



ਕੈਂਪ ਗੁਰਮਤ ੨੦੨੪

DALLAS, TEXAS

ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ

Khalsa, the Sovereign

December 26-31, 2024

Venue: Collin County Adventure Camp,
1180 W Houston St, Anna, TX 75409



ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸੀਸ ਦਿਤੇ,
ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਾਏ, ਖੋਪਰੀਆਂ ਲੁਹਾਈਆਂ, ਚਰਖੜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ, ਆਰਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਚਿਰਾਏ ਗਏ,
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆਂ,
ਸਿੱਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਬਾਹੀ



Dedicated to those lionhearted men and women who never surrendered their faith but for its sake sacrificed their heads, imprisoned prisoners whose bodies were dismembered joint by joint, whose scalps were removed from their skulls, who were bound rotated on the wheel until their bodies broke, were ripped by sharp toothed saws, and who guarding the dignity of gurdwaras were sacrificed without abandoning their faith, those Sikhs who kept their hair intact until their final breath

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ! ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫ਼ਤਿਹ ! !

Welcome to Camp Gurmat 2024, where we gather to immerse ourselves in the legacy of the Khalsa, who transformed unwavering faith into an unstoppable force. This year, we explore the profound theme of ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ (Hannē Hannē Pātsāhī) - a declaration that echoes through history, reminding us how each Khalsa carried sovereignty in their hearts and steadfast to the Panth.

Our journey will take us through 18th-century Sikh History, where we'll witness how Panth turned Kapur Singh into "Nawab" Kapur Singh. We'll see how young Jassa Singh, once teased for his accent while feeding horses, panth awarded him respect and responsibility of Sultan-ul-Kaum. Through these stories, we'll understand how the Khalsa maintained their sovereign spirit even when forced into jungles, surviving on leaves and wild fruits, never compromising their principles for comfort.

We'll learn from the dauntless spirit of Bhai Tara Singh Vaan, who stood against the might of Mughal tyranny when others stayed silent, and from the unwavering conviction of Bhai Mani Singh, who faced death with such dignity that he guided his own executioner through each joint. These exemplars show us how the Guru's Sikhs turned persecution into power, oppression into opportunity, and ultimately established a state founded on justice and equality.

These aren't just tales from the distant past - they are our heritage, living in our daily ਅਰਦਾਸ (Ardās) and flowing through our veins. When we say " ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ (rāj karēgā khālsā) " today, we connect with the same spirit.

Join us at Camp Gurmat 2024 as we discover how these timeless principles of Seva, Simran, and Sacrifice make us more sovereign today.

ਹਮ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦਈਂ ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਲਾਇ |ਜਹਿ ਜਹਿ ਬਹੈ ਜਮੀਨ ਮਲ ਤਹਿ ਤਹਿ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਬਿਠਾਏ |

The True Guru has bestowed sovereignty upon us, establishing it in every place. Wherever they sit upon the earth, there they establish their throne.

Team Camp Gurmat

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Camp Gurmat Discipline

Please read the following camp rules and abide by them during the camp:

1. **Respect and Timeliness:** Be respectful to everyone, be on time, and listen to your assigned Counselor/Volunteer/Organizers.
2. **Safety in Numbers:** No child may roam alone; a group Counselor or cabin Volunteer must accompany all children at all times.
3. **Camp Boundaries:** No camper or counselor is allowed outside camp limits without written permission.
4. **Respecting Privacy:** Boys are prohibited in the girls' Bungas and vice versa.
5. **Mandatory Participation:** All campers and counselors must attend assigned classes and Divans.
6. **Classroom Etiquette:** No talking or disturbances are permitted during Divans and classes.
7. **Following Instructions:** All campers must follow the counselors' and volunteers' instructions.
 - a. **Dress Code:** No shorts are allowed except during sports times.
 - b. **Fostering Respect:** Be respectful of other campers and counselors.
 - c. **Conflict Resolution:** No fighting is allowed. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the Counselor/Volunteer immediately. The assigned volunteer will communicate with the Camp Security Officer for further action.
 - d. **Communication Protocol:** Any concerns or questions should be addressed to the assigned counselors/volunteers. Campers should not communicate with the organizing volunteers, even if they know them personally.
 - e. **Curfew:** Any camper found outside the Bunga after 09:15 P.M. and before 6:00 A.M. without proper written authorization will be expelled automatically.
8. **Parental Involvement:** Parents are requested to attend Diwan on the last day of the Camp (Dec 31st, after 8:00 A.M.). Diwan will feature children's performances, and everyone is invited.
9. **Guardian Authorization:** Written/email authorization is required if a guardian other than a parent picks up the camper on the last day (Dec 31st).
10. **Electronic Devices:** Phones, tables, or other recording devices are NOT allowed in the classroom. If found, they will be confiscated and returned on the final day. Volunteers are not responsible for any lost devices.

Camp Gurmat 2024 Teachers



Bhai Manmohan Singh Ji lives in San Jose, California, with his wife, Amrit Kaur. With Akaal Purakh blessings, he has been in Sikhi Prachar Sewa in various Gurdwara Sahibs in the USA, Canada, and the UK for the last 32 years.

He and his family have been performing Gurbani Kirtan Sewa in Akhand Kirtan Samagams at several places. He has attended Gurmat Camps as an educator and taught Kirtan to several students. With Guru's grace, he has a YouTube channel to learn kirtan and has developed a series of 7 Kirtan Books plus an Audio CD and DVD to teach kirtan.

S. Kuldip Singh is a dedicated community activist committed to making minority communities safer and protecting them from discrimination. Professionally he is a Principal Architect in Data and Analytics at GE Healthcare, based in Atlanta, GA. Kuldip is a long-term advocate for bullying prevention and the banning of religious profiling in the USA. He holds an MBA from the Johnson School at Cornell University, NY, and a Master's in Computer Science from the National Institute of Technology, India.



Bhai Vikram Singh got his degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of California, Davis. Professionally, he has been working as a software engineer for the past 10 years. He has taught *Tabla* at San Jose Khalsa School for many years and frequently performed kirtan. He also does Katha in English for youth at San Jose Gurdwara Sahib.

Vikram Singh has spoken at many colleges, events, and camps around the world and is currently a sevadar with Khalsa Foundation California. He is also a Magician and often performs magic shows at camps, birthdays, and company events.



Giani Gurcharan Singh Ji is a Gatka Ustaad, Head Granthi, and a Kathvachik from Boston Gurdwara Sahib.

He has been teaching gatka for over 15 years and has a wealth of knowledge in Gurbani and Gur Ithaas.

Bhai Harjas Singh Ji has played Gatka for over 15 years, learning under Giani Jangbir Singh Ji Damdami Taksaal in Shaheed Baba Ajit Singh Ji Gatka Akhara in Carteret, New Jersey.

After placing 1st at Maidan-E-Jung in 2014, 2018, and 2019, 1st place Jauhr-E-Teg 2018, 1st Place Yudh 2014, 2nd place Maidan-E-Jung 2016, and 3rd place Maidan-E-Jung 2017, Bhai Harjas Singh Ji has accumulated 4 years of refereeing experience.



Bibi Papaldeep Kaur excels at teaching young students, focusing on Punjabi (Boli). She is a dedicated Khalsa School instructor with multiple years of volunteering experience.

Professionally, she leads the SEC Financial Reporting department for a Fortune 500 company in Irving, TX. She holds bachelor's degrees in Biology and Business Administration, along with a master's degree in Accounting and Information Management from the University of Texas at Dallas. A proud mother of twins, she spends her Sundays volunteering as a Punjabi instructor at Gurudwara Singh Sabha.



Bhai Charanjeet Singh Khushdil has cultivated a deep passion for Tabla, beginning his journey under the guidance of Bhai Sahib Sarabjeet Singh Ji (Ladi Veer Ji), Hazuri Ragi of Sri Darbar Sahib, and later learning from Ustad Bhai Anikbar Singh Ji of Ludhiana. Over the years, he has had the privilege of accompanying renowned Kirtanias such as Bhai Satwinder Singh-Harwinder Singh Ji (Delhi Wale), Bhai Anantvir Singh Ji, and Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh Ji, Stinderpal Singh Jabbal of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, UK. With over 15 years of Tabla sewa, Bhai Charanjeet Singh has performed globally and mentored students in Kenya and the USA, offering in-person and online training for Kirtan sewa, classical solos, and competitions.

Camp Gurmat 2024 Organization

Campers are divided into four groups named after the Chaar Sahibzade. The youngest group is named after Baba Fateh Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਫਤਹ ਸਿੰਘ). And the eldest group is named after Baba Ajit Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ).

- Each group is further split into two sub-groups, leading to eight groups named after Sikh Misls from the 18th century:
- Each Misl will have assigned Counselor(s).
- These counselors will lead their Misls in all movements - in Diwans (ਦੀਵਾਨ), classes, Sewa (ਸੇਵਾ), outdoor activities, etc.



Following are the eight Sewa campers will rotate through

Prakash (ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਸੇਵਾ) Morning Prakash of Guru Granth Sahib	Evening Hukamnaama (ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ)
Morning Deg (ਦੇਗ ਸੇਵਾ) Morning Deg preparation and distribution.	Evening Deg (ਦੇਗ ਸੇਵਾ) Evening Deg preparation and distribution.
Morning Ardas (ਅਰਦਾਸ)	Evening Ardas (ਅਰਦਾਸ)
Morning Hukamnaama (ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ)	Sukhasan (ਸੁਖਾਸਨ ਸੇਵਾ) Sukhasan of Guru Granth Sahib Ji



ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ

Hannē Hannē Pātshāhī



Hanne Hanne Pathshahi

The birth of the Sikh Raj is one of history's most remarkable transformations, spanning nearly three centuries from 1469 to 1765. It is the story of a people who attained ultimate freedom through unwavering faith in the Guru and supreme sacrifice. This journey unfolded in six distinct phases, each marked by trials and triumphs that shaped the Khalsa into a force that transcended physical boundaries and worldly power.

The first phase (1469-1716) began with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's divine mission. In 1469, the Akal Purakh, of Himself, entered the world as Guru.

ਆਪ ਨਰਾਇਣ ਕਾਲਾ ਜਗ ਧਰ ਮੈ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਿਓ ॥

(Ang 1385) Guru Nanak Dev Ji challenged the injustices of his time, declaring, ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਪੰਖ ਕਰ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥

Successive Guru Sahib fortified the Panth, uniting spirituality and temporal sovereignty. Guru Hargobind Sahib introduced Miri-Piri, emphasizing that true freedom lies in spiritual liberation and temporal empowerment. Guru Gobind Singh Ji culminated this transformation with the creation of the Khalsa, a collective embodying saintly virtues and sovereign thought. Banda Singh Bahadur proved that the Khalsa's freedom was unshakable, whether in governance or martyrdom.

The **second phase** (1716-1734) tested the Khalsa's indomitable spirit against relentless persecution. Farukh Siyar's decree sought to annihilate the Panth, but the Khalsa remained unbowed. Even in the depths of jungles and under the harshest conditions,

their souls remained anchored to Akal Purakh. Figures like Bhai Tara Singh of Vaan demonstrated that their sovereignty was not tied to physical circumstances but to their unyielding spirit, proving that no force could rule a free people.

The **third phase** (1734-1745) highlighted the Khalsa's resilience and commitment to justice. During Nadir Shah's invasion, the Khalsa liberated captives and restored dignity to those affected by war. Sacrifices like Bhai Taru Singh's and Bhai Mehtab Singh's acts of justice underscored their sovereign mindset, where faith and honor were paramount. Establishing forts and territorial control reflected their capacity to govern not through power but through principles rooted in justice.

The **fourth phase** (1745-1753) saw the Khalsa unify into a cohesive political and spiritual entity under Nawab Kapur Singh's leadership. The Dal Khalsa's formation and the Misl system embodied a governance model rooted in collective sovereignty. Even in the face of *Chhota Ghallughara*, the Khalsa emerged stronger, their vision undeterred, showing that sovereignty is born from shared values and an unyielding commitment to freedom.

The **fifth phase** (1753-1764) brought immense suffering, yet the Khalsa's resilience only deepened. The *Vadda Ghallughara* tested their resolve, but they remained steadfast, expanding the *Rakhi* system and rebuilding what was lost. Baba Deep Singh Ji's sacrifice became a symbol of the Khalsa's spiritual and temporal

strength, illustrating that their sovereignty was grounded in their connection to *Akal Purakh* and their responsibility to protect the oppressed.

The **final phase** (1764-1769) marked the Khalsa's establishment as a governing force. The capture of Lahore was not merely a victory of arms but of principles. Their governance reflected justice and protection for all, with *Nanakshahi* coins symbolizing their spiritual and temporal sovereignty. The Khalsa's freedom was absolute, rooted in their faith, and their governance was a

natural outcome of their sovereign thought process.

Through these six phases, the Khalsa demonstrated that their spirit transcended physical trials. Their freedom was not tied to worldly kingdoms but to their unwavering connection to *Akal Purakh*. Kingdoms and governance became inevitable outcomes of their sovereign mindset, a testament to their divine mission and their unyielding commitment to justice and freedom.

Throughout these phases spanning nearly three centuries, the Khalsa remained true to the words.

"Jis Panth nu Akal Purakh ne aap sajiya hai, uhnu mita kaun sakda hai?"

(ਜਿਸ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਹਨੂੰ ਮਿਟਾ ਕੌਣ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ?)

This is their story.





Phase I: The Foundation

1469-1716



Guru Nanak Dev Ji uplifted the downtrodden spirit of humanity, reviving life on all fronts. He introduced the path of devotion to the **Formless One (Nirankar)**, eradicated social and religious evils, and courageously critiqued the injustices of the ruling powers of his time. Guru Nanak's sharp critique of corrupt governance is reflected in his words:
ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਪੰਖ ਕਰ ਉਡਰਿਆ ||

(SGGS ANG 145)

(In this age, rulers have become butchers, and righteousness has taken flight).

While Guru Nanak was a true master of Dharam, he also stood as a true advocate for justice in society and governance. He empathized deeply with the pain of the oppressed masses and could not tolerate the sight of tyrannical rulers treating their subjects as mere victims.

Thus, Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a Panth (Sikh community) that would establish Dharam Raj (righteous rule) in the world, upholding truth, justice, and equality for all.

As Sikh sangat expanded **Guru Amar Das Ji** divided the country into 22 regions. Also referred to as ਬਾਈ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ (Bai Manjian). He picked leaders for each region to organize local Sikh Sangat. In 1569, Emperor Akbar visited Guru Amar Das Ji in Goindwal. Guru Ji showed that everyone is equal by having Akbar sit and eat in pangat Langar like everyone else. When Akbar wanted to give land to help run Langar, Guru Ji said no - Langar should run on people's honest work and sharing. Instead, Guru Ji asked Akbar to lower taxes for farmers when their crops failed. Akbar happily agreed.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji completed the work Guru Ram Das Ji started by establishing Amritsar Sahib as the spiritual center and completing the construction of Sri Harmandir Sahib. He also streamlined the management of preaching efforts across the 22 regions and undertook the monumental task of compiling

the Guru Granth Sahib, creating a unified scripture for the Sikhs.

At this time, the Sikh Panth became a well-structured community with a distinct identity. The Sikhs now had four key elements that define a faith:

1. own scripture (Guru Granth Sahib).
 2. own place of worship (Harmandir Sahib).
 3. own spiritual leader (the Guru).
 4. A shared community treasury (Golak).
- Sikhi transformed into a vibrant, organized faith that included people from all walks of life—landowners, merchants, warriors, preachers, and common folk. They worshipped one formless Creator (Nirankar) and followed Guru's teachings as the divine command on earth. The prestige of the Guruship grew immensely during this time, with **Guru Arjan Dev Ji** living humbly but maintaining the grandeur of the Guruship, which included royal tents, elephants, and horses.

