

GURU NANAK SAHIB AND SIKHISM

(Draft)

Prof. Dr. M.S. Bajwa, Ph.D. LL.B

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ABSTRACT

Guru Nanak Sahib, believed as founder of the Sikhism, was actually a convert from Hinduism. He was a religious scholar and the master of four languages, Sanskrit, Gurmukhi (he invented), Arabic and Persian and four holy books, Psalms, Tora, Bible and Quran. He carried the Holy Quran with him all the time and recited regularly. He understood that simple and illiterate people of the Punjab villages could not understand the Holy Quran. So, being a poet and singer, he reproduced and explained the Quranic verses, ideology and prayers in his self styled Punjabi poems (Gurmukhi Bani), e.g Jap Ji Sahib. His Mission was to spread the name of Allah/Rab/God---the Creator and Sustainer of the universes and to recite His Holy names all the time to become His friend. Most of the Muslims believe Guru Nanak Sahib as a Muslim Faquir (Saint) like Kabir Sahib, Mian Mir Sahib, Bhuley Shah Sahib, Sain Baba and Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Sahib. He also wrote Bani about Prophet Muhammad PBUH and Muslim Holy Book Quran.

All religions of the world passed through the process of evolution with passage of time and so was the Sikhism. The religion changed from the second Guru Angat Dev Sahib (Bhai Lehna) through the tenth Guru Gobind Singh Ji. They changed from saints to saint soldiers---the Khalsas. Actually it was not Guru Nanak Sahib but Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the real founder of Sikhism. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh Ji discontinued the chain of human gurus, completed compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib as the eleventh and last Guru and performed the 'matha taking' (Sajjda). From that time the Sikhs started 'matha taking' to the Holy Book, Guru Granth Sahib.

We all are performing the prayers in various styles, doing charity, working hard at the 'langar' (free kitchen) and carrying out other noble deeds to please Allah/Rab/God, to pass happy life in this world, enter Paradise, Bahisht or Swarg to enjoy the facilities for ever and ever and to save our selves from the fires of hell, dosakh or narg. If our prayers are only for one and only God, those make Him happy and have positive points, but if the prayers are for any thing other than God, i.e. for any of His creations or in partnership to God, those make God very angry and have the negative points. Matha taking to the holy books, e.g. Guru Granth Sahib or Holy Quran is like making and worshiping another Rab, which is 'shirk' (partnership to God) and makes Rab very unhappy. To enter Paradise in the first stage after death, we would have to worship the one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes and to believe in angles, all the holy books, prophets and prophet of the time, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)---the last of the prophets and the last Revelation---Holy Quran, the life after death, the dooms day, the day of judgment and entering either Paradise or hell, depending upon 'Eman' (Trust in God) and good or bad deeds. Please read the Holy Quran like Guru Nanak Sahib did.

By

Prof. Dr. M.S. Bajwa
Ph.D. LL.B

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Purpose of Writing:

Dear Friends,

Since many years, I have been studying Sikhism and now written a book (draft). Guru Nanak Sahib, believed to be founder of Sikhism by Sikhs, was actually a Muslim Saint, converted from Hinduism. In reality, the tenth Guru Gobind Sing Ji was founder of Sikhism. He discontinued the chain of human-gurus, finalized Guru Granth Sahib, designated it as eleventh guru and performed 'Matha Taking or Sajda'. He was the first Singh and made Khalsas. The Sikh people have changed the concept of Rab. Some believe Guru Nanak Sahib as Wah-e-Guru or Rab, some Guru Granth Sahib as Rab and some believe all ten gurus as Rab. Though, neither Guru Nanak Sahib nor any other guru called him self as Rab or prophet of Rab. Rather, Guru Gobind Sing Ji warned that who ever believed him as god or Rab would go to Narag (Hell). I am trying my best to connect the Sikhs back to Allah/Rab/God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes and Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the last of the prophets of Allah. I need your help and cooperation in the Kare-Khair (noble deed). You may forward my paper to other friends. The comments and corrections would be welcomed.

With kind regards,

Dr. M. S. Bajwa.
<mbajwa11@hotmail.com>
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THE SECOND MASTER GURU ANGAD DEV (1504-1552)

THE THIRD MASTER GURU AMAR DAS (1479-1574)

THE FOURTH MASTER GURU RAM DAS (1534-1581)

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INTRODUCTION

Back ground of Religions

Religions of the world are mainly of two types: God's religions and Non-God's religions.

Before the idea of one God as Creator of the universe gained currency, religion passed through several intermediary stages represented by worship of innumerable gods believed to

look after their devotees with powers attributed to them. Their statues appeared, leading to idle-worship, which persists even today. Then came prophets with messages from God. They denounced idols as His rivals. The prophets never claimed Godhead for themselves. They were content to be His messengers. Their followers, accustomed to idol worship, however confused the prophets with God Himself and to some people God acquired a human or anthropomorphic form to be realized through personal intervention of particular prophets in favour of their own followers alone. Every religious/spiritual system addresses some fundamental issues, mostly theological in character. The views on these issues determine its character and give a distinct identity (after *Kharak, Sing Ji, OSGC*).

The non-god's religions involved books, instructions or codes of life prepared by humans, under guidance from 'satin' a 'jinn' and either worshipping things other than God, e.g. sun, fire, idles, 'otars' trees, cows or snakes, etc. or making partners in God's kingdom, e.g. sons of God, daughters of God, etc.

God's religions started from Hazrat Adam. He was the first human and prophet. After Hazrat Adam, 125,000 to 200,000 prophets were sent to this world, some with holy books and others with holy instructions from Allah/Rab/God. The famous prophets were about thirty, e.g. Noh, David (with Holy Psalms), Moses (with Holy Tora), Jesus (with Holy Bible), Abraham and last of the prophets--Prophet Muhammad (with Holy Quran) PBUH. Every prophet went to his people, introduced him self as the messenger of Allah, getting the revelations (instructions) from Allah through Angel Gabriel or directly and advised to worship only one Worship able God--Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes (styles and timings of the prayers were different with different prophets), to do good deeds and to advise for the right and negate the wrong, 'Amar bil maroof wa nahi anil munkir'. These are the conditions compulsory for entering Paradise (Swarg) and saving from fires of the hell (Narag), after death and enjoy the facilities of Paradise forever and ever and never dying again.

The Quran was revealed on the last Prophet of Allah--Muhammad (PBUH) about 1500 years ago, at the age of forty. The Revelation was completed in twenty-three years, verse by verse. When ever Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received a verse or a set of verses from Allah through Angel Gabriel, he gathered his fellows (Sahaba), teach them the verses and asked to write down on pieces of wood, leather or large leaves, etc. and checked back, since he was illiterate. The Prophet (PBUH) and all the fellows learnt Holy Quran by heart. The Holy Quran is the only holy book of Allah, in original form and un-changed, since Allah himself took the responsibility to save it. Original Arabic script of the Holy Quran is same through out the world until today.

All religions of the world changed through passage of time. Buddha never posed himself as god, but after four hundred years of his death, The Japanese people started believing Buddha as god. Jesus never introduced him self as God/Lord or Son of God (*Muslim scholar's thought*), but after his passing away, Roman Catholics started believing him as Son of God or as Lord. Allah explained in the Holy Quran about Jesus:

Surah 5 'The table spread' Verses 116-118.
Surah 112 'Purity of faith' Verses 1-4.

Guru Nanak Sahib propounded revolutionary idea that 'Shabad' or God's word (received through a prophet) was the real 'Guru' and not any individual or his body, which brought his message (after *Kharak, Sing Ji, OSGC*).

Neither Guru Nanak Sahib nor any of the gurus introduced them selves as prophets or gods. Guru Nanak Sahib (a convert from Hinduism) was a Muslim 'Faquir' (Saint), believing in one and only God--Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes, all holy books, all prophets, Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the last prophet, calling 'Azan' (call for Muslim prayer), doing prayers only for Allah/Rab and reciting Quran (*Muslim scholar's thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*). After his death, the religion was changed gradually through ten gurus and totally changed to Sikhism from the time of tenth guru--Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He completed compilation of Holy Guru Granth Sahib, performed 'matha taking' (Sajda) and told that the chain of human gurus was discontinued and that Holy Guru Granth Sahib was the eleventh guru. Guru Gobind Singh Ji neither designated the holy book as god, but as guru (teacher), nor him self as god or prophet. Rather, he warned that if any person believed him as god, would go to 'Narag' (hell). From that time the Sikhs started 'matha taking' to the Holy Book--Guru Granth Sahib, instead of God/Allah/Rab--the Creator and Sustainer of the universes, discontinued reading Holy Quran and believing in Prophet Muhammad.

GURU NANAK DEV SAHIB

THE FIRST MASTER (1469 – 1539)

Birth and childhood:

Guru Nanak Dev Sahib was born on 15th April 1469 (500yrs) at Rai-Bhai-di Talwandi, District Sheikhpura, Pakistan, and now Nankana Sahib. Basically he belonged to a Hindu family. His father was Mehta Kalyan Das (Mehta Kaln), an accountant of Rai Bular, the Muslim Chief of Talwandi. Mother Mata Tripta, elder sister Nanki and brother-in-law Jay Ram. He was married at Sultan Pur to Mata Salakhni Ji, a Khatri lady and had two sons Sri Chand and Lakshmi Das.

Schooling:

Nanak was sent to the village school to learn Sansikrat, Hindi and Arithmetic. He learned to read and write soon as if he had known it already. He was a quick learner. His teacher remarked that he was an extraordinary child for his age. Once Nanak asked his teacher to teach him about the Creator. Nanak also talked about good and evil. The teacher was amazed and said "Nanak, you are my teacher. I have learnt a lot from you." Then, Nanak was sent to a Muslim teacher of the village Mosque to learn Persian and Arabic. There, he also learnt in a short time all that the teacher could teach him.

The Childhood Incident:

Guru Nanak Dev Sahib was a very kind hearted and sympathetic person. Once in the childhood his father gave him a reasonable amount of money and sent with some body to buy the merchandise for starting a business, but he spent the money in buying food and

necessities for a group of hungry Hindu 'sadhoo's (saints), while passing through a jungle. The father gave him a hard time on returning home.

The Sacred -thread Ceremony:

Like 'Baptising' ceremony in Christians and 'Barmitzvah' in Jews, every Brahman Hindu child must pass through a sacred-thread 'Jenu' ceremony. Family priest, in presence of the relatives and friends puts the sacred-thread around boy's neck. When Nanak became nine years old, his father also wanted him to wear the sacred-thread. While the priest asked Nanak to wear the sacred-thread, He asked him, "What is the use of this thread?" The priest replied, "It protects the wearer from evil spirits. Every Hindu must wear it. Nanak said, "I would like to wear a thread that does not burn or get soiled. The virtues of compassion, self-discipline, patience and truth make the real sacred-thread. I shall wear a sacred-thread that stands for the pure life." On hearing these truthful words, priest and the gathering realized hollowness of the rituals. A sacred hymn, on the subject, uttered by Guru Nanak Sahib was included in 'Asa Dee Vaar', Guru Granth Sahib at page 471.

Diving in the Ban Nadi (Stream):

While staying at Sultanpur, as a daily routine, Nanak Sahib used to go to a nearby stream, Ban Nadi for bathing. One day, when he did not return, people feared that he had been drowned. In reality, he had focused his mind on God and sung songs in His praise in a nearby forest. He got into a state of trance and stayed, in that state for three days. When people saw him coming to Sultanpur, they were overjoyed and gathered around him. It happened around the year 1500. Guru Nanak Sahib gave his first formal sermon on that day. He said, "For God there is no Hindu and no Muslim. All of us are His children and equal human beings." Now he was not only Nanak, but Guru Nanak Dev Sahib.

After that incident, his life style was totally changed. He was cut off from the worldly affairs, started living in the jungle and engaged in Remembrance of Rab (Zikr-e-Ilahi, Simran). Then he returned to his family, took leave from relatives and friends and left for his famous travels (udasian), comprised of nearly twenty-five years.

During his first travel of twelve years (1497-1509) at the age of 31 years, Guru Nanak Sahib visited Bengal, Assam, Arisa, and Rajasthan in the eastern and central India. After spending less than a year with family, he left for second journey (1510-1515). During second journey, he visited Srilanka in South. His third journey (1515-1517) was towards North. He visited Himalayan states, Kashmir and Tibet. After a brief stay at home, he left for his forth and final travel. Guru Nanak Sahib dressed like a Muslim Saint, visited Saudi-Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Central Asia.

Marriage:

Nanak's parents decided that he should marry. They thought that married life would make him interested in worldly affairs. He was married at the age of fourteen to Sulakhni, daughter of a merchant at Batala, Distt Gurdaspur (Punjab.) Even after marriage, Nanak showed no interest in family affairs. His heart was in the meditation and thoughts in the other world.

Keeper of the State Stores:

Jai Ram, the husband of Bibi Nanaki, heard the complaints of his father-in-law against Nanak. He invited Nanak to Sultanpur, a famous city, where he got him the position of a storekeeper for the storehouse of Dault Khan Lodhi, the Governor of Sultanpur in 1490. Mata Sulakhni also joined Nanak at Sultanpur. In due course, two sons were born to them, Siri Chand in 1494 and Lakhmi Chand in 1497. Nanak Sahib performed his duties honestly to the satisfaction of all. He was very popular and kind to the poor, to whom he gave free ration. Some wicked people were jealous of Nanak. They complained against him to the Governor, who got the accounts of the store audited. Everything was found to be all right. The Governor was satisfied. However, Nanak Sahib quitted the job.

Prayer at the Mosque:

Guru Nanak Sahib was called by the Governor to give an explanation of his words. The Governor, the Qazi (Muslim Clergyman) asked Guru, what he meant by his utterance. Guru Nanak Sahib explained to him the qualities of a true Musalman and true meaning of the prayers. A sacred hymn, uttered by Guru on the subject was written in Guru Granth Sahib at page 141. The Qazi was astonished to hear such candid words. Then he invited the Guru to offer prayer (Namaz) with them in the mosque. The Guru accompanied them, but stood watching while everyone was performing the prayers. After the prayer, the Qazi asked angrily, "Why you did not join us?" The Guru replied, "While praying, you were worried about the safety of your new-born colt and the chief was busy buying horses in Kabul, with whom was I supposed to offer prayer?" Both the Qazi and the chief admitted that their mind had been wandering during the prayer. Thus the Guru taught everybody that true prayer is a single minded devotion to God.

The governor offered Guru Nanak Sahib an estate and requested him to stay with him to teach him how to become a true worshipper of God. Guru Nanak Dev was in no need of such temporal possessions and replied, "The Creator wants me to go to distant lands to deliver His message."

Guru Nanak Sahib was distressed to see the followers of one faith hating the followers of the other faith. A large section of the Hindu society was considered as low-caste or untouchables and treated worse than the animals. In the Indian society, superstitions prevailed and women were treated as inferior human beings. Rulers were bigots and corrupt. They did not care for the welfare of their subjects. Idol worship was prevalent among the Hindus. An ascetic was regarded superior to even a disciplined householder.

Meeting Bhai Lalo and Malik Bagho:

On their way, they stayed with a carpenter, named Bhai Lalo, at the city of Eminabad. In those days, carpenters were treated as low-caste Hindus. The local village official, Malik Bagho, was a corrupt officer. He invited the Guru to a feast at his house, but the Guru refused to accept any food from him. Bagho was surprised as well as angry, and asked the reason for the refusal. The Guru replied, "Your food consisting of tasty and sweet dishes, is in fact made from blood of the poor. You are cruel, haughty and greedy. Others work for you and you take

a lion's share of what they produce. What you take is full of their blood. Bhai Lalo earns his living honestly by working hard. His food tastes good like milk." Bhago was embarrassed by the bold and frank comments of the Guru who also spoke against the caste system. Bhago could not deny the allegations and confessed his guilt. He requested to be forgiven and promised to live an honest life in future. The Guru said to the people gathered there, "All dishonest earnings are the blood of the innocent. Honest earnings are like sweet milk and make the mind pious."

Meeting Sajjan, the Robber:

During one of the journeys, Guru Nanak Dev and Mardana stayed for the night with a person, named Sajjan, means a friend. He had constructed an inn for travelers. But, in fact, he was a wicked man. He killed people staying at his inn for their possessions. In the evening, the Guru sang a sacred hymn while Mardana played on his rebeck. The song flowed from the Guru as soft loving light from the moon. The hymn meant that outward show of good actions means nothing if a person is evil at heart. Our good deeds are our true friends (Sajjans) and help us not only in this world but also after death. Evil actions make our mind dirty and lead to sufferings in this world as well as in the next world. This hymn was written in Guru Granth Sahib at page 729. Sajjan was overwhelmed with remorse on hearing this divine hymn uttered by the Guru. He realized his mistakes, confessed his misdeeds, repented, cried and promised to lead an honest life. He said to the Guru; "Save me, O' Divine One!" Guru Nanak said, "Be pure and sing His praises."

At Hardwar:

Hardwar is a city on the bank of the river Ganges. It is a center for Hindu pilgrimage. When the Guru visited this place, he saw people offering water towards the rising sun, while they bathed in the river. He asked one of the pilgrims, "What are you doing?" The pilgrim replied, "We are offering water to our dead ancestors living in heaven," The Guru stood among them and began throwing water with both his hands towards the opposite direction. People asked him what he meant by that foolish act. "I am watering my farm at Kartarpur (Punjab)," said the Guru. People laughed and said, "You are a fool. Do you think that the water would reach over two hundred miles to your farms?" The Guru replied, "If the water I am throwing cannot reach the distance of two hundred miles, how do you expect that your handful of water will get all the way to your dead ancestors in the heavens?" The people started thinking over this meaningful reply given by the Guru and could not find a logical argument to challenge him. Thus, Guru Nanak, in a dramatic way, taught people that hollow rituals do not have any religious value. We can't send anything to our dead ancestors. We should love, respect and care for them when they are alive. Those people realized the subtle meaning of Guru's words and became the Guru's followers.

Meeting Dhanni Chand:

Guru Nanak Dev Sahib met Dhanni Chand, a multi-millionaire of Lahore, who flew flags over his house--each flag representing ten millions in his treasury. When Guru Nanak Sahib met him, he was giving 'Saradh' (a big feast which the Hindus offer to Brahman

priests, in memory of their ancestors). They believe that what ever they give to the priests on that day reaches their dead forefathers in the next world. Dhanni Chand invited Guru Nanak Dev to join. Seeing the priests being fed, Guru Sahib asked him what was going on. He replied that he was performing his father's 'Saradh' ceremony. The Guru said, "I cannot carry food to your dead father so I don't like to let your food go waste. I shall appreciate if you do me a favour instead. Here is a sewing needle. Keep it with you. I would like you to give the needle back to me in the next world." Duni Chand did not understand the meaning and said, "How can I carry this needle with me when I die?" "If a priest can carry enough food, clothes and money for your dead father, I wonder why this small needle is too big for you to carry;" replied the Guru. Then Dhanni Chand asked for Guru's advice. Guru Nanak Sahib advised him and all others present there, "If you cannot carry a tiny needle to the next world after death, how would you carry your millions? Work hard, and share your earnings with the needy. Remember God because it is the prayer that will help your dead parents." The Guru sang a sacred hymn which meant: - Work hard and share your earnings with others. Thus you will find way to the God's grace. This hymn was mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib at page 468. The Guru's dramatic advice showed many people the hollowness of rituals. Duni Chand understood the Guru's advice. He gave up his princely life, distributed his wealth among the poor, started working with his own hands and shared his earnings with the needy. Duni Chand and his wife along with others became the Guru's followers.

At Jagannath Temple:

Jagannath (Lord of the world) is the name of a famous temple at Puri (Jagan Nath, a town at the coast of the Bay of Bengal). At that temple, every evening, the priests worship the idol of lord Vishnu who is one of the three supreme deities of the Hindus in an imposing but artificial way. Every priest holds in his hand a salver studded with pearls containing many little lamps of 'Ghee' (purified butter), offerings, flowers and incense; and sing hymns to the lord Vishnu. All stand up to offer it to the god. Everyone has a fan made of feathers of peacock and fans the enshrined god. When Guru Nanak Dev visited the temple, the head priests invited him for the worship (Arati) and began the ceremony. The Guru did not participate. After the ceremony, the priests were very angry with him for his disrespectful behavior. Now he raised his eyes to the heaven and sang the famous hymn in God's praise. It is there in Guru Granth Sahib at page 13. The first line of it if translated will mean, "The sun and the moon, O' Lord, are thy lamps; the sky, thy salver; the orbs of the stars, the pearls encased in it." Guru Nanak Dev did not like hollow ritualistic worship. Expanse of the sky, the sun and the moon, the procession of the stars, the natural incense of the sandal, the winds and forests were the fitting accessories of the Guru's purer worship of the God of creation.

A Visit to Mountain Sumer and Mansrower Lake:

After visiting Kashmir, the Guru came to mountain Sumer and Mansrower Lake. There he met many renowned 'hermits' (Yogies) living in caves. They were surprised to see him there and asked him about his creed. "My creed is love for God and His creatures," replied the Guru. Then, they asked him, "How are things going on in the world below?" The Guru replied, "The darkness of falsehood prevails throughout. You have deserted the poor people and thus neglected your duty towards mankind. Don't get lost in your efforts to attain salvation only for yourself. Help others on that path too." The hermits tried their best to convince the Guru in arguments that their path of renunciation of the world was superior but failed. They asked him to perform a miracle. The Guru replied, "I don't believe in miracles. I

rely on nothing but God.” The hermits were silenced and their pride was humbled. He afterwards versified the discussions that Guru had with them in his composition ‘Sidh Goshat’ included in the Guru Granth Sahib at pages 938-946.

A Visit to Mecca (Saudi Arabia):

Mecca is the holiest place for the Muslims. It is located in Saudi Arabia. Muslims from all over the world come to Mecca for pilgrimage called ‘Hajj’. When Guru Nanak Dev along with Mardana reached there, he was very tired. He lay down to rest and fell asleep with his feet towards the holy shrine called ‘Kaaba’. Muslims consider ‘Kaaba’ as the House of God and pray in the direction of ‘Kaaba’ from all over the world. For them, it is sinful to stretch the feet towards it. When one of the caretakers of shrine saw Guru thus asleep, he flew into rage and said, “Why are you sleeping with your feet towards the House of God?” Many people gathered and began shouting at the Guru who replied, “Brother, tell me the direction where there is no God.” These words of the Guru opened their eyes. In the dramatic way, he taught people of Mecca that God is in all directions and in all places and beings. They asked him, “who was superior, the Hindu or the Muslim?” The Guru replied, “Without good actions both will suffer. It is the deeds and not religion that make a man superior.”

Journey to Baghdad (Iraq):

In due course of time, Guru Nanak Dev reached Baghdad. When the priest of Baghdad met the Guru, an enthusiastic stranger, he inquired that who he was and to what sect he belonged. The Guru said, “I have appeared in this age to show man kind the way to reality. I reject all sects and know only one God whom I recognize. He pervades on the earth, the heavens and in all the nether regions.” The Guru further added, “There are hundred of thousands of worlds beyond our own, above as well as below. Their number is difficult to comprehend.” The priest did not agree at first, but was convinced later on by forceful arguments of the Guru. It is also the opinion of the modern scientists. It seems that the Guru’s way of preaching was logical and scientific. The Guru also expressed this idea in pauni 22 of Jap Ji.

At Panja Sahib Temple:

On his way back to the Punjab, Guru Nanak Dev stopped at the foot of a hill in the western part of the Punjab. On the top of the hill, there lived a Muslim Fakir, called Vali Qandhari, of Qandhar (Afghanistan). As Mardana was very thirsty, the Guru asked him to go up and drink water from the fountain of Vali Qandhari. Mardana went up and appealed to him, in the name of God, for water. Vali Qandhari was very egoistic and paid no heed to the appeal of Mardana when he found that Mardana was follower of the Guru. Mardana returned disappointed. On being urged by the Guru, Mardana again went back to repeat his request humbly, but it was of no avail. When Mardana was dying of thirst, the Guru said, “Never mind, Mardana! Dig here; there is a fountain of water flowing at your feet.” When the stone was lifted, a stream of clean water began to flow. Now water in Vali Qandhari’s spring started depleting. He was very angry and pushed a large rock towards the Guru who raised his hand. The rock touched the Guru’s hand and stopped. A print of the Guru’s hand is still there on the rock. There is a beautiful Gurdwara, known as ‘Panja Sahib’ (the holy print). It is near Hasan Abdal, closer to Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. Every year in April, the day is celebrated over there and devotees from all over the world come to pay their homage. Vali Qandhari, whose pride was humbled, came down and bowed at the Guru’s feet. His heart

and mind were purified. The Guru said to him, “Live as a lover of God and you should be loving and kind to all”.

Meeting Mughal Emperor Babar:

Towards the end of their journey, Guru Nanak and Mardana again visited Eminabad. Babar, the Mughal king of Afghanistan invaded Punjab, as he wanted to rule India. At that time, cruel and corrupt rulers of the Lodhi dynasty of Pathans were ruling the Punjab. Babar carried fire and swords through the Punjab and his army played havoc with the people of Eminabad, who resisted him. Many innocent people were arrested and massacred. Guru Nanak and Mardana were also arrested. In the prison, the Guru sang a heart-soothing hymn that made the prisoners forget their fear and sorrow. They sat with folded hands and listened to the Guru’s holy song. Babar’s men saw this and informed him. Babar himself visited the prison and saw the Guru sitting with closed eyes and singing with a sweet voice. Babar did not understand the song and asked the Guru what he was singing. The Guru replied, “I am calling upon God to see what you have done to these innocent people. Why is He watching your cruelty and the plight of innocent victims as a passive observer?” This holy hymn of Guru Nanak is there in Guru Granth Sahib at page 360. Guru Nanak Dev’s frank and bold words touched Babar’s heart. He felt ashamed and sorry for what he had done. He asked the Guru, “What can I do for you, O’ holy man?” The Guru said, “I need nothing for myself. Set all the prisoners free and return their property to them. You must be a just and kind ruler, if want to rule India.” Babar agreed to follow the Guru’s advice.

As mentioned in the biographies (Jnm Swk:aw), Guru Nanak Dev Sahib met the Yogis living on the high mountains and the Muslim priests at Multan and Pakpattan (Punjab), Mecca in Saudi Arabia and Baghdad (Iraq). He delivered his inter-faith message and exchanged the views. He also collected the compositions of the holy persons like *Shiekh Fareed*. These were later incorporated in the sacred Sikh scripture, Sri Guru *Granth* sahib.

At Kartarpur:

Having accomplished his mission after completing extensive journeys in about two decades, in 1520 Guru Nanak Dev resolved to return to his own country. He founded a city named Kartarpur, after name of Kartar, the Creator, on right bank of the river Ravi. He settled there living like an ordinary householder. He wanted to show the people that he did not condone the path of an ascetic for salvation. He was over sixty, but did not sit idle. He would get up early in the morning, take bath and sing sacred hymns. At daybreak, people gathered around him and listened to his talk on religion. His whole day was spent working in the fields. In the evening, Sodar and the Sohila (evening prayers) were chanted. Everybody took food from the common kitchen. In due course of time, Kartarpur became a center of religious preaching. His followers belonged to every caste and creed. Guru Nanak Dev followed the routine until; he placed the umbrella of spiritual sovereignty over Angad’s head. He designated Angad, his most sincere and devoted follower as his successor, while bypassing his own two sons. Guru Nanak Dev Sahib bowed to him, and passed away. A famous saying in Punjabi goes as follows: - “Nanak Shah Fakir, Hindu Da Guru, Musalman Da Pir.” It means Guru Nanak Dev was a saintly person whom both, the Hindus and the Muslims, claimed as their own religious leader. (after *Sawan Singh Gogia, retired Principal*).

Guru Nanak Sahib was a Punjabi poet, singer, musician, a very kind hearted and sympathetic person. He was a very religious man. He belonged to a Hindu family, but did not like 'moorti pooja' (idle-worship). He believed in worshipping one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of universes. He used to recite his poems (Bani), praising Rab in the company of his childhood Muslim friend Mardana. Mardana was a 'miracy' (singer) by cast and played the 'rabab' very nicely. Guru Nanak Dev Sahib involved himself in remembering Rab (Ziker-e-Ilahi, Simran) and reciting His holy names, e.g. Jap Ji Sahib so much that he became a friend of Rab.

