

English Section



Editor : Diljit Singh 'Bedi'

DAYS COMMEMORATING HISTORICAL EVENTS
(16th November to 15th December)

16 November	After spending 3 years and six months at Paonta Sahib, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib reached Anandpur Sahib. (16-11-1688)
17 November	(a) Death of Baba Budha Ji at Ramdas town. (17-11-1631)
	(b) Cremation of the Head of the Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib at Anandpur Sahib. (17-11-1675)
	(c) The first election of S.G.P.C. completed. (17-11-1920)
18 November	(a) Guru Ka Bagh agitation won by Sikhs. (18-11-1922)
	(b) S.G.P.C. declared Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo) as the fifth Sikh Takhat. (18-11-1966)
19 November	(a) Maharaja Ranjit Singh captured Peshawar. (19-11-1818)
	(b) Sikhs, led by Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar liberated Gurdwara Panja Sahib (Hassan Abdal). (19-11-1920)
22 November	Battle of Ram Nagar between the Sikhs and the British. (22-11-1848)
24 November	(a) Sri Guru Arjan Dev laid the foundation stone of Kartarpur, district Jalandhar. (24-11-1594)
	(b) The Sikhs took out the protest march at Delhi against Nehru's remarks about Sikhs. (24-11-1960)
25 November	Akali Silver Jubilee Conference, held at Jandiala (Jalandhar) and opposed the demand of Pakistan. (25-11-1944)
26 November	The Sikh leaders rejected new constitution of India and refused to sign. (26-11-1949)
28 November	Indian Government stated that 2239 Sikh soldiers had been Court martialled and 98 been regularly tried for their crime to protest against Operation Blue Star in 1984. (28-11-1985)
3 December	Bhai Maharaj Singh chalked out a plan to attack contonements at Jallandhar and Hoshiarpur. (3-12-1849)
4 December	The Sikh raised Pro-Punjabi Suba slogans at Nehru's rally in Rajpura, 15 Sikhs were arrested. (4-12-1960)
7 December	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and about 700 of his companions arrested, chained and taken to Delhi. (7-12-1715)
8 December	Central Sikh League formed at Lahore. (8-12-1919)
11 December	Akali Dal appointed a committee to draft the policies of the 'Dal' in

- the changed circumstances. (This committee drafted the famous Anandpur Sahib Resolution). (11-12-1972)
- 12 December (a) Ahmed Shah left our Homeland after humiliating defeat at the hands of Sikhs in Punjab. Kabuli Mal appointed as Governor of Punjab. The Sikhs became defacto rulers of their homeland. (12-12-1762)
- (b) 53 Mahants gathered at Amritsar and decided to oppose the Sikh Gurdwara Reforms. (12-12-1920)



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-

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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).

The Guru ji and his followers while still on their way to Anandpur-Makhawal, heard that Bhim Chand had entered into an agreement with Alif Khan. They naturally felt upset at Bhim Chand's entering into agreement with Alif Khan and expressed their resentment by plundering the inhabitants of Alsun.¹

It is difficult to determine as to which extent the Guru ji incited the Sikhs to loot the said village; but it is certain that the Guru ji regarded the act of Bhim Chand as a betrayal of the trust reposed in him by him. The only gain of the Guru ji as a result of this battle was that he made friends with Raj Singh of Jaswan and Ram Singh of Guler.

The experience of the Guru ji at Nadaun convinced the Guru ji that he could not hope to depend for long on the friendship of his two neighbours and continued to build up his strength. He during the next three years and nine months when he had undisturbed peace planned his way to greater armed strength. He gave his army a strong social base by giving a call to his followers not only to come to Anandpur in increasingly greater numbers every year but also to make the city their home. But the Guru's preoccupations in raising the army did not blind him to his duties, to his religious duties. Once well-settled at Anandpur, he took up the completion of 'Akal Ustat' in 1691 which he had started writing in 1684. The composition is considered to be one of the best works of the Guru ji and is divided into six parts. In the first part there is invocation to God who is looked upon Timeless, Omnipresent, All steel and Supreme Nature. The second part deals with the futility of worldly pomp and power. The third part is a satire on the various penances and austerities. The fourth part relates to the popular theological queries on the spiritual aspects of life and philosophy of Hindu Shastras. The fifth part sings the praises of Chandi, The last part is a hymn to God in all His splendour.

