

# BANDA SINGH BAHADUR

- the rise of Khalsa



*Apinder Singh (M.Phil)*



## Sikh History Lecture Series

The promotion of Gurbani, Sikhi values and heritage is a key priority of the Board. In understanding how Gurbani and Sikh Values have shaped Sikhs, we often look into our Sikh history to examine episodes of how these are exemplified.

To further the Board's efforts in Sikhi Parchar, the Sikh Centre in 2016 launched the Sikh History lecture series. The series provides an insight into a lesser known chapter of our Sikh history (i.e. the time after the passing of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and the annexation of the Punjab into the British Empire). This period is critical as it marks the transition from the first 10 Sikh Gurus to Sri Guru Granth Sahib and in a time period where the external circumstances was especially harsh towards the Sikhs.

Till date over 16 lectures have been conducted in 2016 focussing on different episodes in the 18th century with over 800 participants in attendance and over 2000 views online.

All are welcome to attend the upcoming Sikh lecture series beginning 2017. Recorded lectures are available on CSGB's YouTube channel and website ([www.sikhs.org.sg](http://www.sikhs.org.sg)).



**Front cover Statue:** Banda Singh Bahadur's statue at Chappar-Chiri War Memorial, Sector 91, Ajitgarh (Mohali, India).

For free distribution only

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In commemoration  
of the

300<sup>th</sup>

martyrdom anniversary of  
Banda Singh Bahadur

Apinder Singh(M.Phil)

## President's Message

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

On behalf of the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board (CSGB), I am pleased to share with the Sangat this commemorative book on a great Sikh leader and martyr, Banda Singh Bahadur. This book is written to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> Martyrdom Anniversary of Banda Singh Bahadur who attained Shaheedi in 1716.

CSGB aims to educate and inspire the Sangat through Gurbani, Sikh values and our heritage. As part of this, our Sikh history is an important vehicle where we see how Gurbani and Sikh values have influenced our ancestors and society. This allows us to draw important lessons both to make us wiser and to inspire us. In this regard the CSGB has been investing efforts on various parts of our Sikh history through the lectures conducted at the Sikh Centre over the last decade and Gurdwara activities. The efforts in the past have focussed more on the Sikh Guru period from 1469-1708. In 2016 we decided to further our efforts in Sikh history by forming the Sikh history sub-committee and launching the Sikh history lecture series. The focus for 2016/17 is the century after the passing of Guru Gobind Singh Ji to the annexation of the Punjab into the British Empire from 1708 to the mid 1800's. In 2016 we researched and delivered around 16 lectures which attracted around 800 participants and another 2000 viewers online. This book is a summary of the lecture series on Banda Singh Bahadur that was researched and delivered by Apinder Singh in early 2016.

I hope that this book inspires us all and especially the young and future generations of Sikhs. As Guru Amar Das Ji said in a Salok "The stories of one's ancestors make the children good children".

I would also like to thank the following individuals who made this book a possibility: Apinder Singh for taking the time to research and pen this book; Amarjeet Singh who provided the creatives and layout for the book;

the volunteers like Jagjit Singh Sandhu, Chua Yuan Ting, Manmohan Singh Malla, Kirpal Singh Sidhu and Rajeshpal Singh for proof-reading the book and supporting Apinder in this labor; and to the Secretary of SGPC for providing permission to reproduce the visuals of artefacts and historic sites appended in the annex of this book.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

In Guru Ji's Sewa,

Gurcharan Singh Kesail  
President, Central Sikh Gurdwara Board  
Singapore, 13 December 2016

## Preface

In the Sikh Ardas (Supplication), Sikhs remember martyrs of the Sikh faith who sacrificed their lives for righteousness, justice and basic rights. Banda Singh Bahadur is one of the great martyrs of the Sikh faith. He was the first commander of the Sikh Army appointed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. His monumental achievements in a short span of just 6 years immortalized him in the annals of Indian and Sikh history. In his 6 years of quintessential rule he had many achievements which include: establishment of the first Khalsa rule in 1710 signified by minting of the first Sikh coin and seals with the names of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji; creation of the first Sikh Calendar (*signifies the beginning of a new rule*); and meting out justice on the ruler of Sirhind for the assassination of the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (i.e. the *Chottey Sahibzade*). Throughout his leadership he upheld Sikh values such as maintaining religious harmony, equality and protecting the down-trodden. These are exemplified through his enlistment of 5000 Muslims into his army and his abolishment of the feudal system which provided ownership of land to farmers. Three centuries ago (i.e. 1716) he attained martyrdom along with his four years old son and Sikhs in Delhi. This year the Sikhs worldwide commemorate his 300<sup>th</sup> martyrdom anniversary worldwide.

This book is an attempt to introduce the reader to this giant of a Sikh by highlighting his key contributions, achievements and struggles leading to his martyrdom. Much of the history concerning Banda Singh comes from research done from the early 1900's and this book presents the widely accepted facts concerning his history. This book makes use of artist pictures and photographs to aid the reader to connect better with the context surrounding the life of Banda Singh. This book also attempts to provide the reader with a perspective of how a life can be transformed by a true Guru if we surrender ourselves to him, as did Banda Singh Bahadur who submitted himself totally to Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Central Sikh Gurdwara Board Singapore (CSGB) aims to inspire Sikhs through Gurbani, values and our Sikh history. This book is part of a continuous effort by CSGB to educate the Sangat of our glorious history. We hope the readers will enjoy and benefit by reading it.

Apinder Singh

13<sup>th</sup> December 2016

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I am grateful to the Almighty God for giving me the endurance to complete this project. It was a great undertaking which required balancing my daily work commitments of researching and lecturing at the Sikh Centre. Secondly I am grateful to Mr. Manmohan Singh Malla, Secretary of the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board, who first proposed the idea to write this book. I am thankful to him for taking time to read through the manuscripts and his valuable suggestion for improvements. I am equally grateful to Mr. Rajeshpal Singh, Vice-Chairman of Sikh Centre who proof read the drafts multiple times. Leveraging on his knowledge in Sikh History he provided valuable insights to improve the book.

I am also grateful to Mr. Gurcharan Singh, President of the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board and Mr. Kirpal Singh Sidhu, Chairman of Sikh Centre for their valuable support and guidance in completing this project.

Special thanks go to a few key individuals who had devoted considerable time to make this book a success namely: Mr Jagjit Singh Sandhu, who patiently and diligently edited the draft numerous times; Chua Yuan Ting, Copy Editor of ICIS, Reed Business Information, for proof reading and Mr Amarjeet Singh, Manager, Sikh Centre, for the creative works in this book. I am also thankful to Sikh Missionary Society, for sponsoring this book.

I would also like to thank Dr. Roop Singh, Secretary of SGPC for allowing me to print the pictures of Banda Singh's Relics, which were published in a souvenir on Banda Singh Bahadur in 2010 by SGPC.

I am also thankful to Mr. Milkha Singh and Principal Gurjit Singh for providing me pictures of Chappar-Chiri Memorial and Baba Ajay Singh Khalsa College, Gurdas Nangal.

Last but not least, I am indebted to all those scholars who dedicated their life to document in great detail the life of Banda Singh Bahadur. Without their resources this book would not have been possible. More importantly, I'm indebted to Guru ji for giving me blessings to complete this Sewa. Please accept my sincere apologies for any shortcomings on my part.

Apinder Singh



# Contents

President's Message

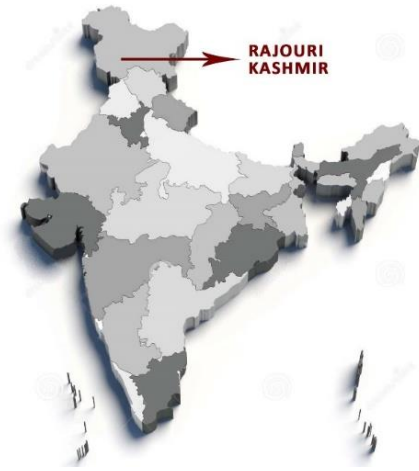
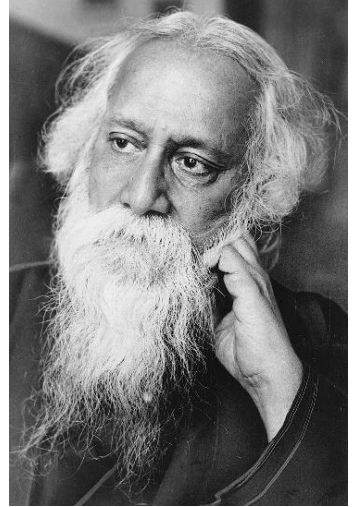
Preface

Acknowledgements

|           |  |    |
|-----------|--|----|
| Chapter 1 | Madho Das to Banda Singh Bahadur           | 1  |
| Chapter 2 | Banda Singh Bahadur marched towards Punjab | 10 |
| Chapter 3 | Retaliation by Mughal Emperor              | 19 |
| Chapter 4 | Banda Singh Bahadur escaped to hilly areas | 21 |
| Chapter 5 | Siege of Gurdas Nangal and Martyrdom       | 24 |
| Chapter 6 | Rabinder Nath Tagore's poem                | 32 |
| Chapter 7 | Banda Singh Bahadur's Personality          | 36 |
| Chapter 8 | Relics, Gurdwaras & Memorials              | 38 |
|           | Bibliography                               | 56 |

# CHAPTER 1

**M**adho Das to Banda Singh - Noble Laureate Rabindar Nath Tagore\* wrote one of his great poems, 'Bandi Bir' 'ਬੰਦੀ ਬੀਰ' (Captive Hero) in Bengali. In this poem he depicts a hero, who was captured and caged by the Mughals in 1715. Tagore stated that a lion had been shackled. The Mughal judge placed his four-year old son in the captive's lap and ordered him to kill his son, while he continued chanting 'Waheguru-Waheguru'. Who was this great hero? Why did the Mughals capture him? Why was he



ordered to kill his son? Did he comply with this order? You will find the answers to these questions in this book.

There was a village in a valley in Kashmir, which was surrounded by hills and dense forests. A river passed through this village. Nature had bestowed fabulous beauty upon this village. It was a paradise! A child was born to a Rajput family in this village in 1670. His parents named him Lachman

Dev. He had a keen interest in learning archery, horse-riding and hunting which he did so in his youth. As he matured, he applied himself to improving these skills.

