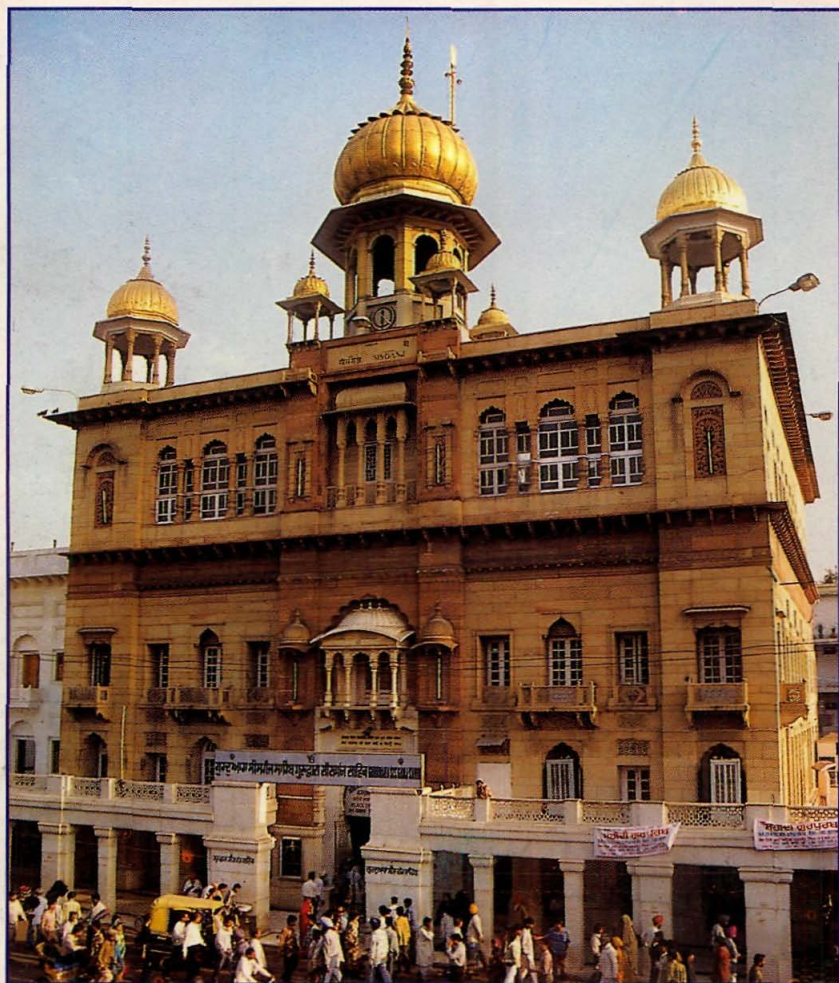


SHAHADAT NAAMA

Brief Account of Sikh Martyrs



Kulmohan Singh

HOMAGE

Think of the five Piyaras' deeds of high weight.
Also of the four sons of Master Great.
Of forty Muktas and of other souls,
Rooted in truth who played the martyr's roles.
Of those who mused in hearts on Name Divine,
And made others their tables free to dine.
Who with the needy ones their tables shared,
Also of those their flashing blades who bared
To save the helpless ones from tyranny
And those who cared not other's faults to see.
Think, think of all such Sikhs, O Khalsa dear
And say Wahe Guru with ardent cheer.
Think of the martyrs who their faith to save
Their precious lives on earth most gladly gave.
And suffered tortures and were cut and torn
Piecemeal and were ruthlessly shorn.
Of scalps, or elsewhere broken on the wheel,
Or sawn alive or boiled-they did not feel.
The least of pain, but kept all calm until
They died, surrendered unto His sweet will.
Think, think of those who all their ordeals met
And gave their lives, in their faith firmly set.
Ye Khalsa, think of all such heroes fine

And sing the wondrous praise of God Divine.
Think of the faith unflinching of such men.
As cleansed each shrine that had become a den
Of shameless sins, and in their efforts faced
The bloody thrusts of blades and gladly embraced
The showering shots of guns or flames aroar
That threatened speedy death, they shrank no more.
But courted chains, imprisonments in jail,
Lo, not a sigh escaped from them to rail
At the perpetrators of such cruelties
Think, think and say "Wahe Guru," on bended knees.

(Extracts from Ardas-The Holy Prayer)

Translation: M.L. Peace

INTRODUCTION

"Shahadat Nama;" a brief account of the Sikh martyrs, recalls the pious memory of those unforgettable personalities who shaped the image of the Sikhs. Their unforgettable personalities who shaped the image of the Sikhs. Their names and deeds are remembered in the Ardas (supplication) as inseparable part of the prayer. Our ancestors by truthful living, noble deeds, selfless determination to serve humanity have given us an identity which will remain our proud privilege forever.

We have been given the name of 'Khalsa', which means the pure ones. Every member of the Sikh community is a saint-soldier, who will live and die for the cause of upholding the right to live with dignity. He will fight for the freedom of faiths, resists injustice, oppose oppression and suppression, maintain the sanctity of sacred places, and revive the moral and ethical values based on spiritual tradition and cultural heritage. He will preserve all that is noble and sublime and respect women recognizing their equal status.

The need for introducing Sikhism in a world already flooded with various kinds of sects was felt by our great visionaries and seers, who preached Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man. Their followers lived and died to uphold these tenets.

History narrates such incidents and events in which the Sikh devotees selflessly served the humanity and made supreme sacrifices not only to be firm in their own convictions but also to see that their neighbors live according to their faiths and respective ways of life. It is in this context that we present the martyrdom of those who laid down their lives for the freedom of worship regardless of their own sect or attain higher realms of spiritual values. No single instance is available where any sacrifice has been made by any one for the well being of humanity. In a way the Sikh martyrs provide a unique example, as the following statement of T.S. Eliot, a literary luminary of world repute, illustrates:

Martyrdom is always made by the design of God, for His love of men to warn them, to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of Man : for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr...."

This humble attempt is neither to project the supremacy of the Sikhs nor to undermine the status of non-Sikhs. This can at best be regarded as an informatory account which would enable the non-Sikhs in India and abroad to comprehend the high ideals for which the Sikh Gurus, the Sikh Martyrs and common Sikhs stand.