Dilawar Khan's attempt to weaken Guru's Power

These activities of the Guru ji brought rich dividends. But his large congregations and rapidly increasing military strength seemed to have unnerved the Kangra Faujdar² and possibly a few Rajas -so much so that they sought Aurangzeb's directions as to how to meet the menace.

The Emperor, in response to this representation, directed his Faujdar in November 1693 to prevent the Guru ji from assembling his Sikhs,³ Accordingly the Faujdar of Kangra,⁴ Dilawar Khan, began a series of attacks with the intention of breaking the Guru's power at Anandpur.

Khanzada's Expedition

He sent his son popularly known as Khanzada in Bachittar Natak to curb the power of the Guru ji at Anand pur in November-December 1694. He framed a plan to raze the Guru ji by surprise. He crossed the Sutlej under the cover of darkness at about midnight, but just then a Guru's servant, Alam Khant⁵ informed the Guru ji. Immediately alarm was sounded. The Sikhs with unparalleled alacrity and promptitude took up their arms and with the zeal of a crusader arranged themselves in battle array to give a hot welcome to the enemy. The quick formations of the Sikhs bewildered the enemy and the guns of the Sikhs which began to discharge volleys of shots and emit murderous fire, altogether terrified them and they were constrained to reel back with their weapons unused. While going back, the soldiers of Khanzada plundered village Barwan, stayed for some time at Bhalan and then returned to Dilawar Khan. Thus the Guru ji got the victory without a fight as he writes: "Through God's favour, the wretched fools could not even touch me, and they fled."

Hussain Khan's Expedition

The failure of Khanzada piqued DiJawar Khan to plan on a bigger scale a war on the Guru ji. Dilawar Khan chose Hussain Khan perhaps the ablest general with the Kangra Faujdar to lead it. Hussain Khan marched with fury and carried all before. He brought the Raja of Dhadwal to his knees, and plundered Dun. Kirpal Chand, the brother of the Raja of Kangra joined him. Bhim Chand too cast his lot with Hussain, most probably with a view to achieving double-purpose; winning the favour of the Mughals and annihilating the Guru ji and the movement he was piloting.

All the three (Hussain, Kirpal and Bhim Chand) alongwith their armies made plans to proceed to Anandpur, but just then, an incident occurred which changed the course of future developments. The Guru ji had assessed their design and made marching preparation to foil it. On hearing the submission of Bhim Chand and Kirpal, Gopal, the Raja of GuJer proceeded to negotiate with Hussain. Flattered and blinded by his earlier successes, Hussain Khan did not condescend to take note of the difficulties of Gopal, and threatened

him with dire consequences if he did not pay ten thousand rupees. Gopal pleaded his inability to pay and came back. Thereupon, Hussain laid siege at the town of GuJer. Finding that the inhabitants of the town were incapable of withstanding the rigours of the siege Gopal sued for peace but nothing less than ten thousand rupees could satisfy Hussain. Thereupon the helpless Gopal approached the Guru ji who sent Sangatia and seven other Sikhs to re-open the negotiations on his behalf. Sangatia on his own security brought the latter in Hussain's camp to negotiate, but the two parties could not reach any amicable settlement.

Kirpal and Bhim Chand began to conspire to arrest Gopal but the latter escaped in time. Kirpallost his temper and raged in fury. He together with Kimmat, Himmat and Hussain lost no time to attack the city. Fight commenced with vehemence. Hussain's bravery Wall a lot of applause but a sharp-pointed arrow struck Hussain dead. Raja Kirpal and several other brave officers such as Himmat and Kimmat fell fighting. On the side of Gopal, there was a heavy loss. Sangatia and his seven comrades were also killed.

Gopal got victory. The Guru ji felt jubilant and correctly comprehended that the rain of bullets that was originally intended for me was showered by the Almighty elsewhere.⁶

Expedition of Jujhar Singh and Chandel Rai

This catastrophe further irked Dilawar Khan who decided to send yet another expedition. Jujhar Singh and Chandel Rai were sent to Jaswan but they could not achieve the purpose. They undoubtedly captured Bhalan, a startegic place in the state. But before they could proceed further, Gaj Singh of Jaswal fell upon them. Jujhar Singh and Chandel Rai fought like lions but were soon overpowered. Jujhar Singh was killed in action and Chandel Rai fled.