It should be noted that after conversion from Hinduism, Guru Nanak Sahib became a Muslim Saint and took the name 'Abdul Majeed'. He preached Islamic values at various places, and performed Hajj at Mecca in the company of his childhood Muslim friend Mardana. (*Muslim scholar's thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*) The entry of Non-Muslims in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina of Saudi Arabia was banned since the time of Hazrat Umer @, the second Caliph of Islam about 1400 yrs back. If Guru Nanak Sahib was not a Muslim, he could not enter the holy land.

Guru Nanak Sahib returned to Punjab in 1521 and started living at Kartar Pur with family and parents. After one year his parents died. He used to do the farming for living. Guru Nanak Sahib worked hard and earned honest living. He became a very famous Muslim Saint of his time and died on 22 September 1539.

Other Details

Guru Nanak Sahib radically departed from the principles of earlier Hindu religion (3000 years old), which aimed at reaching heaven or attaining salvation or seeking merger in God. In the Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Nathism, there is a dichotomy between the spiritual life of man and the empirical life, which cannot go together.

Guru Nanak Sahib, a Muslim Saint (convert from Hinduism) like Kabir, Mian Mir, Haq Bahu, Bulley Shah, Sian Baba and Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, believed in Muslim Kalma '**La ilaha illAllah---Muhammad Rasool Allah**' (No body is worthy of worship, except Allah---Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah) and insisted on the worship of one God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer, reciting His Holy names to become a friend of Rab, believe in and love for Prophet Muhammad PBUH. In the honour of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, Guru Nanak Sahib said: **Bani # 1**. Evidences from Guru Granth Sahib show that Guru Nanak Sahib called the 'Azan' (call for Muslim prayer), prayed the 'Salat' (Muslim Prayers) as **Bani # 5**, asked people to pay 'Zakat' (compulsory Muslim charity @ 2.5%), observed 'Ramadan' (Muslim Fasting) and performed Hajj of the Kaba (*Muslim scholar's thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

Guru Nanak Sahib understood that simple and illiterate people of Punjab villages were unable to understand Holy Quran. So, being a Punjabi poet and singer, he reproduced and explained the Quranic verses, Muslim ideology and prayers in his self styled Punjabi (Gurmukhi) poems, Guru Nanak Sahib insisted on Zikr-e-Elahi/Simran (Remembrance of God---Allah/Rab), to become God's friend, pious Company, service to humanity and honest living. He advised to earn the living with honest and hard work and to join others in the same.

Guru Nanak Sahib also started Langar (free kitchen) for all, eating together with out distinction of race, cast or religion.

In the fifteenth century, there were two major religions in India---Hinduism and Islam. At that time there was no Sikhism. Both Muslims and Hindus of the time revered Guru Nanak Sahib.

Guru Nanak Dev guided every human being irrespective of his race or religion. He inspired and encouraged the people to know the reality and achieve self-realization. The main point that Guru Nanak stressed was that humanity must curb the evil, wish for the welfare of all and happiness of mankind. Hymns uttered by Guru Nanak Sahib contained pure devotion and showed us the way to the devotional realization and demanded subordination of the ego (*after Sawan Singh*).

Guru Nanak Sahib advised not to usurp what belong to others, live an honest life and shun the ill-gotten wealth. He warned "The emancipation is by the honest living and no one can go to the heaven by mere talking. To deprive one of one's due is to eat the (forbidden) cow for the Hindu and swine for the Muslim. By putting condiments in the unlawful food, it does not become lawful. O Nanak, by the false talk only falsehood is obtained" (*after Sawan Singh*).

Guru Nanak Sahib said, "Diseases and Sins are destroyed by hearing the name of God". He stressed the importance of remembering God and meditation on God. Loving God, His creation and doing good deeds is the true religion (*after Onkar Singh, 2010*).

Guru Nanak Sahib had love in his heart for the poor and infinite compassion for the sinner, the wrong doer. He identified him self with them as 'Nanak Neech' (lowly). He knew "Man goes astray, because he is weak and infirm---weak by the body and infirm by the mind. So, he loved sinners and criminals, His love changed their courses of lives and transformed them into saints (*after Sri J. P. Vashwani, 2000*).

As a social reformer Guru Nanak Sahib upheld the cause of women, down trodden and the poor. He criticized the citadel of cast system of Hindus and theocracy of Muslim (Mughal) rulers. He was a born poet. He wrote 947 hymns, comprising Jap-Ji-Sahib, Asa-Di-Var, Bara-Mah, Sidh-Gosht and Onkar (Dakhani), etc. These were included in Guru Granth Sahib by the 5th Guru Arjan Dev Sahib. Guru Nanak Sahib was also a perfect musician. In the company of Bhai Mardana, he composed such tunes in various Indian classical 'Ragas' that charmed Mughal Emperor Babar. Subdued saying:

"Kings raved bigots and tyrants, made thugs and robbers saints"

He was a reformer as well as a revolutionary. The God had endowed him with a contemplative mind and pious disposition. Guru Arjan Dev Sahib called him 'the image of God'

The weaver-poet, Muslim-saint and reformer Kabir Sahib said Guru Nanak Sahib was a product of such times, as he said:

The age is like a knife

*Kings are butchers.
Religion hath taken wings and flown
In the dark night of falsehood.
I cannot see where the moon of truth is rising.*

Guru Nanak Sahib held that people would be judged by their deeds and not by the rituals. Service to humanity was the true religion (after *Girish Bhandari, Nov. 2004*).

Guru Nanak Sahib said to his Muslim followers:

*Make compassion your Mosque,
Faith your prayer mat,
Make honest living your Quran,
Let modesty rule your conduct,
Let piety be your fasts.
In such a way become a Muslim:
Let right conduct be thy Kaaba,
Truth your prophet,
Make the Lord's will your rosary.*

If all the above you do, the Lord would be your protector.
(*Guru Granth Sahib, Majh ki Var, p.140*).

Guru Nanak Sahib further said to the Muslims, praying five times a day:

*Five prayers, five times a day,
Each with a different name,
Make the first prayer, truth.
The second, to honestly earn your daily bread.
The third, charity in the name of God.
Forth, purity of mind.
Fifth, adoration of God.
(*Guru Granth Sahib, Majh ki Var, p.141*).*

Guru Nanak Sahib gave similar advise to the Hindus, who revered and followed him, but drawn from Hindu mythology and Vedic teaching. Hindus wear a sacred thread around their torso, regarding that he said:

*From the cotton of compassion,
Spin the thread of contentment,
Tying the knot of continence.
Give it the twist of virtue.
Such a sacred thread,
Make for your inner self.
(*Guru Granth Sahib, Asa di Var, p.471*).*

No body can see God, while He sees the whole universe (*SGGS 7*).

Though He has no form or colour, yet He can be identified through nature and His creation, where He lives (*SGGS 469*).

God, Himself knows His power, strength, extent, and shape and none except God can know it. We are incapable of describing or narrating Him. He cannot be approached or perceived. We can call Him the greatest, at the most (*SGGS 5*).

Every one, even Hindu gods and goddesses and every thing in the world praise the Lord. --- He takes orders from none. He is the king, rather king of the kings. Nanak remains the subject of His will (*SGGS 6*).

God does what ever He wills and none in the world can disobey Him (*SGGS 475*).

To understand His order, we have to realize our smallness and give up our ego (*SGGS 1*).

To those, who want to know the age, birth and nature of God, Guru Nanak Sahib said that He is one Supreme Being. True is His name and He is the Creator Being. He is without fear and devoid of enmity. He is of eternal Form. He is unborn and self-existent.

Guru Nanak Sahib tells us that to reach the court of Lord and to win His love, we should meditate on True name in the ambrosial hours before dawn and reflects on His greatness. The life is bestowed upon us by (?) noble deeds, but salvation is achieved by His grace. Thus we understand that the True Lord is Omnipotent (*SGGS 1153*).

There is a wall of untruth (illusion) that separates us from God. The reunion with God is not possible until this wall is demolished and we become true to the Creator (*SGGS 1*).
(*Above SGGS references after Sawan Singh, principal ret.d. 2009*)

Believe in the brotherhood of all of mankind as the highest order of Yogis; conquer your own mind, and conquer the world (Guru Granth Sahib P. 6).

O Nanak! Only he who earns by the sweat of his brow and gives something to charity recognizes the true way of life. P. 1245.

Truth is high, but higher still is truthful living. P. 62.

Fools quarrel about flesh and meat, but they know nothing about meditation and spiritual wisdom P. 1289.

Burn those ceremonial customs that lead me to forget my Beloved Lord. P.590.

If you deliberate on your education, only then you will become benefactor to all. P. 356.

Another's wife lures an apostate mind. P.226

That alone is a man's caste and that is his glory, as are the deeds done by him. P. 1330.

O Nanak, by speaking unpleasant words, one's body and mind become insipid. One is called foul-mouthed and one's reputation becomes bad. P. 473.

For endless ages, there was only utter darkness. There was no earth or sky; there was only the Divine will. P. 1335.

When did the Creator created the world? He alone knows. P. 4.

What is the use of bathing at sacred shrines of pilgrimage, when the filth of stubborn pride is within the mind? P. 61.

Guru Nanak says, "The real asses are those persons who pride, but have no virtue" P.1246.

There is but one Supreme Being. True is His Name. He is the Creator. He is without fear and devoid of enmity. He is of Eternal Form. He is Unborn and Self-existent. P. 1.

You are the River, All-knowing and All-seeing. I am just a fish - how can I find Your limit? Wherever I look You are there. Outside of You, I would burst and die. P. 25.

We are good at talking, but our conduct is bad. Our minds are impure and black, but outwardly, we appear white (pious). P. 85.

What can be achieved by bowing the head, when the heart is impure? P. 470.

They are not called pure, who sit down after merely washing their bodies. Only they are pure, O Nanak, within whose minds the Lord abides. P. 472.

The holy man is blessed, even if he has not bathed, while a thief is a thief, no matter how much he bathes. P. 789.

Nanak seeks the company of the lowest of the low class, the very lowest of the low. He need not try to emulate the great. P. 25.

Guru Nanak says. "Sweet temper and humility is the essence of virtue and merits." P.470.

Such is the greatness of the True Guru that one attains emancipation (while living) in the midst of sons and wife (family) P.661.

The man who dwells in wilderness, at burial and cremation grounds, is a fool. He does not know the Lord and finally regrets. P. 667-668.

Muslim eating pork, or a Hindu eating beef. The Guru and the Spiritual Guides, stand by us, if we do not usurp other's right. P. 141.

Man suffers a lot of pain due to jealousy, and is cursed throughout the three worlds. P.1091.

Excessive pleasures lead to the suffering, sexual pleasure causes disease and one is ultimately ruined. P. 1034.

(O Priest) You calculate the auspicious day and time, but do not realize that the Supreme Being is above and beyond these. P. 904.

Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, modesty the knot and truth the twist. O Brahman! This is the sacred thread of the soul; if you have it, then go ahead and put it on me. P. 471.

The impurity of the mind is greed, and the impurity of the tongue is falsehood. The impurity of the eyes is to covet the beauty of another man's wife, and his wealth. The impurity of the ears is to listen to the slander of others. P. 472.

In the world, dedicate yourself to the service of others, and you shall be given a place of honor in the Court of the Lord. P. 26.

(O God!) All living beings are Yours. Without selfless service, no one obtains any reward. P. 354.

Innumerable are the slanderers who carry on their heads load of sins (of slandering others.) P. 4.

If one woman dies, we seek another; through the women are the bonds of the world. Why do we call her inferior who gives birth to the kings? P. 473.

From the woman is born woman. There is none without woman. Nanak says: There is only the True Lord (born) without woman." P. 473.

O man of divine wisdom! Realize that the woman is born through the man's sperm and male is born through the female. P. 879. (after Sawan Singh Gogia, retired Principal).

The Teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib

Love and equality:

Like Kabir sahib, a Muslim saint, Guru Nanak Sahib also wished that the Hindus and Muslims live together with love and peace and tried to bring them closer. He said, "No Hindu, no Muslim---all are brothers" It is same, whether you call Him God, Ram or Rehman.

Believing in one and only God---Allah/Rab:

Guru Nanak Sahib believed in 'Kalma' 'La ilaha ilAllah---Muhammad Rasool Allah' (No body is worthy of worship, except Allah---Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah). He insisted on the worship of one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes and reciting His holy names to become a friend of Rab (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

Moorti Pooja (Idle-Worship):

Guru Nanak Sahib strongly denied the 'Moorti Pooja' (Idle Worship).

Greatness of Allah/Rab/God:

Guru Nanak Sahib wrote a lot regarding the greatness and qualities of Allah/Rab/God.

Equality of human beings:

Guru Nanak Sahib was against the cast system of India and believed in the equality of human beings.

Zikr-e-Elahi (Simran):

Guru Nanak Sahib insisted on remembrance of Allah/Rab/God (Zikr-e-Elahi--Simran) all the time and in all the conditions to become a friend of Rab.

Otars:

Guru Nanak Sahib strongly denied 'Otars' (God in the human shapes) and insisted on the worship of one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and sustainer of the universes to get His closeness.

Amar bil maroof wa nahi anil munkir:

Guru Nanak sahib advised for inviting to goodness and stopping the evil.

Show-off, selfishness and telling lies:

Guru Nanak sahib denied showing off, selfishness, telling lies and involving too much in the worldly affairs.

Reward and punishment of God:

Guru Nanak sahib insisted on importance of the reward and punishment of God. All the human beings and Jins would have to appear in the court of Allah/Rab on the Day of Judgment and only poise people would get through.

Qualities of Allah/Rab/God:

Guru Nanak sahib praised Allah/Rab, e.g. He is one, His name is true, only He is responsible for all actions, He is fearless, He is enemy to non, He is first and last and He has no (known) shapes.

Various names of God---Allah/Rab:

Guru Nanak sahib used various names of God, but meant one and only God---the Creator and sustainer of the universes, e.g. Allah, Rab, Khuda, Rehman, Rahim, Karim, etc. (After Muslim school of thought) and Hari, Gobind, Mohan, Alakh, Akham, Karanhar, etc (After Hindu school of thought).

Worship of one and only God---Allah/Rab:

Guru Nanak sahib insisted upon worship of one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and sustainer of the universes, with love and devotion.

Love of God---Allah/Rab:

Guru Nanak sahib preferred love of Allah/Rab/God to all worldly loves.

To be happy with the actions of God---Allah/Rab:

Guru Nanak sahib preferred to be happy with all the actions of God---Allah/Rab and not to complain.

Denial of Self:

Guru Nanak Sahib insisted on denial of the self and highness of God---Allah/Rab.

Purity of Self:

Guru Nanak sahib insisted on purity of the self. No wishes, greed, worldly affairs, anger, etc. as those hinder in the love of God---Allah/Rab.

Poise Company, Service to Humanity and Honest Earning:

Guru Nanak sahib insisted on Poise Company, service to humanity and honest earning. He advised to earn the living with honest and hard work and to join others in the same. He also started 'Langar' (free kitchen) for all, eating together with out distinction of race, cast or religion.

Family Life:

Guru Nanak sahib opposed solitary living and preferred family life.

Believing in the Prophets:

Guru Nanak Sahib insisted that in addition to accepting the oneness of God---Allah/Rab, it is necessary to believe in the holy books, the prophets and Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the true and last prophet of God---Allah/Rab. Regarding Prophet Muhammad PBUH Guru Nanak Sahib said: **Bani # 1** (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

Pillars of Islam:

Evidences from Guru Granth Sahib show that Guru Nanak sahib called 'Azan' (call for Muslim prayer), prayed 'Salat' (Muslim Prayers) **Bani # 5**, asked people to pay 'Zakat' (compulsory Muslim charity @ 2.5%), observed 'Ramadan' (Muslim Fasting) and performed Hajj of Kaba (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

Believing in the Holy Quran:

Regarding Holy Quran, Guru Nanak sahib said: **Bani # 2,3,4** (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

The Dooms Day:

Regarding the dooms day (last day of the world), Guru Nanak sahib had the same belief as of Muslims. On the dooms day, sky, earth, sun, moon, and stars would be all destroyed and only God---Allah/Rab would survive. He also believed in the Heaven and the hell and said: **Bani # 6** (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

Death and Re-birth Cycle (Second thought):

Since Guru Nanak Sahib was a convert from Hinduism, he followed some basic Hindu concepts. He believed "Until human becomes perfect in obtaining God's love through the remembrance of God / Zikr-e-Alahi / Simron and good deeds, he continues revolving in this world by dying and re-borning in various forms (84 lakhs creations). On one and rare occasion, the human succeeds in taking birth as a human being. It is only possible in the human shape to get rid of the death and re-birth cycles by getting real love of God through Zikr-e-Alahi / Simron and noble acts. At present time, the people who are alive in the human shape, if loose chance of obtaining real love, closeness and happiness of God, will have to pass through 84 lakhs forms, comprising both plants and animals species including worms.

After a very long time period, such a rare occasion will arrive when they will re-born as the human beings again to get real love of God. Until one becomes perfect in obtaining God's love, will and happiness, not only he keeps revolving in this world, but also remains away from the real happiness".

Guru Nanak Sahib preferred to keep himself busy in Zikr-e-Alahi / Simron to get God's love and happiness, rather than involving in the complicated religious issues (after Prof. Shafiq Hussain).

Guru Nanak Sahib, a convert from Hinduism was a religious scholar. Of course, he was not a regular Muslim. He also believed in certain old Hindu thoughts, but strongly believed in oneness of God and was against 'Moorti-Puja' (idle-worship). He was expert in four languages e.g. Sanskrit, Gurmukhi (he invented), Arabic and Persian and four holy books e.g. Quran, Bible, Tora, and Psalms. All the time he carried a Quran with him, which is still saved at one of the temples (gurdwara) of District Ferozpur, Punjab. He said about Quran: **Bani # 2,3,4** (Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shafiq Hussain).

GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Guru Granth Sahib was written in Gurmukhi Language. Guru Nanak Sahib was the inventor of Gurmukhi alphabet. Guru Angat Sahib, the 2nd guru established alphabetical order of Gurmukhi letters and took active part in teaching the script and popularizing it. Guru Nanak Sahib was also expert of the Hindu's Sanskrit, a very old and difficult language. The Gurmukhi was invented and popularized to keep a separate identity of the Sikhs of Guru Nanak, a new group of people separated from the Hindu religion. Because, the Hindu pandits, experts of Sanskrit were trying to merge them back to Hinduism, after the death of Guru Nanak Sahib.

The writings of Guru Nanak Sahib were compiled in to 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib or Addi (half) Granth' by the 5th Guru Arjan Dev Ji in 1604 and was enthroned in the Harimandar Sahib (The Golden Temple). This was edited and composed by the last Guru Gobind Singh Ji, at Damdama Sahib in 1706 and was named 'Dasham Granth'.

Guru Granth Sahib contains 5894 hymns in all, out of which 2216 are by 5th Guru Arjan Dev Ji, 976 by Guru Nanak Sahib, 61 by 2nd Guru Angad Dev Ji, 907 by 3rd Guru Amar Das Ji, 679 by 4th Guru Ram Das Ji and 118 by 9th Guru Teg Bahadur Ji.

However, it may be remarked that 10th Guru Gobind Singh Ji added hymns of 9th Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, before he ordained and launched the holy book as the 11th Guru in 1708 AD. He discontinued the human guruship. Out of thirty-six writers, whose hymns were included in the Guru Granth Sahib, only six were the Sikh gurus. The remaining composition belonged to almost all the medieval Hindu and Muslim Bhagats, ranging between 12th and 17th century, speaking diverse languages, spiritually elevated through diverse faith, form of worship and discipline, coming from high and low castes and varnas and pursuing different professions for earning their livelihood, e.g. Kabir (a Muslim, low caste weaver); Farid (a Muslim Fakir); Nam Dev (a low caste printer); Ravi Das (a shoe maker, untouchable); Dhanna (a cultivator); Jai Dev; Trilochan; Rama Nand; Pipa; Sain and Sur Das, belonging to various parts of united

India, without distinction of caste creed and religion. They all spoke of one God and brotherhood of man.

The writing of Baba Farid, a great Muslim divine of the 13th century A.D. due to whose influence lakhs of Hindus got converted to Islam were included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Whole Guru Granth Sahib was written in divine poetry of high order. Central body was divided into thirty-one sections/ragas, mostly classical, covering 1159 pages. Each of these sections begins with an invocation to God and then follows the hymns of the gurus in order of their succession. After this in each section follow hymns of the bhagats/saints, beginning with Kabir and ending with Farid.. Both music and poetry form an inseparable part of the Sikh prayers. The holy book is worshiped by Sikhs as the living embodiment of the gurus.

Some sayings of **Bhagat Sheikh Farid**--a Muslim Saint:

*Farid, if men beat thee with their fists,
Beat them not in return.
Nay, kiss their feet and go home.
God says, Farid! dwell with the devotee's heart,
Farid, why wanderest thou from forest to forest,
Breaking down branches and thorns.
It is in the heart, that God dwelleth,
Why seek thou Him in the forest,*

*If union with God be obtained by going about naked,
All the deer of the forest shall be saved.
They who bathe in the evening and in the morning,
Are like frogs in the water.
God cannot be obtained even by offering one's weight in gold,
But, I have obtained Him with my soul.
Nobody obeyth his parents when alive,
Yet he giveth them feasts when dead.
O God, I am thy child,
Why destroyest Thou not my demerits.
Worship the Lord, the only God,
Serving the guru is the true abolition.
As without music there cannot be dancing,
So with out a guru, man cannot reach God's court.*

*Make thy mind thy Kaaba,
The body, its enclosing temple,
Conscience, its prime teacher.
Then O priest, call men to pray,
To that Mosque,
Which hath ten gates.*

Gurbani explains God and His virtues as the Creator, Sustainer, Operator and Destroyer of the universes. This tells us, how to realize God.

God is great and merciful.

God is the Lord of the whole universe

God alone is the Father-Mother (Creator) for all of us.

God Himself has created every thing.

All people are His Children (creation).

All people would be judged by their deeds.

The universe is moving and changing according to His will.

He alone is unchanged beyond time.

He is neither born, nor He is to die.

He is ever self-existing.

Any one who loves God, achieves the mission of His life.

We can address Him by Allah, Ram, Gobind, Guru, Wahe-Guru, God.

No person is born sinner.

To love God, one is to love His children (creations).

Gurbani tells us not to bother about 'satin, brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Inder'

The man assumed heaven and hell are not particular places beyond our earth. The place, where we love God and sing His virtues is actually the heaven.

Gurbani says, 'Every day is a good day and very valuable in our life'. Every person is supposed to love God all the time.

'Sankrand (1st day of the Indian solar month), Pooran Mashi (full moon) and Amavas (no moon)' days are considered sacred (after Dr. Gurbax Sing Ph.D, 8/2004)

Japji Sahib is the first chapter of Gurbani, the stairway to heaven.

The Sikh Prayers

Nitnem, the morning prayer of Sikhs. Nearly forty-five minutes prayer in sitting position comprises (1) **Jap Ji Sahib** started with **Mool Manter**. Mool Manter was written by Guru Nanak Sahib at the commencement of Guru Granth Sahib, the fundamental doctrine of Sikh religion. Mool Manter reveals the nature of God and reads as "Ik Onkar (God is one, He manifests Himself in His creation and continues ceaselessly); Satnaam (True Name, Ultimate Truth---God); Karta Purkh (the Creator), Nirbhao (Fearless); Nirvair (without enmity); Akal Moorat (His being transcends time); Ajoonee (Unborn); Saibahng (Self existent) and Gur Prasaad (He is attained through the Enlightener Grace). Written by Guru Nanak Sahib; (2) **Jaap Sahib**, matta taking; (3) **Sawaye**; (4) **Chaupai Sahib**, 2-4 written by 10th Guru Gobind Singh Jee; (5) **Anand Sahib**, written by 3rd Guru Amar Das Ji. At the end Sikhs do **Ardas** for five minutes, while standing. Any man or women, old or young, out of the gathering is competent to lead the prayer. After remembering one God, they recite names of ten gurus, four martyred sons of Guru Gobind Sing Ji and five loved ones, who offered their heads to Guru Gobind Sing Ji, seek from God good wishes for all, requesting for the power to live according to His will and ask forgiveness for the mistakes and sins. Granth Sahib, compiled by 5th Guru Arjan Dev Ji starts with '**Japji Sahib**', also called 'Guru Mantr' It comprises seven pages and forty sections, repeated by Sikh devotees every morning. **Jap Ji Sahib** reveals to man the nature of God and His creation. Telling man his position in the universe,

his relationship with the Creator and enjoins him to ever recite God's name with loving devotion.

Rehras Sahib, fifteen minutes evening prayer of Sikhs while sitting. Rehras covers three and a half pages. Guru Nanak Sahib also wrote this, but later on 4th Guru Ram Das Ji and 5th Guru Arjan Dev Ji made additions. This includes Sodar (that door), Chaupai Sahib and **Ardas**, at the end.

Sohaila, five minutes nighttime prayer, while sitting or lying on bed, contains banis of 1st 4th and 5th gurus and compiled by 10th Guru Gobind Sing Ji.

Sukhmani Sahib, one-hour prayer of 5th Guru Arjan Dev Sahib and **Mool Manter**, Sikhs perform in the after noon or any time.

(Sikh prayers section was written under the advise of Col. Gill Sahib of Toronto)

THE SIKH GURUS

List of the Gurus

- 1- **Guru Nanak Sahib**, son of Kalyan Das Chand (Kalu), 15/4/1469 to 22/9/1539.
- 2- **Guru Angad Dev Ji (Bhai Lehna)**, 1504 to 1552.
- 3- **Guru Amar Das Ji**, 1479 to 1574.
- 4- **Guru Ram Das Ji**, Lahore, 24/9/1534 to 1581.
- 5- **Guru Arjan Dev Ji** (son of # 4, martyred), 1563 to 5/1606.
- 6- **Guru Sri Hargobind Ji** (son of # 5), 19/6/1595 to 3/3/1644.
- 7- **Guru Har Rai Ji** (son of # 6) 1630 to 1661.
- 8- **Guru Har Kishan Ji** (son of # 7), 1656 to 1664.
- 9- **Guru Teg Bahadar Ji** (son of # 8, martyred by Aurangzeb) 1/4/1621 to 11/11/1675
- 10- **Guru Gobind Singh Ji** (son of # 9), 22/12/1666 to 1708.
- 11- **Guru Granth Sahib** (Holy Book of Sikh religion).

THE EVOLUTION OF SIKHISM

The Sikhism passed through the process of evolution with passage of time like other religions of the world. The religion changed from second Guru Angad Dev Sahib (Bhai Lehna) through the tenth Guru Gobind Singh Ji. They changed from saints to saint soldiers---the Khalsas.

Guru Nanak Sahib passed away on 22 September 1539. In the last days of life, he selected one of his devoted followers Bhai Lehna (Guru Angad Dev Ji) as the next guru---'Gadi Nasheen' (successor).

The second guru Bhai Lehna Ji was a fire worshiper. After joining the company of Guru Nanak Sahib and listening the teachings, worshipping of one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes, he was converted to Islam and also became a Muslim Saint.

The third guru Amar Das Ji, fourth guru Ram Das Ji and fifth guru Arjan Dev Ji were all saints. The sixth guru Sri Hargobind Ji built a Mosque for Muslims and Mandar (Dharm

Shala) for Hindus. That was the time of Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Because of cruelty of the Mughal emperors, especially Emperor Orangzeb, gradual change in behavior of the gurus started. The Saints became Saint Soldiers. Evolution of the religion continued through the seventh guru, Har Rai Ji, eighth guru Har Kishan Ji and ninth guru Teg Bahadar Ji.

