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BANDA BAHADUR.

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Childhood.

Banda Singh, the subject of this sketch, was known as Lachhman Dev in his childhood. He was born on Katik Sudi 13, 1727, Bikrami (27th October 1670 A. D., O. S.), at Rajauri in the Puncjh district of western Kashmir. His father Ram Dev was an ordinary ploughman Rajput. As is the case with all such persons, who are born in poor circumstances and rise to historical importance in the later years of their lives, nothing is known of his early childhood excepting that the child Lachhman Dev developed into a youth of very active habits, full of energy and fond of shooting and hunting.

It seems that he received no regular schooling in the early days of his life and like most of the youngmen of his age he spent his time in ploughing and hunting. He was very tender and sensitive of heart and was yet a raw youth when his life had its first dramatic turn. It is said that during one of his hunting excursions, the pitiable looks of a dying doe, shot by him, struck the tender cords of his heart. His feelings were further

affected by the sight of its two young ones, falling from its womb and fluttering to death before his eyes, in a few minutes after their unnatural birth, of which he himself was the main cause. Something latent moved him still from within. His sense of penitence grew so strong that in an instant his mind had an ascetic's turn and was turned away from everything mundane.

Wanders as an ascetic.

He left his home and household at the age of fifteen and assumed the role of a rolling stone. He moved from place to place on the mendicant excursions of his first preceptor Sadhu Janaki Prasad. At the Shrine of Ram Thamman near Kasur he entered into the discipleship of a Bairagi Ram Das and assumed the name of Madho Das Bairagi. But he did not stay with him for long and after some years of wandering settled down in the historic Panchbati woods near Nasik. Here he formed the acquaintance of an old Yogi Aughar Nath who instructed him in the secrets of Yoga and occultism. Being thus accomplished he left the Panchbati woods, after

the old Yogi's death, and established a monastery of his own near Nanded on the left bank of the river Godavari.

With the increase of his fame as a Yogi and an occultist, a sort of pride entered into his head. He was perhaps too raw for the life of a saint. He would practise his occultism over his saint-visitors and guests and would take pleasure in ridiculing his less gifted brethren. He was undoubtedly a mine of energy and enthusiasm but they were directed in wrong channels. The ore was there in an inexhaustible abundance but was waiting for a Refining Chemist to separate the dross from the pure metal and to clean and polish it with his chemical solutions. It was in this state of suspense that Madho Das spent about sixteen summers of his life at Nanded. At last the warrior-saint Guru Gobind Singh appeared on the scene in September, 1708, to reclaim the misdirected energies of the ascetic Bairagi and make them flow through the channels of the Khalsa Brotherhood, strenuously working for the emancipation of humanity suffering under the inequities and oppressions of the age.

Becomes a Sikh.

After the battle of Jajau on the 18th June, 1707, Guru Gobind Singh had accompanied Emperor Bahadur Shah to Agra, where on the 4th of Jamadi-ul-awwal, 1119 A.H.(2nd August, 1707 N. S.), a dress of honour including a jewelled scarf, a *dhukh-dhukhi*, an aigrett etc., worth sixty thousand rupees were presented to him by the Emperor as a mark of his gratitude. It appears from the Guru's letter of the 1st Katik, 1764 (about 15th October. 1707 N.S.), addressed to the Sikhs of Dhaul that the old negotiations that had brought him from the Punjab were then in progress and that he soon expected to return to his country. But as the Emperor had to leave for Rajputana, soon after (12-11-1707), and then to the Deccan to crush the threatening rebellion of his younger brother Kam Bakhsh, the Guru accompanied him southwards. Finding no prospect, however, of any satisfactory conclusion of the negotiations, he separated himself from the royal camp at Nanded, determined to invoke the All-Steel as the last resort. It was here that he met Madho Das Bairagi

and transformed him into *Banda*, a slave or a man of his.

On his way to the Deccan Guru Gobind Singh had heard of the Bairagi's unsaintly behaviour from the Dadupanthi Mahant Jait Ram of Dadudwara (Narayana, Jaipur State), whom, like many others, he had insulted and ridiculed. A successor-follower of Guru Nanak as he was, Guru Gobind Singh could not but visit and reclaim him to the path of righteousness. Madho Das was not then present in his monastery. The Guru, therefore, occupied the Bairagi's cot and lay down to wait for him, while his Sikh companions busied themselves in slaughtering and preparing goats for their meals. The proud and infuriated vegetarian Bairagi atonce hurried to his place to wreak his vengeance upon the intruder for this irreligious act in the precincts of his hermitage. But he came, he saw and was conquered. All his efforts in overturning the Guru's cot by his yogic incantations and occultism ended in a failure, and, thus baffled, he was convinced of the spiritual greatness of the Guru. Madho Das

now came nearer and respectfully addressed him. The following dialogue is recorded in the Persian *Zikar-i-Guruan Ibtida-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan* by Ahmad Shah of Batala:—

Madho Das—Who art thou ?