The obvious result of the defeat of the Imperial forces was that the Mughal administration in the hill area fell in disarray, the Sikhs became hardened in their attitude towards the Imperial authority and the host of the Hill Rajas, in defiance their agreement, hesitated to pay their annual tributes. This thing caused anxiety to Aurangzeb who realised that something drastic had become absolutely necessary and accordingly sent one of his sons, Prince Muazzam, afterwards known as Bahadur Shah, for the restoration of order in the Hills. The prince took up his .position. in August 1696.⁷ From there he directed operations In the Hill area. He deputed Mirza Beg to teach a lesson to the Hill Rajas. "He inflicted upon the defeat after defeat, gave up their country to plunder, set to fire villages, took hundreds of prisoners and in order to make a lesson of them had them shaved clean, and their faces blackened, seated them on donkeys and made an exhibition of them throughout the disturbed area.⁸ After Mirza Beg, the Prince sent four more officers who,

side by side, their having chastised the Hill Rajas, plundered the houses of the apostates who had escaped destruction at Mirza Khan's hand.⁹

The Guru ji, no doubt, passed through troubled times¹⁰, but he was left untouched, The reason seems to be the 'successful pleading on the Guru's behalf, of a Khatri of Delhi, named Nand Chand, who possessed some influence with the Prince.¹¹

Soon after, the Guru ji himself was called upon to fight an action. Two hill chiefs being jealous of the growing power of the Guru ji, finding their opportunity when the Guru ji with only a few Sikhs was sporting in the Dun, fell on him. The Sikhs gave a determined fight but since the number of the opponents was too large, they had to retreat a little. In the meantime, a timely reinforcement under Ude Singh reached, that turned the tables. Alam Chand lost his right arm, and left the field. Balia Chand got wounded and his soldiers took to their heels. The Guru returned victorious.

CAUSES OF THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA

Aurangzeb Policy towards the non-Muslims

Aurangzeb, even after the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur was relentless, and the non-Muslims including the Sikhs continued to suffer because of his discriminatory religious policy towards them. In the seventees, the Emperor's attempt to appeal to Muslim religious divines (Ulemas) for support in respect of every political action is too well-known to need a fresh look. Since these people were parochial in outlook and approach, they committed excesses on non-Muslims and did not deliver good even to their own men Muslims.

Commenting on the conduct of the orthodox Muslim Divines (ulemas) Mahabat Khan says 'since these men are selling their knowledge and manners for the company of kings, to rely upon them was neither in accordance, with the divinely prescribed path, nor suited to the ways of the world. Thus these men are robbers in every way. The country is being laid waste; the army disheartened, the peasantry ravaged, the lowly crying of distress, the higher ones seeking to raise disturbances. As the saying is, the finances are giveu over to the Qazi and the Qazi is satisfied only with bribe.'

Nobles attitude

Secondly, the Muslim nobles, who had taken cue from Aurangzeb and also had been even tempted by the idea of enlarging the area to be available for Jagirs pursued the policy with zeal with the result that the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab suffered a lot.

Sad plight of the peasantry

Apart from it, this policy had, by implication, its adverse effect on the Hindu and Sikh peasantry of the Punjab. In general, all peasants were unhappy because the condition

of the peasantry had deteriorated towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, but the Sikh and Hindu peasants suffered more because apart from sharing the general adverse condition they had to experience the religious discrimination as well. The zamindars and jagirdars in the Punjab being mostly Muslims were obviously comparatively more arrogant in their attitude towards the non-Muslim peasantry.

It was a momentous phenomenon fraught with historical significance of great magnitude. Since the majority of Guru's followers consisted of peasantry, he regarded it obligatory to do something to help them. The Guru ji must have perceived all this oppression on the peasants, forming the bulle of bis disciples and the discontent seething and bleeding them. The Guru decided to transform the force let loose by the widespread suppressed discontent among the peasants into the moral force ready to combat all types of tyranny including that" perpetrated on them. This the Guru ji did by creating the Khalsa in order to usher in a new era.

