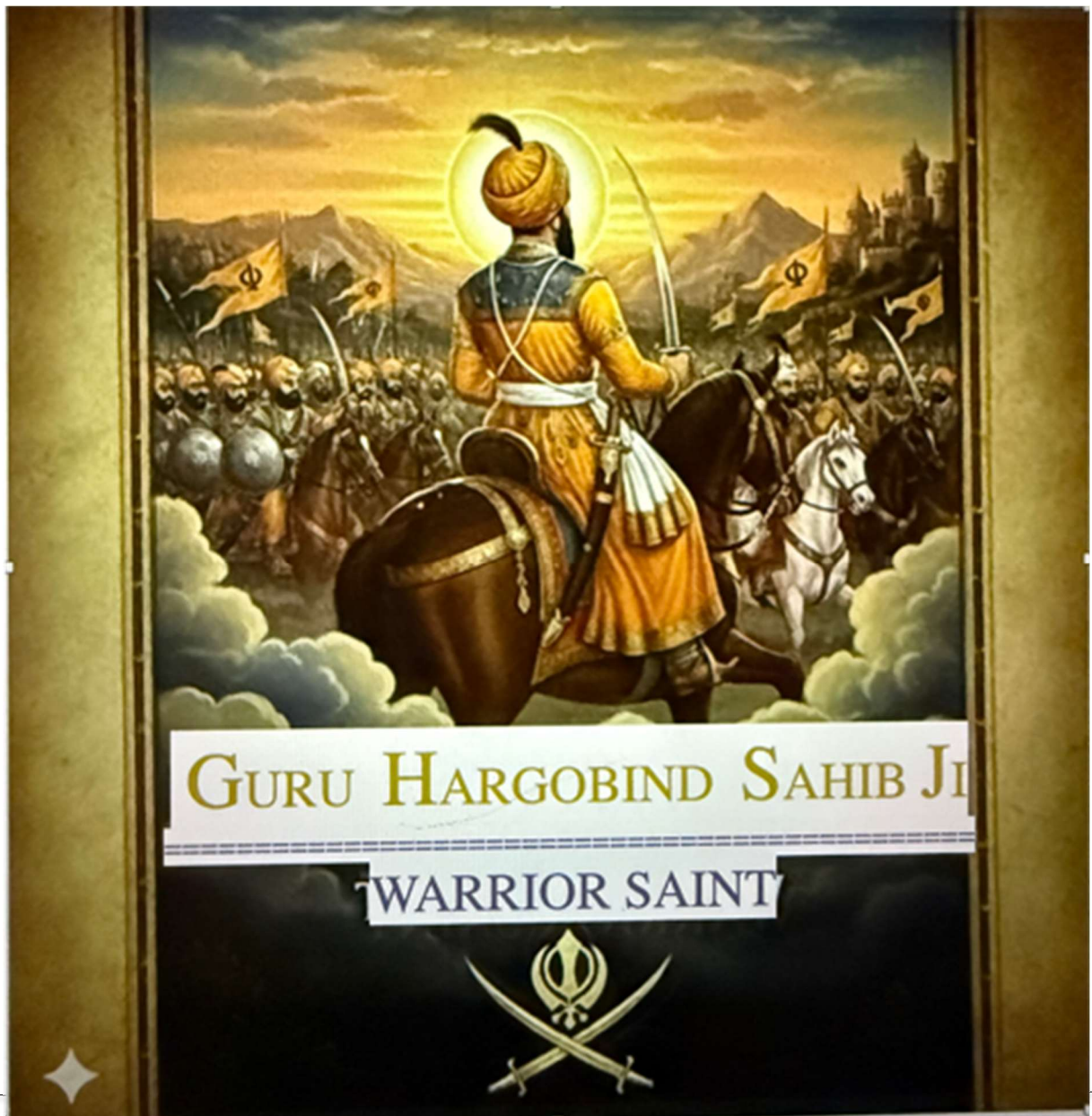




GURU HARGOBIND SAHIB JI

THE WARRIOR SAINT



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Written by dedicated sewadaras
of
Sri Hemkunt Foundation Book committee

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Preface

Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc. was established in 1980 in New York, U.S.A., over four decades ago. 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 main Foundation sponsored event is an annual Symposium. The Symposium encourages participants to critically examine assorted topics and answer a set of questions in a specified time from a podium. For each age group, an age-appropriate book is prescribed. Participants are graded for content and oratory skills.

A few years ago, the Foundation decided to venture into authoring so that suitable books could be provided to the participating youth. The Foundation hopes to foster understanding of Sikhi through a clear understanding of history, discourage emphasis on miracles and introduction to key concepts of Sikhi in simple to understand language structure.

The current book is meant for the 9 to 11 year old age group. 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 Symposiums involving Speech Competitions. Detailed information about the yearly International Symposium is available at the website www.hemkunt2.org. Sunday Schools run by Gurdwaras are welcome to use these books for free, and no permission is needed from the Foundation for using the books.

Chapter 1

Origins of a Warrior



Born on June 19, 1595, in Wadali near Amritsar, Guru Hargobind Ji was the only son of the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Sahib Ji and Mata Ganga Ji. From a young age, he imbibed humility, spiritual wisdom, service and justice. Alongside teachings of Gurbani, he trained in Gatka (swordsmanship) and horse riding.

Surrounded by saints and warriors, young Hargobind Ji grew into a thoughtful leader. Practicing Gatka in open fields while reciting sacred Gurbani, he understood early on the need to balance spiritual grace with worldly resilience. His upbringing became a mirror of the dual path of prayer and protection he would champion.

