

English Section



Editor : Diljit Singh 'Bedi'

DAYS COMMEMORATING HISTORICAL EVENTS
(16th April to 15th May)

- 17 April (a) Sikhs occupied Lahore bringing end to the Afghan rule. (17-4-1765)
(b) Shaheedi Jatha left Akal Takhat Sahib for Jaito. (17-4-1925)
- 21 April Birth of eminent Sikh Scholar Giani Dit Singh Ji. (21-4-1853)
- 24 April (a) Akali Dal decided to launch a peaceful agitation for Punjabi Suba. (24-4-1955)
(b) Akali Dal began agitation to stop Satluj-Yamuna Link Canal. (24-4-1982)
- 25 April Treaty of Amritsar signed between East India Company (the British) and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. (25-4-1809)
- 26 April Battle of Kartarpur (Jalandhar) in which warriors of Guru Hargobind Sahib, Bhai Fatta, Bhai Amia, Bhai Kishna, Bhai Nathia, Bhai Madho etc. were martyred. (26-4-1635)
- 27 April Special Jatha of 101 Sikhs left for Jaito. (27-4-1925)
- 29 April (a) Battle of Phagwara in which some warriors of Guru Hargobind Sahib, Bhai Desa, Bhai Jaggu, Bhai Suhela etc. were martyred. (29-4-1635)
(b) Akali Dal announced launching of agitation for return of Chandigarh to Punjab. (29-4-1968)
- 30 April (a) Birth of Bibi Bhani. (daughter of Guru Amar Dass Sahib) (30-4-1533)
(b) General Hari Singh Nalwa martyred at Jamraud. (30-4-1837)
- 3 May Birth of Sirdar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. (3-5-1718)
- 5 May Indian regime disbanded the Sikh States and formed a province within India under the name "Patiala and East Punjab State Union (PEPSU). (5-5-1948)

6 May	Police firing at Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Delhi.	(6-5-1930)
9 May	Shaheedi Jatha left Akal Takhat Sahib for Jaito.	(9-5-1924)
10 May	(a) Master Tara Singh led a jatha to Peshawar to protest against killing of Sikhs and the Pathans.	(10-5-1930)
	(b) Akali Dal started agitation against imposition of ban on the slogan "Punjabi Suba Zindabad".	(10-5-1955)
11 May	(a) Ram Rai visited Guru Gobind Singh at Paonta Sahib and made an apology for his deeds.	(11-5-1685)
	(b) Akali Dal passed "Sikhs are a nation" resolution.	(11-5-1981)
14 May	The Sikhs captured Sirhind under the command of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur.	(14-5-1710)
15 May	Rani Jind Kaur taken to Benaras. Her pension reduced from Rs. 48,000 to Rs. 12,000.	(15-5-1848)

Appeal

The devotees are requested to bring the 'PAVAN BIRS' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Old ones for SANSKAR) to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan, Gurdwara Ramsar Sahib complex near Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj Baba Deep Singh Ji 'Shaheed' only instead of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. This has been decided to facilitate the 'SANGAT' for the Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Newly published) are available at the same venue.

-Guru Panth Da Das-

*Secretary,
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee,
Amritsar.*

In continuation with the last edition:

**SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI
(1666-1708)**

-S. Surjit Singh 'Gandhi'

We are taking pleasure while publishing these contents from the book '*History of the Sikh Gurus*' by S. Surjit Singh Gandhi former Head of Sikh History Research Board (SGPC).

Literary Activities

Order of Nirmalas

Moreover, it was here that the Guru brought about a new recension of the Adi Granth.¹ Besides this, a part, at least, of the Guru's own works was composed at Damdama. The order of the Nirmala Sikhs was also created here with a view of giving the Sikhs a band of the Sikhs exclusively devoted to the study and preaching of the Sikh faith. Quite a large number of scholars who wanted 'to lead a life of independence also took shelter in the court of the Guru. Possibly, it was because of all these things that Damdama soon acquired the fame of Banaras, the ancient educational centre of India.