Complications because of hereditary principle as applied to Guruship

The institutions of Guruship & Masands had also created many complications, and thrown the development of Sikhism into jeopardy. It is well known that the concept of the institution of the Guru ji was an integral part of Sikhism. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was Guru because it was avowed that the Guruship of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was derived directly from the Guru.¹² With Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji and his immediate successors, it could not have been direct and immediate. Indeed to them the words and message of the Guru as transmitted to them were considered as Guru ji, guruship being supposed to have been transmitted to them through the words and the mission that went with them. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji became Guru because of having been the son of Sri Guru Ram Das Ji and it was from this cue that Guruship became hereditary, a principle, which, conceptually speaking, was against the concept of the institution of the Guru. Thus there was the need to rectify the mistakes.

Furthermore, since the hereditary principle and law of primogeniture were considered as adjuncts to each other by the people, Dhir Mal, the living eldest son of Sri Guru Hargobind Ji and Ram Rai, the eldest son of Sri Guru Har Rai Ji began to dispute the succession to Gaddi. They turned hostile to the central Sikh church and formed rival sects and formed common cause with the Mughal authorities to disrupt the Sikh authority. Besides this, the Guru ji realised that any hereditary institution, particularly of socio-religious nature and of an expanding society, was liable to deteriorate in character and to become authoritarian. As a matter of fact, there is evidence in the compositions of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji himself to show that the masands had actually turned authoritarian and used to

indulge in corrupt practices that led to the exploitation of the poor Sikhs.

In view of all this, the Guru ji must do something in this direction. He made up his mind to abolish personal guruship and invest it with something permanent and inviolate. There was Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, by then well established as the book enshrining the words of the Gurus and considered as sacred as the Gurus themselves. On matters other than spiritual, there was the institution of the Panchayat with which all Punjabis were familiar.

Notes and References:

1. Macauliffe says that the village of Alsun was situated in the territories of Bhim Chand of Kahlur but he gives a somewhat garbled version of the plunder. We are told that the inhabitants refused to sell supplies to the Guru's troops and at last the Guru ji was compelled to order his followers that supplies be forcibly taken at current rates. But this view is not supported by an evidence. The weight of the evidence of the more important records is in favour of view that the entire village was looted as a mark of retaliation against Bhim Chand who made his submission before Alif Khan.
2. Bal S.S., Grewal J.S. : Guru Gobind Singh, p. 96.
3. Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla (R.A.S.) I, 1677-99 an extract of a news letter dated 20.11.1693 in the Akhbarat runs as follows: News from Sirhind-sGobind declares himself to be Guru Nanak. Faujdar ordered to prevent him from assembling (his Sikhs). See Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A Short History of the Sikhs 1.65 f.n2.
4. Gokul Chand Narang calls him the Governor of Kangra. See Transformation of Sikhism ed. II, p. 154.
5. According to Sunder Singh, the Author of the Battles of Guru Gobind Singh, Alam Khan was Guru's Deoridar. According to I. B. Bannerjee, he was Guru's attendant Evolution of the Khalsa Vol. II. p.85.
6. Baclitlar Natak,
7. Refer to Khafi Khan's account in Elliot and Dawson, P. 153.
8. Narang G.C., Transformation of Sikhism, P. 156.
9. Bachittar Natak, Section xiii. According to I. B. Bannerjee, the statement of the. Guru ji that the desertees were ruthlessly punished by Mirza Beg and his successors need not be taken as literary true. The Guru's Object seems to have to preach 'a homely on loyalty one's spiritual guide'. In fact, there occurs nothing the verses in question that would entitle us to connect the Hill Rajas themselves with those desertees, He, however, feels that there is nothing improbable in the statement. Because of the Guru's influence with the prince, there is nothing strange that the Guru's enemies were punished severely.
10. Refer to Hukam Nama dated 2nd August 1696 (2nd Bhadon Sambat 1753 BK) to Bhais Triloka, Rana, and the entire congregation under them to come to him with a force. For English translation see Ganda Singh, Patiala & East Punjab-Historical Background, p. 44.
11. Gur Bilasby Bhai Sukha Singh, pp. 171-3,334-5.
12. This is as per evidence of Guru himself.

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