The brief account is an apology for to write about the Sikh faith, Sikh scriptures, Sikh Gurus and history of the Sikhs, volumes would be required. We trust that this pamphlet would serve its purpose i.e., to present a brief account of Sikh martyrs to the public at large in a simple language.

We acknowledge with thanks the contribution of Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee, Gurmat Missionary College and Mr. J.S. Anand in the preparation of this pamphlet.

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ੴ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ
ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਕਾਲਜ (ਰਜਿ:)

GURMAT MISSIONARY COLLEGE

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Shahadat Nama is a sincere narrative of Sikh Martyrs right from Guru Arjun Dev's times (i.e. early 17th Cent.) till mid 18th cent. The one and a half century period is the golden period of Sikh Revolution, which from many angles the Religious, Social & Political does depict the unique philosophy of Sikhism as it was acceptable to Humanity. In spite of the trying times, it withstood all eventualities. The tyrant rulers tried all sorts of vices to refrain people from embracing Sikhism and also also tempted Sikhs to denounce their faith. Hail and Glory to these Martyrs, each Sikh still remembers God through them and it has become part of each Sikh's daily Prayer (Ardas).

Martyr is one who proves his worth & belief by laying down his precious life for a humanitarian cause. Whole of humanity salutes Martyrs as they are torch bearers of their times & times to come. This pamphlet by S. Kulmohan Singh presents a brief & sincere account of Sikh Martyrs. The Maiden work of S. Kulmohan Singh has earned him a place in the forefront of Missionary work especially for fellow brothers who are far away from the land of five rivers, the theatre of these Martyrs. The language & Style is impressive and we take pride in introducing this work to public at large, who are the best judge. May Almighty shower his choicest blessings on him so that we hear more from him in future.

ਵਾਸਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਕਾਲਜ

GURU ARJAN DEV

Guru Arjan Dev was the first Sikh Guru martyr. He was youngest son of Guru Ram Dass His mother's name was Bibi Bhani daughter of Guru Amar Dass. He was born in 1563 at Goindwal. At the age of eighteen i.e., in Sept 1581, he succeeded his father and became the fifth Guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Ram Das was convinced of Guru Arjan Dev's outstanding qualities such as devotion, obedience, noble-mindedness, humbleness, sweetness, administrative capabilities, sociability with other religious heads and conviction of faith. That is why Guru Arjan Dev was thought to be most suitable for succession to Gaddi (Pontificate) and got preference over his elder brother, Prithi Chand.

CONSTRUCTION WORK

Guru Arjan Dev took up the construction work of Sri Harimandir Sahib (the Temple of God), popularly known as Golden Temple, Sri Amritsar, and had its foundation stone laid by Sufi Saint Mian Mir.

Sri Amritsar, the pool of nectar, was also completed by him. This place gained great importance and played a historical role in the religious history of the community.

At a distance of 12 miles from Amritsar, he built another Gurudwara along with a tank and gave it the name "Tarn Taran" - the pool of salvation.

He also raised the towns of Kartarpur near Jalandhar in Punjab and Hargovindpura near Lahore (now in Pakistan).

A great organizer and practical administrator, Guru Arjan Dev was basically a born poet and musician. His most popular composition is Sukhmani- The Psalm of Peace.

THE HOLY GRANTH

The unique achievement of Guru Arjan Dev was the compilation of the Holy Granth (Sikh Scripture) completed in August 1604. In this great anthology were incorporated hymns

of Sikh Gurus. Hindu Bhagats and Muslim Sufi Saints. It is a remarkable collection of devotional composition of highest order and literary excellence, set to classical music as well as popular folk tunes. It is sovereign and supreme in its authority and establishes the fundamental unity of all religious and mystic experiences. The Holy Granth preserves the great spiritual heritage of five hundred years, depicting the traditional, cultural and religious history of this vast country with mystical and philosophical developments over the centuries in a simple popular language. This is the only Holy Book which enjoys the prestigious status of a living Guru and has been written by the Guru during their life time. It is beyond the scope of this small pamphlet to describe in detail the unlimited merits of this vast ocean of divine knowledge and spiritual practice. The contents of Guru Granth Sahib are known as Guruvani (Guru's Words) and its teaching are popularly termed Gurmat- collective wisdom of all spiritual masters.

No one is allowed to make any change in the text. The Holy Granth or the Adi Granth was installed in 1604 in Harimandir Sahib by the Guru himself and Baba Buddha was appointed its first Granti (Priest).

Prithi Chand, alongwith some of his supportes, reported to Akbar the Mugal Emperor that there were verses in the Holy verses in the Holy Scripture derogatory to Islam. It was examined in the court of the Emperor and confirmed that the Holy Book was all in praise of God (Allah), the Almighty. Akbar not only made his obeisance to the Holy Scriptures but also bestowed robes of honour on Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha who had attended the Moghal court in this connection.

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

The Mughal Emperor Akbar had a very high opinion of the Sikh Gurus. He took special care to have cordial relations with them but after his death in Oct. 1605 Jahangir became the Emperor (Nov.1605). He formed his own impression of Guru Arjan Dev mostly based on the complaints of Qazis and Maulvis.

Jahangir recorded in his memoirs called "Tuzak-e-Jahangir".:

"In Goindwal, which is on the bank of river Beas, there was a Hindu named Arjan, in the garments of sainthood and sanctity, so much so that he had captured many of the simple-hearted Hindus & even of the ignorant and foolish flowers of Islam, by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. They called him Guru, and from all sides stupid people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. For there or four generations (of spiritual successors) they had kept this shop warm. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring him into the assembly of the people of Islam."

