

# Rise of The Sikh Power In The Panjab

SOHAN SINGH SITAL



## PREFACE

The long drawn out struggle and the tale of countless sacrifices through which the Sikh nation had to wade to come by her goal as last, is nothing short of a miracle, indeed.

It was during the life-time of their fifth apostle, Guru Arjan Dev, when the Sikhs came to be organised and knit in a distinct community. But this was too bitter a pill for the autocratic Mughal rulers to swallow. Guru Arjan Dev was martyred under the direct orders of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Though this was an unbearable blow to the newly rising Sikh community, yet it stood this cruel calamity like a dauntless and brave nation.

His son, Guru Hargobind, who succeeded him as the sixth Guru, was then a boy of less than eleven years old. But he stood his test and ground remarkably well and led the community effectively.

The Sikhs did not lose heart because of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. On the contrary they learnt the lesson of daring and bravery from his peerless sacrifice. A sword dangled from its girdle on the person of each Sikh who wore a rosary of holy beads round his neck at the same time. The Sikhs took to the path of living as saint soldiers.

As Aurangzeb occupied the Mughal throne at Delhi, he introduced a wholesale change in the policy of his administration. He had a fixed goal of proselytising\* the entire Hindu population of India to Islam by the terror of his sword hand.

Though the Hindus formed a majority of the population in north India, they behaved as a helpless community. They had no effective organisation to protect or lead them. Guru Teg Bahadur came to their rescue and offered himself for martyrdom for their sake. Far from recognising his rightful and just claim and proposal, Aurangzeb martyred the Guru in Delhi. This sanctimonious martyrdom was responsible for bringing about a matchless revolution in the

history of India, beyond a doubt.

This martyrdom was a challenge, thrown out to the Sikh nation by the Mughal rulers. The Sikhs, too, responded to it like brave warriors. They swarmed to collect themselves under the flag of Guru Gobind Singh as armed and fearless soldiers.

That had started an era of wars for religion and martyrdoms in the country. All the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, his mother and, at last, he, all fell as martyrs to their cause. He was treacherously killed by a hired foe. Yet the Sikh nation was far from being cowed or beaten; it arose every time on the strength of its martyrdoms with a renewed courage and power. It continued to advance like an irresistible storm.

The Sikhs regained some power during the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, when they had set themselves as the rulers of their mother-land for a bit. But the Mughal rulers of Delhi once again used their total military power against them and suppressed them totally. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was put to death most barbarously in Delhi. A wide massacre was staged, next, through the Punjab to annihilate the Sikhs altogether.

The people were now convinced that the Sikhs could never revive and rise again. But after only a short respite, the Sikhs were up and doing and in arms for their life and honour. They were actively staging the same, long drama of martyrdoms and warring struggle in the fires of which they had been tempered a while back. And, in this way, they were able to attain their goal after severe struggles in the fields of battles after three-quarter years of a century.

At long last, the Sikhs were able to establish their administration in the Panjab after sacrificing millions of their members in the fields of bloody battles and repression.

The following pages of this book narrate the story of the matchless bravery of the Sikh nation.

I am also grateful to Professors M. C. Sharma and Hardyal Singh who helped me in this work of translation from my Panjabi compositions.

Seetal Bhawan,  
Model Gram,  
Ludhiana, Pb.

Sohan Singh  
Seetal,  
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## CONTENTS

### Part First

CHAPTER	PAGE
I Early Life of Banda Singh	10
II Sikh Baptism	14
III Banda Singh in Panjab	21
IV Small Skirmishes	26
V Samana-ward	31
VI Sadhaura to Chhatt	37
VII The Battle of Sirhind	44
VIII Nemesis of Sirhind	50
IX Lohgarh as Capital	54
X Towards the Jamna	62
XI Revolution in the Majha	70
XII Fighting the Fanatics	75
XIII In Jullundur Doaba	81
XIV Sirhind and Sadhaura Lost	88
XV The Battle of Lohgarh	94
XVI Aftermath of Lohgarh	99
XVII Back in Panjab	102
XVIII The Scene in Lahore	108
XIX The Tussel Continues	113
XX The Beginning of the End	118
XXI The End Itself	123
XXII In Delhi	128
XXIII Banda Singh: an Estimate	136

### Part Second

I Essentials of Sikhism	146
II Butchery after Banda Singh	148
III Tara Singh Martyred	153
IV Disorders Continue	160

V	Comparative Calm	165
VI	Repression Renewed	169
VII	Bhai Mani Singh	174
VIII	Bota Singh	179
IX	The Mughal Kings	183
X	Nadar Shah became King of Iran	188
XI	Nadar Shah Invaded India	193
XII	Dark Times	197
XIII	Massa Ranghar	202
XIV	Taroo Singh	207
XV	Ressurrection	212
XVI	More Dark Times	216
XVII	Stalemate	222
XVIII	Abdali	227
XIX	Confusion	232
XX	The Sikh Misals	238
XXI	Mir Mannu	242
XXII	Mannu and Kaura Mall	247
XXIII	Abdali Again	251
XXIV	Abdali, Mannu and the Sikhs	258
XXV	Worst Barbarism	263
XXVI	Murad Begam	266
XXVII	Riotous Ravening	271
XXVIII	Abdali Active	277
XXIX	Adina Beg	284
XXX	Abdali and Mahrathas	290
XXXI	Sikhs Survive	295
XXXII	Abdali and the Sikh Slough	301
XXXIII	Abdali and the Sikhs	306
XXXIV	The Panjab in Muddle	311
XXXV	Sikhs Settling	317
XXXVI	Abdali Again	322
XXXVII	Abdali s Last Invasion	336
XXXVIII	The Sikhs Achieve the Goal	340

Note : Please read page seventeenth next.

**PART FIRST**

**The First Sikh Ruler  
Banda Singh Bahadar,  
The Martyr.**

## CHAPTER 1

### Early Life

The great personalities of the world were generally born to parents of small means. Baba Banda Singh, called the Martyr and the Brave, was one such hero of note.

Rajauri is a small, though an ancient, town in the Punchh territory of Kashmir. A male baby was born to the wife of a Rajput of the Bhardwaj sub-caste, Ram Dev by name, on October the 27th, 1670. His parents chose for him the name of Lachhman Dev. No one could tell just then that the baby was to change his name several times during his life and that, at last, he was to bear a name that would be remembered with admiration till eternity.

Ram Dev was a comparatively poor man. He worked as a ploughman, and thus earned his livelihood. He was not in a position to put his son to any schooling in the boy's early life. As Lachhman Dev grew up a little, he lent a hand to his father at his work. But he utilised his leisure for going to the nearby forest and hunting some small game with his bow and arrows. He soon turned out to be a practised hand, through his fondness for, and daily use of, his crude weapons.

His fascination for hunting grew with his advancing years. He looked a fine and stout youngster at the age of fifteen years. The build of his body was spare, size middling, skin wheaten and his features beautifully chiselled. His eyes

were shining and his face reflected his quick temper.\*

He shot a doe with his bow one day, while hunting on the bank of the stream, called Tawi. When he stepped up to where she lay wounded, he stood stunned as he looked into her bright, tearful eyes. When he opened her under-skin, he saw two young ones, that died in extreme pain, while he stood aghast, with his eyes fixed in pity on the little, dying ones. This horrible happening shook the young hunter out of his old bearings of life, with the result, that he took to the life of a holy hermit. He flung his spear into the stream and broke the bundle of his arrows, and threw it away. He had, now, renounced hunting for the rest of his life.

He kept very dejected and led a barren life for a time after this sad incident. Though he lived among his people, yet he took no interest in anything. His habit of adventure and daring, and the happy-go-lucky and ebullient ways of his former life had at once been killed by this phase of a strange sadness. He now went to the extent of feeling little desire for his normal food even.

It so happened that one day a party of roaming ascetics (Bairagis) turned up at his village and stayed there for the night, while on their way to the valley of Kashmir. Their preaching and their random talk drew him to them. He found them satisfying and in tune with his new mentation. He renounced his life with his parents and left with the roaming party of the saints. One of them, a learned saint, Janaki Prasad Bairagi, impressed the mind of Lachhman Dav quite a great deal. The result was that he became his disciple. His name was changed to Madho Das on his initiation to the new cult.

The party travelled, and visited several places, in the mountainous territories of Kashmir and then returned to the plains of the Panjab. Madho Das came to a place, called Ram Thamman,† where a fair was held in mid-April. He had been

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\* Karam Singh Historian, 'enda Bahadur' Panjabi, page 103.

† Ram Thamman is a village in Tehsil Kasoor, District Lahore that is a sacred place of pilgrimage for the ascetics. It has a mausoleum of Saint Ram Thamman who was related to Guru Nanak.



in the close company of a saint, named Janki Prasad. That was in 1686. Here he met another holy man, Saint Ram Dass, the ascetic.\*

Madho Das spent some time here and then he became a regular member of the saintly party and moved with the holy men on pilgrimage to many places. They visited several of the religious places over the country and he received some education and religious instruction during these travels.

During his roamings, he came to the forests of Panch Batti. The beautiful sights of Nasik fascinated him. He built a hut here and lived there to practise austerities and pay adoration to the supernatural powers. Another old saint came to him here, his name being Agghar Nath. Madho Das served him and looked after him with a true devotion. This ascetic was deeply learned in magic and supernaturalism, and was much talked about. Agghar Nath was pleased with Madho Das' devotion and taught him some of his wonderful feats and secrets.

The old saintly Agghar Nath died some time later, in the year, 1691, after passing his book on the gospel of supernaturalism to Madho Das. Madho Das studied and practised asceticism and magic with the help of that book. When he was convinced of his powers of working magic, he set out to try in action the degree of his proficiency in the art.

He chose a green and beautiful place, near Nadeyr, on the bank of the River Gaudavari and built there a small hut for himself. There he soon became well-known to the neighbouring people as an anchorite, possessing extra-ordinary powers. Numbers of persons would visit him, ask for his blessings to grant them success, prosperity and sons and were said to have their prayers granted by this saint. The numbers of those who put their faith in him and made him offerings, swelled, and his disciples, too, were around him, all the while, as were his ordinary followers.

His supernaturalism worked for his followers in both directions: blessing or cursing them, according to the demands made on him. Thus, he won a roaring reputation among the people at large. He occupied a large area for his hermitage,

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\* Banda Singh Bahadur by Dr. Ganda Singh, page 4.

planted garden trees in it and having enlisted a number of disciples, he settled down there as the head-saint.

The habit of hunting of his early life raised its head now again in a new form. His art of working magic made him a proud man. He would make other saints, who came to visit him occasionally, uncomfortable with the powers of the spirits, that he would raise; and found great pleasure in belittling and making fun of them like that. He had a special type of a couch made for this purpose. It had a very beautiful bed-cover spread on it day and night. He would ask a stranger, who came to him, to sit on it. He would welcome him in very sweet words at first; but, next, he would manage, through some concealed mechanical device, or, as the common people believed, through his magical powers, to up-set the couch. Those present in his room would, thus, see the venerable guest lying on the floor with the inverted couch right on top of him. Madho Das would clap his hands in delight and loudly laugh at this.

It became a habit with him to confound and dishonour his saintly visitors. This afforded him a special pleasure. And he spent a period of sixteen years on the bank of the Gaudavari like that.

## CHAPTER II

### Sikh Baptism

His circumstances brought about another change in Madho Das's life. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Guru of the Sikhs, arrived at Nadeyr in 1708. It was about the end of September then. He reached the hermitage of Bairagi Madho Das directly. He had been told lots of things about the wonder working-powers of Madho Das by Saint Jait Ram of Dadu Duara,\* whom he had met there.

Accordingly, as soon as the gracious Guru was in Nadeyr, he was pleased to make sure that Madho Das was, in any case, to be enabled to gain salvation for himself. Madho Das was not at home when the Guru went there. He took his seat on the couch that Madho Das had used to discomfort and confound many a saint already. There were several he-goats browsing about inside the compound of the Bairagi. These goats had been left at the place as offerings to him by his devotees. The Sikhs caught and killed some of the goats, under orders from the Guru, and cooked their meat for dinner. While this meat was being cooked, the disciples of Madho Das took the word of this sacrilege to him. His resentment was aroused sorely at this news, and he rushed back to his hermitage in order to take his revenge upon the offender. His

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\* Dadu Duara is a temple in the village, known as Narayan, in Rajasthan, near Jaipur, three miles off the railway station of Phulera. Mahan Kosh by Bhai Kahan Singh, p. 470, edition of 1880.

anger was simply consuming and his eyes were flaming red. He used all his art and magic to up turn the couch on the Guru, but in spite of his doing his very best, nothing would avail him.

He was a little gripped with fear now. He started wondering as to who the bold new-comer could be ! He came up to the Guru and looked closely at his face, its brilliant, spiritual light, its majestic, captivating and kindly eyes, abounding in divine grace, his golden plumes, a hawk perched on the thumb of his one hand, his sword hanging from his girdle, a bow tucked on his shoulder— looking a fascinating picture of both stateliness and spirituality, harmoniously mingled. The very first look of the Guru had melted his anger and had won him over as an ardent admirer.

Unable to utter a single word and tongue-tied, the Bairagi found his hands joined in obeisance and head lowered in reverence. The kindly Guru smiled and said softly: "You had thrown away your spear, had broken your bow and crushed your arrows; yet even, now, you have not changed your nature !"

Madho Das raised his eyes just a bit and cast them low again. His body shook from head to toe-tips. He felt as if somebody had come to know his deepest secrets. Taking himself a little in hand and under control, he spoke, not without an effort: "Your Holiness, I have lost all my merit and rectitude at the hands of such a high saint as Yourself."

The Guru: "How do you mean ?"

The Bairagi: "Your Honour, I am a confirmed vegetarian saint. You have killed lives and shed blood in my own house and you have desecrated my seat on which I sit, while worshipping my gods."

The Guru: "Does the shedding of blood profane your seat ?"

The Bairagi: "That is the principle of my Vaishnav\* (Vegetarian) creed."

The Guru: "Is that so in spite of the fact that the blood has flowed in one corner of your large compound while your couch stands in a distant corner ? How did that make your

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\*The followers of the cult of God Vishnu.

seat unhallowed ?”

The Bairagi: “Your Lordship, when blood has been shed in the hermitage no seat, in any corner of it, can escape the curse of impurity.”

The Guru: “Then tell me one thing: when in India rivers of the blood of its guiltless inhabitants happen to flow over every inch of its soil, how was it that your hermitage in this locality could remain unprofaned so far in spite of it all?”

These words went straight home and shook his heart out of its complacency. His very soul was shaken out of its deep sleep and all his powers were up in revolt against his past. Thus staggered altogether, he exclaimed: “Well ?”

The Guru replied in a firm tone: “That is that.”

A new and bright light had dawned in the inner soul of the Bairagi now. He bowed and fell at the feet of the Guru and spoke with tears welling in his eyes: “Pardon me, my Lord, I am your humble votary (Banda.)”\*

The Guru: “And I am raising my Banda (servant) to the status of Banda Singh.”†

The Bairagi: “At your service and at your sacred feet, Your Holiness.”

The Guru: “My Banda Singh Bahadur,‡ you are a huntsman by nature. Persevere in your vocation of hunting. I am granting to you an unbreakable bow in place of the one that you had broken and discarded once, and the arrows that will break the tyranny of the cruel, absolute rulers of our people. You hunted the helpless animals at one time; come out now and kill the merciless tyrants of our mother-land. I anoint you to be the protector and saviour of the humble, helpless people, the Khalsa,\*\* from today onward.”

The Guru administered the holy, Sikh baptism†† to

\* Servant, slave, believer or votary.

† Lion-Sikh.

‡ Brave.

\*\* The pure, upright persons, the Sikhs.

†† Amrit, Dr. Ganda Singh: Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 15; Ahmed Shah Batalia: Zikrey Guruan wa Ibtiday Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Aishan, p. 11; Ganesh Dass: Risala-i-Sahib-Numa, pp. 186-87. Mufti Ali-ud-Din:

Madho Das with his own hands. He renamed him Banda Singh and bestowed on him the title of Bahadur.\*

The Guru instructed him in all the articles of the Sikh creed and its symbols. Banda Singh now learnt with great interest the Sikh scriptures and Sikh history with the help of other Sikhs present there. A narration of the stories of the martyrdoms of Guru Arjan Dev and of Guru Teg Bahadur set his blood boiling with pious indignation. The accounts of the battles of Guru Gobind Singh himself against the hill rajas and the Mughal, imperial armies, given him by the Sikhs, made the muscles of his arms twitch and aflame for immediate action. His hands were involuntarily forced to grip his sword. His mind was in revolt, hungering deeply for his Guru's permission to let him rush to the Panjab and to try his luck at fighting the tyrannical rulers there.

It was about that time that another tragedy occurred. Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, felt very much uneasy in his mind on hearing the news that the Guru and the Emperor were on intimate and friendly terms with each other. He wove another fatal plot now. He bribed heavily and won

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Ibrat Nama, p. 93. Mohammad Ali Khan Ansari, *Tawarikh-i-Muzuffri*, p. 85. Kanahya Lal: *Twarikh-i-Panjab*, p. 66. Radha Kishan: *Gosha-i-Panjab*, p. 20. Zaka-ul-La: *Tarikh Hindustan*, Vol. IX, p. 57. Bakhat Mal: *Hal-i-Mukhtsar Ibtida-i-Firqa-i-Sikh-an*, p. 10. Gulam Hussain Khan: *Raymond-SeirMutaqhrin*, I, p. 82. Briggs, pp. 72-73. M. Gregor: I, p. 106. Mohammad Lateef, p. 274. Panye: *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 43. Macauliffe: *The Sikh Religion* V, p. 238. Ibbetson MacLagan-Rose: *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Panjab and N.W.F.P., I*, p. 698. Brown: *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*, India Tract II, 1787-88, p. 9. Forster's *Travels*, I, p. 263. Iradat Khan: *Memories of the Mughal Empire*, p. 143. Lovett: *India*, p. 34. *Sau Sakhi*, 1905: (Sun Bandy Tum Khalsa Panth, Mile Khalsa Pahul Santh), Sardha Ram: *Sikhan de Raj di Vithia*, p. 64. Veni Prasad: *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 102; Sri Ram Briksha Sharma: *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 77; Gyani Gyan Singh: *Panth Parkash*, V Edition, p. 328; Shamsheer Khalsa, Urdu, IV edition, p. 7. Radha Mohan, Gokal Ji. *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 88; Sir Surrinder Sharma: *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 85; Rattan Singh Bhangu: *Pracheen Panth Parkash*. (*Ham ne Khalsa tu bhi ralaya*), p. 68; Gokal Chand Narang: p. 172.

\* Brave.

over two Pathans, Ata-Ulla Khan and Gul Khan\* who were well-known to the Guru already. These two conspirators went all the way to the distant Deccan and appeared at the Guru's encampment. They professed deep devotion to and faith in the Guru. They regularly attended the morning and evening assemblies of prayers and devotional music, where the Guru, too, was present and preached to the congregations.

Gul Khan found an opportunity quietly to enter the tent of the Guru one day, a little after the evening prayers. The Guru was alone there, resting on his couch, at the time. Gul Khan approached him noiselessly and then jumped at him. His dagger thrust went deep into the chest of the Guru, just a bit below the heart, on the left side. Before the Pathan could inflict on him another blow, the Guru rose and severed with his sword the head of the attacker from his body. The other Pathan, Ata-ulla Khan, who had kept watch at the door, hurriedly ran away. He was at once overtaken by the Sikhs and killed with sword thrusts. A surgeon was at once called in, who served the Guru and dressed his wound.

This tragic calamity impelled Banda Singh not to stay there any longer. He was determined in his mind to be avenged immediately upon these murderers for all their unrelenting tyrannies and holocausts, if he was at all to be called worthy of being a Sikh of the Guru.

He presented himself to the Guru in all reverence and with folded hands. The Guru guessed his purpose and observed: "My Banda Singh Bahadur, the time to punish the tyrants is ripe now. Do keep your faith in Sikhism unshaken and firm. I shall be with you in spirit and realisation all the while. The community of the Sikhs shall ever find me present with it, in my own way, and you shall realise me in the Panth† that shall represent the power of the Almighty Himself on this earth. Live and work like a true and devout servant of the Panth. God will be at your back and helpful to you. Let five of my Sikhs pray on your behalf for whatever you seek to attain, and it shall be granted by God Almighty."

The Guru gave Banda Singh necessary instructions in

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\* Gyani Gyan Singh: Twarikh Guru Khalsa, page 1432.

† The Sikhs as a religious entity.

his work like that, and asked him to be ready to proceed to the Panjab. He made him a gift of five arrows from his own stock, signifying the victories to be won by this new Sikh. He was given a war drum and a flag and, moreover, the Guru told five of his leading Sikhs\* to accompany Banda Singh to the Panjab as his councillors. They were: Bhai† Binod Singh, Bhai Kaln Singh, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Baj Singh‡ and Bhai Ran Singh. Twenty other Sikhs, too, were asked to return to the Panjab with him. Moreover, the Guru wrote his instructions (Hukamname or orders) to several leading Sikhs to help Banda Singh in the plan that he was to put through. In short, he was appointed the Jathedar or leader of the Sikh community and sent to the Panjab to work his mission there.

He now started on his journey as the captain of his band of twenty-five Sikh comrades. As they rested after making each stage of their march, he came to know from them the stories of the Sikh Martyrs, and that of the most brutal martyrdom of the two children of the Guru at Sirhind, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, that had, in particular, made his blood boil inside his veins. Their murder by making them stand at a spot while a brick-wall was built around them to suffocate them to death, had shocked him beyond words. It made him grow so agitated and restless as to wish strongly to reach Sirhind in a single day to wreak his vengeance on the tyrannical Nawab there.

They had, thus, reached Bharatpur\*\* by steady marches when they were faced with an unexpected hardship: they had exhausted their funds and were yet far from their destination. They were not in a position to take to any law-breaking in that territory. All of them, however, joined now in making a prayer to their Guru to help them in this contingency. The prayer was answered: just then a party of Lubana Sikhs turned up there, who were on a business trip to a farther area. They made an offering of five hundred

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\* Panj Piyarey or five adored ones or advisers.

† Brother, mister or comrade.

‡ Rattan Singh Baangoo, Pracheen Panth Parkash, p 67.

\*\* Gyani Gyan Singh; Shamsher Khalsa, Urdu, p 7.



rupees to Baba Banda Singh, as one-tenth of their profits.† This money was used by the party of Banda Singh to tide over their difficulty. They were, thus, enabled to continue their march till they had reached the neighbourhood of Delhi.

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† It is a religious tenet of the Sikhs to pay 10 percent of their earnings to the common welfare fund of the community.

## CHAPTER III

### **Banda Singh in the Panjab**

Banda Singh started his preparations to fulfil his mission as soon as he was in the Panjab. He was well aware of all that he required in order to conquer Sirhind. His first task was to win over to him the loyalties of the poorer section of the people. The Sikhs would make their day's prayers and then shouted their slogan loudly which was "Akaal, Akaal."\* All of them were swordsmen-saints and Banda Singh was their leader or chief.

The faithful Sikhs would come to visit him and make him their offerings, taking him for a Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh and the Jathedar of the community. They would reverently greet him, wanting to be blessed by him for the grant of prosperity or sons. He would pray to God in their behalves and their wishes were met, in most cases. He would in this way, receive substantial collections, all of which he used to distribute among the members of his party and the poor commons. If a poor man would come to serve the Sikhs assembled there and the members of his Jatha or group, in particular, he was rewarded with a gold mohar by him.

Bhai Rattan Singh has narrated this practice of Banda Singh in the following words:

"If the demand was made for a son, a son was granted to such a Sikh.

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\* Karam Singh Historian: Banda Bahadur, p. 31.

And milk would be there, if for milk was the prayer  
 made.  
 If a man in trouble turned up, Banda Singh's prayer  
 relieved him of it, too.  
 He made them worship God and their prayers failed  
 not to aid them.....

"Wherever Banda Singh made a halt, there his host  
 was rewarded with a gold mohar.

If an oil-man would lend him oil for his lighting purpose,  
 Banda Singh failed not to pay him a gold coin.

When a potter brought to him an earthen lamp or a  
 vessel, he would drop him a gold coin out of his pocket.

If a wood-cutter offered him fuel, a gold coin was his  
 unflinching reward."\*

Banda Singh had, thus, made a name all over his part  
 of the country. People daily made him the usual offerings.  
 His visitors knew him as a philanthropist, charitable person  
 and miracle worker. This would attract to him thieves and  
 robbers at times; but they dared not do his hermitage any  
 harm as it was always protected by his band of armed Sikhs.

His policy, at the time, was not to get involved in any  
 of the problems of the people; but he was resolved to advance  
 his own plans quietly first.

Thus, moving from one place to another, Banda Singh  
 and his party reached the tract, called Bangar.† One day  
 the village in which Banda Singh and party had stayed, was  
 attacked by a gang of robbers. The entire people of the  
 village were terror-stricken and confounded and started  
 running away, leaving their homes unprotected. That was  
 a time when the Government of Delhi was altogether ineffect-  
 ive and powerless. The bands of rascals from large villages  
 would rob and kill the people of smaller places. These daily  
 calamities and destruction had made the people timid and  
 terror-stricken to the extent that they would run away for  
 their lives, leaving everything in the villages behind them.

The people in the village where these Sikhs were staying,  
 were terrified and nervous, though Banda Singh did his best

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\* Pracheen Panth Parkash, Second edition, p. 69.

† The area of Jakhal, Sirsa and Hissar.

to persuade the residents to join his party in facing and beating the robbers away. But nobody in the village would give an ear to what he had told them. At last, he himself, along with a small number of his Singhs, made ready to oppose the robbers. And he and his party of Sikhs attacked the bad, mad plunderers with such force and ferocity that they knew no other safety than that of running away from these lion-like resisters. The Sikhs went in pursuit of them and succeeded in robbing the robbers of whatever plunder they had succeeded in carrying from their previous victims.\*

The village people, too, had, by then, returned to their homes. They thanked profusely the Sikhs for their bravery. That was how Banda Singh had helped in saving a few villages from being plundered by robbers.†

Banda Singh now sent the criers around, throughout that neighbourhood, asking the people to stop paying the revenue to the Government that afforded them no security of life and property. He himself promised to give them all necessary protection and security in return for their supplying to his Sikhs milk and other articles of food and mere necessities of life, in order to keep them going in life and in their service. At the same time, he tried to persuade the poor and the oppressed classes of the population to assemble under the flag of Guru Gobind Singh and seek conversion to Sikh religion.

This declaration estranged the minds of the chiefs (land-lords) of that area from Banda Singh and his party. These important persons behaved and lived like autocrats, who ruled and acted as it pleased them. And, they were in league with the robbers, too, who had to pay these "barons" a part of the plunder that they used to collect. It were these land-lords alone who were the rulers of the people in actual practice. They were now anxious to break Banda Singh and his group of the Sikhs. But, luckily for the mass of the people, these rulers missed their opportunity to create disturbances that they had wanted to use as their pretext; for, Banda Singh left that locality and moved further to the villages, named Sehri

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\* Rattan Singh Bhangoo : Pracheen Panth Parkash, page 70.

† Karam Singh Historiam : Banda Bahadur, page 83.

and Khanda.

Sehri and Khanda are situated close by each other in the pargana of Kharkhod. Banda Singh wrote letters from there, addressed to the Sikhs of the Majha, the Doaba and the Malwa and of other places, far and near. He despatched special messages, written and addressed by the Guru himself, to many prominent Sikhs and himself wrote several letters, similar to those the Guru had written, addressed to other well-known Sikhs. Other Sikhs who were keeping him company, also, wrote for the same purpose to several other persons whom they knew.

The subject of all these letters was about the same, and may be summed up in the following words:

“Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, the General of the Sikh community, appointed by Guru Gobind Singh himself, has recently come to the Panjab, in order to take our revenge upon Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, for the bloodiest murder of the guiltless and innocent children of our Guru. It is a religious duty of every Sikh to take part in this holy war of the Panth.”

Anybody who read or listened to the subject of the letters, put aside his duties and chores at home and took to preparing for doing his best in order to answer this call to arms. And, moreover, the person who received such a letter, visited with it a score of the neighbouring villages and read it out to their residents. Every home in every village bustled with the preparation for fighting this holy war. The rusted swords were sought out, brightened and sharpened. The spears tucked in the ceilings and bows without strings, were recovered and made war-worthy. Those, who were without substance with them, borrowed money of the professional lenders, at 25% or even 50% interest, yearly. If a couple of Sikhs started from a village, they grew into five through new additions at the next village. After covering a distance of a few miles, they would multiply into a regular squad. Whichever village they would turn in, they would proclaim their mission and invite the residents to join with them to fight for their Guru and his creed and win martyrdom.

The whole of the Panjab had, by now, heard the news of the arrival of Banda Singh Bahadur and of the imminen

war under his generalship. How far had the Sikhs been enthused for this holy fighting was evident from the busy preparations that they were making for it. If the husband was ploughing his land out of the village and his wife had heard of the local war-party being organised, she would meet her husband at the door of the house, taking his weapons to him. A sister would carry a number of coins tied in a piece of cloth, and a bow and arrows for her brother and would go to meet him out in the field. A mother would wake up her sleeping son, place his spear on his shoulder and make him run in order to catch up with the war-party already on its way. These patriotic women of the villages would go up the roofs of their houses to have a fond look at the fighters' parties and greet them with their war slogan\* and encourage them to fight toughly.

No Sikh lady could forget the bloody, horrible deeds of the tyrannical Wazir Khan and Sucha Nand. Their bloody crimes flashed across mind. She imagined and pictured in her mind the two children of her Guru being killed by the rising wall around them, and saw also in her imagination, the writhing, wounded bodies of the unholy dying criminals. That was how earnestly and warmly the Sikhs left their homes and assembled under the banner of Banda Singh.

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\* Sat. Sri Akaal: Deathless is the God Almighty.

## CHAPTER IV

### SMALL SKIRMISHES

The Chaudhries (land-lords) of the rural areas took the news of all this stir to the local officers, who placed special guards on the roads and the river-crossings. They were ordered to arrest every person who looked a suspect. The Sikhs of the Majha were particularly hit by these restrictions on their travel. Many of them had been arrested. The remaining ones managed to reach the Doaba and then Kiratpur either by assuming changed appearances or travelling along less known routes, or joining the company of the traders' parties or by going along the hilly tracks.

The Doaba Sikhs, too, faced similar hurdles. The Pathan functionaries had blocked their passage between Ropar and Maler Kotla; but the resourceful Doaba Sikhs reached Kiratpur and joined those of their comrades who had already assembled there. The Malwa Sikhs, however, met with no such obstruction. They left their homes, formed parties of twenty or so and marched from one village to another, avoiding the known high-ways.

Governor Wazir Khan of Sirhind had two servants, named Aali Singh and Maali Singh, who came of village Salaudi. Wazir Khan had heard of the arrival of Banda Singh. One day the Pathan ruler made the following taunting remarks to Aali Singh and Maali Singh: "I am told that another Guru of yours, Banda Singh, has arrived in these parts. I suggest that you should go and join him in his religious war. If you

can, prompt him to attack Sirhind. Your former Guru, who was badly licked by us, had to flee this part of the country, to find a refuge in the distant Deccan, at Nadayr, and to meet a speedy death there.\* The bones of this new Guru will be scattered in the streets of Sirhind."

Aali Singh and Maali Singh did their best to control their rising indignation and not to make any bitter retort to the taunt. Yet they found it impossible to control their temper any longer against the insult and conceit flung at their Guru and they did happen to say certain bitter words, in their turn. The Governor lost no time in arresting and throwing behind the prison bars all the Sikhs living in that place. But times were such that these victims of oppression could escape from the prison-house as easily as they had been arrested and held up. It, thus, happened that the whole party of Aali Singh was enabled to give a slip to the jailor by successfully bribing his assistants. The Jail officials informed the Governor next day of the escape the Sikh prisoners. They were alleged to have fled away by making a hole in the prison wall the previous night. The Governor was helpless and felt as if the ground had slipped from under his feet. The sikhs had flown out of his reach.

Banda Singh had stayed put at Sehri-Khanda, waiting for the expected Sikh parties to join him there. Aali Singh and Maali Singh of Salaudi were the first to go to him.† They were twentythree in number.‡ Some more parties of the Malwa Sikhs had turned up now. Bhai Fateh Singh, the descendant of Bhai Bhagtu, had brought a large party to the leader. He had with him some Sikh business-men, too, who had brought with them a number of bullocks, laden with rations.†† Karam Singh and Dharm Singh of Roopeka had also turned up there. Nagahia Singh and Choohar Singh of Daulat, along with a good number of Brar Sikhs and Jatts from Bangar, had also joined up. Ram Singh and Tilok

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\* Guru Gobind Singh had died on October the 7th, 1708, at Nadeyr. Banda Singh was already on his way to the Panjab when the news of this death had reached him. And it was he who had told the Sikhs in the Panjab the story of this tragedy.

† Karam Singh, Historian: Banda Bahadur, page 40.

‡ Gyani Gyan Singh: Shamsheer Khalsa, page 8.

†† Dr. Ganda Singh: Banda Singh Bahadur, Page 32.



Singh, the Phoolka leaders, had not come there themselves. But they took care to send to the aid of Banda Singh a large number of their men and a good deal of other material. The Sikhs of the village, Maharaj, had received money from the Phoolkas and reached there in a large party. All these persons had reached Banda Singh at Sehri-Khanda. Chaudhri Kapura did not turn up there, nor did he render Baba Banda Singh any other help.

Banda Singh now had a total of about five hundred sikhs. He set out from there, moving ahead through villages. If the chaudhries of a village offered them the day's provisions, they would resume their march without causing any trouble there. But in places where the leaders of a village were hard-headed, the Khalsa bands would forcibly acquire the provisions to meet their need of the day. As they approached Sonipat, the Captain of the army platoon posted there advanced from the town half-heartedly to fight the Sikhs. He showed no courage to come to a clash with them. The news of the advancing Sikhs that had reached his ears, had frightened him out of his wits. When the Sikhs moved to an attack, he hurriedly retreated and ran away Delhi-ward, leaving the town to the tender mercies of the invaders. The Sikhs plundered the town and advanced towards Kaithal.

The province of Delhi comprised the Divisions of Delhi, Saharanpur, Sirhind, Hissar and Ferozabad, each under a Commissioner, as in our present system. Kaithal was a pargana or district under Sirhind. The band of the Sikhs of Banda Singh Bahadur was resting near the village of Bhuna, not much distant from Kaithal, when they were told that the government money from the treasury of Kaithal was being carried to Delhi, guarded by a few soldiers only. Banda Singh promptly ordered a party of his men to attack the treasure guards. The Sikhs swooped upon the treasure-carriers like hungry tigers. They met no resistance at all. The soldiers who guarded the treasure, melted away at the start of the attack, leaving the treasure behind. This brought a decent sum of money into the possession of Banda Singh, which he distributed among all his followers. All his Sikh comrades were very pleased with him for his self-denial and fair dealings.

The army officers of Kaithal received the news of this incident from his soldiers who had fled to him for protection. This officer was a Hindu. Taking four hundred cavalry men with him, he hastened to meet and punish the Sikhs.\* All the men of Banda Singh were foot-soldiers. He realised that fighting the enemy in the open would not avail him. He, along with all the Sikhs, walked into the dense forest, growing nearby.† When the army officer came to know that the Sikhs had slipped into the jungle of thick trees for fear of his horsemen, he rushed haughtily after them and attempted to enter the forest. When the horses could not enter there safely with their riders, he ordered his soldiers to dismount and to go in pursuit of the Sikhs among the trees. Before they could dismount, the Sikhs rushed on them from amongst the nearby trees, swords in hands, and killed several of the enemies before they had gained a foothold on the ground. This sudden onrush of the Sikhs had astounded the government soldiers. Some of the Sikhs lost no time in arresting the enemy officer securely.

Fighting was at an end. The Sikhs had killed some of the enemies, while the others had either succeeded in running away or had been captured. And the Kaithal officer was, at last, released on the condition that he was to give all his horses to the Sikhs and, for the future, he was to retain his post in Kaithal and was to realise the government dues from the people as before and pay them to the Sikhs.

The Sikhs turned their eyes to Samana next. The Governor of Sirhind had four dastours or districts under him, Haveyli Sirhind, Tehara, Thaneswar and Samana. Samana was a very well-known, old and rich town. In those times people in the villages were poor and lived from hand to mouth, while all the wealth was accumulated in the towns of the administrative head-quarters of the country. The mansions of the rich persons and of the officers were built sky high while it was a rare sight to see an ordinary baked-brick house standing in a village.

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\*Rattan Singh Bhango: Pracheen Panth Parkash, P. 71.

† Karam Singh Historian: Banda Bahadur, p. 34.

Samana, too, was overflowing with wealth. It was well-known for the distinction that it possessed twenty-two palankeens. This meant that there were twenty-two families in that town whose members were formally privileged by the authority of the Emperor to move about in palankeens. Each one of these big parsons possessed a mansion of pucca bricks, with butteressed works like a fort. The town was defended by a thick city-wall, with strong gates that could be shut against the attacks of the enemies. The Muslim Savyads and the Mughals formed a large majority in the town, and were known for their bravery. They knew of the disturbances caused by Banda Singh, no doubt. But they had given him little heed. They were proud of their power and entertained an overweening opinion that the Sikhs had no chance to approach and harm them and their town.

The great wealth of Samana was not the only reason for the Sikhs to attack it; their minds were poisoned against it on another account too. Sayyad Jalal-ud-Din who had beheaded Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru and father of Guru Gobind Singh, and the butchers Shashal Beg and Bashal Beg who had murdered the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh most inhumanly, lived in Samana. When Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, had murdered these children of the Tenth Guru, these rulers of Samana were his partners in this inhumanity. Banda Singh had now proclaimed all these facts of history to the Sikhs of the area and invited all of them, who would partake of the plunder of Samana, to come out and join him in the proposed exploit.

## CHAPTER V

### Samana-ward

The force of Banda Singh had three types of men in it: first, the true, devotee Sikhs who had joined him to attain salvation through martyrdom; secondly, the paid men of the Sikh chiefs like Ram Singh, Tilok Singh and others, who were sent to serve and fight under Banda Singh; and, thirdly, the professional plunderers of that part of the country, who had joined hands with him for the sake of robbing those whom they attacked, and who kept hindmost at the time of fighting and fore-most when plundering their victims. The Muslim, underground historian of the time, Khafi Khan, has recorded that the total number of Banda Singh's men was four thousand horsemen and seven to eight thousand footmen which latter swelled to forty thousands in the end.

At the head of a force of about a dozen thousands men, Banda Singh encamped at a place ten miles distant from Samana. He made his army march at night-fall, and covering the distance of ten miles, appeared at the gates of Samana at four o'clock on the morning of November the 26th, 1709, and rushed into the town. The guards were given no opportunity to close the gates, so sudden was the attack.

Banda Singh gave the word to massacre anybody offering resistance, as his men broke into the streets. The Sayyads and the Mughals had now made ready to check and re-ist this onrush of the raiders. But they could not

make a stand for long to resist and throw the Sikhs out.. Leaving the common inhabitants of the city defenceless, the wealthy families shut themselves up behind the doors of their mansions, in comparative security.

The Sikhs ransacked the streets of the town, making short work of all opponents. Whosoever resisted them, was put to the sword.

It was the turn of the mansions next. The Mughals and the Sayyads fought courageously. But the endless zeal of the Sikhs dashed their hope to the ground. The Sikhs, at the moment, saw the image of a murderer of their ninth Guru and of the two children of their tenth Guru in the face of each Mughal or Sayyad. That being the case, no one could protect and save the lives of these rulers. The mansions fell to the raiders. They were emptied of their inmates and their wealth. The house of every big family was a cess-pool of blood with human bodies writhing in agony of death. The heads of influential residents rolled in the streets like pumpkins. The women of the rich families who never appeared in public except behind their veils, were now running about in the streets with uncovered heads and bare feet. Only those lived to tell the tale afterwards, who had run for their lives, discarding their love of homes and families, as soon as the raiders had rushed into the town. Ten thousand Muslims were said to have been despatched there in one day, a number of them being children and women. Some of the women had committed suicide and some children were killed by the professional plunderers.

The rulers of Samana had never once imagined that such a terrible day was ever to dawn upon them, inflicting on them this horrid retribution. Normally they had been committing on the common folk all the tyrannies that they had chosen. It was the common practice among them to dishonour the daughters or other women-folk of the commons and to fleece them, and squeeze from the small people whatever the latter had possessed. Now that the oppressed people found their first-ever opportunity, they, too, did their worst in taking revenge upon the Samana tyrants. They carefully traced and picked every one of the oppressors, killed him, plundered his effects and set his

house on fire and reduced it to ashes, to complete the tale.

However, the destruction of life and property caused by the Sikhs was small as compared to the havoc wrought by the robbers of the area, who seemed to know much about the life and character of the people of Samana.

This prosperous and busy town was a heap of ashes and ruins by the nightfall. Actually this exploit was the first, real victory that Banda Singh had scored against the Mughal rulers of the Panjab. Samana was really a rich town. The Sikhs had acquired, on this occasion, wealth worth lakhs of rupees. The men of Banda Singh were not paid any salary. He, therefore, distributed proportionately the entire acquisition among his followers. Sardar Fateh Singh had fought with considerable skill and courage. Banda Singh had, therefore, appointed him the officer of the military force that he left behind him in Samana.

Samana, which lay in ruins on that day, has not been able to recapture its old status. The Mughal residents there were up-rooted so as never to come back to their old perch. They shifted to a place on the banks of the rivulet Sraswati, near Pehowa. They were pushed out of that place, too, later, during the time of the Sikh Misils.\* Then they set out to settle down in the Saharanpur area. When the British took possession of these parts, they had shifted these Mughals from there to a place in the District of Karnal.

Sirhind is only thirty miles or so from Samana. The news of this devastation had reached Sirhind, and Wazir-Khan was well aware that his capital could not escape a similar fate for long. He was, therefore, busy in making preparations to ensure that the fate of Samana did not befall Sirhind. He despatched to Samana two of his spies in order to assess the real strength of the Sikhs. But it so happened that they fell into the hands of the Sikhs. One of them had only one good eye, and the other man had only one arm. They were taken to Banda Singh, who had them thoroughly shoe beaten and then sent them back to Sirhind with the message that the Khalsa was ready to attack Sirhind and Wazir Khan might make his preparations

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\* A federation of Sikh feudal chiefs.

against the day-

Some of the Malwa Sikhs were pressing Banda Singh to attack Sirhind at an early day. But he knew the position better. A ruler like Wazir Khan who possessed a large number of big guns, field guns and elephants and who was in a position to requisition large numbers of the soldiers from his local commanders of the divisional areas, could not be challenged cheaply and merely in haste and for the fun of it. It was wiser to make firm and sure preparations, before tackling him in the battle-field, rather than to strike prematurely and suffer a defeat. He wanted to build his strength for a sure victory first and fight the enemy thereafter.

He knew well that the plunderers formed a majority of his men. They were powerful enough to crush a defeated enemy; but when an action was prolonged, the plunderers were the first to slink away before the fluctuating fortunes of the field. It was for this reason that Banda Singh was anxious to meet the Doaba and the Majha Sikhs first. Also, his five councillors, Baj Singh and others, too, came of the Majha; and they had strongly wished that these brethren who had travelled all the way from across the Beas and the Sutlej against great odds and hardships, should be enabled to join the Sirhind venture.

The Sikhs from the Majha and the Doaba, who had assembled at Kiratpur, found their path to Sirhind blocked by the Pathans of Ropar and Maler Kotla. They sent their emissaries in disguise, to Banda Singh, asking him for his orders. His reply was brief: "Remain where you are. We are moving in the direction of Chhatt. Wait for my next message."

These Sikhs, staying put at Kiratpur, were now face to face with another danger, that of starvation. Whatever they had brought from their homes, had been exhausted, leaving them starkly penniless. But the Guru had heard their prayer and resolved their hardship in the nick of time: two traders of Kiratpur itself, Peshaura Singh and Keshaura Singh, financed a free kitchen for the assembled Sikhs. And this charitable arrangement was maintained till the congregation had moved to its next place.

Sirhind fell on Banda Singh's way to Kiratpur. He

had, therefore, to march in a circuitous way. This curve by the eastern side of Sirhind was safer than the route on the western side. The eastern paths were easier to traverse and the people there, too, were more prosperous. Banda Singh, therefore, preferred the eastern detour.

The men of Banda Singh left Samana, walked a little distance to the south, and then turned eastward. Their first encounter was at Ghuram. The Pathan residents of that place came out to resist the Sikhs. But they soon ran away from the field: they could not defeat or throw back these Sikhs, who had already over-run Samana. The town was plundered, the houses of the Pathans were set on fire, and the neighbourhood annexed to the territory controlled by Fatch Singh.

The Sikhs then advanced to Thaska whose Pathan residents did not at all oppose them.\* The Sikhs entered the place, plundered it and left it, without any killing whatever.

They went to Shahabad next. The Sayyad, the Sheikh, the Mughal and the Pathan Muslims formed its population. The local officer, who ruled there, lived outside the town, in an inn, that was built like a regular fort. The Sikhs marched into the town, but the officer rested behind the closed gates of the inn all this while. The resident, too, preferred to play safe for their lives and saw their belongings being pillaged, without raising their little fingers against the transgressors. The result was that without shedding a single drop of blood, the Sikhs carried their plunder and went their way. The admirable officer in charge of the security of the town, was still resting cosily behind his closed doors.

Mustafabad was the next victim of the Sikhs. Its army officer marched out of the town at the head of his two thousand strong special military force, two guns and a large number of volunteers from the town and the country around it, to oppose and defeat Banda Singh.

The robber force with the Sikhs hastily melted at the first booming of the guns. But the staunch, faithful Sikhs held their own as usual. Banda Singh did not fail to take

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh : Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 43.



time by the forelock and made a lightning attack, wisely avoiding a drawn out action. The Sikhs of course, possessed no long-range guns and rifles; they quickly drew their swords and rushed at the enemy straight. There was a brief period of ferocious sword-play on both sides. The Muslim fighters lost their foot hold and ran away for safety. The Sikhs took possession of the guns and the rest of their munitions.

When the robbers heard of the victory of the Sikhs, they, too, turned up to score their own gains. The whole of the town was plundered and the houses of the rich families were set on fire to be devoured by flames.†

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†Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 247.

## CHAPTER VI

### Sadhaura To Chatt

The Sikhs turned their attention to Sadhaura. During their march they stayed for the night at the village of Dalaur. Here they were told by the Lubana Sikhs stories of the cruelties perpetrated by Kadam-ud-Din, who was the chief of Kapoori. His father, Aman-Ulla, had been the Governor of Gujrat, Kathiawar, during the time of Emperor Aurangzeb.\* He had amassed huge wealth during his regime there through corrupt practices. These earnings of sin had turned Kadam-ud-Din into a beastly tyrant. This oppressor would not spare any beautiful Hindu woman of his area from being made a prey to his lust. The soldiers of this dirty beast would roam like wild animals even in areas outside his rule, seeking any pretty women whom they would capture for their master. Every new bride was first taken to him without fail and was then allowed to proceed to her husband's place.

A perfect believer in Sikhism as Banda Singh was, he could not possibly take this barbarism for granted and could not forgive it, either. He attacked Kapoori before he headed for Sadhaura. Before the sun rose, the Sikhs had entered Kapoori. Kadam-ud-Din made a brief stand. But the Sikhs overpowered him quickly and despatched him to the hell to burn in its fires.† His right royal mansion was reduced to ashes and his town was completely plundered.

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\* Karam Singh Historian, Banda Bahadur, p. 43.

† Sohan Singh : Banda the Brave, page 69.

Sadhaura needs a special mention. It is an ancient town. Buddhist saints had lived in it long centuries back. It was then called Sadhuwara, later changed into Sadhaura. When the Muslims conquerors settled in India, the Toosi tribe of the Pathans occupied this town. Sayyad Nizam-ud-Din of Village Siana, district Karnal, later defeated the Toosi Pathans and occupied Sadhaura. About the same time, Sayyad Khizar Khan came to possess the throne of Delhi in the year 1414. He awarded a jagir of sixty thousand rupees to Nizam-ud-Din. It was this man who was succeeded by Saint Badur-ud-Din Shah, whom the Sikhs popularly called Buddha Shah, who was the ninth in succession in Sadhaura.

Sayyads, Qazis and Sheikhs lived in this town at the time when Banda Singh took notice of it. Usman Khan was the pargana (district) chief of it. He was notoriously narrow-minded and fanatical and he had Sayyad Buddha Shah murdered for the reason that the latter had rendered all possible aid to Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. Cows were killed in the houses of the Hindus under orders from Usman Khan and cows' blood was often sprinkled in the kitchens, and in the faces, of the Hindus, who were made to pay him double the amount of taxes of what the Muslims paid. He had forbidden the Hindus observe their religious customs and compelled them to bury and not to burn their dead relatives. This was not all. Hindu women were forcibly dishonoured. The Sikhs were, thus, compelled to attack Sadhaura.

They attacked Sadhaura at the sunrise. They entered the town without meeting with any resistance. They found the streets empty. The middle class citizens had abandoned the town already; they had heard of what had happened in Kapoori. The remaining upper class Sayyads had together found refuge in the mansion of Sayyad Buddha Shah. They comprised forty to fifty wealthy families. It might be that they had hoped that the association of the noble name of Buddha Shah was going to protect them there from the wrath of the attackers.

The Sikhs who were strangers to the place, did not know any one mansion from the other. But the local marauders knew well the place and proceeded to attack it

straight-way. They had been grievously harassed and oppressed by their ruling class, by its Sayyads and Qazis, in particular. Every one of these low class persons had been made to suffer at the hands of the local leaders, at one time or the other. Luckily they found them assembled in one place. The disturbances gave them a plausible excuse to conceal their identity. They drew their swords and rushed into the mansion and killed all of the persons assembled there without exception. Since that day the house has been called the massacre mansion\* (katal Garhi.)

Usman Khan also lost his life there. His dead body was hung from a tree, face downward. Many houses of the Sayyads were burnt down. Plentiful booty was the reward of the invaders of Sadhaura.

Banda Singh settled down in the fort of Sadhaura for the time being and despatched one party of his men toward Mukhlas Garh. They captured the fort after a brief skirmish and named it Lohgarh.†

Banda Singh now sent his message to the Sikhs in the camp at Kiratpur, saying that they were to proceed towards Kharar, while he himself was advancing to Banoor.

Wazir Khan was very uneasy in his mind on hearing the news of the successes scored by Banda Singh. He daily prayed to God that He might ordain matters so as to send Banda Singh any where but to Sirhind and protect him from the impending calamity. He hatched a conspiracy and sent a nephew of Diwan Sucha Nand at the head of an army of a thousand men, to join the Sikhs and then treacherously kill Banda Singh‡

The Sikhs were about to depart from Sadhaura when this troop of one thousand soldiers joined them. Their Hindu commander most humbly prayed to Banda Singh to let his party form a section of the Sikh army in order to fight for the Sikh community. He declared that Sucha Nand and Wazir Khan were his mortal enemies and that Sucha Nand had robbed him and mis-appropriated all his property. That was why he was seeking protection of the

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\* Mirza Mohammad Harisi: Ibrat Nama, page 40.

† Gyari Gyan Singh: Shansher Khalsa, page 10.

‡ Sohan Singh: Banda the Brave, page 76.

Sikhs, to have himself revenged upon his uncle, Sucha-Nand.

Such happenings were very common in those times. That was why, half believing him, Banda Singh allowed him to live in the Sikh camp. This Hindu trickster kept company with the Sikhs till the day of the battle of Sirhind. But he did not succeed in gaining his objective, because staunch Sikhs, like Baj Singh, would, all the while, ensured the strictest security of the life of their chief. Moreover, the most trustworthy guards would attend on him.

Banda Singh made his possession of Lohgarh secure and left Sadhaura and marched in the direction of Ambala.\* He collected a good deal of plunder on the way and then attacked Banoor. The officer of the town offered the Sikhs a feeble resistance and then fled the field. Some of his men saved their lives by fleeing from there, and some others were killed and the remaining persons laid down their arms before the Sikhs. The entire town was plundered. But good care was taken for the security of the homes of the Hindus. Their requests and demands were met and the Sikhs rendered them full help everywhere. The Hindus now had recognised the fact that their welfare depended upon the advancement of the Sikhs. That was why a good many Hindus sought Sikh baptism, took to observing Sikh forms and symbols and had themselves enlisted as the soldiers of Banda Singh.†

The Kiratpur camp had now several thousands of Sikhs assembled there. When they received the message of Banda Singh, they started in the direction of Ropar. Wazir Khan trembled with awe on hearing this news. He had no doubt in his mind that, if the two Sikh armies could join hands, the ruin of Sirhind was inevitable. He saw safety in one measure only: to attack, defeat and destroy the Kiratpur army before it had the opportunity of joining up with Banda Singh's force.

He selected the Chief of Maler Kotla to march in command of a five-thousand strong army and five guns to fulfil this urgent commission. Sher Mohammad Khan was

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\* Gyani Gyan Singh: Shamsheer Khalsa, page 9.

† Shamsheer Khalsa, p. 9.

the Chief of the Maler Kotla rulers at the time. He enjoyed the favour of the Emperor in Delhi and, as a mark of special honour, was permitted to carry a drum and a flag as his badges. Along with his brother, Mahmud Khan, whom Guru Gobind Singh has described as Khuaja Mardud\* in his book, "Zafar Nama," and his uncle, two sons : Nusrat Khan and Wali Mohammad Khan, he rushed to Ropar to clash with the Sikhs. The Ranghar tribe of the Muslims of Ropar region also joined him in large numbers.

The Sikhs had not expected it even in their dreams that they were going to fight a battle with the enemy suddenly and so early. This attack had surprised them; yet they got ready with their weapons to meet the on-rushing foe. This battle was fought outside the town of Ropar and continued the whole of the day. The arrows and the bullets rained thickly from both sides. But the Sikhs had started feeling down-hearted as their ammunition gave out. The night fell and the battle stopped.

The Muslims were happy and sure that they were going to make mince-meat of the Sikhs the next morning. On the other hand, the Sikhs were uneasy in mind and very anxious to find a way to join hands with Banda Singh's force at Banoor at the earliest. But more Sikhs soon turned up, who had been left behind at Kiratpur, during the course of the night. Their Ropar comrades welcomed them with all their hearts and felt encouraged by their presence.

The battle was joined in by both sides with the rise of the sun. Khuaja Khizar Khan chose a specially selected troop of his warriors and advanced to attack the Sikhs. He continued to push forward in the heat of his enthusiasm till the two armies were close enough to use their swords. Khizar Khan shouted at the Sikhs :

"Throw up your arms, if you want to live; else no power on earth will protect you from sure death."

The Sikhs replied to this ultimatum in the form of a rain of arrows and bullets. Destiny had willed that the victory would favour Wahiguru's, that is, God Almighty's Sikhs. A bullet from the rifle of a Sikh killed Khizar Khan and he dropped dead from his horse-back. He

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\*The word means cursed or damned.

had safely come through the battle of Chamkaur. But he was not so lucky at Ropar as to survive another encounter with the Sikhs.

The Sikhs were in high spirits now. They were ruthlessly mowing down their enemies as the farmers do their ripe crops. They surrounded the corpse of Khizar Khan and would not let the Muslims carry it away. When the latter furiously rushed for it again, the Sikhs in their hundreds slashed all these Muslims to death. They would charge the Sikhs again and again to snatch the body from them, but were everytime beaten back with disastrous results. They had, in fact, clashed with invincible mountains.

Fighting was at its hottest and bloodiest at that spot, with the result that neither friends nor foes could be distinguished by either side in this sharp melee. The Malerkotla men reached the corpse at last, though it was at the cost of two more generals of the status of Khizar Khan : Nusrat Khan and Wali Mohammad, who also were killed in this goriest of battles. Sher Mohammad Khan was wounded, but some-how he managed to carry away the corpses of his brothers and returned to Maler Kotla. His army proved smarter than their general in quickly fleeing from the field of the battle after him.

The Sikhs had the battle-field to themselves at last. The shouting of the slogan of their victory resounded from the field and floated on the winds about them. They took hold of the guns and the rest of the war material of the enemy and marched towards Banoor. They were far more anxious to meet their leader, Banda Singh, than to pursue the beaten enemies.

Banda Singh, too, had gained possession of the town of Banoor now. When he and his friends heard the news of the Sikh victory at Ropar, they were all beside themselves with pride and joy. Banda Singh and some of the more eminent leaders, went out for three miles to receive the victors of Ropar. This meeting of the two armies was highly satisfying to them. The customary sweet dishes, costing hundreds of rupees, were cooked and partaken of by all

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\*Kattan Singh Bhangoo : Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 79.

and sundry.

Some Brahmins and Hindus of the town of Chhatt turned up there while the Sikhs were yet celebrating their recent victory. They complained of the tyranny and oppressions of the local Muslims. The Sikhs lost no time in going to Chhatt. They attacked the town and punished the oppressors. The depressed Hindus heaved a sigh of relief.

This was the first venture in which the Malwa, Majha and Doaba Sikhs had taken part together.

Preparations were next taken in hand to plan to win the coming battle of Sirhind now.



## CHAPTER VII

### The Battle of Sirhind

Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, received an ultimatum from Baba Banda Singh, who had threatened him with dire punishment for his black deeds. The Governor was already aware of this ominous danger hovering over his head and spelling the ruin of the Sirhind dominion one of those days. He had called up his feudual chiefs along with their army quotas. Even this left his mind uneasy. He set on foot an immediate propaganda for a religious war, summoning the faithful Muslims to join it. The masses of the Muslim ghazis\* answered his call and rushed to Sirhind to fight for him.

All of them dug themselves in entrenchments that they made near the village of Chaparchiri, † nearly a dozen miles outside the city of Sirhind, and there they awaited the Sikhs. Wazir Khan now had fifteen thousand paid soldiers, ‡ both his own and those from the parganas, and five thousand Muslim zealotry. He was most proud of the Maler Kotla fighters, of whom Sher Mohammad and Khuaja Ali commanded the trenches on the right hand side. His ghazi zealots, who were out to earn martyrdom, commanded the left flank. Wazir Khan himself, in command of his specially

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\* The faithful Muslims who would stake their lives in a religious war, are called Ghazis.

† Rattan Singh Bhangoo: Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 83 and Mehman Parkash, p. 612.

‡ Khafi Khan, Vol. II, p. 653.

tried army, was in the centre.

The gun emplacements were given the foremost positions in the field. The guns which they used were not very powerfully destructive. But they could terrify the enemy by their loud report and their possession lent dignity to an army. Smaller or field guns and large-sized pistols were kept in readiness, on both sides of the big guns. They were backed by a long line of elephants standing like a thick-castle wall. Behind these were the rows of the soldiers, armed with arrows, rifles and spears. Some of these soldiers were spoiling for a hard fight while others who had been forced into the battle, were unwilling and afraid. Thus, there stood the aged Governor, Wazir Khan, supported by an army of twenty thousand men, to oppose and defeat the Sikhs.

The Sikhs, on the other hand, had made their own plans. Banda Singh made freely available to all the Sikhs whatever he had with him. He sent word to all the villagers, prompting them to come in their thousands to Sirhind to take their revenge for the cruellest assassination of the young children of their Guru. This call was made to the devotees and, also, to the marauders over a large area, and they turned up in answer to it. Banda Singh, now, had under him a force of men which could give battle to the Nawab, though it was numerically inferior. But Banda Singh was very short of weapons. The guns, the light guns, pistols and some other sophisticated weapons of the time they lacked. Very few sikhs possessed rifles. Even the horses were far short of their need.

Some of them had their bows and arrows and some a spear or a sword each. The rest had a stick or an axe each that he carried on his shoulder, for lack of anything better. They all came individually or in parties; all of them were in high spirits. They were lustily shouting their war cry of "Sat Sri Akaal." It was by no means a harmonious, trained and disciplined army. Those who were determined to do or die in the name of their holy religion, were not many. Some were regular marauders and pillagers, and some were paid soldiers of Ram Singh and others, sent there to fight for the community. Then there was the one-thousand strong force deputed by Sucha Nand

and Wazir Khan to act as a thousand snakes in the grass to bite the unsuspecting Sikhs.

Baba Banda Singh divided his men in three sections. A part of the Malwa Sikhs were placed under the command of Sardar Fateh Singh Bhaika who was supported by Karam Singh, Dharm Singh, Aali Singh and other sardars. The Majhail Sikhs formed the second section, and were commanded by Sardar Baj Singh, a Ball Jatt of Meerpur Patti, who was assisted by Binod Singh, Ram Singh and Sham Singh. Baba Banda Singh himself commanded the third section.

The Sikhs were fewer in numbers. They were without guns and had far fewer weapons and horses. But they possessed another, cardinal merit in plenty: that was their national zeal, which the enemy had not.

Sirhind and Wazir Khan were the two words that the Sikhs wanted to eradicate for ever from the memory of mankind. It was in Sirhind that the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, Princes Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, while still in childhood, were bricked alive in a wall, on December the 26th, 1704.\* And it was the same Wazir Khan whose hands were red with the blood of these young innocents. It was for this inhuman sin that the indignation of the Sikhs knew no parallel in intensity. In the face of the fury of this indignation no one could possibly protect Sirhind.

Banda Singh and his reserve force retired a little from the main army positions to a mound nearby, and ordered his two generals, Baj Singh and Fateh Singh, to advance and attack the enemy. When they came close to the positions of Wazir Khan, the latter ordered his gunners to fire. The big and the smaller guns were now hurling death on the Sikhs. Their thunder shook the earth under the fighters' feet and the heavens seemed to burst over their heads. The entire field was enveloped in smoke. Those who had gone there in order to rob and plunder, were the foremost to flee from the field at the very start of the attack. But the brave Sikh generals kept their courage

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\* Zorawar Singh was 7 years, 11 months and 8 days and Fateh Singh 5 years, 10 months and 10 days old, on the day of the tragedy.

up and continued advancing and shouting their war cry. The Sikhs had no guns whatsoever to return the fire of the enemy. And, of course, they had no mind to halt and he shot dead by the fire of the enemy from so close a distance.

They, accordingly, rushed at, and attacked, the enemy gunners swiftly. Their arrows pierced the chests of the gun-men and the remaining enemies were cut in twain with their swords. They were now face to face with the mighty wall of the huge elephants. But this wall could not stop the progress of the brave Sikhs for long. Two of the elephants were killed in no time and the rest of them ran away.

It was just at this critical juncture that the nephew of Sucha Nand played foul. He fled the field along with his one thousand soldiers, shouting to others: "Run away. Leave the field, while you just have time to do it." This treachery succeeded in leaving an opening in one wing of the Sikh front, which started retreating slowly.

Baj Singh passed this news to Baba Banda Singh at once. He now rushed into the battle line at the head of his reserves. He made his attack instantaneously. He now, shot one of the five arrows with which Guru Gobind Singh had blessed him.\* The Sikh army shouted their war cry of 'Sat Sri Akaal' with one voice, that seemed to rend the sky. Banda Singh would pull the string to his ear with full force and his arrows pierced the chest of ten soldiers at a time to come out dry on the other side on account of their speed.

The Sikh fighters were at once encouraged when they saw their general fighting by their side. This made Baba Banda Singh shout to them forcefully: "Khalsa, look ahead and you see the greatest criminal, the murderer of the children of our Guru, the sinful Wazir Khan, stand there. He is the dirty beast who had our Guru's innocent children bricked alive in a wall. It is he who had our mother Gujri, of sacred memory and holy soul, imprisoned and starved for several days, and had, thus, killed her. As long as we do not shed pools of his blood, our souls will not know any peace and rest. We shall deserve to be

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\* Gyani Gyan Singh: Shamsheer Khalsa, p. 13.

called the brave sons of the holy ruler of mankind, only when we have fleeced Wazir Khan and thrown his corpse to the dogs to feast upon. Only those nations have a right to preserve their existence, who quickly return a tit for a tat. Do destroy these sinners, therefore. Raze Sirhind to the ground. Look ! there goes the cursed Turk. Kill him. "He who calls upon God, he is blessed. True is God Almighty."\*

These slogans raised by the Sikhs, had shattered the courage of their enemies. Here was this new, freshened force that had joined them at fighting and then there was the sincere, though brief, speech of Banda Singh Bahadur that gave them high courage for a glorious cause. The Maleris were the first target of the quick attack of the Sikhs. It was no more a question of guns and rifles; for, the warriors had now taken to hand-to-hand fighting.

Corpses soon rose in heaps. The clanging of the swords and the din of the roars of the warriors: "Catch them ! Kill them !" were the only noises falling on their ears. The Maleris fought courageously. But the Sikhs' swords proved too much for them; for, they were bent upon destroying the enemy. Sher Mohammad Khan and Khuaja Ali both were killed.† Muslim corpses rose steadily in heaps. As the two chiefs fell, their soldiers ran away from the battle-field. The Sikhs had shattered completely the Maleris' front.

Next, the ghazis fared no better. These lovers of martyrdom and the worshippers of heaven were seen lying all over on the blood-drenched soil, silent in the sleep of death. Wazir Khan's was the only front that had held its own till now. The entire Sikh force was concentrated on that front, next. Baj Singh attacked it on one side and Fateh Singh on the other. The Muslim force was hedged in from all sides. Had Wazir Khan intended to melt away from the field, he would not have found it possible; for, the

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\* Boley so nihaal. Sat Sri Akal.

† Munshi Sohan Lal: Umda-ut-twarikh, Vol. 1, p. 77. The whole family of the Maleris was destroyed in the Sikh battles. Nahr Khan had lost his life in Chamkaur, Khizar Khan, Wali Mohammad Khan and Nusrat Khan in Ropar and both Sher Mohammad Khan and Khuaja Alee in the battle of Chaparchiri.

Sikhs were dead set on preventing his escape. Thus, finding no way out, he had to fight it out.

He attacked Baj Singh. He had despaired of life and now wanted to cut down some-body before he was himself put to the sword. But his wish was not fulfilled: a sharp arrow from the bow of a sikh pierced through his chest\* and he fell off the back of his horse. Sardars Baj Singh and Fateh Singh rushed towards him and captured him while still alive.