Guru Gobind Singh—He, whom you know.

Madho Das—What do I know ?

Guru Gobind Singh—Think it over in your mind.

Madho Das (after a pause)—So you are Guru Gobind Singh !

Guru Gobind Singh—Yes.

Madho Das—What hast thou come here for ?

Guru Gobind Singh—I have come so that I may convert you into a disciple of mine.

Madho Das—I accept it my Lord !

I am a *Banda* (a slave) of yours.

It is indeed inexplicable what charm was there in the mysterious words—‘I have come so that I may convert you into a disciple of mine’--that the erstwhile invincible and proud Bairagi Madho Das so submissively fell down at the feet of Guru Gobind Singh and accepted his creed without a word of argument. Madho Das had, in fact, become the

Master's at the very first sight, and now the touch of his feet had the effect of the philosopher's stone, and the dross of the Bairagi was transformed into the gold of the Sikh *Banda*, a man or a slave of the Guru. This was indeed a miracle of Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh clearly perceived what was yet vital in the youthful Bairagi and he relined it with Promethian fire. He availed of the psychological moment, dressed him like a Sikh, and administered to him the Immortalising Draught, the *Amrit* of the Khalsa, and regularly baptised*

* پس ہماگاہ اور پاپاں دادہ سنگھ کر۔ و با خود پیرہ آورد [احمد شاہ بنایہ ذکر گردان وغیرہ صفو ۱۱]

در آشنائی راہ شخصہ بچہ بول الاسم و نسب را۔ مستمال ساتھ یہ مذہب خود آورد و بر طرف ماکہ و وال

یہ نیابت خود رو آتہ کرد۔ [گنیش داس بہرہ۔ رسالہ صاحب نام صفو ۱۸۹-۱۸۶]

انخصرت۔ در راہ شوال۔ رگہرای اجیر شد کہ در ہمیں اشتیاق حر بنفارت و شورش بندہ کیسے از

مردیان خاص گورو گو بند سنگھ بسامع جاہ و جلال رسید [محمد علی خان انصاری۔ توارخ مغربی صفو ۸۰]

با وجودیکہ اول وہ خاندان بیرگ کا چیلہ تھا۔ اس سلسلہ سے چلیچندہ ہو کر گورو گو بست سنگھ کا چیلہ بن

گیا اور پاپاں لیکر گورو کا سکھ ہوا۔ [کنیا نعل تاریخ پنجاب صفو ۵۰]

him with all the usual Sikh rites. The ex-Bairagi was now given the new name of

Ghulam Hussain Khan—He was a Syc by profession, that is, one of those attached to the tenets of Guru Gobind (Singh) and who from their birth or from the moment of their admission, never cut or shave either their beard or whiskers, or any hair whatever of their body.

[*Raymond-Seir Mutagherin*
i 82 ; Briggs, 92-3]

M Gregor, W. L. [History of the Sikhs (1846) P. 106.] Banda immediately consented, received the Pahooldee, and became a Sikh.

Mohd Latif—[History of the Punjab P. 294.] Govind and Banda soon became intimate friends, and the former, by his persuasive eloquence and religious zeal made such a deep impression on the mind of Banda that he was initiated into the *Pahul*, and became a disciple of the Guru.

Payne, C. H. [A short History of the Sikhs]—Here (at Nander) he spent much of his time in the company of a Bairagi hermit, afterwards known as Banda, the " slave," whom he converted to his own faith and baptized, and to whom he became so much attached that he nominated him his successor, not as Guru, but as Commander of the forces of the Khalsa.

Macauliffe, M. A. [The Sikh Religion—The Guru instructed Banda in the tenets of his religion, and in due time baptized him according to the new rites.

George Forster—A tradition delivered to the Sicques, limiting their priests to the number of ten, induced them to appoint no successor to Govind Singh. A Sicque disciple, named *Bunda*, who had attended Govind Singh in the Deccan came.....into the Punjab, where claiming a merit from his late connection, he raised a small force. His successes at length drew to his standard the whole body of the Sicque nation. [Travels, i 263]

Iradat Khan—He (Guru Govind Singh) was succeeded by Bunda, one of his followers. [Memoirs of the Mughal Empire, 143]

Lovett, S. V.—The Sikhs were commanded by a Rajput convert of Govind's named Banda. [India, 34].

Veni Prasad—.....tadanusar Amrit Sanskar kärke, unhon ne uska nam Bhai Banda rakkha [Guru Gobind Singh, 192]

Sardha Ram. Ik Bairagi Sadh ne Guru Gobind Singh te Pahul lei hoi si. (*Sikkhan de Raj di Vitthya*).

also see **Nand Kishore**—Sikkhon ka Uttham aur Pattan, 244.

Radha Mohan Gokalji—Guru Govind Singh, 88-89.