From Grief to Resolve

One of the most significant moments in young Hargobind Ji's life came when he was just eleven years old. A tragedy struck. His father, Guru Arjan Sahib Ji was arrested for assisting and blessing Prince Khusro, the rebel son of Emperor Jahangir and due to the growing influence of Sikhism which was perceived as a threat by the Mughal authorities. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan occurred during the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, who was influenced by the growing popularity of Sikhi and the perceived threat it posed to Islamic authority. In 1606, Jahangir ordered Guru Arjan's arrest after he refused to convert to Islam and was accused of promoting a faith that included references to both Hindu and Muslim saints in the Adi Granth. This loss seared deeply into young Hargobind Ji's heart. The son as well as the disciple felt the weight. He turned his grief into determination. He recognized that the Sikh community could no longer rely on peaceful resistance alone. They had to be prepared to defend truth with courage. He understood that peace must be paired with power. He realized that spiritual strength alone was not enough to confront injustice. He envisioned a community that could pray with depth and act with courage.

Chapter 2

Shaping a Sovereign Spirit in Sikhs



Guru Arjan Sahib Ji's martyrdom planted the seed of the warrior spirit in Hargobind Ji. For his Guru ship ceremony, Hargobind Ji made a statement of royalty by donning regal robes, a turban with Kalgi (plume) and wearing two swords: one for Miri and one for Piri.

Miri (from the Persian Amir) symbolizing worldly power: leadership, justice, and the responsibility to protect and serve society.

Piri (from Piri) representing spiritual authority: inner wisdom, humility, and connection to the Divine.

By wearing two swords, he declared that devotion must not exclude action. The saint soldier was born, not removed from society, but rooted in justice, ready to serve and protect. His leadership infused a lasting pride that echoed across generations. Guru Hargobind Ji's two swords visually declared that a Sikh must be both a saint and a soldier; a protector of truth and a practitioner of compassion. He raised an army not for conquest, but for defense.

The Concept of Miri-Piri

Miri and Piri became two inseparable aspects in the Sikh way of life. Sikh gurus had stood up to the rulers of their times and exhibited an independent spirit but now they were rising as protectors of peace, anchored in discipline and dignity. This vision marked a turning point in Sikh history. It cemented the idea that saints must be connected to society. Guru Ji inspired his followers to be saint/soldiers; deeply spiritual, yet ready to protect the oppressed. This concept of Miri-Piri became the guiding principle of Sikh leadership from that day on. Guru Ji's vision was not just symbolic; it reshaped Sikh society.

Relevance of Miri-Piri Today

Miri-Piri remains a guiding principle for Sikhs worldwide. It encourages active engagement in society while staying rooted in spiritual values. It calls for defending the oppressed, promoting justice, and living with integrity. It reminds us that faith and action must walk hand in hand.

In today's Sikh communities, the concept of Miri-Piri continues to shape both personal identity and collective action; serving as a compass for living a life that is spiritually grounded and socially engaged. Sikhs maintain spiritual discipline through Nit-nem (daily prayers) and reflection on Gurbani to live a life that imbibes the spiritual message of our gurus.

Acts of Seva (selfless service), such as running Langar kitchens and volunteering in hospitals or disaster zones, are expressions of spiritual values in action. Piri inspires Sikhs to uphold honesty, humility, and compassion in their personal and professional lives.

The practice of Miri emphasizes social engagement. Sikh organizations worldwide advocate for human rights, religious freedom, and social justice; often drawing from the Mir/Piri ethos to challenge oppression. Miri is also reflected in Gurdwaras as places of civic dialogue, education, and conflict resolution, echoing the role of the Akal Takht as a seat of temporal authority. Inspired by the saint as a soldier idea, the Sikhs and Sikh organizations engage in defending marginalized communities.

Global Expressions of Miri-Piri

In Punjab, Miri-Piri influences grassroots movements and political activism, especially around farmers' rights and environmental justice.

In the diaspora (e.g., Canada, UK, US), Sikhs balance cultural preservation with civic participation: running for office, building interfaith coalitions, and promoting equity in education and healthcare.

Sikh youth are increasingly exploring Miri/Piri through leadership camps, martial arts training, and digital storytelling that blend tradition with modern expression.

Living in Balance with Miri-Piri

Modern Sikhs don't see spirituality and worldly engagement as separate paths, they're intertwined. The Miri-Piri principle isn't just a historical ideal; it's woven into the everyday lives of Sikhs around the world. Here are some compelling examples

that show how this balance between spiritual devotion (Piri) and worldly responsibility (Miri) plays out:

Piri in Daily Life (Spiritual Practice)

Morning Nitnem (prayers): Starting the day with nitnem, reflecting on Gurbani and understanding that Sikhi is a way of life, and our path shows us the way to live a meaningful life enriched by sewa (service) and humility.

Seva at the Gurdwara: Volunteering to cook, clean, or serve Langar reflects humility and devotion.

Ethical living: Practicing honesty, compassion, and forgiveness in relationships and work settings.

Mindful parenting: Teaching children spiritual values while guiding them through worldly challenges.

Miri in Daily Life (Worldly Engagement)

Community advocacy: Sikhs often lead or support movements for social justice, such as farmers' rights or refugee aid.

Professional integrity: Whether in medicine, law, or business, to uphold fairness and serve society ethically.

Self-defense training: Practicing Gatka or keeping the Kirpan symbolizes readiness to protect the vulnerable.

Political participation: Sikh leaders and citizens engage in civic duties, from voting to holding office, guided by spiritual ethics.

Everyday Examples of Miri-Piri

A Sikh doctor offering free care to underserved patients.

A student organizes a food drive while not discriminating against anyone.

A business owner running a company with fair wages and inclusive practices,

- inspired by Sikhi values.

A family hosting Langar at home while mentoring youth in leadership and resilience.

This dual path encourages Sikhs to be grounded in faith while fearlessly active in the world.

Sikhi's Distinctive Edge

What sets Miri-Piri apart is its intentional fusion. Guru Hargobind Ji embodied both aspects in his life. The soldier and saint ideal aren't a compromise; it's a calling to live with devotion and courage, compassion and conviction.

Sikhi's approach to Miri-Piri is not just unique, it's revolutionary in how it reimagines the relationship between the secular and the sacred. While many traditions separate spiritual life from worldly affairs, Sikhi fuses them into a single, purposeful path.