Jahangir was a Lahore when he gave instructions to his officers to deal with the Guru. Leaving it to his officers to execute the order he left Lahore for Delhi. An official named Chandu, whose daughter's hand for Horgobind (Guru's son) was not accepted by the Guru, at the instance of Sangat (Holy congregation), was looking for an opportunity to take revenge against the Guru. He became instrumental for his political-religious sacrifice. He took upon himself this evil task of torturing and assassinating the Guru. Chandu took the Guru to his house where he made him sit in a large vessel of boiling water, then he made the Guru sit on a hot iron plate and burning sand was poured on his head and body. Hazrat Mian Mir, the Muslim Saint, came to know of the torture. He rushed to the place. On seeing that inhuman treatment, he sought Guru's permission to overthrow the cruel and unjust Mughal rule. But the Guru advised him to surrender to the Will of God.

Throughout the day torturing was going on. In the evening the Guru's blistered body was thrown into the cold water of the river Ravi where it was washed away by the strong current. This supreme martyrdom, first of its kind in the land, occurred on 30th May 1606.

A Gurudwara called Dehra Sahib stands on the bank of river Ravi at Lahore which perpetuates the memory of Guru Arjan Dev.

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Guru tegh Bahadur's succession to Gut Gaddi (Pontificate) did not take place in the usual manner. Guru Harkrishan before his demise gave an indication, by uttering two words 'Baba Bakale, a small town in Amritsar district of Punjab. The search for the Guru started.

Makhan Shah, a trader was bringing some goods in a vessel which was caught up in a storm at the sea. He vowed to present 500 gold mohars (coins) to the "True Guru" for his safe return home. On fulfillment of his prayer, he came to Bakala where he was bewildered to find 22 claimants to Gur Gaddi. He placed two gold mohars before each one of them as a test. The offering was received gladly to his disappointment. At last he met Tegh Bahadur who reminded him of his vow. Makhan Shah got excited and cried "Guru Ladho"-Guru is found out.

All the seekers assembled there and bowed before Tegh Bahadur. The ascension to the gaddi (Pontificate) in 1665 was ceremonially performed and celebrated.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the youngest son of the sixth Guru Hargobind Sahib. He was born at Amritsar in 1621. His mother's name was Mata Nanki. He was married at the age of eleven to Mata Gujri. His earlier name was Tyag Mal. He showed extraordinary skill in swordsmanship in the battles and was given the title of Tegh Bahadur by his father. He is said to be in a contemplative mood in his childhood and did not favour worldly gains, riches and materialistic way of life. He was on a long tour from 1644 to 1665 in eastern states spreading the message of Guru Nanak.

After ascending Gur Gaddi (Pontificate) The Guru founded a new city called Chak Nanki in 1665 (later Anandpur) and again went on a missionary tour visiting Kurukshetra, Agra, Priyag, Banares, Gaya, Dacca, and Assam preaching Nanak's Gospel wherever he went. He made a great impact on the people and was welcomed everywhere.

In the year 1666 he was blessed with a son Gobind Rai. Guru Tegh Bahadur took great care in the education and training

of his son by great Hindu, Muslim and Sikh scholars.

By now the religious persecution of the Hindus, under the orders of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor, had crossed all limits. He issued a general order in April 1669 asking, all governors of provinces to destroy, with firm hand the schools and temples of the infidels.

In May 1675 a deputation of Brahmins from Kashmir, under the leadership of Kirpal Ram, went to Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur and related their woeful tale of forced conversion at the hands of the Muslim rulers, and prayed for help. Their sad plight landed the Guru in deep thought. At that moment the child Gobind Rai came in who on seeing his father's pensive face, asked the reason for that. The Guru explained the circumstances in which Kashmiri Pandits were subjected to conversion and suggested that if a holy man sacrificed his life, situation could be saved. Gobind Rai immediately said, "who else is holier than yourself," The Guru was happy to see Gobind Rai in high spirits. He told the Brahmins to go back and tell the Governor of Kashmir that if Guru Tegh Bahadur accepted Islam they all would convert en-masse. The message was conveyed to Aurangzeb who issued orders for Guru's arrest. The Guru was apprehensive, he installed his son Govind Rai in the seat of the Guru and proceeded to Delhi. When he reached Agra he was arrested and imprisoned. All sorts of persuasions to convert him failed to yield any results. The Guru was asked to either embrace Islam or perform a miracle or face death.

His Companion Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Dial Dass and Bhai Sati Dass were tortured to death before his eyes to demoralize and frighten him but all in vain. He was imprisoned in an iron cage, kept hungry for days and subjected to humiliation. The Guru had not come to Delhi for a compromise; he had come to defend the freedom of faith even at the cost of his life. On one side the wonderful law anxious to convert the proclaimed criminals (non-Muslims) giving them the option to choose a delightful life with Islam or face death with humiliation.

When Aurangzeb did not succeed in his mission, he

ordered that the Guru be executed. The Guru was beheaded at Chandni Chowk in Delhi on 11 November 1675. The body lay there for the whole day. In the evening a severe dust storm swept the city and under cover of darkness Lakhi Shah carried away the body to his residence where it was cremated by setting fire to his house. The head was carried away by another disciple called Bhai Jaita to Anandpur where it was cremated by Govind Rai (his son).

Gurudwara Rakabganj has been built at the place of cremation and Gurwara Sis Ganj has been erected at the place of execution in respectful memory of the Guru who was looked upon as Hind Ki Chadar (Defender of Indian people).

Guru Gobind Singh has described the purpose of the sacrifice in the following words:

"He sacrificed his life
For protecting the rights of Hindus
To wear sacred thread and forehead marks
He performed the supreme sacrifice in this dark age.
He gave his head, but did not utter a word in pain.
He suffered martyrdom for the sake of Dharma.
He did this great heroic deed
He readily gave up his head
But did not give up his conviction."

BHAI MATI DASS

Guru Tegh Bahadur was accompanied by his trusted disciples who laid down their lives before Guru's martyrdom. One of them was Bhai Mati Dass, a Brahmin of Jehlum, now in Pakistan. His father's name was Praga who had four sons, Mati Dass, Sati Dass, Sukhi Dass and Jati Dass. They all became Sikhs under the influence of the Ninth Master. Mati Dass rose to the status of Diwan and was entrusted the job of maintaining accounts of income and expenditure. Mati Dass was arrested along with the Guru and imprisoned. In order to frighten the Guru Mati Dass was tortured to death the very eyes of the Guru.