Guru Nanak Sahib did not like the kings and said:

“Kings are tigers and their officials are dogs”

The tenth guru Gobind Singh Ji, son of Guru Teg Bahadar Ji, who was martyred by Emperor Orangzeb, totally changed the religion. He completed compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib (holy book of Sikh religion), gave it status of the eleventh guru and ended chain of the human gurus. He designated the holy book as ‘Guru’ and not god or Rab. It is mentioned in the Sikh literature that Guru Gobind Singh Ji performed ‘Matha taking’ (Sajda) to Holy Guru Granth Sahib and gave special attire to Khalsas (Sikhs), e. g. kase (long hair), kanga (comb), turban, kara (steel ring) and Karpan (dagger). From that time Sikh people started ‘Matha Taking’ to the holy book Guru Granth Sahib, instead of Rab.

Actually, it was Guru Gobind Singh Ji who started the Sikh religion and not Guru Nanak Sahib, who was a Muslim Saint, worshipping one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes. He also believed in the prophets and Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the last prophet, performed Hajj of Kaba (Muslim Pilgrimage) and used to recite Holy Quran (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

DISCUSSION

After Mughal Emperor Orangzeb martyred 9th Guru Teg Bahadar Ji, his son Guru Gobind Singh Ji took over as the last human guru. It was fully justified to be strong and changing from the ‘Saints’ to the ‘Saint-Soldiers’ to face cruelty of the Mughal emperors, especially Orangzeb, but why changed the religion, why neglected Holy Quran and stopped believing in Prophet Muhammad PBUH and why neglected teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib, Kabir Sahib, Mian Mir Sahib, Bulley Shah, Sain Baba---all Muslim saints,

Most of the Muslims believe that Hazrat Guru Nanak Sahib was a Muslim Faqir (Saint). After conversion from Hinduism, he became a Muslim and took the name ‘Abdul Majeed’. Of course, he was not a regular Muslim. He also believed in certain old Hindu thoughts, but strongly believed in oneness of God and was against ‘Moorti-Puja’ (idle-worship).

In support of the above claim, they have two strong points:

Firstly, during the four famous journeys, Guru Nanak Sahib visited Mecca as a Muslim Saint with his childhood friend Mardana, also a Muslim. If he was not a Muslim, could not enter the holy city, as Hazrat Umer, the second Caliph after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), banned entry of the Non-Muslims in the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah since fifteen hundred years ago.

Secondly, when, Guru Nanak Sahib passed away, Hindus and Muslims started quarreling. Both the groups wanted to take away the body. When they lifted the cloth, found only the flowers, which they divided among themselves. Guru Nanak Sahib already gone to God. Now the question arises, when Hindus and Muslims were disputing for the body of Guru

Nanak Sahib, where were the Sikh people? Actually, during the life of Guru Nanak Sahib, Sikhism was not a separate religion. In the fifteenth century, there were only two major religions in Hindustan, the Hindus and the Muslims.

After returning from the forth journey Guru Nanak Sahib settled in Kirtar Pur and started the religious teachings. The people coming for learning were known as ‘The Sikhs of Guru Nanak’. The word ‘Sikh’ means ‘student’. Just like, in English ‘the teacher and the student; in Urdu, ‘Ustad aur Talib Ilm’ and in Punjabi ‘Guru aur Sikh’. Sikhs gradually became a separate religious group during the period of second to tenth guru. Actually, it was not Guru Nanak Sahib, but Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the founder of Sikhism.

The ‘Sikh’ means a student, a person always in search of knowledge, in search of truth, but now, mostly the Sikh people are not doing any religious studies. Neither reading Guru Granth Sahib, nor reading the Holy Quran or other religious literature. They just go to Gurdwaras (Temples), perform ‘Matha Taking’ (Sajda) to the Holy Book---Guru Granth Sahib, listen to the ‘Katha’ (Sermon), eat food at ‘Langar’ (free kitchen) and go home. What they listen at the Gurdwaras is the truth---the praises of Rab/Wah-e-Guru, but not the whole truth. The whole truth is ‘Muslim Kalma, **La ilaha ilAllah---Muhammad Rasool Allah**’ (No body is worthy of worship, except Allah---Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah), as believed by Guru Nanak Sahib (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shahid Hussain*).

The worlds ‘Guru’ or ‘Wah-e-Guru’ are very confusing, some times used for Rab (God) and some times for Guru Nanak Sahib or other gurus. Neither Guru Nanak Sahib nor any other guru claimed to be Rab (god) or prophet rather they all insisted on being humans. Rather 10th Guru Gobind Singh Ji warned that if any person believed him as Rab or god, would go to narag (hell). Even this is not mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib, but most of Sikh people believe Guru Nanak Sahib and/or Guru Granth Sahib as Wah-e-Guru or Rab. Some Sikhs also believe that all eleven gurus, including Guru Granth Sahib are all Rab (gods). As a matter of fact, the Holy Book---Guru Granth Sahib is not a Rab (God), but a path to reach Rab. Sikh people in general have made the Holy Book---Guru Granth Sahib another Rab, by ‘Matha Taking. Because, ‘Matha Taking or Sajda, the highest prayer is only the right of Allah/Rab/God---the Creator and Sustainer of the universes.

There is only one Creator Allah/Rab/God and every thing else is creation. Main purpose of our prayers, performed in various styles, is to please Allah/Rab/God, saving our selves from the hell fires and entering Paradise after death---enjoying the facilities of Paradise forever and ever and never dying again. Before doing any prayers, it is necessary to setup the target. Are we worshipping for Allah/Rab/God---the only Creator and Sustainer or for any of his creations, e.g. prophet, guru, saint, human, angle, jinn or book, etc. Performing any kind of prayers for some thing other than Allah/Rab/God, is ‘Shirk’ (making partners in the God’s kingdom), make God angry and have negative marking. That involves two sets of sins. Firstly, not worshipping God---the Creator and the Sustainer. Secondly, worshipping for any thing other than God. The ‘Matha Taking’ (Sajda), which Sikh people perform to the Holy Book, Granth Sahib---a creation, written and compiled by gurus, the humans, is the right of Allah/Rab/God---the Creator and Sustainer of the universes.

CONCLUSION

The Sikhism passed through the process of evolution with passage of time like other religions of the world. The religion changed from second Guru Angad Dev Sahib (Bhai Lehna) through the tenth Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The Sikhs gradually became a separate religious group; they changed from saints to saint soldiers--the Khalsas. Actually, it was not Guru Nanak Sahib, but Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the founder of Sikhism. Guru Gobind Singh Ji performed 'Matha Taking' (Sajjda) to Holy Guru Granth Sahib and gave special attire to Khalsas (Sikhs). From that time Sikh people started 'Matha taking' to the holy book Guru Granth Sahib, instead of Allah/Rab. Guru Nanak Sahib, believed as founder of the Sikhism, was actually (convert from Hinduism) a Muslim Saint, worshipping one and only God---Allah/Rab, the Creator and Sustainer of the universes. He also believed in Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last prophet (*Muslim scholars thought, after Prof. Shaheed Hussain*).

In order to please Allah/Rab/God, develop friendship with Rab and enter the Paradise/Jannah/Swarg, in the first stage after death, living there for ever and ever, never dying again, always young strong and beautiful and enjoying the facilities of Heaven, including company of young beautiful women (Hoors) and young handsome boys (Gilmans) in the wonderful gardens and sweet springs of Heaven, you would have to do all the prayers, including 'Matha Taking/Sajjda' for one and only God/Allah/Rab---the Creator and Sustainer of the universes, believing in the last Prophet Muhammad PBUH, reading Holy Quran and doing noble deeds. Same as Guru Nanak Sahib and other Muslim saints used to do and advised the masses to follow.

I have tried my best to make you understand the difference between worshipping for one and only God/Allah/Rab---the Creator and Sustainer of the universes, makes the Rab happy and prayers for any thing other than Rab, making Him angry. That was the only reason; Guru Nanak Sahib did not like the 'Moorti Pooja' (idle-worship), changed his religion from Hinduism to Islam and became a Muslim Saint. But, if you are still confused, do your own research, read Guru Granth Sahib, read Holy Quran, which Guru Nanak Sahib always kept with him and recite regularly and pray to Allah/Rab/God:

*O Allah, O God-----
Show us the right path*

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APPENDIX A

ZIKR-e-ILAH (Remembrance of God)

Note: Since Guru Nanak Sahib (a convert from Hinduism) was a Muslim Saint and expert in Arabic language, he used to recite Holy Quran regularly and do Zikr extensively in original Arabic words (Muslim scholar's thought). Please recite following Zikr extensively

Bismillah Al-Rehman Al-Rahim:

(Beginning with the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful)

La ila ha ill-Allah, Muhammad Rasool Allah (Muslim Kalma):

(No body is worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the (last) prophet of Allah)

Sub Han Allah: (Allah is poise)

Al-hamdu-lillah: (All praise for Allah, i.e. Thank God)

Allah Ho Akbar: (Allah is great)

Astagfirullah (Astagfir-Allah).

(Allah forgive me)

Insha Allah; Masha Allah:

(If Allah wishes so)

APPENDIX B

SOME AHADITH (Some Sayings of Prophet Muhammad, PBUH)

Prophet **Muhammad** (PBUH) said:

- You should bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except **Allah** and that **Muhammad** (PBUH) is his (last) messenger.
- You should believe in **Allah**, i.e. in His person and attributes; and
- The last day; and
- The angles; and
- The earlier (Divine) Books; and
- All the prophets; and
- The rising after death; and
- The destiny, i.e. all that is good or bad is from **Allah**; and
- You should ascribe no partners unto **Allah**; and
- You should not disobey your parents; and
- You should be ever grateful to **Allah** for His bounties; and
- You should be steadfast in suffering and calamity; and
- You should not be heedless of chastisement by Allah; and
- You should not sever your ties of kinship with your relatives; and
- You should discharge your obligations to your relatives (treat them well); and
- You should believe that what ever good or bad lot befalls you was predestined and could not be avoided and what ever you have missed, you were ordained to do so; and
- You should not give up recitation of the Holy **Quran** under any circumstances.

APPENDIX C

Note: The life histories from second to tenth gurus were taken from Rtd. Principal Sawan Singh Gogia's book 'From Guru Nanak to Guru Granth Sahib'

THE SECOND MASTER GURU ANGAD DEV (1504-1552)

Birth and Early Life:

Guru Angad Dev whose original name was Lehna was born in a small village near Ferozepur (Punjab). His father, Bhai Pheru, was a small businessman. Later on, the family of Bhai Pheru shifted to Khadur a village near Amritsar. Daya Kaur, Lehna's mother, was a gentle lady. In due course of time, Lehna started his business and was married to a lady named 'Khivi'. She gave birth to a daughter, Amro, and two sons, Datu and Dasu. Lehna was the leader of Durga (name of a Hindu goddess) worshiper of his village. Every year, he led a group of the devotees to the temple of the goddess, Durga. The temple called 'Jwala Mukhi' is a place where flame issues from a volcanic seam in the Himalayan foothills. They wore bells on their hands and feet and danced before the image of the deity.

Meeting Guru Nanak Dev Through Bhai Jodha:

In Lehna's village also lived a follower of Guru Nanak Dev. His name was Bhai Jodha who did not believe in Durga worship and recited holy hymns of Guru Nanak Dev. One day, Lehna heard him singing a sacred hymn early in the morning. By listening to this hymn, Lehna experienced tranquility and peace of mind. He asked Jodha who had composed that stimulating hymn. He was told that it was Guru Nanak Dev who lived at Kartarpur. He suddenly developed a longing to see the Guru. During his next journey to Jwala Mukhi, he and his companions halted near Kartarpur. He left his companions there and rode on his horse to see the Guru. On the way, he met a cheerful looking elderly person and said to him, "Please tell me the way to Guru Nanak Dev's house." The man asked him to follow him. When they reached the town, the elderly man pointed to a gate and said, "Enter it and you will meet the person you want to see." When Lehna entered, he was astonished to see that sitting inside was the same person who had led him there. He felt sorry and ashamed for riding while the Guru was walking in front of his horse. Guru Nanak Dev guessed his remorse and said, "Don't feel embarrassed. You are my guest and it was my duty to serve you." Lehna was so impressed by the Guru's personality, humility, and treatment that he decided to become his follower. His heart was filled with love and respect for the Guru. He sat near the Guru and they talked like intimate friends. Guru Nanak spoke to him about the True Creator. The discourse was so impressive that Lehna threw away his bells. He decided to worship only one God instead of an idol of goddess. He discontinued his pilgrimage and stayed at Kartarpur to serve his master with great devotion.

Unmatched Devotion and Humility:

Seeing Lehna's increasing devotion, Guru Nanak Dev advised him to go to his village and settle his affairs first. He stayed in his village only for a few days and returned, as he wanted

to learn true wisdom from the Guru. On his way back, he carried a heavy load of salt on his head for the common kitchen of the Guru. On reaching Kartarpur, he left the salt in the common kitchen and went to see the Guru who was working in his field. Guru Nanak Dev had three bundles of grass for his cattle. He asked his sons to carry them home. They offered excuses and said, "These bundles would spoil our clothes. Ask somebody else to do this job." Lehna heard these words, offered his services and carried the bundles in spite of the fact that he was wearing silken clothes. It was a labor of love for him. The Guru started to love Lehna dearly. People also began to respect Lehna and called him Baba Lehna. Guru Ji used to get up early in the morning and bathe in the river Ravi. Lehna would accompany him and sit near his clothes while Guru Nanak bathed. Some of the Guru's followers became jealous of Lehna. They decided to do for the Guru what Lehna was doing. One day, three more Sikhs accompanied the Guru early in the morning. They could not bear the cold and returned home when it started to hail. However, Lehna waited till the Guru came out of the water. Guru Nanak Dev asked Lehna, "Why did you not return home with the others?" Lehna replied, "How could I desert you, my master?" Lehna always obeyed the Guru readily and joyfully.

Lehna Becomes Guru Angad:

These and many other difficult tests convinced Guru Nanak Dev that he had found a true successor. When the Guru felt that his time to depart was at hand, he said to Lehna, "You have become a part of me. You are Angad, my 'Ang' or part." Thus his name was changed to Angad. Guru Nanak Dev seated Angad on the Guru's throne and asked Bhai Budha, a devoted disciple, to put a 'Tilak,' a mark of Guruship, on Lehna's forehead. The Guru placed five paisas (cents) and a coconut before Angad, bowed before him and said, "Angad's self-sacrifice, devotion, and extreme humility have won him this position. Every Sikh should bow before him." Thus, Baba Lehna became Guru Angad Dev in 1539 at Kartarpur. Guru Nanak Dev rejected the claim of his eldest son, Sri Chand, because he proved inferior to Lehna in his devotion to the Guru. Though a holy man, he (Sri Chand) had ascetic tendencies and led the life of celibacy. The younger son, Lakhmi Chand, was not interested in spiritual matters. Guru Angad Dev shifted from Kartarpur to Khadur, a village nearby, in order to avoid impending conflict with Guru Nanak Dev's sons. During the first six months, he remained in the house of a devotee near Khadur in intense contemplation and meditation. Then he assumed the responsibility of Guruship at the request of Bhai Budha and other leading Sikhs.

Guru Angad Dev and Humayun:

Humayun, son of Emperor Babar, had to fight battles against Sher Shah and was defeated in 1540. While fleeing to Iran, he waited upon Guru Angad Dev at Khadur to request for his blessings for recapturing his throne. At that time, Guru Angad Dev was in deep meditation and Humayun was kept standing. It enraged him and he drew his sword at the Guru. The Guru opened his eyes, smiled and said, "Your sword should have been better used against your rival, Sher Shah, rather than against the innocent man of God to force him to grant a boon." The Guru's bold and frank talk calmed down Humayun's temper, he expressed regret and requested for the Guru's blessings. As Guru Angad Dev was an embodiment of forgiveness, so he bore no ill will and said, "I shall pray for your success. Be a just and kind ruler, go back to your country and always remember God who grants all wishes. If you promise to do that, you will get back your kingdom with God's grace." Humayun was happy; he bowed to the Guru and went away. He got back his throne after a few years in 1555 when he returned with a large army to India.

Guru Angad Dev and the Tapa (Ascetic):

Guru Angad Dev lived at Khadur, his native village, with his family. He was also carrying out the duties of Guruship bestowed on him by Guru Nanak Dev. A mendicant or Yogi called Tapa also lived in that village. On the surface, he claimed to be a religious man and had a great hold on the villagers. He became jealous of the Guru's fame and popularity. He planned to get rid of the Guru. Once it did not rain for a long time and there was a danger of famine. People went to the Tapa and requested him to do something about it. He replied in anger, "How can you expect rain, you fools, when you adopt a married man as your Guru? Turn him out of the village and surely you will get rain." His words carried the people away. They went to the Guru and said, "If you leave the village, the Tapa can save us by bringing rain." The Guru replied, "God alone causes rainfall. Nothing can happen against His will." However, Guru Angad Dev left the village, but rain did not fall, as the Tapa could do nothing against the will of God. Villagers became very angry and shouted at the Tapa. Amar Das, a devout follower of the Guru, who became the third master, arrived at Khadur by that time. He told the people that only God had the power to cause rain and they had been unwise in believing in the statement of a hypocrite. He added that if the Tapa could cause the rain to fall, why he should beg from house to house. Hearing this, people were convinced of the Tapa's hypocrisy and greatly repented of their treatment of the Guru. They inflicted a suitable punishment on the Tapa. Then they went in a body to the Guru, begged forgiveness and brought him back to the village. When Guru Angad Dev heard of the Tapa's punishment, he felt grieved and said to Amar Das, "A true Sikh must not bear any grudge or anger against anyone. He should return good for evil and accept God's will." On hearing this, Amar Das touched the Guru's feet and begged his pardon.

Contributions:

Temple of Bread (common kitchen) established by Guru Nanak Dev was kept up by Guru Angad Dev. It was looked after by his wife, Mata Khivi, and supported by the offerings of the Sikhs. Guru Angad Dev, himself, did not live on these offerings. He earned his living by twisting coarse grass (Munj) into strings used for making cots. Since then, the common kitchen has continued in all the Sikh temples. Guru Angad Dev also gave us the Temple of Teaching. In those days, Sanskrit was the language of religion, but it was not the language of the common people. The most important contribution of Guru Angad Dev was the introduction of Gurmukhi characters (script), which can be easily acquired. This script has thirty-five letters and twelve vowels. It is the most suitable script for the Punjabi language. The Guru, himself, imparted instructions to the children and opened schools for them. This script dealt a powerful blow to the domination of the Hindu priests whose importance rested on their knowledge of Sanskrit. This script proved helpful in asserting the Sikh individuality. Guru Angad Dev also encouraged wrestling matches and other sports among young children. In addition to the Temple of Bread and the Temple of Teaching, Guru Angad Dev also gave us the Temple of Song. He composed 63 hymns in the form of 'Saloks' which are in easy Punjabi language. These are included in Guru Granth Sahib. There was continual preaching, singing and repetition of the Name as in the Guru Nanak Dev's time. Musicians sang 'Asa Dee Var' daily in the morning. Evening prayers were a must before the Guru rested for the night. The Guru had a number of missionaries who preached Sikhism in the neighborhood areas. He emphatically declared that there was no place for the passive recluses in Sikhism. Thus, he preserved the purity and originality of the Sikh religion. By these measures and

active preaching work of the Guru, the Sikhs gradually began to form a coherent group that discarded the ritualistic practices of Hindu society.

Nomination of Successor and Final Departure:

Amar Das, a devout follower of Guru Angad Dev, had won the heart of the Guru through his selfless and devoted service with great humility. After over eleven years of most devoted service of the Guru and the Sangat, Amar Das was nominated the third Guru in 1552. One morning, Guru Angad Dev called his two sons, Datu and Dasu, in the Sikh congregation. He also called Amar Das and said, "I have found Amar Das a man of God and a hard worker. He is noble, kind, humble and intelligent. I, therefore, make him the third Guru of the Sikhs. Guruship is not a birthright. Only good actions make a man great." All the Sikhs accepted Guru Angad Dev's wish and bowed to Guru Amar Das. Datu and Dasu were angry and left the place grumbling. Thus, Guru Angad Dev, despite the opposition of his relatives, conferred Guruship on Amar Das who had proved to be the most worthy of the high office. Guru Angad Dev asked Baba Budha to put a 'Tilak' mark on Amar Das' forehead. Guru Angad Dev also bowed to Guru Amar Das, following the tradition started by Guru Nanak. Next day, Guru Angad Dev, as usual, rose before dawn and bathed to prepare for his final journey. He recited Jap Ji and asked Guru Amar Das to live at Goindwal. With Waheguru on his lips, Guru Angad Dev left this transitory world in 1552.

THE THIRD MASTER GURU AMAR DAS (1479-1574)

Early History:

(Guru) Amar Das was born in 1479 at village Basarke near Amritsar. His father's name was Tej Bhan and mother's Bakht Kaur. His father was a local trader. Amar Das was married to Mansa Devi. He had two sons, Mohri and Mohan; and two daughters, Dani and Bhani. Amar Das lived partly by agriculture and partly by trade. He used to go for pilgrimage to the Ganges every year and zealously discharged all the duties of a pious Hindu. He also went on pilgrimages to the temple of Goddess Durga (Jwala Mukhi). He longed for the guidance of a religious teacher to make his life meaningful. He used to fast and observe many prevalent ceremonies among the Hindus, but his mind was restless.

Meeting Guru Angad Dev:

His nephew (brother's son) was married to Bibi Amro, the daughter of Guru Angad Dev. She used to recite Guru Nanak Dev's hymns every morning. Amar Das who lived in her neighborhood heard the hymns and asked her whose hymns she was reciting. On hearing that those were the hymns of Guru Nanak Dev, the predecessor of her father, he made up his mind to call on Guru Angad Dev. Amar Das was 62 at that time and was called Baba Amar Das while Guru Angad Dev was only 37. Baba Amar Das with Bibi Amro reached Khadur to see Guru Angad Dev who stood up to embrace him, but Amar Das fell at the Guru's feet and felt delighted. "I have come not as a relative, but as your servant. Please make me your Sikh and let me serve you," said he to the Guru. Discarding any prestige of relationship and age, Amar Das became a slave of the lotus feet of Guru Angad Dev. He forgot his home, family and business; and took to the hard life of service. He started to live at Khadur, listened to the hymns and took food in the common kitchen where he also served. He took the responsibility

of bringing, early in the morning, a brass pitcher of water from the river Beas that flowed three miles away from Khadur, for the Guru's bath. He discharged his duties happily.

The Weaver's Wife and Amar Das:

Amar Das continued serving Guru Angad Dev with sincere devotion for eleven years. The Guru tested his devotion many times and every time the disciple came out victorious. One dark and windy night, when it was raining, while returning with a pitcher of water from the river for the Guru's bath, he lost his way and his foot struck against a weaver's peg. He fell into the ditch of the weaver's loom, but did not let the pitcher fall from his head. The weaver's wife awoke on hearing the sound of Amar Das' fall. She remarked, "It must be the homeless Amru." She cursed Guru Angad Dev for exploiting the old man, Amar Das. Amar Das was pained to hear the weaver's wife's remarks. He would not tolerate her words against his Guru and said, "Perhaps you have gone crazy or you would not have uttered these words against the Guru." It is said that she actually went mad. Her husband sought forgiveness of the Guru who said, "Amar Das is not homeless. He is the shelter of the unsheltered."

Nomination as Guru:

After eleven years of most devoted service of the Guru and the congregation, Amar Das was nominated the third Master. He had developed the spirit of patience, forbearance, humility, and charity. Guru Angad Dev asked Baba Budha, a devout follower of Guru Nanak, to put a 'Tilak' mark on Amar Das' forehead. Guru Angad Dev bowed before Guru Amar Das and said, "He will be the Guru after me." It happened in 1552 when the third Master was seventy-three years old. On the advice of Guru Angad Dev, he moved to Goindwal after Guru Angad Dev's death.

Guru Amar Das and Datu:

Guru Amar Das' popularity made Datu, the son of Guru Angad Dev, jealous and angry. He went to Goindwal and said to Guru Amar Das, "Only yesterday, you were our water carrier and today you sit as a Guru." Saying this, he kicked the Guru off his seat. The Guru said humbly, "Please pardon me. My hard bones must have hurt your delicate foot." Guru Amar Das left Goindwal for his native village, Basarke, and shut himself in a room. He wrote outside the door, "Whoever opens the door, he is no Sikh of mine, nor I am his Guru." Datu occupied the Guru's throne, but the Sikhs did not acknowledge him. He gathered all the wealth that he could find in the Guru's house, loaded it on the camel, and left for Khadur. It is said that he was robbed on the way. One of the robbers struck Datu on the foot with which he had kicked the Guru. It caused him pain, which did not leave him until his death.

Return to Goindwal:

Nobody knew where Guru Amar Das was. The Sikhs requested Baba Budha to help them in finding the Guru. Baba Budha hit upon a plan and let loose the Guru's mare that went straight to the Guru's room at Basarke. The Sikhs followed the mare, but were sad to read the order written on the door. Baba Budha made a hole in the back-wall of the room and entered through it. He and all the Sikhs requested the Guru to guide the Sikhs. Guru Amar Das agreed, returned to Goindwal, and resumed his spiritual duties, as he was impressed by the

devotion of the Sikhs. The opening in the wall made by Baba Budha, now supported by the brickwork, still stands at Basarke, where a yearly festival is held to commemorate the event.

The Guru and Akbar:

As the fame of the Guru's piety and saintly character spread, he became more and more an object of popular veneration. Men of all castes, faiths and professions came to Goindwal. All felt happy to see the Guru and receive his blessings. The Great Emperor, Akbar, visited Goindwal on his way from Lahore to Delhi. It is said that he walked to the Guru's presence barefoot. In accordance with the practice, he also sat on the floor and took his meals with the rest of the pilgrims before seeing the Guru. Sikhs working in the common kitchen with humility and spirit of devotion, so deeply impressed Akbar that he offered revenue of a few villages for the support of the common kitchen. The Guru declined, saying that the 'Langar' depended solely on the offerings of the Sikhs. Akbar could not go without making an offering so he granted a tract of land nearby to Bibi Bhani. The Guru could not refuse a gift to a daughter. Akbar also remitted the land revenue of the peasants for a year when the Guru pleaded their case. The Guru also gave a dress of honor 'Saropa' to Akbar who was struck with admiration to see the Guru. Akbar had not seen a face so calm nor had he heard words of such divine wisdom. The Guru's words brought him inner peace and he spent a considerable time in the Guru's company. Akbar's visit greatly increased the Guru's prestige and resulted in adding a large number of new followers.

The Guru and Gangu Shah:

Gangu Shah, a rich man, lived at Lahore. His business failed and his friends and relatives deserted him. He had heard a lot about the Guru so he reached Goindwal. He was asked to eat at the 'Langar' before seeing the Guru. He was hesitant to sit side by side with the people of lower castes as he belonged to a higher caste, but he had no choice; so he took food and saw the Guru. He fell at the Guru's feet, narrated his misfortunes and requested for help and blessings. The Guru advised him, "Go to Delhi, and start your business there. God will help you. Be careful and don't let wealth turn your head. Help the needy and remember God." He left for Delhi where luck favored him and he became prosperous. A poor person came to the Guru and requested for financial help for the marriage of his daughter. The Guru gave him a letter to Gangu wherein he asked Gangu to help the needy person, the bearer of his letter. Wealth had turned the head of Gangu. He refused to help the needy person who returned empty-handed to Goindwal. The Guru gave the poor fellow the amount required by him. After a few years, Gangu became bankrupt and was on the street again. He realized the reason of his bad luck and wanted to apologize to the Guru. He reached Goindwal, started serving in the 'Langar' and reciting hymns. When the Guru came to know of his plight, he called Gangu who wanted to be forgiven. The Guru said to him, "Now you are a true Sikh. Go and live like a Sikh." Gangu took leave of the Guru and spent the rest of his life as desired by the Guru.