Chapter 3

The Akal Takht: The Throne of the Timeless One



In 1609, Guru Hargobind Ji established the Akal Takht across from the Darbar Sahib, a physical and symbolic declaration of Sikh sovereignty.

The location of Akal Takht wasn't just architectural symbolism, it was a governance model, a principle. It is the seat where spirit meets sovereignty.

The Takht wasn't a throne of pride; it was a platform of accountability, reminding Sikhs that leadership is a service, not entitlement.

- Akal Takht addressed worldly matters: justice, community decisions, and political guidance. Here, Guru Ji presided over worldly matters, bridging faith with responsibility. It wasn't merely a structure, but the heartbeat of righteous leadership.
- Darbar Sahib remained the spiritual center. Together, they formed a twin nucleus of Sikh life where prayer and policy coexisted.

To this day, the Akal Takht remains a living symbol of dignity, unity, and the fearless embrace of both prayer and responsibility.

The concept of Miri-Piri was embodied in the two buildings and became a core part of Sikh philosophy.

Even today, the Akal Takht is considered the highest seat of earthly authority for Sikhs.

It represents Guru Hargobind Ji's vision of a balanced life; a life of prayer and meditation, combined with courage, action, and responsibility toward society.

Guru Hargobind and Dhadi Jathas

Guru Hargobind Sahib played a pivotal role in the Sikh Freedom Movement.

He established the Akal Takht, a military court, and encouraged the Sikh community to adopt a protective warrior mindset.

The Dhadi Jathas, groups of singers who perform ballads, were instrumental in narrating the valiant tales of past heroes, instilling the spirit of righteousness and martial courage.

These Jathas, which typically consist of three to four individuals, include a Sarangi player, a Dhad player, and a main singer who recites history and delivers a legendary story (katha).

The tradition of Dhadi Jathas originated during Guru Hargobind's Guruship, where they were employed to recite Gurbani and heroic poetry (Vaaran).

Renowned Dhadi singers like Bhai Chhabeela, Bhai Natha, and Bhai Abdullah were instrumental in preserving and sharing these ballads, which continue to influence modern Punjabi music.

Chapter 4

Training of the Soldier



Guru Hargobind Ji built Lohgarh Fort. This is where Saintly Soldiers were created. Guru Hargobind Ji believed that every Sikh should be both a saint and a soldier: a “Sant-Sipahi.”

The Sant-Sipahi, or saint-soldier, was not merely a fighter; it was a soul fortified by discipline, courage, and compassion. This was not just about learning to fight; it was about building inner discipline, mental strength, and moral courage. This wasn't for personal power, but to defend the oppressed and to protect the Sikh community from injustice.

Guru Ji personally mentored many young Sikhs, including his own sons. He taught by example, showing them how to stand up for what is right while remaining kind and just. He encouraged them to ask questions, to study deeply, and to never stop growing spiritually. These young warriors became leaders and carried forward Guru Ji's legacy.

This focus on spiritual education and empowerment helped the Sikh community remain strong through future challenges. Guru Ji's teachings ensured that every Sikh, regardless of age or gender, understood their role in upholding justice and compassion in the world. He encouraged hunting and military training as ways to develop strength and courage, not aggression. Guru Ji began training Sikhs in horse riding, swordsmanship, archery, and military strategy. Guru Ji personally participated in the training. He would often lead practice sessions, showing great skill and grace. He wanted Sikhs to be physically fit, courageous, and ready to defend justice. The training also included moral teachings; helping the poor, standing up for truth, and living a life of honesty and humility.

What set his teaching apart was the seamless blend of martial skill and moral depth. Sikhs were taught to defend the weak, serve the poor, and live by truth. This was not war making, it was warrior making, anchored in ethics and devotion.

In a changing world where oppression loomed, Guru Ji molded protectors of peace. He showed that strength need not crush; it can uplift.

Guru Hargobind Ji didn't build an army to conquer; he cultivated a force to protect, uphold, and elevate. Every warrior he trained was more than a soldier; they were saintly soldiers (Sant-Sipahis) whose blades were sharpened not just with metal, but with moral courage. Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji understood that legacy isn't what you leave, it's what you empower. In encampments and villages, he nurtured the next generation of Sikh leaders. Handpicked and personally guided, these Sikh warriors learned not only combat skills but a strict ethical code:

- Never harm the innocent
- Never fight out of vengeance
- Always stand for justice
- Training in Sword use (Shastar Vidya)
- Deep study of Gurbani
- Lessons in humility, service, and justice

He mentored youth with tenderness and challenge, modeling how to wield power with compassion. His sons and disciples learned to question boldly and lead bravely. These young warriors would carry his flame into turbulent times, lighting the path for future Khalsa generations.

Guru Ji infused discipline with devotion, ensuring that each soldier remained spiritually anchored. The growing army sent a powerful message: Sikhs would no longer bend to tyranny and neither would their values. For many, this was a surprising change, as earlier Gurus had focused mainly on spiritual teachings. But Guru Ji saw the times were changing, and the Sikh community had to evolve. This unique blend of spiritual learning and martial training was a revolutionary idea. It gave birth to a new kind of leader, someone who could pray with deep devotion and protect the weak from cruelty. He transformed the Sikh community into a fearless collective.

Guru Ji's vision brought a sense of pride, unity, and responsibility to the community. Wherever he went, people saw not just a spiritual leader but a sovereign figure who stood tall in the face of tyranny. This self-respect and confidence would empower generations of Sikhs to come.

This preparation would help Sikhs stay strong in the face of growing challenges from the

Mughal empire and others who tried to suppress their faith. His teachings created more than defenders; they shaped torchbearers of truth, standing firm in the face of injustice and extending kindness beyond boundaries. Thus, he redefined Sikh identity. He inspired the

Sant-Sipahi (saint/soldier) ideal, which later culminated in the formation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Relevance of Saint Soldiers Today

Modern Sikhs continue to live this dual path. They advocate for justice while staying rooted in Gurbani. They participate in politics, medicine, education, and activism with spiritual grounding. They practice Seva (selfless service) while defending human rights. Miri-Piri isn't just a doctrine; it's a lifestyle, a legacy, and a living challenge to be both grounded and bold.

