

The Tenth Nanak

Guru GOBIND SINGH ji

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by

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1. Early Life

1666 (*born*): Gobind Rai ji, the tenth and the last human Guru of the Sikh faith, was born on December 22, 1666 at Patna, in Bihar, India. At that time his father, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, the Ninth Guru, travelled across Bengal and Assam to spread the path of love, service and devotion, as revealed by the founder and first Guru of Sikh religion, Guru Nanak Dev ji. On reaching Patna, Guru Tegh Bahadur ji made arrangements for his family to stay there and live the life he hoped for them. Guru ji was in Assam at the time of his only son's birth. Mata Gujri ji - wife of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji - named her son 'Gobind Rai'.

Pir Bhikhan Shah learned about the birth of Gobind Rai and desired to see him. The Pir was a renowned Muslim saint but he respected both Muslims and Hindus. The Pir reached Patna in two months along with some of his followers. He sought to meet the child. Uncle Kirpal Chand told the Pir that you can have a glimpse of the child only after Guru ji (the child's father) has seen his son. The Pir became greatly disappointed and went on a hunger strike. After a few days, Kirpal Chand took pity on the Pir and approved his request.

The Pir was very pleased to behold Gobind Rai. He was also very curious to know whether Gobind Rai, on growing up, and as the likely Sikh Guru, would respect Hindus and Muslims equally like his father in accordance with previous Sikh Gurus' teachings, or give preference to one religion above the other. The Pir placed two small earthen pots, one filled with water and the other with milk before the child. He assigned the pot containing milk to Hindus and the water to Muslims. Gobind Rai instinctively placed his hands on both the pots. The Pir understood that Gobind Rai, as the potential future leader and Guru of the Sikhs, would respect both Hindus and Muslims - the two major communities in India that coexisted with the Sikh religion and Sikh community (Panth) at that time.

1670 (*age 4*): Returning to Patna from Bengal and Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur ji directed his family to return to Punjab. At the house in Patna where Gobind Rai was born and spent his early childhood, now stands a Gurdwara, Takht Harmandir Sahib, one of the five most honored seats of religious authority (takht - throne) for the Sikhs.

1672 (*age 6*): Gobind Rai reached Anandpur (then known as Chakk Nanaki) at the foothills of the Siwalik Hills in March 1672. There his early education included reading and writing of Braj, Sanskrit and the Persian languages. After his arrival at Anandpur from Patna, Gobind Rai began the important task of learning Punjabi from Munshi Sahib Chand. Learning the Punjabi language was important as all the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji were written in it.

Munshi Pir Muhammad was assigned the job of teaching Persian to the young Gobind Rai as Persian was the official language at that time. Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt taught him Sanskrit, Hindi and Brij Bhasha. *****

2. Rescuing Kashmiri Brahmins

1675 (age 9): He was barely nine years of age when a powerful turn of events distressed the entire Sikh community that he was destined to lead. The Governor of Kashmir, acting on the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb, began coercing and converting all Hindus to Islam. Those who resisted were punished and tortured endlessly and mercilessly. The first to submit were the poor and weak who reluctantly adopt Islam. Soon a group of Kashmiri Brahmins, led by Pandit Kirpa Ram, came to Anandpur to plea for Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's help and support. Pandit Kirpa Ram knew Guru Tegh Bahadur personally as he had once taught Sanskrit to his son Gobind Rai. As Guru ji sat reflecting on what course of action he should take, a young happy Gobind Rai arrived with his playmates. Gobind Rai, with only one glance, asked his father, "Why do you look so preoccupied." The father, as records Koer Singh in his Gurbilas Patshahi 10, replied to his son as he would to any mature counsel, "Grave are the burdens the earth bears. She will be redeemed only if a truly worthy person comes forward to lay down his head. Distress will then be expunged and happiness ushered in." Gobind Rai in his innocent manner remarked, "None could be worthier than yourself to make such a sacrifice."

Soon thereafter, Guru Tegh Bahadur ji proceeded to Delhi to meet with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. On his way to Delhi, Guru ji wanted to familiarize his disciples with the cruelties committed by the ruler. Guru ji was arrested at Agra and brought to Delhi. Despite using many torture techniques and offering temptations of wealth, Aurangzeb failed to convert Guru ji and the Sikhs accompanying him to Islam. To intimidate Guru ji, they started martyring Sikhs after torturing them in different ways. Still, Guru ji remained calm and did not accept conversion to Islam under threat. Guru ji and the Sikhs remained firm in their faith.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji soon afterwards proceeded to the imperial capital, Delhi. Guru ji was executed on November 11, 1675 by the orders of an exasperated Aurangzeb. His sacrifice was a symbol to protect everyone's right to freedom of religion.

3. Gobind Rai as Guru & Paonta Sahib

1675 (age 9): Gobind Rai ji was formally installed Guru on November 11, 1675. In the midst of his engagement with the deeply widening concerns of the community, he also committed himself to the mastery of physical skills, sword play, and literary accomplishment.

1684 (age 18): Some people claim that in 1684 he wrote or translated the Var Sri Bhagauti ji Ki, popularly called Chandi di Var. The poem depicts the legendary contest between the Hindu gods and demons as described in the Hindu religious text Markandeya Purana. Its purpose was to supposedly infuse martial spirit among his followers and prepare them to stand up against injustice and tyranny, just as his nine predecessor Gurus had done.⁽¹⁾

1685 (age 19): Guru ji fortified a new town on the banks of the River Yamuna in April 1685. Some people claim that much of his creative literary work was done here. The town was named "Paonta." It is said that poetry, in abstract terms was, not his aim. For him it was a means of revealing the divine principle and illustrating a personal vision of the Supreme Being. It is claimed that the compositions now known as Japu and Akal Ustat reflect this vision,⁽²⁾ and that through this poetry he preached love and equality and a strict ethical and moral code of conduct. Just as Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the other Sikh Gurus had done before him, Guru Gobind Singh Ji preached the worship of the One Supreme Being, rejecting idolatry and superstitious beliefs and observances. The glorification of the sword, which was eulogized in these compositions as Bhaguati was to secure fulfilment of God's justice. The sword was never meant as a symbol of aggression, and it was never to be used for self-glory. It was the emblem of manliness and self-respect and was to be used only in self-defence, as a last resort. As is said in a Persian couplet in the Zafarnama:

*When all other means have failed,
It is but lawful to take to the sword.*

(1), (2) - From SGPC website.

These and other compositions are currently included in the book now called the 'Dasam Granth' supposedly written by the Tenth Nanak. However, it is important to note that there is no consensus within the Sikh Panth on which of the Dasam Granth compositions, if any, were written by Guru Gobind Singh ji himself.

