

Laſt Days of Guru Govind Singh

By

GANDA SINGH,

Khalsa College, Amritsar.

GURU GOVIND SINGH, the warrior-saint of the Punjab, is well known as the tenth and the last Guru of the Sikhs and as founder of the militant order of the *Khalsa*. But he is one of the most misunderstood great men, and no part of his life is less understood than his last days, particularly his marches towards the Deccan and his relations with Shah Alam Bahadur Shah. In this paper it is proposed to bring to light the main events leading to the first and second march to the south with a view to explaining the real motives which actuated the Guru in undertaking these long and arduous journeys.

Aurangzeb's Invitation and Guru Govind Singh's reply

After the battle of Chamkaur, 22nd December 1704, the Guru was retiring for a quieter life towards the sandy desert of Bhatinda, in the territory of the Barar Jats, when, at Dina, he received a letter from Emperor Aurangzeb inviting him to his presence in the Deccan. Detailed contents of the Emperor's letter are not traceable. The *Sakhee Book*, which gives only a summary, tells us that "Parwanas were issued to the Gooroo to the effect that 'there is only one empire and you agree with us in religious sentiments, so better come here to see us. If, you would not come, I will meet you with the army and your reputation as a devotee would be injured. You may live in my kingdom as other saints and devotees.' To this were added some haughty words as usual with the style of royal *Purwanas* and a sentence that he (Aurangzeb had the kingdom granted to him by the true God."¹

The Guru, however, told the royal messengers that he preferred to send a detailed reply to the *parwana* and would wait for a second letter from the Emperor; and if he still desired he would

1. *Sakhee Book*, trans. Sirdar Attar Singh, *Sakhee* XXVIII, p. 60-1.

gladly comply with the royal wishes.² The Guru then composed a long letter in Persian verse, called the *Zafar Nama* and entrusted it to *Bhais Daya Singh* and *Dharm Singh*, two of the Five-Beloved-ones, to be delivered personally to the Emperor.

Space would not admit of our reproducing the Guru's *Zafar Nama* in full or of translating it here in extenso. It is available in print. For our purpose it is sufficient to say that it is written in an admonitory form and it repeatedly tells the Emperor that he had previously been duped by the Emperor's oaths on the Quran and that he could now no longer be persuaded to rely upon them a second time. Referring, evidently, to the battles of Anandpur, Sirsa rivulet and Chamkaur, the Guru tells him that the imperialists had gone back upon their pledges and oaths and that they had fallen upon him unawares, and that the Emperor's *Bakhshīs* and *Diwans* were all liars. If the Emperor were to live upto his promises the affair could be easily settled. He himself, the Guru continues, had taken to the sword as the last resort, because when all other means fail, it is lawful, he thought, to resort to it. But he was willing to enter into peace negotiations if the Emperor were to come up to the *pargana* of Kangar in the Punjab. And, he would even go down to the Deccan if the Emperor were to issue a second invitation. What the Guru wanted of Aurangzeb was honesty of purpose and truthful behaviour. "Do not wantonly spil the blood of men," wrote the Guru, "for your own blood as surely will be spilt by death. . . . If you rely on men and gold, our eyes are fixed on God, Omnipotent; and if you pride in pelf and power, our refuge is God, Eternal."³

2. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Zikr-i-Guruān wā Singhān wā Mazhab-i-Eshān*, 9-10.

"The Muhammadan authors assert," says Irvine on the authority of Warid, "that Guru Govind now sent in petitions to Alamgir, offering to make submission, with a promise to accept Islam." But there is nothing traceable in the mass of historical material available on Aurangzeb and Guru Govind Singh to substantiate this statement. Irvine also disbelieves Warid and says that "the story, as it stands, with these details, is not quite credible."

There are, however, some writers who only know of the Guru's *Zafar Námáh* and not of the Emperor's letter, inviting him to the Deccan, that preceded it. But there is internal evidence in the *Zafar Námáh* itself (verses, 53, 54) which points to its being a reply and not a petition or an original letter. The *Sakhī Book* and *Zikr-i-Guruān* leave no ground for conjectures and prove the *Zafar Námáh* to have been written in response to the Emperor's invitation.

