

Anandpur Sahib



Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer

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Preface

Anandpur Sahib is the *Puri* (City) of *Anand* (Bliss). The very mention of Anandpur Sahib creates a thrill in the veins of a genuine Sikh, his hair begin standing on the ends, his blood begins throbbing in his biceps, and, he feels himself in unexplainable moment of bliss.

Paying obeisance at Kesgarh Sahib immediately reminds of the revelation of Khalsa, the *Punj Piaray* and *Khandey Di Pahul*. A visit to Anandgarh fort reminds of the martial music of the *Chandi Di Vaar*. Damalgarh becomes a living scene of Sahibzadas learning sword wielding. Thara Sahib seems to be receiving Bhai Kirpa Ram (Singh) Dutt and 16 Brahmins from Kashmir. Guru De Mahal remind of Mata Nanaki, Mata Gujari, Mata Jeet Kaur, Mata Sunder Kaur and Mata Sahib Kaur preparing sacred food for the visitors to the City of Bliss. At Takht Damdama Sahib, we feel Guru Sahib still holding his court and Bhai Mani Singh giving final touches to Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Da Lahore still seems to be celebrating the marriage of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and Mata Jeet Kaur. At Lohgarh one can still feel Bhai Bachitar Singh hitting the drunken elephant and Bhai Udey Singh chopping off the head of the evil hill ruler Kesri Chand. The music of *Ranjit Nagara* fills a Sikh with great enthusiasm. But, the sad scene of Guru Sahib, Mata Gujari, four Sahibzadas, forty liberated ones and about five hundred Sikhs leaving Anandpur Sahib, on the night of December 5 and 6, 1705 makes us *Dilgeer* (despondent). It makes us crave for kissing the feet of the great Guru Sahib and for this purpose take a journey from Anandpur Sahib to Chamkaur, Machhiwara, Dina, Kangar and Talwandi Sabo and then to Nander, on the foot steps of the

last journey of Guru Sahib so that even a single ray of his light may enlighten us and make us say "I shall be a Khalsa in the real sense."

This book is a record of the history of the Sikh City of Anandpur Sahib, from its origin to the days of Guru Sahib. Besides it also gives a summary of the events of the post-Guru period.

The Birth of Chakk Nanaki and Anandpur Sahib

The zone, which is now known as Anandpur Sahib, includes the villages of Chakk Nanaki, Anandpur Sahib, Sahota, Mianpur, Laudipur, Thabbal and Mataur etc.

It is generally believed that Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib founded Anandpur Sahib town on June 19, 1665. In fact, it was *Chakk Nanaki* (now only *Chakk* in official papers) that had been founded in 1665. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib laid the foundation stone of the city of Anandpur Sahib on March 30, 1689. The area of Chakk Nanaki extended from the bank of the river Charan Ganga to the square between Kesgarh Sahib and the bus stand. Chakk Nanaki was carved out of the villages of Laudipur, Mianpur and Sahota. (These three villages still exist). The foundation stone of Chakk Nanaki was laid in the vicinity of Sahota village. Anandpur Sahib was founded in 1689 on the ruins of the village of Makhawal.

Generally, new towns are founded, established and developed by monarchs. It is a unique phenomenon in the history of the Sikh nation that Guru Sahib founded a number of towns and turned several villages into major and important towns. Hence, social, spiritual, economical and political roles became one in Guru Sahib.

The first town associated with the Sikh history is that of Nanakana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak Sahib. But the first town ever founded by Guru Sahib was Kartarpur Sahib (now a part of Pakistan). It was founded by Guru Nanak Sahib in 1522. Sultanpur Lodhi also had the privilege of having felt the touch of the feet of Guru Nanak Sahib. Guru Sahib spent about three years (1504 to 1507) in this village.

Guru Angad Sahib transformed the small unknown village

of Khadur into Khadur Sahib. Guru Amar Das founded the town of Goindwal. He also asked Guru Ram Das Sahib to establish a new Sikh City State in the heart of *Maajha* (the area of the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore is known as *Maajha* zone). Guru Ram Das Sahib laid the foundation of *Guru Da Chakk*, which later came to be known as *Chakk Ram Das* and now it is known as Amritsar. Guru Arjan Sahib developed Chakk Ram Das into a major city. He also founded the towns of Gobindpur (now known as Hargobindpur), Tarn Taran, Kartarpur (Jalandhar) and Chheharta. Guru Hargobind Sahib revealed the Throne of the Almighty in the Sikh City State. He also purchased the land of present town of Keeratpur Sahib. (The foundation of Keeratpur Sahib was laid by Baba Sri Chand, son of Guru Nanak Sahib, in 1624). Guru Har Rai Sahib played major role in the development of Keeratpur Sahib. He also developed the village of Chanauli (Charnauli) where he kept 2200 horses. Guru Harkarishan Sahib brought the minor village of Panjokhra on the map of the world and turned the bungalow of Raja Jai Sinh Mirza into Bangla Sahib. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib founded *Chakk Nanaki*. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib founded the town of Paonta Sahib (1685) and the city of Anandpur Sahib (1689).

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib founded Chakk Nanaki in 1665. Earlier, he used to live at Bakala (which became Baba Bakala due to his stay there). In 1656, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib left for a missionary tour of the eastern zone of Assam, Bengal, Bihar etc and spent more than seven years in this area. During his stay at Patna, a son (Guru) Gobind Das (Singh) was born to him on December 18, 1661 (some writers have wrongly mentioned the year of his birth as 1666). Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib was installed as the Ninth Nanak on August 11, 1664 at Bakala. In the middle of April 1665, he paid a visit to Talwandi Sabo and laid the foundation of the Gurusar *Sarovar* (tank). From here he went to Dhamtan (in Baangar area) where Bhai Daggo served him in a royal manner. The residents of Baangar area loved Guru Sahib so much that they wanted him (Guru Sahib) to establish his headquarters at Dhamtan. When he gave his consent Bhai Daggo began the construction of the residence for Guru Sahib.

In the third week of April 1665, Guru Sahib visited Keeratpur Sahib. Here, he received information about the death

of Raja Deep Chand of Bilaspur State. Raja Deep Chand was a devoted Sikh. His wife, now Dowager Rani, Champa, too, was a very devoted Sikh. On May 10, 1665, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib went to Bilaspur to join the last prayers for the Raja. His mother Mata Nanaki, wife Mata Gujari and several prominent Sikhs accompanied Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib stayed at Bilaspur up to May 13. Dowager Rani Champa wanted Guru Sahib to spend some more days at Bilaspur but Guru Sahib told her that he had to go to Dhamtan. Rani Champa had already known that Guru Sahib was going to establish his headquarters at Dhamtan. The Rani approached Mata Nanaki (mother of Guru Sahib) to ask him not to go far away from Bilaspur State. Rani Champa became so much sentimental that she began to weep. At this, Mata Nanaki promised that she would impress upon Guru Sahib not to move to Dhamtan. The Rani promised to donate land for a new Sikh Centre in her State at the site of Guru Sahib's choice. When Mata Nanaki told Guru Sahib about the feelings of the Rani, at first he hesitated but later agreed to establish his headquarters in the territory of Bilaspur State. Guru Sahib told the Rani that he would establish his Centre in her State subject to the condition that she should accept the price of the land, as he won't like to establish a Sikh City on a donated land. The Rani agreed to accept the price of the land. She, however, declared that she would spend that money for the welfare of the poor people of her State.

Guru Sahib took a tour of the area around Keeratpur Sahib. He selected an area on the bank of Satluj River. He carved out the new town from the territory of the villages of Sahota, Mianpur and Laudipur. At that time river Satluj used to flow near the territory of the present Anandpur Sahib. When Rani came to know about Guru Sahib's selection, her joy knew no bounds at the thought that her State will have the patronage of Guru Sahib. Rani Champa and her ministers were happy because it also meant protection from the invasion of the Moghuls.

The site chosen by Guru Sahib was of great strategic importance. On one side there was a river and on the other side were hills and dense forest. It was a peaceful zone for meditation as well as for promotion of arts and intellectual activities. The area of Chakk Nanaki was supposed to be very peaceful zone. Besides, it was to give two crops a year, hence sufficiency of food as well.

It was also safe from military point of view. The Sikhs had experienced Moghul invasion of Guru Da Chakk (Amritsar) in 1634 and Kartarpur in 1635. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib had himself participated in these battles. So, he knew as to what would be a safe and peaceful zone. Though Keeratpur Sahib was also a peaceful zone. It was surrounded by Satluj River (on the side of Chakk Nanaki) and Sarsa rivulet (on the side of Ropar) and hills and dense forest on north as well as south side. But as the family of Baba Suraj Mal used to live there, Guru Sahib did not want to disturb them.

Bhai Gurditta (great grandson of Baba Buddha) laid the foundation stone of the new town on June 19, 1665 at the present site of Guru De Mahal. Diwan Dargah Mal (religious minister of Guru Sahib) made the first prayer. The town was named as Chakk Nanaki after the name of Mata Nanaki (the mother of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib) who had played a major role in making Guru Sahib agree to establish his headquarters in the State of Bilaspur. Within a few days, Guru De Mahal was built. Guru Sahib spent three months at Chakk Nanaki. During this period several Sikhs visited the town. Within a short period several Sikhs moved to Chakk Nanaki and established themselves in the new town.

In the last quarter of 1665, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib left for another long missionary journey. He could not visit Chakk Nanaki for more than six years. During this period, he visited Assam, Bengal and Bihar where he spent the period from January 1666 to March 1670. He returned to Bakala in the middle of 1670. By this time his wife and son had also joined him. He spent about one and a half-year at Bakala. In March 1672, Guru Sahib and his family moved to Chakk Nanaki.

Now Chakk Nanaki became a major centre of the Sikhs. Thousands of Sikhs began visiting Chakk Nanaki. Within the next three years several Sikhs established their houses and business in the Sikh State. Chakk Nanaki changed the map of the *Hathaut* area. The area, where an average man did not dare to pass through, became a land of hundreds of houses. Within a short time Chakk Nanaki became the major town of the zone.

Betrothal ceremony of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib

On May 12, 1673, Betrothal ceremony of (Guru) Gobind Das (Singh) with Bibi Jeeto (Jeet Kaur after initiation) daughter of Bhai Harijas Subhikkhi, a resident of Lahore, was performed at Chakk Nanaki. By this time (Guru) Gobind Singh had started learning horse riding and sword wielding from Bhai Bajjar Singh (son of Bhai Jeeta Singh). In 1673, several Sikhs visited Chakk Nanaki. Among these was also Bhai Aalam Chand Chauhan (later known as Nachanna), of Duburji Udey Karan Wali, Sialkot. Later, he became chamberlain of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. He spent the rest of his life in the service of Guru Sahib. (He embraced martyrdom in the battle of Chamkaur).

Visit of Kashmiri Brahmins

On May 25, 1675, a large group of Kashmiri visited Chakk Nanaki. Among them was also a group of 16 Kashmiri Brahmins who had joined Bhai Kirpa Ram Dutt, a prominent Sikh from Mattan. Bhai Kirpa Ram introduced these Brahmins to Guru Sahib. The Brahmins told Guru Sahib that the Muslim Governor of Kashmir had launched a campaign of forcible conversion of Brahmins of Kashmir to Islam. He had the blessing of Aurangzeb, the Moghul emperor, who was at that time at Hassan Abdal, near Rawalpindi, hence not far from Kashmir. The Brahmins told Guru Sahib that they had approached the Governor through some Sufi saints but he was adamant. They told that they had tried to seek help from various chiefs of the Hindu shrines but all of them had expressed their helplessness. The Brahmins told Guru Sahib that the house of Guru Nanak Sahib was their only hope.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib consoled them and said, "Don't worry. Waheguru shall help you." After this Guru Sahib paused and then announced: "to achieve religious freedom for the Hindus and the other non-Muslims some prominent person shall have to make a sacrifice." (Guru) Gobind Singh Sahib, who was about 14 years of age at that time, was also sitting by his side. On hearing Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's statement he said, "It means that you shall have to make a sacrifice. There is none who is more prominent than you are; moreover, as these Brahmins have told

that all the Hindu chiefs and priests have surrendered themselves to fate. Father, it means that you shall have to make sacrifice." On hearing this Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib kept quiet. He, later, sent *Hukamnamas* to all the prominent Sikhs to visit Chakk Nanaki. In the first week of July, most of the prominent Sikhs reached Chakk Nananki. Guru Sahib explained to them about the petition of the Kashmiri Brahmins. He announced that he shall have to make a sacrifice of his own life for the sake of the religious freedom of the Hindus and the other non-Muslims. The Sikhs, on hearing the words of Guru Sahib, became sad. They asked Guru Sahib if there was any other alternative to that. When Guru Sahib told them that that was the only option, some Sikhs began even weeping. Guru Sahib told them that a sacrifice was not a matter of sorrow. He said, "My sacrifice will give life to thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. It is the promise of Guru Nanak Sahib's house that we shall never say NO to any petition for help even if we have to make great sacrifices. I will meet Aurangzeb and offer him that if he could convert me to Islam, all the people of Kashmir and Punjab will become Muslims; otherwise he should stop forcible conversions."

On July 8, 1675, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib held his court. In the presence of prominent Sikhs, he installed Guru Gobind Singh Sahib as the Tenth Nanak and announced that he shall leave for Delhi to have a meeting with Aurangzeb. Guru Sahib already had a dialogue with Aurangzeb in November 1665, so he knew his nature. Bhai Dial Das Parmar, Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das too joined Guru Sahib.

On July 10, 1675, Guru Sahib left Chakk Nanaki for Delhi. He proceeded towards Delhi on foot. He decided that on his way he would visit a large number of villages and towns and awaken the public. He spent the first night at Keeratpur Sahib. He addressed a big gathering of the people at Keeratpur Sahib. People from Keeratpur, Kalyanpur, Jiowal, Bhagwal, Chanauli and several other villages attended Guru Sahib's court. At night he discussed the situation with Baba Suraj Mall, Bibi Roop Kaur and others. The next morning Guru Sahib left Keeratpur Sahib. Before beginning his journey Guru Sahib told them that that was his last meeting with them. Guru Sahib's next stop was at village Malikpur (at that time known as Malikpur Rangharan), about six

km before Ropar. At Malikpur, Guru Sahib stayed at the residence of Bhai Nigahia, a Sikh belonging to a devoted Saini family.

On the other hand, the Governor of Sirhind got information about Guru Sahib's mission. He ordered the police chief of Ropar to arrest Guru Sahib. The chief of Ropar police too wanted to get an award from Aurangzeb as well as from the Governor of Sirhind. He, along with a party of policemen, left Ropar for Malikpur and arrested Guru Sahib. He escorted Guru Sahib and his three companions to Sirhind and presented them before the Governor. The Governor jailed them in the fort of Bassi Pathanan and sent an official to inform Aurangzeb. At that time, Aurangzeb was at Hasan Abdal. After some days the Governor of Sirhind received Aurangzeb's instructions. Aurangzeb ordered the Governor to send some Sufi preacher to impress Guru Sahib for conversion to Islam. The Sufis, in stead of convincing Guru Sahib, became so much impressed by him that they requested the Governor of Sirhind to release Guru Sahib. They sent a letter to Aurangzeb to stop forcible conversions. Aurangzeb, who was a fanatic Muslim, rejected the request of the Sufis. He, now, sent the chief of Roza Sirhind, a successor of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (who had written a letter of appreciation to Jahangir for execution of Guru Arjan Sahib). The chief of Roza Sirhind visited Guru Sahib at Bassi Pathanan fort and tried to impress upon Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib had a lengthy discussion with him and convinced him that forcible conversion to Islam was against the teachings of Mohammed. But, as the chief of Roza Sirhind was a fanatic person, he refused to accept logic. He insisted that all the non-Muslims were *Kaafir* (non-believers). Guru Sahib rejected his statement with quotations from Quran. This angered the chief of Roza Sirhind and he reported to Aurangzeb that no one could convince Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. He suggested that he should be forcibly converted and for this purpose he may be tortured.

Report of the chief of Sirhind mission angered Aurangzeb. He, however, tried to make another attempt. He offered Guru Sahib to choose between the Governor-ship of Lahore and the status of *Khalifa* if he embraced Islam. When Guru Sahib received this offer, he smiled and rejected it. When Aurangzeb was told about Guru Sahib's reply to the offer, he became angry and ordered the torture of Guru Sahib. Bassi Pathanan fort became a cruel

torture centre. The *Pathan* in charge of the fort perpetrated unspeakable atrocities on Guru Sahib as well as Bhai Dial Das, Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das. For the next several weeks, they tortured Guru Sahib and his companions. When torture, terror or threat of death could not deter Guru Sahib, the Governor of Sirhind decided to send Guru Sahib to Delhi. They put Guru Sahib in a big iron cage and sent him and the three Sikhs to Delhi, under the escort of a heavy police party. They reached Delhi on November 4, 1675.

At Delhi, the Moghul regime made another attempt to win Guru Sahib. He was again offered honour and luxury, which Guru Sahib rejected in plain words. Now another phase of torture began. This too, could not deter Guru Sahib. On the night of November 10, 1675, the chief of the *Kotwali* (police station) at Chandni Chowk received Aurangzeb's orders to issue final *Fatwa* (Islamic religious order) to Guru Sahib to choose between Islam and death.

On November 11, 1675, Bhai Dial Das was put in a big cauldron filled with water. His head was tied with a rope to the opening of the cauldron. After this the cauldron was placed on fire. Soon, water began boiling and after suffering a lot of torture, Bhai Dial Das died. All this happened in front of Guru Sahib. After the martyrdom of Bhai Dial Das, the police chief asked Guru Sahib if he had changed his mind. Guru Sahib told him that every one has to die sooner or later. The death of a martyr is in fact like living forever. Now, Bhai Mati Das was nailed in two wooden blocks and was sawed alive. This too could not awe Guru Sahib. Finally, cotton was tied around the body of Bhai Sati Das and it was set to fire. Guru Sahib saw the torturous death of Bhai Sati Das also. He had seen three of his most beloved companions being tortured to death before his own eyes.

After the martyrdom of Bhai Sati Das, the police chief again came to him and asked that he (Guru Sahib) had seen three of his followers being killed, if he wished he could still choose to save his own life. Guru Sahib told him that these three martyrs are not dead, they have become mortals. The whole of the world shall remember them forever. But, the terrorist Moghul regime will not continue for a very long period. This cruel regime will wither away soon. Hearing this the police chief asked the

executioner to translate Aurangzeb's order in action. Guru Sahib's head was severed from his body within a few moments. (Gurdwara Sis Ganj has been built at the site where Guru Sahib and the three valiant Sikhs had been martyred).

Bhai Jaita (Jiwan Singh), Bhai Nanu Ram Dilwali, Bhai Uda Rathore carried Guru Sahib's severed head away. They travelled on foot to Chakk Nanaki and presented the head to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. On the other hand Bhai Lakkhi Rai (Yadav) Wanjara and his sons carried the head-less body of Guru Sahib to their house. They set ablaze their house to cremate the body of Guru Sahib. (Gurdwara Rakab Ganj has been built at the site where Guru Sahib's body was cremated). Guru Sahib's head was cremated outside the village of Chakk Nanaki on November 17, 1675. (Gurdwara Sis Ganj has been built at that site).

After the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib

After the cremation of the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib at Chakk Nanaki, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, addressing the Sikh congregation (at the site of Gurdwara Akal Bunga, near Gurdwara Sis Ganj), asked them to be prepared for a long struggle to bring an end to the terrorist regime. He asked them to be armed. He, however, told them not to think in the terms of revenge. A Sikh must never be revengeful in his attitude. We must bring an end to injustice and annihilate terrorism but it should not be done with the feeling of anger or revenge. He told them to be ready for a "holy war" against terrorism.