It was soon known among the Muslim fighters that the Governor had been killed. They lost heart at that and ran away in all directions, leaving the field. But whichever way they turned, they were met by the Sikh swordsmen who were out to destroy them. Banda Singh had taken care to surround them and to stop all points of escape. He had ordered that no enemy was to be permitted to leave alive. The result was that the Sikhs had despatched the whole of the enemy force to the next world.† Those few, who did manage to leave the field alive, could just sneak away with difficulty.‡

The Sikhs took into possession all the material of the enemy and they trampled upon the dead and cut down the still living foes. This well-known battle was fought on May the 22nd, 1710. Though it was fought a dozen miles distant from Sirhind, the victorious Sikhs took no rest and pursued the living enemies to the walls of Sirhind, slashing them as they overtook them.\*\* There was a small force of the enemy, stationed in the fort outside the city. They tried to oppose the Sikhs. But the Sikhs who had defeated and destroyed an army twenty-thousand strong, could not be checked or beaten back by such a small bond. Banda Singh took the fort in a single assault. And the victorious Sikhs, shouting their slogans, "Victory be to God" and "God Almighty is True" entered the town of Sirhind.

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\* Karam Singh: *Banda Bahadur*, p. 71. Latif, p. 274.

† *Ahiwal Sultan-i-Hind*, p. 85.

‡ *Khafi Khan: Vol. II*, p. 654.

\*\* *Gyani Cyan Singh: Shamsher Khalsa*, p. 14. Elliot : *History of India*, Vol. VII, p. 415.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Nemesis of Sirhind

Sirhind is an old town. It was attached to the pargana (district) of Samana at one time. But later, it was promoted to be an independent pargana during the reign of Feroze Shah Tughlak. As it was situated on the Grand Trunk Road, it continued to grow popular and populous. It was raised during the Mughal times to the status of a sarkar,\* that controlled Samana and twenty-seven other parganas. The Mughal Emperors of India used to make a stage for rest there while on their way to Kashmir, and this gave an added fillip to its prosperity every year. The Royal Palace, the Beauty Garden and the Tank and the terraces for leisurely walks heightened the beauty of the place. Great learned scholars, rich businessmen, jewellers and gold merchants had settled there.

It was, thus, known to be the richest centre between Delhi and Lahore. That attracted the pillagers of the surrounding villages as also of other areas from far and near. The bad characters who had deserted the Sikh army at the start of the battle, now again concentrated themselves at Sirhind when the news of the Sikh victory reached their ears. The whole of the town was at once in the grip of plunder and massacre. The Sikhs, of course, did have a bone to pick with the place and its rulers; yet the residents

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\* It was an equivalent of a division that controls five or more districts now in the Panjab.

of the surrounding villages had no less a grouse against their oppressors living in that town. It was a very common practice of the officers of Sirhind to rob the honour of the sisters and daughters of the ordinary families and to plunder their homes without any valid ground. All these people who had suffered such tyrannies, were now united with one another in a mob.

Banda Singh ordered a whole-sale massacre. Men and women who met the attackers, were put to death. Persons who had felt no remorse at the cruel decimation of the Guru's innocent children, deserved to receive no pity or consideration. The streets of the once rich town were turned into quagmires of blood and crushed flesh and bones, where headless corpses rolled on the street pavements. The Hindus saved their lives by exhibiting their hair-plaits on their heads and by praying to be spared in the name of the great Guru. Some Muslims also saved themselves by hiding in Hindu homes and promising never to commit oppression against anybody.\*

The plunderers from Sirhind itself and from its neighbouring villages caused much destruction. They settled old scores and set on fire the houses of those against whom they entertained grudges and on whom they wanted to avenge themselves. This town with a royal dignity had been reduced to utter ruins. Goods worth millions of rupees were despoiled. Some have-nots had now collected wealth enough to go ahead in life for generations to come. The occasion rewarded the Sikhs, too, very well, indeed. Banda Singh had found wealth worth two crores of rupees from the House of Wazir Khan alone. Moreover, the house of Diwan Sucha Nand, too, provided funds worth several lakhs.† The town was ransacked for three days on end. Then, at last, Banda Singh had the plundering stopped by order and by the beat of the drum the and secured peace for the town.

The yellow flag of the Sikhs was now flying at the spot where the two children, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh,

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\* Kamwar Khan, p. 150; Mohammad Kasim: p. 20; Irvine: Later Mughals: vol. I, p. 96.

† Kanwar Khan: p. 150



had been martyred inside the brick wall. The territory of Sirhind, it was proclaimed, now had the Khalsa Raj established in it and Sardar Baj Singh was appointed its Governor. A session of the Khalsa assembled in the fort and those accused of crimes were summoned there for trial. Wazir Khan had been captured during the battle of Chaparchiri. But his son had very smartly slipped from the battle-field. As soon as the news of the defeat of his father reached him, he fled to Delhi, along with other members of his family, leaving every thing else behind him. The Sikhs, therefore, were only half satisfied with their victory.

Sucha Nand, too, had done his best to run away from Sirhind. But, somehow, the destiny did not let him escape from there. The Sikhs had succeeded in capturing him, along with the other members of his family. There were some other Muslim and Hindu dignitaries also who were taken prisoners. All of them were held in ropes and brought before Banda Singh.

Wazir Khan was the first to be presented to Banda Singh who occupied the seat of judgement. He addressed Wazir Khan, saying:

“Look here, Wazir Khan, attend to me carefully and hear all that I say now. Did you not attack Anandpur without any ground? Did you not take false vows for having the fort there evacuated by the Guru? Did you not besiege forty hungry Sikhs in a house at Chamkaur with the help of your army, thousands-and-thousands men strong, and have them martyred? And, as for your last, but worst, cruelty: did you not have the five and the seven years young, innocent, children of the Guru smothered to death by having them bricked in the foundations of a wall? Did you have no fear of God's dread and did not qualms of conscience visit you then? Be prepared now to pay the price of your ghastly sins against God and men.”

Wazir Khan had no answer to these accusations.

His legs were tied with ropes, which were pulled by a pair of oxen and his body dragged behind them and, thus, paraded throughout the town. While the Governor was still breathing and writhing, he was thrown into flames. When he was still half burnt, his body was tied and hung

from a tree, face downward, where the crows and other birds made feast of it for some days.

Sucha Nand was called in, next. It was on his advice that the Guru's children were martyred in that cruel manner. He had a full share in other oppressions also, that had been perpetrated in Sirhind. He and the other members of his family were made to parade the streets of the town in a very disgraceful manner. They were compelled to beg for river-shells at the doors of the residents. His children and grand-children were, then, killed before his eyes, in order to make him realise what it meant to have one's children butchered like that. He, too, was killed cruelly, at last.

The remaining accused were also killed equally pitilessly. The Sikhs had acted on the maxim of eye for an eye, in a full measure.

## CHAPTER IX

### Lohgarh as Capital

Though Babar was the first Mughal king who had conquered Delhi and occupied its throne, it was Akbar who had established the Mughal rule on a broad and sound basis in the country. It was his policy to treat all his subjects equally justly and to respect all their religious creeds.

On the other hand, Aurangzeb acted in a manner altogether opposed to that of Akbar. He was partial in most of his actions. Every non-Muslim was beastly and sinful in his eyes. He had many a Hindu temple razed to the ground and a Muslim mosque built in its place.\* The followers of creeds other than Islam were heavily taxed. His oppression against the non-Muslims had gained dimensions that broke the back of its victims.

One result of this suppression was that the Mahrattas in the Deccan and the Sikhs in the Panjab had rebelled against the Muslim administration during the last phase of Aurangabad's reign. As the Mughal rulers tried to put them down, so did the uprisings of these two peoples gather further force. Aurangzeb breathed his last on March the 2nd, 1707, at Ahmadnagar in the Deccan. There were violent conflicts for succession among his sons. Bahadur Shah occupied the throne at last, by defeating and destroying his brothers. These family feuds had weakened the Mughal power a great deal. Bahadur Shah was compelled to spend some of the time of his early rule in the Deccan,

first in fighting against his brother, Kam Bakhsh, and, next, in suppressing the risings of the Rajput princes.

That was about the time when Baba Banda Singh had descended upon the Panjab, killed Wazir Khan and occupied Sirhind. Bahadur Shah was fighting the Rajputs in Ujjain at the time.\* Banda Singh proclaimed the Sikh rule in the Sirhind territory. The Sikhs then ruled over the twenty-eight parganas that were under Sirhind.† They had in their possession the area between the Jumna and the Sutlej rivers and Sonipat and Kiratpur towns, and the territory yielded a revenue of thirty-six lakhs of rupees yearly.‡

Banda Singh had appointed Sardar Baj Singh of Mirpur Patti, a Ball Jatt, as the Governor of Sirhind and Aali Singh as his deputy. He raised Sardar Fateh Singh of Bhaika to the status of a Governor and appointed him the Commander in Samana. Ram Singh, a brother of Baj Singh, was made the Executive Controller of Thanesar and Binod Singh his assistant. Baj Singh, Ram Singh, Koer Singh and Sham Singh were all the four brothers.\*\* Sham Singh worked under Baj Singh and Koer Singh was made a body-guard of Baba Banda Singh.

The Hindu revenue and accounts officer whom Aurangzeb had dismissed and replaced by Muslim personnel, were reinstated by Banda Singh, in place of the Muslims. Not a few Hindus and Muslims had become converts to Sikhism when they found the Sikhs becoming the rulers in this part of the country. A chief of the locality of Sirhind, Dindar Khan, became Dindar Singh when he had baptised himself a Sikh. Similarly, the news-writer of Sirhind, Nasir-ud-Din by name, was now re-named as Nasir Singh when he had accepted Sikhism.†† The local chiefs gladly accepted the Sikh rule and willingly paid cash tributes to their new rulers.

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† Latif, History of the Panjab, p. 275.

‡ Gokal Chand Narang, p. 170.

† Rattan Singh Bhangu, page 84.XX Rattan Singh Bhangu. P. 83.

\*\* Khalsa: the pure ones, the Sikh congregation.

†† Yaar Mohammad, Dastur-ul-Insha, P. 6; Rukat-i-Nawab Amin-ud-daula. Rukka (letter) the third.

Banda Singh set himself to improve the administration of the territory over which he ruled, when Bhai Bulaka Singh, the musician, came to him for the redress of his complaint. Bulaka Singh used to sing religious hymns while playing music on his two-stringed lyre. He had lived in the company of Bhai Aali Singh, also, for some time. One day he reached village Ghurani in the course of his tour. The Masands of the Ram Rai sect formed a goodly portion of its population. Bulaka Singh held a session of his religious hymns and music in the gurdwara of Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Sikh Guru, and, after reciting the canto of "Rahiras" he led the congregation in the ceremonial prayer. When he mentioned the name of Guru Gobind Singh and added, "Respected Khalsa, (let us) call on Wahiguru,"\* the Masands were furious with anger. They attacked him, broke his lyre and beat him pitilessly. They then poured insults on the Tenth Guru himself, shouting: "It is good that he is no more among the living. His children, too, are done for; but this: '(let us) call on Wahiguru,' is still very much active here."†

This report was too much for Banda Singh to tolerate. He ordered Sardar Aali Singh, the Deputy Commander of Sirhind, to lead a party of his soldiers. Aali Singh swooped upon Ghurani, near Chawa Pail. He threw the followers of Ram Rai out of the village and set up a Sikh police station in Pail. Bulaka Singh was appointed the local police officer. Aali Singh received the tribute moneys from the local chaudries and marched ahead from there.

He next attacked the pargana of Sunam and demanded from the Rangarh tribe of the place the payment of their tribute. These Rajput Rangarhs were a haughty people. They prepared to fight rather than pay the tribute. The Sikhs assaulted them. The Rangarhs were beaten off and the Sikhs plunderee the town.

He next turned to attack Mansoorpur. The town had not paid in the revenue, when a messenger had been sent there to ask for it. The result was that the town was looted. Since no resistance was offered, there was no killing resorted

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\*God Almighty.

† Ardass,

to there.\*

No harm had come to the town of Kaithal when Banda Singh had reached the Panjab. But it was a different matter now. The people of the Bloch tribe in Kaithal, were very swollen-headed. Aali Singh now made a surprise attack on them and robbed its residents who offered only a brief resistance. He made them promise obedience to the Sikhs for the future and returned to Sirhind. About the same time Baba Benda Singh marched upon Maler Kotla at the head of a small army. As the news reached the town, the sons of Sher Mohammad Khan fled their homes, along with their families. There was no one there now to give a fight. Its respectable chiefs met the attacking party outside the town and presented tribute to Banda Singh. Their leader was one, Kishan Das, a Bania by caste. He was the same man at whose house Baba Banda Singh had once stayed when still a Bairagi.

That was why Banda Singh had agreed to accept the request of his old acquaintance. These local chaudhries collected money from the residents of the town according to the capacity of each contributor to pay and made it over to the Sikhs.† That proved the saving of the town.

There was another reason, too, for the safety of this town from the Sikh attack. When Governor Wazir Khan had the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh under arrest in Sirhind, he had told Sher Mohammad Khan, the Chief of Maler Kotla: "The Guru has killed your brother. Wreak your revenge on him by slaying his son now."

Sher Mohammad Khan had not agreed with the Governor. On the contrary, he had advised him to set the children free, since they were innocent and helpless. When the Governor declined to follow this advice, Sher Mohammad Khan expressed strong disapproval of his cruel proposal and left the court in disgust. And, when the Guru heard about it, he blessed the Khan in his prayer to God.‡ This was

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\* Karam Singh : Banda Bahadur, p. 78.

† It was an amount of five thousand rupees and some horses, in addition. Gyani Gyan Singh: Shamsheer Khalsa, p. 15.

‡ Inayat Ali Khan: A Description of the Principal Kotla Afgans, p. 13-14.

another consideration that had weighed with the Sikhs in leaving the safety of Maler Kotla intact. They had favoured Maler Kotla and saved it from an avoidable destruction.

Banda Singh proceeded to Raikot from there. Its ruler brought the tribute due to the Sikhs and proceeded to meet Banda Singh. Humbly and willingly he accepted the Sikh dominance.

The Sikhs treated the Rai of Raikot with due regards, and moved on after receiving a tribute of five thousand rupees. They went to Gujjarwal, Phalleiwai, Jagraon and other places, from where they received tributes and then returned to Sirhind. The Sikhs now controlled an area yielding a revenue worth fifty-two lakhs of rupees.

Banda Singh was resolved to set up a regular Sikh administration then. Any such government had essentially to possess its own territory, its own capital and its own national flag, army, king, currency and stamps. The Sikhs already had their own yellow flag, that had been conferred upon them by Guru Gobind Singh. They had conquered their own country, the Panjab, from the Muslims and they had their own King, Banda Singh Bahadur.\* But they had still to procure the remaining emblems of a free and sovereign state.

Banda Singh had resolved to acquire and establish all these emblems. His immediate proposal was to choose Sirhind as the Capital of the Sikh Government that might be set up in the Panjab. That was why this town was not allowed to be destroyed by the hordes of the free-booters. But he was doubtful of its full suitability as an administrative, national, capital town: it was situated on the main road between Delhi and Lahore and was, thus, exposed to frequent attacks by the imperial forces. Moreover, the place was a flat and open plain, very susceptible to raiders.

It was for these reasons that he preferred Lohgarh to Sirhind for the seat of his government. Lohgarh had been formerly named Mukhlispur. The construction of the fort at this place was started during the reign of Saleem Shah, the son of Sher Shah Suri. He had named it as Pawa Garh; but it was left unfinished at the time. The built portion,

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\* Rattan Singh Bhanguo : Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 97.

too, later became ruins.

Afterwards, Emperor Shah Jahan ordered this place to be developed as his hunting ground. He had a special love for grand buildings as well as for hunting. One of his officers, Mukhlis Khan by name, built a fort and palaces there. The place was called Mukhlispur after his name. Emperor Shah Jahan would often go there on his hunting trips during the summer season.

The fort was situated at a distance of about six miles from Sadhaura in the foot-hills. The Sikhs renamed it as Lohgarh, after they had conquered it. The ruins of Lohgarh are now included in the area of the village, named Pammuwala. The original fort had been built on a high hillock, between two rivulets, formed by the division of one stream. These two rivulets are named as the Pammuwala and the Daskawala streams, after the names of the two villages by which they flow.

Banda Singh found the fort much dilapidated when he arrived there. He had it properly repaired and set it up as the capital of the Sikhs. All the material that the Sikhs acquired from the plunder of Sirhind and other places, was collected and stored in Lohgarh. And the tributes and revenues the Sikhs had received from other places, were, too, deposited there. The yellow flag of the Sikh nation waved at the fort and the slogans of its armies resounded there so as to rend the skies. Banda Singh used the royal palace as his residence and was known as the king of the Sikhs among the local people. His one effort was to exalt the ruling Sikhs to the dignity of the Mughal royalty. The Mughal kings commemorated their coronation by minting new coins on the occasion. Banda Singh, too, started his year, from the date of his conquest of Sirhind. He, also, had the Khalsa currency inscribed with the names of the Gurus, starting with the birth of Guru Nanak and with the following words engraved in Persian inscription:

"Sikkah zad bar har do alam tegh-i-Nanak walib ast,  
Fateh Gobind Singh Shah-i-Shahan Fazal-i-Sacha  
Sahib ast."

(Coin struck in the two worlds by the grace of the True Lord; victory to Gobind Singh, the King of Kings; the



sword of Nanak is the granter of desires )

And the reverse side had the following inscription:

“Zarb ba aman-ud-dahar masawwarat shahar zinat-ut-taklit-i-mubarik bakht.”

(Coined at the Model City, the Refuge of the World, the Ornament of the fortunate Throne.)

Banda Singh also had a royal stamp inscribed for his use. This was a little smaller in size than a paisa, a copper coin of the British time before 1947, and was used for making impressions on the orders of his government. Its inscription read as follows:

“Degh o Tegh o Fatch o Nusrat-i-bedirang Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.”

(The kettle (symbol of the means to feed the poor), the sword (symbol of power to protect the weak and the helpless), the victory and the unhesitating patronage have been obtained from Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.)\*

The Sikhs now possessed all the insignia of their rule as did the Mughals: the country, the throne, the capital place, the coin, the stamp, the flag, the army, the potentate and other symbols of royalty. The difference, however, consisted in the fact that, while the Mughal rulers exercised every governmental authority in their personal names, the Sikhs wielded every authority for power in the name of their holy Guru. Banda Singh considered and called him-self the slave of the Guru, though every-body else named him as the King.

Anyway, he was the first ruler of the Sikh nation. He built the structure of a secular state and government in the community and defended and headed it like a potentate, who combined the spirit, the work and the mission of a nation-builder with the self-denial of a saintly personage. His talent for fighting skilfully, tenaciously and, even, brilliantly, to a victorious consummation, had won him a name among the Sikhs and had made him a nightmare for their enemies.

He, thus, laid truly the foundation of a Sikh state in the country, upon which was confidently raised a

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh: Banda Singh Bahadur, pages 82-83.

superstructure later by his community, which culminated in the rule of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, the Lion of the Panjab. Banda Singh's life as the captain of the Sikh nation's ship, though short-lived, was, beyond a doubt as distinctive as it was distinguished.

## CHAPTER X

### Towards the Jamna

The Sikh Government in those days was no more than a military rule. Banda Singh had no time to set up a civil administration in the country under him. In spite of that, what he achieved for the Jatt farmers of the Panjab was something that no king in the whole of India had ever done. Land-lordism was the invariable practice in the country under the Mughals.\* These big landlords fleeced their tenants mercilessly and they paid their tribute to the king out of this money.

These landlords were the actual rulers inside their areas, and oppressed their tenants very much. Banda Singh did away with this system of land-lordism and made the tenants the owners of the lands that they cultivated. They were made to pay to his government the revenue directly, without the intermediary land-lords. The system of direct payment was continued by the Sikh misals† and, later, by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh throughout the Panjab. And it has been in use in the Panjab ever since. It is as a result of this system that every farmer here in the Panjab owns the land that he farms. This system turned some of the landlords bitterly against the Sikhs. But thousands of the

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\*Land-lordism had been specially strong here, as in the U.P. The moneyed owners of large areas in the villages forced their tenants to work for them. These landless tenants were helpless and totally at the mercy of the owners of lands.

† Alike or equal.

Jatt farmers were greatly obliged to them and had accepted Sikh baptism and turned its defenders.

It was at this time that Banda Singh had given the Sikhs a new war slogan, 'Fateh Darshan,' that is: 'Victory Visit.' But the old Sikhs from the time of Guru Gobind Singh, declined to approve of it. It was, accordingly, dropped during the life time of Baba Banda Singh.

The Sikhs considered themselves, then, the complete rulers of their part of the country and the guardians of the poor sections of the nation. If a low caste villager would join a Sikh party, he would offer himself for baptism as a Singh, and then he would come back to his own village and would be appointed an official there under the authority of Banda Singh. The old, respectable chaudharies of that village were compelled to dance attendance on him. No one had the power to disobey his orders.\*

The ascendancy of the Khalsa to this power, had prompted numerous Hindus, from far and near, to embrace Sikhism. Even some Muslims had preferred to be called Sikhs. Many Hindus had forcibly, even atrociously, been converted to Islam during the Mughal rule. They had not been willingly reconciled to their new religion. As soon as they felt a little safe from Muslim oppression, they threw Islam overboard and adopted the Sikh creed. Hinduism did not take any of the converts from it back at any cost, even though they had been forced to leave it at the point of the sword. But the doors of Guru Nanak's creed were always open to welcome anybody. Consequently, these persecuted citizens gladly found refuge under the protection of the liberator of the oppressed that Guru Nanak had been and turned Sikhs. That was why the number of the Sikhs had grown quickly.

This new movement to seek conversion to Sikhism, was not restricted to the territory between the rivers Jamna and Satlej. It had rather spread over a large area. In the village of Unarsa, in the pargana of Deoband beyond the Jamna, a majority of the residents became converts to Sikhism. The army officer of Jalalabad, Jalal Khan by name, felt bitterly annoyed on hearing this news. He

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\*Irvine : Later Mughals, Vol. I, pages 98-99.

arrested all these new Sikhs, whose leader was one Kapoor Singh. He had been sent there under orders of Banda Singh as their preacher and instructor. He wrote a full report of this occurrence to Banda Singh.

Banda Singh started with a military force from Lohgarh as soon as he had this news. The Sikhs crossed the Jamna at Rajghat and marched straight to Saharanpur, which was a divisional town of the Delhi province and controlled Deoband, Rampur, Nanauta, Thanna Bhavan and twenty-four other parganas.

After crossing the Jamna the Sikhs wrote to the Commander of Saharanpur, telling him either to yield or to face an attack. Commander Sayyad Ali Mohammad Khan of the place, was a weak-kneed and cowardly person. He started shivering in his shoes to hear of the ultimatum from the Sikh messenger. The rich people and the prominent persons of Saharanpur, did their best to urge him to give the Sikhs a fight and promised to render him all help and pressed him not to lose heart. But parrot-like he repeated that it was far wiser to desert the town while time allowed it, than to resist the enemy and get destroyed. He could not lose sight of the memory of the massacres of Sadhaura and Sirhind. He rejected the advice of his courtiers outright, packed all his valuables and ran at nightfall to Delhi, along with the members of his family.

When the Sikhs approached Saharanpur, a few daring persons who were well armed, came out to resist them. They were overthrown during the very first clash with the Sikhs. A hell was let loose on the people of the town now. Any one who tried to oppose the Sikhs, was destroyed. Only he who had laid down arms and submitted to attackers, was spared. The entire city was plundered and the homes of the government officers, were set on fire. It was a rich place and yielded an abundant harvest of property, cash and jewels to the invaders. The conquest of this town and desertion of it by its Commander, had brought into the possession of the Sikhs almost half the division.\* All the neighbouring area of Saharanpur was combed by marauders, and it became desolate in a few days' time.

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\* Mohammad Harisi : Ibrat Nama, page 41.

Beyhut, a village of the pirzadas,† was situated at a distance of seventeen miles from Saharanpur. They were very notorious for cow-killing and for tyrannising over the poor Hindus. They plundered the property of the Hindus and killed cows in the streets and the Hindu homes of the town disdainfully. The Sikhs swooped upon Beyhut as soon as they came to know of these atrocities. The pirzadas tried to oppose them. But that was of no avail at all. They were all put to the sword, except one of them who happened to have been away to Bulandshahr. He was the only survivor of the clan. After plundering and burning the mansions of the Pirzada families, the Sikhs returned to Saharanpur.

Banda Singh sent his messenger from there to Jalal Khan. He was told to set his Sikh prisoners free and to pay to the Panth\* the tribute in future. Else the Khalsa was going to attack him, he was told.

Jalal Khan was a Pathan of a sterling courage. He had already taken part in many a battle successfully and creditably. He had fought under the command of Aurangzeb in the Deccan. He had conquered and destroyed the town, Khera Manihar, of the Rajputs and had built on its ruins his present town that was called Jalalabad after his own name. He commanded a very powerful army of the Pathans of the Khaibar Pass and his town and fort were both strongly built.

He treated the Sikh messenger cruelly. He made him ride a donkey and paraded him along the streets of his town. And he beat him, at last, and sent him back to his master.

This provoking news made the Sikhs very indignant. They started for Jalalabad immediately. The town of Ambeyta fell in their way, though five miles aside. The majority of its population consisted of Pathan and Gujjar Muslims. The eminent Muslim saint, Sheikh Abb-ul-Muali, lived there. His followers, in all that area, used to make offerings to this pir. The town was thus, quite prosperous.

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† Decendants of the Muslim saints, generally rich, influential families.

\*The whole Sikh community.

The Sikhs directed their attention to this place first. Sheikh Abb-ul-Muali offered them no resistance. The Sikhs, therefore, took no life there: they pillaged the town and marched on.

It was the turn of Nanauta, next. Nanu Gujjar had founded this town ancient times, and had given his own name to it. In course of time the Gujjars were thrown out of the town by the Sayyads who now occupied it. Some Pathans and Sheikhs had also settled there later. Several residents of the Sayyad tribe had held high position in public life. A Sayyad of this town had been appointed the Commander of Saharanpur during the reign of Aurangzeb. He had some large mansions built in Nanauta.

When the Sikhs left Ambeyta and advanced further, a large number of the members of the Gujjar tribe from Rampur turned up to join the Sikhs. They declared that they were the followers of Guru Nank and that they came there to take part in that Sikh, religious war. By this strategem they were able to secure the advantage of making their own town and its surrounding area safe from pillage. Moreover, they also became partners in the plunder of Nanauta.

The Gujjars had some old accounts to settle with the Sayyads. The Sikhs entered Nanauta on July the 11th, 1710. The Sheikhzadas of the town were brave fighters and expert arrow-shots. They contested the Sikh on-slaughter over every inch of the ground in every one of the mansions in their part of the town. Three hundred Sheikhzadas lost their lives on that day during the courageous fighting in the court-yard of Sheikh Mohammad Afzal's house alone.

This sharp, bloody contest led to an utter destruction of the town. The royal mansions of the Sheikhs and of the Sayyads were destroyed. The whole town was left in ruins. It has been called Phuta Shahr or the town in ruins, since that day. After dealing with Nanauta like that, Banda Singh advanced toward Jalalabad, that was five miles distant from it.

Jalal Khan\* made full preparations to resist the Sikhs. He had collected a sufficient amount of food and war material in the fort. He had also called a large number of villagers to fight for him by the side of his regular army. The Sikhs approached Jalalabad straight from Nanauta. The ground between the two towns was overgrown with a big forest of *butea frondosa* trees.† As the Sikhs advanced half way, they saw the enemy forces waiting for them.

Jalal Khan had despatched his nephew, Hazbar Khan, and his brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohammad Khan, to go ahead and meet the Sikhs and drive them back. The Pathans had under them four hundred cavalry-men, one thousand foot-soldiers and four-to-five-thousand strong special militia from the villages, besides hordes of the Ghazis.

The Sikhs rushed at the enemies head-long. It was a very bloody battle. Hazbar Khan and numerous Ghazis were killed.‡ Jamal Khan and Pir Khan, the nephews of Jalal Khan, waited in the wings behind, commanding fresh forces for the aid of the fronts where help was required. They chose their chance now and attacked the Sikhs. The fighting raged for three days. Then Dindar Ali Khan, the son of Jalal Khan, rushed to the battle-field at the head of fresh and specially selected seven hundred men. But before he had joined the battle, Jamal Khan and Pir Khan had been killed. The Sikh army had now encircled the Muslim defenders. Dindar Khan rushed upon the Sikhs ferociously. There were many casualties on both the sides. Some-how, he forced his way to where the corpses of his brothers lay. And with the help of his men he got hold of the bodies

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\*Jalal Khan was the son of Mir Hazar Khan. He was a descendent of the Aurak Zai tribe of the Afghans, who had migrated to India during the time of Shah Jahan. He had been granted some villages as his estate. Jalal Khan succeeded Hazar Khan as the landlord of those villages. He had helped Aurangzeb, during the latter's war against Dara Shikoh. He was granted a liege of some more villages in the Pargana of Thanna Bhawan as a reward for his services. He had destroyed Khura Manihar and built a fort on its ruins and called it Jalalabad.

† It is called Keysoo, dhak or plaas here.

‡ Khafi Khan : Muntakhil-ul-Lahab, page 655.



of Jamal Khan, Pir Khan and other Sardars\* and wangled his way back through the Sikh encirclement. He then retreated to Jalalabad.†

The Sikhs besieged Jalalabad.

Jalalabad is situated on a high ground. A small stream, called the Krishna, flows by it. It was the rainy season now and the stream was in flood. The fort and the town had large sheets of water standing all around it. The siege was maintained for a full score of days. The Sikhs failed to take the fort. Nor did Jalal Khan have the guts to come out, drive the Sikhs away and put an end to the siege. The town was, thus, safe; but the countryside around it was devastated by the Sikhs.

At the same time Banda Singh had been receiving urgent calls from the Panjab. The Sikhs, therefore, raised the siege and re-crossed the Jamna. Jalal Khan breathed a sigh of relief and took a full vengeance upon the Sikhs of Unarsa, who were cruelly done to death, along with Kapoor Singh.

Once across the Jamna, the Sikhs headed straight for Karnal. Its Commander turned out to oppose the Sikhs. But he was defeated in the very first clash with them. The Sikhs held the town in their possession. No small or big enemy commander there showed the courage to challenge them. All the territory up to Panipat was captured by the Sikhs, and Sardar Ram Singh and Baba Binod Singh were put in charge of it.

The Sikhs roamed the territories of these parganas of the Delhi division. The Governor, Asaf Daula Asad Khan, was so afraid of the Sikhs as dare not leave Delhi and face them. He was, instead, repeatedly writing his reports to the Emperor.‡ The very word, Sikh, had

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\* Their tombs, brick-built, stand near the shrine of Kaley Shah, on the Saharanpur-Delli Road.

† Jalal Khan wrote a report of all this fighting to the Emperor that was received in Delhi on July 1, 1710.

‡ According to the instruction of this Governor, there were others, too, who had been reporting to the Emperor. The prominent figures among these were: Diwan Taj Din, Diwan Hafiz Khan, Police Inspector Hassan Khan, Bakhshi Fakhr-ud-Din, the Reporter, Reporter Mohammed Tahir, Qazi Darwesh Mohammad and some others: Tarikh Mohammad Shahi.

became a bugbear all over this part of the country. Many a family of Delhi had been leaving the capital and fleeing to other provinces. When the Governor of Delhi itself was afraid of facing the Sikhs, the common people felt, of course, utterly helpless. From Panipat to Lahore and from there to the hills of Pathankot, the country was in possession of the Sikhs. The Sikh hordes were active on one side of Panipat; and, on its opposite side, there was Bazid Khan Qasoori, who commanded a Pathan army; but, instead of fighting and driving the Sikhs away, he had both his eyes fixed Delhiward, in order to seek refuge there when necessary.

The new Sikh Commanders, Ram Singh and Binod Singh, settled at the inn of Tirauri, now their headquarters. The rest of the Sikh forces returned to the Panjab.

The Governor of Delhi, too, felt some relief now. He dismissed, Mahammad Ali Khan, the Governor of Saharanpur, and replaced him by Jalal Khan. He awarded Jalal Khan a robe of honour, along with this new appointment, on August 21, 1710. His son, Dindar Ali Khan, was also promoted to a higher rank in the army.

## CHAPTER XI

### Revolution in the Majha

Most of the baptised Sikhs were the residents of the Malwa, the Doaba and the Majha during the life-time of Guru Gobind Singh. When Baba Banda Singh appeared in the Panjab, many Sikhs joined him in the fulfilment of his mission. And when he had conquered Sirhind and a large area besides, the non-Sikhs of the rest of the territory, were encouraged to accept Sikhism. Besides, the Sikhs of the Majha had also started their plans and preparations for establishing a Sikh government there.

There was no locality in the country the residents of which were not sick of the oppression practised by the Muslim rulers. As the Mughal hold on the people slackened, so did the tyrannies practised by the local rulers on the people, intensify. To rob the property of a family, to expel a man from his native village, to take the life of another man or to dishonour the women-folk of others, was considered to be the birth right of these petty rulers.

This was the reason why the commons were eager to get rid of their oppressive rulers. The phenomenal success of the Sikh struggle in the province of Sirhind, had inspired them, throughout the Panjab, to wage and win a war of liberation. No more did they fear the Mughal imperialism. Rather they considered themselves to be the sole masters of their mother-land now. The fond aspiration of their Tenth Guru, that he was to turn the poor peasants of the Panjab into princes, was constantly ringing in their ears.

The Sikh population of the entire Majha stopped payment of revenue to their rulers. But this was by no means all. Where two Sikhs met even for ten minutes, they felt as if they were the masters in their own land, that their Guru had granted them self-government and that the foreigners had no right to rule over them. Where a Sikh met another Sikh, he would accost him with the greeting: "The Khalsa (the Sikhs) belong to God Almighty. Victory be to our Father God."\* It appeared to them as if the whole mankind had been converted to Sikhism and all owed allegiance to the Sikh flag. They were, at last, strongly determined in every home and every village, to make a united attempt to conquer the entire country. To govern it was the birth-right of the Sikhs. "Why should the foreigners hold it in subjection?" they argued.

This view at once took roots in the Majha and bands of Sikhs assembled every-where. All the Sikhs were invited by the beat of drums and the waving of flags, to assemble in Amritsar. Eight thousands of them had crowded in that holy Sikh centre of their Guru, Ram Dass, within a few days.† They discussed their plans and the way in which they were to advance. It was not safe to move towards Lahore where the Governor and the imperial army were too strong for them to tackle. Qasoor, too, was well defended by Kheshgi Pathans, who possessed well trained armies and well-defended forts.

They agreed that the easiest area to plunder was the Riarki. Their minds thus made up, they paid their homage at their temple, later known as the Golden Temple, said their prayers to their Guru and God and marched on the way to the Riarki, in Gurdaspur district.

They compelled the chaudhries of every village that they approached, to pay them the tribute money and made them promise loyalty to the Sikh rule, and then moved further ahead. Any village where the chaudhries were not tractable and yielding, was pillaged by them. The government police and revenue officers were dismissed by them

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\* Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh.

† Dr. Ganda Singh : Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 100. Ganesh Das: Chahar Gulshan-i-Panjab, p. 189.

and replaced by Sikhs. It did not take them many days to plunder all that area.

The Sikh hordes approached Batala next. It was a prosperous, commercial town. Very rich tradesmen, who had dealings with Kashmir and Kabul, lived there. It was well-known for its riches all over the country. The commander of the town advanced to fight the Sikhs who quickly swooped upon him like hungry tigers. The Sikhs swept the enemy away as do the high, flood waters of a river. Any one who opposed them, was at once done for with the sword. The defenders had taken fright and had stampeded. Shouting their war slogans, the Sikhs entered the town, thoroughly ransacked it and gathered a rich booty from there.

Kalanaur was their next target. It is the town where Emperor Akbar was crowned. The story of Batala was repeated here, too. The Sikhs plundered it and proceeded ahead. This legion reached Kahnuwan, next. The Sikh party from Sathiala and Butala marchad as far as Pathankot and over-ran the whole of the pargana (district.)\*

The major part of the attacking force, however, turned in the direction of Lahore. This Sikh army plundered all the towns and parganas and, they passed through punishing the oppressors of the poor everywhere. It reached the very outskirts of Lahore and rested in its Shalamar Gardens. They had replaced all the government functionaries by the Sikhs in the territory between Lahore and Pathaakot. These now controlled all the police stations in the area. Sikh parties would go up to the city wall of Lahore from their Shalamar camp.

The Governor of Lahore was terribly afraid of leaving his fort. This Governor, Aslam Khan, came of the Maulvizadas of Kabul and he had been appointed the Governor in Lahore by Prince Muazaz-ud-Din, the son of Emperor Bahadur Shah. He was so afraid of the Sikhs that he had no heart to leave the fort and give them a fight. There was, hower, one duty that he performed daily : with a heart sinking with fear, he prayed to God without fail that He might be pleased to keep the terrible Sikhs at

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\* Mohammad Qasim: Ibrat Nama, P. 22.

a distance from him !

The Governor, thus, refused to stir out of the town for fear of the Sikhs. On the other hand, the chaudhris and the maulvis of the country-side worried him with their daily complaints and requests, asking the government to protect them from the rising tide of the marauders. These chaudharies of the villages, who had suppressed and oppressed the people largely, were made to pay back through their noses for their crimes against the populace. The common man who had a grouse against any one, now took his revenge against him to his heart's content. This political upheaval saw many persons punished to death. All they had owned was destroyed and they had to run to Lahore for their lives.

The Muslim priests or maulvis possessed a deadly weapon, jihad, or the holy war. They raised their "religion-in-danger" call. The maulvis who had migrated to Lahore from the villages, highly exaggerated their stories. This terrified the government officers still further. Lahore was full of these maulvis, who instigated a large number of Muslims to embark on a jihad.

The Haidri flag\* was raised in Lahore, in the Id Gah, † outside the Delhi Gate. ‡ Speeches for a jihad were made in all the streets and at street-corners. Crowds of the people of Lahore and its surrounding villages started assembling under the flag at the Id Gah. The promises for sending to Heaven those who became martyrs in the holy war, were freely made by the priests. Governor Aslam Khan was, however, called all sorts of bad names for his slackness.

The numbers of these Ghazis swelled rapidly to some thousands. The fanatical enthusiasm of many of them had gone to the length of their disposing of their homes and other property, and of binding on their wrists the proverbial martyrdom threads. These enthusiasts set themselves up as the leaders of the Ghazi parties. They had donated all that they possessed for financing this holy war. Two of these Ghazi leaders, Mohammad Taqi, a relative of Shah

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\* Muslim flag, named after Hazrat Ali.

† The Muslim prayer ground.

‡ It is the site of the present railway station.

Abdulla, and Moosa Beg, the son of Khuda Vardi Beg Agharkhani, were quite prominent at the time. The Muslim and some Hindu richmen of the town, too, made their contributions to the Ghazi funds in a big way. The top-most contributor among them was the grandson of Todar Mal and the son of Pahar Mall.

Some aged persons also tied the martyrdom thread on their wrists and joined the Ghazi hordes. Respectable persons among them, like Haji\* Sayyad Ismaeel, Haji Yar Beg, Shah Enaiyat and Mulla Pir Mohammad Waiz, became the Ghazi leaders.

The Governor, too, found himself in good heart now. He made a move, at last, to wash out his old disgrace and appointed Mir Ata-ulla Khan Purbia and Muhibb Khan Kharal, the landlord of Faridabad, commanders of five hundred cavalry-men and one thousand foot-soldiers of the royal army, to reinforce the Ghazi hordes.

This army had its own distinctive dignity. There stood the two royal commanders, Ata-ulla Khan and Muhibb Khan, at the head of the royal army, on one side. And, on the other, there were thousands of the Ghazis, with many-coloured, martyrdom strings decorating their wrists, the palms of their hands browned with the water of the myrtle leaves, dressed in green clothes and holding green, Muslim flags in their hands waving above their heads. It was in this splendour that this jihad army left Lahore under their Haidri flag.

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\* Haji: A Muslim who has been on pilgrimage to Mecca in Arabia, from a foreign country.

## CHAPTER XII

### Fighting the Fanatics

The Sikhs were well in control of the territory they held now. They divided their active, fighting force into four regiments. Their first regiment was stationed at Amritsar and was meant for the Majha, that is, Amritsar and Lahore districts. The second unit was in charge of the region of Riarki in order to maintain order up to the foot-hills. The third one was meant for the area near Lahore. And the fourth one was the mobile division, meant to attend to the requirements of any of the other divisions, that arose from time to time.

The Lahore regiment had been stationed in the fortress of Mehta Bhagwant Rai, in the village, called Bharat, by the bank of the River Ravi. Bhagwant Rai was a resident of Bharat and the Qanugo\* of the pargana of Neyshta Bharli. He had built a burnt-brick mansion in his village of Bharat. The people called it the fort of Bhagwant Rai. It was situated within the pargana of Neyshta Bharli. The Ghazis marched straight to village Bharat, carrying their Haidri flag aloft. The Sikhs had the news of it and had improved the fortification of the mansion. They also collected as much ammunition and food stores there as they were able to procure for the occasion.

The Ghazis soon reached there, marching fast in their religious ardour. They besieged the fortress. The Sikhs

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\* Qanugo was a senior revenue officer.



were ready to receive them, sitting behind the walls of their towers and defences. When the Ghazis were within the range of the Sikh firing, the latter rained on them showers of arrows and bullets. The foremost rows were killed and those Ghazis who had stood behind them, now advanced to the attack. And both the sides were then shooting fast and hard.

The Sikhs were inside the fortress and protected by its parapets against the bullets and arrows of the enemy. But everyone of their shots went home, to the cost of the attackers. In a short time there were heaps of the dead seen among the Ghazis outside the fort. As they fell, fresh recruits for the glory of Islam stepped forward blindly to attack the Sikhs in the fort. Their leaders yelled their war slogan, 'Hail My Ali,'\* in order to egg them on to the attack repeatedly.

All through the day they continued to attack the Sikhs and to try to break through the gate of the mansion. And the whole of the day the Sikhs were laying them low with their unflinching shots. There was seen by the evening another wall of the dead outside the brick walls of the mansion. Every Sikh had killed several Ghazis; there were hordes of others of them still, who could be seen jostling about around the walls.

It was already night-fall. Yet the fighting had not stopped. The Sikhs desired the fighting to end for the night; for, they were tired and needed rest badly. But the enemy outside the fort had no mind to give them any time for it. The Ghazis who had fought the Sikhs during the day, were relieved by their fresh comrades in order to have rest behind the fighting lines, and these, in their turn, continued the attack through the night. The Sikhs, all told, were hardly enough to man their defences. They had their bit of a dinner while protecting their positions at the parapets.

Three-fourths of the night had passed and yet fighting had not ceased. The Sikhs were much worried about their safety, indeed. But what could they do? The enemies

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\*A call on the name of Ali who was the son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad.

were sure to press their attacks with redoubled, even four-fold, strength at day-break. They had been fighting all night, without a wink of sleep. It was obvious that the next day was to witness a still bigger holocaust, without respite or recession.

Accordingly, after a serious consultation it was resolved that the Sikhs were to attack the Muslims at a weak point, make a breach there, and escape into the open country under cover of the night. The Sikhs threw open the gate of the mansion immediately and attacked a weak point of a wing. The result was that those of the enemies alone were spared, who had made way for them to pass. It was a smart piece of attack, the Sikhs killed a large number of besiegers and then hurriedly disappeared into darkness outside.

This unexpected happening surprised and confused the Ghazi hordes. The resulting chaos led several of them to strike and kill one another in the dark. But when they found the mansion emptied of the enemies, their delight knew no bounds. The Sikhs had escaped, no doubt; but the Ghazis gave a hell to the residents of the village. The Hindu homes were plundered for the reason that they were said to have co-operated with the Sikhs and some Muslim families were harassed, on the other hand, for the reason that they were merely luckewarm in aiding the Ghazis.

The Ghazis started on their way back to Lahore in the morning. They were jubilant at their victory as if they had destroyed the Sikhs root-and-branch from the face of this earth. They cruelly treated the Hindus of the villages that fell in their way on their return.

Once again they had planted their Haidri flag at the gate of the Id Gah. These Ghazis who were intoxicated with their victory over the Sikhs, treated other Muslims tauntingly. When they met a Muslim, they considered him as cowardly and apostate, since he had taken no part in their jihad. And, if it was a Hindu they approached, he was a non-believer or kafir. They could have given some regard to a cowardly, faithful Muslim; but a Hindu whom, according to them, God had made a non-believer by birth, was possibly given no humane consideration. The result of this hateful tirade was that whoever was even remotely

suspected of being a Sikh or a friend of a Sikh, was maltreated.\*\* This oppression was extended even to the government officers, many of whom were insulted by these Ghazis.

In a few days after that, the Sikhs once again assembled at Kotla Begum, near Chamriari village. There was a small, mud-work fortress there which the Sikhs occupied. When the news reached Lahore, the Haidri flag was once again raised. The call for jihad was made and the Ghazis left their homes and reached the Id Gah in crowds. They were more numerous this time than before. The bad characters of the town, too, joined them.

They left the town and set out for Chamriari directly. The Ghazis who sought merit through waging a holy war, committed untold crimes against the common people. They plundered all the villages they passed through. If some people protested against this tyranny, their village was reduced to ashes. Numberless, innocent women, too, were outraged.†

Even the leaders of the Ghazis were shocked at these outrages. They punished some of the bad characters among the Ghazis at Bhilowal and two or three of them were given the death penalty, too.‡ Even then, the infuriated Ghazis did not mend their beastly behaviour. They continued to mal-treat the peasantry all their way till they came upon the Sikhs at Kotla.

When the watchman on the near tree, known as the tangoo,\* brought the news of the enemy, the Sikhs prepared themselves for the fight. They were from five to seven hundred in number. Both the armies started shooting arrows and bullets at each other when they were within range of each other. This was their first encounter. Sayyad Enaiyat, Mohammad Taqi and Mohammad Zaman Rangarih came forward to lead the attacks. Bows and rifles were discarded in many cases, giving place to hand-to-hand fightings. The earth grew red with blood. The sky was

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\*\* Mohammad Qasim: Ibrat Nama, p. 23.

† Karam Singh: Banda Bahadur, p. 105.

‡ Mohd. Qasim, Ibrat Nama, p. 23.

\* Tangoo meant the man who was made to sit on top of a tree to keep watch.

overcast with clouds that day; but the lightning flashed in the hands of the Sikhs. Whichever way the Sikhs rushed, the Ghazis ran ahead of one another, instead of coming to grips with them. The shining, naked swords in the hands of the Sikhs made the enemies tremble with fear.

The Ghazis were many times the number of the Sikhs. Fresh reinforcements more than made up for the loss of those killed or wounded in the cause of Islam. This bloody battle continued till the afternoon. Both the sides had been fighting equally well till then. After that, however, the Pathan cavalry began to give in because of the rising losses inflicted by the Sikhs on them. They retreated, turned back and fled the battle-ground in all directions.

That was the end. The Ghazis turned tail and left the field.\* It was surprising to see them so disheartened as to throw up their swords. They ran in confusion, empty-handed, not caring for the direction they took. The Sikhs ran in pursuit of them and spared no-body they could lay their hands on. If one Ghazi received a sword thrust, a couple of them more would fall on the ground in panic. To add fuel to the fire, at about sunset a dust storm and then a deluge of rain overtook them.

The Ghazis had left the battle-field. The Sikhs, therefore, prudently took into their possession the material left behind by the fleeing Ghazis rather than pursue them further in that most inclement weather. They cared for their wounded men and collected the booty and retired behind their defences to spend the night there. How the Ghazis fared after this, is hard to tell.

This battle was fought when Baba Banda Singh was fighting against Jalal Khan across the Jamna.

The routed Ghazis recovered their poise the following morning. But they felt much out of sorts and depressed. They thanked God that the Sikhs had not pursued them. Yet, they knew not that the Sikhs were on the look out to snatch their opportunity again, and lurked furtively behind them.

The Ghazis halted for the next night at Bhilowal.

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh : Banda Singh Bahadur, pages 107-108  
 Mohammad Qasim : Ibrat Nama, pages 23-24.

Muhibb Khan and Mir Ata-Ulla had rested their royal forces in the local fort; and the Ghazis and others who had spent the previous night in great discomfort and fear, now went to sleep in the open in a carefree manner. They were confident that they were out of the reach of the enemy.

But the Sikhs were not at all satisfied with their performance of the previous day. They were determined to deal the Ghazis another blow, such as would make the Sikhs a night-mare for the Muslims.

It was about mid-night when the Sikhs suddenly assaulted the sleeping Ghazis. They were surprised in their sleep and found no time to run away. The Sikh swords cut each enemy into two. The entire camp was now up, howling and screaming. Hundreds of the Ghazis were done to death. Murtaza Khan and the grandson of Todar Mall were cut to pieces in the confusion, along with many other noted people. Nothing could be done to challenge and fight the Sikhs in the circumstances. Hence, Ata-Ulla and Mohammad Taqi shouted their order to the Ghazis from the house-tops where they stood, telling them to run and seek refuge inside the village.

Not a single man who was caught napping by the Sikhs outside the village, was able to dodge death. The Sikhs captured horses and plunder worth thousands of rupees and slipped from Bhilowal before dawn. The Ghazis who had survived this onslaught, left the place, sighing and in tears, and hurried back to Lahore. Once again, the Sikhs dogged them there and plundered the out-lying colonies of Lahore. The city proper, in the centre, was alone safe.

Some people again proposed raising the Haidri flag. But, this time, no one came to patronise it.\* The Sikhs now controlled the whole of the country from the city wall of Lahore to Pathankot, between the Rivers Ravi and Beas.

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh: Banda Singh Bahadur, page 110.

## CHAPTER XIII

### In Jullundur Doaba

The precedent of the risings by the Malwa and the Majha Sikhs had encouraged the Sikhs of the Doaba\* also to rebel against their Government. Moreover, a force of the Sikhs from Banda Singh's bands had turned up to assist them. They formed an army of a decent size when the local Sikhs had joined up with them.

Their first victim was the town of Rahon. Enaiyat Khan, the land-lord of the place, was the chief citizen there. He was a notorious robber whose reign of terror had made even the Commissioner of that district helpless. The Sikhs attacked him and dispossessed him of the gains of his crimes. The local government army depot was replaced now by the Sikh soldiers under a Sikh commander. The chaudhris and other land-lords of the neighbourhood were then made to take their orders from their new, Sikh officer.

The Faujdar (military officer) of the division of Jullundur lived at Sultanpur. He belonged to the Khalf Zai tribe of the Pathans of Qasoor. Sultan Ahmad Khan, an ancestor of this family, had been a very well-known person among the servants of prince Mohammad Azam Shah. He had four sons: Hussian Khan, Bazid Khan, Pir Khan and Ali Khan. Ali Khan was a homely sort. He had no out-standing achievement to his credit. Hussian Khan did

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\* The area between the rivers Satlej and Beas.

not seek to serve any prince. He later occupied a large area of the Majha, after Banda Singh's time and during the weak governorship of Abdual Samad Khan, and was, at last, killed in the battle of Chulnian, on April 4, 1721.

Bazid Khan was a very smart man. When Bahadur Shah came to the Panjab to fight against his own brother, Bazid Khan accompanied him and fought for him. And when Bahadur Shah ascended the throne, he conferred on him the title of Qutab-ud-Din Khan and appointed him the Commissioner of the Jammu Division. When Bazid Khan returned to the Panjab from Delhi, he learnt at Pantipat that the Sikhs had occupied the country to the North.

He settled in Panipat itself and dared not proceed further into the Sikh controlled region. But he wrote to the Governor of Delhi that he was blocking the imperial road against the Sikhs, who might have otherwise raided Delhi. When Bahadur Shah marched from Delhi northward, he accompanied him from Pantipat. He set himself up as the Governor of Jammu, after the Sikhs had been defeated at Lohgarh.

Pir Khan, the fourth brother, had served Bahadur Shah in a big way. Bahadur Shah bestowed upon his son, Noor Khan, the title of Shamas Khan and the governorship of Jullundur in return for the services of Pir Khan.

After the Sikhs took possession of Rahon, they sent two of their men to Sultanpur in order to ask the Governor to submit to their suzerainty or be prepared for a fight. The Governor Shamas Khan was an intelligent and statesman-like officer. When he read the terms of the ultimatum, he felt much concerned and care-worn. The Sikhs had written to him: "Set free the Hindu and Sikh prisoners. Return to their original owners the lands that have been confiscated by the government. Give us all your arms and ammunition and make yourself over to the Sikh Panth, along with all the treasure that you possess."

A man who faces a sudden danger is capable of devising a far more effective strategy than a carefree person, who is comfortably placed. He welcomed the two Sikh messengers and gave them full consideration and told them that he was an obedient servant of the Panth.

He called a separate meeting of the rich persons, his

officers and other influential persons of the town and consulted them as to how he was to deal with the Sikhs. They all assured him, on oath, of their loyalty to him. It was resolved to give the Sikhs a good fight. But they agreed that they must gain time to make effective preparation for it. He told the Sikh emissaries that he agreed to meet all their demands, that he possessed large quantities of war material and that he was ready to send some of it immediately with them. And he promised personally to take the rest of it in carts, along with the tribute money; but to arrange all this he needed time.

Shamas Khan, accordingly, got a few cart-loads of the war material ready and sent them with the Sikh messengers to Rahon. When they reached there, the Sikh force assembled there was overjoyed to have the report of the response of Shamas Khan to their ultimatum. They felt assured that when the commissioner himself had yielded to them, no one else could defy them.

On the other side, Shamas Khan gained the time that he was in need of. He despatched the maulvis to the villages of the Doaba, who, on their appeal for jihad or holy war, assembled a large number of the Ghazis. The local chaudhries then led to Sultanpur crowds of these fighters for Islam whom they had prompted to join their war, with the beat of drums in all the villages. Oil-men, cobblers and weavers and other poor, Muslim workers, too, came willingly; the weavers were the foremost in the ranks of the warriors who were spoiling for the coming clash with the infidels. The jihad was the latest love of these weavers who would fall down when entangled in their slender threads, but who were now enthusiastic about their sport of hunting the tigers.

There assembled hordes of the Ghazis within and outside Sultanpur. The chaudhris and the maulvis of the territory were also with them. The traders and the shop-keepers of Sultanpur had donated their money liberally to the Ghazis for the cause of this holy war.

Shamas Khan then advanced from Sultanpur at the head of five thousand horse-men, thirty thousand foot soldiers and over a hundred thousand Ghazis.\* The Sikhs had sent news

\* Khafi Khan: Muntakhib-ul-Labab, Vol. II. p. 668.



of it to Baba Banda Singh at Jalalabad and prepared themselves to face the enemy. A part of their force stayed in the Rahon fort; but their other comrades advanced out of the town and took their positions in a deserted brick kiln. They raised the side walls of the kiln further by placing on them sacks filled with over-burnt bricks and earth and used them as the ramparts of a fort.

When the enemy came within range of the Sikhs, volleys of bullets were fired into them. The front rows of the Ghazis licked the earth. And as the second volley was fired, Shamas Khan ordered a frontal attack. The weavers formed the front ranks of the Ghazis; but they had never handled a sword. They did not know how to carry the weapons like the sword, the bow and the arrows supplied to them by their commanders.

When the order to attack was given to the Ghazis, all of them rushed towards the Sikhs rashly. Some of them fell on the ground, entangled in their own loose, unmartial dresses and some others were cut down by the Sikh swords before they had time to unsheath their own swords. This utter blood-shed by Sikh swords continued for two or three hours, drenching the soil of the battle-field with red blood. The clanging swords reminded one of the noisy scene in a street of braziers. "Catch him, kill him, oh water, Allah-hoo-Akbar, † Sat Sri Akaal ‡ were the only sounds that rent the air. Nothing else could be heard there. The Sikhs were tired of killing the enemy, who appeared to be endless in numbers. The only way out of the impasse for them was to fight a rear guard action and retreat into the fort of Rahon.\*

Shamas Khan besieged the fort. The battle raged between the Sikhs within the fort and the Ghazis outside it. It was October the 11th, 1710. †† The Sikhs saw no advantage in holding the fort against the over-whelming enemy. They, therefore, slipped out of the fort about

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† The Muslim war slogan.

‡ The Sikh war slogan.

\* The building of the Government Higher Secondary School stands there now.

†† The emperor had received the report of this battle from Shamas Khan on October the 25th, 1710

midnight, breaking safely through a weak point in the enemy encirclement.

Shamas Khan, too, thanked his stars for this easy riddance. He did not pursue the Sikhs, therefore. He re-appointed his officers in Rahon and marched back to Sultanpur. The Ghazis who had survived the battle, returned to their respective homes, thanking God for an escape from the harm's way.

But the Sikhs had not gone for. They were hiding themselves in the bush-fields of the neighbourhood. When Shamas Khan had left Rahon, the Sikhs came out of their hiding places. By the time he was back in Sultanpur, a thousand Sikhs attacked the Rahon fort, threw out its guard and retook its possession. But Shamas Khan had no more courage to occupy Rahon again.

The Sikhs made their foot-hold in Rahon secure. They then marched towards Jullunder. The Pathans of the town fled their homes as soon as they heard of the approaching Sikhs. Thus, the Sikhs occupied the town without firing a shot. Since they had met with no resistance there, the town was not pillaged and no one was killed. The prominent citizens collected the tribute money voluntarily and paid it to the Sikhs, who occupied all the territory around it without much ado.

The Sikhs wrote their challenge to Hoshiarpur, next. The district officer of the place settled the matter peacefully, agreed to take his orders from the Sikhs and paid in the tribute. Thereafter tributes were realised from Phagwara and other districts, too. Shamas Khan controlled Sultanpur at the time, while the rest of the Doab was under the Sikhs. They raided Sultanpur and skirmished with him frequently. The author of "the Muasir-ul-Umra" has written that twenty two small and big actions had been fought by the Sikhs against Shamas Khan.

The Sikhs entertained feelings of enmity towards Bilaspur, only a little less in intensity than what they had felt against Sirhind. Raja Bhim Chand of Kahiloor was the first man to fight a battle against Guru Gobind Singh. He was the real originator of the feuds that followed. And he was the man who had invited the imperial generals to fight in his aid. He had instigated the other Hindu hill

chiefs to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Mughal imperial army during the sieges of Anandpur against the Sikh Panth. Obviously, the Sikhs could but ill afford to let these hill states be alone. They had captured the Doaba and the Malwa and were determined to punish the hill rulers for having played the devil with the Guru and his Sikhs.

The Chief of Bilaspur, therefore, was the first to receive their ultimatum. Their reason for this choice was that he was the leader and the most powerful the hill chiefs. The Sikhs had made it a rule that before they would attack an enemy, they would give him a written ultimatum in advance, saying: "Obey or fight us." He who agreed for a settlement, was not harmed in any way. But any one who went in for a clash of arms, was invariably given hell.

The Raja of Bilaspur was a little stunned to have this challenge from the Sikhs and tried to think out what to do about it. He invited the other hill princess and land-lords of the neighbour-hood and consulted them.\* All of them decided to fight the Sikhs. The fort of Bilaspur was repaired and renovated. The articles of food and ammunition were stored there to meet the requirements of a siege. Altogether, one thousand and three hundred Miaans (Rajput leaders and warriors,) assembled there to have a taste of the sharp sword-blades of the Sikhs. The princes had stationed seven frantic elephants, drunk with wine, in front of the gate of the fort to protect it against the enemies. On the other side, a Sikh force, commanded by Sardars Baghar Singh, Kehar Singh, Ranjeet Singh, Ranjor Singh, Bajjar Singh† and other generals advanced to attack the fort. From a distance they fired warning volleys from their rifles twice, and then they rushed at the gate of the fort. The seven elephants that blocked the gate, were killed and the Sikhs broke into the fort.

The Rajputs put up a stiff resistance for a while, but soon the Sikh swords started making a clean sweep of them.

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\* The princes of Darol, Majheloo, Nangloo, Nandey, /Sohal, Jhandwal, Kaneyt, Dicchann Chilahaley, Ballarh, Pammeyn and Dadhwal had answered his call. Rattan Singh Bhangoo : Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 95.

† Rattan Singh Bhangoo, p. 96.

The Sikh wrath rose as they recalled the false and treacherous oaths, once before, taken by these Rajput hill-princes. The swords of the Sikhs made quick work of them and not a single one of the thirteen hundred lived to tell the tale afterward. Then the Sikhs dug thirteen pits and buried one hundred bodies into each one of them.

They plundered the royal palaces and the town. They also sent their ultimata to the other hill chiefs, none of whom had the stamina to give the invaders fight. All of them willingly admitted the Sikh over-lordship and paid in the tributes.

The Sikhs conquered the hill states and proudly returned to the plains.

They had now set up their independent raj in the Majha, the Doaba and the Malwa. The yellow Sikh flag flew over the Majha and the Riaraki territories up to the foot-hills of Pathankot excluding Lahore, from Jagraon, Maclhiwara and Panipat to Bilaspur, along both the Banks of the Jumna and up to the high mountains of the Doaba.

Banda Singh was the King of the Sikhs and Lohgarh was his capital. Fearless fighters, like Baj Singh, were his commanders. The rising power of the Khalsa saw, indeed, during this interval, thousands upon thousands of the Hindus seeking conversion to Sikhism in the territory between the Jumna and the Ravi rivers. The Jatts of the Majha who had never before been really converted to any set creed so far, had now become staunch Sikhs.

## CHAPTER XIV

### **Sirhind and Sadhaura Lost.**

Bahadur Shah suppressed the rebellion of his brother in the Deccan, returned north from there and was, at the time, staying at Ajmer. He intended to punish the Raiputs for their revolt against him. But fate had destined it differently. He had news, on May 30, 1710, of the Panjab having been over-run by the Sikhs who had set up their rule under their King Banda Singh. Asaf-ud-Daula Asad Khan and many other officers had sent to him their reports, highly exaggerating the enormity of the position. Some respectable Muslims of Sirhind, Samana, Thaneswer, Sadhaura and other places also came to him, about June the 22nd, 1710, with their complaints.

The seriousness of the Panjab situation as presented to the Emperor by the Muslims—officers and emissaries—compelled Bahadur Shah to come to the Panjab directly from Rajputana, leaving unquelled the Rajput revolt against him. Bahadur Shah wanted to head the campaign himself; but his Minister, Munim Khan, advised him otherwise and argued that it was beneath the dignity of the Emperor of India to lead the army against an ordinary mutineer who was not from any royal house.

But the Emperor was bent upon treating this uprising as a jihad and himself wanted to take part in it. He ordered Asaf-ud-Daula Asad Khan, the Governor of Delhi, to despatch an army to punish the Sikhs immediately. Simultaneously, he wrote to Khan Dauran, the Governor

of Awadh, Mohammad Amin Khan the China Bahadur, the Commissioner of Moradabad, Khan Jahan, the Governor of Allahabad, Sayyad Abdulla Khan and others, ordering them to rush to the aid of Asad Khan. He himself started for the Panjab on June 27, 1710.

Armies from all the provinces of the country were already with him. He had at first a mind to send them back to their own stations. But the Panjab news that he had been receiving, was so fearful as to compel him to change this view. He rather had to call up more forces now. Whenever he met a prominent person, he told him to accompany him to the Panjab. Raja Chatar Saal and Sardar Chooramann and some others, thus, accompanied him. He by-passed Delhi and proceeded directly to fight the Sikhs.

Wazir Khan, the imperial Governor of Sirhind, had been killed by the Sikhs. The emperor appointed Zain-ud-Din Khan as the Governor of Sirhind in his place, on July 18, 1710. The Emperor and his forces reached Praagpur on August, the 7th. Feroze Khan Mewati was ordered to march forward at the head of his advance force. Sultan Quli Khan, Shakir Khan and some other Sardars accompanied Mewati as his assistants. He was given a sum of fifty thousand rupees to enlist additional forces. Mohammed Amin Khan the China Bahadur, and Qamru-ud-Din Khan also turned up now. Another army, under Sayyad Wajih-ud-Din, was sent there on August the 22nd. And an announcement was made, with the beat of drum, in the imperial camp and the city of Delhi, on August the 24th, to the effect that no one from the army camps was allowed to visit the city and no one from the city was to enter the army camps.

Kokaltash Khan was ordered to march with his army to occupy Sonipat. He was followed by the imperial forces which arrived at that place on October the 22nd.

Most of the Hindus kept long beards in those days. An order was now promulgated, from the royal camp, on September the 8th, compelling all the Hindus to shave their beards, so that they were no longer mistaken for the Sikhs. All the Hindus in the royal camp had their beards shaved, accordingly; they were not the Hindus of the age

of Lord Krishna, who would have rather lost their necks than their hair. Quite a few Hindus who were court and revenue officials, were awarded robes of honour by the Emperor for shaving their beards clean.

It was at Sonipat that Sayyad Saif-ud-Din Ali Khah, Sayyad Nizam-ud-Din Ali Khan and Sayyad Siraj-ud-Din Ali Khan, turned up at the royal camp.

The territory of the Panjab up to Panipat had already been occupied by the Sikhs. Just across the boundary at Panipat were stationed the armies of Bazid Khan Kheshai of Qasoor. He had not, so far, moved out of his camp for fear of the Sikhs. As Feroze Khan reached Panipat with his royal forces, however, Bazid Khan joined him. Now this combined force marched into the Sikh controlled area.

The Sikh forces were not concentrated anywhere. They were scattered all over the territory controlled by them. The Sikh Sardars administered their own separate areas in the Malwa, the Doaba, the Riarki and the Majha. As the imperial army advanced, it entered the territory of Baba Binod Singh and Sardar Ram Singh, who had no large army that could have repelled the Mughals. Yet, they were determined to prove their mettle in the field before retreating deep into the Malwa. A thick forest of *butea frondosa*,\* grew all over the land between Thaneswer and Trawari and the grand road passed across it. Feroze Khan Mewati was advancing along this road. The Sikhs concealed themselves under cover of this thick forest near the village of Amingarh and there waited for the enemy.

