



**SARDAR  
JASSA SINGH  
AHLUWALIA**

**GANDA SINGH**

**PUBLICATION BUREAU  
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY PATIALA**

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Department of Development of Punjabi Language  
Punjabi University, Patiala

*Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* by *Dr Ganda Singh* originally written in  
Punjabi and translated into English by *Dr Sant Singh Bal*

1990  
First Edition : 1100  
Price : 55.00

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Published by Sardar Tirath Singh, LL.M., Registrar, Punjabi University, Patiala  
and printed at M/s. Yesman Printers, Patiala.

## PREFACE

In the 'Punjab Heroes Series', the book, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* is not only the life history of this 18th century brave son of Punjab; but also a chronicle of the collective struggle launched by the Sikh community for political freedom. And this struggle has been presented purely from a historical angle. In my quest for truth, and as a true student of history, I have tried to examine the whole issue from all angles so that the facts which were not clear to me, and about which others were in doubt, should appear in a clear light. In recording these facts, I have not allowed my imagination to interfere with my endeavour. Since I am neither a poet nor a novelist, naturally I did not permit my imagination to indulge in fanciful flights. In fact, I regard the mingling of historical facts and imaginative fiction as highly inappropriate and unjust and irrelevant to the subject in hand whatever the motive prompting such a mingling—communal or the lust of lucre. The imagination can be deceptive because we cannot be sure whether the thinking of others has reached a definite conclusion or not. It is possible that an author depending on his fancy and imagination may embark on his intellectual journey in a wrong direction from the very beginning, and drift away from the obtaining reality. The invasion of historical facts by falsehood is not impossible; rather in certain situations, it is highly probable and since falsehood spreads in all directions very rapidly, its range of influence becomes very wide. Obviously, the mingling of history and fiction is a departure from the truth, and causes permanent damage to the collective consciousness of a race, a community or a nation. Such an historian is neither authentic nor trustworthy, and, above all, he distorts the racial or communal character of a people, thus degrading himself in the eyes of the reader.

Since the historical facts connected with the life of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia are not readily available where the history

of Punjab is concerned, Persian, Urdu, Marathi and British sources have been tapped. There are no contemporary documents available in the old records of the Kapurthala State. The ordinances issued by the Mughals and the Durrani emperors lying there are useless, for their very authenticity is questionable. The volume written by Shri Ram Sukh Rao is a mere tract, and its Urdu version does not take one far. Even the book, *A History of the State of Kapurthala* written by Diwan Ramjas on the basis of the above documents does not contain the life-history of Sardar Jassa Singh. The dates and years mentioned in these books are not correct, and if one goes by them, one can form wrong conceptions of the historical events and lose direction. Therefore, these books have been helpful only insofar as they provide a few descriptions of certain historical events connected with the life of Sardar Jassa Singh. For understanding the history of this period, only *Prachin Panth Prakash* of Bhangoo Rattan Singh is helpful. Its author was the grandson of S. Mehtab Singh of Mirakotia and the maternal grandson of S. Shyam Singh of Natliwala, both of whom had made a personal contribution to the history of this period. Even his father, S. Rai Singh, personally participated in several conflicts and battles, and it was on the basis of what Rattan Singh had heard from his father that he recorded these historical facts in his book. He refers to this fact at several places—see, for instance, pp. 1-2, 498, 502, 510, 537, 585, etc. According to the tradition of the time *Prachin Panth Prakash* is written in verse. Such books by Giani Gian Singh, as *A History of Guru Khalsa and Panth Prakash* are full of information because they were written by the author after long and wide travels. However, since he has followed the style of the English writers, and resorted to poetic emotion, he has not been able to preserve historical truth and authenticity. There occurs a difference of several years in the dates and years mentioned by him. Under these circumstances, it was imperative to take recourse to other competent and reliable sources. These books and records were of immense help in the preparation of the present volume and in sorting out several complex issues and problems relating to Punjab history.

In this book, greater attention has been paid to the efforts

of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia for the freedom of Punjab, and in establishing Dal Khalsa and Sikh Missals for the achievement of his goal. Therefore, I do not deem it proper to concentrate my attention on certain comparatively insignificant or smaller achievements of Sardar Jassa Singh; nor have I discussed in detail question of monetary tributes and collections raised from Punjab for the Mughal emperors. Of course, some light has been thrown on the relations of the Khalsa with the Mughals, the Rohilas, the Jats, the Marathas and the Rajputs because Sardar Jassa Singh personally contributed to these relations.

I had been pondering to write on Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia for the past 30 or 35 years, but somehow I could not take up the project for one reason or another. I am grateful to S. Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University Patiala under whose direction and inspiration, this project has been completed.

Lower Mall,  
Patiala

Ganda Singh





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## CHAPTER I

### ANCIENT LINEAGE

Although the Ahluwalia dynasty is known as Kalal, the royal House of Kapurthala traces its lineage to the royal House of the Bhatti Rajputs of Jaisalmer. This dynasty is one of the few Rajasthan Houses, and is held in high esteem for its physical prowess, bravery and sense of honour.

The Jaisalmer Rajputs trace their family lineage to Lord Krishna of Yadu dynasty. It is recorded in their history that soon after the death of Lord Krishna his offspring were scattered in different parts of India. His sons travelled to North and settled on the Western banks of the river Indus. One of their descendants was a mighty king named Gaj who built the Fort of Gajni for checking the invasions of the Romans, and of the Khurasani emperors. He succeeded in defeating the Khurasani forces thrice, but when he could not resist the joint forces of the Romans and the Khurasanis, he sent his tribe under the supervision of his son, Salibahn to Punjab and himself lost his life while fighting in Gajni, along with his 200 soldiers.

On reaching Punjab, Salibahn succeeded in establishing a new kingdom for himself, and on Bhadar, Samat 372, he laid the foundation of the city known as Salibahanpur. Today this city is known as Sialkot. It is also believed that Sialkot was founded by king Shaall who was related to the Pandvas. Since Salibahn came of the Shaall family, he gave the name of Salibahnpur to the city, while the old Fort continued to have the name of Shaallkot. Shaallkot being an older name, the whole city became famous as Sialkot. Salibahn has been an outstanding hero of Punjab. He had given such a crushing defeat to the Shak hordes in the battlefield of Kehrod, 60 miles away from Multan that they dared not cast an evil eye on Punjab for a long time. This victory was so glorious for Salibahn that he became famous as Shak-aari or the enemy

of the Shaks. Moreover, he started a new era known as Shak Samat to mark his victory over the Shaks. This era has now been accepted by the Govt. of India for the whole country. This era begins from 78 A. D.

The grandson of Salibahn, Bhatti was a great warrior and after him, the dynasty came to be known as Yado Bhatti. He expanded his kingdom by annexing the surrounding territories. For several generations, his progeny ruled over a large part of Punjab. But when the Muslims began to invade Punjab, the Bhattis left their kingdom and took shelter in the Lakhi jungles and in the desert of Bikaner. After defeating the local inhabitants, they established themselves and made Tanot their capital. This city of Tanot is situated to the South-West of Kishangarh in Jaisalmer. But the Bhattis could not hold on to Tanot for a long time. After leaving this place, king Deoraj who added the suffix Raval to his name, got the fort of Deoraval (Deogarh) built in the year 909. Gradually, this name changed to Deoravar, and today it is known as Deoraval and is situated in Bahawalpur.

The capital was shifted from Deoraval to Lodraw, but even this new place did not prove effective for resisting the enemies. At last in Sawan Sudi 11-12 of the Samat 1212, Raval Jaisel built a castle in the Trikuti Hill, and it was named Jaisalmer. When Ala-Udin-Khilji destroyed and plundered the city and the fort of Jaisalmer, some Bhattis came to Punjab, while others spent their days of adversity by going underground and later on finding a suitable opportunity, recaptured Jaisalmer.

Raval Jaisalmer had eight sons of whom Karam and Dharm became very famous. The descendants of Raval Karm are still existent in Jaisalmer, when some degraded Rajputs began to solemnize the marriages of their daughters with the Mughals. Emperor Akbar asked the Bhatti Rajputs of Jaisalmer to follow suit. At that time Rana Har Rai occupied the throne of Jaisalmer. He had no daughter. Therefore, Akbar asked his brother Tulsi to give his daughter in marriage. He was an honourable man. He opted for a life of poverty and privation, and, therefore, leaving the kingdom he came to Punjab with his family. For some time they lived in Bhatinda; later on, their sons and grandsons reached Bir Ambarhar in the Lakhi jungles. But when they could

not settle here, obviously, they migrated to Gorakh Chak in Taran Taran.

With the passing of time, they got mingled with the Jats who constituted at that time the majority community of this area. They began to enter into matrimonial alliances with them. Thus, gradually they also became Jats. Their connection with the Sikh Panth came into existence with the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib, when Bhai Saina Singh and his son Wadava Singh joined the demon-destroying army of the Guru. In those days they lived in the village of Gujjar Chak in Taran Taran. Bhai Saina Singh and Wadava Singh were brave warriors, and they played a remarkable role in the battles fought by the sixth Guru who was extremely pleased with them.

Bhai Ganda Singh, son of Bhai Wadhava Singh was a very famous warrior. He was able to establish his hegemony in the surrounding villages with great ease and assurance, besides charging taxes from the people of nearby areas. Not only that, he plundered a few Eastern localities of Lahore, and even before the royal army could reach there, he had made good his escape. At that time Dilawar Khan was the sub-ruler of Lahore. He tried to capture Ganda Singh, but in vain. At last Dilawar Khan remonstrated with him, and persuaded him to join the royal army. Soon after there was a military campaign in the direction of Multan. In this battle, Ganda Singh showed such bravery that he turned the tide in favour of the Lahore army which was on the verge of losing ground. Dilawar Khan was so highly pleased with his bravery that he gave him the villages and areas of Ahloo-Hollo, Sado, Toor and Chak as a reward. Soon after this, Ganda Singh passed away, and his son Sadhu Singh began to live in the village of Ahloo. Sadhu Singh and his sons and grandsons became famous as Ahluwalias because of their connection with the village Ahloo.

In his childhood, Sadhu Singh lived in the village of his maternal grandparents. He was born and brought up here, and he played with Kalal children of the neighbourhood. He had a deep love for one of the young girls of the Kalals, and this love became stronger with the passing of time. After settling down in the village of Ahloo, he expressed his desire to marry this girl. The

parents of this girl knew the secret of their affair, and they were witnessing the ascending stars of Sadhu Singh's family. They accepted the offer of marriage put forth by Sadhu Singh as something god-send. They also affirmed that in future also the Ahluwalias should have matrimonial ties with them. Sadhu Singh accepted the condition laid down by the Kalal parents of his beloved, and married her. Sadhu Singh had four sons, Gopal Singh, Hemu, Sikander and Chaha, and one daughter. All these four sons were married in Kalal families and thus this dynasty became famous as Ahluwalia Kalal. The Ahluwalia dynasty of Kapurthala begins with Gopal Singh and his son Deva Singh. We do not know many details about them, except that Deva Singh served Guru Gobind Singh as his devout follower. [*Ramjas, A History of the State of Kapurthala*, pp. 78-88; Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 493-96; Mohammad Hassan (Urdu-Rajgani Punjab) 1-6; a *History of Guru Khalsa, Raj Khalsa* 188-90); *Kapurthala State, Its Past and Present*, 1.]

Sir Lapil Griffin does not accept the theory tracing the origin of this dynasty to Jaisalmer and dismisses it as something imaginary. He also believes that the glory of Kapurthala does not depend on Jaisalmer. In his view, the bravery and influence of Sardar Jassa Singh, his being the leader of Khalsa Dal and his ability to establish an independent kingdom are in themselves a sufficient evidence of the glory and sovereignty of this dynasty. [*Rajas of the Punjab*, 496.]

## CHAPTER 2

### Sardar Jassa Singh—Birth and Childhood

Deva Singh Ahluwalia had three sons—Gurbax Singe, Sadar Singh and Badar Singh. Although Badar Singh was the youngest of his brothers, yet he fully matched them in handsomeness and bravery. He was a well-built and tall young man with a knotty body. He had the privilege of seeing the 10th Sikh Master, Guru Gobind Singh face to face along with his father, S. Deva Singh. He had also received the *Pahul* or Amrit from the Hazoori Singhs of the Guru. The Sikh sentiments, faith and love of religion had flowed into his being, and he was a living embodiment of the Sikh ideals.

Bhai Badar Singh was married to the sister of S. Bagh Singh of the village of Hallo Sadho. This lady was also a devout Sikh. She had learnt Gurmukhi, and she had good knowledge of the Sikh religious scriptures. She remembered a large part of Gurbani by heart, but even then she carried Gurbani volumes along with her small sword. She had a special interest in Kirtan, (community singing of the Sikh hymns)-and she was adept in playing upon a two-stringed musical instrument. Reciting the Gurbani both in the morning and the evening and organising *kirtan* congregations was her routine. Indeed, her life was a gloss over the Sikh ladies of olden days. The life of her son, Jassa Singh, was modelled on her own and it was her clear intellect, impressive bearing and religious faith that were fully reflected in the personality of Jassa Singh who became the leader of Khalsa Dal and the emperor of his community. A detailed discussion of his life and achievements would be taken up in the following pages.

Many years after his marriage, Badar Singh had no issue. Therefore, the couple went to Guru Gobind Singh who blessed them and advised them to pray to God, serve the Sikh congregations, and concentrate their mind on Guru Nanak. The Guru was with them and their son would be a true hero of the Guru him-

self. Badar Singh and his wife had to pass through a period of trial for some more time. The 10th Guru passed away. With the turn of time, they had some financial difficulties in their house. Now the time had come when after the sacrifice of Banda Singh along with his 800 companions in Delhi in 1716, the Khalsa was facing the tempest of the Mughal fury, but the devout couple did not feel shaken. In Samat 1775, Baisakh Sudi 15, Purnamashi (May 3, 1718 A D.), the hero of the Guru (Guru Ka Lal) Jassa Singh was born.

This was the period when the Sikhs were being subjected to tyranny and terror, though emerging purer and stronger like gold after passing through fire. The Sikh sentiment was in high spirits, and the Sikhs were making supreme sacrifices. It appeared as if the spirits of the Sikh martyrs had been reincarnated into new beings for the fulfilment of the great mission. While on the one hand this was the period of martyrdom for the Sikhs, on the other, it was also an age when brave and committed soldiers were being born. It was during this period that S. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was born. This century also saw the birth of several Missal leaders like the Bhangis, the Ramgarias and the Ghanayas and several other warriors whose commitment and bravery kept the spirit of the Khalsa Dal alive while the Mughal rulers of the day were bent upon eliminating the Sikhs for all times. The Mughal emperor had issued orders to kill the Sikhs at sight and the royal armies were moving from village to village in search of them. These armies were sending hundreds of Sikhs to Lahore for torture and execution.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the birth of Jassa Singh and during the period

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1. The first royal order for the general massacre of the Sikhs was issued on December 10, 1710 (29 Shawal San 4 Bahadur Shahi) by emperor Bahadur Shah. The order ran as follows: "All the Sikhs who worship Guru Nanak should be put to death."

This order was repeated by emperor Frukhssee (1713-18) after the execution of Banda Singh in 1716. This is evident from the well-known book, "K-ftah-U-Twareekh (Page 398). In this book, it is written: "After the execution of Banda Singh, it had been ordered by the emperor that the followers of the Sikh religion should be killed enmass without any rhyme or reason or without any enquiry."

of his childhood, the events concerning the persecution of the Sikhs were a daily occurrence. But the Sikhs were facing this ordeal with cheer, and accepted their lot as the Will of God. Jassa Singh's mother began to impart him training in the Sikh scriptures and in *kirtan* from a very tender age. On seeing the unusual intelligence of their son, the parents started entertaining several high dreams about his future. Suddenly in Samat 1779, Jassa Singh's father, S. Badar Singh passed away. For the mother of Jassa Singh, this was a period of great difficulties. While on the one hand, she had lost her husband, on the other, the Mughal Government was thirsty for the blood of the Sikhs, but this great lady did not lose heart. She accepted the death of her husband as a part of the divine design, and she began to spend her days in prayer and humility.

After the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Sundriji was living in Delhi. It was here that the Sikh congregations used to assemble to see her. After the birth of Jassa Singh, his mother had not got an opportunity to go to see Mata Sundri. On hearing the news that some Sikhs were ready to leave for Delhi, she also got ready to join them. This relates to Samat 1780 Bikrami or 1723 A. D. On reaching Delhi, Jassa Singh's mother served Mata Sundriji so whole-heartedly that she was immensely pleased with her. Her melodious voice and her love for *Gurbani* left such a deep impression on her mind that she asked her to stay on with her in Delhi permanently. Consequently, reciting *Gurbani* both in the morning and in the evening and holding a *kirtan* darbar for the spiritual uplift of the Sikh congregation became her routine. She emphasised the value and significance of the teachings of the Great Guru. Jassa Singh would accompany her in the recitation of the *Shabad* or hymns from *Gurbani*. Their *kirtan* pleased not only Mata Sundriji, but also electrified the Sikh *Sangat* with joy.

Mata Sundri had a special affection for Jassa Singh, and she looked after him like her own son in the matter of food and clothing etc. Considering his religious bent of mind and his love for *Gurbani* she would shower boundless blessings on him. Thus, Jassa Singh and his mother served Mata Sundriji in Delhi for a period of about 7 years. By this time Jassa Singh was 12 years old. During his stay in Delhi, he had studied not only religious



and historical books, but had also acquired considerable proficiency in Persian by going to a mosque regularly. Since the language of Delhi and its surroundings was Hindustani, Jassa Singh also acquired mastery of this language, and the impact of Hindustani dominated his speech up to a major part of his life.

In view of the fact that S. Bagh Singh Hollowalia had no issue of his own, he showered all his affection whole-heartedly on his nephew, Jassa Singh. It is said that when S. Bagh Singh went to Delhi twice to meet his sister-Jassa Singh's mother-he asked her to return home. But mata Sundriji had immense love for Jassa Singh's mother and she insisted on her staying in Delhi. The political condition of the country was not favourable for the Khalsa. Therefore, Jassa Singh and his mother stayed on in Delhi for 7 years. It was not something easy for Mata Sundriji to part from Jassa Singh's mother and him, in view of her emotional and spiritual involvement with the child whom she had tended like her own son. But at last in Samat 1786 Bikrani or 1720 A. D., S. Bagh Singh visited Delhi, and he humbly sought permission of Mata Sundriji to take his sister and his nephew back home. Even this time, Mataji did not want to send them back, but when S. Bagh Singh Insisted again and again Mata Sundriji allowed Jassa Singh and his mother to return to Punjab. At the time of their departure, Mata Sundriji admonished S. Bagh Singh and his sister to remain true to the Sikh faith, and as a token of her affection and blessings, she gave a number of gifts to Jassa Singh which included a sword, a shield, a bow, a sheath of arrows, a dress and a silver *chob*. She showered her blessings on him saying: "You and your descendants will become rulers of men." By the grace of God, this prophecy of Mataji came out to be literally true.

## IN THE SERVICE OF S. KAPUR SINGH

From Delhi Jassa Singh and his mother accompanied S. Bagh Singh to Jalandhar. In view of the patrolling of the villages situated in the surroundings of Lahore, S. Bagh Singh had left his village Hollo and shifted to Jalandhar for the time being. Jassa Singh and his mother also began to live with him. During these days, S. Kapur Singh and the Khalsa Dal had settled in the vicinity of Kartarpur where S. Bagh Singh had the opportunity of meeting S. Kapur Singh. On the occasion of one *gurpurb* when S. Bagh Singh went to meet Jathedar Kapur Singh, Jassa Singh and his mother accompanied him. Early in the morning they recited *Asa-di-Var* in the *Khalsa Diwan* or the Sikh congregation. With the mother's love for *Gurbani*, her scholarship and her melodious voice and Jassa Singh's style of singing hymns, S. Kapur Singh and other Sikh leaders were so immensely pleased that they persuaded them to stay there for one month. The bearing and conduct of Jassa Singh, his stable nature, his faith in Sikhism and spirit of service impressed Nawab Sahib so deeply that he asked S. Bagh Singh and his sister to leave the boy with him.

S. Kapur Singh was one of the outstanding Sikh leaders of the day. He was held in high esteem on account of his pure life and his commitment to Sikhism. On the one hand, he was a brave warrior of the highest order, on the other, he spent most of his time in singing the praise of God. He did not forget God even in the battle-field. Indeed, like a perfect *Khalsa*, he was acting on the following statement of Guru Gobind Singh: "The man who remembers God even in the battle-field is indeed great in this world." It is a measure of his detachment and greatness that when the title of "Nawab" was offered to him by the Khalsa in a congregation, he submitted with folded hands, "I do not refuse to shoulder the responsibility imposed on me by the Khalsa who represents the Guru Himself, but I should not be deprived of the

community-kitchen service." Many big Sikh leaders regarded it as a matter of honour to spend their life in the service of such a great saint-soldier. How could S. Bagh Singh and his sister turn down the suggestion of Nawab Kapur Singh to the effect that Jassa Singh be left with him? They stood up in the Sikh congregation and humbly announced that they were leaving the child with him, and that he would from then onwards be his own son. At this the Khalsa congregation raised the slogan of *Sat Sri Akal* and offered their prayers to God confirming Jassa Singh's transfer to S. Kapur Singh who became the boy's god-father.

Jassa Singh was a young man of destiny. His mother had imparted him perfect training in the Sikh scriptures. This training was complemented by his stay with Mata Sundri in Delhi. Now he was fortunate to have S. Kapur Singh as his mentor to prepare him as a true Khalsa and serve his motherland like a brave and dauntless hero. S. Kapur Singh was deeply impressed with Jassa Singh's conduct, and character. After sometime, S. Kapur Singh joined the five beloved ones, and offered Jassa Singh the *Amrit* and instructed him to follow the Sikh code of conduct. The *Khanda Amrit* and the instructions of S. Kapur Singh proved to be a double blessing for him. He was already pure as gold and the *Amrit* transformed him into a still higher being. Whereas earlier he recited Gurbani spontaneously, now in the morning of his youth the *Khalsa* ideals and sentiments rose like a tempestuous ocean in his heart, and he began to participate with great enthusiasm in every activity aimed at the service of the people.

Serving the Sikh congregations, fanning them, cleansing utensils in the community kitchen and taking a lead in reciting Gurbani and participating in *kirtan* in the morning and evening were remarkable qualities of this young man which raised Jassa Singh very high in the eyes of S. Kapur Singh and other Sikh leaders and Sardars. S. Kapur Singh had no issue of his own. Therefore, he looked upon Jassa Singh as his own child, particularly after the boy's uncle and his mother had made a gift of him to him.

Soon after, as desired by Jathedar Kapur Singh, Jassa Singh was trained in horse-riding and in the use of sword and spear and bow and arrows by famous archers and arms experts. At the same time, S. Kapur Singh assigned the task of distributing the horses

of the Khalsa to Jassa Singh, and this duty he performed with utmost devotion.

During these days, it so happened that one night there was a torrential rain with clouds thundering and the lightning flashing. Nawab Kapur Singh asked several times as to who was on guard duty. Every time he heard the voice of Jassa Singh, and no other voice. Jathedar Sahib was highly pleased with Jassa Singh's obedience and his alertness. He said, "May you be happy. You are so alert and obedient even at this young age." The next morning the Jathedar called Jassa Singh to the assembly, praised him and appointed him his Personal Assistant. Thus, Jassa Singh began to be groomed for the service of the Sikh Panth, and he climbed the first step of the ladder. (Rattan Singh, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 265-67; Latif, *A History of the Punjab*, 314 : Ramjas-Twareekh Riasat Kapurthala, 104-8).

## CHAPTER 4

### **The condition of the country and of the Panth during the early phase of Jassa Singh's life.**

Immediately after the martyrdom of Banda Singh and his companions in March-June, 1716, Abdu-Samad Khan, Governor of Lahore initiated a general massacre of the Sikhs under the royal orders from Delhi. Sayyed Mohammad Latif writes in his book, *A History of the Punjab*: "By humiliating the Sikhs and by eliminating their leader, Banda Singh, Abdu-Samad took strong measures to destroy the Sikh power and to eliminate the Sikh community. A royal order was issued to the effect that all the followers of Guru Nanak should be put to death, and every Sikh carried a prize on his head. The irritated Muslims did not allow them to settle down anywhere and wherever they came across a Sikh he was tortured to death most mercilessly". (p. 188)

In fact, the order for the general massacre of the Sikhs was first issued by the emperor Bahadur Shah on December 10, 1710, after his victory in the battle of Lohgarh. He addressed the order to Bakhshi-Ul-Mulak Muhabat Khan Bahadur to the effect that he should write to all the military officers around Shah Jahanpur that the Sikh followers of Nanak should be killed at sight. As already pointed out, the second time such a royal decree was issued by Farukhseer after the execution of Banda Singh and other Sikhs in Delhi. The author of *Miftah-U-Twareekh* writes that after the execution of Banda Singh, a royal order was issued to kill the people of his community unhesitatingly wherever they happened to be. Consequently, the Sikhs hid themselves for a long time in the surrounding hills and mountains for fear of the Muslim rulers.

It was a dark and tragic period for the Sikhs. With the circulation of the royal decree on all sides, all the local officers and employees became their sworn enemies, and in order to

please the highly placed officers they began to send large groups of the Sikhs from Punjab villages to Lahore, where they were tortured to death mercilessly. Finding no other alternative, the committed and devout Sikhs left their hearths and homes and took shelter in jungles and hills, where there were no sources of food and other means of sustenance. If ever they managed to get food and other stuff, it was a matter of good fortune for them, otherwise they remained hungry for days on end, and lived mostly on flowers and fruits. With the passing of time, Abdu-Samad relented in his tyrannical attitude, and the main thrust was directed towards those Sikhs who were regarded as the opponents of the Government. These Sikhs included either the companions of Banda Singh, or those who supported them in an organised manner. This category of Sikhs was fighting a fierce and determined battle for the freedom of the country. They were known as *Raath* Singhs or the militants. They were generally fighters. Some of them lived in villages and carried on agricultural activities or small-time trade or commerce. They were known as *Gurmukhs*. Although they did nothing openly against the Government, yet their sympathies were with their militant brethren who were facing great hardships and trials and tribulations for their motherland and their religion. Whenever they found an opportunity, they would send ration to them and as a result of this, they too would get into trouble with the rulers. They accepted all misfortunes with smiles on their faces and explained them away as a part of the divine design.

During this period Abud-Samad Khan had to lead a military campaign against Issa Khan of Manzh Tiharey, Hussain Khan, Peshgi of Kasur and Saraf-Ud-Din of Kashmir. At this he not only relented in his attitude towards the Sikhs but also recruited them in his army and appointed them to other posts. The militant Sikhs saw a ray of hope in this situation. The watch on the Sikhs who sent ration to the militants became lax, and the number of patrol parties came down. The Sikhs also began to receive full information regarding the orders issued by the Government from time to time through the Government officers, so that it became easier for them to remain alert. In the language of the Khalsa, these office holding Sikhs were known as *Chakrcil*, With the

secret help of the Chakrail Singhs and those living in villages, it became possible for the militant Sikhs living in hills and forests to spend their days with ease and assurance at least for a short period, but the days of trouble were not over for them. It was the will of God that the Sikhs should pass once more through the wheel of fire so that they could emerge stronger and purer. This period of sufferings and sacrifices continued up to the time of Abdu-Samad Khan's son Zakria Khan and his grandson Yayah Khan and Mir Muinul Mulk (Mir Mannu). Hardly had Abud-Samad Khan established peace and order in Kashmir when there was a rebellion in Multan and other areas to the west of Punjab. During this period of chaos, the people of many robber tribes began to commit robberies and acts of plunder. The tribes like Bhatti, Dogar, Sial and Kharl and Balochs created a great confusion and terror in the territories of Malwa, Sirsa and Duley-Di-Bar and plundered a large number of villages. But in reality the Sikhs were stigmatized for all these crimes. It was a dark period when the innocent were suffering for the guilty. Therefore, emperor Mohammad Shah appointed Abud-Samad Khan Governor of Multan, and his son Zakria Khan Bahadur was appointed Governor of Lahore. This relates to the year 1726 when S. Jassa Singh was still with Mata Sundri in Delhi.

In order to crush the rising power of the Sikhs in Punjab, Zakria Khan made a departure from the soft policy of his father, and launched a series of strict measures against the Sikhs. Ghanaya Lal writes in his book, *Twareekh-e-Punjab*, that Zakria Khan had been appointed Governor of Punjab because he had boasted to the Mughal emperor, : " If Your Majesty appoints me the Governor of Punjab I would eliminate the Sikhs from Majah, Doaba and Malwa." Not only that, he would accomplish the all-too-impossible task of genocide. Consequently, immediately after his appointment, he organised a patrolling security force against the Sikhs. He ordered this force to keep watch on the big towns, villages and paths and wherever it found any Sikh, it should bring him to Lahore. Awards were fixed for the heads of the Sikhs and they began to be brought in iron chains to Lahore where they were murdered in the open markets and the horse market (pp. 65-66) : *Latif-A-History of the Punjab*, 193. Thus,

thousands of Sikhs were killed and countless of them took shelter in the thick reeds on the banks of the *Ravi*, in the woods of Kahnuwan, in the Shivalik hills and in the mountain caves beyond Anandpur Sahib. There were others who took shelter in the Lakhi jungles of Malwa from where they passed on to the deserts of Bikaner.

There was no arrangement of food and other provisions for the Singhs in jungles and mountain caverns. Rations reached them occasionally in a surreptitious manner, otherwise they had to live on wild vegetation and fruit. On occasions, they had to eat the roots of plants, and many a time they had to go without food. But great indeed were those Singhs who stood this ordeal cheerfully and accepted it as God's Will. They were ever in high spirits and glorified even the humblest fare and their scanty possessions in their own idiom, soaked in optimism. They were indeed the great heroes of Punjab who did not bend in the face of difficulties, and who mocked death. In the name of God, they always described their own condition as prosperous and comfortable though in reality their hearths were cold and their utensils were empty. The wild leaf curry was described by them as *Sabaz pulau*, the parched grains as dry *pulau*, the raw wheat grains were called *Saugi*, parched maize was silver *pulaou*, the parched grams almonds, salt was glorified as *sarbras*, *gur* was *subedar*. The jand fruit was described as *jalebi*, the fried raw grams were known as elachidana, *ghunghnis* were known as *bundi*, *karhy* was called *Amriti*, *penjhu*, were khurme, the creeper leaves were called *puris*, the *kareer* fruit was known as grape, the berries were equated with apples, onion was known as *Roopa Parshad*, brinjals were known as *Ram Batere*, milk was ocean etc. In the same way, they had coined their own names for the various things of daily use, as for example, blanket was known as *Dushala*, shoe was mare, straw hut was *Sheesh Mahal*, grass cutting was known as falcon hunt, plying the grinding wheels was known as riding a *firni*, fine was pay, the grass used for sleeping was regarded as a velvet bed, something in small quantity was described as plentiful, house was *bunga*, (pestle *sota* was Akaldan, water was Inder Singh and letter was called Ardas. The material objects after which the worldly people ran were simply condemned by the Singhs. For example,



they dismissed wealth as a witch, the rupees as tree bark and the paises as pebbles. Not only that, the Khalsa gave optimistic and heroic names to certain Singhs who bore depressing names, as for example Ghasita Singh was changed to Girraj Singh, Tota Singh became Shahbaz Singh and Faqir Singh was changed to Amir Singh, Nika Singh to Sumer Singh, Bhola Singh to Chatur Singh, Bhikhari Singh to Daan Singh etc. This Nihang Singhi language helped the Singhs of those days to maintain themselves in high spirits and face the tempest of ordeals bravely. The Singhs had unshakable faith in their Guru and God. Their hearts were full of generous impulses and their minds were enlightened. They made supreme sacrifices for their religion and for their motherland, without letting the homeless, alienated and hunted community become pessimistic even for a moment. They re-organised the Sikhs, raised armies, organised Jathas, evolved basic principles on which the Misslas were to be raised, and above all they struggled against the Mughal rulers for a period of 40 years, and finally liberated Punjab and laid the foundation of true democracy. That is how these brave heroes prepared ground for the Sikh kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was to be a vast kingdom extending from China to Sind and from the Khaiber Pass to the river Jamuna. This vast territory included the present-day Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and West Pakistan including the Deras. This was the gift that the 18th century Singhs presented to India. It was the fulfilment of a great dream, a dream which may never again be translated into reality.

The Singhs spent some time in the jungles and mountain caverns in the hope that probably with the passing of time the wheel of fortune would turn for the better. However, Zakria Khan was bent upon eliminating them. Consequently, the Sikhs were left with no other alternative but to organise themselves and confront the Mughal forces in direct battles or engage them in guerilla war-fare with a view to looting rations, horses, and other required provisions. The Singhs very often came upon a rich booty by raiding the patrol security forces, and the Mughal guards carrying the Government treasury in caravans. Their aim was to weaken the Lahore Government or render it supine so that it was no longer able to commit atrocities on the Singhs. What

else could they do under these circumstances? Clearly, there were only two choices before them—either they should have bowed their heads before the Mughal tyranny and thus lost their life or they should have fought heroically for the freedom of their motherland and spared no efforts to dig the grave of the Mughals. The first alternative had been tried by the Indians for several centuries, and as a result of this, India had become an open theatre for the repeated invasions of foreign robbers and adventurers. The cowardice of the Indians in the past had encouraged the foreign tyrants to commit atrocities on them. The people had lost all sense of self-respect and all daring. The Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh had raised their voice against the tyranny of the foreign rulers and challenged their authority like true heroes. Guru Gobind Singh had created the Khalsa to engage the tyrants in a direct and violent fight because he knew that no philosophy has any effect on the merciless and unjust tyrants. The text of Vedas and the *Holy Quran* is meaningless for them. Their mental state takes the shape of a deep ulcer which can be operated upon only through the sword. All other remedies are ineffective for the cure of such fanatics and mentally sick rulers and their supporters. After having realised the truth of this fact Guru Gobind had written in his “Letter of Victory” addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb in the following manner: “When all other alternatives fail one is justified in lifting sword.”

The Singhs created, decorated and liverlied by Guru Gobind Singh were not a picture of cowardice. They were the followers of Guru Nanak who was a personification of moral courage. They remembered the words of Guru Hargobind Sahib that one wears weapons for the protection of the poor and the defenceless. They had received the *Khanda Pahul* (the elixir prepared with the touch of sword) from Guru Gobind Singh. They did not want to attack anybody without reason. But when the Mughal tyranny had crossed all limits, and when no other alternative was left for leading a life of peace and comfort, the Singhs were up in arms and refused to submit themselves to the unjust rulers of the day. They could not settle in their villages in view of the constant patrolling by the Mughal security forces; there was no arrangement for their food and other provisions in the jungles, and, therefore, they could

not stay there for long. Since the security forces could not lay their hands on the Singhs hiding in the jungles, they began to arrest and torture the *Gurmukh* Singhs settled in villages. The Khalsa could not tolerate it because with the village *Gurmukh* Singhs in the Mughal captivity no food and other provisions could reach the militant Singhs, and it became extremely difficult for them to spend their days there. As a result of this, they preferred to live in scattered groups rather than consolidate themselves in a collective settlement. In this manner, it was possible for them to keep track of the enemy and engage his forces in guerilla warfare. Keeping these requirements and pressures in view, the Singhs divided themselves into two organisations the *Budha Dal* and the *Taruna Dal*.

The *Budha Dal* included the old Jathedars of the Panth like Diwan Darbara Singh and S. Kapur Singh and their associates. S. Kapur Singh was a well-known Panth worker. He along with his brother Bhai Dan Singh had taken the Amrit direct from Bhai Mani Singh, the Panth Jathedar and the contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. After having seen the atrocities being committed on the Singhs and particularly shocked by the martyrdom of his saintly brother Bhai Tara Singh at the hands of Mirza Zafir Begh, the Faujdar of Patti and Moman Khan Kasuri, his spirit revolted, and he joined the Jatha of Diwan Singh during this dark period in Sikh history. Here he participated in many military campaigns against Zakria Khan and other Mughal rulers and won great name and fame. The Khalsa succeeded in looting about 5 lakh rupees in their raids on the Mughal armies at Khudian, district Lahore, Chavinda, district Amritsar and Kahne Kachhey, district Gurdaspur in July-August, 1726. The Singhs also looted the horse-caravan of Murtaza Khan in September, 1726, thereby meeting their need for more horses and armies to some extent. After some deliberations. S. Budha Singh Shukerchakia and S. Bagh Singh Hollowalia invaded the 700 caravan on the banks of river Beas near Goindwal and thus they succeeded in looting large quantities of gold, silver and other forms of wealth from this caravan going to Delhi from Peshawar.

But it would be wrong to conclude on the basis of these robberies and lootings that the Singhs had become avaricious for

wealth. The conclusion of several writers that the Singhs were decoits and robbers is totally unjustified. As already pointed out, the only motive of the Singhs was to create chaos in the Lahore administration so that the wave of the Mughal atrocities on the Singhs should subside. They had no other motive than this. It is a clear evidence of their sincerity when they restored all the wealth to Seth Partap Chand Sialkoti looted by the Singhs in a misunderstanding. Once when in 1727 the Khalsa got the clue that the royal family of Delhi had made its stoppage in Sri Hargobindpure near Jathedar Diwan Darbara Singh and S. Kapur Singh, the Singhs raided it and looted the wealth, but later on when they learnt that the royal family had not yet purchased this material and that it still belonged to Seth Partap Chand who was on his way to Delhi for selling it, they searched for the Seth and returned his goods. This incident clearly shows that the Singhs did not indulge in looting and waylaying the rich mainly for accumulating wealth: on the contrary, their aim was to divert the attention of the Lahore rulers so that they would no longer remain harsh to the Singhs. If ever they looted wealth from wrong quarters, they would be quick in returning it.

With Zakria Khan adopting a harsher attitude the Singhs began to enlist the sympathy and support of their brethern living in villages and thousands of brave young men began to take the *Amrit* and join the Khalsa Dal. The common people became bolder on seeing the Mughal Government helpless before the Khalsa and the numbers of recruits in the Khalsa Dal began to swell. When the Dal was smaller in its dimension, the Sikh soldiers could make their both ends meet somehow or the other, but with the increase in the recruits, it became difficult for them to live on their present resources. At this Diwan Darbara Singh and S. Kapur Singh called a Sarbat Khalsa convention under the leadership of Bhai Mani Singh. They proposed that the Taruna Dal be divided into different organisations so that with the division and the re-organisation of the community kitchen things could become smooth. Besides the young men belonging to the Taruna Dal were enthusiastic, unusually active in running about and in raiding the Mughal caravans. They could hit the far-off targets successfully and they could easily maintain their liaison

with the Budha Dal. This proposal found favour with all sections, and thus the Panth was re-organised into several Jathas or groups.

The first Nishan Sahib was handed over to Bhai Deep Singh, and he was made incharge of a Dera. The second was given to Bhai Karam Singh, Dharam Singh of Amritsar, the third was given to Baba Kahn Singh Vinod Singh Goindwalia, the fourth to Bhai Dasandha Singh of Kot Budha and the fifth went to Bhai Beeru Singh, Madan Singh.

Leaving aside these five Deras, all the old Sikhs stayed on with S. Kapur Singh; the more famous of them included S. Shayam Singh Narokian, S. Gurbax Singh Roranwali, S. Bagh Singh Hollowalia, S. Gurdial Singh Dolewali, S. Sukha Singh Marykantho wala, S. Bhoma Singh and others. This event relates to the year 1730 A.D. By this time S. Jassa Singh and his maternal uncle had come to S. Kapur Singh.

Zakria Khan felt upset on seeing the Khalsa power rising day by day. He had thought that he would be able to suppress the Khalsa with an iron hand, but the Khalsa was spreading and multiplying like the bitter creeper. Because of the attacks by the Singhs, it became difficult for the Lahore rulers to send the royal revenue to Delhi. In view of trouble in the South-West parts of Punjab, the collection of land revenue had become difficult, as was the case with the Majha. Not only that, the Dal Khalsa had reached the Malwa also, and when in Samat 1789, the Manj Rajputs supported by the armies of Sayyed Asad Ali, Faujdar of the Doaba, and Pathan Jamal Khan of Malerkotla encircled S. Ala Singh Phoolka at Barnala, the Taruna Dal under the leadership of Baba Deep Singh defeated the joint Rajput and Muslim forces and assured S. Ala Singh that whenever he needed their services in his battles against the Bhatti Rajputs and others, he should remember them, and they would be able to teach a good lesson to them. With these developments taking place, it was but natural for the Delhi Government to be displeased with Zakria Khan. Now the weapon of tyranny worn by Zakria Khan had become blunt, and he was fully exhausted. Therefore, in consultation with the Delhi Government and with the approval of Emperor

Mohammed Shah he made the following scheme :

1. All restrictions on the Singhs should be lifted.
2. They should be given a *Jagir* (landed estate) which would keep them in good cheer.
3. Their over-all leader should be accorded the status of Nawab so that he may establish his hegemony over the different Sikh organisations for maintaining law and order.

With a view to translating this scheme into reality, Zakria Khan sent a Government official (a Chakrail Singh), Bhai Shabegh Singh on the Baisakhi day, March 29, 1736 to the Khalsa in Amritsar. After long deliberations the Khalsa accepted this peace and compromise proposal, but no Singh was prepared to accept the status of a Nawab. Some seasoned Sikhs suggested that this status should be conferred on the old Panth leader, S. Darbara Singh, but he also refused to accept it. Referring to this episode Bhangoo Rattan Singh writes in his book *Prachin Panth Prakash* :—

“Darbara Singh replied that he did not need the status of a Nawab because it would be against the commandments of the 10th Guru. He would maintain the sanctity of the Guru's commandments at all costs. All that the Guru had said in relation to the Sikhs had come out to be true. The Guru's words could never be empty or false even when the whole earth begins to quake. The acceptance of the status of a Nawab meant goodbye to the spiritual monarchy given to a Sikh by the Guru. It would amount to a slavery which would be something unfortunate. The Guru had given the Sikhs spiritual kingdom. It was he who had offered thrones to those who formerly sat on the ground. This view of S. Darbara Singh was confirmed by a large number of Sikhs and they rejected the title of a Nawab. They declared that no Sikh should accept this title because their greatness and regal splendour lay in humbly serving the poor and the weak. “(pp. 259-60)”

Clerrly, the title of Nawab received the same treatment at the hands of the Singhs as is given to the football in a playground. Just as the football is kicked about by different players, in the same

way, the title of Nawab was being kicked about by the Singhs. No Singh was prepared to touch it even with a pair of tongs. At that moment, someone was reciting some verses from the Holy *gurmukh* and when he reached the following couplet by the fifth Guru, "The gifts of service and worldly splendour fall to the share of those who have the blessings of saints, and the company of saints is given to those who have the grace of God on them," a Singh, on hearing this couplet, spoke aloud that the high rank goes to those who follow the ideal of service. He advised the Singhs to obey the command of the Guru and without any delay the title of the Nawab should be given to the Singh engaged in serving others. At this time S. Kapur Singh was fanning the congregation. Although the wound in his forehead received recently in an encounter with the patrolling forces near Ropar, was still unhealed, yet ignoring this wound, he was moving about in the congregation doing fan service. The "*Prachin Panth Prakash*" says that S. Kapur Singh "was moving about in the congregation with a fan in his hand. He was doing a great service to the community in diverse ways such as bringing fuel wood for the community kitchen, cleansing utensils, washing the undergarments of the Singhs, removing the horse dung etc. This brave man was engaged in this service day and night without feeling jealous of anyone. He was a brave hero, celibate, pure in thought and ornamented with several other virtues, for which he was amply rewarded. (Second Edition, pp. 424-25).

The Sarbat Khalsa present in the congregation welcomed this idea, and they gave their approval in the midst of "*Sat Sri Akal*" slogans. Under these circumstances, S. Kapur Singh could not decline the offer. A prayer was offered in the presence of the Holy Granth, an ordained Guru a concrete form of the ten Sikh Gurus and S. Kapur Singh bowed his head and humbly submitted that if the Khalsa was determined to confer the title of Nawab on him, it should be purified by the touch of the five Singhs before being conferred on him. The congregation accepted this idea. Thus, the title of Nawab conferred on the Khalsa by the Mughal Government was accepted by the Sikh congregation and consequently the areas of Chuhrian, Dayalpur, Kanganwal and Chabaal etc. were attached with Amritsar, and the Khalsa now

was free to move about within the boundary of this small principality. But in reality Zakria Khan's heart was not clear. He was on the look out for an opportunity to deal a heavy blow to the Sikhs, as would be clear from the following accounts.

After the restoration of peace, the leading Sardars began to live with Nawab Kapur Singh at Amritsar, while the remaining Singhs returned to their respective homes. Now there was no need to loot the royal treasures and caravans. The community kitchen was open at all hours for the Singhs staying at Amritsar with Nawab Kapur Singh. The period of crisis and misfortunes had united the Singhs and, therefore, they lived together like real brothers. This aspect of the life of the Khalsa has been beautifully described in *Twareekh Guru Khalsa*, Part II (*Shamsher Khalsa*) in the following words :

“At that time, the life and the spirit of unity characterised mutual relationships among the Singhs. One Singh loved the other as dearly as himself. He regarded him as his real brother. There were no distinctions of caste, high or the low status. All of them regarded themselves as the *Chhatri Khalsa* belonging to the *Sodhi* dynasty. The earnings of an individual Singh were deposited in the common treasure for the common use. There was no greed and none wanted to have more than he really needed. Whatever was distributed to the Singhs by their Nawab and other leaders, fully satisfied them. They were engaged in reciting *Guru ki bani* and in getting training in the use of weapons day and night. Besides they looked after their horses and their weapons and served in the community kitchen. If anyone ever committed a wrong deed, Bhai Mani Singh would mete out punishment to him with the common approval of the Khalsa congregation and this verdict would be accepted by the defaulter without any hesitation or without any attempt to defend his position. At this time several Singhs who had the privilege of serving in the Court of Guru Gobind Singh joined the Panth. These Singhs included S. Darbara Singh Diwan Sangat Singh Khazanchi Hari Singh Langri Bhagat Singh Khazanchi Budha Singh Dessi, Hardit Singh, Garza Singh, Sajjan Singh, Ishar Singh, Gian Singh, Sadhu Singh and Deva Singh and others. Besides them Nawab Kapur Singh, Hari Singh, Sukhai Deep Singh, Gurbax Singh



martyr, Braj Singh, Jassa Singh, Karam Singh, Bhoma Singh, Attar Singh, Shiahn Singh, Badar Singh, Kehar Singh, Bazzar Singh, Ghanghor Singh, Amar Singh and others were famous in the Panth." [*Panth Parkash*, 427-28, Shamsheer Khalsa, 65-66.]

### **The Death of S. Darbara Singh**

In Sawan Samat 1791, (1734 A. D.) Diwan Darbara Singh passed away, and the leadership of all the different Khalsa organisations fell on the shoulders of Nawab Kapur Singh. In view of the fact that both the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal were living at Amritsar, it was rather difficult to run the Panth affairs on the Jagir income and on the offerings at the Darbar Sahib. Since it was peace time, a large number of Jathas were not required here. Therefore, some of the Singhs belonging to the Taruna Dal left for their villages and engaged themselves in agriculture, while others set out on missionary tours of the whole country. During this period, the Phoolka Sardars were also expanding their territories, and with full hope of support from the Khalsa, they were waging battles against the Bhartis, the Dogars and the Rajputs and winning considerable victories. Ever since the Khalsa Dal helped S. Ala Singh in Samat 1789 (1732 A.D.) to defeat the joint forces of the Jalandhar Faujdar, Asad-Ali and the Nawab of Malerkotla, Jamal Khan at Barnala, its position had become very strong and formidable and the Bhattis, the Dogars and others began to fear the Khalsa. For maintaining and demonstrating its unity and military prowess, the Khalsa Dal would move on occasions as far as Hansi and Hissar. It was around this period that a few Singh Jathas came to the environs of Hissar.

### **The Confiscation of the Jagir and the Reign of Repressions**

Seeing the Singhs scattered to far off places, Zakria Khan began to entertain treacherous thoughts. His mind was changed, and he was dead set to deal a heavy blow to the Singhs and to eliminate them. The opportunity he had been on the look out for, now came his way. He had in fact prepared the whole plan of allotting a Jagir and conferring titles on the Sikhs with a view to rendering them lazy and idle. Therefore, in 1735 A.D., he confiscated the Jagir from the Singhs on the ground that peace had been established and, therefore, the Singhs should engage

themselves in agricultural activities in the villages for earning their livelihood. Zakria Khan wrote to S. Kapur Singh that the Singhs were also free to join the Government service. Nawab Kapur Singh wrote back that the Singhs looked at the idea of this kind of servitude with contempt. However, in the event of some military campaign, the Khalsa would be prepared to support the Mughal armies. He added that since Zakria Khan was going back on his promises and commitments and was taking away the Jagir on flimsy pretexts, he would be responsible for violence and disturbances arising out of this situation. The Khalsa was firm on its word of honour, but if they had to lift the sword once again because of the breach of promises by the Mughal rulers they would not be blamed. But Zakria Khan paid no heed to these warnings, and in 1736 A.D. launched a ten thousand strong Mughal patrol army under the command of Diwan Lakhpat Rai and his nephew Mukhlas Khan. He got it proclaimed that anyone helping in the arrest of the Singhs or bringing the head of a Singh would be suitably rewarded. These patrol security forces crossed all limits of decency and committed such atrocities on the Singhs that once again they were forced to leave their homes and hearths. In view of the fact that the Singhs were scattered in different parts of the country and were away from Amritsar, even the Budha Dal could not face the patrol security forces in a direct conflict. This Dal crossed the river Satluj and reached the Malwa in the South where they were accorded a warm welcome by S. Ala Singh, but the Dal came back before long. In the meantime, the Taruna Dal Jatha also returned to Punjab after hearing about the fresh reign of terror let loose against the Singhs. Now the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal began to engage the Mughal patrol forces at different places, and in a battle fought at Hujra Shah Mukeen near Lahore inflicted a big defeat on them. In this battle, Duni Chand, the nephew of Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Jamal Khan and Tatar Khan, two famous Government Faujdars lost their lives.

#### **Restrictions on Visiting Amritsar**

Zakria Khan was piqued and ashamed of the repeated defeats of the patrol security forces at the hands of the Singhs. He

called a meeting of Muslim priests and asked them as to what the secret of the rise of the Sikhs was. They replied that God alone knew as to what kind of elixir had been poured by the Guru into the sacred Pool of Amritsar. After drinking from this pool and after taking bath in its water, the Singhs cast off the fear of death and became living spirits of freedom, pride and bravery. Therefore, they suggested that as long as the Singhs were not restricted from visiting the sacred temple pool inside the Darbar Sahib and taking their bath there, no harm could come to them. Being frightened by the heroic Singhs, the superstitious Zakria Khan lent full credence to this idea and sent a two thousand strong army under the command of Qazi Abdul Razak and Mohammad Bakhsh to guard the sacred pool inside the Darbar Sahib. He ordered them not to allow any Sikh to take his bath in this pool or to hold a congregation there. But who could bar the Guru's Singhs from visiting the Darbar Sahib and taking their bath in the holy pool? They would disguise themselves, and go to the pool at odd hours of the night for having a dip in the holy waters of the pool many a time along with their horses. They were afraid neither of the enemy nor of death. Moreover, they thought that they would be pleased if they earned martyrdom while so doing. Referring to the courage, the religious sentiments and the spirit of sacrifices displayed by the Sikhs at that time, John Melcolm writes in his book, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, "Some Singhs performed this pilgrimage in secret and in disguise, but in general, according to a contemporary Muhammedan author, the Sikh horse-men were seen riding, at full gallop towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt and sometimes taken prisoners, but they used, on such occasions, to seek instead of avoiding, the crown of martyrdom; and the same authority states that an instance was never known to a Sikh taken in this way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith."