(Continued on page 11).

Banda Singh,* though throughout his life and afterwards he was popularly known, and recorded by historians, by his self-conferred title of Banda or Banda Bahadur, (*Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, 2164.) In an instant he was a changed man. He was now no longer an ascetic Bairagi. He had become a full-fledged Sikh—a saint-warrior disciple of Guru Gobind Singh—a member of the Khalsa brotherhood. His monastery was in no time dissolved and he followed his Lord to his camp to prepare for the new militant mission of his saint-warrior's life.

Leaves for the Punjab.

Just in those very days Guru Gobind Singh was stabbed by a Pathan of Sirhind, deputed in all probability by Wazir Khan, the faujdar of that place, for it was he who had to suffer the most if the negotiations between the Guru and the Emperor were to reach a suc-

Surendra Sharma—Guru Govind Singh, 85-86.

Besides these, there are many more early and contemporary authorities who, without any exception, mention Banda as 'the Sikh,' 'chosen disciple,' 'disciple,' 'follower' and 'devoted follower' of Guru Govind Singh.

[See Harisi, Kamwar, Mohammad, Qalandar, Qasim, Surmon and Stephenson, Malcolm, Thornton, Adams, Crowther, etc.]

* According to Macauliffe and others he was given the name of Gurbakhsh Singh.

cessful conclusion. He was the same man under whose orders the younger sons of the Guru, when betrayed by a Brahman servant named Gangu into the hands of the Mohamadans, were bricked up alive and mercilessly butchered to death at Sirhind, in the Christmas week of 1704, for their refusal to abjure the faith of Sikhism and accept that of Islam. 'Of all the instances of cruelty' says James Browne, 'exercised on the propagators of new doctrines, this is the most barbarous and outrageous. Defenceless women and children have usually escaped even from religious fury. No wonder then, that the vengeance of the Sikhs was so severe.' (India Tract II,8).

Banda had by now heard of all this, and the sight of the Master himself being treacherously stabbed by a Pathan of Sirhind touched him poignantly and added fuel to the fire of his fury against that dreadful city and its murderous governor. His blood boiled within him. He waited not for the recovery of the Guru from the wound and begged to be allowed to proceed to the Punjab to accord a condign punishment to the ruthless persecutors and establish peace and justice in the

land. The Guru acceded to the request and entrusted the military command of his people to the charge of 'his chosen disciple' Banda, and commissioned him, as an accredited soldier of the Khalsa, to protect the poor and helpless and 'to smite the oppressors.'

Before his departure for the Punjab, the Guru called him to his side, gave him the title of 'Bahadur' and five arrows from his own quiver as 'pledge and token of victory.' A council of five *pyaras*, consisting of Binod Singh, Kahan Singh, Baj Singh, Daya Singh and Ram Singh was appointed to assist him, and some twenty other Singhs, were told off to accompany him to the theatre of their future warlike activities. A *Nishan Sahib* and a *Nagara*, or a flag and a drum were bestowed upon him as emblems of temporal authority. The secret of his success lay, he was told, in personal purity and chastity and in the propitiation of the Khalsa, who were to be regarded as his (Guru's) very self.

Thus raised to the position of a 'Commander of the forces of the Khalsa' and equipped with the Guru's *Hukam-namas* or

letters to the Sikhs all over the country to join in his expeditions, Banda Bahadur left for the Punjab.

Is joined by the Sikhs.

In a few months, he arrived on the frontier of Delhi province. Here he slackened his speed and moved very leisurely and cautiously. For want of men, money and ammunition he was not yet prepared for a collision with the government. For some time he stayed near the villages of Sehri and Khanda in the Pargana of Kharkauda. From here he despatched the Guru's letters to the Sikhs calling upon them to join with him in uprooting the tyrannous rule of the intolerant Moghal and in punishing Faujdar Wazir Khan of Sarhind and his Hindu *Peshkar* Sucha Nand (called Sachidanand in Qasim's *Ibratnama*), who had so cruelly butchered the sons of Guru Gobind Singh. His Sikh companions from Nanded, as well, wrote a large number of letters to the leading Sikhs telling them that Banda Singh had been deputed by the Guru himself and it behoved every true Sikh to fall in under his banner.

There was a stir among the Sikhs and they flocked to him from all quarters. Bhai Fateh Singh, a descendant of Bhai Bhagtu, Karam Singh and Dharam Singh of Bhai Rupa, and Nigahia Singh and Chuhar Singh were among the first leading persons who joined him with men and money. Ali Singh and Mali Singh with other Sikhs of Salaudi were the next to follow. And, 'later on his successes drew to his standard the whole body of the Sicque nation. (*Forster's Travels i 253*). Chowdhris Ram Singh and Tilok Singh of the Phoolkean liberally contributed to his resources and rendered every possible assistance in the accomplishment of his mission.

