

# **The Tenth Nanak**

**GURU GOBIND SINGH JI**

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**By the  
Dedicated Sewadars  
of  
Sri Hemkunt Foundation**

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# Preface

Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc. was established in 1980, over four decades ago in New York, USA. The Foundation's primary objectives are to help children and youth ages 6-25 years old raised in the Western Hemisphere learn Sikhi, develop public speaking skills, and feel proud of being a Sikh.

We do this through educational books on the Sikh Gurus' lives, Sikh history, and Sikh philosophy; and by providing youth opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of Sikhi and skillfully communicate their understanding to others. The Sikh faith is virtually unknown in the west. Ideally, any Sikh would be able to communicate the values and practices of the path effectively should an occasion arise.

The main Foundation-sponsored event is an annual Symposium. Participants compete in five age groups: 6-8 years, 9-11 years, 12-14 years, 15-17 years, and 18-25 years. For each group, an age-appropriate book is prescribed. The Symposium encourages participants to critically examine various topics and answer a set of questions at a specified time from a podium. Participants are graded for content and oratory skills.

Every year, there is a three-tier competition. In the first tier, nearly 2,500 children and youth participate in local competitions in the USA, UK, and Kenya. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier, about 400 participants compete. These are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> position holders in the local competitions. The final and international level is the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier, where nearly 125 participants compete. These are the 1<sup>st</sup> position holders of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier competition.

For many years, the Foundation had used books published in India, the UK, etc. However, the Foundation received valid criticism from parents, participants, and judges almost every year that some of the books used for the Symposium competition were unsatisfactory. The English vocabulary, sentence structure, and context were not appropriate for the Western participants and audience. Many of the stories and Sakhees inappropriately highlighted "miraculous" aspects rather than logic and common sense.

To remedy this situation, a few years ago, the Foundation decided to venture into writing the books itself so that suitable books are used for the Symposium and annual competition. Dedicated Sewadars of the Foundation volunteered for this Seva.

The current book is meant for the 9–11-year-old age group. An attempt has been made to present Guru Ji's teachings in a logical manner. The book uses simple, easy-to-understand language and avoids references to events and places that would not usually be familiar to the intended Western school-age participants. It is crucial to ensure that the students' focus is on key concepts and messages within the book. The teachers and parents are expected to be fully involved in helping students understand the depth of the material, rather than remembering only historical facts. The Foundation aims to use this book for the annual Symposium - Speech Competition. Detailed information regarding the yearly International Symposium is available at the website [www.hemkunt2.org](http://www.hemkunt2.org).

Both English and Panjabi versions of the books have been posted on our website. Sunday Schools run by Gurdwaras are welcome to use these books for free, and no permission is required from the Foundation for using the books.

Any suggestions and comments for improving the book are always welcome.

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# 1. Early Life

**1666 (Birth):** Gobind Rai, later the tenth and last human Guru of the Sikhs was born on December 22nd, 1666, at Patna, in Bihar, India. His father was Guru Teg Bahadar Ji and his mother, Mata Gujri.

Guru Teg Bahadar Ji had become the Ninth Nanak in 1664. In 1665 he founded Chakk Nanaki in the foothills of the Shivalik Ranges in Punjab, presently part of greater Anandpur. He had resumed his missionary journeys in January 1666 and had spent the next four and half years in the central and eastern part of India; presently, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam, and Tripura, and Bangladesh.

Midway in his journey Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji settled his family in Patna. He then undertook his missionary tour further East to spread the path of service and devotion to the one universal creator, as revealed by the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak Ji. In 1666, Guru Ji learned of his son's birth in Patna while he was in Assam.

The child Gobind Rai and his mother spent four years at Patna. The house where Gobind Rai was born and spent his early childhood is now a *Takht* (throne) Sri Harmandir Ji, Patna Sahib, one of the five most sacred Sikh seats of religious authority.

**1670 (age 4):** Guru Teg Bahadar Ji returned to Patna from his Eastern missionary tour of Bengal and Assam. He then traveled to Punjab, Gobind Rai, followed by Mata Gujri Ji, attempted to join Guru Teg Bahadur Ji later in Anandpur.

**1672 (age 6):** The young Gobind Rai's family reached Chakk Nanaki. He learned Panjabi, Gurmukhi from Munshi Sahib Chand and the Granthis of Guru Ji's *Darbar* (court). Learning the Gurmukhi language was necessary, as the teachings of the Gurus had been compiled in Gurmukhi. Qazi Pir Muhammad taught him Persian, the state language of the Mughals at that

time. Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt taught him Sanskrit, Hindi, and Brij Bhasha, three of the most common languages used in the region.

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## 2. Gobind Rai as Guru

**1675 (age 9):** Guru Teg Bahadar Ji formally installed Gobind Rai Ji as Guru Gobind Rai, the Tenth Nanak, on July 8th, 1675, before proceeding to Delhi for his eventual martyrdom. The Ninth Nanak was martyred on November 11th, 1675, in Delhi on orders of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.

Upon hearing the news of Guru Teg Bahadar Ji's martyrdom, many Sikhs gathered in Chakk Nanaki and begged Guru Gobind Rai to avenge the martyrdom of his father. Guru Ji calmed them down and said that it is not good to hold negative feelings of revenge. He told them to accept Guru Teg Bahadar Ji's death as God's Will.

He further said that since Aurangzeb and other Mughal leaders continued to direct all types of atrocities on the people, including ultimatums of either embracing Islam or being prepared for death, the Sikh army would challenge the tyrannical Mughal rulers. He opposed them, just as the Sixth Nanak and the Ninth Nanak had fought against oppression and injustice during their periods of Guruship.

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### 3. Final Form of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

**1678 (age 12):** The first volume of *Adi Granth* (Sikh scriptures), later, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, was compiled by the Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Ji, in 1604. It included hymns (compositions) of the first five Gurus, 15 bhagats, and several Bhattas. The Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Nanaks did not compose hymns. The Ninth Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadar Ji, had composed 116 *padas* and *sloks* (a quarter of four-line stanza and verse). These were now with his son, Guru Gobind Rai, the Tenth Nanak.

In 1678, the original *Adi Granth* was at Bakala, in the possession of Dhir Mall's family. Dhir Mall was Guru Har Rai's older brother and Guru Hargobind Ji's grandson. In 1604, the original *Adi Granth* scribed by Bhai Gurdas under Guru Arjan Ji's supervision was installed at *Sri Harmandir Sahib* (Golden Temple) and used daily. It could not be used to make copies. Under the supervision of Guru Arjan Ji, Bhai Gurdas, and Bhai Banno, along with twelve scribes, made a copy of the *Adi Granth* at Amritsar before the original *Adi Granth* was installed at the *Sri Harmandir Sahib*. Later, this first copy made under Guru Ji's personal supervision became known as Bhai Banno's *Birh* (religious scripture). To fulfill the genuine need of the vast *sangat*, multiple copies of the *Adi Granth* were required. Some copies were made from Bhai Banno's *Birh*, while others were second or third-generation copies. Mistakes in copying were sometimes the result of unintended human error. However, later inserts and the introduction of additional hymns in the copies, or copies of copies, made from the Banno *Birh* were deliberately done by mischievous anti-Sikhi elements.