Chapter 5

From Captivity to Compassion: Jahangir and the Guru



The Mughal emperor Jahangir, who had ordered the execution of Guru Arjan Sahib Ji, soon heard about Guru Hargobind Ji's growing influence. He was surprised to see the Guru wearing royal robes, keeping an army, and holding court at the Akal Takht. Jahangir, uneasy with Guru Hargobind Ji's regal demeanor and rising influence, ordered his imprisonment in Gwalior Fort. But the walls of confinement could not dim the Guru's radiance.

Inside the stone walls, Guru Ji radiated serenity. His days flowed with prayer, reflection, and quiet counsel. Even in captivity, his presence turned restriction into refuge. Guard and noble alike were drawn to his calm strength and spiritual warmth.

Inside the fort, there were fifty-two other royal prisoners. The long imprisonment had broken their spirit. Guru Ji became their beacon; his words reawakening hope where despair had settled. Their suffering was reduced by Guru Ji's gentle and spiritual presence. In time, Jahangir's hostility softened into admiration, and he ordered the Guru's release. Yet Guru Ji refused to walk free without the fifty-two unjustly held royal prisoners. Jahangir tried to make it impossible to release those prisoners. He put a condition that as many of these prisoners as can hold on to Guru Ji's robe may be freed. Guru Hargobind Ji commissioned a robe with 52 tassels; one for each soul yearning for liberty and led them out together. Holding onto these tassels, they all walked out together in a powerful moment of liberation.

This act wasn't defiance. It was a statement: freedom is sacred, but it must include others.

“Bandi Chhor Diwas”: The Light of Liberation

The day Guru Ji freed the 52 royal prisoners is remembered as “Bandi Chhor Diwas”: The Day of Liberation. Per some historians, Guru Ji returned to Amritsar after a few months of his release from Gwalior, and the city was lit up with lamps in his honor. Guru Ji was welcomed with glowing homes and glowing hearts. The people rejoiced, not just because their Guru had returned, but because his actions reminded them of the power of justice, compassion, and courage.

His action had rekindled faith in courage and selfless service. Guru Ji was a liberator who uplifted everyone. Over time, celebration of “Bandi Chhor” coincided with Diwali.

This day still holds a unique and deep meaning. It marks the day when Guru Ji not only gained his own freedom but also selflessly ensured the freedom of others; it is a celebration of justice.

“Bandi Chhor Diwas” teaches Sikhs to stand up against oppression, even when it’s risky. It shows the importance of using one’s strength not for personal gain, but to help others. “Bandi Chhor Diwas” is not just a holiday; it is a living vow: to use strength for compassion, and freedom for others. This day remains a symbol of Sikh values freedom, service, and righteous action. It is celebrated with prayers, lights, and reflection on the timeless message of Guru Hargobind Ji.

Chapter 6

Guru Ji's Battles Battle of Ruhilla 1621



After being released from imprisonment in the Gwalior Fort in 1612, Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Sikh Guru, emerged not as a broken young man but as a courageous and determined leader. His vision was clear: the Sikh community would no longer remain passive in the face of injustice. They would rise with both spiritual strength and temporal power (Piri-Miri) to protect righteousness. Guru Ji set his sights on Gobindpur, a town founded by his revered father, Guru Arjan Sahib Ji, where once a small village named Ruhilla had existed. Gobindpur was not just a piece of land; it was a symbol of the Sikh community's resilience and future. But during Guru Ji's unjust imprisonment by Emperor Jahangir, the town had been seized by Chandu, a powerful and cunning official who was also responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib Ji. Chandu had died in 1620, but his son Karam Chand, who also held hatred for the Sikhs, continued to occupy Gobindpur.

The Rising Tensions

When Guru Hargobind Sahib returned, he made it clear that Gobindpur belonged to the Sikhs. Instead of returning the land peacefully, Karam Chand saw Guru Ji's return as a threat. Fueled by arrogance and revenge, he gathered armed men and attacked the Guru's Sikhs. But the Sikhs were not ordinary soldiers. They were Saint-Soldiers, trained under Guru Ji's guidance with courage rooted in righteousness.

In the initial skirmish, Karam Chand's forces were overwhelmed. The Sikhs, though smaller in number, fought with unmatched spirit. Guru Ji did not fight for land or power. He fought to uphold dignity, honor, and justice. Defeated and humiliated, Karam Chand turned to the local Mughal Chief of Police, offering him large sums of money to send reinforcements. The chief agreed and dispatched a battalion of Mughal soldiers to Ruhilla to suppress the Sikh resistance.

The Fierce Battle at Ruhilla

What followed was one of the earliest organized battles between the Sikhs and the Mughal Empire. The Mughals were well equipped, and they outnumbered the Sikhs. But the Guru's army stood firm. With the thunder of war slogans and clashing swords echoing across the plains, the Sikhs and Mughals engaged in a fierce and unforgettable battle. Guru Ji, dressed in princely attire and armed with weapons, led his warriors from the front, inspiring them with his presence and fearlessness.

In the heat of battle Karam Chand was killed; struck down amidst the chaos. Many of his senior officers were also slain. Numerous Mughal soldiers fell on the battlefield. They were unable to match the discipline and determination of the Sikh fighters. Eventually, the Mughal forces fled, leaving behind their dead and wounded.

Just fifteen days after this incredible victory, a son was born to Guru Hargobind Sahib and Mata Nanaki Ji. The entire Sikh community rejoiced for the birth of the child named Teg Bahadar for his courage and skill in the swordsmanship on the battlefield. He would later become the Ninth Guru of the Sikhs, and a unique martyr for the religious freedom.