4. Learning Center at Anandpur Sahib

1686 (age 20): Aurangzeb ordered the closure of all learning institutions teaching Sanskrit. Guru ji invited Sanskrit teachers and scholars to come to Anandpur. Guru ji paid their salaries in accordance with their abilities and qualifications. However, Pandit Raghu Nath refused to teach Sanskrit to Sikhs. In his view, only Brahmins (high caste Hindus) should learn Sanskrit and claimed it as a sin to teach it to others. He argued that by learning Sanskrit, people would be able to read books containing religious and divine knowledge and all the secrets within those sacred texts. The Brahmins would then not be able to claim superiority. However, Guru Ji wanted to reiterate to Sikhs to be empowered and know the reality so that they could discard the baseless Brahmin rituals. For about two centuries before this, all the previous Sikh Gurus - from the First Nanak to the Ninth Nanak - had been preaching against baseless Hindu rituals and superstitions as well.

It is said that Guru ji asked five Sikhs to put on saffron robes and sent them disguised as "Nirmala Saints" to Kanshi to learn Sanskrit. Upon completion of their studies, they returned back to Anandpur and began teaching Sanskrit to Sikhs. Brahmins could no longer claim superiority that they only know what is written in Vedas and Puranas.

Bhai Nand Lal also came to Anandpur. Some people claim that in total 52 poets gathered around Guru ji, and Anandpur became a pivotal place of learning and education. Those who visited Guru ji, returned home after learning Punjabi and were encouraged to learn the sacred hymns of Gurbani by heart. Money donated by the Sikhs was used for propagating the teaching of Guru Nanak, constructing forts, and maintaining the gurdwaras.

To instill courage in the Sikhs, it is claimed that Guru ji initiated poets to write ballads and translate ancient Puranas (*Hindu religious books*) into Punjabi. The Puranas eulogize charity, worship and recitations as more important than truth. These books demand people not to ask questions, but to follow them blindly like simpletons. The ballads of bravery written by the poets discouraged idol worship. However, just as the previous Sikh Gurus had done, based on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings, Guru ji made Sikhs worshippers of only the One Supreme Being.

It is claimed that Guru ji himself personally composed a number of ballads and hymns. At the time of leaving Anandpur, these books were laden on mules. Due to the heavy rains, most of the books were supposedly washed away by the water in the flooded river of Sirsa. Only a small portion was presumably saved; namely Jap Sahib, Akal Ustat, Sawalyas, Chandi Charitra, Chaubis Avtar, Var Bhagauti ji ki, Shastar Naam Mala, Gyan Parbodh and some hymns of Charltar Pakhian.⁽³⁾

⁽³⁾ - *These and other compositions are currently included in the book now called the "Dasam Granth" supposedly written by the Tenth Nanak. However, it is important to note that there is no consensus within the Sikh Panth on which of the Dasam Granth compositions, if any, were written by Guru Gobind Singh ji himself.*

5. Battle of Bhangani & Pir Budhu Shah

1688 (age 22): During his stay at Paonta, Guru ji practised riding, swimming, archery and other forms of physical training. He also inspired Sikhs to undertake daily martial exercises of strength and endurance which scared the neighbouring Rajput hill rulers. These rulers led by Raja Fateh Chand of Garhwal collaborated to attack Guru ji at Bhangani, about 10 km northeast of Paonta, on September 18, 1688.

Pir Budhu Shah was a Muslim saint who lived at Sadhaura in Himachal Pradesh. The Pir came to know that Guru Gobind Rai, the tenth Nanak, was staying at Paonta and went to meet Guru ji. The audience with Guru ji gave him peace of mind which he did not get by studying religious books, prayers and meditation. His mind was cleared of many doubts by listening to Guru ji's wisdom. Pir Budhu Shah often visited Guru ji. He came to realize that Guru ji's fight was not for any kingdom but against the tyranny which was being perpetrated against the poor people, as the strong always dominated the weak. Religion was used as an excuse to hurt and enslave the people. He gathered 500 Pathans (natives of Afghanistan) who had been dismissed from Aurangzeb's army for being Shi'a Muslim, and enrolled them in Guru ji's army.

Before starting the Battle of Bhangani, hill states' rajas enticed 400 of these 500 Pathans to join them. When Pir Budhu Shah learned of the Pathans' disloyalty he came to Guru ji's aid with his 700 followers, four sons and two brothers. A fierce battle was fought at Bhangani. Two of his sons attained martyrdom. The army of the hill rajas suffered heavy casualties in the war and their army was soundly defeated.

After the war, the Pir came to take leave from Guru ji to go back to Sadhaura. Guru ji asked the Pir, "You have rendered great help to me in this battle. You may ask for anything you wish. Your wish will be fulfilled from the 'House of Nanak'." At the time, Guru ji was combing his hair. The Pir requested Guru ji, "If you are so pleased with my services, be kind enough to grant me this comb with your hair entangled in it."

When Aurangzeb came to know that the Pir had helped Guru ji in the 'Battle of Bhangani', he sent Usman Khan with a force to Sadhaura. Usman Khan arrested the Pir and buried him alive for helping Guru ji. Later, Maharaja Bharpur Singh of Nabha state obtained that comb and hair from the descendants of the Pir after paying the sum asked by them.

6. Humanitarian Relief Work Assigned to Bhai Kanhaiya

1688 (age 22): Bhai Kanhaiya was a resident of village Sodhara, district Gujranwala. He had come to Anandpur to have an audience with Guru Tegh Bahadur. He was so completely overwhelmed and inspired by Guru ji that he decided to remain in Guru ji's institution. He undertook the Sewa (service) of serving water for the community kitchen.

Before the Battle of Bhangani began, Guru Gobind Rai instructed him to serve water to the thirsty warriors in the battlefield. In the battlefield, everyone who got exhausted and tired came to Bhai Kanhaiya or summoned him. He not only served the Sikh warriors but also gave water to the Hindus, Muslims, and Pathans. Thus refreshed, they all fought the Sikhs again on the battlefield.

When the Sikhs saw Bhai Kanhaiya serving water to their enemy, they were angry, confused and felt betrayed. If Bhai Kanhaiya had not refreshed the wounded soldiers of the enemy, they would no doubt be weaker or would die of thirst. Some Sikhs went to Guru ji and complained about the Bhai Kanhaiya's lack of common sense. After narrating the whole story they requested that Bhai Kanhaiya be instructed not to serve water to the enemy.

Guru ji called Bhai Kanhaiya and asked him, "Brother, is it true that you are serving water to thirsty enemy soldiers wounded by the Sikhs, thus refreshing them to fight again?"

Bhai Kanhaiya replied, "O' True lord, I do not see any enemy. I understand that every person is created by one God. Whom should I serve water and to whom should I refuse? I serve water to anyone who is in need and comes to me. You, yourself, have bestowed the service of giving water to those in need."