The imperial army reached that place on October the 26th, 1710. When the enemy was within range, the Sikhs showered arrows and bullets at them. This sudden calamity terrorised them. The Sikhs attacked Muhabat Khan, the son of Khan-i-Khanan Munim Khan, instantly. Already the imperial officers entertained a deep fear of the Sikhs. And now the Sikhs had attacked them with the speed and force of lightning. The mughal army failed to gain a foothold. When Muhabat Khan saw his soldiers being pushed back, he himself fled the field. The Sikhs attacked and

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\* It is called dhak, palaas or Keysoo in north India.

routed their enemies in the contest.\*

Feroze Khan Mewati showed better pluck in this clash and changed the fortunes of the battle. He called up the Sayyads of the neighbourhood and advanced to attack the enemy. Their horse-men were handicapped by the thick forest. Accordingly, Mewati ordered them to attack the Sikhs on foot. They fought hand to hand. There was fierce fighting with swords on both the sides for some time and the soil under feet was blood-drenched.

The Sikhs were fewer in number. But they possessed a reputedly wonderful courage. A sikh would be surrounded by ten enemies and presently he could be seen lying wounded among the ten corpses of his foes. This fact had forced even Mewati to doubt his success. The hope of his winning a victory looked distant.

All the same, he persisted in going all out for a victory. He urged his entire force to put their best foot forward in unison. The small number of the Sikhs was swept away by the mighty deluge of the imperial army. They were beaten and pushed back steadily deep into the forest, and those who could escape, disappeared into the back-woods.

Mewati thanked his stars that his name was not tarnished. His other soldiers who were afraid of the Sikh might and had remained in the back-ground, now boastfully stepped forward and began attacking the Sikhs, who had fallen wounded or dead on the ground. They satisfied their feelings of malice by using their swords on the martyred enemies. Carts laden with three hundred heads of the Sikhs, were sent to the Emperor as war trophies. Many Sikh corpses were hung on the trees by their long hair. And lumps of flesh from their dead bodies were displayed on the trees, on both sides of the road and for miles on end.

The Emperor rewarded Feroze Khan by making him the Commissioner of Sirhind, and six of his officers with robes of honour, on October the 30th. He was further given, on November 4th, a sum of one lakh of rupees to meet his requirements.

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\* Mohammad Qasim: Ibrat Nama, p. 24.



The Sikhs repaired from Amingarh to Thanesar and, after another skirmish, reached Sadhaura. Feroze Khan had pursued them from Thanesar to Shahabad.

Bazid Khan, now, marched towards Sirhind. The imperial commanders were in high spirits everywhere, because of the presence of the Emperor. Shamas Khan who had not stirred out of Sultanpur for fear of the Sikhs, now called up thousands of the Ghazis and joined forces with his uncle, Bazid Khan. The Sikh Commissioner of Sirhind, Sardar Baj Singh, was at the moment away on some duty. But his two brothers, Sham Singh and Sukha Singh, were present in Sirhind. As Bazid Khan, Shams Khan and Umar Khan advanced to attack Sirhind, Sham Singh and Sukha Singh came out to repel them. The two forces joined battle in Yaqub Khan's Garden, near the town. The Sikhs were small in number. Yet they fought undauntedly and killed large number of their enemies. The armies were locked in a grim struggle, when Sardar Sukha Singh was shot dead.

The Muslims now pressed the Sikhs hard, and the latter retreated within the fort. Shamas Khan and others besieged the fort. The Emperor had the news of this battle at the village of Ukala, on November the 27th. He ordered Mohammad Amin Khan Chana Bahadur, to lay siege to the fort of Sirhind. But before Mohd. Amin Khan reached there, Shamas Khan had gained its possession. The Sikhs had fought the enemy from inside the fort for a time. But when, at last, they saw the numbers of the besiegers swelling from day to day, they slipped quietly out of the fort one night.

The Emperor reached Sadhaura on December the 4th, 1710. Here he received the flags and three hundred heads of the Sikhs sent to him by Shamas Khan. Mohammad Amin Khan had been despatched to conquer Sirhind. He could not tolerate the credit of the victory of Sirhind going to Shamas Khan. He, thus, felt envious towards the latter and wrote the Emperor a detailed letter. "Shamas Khan has enlisted an unnecessarily large force," wrote Amin Khan. "He does not care too hoots for the orders of the Emperor and is mutinous in all that he does."

The result was that Shamas Khan was dismissed

from the Commandership of Sultanpur.\* Isa Khan Manjhi succeeded him. Isa Khan was an important personality in the Doaba. His grand father, Bulaqi, had been a notorious dacoit, who had terrorised the whole of the Doaba. Isa Khan proved to be a worse beast. He had taken to robbing the caravans on the high road in place of raiding small places. He had, at the same time, developed intimate relations with the local rulers. He, thus, played safe, escaped punishment for his crimes, and was taken for one of the richest persons in the region.

When the Sikh revolution began, he moved into Sultanpur under protection of Shamas Khan, who asked him later to look after the Doaba region during his absence in Sirhind. He was, next, appointed the Commissioner of the Doaba by imperial orders. Isa Khan inflicted the most terrible cruelties on the Sikhs who then returned to the Doaba. He put to the sword every solitary Sikh, who was caught moving in the area.

The Sikhs had lost control of nearly all the areas, till recently under them. They themselves were either scattered in different places or besieged in Lohgarh and Sadhaura fortresses. There were large enemy armies encamped around them. Emperor Bahadur Shah was himself in Sadhaura. His eldest son, Muazz-ud-Din Jahandar Shah, was in command of thirty-one thousand cavalry-men; eleven thousand horse-men were under other princes and eleven thousand cavalry-men under Jumlat-ul-Mulk, in addition to seven thousand cavalry-men being under Muhabat Khan and thousands of foot-soldiers under other commanders. Rustam Dil Khan, Feroze Khan and some other generals also joined them there.

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\* *Muasrul-Umara*, Vol. III, p. 128.

## CHAPTER XV

### The Battle of Lohgarh

About this time the Sikhs had left Sadhaura after some fighting and joined their comrades in Lohgarh. The fort of Lohgarh was built on a high mound. It had deep ravines, streams of flowing waters and high clay mounds all around it, making it very difficult to approach. The Sikhs had some what improved its defences, but were deficient in food supplies. They had occupied the fort; but they were closely besieged by large enemy armies. The imperial army itself was over sixty-thousand strong and, besides, robber bands and the auxiliary armies were countless in numbers. The Sikhs manned all the mounds around the fort. It was not, thus, safe for the besiegers to make a frontal attack on the fort.

That was why the Emperor had forbidden his generals advancing to attack the fort defences.

The Emperor had actually desired that Banda Singh, considering that the Mughal army was too weak to attack the fort, should come out to fight in the open field and be, thus, taken a prisoner easily. But Banda Singh was well aware of such tactics. The Sikhs raided the weak enemy positions and struck at them under cover of night, carried the booty and returned to their posts in a trice. The imperial army suffered heavy losses during these night assaults.

Heavy, continuous rains soon descended on them. It was about the Christmas time of cold winds when winter

rains, too, had flooded the neighbourhood of Sadhaura. The royal forces felt heart-broken. All of them had encamped in low places. The rain waters had flooded all the gorges around them. They were seriously short of rations, and frightened to death by the Sikh raids. Thousands of their horses died for want of fodder, and men died of cold. The word of Banda Singh's miraculous powers, which could curse, paralyse and kill the enemy, went the round of the Mughal posts and drove them to despair. Every general and eminent person now complained to the Emperor of Banda Singh's magical powers to kill or harm them. Even Bahadur Shah himself shivered in his shoes as he daily heard these tales. But the rains stopped after a few days and the royal army had some breathing time.

Prince Rafi-ul-Shan was given the overall command of the Mughal army. He was assisted by Jumlat-ul-Mulk Munim Khan Khan-i-Khana Minister, his sons: Muhabat Khan and Khan Zaman, Feroze Khan Mewati, Rustam Dil Khan, Hamid-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, Raja Chattar Saal, Raja Ude Singh, Chooramann Jat, Islam Khan Mir Atish, Bakhshi Afzal Khan and other famous generals.

On December 4, the Emperor deputed Rustam Dil Khan and Feroze Khan Mewati, to advance and select safe positions for encampment near the enemy. Rustam Dil Khan and Feroze Khan had hardly advanced a couple of miles the following day, when the Sikhs suddenly swooped on them like panthers and rained death on them with arrows and bullets. Hundreds of the enemies were laid low. Among the dead was the nephew of Feroze Khan whose son, too, was wounded. Sword in hand and unafraid of death, the Sikhs ferociously fell upon the enemy, dealing them death blows. The enemies lay dead in heaps. The soldiers of Rustam Dil Khan lost their foot-hold, and ran helter skelter in all directions. Another Mughal army turned up and the enemy was now several times more numerous than the Sikhs who, however, did not lose ground. They fought on, steadfastly like brave warriors, till it was dark. Every Sikh killed several enemy soldiers before he fell a martyr. At last they retreated in the

darkness and slipped back into the Lohgarh fort.\* This battle was fought on December the 5th, 1710.

The Mughal army advanced a mile and half and went in camp there. Khan Khana and Muhabat Khan kept watch at the camp and Rustam Dil Khan, Afzal Khan and other Sardars marched half a mile ahead and encamped at the bank of the Som streamlet. There was a thick forest on the opposite side of the streamlet from which horrible noises were heard all the night.

Rustam Dil Khan was awarded the title of Ghazi Khan Rustam Jang for his bravery and was promoted to command four thousand foot-soldiers and three-thousand cavalry. A dinner was sent from the royal kitchen to Khan Khana and Muhabat Khan as a mark of royal honour to them.

The Emperor too, advanced to the bank of the Som on December the 9th and encamped there. He had a good view of the mound of Lohgarh from there. Prince Rafi-ul-Shan took his advance guard to the very foot of the hillock of Lohgarh on December the 10th. He swerved to his left for another mile, leaving the army of Baklshi-ul-Mamalik in the charge of Ude Singh Bundhela. The Khan Khana advanced to the right side with the help of a local guide. His two sons, Mohabat Khan and Khan Zaman. Raja Chatarsaal Bundhela, Islam Khan Mir Atish, Hamid-ud-Din Khan and the special forces of the two princes, Azim-ush-Shan and Jahan Shah, were under him.

Lohgarh was, in this way, closely besieged on all sides. Sixty thousand men of the special, royal army and thousands of the robbers and the Ghazis were spoiling for a fight in the command of the Khan Khana.†

The Sikhs suffered from two very severe disabilities: they were too few in numbers and were starving for want of food. They had lived on the plunder from the enemy camps or on their horse-meat. In spite of that, the Emperor did not show courage enough to attack the fort of Lohgarh. On the contrary, his orders to his princes and

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\*Kanwar Khan: *Tazkarat-us-Sulatin*, para 153. He was personally present at this battle. He was in the company of Prince Rafi-ul-Shah at the time.

† Kamwar, p. 153.

generals were not to attack the posts held by the Sikhs, however confident of their victory. Khan Khana requested the Emperor to allow him to go ahead in the task of probing the strength of the Sikh defences. He did obtain this permission, but only on the condition that he was in no case to attack the enemy without imperial orders.\*

When Khan Khana was within range of firing, the Sikhs rained arrows and bullets on the enemy. The Sikhs occupied a high ground while the royal army fought from their low level. The latter, therefore, suffered a heavy loss of life. When Khan Khana saw his soldiers fall like flies, he could not resist the urgency to order his soldiers to shoot in return. He was, at the same time, afraid of disobeying the royal order. Yet, he felt a stronger urge to make a name for himself in the battle. The other generals, too, joined in the assault, against the royal orders, when they saw him staging his attack first.

The Emperor and his four sons were watching the fighting from the opposite flank. They disliked this rashness on the part of their generals, though, at the same time, they were pleased to see them advancing. The imperial hordes, sixty-thousand strong, swept forward to attack the Sikhs, who fought ferociously for every inch of every mound and each one of whom was killed after despatching not less than twenty enemies. If a position was too hard pressed by the enemy, the Sikhs retreated to and manned the next one. By the afternoon the Sikhs had lost their perches on all these knolls, except the Lohgarh mound itself, which was the last one they possessed. Had the imperial army dislodged the Sikhs from it, they would have safely conquered the fort.

The Sikhs stuck to the Lohgarh mound with might and main. The enemy would rush forcefully up it to dislodge the Sikhs from the knoll. But the latter held on to it like leeches and would not budge on inch. They cut the attackers to pieces with their swords. The dead bodies of the enemies rose in heaps at the foot of the ridge.

The son of the court official (peshkar) Sucha Nand was killed and his body lay on the heap of other corpses.

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\* Murray : History of India, p. 306.

Rajas Ude Singh and Chatar Saal hastened to help Khan Khana. Even then the Sikhs did not let any one gain the top of the Lohgarh mound till night-fall. The gorge round Lohgarh was more than half full of the dead bodies. The Sikhs, too, had been killed in large numbers; but the enemy losses were many times the number of the dead Sikhs.

The Khan Khana called a halt to fighting when it was pitch dark. But he ordered all his soldiers to keep armed all the night. The Minister was gratified with the hope of capturing Banda Singh by the sunrise. Mirza Rukan made a detailed report of the day's fighting to the Emperor.

Though very few in number, the Sikhs were resolute and undaunted fighters. Each one of them was duty-bound to die in defence of his leader. If they had possessed enough food and fighting material, the enemy could not have captured the fort at all. It was already over a month since the siege had begun. A few days after the battle of Amingarh the imperial army had surrounded Lohgarh and stopped all supplies from reaching the Sikhs in the fort. What little they had, was soon consumed. Several of them had died of starvation. They were considering to slip out of the fort or to attack Khan Khana suddenly on December the 10th. The day's fighting had been the hardest, and thousands of brave warriors had lost their lives on both sides. The Sikhs entertained no doubts about what the following day was going to be like.

They finally decided to give the enemy a slip and leave the fort under darkness of the night. It was very essential to keep the plan a strict secret from the foe. Sardar Gulab Singh, the Bakhshi,\* the treasurer of the Sikh force, had the highest faith in Banda Singh. He offered his life as a sacrifice for the Panth. Gulab Singh offered prayers to God, put on the dress of Banda Singh, and set himself up on his seat. A dozen other Sikhs, too, were to stay behind in the fort with Gulab Singh.

The Sikhs had continued to fire an occasional shot from the fort till mid-night. Suddenly they produced a loud, explosive noise and attacked a weak point of the enemy encirclement, quickly cut down the enemies in front of them, and neatly escaped into the hills of Nahan.

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\* Dastoor-ul-Insha, p. 8.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Aftermath of Lohgarh

At sunrise the next morning, December the 11th, 1710, Jamlat-ul-Mulk Munim Khan Khana Wazir ordered his men to attack the enemy. A dozen shots were fired from inside the fort, in reply. Khan Khana could clearly see Gulab Singh sitting and wearing the clothes of Banda Singh. The royal army advanced on to the walls of the fort, broke open the gate and rushed in. The Sikhs who opposed them, were too few to matter and as they fell wounded, Gulab Singh, mistaken for Banda Singh, was captured. Khan Khana was very delighted, hoping that this victory was to wash away the ignominy of many a previous deed that the Emperor had disapproved.

Munim Khan was an old servant of Bahadur Shah and had been appointed a Minister in preference to several other officials, who had much better claims to the post. Moreover, the Emperor had conferred the title of Jumlatul-Mulk Manim Khan Khana upon him. This had openly estranged him from all the other notables of the court. They told the Emperor that the hawk had flown away and the huntsman was carrying to him an artificially coloured parrot, instead.

As customary, Khan Khana was taking with him to the royal camp a dozen wounded Sikhs and Gulab Singh, supposedly Banda Singh, in a procession, led by bands playing and with usual splendour. An angry word from the Emperor was his reception: "Stop the playing of bands.



Let not Munim Khan dare present himself to His Majesty."

When Munim Khan learnt his mistake, he felt utterly ashamed of himself. He had disobeyed the Emperor and had, thus, earned his displeasure. He, at the same time, had failed to take Banda Singh a prisoner. He felt heart-broken and returned to his camp under a heavy load of sorrow. The royal messenger told him that the wrath of the Emperor was irretrievable, since he insisted that Munim Khan must produce the arch-rebel Banda Singh, at whatever cost he might be captured. The Minister also learnt from the messenger that the courtiers were maligning him freely and that the Emperor was pleased to listen to them. Munim Khan's mind sank within him at this news and he realised suddenly that the leanings of the royalty were no more trustworthy than quick shifting sands. His health began to fail from that day.

After the disgrace of Munim Khan, Rustam Din Khan, took with him the Sikh prisoners to the camp of the Emperor. He also brought with him, from the Lolgarh fort, five howdahs of elephants, three guns, seventeen small gun-carriages, one royal umbrella and a few silver staffs. The Emperor, as usual, presented him a suitable prize.

Gulab Singh and the dozen Sikhs were handed over to the Police Inspector Sarbrah Khan. When the Emperor's mind was pacified, he called Khan Khana to his court, on December the 13th, patted him kindly for his services and awarded him a robe of honour. Bakhshi-ul-Mulk Amir-ul-Umra, Muhabat Khan Bahadur, Hamid-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, Islam Khan Bahadur, Raja Ude Singh, Raja Chattar Saal, Chooraman Jat and some others, too, were rewarded with presents for their services during the campaign.

Orders were issued the same day to the Rajas of Nahan and Sri Nagar\* to arrest Banda Singh and to send him to the royal court. Hamid Khan was also sent immediately to take into custody the Raja of Nahan and to bring him to the Emperor, in case Banda Singh was not captured. Banda Singh, however, would not oblige him. Hamid Khan

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\* The well-known hill station, Srinagar, in Kashmir, is a different place.

took Raja Bhoop Parkash, the son of the Raja Hari Parkash of Nahan, a prisoner and presented him to the Emperor on December the 22nd. The mother of Raja Bhup Parkash deputed thirty distinguished persons of the State to the Emperor to press him for the release of her son. The Emperor had these notables killed on March the 23, 1711.\* And Raja Bhup Parkash and Gulab Singh were enclosed in iron cages and shut up in the fort of Delhi.

Every inch of the fort of Lohgarh was dug up in search of the treasure concealed there by Banda Singh. The search succeeded at last on December 16th, 1710, yielding a harvest of silver and gold coins, worth eight lakhs of rupees.

The Emperor knew that Banda Singh had taken himself to the hills. He had also been informed about the large scale disturbances caused by the Sikhs in the Doaba and the Majha regions. Consequently, he started for Lahore across the Doaba. He left Lohgarh, travelled by way of Puri and halted at Bhadoli on February the 15th, 1711. But, being in no hurry to reach Lahore, he halted there for several days. Unhappy Munim Khan died there on February the 28th, 1711. His death was, by and large, due to the disgrace that the Emperor had heaped upon him for his conquest of the fort of Lohgarh.

The Emperor left Bhadoli on March the 7th and reached Ropar on April the 30th. He crossed the Sutlej on May the 17th and arrived at Hoshiarpur on June the 9th. He, next, crossed the Beas on June the 23rd, reached Kahnawan on July 17th, Kalanaur on the 29th, Chamiani on the 30th, Panj Graeen on August the 3rd and was in Lahore on August the 11th, 1711.

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\* Kamwar Khan, p. 166.

## CHAPTER XVII

### Back in the Panjab

Banda Singh escaped from the fort of Lohgarh, breaking through the siege laid by the imperial army. This, undoubtedly, spelt a defeat for the Emperor. He felt extremely hurt and outraged. But he saw no way of driving his prey back into the cage. Though broken-hearted, he consoled himself with the thought that he was, at long last, rid of the nasty foe. And he gave himself up to revelry and enjoyment.

But Banda Singh was not the man to give the Emperor an easy riddance. He was not at all discouraged by the loss of Lohgarh. He had disappeared among the dense trees in the darkness by skipping across the enemy lines. He donned the orange robes of an ascetic for a few days and walked towards Anandpur with no definite destination in view.\* He had no intention to pass his time in this disguise, either. He was thinking of fighting the Mughal rulers again. Within a fortnight of the battle of Lohgarh he hastened to write requisitionary letters to the Sikhs known to him, telling them to unite and arm themselves. Dr. Ganda Singh has given the text of one such letter in his book,† which is reproduced here.

His seal in Persian: "The kettle (symbol of the means

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\* Lateef, p. 276.

† Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 153. Dr. Ganda Singh has a true copy of one such letter.

to feed), the sword (the symbol of the power to protect the weak and the helpless,) victory and unhesitating patronage, have been obtained from Nanak Guru Gobind Singh."

"Lord God is one. Victory visit.

"I convey to you the injunction of His Holiness the True Master. The Guru shall save the entire Khalsa of Jaunpur. Remember the Guru again and again. You shall gain victory and felicitation in life. You are the Khalsa of the holiest and deathless divinity. I expect you to meet me armed with your five weapons. Observe the religious code and symbols of the Khalsa. Do not use bhang,\* opium, tobacco, poppy seeds, wine and other intoxicants. Do not eat meat, fish and onion. Do not commit theft or adultery. We have tried to build the rule of Heaven on this Earth. Let every one of you love others. I ordain that whoever observes the Sikh forms and the Sikh conduct, the Guru shall protect and bless him.

"Dated Poh the 12th, the year the first, lines ten."†

His words, "His Holiness the True Master" in the letter, have been used for Guru Gobind Singh. "The Guru

\* Bhang is an intoxicating drug made from the leaves of *Cannabis sativa*.

† (ਮੋਹਰ. ਅਖਰ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ)

"ਦੇਗ-ਉ-ਤੇਗ-ਉ-ਫ਼ਤਹਿ-ਉ-ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇ-ਦਰੰਗ

ਯਾਫ਼ਤ ਅਜ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ"

ੴ ਵਤੇ ਦਰਸਨ ।

ਸਿਰੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ  
ਜਉਨ ਪੁਰ ਕਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਖੇਗਾ । ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਵਰੇਗਾ ।  
ਤੁਸੀ ਸਿਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ, ਪੰਜ ਹਥੀਆਰ  
ਬੰਨ੍ਹਿ ਕੈ ਹੁਕਮ ਦੇਖਦਿਆ ਦਰਸਨਿ ਆਵਨਾ । ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ  
ਰਹਤ ਰਹਣਾ । ਭੰਗ ਤਮਾਕੂ ਹਫੀਮ ਪੋਸਤ ਦਾਰੂ ਅਮਲ ਕੋਈ  
ਨਾਹੀ ਖਾਣਾ । ਮਾਸ ਮਛਲੀ ਪਿਆਜ ਨਾਹੀ ਖਾਣਾ । ਚੋਰੀ ਜਾਰੀ  
ਨਾਹੀ ਕਰਣੀ । ਅਸਾ ਸਤਜੁਗ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ਹੈ । ਆਪ ਵਿਚਿ  
ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਣਾ । ਮੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਰਹਤ ਰਹੇਗਾ  
ਤਿਸਦੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਹੁੜੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ । ਮਿਤੀ ਪੌਹੋ ੧੨, ਸੰਮਤ ਪਹਿਲਾ,  
ਸਤਰਾ ਦਸ ੧੦ ।

shall protect and bless him," the word Guru in it refers to Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, which is clear from his reference to the use of "Nanak Guru Gobind Singh." in the wording of the seal. He had told the Sikhs not to use any intoxicants whatever. At the same time, he has forbidden the use of meat, fish and onion. He had lived for the greater part of his life as a Vaishnavite, who does not take meat. That was why he persuaded others, too, to shun meat-eating.

We have to remember, in this connection, that when he was still young, he had seen the death of a doe and its unborn young ones and this had affected his mind so that he had turned a wandering hermit. Never in his life had he overcome this feeling. That was the reason that he abstained from eating meat and advised others, too, against taking it.

He laid great stress on two matters : firstly, observing the code of the symbols of the Khalsa which is a mark of his keen faith in Sikhism, and secondly, the need of every Sikh wearing five weapons, which was a proof of his plan to fight the Mughal rulers again. His letter was dated December the 26th, 1710.\*

The defeat of Lohgarh had not dispirited the other Sikhs, either. They were keen on regaining the freedom, of which they had already tasted a brief spell. This was the reason why a large number of the Sikhs met Banda Singh at Kiratpur in answer to his call. Banda Singh had not yet built a strength sound enough to enable him to return to Sadhaura and challenge the Emperor there. Therefore, he quietly went to the Pathankot region to raise adequate force. It took him about three months before he was able to work publicly.

At the time the Emperor had besieged Sadhaura, he had appointed Bazid Khan Qasoori as the Governor of Jammu. The latter had reached Raipur by then. Shamas Khan, his nephew, who had been relieved of the Commissionership of Jullundur, joined his uncle at Raipur. Bazid Khan was in Raipur when Banda Singh came to

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\* It was actually dated Poh the twelveth, equivalent to the above date.

Pathankot.

Bazid Khan (Qutad-ud-Din Khan Khesghi) was, one day, about 16 miles away from Raipur when the news of Banda Singh's presence in that area reached him. He despatched Shamas Khan's brother-in-law, Shahdad Khan, at the head of fifteen hundred cavalry-men to Raipur for its protection. Shahdad Khan strengthened his defences after reaching there.

Bazid Khan and Shamas Khan, too, started back for Raipur. While busy in hunting on the way, the news of the Sikhs being near at hand came to them. They had a force of nine hundred men at the time and they made ready to attack the Sikhs. Shamas Khan, who was closely followed by Bazid Khan, had hardly gone a mile, when they saw the Sikhs. Bazid Khan had no mind to challenge them, before joining his force at Raipur; but Shamas Khan was for fighting the Sikhs immediately; and against the warning of his uncle, he advanced to attack them.

But, instead of fighting Shamas Khan, the Sikhs ran away from him. Bazid Khan again told him not to go in pursuit of the Sikhs. But the fervour of his young age did not permit him to heed the warning. The retreating Sikhs, with Shamas Khan in pursuit of them, had hardly gone a mile and a half, when they suddenly turned to attack their pursuers.

With drawn swords in their hands, the Sikhs surprised Shamas Khan, who was intoxicated with the hope of a quick victory, but who found himself entangled in a deadly quandary. Bazid Khan also turned up slowly with his force. A hot, bloody action was fought by the contestants. The Pathans were being pushed back, when Shamas Khan advanced to make a ferocious attack, his target being the force commanded by Baj Singh, whom he tried to give a lance thrust. But Baj Singh retaliated by smartly snatching the lance from Shamas Khan, whom he wounded with the same weapon.\* Shamas Khan, drew his sword and, undaunted, attacked Baj Singh again. Before the sword of Shamas Khan could reach Baj Singh, the sword of the latter slashed the former's left shoulder and came out on

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh : Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 162.

his right side below the ribs and had completely cut him in two.

Bazid Khan was cut to the quick to see his nephew killed. In sheer exasperation he rushed at Baj Singh with a vengeance. They both were slightly wounded in simultaneous blows. Bazid Khan was about to strike again when Fateh Singh interrupted and returned him such a blow that Bazid Khan dropped off his horse-back, half dead. The Pathans, now, lost hope of a victory. But they were determined not to leave the field without fetching the bodies of their Sardars. They fought their hardest and succeeded in carrying away the bodies. Shamas Khan had died on the spot; but Bazid Khan died on the third day while on his way back.† Both the bodies were buried in their town of Qasoor.

When the Pathans had fled the field, their camp was left behind intact, and this provided the Sikhs with lots of booty. This was called the battle of Behrampur, and it was fought during the last week of March, 1711.

This victory had greatly encouraged the Sikhs. They plundered the entire region of Pathankot, Batala, Kalanaur and Raipur.

In spite of all these achievements Banda Singh did not want to fight against any army commander protected by the walls of a fort, for the reason that he did not have a sufficient force at his disposal. The fall of Lohgarh was a big blow to the Sikhs, though they had put up with it, no doubt; but they had not yet regained their former proportion and might in men. The Emperor did not return to Delhi after the conquest of Lohgarh; he was still firmly chasing the Sikhs. As long as life befriended him, he was determined to hunt down Banda Singh.

He ordered Saf Shikan Bahadur and Himmat Daler Khan to go to Lahore in pursuit of the Sikhs. They were soon followed, on 7th March, 1711, by Hamid Khan Bahadur, with an army five-thousand strong. Still the Emperor was not satisfied with what he had already done. He despatched Rustam Dil Khan on May the 24th and Muhammad Amin Khan on May the 31st to join the former

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† Rattan Singh Bhangoo : Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 114.

generals speedily.

The Emperor had the news of the battle of Behrampur on June the 4th, 1711, and of the deaths of Shamas Khan and Bazid Khan. Then he himself, left after his generals and reached Hoshiarpur on June the 9th.

By the time Mohammad Amin Khan and Rustam Dil Khan had reached the region of Raipur, Banda Singh had crossed the River Ravi and entered the Rachna Doab.\* He pillaged Aurangabad and Pasrur and went ahead to the Jammu hills. However, the Sikhs, next found themselves besieged by the royal armies near Kathuha and Parol. The forces of Mohammad Amin Khan, Agghar Khan and Rustam Dil Khan had surrounded them on three sides, while the high hills obstructed the Sikhs on the fourth. They were very badly entrapped there. But, instead of wasting his time in thinking out plans of an easy escape, Banda Singh at once rushed at the sector held by Rustam Dil Khan, and after some quick sword-work, tore through the enemy ranks and disappeared from the place.

When the Sikhs had, thus, escaped, the residents of Kathuha and Parol drifted under a terrible cloud. Mortified, Rustam Dil Khan burst upon them like a terrible storm. Their homes were plundered and numerous innocent persons were driven to Lahore and sold in the slave market there.

Mohammad Amin Khan and Rustam Dil Khan were just then alienated from each other. The former wrote to the Emperor that Rustam Dil Khan had been bribed by the Sikhs, whom he helped to break through his flank of the siege. The Emperor was convinced of the truth of the report, recalled Rustam Dil Khan to Lahore and imprisoned him there, on August the 1st, 1711, till he was set free on November the 30th, 1711.

Mohammad Amin Khan alone kept up his pursuit of the Sikhs. He persisted in keeping track of them, but refrained from attacking them. He played this game till the death of Emperor Bahadur Shah.

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\* It is the region between the Ravi and the Chenab rivers.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Scene in Lahore

It was very tough going for the Sikhs and the Hindus of Lahore and its neighbourhood in those days. The Muslim oppression and tyrannies heaped upon them were of the extremely type. There was a general order to kill the Sikhs wherever they were found. Any one suspected of being a Sikh or being friendly with one, was put to death without much ado.

Even the helpless Hindus were treated no less cruelly. Many of their families had their homes plundered and set on fire. It was almost impossible for them to live in Lahore. There was a monastery, opposite the royal palace and on the bank of the River Ravi, where a number of the Hindu ascetics lived. The Muslim priests, one day, incited a mob of their fanatics to attack the place as a result of which a Hindu woman ascetic was stabbed to death with a knife by a Muslim. The entire Hindu population in Lahore was extremely terrorised by such acts.

Shiv Singh was a Hindu and a clerk of the Khan Khana. His son had an attack of small-pox one day. The boy was taken, in a procession by his relatives and friends who were singing hymns and beating cymbals, to the temple of the Hindu goddess, known as Sitala. This incident incited the fanatical Muslim maulvis to cry wolf and create disturbances on the excuse of 'irreligion.' Muslim mobs, thousands strong, and led by Maulvi Vardi

Beg started pillaging the Hindu homes in the city. The whole of Lahore was shocked to see this fanaticism and cruelty.

Bachan Singh Kachhwaha and Badan Singh Bundhelia, had been appointed by the Emperor to keep peace and security in Lahore. They had encamped outside the city at a fine place, and they proclaimed it, with the beat of drums, that the harassed Hindus were to shift to their camp for their protection. Numerous Hindu families moved to the camp. But driven to despair they prepared themselves to oppose the terrorists. Finding that the situation was deteriorating fast, Zabardast Khan came in between the two hostile parties and persuaded the Governor of Lahore, Aslam Khan, to control the situation and keep peace between the two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims.

The Emperor, too, reached Lahore within a few days after the incident. Respectable Muslims and maulvis complained to him that their homes had been plundered by the Hindus and the Sikhs of the city. He asked them about the difference between the Hindus and the Sikhs. He was told that the Hindus shaved their heads and chins, but the Sikhs never did that. He took no other action against the Hindus except issuing a royal proclamation telling them that it was compulsory for them to shave their heads and beards. And any Hindu disobeying the order, was to be punished as a Sikh.

~ There were many Hindus employed in high posts under the Muslim rulers. They had shaved their hair and appeared trim and smart in the royal court the next morning. Any one of them refusing to shave himself was put to death. The government officers in the whole of the city took the barbans with them and whoever met them with a beard on, was shaved without fail. There were some Sikhs who, then, lived among the Hindus and mixed up with them. They were in a great fix in the new conditions. Some of them, who found time over night, ran away from the town; but those who were captured, were invariably killed.

The Emperor and his princes had encamped outside the town. The former now recalled to mind the previous

services of Rustam Din Khan. He set him free from the jail on November the 30th, 1711, and conferred on him the title of Ghazanfar Khan.

The health of the Emperor failed about the end of January, 1712. He was off his head. His condition deteriorated further in another month. He ordered the dogs and the donkeys in the city to be killed. The Government officers were going the round of the streets, holding sticks and other weapons in their hands and, as a result, numbers of dead dogs littered the streets. Another royal order demanded the yogis, ascetics and fakirs to be turned out of the city.

Emperor Bahadur Shah held his last, Durbar on February the 24th, 1712. His health was failing rapidly. The Sardars and the princes were extra busy in those days. But they gave no thought to the sinking Emperor : they were building their respective chances for succession. The Emperor breathed his last during the night between February the 27th and the 28th.

This death gave rise to an internecine war among his sons. It was traditional for most of the Mughal Kings to ascend the throne through a blood-path of their brothers. This happened to the sons of Bahadur Shah, too. The surroundings of Lahore were turned into a battle-ground. All the generals and the Sardars of the kingdom joined this war of succession and sided with one or the other prince. The guns boomed and the swords clanged from March the 14th to the 28th.

Azim Shah, Jahan Shah and Rafi-ul-Shah were killed and Jahandar Shah ascended the throne on March the 29th, 1712. He had Rustam Dil Khan, Ala Vardi Khan and Mukhlis Khan murdered most cruelly. Muhabat Khan, Jahan Khan, Hakim-ul-Mulk, Hidayat-ulla Khan, Fidwi Khan, Abdul Qadir Khan, Lutaf-ul-Khan, Mohammad Ali Khan and some others, about a score in number, were severely victimised. Their properties and homes were confiscated. And any one belonging to the royal family that he could lay his hands upon, was put to the sword. Only he escaped death who had sided with Jahandar Shah in that family holocaust. The only other man who was not done in, was Farrukh Siyer, the son of Azim Shah (Azim-ush-Shan) who,

later, put Jahandar Shah himself to death.

Jahandar Shah left for Delhi after a month. He appointed Zabardast Khan the Governor of Lahore.

The new Emperor lacked the ability to rule his empire. Zulfikar Khan became his Minister and many other non-entities were given high positions in his court. The Muslim mirasis (bards), in particular, received great favour from him.

Most of the high class sardars felt disgusted with his measures. Farrukh Siyer was the Commander of Bihar-Bengal at the time. With the assistance of the Sayyad brothers, Hussain Ali and Abdulla, the Governors of Bihar and Allahabad respectively, he attacked Delhi. A contested battle was fought and much blood shed. Jahandar Shah and his Minister, Zulifkar Khan, were killed and Farrukh Siyer occupied the throne of Delhi on February the 11th, 1713. He appointed the Sayyad brothers, Abulla to Ministership and Hussain Ali to the post of the Commander-in-Chief. Zabardast Khan, the Governor of Lahore, was replaced by Abdus Samad Khan. In short, all the high class officers were replaced with new men.

Banda Singh had slipped into the hills of Jammu after the battle of Behrampur, for the reason that Mohammad Amin Khan had made it impossible for the Sikhs to live in the plains. The place in the beautiful Jammu hills where Banda Singh had spent his time, is still called the Dehra (hermitage) of Baba Banda Singh. When Mohammad Amin Khan heard the news of the death of Bahadur Shah and returned to Lahore, the Sikhs breathed a sigh of relief. Banda Singh, too, began to organise his power. He travelled from Jammu to Chamba and Mandi directly along the mountain paths. The common people, the Hindus, in particular, had come to believe that Banda Singh could work miracles and no power on earth could defeat him.

That was why Siddh Sen, the ruler of Mandi and Ude Singh, that of Chamba, paid their reverence to and sought the blessings of Banda Singh, who agreed to marry a daughter of the prince of Chamba under pressure of the

latter's requests.\* The marriage was celebrated according to the Sikh rites. The elder son of Banda Singh, Ajai Singh by name, was the child of this marriage. He was martyred in Delhi along with his father later.

Banda Singh was not idling when the princes and the generals of Delhi were fighting their battle of succession in Lahore. He left Chamba and went straight to Sadhaura. The imperial army was completely concentrated in Lahore, largely ignoring the territory where Banda Singh was biding his time. He now occupied Sadhaura and Lohgarh after curbing a slight opposition put up by the enemy. Lohgarh was once again made the Sikh capital, and the devastated parts of the fort were repaired. And the Sikhs again controlled a fairly large area around it.

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\* The second marriage contracted by Banda Singh was to a daughter of a Khatri of Wazirabad, named Sahib Kaur, who became the mother of Ranjeet Singh, the second son of Banda Singh.

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Tussel Continues

After occupying the throne firmly, Jahandar Shah despatched Mohammad Amin Khan, to reconquer Sadhaura with the help of Zain-ud-Din Ahammad Khan, the Governor of Sirhind. Both these generals besieged Sadhaura. However hard did they try to take Sadhaura by storm, the Sikhs attacked them from within with an equal dash and beat them back. This fight continued till December, 1712. When Jahandar Shah marched towards Agra in order to defeat Farrukh Siyer, he called Mohammad Amin Khan from Sadhaura. This left Zain-ud-Din Ahmed Khan alone to carry on his fight with the Sikhs.

Banda Singh then found an opportunity, during the short interval, to strengthen the defences of the fort of Sadhaura. Zain-ud-Din continued to maintain the siege. But he was badly harassed by Sikhs, who kept raining bullets on his force all the while. Day or night, dining or doing some thing else, the Sikhs ceaselessly fired on the besieging force.

Thus irritated, Zain-ud-Din advanced his men and placed the guns at a short distance of forty to fifty yards from the walls of the fort. One of these guns kept up accurate firing. Heavy rain descended during the next night when the Sikhs made a sally from the fort in the darkness of the night and pushed that gun into a deep ditch. Zain-ud-Din had a hard job in retrieving the gun; he had to employ one hundred men at the rate of fifty rupees each to

pull it out.\* While this siege was still on, the officers of the province were transferred to other places.

Furrukh Siyer occupied the throne of Delhi on February the 11th, 1713, after killing Jahandar Shah. He removed Zabardast Khan from the Governorship of Lahore and appointed Abdus Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang in his place, on February the 22nd, 1713. Zakaria Khan, the son of the latter, was made the Commander of Jammu. But they were, at the same time, told to drive away the Sikhs from Sadhaura before proceeding futher. Abdus-samad Khan commanded a large army and reached Sadhaura. The army of Zain-ud-Din joined him there.

Banda Singh was at Lohgarh at the time; but most of the Sikhs were in Sadhaura. As soon as Abdus-Samad Khan reached Sadhaura he did his best to conquer it. The Sikhs sallied out of the fort, attacked and licked their besiegers and returned to the fort. Banda Singh himself deputed some Sikhs of his force at Lohgarh, who would suddenly assault the Sadhaura Muslim army and return after inflicting heavy damage on the enemy.

The rations of the Sikh army had totally run out by then. And the sallies they made, did not fetch them what they needed. At last, they were forced to vacate the forts. One night in the first week of October, 1713, the Sikhs left the fort of Sadhaura, cut through the enemy encirclement and reached Lohgarh, where Banda Singh and his men joined them, and all of them together went to the hills the same night. When the royal generals occupied the Sadhaura fort and advanced to Lohgarh, they found an empty fort there, too. The emperor received a report of this development on October the 9th.

Abdus Samad Khan proceeded to Lahore after occupying Sadhaura, and his son, Zakaria Khan, took the heads of the Sikhs, killed in the fighting, to the Emperor in Delhi. He presented himself to the Emperor on December the 13th, 1713. The Emperor gave him the robes of honour and promoted him to a higher rank. Abdus Samed Khan and Zakaria Khan were despatched to lead a campaign into Rajputana. The emperor made then costly gifts on

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\* Dr. Ganda Sinhh : Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 185.

their return to Delhi from there on June the 8th. They were again deputed to the Panjab, on June the 26th, with orders to decimate the Sikhs.

The Sikh rising had once again been put down. Banda Singh went direct to Jammu after leaving Lohgarh and stayed in the old place that was later known as Dehra Bada Banda Singh or his hermitage. Here he was married to one, Sahib Kaur, his second wife.

At this time the rural Muslim population began to tyrannise over and assassinate their Sikh and Hindu neighbours. The regular Sikh fighters were beyond their reach; but they terribly oppressed the Hindus who sympathised with the Sikhs. The cruelties practised by the Pathans of Kahnuwan District, in particular, knew no bounds. At last the non-muslims were literally driven to desperate counter-measures. The Sikhs of this neighbourhood arose with determination to fight these tyrants. Sardar Jagat Singh, a local Sikh leader, along with his brothers, relatives and other Sikhs, attacked the fortress of the Pathans on March the 27th, 1714. Mohammad Ishaq, the local Pathan leader, was killed during the action. The Sikhs gathered a booty worth sixty thousand rupees. Quite a few families had left the village of Kahnuwan for ever, then.\*

A severe famine visited the country that year. The whole of northern India was gripped by hunger. When every one was concerned with his own self, Banda Singh was occupied with the task of building his military power. Khidmat Talb Khan replaced Zain-ud-Din Ahmad Khan as the Commander in Sirhind about this time. He began touring the area under him and that made it difficult for the Sikhs to move about there.

Banda Singh descended from the mountains and came to the plains in February, 1715. His first target was Kalanaur. It is the town where Akbar had been crowned King. Kalanaur had advanced in prosperity with the stability of the Mughal rule. Beautiful mansions, splendid palaces and green, lovely gardens afforded special grandeur to Kalanaur. It was the habitat of rich people in those

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh : Banda Singh Bahadur, page 193.



days.

Its Commander, Sohrab Khan, and its revenue officer, Santokh Rai, made fool-proof preparation for its protection. Anokh Rai, a brother of the latter, lent a big hand in its defence preparedness. These two Puri Khatris had a high opinion of their daring. The three of them called up large forces of the volunteers from the neighbouring villages and confidently waited for Sikhs to show up.

Banda Singh rushed upon them with a dash that simply stunned them. When Sohrab Khan, Santokh Rai and Anokh Rai saw their men dying like flies at the flames, they knew no security other than the one of a flight from the town. The three run-away musketeers left the town to the tender mercies of the Khalsa. The Sikhs plundered the town at their ease and took into possession the entire pargana.\*

The Sikhs next directed their attention to Batala. It is a very old town. It is said to have been founded by Ram Dev Bhatti. It is situated in the centre of the fertile tract of Riarki. It had grown to be a bustling town then. It had reached its maximum prosperity at the time of Banda Singh. It was populated by Bukhari Sayyads to the south of the Thathiari\*\* gate in the west. There stood, next to it, the street of rich Qazis that extended to the large Hatli† Gate. It consisted of pretty palaces and magnificent mansions. The mansions and the mosque of the Qazis†† were well-known places there. The street ran from the Hatli Gate to the Acchli and from there to the Mian Gate.††† Inside this gate were the palace, the holy seat and the school of Mohammad Fazil Qadri.†††† He was alive at the time.

There was a slaughter-house between the Acchali and the Hatli gates, where several cows were killed every day. The town had a pucca fortress for the Faujdar or commander in the town. Sheikh Mohammad Daim of

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\*Karam Singh: Banda Bahadur, page 107. Mohammad Qasim:

Ibrat Nama, p. 41.

\*\* Braziers.

†Elephant.

†† Muslim priests.

††† A noble man.

†††† Karam Singh : Banda Bahadur, page 108.

Bharowal was the Commander then. The news of the imminent Sikh raid made many residents of the town desert it. Mohammad Fazil Qadri and many of the darweshes and his other relatives ran away to Sultanpur in the Doaba for safety. Sheikh Ahimad, Commonly known as Sheikh-ul-Hind, was a great succeder. He collected the people and persuaded them to fight and beat off the Sikhs. They shut the gates of the town and made full preparations to fight the raiders. The Sheikh-ul-Hind and the Commander Mohammad Daim marched out of the town by the Hathli Gate, to fight the Sikhs.

Banda Singh left Kalanaur, spent the night at Acchal and raided Batala early in the morning like a ferocious tiger. The Commander and the Sheikh-ul-Hind fought bravely. A bloody battle continued for some time. When the Sikhs made a determined attack, the enemy could not hold out. Sheikh-ul-Hind\* lost his life and the Faujdar fled to Bharowal. The rest of the residents were either put to the sword or ran away from the town.

The Sikhs smashed the gates of the town and entered it. The first street that they attacked was the one of Qazi Abdul-Haq. Very rich people had their homes there. The whole of the street, was, therefore, plundered and reduced to ashes † The school of Mohammad Fazil Qadri, the mansions of the Qazis and the houses of the butchers were completely burnt down. In short, the town was devastated in a way that it could never regain its old prestige. Its residents, who escaped death, had saved their lives by fleeing to Lahore or to the hills of Chamba or Dasuha.

The Sikhs once again controlled the entire region of the Riarki and one half of the Majha. They replaced the government police by their own appointees in the Majha.

All this news had been sent to the Emperor in Delhi by his officers.

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\* The men of the Sheikh-ul-Hind took his corpse to Wazirabad and buried it two miles outside the town. Thō village at the spot is called Kotla Sheikh-ul-Hind and his descendents live tzero.

† M. Gregor, p. 108. Ahimad Shah Batalia : Zikr-i-Guruan, p. 12.

## CHAPTER XX

### The Beginning of the End

This ascendancy of the Sikh power again shook the Mughal rule to its foundations. Farrukh Siyer was bent upon suppressing the Sikh disturbances at any cost and by all means. He sent an urgent order to Abdus Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang, the Governor of Lahore, to capture Banda Singh at his earliest. On March the 20th, 1715, he ordered Imad-ud-Daula Mohammad Amin Khan's son, Qamar-ud-Din Khan, Afra Sayyab Khan, Muzzafar Khan, Raja Ude Singh Bundelia, Raja Gopal Singh Bhadauria and several other Hindu and Muslim notable Sardars to proceed with their armies and reinforce the troops of the Daler-i-Jang. All the other feudal Sardars and Commanders in the Panjab also received similar urgent orders to join the campaign.

Mirza Ahimad Khan, the Commander of Gujrat, Iradatmand Khan, the Commander of Aminabad, Nur Mohammad Khan, the Commander of Aurangabad and Pasrur, Sheikh Mohammad Daim, the Commander of Batala, Sayyad Hafiz Ali Khan, the Commander of Haibatpur-Patti, Solrab Khan, the Commander of Kalanaur, Raja Bhim Singh Katochia and Hardev, the son of Raja Dhrub Dev, all marched to Lahore at the head of their armies. Arif Beg Khan, the Deputy Governor of Lahore, encamped near Shah Ganj, outside the city, and enlisted new forces, numbering several thousand. Meanwhile, Daler-i-Jang, too, was back to Lahore, after he had subdued the

Blattis of the Lakkhi forest.

He now started, at the head of all these forces, to defeat Banda Singh.

Banda Singh had full information of the enemy plans. He knew that he commanded too small a force to fight the imperial army. He, therefore, ordered his Sikhs to build a mud-walled fort near Kot Mirza Jaan. But the enemy hordes arrived before the Sikh defences were completed. Abdus Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang, the Governor of Lahore, was the Commander-in-Chief of the royal forces and Arif Beg his lieutenant.

Kot Mirza Jaan was situated midway between Kalanaur and Batala. Banda Singh had opted for the place for two reasons, if victory favoured him, the enemy would be left shelterless and completely at the mercy of the Sikhs; but if, on the other hand, the imperialists had the upper hand, the Sikhs could have a free retreat into the hills. Banda Singh had become such a bane to the imperial generals that they were impelled to keep Muslim saints and priests with them to ward off the evil that he was likely to do them. There were numerous qazis, mullas and fakirs with the royal army, and they prayed all the while to God for the victory of the Emperor and the security of the lives of the generals, and recited verses from the Quran.\* Not unoften would the army make the saints go in advance of them, making them recite the scripture louder and louder still, while the poor souls shivered in their shoes for fear of the Sikhs.

Diler-i-Jang ordered an attack immediately on approaching the enemy position. Banda Singh, on the other hand, met the enemy with a dash and violence that shattered the enemies' nerves. Men who fought for the allurements of pay and prizes and who kept first in mind the safety of their lives, were ranged against sincere warriors who had staked their all for the sake of martyrdom or victory: the two horses were different in spirit as in colour. The very first onset of the Sikhs had dislodged the imperial forces from their positions. Faced with an evident defeat, the royal generals taunted their soldiers, pressed them to

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\* Rattan Singh Bhangoo, p. 125.

fight hard and renewed their attacks from all the sides of the field. Finding themselves outnumbered in a big way, the Sikhs and their commander slowly retreated. But this falling back was so confidently and skilfully executed that the enemy had no chance to come to closer grips with, and overwhelm, them. The Sikhs had, at last, sought refuge in the fortress of Gurdas-Nangal.

The old village of Gurdas-Nangal is now only a mound which is called the Ruins of Baba Banda. This mound is situated at a distance of one mile from the present village of Gurdas-Nangal and four miles to the west of the city of Gurdaspur. There was no regular fortress there. It was the large mansion of Bhai Duni Chand where the Sikhs found a refuge from the enemies. This was the so-called fort of Gurdas-Nangal. The Sikhs had dug the ditch around it deeper and the banks of the royal canal and of a natural stream near by were cut to fill the ditch with water. This made it hard for a man or a horse to reach out to the mansion.†

It was on April the 17th, 1715, that Delhi received the news of the rout of the Sikhs and their retreat into Gurdas-Nangal. A royal message from Delhi ordered Daler-i-Jang to despatch immediately Banda Singh, alive or dead, to Delhi. Daler-i-Jang besieged the mansion held by the Sikhs. The Sikhs who had gone to the villages around to fetch food and fodder for their army, were captured and cruelly done to death by the enemies.

Daler-i-Jang then launched repeated attacks against the besieged. The harder the royal forces pressed the fortress, the more ferociously were they thrown back by the Sikhs. The assaulters met an iron wall of opposition against which they broke their fore-heads and rolled reeling back. The guns of the enemy hurled tons of cannon balls on the Sikhs; and the Sikhs retaliated with their arrows and bullets, which pierced the masses of the enemy forces.

When Daler-i-Jang and his son, Zakria Khan, were

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† Mohammad Qasim: Ibrat Nama, p. 42. Qasim was a servant of Araf Beg and had accompanied the Delhi armies at the time of the battle of Gurdas-Nangal.

tired of their repeated attacks and failed to make a headway, they resolved to crush the Sikhs through starvation by a siege.

All approaches were then completely plugged by the enemy forces. Abdul Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang himself commanded one flank of the fortress.

The second wing was assigned to his son, Zakaria Khan, the third to Qamar-ud-Din Khan and the fourth to the rest of the commanders and the landlords. It was not possible for the Sikhs to receive any more food whatever from outside. They were in for the severest hardships.

All the same, the dauntless Sikhs defied all dangers. A party of the Sikhs, forty or fifty strong, would sally forth, cut through the enemy defences, snatch whatever they could lay their hands on, by pressing, killing or plundering the enemies, and would carry their booty back into the mansion. The enemy found these sallies most irritating. Out of desperation they started bombarding the Sikh defences blindly. Even this failed to make any impression on the Sikhs, who held the maxim, "to find comfort in discomfort,"\* dearest to their hearts. They raised their war slogans boldly and lustily from inside their defences and terrorised the enemy. The imperial generals repeatedly prayed to God to rid them of that nasty emergency. If nothing better were to happen, they heartily wished that their enemy should slip out of the fortress so that the whole annoying business should any way end.

The Sikhs were severely short of rations and their enemies of their courage. The Daler-i-Jang had in a way lost all hope of a victory. His anxiety was as to how to dispose of that tantaliser. He recognised an instrument of doom in Banda Singh. On the other hand, there was the obvious risk of annoying the Emperor. In addition, there was the possibility of his fall in the public estimation.

He ordered the siege of the mansion to be tightened and strengthened further. His generals had, moreover, the tents of their soldiers pitched nearer the walls, making the encirclement fool-proof. Each tent joined with the two on both its sides, with a fencing of tightened ropes running full

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† ਦੁਖਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਮਨਾਈ । Dukh wich sukh manaeen.

circle on the inner side. There was not an inch of space that was not covered by tents, ropes and watchmen. The Sikhs were cornered more tightly than ever before. Yet they did present a bold front. Baba Binod Singh would cross the encirclement in disguise and buy sweets and other food in the royal army market at a higher price than the normal rate. Whenever he was suspected, he used his sword to protect himself and slung back into the mansion.

The entire royal force was sick of such skirmishes. It built platforms of earth, ten to twenty yards long and not less than six feet high, in front of its tents, as protection against the Sikh bullets.

But the greatest fear for the besiegers was that of the magical powers of Banda Singh. Though the qazis, mullas and fakirs assured them that their prayers had made the magic of Banda Singh innocuous, yet the generals were still not convinced of this fact. They believed that Banda Singh had the powers even to change his form and go out of, and back into, his fortress at his pleasure. The result was that even a dog or a cat that came from the Sikh side, was made a target of the royal soldiers' arrows and bullets and was reduced to lumps of flesh.

Months passed like this. There were urgent and frequent messages from the Emperor, urging an early capture of the fortress. Daler-i-Jang was himself no less impatient with the stale-mate. He requisitioned thousands of men and sent them into the surrounding area to cut timber and used it in building high platforms from where to bombard the Sikhs. The embankment thus raised outside, was higher than the walls of the mansion. The generals planned to place their soldiers there and made them fire on the Sikhs in their fortress. The Sikhs still retained self-confidence and let no enemy approach their walls.

## CHAPTER XXI

### The End Itself

Another regrettable event happened at this stage. The Sikhs were discussing the question of staying put in the fortress and to continue fighting or slipping out of it and through the enemy lines, as was done at Lohgarh. Banda Singh favoured sticking on to the fortress; but Baba Binod Singh advocated throwing up of the hot potato. The two generals even lost temper as the discussion continued. Then their quarrel grew bitterer and they drew their swords for a fight, when Kahn Singh, the son of Binod Singh, stepped between the two and appealed to them for peace and not to damage the Sikh cause in that critical hour. He further suggested that one of them should leave the fortress. Baba Binod Singh agreed to clear out. He rode his horse, bared his sword and safely pushed through the enemy defences.\* That was the end of that sad incident.

The siege had already lasted for eight months. The enemy did not allow anything whatever to trickle into the fortress. Not much of food and fodder could have been stored inside the building. Whatever they possessed, had already been consumed. The Sikhs had snatched, in their sallies, a little from the foes. And occasionally they had purchased a little from a greedy imperial army-man at a high cost, too. But that did not last for long. Soon men and horses began to die of starvation. Many a precious

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\* Karam Singh: Banda Bahadur, pages 176-77.



life was lost like that.

The Sikh fighters lived on the boiled leaves of trees, without salt, for some time. They peeled off the bark from the trees, dried and powdered it and used it for flour. Harder days came when these resources, too, gave out, in turn. The killing of the horses for meat followed. Next came the turn of the mules and the donkeys to live on.

No fuel of any kind was available any more; they now tried to appease their hunger with raw flesh. Some of them went to the limit of tearing their own thighs open and eating their own flesh to keep going. There is no other example known to history when people were reduced to such horrible straits to pacify the demands of elemental hunger. The Chamba wife of Banda Singh and their son, Ajai Singh, were also among them.\* This innocent child of four years, too, suffered extreme hardships in the name of the Guru.

In spite of all this ruination, the Sikhs did not lose heart. They aimed their rifles at the enemies and pressed their triggers, even when they were at death's door. Then their ammunition, too, finished, as had their rations already. These warriors with stalwart bodies were now reduced to mere skeletons. Even then the enemy did not muster enough courage to advance to attack the besieged and hungry lions.

At long last, Daler-i-Jang resorted to a diplomatic foul play. He sent a message to Banda Singh, saying that if the Sikhs evacuated the fortress, the Emperor would forgive them for all that they had done. Moreover, they were to be awarded feudal estates under a royal mandate. He declared the genuineness of that promise on an oath on the holy Quran and sent a present to Banda Singh, in proof of his earnestness.†

It was under these terms that on December the 17th, 1715, and under orders of Banda Singh, the gate of the Gurdas-Nangal mansion was flung open. Famished with

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\* Sahib Kaur, the second wife of Banda Singh, was living at Dehra Baba Banda Singh, in Jammu territory and it was at this time that she gave birth to her son, Ranjeet Singh.

† Rattan Singh Bhangoo, pages 126-27.

hunger and half dead the Sikhs lay within it helplessly. Abdus Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang forgot all his words of honour and oaths and made Banda Singh a captive. He also had two to three hundred Sikhs bound hands and feet in ropes, and pushed them down to the tender mercies of his soldiers, who had dared not attack the mansion before, but who now used their lances and swords freely against the helpless captives. All of them were killed most mercilessly. This was an unfailing proof of their cowardice and treachery. The army next entered the mansion in order to search it. They dug every inch of its flooring and found nothing there. Had the Shikhs possessed any wealth, they would not have stopped fighting.

Every enemy soldier thought that the Sikhs possessed a huge treasure. The question was: where was it concealed? The bodies of the dead Sikhs were torn open to make sure that they had not concealed gold coins in their intestines. Thus there were some Sikhs among them who were still breathing and not dead; they were now lynched.

This gruesome tragedy and holocaust ended at last. The rest of the Sikhs, about two hundred in number,\* were captured along with Banda Singh, and were made to carry aloft, on the lances, the heads of their former comrade Sikhs, now dead.

Daler-i-Jang, in this way, marched back from Gurdas-Nagal, beating drums of triumph.

The Emperor had the news of this victory on December the 22nd, 1715.

Though a captive, the terror of Banda Singh's powers still made the minds of his captors tremble and deeply panicky. They were terribly afraid of his working the occult powers and flying high over their heads. A bold man among the army officers offered to be tied to the body of Banda Singh with a stout, iron chain, so that when the latter attempted to fly, he was to open his vitals with a dagger.

From Gurdas-Nagal the royal army reached Lahore in great glory. There were rows of spectators on both sides of the road to see the fun. The procession of Banda Singh

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\*Karam Singh: Banda Bahadur, page 177.

was approaching. Bandsmen, playing their tunes, came foremost. They were followed by the Mughal army, carrying the heads of about three thousand dead Sikhs on their lances. Next came Banda Singh, trapped in an iron cage, placed on an elephant's back, with a Mughal army officer chained to him on either sides.\* His feet were fettered, wrists hand-cuffed, a heavy, iron ring round his neck and a heavy chain tied around his waist, the two ends of which were secured fast round the waists of the two Mughal army men on his sides. Then there came two hundred Sikh captives, each two of whom were chained to the back of a camel or that of a donkey. All of them had been reduced to mere skeletons; but their faces had not lost their usual lustre. Last of all came the imperial generals, commanders, rich men, land-lords, Hindu rajas and their forces. Thousands of the Lahore citizens had crowded the sides of the roads, the business streets and the roofs of the houses. After they had been paraded along some of the streets, they were imprisoned in the royal fort.

Abdus Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang asked for the royal permission to present Banda Singh personally at Delhi; the Emperor, however, refused. He ordered Daler-i-Jang to keep in Lahore for controlling the administration of the territory and to tell Zakaria Khan and Qamar-ud-Din Khan to take the Sikh captive in their charge to Delhi.

Zakaria Khan started with two hundred Sikh prisoners as his charge. But he thought this number too small for a presentation to the Emperor. Therefore, he ordered his officers to capture as many Sikhs from the villages as they could lay their hands on. His chaudhris and subordinates ran amuck in the villages, like hunting dogs, in search of the Sikhs. He who learnt of it in time, sought safety in disappearing from his place. The man who opposed his capture, was murdered then and there. And the man who was captured, was handed over to Zakaria Khan as a prisoner of war. Hundreds of the heads of the innocent Sikhs who had been thus killed and hundreds others who were captured in the villages, were taken to swell the numbers whom Zakaria Khan took to Delhi. They had

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\* Rattan Singh Bhangoo: Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 141.

not disobeyed, or fought with, the Government forces; their direst crime was that they professed Sikhism.

This procession arrived at Sirhind where it was taken the round of the main streets. Banda Singh was carried on an elephant and other Sikhs in bullock carts. Each one of them had his hands and feet fastened in chains. Yet, as they looked at the blood-stained fort of the place, the muscles of their arms did not fail to tingle with excitement. Big crowds had assembled in all the streets to have a look at them. Those who had their houses burnt during the previous disturbances, called names to, and brick-batted, the Sikhs. The Sikhs recited their hymns to themselves calmly.\*

The Emperor was informed on February the 25th, 1716, that the prisoners were nearing Delhi. He deputed Itmad-ud-Daula Mohiammad Amin Khan to go out to meet them and to take them into Delhi in a proper, presentable form.†

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\* Rattan Singh Bhangoo: *Pracheen Panth Prakash*, p. 142,

† Kamwar Khan: *Tazkara-ul-Sulatin Chugtayan*, p. 170.

## CHAPTER XXII

### In Delhi

The strange procession entered Delhi by the Lahori Gate. It was led by three thousand army-men, each carrying a head of a Sikh atop a pole, with the long hair flowing behind. They were followed by a skeleton of a cat, similarly held high on a pole, to indicate that not a living creature had escaped from the mansion at Gurdas-Nangal. Then came Banda Singh. He was carried on the back of an elephant, shut fast in a cage, wearing a red turban, covered with gold chains. The jail executioner sat behind him, holding a naked sword aloft in his hand.

They were followed by seven hundred and forty Sikh captives, bound in pairs and carried on camel-backs. Most of them wore wooden caps and had their faces blackened. Each one of them had one hand extended forward and the other backward, thrust in a wooden frame and made fast there with nails driven around it. The tried generals of Banda Singh were forced to wear sheep skins and walk on both sides his elephant.

Next, there came the three Mughal Commanders : Nawab Mohamnad Amin Khan China Bahadur, his son, Qamar-ud-Din Khan Bahadur and son-in-law, Zakaria Khan Bahadur, making the rear of the procession. Their army men stood in file, on both sides of the cavalcade, which was followed by a huge crowd of the citizen-spectators. The streets and the roofs of the houses, too, were full of people,

come out to watch the Sikhs and their victors.

Mirza Mohammad Harisi, the author of "Ibrat Nama," personally accompanied the procession from the Loon Mandi (Salt Market) to the Shahi (royal) Fort. He has written in his book, 'There was not a single person in Delhi who had not turned up to see that spectacle that day. The Mulims were beside themselves with delight; yet the Sikh prisoners, too, felt happy. There was no sign of sorrow or sadness to be seen in their faces. They looked happy in reciting their Guru's hymns.

"If anybody offered to give them his sympathy in their misfortune, their reply was brief : 'Sweet is the Will of God. To another sympathiser who remarked : 'They are going to kill you,' their answer was : 'We are not afraid of death. You may kill us, if you like. Were we afraid of dying, how could we have fought you so often ? It was starvation that had knocked us under. Otherwise, you know the mettle we are made of and what we are up to.' "\*

When the procession reached the fort, the Emperor ordered Banda Singh and some of his Sardars, like Baj Singh, Fateh Singh and others, to be kept as prisoners in the fort under supervision of Ibrahim-ud-Din Khan Mir Atish. The rest of the Sikhs, six hundred and ninety four in number, were sentenced to death and were handed over to Sarbrah Khan Kotwal† for execution.

Mohammad Amin Khan, Qamar-ud-Din Khan and Zakaria Khan were presented with the robes of honour and other prizes, the next day. Zakaria Khan then deposited all the booty that he had captured in Gurdas-Nangal fortress in the royal arsenal. It comprised the following articles :

Swords	1000
Shields	278
Bows and their bukets	173
Rifles	180
Daggers	114
Small Swords	217
Gold Coins	23
Rupce Coins	600

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\* Harisi : Ibrat Nama, pages 52-53.

† Jailer.

## Gold Ornaments      A few\*

It was with the help of this very scanty war material that the Sikhs had been defying the powerful and extensive Mughal empire for eight months. But, had they possessed necessary material to fight with the Mughals on equal footing, no enemy could have forced them to evacuate the mansion of Gurdas-Nangal.

The execution of the Sikhs started on March the 5th 1716, under orders of the Emperor and under the charge of the Kotwal, Sarbrah Khan. One hundred Sikhs were taken to the execution ground in front of the Chabutra Jail. The executioner sharpened his sword while his victims looked on. There were spectators standing all around and in the centre were the captive Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh, the lovers of their faith and of death.

The executioner read out the royal sentence that declared : "He who will accept conversion to Islam, shall be absolved of all his crimes and be exalted with royal honours. But he who declines this favour, shall be beheaded."

There was none among those Sikhs who preferred life to his faith. They chose to die like brave men rather than live like dastardly sneaks. They felt the door of salvation beckoning to them through the flash of the executioner's sword. They shouted their slogans, deeply thrilled by the glory of this finale of their lives.

The stage was set for the tragic show, at last. The executioner stepped forward, holding his naked sword firmly. One of the Sikhs walked up, shouted his slogan : "To God Almighty belongs the Khalsa : Victory be to God,"† and bowed his head to receive the sword-stroke. As the sword struck, his head rolled on the ground, cut from the body that let out spurts of red blood. The spectators trembled with horror and the enormity of the gruesome sight. On the other side, the faces of the Sikhs shone with the light of courage. They shouted their slogan again in ecstasy.