The Baoli at Goindwal:

A Baoli is a well where steps are built to reach the water level. Guru Amar Das founded Goindwal, a town on the bank of river Bias, on the advice of Guru Angad Dev while he was alive. Guru Amar Das also made it his residence as desired by the second Guru. The population of Goindwal started increasing and the town overextended itself owing to the

number of those who visited to seek the Guru's spiritual advice and instructions. This resulted in an acute shortage of houses. The Guru sent one of his followers to the hill state of Haripur to procure timber for the construction of houses. The ruler of Haripur sent a lot of timber, free of cost, to Goindwal. It came floating down the river Bias. The ruler with his family also visited Goindwal to seek the Guru's blessing. A large number of houses were built for the pilgrims. Goindwal became an important religious center. Guru Amar Das knew that the river water was not fit for drinking. He wished to have a well sunk to serve the needs of all without any distinction. The Sikhs worked with great enthusiasm and devotion to excavate the Baoli. The digging started in 1559. It provided a source of clean water for everyone without the use of rope and bucket. The water was approached with a flight of 84 steps. The Baoli when finished yielded sweet drinking water. Guru Amar Das also gave his blessing to the Baoli. Thus the Baoli became a place of pilgrimage and Goindwal is still visited by crowds of devotees twice a year.

Tour of Holy Places of Hindus:

In spite of old age, Guru Amar Das toured different parts of the country to make the new faith known to the people. He visited Haridwar and Kurukshetra, at the time of fairs at those places, to meet large crowds. The Guru secured for the non-Muslims the right to worship without having to pay any pilgrim tax. He chose two festivals—Bisakhi and Diwali for the gathering of the Sikhs at Goindwal. These festivals provided the Sikh families a chance to establish a close personal bond with one another and with the Guru.

Special Contribution:

the number of Sikhs had increased considerably. They were spread not only over the province of the Punjab but also beyond the province, over the rest of India and Afghanistan. The work of teaching and preaching could not be carried out to the Guru's satisfaction. Consequently, the Guru divided the country inhabited by his followers into 22 preaching districts called 'Manjis'. Each district was placed under the care of a pious Sikh who preached Guru Nanak Dev's philosophy and collected offerings for the 'Langar'. 'Manji' literally means couch on which the Guru used to sit and communicate instructions. Two Manjis were assigned to women. One of them was in charge of Kabul and the other was in charge of Kashmir. This measure of the Guru went a long way in strengthening the foundation of the Sikh faith and its propagation in India and abroad.

Social Reforms:

Guru Amar Das made a number of social reforms. He condemned (Sati) the practice of a widow burning herself alive with her dead husband. He declared, "A true 'Sati' is one who bravely bears the shock of separation and lives her normal life with virtue, dignity and discipline. A hymn to this affect uttered by the Guru is there in Guru Granth Sahib on page 787. He advocated monogamy and tried to eliminate caste distinctions through his Sangat (congregation) and Pangat (eating in the common kitchen, all sitting in a row). He encouraged widow remarriage. He condemned the practice of (Parda), the covering of the face by women and seclusion of women. He prohibited 'Syapa' the beating of breast by women on the death of a relative. He emphatically declared that there was no room for 'Udasis' ascetics in Sikhism. He desired to dispense with the usual Hindu ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death.

Compositions:

Guru Amar Das composed 869 hymns in different measures. These are included in Guru Granth Sahib. They also include a long composition 'Anand'. It is a unique devotional composition. Anand means song of joy. It is repeated at the end of congregations and at the preparations of Amrit for baptismal ceremony. It is given on page 927 of Guru Granth Sahib. All the hymns uttered by the Guru are simple, melodious and can be easily understood.

Final Departure:

Guru Amar Das enjoyed the longest span of life of all the Sikh Gurus. He possessed a sweet and lovable personality. He maintained himself and his family on his own meager earnings. In his devotions to his predecessors and his followers, he was as firm as a rock. He departed from this world in 1574 at the age of 95 after being on the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak for 22 years.

THE FOURTH MASTER GURU RAM DAS (1534-1581)

Early Life:

Guru Ram Das generally known as 'Jetha', which means first-born, was born at Lahore in 1534. His father, Hari Das, and mother, Daya Kaur, were deeply religious people. His father was a trader. His parents died when Jetha was only seven years old. His maternal grandmother took him to her village where he grew up. He was a pious soul with a pleasing and smiling face. He earned his living by selling boiled, salted, and spiced grams (garbanzo beans). Whenever he could, he gave his grams free, in the name of God, to needy holy men.

Meeting Guru Amar Das:

He went to Goindwal in the company of some Sikhs to pay his respects to Guru Amar Das. He was so impressed by the Guru's teachings that he became his disciple. Guru Amar Das was also very pleased with Jetha, who took the service of cooking in the Guru's Langar. He also drew water and brought firewood from the forest. At the same time, he continued selling grams. He assisted in the excavation of the Baoli (a well with steps down to the water level) whenever he could find time. He lived up to his name of Ram Das, which means 'God's slave.'

Marriage with Bibi Bhani:

Guru Amar Das' younger daughter, Bibi Bhani, was a deeply religious young lady. She was of marriageable age and her parents were in search of a suitable match for her. Guru Amar Das and his wife agreed to make Jetha their son-in-law, Bibi Bhani's husband. When asked, Jetha also agreed and was betrothed to Bibi Bhani. The marriage took place after some time. Ram Das continued to serve in the Langar as before and did not behave any differently after becoming the Guru's son-in-law. He also continued to labor at the Baoli. Some people laughed at Jetha who in spite of being the son-in-law was serving the Guru as a laborer. He did not mind and kept himself busy as usual.

Access to Gurgaddi (Throne of Guruship):

One day Guru Amar Das visited a place where Baoli was being dug. He asked Rama, his eldest son-in-law, and Ram Das separately to erect a platform where he could sit and watch the construction of Baoli. When the platforms were ready, he rejected them, got them demolished, and wanted new ones to be built. Ram Das made a new one without any resentment, but Rama demolished his platform reluctantly. This process of rejection and reconstruction went on several times. Rama lost his temper, questioned the wisdom of the Guru and wanted to know what was wrong with his platform. Ram Das, on the other hand, begged the Guru's pardon, confessed his fault and felt sorry for his failure to satisfy the Guru. He tried once again while Rama left the job. Guru Amar Das embraced Ram Das and declared that Ram Das was the most suitable candidate for Guruship. Sometime afterwards, Guru Amar Das got down from his throne and seated Ram Das on it. Baba Budha, a devoted Sikh of Guru Nanak, put the 'Tilak' mark of Guruship on Ram Das' forehead. Guru Amar Das bowed before (Guru) Ram Das and ordered his sons and Sikhs to do the same. Thus, Ram Das (Jetha) became Guru Ram Das, the Fourth Master of the Sikhs in 1574. Thus, Guru Amardas departed from the previous practice. At the same time he also ignored the claim of his own sons who fell short of the required standard by the Gurus for their successors.

Visit of Baba Sri Chand:

Guru Nanak Dev's elder son, Sri Chand, had renounced the world and founded the sect of 'Udasis' ascetics. He had not called on Guru Angad Dev and Guru Amar Das, as he was angry for being ignored in favor of Guru Angad Dev. By now, his anger had considerably cooled down and he came to see Guru Ram Das at Goindwal. The Guru received him outside Goindwal with great respect. When they sat down, Baba Sri Chand said, "Being a householder, you can't earn God's grace. It comes only to those who keep away from family life, keep fasts and remember God. God's grace is not a child's play." The Guru replied, "God is not far away. If you accept His will, you can find him in your heart. He does not live in temples or forests. A householder can really find God more easily because he does not look to others for his livelihood. Ascetics go begging to the householders whose way of life they hate." Baba Sri Chand said, "I understand your point of view. Why have you grown such a long beard?" The Guru replied, "It is God's sweet will that all men have beards. It is also for wiping the feet of all holy men like you." Guru Ram Das, actually, proceeded to do this. Baba Sri Chand drew back and said, "O' great King! You are superior; you are in my father's place. It is humility like this that has made you a Guru. I lack this attribute and, therefore, was superseded. I cannot match your greatness." The Guru bade him a fond farewell. In this way, Guru Ram Das' sweet humility won an old foe.

Amritsar (The Pool of Nectar):

One day, while meditating, Guru Ram Das remembered the parting injunction of Guru Amar Das to found a supreme place of pilgrimage. At a distance of 25 miles from Goindwal, Guru Ram Das chose a jungle site having a small pool of water. The Guru left Goindwal for that site and digging of a tank was started in 1577. The Guru and his Sikhs built small huts in which they lived and worked after the Morning Prayer until the time of the evening prayer. A few more huts were later built for the visitors who came to see the Guru and assist in the great work. A free common kitchen was also run there. The Guru proposed to dig a huge tank in which a central temple for the Sikhs was to be erected. The fifth master, Guru Arjan Dev,

completed this work. The tank was given the name of Amritsar 'The Lake of Nectar of Immortality.' This was constructed under the supervision of Baba Budha.

The Holy City of Amritsar:

Gradually number of habitations grew around the tank. As the time went by, a small town grew up there and it began to be called 'Chak Ram Das' or 'Ram Das pura'. Some petty traders settled near the tank to meet the requirements of those who were digging the tank. This shopping center came to be known 'Guru ka Bazar'. The Guru invited men of 52 different trades to come and settle there. The Guru with many faithful Sikhs also settled there. The town grew up very fast and was, later on, named Amritsar after the name of the tank. The city is famous all over the world. At present the city is a great center of trade and learning. It has many famous buildings, such as, the Tower of Baba Atal, The Golden Temple, The Akal Takhat, The castle of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (The Sikh Ruler), the Khalsa College, The famous Durgiana Temple of the Hindus and the Guru Nanak Dev University. There is also a very large Sikh Museum, which contains paintings, pictures, old books and manuscripts, old weapons and many articles used by the Gurus. Moreover, there is 'Jalianwala Bagh' (Park) where many innocent Indians were shot dead by the British in 1919. People call Amritsar 'The City of all Praises'. It is the main place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs. People of all faiths, high and low, from all parts of the world come there to pay their respects. It is called the 'Mecca' of the Sikhs. It laid the foundation of the future greatness of the Sikhs as a nation. Now they could rally at a common place of worship conveniently situated. It (Amritsar) enabled the Gurus to increase their missionary work as it was situated in the heart of the state. It held the highest position in the state as a center of trade. Revenue to the Guru also increased, as the crowds attracted to the city were further swelled due to the sanctity it assumed. The Sikh religion grew like a gigantic tree.

Poetry of Guru Ram Das:

Like his predecessors, Guru Ram Das composed several hymns. Their total number in different musical measures is 638. These are incorporated in Guru Granth sahib and flow like a stream of love. His divine music thrills the soul of everyone and the language is easy and simple. The Guru's famous composition is 'Four Lavans' in Suhi measure. It forms an integral part of the marriage ceremony of the Sikhs. It symbolically represents the union of soul with the Supreme Being. It shows the couple a successful way in the journey of life ahead. It is entered in Guru Granth Sahib at page 773.

Nomination of Arjan Dev:

The Guru had three sons----Prithi Chand, Mahan Dev and Arjan Dev. He carried out a number of tests and found that his youngest son, Arjan Dev, alone was the most suitable person for Guruship. Arjan Dev's greatness had been predicted by Guru Amar Das when he remarked, "This Grandson of mine shall be the boat to carry the Guru's message everywhere." Prithi Chand protested and addressed his father using angry language. Guru Ram Das advised Prithi Chand that it was improper for his son to quarrel with his father. The Guru made his decision known to the Sikhs. He seated Arjan Dev on his throne in the presence of the Sikhs. As usual Baba Budha put 'Tilak' mark of Guruship on Arjan Dev's

forehead. Guru Ram Das bowed before him and said, "Sri Arjan is now Guru Arjan Dev. Guru Nanak's light has come to dwell in him." It took place in 1581. After crowning Sri Arjan Dev, Guru Ram Das with Guru Arjan Dev left for Goindwal where he breathed his last in September 1581.

THE FIFTH MASTER GURU ARJAN DEV (1563-1606)

Early Life:

Bibi Bhani, wife of Guru Ram Das, gave birth to Arjan Dev in 1563 at Goindwal. Arjan Dev was the youngest of the three brothers and Prithi Chand was the eldest. From early age, Arjan Dev was constantly engaged in prayer, rosary was his constant companion and he possessed all the saintly qualities. He did not care for wealth and worldly possessions. He wanted only his father's pleasure. Guru Ram Das also loved him very much.

Jealous Prithi Chand:

As stated in the last chapter, Guru Ram Das nominated the soft-spoken and humble-minded Arjan Dev, purely on the basis of merit, to be the fifth Guru in 1581. Prithi Chand fretted and fumed. He refused to accept Guru Arjan Dev as his father's successor and challenged his father's decision. He declared himself to be the Guru. When the Sikhs visited Amritsar with their offerings, Prithi's agents misguided them and took them to Prithi Chand. Guru Arjan Dev was left with no income for the 'Langar', but still he remained calm, as he believed that truth would triumph in the long run. Prithi Chand took their offerings, but sent the visiting Sikhs to Guru Arjan Dev's 'Langar' for food. The Guru did not mind it, but the quality of food in the kitchen deteriorated. This continued for sometime, the Guru and his family had to live on parched grams. When Bhai Gurdas who was on a missionary trip to Agra returned and saw all this, he was hurt. He consulted Baba Budha and some leading Sikhs. They met the visiting Sikhs outside Amritsar, told them of the greed of Prithi Chand and brought them along with their offerings to Guru Arjan Dev. Once again truth prevailed and the 'Langar' started working properly. Prithi Chand continued his intrigues. He persuaded some Brahmins and Quazis (Muslim Clerics) to complain to the Emperor Akbar that the Granth (Holy Scripture) compiled by Guru Arjan Dev contained hymns against their religions. Two saintly Sikhs, Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha whom Guru Arjan sent to meet the Emperor succeeded in convincing him that the complaint was baseless.

A Lesson in Humility:

Guru Arjan Dev was married to Bibi Ganga Devi and was over 30 years old, but still he was childless. Prithi Chand's wife taunted Mata Ganga Devi for being issue less. She was sad and pained. Once she said to the Guru, "My married life would be most happy if you grant me a son. You grant people their wishes." With the object of giving the Sikhs a lesson in humility, the Guru decided on referring her to Baba Budha. The Guru said to her, "Oh dear one, go to Baba Budha, an old Sikh of Guru Nanak's time, and a humble man. If he is pleased, he would pray for you and you will have a son. God listens to the prayer of His saints." The next day, accompanied with her friends, she set out in splendid carriages. Her servants carried delicious dishes for offering to the Baba. On reaching there, she told Baba Budha the purpose of her coming. Baba Budha smiled and said, "I am a servant of the Guru Nanak's house. It is Guru Arjan who fulfills everyone's desires." He did not even touch the food. She returned,

disappointed, to the Guru who on hearing the result of his wife's mission said, "Saints are not pleased with display of splendor and riches. They should be served with humility." He advised her to bake the bread with her own hands, dress it with onions, take it with buttermilk on her head, like a farmer's wife and request again. Mata Ganga did as desired by the Guru. Baba Budha greeted her with folded hands and took the food brought by her. He said, "Mother! As you have given food to my heart's content, so shall you have a son to your heart's content? He will be very brave, handsome and spiritual. He will crush the head of enemies." Mata Ganga returned and told the Guru every word. The Guru said, "If the saint's so desire, they can make a poor man a king." In due course of time, Baba Budha's words proved true and a son, named Har Gobind, was born in 1595.

Bhai Kaliana:

When Guru Arjan Dev needed money for the completion of the tank and Har Mandir, Bhai Kaliana, one of the followers of the Guru, said, "My Lord! I shall go to the hill state of Mundi, preach there and collect money." The Guru agreed and Bhai Kaliana set out on his mission. The ruler of Mundi state used to celebrate a special religious festival every year on a fixed day. Everybody in the state was required to keep fast on that day, stay awake at night, go to a temple the next morning and break the fast by drinking water in which the idol had been washed. Those who disobeyed were punished. Bhai Kaliana was the only one in the state who did not obey the order and did not join in the celebration. When the ruler came to know of it, he was furious. He sent for Bhai Kaliana and asked him to explain his position. Bhai Kaliana said, "I am a Sikh of Guru Arjan. I recite sacred hymns in praise of God every day and have no faith in stone idols that neither see, nor hear, nor speak. Vain is the worship of a lifeless stone. God is the life within our lives. He is very merciful to us all. No doubt you occasionally observe fast, but don't refrain from grievous sins. The Sikhs of my Guru eat a little and thus are ever fasting. They ever restrain lust and wrath; and worship one God who is Omnipresent." The ruler finding Bhai Kaliana obstinate ordered that one of his legs be cut off and he should be dragged out of the state. However, the king fainted after giving these orders and, therefore, the punishment was delayed. Doctors tried their best to cure the ruler but failed. Some wise men said, "This is all due to the harsh punishment given to the stranger." One of them went to the prison and brought Bhai Kaliana to the king's bedside. Seeing the king, Bhai Kaliana said, "I am sorry for the king, but I have no power or medicine to cure him. This power lies with God. I can pray to Him if you also pray with me and promise to make the king believe in God instead of a stone." They promised to do that. Kaliana stood up, folded his hands, asked everyone present to join him and pray to God to save the life of the King. When Kaliana was praying, the king regained consciousness. He bowed to Kaliana and requested him to lead him to the Guru. The king, the queen and many of his officers set out to see the Guru at Amritsar. Many others joined them on the way. On seeing the Guru, the king bowed before him and requested to be pardoned. The Guru imparted him religious instructions upon which he realized his past errors. After some days, he took leave of the Guru and returned to his state.

Satta and Balwand:

Satta and Balwand were two singers (bards) in the court of the Guru. They recited sacred hymns and played at rebecs in the morning and evening congregations. They were living on offerings made by the Guru and his followers. Satta wanted some money for the marriage of his daughter. Guru Arjan Dev helped him, but Satta was not satisfied. The Guru could not do

more because as a result of rivalry of Prithi Chand, income from offerings had decreased. Satta and Balwand stopped reciting in the Guru's court. They refused the personal request of the Guru and spoke against him at the instigation of Prithi Chand. They even said derogatory words against Guru Nanak Dev. The Guru advised his followers not to depend upon them and he himself started playing the musical instruments while reciting hymns. The Sikhs followed the Guru. Now Satta and Balwand had no source of income and began to starve. They approached an old follower of the Guru at Lahore and brought him to seek forgiveness. Guru Arjan Dev forgave them on his recommendation. They composed an ode in praise of the five Sikh Gurus. The Guru included it in Guru Granth Sahib.

True Living:

Once a person named Chuar went to Guru Arjan Dev for religious instructions. The Guru advised him, "Work hard, tell the truth, help others and remember God." He said, "Sir, how, can a merchant like myself speak the truth? A merchant has to tell lies every day." The Guru directed him to keep an account of his lies and his good acts; and bring it to him at the end of every month. At the end of the first month, the good acts were nil and the lies many. The Guru asked him to read it out to the congregation and confess his sins. He did it, but felt small. The Guru smiled and said, "Keep on trying." The second month the account showed a better balance between good and bad acts. There was a steady progress in subsequent months, until the eighth month when no lies appeared and there was a clean sheet. The Guru said, "Cart loads of books and all the learning in the world are of no use if we don't care to follow them." All the Sikhs understood the advice and promised to act upon it.

Masands (collectors):

Completion of the tank, extending Ramdaspora and construction of temple in the tank required a lot of money. Therefore, Guru Arjan Dev improved the Manji system, introduced by Guru Amar Das, by appointing Masands as the number of Sikh had immensely increased and they were scattered far and wide. Masands preached, settled disputes among the Sikhs, realized voluntary offerings from them and took the same to the Guru twice a year. Every Sikh was expected to offer 'A tithe' (one-tenth of his income). With this improved arrangement the dues were paid more regularly and the Guru could arrange his budget with much more certainty.

Sacred Tank and the Har Mandar (Temple of God):

The removal of the earth from the sacred tank (Amritsar) had been effected under Guru Ram Das. Guru Arjan Dev accomplished the task of making the masonry sidewalls and floor with the assistance of the Sikhs. After the completion of the tank, the Guru started construction of Har Mandar in the center of the tank. Some Sikhs proposed that Har Mandar should be raised higher than all the other buildings in the neighborhood. The Guru replied, "No, what is humble, shall be exalted. The more a tree is laden with fruit, the more its branches descend towards the earth." The idea was that bending low in submission and humility could attain God. Thus the temple was constructed in such a way that from whatever side we approach, we must descend eight or ten steps to enter it. The famous Muslim Soofi saint of Lahore, Mian Mir, laid the foundation of the temple in Dec. 1588. Another distinguishing feature of the temple is that it has four doors facing the four directions. The implication was that the temple would be open to all the four Hindu castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishas and

Shudaras; to all the four major religions in India—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, and to all the people of the world from north, south, east and west. Hindu temples and Muslims mosques are mostly closed on three sides. Hundreds of Sikh helped in the digging and construction work that they called 'Kar Seva' (labor of love). The Guru and his wife, Mata Ganga personally looked after the construction that was supervised by Baba Bhuda. The temple stands like a lotus in water. Inside, there is no idol, no picture or image for worship. It is a temple only for singing the glory of God. No one is allowed to sing or say anything other than the hymns from the Sikh scriptures. Only Guru Granth Sahib draped in fine cloth is placed in the center of the temple and people bow to it, listen to the hymns sung in the praise of God. The walls of the temple on the inside are covered with very fine paintings. Its dome (vault) and walls from outside were, later on, got covered with gold leaf by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab. Due to this it is called the Golden Temple. It is one of the wonders of India and the world. There is a common kitchen near the temple. When the temple was completed in 1604, the Guru himself thanked God Almighty uttering a sacred hymn that is entered on page 783 of the Guru Granth Sahib. Har Mandar (The Golden Temple) is held in great reverence by the Sikhs, low and high, throughout the world. People from far and near come here to pay their respects and get spiritual solace. Surrounded by a sheet of blue water, with heavenly song resounding day and night, the temple seems immune to worldly troubles. It is the favorite resort of the aspirants of the spiritual life. Diwali festival in the month of November is celebrated with great pomp and show at the temple.

The Guru's Building's and His Welfare Works:

1. City of Ramdaspur: Guru Arjan Dev applied himself to the task of extending the city of Ramdaspur. When buildings around the holy tank had increased, the Guru advised his Sikhs and worshippers to take up their abode in them. The city of Amritsar gradually extended. He told his followers that one-day Amritsar would become a great city and have a large population.
2. Santokhsar: The Guru constructed another tank at Ramdaspur and named it Santokhsar (Pool of Spiritual Contentment). It is also a place of pilgrimage. Ruler of a hill state, Mandi, contributed a lot of money for its construction.
3. Tarn Taran: In 1590, the Guru built another great tank and temple at a distance of 12 miles from Amritsar. It was named Tarn Taran that means 'to ferry across the sea of existence.' Name of the city Tarn Taran is derived from the name of the tank. It became another important place of pilgrimage. It helped prevent Hindus from becoming the followers of a Muslim sect 'Sakhi Sarwar' whose seat was located nearby.
4. Kartarpur: At a distance of 40 miles from Amritsar, the Guru founded a new town. It is called Kartarpur (the abode of Creator) and dug there a tank called Gangsar after the name of Mata Ganga. It became a center of pilgrimage and preaching of Sikhism. It helped in stopping the conversion of low-caste Hindus of the area to Islam. Guru Arjan Dev also opened a leper's home at Kartarpur where lepers were looked after and treated. This city is different from the KatarPur founded by Guru Nanak.
5. Baoli: In 1597 the Guru built a Baoli at Lahore where his father was born. It provided the people with employment and drinking water. At that time the city of Lahore was in the grip of famine and epidemics. Dead bodies were lying scattered in streets. Guru Arjan Dev stayed there for 8 months and spent a lot of money, received as offerings, to help the needy and improve their condition by serving them.
6. Chhehrata:- (a well worked with six Persian wheels) There was scarcity of water in the area around Amritsar due to lack of rains. Guru Arjan Dev had a well dug at the village of 'Wadali' that was worked by six Persian wheels. Here, the next Guru, Har Gobind, was born. The place came to be called 'Chhehrata'.
7. Trade in Horses: The Guru encouraged his

followers to take to trade in addition to agriculture. He sent his followers to Turkistan (a country in the north-west of India) to purchase horses for selling them in India. It was a lucrative trade and enriched the Sikh traders. They became good horsemen and soldiers. It dealt a strong blow to a Hindu superstition that prevented them from crossing the Indus River.

Emperor Akbar visits Guru Arjan Dev:

On his way back from Lahore, Guru Arjan Dev was at Goindwal when Akbar called on the Guru. The Emperor was highly pleased to meet him and listen to the recitation of sacred hymns in praise of God. Akbar took food from the common kitchen and wanted to make donation of some land for the common kitchen. The Guru said, "it is run by the Sikhs and does not need any landed property." The Guru however pleaded that the famine-stricken farmers may be given some concession in revenue. Akbar acceded to the Guru's request and reduced the tax by one sixth. Akbar's visit raised the prestige of the Guru and the number of followers increased.

Compilation of the Adi Granth (Guru Granth Sahib):

The most important and notable achievement of Guru Arjan Dev was the compilation of the holy book for the Sikhs. At that time, it was known as Pothi Sahib or Adi-Granth; now it is called Guru Granth Sahib. In Sikhism worship consists of singing the hymns composed by the Gurus. Guru Arjan Dev wished to compile all the authentic hymns composed by his predecessors. This was necessitated by the fact that his elder brother, Prithi Chand, and others, with selfish interests, were passing compositions of their own as those of the Sikh Gurus. The Guru also wanted to provide the Sikhs with a holy scripture of their own so that this new religion (Sikhism) could establish itself on firm footing. Guru Arjan Dev sent for Bhai Gurdas and appointed him to write the hymns as dictated by him. The Guru took his abode near a tank and started the work in right earnest. He had before him poetic compositions of his predecessors, to which he added his own. To these he also added suitable writings of 15 celebrated Hindu Bhakats and Muslim Soofis like Kabir, Nam Dev, Farid and Tarilochan. Compositions of 19 bards and that of Satta and Balwand were also included. Some of the Bhakats belonged to lower classes of society. The only condition for inclusion of a hymn was that it conformed to the spirit of reform and was not inconsistent with the teaching of the Gurus. The Adi-Granth contains only prayers and devotional songs. The original copy still exists at Kartarpur and bears the signature of Guru Arjan Dev. A detailed account of Guru Granth Sahib and its distinct features are given in the last chapter of this book. The Adi-Granth was completed and installed in Har Mandir after a grand ceremony in 1604. Baba Budha was appointed the first Head Priest.

Guru Arjan Dev's Compositions:

Guru Arjan Dev's compositions form a major part of the Adi-Granth. His most important composition is Sukhmani Sahib, also called 'Psalm of Peace'. Its aim is to remove confusion of mind and distress. Its recitation in the morning is expected to smooth the heart afflicted by worries and to increase joy and tranquility. It is a remedy for worldly problems.

Guru Arjan Dev as People's King:

Guru Arjan Dev was a born poet, an accomplished musician, a practical philosopher, a powerful organizer, a good statesman and a spiritual leader. With foresight and patience, he addressed himself to the task of organizing his followers on peaceful lines. Though himself a man of simple habits and great humility, his (Darbar) court became a place of splendor and magnificence. The palatial buildings, tents, horses and treasures gave his court a look of a king's court. The Sikhs had made great advances under Guru Arjan Dev. They acquired an identity distinct from the Hindus. Now Sikhs could be found in every part of the country. The spiritual level of the community was raised by the high example set by the Guru. As the prosperity of the community increased, the Guru's income (offerings) also enhanced. The Sikhs respected the Guru to such an extent that they called him 'Sachcha Padshah' or the True King. It also employed that the Guru governed by principles of love and justice while the temporal kings ruled by force of arms and fear of authority.

The Guru's Martyrdom:

Emperor Akbar's death in 1605 brought to the throne his son, Jahangir, who was determined to protect the interest of his own faith, Islam, by reversing his father's policy of tolerance for all faiths. He had sworn an oath to the orthodox Muslim leaders like Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, to spread Islam. He was the pioneer of religious persecution in the Mughal history. To please orthodox Muslims, he started to restore orthodoxy, punish the liberal groups and destroy non-Muslim movements.