#### **The Martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh**

At this time Bhai Mani Singh and some other Singhs were living in disguise inside the Darbar Sahib complex. Some Hindu and Muslim saints were also staying with them. Therefore,

none suspected them. Bhai Mani Singh was very popular on account of his saintly nature and even Qazi Abdur-Razaak and Mohammed Bakhsh held him in high esteem. Thus, some time passed and Bhai Mani Singh taking advantage of his equation with Oazi Abdur Razaak obtained the permission from the Lahore Government for the Singhs to hold a religious fair that year on the Diwali day. Zakria Khan gave this permission subject to the condition that after this fair the Singhs would pay ten thousand rupees to the royal treasury by way of tax. Bhai Mani Singh had thought that it would not be difficult for the Singhs to pay this tax out of the monetary offerings on the occasion of the fair. Therefore, he sent invitations to the Khalsa living at different and even distant places, and they made enthusiastic preparations for attending this fair. Probably Zakria Khan's mind was already full of the poison of evil and he thought that it would be easier for the Mughal armies to exterminate the Sikhs when they assembled in Amritsar for the fair. Therefore, he sent some army there on the pretext of maintaining law and order in the fair. This gave rise to suspicion in the minds of the Sikhs, and they sent special messengers preventing Singhs from coming to Amritsar and consequently, the proposed fair could not be held, for the Sikh Sangat did not reach there for participation in the fair in view of the ominous developments. Only a handful of saints reached there. Since there was no income from the monetary offerings, it became impossible for Bhai Mani Singh to pay the promised tax. Clearly, Zakria Khan himself was to be blamed for the whole thing, but might is always right. He ordered that Bhai Mani Singh be brought to Lahore and there this saintly person was hacked to pieces on Hadh Sudi 5, Samat 1791 Bikrami (24 June, 1734 A.D.).<sup>1</sup> and his

1. This was written by Bhangoo Rattan Singh in Samat 1794 (1737 A.D.) on the basis of what he had heard from his father. Giani Gian Singh has recorded the Maghar Sudi 5 Samat 1795 (December 4, 1738 in *Twareekh Guru Khalsa* (Shamsheer Khalsa, 74) as the date of the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh. At this time Nadir Shah was advancing towards Peshawar for invading India. But all historians

associates were put on the rack, their bones were broken and they were mercilessly tortured to death. Under the orders of Zakria Khan, the sacred pool inside Darbar Sahib was filled with earth, horse-dung, cattle-bones and hides and other forms of debris. These excesses and the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh made the blood of the Khalsa boil. Those who heard this horrible news, were furious and they became thirsty for revenge.

First of all the Khalsa eliminated Abdur Razak who had taken Bhai Mani Singh to Lahore and later on the Singhs killed several Government officers as and when opportunity came their way. Seeing the turmoil and chaos in the whole country, Zakria Khan set the Mughal patrol security forces after the Sikhs, but now Sikhs had become more alert than before. Immediately, they took shelter in the Northern hills and some of them reached the Malwa after crossing the Satluj.

#### **The Singhs Loot the Booty of Nadir Shah**

In January 1739 when Nadir Shah reached Lahore with a view to invading India, Zakria Khan surrendered before him. The Singhs were also watching the whole chaos in the country in the wake of Nadir Shah's invasion, the general massacre and looting of Delhi. Now was the time for them to come out in the open from their hideouts. In the meantime, Nadir Shah also left Delhi with a heavy booty of gold, silver and other forms of wealth. He reached Sirhind in the middle of May. With a view to *escaping* the scorching summer sun, from Sirhind Nadir Shah took his route to Sialkot along the Shivalik hills. But he had to pay a heavy price for this choice. The Singh Jathas hiding themselves in the hills of Kiratpur and Anandpur [Contd. from Page 27]

believe that the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh had taken place much earlier than the invasion of Nadir Shah. Therefore, Samat 1795 cannot be the correct year of his martyrdom. Sayyed Mohammed Latif in *History of Lahore*, 162 and Noor Ahmed Chishti in his book *Tehki-Kat-Chishti*, 766, have given this date as 1140 Hijri (1727 A.D.), but this is wholly incorrect. In *Shaheed Bilas* written by Bhai Sewa Singh, this date is Hadh Sudi 5, Samat 1791. This is confirmed by Koer Singh Kalal in his book *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, and two works of Bhatt Wahi Multani in Sindhi. See *Shaheed Bilas* edited by Garja Singh, couplet 203 and page (pp Introduction-40-41).

Sahib had been facing a shortage of provisions etc., for a long time. The hill terrain made it easier for the Singhs to loot the booty from the armies of Nadir Shah and hide themselves safely away from the range of attack by them. The Singhs attacked the armies of Nadir Shah from right and left, from front and rear, and relieved them of considerable amount of the booty, thereby preventing a lot of wealth from going to Iran. This event took place in the 3rd week of May in 1739.

#### **Nadir Shah's Prophecy about the Singhs**

Nadir Shah was a brave soldier, and by dint of his super-human courage and spirit of adventure, he had been able to loot and plunder the Iranians and the Afghans, destroy the Mughal hegemony and ordered a general massacre and plundering in their capital of Delhi, but he had moments of great fear and anxiety in regard to the Singhs living in their hill-hideouts and spending their days in hunger and privation. The first question he asked Zakria Khan the Punjab Governor, in the last week of May on reaching Lahore was "Who are these Singhs and what type of people are they who have looted the rear of my army and relieved it of the Delhi plunder and with whose fear, the phalanxes of my soldiers are constantly in disarray?" Zakria Khan replied, "They are a community of saints who come to Amritsar every six months for taking their bath in the Darbar Sahib pool." Nadir Shah again asked him about the location of their hearths and homes. In reply to this question, Zakria Khan told Nadir Shah that their houses were on the saddles of their horses. On hearing this, Nadir Shah smiled and said, "Then there is every reason to be afraid of them. The time is not far when these people would raise their head and become the rulers of this country."

#### **The Return of the Reign of Repression**

Although Zakria Khan had done his worst against the Sikhs, the remarks of Nadir Shah disappointed and enraged him. Therefore, he began the indiscriminate massacre of the Khalsa. This massacre continued from 1739 A. D. to 1746 A. D. up to the period of Yahya Khan. Proclamations were issued in the names of the headmen of the provinces to the effect that no Sikh should be allowed to live in any village, and that anyone who killed

the Singhs or gave clue of their whereabouts would be rewarded by the Government. The guards around the Amritsar and the Taran Taran pools were put on maximum alert so that no Singh should take his bath, Not to speak of the Mughal atrocities, even some of the Hindus took a prominent part in getting the Sikhs arrested and killed. For example, Harbhagat Narnjan, Karma Chhina, Dharam Dass Jodhanagria, Sahib Rai Punnu, Nausherian and Rama Randhawa played this mean role. The Massah Rangarh of Mandiali combed his whole area, and with a view to killing Singhs who came to Darbar Sahib for ablutions; he shifted to the Darbar Sahib Complex itself. Inside the Darbar Sahib and the Akal Takht complexes, drinking bouts became common. Massah Rangarh smoked hookah with prostitutes dancing in front. Thus this holy place was desecrated in several ways. Although the tempests of misfortunes and hardships were blowing against the Singhs, yet they did not lose heart. Mentally and spiritually they were in high spirits, and they declared that they would be true to their faith till their last breath. In spite of these strict restrictions, fearless and brave Singhs like Mehtab Singh Mirankotia and Sukha Singh Marykambo killed Massah Rangarh in August, 1740. Zakria Khan was satisfied thinking that he had eliminated the Khalsa, and in the villages it had become widely known that the Government had destroyed the Sikhs to the last man. Once two Sikhs, Bota Singh and Garja Singh, were returning after taking bath in the Holy pool of Darbar Sahib. On seeing them someone remarked that they were not Singhs; they must be some other men in the guise of Singhs. Bota Singh and Garja Singh could not tolerate this taunting remark. They stopped on the road near the Inn of Noordin, and to prove the fact that the Sikhs were still alive, they began to charge toll tax from the cart and donkey drivers. After some time Bota Singh wrote the following letter to Zakria Khan :-

“I, Bota Singh with a stick in my hand declare that I have imposed a tax of one anna on a cart and one paise on a donkey. Let this information be given to Zakria Khan who is as good as my sister-in-law.” (*Prachin Panth Prakash*, 297.)

After this, both these Singhs attained martyrdom while fighting against the army sent by Zakria Khan, but they could not be captured alive. During this very period the skull of Bhai

Taru Singh was removed with hoes for sending food to the Singhs hiding in jungles. This martyrdom took place on 1 Sawan, Samat, 1702, Bikrami 1, July, 1745. On that very day Zakria Khan developed obstruction in his urinary tract and after suffering piercing pain, passed away. But after his death the Singhs did not have relief during the rule of his son, Yahya Khan. He followed the policy of his father and the reign of repression against the Singhs continued unabated. The whole account will be given in some of the chapters that follow.\*

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\* Governor Yahya Khan now issued a proclamation for a general massacre of all Singhs wherever they could be found. Death was to be the punishment of all persons who invoked the name of Guru Gobind and a reward was offered for the heads of Singhs. Thousands were put to death daily and their heads were brought before the Subedar of Lahore for reward (Sayyed Muhammed Latif, History of the Punjab, 213)



## CHAPTER 5

### The Beginning of the Political Life of S. Jassa Singh

The political life of S. Jassa Singh had begun the day he was brought by his mother and his maternal uncle, S. Bagh Singh Hollowalia, to Nawab Kapur Singh at Kartarpur for the service of the Khalsa Dal. He was handed over to S. Kapur Singh and he became famous as his adopted son.

While Jassa Singh was developing into a handsome and tall young man with an active and vigorous body, he was quite impressive in his bearing and dress. During his stay with Mata Sundri at Delhi, he had unconsciously adopted the Mughal style of tying the turban. He used a considerable number of Hindustani words in his speech. Therefore, several Singhs had started cracking jokes at his cost. They would call him with such words as *Hamko* (me) and *Tumko* (you). After all, Jassa Singh was a raw young man with little experience of social dealings, or the geometry of human relationships. Therefore, he found it difficult to counter the utterances of the seasoned Singhs in S. Kapur Singh's Khalsa Dal. Though he was intelligent and sharp, yet being temperamentally serious, he was not given to fun and frolic. Once while distributing grains, he was upset by the witty remarks and indiscipline among the Singhs. Therefore, with his eyes full of tears he came to Nawab Sahib and said, "It is not possible for me to distribute the grains." Nawab Sahib consoled him affectionately saying, "Do not lose heart. You are to distribute the grains to thousands of herds. This Panth consists of the beloved armies of the Guru. There are no gains without any pains. The poor man like me has been raised to the status of a Nawab by the Panth. Who knows it may place the regal crown on your head?" The Khalsa of the time regarded the Nawab Sahib as a true representative of the Guru. Just as Bhai Mani Singh enjoyed high status because of his services to the Darbar Sahib, in the same way, Nawab Kapur Singh held a position of honour in the Khalsa

Dal. The moment Nawab Kapur Singh uttered the above words about S. Jassa Singh, the Khalsa concluded that it was a prophecy for the future events, and, therefore, they raised the slogan of "*Sat Sri Akal*." Although Nawab Sahib had made the statement in his spontaneous manner, the fact that he was a saintly person saturated with the name of God could not be ignored. This was bound to happen. With the passing of time, the prophecy turned out to be true. When in 1761 the Khalsa under the command of S. Jassa Singh defeated Obed-ula, the ruler of Lahore at the time of his attack on Gujranwala, S. Jassa Singh was proclaimed as their king after the Khalsa had entered Lahore. Thus, the Nawab Sahib's prophecy was fulfilled. Who knew that one day this raw young man whose Mughal style turban and whose Hindustani accent were mocked at in fun would one day become a supreme and impressive leader and that he would be known as the first king of the Sikhs. But the ways of God, the Creator, are mysterious. The Satguru has said, "God's ways are mysterious. The Yogis and saints have attempted to resolve the mystery but in vain. God transforms a king into a pauper in the twinkling of an eye and vice-versa. He can fill the empty pots and render the filled one empty. That is how He operates." [Bihagra, M. 9,2,1.]

Ever since his mother gifted him off to S. Kapur Singh, Jassa Singh had followed him like a shadow, serving him in weal and woe. When the Khalsa was divided into two Dals, Jassa Singh remained in the Budha Dal with S. Kapur Singh. Diwan Darbara Singh and S. Bagh Singh were also in this Dal. He continued participating in battles and other adventures with them. The habit of bearing every hardship with a cheerful face and accepting the Will of God and the experience gained that he during the rule of Zakria Khan and Yahya Khan filled Jassa Singh's mind with faith, strengthened his determination besides making him humble. With the passing of time, his influence began to grow and he became a leading figure in the Khalsa Dal, and came to be known as 'Sultan-ul-Qaum.' During the life time of Nawab Kapur Singh, Diwan Darbara Singh and other leading figures, Jassa Singh's acts of bravery and commonsense did not come in the open, and the pages of history are silent about them. This is evident from some incidents in the small holocaust, referred to

clearly in *Prechin Panth Prakash*, *Panth Parkash* and *Twareekh-Guru Khalsa* (*Shamsheer Khalsa* and *Raj Khalsa*). By this time Jassa Singh was about 27 or 28 years old, and Nawab Sahib had given him sufficient freedom of action.

### The Death of Diwan Jaspat Rai

As has already been pointed out, after the death of Zakria Khan, his son, Yahya Khan also pursued his father's policy of repression against the Sikhs and this he did with a vengeance. From the days of Zakria Khan Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Diwan Jaspat Rai, the two Emnabadi brothers wielded considerable influence in the Lahore administration. Lakhpat Rai was the Diwan of the province of Lahore and Jaspat Rai was the Faujdar of Emnabad. Originally, they were *Khattris*, (a high Hindu caste) from Kalanaur of district Gurdaspur, and they rose to the high position of power and influence through promotions in the Government service.

In January-February, 1746, a Jatha of Singhs led by S. Sukha Singh of Marikambo and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was moving towards the Shivalik Hills under the pressure of the royal armies, when Diwan Jaspat Rai chased it and pushed it in the direction of Emnabad. The Headmen of the area accompanied by their reserve soldiers joined Jaspat Rai and the Singh Jatha turned to Baddoki. Here they took shelter in the woods of the Gosians, and when they were preparing their food, they were overtaken by Jaspat Rai who sent them a message to leave the place at once. The Singhs replied that they had been hungry for the past three days. It was not possible for them to move ahead in that condition. Secondly, they pointed out that they were going to stay there only for the night. The next morning after having witnessed Baisakhi Rori Sahib, they would leave the place. Jaspat Rai was adamant, and he again sent word to them saying that he would not allow them to stay there even for a moment. Therefore, they should leave the place forthwith. The Singhs tried to convince him that they bore no enmity to him, and that they were the enemy of the tyrannical and treacherous Mughal Government. They assured him that after having arranged for their provisions, they would move to some other area. In reply to this, Jaspat Rai brought to their notice that their argument was not accepta-

ble to him. He pointed out that the two sides were poles apart and there could be no compromise on that issue. He minced no words in telling them that he was determined to eliminate them, and still they expected *ration* and provisions from his area. It appeared certain to him that the messenger of death had dragged the Singhs just to his area. He would deal with them instantly. "I shall get you clean shaven and use your long hair for making a beed string." It is said that hardly had *the Singhs* started boiling certain green vegetables in their utensils when Jaspat Rai encircled them. Now the Singhs were badly trapped. Therefore, rather than starve themselves to death within the enemy siege, they preferred to fight an open battle against Jaspat Rai, and within moments, they pounced upon the enemy. Seeing the Dewan's associates taking to their heels, a Singh named Nibab Singh caught hold of the tale of the elephant of Jaspat Rai and climbing up chopped off the head of the Dewan, and scattering his finery and regalia down in the dust, he made good his escape. The Singhs returned this head to Bawa Kirpa Ram of Gosaian who paid them Rs. 500/- by way of the price.

On hearing about the death of his brother, Dewan Lakhpat Rai was mad with fury. He placed his turban at the feet of Yahya Khan and swore that he would wear this turban only after eliminating the Singhs.

What else did Yahya Khan desire? He issued a proclamation for a general massacre of all Sikhs and announced awards for those who brought the heads of the Sikhs. He ordered that anyone uttering the name of Guru Gobind Singh should be ripped open from his stomach.

When Lakhpat Rai returned to Lahore after finding that the Singh Jatha led by S. Sukha Singh and S. Jassa Singh had disappeared, he started the general massacre of the Sikhs. Earlier, only the militant Singhs were killed, but in the first week of March, 1746, Lakhpat Rai ordered that all the Sikh shopkeepers and Sikh Government servants should be handed over to the butchers, and that on 10th of March, their skulls covered with long hair should be removed. At that time 15 Sikhs who were in the service of a hill king, were also brought to Lahore and handed over to the butchers.

A wave of horror ran through the whole city on hearing the news of the massacre of the innocent Sikhs engaged in government service or small-time business. Some citizens who had regard for humanistic values and religious principles held the meeting of a Panchayat and accompanied by Gosain Sant Jagat Bhagat, the Guru of Lakhpat Rai, went to Lahore in the form of a deputation. This deputation was led by Dewan Lachhi Ram and Dewan Kaura Mal. They told Lakhpat Rai that his brother Jaspat Rai had been killed in the battle against the Singhs. They argued with him that the past should bury its dead. Lakhpat Rai should not adopt a blood and iron policy against the Sikhs. After all, they were their own brothers who were facing ordeals and making sacrifices in the defence of Hinduism. But Lakhpat Rai paid no heed to them. He said to the deputationists, "Let alone you. I shall not spare them even if God Himself were to intervene." Sant Jagat Bhagat also remonstrated with Lakhpat Rai, but all in vain, and he told the holy man that he knew nothing of politics and everything that was happening in the province. He advised his Guru to remain confined to his Dera. The *Saint* was utterly disappointed, and pronounced his curse in the following words: "You will be washed away by the same waters which have sustained and reared you. Even the root of your dynasty will not be left behind in the world while the Sikh Panth will multiply day by day."

In the end the members of the Panchayat requested Dewan Lakhpat Rai once again to stop the massacre of the Sikhs on the holy day of Somavati Amavas. This day came very rarely and no one was sure whether this day would come again during his life time. But the entreaties of these responsible men and the sight of their grey beards failed to move and melt the stony heart of Dewan Lakhpat Rai. All the arrested Sikhs were put to death on the day of Somavati Amavas on 12 Chet, Samat 1802, Bikrami (10 March, 1746, A. D.).

### **The First Holocaust**

Soon after this bloody episode, Lakhpat Rai under the orders of Nawab Yahya Khan launched a big offensive against the Singhs. He had a sizable army at his command with canons and deadly weapons. During this period about 15 thousand Sikhs were

staying around the marshes of Kahnawan. Jathedar S. Kapur Singh, Sukha Singh Marikambo, Gurdial Singh Dalewala, Charat Singh Shukerchakia and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia were with these Jathas of the Singhs.

On getting the clue regarding the whereabouts of these Singhs, Lakhpat Rai launched a big offensive against them. Rather than getting involved in a direct battle against the forces of Lakhpat Rai, the Singhs began to move ahead, with Lakhpat Rai chasing them. At times, the Singhs would attack the Lahore forces in a guerilla manner and manage to loot foodgrains and other provisions. But they were helpless in the face of such a mighty Mughal army with cannons at its disposal. The matters became still worse in view of the fact that this army far outnumbered them. Whatever the Singhs possessed had since been consumed and now they had neither ration nor armies. The enemy was dominating them in every way. The Singhs were in a difficult and tight position, while on the other hand, the armies of Lakhpat Rai were receiving required supplies of cannons, guns and ration etc. from Lahore. Under the Governor's orders countless people had come from villages to comb the marshes and woods which were the hideouts of the Singhs. The ratio of the Singhs and their enemies was comparable to salt and flour and the Singhs were no match for their enemies who far outnumbered them, but they were in high spirits with unshakable faith in their high Destiny, they were verily in a desperate state. The Singhs began to advance towards the Northern hills because Lakhpat Rai was attacking them with cannons from all sides and inflicting heavy casualties on them. At this moment some wise and seasoned Singhs pointed out that in a battle there were two and a half alternatives; (a) surrendering to the enemy, (b) retreating from the battlefield with the hope of confronting the enemy at some opportune time and (c) the half alternative lay in dying while fighting. There was no question of surrendering for the Khalsa does not surrender to any other authority except that of the Guru. Therefore, they were left only with the latter one and a half alternatives. The enemy had cannons and cavalry while the majority of the Singhs were on foot. Therefore, they should arrange for horses. Thus, with a view

to confounding the enemy, one afternoon the Singhs took to their heels. When at night Lakhpat Rai's armies grew slack, the Singhs raided its camps and managed to snatch a good number of horses and loot some rations and other provisions. After this they again returned to their hideouts in the marshes.

On seeing this, Lakhpat Rai felt greatly enraged. He sent for *beldars* and began to get the paths cleared in the jungle but it was not possible for the *beldars* to reach the thick marshes. And if ever they attempted to go any further the Singhs hiding there opened fire on them and drove them away. Finding no other alternative, Lakhpat Rai ordered that the thick bushes be set on fire. This drove the Singhs to the wall. Earlier they had the cover of bushes and now with the fire consuming them, they were rendered helpless. Secondly, Lakhpat Rai intensified the artillery fire. The Singhs took to their heels. They were given a hot chase by the royal forces. They had no time even for standing on their feet. Finding the water shallow at one spot, they swam across the river Ravi and thinking that probably their misfortune would be over once they reached the hills, they began to move in the direction of Kathua so that finally they could reach Basohali, but the hill people created obstacles in their way and began to shower bullets on them from all directions. From behind they were being hard pressed by Lakhpat Rai. It was a very difficult position for the Singhs because they could neither move forward nor backward. There was no peace or safe place for them. At last they decided to move towards Durarki and Doaba in separate groups. They would deal with Lakhpat Rai some other time after regrouping themselves. Therefore, the Singhs turned back and pounced upon the Mughal armies creating great confusion in its ranks. Thus, they succeeded in virtually piercing through the columns of Lakhpat Rai's army inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. At this moment, some Singhs looked for Lakhpat Rai also, but it appears that he was at some safe place in the rear ranks of his army. Thus, the Singhs could not capture him. The Singhs moved ahead, but in front, the river Ravi which was in spate put a stop to their movement. The flow of water in the river was so swift that it was impossible to cross it. The two

brothers of S. Gurdial Singh Dallewalia pushed their horses inside the river to measure the depth of water and see its swiftness. But they were helpless before the strong water currents. Consequently, the horses as well as the riders disappeared from the scene for ever.

Considering the nature of their crisis, S. Jassa Singh and some of his associates concluded that they should prefer death in the battlefield while fighting against the enemy, rather than getting drowned in the river. Therefore, under the leadership of S. Sukha Singh the Singhs raised the slogan of "*Sat Sri Akal*" (Victory to God) and attacked the enemy forces. A pitched battle was fought and in this battle, Jaspal Rai's son Harbhaj Rai, Yahya Khan's sons Nahar Khan, Faujdar Saif Ali Khan, Karun Bakhsh Rasulnagria, Agar Khan and others were killed. The Singhs also suffered a heavy loss of life. S. Sukha Singh's thigh bone got fractured with a bomb blast. But he did not complain of any pain and tearing a part of his turban he tied his leg to the saddle of his horse and continued fighting bravely. Just at that very moment S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars launched a second attack, creating still greater confusion among the enemy ranks. Taking advantage of this chaos, the Singhs followed Sukha Singh, and attacking and killing the enemy, they entered the thick jungle. In the meantime, night fell. This terrible battle was fought on Jeth 2 of Samat 1803, Bikrami (May 1, 1746). This was the first day in the Sikh history when they had suffered such a heavy loss of life. That is why this day is known as the first holocaust although it was small in dimensions. The second major holocaust took place in the Singhs' encounter with Ahmed Shah Durrani on February 5, 1762 (Rajar 11, 1175 Hijri). A detailed account of this holocaust will be given later.

Drawing a plan to leave this place at the mid-night hour, S. Jassa Singh and Sukha Singh addressed the Singhs thus, "Dear Khalsa, it is an opportune time to deal a heavy blow to the enemy. Seeing us escaping, the enemy is lying in deep slumber. Therefore, now we can snatch away their horses and their weapons with ease and assurance." The Singhs accepted this proposal and they attacked the enemy. They



inflicted heavy casualties on the army of Lakhpat Rai, took a large number of good horses and considerable quantity of weapons and hid themselves in the woods even before the enemy could light the candles.

Soon Lakhpat Rai reached there with his army and set it after the Singhs. The number of the Singhs riding the horses was not very large. A majority of them were on foot and it was essential to protect them and take them along. Therefore, even as the Singhs were moving ahead, occasionally they would turn back and engage the enemy in armed conflict. Thus, they were fighting even as they were moving forward. Lakhpat Rai's armies with the beating of drums before them were pursuing the Singhs, and vast crowds of villagers with guns, spears, daggers, axes etc. were probing the jungle as if hunters were chasing the deer. This was a critical period for the Singhs. But retaining their faith in the Lord, the Singhs launched such attacks on the enemy that the village crowds took to their heels. It was not an easy task for the Lahore armies to face the Singhs who were as furious as wounded tigers. How can the village crowds who had assembled there as if it were a fair face the heroes ready to play with death? The moment the Singhs raised the slogan of '*Sat Sri Akal*' and drew out their swords, the village crowds supporting Lakhpat Rai's armies took to their heels.

Now the Singhs, made improvised boats out of wild grasses and reeds to cross the river Ravi from a point where the water was shallow and finally reached Riarki. It was noon, with the scorching June sun over their heads. The movement was easy for the horse riders, but for those who were on foot, covering the 3-mile long distance through hot sand was nothing short of passing through a furnace. With the burning of their feet, they began to fall unconscious. They had neither shoes on their feet, nor any extra clothing. Finally, they tore pieces of clothes from their dresses and tied their feet. It was difficult for them to sit on the burning sands. Their bodies were covered with boils, and it became almost impossible for them to move ahead; still somehow they persisted in their onward march. This was the territory of Rama Randhawa who was a sovereign

ruler, and a sworn enemy of the Singhs. He had many times acted as an informer to Zakria Khan for capturing and massacring the Singhs. He came out in support of Lakhpat Rai. What could the Singhs expect of him? About him, the Majah Singhs used to say: "Do not go to the territory of Rama. Eat your humble fare in Majah." In other words the Singhs should prefer eating ordinary vegetables like *dela* to going to the principality of Rama.

Therefore, the Singhs spent a day or two in the woods here, and beating and pushing back the village crowds crossed the river Beas from Sri Hargobindpur and entered the Doaba and pitched their tents in the jungle of Meerkot. The Singhs had been hungry for the past several days. They had neither any rations nor utensils. They managed to get some food provisions from the nearby villages, let their horses free for grazing and began to prepare their food on their shields. All of them had not yet eaten their food when the ruler of Doaba supported by the Pathans of Alawarpur reached there. The Singhs would have dealt with them very easily, but in the meantime they had received the news from behind that Lakhpat Rai had also crossed the river Beas along with his artillery. Therefore, the Singhs swallowed the bitter pill of patience, rode their horses and crossing the river Satluj from Aliwal, entered the Malwa.

In this campaign about 7000 Singhs were killed and about 3000 of them were captured. These included those Singhs also who had been captured by the hill rulers of Basohali and sent to Lahore. All of them were tortured to death in the horse market near the Delhi Gate of Lahore. This was, in fact, the butcher house for the Singhs; and heaps of the heads and bodies of the Singh martyrs could be seen lying here. Therefore, this place came to be known as Shaheed Ganj. In view of such heavy losses suffered by the Singhs in Lakhpat Rai's campaign against them, the entire episode is known as the minor holocaust. At this time S. Jassa Singh came to the Malwa along with S. Sukha Singh and Nawab Kapur Singh and stayed at Kotkapura in the territory of the Brars. The remaining Singhs were also scattered at different places. Sukha Singh went to Jaitu, Nawab

Kapur Singh to Vinjhuke, Hari Singh to Dialpura, Charat Singh to Pake Pathrale etc. Some Singhs sought habitation around Drauli. In brief, the different Singhs and their groups took shelter wherever they could.

### **The Encounter with Lachhmi Narain**

After passing through a terrible period of unequal battles, retreats, starvations and privations, the Singhs regained their glory and enthusiasm within a period of six months, and they were again up in arms against the government. First of all they began to establish their hegemony in their respective areas. At this time S. Jassa Singh, Charat Singh Shukarchakia, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh were all together and were lending full support to one another in conquering territories. When the news of the rising power of the Singhs and their conquests of territories reached Lahore, Yahya Khan ordered Diwan Lachhmi Narain of Sirhind to launch an attack against the Singhs. While some Singhs were away to distant places, others were away to their homes. S. Jassa Singh and his associates were at Gujjarwal at this time, when Lachhmi Narain attacked them all of a sudden. Although numerically the Singhs were outnumbered, they took up cudgels against the enemy. But in the battle Lachhmi Narain had the upper hand. When the evening fell while fighting, the Singhs decided to leave this place in separate groups and move in different directions, for after all they were not going to lose their fort or palace to the enemy. Therefore, even before Lachhmi Narain could launch a second offensive against them, they were scattered in different directions.

Up to this period, the conquests of the Khalsa were confined to the collection of taxes and monetary tributes for maintaining the Dal or the Singh armies. They had not yet started establishing their permanent control over the conquered territories. In Lahore, Yahya Khan and his Diwan wielded considerable influence up to this period, and as far as it was within their power, they would not allow the Khalsa to have any permanent settlement. Whenever Lakhpat Rai got any clue about the presence of the Singhs in a particular area, he would set the army and the village voluntary force after them, with the result that the Singhs had to

move from place to place to pass their time. During these very days, the Singhs attacked Kasur with a view to collecting taxes, but their venture was only partially successful.

#### **Lakhpat Rai's Announcement**

On the other hand, immediately after his return to Lahore from his campaign against the Singhs, Lakhpat Rai adopted a still stricter policy. He got the Sikh Gurdwaras closed and some of them demolished. Their religious scriptures were burnt down or got thrown into wells. He declared that a Khatri had founded this religion, and that he himself as a Khatri had put an end to it, and had eliminated the Singhs. The Singhs who had managed to save their shrines were exiled. He ordered that in future no one should read the *Gurbani* or the Sikh scripture; no one should utter the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, otherwise his belly would be torn open. No one should use the word '*Gurh*' because it was reminiscent of the word *Gur* (*Guru*); it should be called *bheli* etc. He believed that probably by adopting this kind of policy, he would be able to eliminate the Singhs from the face of the earth, but "those who enjoy divine protection cannot be killed by any power in the world." (Maru M. 4). Before long, circumstances took such a turn that the rule of Yahya Khan and the power of Lakhpat Rai as a Diwan both disappeared into thin air.

## CHAPTER 6

### **The Rule of Shah Niwaz Khan and the First Invasion of Durrani**

When on March 10, 1746, on the sacred day of Somavati Amavas Diwan Lakhpat Rai got several innocent Sikhs belonging to the peasantry and the commercial classes massacred, Diwan Lachhi Ram, Diwan Kaura Mal, Sant Jagat Bhagat and several other men of rank were shocked. Santji in utter frustration cursed Diwan Lakhpat Rai saying, "Your dynasty will be rooted out," and Diwan Kaura Mal left Lahore for Multan where Mirza Hayat-ula-(a famous Philauri Khan), the younger brother of Yahya Khan and on whom the title of Shah Niwaz Khan had been conferred by Nadir Shah along with the rule of Multan, was the Governor. The aim of Diwan Kaura Mal in shifting to Multan appeared to be, as is evident from the later developments, that perhaps he would be able to prepare some plan for the prevention of atrocities on the Singhs in Lahore. As long as Yahya Khan was the ruler of Lahore, there was no hope of putting an end to the general massacre of the Sikhs. Therefore, it was essential to bring the rule of Yahya Khan to an end. On reaching Multan, Kaura Mal managed to acquire considerable power and influence by virtue of his ability and his old contacts.

When after the death of Zakria Khan, his son, Yahya Khan, became the ruler of Lahore, he became the sole owner of his father's property and refused to share it with his younger brother-Shah Niwas Khan. Therefore, in November, 1746, Shan Niwaz Khan came to Lahore and he initiated negotiations with Yahya Khan through Baba Surat Singh, but Yahya Khan turned a deaf ear to him. Shah Niwaz Khan enlisted the support of Adina Begh Khan, the Faujdar of Doaba, and taking him, Diwan Kaura Mal, Hasham-Tula Khan and his loyal Sardars pitched his tents near the tomb of his father in Shalimar Bagh. The fire of anger and hostility that had been simmering for the past several months

assumed that shape of a conflagration on March 13, 1747, right inside the mosque on the occasion of the *Id* (Milad-e-Nabi). After the massacre of a large number of associates, Yahya Khan took to his heels and sought shelter in the women's quarters. Shah Niwaz Khan put him under house arrest in this very building and established his control over Lahore. Thus came to an end the period of atrocities being committed on the Sikhs by Yahya Khan and the Khalsa heaved a sigh of relief after full nine years of reprisals.

Immediately after capturing Lahore, Shah Niwaz Khan arrested the personal Adviser of Yahya Khan, Naib Mir Moman Khan Kasuria, Lachhmi Ram, the Chief Diwan and several other officers and decimated their domestic establishments. Kaura Mal was appointed Chief Diwan. Yahya Khan was supported by the Kasuri Pathan but later he escaped to Delhi. He was so thoroughly fed up with the burden of life that after reaching Farukhabad, he turned a saint and became famous as Yahya Shah Darvesh. At last, he breathed his last in Farukhabad, and he was buried there.

When Shah Niwaz Khan learnt about the escape of Yahya Khan to Delhi, he was upset. At this time Qumrudin Khan, an uncle to Zakria Khan, was the Prime Minister of Delhi. Fearing the wrath of Emperor Mohammad Shah and his Prime Minister Qumrudin Shah Niwaz Khan invited to India Ahmed Shah Durrani who had ascended the throne of Afghanistan after the assassination of Nadir Shah Irani on June 8-9, 1747. On hearing this news, Qumrudin remonstrated with Shah Niwaz Khan reminding him of his family loyalties to the Mughal Empire and thus persuaded him to check Durrani and fight against him. But it was not an easy task to resist Ahmed Shah Durrani. When Durrani crossed the river Ravi on January 10, 1748 and reached Lahore, Shah Niwaz Khan left for Delhi on January 11-12. On January 12, Ahmed Shah established his control over Lahore and the plundering of the city turned the Durrani rich over night.

Ahmed Shah stayed in Lahore for one month and one week, and as a token of his jubilation, he issued a coin on which the following words were inscribed :-

“The First auspicious year of Emperor Ahmed Shah, a

diamond among pearls, in the capital of Lahore.”

After having made full preparations for war against the Mughal rulers of Delhi, Ahmed Shah appointed Pathan Jolley Khan Kasuri, ruler of Lahore. Mir Moman Khan was appointed his deputy and Lachhmi Ram the Diwan while he himself advanced towards Delhi on Feb. 19, 1748.

#### **The Singh Battles against the Durranis at Noor-di-Sarai and Verowal.**

At this time Nawab Kapur Singh and S. Jassa Singh were at Taran Taran. S. Charat Singh, S. Karora Singh and S. Khushal Singh, S. Mit Singh Dallowalia and S. Shayam Singh were also there. Perhaps they were waiting and watching to see which way the wind blew, and whether they would be able to fish in troubled waters or not. In the meantime, Ahmed Shah also appeared on the scene. When on January 21-22, he pitched his tents at Noor-di-Sarai, the Singhs attacked him. Their aim was to know the battle strategies and tricks of the Durranis. Moreover, if they somehow succeeded in laying their hand on some wealth and horses etc, it would be an additional advantage. They could not engage the Durranis in a direct battle because they neither had any artillery nor any ammunition. Therefore, they retreated after looting whatever they could. The next day they attacked the Durranis on their way to Verowal, looted some wealth and retreated.

Ahmed Shah had neither sufficient time nor any will to commit his forces against the Singhs. He had some past experience how at the time of Nadir's return from Delhi the Singhs had given him a tough time at Kiratpur and in the hills of Anandpur. But above all a big Mughal army under the command of Shahzada Ahmed and Prime Minister Qumrudin was advancing to check his movement. Therefore, ignoring the guerilla attacks by the Singhs on his army, he was moving swiftly towards Sirhind with a view to capturing the city even before the Mughal army reached there. When after crossing the Sutlaj, Ahmed Shah moved ahead, S. Jassa Singh, S. Kapur Singh and others left for the Doaba while S. Sukha Singh, S. Charat Singh and their associates crossed the Beas and reached Kalanaur.

#### **The Singh-Afghan Battle near Kathbudha (Kalanour)**

When the news of the Singh-Durrani skirmishes near Noor-

di-Sarai and Verowal reached Lahore, it was a good excuse for Jalley Khan Kasuria to send his army under the command of Lachhmi Ram against the Singhs. He sent the Afghan regiment stationed in Lahore with Moman Khan and this regiment reached Kalanaur and moved close to the Singhs under the leadership of S. Sukha Singh and Charat Singh. But in the meantime, the Singhs crossed the river Sutlaj.

When the Afghans saw that the quarry had duped them, they felt humiliated. But now what could be done? However, Moman Khan was quite familiar with the Sikh psyche, and he knew that if their honour was challenged, they always came out in the open for a direct confrontation ignoring their small numbers or their losses. After some deliberations, he got a letter addressed to the Singhs by the Afghan forces saying that they belonged to the community of Afghan Emperor Ahmed Shah and that they had come to see their valour in the battle. It was unfortunate that they had left even before any battle could take place. If they were really Singhs or tigers, they should come out for a fight against the Durrani. They would have the choice to put two Singhs against a single Durrani. The Singhs replied that they would cheerfully accept this challenge if ten Durrani armed with guns and swords fight against five Singhs armed with similar weapons. The Afghans replied that they did not approve of a gun-battle; on the contrary, they would prefer to fight with swords and daggers, but the whole proposal ended in smoke. The Singhs sent their reply saying that they would fight a gun-battle. But the matter remained where it was. While the Singhs were bent upon fighting a gun-battle, the Afghans wanted to fight with swords. The fact was that the Durrani were covered with armour from head to foot. They were in steel trousers. On the other hand, the Singhs did not have even sufficient clothing on their bodies. It was for this reason that the Durrani were insisting on a sword-battle again and again. Besides this, they knew that the Singhs were famous marks men and confirming this Sayyed Gulam Ali has written in his book *Imadoo-Saadat*, that their guns could hit the enemy at a distance of 900 steps.

The next day there came a rude Afghan messenger and challenged the Singhs saying that if they were really heroes they should come out for man to man sword battle. He provoked them in the



name of their Guru and he began to insult every Singh Sardar by name. On hearing this S. Charat Singh was in fury. He placed his gun aside, took up his sword and started for a *duel* with the Durrani. When S. Sukha Singh saw Charat Singh going for a combat, he followed him on his horse and tried to persuade him to give up his plan. He told him that he was only a boy while every Durrani was as much as four times stronger than he. He added that he might not succeed even in breaking a single chain of their steel cover. Not only the Durrani but their horses were also covered with steel, and it was for that reason that they were anxious for a sword battle. Charat Singh replied that he knew that he was a boy, but as long as he was alive, he could hear no humiliating remarks about his religion and his Guru. He preferred death to a life of humiliation. He was ready to sacrifice his life in defence of the glory of the Sikh Panth. Victory and defeat and life and death were in the hands of God, but sincere endeavour was the duty of a Singh. By the grace of God, he would be able to defeat the Pathans.

On hearing this, S. Sukha Singh admired the courage of S. Charat Singh. He asked him to see his move. On saying this, S. Sukha Singh put on his gloves and other armours, wore a shield on his head and put the same covering on his horse as had been snatched from Girzai. He armed himself with two daggers and shields and got ready for a combat. The five Singhs offered their prayer and started and challenged the Durrani in the river sands. They were confronted by a gigantic Durrani. The combat began. Both appeared to be a fit match for each other. While fighting, both were injured with swords and their horses also became unconscious. At one moment when both the heroes came close to each other they were locked in a physical scuffle and fell to the ground. At this moment, Sukha Singh thought of a trick. He raised his neck and lifting aside the armour of the Durrani, pierced his dagger into his belly. After killing the Durrani, S. Sukha Singh raised the slogan of victory. As soon as the Durrani standing close by and watching the duel heard this slogan, they pounced upon the Singhs who were already prepared to face the Durrani. S. Charat Singh moved his horse ahead towards the river sands, held Sukha Singh by his arm, put him on his horse and

brought him to this side of the river. The Durranis who had launched the attack were beaten back by the Singhs (*Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 305-11).

#### **The Defeat of the Durranis at Menupur.**

On March 1, 1748, Ahmed Shah crossed the river Sutlej and after covering a distance of 40 miles, he reached Sirhind the next day. In the absence of any tough resistance, he captured Sirhind very easily, and now the entire treasure and the family of Prime Minister Qumrudin was in his possession. Prime Minister Qumrudin, commander of the Mughal Army, coming from Delhi to obstruct the movement of the Durranis, had already reached Sirhind and leaving his extra belongings here, he had moved towards Machhiwara to check the Durranis. But in the meantime, Ahmed Shah crossed the Sutlej from a different point and reached Sirhind. On hearing this news, Prime Minister Qumrudin, his son, Mir Mo'inudin (the notorious Mir Mannu) and Prince Ahmed moved with their armies towards Sirhind and pitched their tents at village Manupur at a distance of about five miles from Sirhind. This led to immediate skirmishes between the Mughal army and the Durranis, but a deadly battle was fought on March 11 when the Durrani artillery fire struck Qumrudin in his head when he was engaged in reciting the morning Namaz (prayer). Mir Mannu placed the dead body of his father with the support of pillows on an elephant and attacked the Durranis. He fought so bravely that the enemy was put to rout.

When the battle was at the highest pitch, to the misfortune of the Durranis, a fire spark fell on a cart laden with arrows full of powder which they had looted from Lahore. The moment the fire fell on the cart, the arrows came in motion and other carts filled with similar arrows also caught fire. Thus, thousands of arrows began to rise towards the sky. The 'sh-sh-sh-Shaw-koo' sound coming out of these arrows sounded Shah-koo-Shah-koo (Shah-Kujah, Shah-Kujah i.e. where is the Emperor?, where is the Emperor?), The superstitious Pathans concluded that it was some supernatural power which had come from India and was asking where their king was. This voice was really looking for the Emperor Ahmed Shah. Consequently, there was a confusion in their ranks and they ran about helter skelter.

At this moment, the attacks launched by safdarjang, Commander of the army of Mir Mannu made it almost impossible for the Pathans to take up a fresh position. Ahmed Shah returned to Sirhind in disappointment. Now he began to make efforts for a compromise, but Prince Ahmed was not prepared to accede even to a single condition laid down by him. Therefore, Ahmed Shah had no other alternative but to return to his native land.

On March 17, Ahmed Shah left Sirhind and after his brief stay at Lahore, he returned to Kandhar.

Since Ahmed Shah had left Lahore, S. Charat Singh got a good opportunity to attack the rear ranks of the Durranis. On the banks of river Chenab, he succeeded in plundering considerable wealth and horses from the Durranis, and he chased them up to the river Attok. S. Charat Singh's strategy resulted in two major benefits. First, during their return journey, the Durranis could not indulge in looting and plundering, and thus the country was saved from ruin at their hands. Secondly, the valour of S. Charat Singh came to dominate the whole area, (*Umdat Twareekh*, First Edition, p. 127).

## CHAPTER 7

### The Singhs' Occupation of Sri Amritsar.

#### The Defeat of Raja Gurdit Mal

After their battle with the Durraniis near Kalanaur, (Kot Budha) S. Jassa Singh and other Sikh Sardars like S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia, S. Jai Singh Ghanaya, S. Hari Singh and others reached Noorpur in North-East near Pathankot. The king of Noorpur surrendered before them without any resistance, and giving them some contribution for the community-kitchen befriended them. At this time Raja Gurdit Mal who was the Faujdar of the hill territories and Lakhpat Rai the Dewan of Lahore, had already ordered him to launch an attack against the Singhs. The Singhs and Raja Gurdit Mal came face to face near the villages of Sadra and Badra. Gurdit Mal besides having a 5000 strong cavalry and 7000 infantry, also had under his command, the Dogra army of Ranjit Dev Jammuwallia, Jasrotia and Mankotia. The number of the Singhs did not exceed 2000. Therefore, agreeing with S. Hari Singh, when it was found that a gun-battle would not be advisable, S. Jassa Singh in consultation with other Singh Sardars decided to fight a sword battle. With the firing of their guns, the Singhs came close to Raja Gurdit Mal's army, and then with a swift and sudden attack, they got mingled in the enemy ranks, and trying their swords, began to take a heavy toll of life. This put the enemy to rout. Raja Gurdit Mal saved his life with great difficulty, and the Singhs plundered his tent and he straightaway reached Jammu. This happened in the second week of March, 1748 when Ahmed Shah Durrani had suffered defeat in the battle of Manupur near Sirhind and he was making preparations to return to Afghanistan. (*Jassa Singh Binod*, Urdu, pp. 7-8).

#### The Confrontation with Adina Begh.

Now the Singhs took a narrow route along the hills and reached Anandpur Sahib. The Hola Mohalla fair was held here

on March 4-5. They could not reach Anandpur Sahib on that occasion. Therefore, without paying their obeisance to the Sikh holy places they reached the Doaba. At this time Arain Adina Begh Khan was the Faujdar of Sharakpur Patti (Lahore). Generally, he lived at Bijwara or Khanpur near Hoshiarpur. After Ahmed Shah Durrani had returned to Afghanistan in the wake of his defeat at Manupur, Adina Begh proceeded on leave with the permission of Mir Mannu and Prince Ahmed, and when he was on his way to Hoshiarpur, he came face to face with the Singhs. He had already received orders to fight against the Singhs, but Adina Begh was an extremely diplomatic person. He did not want to enter into any controversy with the Singhs for any reason. In fact, he owed his position as a Faujdar of Sharakpur Patti to the actions and movements of the Singhs. Since this area was a little away from Lahore on one side, and out of the limits of the patrolling forces, the Government officials had not committed any considerable atrocities on the Singhs. As a result, there was not much tension between them and the Mughal officers. Moreover, there were no complaints of loot and plunder by the Singhs in this area. Therefore, it was the general opinion that only Adina Begh could maintain peace in Doaba. But there was no clear cut consequence of the confrontation between the two as has already been pointed out and both the parties withdrew themselves from the point of confrontation. Adina Begh left for his Rest House in Khanpur, situated quite close to Hoshiarpur in the North-West, and the Singhs took their way to Amritsar. This happened in the third week of March, 1748, when Ahmed Shah must be somewhere near Lahore, during his return journey to Afghanistan.

#### **The Occupation of Amritsar.**

At this time Amritsar was under the control of Slabat Khan, a Rajput of Village Tharu, who had been here along with his army since 1747. He had laid siege of Sri Darbar Sahib and the Holy Tank. Moreover, he had raised small fortresses and towers around Sri Darbar Sahib in which there were gunmen who shot the Singhs coming to Darbar Sahib for paying their obeisance and taking a dip in the Holy water at odd hours.

The Singhs knew that the defeat of Durrani would result

in administrative changes in Lahore and that the administrators like Jalley Khan and Dewan Lakhpat Rai would be dislodged from their positions. In fact, even these administrators did not know what really lay in store for them. No new administrator had as yet been appointed in Lahore by the Delhi rulers. With a view to taking full advantage of this political uncertainty the Sardars of the Khalsa Dal held a convention and decided to liberate Amritsar, and Nawab Kapur Singh nominated *Sardar* Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to lead the attack on Amritsar.

*Sardar* Jassa Singh quickly prepared a plan, and laid a siege around Amritsar. Slabat Khan was already well known for his bravery. He came out with his soldiers to confront the Singhs. But it was not a child's play to fight against the Singh heroes who had the experience of several battles at their back. When Slabat Khan found that his army was on the verge of rout, he moved forward to encourage his soldiers. Seeing this, *Sardar* Jassa Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh, S. Tara Singh Waian, S. Chuhar Singh Bhakian and others attacked the fortress of Slabat Khan. *Sardar* Jassa Singh who was leading them challenged the Khan and in response he attacked S. Jassa Singh with his sword. S. Jassa Singh resisted this attack with his shield, and the next moment even before the Khan could make a second attempt, he chopped off his head. On seeing this Nazabat Khan, the nephew of Slabat Khan, pounced upon S. Jassa Singh and when he was about to attack him with his spear, Nawab Kapur Singh struck him down with an arrow, and in a moment he fell down dead on the ground. Seeing the dead bodies of their leaders lying on the ground, the army of Slabat Khan lost heart and left the battlefield in terror and confusion. In this way, towards the end of or the beginning of the 4th week of March, 1747, the Singhs established their control over Amritsar, and with the slogans of '*Sat Sri Akal*' (Victory to God) resounding in the air, they entered Sri Darbar Sahib. This was for the first time that the Khalsa could pay his obeisance here after many years. (Griffin, *Rajas of Punjab*, P. 501, *Jassa Singh Binod*, P. 69, Prem Singh, *Nawab Kapur Singh*, pp. 13-39).

#### **The Baisakhi of Samat 1805**

A few days before the Baisakhi fair which was to be held on March 29, 1747, S. Jassa Singh sent messages through horseriders

to far-off places inviting the scattered Singhs to participate in the celebrations. On hearing this happy news, the Singhs left for Amritsar. Nawab Kapur Singh had returned from the Doaba only recently. The other Sardars also reached there along with their detachment of troops, so much so that even Sardar Charat Singh who was chasing Ahmed Shah reached Amritsar.

After a long period, this was the first Baisakhi fair with its own resplendent glory. It was after several years that the Singhs met their brothers and saw their holy places, long separated from them. In the course of discussions, Sardar Jassa Singh pointed out that the Khalsa could not go on living in the jungles and the mountain caves indefinitely. In his view, the time had come when some fort should be built and the Khalsa should start leading a stable life. This proposal was unanimously accepted, and now the question was as to where this fort should be built. Several proposals came forward, which included the proposal of Sukha Singh Marikambo and some other devout Singhs to make Amritsar their permanent abode and raise their fort here. It would be a matter of honour and glory for them to live in the lap of their Guru and die at the door of God Himself.

#### **The Construction of a Boundary Wall by the Singhs (April, 1748)**

After this proposal had been accepted, the work for the construction of a fortress began, and the foundation stone was laid near the spot where Guru Sahib had got a well sunk. There was no need to hire any artisans from outside. There were several masons and labourers among the Singhs themselves. Inspired by the spirit of love and service, the Singhs began to work with great enthusiasm. There were no distinctions between the high and the low, and there was no jealousy of any kind. No one was hungry for leadership. All of them worked together like members of a family, distributing their duties from man to man. The work on the four places of the boundary wall began simultaneously and it was completed within a short period. Bhangoo, R. S. has referred to this event in his *Prachin Panth Prakash* as follows :—

“The Singhs laid the foundation of the boundary wall of their fort.

Near the spot where the Guru had got a well sunk.

The Singhs were themselves masons and labourers.

They were men of brave spirit and generous impulse 15  
 They ground the flour and prepared their food themselves.  
 And this was the secret of their glory and leadership.  
 Any Singh who had surpassed others in this common cause.  
 Earned the collective admiration of the other Singhs. 16  
 There was no mutual jealousy and no one poured out his  
 personal sufferings.  
 They built the wall at great speed.  
 Like the monkeys building the bridge at the ocean. 17

#### Couplet

They started work on all the four sides simultaneously with  
 out being tired. Greatly they worked in accordance with the  
 cooperative commitments. 18

#### Chaupai

The Singhs were digging the earth and raising structures  
 themselves.

