

English Section



Editor : Diljit Singh 'Bedi'

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

19 March	Battle of Nadaun, Martyrdom of Bhai Sohan Chand (brother of Bhai Mani Singh). (19-3-1690)
21 March	Akali Dal passed a resolution of 'Sikh State'. (21-3-1946)
22 March	Third Shaheedi Jatha left Sri Akal Takht Sahib for Jaito. (22-3-1924)
23 March	Sardar Bhagat Singh hanged in Lahore Jail. (23-3-1931)
24 March	Akali Conference held at Sri Anandpur Sahib condemned Indian interference in Sikh Shrines. (24-3-1959)
25 March	(a) Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur became the acting president of Shiromani Akali Dal. (25-3-1972) (b) S.G.P.C. passed "Sikh are a nation" resolution. (25-3-1981)
27 March	Fourth Shaheedi Jatha left Sri Akal Takht Sahib for Jaito. (27-3-1924)
29 March	(a) Sri Guru Angad Dev ji immersed with divine light. (29-3-1552) (b) Akali Dal renamed as Shiromani Akali Dal. (29-3-1922)
30 March	Foundation of Sikh fort Ram Rouni (Amritsar) laid by the Sikhs. (30-3-1747)
31 March	(a) Birth of Sri Guru Angad Dev ji. (31-3-1504) (b) Cheif Khalsa Diwan submitted memorandam to the viceroy asking for representation for the Sikhs in different Councils and services. (31-3-1911)
2 April	Bhai Prithipal Singh, who had severly beaten by the police during Guru-Ka-Bagh agitation, died in Guru Ramdas Hospital. (2-4-1924)
4 April	(a) Sikhs visited Sri Nankana Sahib with black turbans on their heads Enrollment of Akali Dal started. (4-4-1921) (b) 24 Sikhs killed by police during peaceful 'Rasta Roko' agitation. (4-4-1983)
5 April	Sikhs observed Martyrdom Day of the martyrs of Sri Nankana Sahib (Martyrs of February 21, 1921). (5-4-1921)
6 April	Punjab Government banned 'Punjabi Suba' slogans in the district of Amritsar. (6-4-1955)

- 12 April (a) Fifth Shaheedi Jatha left Sri Akal Takht Sahib for Jaito. (12-4-1924)
- (b) Nehru-Master Tara Singh meeting took place. Nehru-Tara Singh pact signed. The Indian Government promised not to interfere in the Sikh religious affairs. (12-4-1959)
- 13 April (a) Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji started digging of Sarover at Tarn Taran. (13-4-1590)
- (b) Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar. (13-4-1919)
- (c) Punjabi became official language at the secretariate level. (13-4-1968)
- (d) Sant Harchand Singh Longowal became the acting president of Shiromani Akali Dal. (13-4-1976)
- 14 April (a) Civil disobedience movement launched in the Punjab. (14-4-1930)
- (b) Government banned visit to the Sikh prisoners of Jodhpur Rajsthan. (14-4-1986)

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).

Forty disclaimed the Guru

Forty of them were so vehement in their demand that they disclaimed Guru Gobind Singh as their Guru. Even then, when they found the Guru ji was not agreeable, they prevailed upon Mata Gujri ji to support their view-point.

Enemy's hypocrisy and deceit exposed

The Guru then thought out scheme to expose the hypocrisy of the enemy, as also to convince his followers of their folly.

Immediately after this, the Guru ordered a number of bullocks to be laden with rubbish articles. When all preparations were complete, he informed the message-bearers of the enemy that he had accepted their proposal. They were told that the Guru's treasure would leave the township first and that would be followed after a time by him and his people. The enemy received this information with great joy. At the appointed hour of the night, the Guru called for the loaded bullocks, tied lighted torches to their horns and sent them out at midnight along with some Sikhs to accompany them. When the enemy saw the train bearing the treasure emerging from the township, they forgot all their pledges and fell upon the small company of the Sikhs to loot the treasure. But their disappointment was great when they found that the treasure was made up of tattered clothes and rubbish articles. After exposing the folly of the enemy, the Guru according to Koer Singh, addressed his Sikhs on the following words:

Never true to their words are these
Hill Rajas, you know not their deceptions
They are all big cheats unworthy of trust.