Guru ji was very pleased to hear Bhai Kanhaiya's simple yet honest answer. Guru ji gave him a supply of ointment and dressings, and said, "Bhai Kanhaiya, from now on, besides serving water, apply the ointment and dressing to the wounded as well. Take some other Sikhs with you, and you will be the leader of this medical unit."

The unit looking after the needy and wounded was known as 'Sewa Panthi.' The International organization 'Red Cross' was established centuries later on the same principles.

7. Battle of Nadaun

1691 (age 25): Guru ji left Paonta and returned to Anandpur. The hostility of the Rajput chiefs continued along with that of the imperial government at Delhi. Guru ji and his Sikhs fought with a Mughal commander, Alif Khan, at Nadaun on the left bank of the Beas, about 30 km southeast of Kangra, on March 20, 1691. Alif Khan fled in utter disarray “without being able to give any attention to his camp.” Among several other skirmishes that occurred was the Hussain battle (February 20, 1696) fought against Husain Khan, an imperial general, which resulted in a decisive victory for the Sikhs. Following the appointment in 1694 of the liberal Prince Muazzam (later Emperor Bahadur Shah) as viceroy of northwestern region including Punjab, there was however a brief respite from pressure from the ruling authority.

8. Abolition of Masands

1698 (age 32): The Third Nanak (Guru Amar Das ji) created 22 zones (called *Manjis*) to reach Sikhs who were living all over India. The Manji of the area became the center for preaching Sikhi. Only Sikhs of high character were entrusted with this responsibility and they were called Masands. Besides explaining Sikhi thoughts and principles, their work consisted of dispelling doubts of devotees. But the misconceptions and doubts that they could not address were brought to Guru ji, and it was imperative that the Masads visit Guru ji twice a year. But there was a hidden danger: As the Masands would also collect offerings from devotees, they gradually became greedy and corrupt. They would keep the offerings for themselves despite the high moral character they initially had. It is why Sikhi teaches not to see yourself as sanctimonious but as a humble fool who can easily be corrupted.

Guru Gobind Rai directed Sikh sangats in different parts of India not to acknowledge the Masands that were complained against. He invited his Sikhs to come to Anandpur and bring their offerings personally. Guru ji thus established a direct relationship with his Sikhs and addressed them as his Khalsa.

9. The Beloved Five: Panj Piarey

1699 (age 33): Guru Nanak as well as his successor Gurus were accustomed to having long hair and beards and to let them grow as nature had intended. They wore turbans, not caps. Generally, Sikhs followed the Gurus' example. They kept long hair and flowing beards but some did not do so even after embracing Sikhism.

In their beliefs, character, outlook, customs and daily conduct, the Sikhs were distinct and different from Hindus and Muslims. However, one could not always recognize a Sikh from his appearance. Guru Gobind Rai decided that all Sikh should keep natural length of hair and beards like their Gurus. Thus, a Sikh would be recognized amongst thousands of non-Sikhs.

In the beginning of the year 1699, Guru ji sent out invitations to all Sikhs. They were asked to attend a special gathering. The gathering was to be held on the occasion of that year's Baisakhi. Many responded to the invitations. As the Baisakhi day approached, a large number of Sikhs arrived at Anandpur. They came from every corner of India. Guru ji ordered carpets to be spread on a raised platform. A beautiful tent was set up nearby. At that place now stands the gurdwara named Sri Keshgarh Sahib.

Just a day before Baisakhi, a large gathering took place in an open area. As soon as the morning prayers were over, Guru ji went into the tent and remained there for some time. The assembled Sikhs grew worried and wondered what was happening inside the tent. At last, Guru ji came out. It is said that he looked very different with eyes blazing with fire. His face was hard-set and red. His naked sword shimmered a sliver light and shook in his uplifted hand. He looked as if a determined warrior were about to enter a battlefield. In a thunderous voice he is reported to have said "My dear Sikhs, this sword of mine wants to taste the blood of a Sikh. Is there any one among you ready to lay down his life?"

Everyone became scared on hearing such a strange demand. There was no response to this foreboding call. Guru ji repeated his words. Still, no response. A third time he spoke in a even louder voice. He is reported to have said 'Is there any true Sikh of mine among you? If so, let him give me his head as an offering, as a proof of his faith in me.' At last Bhai Daya Ram, a Khatri⁽⁴⁾ of Lahore, rose and offered his head.

Guru ji took him by the arm inside the tent. It is said that Sikhs heard the sound of a sword swung swiftly. They also heard the sound of a body falling on the ground. And they saw a stream of blood coming out. It appeared that Guru ji had beheaded Bhai Daya Ram.

(4) - SGPC website identifies Panj Piarey with castes before they became Singh. Guru Gobind Singh ji gave formal instructions to Sikhs not to identify themselves with Hindu castes. In accordance with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings over two centuries earlier, most Sikhs may not have been following the Hindu caste system. But there were no formal instructions against it.

As Guru ji came out of the tent a second time, his face was redder than before. His eyes were red like the human blood. In a loud thundering voice he is reported to have called out again, 'Is there another true Sikh ready to give me his head?' The Sikhs gathered there were truly convinced that Bhai Daya Ram had been sacrificed and that the Guru ji wanted another head. There was dead silence till Guru ji called once more. Again there was no response. He called for the third time. On the third call, Bhai Dharam Das, a Jat Sikh of Delhi, stood up and offered his head.

Guru ji held him by the arm and took him inside the tent. The same two sounds were said to have been heard. The first was that of a sword and the second of a body falling to the ground. As before, a stream of fresh blood came pouring out from the tent. Sikhs were convinced that Bhai Dharam Das had been killed as well. They were all filled with terror. Many of them ran for their lives.

It is said that Guru ji repeated the call for another head three more times waving his sword above his head. Each time he looked fiercer than before. His face and eyes were redder. Each time, more Sikhs slipped away. The gathering became thinner. Some went to Guru ji's mother, Mata Gujri and complained about the demonic sacrifices. He has gone mad. He is killing his Sikhs. Remove him from Guruship. Make a grandson of yours Guru in his place.' She sent a messenger to Guru ji. But he was in no mood to listen to any messenger.

Three more Sikhs offered their head to Guru ji. The following five Sikhs offered their head on that day.

- Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore,
- Dharam Das, a Jat Sikh from Delhi,
- Himmat Rai, a water-carrier from Jagannathpur,
- Muhkam Chand, a washerman from Dwarka, and
- Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar (Karnataka).

After the fifth call, Guru ji remained in the tent for a long period of time. Finally, he came out. He was dressed in bright saffron colored garments. His sword was sheathed. His face was beaming with joy and satisfaction. He was followed by five Sikhs dressed exactly like him. Who were they? Oh wonder! They were the same who had offered their heads to Guru ji. Had they been brought back to life? Their faces, their dress and their whole appearance were all like Guru ji's. Guru ji called them his **Panj Piarey (the Beloved Five)**.