These beloved ones of the Guru were themselves masons  
 and labourers.

They raised the wall after working day and night.

And thus created some kind of shelter for themselves. 2

In all there were 500 Singhs there.

And they were determined to achieve martyrdom.

Since there was not enough accommodation here for a large  
 number of Singhs, only a few of them could find shelter there,  
 (*Panth Prakash*, 399-400)

A *Rauni* (Compound) is not a fortress or a fort; it is only a  
 minor shelter. A thick boundary wall is called *Rauni*. A fortress  
 or a fort is a big structure, and it takes time to raise it. After  
 having completed the construction of the *Rauni*, the Singhs built  
 high towers for drum-beaters and then after fitting the doors, they  
 dug a moat around the *Rauni*, and after the name of Guru Ram  
 Dass, it was called Ram *Rauni*.

It was not a very big building; only about 500 Singhs could  
 be accommodated here and the rest of them went back to nearby  
 jungles and villages so that on hearing the sound of drums from  
 the towers, they should reach there.

The leadership provided by S Jassa Singh during this period  
 made him ever more dominating a figure, more popular and



more prominent than ever before. Nawab Kapur Singh had already transferred a lot of his own work to him. Now he began to pass on more of his personal duties and responsibilities to S. Jassa Singh, with the result that his reputation touched a new high in the Budha Dal. He began to be counted a leading figure of the Khalsa Dal and of the Sikh Panth.

## CHAPTER 8

### The beginning of the age of Mir Mannu

Although Ahmed Shah Durrani had returned to Afghanistan in the middle of March, 1748, Prince Ahmed, the son of Emperor Mohammed Shah and Mir Mannu, the conqueror of Manupur, stayed in Sirhind up to April 11, 1748. On April 9, Emperor Mohammed Shah who was getting physically feeble, wrote to Prince Ahmed to reach Delhi immediately. The Prince appointed Mir Mannu, Governor of Punjab on April 11, and himself returned to Delhi.

On his arrival in Lahore, Mir Mannu ordered the arrest of Jalley Khan and Dewan Lakhpat Rai appointed by Durrani. A fine of Rs. 30 lakh was imposed on the Dewan and in his place Dewan Kaura Mal was appointed by him as his Naib and Dewan of his Court. Out of Rs. 30 lakh Lakhpat Rai was able to pay Rs. 18 lakh. The auction of his house and property brought an amount of 2 lakh more, and in lieu of remaining amount of Rs. 10 lakhs, he had to undergo life imprisonment.

Dewan Kaura Mal knew how Lakhpat Rai had got thousands of innocent Sikhs massacred and tortured. Therefore, he agreed to pay the remaining amount of Rs. 10 lakh on the condition that Lakhpat Rai be handed over to him. What objection could Mir Mannu have to this? Therefore, Kaura Mal deposited this amount and in turn he handed over Lakhpat Rai to the Singhs who bound him hand and feet, threw him in a prison where he had to pass through a veritable hell for his misdeeds. (Khushwaqat Rai, *Tareekh Sikhan*, P. 67; *Tehmashnama*, Rattan Singh, *Prachin Part 1 Prakash*, pp. 290-98. Shams heer Khalsa, P. 470).

#### The Second Reign of Repression on the Singhs.

When Mir Mannu had established himself formally as the Governor of Lahore, he sent patrolling detachments of the Mughal forces to the villages and the surrounding areas with a view to checking the rising tide of the Sikh power, symbolised by the Ram

Rauni and the towers. He ordered the patrolling troops to shave off the Singhs wherever they met them.

The Singhs left their homes and hearths and took shelter in the jungles and hills, but even there they were not allowed to have a sigh of relief. Mir Mannu issued strict instructions to the area leaders and the hill kings to send Singhs in chains to Lahore. In a short period the patrolling troops killed a large number of Singhs, and shaved off the heads and beards of several others. The area leaders and the hill kings sent thousands of Singhs to Lahore where they were massacred in the Horse Market outside the Delhi Gate in the presence of thousands of onlookers. Wells were full with the heads of the Singhs and their headless dead bodies were buried at a place which later came to be known as Shaheed Ganj.

These conditions prevailed for 5 or 6 months. But with the sagacity of Dewan Kaura Mal, and by the time of the second invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani and Shah Nawaz Khan's occupation of Multan, the siege of Ram Rauni was lifted.\*

#### **The Dialogue of Sardar Jassa Singh with Adina Begh.**

On the one hand the detachment troops were hunting down the Singhs in the countryside and the jungles and the Singhs captured by the village leaders and hill kings were being massacred in Lahore, on the other hand, Mir Mannu ordered Adina Begh Khan, the Doaba Administrator and Saddiq Begh Khan to suppress the Singhs and attack Ram Rauni.

Adina Begh Khan sent his men to Jassa Singh and invited him for negotiations. He suggested that these negotiations would be held in Delhi. Sardar Jassa Singh would be free either to have share in political power or to have an independent state. Adina

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\* He then stationed detachment of troops in all parts of the country infested by the Singhs with stringent orders to shave off their heads and beards wherever they might be found and compelled votaries of the Guru to hide themselves in mountains and jungles. Mir Mannu issued strict orders to the hill Rajas to seize the Singhs and send them in irons to Lahore. These orders were obeyed and hundreds of Singhs were brought daily to Lahore and butchered at the Nakhas or Shaheed-Ganj, outside the Delhi Gate in sight of the multitudes of spectators. The Young Mannu became an irreconcilable foe of the Sikhs and was determined to extirpate the nation. (Sayyed Mohammed Latif-History of the Panjab, 221-).

Begh assured him that he would request Mir Mannu, Governor of Punjab, to write to the Mughal Emperor in Delhi, in this behalf. The Emperor would be pleased to accept this proposal. Therefore, there was no use of pushing young soldiers into the jaws of death and cause disturbances and discomfort to the public in general. Adina Begh was a very cunning and selfish man. None could ever trust him. It would not be something astonishing if he got Sardar Jassa Singh arrested and handed over to Mir Mannu. Jassa Singh replied that he would meet him in the battlefield, and that the sound of weapons should be regarded as negotiations. There was no question of sharing any political power, or of having any say in the administration. When God Himself had given one a kingdom or a state, why should one beg for it from somebody else? A man who is destined to be a king has no reason for making such a request to any temporal authority. One on whom God, the Emperor of the two worlds, showers His greetings, need not ask anything more. History appears to be a testimony to the fact that nobody has been able to carve out a kingdom for himself without the loss of young soldiers and discomfort to the general public. Jassa Singh added that he and his Dal were not worried about anything. When they were able to establish their full control over their state, they would be able to inhabit it. When he had lifted the sword, the talk of compromise initiated by Adina Begh looked absurd. When Jassa Singh and his associates marched forward, they would be able to conquer territories.

The Khan sent this kind of message twice or thrice but Sardar Jassa Singh did not change his attitude or stance, which was as follows :

“The Pure will rule and no one else will remain a sovereign  
All other rules will end up in confusion, only those would be  
saved who came to the shelter of the Khalsa.

Adina Begh Khan sent such messages secretly to other Sardars and Sardar Jassa Singh Ichogillia who later became famous as Ramgarhia along with his three brothers; Jai Singh, Khushal Singh and Mali Singh and some other associates joined the service of Adina Begh. Of them, only the youngest and the fifth brother, S Tara Singh, refused to leave the Khalsa Dal to take up service with Adina Begh. (*Jassa Singh Binod*).

## CHAPTER 9

### **The Arrival of Sardar Jassa Singh in Multan in Support of Maharaj Kaura Mal**

#### **The Siege of Ram Rauni (Oct. 1748)**

When Adina Begh failed to achieve the desired goal, he, in collaboration with Saddiq Begh Khan, made preparations to lay siege of Ram Rauni. Under orders from Mir Mannu, the forces of Dewan Kaura Mal, Mirza Aziz Khan, Bakhshi Nasir Ali Khan Jalandri and all the hill kings jointly attacked Ram Rauni. On hearing the sound of drums from the towers of Ram Rauni, a few jathas (groups of Singhs) reached Amritsar and took up positions in the bushes of Ramsar.

The Lahore army had artillery and considerable quantity of arms and ammunition. They decided to blow up Ram Rauni by filling gun-powder in the underground tunnels. But the Singhs dug a deep moat, took positions in it, and thus prevented the progress of the tunnel being made by the enemy forces. But when the Singhs fell short of provisions, they decided to come out in the open and launch a frontal attack on the enemy. When the Singhs accompanying Adina Begh and Sardar Jassa Singh Ichogillia came to know of this fresh developments, they settled their scores with Adina Begh and joined their brother Singhs. A message was sent to Dewan Kaura Mal to come to the rescue of the Singhs trapped within the siege of Ram Rauni by the Lahore army.

During this period, Mir Mannu, had to face two difficulties; first at the instigation of the Mughal Government in Delhi, Shah Nawaz Khan, formerly, Governor of Punjab, occupied Multan, and putting an end to the writ of Mannu, made preparations to advance towards Lahore. Secondly, he received the news of the imminent second invasion of India by Ahmed Shah Durrani. Both these difficulties were quite horrible in their dimensions. Mir Mannu consulted Dewan Kaura Mal and other officers. Dewan Kaura

Mal suggested to him that the only alternative under the circumstances was to lift the siege of Ram Rauni. He added that Mir Mannu should lead his army to resist Ahmed Shah Durrani, while he himself would go to Multan to fight against Shah Nawaz. Finding the time quite opportune, Dewan Kaura Mal also persuaded Mir Mannu for the grant of a *jagir* to the Singhs and thus enlist their support. Consequently, Mir Mannu agreed to grant 1/4th of the land revenue from Pargana Patti to Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar in the form of a *jagir*. He also released the revenue of a dozen villages of Guru Chak. In this way, in Maghar 1805 Bikrami or November, 1748 A. D., the siege of Ram Rauni was lifted, and the armies of Mir Mannu returned to Lahore, and began to get ready for campaigns against Ahmed Shah Durrani and Shah Nawaz Khan of Multan (*Prochin Panth Prakash*, pp. 401-04) Khushwaqt Rai. *Twareekh Sikhan*, pp. 76-8, Sohan Lal, *Umbat Twareekh*, First Edition, page 129)

#### **The Second Invasion of Durrani (Nov, 1748).**

In Maghar 1805 Bikrami or in November, 1748, Ahmed Shah Durrani invaded India for the second time to avenge his earlier defeat in March. Mir Mannu asked for help from Delhi. But Prime Minister Safdar Jang was not very much in his favour. On the contrary, he was for weakening him. Therefore, no force came from Delhi. Mir Mannu's own army could not face Durrani. Therefore, he surrendered before Durrani, and signed a treaty with Nadir Shah Irani in 1749 on behalf of Emperor Mohammad Shah, promising to pay the revenue of the four palaces of Siilkot, Aurangabad, Gujarat and Pasroor. In *Tareekh Ahmed Shah*, it is recorded that this treaty was signed with the permission of the Delhi Mughal Emperor, Ahmed Shah.

#### **The Multan Campaign (September, October, 1749).**

In view of the treaty signed with Durrani, the Multan campaign got delayed. In the meantime, Shah Nawaz Khan strengthened his position. There were two reasons for it. First, he had come to Multan with the support of the Delhi Emperor; and secondly, he had also been Governor of Multan. At this time, some suspicions were created in the mind of Mir Mannu vis-a-vis Dewan Kaura Mal who was put behind the bars. Mirza Asmat Khan was also imprisoned along with

Dewan Kaura Mal. But since no accusation against them could be proved, they were released before long. Mir Mannu sent several gifts to them as a mark of his repentance. He made them the commanders of the Multan campaign instructing them to return to Lahore after the successful completion of the task assigned to them.

Dewan Kaura Mal did not have sufficient and reliable army with the help of which he could have occupied Lahore. On the other side, the Baloches of South-West, Bahawalpur, Mankotia and the Sials had come with their own forces in support of Shah Nawaz Khan. Their collective forces obstructed the movement of the forces of Dewan Kaura Mal. Small-scale battles and skirmishes ensued, but no pitched and decisive battle was fought. Therefore, Mir Mannu lost patience, but in view of the inadequate numerical strength of his army, Kaura Mal was also helpless. What could he do under the circumstances ?

#### **The Support by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.**

At this time Dewan Navneet Rai suggested to Dewan Kaura Mal to seek help from the Singhs. After all, Dewan Kaura Mal was also a *Guru-ka-Sikh* (disciple of the Guru), and had been helping the Singhs according to his capacity and availability of opportunity and resources. Navneet Rai was sure that the Singhs would not let down Dewan Kaura Mal. Therefore, when the messenger of Dewan Kaura Mal approached the Khalsa at Amritsar, the latter agreed to help Dewan Kura Mal in view of his devotion to the Guru, and in view of his past sympathy and support for the Singhs. An army of 10 thousand Singhs under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia got ready to go to Multan. The expenses for the Singh army were fixed on the following pattern—eight annas daily for the infantry, one rupee daily for the horse-rider and 5 rupees daily for the Sardar, and an advance for two months was thus disbursed. At the same time, in accordance with the convention of the time it was also decided that the money and material that came into the hands of the soldiers in rampage and plunder would be exclusively theirs.

Sardar Jassa Singh Ichogillia (Ramgarhia) who was ailing at the moment was left behind for the protection of the Ram Rauni, while Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia along with his Khalsa army

left for Multan, and reached Chiniot. Kaura Mal came forward to receive the Khalsa Dal and offered Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia plenty of cash and other gifts. They made one more stoppage on the way where Kaura Mal collected Rs. one lakh from the Aoraras and Khattris and then moved ahead.

Dewan Kaura Mal would attend the Khalsa Dewan with big pots full of Karah Parshad in his hands. He would listen to the recital of *Rehras* and Ardas like the Gursikhs. For exempting Dewan Kaura Mal from smoking hookah, the Singhs levied a fine of Rs. 5/- daily on him. At the instance of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Dewan Kaura Mal agreed to construct the Baal-Lila Gurdwara at Nankana Sahib. Every day, Dewan Kaura Mal would offer sweet cold drinks (*Shardai*) which the Singhs consumed to their heart's content. They were so pleased with him that they began to address him as Mittha Mal (Mr. Sweet).

#### **The Battle against Shah Nawaz Khan and the Campaign of Multan.**

Shah Nawaz Khan confronted the joint forces of Dewan Kaura Mal and Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the outskirts of Multan and a big battle broke out near the village of Daurana-Langana. Zahad Khan and his son, Sujah Khan moved forward with great courage and bravery and repulsed the special battalion of Dewan Kaura Mal. Seeing the advance of the enemy forces Dewan Kaura Mal rode to Jassa Singh and acquainted him with the whole development, adding that the time for the Khalsa to rise and strike had come. When a terrible battle was going on, the soldiers of Adina Begh appeared to be joining the enemy ranks. Seeing this Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Sukha Singh Marikambo launched their attack from two different directions. Now Shah Nawaz Khan seeing his armies losing the ground, moved ahead in the direction of Dewan Kaura Mal. At this time, the battalion under the command of Khawajah Shah who was in the pay of Shah Nawaz Khan was inflicting heavy casualties on the armies of Dewan Kaura Mal and they had an upper hand, and it appeared that the victory of Shah Nawaz Khan was certain. Khawajah Shah stood aside with about 15 cavaliers. He offered the victory gifts to Shah Nawaz Khan and submitted that he would capture Dewan Kaura Mal and present him in irons before Shah



Nawaz Khan, but God had his own plans. When Khawajah Shah challenged Kaura Mal, the Khalsa forces turned their guns in the direction of Shah Nawaz Khan. As he attempted to turn back in defence, he was struck by a bullet and he fell off his horse. A Singh named Bhim Singh chopped off the head of Shah Nawaz Khan the moment the latter fell off his horse. For showing this exemplary bravery, Bhim Singh was awarded a couple of *Karahs*, arms, clotting shields and a good horse.

Since Shah Nawaz Khan had been killed, there was utter confusion in the ranks of his armies and his supporters. They took to their heels, but the Singhs gave them a chase, and took in their possession a large number of their camps, goods and horses. From among the associates of Dewan Kaura Mal, Abdul Aziz Khan and Mirza Asmat Begh Khan were killed.

When Zahad Khan learnt about the death of Abdul Aziz Khan, he heaved a sigh of relief and thanked God for the elimination of his enemy. But on hearing about the death of Shah Nawaz Khan and the defeat of his army, he felt heart broken, and in a state of great mental depression, he consumed poison and died on the third day. Some historians point out that Zahad Khan was already ill and since he could not bear the blow of defeat he breathed his last.

After the battle had come to an end, Dewan Kaura Mal got the dead body of Shah Nawaz Khan traced, and keeping in view his status, he arranged for a befitting aristocratic burial in the tomb of Shamas Tavrej.

After this Dewan Kaura Mal entered the city of Multan, and established his control over the province.

#### **The Title of Maharaja Bahadur and Governorship of Multan for Dewan Kaura Mal.**

After the fall of Multan, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and his Khalsa army returned to the jungles, and Dewan Kaura Mal after he had established administrative control over Multan, returned to Lahore. He appointed Shakar Khan, the son of Zahad Khan, who had already been living with him on account of differences with his father, Governor of Multan in his own place. To express his jubilation over the victory and showing full regard for the bravery of Dewan Kaura Mal Mir Mannu

conferred the title of Maharaja Bahadur on him, and appointed him Governor of Multan Thatta etc. It is possible that in keeping with the high family tradition, it was some time during this period that Dewan Kaura Mal's name must have been inscribed on the Delhi Gate of Lahore.

#### **The Service of Darbar Sahib Amritsar.**

As a mark of his joy Dewan Kaura Mal made an offering of Rs. 1,000/- for the service of the Holy Tank of Sri Darbar Sahib. Since the tank had been got filled with earth by Lakhpat Rai in Yahya Khan's time, this amount was used for removing this earth from the tank, so that it could be filled with the water from the wells. In view of the Diwali festival fast approaching, the Singhs and the general Sikh congregations also contributed their mite and share in the cleansing operation. Thus, after several years, in 1806 Bikrami, (1749 A.D.), the Darbar Sahib was illumined.

#### **The Service of Gurdwara Baal-Lila, Nankana Sahib.**

As promised by Dewan Kaura Mal to Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia at the time of his support in the Multan campaign he spent Rs 3 lakh for the construction of the Baal Lila Gurdwara and a big pool at Nankana Sahib. Thus, Dewan Kaura Mal fulfilled his spiritual commitment. In commemoration of these services, a portrait of Maharaja Kaura Mal Bahadur riding an elephant accompanied by an infantry and cavalry was drawn on an inner wall of the Gurdwara. It was an historical memorial which disappeared in 1908 when the old building was demolished. (*Ramjas Twareekh Riasat Kapurthala*, pp. 143-44).

At this time the atrocities on the Singhs abated, and they heaved a sigh of relief after a long time of struggle and travail. The Singhs began to live in peace and prosperity and hardly was there any village without a few Singh heroes, Even the Government accepted the might of the Singhs and on seeing this, a large number of people began to take Amrit or Khanda Pahul (A sweet mixture of sugar and water for the initiation of men and women into the Sikh fold.

## CHAPTER 10

### **The Third Invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani (January-March, 1752).**

Mir Mannu was neither clear of heart, nor firm in his commitments. At the time of the second invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani, one of the clauses of the treaty signed with him by Mir Mannu provided that the revenue of the four palaces would be sent to Ahmed Shah Durrani, but Mir Mannu did not fulfil this condition. For three years he sent Ahmed Shah Durrani no revenue at all. He thought that he had sufficient army and arms and ammunition to face Durrani, but it was only an illusion on his part. When in January, 1752, Ahmed Shah reached Lahore, Mannu's army could not face him and when on March 6, Kaura Mal was killed in the battle of village Mehmoodbooty, Mir Mannu surrendered, and took up service under Ahmed Shah Durrani. According to the treaty signed, now the provinces of Lahore and Multan became a part of the territory of Ahmed Shah Durrani and Mir Mannu agreed to become the Governor of these provinces on behalf of Ahmed Shah Durrani.

#### **The Resumption of Atrocities on the Singhs-Seven thousand massacred (March 1752-Nov. 1753).**

After the treaty with Ahmed Shah Durrani, there were no external threats. There was law and order in the hill areas. The *jagir* given to the Singhs became a thorn in the flesh of Mir Mannu. He did not see any kind of advantage in the *jagir* being with the Singhs. He thought that if the Singhs rose in revolt, they could be put down easily with the army. After the death of Dewan Kaura Mal in the battlefield, no supporter was left for the Singhs. The thought of revenge lying latent in the heart of Mir Mannu came to the surface, and he confiscated the *jagir* of the Singhs. The orders of the summer of 1748 were revived, i.e. the Singhs should be sent to Lahore in iron chains. General

instructions were issued to this effect in the name of the village headmen and the hill kings. The detachment troops were sent in all directions in search of Singhs. But now after having passed through the wheel of many massacres, the Singhs had become quite clever. As the detachment troops left Lahore for capturing the Singhs, the latter left their villages, and took shelter in the Shivalik hills.

This was the seventh massacre of the Singhs. The previous six massacres took place in the following years :-

The first massacre-1710-1712.

The second massacre took place during the reign of Fakhruseer and Nawab Abdu Samad Khan from 1715 to 1719.

The third massacre took place during the time of Nawab Zakria Khan Bahadur from 1726 to 1735.

The fourth massacre also occurred in the time of Zakria Khan in 1739.

The fifth massacre was ordered by Yahya Khan from 1745 to 1746.

The Sixth massacre and the seventh massacre were ordered by Mir Mannu in 1748 and in March 1752. to Nov. 1752 respectively.

In the course of the second massacre, Mir Mannu lost his own life while hunting down the Singhs.

The seventh massacre was far more horrible, and far more all-pervasive than the previous ones. In the first massacre, only those militant Singhs who fought directly against the Government were arrested and killed. These Singhs aimed at liberating the country, particularly Punjab, from the atrocities of the Mugal Government and establish democracy in Punjab. Later on, even those Gurmukh and Chakrail Singhs began to be arrested who served food and gave other provisions to the Singhs spending their days in privation and starvation in the jungles. During the time of Yahya Khan even poor shopkeepers were killed. In the seventh massacre carried out under the orders of Mir Mannu, the Singhs were arrested and killed indiscriminately. Even old men, infants and innocent women were not spared. The memory of these anonymous martyrs has become a part of the Sikh prayer. Moreover, a memorial has been raised to these

innocent martyrs in Lahore outside the Delhi Gate in Landa Bazar near the martyrdom place of Bhai Taru Singh (*Prachin Panth Prakash*, 330, 433-435 *Panth Prakash* 708).

Mufti Ali-u-ddin writes in his book *Ibrat N ma* that Nawab Marinul Mulaq (Mir Mannu) tried his best to eliminate the Sikh community. Hundreds of Sikhs were killed and the wells were filled with their heads, and their dead bodies. In those days, the following proverb had become popular among the Sikhs :-

“Mir Mannu is our sickle and we his Soyabean. The more he prunes us the more we multiply.”

This was the spirit of glory and enthusiasm which the Singhs maintained even during the period of the heinous massacre. They regarded the atrocities committed on them by Mannu as a kind of divine gift which was sure to lead to their multiplication. They recited the following couplet from the Gurbani :-

“O God, we remember you in joy and in sorrows also we raise our prayer to you.” 3

“We regard ourselves emperor even in starvation and convert our sorrows into joy.” 4

In this mental state, they never cared to make distinction between joy and sorrow. In fact, joy or sorrow is basically a condition of human mind which can make a hell of heaven and heaven of hell. During the past 40 or 41 years, the Singhs had passed through many such ordeals and they had seen several massacres. Their privations and torture could not frighten them, for they were a part of their existence, and they were ever ready to face them. Therefore, they did not feel nervous, and to face this ordeal, they took shelter in their familiar Shivalik caves. They would attack the enemy in guerilla manner whenever and wherever they got an opportunity. They would attack the Government officials against whose excesses somebody complained to them. Thus, while on the one hand, they were able to enlist the public sympathy, on the other hand, they were able to collect money and material for spending their days in the hills.

#### **The Battle of Nadaun.**

During the rainy season of Samat 1809 (July-August, 1752)

the steward of Mir Mannu went to the Eastern hills for revenue collection. He began to harass the hill kings and levied heavy fines on them which were difficult for them to pay. Sardar Jassa Singh was in Anandpur Sahib at this time, and he was accompanied by some other Sardars. Raja Katoch of Haripur and some advocates of Mandi approached him and requested him to help them. It was a God-send opportunity for the Singhs. Sardar Jassa Singh immediately left Anandpur Sahib and reached Nadaun where Mir Mannu's steward was putting up near the famous place associated with Guru Gobind Singh. He was accompanied by a fighting force. On the first day no decisive battle could be fought because of night fall. The next day, the Singhs and the hill people challenged them again, and a pitched battle was fought in which the steward was shot dead. After a terrible battle between the two forces, the Lahore army took to its heels. The Khalsa emerged victorious and the hill kings were liberated from the clutches of the Mughal steward. After this, Sardar Jassa Singh returned to Anandpur Sahib with gifts from the hill kings. (Griffin, 501).

#### **The Battle with Adina Begh in Anandpur-Makhowal (Feb. 1753).**

When the news of the Lahore humiliation after the death of the steward reached Mir Mannu, he was in fury, and he wrote a very strong and threatening letter to Adina Begh Khan, the Faujdar of Doaba. During the third invasion of Durrani Adina Begh had been rather inactive in the Mehmoodbooty battle, and, moreover, his general conduct had given rise to some kind of suspicion in the mind of Mannu. This explains the background of the battle and the threatening letter written by Adina Begh to him. Secondly, the rise of the Sikh power in the Kandi area was quite dangerous for the Mughal rulers of Lahore, as also for the territory of Adina Begh. Therefore, Adina Begh Khan made preparations to attack the Singhs. In the meantime, on February 18 and 19, 1753, the Hola Mohalla fair was to be held in Anandpur Sahib.

When the Singhs were busy with their religious fair, Adina Begh Khan and Saddiq Begh Khan attacked them. The Singhs had not come prepared with their weapons for the battle, nor had they assembled at one spot. After all, it was a fair, and men,

women and children were scattered all around. With the sudden attack by Adina Begh Khan, there was confusion and people ran helter skelter. When Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia came to know of this, they came out in the open for a direct battle. But by this time, the enemy had upset the whole fair, and all the Singhs had escaped to different places. It was difficult to re-assemble them for a battle, so quickly. A large number of unarmed Singhs, women and children were killed and many of them were wounded in this holocaust. A bullet struck S. Charat Singh also. Although the wound was deep, yet he recovered from it in no time (Griffin, 501, Malcolm, 92, Cunningham 103, Latif, Pb. 224-25; Brown, 17).

#### **Compromise with Adina Begh Khan.**

Although Adina Begh Khan had won a victory and he had sent the news of this victory to Mir Mannu, in Lahore, yet he did not want to spoil his relations with the Singhs any further. Therefore, he sent Saddiq Begh to Sardar Jassa Singh with the message that the past should be ignored. Now they should sign an agreement. Sardar Jassa Singh acted in a far-sighted manner. He thought that if an agreement was signed with Adina Begh Khan, the Singhs would be able to live with their families in the hills of Anandpur Sahib and Kiratpur Sahib and thus protect themselves against the tyranny of Mir Mannu. Therefore, he accepted the proposal of treaty put forward by Adina Begh Khan. This treaty would be useful for both the parties. As a result of this treaty, some Singhs stayed on around Anandpur Sahib, while some began to live in the Doaba villages and some others left for the Malwa.

#### **The Death of Mir Mannu.**

When the militant Singhs eluded the direct attacks of Mir Mannu, the wrath of his patrolling army was turned towards the Gumukh Singhs living in their village homes. Thousands of Singhs were arrested from the villages and taken to Lahore, where they were tortured to death in the Horse Market outside the Delhi Gate. Many village headmen captured Sikh women and children also and brought them to Lahore for winning awards. These helpless women were imprisoned in the underground cellars where each of them was assigned the hard labour of grinding one maund

and a quarter of grains every day. For doing this job, each of them got only 1/4th of a loaf. Cruel soldiers would many a time cut their small children into pieces right under their nose. But the spirit of these women was invincible. They stood the test with great courage, and did not falter in their religious faith.

The massacre of the Singhs was at its height up to Kartik, Samat 1840 Bikrami or the first week of November, 1753. it came to an end only with the death of Mir Mannu around this time.

That year, the Diwali fell on October 26 and a few Singhs managed to reach Amritsar, camouflaging themselves from the vigil of the Government spies and the guards. After a dip in the holy tank, they disappeared. During these days Mir Mannu used to lead his army against the Singhs. He had pitched his tents in the village of Malikpur to the South-East of Mianmir at a distance of about 7 or 8 miles from Lahore. He was informed by his spies that some Singhs were hiding in the nearby sugarcane fields. He at once encircled these fields with a view to eliminating the Singhs whose number was quite large but the majority of them were old men children and women. When the Singhs were in Mannu's siege, they started firing in self-defence. At this, Mannu's horse bolted up, and he fell off, but his foot remained entangled in the stirrup. The startled horse got out of control and stampeded. Mir Mannu was being dragged by it and his whole body was bruised with bush, thorn and rock. He became unconscious. This incident took place on Friday, Moharram 5, 1167 Hijri or Nov. 2, 1753 A.D. But Mir Mannu never regained consciousness, and he passed away on Nov. 4, 1753. The news of his death spread confusion all around, particularly in his armies. Taking advantage of this situation, a regiment of the Singhs hiding in the sugarcane fields reached the Horse Market outside the Delhi Gate. At this time some Sikh women were in the underground prison cellars, sentenced to hard labour of grinding one maund and a quarter of grains daily. They were spending their days in utter starvation and great privation. The Singhs attacked the prisons in a sudden and swift manner, liberating their women, and took them away on horse backs. Thus came to an end the dark chapter of torture and tragedy



in the Sikh history of Mir Mannu's time (*Khazan-i-Amira*, 9 *Ali-uddin, Ibrainama*, 211-12; *Um-dat-Twareekh*, ed. 1, 156, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 35-36.).

#### **The Conditions Following the Death of Mir Mannu.**

It is pertinent to disclose here that after the death of Mir Mannu, his wife, Morad Begum appointed her three-year old son, Mohammad Amir Khan, ruler of Lahore, and she got this appointment approved both by Ahmed Shah Abdali and Alamgir II, but after about seven months, in May, 1754, Mohammad Amir Khan died of small pox. Morad Begum took over the reins of administration from Moman Khan in her own hands, but she was soon engrossed in a round of luxury, and the administration began to be run by eunuchs. Consequently, her relations with all the big officers became strained, so much so that Wazir, Sayyed Bhikhari, was thrown behind the bars. This disappointed the entire aristocracy, and all officers, and they resigned their posts in the Government. The rule of Morad Begum was in fact the rule of the eunuchs, and they were all in all in the royal palaces, and in the administrative set-up.

Khwaza Mirza Jan also acted as the ruler of Lahore for some time, but the brother of Bakhshi Jahan Khan, Mullak Aman Khan, sent by Ahmed Shah Durrani appointed Morad Begum Governor and Zakria Khan's younger brother, Khwaza Ubed-dullah her Deputy in Lahore in place of Khawajah Mirzajan. In April, 1755, Morad Begum got Bhikhari Khan murdered for disobedience. But Khwazah Ubed-dullah was a greedy and cruel man. He began to amass wealth through corrupt and devious means and gave a hell of life to the people of Lahore. Morad Begum asked for help from Wazir Ghazi-u-ddin, of Delhi, and he reached Sirhind in the first week of February 1756. From here, in consultation with Adina Begh Khan, Wazir Ghazu-ddin sent Sayyed Jameelu-ddin to Lahore to arrest Morad Begum; and he brought her to Wazir Ghazu-ddin who took her to Delhi. He handed over the rule of Lahore to Adina Begh Khan for Rs. 30 lakh per annum. (May, 1756 A.D.). (*Tehmasnama*, Rao, 18-40; *Tareekh-i-Alamgir Saani*, 69-70, 75; *Tazkar-i-Iman-diin Mulk*, 116-118, 123; *Khazane-Amira*, 52; Latif 226-27, *Ahmed Shah Durrani* 136-47).

## **Nawab Jassa Singh, the Leader of the Sikh Panth.**

### **The Death of Nawab Kapur Singh.**

In Assu Sudi 11, Samat 1810, October 7, 1753, Nawab Kapur Singh succumbed to an old bullet injury in Amritsar. Besides being the founder of the Dal Khalsa and the Jathedar of the Budha Dal (the original army of Guru Gobind Singh), Nawab Kapur Singh was also the religious leader of the Sikhs after the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh. Sardar Jassa Singh was his disciple, and as has already been pointed out, he was known as the adopted son of Nawab Kapur Singh, ever since his mother had left him to his care. Like Nawab Kapur Singh, Sardar Jassa Singh was also a personification of true religious values. He had received his religious training from his mother and from Mata Sundri. He was a profound scholar and visionary thinker. The truth is that in that dark period of confusion and political uncertainties, he was the only person who had the opportunity of studying Persian and Urdu. He was second to none in bravery. Therefore, Nawab Kapur Singh liked him very much. When On Assu Sudi 10, Nawab Kapur Singh was on the verge of breathing his last, he called Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who was in Amritsar at the moment and instructed him in the name of Guru Gobind Singh to serve the Khalsa. After his death, the mortal remains of the Nawab Sahib were cremated near the entrance of Baba Atal Rai and later, on the Eastern side of this Gurudwara a marble memorial with an iron grill around it was raised to him. (Latif, 323, Griffin 60-61, Prem Singh, *Nawab Kapur Singh*, 165-67).

This memorial was intact up to 1923, but when the administration of the gurdwara passed into the hands of the Akalis in 1923 on the night of 12th of April, it was demolished with a view to widening the Prikarma.

### **The Beginning of the Achievements of S. Jassa Singh**

During the times of Abud-Samad Khan, Zakria Khan, Yahya Khan and Mir Mannu whenever the Singhs looted a royal treasure, a private caravan or a village or made a forcible tax collection, their aim was to arrange for food and other provisions to spend their days in the hill caves and deserts to weaken the Muslim rulers through guerrilla tactics and attacks so that the country could be liberated from their rule. Up to the time of Mannu, the Mughal power was so formidable that it was not possible to break it without effective weapons and arms and ammunition in good quantities. But even then the Singhs were able to maintain their enthusiasm and their determination to carve out an independent Sikh State, and in the process they won the public sympathy. The ordinary Sikhs were passing through hard times and were making heavy sacrifices. The dream of the Khalsa Raj had been realised, though for a short period, by Banda Singh Bahadur, and this was a source of great inspiration for the Singhs. Therefore, when after the death of Mir Mannu, the Singhs returned from the jungles and hills to their villages, large organisations of the village Gurmukh Singhs welcomed them. This enabled the Khalsa not only to establish its control over Punjab, but also made it possible for the Singhs to resist the foreign invaders like Ahmed Shah Durrani, and his son Tehmur Shah coming from the side of Afghanistan for loot and plunder. The position of the Singhs had become so strong that they not only repulsed the foreign invaders but they also helped the Jat kings of Bharatpur and frustrated the Maratha designs to establish their control over Punjab. Moreover, they began to invade the neighbouring territory to further strengthen their position politically and economically.

### **The attack on Kasaipura, Lahore.**

Neither Sardar Jassa Singh nor S. Kapur Singh is referred to anywhere in the Sikh History, in regard to their whereabouts at the time of the death of Mir Mannu. This incident concerning Kasaipura took place 8 days after Diwali. It appears that on this occasion many of the leading Sikh Sardars were in Amritsar to celebrate the Diwali. On such occasions, people came to the Khalsa narrating their tales of woe and seeking help and protection.

So the Hindus from Lahore came to Amritsar and brought to the notice of the Khalsa that cows were being slaughtered openly there and that the butchers were creating much trouble for the Hindus. Perhaps they were being aided and abetted by the Government employees. Since the Singhs had themselves passed through the wheel of sufferings they could realise the troubles and difficulties of others. Consequently, they were ever ready to extend all kind of help to the victims of the cruel Mughal rulers. Around the time of the death of Mir Mannu, the Singhs got a good opportunity to avenge themselves and the Hindus who had come to them for the redressal of their grievances and tortures. The Singhs thought that when they attacked Kasaipura in Lahore the Mughal army would chase them up to Amritsar, and this would result in an immense loss of life in view of the Diwali fair. Therefore, the Gurmukh Singhs and others who had come to attend the Diwali fair were sent away under the leadership of S. Sham Singh, while a few selected Singh soldiers got ready to attack Kasaipura. They spent the night at Kania (Ramgarh), and when they got up in the early hours of the morning, it was decided that their sole aim in attacking Kasaipura was to teach a lesson to the butchers and not to touch any wealth, ornament or any other thing. They attacked Kasaipura before the sunrise. After achieving their target and confusion creating in Lahore, the Singhs at once fled to the South of the Goindwal. Sher Khan of village Talwandi situated on the Southern side of the river Beas with whom S. Jassa Singh was on friendly terms guided the Singhs to shallow waters, and thus crossing the river, they further crossed the river Sutlaj from a place near Masitan. Finally, they pitched their tents near the Dera of Mata Jeeto in the village of Drauli (*Jassa Singh Binod*, Urdu, 15-16).

#### **The Conquest of Khwaspur and Fatehabad.**

During these days finding the time quite opportune Sardar Jassa Singh conquered the forts of Khwaspur and Fatehabad situated on the right bank of the river Beas, to the North of Goindwal, so that in future his armies should have no difficulty in crossing the river Beas from this place. On hearing the order of attack on Khwaspur, Jai Singh Loharanwala climbed the fort by means of a ladder, followed by the son of S. Gurbax Singh,

and Desa Singh Walia. In a matter of minutes, other Sikh soldiers also joined them. Here they were resisted by two Pathans who fought heroically, but under the great pressure by the Khalsa they surrendered.

After establishing their control over Khwaspur, the Khalsa armies advanced towards Fatehbad, and they conquered this village without much resistance. Seeing this, the police station officials got ready to surrender their arms on the condition that their lives be spared. Since S. Jassa Singh was interested only in territory and not in killing his opponents, he at once accepted their condition. The S. H. O. vacated the Police Station, but from the fort of Fatehbad S. Phoola Khan decided to defy and resist the Singhs. He requisitioned army from Adina Begh from Lahore and Jalandhar. On seeing this, S. Jassa Singh instructed Bakhshi S. Natha Singh that the Singhs should be quick in dealing with Phoola Khan. Bakhshi Natha Singh made a few sorties, intensified pressure on the enemy fronts, and then crossing the outer wall the Singh forces entered the city. On seeing this, Phoola Khan took shelter in his *haveli* under heavy guards believing that he would receive military aid from some quarter, but in the end when there was no hope of saving either his position or his life, he presented himself with Bakhshi Natha Singh before S. Jassa Singh. This surrender on the part of Phoola Khan was exactly what S. Jassa Singh wanted. Settling the question of revenue with him, S. Jassa Singh restored the fort to him (*Jassa Singh Binod, Urdu* 13-14)

#### **The Emergence of S. Jassa Singh as the Political and Religious Leader of the Khalsa-the Title of Nawab.**

On the Baisakhi day in Samat 1811, April 10, 1756, a congregation was organised by the Khalsa in front of Sri Akal Takht Sahib at Amritsar. By this time the Singhs had reconstructed Ram Rauni which had been demolished by Mir Mannu. It was renamed Ramgarh, and its supervision was handed over to S. Jassa Singh Ichhogilia. Many of the Sikh Sardars of the Khalsa Dal had reached here. The whole Sikh congregation offered prayers for Nawab Kapur Singh and considering S. Jassa Singh deserving in all respects, appointed him the political and religious leader of the Khalsa in place of Nawab Kapur Singh. The Sikh congre-

gation found S Jassa Singh fully competent for this high honour. Thus, the prophetic words and aspirations of Mata Sundri and Nawab Kapur Singh were fulfilled. S. Jassa Singh accepted this honour in a spirit of humility.

#### **Defeat of Aziz Begh and Bakhshinda Begh**

As already pointed out, at this time Mir Mannu's four year old son, Mohammad Amir Khan, was the ruler of Lahore with Sayyed Bhikhari Khan as Chief Minister. But Morad Begum, the widow of Mir Mannu, was all in all to all intents and purposes. Anticipating a huge gathering of the Singhs at Amritsar on the Baisakhi Day, the Lahore rulers sent their armies there under the command of Aziz Begh and Bakhshinda Begh with a view to dispersing the Singh assembly and taking other necessary action against them, but S. Jassa Singh attacked this army so strongly and effectively that the Lahore army could not face the Singhs. While the defeat of Aziz Begh was a big blow to the Lahore rulers on the one hand, it served as a source of great inspiration for the Sikh Sardars, on the other; and this victory cleared their way for future conquests and achievements.

## The Sikh Missals and the Security Arrangements

Leaving aside the territories around Lahore the Khalsa was gaining upper hand in all its campaigns. The Taruna Dal was divided into several small groups and every group came under the control of an independent and ambitious young leader who had the support of a few riders, and every group began to expand according to its capacity and the opportunities available to it. The number of such independent Sardars crossed 60. But at the time of a major campaign all these smaller Sardars would unite under the leadership of a big Sardar. In this way, the organisational sphere became closely-knit and stronger, and the success of the campaign became more certain. These bigger organisations were called Missals, and their Sardars were called Missaldars. The number of these Missals gradually rose to 12 on the following pattern :

The first Missal-Bhangian-founders S. Chhajja Singh, Bhangra Singh, famous S. Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh.

The second Missal-Ramgarhia-founders-S. Khushal Singh Kakkar, Nand Singh Sanghanian, famous S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia Jodh Singh Ramgarhia.

The third Missal-Ghanya-founder-S. Jai Singh Ghanya.

The fourth Missal-Nakai-founders-S. Hira Singh Nakai, famous S. Nahar Singh and Ram Singh.

The fifth Missal-Dallewalia-founders-S. Gulab Singh, famous S. Tara Singh Gaibba.

The sixth Missal-Ahluwalia-founder-S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

The seventh Missal-Nishanawale-founders-S. Sangat Singh and Mohar Singh.

The eighth Missal-Faizullianpuria (Singhpurian)-founder S. Kapur Singh.

The ninth Missal-Karoresinghian-founder-S. Karora Singh Panjgrahian.

The tenth Missal Shaheedan-founder-S. Baba Deep Singh.

The eleventh Missal-Shukarchakia-founders-S. Nand Singh Budha Singh, famous S Charat Singh, Maha Singh, Ranjit Singh.

The twelfth Missal-Phulkian-founder-S. Baba Ala Singh Phulka; famous S. Maharaja Amar Singh, Patiala, S. Hamir Singh Nabha, Raja Gazpat Singh and Raja Bhag Singh, Jind.

After the death of Mir Mannu in 175 , the Khalsa established its complete control over Lahore in 1765. The period of 12 years was marked by turmoil and political instability. There was much tension among the Mughal rulers of Deihl, the Afghan emperor Ahmed Shah Durrani; the Maratha Sardars of the South and the Singh Sardars of Punjab. It was a period of military campaigns, loot and plunder. In these conditions, the people of villages and cities were hard hit because they were exposed to all kinds of dangers. Their homes, foodgrains, wealth and cattle were looted frequently. Some invaders plundered them for food and other provisions, some to satisfy their greed for wealth, while the other terrorised them for accepting their hegemony over them. In sum, loot and collection of money was the sole aim of every invader, but nobody came to the rescue and protection of these poor people. The Delhi rulers were not at all in a position to provide any kind of protection. In fact, they were themselves looted by Nadir Shah Irani or by Ahmed Shah Durrani, the Marathas and the Jats. The rulers were divided amongst themselves. Ahmed Shah always invaded India for wealth so that he could turn Qandhar and Kabul rich with the booty plundered from India. The Marathas came from the far South. In their eyes Punjab was a foreign cantonment and a source of income for their soldiers. They had neither any attachment with nor any love for this land nor any sympathy for its people.

Punjab was the motherland only of the Punjabi Singh Sardars. They had lived here for generations. They were the product of the soil of Punjab and they had their hearths and homes in the Punjab villages, and their mothers, sisters, daughters, brothers, relatives and families lived in Punjab. Naturally, it was their religious and social duty to serve and protect them. The Singh Sardars, their families and friends, were to have their tryst with destiny here in the land of Punjab. Their interest lay in protecting and guarding their properties,



their cattle and crops. If their possessions were safe, they could lead a happy and peaceful life. In fact, they were fighting and making sacrifices to protect their motherland, their honour, wealth and homes from the foreign invaders whether they were Mughals, Iranis, Durranis or Marathas. It is true that with a view to rendering the Lahore rulers weak and helpless, they had to raid or attack Government treasures, caravans, police stations and forts, but they had also to resort to violence for dealing with tyrannical stooges of the Government. However, the ultimate aim of the Singhs was to create conditions of peace and political stability for the general public living in Punjab.

Therefore, when the Singhs organised themselves into Missals for conquering territory, their real aim was to break the hegemony of foreign rulers and end the era of exploitation, torture, treachery and injustice. But in period of holocausts many a time they were liable to commit mistakes, and there was a danger to their own innocent people being harmed by them or vice-versa. To remove this fear or danger, the Sardars and leaders of the Missals decided that the Sikh regiment or the Sardar who established his control over a particular territory should also establish his own police stations for the protection of the cities and villages in that territory. In the same way, when a village or a tappa or an area wanted to join some Missal it would have to give an undertaking to the effect that it would give 1/5th of the rabbi and the kharif products to them, particularly to the Missal which would in turn be responsible for its protection, against thieves, invaders, unjust neighbours or the Government excesses. In brief, the Sikh Missaldar Sardars took the responsibility of the protection of the life and property of the people in their own areas upon themselves. They made open or public announcement to this effect. At the same time, the Sikh Sardars reached an agreement among themselves that they would fully respect the protection pledge taken by every Missal and shun any kind of interference with the protected area of one another. However, in the event of any outside or foreign intervention or invasion of the territory of a particular Sardar, the rest of them would jointly come to his aid.

Moreover, on the Diwali and Baisakhi occasions in Amritsar

the Missaldars would take decisions on the territories occupied by every one of them so as to avoid all disputes of ownership and all doubts and confusions. Sodhi Jawahar Singh Kartarpuria tells us in his book *Baran Missalan*" (The Twelve Missals) that on these occasions, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia used to prepare records of the territories of the different Sardars, and whenever any Sardar staked his claim to any territory which had already been occupied by some other Sardar, he would say "This territory cannot be included in your Missal, since it forms a part of some other Missaldar's territory". The Sardar would accept this verdict and be satisfied without raising any objection or controversy. Thus, the word 'Missal' used by Sardar Jassa Singh in the records began to be used by other Singh Sardars for their respective territories. In the Persian language this word is synonymous with status, or equality, and since the Sikh Missaldars enjoyed an equal status, without any distinction of high and low, the use of the word 'Missal' was not inappropriate.

With the announcement and implementation of the protection arrangements in the respective territories occupied by different Missaldars, Sikh Sardars not only maintained peace, security and order in the towns and the villages but also this new arrangement paved way for the development of commerce and other economic activities. Above all, with the protection of their life and prosperity fully assured the faith of the ordinary public in the Sikh Sardars became firmer, and big and small landlords cheerfully agreed to accept their protection. This led to the expansion of the parameters of the Sikh Missals, and the foundations of the Sikh democracy became stronger.

It was but natural for the Sikh Sardars to establish their control over old villages and their surrounding areas, but besides this the Missaldars fixed the directions in which they were to expand their territories. This eliminated all chances of mutual conflict, and secondly, in the event of a foreign invasion, they could unite swiftly, and this unity was a terror for the enemy. In the face of external invasions, the bonds of mutual sympathy and understanding were strengthened. Moved by this sentiment of common understanding and fraternity, the Missaldar Sardars of the Khalsā Dal came to the help of other Missaldar Sardars like Baba Ala

Singh Patiala, Bhai Gurbax Singh Kaimbalwale, S Charat Singh Shukarchakia and others. For this purpose a few *jathas* of the Khalsa Dal were stationed permanently at Amritsar. The establishment of the Khalsa Raj, its development and its protection was the common cause of the Sikh Panth—all the Missaldar Sardars were the organs of the Dal Khalsa and they undertook all duties concerning their common interest as a kind of service to the Guru-Panth. Every Missaldar Sardar was addressed as Singh Sahib, and when during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh a vast Sikh empire came into existence, he regarded it as a grace or blessing of the Guru-Panth. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was addressed as 'Singh Sahib' or 'Singhji' "

The truth is that the picture of the present Punjab that emerges before our eyes today and its boundaries which extended from Khaiber to the Jamuna and from Sind to Tibet were drawn by the sword of the Khalsa in those days. It was nothing short of a miracle performed by the Khalsa to save Punjab from becoming a part of the mid-Asia, Afghanistan empire of Ahmed Shah Durrani, and keep it permanently connected with India. Therefore, there is no exaggeration in the statement that Punjab is a gift of the Khalsa to the rest of India. After the partition of India in 1947, if the present Punjab continues to be a part of India, it is to be attributed to the Sikh sacrifices.

According to the directions fixed for the expansion of their respective territories Sardar Karora Singh and Baba Deep Singh crossed the Sutlaj and moved to the South-East parts of Punjab the Singhpurias moved towards Ropar, the Ghanayas and the Ramgarhias moved from Riarki in Amritsar to North-East in Gurdaspur, the Nakais to the South-East of Lahore from Natub and the Shukarchakias and the Bhangis spread in the Deaba. Nishanawali and Dallewalia stayed on for the protection of Amritsar. The three families of Phoolkas at Patiala, Nabha and Jind extended their territories to the jungles in the South of Punjab Malwa-Puadh in the West. In this scheme a large part of Sardar Jassa Singh's territory lay to the South-West, West-South of Jalandhar and in the East it extended up to the confluence of the river Beas and the Sutlaj. Some villages of Hoshiarpur in the North-West of Haryana and around Bhungay and some in the dis-

tricts of Amritsar and Taran Taran were also included in his territory.

Besides these specific directions of boundaries, many times the Sardars got some villages in their share after their victory in joint campaigns as it happened, for example, in January, 1764, when after the occupation of Sirhind, many Sardars got control of its surrounding villages. Many times when a Sardar gave some villages to another Sardar, the territories of the Sardars overlapped, but keeping the provisions and ethics of the protection arrangements in view, one Sardar would not interfere in the territory of the other. Every Sardar had a free hand in the administration of his own Missal.

There were certain villages which fell under the protection of more than one Sardar as, for example, was the case with villages of Mehraj and Chakian etc. in the Mulwa, but despite the difficulties concerning ownership and protection the people lived in an atmosphere of peace and hermony.

This was the protection arrangement of the Sikh Missals and the Sikh Sardars and by virtue of this arrangement they gradually spread in the whole of Punjab and liberated this land from the Mughal rulers and made it safe against Durrani's invasions. It was the spirit of sacrifices, courage and bravery of the Sikh Sardars which put Punjab as a sovereign state on the world map and brought it on an equal level with other free and sovereign countries of the world.

The Punjabis and Punjab will always be grateful to the Sikh Sardars and S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia for their struggle and sacrifices in this great task in the second half of the 18th century.