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\*Rabindar Nath Tagore (1861-1941) was an eminent Bengali poet of India. His two poems 'Jan Gan Man' and 'Mar Sonar Bangla' are the national anthems of India and Bengal respectively.

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## Contemplating upon Life, Death, Sin and Goodness

One day he was hunting in a nearby jungle. He spotted a female deer in the bushes and unfurled an arrow towards the deer from his bow. His arrow met its mark and struck the deer down. When he came closer to inspect his prize, he noticed that the deer was quivering in pain, and simultaneously it delivered two fawns prematurely. Lachman Dev was deeply shocked by this terrible incident and felt immense guilt at the suffering he had caused to innocent animals. The incident shook him so much that he spent many weeks in a solemn state contemplating life, death, sin and goodness. These thoughts consumed him so much that he left home to find answers.



## Seeking answers to the meaning of life at the age of fifteen

After a few days he reached Jammu Tawi (ਜੰਮੂ ਤਵੀ), a place near the bank of River Tawi, which is a tributary of River Jehlum (ਜੇਹਲਮ). He settled in a camp of hermits at the bank of River Tawi and practiced living a hermit's way of life for a few months. Here he met to Janki Das. Janki Das embraced Lachman Dev into his sect and gave him a new name, Madho Das, which signifies the beginning of his new life.

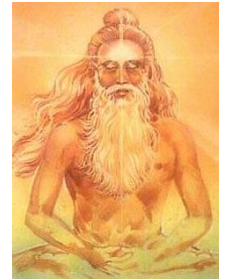


Madho Das followed an ascetic's lifestyle with much reverence and devotion. After sometime Madho Das felt he needed the guidance of another teacher to answer more of his questions so he left Janki Das and accepted discipleship of another Bairagi Ram Das. He continued serving Ram Das for a few years. By then he had matured into a young man. Eventually, he decided to go on a pilgrimage around India.



### In the sanctuary of Tantric Augar Nath

Once he halted at Panchwati (पंचवटी) in Nasik, a town in Maharashtra. While staying at Panchwati, he met a tantric, (In Indian language tantric is used to refer to those who possesses occult powers) Augar Nath. The tantric's lifestyle appealed to Madho Das.



He requested Augar Nath to allow him to become his disciple. Augar Nath accepted him as a disciple. Madho Das proved to be an ardent devotee of Augar Nath, and soon learned all the practices of tantra. At that time, Augar Nath was on the last phase of his life. So he appointed Madho Das as the head of his monastery before his death. Madho Das passed sometime at Panchwati before moving to Nanded 'नंदेड' in 1692.



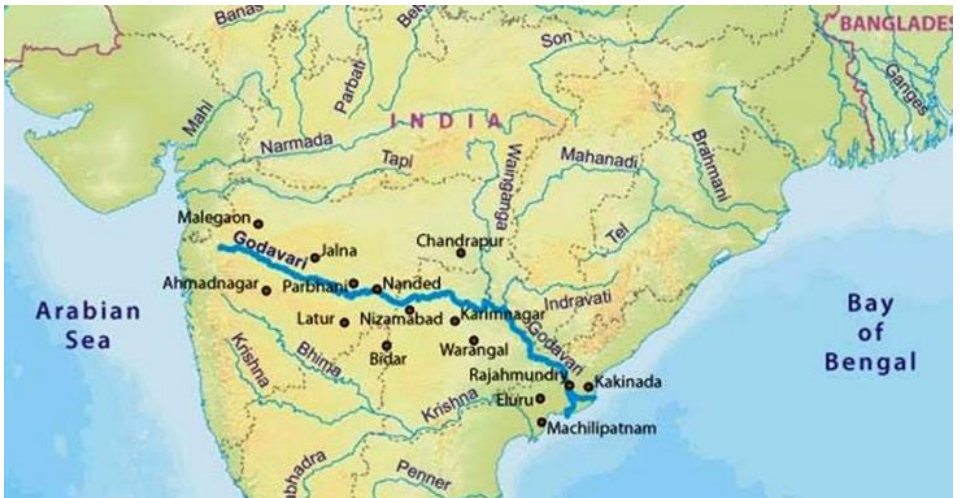
## Madho Das acquired Tantric powers

Finally, Madho Das established his monastery at Nanded on the bank of River Godwari (गोदावरी).

The residents of this area were highly superstitious. They turned to black magic, charms and rituals to



address daily problems. Leveraging on this superstitious bent, Madho Das commenced his work by healing patients with his tantric powers. Soon he became very popular in Nanded and his monastery became a venue of



pilgrimage for many people including other ascetics and hermits. His fame soon made him arrogant. He often insulted religious leaders by belittling them or displaying his occult powers to exert his dominance. As he continued to live in Nanded, Madho Das forgot his past goal of finding answers to the fundamental questions of life and focused instead on developing his occult powers and fame.



## Guru Gobind Singh Ji in Bahadur Shah's court

At the time when Madho Das had relocated to Nanded, Bahadur Shah succeeded Aurangzeb as the Mughal emperor of India in 1707. As part of the emperor's reconciliation policy with Sikhs, he invited Guru Gobind Singh Ji to negotiate resolutions to the injustice done to him by the Mughal governor of Sirhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ).



Guru Gobind Singh Ji accepted the invitation and spent time with the Mughal emperor at his court often delving into deep spiritual discourse beyond negotiation talks. However before the negotiations could conclude, Bahadur Shah's brother, Muhmmad Kam Baksh revolted against him in the Deccan. Bahadur Shah and his army began to move to the Deccan to stem the revolt but the emperor soon faced resistance from the army to move further south due to reputation that the people of the Deccan could use occult powers. To alleviate this fear, the Mughal emperor requested



Guru Gobind Singh Ji to accompany him to the Deccan as it was known to Mughals that the Guru was a very exalted Pir.

Bahadur Shah assured the Guru that negotiations could continue if he would accompany the emperor south. The Guru agreed and the spirits of the Mughal army was raised and they continued their march south. However when Guru Ji and the Khalsa army reached Nanded, Guru Ji suddenly separated from Bahadur Shah. Sikh chronicles mention that Guru Ji realized Bahadur Shah was not interested in concluding the negotiations. However, historians have speculated multiple reasons for this separation. What made Guru Gobind Singh Ji separate from Bahadur Shah is beyond the understanding of historians because it could have been a divine call to Guru Ji. Nanded was the location where Guru Nanak Dev's mission was completed. It was here that Guru Gobind Singh Ji merged his spirit in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and his body in Khalsa Panth as well as appointed Banda Singh as the commander of the Khalsa army. Guru Ji knew that Madho Das was in Nanded.<sup>1</sup> Guru Ji and the Khalsa army camped at Nanded. Singing of Gurbani and practice of Sikh way of life commenced at this place.

### **Guru Ji in Madho Das' monastery**

One day Guru ji asked some of his Sikhs to follow him. Guru ji and his Sikhs reached Madho Das' monastery when the latter was not there. The sakhis record that Guru ji sat on Madho Das' magical cot once he arrived at the monastery. It was believed that whoever sat on the cot, would fall from it because of Madho Das' magical powers. His disciples who were at monastery, saw this were appalled and warned Guru ji not to sit on the cot. However Guru ji closed his eyes and remained silent. After sometime Madho Das arrived back at his monastery. When he saw a religious person

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<sup>1</sup> When Guru ji was going to meet Aurangzeb in 1707, he halted for a while at Dadudwara, in Rajasthan. There Jait Ram (ਜੈਤ ਰਾਮ), the head of monastery had a dialogue with Guru Ji. During this dialogue Guru Ji learnt about his presence at Nanded.

sitting on the cot he was enraged. He tried to pull Guru Ji down from the cot using his occult powers.



After trying many times in vain to dislodge Guru Ji, he gave up. He realised that the person who was sitting on the cot, was not an ordinary religious personality. Looking at Guru Ji in embarrassment, he asked, “Who are you?”<sup>2</sup>

Guru ji replied, “You know who I am, Madho Das. Just try to remember”<sup>3</sup> Madho Das was shocked to realise that he knew him. He contemplated upon him, thinking about the religious leader of the Indian sub-continent. After a short while, he uttered astonishingly, “You are Guru Gobind

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<sup>2</sup> Conversations between Guru Gobind Singh Ji and Madho Das as appears in this book is referenced from Gur Pratap Suraj Granth and Ahmad Shah Batalvi- Tarikh-i-Punjab.

<sup>3</sup> Bhai Swarup Singh Kaushih, mentioned in Guru Ki Sakhian that Guru Gobind Singh Ji met Madhao Das at Kankhal near Hardiwar in his early life.



Singh.” Guru Ji smiled and said, “Yes, Madho Das.” Immediately, he fell on Guru ji’s feet to ask for forgiveness.

### **Dialogue between Guru Ji and Madho Das**

Then they engaged in a spiritual dialogue. Guru Ji asked him how he had become a tantric. Madho Das narrated the whole story of his past from the time he left home, emphasizing what his objective was at that time. He had wandered from place to place to obtain the answers to his questions, but nobody could give him the right answers. Consequently he accepted the discipleship of various saints and finally established himself as a tantric at Nanded. Guru ji observed, “So the aim of your life has not been fulfilled yet. Furthermore, your mission since you left home and your present life are opposite of each other.” Madho Das bowed his head in acceptance. He requested Guru Ji to bless him and make him his disciple.



Guru Ji reminded Madho Das, “Sikhi is not an easy path; it demands total surrender.”

“I am ready to give up everything to serve you.” Madho Das interjected. “I am you Banda (slave), Guru Ji. Please bless me,” he added. Then Guru Ji blessed him by putting his hand on his head.

## Guru Gobind Singh Ji renames Madho Das

Immediately, Madho Das left his monastery to live in the camp of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He took 'Khande De Pahul' (ਖੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ) from the hands of Guru Gobind Singh Ji who honored him with a new name: **Banda Singh**. After twenty-two years, he practiced again to become an archer, and also took up



Sikh martial arts. While living in the camp with the other Sikhs, he learnt about Guru Gobind Singh Ji's life. He was surprised to learn that at the age of nine the young Gobind Rai proposed that his father, Guru Teg Bahadur Ji sacrifice his life for the establishment of religious freedom in face of the fanatical religious policy of the Mughals. Banda Singh's heart was filled with emotion when he learnt that Guru Ji's four sons had attained martyrdom at tender ages.