In 1678, Guru Ji was at Damdama Sahib, part of the Anandpur Sahib complex. Guru Ji asked Bhai Mani Ram (later known as Bhai Mani Singh) to update the *Adi Granth* by including the Ninth Nanak's compositions. Guru Ji, however, did not include any of his compositions. Guru Ji asked Bhai Mani Ram to compare the updated *Adi Granth* with the original that the Fifth Nanak had prepared.



While at Damdama Sahib, Bhai Mani Ram complied with Guru Ji's instructions and made the necessary corrections. The updated final version of this *Adi Granth* came to be known as the *Damdami Birh*. This *Birh* was bestowed with Guruship in 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh Ji and came to be known as the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. To this day, the Sikhs revere the Sri Guru Granth Sahib as their eternal Guru.

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## 4. Ranjit Nagara

**1680 (age 14):** After getting the updated, final volume of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib prepared in 1678, the Tenth Nanak started organizing an army in Chakk Nanaki, now known as Anandpur. He could see danger for the Sikh community in upcoming times. Starting from Guru Nanak Ji to the Ninth Nanak, each Guru had trained the ordinary person to stand up to oppression. That included corrupt religious leaders like the Brahmins, Pandits, Qazis. It also included tyrant political rulers, mainly Mughals, plus the Hindu rulers of some small states in the northern Shivalik hills. They had periodically fought with Sikhs on behalf of Brahmin Priests and the authoritarian Mughal rulers. It was time for the Sikh community to pick up arms again to defend all people's human dignity and self-respect.

Guru Ji sent messages to his Sikhs to bring solid horses and their best weapons. Sikhs in large numbers came to Chakk Nanaki and enrolled in the Sikh army. They were given full military training and equipped with additional horses and arms.

Aurangzeb had banned non-Muslims from riding a horse, carrying weapons, or beating a drum, which was generally used by the army during battle to instill fervor and bravery in soldiers. He wanted non-Muslims to feel inferior, like second-class citizens, and to convert to Islam.

To send a clear message to Aurangzeb that every human is created equal by God and is free to live with dignity, Guru Ji got a huge *Nagara* (drum) built. He named it *Ranjit* (victory in battle) Nagara. Guru Ji instructed Sikhs to beat the drum at the closing ceremony of each congregation. This action was intended as a symbol of the sovereignty of the Sikh community. It is also currently used in many Gurdwaras in the morning and evening to remind everyone to be conscious, fight evil thoughts, and protect those who cannot protect themselves.

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## 5. *Hola Mahalla*

**1683 (age 17):** Guru Ji held competitions of martial games to prepare his Sikhs to defend themselves from any aggressors. This competition enhanced the Sikhs' physical capacity and military skills.

In March 1683, it was the season of Holi, the Hindu religious festival. Holi is a popular, ancient Indian festival, also known as the Festival of Colors. According to the Hindu faith, the festival celebrates the eternal and divine love of the legendry Radha and Krishna, the manifestation of God. People spray colors on each other to celebrate, have fun, and be happy.

When some Sikhs were traveling to Chakk Nanaki, the residents in the neighborhood sprayed colors on the Sikhs' clothes. Upon witnessing the color-soiled clothes, Guru Ji remarked that it was a meaningless activity. He asked the Sikhs to participate in martial games instead, and the martial arts games would provide pleasure and increased stamina.

Guru Ji arranged competitions of horse-riding, arrow throwing, wrestling, sword-wielding, *gatka* (fencing), and mock battles. To distinguish it from the Holi festival, he called it the festival of *Hola Mahalla*. Guru Ji distributed prizes and *siropas* (honors) to the winners. In the evening, *Keertan Darbaar* (Sikh services praising God) was held, followed by *Ardas* (the collective congregation's prayer). *Hola Mahalla* was a unique Sikh celebration, and Sikhs continued to travel to Chakk Nanaki every year to celebrate *Hola Mahalla*. The celebration continues today in Anandpur and at various other places where Sikhs reside worldwide.

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## 6. Mata Sundri Ji (Jeeto Ji)

**1684** (age 18): Guru Gobind Rai was married to Mata Sundri Ji. Her maiden name was Jeeto Ji. During those days, there was a custom that a girl's maiden name or family nickname was changed upon entering her in-laws' house after marriage. As is prevalent today, in some cases, especially those connected with her parent's family continued calling her Jeeto, while others called her Sundri. The two names occurring in popular accounts suggested two different persons, and it was wrongly inferred that Guru Ji had two wives.

Mata Jeeto Ji's father, Harjas, was a resident of Lahore. Harjas, along with some members of the *sangat* of Lahore, came to Anandpur and performed the initial ceremony of marriage. He expressed his desire to Guru Ji that the marriage ceremony takes place in Lahore. Guru Ji developed a new town seven miles from Anandpur towards Lahore. The town was named *Guru ka Lahore*. The marriage was held in the new town.

Guru Ji and Mata Sundri Ji were blessed with four sons.

Sahibzada Ajit Singh, born at Paonta, 1686.

Sahibzada Jujhar Singh, born 1690.

Sahibzada Jorawar Singh, born at Anandpur, 1696.

Sahibzada Fateh Singh, born at Anandpur, 1698.

Mata Sundri Ji (Jeeto Kaur ji) passed away in December 1700 at Anandpur. At that time, Sahibzada Jorawar Singh was four years old, while Sahibzada Fateh Singh was only one and a half years old. Mata Gujri Ji, Guru Gobind Singh Ji's mother, brought up the two younger Sahibzadas. She nurtured them with love and care and instilled strong Sikh virtues, as evidenced by their values and courage during their martyrdom in the face of the enemy.

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## 7. Paonta Established

**1685** (age 19): Raja Medni Parkash of Nahan state requested Guru Ji visit his state. Guru Ji obliged him and came from Chakk Nanaki for a visit. The Raja gave Guru Ji a royal welcome and requested Guru Ji to establish a Sikh center in his state.

Guru Ji selected some specific hills on the banks of the River Yamuna. In April 1685, he laid the foundation of the new town and called it *Paonta*. The honor of laying the foundation stone was given to a descendant of the legendary Baba Buddha.

*Paonta* became a significant center of the Sikhs. Thousands of Sikhs started visiting and moving to the new town. A large number of poets and other artists also settled at Paonta. Guru Ji held *Kavi Darbars* (a court of Poets) at this place. Literary work was done at Paonta by these Poets.

During his stay at Paonta, Guru Ji practiced horse riding, swimming, archery, and other forms of physical training. He also inspired the new community of Sikhs to undertake daily martial exercises of strength and endurance. The purpose was to help strengthen the Sikh community's mental and physical capacity to face future oppressors. However, the neighboring Rajput hill rulers felt threatened and used the Sikh's physical training as an excuse to assemble an army against the Sikhs.

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## 8. Battle of Bhangani

**1688** (age 22): Ram Rai, the son of Guru Har Rai Ji, sought an apology from the Tenth Nanak for siding with Aurangzeb. Guru Gobind Rai Ji forgave Ram Rai. The Seventh Nanak, Guru Har Rai Ji, had not appointed Ram Rai, his elder son, and had appointed his younger son Har Krishan Ji as the Eighth Nanak.