(Koer Singh in 'Gurbilas')

Letter of Aurangzeb to the Guru ji

After some time the enemy delivered a letter to the Guru ji. This letter bearing the seal of Emperor Aurangzeb¹ contained many assurances for the safe passage (of the Sikhs out of Anandpur Sahib. The followers of the Guru ji who were already anxious to leave the township became very vocal and active. They approached Mata Gujri ji and pleaded with her. The Guru ji, however, felt that their pleadings were not reasonable and it was not appropriate to accept the terms of the enemy and leave the fort.

Evacuation of Anandpur

But, finally he agreed to accept the enemy's word and directed the preparations to be made to abandon the fort. Anandpur was finally evacuated on 5/6 December, A.D. 1705 (6-7 Poh Samvat 1762 BK.).

Pledges broken

The moment the enemy got an inkling of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Skirmishes commenced from Kiratpur onwards. Realizing the impending danger, Guru Gobind Singh gave a band of 50 men to Bhai Udai Singh and charged him with the responsibility of checking the enemy's advancement.

Battle of Shahi Tibbi

Bhai Udai Singh fought at Shahi Tibbi a bloody battle with the enemy with a handful of his men; all of them perished fighting, covering themselves with imperishable glory. When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was in progress, the rest of the caravan including Guru Gobind Singh had reached the bank of the Sarsa river. It was now almost the daybreak.

Jiwan Singh to hold the enemy

About this time the news arrived that a contingent of enemy troops was fast approaching. Bhai Jiwan Singh ji², a prominent Rangreta Sikh, was given a band of 100 warriors and ordered to encounter the pursuers. With the rest of his people the Guru plunged into the flooded waters of the Sarsa. The flood was so fast that many of them were drowned and many more scattered, including members of Guru Gobind Singh's own family.

Loss of valuable literature and property

Besides, there was a heavy loss of valuable literature and property. It was from here that the Guru's revered mother, Mata Gujri ji and his two younger sons, Baba Zorawar Singh ji and Baba Fateh Singh ji, got separated and proceeded to Saheri the village of their domestic servant Gangu Brahmin who handed them over to the police at Morinda to be carried to Sirhind. As regards the Guru himself, he was able to reach, accompanied by his two elder sons and a small number of veteran Sikhs, the village Ghanaula on the other side of the Sarsa.

Kotla Nihang

It was now planned to proceed further to Kotla Nihang Khan and pass the day safely in the residence of the Pathan Zamindar Nihang Khan who, being an old and sincere devotee of the Sikh Gurus, could be depended upon for help even in a critical situation such as this. Apprehending that the route ahead might be beset with danger, the Guru set apart a band of about 100 veterans under the command of Bhai Bachittar Singh ji and instructed them to march by the direct route whereas he along with some of his prominent people preferred to take the longer path along the left bank of the Sutlej river. The Guru ji met no resistance on the way and reached Kotla Nihang Khan quite safe and sound.

Fight against the Pathans and Rangars

Bachittar Singh ji and his men, however, had to fight their way through a cordon of the Rangars of Malikpur, a village on the way, and Pathans of Ropar. In the fierce fighting that took place on this occasion, majority of the Sikhs fell dead. The leader, Bachittar Singh, was mortally wounded and in that serious condition was carried to Kotla Nihang Khan by Sahibzada Ajit Singh the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh ji.

The Guru ji did not want to stay at Kotla a minute longer than was absolutely necessary. He decided to proceed further on the same day. His elder sons, Sahibzadas Ajit Singh ji and Jujhar Singh ji and 40 devotees were to accompany him. When the night fell, the whole band set out on the onward journey. Nihang Khan detailed his son, Alam Khan, to guide them as to the route they were to follow.

When Guru Gobind Singh ji left Kotla Nihang Khan, his object, it seems, was to proceed to Machhiwara and Rai Kot. At the former place lived two Pathan brothers, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan. They had many personal trade deals with the Guru ji and in consequence had come to be charmed by his powerful personality. Moreover, they happened to be cousins of Nihang Khan and as such could be depended upon. The second place, Rai Kot, was under the control of Rai Kalla, whose daughter had been married to Alam Khan, the son of Nihang Khan. Besides, like Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan of Machhiwara Rai Kalla also had independently become a devotee of Guru Gobind Singh ji. Another reason for the Guru ji to select this route was that the 6th, 7th and 9th Gurus had widely travelled across this area and converted a good number of local people to the Sikh Faith.