The Guru also re-organised his forces. According to Dr. Bannerjee the Guru's strength seems to have increased to some extent, as besides regular followers, he had also taken some Dogras and Brars into his service.²

The above-stated facts testify that the Guru during his sojourn was as active as ever and we can legitimately accredit to the Guru some very solid achievements at Damdama.

Causes of the success of the Guru ji in the area of Damdama

The tremendous success of the Guru in this area despite heavy odds was due to several causes. Among them the greatest importance may be attached to the Guru's decision to leave the hills and to come into the interior of the area which was the real base of his strength. Anandpur, notwithstanding its strong fortifications, suffered from inherent weakness, for the population around, consisting mostly of the conservative and caste-ridden Rajputs, who were hostile to the Sikhs and day in and day out caused harassments, even impediments, to them. On the other hand when the Guru entered the Punjab plains, the people around were helpful and co-operative and were willing to rally under the banner

of the Guru, should the call come from him. This made all the difference. Closely allied to that was the second factor, the impact left by the previous Gurus on the people of these areas. The 6th, 7th and 9th Gurus had, one after the other, conducted extensive tours across this area and left a deep imprint on the minds of the people. Guru Gobind Singh was at pains to select his route of march through the areas which had already been visited by his predecessors. For instance, the places, of Bur Majra, Ghulal, Lall Kalan, Katana, Bassian, Chakkar, Takhtupura, Patto Hira Singh, Bhagta Bhaika, and Lambhawali, through which Guru Gobind Singh passed, had all been sanctified by Sikh Gurus previously. The third important factor was the valuable support provided by some of the influential Zamindars of the areas traversed. Prominent among them were Nihang Khan, Rai Kall, Chaudhari Kapura, Chaudhri Dana, Chaudhri Dalla, Chaudhri Rama and Chaudhri Taloka. At that time the Mughal Empire was facing a serious agrarian crisis as a result of which zamindars were asserting themselves. Their increasing strength was a great helping asset for Guru Gobind Singh. The next important factor was the terrain of the Jungle Desh. With its scarcity of water, difficulty of routes and vast wildernesses, the Lakhi Jungle, as it was called, presented formidable obstacles to any invading army from outside. Last but not least was the Guru's charismatic personality which could turn adversity into fortune and discomfiture into triumph. But for his powerful and towering personality, even the best of circumstances would have yielded no fruit.

Guru proceeds to the South to see Aurangzeb

It was on October 30, 1706 that the Guru decided to proceed towards the South to see Aurangzeb in response to the Emperor's invitation which he sent having received the letter entitled Zafarnama. The Guru's resolve to see the Mughal Emperor has been generally but wrongly interpreted in terms of an unqualified submission to the Mughal Government. The Guru's purpose in seeing the Emperor was to impress upon him the justness of his own cause.

Imperial messengers to convey Emperor's wish to see him

Emperor's direction to Munim Khan

It was here that Guru Gobind Singh ji received the imperial messengers who had come to convey to him the Emperor's wish for a personal meeting. Guru Gobind Singh's letter entitled 'Zafarnama' appears to have produced the desired effect. In the Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, the receipt of a letter from Guru Gobind Singh ji is acknowledged by the Emperor and the orders which he issued to Muim Khan at Lahore to conciliate Guru Gobind Singh ji and also to make satisfactory arrangements for his travel towards the south may also be seen in the Ahkam-i-Alamgiri. That Aurangzeb was anxious to meet Guru Gobind Singh is evident from the Ahkam though it is not clear why. Perhaps the Emperor wished to secure

peace in the Punjab so that he might concentrate on his schemes to bring the Marathas to their knees.