Guru Sahib organised the Sikhs of different parts of the subcontinent into organised units. He appointed some prominent Sikh as in charge of each unit. He institutionalised the *Daswandh* (tithe). Within a short period, the whole of the Sikh commonwealth had been organised in a well-knit network.

Marriage of Guru Sahib

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib had been betrothed to Bibi Jito Ji (Jit Kaur after initiation) in 1673. The marriage was to take place in 1676 but it had to be postponed due to martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. Bhai Harijas Subhikkhi (father of Bibi Jito),

a resident of Lahore, wanted to perform the marriage rites at Lahore. Owing to the political situation, it was not possible for Guru Sahib to go to Lahore. In order to respect the feelings of Bhai Harijas Subhikhi, Guru Sahib laid the foundation of a new village, at a distance of about 11 km from Chakk Nanaki and named it Guru Da Lahore. The marriage ceremony of Guru Sahib and Bibi Jito Ji was performed here on June 21, 1677.

Final Compilation of Guru Granth Sahib

In 1678, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib asked Bhai Mani Ram (Mani Singh after initiation) to prepare a volume of Adi Granth (given the status of Guru Granth Sahib on October 6, 1708). The original volume of (Guru) Granth Sahib, prepared in 1604, was, at that time, in the possession of the sons of Dhir Mal (Dhir Mal was the son of Baba Gurditta and grandson of Guru Hargobind Sahib. He was the elder brother of Guru Har Rai Sahib. This family did possess the original volume of the *Granth* but they did not form a part of Sikh commonwealth and had their own family-*Dera*). A few copies of the original volume of the Adi Granth had already been prepared and were in the possession of different persons at different places. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib wanted to prepare the final version by adding the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib to it.

When final version of Granth Sahib was ready, Guru Sahib decided to compare spellings etc with the first volume. As the first version was in the possession of the successors of Dhir Mall, Guru Sahib asked Bhai Mani Ram (Singh) to borrow it from them for a few days. Dhir Mall's family was passing through a difficult period in those days. Dhir Mall himself had died in Aurangzeb's prison at Ranthambhor Fort on November 16, 1677 and his elder son Ram Chand had been killed under the orders of Aurangzeb, on July 24, 1678. Now, only Dhir Mall's youngest son Bhar Mall was alive. The final prayers for Ram Chand were being held on August 9, 1678 at Bakala (Baba Bakala after 1664). Guru Gobind Singh Sahib asked Bhai Mani Ram to go to Bakala and represent him (Guru Sahib) at the ceremony of final prayer for Ram Chand and also borrow the original volume of (Guru) Granth Sahib from Bhar Mall, for a few days. After the ceremony was over, Bhai

Mani Ram gave Guru Sahib's message to Bhar Mall. Bhar Mall refused to hand over the volume to Bhai Mani Ram on the pretext that his family was moving to Kartarpur (Jalandhar) to avoid further actions by the Moghul authorities. He told Bhai Mani Ram that he wouldn't have any objection if some one could visit Kartarpur and compare the new volume with the original volume. Bhai Mani Ram returned to Chakk Nanaki and reported the matter to Guru Sahib. Later, Guru Sahib sent Bhai Mani Ram to Kartarpur to compare the final version with the original volume.

Formation of an army

In February 1680, Guru Sahib got a *Nagara* (drum) mounted. On March 15, 1680, the Sikhs began beating this *Nagara* every day after the evening prayers. Later, it was beaten twice a day after each prayer. *Nagara*, in those days, was a symbol of national sovereignty.

Now, Guru Sahib sent *Hukamnamas* to all the Sikhs informing them about his decision to form an army. When Sikhs received these letters, hundreds of Sikhs flocked to Chakk Nanaki to join the army of Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib bought good weapons and horses and distributed them to the new soldiers. After this Guru Sahib sent another *Hukamnama* to the Sikhs asking them to bring good horses, weapons and books as presents to him. Within a couple of years, the City State of Chakk Nanaki had a very large number of horses and weapons as well as books.

Visit by the ruler of Tripura

On October 12, 1680, Raja Ratan Rai (the then ruler of Tripura and Jentia), along with his mother and several State officials, visited Chakk Nanaki. Ratan Rai was born in 1668. During his second major tour of the Eastern States, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib had spent about four years, 1666 to 1670, at Patna, Dhaka (Dacca), Dhubri and other parts of Assam, Bengal and Bihar. In 1668, Raja Ram Sinh, the then ruler of Tripura and Jentia, happened to visit Assam. When he came to know about the personality of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, he went to make his obeisance to Guru Sahib. He requested Guru Sahib to bless him with a son. Guru Sahib told him that birth and death are in the

hands of the Almighty. The Raja then requested Guru Sahib to make a prayer for him to the Almighty for such a blessing. Guru Sahib made a prayer for the Raja. Towards the end of 1668, the Raja was blessed with a son. After the birth of the boy, the Raja and his wife again visited Dhubri and thanked Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib welcomed them and told them to thank only the Almighty for His Blessings. The Raja asked Guru Sahib to choose a name for the boy. Guru Sahib suggested him to name the boy as Ratan Rai. In 1670, Guru Sahib left Assam for the Punjab. In 1675, Guru Sahib embraced martyrdom. When this news reached Tripura, Raja Ram Sinh became very sad. He became so despondent that he stopped taking interest in the affairs of the State. His younger brother, however, helped him and managed the affairs of the State.

In 1680, Raja Ram Sinh died. At that time, Ratan Rai was only 12 years old. He was installed as the new *Raja*, but, as he was a minor, his mother and uncle acted as his guardians. One day, during conversation, Ratan Rai's mother told him that he was born with the blessings of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. At this Ratan Rai requested her to take him to Guru Sahib so that he should make obeisance. She told Ratan Rai that Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib had embraced martyrdom in 1675. Before his martyrdom he had installed his son (Guru) Gobind Das as the Tenth Nanak and had merged his light with the light of Guru Gobind Das. Though a new physical existence, Guru Gobind Das had the same light of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. Ratan Rai expressed his desire to visit Guru Gobind Das. The queen mother told him that Guru Sahib lived at Chakk Nanaki in the Punjab. The queen mother too wanted to visit Chakk Nanaki and make obeisance to Guru Sahib.

Now Ratan Rai began preparations for a visit to Chakk Nanaki. He decided to take with him some fine presents for Guru Sahib. He bought a very fine elephant (later known as *Parsadi Haathi*). It was a unique elephant of dark black colour and a straight white stripe ran from its trunk to its tail. Another gift was a five-in-one-weapon. It could be transformed into a spear, a sword, a knife, a gun and a *Gurj* (mace, a sort of club for blowing the head of an enemy with a single stroke). Among other gifts included a rosary, a fine aigrette, an engraved jug, a royal *Chaunki* (an eastern style of stool-type throne) etc. Ratan Rai also trained the elephant to perform extraordinary functions like washing the

feet, to make those feet dry with a towel, holding a torch in trunk to show passage at night, to run after and bring back an arrow shot by some one etc. When every thing was ready, Ratan Rai, his mother and several of their official staff and servants left for Chakk Nanaki.

The royal guests reached Chakk Nanaki on October 12, 1680. Guru Sahib gave them a warm welcome. Ratan Rai presented all his gifts to Guru Sahib. First he brought the elephant near Guru Sahib. It picked up a jug and washed Guru Sahib's feet with water. Then, it wiped Guru Sahib's feet with a towel. After this the elephant began fanning Guru Sahib by holding a hand fan with its trunk. Now Ratan Rai asked Guru Sahib to shoot an arrow. When Guru Sahib shot the arrow, the elephant ran after it and brought it back to Guru Sahib. At night the elephant held a lantern in its trunk and showed Guru Sahib way to his residence. Ratan Rai also exhibited the functioning of the five-in-one weapon.

Ratan Rai spent five months at Chakk Nanaki. Guru Sahib was very pleased with Ratan Rai's dedication. Guru Sahib and Ratan Rai became very friendly to each other. Guru Sahib gave a lot of religious and political knowledge to Ratan Rai. He also taught him the art of administration. Even after a period of five months, Ratan Rai did not want to go back to Tripura. He expressed his desire to live at Chakk Nanaki forever but Guru Sahib asked him to go back to Tripura and manage the affairs of his State. Ratan Rai requested Guru Sahib to send some Punjabi Sikhs who would help him in administration as well as for the defence of the country. Guru Sahib obliged him and selected some Sikhs to accompany the king to Tripura. Ratan Rai left Chakk Nanaki with some precious gifts from Guru Sahib.

Chakk Nanaki as an Arts Centre

On one hand Chakk Nanaki had become a political and military capital of the Sikh nation, on the other hand it also became a great centre for the promotion of arts and literature. A large number of artists, bards, musicians, poets, scholars and other elite personalities began to live at Chakk Nanaki. Bhai Nand Lal, a great poet and a scholar of Persian and Punjabi languages, was also one of them. He came to Anandpur Sahib in March 1682 and

became a part and parcel of the City. For the next three years military exercises and academic activities went on side by side. Poetical symposia, academic discussions etc. were a daily routine. More than 52 poets used to participate in the poetical symposia.

Celebration of Hola Mahalla

During the month of *Phaggan* of the *Bikrami* calendar (February-March), every year, the Hindus used to celebrate their Holi festival. During the celebration of this festival, the Hindus used to sprinkle dye on their friends and relatives. Some Sikh friends of these Hindus too joined them. During the Hindu Holi festival of 1683, some Sikhs visited Chakk Nanaki. On their way they had joined their Hindu friends in sprinkling dye on each other and had spoiled their clothes. When Guru Sahib saw them, he told them to stop observing such a silly custom, as that was nothing but nonsense to spoil the clothes of each other. Moreover, several incidents of hooligans teasing, fighting and even rioting had also taken place during these celebrations. Guru Sahib told them that being Sikhs they should not celebrate the festivals of other religions. To add to Sikhs' entertainment activities, Guru Sahib introduced a new festival and named it Hola Mahalla. The first Hola Mahalla was celebrated on March 4, 1683. On this day, Guru Sahib held wrestling competitions, horse races, fencing competitions, war manoeuvring games and other martial activities. It not only brought an end to spoiling of clothes and untoward happenings but also nurtured the spirit of martial and recreational moods.

Marraige of Guru Sahib with (Mata) Sundari (Sunder Kaur)

Guru Sahib's wife (Mata) Jeeto (Jeet Kaur after initiation) had remained confined to bed for the past few years. She asked Guru Sahib to have another wife; hence the second marriage of Guru Sahib was performed with (Mata) Sundari (daughter of Bhai Ram Saran Kumarav, a resident of village Bijwara, district Hoshiarpur) on April 4, 1684, at Chakk Nanaki. (Mata Sunder Kaur gave birth to Sahibzada Ajit Singh, on January 26, 1687, at Paonta Sahib. She died at Delhi in 1747).

Foundation of Paonta Sahib

By 1685, Chakk Nanaki had become a major City-State. At that time, Dowager Rani Champa, the ruler of Bilaspur and her son *Crowned Prince* Bhim Chand were followers of the Sikh faith but Bhim Chand's son Ajmer Chand, under the influence of his mentor Pandit Parma Nand, did not like the Sikhs. Ajmer Chand used to live the life of a debauch person. Being the only son of Bhim Chand, he could not be stopped from living an unscrupulous life. Guru Sahib had also learnt about Ajmer Chand's hatred for the Sikhs. Per chance, in March 1685, Raja Medani Parkash, the ruler of Nahan State sent his minister to Guru Sahib inviting him to visit his State. Guru Sahib accepted his invitation and visited Nahan on April 14, 1685. The Raja gave a royal welcome to Guru Sahib. He requested Guru Sahib to establish a Sikh Centre in his State too. The Raja escorted Guru Sahib through various parts of the State so that Guru Sahib may choose some site to establish such a Centre. When Guru Sahib reached the bank of Yamuna River, on the border of Doon valley, he praised the panorama of the area. The Raja was pleased that Guru Sahib had selected a site. Here, Guru Sahib decided to set up his headquarters. Bhai Ram Kanwar (Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh after initiation), a direct descendant of Baba Buddha, laid the foundation stone of the new town, on April 29, 1685. Bhai Nand Chand Diwan (the religious minister) made the first prayer.

The next three years were a period of great activities at Paonta Sahib. The first building to come up was the fort of Paonta Sahib (which does not exist any more). There were about 500 Sikhs, most of whom were amateur soldiers too, that used to live there. Besides, dozens of poets, writers, intellectuals, musicians and other artists also used to live at Paonta Sahib. Paonta Sahib had become as important city as Chakk Nanaki was. It was here that Ram Rai, elder son of Guru Har Rai Sahib, who had been disowned by his father for his association with Aurangzeb, the Moghul emperor, visited Guru Sahib and apologised for his misdeed. Guru Sahib accepted his apology and admitted him to the Sikh faith.

Battle of Bhangani

When Aurangzeb came to know about this, he decided to eliminate Ram Rai. Under Aurangzeb's instructions, some attendants of Ram Rai killed him. Ram Rai's wife reported it to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib visited village Khurvadhi, the residence of Ram Rai, to participate in final prayers for him. Here, Gurbakhsh Rai, an associate of Ram Rai, who wanted to become the chief of the centre at Khurvadhi and was the chief conspirator to kill Ram Rai, tried to insult Guru Sahib. At this Bhai Mani Ram, Nand Chand and other Sikhs taught a lesson to Gurbakhsh Rai and his associates. Gurbakhsh Rai fled the village and reached Srinagar Garhwal. He approached Fateh Shah, the ruler of Garhwal and provoked him to attack Guru Sahib. Fateh Shah, who was already jealous of Guru Sahib's glory, agreed to lead an army to Paonta Sahib. He thought that Guru Sahib did not have a large number of followers at Paonta and a sudden attack will result into his victory.

Guru Sahib received information about the attack in advance. He asked all the Sikhs to leave Paonta Sahib and check the enemy at village Bhangani. On September 18, 1688, Fateh Shah's army attacked the Sikhs. A fierce battle was fought between the Garhwal and the Sikh soldiers. The hill soldiers were no matches to amateur Sikh soldiers. Fateh Shah's army suffered heavy casualties. By the evening Fateh Shah's army fled the battlefield. Guru Sahib told the Sikhs not to chase the fleeing army. In this battle four Sikhs embraced martyrdom. Among these four two were the cousins of Guru Sahib (Sago Shah and Jeet Mal) and the two others were Bhai Hatthi Chand Parmar (brother of Bhai Mani Singh) and Bhai Uda Rathore.

Return to Chakk Nanaki

In October 1688, Guru Sahib received a letter from Dowager Rani Champa, the queen of Bilaspur and Prince Bhim Chand, requesting Guru Sahib to return to Chakk Nanaki. The victory of Guru Sahib at Bhangani had impressed Raja Bhim Chand and he wished to have Guru Sahib's protection and patronage as a defence from the invading forces of Moghul or the other hill States. Even other hill rulers thought of Guru Sahib as their

Godfather. Rani Champa had written the letter in such a humble manner that Guru Sahib could not help accepting her request and decided to return to Chakk Nanaki.

Guru Sahib left Paonta Sahib for Chakk Nanaki on October 28, 1688. On his way to Chakk Nanaki, Guru Sahib visited Kapal Mochan, Laharpur, Toka, Dabra, Raipur Rani, Dhakauli, Nadda, Mani Majra, Kotla Nihang, Ropar, Ghanaula, Bunga, Attari and Keeratpur. Guru Sahib reached Chakk Nanaki in the middle of November 1688.

After Guru Sahib's return to Chakk Nanaki, thousands of Sikh began visiting Chakk Nanaki again. When Rani Champa came to know about the return of Guru Sahib, she sent her minister to Chakk Nanaki to request Guru Sahib to visit Bilaspur. Guru Sahib had special regards for Rani Champa, so he accepted her invitation. The next week Guru Sahib left for Bilaspur via Keeratpur Sahib. When Guru Sahib reached Bilaspur, the aged Rani Champa and her son Bhim Chand welcomed Guru Sahib at the entrance of the city of Bilaspur. She gave a grand welcome to Guru Sahib. Several rulers of the adjoining hill States had reached Bilaspur to make obeisance to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib spent five days at Bilaspur. Before Guru Sahib's departure, Rani Champa requested Guru Sahib not to go far away from her State. She told Guru Sahib that she wouldn't be able to survive if Guru Sahib moved his headquarters to any other place. She requested Guru Sahib to build fine forts for the city of Chakk Nanaki.

Foundation of the City of Anandpur Sahib and the Forts

After reaching Chakk Nanaki, Guru Sahib sent *Hukamnamas* to the Sikhs to visit Chakk Nanaki on March 28, 1689. Thousands of Sikhs responded to Guru Sahib's call. A mammoth congregation was held at Chakk Nanaki. On this day, Dowager Rani Champa too visited Chakk Nanaki. Her son Raja Bhim Chand and some of her ministers and officials also accompanied her. On that day Guru Sahib held his court under a big canopy. Here, Rani Champa requested Guru Sahib to establish a new town as the capital of the Sikh State and also to build some forts for the defence of the State. She offered to grant as much land as Guru Sahib needed for this purpose. Guru Sahib agreed on the condition that she would accept the price for the land. At first she hesitated but finally she consented accepting the price and also announced that she shall spend that amount for the welfare of the poor people of her State. Guru Sahib paid the price for the land of the village of Makhawal (which was just ruins) as well as the land of the villages of Agampur, Tarapur, Laudipur, Mataur and Sahota. Guru Sahib announced the construction of five forts as well. Guru Sahib also decided that the new city Anandpur shall be built at the site of ruins of the village of Makhawal and the five forts will be built in the territory of Anandpur, Sahota, Laudipur, Tarapur and Agampur etc.

On March 29, 1689, Guru Sahib laid the foundation of the new town of Anandpur Sahib. Bhai Chaupat Rai (Bhai Chaupa Singh after initiation) recited five stanzas of *Anand Sahib* (a hymn composed by Guru Amar Das Sahib) and made a prayer as a part of the ceremony of laying down of the foundation stone of the Sikh capital. The foundation stone of the fort of Anandgarh was laid down the next day. Four more forts (Taragarh, Lohgarh,

Holgarh/Agamgarh and Fatehgarh) were to be built after some time. Among these forts Anandgarh was the main cantonment of the Sikh soldiers and Lohgarh had a factory for manufacture of arms and ammunition. The main gate of Lohgarh was a very strong one and it was not possible for the enemy to break it open. All these forts, except the fort of Taragarh, were at a distance of about 800 yards from each other. These forts gave protection to the villages of Chakk Nanaki and Anandpur Sahib as well as the other villages, which had, by then, become a part of Greater Anandpur Sahib, the Sikh City State. Besides, these five forts the Sikh City State had also the protection of Charan Ganga and other rivulets as well as river Satluj (which used to flow on the border of Anandpur Sahib at that time) on two sides and a range of the hills on the third side.

Battle of Nadaun

During those days (in 1690) Dowager Rani Champa, the queen of Bilaspur State and Bhim Chand, the crowned prince, were loyal to Guru Sahib. Rani's grandson Ajmer Chand was inimical to the Sikhs. He even tried to turn his grandmother and his father against Guru Sahib but could not succeed. Rani Champa always remained devoted to Guru Sahib. She had had close relations with Guru Har Rai Sahib, Guru Harkarishan Sahib and Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib too. Rani's devotion impressed Guru Gobind Singh Sahib also. As a result Guru Sahib too patronised the Bilaspur State.

In March 1691, the Governor of Lahore sent a battalion of the Moghul army, under the command of Alif Khan, to collect revenue and tribute from the hill States. Before his arrival Alif Khan had sent letters to the hill States to pay heavy amounts as taxes. When Bhim Chand received this letter, he sent his minister to Guru Sahib to save him from the attack of the Moghul army. Rulers of some other Hill States also sent similar requests. Guru Sahib assured them full help and asked the Sikhs to be ready for a fight against the invading Moghul army.