3. According to Ahmad Shah and Kesar Singh (*Bansavali Nama*), the *Zafar Nama* contained as many as one thousand and four hundred

Bhais Daya Singh and Dharm Singh dressed themselves as *ahdis* and set out for the Deccan. In the absence of modern means of transport and communication, it took them several months to arrive in the neighbourhood of the Emperor's camp in Ahmadnagar. Then there was another difficulty. It was of approaching the Emperor personally. Daya Singh wrote back to the Guru explaining his difficulties and seeking the Master's advice. In the meantime, however, he managed to deliver the message.⁴

On receipt of the *Zafar Namah* the Emperor dictated a letter to *Wuzarit-panáh Wazir* Mun'im Khan at Delhi and sent it to him with Mohammad Beg *Gurz-bardár* and Sheikh Yar Muhammad *Mansabdár*. Therein the Emperor desired the Wazir to conciliate Guru Govind Singh, invite him to Delhi and then, having conveyed the royal *farmán* to him, send him to the royal presence accompanied by a *mu'tmid* of his own and the above mentioned *Gurz-bardár* and *mansabdár*. As soon as the Guru arrived in the neighbourhood of Sirhind, the Emperor's letter continued, he (Mun'im Khan) should provide him with a guide and see him off safe beyond his own territories. Mun'im Khan was further instructed to sooth the Guru and pay him as much cash as he desired, out of his snatched property, for his travelling expenses.⁵

The Emperor dismissed the Guru's messenger *Bhái* Daya Singh accompanied by his mace-bearer and the other official, and they immediately set out for the north.

verses, and traced, at some length, the history of the relations between the Sikh Gurus and the Mughal Emperors up to the time of Aurangzeb, and detailed the Guru's grievances, throwing the responsibility on the Mughal shoulders (pages 9-10). The present *Zafar Namah*, as printed in the *Dasam Granth*, has only 111 verses and deals with nothing more than the subjects enumerated in the text. It appears from the text that there is some confusion in the order of verses, and its abrupt conclusion also points to this disorder and to a suspicion that it is not complete. The Guru's original letter or its more reliable copy is unearthened. The late Babu Jagannath Das, B.A., *Ratnakar* of Ayodhia wrote in the *Nagri Pracharni Patrika*, Part III, No. 2, of Shrawan 1979 B.K. (1922 A.D.), that he had obtained from Baba Sumer Singh of Patna, in about 1890, a copy of a letter of Guru Govind Singh to Emperor Aurangzeb and that it was different from the *Zafar Namah*. But that copy is now no longer known to exist, nor has it been possible to trace the one in possession of Baba Sumer Singh, whose papers on his death were scattered in untraceable places.

4. Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sabha*, 77-8. The Guru wrote in reply to *Bhai* Daya Singh to have faith in Him and preserve patiently, and desired the local Sikhs to co-operate with Daya Singh (p. 78-9).

5. Inayatullah Ismi, *Akham-i-Alamgiri*, 429-30, 510.

The Guru leaves for the Deccan

The Guru also, on the other hand, left for the Deccan on the 5th of Katik 1763 B.K., October, 1706.⁶ Apparently he had not heard from the Deccan again for a long time and had no other means of information regarding the success, or otherwise, of his messenger's mission. All that he had heard from *Bhai* Daya Singh was of his difficulties in approaching the Emperor and delivering the *Zafar Namah* to him. The news of Aurangzeb's failing health and continued illness were also then in the air, and his death under the weight of ninety long years was fast approaching. The Guru, therefore, it seems, thought it best to go to the Deccan himself and settle the affairs with the Emperor.

There could have been no other object of the Guru in undertaking the journey to the Deccan at this time. Several motives have in this connection been ascribed to him by his Sikh and non-Sikh biographers and, in some form or the other, they revolve round the following two central points.

Firstly, that he left for the Deccan with purely missionary intentions.