Ram Rai's *masands* (companions) lived off of Ram Rai's income, as some Sikhs supported him for being the Seventh Nanak's son. The *masands* would use the money received from *sangat* for their personal needs. They had become utterly corrupt. It was against their vested interests for Ram Rai to join in with Guru Gobind Rai Ji. In 1687, Ram Rai was killed by his *Masands*. His widow requested that Guru Ji punish the conspirators. One *masand* escaped and went to Fateh Shah, ruler of Garhwal state, poisoned his mind with false propaganda and provoked him against the Guru.

The one *masand* was successful in deceiving Fateh Shah that Guru Ji was planning to occupy his state. It was just enough misinformation for Fateh Shah, and he planned an attack on Guru Ji at Paonta. Guru Ji learned about the potential attack, and he decided to face Fateh Shah's army before it could reach Paonta. The location selected was Bhangani, about six miles northeast of Paonta. The battle took place on September 18th, and it lasted only a few hours. Fateh Shah lost his General Hari Chand and many soldiers, and he fled the battlefield in defeat.

After the victory in the battle of Bhangani, Guru Ji left Paonta for Chakk Nanaki. With the arrival of Guru Ji, Sikhs started traveling to Chakk Nanaki instead of Paonta. Soon, Chakk Nanaki regained its past glory.

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## 9. Foundation of Anandpur

**1689 (age 23):** The territory of Chakk Nanaki was a small area where Gurdwara *Guru-ka-Mahal* (Guru Ji's residence) was situated. With the arrival of Guru Ji from Paonta, the number of visitors increased significantly. The place became too congested for holding special gatherings. Accommodations and amenities became inadequate for visitors. Guru Ji decided to add more territory to the flourishing Sikh center.

On March 29th, an annual gathering was held at Chakk Nanaki, attended by thousands of Sikhs. It became apparent to everyone that the town needed to be expanded, and Guru Ji explained that the land was required not only for housing but also for building forts for its' defense. Rani Champa and her son Bhim Chand, the royal family of the Bilaspur estate, were present at the gathering. The Rani offered Guru Ji as much land as he needed, free of cost, for the expansion. However, Guru Ji would not accept the gift, so Rani Champa reluctantly agreed to accept payment.

On March 30th, Guru Ji laid the foundation stone of the new town and named it *Anandpur*. After laying the foundation of Anandpur, Guru Ji planned the following five forts in the area: Anandgarh, on the top of the hill, hence the most secure; Lohgarh, used to manufacture weapons; and Fatehgarh, Taragarh, and Agamgarh.

This defense system was expected to be strong enough to resist an enemy siege for months. Thus, the Sikh city of Anandpur would be secure and self-sufficient.

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## 10. Battle of Nadaun

**1691 (age 25):** In March 1691, the Governor of Lahore sent an army under the command of General Alif Khan to attack the hill states. Rulers of Nadaun and Bilaspur sought Guru Ji's help. Rani Champa and Raja Bhim Chand had been loyal to Guru Ji all along. Guru Ji instructed Sikhs at Anandpur to take up arms and go to Nadaun to stop the Mughal army.

On March 19th, a fierce battle took place at Nadaun. The Mughal Army was on one side, and on the other side were the Sikhs and warriors of the hill estates. Warriors from both sides fought bravely. The Mughal army was no match for the Sikhs and warriors of the hill estates and was defeated. Under cover of darkness, the Mughal General ran away. There were heavy casualties on both sides, in any case.

After the battle, Guru Ji spent seven days in the Palace of the Ruler of Nadaun before moving back to Anandpur.

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# 11. First Attack on Anandpur

**1695 (age 29):** Rani Champa of Bilaspur died in May 1691. Raja Bhim Chand died in September 1692. Both had been loyal to Guru Ji. Bhim Chand's son, Ajmer Chand, became Raja of Bilaspur. Ajmer Chand was under the influence of his Brahmin Minister, Parma Nand. The latter did not like Guru Ji and his followers. It was because of the Sikh religion's teachings that emphasized the equality of all people irrespective of their so-called caste.

Ajmer Chand wanted to get rid of Guru Ji, but he was not courageous enough to do it himself. He convinced the Governor of Lahore that Guru Ji had taken the lead in the attack of the Mughal forces at Nadaun in 1691. The Governor was not savvy enough to verify or confirm the allegation, yet he was enraged and dispatched a big army unit to Anandpur.

On August 19th, the Mughal army marched to the outskirts of Anandpur. They had just reached the other side of torrential waters flowing nearby. To their bad luck, it was the time of flash floods. They tried to cross the rapidly flowing water but got swept away by the strong currents and lost some soldiers.

The Sikhs started beating the *Ranjit Nagara* announcing conquest. At the same time, they started chanting the Sikhs' call of victory, "*Bole so Nihal! Sat Sri Akal!*" at the top of their voices. That invocation for Divine aid echoed throughout the hills and gave the impression that the Sikh army was enormous.

The strong water current, the booming sound of the beating of the drum, and the piercing sound of the Sikhs' declaration of triumph, in combination, petrified the Mughal army. The Mughal General abandoned the plan to attack Anandpur and returned to Lahore.

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# 12. Battle of Guler

**1696 (age 30):** When the defeated Mughal army returned to Lahore, the Deputy Governor turned his attention towards the hill states. He demanded tributes from hill state rulers. His message said the refusal to pay would result in attacks by the Mughal army in order to plunder their treasuries. Seeing a lack of response, the Governor first attacked Dadwal state. Dadwal could not resist the aggression. Next was Bilaspur state. It also surrendered without much of a fight. Both states were ordered to join the Mughal army to attack the adjoining hill states.

The next target was the state of Guler. Its ruler seeking help dispatched a fast messenger on horseback to Guru Ji. Guru Ji immediately sent a unit of his army to help Guler. Upon reaching, the Sikhs initially tried to mediate a compromise. In contrast, the Rulers of Dadwal and Bilaspur provoked the Mughal General to fight. Attempts to resolve the conflict failed, and a fierce battle ensued, and the Mughals lost the battle.

Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur had fought from the Mughal's side against Guru Ji. Having lost, he began planning large-scale schemes against Guru Ji.

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## 13. Bhai Nand Lal's Compositions

**1697 (age 31):** Bhai Nand Lal, one of the most prominent Sikhs and a poet par excellence, joined Guru Ji's court at age sixty-four and stayed with him for many years. The *Sikh Rehat Maryada* (Code of Conduct, 1945; chapter 16) recognizes compositions of Bhai Nand Lal as suitable for being recited in the sangat as a part of the *keertan* services. Because Bhai Nand Lal was so closely associated with Guru Ji, his brief history is given below.

Nand Lal was born in 1633 in Ghazni, the region of current day Iran and Afghanistan. His father, Munshi Chhajju Ram, was a scholar of the Persian language working for the ruler of Ghazni. At a young age, Nand Lal became proficient in Persian. In 1654 at age twenty-one, he got married to a Sikh girl. He learned Gurmukhi and memorized many Gurbani hymns. Because of his talent, the ruler of Multan appointed him a Minister. In 1673, Prince Muazzam, Aurangzeb's elder son, who later became Emperor Bahadur Shah, visited the Multan Ruler. Nand Lal also met the Prince.