*Banda Singh Bahadur decided to lead his life for the same noble cause as described by Dr. Gurbhagat Singh while elaborating Prof. Puran Singh's poem as follows:*

*"Guru Gobind Singh taught the Khalsa that the sword, death and self-negation are the name of Waheguru (the Guru of Wonder). Here death is not just self-destruction but it becomes part of the luminous cosmic brotherhood by asserting for freedom, for the liberation of human kind".*

## CHAPTER 2

### Banda Singh Bahadur marched towards Punjab



**Banda Singh Bahadur: Commander of Khalsa army**

After knowing Guru ji's past, Banda Singh felt inspired and regretted on his earlier futile search for answers. All sorts of thoughts flashed in his mind.

"I wasted my life in superfluous religious practices; how ignorant I was, I could not understand the meaning of religion, I was intoxicated with power of tantara while Guru ji's seven and nine years old sons sacrificed their lives for righteousness", he recapitulated. Then he stood up suddenly and went to meet Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He requested him to allow him to resume fighting for justice. Guru Ji smiled and replied, "Banda Singh the role you have chosen is full of hardships." Banda Singh responded, "With your grace I shall face every hardship, so kindly bestow your mercy upon me to pursue this mission." Guru ji realised that Banda Singh was infused with the Khalsa spirit. He acceded to his request and appointed him commander of the Khalsa army. Guru Ji also set up a council of five Sikhs comprising Bhai Binod Singh, Kahan Singh, Baj Singh, Daya Singh and Bhai Ran Singh for taking decisions according to the Khalsa democratic

principles. He sent Banda Singh with twenty-five Sikhs to Punjab, after giving him a *Nishan Sahib* (Khalsa flag) and a *Nagara* (drum), which are symbols of Sikh sovereignty as well as *Hukumnamas* (i.e. edicts) for the Sikh Sangat of Punjab to accept the leadership of Banda Singh.

### **Banda Singh Bahadur in Haryana**

Banda Singh reached Sehri-Khanda (ਸੇਹਰੀ-ਖੰਡਾ) which is in Haryana, in early 1709. He sent the edicts of Guru Ji to the Sikh Sangat to invite them to join him. On receiving the edicts the Sikh Sangat moved immediately towards Banda Singh. According to Sikh history many Sikhs sold their property and belongings to buy weapons. They were ready to sacrifice their lives for their Guru. The Sikhs, who were living near Malwa tract, instantly joined Banda Singh. However the Mughal officials upon learning of Sikh army mobilisation closed the paths of those Sikhs who were coming from Majha and Doaba tracts to weaken the Sikh army.



### **Early Battles of Banda Singh Bahadur**

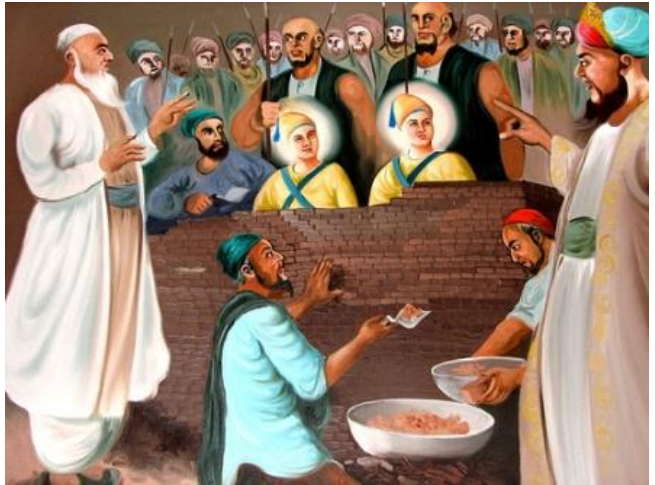
Banda Singh's strategy was to unite with the other powers to overthrow the Mughals. Therefore he sent emissaries to the Kings of Rajputana (Rajasthan). However the Rajput kings declined his proposal. So Banda Singh planned to attack small Mughal citadels, cities and towns first to build the competency of the Sikh army and its confidence. In his early battles, he





defeated the chiefs of Sonapat (ਸੋਨੀਪਤ), Kaithal (ਕੈਥਲ) and Samana (ਸਮਾਣਾ).

The victory at Samana was his first greatest military achievement as the city was very prosperous and fairly large. Many noble Mughals were residents of Samana. Among them were Sayyid Jalaudin, who had beheaded Guru Tegh Bahadur in



Delhi, Chandni Chowk (1675), Shashal Beg and Bashel Beg, who had bricked alive the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji at Sirhind in 1705. All the executioners were put to death by the Khalsa forces led by Banda Singh and the council of the five Sikhs.

### **Banda Singh Bahadur punished Osman Khan**



**Pir Budhu Shah in Guru Gobind Singh's camp**

Pir Budhu Shah was an ardent devotee of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He helped Guru Ji in the battle of Bhangani in 1686. His two sons attained Martyrdom in this battle. Osman Khan, the chief of

Pir Budhu Shah's village (Sadhora), was a fanatical ruler. He was an antagonist of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He tortured to death Pir Budhu Shah in a heinous manner for aiding Guru Gobind Singh Ji in the battle of Bhangani. He buried him alive up to his neck and poured curd on his head and into his mouth. Then he unchained the mad dogs to slaughter Pir Ji. Thus, Pir Ji suffered a terrible ending. The Khalsa forces led by Banda Singh and the council of five Sikhs also sentenced to death Osman Khan for his murder of Pir Budhu Shah.

### **The Battle of Chappar-Chiri (ਚਪੜ-ਚਿੜੀ) in 1710**

The union of Majha and Doaba Sikhs with Banda Singh was a great threat to the Mughals. Therefore the Mughals barricaded all the paths of the Sikhs, who were arriving from Majha and Doaba tracts. The Sikhs endured



a long struggle before they finally managed to join Banda Singh near Kharar (ਖਰੜ) and Banur (ਬਨੂਰ). The next target of Banda Singh was Wazir Khan, the governor of Sirhind, who had betrayed Guru Gobind Singh Ji and was also a perpetrator of the martyrdom of the innocent sons of Guru ji. Wazir Khan had observed the movement of the Khalsa forces and decided

to engage with the Sikhs outside the city of Sirhind. He chose the battlefield of Chappar-Chiri to engage the Khalsa army. A fierce battle ensued on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1710. When the battle commenced, Sucha Nand's (an ally of Wazir Khan) nephew, who had joined Banda Singh with his contingent by making up a pseudo-story against his uncle, defected from the Khalsa force suddenly. The Khalsa army was dispirited by this act and the scene of battle was dreadful. It seemed that the Mughals would emerge victorious. Banda Singh was watching this terrible scene from a mound and when he noticed the Khalsa army beginning to retreat, he rushed to the battlefield to push the Khalsa lines forward. It is noted that when Banda Singh arrived into the battlefield with the Nishan Sahib of Guru Gobind Singh Ji the tide of battle changed almost instantaneously. The tired Khalsa warriors received new energy and the feeling of hopelessness left the Khalsa and a strong feeling for Chardi-Kala (high spiritedness) filled the Khalsa. Banda Singh commanded Bhai Baj Singh and Fateh Singh to deal with Wazir Khan. Bhai Fateh Singh attacked Wazir Khan like a lion, beheading him. A Sikh hung the head of Wazir Khan on a spear and raised it. He shouted 'Sat Sri Akal' and the Mughal army realising Wazir Khan was dead, retreated quickly giving victory to the Khalsa forces.

### **Sirhind's Occupation**

On 14<sup>th</sup> May 1710 Banda Singh and the Khalsa army reached Sirhind. Banda Singh visited the spot where the Sahibzadas had attained martyrdom. The Sikh chronicles mentioned that Banda Singh wept bitterly while paying



homage to the Sahibzadas. After the occupation of Sirhind, Banda Singh issued a strict order to cease all violence and this extended to not permitting even the killing of an animal.



## First Khalsa rule in 1710

After conquering Sirhind, Banda Singh established the first Khalsa rule. He neither occupied the throne nor called himself a king. He appointed valiant commanders of the Khalsa army to be administrators of various towns. He made the farmers to own their lands, and abolished the feudal system in his territory which had oppressed the poor and middle class for generations.



**Bhai Baj Singh and Bhai Aali Singh Ji: Listening to the appeals of Sirhind's residents**



He issued coins and a seal of the khalsa rule with the names of Guru Nanak Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh Ji inscribed on them as follows.



**Persian Script of first Sikh Coin:**

**Obverse**

ਸਿਕਾ ਜਦ ਬਰ ਹਰ ਦੋ ਆਲਿਮ ਤੇਗ-ਏ-ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਹਬ ਅਸਤ |

Sikah zad bar har do alam tegh-i-Nanak wahabast  
ਫਤਿਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਾਹ-ਏ-ਸ਼ਹਾਨ ਫ਼ਜ਼ਲ-ਏ-ਸਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ  
ਅਸਤ |

Fateh Gobind Singh Shah-i-Shahan Fazal-i-Sacha  
Sahib ast.

*Coin struck in the two worlds by the grace of the true Lord,  
victory to Guru Gobind Singh, the king of kings, the sword of  
Guru Nanak is the granter of desires.*

**Reverse:**

ਜਰਬਬਾ ਅਮਾਨ-ਉਦ ਦਹਿਰ ਮੁਸਵਰਤ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਜੀਨਤ-ਉਤ-  
ਤਖ਼ਤ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਵਖ਼ਤ |

Zarbba aman-ud dahar massawarat shahr zinat-ut-  
takht-i-mubarak bakht.

*Coined at the model city, the refuge of the world, the  
ornament of the fortunate throne.*

**The seal of the Khalsa**

ਦੇਗੋ ਤੇਗੋ ਫਤਿਹ ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇਦਰੰਗ  
ਯਾਫ਼ਤ ਅਜ਼ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ

Degh-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-Nusrat-be-dirang  
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.