10. A Revolutionary Act - Creation of Khalsa

1699 (age 33): On the Baisakhi day, Guru ji was dressed all in white and in high spirits. His face was bright and cheerful. He sat on his throne and the Beloved Five sat before him in the first row. When all had assembled, he explained that from today *Charan Pahul*⁽⁵⁾ will be replaced by ***Khande da Amrit***. The person desiring to become a Sikh will drink water that has been stirred with a *khanda* (two-edged sword). This water will be called *amrit* (nectar).

The first Nanak had said that sweetness and humility are the essence of all good qualities. Guru Gobind Rai ji explained that the times have changed. Sweetness and humility alone cannot successfully meet the challenges of the times. Now, fearless bravery, dauntless courage and skill in the use of arms are required. These are needed for the defence of the faith, for maintaining the Sikh nation, to free everyone from cruel Mughal rulers. These qualities are necessary to bring justice, love, equality and brotherliness to the common man.

“One who partakes of this *amrit* will be changed from jackals to lions, from sparrows to hawks. He will be called Singh (*lion*). All castes, all people, are equally welcome to take *amrit*. I mean to make all Sikhs give up and forget their previous castes. I want to combine them all into one brotherhood, the *Khalsa*. In that brotherhood, all will be equal in all respects.” All nine Gurus before Guru Gobind Rai had also been preaching that all men (including women) are created equal by God. Gurus had always explained that a person’s caste based on his birth is irrelevant in the eyes of God. Guru Gobind Rai provided unambiguous instructions on the subject, reinforcing the message first given by Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Guru ji poured pure water in a steel vessel and knelt beside it. He told the Five Beloved Ones to stand around him and asked them to fix their eyes on the water, and focus their thoughts on God. Kneeling beside the vessel of steel, he began to stir the water with a *khanda* (*two-edged sword*). All the time, he recited God’s praise. Then he said, “In this steel vessel, I have prepared the *amrit* (*baptismal nectar*). With it, I shall baptize the Beloved Five. Then I shall baptize others. But before proceeding further, I shall show you what wonderful powers the *amrit* possesses.” It is reported that after saying this, he placed some of it aside for birds to drink. Soon thereafter, two sparrows arrived and filled their beaks with the nectar. As they flew away to a little distance, they began to fight fiercely. They fought like two *rajas* fighting for a kingdom.

5) - A vessel of water was placed before Guru ji and he touched the water with his toe. The person who wanted to be a Sikh would drink from it. It is said that such had been the initiation ceremony in earlier times.

Thereupon, Guru ji said to his Sikhs, “You have seen what wonderful power *amrit* possesses. Anyone who takes it will acquire the same spirit as did the sparrows. He will become fearless, powerful, and brave.”

A Sikh went to Guru ji's wife, Mata Jito ji. He informed her of the *amrit* which Guru ji had prepared. He gave her an account of the incident of the two sparrows. Hearing this, she said to herself, “Let me go and sweeten the *amrit*. It will have sweetening effect on those who take it.” She took some Indian sweet called *patashas*, as Guru ji said, “You have come at a very appropriate time. You have brought something that will prove very useful. I will change my Sikhs into Singhs (lions). The *amrit* that I prepared will produce fearless courage, strength and bravery. These qualities are essential and are urgently needed. They will be needed still more urgently in times to come. But these qualities are nothing if they are not accompanied by sweetness of temper and a peace-loving nature. The sweets you have brought will be instrumental to that effect. Pour the sweets into the *amrit*. Those who drink it will be brave, strong and fearless like lions, and yet, they will possess the grace of divine sweetness.”

Mata jito ji poured the *patashas* into the *amrit* that Guru ji had prepared. He dissolved them by stirring it with a *Khanda*. He stood up, holding the vessel of *amrit* in his hands. He made the Beloved Five kneel like soldiers about to be knighted. He told them to look into his eyes. He gazed into the eyes of each of them. At the same time he sprinkled *amrit* five times into the Beloved Ones' face. With each sprinkle, he called upon the Beloved Ones to say , *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh.*' Guru ji sprinkled the nectar five times on the Beloved Ones' hair and eyes and said to one of them, “Hold the steel vessel in both hands. Drink some of the nectar. Then pass the vessel on to the next Beloved One. Let the vessel go round, forward and backward, in this way, till the whole of the *amrit* has been drunk.”

The Beloved Five had belonged to different castes or occupations. One of them belonged to a so-called high caste - *Khatri*. The other four were all from the so-called low-castes - a Jat, a washerman (calico-printer), a water-carrier, and a barber.

Then Guru ji said, 'Those who take *amrit* become my lions. I name them "Singh." He renamed the Beloved Five as follows:

- Daya Ram to Daya Singh,
- Dharam Das to Dharam Singh,
- Himmat Rai to Himmat Singh,
- Muhkam Chand to Muhkam Singh, and
- Sahib Chand to Sahib Singh.

Guru ji instructed his followers to use “Singh/ Kaur” as the last name instead of the caste name. He also instructed them to wear the following five articles of faith whose Punjabi names begin with 'K'

- Kes (uncut hair),
- *Kangha* (a comb),
- *Kirpan* (a sword),
- *Kachh* (a short drawers) and
- *Kara* (a steel bracelet).

Guru ji further instructed followers to practise arms, be always ready to use them to defend their principles and their faith. They should not show their backs to the enemy in battle. They should always live and act according to the three golden rules laid down by the First Nanak. They should always help the poor. They should always protect those who seek their protection and help. They should give up and forget their previous castes. They now all belong to one brotherhood, the *Khalsa*. They must not take any alcoholic drink or smoke. They must not eat *halal* meat (*meat killed and cut the Muslim way*). A Sikh must not have sexual relationship outside the marital bond.

They must not worship idols, cemeteries or cremation grounds. They must not worship gods and goddesses. They should worship and believe in only one God. They must rise early, three hours before dawn, bathe, read or recite the prescribed hymns of Guru jis, and meditate on God. They should be honest and truthful. They should set apart a tenth of their income for religious or charitable cause.' These instructions were the same as the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji and the other Sikh Gurus (the nine Nanaks) who had followed him during the previous two centuries.

Guru Ji then himself received initiatory rites from his five disciples, now invested with authority as Khalsa, and had his name changed from Gobind Rai to **Gobind Singh**. "Hail," as a poet subsequently sang, "Gobind Singh who is himself Master as well as disciple."

Guru ji then invited others to take *amrit*. Thousands of them were baptized that day. They all became Singhs. The baptismal ceremony was carried on daily for several days.