Revolt by Prince Khusrau:

Jahangir's own 13 years old son; Khusrau revolted against his father and managed to escape from Agra to the Punjab, on his way to Afghanistan. In the beginning of 1606, he met Guru Arjan Dev at Tarn Taran. The prince had already met the Guru when his grandfather, Akbar, visited the Guru. On his request, Guru Arjan Dev gave him some money and prayed for his safe journey. In order to arrest the prince, Jahangir along with his army followed him and reached Lahore. Khusrau's rebellion was crushed. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi who could not tolerate spread of Sikhism incited Jahangir against the Guru for helping the prince. Prithi Chand and Chandu also poisoned the ears of the Governor of Lahore against the Guru. Chandu an official at Lahore had used insulting language against the Guru and consequently the Guru, as desired by the Sikhs, had turned down the proposal of Chandu's daughter marrying Hargobind. Thus Chandu satisfied his own offended vanity. Jahangir hated Guru Arjan Dev as the Guru had been in the good books of Akbar. Jahangir's main helper, Sheikh Ahmad, was extremely jealous of the Guru's popularity. Guru Arjan's activities had already attracted the attention of Jahangir. He writes in his autobiography (Tuzik-a-Jahangiri Vol. 1) on page 72. "In Goindwal, on the bank of river Beas, dwells a Hindu Arjan by name in the garb of sainthood. He has taken into his folds quite a number of simple-minded Hindus and even some ignorant and foolish Muslims by the influence of his ways and means. His purity and saintliness is being loudly proclaimed and worshippers from all parts of the country rally around him. They manifest complete faith in him and pay homage to him. This movement has been going on for the past three or four generations. I have been thinking for a long time to either end this movement or to bring him into the folds of Islam." Jahangir was wrong in supposing that Guru Arjan Dev was a Hindu and his headquarter was at Goindwal. However, the above few lines correctly show Jahangir's intentions.

Summoning the Guru to Lahore:

Jahangir wanted an excuse. He summoned the Guru and asked why he had helped Khusrav. Guru Arjan Dev replied that he gave him some money for his journey as he was in a wretched condition and did not help him in his rebellion. Jahangir did not feel satisfied. So he asked the Guru to pay 200,000 rupees as fine and also to efface certain verses in the Adi-Granth. The Guru refused paying fine and said, "The money belongs to the congregation and is for the poor, the friendless and the needy. I cannot erase or alter even a single letter of the Adi Granth; it is the word of God and there is nothing against any individual or any religion in it." The Sikhs of Lahore were ready to collect money to pay the fine, but the Guru asked them not to do so.

Punishment and Tortures:

Jahangir also writes, "I also ordered that his houses, camps and son were to be given to the Governor of the Punjab. The Guru should be put to death by torture." No doubt, Guru Arjan Dev was tortured to death, but the rest of the order was stayed at the intervention of saint Mian Mir. Chandu, a sworn enemy of the Guru, was the officer who took the responsibility of carrying out the Emperor's orders. He found a chance to take his revenge. The Guru was not given anything to eat or drink on the first day. He was kept awake at night. He remained calm and recited holy hymns. On the second day, he was ordered to sit in a big caldron full of boiling water. It burnt the Guru's body but he neither cried nor sighed. He went on praying to God and repeated, "O' Lord! Thy will is ever sweet." On the third day, the Guru was again made to sit in the boiling water and red-hot burning sand was poured on his body and head, but the Guru kept quiet and recited sacred hymns. Mian Mir, a great Muslim saint, came to the Guru and said, "May I ask the Emperor to release you?" The Guru said, "Brother, all is happening as willed by God. Go and pray for victory to Truth." On the fourth day the Guru was seated on a hot iron plate. Burning red sand was poured on his body, but the Guru sat calm with his mind fixed on God. On the fifth day the Guru was thrown into the running water of river Ravi. Thus Guru Arjan Dev returned to God's presence in the summer of 1606. A beautiful Gurdwara named 'Dera Sahib' stands at the place where the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev took place in Lahore. Before 1947, when India was partitioned, devotees used to visit this Gurdwara in thousands everyday. Now it is in Pakistan and can be visited by permission of the Pakistan government. Every summer devotees from all over the world gather there to commemorate the fifth master's martyrdom day and to pay their respects.

Effects of Martyrdom:

Guru Arjan Dev was the first Sikh martyr. His martyrdom created a nation of Martyrs and sowed the seed of sacrifices among the Sikhs. He taught the Sikhs to surrender to God's will.

THE SIXTH MASTER GURU HAR GOBIND (1595-1644)

Early Life:

Sri Har Gobind was born in 1595 at Wadali, a village, near Amritsar. His birth destroyed the hopes of Prithi Chand and his wife, Karmo. They had thought their own son, Meharban, would be the Guru after the childless Guru Arjan Dev. Prithi Chand and his wife, therefore, conspired to poison and kill the infant Har Gobind with the help of a nurse, a snake charmer and a Brahmin attendant, but all their evil efforts failed. Guru Arjan Dev thanked God for his son's narrow escapes from death. He composed thanksgiving hymns for this purpose. These are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. The first line of one of these hymns, when translated

runs like this: "The poison produced no effect on him; the evil Brahmin died of colic." (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1137) Bhai Budha was entrusted with the responsibility of educating Har Gobind who also learned horse riding and use of weapons. Har Gobind was very handsome and had a well-built body. He was an excellent archer and swordsman.

Accession to the Guru's Throne, 1606:

Har Gobind was only eleven years old when the news of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom reached Amritsar. He was sad to learn the news, but did not grieve and remained calm. Baba Budha was requested to read the Adi-Granth and musicians sang the sacred hymns. After ten days, Har Gobind wanted to follow the injunction, his father had sent through a Sikh from Lahore before his martyrdom, that Har Gobind should sit on the throne fully armed and maintain an army to defend the community to the best of his ability.

A Warrior Saint:

The Guru desired that every Sikh who could afford should keep a sword and a horse. The Sikhs were required to bring offerings of arms, arrows, swords, shields, and bows to the Guru. Masands were ordered to send horses and arms. The Guru had a bodyguard of 52 soldiers, a stable of 700 horses, 300 horsemen, and 60 gunners. 500 young men were recruited as infantry. Many who wanted to fight for the Guru in the cause of righteousness offered their services for only two meals a day and a new uniform twice a year. Some aggrieved commanders of the Mughal army also took refuge with the Guru who also enlisted Pathan mercenaries. The Sikhs came in large numbers for recruitment. The Guru devoted a lot of his time to wrestling, riding, tent pegging, and hunting tigers and bears. Animal food was sanctioned and encouraged. He also regularly took part in the morning and evening prayers.

Building Lohgarh and Akal Takhat:

Guru Har Gobind constructed Akal Takhat (Throne of the Timeless), a raised platform, 12 feet high, in front of the Har Mandir. There he sat in princely attire. The Akal Takhat was the seat of his temporal authority. There he administered justice, accepted presents and watched wrestling matches and other martial games. He also introduced the royal custom of the beating of the drum. Some famous bards sang ballads of heroism. This was the first Takhat in the Sikh History. This was the beginning of militarism. He also built a fort called Logarh (fortress of steel) at Amritsar in 1609. This was the first fort built by the Sikhs. Construction of the fort encouraged the Sikhs, but the Moguls smelled treason. He also adopted his own flag that further aggravated the situation.

Jahangir and Guru Har Gobind:

The reports of king-like and war-like activities of the Guru aroused the anger of Jahangir. The Guru's enemies like Chandu also instigated Jahangir to believe that the Guru intended to raise the standard of revolt. The Guru was summoned to Delhi where Jahangir received him courteously. He asked him several questions. As far as taking to hunting and wearing arms, the Guru replied that these were not restricted by the state. About the holding of the court, the Guru submitted that it concerned only religious matters. Jahangir also asked the Guru why he was called (Sachcha Patshah) the true king. The Guru replied that he had never asked anyone

to call him true king. And in Guru Nanak's view, God was the only Emperor. He quoted from Japji's stanza 27 and added that none of his activities was offensive. With regards to the so-called fine unpaid by Guru Arjan Dev, the Guru said that his father had not committed any crime and he would not pay any fine. Jahagir was in search of an excuse to punish the Guru for his suspected political ambitions. Jahangir did not feel satisfied. He writes in his autobiography at page 273, "I ordered that Guru be confined for some time in a jail at Gwalior Fort." Guru Ji's followers flocked to Gwalior and bowed themselves before the walls that restrained their respected Guru. When Jahagir learnt about the agitation, he became uneasy. He was also troubled with nightmares. A holy Muslim saint, Mian Mir, and the queen, Begum Noor Jahan also recommended the release of the Guru. Jahangir ordered for the release of the Guru with due honor, but the Guru refused to be released until the 52 rulers who were imprisoned there were also released. Jahangir yielded and on the personal security of the Guru, all the prisoners were released in 1612. Period of the Guru's imprisonment was about eighteen months. Guru Har Gobind is remembered as deliverer of prisoners (Bandi Chhor). Sikhs celebrate the day on which the Guru reached Amritsar from Gwalior. This festival is called "Diwali". On this day, Sikhs decorate and illuminate their houses and exchange gifts. Diwali at the Golden Temple is worth seeing. Every nook and cranny of the Golden Temple is illuminated. People from far and near visit the Golden Temple and celebrate the festival.

From 1613 to 1627:

Relations between the Guru and Jahangir remained cordial till the death of Jahangir in 1627. The friendly saint, Mian Mir, and a senior Mughal official, Wazir Khan, were the main factors in smoothening over the rough patches in the Guru's dealings with Jahangir. Consequently, the Guru passed many years in peace. During this period, the Guru once accompanied Jahangir for hunting and saved his life from a tiger. The Guru also pursued with zeal the policy of preparing his followers for war. He persuaded Jahangir to hand over Chandu to him. When the Sikhs of Amritsar told Jahangir what Chandu had done to Guru Arjan Dev, he handed over Chandu to the Guru and the Sikhs of Amritsar suitably punished him.

Kaulan:

A Hindu girl, name Kaulan, was forcibly abducted by the Qazi of Lahore. She was a religious lady and became a follower of Saint Mian Mir. Thinking that Guru Har Gobind was champion of the Hindus, she gradually came into contact with the Guru through the saint and went to Amritsar. She took refuge with the Guru who treated her kindly. The Guru immortalized her by building a tank at Amritsar. It is called 'Kaul Sar' after her. The Qazi complained to Jahangir who refused to interfere as Wazir Khan defended the Guru by saying that the Qazi had kept her against her will and thus made her life miserable.

Baba Atal:

Guru Har Gobind had one daughter named Viro, and five sons – Gurditta, Suraj Mal, Ani Rai, Atal Rai, and Teg Bahadur. Once Atal Rai revived with a miracle his dead playmate, Mohan, whose parents were very happy; but the Guru did not like Baba Atal's use of miraculous powers. He said to Baba Atal, "We must surrender to God's will. Now that you have revived one person, whenever anybody dies, his relatives will bring the dead body to

you. How will you decide whom to revive and whom not to?" Atal Rai realized his mistake and said, "O True King! I feel that I should return to my Creator whom I have disobeyed." Saying so, he took a bath in the sacred tank and departed from this world. When the Guru learnt about Atal Rai's death, he advised everybody not to cry but bow to the Lord's will. As Atal Rai was only nine years old at that time, the Guru wanted that a nine-storied Gurdwara be built in his memory and free food should be distributed to the hungry there. A beautiful nine storied Gurdwara near the Golden Temple stands at that spot and is called Gurdwara Baba Atal. Faithful Sikhs distribute loaves of bread to the visitors. Hungry people gather there and say, "O Baba Atal, send us well baked loaves of bread (Baba Atal, Pakian Pakainan Ghal).

Propagation of the Sikh Religion:

Guru Har Gobind did not neglect the missionary work. He visited many places including Kashmir and foothills of U.P. (Pili Bhit) and the area between river Ravi and Beas for preaching Sikhism and stayed for some period at Kartarpur. He also recruited many soldiers during this tour. Painsa Khan, a famous Pathan warrior, was also enlisted. The Guru also developed a strategic city Hargobindpur. A local landlord opposed the construction and took the help of the Mughal forces of the area, but the Guru defeated the Mughals and developed the city.

Shah Jahan and Guru Har Gobind:

After the death of Jahangir, his son, Shah Jahan, also an orthodox Muslim, ascended the throne in 1628. He started his reign with the execution of all his brothers and nephews. During his first visit to Lahore, he ordered the destruction of three temples and building of mosques in their places. The Boali built by Guru Arjan Dev was filled with rubbish and the Langar building attached to it was converted to a mosque. As a result of this, the Guru had to fight three battles against the Mughal forces, all of which he won.

Battle of Amritsar, 1628:

Actual hostilities between the Mughal troops and the Guru's followers started on rather flimsy issues. Once the parties were hunting in the same forest near Amritsar and a dispute arose about the capture of a royal falcon that fell into the hands of the Guru's followers. They would have returned the same if the imperial army had not threatened the Guru and his Sikhs with dire consequences. Complaints were made to Shah Jahan against the Guru for his keeping forces, use of war drum and the raised platform for giving audience. A Mughal force of 7000 under Mukhlis Khan was sent from Lahore. At that time, Guru Har Gobind was celebrating the marriage of his only daughter, Viro. The Sikh detachment in the fort of Lohgarh, though courageous, was too small to cope with the invading army. They fell martyrs after killing hundreds of the enemy. The Mughal forces took possession of the Guru's house and fell on the sweets. When the Guru returned after performing the marriage of his daughter at a nearby village, he prepared the Sikhs for a surprise attack on the Mughals. Only 700 defeated 7000 Mughals killing many. The Guru also participated in the battle and killed Mukhlis Khan. The battle of Amritsar is an important landmark in the Sikh history. It marks the beginning of their armed struggle against the Mughals.

Battle of Lehra Gaga:

Guru Har Gobind once again got involved into trouble with the Governor of Lahore in 1631. One of the devoted Sikhs of the Guru brought two horses of the finest breed from Iraq. When he reached Lahore, the Governor seized his horses. One of the Guru's brave Sikhs, Bidhi Chand, offered to recover the horses. In disguise, he took up services in the Lahore fort, first as a groom and later on as a tracker. In due course of time, he escaped with both of the horses one by one. Before leaving the fort with the second horse he announced loudly who he was and where he was taking the horses. The Guru was pleased and liked the horses. Expecting reprisal, the Guru shifted to the desert lying between Bhatinda and Frozepur. As anticipated, the Governor sent a strong force, but the Guru retreated and took position near a tank of water in the waterless country. The Sikhs lay in ambush and defeated the enemy. The defeated Mughal army, on arrival of the fresh units, pursued the Sikhs who were leaving the area. Another battle was fought at Guruser. The Guru himself took part in the battle and with a heavy blow severed the head of the Mughal commander. The surviving Mughals fled and the Sikhs celebrated their victory.

Expulsion of Insolent Painda Khan:

After the battle of Guruser, the Guru stayed in that area for spreading Guru Nanak's message. As a result, many people embraced Sikhism. After about two years, the Guru returned to Kartarpur near Jullundur. The Guru's excellent soldier, Painda Khan, who had led the Guru's troops in all the battles and whom the Guru always treated with the greatest kindness, began to feel that he had been the cause of the Guru's repeated victories. He incurred the Guru's displeasure by handing over to his son-in-law the horse and the special dress that the Guru had given to him for his personal use. When asked about them, he told a lie and was caught red-handed. He became insolent and the Guru expelled him.

The Battle of Kartarpur, 1634:

The son of Chandu and the son of Prithi Chand made a common cause with Painda Khan. They flattered him so that he became their associate. The three went to the Emperor and offered to finish the Guru if they were given sufficient troops. The Emperor agreed and the Governors of Lahore and Jullundur sent a large army under the command of Painda Khan against the Guru who had only 5000 soldiers. A desperate battle was fought in which the Guru killed traitorous Painda Khan with his own hands. The Mughal army was repulsed with great slaughter. The Guru was sad on seeing the dead body of his beloved soldier, Painda Khan, and put his shield over his face in order to protect it from being trampled. The victorious Guru did not think it safe to stay any longer in the plains. Consequently, he retired to Kiratpur in the Shivalak hills. Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of the Guru on his behest, founded this town.

Stay at Kiratpur (1635-1644):

Guru Har Gobind spent the last nine years of his life at Kiratpur attending Kirtan and preaching work that had suffered due to the battles. He provided peace to his followers with teachings of Guru Nanak Dev. As a result, many Hindus and Muslims of the area became

Sikhs. The Guru entrusted the work of preaching in far off places to Baba Gurdaitta and his Udasi companions. Baba Bidhi Chand, a brave soldier, was sent to Bengal to spread Sikhism. Bhai Gurdas was sent to Afghanistan for the same purpose. The Guru himself went to Sri Nagar (U.P) where he met with Marathi saint, Ram Das. Who said to him, "Guru Nanak had renounced the world, while you wear the sword, keep horses and an army. People call you 'the True Emperor. What kind of saint are you?'" the Guru replied, "Saintliness is within. Sovereignty is without. The swords are to protect the poor and destroy tyrant. Guru Nanak Dev had not renounced the world. He had renounced mammon (Maya)." Ram Das was satisfied. The same saint, Ram Das later trained Shiva Ji who also fought against the Mughals in the same manner.

The Guru's Death and the Nomination of the Successor.

At the time of the Guru's death his two living sons were, Suraj Mal and Tegh Bahdur. Suraj Mal was fond of worldly pleasures and the later was a recluse. The Guru's eldest son, Gurditta had died in 1638, leaving behind two sons, Dhir Mal and Har Rai. The Guru did not consider Dhir Mal a suitable candidate and nominated his younger brother, Har Rai, who was 14 years old at that time. The Guru found in Har Rai the spirit of Guru Nanak Dev and gave him his throne at Kiratpur before leaving for heavenly abode. Dhir Mal had stayed back at Kartarpur and had not accompanied the Guru. He felt infuriated and did not part with the original copy of the Adi-Granth that is still in the possession of his successors at Kartarpur. Before departing, Guru Har Gobind said to Har Rai, "Don't mourn; rejoice that I am returning to my Home. Fill yourself with the song of His Name." He also advised Har Rai to keep 2,200 horsemen always with him, but avoid fighting. The Guru guided the Sikhs in spiritual as well as temporal matters for nearly 38 years. The Sikh history took a different turn during this period. He was the first of the Sikh Gurus to have entered upon a military career. He was trying to change the mentality of passive resistance of his countrymen towards the oppressor. He was awakening them after 600 years of slavery. He made it clear that to bear arms in defense of their homes and hearth was also a sacred duty. It is wrong to presume that he had fallen short of the lofty ideals of his predecessors. His battles were only to defend the community from unjust Mughal rule. These battles created self-confidence among the Sikhs. He combined in himself the spiritual and military leadership. The Guru did not neglect preaching and propagation of the Sikh religion. He went on missionary work to Kashmir in the north and to the hilly areas in the east, besides the deserts of the Punjab. No doubt he was a great warrior who himself took part in the battles, but he was basically a saint. We are justified to call him a 'Saint Warrior'.

THE SEVENTH MASTER GURU HAR RAI (1630-1661)

Early Life:

Guru Har Rai was born in 1630 at Kartarpur. He was the son of Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Guru Har Gobind. His mother's name was Mata Nihal Kaur. He had a strong body and was a skillful rider. He had a very tender heart like all true saints. He avoided causing pain or grief to anyone. He was always ready to do well to others. Like his grandfather, he was a saint as well as a soldier.

Accession to Guru's Throne:

As stated in the last chapter, only two sons were alive at the time when Guru Har Gobind departed for heavenly abode. The elder son, Suraj Mal, was a worldly man and had little or no aptitude towards spiritual pursuit. The younger son Teg Bhadur was a recluse. Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Guru Har Gobind had left two sons, Dhir Mal and Har Rai. Dhir Mal had proved disloyal and disobedient to his grandfather. Guru Har Gobind found Har Rai steady, pious and in every respect fit for Guru-ship so he bestowed Guru-ship on him with due ceremonies in 1644. Har Rai was only 14 years old at that time.

A Peaceful Period:

As a result of growing influence of Dara, the son of Emperor Shah Jahan, there was relaxation of tension between the Guru and the Mughals. Moreover, Guru Har Rai was also endowed with a peace loving nature and a reflective mind. His period was peaceful, but he still always kept 2200 soldiers with him. He also followed his grandfather's example of taking a sword-belt instead of a 'Seli'. His court also displayed the pomp and grandeur of an independent military leader. He, thus, kept the community in a state of preparedness.

Guru Har Rai and Prince Dara:

Aurangzeb, another son of the Mughal Emperor wanted to grab his father's throne. He wanted to kill his brother, Dara. Once he tried to poison Dara's food. Dara became seriously ill. No physician could cure him. A large number of physicians assembled and discussed the matter carefully. They prescribed a medicine for the suffering prince. A search for the medicine in the whole empire proved fruitless. Somebody suggested that the medicine might be available in the dispensary of Guru Har Rai. Although the Emperor was hostile to the Guru's father, he wrote a humble letter and requested the Guru for the required medicine. Shah Jahan knew that the Guru's house was a mine of sympathy and compassion for all; so he was sure that his request would be granted. The Guru sent the medicine through the bearer of the letter. The Emperor was very pleased, forgot his enmity to the Guru and vowed that he would never cause him harm. The medicine was administered and it affected a speedy recovery of the prince.

Pure Deeds Make a Holy Man:

A pious lady used to pray daily that the Guru should eat the bread cooked by her. The Guru who had spiritual power of perception had come to know of her desire. One day, during a ride, the Guru knocked at the door of her cottage and said, "O pious lady! Bring me the bread you have prepared for me." The woman, wild with joy, brought out some course bread that the Guru ate while still in his saddle. The disciples were astonished because this was not the time of his meals. Next day, as they rode again, they brought the meals at the same hour. The Guru laughed and said, "It was not hunger for food that caused me to beg for the bread, but hunger for love with which it was prepared. It is the love and devotion that attracted me to go there. Seldom I get such bread. I pine for my disciples more than they pine for me."

Guru Har Rai and Fugitive Dara:

Shah Jahan's friendship with the Guru was short-lived because the Emperor fell ill and the war of succession started. The cunning and zealot Aurangzeb fought with his brother Dara and defeated him. Dara ran towards the Punjab in 1658, met the Guru and wanted his help as the enemy was chasing him. The Guru helped him to cross the river Beas and thus saved his life. Dara was noted for his liberal views and honesty. He was no match for cunning Aurangzeb. He ran for his life, but was captured and put to death.

Aurangzeb and Guru Har Rai:

After firmly establishing himself on the throne by killing all his brothers and imprisoning his father, Aurangzeb made persecution of non-Muslims a regular feature of his administration. He summoned Guru Har Rai to his court at Delhi as it was reported to him that the Guru was preaching a religion distinct from Islam. The Emperor wanted to convert the Guru to Islam so that his followers may follow his example. The Guru consulted the Sikhs and it was decided that Ram Rai, the eldest son of the Guru, be sent to see the Emperor. When Ram Rai was leaving for Delhi, the Guru instructed him to concentrate on God and reply to the Emperor's questions patiently and carefully. He was warned to avoid flattery and to behave with dignity. He was reminded of Guru Arjan Dev's conduct when Jahangir wanted him to modify hymns in the holy Granth. A few Sikhs were sent along with him.

Aurangzeb and Ram Rai:

14 years old Ram Rai reached Delhi in 1661. He was well received at the court and was asked many questions which he replied tactfully. He also performed some miracles to please Aurangzeb. He was asked to explain the following verse in the holy Granth that, according to Aurangzeb, was derogatory to Islam. 'Mitti Musalman ki Pire pai Kumhar. Ghar bhande Ittan Kian Jalti Kare Pukar.' (A potter into dough kneads the dust of a Muslim, and he converts it into pots/bricks, which cry as they are put in fire.) In fact, this hymn was uttered by Guru Nanak Dev to indicate that cremation and burial differed little and only God knows the fate of the soul. In order not to offend the Emperor, Ram Rai replied that Guru Nanak Dev's actual word was 'Beiman' (faithless) and not Musalman that appeared in the text by a mistake of the scribe. This answer pleased the Emperor who gave Ram Rai an estate in the 'Doon Valley', but offended the Sikhs who reported the matter to Guru Har Rai. The Guru was deeply distressed at his son's behavior for having insulted Guru Nanak Dev and the Granth. The Guru declared Ram Rai unfit for Guru-ship and excluded him from succession. The Guru said, "Ram Rai should not show his face to me." Hearing this, Ram Rai proceeded to Lahore and tried, through his uncle, for a compromise with the Guru, but his efforts failed. Thus Aurangzeb's strategy of making the next Guru his tool failed.

A Glance at the Life of Guru Har Rai:

Guru Har Rai was a man of peace and had a very tender heart in a strong body. It is said that one day, walking in his garden, he got his clothes entangled in a flower bush. While he was pulling his clothes, some flower fell down on the ground. The Guru was so touched by the incident that thereafter he always carried his cloak carefully in his hands when walking in his garden. His dispensary contained the most rare and costly medicines. He also opened a shelter for lepers. He paid special attention to the community kitchen. He had instructed that his free kitchen must remain open, day and night. He desired that his Sikhs should also run free kitchen and share their food with others who needed. He made no distinction between

the rich and the poor. Like his grandfather, he was a mighty hunter. He chased and caught wild animals, but did not kill them. He kept them in his zoo and took care of them. Guru Har Rai busied himself in the work of preaching and peaceful organization. Some of the most powerful families became his followers. Phul, the ancestor of the ruling chiefs of erstwhile states, Patila, Jind and Nabha, was one of his followers. The Guru, by his diligent and earnest preaching, made many disciples. His listeners abandoned the worship of idols and cemeteries; and embraced the simple worship of God. One of the Guru's followers, Bhagat Bhagwan, established many centers of Sikh religion in Bihar, a state in the east of India. The Guru was very attentive to his devotion and ablation; and recited hymns to his followers. One of his followers, Gonda, was deputed to Afghanistan for preaching Sikhism. The Guru established the sanctity and divine nature of Guru Granth Sahib.

Final Departure:

When the Guru felt that his end was approaching, he selected his successor. He thought that Ram Rai who was plotting and struggling for Guru-ship was unworthy and seated his second son, Har Krishan, who was still a child of six years age on the throne in the presence of his followers. The Guru enjoined on all the Sikhs to consider Har Krishan as his image. The Guru closed his eyes and went to his final rest in 1661 at the early age of thirty-one.

THE EIGHTH MASTER GURU HAR KRISHAN (1656-1664)

Birth and Early Life:

Har Krishan, the second and younger son of Guru Har Rai and his wife, Krishan Kaur, was born in July 1656 at Kiratpur. Even in his childhood, Har Krishan was an exceptionally bright boy. He gave early indications of being worthy to succeed to the high office of Guruship. He had developed those mystic signs by which a Master is always recognized. He was called 'Child Saint.' It is said that he was an extremely charming child. He had bright eyes and there was a divine glow on his face.

Accession to Guru's Throne:

He was appointed Guru in 1661 at the age of five years and three months. Even then, he gave promise of docile spirit and acute intellect. At that early age, Guru Har Krishan used to give instructions to his Sikhs and resolve their doubts. A council of five Sikhs called 'Panchayat' managed the Guru's affairs. He remembered a great many hymns of his predecessors and the light of Guru Nanak Dev kindled in him. Whatever decisions he made, had the stamp of maturity about them. His mother and other senior Sikhs also gave him wise counsels.

Ram Rai's Complaint:

As stated in the last chapter, Ram Rai, the elder brother of Guru Har Krishan was ignored for having alienated himself. He had gone against the instructions of his father just to please the Emperor at Delhi. He was instigated by a few Masands and had declared himself Guru. Since

he was a self-appointed Guru, most of the Masands behaved in an unruly manner and did not care for him. They kept the greater part of the offerings for themselves. He made a complaint to Aurangzeb that his father had deprived him of his right just because of his loyalty to the Delhi throne. He pointed out that under the rule of the infant Har Krishan, the more ambitious of his followers would create trouble in the Punjab. Aurangzeb also wished the brothers to keep on quarreling so that their influence with the Sikh masses would weaken and he could win them over to Islam. Ram Rai implored the Emperor to summon Har Krishan to Delhi.