Under Guru Ji's leadership, the Sikh Panth thrived, and its principles gained wide acceptance. However, this growth and influence began to threaten the Mughal Empire. Emperor Jahangir, troubled by Guru Ji's influence and the increasing strength of the Sikh community, ordered Guru Arjan Dev Ji's martyrdom. On May 30, 1606, Guru Arjan Dev Ji was tortured and executed on Jahangir's orders, becoming the first Sikh martyr and further solidifying the resolve of the Sikh Panth to stand against oppression.

Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, known as "Peeran de Peer" (ਪੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੀਰ) and "Rajan de Maharaj" (ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ), ascended to the Guruship and established a unique blend of Miri (temporal authority) and Piri (spiritual). Adorned with a golden Kalgi (ਕਲਗੀ), wearing two Kirpans (ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਾਂ), and carrying a majestic Baaz (ਬਾਜ਼), Guru Ji embodied both saintly and royal attributes. Seated on the Akal Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ), Guru Ji wore regal attire,

symbolizing sovereignty, and held court, establishing the Sikh Panth's autonomous governance.

Hukamnaama (Decrees) issued from the Akal Takht under carried authority among Sikhs. Guru Ji's leadership transformed the Sikhs into a well-organized group of warriors skilled in horseback riding, swordsmanship, archery, and royal hunts, reflecting their readiness for both self-defense and governance. From 1628 to 1634, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji led the Sikhs in four battles against the Mughal forces, demonstrating unmatched valor and tactical brilliance. The Guru's forces emerged victorious in every conflict, inflicting significant losses on the Mughal army, including their generals. Under Guru Ji's guidance, the Sikh Panth transitioned into a sovereign force, capable of asserting its independence even under Mughal rule. These victories solidified the Sikh community's military strength and resolve to uphold justice and freedom.

When **Aurangzeb's** time came, persecution increased. To protect dharma, **Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji** offered the supreme sacrifice on **November 11, 1675**, in **Delhi**. Guru Sahib's shaheedi ignited a spiritual flame in the hearts of Sikhs across the land. Guru Gobind Singh Ji declared, "**Talwār uthāe binā nibhāu aukhā hai**" (ਤਲਵਾਰ ਉਠਾਏ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਨਿਭਾਉ ਐਖਾ ਹੈ), meaning it was now necessary to take up arms to combat tyranny. Guru Sahib began extensive military preparations to resist oppression and defend justice. Faced with opposition from **Pahārī Hindu rāje** (ਪਹਾੜੀਏ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਰਾਜੇ), the Sikhs were compelled to confront them and engage in battles. Through these efforts, the Sikh community evolved into a formidable military power. Then, in 1699, Vaisakhi Guru Sahib conducted a profound and unprecedented trial of faith. In a grand assembly, (**ਭਰੇ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਅੰਦਰ**), Guru Ji, with a glittering sword in hand, demanded the

ultimate sacrifice, asking for "**sīr**" (ਸੀਸ) from his Sikhs. Five brave individuals offered their "**sīr**" (ਸੀਸ), proving their complete faith in the Guru.

This marked the creation of the **Panj Piare** (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ), who were initiated with **Amrit** (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ)

and, in turn, initiated Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself. On **March 30, 1699**, thousands of Sikhs took Amrit and became **Khalsa**.

Standing atop the throne at **Kesgarh Sahib** (ਕੇਸਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ), Guru Gobind Singh Ji declared,

"Mera rūp, Bahādur Singho! Guru te Khālsa hun vāhigurū jī kā Khālsa bane hāñ, tā vāhigurū jī kī fateh vī hovegī" (ਮੇਰਾ ਰੂਪ, ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿੰਘੇ! ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੁਣੇ ਅਸੀ 'ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਬਣੇ ਹਾਂ, ਤਾਂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ), affirming the Khalsa

as warriors of Akal Purakh, born from the sword, committed to righteousness, and destined to rule in accordance with divine will. Guru Sahib further proclaimed the Khalsa as "**Akal Purakh de puttār**" (ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ),

free from the cycle of birth and death (**churāsī ton ūchē, gain-maraṇ ton rahit - ਚੁਰਾਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚੇ, ਗੈਣ-ਮਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ**) and charged them with the duty of establishing **Dharam Raj** (ਧਰਮ ਰਾਜ), a

society built on justice. He declared all humans equal, rejecting caste-based discrimination and social hierarchies. The Khalsa's motto, "**Rāj karegā Khālsa, āki rahe na koe**" (ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਆਕੀ ਰਹੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ), became a resounding

call for sovereignty and unity.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji spent much of his life in **Dharam Yuddh** (ਧਰਮ ਯੁੱਧ), fighting against oppression.

Khalsa then saw a chain of sacrifices, including chotte Sahibzadey, Mata Gujri Ji, vadde Sahibzadey and 40 Singhs.

The sacrifices and struggles of the Khalsa laid the foundation for their eventual rise as sovereign rulers, ensuring that the flame of justice, equality, and independence burned brightly for generations to come.

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur



After **Guru Sahib's joti jot samana** in the **south (October 7, 1708)**, the Khalsa sought leadership to avenge the shaheedi of the Sahibzadas. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, whom Guru Sahib had blessed with five arrows and a hukamnama, arrived in Punjab.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, entrusted Baba Banda Singh Bahadur with a sacred mission to end tyranny and oppression in Punjab. To empower him, the Guru gave him Panj Singh (five Singhs) as an advisor, Panj Teer (five arrows symbolizing divine guidance and strength), and a **Hukamnama** (edict) calling Sikhs across Punjab to join the righteous cause. With the Guru's blessings, Baba Banda Singh set forth to liberate the oppressed and establish justice.

Baba Banda Singh began his mission in Punjab by sending letters to the Sikh Sangat in **Majha, Malwa, and Doaba**, urging them to join the campaign. Sikhs responded enthusiastically, leaving their homes and livelihoods behind to join Baba Banda Singh. Within a short time, he assembled a formidable force of 4,000 cavalry and 7,000 infantry, transforming the scattered Sikh resistance into an organized army. They captured royal treasury to sustain their campaign.

The next major target was **Samana**, a city known for its wealth and its connection to the executioners of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and the

Sahibzade. On **November 26, 1709**, Baba Banda Singh launched an attack, and within hours, the city fell. Thousands perished, and the city's treasures were seized, marking the first significant victory of the Sikhs.

The most decisive confrontation came at the **Battle of Chappar Chiri on May 22, 1710**, near Sirhind. This battle was pivotal for the Sikh struggle, as it targeted **Wazir Khan**, the governor of Sirhind, who had ordered the brutal execution of the Sahibzade. Baba Banda Singh's army faced a much larger and better-equipped Mughal force. Wazir Khan commanded an army of **20,000 soldiers**, including war elephants and artillery, while the Khalsa forces were smaller and armed with limited resources.



Initially, Wazir Khan's cannons and muskets inflicted heavy damage on the Singhs, causing significant losses. Seeing this, the traitorous soldiers under Sucha Nand's nephew abandoned the battlefield, leaving only the loyal Khalsa warriors to continue the fight. Banda Singh, observing the situation from a high vantage point, led his reserve forces into the battlefield. The arrival of Baba Banda Singh gave Khalsa Army a new energy. With their swords and spears in hand, the Singhs launched a fierce attack on the Malerkotla forces. Both Sher Muhammad Khan and Khwaja Ali fought valiantly but were ultimately slain by the Khalsa warriors.

The fall of these generals caused panic among Wazir Khan's troops, and many fled. Despite the setbacks, Wazir Khan held his position until a well-aimed arrow struck him, throwing him off his horse. S. Baj Singh and S. Fateh Singh captured Wazir Khan, and his fall marked the collapse of his army.

After their victory, the Khalsa army advanced to **Sirhind**, entering the city on **May 24, 1710**.

The city, stained with the blood of the Sahibzade, was subjected to the righteous wrath of the Khalsa. The oppressive structures of Mughal rule were dismantled, and tyrants like Wazir Khan were held accountable for their crimes.

Baba Banda Singh appointed **Bhai Baj Singh** as the governor. Khalsa Raj, under Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, was unlike any other kingdom of its time. They abolished the zamindari system. That is, farmers became owners of the land they till. People of all faiths were allowed to live without fear of persecution. However, this raj didn't last for long.

1715: Baba Banda Singh at Gurdas Nangal

Emperor **Bahadur Shah** launched massive campaigns to suppress the Khalsa. Baba Banda Singh continued to resist, but after several battles, he was forced to retreat to **Gurdas Nangal**, where the Khalsa forces were besieged for many months.

Starvation and betrayal eventually led to the capture of Baba Banda Singh and his army on **December 17, 1715**. Baba Banda Singh and 740 of his companions were marched to **Delhi**, where they endured unspeakable humiliation and torture.



On **March 5, 1716**, the mass execution of Sikhs began. Every day, a hundred Sikhs were executed, but none renounced their faith.

On **June 19, 1716**, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur faced his final moments. He was forced to witness the execution of his **four-year-old son, Ajay Singh**, whose heart was torn out and placed in his father's mouth. Despite this horrific act, Baba Banda Singh remained calm and composed. His body was mutilated piece by piece, yet he displayed no fear or weakness, embracing martyrdom with the dignity and courage befitting a true Sikh warrior.

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's life and sacrifice left an indelible mark on Sikh history. **Khalsa Raj**, founded on the principles of justice and equality, demonstrated the power of faith and unity in challenging oppression.

This marked not the end, but a new beginning in the struggle for Sikh sovereignty, setting the stage for future victories under the **Dal Khalsa** and, eventually, the establishment of the **Sikh Raj**.



Phase II: Panth Leads
1716-1734



Sakhi: Bhai Tara Singh Vaan

Sikh persecution continued after the *Shaheedi* of **Baba Banda Singh Bahadur**. Sikh persecution of **1716-1719** led to the destruction of most of Sikh homes. And many moved to Hill or Bikaner. By 1719, Abdus Samad Khan got busy with political matters in Delhi, giving the Sikhs a break. The Singhs, inspired by the freedom they had tasted under Banda Singh Bahadur, refused to give up their dream of independence. They formed small jathas of about a hundred Singhs roaming the region. For survival, they sometimes looted and targeted informants or traitors who had betrayed the Khalsa.

In **1721**, the Sikhs celebrated Vaisakhi in Amritsar Sahib, where Bhai Mani Singh Ji was appointed as the Granthi of Harmandir Sahib. By **1723**, **Zakariya Khan** became the Governor of Lahore, with **Lakhpot Rai** as his Diwan and Moman Khan as his Deputy. To control the Sikhs, Moman Khan sent patrolling soldiers into the region. But, this made the Sikhs even bolder and more determined. Among these events, the martyrdom of Bhai Tara Singh Ji is especially remembered.



Figure 1 Bhai Tara Singh Vaan

Bhai Tara Singh (ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਂ) lived in the village of Vaan, near Amritsar Sahib, then part of Lahore district. A devout Sikh, he was a **rehitvaan** (one who keeps Rehet), always *Tyaar-bar-Tyaar* (ever-prepared), and deeply

immersed in **Gurbani** and **Naam Simran**. Clad in blue *chola* and adorned with many shasters (weapons), Bhai Tara Singh exemplified the spirit of the Khalsa. Bhai Tara Singh's **bunga** (house) was more like a fort, constantly fortified with 10-12 armed Singhs who lived and trained

there. Together, they did Gurbani paath, practiced *shastar vidya* (martial arts), and shared earnings to sustain langar (community kitchen).

Conflict with Sahib Rai

Not far from village Vaan was the village of Naushera Pannu, where a proud and oppressive **Chaudhary** (village head) named **Sahib Rai** ruled. He frequently harassed the Sikh farmers, letting his horses graze in their fields and destroying their crops. Despite their peaceful nature, the Sikh farmers became increasingly frustrated.

When the Singhs finally confronted Sahib Rai, he responded with arrogance and insult, threatening to cut their **kesh (hair)** — a deeply offensive remark to the Sikhs. The Singhs, valuing their **Kesh** more than their lives, were enraged but chose not to retaliate immediately.

Singh took action

First, Singhs sent their families to safety and, then with the help of Bhai Baghel Singh and Bhai Amar Singh, captured Sahib Rai's horses. The horses were sold in a Malwa, and the money was offered at Bhai Tara Singh's **Bunga**. When Sahib Rai learned of the incident, he accused the Singhs of theft and stormed into Bhai Tara Singh's Bunga with his guards. Bhai Tara Singh, unshaken, boldly declared that the real thief was Sahib Rai for allowing his horses to steal from the farmers' fields. When Sahib Rai resorted to insults, Bhai Tara Singh and his Singhs drove him out, leaving him humiliated and beaten.

The Battle Begins

Enraged, Sahib Rai sought the help of the Patti ruler, exaggerating the threat posed by Bhai Tara Singh. A force of 100 soldiers was dispatched to capture Bhai Tara Singh and other Singhs. However, Bhai Tara Singh Vaan and Singhs forced the soldiers to retreat.

Realizing that the Patti forces would return with reinforcements, many renowned Singhs across Punjab joined him. Together, 22 Singhs fortified and guarded the Bunga

The defeat of Patti forces reached Lahore Darbar. Zakariya Khan, dispatched **Moman Khan, Deputy Subedar**, with a massive army of **2,200 cavalry, cannons, and elephants** to capture Bhai Tara Singh Vaan. Moman Khan's forces reached the outskirts of Vaan, but Bhai Tara Singh and his Singhs, undeterred, stood their ground.

The battle began with fierce hand-to-hand combat. The Singhs, outnumbered but fueled by their unwavering faith, fought valiantly. Bhai Bhulaaka Singh was the first to attain *shaheedi*, but not before taking down many enemy soldiers.

When Moman Khan's officer, Takki Beg, challenged Bhai Tara Singh, he was met with a spear thrust so fierce that it shattered his confidence. Despite their small numbers, the Singhs inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. By morning, most of Bhai Tara Singh's companions had attained *shaheedi*.

The Shaheedi of Bhai Tara Singh Vaan

Bhai Tara Singh roared like a lion and charged into the enemy ranks. Cutting through the soldiers, he reached Moman Khan, who sat atop an elephant. Although surrounded, Bhai Tara Singh fought bravely, killing countless soldiers before he was finally brought down. Even in his final moments, he continued to fight, becoming a storm of resistance against tyranny.

Bhai Tara Singh Vaan's shaheedi in 1727 remains a symbol of courage and devotion. Their heads were taken to Lahore and discarded in a well, now the site of Gurdwara Shaheed Singhanian. Bhai Tara Singh's bunga became a site of inspiration, reminding Sikhs of their duty to uphold justice and protect their faith.

"Deh Pavitter Hoye, Shaster Lagaaye" –

Their bodies were purified through the wounds of battle.

1726: Khalsa attacked State Treasuries

In **1726**, Khalsa gathered in Amritsar Sahib and *Gurmatta* was done increase raids on royal treasuries. The Sikhs formed groups and spread out across the area while the Subedar deployed patrolling forces to counter them.

When Sikhs learned about a royal treasury being transported from Multan to Delhi, they ambushed it near *Khudiyān* (District Lahore) and captured the treasure. Around four lakh rupees fell into the hands of the Sikhs. A portion of the treasure was sent to Bhai Mani Singh Ji in Amritsar Sahib to support the langar, and the rest was distributed among the Sikhs. And did many such attacks on treasuries and developed a solid spy system.

Zakariya Khan offered rewards of 10 rupees for Sikh information, 25 for capturing one alive, 100 for a Sikh's head, and jagirs for greater services. As a result, the royal army, along with village *Chaudhari* and others, began actively searching for Sikhs. The Sikhs fled ahead, and the army followed, leaving destruction in their wake. The entire land was devastated.

In **1730**, Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan wrote to the Delhi Emperor for help, saying he couldn't pay taxes because Sikhs were looting the treasury. The emperor sent an army of 20,000, but before it arrived, many Sikhs hid in the Punjab hills or escaped to Bikaner. Unable to find them, the royal forces destroyed villages and harmed *kirti* Sikhs, causing more devastation. The army returned to Delhi, but by **1731**, the Sikhs reappeared in Punjab, stronger and more fearless, raiding and punishing informants and local Chaudhari. Zakariya Khan, unable to control them, wrote to the emperor, suggesting that Sikhs should be given jagirs to stop their raids and bring peace to the region.