## CHAPTER 13

### The Fourth Invansion by Durrani

#### The Ruin of Delhi

The political upheaval in Punjab had completely upset Ahmed Shah Durrani's administration here. Wazir Ghazuddin of Delhi arrested Morad Begum of Lahore, contrary to the wishes of Durrani. He also took forcibly to Delhi Morad Begum's daughter, Umida Begum, who was engaged to the son of Ahmed Shah Durrani, and he appointed Adina Begh Khan Governor of Lahore. In response to the applications addressed by Khwaza Ubad-u-lla Khan and Morad Begum, Durrani first, sent his personal messengers to Delhi and Lahore in October, 1756 and later he sent an army under the command of Jangbaz Khan, and this army captured Lahore on November 25, 1756. On December 20, Ahmed Shah also reached Lahore. Adina Begh and Sayeed Jameelu-ddin had already left Lahore. The Shah handed over the rule of Lahore to Khwaza Mirza Khan of Jalandhar, to Khwazah Ubad-u-llah, and of the territories of North-East, to Raja Ghumand Chand Kangria, and he himself left straightaway for Delhi. No resistance was offered to him by the rulers of Delhi; on the contrary, Wazir Ghazudin Imadam-Malik received the Shah with folded hands, and other nobles of Delhi also offered him gifts. Thus, the Mughal rulers of Delhi fell at Durrani's feet, and on January 28, 1767, emperor Alamgir II personally came to welcome Ahmed Shah Durrani near Fatehpuri mosque and escorted him to the Red Fort. Ahmed Shah spared the Delhi rule for Alamgir, but he looted the city and its fort and reduced them to rubble. He humiliated the Mughals beyond any description. The royal palace, the big houses of the nobles, high officers, the rich jewellers and money lenders etc, all were subjected to plunder. Even their underground cellars and the secret chambers in their ceilings were ransacked, and the wealth buried underground was also recovered. The remaining wealth was extorted by him

through fines which the people had to pay after selling the ornaments of their women and their household utensils and other effects. The price of gold fell to rupees 8 to 10 per tola, silver was sold at the rate of 2 tolas per rupee, and the utensils at the rate of 3 seers per rupee. Hardly had the people recovered from the shock of the first adversity when the tax collection began second time. This collection reduced the inhabitants of Delhi to economic skeletons. In this plunder Morad Begum extended all help to Ahmed Shah and by leaking out the secrets to him. She got the high and the low looted, and in the process the people of Delhi disposed of their property and wherewithal.

#### **Durrani's Campaign against Jats**

After looting and ruining Delhi Ahmed Shah Durrani invaded the Jats of Bharatpur. King Suraj Mal of Bharatpur refused to surrender. This roused the fury of the Shah. The Durrani and the Indian Afghans laid the entire territory of the Jats waste and under the orders of Ahmed Shah Bakhshi Jahan Khan burnt down city after city and village after village. On the morning of March, 1757, Jahan Khan reached Mathura. On March 4, countless Hindus had come to Delhi for the *Holy* celebrations. Jahan Khan ordered an indiscriminate massacre of these people. He covered the whole Mathura city with the red blood of the Hindus and reduced the city to ashes. The idols of gods and goddesses were shattered to pieces by the Durranis with their daggers and trodden under foot in the streets and market places of Mathura. Gulam Hussain Sumin has written in his book, *Halate-Amdan, Ahmed Shah Durrani* that countless ascetics, saints and mendicants were murdered in their huts and with their heads chopped off from their bodies, the Durranis tied the heads of cows. Not only this even some rich Muslim nobles and diamond sellers could not escape this massacre.

#### **The Massacre in Bindraban and Gokhal**

On March 6, Jahan Khan ordered massacre in Bindraban and raised huge heaps of human corpses. On March 15, Ahmed Shah personally reached a place in Mathura and attacked Gokhal. Here he was resisted by some naked mendicants with great valour. Since the Shah could not hope to loot any wealth from the naked mendicants, he came back to Delhi and made preparations to return

to Afghanistan before the summer season set in.

On February 14, 1757, Ahmed Shah solemnised the marriage of his son, Tehmur, with Emperor Alamgir's daughter, Gohar-Afroge Bano Begum. Now before leaving India, he himself married Hazrat Begum, the daughter of Emperor Ahmed Shah. In the first week of April, Ahmed Shah Durrani left for Afghanistan with the princesses of two Mughal emperors, 16 other ladies of the Mughal family, about 400 maid servants and the loot worth 10 to 12 crore rupees.

#### **The Singh Sorties on the Durranis**

When Ahmed Shah's son, Prince Tehmur Muraihali, reached Sirhind with his regiments, S. Baba Ala Singh of Patiala and other Sardars attacked him and looted his treasures. The Singhs attacked the Durranis near Mawarkot and relieved Tehmur of considerable wealth. The Durrani army was under such a complete spell of the fear of the Singhs that rumours regarding the capture and killing of Tehmur began to circulate.

#### **The desecration of Kartarpur**

As soon as Tehmur Shah and Jahan Khan reached Jalandhar in Doaba, they looted the city of Kartarpur with the help of Nasir Ali Khan Jalandharia. Several people were put to death and the Gurdwara Tham Sahib was set on fire and the carcasses of newly-killed cows were thrown into that holy place. When Ahmed Shah had crossed the Sutlaj from near Goindwal and was going to Lahore via Fatehbad, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia began to pursue him and looted his treasure whenever and wherever he got an opportunity. Thus, S. Jassa Singh humiliated the Durranis and gave them hell.

By raiding the Durrani army in this guerrilla manner, S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars aimed at warning Tehmur Muraihali that it was their territory, and that they were not prepared to tolerate any foreign or outside interference in it. Whosoever tried to interfere with their internal affairs, the Singhs would fight against him and drive him out of their motherland at all costs.

#### **The Lahore administration under Durrani and his Return**

On reaching Lahore, Ahmed Shah appointed his son, Tehmur Shah the ruler of Lahore and Bakhshi Jahan Khan his deputy. Hoping that Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu would extend his help

to Tehmur in the times of crisis, and would put down all rising forces in the whole area, Ahmed Shah gave him the territories of Zefarwal, Sankhatia and Aurangabad in district Sialkot.

Thus, in his own way, Ahmed Shah made the whole of Punjab a part of his Afghan empire, but his real writ did not run beyond the few villages around Lahore. The territories of Majah, Riarki and Doaba were under the occupation of Sikh Sardars. A little away from Lahore towards Gujjaranwala and from there up to Jhelum, several territories and passes were under their control. It is evident from the fact that when Ahmed Shah Durrani left Lahore for Kabul, S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia operated from Gujjaranwala and attacked the armies of Durrani repeatedly and made his return journey virtually a nightmare. In the face of these attacks, Ahmed Shah was deeply worried about his wealth as well as his horses. It was with a great difficulty that he succeeded in crossing the Sind.



## CHAPTER 14

### The rule of Tehmur Shah over Punjab

#### The desecration of Sri Darbar Sahib (May, 1757)

Immediately after stabilizing himself in Lahore, Tehmur attacked Amritsar. Here S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had reconstructed Ram Rauni (Ramgarh). But the Singhs were under great pressure and since no military aid reached them from any quarter the enemy demolished Ram Rauni and the holy tank was filled with earth (Cunningham, 105, *Gulstan-e-Rehmat*, 110; Latif, Lahore, 78).

#### The Skirmishes with Adina Begh

Tehmur had given military command of Jalandhar-Doab to Adina Begh. It was thought that he would not rise in revolt against the new Governor, and secondly, he would be able to deal with the Singhs on his own. At this time S. Jassa Singh was capturing territory after territory near Taran Taran and in Doaba. Therefore, occasional skirmishes with Adina Begh were unavoidable. The forces of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia came in open conflict with the forces of Adina Begh near Khadoor Sahib at a time when he was returning from Taran Taran to Fatehbad. In this battle, S. Jassa Singh, wounded Qutab with an arrow and chopped off the arm of Sayyed Khan with his sword. From here Adina Begh went away to Jalalabad, and S. Jassa Singh captured Fatehbad.

#### Janauri

Soon after this S. Jassa Singh came to Doaba. During these days Adina Begh had started collecting land revenue in this area. When he demanded revenue from the people of Janauri, they declined to pay. Perhaps their crops had been damaged either on account of long spell of drought or due to heavy rains. This refusal on the part of the people gave rise to a controversy. In this situation, the only alternative for the people of Janauri was to seek shelter under the protection of some

Sikh Sardar. The area of Bhunga in the territory of S. Jassa Singh adjoined Janauri in the South-West. Gainda, the Rajput Chaudhari of Janauri met S. Jassa Singh and appealed to him for protection. S. Jassa Singh sent police inspector Deva Singh to Janauri and wrote to Adina Begh that the people of Janauri were his subjects. Therefore, he should not collect any land revenue from them (*Jassa Singh Binod*, Urdu 22-3).

#### **The Support of Adina Begh—the Battle of Mehalpur**

When Adina Begh was appointed the military adjutant of Jalandhar-Doaba, Tehmur Shah had promised that if he sent the revenue to Lahore in time, it would not be compulsory for him to present himself in his court at Lahore. But soon after Tehmur grew greedy and with a view to extorting more than the promised land revenue, he began to insist on Adina Begh's personal visit to Lahore. Adina Begh became suspicious of the evil intentions of Tehmur Shah. Therefore, he was hesitant in carrying out his orders. At this Tehmur Shah appointed Sarfaraz Khan the ruler of Doaba and a big army was sent against Adina Begh under the command of Morad Khan, supported by Buland Khan.

When Adina Begh came to know of these developments, he approached Sodhi Wadbhag Singh Kartarpuria and S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Sodhi Sahib also recommended to S. Jassa Singh that Adina Begh who had sought protection in their fort be given full support. S. Jassa Singh was already on the look out for an opportunity to avenge the desecration by the Durrani of Gurdwara Tham Sahib at Kartarpur and Sri Darbar Sahib.

When the Khalsa came to know of the imminent battle with the Durrani, the Singhs came from all directions and fought a battle against them at Mehalpur, to the East of Hoshiarpur. (December, 1757). It was difficult for the Khalsa forces to make a distinction between the Durrani soldiers and the army of Adina Begh and his supporters. Therefore, the Singhs advised them to tie leaves of green grass on their heads. Although the Durrani had light artillery, yet they could not contain the Singhs who were seething with anger. Buland Khan was killed in this battle, and Morad Khan disappeared from the battlefield leaving his army to its fate. Thus, the Durrani army suffered a

defeat.

Now S. Jassa Singh attacked Jalandhar straightaway. Saadat Khan Afridi could hardly stand the pressure of the Sikh forces, and, therefore, he retreated after suffering defeat. Consequently, the city was at the mercy of the Singhs. The people of Tangri village also reached Jalandhar and began to indulge in looting. Seeing all this Adina Begh offered Rs. 3 lakh and 25 thousand to the Singhs and appealed to them to restore peace and order in the city.

Sodhi Wadbhag Singh congratulated S. Jassa Singh heartily on this glorious victory.

#### **The Defeat of Khwajah Ubed-u-llah Khan**

After the occupation of Jalandhar by the Khalsa, Saadat Khan Afridi escaped to the hills and the heroic deeds of the Singhs became a household word in the whole Doaba. S. Jassa Singh earned great name and fame. When Tehmur Shah received this news in Lahore, he sent a 25 thousand strong cavalry under the command of Khwajah Ubedullah Khan. But he was also defeated and losing his entire artillery to the Singhs, returned to Lahore (End of December, 1757-Jan. 1758).

Now the Singhs crossed the river Beas and established their control over Bari Doab-Batala and Kalanaur and the outer colonies of Lahore in the South (*Peshwa* Volume II. 83, Ahmed Shah Batalia, *Treekhi-Hindi*, 1872).

#### **The Invitation to Marathas by Adina Pegh**

Bakhshi Jahan Khan, the deputy of Tehmur Shah was in great fury on hearing the news of this defeat but he was helpless under the circumstances, His backbone had been broken by his defeats at the hands of the Singhs in Doaba but the Lahore rulers were in for another heavy blow. There is no doubt that Adina Begh had repulsed the attacks of Morad and Sarfraj Khan with the help of the Singhs, driven out Saadat Khan Afridi and defeated Ubedullah Khan, but he was under the impression that perhaps he would not be able to face the joint forces of the Durrani and if emperor Ahmed Shah himself led a mighty Durrani army against him, he would not be able to face it. At the same time he also thought that the Singhs could not fight all his battles.

They themselves were fighting for the establishment of their own rule, and looking forward to the day when their slogan: "The

khalsa would rule and none else would remain in power" would be realised.

Adiga Begh also knew that the Singhs had already established their control over large parts of Punjab, and that they were gaining more and more power day by day. In his heart of hearts, he must have been entertaining fears in that regard also.

Therefore, Adina Begh entered into an agreement with the Marathas through advocate Her Lal Agreeing to pay Rs. 1 lakh for the movement day and Rs. fifty thousand for the stay, he invited Maratha Sardar Raghunath Rao to Lahore. It was a God-send opportunity for the Marathas because they would be getting money as well as territory. Raghunath Rao at once left Delhi, and on March 9, 1758 reached Sirhind. Here he was joined by Adina Begh and the Singhs who were his allies.

The Khalsa was already seething with anger against Sirhind. Wazir Khan, the military commander of this Guru-cursed city, had tortured the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh to death. Therefore, they settled with Adina Begh that they would be the first to attack Sirhind. At this time Abud Samad Khan Mohammad Zai was the military adjutant of Sirhind. He had been appointed by Ahmed Shah Durrani at the time of his return to Afghanistan. He had been fortifying the city of Sirhind from January, 1758. But he could not stand the siege for a long time and on March 21, (Fagun Sudi 12, Samat 1814, Bikrami), the fortification collapsed and there was total confusion. The Singhs pounced upon the city like tigers, and the following day, the Marathas also looted considerable booty from here. On Chet Badi 1, January 25, there was Holi fair. Therefore, the majority of the Khalsa forces left for Anandpur Sahib but Sirhind was ransacked by the vast crowds of people from the surrounding villages. When the fortification had fallen, Abud Samad Khan and Jangbaz Khan took to their heels but they were captured. In view of the fact that the Singhs were the first to attack Sirhind, the Marathas became jealous of them and a small skirmish followed. But it was soon decided that while advancing towards Lahore, the Khalsa forces would remain ahead of the Marathas by two stoppages.

**Adina Begh Khan's Occupation of Lahore with the aid of the Singhs and the Marathas**

On hearing the news of the advance of the Singhs and the

Marathas towards Lahore after their conquest of Sirhind, Bakhshi Jahan Khan, the deputy of Tehmur Khan, came with a large army to Jalalabad and he waited for them for eight days, but they reached Doaba by some other pass. On seeing this, Jahan Khan returned to Lahore. The Lahore fort was weak on one side. Since the rabi crop had not yet been reaped, there was not enough store of foodgrains and fodder inside. He had no friends among the landlords and *chaudharies* of the area, while the number of his enemies was legion. The Sikh masses were sympathetic to the advancing army. Jahan Khan's own army was very small, and no military aid could reach immediately from Emperor Ahmed Shah from Afghanistan. Therefore, Jahan Khan concluded that the welfare of Tehmur Khan and his own lay in vacating Lahore and, therefore, he returned to Afghanistan. Consequently, on April 9, 1758, both of them crossed the river Ravi. The next day i. e. April 20, Adina Begh Khan, Raghunath Rao and the Khalsa reached Lahore and established their control over the city. The Sikh Sardars who participated in this campaign and who compelled the Durrani to vacate Lahore included S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charat Singh Shukarchakia, Tara Singh Gaiba, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Bhangi and others. Some regiments of the Singhs under the command of S. Charat Singh gave a hot chase to the Afghans, and brought about 200 of Afghans prisoners to Amritsar. These persons were made to cleanse the holy tank in Sri Darbar Sahib, which had been filled by Jahan Khan. (The background source, *Tareekh-e-Gujranwala*, Haqiqat-e-Firkai Sikhan, 37).

## CHAPTER 15

### **The Rule of Adina Begh in Lahore (April-September, 1758)**

It was difficult for Raghunath Rao to stay in Punjab for a long period. He soon realised that in the face of the rising Sikh power in Punjab, it would not be possible for any outsider to establish his rule in this province. The flame of an independent sovereign rule had been lit in the minds of the Singhs at the time of Banda Singh Bahadur which could be extinguished neither by the Mughal power nor by the Durranis. Mir Mannu had lost his own life in the process of eliminating the Singhs. Their achievements and victories had created such a collective consciousness in the Sikh masses of Punjab that now they were not prepared to surrender themselves to any foreign power. The majority of population in Punjab consisted of the Jats living in villages who fight for every inch of their land. Sikhism played a very vital role in sharpening their sense of honour and dignity. After having passed through the furnace of political excesses and massacres, they had become so firm that they would break, but would not bend. It was all the more difficult for the Marathas to establish their cantonments in Punjab since they had come from a distance of thousands of miles. Even the financial condition of the Puna Government could not bear this burden. It would not be possible for them to maintain themselves on the local taxes. Moreover, it was not easy for the Marathas to bear the extreme winters and summers of Punjab. Therefore, Raghunath Rao entered into an agreement with Adina Begh and handed over the Lahore government to him in exchange for Rs. 75 lakh per annum. Adina Begh appointed Khwazah Mirza Jan his deputy there, while he himself took his residence in Khanpur near Hoshiarpur in Doaba. Having finalised these arrangements Raghunath Rao left for Delhi on May 10, 1758, and after breaking his journey at short intervals he took a dip in the holy tank of Karukshetra on Somavati Massiah on June,

5 (*Ahmed Shah Durrani*, (216-217).

### **The Tyranny of Adina Begh and the Singhs**

After the return of Raghunath Rai, Adina Begh ruled over Punjab for about four months and during this period, he took steps for the suppression of the Singhs, lest they should grow stronger. He set a big army of the Ghakhars, Janjohan, the Ghaibas, the Waraich and the Pathans, the Randhawas and the Dogras from Majah and Malwa after them and this army began to make incursions into the different organisations of the Khalsa. S. Jassa Singh was really shocked over this treachery of Adina Begh, for after all, the Singhs had helped him establish his power in Lahore.

### **The Death of Hira Mal and Gulsher Khan**

At this time S. Jassa Singh accompanied by a few *jathedars* of the Khalsa Dal, gathered near Ahmad Nagar where Adina Begh Khan had pitched his bivouac. When Adina Begh came to know of this, he sent his Diwan Hira Mal and Akal Das Jandialia to them. Both the armies came into conflict near Quadian. Hira Mal was killed in the battle and Akal Das disappeared. The Singhs were able to lay their hands on a good deal of their belongings, including arms and horses.

During these days S. Jassa Singh received a letter from S. Charat Singh, S. Jai Singh Ghanya, Haqiqat Singh and S. Gujjar Singh to the effect that a Lahore noble, Gulsher Khan (who must have been sent by Mirza Jan) was stationed near Majitha, and Jai Singh could kill him the moment he saw him. On hearing this news, S. Jassa Singh left for Majitha via a jungle path and he planned with other Sardars that they should attack him in quick succession so that Gulsher Khan did not have any time to re-organise his forces.

One day when the battalion of S. Jai Singh Ghanya was firing at the *Dera* of the enemy, they were chased by some soldiers of Gulsher Khan. The Khalsa wanted exactly this. When they had come a little out, S. Jassa Singh accompanied by some other Sardars reached for the aid of S. Jai Singh. By that time, Gulsher Khan had also reached with his reinforcements. When he advanced a little, the Singhs showered their bullets in such a manner that one bullet struck the Khan on his forehead, and he died on the spot. As

soon as the Khan died, his army ran helter-skelter, and his Dera came in the possession of the Singhs (*Jassa Singh Binod*, 94-95, Urdu, 38-39). All this happened in August, 1758.

#### **The Death of Adina Begh Khan**

During these days, Adina Begh Khan was ailing. The bullet injury that he had received in some past battle used to trouble him a lot occasionally, especially during the rainy season when the air is full of humidity. This pain ultimately led to paralysis and on September 15, 1758, he breathed his last. He was buried in Khanpur near Hoshiarpur where his tomb exists even today.

#### **The defeat of Noorudin Thamezai (Nov. 1758)**

As has already been pointed out when the Marathas handed over the rule of Punjab to Adina Begh Khan, the Khan himself lived in Doaba near Hoshiarpur or in Ahmed Nagar in Gurdaspur. The Lahore affairs were the overall responsibility of his deputy Khawajah Mirza Jan. After the death of Adina Begh, he reached a compromise with the Singhs. He knew that since he had his enemy on both the sides, he would not be able to run the Lahore administration properly. Therefore, it appears that he reached a secret agreement with the Singhs to the effect that if they helped him in fighting against the Durrani coming from the West, he would not interfere with their movements in Doaba. This was really beneficial for the Singhs because they would be able to establish themselves on a firm footing in the Doaba and the Malwa and gain strength for facing the Durrani invasions. Secondly, since the Durrani aimed at establishing their own rule in Punjab and turning this province into a part of the Afghan empire, it was intolerable for the Khalsa to accept the slavery to the foreigners. After they were defeated or repulsed finally, it would be easier for the Singhs to deal with the local tyrants. With this end in view, the Khalsa entered into an agreement with Mirza Jan and helped him against Noorudin Thamezai.

When the news of Adina Begh's death reached Ahmed Shah Durrani, he laid siege to Kalaat, the city of Mir Jaseer Khan. Therefore, the Khan sent Noorudin Thamezai to Punjab with an army. He crossed the river Sind without much resistance and in



the last week of September, 1758, he reached Doaba Sind Sagar and indulging in plunder, arson, and leaving the town and the Dera of Miani and Chak in flames, crossed the river Chenab. At this time Mirza Jan led the Singh army to the Eastern banks of the Chenab and confronted Noorudin. In the battle that followed Nooru-din suffered defeat and he beat a retreat. This happened in October-November, 1758. (*Tareekh Alamgir Sani-191, Akhbar-Durbar-Mualla-Ahmed Shah Durrani, 233*).

### Teaching a Lesson to Khwajah Mohhamed Sayyed

Around the time of Khwajah Mirza Jan, the administration of the city of Lahore was in the hands of his brother Khwajah Mohammed Sayyed. When Mirza Jan was out on a military campaign, Mohammed Sayyed performed all his duties and tasks pertaining to the city administration. He was extremely cruel and greedy. He levied heavy fines on the people of the city, and with a view to terrorising them, he was having one or two criminals killed every day. In this way, he killed a few Singhs also, and raiding the private premises of the rich and the noble people of the city, he took their money and ornaments in his own possession forcibly.

When S. Jassa Singh came to know of his tyranny, he reached Lahore and pitched his tents at Muzang. He thought that after all the Singhs had been giving strength to Adina Begh to establish himself in Lahore. Mirza Jan was his deputy and after the death of Adina Begh he became the ruler of Lahore. Khwaja Mohammed Sayyed was his brother and his position was no more than that of a steward. However, on receiving the news of the arrival of S. Jassa Singh, Khwajah Sayyed became ready for a battle, but it was not a child's play to face S. Jassa Singh. He suffered defeat, and hid himself in the city.

Taking advantage of this situation, the enemies of the Khwajah brothers entered into an agreement with the Marathas. These enemies included Kizalkash Pathan, Ahmed Khan and Salley Khan who had been imprisoned by Mirza Jan in April, 1758 on the bank of river Chenab at the time of the defeat of Tehmur Shah. Later they were employed by him in his army. They now imprisoned Mirza Jan, and putting Mohammed Sayyed on a donkey, they took him in procession through the whole city.

His victims in the city threw excreta on his head. Later on, when he was produced before the Maratha Sardar Sabaji Patil, he said to him, "You have received this punishment on account of your misdeeds. Now leave the country quietly." Then Kizalbash was appointed the ruler of Lahore and Multan, but the real power remained in the hands of Sabaji who had been driven back from the Attok by Jahan Khan afterwards at the time of the 5th invasion of Ahmed Shah. (*Ala-u-din-Ibratnama*, 221; *Tehmashnama* (Rao), 81-2; *Jassa Singh Binod*, 98, Urdu, 44-45). Munshi Sohan Lal writes in *Umdat Twareekh* that Mirza Tahir Begh was appointed the ruler of Lahore in place of Khwajah Mohammed Sayyed (First edition, 147). It is possible that Mirza Tahir Begh was made the deputy of Ahmed Khan Khizalbash.

### **The Conquests of the Singhs in the Doaba and the Malwa**

After entering into an agreement with Khwajah Mirza Jan, it became easier for the Singhs to conquer territories in Doaba and Malwa. S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia had established his position in Rachna Doab, with his firm base in Gujranwala. The Bhangi Sardars also began to expand their territories. The greater part of the territory of S. Jassa Singh fell in Doaba-Jalandhar, and since this area was also the centre of Adina Begh's activities, there were occasional battles between the Singhs and Adina Begh. Now the past hostility had come to an end. Therefore, the people residing in all areas under the protection of S. Jassa Singh accepted him as their ruler, with even more territories coming under him.

In Malwa, the scene was dominated by Baba Ala Singh who had established his control over a large territory with the help of the Khalsa Dal. In September, 1758, they had dealt such a heavy blow to the joint forces of Abdu-Samad Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind and Mohammed Amir Khan Bhatti near Rampura that for the next nine years, or so the Bhattis dared not face the Patiala army. Up to this time they, had captured only villages. Now they established their control even on the cities of Samana and Sunam. After his control over these royal cities, Baba Ala Singh rose to be the king of the area. According to the writings of S. Karam Singh, after the battle of Rampura, the period of Sardari in the life of Baba Ala Singh ends, and the

period of kingship begins.

**The Attack of Saddiq Begh on the Anandpur fair (13-14, March, 1759)**

After the death of Adina Begh, only Saddiq Begh, the Faujdar of Sirhind, remained in power. He had known the secrets of the Khalsa Dal for a long time. He reached a compromise with the Dal, and agreed to pay a fixed amount every six months provided the Dal Sardars did not collect any taxes from his territory. The Dal acceded to this condition, and Saddiq Begh paid the first half-yearly instalment in advance.

In the beginning of March, 1759, the Sardars and the forces of the Khalsa Dal assembled at Gujranwala. Sardar Tara Singh Gaiba was appointed their leader. S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was also with them. The Khalsa Dal sent its lawyers to Saddiq Begh and demanded the next instalment, but he sent them back empty-handed. The Dal did not appreciate it. They concluded that Saddiq Begh had gone back on his word. Therefore, on its way to Anandpur Sahib when the Dal spotted the Sirhind party collecting taxes, it took to its heels on seeing the Dal. The Singhs pounced upon them, and dispossessed them of the money they had collected.

When Saddiq Begh came to know of this, he organised his army and attacked the Hola Mohalla fair at Anandpur Sahib. The Singhs were scattered here and there, and it was not easy for them to organise themselves quickly. Therefore, the Khalsa suffered a heavy loss. There was hardly any Sardar of the Dal who did not receive a few sword injuries. S. Jassa Singh also received two serious injuries, and he had to stay at Darauli for cure. While the Dal was still at Darauli the lawyers of Saddiq Begh came with the instalment amount. They submitted that since the Dal had looted the Sirhind tax collecting party, they had attacked the Hola Fair of Anandpur Sahib. They appealed to S. Jassa Singh not to entertain any resentment. S. Jassa Singh blamed Saddiq Begh for the whole unpleasant situation for he had backed out of his promise. After all it was he who had thrown the first brick. It was for this reason that the Singhs had looted the Sirhind tax collecting party. He added that the Singhs had no resentment against Sirhind, and advised them to be cautious in future. (Karam Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh*, 194-96).

**The Death of Diwan Bishamber Dass and Raja Bhoop Chand**

S. Jassa Singh recovered soon, and was again in good physical health. During these days the Sardars of the Khalsa Dal used to assemble at Amritsar on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali to assess their achievements during the past six months, and plan their course of action during the future six months. The Khalsa was passing through a period of trial. Although Adina Begh had died, his spirit was still ruling Punjab from his tomb. His deputies held sway in Lahore and in Sirhind. The Khalsa had established its control over a large territory in Doaba, and Malwa, but it had yet to achieve the goal of full freedom. The fear of Durrani's invasions from the West was still there, and the symbols of the old Mughal Government were intact in Doaba and Malwa. Sometime after Baisakhi when S. Jassa Singh was in Doaba, the Pathans of Miani in the North-West Urmur Tanda showed some reluctance in accepting his hegemony. The common people were not happy with them, and they were desirous of taking shelter under the protection of S. Jassa Singh. Therefore, when S. Jassa Singh attacked, the Pathans could not offer any resistance.

At this time, Bishamber Dass Lasana, the Diwan of Doaba was camping with 30 thousand strong army near the brick bridge of Yahyapur in the West of Urmur. He must have come for the Rabi collection, or for a confrontation with S. Jassa Singh. Perhaps in view of the heavy loss suffered by the Singhs at Anandpur Sahib, the Diwan had over-estimated his own strength. The Diwan was accompanied by Raja Bhoop Chand. They attacked the Singhs early in the morning, and a battle ensued. At noon S. Jassa Singh came forward with his sword in hand and ordered his army to launch an all out attack. On seeing this the Diwan's army became unstable. At this moment the Diwan was leading his army and shooting arrows. He fought very bravely and continued encouraging his army. On the other hand, S. Jassa Singh also showered a rain of arrows. One of his arrows struck Diwan Bishambar Dass and he fell on the ground. Seeing his valour S. Jassa Singh said spontaneously: "Great is the mother who has given birth to you." On seeing the Diwan fallen on the ground, Raja Bhoop Chand took his place and now a sword-battle began. Both the sides lost quite a good number of their young soldiers.

Raja Bhoop Chand advanced towards S. Jassa Singh. He attacked the Sardar with his sword injuring the neck of the Sardar's horse. S. Jassa Singh attacked him in defence and chopped off his arm. Bhoop Chand fell down dead, on the ground. Seeing him falling, confusion prevailed in his army.

On the left side stood the army of the landlords of Sirhind and Phagwara. The army of Diwan Bishamber Dass also stopped here, but S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars over-took this army and launched a powerful attack on it and shook them to the roots. Now all of them ran in utter confusion and their era came under the control of the Khalsa.

The bravery displayed by Diwan Bishamber Dass and Raja Bhoop Chand impressed S. Jassa Singh so deeply that he made an offering of costly woollen blankets on their dead bodies and arranged their cremation in an honourable manner. S. Jassa Singh was a warrior of high degree and only a warrior can value the bravery of other warriors (*Jassa Singh Binod*, 91-92, Urdu, 35-6).

#### **Occupation of Qadian by S. Jai Singh Ghanya**

During these days the Singhs had small skirmishes with the Mughals of Qadian on the outskirts of this town, but when the latter could not offer much resistance, they retreated to the town, and when the Singhs chased them, the town walls became an obstacle. The Mughal guns, being fired from inside resulted in the killing of several Singh soldiers. On seeing this, S. Jassa Singh launched a massive attack and the brave Singhs entered the town and established their control over it. This town and its surrounding areas up to the radius of 9 miles came under the sway of S. Jai Singh Ghanaya who was an intimate friend of S. Jassa Singh.\*

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\*In *Jassa Singh Binod*, there is a reference to a battle with Diwan Ghumand Chand the Khatri of Batala near Yahyapur, before the conquest of Qadian. Here it is written that he was the Diwan of Adina Begh and he had become an independent ruler after his death, but several villages of Doaba refused to accept his hegemony and when they approached the Khalsa for protection, Ghumand Chand began to harass the Singhs. Accepting their appeal, S. Jassa Singh reached Doaba for their protection and help. A battle ensued near Yahyapur in which Ghumand Chand was defeated and he took to his heels. (*Jassa Singh Binod* 98). It appears that it is the same battle in which Bishamber Dass and Bhoop Chand were killed.)

## The Fifth Invasion of Ahmed Shah

### The Confrontation of the Singhs with the Shah (Nov. 1759)

The Emperor Ahmed Shah was so thoroughly pre-occupied with Kalat campaign from 1757 to 59 that he could not pay any attention to India. The collective forces of the Singhs, the Marathas and Adina Begh had driven his sons, away from Punjab. They had topsyturvied his administration in Punjab, and the Singhs had established their control over large parts of Punjab. In November, 1758, his General Nooru-din had also beaten a retreat after his defeat. These developments were very painful and disappointing for Ahmed Shah, but he was helpless in view of his previous military commitments. When he became free from the Kalaat campaign in October, 1759, he finally invaded Punjab with a 40-thousand strong army. This was his fifth invasion of India. He thought that first he should deal with the Marathas in Delhi, and then it would be easier for him to establish his control over Punjab.

On October 25, the Shah crossed the river Attok. The Marathas did not offer him any resistance anywhere. The frontal forces under the command of Jahan Khan cleared the way for the army of the Shah. But when Ahmed Shah approached Lahore in the middle of November, the Khalsa got a clue. At this time S. Jassa Singh, Jai Singh Ghanaya, Charat Singh Shukarchakia, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh Bhangi were staying in the Akal Bunga of Amritsar. This year the Diwali fell on October 20, i. e. when these Sardars and some other Missaldars happened to be in Amritsar. After taking their collective decision at the Akal Takht to fight against Durrani, they organised some army at a very short notice and advanced towards Lahore at night and reached the Shalamar Garden east of the city and attacked the army of Durrani. On seeing the Singhs, the Durranis ran away. The Singhs chased

them up to Bighwanpura and Begumpura colonies, and took their horses, mules and other materials in their possession.

When Ahmed Shah came to know of the Singh attack, he sent Jahan Khan with an army to engage them. S. Jassa Singh was fully prepared. As soon as the Durrani came, S. Jassa Singh and Jai Singh attacked them from the right side and S. Charat Singh, S. Gujjar Singh and S. Lehna Singh from the left. Thus, the Durrani army was surrounded from both sides. If the Durrani Generals advanced in the direction of S. Charat Singh they were attacked by S. Jassa Singh, and if they moved in the direction of S. Jassa Singh, they were attacked by S. Charat Singh. In this way, a fierce battle continued raging up to the evening, and two thousand of Durrani were killed and their commander Jahan Khan was wounded. At night both the armies retreated from the battlefield. The Khalsa forces spread out in Majha so that at the time of Ahmed Shah's departure, they could attack the Durrani if a suitable opportunity came their way. (*Rajwara*, First Volume 146; *Jassa Singh Binod*, 97-Urdu, 43-44).

#### **The battle of Panipat**

Since Ahmed Shah was in a hurry to go to Delhi, he did not stay at Lahore for a long time. He appointed Hazi Qarim Dad Khan, the brother of his minister Shah Wali Khan, administrator of Lahore. Hamid Khan was his deputy, while Zain Khan was appointed Faujdar of Mahal. On November 20, the Shah crossed the river Beas from near Goindwal and advanced towards Delhi. In Delhi, the minister Imdul Mulak Gaziudin got Emperor Alamgir II assassinated on Nov. 29, 1759.

The next full year i. e. the year 1760, was spent by Durrani in fighting against the Marathas, the Jats of Bharatpur and others. In January, 1761, the Shah fought his last battle against the Marathas in the battlefield of Panipat and defeated them. A historian has made the following comments in *The History of India* on the victory of Ahmed Shah over the Marathas: "The miracle happened in Panipat, when Durrani won a victory over the Marathas." After this victory, Durrani went to Delhi for a few days and on January 29, he accepted Shah Alam II, a son of Alamgir II, as the new Emperor of Delhi. He sent him a message asking him to return to Delhi from Bihar. On the other hand,

he also began to exchange correspondence with the Marathas for a compromise and this compromise materialised in May when the Shah had returned to Afghanistan.

#### **The Tottering Lahore Government in 1760**

As has already been pointed out, while leaving for Delhi, Ahmed Shah had handed over the Lahore administration to Qarim Dad Khan. Later the Shah called him to Delhi keeping in view the military requirements and replaced him by Sarbuland Khan. But Sarbuland Khan took up his residence at Jalandhar for fear of the Khalsa and sent his deputy, Saadat Yar Khan, to Lahore. Now the Singhs were in high spirits, and they began to attack the colonies around Lahore and started collecting taxes. Saadat Yar Khan tendered his resignation out of fear and confusion. Instead of going to Lahore for administration, Sarbuland Khan handed over the administration of Lahore to a famous money lender Diwan Surat Singh. Probably he thought that since Surat Singh was a Hindu, he would be able to keep the Singhs in check through peaceful and persuasive methods, but he also resigned his post before long. Now Sarbuland Khan appointed Mir Mohammed Khan, the son of Moman Khan Kasuria, administrator of Lahore in September-Oct., 1760.

#### **The Imprisonment of Rustam Khan Sadozai-the Compensation (gift) of Rs. 20,000/- (October, 1760)**

While Ahmed Shah was still involved in battles with the Marathas, and there were still three months to the battle of Panipat, the Singhs dealt two heavy blows to his administration in Punjab-one in Sialkot to Rustam Khan Sadozai, and the second in Lahore proper to Nazam Mir Mohammed Khan, appointed there by Sarbuland Khan.

In October, 1760, Rustam Khan received the news in Sialkot that at a distance of 6 miles from there, about 50 Singhs were collecting taxes. He attacked them with about 150 cavaliers, but when they resisted, the Khan took shelter in a nearby fort. But the Singhs attacked the fort and captured him along with Tehmas Khan, the steward of Morad Begum. In the end Rustam Khan paid a compensation of Rs. 20,000/- to the Singhs through the Raja of Jammu for his release *Tehmasnama*, (Rao), 92-8).



**The Compensation of Rs. 30,000/- from Mir Mohammed Khan (Nov. 1760)**

This year the Diwali fell on Nov. 7 and on this day there was a huge gathering of the Singhs at Amritsar. Besides S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Charat Singh, Jai Singh Ghanaya, Hari Singh Bhangi, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Haqiqat Singh, Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and other Sardars were present. At this time the Khalsa was in high spirits. The Singhs were happy to note that no administrator of Durrani could rule this city against their wishes. Their aim was to impress upon the minds of the Durranis, especially Ahmed Shah Durrani, that the Khalsa would not allow his rule to exist in Punjab at any cost. Even if Ahmed Shah Durrani were to come personally here, he would not be able to rule this province. They had already given proof of their might vis-a-vis. their relations with Ahmed Shah. Mir Mohammed Khan was the administrator of Lahore at this time.

Therefore, in a Diwali congregation, a resolution was adopted by the Khalsa that before the return of Durrani from Delhi, the Khalsa should launch a massive attack on Lahore so that he should be in no doubt about the fearlessness of the Khalsa, the deep-rooted resentment against the rule of Durrani and boundless enthusiasm for the establishment of democracy in Punjab and the spirit of sacrifices. Following this resolution, after the Diwali celebrations, the Khalsa attacked Lahore under the command of S. Jassa Singh and established their control over the outer colonies. Out of fear Mir Mohammed Khan ordered the closure of the gates in the outer walls surrounding the city. Thus, the city of Lahore automatically came under a siege, and all traffic came to an end. The siege lasted for 11 days, and the people were fed up, while Mir Mohammed Khan was completely upset. But it was not the intention of the Singhs to harass the common people. Their real aim was to render the administration helpless and destabilise it. Therefore, S. Lehna Singh sent a mediator to Mir Mohammed Khan with the message that if he wanted peace, he should accept the grant of compensation to the Singhs for *Karah Parshad*. Although in the circumstances, Mir Mohammed Khan was helpless, he did not have enough money to meet the demand of the Singhs, Gul Mohammed Khan, the treasurer of

Ahmed Shah had sent the amount from Pasrur revenue through Yakub Khan. Out of this amount, Mir Mohammed Khan gave Rs. 30,000/- to the Khalsa for *Karah Parshad* through such nobles of Lahore as Pirzada, Gulam Hussain Sarhandi, Mian Mohammed Taqi, Mir Nathu Shah and Hafiz Qadir Bakhsh and others. This was a clear surrender on the part of the Lahore administration, and this fulfilled the aim of the Khalsa. The Singhs returned to Amritsar for other programmes. Mufti Gulam Sarvar writes in his book *Tareekh-e-Makhzani Punjab* that when the besieged Lahore administrator lost his patience and nerve, it was he who sent out a message for compromise which was accepted by the Khalsa to whom the Lahore Administrator gave Rs. 30,000/- for *Karah Parshad* (Ali-u-din, Ibrathnama-226-27; *Umdaat Twareekh-Firs* Edition-150 Ghanya Lal, *Tareekh-i-Punjab*, 80-81; Mufti Gulam Sarvar, *Tareekh-i-Makhzan, Punjab*-470).

#### **The Return of Ahmed Shah from Delhi**

After his victory over the Marathas in the battle of Panipat, Ahmed Shah handed over the throne of Delhi to Shah Alam II. After this Ahmed Shah also intended attacking Suraj Mal the Jat ruler of Bharatpur, but the strong fortification of this Rajasthani King, the anxiety of the Shah's army to return home, an element of frustration in their minds and the imminent summer forced the Shah to return to Afghanistan. On March 13, 1761, the Shah sent all his frontal army and tents etc; and on March 20, he himself left Delhi for Afghanistan.

On March 27, the Shah reached Ambala and on March, 29 he was in Sirhind and appointed Zain Khan its Faujdar. According to the order issued on Shahban 22, 1174 Hijri (March 29, 1761), Baba Ala Singh of Patiala was acknowledged the ruler of the territories under his control.

#### **The release of the kidnapped women by Jassa Singh from the clutches of the Durrani**

At this time in the camp of the Durrani Emperor there were thousands of prisoners whom Ahmed Shah was taking to Afghanistan. These prisoners included nearly 2200 Hindu women. These helpless women were being dragged by the Durrani much against their wishes. But the lamentations of these women did not melt any heart; no one heard their appeal for succour. No

Maratha, Rajput or Jat warrior risked his life for saving the honour of these women. Even their men folk followed these prisoners crying and shedding tears. When no help came forth from any quarter, some of their spokesmen reached Amritsar. It was the Baisakhi festival. On hearing the lamentations of these spokesmen in the court of the Guru, the blood of S Jassa Singh began to boil. He thought that the Khalsa was a living embodiment of the Guru, while he himself was the leader of the Khalsa created by the Guru. Therefore, S. Jassa Singh drew his sword and taking a few selected Singhs with him reached Goindwal and attacked the Durrani when they were crossing the river; even before they could imagine what had happened, he freed the bonded women. He gave them pocket expenses and sent them to their respective places. This sympathy and bravery made S. Jassa Singh famous in the length and breadth of the entire country, and his valour and selfless service became a household word, and he became famous as a Liberator of bonded women. (Ghanaya Lal, *Tareekh-i-Punjab*-100; Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, 145/507).

On April 26, 1761, Ahmed Shah reached Lahore and appointing Ubed Khan, administrator of Lahore in place of SarBuland Khan, Ghumand Chand Katauchia, Faujdar of Doaba Dist Jalandhar and Khwaja Mirza Jan, Faujdar of Chahar Mahal in place of Rustam Khan, returned to Afghanistan.

## CHAPTER 17

### **The first occupation of Lahore by the Singhs**

#### **The title of Sultan-ul-Qaum for S. Jassa Singh**

#### **The Death of Mirza Jan (May-June, 1761)**

When Ahmed Shah left Lahore for Afghanistan, the Singhs began to chase him as ever before, and pressed him hard up to the bank of the Sind, and they took into their possession whatever they could lay their hands on. When they were returning from Sind, on the way, they came in conflict with Mirza Jan, Faujdar of Chahar Mahal. In this battle, Mirza Jan suffered defeat and he was killed. The credit for this victory goes to S Charat Singh.

#### **The Fruitless Campaign of Noorudin Thamezai—The Victory of S. Charat Singh (August 1761)**

The blows dealt by the Khalsa to the administration of Ahmed Shah were galling and telling. Therefore immediately after reaching andhar, he sent General Noor-u-in Thamezai, with an army of 12 thousand soldiers against the Singhs. After crossing the Chenab, Noorudin came in conflict with S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia who had established his control over a large territory in the North of Lahore. S. Charat Singh was an obstacle in the way of Durrani and he raided the army of the Shah whenever he came to invade India and when he returned to Afghanistan. After plundering the army he would go to his fort at Gujranwala. A big battle was fought near Wazira Bagh on the banks of the Chenab. Noorudin could not face the Singhs and he took shelter in the fort of Sialkot. S Charat Singh chased him and laid seige of the fort. The Sardar made the siege so narrow and strict that all food provisions stopped going inside. All the surrounding territories were under the control of the Singhs. Therefore, there was no possibility of ration and other provisions reaching inside the fort. Noorudin felt so humiliated and

frustrated that leaving his army to its fate and at the mercy of the Singhs, without any arrangement of internal administration, he escaped to Jammu in the darkness of night. Finding their commander absent, the army also surrendered. In fact, there was no alternative before it. S. Charat Singh meted out a very generous treatment to the soldiers of Noorudin. After the surrender of their armies, he allowed them to go away, and the officers and the soldiers who had been taken prisoners were sent to Noorudin in Sialkot. After this, S. Charat Singh returned to Gujranwala (*Umdat Twareekh-II* Edition, 6-7, Ghanaya Lal, *Tareekh-i-Punjab*, 81, Mufti Gulam Sarvar, *Tareekh-i-Makhzam Punjab*, 471).

#### **The Support of S. Charat Singh by S. Jassa Singh (Sept. 1761)**

When the news of the humiliating defeat of Noorudin reached Khwaja Ubed Khan, the Lahore Administrator, he attacked S. Charat Singh at Gujranwala with a formidable army. He must have realised with anxiety that the defeat of Noorudin was in a way the defeat of the Lahore Government, and Ahmed Shah would be greatly displeased with him on this account. Ubed Khan stayed in Emmabad for a few days, took stock of the whole situation and then encircled Gujranwala. S. Charat Singh was fully prepared to confront him and he took position for a battle. By this time S. Jassa Singh also had come to know of Ubed Khan's attack on Gujranwala. He reached there along with S. Jai Singh Ghanaya, Hari Singh, Bhangi, Lehna Singh, Soba Singh, Gujjar Singh and others, and they launched a massive attack on Ubed Khan. This so greatly stunned and confused the enemies that they fled from the field leaving their artillery horses, camels and other war material there, and ran to Lahore (*Umdat-Twareekh*, First Edition 154, Second Edition, 7-8, Ab-u-din, 228-29, *Tehmashnama* (Rao), 104).

#### **The Occupation of Lahore by the Singhs (Sept. 1761)**

This kind of defeat of Ubed Khan, the Lahore administrator whose artillery and war material also came in the possession of the Singhs, provided them with a golden opportunity. They chased him up to Lahore and encircled him in the Lahore fort. From the time of Mir Mohammed Khan, it had been the experience

of the Singhs that the Government officials could not face them and they marked time inside the forts for a suitable opportunity, to repulse them. These people had a store of food provisions inside the forts or they robbed it from the nearby territories, but in the event of a siege, the worst sufferers were the common people who had to go out of the city for earning their livelihood. They had nothing else to fall back upon except what they earned from day to day. Moreover, they had to go out of the city for the fulfilment of their physical requirements. Therefore, the Singhs knew that in view of this difficulty, the public of the city would force Khwaja Ubed Khan to surrender to the Khalsa.

The city leaders also knew that during the time of Mir Mohammed Khan the Singhs had returned after receiving compensation. From the defeat of Ubed Khan, they had also concluded that he was not a very brave and valiant administrator who could resist the Singhs for a long time. Therefore, with little hope of dependence on him, the nobles of Lahore negotiated the matter with S. Jassa Singh, and opened the city gates to the Khalsa. Thus, in response to the appeal of the citizens of Lahore, the victorious Khalsa raising slogans of "*Sat Sri Akal*" (Victory to God) entered Lahore under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. This was the first political victory of the Khalsa over the capital of Punjab. With this victory, the whole territory from the river Sind to the Sutlej came under the control of the Khalsa (*Umdaat Twareekh*, First Edition, 154, II Edition, 7-8, Ali-u-din, Ibratnama, 228-29, *Tehmaznama* (Rao), 104).

#### **The title of 'Sultan-ul-Qaum' for S. Jassa Singh**

As soon as the Singhs established their control over Lahore, the Sardars of the Dal Khalsa remembered the spontaneously uttered prophetic words of Mata Sundri and Nawab Kapur Singh. While seeing Jassa Singh off from Delhi Mataji had showered her blessings on him saying, "You and your children will have under your command Asianwala Chobdara". In the same way, once while consoling Jassa Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh had said, "I have been raised to the status of Nawab by this Panth which is the patron of the poor. Who knows it may make you a king?"

How could these prophecies turn out to be empty? The Khalsa Dal was now gloating over its victories in a palace of bliss. S. Jassa Singh had placed the capital of Punjab at their feet and enhanced the glory of the Panth. Therefore, they honoured him by conferring on him the title of "Sultan-ul-Qaum"—the king of the community, and to express their gratitude to God, they issued the Khalsa coin in the name of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh, with the following Persian inscription on it. This Persian couplet had been got inscribed by Banda Singh on his Mohar (the gold coin) after his conquest of Sirhind in 1710; "Victory of the Deg-(Sword) and Teg Atal, we have the blessing of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh".

Some historians believe that the following was the Persian couplet inscribed on the coin issued by the Khalsa from Lahore :

"The coin has been issued in the world by the Grace of God.  
Jassa Katal has snatched the territory of Ahmed Shah."

But it was difficult to believe that the words inscribed on the coin issued by the Khalsa should smack of pride, vanity and impertinence and in which the political and religious leader of the Sikh community should be referred to by half his name. Referring to any Singh who has taken the Khanda Pahul by half name is a kind of abuse. But Ganesh Dass Wadhare has settled this issue in his book *Char Bagh Punjab*. He writes that when the Degh Tegh Coin of the Khalsa came in circulation and the old Mohammed Shahi began to disappear, some fanatic Muslims in Punjab issued a fresh coin with the half name of S. Jassa Singh on it and sent these coins to Ahmed Shah in Kabul. On seeing these coins, Ahmed Shah felt dishonoured and he started from Afghanistan for invading Punjab. In the light of such evidence, there is no scope for any further discussion of the matter.

Towards the end of September and the beginning of October, there was dual administration in Lahore—one was that of the Khalsa, and the other that of Ubed Khan who was inside the fort. According to the writer of *Khazana-e-Amiran*, Ubed Khan died soon after, but the author has not given any date of his death. Therefore, it is not possible to say anything about how long he really remained inside the fort.

## CHAPTER 18

### The Great Holocaust

#### The Siege of Jandiala (January, 1762)

Now the Khalsa posted a big military contingent at Lahore for the purpose of obstructing Ubaid Khan's exit from the fort and S. Jassa Singh reached Doaba-Bist-Jalandhar and he drove away Saddat Khan and Sadique Begh, the Durrani administrators. On seeing this, Raja Ghumand Chand Katochia escaped quietly to the hills. On the other hand, S. Charat Singh and the Bhangi Sardars conquered the whole area lying to the North of Lahore. Having completed these operations within a few days the Khalsa Dal reached Amritsar for the Diwali celebrations.

The Diwali fell on October 27 that year. The Khalsa was in high spirits. The Sikhs reached Amritsar from all directions, and the Khalsa chalked out the future programme after collective deliberations. The Khalsa had conquered major territories and the remaining areas were out of its control because of the presence of several Durrani agents and informers who opposed the Khalsa. The Chief of these agents and informers included the Naranjanias of Jandiala, the Kheshg of Kasur, the Afghans of Malerkotla and Zain Khan, the military commandant of Sirhind. So long as these agents of Emperor Ahmed Shah were not eliminated, the threat from the Durrani was hanging like a Damocles's sword over their heads. The Kasuries and the Afghans of Malerkotla had a racial relationship with the Shah, while Zain Khan had been appointed by Ahmed Shah himself, and he was his servant. Naranjania Mahant Akil Dass was otherwise hostile to the Sikhs. Therefore, the Khalsa realised that for establishing its rule in Punjab, it was essential to eliminate all these centres of Durrani power, but it was not certain what difficulties and problems this task might entail and how much time it might take. It



was also feared that on seeing his position under attack, Ahmed Shah might himself come from Kabul. On considering all these issues, the Singhs decided that they should first send their families to the Malwa and then a big offensive should be launched to achieve their target. It was also decided that Jandiala which was situated at a distance of about 12 miles should be their first target.