On March 19, 1691, the Sikh soldiers, under the command of Guru Sahib, reached the city of Nadaun, near Kangra (on the bank of river Beas). Guru Sahib divided the Sikh army in different

groups, under the command of Bhai Nand Chand Sangha, Bhai Mani Ram, Bhai Aalam Chand Nachanna, Bhai Dharm Chand Chhibber, Bhai Udey Ram, Bhai Bachitar Ram etc. The next day Alif Khan's army attacked them. The Sikhs fought bravely and killed several soldiers of the invading army. The Sikhs had been waiting for an opportunity to fight for the past two and a half years (since the battle of Bhangani). The enthusiasm of the Sikh soldiers compelled Alif Khan to flee the battlefield. In this battle a large number of Moghul soldiers were killed. Among the Sikhs Bhai Sohan Chand (brother of Bhai Mani Singh), Mool Chand (son of Bhai Raghupati Rai Kamboj of Khemkaran) etc. embraced martyrdom.

After the victory, Guru Sahib spent seven days in the palace of the ruler of Nadaun and then left for Anandpur Sahib. On their way home the Sikh soldiers taught a lesson to the mischievous residents of village Alsoon because they had troubled them while they were proceeding to Nadaun.

Guru Sahib and the soldiers reached Anandpur Sahib on March 28, 1691. A large number of Sikhs were eagerly waiting for him. The Sikhs celebrated the victory of the Sikh army at Nadaun by singing hymns.

Death of Rani Champa

On May 12, 1691, Dowager Rani Champa, the queen of Bilaspur, died. She was a devoted Sikh and all the Sikhs and Guru Sahib had special regards and love for her. When Guru Sahib received the news of the death of Rani Champa, he left for Bilaspur. Mata Nanaki Ji (in whose name the village of Chakk Nanaki had been founded), Mata Gujari Ji, Mata Jito Ji and other members of the family of Guru Sahib, along with several prominent Sikhs, joined Guru Sahib. Final prayer of Rani Champa was said on May 27, 1691.

After his return from Bilaspur, Guru Sahib began living at Anandgarh fort. Guru Sahib's family continued to stay at Guru De Mahal, in the village of Chakk Nanaki. Guru Sahib began holding his court at Kesgarh Sahib. With this shifted the seat of Akal Takht Sahib from Takht Damdama Sahib (Chakk Nanaki) to Takht Kesgarh Sahib. The Sikhs, too, began visiting Guru Sahib at Anandgarh fort and Kesgarh Sahib.

Conference of the Hill Rulers

Though Guru Sahib had helped the hill rulers against the attack of Alif Khan, in March 1691 and the Moghuls made no further attack for several months, yet, the hill rulers were afraid of the Moghul army. They expressed their fears to Bhim Chand (now the king of Bilaspur State). Bhim Chand conveyed the feelings of the hill rulers to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib sent a message to Bhim Chand to call a conference of the hill rulers. Bhim Chand invited all the hill rulers at Rawalsar, on March 29, 1692. Guru Sahib presided over this conference. The hill rulers requested Guru Sahib to grant them protection from the invasions of the Moghul rulers. Guru Sahib agreed to help them subject to the condition that they shall remain united and would never accept subordination of the Moghuls in any manner. When hill rulers accepted this, Guru Sahib agreed to patronise them.

After this conference, Guru Sahib stayed at Rawalsar for a few days and then left for a tour of the hills. He visited Purmandal, Jammu, Chakk Kahna, Ramgarh, Khirari and Samba etc. From here Guru Sahib returned to Anandpur Sahib via Pathankot and Hoshiarpur.

Death of Raja Bhim Chand

On September 16, 1692, Raja Bhim Chand died. He had already abdicated the throne of Bilaspur State for his only son Ajmer Chand. Bhim Chand's final prayers were said on October 3, 1692. Guru Sahib, Mata Nanaki, Mata Gujari and other members of the family of Guru Sahib, Bhai Chaupat Rai and several other prominent Sikhs visited Bilaspur to attend the ceremony. Guru Sahib spent three days at Bilaspur and then returned to Anandpur Sahib. With the death of Raja Bhim Chand, now Anandpur Sahib and Bilaspur were likely to be two different blocks because Ajmer Chand was inimical to the Sikhs. It was Rani Champa and Raja Bhim Chand who were devoted Sikhs and had always remained loyal to Guru Sahib.

Tour of Malwa and Baangar area

In April 1693, Guru Sahib left Anandpur Sahib for a

missionary tour of *Malwa* and *Baangar* zones of the Punjab. His first stop was at Talwandi Sabo where Bhai Dalla gave him a warm welcome. Guru Sahib spent several days at Tawandi Sabo. After a tour of other villages and towns of the Malwa zone, Guru Sahib went to Dhamtan in Baangar zone. At Dhamtan, he stayed with Bhai Nigahia (son of Bhai Daggo). Guru Sahib spent several weeks at Dhamtan and people from far and wide visited Bhai Nigahia's house to make obeisance to Guru Sahib. From Dhamtan, Guru Sahib went to Keeratpur Sahib and finally reached Anandpur Sahib. Guru Sahib had spent about six months out of Anandpur Sahib and the Sikhs had been waiting him very anxiously. In January 1694, Guru Sahib took a tour of Khurwadhi (Dehradun), Hardwar, Kankhal, and Kurukashetra etc. When Guru Sahib was at Kankhal, Madho Das (later known as Baba Banda Singh) met Guru Sahib. At Khurwadhi Guru Sahib enquired about the affairs of the shrine of Ram Rai. Mata Punjab Kaur, wife of Ram Rai, told Guru Sahib that Fateh Shah of Garhwal had not disturbed her since the battle of Bhangani because he feared the wrath of the Sikhs. Towards the end of March 1694, Guru Sahib again returned to Anandpur Sahib.

On March 29, 1694, thousands of the Sikhs from various parts of the subcontinent visited Anandpur Sahib. On this day, Bhai Nihang Khan, of Kotla Nihang, also visited Guru Sahib. Bhai Nihang Khan, his wife, son and daughter requested Guru Sahib to attend the betrothal ceremony of Aalam Khan (son of Bhai Nihang Khan) on May 3, 1694. Guru Sahib promised to reach Kotla Nihang. Guru Sahib spent the first week of May 1694 at Kotla Nihang and Keeratpur Sahib and attended the betrothal ceremony of Bhai Aalam Khan.

On July 11, 1694, Bhai Lal Chand Subhikkhi, father of Mata Gujari and maternal grandfather of Guru Sahib died. Guru Sahib went to village Lakhnaur to join final prayer for Bhai Lal Chand. In October 1694, several thousand Sikhs again visited Anandpur Sahib. On February 10, 1695, Diwan Dargah Mall died. He had been Diwan (religious minister) of four Guru Sahib. His body was cremated at village Agampura, near the fort of Agamgarh.

Guru Sahib forbade the Sikhs from cutting hair

In March 1695, Guru Sahib sent Hukamnamas to all the Sikhs to visit Anandpur Sahib on March 29, 1695. Thousands of Sikhs responded to Guru Sahib's call. While addressing the main congregation, Guru Sahib announced that no Sikh should ever cut his/her hair in future. Though majority of them already used to keep unshorn hair but with this commandment cutting of hair from any part of one's body was forbidden by Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib also ordered that every Sikh should, in future, wear a steel/iron Kara (bracelet) in his right hand.

First attack on Anandpur Sahib

Guru Sahib's first confrontation with the Moghul army had taken place in March 1691 at Nadaun. Since then there had been complete calm. Guru Sahib had fought this battle (of Nadaun) to help Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur. Since the death of Raja Bhim Chand (1692), Guru Sahib had not visited Bilaspur, as Bhim Chand's son Ajmer Chand was inimical to the Sikhs. He was so aggressive that he even wanted Guru Sahib to leave Anandpur Sahib. Though he himself did not dare attack Anandpur Sahib, he instigated the Governors of Sirhind and Lahore against Guru Sahib. As it was Dilawar Khan (the Governor of Lahore) who had sent Alif Khan to Nadaun (in March 1691), he (Governor of Lahore) agreed to attack Anandpur Sahib to avenge the defeat of 1691. In August 1695, Dilawar Khan sent his son Rustam Khan with a huge army to attack Anandpur Sahib. He reached the outskirts of Anandpur Sahib on August 19, 1695. That day, the rainy water had flooded all the streams and rivulets. It was not possible for his army to cross the rivulet on the outskirts of the Greater Anandpur Sahib. On the other hand Bhai Aalam Chand Nachanna had seen the Moghul army. He informed Guru Sahib and soon a large number of Sikhs gathered on the top of the hill at Kesgarh Sahib and Anandgarh Sahib. The Sikhs began beating *Ranjit Nagara* and started raising *Jaikaara* (Bole so nihal...). The thunder of the drum and the sounds of the Sikh war cry frightened the Moghul soldiers. So, on the pretext of flood in the rivulet, the Moghul soldiers beat a retreat without a fight. The Sikhs felt relieved. They renamed the rivulet as *Himaiti Naala* (supporter

rivulet) because due to flood in this rivulet the Sikhs had won a victory, without fighting a battle. (Now, this rivulet does not exist as the floodwater now falls in Charan Ganga and the other small rivulets. The land, on which this rivulet existed, is now cultivated land).

Divorce between Anandpur Sahib and Bilaspur

Though the death of Rani Champa, followed by the death of Raja Bhim Chand, had brought an end to the friendship between Anandpur Sahib and Bilaspur, yet both of them had never openly stood against each other. Ajmer Chand wanted to expel Guru Sahib from Anandpur Sahib, but he dared not lead an army at Anandpur Sahib. In August 1695, he had tried to get Anandpur Sahib attacked by the Moghul army but he could not succeed as Rustam Khan retreated without a fight.

Though Dilawar Khan, the Governor of Lahore, had failed in his mission to attack Anandpur Sahib, but he decided to send his army to collect revenue and tribute from the hill States. In February 1696, he despatched Hussain Khan, the Moghul chief of Kangra, to collect revenue. Hussain Khan first attacked Dadwal and Bilaspur. Both of them tried to give a fight to Hussain Khan but they surrendered very soon. Hussain Khan agreed to forgive them on the condition that both of them would join him in collecting tribute from the other hill States. Ajmer Chand at once agreed because he wanted to use the Moghuls in order to get Anandpur Sahib vacated.

Hussain Khan's next target was the State of Guler. Raja Gopal, the ruler of State, sent his minister to Anandpur Sahib to seek Guru Sahib's help. Guru Sahib sent a unit of the Sikhs soldiers to help Raja Gopal. On February 20, 1696, Hussain Khan put a siege to the city of Guler. Bhai Sangatia and other Sikhs first tried to negotiate a compromise but Hussain Khan was very aggressive. He even tried to arrest Raja Gopal. This resulted into a battle. Bhai Sangatia, Hanumant, Darso and other Sikhs fought bravely and killed several soldiers of the Moghul army. In this battle Hussaini too fought bravely. Even some Rajputs fought bravely but during the battle Hussain Khan was killed and with this fled the Moghul soldiers. On the Sikh side eight Sikhs

embraced martyrdom, including Bhai Sangatia, Bhai Hanumant, Bhai Lehnu and Bhai Darso.

In this battle Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur had fought on the side of the Moghuls; hence it was the first encounter between the Sikhs and the Bilaspur State. The defeat of Hussain Khan was, in a way, also the defeat of Ajmer Chand. This meant clear-cut divorce and rather enmity between Anandpur and Bilaspur. Now, Ajmer Chand began planning to attack Anandpur Sahib in order to avenge his defeat at Guler, as an ally of the Moghuls.

On the other hand, when the Governor of Lahore learnt about the death of Hussain Khan, he sent another battalion of the Moghul army under the command of a Rajput named Jujhar Sinh Hada. Hada led three thousand soldiers against Guler State but he too was killed in the battle. This further enraged the Governor of Lahore.

When Aurangzeb came to know about successive defeats of the Moghul army at the hands of the Sikhs, he sent his son prince Muazzam (later known as Bahadur Shah) to enquire into the matter. Prince Muazzam left Agra with a big army. During his expedition of the hill States, he did not attack Anandpur Sahib. He reported to his father that the Sikhs were a peaceful people and they were never offensive to any one, in any situation; hence, not a problem for the Moghul empire.

Aurangzeb was not satisfied with the report of his son because Ajmer Chand and the Governors of Lahore and Sirhind had sent adverse reports about the activities of the Sikhs. In order to ascertain the authenticity of the report of the Prince, Aurangzeb sent Mirza Beg, one of his senior army Generals, to report about the affairs of the hill States and the Sikhs. Mirza Beg visited Anandpur Sahib and had a meeting with Guru Sahib. Mirza Beg was very much impressed by the personality of Guru Sahib. He reported to Aurangzeb that there was no sense in attacking Anandpur Sahib. Aurangzeb was, still, not satisfied. He sent another team of four senior officials towards Anandpur Sahib and the hill States. These four officers too confirmed the earlier reports by the Prince and Mirza Begh. This brought an end to the rumours of attack of the Moghul army on Anandpur Sahib.

Disbanding of the institution of *Masands*

Since the period of Guru Nanak Sahib, the Sikhs had been organised in the form of *Sangats*. Guru Ram Das Sahib appointed *Masands* (organisers or area chiefs) for each unit or a group of various units/zones. Their main function was to act as a link between Guru Sahib and the Sikhs of that particular area. The institution of *Masands* contributed a lot to the Sikh mission. It was helpful in organising the Sikhs of various areas as well as the missionary activities. It also played an important role in channelling the economic system of the Sikh nation. These *Masands* were the organisers but not the religious deputies or bosses or sub-Guru. They were supposed to serve as humble servants of the mission and the nation. But, with the passage of time, some of them became corrupt. They began misusing donations, the tithe and other gifts given by the Sikhs to be made over to Guru Sahib through them. Some *Masands* began collecting forced donations and some even tried to behave as sub-Gurus. So, a very useful system became a corrupt institution and an obstacle to the mission of Guru Sahib.

In the month of February 1698, Guru Sahib was watching a skit performed by some artists. The artists presented the story of a poor family tormented by a *Masand* who wanted to force a donation upon them in spite of their poor economy. This satire was an eye opener for every one. When the presentation of the satire was over, Guru Sahib asked the artist whether that was based on a true event. The artist confirmed it. Bhai Nanu Ram Dilwali was also present there. He narrated several other instances of the corrupt activities of the *Masands*. Guru Sahib immediately sent some prominent Sikhs to bring all the *Masands* to Anandpur Sahib. Within a few days, all the *Masands* reached Anandpur Sahib. Guru Sahib tested the credentials of each and every *Masand*. Those who were found debauch, corrupt and scoundrel were punished according to the gravity of their crimes. On the other hand, honest missionaries and genuine *Masands* were presented with *Siropaos* (robes of honour). Those who received robes of honour included Bhai Sangat Rai, also known as Bhai Pheru (Mian Ki Maur, Lahore), Bhai Bakht Mall Suri (Jalalpur Jattan), Bhai Kambo (Dipalpur), Bhai Jodh (Kamalia), Bhai

Durga Das Chauhan (Duburji Udey Karan Wali, Sialkot) and Bhai Tulsī Das Chhimba (Delhi).

Though there were some genuine missionary *Masands* also but Guru Sahib decided to disband the institution of *Masands*. He declared that, in future, no Sikh should send any thing to Guru Sahib through any *Masand*. Guru Sahib would not accept any offering sent through a *Masand*. Guru Sahib also issued a *Hukamnama* to all the Sikhs to attend a special congregation, on March 29, 1698, at Anandpur Sahib.

Revelation of Khalsa

Khalsa Akaal Purakh ki fauj

Pargatio Khalsa Parmatam ki Mauj

(Khalsa is the army of the Almighty).

Khalsa has been revealed as per the Will of the Almighty).

On March 29, 1698, more than twenty thousand Sikhs reached Anandpur Sahib (The popular date accepted by several writers is 1699). After regular *Keertan*, Guru Sahib stood up, unleashed his Kirpaan and said, "I need a Sikh who is ready to sacrifice his life for the nation." On hearing this, all the Sikhs were surprised. They began staring at Guru Sahib. Some of them could not even understand the meaning of the words of Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib repeated his words. Now all of them began thinking that Guru Sahib was serious. A large number of people got even frightened, hence no one stood up to respond to the call of Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib repeated his call for the third time. Now, a Sikh, named Bhai Daya Ram Sobti, of Lahore stood up and said, "Guru Sahib, I am your Sikh. I and my life are all yours. I offer my head for the nation." Guru Sahib moved forward, held Bhai Daya Ram by his arm and took him into a tent pitched on a nearby mound. Soon the sound of a thud was heard. After a few moments Guru Sahib came out of the tent. Blood was dripping from his sword. The people thought that Guru Sahib had severed the head of Bhai Daya Ram. Most of them got frightened. Some of them began moving away from the congregation ground.

Guru Sahib began addressing the Sikhs again. He made another call asking for another head. Now, no one spoke. There was complete silence. But, within seconds, another Sikh, named Bhai Muhkam Chand, stood up and with folded hands he expressed his desire to sacrifice himself. Guru Sahib held Bhai Muhkam Chand by his arm and took him too into the tent. The

same sound of thud was heard again. The Sikhs saw blood flowing downwards from the tent. Guru Sahib returned soon with fresh blood dripping from the sword. The audience was completely stunned. But when Guru Sahib gave the call for a third head, a large number of Sikhs began slipping away. On the other hand Bhai Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar (Karnataka), stood up and rushed towards Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib took him too towards the tent and returned soon with fresh blood on his sword and made another call for the fourth head. Now people began whispering as to what had happened to Guru Sahib. People thought that no fourth Sikh would now come forward as every body had presumed that Guru Sahib had severed the heads of the three Sikhs. But to their astonishment Bhai Dharam Chand Jawanda, a Jat of Hastinapur (near Delhi), stood up and offered his head. Guru Sahib took Dharam Chand to the tent and returned again with fresh blood on his sword. Guru Sahib now asked for the fifth head. By this time a very large number of Sikhs had left the congregation ground. On hearing Guru Sahib's call, Bhai Himmat Chand got up smilingly and moved towards Guru Sahib with fast steps. He too was led to the tent.

Now people were really horrified but it was strange that now five more Sikhs were standing to offer their heads. This time Guru Sahib did not come back. This made the congregation worried as to what had happened to Guru Sahib himself. Some Sikhs began asking each other "What is Guru Sahib doing now ? Is he coming back to ask for the sixth head? Has he really killed five Sikhs? Is he cremating them ? What is he doing after all?" Every one had a different question and a different answer. The Sikhs were frightened, horrified, surprised, worried but also curious to know the reality; still no one dared to go towards the tent. But soon, the congregation was amazed to see Guru Sahib stepping out of the tent with a blue dress on his person. All the five Sikhs wearing the same blue dress followed Guru Sahib. They looked like God's chosen beloved one's, their eyes glowing and their faces shining. They looked like the messengers from some spiritual land. On seeing them, the Sikhs began raising the *Jaikaaras* of *Bole so nihal...* A strange wave of amazement and joy spread throughout the congregation.

When Guru Sahib reached the dais and saw another batch

of five Sikhs standing in the middle of the congregation ground, he asked them as to why were they standing. (These five were: Deva Ram, Ram Chand, Tahil Das, Ishar Das, Fateh Chand). They told Guru Sahib, "We have been waiting since you left with Bhai Himmatt Chand, we too offer our heads." Guru Sahib smiled and said, "I needed only five *Marjiwras* (living martyrs). May Waheguru bless you also because you are ready to sacrifice your life for the nation. Your dedication has been accepted in the court of the Almighty. You too will have special place in His court. Those who offered their head first are the *Punj Piaray* (five chosen beloved ones) and you will be known as *Punj Muktey* (five liberated ones)." After this, Guru Sahib addressed the congregation: "I needed *Punj Marjiwras* (living martyrs) who will be ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation. These five have passed the test of sacrifice and loyalty for the nation. So long the sun and the moon exist, these five shall be remembered by the history for their devotion, dedication and sacrifice. Whenever the Sikhs prepare *Karah Parshad* (blessed pudding) the *Punj Piaray* shall be served first. The Sikhs shall always remember them in their national prayer."