In **1733**, Panth gathered in Amritsar Sahib to celebrate Vaisakhi. Zakhariya Khan sent Sardar Shabeg Singh with an offer of Nawabi to Panth. "The Lahore government wishes to establish peace with the Panth. It has granted a jagir (land grant)

worth one lakh annually and the title of 'Nawab.' We request the Panth to accept this."

Jathedar Sardar Darbara Singh asked for the opinions of all present. Many advised against accepting it. However, Sardar Shabeg Singh appealed again, saying:

"Strategy demands that what comes to the house unasked should not be rejected; the Lahore Darbar, fearing the Panth, initiated the peace offering, making it an honor for the Panth, not a disgrace, and thus it should be accepted."

Shabeg Singh's advice was accepted unanimously. The *jagir* was approved, but no one stepped forward to take title of *Nawabi*. The Panth chose **Kapur Singh**, who was humbly serving in the congregation. Reluctantly, he accepted and became known as **Nawab Kapur Singh**.

This new system worked for a year or so. For the needs of Amritsar Sahib, such as clothing, weapons, and other essentials, expenses were covered by *Guru Ki Golak*. The Golak received income from three main sources: the jagir, offerings (*chadhava*), and the honest earnings of the Sikhs (*kirat kamaī*).



Figure 2 Nawab Kapur Singh

Nawab Kapur Singh reorganized the Singhs into Buddha Dal and Taruna Dal, but as numbers grew, jagir income fell short, prompting the Taruna Dal to move to Hansi and Hisar. In **1735**, the Nawabi was revoked, and Nawab Kapur Singh rejected Lahore's employment offer. With limited offerings at Harmandir Sahib and refusing to use *Guru-ki-*

Golak, the Buddha Dal resumed earlier practices of attacking Mughal treasuries.

1735: Around this time, with Khan Bahdur's support, village chaudharis began harassing the Singhs. In response, the Singhs shifted the attack zone from Amritsar Sahib to the villages - collecting dues from the landlords and Chaudhuris. Subedar deployed a 10,000-strong force under Mukhlis Khan. The soldiers patrolled villages, killing anyone suspected of being a Sikh. Under this pressure, the Singhs retreated to Malwa. Zakariya Khan, frustrated with the growing strength of the Singhs despite daily killings, asked the *mullahs* and *Qazi* for an explanation.

They replied, "*Their Guru blessed the Sarovar at Amritsar Sahib with aabe-hayat (immortal water). By bathing in it and drinking Amrit, the Singhs become immortal. Stop them from going to Amritsar Sahib, and they will fade away.*"

Hearing this, Zakariya Khan sent Qazi Abdul Rahman and Muhammad Baksh with a thousand soldiers to seize Amritsar Sahib. They occupied the city, placed strict guards around the *Sarovar*, and prohibited any Sikh from bathing or drinking from *Amrit Sarovar*.

At this time, only Bhai Mani Singh Ji and a few companions remained in Amritsar Sahib, while most Singhs were unable to enter.

Bhai Mani Singh

Bhai Mani Singh Ji was from a distinguished family of Sikh warriors and Martyrs. His brother, Bhai Dayala attained martyrdom at Delhi with Guru Tegh Bahadur. Eleven brothers of Bhai Mani Singh and 7 out of 10 children attained martyrdom.

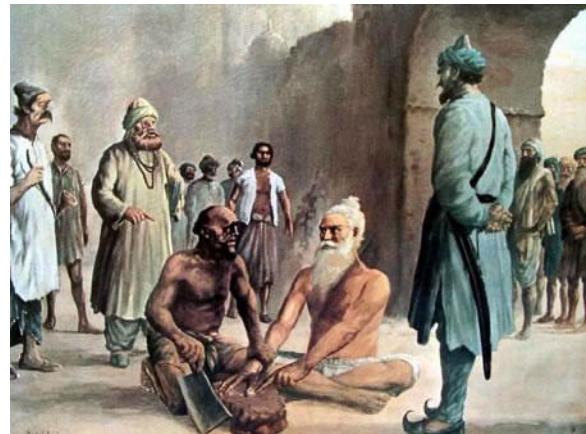
In 1738, due to the strict restrictions imposed by Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Qazi Abdul Razak, Amritsar Sahib was inaccessible to most of the Sikh Sangat. Bhai Mani Singh Ji, deeply pained by this situation, desired to organize a gathering of the Panth in Amritsar Sahib. To achieve this, he negotiated with the governor of Amritsar Sahib, Qazi Abdul Razak, for permission to hold a Diwali Jod Mela. The agreement was that Bhai Mani Singh Ji would pay 5,000 rupees to the government as a fee for the event and an additional 2,000 rupees to Qazi Abdul Razak. The Jod Mela was planned for ten days, and it was agreed that the Singhs could come to Amritsar Sahib without any obstruction from the authorities. He sent letters inviting distant and nearby congregations and jathas to participate. In preparation for the event, the local devotees cleaned the *Sarovar* and filled it with fresh water from wells. However, when Lakhpat Rai learned about this arrangement, he devised a cruel plan in agreement with Zakariya Khan. Using the *Jod Mela* as an excuse, he sent an excessive number of soldiers to Amritsar Sahib. Seeing the large army and the newly arrived officers, Bhai Mani Singh Ji understood the true plan. He immediately sent messages to all the jathas and sangats, warning them not to come. After the days of the Diwali mela passed, the officials demanded the contract fee from Bhai Mani Singh Ji.

He firmly replied, "It was your unnecessary deployment of soldiers that prevented the Jod mela from happening. The sangats didn't come, and no offerings were collected. How can I pay the fee?"

Diwan Lakhpat Rai arrested Bhai Mani Singh Ji in Amritsar Sahib and sent him to Zakariya Khan in Lahore.

The Nawab gave him an ultimatum: accept Islam or face death. Bhai Sahib firmly replied, "Zakariya Khan! If a Sikh has ever abandoned their faith, you may expect the same from me. A Sikh would prefer death over abandoning their Sikhi. The Khalsa is ready."

The *Qazi* ruled that Bhai Mani Singh Ji's body be cut limb by limb. When Sikhs in Lahore learned of this, they collected the required money and offered it to Bhai Mani Singh Ji to save his life, but he chose *Shaheedi*.



At *Nakhas Chowk*, the gruesome punishment began. When the executioner aimed to cut through multiple joints at once, Bhai Mani Singh Ji stopped him and said, "*Follow your master's orders properly. You must sever each joint individually. Look closely—there are three joints between each segment.*"

This extraordinary martyrdom shook every compassionate heart in Lahore. Bhai Sahib, calm and meditative, sat in prayer as his body was cut piece by piece. Finally, the executioner struck his neck, separating the head from the body.

Bhai Mani Singh Ji's *Shaheedi* profoundly inspired the Khalsa and ignited a fiery resolve among the Singhs. Enraged by the injustice, they began targeting various areas, resulting in the killing of many village *Chaudharis* and the plundering of several villages. Despite avenging Bhai Mani Singh Ji's martyrdom by killing the *Qazi* and *Mufti* responsible, their anger

remained unquenched. Determined to exact further justice, they set their sights on Nawab Zakariya Khan. However, their plans were hindered as Zakariya Khan seldom left the safety of his fort.

Singhs in Lahore to Kill Zakariya Khan

One day, 2,000 Singhs came up with a clever plan. They dressed like Turks, carried a specially designed green Haideri flag, and rode horses into Lahore through the Taksali Darwaza (gate). Lahore guards, seeing their flag and flowing beards, welcomed them in. They chose Friday for their mission because that was when

Zakariya Khan usually went to the royal mosque to pray. The Singhs planned to punish him for his actions.

However, things didn't go as planned. That day, Zakariya Khan, Subedar Lahore, didn't show up for public prayer. When the Singhs realized they couldn't complete their main mission, they decided to make their presence known in another way. Before leaving the city, they raided the officials' areas near the Taksali and Mochi gates.

When Khan Bahadur (Zakariya Khan) heard about what happened, he became even more frightened than he had been before.

Bhai Garja Singh Bhai Bota Singh



Bota Singh and his companion Garja Singh were living in hiding near the village of Bharaane. They avoided being seen and moved cautiously, often traveling at night to bathe in the Sarovar of Amritsar Sahib and Tarn Taran. One day, after bathing at Tarn Taran, they rested in a nearby forest, concealed among the trees.

As they sat, they overheard some travelers passing by. One traveler remarked, "I saw two Singhs hiding over there." Another responded, "Singhs don't hide! Those must be jackals."

These words stung deeply. Bota Singh and Garja Singh did a *Gurmata* and decided that instead of living in hiding, they would perform a

heroic deed and achieve martyrdom. They resolved to act boldly.

They went to a spot on the Lahore Road near Nuruddin's inn and setup toll booth for passersby. They demanded one anna per cart and a small fee from travelers. Those who paid the toll were allowed to pass, but they ensured their actions made a statement.

After a few days, Bota Singh wrote a letter to Khan Bahadur, the governor of Lahore. The letter read:

ਚਿੱਠੀ ਲਿਖੇ ਯੋ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੋਤਾ, ਹਥ ਹੈ ਸੇਟਾ, ਵਿਚ ਰਾਹ ਖੜੋਤਾ

I, Bota Singh writes a letter to convey that I have a staff in hand and has blocked the main road.

ਆਨਾ ਲਾਯਾ ਗੱਡੇ ਨੂੰ, ਪੈਸਾ ਲਾਯਾ ਖੋਤਾ,

I have levied four paisa tax for a bullock cart and two for a donkey

ਆਖ ਭਾਬੀ ਖਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ, ਯੋ ਆਖੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੋਤਾ

Let my brothers wife, Khano know that this is the declaration of Bota Singh

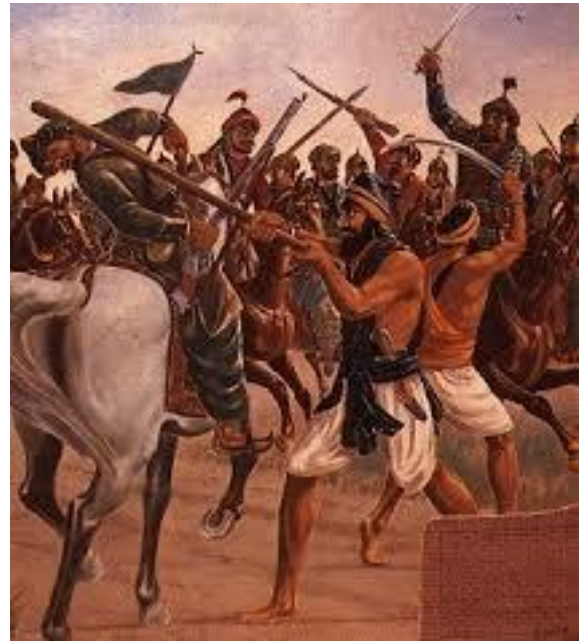
This bold letter was sent to the governor through passing merchants, who delivered it promptly. Upon reading the letter, Khan Bahadur was enraged. He ordered his officer Jalaluddin to capture Bota Singh and Garja Singh alive. Jalaluddin set out with a force of 100 soldiers.

When Jalaluddin's forces arrived, the Singhs were ready. Jalaluddin tried to persuade them, saying, "Bota Singh, resistance is futile. You cannot fight so many. Surrender, and I will request the governor to pardon you."

Bota Singh boldly replied, "We are here to fight and die like warriors, not to live as cowards. If

you wish to witness the bravery of Singhs, send four of your best soldiers to face us."

Jalaluddin accepted the challenge and sent four skilled soldiers to fight. The Singhs fought valiantly and defeated all four. Seeing this, Jalaluddin sent more soldiers, but they too met the same fate. Finally, Jalaluddin ordered his entire force to attack at once.



Despite being heavily outnumbered, Bota Singh and Garja Singh fought fiercely. They battled courageously until their last breaths, achieving martyrdom. On the other side, about thirty of Jalaluddin's soldiers were killed or wounded.

This act of bravery and sacrifice shook the entire region. The Singhs had once again shown their indomitable spirit and unwavering faith. For the Singhs, death held no fear. They lived and died for righteousness, embodying the true spirit of their faith.



Phase III: Tackle Invaders

1734-1745



1739: Nadir Shah in Punjab

To understand Sikh history, knowing about the Mughal rulers of Delhi and the rulers of Kabul and Lahore is essential. The Sikh panth grew strong while these two powers clashed. As these powers weakened, the *panth* became stronger, eventually overcoming them.

Nadir Shah, born in 1688 in a poor family in Khorasan, rose from being a fearless bandit leader to a national leader. By 1721, he had defeated the Afghans and reclaimed Khorasan and Kandahar. With the support of thousands of patriots, he drove the Afghans out of Iran and was declared its ruler. In 1736, he assumed the title of Nadir Shah.

Nadir Shah entered Lahore in January 1739, facing minimal resistance and quickly defeating Zakariya Khan's forces in the first skirmish near the city. Earlier, he had expanded his empire by capturing Kabul (part of the Mughal Empire) meeting little opposition. When his peace offers to Peshawar and Delhi went unanswered, he prepared for war. In November 1738, he captured Peshawar and advanced towards Delhi by early 1739, encountering weak resistance.

At the Battle of Karnal on February 13, 1739, Nadir Shah decisively defeated the much larger but poorly led Mughal army. He entered Delhi soon after and plundered it mercilessly. The loot included immense wealth, such as the famed Kohinoor diamond, the Peacock Throne, gold, silver, and countless valuables, estimated in the hundreds of millions of rupees, leaving the Mughal Empire severely weakened. Nadir Shah's invasion severely weakened the Mughal Empire. In May 1739, Nadir Shah left Delhi and took vast wealth, including the famous Kohinoor diamond and the Peacock Throne. During this time, the Sikhs, under their leaders, used the chaos to emerge stronger, reclaiming lost ground and resources. Nadir's invasion inadvertently helped the Sikh Panth grow in strength and unity, setting the stage for their future rise.

Nadir Shah learns about Sikhs

When the news of the Sikhs looting Nadir Shah's army reached him in Lahore, he was consumed with rage. Turning to Khan Bahadur, he demanded, "Who are these Sikhs who dare to plunder the army of Shahan Shah Nadir Shah? Where are their homes? I will burn them to ashes! What kingdom do they claim? I will wipe it off the map!"

Khan Bahadur replied cautiously, "Victory to Shahan Shah! But where can I show you the Sikhs' homes or their kingdom? Their homes are on their horses' saddles, and, according to their words, their kingdom spans the entire world. These Sikhs, hungry and barefoot, wander through jungles, surviving the harshest conditions. They face your bullets and torture on the charakhi, yet they still proclaim: Raj karega Khalsa, aaki rahe na koi!"

*"They have no wealth, no allies, and no shelter. The government offers rewards to those who kill them, yet they never have enough to eat or proper clothing to cover themselves. Still, they claim they will one day rule the world. These warriors are so bold that they are ready to fight one against sava lakh. They see the rest of the world as **Chaurasi** (mere mortals) while they consider themselves the Khalsa of Akal Purakh. "They can outrun our horses and care nothing for exhaustion, hunger, or sleep. Their spirit never weakens, no matter the hardship. These are the Sikhs who plundered your army." Listening intently, Nadir Shah took a deep breath and said, "If this is the kind of people they are, then they will surely become the rulers of this land one day. No force will be able to stop them from reaching their destiny."*

Sikh Gains During Nadir's Attack

Nadir Shah stayed in Hind for five months, and for the Sikhs, this was a golden opportunity to grow in strength. Taking advantage of the chaos, they raided and expanded their power. At that time, the Sikhs were organized into jathas and led by fearless leaders like Nawab Kapur Singh.

As Nadir marched back to Kabul, he took some of Lahore's forces. Punjab was left vulnerable. Emerging from their hiding places, the Singhs unleashed a wave of raids across the plains of Punjab. Many people who had suffered under the rule of Muslim governors abandoned their homes and joined the Sikhs. Once someone took Amrit and became a Singh, there was no turning back.