Thus was born the Khalsa, a nation of saint-soldier, worshipper of one God, friend and servant of mankind, and sworn enemy of tyrants; a brotherhood in which all were to be equal in all respects, just as Guru Nanak Dev Ji had first preached to his disciples, the Sikhs, when he had earlier founded the new religious community of Sikhs (the Sikh Panth)

11. Hill Chiefs' Attack

1700-04 (age 34 - 38): With the creation of Khalsa, reports of its number and strength were increasing day by day and would reach Rajput chiefs of the Shivalik hills quite regularly. Such reports alarmed the caste entrenched hill chiefs. They began to look upon Guru ji as their enemy and his beliefs as a discord to their own way of life. They wanted to evict Guru ji from his hilly fort. They met under the leadership of the Raja Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur. They reviewed the situation resulting from the creation of Khalsa. They discussed steps to eradicate it completely. They decided to meet Guru ji first and appeal to him not to build up militarily. If he refused to change course, they would take further action.

A deputation of the hill chiefs went to Anandpur to meet with Guru ji. Raja Ajmer Chand headed the delegation. Guru ji received them with regard. He gave them seats of honor in his *darbar*. Guru ji reasoned with Raja Ajmer Chand to side with the truth. Guru ji reminded the Raja to think of their glorious past and live with honor not as slaves of Mughals. Guru ji explained to Rajas not to lose the spirit of their mighty ancestors and become cowards. It is cowardice that makes one think and behave in this pitiable way. Guru ji suggested them to take the *amrit*, join the Khalsa, be part of saint soldiers and cast off all fear. The *amrit* will infuse new life in them and will change them from jackals to tigers. Singhs will destroy the cruel Pathans and Mughals. Guru ji encouraged them to champion the cause of human equality and freedom of worship.

Rajas were scared of the might of Mughal rulers. They decided to side with the Mughal Emperor - Aurangzeb and fight with Guru ji instead.

1705 (age 39): Hill chiefs attacked Anandpur. But their combined forces could not defeat the Singhs, who fought skillfully inside the fort. Not seeing the victory in sight that they had planned, the hill chiefs encircled Anandpur and waited. They blocked the supply of food to the city of Anandpur for two months, but still Singhs would not surrender.

Finally, Raja Ajmer Chand proposed a desperate plan to the other chiefs. His idea was to tie iron plates and shields to the forehead of an elephant and make it mad with intoxication. The elephant would break the gate of Lohgarh fort open for an attack and capture Guru ji alive, if possible.

An informer narrated Ajmer Chand's plan to Guru ji. Guru ji said, "We too have an elephant in the fort who can defeat Ajmer Chand's elephant." Duni Chand was standing nearby. He somehow thought that Guru ji was thinking of him. He got was frightened of facing such an elephant. Trying to escape at night by jumping the fort's wall in the darkness, he fell and broke his leg but dragged himself home to Amritsar. When people came to know that he had deserted Guru ji, they ostracised him completely and never spoke a word with him again. Duni Chand died of snake bite inside his house.

Bhai Bachittar Singh, son of Bhai Mani Singh (the Martyr), volunteered to face the wild,

intoxicated elephant alone. Bhai Bachittar Singh mounted a horse. When the gate of the fort opened, with great alertness he made the horse stand on its hind legs and struck the serpentine spear on the elephant's forehead. The spear pierced the iron plates and elephant's head. The elephant was in great pain. It turned back and ran. The plan backfired, as the elephant now trampled the forces of the hill chiefs's forces, causing wide scale confusion and panic. The Singhs seized their opportunity. During the final battle, Bhai Uday Singh severed Ajmer Chand's head and presented it to Guru ji. The Hill chiefs got demoralized and abandoned plans to capture Anandpur fort.

12. Martyrdom of Sahibzadas Ajit Singh & Jujhar Singh

December 1705 (age 39): At last, with desperation, chiefs petitioned Emperor Aurangzeb for help. The Hill chiefs and mughal army marched upon Anandpur and laid a siege to the fort in May 1705. The extended barricade caused acute shortage of food. Sikhs tolerated the hardship. Over the months, Guru ji and his Sikhs firmly withstood repeated assaults. Rajput chief's army and mughal forces were confounded at Sikhs' determination.

December 5-6, 1705: Aurangzeb was convinced that it was not possible to capture Anandpur as long as the Sikhs were inside the fort. He devised of a deceptive plan to capture Guru ji. Aurangzeb offered, on solemn oaths of the Quran, safe exit to the Sikhs if they quit Anandpur. Relying on the holy oath, Guru ji evacuated Anandpur during the night of December 5-6, 1705. But as soon as Guru ji and Sikhs came out, Hill chiefs and Mughal army attacked them. In the confusion, many Sikhs were killed and Guru's personal belongings, including most of the precious manuscripts, were lost. Guru ji himself was able to make his way to Chamkaur, 40 km southwest of Anandpur, with barely 40 Sikhs and his two elder sons - Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh. Villagers embraced and extended a warm welcome to Guru ji. Guru ji fortified the fortress during the night. He posted Sikhs on all sides and sat himself on the roof as the royal army approached in pursuit. By day break the army of hundreds of thousands arrived and surrounded the fortress.

The generals knew that there were but only a few Sikhs inside the fortress. Early in the morning they ordered the army to attack. From inside the fortress, arrows rained with such ferocity as if there were thousands of Sikhs inside. The army was forced to retreat. Eventually, Singhs ran out of arrows and came out opening the gate of the fortress and fought skillfully using swords and spears. They attained martyrdom.

December 7, 1705: 18 years old Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the eldest son of Guru ji, was inspired by his witnessing brave Sikhs fighting till their last breath. Sahibzada requested permission to show his skills in battle like his brethren before him. Guru ji willingly agreed and personally dressed him to go to the battlefield. Sahibzada and five Singhs stormed out of the fortress. When the soldiers saw the Prince, they jumped in numbers to capture him. Singhs and the Sahibzada fought with a fierceness and determination despite the odds against them. Guru ji watched the entire scene from the roof of the fort, as they killed hundreds of mughal soldiers and attained martyrdom..

The martyrdom of the elder brother inspired the younger Sahibzada - Jujhar Singh (14 years old) to request permission to fight in the blood-filled battlefield. Guru ji personally dressed Jujhar Singh also and sent him outside the fortress along with five Singhs to take on an army of hundreds of thousands. Sahibzada Jujhar Singh and five Singhs fought bravely killing many of mughal soldiers as they also attained martyrdom.

13. Uch Da Pir

December 8, 1705: Obeying the command of the 'Panth' (decision by five Singhs), Guru Gobind Singh left the fortress of Chamkaur in the middle of the night's darkness. In the morning, Guru ji reached an orchard, and fell fast asleep under a tree. Bhai Daya Singh, Dharam Singh and Maan Singh found him and guarded him as the locals walked by. But a garden worker informed his master Gulaba (owner of the orchard), who became frightened when he came to know that mughal army is looking for Guru ji. Gulaba turned to Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, two brothers, and briefed them about Guru ji.

Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan were residents of Machhiwara in Ludhiana district. They were horse traders. People from far and near knew them by name. They would come to Anandpur from time to time to sell horses to Guru Gobind Singh. They were impressed that everyone was treated with equal respect in Guru's institution. They became devotees.

Accompanying Gulaba, they came to the garden and offered food that they had prepared for the Guru ji and the Singhs. They requested Guru ji, "Please accompany us to our house and give us a chance to serve you." Guru ji accepted their offer and moved to their house.

A plan was made at night to present Guru ji as "Uch Da Pir" (Head of a saintly sect from Multan province) and escort him out of the reach of the mughal army. Blue garments of homespun cotton were prepared during the night. At day-break, Guru ji dressed in blue garments and sat on a bed woven with strings making him "Uch Da Pir." The two brothers and the three Singhs also wore blue garments. Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan held front legs of the bed on their shoulders so that they may be able to reply to the enquiries on the way. Bhai Daya Singh fanned peacock feathers over Guru ji's head. Bhai Dharam Singh and Maan Singh gave their shoulders to the rear legs of the bed.

On the way, Pir Mohammad Kazi, who taught Persian to Guru ji, gave testimony to his being "Uch Da Pir". He said, "This is an angel in tune with Allah (God). He has no love for worldly material. By stopping him you incur the wrath of God. He should be allowed to go wherever he may wish." The royal patrol believed Kazi and bowed to the Pir and asked forgiveness for their mistake.

Making Guru ji look like the revered saint, the two brothers took him out of the danger of the royal army and carried him to Alamgir in Ludhiana district. Guru ji sent them off with a letter of honor.

14. Martyrdom of Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh & Fateh Singh

December 13, 1705: Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh (born 1696, age 9) and Fateh Singh (born 1699, age 6), were the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh. The two Sahibzade and Mata Gujari (Guru Gobind Singh's mother) were separated from Guru ji while evacuating from Anandpur. Mata ji and the two younger sons were led by Gangu, their old servant, to his own house. Later, Gangu betrayed them by informing the faujdar of Sirhind.

When the governor of Sirhind came to know of these arrests, he was overjoyed. He said, "Lock them up in the cold tower without food and water. They should not be provided with warm clothes or blanket." It was the coldest of winter nights as they were kept without food and water. A guard was sent the next morning to bring them to the court. The grandmother advised them not to forsake their faith no matter what temptations or threats were made by the governor.

Upon entering the court, both Sahibzade folded their hands and greeted the governor with, "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh" The governor was about to say something on hearing this greeting of victory when Sucha Nand (a Hindu minister) spoke, "Children, this is the court of Mughal empire and not Anandpur. Here, you have to bow your head to the governor. In Spite of being a Hindu, I bow my head before every governor."

Sahibzada Zorawar Singh replied, "We bow our heads only to God and Guru ji." This plain answer incensed Sucha Nand, yet he stayed silent. Wazir Khan, the governor of Sirhind was confident that he would be able to convert Guru ji's sons to Islam by luring them with riches and worldly comforts. It would have been a great victory for him, but he failed even after trying his best.

In the end, the governor asked them, "What would you do if I set you free?" Sahibzada Zorawar Singh replied, "On growing up, we shall gather Singhs and fight till tyranny is eradicated or die fighting. We shall follow the example set by our grandfather and his Sikhs. We cannot concede defeat to the tyranny. We shall live with honor or die with honor. We can not live as cowards."

The governor was alarmed. He thought that there would be a perpetual threat to his life if they continued to live, and it his future would be safer by killing them.

Sahibzade aged nine and six were bricked alive by the governor's orders. This happened on December 13, 1705. Their grandmother died the same day. the But the greater defeat and loss were felt by the governor due to the determination of the two Sahibzadas to remain firm in their faith.

15. Forty Muktey (*Immortals*)

December 29, 1705: The Emperor had issued an order that no one should help or shelter Guru ji while the armies searched for them. However, dedicated devotees risked their lives and helped Guru ji. Such devotees were not only Sikhs but also Muslims.

Wazir Khan - Nawab of Sirhind - decided to march in pursuit of Guru ji. Guru ji was prepared to face and fight the Nawab. Guru ji thought, 'If the fighting takes place near this or any other village, the inhabitants will be in danger'. Hence, he decided to leave the comfort of hospitality and move to the nearby jungle.

After passing through a number of villages, he reached Jaito. There he learned that Wazir Khan was approaching with an army of five thousand soldiers and expected to reach there in four or five days. Guru ji decided to move to a place near Khidrana. He planned to face Mughal army near the lake.

A group of 40 Sikhs had deserted Guru ji at Anandpur during the long siege. Before leaving, they wrote the disclaimer on paper that he was not their Guru and they were not his Sikhs. Deserters belonged to the Majha tract of the Punjab. When they reached their homes, they were berated by their own women for deserting Guru ji. They taunted men to stay at home while they go to battle instead and support Guru ji in the battle.

The deserters from the Majha decided to return to Guru ji and ask for his forgiveness. This group of 40 fully armed saint-soldiers marched towards Guru ji with Mai Bhago also joining them. She and Bhai Mahan Singh were the leaders of this group. They had to move cautiously. If they had marched together as a *jatha (big group)* they might have been captured. So they travelled in small groups, mostly by night, and by unfrequented routes. Along the way, more and more joined them, and now a quite a large number of Sikhs were ready to engage the enemies of Guru ji in the battle.

They learned that Guru ji had crossed over to the other side of the lake, and Wazir Khan's army was expected soon. On reaching Khidrana, they found it almost dry. Bhai Mahan Singh proposed to engage the enemy there. Guru ji would, thereby, have time to reach some safe place. Wide white sheets of *khaddar* were spread on shrubs to appear like many tents. The sight of them was sure to make the enemy believe that the Sikhs were encamping there in large numbers.

The Muslim army arrived soon, and a long and bloody battle was fought. Mai Bhago fought in the forefront as all Sikhs fought with courage. Guru ji had reached a sandhill on the other side of Khidrana. He targeted the most prominent officers and soldiers of the Muslim army with arrows. The army made repeated attacks on the Sikhs, but each time it had to retreat after suffering heavy losses.

Even though, Sikhs ran out of ammunition and arrows, they continued fighting with spears

and swords. They advanced in small groups, and killed several times their own number. They were not fighting for victory. They had no thought of saving their lives. Their only wish was to win Guru ji's pardon and pleasure. They were determined to resist and fight the enemy as hard as possible and as long as possible. In time, all of them obtained martyrdom. About three thousand Turks were struck down with them on the same bloody field. In spite of their overwhelming numbers, the Mughal troops failed to capture Guru ji and had to retreat in defeat.