Secondly, that after the deaths of his sons, mother and a host of his Sikh followers, he felt despaired of the Punjab and the Punjabis and repaired southwards to rouse the sturdy Rajputs and valiant Marathas for the fulfillment of his mission and to find a suitable successor to continue his work.⁷

But, as we shall presently see, the course of subsequent proceedings in the life of Guru Govind Singh does not bear testimony to these conjectures.

The Guru marched to the Deccan via Bikaner and Rajputana. Passing through several places, he had arrived in the neighbourhood of Baghaur when *Bhai* Daya Singh, on his way back, met the Guru and related to him his experiences in the Deccan. The Emperor's *Gurz-bardar* and the *mansabdar* had gone straight to Delhi with the royal order for Mun'im Khan while Daya Singh had returned to his Master. It was about here that the news of the death of Aurangzeb at Ahmadnagar on 28th Zilgada 1118 A.H., 20th February 1707 (O.S.) was received.⁸

6. Attar Singh, *Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur*, Sakhi 112, p. 128-29.

7. Daulat Rai, *Guru Govind Singh*, 225-6.

Parmanand, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*.

8. *Sri Gur Sabha*, 85-6.

The Guru Returns to Delhi

As the only object which had brought the Guru so far from his country could now no longer be accomplished, he decided to return to the north. This alone is sufficient to demolish the above conjectures. If the Guru had gone thither purely for missionary purposes, there was no point in retracing his steps on the death of Aurangzeb. He should have rather gone ahead more vigorously with his work, as the worst of his religious enemies had now been removed and no cause of any great apprehension was left. And, if he had left the Punjab in despair, there could have been no better opportunity available to him than at the present moment to rouse and raise the Rajputs and the Marathas. The old Emperor was dead. The rightful heir Prince Mu'azzam (Bahadur Shah) was as yet far away on the North Western Frontier, with no army and no treasure, while Prince Azam, his younger brother, had proclaimed himself Emperor and was marching to the north to usurp the throne. But we find Guru Govind Singh far above personal animosities and revengeful politics. He seems to have no such thing in view. The only thing that he had in view, could not now, after the death of Aurangzeb, whom he proposed to meet in the Deccan, be accomplished. He, therefore, quietly marched back towards Delhi where his wives, *Mata Sundri* and *Mata Sahib Devi*, then lived.⁹

Prince Mu'azzam Seeks the Guru's Assistance

Prince Mu'azzam was at this time hurrying down to oppose his younger brother 'Azam, the usurper, who was coming up to the Imperial capital to establish himself there. Guru Govind Singh had by this time arrived at Delhi. On the advice of *Bhai Nand Lal*, devoted disciple of the Guru and a former *Munshi* of the Prince, the heir apparent wrote to the Guru and sought his assistance. It is true that Guru Govind Singh had with him no large army which could be of any substantial help to him. But, apparently, it was not for his strong army that he was appealed to for assistance. The Mughals on occasions like this, not unoften, looked up to saints and *faqirs* for blessings. Guru Govind Singh was a successor of Guru Nanak who was revered and looked up to by Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims like as a great saint—a man of God. Moreover, *Bhai Nand Lal*, who advised Mu'azzam on the subject, was himself a great devotee of the Guru and considered him next

only to God. It was, therefore, more for his spiritual intercession that *Bhai Nand Lal* approached him on behalf of the Emperor.

Now again we find the Guru on a much higher plane. For a century his ancestors had been persecuted by those of Mu'azzam. Guru Arjan, his great grandfather, had been executed under the orders of Jehangir, his grand father Guru Hargobind had been imprisoned in the Fort of Gwalior by the same Emperor and was later on harassed by the forces of Shah Jahan. Mu'azzam's own father, Aurangzeb, had been responsible for the persecution of the seventh and eighth Gurus and for the execution of Guru Govind Singh's father, the Ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur. For over a decade and a half, the Guru himself had to suffer a great deal at the hands of Aurangzeb. His four sons had been sacrificed and his mother had died under most excruciating circumstances. A large number of his beloved disciples had been killed in the battles that had been forced upon him, and he had himself to seek refuge in exile. But true to his noble heritage, with all this bitter past, he promised to stand in defence of the right of Mu'azzam, and sent a small detachment of his Sikhs under the command of Dharm Singh to render him all possible assistance. The two brothers met each other in the battle of Jajau (18th June, 1707, N.S.) where the younger one, Azam, was killed and Mu'azzam became the Emperor of India with the title of Bahadur Shah.¹⁰

