INTRODUCTION

Punjab is the state of North India, form part of the larger Punjab region. The state is bordered by the Indian states Jammu and Kashmir to the north, Himachal Pradesh to the east, Haryana to the south and southeast, Rajasthan to the southwest, and the Pakistan province of Punjab to the west. The state capital is Chandigarh, a Union Territory and also the capital of the neighboring state of Haryana. After the partition of India in 1947 A.D, the Punjab province of British India was divided into India and Pakistan.\(^1\)

The Indian Punjab was divided on the basis of language in 1966 A.D. It was divided into three parts. Haryanvi speaking areas (dialect of Hindi) were carved out as Haryana, Hilly regions and *Pahari* speaking areas formed Himachal Pradesh alongside the current state of Punjab.

The name of “Punjab” in the Persian language literally means “five” (pani) “water” (aab), which obviously refers to the “Land of Five Rivers”.\(^2\) The five rivers that drained its territory and finally join the mightily Indus River as tributaries were, Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Chenab and Jhelum. The region of Punjab, situated in the Indus Valley, was one of the region in the world where ancient human Civilization dates backs to more than 3,000 years BC, and produced large cities such as Mohenjodaro in Sindh and Harappa in West Punjab.\(^3\)

A Sikh lives a normal family life and faces all the challenges of life squarely. According to the Sikh belief a person can achieve salvation in this world while working, playing, eating, enjoying, and living a truthful life. The following lines have become folklore

\(^{1}\) *Punjab, Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre*, Retrieved 8\(^{th}\) September, 2011, p.no. 1.


\(^{3}\) *Ibid*, p. no. 2.
about Guru Nanak Dev, the Ascetic lord who is known as the King of holy men, the Guru of the Hindus, and the Pir of the Muslims:4

“Baba Nanak Shah fakir

Hindu ka Guru Mussalman ka pir”

There are some historical events that gave it a definite shape and character. The single most important such event was the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev ji during the rule of Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Just before achieving martyrdom, Guru Arjan Dev ji alerted his son Guru Hargobind ji to make the necessary preparations by arming himself for the upcoming dangers. The Guru Sahib sat on throne, listened to the complaints of the people, administered justice, and delivered sermons. The purpose of the Guru was to infuse the spirit of bravery among his Sikhs. Guru Hargobind Sahib also wore new garments, a seli and a turban.5 So, the sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib is called Miri te Piri da Malik, the Master of temporal and spiritual power and Sacha Paatshah. He armed and drilled some of his sturdy disciples. In due course, from an inherited bodyguard of 52 soldiers he came to possess a stable of seven hundred horses, three hundred horsemen, and sixty gunners.6

Like his grandfather, Guru Arjan Dev ji, Guru Teg Bahadur ji was offered the choices of conversion to Islam or face death. The indomitable Guru Tegh Bahadur chose the latter. To intimidate Guru Sahi, Mati Das was sawed alive into two body parts, Dyal Das was boiled alive in a cauldron and Sati Das was wrapped in cotton wool and burnt alive in front of him. The Governor and Quazi of Delhi tortured Guru Sahib for five days. Finally


Guru Sahib was martyred by beheading at the behest of Aurangzeb. There were striking similarities in the crucial events in the lives of the sixth Guru Hargobind ji and tenth Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Both had their fathers martyred. Both were young, eleven and nine years of age respectively at the times of their father’s martyrdoms and succession to the Guru-ship. And both had to face the dilemma of either annihilation of Sikhism or challenge by the tyrannical Muslim Rulers, who were far superior in manpower, resources and equipment. Both opted for the latter and not only successfully warded off the murderous onslaughts but inflicted mortal blows to the mighty Mughal Empire and Muslim Jihad (crusade). The Mughal Empire crumbled soon after. Although both the Gurus won decisive battles against aggressive Mughal and Hindu forces but they made no attempts to occupy territory. It was the seed that under the fostering care of Guru Nanak Dev ji’s successors, grew into a gigantic Khalsa power. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev ji (the fifth Guru) and Guru Teg Bahadur Ji played a major role in shaping the saint-soldier character of Khalsa.