After this Guru Sahib asked Bhai Chaupatt Rai to bring fresh water from Satluj River. In those days, river Satluj used to flow near the boundary of the city of Anandpur Sahib. Now its flow has turned towards Keeratpur Sahib). When Bhai Chaupatt Rai came back with fresh water, Guru Sahib asked Bhai Dharam Chand Chhibber (the religious minister) to bring a *Bata* (an iron vessel) and *Khanda* (double edged sword). Guru Sahib poured the water into the *Bata* and began stirring it with the *Khanda*. The *Punj Piaray* sat around the vessel and began reading five hymns (*Japuji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Swayyay, Chaupai* and *Anand Sahib*). During this Mata Jito (Jeet Kaur after initiation) went towards them and added *Patasas* (sugar candy) into the water. When Guru Sahib and the *Punj Piaray* finished the hymns, an *Ardaas* was offered.

After the *Ardaas*, Guru Sahib put five drops of the *Khandey Di Pahul* in his mouth with the *Khanda* and then gave *Khandey Di Pahul* to the *Punj Piaray*. (It was an after thought that he got initiation from the *Punj Piaray* after initiating them. This story became popular in the beginning of the nineteenth century. No

book written prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century mentions that Guru Sahib got initiation from the *Punj Piaray*). After *Khandey Di Pahul*, Guru Sahib told them, "Now, you are *new* persons. Your previous family of birth, your beliefs, your deeds, illusions and taboos do not exist any more. From now onwards you are *Khalsa* (sovereign beings) of the Supreme Sovereign (the Almighty). Guru Sahib gave them new names as well: Daya Singh, Muhkam Singh, Sahib Singh, Dharam Singh and Himmat Singh. Guru Sahib named himself also as Gobind Singh in place of Gobind Das.

Guru Sahib told the Khalsa that they would never cut their hair from any part of their bodies. They must not eat *Halal* (meat in Muslim fashion); must not use tobacco in any form, and, must not cohabit a *Turkani* (literally: it meant a Muslim woman, but it seems that Guru Sahib wanted to prohibit adultery). Guru Sahib prohibited the Sikhs from having any relationship with *Minas* (descendants of Pirthi Chand), *Dhirmallias* (descendants of Dhir Mall), *Ramraiyas* (the followers of Gurbakhsh Rai, a Masand of Ram Rai, who had begun a new sect named Ramraiyas), *Masands* and *Sirgumms* (those who are born in a Sikh family but cut their hair later on). Guru Sahib further said that a Sikh should never bow before mausoleums, graves, *smaadhs* (memorials raised by the Hindus after their dead). He commanded that a Sikh must have five articles of faith always on his person all the time till his/her death. These five are: *Kes* (unshorn hair), *Kangha* (Sikh-comb to be kept in hair-knot), *Kirpaan* (the Sikh sword), *Kachhehra* (the Sikh-shorts designed and stitched in a specific manner) and *Kara* (Sikh-bracelets, though *bracelet* is not a proper term) in one's hand. This *Kara* should be made of iron/steel and not gold because it is not an ornament. The commandments for Khalsa also included not dying or plucking grey hair from any part of body. Guru Sahib told the Khalsa that a Khalsa belongs to the Almighty and has his loyalty for the Almighty only.

After the initiation of the *Punj Piaray* was completed, Guru Sahib initiated the *Punj Muktey*. After these ten Sikhs, the next batch to get *Khandey Di Pahul* included: Bhai Mani Singh, Chitar Singh, Bachitar Singh, Ajab Singh, Ajaib Singh, Anik Singh, Udey Singh (six sons of Bhai Mani Singh), Bhai Chaupa Singh (Chaupat Rai), Bhai Dharam Singh Chhibber *Diwan*, Bhai Aalam

Singh Nachanna and Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh (Ram Kanwar). After these 21 Sikhs, another batch was given *Khandey Di Pahul*. They included Bhai Kirpa Singh (Kirpa Ram) Dutt, his brother Bhai Sanmukh Singh Dutt, their father Bhai Gurmukh Singh (Aru Ram) Dutt, Bhai Rai Singh Multani (brother of Bhai Mani Singh), Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, Bhai Gurbakhshish Singh, Bhai Daya Singh Purohit, Bhai Subeg Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, Bhai Barn Singh, Bhai Lal Singh Pishauria, Bhai Ani Singh (Ani Rai poet), Bhai Rup Singh, Bhai Deep Singh and Bhai Nand Singh (both, sons of Baba Suraj Mall and grandsons of Guru Hargobind Sahib), Bhai Nanu Singh Dilwali and three Bania brothers from Sirhind (Bhai Hazari Singh, Bhai Bhandari Singh and Bhai Darbari Singh). After this the *Punj Piaray* began initiating the rest of the Sikhs. In the next few days thousands of Sikhs got *Khandey Di Pahul*.

Bhai Mani Singh sent to Guru Da Chakk (Amritsar)

Guru Da Chakk (Amritsar) had been under the management of the Mina family from 1635 to 1696. In 1696 Harji, son of Meharban and grandson of Pirthi Chand, died. He had four sons. They could not look after the affairs of the town and left the city for far off places. In 1698, some Sikhs from Guru Da Chakk visited Anandpur Sahib and requested Guru Sahib to send one Sikh to take care of the shrine and look after the affairs of the town. Guru Sahib promised to send some Sikhs to Guru Da Chakk. In the last week of April 1698, Guru Sahib asked Bhai Mani Singh to move to Guru Da Chakk. He also asked Bhai Bhupat Singh, Bhai Gulzar Singh, Bhai Koer Singh and Bhai Dan Singh to accompany Bhai Mani Singh. These five Sikhs reached Guru Da Chakk in the first week of May and began living there. They started regular *Keertan* and *Katha* at Harimandir Sahib and people began visiting the shrine as before. Now, Guru Da Chakk too became another centre for the Sikhs of the *Maajha* area.

Attacks on Anandpur Sahib

After the revelation of Khalsa, thousands of Sikh began flocking to Anandpur Sahib to receive *Khandey Di Pahul*. This news reached the Moghul rulers. They were worried to learn about the declaration of the Sikh nation. Not only the Moghuls but the Brahmins (the Hindu priestly class) were also embarrassed to learn it because thousands of Punjabis, now, considered it a matter of pride to receive *Khandey Di Pahul*. The Brahmins feared major losses of their priestly business and their revenues because their clientele was sure to decline because a Khalsa has nothing to do with the Brahmins or a priest. Parma Nand, the prime Minister of Bilaspur State, was a Brahmin. He was also the mentor of Ajmer Chand, the ruler of Bilaspur. He found it as a proper opportunity to exploit the situation to provoke Ajmer Chand to attack Anandpur Sahib.

Politically too, the Moghul and the hill rulers, were jealous of Guru Sahib's growing number of the followers and his power. Guru Sahib had, by then, built four forts and the fifth one, the Fatehgarh fort, was also near completion. The Sikhs had a large number of horses and an equally good quantity of arms and ammunition. A factory of arms had already been set up inside the fort of Lohgarh under the charge of Bhai Ram Singh Sikligar who was an expert of manufacture of arms and ammunition.

Anandpur Sahib had become a major centre. From cantonment, business and political aspect Anandpur Sahib was much more important than Bilaspur and all the other capitals of the hill States. From arts and education point of view too Anandpur Sahib was supreme. This created jealousy in the minds of some of the hill rulers. They were looking for an opportunity to harm Anandpur Sahib in some manner.

Attack by Katochs

On July 12, 1698, Guru Sahib, along with a few Sikhs, went to the hill forests for hunting. When they reached in the middle of the forest, they came across a party led by Aalam Chand and Balia Chand, the two Katoch feudal. The Katoch had deep friendly relations with Ajmer Chand. As the Katoch party was much bigger than the number of the Sikhs accompanying Guru Sahib, they thought that they would be able to kill the Sikhs and capture Guru Sahib; hence they attacked Guru Sahib. In a hand to hand fight Bhai Aalam Singh and Bhai Udey Singh seriously wounded the two Katoch feudal. Bhai Udey Singh cut the right arm of Balia Chand with a single blow of his sword. On seeing their chiefs in such a condition the hill soldiers began running to save their lives.

Guru Sahib's marriage with (Mata) Sahib Kaur

In the last days of March 1700, a large number of Sikhs visited Anandpur Sahib. Among them were Bhai Har Bhagwan (alias Bhai Ramu), his wife Bibi Jas Devi and their children Sahib Singh and Sahib Kaur (Sahib Devan before initiation). They were the residents of Rohtas (district Jhelum, now a part of Pakistan). Bhai Har Bhagwan requested Guru Sahib to accept Bibi Sahib Kaur as his wife. Guru Sahib politely refused and told him that he had already two wives and four sons, hence it won't be proper to have another wife. Bhai Har Bhagwan told Guru Sahib that his daughter had always treated him (Guru Sahib) as her husband and she won't even dream of marrying any other person. Guru Sahib told him that he (Guru Sahib) would not consummate the marriage with her but if she still insisted for marriage, she could stay in his family even as a wife but without having any marital relations with him (Guru Sahib). Bhai Har Bhagwan and Bibi Sahib Kaur agreed to this. As a result, a formal marriage ceremony was performed on April 15, 1700. Guru Sahib never consummated this marriage but Mata Sahib Kaur remained in Guru Sahib's household as his wife. According to one writer Guru Sahib granted her the status of the "*Mother of Khalsa*", though this is not confirmed by any other source.

Attack by Painda Khan and Dina Beg

Having suffered at the hands of the Sikhs, the Katoch feudal went to Bilaspur and narrated the whole story to Ajmer Chand. Ajmer Chand contacted the other hill chiefs but he could not get good response. No hill ruler was interested in a fight against Guru Sahib. Then he approached Aurangzeb. He too did not show any interest in helping Ajmer Chand. Finally he contacted the Governors of Sirhind and Lahore. The Governor of Lahore agreed to help Ajmer Chand and sent a battalion of the Moghul soldiers under the command of Painda Khan and Dina (Adina) Begh. They attacked Anandpur Sahib on July 26, 1700. Guru Sahib had already got information about the attack and the Sikhs were prepared to have a fight. Battle between the Sikhs and the Moghul soldiers lasted only for a few hours. The invaders suffered heavy losses and retreated in the evening.

Attack by Ajmer Chand

When Ajmer Chand learnt that the Moghul army had been defeated and the Sikhs had an upper hand, he decided to attack Anandpur Sahib with his own army. On August 29, 1700, Ajmer Chand led a large number of soldiers and attacked the fort of Taragarh. Taragarh fort was on the border of village Tarapur and Bilaspur State. It was at a distance of about five km from Anandpur Sahib. At that time there were only a few dozen Sikh soldiers in this fort. Sahibzada Ajit Singh was the in charge of the fort. Ajmer Chand knew that the number of the Sikhs in that fort was very small and he would be able to kill all of them and occupy the fort. But, Ajmer Chand was simply mistaken. Though it was a sudden attack but the Sikhs had seen the hill soldiers advancing towards the fort. Sahibzada Ajit Singh sent a Sikh soldier to inform Guru Sahib about the attack. Before the hill soldiers could reach the fort of Taragarh, the Sikh messenger had already disappeared from their sight and reached Anandgarh fort. He informed Guru Sahib about the attack. Guru Sahib sent one hundred and twenty-five soldiers under the command of Bhai Udey Singh.

By the time Bhai Udey Singh could reach the fort the fight had already begun. The Sikhs had killed some of the hill soldiers.

Bhai Udey Singh's party began attacking the hill soldiers from the other side. As a result several of the soldiers of hill army were killed. Ghumand Chand, a leader of the hill army was seriously wounded in a hand-to-hand fight with Bhai Udey Singh. On seeing Ghumand Chand badly wounded, the hill soldiers began retreating. In this battle dozens of hill soldiers were killed. On the Sikh side Bhai Kalyan Singh Parmar (son of Shaheed Dial Das), Bhai Mangat Singh (brother of Bhai Pheru) and Bhai Ishar Singh embraced martyrdom. In the evening Guru Sahib sent messages to the leaders of the other forts asking them to be vigilant and be prepared to face another attack by Ajmer Chand's army.

Attack on Fatehgarh fort

Ajmer Chand knew that the Fatehgarh fort was not fully built and one of its walls was still incomplete, so he decided to attack this fort. On August 30, 1700, he attacked Fatehgarh fort. Bhai Bhagwan Singh, son of Bhai Mani Singh, was the in charge of this fort. He encouraged the Sikhs to give Ajmer Chand a befitting reply so that they may not be able to attack Anandpur Sahib again. The Sikhs fought bravely and Ajmer Chand was not able to reach near the incomplete wall of the fort. Even at Fatehgarh fort Ajmer Chand suffered heavy casualties. Under the pretext of darkness, the hill army fled the battlefield. In this battle Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh (son of Bhai Lakkhi Shah Wanjara), Bhai Nand Singh (son of Bhai Aalam Singh and grandson of Bhai Daria) embraced martyrdom.

Attack on Agamgarh fort

Ajmer Chand had suffered heavy losses in two battles but he was still not subdued. On the third day, i.e. August 31, 1700, he made another attempt to defeat the Sikhs. This time he attacked the fort at Agamgarh village. This fort was at a distance of about one and a half a kilometre from Anandgarh fort and about 800 metres from the fort of Fatehgarh. The Sikhs had sensed that Ajmer Chand would attack that fort so they were fully prepared for a fight. Within an hour a large number of hill soldiers were killed. Ajmer Chand was depressed to see heavy casualties, so he

decided to beat a hasty retreat, hence the battle could not last long. On the Sikh side, Bhai Bagh Singh (nephew of Bhai Mani Singh) and Bhai Gharbara Singh (son of Bhai Nanu Singh Dilwali) embraced martyrdom.

Attack on Lohgarh fort

Having suffered shameful defeat for three successive days, Ajmer Chand became more aggressive. On the other hand the hill soldiers felt very much demoralised. Some of them suggested that they should return to Bilaspur. But, Ajmer Chand wanted to make another trial. His maternal uncle Kesri Chand was more aggressive than him. He tried to infuse new spirit among the hill soldiers. Kesri Chand's minister Karam Chand advised him against a new fight. But Kesri Chand swore that he wouldn't return to Bilaspur if he could not chop off the head of Guru Sahib. Parma Nand, the minister of Ajmer Chand, suggested that they should attack the fort of Lohgarh, as that was the major arsenal of the Sikhs. He said if they could occupy that fort all the losses in the three battles would be avenged. Karam Chand told them that the gate of the Lohgarh fort was so strong that they won't be able to break it open. At this Parma Nand suggested that a drunkard elephant should be brought in to break it open. Ajmer Chand immediately agreed to this proposal.

A Sikh intelligence officer, Bhai Chatar Singh, received this information and he immediately informed Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib asked the Sikhs to be ready to push this elephant back on the hill army. He assigned the job to Duni Chand Dhaliwal, who had a bulky, tall and impressive physique. But, in fact, he was a known coward. At night, Duni Chand approached some senior Sikhs in the fort and asked them to request Guru Sahib not to send him for such a job, which would mean sure death. When no one could extend help to Duni Chand, he, along with his five companions, tried to flee Anandgarh fort by scaling down the walls of the fort with the help of a rope. As Duni Chand had a heavy body, the rope got broken and he fell down. He was seriously wounded. (His companions carried him to his native village where he died soon after). Guru Sahib received the news of Duni Chand's escape within a short period. He knew what Duni Chand would do so,

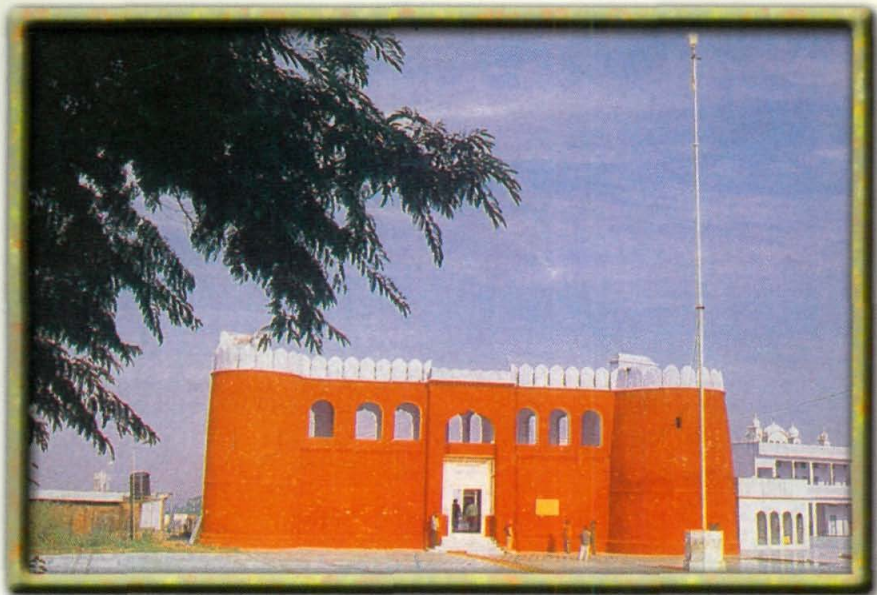
so he had already decided to assign this job to some one else.

The next day, early in the morning, Guru Sahib asked Bhai Bachitar Singh to turn the drunken elephant back. He immediately stood up to accept the duty. Guru Sahib gave him his own *Naagani* spear to carry out this job. Bhai Bachitar Singh left for Lohgarh fort at once. After he was gone, Bhai Udey Singh stood up and said, "Guru Sahib Kesri Chand has sworn to cut off your head. I wish to chop off his head, I seek your permission to do so". Guru Sahib embraced him and gave him his own *Karpa* spear to carry out the assignment. Bhai Udey Singh too left for Lohgarh fort immediately. Both the brothers reached the gate of Lohgarh fort and began waiting for the attack of Ajmer Chand's army.

As planned by the hill army, they brought a drunken elephant to break open the gate of Lohgarh fort. Big and strong iron plates had been tightened on the forehead of the elephant. When the elephant reached near the gate of the fort, Bhai Bachitar Singh rushed towards the elephant with a great speed and attacked it with the *Naagani* spear. The spear pierced through the iron plates and entered deep into the forehead of the elephant. Bhai Bachitar Singh immediately pulled the spear back. As a result the elephant began trumpeting due to sever pain. The elephant made a hasty retreat and ran at a high speed thus wounding and killing a large number of hill soldiers.

On the other hand, Bhai Udey Singh rode his horse and ran towards Kesri Chand, the maternal uncle of Ajmer Chand, who had sworn to cut the head of Guru Sahib. Bhai Udey Singh challenged Kesri Chand to make the first attack. Kesri Chand made three successive attempts but failed to hit Bhai Udey Singh. Now Bhai Udey Singh wielded his sword and cut Kesri Chand's head with a single stroke. Bhai Udey Singh hanged the head of Kesri Chand on *Karpa* spear and rushed immediately towards Anandgarh fort to present the same in the feet of Guru Sahib. The hill soldiers tried to stop Bhai Udey Singh but he disappeared in no time and the arrows shot by them could do nothing.