The Guru now returned to Delhi, while Bahadur Shah went to Agra.¹¹

The Guru Meets Bahadur Shah at Agra

After about a month's stay at Delhi, the Guru set out towards Agra. On his way he visited Muthra and Brindaban. At a distance of about four *kos* (about six miles) from Agra, he set up his camp in a garden. The Emperor's residence was about two *kos*

10. There is no mention in the Persian histories of the military assistance rendered by Guru Gobind Singh to Bahadur Shah in the battle of Jajau. This is, perhaps, because the number of the Sikhs was not large enough to attract the notice of the chroniclers, or perhaps because the Guru himself took no active part in the fighting. The account of the Guru's assistance in the text above is based on Santokh Singh's *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, popularly called *Suraj Prakash*, p. 6151-9), and Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, v. 230.

Jajau is situated between Agra and Dhaulpur, and the battle field was 4 miles north-east of the place. (Sarkar's Note in *Later Mughals*, p. I. 25).

11. *Sri Gur Sobha*, 91.

from this place. On hearing of the Guru's arrival, *Khan-i-Khanan* Mun'im Khan sent some of his men to wait upon him and to invite him to his place. The Guru gladly availed of this opportunity and paid a visit to *Khan-i-Khanan* who received him with all the respect due to his high spiritual position. He proceeded to touch his feet and the Guru patted him on his back. The two had some friendly conversation, and he then retired to his own camp. It was the rainy season and there was a very heavy down-pour after the Guru had left *Khan-i-Khanan's* residence. It was perhaps, for this or some other reason that he did not see Bahadur Shah on that day.¹²

When Bahadur Shah came to know of the Guru's visit to *Khan-i-Khanan*, he invited him to pay him a visit also. On the 4th Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 1119 (23rd July 1707 O.S., and August 1707 N.S.), the Guru set out with a selected body of Sikhs to meet the Emperor. On arrival at the royal residence he left his body-guard there, and went in accompanied by only one Sikh. At the *Deorhi*, which led into the royal presence, he left that Sikh also and went in all alone. The Emperor was highly pleased to see the warrior-saint and to receive him at his court. He thanked him for the assistance he had rendered him in the battle of Jajau and offered to him as a mark of his gratitude a rich *Khillat*, including a jewelled scarf, a *dhukhdhukhi*, an aigrette, etc., worth sixty thousand rupees. The Guru called in the Sikh standing at the Gate of the *Deorhi* to the Shah's presence and had the dress of honour carried by him to his camp, and then returned to his residence.¹³

The Guru's Letter to His Sikhs in the Punjab

It appears that these visits of Guru Govind Singh, the first to *Khan-i-Khanan* and the second to Emperor Bahadur Shah, had some greater significance than mere courtesy visits. The negotiations, which had prompted him to move towards the Deccan to see Emperor Aurangzeb, seem to have now been started with the new Emperor Bahadur Shah and that the Guru soon expected to return to the Punjab, after their successful conclusion, and that he also had in view some military operations there for which he was issuing instructions to his Sikhs in the Punjab to join him on his arrival

12. *Sri Gur Sobha*, 92-94.

13. *Bahadur Shah Namah*. Entry dated 4th Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 1119, A.H., *Hukam Namah* of Guru Govind Singh dated 1st Katik 1764 B.K. (October 1707); Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I. 96; *Sri Gur Sobha*, p. 94-5; *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, XIV, 6174-5.

in Kahlur. For this we have a very reliable piece of documentary evidence in the Guru's own letter dated Katik 1st, 1764 B.K. (first week of October 1707), written from the neighbourhood of Agra. Translation into English it reads as follows:—