The Sikhs built their first *Kachcha Quilla* (mud fort) at Dallewal on the banks of the Ravi. This fort served two purposes: storing looted goods and preparing to face the enemy during tough times. Growing bolder, the Sikhs launched attacks on Nadir's forces, looting them and rescuing thousands of captive girls. This act of bravery left a deep impression on Hindus, inspiring many young men to embrace Sikhism and join the ranks of the Khalsa.

Khan Bahadur After Sikhs

When Khan Bahadur turned his attention to his territory, he saw the devastation caused by both Nadir's forces and the Sikhs. Although he hadn't dared to confront Nadir Shah, Khan Bahadur decided to vent all his anger on the Sikhs. He issued strict orders to the local *chaudharies*, *faujdar*s, and officers of the patrol forces to eliminate the Sikhs completely.

The royal forces surrounded *Kachcha Kila* Dallewal and launched an attack. The Singhs

fought back fiercely, but the enemy's numbers were overwhelming. Despite their bravery, they couldn't hold their ground for long. Under the cover of darkness, the Singhs broke through the enemy's encirclement and escaped.

In this fierce battle, hundreds of Singhs were martyred, and many were captured by the enemy. The prisoners were taken to Lahore, where they were brutally tortured and executed in *Nakhas Chowk*. The enemy then demolished *Kila Dallewal*, leveling it to the ground.

Khan Bahadur issued a royal proclamation against the Sikhs:

"It is the government's decree that no Sikh shall remain in our territory. Sikhs are declared rebels by the state. Whoever finds a Sikh and kills them will be pardoned for the murder, and whoever loots a Sikh's house will face no penalty for the loot. Anyone providing information about a Sikh will receive ten rupees. Capturing a Sikh alive or bringing their severed head will earn a reward of fifty rupees. However, anyone who knows of a Sikh's whereabouts but fails to report it, offers them food or shelter, or shows any sympathy or relation to the Sikhs, will either be forcibly converted to Islam or executed for refusing conversion."

This proclamation turned the greedy *chaudharies* of the villages into bloodhounds, relentlessly pursuing the Sikhs for rewards.

At that time, Sikhs were nearly wiped out in Punjab. Most had fled to the hills or distant Hindu states like Bikaner, Jaipur, and Jodhpur. Those captured by the Mughals were sent to Lahore's *Nakhas Chowk*, where they were brutally tortured and executed.

Sakhi: Bhai Sukha Singh – Bhai Mehtab Singh

Source: Hanne Hanne Pathshahi (ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ) by Jagdeep Singh

In 1740, with Zakaria Khan, legalizing looting and murder of Sikh, cartloads of Sikh heads were sent to Lahore. Among the traitors aiding this brutality were Harbhagat Niranjania of Majitha, the Chowdhary of Noshaira Pannu, and Massa Rangar of Mandiali. Massa, in charge of the Amritsar Sahib circle, desecrated Darbar Sahib by smoking hookah and drinking alcohol inside while watching dancing girls. Armed guards surrounded Darbar Sahib, ensuring his protection.

Bhai Mehtab Singh hailed from Meeran Kote, and **Bhai Sukha Singh** was from Mari Kamboki, near Amritsar Sahib. They were part of a *jatha* camping in Budha Johad (near Ganganagar). When news of Darbar Sahib's desecration reached them, they sought the *Panth's* permission to act.

They started their journey towards Amritsar Sahib.

The plan was made along the way. Both Singhs dressed up as *Lambardars* (revenue collectors). During those days, collectors would obtain revenue from the people of the villages in their charge and deposit the money with the local administrator, who would send the collections to Lahore. The land revenue was paid in the form of coins of different values. The Singhs took broken baked clay pots and shaped them to look and sound like coins. They filled bags with these fake *coins*. Once they had enough, they tied the bags into bundles.

They did Ardas and entered Amritsar Sahib Sahib.

They caught the first glimpse of Darbar Sahib and the armed guards around it from a distance. They quickly set the bundles down. The security was tight, but how could a Sikh see Darbar Sahib and not bow in respect? It was the month of *Bhadon* (August-September), and the rain and sunshine took turns. The Singhs fell to their knees, crying out, “Dhan Guru Ramdas Sache Pathshah Sodhi Sultan Ji!”.

The melodies of Raag Sarang and Raag Malhar echoed in the air, but the words sung offered no solace. “Poor poetry ruins the essence of these Raags. When paired with Gurbani, they soothe burning hearts, but today, they feel so distasteful,” remarked Bhai Sukha Singh, a renowned Kirtaniya, unable to tolerate the disrespect.

“You are right, Singh Ji. The true power lies in Satguru’s Bani. Without Bani, these Raags cannot calm restless souls,” Bhai Mehtab Singh agreed.

They swiftly rode their horses and tied them to the *Beri* tree. They hid their spears against the *Beri*. The *Sirōhī* were concealed under their robes. The kirpans with *gatrās* were also worn inside. (*The Sirōhīs a heavier Rajasthani sword with a flat-ground blade, a long back edge, and a polished finish making it stronger and sharper than typical swords.*)

“What are these bundles you’re carrying?” mocked a Mughal soldier, spitting a mouthful of Paan into the waters of Amrit Sarovar. Mehtab Singh’s hand moved toward the sword hidden under his robe, but Sukha Singh quickly stepped forward and grabbed his arm to stop him.

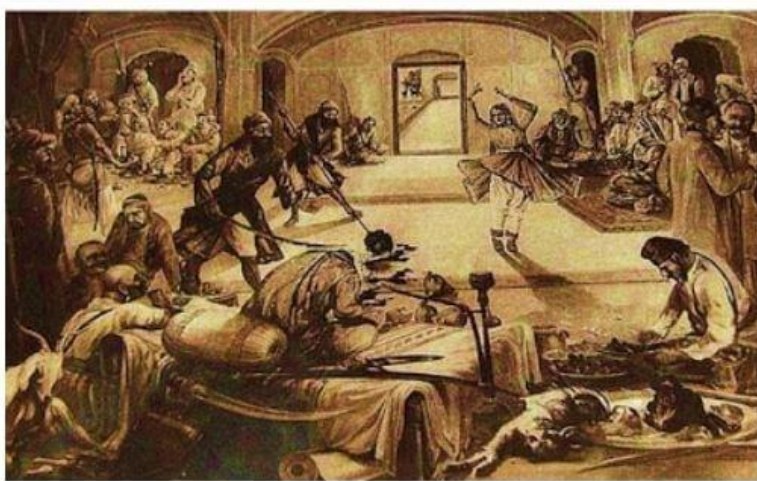
In a steady but firm voice, Sukha Singh said, “We’ve come to settle Chaudhary Sahib’s dues. There’s an old account, and we’re here to pay it in full.”

“Save something for us, too,” the soldier sneered.

“Of course,” Sukha Singh replied with a calm smile. “We won’t take anything back with us today, and no one will be upset. Everyone will get their share.” Saying this, Sukha Singh moved forward confidently, keeping his composure.

Both Singhs bowed their heads as they entered Darbar Sahib. “Dhan Guru Ram Das Sache Patshah Ji, grant us strength,” Bhai Sukha Singh whispered.

The tunes of Raag Sarang echoed in the air, but they were tainted by the vulgar dance of a courtesan whose hands and feet moved to the beat. Soldiers leaned against the walls, lost in the performance. Some were drunk, staggering from the effects of alcohol, while others swayed to the beats of the drums. Many Mughal soldiers, unfamiliar with Raag and uninterested in the spectacle, were dozing off.



Bhai Mehtab Singh and Bhai Sukha Singh beheading Massa Ranghar

The Singhs approached Massa’s cot and stood silently before him. “What have you brought?” Massa slurred, his voice heavy with intoxication.

“We have brought the dues, *Huzoor*,” they replied respectfully.

“Put them down,” Massa commanded.

The Singhs placed the bundle of fake coins on the ground. Massa leaned forward to inspect them, and Bhai Mehtab Singh slipped

his hand into his robe. As Massa stepped off the cot, his hand reached for one of the bundles of fake coins. At that exact moment, Bhai Mehtab Singh’s hand gripped the hilt of his *Sirōhī*.

Massa untied a bundle, bending over to see what was inside.

Bhai Mehtab Singh, without hesitation, unsheathed his sword and swung it in one swift motion. The blade struck Massa’s neck, and his head fell right into the bundle of fake coins.

The commotion caught the attention of a few Mughal soldiers nearby, but before they could react, Bhai Sukha Singh had already dealt with three or four of them with his quick and decisive strikes. The room turned into chaos, with the Singhs moving swiftly and purposefully amidst the startled soldiers. Bhai Mehtab Singh emerged from the *Darbar Sahib*, letting out a thunderous *Jaikara*: “*Sat Sri Akal!*” He carried Massa’s severed head by its hair in his right hand. Chaos erupted inside, with shouts and confusion filling the air. A Mughal soldier cried out in alarm, trying to gather others.

As they tried to leave, they faced the Mughal soldier who had spit paan in the sacred Sarovar. Bhai Mehtab Singh, holding Massa's head in his right hand, swung his Sirohi with his left - cutting off the Mughal's head, which rolled across the Darshani Deori.



The Mughals were utterly unprepared for such an attack, blinded by their arrogance and belief that such an event was impossible. To them, the Singhs in Punjab were either eradicated or scattered, never to return. Their chase team barely managed to mount their horses before the Singhs had already vanished into the wilderness. After all, how can ordinary crows ever hope to catch soaring eagles?

After days of riding through Malwa's forests and barren lands, Bhai Sukha Singh and Bhai Mehtab Singh arrived at Buddha Johad at dawn. Khalsa jatha was completing *Asa-ki-vaar diwan*. The two dismounted their horses and bowed respectfully. The *Asa-ki-vaar diwan* concluded with an *Ardas*, and the *Hukamnaama* was read. The Singhs, fulfilling their oath, removed Massa's head from the spear and placed it before the *Panth*. In their rage, a few Singhs kicked the severed head, but Baba Sham

Singh stopped them, saying, "Singho, Perform its last rites. The *Panth* does not nurture hatred. The sinner has been punished for his deeds. The *Kalgidhar Pita Ji* protected the *Panth*. Now let this wicked head be offered to fire as its final punishment." And so, it was done. The head of Massa met its end in flames as justice was served.



Sakhi: Brave Nattha Khaira save Child Rai Singh Bhangu

Adapted from Hanne Hanne Pathshahi (ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ) by Jagdeep Singh

The news of Massa's killing spread across Punjab like wildfire, sparking *Jaikaras* of joy from the Singhs who had been hiding in the jungles and thickets. Once forced into the shadows, the Panth began emerging with renewed confidence. Meanwhile, terror gripped the homes of the *chughals* and *mukhbirs*, who now trembled at the thought of their fate. If the Singhs could strike down a powerful *Chaudhary* like Massa, severing his head and escaping from a heavily guarded Mughal circle, what chance did these petty informers have? Massa's grieving family, in their anger and sorrow, carried his headless body to Lahore and placed it before Zakaria Khan, demanding justice. "Capture the killers, cut them into pieces, and give us justice!" they cried, refusing to bury Massa's body until their demands were met. Zakaria Khan, already shaken by the news, was stunned into silence upon seeing the lifeless, headless corpse. The sheer boldness of the two Singhs, who appeared from nowhere, breached the Mughal defenses and vanished with Massa's head, leaving him reeling. His rage boiled over as he summoned the *Faujdar*s responsible for Massa's security, ordering them to answer for their failure.

Massa's family wailed in despair, threatening Zakaria Khan, "If you can't handle this, we'll take Chaudhary Sahib's body to Delhi!" Furious, Zakaria turned to the *Faujdar*s, shouting, "How could this happen under your watch? Were you blind?" A *Faujdar* replied, "They struck swiftly and escaped." Zakaria, enraged, dismissed him on the spot.

He called all his informants, the *Chaudhary*s and *Lambardars*, who collected rewards. When they stood before him, shaking with fear, Zakaria shouted, "You said the Singhs were gone! Then, who dared to kill Massa? Tell me, do you have any clue who those killers were?"

Terrified, the group remained silent until Harbhagat Niranjan spoke, "Huzoor, I've heard it was Mehtab Singh Bhango from Meeran Kote. He doesn't live there anymore but has gone into hiding with his companion."

Zakaria asked, "What about their families?" Harbhagat said, "Their families are in Punjab, hiding." Zakaria screamed, "Destroy their families! Burn their villages! Let no child survive!"

At Village Meerankot

Mughal soldiers, accompanied by Massa Ranghar's family, surrounded the village of Meerankot. They summoned the village *panch* (elders) – **Nattha Khaira**.

"Hand over Mehtab Singh, or your village will be destroyed. Choose—one man or the entire village." Nooruddin, their leader, declared.

Nattha pleaded, "Mehtab Singh is not in the village, Huzoor."

Before Nooruddin could respond, Harbhagat Niranjanian whispered something in his ear. Nooruddin's face darkened as he spoke again, "There is another way to settle this. I've heard that Mehtab Singh's young son is in the village. Bring him to me."

Nathha's face paled, and his voice trembled, "But he is just a child, Huzoor. He has done nothing wrong."

Nooruddin smirked cruelly, "What good is a snake's offspring if not to become a snake? We'll throw him into a pit with wild animals and let them finish the job. Go, bring him to me!"

Nathha was speechless. A close friend of Mehtab Singh, he had raised young Rai Singh like his own son.

As Nathha returned home, he saw seven-year-old Rai Singh playing happily with his friends. His heart sank. What if I take him and escape far away? The soldiers won't spare him if they find him, he thought. How can I ever face Mehtab Singh if I fail to protect this child? It would be better to give my life saving him than to live with such shame.

Determined to save Rai Singh, Nathha gathered his son, a nephew, a servant, and the boy. Together, they quickly crossed the village canal.

Soon, informers alerted Harbhagat Niranjanian, "Nathha has fled!" Harbhagat, alarmed, said, "If they escape, Khan Bahadur won't spare any of us."

Nooruddin wasted no time, ordering his cavalry, "Ride after them immediately. If you spot them, shoot on sight!" Soldiers, joined by the informers, set out in pursuit.

The dust of Zakaria Khan's advancing soldiers clouded the horizon as Nathha Khairan stood firm, his voice steady. "I'll stay and hold them off. Head towards Malwa, cross the marootherals, and reach Budha Johad. Deliver Rai Singh safely to Mehtab Singh."

"No, Panch Ji," his servant protested. "We can't leave you behind. We'll fight with you and protect Rai Singh as long as we live."

"If no one stays to delay the army, they'll destroy us all," Nathha said firmly, glancing at his son. "You must go. The boy's survival is what matters."

"Father, there's no escape now," his son replied. "Death is here. We must fight."

Nathha's tone grew desperate. "Even if it's nearby, hide him. Let Rai Singh live, no matter what happens to us."

Bullets tore through the air as Nattha and his companions took cover in a shallow trench, ready to fight. Nooruddin spurred Massa Ranghar's kin forward, shouting, "There are your enemies!"

Outnumbered and poorly armed, Nattha's group stood firm. Nattha aimed his bow, while his nephew carried a spear, his son a *selah*, the guard a sword, and the servant a wooden staff. The Mughal forces, armed with guns, charged ahead. Despite the odds, Nattha's group was determined to fight to the end.

Massa's family charged first, with his brothers and nephews leading the attack. Nattha struck down two horsemen, both Massa's nephews, while his servant's *salotar* split Massa's brother's skull with a loud crack, forcing the attackers to retreat. In the chaos, Nattha's guard claimed three more riders with his *kirpan*. Shaken by the losses, Massa's brother cried, "Half of us are gone; I want no more revenge!" and fled, leaving Nooruddin furious.

"Nooruddin, we are informants, not soldiers. Killing these Jatt is your job," Harbhagat Niranjania protested. Meanwhile, Nattha's arrows found their mark, taking down more riders. Nooruddin, seeing his men falter, ordered a full surround.