S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia conveyed this decision of the Khalsa to Mahant Akil Dass of Jandiala adding that he should surrender to the Khalsa without any protest so that both the parties could live in peace. But Akil Dass did not accept this proposal; on the contrary, he sent some camel riders to Ahmed Shah asking for help.

Ahmed Shah was already on his way to Punjab, and Akil Dass might be in the know of this fact. On reaching Rohtas Ahmed Shah got the message of Akil Dass. He also received a fresh letter from the Mahant at this place. The Shah was already bitter against the Singhs. Now taking a selected number of soldiers with him, he made for Jandiala. His army also joined him soon.

When Jassa Singh came to know of the Shah's arrival in Jandiala, he told the Dal Sardars that the Durrani might attack them at night. The Singhs decided that they should leave their families at some safe place across the Sutlej so that they could deal with the Durrans fearlessly and without any anxiety in their minds. Following this decision, the Singhs lifted the siege of Jandiala and crossed over to the Sutlaj.

Consequently, when the Shah reached Jandiala, the Singhs had already left this place. On the other hand, when Bihchan Khan Malerkotlia came to know that the Singhs had reached the South of Raipur Gujjarwal only 8 or 10 miles away from Malerkotla, he was nervous, because he concluded that the Singhs might attack Malerkotla. Therefore, he asked for help from Zain Khan, the military commandant of Sirhind, who was on tour in the area near Malerkotla and at the same time he informed Ahmed Shah that the Singhs had assembled in full strength near his city. He requested the Shah to reach immediately so that the Singhs could be encircled and thus killed easily.

This news came as something god-send to Ahmed Shah. He left Lahore on the morning of February 3 and without any halt, he crossed the Sutlej. On the way, on February 4, the Durrani sent his horse riders to Zain Khan with the message that he should attack the Singhs from one side. He ordered Zain Khan to come with his entire army and launch a frontal attack on the Singhs on February 5. As soon as this order reached Zain Khan, Bhikhan Khan, Murtaza Khan Warraich, Qasim Khan Marhal, Diwan Lachhmi Narain and other officers began to make preparations for the massacre of the Singhs.

### **The Holocaust of February 5**

On Rajjab, 1175 Hijri, Feb. 5, 1762, Zain Khan moved forward with his army and ordered Qasim Khan Warraich to attack the Singhs. Thus, the Singhs were taken by surprise. They were not aware of the gathering or designs of the enemy. Therefore, they were trapped suddenly. At this time there were around 30,000 Singhs but this number included women, children and old men whom they were going to leave at some safe place. The Singhs also had under their care some invalids, working men and household effects. Therefore, it was not possible for them to rapidly spread out here and there in self-defence. Qasim Khan attacked this gathering of the Singhs near the village of Kul which is situated at a distance of 6 miles to the north of Malerkotla. As soon as this news reached S. Jassa Singh, S. Shyam Singh, Charat Singh and other Sardars, they came there and a battle broke out. As the sun rose, Zain Khan received the message from the Shah that he had ordered his soldiers to kill everyone wearing Punjabi dress. Zain Khan was asked by the Shah to order his men to cover their heads with the green tree leaves or green grass so that they could be easily identified.

With the Sikh Sardars reaching the scene, Qasim Khan could not resist them, and he ran towards Malerkotla. At this time the Sardars decided to send their women and children with the lawyers of the Malwa Sardars. Saggu Singh, the lawyer of Kaithal asked Sekhu Singh Humblewale the lawyer of Baba Ala Singh and the lawyer of Bhai Budha Singh to take the women, children and old men to some safe place. Hardly had they covered a distance of 3 miles when Shah Wali Khan and Bhikhan Khan attacked them,

but their armies could not put the Singhs to rout or scatter them. The Khalsa had established a round fort around their women, children and old men so that they went on fighting as they moved, and moved on as they fought. Sometimes they would turn back and attack the enemy, and then they would join their families.

When Ahmed Shah saw that his minister Shah Wali Khan had failed to penetrate into the circle of the Singhs, he sent Sardar Jahan Khan with more armies but even he could achieve nothing. At this fresh Afghani re-inforcements came but the Singhs did not allow the enemy to reach the inner circles. S. Jassa Singh and S. Charat Singh personally supervised the movement of the Singh families. The Singh forces protected these families according to the instructions of these two Sardars.

When Ahmed Shah saw that no deadly blow could be dealt to the Singhs moving in that manner, he was in fury and asked Zain Khan and Lachhmi Narain why they did not prevent the onward march of the Singhs: "If you stop their movement from the front for a short while, we shall eliminate them in no time." Zain Khan replied: "But it is not possible to put a stop to their frontal movement."

In this way fighting and suffering heavy casualties, the Singhs passed through several villages but they did not get shelter anywhere. The villagers would shut their doors for fear of the Durrani. Thus, they continued moving ahead and suffering casualties at the hands of the enemies. The Singh Caravan was spread over several miles and the circle around it could not be uniformly strong. Wherever the enemy got an opportunity, he caused a heavy loss to the Caravan which included old men, children and women. Many of them were exhausted; they left behind and were put to death by the enemy. In the afternoon the Caravan reached the villages of Kutaba and Bahmni, and many people rushed to these villages for shelter. But these villages were inhabited by the Afghans of Malerkotla and they were hostile to the Singhs and were in alliance with their enemies. The Ranghars of these villages gathered at the beating of drums and attacked the Singhs. The Caravan suffered a heavy loss. Now, S. Charat Singh came to the help of the Singhs and he beat back the Ranghars. But the circle of the Caravan had already been broken at

several places and consequently it was suffering a heavy loss. There were no armed fighters in the Caravan, The circle around it covered an area of several miles and, therefore, it was not possible for the Singhs to protect it effectively, but even then, the Singhs held on, and moved ahead while fighting against the enemies.

There was a watery pond near the villages of Kutaba and Bahmni. On seeing it, both the parties, the Afghans and the Singhs turned to it for quenching their thirst. They had been hungry and thirsty since morning. Both the parties began to drink water. Thus the battle came to an end automatically and it did not break out again. The Durrani were also exhausted. They had covered about 150 miles during the past 36 hours and they had been fighting for the past 10 hours. It was also clear that they were now moving to the areas thickly populated by the Sikhs. Therefore, Ahmed Shah did not deem it proper to move any further. According to *Tehmasnama*, the Durrani had reached somewhere near Barnala which was the territory of Baba Ala Singh of Patiala.

The Singhs were also dead tired and their horses were utterly exhausted. S. Jassa Singh and S. Charat Singh were firm in their determination. The father and uncle of Bhangoo Rattan Singh, the author of *Prachin Panth Prakash* were with the Caravan in this battle. On their authority, Rattan Singh writes that at one place the horse of S. Jassa Singh refused to budge because it was dead tired. The Sardar kicked it again and again, but all in vain. At this his Palak S. Gurmukh Singh lifted the whip to beat the horse, but S. Jassa Singh asked him not to beat the horse so that nobody should conclude that the Sardar had knowingly got his horse whipped and run away. In this battle S. Jassa Singh received as many as 22 wounds, but even then he would always be ready to fight against the enemy. To quote Rattan Singh :

"Jassa Singh received many injuries.

He was attacked with arrows, bullets and swords.

He was inflicting injuries on the enemy and bearing attacks of the enemy.

In all Jassa Singh received 22 injuries, but even then he went

on fighting valiantly.”

In the same way, the other Sardars also received several injuries. There was hardly any Sardar who had not received at least 5 to 7 wounds :

”All the Sardars were wounded and none was safe.

Several of them fell martyrs and it is difficult to count them.

Charat Singh could not count the wounds he received from the arrows, swords and spears of the enemy.”

The loss suffered by the Caravan on this day is difficult to be estimated, but according to S. Karam Singh, about 15 to 20 thousand men, women and children lost their lives. According to *Tehmashnama* this number must be 25 thousand. The Khalsa had never suffered such a heavy loss of life in a single day before. It is for this reason that the Sikhs remember this day as the great holocaust.

It was such a hard blow as could not be borne by any Community easily, but the Khalsa had been brought up under the shadow of swords and it had passed through several massacres during the past 50 years. Therefore, this holocaust did not frighten the Khalsa. The Singhs regarded it as the will of God, a test of their character and courage, and thus they bore it with cheer. Its living example is to be found in the following saying of a Nihang Singh who was found singing loudly on the day of this holocaust. “The pure Khalsa is intact, while the mortal framework attached to worldly wealth and other illusions has disappeared.” (*Prachin Panth Prakash*) pp 442-458; *Tehmashnama* (Rao), 105-0; *Khazan-e-Amira*. 114).

### **The Return of Ahmed Shah to Lahore**

Ahmed Shah noticed that the Singhs had suffered a heavy loss of life because they had been caught on the wrong foot. Now wherever they got shelter and whenever they got an opportunity, they would turn back and pounce upon his army like wounded tigers. Therefore, he did not deem it proper to chase them any further, and the next day he turned to Sirhind.

The previous year while returning to Afghanistan after the battle of Panipat, Ahmed Shah had accepted Baba Ala Singh the ruler of the territories conquered by him. Now thinking that

after this holocaust his position might not be indanger, Ala Singh met the Shah through Najeebu Daula Rohele and offered him an amount of Rs. 6 1/4 lakhs. The Shah was happy, and sent Ala Singh away after a few days.

At this time Ahmed Shah also tried to persuade the Dal Khalsa for a compromise. He asked Baba Ala Singh to mediate between himself and the Dal Khalsa. The Dal Khalsa should not create any problems for the Shah and in return he was ready to accept them the rulers of the territories already in their possession. Baba Ala Singh sent his lawyer Nanu Singh Grewal to the leaders of the Dal Khalsa. S. Jassa Singh who was the leader of the Khalsa Dal Sardars replied that no one ever got the offer of rule on a platter and that the Turks (Durranis) and the Singhs had nothing in common. The Durranis had come from Afghanistan and wanted to establish their empire in Punjab while the Singhs were opposed to any foreign ruler in their country. It was a play of gunpowder and fire. The Singhs had already been granted sovereignty by God; they had got it in return for their heads and they would not ask for any rule from anybody.\*

#### Chaupai

Then Ala Singh sent his lawyer  
 To see the Dal Khalsa.  
 It was Nanu Singh Grewal  
 Who carried the message of the Shah  
 The Khalsa replied :  
 Who gives the rule for asking  
 There could be no compromise between the Turks and the  
 Singhs  
 It was a play of gunpowder and fire  
 God has granted us sovereignty  
 Which we have earned in return for our heads.)

(*Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 473).

Leaving Zain Khan to act as the military commandant of Sirhind, the Shah left on Feb. 15, 1762 and reached Lahore on March 3. Fearing that the Marathas might come to the help

\*Then the Shah asked Ala Singh to bring about the compromise with the Khalsa, so that they did not fight against him and get the possession of their territory approved by him.

of the Khalsa, the Shah took up correspondence with them for compromise, and this correspondence went on for several months. At the same time he made preparations to invade Kashmir.

#### **The Desecration of Sri Darbar Sahib (April, 1762)**

A month and a quarter after the Shah had reached Lahore the Baisakhi fell on April 10, 1762. One day before the Baisakhi fair, Ahmed Shah reached Amritsar with a big army and ordered the blowing up off the towers adjoining Sri Harimander Sahib. The holy tank began to be filled with the debris and other material. Moreover, the bones of the dead were also dumped into this tank besides the Carcasses of the cows slaughtered for this purpose. When Ahmed Shah was getting the Darbar Sahib blown off, a brickbat struck his nose causing a deep wound. This wound grew into an ulcer and with the passing of time the entire nose of the Shah began to rot and disintegrate and this very wound became the cause of his tragic death after 10 years on October 23, 1772 (*Umdat-Tvareekh* pp. 1, 155).

#### **The Humiliation of Zain Khan and Lachhmi Narain Compensation of Rs. 50,000/-(May, 1762)**

Ahmed Shah believed that he had given such a crushing defeat to the Singhs that they would not rise again, and that by blowing off Darbar Sahib and filling up the holy tank he had destroyed the very centre of their temporal and spiritual life. But the Singhs were made of a different stuff than the Marathas. Little did the Shah realise that just three months after the holocaust, they would be ready to take up arms against him.

When the news of the desecration of the Darbar Sahib reached the Singhs in the Malwa where they were getting their wounds treated after the holocaust, they were in a rage. The Singhs did not hold their lives dear and they never tolerated the desecration of their holy places. The entire Khalsa Dal had not yet recovered from the onslaught of the recent battle. Therefore, it was decided that first they should raid the nearby territory of Sirhind whose military commandant Zain Khan had caused heavy losses to the Singhs. Little caring for the fact that all the Singhs had not yet recovered from the wounds and that Ahmed Shah was still in Lahore, S. Jassa Singh

launched a sudden attack on Sirhind and gave a big defeat to Zain Khan. When Zain Khan saw no alternative of defence, he entered into a compromise with the Singhs after paying a compensation of Rs. 50, 000/-.

But hardly had the Khalsa moved about 12 miles from Sirhind when Zain Khan attacked them from behind and he looted the goods and other articles of the Singhs. At this the Singhs turned back immediately and relieved both Zain Khan and Diwan Lachhmi Narain of their paraphernalia and pushed them back towards Harnaulgarh which was situated at a distance of about 15 miles from Sirhind. Here, a pitched battle was fought in which Zain Khan suffered defeat (Rajwara, Vol. 6, 384; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 491) It appears that Zain Khan had looted the Singhs, on the instigation of Diwan Lachhmi Narain so that they could not defeat him a second time. At the time of the first battle Lachhmi Narain must have been somewhere out. That is why he is not referred to in the first battle.

#### **The Shah spends the rainy season at Kalanaur**

It was difficult for the Shah to stay at Lahore in the heat of June. Therefore, he established his camp at Kalanaur on the bank of river Ravi and spent the rainy season there. This year the rain was rather unusual, with the result that neither the foreign Durrani could do much against the Singhs, nor the local *Chaudharies* and landlords who supported them could come out. And wherever they did come out, they were driven away by the Singhs.

The time was extremely opportune for the Singhs. S. Jassa Singh and Tara Singh Gaibe ransacked the entire Doaba and established their firm control at several places. In the North-west of Lahore S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia established his control, and the Bhangi Sardars re-occupied Gujranwala and Gujarat. Not only this, a big group of the Dal Khalsa reached Karnal in the end of August collecting land revenue and stayed in Panipat for full one month (from August 25 to September 24, 1762). As a result even the messengers of the Mughal Empire could not reach the Shah.



### **The Battle with the Durranis on the Diwali Day (Oct. 17, 1762)**

On September 24, the Sardars of the Dal Khalsa moved to the North so that they could reach Amritsar on October 17, the Diwali Day. By the time the Singhs reached Amritsar, Ahmed Shah had already arrived in Lahore. He was taken aback. He could not even dream that the Singhs would be able to recover their strength so soon after the bloody battle in which they had suffered such a heavy loss of life and would challenge him from a distance of only 20 miles from Lahore. At this time he did not have a sufficient army of his own because a large part of it had accompanied Noorudin Thamezai to Kashmir against Sikhjivan, nor could he receive any military aid from Sirhind, Multan or any other quarter. Therefore, he sent his messenger to the Khalsa to initiate peace negotiations. But the Khalsa was in great anger in view of the desecration of Harimandir Sahib by the Shah. They were ready to do or die and they were not prepared to have any compromise with such an enemy. Some of the angry Singhs relieved the messenger and his companion of their belongings and drove them away.

Now it was difficult for the Shah to remain silent. Therefore, he reached Amritsar with his army on the evening of October 16, one day before the Diwali. On the morning of October 17, the Singhs offered their prayers and attacked the Durranis. The Durranis had come prepared to fight. A pitched battle was fought throughout the day. The Singhs had a double resentment against the Durranis—the holocaust and secondly the desecration of Darbar Sahib. They had jumped into the battle-field with supreme determination and they were ready to sacrifice their lives. It was extremely difficult for the Durranis to face such fearless warriors. There was a total solar eclipse resulting in such darkness that stars appeared in the sky during the day. It was the night of Amavas. The swords of the Singhs worked miracles and Ahmed Shah returned to Lahore under cover of darkness. After this he never fought an open battle with the Singhs.

Referring to the Durrani-Singh battle, George Forster writes that although the Singhs had great resentment against the Durranis, yet they kept their impulse of revenge under check; and though

the Afghan massacre and persecution must have been deeply imprinted on their minds they did not, it is said, destroy even one person in cold blood (*A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. 1, page 279).

### The Return of Durrani to Afghanistan

Since Ahmed Shah also wanted to settle the matter concerning Shah Alam the Second, he stayed on in Lahore for about a quarter and two months and agreeing to receive Rs. 40 Lakh annually from him, he accepted him the ruler of Delhi and appointing his own administrators in the following order, he left Lahore in December, 1762 :

Lahore	Kabuli Mal
Sirhind	Zain Khan
between Hill-Beasa and Sutlaj	Raja Ghumand Chand Katauchia Kangria
Jalandhar-Doab	Saadat Khan
Kalanaur	Khwaja Ubaid Khan
Bari Doab	Murad Khan
Rachna & Lehnda	Jahan Khan
Sind Sagar	
Kashmir	Nooruddin Thamezai.

## CHAPTER 19

### The Conditions of 1763

As soon as Ahmed Shah returned to Afghanistan, the Singhs re-occupied their old territories. In fact, many of them had established their control over their territories even while Ahmed Shah was still in Punjab. They would leave their places only to mark time or fight against the enemy or to take part in some common military campaign. Now in the first three months of the year 1763, they had given proper shape to their respective administration and thus they were able to settle their scores with Ahmed Shah who had caused them loss and who had desecrated their holy temple.

During this period S. Jassa Singh decided, in consultation with the Sardars of Khalsa Dal, that they should consolidate their control over the territories conquered by them and take up the construction of the Golden Temple demolished by Ahmed Shah. Therefore, it was decided that the Missals of Doaba and Malwa, Ahluwalia, Singhpurian, Dalewalia, Karor Singhia, Nishanwale and Shaheed should come out once again for this purpose and the Missals of Majah and Riarki, Ramgarhia, Ghanaya, Shukarchakia, Bhangi and Nakai should stay in Amritsar.

#### **The Release of a Brahmin woman from Kasur—Plunder of Kasur**

The Baisakhi fell on April 10, 1763. The Khalsa reached Amritsar from all directions to pay their obeisance. The Khalsa was then in ascendance all around. The Singhs were giving protection, help and moral support to all those who were down and out in the political, social and religious fields. On this day, when the Khalsa congregation was in progress in front of Sri Akal Takht and S. Hari Singh Bhangi sat there, a Brahmin from Kasur came and told him that Usman Khan Kasuria had kidnapped his wife. On hearing the appeal of this aggrieved Brahmin S. Hari Singh Bhangi consulted the other Sardars. Some wise Singhs began to count the number of the fortresses full of arms and

ammunition, while on the other hand, the Khalsa was not even in full strength. But S Hari Singh replied that since the Brahmin had made his appeal in the Court of the Guru, it was their moral duty to help him. S Charat Singh caught hold of his sword and requested S. Hari Singh to offer their community prayer in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib inside the Darbar Sahib and then act according to the divine command. This proposal was unanimously accepted and then they listened to the *hukamnama* from the Holy Granth. This *hukamnama* was as follows :  
 Leaning on the True One, one binds down the All-Powerfull five (desires).

And God stands in One's midst and Makes one Dwell on His Feet.

And one is rid of all one's sorrows and Maladies : and one is ever-Fresh, ever New.

And Dwells on the (Lord's) Name, night and day and dies not again.

And He, from whom one has issued forth, one becomes He.

This divine command removed all doubts from the minds of the Khalsa and ignoring the question of small numbers they advanced towards Kasur. On the way, they did not unfurl their emblem, nor beat their drums. Nor did they come into conflict with anybody, and at noon they entered the city quietly. It happened in 1766, during the month of Ramzan and the final days of fasting (April 12-13). The heat was prodigious. The Pathans of Kasur had retired to their respective fortresses. No One could have dreamt of the attack by the Singhs. There was no question of any preparation for battle. After a brief armed encounter, the Singh liberated the Brahmin woman and handed her over to her husband. This was followed by loot and plunder in the city of Kasur with the farmers and the working men belonging to the scheduled castes from the surrounding villages participating in it. Thus this plunder ruined the rich city though at the same time several poor people became rich all of a sudden.

In this plunder, S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brother Bhai Mali Singh got a rich booty of diamonds, jewels and gold from the house of Hirdey Ram son of Diwan Dila Ram. This booty rather

than being equally shared with Ghanaya Sardar Jai Singh according to the old custom was grabbed by Bhai Mali Singh. Later on it became the cause of a mutual conflict between these two Sikh families (*Prachin Panth Prakosh*, 47-893; Bhoote Shah, 534-35, *Ahmed Shah Batalia*, 491-92).

#### **Jalandhar-Doab**

From Kasur S. Jassa Singh reached Jalandhar-Doab first of all, where the territories were under his own protection and of Dallewalia and Singhpuraian (Faizulapurian). While leaving Punjab Ahmed Shah had appointed Saadat Khan Military Commandant of these areas. He dared not come out to confront the Singhs. He preferred to keep silent and did not leave Jalandhar. Therefore, S. Jassa Singh re-established his control over these territories quite easily.

#### **Katthgarh and Garshankar**

On the occasion of Baisakhi (April, 1763), S. Jassa Singh was in Anandpur. The Sikhs who came to pay their obeisance to their holy temple brought to his notice that Gole Khan of Katthgarh and the Ranghars of Garshankar had looted the Sikhs coming to Anandpur Sahib and other holy places. It was a matter of great regret that the Ranghars should commit excesses on the Sikh pilgrims despite the presence of the Sikh Sardars in that area. S. Jassa Singh established his control over both these places and cleared the way for the Sikh pilgrims (*Jassa Singh Binod*, page 108 ; Urdu, 56-57).

#### **In the Malwa**

From Anandpur the Khalsa Dal came to the Malwa and taking Baba Ala Singh and Bhai Kian along declared that it was the time for settling scores with their enemy. There was enmity between the rulers of Malerkotla and the Singhs. The Malerkotlias had lent their support to Zain Khan, the Military Commandant of Sirhind, and Ahmed Shah Durrani against the Singhs and caused them a heavy loss. Now Dal Khalsa ransacked the whole territory of Malerkotla and Nawab Bhikhan was killed in battle. After this the Singhs moved to Sirhind and captured its surrounding areas.

It appears that after the rainy season, the Khalsa Dal moved to the Doaba under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh and reached

Amritsar on the Diwali Day.

### The Defeat of Jahan Khan of Sialkot

On Nov. 5, 1763, on the occasion of Diwali, the Khalsa decided to teach a lesson to the city of Sirhind. When the Singhs were just preparing their plans and discussing their future course of action, Bakhshi Jahan Khan sent by Ahmd Shah Durrani had already crossed the river Attock. After crossing the river Chenab, he moved towards Sialkot with the hope that he would be able to get military aid from Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu. At this time S Charat Singh was at Gujranwala around 30 miles to the South-West. He summoned S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Jhanda Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangian, and the Singhs challenged Jahan Khan. In the battle Jahan Khan's horse was killed and he himself fell to the ground. On seeing this, the Khalsa raised slogans, "We have killed Jahana, we have killed Jahana. Sat Sri Akal-(victory to the God)." They drew their swords and pounced upon the Afghans and put them to rout. Jahan Khan left the battlefield and ran towards Rohtajgarh. His elephant, arms and ammunition and several female relatives fell into the hands of the Singhs.

At this time the wife of Jahan Khan appealed to S. Charat Singh to protect her honour. Somebody told S. Jassa Singh that the jewellery and Toshokhane of Jahan Khan were in the possession of his women. The Sardar replied that the Khalsa would not touch the wealth or jewellery in the possession of women. S. Jassa Singh told the Begum not to worry at all. He assured her that the Singhs had no enmity with her. They had to settle their scores with those who had come with the intention of fighting. They and their possessions would be fully protected. They would be sent to the places of their choice safely. Consequently, the Begum expressed her wish to go to Jammu. S. Charat Singh sent the family of Jahan Khan along with their belongings and jewellery etc. to Jammu, under the escort of his own men.

Mufti Ali-ud-ddin writes that the Singhs of old times did not touch others' women. Therefore, they sent the family of Jahan Khan to Jammu and themselves returned to their respective

homes in the middle of November. (*Umdat-Twareekh* II Edition, 11 Ahmed Shah Batalia, *Zikre-Guruan Wa-Singhan* 14, Aliudin, Ibratnama, 236 ; Ghanaya Lal, *Tarekh-i-Punjab*, 85, *Jassa Singh Binod*, 123 ; Urdu, 77, *Tareekh-i-Kapurthala*, 210-11).

## The Conquest of Sirhind by the Khalsa (Jan., 1764)

### Defeat of Lachhmi Narain

Being free from the North for sometime, S. Jassa Singh came to the Doaba, and after establishing the necessary administration here he got ready for teaching a lesson to Sirhind according to the Khalsa resolution of Diwali. The Bhangi, Shukarchakia, Ghanaya and Ramgarhia Sardars were also invited, and in the beginning of January, 1764, they crossed the Sutlej from Ropar and assembled at Chamkaur Sahib. This is the place where on 8 Poh Samat 1762 (December 7, 1705)-Sri Guru Gobind Singh had fought the battle against Wazir Khan Faujdar of Sirhind and Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Sahibzada Jhujar Singh and fallen martyrs. Here S. Jassa Singh came to know that Lachhmi Narain Diwan of Zain Khan, Faujdar of Sirhind was collecting land revenue. Therefore, the Khalsa attacked the forces of Lachhmi Narain who took to his heels, leaving everything behind, and took shelter at Kurali. His entire camp along with its wealth came to the hands of the Khalsa. This gave financial prosperity to several Singhs (*Prachin Panth Prakash*, 472-73: Karam Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh*, 224).

### The Trampling down of Morinda

Morinda was situated near Kurali to the south-west. The Ranghars of this place had captured Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the younger sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, from the village of Saheri and handed them over to Wazir Khan, Faujdar of Sirhind who had got them put to death on 13 Poh, Samat 1762 (December 12, 1705). Therefore, the Singhs had a deep resentment against the Ranghars of Morinda. S. Dal Singh and Ran Singh of Gharuan and Salaudi respectively insisted that Morinda should be taught a lesson on their way to Sirhind. S. Jassa Singh wanted to avoid this for certain reasons, but human beings cannot evade 'Destiny'. While passing through Morinda



when some Singhs went to a well to drink water, a few armed Ranghars passed some insulting remarks against them. The Ranghars showed them some ropes and told them that they had been made from the hair of the Singhs, and that they had worn out with the passing of time. Therefore, they demanded fresh hair from the Singhs. They challenged them to a fight saying that they had already killed the sons of their Guru, and that they were standing ready to kill them. In reply to this insinuation when the Singhs made a bitter though a befitting reply, the Ranghars attacked them. On seeing this, S. Shayam Singh and Karora Singh persuaded S. Jassa Singh to attack Morinda. A fierce battle followed resulting in a great loss of life, and in the destruction of Morinda. In the attack on Morinda S. Charat Singh showed exemplary bravery. He encircled Morinda in such a manner that no outside aid could reach the haughty Ranghars. In the same way, Tara Singh Gaibe and other Sardars put in their maximum efforts in humiliating the people of Morinda, but the Sardars of Gharuan played a leading role in causing ruin to the city. In fact, they had an old and outstanding enmity with the Ranghars, and this was reflected in their fights with them from time to time. No one paid much attention to plundering the town, but bearing the excesses committed on the Sahibzadas in mind, they left no stone unturned in expressing their anger against the Ranghars. Obviously the people of Morinda were taught a lesson for their misdeeds. In this world one is destined to reap the harvest of one's deeds, good or bad, and the Ranghars of Morinda were no exception.

#### **Preparation for attack on Sirhind**

Now it was the turn of Sirhind which is situated at a distance of about 14 or 15 miles from Morinda to the South-West. On hearing the very name of Sirhind, the Singhs began to writhe with anger. This is the same cursed place where Faujdar Wazir Khan had got Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh bricked alive in December, 1705 and on 13 Poh, Samat, 1762 (December 12, 1705). They were hacked to death. Naturally the very thought of Sirhind filled the Khalsa with boundless anger, and it was the aim of their life to destroy the city completely. At the

time of Banda Singh, Sirhind was spared for several reasons, and the Khalsa had never had any opportunity to trample it under their foot. This time the Khalsa had come after offering prayers at Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar and taking a vow to destroy it. Their spirits were so high that no power on earth could obstruct their advance or face their attack.

Zain Khan, the then Faujdar of Sirhind had already lost his credentials. Tehmash Khan, the author of *Tehmashnama*, was in Sirhind at the moment, and he was an eye-witness to the excesses and cruelties of Zain Khan. He writes that Zain Khan had violated all old laws and rules. He had stopped the salaries of his soldiers, and he was plundering the villages in his own territory, most unscrupulously. He gave foodgrains to his soldiers worth 1/4th of their salaries. He had established friendly relations with the old kings, and he was busy in accumulating wealth with both his hands. It was foolish to expect a bright future out of such cruel and stupid misdeeds which are in fact always the cause of one's ruin. "I told all my colleagues that the army of Zain Khan would meet its end before long and Sirhind would be turned into a waste land." (*Tehmashnama*, 113-14 (Rao), 108-09). This prophecy of Tehmash Khan came out to be literally true. It appears that Tehmash Khan had got wind of the imminent Khalsa invasion.

Zain Khan could receive no aid from outside either. Emperor Ahmed Shah was far off in Afghanistan. Bakhtsni Jahan Khan had only recently been defeated by the Khalsa at Sialkot and he was nursing his insult and injury in Kohatgarh or Jammu. Sadat Khan was not leaving Jalandhar out of fear, while Kabli Mal did not have sufficient army at Lahore and his present force was required for the protection of the city. Murtaza Khan Warrach Qasim Khan and Tehmash Khan had left him in disgust and desperation (*Tehmashnama* (Rao), 109-13).

On the other hand, all the leading Sardars of the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal had forged unity among their ranks. S. Jassa Singh, Sultan-ul-Qaum, was the leader of both the Dals, and was the Commander of the joint forces. S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh Bhangi, S. Tara Singh Gaibe of Rahon and other Sardars and Missaldars were already

the e. Baba Ala Singh of Patiala also reached with his army which was under the joint command of S. Himat Singh and Chain Singh.

#### **Zain Khan waylaid on the outskirts of Sirhind**

On January 13, 1764, Friday, the Dal Khalsa pounced upon Sirhind. At this time Zain Khan was out in countryside to the East of Sirhind for revenue collection and was literally plundering the villages. S. Jassa Singh thought that it would be highly strategic to encircle Zain Khan and cut him off from the city of Sirhind. He should not be allowed to reach Sirhind fort so that the battle was not prolonged. This plan was approved by all the Sardars, and with a view to checking the entry of Zain Khan in Sirhind, the Budha Dal under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh put up its camp at the village of Bhaganpur to the East of Bassi, while the Taruna Dal took position at the village of Manhera to the South-East of Sirhind so that Zain Khan could not reach Sirhind from any direction. Throughout the night the Singhs were battle-ready on their horse-backs. On the other hand, when Zain Khan came to know of this development, he also spent a sleepless night.

In the small hours of the morning of January, 14, 1764, Zain Khan moved towards Sirhind with a selected number of soldiers from the Manhera side with a view to entering the city quietly and secretly. He left his artillery and other heavy weapons like *Zambura*, *Rehkaley* and drums with his main army. He ordered his main army to beat the drums so that the attention of the Khalsa was diverted in that direction. In the meantime, he would be able to enter Sirhind and take position for a battle with the Singhs.

#### **The Death of Zain Khan**

But S. Jassa Singh had anticipated all these tricks and he had posted spies on all sides. On hearing the sound of the drums, the Majhail Sardars of Taruna Dal advanced towards the main army of Zain Khan. When the spies gave the whole information to S. Jassa Singh, he became cautious. Zain Khan ordered a part of his army to fight against the Singh regiment, and himself made for the city. But the Khalsa stood on the way and they showered a rain of bullets on him. Zain Khan was wounded, and he fell on the ground. Now there was confusion among his ranks. On

hearing the sounds, 'lift him' 'lift him,' the Singhs concluded that Zain Khan lay on the ground, and a large number of Singhs reached there. S. Tara Singh of Mariwala moved forward, and beheaded Zain Khan. As soon as Zain Khan was killed, his army took to *heels* (*Prachin Panth Prakash*-498-502; *Umdat Twareekh*, Vol. I, 161; Vol.2 (ii) *Tazkira Khandan Phoolki n*, 17).

This happened on 4 Maghar, Samat 1820 Bikrami (January 14, 1764). This was the third anniversary of Ahmed Shah Durrani's victory over the Marathas at Panipat. Now exactly three years after, the Singhs eliminated the Durrani administration from the whole territory lying to the south of the Sutlej, and he was never able to establish his control, ever again. Even before a period of two years had elapsed from the date of the massacre, the Singhs had avenged themselves on Durrani by conquering Sirhind. In fact, the arrows which the Durrani shot at the Khalsa in the massacre roused such ire in the heads of the Singhs that they did not allow the Durrani to have a peaceful sleep, and they rested only after eliminating his rule. One year and a quarter after their victory over Sirhind, the Singhs established their firm control over Lahore also, and thus liberated Punjab from the Durrani rule for all times.

#### **Ploughing the Fields with Donkeys at Sirhind**

The ruin of Sirhind can very well be imagined from the ruins of fortresses, double-storied structures and houses and the rubble scattered over several miles. The destruction of Sirhind bears testimony to the fact that when the rod of God descends on the earth to avenge injustice and tyranny, large forts and thickly populated cities are reduced to ashes and beautiful gardens and orchards laid waste.

When the city was being ravaged, somebody brought to the notice of S. Jassa Singh the reported prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh regarding the destruction of Sirhind. The place would be a heap of rubble and brick and the land there would be ploughed with donkeys. S. Jassa Singh who was a devout Sikh, declared that they would carry out the Guru's word. After the destruction of Sirhind, a number of donkeys were brought and S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars ploughed the fields as a kind of ritual to mark the fulfilment of the prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh (*Prachin Panth*

*Prakash-502).*

Sri Guru Gobind Singh's prophecy that the bricks of Sirhind would lie scattered was thus fulfilled. The big houses in the city were reduced to rubble while other houses collapsed after their inhabitants left Sirhind for other places. During this period a custom came in vogue according to which every Sikh passing by Sirhind would carry a brick, and if he were going to some far off place in India, he would throw it into the Yamuna or the Sutlej, while the Sikh who was not to go far away would throw this brick out of the precincts of Sirhind. The older Singhs follow this custom even today. Later, when the railways came into existence, the Maharaja of Patiala sold the debris of Sirhind to the North-Western Railway Company in 1867. The contractor of this Company got the bricks recovered from the debris spread on the railway track. In this way, the bricks of old Sirhind got scattered over an area of several miles and a large number of them were carried away to far off places beyond the Sutlej.

#### **The Division of Sirhind Territory**

With the fall of Sirhind, the entire Faujdari territory was liberated from the Durrani, and the Singhs established their control over it. This territory was about 220 miles in length and 160 miles in breadth, and it lay from the Sutlej in the north to Karnal and Rohtak in the south and in the east it spread from the Jamuna to Bahawalpur in the west. Once again the Muslim Sardars came out and established their control at different places. Leaving aside Shukarchakia, Nakaian, Ghanayan and Ramgarhian Missals which were confined to Jalandhar-Doab and the southern territories, the remaining Missals took some area from the territory of Sirhind into their possession. The Sikh Sardars and their relatives and companions rode from village to village, and accepting a rupee and a quarter or a brick or *gur* or some other article from its *chaudhary* or headman as an offering announced their possession of that village, The other Sardars would not touch this village. They would go to some other village, accept the prescribed offering and announce their ownership of that area. In the middle of the 19th century, Cunningham writes in his book, *History of the Sikhs*, that people "are full of stories even up to this day how after

the conquest of Sirhind the Singhs were rapidly scattered in the whole territory and how horse-riders would go from village to village and throwing their belt the sword sheath or some piece of cloth or a part of the saddle there announced their ownership of different places”.

Banda Singh had lit the flame of freedom after conquering the Malwa territory about 50 or 55 years ago. Now this flame of freedom was lit once again and was in its full glory under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh who liberated Punjab from the yoke of the Durranis and laid the foundation of India's freedom.

The brief account of the territories captured by the Khalsa is to be found in the administrative and revenue reports of Ludhiana, Ambala and Karnal. Since S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the supreme leader of the Khalsa in this freedom struggle, he was Sultan-ul-Qaum and was contented by nature, he did not establish his control over any area. He took in his possession only five villages, namely Naraingarh, Bharog, Barwalian, Jagraun and Fatehgarh as a symbolic gesture.

#### **The Control over Sirhind and its surrounding territories**

Ever since Wazir Khan had put the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh to death, the Sikhs had harboured a natural hatred for this city. They regarded it as an accursed and unfortunate place. They did not deem it proper to utter its real name and, therefore, they called it '*Gurumari*'-the town cursed by the Guru. Consequently, at the time of the division of the territory no Sardar was prepared to take possession of Sirhind. But after all it was to be handed over to some Sardar or other. Therefore, it was decided that this city should go to the Sardar in whose feet the people of that locality from where the population had not migrated take shelter. The city would be transferred in the name of that Sardar with the recital of the prayers. This Sardar would earn no blame or condemnation. The people of the city took shelter with Bhai Buda Singh. The entire Dal expressed its satisfaction at this. The Bhaikas deserved reverence even otherwise. But Bhai Buda Singh was not very happy with the transfer of Sirhind in his name. Therefore, he handed over the administration of Sirhind to Baba Ala Singh of Patiala on 22 Sawan Samat 1821 Bikrami (August 2, 1764) for 25 lakh

rupees. Two years later Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala transferred 12 villages like Adampur, Todarpur etc. to Bhai Buda Singh and established his permanent control over Sirhind (*Mukadma Chaharmian*, C. 7-8, 16, 20).

At the time of the destruction of Sirhind Baba Ala Singh generously persuaded the people of the city to settle in Patiala and gave them all kinds of facilities. He gave them open space to the east of the fort of Patiala. He sent bullock carts and camels for carrying their household effects. In the initial stages he organised community-kitchen for them under the supervision of his queen, Mai Fateh Kaur, popularly known as Mai Fato. This habitation became popular as Sirhindi Mohalla and this continues to be the current name of this locality and the bazar adjoining it is called Sirhindi Bazar.

#### **Malerkotla-Raikot Spared.**

It is pertinent to point out here that although the Singhs had snatched Sirhind from the Durranis, their whole campaign was essentially religious in nature and their aim was to liberate the country from the foreign rule. This campaign was not directed against any ruler simply because he was a Muslim. Thus although the rulers of Malerkotla had opposed the Singhs at the time of the massacre, yet after the conquest of Sirhind they left Malerkotla untouched. Although there were several villages in the territory of Malerkotla, the Singhs gave way neither to greed, nor invented any excuse to settle old scores with the rulers of Malerkotla. They remembered that when Wazir Khan of Sirhind had condemned the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh to death, Sher Mohammed Khan of Malerkotla had tried to save their lives, but he could not have his say. He had left the city uttering a curse for Wazir Khan. The Singhs never forgot this noble act of sympathy, so much so that even during the 1947 riots at the time of the partition of India, the Khalsa saw to it that no harm came to the people of Malerkotla, and the Patiala army reached Malerkotla for their protection.

In the same way, the Singhs spared the territory of Rai Iliaz of Raikot who had descended from the Raikelah dynasty and who had got the news for Guru Gobind Singh regarding his

younger sons from Sirhind through his man, Nooru. The Singhs were beholden to him and, therefore, left his Jagraun territory intact (*Prachin Panth Prakash*, 509).

#### **The Cloth-sheet of the Guru**

Large amounts of wealth came to the hands of the Singhs during the plunder of Sirhind. An amount of 9 lakh rupees came to the share of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, but he did not want to keep even a penny out of it. He knew that while returning after the massacre, Ahmed Shah had blown off Sri Darbar Sahib and the adjoining structures with gunpower and got the holy tank filled up with human and animal skeletons. The temple awaited overhauling. Therefore, one day S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia called the Sarbat Khalsa, and broached the topic of the purification of the Darbar Sahib. He spread out a sheet in the name of the Guru for collecting contributions and placed the amount of 9 lakh rupees on this sheet. This sheet came to be known as '*Guru Ki Chader*,' and an amount of over 5 lakh rupees was contributed by the other Sardars. The whole amount was handed over to Bhai Des Raj Bidichandia so that it could be spent on the renovation of the Darbar Sahib and the purification of the holy tank. Bhai Des Raj undertook this service in a spirit of love and devotion, and the towers destroyed by Ahmed Shah were re-built and the Darbar Sahib was renovated.



## CHAPTER 21

### **The Support of Jawahar Singh Bharatpuria**

#### **The Lawyers of Jawahar Singh Bharatpuria Approach the Khalsa (Feb. 1764)**

Even while S. Jassa Singh was busy in the division and administration of Sirhind, the lawyers of Jawahar Singh, the Jat King of Bharatpur, came to him and brought to his notice that Najibu Daula Rohela had struck terror in their kingdom. Raja Suraj Mal, father of Raja Jawahar Singh, was killed on December 25, 1763 while fighting against Nijibu Daula. The rule of Raja Jawahar Singh was in its initial stages. In view of this situation, the lawyers requested S. Jassa Singh to come to the help of Raja Jawahar Singh. Najibu Daula was a big supporter and stooge of Ahmed Shah Durrani in India. The Singhs had defeated Zain Khan only recently, and they had liberated the Malwa from the clutches of Ahmed Shah Durrani. Therefore, the Singhs decided to help Jawahar Singh Bharatpuria against Najibu Daula, the stooge of Ahmed Shah and the enemy of the motherland. This had several advantages for the Khalsa also. First, this would lead to the decimation of the influence of the Durrani and in future whenever Ahmed Shan invaded India, he would not be able to plant his feet firmly; secondly, after their victory of Sirhind, their influence would spread not only in Punjab, but also outside it. Finally, they would be able to lay their hands on considerable amounts of money, besides tightening their grip over the province.

S. Jassa Singh thought that the Jat King of Bharatpur could be helped best by forcing Najibu Daula to withdraw his army from Bharatpur, and the best way of doing so would be to invade the territory of Najibu Daula. This would terrify him and leaving his external campaign against Jawahar Singh, he would run for the protection of his own territory.

With a view to translating this plan into reality, S. Jassa Singh

made preparations to attack Gang Doab, the territory of Najibu Daula. S. Jassa Singh relieved S. Charat Singh Shukarchakia, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh Bhangian, S. Tara Singh Gaibe Dallelawalia, and Nakaian etc. instructing them to look after their respective territories.

### **The Attack on Gang Doab**

In the third week of February, 1764, under the command of S. Jassa Singh, S. Khushal Singh, Karora Singh, Baghel Singh, Tara Singh Gaibe, Gurbakhsh Singh, Bhariga Singh, Karam Singh, Rai Singh and others with 40 thousand horse riders crossed the Jamuna from Buria, and on Feb. 20, they captured Saharanpur. From here the Missaldar Sardars moved to their chosen targets. The moment Najibu Daula received this news, he was extremely nervous. In his own wisdom, he had gone to conquer territories, but into the bargain, he lost his whole territory to the Singhs. He returned to his native land rapidly but there he had to face a formidable enemy. If he attacked the Singhs in one direction, they invaded another city, and if he turned to that city, the Singhs would attack the third one. Thus, the Khalsa attacked in rapid succession Shamli, Kangla, Ambi, Meerapur, Deoband, Muzaffarpur, Jwalapur, Karkhart, Landhaunia, Najibabad etc. and shocked and surprised Najibu Daula. Now there was no way of escape for him. Therefore, he sent his lawyers to the Khalsa, and offered Rs. 11/- lakh. By this time the purpose of the Khalsa had been served. The pressure from Raja Jawahar Singh Bharatpuria had been lifted, Najibu Daula had been crushed, and the Singhs were in ascendance on all sides. They accepted the offer of Rs. 11.00 lakh, and thus humiliated Najibu Daula. At the moment they did not want anything more. Therefore, S. Jassa Singh returned to Punjab in the end of February. (Nooru-din (Rashid) *Najibu Daula*, 77; Tehmashnama (Rao), 113; Ganda Singh, *Ahmed Shah Durrani*, 293).

### **Khalsaji in Support of Jawahar Singh once again (December, 1764-Feb. 1765)**

With the help of S. Jassa Singh, Raja Jawahar Singh was free from the pressure and threat of Najibu Daula. This put him in high spirits and he established friendly relations with the Khalsa. He wanted to avenge the death of his father. Therefore, he ente-

red into a kind of treaty with Malhar Rao Holkar, and at the same time wrote to the Khalsaji for support. At this time, Najibu Daula was working as Vakeeley Mutalakh i. e. Kulli-kar Mukhtiar (or sovereign agent) with the Mughal Emperor of Delhi Shah Alam II, on behalf of Ahmed Shah Durrani. Therefore, Jawahar Singh attacked Delhi on Nov. 15-16, 1764, he fought initial battles with Najibu Daula. During this period Malhar Rao Holkar was a silent spectator, and he did not lend any support worth mentioning to Jawahar Singh. Consequently, Jawahar Singh did not have much hope of support from the Marathas. S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia also reached Delhi towards the end of December, 1764 or in the beginning of January, 1765 with a 15 thousand strong Singh army.

When the Khalsa reached the Brarighat, Jawahar Singh crossed Jammuna and came to meet them. The congregation of the Khalsa was in progress. A servant of Jawahar Singh carrying his hubble-bubble accompanied him. The Singhs stopped him at the outer gate. After the negotiations the Singhs offered the collective prayer uttering the following words. "O God Jawahar Singh son of Suraj Mal, follower of Guru Nanak has taken shelter with the Khalsa and with your blessings he wants to avenge the murder of his father." Jawahar Singh was completely ignorant of the laws of Sikh congregations and the rituals of the Sikh religion. He had come to the Sikh congregation for the first time. He did not know that here princes and paupers, Emperors and poor people are all equal. Jawahar Singh knew the rules only of his own Court where all people bow to the king with folded hands. But those who come to the Guru Khalsa Diwan fold their hands and enter humbly and after paying obeissance to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* bow to the congregation and take their seats wherever they find them. All this was new and strange for Jawahar Singh. He did not know that tobacco was a taboo in the Khalsa Code of Conduct and taking hubble-bubble to their congregation was a violation of this Code. Therefore, he did not like his man carrying his hubble-bubble being stopped by the Khalsa nor did the words of the prayer appeal to him. His discomfort was clearly a result of his own ignorance, but since he badly needed the support of the Khalsa at the moment, he did not make an issue of the whole situation.

It was decided that the Khalsa should attack Delhi from the Sabzi Mandi in the north laying Najibu Daula's territory waste at the same time so that he might start thinking of defending it. The Delhi attack by the Singhs humiliated Najibu Daula to a great extent, but they did not have artillery, and as such they could not make considerable dent in Delhi. On Feb 4, 1765, a big battle broke out between the Singhs and Najibu Daula near Sabzi Mandi and Nakhas. In this battle, the Rohelas were put to rout and they had to beat a retreat. (Kanoongo-Jats, 176).

In the meantime, news was in the air that on the invitation of Najibu Daula, Ahmed Shah Durrani had arrived in Punjab. This news upset the Marathas. Malhar Rao was already not in favour of causing much loss to Najibu Daula. Ima Dul Mulak Gazi-u-Din who had been a refugee in Bharatpur from the days of Raja Suraj Mal also joined hands with him and planned a secret compromise with Najibu Daula. Jawahar Singh did not favour this compromise. But when Malhar and Imad joined the enemy in the end, he was also forced to accept the proposal for compromise with Najibu Daula. Not only that, some old Jat Sardars of the time of Suraj Mal were also against Jawahar Singh, and in their heart of hearts they wanted him to be defeated. The Khalsa came to know of this whole conspiracy only when the plan had been translated into action. Thus, on February 16, Jawahar Singh left Delhi and returned to his territory. (*Noor-u-Din*, 77-103; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 459-68 Kanoongo, 'History of the Jats,' 174-179).

Now there was no reason why the Khalsa should prolong its stay in Delhi. On the other hand, Ahmed Shah had already reached Punjab and it was extremely urgent for the Khalsa to go there. Therefore, they returned to Punjab immediately and speedily.

## CHAPTER 22

### **The Domination of the Singhs in Punjab**

#### **The Writ of the Khalsa in Lahore**

In February, 1764 when S. Jassa Singh accompanied by the Budha Dal had gone in support of Jawahar Singh Bhartpur and was in Saharanpur the territory of Najib Khan Rohela, the Sardars of Taruna Dal had returned to Jalandhar-Bari and Rachna Doab to protect their territories in that area. As soon as they reached Jalandhar-Doab, its Faujdar Saddat Khan, left this place quietly. In fact, he had been deeply shaken and frightened by the defeat and death of Zain Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind. Thus, the Khalsa was able to establish its control over the Doaba easily.

Now the Khalsa forces advanced towards Lahore. At this time, Kabuli Mal was the ruler of Lahore. The Khalsa had to fight its first battle with Ubaid Khan who had come here from Kalan. In this battle, Ubaid Khan was killed. Now the Singhs converged around Kabuli Mal and asked him to punish the Lahore butchers who had recently killed 30 cows and thus hurt the Hindu sentiment. Kabuli Mal replied that he was an employee of a religious Muslim Emperor (Ahmed Shah). The banning of the cow slaughter would annoy him. But at the same time, it was not easy for Kabuli Khan to displease the Khalsa who had virtually entered Lahore. Therefore, Kabuli Mal sought the permission and consent of the city noble men and got the hands and noses of two or three butchers chopped off. At the same time, Kabuli Mal agreed to pay compensation to the Khalsa, and he employed Tek Chand, the lawyer of S. Hari Singh, on a remuneration of Rs. 10/-per day. In this way, the foundation of the Khalsa rule was laid in the Capital city of Lahore. Close to Lahore at a distance of about 8 miles, S. Soba Singh had established his control over Niaz Beg, and he was collecting octroi there. This resulted in hardship to

the traders of Lahore. Kabuli Mal employed another man to station himself in Lahore to claim his share in the octroi. This gave some relief to the people of Lahore. As a result of these developments, to the east of the Chenab the Durrani rule was confined to the city of Lahore and its fort. The remaining territory was captured by the Khalsa. Whatever influence the Durranis had to the west of the chanab up to Jhelum and to Multan in the south west was put to an end by S. Charat Singh and the Bhangi Sardars in the summer of 1764. (Ali-U-Din, *Ibratnama*, 234-25, Ghanaya Lal, 84 ; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 494).

### **The Control of S. Charat Singh over Rohtas**

After his return from Sirhind, S. Charat Singh learnt that when the Singhs were away on Sirhind campaign, Sarbuland Khan, Faujdar of Rohtas had established his control over the Gujrat territory after crossing the river Jhelum and that he had put the *Chaudharies* and Kanugos in prison. Sarbuland Khan had got Chaudhary Rehmat Shah and Diwan Shivnath killed on the charge that it was at their invitation that the Khalsa had established its control over Gujrat. Therefore, it was essential for the Khalsa to liberate Gujrat from the clutches of Sarbuland Khan, get the Kanugos and *Chaudharies* released from the prison and hold regular inquiries in the circumstances of the killings of innocent people. With this end in view, S. Charat Singh and S. Gujjar Singh Bhangi laid siege around the fort of Rohtas. The siege lasted for four months, but the fort could not be conquered. Now the Sardars decided to lift the siege, and pretended to beat a retreat. When Sarbuland Khan came out of the fort to chase away the Singhs, they suddenly turned back and encircled the Khan and captured him alive. But S. Charat Singh gave him a dignified treatment and every kind of facility. On seeing this, Sarbuland Khan felt so happy that he told S. Charat Singh that if the latter became the new Emperor he would be ready to serve him as his Faujdar. S. Charat Singh replied : "God has already given royal powers to the Khalsa. We want to keep you in the prison so that the entire world should know that the uncle of Emperor Ahmed Shah was in the prison of Charat Singh." On

hearing this, Sarbuland Khan suggested to S. Charat Singh that his release from the prison would bring S. Charat Singh still greater glory because the people would think that S. Charat Singh was so powerful that he had taken the Emperor Ahmes Shah's uncle in his custody and later released him at will. This suggestion appealed to S. Charat Singh, and he bade a respectful farewell to Sarbuland Khan.