He was earlier given the option of embracing Islam and enjoy a joyful life worthy of his youthful built. Mati Dass refused to yield. He was asked to express his last wish. He desired that he should be beholding the Guru till his last breath. It was granted. He was made to stand between two logs of wood and was sawn into two pieces in Chandni Chowk, Delhi. The place is now called Bhai Mati Dass Chowk to perpetuate his martyrdom.

BHAI DIALA

Bhai Diala was also accompanying Guru Tegh Bahadur when he was arrested and imprisoned. The usual offer of worldly pleasures was made to him, if he agreed to embrace Islam. Bhai Diala sternly refused to deviate from his cherished path. He witnessed the sacrifice of Bhai Mati Dass but was not terrified or shaken. On the contrary he remained firm in his faith. The Qazi (Islamic administrator of justice) decided his fate by ordering his death in an exemplary way. Bhau Diala was made to sit in a cauldron, full of boiling water. Bhai Diala remained calm and peaceful while the water was boiling. He was reciting religious hymns unperturbed. He suffered torture without a murmur. Thus he became one of the fore-runner martyrs.

BHAI SATI DASS

The sacrifice made by his two companions, Bhai Mati Dass and Bhai Diala, inspired Bhai Sati Dass to be firm in his faith. Any type of torture and tyranny could not deter him from his determination. As per Islamic injunction he was also asked to embrace Islam and enjoy a high status in life. This was outrightly rejected. This infuriated the rulers. Orders were passed for his death sentence and he was wrapped in cotton wool and set afire. Thus he was burnt alive and attained martyrdom.

THE FIVE LOVED ONES

Guru Gobind Singh called a special gathering of the Sikhs on Baisakhi day of the year 1699. Addressing the gathering he

drew his sword and in a commanding voice said" I need a head. Is there any one who can offer his head (lay down life)?" He repeated his call thrice. His unusual manner and unprecedented words frightened the audience who were awe stricken and amazed at the sight of unsheathed sword in the hands of the Guru. Unable to understand the purpose behind it, some thought of running away. Out of the large gathering came forward one Sikh, named Daya Ram a Khatri from Lahore who voluntarily offered his head to the Guru for any service or purpose. The Guru took him in a nearby tent and after a while came out waving the sword dripping with blood. The Guru with a glorious flash on his face asked for more heads. The demand was repeated four times and one by one the disciples named Dharam Chand a Jat of Delhi, Mohkam Chand a washerman of Dwarka, Himmat Rai, a water carrier from Orrisa and Sahib Chand, a barbar from Bidar came forward offering their heads to the Guru. The Guru took them inside the tent but further surprised the gathering when he brought all the five disciple dressed in new clothes out of the tent and baptized them with his Amrit (nectar) specially prepared for the occasion.

Thereafter they were called PANJ PYARA- The Five beloved ones. They enjoyed a status next only to the Guru. They had the unique privilege of baptising the Guru himself who set a solitary example by asking his disciples to make him a disciple. This set a unparallel example ceremony led to spontaneous baptism of twenty thousand disciples on the spot. In a few days the number went unto eighty thousands. They were given five symbols (Kesh, Kangha, Kachha, Kara and Kirpan) with the name of Khalsa having a special ethical & moral code of conduct.

Consequent to the baptismal ceremony, the suffix of Singh was added to their names, meaning thereby a Lion. Similarly womenfolk were given the suffix of Kaur a Princess. Since then they PANJ PYARAS are remembered as a mark of great respect in the Ardas (supplication) and their share of Karah Prasad (sacred food) is taken out before distribution to others. This

historical status of Panj Pyaras is recognized as a command of the Guru and will always remain so. When ever there is a celebration or a procession they are represented by five Sikhs out of the Sangat to give the lead to the congregation. Their memory is always kept fresh by the Sangat.

BHAI DAYA SINGH

He was the son of a Khatri of Lahore, named Sudha. He was born in 1669. From the very childhood his inclination was towards religious affair and he was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. He came into contact with the Tenth Master and was immensely moved to become a true Sikh. When on the Baisakhi Day of 1699, the Guru made a call for a head in the large gathering of the Sikhs, he instantly rushed forward to offer his head saying " O' King of Kings, here I offer my head to thee. It was always thine",. His earlier name was Daya Ram and became Daya Singh after baptism.

He was with the Guru at Anandpur and remained with him even after vacating Garhi Chamkaur. It was he who was considered most suitable to deliver the historic letter, popularly known as the Zafar Nama to the Emperor Aurangzeb. When discussion ensued regarding the attitude of Guru Gobind Singh's opposition to the Muslim faith, Bhai Daya Singh clarified position and convinced the Emperor of Guru's noble and pious thoughts and respect for all faiths. The Emperor was impressed by his gesture, and conferred on him the Robe of Honour Aurangzeb. He was also given a Shahi Parwana for safe passage. On return he delivered Emperor's message conveying his desire to meet the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh agreed to this. Thus Bhai Emperor the decision of the Guru to see him. However, when the Guru was on his way he received the news that Aurangzeb had expired.

Bhai Daya Singh fought all the battles alongside the Guru and remained in his service. He accompanied the Guru to Nander as well, where breathed his lest in 1708 AD.

BHAI DHARAM SINGH

He was born in 1666. His father's name was Sant Ram. He was a Jat by caste. On taking Amrit (nectar) he became Bhai Dharam Singh from Dharam Dass. He accompanied the Guru and fought in all the battles until the Guru was prevailed upon to leave the Chamkaur Garhi. Because he could serve the master well as none else, he remained with the Guru all through. He looked after the Guru in the days of turmoil and hardships with utmost affection and devotion. He breathed his last in 1708 at Nander.

BHAI MOHKAM SINGH

He was the third to respond to the call of the Guru for a head and became Mohkam Singh from Mohkam Chand after baptism. Born in the Year 1663 in Kshatriya (Tonk) community usually cloth merchants and calicoprinner, he learnt swordsmanship and the use of various arms. The name of his father was Tirath Ram. His mother was Devan Bai. He was the Guru at Anandpur and Chamkaur during the battles with the Mughal forces. He alone faced the mighty Mughal army for nearly three hours tactfully. Dreading by his strength and mastery in wielding arms, the enemy encircled him from all sides and blew him up with fire-arms. He became a martyr on December 22, 1704.