Amid the attack, Rai Singh clung to Nattha's leg as Nattha fired his last volley of arrows. His companions fought bravely with their weapons, holding off the advancing soldiers as long as they could.

Right then, Nattha's bowstring snapped. He drew his *kirpan* and cut down several attackers before Nooruddin signaled the riflemen. A volley of bullets struck Nattha, his son, the guard, and the servant, leaving them all fallen. Wounded, Nattha collapsed, with Rai Singh still clinging to his side, refusing to leave.

As the Mughals advanced, trampling bodies, Harbhagat Niranjania pointed toward Rai Singh and screamed, "There lies Mehtab Singh's seed! Crush him under the hooves!"

A Mughal soldier struck Rai Singh with his sword, slicing his neck. A second blow severed his shoulder. The lifeless child lay on the ground. Covered in blood, the Mughals assumed Rai Singh was dead and left the scene.

By the grace of Waheguru, young Rai Singh's vital artery was spared. A woman selling saag, passing through the field, noticed the lifeless bodies and then the boy, barely alive with a faint pulse. She carried him home and, eventually reunited him with his family in Rudiyaala. Rai Singh's deep wounds were stitched, and he survived to honor the sacrifices of Nattha Chaudhary. He grew into a valiant warrior, playing a pivotal role in the Sikh conquest of Sirhind in January 1764. His legacy lived on through his son, Ratan Singh Bhangu, the celebrated author of *Panth Prakash*.

1740-1745: Amritsar Sahib Siege

After the killing of Massa Ranghar, Khan Bahadur put stricter guards around Amritsar Sahib. Despite this, many determined Sikhs risked their lives, sneaking in to do *Ishnan in Sarovar*. Hearing these reports, the government pressured *Chaudhariyan and Chughlan* (informants), questioning their failure to capture Sikhs. Out of fear, these informants began targeting peaceful Sikhs, their children, and their families.

1745: Bhai Taru Singh

Bhai Taru Singh lived in Pind Poolha with his mother and sister. He was a Naam-bani walla Singh who farmed his land and used his earnings to run langar for sangat and Singhs. Har Bhagat Niranjaniya reported him to the authorities for helping Singhs with food. When he was arrested and being taken to Lahore, some Sikhs offered bribes to the guards to meet him and planned to free him. But Bhai Taru Singh refused their help, choosing to accept Shaheedi instead.

Facing Persecution in Lahore

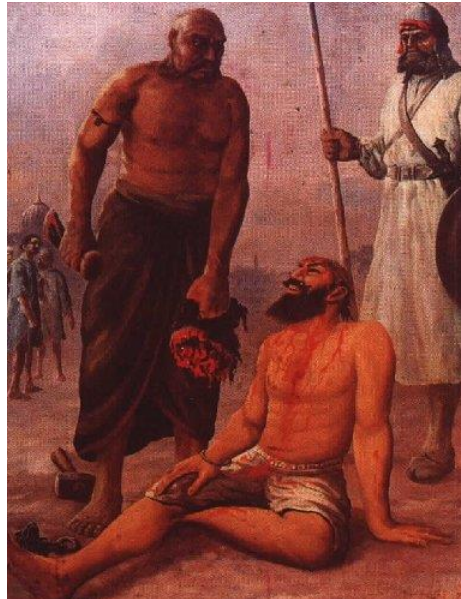
In Lahore, Bhai Taru Singh was charged with helping “rebel” Sikhs. They offered him “Death or Islam.” On receiving the news of the arrest of Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh surrendered himself voluntarily to be Shaheed by Bhai Taru Singh's side. Sardar Mehtab Singh was martyred on Charkhdi before Bhai Taru Singh's eyes. Around the same time, **S. Dayal Singh**, was martyred on the **charkhdi**, and **Garja Singh** was also martyred on *Sooli*.

A few days later, **Bhai Taru Singh Ji** was presented again. The **Subedar** tried to tempt him with many offers. Angered, **Khan Bahadur** said, *“Taru Singh! You take pride in your Sikh faith and your kesh (unshorn hair). I will have your kesh removed with Jutti!”*

With great spirit and resolve, Bhai Taru Singh replied, *“Khan Bahadur! My Sikh faith and kesh*

will end with my last breath, but your life and death will depend on my Jutti!”

Later, in Nakhas Chownk, Lahore (1745), Khan Bahadur ordered a *Mochi* (cobbler) to remove Bhai Taru Singh's **scalp with Kes(h)**. Despite this cruelty, when handed to the Sikhs afterward, Bhai Taru Singh survived several more days, calmly reciting Gurbani.



Remedy for Khan Bahadur's Suffering

As soon as Bhai Taru Singh Ji's scalp was removed, Khan Bahadur suffered from a severe ailment—he couldn't pass urine. No doctor could help him. Believing it was Bhai Taru Singh Ji's curse, he summoned Sardar Shabeg Singh to seek forgiveness. Bhai Taru Singh Ji replied that only the Khalsa Panth could change his words.

Shabeg Singh went to Akal Bunga, where the Budha Dal was stationed, and presented the matter to Nawab Kapur Singh. The Panth performed Ardas and decided that while Bhai Taru Singh Ji's curse couldn't be undone, striking Khan Bahadur's head with Bhai Sahib's jutti would bring relief.

Desperate, Khan Bahadur accepted. Each time Bhai Sahib's jutti struck his head, he was able to pass urine. Zakariya Khan died on July 1, 1745. On hearing this, Bhai Taru Singh Ji recited Japuji Sahib and peacefully departed.



Phase IV: Chhota Ghallughara 1745-1750



1745: First Ghallughara

On July 1, **1745**, Khan Bahadur Zakaria Khan, the powerful governor of Lahore, passed away. His death left a power vacuum, and infighting broke up among his three sons—Yahya Khan, Hayatullah Khan, and Shah Nawaz Khan. Yahya Khan, supported by the Mughal minister Qamaruddin Khan, claimed Lahore. However, Shah Nawaz Khan opposed him. The local elites eventually brokered peace, and by January **1746**, **Yahya Khan** had solidified his position as the new governor of Lahore. To help manage his rule, Yahya appointed **Lakhpat Rai as his Diwan**, or chief administrator.

During this time of political chaos, the Sikhs saw an opportunity. In the Majha region of Punjab, their numbers were growing. They raided oppressive landlords and used their resources to strengthen their position. Sabat Khalsa of **October 14, 1745** (Diwali), Khalsa united their forces under the name "**Dal Khalsa**." By early 1746, their confidence grew, and they even raided Lahore itself. Alarmed by their boldness, **Yahya Khan** ordered Lakhpat Rai to deal with the Sikhs.

The Battle of Rori Sahib

Lakhpat Rai took immediate action, sending his brother Jaspat Rai to confront the Sikhs. Word soon reached Jaspat that a group of Khalsa warriors had taken refuge in the jungles near Rori Sahib, close to Eminabad (now in Pakistan). To Jaspat, this was a challenge to his authority. Gathering his advisors, he commanded: "These rebels have no place here. Tell them to leave at once."

When the message reached the Sikhs, their reply came swiftly, calm but resolute: "*We will leave, but we need three days. Our injured need care, and our langar must feed the hungry.*" Jaspat, however, was a man of pride and impatience. "*Three days?*" he yelled. "*These are not guests but traitors! Ready the troops. We will drive them out ourselves.*"

Jaspat Rai led his forces into the jungle, sitting atop a majestic war elephant. His soldiers marched behind



him, carrying the banners of the Mughal Empire that fluttered in the breeze. As they surrounded the Sikh camp, the Khalsa warriors emerged, fearless and ready for battle. Their jakaras of "Sat Sri Akal!" echoed across the battlefield, their swords gleaming in the sunlight. The clash that followed was fierce. Though outnumbered, the Khalsa warriors fought with unmatched bravery, their movements swift and precise. Jaspat's forces pushed hard, but the Sikhs held their ground. The leader of the Khalsa warriors, Nibahu Singh, spotted Jaspat Rai on his elephant. With determination blazing in his eyes, Nibahu Singh roared, "Let this tyrant's arrogance end today!" Leaping onto the elephant with the agility of a lion, he drew his sword and struck. Jaspat Rai fell, his lifeless body sliding off the elephant.

The Spark of Revenge

News of Jaspat Rai's death reached Lahore within days. **Lakhpat Rai**, upon hearing of his brother's fate, was overcome with grief and rage. Lakhpat Rai, a prominent official in Governor

Yahya Khan's Lahore court. Lakhpat swore an oath before his court, "*I shall not rest until the Khalsa is wiped from the face of this earth. Let it be known: I will uproot them from their jungles, their villages, and wherever they may stand.*"

Lakhpat Rai's hatred was not mere rhetoric. He immediately approached **Yahya Khan** with a plan for vengeance. Yahya Khan, convinced by Lakhpat Rai's fervor, agreed. The campaign of extermination began in Lahore city, where innocent Sikh men, women, and children were rounded up and executed *en masse*. Their blood stained the streets, and their heads adorned Mughal outposts as grim trophies. Despite the horrors unleashed by Lakhpat Rai, the Khalsa remained unbroken. As the Lakhu's forces closed in, the Khalsa retreated to the dense swampy forest of *Kahnuwan*.

Trapped at Kahnuwan

Lakhpat Rai's forces laid siege to Kahnuwan, determined to flush out the remaining Khalsa warriors, however scared to enter the jungle. Lakhu's forces were well-equipped with cannons and muskets.



Inside the jungles, the Khalsa forces, led by **Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Sardar Naudh Singh Sukerchakia, Sardar Sukha Singh, and Sardar Gurdial Singh Dalewalia**, prepared themselves for what seemed like an impossible fight. The dense forests became both their shield and their battleground. When Lakhpat's forces approached, the Sikhs struck with swift and calculated raids. Wherever the Mughal cannonballs fell, the Khalsa would shift positions, ambush the Mughals from unexpected directions, and retreat into the cover of the trees. Their supplies of ammunition and food dwindled, leaving them to survive on forest leaves. Lakhpat Rai, frustrated by the Khalsa's resilience, ordered his forces to set the jungle on fire. Pursued by

enemies on all sides, with the River blocking their escape to the rear and the hills occupied by hostile forces, the Sikhs faced an almost impossible situation.

As Lakhpat pursued the Sikhs further, they continued their strategic retreat into the hills of *Basohli*, hoping for support from the local hill chiefs. However, they soon realized that Lakhpat had already aligned with the hill tribes, issuing strict orders to ensure no Sikh escaped alive. Trapped between the hostile hills, Lakhpat's pursuing army, and the raging Ravi River, the Sikhs faced an almost impossible situation.

The foot soldiers climbed the mountains with great effort while the horsemen struggled to follow because the steep paths were too dangerous for their horses, some slipped and fell to their deaths. Despite the enemy firing bullets from above and setting fires to block the way, the Sikhs advanced, defeated the hill warriors, and cleared a path forward.

Sardar Sukha Singh of Mari Kamboki shouted, "*Singhs! Why are you hiding your lives? Instead of dying like this, come forward and fight the enemy bravely. Follow me if you are ready to battle like warriors against Lakhpat!*" Hearing his call, the Singhs acknowledged and, with Jakaras, charged at the enemy.

A fierce battle followed, with Lakhpat seated on a red canopied elephant. Sukha Singh, injured by a cannonball that broke his leg, tore his turban to bind the wound and continued fighting. Though he couldn't reach his target, the Singhs inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, killing many key commanders. Eventually, surrounded but undeterred, the Singhs broke through the enemy lines and moved forward.

How to survive without weapons?

A jatha, under Sukha Singh, and Jassa Singh, escaped Lakhu's cover. However, as they camp at a safe distance, Sukha Singh and Jassa Singh addressed the Jatha.

"Singh Ji! We've escaped the enemy's encirclement, but by morning, they will likely pursue us again. Our journey ahead is long, and we need horses, weapons, and other supplies to continue. Think—where can we get them? From none other than our enemy, Lakhpat, who is now resting carelessly, thinking we've fled. This is the perfect moment for success. Attack the sleeping enemy and bring back what we need!"

Resolute in their plan, the Singhs launched a surprise attack under the cover of darkness, striking swiftly with their swords. They seized whatever supplies they could and left before the enemy could prepare to fight back.

Lakhpat, already grieving his brother's death, was struck by the loss of his son and pursued the Singhs with renewed fury. The Singhs, moving toward Lahore along the Ravi River, crossed it by midday using makeshift rafts. They then endured the scorching sands of Bari Doab before crossing the Beas near Sri Hargobindpur into the Doaba region, where Adina Beg posed fresh challenges. Pushing further south, they reached Malwa, where Baba Deep Singh set up camp in Lakhi Jungle, and Sardar Sukha Singh rested at Jaito to recover from his wounds. Those who sought refuge in the hills faced hostility from the chiefs, while captured Singhs were tortured and executed in Lahore, their heads displayed on Lahore city gates.

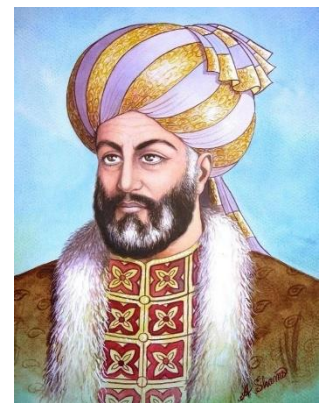
During this campaign, lasting two and a half months, thousands of Singhs were killed in what became known as the **Chhota Ghallughara**.

1747: Arrival of Abdali

In 1746, the power struggle between brothers Yahya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan over Lahore gave the Sikhs much-needed respite from the devastation of **Chhota Ghalughara**. Shah Nawaz invited Ahmad Shah Abdali, who had risen to power in Afghanistan after Nadir Shah's assassination in 1747. Abdali's intervention led to Yahya Khan's defeat and Abdali's control over Lahore in early 1748. However, Mir Manu, the son of the Mughal Wazir, led a counterattack at the Battle of Manupur in March 1748, defeating Abdali and forcing him to retreat. Following this victory, Mir Manu was appointed governor of Lahore and Multan.

About Ahmad Shah Abdali

Ahmad Shah Abdali, later known as **Ahmad Shah Durrani**, founded modern Afghanistan. Respected by the Afghans as "Baba". Before being elected king in 1747, Abdali was a cavalry general under the Persian emperor Nadir Shah Afshar. Abdali was part of Nadir Shah's army as it plundered Delhi and annexed the famous diamond Koh-i-Noor from the Mughal Emperor Muhamad Shah. Nadir Shah was assassinated in a brawl between the Afghans and Persians of his army.



Sukha Singh Accepts Challenge

In 1746, following the devastation of the Chhota Ghalughara, the Sikhs faced immense challenges, but their resilience remained unbroken. As power struggles raged in Lahore, the Sikhs found an opportunity to regroup in the Majha region and reclaim their presence in Amritsar Sahib. However, the Sarovar in Amritsar Sahib was heavily guarded. Watchtowers were erected around the Sarovar, and armed guards with muskets were stationed with strict orders: shoot any Sikh who dared to approach for a bath.

Despite the threat, the Sikhs refused to be deterred. At night, under the cover of darkness, they would stealthily arrive at the Sarovar, perform their sacred bathing rituals, and vanish before dawn. Frustrated by their inability to catch the Sikhs, the Muslim rulers sent out a taunting message, daring Khalsa to come during the day if they had true courage. This challenge reached Sukha Singh Mari Kamboke. He decided to answer it.

One afternoon, disguised in Turkish attire, he boldly walked to the Sarovar under the watchful eyes of the guards. Without hesitation, he entered the Sarovar, bathed openly, and then, to everyone's shock, removed his turban to reveal his unshorn hair tied (*Joora*) — a proud declaration. He raised *Jakara* in full defiance, and before the stunned guards could react, he fled with unmatched swiftness. Sukha Singh showed that no guards, no watchtowers, and no threats could stop the Khalsa spirit of fearlessness and faith in Waheguru.