With this victory, the entire territory lying between the Jhelum and the Sind fell into the hands of the Khalsa, and this was divided by S. Charat Singh and the Bhangi Sardars among themselves. (Ganesh Dass *Chahar Begh, Punjab*, 131; *Umdat Twareekh*-Vol. ii, 12; *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 496-98).

#### **The Singhs Reach the Deras of Multan**

At the time, when S. Charat Singh and S. Gujjar Singh were engaged in their campaign against Sarbuland Khan, S. Hari Singh Bhangi, his sons, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and Hira Singh Nakai, advanced towards South West Punjab, and after conquering Multan reached Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Gazi Khan. Qazi Noor Mohammed Gunjabe, the author of *Jangnama* (completed in June, 1765), writes : "The heathen Sikhs have reached the territories of Lahore and Multan. They have attached all the territories from Lahore to the Deras. ...They have exerted a great pressure on the devout Muslims and trampled the whole territory of Multan under their foot." (38-407).

## The Seventh Invasion of Durrani

### Preparation of Jihad Against the Sikhs

When Emperor Ahmed Shah came to know in Afghanistan that the Khalsa had driven the Durrani out of Punjab, captured Sirhind after killing Zain Khan, turned Saddat Khan out of Jalandhar secured the surrender of Kabuli Mal in Lahore, made Jahan Khan and Sarbuland Khan quit Sialkot and Rohtas respectively, conquered Multan, and reached Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Gazi Khan situated close to the Sind-Afghanistan border, he was greatly upset. Considering that his famous and brave military generals like Jahan Khan, Sarbuland Khan, Zain Khan, Sarferoz Khan, Murad Khan, Saddat Khan and others could not prevent the advance of the Singhs, the Emperor wrote to Mir Nasir Khan, the Baloch ruler of Kalat, saying that he should give up the idea of going to Mecca for *Haj*, and should join him with his entire army in his religious war against the Singhs.

Mir Nasir Khan had already heard the news of the Khalsa invasion of Multan and the Deras. He had become worried about his own territory which was not very far off from Dera Gazi Khan to the west. Even otherwise Multan was an area where there were several tombs and shrines of saints. Therefore, Mir Nasir Khan referred the proposal of the *jihad* against the Singhs to his priests for judgement. They approved it, and advised him to seek the permission of Emperor Ahmed Shah.

### The Invasion of Punjab by Ahmed Shah and Mir Nasir Khan

Thus Emperor Ahmed Shah and Mir Nasir Khan Baloch invaded Punjab in October, 1764 with a resolve of *jihad* against the Singhs, and 18 thousand Durrani and 12 thousand Balochis were united near Emnabad. Noor Mohammed, the Qazi of Gunjabe, also joined the army of Mir Nasir Khan, and he appealed to him that after the conclusion of this *jihad* when



the Emperor gave him the Deras and the territory of Shikarpur, he (Qazi Nor Mohammed) should be made the Qazi of either of these two places. The Qazi promised to accompany Mir Nasir Khan and present a true account of the *jihad*. Mir Nasir Khan accepted the idea and thus an account of this war was written under the title '*Jangnama*' and this book forms the basis of the present chapter. Nowhere else do we find such a detailed account of this invasion of Ahmed Shah.

At this time there were no Singhs in the central Punjab. As has already been pointed out, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was away to Delhi with 15 thousand Singhs of the Budha Dal to support the Jat King of Bharatpur. Only S. Charat Singh was in Rachna and Doab, and at the moment he was away to Sialkot. As soon as he came to know of the invasion of Ahmed Shah, he made rapid advance towards Lahore.

Therefore, when the Khalsa reached Lahore unobstructed in the third or 4th week of November, there was none to face them there. The Shah was on the horns of a dilemma, and he called a meeting and consulted his Sardars as to the future course of action in such a situation.

#### **The Attack of S. Charat Singh**

The next morning, as was the usual custom, the Chief Afghan Sardars were in the presence of their Emperor when a horse rider came riding fast from the advance guard and broke the news that Sikh army had invaded the Durrani army and put the soldiers of the advance guard in a very tight condition. If the Emperor did not reach there to support them, the entire world would sink into darkness.

The leader of the Singh army was S. Charat Singh who had attacked the advance guard of the Baloch army which was under the joint command of Gehran Khan Magsi and Ahmed Khan Balidi. The attack by S. Charat Singh was so swift and formidable that Ahmed Khan and his son were killed in the first instance. Mir Abdul Nabi Raisani and Mir Nasir Khan reached the scene of the battle in support of their advance guard. In the battle, the horse of Mir Nasir Khan was killed, and he himself fell to the ground. Right at this moment, if two of his gunmen had not fired shots at the attacking Singhs,

only Providence could have saved him. A pitched battle continued till night, and it came to an end only after darkness had descended on the world. The Singhs had a unique style of attacking. First, a regiment would fire on the enemy positions from a distance, and then it would retreat for the re-loading of its guns. In the meantime, another regiment would attack the enemy from the other direction. In this way, three or four regiments would continue showering a rain of bullets from all directions and would not allow the enemy to move in any direction or to take rest. They would manage some rest for themselves to keep the enemy hard pressed all the time. When Mir Nasir Khan met Ahmed Shah again, the Emperor congratulated him on his bravery. At the same time, he cautioned him not to go so fast against the Singhs and thus risk his life. (*J. ngn ma*, 80-97).

#### **The Sacrifice of 30 Singhs in Amritsar**

Thus, after one encounter with Ahmed Shah, S. Charat Singh retreated to a safe place and began to wait for a second opportunity. Someone reported to the Shah that the Singhs had left for Amritsar. Therefore, the Shah moved in that direction. It took him three nights and 3 days on the way and on the fourth night (November 30, 1764), he reached Amritsar. It appears that his movement towards Amritsar was obstructed by the occasional attacks by the Singhs. On December 1, when Ahmed Shah reached Sri Darbar Sahib, he could see no Singh anywhere around. Many of them might not have come here. When the Shah reached the Parikarma, 30 Singhs came out of the tower and pounced upon the army of the Shah numbering 30 thousand-18 thousand Afghans and 12 thousand Balochis. Noor Mohammed writes, "When the Emperor and his royal army reached Guru Chak (Amritsar), no *kafir* (non-believer) could be seen there. But a few men had been staying in the tower for protecting the sanctity of Sri Darbar Sahib and they sacrificed their lives for the Guru. When they saw the Emperor and the Islamic army, all of them left the tower. They were 30 in number. They were not at all frightened or perturbed in the face of death. They engaged themselves in a battle against the Muslim soldiers, and in this attempt,

they spilt their blood. Thus, all those Singhs were killed and their souls were transported to the seventh hell."

This is an eye-witness account given by Qazi Noor Mohammed. From this account, we come to know how only 30 Singhs ignoring the idea of their small number, came out of the Akal Takht tower and attacked the 30-thousand Afghan-Bloch army of the Shah, and in complete defiance of death, they sacrificed their lives in the name of the Guru. This was the group (Jatha) of Bhai Gurbax Singh which embraced martyrdom on December 1, 1764 in defence of Sri Darbar Sahib.

#### **Ahmed Shah's Movement towards Delhi**

Ahmed Shah now searched for the Singhs here and there but they were nowhere to be seen. Therefore, he returned to Lahore. Here he consulted his Sardars as to the future course of action when the Singhs did not come forward for an open battle. Mir Nasir Khan brought to his notice that at the moment Najib Daula was under siege in Delhi. Therefore, they should go to Sirhind and await news regarding him, and they would act according to this report. Mir Nasir Khan added that as soon as the news of Emperor Ahmed Shah's arrival reached Delhi, the enemies of Najib would be scattered, and he would be liberated. This proposal found favour with all the Sardars and the Emperor.

Now the Shah reached Batala and plundered the whole territory. The army Sardars, soldiers and their relatives garged themselves freely and copiously on a variety of rich foods including *gur* (raw sugar) beef and oil-seeds etc. The Durrani indulged in plunder so freely and rendered the countryside so barren that the following proverb became popular with the people :

"To us belongs only that much which we eat and drink, The remainder goes to Ahmed Shah."

Crossing the river Beas at this point, the Durrani entered the district of Hoshiarpur. The Singhs attacked them suddenly and putting Jahan Khan in fear and confusion they disappeared. After the Shah had crossed the river Sutlej, he was given such a hard time by the Singhs that he gave up the idea of staying at Sirhind and made for Kunjpura so that

he could make arrangements for the aid of Najibu Daula. This relates to the middle of February, 1765 (*Jangnama*, 101-113).

#### **Ahmed Shah's Retreat**

By this time Najibu Daula and Jawahar Singh had reached a compromise through the good offices of Malhar Rao Holeykar and Iman-U-Dal-Malik Gazi-U-Din. Najibu Daula was no longer in need of the Shah's help. Therefore, the Shah's movement towards Delhi was meaningless. Mir Nasir Khan was of the view that the Emperor should spend the summer and rainy season in Delhi so that all the outstanding matters concerning the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, could be dealt with, and then they should launch an attack against the Singhs with the joint forces of Najibu Daula, Mughal Emperor, Shah Sujah, the Rohellas of Farukhabad, the Jats and the Marathas. But the Afghan Sardars of Abdali did not approve of this proposal. Their experiences of the years 1757-1760 were very bitter. They also feared that if the epidemic of 1757 broke out again or if the rain of 1760 repeated its course, their countless horses and camels would die and during their return journey all their plunder would be looted. Ahmed Shah also appreciated this view and he ordered his army to return to Afghanistan (*Jangnama*, 119-22).

At this time S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and the Sardars of the Budha Dal Missal along with 15 thousand Singhs were coming back to Punjab after the return of Jawahar Singh to Bharatpur. Ahmed Shah's decision to return might also have been confirmed by the view that a possibility of reaching some kind of compromise with the Singhs might come his way.

#### **The Present of Drums (*Dhaunsas*) Symbols (*Nishan*) to Baba Ala Singh by Durrani**

Within three or four days, Ahmed Shah returned from Kunjpura and reached Sirhind. According to Noor Mohammed, the city lay waste and deserted. After the death of Zain Khan, this city was now under the control of Baba Ala Singh of Patiala. By now Ahmed Shah was sure that no other ruler except a Sikh would be able to stabilise himself in Sirhind and in his view Ala Singh was the only Sikh Sardar to whom

the administration of Sirhind could be handed over. He was a leading Sardar in the Khalsa Panth and Chief of the Phoolkian Missal. Therefore, Ahmed Shah invited S. Ala Singh to Sirhind, gave him great honour and conferred on him the title of a king and presented him with royal symbols—the drum and Flag (Tabl-o-Alam), and on Ala Singh's recommendations, he exempted his people from the payment of revenue for one year so that the city could be rehabilitated. (*Jangnama*, 125-28).

### **The Attacks of the Khalsa**

It was the wish of the Shah to sort out matters with the other Sikh Sardars also. But their leader was S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on whom the Panth had conferred the title of Sultan-Ul-Qaum. Now, how could the Emperor of the Panth bow to any foreign Emperor. The Guru had already given royal authority to the Panth. Therefore, there was no reason why their Emperor should compromise his principles with tyrants. Secondly, after their return from Delhi the Sikh Sardars had decided to fight a final battle against Ahmed Shah who invaded Punjab and India every third day, as it were. Consequently, planning a big battle against Ahmed Shah, the Khalsa blocked the highway at Philaur and Talwan, and began to wait for the Shah.

Ahmed Shah also knew the Singhs very well. He quietly crossed the river Sutlej from Ropar and even before the Singhs could get any wind of his movement, his army had pitched its tents on the other bank of the river. Now he had reached the Douba. The next day hardly had he covered some distance, when the Khalsa confronted him and challenged him to a battle. When the matter was reported to the Shah, he was in fury, and expressed his surprise over the action of the Singhs who had created a storm, even while he was still around. He thought that when his own army was lethargic in the *jehad*, the attacks by the Singhs were justified. It was a matter of shame for him to hear the taunts of the people that the heathens were attacking his armies.

### **The Battle of the First Day**

Now Ahmed Shah ordered his army to get ready for a battle; "O My soldiers, this is a *jehad*; pounce upon these heathens." He

handed over the command of the right side to his Prime Minister, Shah Wali Khan, Bakhshi Zahan Khan, Anjula Khan, Shah Pasand Khan and other famous Sardars, and that of the left side to Mir Nasir Khan Baloch.

On the other hand, the commander of the Khalsa army was S. Jassa Singh. He was in the middle of his army, accompanied by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. On his right side was S. Charat Singh accompanied by Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh Bhangi and Jai Singh Ghanaya. They were facing Nasir Khan. On the left side of S. Jassa Singh there were Hari Singh Lama, Ram Dass, Gulab Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi, and they were face to face with Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan and others.

Seeing S. Charat Singh facing Mir Nasir Khan, Ahmed Shah instructed the latter to stand alert at his position. He asked him to keep to his left and not move forward to his position. He added that even if he happened to see the enemy force he should not attack it. He should not budge forward under any circumstances.

When the battle broke out, S. Hari Singh attacked the right phalanx of the Afghans and pressed them hard. When Ahmed Shah noticed that Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan and others were unable to obstruct the movement of the Singhs, he called Nasir Khan Baloch and told him that the Singhs had gained an upper hand on his right side. The soldiers of this side had gone far ahead and seeing this, the Singhs had come again; "You see that they have outnumbered our soldiers and they are showering a rain of arrows and bullets on our army like heathens. Their courage astonishes me. Go to this side and obstruct the movement of the Singhs. But see that you do not show any haste in the battle against the Singhs. I order you in the name of God not to budge from your position. Do not chase the enemy; he will come to you himself. These enemies are very powerful and in the battle-field they become living flames of fire. Their ancestors were also brave men who came to the battlefield one by one and pounced upon the enemy army."

But despite this counsel, Nasir Khan was caught in the trap laid by the Singhs. When the battle was in progress, the Singhs pretended to retreat a little. When the Baloch soldiers left their

positions with a view to attacking the Singhs, the latter occupied the positions vacated by them. In this way, Nasir Khan was cut off from the Shah, but soon, it was night and Nasir Khan saved his life with great difficulty. (*Jangnama*, 128-56).

Noor Mohammed has written a detailed account of this one day battle and praised the Durrani, especially the Balochis for their bravery. He writes that in this battle 500 Singhs lost their lives and this number was recorded in the office. Among them the number of Singhs killed by the army of Mir Nasir Khan was 124. (*Jangnama*, 154-55). The total number of both the fighting forces of Durrani was 30 thousand-18 thousand Afghans and 12 thousand Baloches. Even if the number of the Singhs killed in this battle as given out by Noor Mohammed is correct, it may be concluded that from morning till evening, 100 Afghans and Baloch-warriors collectively were able to kill just one Singh. And this situation is interpreted by the author of *Jangnama* as the victory of Durrani and the proof of the bravery of his army. However, Noor Mohammed has not given the number of the Afghans and Baloch soldiers killed in this battle. In view of this silence, it is not possible to make any comparison and contrast. But there is no doubt that the casualties suffered by the Shah must have been heavy. The number of these casualties could very well be estimated from Noor Mohammed's account of all the Afghans swept away by the flood in the river Chenab. He says that the flood was so furious that fathers did not care to save the life of their sons, while mothers threw their children into the water, and men did not try to save women. The number of people swept away by the terrible flood far exceeded the number of those soldiers killed by the Singhs in the battle. (*Jangnama*, 170-71).

It was but natural for Noor Mohammed to sing the praise of the Durrani and Baloch soldiers for after all he had come with Mir Nasir Khan of Kalat to record their valorous deeds. But on seeing the bravery of the Singhs in the battle, he was so deeply impressed that he was all praise for them and later devoted a full Chapter No. 41 (page 156-59) of 58 stanzas to the heroism, courage and spirit of sacrifices displayed by the Singhs.

This chapter is clearly indicative of the impact left by the

Sikh bravery on his mind. In chapter No. 42, he refers to those territories over which the Singhs had established their control. (*Ponth Prakash*, 160-61). It is true that in his *Jangnama*, Noor Mohammed condemns the Singhs again and again, heaping abuse on them and using such words for them as 'dogs', 'disgraceful,' 'dirty,' 'idol worshippers', 'pig eaters' etc. But when such a fanatic enemy has at the same time a word of praise for the Singhs, it is highly valuable for understanding history. It is for this reason that although the *Jangnama* is a dictionary of abuse, it is a precious document for Punjab history.

### **The Battle of the Second Day**

The next day with the sun-rise, the Shah ordered his army to move forward, but hardly had they covered two or three miles when the Singhs launched a frontal attack on them. They encircled the Shah's army from the left and the right. On this day, they had changed the side of their forces-the Sardars and soldiers who had fought on the right the previous day were shifted to the left, and vice-versa. In the same way, the front portion of their army had gone to the back side and vice-versa.

The regiments of the attacking Singhs came jumping and they started the battle. The Shah's advance was obstructed, and he pitched his flags and brought his army to a stop. Then he took a round of his army, and instructed them to keep standing and fight from the present position. Approaching Nasir Khan the Shah told him that the Baloch army was his right arm. It should stand firm like a mountain and without his orders it should not budge even an inch.

Finding it a suitable opportunity, the Shah ordered his army to attack the enemy and it pounced upon the Singhs. When they had covered some distance, they could spot no one in the battle-field. Therefore, the soldiers retreated, but the moment they turned their backs, the Singhs attacked them from all directions. Now Ahmed Shah again began to go round his army, and instructed Nasir Khan not to move forward even if he saw the enemy close in front. The Balochis should stand firm like a rock, he commanded. The Shah had given these orders to other soldiers also. Now Nasir Khan did not deem it proper to leave his position in violation of the orders of the Shah.



Ahmed Shah's army was not allowed to move forward. Therefore, the Singhs launched attacks while the Durranis and the Balochis were mainly on the defensive. Thus, the battle continued throughout the day, and at night all returned to their respective places. (*Jangnama*, 161-64).

Noor Mohammed does not give the number of the Singhs killed in this battle.

### **The Battle of the Third day and its Aftermath**

The battle of the third day was fought on the pattern of the previous two battles. In the morning, hardly had Ahmed Shah covered a distance of five or six miles from his camp, when the Singhs attacked his army and waylaid it. They surprised him with their sorties throughout the day, and, as before, they returned to their camp only in the evening. After this battle, Noor Mohammed has not made any reference whatever to the battles of the fourth, fifth and sixth day, but he does refer to the Singhs' attack on the Shah's army to the south of the Beas on the seventh day.

It is clear from the *Jangnama* of Noor Mohammed that under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jai Singh Ghanaya, Hari Singh Bhangi and other Sardars, the Singhs gave such a tough time to Ahmed Shah with their sorties on his army between the Beas and the Sutlej that there was no peace for him even for a single day in the Doaba. The same Ahmed Shah who in the absence of the Singhs leaves Lahore in the beginning of December and stops in Rearki and the Doaba for days together looting towns and villages and reaches Sirhind after two and a half months, his army making a feast of sugarcane, *gur*, *til* and beef, finds himself in a tight corner as soon as S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia returns from Delhi, and reaches Sirhind from Kunjpura just on the fourth day, and from there he moves to Ropar on the third day. The Singhs did not allow him to stay stable anywhere in the whole of Doaba, and pushed him to the south of Beas within a period of seven days. The Afghan and Baloch warriors had come with the sole objective of *jehad* against the Singhs and they claimed that they would eliminate the Khalsa, take their women and children as prisoners and beat their bones into shreds. (*Jangnama*, 40-41,78). But when they had to deal with the Singhs,

they were so confused that Noor Mohammed went to the extent of saying that even if the Singhs appeared to be retreating, they should not be taken seriously. It was a tactic of their warfare. The Shah's army should be doubly cautious of them (157). When the Singhs began to obstruct the movement of the Shah's army from the right and the left, the same Shah who had said at the initial stages that the Singhs were nowhere to be seen, began to instruct the officers and soldiers of his army personally not to run after the Singhs with a view to attacking them, nor leave their own positions. He would instruct Mir Nasir Khan again and again not to leave his position but stand firm like a mountain. He should neither attack the Singhs even if he saw them close in front nor chase them. He was astonished at their bravery and courage (129, 135, 157, 163). In fact, one may be a prince or a pauper, big or small, rich or poor, if one contemplates evil for others, and drunk with pride, is out to quench one's thirst with the blood of others, or wants to take others prisoners and make them slaves, and if one is cruel and tyrannical, one does not attain prosperity or success. Pride has a fall and tyranny is always humiliated. This is the divine law of retribution. There may be delay in it, but the whole process is inevitable.

#### **The Shah's Direct Movement to Afghanistan**

When Ahmed Shah had crossed the river Beas, the Singhs stopped chasing him, and the Shah crossed the Ravi and in the middle of March, 1765, he reached the river Chenab. While crossing the river Sutlej from Ropar, it had been reported to him that the Singhs were collecting a big army in Chak Guru, (Amritsar) for fighting a big battle against him. Noor Mohammed writes that when the soldiers of Ahmed Shah heard this news, they felt excited and happy, and the Shah ordered his army to move towards Chak Guru and eliminate the heathens. (1, 8-29).

But the seventh day battle on the way left such a bitter taste in the mouth of the Shah that after reaching Amritsar, he gave up the idea of any further battle against the Singhs and without stopping at Lahore he crossed the river Ravi. (167-68).

The six streams of the river Chenab were crossed quite

easily by the Shah's army, but the last two streams were very deep with a swift and powerful current of water in them. Thousands of camels laden with goods, horses, donkeys, bullocks, buffaloes, goods, treasures, children and women were washed away. In that moment it appeared as if the Shah were on the gateway of the doomsday. Noor Mohammed writes, "Whenever he remembers this day, his entire being begins to shake with the fear of doom. The number of men, horses and camels who died in the river far exceeded the number of the soldiers killed in the battle with the Singhs. After crossing the river Jhelum from Rohtas. Mir Nasir Khan left for Balochistan and Ahmed Shah returned to Afghanistan (168-176).

### **The Description of the Bravery of the Singhs**

From the point of view of the Punjab history, two statements of Qazi Noor Mohammed in *Jangnama* are significant. These statements cover Chapters No. 41 and 42, because all that has been recorded by him here is based on what he had seen with his own eyes. Between November, 1764 and March, 1765, he had written the whole account in 1178 Hijri which began on June 19, 1765. By this time, the Khalsa had established its firm control over Lahore, having occupied the city on April 17. The two statements of Noor Mohammed referred to above concern the bravery of the Singhs in the battlefield and their occupation of territories in Punjab before establishing their control over Lahore. In Chapter No. 41, Noor Mohammed writes as follows in praise of the bravery of the Singhs :

"Don't call the dogs by their proper names, they are really tigers and they really fight like tigers in the battlefield.

The warrior who roars like a tiger in the battlefield could not be a dog. If you want to learn the art of warfare, come out and face them in the battle. They will show you such astonishing tactics that all of you would admire them.

O swordsmen, if you want to be expert in the art of warfare, learn it from them and they will teach you how to face the enemy and how to come out unscathed from the battle.

It should be clear to all that 'Singh' is their decoration. It is not justified to read or interpret this term as dog.

O young men, if you do not know listen to me, in Hindustani language, 'Singh' means 'lion'. In the battlefield they conduct themselves like 'lions' while in the leisure time they surpass even Hatam.

When these Indians take up swords in their hands, they become a destructive force from Hind to Sind. No man, howsoever powerful he may be, could resist them.

When they take up spear in their hands, they put the enemy's army to rout. When they raise the tip of the spear to the sky, they could pierce even the Qaf mountain.

When they put their arrows on their bow and pull it with all their might, the enemy trembles with fear.

When their war axe falls on the enemy he turns into a corpse. In terms of the body, everyone of them is a fragment of and each one of them excels 50 men.

If Behrangore who killed the donkeys and made the lion shriek, is locked in a fight with them they would be able to defeat him.

In the battlefield, when they take up the gun, they roar like tigers, raise slogans and come jumping to the battlefield. They pierce the hearts of many an enemy, and spill the blood of many others. It should be admitted that the gun is the invention of these people and not of Hakim Lukman.

Of course, there are several other gunmen, but there is none to match them. In front, behind, to the right and the left they shower a rain of bullets.

If you do not believe me, ask the soldiers who wield swords in the battles against these people. They would be full of even greater admiration for them and eulogize their battle tactics.

The 30 thousand warriors who have fought against them would bear me out in what I state.

O Youngmen, even if there is a confusion in their ranks, don't take it as their retreat, because this is also one of their war tactics. Beware of this trap of theirs. When they employ this tactic, the enemy runs after them in anger, thus moving away from the immediate aid of the

main army.

Then they turn back and set even water on fire

Did not you see them in the battle in which they had shown a white feather to Mir Nasir Khan with a view to deceiving him ?

Later they had turned back and encircled the Khan.

Then that noble warrior came down from his horse and began to shoot arrows and fire his gun, and came out of their trap boldly.

O Warriors, you can yourself judge their war tactics.

One of their regiments attacked Multan and plundered it. These dogs looted boundless wealth from there. It is, indeed, hard to believe what they did there.

Eversince the creation of this world, none remembers that Multan was ever subjected to such a terrible attack by any power.

But that was the will of God and we should bow to it. Besides their exploits in the battles, they have another quality in which they surpass all other warriors.

They do not kill the man who lays down his arms in the battle, nor do they stop the running enemy.

In plunder they do not touch the wealth and ornaments of a woman, whether she is a housewife or a slave.

There is neither the element of immorality nor the vice of theft among them.

They address a woman, young or old, as 'old woman'. They say 'old woman' move aside."

In Hindustani language, 'old woman' is a woman of advanced age.

They do not commit theft nor is there any *braggart* among them.

They do not enter into friendship with an immoral person or a thief.

O gentlemen, if you are ignorant of their religion, I shall enlighten you about it.

They are disciples of the Guru, the good old man who once lived in Guru Chak (Amritsar).

Afterwards their Caliph, Gobind Singh, gave them the title of 'Singh'.

These people are from the Hindus, but their way of life is quite distinct. Now since you have come to know about the exploits of the Sikhs, it is time that you learnt something about their territories in Punjab which they have distributed equitably among the old and the young.

#### **Noor Mohammed's Comments on the Singh territory**

Jhanda Singh Bhangi has occupied Chineot, and is ruling it independently.

The territories of Chathian Jhang are under the control of Hari Singh Langa (Bhangi).

Behrwal is in the possession of Karam Singh Bhangi, while Jai Singh Ghanaya is in full control of Norowal.

Jassa Singh Kalal (Ahluwalia) is the ruler of Kalanaur and Doab (Bist Jalandhar).

Bist-Jalandhar is in the possession of Jassa Singh carpenter (Ramgarhia). Both these Jassa Singhs are friends. Batala is also with them, and their drums and flags are common.

Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh Bhangi are eating into the vitals of Vanike and grab the entire revenue. The territory of Aughar Singh and Sanwal Singh touches the borders of Pindi of Sayyedan. Chamiani is also under their control.

Soba Singh and Warara Singh are friends and the territories of Adina Nagar and Emnabad across the river are in their possession. The territory of Charat Singh is Rohtas and he is the founder of the city.

Natha Singh is in Dipalpur and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brother Karam Singh is with him.

Besides them there are other big Singhs who are in control of other territories. From Sirhind to Multan, rather to the Deras (Dera Ghani Khan and Dera Ismail Khan) they have divided the whole country among themselves, and they are collecting land revenue from their territories without caring for anybody. It appears that while writing this account only Noor Mohammed did not have full information, or while writing, he committed some errors. For example, his account of the territories of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia is incorrect. Kalanaur was in the control of S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Bist Jalandhar was with S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The territories

of both these Sardars were not common. On the contrary, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia shared his territory with S. Jai Singh Ghanaya. A large part of the territory of S. K. S. Bhangi was in district Jhang. (see "*Tareekh-i-Jhang Sayal*").

## The Firm Control of Sikhs over Lahore

### Control over the Lahore city

The Khalsaji celebrated Baisakhi at Amritsar on April 10, 1765. On this occasion, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jai Singh Ghanaya, S. Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh Bhangi, Soba Singh and others were present. The Sarbat Khalsa resolved unanimously that it was the time for the Khalsa to establish its firm control over Lahore. Kabuli Mal, Governor of Lahore, was away to Jammu for recruiting 2000 Dogras in his army. Finding it an opportune time, S. Jassa Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh Bhangi and other Sardars advanced towards Lahore from Ramgarh-Vanike with an army of 2000 soldiers, and with the help of Mehar Sultan, Gulam Rasool, Asharf Channu and Bakar Arains of Bagbanpura stormed the Lahore fort, and the Bhangi Sardars entered it easily. This happened on Baisakhwadi 11, Samat 1822 Bikrami, i.e. April 16, 1765. In the morning Bakhshi Amir Singh, the nephew of Kabuli Mal, fired a few artillery shots from the city wall. But Tara Singh of Mujhang put the half-hearted soldiers of Bakhshi Amir Singh of Lahore to rout just with twenty-five Sikh soldiers and took Amir Singh and Jagan Nath, the son-in-law of Kabuli Mal prisoners. In the morning, Soba Singh Ghanaya of Niazbegh joined the Bhangi Sardars. In this way, the Lahore fort and the city came under the control of the Khalsa and according to *Umdat Twareekh*, with the arrival of the Singhs, the inhabitants of Lahore got liberated from the tyranny and excesses of Kabuli Mal, and a current of joy ran around in such a manner as if encaged birds had been set free. This liberation was celebrated throughout the territory of Lahore with great enthusiasm. Seeing a few Sikh soldiers indulging in plunder, some nobles of the city like Sajjan Sayyed Mir, Nathu Shah, Hafiz Qadir Bakhsh, Mian Mohammed Ashiq, Chaudhary Roopa, Lala Bishan Singh and Maharaj Singh



met the Sardars and brought to their notice that the city of Lahore was known as '*Kotha Guru*'-(the home of the Guru). This was the birth place of Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Sikh Guru. Therefore, it was the moral duty of the Sardars to protect the city fully and there should be no mischief or trouble of any kind. The Sardars at once got the main gates along the city walls closed and announced in the city that anybody committing excesses on the people would be dealt with severely. Thereafter, both the Sardars with sticks in their hands had a round of the city and beat up those indulging in loot and plunder in the city lanes and streets. They sent a message to S. Soba Singh also saying that since he was a claimant to one third of the city, he should come forward on horseback and help them in protecting the city. Thus, all the three Sardars left no stone unturned to make the situation of Lahore happy and comfortable, and they also assigned fruitful work to the relatives of Kabuli Mal who were in prison (*Umdat Twareekh*, Vol. i, 163-64; Ali-U-Din, *Ibratnama*, 237-39; *Jassa Singh Binod (Urdu)*, 118-19).

#### **The Khalsa Coin**

With the conquest of Lahore, the capital city, the entire Punjab had now come under the control of the Khalsa and the prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh contained in "Tankhahnama of Bhai Nand Lal," to the effect that "the Khalsa will rule and none else would be sovereign" came out to be true. The Khalsa had succeeded in liberating the country from the clutches of foreign invaders with the help of the sword gifted to them by the Guru, and after establishing law and order, they opened an era of peace and prosperity in the state. The Khalsa created suitable conditions for agricultural and trade activities and put the economic life of the people on a normal footing. These gifts of *Deg* and *Teg* had come to the Sikhs from Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singhji, respectively, and it was their religious teaching which made them worshippers of one God, and helped them transcend the barriers of the high and the low and united them in a single brotherhood, the brotherhood of the Khalsa. These Gurus had created such a spirit of sacrifice in the Sikh psyche that during the past 80 years they had borne untold sufferings, sacrificed their lives in battles, got the limbs of their bodies

chopped off in massacres and their scalps torn off their heads, they had cheerfully accepted to be bound, to the racks, Thus, in the name of God and His Will, they had put up with all kinds of tortures and in the end, succeeded in freeing their country and community from the chains of slavery. However, even after attaining sovereignty, they did not become proud or vain of their position. They were ever humble and enlightened in their approach. The victory won by dint of the sword was turned into an opportunity to serve the people with food and other things. The Khalsa agreed to get the same words inscribed on its coin as had been inscribed on the official stamp of Banda Singh, their first leader. This was later accepted by S. Jassa Singh, Sultan-UI-Qaum, at the time of the first Sikh conquest of Lahore. This is a proof of their humility as also of their respect for the past tradition. By doing so, they paid a tribute to the Guru and expressed their gratitude to him, for after all it was the Guru who had conferred on them worldly power and glory. The following are the words of inscription :—

“We pray for the victory of the sword and the utensils,  
We pray for the blessings of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind  
Singh.”

On the other side of the coin the following words were inscribed :—

“This coin came into being in Lahore, the capital of Punjab in  
Samat 1822.”

The same coin was issued by the Sardars of the different Missals, and it was also later on continued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Only the place and Samat of the minting of the coin continued to change according to the requirements.

### **The Division of Territories**

Within a period of about three months, the different Sardars consolidated their positions in their respective territories, but Amritsar, the city of the Guru, remained common for all. Many of the Sardars got towers built in the Darbar Sahib for their stay and for performing their religious activities on the Diwali and Baisakhi festivals. S. Jassa Singh also got his tower, and a bazar known as Katra Ahluwalia built here which are famous till today. The territories of S. Jassa Singh were confined mostly to Jalandhar-Doab, but he had control over a

few villages in Bari Doab in district Amritsar also. These villages included Jandiala, Sathiala, Batala, Bundala and Mehtabkot Pargana in the south of Amritsar and Jalalabad, Verawal, Fatehbad and Kot Mohammed Khan Parganas in Taran Taran. Moreover, S. Jassa Singh's territory extended over other 32 to 40 villages around Issapur to the south of the Sutlej.

### **S. Jassa Singh brings about a Compromise between Baba Ala Singh of Patiala and other Singh Sardars at the time of the Battle of Lang Chalela**

While returning from India, Ahmed Shah Durrani had conferred the title of 'King' on Baba Ala Singh of Patiala who had accepted all this to mark time. But the Singhs did not approve of this action of Ala Singh. In a way, it amounted to surrender to a foreign invader. The Singhs bore a grudge against Baba Ala Singh for bowing before Durrani. When during the time of Banda Singh, Aslam Khan the Lahore Governor had sent a large amount of money and the title of Nawab to the Singhs, no one had accepted it. Later on, when Nawab Zakria Khan made this kind of gesture by offering the title of the Nawab, no Singh was ready to accept it though finally it was forcibly imposed on S. Kapur Singh who was then fanning the Sangat. The Guru had already conferred royalty on the Khalsa. Therefore, there was no need for Baba Ala Singh to accept the title of 'King' from Ahmed Shah Durrani. Now when the Shah had left and the Singhs had consolidated their positions in their respective territories, they launched an attack against Baba Ala Singh of Patiala. The entire Dal at this time was being led by S. Hari Singh. When the news reached Baba Ala Singh, he sent his lawyers to the Dal Khalsa with the appeal that for accepting the title of 'king' from the Durrani, he should be fined according to the Sikh tradition, and that his anti-Panth action be ignored. At the same time he also sent some of his army so that no one should commit any excesses on the people of his territory. To the north of Patiala between the villages of Lang and Chalela, the Patiala army came into conflict with the armies of the Dal Khalsa, and in the very beginning of

the battle, S. Hari Singh Bhangi was hit by a bullet and he died on the spot. When S. Jassa Singh came to know of the whole development, he at once remonstrated with the Khalsa that what was destined to happen had happened. There was no reason for the Singhs to fritter away their energies in mutual conflicts. The Dal Sardars accepted the peace proposal of S. Jassa Singh and they made Baba Ala Singh take *Pahul* once again, and after charging fine from him pardoned him.

Perhaps some of the Dal Sardars thought that after the return of Ahmed Shah, Baba Ala Singh had occupied certain territories which were earlier in the possession of other Sardars. For example, Baba Ala Singh had set up his police posts in Buria, Shahbad, Sadoura, Ropar and other places. But he had no intention of establishing his firm and final control over these places. Mai Fato was specially of the view that the territories conquered by other Singh Sardars should not be touched at all. So, as the Singhs came, Baba Ala Singh went on lifting his police posts, and handed over the different territories to them.

Soon after this on August 7, 1765, Bhadsonvadi Chhath, Samat 1822 Bikrami, Baba Ala Singh passed away (*Tareekh-i-Patiala*, 57-9, 62; Karam Singh, *Maharaj Ala Singh*, 246-40).

## CHAPTER 25

### The Campaigns of Gang Doab and Rajastahan

#### The Campaign Against Najibu Daula

The Khalsaji bore a bitter resentment against Najibu Daula, because he was a big agent of Ahmed Shah in India. It was he who had incited Ahmed Shah to attack India in season and out of season, and thus causing inestimable damage to Punjab. In every invasion, hundreds of Punjabis were killed, and property worth millions of rupees was looted. During such critical periods the entire burden of the security and protection of Punjab fell on the shoulders of the Singhs, and they had to face several difficulties. Countless Singhs lost their lives in the battles against the Shah. Their enmity with Durrani was ever deepening, and burning in the fire of revenge, he attacked Punjab again and again. That was an endless cycle. Since Najib was fully acquainted with the conditions prevailing in the country, he went on sending all kinds of news to Ahmed Shah, giving him clues about the local political squabbles and weaknesses and the mutual bickerings of Kings and Sardars and the permutation and combination of their alliances, treaties and agreements. All this made Ahmed Shah's task easier. True, the Singhs had eliminated Durrani's rule from Punjab and they were now reigning supreme here, but as long as Najib was there to instigate and invite the Shah, the newly won freedom for Punjab was in danger.

By the end of the rainy season, the Khalsa had streamlined the administration in their respective territories, and in September, 1765, the Dal Khalsa set out to deal with Najib. It was decided to attack the territories of Najib from two directions. Consequently, the Taruna Dal crossed the river Jamuna from Buria and moved towards Saharanpur, while the Budha Dal under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh and with 25 thousand cavaliers

of Tara Singh Gaibe, Dalewalie, Shayam Singh and others attacked the territories of Najib to the south of Delhi. It appears that the Singhs had come with the sole purpose of measuring the strength of the enemy, and not for any conclusive battle. Therefore, soon both the Dals returned to Amritsar for the Diwali celebration which fell on October 14.

But immediately after Diwali, Khalsaji turned to the territories of Najibu-Daula. Now Najib was also fully prepared and with a view to resisting the Singhs, he reached Shamli, district Muzaffarnagar (U.P.) He had a big artillery under his command. Therefore, the Singhs were fighting from behind the cover of sugarcane fields and moving around the army of Najibu Daula, Wherever they got an opportunity, they would shower bullets on the enemy and then disappear, away from the range of the artillery fire. In this way, the battle continued till the evening.

The next day, a fierce battle was fought and several famous Rohela Sardars were killed. On one side, the Singhs attacked Najib's son, Zabita Khan, in a mangoe orchard. Their aim was to divide the Rohella army and then deal with different parts one by one. Najibu Daula knew that it was difficult for individual regiments to face the Singhs. Therefore, he was instructing his army commanders to make a collective advance, and no regiment should take a lead out of enthusiasm. Saddat Khan's brother, Sadiq Khan who had moved forward to attack the Singhs was badly trapped and Saddat Khan got him freed with great difficulty. When Najibu Daula came to know that Saddat had gone to attack the Singhs leaving the back side free, he said, "he has spoiled my game" and simultaneously he sent a message to his son, Zabita Khan that he should fight against the Singhs while keeping close to his main army. He should not move backward and forward unnecessarily. Najibu Daula himself went back so that he should help Saddat Khan with guns and other weapons. At this time the Singhs were firing from a high hill. Thus, the battle continued till nightfall, and under the cover of darkness the Singhs beat a retreat.

**The Aid of Jawahar Singh, the King of Bharatpur (January-March, 1766)**

During this period, the Marathas were plundering the

territory of King Jawahar Singh of Bharatpur. Therefore, he approached S. Jassa Singh through his lawyer Ram Kishan Abir for help, and agreed to pay 7 lakh rupees in exchange. There had been old friendship between Jawahar Singh and the Singhs. Only recently i.e. in February, 1764 and from December, 1764 to February, 1765, they had helped Jawahar Singh against Najibu Daula. In the name of this friendship, the Khalsaji postponed their Shamli campaign and towards the end of December, 1765 they moved towards the border of Jaipur.

In this campaign S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was accompanied by S. Shayam Singh, S. Tara Singh Gaibe, Dalewalie, two other Sardars and 25 thousand cavaliers. It was planned that for diverting the attention of the Marathas they should attack the city of Rewari, situated on the border of Jaipur whose King, Madho Singh, was helping them. This was the estate of Raja Nagar Mal, a noble of King Madho Singh Jaipuria's court. The administrator of this estate ran away leaving it to be plundered by the Singhs.

From here, the Dal Khalsa entered the territory of Jaipur, and in collaboration with Raja Jawahar Singh, conquered several villages and towns and destroyed Katputli. Bakhshi Dulla Rai and Khan-e-Samaan, Jai Chand were away to Kanauj to suppress the rebellion led by Rattan Singh Khangarote. The Singhs established their camp at a distance of 7 or 8 miles, from Jaipur. On seeing this, Madho Singh was upset. He did not have the guts to face the Singhs. Therefore, he appealed to the Marathas to come to his rescue, offering them 5 thousand rupees per day. He knew that the Marathas were hostile to Jawahar Singh. There was a definite background to this enmity. When the Marathas had gone to help him in his Delhi campaign in February, 1765, they had entered into a secret agreement with Imadul Mulaq Gazio-U-Din without taking Jawahar Singh into confidence and concluded a peace treaty with Najibu Daula. Jawahar Singh was forced to accept this Peace Treaty. An army of Mahazi Sindia under the command of Achiut Rao Ganesh was at that time indulging in plunder near Kishangarh. This army at once reached there for the help of king Madho Singh of Jaipur. Now Jawahar Singh was not fully certain of his victory. Therefore, he signed a compromise with Mado

Singh through Nowel Singh (*Peshwa Daftar*, 29-99, 102, 121, 127, 197; Khushwaqt Rai, 104; Gupta Vol. i, 243).

### **The Support of Rana Gohad (March, 1766)**

From here the joint forces of the Singhs and Jawahar Singh went to the support of Rana of Gohad. Although Gohad was not a part of the Kingdom of Bharatpur, yet being a Jat brother, Jawahar Singh had promised, to help the Rana against the Marathas. Jawahar Singh's brother, Nahar Singh, who was a claimant to the throne of Bharatpur was in league with the Marathas. At his instigation, Malhar Rao Holkar had sent 15 thousand Maratha cavaliers to Gohad, under the command of Sultanji Lambate, Maccaji Lambate and Shantaji Baable and these Maratha soldiers had turned the Jat villages desolate from Dhaulpur to Deeg and up to the walls of Agra. Raja Jawahar Singh with his own army and with 7 thousand Singhs came to their help, and on March 13 he challenged the Marathas near Dhaulpur.

First of all the Singh launched an attack of their own style leaving Jawahar Singh behind, and asking him to remain alert. When the Marathas came forward to fight, the Singhs retreated. The Marathas thought that the Singhs had been defeated and therefore they were running away from the battlefield. But they were using a tactic. When the Marathas came after the Singhs up to the front regiments of Jawahar Singh, the Singhs at once turned back and took positions on the right and the left of Jawahar Singh and began to shower a rain of bullets. From the centre, the Jats also fired their guns and moved forward. Now the Marathas realised that they had been trapped by the Singh and Jat forces. It was the evening time. The Marathas began to retreat. But as soon as they turned back, the Singhs and the Jats launched a full scale attack on them. Sultanji Lambate was wounded and fell down; the Maratha army ran in confusion and took shelter in the Dhaulpur fort. The Singh Sardars and Jawahar Singh chased them close at their heels. They captured the Dhaulpur fort without much resistance from the Marathas, and all the Maratha Generals including Sultanji Lambate were taken prisoners. This battle was fought on March 13-14, 1766.

Rana Gohad and Jawahar Singh wanted that they should now cross the river Chambal and deal a blow to Malhar Rao also.



There was no doubt about their success, but now the Baisakhi was fast approaching. The Khalsa Dal was eager to return to Punjab. Jawahar Singh came with them up to the border of his territory and bidding them farewell returned here. S. Jassa Singh, S. Shayam Singh, S. Tara Singh Gaibe and the entire Dal Khalsa moved to Amritsar rapidly (Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 471-73; *Peshwe*, Vol. 29, 126-127; Gupta. 243-44).

## The Last Invasion of Durrani (1766-67)

After celebrating the Baisakhi festival at Sri Amritsar Sahib on April 10, 1766, the Singh Sardars returned to their respective territories and began to concentrate their attention on administration. Around Nacca and Multan, the Khalsa had not yet established its firm control.

After the rainy season the Bhangi Sardars; Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh moved towards Multan. As has already been pointed out, their armies had already conquered these territories in 1764, and occupied Dera Gazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan across the river Sind. In these areas, the Afghans wielded a considerable influence and, therefore, it was somewhat difficult to establish firm control over these territories. Consequently, in 1766, an agreement was reached with the Afghans, and according to this agreement, Pak Pattan was accepted as the border point of the Khalsa.

### The Eighth Invasion of Durrani

In 1765-66 Ahmed Shah did not think of coming to Punjab. At this time there were several intricate problems in Afghanistan, and he remained busy in solving them. Moreover, the Singhs had established their control over the whole of Punjab, and the Shah had no territory in his possession from Sind to Jamuna, nor was any officer at his command. Across Jamuna there was only Najibu Daula who could be called his supporter, but he too was with Ahmed Shah as long as the latter had some influence in India or as long as he was in a position to help him against his enemies. On the other hand, the Shah was desirous of coming to Punjab and other parts of India as long as he was hopeful of establishing himself on a firm footing and getting sufficient booty in plunder. With the rise of the Sikh power in Punjab with every passing day, he was not much hopeful of striking roots here. Therefore, whenever he got any excuse, though very flimsy, he would invade India. He thought that perhaps his repeated invasions might

force the Singhs to conclude some kind of agreement with him, or cause some internal division in their ranks. This, he believed, would make them appeal to him for help and so he might be able to take advantage of this disunity.

But it appears that in 1766, Mir Qasim of Bengal invited Ahmed Shah to come to India so that he might help him regain the throne of Murshidabad from where he had been dethroned by the British. Whatever the reason or the motive, Ahmed Shah crossed the river Sind in the last days of Nov., 1765 and without much resistance reached Gujarat on December 4. From here he did not come to Lahore direct but after crossing the Chenab from the bridge of Shah Daula, he moved towards Sialkot. Leaving Sialkot on December 10, he stayed for three days at Jamkey, and got sureties from the landlords of the surrounding areas to the effect that they would not give shelter to the Singhs; on the contrary, they would capture them and hand them over to him. The Shah sent his advance regiments to Lahore under the command of Jahan Khan Barkhurdar Khan and Darvesh Ali Khan Hazara. This army established its control over Lahore, and the Shah himself reached the village of Mehmood Booty to the *North-East* of Lahore on December 22.

The Singh Sardars did not attack the armies of Ahmed Shah anywhere near Lahore. During this period, S. Soba Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh, Hira Singh, Ajaib Singh and others were here, but they were not together; they were scattered here and there. Perhaps they wanted to gauge the intentions and motives of the Shah, or they were on the look out for some suitable opportunity when they should be able to deal a hard blow to him.

#### **The Reply of S. Lehna Singh to Ahmed Shah**

On hearing the news of Ahmed Shah's arrival in Mehmood Booty, some nobles of Lahore went to see him, and according to the writing of Mufti Ali-U-Din, they told the Shah in the course of their talks with him that S. Lehna Singh was a very noble man who was a well-wisher of all. Although he was a ruler, he made no distinction between the Hindus and the Muslims. S. Lehna Singh presented the Qazis, Muftis and the Imams of Mosques with turbans on the day of the Id and he had great respect for the learned people and was extremely kind to them.

Ahmed Shah replied that if he was such a noble man why he had run away. He added that he would have given him a hearty welcome

At this Ahmed Shah sent some fruit to S. Lehna Singh as a gift, and wrote him a letter asking him to see him without any kind of fear and suspicion. The Shah assured S. Lehna Singh that he would give him the Governorship of Lahore. S. Lehna Singh sent his reply through Rehmatulla Begh of village Maur saying that the Shah's kindness was so immeasurable that he should come to meet him cheerfully, but he expressed his inability on the ground that his action would displease the Khalsa. The fruit sent by the Shah was also returned by S. Lehna Singh saying that it was meant only for an Emperor of his stature while for a poor Jat of Lehna Singh's category simple grains were a blessing (*Ibratnama*, 240; Latif, *Punjab*, 288).

After appointing Maulvi Abdula's brother Dadan Khan the administrator of Lahore, Ahmed Shah left Mehmood Booty on December 29 and reached Amritsar the next day and on January 1, 1767, he moved towards Verowal. Hardly had he pitched his tents there when he received news that his camp in Lahore had been looted by S. Charat Singh, Hira Singh and Lehna Singh. The Shah left Lahore immediately, but by this time the Khalsa had already disappeared. Now the Shah was helpless.

#### **Khalsaji's Refusal to have Negotiations with the Shah**

The leading Muslim Khans like Shahwali Khan, Jahan Khan, Nasir Khan Baloch, Shah Pasand Khan and others suggested to the Shah to initiate peace negotiations with the Singhs. Following this advice, on January 15, the Shah wrote to S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Jhanda Singh Bhangi, S. Khushal Singh and others from Noor-Di-Sarai saying that if they wanted to serve him, they should meet him, but if they intended to oppose him, they should come to the battle-field. The king of Chamba sent his lawyers to the Singhs and Saddat Yar Khan, a close relative of Adina Begh also felt that the Singhs should conclude some kind of peace treaty with the Shah. Saddat Yar Khan sent a message to the Singhs that it was not the intention of the Emperor to deprive the Singhs of their territories. He assured the Singhs that he would play a leading role in bringing about their

compromise with the Shah in guiding them as to the territories to be left for the Shah and the amount of money to be given to him. In return, the Shah would hand over the control of Lahore to them. But no Singh Sardar accepted this compromise proposal with the Shah. They knew that Ahmed Shah would very soon be constrained to return to Afghanistan, and the Khalsaji would re-occupy their respective territories. Therefore, the Singhs saw no reason why they should negotiate any peace treaty with the Shah, and that too from a position of disadvantage. The Khalsa pointed out that God had showered countless blessings on them. (*Calendar*, Vol. ii, 50, 108-A; *Jassa Singh Binod*, Urdu, 126-27, 131).

#### **The Crushing Defeat to Jahan Khan**

The Shah had deputed Jahan Khan to Amritsar to keep an eye on the movement of the Singhs. On January 17, with a Durrani army of 15 thousand soldiers he moved forward, plundering the villages on the way. At this time S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Hira Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi were in Amritsar. They pounced upon Jahan Khan like angry tigers, and killed 5 or 6 thousand Durrani and wounded a large number of them. Jahan Khan was completely unnerved and he had no alternative but to retreat, defeated and humiliated. When this news reached Ahmed Shah, he came personally in support of Jahan Khan but now it was too late because the Singhs had already moved towards Lahore. On seeing this, Ahmed Shah felt humiliated and ordered the demolition of the towers inside Sri Darbar Sahib and the execution of the Singhs who were present in those towers. (*Calendar* Vol. ii, 65).