Legacy of this Battle

The Battle of Gobindpur in 1621 was more than a military victory. It was the first step in shaping the Sikh identity as warriors of justice who are always ready to stand up against tyranny, not for territorial conquest but to protect the oppressed. It sent a message to the Mughal empire and is exemplary in the world for sowing seeds of a secular Sikh empire in the future. The Khalsa spirit had been awakened. The path of the Saint-Soldier had begun.

The Battle of Amritsar: Faith Against Fire

After the clash in Ruhilla, tensions with Mughal authorities escalated. In 1629, the Mughal forces led by Mukhlis Khan, launched a full-scale assault on Amritsar.

Their aim was to break the Sikh spirit and crush Guru Hargobind Ji's growing influence. But they met a resistance woven from conviction.

The Sikhs were heavily outnumbered, yet their courage and strategic skills helped them mount a fierce defense. The battle lasted several days, with fierce fighting taking place around the Darbar Sahib and the Akal Takht. Guru Ji stood at the helm, fighting alongside his warriors near sacred ground. For days, the battle raged. The Sikhs were fewer, but their strength lay not in numbers, but in resolve.

Mukhlis Khan fell, and the Mughals retreated in defeat. This wasn't just a strategic military win; it was a spiritual statement: the Guru's grace and grit had kindled a community too resilient to fall to fear or force.

Battle of Amritsar or Sangrana (April 1634)

The air around "Guru Ka Chakk", the present-day Amritsar, was filled with celebrations. Guru Hargobind Sahib was preparing for a joyous occasion: the wedding of his beloved daughter

Bibi Veero. The date was set as April 16, 1634. Guests from far and wide had begun to arrive. The city buzzed with excitement. Musical Drums (Dhols) beat in rhythm, women sang folk songs, and the spirit of joy ran through the streets of Amritsar.

Oppression Under Shah Jahan

The new Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1628), son of Jahangir, had launched a wave of religious intolerance. He imposed heavy taxes on non-Muslims, demolished Hindu temples, and even targeted Sikh institutions. In Lahore, he ordered the destruction of a Gurdwara and forcefully took over the Baoli (a stepwell where Sikhs gathered for water). These weren't just attacks on buildings, but attacks on faiths, identities, and communities. When Guru Hargobind Sahib received this news, he was not surprised. The Sikh spirit had always stood against injustice, and this was no different. Yet, he remained calm, choosing not to disrupt the wedding of his daughter. The preparations continued. But the Mughals had other plans. Far away in the

Mughal court, a storm of hatred was brewing. A short time before the battle of Amritsar there was a brief encounter of the Mughal forces on a hunting trip over the capture of the Royal Hawk by Sikhs in which Sikhs had won. Shah Jahan considered that a rebellion.

The Attack Before the Wedding

Just one day before the wedding, on April 15, 1634, a large Mughal army contingent marched from Lahore. Their goal was clear: capture Guru Hargobind Sahib and suppress the growing strength of the Sikh community. The Mughals saw the wedding as the perfect time to strike when the community would be distracted, vulnerable, and unprepared.

But they underestimated the spirit of the Saint-Soldiers of the Guru. As soon as word of the advancing Mughal army reached the city, the Sikhs sprang into action.

- One group of trusted warriors quickly escorted Guru Ji and his family, including the bride to be “Bibi Veero”, to a nearby safe village.
- The rest of the Sikh army stayed behind, determined to defend their Guru’s city even if that meant dying on the battlefield.

The Mughal army was led by a seasoned general, Mukhlis Khan. He commanded a large force and expected an easy victory. But what awaited him was a fearless and organized resistance. The Sikhs, though fewer in number, fought with unmatched courage. Many had been trained under Guru Ji’s direct guidance and carried the spirit of justice and discipline. The narrow streets of Amritsar echoed with shouts of “Sat Sri Akal” as swords clashed and arrows flew through the sky.

The battle was fierce and bloody: Sikh warriors fought with unshakable resolve, defending their land, faith, and their Guru’s honor. Though many brave Sikhs were martyred, they refused to retreat. In a dramatic turn during the battle, Mukhlis Khan was killed.

Death of the general caused confusion and panic among the Mughal ranks. Without their leader, the Mughal army retreated leaving behind their dead and wounded. The battle was over, and the city stood strong. The Sikhs had not only defended their home, but they had also sent a powerful message:

“We will never bow to tyranny. We will defend our faith with courage and righteousness.”

The very next day, despite the loss and exhaustion from battle, Bibi Veero's wedding was held not only as a family celebration, but also as a symbol of resilience and faith of the victorious Sikhs. Guru Hargobind Sahib continued to lead the Sikhs with strength, grace, and deep spirituality. This battle became another milestone in the transformation of the Sikhs into Saint- Soldiers who were always ready to protect the weak, defend justice, and counteract oppression with bravery.

Battle of Gurusar (1635)



In the warm summer of 1634, Guru Hargobind Sahib settled for a while in Kartarpur, a quiet town near Jalandhar. The rains had passed, the air was fresh, and the fields were green. For four peaceful months from July to October. Guru Ji held daily congregations, preached the message of love, bravery, and righteousness, and inspired the Sikhs to live by the principles of Miri-Piri (temporal strength and spiritual wisdom). Kartarpur became a vibrant center of Sikh life during those months. Pilgrims and seekers came from far and wide to sit at the feet of the Guru, hear divine hymns, and witness his saintly presence and princely demeanor.

From there Guru ji continued traveling to the adjoining Malva region (Maharaj, Lahira and Bathinda) for the spread of his mission. During this time two special breed horses meant for the service of Guru Hargobind were blocked by the Mughal administrators of Lahore to divert them as gifts to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. Bidhi Chand a former horseman thief who had become a righteous person due to the influence of Guru Arjan was now participating in the armed campaigns of Guru Hargobind sahib. Guru ji deputed him for the task of retrieving these horses. Bidhi Chand succeeded in this campaign by disguising as a service man in the stable where those horses were kept. This initiated another campaign of punishment by the Mughal administrators.