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



Banda Singh also constructed a famous sign-board of Khalsa rule on the Lahore-Delhi road near Thansehar (ਥਾਨੇਸਰ). He inscribed these words on

the sign-board: '**Badshah Khabardar Khalse de Raj de Had itho Shuru Hundi hai**' (ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਖਬਰਦਾਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਹਦ ਇਥੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।) which means 'Mughal emperor be cautioned Khalsa rule begins from here' which was intended to humiliate the emperor. He also enlisted 5000 Muslims



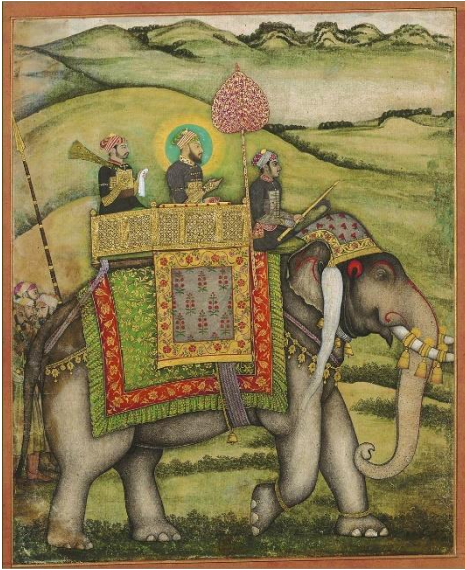
**Outside view from Lohgarh fort**

into his army to demonstrate the policy of equality and racial harmony. He started a new Sikh calendar as well to formalize the independence from the Mughal regime. Foreseeing retribution by the Mughals for the attacks by the Khalsa forces Banda Singh selected his military headquarters to be deep in the hills of Haryana whose altitude, dense forest and narrow passages would limit Mughal army mobility. He occupied the historic but abandoned Lohgarh fort and refurbished it.



Banda Singh stored ammunition and treasures in the Lohgarh (ਲੋਹਗੜ੍ਹ) fort to finance future battles.

## Mughals suffer embarrassment



**Bahadur Shah returning from Deccan**

The victory of the Sikhs was an embarrassment for the Mughals. Persians' chronicles state that it had happened for the first time in Mughal rule; a small community had eliminated the Mughal governor and nobles as well as established its rule over a vast Mughal territories.

The Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah returned from the Deccan in June 1710 after suppressing the revolt of his brother. Bahadur Shah was the same Mughal emperor whom Guru Gobind Singh Ji had

accompanied towards Deccan in 1708. The family of Wazir Khan and other Mughal nobles met him near Ajmer (अजमेर) in Rajasthan. They narrated the exploits of Banda Singh to the emperor. The emperor rose furiously and decided to eliminate the rebellious Banda Singh. His minister, Munim Khan disagreed with his decision. He requested Bahadur Shah not to be personally involved in this crusade as it was not in keeping with the status of an emperor. However, Bahadur Shah insisted that it was his religious obligation to punish a rebel. Hence the machinery of the most powerful empire of the time, the Mughal empire, targeted Banda Singh and Sikhs.

*A British officer, John Malcom mentioned in his book, 'Sketch of the Sikhs' published in 1810:*

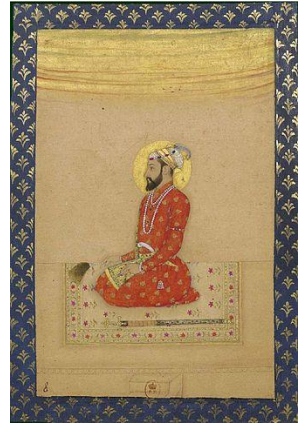
*"If Bahadur Shah had not quit the Deccan, which he did in 1710 CE, and marched towards the Punjab with all his imperial forces, there is every reason to think the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these invaders (Sikhs)."*

## Chapter 3

### Retaliation by Mughal Emperor

#### The Battle of Lohgarh

Bahadur Shah and his allies attacked Lohgarh in December 1710. The battle was disastrous. The Mughal army was equipped with heavy ammunition and artillery. However, the unexpected heavy downpours and encounters with the Khalsa army threatened the Mughal soldiers adversely. They thought that Banda Singh was controlling the weather with his supernatural powers. For almost a week the battle continued.



The Mughal army moved towards Lohgarh fort step-by-step. However, on the side of the Sikhs their ammunition and supplies were running out. The Khalsa leaders suggested that Banda Singh vacate the fort to ensure the survival of the leadership of the Khalsa forces. However, he insisted on continuing this battle. Finally, Banda Singh had to vacate the fort on the Hukam (Order) of the Khalsa leaders. He exchanged his attire with a Sikh, Gulab Singh, who looked like him. Then Gulab Singh went to the top of tower of the fort and opened fire on the Mughal

army. The sudden midnight attack threatened the Mughals. It also



diverted their attention. Meanwhile Banda Singh and the Khalsa army loaded their treasures and valuables on camels and escaped from the fort by another exit.



The next morning the Mughal army entered the fort and captured a few Sikhs. They were extremely happy to have captured Gulab Singh, being under the impression that he was Banda Singh. When Wazir Munim Khan presented Banda Singh before the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, a Mughal soldier from Gulab Singh's village recognised him. He revealed the truth about Banda Singh's identity before Bahadur Shah. On hearing his testimony, the emperor chided Wazir Munim Khan and expelled him from his camp. Although Bahadur Shah honored Munim Khan after sometime, the embarrassment that had happened in Bahadur Shah's camp caused his ultimately death in early 1711.

*A Mughal officer Khafi Khan, who was an eyewitness of Lohgarh battle, wrote about the relationship between Sikhs and their leader (Banda Singh) in his book Muntakhab-ul-Labab*

*"The Sikhs not only accepted the instructions of their leader with deepest love and devotion but came out of the fort with shouts of their war cry and rushed towards the fire of the imperial artillery like 'moths upon a flame'".*

## Chapter 4

### Banda Singh Bahadur escaped to hilly areas

#### Banda Singh Bahadur and the hill chiefs

Banda Singh and the Khalsa army escaped to the hilly areas. Many of the chiefs of these areas were punished by Bahadur Shah because he had suspected them of helping Banda Singh. Banda Singh also punished rulers



of the hilly kingdoms who were hostile to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The monarchs of Kangra, Mandi and Chamba welcomed Banda Singh and the Khalsa army. The rulers of Jammu, Jasrota and Nurpur also supported the Khalsa. Consequently the hilly chiefs were inspired by the achievements of Banda Singh. They had suffered innumerable Mughal atrocities for two centuries. Now there was a ray of hope for their independence.

#### Marriage of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1711

In some Indian traditions people become ascetics to attain salvation. Banda Singh followed the same path in his early life. He was a celibate before embracing Sikhism. However Sikh ideology emphasizes a 'Grisht Dharam' (ਗ੍ਰਿਹਸਤ ਧਰਮ) married life. So the king of Chamba (ਚੰਬਾ) advised Banda Singh to get married. He also proposed a princess from his family. Banda Singh accepted the proposal and entered the realm of marriage

with Sushil (Kaur). They were blessed with a son named Ajay Singh. It is to be noted that Sushil Kaur was not only a devoted wife and mother but a brave warrior too. In the final battle of Banda Singh, it is recorded that Sushil Kaur insisted to accompany Banda Singh and the Khalsa forces in Gurdas Nangal to also defend Khalsa rule despite discouragement from Banda Singh and other Khalsa army leaders.



### Minor Skirmishes

When the Mughal army was struggling to capture Banda Singh, the latter was planning to expand the territories under Khalsa rule. While living in the hilly areas, he attacked the surrounding areas of Gurdaspur.



Minor skirmishes took place in different areas. Meanwhile Bahadur Shah tried his best to capture Banda Singh during his reign in vain. It is documented in history that Bahadur Shah became mentally unstable from his obsession to eliminate Banda Singh and

his failure in this regard, and finally died in February 1712.

### Recapture of Sadhora (ਸਢੋਰਾ) and Lohgarh

After the death of Bahadur Shah, a civil war broke out among the Mughals for the throne of the Mughal Empire. Banda Singh took advantage of this anarchy to recapture Lohgarh fort and Sadhora. In February 1713

Farrukhsiyar became the Mughal emperor. He appointed Abdus Samad Khan governor of Lahore on the condition that he would eradicate the Khalsa army and Banda Singh.

### **Communal Harmony in Khalsa rule**

Banda Singh appointed many Muslims in high administration positions in the Khalsa rule. According to contemporary Muslim authors Banda Singh's liberal attitude attracted many Muslims to provide their services for Khalsa rule. Persian chronicles mentioned "All those Muslims who had joined Banda Singh were given daily allowances and wages, and were looked after." He permitted them to read *Khutba* and offer prayers and did not follow the popular practice of imposing a religious tax to those communities that practiced different faiths to the rulers. Thus, 5000 Muslims had joined the Khalsa army.

### **Banda Singh Bahadur's next two years**

Abdus Samad Khan and his allies commenced a crusade against the Khalsa army and Banda Singh. From 1713 to early 1715 Banda Singh fought numerous battles against the Mughals. Simultaneously, many Sikhs were killed by the Mughals during this period. When Abdus Samad Khan failed to capture Banda Singh, he sought help from other Mughal powers to annihilate Banda Singh. On March 15<sup>th</sup> 1715, the Mughal emperor, Farrukhsiyar ordered his Mughal and Hindu nobles to assist Abdus Samad Khan to achieve in this mission.