#### **Ahmed Shah's weak position in Doaba-Bist Jalandhar**

From here the Shah moved towards the Doaba where the lawyers of Indian kings and big landlords met him. Among them were the lawyers of Raja Amar Singh of Patiala and Kanwar Himmat Singh of Noormahel, Raja Amar Singh and Kanwar Himmat Singh met the Shah personally. (*Calendar* Vol. ii, 29).

But the Khalsa did not spare the Shah, and wherever they got an opportunity they raided his armies. At one place 20,000 Singhs attacked Mir Nasir Khan Baloch, and after a

fierce battle, they took away the entire paraphernalia of the Shah. Moreover, they took in their possession a caravan of 300 camels laden with Kabul fruit. They also snatched the ration sent by the King of Chamba for the Shah.

It is clear that the Singhs were giving a tough time to the Shah, and his position had become vulnerable. The Shah had no rest and peace either during the day or at night. As a contemporary writer notes : "The influence of the Shah does not extend beyond the places through which his army is passing. The village landlords appear to be so greatly in favour of the Singhs that even ordinary Singhs are welcome in their houses and are served with food etc. In day time they come out and pester the Shah's army. So long as the Shah is in Doaba between the river Beas and the Sutlaj, the Singhs would be moving close to the Emperor, but if he moves towards Sirhind and beyond, they would immediately occupy the territories left behind by the Shah." (Calendar Vol. ii, 161-A). This prophecy came out to be literally true. In the beginning of March, 1767, when the Shah crossed the Sutlej and moved towards Delhi, the Singhs occupied Lahore, and the whole area from the Ravi to the Sutlej.

The British were highly upset at this time with the presence of the lawyer of Mir Qasim of Bengal in the camp of the Shah. They feared that if Shah Alam II and Shuja-u-joined hands with the Shah, they would be in a tight corner. Therefore, the men at the helm of the affairs of the East India Company, wrote to Shah Alam, Shuja-u-Daula, the Rohellas, the Marathas and the Jats that they should not meet the Shah under any circumstances. They assured them that if the Shah came to that side, the company would extend its full support to them. Even while these people were on the horns of a dilemma, the news began to percolate from Punjab that the Singhs had rendered the Durrani and Baloch armies weak, and with repeated raids had caused irreparable damage to the forces of the Shah. On hearing this news, all of them gave up the idea of joining hands with the Shah.

When Ahmed Shah was camping at Ismilabad to the south of Shahbad, the lawyers of the kings and others requested him

humbly not to proceed further towards East. On hearing this the Shah was red with anger, and he told them that he would reach Delhi very soon. At this Najibu Daula said, "If your Majesty wants to go to Delhi it is well and good, but with your Majesty's army advancing forward the general public will be panic-stricken. All the towns and villages will be deserted and nothing would be available for food. I am at your Majesty's disposal on behalf of these people. But if your Majesty wishes to go to Delhi even then, I request you to put me to death and after this anything may happen." The Shah was a very clear-headed person. He understood the whole matter at once, and in view of this opposition, he did not deem it proper to move towards Delhi and returned to Afghanistan from this point on March 17, 1767. On March 18, he reached Ambala from where he left for Sirhind. (*Calendar* Vol. ii, 213, 294, Vol. iii, Introduction, 15, *Delhi Chronicle*).

#### **The gift of Kingship to Raja Amar. Singh**

Najibu Daula accompanied Ahmed Shah to Sirhind and presented him with 2 lakh rupees. Being extremely pleased, the Shah gave the Governorship of Sirhind to Najibu Daula's son, Zabita Khan. Sirhind was in the territory of Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. The Shah demanded an amount 2 lakh rupees from him that was due from the time of Baba Ala Singh. Here Najibu Daula told Raja Amar Singh just by the way: "What is the fort of Patiala? I shall show you my own fort called Pathangarh in Najibabad." It struck to Amar Singh that perhaps the intention of Najibu Daula was to arrest him and take him to Najibabad. When Rani Fato (Fateh Kaur) the grandmother of Amar Singh, came to know of this, she quietly met Shah Wali Khan, the Prime Minister of Ahmed Shah and after presenting him with some gifts, she requested him to help Amar Singh. As a result, the next morning, Ahmed Shah gave Amar Singh not only the rule of Sirhind and the title of King of Kings but also allowed him to issue his own coin in Ahmed Shah's own name. (*Calendar* Vol. ii, 310, *Tareekh-i-Hussain Shahi*, 67, 8; *Khushwaqt Rai*, 115-A).

In order to express his gratitude to Shah Wali Khan, Raja Amar Singh affixed the name of Shah Wali Khan's sub-caste, 'Thamezai' to his name; and the coin issued by him carried the same words as were inscribed on the coin of Ahmed Shah :

“God, the Almighty has commanded Emperor Ahmed Shah to issue the silver and gold coins with the image of moon from the back of a fish (i.e. from the lowest world to the heavens.)”

These silver and gold coins were ritualistically issued every time when a new king ascended the throne of Patiala. The last coin was issued in 1938 when Maharaja Yadvindra Singh was coronated.

### **The Return of Ahmed Shah to Afghanistan (May-June. 1767)**

Leaving Sirhind on March, 23 1767, the Shah reached Machhiwara on the bank of the river Sutlej. When the Shah was camping here before entering the Doaba, he was worried as to how he would deal with the Khalsa. The Shah's experience of the previous invasion was very bitter. By attacking his armies continuously for 7 or 8 days in the Doaba, the Singhs had rendered his position so weak that he dared not enter Amritsar and Lahore. This time even Shah's offers to initiate negotiations with the Singhs had failed. Neither S. Lehna Singh nor S. Jassa Singh, nor anybody else had agreed to have any talks with him. The situation was so hopeless that none of these Sardars was prepared to have anything to do with him. The Singhs regarded it as a matter of disgrace for their community to bow to anybody for the gift of freedom. The Guru had given them sovereignty, and it could not be questioned. Why should they get any gift from any Mughal or Durrani ruler? Were these mortal people superior to the Guru who was eternal? The Singhs who were the servants of God regarded these temporary Emperors and rulers as trash. Therefore, they could not be persuaded to surrender themselves to anybody.

When the Shah was pondering over his future at Machhiwara in the first week of April, he received news from Amritsar that on the Baisakhi day of April 10, 1767, a quarter and one lakh Khalsa would be gathering at Amritsar and that they would be fully prepared for battle. Ahmed Shah was an insightful person. He never did anything thoughtlessly, or in a state of anger which might cause direct loss to him. In his view, the lives of Afghans were not so cheap as should be thrown away for nothing. He knew that at that time the attitude of the Khalsa was harsh, and that



their man-power was also considerable. Their attacks would be strong and destructive. Therefore, he decided to spend about two months on the southern bank of the river Sutlej.

On May 11, Najibu Daula took leave of the Shah and returned home. At this time one part of the Khalsa army invaded the territory of Najib. Their only aim was that all soldiers of Najibu Daula should return for the defence of his territory and during the Shah's return to Afghanistan through Punjab, there should be no knowledgeable Indian leader or ruler to guide him. The Singhs conquered Ambehatta and Nanauta and from there, they attacked Shamli and Meerut. When Najibu Daula found that his armies were incapable of resisting the Singhs, he appealed to the Shah for help. The Shah sent Jahan Khan with Najib's son Zabita Khan, along with an army of 8 thousand and after 3 days they reached Shamli covering a distance of 180 miles. But the Singhs had also got the clue. Therefore, on May 19, a few hours before the arrival of the Shah's army they crossed the river Jamuna and moved back towards Punjab. Now their aim had been fulfilled because Naib's soldiers had returned from the camp of the Shah. When after about 7 days Jahan Khan returned, the Shah left for Afghanistan, avoiding any direct conflict with the Khalsa. He decided to reach Qandhar via Kasur, Pakpattan and Multan rather than going via Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Amritsar Goindwal, Taran Taran, Noor-Di-Sarai and Lahore. (*Najib Daula* (Rashid), 121-123; *Tehmashnama* (Rao), 116; Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 498-99).

### **The Khalsa Re-captures Punjab**

Under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh the Khalsa had created such conditions that Ahmed Shah gave up the idea of establishing his rule in Punjab, and leaving its capital Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujarat, Rohtas and other places intact under the control of the Singhs, returned disappointed. The Jalandhar-Doab and the Majah were already in the control of the Singhs. In Riarki too there had been insignificant change. The Shah had appointed his administrator only in Lahore, and this administrator left on the arrival of the Singhs here.

When the Singh Sardars like Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and Soba Singh reached the Shalamar Gardens near Lahore, Dadan

Khan, the so-called administrator appointed by the Shah asked the nobles of Lahore as to what should be done. All of them told him unanimously that the public was extremely happy with the Singh rule. He should not come in their way and thus invite trouble for himself. They assured him that they would arrange for his maintenance through his meeting with the Singhs. Consequently, when Dadan Khan, accompanied by the city nobles, met the Singh Sardars, they gave him much honour, and all of them entered the city. Thus S. Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and Soba Singh regained the control of Lahore, the capital of Punjab, and they fixed an amount of twenty rupees per day by way of pension for Dadan Khan.

The control of the Sirhind territory continued to be with Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala, the Phulka and other Sardars (*Ali-U-Din, Ibratnama, 240-241, Khushwaqt Rai, 62-62*).

Although even after his eighth invasion Ahmed Shah Durrani tried his luck twice to establish himself in Punjab yet in reality this should be regarded as his last invasion. In the beginning of 1769, he could hardly reach somewhere near Gujarat and in 1771, he did not cross the Sikh border accepted by the Afghans in a written agreement.

#### **'Do Not Touch Patiala'- Jassa Singh**

It has already been mentioned that during his eighth invasion Ahmed Shah had tried to persuade the Singhs to conclude a Peace Treaty with him. But neither S. Lehna Singh nor S. Jassa Singh, nor any other Sardar had been ready for negotiations with him. Only the Maharaja of Patiala met him at Sirhind and received the title of 'King of Kings'. This action of the Maharaja of Patiala was resented by the Singhs. Prior to this when Baba Ala Singh had met the Shah and received from him a drum or 'Dhaunsa,' the Flag as symbols of royalty, the Dal Khalsa had attacked Patiala, but Jassa Singh had settled the whole matter by intervening personally. Now again conditions seemed to be worsening. The Dal took no direct action against Patiala, but the meeting of Maharaja Amar Singh with Ahmed Shah was an eyesore for several Sardars. In the summer of 1767 when S. Jassa Singh, S. Baghel Singh Karorsinghia and some other Sardars came to the Malwa and entered Patiala, Maharaja Amar Singh was not here. S. Baghel Singh thought that it was a golden

opportunity for capturing Patiala. At this, S. Jassa Singh said, "No, Patiala is not to be touched." The Sardar thought that what was destined to happen had already happened. So far the Khalsa had struggled hard to liberate the country from Ahmed Shah and the foreign rulers appointed by him and the Singhs had succeeded in their efforts. Now when they had gained power, it would be highly improper for them to settle scores with one another. The House of Patiala had been blessed by the Guru and Guru Gobind Singh had written in his *hukamnama* (edict) issued in the name of Bhai Taloka and Bhai Rama, the ancestors of the Patiala House on August 2, 1696, Bhadson 2, Samat 1653 Bikrami, "I reside in your house, you are under the canopy of our blessings." Therefore, in Jassa Singh's opinion it was not proper for the Singhs to attack Patiala.

When Maharaja Amar Singh came to know of this, he expressed his gratitude to S. Jassa Singh, and as a mark of respect gave him Pargana of Issarru (*Tareekh-i-Patiala*, 74-5 ; *Hukamnamas* No. 43, 146, 147 ).

## The Jats the Rohellas and Khalsaji

### The Resolving of the Conflict between Bharatpur and Jaipur

Raja Jawahar Singh was returning from his pilgrimage to Pushkar when Swai Madho Singh of Jaipur attacked him at Maunde about 23 miles to the south west of Narnaul on December 14, 1767 to settle old scores with him and caused him much loss. Raja Jawahar Singh could save himself with great difficulty. Soon after this, in February 1768, Madho Singh attacked the Jat territory and on Feb. 29, in the battle of Kama, he put the Jats to rout. But when under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia 20 thousand Singhs came to the help of Jawahar Singh, the Rajput army of Madho Singh seeing no hope of their last victory returned to their territory, and thus Jawahar Singh was rescued. At this time Raja Jawahar Singh gave seven lakh rupees per month to the Khalsa for food and fodder (Sarkar-*The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 477-80, 513-14; Kanoongo, Jats, 213-15). Soon after this within a week's time on March 6, 1768, Raja Madho Singh died, and 4 or 5 months after his death, Jawahar Singh was also murdered. Now in future during the life time of S. Jassa Singh, the need for the Khalsa to go to Bharatpur and other parts of Rajasthan did not arise, and they had to deal only with the Rohellas, the nobles of Delhi and the Marathas.

### The Defeat of Najibu Daula Rohella

In the winter of 1767 after Diwali (Oct. 22) the Khalsa Dal moved to the territory of Panipat. Najibu Daula came with his army to fight against them. But he realised that it was not within his power to resist the Khalsa. He saw that the Singhs who had established their control over Sirhind and Lahore and issued their coin after establishing their rule throughout Punjab, could not be resisted. No wonder, if they attacked Delhi, they might establish their control there also. In that circumstance, the Mughals would

also lose their capital and, it would not be possible to protect the Princes and Rajmata, Malika Zinat Mahal. In this condition of his helplessness, Najibu Daula wrote to Emperor Shah Alam II in Allahabad :

“Until this hour I have manifested the firmest devotion and loyalty to the young Princes and ex-Empress in Delhi fort. But I am no longer able to continue the support to them which is necessary for their protection. Let your Majesty advance to your capital and yourself defend your honour. Your Vassal frankly represents that he is not equal to the task in the present situation.”

To the Dowager-Empress, Zinat Mahal, he wrote in the same terms, resigning his task of defending Delhi, and offering to escort the whole royal family in the fort to the Emperor at Allahabad if she desired it. He added that the Sikhs had prevailed, and he was unable to provide for his own security. He talked of seeking his political *nirwan* by making a pilgrimage to Mecca or retiring to some obscure retreat. (Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 403-04\*

Thus Najib Daula acknowledged an open defeat at the hands of the Khalsa.

#### **Najib Daula Gives his Turban to Zabita Khan (March, 1768)**

The tendering of his resignation by Najibu Daula to Shah Alam and the Dowager-Empress, Zinat Mahal was neither a political threat nor a diplomatic move, but he thought that it was not possible for him to stand against the ever-increasing power of the Singhs. Therefore, after consulting the members of his family, and considering the pros and cons of the situation and appointing Zabita Khan in his place, he tied his own turban on his head, and even during his life time he transferred all his political, territorial and military rights to him. He also gave him

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\* The Sikhs were year by year increasing in number and spirit. The final retreat of Ahmed Shah, particularly beaten in May, 1767, had given them boundless courage....And now the dying Najib confessed himself beaten. It was only because the entire nation in arms fired with all the energy of a newly risen.....people.....that he had at last to admit defeat. He had served his sovereign loyally and defended his capital and family as long as he could. But he now begged leave to resign the burden beyond his physical powers. He wrote to the Emperor Shah Alam.”

full freedom in determining his relationships with foreign powers. He told Zabita Khan to settle matters with the Singhs either through a battle, or by reaching a compromise, as he deemed proper. At the same time Najib recalled his associate Sultan from Delhi, and got his baggage back from him. Zabita Khan agreed with his father that it was not possible to defeat the Singhs in an open battle. Therefore, he signed a peace treaty with the Singh Sardars of Lahari and Jalabad *Najib-Daula* (Rashid), 125-26, Sarkar-*The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 404-05).

### **The Perplexity of Emperor Shah Alam**

The resignation of Najibu Daula caused much worry to Emperor Shah Alam at Allahabad. The immediate question that faced him was : Who would protect the Dowager Empress and the Prince and others in Delhi after Najibu Daula had left the capital and if the royal family were shifted from Delhi ? The Singhs who had been accepted the ruler of Sirhind and who were in ascendance in the upper-Doab and Harian would capture Delhi, the capital of India without any resistance from any quarter and then it would be for the Emperor to liberate it from their mighty hands. It is natural that the man who has the control of the capital appoints or removes the Emperor. Once when the Singhs had established their control over Delhi, they could put any person on the throne from the beggarly loafers of the royal family. Under the mask of his legal rights they might conquer the Delhi empire.\*

### **S. Jassa Singh's Letter to Emperor Shah Alam and his Reply**

But it appears that the Khalsa had no such intention. On the

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\*As early as October, 1765, Najib had asked the Emperor to come personally to Delhi and now in February, 1768, he definitely tendered his resignation. This development threw Shah Alam into the greatest perplexity; who would guard his mother and heir in that city after the withdrawal of Najib? And if he recalled all his family from Delhi, the Singhs who were now the official masters of Sirhind and practically supreme over Harrian and the upper Doab, would take unopposed possession of the capital, and it would be impossible for Shah Alam to recover it from their strong hands. The holder of the capital was naturally in the position of a king-maker. What was there to prevent the Sikh lords of Delhi from crowning a puppet from among the swarm of beggarly vagrant Shahzadas, and under cover of his legal authority conquering the empire for themselves. (Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, ii, 549-50).

contrary,' in January. 1768, S. Jassa Singh wrote a letter to Emperor Shah Alam at Allahabad saying that he should return to Delhi and regain control of the whole empire. In reply to this letter, the Emperor wrote to the Sardar that he was all the time thinking of doing so, but this was possible only if he and the other Singh Sardars accompanied him. Then peace would return to the Empire, and the enemy would feel upset. The Emperor was astonished that the Singh Sardars were not united, and every day he was receiving letters from one Sardar or another, the number of such letters being ever on the increase. Therefore, what was required in the first instance was that all the Sardars should organise themselves, and send an application to him under the seal of all the united Sardars, so that he might trust them and accept their petition. The Emperor added that lest the whole secret should be out, they should send some reliable person to him. Then he would come with his army, and with the support of the Singh Sardars, he would re-establish his control over the administration of Delhi.

From this it becomes clear that S. Jassa Singh had written this letter on his own without any common resolution by all the Singh Sardars. It was for this reason that Emperor Shah Alam was receiving letters from different Sardars. But since the theme of all these letters was the same, the Emperor sent his reply to S. Jassa Singh telling him that he should write a collective letter under the seals of all the Sardars, promising the restoration of the Emperor to the throne of Delhi. Nothing is known from the records of the Govt. of India as to what came out of this correspondence. But it seems that S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars had written letters to Emperor Alam Shah, when on November 1, 1767, a Maratha lawyer had proposed that the British (East India Company), the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Rohellas should join hands in helping the Emperor in coming to Delhi from Allahabad. This correspondence went on for a long time, but without any result. (Calendar, Vol. ii, 849; Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. ii, 505).

Even as this correspondence was going on, Najibu Daula got an opportunity to sign a peace treaty with the Maratha Sardar Tukoji, and put his son Zabita Khan under his care. He

himself became completely carefree, and on Oct. 31, 1770, he passed away.

The death of Najibu Daula forced Emperor Shah Alam to take an immediate and clear decision; if he was to return to Delhi, now was the opportune time for him, otherwise he would never be able to do so. In 1761 when he was in the protection of the British, he was waiting anxiously for the day of his return to Delhi. But the British had not been able to help him come back to Delhi. The intentions of Shah Shujah were not clear. The Rajputs and the Jats could not do anything independently, while for the Khalsa, this period (1761-1769) was the period of constant campaigns, and for the most part they were busy in Punjab. Therefore, in November, 1770, the Emperor initiated peace talks with the Marathas which reached fruition in March, 1771, and the Emperor left Allahabad on April 13, 1771 and reached Delhi on January 6, 1772.

#### **Zabita Khan and the Singhs**

After the death of his father, Najibu Daula, Zabita Khan, concluded a peace treaty with the Khalsa, and Emperor Shah Alam gave him the post held by his father, and conferred the title of Amir-UI-Umra on him, but the Maratha Mahaji Sindi turned Zabita Khan not only out of Delhi but also from his own territory. As a result, Zabita Khan had to take shelter with Nawab Shujah-u-Daula of Audh. But Shujah brought about a compromise between them.

In May, 1773 Abdul Ahed Khan, Adviser to the Emperor, reached an agreement with Zabita Khan, and tried to use him against Mirza Najjaf Khan, but since Zabita Khan had refused to act as a stooge, Abdul Ahed Khan became his enemy, and on finding a suitable opportunity appointed his own brother Abul Qasim Khan, Faujdar of Saharanpur in his place and ordered him to attack Zabita Khan. But the Khalsaji did not leave Zabita Khan in the lurch, and in the battle on March 4, 1776 they fought against Abul Qasim Khan with great courage. While fighting against the army of Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal, Abul Qasim was killed. Now Abdul Ahed Khan became a sworn enemy of Zabita Khan and the Sardars of Malwa. In 1777, Abdul Ahed



Khan sent an army against Zabita Khan at Garhshankar under the command of Najjaf Khan when the Emperor himself accompanied this army. The main burden of the battle fought on June 8, 11, 13 and 23 fell on the shoulders of the Singhs and their brave support rendered all the attacks against Zabita Khan ineffective. As rainy season set in, the battle became slow. Taking advantage of this, the Singhs crossed the river Krishni on a rainy night and attacked the Mughal army near Thana Bhavan, and piercing through the Mughal lines they reached their tents. But when the Mughal army resorted to artillery fire, the Singhs beat a retreat. Seeing that their victory was not certain in the battle the Mughals initiated peace talks with Zabita Khan, but the Rohellas did not agree. When the battle had become slow in view of a heavy rain, Najjaf Khan tried to cause defection among the supporters of Zabita Khan, and he succeeded in entering into a secret alliance with Dilawar Ali and Kalandar Ali the Urkzai Pathans of Jalalabad. But the Khalsa refused to desert Zabita Khan even when Najjaf Khan offered to pay a heavy amount of money. On September 14, when the Mughal army attacked Jalabad, the dishonest Urkzai Pathans joined hands with the Mughals, and Zabita Khan was defeated. The enemy established his control over Gausgarh and took the families of Zabita Khan and other Rohella Sardars prisoners, and threw them into the Agra fort.

In this condition, Zabita Khan was rendered homeless and rootless, and he had none to fall back upon except the Khalsa. Therefore, he returned with them to Punjab. At this time, he was literally penniless, and he had nothing except the clothes that he wore. He had no money, no cattle, no companions, no cavalier and no land. The Khalsa took the responsibility of the care and protection of this refugee on their shoulders. For several months, Zabita Khan stayed in the territory of Raja Gazpat Singh of Jind. The hospitality of the Singhs, their sense of service and friendliness left such a deep impression on his mind that he embraced Sikhism, and re-christined himself as Dharam Singh. In April, 1778, he attempted to regain control of his territory, but in vain. Soon after this, Raja Gazpat Singh brought about a compromise between him and the Delhi Government with the result that he got

back some parts of his territory. His relatives were released, and the wealth plundered from Gausgarh was also restored to him. (Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. iii, 49-60, 124-05, 159-61).

## CHAPTER 28

### The Aid to Patiala

#### The Revolt of Kanwar Himat Singh and Compromise

Bhumia Singh, the eldest son of Baba Ala Singh had only one daughter. His second son, Sardool Singh who passed away during the life time of Babaji, had one son each from his two marriages, Amar Singh and Himat Singh. Amar Singh succeeded Baba Ala Singh to the throne of Patiala. Himat Singh regarded the crown of Patiala as his own right. Therefore, he made several subtle and cunning moves to ascend the throne, but all in vain. Maharaja Amar Singh tried to placate him by offering him a good estate, but nothing short of the throne of the whole state of Patiala seemed to mollify and pacify Himat Singh.

It is recorded in the book *Baran Missalan (Twelve Missals)* that in Samat 1826 Bikrami (1769 A.D.) when Maharaja Amar Singh was away on some military campaign, Himat Singh instigated by Sukhdas Singh occupied Patiala. Following this revolt, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and several other Sardars came to the help of Maharaja Amar Singh. Finally, an agreement was reached between the two brothers. But soon after in Samat 1831 (1774 A.D.), Kanwar Himat Singh passed away (Mohammed Hassan, *Tareekh-i-Patiala*, 86-90, Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, 690-91, *Baran Missalan*, 150 ; *Kaifiat Sardaran Ahluwalia*, 15. ).

#### Contemplation and discussion regarding the campaign against Abdul Ahed and Farkhanda Bakht

Abdul Ahed Khan was a soft spoken person, quick to adjust himself to any situation or occasion and extremely deceptive. Through flattery he wormed himself into the confidence of Emperor Shah Alam and became his special courtier and personal companion. Shujah-U-Daula, the Emperor's minister, lived in Audh; and, therefore, Abdul Ahed officiated in his place. But he was not a brave warrior and prospered only on flattery. He was not on good terms with Hazar Mir Bakhshi-

Mirza Najjaf who had been appointed in June, 1773 to work in place of Bakhshi-Ul-Mamalik, the absentee Khitabdar. Therefore, he did try to persuade Zabita Khan to act as his stooge and work against Najjaf Khan, but when Zabita Khan did not agree, he sent his brother Abdul Qasim Khan against Zabita Khan. Abdul Qasim Khan was killed on March 4, 1776. In this battle, the Singh Sardars of Malwa helped Zabita Khan, so much so that Abdul Qasim Khan was killed while fighting against the army of Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal. Therefore, Abdul Ahed Khan was thirsty for the blood of Zabita Khan and the Singh Sardars of Malwa. At one time he launched such an attack on Zabita Khan that he ruined him and dispossessed him of his territory. The matters came to such a pass that Zabita Khan could not settle anywhere. In this condition, he had to seek refuge with the Singhs. Abdul Ahed Khan bore a grudge against the Singhs for providing shelter to his enemy.

Prior to this, in 1775, Abdul Ahad Khan had sent Rahim Dad Rohella to liberate the territories of Hansi and Hissar from the Khalsa, because the Phoolkian Missal had conquered these territories which at one time were part of the *territory of the Emperor of Delhi*. But when he had laid a siege to Gohana, the territory of Raja Gazpat Singh of Jind, 18 miles to the south of Rohtak, he was killed on December 30, 1775 at the hands of the army sent by Maharaja Amar Singh under the command of Diwan Nanu Mal. (Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. iii, 117-18, *Tareekh-i-Patiala*, 96; Brij Narain Phulnama, 64-66). Abdul Ahed Khan was angry with the Singhs and this anger had been further aggravated when the Singhs gave refuge to Zabita Khan and killed Abdul Qasim. He was on the look out for an opportunity to destroy the rising Sikh power and their advance towards Delhi.

#### **The Policy of Dividing the Sikh Sardars**

In 1778, when Zabita Khan was rendered almost lifeless and the Rohellas were eliminated, with the Jats of Bharatpur and Rao Partap Singh of Machhori becoming weak and the Marathas interlocked in life and death conflict with the British, the Delhi rulers did not face any threat from any side, except from the Singhs who were then in ascendance. They had established their full control over entire Punjab to the north

of Sutlej, and the Delhi rulers had written these territories off. It was almost impossible for them to re-claim them, although the thought of Sirhind had troubled them occasionally like a dream and as soon as the Singhs could reach not only Delhi easily from here but also beyond, Sirhind was an eye-sore for the Delhi Government. The nobles and the ministers of Delhi, therefore, were all the time conspiring to create conditions for a division among the Sikh Sardars and thus bringing them under their control.

Abdul Ahed Khan was a cunning conspirator. He thought that if a few Singh Sardars could be attracted to and allied with Emperor Shah Alam, by virtue of royal gifts and other temptations, this would create division and jealousy among the Singh Sardars. And secondly, with the help of the Sardars won over to the side of the Emperor, the other Sardars could be weakened and made to surrender. The mutual division had been the cause of the ruin of the Jats of Bharatpur, and this exactly was the cause of the ruin of the Marathas. The Rajputs had never been able to forge unity among their ranks. The germs of this disease of internal division were visible even among the Singhs. This malady is a part of the very climate of Delhi, the soil of the country and the blood of the people. The cunning people both from abroad and from inside the country had always taken advantage of this. Abdul Ahed Khan was a seasoned player at this chess-game. Therefore, he decided to make a subtle move in this direction.

#### **The Flattery of Sikh Sardars**

In September, 1778, a few Sardars of the Khalsa Dal were camping near the Shalimar Gardens to the south west of Delhi. They obviously posed some kind of threat to the Delhi Government. Therefore, Abdul Ahed Khan began to flatter the Singhs and their friends and relatives. On September 23, he asked Behram Kuli Khan, one of his deputies, to meet and welcome S. Sahib Singh Kandeh, Karam Singh Shaheed and others, and in consultation with the Emperor, he got the title of Najibu Daula II conferred on the youngest son of Najibu Daula on September 28. The next day i.e. September 29, Abdul Ahed Khan met the Singhs personally in the Garden of Yaqub Ali Khan

and offered them gifts on behalf of the Emperor.

### **The Mosque of Bangla Sahib**

The Dussehra fell on October 1, Assu Sudi 10. The Singhs had also concluded that the Delhi Government was somewhat shaken. Therefore, the Singhs while celebrating the Dussehra in the open grounds near Rakabganj, reduced the mosque converted out of 'Guru Ka Bangla' to rubble. Abdul Ahed Khan tolerated all this without any protest. Truly it was the case of a blind bridegroom uttering the name of God in prayer.

But soon after the King had to go to Jaipur. Therefore, up to the end of 1779 Abdul Ahed Khan could do nothing except prepare clever and crooked plans against the Sikhs. After the return of the Emperor to Delhi, he invited the Sikh Sardars of Karnal for negotiations. But the Emperor refused to invite them to his court. During these days Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala sent some gifts to Abdul Ahad Khan, probably with this end in view that S. Baghel Singh Karorsinghia who was at that time in Delhi should do something detrimental to the interests of Patiala. But the Maharaja seems to have been under some kind of illusion. Despite their internal difficulties the Singhs of the time could not think of aligning themselves with the outsiders for harming their own brethern. When Abdul Ahed Khan took up the issue of the Malwa campaign with some of the selected Sardars, they pretended to be innocent and credulous like untutored peasants. Outwardly however they held out promises that in collaboration with Maharaja Amar Singh they would extend full support to re-establish the rule of Emperor Shah Alam on the entire Punjab territory lying to the side of Patiala. Not only that, with their promises and sweet words they raised the hope and dream in the heart of Abdul Ahed Khan of his victory over Lahore and Multan also. In fact, this was a subtle chess-like move on the part of both the parties to trap each other and eliminate each other. As it always happens, in such a game, the man who takes the initiative emerges victorious. While the one party was led by Abdul Ahed Khan, a Kashmiri, the other was led by Baghel Singh, a Jhabalia Jat. Both matched each other in diplomacy. But whereas Baghel Singh was a famous warrior,

Abdul Ahed was a coward of the first water, and in the end, his selfish policy of hidden hostility, treachery and cowardice proved his Waterloo.

#### **Preparation for the Campaign**

Abdul Ahed Khan was trapped in the net of Sardar Baghel Singh's tactics, and according to Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar, the old fool swallowed the bait Abdul Ahed Khan set his mouth to the meat morsel hung as a bait for catching fish, and this bait got stuck up in his throat. Abdul Ahed, misled by the false promises held out by S. Baghel Singh on behalf of the Singhs, requested the Emperor to accompany the military campaign in the Sikh territories, but the Emperor refused probably because of his knowledge of the tragic chapters in the past Sikh history. Abdul Ahed brought to the notice of the Emperor in a tone of veiled warning that if no campaign was launched against the Singhs, the royal army would put him under siege for claiming the arrears of the amount of money and salary settled with it but the Emperor did not agree. Prince Jahandar Shah got rid of Abdul Ahed Khan by saying that he was indisposed. But Abdul Ahed was insisting that the campaign would not be effective in the absence of some member of the royal family. Therefore, Emperor Shah Alam was compelled to order his son Mirza Jahan Shah Farkhanda Bakht to accompany Abdul Ahed Khan on this campaign against the Singhs.

Abdul Ahed Khan collected a sizable army and artillery regiment, and accompanied by Prince Farkhanda Bakht left Delhi on June 3, 1779. S. Baghel Singh and some other small Sardars like Bhag Singh Dalewalia were also with him. On the way, Abdul Ahed Khan removed the revenue officer and revenue collectors of Mirza Najjaf Khan and appointed his own officers. When the royal army reached Karnal, Raja Gazpat Singh and the young Prince of Jind met Abdul Ahed Khan, with some other Sardars joining them. S. Baghel Singh kept on whispering his own plan into their ears. As a result, the Sikh Sardars went on giving some presents to Abdul Ahad Khan without much objection. Therefore, neither Abdul Ahed Khan nor Prince Farkhanda Bakht grew suspicious. Raja Gazpat Singh himself agreed to pay two lakh rupees. Earlier S. Baghel Singh alone was the adviser of Abdul Ahed Khan. Now Gajpat Singh also became a friend, trusted

adviser and top-ranking officer. The whole administration began to be run in consultation with him. Any Sikh coming with his recommendation was recruited in the army and it was on his advice that every new Sardar was given elephants, crowns, and other gifts. The Sikh police posts would be set up in the territories from where people attempted to migrate with the coming of the royal army. Thus, these two Sardars-Baghel Singh and Gajpat Singh-created a new situation in that area, While in reality the royal army was advancing forward, the police posts being set up from place to place were manned by the Singh Sardars. This reminds us of what Akbar Allahabadi had observed on one occasion during the First World War 1914-18; "The victory goes to the English even while the pace of Germany moves forward." Thus, the policy and diplomacy of S. Baghel Singh and Gajpat Singh proved successful, and Abdul Ahed Khan was being trapped in a very subtle manner.

Abdul Ahad Khan had launched his campaign from Delhi to establish his control over the loyal 'Khalsa' territory in the district of Sonapat, and with a view to collecting monetary tributes and revenue from those Sikh Sardars and Missaldars who had established their hegemony in certain areas of the districts of Sonipal and Ambala. For this purpose, he had recruited in the royal army even those soldiers and Sardars whose brothers and relatives he wanted to crush. Moreover, his chief advisers were those Sikh Sardars who were thus to come under the range of his attack. God alone could protect such a person dreaming of the success of his policy under these circumstances.

#### **The Imprisonment of Bhai Desu Singh**

Abdul Ahed spent the rainy season in Karnal. Here Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal met him. Abdul Ahed demanded three lakh rupees from him, and Bhai Desu Singh agreed to pay two lakh rupees. At this Ahed raised his demand to 5 lakh rupees. One night Raja Gajpat Singh told Abdul Ahed Khan that it was difficult to collect the amount from Bhai Desu Singh. Therefore, he advised the royal minister to put all the Sardars including himself behind the bars. Later on, he should release all except Desu Singh. Ahed was taken in. On September 12, when the Sardars came to see Abdul Ahed Khan and the Prince, they were arrested.



When Taj Mohammed informed Abdul Ahed Khan that all the Sardars except Desu Singh had agreed to give monetary tributes, they were released. Only Desu Singh was not released. In fact, Abdul Ahad's heart was not clear. He wanted to avenge the death of his brother Abdul Qasim who was killed fighting against Desu Singh's army in the March, 1776 battle. Further, he had asked him to deposit in the royal treasury the whole revenue collected by him during the past four years. Finally, after exacting one lakh rupees in cash, he released Desu Singh, but as a surety for the remaining amount, he kept his son Bhai Lal Singh in the royal custody.

With this short-sighted and stupid act of Abdul Ahed Khan, he lost the confidence of all the big and smaller Sardars of the area and it became widely known that Abdul Ahed was a dishonest and treacherous man. No one could trust him. At the same time the treatment meted out to Bhai Desu Singh enraged them, because Bhai Desu Singh came from a devout and noble Sikh family of Guru Arjan's time and was held in high esteem in the Khalsa ranks. His humiliation was nothing short of the collective humiliation of the Khalsa. Probably the sole motive of Raja Gajpat Singh was to enrage the Khalsa so that when the proper time came, the Sikhs should be prepared to deal a hard blow to Abdul Ahed Khan.

#### **Abdul Ahed Khan's hostility to Patiala and his attack**

During these very days, Maharaja Amar Singh sent his Diwan Nanu Mal and Mir Munshi Lala Ram Dayal with pledges of five lakh rupees to be handed over to Abdul Ahad Khan on the condition that he should go back and not commit any excesses in the Patiala territory. This happened on September 13, 1779.

It was a good opportunity for Abdul Ahed Khan. It was a victory for him. He had already received some monetary tributes from Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind, Bhai Desu Singa of Kaithal and Sardar Bhanga Singh of Thanesar. Now Maharaja Amar Singh had also sent him *hundis* (pledger) worth five lakh rupees. Whatever might be the inner or psychological state of the Sardars, apparently Abdul Ahed Khan received monetary tributes from them. But his arrogance and subtle diplomacy upset his apple-cart. He told Diwan Nanu Mal to ask Maharaja Amar Singh to come personall

for giving the monetary tribute of five lakh rupees. But the Diwan had come to know how Desu Singh had been deceived. Therefore, the Diwan and the Maharaja were not ready to accept Ahed's proposal. The territory and sovereignty of Patiala exceeded that of any other Sardar, and Sirhind also formed a part of this state. Therefore, Maharaja Amar Singh could not trust Abdul Ahed. Diwan Nanu Mal agreed to pay Rs. 1½ lakh in lieu of the absence of the Maharaja of Patiala. But Abdul Ahed insisted that the Maharaja should pay monetary tributes and other gifts personally, and in anger he went to the extent of saying that he would charge the whole amount expended on the campaign from Maharaja Amar Singh to the penny, and that he would not accept the amount sent through the Diwan although it might well be seven lakh rupees. In his pride and arrogance, he tore away the pledges presented to him by the Diwan and declared that he would humiliate Amar Singh at least once. Raja Gajpat Singh assured Abdul Ahed that he was personally responsible for the Patiala monetary tributes and advised him to return to Delhi. But Ahed moved towards Patiala and ordered his advance army to loot and plunder the state of Patiala and turn it into a waste land and attack the Patiala fort.

#### **The arrival of S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars**

The royal army crossed the river Sarswati from near Pehwa on September 25, and pitched its tents at Ghuram, 15 miles to the south east of Patiala, and from here the troops began to come out for the plunder and ruin of the villages of the Patiala state. But the Patiala army intercepted them. In the meantime a 15 thousand Singh army led by S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Tara Singh Gaibe and some other Sardars arrived from beyond the Sutlej. It appears that Maharaja Amar Singh had been receiving all the news concerning the movement of the royal army either through S. Baghel Singh and Raja Gajpat Singh or through S. Bhangra Singh and his spies. Moreover, Maharaja Amar Singh was fully in touch with S. Jassa Singh, S. Tara Singh, Sangat Singh, Maha Singh, Shukarchakia, Bhangi Ramgarhia and other Sardars so that in the time of emergency they could be approached for help. Consequently, these Sardars were also battle-ready. Therefore, the moment the news of Abdul Ahed Khan's plans to attack Patiala spread, the different Singh Sardars immediately moved towards Patiala, and S. Jassa

Singh, Tara Singh and Sangat Singh were the first to reach here with an army of 1<sup>5</sup> thousand Singhs.

At this time a few Singhs who had been recruited by Raja Gajpat Singh revolted and demanded the full settlement of their accounts up to date otherwise they would not move even a pace ahead.

On seeing all these developments, Abdul Ahed Khan was perplexed and he became nervous. Now a few Singh Sardars initiated negotiations with Maharaja Amar Singh. Perhaps the armies of the Bhangi and other Missaldar Sardars were yet to arrive. Maharaja Amar Singh agreed to meet Prince Farkhanda Bhakht and minister Abdul Ahed Khan, and the following day i.e; October 6, was fixed for this meeting. But the Maharaja returned from the way while going to meet them. Probably by now he had received the news that the Dal Khalsa was about to reach Patiala, or it is possible that he had come to know about the evil intentions of Abdul Ahed Khan.

On October 7, a small battie was fought and Maharaja Amar Singh took position in his fort. Abdul Ahad Khen now moved still closer to Patiala and put his camp at a distance of five miles from the city. At this time Zabita Khan Rohella tried to be sympathetic to the Singhs, and it is surmised that with the situation taking a turn against Abdul Ahed, he fanned the feelings of disloyalty among his Rohella brethren in the royal army.

When Abdul Ahed Khan's position had become weak in this manner, S. Baghel Singh informed Prince Farkhanda Bhakht and the minister that a big Singh army was on its way to Patiala from across the river Sutlej for the support of the Maharaja. He pointed out that in all there would be a gathering of two lakh Singhs led by S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the conqueror of Sirhind, and Lahore. On hearing this, Abdul Ahed Khan was greatly upset, and he agreed to return to Delhi quietly. Now there was no ray of hope for him anywhere around. He feared that he might not be able to save himself and reach Delhi. The scene of the death of Zain Khan at the hands of the Singhs troubled his memory. He visualised the picture on the screen of his mind of the armies of Jahan Khan and Temur Shah running helter skelter to

Afghanistan under the pressure of the Singhs. It seemed to him that a similar destiny awaited him. Therefore, he was trembling in his shoes with froth on his mouth. If he had been a hero he might well have plunged into the battle-field with sword in hand and challenged his enemy, but Abdul Ahed Khan had prospered on intrigues, and mean and cunning acts. A brave warrior may be arrogant, but he can never be a mean intriguer, and an intriguer can never be courageous. Conspiracies are hatched in secret by wicked and cowardly people. Simple and brave people settle their differences in personal encounters or they do so by dint of sword. Abdul Ahed Khan was a cowardly person. He told S. Baghel Singh that he should help him reach Delhi safely at any cost.

#### **The Return of Abdul Ahed to Delhi**

Here was an opportunity for S. Baghel Singh. He told the Prince and Abdul Ahed Khan that both the Khalsa Dals had come and that they would not go back without fighting a battle. The surrounding territories were also in the control of the Singhs, from where Abdul Ahed had received monetary tributes and collected land revenue. The Sardars of these areas, big or small, were grinding their teeth in anger, and they were on the look out for an opportunity to avenge themselves. Along with them the Sikhs in general would also pounce upon them. In Baghel Singh's view, the only solution lay in refunding the money collected from different Sardars. In addition, they should be given some more compensation so that they might agree to remain peaceful; and the Dal Khalsa Sardars should be presented with an amount of seven lakh rupees for *Karah parshad*. Only then would they be able to have some kind of peace with them. Abdul Ahed was badly trapped. He was in a dilemma as to what he should do. Therefore, without any objection or protest, he accepted the proposal of S. Baghel Singh. He refunded the monetary tributes received from the Singh Sardars, and offered seven lakh rupees to the Sardars of the Khalsa Dal. The control of their respective territories remained intact and on Oct. 14, 1779, minister Abdul Ahed Khan and Prince Farkhanda Bakht of Emperor Shah Alam returned to Delhi from Patiala. This was a crushing defeat for the

Mughal army which had come to attack Patiala. When on the third day, Emperor Alam Shah received this news, an atmosphere of gloom and disappointment descended on the state. On hearing that the Singhs had reached Patiala in lakhs, nobody expected that the Prince or Abdul Ahed Khan would be able to save his life and reach Delhi. But they were labouring under an illusion. They were not familiar with the greatest characteristics of the Khalsa warriors, i.e. the Khalsa is inimical to the enemy as long as the latter confronted him in the battle-field with sword in hand. But if the weapon drops from his hands or if he surrenders the weapon, the Singhs do not attack him; on the contrary, they withdraw their sword lifted for the attack. This quality of true and detached warrior had left such a deep impact on the mind of Qazi Noor Mohammed Gunjabe on the basis of his eye-witness incidents that after referring to the bravery of the Khalsa in the battle-field, the next quality of the Singhs that he points out is that they do not attack those who run away from the battle-field, nor do they obstruct the way of the renegades. In his *Jangnama* written after the Jihad of Ahmed Shah Durrani and Nasir Khan Baloch against the Singhs in 1764-65, Qazi Noor Mohammed says : "The Singhs never kill a coward who runs away from the battle-field nor do they intercept the renegade i.e they do not chase him."

Since Abdul Ahed Khan and Prince Farkhanda Bhakht had conceded their defeat and returned to Delhi, leaving the campaign, no Singh Sardar attacked them; nor were they allowed to do so. The Khalsa remained true to this commitment, and if any outsider tried to do so, the Singh Sardars advised him against it. Thus, the Prince and his minister reached Delhi safe and sound on Nov. 5, 1769 and Emperor Shah Alam, the entire royal family and court thanked God a million times.

(Mohammed Hussain, *Tareekhi-Patiala*, 113-17; *Tehmasnama* (Rao). 149-50; *Jassa Singh Binod*, 219-20, Urdu, 151-53; Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. iii, 172-84; Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, 955-56, *Kaifiyat Sardarane Ahluwalia* (Baran Mislan 15-6).

## The Last years of S. Jassa Singh

### The Occupation of Kapurthala

As has already been pointed out, S. Jassa Singh was an extremely contented Sikh. It was never his motive to conquer territories for his personal gains. The *Panth* had showered exceptional glory on him by raising him to the status of Sultan-UI-Qaum—the Emperor of the *Panth*—and he was happy and contented with this position. It may be noted that even after the conquest of Sirhind and Lahore, he kept under his personal control only a few territories. After the conquest of Sirhind, the lion's share in the territory went to Patiala, while the smaller territories went to some Phulka families and other smaller Sardars. The Lahore conquest was by and large the result of the efforts of the Bhangis, Ghanayas and Shukarchakias, and these *Missals* had occupied several territories. S. Jassa Singh was never avaricious for any territory nor did he take an undue advantage of his high position. For example, he never showed any favouritism to the members of his own family and his relatives. Kapurthala was the place which belonged to the founder of his dynasty, but even it was occupied by S. Jassa Singh at a later stage. It is recorded in *Jassa Singh Binod* that in Samat, 1830 Bikrami (1773-74), the territory of Rai Ibrahim had been occupied but since the Rai had surrendered, agreeing to pay the land revenue in time, he was allowed to keep in his control the city of Kapurthala and 27 villages. But Rai Ibrahim never came to participate in the last rites of S. Jassa Singh's son-in-law who, during his visit to Kapurthala for revenue collection, lost his life after being hit by a bullet coming from the fort. Nor did he send the revenue in time. He went on putting off the steward sent by S. Jassa Singh with diplomatic tactics. There were also

complaints against him regarding the harassment of the people, and it was for this reason that someone had murdered his son. In Samat 1837, (1780 A.D.) when Kanwar Bhag Singh whom S Jassa Singh had handed over the administrative responsibility in his own place, brought all these complaints to the notice of the Sardar, the latter replied that in view of the murder of Rai Ibrahim's son, Kapurthala had been left under his control, but since Rai Ibrahim had gone back on his word, Kapurthala should be occupied. Consequently, Kanwar Bhag Singh attacked Kapurthala with his armies, S. Jassa Singh accompanying it personally. When this army reached near Mansoorwal, Diwan Lahori Mal and Boora Mal, the two lawyers of Rai Ibrahim came to meet S. Jassa Singh. But in the meantime, the army had reached quite close to Kapurthala, and the army of Rai Ibrahim suffered defeat after a brief encounter and took shelter in the city fort. Now in utter helplessness Rai Ibrahim came to S. Jassa Singh personally. The Sardar assured him that he would not be subjected to any kind of excesses. He would be allowed to have in his control the houses inside the city and he would be free to live there, but he should vacate the fort and shift his goods to those houses. There would be no obstruction in his way of any kind. Thus, the city of Kapurthala came under the control of S. Jassa Singh who fixed a pension for Rai Ibrahim. Sayyed Mohammed Latif has given 1777 as the date of this incident in his book *History of the Punjab*. This very date, Samat, 1834 Bikrami, 1777 A.D., is recorded in *Twareekh Guru Khalsa-Raj Khalsa* and it appears to be more authentic. (*Jassa Singh Binod*, 205, 224, Urdu, 141, 142, :55-56; *Tareekh-i-Kapurthala*, 254, 56, 265, Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 316).

#### **Tension with the Ramgarhias**

Almost all the historians have referred to the arrest of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia by S. Mali Singh and Tara Singh, the younger brothers of S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and his honourable release after the other Sardars remonstrated with S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia; and this incident has been quoted to be the root cause of the conflict and hostility between the Ahluwalias and the *Ramgarhias and Ghanayas*. Losing their territories in this conflict, the Ramgarhia Sardars were forced to leave the Central

Punjab for some time, but the full light on this episode has been thrown only by Sayyed Khalifa Mohammed Hassain in his book *Tareekh-i-Patiala* written in 1878. He writes that once S. Jassa Singh was on his way to Achall, about two miles to the south of Batala, where on Fagun, Sudi 14, a fair is held. When he reached near Gurdaspur—probably he was coming from Pathankot or from the hills—S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brothers, Khushal Singh, Mali Singh and Tara Singh attacked him all of a sudden and arrested him. It appears that S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was not accompanied by a large number of men, because Mohammed Hassan does not mention any attempt at resistance or armed encounter on his part. When this came to the notice of S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, he presented Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia with a head-dress, horse and palanquin, and gave him a warm send-off. It is recorded in *Tareekh-e-Riast Kapurthala* that S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was engrossed in a stroll and hunting near the village Nangal, but the identity of this village is not fully clarified, perhaps it was Gurdas Nangal when Mali Singh Ramgarhia arrived there suddenly with a large army. In the battle that ensued S. Jassa Singh received two bullet-injuries. But the account of Sayyed Mohammed Hassan appears to be more correct.

Although S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was able to handle the matter wisely, it could not be suppressed for a long time. The territory of S. Jai Singh Ghanaya touched the area where the Emperor of the *Panth*, Jathedar Sultan-ul-Qaum, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, was humiliated by the Ramgarhias without any rhyme or reason. Jai Singh Ghanaya took it as an insult as well as the humiliation of the whole *Panth*. Moreover, there had been old hostility between the Ghanayas and the Ramgarhia Sardars from the time of the Kasur plunder. At that time Mali Singh Ramgarhia had refused to share the plunder with the Ghanayas according to the established convention and he had kept the entire booty with himself. S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had tried to remonstrate with his brother, but when Mali Singh stuck to his guns, he kept quiet, and the Ghanayas were not given their share. This action violated the established practice and convention prevalent among the famous Missaldar Sardars.



The territories of the Ghanayas and the Ramgarhias were in the same areas and they shared their boundaries at several places. This kind of situation was bound to result in misunderstanding, differences and trivial conflicts. The Punjab farmers are ready to kill each other for an inch of land and, therefore, it is not something surprising if the Ghanayas and the Ramgarhia Sardars took sides of their respective men and came in conflict. Many times trivial matters become the cause of big conflicts as should be clear from the mutual conflicts of the Ramgarhias and the Ahluwalias, on the one hand, and of the Ghanayas and the Ramgarhias, on the other. This conflict assumed such terrible dimensions that it became the cause of battles between the armies of these Missals and as a result, the Ramgarhia Sardars were forced to vacate their territory in Riarki and the Doaba and for a time, they took refuge with the Maharaja of Patiala. (Sayyed Mohammed Hassan, *Tareekh-i-Patiala*, 69-70; Ali-U-Din, *Ibratnama*, 304-08, Ramjas, *Tareekh-i-Riast Kapurthala*, 262-63; Gian Singh *Twareekh-Guru-Khalsa*, Vol. iii, 618, *Raj Khalsa*, 78; Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 481-88; Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 316)

### **The Bringing of the Kartarpur (Dhirmalli) Sodhis into the fold of the Panth**

The Sodhis of Kartarpur are the offspring of Sahibzada Baba Dhir Mal. They were as much ostracised from the Khalsa community as the *masands* were. Therefore, the Khalsa was prohibited from sharing food and other social formalities with the Dhir Mali Sodhis. Sodhi Badbhagh Singh, the successor to the seat of Kartarpur, had already tasted the *Khanda Pahul* and joined the Khalsa Dal, but after him Sodhi Gulab Singh had not taken the *Pahul* so far. Seeing the Khalsa in ascendance, they felt that they could not maintain their separate identity. Therefore, they appealed to Tikka S. Bhag Singh to visit Kartarpur and dine with him so that he might also mix with the Panth Khalsa. When Tikka Bhag Singh broached this topic with S. Jassa Singh, he consulted other Sardars. The Singhpuria Sardars and Bhai Darbara Singh Akali argued that this was possible only if Sodhi Gulab Singh embraced Sikhism after taking *Amrit*. This proposal was accepted

by Sodhi Gulab Singh. At this S. Jassa Singh, Tikka Bhag Singh and other Sardars went to Kartarpur, and in a big congregation, they administered the *Amrit* to Sodhi Sahib. S. Jassa Singh announced in that assembly that since Sodhi Gulab Singh had become a full-fledged Singh after taking 'Amrit,' he had become a part of the Khalsa community. Now the Khalsa should accept his invitation to meals. Consequently, S. Jassa Singh and other Sardars went to the community kitchen and sitting with the congregation took their meals. Thus, Sodhi Gulab Singh and his family came to form a part of the Khalsa Panth.