In 1675, Nand Lal was part of a sangat of Multan that visited Guru Gobind Rai in Anandpur. He returned to Multan after the trip.

Aurangzeb appointed Prince Muazzam Governor of Afghanistan in 1676. With the consent of the Ruler of Multan, the Prince appointed Nand Lal as his Head Clerk. In 1679, one day in the royal court of Aurangzeb at Agra, a discussion ensued on a hymn in the Quran. Aurangzeb was not satisfied by any explanation. Prince Muazzam was also in the court. When the Prince returned to his residence, he consulted Nand Lal. He liked Nand Lal's explanation. The next day in the court, the Prince shared the explanation with everyone. Aurangzeb was impressed. Upon inquiry, he learned that the person responsible is a non-Muslim. Aurangzeb hinted that such a talented person should be brought into the fold of the Muslim faith. Before Aurangzeb could act on his desire, he had to leave for Marwarh to quell a rebellion. When Nand Lal learned about a possible conversion plot, he left the royal court and went back to Multan.

In 1697, at the age of sixty-four, Bhai Nand Lal moved to Anandpur and stayed in the company of Guru Gobind Rai. With daily interactions, both developed affection for each other. In 1704, when hill rulers and Mughal forces decided to attack Anandpur, Guru Ji requested families, poets, elders to vacate the city. Bhai Nand Lal, at age seventy-one, left Anandpur as instructed by Guru Ji. He returned to Multan, where he passed away in 1705 at the age of seventy-two.

Bhai Nand Lal's significant works which praise Guru Gobind Singh, Waheguru, and Sikh principles are in Divan-e-Goya (collection of 63 ghazals), Zindagi Nama (Book of Life), Ganj Nama (Treasure Book), Toseeney Sana (Prose), Jot-Bikas Punjabi (43 couplets), Jot-Bikas Farasi (175 couplets), Arzul Alfaz (verses), Majmua Anwar, Khatma, Datur-ul-Nisha (letters), and Insha Dastur.

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## 14. Abolition of the Masand System

**1698 (age 32):** At the time of Guru Gobind Rai Ji, the Sikh mission had expanded throughout the subcontinent. The *Masand* institution was helping cater to the needs of the Sikh *Sangat* living in far-off places.

Guru Nanak Ji had started the concept of *Sangat* (fellowship of men and women who meet religiously) and *Dharamsal* (a place of religious worship). Guru Amardas Ji then instituted *Manjis* and *Peehris*, and Guru Ramdas Ji founded the institution of *Masands*. This institution was intended to serve the Sikh community through a well-coordinated system. Sikhs of high character were appointed as Masands and entrusted with this responsibility. The Sikhs' missionary, social, and dasvandh (tithing-donations) systems worked smoothly for many years. Donations from far-off places started reaching Guru Ji's Community Treasury, and the funds were used to help the poor and needy.

From the Fourth to the Seventh Nanak, the institution of *Masands* played a significant and positive role. The *Masand* role and system were transmitted from parent to offspring. The following two generations of Masands were honest and sincere. Guru Har Rai Ji, the Seventh Nanak, and Guru Harkrishan Ji, the Eighth Nanak, died young. Guru Teg Bahadar Ji, the Ninth Nanak, mainly stayed in the Eastern part of India. Some third generation Masands did not have in-depth knowledge of Sikh practice, values, and philosophy, and they started going astray from the Sikh path.

In March 1698, Guru Gobind Rai Ji was watching a skit at the celebration of Hola Mahalla. One act depicted a *Masand* as corrupt, a womanizer, and eccentric. Guru Ji inquired whether it was true, and he learned that a few Masands fit that description. Upon hearing this, Guru Ji instructed Bhai Mani Ram to summon all *Masands* to Anandpur.

When the *Masands* arrived, Guru Ji examined their credentials. The good ones were blessed with *Siropas* (robes of honor). Those lacking in character were punished. Guru Ji then declared an end to the institution of *Masands*.

He instructed 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*. The use of the Persian-origin word *Khalsa* indicated that from now on, there would be no intermediary person (such as a *masand*) between him as Guru and any ordinary member of the Sikh community.

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## 15. The Beloved Five: Panj Piarey

**1699 (age 33):** Through experiences of the last few years, Guru Ji realized the Panth needed members that are of high character, love Waheguru, and are imbued with martial spirit. They should be compassionate yet ready to take up arms and sacrifice themselves for the community and the nation's safety, honor, and well-being.

Guru Ji was determined to push the cruel Mughal rulers out of the country, and this was the only option to save the oppressed Hindus. He needed to create a distinct army that would stand out in a crowd and emanates a love of God and country. Instead of greed, laziness, self-absorbed, he would instill the values of bravery, courage, sacrifice, and the spirit of love and service towards all people. They would overcome the caste divide and be united as one. The Baisakhi of 1699 provided the grand finale to this.

At the beginning of 1699, Guru Ji sent out invitations to all Sikhs. They were asked to attend an exceptional gathering known as *Sarbat Khalsa*, referring to all Sikhs. The gathering was to be held on the occasion of Baisakhi. Nearly 20,000 Sikhs reached Anandpur. They came from every corner of the region. Guru Ji ordered carpets to be spread on a raised platform. A beautiful tent was set up nearby. At this place now stands the Gurdwara named Sri Keshgarh Sahib.

A day before Baisakhi, a large gathering took place in an open area. As soon as the morning prayers were completed, Guru Ji went into the adjoining tent and remained there for some time. The assembled Sikhs grew anxious and wondered what was happening inside the tent. At last when Guru Ji appeared, he looked very different, with eyes blazing with fire. His naked sword shone a silver light and shook in his uplifted hand. He looked like a determined warrior that was about to enter a battlefield. In a thunderous voice, he demanded the head of a Sikh. He asked if anyone was willing to sacrifice his life for the country and faith.

Everyone became frightened on hearing such an unusual demand. There

was no response to the threatening call, and Guru Ji repeated his words. Still, no response. The third time he roared whether anyone would offer his head as proof of his faith in the Guru. At last, Bhai Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore, arose and expressed his readiness to offer his head.

Guru Ji took him by the arm inside the tent. It is said that Sikhs heard the sound of a sword-swinging swiftly. They also heard some sound as if a body had fallen to the ground. Then they saw a stream of blood coming out.

As Guru Ji came out of the tent a second time, he was reported to have called out again for another head in a loud thundering voice. His face was redder than before, his eyes were as red as human blood. The Sikhs gathered there were convinced that Bhai Daya Ram had been sacrificed. There was dead silence till Guru Ji repeated the call. Again, there was no response. He called for the third time. On the third call, Bhai Dharam Das, a Jat Sikh of Hastinapur (Delhi), stood up and offered his head.

Guru Ji held him too by the arm and took him inside the tent. The same sound was said to have been heard, and it appeared that a body had fallen to the ground. As before, a stream of fresh blood came pouring out from the tent. The assembled Sikhs were filled with terror, and many of them ran for their lives.

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 shrunk. Some people went to Guru Ji's mother, Mata Gujri, and expressed that Guru Ji had gone mad. He was killing his Sikhs, and he should be removed from Guruship. They urged Mata Ji to replace Guru Ji with a grandson of hers. She sent a messenger to Guru Ji, and he was in no mood to listen to anyone.