1748: Lahore under Mannu

In 1748, amidst the intense activity of Mir Manu and Ahmad Shah Abdali in Lahore, the Khalsa resolved to rebuild its strength and unify its ranks. At a crucial gathering, the first **Gurmatta** (a collective decision) was made to eliminate informants who had caused the martyrdom of many Singhs, including Bhai Taru Singh and Bhai Mani Singh. Acting swiftly, the Khalsa turned their attention to these informants and punished individuals such as Chaudhary Sahib Rai, Rama Randhawa, and Harbhagat Niranjia, effectively removing the middlemen who had created barriers between the Khalsa and the Lahore Darbar.

With these obstacles cleared, the Khalsa advanced further, targeting Salabat Khan, the ruler of Amritsar Sahib. Under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, they defeated Salabat Khan in battle and took control of Amritsar Sahib. Once in power, they repaired the sacred Sarovar, clearing it of debris and filling it with fresh water, allowing the Sikh Sangat to bathe freely.

Meanwhile, news reached the Khalsa that Abdali, having suffered defeat in the Battle of Manupur, was retreating back to Afghanistan. The Khalsa intercepted his army near the Sutlej River. Using their guerrilla tactics, they launched nighttime raids, inflicting heavy losses on Abdali's forces without suffering significant casualties. They continued to harass his retreating army until he crossed the river and left the region.

On **March 29, 1748**, the Khalsa gathered triumphantly in Amritsar Sahib to celebrate **Vaisakhi** at the Sarbat Khalsa. This Vaisakhi was historic, marking the first such celebration in Amritsar Sahib after years of hardship. Here, the Khalsa made pivotal decisions: they organized themselves into **eleven Misls** (military units) for better coordination and unity, and they resolved to construct their own fort, **Quila Ram Rauni**, as a symbol of their sovereignty. This Vaisakhi became a turning point in Sikh history, signifying the rise of a unified and determined Khalsa ready to assert its authority.

Mir Manu, arrived in Lahore and reorganized the administration. He made Kaura Mal his Diwan (chief administrator) and deputy and appointed Adina Beg as the Faujdar (military commander) of Jalandhar. All officials installed by Ahmad Shah Abdali were removed. Lakhpat Rai, once a key figure, was fined 30 lakh rupees by Mir Manu. Of this, 22 lakh was collected through cash and the sale of his property. Unable to pay the remaining 8 lakh, Lakhpat Rai was imprisoned. Kaura Mal paid the remaining amount and handed Lakhpat Rai over to the Dal Khalsa, who kept him in custody for six months until he passed away.

In **September 1749**, Kaura Mal, newly assigned to take control of Multan, sought assistance from the Dal Khalsa. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia joined forces with Kaura Mal, and together they defeated Shah Nawaz. Grateful for the Khalsa's support, Kaura Mal donated 11,000 rupees for the repair of Darbar Sahib in Amritsar Sahib. He also funded the construction of Gurdwara Bala Leela at Nankana Sahib, spending 300,000 rupees to honor the sacred site.

However, things changed very quickly as Sikhs couldn't help him defeat Abdali.

1752: Executions under Mir Mannu



In **1752**, **Mir Mannu** faced a crushing defeat at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali in a decisive battle where Diwan Kaura Mal, his trusted ally, was killed. Abdali, now firmly in control of Lahore and Multan, reinstated Mir Mannu as governor of both provinces. With **Kaura Mal** no longer in his court, Mannu surrounded himself with advisors who blamed the Sikhs for his loss to Abdali.

Mannu launched a brutal campaign against the Sikhs, harsher than anything Khalsa had endured before. He seized their lands, issued orders for the execution of all Sikhs, and intensified efforts to eradicate them. He issued orders to kill Sikh men, women, and children, sending patrols led by his officers throughout the region to hunt them down. To encourage the killings, he announced a reward of ten rupees for every Sikh head brought to him. Hundreds of Sikhs were captured and brought to Lahore, where they were tortured and executed in Nakhhas Chowk (Shaheedganj). The executions were so frequent that the heads of the Sikhs were piled into wells, towers were built with their skulls, and the remains were buried under mounds of earth. Even women and children were not spared. Greedy opportunists brought the heads of Sikh men and even hair-covered heads of women to claim rewards.





During this dark chapter in history, Mir Mannu's patrol forces conducted widespread captures of Sikh women and children, bringing them to Lahore's Nakhhas Chowk (Shaheedganj). There, they faced severe persecution designed to force them to renounce their faith in favor of Islam. The women were subjected to brutal forced labor, required to grind over 40 pounds of grain daily. Those who couldn't complete this task faced additional torture—having a massive 100-pound stone placed on their chest. No food, no water. Their children were torn from their arms.

Before their very eyes, infants were brutally killed—tossed into the air and impaled on spears. The lifeless bodies were placed back in their mothers' laps and around their necks as garlands. Mir Mannu's persecution surpassed all previous atrocities in its brutality.

ਮੰਨੂ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਦਾਤਰੀ, ਅਸੀਂ ਮੰਨੂ ਦੇ ਸੋਏ। ਜਿਉਂ-ਜਿਉਂ ਮੰਨੂ ਵਢਦਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੂਣ ਸਵਾਏ ਹੋਏ।

"Mannu is our sickle, we are his grass/crop. The more he cuts us, the more we grow."

Mir Mannu's End

On November 4, 1753, Mir Mannu's spies told him of Singhs hiding in a sugarcane field. Without hesitation, Mannu mounted his horse and surrounded the field with his forces. The soldiers began firing into the dense sugarcane, with bullets raining down like a storm. Inside, the Sikhs fiercely defended themselves, returning fire despite being outnumbered. However, the sugarcane was so thick that neither the soldiers' bullets nor the Singhs' counterattack could inflict significant damage.

Amid the chaos, Mannu's horse panicked at the deafening sounds. He was thrown from the saddle, and one of his feet became trapped in the stirrup. Dragged by the terrified horse, Mannu was fatally injured and died on the spot.

Leaderless, Mannu's troops looted his camp to claim their long-overdue wages. His wife, Murad Begum, also known as the Mughlani Begum, sold her jewelry to pay the soldiers 300,000 rupees in wages.

When the Singhs learned of Mannu's death, a group near Lahore decided to act. Under the cover of darkness, they launched a daring attack on Shaheedganj. Breaking through the prison walls from the northern side, they rescued all the imprisoned Sikh women and safely reunited them with their families.



**Phase V: Vadda Ghallughara
1753-1764**



After Mir Mannu died in 1753, his wife, Murad Begum, took control of Lahore and sought Ahmad Shah Abdali's help during power struggles. By 1756, she was arrested after many battles, leaving Lahore under Adina Beg's rule.

1753: Sikh Response

After Mir Mannu's death, the Sikhs took bold steps to assert their power and punish their enemies. They focused on retaliating against informers who betrayed Sikh families to patrolling forces. Villages like Nooruddin's Serai, Majitha, Saidewala, and Fagwara, where such traitors lived, were raided. The Khalsa looted these places, reclaimed stolen goods, and executed those who had caused harm. Notable informers like Bhuriya of Saidewala and Ismail Khan of Mandiala were hunted down and killed.



At **Ram Rauni**, damaged during Mir Mannu's siege, Sardar Jassa Singh rebuilt the fortress into a stronghold named Ramgarh, making it a base for future operations.

One evening, Sardar Charat Singh and Sardar Jassa Singh entered Lahore with 500 horsemen disguised as Turks. They targeted the richest Mughal households, looted gold and valuables, and escaped into the Ravi River before Momin Khan's forces could react.

Determined to retaliate, Momin Khan launched patrols to hunt down the Sikhs, but the Khalsa's guerrilla tactics inflicted heavy losses on his forces. Momin Khan, unable to match their strength directly, turned to offering rewards to village leaders for betraying the Sikhs. However, no one dared to oppose the Khalsa, as fear and respect for them had grown.



Rakhi System

By **1756**, the Sikhs had emerged as the strongest and most organized power in Punjab, recognized by both the rulers of Lahore and the people. Tired of constant raids and lawlessness, the villagers sought protection, which only Dal Khalsa could provide. The Sikhs introduced the Rakhi system, where villages offered one-fifth of their harvest in exchange for protection from bandits and government forces. This arrangement rapidly expanded, covering areas between the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, and Chenab rivers, while unprotected villages continued to face raids. The Lahore government, confined to cities and forts, was helpless against Sikh dominance. Dal Khalsa divided its forces into smaller jathas to patrol Rakhi-protected areas, maintain order, and solidify Sikh control across Punjab.

Abdali's 4th Attack

In late **1756**, Ahmad Shah Abdali was invited to invade India. As his forces advanced and plundered the Jalandhar Doab, Adina Beg, its governor, fled to safety. Abdali crossed the Sutlej River on January 10, 1757, and entered Delhi on January 28 without encountering resistance. Once inside, he unleashed a brutal campaign of terror, looting homes, abducting women, and extorting wealth from the city's residents. Following the devastation of **Delhi**,

Abdali moved southward, sacking **Agra**, **Mathura**, and **Vrindavan**. His campaign, however, was abruptly halted by a cholera outbreak in his army, which claimed hundreds of lives daily.

On March 31, 1757, Abdali returned to Delhi, annexed the Sirhind province into his empire, and departed on April 2, 1757, with an enormous haul of looted wealth, transported on 28,000 animals.

In the months following Ahmad Shah Abdali's sack of Delhi in early 1757, the Sikhs took advantage of the chaos to reclaim territory and punish corrupt officials. When Abdali began his return journey, laden with loot, Sikh jathas pursued him relentlessly. Every night, they ambushed his army, targeting the heavily burdened Durrani soldiers who were unable to retaliate effectively. From Karnal to the Chenab River, the Sikhs reclaimed a significant share of the plundered wealth and weakened Abdali's forces, leaving thousands of his soldiers exhausted and defenseless.

Jahan Khan Captures Amritsar Sahib

During his brief stay in Lahore, Abdali reorganized the region's administration, appointing **his son Timur** as governor and **Jahan Khan** as deputy. Despite his efforts, the Sikhs continued their raids, disrupting Durrani control. Determined to crush the Sikh resistance, **Jahan Khan** launched a vigorous campaign, but the Sikhs, strategically retreating, prepared for the next phase of their struggle for Punjab's sovereignty.

Jahan Khan demolished gurdwaras in Amritsar Sahib, defiled the Sarovar by filling it with debris, and destroyed the Sikh-built fort of Ramgarh. The city of Amritsar Sahib was thoroughly looted, and the residents suffered severe atrocities under his orders.

1757: Baba Deep Singh Ji

In **1757**, **Baba Deep Singh** was working on a copy of Guru Granth Sahib Ji when the news of

the desecration of Harmandir Sahib reached him. Upon hearing of the sacrilege, he laid down his pen, picked up his double-edged sword, and vowed to defend Amritsar Sahib. He formed a jatha and set out for Amritsar Sahib. By the time the jatha reached Tarn Taran, its numbers had grown to 10,000. The word spread that Baba Deep Singh Ji was marching to defend Amritsar Sahib, and the Sikhs rallied with unmatched determination.



Jahan Khan, the Durrani general, prepared to stop them by amassing an army of 20,000 soldiers. The two sides met at Gohalwar, where a fierce battle ensued. Initially, the Durrani forces wavered and began to retreat, but Jahan Khan regrouped his men by using force against his own soldiers. The Sikhs pushed forward with incredible courage, driving the enemy back toward Amritsar Sahib.

The final clash occurred near Ramsar in Amritsar Sahib. Baba Deep Singh Ji personally engaged Aman Khan, a Durrani commander. Both struck with immense force, and their swords severed each other's heads. Despite being gravely injured, Baba Deep Singh Ji, inspired by his vow to defend Harmandir Sahib, lifted his severed head to his left hand and continued fighting. He reached the precincts of Harmandir Sahib before his Shaheedi. Some of the Singhs attained martyrdom within the Parikrama of Harmandir Sahib, while others were martyred near the back of the Akal Takht Sahib. The Singhs performed the final rites for their Shaheeds and retreated to the forest before daybreak. In this battle, the Durrani Muslim army vastly outnumbered the Singhs, but the losses on both sides were nearly equal.

Return of Abdali 5th time

On **October 30, 1758**, the Khalsa assembled at Amritsar Sahib and passed a **Gurmatta** to capture more strategic location in the region. In **October 1759**, Ahmad Shah Abdali returned with a formidable force of 60,000 fighters. Upon hearing of his advance, the Maratha rulers in Lahore fled to Delhi. Abdali proceeded through **Lahore** and **Sirhind**, reaching **Delhi** and nearby regions such as Aligarh. There, he rallied a Muslim army from the area to confront the Marathas.

1761: Third Battle of Panipat

In **January 1761**, Abdali's forces clashed with the Marathas in the historic **Third Battle of Panipat**. The Marathas suffered devastating losses, with around 80,000–100,000 killed. Abdali captured approximately 22,000 Maratha women and children. After plundering Maratha resources, Abdali turned his attention to Delhi, continuing his campaign of looting and devastation.

1758-61: Sikh Response

During this time, the Sikhs solidified their control over Punjab by establishing multiple forts. Sardar Charat Singh built a fort near Gujranwala (close to Lahore), extending Sikh influence over rural areas. While cities remained under the rule of Pathans, rural regions increasingly came under Sikh control. With much of Punjab in their hands, the Sikhs began securing the outskirts of major cities like Lahore.

In **November 1760**, during Diwali, the Sarbat Khalsa gathered at Amritsar Sahib and passed a Gurmatta to attack Lahore. Within days, a force of 15,000 Sikhs marched to Lahore and laid siege to the city. The city's governor, Mir Muhammad Khan, shut the gates and took refuge inside the fort, leaving the outer settlements vulnerable. The Sikhs looted the areas outside the city gates while the Subedar made no attempt to retaliate. When the Sikhs threatened to break down the city gates, the governor sent emissaries to negotiate.

Eventually, the city's leaders paid a tribute of 30 lakh rupees to the Sikhs, who then withdrew.

By this time, the Sikhs' power had grown significantly, dominating much of Punjab. While Abdali was stationed in Delhi, the Sikhs had extended their influence across the region from the Sutlej to the Chenab, consolidating their control over the land.



In March 1761, Ahmad Shah Abdali left Delhi and camped at Sirhind. Crossing the Sutlej in April, he faced fierce resistance from the Sikhs. Operating in small jathas, the Sikhs conducted night raids on Abdali's heavily laden Durrani forces, looting their wealth and supplies. They freed thousands of women and children, ensuring their safe return home by covering their expenses. Abdali eventually reached Lahore and ordered a crackdown on the Sikhs, but, frustrated by limited success, he started a return journey to Afghanistan in May 1761, leaving his commanders to manage Punjab.

Sikhs continued chasing Durranis on their trip back. At Jhelum, under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Sardar Charat Singh Sukerchakia, the Sikhs inflicted heavy losses on the Durrani forces, freeing more captives and escorting them back to their homes. In June 1761, Singh reverted their focus back to reasserting their dominance in Punjab. Building on their momentum, the Khalsa asserted control by attacking Jalandhar, Sirhind, and Malerkotla.

Take control of Lahore

On **October 22, 1761**, Sarbat Khalsa gathered at Amritsar Sahib, and Gumatta was made to capture Lahore now. They took Hukamnaama and the next day surrounded Lahore. The city's representatives, realizing their inability to resist, surrendered to Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, opening the gates to the Singhs.

With the city under their control, Lahore now had two rulers: Ubaid Khan, who remained in the fort, and the Sikhs, who governed the city. Nawab Kapur Singh ceremonially seated Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the throne and honored him with the title of "Sultan-ul-Kaum." (King of the Nation). The Singhs captured the royal mint and began striking their own coins. These silver coins bore an inscription in Persian that read:

*"Sikka zad bar jahan ba fazl-e-Akal,
Mulk Ahmad girift Jassa Kalal."*

("This coin struck by the grace of the Timeless One; Jassa, the distiller, seized the kingdom of Ahmad.")