The Governor who was already concerned about Guru Ji's missionary tour as a threat. A religious leader was moving freely with armed followers. This was intolerable to the Mughal authorities, even though the Guru had preached only with peace in his heart. Mughals gathered a large military force to punish the Sikhs and recover the lost horses. The army was led by two experienced Mughal generals, Lalla Beg and Kamar Beg, who had earned reputations as fierce commanders. The Sikhs, though outnumbered, were not caught off guard. They stood tall, loyal to their Guru, and ready to defend their faith.

As swords clanged and arrows whistled through the air, the battle erupted into a ferocious fight. On one side stood the Mughal troops with their polished armor and war horses.

On the other side were the Saint-Soldiers of the Guru, fueled by faith, discipline and love for truthful living.

Lalla Beg and Kamar Beg led repeated charges, trying to overpower the Sikhs with sheer numbers.

But the Sikhs fought back with unmatched bravery. They used skill, strategy, and the spiritual strength instilled in them by their Guru. Both Mughal generals Lalla Beg and Kamar Beg were killed leaving their forces shaken by their fall. Many Mughal soldiers were slain or wounded. Several brave Sikhs also achieved martyrdom, laying down their lives for righteousness.

Despite the loss of precious lives, the Sikhs emerged victorious. The defeated Mughal army scattered and thus was forced to retreat. Guru Ji and his warriors stood firm for the conquest of righteousness.

The battle of Kartarpur (April 26, 1635)

Among the many warriors who served under Guru Hargobind Sahib, one stood out for his strength and skill in battle. His name was Painda Khan, a seasoned Pathan general who had once fought alongside the Guru with pride.

His son in law along with several other Pathan companions also served as soldiers. For a time, they all lived in Kartarpur, walking in the Guru's grace and partaking in the spirit of selfless service (Seva) and martial training (Shastar Vidya).

But not all hearts that walk near truth remain loyal.

One day, Guru Ji discovered that Painda Khan's son in law had stolen valuable items from the Guru's household. When confronted and asked to return the stolen goods, the man refused.

Instead of seeking forgiveness, he stood defiant. Shockingly, Painda Khan, rather than correcting his relative, chose to defend his son in law's wrongdoing.

Guru Ji, unwavering in his commitment to justice, dismissed them both from his service. It was a difficult but necessary decision. No one is above righteousness, not even a once trusted general. Wounded by pride and fueled by rage, Painda Khan turned traitor. He and his companions fled Kartarpur and headed towards Jalandhar, where they met with the local Mughal commander. Seeking revenge, Painda Khan stirred up lies and twisted the truth:

“Guru Hargobind sits on a great treasure,” he told the commander. “Let us raid Kartarpur together. In our success there will be gain of both wealth and power.” Tempted by greed and ambition, the Mughal commander agreed. Together, the Pathan and Mughal forces formed a united army, their sights set on attacking Kartarpur, the town that stood as a symbol of Sikh strength and peace.

On the morning of April 26, 1635, the peaceful air of Kartarpur was shattered by the marching of soldiers, the neighing of warhorses, and the distant sound of war drums. Guru Hargobind Sahib was informed of the approaching army. There was no time to send messengers or negotiate. Suddenly the battle was upon them.

Guru Ji addressed his Sikhs:

“This is not a battle for wealth or revenge. This is a stand for truth. The weapons we raise are in defense of justice, not in egoistic pride.” The Sikhs prepared to defend Kartarpur. Though vastly outnumbered, they were fueled by courage and unwavering devotion to their Guru.

The battle lasted three long days, with intense fighting on both sides: The combined Pathan- Mughal army launched wave after wave of attacks, hoping to overwhelm the Sikhs with numbers. But the Sikh warriors fought with unshakable determination, their swords flashing like lightning and war slogans echoing through the fields.

Guru Hargobind Ji, as always, led from the front, mounted on horseback, armed with sword and shield, his very presence lifting the spirits of his warriors.

On the second day, Painda Khan himself confronted Guru Ji on the battlefield. Once a close companion now a sworn enemy. He challenged the Guru to a single combat. "Draw your sword, Guru," he shouted, "if you truly stand for justice!" Guru Ji, calm yet resolute, met his challenge. In a swift but fierce duel, Painda Khan was struck down not by anger, but by the sword of truth. Soon after that his son in law also fell in combat. The Mughal commander, who was too late in realizing his mistake also got killed. The remaining soldiers, being leaderless and shaken, fled the battlefield in defeat.

Though victorious, the cost was heavy for the Akal Sena. Many brave Sikh warriors were martyred. Their sacrifices were honored with deep respect. Guru Ji held special prayers for those who gave their lives defending righteousness.

The battle was over, but its lessons are timeless: Justice must never be compromised, even if the guilty were once trusted friends. Greed and betrayal lead only to destruction, while truth and loyalty build legacies.

This battle of Guru Hargobind Sahib was not only a military win, it was also a moral victory. It showed the Sikh community how to stand against betrayal, defend the righteous path, and stay united under the guidance of the Guru. In the heart of every Sikh, it reaffirmed the Guru's message:

"We shall never attack first. But to defend truth, we must fight with honor, courage, and without fear."

The Battle of Phagwarha (April 29, 1635)

Only three days had passed since the fierce battle at Kartarpur. The air still smelled of smoke, and the hearts of the Sikh warriors were heavy with the loss of their brave companions. Though victorious, the Sikh army was exhausted, both in body and spirit.

Guru Hargobind Sahib decided that it was time to leave Kartarpur. Their next destination was Keeratpur Sahib, a town Guru Ji had founded in 1624, nestled in the hills of the Shivaliks.

It was to be a place of spiritual reflection and peace, far from the unrest of Mughal controlled Punjab.

The journey was long and difficult. The army traveled through dusty trails, forests, and small villages, tending to the wounded as they marched. Guru Ji remained calm, walking and riding alongside his soldiers, not as a distant king, but as a caring guide and father. But the road to peace is often filled with trials.