Guru ji visited the scene of the battle. With fatherly affection, he lifted the heads of the martyrs into his lap. He wiped each one's face and blessed them. Bhai Mahan Singh was still breathing. He opened his eyes and found himself in Guru ji's arms. He was filled with immense joy. Guru ji asked him for his last wish. "No, father," replied Bhai Mahan Singh. "I have seen you. I die for your cause, in your arms and with your blessings. What else could I desire? But father, if you have taken compassion on us here, tear up our disclaimer, the paper on which we and others wrote, 'You are not our Guru, we are not your Sikhs.' Tear it up and let broken ties be reunited."

Guru ji blessed him and said, 'You have done a great service. You have saved the root of Sikhism in the Majha. The Guru blessed the 40 dead as the 40 Mukte, i.e., the 40 Saved Ones. Guru ji took out the disclaimer from under his belt, tore it into tiny pieces and threw them all away. Bhai Mahan Singh felt immensely relieved. He smiled, took a long, deep last breath as he closed his eyes. The site is now marked by a revered shrine and tank and the town which has grown around them is called Muktsar, the Pool of Liberation.

Guru ji also saw that Mai Bhago was senseless but not wounded. She had fallen down from complete exhaustion. A little aid revived her, as Guru ji removed her from the battlefield. Her wounds were treated and healed. When she recovered, she was baptized and became Mai Bhag Kaur. Mai Bhag Kaur, dressed in male dress, remained in Guru ji's service to the end. Along with ten Sikhs, she would guard Guru ji's bed during his sleep. When Guru ji died, she went to Bidar and lived there till the end of her earthly life.

1706 (age 40): After spending some time in the Lakhi Jungle, Guru ji arrived at Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib, on January 20, 1706. During his stay there of over nine months, a number of Sikhs rejoined him. He prepared another copy of the Sikh Scripture, the Sri Granth Sahib ji. Celebrated scholar, Bhai Mani Singh wrote the Granth Sahib. In honor of the numerous scholars who rallied around Guru ji's cause and the literary activity initiated, the place came to be known as Guru ji's Kashi or seat of learning like Varanasi.

16. Dalla's Illusion of Bravery

Dalla, the village headman of Talwandi, came to Guru ji and humbly offered him his services. When the governor of Sirhind came to know of the presence of Guru ji at Dalla's place, he ordered Dalla to hand over Guru ji, and even offered him a substantial reward. For added measure, the Governor also threatened to attack and destroy Dalla along with Guru ji.

Dalla sent word to him, "I will not handover Guru ji to you at any cost. You may try any means you want." Setting aside the fear of the governor, Dalla served Guru ji as best he could.

Dalla was very proud of his men. He would routinely boast to Guru ji, "Had my men been with you in the Chamkaur fortress, the army of the governor would not have dared to do any harm to you." Guru ji explained to him, "Brother Dalla, good health and bravery are two different qualities of a man. It is not necessary for a healthy and strong man to be brave." But, the illusion in Dalla's mind persisted. Dalla often thought, the Singhs who were with Guru ji in the fortress at Chamkaur could not be as brave and strong as his soldiers. That is why the Shabizades had to lay down their lives outside the fortress.

However, Dalla had an opportunity to prove his soldiers' bravery. One day, a Singh from Lahore presented a new gun named "Ram Janga" to Guru ji. Guru ji said to Dalla, "Brother Dalla, I want to test the accuracy of this new gun. Please send one of your soldiers so that I may test this weapon on him."

Dalla asked his soldiers but no one was ready to become the target of the gun. All declined one by one. Guru ji asked Dalla to come forward and be the target himself. Dalla saw the loaded gun and got scared. He replied to Guru ji, "Who wants to die in this untimely manner? I would rather die in a war fighting bravely."

Guru ji then told Dalla, "Brother, go and see if there is any Singh in the kitchen. Tell him that your Guru wants to test a new gun. He wants one Sikh to become the target of the bullet."

Dalla, facing the kitchen, announced Guru ji's order from a distance. He was not expecting anyone to answer it. There were only two Singhs in the kitchen when Dalla called. Dalla was astonished to see both Singhs running towards him, each one trying to get ahead of the other. Guru ji said to them, I have called only one Sikh for the test, not two. Both the Singhs requested together, "My lord has asked for one Singh but had not mentioned any particular name. I heard your order first so I have presented myself. It will be my privilege to become the target of the gun."

Guru ji made both of them stand one before the other and fired the bullet over their heads. Both the Singhs stood firm. When Dalla saw the courage of the Singhs he was ashamed of his cowardice and that of his healthy soldiers. He came to realize the caliber of bravery Singhs had shown in the fortress of Chamkaur. Dalla stopped praising his soldiers from that day onwards.

17. Zafarnama proves Effective

1707 (*age 41*): Befriended by another Muslim admirer, Rai Kalha of Raikot, Guru ji reached Dina in the heart of the Malva. There he enlisted a few hundred warriors of the Brar clan, and also composed his famous letter, Zafarnama (Epistle of Victory), in Persian verse, addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb. The letter was a severe indictment of the Emperor and his commanders who did not honor their oath and attacked him once he was outside the safety of his fort at Anandpur. It strongly emphasized the importance of morality in the affairs of State as much as in the conduct of human beings, and held the means as important as the end.

Two of the Sikhs, Daya Singh and Dharam Singh, were despatched with the Zafarnama to Ahmadnagar in the South to deliver it to Aurangzeb. The Zafarnama letter shook Emperor Aurangzeb to the core. Aurangzeb immediately invited Guru ji for a meeting. According to Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, the Emperor wrote a letter to the deputy governor of Lahore, Mun'im Khan, to conciliate Guru ji and make all arrangements for Guru ji's journey to the Deccan. Guru ji had, however, already left for the South on October 30, 1706. He was in the neighbourhood of Baghor, in Rajasthan when the news arrived of the death of the Emperor. Emperor died on February 20, 1707.

Guru ji decided to return to Punjab, via Delhi. At that time, the sons of the deceased Emperor were fighting for the throne. Guru ji despatched help for the eldest claimant, the liberal Prince Muazzam. A token contingent of Sikhs took part in the battle of Jajau (June 8, 1707). Muazzam won decisively and ascended the throne with the title of Bahadur Shah. The new Emperor invited Guru ji for a meeting which took place at Agra on July 23, 1707.