From the 10th Guru

To the *Sangat* of Dhaul. You are my *Khalsa*. The *Guru* shall protect you. Repeat *Guru, Guru* (always remember the Great Master). With all happiness, we came to the *Petashah*. A dress of honour and a jewelled *dhukhdhukhi* worth sixty thousands was presented to us. With the *Guru's* grace, the other things are also progressing (satisfactorily). In a few days we are also coming. My instructions to the entire *Khalsa Sangat* is to remain united; when we arrive in Kahlur, the entire *Khalsa* should come to our presence fully armed. He who will come shall be happy....
Sammāt 1764, date Katik 1st.¹⁴

This letter of Guru Govind Singh is of great historical importance. In addition to the Guru's visit to Emperor Bahadur Shah, when a dress of honour was presented to him, it points to some *other things also* which "with the *Guru's* grace" were "also progressing". These *other things* could be nothing but friendly negotiations for the termination of a century-old hostile attitude of the Mughals towards the Sikh Gurus. And, from the attitude of the Emperor, the Guru seems to have gauged that they would soon be concluded to his satisfaction and that he would "in a few days" return to the Punjab. But, apparently, on his arrival in Kahlur, on his way home to Anandpur, he feared some opposition from some quarter, and it was, therefore, that he desired his *Khalsa* to meet him there fully armed for any military operation and he might in self-defence be called upon to undertake. Kahlur being situated in the Shivalik range of the Himalayas, and in the neighbourhood of the *Chakla* of Sirhind, the opposition could have come either from the Hindu Rajput hill-chiefs or from Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, his bitterest enemies in the country, the latter being ultimately responsible for the murderous attack upon the Guru at Nander in Hyderabad Deccan where he breathed his last. This letter conclusively repudiates the conjecture that the Guru had left for the Deccan because of his despair of his own people and in the hope of rousing the Rajputs and the

14. *The Panj Darya*, Lahore, October 1940, p. 17-22. A photographic copy of the original is available in the collection of the Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Marathas to achieve his mission. On the basis of this unassailable evidence it can now be safely asserted that the Guru would certainly have returned to the Punjab, had not the accidental change in circumstances, owing to the rebellion of Bahadur Shah's brother Kam Bakhsh, taken him to the Deccan in company with the Emperor with whom the negotiations referred to above were then still in progress.

*He Accompanies Bahadur Shah to Rajputana, and
Thence to Deccan*

According to the *Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim* of Murtaza Hussain Belgrami, some of the Imperial Amirs had for some time been clamouring for *Jagirs*, and salaries, and as Bahadur Shah had found very little money in the treasury at the time of his accession, he had not been able to reward the services of many of those who had assisted him in the victory of Jajau. *Khan-i-Khanan* Mun'im Khan at this stage advised the Emperor to annex the territories of the Kachhwaha Rajputs and to distribute them amongst the clamouring and dissatisfied *Amirs*.¹⁵ This would serve a double purpose. These refractory Rajput enemies would be suppressed for ever and the friends and pillars of the Empire appeased. The suggestion appealed to Bahadur Shah and he left for Rajputana on the 12th November 1707. The Guru's negotiations do not seem to have concluded as yet. Therefore, he also accompanied the Emperor. But before the Emperor could fully subjugate the Kachhwahas, news arrived from the Deccan that his younger brother Kam Bakhsh had raised the standard of rebellion and that it was assuming threatening proportions. Bahadur Shah, thereupon, postponed the expedition against the Rajputs and marched to the South in the 1st week of May 1708. The Guru also moved thither with a view to pursuing his object as and when he found a favourable opportunity to turn the Emperor to it. Here again another conjecture appears. Finding the Guru occasionally in the Imperial camp on its march to the Deccan, and not knowing the real object which took him that side, some writers, including Forster and Elphinstone, have conveniently followed their imagination that he must have been there only as a commandant like many others who were there) in the expeditionary force that was marching into the Deccan to crush the rebellion of Kam Bakhsh. Some later writers have further interpreted and mentioned it as his having entered into Mughal service. But as it is not substantiated by any contemporary or authenticated second-

15. *Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim*, 127-8.