*Asrare Samdi, author of 'Jot Parkash' depicted the valour of Sikhs as follows:*

*In spite of their blistered feet and lack of provisions and horses the Sikhs still fought bravely. They continued to fight fearlessly.*



# Chapter 5

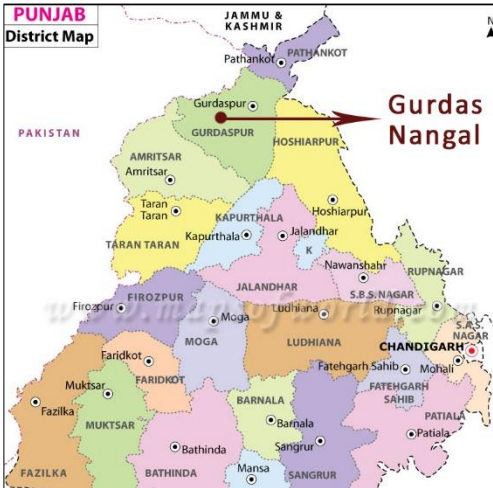
## Siege of Gurdas Nangal and Martyrdom

### Banda Singh's future strategy

At that time, Banda Singh and the Khalsa army were moving in the Majha tract. He was aware about the upcoming attacks planned by the Mughals against the Khalsa. He

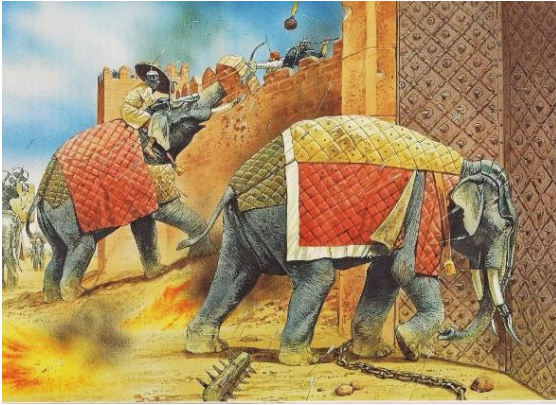


started to build various mud fortresses at different places in Gurdaspur to keep the Mughals at bay. He built a fortress in Gurdas Nangal. He made every effort to complete the erection of the fortress speedily. He built four mud-towers at the four corners of this citadel to keep an eye on the enemy. He constructed a moat around the fortress and filled it with water. He stored supplies, arms and ammunition as well in preparation of a siege by the Mughals.



**Statue of Banda Singh Bahadur opposite Fishpark, Gurdaspur (Punjab India)**

## Siege of Gurdas Nangal fortress



Initially, Mughals besieged the village of Gurdas Nangal from all sides with 30,000 soldiers in April 1715. They were threatened by a direct attack on the fortress. Abdus Samad Khan brought heavy guns to break the walls of the fortress. However it was impossible to target the

walls from a distance because the surrounding area was filled with water by the Khalsa forces to limit mobility. The Khalsa soldiers were positioned in the higher towers. Their gun-fire kept the Mughals away from the fortress. Abdus Samad Khan, his son Zakriya Khan and Qamur-du-din besieged three sides of the fortress and fourth side was surrounded by nobles of the Mughal states. Persian chronicles mention that the siege was so stringent that not even a blade of grass could enter the fortress. After sometime the land became dry and the Mughal soldiers moved closer to the fortress. They wanted to break the walls and the main gate of the citadel. However, the Khalsa army defended the fortress valiantly. Both sides suffered heavy losses. When the Mughal forces failed to break the walls and gate of the fortress, they maintained the siege to force the Khalsa army to surrender.

### Situation of the Khalsa army in the fortress

The lengthy siege caused the condition for the Khalsa forces to become desperate. When the supplies ran out, the Sikhs started to consume grass. When the grass was ran out,



they ate leaves of trees. The Khalsa soldiers became living skeletons, and some of those who were dying from starvation offered their bodies as food for their companions, who continued to face the Mughals valiantly. The siege continued for seven months.

### **Mughals' next plan**

The Mughals decided to drain out the water from the moat by digging a few streams around it. After multiple attempts they succeeded in draining out the water, and moved closer to the fortress. The ammunition of the Sikhs had almost run out. Seizing the momentum, the Mughal army broke the gate of the fortress and captured Banda Singh, his son, wife and the Khalsa warriors who were still alive.

### **Banda Singh's captivity**



**Mughal Emperor  
Farrukhsiyar**

Farrukhsiyar received the news of Banda Singh's captivity on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1715. Banda Singh and his Khalsa companions were taken to Lahore from Gurdas Nangal. As the Mughals were frightened that Banda Singh might fly away by using his supernatural powers, they shackled Banda Singh tightly and locked him up in an iron cage. The cage was placed on an elephant. Two Mughal officers held the chain of the cage. The Mughal army marched

through the streets of Lahore by raising the heads of the slain Sikhs on their spears. The Mughal drummers beat the drums to attract the attention of the residents to the march. They were demonstrating to the people the fate of rebels who rose against Mughal rule. After



**Banda Singh Bahadur forcefully clad in chains and royal robe by Mughals**

dishonoring Banda Singh and his companions, Abdus Samad Khan received an order from Farrukhsiyar to bring them to Delhi.

## **Genocide of the Sikhs**

Zakriya Khan advised his father, Abdus Samad Khan that the number of Sikh prisoners should be increased to show its impact on the Mughal emperor. He told his father that Farrukhsiyar might reprimand him for capturing only two hundred Sikhs in eight months. Consequently, Abdus Samad Khan accepted the advice of Zakriya Khan and ordered Mughal officers to kill and capture Sikhs living in the areas surrounding Lahore. These included peaceful Sikhs living under Mughal rule but were captured nonetheless to make up numbers so that they could be displayed in Delhi.

## **March to Delhi**

Almost seven hundred cartloads of decapitated Sikhs' heads were dispatched to Delhi as a gift to the emperor. In addition, about seven hundred eighty Sikh captives were sent to Delhi. To insult Banda Singh, the Mughals dressed him in a robe of brocade flowered with pomegranates and a red embroidered golden turban was tied on his head. The march of the captives passed



through 'Sirhind', where Banda Singh had established Khalsa rule in 1710. The Mughals were demonstrating to the inhabitants of Sirhind that they had finally captured the rebel and his companions, who had risen against the Mughal rule. The natives of Sirhind abused Banda Singh and the captured Sikhs. However, the Sikhs remained calm and chanted '*Waheguru Waheguru Waheguru*'.



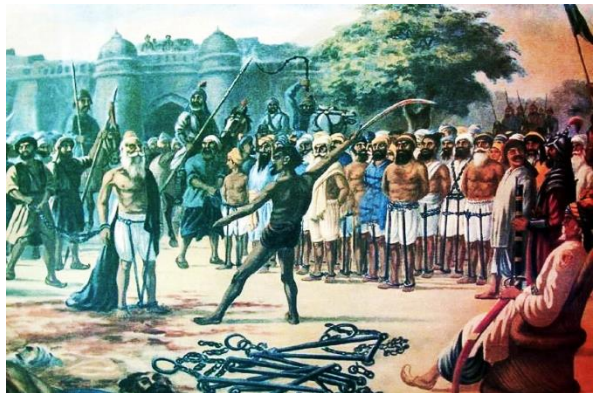
## March in Delhi



Banda Singh and the captured Sikhs reached Delhi on 29<sup>th</sup> February 1716. A Mughal officer hung a cat on a bamboo pole to show that the Mughals' victory had not allowed even a single living creature to escape from Gurdas Nangal fortress. They marched through the streets of Delhi. The people of Delhi laughed and mocked the Sikhs, using the filthiest language. They threatened them by shouting, "You will suffer a merciless death." The Sikhs responded by stating, "Who are scared of death? Through starvation you have made us captives, otherwise you know what we could have done with our valour and war tactics." An eye-witness account of a Muslim author, Mirza Muhammad Harisi states in his book, '*Ibratnama*', "*There was hardly anyone in the city who had not come out to see the tamasha (Public show).*"

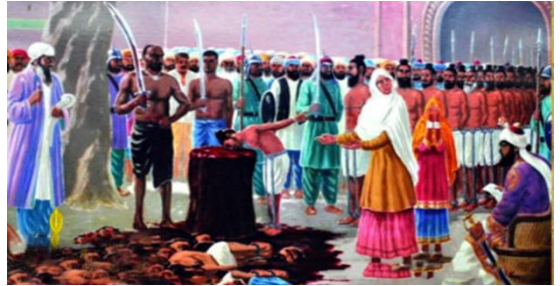
## Martyrdom of Sikhs

Banda Singh and his commanders were imprisoned in Tripolia (ਤ੍ਰਿਪੋਲੀ) and the other Sikhs were incarcerated in *Kotwali* (Police Station) near Tripolia. The execution of the Sikhs



started on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1716. The Mughal officials gave them two options: convert or die. All the Sikhs chose to die. Every day a hundred Sikhs were slaughtered publicly. None of them lost their faith.

Khafi Khan, a Muslim author who witnessed the incident narrated this episode in his book Muntakhab-ul-Labab. *“An old lady made a request for the release of her newly married son through a plea that her son had been beguiled by the Sikhs; he had not embraced Sikhi from his heart. The emperor issued his release order. The lady arrived at the location where her son was to be executed. When she showed the royal order to the Mughal officer, he set him free. However, the young boy denied this mercy plea by*



*stating, “This lady is not my mother. She is telling a lie. I am a true Sikh of Guru Ji and I am willingly to die.” The Sikhs of the Guru preferred to sacrifice their lives rather than abandon their faith.”*

### **Martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur**

The Mughals wanted to find where the Khalsa kept their treasure. Therefore, they delayed the execution of Banda Singh and his commanders in the hope of recovering it. It was in vain. Banda Singh and his companions were executed on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1716. The executioner told Banda Singh to kill his son. Banda Singh refused by stating, “I will never kill him even if he is your son.” Then the executioner stabbed Banda Singh’s son with a dagger, pulling out his heart in the process and then putting it in Banda Singh’s mouth. After his son’s death, Banda Singh was tortured to death. The executioners pulled out his eyes, and then cut his feet and hands. His flesh was pulled with hot pincers, and finally his body was chopped to pieces, limb by limb. He suffered a merciless death in high spirits by remaining calm and uttering *Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru*



all the way. His mission has been completed. His last words showed us that he accepted his and his son's death under the *Hukam* (command) of Waheguru.

When a Mughal officer Muhammad Amin Khan asked Banda Singh, "Banda Singh you seem wise from your appearance, but what made you fight against us without fear of our supremacy. Why did you spend your short life-span persecuting the Mughals?"