Guru Har Krishan Invited to Delhi:

Aurangzeb was a master in the art of diplomacy. He took full advantage of the rift between the two brothers. He asked Raja Jai Singh to summon the Guru to Delhi. He said, "I wish to see him. Be careful that he is treated with due respect." Raja Jai Singh was a senior court official and known for his devotion to the Sikh Gurus. He sent a high official to invite the Guru and respectfully escort him to Delhi. When the officer who had been deputed to summon the Guru delivered his message, the Guru said that he would give the reply the next day. The next day, the Guru said to the officer, "I was advised by my father not to see the Emperor. Moreover, my brother is with the Emperor. I can do nothing for His Majesty by accepting the invitation." The officer conveyed this reply to Raja Jai Singh who, in turn, wrote to the Guru that he and the Sikhs at Delhi were anxious to behold him. He further wrote that the Guru was at liberty to act as he wished regarding an interview with the Emperor. He will be an honored guest of Raja Jai Singh. Hearing this, the Guru agreed and set out the next day.

On the way to Delhi:

The Guru's mother and a large number of Sikhs accompanied him to Delhi. Many more joined on the way. When they reached Panjokhra, a village near Ambala, the Guru decided that the large number of Sikhs need not go with him any further. He bade them farewell. He advised them to live and act as the Sikh Gurus had taught them and also blessed them. Only the Guru's mother and a few Sikhs proceeded to Delhi. All others went back. While at Panjokhra, a Sikh said to the Guru, "A haughty Brahmin objects to your name. He says Lord Krishna gave his message in Bhagwad Gita. How can the Guru call himself with the name that makes him superior to Lord Krishna? He wants to test you on the knowledge of Gita." The Guru asked the Sikh to invite the Brahmin who himself walked in haughtily and said to the Guru, "I would like you to discuss the meaning of Gita with me." A water carrier named 'Chhajju' was sitting among the followers of the Guru. He said to the Brahmin, "I would like you to discuss with me before the Guru replies. I am a humble devotee of the Guru." The Brahmin asked him many questions to which he answered very satisfactorily. The Brahmin was surprised at his splendid display of knowledge. He was convinced that it was all due to the Guru's blessings that an ordinary villager could reply so accurately to the questions on the philosophy of Gita. He was convinced that the Guru had supernatural powers. He fell at the Guru's feet, begged his pardon, and requested to be allowed to become his disciple. The Guru advised him to remain humble and sweet. There is a beautiful Gurdwara on the spot in memory of this visit.

The Guru in Delhi:

On his arrival in Delhi, Raja Jai Singh received the Guru and his party with great respect. He took the Guru to his own bungalow, where he arranged a comfortable stay for the Guru. A Gurdwara called Bangla Sahib was subsequently built at the place of the Guru's stay. A holy tank has been added to the Gurdwara that is a place of pilgrimage for the devotees from the whole world. Aurangzeb sent the Guru some presents, but the Guru kept only a rosary and returned all of the remaining presents. Aurangzeb also wanted to meet the Guru, but the Guru asked Raja Jai Singh to speak to the Emperor on this point. The Raja persuaded Aurangzeb to respect the Guru's wishes and not to press for the meeting.

The Guru and Aurangzeb's Son:

Aurangzeb's son came to see the Guru and said that his father desired to see the Guru to find out the right person for the Guru's throne. Guru Har Krishan said, "The departing Guru makes the selection on merit and it is final and cannot be questioned. Furthermore, it is an internal matter of the Sikhs and the emperor should not interfere in it. I have already expressed the reason for not seeing the emperor. Ram Rai is at the court to transact any political or administrative business. If the Emperor desired any religious instructions, I shall dictate for him." The Guru dictated the following hymn of Guru Nanak Dev for the Emperor. "If the true God dwells not in the heart What is eating, what clothing What fruit, what clarified butter, and sweet molasses, What fine flour and what meat? What clothes, what a pleasant couch for billing and cooing, what an army, what mace-bearers and servants and what places to dwell in? Says Nanak, accept the True Name, all things are perishable. The prince took this hymn to his father who was impressed and whose eyes were opened to the truth. He was astonished that a child of seven years could have replied thus boldly and wisely.

The Guru Put to Test:

Once the Emperor said to Jai Singh, "You highly praise the Guru. Have you ever tested his intelligence? If not, do so now and report to me as I want to see him in disguise." Jai Singh, in consultation with his head queen planned to test the Guru. She dressed herself as a maid and sat among the other maids behind the queens. Jai Singh told the Guru of his queen's desire to see him. The Guru refused at first, but when Jai Singh requested again and again, he complied with his request. The Guru saw a large number of females ready to receive him. He pointed towards the head queen and said, "Why has the head queen dressed herself as a maid?" Upon this, Raja Jai Singh and his queen felt remorse and begged forgiveness. When Jai Singh informed Aurangzeb of the result of this test, he said, "I acknowledge that Har Krishan is a saint with supernatural powers. He is what his followers believe him to be. Ram Rai's claim is false. The Guru can return to Kiratpur as soon as he likes."

The Guru's Missionary Work and Final Departure:

Crowds of Sikhs thronged to see the Guru and receive spiritual consolation from him. He held daily congregations for morning and evening prayers and spread the message of Guru Nanak Dev to every corner of Delhi. An epidemic of small pox broke out during the Guru's stay at Delhi. The Guru himself went to the suffering patients to look after them. It is said that the very sight of the Guru healed the sick and comforted the miserable. As hundreds of devotees were visiting the Guru, he could not escape contracting the disease. He fell seriously ill and as desired by him, was removed to a house on the bank of the river 'Yamuna'. The

Guru's mother sat by his side and began to lament. Guru Har Krishan said, "Dear Mother, it is our duty to accept the will of the Almighty. Guru Arjan Dev has said, 'The master may gather the crop whether it be green, half-ripe, or ripe and fit to be cut.'" During the Guru's illness, everyone was ordered to repeat the sacred hymns and not to cry. Before he breathed his last breath, the Guru said, "Baba Bakale." This meant that the successor would be found in the village Bakala. Children don't call their parents or grandparents by name. By the word Baba, the Guru meant Teg Bahadur, the brother of his grandfather, who was living at Bakala at that time. Having said this, he closed his eyes forever in March 1664 at the age of eight. He was cremated at the bank of the river Yamuna, where now stands Gurdwara Bala Sahib.

THE NINTH MASTER GURU TEGH BAHADUR (1621-1675)

Birth and Early Life:

Tyag Mal (The Great Sacrificer), the youngest son of Guru Har Gobind and Mata Nanaki, was born in April, 1621 at Amritsar. On seeing the child, Guru Har Gobind prophesied that he would be a great hero. When Tyag Mal was five years old, he often used to get into deep contemplation and for hours he would speak to no one. He took no interest in playing with other children and did not quarrel with anybody. However, he listened to the songs of bravery and watched wrestling matches and other martial games. Arrangements were made for his education and training. He was given instructions in reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, athletics, horse riding, swordmanship, and marksmanship. Baba Budha and Bhai Gurdas were his worthy teachers. Guru Har Gobind's daily routine deeply influenced the growing mind of Tyag Mal. In 1633, he was married to Gujari, daughter of Sri Lal Chand at Kartarpur. In 1634 he distinguished himself in a battle against the Mughals. Guru Har Gobind was so much pleased with his bravery that he conferred the title of Tegn Bahadur (Hero of the sword) on him, by which name, he is known in the history. From Kartarpur, the family moved to Kiratpur. The death of his brother, Gurditta, affected the tender mind of Tegn Bahadur very deeply. He avoided worldly pleasures and turned even more to meditation and prayer. As desired by his father, he along with his mother and wife went to his mother's parents at village Bakala and lived there in seclusion for many years. The family lived a comfortable life on the income of the land at Hargobindpur. Tegn Bahadur used to work with his own hands and would give a portion of his earnings in charity. There he used to meditate in solitude in a basement.

Twenty-Two Impostsors:

As stated in the last chapter, Guru Har Krishan in his last words 'Baba Bakale' had indicated that the next Guru lived at village Bakala and he is 'Baba' a brother of his grandfather. As soon as, the news reached Bakala, many distant relatives of Guru Har Krishan set up their posts in the village and claimed the right to succeed him. These 22 self-made Gurus forcibly took the offerings of the faithful who came to Bakala. The most powerful of them was Dhir Mal, nephew of Tegn Bahadur. He had the original copy of the Adi-Garanth in his possession. He also employed some touts to proclaim as the ninth Guru. Consequently, worshippers were confused and suffered psychologically.

Makhan Shah finds the Truth at Bakala:

Leading Sikhs from Kiratpur visited Bakala and installed Tegn Bahadur on the Guru's

throne, but impostors declared this installation ceremony a fraud. At last a Sikh, named Makhan Shah, came to Bakala. He had prayed to the Guru to avert a calamity during one of his business trips and vowed in his heart to make an offering of five hundred gold coins. On safe completion of the trip, he brought the money but was disappointed to find so many claimants for the Guru-ship. He resolved to conduct a test of the pretenders. He visited everyone and offered each two gold coins. Every one said that the others were deceivers. He then inquired if there was any one else belonging to the Guru's family. He was told that there was a holy man named Tegha (Tegh Bahadur) son of Guru Har Gobind, but he made no claim of Guru-ship. Makhan Shah went to Tegh Bahadur's house and found him in deep meditation. Makhan Shah bowed to Tegh Bahadur and made an offering of two gold coins. Tegh Bahadur opened his eyes and said, "Brother, your vow was for 500 coins and not for two coins. Where are the rest?" Makhan Shah was delightfully surprised, prostrated himself before Tegh Bahadur and presented 500 coins. In excitement, he rushed to the housetop and shouted, "Guru Ladhore" meaning I have found the real Guru. Guru Tegh Bahadur was 43 years old at that time.

Guru Tegh Bahadur and Dhir Mal:

The Sikhs started making offerings and honoring Guru Tegh Bahadur. Dhir Mal could not tolerate it and became violently jealous. He plotted to kill the Guru with the help of his touts. About 100 of Dhir Mal's followers attacked the Guru. One of his touts, named Sihan, fired at the Guru and wounded him. Luckily the wound did not prove fatal. The Guru's house was thoroughly ransacked, but the Guru retained his composure and remained calm. He derived neither pleasure at excessive wealth nor grief at its loss. He was happy in whatever was the Will of God. When Makhan Shah heard of this occurrence, he with his men went to Dhir Mal's house. They seized him and his helpers, and brought them to the Guru. Makhan Shah recovered and restored to the Guru the whole property, which was taken by Dhir Mal and his men. He also took Dhir Mal's own property including the Adi-Granth and placed at the Guru's disposal. The person who had fired at the Guru placed his head at the Guru's feet and begged to be forgiven. Guru Tegh Bahadur, on seeing them humbled and distressed, ordered to release them and restore the property taken from Dhir Mal's house. The Guru preached to Makhan Shah and others that the wealth of the Name was sufficient for all his needs and said, "In anger man commits evil deeds. To exercise forgiveness is a divine act. There is no virtue equal to forgiveness." The Sikhs reluctantly returned Dhir Mal's property, but kept back the Adi-Granth. They felt that it was not his personal property and it belonged to the Sikhs. However, the Guru did not agree with them and it was returned to Dhir Mal although after some time. Now the Guru began to preach Guru Nanak Dev's message and the Sikhs from far and near came to pay their respects.

The Guru's visit to Amritsar:

Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to pay his respects to Har Mandar at Amritsar. When he with his family reached Har Mandar, he found the doors closed. He was refused to enter the temple. After Guru Har Gobind's departure from Amritsar, the temple had remained in the possession of Prithi Chand and his successors. Prithi Chand's grandson, Harji, met the Guru, but refused to open the door lest he (Harji) be ousted by the Guru and deprived of his income. The Guru bathed in the sacred tank, bowed to Har Mandar and rested on a spot where now stands a stone platform dedicated to his memory. He advised his companions not to use any force. He forgave the priests and said, "The priests of Amritsar are men of blind hearts that burn in

their greed." A few Sikhs came from a nearby village, Walla, and requested the Guru to stay with them. The Guru agreed. When the inhabitants of Amritsar came to know of what had happened, they went to the Guru and begged him to return. In memory of the Guru's visit, a yearly fair is held at the village Walla. Having communicated religious instructions to the villagers, the Guru returned to Bakala after visiting places associated with the lives of the previous Gurus.

Foundation of the city of Anandpur (Abode of Bliss):

At Bakala, the Guru was not allowed to remain in peace so he left for Kiratpur. While living at Kiratpur, he purchased a large tract of land (Makhowal) from the ruler of Bilaspur, a hill state, and in 1665 founded a new town called Anandpur. It is situated at the foothills of Shivalak range at a distance of five miles from Kiratpur and is near river Satluj. At first it was named 'Chak Nanaki' after the name of the Guru's mother. In due course of time Anandpur became an important center for the spread of Sikhism. Pilgrims from different parts of the world visit Anandpur to pay their respects.

Journey to the East for Preaching (1665-70):

This tour was aimed at places such as Dhaka and Dubri (in the Eastern most part of India) which had been sanctified by the footprints of Guru Nanak Dev. Consolidation of 'Sangat' and spread of Sikhism were two important objectives. He also wanted to go away from the selfish intrigues of frustrated relatives, where he could live in peace and devote himself wholeheartedly to the missionary work. His mother, wife, her brother, Kirpal Chand, and a few devoted followers accompanied him. He had his own tents, horses, carriages, bullocks, camels and necessary equipment for the journey. He passed through Malwa, area of the Punjab between the rivers Satluj and Ghaggar. He preached against the use of tobacco, induced people to dig wells and get rid of superstitions. He gave financial help to the needy villagers. After visiting Kurukshetra, Mathra, Allahabad and Benaras, the Guru reached Gaya. He blessed the Sikhs who called on him at various places. Wherever he halted, the Guru had wells sunk, tanks dug and free kitchens established.

Raja Ram Singh Seeks help of the Guru(1666):

Raja Ram Singh son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh, a Rajput prince was a general in the court of Aurangzeb. He was ordered by the Emperor to lead a dangerous expedition for the conquest of Assam (a state in the east of India.) Ram Singh, like his father, was a Sikh devotee. At Gaya, he approached the Guru to seek his blessings. He requested the Guru to accompany him during the operation and help him negotiating a settlement with the king of Assam. The Guru agreed thinking that this would be a good opportunity for preaching in the new territories. Ram Singh accompanied the Guru to Patna where the Guru left his mother and wife, entrusting them to his brother-in-law, Kirpal Chand, and his devotees and accompanied Raja Ram Singh to Assam.

Halt at Dhaka:

The Guru set out with the raja. Wherever the Guru went the people to whom he communicated religious instructions received him with great respect. Their next main halt was Dhaka where Guru Tegh Bahadur received the happy news of the birth of his son whom

he named Gobind Rai. Bulaki, a devotee of the Guru along with other Sikhs honored the Guru and received his blessings. Dakha became a Sikh center where a large Gurdwara was established. The Guru and the raja started towards Assam. The Guru remained busy in meditation and prayers. His fame spread far and wide. He mediated negotiation with the king of Assam successfully as the king had great respect for the Guru. The news of the peace treaty between the contending forces pleased everyone. The Guru, a peacemaker, prevented a lot of bloodshed. He stayed for some days at Dubri and got a Gurdwara built in memory of Guru Nanak Dev who had once visited that place.

The Guru Returns to Anandpur:

Meanwhile reports of Aurangzeb's determination to convert non-Muslims to Islam and make India a pure Muslim State reached the Guru. He decided to return to the Punjab immediately. After a few days stay at Patna, the Guru returned to the Punjab in 1670 leaving his family at Patna, as his son Gobind Rai was still young and the conditions in the Punjab were unsettled. A very important Gurdwara perpetuates Guru Tegh Bahadur's memory at Patna, the capital of the state of Bihar. In due course of time, Bhai Kirpal Chand, brother-in-law of the Guru, brought the family to Anandpur in 1671. Guru Tegh Bahadur developed Anandpur and started to live there. He devoted himself to bringing up Gobind Rai as best as possible. He groomed his son for the struggle ahead.

The Guru's Tour of Malwa. (1673 - 75):

During the Guru's stay at Anandpur, he constantly heard of the Mughal officials persecuting the non-Muslim population of the Punjab and converting them to Islam in large numbers. The Hindus were terror-stricken. The Guru realized the necessity of encouraging the Hindus and the Sikhs to face the situation boldly and not to yield timidly. Feeling deeply aggrieved at Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution, the Guru toured Malwa to strengthen the people's resolve to face and resist tyranny. He also cultivated personal relations with influential chiefs like Nawab Saif Khan of Bahadurgarh near Patiala and Soofi saints of the area. As the situation was alarming and the people were deeply perturbed, the Guru travelled from village to village and met his followers. The main theme of his sermons was: Don't frighten anybody nor be afraid of anyone. Apart from preaching the faith, he took an active interest in the problems of the downtrodden people of the area. Guru Tegh Bahadur dug wells at places where there was scarcity of drinking water. Tanks were constructed to store rainwater. He purchased cows and gave them away to the poor families. The Guru became a man of the people, teaching them to improve their lot through moral and spiritual elevation.

The Kashmir Pandits at Anandpur:

Guru Tegh Bahadur had still not recovered from the fatigue of the tour of Malwa, when he had to face a more serious problem. A fifteen-member deputation of the Pandits of Kashmir under Kirpa Ram arrived at Anandpur. They complained to the Guru against the policy of their forced conversion to Islam adopted by the Governor of Kashmir. They told the Guru that they were given a notice to choose between conversion to Islam and death. The Governor was under strict orders from Aurangzeb not to delay so that the common people may follow the Pandits. The Guru was deeply affected at their tale of woes. He remarked that, in order to put an end to this tyranny, a great man should come forward to sacrifice his life. Gobind Rai, a mere child of nine, who had been listening to all this exclaimed, "Revered father, who is

greater than you whose sacrifice can save the Pandits?" The Guru was very much struck by this remark of his young son. He told the Pandits that they should tell the Governor that if Guru Tegh Bahadur were converted first, they would follow him.

The Guru Arrested:

The Pandits went back and told the Governor what the Guru had said. The Governor informed Aurangzeb accordingly. The Emperor who had already heard the exaggerated reports of the Guru's activities in Malwa was offended by the Guru's support to the Kashmiri Pandits. He issued an order to the Governor of Lahore to arrest the Guru and to keep him in prison until he was called by him (Aurangzeb) to Delhi. After assuring the Pandits, the Guru ordained nine years old Gobind Rai as the next Guru as he knew that his hour had struck. He, accompanied by three of his followers undertook his journey to Delhi. The Guru and his companions were arrested by the Police Inspector of Ropar at a distance of 25 miles from Anandpur in July, 1675 and detained at Sarhind for four months. They were taken to Delhi under strong supervision in November 1675. The Guru was kept in an iron cage in the police station at Chandni Chowk (name of a crossing in Delhi).

The Guru's refusal to Give Up His Faith:

Several royal Muslim missionaries were deputed to persuade the Guru to give up his faith and accept Islam or to be prepared to die a terrible death. He was asked to show miracles to prove that he was a true Guru. The Guru replied, "Showing a miracle is to interfere in the work of God and it is wholly improper. As for embracing Islam, I consider my own religion as good as Islam and therefore change of religion is not necessary. The threat of death is no terror for me. I am prepared for death and will cheerfully accept it."

Torturing to Death of the Companions:

It was ordered that the Guru be put to the severest tortures. Five days of persecution was of no avail. To shake his resolve, three of his companions were brutally murdered one after the other before his eyes when they also refused to accept Islam. First of all, Bhai Mati Das was offered freedom and all other facilities if he embraced Islam. On his refusal, he was tied between two posts and, while standing erect, was sawn across from head to loins like a log of wood. He faced this savage operation with peace of mind. We Sikhs refer to such cruel operations in our daily prayers. Bhai Dyal Das also refused the offer and protested against the torture. He was tied up with an iron chain and put into a huge cauldron of boiling oil. In this way, he was roasted alive. Bhai Sati Das was also given the same choices. He refused the offer and remained firm in his resolve. He was wrapped in cotton, soaked in oil and burnt to death. He was calm till his last breath and continued to recite the sacred Jap Ji.

The Guru's Martyrdom in Defense of the Hindu Faith:

This all happened before the very eyes of Guru Tegh Bahadur who was all the time repeating 'Waheguru'. At the end of this devil's dance, the Guru was again offered to embrace Islam or show a miracle or face death. He was determined to sacrifice his life, but not to relinquish his faith. He knew that his end was at hand, but he was in high spirits. He expressed hope and faith in God's help in his famous stanza (Salok 54):- "Strength has come; the bondage is broken, All the resources are there; Says Nanak, Lord, everything is in Your power, You are

my refuge.” The inevitable happened and on the afternoon of November 11, 1675, the Guru was beheaded in the presence of thousands of people at Chandni Chowk, Delhi. Guru Gobind Singh has penned down this incident in the following lines: He sacrificed his life for protecting the rights of the Hindus, to wear their sacred thread and frontal mark... He gave up his head without uttering a word of sorrow. A grand Gurdwara called Sis Ganj (The Holy Head) stands at the place where the Guru was executed. The devotees visit the Gurdwara daily from every part of the world. Its adjacent building (police station) where the Guru was confined has been acquired by the Sikhs and converted into a free inn for the visitors.

Extraordinary Deeds of Jaita and Lakhi:

The head and body of the Guru lay at the crossing. Strong guards were posted to prevent them from being taken away. At midnight, a daring Sikh named Jaita, a Ranghreta by caste (Calico printer), approached the place secretly. He picked up the head and fled away to Anandpur, a distance of 200 miles. On his arrival there, Gobind Rai accorded a ceremonial reception to his father’s head. He performed the cremation with due rites at a place where now stands Gurdwara Sis Ganj (Kes Garh Sahib) at Anandpur. Gobind Rai held Jaita in a tight embrace declaring “Ranghreta Guru ka beta,” meaning the untouchables are Guru’s own sons. The next day, a severe dust storm began to blow. Lakhi Shah, a wanjara (trader) took advantage of it, picked the headless body of the Guru, hid it in his cart loaded with cotton, and took it to his hut outside the city. He covered it with firewood and set fire to his hut. He made it known that his hut had caught fire by accident. A grand Gurdwara called Rakab Ganj near the Parliament house building marks the site, at New Delhi. It is also visited by thousands of devotees daily.

Causes of the Martyrdom:

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the first Guru after Guru Nanak Dev who undertook long and extensive journeys for preaching. He advised people not to yield to despair and to be afraid of none but God. Such a liberal preacher could not escape the wrath of bigot Aurangzeb. The Guru’s last tour of Malwa prepared the ground for the sacrifice. A strong Sikh organization was a thorn in the eyes of the Mughal Emperor who tolerated it only during the first few years of his reign when he was busy strengthening his hold. He could not tolerate that his followers should regard a Guru as ‘Sachcha Padshah’ (True King). According to him, it created the impression that Guru Tegh Bahadur aspired to a sovereign power. The Guru was beheaded simply because he happened to be the head of a non-Muslim religious body. Aurangzeb’s religious policy was the main cause of this tragedy. He believed that Hinduism was utterly misconceived and corrupt. It was for the good of the Hindus if he could rid them of their superstitions and idolatrous practices. He thought that he could improve his image by mass conversion of the Hindus under his rule. He wished the country to be turned into Dar-ul-Islam (the abode of the Muslims) and thus secure a berth for him in paradise. He had starved his own father to death and murdered his brothers to secure the throne. The Islamic world thought poorly of him, and therefore, he adopted all conceivable means to change his image among his Muslim subjects by forced conversion of Hindus to Islam. He imposed special taxes on non-Muslims and ordered for the destruction of historic Hindu temples. He did not want to see any ‘Tilak’ (holy mark on the forehead) or ‘Janaeu’ (sacred thread) on any of his subjects. Forced conversion of Kashmiri pundits and their prayers to Guru Tegh Bahadur proved to be the immediate cause.

Effects and Importance of the Martyrdom:

Hindus, Sikhs, and Soofi Muslims were deeply shocked at the execution of Guru Teg Bahadur and his three companions. A Sikh of Delhi even made an attempt on Aurangzeb’s life. People were filled with indignation and revenge. They wanted a leader under whom they could fight and avenge the insult done to their religion. Khwaja Abdulla, a Muslim police officer of the police station where the Guru was executed, resigned his post and went to Anandpur where he spent the rest of his life as a recluse. In the words of Guru Gobind Singh, “At Teg Bahadur’s departure, the whole world was plunged into grief. The world wailed, but the celestial realms echoed with glory.” Guru Teg Bahadur’s martyrdom turned the tide of the history of the Sikhs and of India. It was realized that people themselves must find their own salvation from a cruel government. Guru Gobind Singh took up the task with the creation of the Khalsa. Thus the sacrifice paved the way for a strong organization of the Sikhs who resisted tyranny. The downtrodden people who had lived for centuries under complete subordination turned into warriors. In only 100 years, they not only ended the foreign rule, but stopped the foreign invasions of India from the northwest. Thus the sacrifice became the starting point for a mighty revolution and stemmed the tide of barbarism. Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom is unique in the history of the world. People give their lives for the principles dear to them. There is hardly anyone who staked his life for other people’s faith. This supreme sacrifice was essentially for the human rights. In the words of Guru Gobind Singh, “The Lord protected their (Hindu’s) paste-mark and sacred thread. And in the Dark Ages performed the mighty heroic deed.” The Guru performed the heroic deed under the inspiration of human ideals like compassion for suffering humanity, resistance, to tyranny and human rights of worship. We must not forget that the concept of human rights was not appreciated those days. None else in the world can match the Guru’s sacrifice. He also refused to purchase his safety by showing a miracle. Guru Gobind Singh has written in Bachitar Natak: - He refused to perform miracles, A cheap way of fooling people; True prophets of God are ashamed Of displaying their occult powers. The Guru gave his head, but swerved not from his determination. This peace loving man never compromised on principles. He did not flinch and faced his death with courage worthy of a spiritual leader. He sacrificed his head, but did not desert those whose hand he had taken for protection. The martyrdom was universally regarded as a sacrifice for the faith. Historians have called the sacrifice as ‘a self-sought martyrdom’. He is truly regarded as ‘savior of India’ (Hind De Chadar) meaning that he saved India with his martyrdom.

The Poetry of Guru Tegh Bahadur:

59 hymns and 57 couplets (Shaloks) composed by the Guru were incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh. These writings testify to the saintliness of his character. He was a poet of deep perception. His couplets, which form the concluding section of Guru Granth Sahib, continue to be popular generation after generation and they are a great solace to people in grief and sorrow. Some of them were probably composed in the prison in Delhi. Nearly all the themes of his earlier hymns are repeated in these couplets. The concluding couplet (number 57), affirms the Guru’s faith in God and in the imminence of his union with Him. Its English translation is being given below. “I have lodged the Name of God in my heart--God’s Name that is supreme of all, whose meditation annuls all sufferings and favors the devotees with a sight of Divine presence.” It is said that his poems are tears shed for people in the silence of his heart; they awaken the dry hearts of men. It is poetry of peace and poise. His hymns generally begin with the word ‘Sadho’ (devoted friends), ‘Mai’ (mother) and ‘Re Mana’ (O’ my mind). He regards life as an illusion and his poems are long laments

over the folly of man lost in dreams of power and pride. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the Guru viewed life with disdain. He never resorted to asceticism, foreign to the character of Sikhism. Language of his stanzas and hymns is sweet and can be easily understood.

THE TENTH MASTER GURU GOBIND SINGH (1666-1708)

Birth and Childhood at Patna:

Gobind Rai, the only son of the ninth Master, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Mata Gujari, was born in December, 1666 at Patna, the capital of Bihar state in India. His father had stationed his family at Patna on his way to Assam on a tour of God's mission and in order to help Raja Ram Singh negotiated a peace treaty with the raja of Assam, as stated in the last chapter. Great rejoicing took place on Gobind Rai's birth at Patna and Dhaka where Guru Tegh Bahadur happened to be at that time. There stands a beautiful Gurdwara at the place where Gobind Rai was born. It is one of the holiest shrines of the Sikhs and one of the five highest seats of religious authority called 'Takhats' or Thrones. In the Gurdwaras are preserved some of the relics from Guru's childhood such as cradle, pair of shoes and arrows. A glimpse of the innocent face of the handsome child was a matter of joy for many at Patna. Among them were two Muslim nobles, Rahim Bakash and Karim Bakash. They were so much impressed by the piety, he radiated, that they made to him an offering of two gardens and some land. This property now belongs to the Sikh temple at Patna. This extremely lovely and charming child was brought up like a prince. As he grew up, his most favorite sport was to divide his companions into two groups and enact mock fights. He acted as the leader in such fights. His toys were toy bows and arrows. He took great pleasure in thus leading his companions through mock maneuvers and then feasting them at the end of the day's play. He played matches, which required courage and strength. He was fearless, brave, active and full of mirth. He gave clear signs of the kind of life he was to lead later. He also learnt to read Gurmukhi from his mother.