After the death of Kesri Chand a pitched battle began. The Sikh soldiers fought bravely and killed a very large number of hill soldiers. Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Sher Singh, Bhai Nahar Singh and others fought bravely. In this battle Bhai Aalam Singh (son of Bhai Daria), Bhai Sukkha Singh (a nephew of Bhai Mani



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਲਾ ਅਨੰਦਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ
Gurdwara Qila Anandgarh Sahib



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਲਾ ਲੋਹਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ
Gurdwara Qila Lohgarh Sahib



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਲਾ ਤਾਰਾਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ
Gurdwara Qila Taragarh Sahib



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਲਾ ਹੋਲਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ
Gurdwara Qila Holgarh Sahib



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਭੋਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ)
 Gurdwara Bhora Sahib (The first building of Anandpur Sahib)



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਇਥੋਂ ਚੱਲਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ)
 Gurdwara Damdama Sahib (This was the seat of Akal Takht Sahib)



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਥਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਹਿਲੀਆਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ)
 Gurdwara Thara Sahib (One of the first buildings of Anandpur Sahib)



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੀਸ ਗੰਜ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੀਸ ਦਾ ਸਸਕਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ)
 Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib
 (The site of cremation of the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib)



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਬੁੰਗਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਸੀਸ ਗੰਜ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ, ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸਸਕਾਰ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਣਾ ਮੰਨਣ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ)

Gurdwara Akal Bunga Sahib (In front of Sis Ganj Sahib where Guru Sahib addressed the Sikhs after the cremation of the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib)



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਦੁਮਾਲਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਜਿਥੇ ੧੬ ਜਨਵਰੀ ੧੭੦੪ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ "ਦੁਮਾਲਾ" ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ)

Gurdwara Dimalgarh Sahib (where 'Dumala', flag in turban, was started on 16-1-1704)



ਮਾਤਾ ਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਿਆ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ (ਅੰਗਰੇਮਪੁਰ)
Gurdwara Mata Jit Kaur Ji



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਤੀਰਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਨੁਰਪੁਰ ਬੇਦੀ)
Gurdwara Tirgarh Sahib (Nurpur Bedi)



ਬਸਾਲੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਿਆ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ
 (ਇਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ੧੫ ਤੋਂ ੩੦ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੭੦੦ ਤਕ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ)

Gurdwara at Basali

(where Guru Gobind Singh Sahib stayed from 15th to 30th October 1700)



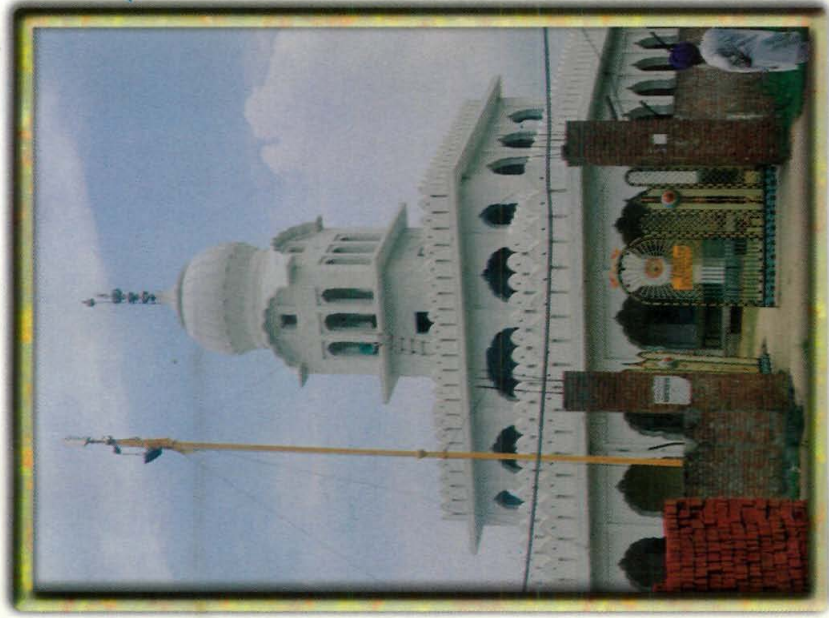
ਬਸਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਮਹਿਲ, ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਰਹੇ, ਤੋਂ ਬਸਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਾ
 Basali Gurdwara from the site of the palace of Raja of Basali



ਬਸਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਸਲਾਹੀ ਚੰਦ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਧ
Mausoleum of Raja of Basali



ਕਲਮੋਟ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ
(ਇਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ੨੦ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੭੦੦ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਆਏ ਸਨ)
Gurdwara at Kalmot
(Guru Sahib visited this Village on 20-10-1700)



ਬਸਰੂੜ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ
Gurdwara at Village Bairur



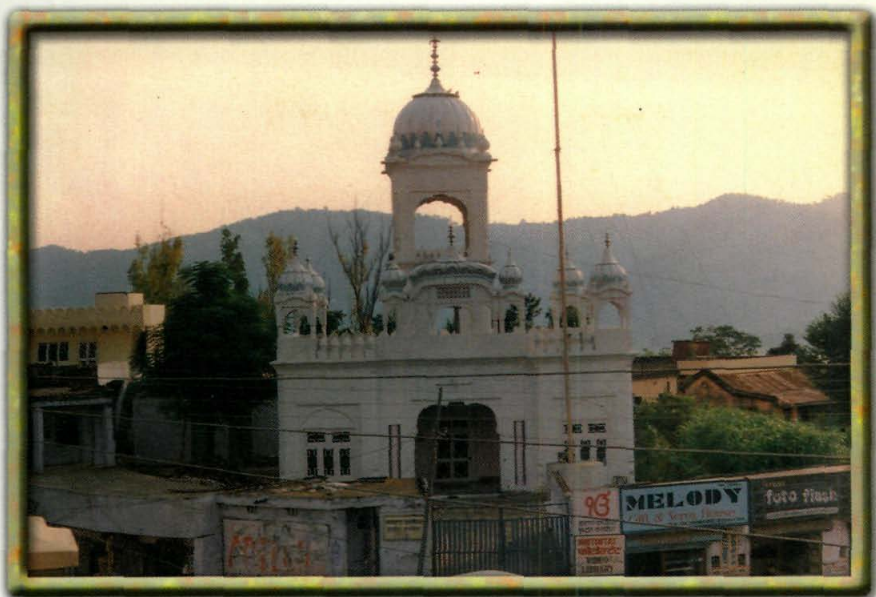
ਅਟਾਰੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ
Gurdwara Atari Sahib



ਨਿਰਮੋਹਗੜ੍ਹ ਦੀ ਪਹਾੜੀ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ
 (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਸ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ੪ ਤੋਂ ੧੪ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੭੦੦ ਤਕ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ)
 Gurdwara at the hill of Nirmohgarh



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੰਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਭਰਤਗੜ੍ਹ
 Gurdwara Manji Sahib, Bhartgarh



ਬਿਲਾਸਪੁਰ (ਹਿਮਾਚਲ) 'ਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਿਆ ਨਵਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ।
ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੀ ਬਣੀ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਗਰ ਝੀਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਾ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ।
Gurdwara at Bilaspur



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਿਭੌਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਨਵਾਂ ਨੰਗਲ
Gurdwara Bibhaur Sahib, Naya Nangal



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ, ਪਿੰਡ ਨੰਗਲ ਸਰਸਾ
 (ਇਥੇ ੬ ਦਿਸੰਬਰ ੧੭੦੫ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਤੇ ਨਿੱਕੇ ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦੇ ਵਿਛੜੇ ਸਨ)
 Gurdwara Parivar Vichhora



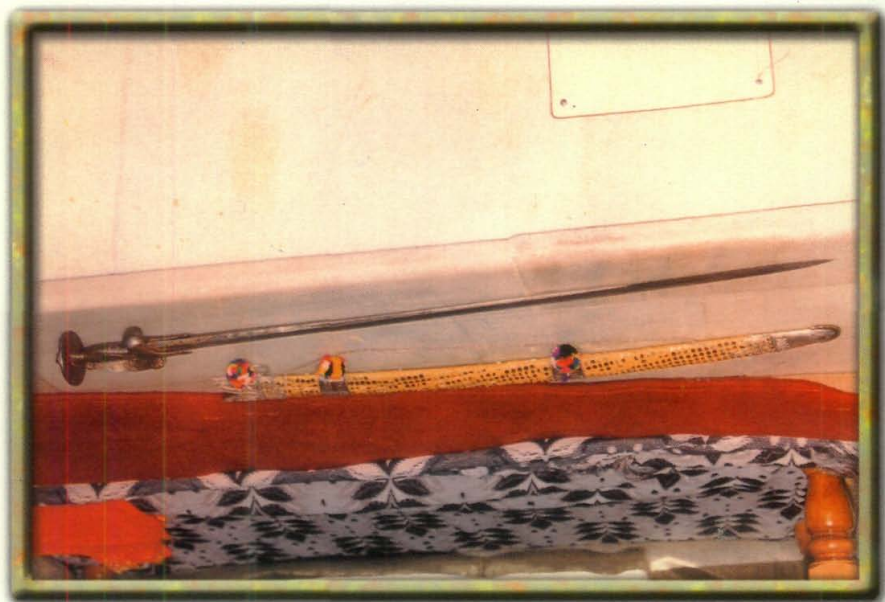
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਦਾਬਰਤ
 Gurdwara Sadabart



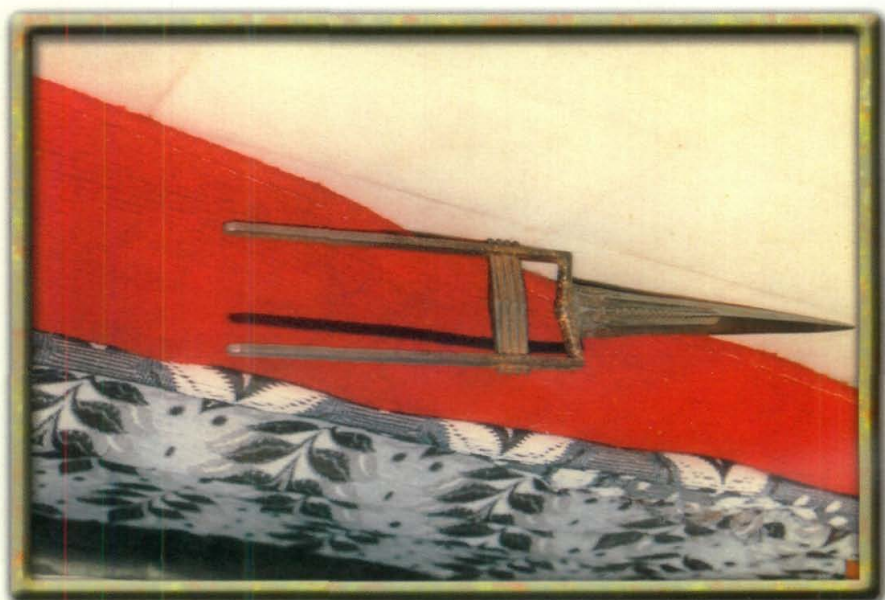
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਭੱਠਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਨੇੜੇ ਰੋਪੜ)
Gurdwara Bhattha Sahib (Village Kotla Nihang, near Ropar)



ਕੋਟਲਾ ਨਿਹੰਗ (ਨੇੜੇ ਰੋਪੜ) 'ਚ ਭਾਈ ਨਿਹੰਗ ਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਵੇਲੀ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਰ। ਇਥੇ ਛੇਵੀਂ ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਦਸਵੀਂ ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਤਕ, ਪੰਜ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਮਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਠਹਿਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ।
The ruins of the fortress of Bhai Nihang Khan and Village Kotla Nihang



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਭੱਠਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ,
ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਨਿਹੰਗ ਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ
Guru Gobind Singh Sahib's sword at Bhattha Sahib



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਭੱਠਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਈ ਕਟਾਰ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ
ਭਾਈ ਨਿਹੰਗ ਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ
Guru Sahib's Katar at Bhattha Sahib



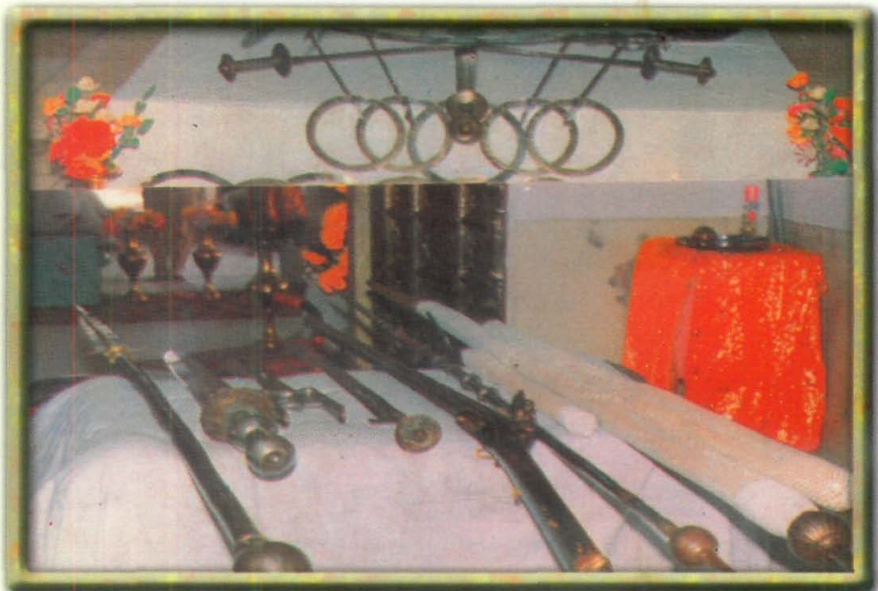
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Gurdwara built in the memory of Bhai Bachitar Singh at Village Kotla Nihang



ਬੜੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਬੀ ਮੁਮਤਾਜ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਿਆ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ
Gurdwara built in the memory of Bibi Mumtaj at Village Bari



ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ (ਇਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ)
Gurdwara at Guru Da Lahore



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੇਸਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਏ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ
Guru Sahib's relics at Kesgarh Sahib

Singh), Bhai Khushal Singh (son of Bhai Makhan Shah Lubana) embraced martyrdom.

Guru Sahib moved to Nirmohgarh

After loosing four successive battles and the death of Kesri Chand, the hill army returned to Bilaspur. The death of a royal leader like Kesri Chand was a great loss to the hill folk and a great personal loss to Ajmer Chand and his supporter hill rulers, feudal and other elite. They held a meeting at Bilaspur and discussed their plight. They finally agreed that they wouldn't be able to defeat the Sikhs in a battle. Parma Nand, a minister of Ajmer Chand, suggested a plan to expel Guru Sahib from Anandpur Sahib and eventually kill him. Every one liked his suggestion. In furtherance of this plan, they sent Parma Nand to Anandpur Sahib, on October 1, 1700. Parma Nand made a cow (which is sacred to Hindus) of wheat flour and placed it in a brass plate along with some flowers and a letter, and, placed it outside the gate of Anandgarh fort. The next morning, when a Sikh opened the gate of Anandgarh fort, he saw all this. He picked up the plate and took it to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib asked a Sikh to read the letter. It said: "Respectable Guru Sahib! We are ashamed for having attacked Anandpur Sahib. We are all very sorry for our misdeed. Our defeat and losses have put us to great shame. Every body laughs at us. This has made our life miserable. Because of this disgrace, we can not appear in public. We apologise for all our sins. We can not live without your help and grace. Please forgive us. It will be a great act of mercy on us if you could do something for us so that we may gain some respect among the people. We request you to vacate the town of Anandpur Sahib for a few days so that we may boast of our success. You may come back here after a few days. In return we promise that we shall always remain loyal to you. We swear by this cow that we shall never attack Anandpur Sahib in future. Please forgive us and help us. We know you are a very kind person. Please help us. We shall never forget your generosity"

When Guru Sahib heard the wording of the letter he smiled and said, "These stone (idol) worshiper hill rulers are not trustworthy people. They don't deserve mercy." At this, some Sikhs requested Guru Sahib to show mercy, as they might be

willing to wash their sins. Guru Sahib told the Sikhs, "I know their mind. They are ungrateful people. But, as per your wish I will give them a chance; but you will see how do they react to this act of mercy."

On October 4, 1700, Guru Sahib, along with hundreds of Sikhs, left Anandpur for village Nirmoh. It was a journey of about 10 kilometres. At village Nirmoh there was a big hill. Guru Sahib asked the Sikhs to pitch their tents at the top of the hill. This hill was safe from defence point of view because there was only one way to climb up the hill.

When Ajmer Chand came to know about the departure of Guru Sahib from Anandpur Sahib, he sent some soldiers to confirm it. Having confirmed, he made an announcement in Bilaspur that he had expelled Guru Sahib from Anandpur Sahib. This helped him gain his lost respect. But, as he was a man of satanic tendencies, he forgot that Guru Sahib had left Anandpur Sahib as an act of mercy. Parma Nand told him that Guru Sahib had stationed himself on a hill without any fort or other defence so it would be easy to attack him in this situation. Ajmer Chand and Pandit Parma Nand forgot that they had sworn by their "spiritual goddess mother cow" that they wouldn't attack Guru Sahib in future. Ajmer Chand ordered his army to be ready to attack Guru Sahib at Nirmoh village.

On October 8, 1700, Ajmer Chand led a big army to village Nirmoh and attacked Guru Sahib. When Guru Sahib saw the hill army he told the Sikhs that he had told them the truth about the hill rulers that they won't keep their vows. At this the Sikhs said, "Let these ungrateful people come near us we shall teach them a lesson." Within a short time the hill soldiers reached near the hill. The Sikhs, though much less in number, gave a befitting reply to the hill soldiers. The Sikhs repulsed the attack and killed a very large number of soldiers of the invading army. But they too lost some brave soldiers, including Bhai Sahib Singh *Diwan* (religious minister) son of Shaheed Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Mathura Singh son of Shaheed Bhai Dial Das, Bhai Surat Singh, Bhai Deva Singh, Bhai Anup Singh Dhaliwal and Bhai Sarup Singh Dhaliwal (grandsons of Duni Chand Dhaliwal).

Attack by Rustam Khan

This time Ajmer Chand had not expected a defeat. Now, he thought that it would need a long siege to defeat the Sikhs. So, he decided to use some other tactics. He sent his minister Parma Nand to the Governor of Sirhind requesting him to attack Guru Sahib. He sent some money as his contribution towards the expenses of the attack. He assured the Governor of Sirhind that Guru Sahib was stationed at a very insecure place with not many soldiers and a small quantity of arms and ammunition; hence in a much inferior military position. Ajmer Chand's proposals convinced the Governor of Sirhind and he agreed to attack Guru Sahib. He sent a large battalion under the command of Rustam Khan and his brother Nahar Khan to attack the Sikhs.

When Bhai Bachitar Singh and Chitar Singh (sons of Bhai Mani Singh) came to know about the movement of Rustam Khan towards Nirmohgarh (the place was called Nirmohgarh because it was used by the Sikhs as a *Garh* i.e. a small fort), they took a vow to punish Rustam Khan in an exemplary manner. Several other Sikh soldiers also expressed such a determination. On October 13, 1700, the army led by Khan brothers reached near Nirmoh village. They occupied a hill from where they could shoot arrows or make shelling with cannons at Nirmohgarh. They began their attack with a ball from their cannon. The ball hit Bhai Ram Singh Kashmiri, a personal attendant of Guru Sahib. He was killed at the spot. It meant that the cannon ball could have hit Guru Sahib too. Guru Sahib immediately shot an arrow and killed Rustam Khan, the chief of the invading army. Bhai Udey Singh also shot an arrow that killed Nahar Khan. Though both the brothers had been killed, still, the Pathan soldiers continued fighting against the Sikhs. The fighting continued till it was dark. In the evening the Moghul army beat a retreat. Though the Sikhs were victorious, yet they too suffered some losses including Bhai Ram Singh Kashmiri, Bhai Mohar Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh and Bhai Ram Singh.