Guru Gobind Singh ji, the tenth guru of Sikhs, was born in 1666 A.D at Patna (Capital of Bihar, India). In 1675 A.D Pandits from Kashmir in India came to Anandpur Sahib pleading to Guru Teg Bahadur (Father of Guru Gobind Singh ji) about Aurangzeb forcing them to convert to Islam. Guru Teg Bahadur ji told them that martyrdom of a great man was needed. His son, Guru Gobind Singh Ji said "Who could be greater than you", to his father. Guru Teg Bahadur ji told Pandits to tell Aurangzeb's men that if Guru Teg Bahadur will become Muslim, they all will. Guru Teg Bahadur ji was then martyred in Delhi, but before that he assigned Guru Gobind Singh ji as 10th

Guru at age of 9 years. After becoming Guru, he commanded Sikhs to be armed. He fought many battles with Aurangzeb and some other Kings of that time, and always chased victory. In 1699 A.D., he created the Khalsa Panth, by giving amrit to sikhs.

Guru Gobind Singh molded his Sikhs into the Khalsa Panth - a nation of Saint-Soldiers. A divine army of people prepared to sacrifice their lives to protect the sacred values of Justice and Freedom. Some observers see a sharp break between the ‘peaceful’ path pursued by Guru Nanak and the militant attitude of Guru Gobind Singh. In reality, however, there is no such break. The Khalsa Panth is just a formalization of Guru Nanak’s view of Religion. This is apparent in the Sikh belief that the ten Gurus were all the same in spirit. Indeed, that the semi-martial nature of the Khalsa is consistent with the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji.9

Historically too, Guru Gobind Singh ji was not the only Sikh Guru to take up arms. In 1606 A.D the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun Dev ji, was tortured to death by the Emperor Jahangir; religious intolerance was the cause of his execution. His successor, Guru Hargobind ji, then had to take up arms against the Emperor’s persecution. Guru Arjun Dev ji had been the Apostle of Peace - even under severe torture he accepted his ordeal calmly. However, Guru Hargobind ji showed that sometimes it became necessary to fight for one’s freedom. But the motivation for that struggle must stem from a deep-seated love for peace. This may sound a little strange at first but it is an important concept in Sikhism - namely, the idea of ‘Beer-Russ’.10 Peace comes first. But if peaceful methods fail to ensure one’s basic freedoms then Beer-Russ is the force, which inspires the struggle against injustice. But, because Beer-Russ is founded on a love for peace, it

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provides the motivation to fight but without the feeling of anger, hatred or revenge — injustice is the only enemy. Fighting in this instance is seen as a call of duty resulting from a desire by every self-respecting individual to lead a dignified life. As Guru Nanak Dev ji puts it: ‘Cursed is a man who tolerates a life of indignity and humiliation’. Sikhism views it as a moral duty of every religious individual to speak out against injustice and fight against oppression. Since a Saint is peaceful by nature, and tries peaceful methods of persuasion first. But if all efforts are to no avail, then Beer-Russ spurs the Saint to take up arms and purge tyranny with the sword. But religion had learnt, from bitter experience, that to even comment on social and political problems was a sure way to invite persecution. Either way, the commitment to uphold the values of human rights necessarily entails sacrifice.  

When Guru Gobind Singh abolished personal guruship, he ruled out dictatorship and gave the decision-making authority to the Panth, under the doctrine of Guru Granth-Guru Panth. In his lifetime, he trained the Sikhs to exercise that authority through Panj Piaras, and he was on record to have himself submitted to their decisions. In essence, it means that collective leadership is better than the whims of an individual. Subsequent history of the Panth also yields the same lesson. So long as the Khalsa followed this principle, as in the case matters of the Sarbat Khalsa in the eighteenth century, it touched new heights of glory establishing a powerful empire in the northern India. On the other hand, when the authority passed into the hands of an individual, degeneration and decline followed, like Sikh Raj under the Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Guru Gobind Singh established the order of Khalsa and asked the Sikhs to bear arms. According to poet Sainapati (a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh ji) the Khalsa had