Journey to Anandpur:

Guru Tegh Bahadur, on his way back from Assam to Anandpur, stayed for some time at Patna. He left his family at Patna as the child was of a tender age and the atmosphere in the Punjab was not favorable. In due course of time, the family followed. Gobind Rai was only six years old at that time. On the day of departure, many companions of Gobind Rai and citizens of Patna bade a very touching farewell to the party. As the party approached Anandpur, it was given a royal welcome. Gobind Rai's entry was hailed with joyous ceremony.

Early Life at Anandpur:

For Gobind Rai, Anandpur was a paradise on earth. The greatest blessing was the affection of his father. The daily congregational assemblies under Guru Tegh Bahadur were a source of spiritual inspiration for him. He now began to learn Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, Arithmetic and History. He spent the rest of his time in hunting and other manly sports. He was trained in horsemanship, the use of sword and spear, bow and arrow and musket and matchlock. He started practicing archery and enacting mock battles with his companions. Thus he prepared himself for the great mission ahead.

Investiture Ceremony:

Gobind Rai was only nine years old when Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life for human rights. It was a tragedy too deep for words. Yet, Gobind Rai displayed matchless fortitude and calmness. He consoled his family and the Sikhs. As stated in the last chapter, he greeted Jaita who had brought the severed head of Guru Tegh Bahadur, embraced him affectionately and exalted his whole tribe. He cremated the head with due honor while the congregation sang sacred hymns. In March 1676, Gobind Rai was formally installed as Guru. He, like a king, wore a 'Kalgi' or plume on his head. He now succeeded to the spiritual sovereignty of the Sikhs as well as to the authority governing their secular affairs.

A Nation in Formation:

Martial Exercises and sports were resumed with redoubled vigor. Hunting expeditions, competitions in horse riding and archery became a common feature of life at Anandpur. Followers were told to bring offerings of weapons and horses. The hills began to echo with heroic balladry. Sadness in the heart of the Sikhs was giving way to a new determination and purpose. It was a new nation in formation. He accepted professionals into the small army that he started to raise. He made it obligatory for those who lived with him to exercise their muscles along with their souls. He got constructed a huge kettle drum called 'Ranjit Nagara' (the drum of victory) which was beaten, morning and evening, as symbol of royalty. It was also beaten when the Guru went out for hunting or at the meal times. This custom of beating on the kettledrum at meal times is observed, even today, in the Sikh Gurdwaras at many places. He also got himself extremely well versed in different languages and read ancient and current lores in those languages. Morning and evening services were held regularly to keep the minds attuned to the Supreme Being. His maternal uncle, Kirpal Chand, recruited a small force for the protection of the young Guru.

Raja Ratan Rai of Assam visits Anandpur to Pay Homage:

During Guru Tegh Bahadur's tour of Assam the ruler of Assam, Raja Ram, a devotee of Guru Tegh Bahadur had requested the Guru that he be blessed with a son. The son, born to Raja Ram, was named Ratan Rai who along with his mother and retinue came to see Guru Gobind Rai at Anandpur. He brought, in addition to many wonderful gifts, five strong horses and a very intelligent small elephant. The tiny elephant could perform many tricks. It washed Guru's feet with a jug of water, wiped his shoes and placed them before him. It also fetched an arrow shot by the Guru, waved a whisk of peacock feathers over Guru's head and at night held glowing torch in its trunk to light Guru's path the fame of this elephant spread far and wide and many people came to see it. The Raja stayed at Anandpur for five months. He enjoyed the Guru's company and accompanied him for hunting many times. When the Raja was parting, the Guru gave him suitable gifts and said to him, "Do your duty honestly and love your subjects as your own children. Be just and kind to them, and fix your thought on God."

Conflict with Bhim Chand, the Ruler of Bilaspur State:

Anandpur was situated in the hilly state of Bilaspur. Its ruler did not like the large Sikh gathering and their martial activities near his capital that was only ten miles away. He also objected to the beating of the "Ranjit Nagara" by the Sikhs. He thought it was the privilege of

the rulers alone. The Guru's condemnation of caste and his declaration of equality among all human beings also gave a jolt to the pride of the Rajput ruler. He did not tolerate a sovereign state springing within his state because he felt that the Guru had become to assert himself politically. Moreover, he was afraid of the wrath of the Mughal Emperor and his governors if the Guru was allowed to gain power. The Raja decided to assert his authority over the Guru. He asked that the famous elephant from Assam and a costly silken tent, presented to the Guru by a devotee, be given to him on loan for a few days on the occasion of the betrothal of his son. The Guru knew the Raja's intention, so he brushed aside his request saying, "Anything presented to the Guru's house is not supposed to be loaned." Relations between Anandpur and Bilaspur became tense. Jealousy of Bhim Chand led to two skirmishes between the Sikhs and his soldiers in which the Sikhs repulsed those who wanted to uproot the Guru. (There were 22 hill states at that time. These have been merged now into one state called Himachel Pardesh.)

Marriage:

In those days early marriage was the rule. The Guru was married to Jito, daughter of Harjas Subhikhi of Lahore, in 1677. As going to Lahore was not safe, the marriage was celebrated at a village near Anandpur. This village is called 'Guru Ka Lahore'. In those days, their in-laws gave brides a new name at the time of marriage. So Jito was given the name of Sundari. The Guru had four sons. Their years of birth and names are given below: Ajit Singh 1687, Jujhar Singh 1691, Zorawar Singh 1696 and Fateh Singh 1699. Mata Sahib Dewan had vowed from childhood to marry the Guru. Her father with a few Sikhs presented her to the Guru who refused to marry second time. The girl refused to go back. The Guru accepted her on the condition that she would not have conjugal relationship. She was declared the mother of the Khalsa.

The Guru leaves Anandpur for Nahan:

Cordial relations had existed between the Sikh Gurus and the ruler of Nahan, capital of Sirmur state, since the time of Guru Har Rai. The ruler of Nahan was not on good terms with the ruler of Garhwal state and wished to safeguard his borders. Medni Parksh, the ruler of Nahan invited the Guru to settle down in his state. The Guru was unwilling to leave Anandpur, but was persuaded by his mother to accept the invitation. He left an adequate guard at Anandpur and set out towards Nahan. The ruler who looked after him and his Sikhs in the most hospitable manner warmly received him.

The Guru founds Paonta:

The Guru selected a place on the bank of the river Yamna, 25 miles from Nahan and set up his camp there. He laid the foundation stone of a fortress in 1685. The building was soon ready and the Guru took up his abode in it. The place was named Paonta.

Resumption of Literary Activities:

Guru Gobind Singh was a great admirer of poets and scholars. He patronized 52 scholars and poets in his court. While at Anandpur, regular poetical contests were held and prizes were

awarded to those who excelled in these contests. The same practice continued at Paonta also. Every full moon night poetical contests were held. The Guru himself was a poet per excellence. His vast knowledge of several languages, which he freely used in his compositions to create fantastic word, pictures and expresses unparalleled flight of ideas. His compositions covered two main subjects, devotion and bravery. 'Jaap Sahib' and 'Akal Ustat' are the examples of incomparable devotional compositions while 'Chandi Dee Var' and 'Shashtra Nam Mala' are compositions that infuse new vigor and fearlessness in the hearts of readers. One of his most famous couplets which is a part of the translation of 'Krishan Avtar' and which he completed at Paonta runs as follows: Grant me boon O' Lord, that I may never shirk from doing good deeds. I may have no fear of enemy when I go to the battleground; and assuredly achieve victory. In mind there is but one desire that I may (ever) sing Thy praises and when the time comes, I may die fighting in the thick of action. He encouraged the poets in his court to translate from Sanskrit, 'Ramayana' and 'Maha Bharat' and stories of bravery from the 'Puranas'. One of the most famous poets in his court was Nand Lal Goya who was a highly regarded scholar of Persian and Arabic, and a gifted poet. He was serving in the court of prince Muazzim, the son of Aurangzeb, who was highly impressed by his knowledge of Arabic and his convincing interpretation of some difficult portions of Koran. Aurangzeb wanted to convert Nand Lal to Islam. When Nand Lal found out the intention of the Emperor, he left the prince and took refuge with Guru Gobind Singh. His devotional Persian poetry is very highly regarded among the Sikhs and is sung along with Gurbani Kirtan. Five Sikhs were sent by the Guru to Benaras to learn Sanskrit in order to break the hold of Brahmans on Hindu scriptures. A large body of literature was thus produced in 'Brij' (akin of Hindi of today) and Punjabi. Most of it was, unfortunately, washed away in the flooded river 'Sirsra' at the time of the Guru's exodus from Anandpur. Some of the Guru's compositions are preserved in the 'Dasam Granth' the Book of the Tenth Master. Three of these compositions, 'Jaap Sahib' 'Sudha Sawaihs' and 'Chaupai' are among the five daily prayers for the Sikhs.

The Guru Helped Punjab Kaur 'widow of Ram Rai:

Ram Rai son of Guru Har Rai whom his father had disowned and thus deprived from Guru-ship was living on the estate granted to him by Aurangzeb near the city of Dehra Dun. He had created a sizeable center of his own and had visited Paonta to see the Guru. His agents seized his property after his death. His widow appealed to the Guru for help. The Guru rushed to Dehra Dun, got hold of the culprits, recovered and restored the property to the widow and punished the perpetrators.

Sayyid Budhu Shah:

At a distance of ten miles from Paonta, there lived a Muslim saint named Budhu Shah at village Sadhaura. He had heard much about the Guru, and longed to see him. He along with his disciples came to pay a visit to the Guru and make his offerings. The Guru received him warmly and seated him by his side. Budhu Shah said, "I am a great sinner. Kindly pray to God and save me from His wrath." The Guru replied, "God is all mercy. Repent of your sins and resolve never to repeat them. Do good deeds and help the needy. Be humble and truthful. Feel that God is watching your actions. Ever remember God and pray to Him for mercy. If you live such a life, you need not fear God." Budhu Shah was delighted to hear these words and remained for some days with the Guru who gave him religious instructions. One day, Budhu Shah asked the Guru how he could meet God. The Guru said as night met the day.

Budhu Shah said that when night met the day, it did not remain the night. The Guru exclaimed, "Similarly, one's ego is the obstacle in meeting God, on disappearance of ego one meets God." The saint was satisfied and became a devotee of the Guru. After some days, 500 Pathans came to the saint and said, "We were in the army of Aurangzeb who dismissed us for a minor fault. Nobody is willing to employ us kindly help us." Saint Budhu Shah took them to the Guru and recommended them for enlistment. The Guru took them into his service.

The Battle of Bhangani, 1688:

The Guru brought about reconciliation between the rulers of Nahan and Garhwal, but still the war-like activities of the Guru alarmed the hill rulers. They were afraid of the growing power and popularity of the Guru. Large number of his low-caste followers was a threat to their deep-rooted caste prejudice. The democratic spirit among the Sikhs was in direct conflict with the feudal system of those rulers. They always resented the Guru's teachings, specially his practice of common kitchen. They were also afraid of the Mughal Emperor. The peaceful atmosphere of Paonta was disturbed by a conflict forced upon the Guru. A son of the ruler of Bilaspur was wedding the daughter of the ruler of Garhwal. The Guru sent costly gifts for the daughter of the ruler but the same were returned as the ruler of Bilaspur who was not on good terms with the Guru objected to their acceptance. While returning after the wedding, the ruler of Bilaspur along with other hill chiefs plotted to attack Paonta. They seduced the Pathan mercenaries who deserted the Guru. The Guru sent a word to Budhu Shah about the treachery of the Pathans. He brought 700 soldiers under his four sons. The enemy crossed the river near Paonta, but the Guru intercepted them in the valley of Bhangani. The fighting was tough and hard. The Sikhs fought hard. Budhu Shah's two sons and one of the Guru's cousins were killed. The Guru, himself, took part in the battle and killed Hari Chand, a hill chief and two Pathan chiefs with his arrows. At nightfall, the enemy troops and their rulers ran away. The victorious Guru returned to Paonta and blessed Budhu Shah with his loose hair, comb, and turban in appreciation of his services. These are still preserved as sacred relics in the Shah's family. Victory in this battle is very important as defeat of the hill chiefs led to the self-reliance of the Sikhs. It raised the prestige of the Guru considerably and exposed the hollowness of the power of the hill chiefs. They were convinced that they could not evict the Guru from Anandpur without the support of the Mughals. Thus it paved the way for the Mughal-Sikh conflict. The Guru dispersed his camp at Paonta and returned to Anandpur in 1688. In order to fortify the town, the Guru constructed six forts on strategic hills and named them: Anandgarh, Lohgarh, Kesgarh, Holgarh, Fatehgarh and Nirmohgarh. The chief of Bilaspur made peace with the Guru by paying him a visit on his return to Anandpur.

Battles of Naduan and Guler:

In 1690, while Aurangzeb was in the south India, the hill chiefs under the leadership of the chief of Bilaspur stopped payment of their tribute to the Emperor. They sought the Guru's advice and help. The Guru advised them to resist the demand and agreed to help them in the struggle. This resulted in a battle fought between the hill chiefs and the Mughal forces at Nandaun. Some of the hill chiefs defected to the Mughals. The Guru also took part in the battle, which ended in the defeat of the Mughal army. In 1693, the Governor of Jammu sent a stronger expedition against the hill chiefs. The Guru sent his force to help the chief of Guler state who did not yield in spite of the fact that many hill chiefs had joined the invader. A bloody battle was fought. It also ended in the defeat of the Mughal forces.

Hola Mohalla:

Free from the battles, the Guru gave training to his Sikhs in defensive battles. He gave preliminary directions to the large gathering that had assembled on the occasion of Holi, a festival celebrated by the Hindus by spraying colored water on one another. The Sikhs were divided into two groups and a mock battle was fought. The attacking force employed many tactics of warfare. Drums were beaten and both sides took a number of prisoners. The Guru also took part in it. Thus Holi was turned into Hola Mohalla. The 'Nihags' celebrate it at Anandpur every year. They ride on horses with sparkling spears and swords. They shout war cries and march in a procession. Wrestling matches and other contests are also held.

Service, not Birth and Caste Matters:

One day, the Guru while sitting in a group of Sikhs asked for a cup of water. A handsome young man with clean and soft hands brought it to him. The water was crystal clear and the cup was also clean. The Master, after taking it in his hands, returned it to the young man without drinking and said, "It seems your hands have not yet labored in the service of others." The boy replied, "I come from a rich family, therefore, I have never worked for anyone yet." The Guru said, "My son, go and make them pure in the service of the saints. The body must be used in useful work and service. Do not shirk work, specially, when it is to serve the holy persons." The youth's pride of his wealth and birth was shaken. He started serving in the Master's community kitchen. The Master was highly pleased and loved him. Once there came into the assembly a youth belonging to the caste of Kalal (wine distiller). Kalals were looked down upon by the society because of the caste prejudice prevailing at that time. He stood at a little distance and did not join the congregation. The Master invited him to come and sit in the assembly. The youth hesitated and said that he was a Kalal. The Master immediately said, "No, come in, you are not a Kalal, but Guru Ka Lal (a ruby of the Master)." Such was the attitude of the Master toward the low castes. He loved to lift them and did raise them by his baptism of love.

Foundation of the Khalsa, 1699:

Certain factors impelled the Guru to create a national army of his own. He had seen that when his father was beheaded in a public square of Delhi, no one except two low-caste Sikhs in disguise and under the cover of darkness had come forward to claim his body and head. The Guru's relations with the hill-chiefs had shown that there could be no compromise between cosmopolitan Sikhs and caste-conscious hill-chiefs. A national army was essential to oppose Aurangzeb's religious fanaticism. The nine Gurus preached against the caste system and made considerable progress towards the creation of a caste-less society as was evident by a common kitchen where everyone sat together and partook the food. It was the need of the hour to completely eradicate the caste system from the society as visualized by Guru Nanak Dev. In such a society, people stood by each other irrespective of caste, creed or color. The Master had seen lack of discipline and steadfastness in a section of his followers during the battles as indicated by some desertions. The Guru wanted to develop the spirit of courage and steadfastness among his Sikhs who would be recognizable among even a thousand non-Sikhs. He decided to create national awakening in the people who were ready to follow their selfless leader. He wanted to infuse a new life into the dead bones of Hinduism to make them

forget their differences and to regain their lost glory. He, therefore, decided to evolve an order that would keep as its ideal of life nothing but sacrifice for the cause of Dharma and would not accept slavery of any kind.

The Call of the Master:

For the next Baisakhi festival in 1699 that falls on the first day of the month of Baisakh (Indian calendar), the Guru issued a general invitation to his Sikhs throughout the country to visit Anandpur. It is said that eighty thousand persons assembled in response to the Guru's call. After the congregational services, the Guru stood up with the naked sword in his hand, and thundered in the assembly, "I want a Sikh who can offer his head to me, here and now." There was a hush in the congregation. His eyes flashing, the Guru roared again and repeated his amazing call. His words surprised the audience who gazed in awed silence while he spoke again and reiterated his call for the third time. Daya Ram of Lahore stood up and said with humility, "My head is at your disposal, my true Lord." He walked behind the Guru inside a tent nearby. A thud of sword was heard from the tent. The Guru came back, his sword dripping blood. Men in the congregation fled in terror, and there was a panic in the audience. "I want another head," roared the Guru. Before he could repeat his call, another disciple, Dharam Das, placed his head at the disposal of the Master. He was also taken to the enclosure. Again there was a thud of the sword and as before, the Guru came out of the tent with his sword drenched in blood. This was more than many could endure. Some of them went to complain to the Guru's mother who sent word to the Guru, but he continued with his unusual behavior. The Guru made three more calls. Mohkam Chand, Himmat Rai, and Sahib Chand cheerfully responded one after another, and advanced to offer their heads. After the five had surrendered themselves to the Guru, he put a stop to further demands. A short time later, he brought out the five Sikhs he had taken into the tent, each dressed in fresh garb, blue turbans, loose long yellow shirts (Cholaa), and knickerbockers (Kasheraa) worn as underwear and with swords (Kirpan) dangling by their sides. No one, except the Guru and the five Sikhs, knows what happened in the tent. (All kinds of speculation are advanced) The Guru declared that these five Sikhs would form the nucleus of the order of the Khalsa (the pure ones) that he was going to inaugurate. The whole assembly resounded with the shouts of 'Sat Sri Akal,' meaning immortal is God. It would be interesting to know that out of the five, three belonged to untouchable classes.

Ceremony of Baptism:

The Guru then asked for a steel bowl filled with water. He kept churning it with a double-edged dagger while reciting the following sacred hymns: Guru Nanak Dev's 'Japji,' Guru Amar Das' 'Anand,' and his own 'Jaap,' 'Chaupai,' and ten 'Sawaiyahs.' Mata Sahib Devi brought some sugar crystals, which were put into the vessel as desired by the Guru. Sweetness was thus mingled with the alchemy of steel (bravery). When the recital was finished, the Guru administered the sweet blessed water that he called 'Amrit' (nectar) to his Beloved Five. They were asked to kneel down on their left knee and look into the eyes of the Guru who then proceeded to give each one of them five palms of 'Amrit.' He also sprinkled the holy water over their heads and faces five times. They were asked to partake of it from the same bowl by turns. In this way, the Guru's spiritual power penetrated into their souls. They were designated 'Panj Pyare' (Beloved Five). The Guru said that they were his sons. This revolutionary act marked a complete break with the past.

Emblems of Khalsa:

They were given the surname of 'Singh,' meaning lion and were forever to wear the five emblems of the Khalsa. The emblems' Punjabi names begin with 'K': (1) Kesha, or long uncut hair and beard; (2) Kangha, a comb tucked into the Kesha to keep it tidy; (3) Kara, a steel bracelet worn to remind the Sikh of his promise to the Guru to be true; (4) Kachcha, breeches down to knees worn by the soldiers of that time; (5) Kirpan, a sword for defense and a symbol of royalty for fighting oppression. The Guru asserted, "One who leads a disciplined life is my Sikh, rather he is my master and I am his disciple." The Guru provided his followers these five jewels, which were within the reach of everybody. These symbols gave the Khalsa semblance of unity and close brotherhood. They developed group consciousness and provided the Khalsa with a new uniform. The Master wanted his followers not to be able to hide their identity and face danger boldly. Moreover, the previous Gurus and saints kept long hair, so the Guru also wanted that his followers should have saintly appearance like them. For a 'Khalsa' hair is sacred and symbol of his being the Guru's follower.

Injunctions:

The Khalsas were also required not to do the following: A) to wear a cap B) to worship tombs, graves and cherish superstitions C) to eat Halal, meat of the animal (cut in the Jewish or Muslim style) D) to smoke. He also enjoined the Sikhs to observe strict fidelity to their spouse. He wanted that before beginning any work, prayer should be offered and the Sikhs should help one another. They should practice riding and using arms. A Sikh should never covet another's property. Every Sikh should say the five prescribed prayers daily. He should greet another Sikh with, 'Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh' (Khalsa belongs to the Lord and the victory too belongs to Him).

The Disciples Baptize the Master:

Now the Master stood before his five Beloved disciples with folded hands and requested them to baptize him likewise. This stunned everyone in the assembly. They said, "You are our Guru; how can we administer the Amrit to you?" The Guru replied, "It is a new order I have evolved today. There will be no high and no low. The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa." The Guru was then administered Amrit the same way. It electrified the atmosphere. It was for the first time in the history of mankind that the Master sat at the feet of his disciples asking to be blessed with a draught of nectar. Now Guru Gobind Rai became Guru Gobind Singh. Somebody in the assembly remarked, "Wah Guru Gobind Singh, ape Gur te ape chela" (Hail to Guru Gobind Singh who himself is the Master as well as disciple). Thus he merged himself into the Khalsa and endowed it with his own personality.

The Guru's Exciting Oration and its Result:

Then Guru Gobind Singh spoke to all the Sikhs present and said, "I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Any five baptized Sikhs can administer 'Amrit' to any number of men or women anywhere. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism. In order to safeguard your temporal and spiritual rights, you should not depend on fate. Love of neighbor must accompany the punishment of the oppressor. Salvation is to be attained in this very life, here and now. Women shall be equal to man in every respect. No veil (Purdah) for them anymore. There should be neither

burning alive of a widow on the pyre of her dead husband nor killing of newborn daughters. I am but a servant of the Supreme Being, and anyone calling me God will be thrown into the cauldron of hell." Though several hesitated to follow the Guru, many were baptized at their request on that day. Their number rose to 80,000 in two weeks Anandpur became the hub of activity. Baptismal ceremonies continued for several weeks. The word went around the country that the Guru had created a new order. It infused a new spirit in the Hindus and struck terror in the hearts of the Guru's adversaries.

Abolition of the Institution of the Masands:

Guru Arjan Dev had put a Sikh of high spiritual status in charge of each district and called him by the dignified term of 'Masand', which literally means high seat. The Masands preached Sikhism and collected offerings from the Sikhs. They presented these offerings to the Guru on the occasion of 'Diwali' and 'Baisakhi' festivals. The system worked well upto the time of the 6th Guru. After that most of the Masands became corrupt. They unduly forced the poor Sikhs to give the tithi, which they did not pass on, to the Guru. They were also adopting a defiant attitude towards the Guru. The tenth Master was determined to abolish this order. He summoned the Masands to Anandpur and divested them of their positions. Those who had serious charges against them were punished and if you who were good and honest were honored by the Guru. The system was abolished once for all. He advised the Sikhs to send their offerings directly to the Guru at Anandpur. This immediate attack on the Masands is a tribute to the Master's determination and boldness.

A Donkey in a Tiger's Garb:

Once a Sikh killed a tiger and presented its skin to the Guru. The Guru fastened the skin on a donkey and let it loose. People raised an alarm on seeing the supposed tiger. The whole population was terrified. The Guru gathered some Sikhs for hunting. As they approached the supposed tiger, it began to bray. The donkey was caught and the tiger's skin was removed. Then the Guru said, "You should not behave like the disguised donkey. I want you to learn a lesson from this. As long as you were bound by caste and superstitions, you were like donkeys. I have given you Khalsa uniform and have made you my Singh (lions). Stick to that uniform of five 'Kakars' and never discard them. If the donkey had preserved the tiger's garb and conduct, it would have been treated as a tiger. If you discard the Khalsa uniform, you will fall from the lofty position. Keep yourself distinct from others in character and conduct."

Hill Chiefs Feel Danger and Turn Hostile:

The Guru invited the hill chiefs to take Amrit and join the order of the Khalsa. He exhorted them saying, "I am concerned about your fallen state. You should feel ashamed to call yourself brave Rajputs when the Mughals carry away your daughters and wives before your own eyes. Your temples are being demolished and many of your faith have been forcibly converted to Islam. Gird up your lions, join me and elevate the fallen condition of your country. Let the four castes become brothers." The Guru's appeal had no effect. The hill chiefs were perturbed at the growing power of the Guru and at the creation of the Khalsa. They were of the view that, in due course of time, the Khalsa would eliminate them. Abolition of caste system was a challenge to the social exclusiveness of the hill society. They had enjoyed special rights for centuries. They were pained to find the members of the low castes being raised to a position of equality with them. They were jealous and afraid of the

Guru after being defeated at Bhangani. The ruler of Bilaspur was more alarmed as Anandpur was situated in his state. He asked the Guru to pay rent for the land occupied by him or leave Anandpur. As Guru Tegh Bahadur had purchased the land, Guru Gobind Singh rejected the demand. There was a skirmish between the Sikhs and the soldiers of Bilaspur in which the latter suffered many casualties.

Hill Chiefs on the War Path, 1700:

The hill chiefs formed a coalition and decided to march upon Anandpur. They isolated Anandpur from the outside world. Efforts of the hill chiefs to break the fortification were beaten off. The Guru's eldest son, Ajit Singh, won praise for his skill and valor in this battle. The hill chiefs used a drunken elephant for battering the gate of the fort Lohgari. Bachhitar Singh made a powerful thrust with his spear and injured the elephant that ran back and trampled several hill soldiers. The hill chiefs were compelled to abandon the siege and flee for safety. The hill chiefs, then, appealed to the Viceroy of Delhi who sent a strong force under Pinda Khan. Hill chiefs also joined him, but no amount of pressure could dislodge the brave Sikhs from their position. The Guru killed Pinda Khan in a single combat. Mughal forces and the hill chiefs took to the flight and a large booty fell into the hands of the Khalsa.

The Guru's Visit to Riwalsar, 1701:

The hill chiefs realized the futility of continuing hostility with the Guru. They wanted to make peace and invited the Guru to an annual fair at Riwalsar, a holy place of the Hindus. The Guru visited with his family and the hill chiefs who entreated him to forget and forgive warmly received some Sikhs. He told them that he had no malice towards anyone. He invited them to his camp and gave them a cordial reception. The Guru was still at Riwalsar when the hill chiefs learnt that Auragzeb was planning to attack Anandpur. This news changed their attitude and they dropped the peace efforts with the Guru. A princess of Nahan state, Padma, who was a devotee of the Guru came to know of it and told the Guru about the secret design of the hill chiefs and the Mughals. The Guru hastened back to Anandpur.

Amazement of the Hill Chiefs:

At Riwalsar, a Sikh offered the Guru a double-barreled gun. Every body admired the gun. The Guru loaded the Gun and said, "I want to test how far the gun can shoot. Let a Sikh stand 100 yards away." Many Sikhs rushed to serve as target of the gun. Everyone tried to be in front of the other. On seeing this struggle, the Guru said, "All of you should stand in a single line. I want to see how many of you the bullet can pierce through." All the Sikhs stood in a line. They were firm like a rock. The Guru took aim slowly and carefully so that the bullet passed over their heads. The Guru had wanted to test the faith of the Sikhs and show the same to the hill chiefs who were amazed. They said, "How can we defeat the Guru whose Sikhs serve him with such devotion and obedience?"