The next day Ajmer Chand attacked again. This time he had a much bigger army. Guru Sahib divided the Sikhs in different units so that they could fight on different fronts. This led to heavy losses for the hill soldiers. By the evening, dozens of hill soldiers

had been killed. Two Sikhs, Bhai Jeeta Singh and Bhai Neta Singh also embraced martyrdom.

Another attack by Ajmer Chand and Guru Sahib moved to Basali

Basali village is at a distance of about 13-14 kilometres from Keeratpur as well as Nirmoh village. Basali, in those days, was a small State. Raja Salahai Chand, whose wife was the sister of Rani Champa (who had been one of the greatest devoted Sikhs of the history), ruled this State. [Salahi Chand's wife Heera Devi too was an admirer of Guru Sahib. Both the sisters were the daughters of the ruler of Mandi State. This family had been a part of the Sikh brotherhood since the time of Guru Nanak Sahib]. When he came to know that Ajmer Chand had taken a vow by the name of cow but still deceived Guru Sahib, he led a small army towards Nirmoh village. When he reached near Sarsa stream, he sent his minister to Nirmoh to ask Guru Sahib to leave the hill and accompany him to Basali. When Guru Sahib received Raja Salahai Chand's invitation, he gave his consent and asked the Sikhs to march towards Sarsa stream. When Guru Sahib and the Sikhs were moving towards Sarsa stream, the hill army again attacked them. The Sikhs went on fighting as well as advancing towards the direction of the stream. Bhai Udey Singh and his associates stopped the movement of the hill soldiers with their arrows. Within a short time Guru Sahib and most of the Sikhs crossed the stream. Rest of the Sikhs also crossed very soon. During this battle too a few Sikhs were killed. Those who embraced martyrdom included Bhai Kesra Singh and Bhai Gokal Singh. Guru Sahib reached Basali in the evening of October 15, 1700. Guru Sahib stayed at the palace of Raja Salahai Chand and the Sikhs pitched their tents in the foothill of the village. Guru Sahib spent fifteen days in this village. During this period Raja Salahai Chand negotiated a compromise between the Sikhs and Ajmer Chand.

During his stay at Basali, one day Guru Sahib planned a hunting tour of the hills. On October 20, the Sikhs, under the leadership of Bhai Udey Singh, left for hunting, under the beat of a drum. After a long journey they found a jackal and began chasing it. The jackal was seriously wounded but it continued

running. When it reached near the village of Kalmot, the residents of the village came out of their houses and began quarrelling with the Sikhs. During arguments, one of the residents shot at the Sikh party killing Bhai Jiwan Singh (son of Bhai Prema who was the brother of the grandfather of Bhai Mani Singh). When Bhai Jiwan Singh was killed the Sikhs too began fighting. During the skirmishes some residents of Kalmot were killed. Later, the residents of Kalmot apologised and the Sikhs went back to Basali.

Guru Sahib's return to Anandpur Sahib

During Guru Sahib's stay at Basali, Raja Salahi Chand mediated a compromise between the Sikhs and the ruler of Bilaspur. Though it was a temporary agreement but it brought peace for the time being. On October 30, 1700, Guru Sahib and the Sikhs returned to Anandpur Sahib.

Death of Mata Jeet Kaur

On December 5, 1700, Mata Jeet Kaur, the first wife of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, breathed her last. She had been ill for a very long time. She was cremated near the bank of rivulet Charan Ganga in the vicinity of Agampur village. The last prayers for Mata Jeet Kaur were held on December 21, 1700. At the time of her death, Sahibzada Fateh Singh was just two years old. Mata Gujari and Mata Sunder Kaur brought him up.

Celebration of Hola Mahalla

In 1702, Hola Mahalla was celebrated with great fervour because a very large number of Sikhs had reached Anandpur Sahib. On March 4, a procession was led from Anandgarh fort towards Holgarh fort, at Agamgarh. The Sikhs wearing dark grey turbans looked like a cluster of clouds moving towards the bank of Charan Ganga rivulet. [On their way some Sikhs showered shoe beating at the spot where Bhai Udey Singh had killed Kesari Chand, the maternal uncle of Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur, on September 1, 1700. (This action is still repeated by some Sikhs).

At Holgarh Fort, Guru Sahib held competitions of sword wielding, fencing, horse races, arrow shooting, guerrilla battles,

wrestling and other martial sports. Since 1683, observing Hola Mahalla had become a regular event of Anandpur Sahib. Guru Sahib, by beginning a healthy festival, had brought an end to a silly and non-sense festival as well as hooliganism. Nowadays, some ignorant Sikhs, under the influence of the Hindus, have begun using sprinkling dye on each other but this is against the teachings of Guru Sahib and totally against the purpose of Hola Mahalla.

Punishment to the terrorists of Bajrur

On March 15, 1701, the Sikhs of *Darap* area (area between the rivers Ravi and Chenab) visited Anandpur Sahib to make obeisance to Guru Sahib. On their way to Anandpur Sahib they were attacked and robbed by the terrorist residents of the village of Bajrur. Chittu and Mittu, the ringleaders of the Ranghar and Gujjar gangs, not only robbed the Sikhs, but also challenged them to seek the help of their Guru. Bajrur is at a distance of about 5 kilometres from Keeratpur Sahib. When these Sikhs appeared in the court of Guru Sahib they reported the whole incident. Guru Sahib told them that had all of them taken *Khandey Di Pahul* and been wearing *Kirpaans*, such a situation would not have arisen. He told them that every Sikh must have some weapons for his/her defence. After this Guru Sahib asked Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Bhai Udey Singh to lead a batch of 100 Sikhs and punish the terrorist robbers. On March 17, 1701, the Sikh soldiers went to Bajrur and punished the robbers and their collaborators. Chittu and Mittu were killed in the battle. After this, no one ever tried to attack the Sikhs visiting Anandpur Sahib.

Death of Raja Salahi Chand

On October 25, 1702, Raja Salahi Chand of Basali breathed his last. Guru Sahib visited Basali, on November 11, 1702, to participate in the last prayers for the Raja. Raja Salahi Chand was the person who had mediated a compromise between the Sikhs and Ajmer Chand. His death was sure to bring an end to this compromise.

Attack by Syed Begh and Alif Khan

In January 1703, Guru Sahib visited Lakhnaur, Ambala, Kurukashetra and some other villages and towns in this zone. On his way back to Anandpur Sahib, on January 13, 1703, Guru Sahib was attacked by a unit of the Moghul army led by Syed Begh and Alif Khan near Chamkaur. At that time Mata Gujari, Mata Sunder Kaur, Mata Sahib Kaur and about 125 Sikhs accompanied Guru Sahib. The Sikh soldiers, though small in number, fought bravely and compelled the attackers flee the battlefield.

Restoring of the wife of Devki Das Brahmin

In March 1703, Devki Das, a Brahmin, visited Anandpur Sahib and told Guru Sahib that Jabar Jang Khan, the chief of an area in *Doaba* (an area between rivers Beas and Satluj, had forcibly taken his wife. He requested Guru Sahib to help him in getting his wife back from the Khan. Guru Sahib at once ordered a band of 100 Sikhs, under the command of Bhai Udey Singh and Sahibzada Ajit Singh, to go to Bassi Kalan to get the Brahmin's wife restored to him.

The next day this band reached Bassi Kalan and sent a message to the Khan to return the wife of the Brahmin. But, the Khan, instead of returning the wife of the Brahmin, ordered his men to attack the Sikhs. Soon a fierce battle began. All the hired soldiers of Khan were either killed or captured. Jabar Jang Khan too was killed. The Sikhs escorted the wife of the Brahmin to her residence. When this news reached the people of the area, they praised Guru Sahib and the Sikhs. Most of the residents of the area, including this Brahmin and his wife, embraced Sikhism. On the other hand, jealous Ajmer Chand became more inimical to the Sikhs.

New Attack by Ajmer Chand

Raja Salahi Chand, who had mediated a compromise between the Sikhs and Ajmer Chand, had died in October 1702. After his death, Ajmer Chand began harassing the Sikhs again. His soldiers attacked some Sikhs between the area of Anandpur and Tarapur. Soon the ruler of Handur (his grandfather Himmat

Chand was one of the prisoners who had been got released by Guru Hargobind Sahib from Gwalior Fort prison in October 1619) too joined hands with Ajmer Chand. He too began quarrelling with the Sikhs living in or passing through the area between Keeratpur Sahib and Nalagarh. Several small skirmishes took place in the second half of 1703.

Beginning of the *Farra* (flag in turban)

On January 16, 1704, Ajmer Chand made a full-fledged attack on Anandpur Sahib. The Sikh soldiers fought bravely and repulsed this attack. During this attack Bhai Maan Singh Nishanchi, who had been carrying the blue Khalsa flag, was seriously wounded. He fell down and also came down the blue Khalsa flag. This battle continued throughout the day. In the evening the invading forces fled the battlefield.

After the battle, the Sikhs told Guru Sahib about the falling of the flagpole with the wounding of Bhai Maan Singh Nishanchi. At this, Guru Sahib announced that in future the Sikh nation would have such a flag, which will never fall or get lowered. Guru Sahib tore a stripe from his blue *Keski* (under turban) and hung it on the left side of his turban. He said that all the leaders of the army units will always have such a *Farra* (flag) in their turbans, hence the blue Khalsa flag shall always furl up high (in the turban) and never get lowered. Bhai Udey Singh, Bhai Aalam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh and Bhai Muhkam Singh, who were sitting by the side of Guru Sahib, also tore a stripe each from their blue *Keskis* and hung the same on the left side of their turban. Sahibzada Fateh Singh, who was just six years old at that time, too did the same. [This was the beginning of the Sikh *Farra* flag, which is sometimes attributed to Bhai Man Singh, as well as Sahibzada Fateh Singh. It is in fact Khalsa's blue national flag, which is a must for the leader of each and every *Jatha*. This custom has been forgotten by most of the Sikhs, only the Nihangs have preserved it. But, on the other hand, most of the Nihangs have not preserved any thing else of the Khalsa army]. *Farra flag was not the beginning of a new institution of Nihangs.*

Marriage of Sahibzada Ajit Singh

In October 1704, among several other visitors to Anandpur Sahib, there was also the family of Bhai Jetha Singh of Burhanpur. Bhai Jetha Singh, his wife and his daughter Tara Kaur (Tara Bai before initiation) spent a few days at Anandpur Sahib. One day when Sahibzada Ajit Singh was having a bath in the stream, Bibi Tara Kaur saw him and fell in love with him at the first sight. One day one of her friends told her mother about the feelings of Tara Kaur. Her mother hesitatingly talked to Mata Gujari and Mata Sunder Kaur (the mother of Sahibzada Ajit Singh) and told them about the feelings of the girl. Both mothers promised her that they would discuss the same with Guru Sahib. When Guru Sahib came to know about this, he immediately agreed and the marriage of Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Bibi Tara Kaur was solemnised on January 15, 1705.

[Bibi Tara Kaur gave birth to a son (Hatthi Singh) on December 9, 1705, at Agra, at the residence of Bhai Shardha Singh Gulati, with which she stayed for the time being along with Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sunder Kaur. Hatthi Singh died at a ripe age at Burhanpur. Some writers have mistakenly mentioned Hatthi Singh as the son of Ajit Singh Palit].

Guru Sahib evacuated Anandpur Sahib

After suffering heavy losses in the battle of January 16, 1704, Ajmer Chand remained silent for more than one year. In fact he had been planning for a long time siege of Anandpur Sahib followed by a major assault by the joint armies of the hill rulers and the Moghuls. To test the strength of the Sikhs, he made an attack on Anandpur Sahib in March 1705. The Sikhs repulsed this attack of March 12, 1705 too.

By this time, the Sikhs had received information that Ajmer Chand had planned a long-term siege of the area of Anandpur Sahib from all the sides. It would mean stopping the visit of the Sikhs to Anandpur Sahib as well as the blockade of entry of food, arms, fodder, messages and every thing. He wanted to cut Anandpur Sahib from the rest of the world. It meant a prolonged war. When Guru Sahib came to know about the joint plan of the hill rulers as well as the Moghul, he called a meeting of the

residents of the Greater Anandpur Sahib. This meeting was held on March 29, 1705. In this meeting Guru Sahib told the congregation that the time had come for a very prolonged battle, hence all the families must move to safer places. Only male folk could stay there. Within a few days most of the families moved out of Anandpur Sahib. Guru Sahib asked Mata Gujari, Mata Sunder Kaur, Mata Sahib Kaur and Bibi Tara Kaur also to leave Anandpur Sahib. All of them, except Mata Gujari, agreed to leave Anandpur Sahib. Bhai Jetha Singh (father of Bibi Tara Kaur) escorted Mata Sunder Kaur, Mata Sahib Kaur and Bibi Tara Kaur out of Anandpur Sahib. Bibi Tara Kaur was pregnant at that time. They began their journey for Burhanpur. On their way they spent some days at Lakhnaur and Shahjahanpur (Delhi) and then went to Agra where Tara Kaur gave birth to a son. Later, they moved to Burhanpur (where Guru Sahib met them in May 1708).

After the departure of the families, Guru Sahib saw that there were still some female folk in the city. Besides Mata Gujari, Bibi Bhikkhan (wife of Bhai Aalam Singh Nachanna) who was the in charge of the *Langar*, one attendant of Mata Gujari and the wife of Bhai Rai Singh Multani (brother of Bhai Mani Singh) were still living at Anandpur Sahib. Guru Sahib told Bhai Rai Singh that he too should leave Anandpur Sahib with his family as the time had come for final battle. Bhai Rai Singh obliged Guru Sahib and moved to Kaahna-Kaachha (in *Maajha* area). Now only male folk and three ladies were left in the town.

Siege of Anandpur Sahib

As expected, Ajmer Chand and some other hill rulers despatched their soldiers to put a siege to Anandpur Sahib. On May 3, 1705, Anandpur Sahib was fully cut from the rest of the world. Not a single person could enter or leave Anandpur Sahib, nor any food, fodder or even message was allowed to enter Anandpur Sahib. Though there was sufficient food in the store of the *Langar* but it could not have lasted for more than a couple of months. Some Sikhs thought that the state of siege wouldn't continue for a very long period but their guesses proved wrong. The siege continued for more than 6 months. The Sikhs, now, began taking a small quantity of food every day and even that was

not expected to last for several weeks. Due to the shortage of fodder, *Parsadi* elephant (presented by the ruler of Tripura) too died of hunger. The Sikhs had to kill several horses for eating.

Now, some Sikhs began suggesting Guru Sahib to break the siege of Anandpur Sahib and move to some safer place. Guru Sahib wanted them to wait for some more time. According to one source Guru Sahib had been in communication with Aurangzeb, the Moghul emperor, and was waiting for his letter. (Some other sources don't believe that there was any correspondence between Guru Sahib and Aurangzeb. But, the mention of a letter from Aurangzeb, in *Zafarnamah*, by Guru Sahib, confirms that there must have been some correspondence). During this period, some Sikhs approached Mata Gujari also to request her to ask Guru Sahib to leave Anandpur Sahib.

On the other hand, the anti-Sikh camp had its own planning. The siege of Anandpur Sahib had continued for about 7 months and they had not been able to expel Guru Sahib from Anandpur Sahib. Now they planned for the final assault. Ajmer Chand and the Governor of Sirhind held a meeting and planned a joint attack. Both the armies were to join each other near Keeratpur.

On December 5, 1705, Ajmer Chand's army reached Keeratpur Sahib and began waiting for the army of the Governor of Sirhind, which was to join them on December 6. Guru Sahib too had received this information. A day earlier, Guru Sahib had also received a letter from Aurangzeb, asking him (Guru Sahib) to leave Anandpur Sahib and move to Kaangar village where a meeting between the emperor and Guru Sahib would be arranged. This letter had reached Guru Sahib pasted in a volume of Quran. On December 5, almost all the Sikhs went to Guru Sahib and requested him to move Anandpur Sahib. Guru Sahib agreed and it was decided that all the Sikhs would leave together. The departure was to begin at midnight of December 5 and 6. Guru Sahib divided the Sikhs into different batches: one batch was to be headed by Bhai Bachitar Singh, the second by Bhai Udey Singh, the third by Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the fourth by Bhai Jiwan Singh. One batch was to comprise of Mata Gujari, Sahibzadas and ninety Sikhs. The last batch was to comprise of Guru Sahib and thirty-seven of the forty Sikhs who had taken a vow to remain on the side of Guru Sahib. These forty Sikhs included: (*Punj*

Piaray:) Daya Singh, Muhkam Singh, Sahib Singh, Himmat Singh, and Dharam Singh), (*Punj Muktey*:) Deva Singh, Ram Singh, Tahil Singh, Ishar Singh, Fateh Singh, (five sons of Bhai Mani Singh:) Ajab Singh, Ajaib Singh, Anik Singh, Bachitar Singh, Udey Singh, (two brothers of Bhai Mani Singh:) Dan Singh, Man Singh, (four members of Bhai Aalam Singh Nachanna family:) Aalam Singh, his sons Amolak Singh and Mohar Singh and his brother Vir Singh, (two in charges of the stables:) Madan Singh, Kaattha Singh,(two Sikhs of Delhi:) Jiwan Singh, Nanu Singh Dilwali, Mukand Singh Chhibber, Sanmukh Singh Dutt, Daya Singh Purohit, Khazan Singh, Lal Singh Pashauria, Sukkha Singh, Dhanna Singh poet, Kesra Singh, Hukam Singh, Jawahar Singh, Kirat Singh, Sham Singh, Anand Singh, Sant Singh Bangeshari, Sangat Singh Arora.

On the midnight of December 5 and 6, Guru Sahib visited Gurdwara Sis Ganj for the last time and asked Bhai Gurbakhsh Rai to take care of the shrines and the town till the return of the Sikhs. After this Guru Sahib reached Anandgarh fort. The first batch to leave comprised of Mata Gujari, two younger Sahibzadas and 90 Sikhs. It was followed by the batch comprising of Guru Sahib and 37 Sikhs. The next to leave was the batch led by Sahibzada Ajit Singh. The last to leave were the batches led by Bhai Bachitar Singh and Bhai Udey Singh.

All these batches went towards Keeratpur Sahib through fields, dense bushes and trees. On that day it was pitch dark and the movement of the Sikhs could not be known. They crossed Keeratpur Sahib much earlier than the sunrise. After the sunrise the movement of the Sikhs became known and this information reached the hill army too. From Keeratpur Sahib the Sikhs went towards rivulet Sarsa. They were to cross the rivulet at village Nangal Gujran (now known as Nangal Sarsa). When the Sikhs reached near village Jhakkhian (about 6-7 km from Keeratpur Sahib), they came to know that the hill army had come to know about them and were chasing them with a very high speed. At this Guru Sahib asked the Sikhs to stop the advance of the hill army. Guru Sahib sent an advance party towards Ropar also. Bhai Bachitar Singh's band was to engage the Sirhind army and stop its advance. So his *Jatha* (batch) was the first to cross the rivulet Sarsa. After crossing the river this batch left for Ropar via

Malikpur Ranghran (now known as Malikpur only). Guru Sahib asked Bhai Jiwan Singh to take positions outside the village of Jhakkhian and Bhai Udey Singh at Shahi Tibbi.

Now, Mata Gujari, two Sahibzadas and their two attendants crossed the rivulet. Guru Sahib asked them to move towards Chamkaur. The next to cross the rivulet was Guru Sahib and the 37 Sikhs. After crossing the rivulet Guru Sahib asked most of the 37 Sikhs to go to Chamkaur and wait for him there. He himself moved towards Kotla Nihang to see Bhai Nihang Khan. Within a short time the group led by Sahibzada Ajit Singh too reached village Jhakkhian. Bhai Jiwan Singh asked him to cross the rivulet and go towards Kotla Nihang. Most of the Sikhs of his batch stopped there to fight against the hill army.