18. Madho Das to Banda Bahadur

1708 (age 42): Emperor Bahadur Shah moved against Rajputs of Amber (Jaipur) and then to the Deccan where his youngest brother, Kam Baksh revolted. Guru ji accompanied him and addressed assemblies of people on the way preaching Gurbani, the Word of Akal Purkh as revealed to Guru Nanak Dev Ji and other Sikh Gurus as contained in Sri Granth Sahib. The two camps crossed the River Tapti between June 11-14, 1708. On August 14th, Guru ji arrived at Nanded, on the Godavari. While Bahadur Shah proceeded further South, Guru ji decided to stay awhile at Nanded. At that place, near the bank of the river Godavari, was the *ashram* of a *Bairagi* monk (recluse), named Madho Das.

When Guru Gobind Singh reached this *ashram*, the *Bairagi* was away. Guru ji went in and occupied the *Bairagi's* seat and told his Sikhs to kill one of the *Bairagi's* goats for dinner. One of *Bairagi's* disciples ran to inform him of the visitor and his conduct. The *Bairagi* flew into a rage. With his supposed magical powers he tried to overturn the seat occupied by Guru ji. But he failed to do so. He had reportedly never failed before. He went to the *ashram* and made another attempt with magic. But he failed again. Then he went before Guru ji, and the following conversation reportedly took place:

Madho Das : Who are you?

Guru Gobind Singh : He whom you know.

Madho Das : What do I know?

Guru Gobind Singh : Think it over.

Madh. Das : (after a pause) So you are Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh : Yes.

Madho Das : What have you come here for?

Guru Gobind Singh : I have come to make you my disciple.

Madho Das : I submit. I am your Banda (slave).⁽⁶⁾

Saying this, Madho Das fell at the Guru's feet. Guru ji instructed Banda in the tenets of Sikhism. In due course he baptized him. Madho Das became a Sikh accepting Khande Di Pahul. He was renamed Gurbaksh Singh (popularly known as **Banda Bahadur**). Guru ji gave Banda Singh five arrows from his own quiver and an escort, including five of his chosen Sikhs, and directed him to Punjab to carry on the campaign against the tyranny of the provincial overlords.

(6) As recorded in Ahamad Shah's *Zikar-i-Guruan wa Ibtidai-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan*.

Excerpted from principal Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh's book "A Short History of the Sikhs", page 78.

19. The Word is The Guru

1708 (age 42): Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind worried about the Emperor's conciliatory treatment of Guru ji. Their marching together to the South scared him. He enlisted two of his trusted men to kill Guru ji before the alliance could result in any harm to him. Two pathans pursued Guru ji secretly to Nanded. One of them stabbed Guru ji as he rested one evening in his chamber after the Rehras prayer. Before the pathan could deal another blow, Guru ji struck him down with his sword. His fleeing companion fell under the swords of Sikhs who had rushed in on hearing the noise. As the news reached Bahadur Shah's camp, he sent expert surgeons, including an Englishman, Cole by name, to treat Guru ji. The wound was stitched and appeared to have healed quickly. One day, Guru ji applied full strength to pull a stiff bow. The wound which was still healing, ruptured and bled profusely.

Before the end came, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji had asked for the Sacred Volume to be brought forth. To quote Bhatt Vahi Talauda Parganah Jind: "Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, son of Guru Teg Bahadur, grandson of Guru Hargobind, great-grandson of Guru Arjan, of the family of Guru Ram Das Surajbansi, Gosal clan, Sodhi Khatri, resident of Anandpur, parganah Kahlur, now at Nanded, in the Godavari country in the Deccan, asked Bhai Daya Singh, on Wednesday, 6 October 1708, to fetch Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In obedience to his orders, Daya Singh brought Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five pice and a coconut and bowed his head before it. He said to the sangat, "It is my commandment: Own Sri Granth ji in my place. He who so acknowledges it will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth".⁽⁷⁾

Guru ji left for heavenly abode (Joti Jot) on October 7, 1708.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji thus passed on the succession with due ceremony to the Holy Book - **Sri Guru Granth Sahib**, ending the line of personal Gurus. "Guru ji's spirit," he reportedly said, "will henceforth be in the Granth and the Khalsa. Where the Granth is with any five Sikhs representing the Khalsa, there will Guru ji be."

The Word enshrined in the Holy Book had always been revered by every Guru ji as of Divine origin. The Sikh Gurus (the Ten Nanaks) were the revealers of the Word. Guru Nanak Dev Ji had himself said clearly that the Shabad Guru was his only Guru. One day the Word was to take the place of a human Guru. The inevitable came to pass when Guru Gobind Singh ji declared the Granth Sahib as his spiritual successor and the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

It was only through the divine Word in the Guru Granth Sahib that the Shabad Guru could be made everlasting. The Word, as contained in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, would henceforth, and for all time to come, be The Guru for the Sikhs.

20. Highlights of the Tenth Nanak

{1666 - 1708}

Born on:	December 22, 1666
Born at:	Patna Sahib, Bihar
Parents:	Father - Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, the Ninth Guru, Mother - Mata Gujri ji
Wife:	Mata Jito ji
Children:	Sahibzada Ajit Singh (born 1687) Sahibzada Jujhar Singh (born 1691) Sahibzada Zorawar Singh (born 1696) Sahibzada Fateh Singh (born 1699)
Accession to Gurgaddi:	November 11, 1675
Joti Jot:	October 7, 1708
Contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 1685, founded city of Paonta Sahib on the banks of river Yamuna as a literary hub. He assembled 52 poets. Through his poetry he preached love and equality and a strict ethical and moral code of conduct. ■ During his stay at Paonta, Guru ji practiced different forms of manly exercises, such as riding, swimming and archery. ■ Abolished the order of masands who robbed poor Sikhs and misappropriated funds collected from Sikhs. Faithful were directed to bring offerings directly to Guru ji at the time of the annual Vaisakhi fair. ■ Selected Panj Piare who were willing to offer their head to Guru ji. ■ Established practice of Khande di Pahul instead of Charan Pahul to baptize Sikhs. ■ Took Amrit from Panj Piare and became Aape Gur Chela. Renamed to Gobind Singh. ■ Mandated Sikhs to carry Five Ks (<i>Panj Kakkar</i>). ■ Wrote Zafarnama (Epistle of Victory) to mughal emperor - Aurangzeb.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Passed on Guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib as eternal Guru for the Sikhs. |
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21. Significant World Events

around the period of Tenth Nanak are as follows:

1667	Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i> , widely considered the greatest epic poem in English.
1682	Pennsylvania founded by William Penn.
1685	James II succeeded Charles II in England, calls for freedom of conscience (1687).
1689	Peter the Great becomes Czar of Russia—attempts to westernize nation and build Russia as a military power.
1690	William III of England defeats former king James II and Irish rebels at Battle of the Boyne in Ireland.
1707	United Kingdom of Great Britain formed—England, Wales, and Scotland joined by parliamentary Act of Union.

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