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actually taken control of many villages in the vicinity of Anandpur Sahib. The city of Anandpur Sahib had become the center of Sikh religious activities and a nucleus of Khalsa political power which was evident from the fact that Guru Gobind Singh ji built at least four forts in Anandpur Sahib and its vicinity. Some of them are still there\textsuperscript{12}. Banda Singh Bahadur was chosen to lead the Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was born on 16 October, 1670 A.D (Lachhman Dev alias Madho Dass Bairagi), originally from the Jammu region, as one of greatest Sikh warriors as well as one of the most hallowed martyrs of the Khalsa Army. However, as a young man, he shot a doe and was shocked to watch the mother and her aborted fawn writhing in pain and dying. After this gloomy scene, he had a change of heart. That experience moved him so much that he completely changed his outlook to life. He left his home and became a recluse. Soon, he met a Bairagi Sadhu, Janaki Das and became his disciple. The Sadhu gave him the name, Madho Das. In the company of the Sadhus he travelled through Northern India and then finally arrived at Nanded (present-day in Maharashtra) in Central India, situated on the bank of the river Godavari, where he built a hut to meditate upon God. In September, 1708 A.D, Madho Das met Guru Gobind Singh ji and tried all his occult powers and accepted defeat, by saying with great humility, "\textit{I am your banda (slave). Show me the right path}".\textsuperscript{13}

Guru Gobind Singh ji had hoped that Emperor Bahadur Shah would fulfill his promise and do justice in the Punjab by punishing the Governor of Sirhind, Nawab Wazir Khan and his accomplices for their crimes against the common people including the deaths of the Guru's mother, Mata Gujri and his two younger sons, Sahibzada Zorawar


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Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh. Finding him reluctant, the Guru deputed Madho Das Bairagi, under the leadership of five Sikhs, to end Mughal persecution of innocents in Punjab. Guru Gobind Singh ji held a darbar and baptised Madho Das with *Khande ki Pahul* (Amrit) and conferred the title of Banda Singh Bahadur on him. He appointed him as his military lieutenant and invested him with full political and military authority as his deputy to lead the campaign in the Punjab against the evil Mughal administration and to punish Nawab Wazir Khan and his supporters. Banda was supplied with five gold tipped arrows and a *nagara* (drum) as symbols of temporal authority. He was given an advisory council of five devoted Sikhs (Hazuri Singh), who on their arrival in the Punjab were to assure the Sikhs that Banda was the Guru's nominee and deputy and to organize them in order to lead an expedition against Sirhind. Holding the characteristics of bravery and punishing the faulty, Banda Singh was started to known as Banda Singh Bahadur.

Banda Singh Bahadur was soon joined by thousands of Sikhs in his crusade against the wicked rulers. Within a short span of time, Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur’s leadership put an end to life of many tyrant rulers, including Nawab Wazir Khan, the main culprit behind death of younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh ji. Banda Singh Bahadur captured large part of Punjab and established Sikh rule there. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was the master of the Punjab, east of Lahore. He made Mukhispur, a hilly city near Sadhura his capital. He repaired its old fort and renamed it as Lohgarh (Iron Fort). He minted his own Khalsa currency in the

\[^{14}\] Ibid, p. no. 2.
name of Guru Nanak Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh ji\textsuperscript{17}. In the meantime, Faruksiyar became Delhi’s emperor. Angered by defeat at the hands of Banda Singh Bahadur and Sikh forces, he sent a large force from Delhi and mobilized from elsewhere in Punjab to defeat and capture Banda Singh Bahadur. Sikhs were surrounded by large number of Mughal forces in the fortress of Gurdas Nagal. They fought valiantly under Banda Singh Bahadur’s command but due to depleting ration, they ultimately became too weak to fight with the enemies. Ultimately, the brave general Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was arrested along with seven hundred Sikh soldiers and brought to Delhi, after eight months. Inside the fortress, Sikhs survived on leaves, trees, and even bark of trees\textsuperscript{18}.

In Delhi, they were insulted and paraded in Delhi bazars. Sikhs were offered amnesty by Mughals in lieu of accepting Islam. Not even a single Sikh betrayed the spirit of Sikhism and embraced Islam. They were tortured and killed publicly. After an ordeal of about three months, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was killed in one of the most cruel manners mentioned in the history of mankind on 9 June, 1716 A.D. His four year old son Ajay Singh was put to death in front of him. His liver was thrusted into Banda Singh’s mouth. But Baba Banda Singh Bahadur remained as tranquil as ever, and even that act failed to break his resolve and determination. Finally, he was put to death mercilessly by pinching the flesh from his body, bit by bit, with means of hot pincers\textsuperscript{19}. His eyes were pulled out and his feet were chopped off. With the martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, Khalsa leadership was taken up by new warriors\textsuperscript{20}.

\textsuperscript{17} Singh Station, The First Sikh General, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur http://singhstation.net/2014/06/the-first-sikh-general-baba-banda-singh-bahadur/ p. no. 1.