Banda Singh replied "It is mentioned in all religious faiths when people in power abuse their privilege, God sends people like me to punish the tyrants. This is a divine law and public show of the Almighty, which you and I are watching in this world"

## Conclusion

Banda Singh left his physical body in 1716. However his memory lived on strongly in the 18th century Sikhs and Mughal leaders. The feats that the Khalsa accomplished under his leadership inspired a major revolution eventually leading to downfall of the Mughal Empire and the rise of the Sikh Empire that saw Maharaja Ranjit Singh leading the Sikhs to supremacy in the Punjab by 1799.

It was through the heroics of the Sikhs led by Banda Singh and subsequent Sikh leaders that saw the completion of the prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh Ji made in December 1705 when he proclaimed that *“just like how my arrow has unearthed this weed, so will the actions of the Khalsa uproot the Mughal empire”*. Banda Singh Bahadur was not just a martyr for the Sikhs but the first Sikh leader after Guru Gobind Singh Ji that showed when united, Sikhs can overcome the most difficult of circumstances. Through his life and the short 6 years of campaigning we also see a great example of selfless service, how Sikh values such as equality can co-exist in a multi-religious environment and how good leadership and unity can overcome great challenges. Let us remember Banda Singh Bahadur, his achievements and sacrifices on his 300<sup>th</sup> martyrdom anniversary so that it can inspire us and the many generations to come.



A Muslim author, Muhammad Ali Khan Ansari mentioned in his book Tarikh-i-Muzaffari: “Banda Singh sacrificed his life like a devoted follower rather than abjuring his faith for the sake of enjoying a few more years of life.”



## Chapter 6

# For Tagore, Banda was a hero, 'lion in shackles'



**BANDA SINGH BAHADUR**

It was in 1899 that the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore wrote his famous poem 'Bandi Bir' (Captive Hero) on Banda Singh Bahadur and his brave Sikh fighters who took on the tyrannical Mughal army despite being outnumbered and ill-equipped in terms of weapons. He sang paeon to the great warrior, using terms like 'lion in shackles' to describe his capture by the Mughals.

The poem, which is part of the academic syllabus in every English and vernacular medium school of West Bengal, is also one of those powerful creations of Tagore which mothers love to teach their children in every Bengali household. It was also universally recognised as a source of inspiration to several other Bengali writers as well as the youths of those times who were fighting for India's Independence.

- It is to be noted that at the point of penning this poem, history concerning Banda Singh was poorly researched. It was until only the 1900's that rigorous research was done on Banda Singh that shed light into facts. These include confirming that Banda Singh did not take his son's life as instructed by the Mughals when held captive in Delhi in 1716

-Reference link to the above information:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/For-Tago-re-Banda-was-a-hero-lion-in-shackles/articleshow/5928825.cms>

# The Captive Hero

*On the banks of the five rivers, Up rise the Sikhs spontaneous;  
With hair coiled above their head, Inspired by the Mantra their Guru spread  
Fearless and unyielding.....*

*"Glory to Guruji" - thousands of them, Resound the horizon;  
At the rising sun of the dawn, The Sikhs stare with deep emotion  
With new awakening.*

*"Alakha Niranjan!" (means 'Holy Spotless'= God)*

*The war cry of the rebellion; Let loose their chivalry;  
On their ribs clank swords luminary; In wild joy was Punjab's insurrection  
"Alakha Niranjan!"*

*There came a day, Thousands of hearts were on their way,  
Without any binding or fear, Life and death at their feet slaves mere;  
There on the banks of those rivers, The tale of that day still shivers.  
At the tower of the Delhi palace, Where the Sikhs are apace -  
The Badshajada's drowsy spell, Time and again they quell;  
Whose voices there, the dark sky tear? Whose torches set the horizon afire?*

*On the banks of the rivers five, For supreme sacrifice was their dive,  
Unleashed there was the flood of the devotee's blood.  
From thousands of hearts torn apart, For destination divine in their lark -  
The heroes putting their sacred blood mark  
On the forehead of their motherland  
There around the five rivers so dear and grand.*

*In the Mughol and Sikh battle, Their embrace to each other throttle  
Like the fight between the eagle and snake,  
Deep bruise one to the other did make.*

*In the fierce fight of that day - In blood craze "Din Din" the Mughols bay,  
"Glory to Guruji" - was the Sikh's commotion, In their divine devotion.*

*At Gurudaspur castle, When Banda was captured amidst all bustle  
In the hands of the Turani troop, As if a lion fettered with his group;  
To capital Delhi they were taken, Alas, at Gurudaspur Banda was beaten!*

*The Mughol soldiers march ahead, Kicking up the road dust in sneer,  
Hoisting the Sikh's chopped head, At the blade of their spear.  
Follow them Sikhs seven hundred, Tinkles their chain,  
Throng people on the road widespread, Windows open - a glimpse they fain,  
"Glory to Guruji", the Sikhs roar, For fear of life none is sore,  
Sikhs with the Mughols to-day, Stormed the Delhi road all in gay.*

*Started the scurry, For lead in the carnage was their hurry;  
They line up at the dawn, Defiant till their execution.  
"Glory to Guruji" was their slogan, Until they were done.*

*Thus over a week, The arena turned bleak;  
With seven hundred lives gone - Upon the martyrs' immortalization.,  
On the last round of cruelty, Banda was ordered by the Kazi,  
To kill his own son, At ease to be done.*

*In mere teen was the boy, With hands tied thrown as a toy  
Into the lap of Banda and without a word, He drew him close to his heart.  
For a while he put his hand on his head, Just once kissed his turban red.  
He then draws his dagger, Whispers in the child's ear -  
"Glory be to Guruji - fear not my son"*



*A virile in the boy's face did burn - In his juvenile voice the court did ring*

*"Glory to Guruji" as he did sing.*

*With his left hand Banda held the boy,*

*With right struck the dagger in his ploy,*

*"Glory be to Guruji", was all he did implore*

*As he took to the floor.*

*Silence fell in the court,*

*Guruji's inspiration still not abort.*

*Then with tong red hot*

*Banda's body was pieced apart;*

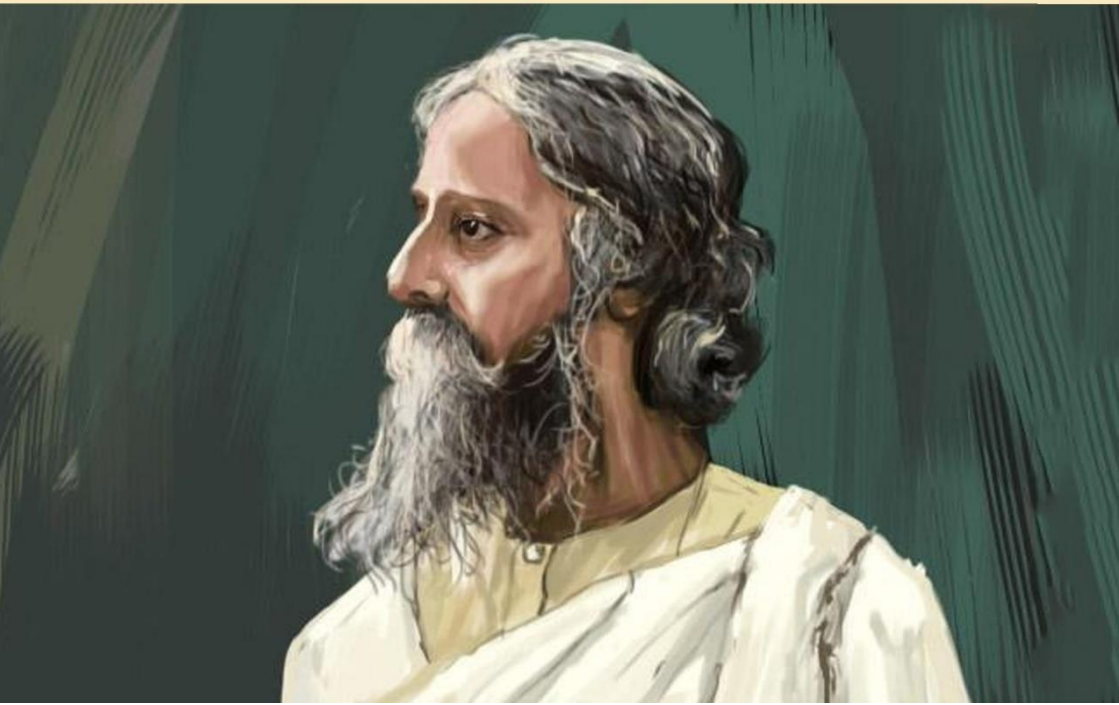
*A word of moan he uttered not*

*And all in calm did he depart.*

*As stopped his heart throb*

*Witnesses closed eyes - silence choked pin drop.*

*- Rabinder Nath Tagore (1899)*



# Chapter 7

## Banda Singh Bahadur's Personality



Banda Singh Bahadur is recorded as a unique leader in world history that achieved much in just 6 short years. The following points will summarize his contributions and provide an understanding to his personality:

- **An adept military and civilian administrator:**
  - He made innumerable forts and mud-fortress in a short span of time to fight against powerful empire.
  - He further formalized military training for the Khalsa army; and
  - Began his military conquest of smaller cities first and chose Lohgarh for his headquarters.
- **Open mindedness:** His liberal policies gave freedom to practice any religion.
- **Selfless:** Although he established a Sikh rule, he neither occupied the throne nor called himself a king.



- **A charismatic leader:** Muslim contemporary writers state that under his leadership, Sikhs were always ready to sacrifice their lives on the call of their leader (Banda Singh).
- **An innovator:** Banda Singh made cannons by making holes in trunks of trees and used them as cannons in the Battle of Lohgarh.
- **An adept diplomat:** He tried to unite other political powers against the Mughals and also accepted the proposal of marriage to an important power.
- **A man of strong physique and endurance:** He was known to be able to ride around many miles in a day without fatigue.
- **A liberator of the poor:** He gave ownership of land to farmers, and abolished the feudal system under the Khalsa rule. He made the downtrodden rulers in Khalsa rule and established an egalitarian society.
- **Believed in equality for all:** He enlisted 5000 Muslims into his army demonstrating racial harmony. He appointed non-Sikhs on higher ranks in Khalsa rule too.
- **A devoted Sikh:** He was an ardent devotee of Sikh Gurus who lived his life according to Sikh tenets and sacrificed himself and his family for his faith.