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

Daya Ram, a Sobti Khatri of Lahore,  
Dharam Das, a Jat from Hastinapur (Delhi),



Himmat Rai, a watercarrier from Jagannathpuri,  
Mohkam Chand, a washerman from Dvarka, and  
Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar (Karnataka).

After the fifth call, Guru Ji remained in the tent a bit longer. Finally, he came out 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 precisely like him. These five, three of them from the so-called low castes, a Ksatriya and a Jatt, formed the nucleus of the self-sacrificing, martial, and casteless fellowship of the Khalsa. They were the same who had offered their heads to Guru Ji. Their faces, their dress, and their whole appearance were all like Guru Ji's. Guru Ji called them his ***Panj Piarey***, the five beloved ones.

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## 16. Creation of the Khalsa

**1699 (age 33):** On Baisakhi day in 1699, Guru Ji dressed in white and was in high spirits. His face was bright and elated. He sat on his *gaddi* (elevated platform), and the Beloved Five sat before him in the first row. He replaced *Charan Pahul* with *Khande da Amrit* for the initiation ceremony. During this ceremony, the person desiring to become a Khalsa would drink water that had been stirred with a *khanda* (two-edged sword). This water would be called *Amrit* (nectar).

Guru Ji poured 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*. All the time, he recited God's praise, Gurbani hymns. Thus, he prepared the *Amrit* (ambrosial nectar) for the initiation ceremony.

He stood up, holding the vessel of *Amrit* in his hands. He made the *Panj Piarey* kneel like warriors 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 their faces. He called upon the Beloved Ones each time to say, '*WaheGuru Ji ka Khalsa, WaheGuru Ji ki Fateh!*' Guru Ji also sprinkled the *Amrit* five times on the Beloved Ones' hair and eyes and asked them to sip some *Amrit*. Each of the Panj Piarey passed the vessel on to the next one until the whole of the *Amrit* was finished.

Guru Ji renamed the Panj Piarey as follows:

Daya Ram to Daya Singh (Singh: Lion)  
Dharam Das to Dharam Singh,  
Himmat Rai to Himmat Singh,  
Muhkam Chand to Muhkam Singh, and  
Sahib Chand to Sahib Singh.

Guru Ji, then himself, received initiatory rites at the hands of his five disciples, now invested with authority as Khalsa, and had his name changed from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. "Hail Gobind Singh, who is himself, Master as well as disciple."

Guru Ji pronounced instructions for his followers and formalized them by writing Rehat Namas. These constitute a set of rules on proper conduct, based on Guru Ji's instructions and the teachings of previous Gurus starting from the founder, Guru Nanak Ji. The final version of the code of conduct called the *Sikh Rehat Maryada* was approved in 1945.

The authority of granting *Khandey di Pahul* - a promise to lead a pure and pious life to unite with Almighty God to the rest of the Sikhs assembled on Baisakhi day in March 1699 was delegated to the *Panj Piarey*. Thousands of Sikhs took Amrit that day, and all of them were surnamed Singh, meaning lion. The baptismal ceremony was carried on daily for several days to follow.

Thus, was born the Khalsa, a community of warrior-saints, worshippers of *Akal Purakh* (one God). They were joined together to protect the helpless and fight the oppressors, to have faith in one God, and to consider all human beings equal, irrespective of caste and creed—just as Guru Nanak Ji had first preached to his disciples, the Sikhs when he founded a new religious community of Sikhs, the Sikh Panth.

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# 17. Mata Sahib Kaur

**1700 (age 34):** On the day of Baisakhi, Bhai Ramu, resident of Rohtas, District Jehlam, along with his family, came to pay homage to Guru Ji at Anandpur. In the Deevan, he requested Guru Ji to marry his daughter, Sahib Devi. He said that he had "pledged" her marriage with Guru Ji the day she was born. In those days, it was typical for such one-sided pledges to be made by the parents of children. Guru Ji refused to recognize and honor this pledge in any way. Guru Ji explained that he could not accept this proposal.

Sahib Devi's father added that all the residents of their village knew about this pledge. Hence, everyone addressed his daughter as *Mata Ji* (mother), signifying that she had been promised to Guru Ji already. Hence, no one else would marry her.

Guru Ji suggested that she become the Mother of the Khalsa and serve them with motherly affection. Guru Ji advised her to serve the Khalsa and meditate on God's name for the rest of her life. She readily agreed to follow and remained a virgin all her life.

Upon getting initiated, she became known as Mata Sahib Kaur. She lived from 1681 – 1708. She passed away in Delhi. Her body was cremated near Guru Har Krishan Ji's in a place presently known as Gurdwara Bala Sahib

Up to today, on the occasion of their baptism, Sikhs are urged to give Anandpur as the name of their village, Guru Gobind Singh Ji as their father, and Mata Sahib Kaur Ji as that of their mother.

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## 18. Hill Rulers' Attacks

**1700 (age 34):** With the creation of the Khalsa, thousands of Hindus took *Khandey di Pahul* and became Khalsa. Thousands leaving the Hindu path affected the income of Brahmin priests. Some Brahmins began planning revenge against Guru Ji. Parma Nand, the Brahmin priest of Bilaspur, incited Raja Ajmer Chand to expel Guru Ji from his state. Ajmer Chand convinced the rulers of Kangra and Handur to join him in this treacherous endeavor.

**Attack on Taragarh Fort:** Ajmer Chand decided to attack Taragarh Fort first. He considered it the weakest of the five that could be easily conquered. It was located nearly three miles from Anandpur city. Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and a small unit of Sikhs were stationed there. On August 29th, Ajmer Chand attacked. Sahibzada Ajit Singh sent a fast horse-rider to Guru Ji for help. Soon, a large army of Sikh warriors reached the Fort. A fierce battle ensued. Many soldiers of the invading army were killed. After three hours of fighting, the hill soldiers fled from the battleground. Some Sikhs also passed.

**Attack on Fatehgarh Fort:** Despite his severe defeat, Ajmer Chand attacked Fatehgarh Fort the next day, on August 30th. Though only a few Sikhs were stationed there, they gave a tough fight to the Bilaspur army. Battles continued the whole day, and a large number of hill soldiers were killed. In the evening, the Bilaspur army fled the battlefield. In this battle, too, some Sikh warriors passed.

**Attack on Agammgarh Fort:** Despite being defeated in two battles, Ajmer Chand attacked the Agammgarh Fort the next day, August 31st. It was located at a distance of one mile from Anandpur. Despite a small number of Sikh soldiers being present, the Bilaspur army experienced heavy casualties and withdrew in defeat.

**Attack on Lohgarh Fort:** Ajmer Chand understood that capturing or defeating Guru Ji was a difficult task. However, he was too stubborn to accept the reality of his situation. He decided to try one more time. The

Lohgarh Fort was of strategic importance. Guru Ji's weapon factory was located there. Capturing it would diminish Guru Ji's strength. Ajmer Chand knew the gate of this Fort was extremely strong. He decided to tie iron plates on the forehead of an intoxicated elephant. He thought they would make the elephant run head-on into the gate and knock it down.