Another Sikh walked up, next. The sword was plied

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\* Kamwar Khan : Tazkrah, p. 179

† Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh.

and a head dropped. After this before a head was chopped, a new Sikh was already at the spot. The one request to the executioner by each one of them was : "Give me my turn first." They called their slayer the giver of salvation to them, the death the bride and the martyrdom the eternal life.

A hundred Sikhs had offered their lives that way. And there was another century of them waiting for the next day.

That day there was a raw youth among the Sikhs who were to be killed. His hair had just started growing on the chin, and he was about to step into manhood. He was one of the Sikhs who were captured from the villages while the imperial army was on its way from Lahore to Delhi.

He was the only son of a widowed mother. He was arrested at the juncture when he had just returned from his father-in-law's village with his freshly married bride. The palankeen of the bride was in the big village-gate for a ceremonial reception, before being taken to the bridegroom's house and after his mother had performed her rites. It was exactly then that he was spirited away by the Mughal soldiers.

The ill-fated mother reached Delhi, weeping pitifully and beating her chest : the bride accompanied her. Wailing she went to Rattan Chand, the Diwan of Sayyad Abdulla, the Minister, and appealed to him for help. Through him she approached the Minister and the Emperor.

Farrukh Siyer took pity on her in her extreme misery. When she took the myrtle-browned hands of the young daughter-in-law out and showed them to her sympathisers, there was no one whose heart did not melt in pity for her.\* She cried bitterly saying that her son was not a Sikh. The Emperor was touched by her misery and wrote an order to the effect that if the young man confessed that he was not a Sikh, he should be let off. He sent an officer who took the order and the mother to the execution ground.

They arrived there at the time when half the number of the Sikhs had been beheaded and that particular young man was to be called next. The officer passed the royal order to the Kotwal, who felt delighted to speak to the young

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\* Tarikh Mohammad Shahi, p. 237.



man : "How very lucky you are ! You are saved from the very door of death. Just another minute and you would have been among the dead. Destiny has been kind to you and has granted you a further lease of life. The Emperor is pleased to set you free. You are allowed to accompany your mother."

The young man was taken by surprise and demanded : "Why is the sword that has already granted the gift of martyrdom to so many of my comrades, ashamed of dealing with me ? What is the reason of my release ? No, I do want to win martyrdom by the side of my brethren."

"Your mother says," replied the officer, "that you are not a Sikh. And the sentence of general massacre applies to Sikhs alone. You are set free."

"My mother tells a lie" snapped the boy in sharp tones. "I am an orthodox Sikh by my actions and conviction, both. Do hurry up with giving me martyrdom. My comrades have already left me far behind them."\*

His widowed mother pitcously cried and appealed to him to avail of the pardon and showed to him the myrtle-coloured hands of his bride, but to no avail. He stuck to his guns and resolutely declined the offer and declared that he was not a non-Sikh. The fact was that the Sikh creed had entered his blood and bones. Soon a sword-stroke severed his head from his shoulders and he attained the sacred martyrdom and joined the assembly of his comrades beyond his life.†

All those Sikhs were, thus, killed, within a week.‡ Not a single man among them had felt hurt or indignant or had asked for safety by disowning Sikhism. The heads, the legs and the arms of these martyrs were hung up at many places in the markets and on the trees on road

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\* Khafi Khan : Muntkhib-ul-Lubab, vol. II, p. 766.

† Dr. Ganda Singh, Page 228. Khafi Khan, page 766. Elliot Vol. VII, page 458. Baiber-ul-Mawaj, page 228. Wilson : Early Annals, XI.III. Munawwar-ul-Kalam. Irvine, page 318.

‡ Baba Kahn Singh Bhalla, the son of the Daba Binod Singh, had alone survived this hell. The Sikh residents of Delhi had heavily bribed the Kotwal and Mohammad Amin Khan and got him free. He had returned to the Panjab from there.

sides.\*

To return to Banda Singh. He and his notable Sardars had been imprisoned in the fort, where they were kept for three months. They were subjected to a variety of severities† and asked to give the Government clues of the treasures that they were supposed to have come by during the plunder of Sirhind and other places.

Preparation was made to put an end to their lives, after all means had been tried in vain to make them divulge their secret. The Delhi Sikhs offered very high bribes to Mohammad Amin Khan in order to help save the life of Banda Singh. But nothing at all prevailed.‡

The sun of June the 19th, 1716, was just up when Banda Singh and his twenty-six Sardars were taken out of the fort. Banda Singh was dressed in royal robes, that day.†† He rode an elephant in front of the cavalcade. Ajai Singh, his four years old son, sat in his lap. They were followed by the rest of the Sikh Sardars: Baj Singh, Ram Singh, Bhai Fateh Singh, Aali Singh, Gulab Singh Bakhsh††† and others, walking fettered and manacled. This procession proceeded along the bazars of Delli to the Masauleum of Khuwaja Qutab-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki, where the Qutab Minar stands now.

Banda Singh was taken off the back of the elephant and made to sit on the ground. Sarbrah Khan, the Kotwal, read out to all the prisoners, the same order, that declared that pardon was to be granted to those who would adopt Islam as their creed. It was clear that the temptation, that had been spurned by so many Sikhs formerly, was not going to evoke a different response now. All the Sikh Sardars were, at last, assassinated one after the other, after they had been subjected to severe cruelties. Their heads were hung on the spears, that were next made to

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\*Harsi: Ibrat Nama, p. 53; Kamwar Khan, p. 170.

†The representatives of the companies, John Surman and Edward Stephenson in their letter, dated 10 March, 1716, p. 164.

‡Karam Singh: Banda Bahadur, p. 187.

†† Latif: p. 280.

††† He was the same Gulab Singh who was captured from Lohgrah fort, disguised as Banda Singh, and had been imprisoned in Delhi, under orders of the Emperor.

stand around Banda Singh. Yet, he squatted there in peace, surrounded by crowds, several thousands strong, who stood around him.

Ajai Singh, the elder son of Banda Singh, was a child of about four years. He was very beautiful. May be that was the reason that Death had been enchanted to see and carry away his captivating person in his early childhood.

The same order was read out to Banda Singh. When he refused to adopt Islam, the child Ajai Singh was laid on his thighs, and Banda Singh was given a dagger and told to kill his own child. Of course, it was impossible for a father to commit such a hellish deed; Banda Singh gave a firm no to this demand. The heartless executioner, then, himself used his sword to cut into pieces the delicate body of the innocent child lying in the lap of his father. The child's flesh, cut into small pieces, was hurled at the face of his father. The liver of the child was, too, cut into small pieces that were thrust into his father's mouth.\* But it was a remarkable feat of that Saint Soldier that he sat undisturbed like a statue of stone. He did not utter a word of sorrow in spite of the unspeakable cruelties heaped upon him.

Then they turned to Banda Singh. The executioner first cut out his right eye with the point of his sharp dagger. Then he removed the left eye in the same way. He chopped his left foot. Still Banda Singh sat unmoved. Then the cruel man chopped off both his hands. Yet his face had not lost its former light. Pieces of his muscles were notched from his body with the red-hot, sharp point of his dagger. Still he was, as before, determined to put up with all the enormity. It was obvious now that the executioner did not have any more daring to play the devil and to keep the butchery going longer : the end came when

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\* Harisi : Ibrat Nama, p. 62. Kamwar, p. 180. Khafi Khan, pages 765-66. Tabasirat-ul-Nazrin, p. 187. Karam Singh : Banda Singh Bahadur, p. 188. Ganda Singh : Banda Singh, p. 282.

the haggled body was cut into thousands of bits.\* This powerful warrior had resigned himself to the Will of God as the final consummation. He was tried by God and destiny and succeeded in his right for maintaining the highest Sikh ideals; and he had not been found wanting in any respect.

\*\* Dr. Ganda Singh : Banda Singh, p. 234. Harisi : Ibrat Nama, p. 62. Kamwar : Tazkarah, p. 180. Khafi Khan, pages 765-60. Tabassrat-ul-Nazrin, p. 187. Farrukh Siyer Nama and Munawwar-ul-Kalam and reference by Irvine, pages 318-19. Thornton : History of the Panjab, pages 180-81. Elphinstone : History of India, p. 670. Danishwar : Mifta-hut-twarikh, p. 398. Siyer-ul-Mutakharin, p. 403. Raymond, p. 91. Briggs, pages 79-80. Suraj Parkash (Mar dyo banda pal mahun), p. 6336. Mc. Gregor, p. 110.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### **Banda Singh : an Estimate.**

Banda Singh had a middling height. He was neither lean nor heavy in build. Habituated to exercise, he was given to an active healthy life. He had fine features, wheaten skin, large eyes that were longish, bright and darkish red. His face had the look of a serene, political and warrior-like ruler. Anybody who looked at him, was well impressed by his personality. He was smarter than his bodily build seemed to suggest.

He was a remarkable horseman who could remain for several days together in the saddle. The arrow and the sword were among the weapons that he dearly loved. Besides commanding his army in the battle-field, he was a dare-devilish fighter.

His life had witnessed three big changes. He was brought up in a common-place family and was by nature a fearless hunter. This talent that was his gift since his birth, was naturally blended and adjusted with the rest of his parts.

One day he suddenly met with the incident of the doe and her young ones.\* That changed his life, so that he became a complete bairagi or ascetic. He now felt meat-

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\* He had shot a doe while hunting outside his village, which dropped two young cubs when its lower body was torn open and died immediately.

eating as nauseating and, consequently, turned a Vaishnavite by creed. It produced such a deep impression on his mind that even when he became a Sikh, he advised people not to take meat.

He did not do it so much from the religious point of view, as from the obsession of his mind produced by the sight of the death of the tiny young ones and the doe, which he was never able to abrade from his mind. He had killed hundreds of persons, during numerous battles that he fought and trampled upon many a dead body in passing, and yet he never had shown any qualms. The reason for it was that the people he killed, were tyrants or their partners. But he considered the doe and its progeny innocent and to kill them was sinful. That was the reason of his hatred for meat-eating and for his advice or his orders to the Sikhs against meat-eating. He had, all the same, never resented or disapproved of meat-eating by other Sikhs. The Sikhs had killed all sorts of animals, during the sieges of Lohgarh and Gurdas-Nangal and eaten their flesh when Banda Singh was among them all the while.

This was the reason for the formation of two parties in their kitchens: meat-eaters and vegetarians. They were called Tatt (puritians) Khalsa and Bandai Khalsa later.

Banda Singh had spent a large part of his life in the company of Yogi and Bairagi saints, practising austerities and concentrating on the Divine Name. That was the reason why he and his descendants were called Baba or holy elders. His Sikhs and successors follow that tradition even to-day.

He was specially fortunate in that he had contacted Holy Guru Gobind Singh, received baptism from his hands and had adopted Sikhism. This was the most significant revolution in the life of Banda Singh. He returned to the Panjab, carrying in his breast the fires of a fervour to achieve big victories for his people.

India was in a most pitiable state of helplessness at the time. Her rulers were great tyrants and her masses fundamentally down-trodden and miserable. With the weakening of the control and administration of the Delhi kings, the local rulers became increasingly tyrannical and corrupt. The Mughal rulers became haughty, but their power declined from

day to day. They took far better care of their own luxurious living and enjoyment than of the welfare of their subjects. Almost every one of the officers and feudal sardars kept hundreds of wives and more of slave keeps. No pretty daughter or daughter-in-law of a common family had her honour safe from the depredations of these degraded rulers and gentry. The children of the nation helplessly cried for food and starved and no one cared. The district officer snatched away all the earnings of the helpless villagers and himself lived in luxury in his palace. What was left over, was monopolised by the local chaudhries, every one of whom was an independent king in his area. He would pay money to please his higher ruler and was free to rob all the people placed in his charge, over the whole year around. He was subject to no effective law or control by the king. The word of the local ruler was the law that alone operated, in fact.

It was in such strait circumstances that Banda Singh had started working for his mission. Very few Sikhs had joined him then. He frankly elaborated his detailed programme for discussion with these intimate comrades. Both sides had discussed their plans without any mental reservations.

They had to win over the sympathies of the individuals and the masses of their people for the fulfilment of their aim. He could build these two resources for his use with the help of the oppressed masses of people alone, who suffered from the rising tyranny of the upper people from day to day.

The result was that he selected his soldiers from among the common people and the suffering families. He knew it, beyond a doubt, that when he had to fight the imperial rulers, their touts and sycophants must range themselves on the side of the oppressors of the commons. He, accordingly, trusted or contacted not the powerful sections of people. And when he rose to power, that was with the aid of the services and the sacrifices of the small persons; and what he possibly could attain, was done for the welfare of the poor and the oppressed classes. As he established the Sikh rule in a part of the Panjab, his first care was to abolish the system of land-lordism from the

territory under him and to make every cultivator own the land under his plough. This step turned some of the erstwhile landlords into his enemies. On the contrary, it had won over to him thousands of the poor families. He worked for taking the surplus wealth away from the rich people and for giving it to the poor workers.

He was a superb fighter and a victor of the battle-fields. When face to face with an enemy and in the fighting fettle, his trained and fore-seeing talent would know precisely what to do with the situation in hand. If he was convinced that there was no chance to win the field whatever, he would not hesitate to flee the place without exchanging blows. He preferred not to fight rather than to fight and lose an action. But, in case he was hopeful of a victory, he would quickly rush at the enemy and confound and defeat him without wasting any time in hesitating and vacillating. That is, he always fought to win.

At times when he found the enemy too strong for him, he would run away without fighting, in a way that the enemy could neither overwhelm him in a rush nor was he to drop his pursuit of him in despair and to turn back. When the chosen troops of the enemy were detached from his main body, the Sikhs would, all of a sudden, turn back and deal heavy blows to him. This method always brought victory to the Sikhs. The battle of Behrampur was a case in point.

Several writers have called that action the defeat of Banda Singh. It was not that this running back was, in fact, a defeat of the Sikhs : it was, on the contrary, a tactic that the Sikhs had used till the end of the era of their misals.

If Banda Singh was caught in a siege, he would give the besiegers hell by making frequent night sallies against them.

It was this dare-devilry on his part that made the enemy call him a miracle-worker. This misconception had helped him a lot; for, this fear of his super-natural powers deterred the enemy from attacking him boldly and confidently. The imperial generals were so much convinced of the truth of such reports that, even after he had been



captured at Gurdas-Nangal, they were afraid of dealing with him lightly or boldly. This was the most dominant reason that he had compelled a mighty imperialism to live in jitters for so long.

Some Muslim writers have tried to represent Banda Singh as a tyrant. But actually he was neither a tyrant nor a supporter of tyranny, though there is no doubt that he, all his life, punished the tyrants. Whenever he attacked a village or a town, his urgent orders to his men were : not to harm a woman; to respect and protect her honour; not to strike an innocent child and to spare poor, helpless and unarmed persons.

If the people of a town submitted to the demands of the Sikhs without fighting, no harm was done to them. The instance of Maler Kotla can well be mentioned as a good proof of this assertion. If a town had to be fought for, the question of tyranny or justice did not arise in that case; for, it was not possible to know the innocent from the guilty in a strange place. The oppressed residents of such a town and the plunderers of the area around it, turned up to take their revenge against their local enemies and to pillage the possessions of the prosperous families. Such crimes might not be foisted on Banda Singh.

Sirhind was a case by itself. It was natural for every Sikh to resent deeply what had happened there. The bloody town that put up with the atrocity of the innocent, small children (of the Tenth Guru) being bricked up and strangled to death in a blind wall, was subjected to certain excesses at a time of explosive indignation, which need not be named tyranny. Had there been another man in place of Banda Singh, he would have done no less.

Moreover, it was a time when such happenings were the order of the day. If Banda Singh had not been as severe as he was, it would have been impossible for him to succeed in his mission. Any way, how could he have otherwise subdued his enemies ?

There is, next, the question of religion and sin. If it was no crime to kill the innocent Sikhs of Unarsa, it could not, accordingly, be a sin to put to death some of the treacherous tyrants of Sadhaura. If the opposite party held in high merit the murder of the disarmed and

chained Sikhs as was done in the case of Gurdas-Nangal prisoners of war, it could not be called a sin, by the same measure, to kill some of their men in a battle or in an occupied town. Briefly, Banda Singh could not, again, be called a tyrant, for the reason that he acted as God Shiva or Pluto for the oppressors of mankind, but as the shield to protect the poor people.

Banda Singh might be called the founder of the Sikh rule. He conquered the commissionership of Sirhind and set up a Sikh government there, with Lohgarh as its capital. Banda Singh was the king then and those who had fought against great odds by his side, were his generals and commanders. The numbers of the Sikhs grew rapidly in those days. Persons who had never heard the name of the Gurus before, became orthodox Sikhs. Many Hindus and some Muslims, like Dindar Singh and Mir Nasir Singh, chose to be baptised to Sikhism.

The Sikhs had gained the dignity of a ruling nation at the time. An ordinary citizen was inspired to possess all the merits and good qualities of a Sikh, as soon as he was baptised. If a poor worker of a village adopted Sikhism and returned as an official to his own village under order of Banda Singh, the local, respectable citizens would attend upon him as his servants. At last this tendency among the Sikhs raised them to the royal throne in the personality of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, by virtue of the numberless severities which they had suffered from. They had been broken up on the death-wheels and been made the targets of the ruling tyrants. This had been their real baptism.

Moreover, Banda Singh was a perfect Sikh in terms of the Sikh code of life. He had been properly baptised, said his prayers regularly and was orthodox in the observance of the Sikh forms. He had full faith in the Sikh Gurus. He called Guru Gobind Singh by the name of the Super Man or the True Lord. He said his prayer\* before taking in hand any particular task. Whatever power or prestige he came to possess, he ascribed it to the kind favour of the holy Guru Gobind Singh.

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\*Ardaas.

A proof of this aspect of his mental make up is met with in the wording that he devised for his state seal. "The kettle (means of feeding,) the sword (power to protect the weak,) victory and unhesitating patronage, all have been obtained from Nanak-Guru-Gobind Singh." He placed the precious Sikhism, preached by his Gurus, far higher than the royalties and prophets of this mundane world. If any different motives are assigned to the personality and the actions of Banda Singh, such a view and inference must be traced not to the nature of Banda Singh Bahadur, but to the whims of those writers.

It may be repeated that his Sikhism was flawless and he lived the life of a true Sikh who never betrayed its holy traditions and his devotional fervour for the Sikh tenets. He never had a quarrel with the Sikh throughout his life. Nor had he acted against Sikh rites during his life time. To marry according to Sikh rites is permissible for any Sikh.

His new war slogan, "Fateh Darshan" or victory visit, that he had once originated, was quickly suppressed on the advice of some of his Sikh colleagues. If today the Banadi Sikhs use the slogan, "Fateh Sacchey Sahib Ki" that is, "Victory be to the True Lord," it cannot be alleged that Banda Singh Bahadur had meant to start a new creed or community. Most of the Sikhs use "Sat Sri Akaal" or "the holy and eternal God is True," in place of "Wahiguru Ji Ki Fateh," this, too, is another war slogan. No one may dare conclude, in the face of these facts, that Banda Singh was not a perfect Sikh. He was a true Sikh, beyond a doubt.

Banda Singh had the courage that was as invincible and substantial as a mountain. The soldiers of Succha Nand and the hordes of the professional robbers and plunderers at Sirhind had deserted the Sikhs at a critical moment, leaving a small number of the Sikhs to fight a far larger, trained and heavily armed enemies. But Banda Singh held his ground undaunted and with a Himalayan high determination. He called on his Guru and concentrated his mind on him with full faith in him, confidently shot one of the five arrows once granted to him by the Guru, and attacked the enemy with an iron will and, thus, the Sikh

victory was ensured.

Emperor Bahadur Shah won possession of the fort of Lohgarh. The Sikhs lost all the territories that they had conquered. Banda Singh alone escaped from there, disguised in the loose, orange robes of a Hindu, roaming saint.

He never lost the courage of his conviction even then. He wrote letters to the Sikhs within a few days after that, telling them to unite and be prepared for fighting their holy battles against the enemy.

Banda Singh had already won the battle of Behirampur, while the Emperor was still advancing in pursuit of him. This was another proof of his dauntless daring.

The hard-ships and calamities of the last days of the siege of Gurdas-Nangal were beyond human endurance : eight month old siege, complete absence of rations and the hardiest of warriors dying of dreadfully long starvation. It was the fortitude of the Sikhs of the Gurus alone that enabled them to fight in such an extreme adversity. It is at a time of such adverse conditions when one's sterling manhood is tested.

The Sikhs had stood this trial too well. Daler-i-Jang resorted to deceitful oaths and hollow promises to realise his end, at last. The defenders, then, opened the gates in good faith.

Banda Singh's martyrdom was the last test of his matchless heroism. The way in which he passed his last minutes was miraculous and it has been the lot of only Sikhs to perform such miracles. He was bound in iron chains and was surrounded with the severed heads of his brave brother-in-faith, hung on tops of poles. His child of four years, a tender, lovable life, was mangled by human butchers and killed before him, its liver taken out, and its pieces thrust into Banda Singh's mouth. Every part of his limbs was cut off while he was still living, and he himself bore patiently all this hell hurled upon him ! Was he a human being or a god of the old myths ! We may wonder !

The fact is that the state of a Sikh is higher than that of any other being, human or divine, and Banda Singh was a true specimen of Sikhism.



**PART SECOND**

**A Long Struggle**

**and**

**The Rise of the Power.**

## CHAPTER I

### Essentials of Sikhism

The temper imparted to the steeled hearts of the Sikhs never lost its quality inspite of the thousands of reverses which they suffered. This nation was transformed from the Sikhs or disciples to Singhs or lions, for their determination to do or die. When the Tenth Guru had created the Khalsa nation on the day of Baisakhi, he had made a speech on the occasion that has always been ringing in the ears of the Sikhs. The Guru had spoken in all his glory, from the holy seat of the Kesgarh, at Anandpur, saying :

“My brave Khalsa, you personate me and my image shall always exist in you. We have now become ‘Wahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa.’\* We may rest assured that ‘Victory shall be of God,’ beyond a doubt.† I was specially sent here by the Eternal God to create the Akali Panth.‡

“My Khalsa, I make you, from this day on, the children of our Eternal Creator, made in the Image of Wahiguru and independent of births and deaths and of being subject to the cycle of eight and a half million†† lives and the kings of all the world for ever. You are born of the sharp blades of the double-edged dagger or khanda. War weapons are your play

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\* The pure Sikhs belong to God Almighty.

† Wahiguru ji ki Fateh.

‡ The Deathless Nation

†† Chaurasi lakh joon: it is believed in Hindu mythology that there are eighty four lakhs kinds of lives through which a soul passes.

things. Fighting is your life-work. And to bring the kingdom of Heaven on earth is your right.\*

"All men are equal. Caste and creed are illusions. The difference between the high and the low is a heresy. This world is a rumpus of eight lakh and a half births. The Khalsa is the highest nation. All of you are brothers. And gur-mata is the eternal law for you to follow. You are the saint-soldiers specially chosen by the Almighty God, and you are the rulers of your country for all time to come.† I have humiliated the vain and powerful men and I shall grant the kingship to the poor and the humble. The country belongs to you and you are its rulers."

Thus it was that to realise these ideals became the chief aim of the Sikhs. They rose with a passionate zeal in their hearts and sparkling swords in their hands. And with their war song on their lips:

"The Khalsa shall rule the world

And no one may dare disobey them."‡

They held the battle-field. They had to overcome thousands of hardships, miseries, storms, trying rainy days and deluges. But they have continued to advance resolutely and steadily. And starting from the scratch then, have conquered the thrones and become the rulers of this land.

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\* Rattan Singh Bhangoo : Pracheen Panth Parkash, 2nd Edition, page 20: "The Sikh nation is born to fight and to use its weapons of war is its life-work. The Sikhs have been baptised with the symbol of the khanda, and they have received the birth baptismal of the khanda, too. The perfect Guru made the Sikh nation for the express purpose of fighting its battles. Who has ever possessed a throne without winning a victory? The Guru himself had been fighting his battles since his birth."

† Rattan Singh Bhangoo, page 27. Narang, P. 169.

‡ Raj Karega Khalsa, aki rahe na kal.



## CHAPTER II

### Butchery after Banda Singh

The martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was a great blow to the Sikh nation. No other nation, but the Sikhs, could have survived such a mortal set-back. The Sikh power had been eliminated from the Panjab. There was no place there where they could seek shelter any more.

Emperor Farrukh Siyer was not satisfied even after he had crushed Banda Singh and his seven hundred and forty comrades. He issued an edict to his officers, saying : "Any Sikh you can lay hands upon, must be killed without a question. But he who will adopt Islam as his religion, should be spared. All the Hindus should shave their heads and beards. He who disobeys this order, should be taken for a Sikh and killed. A person rendering any sort of help to the Sikhs, should also be killed. But any one who helps arrest a Sikh, or gives a clue to one or who kills one and brings his head to the Government, should be rewarded for this service."<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup>Sketch of the Sikhs by Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm, London, 1812, page 85. A Journey from Bengal to England by George Forster, Vol. I, 1812, pages 312-13. History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs, by Major James Browne, Vol. II, 1788, page 13. A History of the Sikhs by Joseph Davey Cunningham, 1918, page 89. Mc Gregor, Vol. I, page 113. Narang, page 201. Studies in Later Mughal History of the Panjab by Hari Ram Gupta, 1944, page 50. Sikhon ka Uthan aur Pattan, by Nand Kumar Dev Sharma (Hindi) 1997 B., page 76.

This news flew quickly on the wings of the wind. Thousands of Sikhs were put to the sword. Every head with a long hair brought a reward for its carrier. The Sikhs who found timely shelter in the forests and the hills, alone survived this whole-sale massacre. The robbers, who first kept long hair, now had themselves shaved and found safety in mixing with the Hindus. The Mughal army men and the village chaudhris went scurrying about every-where as hunters.

Soon no Sikh was to be found in the Panjab. The Hindus had their heads and chins shaved and were safe from any danger. But the Sikhs were facing hell. Those of them who could, slipped to find safety in the hills of the Himalayas, the jungles of the Malwa and the sand-dunes of Rajasthan. They bided their time there and lived on the leaves of trees and the flesh of the wild creatures. Their women and children whom they had left behind, were at the mercy of the utterly tyrannical rulers. The armies of Abdus Samad Khan were roaming amuck all over the territory. And yet all this brutality, resorted to against the Sikhs, had made them more daring and dauntless.

This barbarity went on unchecked for a year and a half. But then there arose other complications which claimed the attention of the Lahore Governor. Isa Khan Manjh in the Doaba and Hussain Khan Kheshgi in Qasoor defied his authority. These two Commanders had rebelled against Abdus Samad Khan at the instigation of the Delhi Darbar. The Governor, therefore, diverted his attention from the suppression of the Sikhs to this new danger.

On the other hand, deep conspiracies were being hatched to bring about a change in the Government in Delli. The Panjab set-up was naturally affected by the new developments. Sayyad brothers, Abdulla Khan and Hussain Ali, had helped Farrukh Siyer ascend the throne of Delhi. They naturally wanted the Emperor to play a second fiddle to them. But Farrukh Siyer was after terminating the hold of the Sayyad Brothers on him. Consequently the Delhi Darbar was divided into two factions, which wrangled between themselves from 1717 to 1719.

The Sayyads succeeded in their machinations at last

They dethroned Farrukh Seyer, blinded him and had him, later, murdered in 1719.

The Sayyads were at the height of their power at this time. They enthroned the prince of their choice, Rafi-ud-Darjat, at Delhi. But the Sayyads soon discovered that he, too, was not after their mind. They, therefore, poisoned him to death in three months. They picked up his elder brother, Rafi-ud-Daula, next and set him up as the Emperor in Delhi. He played a complete puppet to them. In spite of that, luck did not favour him on the throne; he too, was despatched to the next world, like his brother, in three months' time.\*

The next choice of the Sayyads was Mohammad Shah. He met with this luck to become the Emperor after an imprisonment of seven years. The Sayyads met their end within a year since. Mohammad Shah dismissed Sayyad Abdulla as his Minister and replaced him by Mohammad Amin Khan, with the title of Itmad-ud-Daula, towards the end of the year 1720. But he died on January the 16th, 1721. Nizam-ul-Mulk succeeded him as the Minister in Delhi.

This confusion in the capital gave a brief spell of relief to the Sikhs. They returned from their exile in the hills and the jungles back to the plains of the Panjab. The attendance of the faithful in their gurdwaras brisked up with their re-appearance in their homeland.

A vegetarian is, by nature, less of a combatant than a meat-eater. Baba Banda Singh had urged the Sikhs not to take meat. Those who dropped meat-eating and became vegetarians, were called Bandais by the other Sikhs. These Bandais gave up their fighting habit and took to the peaceful work of serving the congregations in the Sikh temples. The solitary sikh fighters who returned home, took to their private callings. It was a common sight to see the Sikhs in the Majha and the Riarki in 1720.

The Sikhs openly assembled in Amritsar on the festival day of the Baisakhi of the year, 1721. They made a decent gathering for those circumstances. But a quarrel

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\* Harcharan Dass : Chahar Gulzar Shujae, 1784, p. 384. The Sayyads had poisoned both the brothers.

arose between the Bandais and the Tatt Khalsas on the question of the use that was to be made of the offerings that the faithful presented at the temple. Bhai Mani Singh tried to settle the dispute by lots, in the presence of the Holy Book which favoured the Tatt Khalsa. The Bandai leader, Amar Singh, resident of Khem Karan, rejected the definitive settlement. The matter ended in a fight with swords between the two parties.

This was the first time that the Sikhs had fought the Sikhs. The Bandai section practically disintegrated as a result of this mutual destruction. Some of the Bandais were killed; others melted away from the scene and still others became true disciples and merged themselves with the Tatt Khalsa. This reunity added to the strength of the Khalsa. Bhai Mani Singh was appointed the priest of the Amritsar Sikh temple.

The houses of a great many Sikh families had been destroyed during the massacres of the years 1716-17. Some of the Sikhs had taken their families with them when they had escaped to the hills and to Bikaner; but the families of most of the others who had been left at home, had been killed during their forced absence. These men could not obviously lead a quiet life when they were now in the Panjab again. Moreover, a brief span of political freedom, of which they had a fleeting dream during the leadership of Banda Singh, was not to be ignored by them. They eagerly wanted to win that liberty again at any cost.

They roamed over the territory in parties of one hundred or so. Now and then they would plunder some people for their own living. Quite a few persons who had been instrumental in getting the families of the local Sikhs arrested and their houses demolished during the absence of the latter, were punished by these parties with a vengeance.

Abdus Samad Khan once again started persecuting the Sikh with a view to suppressing these disturbances. He ordered that the Sikhs were to be charged double the amount of taxes paid by others to the Government. It was generally proclaimed that those who had suffered at the hands of the Sikhs, were to lodge their reports with the

local authorities. And these reports were to decide the transfer of the Sikh property to the aggrieved parties.\* Some of the Sikhs who had been arrested under suspicion only, were hanged without trial. Accordingly, their minds and lives were again ruffled by these proceedings.

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\* Gyani Gyan Singh : Shamsheer Khalsa (Urdu,) 1023, p. 56.

## CHAPTER III

### Tara Singh Martyred

There was a change of the Ministership at Delhi in 1727. Nizam-ul-Mulk resigned and Qamar-ud-Din Khan, Itmad-ud-Daula II, replaced him. He was the son of Mohammad Amin Khan, Itmad-ud-Daula I. Abdus Samad Khan, at that time, was more concerned with the happenings in Delhi than with the administration of the Panjab. Thus, the Sikhs had a little free time. More Sikhs returned from Bikaner in 1725. Their hands moved everywhere in the Panjab and dealt severely with their enemies. They took revenge on those who had reported against them, and robbed these marauders of the properties that the latter had wrongfully possessed, restoring them to their old and rightful owners.\*

These disorders ruined the country. Everywhere people were harassed by thieves and robbers. The police, understandably, avoided the militant Sikhs, but artfully let loose its oppression on the working classes of Sikhs and Hindus. This rather went to the advantage of the Sikhs. Persons who were even slightly suspected by the police, deserted their homes and joined the roaming Sikh parties. This swelled the numbers of the fighting Sikhs.

Qumar-ud-Din Khan, the Minister in Delhi, transferred Abdus Samad Khan, Daler-i-Jang, Saif-ud-Daula, Seven Thousander (the last title having been bestowed on him

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\* Shamsheer Khalsa (Urdu,) p. 37.

for his services in arresting Banda Singh Bahadur,) from Lahore to Multan, on the excuse of the lawlessness in the Panjab. His place as the Governor of Lahore, was given to his son, Zakaria Khan, Khan Bahadur, Saif-ud-Daula the Second, Eight Thousander. He was a brother-in-law of the minister Qamar-ud-Din Khan.

This change was made in 1726. Zakaria Khan is known as the Khan Bahadur in Sikh history. He selected Lakhpat Rai as his Diwan and Moman Khan as his Lieutenant Governor.\* A roving army was placed in his charge in order to suppress the Sikh rising.

This new set-up brought a new hope to the government Chaudhris. They started threatening the Sikhs. But these threats had an effect on the Sikhs just opposite to what was intended. As the government tried to suppress them more harshly, they became bolder and more dauntless. The Sikhs pounced upon the imperial forces like tigers, whenever a clash was imminent, and then disappeared into the jungles. Such incidents were common in the country. The martyrdom of Tara Singh was one such event.

The Sikh peasants in the village, Naushahra, in Amritsar District, made their living by cultivating their lands. The local Chaudhri, Sahib Rai by name, was in the habit of letting loose his horses graze in their fields. The Sikh owners of the fields repeatedly requested him not to destroy their crops. But he refused to oblige them, and peevishly remarked: "I warn you that I am soon going to use the long hair on your heads to make ropes to tie my horses with. They must go loose till then."

The Sikhs were cut to the quick at these biting words. They invited Sardars Amar Singh and Baghel Singh Dhillon, of the village Blussa, and helped them capture the horses of the Chaudhri. These men of Blussa took the horses to Sardar Lakhmir Singh of village Ghariala, district Amritsar. He sold them to Sardar Aala Singh, an ancestor of the present prince of Patiala, in the Malwa region, and made an offering of the money to Bhai Tara Singh for the purpose of supplying food to the pilgrims, who visited the Sikh temple in the village.

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† Shamsheer Khalsa (Urdu,) p. 38.

A jatt of Buttar sub-caste,\* Bhai Tara Singh was a resident of the village, Waan, in the district of Amritsar. He was a staunch Sikh and he was honoured as a saint in the Sikh community. He wore a sword, worked for his living and always ran a free kitchen for the hungry, according to the Guru's instructions. A few Sikhs always came to him and stayed there. Those who evaded the police vigilance, also came to stay with him. He had fought in the Sikh battles by the side of Banda Singh, too.

Sahib Rai had traced the thieves of his horses. He took his men with him and went to arrest Baghel Singh and Amar Singh. They ran to find shelter at the hermitage of Bhai Tara Singh. Sahib Rai followed them there. He threatened Bhai Tara Singh, too, as was his habit. When the chaudhri told him to hand over his thieves to him, the Bhai replied : "He who sets his cattle loose to ruin the crops of others is the thief, not he who earns his living with the sweat of his brow." The chaudhri felt outraged at these words and he angrily retorted, "If you do not hand over my thieves to me straightway, I shall resort to shoe-beating."

"He who talks of shoe beating the saints, shall be thrown out of here by means of shoe-beating" was the reply of the Bhai.

One of the Sikh present there, took the hint and started shoe-beating the chaudhri, who, bewailing the incident, went away and complained to Jafar Beg, the Commander of Patti.

The Commander took with him a force of two hundred foot soldiers and a hundred horsemen† and went to punish Tara Singh. They reached the village of Waan two hours before sun-rise. Sardar Baghel Singh heard the hoof falls of horses from a distance, when he had just gone out to case himself at that early hour. He at once understood that the government army was at hand. Instead of turning back, he challenged them Sahib Rai knew him by voice and told the Commander that it was Baghel Singh,

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\* Bhangoo, p. 173.

† Gyan Singh : Panth Parkash, p. 485. Bhangoo gives the figures of eighty foot-soldiers and thirty-five horse men. p. 176.



the thief of his horses. The Commander ordered an attack. Baghel Singh plied his spear and died fighting like a true warrior.

There were twenty-two Sikhs present in the hermitage at the time. Lakhmir Singh of Ghariala, Aali Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh of Bharana, Bhim Singh, Badal Singh of Rattokey, Megh Singh of Maddar, Hata Singh of Chung, Bulaka Singh of Sangna, Jodh Singh of Narowal, Mehar Singh of Tung, Wasawa Singh, Koer Singh, Samund Singh and Jhab Singh Multani, Sura Singh of Khalra, Bhaugar Singh and Rasal Singh Peshaurias, Amar Singh of Bhussa and others. The sound of firing drew them out into the field. The government force lost about ten lives and had some others wounded in the very first clash and retreated hastily. A brother and a nephew of the Commander were among the dead.

Jafar Beg halted at the village, Kambo-ki Mari, after he ran back from Waan. He took the corpses of the dead with him and hurried with them direct to Lahore and bitterly complained to Zakaria Khan.

The Governor ordered Momin Khan to attack Waan with a strong force. A Qazi who was sitting nearby, suggested, "Catch them living. We shall butcher them here." A soldier of Momin Khan remarked, "Let the holy Qazi come away with us."\* This silenced the Qazi who was too afraid to add another word.

Momin Khan left Lahore, taking with him two thousand and two hundred horse-men, five elephants, four small guns and forty large pistols, in order to arrest Tara Singh.†

The Lahore Sikhs sent a messenger to Tara Singh to convey this news, requesting him, at the same time, to leave his hermitage and go to some other unknown place.††

Bhai Tara Singh conveyed this message to all the Sikhs present there, adding at the same time, that he had no mind to leave his sanctuary. But the others could go with pleasure where they liked; and, as for himself, he would die a martyr's death while fighting.

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\* Bhangoo, p. 179.

† Ibid. p. 179.

†† Ibid. p. 179. Panth Parkash, p. 488.

Not a single Sikh among those who were then present at the place, agreed to get away from there. On the contrary about thirty more Sikhs who had heard this news, turned up from their places to join them. Joga Singh, Sunder Singh, Gajja Singh, Niranjan Singh Chahil, Kehar Singh of Hehar, Sher Singh, Suba Singh, Saran Singh and others formed this group of new comers. They strengthened their defences and waited for the imperial army to attack them.

The force of Momin Khan arrived before sun-rise. The sikhs rained arrows and bullets at them when they reached within their range. There was fierce shooting from both sides. As soon as the ammuniton of the Sikhs ran short, they drew their lances and swords and rushed out of the hermitage at the enemy.

Taqi Beg Turani saw Tara Singh and urged his elephant towards him. Tara Singh, too, saw in Taqi Beg his equal in the battle and prodded his horse in his direction. Taqi Beg shot an arrow that pierced the plume of the turban of Tara Singh, who coutiously retaliated by driving his lance hard. Taqi Beg was well protected with coats of iron plates and wire-netting. Tara Singh chose Taqi's mouth for his lance thrust. Taqi was mortally wounded and turned backward. Momin Khan saw his mouth bleeding and jokingly enquired : "Are you chewing your betel leaves ?" Taqi Beg replied in the same strain : "Yes; Tara Singh is distributing tempered betels. You also step forward and receive your share."

Taqi died of this wound a little later. Murid Khan the nephew of Momin Khan, next advanced to the attack Bhim Singh killed the driver of Murid Khan's elephant with his spear and caught hold of the ear of the beast and made it sit down. Lakhmir Singh was near-by and he chopped with his sword the head of Murid Khan by jumping on to the back of the beast.

Daya Ram and Mansa Ram Purbias, two officers of the imperial army, then advanced to attack the Sikhs. Amar Singh killed both of them. The fighting was nearing an end now. Bhai Tara Singh had several wounds and died after killing several of the enemies. The Government force lost nearly three hundred men in dead and some

more in wounded.\* Twenty-two sikhs were martyred, in addition to Bhai Tara Singh.† Moman Khan returned to Lahore, playing his bands in celebration of his victory.

This action was fought in February, 1726.

Tara Singh was a worshipful personality among the Sikhs. The news of his martyrdom, deeply moved the feelings of the Sikhs and thousands of them assembled in Amritsar to consider the situation in a gurmata‡ and take a decision on it. It was unanimously resolved to intensify the task of plunder and disturbances. Particular attention was to be given to looting the government treasures. The Sikhs formed themselves into different parties and they roamed in all the four directions of the territory. The Governor, too, had ordered the patrolling parties of the army to be on duty in the rural areas.

The Sikhs were informed of a treasure that was being carried from Multan to Delhi. They attacked the treasure-carriers, near the village of Khudian, in Lahore District. Some of the government soldiers guarding the treasure, were killed and others took to their heels for safety. The Sikhs bagged rupees four lakhs of the Government money. A part of it was sent to Amritsar and given to Bhai Mani Singh for use in the free kitchen there and the rest was distributed among the party members.

The sikhs of village Chawinda looted another treasure that was being taken to Lahore. Still another treasure that was being carried to Lahore from Qasoor, was also plundered by Darbara Singh, Fateh Singh, Kharak Singh, and others near Kahna. A royal horse-trader, Murtza Khan was robbed near Jandiala by the sikhs of his horses that he was taking to Delhi.

Nawab Jafar Khan, Ten-thousander, the brother-in-law of Shah Mohammad, was on his way to Delhi along with his family. When they were at the river crossing of Goindwal, Bagh Singh and Budha Singh robbed them of their belongings. The Sikhs had robbed another merchant, too, near Haigobindpur. It was later known that the

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\* Panth Parkash, 405.

† Bhangoo, p. 185.

‡ Gurmata, is a resolution.

merchant was one Partap Chand, a Hindu of Sialkot. All his property was, therefore, returned to him.\* There were many robberies committed by them in the year 1726. Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan increased the number of his patrolling parties and issued stricter instructions about dealing with the Sikh menace. This resulted in several clashes with the Sikhs at many places.

One day the marriage of a son of Bahadur Singh, a Sikh leader of village Chawinda, was being celebrated. When the men folk of the village had gone to the bride's village, a government patrolling party attacked the village in their absence. There were women alone at home at the time. They fought the state patrol party so courageously as to compel it to seek safety in a flight. This happened during the summer of 1726.

A party of a score of Sikhs was coming from the direction of the hills on another day. They halted at the village Ghanyan of the Randhawas. Chaudhri Rama Randhawa marched his soldiers to attack them. Twenty Sikhs were killed in this clash, though they themselves killed several more of their enemies. Rama was rewarded by the Governor for having sent their heads to Lahore.

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 506. .

## CHAPTER IV

### Disorders Continue

Governor Zakaria Khan circulated a proclamation all over the province, declaring : "He who will give a clue to the presence of a Sikh, shall be rewarded with a sum of ten rupees; he who shall help one being arrested, shall receive twenty-five rupees; he who will capture one and hand him over to the government, shall be paid fifty rupees; and he who brings the head of a Sikh, shall be paid one hundred rupees as his reward.\* He who renders a still bigger help to the government, shall be granted a largess in addition."

The result was that the chaudhris and parties of the village commons, too, joined hands with the army in search of the Sikhs. There was now a madding race on to capture the Sikhs. The armies were pursuing the Sikhs and the Sikhs were alluring them onward: this storm had devastated the province. The armies were equally guilty with the Sikhs in plundering the country-side and spreading terror. The commons were compelled by the armies to perform chores of labour for them and the crops of the farmers were plundered by the Sikhs. Their goats, sheep and any other cattle that the army people could lay their hands on, were killed by them for food. The people were, thus, down-and-out, completely impoverished and unable to pay the government revenue even.

The Governor of Lahore had not paid Delli the

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\* Shamsheer Khalsa (Urdu) p. 41. Cunningham, p. 89.  
Mc Gregor, p. 113. Malcolm, p. 85.

revenue for the previous three years. The Emperor sent Haibat Khan and Salabat Khan; with a Rohela force, two-thousand strong, in order to realise the over-due revenue from Lahore. They went into camp at Lahore and told Governor Zakaria Khan to pay a few crores of rupees to the Emperor in addition to paying them five thousand rupees daily towards their maintenance.

The treasury of Zakaria Khan was, of course, empty. He summoned to Lahore the chaudhris of his territory. Those people, who had the Sikhs captured for high rewards, were now compelled to do something more than part with these gains. The Governor had insulted and oppressed his chaudhris to extract money out of them, He had to bribe the Rohela Sardars to the tune of ten thousand rupees. Another amount of about twenty lakhs of rupees was sent to Delhi, laden in sixty carts.

This amount had not been counted in the presence of the Rohela Sardars. They were roundly told that the entire balance of payment was being transferred to Delhi thereby, which sum actually came to several crores of rupees.

Zakaria Khan then had on after thought :

“How am I to cover up this fraud ?” A subterfuge suggested itself to him. Sardar Shabeg Singh of Jambar was settled in Lahore for the fine being. His business was to have the state-owned villages on contract for fixed amounts. Zakaria Khan called him and told him to send a message to the Sikhs that the treasure that had left for Delhi, was to be plundered and that his army had been told not to resist them.\*

As the Rohelas neared the bank of the Beas, they were suddenly attacked by a Sikh force, eight-thousand strong. The Lahore army deserted the Rohelas as soon as the Sikhs appeared there. Though the Rohelas tried to make a stand, yet they were soon overpowered. The Sikhs carried the treasure and melted into the nearby jungles and the Rohelas returned to Lahore lamenting their losses. It happened in 1730.

Zakaria Khan wrote to the Emperor that he had

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\* Panth Parkash, page 508

despatched to Delhi the full amount of his arrears, some crores of rupees, which the Sikhs had plundered. He further asked for an army from Delhi to help him crush the Sikhs. The indignant Emperor despatched an army, twenty-thousand strong, in the command of Najib Khan, Safdar Khan, Zafar Khan and others. Before this army was in the Panjab, the Sikhs had left for the hills, and a part of them for Bikaner. The imperial army came heavily down on the Hindus and the Sikh workers in giving went to their ire and succeeded only in ruining further the already plundered Panjab.

The imperial army returned to Delhi in 1731 and the Sikhs were back in the Panjab soon after. They plundered their enemies with greater abandon this time. They punished the tell-tale chandhris severely. They baptized the Hindus, who had previously been forcibly converted to Islam, as Sikhs. The number of these new converts to Sikhism was quite large.

The Sikhs had upset the entire life of the territory in taking revenge upon their wrong-doers. Zakaria Khan again tried his hardest to suppress the Sikhs. But, in spite of his best efforts, success did not favour him.

The numbers and the courage of the Sikhs had risen high. Their daring enabled them to plunder even the bazars of Lahore at times.\*

Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan failed to suppress the Sikhs by force. He now resorted to a new policy. He wrote a detailed letter to the Emperor, saying: "Repression has failed to suppress the disquiet created by the Sikhs. We should now win them through the way of peace and policy. If they are offered a Jagir, they would stop plundering the land. There is no other way for this part of the country to prosper."

Emperor Mohammad Shah was a weak-minded man. His early imprisonment for seven years had debarred him from receiving high education. He was addicted to opium-eating and passed his time inside his palaces. It was a fact that he was not fit to rule.†

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\* Narang, page 204. Shamsheer Khalsa (Urdu) page 43.

† Jadu Nath Sarkar: Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. I, 1932, pages 6-7.

He read the letter of Zakaria Khan and consulted his courtiers about the Sikhs. The ruler and his advisers happened to be very much of a piece: all of them finally agreed to call in the farce-players to act the Sikhs. The performers chose a very apt plot, which well impressed the Emperor in favour of the Sikhs. He permitted the Khan Bahadur to make a jagir in cash to the Sikhs.

Most of the Sikhs had assembled in Amritsar to celebrate their Baisakhi festival of 1733. Darbara Singh, Kapur Singh, Hari Singh Hazuri, Deep Singh Shaheed, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Karam Singh, Budha Singh Sukarchakia, Garja Singh and a few others were among the well-known Sikh leaders of the day. Sardar Shabeg Singh of Jambar, sent by the Khan Bahadur, reached Amritsar to meet the Sikhs assemblage. He offered five thousands rupees as a donation from the Governor for the Deg\* to the Sikhs and prayed: "The Government of Lahore desires to come to terms with the Panth. I am authorised to state that the Panth receives an annual jagir of one lakh of rupees and the title of Nawab Sahib†. I request you to accept these awards."

Sardar Darbara Singh was presiding over the assembly. He asked for the views of the audience. Most people favoured a rejection of the offer.

Sardar Shabeg Singh spoke again: "Statesmanship demands that the Panth should accept the proposal. What has come home to us as a gift, prudence demands that it be accepted. The Panth has not asked for peace: on the other hand, it is the Panjab Government that has asked for it. You have not begged anything of it: it has made its offering to the Panth rather out of fear of you. This offer makes for the honour of the Panth and means no disrespect to it. I suggest accepting all that is offered now."

This proposal was unanimously adopted and the jagir was accepted. But no one agreed to receive the robes of the honour in token of the Nawabship‡ title. Whoever was proposed to accept it, invariably declined it. Kapur

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\* Deg means an offering of sweet pudding.

† Shamsher Khalsa (Urdu) p. 45. Narang, p. 206.

‡ It is the rank of a prince of a state or a governor.



Singh of Faizullapuria was standing and fanning the assembly, at the moment. He was unanimously proposed for it by the assembly. He was, at last, pressed to accept the title and everybody called him Nawab Kapur Singh from that day on.

## CHAPTER V

### Comparative Calm

The Sikhs settled down in peace in Amritsar, with the largess in their pocket. All dined at the common kitchen. The common fund, comprising the offerings, provided the needy with clothes, arms and other requirements. There were three sources that made up this common fund: largess, offerings and the earnings of the individual sikhs. The responsibilities of the organisation were shared among the Sardars: Sardar Bhai Mani Singh was the priest of the temple of Amritsar. The finance was with Diwan Darbara Singh. Nawab Kapur Singh was the flag captian, Gurbakhsh Singh, the artillery commander, Hari Singh, the food controller and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia the provender manager of the horses.

Hari Singh Hazooria, Deep Singh Shaheed, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Karam Singh Khatri, Buddha Singh Sukarchakia, Bhooma Singh, Garja Singh and some others were the advisers to the Diwan and the Nawab.

This organised set-up worked well for a year. The Sikhs caused no lawlessness in the country. Diwan Darbara Singh, the Finance Member, died the next year, in July, 1734. Nawab Kapur Singh took his place as the leader of the Nation. Sardar Darbara Singh had admittedly been the chief of the entire Sikh community till then.

The numbers of the Sikhs had considerably risen, which created grave difficulties in their organisational sphere. The leading Sikhs reviewed the situation and

created two Sections of the Panth : the Buddha Dal (Old Corps) and the Tarna Dal (Young Corps.)

The Tarna Dal was further organised into five divisions.\*

The first was the Shaheed (martyrs) Division. Its general was Baba Deep Singh Shaheed, assisted by reputed Sardars, Natha Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh.

The Amritsarian Division was the second one. Sardars Karam Singh and Dharm Singh Khatri were the generals of the Amritsarias.

Baba Kaln Singh Bhalla was the general of the third division. He was assisted by the well-known Sardars, Miri Singh Bhalla, Hari Singh Dhillon and Bagh Singh Kalal of Hallawal.

The Dallewal Division was the fourth one, with its general, Sardar Dasaundha Singh, a Gill Jatt of Kot of Buddha village.

The Raughretta Sikhs formed the fifth division. It was officered by prominent Sardars, Bir Singh, Joon Singh, Madan Singh and Amar Singh.

The general of each one of these divisions was given a flag and a drum and was ordered to select his own separate camping place in Amritsar. The entire body of the Sikhs was then told individually to choose to join the general who suited them. The five divisions encamped in five separate places, like Ram Sar, Santokh Sar, Babek Sar, and two others.

The Buddha Dal alone remained at the original Akaal camp. Nawab Kapur Singh was its general, with Sardars Jassa Singh and Thraj Singh as his notable lieutenants.

The amount of the largess was not enough for the needs of the growing numbers of the Sikhs in Amritsar. Accordingly, all the divisions of the Tarna Dal marched south to Hansi and Hissar territory, leaving the Buddha Dal alone behind at Amritsar. The Governor of Lahore saw that the Sikhs had their forces scattered. He, therefore, withdrew their largess† and told Nawab Kapur Singh and his Corps to enlist themselves in the imperial

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\* Narang, p. 206. Panth Parkash, p. 568. Bhangoo, p. 202.

† Narang, p. 207. Panth Parkash, p. 572. Bhangoo, p. 205.

army, which the Sikhs refused to do.

The Buddha Dal, was now faced with a financial stringency. The offerings at the Sikh temple were, by no means, sufficient to meet their requirements. Nor had the Army Sikhs agreed to live on the temple offerings of the faithful.

When the Sikhs found themselves financially hard up, they were compelled to have recourse to their old methods. The government had prompted the chaudhris in the villages to harass the Sikhs. The Sikhs, too, left Amritsar and roved the rural areas about that time. They started extracting their means of living from the village chaudhris and numberdars.\* They did not disturb a village that gave them the ration for a meal. But those who resisted this modest demand, were forcibly made to feed the Sikh bands. The entire Majha was overwhelmed by this terrorism.

The Governor of Lahore set an army, ten-thousand strong, to patrol the Majha in parties, under Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Mukhlis Khan, his own nephew, in order to chastise the Sikhs and throw them out of the Majha. These parties moved from one village to another, looting the families of the working Sikhs and the Hindus. Any one protesting even mildly against this tyranny, was invariably killed on the pretext of his being a Sikh. The Sikhs were, thus, compelled to shift to the Malwa.

The corps of Nawab Kapur Singh reached Barnala, which was then the capital of the founder of the Patiala State, Sardar Aala Singh. Sardar Aala Singh hosted all of them, had the ceremonial reading of the holy Granth† performed, offered a dinner to the whole of the assemblage of the Sikhs there and made an offering of clothes for wear and bed to each Sikh. Nawab Kapur Singh performed the Sikh Baptism ceremony for Aala Singh and the members of his family.‡ From that day Sardar Aala Singh enjoyed pre-eminent respect among the Sikhs.

The Buddha Dal of the Sikhs left Aala Singh's place

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\* Revenue Collectors of the villages.

† The sacred scripture of the Sikhs.

‡ Panth Parkush, p. 575. Bhangoo, p. 200.

and approached the territory of Maler Kotla. They received offerings from the faithful and plundered those who opposed them. Next, they raised their heads in the neighbourhood of Sirhind. Mulcting the Muslim chaudhris and the land-lords in that area, they crossed the River Satlej and entered the Jullundher Doaba. Their raids for plunder to meet their necessity continued there. The terror of the Sikhs for the people was so real that no one dared resist their demands. They plundered the area, populated by the Manjhi Muslim Rajputs, with particular care.

Both the Buddha Dal and the Tarna Dal of the Sikhs united again there. The Panth resolved to celebrate the Diwali festival at Amritsar. Accordingly, they crossed the River Beas at Goendwal on the first Saradh, that is, about the middle of September and celebrated their fair at Bowli Sahib in Goendwal.

The Sikhs had collected considerable funds while in the Malwa and the Doaba. They, therefore, donated funds to the Gurdwaras liberally. They moved to Khadoor Sahib from there and held another fair there, four days later. Then they went to Sri Taran Taran. The Tarna Dal stayed there, but the Buddha Dal encamped in the reserved jungle of Basarki.

## CHAPTE VI

### Repression Renewed

As the news of these movements was received by the Governor at Lahore, the Khan Bahadur deputed an army of seven thousand men, in the Command of Lakhpat Rai, Haibat Khan, Salabat Khan, Qutab-ud-Din and other generals to subdue the Sikhs. They surprised the peaceful, unsuspecting Sikhs at Basarki and attacked them ferociously. A bloody action was fought there. Though fewer in numbers, the Sikhs fought desperately. Qutab-ud-Din, the son-in-law of Samund Khan, and Salabat Khan were killed fighting. The death of these two imperial generals was a damper for their army. But Samund Khan himself turned up at the head of a fresh army, just then. Thus, the Sikhs wisely fought a retreating battle and succeeded in slipping towards Khem Karan. That was about the middle of November, 1736.\*

The imperial force kept in pursuit of the Sikhs. The Tarna Dal of the Sikhs joined with the Buddha Dal near Khem Karan. These two corps moved together to the area of Chuhnian. The imperial army was coming in pursuit of them. They met, at last, near Hujra Shahmuqcem and the two armies were locked in a deadly battle. The Sikhs had taken the defeat of Basarki bitterly to heart. Consequently, they now fought with such determination and daring as to inflict a crushing defeat on the enemies,

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 576. Narang, p. 207.

and killed their generals, like Jamal Khan, Tatar Khan and Duni Chand, a nephew of Lakhpat Rai, besides thousands of their soldiers. The imperialists hurried back to Lahore.

This was an undisputed victory for the Sikh arms. The enemy had left behind him ammunition and stores worth thousands of rupees, which the Sikhs took over.

The Sikhs turned back towards Amritsar again. While they were on the march, they took care to punish persons, who had harmed the Sikhs to seek favour with the government. Meanwhile, Samund Khan advanced against them from Lahore at the head of fresh forces. The Sikhs avoided a new clash with them and withdrew into the Riarki area, where they plundered Kalanaur, Gurdaspur and Pathankot. They crossed the River Ravi next and pillaged the territory of Pasrur, Sialkot and Wazirabad.

Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan felt bitterly slurred and discredited by these events. He consulted the mullas and the qazis about the puzzling position that he found himself in. "Thousands of these Sikhs are killed daily. In spite of that, they grow in numbers. Tell me the reason of it?" he asked them.

"Their Guru," they replied, "had poured life-giving nectar into the tank in Amritsar. A bath in it and the sipping of its water renders them immortal. If we stop their entry into Amritsar, they will automatically die out."

This explanation impressed the Khan Bahadur, who ordered Qazi Abdul Rahiman and Muhammad Bakhsh to go and take possession of Amritsar with the help of an army of two thousand men. They occupied Amritsar on reaching there and placed a strong guard around the sacred Sikh tank so as not to permit any Sikh to have a bath in or a sip of its water.

The place was under a close and strict watch that permitted no Sikh to enter there with the exception of Bhai Mani Singh and a few of the his companions who were saints and fakirs. The Qazi one day declared, when standing in the open and among a few bystanders, that only the Sikh who dared have a dip in the sacred tank and escaped unscathed, was a true Sikh in his eyes. All others were just fake Singhs (tigers,) he had added.

This remark took wings and reached the Khasla forces.

Sardar Sukha Singh, a carpenter of the village Kamboki Mari and Sardar Thraj Singh, a nephew of Bhai Mani Singh, prepared themselves, along with a band of fifty other Sikhs, to repair to Amritsar and have a bath in the holy tank. The two leaders left the rest of the party outside the Gillwali Gate in Amritsar, and themselves reached the tank in disguise. It was before dawn and the Lahore army men were yet asleep in their tents. Loth the Sikhs bathed in the tank and rode their horses, shouting their slogans, and joined their party.

Their slogans had roused and confounded the enemy guards, who ran helter shelter, in all directions, shouting: "The Sikhs are here. The Sikhs have come."

Qazi Abdual Rehiman was no less upset. Yet, he tried to put a brave face on it and attempted to encourage others shouting: "It is no more than a few Sikhs. Be brave and capture them."

Had the Sikhs tried to slip away quietly, they could have easily done that. But they decided not to slink away like that, since they had gone there then, and they resolved to do something worthy of their brave, Sikh tradition.

They shouted their slogans again from where they stood outside the Gillwali Gate. The Qazi and his son heard them and advanced towards them along with their men. They had hardly stirred out of their camp, when the Sikhs swooped upon them like lions. It was a well contested action for a short while. The imperial force had about one hundred of them wounded or dead. Qazi Abdul Rehiman and his son were among the killed.\* The Sikhs slipped away into the jungle before it was day light.

When the Khan Bahadur heard this news, he increased the strength of patrolling armies. He further ordered his officers to be very strict in doing their duty. The Sikhs sensed how the wind blew and went to the Malwa and pillaged the area up to Hansi and Hissar. The patrolling armies of Lahore thoroughly plundered the relatives of the Sikhs, during the absence of the latter. It was the year 1737.

The Governor deputed Diwan Lakhpat Rai to Amritsar

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\* Panth Parkash, page 579.



to mend matters there. He had a large part of the holy Sikh tank filled with earth and appointed Qazi Abdul Razzaq as its Controller.

Bhai Mani Singh stuck to Amritsar in spite all these convulsive happenings. He dressed as a Nirmala\* saint. In fact, the cult of the nirmala saints and the system of the standard exposition of the Sikh scripture, the holy Granth, had been started by Bhai Mani Singh. All the clothes he put on, were spotlessly white. His white turban wound plainly round his head, misled the Muslims a lot, since it was quite a contrast with the sharp-pointed, blue turban† of the army Sikhs.

Mani Singh always had a score of Hindu and Sikh saints and Muslim fakirs with him. It was his constant duty to explain the meanings of the text of the Sikh Granth to the faithful. Everybody had free food available at all hours at the Community kitchen.†† These were the reasons that led the government officers to leave Bhai Mani Singh in peace, and to take him for a saintly personality, belonging to all the religious creeds of the country.

The well-known Sikh historian, the author of the Panth Parkash and the Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, Gyani Gyan Singh, was a great-grand-son of Mani Singh. The Gyani has given the life story of Bhai Mani Singh in detail.

One day Guru Teg Bahadur was staying at the village of Akoce, when a Sikh, Bhai Kallah, of Village Kailowal,‡ near Sunam, came to pay his respects to the Guru, along with his two sons, Mania and Nighahia. When the Tenth Guru came to Anandpur from Patna, Bhai Kallah left his son, Mania, in Anandpur as his play-mate. The boy was about seven years old then, that is, a couple of years older than the Tenth Guru. When the Guru organised the Sikh Panth later, the name Mania was changed to Mani Singh as a result of his baptism.

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\* A holy Sikh saint who dresses in neat white clothes and leads a life of peace.

† Mc Gregor, p. 19. Malcolm, p. 180.

†† Guru ka langer.

‡ This village was reduced to ruins at the time of the invasion of India by Nadar Shah and its people who survived, shifted to Laungowal.

When Guru Gobind Singh vacated Anandpur, Bhai Mani Singh was asked to accompany the wives of the Guru to Delhi. Bhai Mani Singh had escorted the Guru's wives, Mothers Sahib Deywan, and Sundari to Damdama, where the Tenth Guru was staying after the battle of Muktsar. Bhai Mani Singh had, later, accompanied the Guru to Nader in the Deccan. Mani Singh had returned to Delhi, accompanying Mother Sahib Deywan, a few days before the death of the Guru.

Mother Sundari had appointed Bhai Mani Singh as the priest of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, in 1721, and had specially asked him to effect a compromise between the two parties of the Sikhs, the Tatt Khalsa and the Bandai Khalsa. He worked as the priest there from then till his martyrdom.

He was the founder of the present system of exposition and commentary\* of the text of the sacred Granth.

Once his brother, Nagahia Singh, and the members of his family came to see him at Amritsar. His brother's seven sons, Agghar Singh, Thraj Singh, Dargaha Singh, Rugha Singh, Marhaj Singh, Bakht Singh and Sujan Singh, had been baptised Sikhs by Bhai Mani Singh. The first three of the nephews stayed with their uncle at Amritsar, but the other four returned home with their father. Thraj Singh joined the Corps of Nawab Kapur Singh later. But Dargaha Singh kept company with Bhai Mani Singh till the latter's martyrdom.

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\* Katha.

## CHAPTER VII

### **Bhai Mani Singh**

The visits of the Sikhs to Amritsar were totally at an end, on account of the very stringent measures that Dewan Lakhpat Rai and Qazi Abdul Razzaq had taken to stop their entry. Bhai Mani Singh felt most uneasy in mind at this prohibition. He was keen on exploring a way and a pretext soon to hold a large gathering of the Sikhs in Amritsar.

He saw the Controller of Amritsar, Qazi Abdul Razzaq, for this purpose. It was settled between them that Bhai Mani Singh was to be allowed to hold a Sikh fair on the occasion of the Dewali in return for the payment of five thousand rupees to the Government as contract fee and, further, two thousand rupees by way of a bribe to the Qazi.\* The fair was to be held for a term of ten days. It was settled that no restrictions were to be placed on the entry of the Sikhs into Amritsar during those days

The Bhai had expected that large crowds of the Sikhs would attend the proposed Diwali fair and that necessary money would come in for the occasion through offerings. He had hoped that enough funds were to be collected for the improvement of the Darbar,† after paying the administration its toll of seven thousand rupees. He despatched invitation letters to the Sikh congregations and parties

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 593.

† The temple premises.

far and near. And in Amritsar itself, the saints and the other faithful residents removed the earth from the tank and filled it with fresh water by drawing it from the wells with the help of draft oxen. All preparations for the fair were taken in hand with considerable enthusiasm.

The government in Lahore had changed its mind by now. They thought of playing foul. They expected all the Sikh leaders to assemble in Amritsar on the occasion of the Diwali and made a plan to arrest all of them from the fair at the temple and to despatch them to Delhi as prisoners. They sent to Amritsar a military force far in excess of what was necessary, on the excuse of making suitable arrangements for the fair. Bhai Mani Singh smelt a rat and judged from the presence of an unnecessarily big force and the suspicious movements of its officers, what they actually were likely to do.

The Bhai immediately sent another letter to every one of the Sikh groups and to every territory, intimating to them the dark design of the rulers and asking the faithful not to come to Amritsar. The absence of the Sikh pilgrims meant no fair in the temple of Amritsar. Just a few udasi and nirmala saints and Muslim sufi fakirs had actually turned up for the fair.

When the days of the fair were over, the rulers asked Bhai Mani Singh to pay in the contracted amount of the fair. His reply was frank. "You had posted," he told them, "an unnecessarily large military force, which frightened away the pilgrims. There was no income from offerings, therefore. How am I to pay you the settled amount now?" At that and under orders from the Lahore Governor, Bhai Mani Singh was arrested by Diwan Lakhpat Rai\* and bundled off to Lahore. It was the year, 1738.