Sacks Samana, Kapuri and Sadhaura.

In a few months he found himself at the head of a considerable force of Sikhs with whom he marched upon the town of Samana which rankled in their hearts as the residence of Sayyed Jalal-ul-din, the executioner of Guru Tegh Bahadur, and of Shashal Beg and Bashal Beg who had volunteered to decapitate the Guru's sons. Early on the morning of the 26th November, 1709, Banda Singh and his

men suddenly rushed upon the town from a distance of about ten *kos* and, before night fall, its palatial buildings were a heap of ruins. About ten thousand lives are said to have been lost in the pillage and an immense booty fell into the hands of the Sikhs.

Passing through Ghuram, Thaska, Shahabad and Mustafabad, which all fell before him without much resistance, he attacked the town of Kapuri. Its Faujdar Kadam-ud-din was a moral-wreck of the worst type and stories of his profligacy are still, after the elapse of over two centuries and a quarter, current in Kapuri and its neighbourhood. There was hardly a handsome Hindu woman there, whose chastity had not been attacked by this depraved ruler. His sowars prowled over the territory, way-laying Hindu marriage parties and snatching away young brides, and thus Kadam-ud-din was a terror to the non-muslims of the illaqa. This was more than what a Sikh could tolerate. Banda Singh, therefore, decided to attend to no other business till he had chastised him. He attacked Kapuri, set fire to the strong-

holds of Kadam-ud-din's debaucheries and scattered his immoralising wealth to the four winds.

He next turned his attention to Sadhaura which was a notorious centre of oppression. The Hindus of this place were not allowed to burn their dead. Osman Khan, the ruler of the place, was a great bigot and he had tortured to death the great Muslim saint Sayyed Badar-ud-din Shah, popularly known as Budhu Shah, simply because of his having helped Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. In the attack it was mostly the local infuriated peasantry, inspired by a spirit of revenge, that worked havoc, and indiscriminately massacred the refugees in the Haveli of Shah Badar-ud-din.

It may be mentioned here that Banda Bahadur was following this circuitous route so that the Sikhs from Doaba and Majha, whose passage across the Sutlej had been blocked by Sher Mohammad Khan of Maler Kotla, could join his force before his attack upon Sirhind. While he occupied Chhat, the Sikhs from the north defeated the Maler Kotla contingent near Ropar and joined their brethren between Kharar and Banur on the Ambala - Roper Road.

Conquers and Occupies Sirhind.

Preparations for the attack upon Sirhind were in progress when a Hindu Officer of Sirhind—a nephew of Peshkar Sucha Nand—appeared in the Sikh camp with a thousand men to play the part of a traitor. Banda Singh believed his false story of desertion from Sirhind and allowed him to join the camp. In addition to the Sikhs, who looked towards the happy prospect of a holy war against the condemned city and its governor, a large number of plunderers joined the Sikhs to prey upon the countless riches that were supposed to have been amassed in the city during many centuries. Wazir Khan came out to meet them with a large force and an innumerable host of Muslim crusaders. The battle was fought on the plain of Chappar-Chiri on the 24th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1122 A.H. (22nd May, 1710, N. S.). The plunderers and the Hindu officer were the first to take flight. It was feared that this would cause confusion in the Sikh ranks, but the position was soon brought under control when Banda Singh came forward to lead his men on to a bold

attack. Wazir Khan fell under the sword of Fateh Singh and the battle was won. The city was entered and occupied on the 26th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1122 (24th May, 1710).

The Ram Raya *Masands* of Ghudani were the next to be punished for the insult of a Sikh musician Bulaka Singh. At Maler Kotla the grave of Bibi Anoop Kaur was dug out and her remains were cremated according to Sikh rites. She had been forcibly carried away by Sher Mohd. Khan from Sirsa in December, 1704, and buried in a grave after she had committed suicide to save her honour. The town was however spared, for Sher Mohammad had appealed for mercy for the sons of Guru Gobind Singh at the time of their execution at Sirhind. However insignificant may be the favour done by any one towards a Sikh, his sense of gratitude is too strong for any feeling of revenge and he would readily forget and forgive the worst of his enemies. It was under this sense of gratitude that the Sikhs never raised even their little finger against the town of Maler Kotla, although the whole of its neighbourhood was trampled under their

horses' hoofs and more than once the city of Sirhind was sacked and its magnificent buildings converted into heaps of ruins.

Rai Kot and other places of importance offered no resistance and the whole of the province of Sirhind thus fell into the hands of Banda Singh. Baj Singh, his companion from Nanded, was appointed the Subehdar of Sirhind, with Ali Singh as his Naib; Fateh Singh was confirmed in his appointment at Samana, and Ram Singh and Binod Singh were given the joint charge of Thanesar and the surrounding territory.