\textsuperscript{18} Singh, T., A Short History of the Sikhs: 1469-1765, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala 1999, p. 85, 97.


After the martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, for several years Sikhs found refuge in the jungles and the Himalayan foothills until they organized themselves into military bands known as *jathas called Misls*. The Sikh Rule in Lahore initiated from the invasion and rule of the Sikh *Misls* and extended till the Sikh Empire of Ranjit Singh (*also known as Punjab, the Sikh Raj, and Sarkar Khalsa Raj*) which ended in 1849 A.D. The Sikhs began gaining power following the decline of the Mughal Empire in Punjab and consisted of a collection of autonomous Punjabi *Misls*, which were governed by *Misldars*, mainly in the Punjab region. There were twelve *Misls*, each *Misl* was made up of members of soldiers, whose loyalty was given to the *Misl*'s leader. A *Misl* could be composed of a few hundred to tens of thousands soldiers. Every soldier was free to join any *Misl* he choose and free to cancel his membership of the *Misl* to whom he belonged.

The Sikh *Misls* had four different classes of administrative divisions. The *patadari*, *misaldari*, *tabadari*, and *jagirdari* were the different systems of land tenure used by the *Misls*, and land granted by the misl left the responsibility of establishing law and order to the owner of the land. The land under the direct administration of the chief of the *Misl* was known as the *sardari*, *tabadari* and *jagirdari* systems used land directly given by the chief from the *sardari*. The *Patadari* and *Misaldari* systems formed the basis of a *Misl*, while *tabadari* and *jagirdari* lands would only be created after large acquisitions of land. The type of system that was used in an area depended on the importance of the chief *sardar* of the area to the rest of the *Misl*. Eleven *Misls* were conquering north region of the Sutlej river and one the *Phulkian Misl* was south of the Sutlej. The Sikhs

21 Punjab, Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre, Retrieved 8th September, 2011, p. no. 2.
north of the Sutlej river were known as the Majha Sikhs while the Sikhs that lived south of the Sutlej river were known as the Malwa Sikhs.

The Sukerchakia Misl was one of 12 Sikh Misls in Punjab during the 18th century. Sukerchakia Misl named after the village of Sukkarchakk in Gujranwala district, now in Pakistan, to which its founders belonged, became ultimately the most important of the twelve eighteenth-century Sikh ruling clans. Budda singh laid the foundation of Sukkarchakhia fortunes. His feats of endurance and daring in those days of adventure and plunder made him a legendary figure. The sons’s of Budda Singh and Naudh Singh, fortified Sukkarchakia and raised a jatha or body of men acquiring the name of Sukkarchakia. Naudh Singh was also great grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Sukerchakia, who was eldest of four sons of Naudh Singh, moved his headquarters from Sukkarchakkia to Gujranwala and settled round the town. Charhat Singh's youngest son, Mahan Singh, inherited his father's spirit and ambition. He married a daughter of Gajpat Singh, the chief of Jind, thereby strengthening his own position among the Misl sardars. Within the walled town of Gujranwala he built a fortress which he named Garhi Mahan Singh. He increased the number of his horsemen to 6,000 and launched upon a career of conquest and expansion of territory. Mahan Singh died in 1790 A.D. At his death, his 10 years old son, Ranjit Singh, became the head of the Sukkarchakkia misl. Young Ranjit Singh had inherited from his forefathers a sizeable estate in Northwestern Punjab, a band of intrepid horse and matchlock men, and an ambition that knew no bounds. In due course, he liquidated the Misls from the north of the Sutlej and became the powerful sovereign of the Punjab.

\[22\text{ Ibid, p. no. 2.}\]
His mother Raj Kaur became his natural guardian; she was also helped by Diwan Lakhpat Rai. She had full confidence in his integrity but her brother Dal Singh did not like his interference in the administration of the territory. So, Dal Singh joined hands with Sada Kaur, Ranjit Singh’s mother-in-law who exercised a lot of control over him. Thus two clear cut groups were formed, Diwan and Raj Kaur on one hand, Sada Kaur and Dal Singh on the other side. The intrigues and counter intrigues made Ranjit sick of all of them. He started spending most of this time outside the house on hunting expeditions. Ranjit Singh also became suspicious to people around him and disliked some of them.