any evidence, it must be dismissed as an incredible conjecture. Even in the events in the Guru's life before and during his journey to the Deccan we find nothing but a clear contradiction of this wrongful and imaginary theory. At Agra we find the Guru, as the *Sri Gur Sabha* tells us, ordering the dress of honour, presented by the Emperor, to be carried away by a follower instead of putting it on, according to the court etiquette and practice, in the royal presence. This was a rare privilege allowed to men of religious eminence and not to any Imperial official or a servant of the state. Again during the march, we find him, separating from the Imperial camp at his will, and for any number of days, carrying on his missionary work. The *Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi* tells us that "Guru Govind, one of the grand-sons (descendants) of Nanak, had come into these districts to travel and accompanied the royal camp. He was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics and all sorts of people."¹⁶ This could certainly not have been allowed to a servant of the state proceeding on a military expedition against a threatening rebellion. But we have still stronger an evidence against this conjecture. On the 5th of Ramzan 1120 A.H., 7th November 1707 (O.S.), a month after his death, a report was made to Emperor Bahadur Shah "as to the disposal of moveable property of Guru Govind Nanak. It was of considerable value and according to rule (applicable to Imperial officials and servants of the state) ought to be confiscated. The Emperor, with the remark that he was not in want of the goods of a *Darvesh*, ordered the whole to be relinquished to the heirs."¹⁷ Here the Emperor himself remembers the Guru as *Darvesh*, a saint, and not as an official or servant of the state. And this is sufficient to clear the above point.

At Nander in Hyderabad Deccan

Having crossed the Narbada, the Imperial camp arrived at Burhanpur on the Tapti which it crossed between the 22nd and 25th June 1708 (N.S.). From Burhanpur Bahadur Shah had despatched an urgent message to the Guru, who arrived in the camp there and accompanied it towards further south. The route taken from here was by Malkapur. The Banganga was crossed on the 24th August 1708 (N.S.), and the camp arrived at Nander early in September.¹⁸

16. Henry Elliot, *History of India as told by its own historians*, VII, 566.

17. *Bahadur Shah Namah*, Entry, 5th Ramzan, 1120, Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 90.

18. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, 158-59.

It was here at Nander that Guru Govind Singh transformed a Vaishnavite *Bairagi* Madho as, also called Lachhman Das, into a soldier of the Khalsa. On his way to the Deccan, the Guru had been warned by Jait Ram, a Dadupanthi *Sadhu* of Dadudwara (Narayana, Jaipur State), against visiting the hermitage of this *Bairagi* who, according to him, practised incantations on his visitors and took pleasure in ridiculing them. But the Guru was a disciple-successor of Guru Nanak (1469-1537) who not unoften travelled several hundred miles to bring a misguided soul to the right path. Guru Govind Singh disregarded the warning of Jait Ram and, on his arrival at Nander, repaired to the *Bairagi's* monastery. Madho Das was not present there. The Guru occupied the only cot available there and laid himself on it to wait for him, while his Sikhs busied themselves in cooking meat for their meal. This exasperated the zealous and devoted vegetarian disciples of the Vaishnavite *Bairagi*. They ran to inform him about this strange visitor. The *Bairagi* was red with anger and his fury knew no bounds. In vain he called in the assistance of secret spirits, and in vain he exhausted all his yogic powers and occultism in trying to overturn the cot on which the Guru was seated. The Guru's mind was too strong for these things. All the efforts of the *Bairagi*, therefore, ended in failure. He then came nearer. He saw in him his Master and threw himself at his feet. The following dialogue is recorded in Ahmad Shah Batalia's *Zikr-i-Guruan wa Ibtida-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan*:—

Madho Das:—Who are you?

Guru Govind Singh:—He whom you know.

Madho Das:—What do I know?

Guru Govind Singh:—Think it over in your mind.

Madho Das (after a pause):—So you are Guru Govind Singh!

Guru Govind Singh:—Yes!

Madho Das:—What have you come here for ?

Guru Govind Singh:—I have come so that I may convert you into a disciple of mine.

Madho Das:—I submit, my Lord.

I am a *Banda* (a slave) of yours.