'In all the Parganas occupied by the Sikhs, the reversal,' says Irvine, 'of the previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation had only to leave home and join the Guru (referring to Banda Singh), when in a shorttime he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they

stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders...Not a soul dared to disobey an order, and men, who had often risked themselves in battle-fields, became so cowed that they were afraid even to remonstrate. Hindus who had not joined the sect were not exempt from these.'

Converts Hindus and Muslims into Sikhs.

While at Sirhind and other places, Banda Singh converted many a Hindu and Mohammadan to the faith of Sikhism. 'The authority of that sect (of the Sikhs) extended to such an extent' wrote Yar Mohammad Qalandar, the then Subehdar of Shah Jahanabad, in June 1710, 'that many Hindus and Mohammadans, finding no alternative other than obedience and submission to them, adopted their faith and manners. And their chief 'Banda'...captivated the hearts of all towards his inclinations, and, whether a Hindu or a Mohammadan, whosoever came in contact with him, he (Banda Singh) conferred upon him the title of Singh—baptized him into the Sikh faith. Accordingly Dindar Khan, a powerful ruler of the

neighbourhood, was named Dindar Singh, and Mir Nasir-ud-Din, the newswriter of Sirhind, became Mir Nasir Singh. In the same way, a large number of Mohammadans abandoned Islam and followed the misguided path (of Sikhism), and took solemn oaths and firm pledges to stand by him, [*Dastur-ul-Insha*, 6b ; and *Ruqat-i-Amin-ud-Daula*, 5b-6a.]

At his Capital.

With the establishment of his power, Banda Singh assumed something of regal state. He repaired the old Imperial fort of Mukhlispur, occupied by him at the time of his conquest of Sadhaura, gave it the name of Lohgarh and established his capital there. He had become a king all but in name. He had conquered many a territory and governed it through his deputies. He commanded a large army of devoted followers and had a capital and palaces to live in. He now struck a coin in the name of his Saviours Gurus Nanak-Gobind Singh with the Persian inscription:

سکزد بر بردو عالم تیغ نانک و اہب است
فتح گوبند سنگھ شاہ شاہان فضل پچاقتا است

*Sikka zad bar har do alam tegh-i-Nanak wahib ast
Fateh Gobind Singh Shah-i-Shahan Fazal-i-Sacha Sahib ast.*

‘Struck coin in the two worlds, by the grace of the true Lord, victory to Gobind Singh, the King of Kings : the sword of Nanak is the granter of desires.’ On the reverse were the words :

ضرب به امان الدهر مصورت شهر زینت التخت مبارک بخت

*Zarb ba aman-ud-dahar, maswrat shahar,
Zinat-ut-takht-i-mubarak-bakht.*

‘Coined at the Refuge of the world, Model (painting) of city, the Ornament of the Fortunate Throne.’ [Ijad-Farrukhsiyar Nama ; Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim, 148]. These were the titles and epithets assigned by him to Lohgarh, just as each imperial city had its appropriate honorific name.

He also introduced an official seal for his *Hukamnamas* and *farmans* or letters and orders. It bore the inscription :

دیک تیک و فتح و نصرت میدنک
یافت از نانک گورو گوبند سنگر

*Deg Tegh o Fateh Nusrat-i-bedirang,
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*

‘Kettle (the means to feed the poor),
Sword (the power to protect the weak and

helpless), Victory and Unhesitating Patronage (are) obtained from Nanak Guru Govind Singh. [Ijad-Farrukh Siyar nama.]

Like the *Sann-i-Jalus* (the year of the reign) of the Moghul Emperors, he introduced his own *Sammāt* or year commencing with his victory at Sirhind. [*Hukamnāma* to the Sikhs of Jaunpur.]

In matters religious, the greatest innovation ascribed to him had rather been introduced by some of the Sikhs themselves. 'He always declared himself to be *Banda* or slave of the Guru. It were some of the Sikhs who took him to be the Guru and followed him as such.' [Risala-i-Sahib Numa Chahar Gulshan-i- Punjab, 188.]

His coin and seal are the living monuments of his unflinching devotion to Gurus Nanak-Govind Singh whom he claimed to be his guiding angels and from whom he proclaimed to have obtained all his *Tegh* and *Deg*, Power and Prosperity. In his letters to the Sikh *Sangats* he is mentioned as *Sacha Sahib* (not as *Sacha Padshah* or *Guru*), exactly in the same sense as the present Maharajas of Indian states are mentioned in their farmans as *Hazoor Mabdaulat*. It

may also be mentioned here that there is absolutely nothing in contemporary or earlier records to show that there were ever any negotiations carried on between Emperor Farrukh Siyar and Mata Sundri, or that any conflict ever took place between Banda Singh and Mata Sundri or the Khalsa. There is no denying the fact, however, that he introduced a new war-cry '*Fateh Darshan,*' and that it was rejected by the Khalsa in favour of the old salutation '*Wahiguru ji ki Fateh.*'

Invades the Gangetic Doab.