That night, Guru Ji was holding a Sikh service in the Anandgarh Fort. Guru Ji learned of Ajmer Chand's plan. He saw Duni Chand, a former Masand with a big strong body, sitting in the congregation. Guru Ji remarked that Duni Chand could quickly kill the drunk elephant. Duni Chand was startled at the suggestion, as it could result in his martyrdom, but he could not refuse. That night, Duni Chand climbed down the wall of the Fort with a rope. To his misfortune, the rope broke, and he fell to the ground below and injured his leg. When Bhai Bachittar Singh learned that Duni Chand had been injured, he requested Guru Ji to let him have the assignment. Guru Ji blessed him with the responsibility.

The next day, as planned, a drunk elephant ran towards the gate. Bachittar Singh came out of the Fort riding on a horse. He spotted a small area on the elephant's head not covered with iron plates. He struck his spear with full force on that spot and quickly took out the spear. The spear caused unbearable pain to the elephant. Shocked elephant ran wild. It took a U-turn and trampled the hill ruler's soldiers following the elephant intending to enter the Fort once the gate was broken.

A fierce battle was fought outside the fort entrance. By the evening, a large number of hill soldiers lay dead. Defeated and battered, Ajmer Chand and his army retreated towards Bilaspur. Some valiant Sikhs also passed in the battle to defend Lohgarh Fort.

**Attack on Nirmohgarh:** Despite his defeat on four consecutive days' battles and the loss of many soldiers, Ajmer Chand was still persistent. He consulted many allies to find a way to achieve his goal of capturing Guru Ji. The Brahmin priest Parma Nand offered a cunning plan.

As per the Brahmin priest's plan, on October 1st, Parma Nand went to

Anandgarh Fort. He placed a cow made of wheat flour on a platter and a letter addressed to Guru Ji and left it outside the gate. It read that the Raja was ashamed of his acts and begged Guru Ji's pardon. The Raja had suffered humiliation and insult in public. The letter also said that the Raja would be obliged if, as a face-saving gesture, Guru Ji would vacate Anandpur for a few days. It would help the Raja regain some respect from the public. The Raja promised Guru Ji a safe return. Guru Ji was fully aware that Brahmins and the Raja were untrustworthy. However, some prominent Sikhs took pity on the Raja and wanted to respond to the Raja's request.

On October 4th, Guru Ji vacated Anandpur and went to a hill two miles from Kiratpur. There was no fort there. Since Guru Ji used it as a fort, it later came to be known as Nirmohgarh. The Sikhs only took weapons, horses, food, and some household articles with them. They had left everything back at Anandpur. Tents were put up for the temporary stay.

Ajmer Chand was filled with rage and enmity. He gathered a large army and attacked Guru Ji at Nirmohgarh. He thought that since there was no fort, Guru Ji and Sikhs were most vulnerable. The Sikhs did not expect the attack, yet they were ready in no time for the battle. By the evening, several hill soldiers were killed. Ajmer Chand was severely shaken and fled.

Ajmer Chand sent Parma Nand to Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, with a considerable amount of money seeking help to capture or kill Guru Ji. Ajmer Chand convinced Wazir Khan that the task should be easy since Guru Ji was staying in a tent and there was no fort.

On October 13th, a big unit of the Mughal army reached Nirmohgarh. In the fierce battle, some Generals and a large number of enemy soldiers were killed. The defeated army returned to Sirhind.

The next day, on October 14th, Ajmer Chand himself led an even bigger army and attacked Guru Ji. Guru Ji divided the Sikhs into four groups. It was a fierce battle, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides, and Ajmer Chand lost the battle yet again.

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# 19. Martyrdom of Sahibzadas Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh

**1705 (age 39): Last Attack by Ajmer Chand:** on March 13th, Ajmer Chand, along with the ruler of Handur, another hill state, attacked Anandpur. The battle lasted two days. Ajmer Chand again lost the battle. However, he made plans to continue the struggle. He teamed with Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, to jointly surround Anandpur and cut off all supplies and replenishments. His strategy was to force Guru Ji to abandon Anandpur as it was not possible to defeat him on the battlefield. Guru Ji learned of the plot.

On March 29th, anticipating a long spell of hardship, Guru Ji suggested that all families leave the city, and he advised that only those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice should stay. In April 1705, the Sikhs' families left the city of Anandpur.

On May 3rd, thousands of enemy soldiers started a siege of the city of Anandpur. The city was cut off from the rest of the world. No one could enter or leave the city. No support, supplies, or rations were allowed in. The siege's six months, May to November, caused an acute food shortage for the residents and horses. Everyone was starving to death.

December 4th, Aurangzeb was convinced that it was impossible to capture Anandpur as long as the Sikhs were inside the Fort. He devised a deceptive plan to capture Guru Ji. On a solemn oath on the Quran, Aurangzeb offered a safe exit to the Sikhs if they left Anandpur.

**December 5th-6th**, relying on the holy oath, Guru Ji evacuated Anandpur during the night of December 5-6. As soon as Guru Ji and Sikhs came out, hill rulers and the Mughal army attacked them. Many Sikhs were killed, and Guru's personal belongings, including most precious manuscripts, were lost. Guru Ji made his way to Chamkaur, 25 miles southwest of Anandpur, with barely forty Sikhs and his two elder sons - Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh.



Villagers embraced and extended a warm welcome to Guru Ji. Guru Ji constructed and fortified the defenses during the night. He posted Sikhs on all sides, and himself took position on the roof. By daybreak, the army of many thousands arrived and surrounded the fortress.

The Generals knew that there were only a few Sikhs inside the fortress. Early in the morning, they ordered the army to attack. From inside the fortress, arrows rained with great ferocity, as if there were thousands of Sikhs inside. Eventually, Sikhs ran out of arrows and came out, opened the fortress's gate, and fought skillfully using swords and spears. They attained martyrdom.

**December 7th**, eighteen years old Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the eldest son of Guru Ji, requested permission to show his skills in battle like his brethren before him. Guru Ji agreed and personally dressed him to fight the Mughal soldiers. Sahibzada Ajit Singh and five Sikhs stormed out of the fortress. When the soldiers saw him, they tried to capture him. Sikhs and the Sahibzada fought with great fierceness and determination despite the odds against them. Guru Ji watched the entire scene from the Fort's roof as they killed many Mughal soldiers, and all of them passed.

The martyrdom of his elder brother inspired the younger Sahibzada - Jujhar Singh (fourteen years old) to request permission to fight in the brutal battle. Guru Ji personally dressed Jujhar Singh and sent him outside the fortress and five Sikhs to take on a sizeable Mughal army. Sahibzada Jujhar Singh and five Sikhs fought bravely, killing many Mughal soldiers and attaining martyrdom in Chamkaur.

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## 20. Uch Da Pir

**December 8th,** Obeying the command of the '*Panth*' (Sikh congregation), Guru Gobind Singh Ji left the fortress of Chamkaur under the darkness of night. 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 there and stayed with Guru Ji. Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, two brothers devotees of Guru Ji, came to meet Guru Ji. They took Guru Ji to their house and took care of him with respect and devotion.

Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan were residents of Machhiwara in the Ludhiana district. They were horse traders, and people from far and wide knew them. They used to come to Anandpur occasionally to sell horses. They were impressed that in accordance with the teachings of Sikhi, everyone was treated with equal dignity and respect. They had become devotees of Guru.