BHAI HIMMAT SINGH

He was born in the year 1661. The name of his father was Sri Gulab Rai, a water-carrier of Jagannath. His mother's name was Srimati Dhanno. Throughout his life he contributed his might for the fulfillment of Guru's mission to free the common people from shackles of tyrant rulers. With unflinching faith and utmost devotion he displayed his fighting talent at Chamkaur and met with heroic death in 1704.

BHAI SAHIB SINGH

He responded to the call of Guru Gobind Singh and became one of Guru's loved ones. Born in 1662 Sahib Chand (later Sahib Singh) was the son of Sri Chamna, a barber of Bidar. He remained a devout Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh and fought heroically during battles with Hill Chiefs and Mughal forces. He met with a hero's end while checking the onslaught of Mughal Soldiers during the battle of Chamkaur in 1704.

SAHIBZADA:

BABA AJIT SINGH AND BABA JUJHAR SINGH

Background: The Hill Chiefs were keenly watching the growing influence of Guru Gobind Singh. They had their own fears and suspicion. They wanted to contain the Guru or end up his life to curb the Sikh movement. They gathered their combined forces to challenge the Guru at Bhangani-Paonta Sahib in 1688. The Guru, supported by his followers and friends like Pir Budhoo Shah, met the challenge gallantly and defeated the Rajas. Thereafter, the Guru went to Anandpur Sahib and at the place called Nadaon in 1691, he again gave a crushing defeat to the Rajas. The victories of the Guru were alarming for the convert all non-Muslims or kill them as infidels -Kafirs.

In 1699 the Guru baptized a large number of his followers at Kesgarh (Anandpur) to resist in an organized manner the oppression of conversion by the state. Receiving the reports of Guru's activates, coupled with the complaints of the Hill Chiefs, who had been seeking help from the Emperor Aurangzeb issued orders for military operation against the Guru. A large scale fighting started in 1701 and continued for three years i.e., upto 1704 at Anandpur Sahib. The military generals namely Wazir Khan and Zabardast Khan sent several messages on oath of Quran (Holy book of Muslims), and cow, by the Hill Chiefs, to the Guru to vacate Anandpur on the promise of safe passage. The guru did not rely on such oaths. But he was requested by his followers to do so because of prolonged siege leading to

frustration. Their enemy was curiously watching every movement of the Guru.

On intervention of Royal Emissary of Aurangzeb the Khalsa contingent vacated the precincts of Anandpur Sahib. The treacherous enemy fell upon them. Fierce fighting took place at every step to the detriment of both the sides. Extremely outnumbered the Khalsa gave way and dispersed in all directions. Some men remained with the Guru and crossed the river Sirsa whence they preceded in the direction of Chamkaur. Two elder Sahibzada were with the Guru whereas the two younger ones along with Mata Gujri escaped to some other direction.

Fighting was going on at every step when the Guru after vacating the Anandpur fort took shelter in a mud-house (Haveli) at Chamkaur. Pursuing forces laid a siege around the Haveli in which the Guru with a handful of men planned a strategy to hold the enemy advance by keeping them engaged in fighting till night fall. History does not record a battle similar to one fought at Chamkaur, where in courage, bravery and fortitude in each batch of five Sikhs displaying unparalleled chivalry challenged the might of several lakhs of enemy soldiers and stunned them with their fighting spirit. It was probably here that Guru Gobind Singh claimed, "One Sikh will fight against a hundred and quarter thousand tyrants."

BABA AJIT SINGH

The eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh, Baba Ajit Singh was born at Anandpur on 7th January 1687 AD. He was given proper training in the use of war weapon especially archery and swordsmanship. He took part in all the battles fought by the Guru & showed his proficiency in the use of arms. In the battle field wherever he was posted he stood like a rock and pushed the advancing enemies back. In a horrible situation at Chamkaur Baba Ajit Singh requested his father to allow him to go out of the Haveli with five Sikhs to stall the enemy. The Guru, with an affectionate pat granted his request. When Ajit Singh thundered in the field, he remained out of reach of the enemy for hours.

He excelled in the use of war weapons such as archery and swords-manship. Whosoever thought of going near him faced sure death. He was terror for the enemy in the battlefield. As long as the arrows lasted in his quiver, he held the enemy soldiers at a distance. But with his weapons his sword and plunged in a hand to hand fight. Hundreds of enemy soldiers encircled him from all sides narrowing the distance every movement. He fell fighting to the last with a glow of a martyr on his face.

BABA JUJHAR SINGH

The second son of Guru Gobind Singh, born in 1689 at Anandpur. He was 16 years old when he participated in the battle of Garhi Chamkaur. He had seen how his elder brother fought and fell. He requested his father to allow him to go out of the Garhi and fight against the forces of injustice and evil. The Guru equipped him with a sword and shield and gave him an encouraging pat. He went out with five Sikhs. While fighting bravely, he felt thirsty and came back to the Guru for water. The Guru forgetting the relationship turned his back to him and said that a soldier returns from the battle field victorious on vanquished. The son got the hint and rode back to the field roaring like a hungry lion. While fighting he advanced into the thick of the enemy rows until he was overpowered and slain.

BABA FATEH SINGH AND BABA ZORAWAR SINGH

When Anandpur was vacated, Guru Gobind Singh and his companions had to face combined forces of the Mughals and Hill Rajas (Chiefs). A fierce fight took place on the bank of river Sirsa and in the utter confusion the Guru with two elder sons and forty Sikhs encamped at Chamkaur while two younger sons, Baba Fateh Singh and Baba Zorawar Singh with their grand-mother, Mata Gujri and domestic servant (Cook), Gangu Brahmin got separated. Gangu thought of earning a reward by handing over Guru's mother and younger sons to Wazir Khan, Nawab of Sirhand. The Nawab was too happy to learn that. He

got them arrested and ordered that the children be brought before him. The usual persuasion for conversion to Islam followed. No temptation or threat could yield any result. The Nawab ultimately ordered to brick them alive. Against this horrible decision, Nawab of Malerkotla who was present there, raised a voice of dissent but in vain. Both the brothers aged 8 & 7 (youngest martyr's in world history) were bricked alive. Mata Gujri, was thrown from the brij and thus martyred.