Soon Guru Sahib, Mata Gujari, four Sahibzadas and about 50 Sikhs were out of sight. By that time the hill army had reached there. An unequal fight between a couple of hundred of the Sikhs and thousands of the hill soldiers began. The first to embrace martyrdom was Bhai Jiwan Singh. He was shot in his forehead. He died in the fields of village Jhakkhian. One hundred Sikhs accompanying Bhai Jiwan Singh too laid their life fighting against the hill armies. Along with these 100 Sikhs, Bibi Bhikkhan, the wife of Bhai Aalam Singh Nachanna, also embraced martyrdom. On the second front, at Shahi Tibbi, Bhai Udey Singh and his companions continued fighting against the hill armies. This fighting continued for several hours. Bhai Udey Singh and his companions killed a very large number of hill soldiers and finally fell martyrs themselves. As Bhai Udey Singh was wearing the aigrette of Guru Sahib, the hill soldiers thought that they had killed Guru Sahib. They severed the head of Bhai Udey Singh and sent it to the Governor of Sirhind in order to boast of their success and hope for a prize. But, they were shocked to know that they had been fooled by the aigrette and Guru Sahib had escaped safe and sound.

Guru Sahib reached Kotla Nihang along with a few Sikhs. Bhai Nihang Khan served them with food. Guru Sahib was tired after a walk of about 50 kilometres, so he wanted to take some rest. He wanted to move towards Chamkaur in the dark of the night. After some time Sahibzada Ajit Singh and a couple of his companions too reached the fort of Bhai Nihang Khan. They had

brought with them Bhai Bachitar Singh who had been wounded in battle at village Malikpur Ranghran. The family of Bhai Nihang Khan tried to bandage the wound of Bhai Bachitar Singh but he was so seriously wounded that it seemed almost impossible to save his life. But, still, no body wanted to leave the hope; hence they continued trying to treat him.

By the evening all the Sikhs became ready to move. No body wanted to remain there because it was likely that the Sirhind army would attack the fort of Bhai Nihang Khan too. The Sikhs began leaving Bhai Nihang Khan's house one by one. Guru Sahib was the last to move. Bhai Aalam Khan, the son of Bhai Nihang Khan, escorted him. They had to leave Bhai Bachitar Singh behind because it was not possible to carry him. (Later, Bhai Bachitar Singh died there and was cremated in the village by Bhai Gursa Singh Gahunia and Bhai Bagga Singh).

Guru Sahib reached Chamkaur in the morning of December 7 and took shelter in the fortress of Bhai Budhi Chand Rawat. Here too the Moghul army attacked them and the Sikhs had to fight the most unequal battle of the Sikh history, perhaps of the history of the world. In this battle two elder Sahibzadas and forty Sikhs embraced martyrdom while fighting against thousands of the soldiers of the Moghul army. Guru Sahib and five Sikhs (Daya Singh, Dharm Singh, Daya Singh Purohit, Ram Singh and Man Singh) escaped from the fortress in the dark of the night between December 7 and 8. Guru Sahib left the fortress with the help of Bhai Nabi Khan and Bhai Ghani Khan (the cousins of Bhai Nihang Khan) and went to Machhiwara. After spending two nights at Machhiwara Guru Sahib left for village Dina in blue dress as *Uchch Da Pir* (a holy man from Uchch). He reached Dina via Ajner, Doraha and Aalamgir. He spent a couple of days at Dina, where he wrote *Zafarnamah*, and then moved towards Talwandi Sabo.

Anandpur Sahib after 1705

After exodus of the Sikhs from Anandpur Sahib, the hill army ransacked the town. The soldiers looted each and everything from the town. They also demolished the forts. The hill army did not occupy the town, as they were always afraid of the return of

the Sikhs. So, instead of living there, they demolished most of the buildings of Chakk Nanaki and Anandpur Sahib. Ajmer Chand had learnt that Guru Sahib was alive and the Sikhs could organise themselves and return to the town any time so he did not want to take risk for himself. [Guru Sahib, in one of his letter, dated October 15, 1707, had asked the Sikhs to visit him (Guru Sahib) after his return to Anandpur Sahib]. So, between December 1705 and October 1707, Anandpur Sahib and Keeratpur Sahib remained fully deserted. Even Sodhi family (the descendants of Baba Suraj Mall) left Keeratpur and moved to Nahan.

Guru Sahib breathed his last on October 7, 1708. Now Ajmer Chand became fearless as the hopes of the Sikhs returning to Anandpur Sahib were no more there. He decided to take control of the towns of Anandpur Sahib and Keeratpur Sahib.

On the other hand, Guru Sahib before his death, had already assigned the command of the Sikh army to Baba Banda Singh who had left for the Sikh Homeland on October 5, 1708. Banda Singh Bahadur reached Punjab in a few days. He sent letters to all the Sikhs and began organising an army. Within a year, he occupied Samana (on November 26, 1709). Sadhaura fell to him on December 5, 1709 and by 14th of May 1710, he had occupied most of the eastern zone of the Sikh Homeland including the capital of Sirhind province. In October 1710, Bahadur Shah, the Moghul emperor, led a mammoth army to reoccupy the liberated territory. Baba Banda Singh, at first, tried to fight against the Moghul army but he, soon, realised that Bahadur Shah had a very big army as well as arms and sources, hence it won't be wise to waste energy, resources and men. So, he moved towards the hills. He wanted to punish Ajmer Chand also for compelling Guru Sahib to leave Anandpur Sahib.

On December 28, 1710, Baba Banda Singh reached the outskirts of Bilaspur. Ajmer Chand had already received information about the advance of the Sikh army towards Bilaspur, so he had asked his army to stop them outside the city. The hill army took positions on the bank of the Barsana rivulet. Here, a fierce battle was fought between both the armies. A very large number of hill soldiers were killed. On the Sikh side Bhai Keso Singh, Bhai Bhag Singh a few others too lost their lives.

Having lost a large number of soldiers, Ajmer Chand

realised that the strength of Baba Banda Singh's army was much more than his soldiers, so he surrendered and agreed to pay tribute. *It is not understandable as to why Baba Banda Singh forgave Ajmer Chand who was the major perpetrator of atrocities on the Sikhs and was responsible for compelling Guru Sahib to evacuate Anandpur Sahib. In comparison to Wazir Khan of Sirhind, Ajmer Chand was no less scoundrel.*

After the victory of Baba Banda Singh, some Sikhs returned to Keeratpur. But these two cities could not be inhabited because Baba Banda Singh was captured in December 1715 and executed on June 9, 1716. After Banda Singh's martyrdom Ajmer Chand again became aggressive towards the Sikhs. As a result the Sikhs left Keeratpur Sahib again. After a couple of years, the Sodhi family of Keeratpur Sahib (Gulab Singh and Sham Singh) approached Ajmer Chand and sought his permission to live at Keeratpur Sahib and Anandpur Sahib. Ajmer Chand agreed to sell one acre of land at the market price. Although Guru Sahib had already paid the price for the whole of Keeratpur Sahib and the whole of the Greater Anandpur Sahib and these villages belonged to the Sikhs, Ajmer Chand still wanted them to "buy" land from him. Sodhi family paid the price of the land and became the subjects of Ajmer Chand.

Sodhi Gulab Singh began to live at Anandpur Sahib. He even declared himself as a Guru and began collecting offerings from the Sikhs. Bhai Gurbakhsh Das, whom Guru Sahib had appointed as caretaker of the shrines, told Gulab Singh not to do so as Guru Sahib had installed Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru-Eternal of the Sikhs. But, Gulab Singh, instead of listening to Bhai Gurbakhsh Das, abused him and even beat him. After this incident Bhai Gurbakhsh Das left the town and moved to Nakkian village. Soon after the departure of Bhai Gurbakhsh Das all the four sons of Gulab Singh died one by one and he himself could not survive for a very long time. The people believed that all that was a punishment to Gulab Singh for calling himself a Guru. After the death of Gulab Singh, his brother Sham Singh continued receiving gifts from the Sikhs but he did not present himself as a Guru. (His direct descendants still live there).

In the beginning, Sodhi family was in the possession of Guru De Mahal, Bhora Sahib, Damdama Sahib, Sis Ganj and Akal

Bunga (in the villages of Chakk Nananki and Sahota) but the rest of the land of Greater Anandpur was in the possession of Ajmer Chand. Later, Ajmer Chand distributed the rest of the land of Greater Anandpur to Behrok Rajput families of the nearby villages. Eventually, the Behrok Rajputs also embraced Sikhism. After embracing Sikhism, the Behroks gifted some of the land to the Sodhis. (Even today the Behroks possess a lot of land of the town. The *Nambardar* of Chakk Nanaki, Sirdar Hardial Singh, also belongs to a Behrok family).

During the rule of the Misls, a few families moved to Keeratpur Sahib and Anandpur Sahib. When Moghul began perpetrating atrocities on the Sikhs and chased them even to this zone, they moved towards Nahan and Mandi States. The Sikhs still continued visiting Anandpur Sahib to celebrate Hola Mahalla. In 1753, when the Sikhs were celebrating Hola Mahalla at Anandpur Sahib, Adina Begh, the chief of Jalandhar area, attacked them on March 5, 1753. As the families had been accompanying them, several of the Sikhs were killed.

During the second half of the eighteenth century the Sikhs had been playing hide and seek with the Moghul rulers, so it was not possible for the Sikhs to live at Anandpur Sahib. Even in this situation, two Sikhs, named Bhai Sher Singh and Baba Jalmast Singh, chose to live here forever. Whenever the Moghuls attacked, they moved towards the hills; otherwise they continued to take care of the Sikh shrines. They did not build big buildings nor did they decorate the buildings for fear of attacks by the Moghuls. According to one source Baba Sher Singh was killed during one of the attacks by the Moghul army (perhaps in 1753).

After Baba Sher Singh and Baba Jalmast Singh, Baba Gurbakhsh Singh (of Leel village) moved to Anandpur Sahib. He served the shrines for more than a decade. In 1764, he went to Amritsar to make obeisance there. On December 1, 1764, when he was present at Akal Takht Sahib along with 30 companions, Ahmed Shah Durrani attacked the Darbar Sahib complex. These 31 Sikhs, instead of surrendering or trying to flee, fought against the Afghan army. Though these 31 Sikhs embraced martyrdom but they also killed several of the 30000 Afghan soldiers.

After Baba Gurbakhsh Singh's martyrdom, Bhai Sukkha Singh became the caretaker of the shrines of Anandpur Sahib. It

is believed that he was the same person who wrote *Gurbilas Patsahi Dasvin* during his stay at Anandpur Sahib.

In 1790, Baba Baghel Singh, of Karosinghia Misl, who had built the shrines at Delhi, visited Anandpur Sahib. He built buildings of most of the shrines of Anandpur Sahib also. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Raja Karam Singh, the ruler of Patiala State and his son Narinder Singh spent a lot of money for the shrines of Anandpur Sahib. They built a *Saran* (hostel for the visitors) also. It was known as *Raja Da Bunga*.

Another attack on Anandpur Sahib

In 1812, Mahan Chand, grandson of Ajmer Chand, asked Bhai Surjan Singh Sodhi (son of Nahar Singh and grandson of Sham Singh Sodhi) to pay tax to him. When the Sikhs refused to pay any tax, Mahan Chand threatened to attack and occupy the town again. During those days, Hukma Singh Chimni, a General of the army of (Maharaja) Ranjit Singh, was camping in a nearby area. When he came to know about the attack by Mahan Chand, he led his army towards Anandpur Sahib. By that time the hill army had also reached near Anandpur Sahib. A battle took place between both the armies. The hill army suffered heavy losses. After loosing hundreds of soldiers, Mahan Chand surrendered. So, instead of getting tax, the hill rulers agreed to pay a huge amount as penalty.

In 1814, when (Maharaja) Ranjit Singh began showing special favours to the Dogras, the Brahmins and the Bhaiyyas, Akali Phula Singh protested against it. When Ranjit Singh did not bother for him, he left Amritsar and moved to Anandpur Sahib, on August 28, 1814. On September 29, 1814, Raja Partap Singh of Jind State (which was under British protectorate), reached Anandpur Sahib and took asylum there. The British sought the help of (Maharaja) Ranjit Singh, Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha and the ruler of Malerkotla. A joint army of Lahore, Nabha and Malerkotla was sent to Anandpur Sahib to arrest him (and Akali Phula Singh). When this joint army reached near Anandpur Sahib it (the Sikh army) was told that it was to arrest Akali Phula Singh and Raja Partap Singh, the Sikh soldiers refused to move into Anandpur Sahib. Later, Sahib Singh Bedi mediated a compromise

between Ranjit Singh and Akali Phula Singh and Ranjit Singh mediated negotiations between the British and Raja Partap Singh. After some time Akali Phula Singh returned to Amritsar.

After 1815, Bhai Karam Singh, Baba Kharak Singh, Bhai Budh Singh, Bhai Puran Singh and Bhai Amar Singh became the caretakers of the shrines of Anandpur Sahib served for the rest of the century. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Baba Sampuran Singh became the caretaker of Kesgarh Sahib. He was a learned person. He had a good knowledge of medicine as well. He served the residents of the area for a very long time. Bhai Amar Singh succeeded him. Bhai Amar Singh died in 1948. During this period Bhai Bakhshish too served as the chief Granthi of Kesgarh Sahib. He was one of the members of the first Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

After 1947

After 1947, Anandpur Sahib became a centre for the meetings, conferences and religious training camps. Shiromani Akali Dal, the Sikh Students' Federation and the other organisations held several religious training camps at Anandpur Sahib.

Punjabi Suba Morcha

In 1955 and again 1960-61, Shiromani Akali Dal launched an agitation for the creation of a Punjabi speaking. Though both these agitations ended without any achievement, the Sikhs still continued their struggle. In February 1966, Shiromani Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh group) had passed a resolution that if Punjabi Suba was not created by March 7, 1966, the Sikhs shall erase the boards written in Hindi language and Devnagri script in the Punjabi speaking region. As expected, the government of India did not bother and the Sikhs began their action of erasing the Hindi boards and plates. The first action was to erase the Hindi plates of Anandpur Sahib railway station on March 8, 1966.

Anandpur Sahib Resolution

Anandpur Sahib is also known for another historical event. Shiromani Akali Dal, the foremost Sikh organisation, passed its

new policy programme and manifesto, here, on October 16-17, 1973. This manifesto is known as "*Anandpur Sahib Da Mata*" (the resolution of Anandpur Sahib). According to this resolution, "Akali Dal will endeavour to carve out a State (*Desh kaal gharhna*) where the Sikhs shall have all decision making powers (*Khalsaji de boal baley*)." It meant "a sovereign Sikh State". This resolution became a phobia with all the anti-Sikh forces of India. Later, one group of the Akalis "modified" this resolution by changing it into 12 demands. This group also defined *Khalsaji de boal baley* as "pre eminence of the Khalsa" and *Desh kaal gharhna* as "to create a congenial environment". The other groups however called it creation of a separate Sikh State.

Hoisting of Khalistan Flag

On March 21, 1981, some Sikh organisations held a Khalistan conference at Anandpur Sahib. In this conference a "Khalistan Flag" was hoisted by Dr. Rajinder Kaur (daughter of Master Tara Singh).

Killing of 15 innocent Sikhs by the Barnala Government:

In March 1986, when the movement for the freedom of "Khalistan" was in full swing, Surjit Barnala, the then chief minister of the Punjab, ordered the arrest of Bhai Muhkam Singh of Bhindran-Mehta Jatha. The militants asked Barnala to release him. He did not oblige the militants. At this the militants challenged him that if Muhkam Singh was not released by March 25, Barnala won't be allowed to make a speech at Anandpur Sahib. Barnala refused to bother for the militants' ultimatum. As a result, on March 25, when Barnala stood up to make a speech in the conference, at Anandpur Sahib, the Sikh youth began moving to the venue of the conference. The Sikhs disturbed Barnala's speech by raising slogans against him. At this, Barnala asked the police to start firing. 15 Sikhs were killed in this firing. It was the first killing of the Sikhs at Anandpur Sahib since 1753.

300th Anniversary of Khalsa

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.), Shiromani Akali Dal and the other Sikh organisations decided to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the revelation of Khalsa from April 1998 to April 1999, at Anandpur Sahib. Several grand programmes were chalked out for this purpose. The first important function was held on November 22, 1998. But, within a few days Badal faction of the Akali Dal began exploiting a statement made by Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra (for which he apologised several times), which led to division in the Akali Dal. It led to exist of Jathedar Tohra as the president of the S.G.P.C. (and formation of a new Akali Dal by him later on). All this spoiled the charm of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the revelation of Khalsa. Both factions held separate conferences. The conference of Badal had much less number of the audience but more of pomp and show where as Tohra supporters attracted huge public but it became more of anti-Badal and pro-Ranjit Singh conference than that of a religious function.

More than one third of the total Sikh population visited Anandpur Sahib

Though the Akalis spoiled the function due to their ego and infighting but the Sikhs did respond to the call of Anandpur Sahib. According to an estimate more than 8 million (80 lakh) Sikhs visited Anandpur Sahib between April 8 and 14, 1999. The city looked like an ocean of turbans. Never had the world seen such a grand gathering of the visitors in such a short duration and possibly it shall remain a world record.

Hola Mahalla of Anandpur Sahib

Hola Mahalla of Anandpur Sahib is one of the most prominent fairs of the Punjab. It has a special significance for the Sikhs. Though, nowadays, it is being observed as a fair but its origin was much different and unique one. Some part of its original celebration is still observed though much has been changed and a lot new has been added. Hola Mahalla is held on the first of *Chetar Sudi* (February-March) every year. It was first held on March 4, 1683.

How began the Hola Mahalla

In the last week of *Phaggan* month of the *Bikrami calendar* (February-March) every year, the Hindus used to celebrate their Holi festival. During the celebration of this festival, the Hindus sprinkle dye on their friends and relatives. During the Hindu Holi festival week of 1683 (February 24 to March 3), some Sikhs visited Chakk Nanaki. On their way they had joined their Hindu friends in sprinkling dye on each other and had spoiled their clothes. When Guru Sahib saw them, he told them to stop participating in such a silly custom. It is nothing but nonsense to spoil the clothes of each other just for fun. Moreover, several incidents of hooliganism, teasing and even riots had also taken place during these celebrations. Guru Sahib told them that they (Sikhs) should not celebrate the festivals of the other religions. Guru Sahib asked them that they could enjoy fun in other manner too. To add to Sikhs' entertainment, Guru Sahib introduced a new festival and named it Hola Mahalla. The first Hola Mahalla was held on March 4, 1683. On this day Guru Sahib held wrestling competitions, horse races, fence competitions, war manoeuvring games and other martial activities. It not only brought an end to

spoiling of clothes and untoward happenings but also nurtured the spirit of martial and spiritual moods.

Later, Guru Sahib made more additions to the Hola Mahalla. He began holding poetical symposia and other artistic competitions as well. Bhai Nand Lal, Sainapati, Amrit Rai Lahori, Bhai Pheru and several other prominent poets of the day used to participate in these poetical symposia. Even Guru Sahib himself used to recite his own compositions. Thus, the Sikh Hola Mahalla, during the time of Guru Sahib, was a combination of entertainment, martial games and sports, artistic activities etc. But, there was no question of sprinkling dye on each other or spoiling the clothes of one another.

Guru Sahib spent more than three years at Paonta Sahib (April 1685 to October 1688). During this period Hola Mahalla was held at Paonta Sahib. Guru Sahib returned to Anandpur Sahib in November 1688. So, from 1689, Hola Mahalla celebrations were resumed again. Guru Sahib left Anandpur Sahib on the night of December 5 and 6, 1705. Hence no Hola Mahalla was held at Anandpur Sahib for the next several decades. Anandpur became a centre of the Sikhs again in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Though the population of Anandpur Sahib, during the nineteenth century, remained around five thousand only but a large number of people from the adjoining areas used to visit the City for the Hola Mahalla celebrations.