A plan was made at night to present Guru Ji as *Uch Da Pir* (Head of a saintly Muslim sect from Multan province) and escort him out of reach of the Mughal army. Guru Ji was dressed in blue garments, a tradition for Muslim clergy, and was seated on a bed. The two Muslim brothers and the three Sikhs also wore blue garments. Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan held the front legs of the bed on their shoulders to be better placed to face and deal with any situation if they encountered Mughal soldiers. Bhai Daya Singh fanned peacock feathers over Guru Ji's head. Bhai Dharam Singh and Maan Singh held the rear legs of the bed.

Upon encountering Mughal soldiers, Pir Mohammad Qazi, who had taught Persian to Guru Ji, told the soldiers that they were escorting the *Uch Da Pir*. The Mughal soldiers believed the Qazi and let them pass through. By making Guru Ji look like the revered Muslim Pir, the two brothers took him out of the danger of the Mughal army and carried him to Alamgir in the Ludhiana district. Guru Ji thanked them and saw them off with a letter of honor.

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## 21. Martyrdom of Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh & Fateh Singh

**December 13th**, Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh (born 1696, age 9) and Fateh Singh (born 1698, age 7) were the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The two Sahibzadas and Mata Gujri Ji, Guru Ji's mother, were separated from Guru Ji in the mayhem that followed while evacuating from Anandpur. Mata Ji and the two younger sons were led by Gangu, their old servant, to his own house. At night when Gangu saw some diamonds and gold *mohars* (coins) in Mata Ji's belongings, he was tempted and stole the valuables. In the morning, when Mata Ji inquired, Gangu denied knowing anything. Gangu was scared that Mata Ji might share her suspicion with someone. He decided to get somehow get rid of Mata Ji. He went to the nearest Mughal police station and disclosed the whereabouts of Mata Ji and the two Sahibzadas. The Mughal police came and arrested them.

When Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, came to know of the arrests, he was overjoyed. He locked Mata Ji and the two Sahibzadas in a cold tower without food and water. They were not provided with warm clothes or blankets on the coldest winter nights, and December is one of the coldest periods in Punjab. A guard was sent the following day to bring them to the court. Their Grandmother advised the Sahibzadas not to forsake their faith no matter the Governor's temptations or threats.

Wazir Khan got a *fatwa* (religious edict) issued against the two Sahibzadas from a *Qazi* (Muslim priest), asking them to either join Islam or be prepared to die. The young Sahibzadas remained steadfast and refused to bow down or convert to Islam. On Wazir Khan's orders, the Sahibzadas were bricked alive. Sadly, a Hindu Minister Sucha Nand had a big hand in enflaming and abetting Wazir Khan's rage against the young lives. Their Grandmother passed away the same night. The descendants of Todar Mal cremated the bodies of all three. The famous Fatehgarh Sahib Gurdwara stands today at this site as a tribute to their ultimate valor.

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## 22. Zafarnama sent to Aurangzeb

**December 22nd**, Befriended by another Muslim admirer, Rai Kalha of Raikot, Guru Ji reached Dina in the heart of the Malwa region of Punjab. There he enlisted a few hundred warriors. Guru Ji composed his famous letter, Zafarnama (Epistle of Victory), in exquisite Persian verse, addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb. The tone of the letter is in keeping with its title. Guru Ji had won a moral victory over the crafty Mughal Emperor, who had broken all his vows. The whole letter reads like a rebuke addressed by a superior to a person of lower status, rebuking him for his weaknesses and excesses. Reportedly, the letter was a scathing indictment of the Emperor and his Commanders. They did not honor their oath taken on the Quran and had attacked Guru Ji once he was outside the safety of the Fort at Anandpur. Even though the Mughals had promised a safe passage for all Sikhs leaving the Fort, it strongly emphasized the importance of morality in State affairs, as much as in the conduct between humans. It said that the means used are as necessary as the end sought.

Two of the Sikhs, Daya Singh, and Dharam Singh, were dispatched with the Zafarnama to the South to deliver it to Emperor Aurangzeb. Upon reading the Zafarnama, Aurangzeb's stance towards Guru Ji softened. According to Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, the Emperor wrote a letter to the Deputy Governor of Lahore, Munim Khan, to reconcile with Guru Ji and make all arrangements for Guru Ji's journey to the Deccan.

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## 23. Forty Muktey, Forty Immortals

**December 29th**, Guru Ji was going to Talwandi Sabo from Dina. Emperor Aurangzeb had ordered that no one should help or shelter Guru Ji while the armies searched for them. However, it could not deter dedicated devotees of Guru Ji who risked their lives and helped Guru Ji. Such devotees were not only Sikhs but Muslims as well.

When Guru Ji reached Jaito, he learned that Wazir Khan was approaching with an army of five thousand soldiers and expected to reach there in four to five days. Guru Ji decided to move to a place near Khidrana, and he planned to face the Mughal army near the lake.

Earlier, a group of forty Sikhs had deserted Guru Ji at Anandpur during the long siege. Before leaving, they had written a disclaimer on a piece of paper, declaring that he was not their Guru, and they were not his Sikhs. The deserters belonged to the Majha tract of Punjab. When they reached their homes, they were berated by their wives for deserting Guru Ji. The women taunted the men to stay at home while their wives supported Guru Ji in the battle. The insult heaped at them was relentless and too much to bear.

The deserters from the Majha decided to return to Guru Ji and ask for forgiveness. This group of forty fully armed men and one prominent woman named Mai Bhago marched towards Guru Ji. They traveled in small groups, primarily by night, to avoid detection. Along the way, many Sikhs joined them, so the group gradually became a sizable troop.

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, thus providing enough time for Guru Ji to reach a safe place. The Mughal army arrived soon, and a long and bloody battle ensued. Sikhs fought with ferocity and great courage. In the meantime, Guru Ji had reached a sandhill on the other side of Khidrana. He targeted prominent officers and soldiers of the Mughal army with arrows. The army repeatedly attacked the Sikhs,

but it had to retreat after suffering heavy losses each time. Eventually, Sikhs ran out of ammunition and arrows.

Nevertheless, they continued fighting with spears and swords. They advanced in small groups and killed many Mughal soldiers. Sikhs were not fighting for victory. Not for once did they think of saving their own lives. Their only wish was to win Guru Ji's pardon and pleasure. They were determined to resist and fight the enemy as much as possible and as long as possible. All of them obtained martyrdom. Sikhs reportedly killed about three thousand Mughal soldiers. Despite their overwhelming numbers, the Mughal troops failed to capture Guru Ji and retreated 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 martyr's face and blessed him. Mahan Singh was still breathing. He opened his eyes and found himself in Guru Ji's arms. He was filled with immense relief. Guru Ji asked him for his last wish. Bhai Mahan Singh begged Guru Ji's pardon. He requested that Guru Ji tear up the disclaimer, the paper they had disowned Guru Ji.

Guru Ji blessed the forty martyred Sikhs as the *forty Muktey*, forty immortals. He took out the disclaimer from under his belt, tore it into small pieces of paper, and threw them all away. Bhai Mahan Singh felt immensely relieved. He smiled, took a deep last breath, and closed his eyes. The site is presently revered and is called *Muktsar*, the Pool of Liberation.