The place is now known as Gurudwara Feteah Garh Sahib built in their sacred memory. The Sahibzadas are always remembered in the Ardas. The brave participation of the young souls has earned them a unique place in the history of the Sikh martyrs.

THE FORTY IMMORTALS

The siege at Anandpur Sahib continued for a long time. The garrison had to face great many hardships. Some Sikhs felt exasperated and sought the permission of the Guru to leave. The Guru asked them to give in writing that they disowned the Guru. The paper on which it was written and signed was called Bedawa (disowner's Document) when the deserts went back to their homes they were humiliated for their cowardly act. The cold treatment of their families was unbearable. They felt awfully ashamed and sincerely repented. When they came to know that imperial forces were in Malwa in search of the Guru, they gathered under the command of one brave lady named Mai Bhago and attacked the Mughal forces. The battle took place at Khidrana. Guru Gobind Singh was watching at a distance on a sand-hill when the fighting was going on. Before he could reach the battlefield each one of them had fallen. The battle was over and Mughal forces had left the place. The Guru reached the battle was over and Mughal forces had left the place. The Guru reached the battlefield, cleansed their faces, kissed the dead warriors one by one with great love and affection. All had expired except one, Mahan Singh, who

requested the Guru to tear off the Bedawa. The Guru tore the paper and blessed the forty warriors as Immortals. Mahan Singh with a victorious smile on his face breathed his last peacefully in the lap of the Guru. As a part of the Ardas a special mention is made of the forty immortals who will ever be remembered for their unparalleled martyrdom.

GURU GOBIND SINGH

Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna (Bihar) in the year 1666. His father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was at Assam those days from where he went to Anandpur through Punjab. He called his family over there from Patna.

Kashmiri Pandits, terrified by forced conversion to Islam approached Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur Sahib for protection. Here the child Gobind Rai played an important role by requesting his father to take the historic decision of sacrificing his life to safeguard the freedom of worship and faith. This was a great moment which changed the direction of future course of action. Gobind Rai's participation at this stage, was indicative of his concern to uphold the ideals of human dignity and right to live with respect. His determination to face all odds with boldness and pay any price, including supreme sacrifice for the protection of faith was evident. Guru Tegh Bahadur visualized with satisfaction in Govind a heir for protection of spiritual heritage.

When he came of age he was a scholar of Sanskrit, Braj, Arabic and Persian languages. A great poet and prolific writer, he inspired his followers to resist all evil and project all that was noble and virtuous.

To achieve all this he baptized his followers with Amrit (Nectar), called them Singhs (Lions) or saint-soldiers and established Khalsa Panth (community of Pure Ones) who regarded it as merit to give their faith in upholding the sublime ideals. They swore to live and die for their faith and not to deviate from it. All principle based on caste or creed high or low, rich or poor were abolished. They were given a code of conduct with

five k's as part of faith. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man with equal opportunities for all was to be the guiding principle in Khalsa Panth. Their slogan was Khalsa (Pure one) belongs to God, all victory is of God. Supremacy of God and not of man created a host of enemies against the new panth (way). The Hill Chiefs, terrified by the growing popularity of the Khalsa Panth, gathered together to throw challenges is used war follows. A fierce battle at Bhangani, a place near Paonta Sahib, was fought in which the Guru win the day. The Hill Chiefs made another attempt at Nadaon but suffered defeat. They sought the support and help of the Emperor Aurangzeb under whose order a big Imperial army laid siege of Anandpur Sahib where the Guru was stationed. This siege was carried on for three years without any tangible result.

At last a message was sent to the Guru by the Commanders of Mughal army and Hill chiefs with a promise on oath of the Holy Quran and cow that safe passage will be allowed to the Khalsa if they vacate Anandpur. But when the Guru vacated he, along with his other Sikhs, was severely attacked from all sides. The Khalsa garrison dispersed in all directions. The two elder sons alongwith the Guru crossed river Sirsa and encamped in a mud house at Chamkaur, presently known as Garhi Chamkaur, while the two younger sons with Mata Gujri managed to escape from the imperial army.

At Chamkaur an exemplary battle was fought with forty men on one side and several thousand imperial forces on the other. It was here that Sahibzadas Ajit Singh and Jujhar Sigh fell fighting.

When five Sikhs were left inside the Garhi, they requested the Guru to escape in the larger interest. The guru managed to reach Machhiwara and with the help to two Muslims Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan he further advanced to Malwa. At Muktsar the 40 disowners engaged the ensueing Imperial army thereby gaining time for Guru's escape. The Guru reached Talwandi Sabo where he stayed and dictated the Guru Granth Sahib to Bhai Mani Singh.

Times changed. Aurangzeb died, Bahadur Shah won the war of succession wherein he had requested for Guru's help, which was given. The Guru visited Delhi, Agra and proceeded to Deccan and reached Nander, Here he baptized Banda Singh Bahadur and sent him to Punjab as the leader of the Khalsa.

Wazir Khan, Nawab of Sirhind hired two Pathans to assassinate the Guru. One of them succeeded in stabbing the Guru. The Guru killed him on the spot. The wound inflicted by the Pathan was stitched and healed up after a few days. The Guru, one day, tried to bend a stiff bow, which made his wound burst open. The Guru visualized that his end was near. He conferred Guruship on the Holy Granth Sahib i.e. Sacred Scripture of the Sikhs and ordained that "there will be no person as Guru after me. The Khalsa Panth will act as the Guru and their decision will be imperative.

The Guru laid his life for the ideals for which he lived. His divine journey ended in 1708 at Nander where now a majestic Gurudwara called Hazoor Sahib Stands.