At Naraina meeting with -Jaitmal

Bhai Daya Singh joins the Guru ji

Death of Aurangzeb

Before starting on his onward journey, the Guru deviated to Khural 35 miles away from Sirsa to help Gulab Singh who was being harassed by the Muslim population of that place. After that he set out in the direction-of Rajasthan en route to Ahmednagar where the Emperor was encamped. On the way, he passed through Haripur Bud Tirath Madhu Singhana and Nohar wherefrom he proceeded to Bhadra, Then he moved to Sahewa, reputed from the strange phenomenon of a Peepal tree growing out of a Jand tree. Therefrom he reached Naraina where there was the principal Dera of Dadu Panthis. The Guru paid a visit to the Dera and held a discussion with Mahant Jait Ram. The inmates of Dera accorded a warm reception to the Guru; but they were wonderstruck at the regal manners of the Guru. From this place the Guru moved to Kalot. It was here that Bhai Daya Singh came up from the south and joined him. From Kalot, he proceeded to Pushkar near Ajmer, Ultimately he reached Baghoru in the state of Udaipur. It was situated on the left bank of Kothari river. Here the local people attempted to bar the entry of the Guru in to the town which led to a slight skirmish in which the people were defeated. At Bughor the news. reached that Aurangzeb had expired and war of. succession had broken out among his sons. There was no point now in proceeding further.

Moral support to Prince Muazzam

He continued to stay there for quite some time. When he heard about Prince Muazzam's march towards Delhi and Agra, he atonce decided to give him his blessings. First he sent Dhararn Singh and a few other devoted Sikhs to see the Prince and assure him on his behalf of his moral support; and a little afterwards, he himself set out by easy stages for Delhi. By the time he reached Delhi, Muazzam had advanced to Agra. Guru Gobind Singh's keenness to meet Bahadur Shah is understand- able. Aurangzeb's death had left his purpose unsolved and 'after the issue of war had been decided he could meet Bahadur Shah for the same purpose for which he had set out to meet Aurangzeb in the south.

The Guru Ji was honoured by Bahadur Shah

After hearing about Muazzam's victory at the battle of Jajau, the Guru left Delhi for Agra, There he was received by Muazzam who had now proclaimed himself the Emperor of India. A royal robe of honour was conferred upon the Guru on 24th, 1707.³ .

Guru accompanies Bahadur Shah to Rajasthan and Deccan

The Guru had come for talks with the Emperor. These talks were still inconclusive when the Emperor left for Rajasthan with a view to suppressing the revolts that some discontented Rajput Chiefs had raised. The Guru accompanied him. By now the news had reached Bahadur Shah that his younger brother Kam Bakhsh in the Deccan had proclaimed himself the Emperor of India. To put down that rebellion, the Emperor proceeded towards Deccan via Chittorgarh.

At Burhanpur The Guru Ji Parted company with the Emperor

From Chittorgarh, Bahadur Shah left for Burhanpur and the Guru accompanied him enroute to Hyderabad. The Guru stayed for many days at Burhanpur and met Jogi Jiwan Das. He also met Mahant Jait Ram of Dadoo Dawara who, per chance, was there. Jogi Jiwan Das and the Mahant told the Guru about one Bairagi Madho Das and his great occult powers. The Guru ji decided to meet him. At the same time, the Guru ji became weary of Bahadur Shah who, instead of deciding something against Wazir Khan and other officials, was evasive in his replies. Accordingly, the Guru ji parted company with the Emperor at Hingoli and moved on to Nander where he reached in the beginning of September or towards the end of August, 1708.

The Guru ji's stay at Nander

The Guru ji decided to stay here, selected for his residence, a congenial spot overlooking the river. Why did he select this place in particular? The reason hitherto known is that he wanted to see Banda; but there was another reason also. The city of Nander at that time had eight Ashrams of different religious sects: Vaishnavites, Shaivites Lingayats, Bairagis etc. The Guru considered it in the fitness of things to enter into a dialogue with the leaders of the holy camps to convert them to his own viewpoint. It was perhaps because of this that he started addressing congregations without much loss of time. Guru Gobind Singh's missionary activities among the inhabitants of Nander led to an armed fight between the Khalsa and the followers of a Bairagi, later to be known as Banda. The followers of Banda were worsted in the encounter, and his own encounter with Guru Gobind Singh ji resulted in Banda's conversion to Sikhism who accepted the pahul and the rehat of the Khalsa."⁴

All kinds of people started coming to the congregations of the Khalsa at Nander. Soon an Afghan named Jamshed Khan started coming to the assemblies which were addressed by Guru Gobind Singh ji. Apparently, he came to attend the congregation but in fact he was looking for an opportunity to assassinate the Guru.⁵ On the third or fourth day, he found the opportunity and as Guru Gobind Singh retired to his personal apartment after evening prayer, Jamshed Khan entered the apartment and, through deceit, wounded him with a dagger. The Guru put him to death immediately, but the wound he received was

very serious.