*A Mughal officer Khafi Khan, stated about the condition of Mughal commanders during the siege of Gurdas Nangal in his book Muntakhab-ul-Labab:*

*“Such was the terrifying episodes of these people and the fear of the sorcery of their chief as the part of that the commanders of the royal army that they prayed that God might ordain things in such a way that Banda should seek safety in flight.”*

## Chapter 8

### Relics, Gurdwaras & Memorials

Martin Luther King stated, “It is better to die for something than to live for nothing.” The Sikh ideology inspires us for this noble cause too. The Sikh Ardas is not merely a thanksgiving couplet to the Almighty God. It is the second Zafarnama (epistle of victory) written by great Sikh heroes who had sacrificed their lives for their faith. The Sikhs love their martyrs and they remember them in their daily Ardas which is recited at least twice a day. Sikh Ardas is a reminder to every Sikh to live in *Chardi Kala* (high spirits). The Sikh historical and non-historical Gurdwaras are an inseparable part of the Sikh psyche. Therefore, Sikhs also meditate upon the five seats of temporal power (Panj Takht), entire Gurdwaras (Sarbat Gurdwaras), and monuments (Bungas) in Ardas. There are thousands of Gurdwaras and shrines which are located mainly in the Indian subcontinent. Several of these monuments, relics and Gurdwaras are related with Banda Singh Bahadur. In this chapter readers will enjoy learning about these historical shrines, relics and memorials which are associated with Banda Singh Bahadur through images.



**Arrow of Banda Singh Bahadur at  
Reasi Dera (Jammu, India)**



**Shield of Banda Singh  
Bahadur at Dera Budha  
Dal (Punjab, India)**



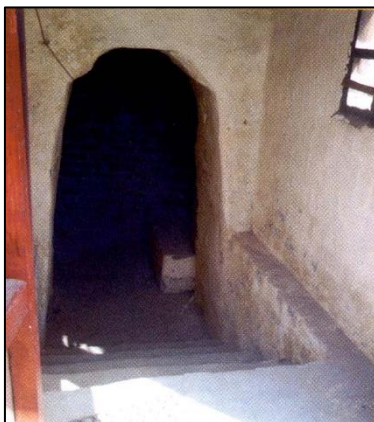
**Robe of Banda Singh Bahadur at  
Reasi Dera (Jammu, India)**



**Mace of Banda Singh Bahadur  
at Reasi Dera (Jammu, India)**



***Nagara* (drum) of Banda Singh Bahadur at  
Dera Budha Dal (Punjab, India)**



**Historical caves  
of Banda Singh  
Bahadur at  
Gehal Mazari,  
Nawanshahr  
(Punjab, India)**





**Meeting place of Madho Das (Banda Singh) and Guru Gobind Singh Ji.  
Gurdwara Banda Ghat at Nanded (Maharashtra, India)**

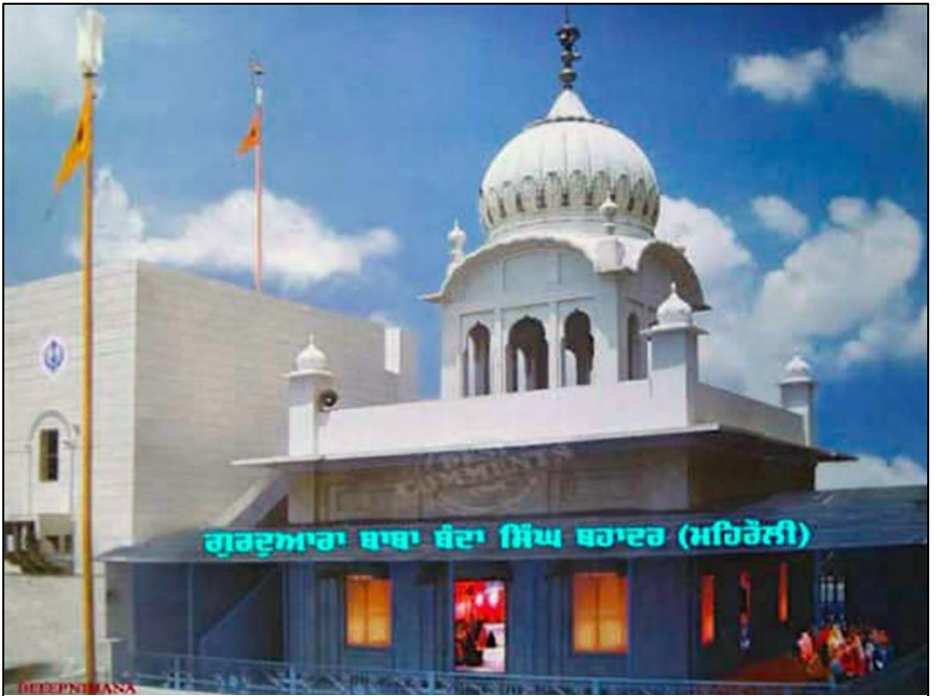


**Gurdwara Lohgarh Sahib (Haryana, India)**





**Gurdwara Sahib Gurdas Nangal in Gurdaspur (Punjab, India)**



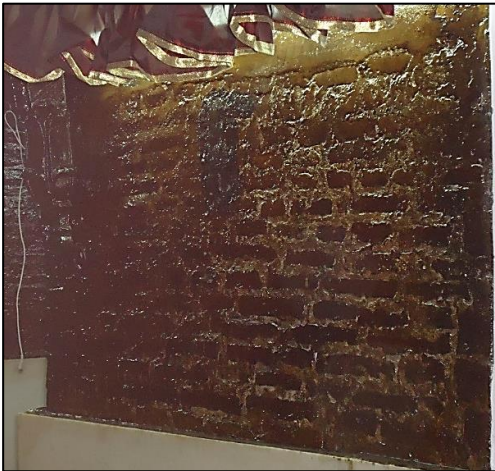
**Martyrdom place of Banda Singh Bahadur  
Gurdwara *Shaheedi Asthaan*, Mehrauli (Delhi, India)**



**Baba Ajay Singh (son of Banda Singh Bahadur) Khalsa college,  
Gurdas Nangal, Gurdaspur (Punjab, India)**



**Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Engineering College Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab, India)**



**Inner Sanctum (Martyrdom) place of younger (*Chottey Sahibzade*) sons  
of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, Sirhind-Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab, India)**



## Banda Singh Bahadur's War Memorial [Chappar-Chiri]



Inaugurated on **30th Nov 2011**, the 20-acre memorial commemorates Baba Singh Bahadur's glorious victory over the Mughal forces in May, 1710.

- **Tallest** religious memorial in India where the height of the Victory Tower is **328 feet**.

- The Fateh Burj showcases three levels of victory viz.

a) 67' (victory of Samana),

b) 117' (victory of Sadhora)

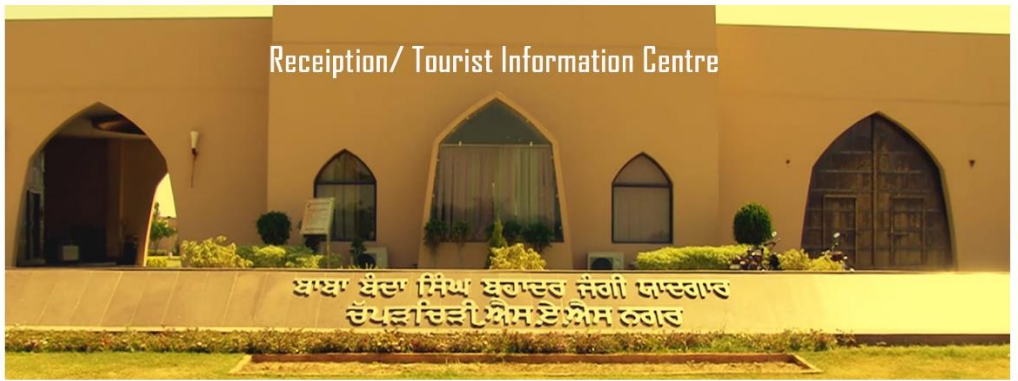
c) 220' (victory of Chappar Chiri).

- **Six** shell structures along the water body and towards south-east side of the memorial similar to the original *tibbas* (mounds) have statues of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and his five generals.

- Reference link for above information: [http://www.mtmohali.com/chappar\\_chiri.php](http://www.mtmohali.com/chappar_chiri.php)

**Chappar** means pond,  
**Chiri** means a cluster of trees.

Wazir Khan deployed his cannons and lined up his elephants, cavalry and skilled warriors on a plain site beyond which lay the rough landscape of *Chapparchiri* and *tibbas* (mounds). Baba Banda Singh Bahadur reached the site on the eve of the battle. He climbed the highest *tibba* to take stock of the enemy forces, assessed his strength, and drew a strategy for war. The *tibbas* provided defence against cannon-fire and the *chiri* forced the enemy to engage in close-quarter fighting.