#### **The Administering of 'Amrit' (*Khanda Pehul*) to Maharaja Sahib Singh of Patiala**

Whereas on the one hand, S. Jassa Singh held a high position in the political matters concerning the Khalsa Panth, on the other hand, he was also an acknowledged religious leader of the Panth. Therefore, the outstanding Sardars took the Khanda Pahul in his leadership. Baba Ala Singh and Maharaja Amar Singh of the Phoolka dynasty had taken the Khanda Pahul directly from him and it was the desire of Maharaja Amar Singh that his son, Tikka (Prince) Sahib Singh, should also be administered the 'Amrit' by him. Moreover, he wanted that S. Jassa Singh should personally solemnise the marriage of Tikka Sahib Singh with Bibi Rattan Kaur, the daughter of S. Ganda Singh Bhangi. Even when this idea was under consideration on Fagunvadi 8, Samat 1838 Bikrami, Feb. 5, 1782, Maharaja Amar Singh passed away. S. Jassa Singh had promised that Maharaja Sahib Singh would be administered the Amrit (Khanda Pahul) before his marriage.

The marriage arrangements were made under the supervision of Diwan Nanu Mal, and the marriage party included Raja Bhag Singh Jind, S. Hamir Singh Nabha, Bhai Desu Singh Kaithal, Rai Ahmed Jagraon, Nawab Atta-Ula-Khan Malerkotla, amongst others. When the marriage party reached Kapurthala, S. Jassa Singh suggested that Maharaja Sahib Singh should be administered 'Amrit' in Gurudwara Taran Taran Sahib. From Kapurthala, the marriage party reached Taran Taran where S. Jassa Singh joined the 'Panj Piaras' (the five beloved ones) and administered 'Amrit' to Maharaja Sahib Singh and after this the marriage was solemnized at Panjwarh. This event took place in the beginning of Samat 1839 (1782 A.D.).

### **The Purification of Sri Darbar Sahib**

The loss of life suffered by the Khalsa in their struggle against the Mughal and Durrani Governments for the freedom of Punjab was but natural, but the most painful aspect of the situation was the destruction of Sri Darbar Sahib, filling in of the holy tank with rubbish and debris and the destruction of the towers inside the Darbar Sahib complex. After the conquest of Sirhind at the time of Guruki-Chadar. S. Jassa Singh had donated the whole money of his share to Sri Darbar Sahib, and with this amount together with the contributions made by the other Sardars, the task of the purification of Sri Darbar Sahib was assigned to Bhai Des Raj Bidhichandia. After the great holocaust, Ahmed Shah Durrani had mortgaged Sri Darbar Sahib and the landed estate etc. attached to it to Chaudhary Sahib Rai of Naushehran Pannuan for Rs. 3/-lakh. It was provided that as long as Ahmed Shah did not make this payment the offerings of the Darbar Sahib would also go to Chaudhary Sahib Rai. When the Singhs lodged a complaint with S. Jassa Singh in this connection, he replied that Chaudhary Sahib Rai had not committed any act of desecration. On the contrary, he had spent an amount of Rs. 3/- lakh from his own pocket to prevent any damage to the houses inside the Darbar Sahib complex and saved the priests from a forcible conversion to Islam. This was really a noble task accomplished by him. Consequently S. Jassa Singh invited him and gave him a hearty welcome. The amount of Rs. 3/- lakh was paid to him and Sri Darbar Sahib was freed from his mortgage. The amount concerning the fines of the priests and the Akali Singhs was also paid by him. Thus, he fulfilled a great moral obligation on the part of the Panth.

It appears that S. Jassa Singhji thought that with the liberation of Punjab from the local tyrants and foreign invaders, the mission of his life had been accomplished. Now he thought he should not interfere with the remaining matters and the care and administration of the territories should be handed over to young Sardars so that they might gain experience of independent administration. Even otherwise Sardar Jassa Singh was detached and contented to a great extent. Therefore, he

devoted the last four or five years of his life to the service of Sri Darbar Sahib, the re-construction of the towers, and the re-habilitation of the city etc. He led a military campaign, or went out in support of others only when his personal presence was almost indispensable.

#### **The Death of S. Jassa Singh**

It was a religious ritual for S. Jassa Singh to visit Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar on the occasions of Diwali and Baisakhi for paying obeisance and having a dip in the holy tank, because on these occasions the whole Khalsa community assembled here to offer prayers and evaluate its achievements during the past six months and pass resolutions regarding the tasks to be taken up during the coming six months. That is why the Khalsa would wind up its campaigns outside quickly and return to Amritsar.

When in the month of Katak, Sumat 1840, S. Jassa Singh was coming to Amritsar from Fatehbad for the Diwali celebrations, he made a halt at the village Bundela. Here he ate a piece of watermelon, and while riding his horse, he developed a stomach ache and became unconscious. On his way to Amritsar, he passed away. It was Katak 7, Oct. 20, 1783, the Diwali being five days ahead of Oct. 25. According to his will he was cremated in Sri Amritsar near Baba Atal where S. Kapor Singh had at one time been cremated. S. Jassa Singh's tomb is still in existence on the western side of the *parikarma* of Baba Atal.

Thus, this great warrior leader of Punjab, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who dedicated himself, body and soul, to the service of the community and his faith, and who spent his resources freely and generously in the cause of his country's freedom, died after having led a life of action and sacrifice. He left behind a Punjab that could look forward to a great future.

## CHAPTER 30

# The Qualities and Nature of S. Jassa Singh and his contribution to Punjab

### Personal Qualities and Nature

S. Jassa Singh was handsome, with a vigorous and strong body. He was tall, and his complexion was wheatish but bright, with a broad head, full eyebrows with a downward tilt, penetrating, large eyes, and a full beard. His chest was broad and his arms were so long that when he was in the standing posture, they touched his knees, and his voice was so slentorian that even when he spoke in a low tone, it was audible to the people standing at a distance.

S. Jassa Singh's breakfast consisted of one seer of butter and a quarter seer of *mishri* (condensed sugar). He had his lunch regularly, and it is a measure of his physical strength and health that he could easily digest half a goat or so. His body was well built and heavy, and he was so active, tough and strong in riding that no horse would bear his weight for more than six months. He was an expert swordsman and bowman. Very few Sardars could match him in this field. Many of the arrows carried his name or his symbol. In firing a gun he was a great marksman; in the battle-field he invariably led the army, and wherever he was needed, he would give a kick to his horse and reach there. He was not in favour of wearing iron armour because he thought that after wearing such a heavy steel dress a rider could neither attack the enemy swiftly and suddenly, nor effect a quick escape. For his defence he depended exclusively on God.

His dress was essentially sky-blue. He tied his turban in the Mughal style. Over his shirt he wore a buttoned jacket followed by a belt and a short sword, and he had a big flying under garment and tight wrinkled trousers. He would

wear a large sword and other requisite weapons in his belt, along with a short sword.

Since he had spent his childhood with Mata Sundriji, he had had a good opportunity to study Urdu and Persian there, and among the Missaldar Sardars, he was the only person who could be regarded as literate according to the tradition of the time. To begin with he spoke only Urdu; and this used to amuse his Sikh brethren. Gradually he switched over to Punjabi but the influence of Urdu and Persian remained intact till the very end of his life.

Whereas on the one hand, he was the political leader of the Khalsa, on the other, he also wielded influence as a religious jathedar (leader) and after Nawab Kapur Singh, he was held in high esteem and big Sardars regarded it as a matter of honour to be administered 'Amrit' (Khanda Pahul) by him. Although the military strength of the Ahluwalia Missal did not exceed four thousand, the major campaigns of the Khalsa were invariably led by S. Jassa Singh. He was very strict and highly disciplined in his routine religious activities and he paid full attention to keeping the Khalsa pure in religion. Before admitting anyone in the Khalsa Dal, S. Jassa Singh would administer him *khanda paul*. He would take a round early in the morning to see whether the Singhs were reciting Gurubani or not. At this time if he saw the Muslim servants lying asleep, he would hold them by their hands, rouse them and ask them to recite *namaz* and remember God. There were clear instructions for the Sikh Sardars to have the *kirtan* (collective singing) of *Asa Di Var* regularly.

The Hindu and Muslim officials were also employed in the administrative machinery along with the Singhs for his territories, and according to the writing of Diwan Ramjas, the Muslims were free to carry on the rituals and ceremonies of their religion. It is for this reason that sacrificing their life was regarded as martyrdom by the Muslims. The Muslims drawn from different sections and classes were employed, like the Hindus, in every department. S. Jassa Singh would not allow anyone to interfere with the religious affairs of others; nor did he permit anyone to hurt the feelings of others in the name of religion. The

slaughtering of cows was banned in the areas where the Hindu population was pre-dominant, but it was not a taboo where the majority or the total population consisted of Muslims.

According to the tradition of the Guru's house, S. Jassa Singh kept the free community-kitchen open at all times where every needy person was served with food without any distinction or discrimination.

If *anybody* came with determination and devotion for taking 'Amrit'. S. Jassa Singh joined the 'Panj Piaras' (the five beloved ones) and administered him 'Amrit' without any discrimination. While *karah parshad* came from the free community kitchen, his turban, shoes, sheet, shirt and sword were provided by the Government. If such a man wanted to remain in the Dal, he could join the jatha or military organization of any Sardar of his own choice, and if he wanted to go home, he was free to do so. S. Jassa Singh used to address everyone as 'brother'.

He held his court in the afternoon, where all important matters were discussed and resolutions passed and plans chalked out for the future collective programme or action. In the evening, there was a recital of 'Rehras' and *Kirtan* and after the prayers all would go to their respective camps (Ramjas, *T. reekh-i-Kapurthala*, 294, 112-115; Macgregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. i, 147, Griffan, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 516, Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 316-17).

#### **Contribution to Punjab.**

The greatest contribution of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to Punjab lies in liberating his native land from the local tyrants and foreign invaders. The flame of this freedom had been lit by Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the founder of the Khalsa Panth, and which had been translated into reality for a short period by Banda Singh Bahadur, but the dream of the complete freedom for Punjab was realised only during the time of S. Jassa Singh, when he was serving the Dal Khalsa as the leader of the Sikh Missals. Therefore, I deem it proper to refer to their structure and administration.

Guru Hargobindji, the Sixth Guru of the Sikhs, had initiated the faithful in the use of arms so that they would not grow into a cowardly and diffident people incapable of protecting their

religion, and the honour of their mothers and sisters, of their community and country. If they were not given this training they would become weak and helpless looking up to others for help. What Baba Farid said of the disciples in general had a direct relevance :

“Farid, do not push me to the doors of others. If you are to do so, take my life ”

A true Sikh is a man of action, but according to the instructions of the Guru, he is to conquer sexual passions, anger, avarice, attachment and arrogance with great courage and determination in the battle of life. He is to remain detached without the feeling of ill-will and cunningness and march forward with the spirit of service. As the first God-blessed bridegroom, he is to jump into the arena where countless wrestlers and heroes were going round and round, and challenging others for a duel. A true Sikh has to accept this challenge on the strength of his pure action. He is always to accomplish the task taken in hand, with the fear of God in his mind. He is in the protection of God and is fully supported by the Guru. It was with this end in view that Guru Gobind Singh had created the Khalsa, a community which regarded itself as the pure ones of the Lord. The real aim of the Khalsa was the service of the people, redressal of their sufferings, mental as well as physical. Some of this suffering is self-created, while some of it is the result of the misdeeds of wicked people who are the slaves of physical passions. One can get rid of one's mental sufferings by following the teachings of the Guru and by having unshakable faith in God. But for getting liberation from the sufferings imposed on us by other people who are the slaves of their physical desires, we need physical strength, courage and fearlessness. Those who are blindly attached to the worldly illusions cannot appreciate spiritual knowledge. They know no mercy; nor are they afraid of God. Such people are totally indifferent to the joys and sorrows of others. They have no sense of justice. Their aim is to fulfil their personal desires, and this is regarded as a universal religion by them. They justify all kinds of means for the attainment of their aim, and then interpret every word spoken by them as law. Such self-willed tyrants transform this world into a hell for the innocent people



whose life becomes a nightmare. In such conditions, if one does not feel pity or share the sorrows of others or try to remove the pain of others, if one has no courage, one is a coward and not a human being. Such a man is worse than a beast. His cowardice prompts him to commit ever more atrocities. Thus, a coward is an ally of tyranny. He is a cause of shame and regret for human society. His existence is a blot on the fair name of society.

With a view to removing this shameful cowardice from the minds of men, Guru Gobind Singh had given the gift of the sword to the Khalsa and made it a part of their religion. For the past so many centuries, our countrymen had felt terrified at the very glitter or the sound of the sword. It was regarded as a symbol of tyranny, and the weapon of the tyrants. But Guru Gobind Singh transformed it into a weapon of courage and protection. He gave its glitter and sound a new colour and a new meaning. Now the glitter of the sword began to produce divine glow on the face of the Khalsa. On seeing it, the fear of invaders began to disappear, and people began to take courage in the thought that as long as they carried this weapon, no foreign invader would dare commit any excesses on them. The very lifting of the sword and holding it straight in hand began to give strength to one's arms and courage to one's heart. And as they practised its use, they grew brave and courageous. From sparrows they were transformed into falcons, and from cows they became tigers. Earlier the eyes of these cowardly pigeons were dazzled with the glitter and sound of the sword but now at the very sight of the sword these newly converted falcons began to look here and there to find out the direction from where the cry of lamentation was coming. They became eager to remove the sufferings of others, and at once moved in the direction of the shrieks of pain and suffering. Their drawn and glittering swords gave a new lease of life to the victims of tyranny. They gave sustenance to the lamp of their life becoming dimmer every moment. The Singhs blunted and finally eliminated the tyranny of the foreign invaders, and in the words of Guru Hargobind, in the hands of these religious warriors, weapons became the means of the protection of the poor and

the destruction of the tyrants. It was a miracle performed by Guru Gobind Singh who transformed the sword which was earlier a symbol of tyranny, excesses and fear into a moral instrument, a symbol of mercy, courage and the service of the poor and the helpless. In this way, it became worthy of worship and obeisance. Now Guru Sahib gave the slogan of '*Sat Sri Akal* (victory to God) to the Khalsa and freeing him from the fear of death, prepared him for the service of the country and the community. The Guru prepared the Khalsa to sacrifice their transitory worldly life for the happiness of their fellow beings. He assured them that their victory would be the victory of God Himself because as he brought to their notice, God alone is immortal.

Guru Gobind Singh had lifted the sword when he had exhausted all other means to deal with his enemies. In fact, man understands only that language best which he has heard and used since his childhood. The foreign invader knows the language of excesses and injustice, and, therefore, he uses the sword and understands only its language. He neither knows nor understands any other language. Therefore, it is useless to communicate with him in any other language. He has to be approached through his own language—the language of the sharp sword, of cool iron or of the double-edged sword. Therefore, Guru Gobind Singh has made it clear that when one is left with no other alternative, one is justified in lifting the sword.

But the sword gifted to the Khalsa by the Guru is meant for the protection and service of the poor. It was with the help of the sword that after the death of Guru Sahib, the first General of the Khalsa army, S. Banda Singh eliminated the tyrannical rule of the Mughal from Sirhind (Malwa) and from 1/4th of the Eastern Punjab, but in the face of the immeasurable strength of the Mughal Government, the Khalsa could not achieve full and final success. The Khalsa had to struggle for half a century more for this purpose, make countless sacrifices and undergo all kinds of tortures, pass through seven massacres and two holocausts. Only then under the leadership of S. Jassa Singh and as a result of the struggle of the Missaldar Sardars could Punjab be liberated from the tyranny of the Mughals and the Durranis.

### The Glorious Khalsa

This army fighting for the freedom of Punjab was known as the esteemed Dal Khalsa, and it is under this name that this army is referred to in contemporary records.

The soldiers of this army were not salaried servants. But they joined the Khalsa army spontaneously in the name of the Guru and of religion. There were no distinctions of high and low, or of caste and creed. Since they were to serve the country strictly according to the discipline of the Guru Panth, the taking of 'Amrit' (Khanda Pahul) was essential for them. This ceremony of administering 'Amrit' to the new recruits in the Khalsa Dal signified the decimation of their original religion, family lineage, caste considerations and religious superstitions. After taking 'Amrit' from the same vessel all of them became one with the Khalsa Dal, members of a single brotherhood. They were raised to the status of pure beings of God, and it was for the victory of God, or of the moral principle which sustains this universe that they were fully and finally united, and entered the battlefield of life.

The Singhs of the Khalsa Dal (army) were free to join the Jatha (organisation) of any Sardar according to their choice, and whenever they wanted, they could shift to the Jatha of another Sardar. The main advantage of this freedom was that the Sardars spared no pains to keep their soldiers happy and contented. This also prevented them from making any kind of distinction or from subjecting the soldiers to any kind of harassment or exploitation.

It appears that the Sardars did not maintain a detailed record or register of their soldiers. In view of the paucity of literate Singhs, this was not possible either. Receiving education was really an impossible task for a community on whose head the sword of a hostile Government had hung for 50 or 60 years, a community which had to pass through massacres and holocausts ever and anon, and which had to spend 40 years in jungles, mountains and deserts. At that time the Singhs needed only two kinds of training for their survival-swordsmanship and horseriding. In these two fields the Singhs were fully seasoned and unique in the context of their times, and even the most perfect swordsmen and

horse-riders hesitated to confront them.

In 1764-65, Qazi Noor Mohammed had personally witnessed the exploits of the Sikh sword against the Durrani and the Balochis. He says: "When they (the Singhs) lift the Indian sword they cause destruction from Hind to Sind, trampling down everything under their foot. No warrior could resist them in the battlefield howsoever mighty he was." (*Jangnama*, 156)

Their adeptness in wielding spear and bow was an accepted fact, but in operating the gun, nobody could match them. To quote Qazi Noor Mohammed again, "In the battle when they carry gun, they roar like lions and enter the battlefield jumping. They pierce the ranks of many warriors and spilt the blood of many others in the dust. No doubt, there are countless other gunmen, but no one can excel them in the art of using a gun."

Sayyed Gulam Ali Khan writes in his book "Imadu Sadat" (page 71) that "their gun hits a man at a distance of 900 paces". He also writes that after the Durrani no army could ever match the Singhs. In this community "there are many strong and lion-like youngmen with such vigorous bodies that if they give kick to English horse, it will die on the spot. Everyone of these Sikhs could cover a distance of 200 miles (kos) on horse back. Had it not been so how could they resist the foreign (Durrani) army?" Finally, the Durrani acknowledged the might and range of the Sikh sword. For the Sikh horse riders covering a journey of 40 or 50 miles (kos) was a child's play, and they were never bothered about exhaustion."

The Dal Khalsa consisted only of the cavalry; the infantry was meant for guard duty or for revenue collection. Referring to the Singhs' love for horses, Colonel Polliar writes, "The Singhs do not mourn the death of a brother or a relative, but they do mourn the death of their horses." The Singhs' horses responded to individual voice, whistle or pat, and the moment they got the signal, they started galloping, came to a stop, fell on the ground; in fact, these horses functioned like machines.

The Singh Sardars including S. Jassa Singh were greatly pleased to accept gifts in the form of horses. In *Jassa Singh Binod*,

there are several references to this fact. By following this practice, the Singhs in the infantry could be easily turned into cavaliers and thus they could be admitted to the Dal.

In the Dal Khalsa, there were neither parades on the European pattern, nor any platoon divisions. The Sardars were the commanders of their respective Jathas (organisations) and according to the need of the occasion, they would divide and organise the horsemen in some pattern. The Sardars with smaller organisations would fight the enemy after joining the Missal of a bigger Sardar. Therefore, there was no question of disobedience, or of the violation of the code of conduct. If they did not approve of any action of a Sardar, next time they would join some other Missal.

But whenever there was any case of disobedience, the Panj Piaras (the five beloved ones) would intervene, bring about a reconciliation between the two parties, imposing fine on the defaulter, who would accept this verdict, for the Panj piaras were nominated in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and they announced their verdict and imposed the fine also in the presence of the Holy Granth. Since the Singhs were engaged in the service of the people and the country in the name of the Guru, there was a very little scope for any dispute and for the imposition of any fine.

The dress of the Sardars and of the Singhs was very simple. They wore a sky blue turban on their head, kachhera (the loose under-garment), simple shoes (jutti), and a sheet or a quarter blanket to cover their body. The specimen of this dress is clear in the sketch of Baba Ala Singh of Patiala.

When an emergency arose the Singhs would use their turban as a belt. A few Sardars would wear gold bracelets and necklaces, or wrap a gold chain or iron chain around their turban. Beyond this there was no distinction between the Sardars and the Singh soldiers.

Even during a military campaign, they did not carry much paraphernalia. They had one blanket each, with which they would cover themselves at night if the need arose, and while travelling, it lay safe on the saddle of their horses. Only the Sardars carried the *Shaldari* or *Loi* (a blanket of refined wool) as a mark of their

identity. In the event of a long and arduous march, parched grāms and *gur* constituted the victuals of the Singhs. They ate meat only in the time of leisure and it was available only in villages or cantonments.

In the battle-field, a Singh soldier carried a bow and arrows, a spear, a sword, a shield and, a gun. The iron rings were worn by the Singhs on their head dress, and they would be sometimes worn on the left arm, in case a need arose. Many of them carried '*gurj*' with one end plated with iron. They also used long guns, *rehkalc*, *topre*, and jambure, but the Dal did not have big cannons and if they ever had, these could not be transported to the battle-field rapidly. Therefore, in the face of the royal artillery, the Khalsa had a difficult going on many occasions.

The attacks of the Khalsa were directed against the Mughals and other foreign invaders so that Punjab could be liberated from their clutches and the people could lead a happy life. Their attacks on the territories in Gang Doab beyond the Jamuna were aimed at weakening the power of Najibu Daula, the agent of Ahmed Shah Durrani so that he should not act as a Durrani informer, and so that, aided and abetted by him, the foreign rulers should not be able to tighten their hold on Punjab. To Rajasthan the Khalsaji went in aid of the Jats who sought refuge with them. The Khalsa Dal never attacked any quarter without any rhyme or reason, or purely for plunder. Several historians have committed mistakes in assessing the activities of the Khalsa. Before launching an attack on anybody, the Khalsa would ask him to accept their protection, and then an area or territory came under the protection of a Sardar for which he received a nominal revenue of 5%. No other Sardar interfered with him in any way or demanded anything from him. Colonel Pollier writes that many of the landlords of Gang Doab saved themselves from the attacks of the Khalsa by accepting their protection. Gulam Mohudin (Bute Shah) writes in his book *Tareekh-i-Punjab* that when a Sardar with 10 horsemen took some territory in his protection even a Sardar with 500 horsemen or more did not interfere with him.

The Khalsa treated the landlords who came under their protection with great respect, and the people were happy and pros-

peous. According to the circumstances, the rate of revenue varied from 1/3rd of the total production to 1/10th, out of which a sizable portion was given away in charity or in the form of estate to Hindu temples, Muslim *darguhs*, mosques, tombs etc. Moreover, the Singh Sardars would transfer the ownership of the villages and land to the Deras of saints, Hindu dharamsalas, Muslim schools and mosques (Bute Shah, *Tareekh-i-Punj*: b).

In their territories, the peasants and agricultural labourers enjoyed full freedom of work and in the hour of crisis if some traders or shopkeepers sought their aid, or if they took permanent residence in their territory, full protection was extended to them so that they remained completely immune from the external battles and conflicts.

Every Sardar enjoyed full rights over his territory. And with a view to aiding his population or improving the economic conditions of his people, he would welcome the migration of people from other parts of India and provide them with all facilities. Therefore, although in the Sikh territory a single Sardar was the sovereign ruler, there was very little scope of any excesses being committed on the people in the territories of the neighbouring kings. (Franklin, George Thomas, 76).

At the time of launching a campaign or going to the battlefield, the Missaldar Sardars chose their leader known for his bravery, humility and service to the community; and after Nawab Kapur Singh, this honour was invariably conferred on S. Jassa Singh.

The war tactics of the Singhs have already been explained in detail. They followed the rules of guerilla warfare tactics. A group of 40 or 50 riders would move forward swiftly and reach the point from where the enemy came within the range of their fire. They would stop their horses and shower bullets. Then they would retreat about 100 paces to re-load their guns and repeat the attack. Their horses were so trained that with a touch or a pat they would come to a sudden halt even though they were galloping. When one group of soldiers retreated for re-loading their guns, the other fired at the enemy. Thus, they would not allow the enemy a breathing space. They would force him to run in confusion and humiliation. Sometimes the Singhs

affected a retreat at the height of a battle and when the enemy troops were separated from the main army while chasing them they would suddenly turn back and encircling the enemy soldiers from all sides attack them, thereby inflicting heavy casualties on them. That is why Qazi Noor Mohammed has said :

“Even if there is a confusion in their army ranks, don’t take it as a rout, O youngmen.

Because this is only their war-tactic. Beware of this trap of theirs, beware.”

Generally the Dal Khalsa never laid a siege to forts and cities, nor did they take cover behind them. However, they would climb and scale walls by means of their ladders as soon as they could, and jump inside. They would either open the doors, or use their swords for settling scores with those who came to resist them. They would raise the battle cry of ‘*Sat Sri Akal*’ with the rest of the army following them in triumph and victory.

It is true that in such circumstances, there was some looting, but the Khalsa plundered only the Government treasuries, stores, forts, fortresses, mansions or underground basements of their particular enemies. According to Bute Shah, they would touch neither poor men, nor anybody’s turban, nor women’s ornaments and other goods. Qazi Noor Mohammed confirms this in *Jangnama*. He says : “They do not kill a coward who surrenders his weapons in the battle-field, nor, do they run after a renegade to encircle him. They do not loot the wealth or ornaments of any woman whether she is a house-wife or a slave.”

The code of conduct evolved by the Guru directed the Singhs to regard other women as mothers and sisters, and the association with a Muslim woman was an unpardonable sin for them. This strict rule had been included in the Sikh Code of Conduct so that in a fit of anger ignited by mutual hostility, the Sikhs should not think of assaulting the Muslim women by way of reprisals.

The man who showed exceptional bravery in the battle-field was at once promoted. Immediate arrangement was made for the treatment of a wounded soldier and he was looked after so well that he soon forgot his pain. The money and other belongings of a Singh who lost his life in the battle-field were given to his



son who was also appointed in his place. In the event of his being issueless, his property was given to his relatives or some representatives, after due resolution having been passed in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Therefore, a Singh soldier was afraid neither of being wounded, nor of death. By nature the Singhs were detached from the thought of death and misfortune. They accepted every state, happy or miserable as the, 'will' of God.

The Singhs never spilt the blood of their enemy blindly, nor did they take anybody a prisoner or make anyone a slave. They did not have permanent enmity with anybody. They were hostile to the enemy as long as he stood in the battle-field with the sword in his hand. The moment he dropped the sword, the Singhs ignored that enmity, and if the need arose, they even came to his help. This is evident from the relations of the Sikhs with Mir. Mannu and with the Rohellas.

Although at the time of S Jassa Singh's death, the Missaldar Sardars were not fully free from anxiety and they could not even pay their full attention to their administration people had been liberated from the external invasions and the internal tyrants, and they had started leading a quiet and normal life. Although the Missaldars ruled different territories in Punjab, yet since all the Sardars regarded themselves as the servants of the Guru Panth and since the resolutions and commandments (*hukamnama*) of Sri Akal Takht were applicable to all of them equally, all the Sardars described themselves as part of the Khalsa, so much so that when after 16 or 17 years Maharaja Ranjit Singh established his rule in Punjab, he described himself as 'Guru Ka Das' (the servant of the Guru), and he looked upon his coin as 'Guru blessed.'

The main cause of the success of the Sardars in winning freedom for Punjab was the purity of their ideal, their faith in the Guru, a sincere desire to redress the grievances of the people and strength to bear all trials and tribulations as a part of the Will of God. It was this spirit by virtue of which the Khalsa fought against the formidable power of the Mughal empire, and it was because of this that they defeated the Durrans and won the victory over Sirhind and Lahore.

Not only this, the Khalsa reached as far as Garhwal and

established its hegemony. They charged four thousand rupees as a full monetary tribute from the Garwal king, and they wielded such an influence in this area that they commanded universal respect. George Forster writes in his travelogue letter No. 9 written from Bilaspur on February 23, 1783, as under :-

“The Sicques have an unrestrained access into these parts through the Southern hills which are broken by small valleys and, fearing no opposition from Zabita Khan, they could at pleasure penetrate into the lower districts of Sringnaghur...in activity of the present rajah as enabled the Sicques to exact from this country a regular tribute they set to be four thousand rupees annually.).

At this place (Kheynsapoor) I saw two Sicque horsemen who had been sent from their country to receive Siringhaghur tribute, which is collected from the revenue of certain custom houses. From the manner in which these men were treated or rather treated themselves, I frequently wished for the power of migrating into the body of a Sicque for a few weeks and so well had these cavaliers fare.” (*A Journey from Bengal to England*, i, 199).

#### **The Defenders of the Motherland and of the Faith**

As compared to the Afghans, the Singhs had acquired such strength that even Ahmed Shah Durrani acknowledged defeat and after his death in 1772 A.D., his son Timur was finally defeated by the Singhs and was driven away from Punjab. George Forster thought that were Sikh chiefs not “mere apprehensive of domestic increasing influence, than desirous of subduing a constitutional enemy, they would, it may be fairly inferred, speedily extinguish the Afghan Government in India.” (*A Journey from Bengal to England*, ii, 88-89).

So much so even the East India Company in Calcutta had become certain that as long as the Dal Khalsa protected Punjab no foreign power could invade India. Therefore, General Sir Robert Barker wrote in reply to a letter by S. Jhanda Singh Bhangi, “It is clear that as long as the Khalsa army is on the watch, no one could march upon Hindustan unopposed.” (*Calendar of Persian Correspondence* Vol. iii, No. 868, P. 236).

George Forster also feared and his fear came out to be true

in the end that since there was no internal unity and harmony among the Sikhs, they would not be able to consolidate their military conquests in far-off places. From times immemorial, our country has been suffering from a deadly malady i.e. when our people attain power, the whole structure of unity crumbles. But General Forster firmly believed that by dint of the courage and determination with which they bore countless sufferings and finally liberated their country from the enemy after a long drawn out struggle, the Sikhs would emerge as the most dominating power among the native kings of India. At the end of his letter No. 11, Forster writes: "In the defence and recovery of their country Sicques displayed a courage of the most obstinate kind and manifested a perseverance, under pressure of calamities which bear an ample testimony to their native resources, when the common danger had aroused them to action, and gave true impulse to their spirit. Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the Sicques to maintain the existence of empire and religion, we may see some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success, and absorbing the power of his associates display from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy. The page of history is felt with the like effects, springing from like causes. Under such a form of Government, I have little hesitation in saying, the Sicques would soon be advancing to first rank among the native Princes of Hindustan" (*A Journey from Bengal to England*, i, 294-95).

This prophecy of George Forster came out to be true when within the next fifteen or sixteen years, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was able to establish his empire in Punjab.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1699, August 2 (2 Bhadson, Samat 1653 Bikrami),-Sri Guru Gobind Singh's commandment in the name of the ancestors of Patiala.
- 1705, December 7 (8Poh, Samat1762)-The Martyrdom of the elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Chamkaur Sahib.
- 1705, December 12 (13 Poh Samat 1762)-The Martyrdom of the Younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh at Sirhind.
- 1710, The Conquest of Sirhind by Banda Singh Bahadur
- 1710, December 10, the Order of the Messacre of the Sikhs by Bahadur Shah.
- 1716, (March-June), The Martyrdom of Banda Singh and his associates.
- 1718, May 3 (Baisakhisudi 15, Samat 1775). The Birth of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.
- 1722, (Samat 1779). The Death of S. Badar Singh, the father of S. Jassa Singh.
- 1723, (Samat 1780 Bikrami). The Arrival of S. Jassa Singh and his mother in Delhi.
- 1726, The Appointment of Abud-Samad Khan and Zakria Khan as Governors of Multan and Lahore respectively.
- 1726, July-August (Savan Bhadson Samat 1783). Rs. 5 lakh come to the hands of the Khalsa.
- 1726, September (Samat 1783, Assu). The looting of the Caravan of Murtaza Khan.
- 1727, (Samat 1784). The Raid on the Royal Treasure.
- 1729, (Samat 1786 Bikri). The Return of S. Jassa Singh and his mother from Delhi.
- 1730, (Samat 1787). The Division of the Taruna Dal into five Jathas (organisations).
- 1732, (Samat 1789). Baba Ala Singh Phoolka trapped in Barnala and rescued by the Khalsa.

- 1733, March 29 (Samat 1790). The Coming of Subegh Singh to the Khalsa congregation at Amritsar.
- 1733, (Samat 1790). The Conferment of the Title of 'Nawab' on S. Kapur Singh.
- 1734, June (Harh Sudi 5, Samat 1791 Bikrami). The Martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh.
- 1734, (Samat 1791). The Death of Diwan Darbara Singh.
- 1735, The Confiscation of the Khalsa Estate (Jagir).
- 1736, (Samat 1793). The Attack by Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Mukhlas Khan against the Singhs.
- 1739, Mir Mannu Surrenders to Durrani.
- 1739, January. The Invasion by Nadir Shah.
- 1739, May. The Snatching of Nadir Shah's plunder by the **Khalsa**.
- 1740, August. The killing of Massah Ranghar.
- 1745, July 1 (Samat 1802, Savan 1). The Martyrdom of Bhai Taru Singh, the Death of Zakria Khan.
- 1746, January-February (Magh-Fagun, Samat 1802). The Pushing of the Sikh Jathas (groups) by Diwan Jaspai Rai towards Ennabad.
- 1746, March, First week, The capturing of the Lahore Singhs.
- 1746, March 10 (12 Chait, Samat 1802). The Messacre of the Sikhs.
- 1747, May 1 (2 Jeth, Samat 1803). The Small Scale Holocaust.
- 1746, November. The Arrival of Shah Niwaz Khan in Lahore.
- 1747, March 13 (12 Rabbi-Ul-Avall, 1160, Hijri). The Imprisonment of Yahya Khan.
- 1747, The Third week or the end of March or the beginning of 4th week. The Occupation of Amritsar by the Singhs.
- 1747, June 8-9. The Assassination of Nadir Shah.
- 1748, The Order for the capture of Sikhs.
- 1748, January 10. The Arrival of the Ahmed Shah Durrani in Lahore.
- 1748, January 11-12. The escape of Shah Niwaj to Delhi.
- 1748, January 21-22. The Attack on Noor-Di-Sarai by the **Khalsa**.
- 1748, February 19. The Movement of Ahmed Shah from Lahore to Delhi.

- 1748, March 1. The Crossing of river Sutlej by Ahmed Shah.
- 1748, March 4-5. The Hola Mohalla Fair at Anandpur Sahib.
- 1748, March 11. The killing of Minister Kamr-U-Din.
- 1748, March (Second week). The Defeat of Raja Gurdita Mal.
- 1748, March 17. The Return of Ahmed Shah from Sirhind.
- 1748, March (Third week). The Return of Adina Begh to Khanpur and of Singhs to Amritsar, the Return of Ahmed Shah Abdali.
- 1748, April (Baisakhi). The Construction of Ram Rauni.
- 1748, April 11. Prince Ahmed and Mir Mannu stay in Sirhind. The Appointment of Mir Mannu as the ruler of Punjab.
- 1748, October 1. The Siege of Ram Rauni.
- 1748, November (Maghar, 1805). The lifting of the Siege of Ram Rauni.
- 1749, The Lamp illumination fair in Amritsar.
- 1749, September-October, The Multan Campaign.
- 1752, January-March. The Third Invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani.
- 1752, March 6. The Death of Diwan Kaura Mal in the battle of Mehmoodbooty.
- 1752, March to November, 1753. The Return of atrocities on the Sikhs.
- 1752, July-August. The battle of Nadaun.
- 1753, February 18-19. Adina Begh's attack on the Hola Mohalla Fair in Anandpur Sahib.
- 1753, October 7. (Assu Sudi, Samat 1810). The Death of Nawab Kapur Singh.
- 1753, October 26. Diwali in Amritsar.
- 1753, November 2. (Friday 5, Muharram 1167 Hijri). The Attack by Mir Mannu on the Singhs.
- 1753, November 4. The Death of Mir Mannu.
- 1754, April 10. (Samat 1811). The election of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as the leader.
- 1754, May. The Death of Mohammed Amin Khan.
- 1755, April. The Assassination of Bhikhan Khan.
- 1756, February. The Arrival of Gazi-U-Din in Sirhind.
- 1756, October. The Despatch of Messenger to Delhi by Ahmed Shah Durrani.
- 1756, November 25. The Occupation of Lahore by Durrani.

- 1756, December 20. The Personal Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Lahore.
- 1757, February 14. The March of Temur with Gohar Afroz, the title of Alamgir.
- 1757, March 1. Jahan Khan reaches Mathura.
- 1757, March 4. The Messacre of the Hindus on the Holi.
- 1757, March 6. The Messacre by Jahan Khan in Bindraban.
- 1757, March 15. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Mathura and the Massacre in Gokal.
- 1757, May. The Desecration of Sri Darbar Sahib by Durrani.
- 1757, December 1. The Victory of the Khalsa in the battle of Mahalpur:
- 1757, December-January, 1758. The Defeat of Khwaja Ubaidulla Khan.
- 1758, January. The Fortification of Sirhind by Abud Samad Khan.
- 1758, January 25 (Chaitvadi 1). The Arrival of the Khalsa in Anandpur for Holi Mohalla fair.
- 1758, March 9. The Arrival of Raghu Nath Rao in Sirhind.
- 1758, March 21. (Fagun Sudi 12, Samat 1814). The Conquest of Sirhind by the Singhs and the Marathas.
- 1758, April. The Imprisonment of Ahmed Khan and Saleh Khan by Mirza Jan.
- 1758, April-September. The Rule of Adina Begh.
- 1758, April 19. The Vacation of Lahore by Temur Shah and Jahan Khan.
- 1758, April, 20. The arrival of Adina Begh, Raghu Nath Rao and the Khalsa in Lahore.
- 1758, May 10. The Return of Raghu Nath Rao to Delhi
- 1758, June 5. The Taking of Holi Dip by Raghu Nath Rao at Kurukshetra, on the occasion of Somavati Massiah.
- 1758, The end of the August or the beginning of September. The Death of Gulshan Khan.
- 1758, September. The Defeat of Mohammed Amin Khan and Abud Samad Khan by Baba Ala Singh.
- 1758, September 15. The Death of Adina Begh Khan.
- 1758, The last days of September. The Entry of Nooru-Din Thamezai in Sind Sagar.

- 1758, November. The Defeat of Nooru-Din Thamezai by Mirza Jan with the support of the Khalsa.
- 1759, March. The gathering of the Khalsa Sardars and the Khalsa armies at Raipur Gujjarwal.
- 1759, March 13-14. The Attack on Anandpur Fair by Saddig Begh.
- 1759, October. The Invasion of Punjab by Ahmed Shah Durrani.
- 1759, October 20. The gathering of the Missaldar Sardars at Akal Bungah and their march towards Lahore for confronting Durrani.
- 1759, October 25. The Movement of Ahmed Shah Durrani towards Punjab after crossing the Attock.
- 1759, November 20. The crossing of river Beas by Ahmed Shah from Goindwal.
- 1759, November 29. The Assassination of Emperor Alamgir through a conspiracy by Iman-Dul-Mulak, Gaji-U-Din.
- 1760, A. D., September-October. The Appointment of Mir Mohammed Khan as the administrator of Lahore by Buland Khan.
- 1760, October. The Arrest of Rustam Khan Saddo-Zai by the Khalsa and receiving of a monetary tribute of 20 lakh rupees.
- 1760, November. A Monetary tribute of thirty thousand rupees from Mir Mohammed Khan.
- 1760, November 7. The gathering of the Khalsa at Amritsar on the Eve of Diwali and resolution for attacking Lahore.
- 1761, The Death of Khwaja Ubaid-Ullah.
- 1761, January 14. The Third Battle of Panipat.
- 1761, January 29. Ahmed Shah accepts Shah Alam as the Emperor of Delhi.
- 1761, March 13. The Movement of Ahmed Shah's advance armies.
- 1761, March 20. The Return of Durrani from Delhi to Afghanistan.
- 1761, March 27. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Ambala.
- 1761, March 29 (22 Shahban, 1174 Hijri). The Return of Ahmed Shah to Sirhind, Appointment of Jain Khan as the Faujdar of Sirhind and accepting Baba Ala Singh the ruler of



- his territory.
- 1761, April 10. The decision of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia at Amritsar on the Baisakhi Day to liberate the Hindu women.
- 1761, April 26. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Lahore, appointment of Khwaja Ubaid Khan and Ghumand Chand Katauch as the Faujdar of Lahore and Bist-Jalandhar respectively.
- 1761, May-June. The killing of Mirza Jan by the Khalsa.
- 1761, August. The Unsuccessful military campaign of Noorudin Thamezai against Charat Singh.
- 1761, September. The Death of Khwaja Ubaid Khan and the occupation of Lahore by the Singhs.
- 1761, October 27. The gathering of the Khalsa at Amritsar, on the eve of Diwali and the resolution to eliminate the rule of Abdali.
- 1762, The Siege of Jandiala.
- 1762, February 3. The March of Ahmed Shah from Lahore.
- 1762, February 4. Ahmed Shah's orders to Zain Khan to launch a frontal attack on the Singhs on February 5.
- 1762, February 5. (11 Rajjab, 1175 Hijri), Zain Khan's military movement and his orders to Qasim Khan Waraich to attack the Singhs, the great holocaust.
- 1762, February 15. Ahmed Shah's movement towards Lahore.
- 1762, March 3. Ahmed Shah's arrival in Lahore.
- 1762, April 1. The desecration of Sri Darbar Sahib by Ahmed Shah.
- 1762, May 17. The Defeat to Zain Khan by S. Jassa Singh, the Death of Lachhmi Narain.
- 1762, August 25. to September 24. The stay of the Khalsa at Panipat for one month.
- 1762, September 24. The Return of the Dal Khalsa to the North.
- 1762, October 16. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah Abdali in Amritsar.
- 1762, October 17. The battle of the Khalsa with the Durranis and Abdali's Movement to Lahore under the cover of darkness.
- 1762, December 12. Ahmed Shah Abdali's return to Afghanistan from Lahore.

- 1763, April 10. The appeal of a Brahman from Kasur in Amritsar on the Baisakhi Day.
- 1763, April 12-13. The attack on Kasur by the Khalsa.
- 1763, April 14. The occupation of Kathgarh and Garshankar by S. Jassa Singh.
- 1763, November 5. The Resolution by the Khalsa to teach a lesson to Sirhind.
- 1763, December 25. The Death of King Suraj Mal of Bharatpur.
- 1764, January. The gathering of the Missaldar Sardars at Chamkaur Sahib.
- 1764, January 13. The Movement of the Khalsa towards Sirhind.
- 1764, January 14. (4 Maghar, Samat 1820). Zain Khan's attempt to reach Sirhind. The Death of Zain Khan and end of the Durrani rule. The occupation of Sirhind by the Khalsa.
- 1764, February. The Occupation of Jalandhar-Doab by the Taruna Dal.
- 1764, February. The Arrival of the Lawyers of King Jawahar Singh of Bharatpur to S. Jassa Singh.
- 1764, February (3rd weak). The Attack on Gang-Doab under the command of S. Jassa Singh.
- 1764, February 20. The Occupation of Saharanpur.
- 1764, August 2(2 Sawan Samat 1821). The Administration of Sirhind under S. Budha Singh. Handing over of Sirhind to Baba Ala Singh.
- 1764, October. The Jihad by Ahmed Shah and Mir Nasir Khan, against the Sikhs.
- 1764, November 15-16. The confrontation of Jawahar Singh with Najibu Daula.
- 1764, November 30. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah at Amritsar.
- 1764, December 1. The Martyrdom of the Jatha of S. Gurbax Singh.
- 1764, December or January, 1765. The Arrival of S. Jassa Singh Anluwalia in Delhi.
- 1764, December to February, 1765. The Khalsa Dal comes to the support of Jawahar Singh.
- 1765, January-February. The Treaty of Marathas with Najibu Daula.

- 1765, February 4. The battle between the Khalsa and the Rohells, in the Sabzi Mandi and the retreat by the latter.
- 1765, March. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah Abdali near Chenab.
- 1765, April 10. The Resolution by the Khalsa at Amritsar on the Baisakhi Day to occupy Lahore.
- 1765, April 16. (Baisakh/vadi 12, Sama 1822). The Entry of the Khalsa in Lahore at night.
- 1765, April 17. The Occupation of Lahore by the Singhs.
- 1765, August 7 (Bhadsonvadi Chhatt Samat 1822) the Death of Baba Ala Singh.
- 1765, September. The decision by the Khalsa Dal to help Najibu Daula.
- 1765, December. The Postponement of the Shamli campaign and the movement of the Khalsa towards the borders of Jaipur.
- 1766, January-March. The support of Jawahar Singh Bharatpur by the Khalsa.
- 1766, March. The support of Rana Gohad.
- 1766, March 13-14. The Occupation of the Daulpur fort, by the Singhs and the capturing of all the Maratha Generals including Sultanji Lambate.
- 1766, April 10. The Celebration of Baisakhi at Amritsar.
- 1766, November. The crossing of river Sind by Ahmed Shah.
- 1766, December 4. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Gujarat.
- 1766, December 10. The departure of Ahmed Shah from Lahore.
- 1767, January 1. The Movement of Durrani towards Verowal.
- 1767, January 15. The Invitation by Ahmed Shah to the Missaldar Sardars for a compromise.
- 1767, January 17. The Arrival of Jahan Khan with the advance army and plundering of the villages.
- 1767, March. The Re-occupation of Lahore by the Singhs.
- 1767, March 17. The Return of Ahmed Shah from Ismailabad.
- 1767, March 18. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Sirhind.
- 1767, March 23. The Arrival of Ahmed Shah in Machhiwara.
- 1767, April 10. The news of the Khalsa congregation in Amritsar on the occasion of the Baisakhi Fair.

- 1767, May-June. The Return of Ahmed Shah.
- 1767, May 11. Najibu Daula's leave from Ahmed Shah to return home.
- 1767, May 19. The Movement of the Singhs to Punjab from across the East of river Jamuna.
- 1767, October 22. The camping of the Khalsa in the ground of Panipat.
- 1767, November. The Proposal to invite Shah Alam to Delhi.
- 1768, January. The writing of a letter to Emperor Shah Alam by Jassa Singh requesting him to return to Delhi.
- 1768, February. The Attack by Madho Singh on the Jat territories.
- 1768, March. The Presentation of a turban to Zabita Khan by Najibu-Daula.
- 1769, (Samat 1826). The Occupation of Patiala by Prince Himmat Singh and the Arrival of Ahmed Shah up to Gujarat with great difficulty.
- 1770, October 31. The Death of Najibu Daula.
- 1770, November. The Compromise by Shah Alam with the Marathas.
- 1771, March. The Successful completion of the negotiations with Marathas initiated by Shah Alam.
- 1771, April 13. The departure of Shah Alam from Allahabad.
- 1772, January 6. The Arrival of Shah Alam in Delhi.
- 1772, October 23. The Death of Ahmed Shah Abdali.
- 1773, May. Abdul Ahd Khan's conspiracy with Zabita Khan to use the latter against Mirza Najjaf Khan.
- 1773, June. The Appointment of Mi za Nazaf as Bakhshi-Ul-Mumalik.
- 1774, (Samat 1831). The Death of Prince Himmat Singh.
- 1775, The Sending of Rahim Daad Rohella by Abdul Ahd Khan for the liberation of the territories of Hansi and Hissar, from the Sind Sardars.
- 1775, December 30. The Death of Rahim Daad Rohella.
- 1776, March 4. The battle of the United forces of the Khalsa and Zabita Khan against Qasim Khan. The Death of Abdul Qasim, the brother of Mirza Nazaf.
- 1777, The despatch of the army by Abdul Ahd Khan against

- Zabita Khan.
- 1777, June 8, 11, 13 and 23. The burden of the battles fought against Zabita Khan on the Khalsa.
- 1777, September 14. The Defeat of Zabita Khan at the hands of the Mughal army at Jalalabad.
- 1778, April. The Unsuccessful attempt by Zabita Khan to recover his territory.
- 1778, September. The Camping of the Khalsa to the North of Delhi.
- 1778, September 23. The Sending of his deputy Behrankuli by Abdul Ahd Khan to meet the Sikh Sardars.
- 1778, September 28. The Conferment of the title of Najibu Daula II on Najibu's son, Mannu Khan.
- 1778, September 29. The Personal meeting of Abdul Ahd Khan with the Singhs in the Garden of Yakub Ali Khan.
- 1778, October 1 (Assu Sudi 10) The Demolition of the mosque built on the Guru Ka Bangla, Sahib.
- 1779, April. The Helplessness of Abdul Ahd.
- 1779, June 3. The Attack against Malwa Singhs by Abdul Ahd Khan in collaboration with Prince Farkhanda Bakhat.
- 1779, September 12. The Imprisonment of Bhai Desu Singh and other Sardars.
- 1779, September 13. The offer of five lakh rupees by Maharaja Amar Singh to Abdul Ahd Khan.
- 1779, September 23. The crossing of the river Sarswati by royal armies.
- 1779, October 5. The meeting of a deputation of Missal Sardars with Maharaja Amar Singh.
- 1779, October 6. The readiness of Maharaja Amar Singh to meet Prince Farkhanda Bakht and minister Abdul Ahd Khan.
- 1779, October 7. A Small Battle.
- 1779, October 14. The Return of Prince Farkhanda Bakht and Minister Abdul Ahd Khan from Patiala to Delhi.
- 1779, November 5. The Arrival of the Prince and the Minister in Dehi.
- 1780, (Samat 1837). The Re consideration of occupying the territory of Rai Ibrahim.

- 1782, February 5 (Fagunvadi 8 Samat 1838). The Death of Maharaja Amar Singh.
- 1782, (The beginning of Samat 1839). The administering of Khanda Pahul to Maharaja Sahib Singh of Patiala at Taran Taran.
- 1783, The beginning of October (Katak, Samat 1840). The Camping of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia at Bundala.
- 1783, October 20. (7 Katak, Samat 1840). The Death of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.
- 1867, The Removal of debris from Sirhind by Maharaja of Patiala.
- 1923, April 12-13. The Demolition of the Memorial of Nawab Kapur Singh from the Parkarma of Sri Darbar Sahib:
- 1938, The Issuance of the Ahmed Shah Durrani's coin by Maharaja Yadvindra Singh at the time of his coronation.
- 1947, The Division of Punjab between India and Pakistan.