Manly Performance of Bibi Deep Kaur:

With baptism, the Guru had infused fearless valor in all hearts. Here is an example of one baptized lady, Deep Kaur, who displayed exemplary spirit of courage. While on her way to Anandpur, her male companions halted for taking rest, but she continued her journey. When

her companions were out of sight, two armed men blocked her way and threatened her. She read their evil designs in their eyes, but did not lose heart. She threw one of her gold bangles on the ground and said, "Take that and go away." One of them bent down to pick up the bangle. She drew her sword, and, at once, cut off his head. Before his companion could recover from the shock, she fell upon him and, with a quick stroke of her sword, finished him too. By then, her companions also arrived and were surprised at the courage shown by her. When they reached Anandpur, the incident was narrated to the Guru who remarked, "She has proved to be a true Sikh. Everybody should follow her example."

Saiyad Khan, Mughal General Turns the Guru's Devotee:

The hill chiefs had become sworn enemies of the Guru. They wanted to get rid of him. With the help of the Mughal forces, they fought three battles against the Guru, but failed to expel him from Anandpur. In one of the battles fought in 1703, Saiyad Khan was the general of the Mughal and hill forces. He was the brother of Pir Budhu Shah's wife. He was surprised to know that his brother-in-law (Sir Budhu Shah) was a devotee of the Guru and his two sons and many soldiers died fighting for the Guru in the battle of Bhangani. He had heard a lot about the spiritual power of the Guru from his sister and had become a secret admirer of the Guru whom he longed to see personally. When he saw the Guru on his blue horse in his battlefield, he shot an arrow at the Guru, but the arrow missed the target. Then he pulled out his musket, but his aim that was known to be flawless, let him down. Now the Guru invited him to hand-to-hand fight with the sword. When he saw the Guru from closer quarters, he came down from his horse, refused to fight, and fell at the Guru's feet. He became a devotee of the Guru and spent the rest of his life in prayer. After the battle, the Guru praised his Khalsa in one of his compositions in the following words, "It is through the kindness of the Sikhs that I have won all of my victories. Through their favor have I acquired honor, otherwise there are millions of ordinary mortals like myself."

Restoration of an Abducted Bride:

The Guru's fame was spreading far and wide. One day a Brahmin (Hindu priest) came to Anandpur bewailing that some Pathans had forcibly abducted his bride. He petitioned the Guru to restore his bride to him. The Guru sent his son, Ajit Singh, with one hundred cavalry to rescue the bride. Marching with speed, Ajit Singh surprised the Pathans, fell upon them like lightning, captured them and produced the culprits along with the bride before the Guru. She was restored to her husband and the Pathans were punished for their misdeeds.

Aurangzeb's Invitation:

Aurangzeb was greatly exercised over the defeat of the Mughal forces and the defection of Saiyad Khan. He desired that the Guru should be compelled to vacate Anandpur and be killed. His advisors suggested to him that it would be better to win him over with diplomacy. So the Emperor wrote a personal letter to the Guru in the following words: "Your religion and mine believe in the unity of God. You should acknowledge my sovereignty that I have attained by the grace of God. If you have any grievance, see you and me will be treated as holy men are treated. Don't challenge my authority else I shall have to march against you." After due consideration, the Guru declined the invitation and sent the following reply, "My brother! God who made you the Emperor has sent me to the world to do justice. You don't do

justice and discriminate against non-Muslims. How can I be at peace with you so long as our ways are different?"

The Last Battle of Anandpur, 1704:

The ruler of Bilaspur state was deputed by the other hill chiefs to go to South India and apply in person for help to Aurangzeb. The emperor had already received the Guru's reply and was in fury. On reading the alarming petition of the hill chiefs, he issued orders to the Governors of Sirhand and Lahore to lead an expedition against the Sikhs and capture the Guru. The hill chiefs with their forces joined the Mughal forces under Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhand, and the Governor of Lahor at Ropar near Anandpur. The Sikhs met the advancing forces with fire from their guns. The invaders did not expect this kind of planned and aggressive action, so they were surprised. When the armies disengaged in the evening, the allied forces had suffered heavy losses. The battle on the second day was equally severe. The Guru himself took part in the battle. His son Ajit Singh won admiration by his deeds of valor. The issue, however, remained inconclusive.

Bhai Kanhiya, the Real Founder of the Red Cross:

At the end of the second day's fighting, some Sikhs complained to the Guru that a Sikh, Bhai Kanhiya, had been giving water to the wounded enemy soldiers. The Guru asked Kanhiya if that was true. "Yes, my Lord," said he. "I have been giving water to everyone who needed it in the battlefield. I didn't see any Muslim there. I see the entire creation as God's children. I fail to distinguish between the Sikhs and the Muslims." The Guru was highly pleased with him and blessed him. He gave him bandages and ointment, and bade him to continue serving the suffering soldiers. The followers of Bhai Kanhiya are known as 'Sewa Panthis' meaning, those on service mission and are still preaching Sikhism and serving the sufferers. Their aim in life is service. The Guru told the Sikhs that Bhai Kanhiya had truly understood his mission. Bhai Kanhiya can be called the founder of the Red Cross.

The Master Besieged:

On the third day, the Guru's troops fought with great enthusiasm in spite of the fact that they were fighting against heavy odds. The Mughal forces succeeded in laying siege to the Anandgarh fort. The Sikhs continued to fight with God's name on their lips. The siege continued for some days and the provisions began to run short. The Khalsa lived on leaves and bark of trees. Water supply from the channel was cut off. As the siege continued, the hardship increased. But the spirit of Khalsa remained undiminished. Some Sikhs suggested evacuation, but the Guru rejected the idea. Forty Sikhs wavered in their resolution and insisted on leaving. The Guru told them that they could go if they were ready to disown him. They actually wrote a statement disowning the Guru and left.

Farewell to Anandpur:

Taking advantage of the situation, Wazir Khan formed a plan to capture the Guru alive. He sent the Guru a letter signed by Aurangzeb as a guarantee for the safety of all if the Guru vacated the fort. On hearing this, the Sikhs pressed the Guru to accept the offer. The Guru's mother also supported them. The Guru did not rely on the enemy's assurance, but he knew that an effective defense of Anandpur was impossible owing to the lack of provisions and other supplies. He thought that even if the imperial troops betrayed their trust, it would be

better to die fighting than to die from hunger. Therefore, the Guru agreed, though reluctantly to evacuate Anandpur. He took the most valuable things before leaving Anandpur on the night of Dec. 20-21, 1704.

Trust Betrayed by the Mughals:

When the Mughals learnt that the Guru and his followers had evacuated the fort, they pursued and overtook them on the bank of the swollen river, Sirsa. They attacked them and killed many of the Sikhs. In the midst of cold, darkness, and fierce fighting, complete confusion prevailed among the Sikhs. Some daring Sikhs pushed their horses into the swollen river and crossed it. Much of the Guru's property and many valuable manuscripts were washed away. In the confusion, the Guru's mother and his two younger sons were separated from the Guru. Some Sikhs towards Delhi hurriedly led Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devi. When the Guru crossed the river, he was left with his two elder sons, the five Beloved Ones and thirty-five other Sikhs, forty-three souls out of four hundred.

The Battle of Chamkaur, December 1704:

After crossing the river, the Guru realized that he was in open country with enemy in front as well as in the rear. The Guru rushed towards Chamkaur, a village nearby, and took shelter in the mud-walled double-storied house belonging to one of his Sikhs. The Mughal army came, surging like dark clouds and threw a tight ring around the house. They aimed at capturing the Guru alive so they did not blow up the house. The Sikhs, in batches of five, went forth to contend with the army outside and died fighting like heroes. The Guru's two sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, in their teens, begged their father, one after the other, to be allowed to court death. The Guru cheerfully agreed to their request. The Sikhs got agitated and said that the Guru's sons could not be allowed to risk their lives. "All of you are my sons," said the Guru as he overruled their objections and directed his sons to go out by turn and face the enemy, several thousand strong. From the balcony, the Guru watched with his own eyes their heroic fight and martyrdom at the hands of the enemy. The Guru rendered his gratitude to the Lord for having been able to restore to Him what He was pleased to grant the Guru. By nightfall, the Guru was left with five Sikhs. Seeing how hopeless the situation was, the Sikhs requested the Master to leave Chamkaur. They said to him, "You will create thousands of Khalsa as warriors who will destroy the tyrants." The Guru did not agree. Then the Sikhs said, "O true kings, we five as Guru Khalsa, order you to go. Kindly excuse our assuming your role." The Guru had no alternative but to obey. Two of the Sikhs offered to remain in the fortress. The other three accompanied the Guru at midnight. Before they left the fortress, they extinguished with a shower of arrows the night torches of the enemy. They created chaos among the Mughal forces and escaped unmolested. It was decided that they would meet on the outskirts of the village Machhiwara. In the morning, the battle was resumed. As the two Sikhs holding the fortress could not keep the enemy away, the Mughal soldiers scaled the wall, but were disappointed to find that neither of the two Sikhs was Guru Gobind Singh. Writing about this battle, in a letter (Zafarnama), the Guru wrote to Aurangzeb, "What could forty famished men do when opposed by countless?" There is a beautiful Gurdwara at Chamkaur where numberless devotees in memory of this tragic event attend an annual fair.

Martyrdom of Younger Sahibzadas (Princes) at Sirhand:

Gangu, the Guru's cook, had taken charge of the younger princes, Zorawar Singh and Fateh

Singh, aged 9 and 7 and the Guru's mother, Mata Gujri, after crossing the river Sirsa. He took them to his village. At night he stole their bag containing money. Next morning, when it was pointed out to him, he feigned ignorance and protested for being blamed. He informed the village headman of their presence. They were arrested and taken to the Governor of Sirhand who ordered them to be confined in a tower where they passed the cold December night on hard floor. Next day, the Sahibzadas were summoned before the Governor. They refused to bow before him and uttered 'Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.' The Governor was annoyed and threatened to torture them if they did not embrace Islam. Both of them firmly refused to give up their faith. They were given 24 hours to think, and promised many gifts and comfortable lives if they agreed. They were warned that they would be bricked alive if they refused. When Mata Gujri heard about this, she said to them, "Stay strong like your grandfather, my beloved children." Next day, the Governor again made the tempting offers, but they rejected all of them. He ordered them to be bricked alive. The Nawab (chief) of Malerkotla state who was present there pleaded for them, but of no avail. When they were covered up to their shoulders, the same offer ---Death or Islam---was repeated to them. They remained firm and calm. At this point, their heads were cut off by the order of the Governor. When Mata Gujri was told about the martyrdom of her grandsons, she thanked the Lord for giving them a dignified death. She closed her eyes and breathed her last meditating. Todar Mal, a rich businessman, cremated the three dead bodies by purchasing the land at a huge price. Gurdwara 'Joti Saraup' was erected later on that piece of land. Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib stands at the place where Sahibzadas were beheaded. This all happened in the last week of December 1704. (Barely six years later, Banda Singh Bahadur killed Wazir Khan in a battle and razed the city of Sirhand to the ground. Sirhand is on the main road connecting Delhi and Amritsar.)

Uchch Da Pir (a Muslim Saint of a City Called Uchch):

The Guru left Chamkaur, walked barefooted through the forest full of thorny bushes. His clothes got torn and his feet were bleeding. Due to extreme fatigue, he lay down on the ground with a stone as a pillow and slept. In spite of such a depressing condition, he did not lose courage nor did he, for a minute, forget the Lord's Name. A beautiful composition expressing longing for the Lord is assumed to have been composed by the Guru at this occasion. In the mean time, the three Sikhs came and met the Guru at Machhiwara. On being informed that he was being pursued by the Mughals, the Guru did not like to stay with the Sikh who had given him his house. Two Pathans, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who had sold horses to the Guru at Anandpur and had great respect for him, offered their services to him. The Guru was to disguise as a Muslim saint of Uchch. The two Pathans and two Sikhs carried him on a cot while the third Sikh served as an attendant. This scheme saw them safely through the Mughal troops who were camping on the way. When the Pathans took leave of the Guru, he gave them a letter of appreciation that is still preserved by their descendants.

Zafarnama (The Epistle of Victory):

The Guru proceeded towards Rai Kot. The Muslim chief of Rai Kot entertained the Guru. Here the Guru received the tragic news of the martyrdom of the younger Sahibzadas and the death of Mata Gujari. He received the news with perfect composure and fell into prayer of gratitude for having rendered unto the Lord what was really His. The Guru gave the chief of Rai Kot a sword as a present. It is now preserved in the British Museum, London. The Guru's next place of halt was village Dina. He stayed there long enough to gather, once again, a band

of devoted Sikhs. It was here that the Guru addressed a letter to Aurangzeb. The guru had lost his four sons, his parents, and brave Sikhs in his struggle against oppression. The enemy forces were chasing him. Even then he was not demoralized as the contents of the letter indicate. This letter was written in response to Aurangzeb's invitation to the Guru to meet him. The letter is a fair-sized poem of one hundred and eleven stanzas in Persian and is preserved in the Dasam Granth. In this letter, Aurangzeb is repeatedly chided for breach of faith in the attack made by his forces on the Sikhs when they vacated Anandpur on solemn assurances of the Emperor's generals. The Guru says in this letter, "When there is no other course open to man, it is but right to unsheathe the sword. O king, I have no faith in your oaths. Although my four sons have been killed, I (the coiled snake) remain to continue the strife. Victory and defeat are to be judged by the ultimate standard of morality and not by temporary material gain. You are monarch of the world, but far from you is religion. My protection is God, who is above and beyond all worldly kings." The Guru sent this letter to Aurangzeb who was at Ahmed Nagar, a city in South India, through two of his devoted Sikhs. The Guru asked Aurangzeb to come and see him. The letter was duly delivered and the Emperor expressed a wish that the Guru might come and see him. But before the two could meet, Aurangzeb died.

The Forty Immortals:

The Guru left Dina and took to traveling from village to village. He learnt that the Governor of Sirhand, with a force of 5,000, was marching to capture him. Many new converts were made and a band of devoted Sikhs gathered around him. Clash with the Mughal forces now seemed imminent. The Guru returned into the waterless wastes of Khidrana on the banks of a small lake. The forty Sikhs who had deserted the Guru at Anandpur belonged to the district of Amritsar. Their women folk and relatives for having forsaken the Guru castigated them. A young woman, Bhago, was determined to wipe out this badge of infamy. She gathered the forty deserters who now repented on their cowardice and marched towards Khidrana to seek the Guru's pardon. One morning, they found the Mughal troops coming to attack the Guru. They spread their loose sheets on the bushes to give an impression to the enemy that a large force was camping there. They sat scattered among the bushes ready to fight. When the enemy troops drew near, a bloody battle started. It alerted the Guru and his men. The Guru took his position on a sandhill on the other side of the lake and directed a rain of arrows on the enemy. The forty Sikhs fought with swords when their stock of ammunition and arrows was exhausted. They died like heroes after killing a large number of enemy soldiers. Their aim to alert the Guru and to check the enemy, as long as possible, was achieved. The Mughal forces returned after sustaining heavy losses. Now the Guru advanced to the actual scene of the battle. Mai Bhago who was injured but alive greeted him. She told him how the forty deserters had fought bravely and laid down their lives. A little farther, the Guru saw another Sikh, Mahan Singh, lying seriously wounded and about to expire. He requested the Guru to pardon all the forty renouncers and restore the snapped relationship. The Guru granted pardon to all and declared that those forty had become 'Forty Liberated Ones' or Muktas. Their deeds of heroism have become a part of the Sikhs' daily prayer. Khidrana is known after them as Mukatsar (Pool of liberation). Every year in the month of January, a big fair is held there in their memory. Mai Bhago was saved and is remembered as Joan of Ark in the Sikh history. She was with the Guru up to the last moment.

Prose at Damdama Sahib:

The Guru now proceeded to a village, Talwadi Sabo, now called Damdamasa (a sacred

resting place) in January 1706. Here he built a house for himself and stayed there for nine months. It became a place of reunion as Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devi with Bhai Mani Singh came there from Delhi. In sorrow, they asked where their four sons were. The Guru pointing towards his Khalsa, replied, "The four sons have been offered as a sacrifice over the heads of these sons. What does it matter if we have lost four sons while thousands of them are alive." He consoled them by saying that they have died for their faith in God and would live forever. The old glory of Anandpur had returned to Damdama Sahib and the Sikhs thronged here from far and near. The Guru baptized them and Sikhism took firm roots in this region. The Guru baptized more than a hundred thousand people. A Muslim named Ibrahim also received baptism. He was named Ajmer Singh. Guru Gobind Singh wanted to include the compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the Adi-Granth, the original copy of which was with Dhir Mal at Kartarpur. The Guru sent for this copy, but Dhir Mal refused to part with it. So the Guru recited the Granth from memory and Bhai Mani Singh recorded it. Guru Tegh Bahadur's hymns were included at appropriate places. Bhai Mani Singh also made more copies of the Holy Scripture. The Guru also made addition to his own compositions that were then compiled by Bhai Mani Singh and the resulting volume is known as 'Dasam Granth' or the Book of the Tenth Master. Thus Damdama Sahib became a famous seat of learning. A big Gurdwara was erected there later on. It is one of the holiest shrines of the Sikhs and one of the five highest seats of religious authority called Takhts (Thrones). A fair is held there every year in April.

On Way to Aurangzeb, 1707:

When Aurangzeb received the Zafarnama, he was struck with remorse. He dictated from his sickbed a letter to his Prime Minister at Delhi asking him to show friendliness to the Guru, invite him, send him with honor and escort him to the royal presence. The Guru had heard nothing of this development, but knew about the failing health of Aurangzeb. So he decided to go and meet him personally in the south India. Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kaur were sent back to Delhi and the Guru left for the south. On his way, the Guru happened to pass the grave of Dadu, a famous Muslim saint and a reputed poet. Out of respect for the poet, the Guru lowered his arrow before the grave. The Sikhs accompanying him objected to it and reminded him that he had told them not to worship the graves. The Sikhs passed a resolution and fined the Guru for his lapse. The Guru accepted it with grace. He was proud of his Sikhs for their respect for the principles. He was still on his way when his Sikhs who had taken the letter to Aurangzeb, met him, and gave him the details. A short time later, the Guru received the news of Aurangzeb's death. He proceeded no further and turned to Delhi.

Relations with Bahadur Shah:

Aurangzeb's death was a signal for the usual war of succession among his sons. Muazzam, the eldest son, who finally became the Emperor under the title of Bahadur Shah, requested the Guru through Bhai Nand Lal for help. He had a reputation of being a liberal man, had regard for the Guru and being the eldest was the rightful heir to the throne. He promised to look into and redress the grievances the Guru might have had. The Guru placed his Sikhs under the command of Bhai Dharam Singh to help Muazzam in the battle of succession. Muazzam was successful. As a token of his gratefulness, he invited the Guru, through Dharam Singh, to Agra. At Agra, Bahadur Shah received the Guru with great honor. He thanked the Guru for help and presented him with a jewelled scarf, a dress of honor and an

aigrette (Kalgi). He invited the Guru to accompany him on his march towards the south India. The Guru had a plan to return to the Punjab, but agreed to accompany him to complete the negotiations. On the way, the Guru imparted his message to the people of new territories through which he passed. The Guru's negotiations with Bahdur Shah remained inconclusive. He found Bahadur Shah evasive and helpless in taking any action against Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhand. The Guru saw little profit in pursuing the talks any further. He broke off with the Emperor and told him that he would try his own resources to punish the tyrants. The Guru set up his camp at Nander now called Hazur Sahib.

Banda Singh Bahadur Deputed to the Punjab:

At Nander, the Guru visited the abode of a Hindu saint, Madho Das, who was known to possess occult powers. The Guru lay on his couch in his absence. Madho Das, on his return, saw this and was furious, but as soon as he set his eyes on the Guru, he could perceive the great spiritual power in him. All his anger was gone. He fell at the Guru's feet and called himself his 'Banda' (slave). The Guru was deeply touched at his humility and reminded him that it was the duty of persons like Banda to fight against tyranny and even to lay down his life in the struggle. Banda offered to do as he was bidden. The Guru baptized him and named him, Banda Singh. He gave him five arrows from his own quiver, and escort of a few of his chosen Sikhs as his advisers, and advised him to go to the Punjab to carry on the campaign against tyranny and injustice. The Guru sent letters to his Sikhs in the Punjab to join Banda Singh in his war against cruelty. Banda Singh bowed at the Guru's feet, promised to do as he was instructed, and left Nander soon after. Banda Singh punished Wazir Khan by killing him in a battle, sacked Sirhand within a year and shook the foundation of the Mughal rule until he was overcome and murdered in 1716.

Departure to the Eternal Home:

The secluded town of Nander on the bank of river Godawari attracted the Guru who decided to settle there. But he had not too much time left. Wazir Khan felt alarmed at the Emperor's conciliatory treatment of the Guru. Their marching together to the south made him jealous. He sent two of his trusted men to assassinate the Guru. These two pathans regularly attended the daily sermons of the Guru at Nander and displayed keen interest in his teachings. They also won the confidence of other Sikhs. One day, as the Guru lay in his chamber resting after evening prayer, one of the pathans suddenly fell upon him and stabbed him. Before he could attack again, the Guru struck him down with his saber. His companion fell under the sword of the Sikhs who had rushed in on hearing the noise. (Some historians write that Bahadur Shah was also a partner in this conspiracy.) The wound was treated immediately and was stitched up. It is said that the emperor sent an English surgeon to stitch the wound. The Guru began to recover under proper care. But not long afterwards, as he stretched a powerful bow, the healing wound opened again and bled profusely. This weakened the Guru's physical frame. As the condition of the wound grew worse, the Guru realized that his end was near. He called all the Sikhs present at Nander and, in his last sermon, said to them, "The human body must perish sooner or later. God alone is immortal. Nobody should yield to sorrow or mourning on my death. Everything happens according to the will of the Lord. I am merging myself into the Khalsa. No one should erect any shrine commemorating my death. The community should be guided by the Five Faithful chosen from among the devotees." A day before the end came, the Guru asked for the sacred volume of the Adi-Granth to be brought forth. He placed before it five pice, a coconut and bowed before it, according to the tradition. He conferred Guruship

on the Adi-Granth. Thus the Adi-Granth became Guru Granth Sahib, the Guru eternal. The Guru uttered Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh, to bid his last farewell to the Sikhs and breathed his last on October 7, 1708. Thus passed away from the earthly scene a great teacher and regenerator of mankind at the young age of forty-two. A beautiful Gurdwara, 'Sach Kand' stands at the place of his cremation. It is also one of the five 'Takhts' (thrones), the highest seat of religious authority.

Achievements of Guru Gobind Singh:

Guru Gobind Singh's four acts of crowning glory are 1) creation of the Khalsa, 2) bestowal of political sovereignty on the Khalsa, 3) his selection of Banda Singh Bahadur to fight against tyranny, and 4) declaring the Holy Granth as the eternal Guru. It is undeniable that Guru Gobind Singh must be counted among the greatest men of all ages. The Guru's predecessors had considerably elevated the morals of the Hindus. But the work of evolving a body of man inspired by sane and high moral and ethical standards was reserved for the exceptional genius of Guru Gobind Singh. He realized that the Hindus were terror stricken and demoralized. They had a religion but no national feeling. The Guru made nationalism a religion with them. Caste was a great barrier to unity, the most important element of nationalism. He struck at the very root of this evil by declaring that nobody could call himself a true Sikh if he did not regard his entire fellow Sikhs as his brothers. They were to take food from the same common kitchen sitting in rows and adopt the same family name of 'Singh'. The Khalsa created by him formed a brotherhood in which the low-caste was equal to the highest. The Guru embraced everyone, irrespective of caste or creed into his fold. Three out of the five beloved ones who were baptised first belonged to low –castes. He set the unique example of himself being baptised by his followers. He infused democratic spirit in the Khalsa brotherhood. He gave his followers an external insignia of saint-soldiers who were ready to die for freedom and protection of the downtrodden. He emancipated their mind from the bondage of superstitions. In whatever condition they happened to be, a living faith in one God was their guide. The Guru's 'Amrit' and teachings had the magical effect of changing an outcaste into a brave and determined saint-soldier. Creation of the Khalsa gave the people self-confidence and stopped the flood of conversion to Islam. A Muslim Soofi poet of the Punjab, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, has written, "I neither say of the past nor do I speak of the future, but I talk of the present time and declare that but for Guru Gobind Singh, all the Hindus would have been converted to a foreign culture and religion." He shattered the halo of invincibility, attached to the lord of Delhi and destroyed the awe and terror inspired by the Mughal's tyranny. He transformed sovereignty to the poor of our land. He strove for it and sacrificed everything for it. He awakened the dormant spirit of his followers. He believed not in the divine right but in human rights. He enjoined upon his followers to regard the sword as their principal stay in the world. Confectioners, sweepers, and barbers became leaders of armies before whom the Mughal and hill forces trembled with terror. He left the leadership to the collective wisdom of the community. Though, the Guru did not live long enough to see his aim accomplished, his labors were not lost. Success is not always the measure of greatness. He roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people who conquered Sirhand and killed tyrants like Wazir Khan within five years after the Guru's death. Within the same century, they were the masters of their state. He set the soul of his followers free. The Guru's selection of Banda Singh Bahadur for uprooting tyranny is another act of crowning glory. But for the efforts and sacrifices of Banda, the people of the Punjab would have remained leaderless and demoralized. He shook the foundation of the Mughal kingdom that seemed invincible. He was the first Sikh ruler who struck coins in the name of Nanak

and Gobind. His great success, though short-lived, gave Sikhism prestige and power. Guru Gobind Singh had sown the seed, Banda reaped the harvest. Guru Gobind Singh invested Guru-ship in the Holy Granth for all times to come in order to avoid all possible family feuds as well as impostors and to check any division in Sikhism. He anticipated the abuses if it fell into unworthy hands. He enjoined upon the Sikhs to look upon the Granth as their only Guru in the future. The Guru realized that some disappointed aspirants for the office of the Guru-ship would create some more sects leading to confusion and chaos. The only remedy to avoid all these dangers was the abolition of human Guru-ship. Another important aspect of the Guru's genius was his poetic excellence. He used the medium of poetry to deliver his spiritual message. He composed poetry that has few peers in the annals of literature. He was a great linguist and wrote on a wide range of subjects in many languages. He had in his court 52 poets who translated, from other languages, heroic events wherein good triumphed over evil. His speech was inspiring and it impressed as a hymn. His poetry awakened the sleeping spirit of his followers. Guru Gobind Singh did not fight against any religion or sect. Among his admirers were many Hindus as well as Muslims. Pir Budhu Shah sacrificed two of his sons and a number of his disciples in the battle of Bhangani fighting on the Guru's side. Saiyad Beg and Syed Khan, Mughal commanders were among many of his Muslim followers. The Muslim ruler of Malerkortla state raised a strong voice against the execution of his two younger sons. Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan helped the Guru at the risk of their own lives. The allegation that the Guru's policy was 'open hostility to Islam' is contradicted by his own teachings. He has written: Some men are Hindus and others Musalmans; know that all men are of the same caste. He also uttered: The temple and the mosque are the same. The Hindu and the Muslim ways of worship lead to the same end. Some critics have regarded martial spirit inculcated by the Guru as a reversal of the teachings of Guru Nanak. This is quite wrong. The Guru took up arms only to defend religious values that his predecessors had upheld at the cost of their lives. None of the battles, he fought, was of his seeking. His struggle against injustice and tyranny was in keeping with the teachings of Guru Nanak who had also written against the oppression practiced by the Mughal and Pathan rulers. He did not depart even an iota from the teachings of Guru Nanak. Bearings of arms and battles with the Mughals had started at the time of his grandfather, Guru Har Gobind. It can be safely concluded that Guru Gobind Singh is undoubtedly amongst the greatest saviors of mankind. A Muslim historian has truly said, "He was a lawgiver in pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his throne and a 'Fakir' in the society of the Khalsa.