Bhai Mani Singh was taken to the Governor Khan Bahadur. The Bhai told the Governor that he was not able to pay the contract money and he held the government totally responsible for the failure of the fair. The Governor sentenced him to death or to conversion to Islam in the alternative. The Bhai replied to the Khan Bahadur : "Do

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\* Bhango: Pracheen Panth Parkash, p. 211.

you know any Sikh who has ever renounced his religion ? You would have been justified to question me like this only in that case. A Sikh would prefer to lay down his life to disowning Sikhism. This Khalsa is at your service."

The Governor consulted the Qazi who sat near him. His verdict was : "All the joints of his body be dismembered from one another." The Sikhs in Lahore subscribed the money to pay off the value of the contract as soon as they had the news of that verdict. When they spoke of it to Bhai Mani Singh, he refused to avail of their offer for saving his life.

Accordingly, this tragedy was enacted at the Nakhas Crossing. The public executioner was about to chop his hand at the wrist, when Bhai Mani Singh cut him, saying, "act on the sentence that your master passed against me. You have been ordered to sever each joint from others. Don't you see that there are three more joints of the fingers beyond my wrist ? Hack each one of these joints separately."

It was an unusually gruesome sight. The executioner was busy in chopping each one of the joints of the victim's body, while the holy saint sat in complete complacence and unconcern. This unexampled cruelty stunned and shocked every feeling, human heart in Lahore and set people whimpering and groaning with its extreme shock. The last stroke descended on the neck, throwing the head apart from the body. The Sikhs of Lahore collected the pieces of the body of the immortal and martyred saint, Bhai Mani Singh, and cremated them outside the eastern gate of the Lahore fort where his mausoleum stands today. This butchery was enacted early in December, 1738.

This martyrdom caused the long suppressed flames of wrath to burn in the breasts of the Sikhs once again. Every Sikh had in his heart bottomless love for, and faith in the Bhai. The sentence of the severance of all his joints had been executed under the supervision of Qazi Abdul Razaq. Moreover he was a companion of Lakhpat Rai at the time of the arrest of the Bhai. That was the reason that the Sikhs had destroyed the Qazi's ancestral

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\* Shamsheer Khalsa (Panjabi), by Gyani Gyan Singh, 1892, p. 74.

village, Aligarh, in District Gujranwala, a little later and had renamed it Akalgarh,\* and that Sardar Agghar Singh had killed the Qazi of the place.

The qazi who was responsible for the sentence on the Bhai Sahib, was killed, at his house, in Muzang area of Lahore, by Sardar Thraj Singh.

Samund Khan was in camp near the village called Manak. He was the Captain of the patrolling troops. Nawab Kapur Singh attacked him one day and captured him during the fighting. He was tied in ropes and dragged behind horses and, thus killed.†

This was the year when the Sikhs were being massacred everywhere. The Sikh saints who were arrested along with Bhai Mani Singh, were killed by being cracked on the death-wheels.‡ And this was, by no means, the limit. The Sikhs were searched for and hunted all over the Panjab and captured when living peacefully in their homes and taken to Lahore. When they refused to accept the condition of conversion to Islam, they were subjected to extreme persecutions and then murdered.†† These incidents of their forced martyrdom, had ignited the fires of unlimited vengeance in the minds of the Sikhs.†††

Haqiqat Rai had been martyred in Lahore on the day of the spring festival, the Basant Panchmi, in March, before

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\* The village bears the name of Akalgarh even now.

† Panth Parkash, p. 602.

‡ Bhangoo, p. 214.

†† Bhangoo, p. 214.

††† The Governor Khan Bahadur harassed the Sikhs badly, in the year 1738. He was a great tyrant. He killed many Sikhs on the wheel, by hanging, with guns or with spears. He killed others by breaking their heads with thick sticks and drowned or dragged others to death. Many were buried under ground, hanged on the trees or killed with bullets. Who can count these deaths? They ran into many thousands. Many were made to sit in rows and beheaded with swords. He cut the hands or the legs of many. Some had their eyes pulled out or bodies skinned. Whoever kept long hair, was ferreted out and butchered whether he was a child or an old person. Bhangoo, p. 214.

Bhai Mani Singh's assassination\*. The martyrdom had helped the cause of the Sikh patriots. The minds of the dauntless Hindu young men, too, were roused to wreak vengeance on the Muslims. They left their homes, joined the roving Sikh parties and had themselves baptised Singhs.

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\* Haqiqat Rai was the only son of Bhai Bhag Mall Puri and Mother Gauran of Sialkot. He had been married, in his raw boyhood, to Durgi, the daughter of Sardar Kishan Singh of Wadala. Kishan Singh, Mall Singh and Dall Singh were brothers. Haqiqat Rai's mother, too, thus came of a Sikh family.

He was, therefore, well tempered mentally for feeling in favour of the martyrdoms of the Sikh Gurus. He studied in a mosque. A Muslim student used foul words against a Hindu Goddess and, in retaliation, Haqiqat Rai used similar words against Bibi Fatima.

He was arrested for this fault and taken to Lahore and was tried in the court of the Khan Bahadur. He was sentenced to death or Islam. The child who loved his religion invited martyrdom in place of disowning his creed. He was martyred in 1735.

The Sikhs had succeeded in taking full revenge for this murder, later. They attacked Sialkot and plundered it. They killed the beastly qazi Zalim Khan the committing mauvi. Amir Beg, the Commander of Sialkot and other chosen Muslims. Kishan Singh and Dall Singh took the heads of the murderers of Haqiqat Rai and placed them at the feet of Mother Gauran. Panth Parkash, p. 642 Bkangoo, p. 277.

## CHAPTER VIII

### **Bota Singh**

It has already been stated how the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh had given the Sikhs a new life of courage and action. They had created an atmosphere of lawlessness and plunder all over the Panjab. They killed the chaudhris of many places and pillaged several villages. The reciprocal killing of the murderers of Bhai Mani Singh, the Qazi and the Mufti, had not pacified or satisfied them. They were planning to kill the Khan Bahadur, the Governor of Lahore. But the hitch in his case was that he would not stir out of the fort.

One day two thousand sikhs, disguised as Muslims and holding a green flag in their hands, entered the city through the Taxali Gate. The ruse that they were out to play, was that, as the Khan Bahadur came to say his Friday prayer with the congregation, at the Shahi Mosque, they were to do him to death in a sudden sally. But the Governor failed to appear in the congregation outside the fort. The Sikhs were, therefore, disappointed at not finding their chance. But they pillaged parts of the city inside the Taxali and the Mochi Gates before leaving.

This incident put the Khan Bahadur on better guard. He was beside himself with wrath at it. He summoned the officers of the army patrolling parties and the chaudhris of the province. He warned and told them : He in whose area a Sikh is seen, shall be punished in the way as the Sikhs are dealt with now."



The new order compelled the Sikhs to suspect a murderer behind every bush. It, thus, became difficult for them to live in the province of Lahore. They hurriedly moved into the Malwa and some of them went further to Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and other areas of Rajasthan.

It was at this time that the sons of Sardar Aala Singh of Patiala were administered Amrit by Sardar Agghar Singh.

There was no Sikh to be seen in the Majha that year. If there was, however, a solitary Sikh, he would fight like a warrior and die like a hero, when he clashed with the imperial men.

The Commissioner of Jullundur, Qutab-ud-Din, attacked Kartarpur. The priest of the Gurdwara there, Sodhi Wadbhag Singh, escaped to the hills for refuge. Qutab-ud-Din burnt down the Gurdwara Thamm Sahib and killed a cow in its yard.

He looted the whole of the village of Kartarpur and took into his possession several Hindu women and brought them to Jullundur.

But soon Sardar Bhag Singh punished Qutab-ud-Din for this crime. The Sikhs over-powered and captured him when he was hunting near the village of Dhilwan, and then threw him alive into flames.\* The Sikhs attacked Jullundur next and looted a large part of it. They set free the Hindu ladies from the possession of the Muslims and took them safely back to their homes.

Sardar Bota Singh, a Jatt of Bharana and his Comerade, Sardar Garja Singh, a Mazhabi, were in hiding for fear of the government forces. They occasionally had their bath in the holy tanks of Amritsar and Taran Taran at night. One day they had taken their bath in the tank of Taran Taran and were in hiding in the neighbouring jungle, when they overheard the talk of some casual travellers passing by them. One of the strangers said to the others: "Look! There are two Singhs in hiding there." Another man remarked: "Did you ever before hear of Singhs being in hiding? The two here must be jackals."

The Sikhs were cut to the quick by these words. They thought over the casual remark and resolved to die in a

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 610-11.

manner worthy of the true Sikhs. They blocked the Lahore road near the Sarai Nur-Din and began charging as road toll of one anna per cart and one paisa per donkey which passed that point of the road.

The passengers paid up the toll and the moved on, unprotesting.

When this business had gone on peacefully for two or three days, Sardar Bota Singh wrote a letter to the Khan Bahadur, the Governor of Lahore, saying, "I am Bota Singh I wield a thick club in my hands. I stand here and realise, the road toll at one anna a cart and one paisa a donkey. You are an incompetent ruler, and you will be dragged to the court of Lord God, and held answerable for your incompetence. Tell Miss Khano, your sister and my sister-in-law, that Bota Singh is her brother-in-law."\*

This letter was handed over to some traders who were on their way to Lahore and it reached the Governor. He was beside himself with rage when he read it. He deputed his Commander, Jalal Din, and ordered him to take one hundred horse-men and bring Bota Singh to him as a captive.

Jalal Din went there and surrounded Bota Singh and his comrade. He found the two Sikhs ready for a fight. Yet the Commander chose to shout to them: "Bota Singh, let me tell you that resistance is futile. For how long will you two make a stand against one hundred? Do as I advise you: throw up your arms and surrender to me. I shall recommend you to the Governor of Lahore for a pardon."

Bota Singh shouted his reply to him like a dauntless man that he was: "We came here to die fighting like brave soldiers, not to live on like cowards by making an apology. If you have a mind to try the daring of the Sikhs, tell four of your soldiers to come forward and fight the two of us."

The Commander carefully selected four of his fierce soldiers to attack this pair of Sikhs. Both the parties were ready with the use of their swords and shields against each other. The paid soldiers of the Governor could not overpower the Sikhs who were not afraid of dying. The two

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\* Shamsheer Khalsa, Panjabi, p. 76. Khano was a sister of the Khan Bahadur. Bhangoo, p. 230.

Sikhs put to death their four foes in an instant. Five others of the enemy followed the first four. They, too, met with the same fate.

The Commander, next, ordered his entire force to the attack. The Sikhs kept up their courage. These two warriors continued to fight till they breathed their last and fell as martyrs. Jalal Din, on his side, had about thirty of his soldiers either wounded or killed.\* This episode soon became a common sensation all over that area.

The Sikhs had brought about many such exciting incidents to assert that the Panth was alive and vigorous and to refute the enemy claim of its extinction. The fact is that the Sikhs lived only to die like warriors of note. The fear of death had never entered their minds. He alone would agree to be baptised a Sikh, who was determined to die in the service of the Panth. Not only the man who accepted Sikh baptism, but also his relatives, were convinced that he had accepted Sikhism in order to die for the Panth. If a woman asked another woman as to the number of her sons, the latter would reply that she did have four, though one of them had been converted to Sikhism, † meaning thereby that becoming a Sikh was to offer one's life on the altar of the Panth.

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 608.

† Narang, p. 89.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Mughal Kings

For the understanding of Sikh history it is essential that we should be somewhat acquainted with the history of the Mughal kings of Delhi and of the rulers of Kabul. Brought up with these two powers on either side, the Sikh nation attained its adolescence. The vicissitudes faced by these two powers, have deeply influenced the history of the Sikhs, during the period of the gradual decline of these governments. The Sikh power slowly rose. It would be more correct to say that after a prolonged struggle with these neighbours, the Sikh nation overthrew the supremacy of the former and attained the zenith of its glory.

Babar was the founder of the Mughal rule in India. His real name was Zahir-ud-Din. But because of his valorous deeds, he was popularly known as Babar or a Lion. On the father's side he had descended from the house of Timur and on the mother's side he belonged to the dynasty of Chingiz Khan. His father, named Umar Sheikh Mirza, was the ruler of the principality of Farghana in Turkistan. Babar lost his father, when he was only 12 years old, and his close relatives usurped his state. For ten years he kept moving from place to place. Finally, by virtue of his unflinching efforts and manly courage, he took possession of Kabul, in 1504.

Babar was then only 22 years old. But brave men have always a desire to live in a spacious world and they never allow the boundaries of their dominion to become

stationary. Babar, too, had a similar yearning. He longed to be the king of a vast country like India. Consequently, at the first battle of Panipat, in 1526, the army of Babar, consisting of 12,000 horsemen, defeated the 100,000 strong army of Ibrahim Lodi, the king of Delhi. Babar, thus, became the king of Delhi and the founder of the Mughal Empire in India.

Babar died in 1530 and was succeeded on the throne by his son, Nasir-ud-Din Humayun. Ten years thereafter, in 1540, Sher Shah Suri usurped the kingdom from Humayun, and drove him into exile. Fifteen years later Humayun reconquered India in 1555, and was succeeded by his son, Jalal-ud-Din Akbar.

Though the word, Akbar, itself means great, Akbar came to be known as the greatest among the great rulers of India. He ruled for 49 years, and died in 1605.

After Akbar, his son, Nuru-ud-din Jahangir, ascended the throne and it was under Jahangir's order that Guru Arjan Dev was martyred in Lahore. Jahangir died in 1627 and was succeeded on the throne by his son, Prince Khurram, who took the title of Shah Jahan.

During his rule Guru Hargobind fought four battles against the royal forces. Shah Jahan is famous in Indian history for his buildings, particularly for the Taj Mahal in Agra.

Shah Jahan occupied the throne for 31 years. But, in 1658, he was imprisoned by his son, Mohy-ud-Din Aurangzeb, who became king with the title of Alamgir, but not before he had put to the sword all his real brothers. Under Aurangzeb's order a saint, like Sarmad, and also Guru Tegh Bahadur, were martyred. Aurangzeb extended the boundaries of his kingdom to the remote parts of the Deccan, though he also gave birth to the causes which led to the fall of the Mughal empire.

Aurangzeb died in 1707 and his son, Prince Muazzam, waded through the blood of his brothers to the throne, under the title of Bahadur Shah the First. He, however, died a few years later, in 1712.

Once again the battle of succession was decided with the sword; and with his hands reeking with the blood of his

brothers, Jahandar Shah, the son of Bahadur Shah the First came to the throne. But he ruled for 11 months only.

He was killed by Farrukh Siyer, who received help from the Sayyad Brothers, Abdullah and Hussain Ali, in this matter. Now Farrukh Siyer became the king of Delhi.

It was during the reign of Farrukh Siyer that Baba Banda Singh was martyred. Farrukh Siyer fell out with the Sayyad Brothers, and they killed him in 1719, and placed Rafi-ud-Darjat on the throne of Delhi. But the new king was also murdered after only three months and his brother, Rafi ud-Daula, was placed on the throne. After another three months Rafi-ud-Daula, too, followed his brother to the grave. Both the brothers had been poisoned to death by the Sayyad Brothers.

At last, Prince Roshan Akhtar, commonly known as Muhammad Shah Rangila, came to the throne towards the end of 1719. He ruled till 1748, The Sayyad Brothers were, no doubt, killed during his reign. In spite of that, power had passed into the hands of the new ministers. After the death of Muhammad Shah Rangila, Ahmed Shah, his only son, ascended the throne.

The empire of Delhi had become a play-thing in the hands of the successors of Ahmad Shah, after he had been dethroned. Gazi-ud-Din, his Minister, blinded and imprisoned him in Saleemgarh, on June 5, 1754, where he died in 1775.

The Minister, next, placed Sultan Aziz-ud-Din, the son of Jahandar Shah, on the throne. The new Emperor was fifty-five years old when he came to the throne. He adopted the title of the Abul Adal Aziz-ud-Din Mohammad Alamgir the Second. He, too, was murdered by Gazi-ud-Din on November 30, 1759.

Delhi had two powerful men in those days: Gazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk, the Minister and Najib-ud-Daula Rohela, the Commander-in-Chief.

The Minister made Muhi-ul-Millat the Emperor, on October 9, 1760; the new Emperor assumed the title of Shah Jahan the Second. Najib ud-Daula wrote a letter to invite Ahmad Shah Abdali. On the other side, the Minister called in the Maharathas to his aid. Once in

Delhi, the Mahrathas were the masters of the situation. The Maharatha General, Sada Shiva Rao Bhau, replaced Shah Jahan the Second by Mirza Jawan Bakht, and gave him the title of Shah Jahan the Third.

Shuja-ul-Daula, the Nawab of Awadh, invited Prince Ali Gauhar from Patna, about this time, and placed him on the throne of Delhi, and himself became the Minister of the latter. Ali Gohar chose the title of Shah Alam the Second. The third battle of Panipat was fought in his time. When Ahmad Shah Abdali was in Delhi, he recognised Shah Alam the Second as the Mughal Emperor.

It might be remembered here that Rafi-ul-Daula had chosen for himself the title of Shah Alam the First, though it was not recognized by any one else.

Ghulam Qadir Rohela took possession of Delhi in 1788 and blinded Shah Alam the Second, who retained his throne after the Rohelas had left Delhi.

The English took possession of Delhi next, who, too, recognised the same Emperor. That was in 1803. Shah Alam the Second died in 1806.

The English, next supported Akbar the Second and made him the Emperor of Delhi. He reigned till 1837. He was succeeded by Bahadur Shah the Second, the last Mughal King of Delhi. He was a good poet of Urdu, having Zafar as his poetic name. He was dethroned by the English in 1858, after the mutiny, and was deported to Rangoon, where he died in detention in 1862.

Besides these Mughal Kings, there were two other Mughal princes who had been the Kings of Delhi for a spell of only a few days. Prince Niku Siyer was declared the King of India in Agra, after the death of Rafi-ud-Darjat, with the help of the men of Raja Jai Singh. The Sayyad Brothers were then at the height of their power. They fought a battle against Niku Siyer, defeated him in the field and imprisoned him in Saleemgarh, where he died on March 11, 1723.

Mohammad Shah Rangila ascended the throne, after the death Rafi-ul-Daula. The Sayyad Brothers fell out with him and they declared Prince Sultan Mohammad

Ibrahim as the Emperor. But this issue of the succession to the throne was, then, taken to the battle-field for a decision. The Sayyad Brothers were killed during the fighting and Ibrahim was made a prisoner. He died in the prison on January 30, 1746.



## CHAPTER X

### Nadar Shah Became King of Iran

The invasion of Nadar Shah was instrumental in weakening the Mughals and strengthening the Sikhs. Nadar was born in Khurasan in a poor family in 1688 A. D. Who could at that time predict that this son of a shepherd would one day become quite a figure in the history of the world? His childhood was spent in poverty. When he grew up, he joined a robber band, becoming soon its leader on account of his fearless nature.

The king of Iran at that time was very weak. Consequently, the Afghans occupied by force Khurasan, in 1717, and later Iran itself, in 1721. The national pride of Nadar was aroused at these happenings. The robber chief now turned into a national hero, who came out to measure strength with the Afghan foreigners who had invaded his country. He captured Khurasan and Qandhar from the Afghans.

This glorious deed brought thousands of patriots flocking to his banner. Nadar now set out with renewed courage, and compelled the Afghans to vacate every inch of the Iranian territory. Then he placed upon the throne of Iran King Tehmasap, a scion of the old royal family of Iran. In gratitude for this kindness king Tehmasap gave half his kingdom to Nadar.

While Nadar was busy administering his territory, the Afghans once again usurped from Tehmasap his dominion. Nadar again drove the Afghans out of Iran.

He refused the entreaties of the people to assume for himself the rulership of the land. On the other hand, he placed Abbas, the son of Tehmasap, on the throne of Iran, in 1732. Abbas was then only 8 months old. Nadar, therefore, became the regent, and the entire control of the government passed to him. Four years later Abbas died and Nadar became the king of Iran under the title of Emperor Nadar Shah.\*

The Afghans were beaten back into Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, then called the province of Kabul, was at that time a part of the Mughal kingdom of Delhi, and had been so since the time of Akbar. One, Nasir Khan, had been the Governor of Kabul since 1720. He was an incompetent person, who passed in hunting the time left over to him after saying his prayers. He had, thus, hardly any time left for administration, which went awry in a big way and the state revenues declined. The central government at Delhi had, therefore, to bear part of the expenditure of Kabul.

When Nadar rose to eminence, Mohammad Shah Rangila was the king and Qamr-ud-Din Khan the Minister at Delhi, and they both seemed to have forgotten that Kabul, too, was a province of the kingdom of Delhi. They had discontinued all help to Kabul for many years now and had paid no attention whatever to its administration. The soldiers of Nasir Khan had not been paid for five years, from 1733 to 1738. There was also a decline in the rations and the ammunition of the army.

The Afghans of Kabul had invaded Iran several times. To avenge these attacks now, Nadar Shah advanced upon Afghanistan in May, 1738. He occupied the city of Gahzni without any opposition. Nasir Khan was then in Peshawar. Nadar Shah, thus, occupied Kabul also after a brief resistance. From Kabul Nadar Shah addressed

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\* Gupta Hari Ram : Later Mughal History of the Panjab, p. 30. Tazkara-i-Mukhlis by Anand Ram Lahori (Lahori was the secretary to the Minister of Delhi, Qamruddin Khan,) p. 34. Jahankusha-i-Nadari by Mohd Mehdi Ali Khan (Secretary to Nadar) Vol. I, p. 222. Biyan-i-Waqi by Khawaja Abdul Hakim Kashmiri, p. 21. Irwin, Vol. II, p. 320.

friendly missives both to Nasir Khan at Peshawar and to the king at Delhi. The replies received from both the quarters were discouraging.

Nasir Khan blocked the Khyber Pass with an army, twenty thousands strong. Nadar was furious at this and dashed with his army in the direction of Peshawar. The soldiers of Nasir Khan were hardly expected to put up a fight. They turned tail and fled from the field and Nadar occupied Peshawar on 20th November, 1738.

A victorious general feels rarely contented; nor do the frontiers of countries pose any barriers for him. Having occupied Peshawar, Nadar Shah bounced across the river Attock on December 12th, 1738. There was nobody to bar his advance up to Lahore; nor did Zakaria Khan, Khan Bahadur, consider it prudent to challenge him as soon as he had entered the territory of the province of the Panjab. He was all the time writing to Delhi, urging the despatch of imperial forces to stop Nadar Shah. But at the time, a Rangila king occupied the throne of Delhi. A merry-maker hardly has anything to do with the wars and the skirmishes. Ultimately the Khan Bahadur alone came to fight Nadar on the banks of the Ravi. But he was defeated in the very first clash of the armies on January 11th, 1739. He accepted the suzerainty of Nadar, and was retained by him as the Governor of Lahore. The Khan Bahadur made to Nadar an offering of twenty lakhs\* of rupees.

Nadar had, no doubt, appointed the Khan Bahadur as a governor under him, yet, he was certainly not free from the apprehension of a revolt on the part of the Khan Bahadur, if Nadar was locked in a struggle with the king of Delhi. On that account Nadar took with him as hostages Khan Bahadur's son, Hayatullah Khan, on whom he conferred the title of Shah Nawaz Khan, and Dalpat Rai, the son of Dewan Lakhpat Rai. This done he wanted to reach Delhi at the earliest. Leaving Lahore on 26th January he reached Sirhind on February the 5th, Rajpura on the 6th, Ambala on the 7th and Shahabad on the 8th of

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\* Punjab Mughals by Gupta, p. 31. Bhangoo mentions a sum of 3 crores of rupees at. p. 215.

February, 1739.

A word now about the preparations of the Government at Delhi to meet the situation. When Muhiammad Shah heard of Nadar's capture of Kabul, he ordered his generals to prepare to give a fight. The generals were so timid and slow that they took one full month to move with their armies out of the city of Delhi itself. They took another two months to reach Karnal at a distance of 75 miles from Delhi. They thought it prudent not to proceed further and so built their defences there. Their army outnumbered Nadar's forces and they had more of guns and other munitions, too. But the soldiers of Nadar had become a nightmare for the Delhi forces, and there was no antidote to this nervousness.

On Tuesday, the 13th February, the decisive battle of Karnal took place. In a short period of three hours the Mughal army of Delhi lost 20,000† in dead, while the rest of them became disheartened and fled the field. The generals laid down arms and Nadar made a victorious entry into Delhi on the 9th March. He stayed in the royal palaces at Delhi for 58 days.‡

The day after his occupation of Delhi, on 11th March, the news spread in the city that Mohammad Shah had got Nadar murdered. At this the people, thinking of Nadar's soldiers being masterless now, pounced upon them, and hundreds of Irani soldiers were thus killed. Nadar was all afire at this and he ordered a general massacre of the people of Delhi. In nine hours thousands†† of people were put to the sword. The rich and the poor were robbed alike of whatever they could yield. The Irani soldiers molested and assaulted countless Indian women. Nadar himself assaulted the beautiful wives and daughters of

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† Punjab Mughals by Gupta, p. 32. Jadunath Sarkar at p. 4 mentions the number of those killed as ten to twelve thousands.

‡ Panth Parkash, p. 622.

†† Panjab Mughals by Gupta, p. 32, gives 20,000, and Jadunath Sarkar, p. 4, 20,000. Religion and Short History of the Sikhs by George Batley Scott, C. I. E., printed in 1930, p. 39, 100,000. Panth Parkash p. 622, 1,38,000. Bhangoo, p. 217, 70,000. The last number seems to be correct.

Muzaffar Khan\* who had been killed in the battle of Karnal. Nadar married his son, Nasrullah Mirza, to the daughter of king Mohammad Shah,† on March 26. But, in fact, it was no marriage; it was a part of the general massacre and plunder ordered by Nadar. On his return Nadar took with him 50, 000‡ boys and girls from Delhi and its neighbourhood, as prisoners, with the intention of making slaves of them.

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\* Jadhunath Sarkar, p. 5.

† Jadhunath Sarkar, p. 5.

‡ Panth Parkash, p. 623.

## CHAPTER XI

### Nadar Shah Invaded India

It has been stated above that Afghanistan was then a province of India. The king of Delhi surrendered to Nadar Afganistan, Peshawar and the rest of the territory west of the River Attock. But this was not all. A big region to east of Attock, with its outstanding principalities of Gurjat, Sialkot, Aurangabad and Pasrur, commonly known as the Char Mahaal, was also surrendered to Nadar.

Estimates differ as to the amount of booty Nadar captured in Delhi. Besides the well-known Peacock Throne\* and Koh-i-noor diamond,† he carried cash and property worth crores of rupees.‡ This invasion shook the Mughal rule to its foundations. Deccan, Bengal and Oudh were already out of its orbit : Lahore, too, was now lost to it.

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\*Shahjahan had got it prepared at a cost of 9 crores of rupees.

† This is the famous diamond of the Pandavas, which was captured by Nadar in Delhi. Sher-i-Panjab Ranjit Singh got it from the descendants of Nadar. The English took it in 1840, from Dalip Singh, a descendant of Ranjit Singh. Now it is in the possession of the sovereign of England.

‡ Jadunath Sarkar, p. 4, gives the figure of 15 crores in cash and property worth rupees 50 crores. Panth Prakash, p. 622 : Peacock Throne worth rupees 9 crores : Koh-i-noor, a pink coloured diamond, weighing 22 Masas, a pearl weighing 64 rattias and cash and other property worth Rs. 60 crores. Bayan-i-Waqui: Rs. 80 crore.

Nadar left Delhi on May 5, 1739 and came to Lahore. When his arrival was known practically the whole of the Panjab, was, so to say, evacuated by the people. They migrated to the hills with whatever belongings they could looted with Sikhs were already ensconced there, and they carry. The a vengeance those who were the enemies of the Panth. In short, of the migrants some were looted\* by the Sikhs, while many received the holy baptism and became Sikhs.†

During Nadar's stay in Delhi the Sikhs had reappeared in the plains of the Panjab. They plundered the whole territory from the Chenab to the precincts of Karnal and the monetary straits of the Sikh Sardars had been entirely cured by this loot. When Nadar turned back from Delhi, the Sikhs passed a community resolution that Nadar must not go back without giving to the Sikhs their share of the loot of Delhi. Accordingly, the armies of Nadar, who had become a terror for the governments of Delhi and Lahore, were looted freely by the Sikhs.‡ As a result of it Nadar's invasion helped greatly the Sikhs to grow and prosper. They gained immensely both in money and in numbers †

When Nadar received in Lahore the news of this attack on his army, he was ablaze with fury. He said to the Khan Bahadur, "Who are these Sikhs, who have laid their hands on the armies of Emperor Nadar Shah? Where do they live? I shall burn their houses to ashes. Where is their kingdom? I shall annihilate it."

The Khan Bahadur replied, "O victorious king, it is difficult to tell you about their homes or their kingdom. The saddles\*\* of their horses are their homes and their kingdom embraces the whole world, as they claim. Hungry and naked, treading the brinks of forests and falling victims to bullets of State forces or tied to the whirling

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\* Sinha, p. 11. Malcolm, p. 86.

† Sinha, p. 11.

Malcolm, p. 86. Sinha, p. 12. Panth Prakash p. 623. Forster, Vol. 1, p. 313.

‡ Bhangoo, p. 215.

\*\* The Sikhs by Sir J.J.H. Gordon, printed in 1904, p. 58.

wheels and losing their limbs one by one, their slogan is ever the same :

‘The true shall reign supreme;  
The rebels shall ever go under.’\*

“They have no settled homes, no dear and near ones. The Government offers prizes for their heads. They don’t have enough to eat, nor enough to clothe their bodies with. Yet they claim to be the rulers of the world. Their bellicosity is so great that a single individual does not shrink from facing a whole army. They are so proud that they dub others as the creatures who have to go through a round of eighty-four lakhs of births, while they regard themselves as the pure ones of the Supreme Being. They run faster than our steeds. They are not bothered by hunger, fatigue or sleep. Despondence is something alien to them.† Such are these Sikhs, who have pillaged your army.”

With a cold sigh Nadar observed, “If this is so, they shall without doubt be the rulers of this land. Let alone yourself, no power on earth can stop them from attaining their objective.”

Finally Nadar handed over to the Khan Bahadur the four principalities of the Char Mahaal, along with the adjoining territories and returned to Kandhar. The Khan Bahadur promised to pay to him an annual tribute of twenty lakhs of rupees.

The Khan Bahadur accompanied Nadar up to the river Chenab to see him off. In appreciation of this loyalty Nadar wrote to the king at Delhi, recommending a raise in the status of the Khan Bahadur. In compliance of that desire the king gave to the Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan, who was now an eight-thousander, the title of Saif-ud-Daula the Second. In addition, the Khan Bahadur was also given the Governorship of Multan,‡ since Governor Abdus

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\* Raj Kerega Khalsa Aaki Rahey na Koey.

† Bhangoo, p. 217. The original it is in Panjabi verse.

‡ Anand Ram, p. 85.



Samad Khan of Multan, the father of the Khan Bahadur, had died earlier. The Khan Bahadur appointed his son, Shah Nawaz Hayatullah Khan, as his Lientenant Governor in Multan.\*

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\* Anand Ram, p. 93.

## CHAPTER XII

### Dark Times

The period of five months when Nadar stayed in India, was a golden time for the Sikhs. They had augmented considerably their power through loot and plunder, and were now fully organised. They possessed outstanding leaders, like Nawab Kapur Singh and S. Bagh Singh\* of Hallowall. While going to Delhi, Nadar had taken along with him large forces belonging to Lahore. Panjab was, thus, practically denuded of state forces. The Sikhs emerged from their hide-outs and started pillaging the plains of the Panjab. The houses of the Muslims and of the chaudhris of the area were looted. Many of those who had ever suffered at the hands of Muslim rulers, gave up their hearths and homes and joined the Sikhs† bands. He who once received baptism and became a Sikh, could never turn back. Thus, along with their economic strength the numerical strength of the Sikhs had also increased.

At this time there arose among the Sikhs a new keenness to construct a fort for fighting the enemies. Thus, for the first time the Sikhs constructed a kutchra fort at Dallewal,‡ on the bank of the River Ravi. Two main considerations that governed the construction of this fort,

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\* The nephew of S. Bagh Singh, named S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, became very famous.

† Khalsa Nama by Dewan Bakht Mal, p. 57.

‡ Malcolm, p. 87.

were the storage of the looted property and resistance to the enemy in times of difficulty.

The Sikhs had become so bold as this time, that, setting aside all fear, they looted the armies of Nadar and secured the liberty of thousands of Indian boys and girls, who were being carried as prisoners by Nadar's soldiers. This good deed prompted many Hindu young men to embrace Sikhism.

Being now rid of Nadar, the Khan Bahadur took stock of his own land, and found it in ruins. The depredations of Nadar's army were mainly responsible for this; the rest of it was the handiwork of the Sikhs. Helpless as he was before Nadar, the Khan Bahadur now decided to vent his full wrath upon the Sikhs. He issued strict orders to the chaudhris, commanders and the officers of the roving forces to annihilate completely the Sikhs in the area.

When the patrolling army advanced, the Sikhs moved in the direction of the Dallewal fort and the neighbouring jungle. The royal army surrounded the fort. The Sikhs offered plucky resistance. But the enemy's numerical superiority made everything unavailing. At last, in the darkness of the night, the Sikhs broke through the encirclement of the enemy and made good their escape. But hundreds of them had lost their lives in this escapade. Many were captured by the enemy, and brought to Lahore, where they were all tortured to martyrdom in Nakhas Chowk.\* The Dallewal fort was razed to the ground by the enemy.

The Khan Bahadur issued the following proclamation : "The state decrees that no Sikh must live in our territory. The Sikhs have been proclaimed as rebels by the government and it would be no offence to murder a Sikh or to loot his house.† A person giving information about a Sikh will receive ten rupees; one who captures a Sikh, or produces the head of a Sikh, will get fifty rupees as

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\* The place is now known as Shahid Ganj: Rasala-i-Sahibnuma, by Ganesh Dass, p. 198.

† Bhangoo, p. 219.

reward.\* One who suppresses information about Sikhs or feeds them, gives them provisions, gives them shelter in his house or enters into matrimonial relations with them, will be converted to Islam. If he refuses to embrace Islam, he will be killed."†

This proclamation turned the greedy chaudhris of the villages into veritable bloodhounds for preying upon the Sikhs. It became impossible for the Sikhs to live in the Bari Doab. Consequently, a number of them sought shelter in the hills of Jammu and Kangra, while a good majority crossed the river Beas into the Jullundur Doaba.

The Sikhs, expelled from the Majha and Riarki areas, had poured into the Doaba. Now, in order to drive them out of there too the Khan Bahadur appointed Adina Beg the Nazim‡ of Jullundur with strict instruction to root out the Sikhs. Adina Beg†† was a clever and politic ruler. He had long desired to be the Nazim of Jullundur, and now when he had gained his wish, he had the further ambition to retain this office at all costs. For this purpose he followed the policy of not at all driving the Sikhs from his territory. Soon after his arrival, therefore, he made peace with the Sikhs and granted even Jagirs to a few Sardars.\*\* But the Khan Bahadur's relentless orders compelled Adina Beg to resume the Jagirs and to deploy forces to turn out the Sikhs. Thus forced to quit the Doaba, the Sikhs crossed over into the Sirhind territory and started plundering it.

The local officers in Sirhind were in no position to face the Sikhs. General Azimullah was, therefore, despatched

\* Bhanghoo, p- 219.

† Ibid, p. 221.

‡ Governor.

†† Adina Beg's father, Channun Arain, a peasant, was a resident of Sharakpur. Adina Beg ran away from home while still young. He worked as a domestic servant with Mughal officers. He worked also as a revenue collector, Qanugo of Kang in Sultanpur region. He also was an officer in Sultanpur for some time. Bakht Mal p. 58.

\*\* History of the Sikhs ,1738-1768 by Hari Ram Gupta, p. 8

by the kings from Delhi to meet the situation. The Sikhs had several skirmishes with him at a number of places. However, realising their difficult position, the Sikhs moved towards Bikaner. This area was now free from the Sikhs and thereupon, Azimullah Khan returned to Delhi.

The Panjab had been completely rid of the Sikhs : now some had migrated to the hills, while others had sought refuge in the Hindu States of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur and others. If some stray Sikh, who had been in hiding, fell into the hands of the rulers, he was given a veritable hell. An idea of the severities faced by the Sikhs is given by the typical incident narrated below.

Three Sikhs had found shelter in a deep cave, dug by the wolves in the forest near Mirankot. They were S. Laddha Singh Bhangoo of Mirankot, S. Ram Singh of village Lamma Hehar and S. Sulakkhan Singh Gill.† They would hide themselves there in daytime, but would emerge from the cave at night and meet their relatives and friends. One day a military patrol arrived there and the Sikhs hid themselves. The commander of the patrol party surrounded the hideout and ordered his soldiers to enter the hollow and arrest the Sikhs.

But who would bell the cat, was the question. The soldiers were all atremble as they approached the entrance. They stood near the opening and started firing into the cave. The Sikhs also fired a few shots in reply. The firing from both the sides went amiss. But this sound of firing from inside had made the soldiers tremble. Not one of them dared come near the opening of the cave.

Finally, labourers were forced to work in order to open up the entrance. With trembling hands they would ply the spade and, then, frightened at the sound of their own feet, would shout "they are coming," and run away, leaving the spades behind them.

When this plan either did not succeed, it was decided to fill the hollow with water. But as the cave led to a lower water-source, it would not fill with the water poured from above. In the meantime it was evening, and the

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\* Bhangoo, p. 247.

coming darkness unnerved the Muslims. They placed fuel at the mouth of the hollow and set fire to it. The soldiers put the villagers on watch-duty for the night and themselves retired to rest in the village. The villagers sympathised inwardly with the Sikhs. The fire was put out by them, the Sikhs came out alive and made good their escape in the darkness of the night.\*

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 633.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Massa Ranghar

The Khan Bahadur called the well-known informers\* of the area, gave them rewards, but, at the same time, warned them, and threatened them with dire punishments, if any Sikh ever made his appearance in their region. The chaudhris assured the Governor that the Sikhs were extinct in the area and they were not to be permitted to appear again. These rewards made the chaudhris still more embittered enemies of the Sikhs. They now began to get the families of the absentee Sikhs arrested and their sacred places desecrated.

Massa Ranghar was the chaudhri of Mandiala and Amritsar too fell in his charge. The Khan Bahadur gave him some force and put him on guard duty at Amritsar, since the Khan Bahadur knew that the Sikhs must first visit Amritsar, whenever they returned to the Panjab. Massa stationed himself in Amritsar, together with the state force and his henchmen. He exacted money and provisions from the Hindus and the Sahajdhari Sikhs in the name of the state force. This was not all. He would sit on a cot

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\* The chief hostile informers against the Sikhs then were : Harbhagat Niranjania of Jandiala, Karma Chhina, Rama Randhawa of village Ghanian, Dharamdass of village Jodhnagar, Massa Ranghar of village Mandiala, Sahib Rai Sandhu of village Nushehra, Manha of village Nushehra, Dilbagh Rai of village Saran, Haibat Mal of village Dhaneshta, etc.

in Harimandar Sahib † smoke his pipe and drink wine there. Prostitutes were called in to dance at the place where the Fifth Guru used to perform Kirtan. ‡

In view of these stringent measures the Sikh bands had moved to places like Bikaner. Only a stray Sikh lived here and there in hiding: Sardar Bulaqa Singh of village Kang\* was one such Sikh who lived in hiding. When he heard of the wicked deeds of Massa, he burnt with impotent wrath. Roused by the insults heaped on the panth, he arrived in Bikaner after a journey of great hardships, and met the band of S. Sham Singh Narli and S. Buddha Singh. On hearing from S. Bulaqa Singh the news of the desecration of the Harmandar Sahib, they all had their blood boiling with furore and rage. S. Mehtab Singh Bhangoo, of village Mirankot and S. Sukha Singh Carpenter of Mari Kamboki stood up in the gathering, drew their swords, and sought permission of Jathedar Buddha Singh to kill Massa. The gathering prayed to God for the success of their mission, and the two Sikhs rode their horses and set out in disguise for Amritsar.

When they approached Amritsar, they thought of a plan to gain access to Massa. They collected flat pieces of broken earthenware from a mound of ruins and put them in a bag. They let their hair hang loose behind them. Their plan was to appear like some village revenue collectors, 'Numbardars' who came to hand over the collections. On a blazing noon in August,\*\* both of them appeared in front of the entrance the Darshani Deorhi. They tied their horses to the jachiber tree growing to the left of the entrance door. The watchmen took them to be some village revenue officials, who had come to hand over their collection. Nobody, thus, stopped them. The soldiers too were resting at their proper places at the hot time of noon, and only a few watchmen were awake.

As the two Sikhs reached Harimandar Sahib, they

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† The Sikh temple now called the Golden Temple.

‡ Kirtan is the pieces of the text of the Adi Granth that are sung in accompaniment of musical instruments.

\* Shamsher-i-Khalsa (Gurmukhi,) page 78.

\*\*Bhangoo, page 223.



saw Massa sitting on a cot and smoking, while a courtesan was dancing in front of him. A few of his intimate companions were reeling in a besotted condition. The two Sikhs blazed with wrath to see this. Sukha Singh threw the bag under the cot of Massa, and as the latter bent to pick it up, Mehtab Singh cut his head clean with a stroke of his sword. In the meantime Sukha Singh also pulled out his sword and the two between themselves accounted for the death of quite a few more of those present there. Sukha Singh removed Massa's ornaments.† Then the two came out, and before the army could be alerted 'they' were well on their way to Bikaner. There they placed before Jathedar Buddha Singh the head of Massa, when the joy of the Sikhs knew no bounds indeed. According to a resolution then passed by the gathering, the head of Massa was consigned to the flames.‡ Living races can, truly, never tolerate desecration of their sacred places.

This incident struck terror into the hearts of the informers and the tyrants all over the Panjab. They too feared for their misdeeds lest the fate that had overtaken Massa, should be their lot, too, so much so that the Khan Bahadur, too, trembled with fear.

The family of Massa took his headless body to the Khan Bahadur and wept bitterly before him. The Khan Bahadur was most angry with the chandluries of the area who had claimed that they had rid their region of the Sikhs. He called to Lahore the chaudhris of the area, gave them a sound beating,\* telling them, "You had reported complete extinction of the Sikhs in your area, whence have these appeared? Trace out the murderers of Massa and have them arrested, or his death will be avenged on you."

Harbhagat Niranjania gave the report that the murderers of Massa were Mehtab Singh Bhangoo of Mirankot and Sukha Singh Carpenter of Mari Kamboki. The Khan Bahadur despatched commander Nur Din, with orders to produce in ropes the family of Mehtab Singh.

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† Bhangoo, p. 224. The chaudharies and other rich people of those days wore ornaments as a common practice.

‡ Shamsheer-i-Khalsa Panjabi, p. 80.

\*Ibid p. 80.

Nur Din came and surrounded Mirankot with his army, helped by the irregulars of the chaudhairs. The relatives of Massa also were with them. The village revenue collector, the numberdar, named Natha Khehra, was called and asked to produce the son of Mehtab Singh. Now, Mehtab Singh had at the time of his departure for Bikaner entrusted his seven years old son, Rai Singh, to the care of chaudhri Natha. Natha submitted humbly that if he were assured that the young innocent boy would not be punished, he was to produce him.

Nur Din thundered, "Mercy to the seedling of a Sikh! Be warned against such prattle in future. Bring him soon, or else you are no more."

With eyes downcast Natha came home and narrated the whole thing to his son, adding, "My son, Guru Tegh Bahadur tasted martyrdom in order to honour the plighted word for affording protection of the helpless. Tell me: are we not to honour our commitment regarding the protection of this child?"

With firm determination Natha's son replied, "Father, we shall sacrifice our own lives to save Rai Singh."

Natha, his son, his nephew, one Mazhabi Sikh and one Barwala—five in all—set out towards village Kambow, taking Rai Singh with them. Now, Harbhagat Niranjan, too, carried the complete account of this flight to Nur Din. Nur Din gave Natha a chase with his army and overtook him on the way, just outside the village of Kambow. Noticing the approach of the army, Natha asked his son to make good his escape with Rai Singh, but he refused to go, leaving his father behind. In the meantime the soldiers of Nur Din arrived. Natha was a famous archer and as long as his stock of arrows lasted, he kept the enemy at bay. Finally the forces made a charge from all sides, and Natha fell a martyr, but not before killing several of the enemy. His nephew† somehow took shelter in the jungle and saved his life, but the remaining three persons—Natha's son, Barwala and the Mazhabi Sikh—fell fighting like heroes. Last of all came Rai Singh's turn, clung to the legs of the fallen Natha. The cruel enemy

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† Son of Natha's sister.

gave three rapier blows to the innocent child, who was lying with his face downward. The sword pierced his back-bone of neck; but the main blood-artery was spared. Another blow cut his collar bone, while the third went through his shoulder. The enemy left the child for dead. But who can kill him whose survival is willed by God? There was still some life in the child, when a woman of the village Kambow, returning from the city after selling Saag† in the evening, found him there. She picked up the boy and took him to the aunt of S. Mehtab Singh in village Rutala. With care and treatment Rai Singh survived. Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangoo, the author of the famous book of Sikh history "Pracheen Panth Prakash," was the son of this Rai Singh.‡

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† Saag is used as a green vegetable.

‡ Bhangoo, pages 225 to 229.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Taroo Singh

The invasion of Nadar Shah had put the entire state mechanism out of gear. The country was in ruins, revenue collection was at a stand-still and the army had not been paid for long. The Dewan, Lakhpat Rai, was asked by the Khan Bahadur to pay the army its salary. But when the former was not able to do so for want of money in the state treasury, he was put under arrest. Jaspat Rai secured the release of his brother, Lakhpat, by making the payment himself. Thereafter the two brothers strictly extorted, with the Khan Bahadur's permission, the payment of revenue from the landlords and the chaudhis of the area.

The Administrator of the Jullundur Doab, Adina Beg, had also been a defaulter in respect of his payment of the revenue. He too was arrested, along with his minister, Dewan Bhawani Dass. Though Adina Beg made good his escape after some time, Bhawani Dass was severely tortured by being thrown into boiling water in the prison. On the intercession of Lakhpat Rai, however, Bhawani Dass was released and the administration of Jullundur again entrusted to Adina Beg.

The murder of Massa resulted in a complete ban on the entry of Sikhs into Amritsar. Military surveillance was intensified, still some devoted Sikhs would come under cover of darkness and flee into jungles again after taking a dip in the holy tank. Some of them were, of course, captured by the guards and martyred. A holy dip

in Amritsar was, at that time, tantamount to playing with one's life.

Reports of such surreptitious visits of the Sikhs to Amritsar brought still more heavily the wrath of the Government down on the chaudhris and the informers, who were accused of connivance with the Sikhs. Consequently, the informers now caused the families of the Sikhs to be arrested as also those Sikhs who were living harmless, peaceful lives in their homes. Needless to say that several innocent followers of the Panth lost their lives, as a result of these cruelties.

The previous royal proclamation had listed as a punishable offence the supply of provision of necessaries to the Sikhs. For this reason, Harbhagat Niranjania informed on Bhai Taroo Singh for feeding the Sikhs. The Bhai was a resident of village Pullah, in District Amritsar, a saintly soul ever engaged in divine worship, and leading a pious life. His mother and his sister were the only other members of the family. He tilled his own land and out of his honest earning he would help with food stray visitors and guests. When he came to know of the presence of militant Sikhs in the jungle, he would go and feed them there.

Harbhagat Niranjania poisoned the Khan Bahadur against Bhai Taroo Singh and secured an order for the latter's arrest. Some officials from Lahore came, took Taroo Singh under arrest and set back for Lahore. They halted for the night at village Bharana. The Sikhs of Bharana bribed the guards of Taroo Singh and arranged an interview with the Bhai. They proposed to the Bhai that they would secure his release from the guards by force. But the Bhai did not agree for fear that the wrath of the Government would thereby descend upon the Sikhs of Bharana. Finally Bhai Taroo Singh was produced before the Khan Bahadur in Lahore, and the latter pronounced the sentence of "Death or Islam" for the

offence that Bhai Sahib had helped the rebel Sikhs.\*

Bhai Taroo Singh refused to embrace Islam. He was mangled and broken upon the wheel. Even then the faithful Bhai did not recant. He was then thrown into the prison and tortured in various ways.

S. Mehtab Singh, the murderer of Massa, was now back in his village. Niranjanias soon informed on him and got him arrested by the State soldiers. He was brought before the Khan Bahadur at Lahore, and the sentence of "Death or Islam" was pronounced upon him. But those who are born to become martyres, never renounce their faith. On his refusal to embrace Islam, S. Mehtab Singh was martyred on the wheel.\*\* S. Garja Singh was killed at the stake.† And all this was knowingly done before the eyes of Bhai Taroo Singh.

After a few days Taroo Singh was again brought before the Governor. Great temptations were held out to him, but the Singh did not waver from his resolve. The Khan Bahadur blurted out in anger. "Taroo Singh, I can trample under shoes the hair and the religion of which you are so proud."

And the Sikh flashed back, "Khan Bahadur, I shall be faithful to my religion as long as my life lasts. But you will have to bow before the shoes of the Khalsa."

The Governor was ablaze at this. Under his order a cobbler tore off the skull, along with the long hair, of Taroo Singh.‡ This brutality took place in the Nakhas Chowk in Lahore, in 1745 ††

This unusual barbarity sent a wave of horror in the whole city. At the request of the Sikhs of Lahore, Taroo

\* There is another well-known story in this regard. The Muslim commander of Patti seized by force the unmarried daughter of a waterman, Rahim Baksh. On the wailing of the aggrieved father, Bhai Taroo Singh got the commander murdered with the help of a Sikh band, living in a jungle and the girl was restored to her father. It was in this connection that Bhai Taroo Singh was arrested.

\*\* Panth Parkash, p. 647. Bhangoo, p. 275.

† Panth Parkash, p. 647.

‡ Panth Parkash, p. 650. Bhangoo, p. 276. Gupta, I, p. 11.

†† Bhangoo p. 177.

Singh was handed over to them.\* The Bhai continued to be in this condition for 22 days. He was always reciting the Gurbani† and felt as if nothing whatsoever had happened to him.

On the other hand the Khan Bahadur began to suffer from prostatitis, and there was no improvement in spite of medical treatment. He became convinced that it was all because of the curse of Bhai Taroo Singh. He sent S. Shabeg Singh of Jambar to beg Bhai Taroo Singh's forgiveness. Taroo Singh said that the thing was then beyond him, and only the Panth at Amritsar was in a position to do something, if requested. S. Shabeg Singh reached Amritsar with offerings from the Khan Bahadur. At the moment the Buddha Dal was camping in the Akaal Bunga (hutments). S. Shabeg Singh made his request to Nawab Kapur Singh. Finally after a prayer to Guru Maharaj from the Panth in an assembly, Shabeg Singh was informed of the decree. The curse of the saint, Bhai Taroo Singh, was basically irrevocable: but the urine trouble of the Khan Bahadur might be cured if the latter was given shoe strokes on the head with the shoes of Bhai Taroo Singh.

Shabeg Singh reported the verdict in full to the Khan Bahadur, who felt relieved at the outcome. As the Khan Bahadur received on his head strokes from the shoes of Bhai Taroo Singh, he experienced relief and the urine trouble disappeared. For this kindness Shabeg Singh was appointed the Kotwal (police officer) of Lahore. Shabeg Singh did away with the torture-wheel, the stake and other inhuman instruments of punishment. He retrieved the heads of the Sikhs suspended from the city gates or thrown into wells, and gave them the proper last rites. He built memorials to martyred Sikhs at several places.

Finally, after a long travail, as retribution for his devilish deeds, the governor Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan breathed his last on the first of July, 1745.‡

When the news of the Khan Bahadur's death reached

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\* It is also said that his body was thrown into the ditch that encircled the court of Nikhas Chowk.

† The text of the Adi Granth written by the Gurus. (?)

‡ Jadunath Sarkar, p. 101.

Bhai Taroo Singh, he too renounced his physical form, after he had recited the holy Japji Sahib.† The Shaheed Ganj stands there even today as memorial to Bhai Taroo Singh.

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† Japji Sahib is a composition by Guru Nanak. It is the first canto of the Adi Granth. The Sikhs recite it as the first part of their morning prayer.



## CHAPTER XV

### **Ressurrection**

Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan died on July 1, 1745, leaving behind three sons: Yahiya Khan, entitled Azudallah the Second, Hayatullah Khan, entitled Shah Nawaz Khan Hizbarjang and Mir Baqi. They were all three the nephew of Qamr-ud-Din Khan the Minister of Delhi, while Yahiya Khan was also the son-in-law of Qamr-ud-Din Khan. Consequently the Minister was particularly disposed to help him. The Minister requested the Emperor to appoint Shah Nawaz Khan as the Governor of Multan and Yahiya Khan as the Governor of Lahore, but the Emperor did not oblige him. Shah Nawaz Khan was already in possession of Multan. Now, at the instance of the Minister, Yahiya Khan took possession of Lahore. When the Khan Bahadur had breathed his last, his lieutenant, Moman Khan, was the Deputy-governor of Lahore. He, thus, continued in this post as the acting Governor.

It was altogether without the consent of the Emperor that Yahiya Khan took possession of Lahore, and inherited the entire property of his father. Shah Nawaz Khan was naturally piqued at this and marched on Lahore at the head of an army. A fight was imminent, when some prominent persons intervened and brought about amity between the two brothers. Yahiya Khan gave to Shah Nawaz Khan the latter's share of the diamonds and cash left by their father, while Shah Nawaz Khan surrendered

his claim to the command of Jullundur of Doaba, to which he had been appointed by the Khan Bahadur. After this Shah Nawaz Khan returned to Multan.

The Emperor, however, agreed when Minister Qamr-ud-Din Khan asked for his own appointment as the Governor of Lahore. The Minister made Yahiya Khan his deputy and thus handed over Lahore to him. These decisions took place on January the third, 1746.\* Lahore had, thus, been without a proper Governor for nearly six months.

This period of six months, when the rulers of the Panjab were engaged in their mutual, petty disputes, was a godsend for the Sikhs. Even during the life time of the Khan Bahadur several bands of the Sikhs had concentrated in Amritsar; and then, after his death thousands of Sikhs came and assembled in the Majha. These carefree forces formed themselves into units of one hundred each and scattered themselves all over the land, engaging in extensive depredations. Taking advantage of the internal quarrels of their enemies, the Sikhs reaped a rich harvest of booty.

This anarchy was responsible for the ruin of the land. Open plunder, accompanied by heavy taxes and duties, paralysed the whole country. There were now two paths open for the Jatts of the Majha : they should either starve to pay the State revenue or make common cause with the Sikhs and make merry on their booty and plunder. A majority of them chose the latter course. Seated round the community fire at night, when people narrated accounts of the Sikh raids, the young men felt extremely thrilled. Fighting has a natural fascination for the youth, and the company of warrior is very inviting for them. A fine steed and a good weapon were essential, if one wished to join the Sikhs. Dashing young men would ride the family mare, or would steal enough money to come by one, a sword or a rifle, and thus equipped, would go and join the Sikh bands,† receive the holy baptism and become the

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\* Jadunath Sarkar, p. 193; Anand Ram, p. 95; Sikh History by Gupta, part I, p. 18.

† Gupta : Sikh History, part I, p. 22; Boote Shah : Tarikh-i-Panjab, p. 308.

### Guru's Singhs.

The soldiers of these Sikhs chiefs were not paid in cash; they received a share of the booty. If a number of Sikh sardars joined hands in a raid, the share of each one of them in the booty was in proportion to the numbers of soldiers he had commanded in the raid. This share of each one was further distributed among his soldiers. To maintain discipline in the organisation, each Sikh abided by the order of his commander; but all were equal in matters social and religious. In this way the numbers of the Sikhs became fairly large.

A new development now took place in the organisation of the Sikhs. Their wise commanders conceived of an organisation in which the small constituents would enjoy autonomy under their own leaders in matters of raids and plunder, but would be under a united command in times of a common national emergency for the Panth. In pursuance of this plan the following junior commands were created on 14th October, 1745, the Dewali day. The common army, based on these constituents, was to be called the "Dal Khalsa" and the different sub-commands were put under separate leaders :

1. Nawab Kapur Singh Faizlapuria (Singhpuria.)
2. Sham Singh, Village Naroke, District Sialkot.
3. Gurbakhash Singh Kalsia.
4. Karora Singh, of Paijgarh (Distt. Gurdaspur.)
5. Karm Singh " " "
6. Gurdial Singh of Dallewal (Pargana Kalanaur.)
7. Dial Singh " " "
8. Naudh Singh Sukarchakkia.
9. Chanda Singh " "
10. Kala Singh, Village Kang.
11. Khiala Singh, " "
12. Bagh Singh, Village Hallowal.
13. Jassa Singh, Village Ahlu.
14. Hari Singh Village Panjwar.
15. Chhajja Singh, " "
16. Deep Singh Shaheed.
17. Sudha Singh, Shaheed.
18. Sukha Singh Takhan, of Mari Kamboki.

19. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.
20. Bhoma Singh Kanhiya.
21. Jai Singh     ,,
22. Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya.
23. Hira Singh Nakyi.
24. Sadda Singh   ,,
25. Karam Singh of Amritsar (Narli?)
26. Dharm Singh   ,,
27. Jeewan Singh Mazhabi.
28. Badan Singh   ,,
29. Beer Singh     ,,
30. Aghar Singh\*   ,,

These bands started their depredations all over their territory. Communications in the Panjab came to a stop and trade and commerce came to a halt. The Singhs became so intrepid that one evening, in January, 1746, a Sikh party† entered, in disguise, the city of Lahore through the Mochi Gate and began to loot it. The shopkeepers were just closing their shops, as the Sikhs descended upon them. Articles worth lakhs of rupees were looted and before the royal army was mobilized, the Sikhs had disappeared, but not before they had despatched to their doom a few Mullas and Qazis, the enemies of the Panth. The royal army went in pursuit : but the Sikhs had, in the meantime, taken shelter in the jungle on the bank of the Ravi. Yahiya Khan had taken over as Governor only recently. He sent his Dewan, Lakhpat Rai at the head of a large force with the order not to return without driving out the Sikhs from the region. As Lakhpat Rai set out with the army, the Sikhs abandoned the shelter of the Ravi and proceeded to Aimanabad. Lakhpat Rai turned back to Lahore.

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\* Shamsher Khalsa (Panjabi,) p. 101; Panth Parkash. p. 664-5.

† Panth Parkash, p. 661. The Sikhs numbered 5,000.

## CHAPTER XVI

### More Dark Times

The Faujdar (military commander) of Aimanabad was Jaspat Rai, the brother of Lakhpat. Jaspat Rai had been transferred as Faujdar from Jullundur to Aimanabad by Zakria Khan, when the latter took over as the Governor of Lahore, and Adina Beg\* had been made the commander of Jullundur. When Jaspat Rai came to know of the bivouac of 2,000 Sikh soldiers in Rori Sahib (Aimanabad), he sent them a stern order to clear out immediately from his territory. The reply of the Sikhs was that their soldiers had not had anything to eat for three consecutive days : they would eat, rest for the night and would leave immediately the next morning. Jaspat was not prepared to show them so much leniency : he called the army and attacked the Sikhs. The Sikhs too drew their swords and a bloody battle took place.

The Sikhs did not wish to fight, but this fight had been forced upon them. They retreated as they fought on. The contending armies now reached Badloki Gosaiian. Jaspat Rai, who rode on an elephant was exhorting his hordes to attack the Sikhs. Suddenly he was noticed by S. Nibahu Singh Ranghreta. Nibahu Singh pounced upon the enemy like a tiger. Getting hold of the beast's tale, he climbed upon the elephant and cut off Jaspat's head with his sword. No sooner did the commander fall, than the

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\* Narang, p. 212.

heterogeneous rabble and the mercenary soldiery took to their heels. Baba Kirpa Ram, the Guru of Jaspat Rai, had to pay a ransom of five hundred rupees to obtain the head of Jaspat from the Sikhs, in order to perform the last rites of the latter. The samadh of Jaspat was built by his brother, Lakpat and is still to be found in Baddoki-Gosaian.\* This event took place in February-March, 1746. Having killed Jaspat the Sikhs crashed upon Aimanabad,† pillaged it thoroughly and disappeared again into the thickets of the Ravi.

The two real brothers, Jaspat Rai and Lakpat Rai, belonged to a Khatri family of Kalanaur.\*\* Lakpat Rai was the Diwan to the Governor of Lahore from 1726 to March 21, 1747. When he heard of the death of his brother, he was furious and, in a fit of anger, he vowed that he would rest only after he had put an end to the entire Sikh faith. He believed that it was his leniency alone which had so far afforded protection to the Sikhs. Had he wished to decimate them, they could not have survived so long. He had the hardihood to declare that it was a Khatri who had started this religion, and now a Khatri would exterminate it.†

He obtained an order from the Governor Yahiya Khan for a general massacre of the Sikhs: "A Sikh, wherever found, should be killed. Anybody who professes to be a follower of Guru Gobind Singh, should be given short shrift; there will be a reward for the head of a Sikh."†† To begin with he put under arrest all Sikh Government employees as also other peaceful Sikh inhabitants of Lahore, including the renowned Kotwal of Lahore, S. Shabeg Singh, and his youthful son S. Shalbaz Singh.‡

\* S. Karam Singh Historian : Phulwari, October, 1028, p. 068.  
Dr. Ganda Singh : Sikh Itihas Bare (Panjabi,) p. 80.

† Bhangoo, p. 293.

\*\*I bid., Page 288.

† I bid., Page 293.

†† Narang : Page 218, along with a reference to Ibrat Nama by Ali-ud-Din.

‡ For their refusal to adopt Islam these two were put on the whirling wheel before being killed.

So far only the militant members of the Dal Khalsa used to be put to the sword, and they alone were considered as rebels by the State; now it became a crime to be a Sikh at all. Adoption of Islam was the only way to save one's life. Order for the massacre of the Sikhs, both peaceful inhabitants as also the Government employees, arrested in Lahore, was given by Lakhpat. This order created a sensation in the city. Prominent people of the town, including Dewan Kaura Mall, Kashmiri Mall Khurana, Dewan Lachhi Ram, Dewan Surat Singh, Dile Ram, Hari Mall, Hari Singh, Gulzar Singh and Bhai Des Raj† went together in a deputation to Lakhpat Rai and beseeched him not to massacre these peace-loving, innocent Sikhs. Their entreaty was supported by Jagat Bhagat Manakwala, but Lakhpat was adamant. He even turned down their request that the killings should not take place on a Somavati Amavas.†† Consequently, all these Sikhs were beheaded on the Somavati Amavas, the 10th of March, 1745 in the Nakhas Chowk or Shaheed Ganj. This was followed by the Sikhs of the area around Lahore also being captured and beheaded.

Lakhpat ordered a general announcement to be made in the whole city and the area around, to the effect that: "Nobody is allowed to read Guru Granth Sahib; the word Pothi is to be used to signify the book, and not the word 'Grantli' since the latter word suggests the holy book of the Sikhs (Guru Granth Sahib). The use of the word 'Gur'a sweet solid preparation of the juice of sugar-cane, is to be discarded in favour of 'Rori or Bheli', since the word Gur has some phonetic affinity with the word Guru. The word 'Wahiguru' is made taboo and those guilty of defiance of these orders are to be beheaded or converted to Islam."\* The Sikh scriptures that Lakhpat could lay his hands upon, were burnt.

After the murder of Jaspat and the pillage of Aimanabad, the Dal Khalsa receded into the thickets of

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†Bhangoo, page 294.

†† The fifteenth night of the moonless fortnight, that falls on Monday.

\* Bhangoo, p. 294.

the Ravi. Lakhpat Rai set out to exterminate the Dal Khalsa, being now free after the massacre of the urban Sikhs. He himself commanded the royal army of Lahore, including the artillery; and the chaudhris of the area, with their fighting rabbles, were also with him. At the moment the bands of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Naudh Singh Sukarchakkia, S. Sukha Singh Mariwala and S. Gurdial Singh Dallewalia were sheltering in the thickets of the Ravi. Lakhpat's forces surrounded the thickets, trained their guns on the Sikhs and the shelling started. The Sikhs would vacate the area where the shells fell, attack the enemy at other points and withdraw again into the thickets, after inflicting heavy damage on the foe. But, while fighting these actions they also kept moving along the Ravi towards the hills followed, of course, by the swarms of Lakhpat. The Sikhs were, however, now short of ammunition and supplies. They were thus in dire straits. They were surrounded by enemies and had no supplies. They subsisted on wild game, killed in the jungles or on the leaves of trees, but they stuck fast to their sense of honour and pride.

One day the Sikhs launched an attack on the enemy in the afternoon, and then they soon turned back and fled the field. The enemy believing that the Sikhs had retreated far from the arena, became complacent. About midnight the Sikhs came back and launched a terrible attack on the Lahore forces. There was complete pandemonium among the Muslims and they were completely confounded. Before they recovered poise, the Sikhs had slain hundreds of them and got off on their horses.

This attack caused complete demoralisation of the enemy forces. Lakhpat, however, again got his forces ready to fight. After through the lure of rewards, and effected a very heavy bombardment of the Sikhs with a crushing effect this time. After the attack the Sikhs retreated into the thicket, under the impression that Lakhpat would turn back after a few days' unavailing search for them. Little did they imagine that this time he would stick to them like glue, and would not be shaken off. Otherwise, they would



have cleared off from thicket and moved towards the Doaba or the Malwa.

The Sikhs, with Lakhpat in pursuit, struck in the direction of Basohli hills. The Sikhs expected that the Hindus of the Hills would help them in this holy war, which had been started to throw off the yoke of the Mughal rule. But they failed to understand that the Hindus of the hills would hardly help, when Lakhpat, a Hindu and an instrument of Yahiya Khan, was advancing in order to exterminate the Sikhs.