Reception/ Tourist Information Centre



Open Air Theatre (capacity 1000 people)



Fateh Burj Entrance



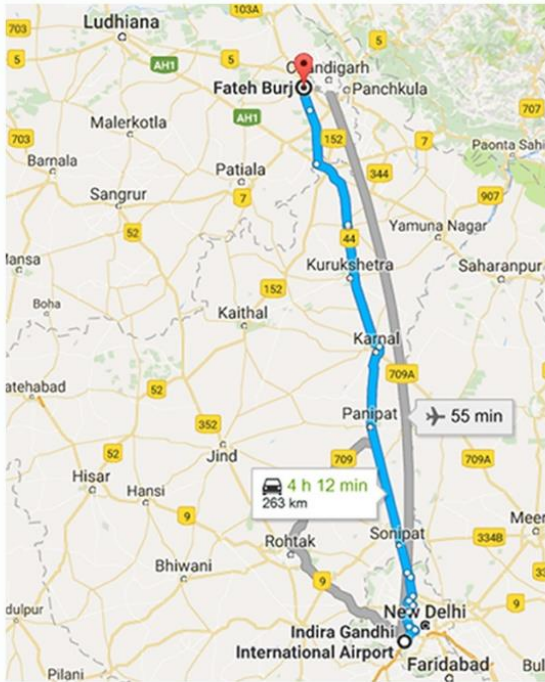
Canteen Facility



Office of Chappar-Chiri







## Map

### LOCATION

Village Chappar-Chiri( sector 91)  
District Ajitgarh, Punjab, India

### DISTANCE

From New Delhi Airport- 263 km  
From Chandigarh-15 km

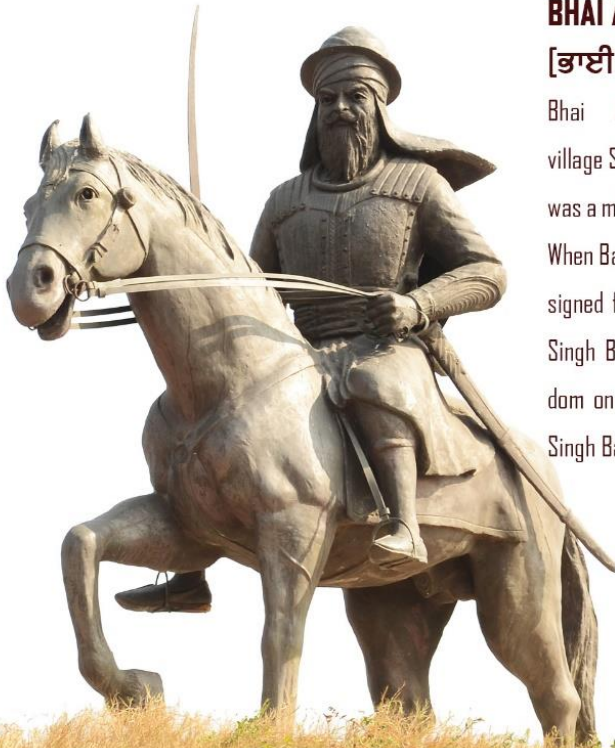
### NEAREST AIRPORT

Chandigarh

### OPENING TIMINGS

10AM to 8PM

[Closed on Monday & National Holidays]



## BHAI AALI SINGH JI

### [ਭਾਈ ਆਲੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ]

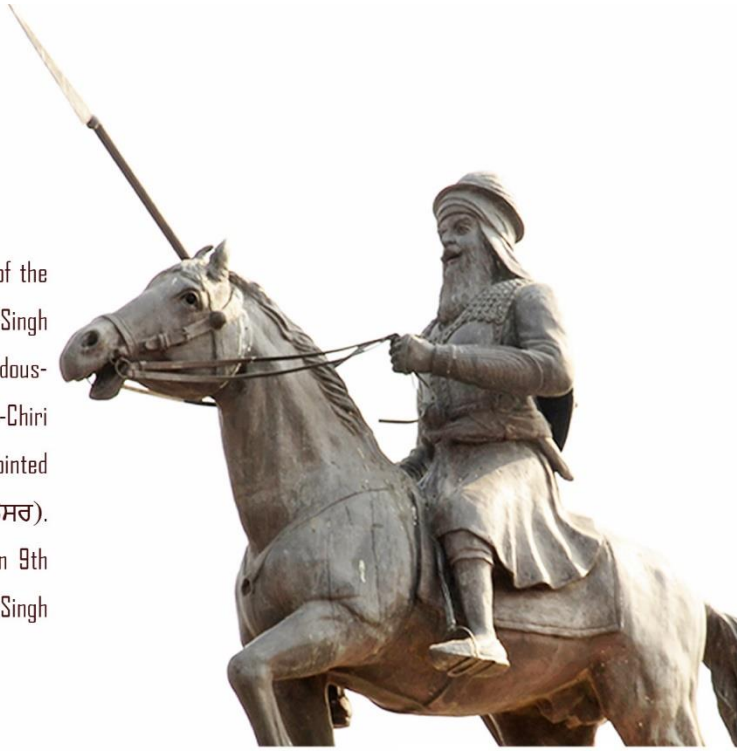
Bhai Aali Singh a resident of village Singha di Salodi (ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਲੋਦੀ), was a military officer in Wazir Khan's army. When Banda Singh arrived in Punjab, he resigned from his service and joined Banda Singh Bahadur. He also attained martyrdom on 9th June 1716 along with Banda Singh Bahadur in Delhi.



## **BHAI RAM SINGH JI**

**[ਭਾਈ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ]**

Bhai Ram Singh was also one of the great commanders of Banda Singh Bahadur. He contributed tremendously in the Battle of Chappar-Chiri (ਚਪੜ-ਚਿੜੀ). He was appointed commander of Thaneshar (ਥਾਨੇਸਰ). He also attained martyrdom on 9th June 1716 along with Banda Singh Bahadur.



## **BHAI FATEH SINGH JI**

**[ਭਾਈ ਫਤਿਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ]**

Bhai Fateh Singh was a leader of Malwa Sikhs, who joined Banda Singh Bahadur first. After Banda Singh conquered Samana (ਸਮਾਣਾ), he appointed him commander of Samana in 1709. He beheaded Wazir Khan in the battle of Chappar-Chiri. He also attained martyrdom on 9th June 1716 along with Banda Singh Bahadur in Delhi. There is a town 'Chak Fateh Singh' (ਚੱਕ ਫਤਿਹ ਸਿੰਘ) named after him in Bathinda.



## **BHAI MAALI SINGH JI**

**[ਭਾਈ ਮਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ]**

Bhai Maali Singh was the brother of Bhai Aali Singh. Banda Singh Bahadur appointed him commandant of a contingent.

He also attained martyrdom on **9th June 1716** along with other Sikhs in Delhi.



## **BHAI BAJ SINGH JI**

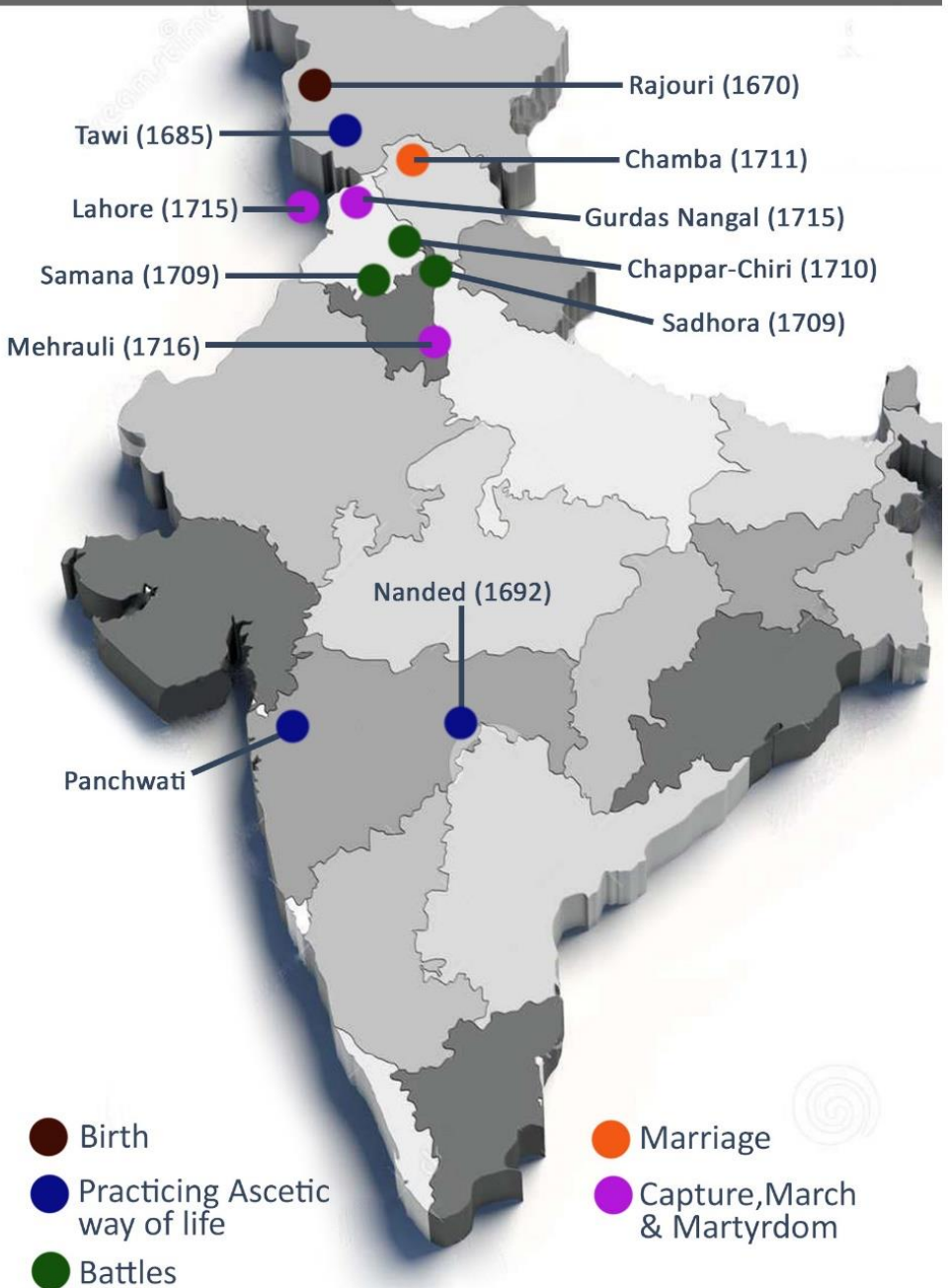
**[ਭਾਈ ਬਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ]**

Bhai Baj Singh was an inhabitant of Mirpur Patti (ਮੀਰਪੁਰ ਪੱਟੀ) village. Banda Singh Bahadur appointed him the first Sikh governor of Sirhind in 1710. He was known for his agility in Sikh history. He attacked the enemy like a hawk. He attained martyrdom on **9th June 1716** in Delhi.

## Bibliography

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# Trail of Banda Singh Bahadur's Life (1670 - 1716)





## FATEH BURJ (ਫਤਿਹ ਬੁਰਜ)

The Height of the Fateh Burj( Victory Tower) is 328 feet. The Fateh Burj showcases three levels of victory viz. 67'(victory of Samana), 117'(victory of Sadhora) and 220' (victory of Chappar-Chiri).