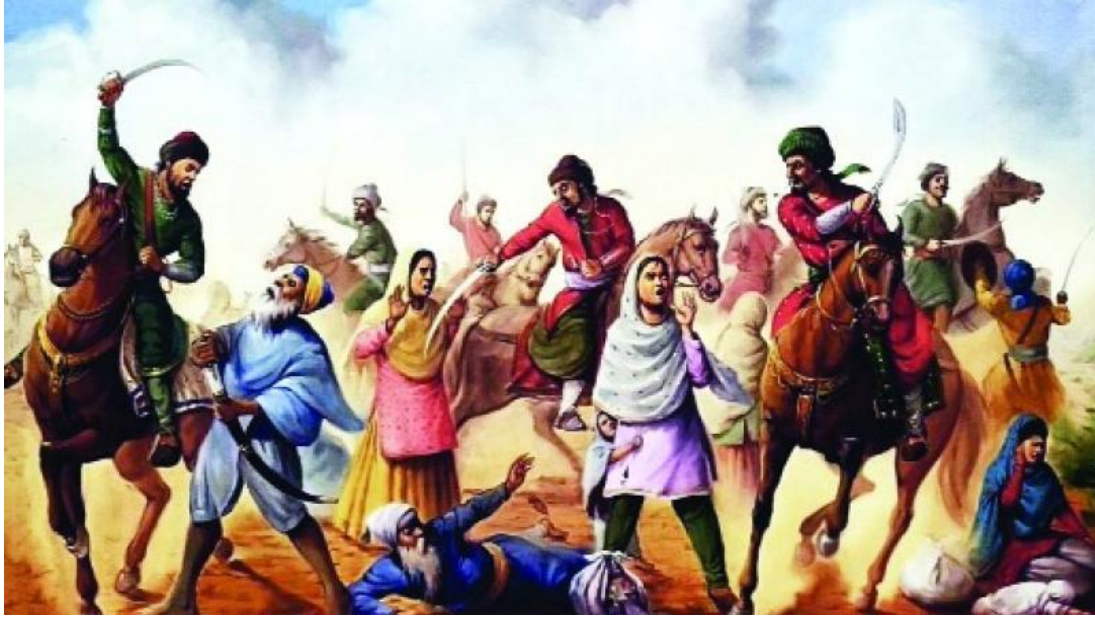
Though the Singhs successfully captured Lahore, they were cautious about their ability to maintain control against stronger adversaries. Their immediate goal was to consolidate their power and neutralize threats in the region. By this time, all other powers in Punjab had bowed to Abdali, leaving the Singhs as the sole force defying his rule. Angered by their resistance, Abdali launched his sixth invasion of Punjab, determined to crush the Sikhs.

1762: Vadda Ghallughara



The Vadda Ghallughara, or the Great Massacre, unfolded as Ahmad Shah Abdali launched his sixth invasion of India in early 1762. Determined to annihilate the Sikhs, he was informed by his ally, Aqil Das of Jandiala, about Sikh movements and their plans to relocate their families to safety. Abdali, equipped with a massive army and artillery, arrived in Lahore on February 3, 1762, and quickly advanced to intercept the Sikhs. The Singhs, led by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Sardar Charat Singh Sukerchakia, were 40,000 strong, including 10,000 women, children, and elderly members of their community. Recognizing the threat, the Singhs aimed to safeguard their families, known as the Vahir, by moving them toward the wastelands of Malwa.

Abdali sent Zain Khan, the Subedar of Sirhind, and Bhikhan Khan of Malerkotla to engage the Singhs while he himself swiftly marched to Kup Rahira near Malerkotla, covering 200 kilometers in less than 48 hours. At dawn on February 5, 1762, the Sikhs were encamped near Kup Rahira when Abdali's forces attacked. The Singhs, caught off-guard, fought valiantly despite being heavily outnumbered. Their primary focus was to protect their Vahir and engage the enemy to inflict as much damage as possible.



The Durrani forces, numbering nearly 50,000, led by Abdali and his generals, launched a relentless assault. Sardar Jassa Singh and Sardar Charat Singh commanded the Singhs, ordering their warriors to encircle the women and children and continue moving toward Barnala. Despite their bravery, the Singhs suffered heavy losses. Abdali's artillery and superior numbers overwhelmed the Sikh forces. Nearly 25,000 to 30,000 Singhs were martyred, including thousands of women and children.

Among the Sikh leaders, Sardar Jassa Singh was wounded 22 times, and Sardar Charat Singh suffered 19 wounds. Every Sikh warrior bore injuries, yet they fought with unmatched courage, repelling attacks and rescuing captives. Even in the face of such devastation, the Singhs never surrendered their morale. Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha records that the sacred Bir of Sri Guru Granth Sahib from Damdama Sahib was lost during the battle.

As the Singhs retreated toward Barnala, their Vahir was ultimately secured, but the path from Kup Rahira to Barnala—nearly 25 kilometers—was strewn with bodies. Known as the Vadda Ghallughara, this massacre claimed the lives of over 70% of the Sikhs present, marking one of the darkest chapters in Sikh history. Despite this tragic loss, the Singhs emerged with unwavering determination, vowing to continue their struggle for sovereignty and justice.

1762: Destruction of Darbar Sahib, Amritsar Sahib

On February 15, 1762, Ahmad Shah Abdali marched from Sirhind and took control of Ramgarh Fort in Amritsar Sahib. He unleashed a wave of destruction on Sikh sacred sites, beginning with Harmandir Sahib. Abdali ordered gunpowder to be placed beneath the holy structure and had it blown up. As the shrine collapsed, a flying brick struck Abdali on the nose, leaving him injured with a wound that reportedly never fully healed.

Abdali continued his desecration, destroying all gurdwaras in the city and filling the sacred *Sarovar* of Amritsar Sahib with debris, horse manure, and even carcasses of animals, including cows.



Figure 3 Destruction of Darbar Sahib, Amritsar

Abdali in Lahore

On March 3, 1762, Ahmad Shah Abdali reached Lahore after the devastating events of the Vadda Ghallughara. In an act of further brutality, Abdali brought with him fifty cartloads of severed heads of Sikh martyrs. These were displayed on spikes at the gates of Lahore, and the blood of the Singhs was used to wash mosques in a symbolic act of desecration.

Abdali remained in Punjab for nine months to ensure that the Sikhs would not rise again, observing closely whether they would recover from this massacre or if their spirit had been permanently broken.

Wounds of the Vadda Ghallughara

On February 5, 1762, during the Vadda Ghallughara, the Sikhs suffered a devastating loss. However, this massacre, instead of breaking their spirit, strengthened their resolve. Any hesitation of Ahmad Shah Abdali that had lingered in their hearts was replaced with renewed courage and determination. Their loss was a transformative moment, as it removed hesitation and ignited a fierce desire for revenge.

In the months following the massacre, the Singhs regrouped and healed from their wounds while taking shelter in the villages of the Brar region. By May 1762, they gathered under a Gurmatta, to plan their response. The decision was unanimous: they would avenge the atrocities of the Vadda Ghallughara. A major challenge, however, was their lack of resources and supplies, all of which had been lost during the massacre. The Singhs resolved to replenish their resources by seizing them from the enemy.

In May 1762, the Singhs launched a surprise attack on Sirhind, catching the enemy off guard. Unable to mount an effective defense against the determined Singhs, Zain Khan, the Subedar of Sirhind, opted to negotiate. He agreed to pay the Singhs 50,000 rupees as a tribute to secure peace. The Singhs, after taking the negotiated tribute, returned to Patiala, their morale high and their unity stronger than ever.

By **July 1762**, the Singhs, in thousands-strong groups, started taking back the Majha region and moved toward Amritsar Sahib with great determination. The Durrani soldiers were too scared to fight them. When Abdali came with his army, the Singhs quickly moved into the jungles to avoid a direct fight. In August, led by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the Singhs entered Doaba Jalandhar and raided the area. By September, they stayed between Panipat and Karnal for a month, disrupting trade and capturing supplies like weapons, before heading back to Amritsar Sahib.

By October, the Singhs returned to Majha and started daring raids just a few miles from Abdali's camp in Lahore. On October 16, 1762, about 60,000 Singhs gathered in Amritsar Sahib. Abdali sent envoys to negotiate, but the Singhs rejected peace, looted the envoys' supplies, and sent them back. With no other choice, Abdali brought his 100,000 soldiers near Amritsar Sahib that evening.

On **October 17, 1762**, the Singhs launched a surprise attack at Pipli Sahib. The battle lasted the whole day. By night, Abdali's army was defeated, and he ran away to Lahore in the dark, leaving the Singhs victorious. Singh captured thousands of Durrani Army men. They were taken to Amritsar Sahib and are tasked to remove the debris from the Amrit Sarovar. Once they finished, Singh let them go, and Khalsa Ji returned to Lakhi Jungle.

In **November 1762**, Abdali got more forces from Kashmir and surrounded Lakhi Jungle. Khalsa was prepared this time. Khalsa spread the around the jungle like wild vines and showed up in small surprise parties from different directions at night. Abdali was never able to define the battle front. One day, Sawa Lakh Khalsa charged on horseback at Abdali when he saw him. Though the singh was killed by Abdali's bodyguard army, this incident had such a strong impact

on Abdali's mind that he retreated with his army back to Lahore. Abdali then appointed Kabuli Mal as the governor of all Punjab.

In December 1762, Abdali left Lahore for Kabul. However, as usual, Sikh jatha attacked him while his army was crossing the Raavi River. Abdali watched this from the other side of Raavi while Singh looted his army.

Khalsa reorganized Misl into two units: **Budha Dal** and **Taruna Dal**. The leader of Budha Dal was appointed as Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. This unit included six misls:

- Ahluwalia,
- Singhpuria,
- Dallewalia,
- Karorha Singhia,
- Nishanawalia, and
- Shaheedan.

The role of Budha Dal was to conduct operations such as raids in enemy territories and punish adversaries. The leader of Taruna Dal was chosen as **Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi**. This group consisted of five misls:

- Bhogianwali,
- Ramgarhia,
- Kanhiya,
- Sukerchakia,
- and Nakai.

Taruna Dal served and protected the Gurdwara sahib in and around Amritsar Sahib sahib.

In **November 1763**, Singh came back to Amritsar Sahib Sahib. But this time, they had already captured major territories, including Kasur. Now, the Darbar Sahib Sarovar was clean, but there was no Darbar Sahib (as Abdali blasted Darbar Sahib). Khalsa Ji debated about reconstructing Darbar Sahib or waiting for the next attack of Abdali. They chose to rebuild it. By **January 1764**, Singh defeated Sirhind's nawab and brought the territory under their control. Suba Sirhind (Province of Sirhind) covered territory as wide as 220 miles by 160 miles.



Final Phase: The Khalsa Raj

1764-1769



In February 1764, the Khalsa launched a two-pronged campaign led by the Budha Dal and Taruna Dal, targeting significant regions in Punjab. The Budha Dal, under Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, advanced towards areas near the Yamuna. They crossed the river at Buria Ghat and began their offensive in the region. Meanwhile, the Taruna Dal, led by Sardar Hari Singh Bhoghi, shifted focus to the Doaba region and entered Jalandhar. From there, they advanced to Lahore, laying siege to the city in February 1764.

The strategy was clear: divide their forces to disrupt Mughal control in key areas and weaken their defenses. The Taruna Dal besieged Lahore, targeting the Mughal stronghold. Kabuli Mal, the Subedar of Lahore, fortified the city's gates, but the Khalsa forces broke through the Delhi Gate and looted parts of the city. Under pressure, Kabuli Mal agreed to pay tribute and accepted the Khalsa's terms. Representatives from the Taruna Dal were stationed in Lahore to oversee governance and collect revenues.

At the same time, Sardar Sobha Singh took control of Niaz Beg, eight miles from Lahore, intercepting goods and wealth passing through the area. This dual approach allowed the Khalsa to secure revenue, strengthen their influence, and disrupt Mughal administration, marking a significant victory in their campaign for dominance in Punjab.

1764: Abdali Returns – Seventh Time

Hearing about Punjab's situation, Abdali started for Punjab in Feb 1764. He first sent his General Jahan Khan, whom Singh defeated in Sialkot and General escaped to Peshwar. Abdali was devastated to hear the defeat of Jahan Khan but continued moving towards Lahore. Khalsa Ji's spirit was much more bold now. They intercepted him multiple times and defeated him in Batala (March 1764). Abdali went into hiding with informant Jandiala Aakaldas. Singh attacked Quilla Jandiala, and Abdali escaped from there and hid in Quilla Lahore. Within two weeks, Abdali was ready to go back to Afghanistan. Singh let him get out but then intercepted his Army on River Raavi and caused huge loss to his Army.

Sardar Charat Singh capture Quilla Rohtas

Sardar Charat Singh continued chasing Abdali all the way to Dina, where the mighty Quilla Rohtas stood under the control of the Durrani ruler, Sarfaraz Khan. Determined to capture the fort, Sardar Charat Singh and his forces surrounded it. Quilla Rohtas was a stronghold, armed with cannons mounted on its walls. As the Khalsa army approached, Sarfaraz Khan opened heavy fire to defend the fort. Recognizing the fort's firepower, Sardar Charat Singh decided to use a war tactic of false retreat.



The Khalsa army pretended to retreat, making it seem like they were fleeing in fear. Sarfaraz Khan fell for the trick. Believing the Khalsa was defeated, he opened the gates of the fort and sent his forces to chase them. Once the Khalsa reached a safe distance, they suddenly split into groups, turned back, and launched a surprise attack. The Durrani forces were caught off guard and suffered a crushing defeat. Sarfaraz Khan's army was overwhelmed, and Sardar Charat Singh captured Quilla Rohtas, along with its cannons and weapons, securing a significant victory for the Khalsa.

Abdali wants to try again

Khalsa army continued their winning spree and added more Durrani-controlled territories. Abdali started for Lahore once again, and this time reached Lahore by **Dec 1764**. Khalsa caused damage to his army and broadly stayed out of his sight. Abdali moved fast and attacked Amritsar Sahib. Except for 30 Singhs in Quilla Ramgarh, Khalsa was not there. But these 30 Singhs openly attacked the Durrani Army and attained martyrdom. Abdali once again destroyed Darbar Sahib. From here he moved carefully into Batala, Jalandhar and Sirhind. He ordered his army loot the Kafir land but avoid chasing Khalsa. Just defend.

Khalsa Army showed up in Ropar

In March 1765, Abdali crossed the Satluj River into Ropar, where the Budha Dal and Taruna Dal were waiting. The Sikhs attacked the right side of Abdali's army, forcing him to send Nasar Khan to respond. Sardar Charat Singh used a false retreat, tricking Nasar Khan into chasing his forces. Unfamiliar with this tactic, Nasar Khan was trapped, escaping with his life but losing many soldiers. Meanwhile, the Sikhs opened three new fronts, launching surprise attacks that left Abdali's army stuck. After seven days, Abdali retreated. The Sikhs let him cross the Ravi River but chased him soon after.

1765: Vaisakhi at Amritsar Sahib

April 10th, 1765, Sarbat khalsa gathered at Amritsar Sahib to celebrate Vaisakhi. Khalsa was convinced that now they could take a more offensive approach towards Abdali. They did Gurmatta to take control of the entire Punjab. By May 1765, Bhangi Misl captured Lahore and removed Subedar Kabuli Mal. Sikh took full administrative control of the city and launched Nanakshahi Sikka.

The following text was inscribed on it in Persian.

ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ਼ ਫ਼ਤਹਿ ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇਦਿਰੰਗ, ਯਾਫ਼ਤ ਅਜ਼ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ।

"The Deg(Langar), the Sword (Tegh - defending the oppressed), Victory and Protection without delay, bestowed by Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh."