Lakhpat had already won the hill chiefs over to his side. In addition, an order decreeing that no Sikh should get away alive, had come from the Mughal Government. The hill people also were aware of the proclamation : "Death for the helpers of the Sikhs and rewards for the killers of the Sikhs." Thousands of hillmen, therefore, came out, armed to fight the Sikhs, while the latter thought them to be their helpers. In obedience to their generals' directions to advance up the mountains, some Sikhs courageously climbed the hills of Basohli and came close to the concentrations of the hilly troops. The reality dawned upon them only when the hillmen arrested them and started to fire upon those who followed them.

This was the fate that befell those Sikhs who ascended the heights of Paraul and Kathua, and they realised now the straits in which they had landed themselves. The Sikhs started moving northwards along the right bank of the Ravi. They saw high mountains and hostile hillmen in front of them, the forces of Lakpat behind them and on the east the swirling water of the Ravi. They planned to cross the Ravi and move towards the Majha. To sound the depth of the Ravi at that point, two brothers of S. Gurdial Singh Dallewalia rode on their horses into the waters of the river in order to sound their depth, but neither the mounts nor their riders were seen thereafter. The two heroes sacrificed their lives so that their companions were not swept away by the gushing stream of the Ravi.

The Sikh Sardars conferred among themselves to

think of a way out. At last they decided to fight and cut their way through the hillmen. They launched a combined attack on the hillmen and wrested one mound from them. The infantry climbed the mound all right, but the horsemen were in difficulty, since their horses could not climb the hills. The riders would dig with their weapons a foothold for the horses, but many horses toppled over into the gorges and died. From the high hills above the hillmen were raining bullets. Ultimately, Sukha Singh ordered that unmindful of their lives, the infantry should scale the heights, while the cavalry should block the advance of Lakhpat's forces till the infantry had climbed the mountains: thereafter they must rush their way through the enemy towards Lahore.

## CHAPTER XVII

### Stalemate

The Sikhs, who climbed the mountains successfully, overcame the enemy and continued their advance, while the horsemen turned back. Now, when Lakhpat saw that he could not deal successfully with the Sikhs, sheltering in the thickets, and that his soldiers fought shy of entering the thickets, he decided to have these jungles cleared to secure a passage through them. This project of his, too, failed, since the Sikhs started killing the labourers engaged in clearing the growth, and none dared advance for the job now. Lakhpat got the thickets set on fire and issued also a proclamation, promising a reward of five rupees to a person who brought to him the head of a Sikh.\* This proclamation intensified the head-hunting campaign against the Sikhs.

S. Sukha Singh of Mari Kamboki addressed his comrades, saying : "The Brave Khalsa, it is ignoble thus to live in hiding. It is worthier far to die while fighting the enemy than to be killed singly while in hiding. Now follow me, all those, who wish to fight this Lakhpat like heroes."

On this clarion call from their general, the Sikhs, shouting their slogans of Sat Sri Akaal, that is, The Eternal One is Truth, and Raj Karega Khalsa or The Pure shall

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\* The price of wheat then was eight annas per maund : this can give an idea of one rupee at the time.

ever Rule, pounced upon the enemy desperately. A ferocious battle took place. Lakhpat was riding an elephant with a red enclosure and was surrounded by small-sized cannon. Acting on intelligence Sukha Singh made an attack on Lakhpat. When Lakhpat saw Sukha Singh approaching, he changed over to a horse and thought of fleeing the field. Right at that moment a cannon ball struck Sukha Singh on the leg, causing a thigh fracture. Sukha Singh tore off a part of his turban, tied his fractured leg to the fore-part of his saddle and continued to fight. But he failed to reach his objective for, several generals, like Harbhaj Rai, the son of Lakhpat and Nahar Khan, the son of Yahiya Khan, came to the help of Lakhpat. S. Jassa Singh and many other Sardars rushed to help S. Sukha Singh. In this very bloody encounter Lakhpat suffered far heavier losses than the Sikhs, and among those who were killed by the Sikhs were Lakhpat's son, Harbhaj Rai, Nahar Khan, the son of Governor Yahiya Khan, Commander Karam Bakhshi of Rasulnagar, Makhmoor Khan and several others.\*

The Sikhs made another fierce attack and pierced their way through the enemy. This happened in May, 1746. The enemies felt greatly demoralised at the escape of the Sikhs from their grip. After going a short way the Sikhs also made a halt under cover of a jungle. During the night, S. Sukha Singh and S. Jassa Singh, addressed their men as follows: "Brave comrades, we have come out of the enemy encirclement, but in the morning the foe would again pursue us. We have to go a long way and for this we require horses, weapons and other articles of use. And where can we possibly get them all? Obviously from that debased Lakkhu (Lakhpat), the enemy of the Panth! Thinking that we have fled the field, the enemy are sleeping carefree: now is the moment of success for us. Let us pounce upon the foe and secure the material that we badly need."

Wonderful, indeed was the courage of these heroes. At one stage they had found no way out of the enemy encircle-

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\* Dr. Ganda Singh : Sikh Itihaas Bareilly, p. 90,

ment, and now, when they had perilously succeeded in coming out, they were determined to counter-attack the foe once again. The plan received general congregational approval. The Sikhs pounced upon the sleeping foe, massacring those they could lay their hands upon. Then they made off with whatever booty they could gather. Before the enemy forces could get ready, the Khalsas were back in the shelter of the thickets of the jungle.

This incident left Lakhpat enraged once again. He had hardly recovered from the shock of his brother's death, when a fresh thunder lap befell him, in the form of his son's death. And, then, he was shaken by the temerity of the Sikhs beyond his expectations. Though utterly routed they turned back and fell upon the royal armies. Lakhpat collected a huge rabble of the local militia and set it on hunting out the Sikhs like game, with the beating of the drums. The Sikhs had dealt their blow and had made good their escape. They were heading for Lahore along the right bank of the Ravi, with Lakhpat in hot pursuit of them. The Singhs decided to cross the Ravi and they arrived at the river bank at about noon. With small floats made of reeds and grass, the Sikhs crossed over. The horsemen crossed first and waited on the left bank of the river till the entire party had safely landed on the side. The broad stretch of scorching sand, spread over three miles along the bank, made it terrible for the barefooted Sikhs to go over it, though the horsemen crossed it with ease. They covered their feet with pieces of rags torn from their clothing. By the end of the stretch of the sand their feet were covered with blisters, all the same.

Before the Sikhs now lay the territory of Rama Randhawa who blocked with his force the path of the Khalsa. But the daring men who had cut their way through the royal forces of Lakhpat, could hardly be halted by the rabble of Rama. After a brief encounter the Sikh reached the ferry of Sri Hargobindpur, and from there they crossed over into the Doaba.

Here Adina Beg\* marched against them with his forces and the Sikhs got no breathing time there either. From there they set out in haste and crossed over at Aliwal. They had entered the region of Malwa. Then Jassa Singh headed for Kot Kapura, while S. Hari Singh, S. Naudh Singh and S. Deep Singh halted at Dialpur, Pathrala and in the Lakhi Jungle respectively. The party of S. Sukha Singh reached Jaito. Sukha Singh had his fractured leg properly attended to by an expert there. He was confined to bed for six months. At last the leg was cured and the hero was busy with his campaigns as before.

The Sikhs who had repaired to the hills, faced equally great hardships. The hillmen were hostile to them. Shifting from one place to another made no difference in the treatment which they received from the inhabitants of the mountains. They could not make any purchases even on payment. Thus, facing extreme hardships, they made their way to Kiratpur after five or six months, going along the mountainous tracks through Mandi and Kulu. It took them no less than six months more to bring all the Sikhs together once again, through letters and personal messages.

The Sikhs, who had been arrested by the hillmen and delivered to the Lahore force, and those who had been arrested by the forces of Lakhpat, were all brought to Lahore and tortured and finally killed. Their heads were collected and displayed in heaps at the gates of Lahore.

In the end of March or the beginning of April, Lakhpat campaigned against the Sikhs and returned only in the end of June, 1746.\*\* In this space of three months thousands of Sikhs had been put to the sword. This massacre is known in Sikh history as the lesser Marathon or Chhota Ghallughara.†

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\* Gupta, Vol. 1, page. 30.

\*\* Bhangoo, p. 308.

† Dr. Ganda Singh : Sikh Itihas Bare, p. 03, mentions the number of the Sikhs killed as ten or twelve thousand. But Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangoo puts the number at thirty or forty thousand killed. His father S. Rai Singh was a member of the

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But it pleased nature to give another opportunity to the Sikhs to raise their head. The sons of Khan Bahadur were now at daggers drawn with one another. Shah Niwaz Khan marched to encamp at the Shalamar Gardens on 21st November, 1746, at the head of an army, and Adina Beg Khan, Kaura Mal and Hashmat-ul-lah Khan, too, joined him there. He sent Dewan Surat Singh to Yahiya Khan, demanding his full share of the property left with him by the Khan Bahadur. Yahia Khan, too, had full confidence in his own strength and got ready for a fight. He took the field with his lieutenants, Moman Khan, Lakhpat Rai, Meer Niamat Khan and Meer Amin Beg. A fierce battle was fought between the two brothers. Yet neither party was fully ready for a showdown. Yahiya Khan, therefore, came to terms with Shah Niwaz by offering him a sum of six lakhs of rupees. Shah Niwaz left Lahore and proceeded to Batala, where he seized a large chunk of Yahia Khan's territory.

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party of S. Sukha Singh when this massacre took place. *Bhāṛgū*,  
p. 308:

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Abdali

The news of this seizure enraged Yahiya Khan and he prepared himself to fight. But before he could contact and attack him, Shah Niwaz Khan was again at the gates of Lahore. A bloody battle was fought between the two brothers, on March the 17th, 1747, in which Yahiya Khan was defeated. Shah Niwaz entered Lahore on the 21st of March and became the Governor of the place. He imprisoned Yahiya Khan, Dewan Lakhpat Rai and Moman Khan, and replaced old officers with new ones. Kaura Mal was appointed his Dewan in place of Lakhpat and Adina Beg was made the commander of Jullundur.

Shah Niwaz sent his emissary to the Emperor and his Minister in Delhi, urging them to accord legal sanction to his Governorship of Lahore. Since Yahiya Khan was the son-in law of the Minister, Qamr-ud-Din, the latter's reply to Shah Niwaz Khan was that his request could be considered only after he had released Yahiya Khan. To this, the reply of Shah Niwaz was that his appointment as the Governor must precede the release of Yahiya Khan. These squabbles continued for some time.

An aunt of Yahiya Khan, named Dardaana Begam, the wife of Jani Khan, was in Lahore about this time. She had Yahiya Khan concealed in a huge metallic cask, which she managed to take out of the prison through her servants. On coming to know of Yahiya Khan's escape, Shah Niwaz



was greatly annoyed with his aunt. But Dardaana Bgam retorted that she would have acted similarly, if Shah Niwaz had been imprisoned by his own brother. It was about the end of July when the legal release of Yahiya Khan was effected†.

Shah Niwaz was beside himself with rage. Having lost hope of his appointment by the Emppror of Delhi as the Governor of the Panjab, he sought the support of the King of Afghanistan for his security.

The King of Afghanistan then was Ahmed Shah Abdali, who belonged to the Saddozai family. His father had earlier settled in Multan and it was here that Ahmed was born. A little before Nadir became the king of Afghanistan, Ahmed's father, Zaman Khan and Ahmed's elder brother, Zulfikar Khan, had returned to their ancestral home in the province of Hirat. When Nadir came to the throne, Zaman Khan and his two sons took service under him. By virtue of their ability, Zulfikar Khan became the Governor of Hirat, while Ahmed Shah was appointed to the supreme command of Nadir's forces. On the night of the 9th June, 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated by the his servants. Ahmed Shah defeated the enemies of Nadir Shah and himself assumed the kingship of Afghanistan, taking the title of Shah-i-Durani, and thus, become Abdali Ahmed Shah Shah-i-Durani,\* Shah Wali Khan was his minister and Jahan Kahn his commander-in-chief. After he had subjugated the whole of Afghanistan, Abdali turned his attention towards India. He took possession of Peshawar and defeated and drove out the then Governor Nasir Khan.

In consultation with Adina Beg, Shah Niwaz sought

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† Yahiy Kahan reached Delhi after his escape from the prison house- He was so shocked by these incidents as to feel fed up with the life he had so far led. He fled to Farrukhabad and adopted the life of a Muslim saintig People called him Yahya Shah, the ascetic. He died at a ripe, old age and was buried there.

The History of Farrukhabad, by Mohammed Wali Allah, Page 257

\*Abdali was the old nickname of Ahmed Shah's family. When Ahmed Shah assumed the title of Durrani, the family also came to be known by the same name,

help from Ahmed Shah Abdali and invited him to invade India and annex the provinces of Multan, Lahore and Kashmir. He also suggested that after the annexation of these territories, Abdali would, of course, be the King thereof, while Shah Niwaz would be his Minister.\*

Now Adina Beg prompted Shah Niwaz as above, on the one hand, while, on the other, he apprised Minister Qamar-ud-Din at Delhi of the invitation extended by Shah Niwaz to Ahmed Shah Abdali. The Minister was the maternal uncle of Shah Niwaz. Appealing to his sense of relationship, the Minister wrote an affectionate letter to Shah Niwaz, saying, "Do not tarnish the reputation of your ancestors; instead of being a traitor to the King of Delhi, give a fight to this predatory Abdali and you stand to be the master of the provinces of Multan, Kashmir, Lahore and Kabul. Your maternal uncle will certainly help you in this noble task." This letter made Shah Niwaz break with Abdali and to promise loyalty to the Emperor at Delhi.

Abdali was fully aware of the weakness of the Government at Delhi. He had accompanied Nadir to Delhi when the latter had invaded India. He made preparations for an invasion of India at the invitation of Shah Niwaz. In the middle of December, 1747, he set out from Peshawar, and arrived at Attok. From there he sent an emissary, named Gurra Khan, to Lahore. But Shah Niwaz was now a changed man, who did not give the emissary even a hearing, as was then under the complete spell of the Minister of Delhi. Gurra Khan went back and met Abdali at Rohitas. Abdali then sent his preceptor, Sayyed Sabir Shah, to Lahore. But Shah Niwaz had him killed by getting hot, molten zinc poured down his throat.† This news infuriated Abdali, who lost no time in hurrying towards Lahore. He reached the banks of the Ravi on the 8th of January, 1748, and camped in Shahdra. He crossed the river on the 10th of January.

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\* Maskeen: Tazkara-i-Tehmasap Khan Maskeen, Page 40. Ali-ud-Din: Ibrat Nata, Page 106.

† Panjab Mughals, page 70: co-reference, Bayan-i-Waqi, pages 163-64. Siyar-ul-Mutakhrin, page 17. Tarikh-i Muzaffari, p. 74. Tarikh-i-Hussainshahi, p. 20. Tarikh-i-Ahmed, p. 6.

He had an army only eighteen thousand strong. But he had no artillery with him.

As against this, Shah Niwaz had taken up his position near Mian Mir, with an army of 70,000, supported by a powerful artillery. The parties joined battle on the 11th of January. Hashmat-ul-lah, the general of Shah Niwaz, was killed in the battle and Jumla Khan of Qasoor defected to Abdali, along with his forces. Finally, the forces of Shah Niwaz suffered a severe defeat, and the same night Shah Niwaz fled to Delhi, followed thither by his generals. On the 12th January Abdali pillaged Mughalpura and the adjoining localities. He came by huge quantities of war material from the camp of Shah Niwaz. There was no resistance from any quarter, and, consequently, Abdali was the master of the whole city. The old officers of Yahiya Khan, Moman Khan of Qasoor, Dewan Lakhpat Rai and others, who had been imprisoned by Shah Niwaz, were set at liberty by Abdali.

At the entreaty of the prominent men of the city, Abdali agreed not to plunder Lahore, but demanded, in return, a tribute of thirty lakhs of rupees, of which twenty-two lakhs were paid the same day.\* Abdali stayed in Lahore up to the 18th of February, and left for Delhi on the 19th. He had brought the entire area under his complete control and appointed Jumla Khan of Qasoor the Governor of Lahore and Lakhpat Rai his Minister.

Shah Niwaz, the Governor of Lahore, had arrived at Delhi. The King, thereupon, got up an army of two lakhs to fight Abdali. The virtual leader of this army was Minister Qamar-ud-Din, though nominally prince Ahmed was the commander. When the royal army reached Sirhind on the 25th of February, it was learnt that the local Governor, Mohammed Khan Rohela, had fled on hearing the news of Abdali's advance. The Minister, Qamar-ud-Din, left his begams and materials at Sirhind under the protection of one thousand soldiers, and himself took up position at the river crossing of Machhiwara.

Abdali reached Phillaur on the 1st of March and crossing the river in the night, attacked Sirhind the following

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\*Anand Ram, p. 328.

day. The protecting force posted by the Minister was massacred, the material was appropriated and the Begams imprisoned.

On hearing this news the Minister turned back from Machhiwara and camped at Manupur, six miles west of Sirhind. On the 3rd of March, Abdali, too, took up his position, facing him, at a distance of about two miles, and minor skirmishes between the two forces started taking place. Ultimately on the 11th of March, 1748, a major battle was fought, in which Minister Qamar-ud-Din was killed. His son, Muayyan-ul-Mulk, known by the name of Mir Mannu, however, launched such a fierce attack on the enemy, that Abdali was completely defeated and had to flee the field. On the 17th March, he crossed the Satlej and returned to Afghanistan via Lahore.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Confusion

Mir Mannu was, no doubt, victorious. But he failed to consider it necessary to chase the foreign invader. For four days he continued to stay in his defences. On the 16th of March the royal army left Manupur and arrived on the banks of the Satlej, where they bivouacked at Ludhiana, till the 12th of April. In appreciation of the victory of Mir Mannu, the King issued a royal order, on the 9th April, appointing him the Governor of Lahore and Multan. Mir Mannu, who received this order on the 12th April, proceeded straight to Lahore to assume charge of his new office, while Prince Ahmed started back for Delhi. The Prince had reached Panipat when he received the news of the death of King Muhammed Shah. Ahmed Shah was now crowned the King of Delhi and Safdar Jang became his Chief Minister. The appointment of Safdar Jang as the Chief Minister was officially notified on the 20th of June, 1748.\*

How did the Sikhs meanwhile fare? The Chhota Ghallughara†, had come as a deadly blow to them, from which, however, they soon recovered. In June Lakhpat abandoned the pursuit of the Sikhs and came back home. Yahiya Khan and Shah Niwaz had been at loggerheads from November, 1746 to March, 1747. Now, at this time the Sikhs rose again and started prowling round Amritsar. The sacred

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\* Jadunath Sarkar, page 352,

tank at Amritsar was heavily guarded, with riflemen posted in the four minarets, which had been specially constructed for the purpose in the four corners of the tank. The guards had orders to shoot at any Sikh, who might come for a dip. Still the Sikhs would come in the darkness of the night and would slip away after taking the holy dip. The Muslim commander tauntingly challenged the Sikhs to come and bathe in the holy tank, not surreptitiously at night, but boldly in the day-time. S. Sukha Singh of Mari Kamboki, accordingly, arrived one noon for the holy bath, disguised as a Turk. After the bath, he emerged from the tank, removed his turban and made his hair into a knot in full view of the people, raised the victory slogans of the Sikhs, and made good his escape. He had removed the turban, of course, to notify the enemy that the bather was a Sikh.\*

Thereafter Sikhs would come for the holy bath in groups of ten or fifteen. Sometimes they would clash with the royal guards and many of them would fall martyrs.

But this was not all. The Sikhs plundered and pillaged the area between the rivers Beas and Chenab from Lahore to the hills. They did not hesitate to teach a lesson to the enemies, who fell into their hands. The Sikhs, in this way, avenged themselves partially for the Chhota Ghallughara.

Shah Niwaz Khan remained the Governor of Lahore from the 21st of March, 1747, to the 11th of January, 1748. But he could hardly apply himself to the problem of the Sikhs, since his own problems kept him fully occupied.

With the advance of Abdali to the east of Attock, confusion overtook the whole country; for, the people had hardly forgotten the mortal blows that Nadir Shah had dealt them during his invasion. They, therefore, abandoned their homes and hearths and repaired to the hills. Now was the time for the Sikhs to grow and prosper. They sent their families to the hills or to the inaccessible regions of the Malwa and, armed with weapons, they awaited their opportunity.

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\* In commemoration of this exploit, it is traditional today that the turban must be removed while bathing. It is forbidden to bathe with the turban on.

Abdali conquered Lahore on the 11th of January and lost the battle of Manupur on the 11th of March. In this interval of two months, the Sikhs had more than made up for all the losses of the Chhota Ghallooghara. They pillaged the whole country from the Satlej to the Chenab. This time, however, they decided that, before confronting the enemy forces, they should deal with those debased parasites, who informed on the Sikhs. These informers and chaudhris must be got rid of, they decided. As soon as this decision received the general consent of the Panth, its execution was started by the select forces of the Sikhs. Chaudhri Sahib Rai, Sandhu Jatt of village Naushehra, Rama Randhawa of village Ghaniyan, Harbhagat Niranjania of village Guru Ka Jandiala, Dharamdass of Jodhnagar, Karma Chheena of village Chheena, Sanmukh Rai of village Vadall, Rai Bakhta of village Majeetha, Rai Hasana of village Mandiala, Gahina Mal of village Bhilowal, Qazi fazl Ahmed Khan, Shamsher Khan Khokhar, the Ranghars of Sathiala and Butala, the Jatts of Dhaneshta, the Khattris of Haibatpur Patti, the Ranghars of Shekhupura and several other chaudhris and landlords were picked up and murdered. Along with that the villages and towns of Ghaniyan, Naushehra of Sandhuan, Batala, Jandiala, Majeetha, Kalanaur, Jodhnagar, Phagwara, Talwan, Bajwara, Jullundur, Sathiala, Butala, Mandiala, Shekhupura, Rasul Nagar, Dhigg, Manjhki and others were thoroughly plundered.\*

The one great benefit which resulted for the Panth from this policy of loot and murder was that, for the future, no chaudhri would inform on the Singhs in a light-hearted manner: he knew that it would be tantamount to courting death. Thus the fight now was between the Sikhs and the Government: the third party, the public, had been eliminated.

The commander of Amritsar at the time was Salabat Khan, a Rajput of village Tharoo. When Abdali was engaged in the battle of Manupur, the Sikhs swooped on

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\* Shamsher-Khalsa, Panjabi, page 100. History of the Sikhs by Gupta, vol. 1, page 24.

Amritser. In the battle which ensued, Salabat Khan was killed by S. Jassa Singh of Ahlu,† and Salabat's army fled from Amritser. The Sikhs took possession of the city. A part of the sacred tank had been filled with earth under orders of Dewan Lakhpat Rai: the same was now repaired and fresh water filled therein. The Sikh masses now took the holy bath without any let or hindrance.

In the meantime Abdali had suffered defeat at the hands of Mir Mannu, and turned back. The Sikhs followed closely on the heels of Abdali from the eastern bank of the Satlej. They would draw away a bit from the armies of Abdali, in the day-time, but would ambush him in the night and taking with them whatever booty fell into their hands, disappear in the jungles. In this way the Sikhs harassed Abdali right up to the banks of the Chenab.

March the 29th, 1748, was the Baisakhi day. The Sikhs, therefore, gave up the chase of Abdali, and assembled in Amritsar for the Baisakhi celebrations. It was the first Baisakhi in many years, which the Sikhs celebrated in freedom, and on this day a new chapter was initiated in the History of the Sikhs. First, the frame-work of the eleven Misals was organised,\* and, secondly, the Ram Rauni fortress was constructed. The tragedy of the chhota ghalooghara had brought home one lesson to the Sikhs, that, in place of the small independent parties of Sikhs under separate leaders, there should be a strong and central organisation of the Panth, which should, in time of need, function under one commander. At the time there were several small bands under different Sardars, the following being the outstanding ones among them:

1. Nawab Kapur Singh of Faizulapur or Singhpura.
2. Jassa Singh Kalal, of village Ahlu.
3. Hari Singh Bhangi, of village Panjwar.
4. Jhanda Singh                   "           "
5. Ganda Singh                   "           "
6. Natha Singh                   "           "

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† History of the Punjab by Sayyad Muhammad Latif, 1891, page 315. Maharaja Kaura Mall by Dr. Ganda Singh, page 40.

\* The 12th Misal, that of Phulkians, has always remained a bit apart.



7. Mehtab Singh of village Khakh, Distt. Amritsar.
8. Charhat Singh Kanhaya.
9. Diwan Singh.
10. Gujjar Singh.
11. Garja Singh.
12. Nibahu Singh.
13. Lehna Singh.
14. Phula Singh of village Roranwala.
15. Sanwal Singh Randhawa of village Wagha.
16. Gurbakhsh Singh of village Doda.
17. Dhanna Singh of village Kalalwala.
18. Tara Singh of village Chainpur.
19. Bagh Singh, village Kot Sayyad Mahmud.
20. Hakikat Singh.
21. Mehtab Singh of village Vadala Sandhuan, Distt. Sialkot.
22. Jai Singh of village Kahna.
23. Jhanda Singh     ,,     ,,
24. Tara Singh     ,,     ,,
25. Manohar Singh     ,,     ,,
26. Sobha Singh     ,,     ,,
27. Bhtm Singh.
28. Amar Singh of village Wagha.
29. Sobha Singh of village Bhikka.
30. Baghel Singh of Village Jhubal.
31. Gulab Singh Dallewalia.
32. Hari Singh     ,,
33. Naudh Singh Sukarchakia.
34. Gulab Singh, (father-in-law of Naudh Singh) of Village Majitha.
35. Mehtab Singh of Village Julka (son of S. Baghel Singh).
36. Karora Singh of Village Paj Garh.
37. Hara Singh.
38. Lajja Singh.
39. Nand Singh of Village Sanghna.
40. Kapur Singh of Surianwala.
41. Amar Singh of Village Kingra
42. Jiwan Singh of Village Qila Jiwan Singh.
43. Sahib Singh of Sialkot.

44. Deep Singh Shaheed.
45. Natha Singh Shaheed.
46. Mohan Singh of Village Ranian.
47. Mahan Singh       "       "
48. Bagh Singh of Hallowal.
49. Jhanda Singh of Village Sultanwind, near Amritsar.
50. Mirza Singh Kahlon.
51. Sham Singh Maan of Village Bulaqi Chak.
52. Mala Singh       "       "
53. Bahal Singh of Shekhupura.
54. Amir Singh       "
55. Hira Singh.
56. Ganga Singh.
57. Lal Singh.
58. Tara Singh Maan of Maanawala, Distt. Amritsar.
59. Mehtab Singh of Village Lalpura, Tehsil Taran  
Taran.
60. Roop Singh.
61. Anoop Singh Naqai.
62. Dasaundha Singh.
63. Tara Singh Gheba.
64. Dharam Singh Khatri of Amritsar.
65. Sukha Singh of Village Mari Kamboki.
66. Jassa Singh of Village I 'hogill, later on known  
as Ramgarhia.

## CHAPTER XX

### The Sikh Misals

Nawab Kapur Singh moved the resolution that the Panth should have one organisation and one leader or Jathedar, who was to be elected by the entire Panth. This resolution was adopted. It was on a Baisakhi day that the Tenth Guru had given birth to the Panth, and it was again on a Baisakhi day that the new organisation or Jathebanti came into being, called by the name of Dal Khalsa. When it came to the election of a leader, all eyes turned to S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. He was, at the time, the most powerful of the Sikh sardars. Thus, Jassa Singh\* was appointed unanimously the leader of the Panth.

An Advisory Committee, having ten members, was constituted under him. These ten leaders became the heads of the remaining ten Misals of the confederacy.

The following eleven Misals were then constituted at Amritsar :

1. Misal Ahluwalian under S. Jassa Singh Kalaal,†

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\* Jassa Singh of Village Ahlu, in the District of Lahore, was the son of S. Badar Singh Kalaal, and was born in 1718. At the age of seventeen years he received the holy baptism from Nawab Kapur Singh. He was tall and very powerful and his meal consisted of half a seer of butter and half a goat of meat.

† Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a Kalaal; consequently all Kalaals now call themselves Ahluwalias.

who was also the Jathedar of the whole Panth.

2. Misal Faizulapurian or Singhpurian, the leader of which was Nawab Kapur Singh.

3. Misal Sukarchakian, with its leader, S. Naudh Singh (the great-grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.)

4. Misal Nishanawali, with its leader, S. Dasaundha Singh, who was the flag-bearer of the Dal Khalsa.

5. Misal Bhangian, with its leader S. Hari Singh of Village Panjwar.

6. Misal Kanhiyan whose leader was S. Jai Singh Kanhiya, of Village Kahna, in District Lahore.

7. Misal Naqian, whose Jathedar was S. Hira Singh Naqai of Village Bahirwal, in District Lahore.

8. Dallewali Misal, with its leader, S. Gulab Singh, of Village Dallewal.

9. Misal Shaheedan, its leader being Baba Deep Singh Shaheed.

10. Misal Karorasinghian, whose leader was S. Karora Singh, of Village Pajgarh.

11. Misal Sanghanian, its leader being S. Nand Singh, of Village Sanghane : This Misal later came to be known as Misal Ramgarhian.

Then every Sikh soldier and leader was ordered to join the Jatha or Misal of his choice. Every baptised Sikh was considered to be a member of the Dal Khalsa and an equal partner in the organisation. Every soldier was also given the right to change over from one misal to another. Every Misal was declared autonomous in regard to all internal matters; but, in matters involving common action, the Misals were to obey the orders of the Chief Commander of the Dal Khalsa. Thus, the organisation of the Misals came into being in the new circumstances of the Panth.

There was, then, another significant decision taken. How long could the Panth fight from behind the shelter of thickets? This was the question. The Sardars, therefore, decided upon the construction of an adequate fortress to fight the enemy in times of national emergency. They unanimously chose Amritsar as the site of the proposed fortress, since there was no soil more sacred to the Sikhs than that holy city. The foundation of the mud fortress

was dug on the Baisakhi day, in 1748, round a well which had been constructed by the Guru Maharaj near the Ramsar. The wall of the fortress gradually went up, constructed with the mud prepared from the earth dug out at the site. The Sikhs themselves performed the duties of masons, labourers and overseers. Within only a few days the mud fortress was ready and was named Ram Nanni, after the name of Guru Ram Das. The walls of this fortress were six feet wide and ten feet high. There was room for accommodation five hundred horsemen inside the fortress. Accordingly five hundred Sikhs were ordered to stay in the fortress. At about this time S. Hari Singh Bhangi also constructed his square of buildings, called the Katra Bhangian.

In April, 1748, Mir Mannu reached Lahore to take up his appointment as the Governor of Lahore and Multan. He appointed Kaura Mall as his Minister and Lieutenant and Adina Beg as the Commander of Jullundur. The officials appointed by Abdali were sacked. Lakhpat Rai was fined thirty lakhs of rupees out of which twenty-two lakhs was realised, partly in cash and partly through the sale of his property. Lakhpat was imprisoned since the arrears of eight lakhs of rupees had remained unrealised. But Kaura Mall paid the arrears and got Lakhpat released, only to hand him over to the Sikhs, as a prisoner. He breathed his last after a confinement of six months.†

Safdar Jung, the new Minister in Delhi, was bitterly opposed to Mir Mannu. There were two parties in Delhi: the Irani Shias and the Turani Sunnis. Safdar Jang was an Irani Shia. The Ministers who had preceded him, were Turani Sunnis. Mir Mannu was a son of a former Minister, Qamar-ud-Din. The reason for his removal from Delhi was to keep him from establishing his claim to become a

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†Lakhpat was bound down as a prisoner in a latrine where people eased themselves on his head as on a privy stool. He died in 1748. Bhangoo, page 310.

Kaura Mall handed Lakhu over to the Sikhs. He died after his detention in a latrine for period of six months. Panth Parkash, Page 682.

Dr. Ganda Singh Kaura Mal, P. 47, as referred to by khushwaqt Rai, P. 67. Tahmasap Nama, p. 72. Ali-ud-Din, p. 238.

minister in the place of his father: all the positions were, at the time, considered hereditary, descending from father to son.

Mir Mannu was aware of this fact. Yet, he thought it prudent to build his position in Lahore. Being a Turk, he re-employed in his own forces many Turks as soldiers and officers, whom Nadir Shah had dismissed.

## CHAPTER XXI

### Mir Mannu

Mir Mannu established his possession of Lahore firmly and, then, made his plan to conquer Multan. He appointed Kaura Mall as his Lieutenant for the purpose and despatched him to Multan. The province of Multan had been merged with that of Lahore, in 1738, after the death of Abdus Samad Khan Daler-i-Jang, the Governor of Multan. It was entrusted to the charge of Daler-i-Jang's son, Zakaria Khan, Khan Bahadur, the Governor of Lahore. The Khan Bahadur had appointed his own son, Shah Niwaz Khan, as his Lieutenant and the Commander of Multan.

When Niwaz advanced to take possession of Lahore, he had appointed Khuaja Ishaq, in his own right, as the ruler of Multan. Minister Qamar-ud-Din, in Delhi, had also given Zahid Khan Saddozai a letter, appointing him as the Governor of Multan. Zahid Khan threw out Ishaq from there and himself took possession of it. When Kaura Mall reached Multan, he found Zahid Khan in possession of it and ready to fight him. But Zahid was worsted in the very first onset and Kaura Mall was left in the sole possession of Multan.

When Mir Mannu was firmly in the saddle in Lahore and Multan, he, turned his attention to the Sikhs. He ordered his patrolling units† to be active against them, on the

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† Dr. Ganda Singh, Kaura Mall, p. 52. Gupta, Sikh History, vol. I, p. 59.

excuse of maintaining peace in the land, and set them to crush the Sikhs, who now left the Bari Doab, avoided facing the patrol-men and shifted to the Jullundur area across the Beas. The Sikhs created no disturbances in that area of Adina Beg and, on his side, Adina Beg did not think it necessary to take any steps against the Sikhs.

But Mir Mannu, then, sent strict orders to Adina Beg to destroy the Sikhs at all costs. The Sikhs were assembled in Anand pur at the time. Adina Beg pounced upon them there at the head of a large army. There were many deaths on both sides.\* The Sikhs proceeded to the Malwa from there and Adinda Beg returned to Jullundur. This battle was fought in June, 1748.

Adina Beg, as before, quietly made peace with the Sikhs again.\*\* He employed some Sikhs in his government, to boot. Jassa Singh, a carpenter of Ichogill, † later called Ramgarhia, obtained service under Adina Beg, along with his three brothers, Jai Singh, Khushal Singh and Mali Singh, and with several others of his companions. His fifth brother, Tara Singh did not go in for that service, however. He kept the company of the Khalsa forces. ††

The Panjab was quiet during the couple of the months of heavy rains. The Sikhs again assembled to celebrate the Diwali festival in Amritsar. The Holy Granth was read and hymns sung at the Darbar Sahib. The usual feast of lights was celebrated on the Diwali night.

When Mir Mannu heard of these celebrations, he ordered Adina Beg to round up and annihilate the Sikhs. Adina Beg and his Lieutenant, Sadiq Beg, left Jullundur

\* Malcolm, p. 92. Sikh History by Gupta. Vol. I, p. 59. Six hundred Sikhs were killed.

\*\* Malcolm, p. 92.

† The ancestors of Jassa Singh came from village Sur Singh. Sardar Bhagwan Singh the father of Jassa Singh, left Sur Singh and shifted to the village of Ichogill. The same Jassa Singh was surnamed Ramgarhia later on. Chiefs and Families of Note in the Panjab, by L. H. Criffin and Col. Massy, translated into Urdu by Sayyad Niwazish Ali, 1911, Vol. I, as on p 715.

†† Dr. Ganda Singh : Kaura Mall, p. 54. Jassa Singh Binod (Panjabi)



with a large armed force and joined the army of Mir Mannu under his officers at Amritsar and besieged that town. Five hundred Sikhs took positions behind the walls of the mud-defence work, called Ram Rauni, that could accommodate no more than that number and the other sikhs left for the neighbouring jungles.

Both the armies were locked in a grim fight. Thousands of the enemy outside the mud-fortress were all the while pressing hard the five hundred inside it. Hell fires were hurled at each other from day to day. Occasionally a Sikh party would make a sharp sally on the enemy outside, would harm and press them hard and rob them of whatever they could snatch from them and hastily return for protection behind their defences. And, sometimes, a Sikh party from the jungles would swoop down on the enemy, inflict mortal wounds on him and again disappear into the wilderness.

This siege was maintained for nearly a couple of months. There was no more food or fodder left in the fortress. Men and horses starved to death. Two hundred of the Sikhs had already been martyred† and the rest of them were resolved to attain martyrdom together in a final attack.

Diwan Kaura Mall, a Sahejdhari Sikh of the Guru, was there with the Lahore force. And Sardar Jassa Singh Carpenter was among the Jullundhur army with his one hundred men. His wife had killed her own daughter‡ at her birth and the Sikh Panth had excommunicated him for infanticide. He had, then, found employment under Adina Beg.

One of the Sikhs in the fortress one day disguised himself and went among the enemies outside, to have news of Adina Beg's plan. He found Jassa Singh and his comrades present there. "I say, you are the murderers of the Singhs within the Ram Rauni," observed the Sikh in surprise. Jassa Singh and his men were deeply moved by this cut and their eyes were tearful. They appealed to him most piteously to request the Panth to

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† Khushwaqt Rai, pages 83-84.

‡ Panth Parkash, p. 687.

pardon and forgive them, some-how. The Sikh replied that the entire body of the besieged in the Ram Rauni, had resolved to attain martyrdom the next day, adding that, if they, too, agreed to join them in their supreme immolation, the holy Guru was to reward them for it.

The news that all the Sikhs in the fortress were determined to win martyrdom, had shocked and moved them. Jassa Singh wrote a letter and tied it to an arrow, which he shot into the fortress. He had written to say that, if the Panth was willing to forgive him for his serious defection, he would part company with the enemy and return to his brethren in the fortress.

The reply from within Ram Rauni reached Jassa Singh in the same way, flown on the wings of the air and read : "The Guru is the forgiver of the faults of all of us. If you like, you may return to the fold of the Panth now."\*

Jassa Singh and his comrades entered the fortress the same night and rejoined the Panth. They had brought with them a quantity of rations and munitions, too. The Sikhs in the fortress felt relieved now and were enabled to resist the enemy for a short while longer.

Sardar Jassa Singh sent word to Kaura Mall, requesting him urgently to do something at once to save the lives of the three hundred Sikhs in the Ram Rauni fortress. News was received just then that Abdali was coming to invade the Panjab.\*\* Another news of the day was that Minister Safdar Jang of Delhi had deputed Shah Niwaz as the Governor of Multan. Kaura Mall advised Mir Mannu, in view of these developments, to raise the siege of Ram Rauni and to come to friendly terms with the Sikhs, so as to enlist their good offices during the coming hard times.

Mir Mannu readily accepted this advice. The result was that the forces besieging Ram Rauni were withdrawn†

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\* Bhangoo, pages 314-15.

\*\* Cunningham, p. 95.

† Dr. Ganda Singh : Kaura Mall, p. 61. Bhangoo, pages 315-

in November, 1748. Moreover, Mannu, on the advice of Kaura Mall again, awarded the Sikhs a Jagir of half of the revenue of the District of Patti. He also restored to the Darbar Sahib the largess of the former twelve villages.† This put an end to the campaign of Ram Rauni.

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† Bhangoo p. 315.

## CHAPTER XXII

### Mannu and Kaura Mall

Abdali had been defeated by Mir Mannu and driven out of the country in March, 1748. Mir Mannu could have then assumed control of the whole country, had he been in Delhi. But, actually, he commanded now only the Panjab, to which he was a new comer as its ruler. Abdali also knew that the Delhi Darbar was a divided house and the Delhi Minister was not in a position to help the Governor of Lahore. He had wanted exactly to know as to the extent of the power of Mir Mannu as the Governor of the Panjab.

Accordingly, Abdali and his army crossed River Indus again in December, 1748.\* He plundered the territories all along the line of his advance and reached the banks of River Chenab. Mir Mannu, too, started from Lahore and reached the river Chenab, at a point, called Sahodra on the left bank, four miles off Wazirabad.

Abdali wrote to Mir Mannu, saying: "Char Muhal, the districts of Gujrat, Pasrur, Sialkot and Aurangabad, were a part of the kingdom of Kabul since the time of Nadir Shah. Pay up its revenue to Kabul and promise to make timely payments to us in future also."

Mir Mannu kept up his negotiations with Abdali on the one hand and despatched, on the other hand, Abdali's letter to the Emperor in Delhi, who agreed to pay Abdali

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\* Cunningham, page 95. Dr. Ganda Singh: Kaura Mall, p. 63.

the revenue of the Char Muhal area. Conscious of his weak military power, Mir Mannu, too, promised to pay Abdali the yearly amount of fourteen lakhs of rupees for the Char Muhal\*\* and paid to him the revenue for the current year. Abdali returned from there to Qandhar with the revenue in his pocket.

Mir Mannu had to attend to the serious position obtaining in Multan on his return from seeing Abdali off. Minister Safdar Jang had appointed Shah Niwaz as the Governor of Multan, and he had done so to belittle the power of Mir Mannu. Niwaz took possession of Multan, in May, 1749.\* He increased the pay of some of the army men and won them over to his support and recruited a large fresh force. He, thus, raised an army of fifteen thousand men in a few days in order to conquer Lahore : he had been assured by Safdar Jang that, if he dispossessed Mir Mannu of the Lahore province, he was, in that case, himself to be appointed its Governor, in place of the latter.

On the other hand, Safdar Jang assured Nasir Khan of his being made the Governor of Lahore, if he succeeded in driving Mir Mannu out of it. This Nasir Khan was once the Governor of Kabul; but he was out of job when Mir Mannu was appointed the Governor of Lahore. When Nasir had spoken of his being jobless to Mir Mannu, the latter had appointed him the Commander of Char Muhal.

But, as instigated by Safdar Jang, Nasir Khan played foul by Mir Mannu and raised an army, about eighteen-thousand strong, to attack Lahore. Mir Mannu was enraged at this news. He marched upon Sialkot at the head of a large army, Nasir Khan lost this battle and sneaked to Delhi in July, 1749.†

As soon as Mir Mannu was rid of Nasir Khan, he ordered Kaura Mall to attack Multan at the head of a large army. Kaura Mall invited ten thousand Sikhs of the Dal Khalsa to join his army, with the permission of Mir Mannu.‡

The Sikhs were paid a dally wage at the rate of fifty palsas a foot soldier, a rupee a horseman and five rupees a sardar.

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\*\*Jadunath Sarkar, page 419.

\* Jadunath Sarkar, page 416.

† Ibid, page 416.

‡ Panth Parkash, p. 690.

This was a higher rate of pay than what others received. In addition, the Sikhs were given the right of plundering the enemy. Also they had been paid two months' wage in advance. Sardar Jassa Singh of Icho Gill was not well. He stayed behind in Ram Rauni fortress, which was then named Ramgarh. That was how Jassa Singh was given the surname of Ramgarhia.\*

A battle was fought at a place three miles off Multan. Shah Niwaz was pressing the armies of Kaura Mall hard. Kaura Mall challenged Sardar Jassa Singh, saying: "If I am going to be defeated in the presence of the Panth, where else shall I seek help?"

These words put the Sikhs on their mettle. S. Jassa Singh and Sardar Sukha Singh shouted their war slogan of "Sat Sri Akaal" and dashed against the army of Shah Niwaz

Sardar Jassa Singh shot Shah Niwaz, who fell off his horse and Bhim Singh rushed at him and chopped his head off.† When the Multan army saw its general fall, it felt disheartened and fled the field. As the enemies took to their heels the Sikhs, first class plunderers as they were, lost no time in pillaging the camp of Shah Niwaz and the city of Multan. It was in September or October, 1749.‡

Kaura Mall rewarded Bhim Singh with a pair of gold bangles, a coat of mail, a uniform and a steed. The head of Shah Niwaz was carried to Lahore and presented to Mir Mannu, while the body was buried in the compound of the Mausoleum of Shams Tabrez.\*\*

Kaura Mall took possession of the entire province of Multan. Mir Mannu conferred the title of the Maharaja

\* Panth Parkash, p. 690.

There were two Jassa Singhs: one came of Village Ahloo and was a kalaal and the other of Village Icho Gill and was a carpenter. In order to distinguish between the two, one was called the Ahluwalia and the other the Ramgarhia. It is after the surnames of these two men that all the kalaals are called Ahluwalias and all the carpenters Ramgarhians.

† Bhangoo, page 317. Panth parkash, page 692.

‡ Jadunath Sarhar page 417.

\*\* Bhangoo, p 317 Panth Parkash, p. 693.

Bahadur on him and appointed him as the Governor of Multan.†

Kaura Mall had a firm faith in the Sikh Gurus. In gratitude for this victory he made an offering of eleven thousands of rupees to the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar. He also donated three lakhs of rupees to the building of the Gurdwara Baal Lihla and the tank attached to it, at Nankana Sahib. He loved to serve the Sikhs, and consequently, they called him Mitha (Sweet) Mall, instead of Kaura (bitter) Mall.

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† Cunningham, p. 96.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Abdall Again

Kaura Mall praised highly the help rendered him by the Sikhs and went to the extent of asserting that the Multan victory was won through their valour. He recommended that their satisfaction should be the care of the Lahore government. Mir Mannu approved of the report of Kaura Mall and increased the largess already given to the Sikhs, by adding to it the revenue from the districts of Chuhnian and Jhabal.\* And, in return, the Sikhs stopped harassing the people of the territory of Mir Mannu and settled down to a life of peace.

The first task they took in hand was that of the service they rendered to their gurdwaras. The tank of Amritsar had been levelled with the ground by the former rulers of Lahore. The Sikhs now took the mud out of it and filled it with fresh water from the wells. They, next, improved the precincts and the temple of the Darbar Sahib with the donation of Kaura Mall. The Sikh sardars, too, made their contributions in money for this work, according to their means. Thus the Darbar Sahib, also called the Har Mandir Sahib,† had its entire look brightened.

The people who had fled the place for fear of the

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\* Panth Parkash, p. 694.

† Later known as the Golden Temple.



government forces, returned and settled in Amrītsar. Some of the Sikh sardars, too, built their homes there. The Guru's free kitchen was well financed out of the largess recently granted to the Panth. Fairly large crowds of the faithful were daily seen there around the Har Mandir and near the Akaal Bunga.

The Sikhs passed about two years of peace and freedom in this way. The funds donated by Kaura Mall, at the time, were utilised for building the Gurdwara Bāab Lihla at Nankana Sahib and some other religious places elsewhere. Wherever the Gurdwaras had been deserted and damaged, these were now repaired and rebuilt.

This period of peace had brought the Sikhs another benefit. The people realised that the government itself had recognised the strong position of the Sikhs in the Panjab. The Sikh Panth that had so far been outlawed by the then rulers, was now called upon by the government to take part in its campaigns. This led to the people asking freely for the Sikh baptism. The parents who had formerly forbidden their children being baptised to Sikhism, now persuaded them to obtain conversion to Sikhism. One reason for this change in the public outlook was that becoming a Sikh meant wielding a position of high influence among one's neighbours. People were naturally and strongly impressed by a Sikh personality. The enemies of a Sikh dared not take him for granted and people were proud of having the help of the faithful Sikhs at their disposal. Consequently, this period of lawful life had added considerably both to the numbers and the dignity of the Sikhs.

This peace between the government and the Sikhs had been established solely through the efforts of Diwan Kaura Mall. Otherwise, the mullahs and the rulers, who were opposed to the Sikhs, had, all the time, been working to antagonise Mir Mannu against the Sikhs. Mir Mannu, too, disliked the powerful Sikh station of Amrītsar, in such proximity to Lahore. But he kept himself quietly on the look-out for a suitable opportunity. The Sikhs knew that and were anxiously and fast building their power. The government and the Sikhs

worked along two opposite lines. The government was determined to uproot and destroy the Sikhs totally. And the goal of the Sikhs was : "The Khalsa shall govern the land, and none shall dare go against it."\*

That was why the provisional and opportunistic amity between them could not be trusted to last long.

Mir Mannu had succeeded in bringing about peace to Lahore and Multan. But he was by no means free from the danger that loomed large for him from the Delhi and the Kabul sides. Delhi was the seat of his powerful enemy, Minister Safdar Jang and Kabul that of Ahmed Shah Abdali. He was aware of the fact that both these enemies were determined to possess the land of the Panjab. He was making war preparations in order to face the danger from both these potential enemies. But before he was prepared to dispel danger from these opposite directions, rumours came of the mounting of an attack by Abdali.

Harnoon Khan, the representative of Ahmed Shah Abdali, came to Lahore in October, 1751. He asked Mir Mannu to pay up twenty-four lakhs of rupees as the revenue of Char Muhal. Mir Mannu pleaded his inability to pay, for the reason that he could not collect it on account of the unsettled conditions in the country. Secondly, whatever had been received, was taken away by Nasir Khan to Delhi. All the same, he promised to pay the amount in easy instalments.

Another report came in November, that Abdali himself had reached Peshawar and that his generals, Jahan Khan and Abdus Samad Khan, were already in Rohtas. Mir Mannu felt greatly upset at hearing it. He called up Kaura Mall from Multan and Adina Beg from Jullundur, along with their armies. Simultaneously, Mir Mannu paid the Ambassador of Abdali, Haroon Khan, a sum of nine lakhs of rupees and, further, stipulated that if Abdali were to turn back to Kabul immediately, he, Mir Mannu, would collect and send to him at Kabul the balance of the this amount. Haroon Khan

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\* Raj Karega Khalsa, Aaki rahey na koiy.

despatched to Abdali the message and the sum of the revenue received from Mir Mannu. Abdali received the money and still continued to advance into India. The fact was that this time he had not come to realise the delayed revenue, but he wanted to conquer Lahore. He commanded an army over fifty-thousand strong at the time.

Another news was received, on 14 November, that Abdali had occupied Aimanabad. The rich families of Lahore, thereupon started deserting the town and moved to the hills. Not to speak of the subjects, even Mir Mannu sent his wives and children to Jammu\*. Mir Mannu had ordered Kaura Mall to go in camp at Shahdra across the River Ravi. But he himself moved to the Ravi crossing at Shah Daula, twenty-two miles up stream of the river, at the head of an army of fifty thousand men, and, in anticipation of Abali's move to cross the Ravi from the eastern side.

Abdali, too, set up his camp opposite that of Mir Mannu, across the river. Then in a clever move Abdali left his camp at Shah Daula, and marched along with his army, during the night, by a long circuit, and reached the crossing of Ghazipur, down-stream from Lahore. He crossed the Ravi there and marching via Shah Bilawal, dug himself in defences near Lahore. He was accompanied by his well-known general, Jahan Khan.

Mir Mannu also hastened back to Lahore, when he came to know of Abdali's move. Both the factions now faced each other entrenched in their defences, Mir Mannu on the side of the city and Abdali confronting him on the other side. Abdali was without heavy artillery and Mir Mannu waited for the supporting armies to come from Delhi. Therefore, neither of them was yet prepared to advance and attack the other.

Mir Mannu had repeatedly written to Delhi for reinforcements. But no aid came to him from there, nor was it likely to be despatched from there.

Mir Mannu used the good offices of Kaura Mall to

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\* Gupta : Sikh History, Vol. 1, p. 73.

ask for the help of the Sikh Panth and promised to hand over to their control the disturbed, hill territory of Parol, Kathuha, Basohli and some other places.\*

While the Sikhs were on their way from Amritsar, an unfortunate incident occurred. Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi killed Sardar Khushal Singh Kakkar of the Ramgarhia Misal. The other sardars resented this outrage and started pillaging the Bhangi's camp. This resulted in the Bhangi sardars returning from that point to their original camp in Amritsar, along with their army of ten thousand men. The remaining army, about twenty-thousand strong, proceeded on and camped in the Shalamar Garden in Lahore.

Some of the Sikhs went to the camp of Kaura Mall to see him the next day, while the others remained in their own camp. When they reached the city gate, they saw that some butchers were killing a cow. The Sikhs were enraged at the sight and they killed the butchers then and there. The Muslims of Lahore reacted violently to this incident, and attacked the Sikhs. Several deaths resulted on either side. This quarrel would certainly have flared up into a big conflagration, but for the prompt intervention of Diwan Kaura Mall who succeeded in making peace between the two parties. The Sikhs put up their camp outside the Yakki Gate.

One day, Sardar Sukha Singh of Mari Kamboki crossed the River, along with a number of his Sikh soldiers. The small party of these Sikhs was attacked by four squads of the Abdali army. Though insignificant in number, the Sikhs thought it below their dignity to flee the place. They stood their ground and dauntlessly fought the enemy back. Sardar Sukha Singh of Mari-Kamboki was killed here during the fighting.\*\* The

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\* Bhangoo, p. 319.

\*\* Sardar Sukha Singh, a carpenter, came of Mari Kamboki. He was married while still a raw boy of twelve years. He came to Amritsar and had himself baptised a Sikh. The army men came to his village to arrest him, when they knew of his baptism, but he was not there then.

Sikhs who were still far away in the jungle, escaped alive; but as they were on their way back to their camp, the Muslims Army of Lahore started firing on them with heavy artillery. A number of the Sikhs were thus killed. Such hostile episodes, created by the Muslims of Lahore, embittered and antagonised the minds of the

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At this his parents were apprehensive of his life. They quietly administered to him a dose of bhang, an intoxicant and when he was senseless under the effect of this drug, they shaved his head. As Sukha Singh recovered his senses, he jumped into a well. When his parents tried to get him out of it, he resisted their attempts. It so happened that another Sikh turned up there and was told of what had happened. He shouted to Sukha Singh : " Why are you committing suicide ? Seek death rather by fighting an enemy of the Panth."

On hearing these words Sukha Singh came out of the well, caught hold of the horse of the headman of his village, and rode away. He joined the force of Sardar Sham Singh, from whom he also received the Sikh baptism again.

One day Sukha Singh entered Lahore in disguise and robbed a goldsmith. Out of the booty he sent a sum of three hundred rupees to the headman of his village towards payment of the price of his horse and donated the rest of the sum to the Guru's common kitchen.

His parents took him home from his new habitation for a few days and made him stay there with his wife. His wife gave birth to a daughter in due time. The baby died at birth or was killed by her mother. It was, however, generally believed that she had been killed.

The result was that the Panth expelled him from the brotherhood. Yet, he did not desert his troop. His colleagues, however, treated him as of a lower status than the rest of them.

When Abdali had attacked India for the first time and advanced towards Sirhind, he posted a part of his army behind him in the Panjab in order to maintain peace there. The men of this army challenged the Sikhs to choose one of them to fight a duel with another one chosen from Abdali's forces Sukha Singh offered himself for the duel and succeeded in killing a Durrani of a towering height. The Panth was pleased to pardon him for his old blame and accepted him as an equal member to the others. All the Sardars offered him horses as his reward. He accepted the horse of Sardar Sham Singh and returned all the other horses to their masters. Bhangoo, pages 232 to 240,

Sikhs, who felt that they had better not have anything more to do with Mir Mannu and, therefore, returned home.\*

The fact was that the house over which Mir Mannu presided. was divided against itself. Adina Beg and several other Muslim officers of his way of thinking were jealous of the influence that Kaura Mall wielded, and of the Sikhs who formed the bed-rock of Kaura Mall's position. They found it intolerable to see a Hindu or a Sikh holding a high position under the Muslim rulers. They annoyed the Sikhs by committing deliberate excesses against them and succeeded in bundling them back home. That was their first success, that shook seriously the position of Kaura Mall. Their next step was to plan his assassination.

It was a long drawn out war. Skirmishes were engineered by both sides; but there was no decisive battle fought so far. Neither army was willing to come out of its trenches. The soldiers of Abjali plundered the area to a distance of fifty miles around Lahore. The villages were reduced to ruins and the crops destroyed. No light was now seen overnight over a distance of fifty miles from Lahore.

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\* Bhango, pages 310-321.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Abdali, Mannu and the Sikhs

Mir Mannu finally came out of his tranches on March the 6th, 1752. He attacked the enemy fiercely, but Kaura Mall alone, of all his senior generals, fought wholeheartedly for him. Just when the fighting was at its bloodiest, Adina Beg acted the traitor and prompted a Pathan of Qasoor to shoot Kaura Mall. The elephant of Kaura Mall had put its foot in a hollow tomb and tumbled to the ground. As Kaura Mall tried to change to another elephant, the traitor's bullet shattered his forehead and he died at the spot. This treachery on the part of Adina Beg took the life of the brave Maharaja Kaura Mall and resulted in the defeat of Mir Mannu. The part of the front defended by Kaura Mall was then pierced by the enemy and slowly the armies of Mir Mannu retreated along the whole of the front. Abdali had defeated Mir Mannu crushingly.

The defeated Mir Mannu was taken to Abdali the next day. He offered presents to his victor.

"Why did you disobey me first?" asked Abdali.

"I had another master, then," replied Mir Mannu humbly.

"Why did your master not come to your help?" he was asked next.

Mannu: "He was of the view that his lieutenant was capable of helping himself."

Abdali: "If you had captured me, how would you have treated me?"

Mannu: "I would have chopped your head and sent it to my master in Delhi."

Abdali: "Now that I have you in my grip, tell me how shall I treat you?"

Mannu: "If you are a trader, sell me in return for a present. If you are a butcher, kill me. And if you are a king, then forgive me and take me in your protection."\*

Abdali was very pleased to hear these answers. He reappointed Mir Mannu as the Governor of Lahore in his own behalf. Mir Mannu promised to pay Abdali a revenue of fifty lakhs of rupees for the provinces of Lahore and Multan.† He presented Abdali the sum of fifty lakhs of rupees that he collected from Lahore promptly, eleven horses and two elephants.††

Abdali made a treaty, annexing the provinces of Lahore and Multan to his empire. He told Qalander Beg to take the text of the treaty to Delhi to secure for it the signature of the Emperor there, who signed and accepted it on April the 13th,\*\* admitting the sovereignty of Abdali over Lahore and Multan.

These two provinces were detached from Delhi from that day on and appended to the Government of Afghanistan and Mir Mannu was appointed the Governor of both of them.

Ahmed Shah Abdali was born in Multan, He had, thus, a special attachment for it. As he annexed Lahore and Multan to his dominion, he granted lands to many a Saddozai Pathan of his race in Multan and saw him settled there.†††

It was at this time that general Abdulla Khan was despatched to Kashmir, who conquered it for Abdali.

\* Maskeen, page 79. Khushwaqt Rai, page 88. Sohan Lal, pages 134-35. Ali-ud-Din, page 112. Brown, page 17.

† Bhahgoo, page 322. Panth Parkash, page 700. Jadunath Sarkar, page 435.

†† Shamsher Khalsa (Panjabi) page 114.

\*\* Jadunath Sarkar, page 435.

††† Jadunath Sarkar, page 435.



Kashmir was attached by Abdali to form a part of Afghanistan and he appointed Diwan Sukhjewan Mall as its Governor. Abdali returned to Qandhar from Lahore after he had organised the administration of the three provinces, newly acquired by him.

Mir Mannu, who had been appointed the Governor of Lahore and Multan by Abdali, was now free from any involvements from Delhi and Afghanistan sides for the reason that he had nothing more to do with the former and had transferred his allegiance to the latter. He was left with one anxiety alone, and that was about the internal peace of the territories under his charge. And it was to this task that he, next, applied his mind with a strong will.

Diwan Kaura Mall was the only link between Mir Mannu and the Sikhs. His death had snapped this bond. The people who were hostile to the Sikhs, alone wielded influence in the counsels of Mir Mannu now. They called the Sikhs non-believers and wanted to destroy them root and branch. Mannu himself was fanatically minded. When a pimple had grown upon an ulcer, how could the poor patient know rest ?

The Maulanas and the Commanders left no stone unturned in poisoning the mind of Mannu against the Sikhs. They laid the blame for his defeat at the hands of Abdali, too, on the Sikhs. They argued that, had the Sikhs had their heart in the right place, they would not have lost the game at all.

All this incitement went home with Mir Mannu who was convinced that the stability of his administration rested only on the decimation of the Sikhs. He confiscated their Jagir\* and ordered a massacre of all the long-haired Sikhs. The Sikhs were, thus, forced to go once again on the rampage, pillaging the country which now bubbled over with disturbances.

Mir Mannu was the most powerful and the stoniest of all the governors who had ever ruled. Lahore he was sworn to destroy the Sikhs. He ordered his patrolling troops to

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\* Panth parkash, page 701. Bhangoo' Page. 340. Shamsher Kha sa, (Panjabi) Page 114. Gupta. Vol. I, page 65.

cover the entire territory and kill all the Sikhs, including their women and children. These troops were officered by Momin Khan, Sayyad Jamil-ud-Din, Bakhshli Ghazi Beg, Khuaja Mirza and others. It was notified, at the same time, that any one bringing the head of a Sikh was to be awarded a sum of ten rupees.\*

He had given strict written orders to the chaudhries and the hill princes, telling them to bring to Lahore any Sikh men, women and children they happen to meet. These orders were executed vigorously. Hundreds of Sikhs were marched to Lahore from day to day and were martyred at the Nakhas Chowk after they had been subjected to the severest cruelties of all kinds.† Once the number of the chopped off heads of the Sikhs was so large, that they were heaped high into towers. Wells were filled with them and deep foundations were levelled with them and walls built thereon. About fifty Sikhs, sent there by Adina Beg, were bludgeoned, beaten and pulped to death with heavy, thick clubs. Greedy persons used to bring the heads of dead sikhs or of women with long hair on them, and claimed rewards against them in Lahore.

The Sikhs had suffered the heaviest and the most grievous losses during that time. The fighting Sikhs often clashed with patrolling troops and disappeared into the neighbouring jungles when about to be over-powered. Momin Khan was once so indignant that he pursued them into a wilderness. The Sikhs found their opportunity and surrounded him and his men on all sides. His troops

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\* Latif, pages 220-21. Maskeen, pages 68-69. Sinha, page 28. Dr. Ganda Singh: Gurdwara Shahid Ganj, page 29.

† "Mir Mannu had done thousands of the Sikhs to death" Latif page 64. "Thousands of the Sikhs were captured every day and taken to the Nakhas Chowk and murdered there:" History of the Panjab by Kanhya Lal, page 73. "Mir Manuu was responsible for the murder of thousands of the Sikhs ... Mannu had ordered one thousand and one hundred Sikhs to be killed at the Nakhas Chowk on the Id Day." Tehqiqat-i-Chishti by Nur Ahmed Chishti, pages 100-01. "Mir Mannu was fanatical to his finger-tips. He had more than a kilogram of the holy threads of the Hindus taken off them and burnt, before he had his day's meal. "Tehqiqat-i-Chishti, page 648.

suffered heavily before he could extricate himself from the  
Jungle.\*

Such incidents had happened at many places.

## CHAPTER XXV

### Worst Barbarism

The patrolling troops brought to Lahore hundreds of Sikh women and children, who were subjected to countless intolerable and unspeakable tortures at the Nakhas Chowk. Mir Mannu had left them no other choice but to disown Sikhism and accept Islam. As they rejected the proposal, they were confined to extremely small, underground cells in the hottest summer time. Every Sikh woman was forced to grind half a maund of grain at the hand mill. She, who found it beyond her power to do it, had to bear the weight of a round stone, two maunds heavy, that was placed on her chest. She was given half a loaf of barley, mixed with an equal quantity of common salt, and one cup of water during the twenty-four hours of the day. Their children would cry on account of these hardships and utter hunger; the mothers had to put up with all this hell and resigned themselves to the will of God.

These children were wrenched out of the laps of their distressed mothers by the orders of Mir Mannu and butchered before their eyes. An executioner held a child, tossed it up into the air and caught it on the sharp point of his lance and hurled the bleeding and writhing corpse into the lap of the mother, the reason being that they found these mothers un-yielding still; they cut out the livers of the children and thrust pieces of them into the mouths of their mothers. More than all this, pieces of the flesh of their darling off-spring were notched off their corpses, threaded into ghastly garlands and placed round the necks of the

wretched mothers. It was marvellous on the part of these frail women, who were shattered physically and more dead than alive, but stout of will as ever, to put up with such bloody atrocities. Yet they stood by their faith in Sikhism and flinched not.

Batches of more Sikh women were daily taken to Lahore, adding to the number of former women prisoners. The warring Sikhs had fought their way through the unexampled repression let loose in their home-land and found refuge away from Mannu's authority. All the machinery and might of oppression was concentrated in their absence on capturing their families. Any person suspected of being himself a Sikh or being sympathetic to Sikhism, was held up. If a patrolling party assaulted a village, ten other villages in the neighbourhood were emptied of their residents. Mothers put their children out of the way of the patrols and of consequent harm. The extent of the Sikhs, perpetrated in the reign of Mannu was so terrible and gruesome as to beat all the previous oppressions heaped upon the Sikhs, taken together. It was a very common by-word among the Sikhs to declare:

"Mannu is our scythe and his anise are we sure;

He reaps, we keep on growing a thousand times more."\*

The Sikh parties who now were in places distant from their homes, received the news of the extreme tyrannies practised on the members of their families. They made up their minds, in desperation, to return home in order to protect their families and relatives and win their battle against the enemy or die in the attempt. They, accordingly, were back in the Panjab during the winter, clashing with the government patrols at many places.

When Mir Mannu heard of it, he lost temper and rushed from Lahore at the head of his troops. He went in camp near Multanpur and had the Sikh children in that area captured from their homes and murdered. It seemed that fate itself lay in wait for him. The day of the fourth November, 1753, had just dawned, when a spy brought him the news of the Sikhs being in hiding in a sugarcane field

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\* Mannu Saadi daatri, aseen Mannu dey soey;

Jeon Jeon Saanoo wadhda, aseen teon teon doonev hoey

near-by.