When the Emperor was informed of the unfortunate incident, he sent one of the royal surgeons to dress Guru's wounds but even he could not cure it. On the 18th October, 1708 Guru Gobind Singh ji resigned his life at the age of forty- two and was cremated at Nander.

THE GURU'S MOTIVES IN GOING TO THE DECCAN

The Guru's motives in going to the Deccan alongwith Bahadur Shah variously stated by different writers are as under :-

(1) Bute Shah and Malcolm say that he went to Deccan because he despaired at the terrible reverses and bereavement which had been his lot and wanted a change.

(2) Some writers say that the Guru joined the Mughal service. Cunningham says that the Guru received a military command in the valley of Godavari.

(3) Quite a few writers state that the Guru having found that it would be difficult to gather afresh an army strong enough to challenge and rout the Imperial forces decided to arouse the Rajputs and the Maharattas to fight against the Mughal tyranny.

Before arriving at some definite conclusion we will have to examine all the theories stated above. The view of Bute Shah and Malcolm that dejection overwhelmed the Guru and he, in order to have a change, left for the South, is evidently unfounded, as it does not fit in with the Guru's behaviour in the face of severest losses. Indeed, his whole life is a lesson in fortitude, courage and high spirits. As a child of nine years, he lost his father and stood face to face with formidable Mughal Empire as its zenith; but that thing failed to have any depressing effect on his tiny yet mighty heart. He saw his dearest Sikhs killed before his eyes, sent his two eldest sons into the valley of death at Chamkaur but these things could not plunge him into gloom. When his wife asked him where his four sons had gone, his reply was characteristic of his fundamental attitude to these things. He stated :-

"What then if they fours are gone?

They yet live, and shall ever live,

Millions of our dear brave sons".

Certainly no trace of grief or despair in all this. Besides this, the tenor and tone of his letter Zafarnama testifies to the attitude of the Guru towards sufferings. In fact, he openly threatened the Emperor while he wrote 'what though my four sons have been killed, my younger son, the Khalsa remains behind like a coiled snake. What bravery is it to quench a few sparks of life? Thou art merely exciting a raging fire the more.' Nowhere and at no time the Guru was despondent; he was always active in the pursuit of his ideals.

Thus in the presence of such unimpeachable evidence, it is absurd to repose faith in the dejection theory.

The second view that the Guru went to the Deccan in the capacity of a servant of Bahadur Shah is also far from truth. Cunningham who has given currency to this theory states that the Guru received military command in the valley of Godavari. He bases his conclusion in the evidence of some Sikh writers, Forster and Khafi Khan. On examination of the references cited by Cunningham we ascertain that he had little or no acquaintance with the original works of any Sikh writers. He alludes to Vachitra Natak and at another place Gur Bilas of Bhai Sukha Singh. He seems to have referred to Bhai Gurdas Bhalla, but all these accounts do not subscribe to the theory that the Guru took service with Bahadur Shah.

So far as the authorities such as Forster and Khafi Khan are concerned, a close scrutiny of these also leads to the conclusion contrary to the service theory. Forster writes that "Guru Gobind Singh received marks of favour from Bahadur Shah who being apprised of his military qualities, gave him a charge in the army which marched into the Deccan to oppose the rebellion of Kam Backsh (Kam Baksh)". For this account, he relies on some historical tracts whose authors he names not. We have tried our best to discover those writers of the Sikhs but we have failed, and now we think that Forster might have made use of some distorted versions of the accounts of Khafi Khan or those of some detractors of the Guru. At any rate, in the absence of some authentic information, it is difficult to maintain that the Guru entered into the employment of Bahadur Shah.¹⁶

Khafi Khan too does not corroborate the view of Cunningham, although he, being religious bigot, was in the habit of seeing everything through the religious myopic eyeballs. He describes the Guru not as a servant but a companion of Bahadur Shah. He uses for the Guru the word 'Rafuqat' an abstract noun of Rafiq and means companionship or company. Obviously, it does not connote any difference of status between the persons concerned. Thus the service theory finds no support from the statement of Khafi Khan. It appears that service theory originated from an intentional or accidental mistranslation of Khafi Khan's passage.