The erstwhile proud and invincible *Bairagi Mahant* now became Guru Govind Singh's *Banda* (slave). The Guru clearly perceived what was yet vital in the youthful ascetic and he relumed it with Promethian fire. He availed himself of this psychological

moment, dressed and armed him like a Sikh and administered to him the Immortalising Draught, the *Amrita* of the *Khalsa*, and baptized him with all the rites of the *Pahul* ceremony. He was given the new name of Banda Singh, though throughout his life and afterwards he was popularly known, and recorded by historians, by his self-conferred title of *Banda*.¹⁹

The Guru's Death

On his journey to the south, the Guru was secretly pursued by two Pathans from Sirhind. The daily increasing closer relations between Emperor Bahadur Shah and Guru Govind Singh were a source of alarm to Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind. It was he who had been responsible for most of the sufferings of the Guru and his Sikhs in the past, and it was under his orders that two younger sons of the Guru were at first bricked up alive and were then butchered to death, and it was against his treacherous army that his other two sons died fighting at Chamkaur. So, it was he, who had the most to fear from these friendly relations now when it was popularly believed that the Guru was accompanying the Emperor to explore means to avenge the murder of his young sons.²⁰ In the beginning of his reign, Bahadur Shah, according to Bakht Mall, had granted a *farman* in favour of the Guru upon Wazir Khan for a sum of three hundred rupees per day. Wazir Khan had since then been looking for an opportunity to get rid of him. He had engaged a Pathan to take his life, but the plot had failed and the Pathan had fallen under the Guru's sword. Wazir Khan could easily play upon the revengeful feelings of the sons of this Pathan. He instigated them against the Guru and sent them to the Deccan with a view to putting an end to his life as and when they found an opportunity to do it.²¹ The *Chaturjugi* tells us that these Pathans at first went to Delhi and enquired about the whereabouts of the Guru from his wife *Mata Sundri* and then moved to the Deccan with their murderous design.

These Pathans were evidently known to the Guru and his Sikhs. They were not, therefore, suspected of any evil design on their visits to him. According to the *Sri Gur Sabha*,²² they had occasio-

19. For fuller details and authorities see Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, 12-17.

20. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, 44.

21. *Khalsa Namah* 17-19. The fact that the Guru's murderers belonged to Sirhind is mentioned in the *Chaturjugi* also.

22. *Sainapat*, 101-02.

nal visits to the Guru at the intervals of two or three days, but they could find no opportunity to attack him. At last, one evening, after the *Rahr* prayer, when the Guru was having a nap and his attendant happened to be drowsing, one of the Pathans slowly crept up to him and stabbed him in the left side, a little below the heart. But before he could deal another blow, the Guru despatched him with his sabre and his flying companion fell under the swords of the Sikhs.²³

When Bahadur Shah heard this news, he ordered one of his surgeons, Cole (or Call) by name, an Englishman, to attend to the Guru.²⁴ In a few days the wound was healed up and he was able to move about. But it appears to have been yet raw from inside when, one day, with the strength applied in pulling a stiff bow, the wound was reopened and the gush of blood weakened him beyond cure. He bade his last farewell, with the words *Wahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Sri Wahiguru ji ki Fateh*, immediately after midnight and breathed his last in the very early hours of *Katik Sudi 5, 1765 Bikrami, October 7, 1708 A.D.*²⁵

23. Several theories regarding the motive of the attack have been advanced by writers on the subject. According to some the Guru himself instigated the Pathans to avenge the death of their father, while according to the *Tarikhi-i-Bahadur Shahi*, "certain expressions, unfit for the ears of the faithful, fell from the mouth of the Guru. The Afghan was enraged, and regardless of the Guru's dignity and importance, he gave him two or three stabs with a knife and killed him." Daulat Rai in his *Swaneh-umri Guru Govindh Singh* accuses the Emperor himself for having instigated his to murder to get rid of him. There are some writers according to whom this was the result of the exchange of hot words on the settlement of accounts regarding the purchase of horses. These theories are apparently put forward by Sikh and non-Sikh writers with different motives, but they cannot stand the test of historical scrutiny and must be dismissed as incredible.

24. Dhian Singh, *Daswen Patshah ka Antam Kautak*, 4.

25. *Sri Gur Sobha*, etc.