Mannu rode his steed at once and, at the head of his troops, besieged the field and started raining bullets into it. The Sikhs, too, retaliated and fired a volley from within it. It was a thick-growing sugarcane crop and the result was that neither the bullets of the Lahore troops harmed the Sikh nor did the Sikh firing injure anybody. The bustling noise of sugarcanes frightened the horse of Mir Mannu who fell off his saddle, with one of his feet caught in a stirrup of the horse saddle. He was dragged behind the running beast and soon breathed his last.\*

His soldiers had not been paid for the last several months. They, therefore, took possession of his body. His wife, Murad Begam, popularly known as the Mughlani Begam, sold her jewellery and paid the army three lakhs of rupees as the arrears out of its proceeds, on the third day. It was only then that the dead body of Mir Mannu was handed over to her and buried at Mian Mir, near Lahore, and by the side of the tomb of the Khan Bahadur.†

The Sikhs heard the news of the death of Mir Mannu. A Sikh party that had been hovering near Lahore at the time, made a night sally at Shaheed Ganj, then called Nakhas Chowk. They broke an opening into a wall of the jail and set free all the Sikh women prisoners, and escorted them back to their homes in safety.

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\* Bhangoo, page 341. Panth Parkash, page 711. Shamsheer Khalsa, Panjabi, page 117. Dr. Ganda Singh: Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj, page 31. Latif, page 70. Tehqiqat-i-Chishti, page 648.

† Panth Parkash, p. 712, Dr. Ganda Singh, Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj, p. 31. Jadunath Sarkar, p. 437.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### Murad Begam

Mir Mannu died on the fourth of November, 1753. His widow, Murad Begam, bribed the army and won it over to her side and set herself up as the ruler of Lahore. When the Emperor in Delhi received the news of the death of Mir Mannu, he appointed his own son, Prince Mahmud, a three-year old child, as the Governor and the son of Mir Mannu, named Mohammad Amin Khan, again only two years old, as the Lieutenant Governor of Lahore. He appointed Murad Begam and Moman Khan as the regents for the two children. These four nominees however, enjoyed a tenure of only five days in their new offices.

There had been a shuffling in the Ministership at Delhi a few days earlier. Intazam-ud-Daula, Khan-i-Khana, the eldest son of Minister Qamar-ud-Din, had replaced Safdar Jang as the Minister in Delhi, in March, 1753. The new Minister, the Khan-i-Khana, did not approve of the Lahore appointments, in which changes were made once again. The Minister Khan-i-Khan was nominated as the Governor of Lahore on the 17th of November, 1753, and Moman Khan his lieutenant: Bhikharí Khan was appointed assistant to the Lieutenant Governor\*.

But neither Murad Begam nor Moman Khan liked the new appointments. They, therefore, requested Abdali to

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\* Jadunath Sarkar, p. 438.

appoint their proteges to the Governorship of Lahore, and the royal order from Ahmed Shah Abdali appointing Mohammad Amin Khan, the son of Mir Mannu, as the Governor and Moman Khan as his Lieutenant, was received by Murad Begum in January, 1754.

Bhikhari Khan Roshan-ud-Daula Rustam Jang rejected this change, and defied the new order from within his own house. Murad Begam bribed all the generals into supporting her. She attacked the house of Bhikhari Khan, pillaged it and took him a prisoner. The rebellion was, thus, suppressed. But, as ill luck would have it, her son, Governor Mohammad Amin Khan, died in May, 1754. He was said to have been poisoned by Bhikhari, though other said that small-pox had taken his life.

There was a change in the royal court at Delhi mean-while. In May, 1754, Intizam-ud-Daula Khan-i-Khana was replaced by Gazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk, the grandson of Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk, as the Minister. He was a handsome young man of eighteen. He shut Emperor Ahmed Shah behind the bars on the second of June, 1754, and notched his eyes out. He placed Prince Aziz-ud-Din, an old man of fifty-five, the grandson of Emperor Bahadur Shah and the son of Muaz-ud-Din, on the throne. The new king adopted the title of Alamgir the Second.\*

Alamgir, the Second, appointed Moman Khan as the Governor of Lahore on the 25th of October, 1754. But Murad Begam refused to accept this appointment, and set herself up as the ruler of Lahore. She replaced the former Sardars with her own minions. Everybody in Lahore, including the street urchins, talked of her characterlessness. Her intimacy with Bakhshi Gazi Beg Khan and Tehmasap Khan Maskeen, a slave youth of her household, was an open secret.\*\*

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\* Jadunath Sarkar, pages, 543-44.

\*\* Maskeen, p. 281. Tarikh Farrah Bakhsh by Shiv Parsad, p. 33. Shah Alam Nama by Ghulam Ali, the son of Bhikhari Khan, whom Murad Begam had murdered, p. 26. Khazana-i-Amiran by Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami, pages 98-99. Gupta, Vol. I, p. 80.



The rich and the respectable citizens of Lahore were sick of the rule of the Begam. They invited Khuaja Mirza Khan, the Commander of Aimanabad, to take over the government of Lahore. The Khuaja took possession of the city in December, 1754, and he confined the Begam to her house and assumed the Governorship of Lahore.

Murad Begam sent her uncle, Khuaja Abdulla Khan, to Ahmed Shah Abdali in order to seek his protection. Consequently, Aman Khan, the brother of Jahan Khan and a General of Abdali, arrived at Lahore at the head of an army of ten thousand men in April, 1755. He defeated Khuaja Mirza on the battle-field and took him a prisoner along with his subordinates. He pillaged the town of Lahore and collected a booty worth forty lakhs of rupees.\* Murad Begam was appointed by him as the Governor of Lahore and Khuaja Abdulla her lieutenant.

Bhikhari Khan, who had been set free when the Begam was held a prisoner, was again handed over to Murad Begam. She had him bound hands and feet and shoe-beaten by her servants, both male and female. When this beating had made him senseless, she herself took a dagger and did him to death and had his corpse thrown into a ditch, outside the town.† This happened in April, 1755.

Khuaja Abdulla, the Lieutenant of Murad Begam, took her a prisoner and became himself the Governor of Lahore in July, 1755. He celebrated this elevation in rank by plundering thoroughly the houses of the Hindus and the Muslims of Lahore; thus he amassed a fortune of lakhs of rupees.

This disturbed condition of Lahore prompted Adina, Beg, the Commissioner of Jullundur, to attack the city at the head of his army in September, 1755. Khuaja Abdulla was driven from there and Sadiq Beg, the lieutenant of Adina Beg, was made the Governor. Murad

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\* Khushwaqt Rai, p. 89.

† Panjab Mughals, p. 125. Panth Parkash, p. 718. It writes that Murad Begam had wanted to start a love affair with Bhikhari. Bhikhari rejected the offer, for which the jilted woman saw him murdered.

Begam, thereupon, sent her representative to Abdali and sought his help for herself. Abdali ordered his general, Jahan Khan, to attack Lahore. But, before Jahan Khan reached Lahore, Sadiq Beg retreated to Sirhind. Jahan Khan re-appointed Murad Begam the Governor of Lahore and Khuaja Abdulla her Lieutenant in December, 1755.

As soon as the Durrani Army left the Panjab Adina Beg once again made preparations to attack Lahorr. Umda Begam, the daughter of Murad Begam, was the fiancee of Gazi-ud-Din, the Minister in Delhi. Depending upon this close relation-ship, Murad Begam called upon the Minister to come to her aid. He set out with an army of ten thousand men for the Panjab and encamped at Machhiwara in February, 1756.

Adina Beg came to a secret understanding with the Minister, who now stayed put at Machhiwara, while Adina's Lieutenant, Sadiq Beg, attacked Lahore with an army of ten thousand men. Murad Begam got wind of this conspiracy and sent her daughter, Umdn Begam, to the Minister, her betrothed, at Machhiwara, on the 4th of March, 1756. Gazi-ud-Din married her there and despatched Sayyad Jamil-ud-Din Khan, to Lahore to escort Murad Begam, too, to him.

The Sayyad took Murad Begam prisoner and plundered her house. She was brought to the camp of the Minister as a prisoner on March the 28th, 1756.\*

The Minister kept her as a prisoner and passed the provinces of Lahore and Multan to Adina Beg in return for a yearly revenue of thirty lakhs of rupees. Adina Beg appointed Jamil-ud-Din Khan as his Lieutenant in Lahore.

The Minister returned to Delhi after he had finalised this arrangement, on May the 9th, 1756.

Khuaja Abdulla Khan had fled to Qandhar. But he now returned from there accompanied by Jang Baz Khan a General of King Abdali, and his army. Jamil-ud-

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\* Shamsheer Khalsa, Panjabi, p. 119. Murad Begam was taken in, either as a wife or paramour, by the Minister. She was well known as a bitch and she might possibly have laid a trap for him.

Din hastened to retreat to Jullundur before the Afghan force reached Lahore on October 4, 1756. Backed by this force, Khuaja Abdulla was installed as the Governor and Khuaja Mirza as his Lieutenant in Lahore. Lahore was mercilessly looted this time, too.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### Riotous Ravening

Several changes were effected in the government of Lahore from November, 1753, to October, 1756. Not once did these three years see a firm administration in control of the province. This provided an opportunity to the Sikhs to add to their strength. Their rise was surprising and they had become a power to reckon with. It was a fact that the Sikhs were the only well-organized power in the country at the moment.

The Sikhs had returned to the Panjab during the lifetime of Mir Mannu. Chaos came in the wake of his death, which enabled the Sikhs to plunder the territory. The informers of the government, who had reported on the Sikhs to the patrolling armies and were responsible for the atrocities and deaths of Sikh men, women and children, were singled out and vindictively punished by the Khalsa. Places like Nur-Deen-Di-Saran, Kot, Majitha, Jandiala, Ghanian, Saidewala, Bhura, Mandiala, Butala, Bandala, Naushehra, Malhpur, Phogwara and other villages and towns were looted by them. As many members of the families of Karma Chhina and Rama Randhawa as came handy, were killed. The Jatts of village Saidewala, the nambardars of Bhura, the Ranghars of Butala, the Jatts of Bandala, the chaudhries of Naushehra, Ismaeel Khan of Mandiala, Aulya Khan of Gheb, Hasna Bhatti and other top informers were searched out and killed. †

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† Panth Parkash P. 713.

The walls of Ram Rauni had been badly damaged in the bombardment during the last siege, in the time of Mir Mannu. Sardar Jassa Singh, a carpenter, now had it rebuilt with burnt bricks and it was renamed Ramgarh. That was why he himself was called Ramgarhia.

The Sikhs were greatly emboldened to loot the people and their homes up to the very walls of Lahore. Qasam Khan, the Commander of Patti, was once on his way to Lahore. When he was only one stage from his destination, a force of eight thousand Sikhs set on him. He was beaten in the fight and all the belongings of his camp were looted by the Sikhs. The Sikhs marched further and attacked Mirza-Khuaaja at Aimanabad, who had been the governor of Lahore for a few days. They pillaged his territory and were back in Lahore again. All this hapened in February, 1754.

The Jatts of Sheikhpura had waylaid five Sikhs, who included the two brothers, Sarja Singh and Garja Singh, and killed them. Sardar Bagh Singh of Hallawal came to know of it. His band of fighters attacked the village of the Jatts, looted it and killed about fifty of the enemies.

Sardars Jassa Singh and Hari Singh attacked Kalanaur. It was the old home-town of Jaspat and Lakhpat. The Sikhs looted the entire town and killed several relatives of Lakhpat. They advanced further to Pathankot and Sujampur and plundered these towns.

Sardars Charhat Singh and Jassa Singh, with their horsemen, numbering five hundred and disguised as Turks, entered Lahore one evening. They robbed the houses of the rich Mughal residents of the Pari Mahal and Rang Mahal localities, and returned to the jungles of the River Ravi before the enemy army-men had moved in. Moman Khan tried to pursue and punish the Sikhs, at the head of an army patrol. The Sikhs made several sallies against the patrol and inflicted a good deal of damage on it.

Moman Khan was not able to punish the Sikh soldiers. But he took his vicarious revenge on the peaceful and harmless Sikh relatives of the members of the Dal Khalsa. The country was ravaged by these disorders and depredations. Both the Sikh bands and the government army patrols robbed the population. Moman Khan offered the

temptation of prizes to those who would agree to inform on the Sikhs; but no one dared to do it now for fear of subsequent Sikh reprisals against them.

Nawab Kapoor Singh, one day, challenged the members of the Dal Khalsa, demanding: "Is there any Sikh warrior who will dare cut the head of Moman Khan and carry it here?" Sardar Agghar Singh, the nephew of Bhai Mani Singh, stood up to answer the call. The assembly prayed to God for the success of his mission and he started for Lahore. He disguised himself and secured work in the stable of Moman Khan. Moman Khan took him for an obedient and untiring servant and made him accompany himself all the while. One day Moman Khan went to the River Ravi, for fishing when he took Agghar Singh with him as usual. Moman Khan asked him to hold the horse by the reins on the bank and tried to step into the boat. The Sikh got his chance, chopped the head of Moman Khan and fled with it, riding the horse.

He placed Moman's head before Nawab Kapoor Singh, who embraced him fondly and let him retain the sword and the horse of Moman Khan as his mementos. The Panth further offered him the robes of honour. \* This incident had greatly terrified the rulers.

In 1754, a Sikh force, twelve-thousand strong, started plundering the territory around Ambala. Their feelings were bitterly aroused as they approached Sirhind. That was why they had once again attacked and looted Sirhind. They proceeded next to Theekariwala. Aala Singh, the founder of Patiala State, came to the Dal Khalsa here, to seek its aid. A force of twelve thousand Sikhs accompanied him and secured for him the possession of the Budlada area.

Another force of the Sikhs advanced to the neighbourhood of Lahore early in 1755 and started plundering it. Khuaja Mirza was the Governor of Lahore then. He deputed his brother, Khuaja Qazi, with an army force to deal with the Sikhs, who, however, trickled away into Jullundur Doaba. †

Qutab Khan Rohela rebelled against the Emperor of

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\*Panth Parkash, Pages 716-17

†Ahmad Shah: Ahiwal-i Adina Beg Khan, pages 880-81.

Delhi and took possession of Sirhind on March the 11th, 1755, driving away its Governor, Sadiq Beg. Adina Beg was worried to see the Rohela chief consolidating his power there and enlisted the help of the Dal Khalsa to dislodge Qutab Khan. He advanced at the head of the two combined forces, fifty thousand horsemen and as many footsoldiers, to fight the Rohela chief. A contested battle was fought near Ropar, on April the 11th, 1755. Qutab Khan Rohela and his aide, Jamal Khan of Maler Kotla, were killed in the fighting.

Adina Beg took possession of Sirhind, and, further, he occupied the territories of Shahabad, Thaneswar, Ghuram, Mansoorpur and Mustafabad. The Emperor, instead of suppressing him, appointed him as the Governor of Sirhind and bestowed on him the title of Zafar Jang Bahadur. †

The Sikh force parted company with Adina Beg at Thaneswar. They went to Jaipur, the State of Rana Madho Singh and looted the areas of Narnaul and Kanaud. Madho Singh invited the Mahrathas to his aid, when the Sikhs retreated into the Panjab.

The Durrani generals who came to Lahore to help Murad Begam, had to contend with a still greater resistance from the Sikhs. The Durranis, who were a terror for others, could not take lightly a determined and intrepid confrontation from the Sikhs. Whenever the Durrani generals made the mistake of pursuing the Sikhs into the wilderness of the jungles, they had to suffer defeats at the hands of the latter and turn back.

A party of the Sikhs entered the town of Qasoor one day. They looted it freely and then retired from the place. Government army patrols would not interfere with the Sikhs anywhere. They had no courage to challenge any Sikh band. If the Sikhs were reported to be lurking on the eastern side, the patrol would slink to the west of the place. And, if the Sikhs attacked the northern flank of a village, the government force would slip a mile away to its south.

The Sikhs were the largest and the best organised power in the Panjab at the time. The rulers in Lahore and the people of the country knew it beyond a doubt.

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†Ahmad Shah: Ahiwal-i-Adina Beg Khan, pages 880-81.

The masses were sick of the daily marauding inflicted on them. They needed a ruler who could guarantee the security of their lives and property and they knew that the Dal Khalsa alone could bring them such a peace.

The leaders of the Dal Khalsa, on the other hand, were conscious that that was the right opportunity for them to set up their government in the country. There was no other power in the Panjab that was in a position to establish a firm rule there. They, accordingly, resolved to set up their own government in the Panjab.

The people wanted a firm ruler and the Sikhs were out to govern their motherland. The two of them conveniently and quietly reached an understanding. Therefore, the Sikhs proclaimed: "A village, a territory or a chaudhri who will agree to yield to the Dal Khalsa one fifth of the produce, shall be protected in every way. This is not all. The Dal shall not do any harm to them; it shall protect them from the ravages of all sorts of raiders, be they the robbers or the government troops or any others. They shall, in return, hand over to the Dal Khalsa one fifth of the yield of their crops at the harvesting of the two crops of the year, in place of the repeated revenues and other payments made to the previous administrations."

This proclamation was widely welcomed by the people. Numbers of villages and territories accepted the rule of the Sikhs. This system was termed the 'Raakhi', or custody, of the Dal Khalsa. \* The people inhabiting the territories along both the banks of the rivers Satlej, Beas, Ravi and Chenab accepted the protection of the Khalsa. There were only a few places that had not yet accepted the Sikh rule. The Sikh parties roamed the country; they protected the villages under their formal custody and looted the rebel villages.

The control of the Government of Lahore did not extend beyond the walls of its cities and forts. If one of its officers dared stir out of those walls, he soon scurried back to the safety of his battlements after an encounter with one or the other band of the Sikhs. On the arrival

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\* Gupta Vol. I, pages 93-94. Butay Shah, page 308, Ala-ud-Din, page 171.



of Jang Baz Khan, the Durrani general, Jamil ud-Din Khan decided to flee to Delhi, taking with him the treasure of Lahore. But the Sikhs did not allow him to cross the Satlej and robbed him of all his belongings.\* Jamial-ud-Din was able to reach Delhi barely with his life.

After the country had been placed under the Raakhi system, the Dal Khalsa was divided into various sections each one of which was allotted a particular area to patrol for peace and security. The bands of Sardar Karora Singh and Sardar Deep Singh Shaheed moved to the South of the River Satlej. The Singhpuria and Aliluwalia sections were sent to the area of the River Ghara, beyond the conjunction of the Rivers Beas and Sutlej, to protect the population on both sides of it. The Narjai Misal was allotted the territory of Naqqa, the sub-district of Chuhmian and the area adjoining it. Sardar Jai Singh Kanhya and Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia were placed in charge of the Riarki area. Sardar Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and Sardar Hari Singh Bhangsi had Doaba Rachna, between the Rivers Ravi and Chenab, in their charge, in addition to the Doaba Chaj, between the Rivers Chenab and Jehlem. The Nishanawali and Dallewali misals were stationed at Amritsar, so as to be drafted for duty wherever needed, to maintain peace and order.†

The Sikhs now controlled the major part of the fertile Panjab. This area would have had a firmly established Sikh rule in it, had King Abdali of Afghanistan not budged in to check the march of the Sikhs. This fourth invasion of India by Abdali once again upset the apple-cart of the Panjab and caused a political storm.

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\* Panth Parkash, page 719.

† Sohan Lal, Vol. II, P. 8.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Abdali Active

At the instigation of Najib-ud-Daula, Murad Begam and Emperor Alamgir the Second Ahmed Shah Abdali left Peshawar on November the 15th, 1756, and reached Lahore on December the 20th, 1756. He stayed in Lahore for a few days and received presents from the notables there.

He pillaged the territories through which he passed. He sent Jahan Khan to Jullundur Doaba, but the commissioner of the area, Adina Beg, fled to Hissar and Hansi out of sheer fear of the Durrani forces. Jahan Khan looted and laid waste the whole of the Doaba. Adina Beg left Hansi, too, and slipped to the mountains of Kangra, along with his family, to find shelter there.

From Lahore Abdali marched straight to Delhi. He crossed the River Sutlej on January the 10th, 1757. Murad Begam advanced to receive him at Karnal and Najib-ud-Daula met him at Narela on the sixteenth of January, 1757. Gazi-ud-Din, the Minister of Delhi, reached the camp of Abdali on the 19th of January. He was arrested, on the 20th. Abdali arrived at Delhi on the 28th of January, 1757. For once he did not have to fire a single shot between Peshawar and Delhi.

The Durrani started looting the people of Delhi as soon as they reached there. Murad Begam had helped them to know the houses of the rich families in order to have them pillaged. Not only that; she told them of the families that had beautiful daughters or wives.

When the general pillage stopped, the city was divided into different sectors, and each sector was thoroughly

ravaged in its turn. The floors and the roofs of the houses were broken, in order to come at hidden wealth. At the end of it all, a toll was fixed on every house and charged to it. Young wives and daughters of the people were dragged by the hair. Women were captured from their homes with every new sun to satisfy the lust of the Durrani soldiers. Many of them were killed in that way, and many more committed suicide by jumping into the wells, by hanging themselves or by taking a fatal dose of poison, to save their honour. Thousands of the residents of Delhi committed suicide and thousands more were killed by the Durrans.

This extravagant carnage continued for a month. Princess Zohra Begam, the daughter of Emperor Alamgir the Second, was married to Prince Taimoor Shah, the son of Ahmed Shah Abdali. But such a marriage was actually nothing better than a forcible capture of a concubine. Hazrat Begam, aged only sixteen, the daughter of Emperor Mohammad Shah, was taken in by Abdali as his own wife. Sixteen other princesses of the royal family and four hundred young women of the nawabs and other wealthy families were taken by him as a part of his booty to Afghanistan. All this was the nefarious work of Murad Begam, who had provided clues leading to the death and dishonour of thousands of the unfortunate citizens of Delhi, both men and women.

Murad Begam offered her own presents to Abdali on the 20th February. Abdali placed his turban, decorated with a jewelled plume, on the head of Murad Begam, in return, and, after naming her as his 'son' bestowed on her the title of Sultan Mirza. He celebrated, on a request made by Murad Begam, the marriage of her daughter, Umda Begam, to Minister Gazi-ud-Din, who had been already living with her, and let him continue as the Minister in Delhi. But this Minister was now made to divorce under Abdali's orders all his former wives.

Abdali marched beyond Delhi and pillaged and burnt Agra, Mathura and Brindaban. The whole of this large territory was pillaged and ransacked by him. He might have advanced much farther but for a natural calamity: cholera broke out among his forces to the extent that not

less than one hundred and fifty men of his troops died daily. This compelled him to return to Delhi on the 31st of March.

The provinces of Lahore, Multan, Kashmere and Peshawar were already a part of his kingdom. He now annexed the province of Sirhind, too, to his vast territory, and appointed Mohammad-Zai Abdus Samad Khan of Hashtnagar as its Governor and Saidq Beg his lieutenant. He had already appointed Gazi-ud-Din as the Minister in Delhi: he now appointed Najib-ud-Daula as the Commander-in-Chief there.

Najib-ud-Daula was, in reality, the sole power in Delhi. The Emperor and the Minister were mere puppets in his hands who danced to the tune that he called. Abdali collected the vast wealth and booty amassed through the pillage of Delhi once again, and turned back towards Kabul on the second of April. The camels, horses, mules, elephants and carts that carried his treasure numbered as many as twenty-eight thousand. He had an army that was eighty-thousand strong. The warriors who had gallantly ridden their steeds on the expedition to India, had now to foot it back the whole way to Afghanistan on the return journey. The horses were all needed to carry the fabulous booty from India: they could not be spared for the soldiers.

For the Sikhs this short period of turmoil was a God-send. The villages that had not accepted their custody arrangement, were thoroughly plundered by them. As a matter of fact various bands of marauders were active during this interval of the disturbances. The Sikhs were able to protect the areas that had accepted their custody, from the other groups of free-booters. Adina Beg, the ruler of Jullundur Doaba, had fled and sought refuge in the hills for fear of Abdali. The Sikhs snatched this opportunity to plunder the masterless territory. Also, they punished suitably the refractory, government functionaries and the chaudhris of the area.

When Abdali was returning from Delhi, carrying huge quantities of booty, the Sikhs organised their bands and made raids on the Durrani forces encamped for the nights. The Durrani soldiers carried on their persons large quantities of booty, and were, therefore, not able to fight against the

Sikhs because of that handicap. And the Sikhs were traditionally not afraid of empty threats. The result was that the Sikh raiders snatched from the Durrani plunderers a goodly part of the wealth that they were carrying and successfully lightened their burden. Abdali's army was subjected to this treatment during the journey from Karnal to the River Chenab.\*

Abdali made a halt of a few days at Lahore and made a few changes of officers in the territory. He had already appointed Abdus Samad Khan as the Governor of Sirhind. Nasir Ali was posted in Jullundur, while Abdali's own son, Prince Taimoor was nominated as the over-all chief of the entire territory of the Panjab, with Jahan Khan as his Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief.

The Durrani were mortally sick of the Sikh raids. Accordingly, Abdali had issued strict orders to Jahan Khan to be avenged on the Sikhs. The army patrols, too, had urgent orders to crush the Sikhs, some of whom were killed during the skirmishes while the rest slunk into the jungles. Yet when Abdali renewed his march, the Sikhs again chased him.

Abdali returned to Qandhar, leaving behind an army of ten thousand Durrani at the disposal of Taimoor and Jahan Khan.

Jahan Khan, after setting the administration in Lahore on a firm footing, now marched against the Sikhs. There were three claimants for the rule of the Panjab: the Mughals of Delhi, the Durrani of Afghanistan and the Sikhs of the Panjab. The Mughals had been defeated by the Durrani, which meant that they had admitted the Durrani possession of the Panjab. The Durrani and the Sikhs were, therefore, the only contestants in the Panjab field. The Sikhs did not ask for the Panjab in charity; they were, rather not willing to receive it as a gift from any one; nor would they let any one else rule over the Panjab.

Jahan Khan knew well the nature of the Sikhs. He was convinced that, if they were not destroyed or disabled, a rule of peace and law in the Panjab was not only difficult, but impossible. He made up his mind to do his very best

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\* Malcolm, p. 93. Bakht Mall, p. 77. Ahmed Shah p. 877.

to gain this purpose. The army patrols renewed their work throughout the Sikh areas with vigorous efforts. The Sikhs knew the shape of things to come, and hurried to the Malwa in time, or sought shelter in the hills or the jungles.

Jahan Khan personally attacked Amritsar with a large army. Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh of Village Leel, in Tehsil Qasoor, held the charge of the Harmandir Sahib. It was there that Bhai Mani Singh had rendered him the Sikh baptism. He was a very devout, worshipful and saintly Sikh and wore a blue uniform. When the other Sikhs left for the jungles, he stuck to his post at the Golden Temple, along with a small party of other Sikhs, willing to offer martyrdom at the Akaal Takhat. Jahan Khan attacked the temple and Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh and his comrades were killed fighting like brave warriors. Their memorial, called Shaheed Ganj, stands behind Sri Akaal Takhat today.†

Jahan Khan took possession of Amritsar. He pulled down its gurdwaras and had the tank filled with earth. He razed the Sikh fort of Ramgarh to the ground.‡ A few Sikhs who lived in it, were martyred. The residents of Amritsar were cruelly pillaged and unspeakable tyrannies were inflicted on them.

The Shahced Misal was, at that time, camping at Talwandi, now called Damdama Sahib, in the Malwa. Its leader, Baba Deep Singh, was writing a copy of the Guru Granth. When he heard the news of the desecration of Harmandir Sahib of Amritsar, this saint soldier laid down his pen and took his sword in hand. He entrusted his duties at Damdama Sahib to his nephew, Sadda Singh, and himself set out for Amritsar at the head of his squad of Sikhs.

The party travelled through the villages of Jagga, Bahmaniwala, Nehyanwala, Wijjukey, Guru Chauntra, Phool Mehraj, Daraaj, Bluccho, Gobindpura, Kot and the Lakkhi Jungle and, further, through Ferozepur and Khemkaran, and reached Taran Taran. By this time, the number of the Sikhs had risen to five thousand and, as the news

† Bhango, P. 409

‡ Cunningham, P. 98.

travelled across the neighbouring territory, to the effect that Baba Deep Singh was going to win his martyrdom in Amritsar, more Sikhs hastened to join him at Taran Taran. The number of the Sikhs had reached ten thousand by the day the next battle was fought.

On the other side, Jahan Khan dug himself in trenches at Gohlwar. He called up all the commanders and the Chaudhris, along with their forces, from all over the territory. All the horse-men of Lahore were ordered to join the coming fight. He had, to aid him, Haji Attey Khan, Qasim Khan of Patti, Mir Niamat-Ulla, Sayyad Sabar Ali, Amir Jan Khan, a five-thousander, Ayub Khan, Aman Khan, Yaqub Khan, Zabar Dast Khan, Rustam Khan and other officers.

The battle was joined in by both the sides on November the 11th, 1757. The Sikhs had left Taran Taran and were the first to attack Jahan Khan's camp. The Muslim army ran back at the first onset. Jahan Khan wounded some of his men with his own sword to check the stampede. The Muslims, thus, sure of death facing them on either side, were forced to fight. They were, however, unable to gain a foot-hold against the over-whelming fervour of the Sikhs for a victory. The result was that the Muslim generals fought a retreating battle, moving toward Amritsar.

Both the fighting armies had reached Ramsar, near Amritsar, where a contested battle was fought. Aman Khan and Baba Deep Singh battled face to face. A simultaneous attack by both the warriors saw the heads of both of them chopped. His memorial, the Shaheed Ganj of Baba Deep Singh, stands there still.

The battle had continued in spite of the martyrdom of Baba Deep Singh. The lion-hearted Sikhs attacked the enemy again and again and advanced, wading through pools of blood. This most bloody battle raged in the Guru Ka Bagh, on the steps of the Amrit Sarowar (Tank) and at the site behind the Akaal Takhat. The enemies were pushed back from the Harimandir Sahib and the Akaal Takhat sites by the time of nightfall, when fighting ceased.

Both the armies had thousands of soldiers and several of their Sardars among the killed. Sardar Dyal Singh had

killed Amir Jan Khan. Baba Deep Singh had killed Yaqub Khan, Mir Niamat-Ulla and Aman Khan. Sayyad Sabar Ali and Sardar Hira Singh had killed each other. Sardar Balwant Singh killed Zabar Dast Khan by throwing at him his circular Sabre.\* Rustom Khan and Sardar Balwant Singh had both died in a simultaneous attack.

Where a Sikh warrior was killed, a memorial has been raised there in order to make his memory perpetual. Sardar Naudh Singh was killed near Village Chabba. His memorial now stands there in the middle of a tarred road. Hari Singh and Bir Singh were killed near Village Sangrana. Mehtab Singh Gih was killed near the place where Baba Deep Singh had fallen, opposite the Chativind Gate of Amritsar. Dharam Singh had been killed near Babek Sar. Kaur Singh, Manna Singh, Basant Singh and Bir Singh were killed near the monastery Akhara of Mangani Ram.

Hira Singh, Ganda Singh, Nihal Singh, Lehna Singh, Gopal Singh, Ran Singh, Bhag Singh, Sajjan Singh, Aggarh Singh and Bahadur Singh had fallen in the Guru Ka Bagh. Some of the Sikhs were killed on the steps of the Amrit Sarowar and some others in the place behind the Akaal Takhat.

The Durrains spent the night in their camp, waiting for fresh reinforcements. The Sikhs burnt the bodies of their dead heroes and retreated into the jungles before sunrise. The Durranis repossessed Amritsar. The Muslim army was several times stronger in numbers, though the losses in lives were evenly balanced on both the sides.

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\* It is a circular weapon, made of steel, with a sharp blade on the outer side called Chakar.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### Adina Beg

The Sikhs had badly ravaged the Jullundur Doaba during the invasion by Abdali. They had also surprised and cut up a squad of the Durani army near Kartarpur, while it was on its way from Sirhind to Lahore. Jahan Khan deployed an army to Jullundher in order to take revenge on the Sikhs. Commander Nasir Ali of Jullundur besieged Kartarpur with the help of that army and captured and beat Sodhi Wadbhag Singh mercilessly. The Sodhi slipped away, it is alleged by bribing his keepers, and escaped to the hills, taking refuge in the village, called Baheri, in Hoshiarpur District.\*

Nasir Ali reduced Gurdwara Thamm Sahib to ashes and slaughtered some cows there. He plundered the town and captured many young Hindu women and had them converted to Islam.† This had happened in December, 1757.

The Sikhs violently reacted to these happenings. A squad of them left their perch in the mountains and marched upon Jullundur. Nasir Ali called up Shamas Khan of Bijwara, Saidey Khan of Tanda, Jafar Khan of Hoshiarpur, Paindey Khan of Basi and other chaudhris and commanders and advanced to check the march of the Sikhs. A pitched action was fought near Adampur. Saidey Khan and Jafar Khan were killed in the battle. Finding the enemy overwhelming in numbers, the Sikhs gave him the slip and conveniently melted away in the course of the night.

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\* A fair is held at the place even now in the memory of his stay.

† Panth Parkash Page 722.

Adina Beg contacted Sodhi Wadhag Singh in the hills and requested him to persuade the Dal Khalsa to help him. He offered to provide them with munitions and pay them money in reward for this help. He added that the proposed arrangement was to enable the Sikhs to be avenged upon the Durrani for the desecration of Gurdwara Thamm Sahib and he himself would be in a position to wrench his territory back from the common enemy.

Waddhag Singh took up the proposed plan through the good offices of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and found the Dal Khalsa agreeable to it. Adina Beg made an offering of money to the Panth, had the customary sweet-pudding distributed and acknowledged the right of the Sikhs to plunder the territory.

The Army of Adina Beg joined with the Dal Khalsa near the village of Mairce. Sardar Jassa Singh plucked a small twig of a wheat plant and tucked it in the head dress of Adina Beg as a mark of distinction and asked him to make this mark of distinction compulsory in the case of all his men, so that they did not get mixed up with the Durrani army-men in the eyes of the Sikhs.

Jahan Khan got the news of this development in Lahore. He sent Murad Khan and Sarbuland Khan, with the Durrani forces, to help Nasir Ali. At the same time he sent a special messenger to Adina Beg, calling him to Lahore, and promised to make him the Governor of Jullundur in return for a yearly sum of thirty-six thousand rupees.

Adina Beg did not expect to be treated decently by the Durrani. No agreement was made between the two of them, therefore Sadiq Beg, Khujaja Mirza Khan and Raja Bhoop Singh, went to succour the force of Nasir Ali, under orders of Jahan Khan.

Adina Beg and the Dal Khalsa attacked the armies of Nasir Ali. A bloody battle raged the whole day. Nasir Ali and his helpers slunk back into Jullundur during the night. The Sikhs rummaged their camp for booty. Adina Beg, however, did not permit his own soldiers to join in this plunder for fear of possible clashes between the two allies.

The Sikhs fell upon Jullundur the following day.

Sarbuland Nhan and Murad Khan had fled to Lahore during the night. When Nasir Ali tried to hurry away to Lahore that day, he fell into the hands of the Sikhs. He was the man who had burnt the Gurdwara Thamm Sahib and had shed the cows' blood in it. The Sikhs thrust pork into his mouth and consigned him alive to the flames. They plundered the entire town and recovered the Hindu ladies from the Muslim homes and returned them to their Hindu relatives. Adina Beg presented a sum of one lakh and twenty-five thousands of rupees to the Panth and offered a thousand rupees for the Degh (sweet pudding) to be distributed to the religious assembly.\*

These events took place about the end of December, 1757.

The Sikhs had done their duty by Adina Beg. But he lacked the guts to control the Jullundur Doaba. He escaped to Nalagarh for fear of Jahan Khan, who appointed Sarfraz Khan the Governor of Jullundur.

There were two powerful rulers in Delhi at the time: the Minister Ghazi-ud-Din and the Commander-in-Chief Najib ud-Daula. The Emperor was a mere figure head. The Minister and the Army Chief were bitterly opposed to one another. The former called in the Mahrathas to his help. Unable to face the difficult situation, Najib-ud Daula Rohela left Delhi and fled to Najibgarh for safety. The Mahrathas occupied Delhi and the Emperor and the Minister were at their mercy now.

Adina Beg approached the Mahrathas to enlist their aid. He offered to pay to them one lakh rupees per day when they were on the march and fifty thousand a day when they were camping. He also won over the Sikhs to his side.† The Mahratha Generals, Raghu Nath Rao and Malliar Rao, took the Minister, Gazi-ud-Din, with them and advanced to Sirhind.

The Mahrathas occupied the Afghan fort of Kunjpura as soon as they approached it. Abdus Samad Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, had besieged the fort of Sunam at the

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\* Panth Parkash, pages 723-728. Bhangoo, pages 324-330.

† Bhangoo, p. 350.

time. He made peace with Aala Singh on January the 12th, 1758, as soon as he received the news of the Mahratha invasion and was promptly back in Sirhind.

The Mahrathas were nearing Sirhind, on the 8th March, when Adina Beg, along with the Sikhs, met them. The Mahratha force numbered about a lakh men. The Durrani Governor had shut himself up within the walls of his fort. The Sikhs and the Mahrathas attacked from outside the walls and gave a terrible pounding to the defenders. The Durrani lost all hope of victory and Abdus Samad Khan and Jang Baz Khan fled the fort; but, as ill-luck would have it, they fell into the hands of the Mahrathas who took them prisoners.† The Sikhs and the Mahrathas plundered Sirhind to their hearts' satisfaction. The Sikhs already knew Sirhind well. They, thus, came by a larger share of the booty. The Mahrathas were bitterly annoyed at this. They planned to plunder the Sikh camp itself. But, as Adina Beg passed this news to the Sikhs, they marched off to the Majha in good time.††

The Mahrathas appointed Sadiq Beg as the Lieutenant of Adina Beg and then proceeded to Lahore. Sadiq Beg had acquired notoriety as a traitor to every boss under whom he had been a lieutenant. The Mahrathas and Adina Beg started for Lahore and Minister Gazi-ud-Din returned from Sirhind to Delhi. He besieged Najib-ud-Daula in Najibgarh.

As the Mahrathas crossed the Satlej, Taimoor and Jahan Khan deserted Lahore and proceeded to Kabul, carrying their belongings with them. They stopped at Shahdra on April the 9th. The Mahrathas occupied Lahore on April the 11th without moving their little finger. Murad Begam and Khuaja Mirza had also accompanied the Mahrathas to Lahore. The Durrani set fire to a large part of their belongings and hurried away, carrying with them what was valuable. Taimoor and Jahan Khan were fleeing and the Durrani army under the command of Mir Hazir

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† Bhangoo, P. 330. Panth Parkash, P. 732. Sikh History by Gupta, Vol. I, P. 115.

†† Bhangoo, P. 332. Panth Parkash, p. 732.

Khan followed to cover their retreat.

Khuaja Mirza and the Mahrathas captured Mir Hazir Khan and his Durrani army in a speedy attack the next day. The Sikhs were invited as partners in the campaign on the advice of Adina Beg. The Sikhs and the Mahrathas pursued the Durrani and overtook them at the River Chenab. The Mahrathas were a force of twenty thousand men and the Sikhs ten thousand. Taimoor and Jahan Khan escaped with their lives during the night, but their camp was pillaged by the Sikhs and the Mahrathas. Thousands of the Durrani soldiers were killed there and the rest of them were made prisoners.\*

The Mahrathas occupied the whole of the Panjab and their forces reached as far as Multan in the west. They had no mind to bring the Panjab under their direct control, as they were afraid of Abdali. They leased out Multan, Lahore and Sirhind to Adina Beg for a yearly revenue of seventy-five lakhs of rupees and bestowed upon him the title of 'Nawab'. They returned to Thaneswar, arriving there on the 5th of June, 1758.

This rough and tumble offered the Sikhs their much needed opportunity when they were able to build mud-defences in various places.† They knew that a clash with Adina Beg was inevitable.

Adina Beg made Dina Nagar, in the Batala region, his capital. He appointed Khuaja Mirza Khan, his son-in-law, as the Governor, and Khuaja Sadiq Khan, the latter's brother, as his Lieutenant Governor in Lahore. Sadiq Beg was made the Commander of Sirhind. Murad Begam went to Batala with Adina Beg.

The first step Adina Beg took as the Governor of the Panjab, was to start a campaign to destroy the Sikhs. He already had an army, ten-thousand strong, at his disposal, and he enlisted many thousand more men, in addition. He

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\* The Sikhs had captured some of the Pathans there and had brought them to Amritsar. They were forced to dig the tank that had been filled up with earth by Jahan Khan. Sikh History by Gupta, Vol. 1, P. 117.

† Bhangoo, P. 332.

won the co-operation of the big and small rulers and the chaudhris of the whole of the Panjab now. The Sikhs, too, knew what was about to spring up and they, consequently, started assembling round about Dina Nagar.

Adina Beg deputed Diwan Hira Mall and Aakil Das of Jandiala, at the head of their forces, to fight the Sikhs. A great battle was fought near Qadian, in which Hira Mall lost his life. The Sikhs plundered his camp, next. This infuriated Adina Beg who ordered a general massacre of the Sikhs. The chaudhris and the commanders of the area received strict orders to decimate the Sikhs altogether. The Sikhs had fought for Adina Beg and their aid had been responsible for making him the chief ruler more than once. The same Adina Beg was now determined to annihilate them.

## CHAPTER XXX

### **Abdali and the Mahrathas**

Adina Beg knew that the impenetrable fort of the Sikhs was the jungle growth on the banks of the rivers. He ordered Mir Aziz Bakhshi to employ one thousand carpenters and also to draft his own soldiers to cut and burn the jungles that afforded cover to the Sikhs. Sardars Nand Singh of Sanghna, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jai Singh Kanhya and Amar Singh of Kingra, along with some of their comrades, deserted their hiding places and occupied the fortress of Ramgarh in Amritsar. Mir Aziz besieged that fortress. The Sikhs fought bravely and then made a thrust in one of the flanks of the enemy and escaped to the Malwa.

The Sikhs were moving across the Doaba and the Malwa towards Anandpur. They had halted in the village of Sanghola when Sadiq Beg suddenly attacked them with a large force and a battery of guns. The Sikhs suffered heavy losses in this battle. They left their camp and fled towards Anandpur. Sadiq Beg left his guns behind and gave a hot chase to the Sikhs. When the enemy was four or five miles away from his guns towards Ropar, the Sikhs turned back and rushed at him with their full might. They were keen on taking revenge upon the enemy. They pressed him so hard as to force him to look for safety in a

hasty retreat.\* Sadiq Beg hurried back to Sirhind. The Sikhs pillaged his camp. The Tarna Dal went to Anandpur from there and the Buddha Dal stayed in Daroli.

The officers of Adina Beg were harrassing the Sikhs everywhere. But this condition did not last long. Adina Beg was taken ill at Batala and died on September the 15th, 1758. He was buried at Khanpur, near Jullundur.

October the 30th, 1758, was the day of the Diwali festival. The Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on the occasion. The Sardars passed a resolution to the effect that they were to occupy all the places in the Panjab. Jullundur Doaba had been without a ruler after Adina Beg's death: the Dal Khalsa now marched to take possession of it. The Sikhs were challenged by Hassan Beg, the son of Adina Beg, and Diwan Bishamber Dass at the head of their army. A great battle was fought near Urmur Tanda. A bullet killed Bishamber Das, whose head was chopped by Sardar Karora Singh, who took it to Nawab Kapur Singh and placed it at his feet.† The army of Bishamber Das fled the field. The Sikhs were now in possession of the entire Doaba, which they divided among the sardars.

One squad of the Sikhs had occupied the Riarki and the Majha. The area around Lahore was robbed or occupied by the Sikhs, even when Khuaja Mirza, its ruler, was present at the head-quarters. The villages and the areas that peacefully submitted to the Sikhs, were treated civilly by the sardars. But others which were recalcitrant, were suitably punished by them.

The Mahrathas were at the height of their ascendancy in those days. Adina Beg, nominated by them as the Governor of Lahore, had died. They advanced to reassert their possession of Lahore. Dattaji Sindhia whom the Peshwa had despatched for the purpose, went in camp at Macchiwara. Sambhaji Sindhia occupied Lahore under orders of the former. He imprisoned Khuaja Mirza Khan and his brother, Khuaja Sadiq. The Mahratha forces, controlled the whole of the Panjab, including Multan. Mirza Ahmed

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\* Bhangoo, pages 333-34. Panth Parkash, P. 734.

† Panth Parkash, P 751.



Khan was appointed the Governor of Lahore and Saleh Khan, the Governor of Multan by the Mahrathas. Dattaji returned to Delhi after making this arrangement in the Panjab and leaving Sambhaji behind him at Lahore. The Mahrathas were the factual rulers of Delhi at the time.

There were two factions in Delhi: Gazi-ud-Din Imadul Mulk, the Prime Minister, and Najib-ud-Daula Rohela, the Commander-in-Chief. Ahmed Shah Abdali was backing the latter. The Minister, therefore, invited the Mahrathas for helping him. When the Mahrathas arrived in Delhi, Najib-ud-Daula fled to Shukartal, where he was besieged by the Mahratha forces. Najib wrote to Abdali for help from there. Emperor Alamgir the Second, too, wrote to Abdali, telling him that, if he did not protect him in time, the Minister was going to kill him.

The fact that Prince Taimoor had been kicked out of the Panjab by the Mahrathas, was enough to drive Abdali mad. Even his general, Jahan Khan, whom he had despatched as the Commander of his army to India, had been jostled out of the country after he had suffered a defeat from the Mahrathas and the Sikhs.\*

Thus enraged, Abdali himself invaded India with a force of sixty thousand men. The Mahrathas had left the Panjab and were back in Delhi. Abdali occupied the undefended Lahore in October, 1759. He appointed Karim Dad Khan, the nephew of his Minister, Shah Wali Khan, as the Governor of Lahore. He made over the Governorship of Jullundur to Raja Ghumand Chand of Kangra.

Abdali started for Delhi when he had made these arrangements. He was in Sirhind on November the 27th. The Minister of Delhi, Ghazi ud-Din, had just then murdered both Emperor Alamgir the Second, on November the 29th and Intizam-ud-Daula, on the 30th, and set up a scion of the royal family on the throne.

Dattaji advanced north to meet Abdali, after giving a go-by to Najib-ud-Daula. Abdali was in Tarauri on December the 24th. He clashed with the Mahrathas here for the first time. Nearly four hundred Mahrathas lost

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\* Gupta : Sikh History, Vol. 11, page 128.

their lives and their remaining force retreated from the field.

Najib-ud-Daula met Abdali when the latter had crossed the Jamna and had reached Saharanpur. Next, Hafiz Rehmat Khan, Dundey Khan, Said-Ulla Khan and other Sardars also joined the forces of Abdali. There was another battle fought between the Durrani and the Mahrathas at the crossing of the River Jamna at Brari near Delhi. Dattaji was killed and his nephew, Jankoji, wounded in this battle. Malhar Rao lost a battle to the Durrani near Sikandarabad on March the 14th, 1760.

Abdali next went to Aligarh where he started contacting and winning over the Muslim rulers to promote once more his plans for a Muslim ascendancy. Shuja-ud-Daula, the ruler of Lucknow, turned up there at the head of his forty-thousand strong army and joined him in his mission. On the other side, Sada Shiv Bhau, the brother of the Peshwa, came with a large Mahratha army and occupied the city of Delhi on July the 22nd and the fort of Delhi on August the 2nd. Bhau attacked and conquered Kunjpura and killed Abdus Samad Khan and Najabat Khan on 17th October.

Abdali marched from Aligarh, along with all the Muslim generals and commanders, crossed the Jamna on October the 23rd and camped at Panipat on the 24th. The Mahratha General, Bhau, too, came up there and camped near the flank opposite Abdali. Both the armies were equal in numbers, about seven lakhs of men, on either side. They stayed their and faced one another for three months.

There were small skirmishes between the two from day to day. At last, the third battle of Panipat was fought on January the 14th, 1761. The Mahrathas were defeated in it. Their Commander-in-Chief, Sada Shiv Bhau, Jankorao, Antaji Mankeshwar and several other well-known generals were killed in this battle. Wishwas Rao, the son of the Peshwa was wounded. From sixty to seventy thousands of the Mahrathas had lost their lives, though some others have put their losses at one lakh.

The Mahratha Peshwa took ill at hearing the news and died of the shock after six months. The blow of this

defeat struck the Mahratha ascendancy down so that it never regained its former prestige. The Durranis had captured twenty-two thousand Mahratha women, children and men and took them away. Moreover, Abdali had gained booty worth crores of rupees.

Abdali entered Delhi on January the 29th, and freely looted the city and the territory till March the 21st and left Delhi for Kabul on March the 22nd, 1761.

CHAPTER XXXI  
**Sikhs Survive**

When on his way to Delhi, Abdali had appointed Karimdad Khan as the Governor of Lahore. The latter occupied that post in Lahore from November, 1759, to March, 1760, when Abdali called him and Zain Khan of Sirhind to himself and made Sarbuland Khan the Governor of the Panjab, who was however, not a courageous man and continued to stay in Jullundur for fear of the Sikhs. He dared not move to Lahore himself, but, instead, sent Saadat Yar Khan, as his lieutenant there. It was at this time that Rustam Khan was appointed the Commander of Char Muhal or Sialkot and Samadd Khan that of Sirhind.

The Sikh Sardars had occupied their respective territories once again and built some fortresses in each one of them.\* Sardar Charhat Singh built and made pucca his fortress in Gujranwala, that could protect him in case of an attack from an enemy. The Sikhs had taken possession of a large number of territories once again. Most of the farmers were baptised as Sikhs in the villages and the other residents accepted their rule.

The Pathans held their sway over the towns alone.

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\* Cunningham, P. 100-

And, the rural areas were occupied by the Sikhs. If any Pathan ruler dared step outside his city-walls, he had to rue his folly. Rustam Khan, the Commander of Sialkot, had made such a mistake. He pursued the Sikhs at the head of his army in October, 1760. He lost his battle and was captured by the Sikhs. He had to buy his release by paying the Sikhs repatriation money.

After the Sikhs had taken possession of the territory around Lahore, they advanced closer to the city. Their raids extended to the very walls of the city. This worried the Governor Saadat Yar Khan, frightfully. He dared not stir out of the city to fight the Sikhs. He, therefore, resigned his post as the ruler out of sheer desperation and sent his letter to Sarbuland Khan. Strangely enough, the latter stuck to his residence in Jullundur. He wrote, from there, a letter of appointment in favour of a Hindu, Diwan Surat Singh, asking him to take over the charge of the government of Lahore from Saadat Yar Khan. The Diwan expressed his unwillingness to accept this responsibility; yet he was, against his will, forced to become the ruler of Lahore under a make-shift arrangement. Mir Mohammad Khan was, at length, appointed the Governor of Lahore.

The Sikhs assembled in Amritsar on the occasion of the Diwali, in November, 1760, and decided to attack Lahore. Within a few days of it, ten thousand Sikhs had besieged Lahore.† Mir Mohammad Khan shut the gates of the city and made himself secure within the walls of the fort. The Sikhs pillaged the residential parts of Lahore outside the city wall. The Governor showed no courage even to have a single look at what had happened outside the walls of his town. When the Sikhs threatened to break open the gates, the Governor collected thirty thousand rupees and offered the amount to them through the agency of the local chaudhiris. The Sikhs returned to Amritsar with the money.

Another party of the Sikhs attacked Kalanaur, about the same time, looted it and killed Sayyad Hassan Ali of

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† Panth Parkash, P. 761; it gives the number as thirty thousand.

the place. The Sikhs had grown powerful now. Abdali was then in Delhi and the Sikhs had gained possession of the territory extending from the Satlej to the Chenab rivers.

Abdali left Delhi and camped at Sirhind on March the 22nd, 1761. Sardar Ala Singh of Patiala had helped the Mahrathas at the time of the battle of Panipat. Abdali had, for that reason, sent an army to Barnala to arrest him. But he himself came to Abdali before that army had reached his place. Abdali imprisoned Ala Singh, whose wife, Rani Fatto, contacted the Minister, Shah Wali Khan, and paid to Abdali, through the Minister's intercession, a sum of three lakhs of rupees and had her husband, Ala Singh, set free. Abdali was pleased with the price paid to him and conferred on Ala Singh the title of the Raja.\*

Leaving Zain Khan behind in Sirhind as its Governor, Abdali marched to Lahore. When he crossed the Satlej in April, the Sikhs, too, appeared in that neighbourhood. They started pillaging the forces of Abdali during their raids as he advanced beyond that river. The Durranis were heavily loaded with the booty that they had gathered at Delhi and, for that reason, they could not pursue the Sikh raiders. The Sikhs would attack the Durrani Army in small bands, at night, from all sides; they robbed the army men of their belongings and melted away in the darkness and receded far into the jungles to spend the day there. This hunting sport continued from night to night. As Abdali tried to cross the River Beas at Goindwal, the Sikhs attacked his army, robbed it of the property worth lakhs of rupees and liberated from his hold thousands of women and men, who were meant to be sold as slaves abroad. The Sikhs paid their travel expenses and left them at their homes.†

When Abdali reached Lahore, he set his army the task of punishing the Sikhs. But his men met with poor success. They captured a few sikhs from the neighbouring villages. Sardar Haathu Singh of Village Kahna was one of them

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\* Panth Parkash, pages 737-38.

† panth Parkash, pages 759-60.

When he refused to be converted to Islam, his legs were bound in iron chains that were tied to the hind legs of two elephants that were driven in two opposite directions, tearing his body in the middle lengthwise and thus, killed him.†

Abdali made appointments of his officers in the Panjab, before leaving Lahore. Ubed Khan was made the Governor of Lahore, Sar Buland Khan, that of Multan. Raja Ghumand Chand, the Commander of Jullundher and Saadat Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi, the Lieutenant Commanders of the Raja. Abdali left Lahore for home, in May, 1761, after issuing strict orders to them to annihilate the Sikhs. As soon as he left Lahore, the Sikhs were again at their old game. Instead of fighting a pitched battle, they found it more paying to raid the Durrani army, rob it of its belongings and escape in to the jungles.

The most destructive attack the Sikhs made was the one on the banks of the Jehlem River. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Sardar Charhat Singh Sukarchakia were their Commanders during this action. The Durrani losses were pretty heavy. The Sikhs had succeeded in releasing from the Durrani slavery all the remaining Indians whom the latter were escorting abroad and arranged for their return to their homes. This noble action won the Sikhs high praise throughout the country. The Sikhs persisted in dogging Abdali till he had crossed the River Attock.

A force of forty thousand Sikhs, who returned from their task of pursuing the Durrani, in June, 1761, looted Gujrat and Wazirabad.\*

They advanced to Sialkot from there. Khuaja Mirza Khan the Commander of the town, took the field against them. But he was killed in the very first onset. The Sikhs plundered the town. They then, crossed the Ravi and entered the Riarkee territory. They chastised the people of the areas that were still independent of them, and made firm arrangements in the areas that had already accepted

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† Bhangoo, pages 336-7,

\* Panth Parkash, Page 762.

their protection. Thereafter they crossed the Beas and entered the Jullundher-Doaba. They were opposed by the local rulers, Saadat-Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi, who were however defeated and had to flee the Doaba altogether.

The Sikhs came to know that Zain Khan was staying away from Sirhind. They hastened to reach the place under command of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia during the night. Bhikhian Khan, the ruler of Maler Kotla happened to be in Sirhind at the time. He did not let the Sikhs capture the fort; but the city outside it was pillaged by the Sikhs. When Zain Khan received this news, he hurried back to his head-quarters. But the Sikhs had got off by then and were out of his reach. He had, however succeeded in capturing four or five Sikhs who had been stranded from their main body. He imprisoned them in Sirhind. The wife of Zain Khan told him that she had never seen a Sikh. In order to satisfy her curiosity, these Sikh prisoners dressed and armed like army Sikhs, but fettered Zain Khan had in the legs and brought before her. Her very first look at them, sent her senseless and she fell on the ground unconscious.†

After leaving Sirhind the Sikhs attacked and looted Maler Kotla. They marched to Patti next. Mir Mohammad of Patti had captured from their villages and put behind the bars some Sikh women, when Abdali had been in Lahore the previous time. They had been cruelly tortured in the jail. Their sucking babies were pitilessly murdered in their laps and garlands of the pieces of their flesh were thrust on the mothers and put round their necks. When the Dal Khalsa got news of it, they crossed the river and attacked Patti. Mir Mohaminad was killed and his body consigned to flames. The Sikh women were released from the prison house and taken to their homes.\*

The Sikhs received the news that General Nur-ud-Din, sent by Abdali, had reached the Panjab with a large army. Sardar Charhat Singh Sukarchakia had called a few other Sardars of other misals and they had confronted

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†Panth Parkash, Page 774.

\*Panth Parkash, Pages 764-777.



Nur-ud-Din at the crossing of the River Chenab. A hotly contested battle was fought there. Nur-ud-Din was forced to seek refuge in Sialkot. Sardar Charhat Singh pursued him and overtook him there. Nur-ud-Din sneaked away from the besieged place, disguised as a fakir, and his army of twelve thousand Durrani laid down arms. It was August,

1761. Sardar Charhat Singh plundered Sialkot. The war material of the Durrani army was also taken over by him, which he removed to his fort at Gujranwala.

Sardar Charhat Singh was by now a power to reckon with among the Sikh hierarchy. He further strengthened the fort of Gujranwala. The fact that the Sikh power had risen phenomenally so close to Lahore, had infuriated Governor Ubed Khan. He marched, with a force twenty thousand strong and a battery of guns, and besieged the fort of Charhat Singh at Gujranwala. The siege had continued for thirteen days when Sardars Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi, Jhanda Singh, Gujjar Singh, Jai Singh Kanhya, Lehna Singh, Sobha Singh and other commanders turned up at Gujranwala.

They besieged the besieger Ubed Khan and decided to attack him the next day. He secretly fled from the place for fear of the Sikhs, escaped to Sharaqpur and thence to Lahore. His general-less army dispersed the many ways it found open to it. The Sikhs despoiled their camp. Material worth thousands of rupees, in addition to several big guns, fell into the hands of Charhat Singh. He fixed the guns at the walls of his fort.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### Abdali and the Sikh Slough.

October the 22nd, 1761, was the Diwali festival day. The whole of the Panth assembled at Amritsar. A resolution was passed in the assembly at akaal Takhat to the effect that the Sikhs should take possession of Lahore and that the Guru Aakil Dass of Jandiala, should be suitably punished. They invoked the blessings of God, marched to Lahore and besieged it. Ubed Khan offered no fight and shut himself inside the fort. The public leaders of the town made a compromise with Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and threw its doors open. Lahore had two rulers now: Ubed Khan\* in the fort and the Sikhs in the town. † Nawab Kapur Singh placed Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the throne and designated him as the king. The Sikhs called him the king since that day. They took the government mint into their possession and issued their own currency. Their silver coin had a Persian couplet imprinted on it :

“By the Grace of God has this coin been minted.

Jassa Kalal has the territory of Ahmed grasped ‡

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\* It appears that Ubed Khan had died soon after this incident. The author of “Khazana-i-ameeran” writes on page 114, that Ubed Khan had fought and lost and that Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had killed him.

† Panth Parkarh pages 809-10, Sohal Lal, page 146-47,

‡ Siqqa zad dar jahan bafaza! Akaal. Mulk Ahmed grift Jassa kalaal.

Though the Sikhs were in possession of Lahore, they had no confidence in their military might to retain it for long. Their plan was to subdue effectively the landlords of the country-side around Lahore first. Accordingly, they left Lahore and attacked Jandiala.

Guru Aakil Das was an informer of a high rank for the Muslim governments and an enemy of the Sikhs. He had been instrumental in getting arrested and then killed several highly religious sikhs. The Sikhs now advanced towards Jandiala from Lahore. They plundered the entire territory of Aakil Das in January, 1762.

Aakil Dass wrote to Abdali requesting him to protect him from the onslaughts of the Sikhs. He had lost all hope of saving his life from the Sikh besiegers. He made his Muslim servants kill cows and threw their carcasses over the walls on to the Sikh trenches.\* This sacrilege made The Sikhs raise the siege and they departed for Maler Kotla.

Every time Abdali had attacked India, his army had been robbed by the Sikh bands. All the powers that had mattered here, had submitted to him, with the exception of the Sikhs, who became therefore, a bitter eyesore to him. That was the reason for his sixth invasion of India. When he reached Rohtas, the messengers from Jandiala met him. Abdali hurriedly marched from there and was in Lahore within four days. He found the city undefended. He reached Jandiala the next day; but he missed the Sikhs there, too. Abdali received tribute money from Aakil Das and was back in Lahore again, from where he sent out his spies to trace the whereabouts of the Sikhs.

The Sikhs had reached the territory of Maler Kotla from Jandiala. This Sikh army comprised about fifty thousand men. They had their families, too, with them this time. The Sikh force was at village Kupp, six miles from Meler Kotla and the Sikh families were in camp at Village Gurma, four miles farther. Zain Khan, the Commander of Sirhind, was also present in Malekotla then. Zain Khan and Bli Khan of Maler Kotla were fighting the Sikhs.

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\* Gupta: Sikh Hist ry, Vol. I. Page 169.

As soon as Abdali had this news, he hastened to Maler Kotla and reached there in two days' time, on the morning of February the 5th, 1762. He retained with him half his army and ordered his Minister, Shah-Wali Khan, to attack the camp of the Sikh families, at the head of the other half. He despatched Zain Khan, Bhikhan Khan and Lachmi Narayan to reinforce Shah Wali Khan. The Sikhs knew nothing of these developments till Abdali was actually in Maler Kotla. The Sikh force was no more than one fourth of the enemy army and they had no guns. Abdali, on the other hand, had a large battery of guns.

The Sikhs rushed towards Village Gurma to protect their families when the Durranis surrounded them from all sides. Qasim Khan was the first to attack them. But he was pushed back by the Sikhs. Ahmed Shah then ordered his two prominent generals, Jahan Khan and Sar Buland Khan to the attack and he himself joined them. The Sikhs sent their families to Barnala in the custody of three Malwa sardars, Seikhoo Singh of Hambalwal, the agent of Aala Singh, Sangu Singh Bhaika and Buddha Singh Bhaika and they themselves faced the enemy. Sardars Charhat Singh Sukarckakia and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia fought with rare courage. Shah Wali, on the other side, attacked the Sikh families and killed thousands of women and children.

When Jassa Singh heard this news, he despatched Sardars Karora Singh, Sham Singh, Karam Singh, Nahar Singh and some others for the protection of their families. Shah Wali had taken thousands of these women and children prisoners. The Sikhs attacked him and set these prisoners free and inflicted heavy losses on the army of Shah Wali. He was much pressed by the Sikh swordsmen and was forced to give up his pursuit of the Sikh families and retreated to join his main army.

Just when Sardar Charhat Singh, in the big battles had wounded General Sar Buland Khan and had forced him to retreat, Jahan Khan attacked him on the other flank. He, too, was wounded by Jassa Singh. The two armies, engaged in this bloodiest of contests reached Village Galu. The villagers shut themselves behind their house doors, for

fear of Abdali, and rendered no assistance to the Sikhs. Some old Sikh men and women who sought shelter in the stacks, of dry millet plants, were burnt alive, by the Durranis, who set fire to the stacks.

The Sikhs retreated towards Barnala, as they fought their enemy. They reached Village Kutba by the evening. There was a pond, full of water, there, which the Sikhs took possession of. The Durranis, too, advanced towards the pond, when another pitched battle was fought there. The Sikhs checked the advance of the enemy till their families had satisfied their thirst and left the place. The fighting Sikhs, then, drank water and went their way. The Durrani army, also was dreadfully thirsty. They, how, rushed to the pond to take their fill of water.

Meanwhile the Sikhs and their families had got off to some distance. Abdali had pursued the Sikhs up to Barnala. Since it was now fairly dark, he encamped there. The Sikhs had moved towards Kot Kapura and Faridkot. The country side from Kupp to Barnala, a distance of twenty-five miles, was littered with dead bodies. This battle has been called the Greater Marathon or Wadda Ghallooghara.

The Sikhs had suffered very heavy losses in this mealstrom. The chief reason for their defeat was the consuming anxiety to protect their families. These demanded their best care. The second reason for it was that Abdali possessed a strong battery of guns while the Sikhs had none of it. The Sikh fighting force did not exceed forty to fifty thousand; but Abdali commanded four times their number, that is, about two lakhs of men, though the loss of life was nearly the same on either side. Ten to twelve thousand Sikhs were martyred and a similar number of the Durranis had lost their lives. But the loss of lives among the Sikhs, including women and children, was as high as thirty thousand.†

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† Bhangoon has written that people counted the Sikh losses at fifty thousand; but his father gave him this number as thirty thousand.

The following figures have been given by different authorities:

The Sikhs had been robbed of all the material they had carried. Two old copies of Guru Granth, the one written at Amritsar and the other at Damadama Sahib fell into Abdali's hands. \* Sardars charhat Singh, Jassa Singh and Sham Singh had each received several wounds. There

Bhangoo, Page 355,

was no soldier who had not been wounded during this fighting. But their courage was unparalleled. A Nihang Singh was saying the same night: " Whatever was false, has been cut out. Only the Tatt (pure) Khalsa is left behind † The Sikhs who had survived the holocaust, settled in Jaito, Abul Mahema Bhagtoo, Bijjhokey, Kaoni, Charikk Gholia, Chubara, Fraidkot, Kot Kapoora, Bathinda and other places.

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Maskeen: Twenty-five thousand. Khazana-i-Amira, twenty-nine thousand. Tarikh-i-Muzafri: Twenty-two thousand. Tarikh Hussain Shah: thirty thousand. Tarikh-i-Ahmad: thirty thousand. Tarikh-i-All: twenty thousand. Tarikh-i-Sultani: twenty thousand. Ahmed Shah: seventeen thousand. Ganesh Das: Thirty thousand. All-ud-Din thirty thousand. Panth Parkash: Thirty thousand, of whom thirteen thousand were the army men. Karam Singh: thirteen thousand. Gupta, twelve thousand. Jadu Nath Sarkar: ten thousand. Forster: Twenty-five thousand. Malcolm: over twenty thousand. Princep: twenty-five to thirty thousand. Mc. Gregor: Seventeen thousand. Cunningham: Twelve to twenty-five thousand. Hugel: twenty to thirty thousand: Latif: Twelve to thirty thousand.