A modern writer, Mohammad Latif while upholding the service theory, quotes Malcolm. But on perusal of Malcolm's book 'Sketches of the Sikhs', it has been found that Malcolm held a diametrically opposite opinion. He nowhere in his book lent credence to this theory. Hence Latif's view is without any foundation or at best an attempt to stain the unalloyed courage of the Guru.

'Service Theory' can also be rejected in the light of the ideology and ideals of the Guru. The memory of the wrongs that had been inflicted on him and on his people were too fresh in him to have reconciled him joining the army of oppression. Nor, as Dr. G. C. Narang writes can the service theory be reconciled with the Guru's commission of Banda

Bahadur to the leadership of the Punjab Khalsa.

Similarly the view that the Guru accompanied Bahadur Shah to Deccan for he wanted to arouse the Rajputs and the Marhattas to contribute their mite to end the Mughal tyranny, is at once far-fetched and a mere figment of imagination. Had the Guru gone on this errand, he must have tried to see some groups of the Marhattas or of the Rajputs to gauge their strength and the will to combat the Mughal might. Since the Guru did not do any thing of the sort, it is clear that he had no purpose of this sort. No doubt in Khafi Khan's accounts one gathers that the Guru addressed to the assemblies of the people who gathered around him daily; but it does not seem probable that the Guru preached sedition or revolt against the Mughal Government because in that case it was not possible for the Guru to spend so much time in the company of the Emperor.

Having negated the oft-held views, the issue of the real motives of the Guru while accompanying Bahadur Shah to the Deccan still remains unsolved -, We think that after his meeting with the new Emperor who had given him an honourable reception, the Guru wrote to his followers in the Punjab and conveyed his appreciation of what had passed between himself and the Emperor. In his letter, Guru Gobind Singh ji made a very significant allusion to the purpose of his meeting with Bahadur Shah. After-remembering the jewelled scarf and the Khillat presented to him by the Emperor, the Guru expressed his satisfaction with other matters. He then informed the Khalsa that he would return to them in a few days, enjoined on the Sikhs to remain friendly with one another and come fully armed to his presence on his return to Kahlur. The Guru ji seems to have believed that he would soon get justice or succeed in prevailing upon the Emperor to follow the liberal policies, to return Anandpur to him and to punish the Subedar of Sirhind for his excesses. The Hukamnama to this effect certainly epitomises a fresh approach to the problems. As a matter of fact, the Emperor throughout this period lived far away in the south at Ahmednagar, and it is possible that he might have not been kept fully informed regarding the affairs in the Punjab. Although the late Sikh records speak of frequent appeals to the Emperor on the part of Hill Chiefs and' thus give the impression that the whole campaign was being conducted with the full knowledge of the Emperor but considering the distance of Emperor's stay from the Punjab and poor means of communications and transportation their view may be considered with reservation. In this connection it is pertinent to note that no contemporary record makes mention of any representation from any party, whosoever. Sainapat makes mention of an embassy to a Sultan only once, and it is doubtful whether even here the Emperor is meant.⁷

In view of this, we may infer that the cause of the trouble was primarily the local officials including Wazir Khan, the Subedar of Sirhind, who did not brook the popularity' of

the Guru ji on account of religious as well as Imperial reasons. The crime of Wazir Khan in particular was so heinous and of so brutal a character that the Guru ji would have been false to himself and his ideals if he had not made efforts to get the accused punished properly. He could not resort to armed conflict any longer because of the dissipated resources and hence the only way left to him was to resort to diplomacy. Thus it is quite understandable that this was the purpose for which the Guru ji sought to see the Emperor. The death of Aurangzeb foiled him in his effort for a while, but he was consistent and persistent in the present course chalked out by him. It was this very purpose for which he extended his moral support to Bahadur Shah and kept himself in the Emperor's train.