BANDA SINGH BAHADUR

Lachhman Dass, son of Ramdev, was born in 1670 at Rajouri, a small town in Jammu. His father was a Rajput who gave him training in swordsmanship and arrow shooting. He used to go for hunting. Once he shot a female deer with an arrow. It died alongwith its kids before his eyes. The sight of the mother with its children was a terrible shock to the young Lachhman Dass, who became Bairagi (Sanayasi)-ascetic thereafter, and changed his name as Madho Das. He went from place to place in search of real manager. He set his own monastery at Nander (Maharashtra) where he developed some magical powers.

Guru Gobind Singh went to Nander in 1708, and visited the monastery. Madho Das failed to work his magic on the Guru and realized that he had found the real Master. He fell at the feet of the Guru and said, "I am your Banda, a slave." Guru Gobind Singh baptized Banda and gave him the name, Banda

Singh, now popularly known as Banda Singh Bahaur. The Guru gave him five arrows and after imparting moral and ethical injunctions, sent him to Punjab with letters to his devout Sikhs for giving all possible help to Banda. The Sikhs of Majha, Malwa and Doaba, in Punjab, gathered under Banda's command and marched to Sirhind creating terror wherever they went. Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, fought but was killed in the battle.

Banda, then, turned to the administration of the territory brought under his control. He abolished Zamindari and distributed land to the tillers. He assured the Mohammedans that there will be no interference, in any way in their life, and that those who came to his ranks would enjoy full religious liberty.

Banda gave a new capital to his realm. He chose Mukhilsapur, near Sadhaura and re-built the fortress of Lohgarh. He married twice and got two sons, Ajai Singh and Ranjit Singh from his first and second wife respectively. He struck a new coin in the name of the True Guru.

***Sikka zad bar har do alam
Tegh -I-Nanak wahib ast
Fatah Gobind Singh Shah Shaham
Sacha Sahib ast.***

"This coin is struck by the grace of the True Master, and also the victory that (Guru) Gobind Singh the King of Kings brings." His official seal read:

***Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fatah-o Nursat bedrung
Yaft Az Nanak-Guru-Gobind Singh***

"The sword, the worldly treasures, victory and unalloyed power I have found from Guru Nanak and Gobind Singh".

Emperor Bahadur Shah, greatly alarmed with Banda's achievements, marched in person towards Punjab with a huge army. A long siege to the fort was laid. Banda had to retire to hills.

Bahadur Shah died in 1712 and was succeeded by his son who was dethroned by Farukh Siyar his nephew. He issued

strict orders to surround Banda from all sides. In 1715 royal arma, after cutting off all supplies to the besieged fort, forced Banda and his forced to surrender. Banda was taken prisoner alongwith his 800 surviving troops. They were offered mercy if they would renounce their faith in favour of Islam which was not to happen. Not a single man deviated. The entire group of 700 was executed, one by one, in Chandni Chowk Delhi and the rest Near Mehrauli where a Gurdwara stands in memory of the martyrs.

BHAI TARA SINGH

Resident of village Dhilwan in Majha, Bhai Tara Singh used to serve Khalsa at his house with food and lodge. He was running a free kitchen (Langar) and was very popular for his generosity and fearlessness. Staunch in his faith he was a true saint-soldier.

A small revenue officer in the village looked down upon Sikhs and called them dacoits and plunderers. He let loose his horses in their fields to the detriment of rich crops. One day some horses were stolen. He suspected the Sikhs who were under the protection of Bhai Tara Singh. So he asked Bhai Tara Singh to hand over those people responsible for the theft. Tara Singh refused to oblige since he knew that the Sikhs were innocent. The officer complained against Tara Singh to the Governor, Zakaria Khan who sent a big force of five thousand men to subdue the criminals. Bhai Tara Singh with four hundred Sikhs faced the enemy bravely until death. They fought against the oppressor and were killed to the last man giving an ample proof of their invincible spirit and faith.

BHAI MEHTAB SINGH AND BHAI SUKHA SINGH

S. Mehtab Singh belonged to a village called Mirankot in Amritsar district. He had taken up service in Bikaner in Rajputana. He used to entertain visitors from Punjab at his place. Once a visitor brought a stunning news to him. He was

told that the Golden Temple, Amritsar, was occupied by one Muslim by the name of Massa Rangharh. Who was a miscreant, debauch, drunkard and immoral fellow. He called dancing girls there and used to indulge in wine and woman.

Hearing this Sardar Mehtab Singh was all aflame. He took a vow to kill Massa Rangharh and restore the sanctity of the Hari Mandir. He took Sardar Sukha Singh with him and rushed to Amritsar. They held some bags full of coins and stones in their hands and presented themselves as Revenue Officers. They gained easy access to Massa and finding a suitable opportunity S. Mehtab Singh smashed Massa cutting his head with a sword in a flash of lightning. They rode back victorious to Rajputana.

After sometime, S. Mahtab Singh visited his village and was arrested. He was taken to Lahore where he was put on the intertwined wheels and crushed. Sardar Sukha Singh was also arrested. He too suffered the same fate and received martyrdom.

BHAI MANI SINGH

Son of a Jat named Chaudhri Kala of the village Kobewal, Mania (later Bhai Mani Singh) visited Anandpur Sahib at the age of seven along with his parents to pay respects to Guru Tegh Bhahadur. Mania became a playmate of Sri Gobind Rai. He endeared himself to all. When his parents left Anandpur Sahib. He remained there and became a companion of Sri Gobind Rai. Mata (Mother) Gujri looked after him as her own child. He received all sorts of training alongwith Gobind Rai and soon occupied a place of distinction in the scheme of things. After baptism, he became Bhai Mani Singh.