The tide of religious zeal and victory bore Banda Singh and his warrior Sikhs across the rubicon of Jumna at Rajghat and they marched upon and occupied the town of Saharanpore. Behat was the next to be sacked and none of its Pirzadas escaped except one who was providentially absent in Buland Shahar. 'These victims' according to G.R.C. Williams, 'were solemnly executed after conviction on the capital charge of cow-murder, an offence easily proved against them; one which actually became the subject of prohibitory proclamation under our own Government before we knew our strength.' [Cal. Rev., LX, 23.]

On the 25th Jamadi-ul-Awwul, 1122 (July 1710), Banda Singh arrived at Nanauta, where crowds of needy Gujjars, styling themselves *Nanak-prast*, or the worshippers of Guru Nanak, inflated the ranks of the invading Sikhs, and wiped out their old scores with the Sheikhzadas, three hundred of whom fell dead in the courtyard of Mohammad Afzal alone. Since then the town has earned the significant title of *Phoota Shahr*, which has completely displaced its original name in the popular dialect.' [Zafur-ud-Din's Diary; Williams, 23; Neville-Muzaffarnagar, 175.]

At Jalalabad, the Faujdar Jalal Khan lost very heavily in men, particularly in Jamal Khan and Pirkhan, his nephews. But as calls upon the Sikhs from the Punjab were more urgent, 'they raised the siege and went off to reduce Sultanpore and the Parganah of Jullundur.' [Muntakhib-ul-Lubab, ii 657.]

Rising in the Majha and the Haidri Flag Crusade.

The victory of Sirhind, as we have seen, had served as a signal for a general Sikh rising throughout the country. They felt providentially raised to the position of con-

querors and rulers. 'The entire Khalsa from Majha and other sides collected at Amritsar and, having consulted and counselled together, over-ran the territories of the Punjab.' [Risala Sahib Numa, 189-90]. After the occupation of Batala and Kalanaur, the main force marched towards Lahore and carried their arms to the very walls of the city, while a detachment of the Sikhs of Sitthala and Butala went as far as to occupy the town and Pargana of Pathankot. [Pr. P. Prakash, 117].

Sayyed Aslam Khan, the Subehdar of Lahore, was seized with terror. He dared not oppose the Sikhs in an open fight. The Mullahs, therefore, took the lead. They appealed to the sentiments of the Mohammadans and proclaimed a *Haidri Flag Jihad* against the Sikhs. The Sikhs slowly retired from Qila Bhagwant Rai and Kotla Begam and inflicted so heavy a defeat upon the Muslim crusaders at the village of Bheelowal, that, excepting Lahore proper, practically the whole of Majha and Riarki fell into their hands. [Mohd, Qasim-Ibrat Nama; Risala Sahib Numa, 190-92; Imdat-ut-Tawarikh, 79-80.]

Rising in the Jullundur Doab.

Being on the border of the province of Sirhind, Doaba Bist Jullundur was the first to be electrified with the spirit of rising and independence. Following the footsteps of their brethren in the south, the Sikhs of this ilaqa, as well, embarked on a career of conquest. They turned out the Mughal officials and appointed their own Tehsildars and Thanedars in their places.

Encouraged by their pretty successes, they addressed a letter to Faujdar Shamas Khan, in the form of a *Purwana*, and called upon him to submit. With a large army, and an innumerable host of Muslim crusaders, consisting mostly of *Julahas*, Shamas Khan came out to meet the Sikhs. They retired upon the fort of Rahon, which had been previously occupied by them. The fort was invested for several days, and, as the number of the besiegers was too large to be thinned or driven away by small sorties, the Sikhs turned to tactics peculiar to themselves, and in the darkness of night slipped away from their entrenchments. The following morning, finding that Shamas Khan had

left for his capital at Sultanpur, a thousand Sikhs rushed upon and attacked the garrison, placed by Shamas Khan in the fort of Rahon, drove them out and re-established themselves therein. This happened on the 20th Shaban, 1132 [12th October, 1710].

Bahadur Shah's Expedition—Escape of Banda.

In addition to their successes to the east of the Jumna and the north of the Sutlej, the Sikhs had, by the middle of September, 1710, become supreme from Machhiwara to Karnal, and, according to Iradat Khan, 'there was no nobleman daring enough to march from Delhi against them.' 'If Bahadur Shah had not quitted the Deccan which he did in 1710, there is every reason to think,' says Malcolm, 'the whole of Hindostan would have been subdued by these.....(Sikh) invaders.' [Sketch, 99.]