After Kotla Nihang the village, Bur Majra happened to be the halting place of Guru Gobind Singh ji and his men. Soon after their arrival there. the news was received that a large body of Sirhind troops was chasing them. Immediately. the Guru ji decided to face the enemy from within the Garhi of Chamkaur and hurried towards it. He was well aware of the importance of this garhi as he had, on a previous occasion, fought a military engagement at this place.

Battle of Chamkaur

The zamindar of the place invited the Guru to come inside the village and offered his mud Haveli (mud fortress) to the Guru for his abode and other purposes. Soon after, the army of the allies closed upon the place. The Guru had only forty men³ with him, an infinitesimally small number in comparison with the huge host that had encompassed it. His weapons of defence and offence were those which he and his men had managed to bring with the fight. His provisions consisted of the little that he could manage to procure during interval between his arrival and the arrival of the imperial armies. It was under such conditions that the siege of Chamkaur started. The faithful little band of forty, with only mud walls to protect them, fought against thousands to the last. The two eldest sons Ajit Singh ji and Jujhar Singh ji and three of the beloved ones were killed. Only five Sikhs were left to defend the place. They persuaded the Guru to leave the place. The Guru ji had to agree to the persuasions as he himself had promised at the time of the creation of the Khalsa, that the authority of the five beloved was higher than even that of the Guru. Accordingly, the Guru ji slipped out from Chamkaur sahib through the ranks of the enemy. According to Gur Bilas⁴ Sant Singh who resembled the Guru put on the dress which resembled that of the Guru. The enemy was duped and they concentrated their attention on Sant Singh, thus providing opportunity to the Guru and his three prominent Sikhs- Bhai Daya Singh ji, Bhai Man Singh ji and Bhai Dharam Singh ji to step out of the Garhi and wend their way completely out witting the enemy. Since it was not possible for all of them to travel together, so each went his own way.

Machhiwara

Gani Khan & Nabi Khan

Uch-da-Pir

Alamgir Muslim friends honoured

When the Guru ji reached Jandsar, a local Gujjar indentified him and raised a cry but to no effect. The Guru ji moved on and reached the village Behlolpur at a distance of three Kos to the west. From there he reached the throny wilds of Machhiwara. For days he had nothing to eat but tender leaves of the Akk plant and had nothing but only a clod of earth to rest upon. While he was asleep, three of his devotees Bhai Dharam Singh ji, Bhai Man Singh ji and Bhai Daya Singh ji came up and rejoined him. But the situation was grave because the enemy was in hot pursuit of the Guru. Realizing this, one Golaba, an old masand of Machhiwara took the Guru ji and his three Sikhs to his residence but soon the heart within him failed. At this juncture, two Pathan horse-marchants Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who were old acquaintances of the Guru, chose to risk their lives. With their help, the Guru ji disguised himself as a Muslim Faqir while his three Sikhs, masqueraded

themselves as his attendants. The all the inquirers that they were escorting 'Uch-da-Pir'⁵ or a high saint, which by a pun would also mean the holy saint of Uch (a sacred place near Multan). At the village Lal, a military officer had some doubts and made searching inquiries. Finding the answers not very satisfactory, the commander sent for Qazi Pir Mohammad, once the Persian tutor of the Guru and asked him to identify the occupant of the letter. The Qazi gave helpful reply and in this way, the situation was saved. From Lal the Guru visited Katana and then Kanech where the masand named Fateh did not let him stay. Then he reached Alamgir via Doraha. Here one Nand Lal Zamindar presented a horse to The Guru thereby enabling him to change cot for the horse. The Guru also cast off the robes of 'Uch da Pir. The situation was now easier and the Guru asked Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan to return home. The families of these Muslim friends, including that of Pir Mohammad were honoured with Hukam Namas (letters of authority).