On April 29, 1635, as Guru Ji and his weary army reached the village of Palahi, near Phagwarha town, they paused to rest. The village, quiet and green, seemed peaceful. The Sikh soldiers, many of whom were still recovering from the wounds of the previous battle, sat down to drink water and catch their breath. But just as they were settling down, a dust cloud appeared on the horizon. It wasn't a natural storm; it was a large contingent of Mughal soldiers. Led by local commanders, this Mughal unit had learned of the Guru's movement and saw an opportunity:

"Strike the Sikhs while they are weak," they thought. "Catch them off guard and capture the Guru."

The Mughals launched a sudden and aggressive attack, hoping to overwhelm the tired Sikh army.

The Sikh warriors were caught by surprise, but only for a moment. At the sound of the first arrow, they sprang into action. Though tired, and some still bandaged from Kartarpur encounter, their spirit was unbreakable. This wasn't just another battle, it was a fight for survival, the safety of their Guru, and for honor. Guru Hargobind Sahib, as always, remained composed, guiding and encouraging his soldiers. Mounted on his steed, adorned in princely armor, he led the defense with the calm power of a true spiritual warrior.

"Do not be afraid," Guru Ji said. "You do not fight for land or treasure. You fight for truth. You fight to protect the helpless. You fight because you must for justice."

The battle at Palahi, Phagwarha was short but intense: The Mughals charged

with full force, but the Sikhs met them head on, forming defensive lines and protecting Guru Ji's flank.

Arrows flew, swords clashed, and war slogans filled the skies. Despite their exhaustion, the Sikhs fought fiercely, turning defense into offense with every passing hour.

Eventually, the Mughal soldiers began to fall, their attack lost momentum. Their commanders could not believe the resistance they were facing from warriors who had just survived a major battle days before. With mounting casualties and growing fear, the Mughals lost heart and fled the battlefield, leaving behind their wounded and dead.

Though the Sikhs had once again defended themselves bravely, the cost was heavy. Many beloved Sikh soldiers were martyred that day at Palahi. Guru Ji personally tended to the wounded and offered prayers for the souls of the departed. He did not celebrate the victory with egoistic pride. Instead, he taught: "This is not a time to rejoice in defeat of enemies, but to reflect on the cost of violence. We seek peace, but we will never run from our duty."

Arrival at Keeratpur

After the battle, Guru Hargobind Sahib and his remaining warriors continued their journey. When they finally reached Keeratpur, the village welcomed them with tears and respect. The congregation of devotees (Sangat) gathered to hear stories of the battles, to honor the martyrs, and to find strength in the Guru's presence.

Guru Ji resumed his teachings, balancing the sword and the scripture, the shield and the shabad.

This Battle of Guru Hargobind Sahib taught the world powerful lessons: Even when tired, and wounded, a soul guided by truth can stand firm. A warrior of righteousness never fights in hate and never runs away due to injustice. The spirit of the Sikh nation had been tested again, and once more, it stood tall.

Chapter 7

Leadership Through Compassion



War never eclipsed Guru Ji's compassion. Even as a martial leader, he remained a spiritual guide. His hands healed as much as they defended. He never let military strength overshadow his role as a spiritual guide. He continued to care for the people, teach the Sikh faith, and provide shelter to anyone in need, irrespective of the faith.

A beautiful story of Guru Ji's compassion is that after the battle, a wounded Mughal soldier was captured. But instead of punishment, Guru Ji ordered his care and safe return to his family. Guru Ji had a mosque constructed known as "Guru Ki Maseet," in Sri HarGobindpur. The mosque was constructed to accommodate the religious needs of all Muslims who lived in the city. Acts like this whispered truth louder than swords ever could: mercy is the highest form of justice.

Guru Ji led by example. Guru Ji's leadership was built on balance of strength and humility, justice, forgiveness and boundless empathy. He reminded his followers that true power lies not in weapons, but in the courage to do what is right, even when it's difficult. His compassion earned him the respect and loyalty of many, including people outside the Sikh faith.

Building Bridges of Respect with Other Communities

Guru Hargobind Ji's leadership wasn't tribalist; it was universal. He reached across divisions of faith, caste, and creed, knowing that unity is sacred. While defending his people, he also worked to build bridges with other religious and social communities. He met with Sufi saints, sages, Hindu leaders, and scholars, sharing thoughts of oneness and acceptance. He discussed spiritual ideas and promoted mutual respect. He taught that all paths to the Divine are worthy of respect and that no one should be judged by their religion, caste, or background. Through relationships built on understanding, he dissolved boundaries and sowed the seeds of peaceful co-existence.

These teachings helped reduce tensions and created a spirit of harmony in many parts of Punjab. Guru Ji's open mindedness inspired many to learn from him, regardless of their faith.

Through such relationships, Guru Ji showed that true leadership means uniting people, not dividing them.

Among his closest allies was Mian Mir, a Muslim Pir who had laid the foundation of the Darbar Sahib; a bond that embodied the Guru's vision of harmony.

Chapter 8

Final Days in Kiratpur: A Departure in Grace



In the serene embrace of Kiratpur Sahib, surrounded by nature and devoted souls, Guru Hargobind Ji spent his final years imparting wisdom and peace. He continued to guide the Sikh Panth with clarity and compassion. As his health began to decline, he started preparing his Sikhs gently for the transition ahead.

Guru Hargobind Ji perceived the same gentle strength in his grandson HarRai Ji that he himself had lived by. Guru Ji entrusted him with the Guruship. In HarRai, he recognized a harmonious blend of gentleness and resolve; a reflection of the ideal Sant-Sipahi.

Guru Hargobind Ji left this world in 1644, not with finality but with a lasting message:

Stay rooted in Divine Virtues, stand for truth, and serve with love.

His presence endured in the prayers of the faithful, and in every act of righteousness.

Guru HarRai Ji: The Light Continues

The appointment of Guru HarRai Ji was no sudden gesture. Guru Hargobind Ji had watched him grow as a child of grace, courage, and deep devotion.