On receipt of the alarming news of the Sikh conquests in the Punjab, Bahadur Shah called upon the Subehdars of Delhi and Oudh, Faujdars and Nazims of Moradabad and Allahabad, and Sayyeds of Barha to march towards the Punjab. On the 13th December, 1710, he arrived at Sadhaura near Lohgarh, accompanied by his sons, the imperial and provincial forces, and the contingents of Odet Singh Bundela, Chattarsal Bundela and Chauraman Jat. Lohgarh was invested and the besieged were reduced

to extremities for want of food and fodder. The last faint hope left to them was the desperate chance of cutting through the enemy. One Gulab Singh, 'a Hindu convert, resolved to sacrifice his life for the good of his religion,' dressed himself in the garments of Banda Singh and seated himself in his place. And, Banda Singh made a determined sally on the night of 10th-11th December, 1710, and breaking through the royal lines made off to the mountains of Barfi Raja (of Nahan). [Kamwar Khan, 154a; Khafi Khan, ii 673].

Bahadur Shah was very much perturbed over the escape of the Sikh chief; 'an iron cage,' says Khafi Khan, 'became the lot of Barfi Raja (Bhup Parkash) and of the Sikh, who so devotedly sacrificed himself for his Guru, for they were placed in it, and were sent to the fort of Delhi.' [Elliott, VII, 425], and the Emperor himself leisurely marched off to Lahore, where he died on the night of 29th December, 1712 (N. S.)

His power re-established.

The period of struggle for the Imperial throne and the disturbed state of affairs at Delhi, from February 1712 to the summer of 1713, when Abdul Samad Khan laid siege to Sadhaura, was very favourable for the re-establishment of the Sikh power. Banda Singh had appeared in the neighbourhood of Raipur

and Bahrapore, killed Shamas Khan and had mortally wounded his nephew Bayzeed Khan. They had taken hold of the parganahs of Batala and Kalanaur before the arrival of Bahadur Shah at Lahore and had pushed as far as Pasrur. Sadhaura was taken soon after, and Lohgarh once more enjoyed the dignity of a capital. Many of the Hill states were reduced to subjection and their rulers paid tribute into the Sikh treasury. But all this was destined to be of a very short duration and was rolled up with the siege and fall of Gurdaspur.

Siege and fall of Gurdaspur.

Abdul Samad Khan Diler-i-Jang was appointed the Subehdar of Lahore on 22nd February, 1713, with orders to exterminate the Sikhs. But he could not accomplish much till a sharp rebuke was administered to him by the Emperor on 20th March, 1715, and Qamur-ud-Din Khan son of Mohd. Amin Khan, Afrasyab Khan, the third Bakhshi, Muzaffar Khan, Raja Gopal Singh Bha-dauriya, Udait Singh Bundela and many other Muslim and Hindu nobles were sent to reinforce him. [Kamwar-Tazkira, 176b].

Banda Singh and the Sikhs were besieged in a small fortress at Gurdaspore, where they performed prodigies of valour. So bold and indomitable were the Guru's followers, that they impressed their adversaries with the

greatest respect for their fighting qualities. It was feared that the garrison might, by a *sortie en masse* and by sacrificing themselves, secure the escape of their leader, (Banda Singh). [Khafi Khan, ii 763-4; Irine 314.] But their close confinement for eight long months exhausted their provisions, 'not a grain being left in their storehouse,' and they were reduced to great extremities. 'The Sikhs were not strict observers of caste, they slaughtered oxen and other animals and, not having any firewood, ate the flesh raw. Many died of dysentery and privation.....when all the grass was gone, they gathered the leaves from trees. When these were consumed, they stripped the bark and broke off the small shoots, dried them, ground them down and used them instead of flour, thus keeping the body and soul together. They also collected the bones of animals and used them in the same way. Some say that they saw a few Sikhs cut flesh from their thighs, roast it and eat it.' [*Qasim-Ibrat Nama, Khafi Khan ii 763; Irvine, i 325, Miftah-ut-Tawarikh, 398; Cunningham, 93*]. 'In spite of all this, the infernal Sikh chief and his men' says Kamwar Khan, 'withstood all the military force that the great *Saltanet-i-Mughlia* could muster against them for eight months.'

At last on the 17th December, 1715 (N.S.), the fort of Gurdaspur fell into the hands of the besiegers and every one found in it, in-

cluding Banda Singh, was made prisoner. The Imperial force fell upon the half-dead Sikhs like hungry wolves and some two or three hundred of them were bound hand and foot and executed, under the Nawab's orders. Their dead bodies were ripped open in search of gold coins supposed to have been swallowed by them, and their heads were then filled with straw and mounted on spears. About 740 of the Sikh prisoners were at first taken to and paraded in the streets of Lahore, and were then sent to Delhi under the escort of Zakeriya Khan, son of Abdul Samad Khan. [*Bahar-ul-Mawaj*, 22Sa; Kamwar, *Tazkerah* ; Irvine, i 316].

Massacre of the Sikhs at Delhi.