News regarding the proposed march of Wazir Khan of Sirhind

From Alam Gir, the Guru advanced on horseback in the direction of Rai Kot. At Silaoni the Chief of Rai Kot, Rai Kalla who was the Guru's devotee and a close relative of Nihang Khan waited upon him and took him to Rai Kot. At the Guru's behest, he sent Nura Mahi to Sirhind to fetch news about what had happened to the other members of the family. Not long after, the news of the tragedy enacted at Sirhind was delivered to him here. He remained as composed as ever. He resumed his march to Hehar where he stayed for two days as the guest of Mehant Kirpal Das, a hero of the battle of Bhangani (1688). The next stage in his journey was Lamma Jatpura. It was here that Rai Kalla of Rai Kot, who had been accompanying him all the time took leave. The messenger Nura Mahi had hinted that there was a rumour at Sirhind that Nawab Wazir Khan would soon send a force in search of Guru Gobind Singh. Realising that the territory around Rai Kot was not a suitable place for meeting the enemy's challenge, the Guru directed his Sikhs towards the Jungle Desh, the land of Barars. On the way, he passed through the villages of Manuke, Mehiana Chakkar, Takhtupur and Madhen and reached Dina.

Zamindars & people rallied round the Guru

At Dina, about 7 kos south-west of Takhat Pura, a devoted Sikh Rama presented the Guru with an excellent horse. The Guru accepted it for himself and gave his former horse to Bhai Daya Singh. The Guru's arrival here soon became known to the Zamindars of the area, and they began to rally round him. Some of the influential people who met him here, were Lakhmir and Samir, grandsons of Jodha Rai, who had met Guru Hargobind Sahib ji and became his devotee and Param Singh and Dharam Singh grandsons of Bhai Rup Chand. The Guru stayed here for some days. He, about this time, wished to settle the matter diplomatically, and wrote Zafarnama, a letter in Persian verse addressed to the

Emperor making a bold protest against the attitude of local government officials. This letter was taken to the Emperor by Bhai Daya Singh and Dharam Singh. The letter was in fact a reply to the letter already sent by the Emperor.

From Dina, the Guru occasionally went out and visited a few places of the neighbourhood. Two such places were Manan and Bhadaur.

The Mughals came to know of Guru's whereabouts

While yet at Dina the Guru came to learn that his whereabouts had become known to the Mughal Government of Sirhind. From now onwards he was most anxious to find out some suitable place where he could best meet the challenge of the enemy; no less was his keenness to inculcate in the minds of the people the spirit of 'Dharam Yudh', war of righteousness.

The Guru's search for the place to face the Mughals

Kanpura's refusal to give his fort

Blue robes taken off

So he left Dina and visited many places such as Bander, Bargarh, Baihbal, Saravan. At Saravan the Guru gave his people a little practice in arrow-shooting. Next, he proceeded to Jaito. Therefrom the Guru went to Kotla Maluk Das and Lambhawali wherefrom he made a dash to Kot Kapura situated 13 Kos in the north. Probably, the pursuing enemy force had come too near by now. Chaudhri Kapura, a Brar Jat, was asked to lend the use of his fort to him for a few days but fearing the wrath of Mughals, he refused to oblige the Guru. From here the Guru proceeded to Dhilwan Sodhian, 3 Kos from Kot Kapura where a relative of Guru Gobind Singh received him with great warmth and cordiality. It was here, as the tradition goes, the Guru took off his blue robes which he had been wearing ever since he left Machhiwara and tearing them off into small pieces consigned them one by one, to fire. The historic words that he is said to have uttered on this occasion are memorable :

The blue robes have been torn off,

And with that ends the rule of Turko-Pathans.

Chaudhari Kapura forgiven

Chaudhari Kapura, now repentent of his earlier disgraceful act, came to see the Guru and asked for his forgiveness. The Guru forgave him and he provided the Guru with a good guide, Chaudhari Khana, under whose guidance the Guru marched westward in the direction of Dhab Khidrana. On the way, he passed through Ramina, Mallan, Gauri, Sanghar and Kaoni.

Battle of Muktsar Dec. 1705

meanwhile a large number of the followers had collected around the Guru who

now was not as helpless as he had been at Chamkaur.⁶ But the number certainly did not swell to twelve thousand as Muhammed Latif would have us believe.⁷ The tank of Khidrana being dry, the Sikh soldiers entrenched themselves in a forest in the neighbourhood of Khidrana and awaited the advance of the troops of Wazir Khan. Contending forces clashed with each other on 29th December 1705. The brunt of the attack was borne by the forty men of Majha who had deserted the Guru's ranks during the siege of Anandpur sahib but taunted by their own women who would not let them enter their homes, they had come back to reinforce the Guru's small army. These were all over-powered but not before they had shown their mettle as the toughest fighters whom the experienced Mughal Faujdar has ever known in his life. The Muhammedans were soon in great straits for want of water and Wazir Khan decided to return without striking a blow on the main body of the Khalsa with Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru, thus, obtained a great victory for himself.