Abdali Back for 9th Time

In December 1766, Abdali crossed Attuck. 7000 Khalsa fauj from Rohtas confronted him. Abdali's Army was eight to ten times. Sikh army suffered major losses in this battle and retreated. Singh tried intercepting Abdali again at Jhelum river but failed again. Sikh Sardar Lehna Singh of Lahore had only 8000 army men. So he vacated Lahore and Abdali walked in. But this time, Hindu and Muslim leaders showed up and requested Abdali to appoint Sardar Lehna Singh as Subedar of Lahore. They told him that S. Lehna treated both Muslim and Hindu traditions. Abdali did so, but S. Lehna Singh refused to accept Nawabi. Abdali stayed in the region for a few months and, in May 1767, started the return journey. As usual, Singh attacked him on his way back to Jhelum – looted his resources and released women and children. Sikhs reestablished their control over territory in Punjab.

1768: Sikh Established Khalsa Raj



By the end of 1768, Sikh rule had firmly established itself across Punjab. Its boundaries extended to the Yamuna River and the hills near Karnal in the east, to the Indus River and the city of Attock in the west, to Bhakkar in the southwest, and included Multan and various Hindu princely states in the south. In the north, the territories reached Bhimber, Jammu, and Kangra. Some areas remained under the control of Muslim chiefs.

At this time, the Sikhs faced resistance from three main powers. Though significantly weakened, the Muslim administration in Lahore still posed a challenge. Despite his losses, the Delhi government was in decline, and Ahmad Shah Abdali had not entirely conceded defeat. Two adversaries were already nearing collapse, while the third still posed a lingering threat. In December 1768, Abdali attempted for the 10th time, but Khalsa never let him cross the Chenab River, and he retreated back.

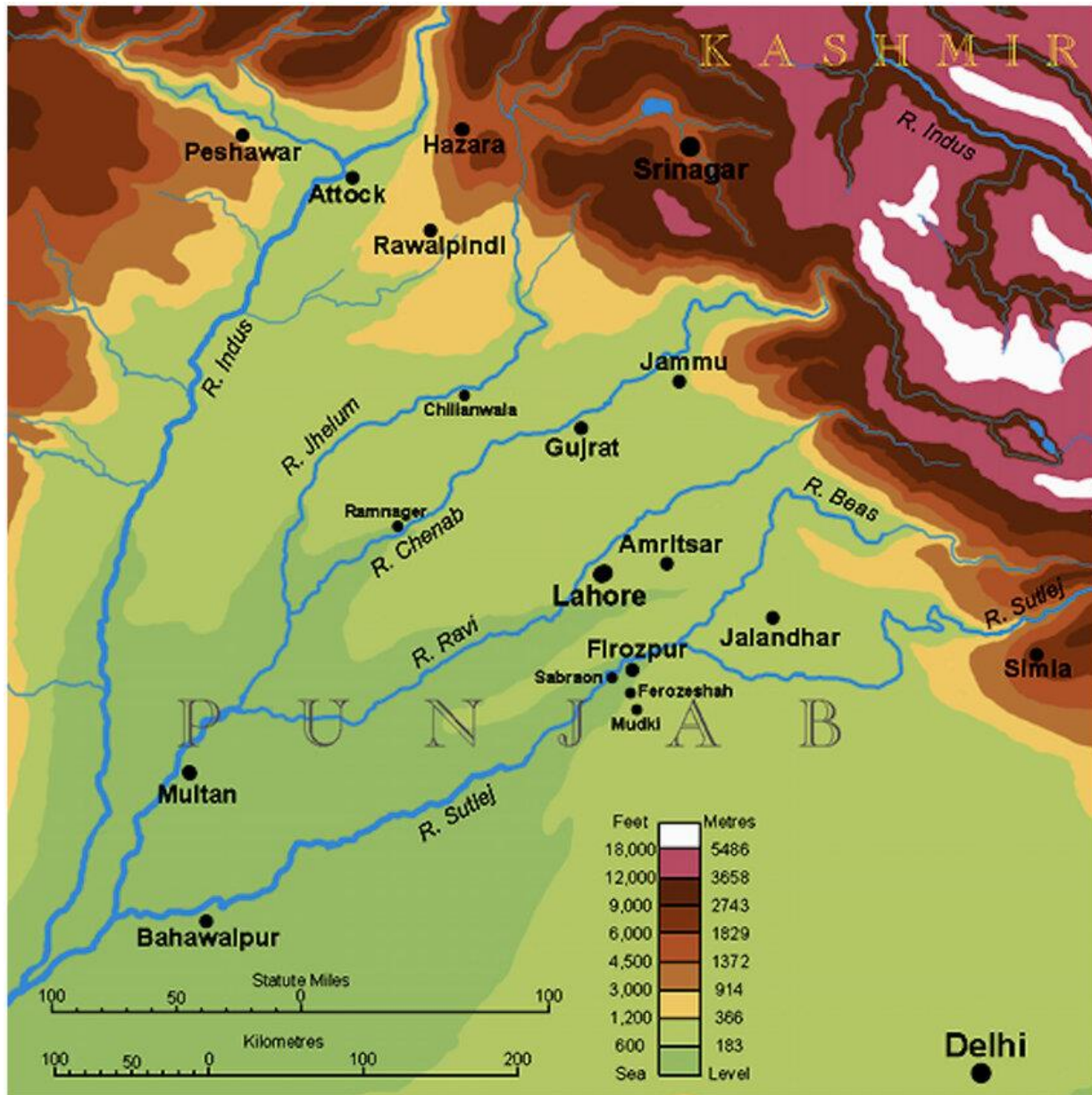
In December 1769, Ahmad Shah Abdali crossed the Indus for the last time during his eleventh invasion. At Rohtas Fort near Jhelum, the Singhs stood ready to face him. The once-feared Abdali, who had terrified all of Hindustan, lacked the courage to fight the Singhs. After staying a few days beyond Jhelum, he retreated to Kabul. Thus, the Singhs successfully drove Abdali out of Punjab twice. Abdali's trusted general, Zain Khan, also faced defeat and eventually lost his life. Abdali himself passed away on April 14, 1772, marking the end of his era.

Appendix: Timelines

Date	Event
April 15, 1469*	Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji
May 30, 1606	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji
Nov 11, 1675	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
Dec 22, 1666	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji
Nov 11, 1675	Guru Gobind Singh Ji ascends to Guruship
Oct 7, 1708	Guru Gobind Singh Ji Jyoti-Jot Smaye.
Mar 30, 1699 {1 Vaisakh, 1756 BK}	Creation of the Khalsa and administering of Amrit
Poh 8, 1761 BK (Dec 1704)	Martyrdom of Elder Sahibzadas (Battle of Chamkaur)
Poh 13, 1761 BK (Dec 1704)	Martyrdom of Younger Sahibzadas
May 22, 1710	Battle of Chappar Chiri and victory of Baba Banda Singh
Dec 17, 1715	Capture of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in Gurdas Nangal
Jun 18, 1716	Execution of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur
1726 - 1745	Tenure of Zakariya Khan as Governor of Lahore
1726	Martyrdom of Bhai Tara Singh Vaan
1733	Khalsa Accepts Nawabi – Nawab Kapur Singh
1738	Martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh Ji
1735	Martyrdom of Haqiqat Rai
Dec, 1738 - May 1739	Nadir Shah's invasion of India
February 13, 1739	Battle of Karnal (Nadir Shah defeats Delhi)
1747	Nadir Shah was Killed by his men in Khorasan (Iran).
July 1, 1745	Lahore Subedar Zakariya Khan Dies
July 1, 1745	Martyrdom of Bhai Taru Singh Ji
1745	Yahiya Khan becomes Governor Lahore
March 10, 1746	Martyrdom of Shaheed Shabeg Singh - Shahbaz Singh Ji
March - June 1746	Chotta Ghallughara Kahnuvan (Gurdaspur)
Apr 1748 - Nov, 1754	Mir Mannu's Governorship of Lahore
Mar 29, 1748	Formation of Sikh Misls and foundation of Fort Ram Rauni
Feb, 1752	Martyrdom of Sardar Sukha Singh
Nov, 1757	Martyrdom of Baba Deep Singh Ji
Sep, 1758	Death of Adina Beg
Feb, 1762	Vadda Ghalughara (Large Holocaust)
Nov, 1763	Reconstruction of Harmandir Sahib
May 16, 1765	Capture of Lahore and introduction of Nanakshahi Sikka
1768	Punjab under command and control of Khalsa Ji

*Based upon Sikh Raj Kiwein Banya, Sohan Singh Seetal

Appendix: Rivers of Punjab



Appendix: Mughal Emperors in Delhi

Name	Period	Other Details
Babur	1526 – 1530	Zaheeruddin Babur, Founder of the Mughal dynasty in India.
Humayun	1530 – 1540, 1556	Naseeruddin Humayun. Humayun, ruled first from 1530–1540, then after being ousted by Sher Shah, reconquered India in 1556 but ruled for only six months.
Akbar	1556 – 1605	Jalaluddin Akbar
Jahangir	1605 – 1627	Nooruddin Jahangir: Shaheedi of Guru Arjan Pathshah Ji and Imprisonment of Guru Hargobind Pathshah Ji
Shah Jahan	1627 – 1658	Shahzada Khurram. Imprisoned by Aurangzeb in 1658
Aurangzeb	1658 – 1707	Muhiuddin Aurangzeb, also called Aurangzeb Alamgir.
Bahadur Shah I	1707 – 1712	Muazzam, Title: Bahadur Shah I.
Jahandar Shah	1712 (11 months)	Ruled for 11 months. Killed on February 11, 1713.
Farrukh Siyar	1713 – 1719	Imprisoned and blinded on February 28, 1719, and assassinated on the night of April 27-28, 1719.
Rafi ud-Darajat	Feb - June 1719	Son of Rafi-ush-Shan and grandson of Bahadur Shah I.
Rafi ud-Daula	June - Sep, 1719	Brother of Rafi ud-Darajat.
Muhammad Shah	1719 –1748	Muhammad Gohar Akhtar, grandson of Aurangzeb.
Ahmad Shah	1748 –1754	Son of Muhammad Shah, blinded by Wazeer Ghaziuddin Imad-ul-Mulk and imprisoned in Salimgarh. Died in prison in 1775.
Alamgir II	1754 – 1759	Sultan Azizuddin, grandson of Jahandar Shah. Assassinated by Wazeer Ghaziuddin.
Shah Jahan III	1759–1760	Full name: Mahiyuddin, great-grandson of Aurangzeb.
Shah Jahan III (alternate)	1760	Installed by Maratha General Sadashivrao Bhau, real name Mirza Jawan Bakht, son of Shah Alam II and grandson of Alamgir II.
Shah Alam II	1760-1806	Powerless Mughal emperor post-1760, became a symbolic figure under Maratha and later British influence

Appendix: Ahmad Shah Abdali's Invasions of Hind

Attack	Period	Details
1st	Dec 1747 - Mar 1748	Faced defeat on March 11, 1748, in the Battle of Manupur near Sirhind and returned to Kandahar (Afghanistan). Lahore Governor: Shah Nawaz Khan
2nd	Dec 1748	Took tribute from Mir Mannu and returned shortly afterward. Lahore Governor: Mir Mannu
3rd	Dec 1751 - Apr 1752	Captured Lahore, Multan, and Kashmir, establishing control over these provinces.
4th	Dec 1756 - Apr 1757	Plundered Delhi, Agra, and Mathura; took Mughal princesses captive and established control over Sirhind. Lahore Governor: Vacant after Mir Mannu's death (1753)
5th	Oct 1759 - Apr 1761	Defeated the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat on January 14, 1761; stayed in Delhi from Jan-Mar, 1761, then returned to Kandahar. Lahore Governor: Kabuli Mal (under Abdali).
6th	Jan 1762 - Dec 1762	Wadda Ghallughara (The Great Holocaust), mass persecution of the Sikhs.
7th	March 1764	Faced defeats by the Sikhs in battles at Batala, Jandiala, and Lahore, prompting a retreat.
8th	Dec 1764 - Mar 1765	Retreated after being defeated by the Sikhs at Sirhind and Kanjpura.
9th	Dec 1766 - Jun 1767	Launched another campaign but faced stiff resistance, with limited details on his actions recorded here. Lahore Governor: Local Mughal subordinates
10th	December 1768	Abdali retreated from the Chenab River area.
11th	December 1769	Crossed the Jhelum River but returned without proceeding further. This marked Abdali's final invasion.
Ahmad Shah Abdali died on April 14, 1772. His general, Jahan Khan, passed away on March 14, 1770.		

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About us

Camp Gurmat (based out of Dallas, Texas) is an immersive Sikh youth retreat, offering a space for exploring and embracing Sikhi, guided by the grace of Waheguru. This retreat invites young minds into the heart of Sikh history and the values of the Khalsa, providing a serene environment for connecting with their faith and heritage. Away from everyday distractions, participants immerse themselves in the Saakhiyaan (stories) from Sikh history, nurturing a personal bond with the Guru.

The first Camp Gurmat, held in December 2011, focused on the theme of Sahibzadey. This inaugural outdoor event, a blend of simple joys and spiritual growth, was made possible by Waheguru's grace, marking the start of an annual gathering. Whether it was the Guru-ki-sangat, the melodious Gurbani Kirtan, the practice of Gatka, the engaging Sikh History quiz, or the warmth of the campfire, each aspect provided a unique way for participants to connect with their roots and each other.

Year after year, the camp adopts new themes to deepen understanding and foster meaningful, lasting experiences. Past themes have drawn from the lives of Guru Nanak Sahib, Banda Singh Bahadur, Mata Bhag Kaur, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mani Singh, and the solemn remembrance of the Chotta (ਛੋਟਾ) and Vadda (ਵੱਡਾ) Ghallughara (ਘੱਲੂਘਾਰਾ).

The objective of Camp Gurmat is to create a tapestry of enriching experiences and insights, year after year, helping to strengthen each participant's bond with the Guru, the Sikh Virsa, and the enduring spirit of the Khalsa.

Mission

To create enriching experiences that foster and deepen the Sikh dedication in the upcoming generation. In a setting free from distractions, children are immersed in a community where they live, learn, play, and collaborate, facing creative challenges that empower them to make impactful decisions, leading to transformative life experiences.

Vision

To envisage a world where every Sikh strives to maximize their life's potential and becomes a beacon of inspiration for those around them, by earnestly walking the path laid out by our Gurus.

ਹਮ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦਈਂ ਹੰਨੈ ਹੰਨੈ ਲਾਇ |
ਜਹਿ ਜਹਿ ਬਹੈ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਮਲ ਤਹਿ ਤਹਿ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਬਿਠਾਏ ॥

This is how Ratan Singh Bhangu, author of Prachin Panth Prakash, captured the unbreakable spirit of the Khalsa. Hunted and persecuted, driven into jungles with no shelter or worldly possessions, the Khalsa carried their sovereignty not in kingdoms or castles but in their faith, their actions, and their identity as Akal Purakh-Ki-Fauj. With nothing but their Shastar (weapons), Aswar (horses), and Guru-Ki-Bani, the Khalsa panth upheld their full faith in the words of Sacche Pathshah

We are reminded of this history is our Daily Ardas:

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸੀਸ ਦਿਤੇ, ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਵਾਏ, ਖੋਪਰੀਆਂ
ਲੁਹਾਈਆਂ, ਚਰਖੜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਚੜੇ, ਆਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਚਿਰਾਏ ਗਏ,
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ,
ਸਿੱਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾਹੀ

At Nakhas Chowk, Khalsa walked fearlessly to give Shaheedi, their severed heads piled high as warnings to others. In Mir Mannu's prison, Bibian stood unwavering, even as their infants were cut into pieces and garlanded upon them. They accepted Waheguru's will with unwavering faith.

We must learn about Bhai Tara Singh Vaan, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Deep Singh Shaheed, Bhai Sukha Singh, and Bhai Mehtab Singh, who stood as eternal symbols of courage and sacrifice, choosing Sikhi over everything else. Despite enduring unimaginable trials, including two Ghalughare (holocausts), the Khalsa confronted invaders like Nadir Shah and Abdali and emerged victorious, shaking the mighty Lahore and Delhi Darbar.

We dedicate this retreat to that sovereign spirit and their complete faith in Waheguru.

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