When Guru Gobind Singh vacated Anandpur Sahib in 1704, Bhai Mani Singh escorted Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundri to Delhi, Wherefrom he accompanied them to Damdama Sahib. He worked as a scribe for preparing a copy of Guru Granth Sahib under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh. He also compiled the Dasam Granth. He was with the Tenth Master

in Deccan when the Guru asked him to go to Delhi to look after Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kaur. He was deputed by Mata Sundri to settle a dispute over distribution of offerings at Amritsar between two groups of the Khalsa. The local Khalsa requested Bhai Mani Singh to take charge of the Temple (Harimandir) to check abuses. The Bhai felt that people were not visiting the Temple in large numbers on account of the fear of Turks. He held talks with authorities to permit the worshippers to hold Diwali fair and freely visit the Temple. The authorities agreed on the condition that Rs. 10,000 be paid to the government. The Governor of Lahore, Zakaria Khan had his own plan. He wished to put each one to sword on the fair day and gave orders that "Not a single soul should escape." Somehow his intentions became known and people scattered in all directions before they could be attacked. Since there was no gathering there were no offerings. Thus Bhai Mani Singh could not honor the commitment and was arrested. He was given the severest punishment by the Maulvis (Muslim clergy) who announced that he be cut limb-by-limb and thus done to death. The executioners obeyed the order of the cruel ruler and Bhai Mani Singh was cut into pieces publically. A gurdwara called Sahid Ganj, stands in memory of his unique martyrdom at Lahore.

BHAI TARU SINGH

There was a time when Mughal armies went chasing Sikhs and killed any one found by them. The Khalsa was under the ban. They were declared outlaws. Their heads were sold for a reward. No one would give them shelter or food.

Bhai Taru Singh, resident of Poola, in Majha would give shelter for a night to his co-religionists and serve them food also. This could not go unnoticed. One Khatri named Niranjana reported to the authorities that Bhai Taru Singh was entertaining dacoits who wrought havoc throughout the land and that the lives of peaceful subjects were not safe under the circumstances. The Governor ordered Bhai Taru Singh's arrest. He was brought

before the Governor who asked him to embrace Islam failing which his head would be clean-shaven. Bhai Taru Singh's defiance further enraged the Governor who ordered that Bhai Taru Singh's scalp be removed. A cobbler was called who did the job. Bhai Taru Singh cheerfully died a martyr's death.

BABA DEEP SINGH

Background: The Mughal government pursued the policy of persecution of Sikh. It was determined to root them out. Hundreds and thousands were murdered publically. The only way out or the only option readily available was to give up their faith in favour of Islam. Thus they could not only save their lives but could also earn any desired reward. The Sikhs could not move about freely. No shelter was offered to them by any one for fear of punishment. A wave of terror was let loose. To add insult to injury their religious places were demolished or desecrated. But exemplary martyrdom of the Sikhs strengthened the faith of the believers and their resolve to take revenge sharpened. Retaliation was the only course left to them for restoring the sanctity of their religious places and honorable living. They had retired to far off forests and hiding places. But for how long? Where was the limit? They had always lived and died for a cause. How could they stand humiliation of their sacred places.

A Jat Sikh of Amritsar, Baba Deep Singh was a saint-soldier. He was baptized by Guru Gobind Sahib in his own hand. He was tall strong and stout and very well versed in the use of arms particularly Khanda (Double edged sword). He fought many battles with uncommon bravery. The only aim of his life was the good of the Panth (Sikh community) for which he was prepared to sacrifice his all. He was staying at Damdama Sahib as incharge of the Gurdwara where he could remain informed about the welfare of the Sikh and their sacred places.

In Ahmed Shah Abdali's time, the city of Amritsar was plundered, the sacred tank was filled with filth and the building

of Sri Darbar Sahib was pulled down. All sorts of insults were inflicted on the Sikhs as a punishment for their staunch faith. Baba Deep Singh was furious on learning all this. He immediately announced to celebrate Diwali at Sri Darbar Sahib, and proceeded towards Amritsar with a small band of five hundred Sikhs. On his way many more joined him. At Tarn Taran Sahib, he prayed and took a vow that he should fall fighting for the emancipation and sanctity of Sri Darbar Sahib.

He drew a line with his sword asking those Sikh to cross the line who wished to sacrifice their lives for the cause.

Jahan Khan, Deputy Governor of Lahore, on learning about Baba Deep Singh's march, ordered his forces to put an end to the Sikhs. More than 20,000 Muslim soldiers supported with artillery confronted Baba Deep Singh and his men. The Sikh fought with exemplary bravery and kept advancing towards Ramsar (two miles from Amritsar), crushing the enemy's might. Jahan Khan and several other generals were killed in the battle which affected the morale of their soldiers.

A young Muslim General challenged eighty years old Baba Deep Singh for hand-to-hand fight in which the General was killed and Baba Deep Singh received a fatal cut in his neck. He held his head with hi left hand and went on wielding his **Khanda** until he reached the precincts of Sri Darbar Sahib, where he fell a martyr. In his fond memory stands a Gurdwara called Shaheed Ganj.

VEER HAQIQAT RAI

Haqiqat Rai was now among very few young owns how gladly sacrificed their lives but refused to be converted to Islam. He was born in the year 1724. His father, Sri Diwan Mal, a Nanak Panthi Khatri by caste, belonged to Sialkot (now in Pakistan). Being the only son of his parents, all the love of the family was showered upon him. He was married at a very early age with the daughter of S. Kishan Singh of Batala.

Haqiqat Rai was not baptized but had full faith in the noble ideals of Sikhism. He firmly and fearlessly stood against tyranny and injustice. He was receiving his early education in a Mosque from a Maulvi (Muslim Teacher) who once used undignified language for Hindu Gods. Haqiqat Rai could not tolerate that and requested the Maulvi not to be disrespectful to other religions. The Maulvi complained against Haqiqat Rai to the higher authorities saying that the naughty boy had abused the holy Prophet. Haqiqat Rai was immediately arrested and sent to Lahore for trial. The Governor, Zakaria Khan, known for his fanaticism and brutality, did not show any mercy to the young boy whose parents had made all sorts of requests. Haqiqat Rai was given the usual option to embrace Islam or face death with torture. He bluntly refused to submit to injustice. He was tied to a pillar and publically caned until he was unconscious. A sword swept to decide his fate in favour of his faith. This happened in 1742. a big fair on Basant Panchmi day used to be held in respectful memory of Veer Haqiqat Rai at Lahore where he was martyred. After partition of the country, Basant Panchami day is now celebrated at Batala in Punjab in memory of the great martyr.

'The battle of freedom once begun and handed down from sire to son though often last is ever won.'