On Thursday, the 17th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1128 (27th February, 1716, O. S.), the Sikh prisoners were conducted to the city of Delhi. The ceremonial on this occasion was copied from that observed after the capture of the Maratha Sambhaji. 'First came the heads of (two thousand) executed Sikhs, stuffed with straw and struck on bamboos, their long hair streaming in the wind like a veil.' Banda Singh himself came next, seated in an iron cage, placed upon an elephant, and dressed, out of mockery, in a gold embroidered red turban and a robe of gold brocade, a mail-clad officer standing behind him with a drawn sword. After him came 740 Sikh prisoners in sheep-skin dresses and foolscaps, tied two and two upon saddle-less camels,

with one of their hands pinned to their necks between two pieces of wood. Nothing could rob the brave disciples of Guru Govind Singh of their natural dignity and they bore all the insults and abuses of their enemies with perfect equanimity, without any sign of fear or dejection. They rode on calm and cheerful, singing their sacred hymns, 'anxious to die the death of martyrs.' [Harisi-Ibratnama; *Tarikh i-Iradat Khani*, etc.]

By Farrukh Siyar's orders, Banda Singh, Baj Singh, Bhai Fateh Singh and a few other chief men were sent to the Tripolia prison, while the remaining 694 were made over to Sarbrah Khan Kotwal for execution.

The butcher's work began on the 22nd Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1128 (5th March, 1716, O. S.) and, one hundred of the Sikhs were executed every day at the Police *Chabutra*. After their decapitation, their bodies were thrown into a heap and at night they were taken out of the city in carts and hung up on the trees. Life was offered to any one who would renounce his faith, 'but to the last,' wrote Surmon and Stephenson, in their letter of the 10th March, 1716, 'it has not been found that one apostatized from the new formed religion' of Sikhism. The Sikhs welcomed death with cheerful faces, and, with the words '*Wahiguru! Wahiguru!*' on their lips, they joyfully gave up their lives. [*Risala Sahib Numa*, 197.] And, at the time of suffering their constancy was wonderful to look at, and 'Me Deliverer! kill

me first!!' was the joyful prayer that constantly rang in the ears of the executioner. [*Manawwar-ul-Kalam*, f 10; Wheeler—*Early Records*, 180; Irvine, 318].

The story of a Sikh Youth.

Among these was a Sikh youth whose widowed mother obtained the order of his release through Sayyid Abdulla Khan saying that her son was only a prisoner in the hands of the Sikhs and was not a follower of the Guru. But the boy refused to be released, says Khafi Khan, and loudly cried out: 'My mother is a liar. I am heart and soul the Guru's follower. Send me quickly after my companions.' With these words, he bowed his head before the executioner and met his death with unshaken devotion to the Guru.

The Martyrdom of Banda Singh.

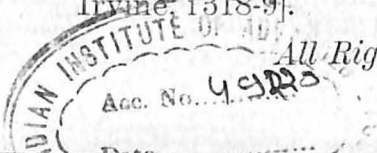
The fate reserved for Banda Singh is too excruciating to be described. On Sunday, the 29th Jamadi-ul-Akhar, 1128 (19th June, 1716), Banda Singh, his son Ajai Singh, Sardar Baj Singh, Bhai Fateh Singh and a few others were led out of the fort under the escort of Ibrahim Khan Mir Atish, and Sarbarah Khan Kotwal. The Sikh chief laden with fetters was dressed in a gold-embroidered red turban and a robe of gold brocade, as on the day of his first entry, and was taken on an elephant through the streets of the old city to the tomb of Khwaja Qutub-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, at the Qutub Minar, where, to add insult to injury, he was paraded round the

tomb of the late Emperor Bahadur Shah."

After he had been dismounted and seated on the ground, Banda Singh was offered the usual choice between Islam and death. But, the 'chosen disciple of Guru Gobind Singh,' as *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari* calls him, preferred to lay his life like a devoted follower than to abjure the faith of Sikhism 'to save his muddy vesture of decay.' His young son, Ajai Singh, about four years old, was then placed in his arms and he was told to take the boy's life. But, can a father kill his own suckling child? The executioner hacked the child to pieces with a long knife, dragged out its quivering heart and thrust it into the mouth of his father.

His own turn came next. First of all his right eye was removed by the butcher's knife, his left foot was cut off next, then his two hands were severed from his body, his flesh was then torn with red hot pincers, and finally he was decapitated and hacked to pieces limb by limb. Banda Singh stood calm and serene amidst these tortures, completely resigned to the Will of God and the Guru, and died with unshaken constancy, 'glorying,' says Elphinstone 'in having been raised up by God to be a scourge to the inequities and oppressions of the age.' [Iradat Khan, 145; Mohd.-*Tabsirat-un-Nazerin*, 187a; Harisi-*Ibratnama*, 62b; Kamwar-*Tazkerah*, 179b-180a; Wilson-*Annals*, XIiii; Irvine, i318-9].

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THE ORIENTAL PRINTING PRESS,
Albert Road, Amritsar.