Ranjit Singh grew up without any formal education and remained totally illiterate. Fond of swimming and excursions, Ranjit Singh had more traits to become a soldier later in life. Ranjit Singh once told Captain Wade, British agent at Ludhiana that his father had left for him 20,000 rounds of shot which he expended in firing at marks.

After the death of his father, Ranjit Singh was raised by Sada Kaur of the Kanheya Misl. He took over as Misldar of the Sukerchakia Misl at the age of 18 years. He was married to Mehtab Kaur (1813 A.D.), daughter of Sardar Gurbaksh Singh Sandhu (1785 A.D.), of the Kanhaiya Misl, in 1796 A.D., at the age of 16. Thus that marriage brought two great Misls together. In 1798 A.D., he married Raj Kaur, alias Maharani Datar Kaur (1838 A.D.), the daughter of Sardar Ran Singh Nakai (A.D. 1781), of the Nakai Misl, thus also adding his strength. The second marriage annoyed Sada Kaur and Mahtab Kaur. Mehtab Kaur returned to Batala and returned to Gujrawala occasionally. Among the other wives of Shere-E-Punjab were Rani Ratten Kaur and Rani Daya Kaur of Gujrat, Rani Chand Kaur (1840 A.D.) of village Chainpur (Amritsar), Rani Gulab Kaur (1838 A.D.) of village Jagdeo (Amritsar), Rani Lachhmi Kaur of village Jogki Khan (Gujranwala), Rani Jind Kaur (1817 A.D.-1863 A.D.) of village Chachar (Gujranwala), Rani Raj Bano Devi (1835 A.D.) of Kangra Hill State. Few men over the ages had
matched his rare qualities of leadership. Whether in the field of battle in providing just rule to men and women from the most diverse religious backgrounds in the human treatment of his adversaries or in achieving so much in one eventful, action-packed lifetime, not many measure up to his extraordinary achievements. In 1790 A.D., Punjab looked like a jig-saw puzzle twelve Misls, the Afghans in the north-west, the Rajputs of Kangra in the north, the Gorkha in the north-east, the British in the east, and the Marathas in the south-east, the Pathan controlled district of Kasur in the neighborhood of Lahore, and Hansi in the south-east under the English adventurer, George Thomas. From 1799 A.D. to 1846 A.D., Lahore recovered under the patronage of Ranjit Singh and his successors. Ranjit Singh consolidated the Sikh Misldars (commanders) who had ruled more or less independently during the eighteenth century under a unified command and in 1799 A.D. he established Lahore as the administrative capital of a new Sikh kingdom. Nearby Amritsar became the spiritual and commercial center of the kingdom in 1802 A.D.

Among all the wives, Maharani Jind Kaur was the youngest wife of Shere -E- Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who established Sikh Raj after the death of Maharaja and also worked for the better improvement of Sikh raj. In present time, women is accepted as the weakest person in the society, but Maharani Jind kaur faced the British ruled forces. British Government was too afraid of Maharani Jind Kaur. Lord Dalhousie also revealed her character by saying “Believe me, for us only trouble which could be caused will be Maharani Jind Kaur”. Among the most important of Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s regular wives married according to Sikh customs, were Mehtab Kaur of Kanhia Misl, gave birth to three sons, the eldest Ishar Singh died young at 1.5 years of age. The second and third son Sher Singh and Tara Singh were twins. Sher Singh was the strongest claimant to the throne after Maharaja Ranjit Singh, being the eldest surviving son of the senior most
wife of the king. His second wife was Raj Kaur of Nakai Misl gave birth to a son Kharak Singh in 1801 A.D., who became the heir-apparent to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, being the Maharaja’s eldest son. Among his other favorite wives there were the two Rajput princesses, sisters Guddan and Rani Raj Bano, the daughters of Raja Sansar Chand from the same family belonging to the hill country, Kangra. They were the most charming women in the Maharajah’s harem. Another favorite of his regular wives was Rani Jind Kaur, daughter of Sardar Manna Singh Aulak, the Royal Kennel Keeper at the Court of Lahore.

Thus among the all wives of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Maharani Jind Kaur was the only beautiful, brave, political and full of enthusiasm wife and also was the fearless lady which gave her the name of ‘The Iron lady’. She was called as Jindan in the family and she got familiar with this name only because of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Maharani Jind Kaur and her son Dalip Singh hold the Sikh raj for few years. She was the first women who hold an importance in the first Independence war for India.