Forty Muktas

When the Guru, at the close of the battle, came to know of the sacrifices of the Sikhs of Majha, he was deeply moved. He took out the paper on which they had written their disclaimer and tore it up, as a sign of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Guru embraced each one of them, as they lay dead or were dying and called them 'Emancipated ones'. They are still remembered in the daily prayer of the Sikhs as forty Muktas.

Brars' indecent behaviour

From Muktsar, the Guru moved to Rupana, Bhandar, Gurusar and Thehri Bambiha and Rohila and Jangiana and Bhai Ka Kot which had been founded by Bhai Bhagtu. From there, he moved on to Sahib Chand and further on to Chatiana where Brars who had fought for him demanded the arrears of their pay under threat of blocking his onward march. But by God's grace, it so happened that a devoted Sikh from the neighbouring area brought enough money about the same time which enabled the Guru to pay off all the arrears. The leader of the Brars Chaudhari Dana was extremely sorry for the insolent behaviour of his people and refused to get any payment for himself.

His act of self-abnegation greatly impressed Guru Gobind Singh Who, on his request, immediately agreed to visit his native place Mehma Swai. The Journey lay through Ablu, a place founded by an uncle of Chaudhari Dana. Reaching Mehma Swai, the Guru encamped at the place now called Lakhisar and from there made a visit to Dana's home and several other places around. After a few days at Lakhisar, Guru Gobind Singh decided to go to Talwandi Sabo at the request of Chaudhari Dalla. He took the same old route and once again passing through Chatiana, Kot Sahib Chand and Kot Bhai arrived at Giddarbaha and then paying short visit to Rohilla, Jangirana, Bambiha, Bajak, Kaljhirani, Jassi Bagwali, Pakka Kalan and Chak Hira Singh reached Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib

or Takhat Damdama Sahib. The place appealed to the Guru so much that he assumed a permanent residence there. His stay at this place lasted for 9 months and 9 days.

Activities at Damdama

Conversion of the people to Sikh faith

The period at Damdama was put to best possible use by the Guru. He utilised the time in laying abiding foundations of Sikhism in the Malwa Tract.⁷ Many old and hereditary Sikhs were given Pahul and brought more thoroughly into the Khalsa. Dalla, the Chief of the Talwandi, Tiloka, the ancestor of the Nabha State and Rama, the ancestor of Patiala State were outstanding examples. Besides, new converts were also made in large numbers.

According to Dr. Fauja Singh "Talwandi Saboke attracted large crowds from far and near and presented the spectacle of a new Anandpur Sahib. The Sikhs, devotees and others who came to assemble here have been estimated at more than ten times the number of the people at Anandpur Sahib. The Guru made a number of trips to important places nearby. In one trip he visited Bhagi Bhandar, 3 Kos north of Talwandi sabo, Kot Samir, 3 Kos further north and Chak Bhai Ka, about 10 Kos from Talwandi Sabo to the north. At the last-named place, the Guru was given a warm reception by Bhai Rai Singh, grandson of Bhai Bhagtu. On another occasion, he went to Bathinda city and stayed there for seven days. While coming back to Talwandi, the Guru visited Mahima and Bhakri both of them situated to the north of Bathinda. On some other occasion, he visited Tala Pind about 10 Kos to the south. At kewal Chaudhries Rama and Tiloka waited upon him and got his belssings.

Notes and References:

1. Koer Singh, Gur Bilas,
2. Bhai Jaita's name after baptism.
3. Refer to 'Zafarnama', the letter addressed to the Emperor Aurangzeb.
4. Gur Bilas, xxi.
5. 'Uch-da-Pir', meant priest of Uch, a town in the south western Punjab. The expression also meant high priest.
6. Some Sikh scholars are of the opinion that the Guru had only 40 disciples in this battle. The statement is wrong because as they themselves put it, that thousands of enemy soldiers were killed- the task which only forty soldiers could not accomplish.
7. Mohd. Latif : History of the Punjab, P. 266.

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