Guru Ji also saw that Mai Bhago was exhausted but not wounded. He arranged for her to be carried from the battlefield. She recovered soon upon getting proper help and treatment. She took *Khandey di Pahul* and was renamed, Mai Bhag Kaur. She remained in Guru Ji's service to the end. Along with ten Sikhs, she would guard Guru Ji during his sleep. After Guru Ji *Joti Jot Samaey*, she relocated to Bidar (South India) and lived there until her earthly journey was completed.

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## 24. Madho Das to Banda Bahadar

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

When Guru Gobind Singh Ji reached the 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 the 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. He failed. He had reportedly never failed before. He went to the ashram and made yet another attempt with his presumed magic. He failed again. He then presented himself 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.*

*Madho 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). (\*)*

Saying this, Madho Das fell at Guru Ji's feet begging forgiveness. Guru Ji

instructed Banda in the tenets of Sikhism.

On September 4th, Guru Ji blessed him. Madho Das became a Khalsa accepting *Khande Di Pahul*. He was renamed Gurbaksh Singh (popularly known as **Banda Bahadar**).

On October 5th, Guru Ji gave Banda Bahadar five arrows from his quiver and an escort, including five of his chosen Sikhs, and directed him to go to Punjab to carry on the campaign against the tyranny of the provincial overlords.

(\* ) *As recorded in Ahmad Shah's Zikar-i-Guruan we 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.*

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## 25. The Word is The Eternal Guru

**1708 (age 42):** Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind worried about the Emperor's peacemaking stance towards Guru Ji and feared it might be detrimental to his welfare. Their marching together towards the South concerned him. He started conspiring to eliminate Guru Ji. He enlisted two of his trusted men to kill Guru Ji before the alliance could result in any harm to him. Two *Pathans* (residents of Afghanistan) pursued Guru Ji secretly to Nanded. They started living in the Guru's camp as Sikh-sympathizers. As soon as they got an opportunity, 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.

Upon hearing the commotion, Sikhs rushed to Guru Ji's tent. They saw blood profusely coming out of Guru Ji's chest, and they immediately arranged to dress the wound. Some of the Sikhs chased the fleeing Pathan and killed him.

The next morning, on October 6th, Guru Ji asked Bhai Daya Singh to bring the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to him. To quote *Bhatt Vahi Talauda Parganah Jind*:

*"Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, son of Guru Teg Bahadar, 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, October 6th, 1708, to fetch Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In obedience to his orders, Bhai Daya Singh brought Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five pice (coins) and a coconut and bowed his head before it. He said to the sangat, "It is my commandment: Own Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in my place. He who so acknowledges it will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth". (\*\*)*

Guru Ji *Joti Jot Samaey* on October 7, 1708.

He took up arms to resist bigotry and tyrannical rule to empower the ordinary people. He fought 14 battles between 1688 (Battle of Bhangani)

and 1705 (Battle of Muktsar) against impossible odds to see the fall of the bigoted Emperor in 1707. He laid the foundation for the people's rule in Punjab as the Khalsa Raj, in which all were equal partners. He sacrificed his whole family, and thousands of his beloved Khalsa gave their lives willingly for his cause. However, he always remained in *Chardhi Kalaa*, in positive spirit while accepting God's Will.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji thus passed on the succession of Guruship, with an appropriate ceremony, to the Sikh scripture - Sri Guru Granth Sahib, ending the line of in-person Gurus. After Guru Gobind Singh, by his own order, the Guruship continued from the person Guru to the joint Guruship of Bani Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and Gur Sangat as the Guru Khalsa. Wherever the Granth will be with any five Sikhs representing the Khalsa, there Guru Ji would be.

The Word of Akal Purakh (God) enshrined in the Sikh scriptures 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 Ji had himself said very clearly that the *Shabad Guru* was his only Guru. The Word took the place of a human Guru when Guru Gobind Singh Ji declared the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as his spiritual successor and Guru of the Sikhs.

Reading or listening to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is akin to having a glimpse or experience of the Guru. Only through the Divine Word contained in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the *Shabad Guru* could be made everlasting. The Word of Akal Purakh, as contained in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, henceforth and for all time to come, thus became the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

(\*\*) SGPC website

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# 26. Highlights of the Tenth Nanak

1666 - 1708

Born on:	December 22nd, 1666
Born at:	Patna, Bihar (India)
Parents:	Father - Guru Teg Bahadar Ji, The Ninth Nanak Mother - Mata Gujri Ji
Wife:	Mata Sundri Ji (Jeeto Ji)
Children:	Ajit Singh (born 1686) Jujhar Singh (born 1690) Zorawar Singh (born 1696) Fateh Singh (born 1698)
Gurgaddi:	November 11th, 1675
Joti Jot:	October 7th, 1708
Contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In 1685, founded the city of Paonta on the banks of river Yamuna. He assembled 52 poets. Guru Ji practiced different forms of martial exercises, such as riding, swimming, and archery.</li> <li>■ Abolished the order of Masands and directed the Sikhs to bring offerings directly to Guru Ji at the time of the annual Baisakhi fair.</li> <li>■ He selected Panj Piarey, who were willing to offer their heads to the Guru.</li> <li>■ Established the practice of <i>Khande di Pahul</i> to initiate Sikhs as Khalsa.</li> <li>■ He received Khande di Pahul and renamed himself Gobind Singh.</li> <li>■ Mandated the Khalsa to carry the <i>Panj Kakkar</i> (the Five Ks).</li> <li>■ Wrote Zafarnama (Epistle of Victory) to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.</li> <li>■ He fought 14 battles between 1688 (Battle of Bhangani) and 1705 (Battle of Muktsar) against impossible odds to see the fall of the bigoted Emperor in 1707.</li> <li>■ He passed the Guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture containing Shabad Guru, as the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.</li> </ul>

## 27. Significant World Events

around the period of the Tenth Nanak

1667	Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i> , widely considered the greatest epic poem in English.
1682	William Penn founded Pennsylvania.
1685	James II succeeded Charles II in England, calling 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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2. *Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, by Prof Sahib Singh, Singh Brothers, Amritsar.
3. *A Short History of the Sikhs* by Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh.
4. *Life of Guru Gobind Singh* by Prof. Kartar Singh, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana.
5. *Bedtime Stories 6*, by Santokh Singh Jagdev, Sikh Missionary Resource Center, England.
6. *Stories from Sikh History 3*, by Kartar Singh *et al.*, Hemkunt Press, New Delhi, India.
7. SGPC website, <http://sgpc.net/ten-guru-sahibs/guru-Teg-Bahadar-sahib/>
8. Google search, world events.

## **Books by Sri Hemkunt Foundation:**

1. *Guru Nanak Sahib* (English and Panjabi, for ages 6-8)
2. *The Second – Fourth Nanak* (English and Panjabi, for ages 6-8)
3. *The Fifth Nanak* (English and Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
4. *The Sixth – Eighth Nanak* (English and Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
5. *The Ninth Nanak* (English and Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
6. *The Tenth Nanak* (English and Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
7. *The Sikhs 1718-1801* (English and Panjabi, for ages 12-14)
8. *The Message of Bhagats in Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (English and Panjabi, for ages 15-17)