† Bhangoo, Page 358.

CHAPTER XXXIII  
ABDALI AND THE SIKHS

Sardar Aala Singh had sided with neither party openly in this battle. He had left Patiala and had gone to Dhandhauta, seventeen miles distant. Abdali was enraged at his absence and, out of pique, he pulled down the fort at Barnala and plundered the territory around it. He ordered the arrest of Aala Singh and sent an army for the purpose. But the latter presented himself before Abdali, who made him a prisoner and ordered that he was to be shaved. Aala Singh purchased his hair for a lakh-and-a-quarter of rupees before the razor had been applied, that is, Abdali was paid the amount as redemption money for the security of his hair. Abdali returned from Barnala to Sirhind, where Sardar Aala Singh paid to Abdali five lakhs of rupees in order to purchase his freedom, through the good offices of the Minister, Shah Wali.

Abdali left Sirhind on February the 15th and rested in the fort Ramgarh, at Amritsar. He dug cans of gunpowder deep into the foundations of the Golden Temple ignited them and blew it up. One of the bricks of the walls was thrown up and struck Abdali on his nose. The cut that it made, developed into a cancer later and did not heal till his death. He razed all the Sikhs temples in the town to the ground and filled up all the tanks with earth. He had the remains of the dismantled houses carried to the Amrit Sarovar or the sacred tank, as also the horse dung and, filled up the Sarovar with these materials and

sowed barley there. There after he also had cows killed on the Sarowar ground. \*

Abdali reached Lahore on march the 3rd. He had taken with him fifty cart loads of the heads of the Sikhs who had been killed in the battle, arranged them in minarets at the gates of Lahore and used their blood to wash the local mosques with, †

Abdali stayed in Lahore for nine months more, in order to make sure that the Sikhs did not create a stir any where. Najib-ud-Daula and Yaqub Ali Khan, the ambassadors of the Emperor of Delhi, and Bapu and Parshotam Mahadev, the ambassadors of the Mahrathas, turned up at Lahore to offer presents to Abdali. He wrote and sent a royal charter, through Najib -ud-Daula and Raza Quli Khan Munir-ud-Daula, in which he approved of the positions of Shah Alam as the Emperor and Shuja-ud-Daula as the Minister in Delhi. It was settled that they were to pay Abdali a yearly tribute of forty lakhs of rupees in lieu of this arrangement.

The Governor of Kashmir, Sukhjiwan Mall, rebelled against the authority of Lahore. Abdali sent Nur-ud-Din, with an army, to Kashmir, Nur-ud-Din captured and blinded Sukhjiwan Mall and despatched him to Lahore, where he was put to death. \*\*

Nawab Sar Buland Khan was appointed the Governor of Kashmir then. Since Lahore was too hot for Abdali, he shifted to Kalanaur for July and August and returned to Lahore after that. He left this city only when the Sikhs threw him out with a severe thrashing.

The Sikhs had lost their battle in the Great Holocaust (Ghalooghara) on February, 5th 1762. But instead of becoming disheartened, they were in higher spirits. they were rid of the fear of Abdali that they had once entertained. They reached to this defeat better than they

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\* Bhango, Page 347. Gupta : Vol. I, Page 167.

Latif Page 284, with other references.

† Khazana - i - Amira, Page 114, Khushwaqt Rai page 95.

Forster, page 320, Malcolm, Page 68.

\*\* Latif, Page 284.



would have done to a victory. They passed nearly three months in the villages of the Brar Jatts. when their wounds were healed a bit, they assembled at a place to decide upon their future course. They resolved to be avenged on Abdali for their recent debacle. The most difficult problem of their Sardars was as to how to acquire the necessary wherewithal for fighting. All that they had possessed, had been lost during the last battle. It was agreed that whatever was needed to end the enemy, should be snatched from him.

The Sikhs made a surprise attack on Sirhind, in May, 1762. Zain Khan, knowing that he could not resist them, paid them fifty thousand rupees and made peace with them. They received the money and returned to Patiala. When they were near Bahadur Garh, Zain-Khan and his Diwan Lachmi Narain suddenly swooped upon them from behind. The Sikhs turned back and fell upon them with a ferocity that forced Zain Khan and Lachmi Narain to flee the field to save their lives. The Sikhs looted the camps of both of them. In this way, they came by the fighting material and other necessary effects worth thousands of rupees.

The Sikhs started going back to Amritsar in parties of one thousand each, in the month of July. They were in such high spirits that they fearlessly raided the territory up to the very walls of Lahore. The units of the Durrani army were too afraid to face them. Abdali himself came at the head of his army; but the Sikhs melted away then into the jungles.

The Sikhs entered the Doaba of Jullundher in August under the command of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, They burnt and looted the houses of the enemies of the Panth and then proceeded to the Malwa. They camped between Panipat and Karnal for a month, from August the 25th to September the 24th; here they purchased fighting material from far and near places, besides providing for their other needs and then returned to Amritsar.

They were back in the Majha early in October Abdali was staying in Lahore and the Sikhs would raid the places

within four or five miles of his camp. They were out to wash the stains of the slur of their recent Ghalooghara. Their numbers grew in Amritsar to sixty thousand by the Diwali day.

While the Sikhs had regained their self confidence and daring, Abdali shirked facing and fighting them. He accordingly; decided to use his cunning state-craft and sent his ambassadors to Amritsar to make peace with the Sikhs. The Sikhs dispossessed the emissaries of their effects and turned them back to Lahore, rather than talk peace with them.

There was now no other course open to Abdali except that of war. He came and camped near Amritsar, at the head of an army of one lakh men, on the evening of October the 16th. The next day, the 17th of October, 1762, was the Diwali festival which was also a day of a full solar eclipse, when the Sikhs fell upon the enemy, in the early morning from all the four sides. Severe fighting continued throughout the day near Pipli Sahib. Abdali was totally routed by the evening and escaped under cover of darkness and hurried back to Lahore. \* The Sikhs had captured several thousands of the Durrani as prisoners. They made them remove the earth with which the sacred tank had been filled by the orders of Abdali. After this was done, the Sikhs let the Durrani off and they themselves went to the Lakkhi jungle.

The Kashmir army was back in Lahore in November. Abdali also called, up the armies of the Panjabi Muslim commanders to join with the rest of his forces. Abdali, along with his army thus swelled, went in pursuit of the Sikhs in the Lakkhi jungle, in November, 1762. The latter avoided meeting their enemy in a straight confrontation. They divided themselves into small bands and, thus, fought his huge force. A band would surprise him in an attack on one flank. The Durrani army would turn to fight the attackers when the Sikhs would disappear into the depths of the jungle. Before the Durrani had recovered their

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\*Forster, pages 321-22. Brown, Vol. 11, pages 25-26. Ali ud-Din, pages 125-26.

poise, another Sikh band attacked another flank of the Muslim army. As they advanced to meet the second attack, this Sikh band, too, vanished behind the jungle cover, like the first party, and, by then, a third party attacked at another point.

Abdali was bitterly confounded by this form of fighting. A Sikh soldier, one day, spotted Abdali and rushed at him riding singly. He was killed by the body-guard of the Muslim king, who, however, was so impressed by the dare devilry of that one Sikh that he ordered a retreat and returned to Lahore with his army.

He appointed Kabuli Mall the Governor of the entire Panjab. He appointed Murad Khan for the Bari Doaba, Jahan Khan for the territory from the Rivers Ravi to the Attock, Saadat Yar Khan for Jullundher and Zain Khan for Sirhind as the Deputy rulers of the Governor. Abdali himself left Lahore for Kabul on December the 12th, 1762. The Sikhs were so far emboldened at the time that they attacked the Durrani army as it crossed the Ravi. \*The Sikhs were plundering his army, as Abdali looked at this sight from the bank of the Ravi.

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\*Panjab Mughals, page 195.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV

### The Panjab in Muddle

As soon as Abdali had left the country, the Sikhs assembled in Amritsar again. It was unanimously decided to divide their fighting force into two parts: the Buddha Dal, and the Tarna Dal. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia headed the Buddha Dal, which comprised six misals: Ahluwalian, Sighpurian, Dallewalian, Karora Singhian, Nishanwali and Shaheedan. This Dal was assigned the task of plundering and punishing the foes of the Panth. Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi commanded the Tarna Dal, consisting of five misals: Bhangianwali, Ramgarhian, Kahnayan, Sukarchakian and Nagian. This army was charged with the protection of the Sikh religious places in Amritsar.

The Buddha Dal was roaming near Lahore when it met a unit of the Durrani army, who laid down their arms and were captured by the Sikhs, marched to Amritsar and made to clear the Amrit Sarowar of mud, after which they were let off.

The 10th of April, 1763, was the Baisakhi festival day. The Tarna Dal of the Sikhs assembled in Amritsar. The Buddha Dal was moving about on the other side of the Beas.\* A Brahmin of Qasoor appeared at the Golden Temple and

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\*Bhangoo, page 371.

appealed to the Khalsa to help him recover his wife who had been spirited from his house by Usman Khan of Qasoor. He narrated in detail the story of the oppression practised by the Pathans of that town. There were no less than a dozen forts built by as many influential Pathan families there. They killed the cows in the open markets and cast their bones into the local wells and the tanks. If the cow of a Hindu was taken ill, the Qazi would go to the owner's house and killed it at the spot. A Hindu who did not inform the Muslim priest of his dying cattle, was punished for his default.\*\*

Qasoor maintained a strong defence force. Therefore, not many Sikh leaders favoured the idea of attacking that town particularly for the reason that the Buddha Dal was not there to join with them. But Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi differed with them. He asserted that the Guru had formed the Panth for protecting the help-less, and the Brahmin who sought for the aid of the Panth, must not be allowed to depart without hope.

Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi invoked the blessing of the Guru and made ready to march upon Qasoor. Sardar Charhat Singh Sukarchakia joined him with the force of his misal. The remaining three misals, the Ramgarhia, the Kanhiya and the Nagoi also lined up with them. The Bhangi force was five thousand strong and the remaining four misals had another ten thousand strong army. This force of fifteen thousand soldiers, swelled to twenty four thousand soldiers by the time they neared Qasoor.\*\*\*

It was the month of Ramzan, May, 1763, when the Muslims observed their fasts. The Sikhs, thus, had the opportunity to enter the town through open doors at mid-day. The Pathans, oppressed by the heat of the summer, slept in their cool, under-ground rooms. The Sikhs posted their soldiers at the gates of the town and started massacring its residents. Usman Khan was killed along with five hundred of his soldiers. The wife of the appellant Pandit was returned to her husband. Ghulam Mali-ud-Din

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\*\*panth parkash, pages 797-98.

\*\*\*Bhangoo, page 74.

Khan died fighting. His nephew, Hamid Khan, fell at the feet of Sardar Jhanda Singh and saved his life by offering to him a sum of four lakhs of rupees.

The Sikhs plundered the town after they had defeated the Pathans. This looting continued for three days. Property, worth crores of rupees, including gold, silver, ornaments, diamonds and pearls, was taken hold of by the Sikhs. This plunder of Qasoor enriched them.

A past resident of Qasoor, named Diley Ram, had been a Diwan of the queen of Shah Jahan. He possessed crores of rupees and the jewellery of the queen, buried inside his house in Qasoor. It was owned by his grandson, Hirdey Ram, at the time of this attack by the Sikhs. Mali Singh, a brother of Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, blockaded his house and captured Hirdey Ram. Hirdey Ram got a promise from Mali Singh that he would spare his life, and in return Hirdey Ram dug out a box from underneath a stair-case and handed it over to Mali Singh. It contained diamonds and other precious stones and the jewellery of the queen, professedly worth over fifty lakhs of rupees.

The Ramgarhias and the Kanhyas had made an alliance to share all booty on equal basis between their two misals. This huge acquisition by Mali Singh made him change his mind. He took this box by himself to his camp. When the Kanhyas knew of it, they asked him for their share of the gain. Mali Singh showed no willingness to part with their due. The Kanhyas thereupon prepared them-selves to fight for what was due to them.

Mali Singh played foul by Hirday Ram, too. He killed him, lest he should disclose the matter to some one else. The other Sardars, particularly Sardar Charhat Singh, came in between the two factions and made peace by making Mali Singh part with some of the wealth in favour of the Kanhyas. This wealth, somehow drifted into the hands of Charhat Singh, after the death of Mali Singh.\* The Sikhs returned to Amritsar, having plundered Qasoor they celebrated this victory by the playing of bands.

All the Sikh misals of the Buddha Dal attacked Doaba Jullundher. Saadat Yar Khan, the Commander of

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\*Bhangoo, pages 378-383. Panth Parkash, pages 805-806.

Jullundher was so afraid of the Sikhs that he did not stir out of the city. The Sikhs occupied the entire territory around the city. They subdued those who flouted their authority and punished their enemies. They stayed there from June to September.

Jafar Beg, the son of Adina beg, was the ruler of Dina Nagar, in those days. Knowing that the Sikhs were rising in power, he felt concerned about it and started preparing himself to defeat them. He called up Khan Mohammad of Pasrur and Nur Din of Kalanaur for help. His chief adviser was Shivdyal, the son of Bishambhar Das. When this news reached Amritsar, the Tarna Dal got ready to fight them. It was late in the month of July when the two forces clashed near Batala. It was a hard fought battle. Sardar Charhat Singh killed Nur Din and Sardar Pahara Singh despatched Diwan Shivdyal Khan Mohammad was also killed on the battle-field. Jafar Beg fled for his life after the battle. The Sikhs occupied the whole of the Batala territory.\*\*

November the 4th, 1763, was the Diwali day. The two Khalsa Dals assembled at Amritsar. The tank had already been cleared. The plan for laying the foundations of the Harimander Sahib was under consideration. Several Sardars were of the view that the work of building the temple might not be taken in hand till after the next invasion of Abdali But the others were in favour of starting the work right then.

When the Harimandar was to be constructed Guru Arjan Dev had invited the Muslim Saint, Mian Mir, to lay its foundation stone. The mason who began to construct the holy temple, happened to move the brick, laid down by Saint Mian Mir a little to one side, for proper alignment. It is said that Guru Arjan-Dev had then remarked: "As the mason has shifted the brick from its original place, the Panth shall have to lay it again. "The Sarowar, or the holy tank, had been damaged a few times earlier too. But it was only during his previous invasion that Abdali had blown up the Golden Temple from its foundations.

The whole of the Panth had joined the prayer that was

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\*\*panth Parkash pages 707-709.

made at the reconstruction ceremony on November the 17th, 1763. Nawab Kapoor Singh had laid the brick this time and Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had laid the mortar on the bricks. All the Sardars contributed money, according to their means, for the construction work.\*

It was just then that the news came that the Durrani General, Jahan Khan, had crossed the River Attock. The Sikhs entrusted the work of the construction of the Harimander to Bhai Des Raj of Village Sursingh and their fighting forces started north-ward to fight the Durrans.

Jahan Khan had reached Wazirabad without meeting with any opposition. The Sikhs, now arrived there and attacked the Durrans from all sides. Jahan Khan was not able to make a courageous stand against the Sikhs this time. He hurried back to Kabul, after suffering heavy losses in men. It was a total defeat for him. Shouting the slogans of their victory the Sikhs were back in Amritsar. This battle was fought towards the end of November, 1763,

The Sikhs in Amritsar resolved to punish the Governor of Sirhind. Twelve misals joined this campaign, under the command of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The Sikhs besieged Maler Kotla in December, 1763. Nawab Blikhan Khan came out of the town, fought in the open and was killed by a bullet. The Sikhs plundered and destroyed Maler Kotla.†

The Sikhs attacked the village Kheri, next. It was Gangu Brahmin of this village, who had helped the Governor of Sirhind to arrest and kill cruelly the two younger sons of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. The criminal Gangu had been killed by the Muslim rulers of that day. But quite a number of the members of his family were now killed by the Sikhs during this attack and the village plundered.

The Sikhs besieged Morinda in January, 1764. They wanted to have their revenge on Jani Khan and Mani Khan. The Rangarhs shut the doors of the town and

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\*Panth, Parkash, 735-736.

†Bakht Mall, pages 99-100. Sohan Lal, Pages 100-61. Brown, Vol. II, page 24. Panth Parkash, page 832.



prepared themselves to fight the Sikhs. The Sikhs ravaged the country side around it. They attacked the town, next, shattered its gates and entered it. The entire town was subjected to a massacre. They protected the women and children; but the men they could lay their hands upon, were done to death. Jani Khan and Mani Khan were killed, along with other members of their families. The Sikhs were satisfied that they had been avenged for the deaths of the two sons of their Guru. They had plundered the town, too now.\*

The Sikhs came to know that the Diwan of Zain Khan, Lachhmi Narain by name, was realising the revenue from the people; he also happened to be camping at the moment at village Kurali. The Sikhs attacked and looted the village. The Diwan had escaped barely with his life. The Sikhs plundered his camp.

Zain Khan was in Sirhind at the time. But he could not risk life by leaving the town. The Sikhs plundered all his territory. Zain Khan was convinced that he was not strong enough to beat the Sikhs. He, therefore, sent his deputy to S. Aala Singh, asking him to make peace with the Sikhs and accept the jagirs he was prepared to offer them. Sardar Aala Singh sent Nanoo Singh Grewal to the Sardars of the Dal Khalsa. The Sikh Sardars rejected the offer. They told him that their Guru had granted to them the rulership of the country and, therefore, they were not prepared to receive any feudal holdings at the hands of the Turks or Muslims and live as their creatures.\*\*

The result was that the Sikhs raised their clarion call, "The Khalsa shall rule the land."† and attacked Sirhind.

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\*Bhangoo, Pages 308-60. Panth Parkash, pages 832-84.

\*\*Bhangoo, page 371. Panth Parkash, page 834.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### Sikhs Settling

The Sikhs advanced towards Sirhind from three different points. The Buddha Dal was camping at Bhaganpur. The Tarna Dal was already staying at Village Nanhera and the Phulkian misal was at Patiala. The Sikh armies comprised thirty thousand horsemen and twenty thousand foot-soldiers. The Tarna Dal advanced and took its position at Pir Zain Khan Maniara, seven miles off Sirhind.

Zain Khan left Sirhind and advanced to attack the Tarna Dal, on January the 14th, 1764. The Sikhs, too, had decided to attack Sirhind on this very day. They were, thus, not unprepared to receive him. As the Buddha Dal and the Phoolkas heard the news of the Tarna Dal being under attack, they advanced to reinforce it. Zain Khan found himself hedged in by the Sikhs. He tried his best to force his way out and back to Sirhind. Tarna Dal quickly attacked the camp of Zain Khan and plundered it. The Buddha Dal blocked his return to Sirhind. The Durrani found all the ways of their escape closed in their faces.

A gory action was fought for a while. At last, Zain-Khan was killed by a bullet fired by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Thiraj Singh, the nephew of Bhai Mani Singh, chopped the head of Zain Khan and presented it to Nawab Kapur Singh. Said Khan and Yar Mohammad Khan had also lost their lives in the fighting. The Durrani threw up their arms and fled in different directions. A large part of

their army was lost in this battle, which was fought on January the 14th 1764 .\*

The triumphant Sikh army raised its slogans of victory and entered Sirhind. All the residents were put to the sword, excepting the Women and the children. The roofs of the houses were pulled down and the floors dug up. A thriving and bustling city was turned into ruins. The fort of Sirhind was razed to the ground and ploughed up with donkeys. The old people were consulted about the spot where the Guru's sons had been martyred and, then, Gurdwara Fatehgard Sahib was built there and a priest appointed to run it\*\*

The Dal Khalsa made over the fort to Buddha Singh of Bhaika,‡ who passed it to Sardar Aala Singh for a sum of twenty thousand rupees. The gun battery of Sirhind was also taken over by the Patiala man.

The Sikhs were now the rulers of the province of Sirhind, a territory with a revenue of fifty-two lakhs of rupees. It was two hundred and twenty miles in length and one hundred and sixty miles broad. It was bounded on the east by the River Jamna, by the River Satlej on the north, Haryana and Rohtak on the south and Bahawalpur on the west. The Sardars of eight misals, those of Ahluwalian, Singhpurian, Bhangian Dallewalian, Shalidan, Karora-Singhian, Nishananwalian and Phoolkian, divided this territory among themselves

The Sikh Sardars had a peculiar way of taking possession of an area. When one of the Sardars went to a village, he passed to its headman or the chaudhri one of his weapons or an article of wear or some other similar article before shifting to the next village. A shield, a sheath of a sword, a blanket, a towel, the saddle or a stirrup of a horse were used as his symbol or mark of ownership, to the extent that a horse and his rider were in some cases left stark naked during this operation. A village that had been marked down by one Sikh, was not claimed by another, who

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\*Bhangoo, Page 393.

\*\*Bhangoo, Pages 301-306. Panth Parkash, Pages 841-82,

‡whom Baba Banda Singh had granted the title of Nawab. He was a grandson of Bhai Fateh Singh of Village Jhalowal.

came later, however prominent a Sardar he might be. This was in the territory where Baba Banda Singh Bahadur had set up a Sikh rule and so did the misals after him now. The more or less important Sardars had now divided the villages among themselves.

The following is the detail of the division of the areas among the different misals:—

1. Misal Bhangsi: Buria, Dyalgarh, Jagadhri, Dadupur, Kharwan, Damla, Ferozepur, Khai, Waan, Wazirpur and other places.

2. Misal Karora Singhian: Sham Singh Wala, Dhecn, Gadauli, Nagla, Lalpur, Museemwal, Kabutar Khana, Balchupur, Talakaur, Basoor, Kalawar, Kalsia, Leeda, Sudhaura, Bilaspur, Kotru, Machhrauli, Mace Kajan, Saido, Khatrani, Raj Kaur, Dhanaura, Radaur, Jainpur, Bheri, Chhachhrauli, Charik, Kot, Kanauri, Jameetgarh, Chhalaudi and others.

3. Misal Shaheedan: Shahzadpur, Kesri Majra, Tipla, Sulka, Majru, Tangaur, Taraori, Jadauli, Ranian, Dandama Sahib and others.

4. Misal Dallewali: Dhoa, Saaran, Mustafabad, Bijral, Chapur, Dhumsi, Garhi, Jamaraian, Haibatpur, Khera, Chunian, Ladwa, Indhri, Shamgarh, Pehowa, Kahod, Sikandra, Sikri, Thanewar, Sialba, Khanna, Dharamsingh-wala, Dharamkot, Maari, Tihara, Kang, Lohian, Ropar, Awankot, Seeswal, Kurali, Khizarabad, Dera, Tandwala, Annauli, Siddhuwal, Bangar, Amloo, Kullar Kharial, Akalgarh, Barara and others.

5. Misal Nishanawali: Ambala, Boha, Babial, Panjokhra, Thirwa, Shahabad, Lidhran, Sarai Lashkri Khan, Singhanwala, Sahnewal, Doraha, Saunti, Zira, Ludhar, Kheri, Ismaelabad, Mansurwal and others.

6. Misal Ahluwali: Naraingarh, Bharog, Barwalian, Jagraon, Fatehgarh and others.

7. Misal Singhpurian: Abolas, Adampur, Chhat, Banoor, Manauli, Bharatgarh, Kandhaura, Chuni Machhli, Bhareli and others, and

8. Misal Phoolkian: Patiala, Soolar, Jind, Safaldon, Panipat, Karnal, Kaithal, Nabha, Sirhind, Neelokhagri, Pail, Basi, Lutbara, Isru, Buharso, Amloh Veeru, Bhagan, Malaud, Rohtak and others.

After the conquest of Sirhind the Tarna Dal (The army of the young) proceeded to the Majha, while the Buddha Dal, (the army of the old) led by S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, crossed the Jumna at Buria Ghat about the middle of February, 1764. The Buddha Dal was a formation of about forty thousand Sikhs, led by persons like S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Khushal Singh, S. Baghel Singh, S. Karora Singh, S. Sham Singh, S. Tara Singh Gheba, S. Gurbaksh Singh, S. Bhangga Singh, S. Karam Singh and S. Rai Singh. On the 20th of February, 1764, the Sikhs ransacked Saharanpur. Thereafter, they looted places like Shamli, Kandela, Ambli, Miranpur, Devband, Muzaffarnagar, Jawalapur, Chandausi, Kankhal, Landhaura, Najibabad, Nagina, Muradabad, Anoopshahr and Garhmukteshar.

The Sikhs collected booty worth lakhs of rupees from the lands of the Sayyads of this region. Along with that they captured numerous eunuchs, who were released against the payment of tributes. When Najib-ud-daula, the suzerain of the territory heard of the depredations of the Sikhs: he advanced to encounter them. A few skirmishes took place, and in one of them Karora Singh, the deputy of S. Sham Singh, was shot dead by the enemy.\* The Sikhs now returned to Sirhind, and set themselves to the pillage of the place, where the Guru's sons had been martyred.

S. Aala Singh of Patiala came to Sirhind with his grandson, Amar Singh, who received the Sikh baptism from S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. On this happy occasion S. Aala Singh gave to S. Jassa Singh the district of Isru† as an offering.

After their victory at Sirhind the Tarna Dal entered the Jullundur Doaba, the ruler of which sought safety in flight. The Singhs took control of the entire area and therefrom proceeded straight to lay siege to Lahore in the month of February, 1764. The Sikhs ransacked the precincts and suburbs of Lahore, but the Governor, Kabuli Mall, did not stir out of the city. On the other hand he got the gates of the city securely bricked up. The Sikhs offered to Kabuli Mall three conditions for peace: (1) all

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Bhangoo: page 398.

† Panth Prakash, page 868.

the cow slaughterers of the city should be handed over to the Sikhs. (2) cow slaughter should be banned for the future; and (3) tribute should be paid to the Panth. Upon the refusal of the Governor to agree to these conditions, the Singhs smashed open the Delhi Gate, entered the town and ransacked the surrounding part of the city. The Governor was now frightened into accepting the terms of the Sikhs, and thus made peace with them. He handed over a few butchers to the Sikhs and paid the tribute. The leader of the Tarna Dal, S. Hari Singh Bhangi, appointed Tek Chand as his representative at the Lahore Darbar. Tek Chand was paid a daily remuneration of ten rupees and was to advise Kabuli Mall in all affairs of the state. When this arrangement was finalised, the Sikhs raised the siege of Lahore.

At about this time S. Sobha Singh occupied the pargana of Niazbeg, about eight miles distant from Lahore, and he used to loot all merchandise intended to reach Lahore from that direction. Kabuli Mall accepted the arrangement that Sobha Singh was not to loot the goods on the way, but would collect octroi on them at the Shahalmi Gate.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### Abdali Again

The news of all these happenings reached Abdali, and he once again made up his mind to set out for the Panjab, in February, 1764. He sent his general, Jahan Khan, in advance. When Jahan Khan reached Sialkot he found himself surrounded by the Sikh forces. In the clash which followed, Jahan Khan's horse was shot dead and the animal collapsed on the ground along with the rider. The Sikhs believed that Jahan Khan too had died. They unsheathed their swords and rushed at the enemy. Jahan Khan fled for his life to Peshawar, but his army received a terrible mauling at the hands of the Sikhs. The enemy camp was looted by the Sikhs.

Meanwhile the tidings about the advance of Abdali had been received and in preparation for a fight with him, the Sikhs sent their families to Jammu and awaited the enemy with supreme confidence.

The ignominious defeat and consequent return of Jahan Khan set Abdali all afire. He hurried to Kalanaur via Sialkot and Pasrur, but as he advanced beyond Kalanaur, he was attacked near Dina Nagar by the Sikh forces. The Sikhs had now become intrepid beyond measure, and were actually out to create occasions to have a go at Abdali.

From Dina Nagar Abdali turned towards Lahore and was joined near Batala by Sarbuland Khan with his army of eight thousand soldiers. The Sikhs attacked Abdali once again near Batala. In the ensuing fight Sarbuland Khan

was wounded and Abdali, who was thoroughly defeated, took shelter in the house of Aakil Das in Jandiala. This happened in March, 1764. The Khalsa fell upon the forces of Abdali near Jandiala. In the encounter Rahim Khan Bakhshi was killed and the defeated Durrani forces retreated into the Jandiala fort for safety.

The Khalsa forces gave no respite to Abdali inside the Jandiala Fort, either. Full of fear, he left the fort at Jandiala and took refuge in the fort at Lahore, but the Sikhs continued to threaten the Durrani king in Lahore too. They would move about the perimeter of Lahore in bands and no Durrani could dare come out of the town. After a fortnight in Lahore, Abdali set out for Kabul. While he was crossing the Ravi, the Sikhs again crashed upon him and looted the Durrani forces in the sight of Abdali, who was watching like a helpless spectator. With the meagre remnants of his mercenary forces Abdali turned back towards Kabul. This Abdali was no other than the one who had claimed, at the time of his holocaust of the Sikhs, during his previous invasion that he had annihilated the Sikhs in the whole of India, and who had been the victor against the Mahrathas in the third battle of Panipat. That some hero was now running for his life before the Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh as a finale to his seventh invasion of India.\*

While the bands of S. Hari Singh Bhangi hovered round the city of Lahore, S. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia remained close on the heels of Abdali. This time Abdali was in the van of his retreating forces, while his rear was exposed to the nibbling attacks and ambushes of Charhat Singh. This merry game continued right up to the banks of the Jhelum. Abdali proceeded to Kabul and Charhat Singh laid siege to the fort of Rolitas. Sarfraz Khan, the Durrani Governor of the fort, rained cannon-balls on the Sikhs from inside the fort. Wishing to avoid this senseless damage to his forces, Charhat Singh raised the siege of the fort. Sarfraz Khan fell into the trap of the Sikhs. He abandoned the security of the fort and gave chase to the Sikhs. When he had left the fort far behind him, Charhat Singh turned back and fell upon

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\* Gupta: Sikh History: Part I, pages 201-202.



him. Sarfraz Khan was thoroughly beaten, but was allowed to go away along with his defeated soldiers. Charhat Singh gained possession of the fort of Rohtas.

At the time of his invasion of India, Abdali had summoned to his aid Sarfraz Khan, the Durrani Governor of Kashmir. Abdali was defeated and had to turn back. Now Sarfraz Khan appeared on the scene with an army twelve-thousand strong. S. Charhat Singh attacked him from the Rohtas fort and the Durranis were defeated in the battle. Sarbuland Khan was captured and a large number of his soldiers killed. He was kept a prisoner in the fort of Rohtas for some time and then sent to Kabul.\* S Charhat Singh occupied the entire territory between the rivers Attock and Jehlum (Dhanni, Pothohar, Chakwal, Pind Dadan Khan and the salt mines of Miani), and appointed S. Budh Singh and S. Kaur Singh as his own commanders of the area.

Bhangi and Nakayee abandoned the pursuit of Abdali and turned towards Lahore in April, 1764. S. Hira Singh Nakayee occupied the areas of Nakka and Lamma, while S. Hari Singh Bhangi fell upon Multan, which he ransacked. This was not all. The Bhangis hopped over the river Attock and plundered the Dera towns. Returning from there, the Bhangi Misal attacked the city of Jhang, where the Syals were defeated as a result of the encounter. S. Jhanda Singh occupied Jhang, Khushab, Chaniot and other places and appointed S. Karam Singh Dullu as his commander of the territory. All this happened barely in three months.

The Kanhiyas took possession of the territory lying from Gurdas-pur to Patner and set up their own police posts there, while the Ram-garhia Misal occupied the lands on both sides of the river Bias as also the district of Hargobindpura. The Dhallewali and the Ahluwalia Misals secured dominion over Doaba-Jullundur. Except for the cities of Lahore and Jullundur the entire territory from the river Attock to the river Jamuna was at this time, under the domain of the Sikhs.\*\*

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\* Bhangoo : Pages 388-89.

\*\*Panth Parkash: Page 860.

On the 25th of December, 1763, Najib-ud-Daula had killed in battle the Jat Raja of Bharatpur, named Suraj Mall. To avenge this death, Jawahar Mall, the son of Suraj Mall prepared to fight against Najib-ud-Daula, and invited the Mahrathas for help. Jawahar Mall surprised and besieged Najib-ud-Daula in Delhi in November, 1764. On the other side, the Buddha Dal crossed the Jamuna at Buria G at under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and started ravaging the territories under the rule of Najib-ud-Daula. Hafiz Rehmat Khan came out to face the Sikhs with an army of six thousand men, but was defeated and ran away. The Sikhs ransacked the whole area.

In Delhi even after a siege of more than a month, Jawahar Mall was unable to force a decision against Najib-ud-Daula. In the beginning of January, 1765, Jawahar Mall made an entreaty for help to the Buddha Dal and also made an offering of a tribute. The Dal set out to assist Jawahar Mall and put up their camp in Sabzimandi, of Delhi, as planned by Jawahar Mall. On January 25, 1765, Najib-ud-Daula sallied out and attacked the Sikh camp. A fierce battle took place and there were numerous casualties on both sides. Najib-ud-Daula then withdrew into the city again.

Najib-ud-Daula had already invited Abdali to come to his help, but Abdali had been late in coming. Thereupon, finding himself under military pressure from the Mahrathas, the Sikhs and the Jats, Najib-ud-Daula made peace with Jawahar Mall. The main condition of the treaty was that Najib-ud-Daula was to give his daughter in marriage\* to Jawahar Mall with a dowry of several lakhs of rupees. The latter paid off an amount of two lakhs of rupees to the Sikhs. By this time Abdali had marched into the Panjab and the Sikhs repaired to the Majha in order to face him.

The news of the Sikh possession of the Panjab and the request for help received from Najib-ud-Daula prompted Abdali to march on the Panjab about the end of the year, 1764. When he reached beyond Ainnabad, he was joined by Nasar Khan Baloch who joined with his army. Qazi Nur Ahmed, the author of 'Jang Nama', too was with him. They arrived in Lahore in December, 1764; but, meanwhile the Sikhs had made good their escape into the jungles,

before the arrival of Nasar Khan and Abdali in Lahore. The provision stocks of Abdali were located outside the town under the guard of Ahmed Khan and Guhram Khan. In a raid one day the Sikhs killed Ahmed Khan and captured a major part of the stores. This brought Nasar Khan Baloch also there and the fight with the bands of S. Charhat Singh continued the whole day. With the coming of the night, the Sikhs disappeared into the jungles, while Nasar Khan turned back into the city.

Starting from his camp at Lahore, Abdali launched an attack at Amritsar. But the Sikhs had moved away from there before the attack, leaving only thirty men to guard the fort at Ramgarh. As the Durrani forces approached the fort, the small garrison of thirty Sikhs raised their war-cries of 'Sat Sri Akal' and 'Raj Karega Khalsa' and pounced upon the enemy. One may well marvel at the courage and boldness of these gallant warriors who, hungry for martyrdom, faced without wincing a mighty host led by the renowned general of the age, Ahmed Shah Abdali: All the thirty Sikhs fell martyrs, after they had taken a heavy toll of the enemy, but they left an indelible memory of their valour on the foe.

Hardly had the Sikhs repaired a small part of the ravages of the defences at Amritsar done by the Greater Mauathon, when Abdali once again destroyed the city and returned to Lahore. From Lahore Abdali, along with his entire camp, set out in the direction of Batala, where he arrived after fifteen days, having covered a distance of 56 miles. Abdali's instructions to his forces, in respect of this territory, were that it should be ransacked most mercilessly, since it was the land of the infidels. The order was executed to the letter and the whole territory was soon ravaged. People abandoned their homes and hearths and were forced to seek refuge in the hills.

After a brief sojourn at Batala, Abdali moved across the River Beas. But hardly had he entered the Jullundur Doaba, when his advance battalions were set upon by the Sikhs. Knowing the Sikhs well as he did, Jahan Khan, instead of advancing, stayed put and fought the Sikhs only

for self-preservation. Though Nasar Khan Baloch, too, came with his army to his help, they could not gather the courage to launch a counter attack on the Sikhs. After a day-long battle both the sides retired to their camps for rest, as the darkness descended upon them.

Abdali effected the transit through the Doaba in three days and crossed the Sutlej at Machhiwara. While he was in the act of crossing over, the Sikhs again fell upon him. Abdali's strict orders to his forces in this case were that they were mercy to defend themselves and not to attack the Sikhs in any case. Having passed the night on the farther bank of the Sutlej, the Durranis moved into camp at Pinjore, from where, after a few days halt, they came and encamped at Kunjpura about the close of February. Here he came to know that, having despaired of Abdali's arrival to his aid Najib-ud-Daula had at last made peace with Jawahar Mall. At this Abdali decided not to advance further. He therefore, turned back and came to Sirhind.

Abdali invited the rulers of Malerkotla and offered to them the Governorship of Sirhind. But the fear of the Sikhs made the Governorship go abegging.\* Finally he called S. Aala Singh of Patiala and appointed him as the Governor of Sirhind in exchange for an annual tribute of three and a half lakhs of rupees. The tribute for the first year was condoned and the title of 'Maharaja' was conferred upon him.\*\* as also the right to have his own war drum.

Abdali also sent a messenger to the Buddha Dal at Thikriwala, urging them to accept his suzerainty and to receive control of the territory. But the Sikhs were in no mind to accept this condition †

Having foisted Sirhind on Aala Singh, Abdali prepared

\* Bhangoo, Page 415 Panth Parkash: Page 879

\*\* Alla Singh accepted the sovereignty of Abdali and was appointed the Governor of Sirhind. The Panth was much annoyed with Aala Singh at this term and attacked the Patiala ruler S. Hari Singh Bhangi was killed during the fighting To avoid this internecine war, S. Jassa Singh Ahloowalia brought about peace between the two parties. A penalty was imposed on Aala Singh, which he got condoned by the Panth.

† Panth Parkash: page 880

to go back to Kabul. During this expedition nowhere had Abdali sought to attack the Sikhs. On the other hand, he had been all the time concerned with his own safety and was always on the defensive. He was aware that he had no longer the requisite power and strength to face the Sikhs. He crossed the Satlej at Ropar in March, 1765, and found himself face to face with the combined forces of the Tarna Dal and the Buddha Dal, who were blocking his way. Hardly had the Durrani gone a mile, when the Sikhs unleashed a frontal attack upon them †. The Durrani Generals at this time were Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan, Shah Pasand Khan and Nasar Khan, while the Sikhs were commanded by the well known Sardars, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh, Jai Singh, Hari Singh Bhangi, Gulab Singh and Gujjar Singh. Abdali ordered his soldiers not to leave their stations in any case. The Sikhs exerted very heavy pressure on the right flank of Abdali's army, and Abdali despatched Nasar Khan to relieve the pressure. S. Charhat Singh challenged Nasar Khan who advanced to attack him whereupon the Sikhs of Charhat Singh fled the field. Nasar Khan was not aware of this stratagem, and proceeded with his army to chase the Sikhs. When he was a bit away from the armies of Abdali, S. Charhat Singh wheeled round and attacked him. Nasar Khan was caught in the Sikh trap. He was lucky enough to run away with his life and to join the forces of Abdali, but a major part of his army fell victims to the sabres of the Sikhs. The Durrani had hardly recovered from this blow when another Misal of the Sikhs unleashed an attack from the other direction. As the night came with its darkness, the battle came to a halt.

The next day Abdali had proceeded but three miles, when the Sikhs fell upon him from three directions. Formerly the Sikhs only harassed the rear of Abdali's armies and instead of confronting them, they fled away after looting them. But now they would block the advance of

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†Nazi Nur Muhammad, the author of 'Jang Nama' who accompanied Nasar Khan, has given in persian a detailed description of the attack in vorse.

the Durranis from the front and challenge them and attack them, in order to hinder his advance. One Misal of the Sikhs would come galloping from afar, discharge their loaded rifles on the enemy and retire; their place would be taken by the soldiers of the second Misal, who would fire into the enemy and move back vacating their places for occupation by the third Misal. This process would last the whole day. The Sikh Sardars would step forward and challenge the Durrani generals to a combat. But the Durranis conveniently swallowed these challenges and dared not take even a step forward. They would ardently pray for the coming of the night, which alone brought them deliverance from the bands of the Sikhs.

Thus these diurnal battles continued for seven days: the two battles fought at Nur Mahal and Kapurthala were particularly fierce. From Kapurthala Abdali, instead of proceeding to Lahore, veered in the direction of Batala. At Batala he was set upon by a force of thirty thousand Sikhs, under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Hari Singh Bhangi and S. Baghel Singh.\* Utterly defeated here, Abdali crossed the River Ravi but the Sikhs again attacked him across the river. In short the Sikhs chased Abdali up to the town of Gujrat. † On the return journey Abdali had not touched Lahore. ‡

Towards the close of March Abdali reached Rohtas and the Sikhs, who were hot on his heels, turned back to be in time for the Baisakhi celebrations at Amritsar. At Rohtas Abdali bade farewell to Nasar Khan. Abdali offered to hand over to Nasar Khan the entire territory west of the Chenab. But Nasar Khan did not agree to have it, for fear of the Sikhs. He asked for Quetta from Abdali, which he agreed to give him. From here Abdali proceeded to Kabul, while Nasar Khan went to Kulat.

According to Qazi Nur Muhammad, the author of 'Jang Nama' the dominion of the Sikhs at this time was as follows: Chiniot was under the possession of S. Jhanda Singh Bhangi, Jhang under S. Hari Singh Bhangi, Varpal

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\* Bhangoo : Page 417, Panth Parkash : Pages 883-84

† Panth Parkash : Page 886.

‡ Bhangoo : Page 418.

under Karam Singh, Parol under Jai Singh, Kalanaur under Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jullundur under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, \* Batala under Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Wanike under Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh, Pindi Sayyadan and Chamiari under Aghar Singh and Sanwal Singh, Dinanagar under Wasava Singh, Rohtas under Charhat, Singh and Dipalpur under Natha Singh. The Sikhs were in possession of the entire territory of Sirhind, Lahore Multan and the Derafaat towns. These areas were under the Sikhs even before the invasion of Abdali. As Abdali turned back, they asserted their hold over the remaining areas also.

The Khalsa abandoned the pursuit of Abdali and congregated at Amritsar for the Baisakhi celebrations, which fell on the 10th of April, 1765. The Sikhs were now of the view that they were stronger than Abdali and that they would defeat him if he attacked them again. They stayed at Amritsar for a month during which period they repaired the Gurdwaras, which Abdali had pulled down. The Sardars passed a general resolution in which they decided to assert their sway over the whole country. They took the traditional holy vow and the various Sardars set out for their respective areas to gain possession of them.

The Governor of Lahore, Kabuli Mall; had gone to see Abdali off, leaving behind his nephew, Amir Singh, in charge of the city. S. Lehna Singh and S. Gujjar Singh (Bhangi Sardars) appeared with 2,000 soldiers and camped at Bagwanpura. Some Arains (Muslim tillers of land) of the place—Mehr Sultan, Ghulam Rasool, Ashraf, Chunnu, Baaqar—worked as gardeners in the local fort. The Bhangi Sardars won them over and gained entry into the fort by breaking open the ramparts at night at a place indicated by the gardeners. Amir Singh was busy witnessing a dance in the palaces, at the moment He was captured and imprisoned in Muzang. The next day, on the 16th of May, 1765, S. Sobha Singh of Niazbeg also arrived with 200 horsemen, and the three Sardars gained possession of the city and the fort of Lahore. The respectable citizens of the town, chief among whom being Chaudhri Roopa, Mir Nathu Shah,

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\* Qazi Nur Muhammad confuses these two names.

Mian Muhammad Ashiq, Hafiz Qadir Bakhsh † and Dewan Surat Singh's two sons, Lala Bishan Singh and Maharaj Singh, waited in a deputation on the Sikh Sardars and requested them to give them the rule of peace. The Sikh Sardars went round the city to establish peace and ordered severe penalties for those engaged in plunder. The arrested family of Kabuli Mall The Bhangi Sardars gave him only the Zamzama gun was later on released for a consideration of thirty thousand Rupees Kabuli Mall had gone to Jammu and his family followed him there. \*

The Sikh Sardars established peace in Lahore and stamped a new coinage, known as Nanak Shahi coins, which bore the following Persian inscription :

Degh-o-Tegh-o-Fateli-o-Nusrat Bedarang

Yaafat az Nanak Gurn Gobind Singh. †

Thereafter the three Sardars divided the city into three parts. The eastern part of the city upto the Shalamar Gardens, fell to the share of S. Gujjar Singh, who built a fort after his name and made it his seat of Government. The central part of the city, comprising Shahi Fort, and the areas enclosed by the Kashmiri, Khizri Rohini and the Masti gates was possessed by S. Lehna Singh, S. Sobha Singh became the master of the southern and the western parts of the city, consisting of Muzang, Kot Abdulla Shah. Ichra and Chauburji. He got a pucca wall constructed round the garden of Zebinda Begam, better known as Zebunissa, the daughter of Aurangazeb, converted the place into a fort, which he named as Nawankot and established his Headquarters there.

On hearing the news of these acquisitions by the Sikh Sardars, S. Charhat Singh also arrived in Lahore with a force of 2,000 men and demanded his own share of the city. The Bhangi Sardars gave him only the Zamzama gun (Khangian Wali Toap), which S. Charhat Singh ordered to be carried from the Shahi Tower to Gujranwala, since he

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‡ Hafiz is one who can recite from memory the entire Quram.

\* Panth Parkash : Pa e 891.

† The kettle, (symbol of the means to feed) the sword (symbol of the power to protect the weak and the helpless.) Victory and unhesitating patronage have been obtained from Nanak Gobind Singh."



saw hardly any prospect of receiving anything more.

This dominion over Lahore gave to the Sikhs the feeling that they were the rulers of the entire Punjab. Barely in two months (from mid-May to mid-July) they established their sway over the whole of the Punjab. The leaders of the Misals directed each one of their lieutenants to occupy as much land as he possibly could. Accordingly, the different Misals occupied territories as follows:

Amritsar was the common city of the entire Khalsa Panth. The leaders of the various Misals had built their own localities on Katras there, which they had called either after their own or after the name of the Misal. When they came to Amritsar, the various Sardars lived and behaved like brothers to one another.

Bari Duab, the area between the Ravi and the Beas rivers:

Misal Bhangian occupied the suburbs around Amritsar and round Tarn Taran, particularly the southern side of Tarn Taran and the town itself and the territory of Chhinian was under Karam Singh Bhangi.

Misal Ahluwalia was in possession of the areas along both the banks of river Beas, viz. Fatehabad, Goindwal, Jandiala, Butala, Sathiala, Bandala, Matabkot, Jalalabad, Vairoval and Kot Muhammad Khan.

Misal Ramgarhian was in occupation of Sri Hargobind pura, Qadian, and Matewal.

Misal Kanhyan was in occupation of the suburbs of Batala, Fatehgarh, Gilvali and Panjgaraian.

Misal Nakian possessed a huge territory of Nakka and Lamma.

Misal Singhpurian had Singhpura (Fiazalapur) and Khaparkheri. S. Jodh Singh was in occupation of Saurian, Jagdeo, Ghonewal and Kariyal, while S. Dewan Singh had Sainsara.

Doaba Rachna, between the Ravi and the Chenab: A major part of this Doaba was conquered by Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and distributed among the generals under him.

Sahai Singh and Sahib Singh, who had received baptism at Amritsar, snatched the territory of Sheikhpura from the Lubbanas.

Bhangi Misal: S. Hari Singh occupied Kalewala, Alaar, panwana, Chak Raindas, Chaubara and several other

villages. Tara Singh, Jeewan Singh and Sahib Singh, the Bhangi Sardars usurped the Sialkot fort from the Pathans and occupied a vast territory, while S. Karam Singh Bhangi occupied villages like Firozke, Kaleke and Bajra.

Doaba Chajj, between the Chenab and the Jhelum rivers: In this territory mukarrab Khan Gakhar was the chief power. S. Gujjar Singh Bhangi and S. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia defeated Mukarrab Khan and occupied the fort of Gujrat and the Surrounding territory. S. Gujjar Singh improved the defences of the fort and converted it into his headquarters. The Two Misals divided the whole District into two and further distributed the area among the Sardars. The territory of Gujrat and Waraich was occupied by the Bhangis, while Kunjah and Miani including the salt mines, was own by the Sukarchakias. Midh and Moosa Chooha were occupied by the Bhangi Sardars, Ganda Singh and Jhanda Singh; village Miani was occupied by S. Tara Singh, while Bhena and Ahmedabad were taken possession of by S. Maan Singh.

Doaba Jullundur and the Malwa were already under occupation of the Sikhs, who now held the territory west of the Beas and assembled in Amritsar once again. Here a Panthic decision was taken to ravage the territories of Najib-ud Daula. Accordingly the Sikhs marched eastwards in September 1765. At Sirhind they divided themselves into the two groups the Buddha Dal and the Tarna Dal. The Tarna Dal crossed the Jumna at Buria Ghat and made its way into Saharanpur, and the Buddha Dal, a force of twenty five thousand men, under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Tara Singh and S. Sham Singh, ravaged the areas belonging to Najib-ud-Daula, who at the moment was roaring in the Rohtak region. As soon as he received the news of the plunder of his territories, he marched at the head of an army to combat the Sikhs, but before he could arrive there, the Sikhs had turned back towards Amritsar with the plunder. The Dewali festival which fell on the 14th of October, 1765, was celebrated by the Khalsa with great eclat.

After the Dewali celebrations, the Sikhs were once again in the areas belonging to Najib-ud-Daula, in December, 1765. Najib-ud-Daula had already put himself in a state

of preparedness. For several days a battle was waged near Shamli, but on two days this battle was particularly fierce. When the battle stopped for the night, the Sikhs made a nocturnal crossing of the Jumna and came back to the western bank of the river. From there they proceeded to the territories of the Jat Rajas. In January 1766 both the Dals entered the areas of land belonging to the ruler of Bharatpur. Raja Jawahar Mall sent his emissary Ram Kishore Ahir, to the Sikhs and made peace with them. He offered them a sum of seven lakhs of rupees on the stipulation that his territories would not be plundered and that, on the other hand, the Sikhs would help Jawahar Mall against the Mahrathas. Whereas the Buddha Dal stayed on to render help to Jawahar Mall, the Tarna Dal once again fell to plundering the areas under Najib-ud-Daula. When Najib-ud-Daula advanced with his forces, the Dal returned to the Punjab.

The Sikhs and Jawahar Mall chalked out a plan to plunder the territory of Raja Madho Singh of Jaipur, since he was an ally of the Mahrathas. After an all-night march of forty-two miles the Sikhs fell upon Rewari and looted it.

From his base near Dhaulpur, Malhar Rao Mahratha was plundering the territories of the Jat Raja Jawahar Mall. The latter attacked the Mahratha chief with the help of the Sikhs. In the battle which fought near Dhaulpur on the 13th and 14th of March, 1766, the Mahrathas were defeated and took shelter inside Dhaulpur. The Mahratha general Shutanji, was wounded and captured. Jawahar Mall besieged Dhaulpur and captured all the Mahratha generals.\*

After taking leave from Jawahar Mall the Sikhs came and camped near the precincts of Delhi. The Deputy of Najib-ud-Daula, named Afzal Khan, was at the moment in Delhi. He closed the gates of the city for fear of the Sikhs, which was in April, 1766. The Sikhs plundered the area of Partapganj and then, crossing the Jumna, looted the areas of Kutana, Jhanjhana and Budhana. Najib-ud-Daula crossed over at the Kutana Ghat and fell upon the Sikh camp. The Sikhs were at the time away on their marauding expeditions in the surrounding villages, and the unguarded camp was thus looted freely by the Rohila forces. On hearing the uproar, the Sikhs came back; but,

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\* Gupta: Sikh History, part I, pages 243-44.

by then, their camp had been badly ransacked. The two sides fought actions from the 16th to the 20th of April, 1766, and the Sikhs lost heavily. They then crossed over to the western bank of the Jumna and pillaged the territories of Najib-ud-Daula, lying on this bank of the Jumna. Najib-ud Daula set out in pursuit, but had to go back after suffering heavy damage.

During these battles and encounters Amar Singh, the ruler of Patiala, S. Aala Singh's grandson, had been helping Najib-ud-Daula. Consequently, on their return journey, the Sikhs attacked the State of Patiala and after a fight with Raja Amar Singh looted his territories.

About this same time S. Hira Singh Naqai attacked the areas of Pakpattan, and fought a battle with the Dewan of the place near the village of Bhooman Shah, wherein Hira Singh was killed. His nephew, Nahar Singh, now became the leader of the Misal, and the Naqais came back after abandoning the fight.

Shortly after the Bhangi Sardars, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, advanced upon Pakpattan. In the battle that ensued Muhammad Azim was defeated and the Sikhs occupied the areas surrounding Pakpattan.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### Abdali's Last Invasion

To retrieve his fallen prestige and to recover the lost territory, Ahmed Shah Abdali once again descended upon the Punjab with a mighty host. In the beginning of December, 1766, he crossed the Attock. About seven thousand Sikhs were, at this time, present in the neighbourhood of Rohitas and they advanced about half a score of miles to meet the forces of Abdali, who outnumbered by eight to ten times the forces of the Sikhs. Consequently, the Sikhs suffered heavy losses in this battle.

After this initial victory, when Abdali proceeded beyond Rohtas, he was joined by the ruler of Gujrat, Shah Daula, and many other Muslim Chiefs. The Sikhs forces which had been defeated at Rohtas once again attacked the Durrani armies on the eastern bank of the Jehlum. But their crippling numerical inferiority again led to their defeat.

Abdali now proceeded and camped at a distance of eight miles from Sialkot on the 10th of December, 1766. Here he summoned the landlords of the area and extorted from them a tribute of one lakh and a half of rupees. Abdali reached Daska on the 15th December, 1766, and collected revenue worth three lakhs of rupees from the landlords of that region. From here Abdali set out once again, reaching Fazalabad, seven miles from Lahore, on the 21st of December.

A Sikh force, 8000 strong, was present at that time in Lahore. As Abdali came close to Lahore, the Sikh Sardars

Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh, retreated with their forces from the city. Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh proceeded in the direction of Qasoor, while Sobha Singh moved towards Pakpattan. Abdali entered Lahore on the 22nd of December. The leading Muslims and Hindus of the city waited upon him in a deputation and requested him to call Lehna Singh and appoint him as the Governor of the city in the interest of the citizens, since Lehna Singh was a noble and just ruler, who was acceptable to everybody. He made no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. On the day of the Id he had awarded turbans† of honour to the Qazis and the Maulanas. They also submitted that in the event of somebody else being appointed as the ruler of Lahore, the Sikhs would not allow the administration to function.

Abdali too had thoroughly perceived the situation. He sent Rehmat-ullah Beg of village Mode as his emissary, with a letter and a gift of dry fruit from Kabul to S. Lehna Singh. By that letter Abdali offered the governorship of Lahore to Lehna Singh. In reply Lehna Singh returned the fruit along with sample of gram, along with his own letter that contained the following words; "Fruit is the food of Kings: I am an ordinary soldier and can well sustain myself on a simple meal of gram. In regard to the offer of Governorship, I am a soldier of the Panth, which would spurn even the gift of rulership of the three worlds, except when it came from Guru Gobind Singh." In short S. Lehna Singh did not fall in the trap laid by Abdali.

Abdali stayed in Lahore for a week and in order to fill the vacancies, he appointed Dadan Khan, the brother of Maulvi Abdulla, as the Governor of Lahore and Rehmat Khan Rohila as his deputy.\*

Having made these administrative arrangements in Lahore, Abdali set out eastward with an army of fifty thousand soldiers, leaving his base camp intact at Lahore. He had with him seven thousand long-range riflemen and a few cannon. The generals who accompanied him were, among others, Jahan

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† Ali-ud-Din: page 130.

\* Ali-ud-Din: page 130. khushwakt Rai: page 129.

Khan, Faiztalab Khan, Barkhurdar Khan, and Darwesh Ali Khan of Hazara. On the 28th of December Abdali attacked Fatehabad. The small Sikh garrison in the fort fell fighting and Abdali ransacked the village and the adjoining territory.

At the time of this attack S. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and S. Jassa Singh Shluwalia, with an army of twenty thousand men, were camping near the village of Khasa, while S. Tara Singh and Khushal Singh were stationed near village Tara Garh and S. Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh near village Kahna. When Abdali was engaged in ransacking Fatehabad, S. Charhat Singh and Lehna Singh fell upon Abdali's camp at Lahore and plundered it. The news of the pillage of his camp made Abdali turn back at once, and he arrived at Mahmud Tuli near Lahore on the first of January, 1767. The Sikhs, however, were safely far away after looting the camp, when Abdali reached there.

S. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, S. Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi joined one another at Amritsar. On the 17th of January Jahan Khan attacked them with an army of fifteen thousand men. A very bloody battle was fought for a few hours, in which six thousand Durrani soldiers were killed. Jahan Khan suffered defeat and ran away. Abdali now himself came at the head of an army, but the Sikhs retreated into the jungles.

Abdali crossed the Beas on the 17th of January and the following day went into camp at Saheri village. Here Rai Megh Raj, Sujan Rai, Lahori Mall, Bhim Singh, the emissaries respectively of Najib-ud-Daula, Mir Qasam, Raja Jawahar Mall and Raja Madho Singh, as also the representatives of Raja Amar Singh of Patiala and of Rai Kalha, waited upon Abdali and offered him presents. Abdali ordered these emissaries to let their masters appear in person before him. The Raja of patiala met Abdali at Nur Mahal. Abdali crossed the Sutlej and camped at Machhiwara, where the Sikhs began to attack him from all sides. One day Nasar Khan Baloch pursued the Sikhs in order to encounter them: he suffered a severe defeat and came back.

Abdali arrived in Ismailabad thirty miles to the south of Ambala, where Najib-ud-Daula appeared before him on

the 9th of March and made an offering of two lakhs of rupees. Abdali reached Ambala on the 18th of March and two days latter, camped at Sirhind. Here the ruler of Patiala Raja Amar Singh, paid him a tribute of three lakhs of Rupees. In return Abdali conferred upon him the Governship of Sirhind and the title of Maharaja-i-Rajgan or the Chief of the Rajas.\* Raja Amar Singh also paid him an additional sum of rupees two lakhs to secure freedom for thirty thousand young Indians to be used as slaves, which Ablali had captured up from Ambala. Moreover, he paid for each capture the expenses of a safe return home. This benevolent act secured for him from the people the nickname of Bandi-Chhor or Rescuer of the Captives.\*\* From Sirhind Abdali came to Machhiwara, and stayed here for a month and a half.

It was about this time that a party of the Sikhs hopped over the Jumna and pillaged the territory of Najib-ud-Daula including places like Ambeta, and Nanauta, on the 14th of May and Meerut. Najib-ud-daula proceeded with Jahan Khan Durrani to battle against the Sikhs. An encounter too place between Shamli and Kerana, in which S. Baghel Singh was wounded, when the Sikh forces slipped away from the field.

Ablali left Machhiwara and set out for Kadul via Lahore. As he neared Lahore the Sikhs suddenly attacked him, † and Abdali had to seek shelter in Lahore. From Lahore he reached Sialkot, where he looted the adjoining territory and captured twenty thousand young civilians to be taken to Kabul and sold as slaves there. S. Jassa Singh, S. Baghel Singh, S.Charhat Singh and others set upon Abdali on the banks of the Jehlum and rescued the captives, capturing, at the same time, a good deal of booty. ‡ Thus Abdali reached home after suffering heavy damages at the hands of the Sikhs. When he had crossed the Jehlum the Sikhs came back to take possession of their respective territories;

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\* Cunningham : Page 113.

\*\* Panth Parkash Page 893; Khushwakt Rai Page 108.

† Panth Parkash : Page, 893.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### To Sikhs Achieve the Goal

S. Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh came and stationed themselves with their forces in the Shalamar Gardens, and then sent a message to Dadan Khan the Governor of Lahore appointed by Abdali. The message gave to Dadan Khan the choice of either vacating Lahore or facing the might of the Sikh arms. Dadan Khan had hardly any nerve to face the Sikhs. He took with him the leading citizens of Lahore: Mian Muhammad Aship, Mir Nathu Shah, Hafiz Qadar Bakhsh and Lala Maharaj Singh, and appeared in person before the Sikh Sardars. The Sardars treated Dadan Khan with great courtesy. He was sanctioned a daily allowance of twenty rupees and thus the Sikhs took over peacefully possession of the city of Lahore again.

Having restored to themselves their previous possessions, the Sikh Sardars began to occupy fresh territories. S. Gujjar Singh occupied the area of Gakkhars around Rawalpindi and appointed S. Milkha Singh Thehpuria as the Governor of the region. S. Milkha Singh made Rawalpindi as the seat of his Government and by the end of 1767 his dominion had expanded to yield an annual revenue of three lakhs of rupees.

About the same time S. Budh Singh Singhpuria defeated Sheikh Nizamud-Din and occupied the territory of Jullundur. Along with this he also took possession of Bulandgarh, Behrampur, Nagpur and Haibatpur Patti.

His territory yielded an annual revenue of nearly three lakhs of rupees.

S. Desu Singh, the son of S. Gurbakhsh Singh of Bhaika snatched from the two brothers, Bheekh Bakhsh and Niamat Khan, the territory of Kaithal. Niamat Khan recognised the sovereignty of S. Desu Singh and received several villages as Jagir from him, but Bheekh Bakhsh ran away in fear of the Sikhs.

Towards the close of 1767 the Sikhs once again embarked upon the pillage of Najib-ud-Daula's territories, and the Khalsa forces approached Delhi on the 19th of December. Najib-ud-Daula sent out an order to his deputy Yaqub Ali, enjoining upon him to defend Delhi determinedly: The Sikhs then crossed the Jumna and fell upon Nanauta. Najib-ud-Daula, too, arrived there with his army. After a fierce battle the Sikhs retired to Saharanpur. Another battle took place at Islamnagar, in January, 1768. The Sikhs crossed the Jumna at Rajghat and thus were back in their own territory.

In March, 1768, the Sikhs once again fell to plundering the territories of Najib-ud-Daula, who at the moment was occupied with the marriage of his son, Kala Khan, in the village of Aanwla. On receiving information of the pillage of panipat and Karnal by the Sikhs, Najib-ud-Daula advanced to face them at the head of an army. The battle raged for several days and Najib-ud-Daula was badly defeated.

After driving Najib-ud-Daula far from the scene of operations, the Sikhs came and threatened Delhi, which at the moment, was without any defender. King Shah Alam II was himself away from Delhi and the entire administration was run by the Queen Mother, the mother of the king and of Najib-ud-Daula. The latter had reconciled himself with his total defeat at the hands of the Sikhs and was now powerless to face them once again. He recalled from Delhi his agent, Sultan Khan along with his forces, and sent his own resignation to the Queen Mother, starting that he was powerless to defend Delhi against the Sikhs.

In December, 1768, Najib-ud-Daula had another encounter with the Sikhs and was again defeated. With this

battle the territory up to the Ganges lay at the mercy of the Sikhs; for, there was no power there which could resist them. Their foraging sallies across the Jumna became a common place. At last the rulers and the chaudhris of the territory lying between the Jumna and the Ganges were obliged to recognize the suzerainty of the Sikhs and agreed to pay the Rakhi or recovering tax money paid to them toward off the marauding raids. A tax of two to five rupees per head of the population was charged by the Sikhs half-yearly. The Sikh Sardars distributed this entire territory among themselves and the system came to be known as Pattedari. After every six months at the time of the harvest, a small body of Sikh soldiers would go and collect the tax from their respective areas.

By the end of 1768 A. D. the Sikh rule had been established all over the Punjab. Its boundaries extended on the east from the mountains of the Jumna to Karnal, on the west from Attock on the Indus to Bakkhar; on the south the Sikh territories were bounded by Multan and the Hindu States and extended to the foot of the hills of Blinibar, Jammu and Kangra. Here and there a few areas were under the Muslim chaudhries.

During this period the Sikhs had to combat against three powers of the three the Lahore Government with its Muslim ruler had been completely knocked out. The Government at Delhi was also out of the combat. And Ahemed Shah Abdali, though defeated, had not yet admitted defeat. In short, of the three contenders two had already been put down, while the third was about to go out of the arena.

In December, 1768, Abdali once again advanced with his armies against the Punjab. The Sikhs, once again, got ready for an encounter with him. But he turned back at the river Chenab without a combat. He did not dare advance and battle with the Sikhs,

The following year, in the December of 1769, Abdali crossed the Attock for the last time, and the Sikhs garrisons in the fort of Rohtas to the west of Jehlum, got ready to face him. But Abdali, who had become the terror of the whole of India, could not any more, summon courage enough to fight against the Sikhs. Consequently, after a

brief sojourn west of the Jehlum, the veteran general turned back for Kabul. Thus the third contender in the struggle was also squarely and fairly beaten and eliminated from the combat for ever.

On his expeditions Abdali used to be accompanied by his able general Jahan Khan. Their defeat at the hands of the Sikhs turned out, in this case, to be the loss of the battle of life itself for them. Jahan Khan breathed his last on the 14th of March, 1770 and on the 14th of April, 1772 Ahmed Shah, too, left this world. \*The death of the latter took place in the village of Murgha in the Suleman mountains and he was buried in the city of Kandhar, where a beautiful tomb was erected at a cost of ninety thousand rupees over his remains.

Different historians have given varied assessments of the military might of the Sikhs. George Thomas places the Sikh army at sixty thousand horsemen and five thousand foot-soldiers, whereas Browne thinks that it was seventy three thousand horsemen and twenty five thousand infantry. Taimoor Shah of Kabul estimated the number to be only fifty thousand while, according to Forster, the strength of the Sikh army was three lakhs, out of which two lakhs could take the field. Of these surmises that of Browne seems to be the most correct. The strength of the Army of the Misals which was earmarked for combatant purposes only, did not exceed one lakh. So far as the nature of the Sikh race goes, every turbaned Sikh wore arms and could, in time of need, acquit himself as a good soldier. It was this military organisation of the community that had established its sway over the Punjab

Thus runs the long, immortal, and heroic story of the establishment of the Sikh Rule.

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\*At the time of the Great Holocaust Abdali had razed Harmandar Sahib to the ground. When it was blown up with dynamite, a piece of brick had landed on the nose of Abdali: the injury developed into a cancer and ultimately took the life of Abdali.