The Sikh records, more or less, are definite that this was the object for the consummation of which, he joined Bahadur Shah. This thing is also quite clear from the Guru's Hukam Nama (fiat) of October 2, 1707 wherein it is written 'the old negotiations that had brought him so far, were then in progress and he soon expected to return to the Punjab.' But it appears that the negotiations had not yet culminated into any agreement that the Emperor started for Rajputana (12th November, 1707). The Guru had to accompany him. The Emperor, however, avoided the Guru under one pretext or the other.' Shortly after, the Guru discovered that his efforts had failed and the Emperor was not sincere in his overtures. He then, commissioned Banda to achieve by force what he had failed to accomplish only on appeal to justice.

THE GURU'S DEATH (JOTI JOT)

The Guru expired on 18th October, 1708 as a result of the wound caused by the stabbing of the Guru by a certain Pathan. Various views have been expressed with regard to the circumstances of the assassination of Guru. Bhai Sukha Singh in his Gur Bilas states that two Pathan youths who were the sons of Painda Khan whom Guru Hargobind had killed in the battle of Kartarpur, came to the Guru. One day, the Guru gave one of them the sword which had been presented to the Guru and said that a man who had sword in his hand and saw the enemy of his father or grandfather before his eyes and yet failed to avenge the wrong had been born in vain. The youngman hesitated; but after a few days when he went to see the Guru ji, he was again aroused. He struck the Guru; his third blow penetrated into the Guru's body. Upon this there was a row and a Sikh came and cut off the Pathan's head. The wound was sewn up; but it could not be healed causing ultimately the death of the Guru.

The story, when put to critical analysis, falls flat on the ground. A son of Painda Khan who died in 1634 was by no means, a young man in 1708. Moreover, first to arouse young Pathan to kill the Guru and then to see him being killed by the Sikhs is such an

incongruity inexplicable by any norm of logic.

Notes and References:

1. The new volume containing the whole of original Guru Granth Sahib, the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji and his own Slokas is known as 'Damdama Sahib di Bir'. This Bir was installed at Harmandir Sahib but it is not available to us now. It has either been destroyed or taken away by Ahmad Shah Abdali when he plundered the town during one of his raids.
2. Koer Singh: Gur Bilas Patshahi 10. "Everyday would the Guru distribute gold and silver coins. Countless soldiers were thus attracted to the place."
3. Entry in the Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla (Jaipur) dated 24th July, 1707 Guru Sobha.
4. J. S. Grewal and S.S. Bal : Guru Gobind Singh, p. 154.
5. Sainapat: Gur Sobha.
6. Froster himself is conscious of his shortcomings. He on page 253 of his Travels admits that he has no substantial authority from whom he could deduce the history of the Sikhs.
7. Gur Sobha ix 10. According to I.B. Bannerjee whenever Sainapat speaks of the Emperor he uses the word Shah and so it seems that by the word 'Sultan' somebody else possibly the Emperor's representative at Delhi is meant.
8. To Sangat of Dhaur. We have met the Emperor with all success and received a robe of honour and a jewelled necklace with Rs. 60,000 as a gift. We are returning shortly. Be at peace with one another. When we come to Kahlur let all the Khalsa come armed. Send 2 tolas of gold worth Rs. 40 by draft. If the messenger dallies, throw him out of the congregation. October 2, 1707.

Cont...

Appeal

The devotees are requested to bring the 'PAVAN BIRS' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Old ones for SASKAR) to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan, Gurdwara Ramsar Sahib complex near Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj Baba Deep Singh Ji 'Shaheed' only instead of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. This has been decided to facilitate the 'SANGAT' for the Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Newly published) are available at the same venue.

-Guru Panth Da Das-

**Secretary,
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee,
Amritsar.**