Though HarRai favored peace, he was prepared to protect it. Trained in both spirituality and martial arts, he embodied the ongoing spirit of Piri-Miri: spiritual integrity paired with worldly strength.

His leadership signaled more than succession; it was a reaffirmation that Sikh values are timeless, and that true leadership flows from humility and service. The community welcomed him not as a new Guru, but as a continuation of a living flame that was Guru Hargobind Ji.

Chapter 9

Strengthening Sikh Identity



Guru Hargobind Ji had laid the blueprint for a resilient community. The warrior attire, the training in shastar vidya, and the carrying of the Kirpan weren't symbols of pride, not just for show, they were reminders of duty, of the inner strength and discipline that every Sikh must cultivate.

He reinforced the power of congregation (Sangat); through Langar, Seva, and Sangat. In unity, Sikhs found courage; in service, they found grace.

His legacy, the strong sense of identity gave Sikhs the strength to walk boldly in the face of persecution, carrying with them both sword and scripture, both discipline and devotion.

Sikh Women: The Courageous Voices That Inspire

In Guru Ji's time, Sikh women stepped forward as warriors, healers, and teachers. Far from passive, they were equals who embodied courage in every role. They stood alongside the men in upholding justice and truth. This was unheard of in that era.

Guru Ji uplifted them as spiritual leaders and protectors. Mothers passed down strength, daughters inspired entire communities, and wives stood firm in battle.

Their stories, etched into Sikh history, remind us that bravery knows no gender, and that the divine light shines just as brightly in every soul, regardless of form.

A Message for the Youth

Young Sikhs, Guru Ji's path belongs to you now. You don't need armor; just conscience. You don't need a sword; just conviction. You don't need a horse, just gentle strength.

Stand up for your classmates against bullies. Speak truth in a crowd, when it is hard. Pray with intention. Help with sincerity. That is the way of the Saint-Soldier, a Sant-Sipahi.

Guru Ji's light is in you. Let it shape your actions, hone your words, guide your dreams, and remind yourself that you are inheritors of strength and kindness. This path may not always be easy, but it is always meaningful. Be the brave, compassionate, and spiritual leader that Guru Hargobind Ji saw in every Sikh.

Reflections on a Life of Legacy

Take a moment to reflect, not on battles or titles, but on the soul behind all that you read. Guru Hargobind Ji wasn't just a warrior or a spiritual leader; he was a visionary who changed the course of Sikh history. His life showed us that faith doesn't mean hiding away or staying quiet; it means engaging with the world courageously and truthfully. Whether you're at school, at home, or with friends, Guru Ji's teachings can shape how you think, speak, and act.

Guru Hargobind Ji taught that strength is for service, power is for protection, and not aggression, and balance between the world and the divine inside of you is essential. spirituality and action must walk together.

That lesson is just as relevant today as it was centuries ago. Ask yourself: What kind of Sikh do I want to be?

Continuing the Journey

Guru Ji's journey of Sikhi didn't stop with him; it continued through Guru Har Rai Ji, all the way to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and now into the divine wisdom of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Each Guru built upon the foundations of those before them.

Guru Ji's gift to us was not only his teachings but the strength to live by them. That strength flows through the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, where the words of our gurus are compiled.

Now that you know the story of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, you've walked through Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's journey, the next chapter belongs to you. How will you live out the values of courage, spirituality, and service? How will you respond when faced with challenges? Now ask yourself:

What chapter will you write?

Start by practicing small acts of bravery; telling the truth, helping someone, speaking out against unfairness. Let your prayers be deep, and your actions be strong. Let your actions reflect your spirituality. You are part of the Khalsa spirit, the spirit that Guru Ji nurtured.

‘You don’t need perfection, just purpose’.

Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep walking. The Guru walks with you in every step.

Highlights of Guru Hargobind Ji

1590 – 1644 C.E.

Born on:	June 19, 1590
Born at:	Village Guru Ki Wadali (district Amritsar)
Parents:	Guru Arjan Sahib and Mata Ganga Ji
Children:	<p>Baba Gurditta (son, born 1613)</p> <p>Bibi Viro (daughter, born 1615)</p> <p>Suraj Mal (son, born 1617)</p> <p>Ani Rai (son, born 1618)</p> <p>Atal Rai (son, born 1619) and</p> <p>Tegh Bahadur (son, born 1621) - became Guru in 1664</p>
Gurgaddi:	May 25, 1606, age 16 years.
Joti Jot:	March 3, 1644, age 54 years.
Bani:	None.
Special Contributions	<p>Strengthened the concept and practice of Miri-Piri by raising the first Sikh army.</p> <p>Constructed Akal Takhat in front of the Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar (1609).</p> <p>Motivated poets to write Vaars (ballads) of the martyrs and sing them in heroic ragas using the Dhad and Sarangi (musical instruments).</p> <p>Orchestrated the release of 52 Hindu Rajas from Gwalior Fort (1619). The day of his return to Amritsar, upon release, is now celebrated by Sikhs worldwide as Bandi Chhor Diwas (the day of liberation).</p>

Significant World Events

[Around the period of Guru Hargobind Ji]

1593	In Italy, Galileo develops the first thermometer.
1600	Queen Elizabeth of England charts the British East India Company to compete with the Dutch, who control the trade with India.
1602	The Dutch government (United Netherlands) granted the Dutch East India Company a monopoly to pursue trade in Asia.
1607	A London company sent three ships and a small group to what is today the state of Virginia, founding a town named Jamestown.
1609	Henry Hudson, employed by the Dutch East India Company, anchors off Manhattan Island and trades with local Native Americans.
1616	William Shakespeare dies.
1621	The Pilgrims in Massachusetts have a meal with the Wampanoag Chief Massasoit and more than ninety of his warriors. This event comes to be celebrated in the United States as Thanksgiving Day.
1629	In the Holy Roman Empire, hundreds are burned as witches.
1632	Galileo publishes his ideas about the universe.
1641	A fort is founded in what today is Montreal.
1642	The Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, built the Taj Mahal for one of his wives.

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