In the nineteenth century, the fair of Anandpur Sahib was considered as one of the major fairs of the Punjab. According a report of 1866: "The biggest fair of this area is held at Anandpur Sahib (Makhowal) on Hola Mahalla day. This fair is observed for two days and on the second day, in the afternoon, the priests of different Gurdwaras come out with their *Nishan Sahibs* (the Sikh flags) and proceed towards Charan Ganga ground. When all the flags reach this complex, it gives the look of a magnificent show. The priests and the Sikh *Jathas* (bands) go round with their flags. They (priests) receive offerings from the people and bless them. The flag of Anandgarh is of blue colour and it is carried by the Nihangs who wear black dresses and tie angular turbans with quoits on it. They ride their horses and move around here and there and raise the *Jaikaaras* (war cries) of *Akal ! Akal !! Akal !!!* They also make a show of artificial battles by signs and signals

as if they are defending their national flag from the army of an enemy. Some of the *Jathas* sing songs in the praise of Guru Sahib at a high pitch. Sodhi leaders come out of their houses and sit on the elephants and horses. The people make obeisance to them. They receive offerings and gifts from the people. Normally, about 3000 Sikhs attend this fair. In the evening all the *Jathas* return to their Gurdwaras in such a style as if they have won some battle. After the sunset, the people begin returning to their villages and most of the crowds begin diminishing.

This fair is considered of political importance because several Nihangs attend this fair and they are known for their enthusiasm and valour. In 1864, a Nihang killed a Christian missionary from Ludhiana because he was preaching Christianity in front of Gurdwara Kesgarh Sahib. This Christian missionary had also used abusive language for Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. Since then, the police, a magistrate and other officers remain present during the whole of the fair. During these days Hindus too observe their festival of Holi. They sing vulgar songs and there is always a possibility of riots."

The above report has been taken from a detailed account of the cultural life of the district, in the year 1866 by an Englishman. In 1925, the shrines of Anandpur Sahib and Keertpur Sahib came under the management of the S.G.P.C. With this came a major change in the administration of the shrines as well as the celebration of the Hola Mahalla. According to a report of 1945:

"This fair is held for about one week. For the first three days people celebrate it at Keeratpur Sahib and for the next three days at Anandpur Sahib. In fact, the total activity of the celebrations, around this festival last for about two weeks. The Sikh *Jathas* can be seen moving between Keeratpur Sahib and Anandpur Sahib and even Guru Da Lahore. It looks like an ocean of turbans and the Sikh *Jathas* moving from one place to another look like waves of the sea.

In the last three days of the fair, religious congregations and political conferences are held. The S.G.P.C., Shiromani Akali Dal, Doaba Diwan, Malwa Diwan, Myen Doaba Diwan and other organisations hold their separate conferences and sing hymns. The ballad singers sing the ballads of chivalry of the Sikh martyrs and please the audience with their art. Besides this, Congress,

Communists, Socialists and other parties too hold their conferences on the last day. Special bazaars are held from Shaheedi Bagh to Anandgarh, from Anandgarh to Kesgarh and from Kesgarh to Sis Ganj. There is a great hustle and bustle of the visitors to the town. Kesgarh is the most busy shrine as every one wishes to make obeisance there.

Now, there are no vulgar songs or mischief. It is all due to good management by Akalis. Sports competitions are held in the ground of the Khalsa High School for three days and the final matches are held on the fourth day. At about 11 A.M., on the final day, people begin occupying seats on both sides of the Charan Ganga ground. At about four in the evening, the Nihangs of Mitthasar come out with their drums and flags. Campfire is held on one side of the ground. After this a formal procession, under the management of then S.G.P.C., leaves Anandgarh for Holgarh via Kesgarh and Damdama Sahib. They carry five blue flags. A large number of horse riding Sikhs join the procession. The Sikhs blow trumpets and some *Jathas* have their own music bands too. It seems as if an army is moving towards some front. It is followed by hundreds of the Sikhs on foot. All of them have blue or dark grey turbans. Almost every one carries a big sword, a spear, a big stick, an axe or some other weapon. After crossing Khalsa High School this procession reaches the site of campfire. Some Sikhs strike their sticks on fire.

After this the Sikhs proceed to the ground of Charan Ganga. By this time the Nihangs also reach there. They are usually under the influence of hemp (it is contrary to Guru Sahib's teachings). Up to 7 P.M. horse riding, polo, tent pegging, sword wielding, fencing competitions and exhibitions are held here. Finally, all the Sikhs begin returning to their places. The music of drum beating and the *Jaikaar* as sound throughout the hollow valley. Slowly the crowds become thinner and thinner".

The above report is still different from the present day celebrations. Now, the martial aspect of the fair is disappearing and it is becoming like all other fairs. Guru Sahib began this fair as a blending of enjoyment, martial games and sports and spiritualism. Now spiritualism and martial aspects are disappearing day by day and it is becoming a gathering of eating, drinking and anti social activities.

Naina Devi Fair

Naina Devi temple has been built on the top of a hill, about 9 kilometres from Anandpur Sahib. The temple has been dedicated to a mythical Hindu goddess. Though Naina Devi seems to be a big village but most of its residents are priests, shopkeepers, menial workers or beggars.

At the time of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, only a few people used to live in this village. The Pandits used to boast that this so-called goddess had miraculous power and when people hold a Yagya (also written as Yajna), a Hind worship, the goddess appears and fulfils the wishes of those who perform such a worship. Guru Sahib told them that all such myths are sheer nonsense. There is no real goddess in the universe. Every thing happens as per the wish of the Almighty. When Pandits insisted, Guru Sahib asked them to get every thing they needed and hold a Yagya. Guru Sahib provided the Pandits with every thing they asked for. As nothing was to happen, the Pandits, disappeared from the village on the last day of the Yagya. Thus, the mythical propaganda was exposed. After this incident even the Hindus stopped visiting Naina Devi. Most of the Hindus now don't believe in any mythical power or gods or goddesses because they feel that never in the living history has any mythical god or goddess shown any miracle.

A fair is held at Naina Devi temple even now. A Sikh is forbidden from attending such a fair. Even most of the Hindus don't attend this fair for any religious reason. They simply enjoy the fun of going in crowds for their personal reasons.

There is another story associated with this so-called goddess. Once a Sikh broke the nose of the statue of this mythical goddess. The Pandits approached Guru Sahib and made a complaint against the Sikh. Guru Sahib summoned that Sikh in the presence of the

Pandits and asked him as to why had he done so. The Sikh apologised from Guru Sahib and said, "Guruji I have a doubt in my mind. I want to ask a question from these Pandits." The Pandits at once said, "Why not! We shall answer all of your questions, you just ask us." At this the Sikh said, "I have broken the nose of the statue. OK! You say that Naina Devi is a very powerful goddess. Sir, if she is very powerful then why could not she stop me from breaking her nose?" Pandits could not answer his question. At this Guru Sahib told him that a Sikh must not hurt the feelings of the others. Even if we don't believe in these mythical gods and goddess, we should avoid being in conflict with the belief of the others."

Usually, no Sikh visits Naina Devi temple. Some Sikhs have been to Naina Devi village for the purpose of hiking and trekking or for tourism only but none of them goes inside the temple. A Sikh worships only the Almighty and makes obeisance before Guru Granth Sahib only. It is a sin for a Sikh to worship any mythical god, goddess, idol or statue.

Visakhi of Anandpur Sahib

Though the Hola Mahalla has become more prominent and major fair of Anandpur Sahib, but it is the (so-called) Visakhi, which has more historical and religious importance in the history of Anandpur Sahib. Hola Mahalla is associated with entertainment, sports, martial arts etc. but (so-called) Visakhi is the day when Guru Sahib revealed Khalsa. I have used the term "so-called" Visakhi because Visakhi itself has no religious or spiritual importance in Sikhism. The first of the Visakh might have any importance for the Hindus as they believe in the auspiciousness of the first day of each month of the Hindu calendar i.e. *Sangrand*. *Sangrand* is the day when sun enters a new *Raashi*, (star of zodiac). Though the Hindus believe in the *Raashis* (stars) but the Sikhs don't have faith in such things.

Guru Sahib chose the first of Visakh to hold the congregation to reveal Khalsa, not because of the auspiciousness of the *Sangrand* of *Visakh*, but because there were no calendars or diaries in those days and the common folk had to depend upon the days on which most popular festivals were held by the local people. The majority of the population in those days was the Hindus and the Pandits used to visit the residences of the clients to collect their periodical charities on the days of *Sangrand*, *Pooranmaasi*, *Massiya*, *Panchami* etc. Thus, every one could know the day of the first of Visakh, Diwali, Holi, the first of *Maagh* etc. Similarly, it was easy to know the dates of *Id*, *Muharram*, *Bakrid* etc. as the Maulavis used to calculate these dates for the Muslims. So, this was the background of holding the Khalsa revelation on the first of *Visakh*. Had there been any calendars, Guru Sahib would never have chosen these dates for the Sikh congregations.

Had there been any concept of auspiciousness of any such

day in the mind of Guru Sahib, they would have done all their major activities on such days. Guru Sahib laid the foundation of Keeratpur on April 7, 1624 (11th of Visakh), foundation of Chakk Nananki on June 19, 1665 (21st of Haar), foundation of Anandpur Sahib on March 30, 1689 (2nd of Visakh). Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib did not begin writing of any of his books on any Hindu auspicious day, nor was any child of Guru Sahib married on such a day.

As far as holding of the Sikh congregations on the day of the first of Visakh, Maagh or Diwali day is concerned, it was started by Guru Amar Das Sahib, with a view of holding four gatherings every year and these were arranged in such a manner that there should be one gathering in each of the three seasons (winter, summer and autumn) every year. No gathering was to be held during the rainy season.

Now a word about the so-called Visakhi of Anandpur Sahib. Hola Mahalla is the major fair of Anandpur Sahib. This event has a great importance for the Sikhs but it is the revelation of Khalsa that has brought Anandpur Sahib on the map of the world. Sikhs must observe this day with great enthusiasm but it should be observed with spiritual and religious fervour and not as a show of eating, drinking, dancing, making noise and such like cheap entertainment activities. It should be such a spiritual performance that the leaders of the world should wish to imitate it for celebration of their own holy days.

Only one so-called Visakhi celebration has surpassed the Hola Mahalla of Anandpur Sahib, i.e. in the year 1999. On this day, more than 8 million Sikhs (more than one third of their total population) visited Anandpur Sahib to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the revelation of Khalsa.

In fact, each and every Sikh should try to visit Anandpur Sahib as much as possible and this visit should not mean tourism. A Sikh should spend some days here and pay homage to Guru Sahib, their families, the Sikh martyrs and Sikh savants who made contribution to the Sikh Panth. On every 29th of March or any other day, at the time of his/her visit to Anandpur Sahib every Sikh should ask a question from himself/herself: "Am I a Sikh of Guru Sahib? Am I a son/daughter of Guru Sahib? Am I a Khalsa? Am I a subject of Anandpur Sahib? Am I a Sikh at all?" It is the duty

of each and every Sikh to keep up his/her commitment made by the nation on Khalsa revelation day: *Every Sikh is a son/daughter of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and Anandpur Sahib is his spiritual home.*" (There is no auspiciousness or sanctity of any day or date in Sikhism; hence, a Sikh may visit any shrine on any day).

[There is confusion about the date of the revelation of Khalsa. Though the first of Visakh month corresponds to April 12 to 14 of the present day Common calendar but it used to be on March 29 from 1695 to 1699. According to one source Khalsa was revealed on March 29 in the year 1695. According to some other sources the date was March 29, 1698/1699. The majority of the Sikh leaders accept 1699. But, even in 1699, the first of the Visakh month fell on March 29. It was perhaps Dr. Ganda Singh who made the mistake of calculation of the date of the first Visakh 1699 as March 30. Whichever may be the year (1695 or 1698 or 1699), the date remains the 29th of March. As the Sikhs have nothing to do with the Bikrami calendar then why should they celebrate the revelation of Khalsa according to Bikrami calendar and why not as per the Common Era calendar, which is in common, use now (as *Bikrami* calendar was in common use at the time of Guru Sahib). Hence, it should be celebrated every year on March 29, which would bring an end to confusion of calculation of dates.]

The Map of Anandpur Sahib

Anandpur Sahib is at a distance of 97 kilometres from Chandigarh, 45 kilometres from Ropar, 9 kilometres from Keeratpur Sahib, 22 kilometres from Nangal and 11 kilometres from Guru Da Lahore.

Hundreds of years ago, the area between present day Nangal and Ropar, i.e. Keeratpur Sahib, Chakk Nanaki, Anandpur Sahib, Guru Da Lahore and the other villages were, known as *Hathaut* (literally: abode of elephants). It was a dense forest with thick growth of trees and bushes. The jungle-valley was surrounded by several hill belts, river Satluj, Charan Ganga and several other rivulets. It was a home of the herds of the elephants, lions, panthers, jackals, wolves and other beasts. This area, about 50 km in length and about 15 to 20 km in width, did not have any human population. By fifteenth century most of the beasts had been killed or had moved to the upper hills but the people were still afraid of this area and would not usually pass through the zone. There is another popular local myth about this area. According to this myth, two giants, named Makho and Mato, used to live here. They had established the villages of Makhawal and Mataur. Both were cruel monsters. They used to perpetrate atrocities on innocent people of the area. As a result most of the residents of this area left their houses and went to far off places. This seems to be, like all other myths, a fiction. One thing, however, is certain that the people did not inhabit this zone. It was Guru Sahib who turned this land not only into a populated area but also brought it on the map of the world as a prominent religious and historical place.

Nowadays, only the revenue officials know about the boundaries of Anandpur Sahib, Chakk Nanaki (in papers it is, now, known as Chakk only), Sahota, Mataur, Laudipur, Thabbal, Mataur, Tarapur etc. All these villages have their distinct official identity.

The total area of the Anandpur Sahib village is 86 hectares, Chakk Nananki is 78 hectares, Sahota is 146 hectares, Mianpur is 76 hectares, Laudipur is 537 hectares, Mataur is 208 hectares and Agampur is 1247 hectares. For an ordinary person all this is Anandpur Sahib.

The square between the present bus stand and Gurdwara Kesgarh is the meeting point of the villages of Chakk Nanaki, Anandpur Sahib and Laudipur. Gurdwara Guru De Mahal, Damdama Sahib, Thara Sahib, Bhora Sahib, Manji Sahib, all are a part of the village Chakk Nanaki. Gurdwara Sis Ganj is on the border of village Sahota and Chakk Nanaki. The bus stand, the hospital and the Girls' High School are in the territory of Chakk Nanaki. A part of the Sawmill is in the territory of the village of Sahota and the rest is in Chakk Nanaki. The milk bar (near the main square) and the *Sarovar* (it did not exist at the time of Guru Sahib) are in the boundary of Laudipur village. The garden adjacent to the police station is a part of Chakk Nanaki. The Khalsa High School is in the territory of Sahota. Gurdwara Shaheedi Bagh is in the territory of Mataur. Kesgarh Sahib and Damalgarh are in the territory of Anandpur Sahib. Khalsa College has been built in the territory of Mataur. The bridge of the rivulet Charan Ganga is in Chakk Nanaki.

The Anandpur Sahib zone has undergone several major changes in the past 337 years. The river Satluj that used to flow near Anandpur Sahib has changed its course and now it flows near Keeratpur Sahib. The *Himaiti Naala* (the rivulet which saved Anandpur Sahib from the attack by Rustam Khan on August 19, 1695) has disappeared. It has become a part of cultivated land. Several other rivulets have also disappeared. A bridge has been built on the rivulet Charan Ganga. The hill on which Guru Sahib had set up a tent on the day of revelation of Khalsa (known as *Tambu Wali Pahari*) does not exist any more. Even the hill, on which Kesgarh has been built, is, now, about 10 feet lesser in height than it was in 1698. Soil erosion by heavy rains has changed the map of this zone. Now, the area between Kesgarh and Anandgarh is no more a hill zone. A road has been built to link both the shrines. A large number of buildings, inns, rest houses have also been built in this area. The proposed Heritage Complex will further affect the natural beauty of Anandpur Sahib.

Anandpur Sahib is a tehsil of the Ropar district. Its 240 villages include several villages associated with the Sikh history e.g.: Chakk Nanaki, Agampur, Sahota, Laudipur, Mianpur, Mataur, Thappal, Tarapur etc. (Anandpur Sahib zone), Keeratpur, Jauwal, Kalyanpur, Bhatoli, Bhagwal etc. (Keeratpur zone), Jindbari, Khera-Kalmot, Nurpur Bedi etc. (Nurpur Bedi zone), Bajrur, Basali, Chanauli etc. (Takhtgarh zone) etc. Nirmohgarh, Jhakkhian, Shahi Tibbi, Pariwar Vichhora, Sarsa Nangal etc. are in Ropar zone. Guru Da Lahore and Taragarh are in Bilaspur zone. Similarly, Gurdwaras at Bilaspur, Nahan, Paonta Sahib, Bhangani, Nadaun, Rawalsar etc are in Himanchal Pradesh. Gurdwaras have yet to be built at Malikpur, Jhakkhian, Shahi Tibbi, and ~~Nirmohgarh etc.~~

When Guru Sahib left Anandpur Sahib, there were about 500 persons in the city. All of them left on the night between December 5 and 6, 1705 and only Bhai Gurbakhsh Das was left behind. After a few years the families of the descendants of Baba Suraj Mal began living there.

With the passage of time Anandpur Sahib again became prominent centre of the Sikhs. At the time of Akali Phula Singh a couple of thousand Sikhs began living at Anandpur Sahib. Most of them were the Akalis/Nihangs. By the middle of the Nineteenth century the population of Anandpur Sahib had reached about 5000. In 1861, the British government held the census of this zone. The population of the Anandpur Sahib zone was recorded as 6869. It included the population of the villages that formed a part of the Anandpur Sahib municipal committee area. In the first half of the twentieth century the population of this zone decreased because of an epidemic, which spread through the town and the adjoining villages. It took the lives of hundreds of the residents. Besides, hundreds of people left the city in panic.

In 1947, several Sikh families who had been uprooted from the West Punjab (which became a part of Pakistan), moved to this

area. After a couple of years the Bhakhra, Nangal and Ganguwal projects added several hundred people to the population of Anandpur Sahib. Today, in 2002, the population of the municipal area of Anandpur Sahib is about 13000 and there is no possibility of any increase in this number. In spite of announcement of a large number of projects in the name of the tercentenary of Khalsa, there is no likelihood of increase in the population of the town. The city may get a new look due to new buildings but the original character of the town of Guru Sahib will disappear.

Anandpur Sahib, Chakk Nanaki, Guru Da Lahore, Basali, Bibhaur, Keeratpur Sahib, Jindbari, Nirmohgarh, Shahi Tibbi, Jhakkhian, Sarsa Nangal, Malikpur, Kotla Nihang, Chamkaur, Machhiwara, all this is the Sikh zone. It is a sacred land because five Guru Sahib had stayed in this area from 1635 to 1705. During these 70 years this unknown area of the earth became a land of ~~of the greatest importance in the history of the world~~. Even now This is Guru Sahib's land not because Guru Sahib had paid for the land of these villages but also because the very existence of the zone is associated with Guru Sahib.

Guru Sahib had purchased the land of at least 8 villages (Keeratpur Sahib, Chanauli, Chakk Nanaki, Anandpur Sahib, Sahota, Mianpur, Agampur, Tarapur) in this zone. Later, when Guru Sahib left the city Ajmer Chand occupied it. Since then several persons have occupied the land or purchased it from those who had been granted this land by Ajmer Chand. Whatever may be the situation, all these purchases were illegal. Guru Sahib had purchased the land for Anandpur Sahib with cash money and the real owners of this land are Guru Sahib's successors, i.e. the Sikh Panth (through the S.G.P.C.).

It is remarkable to note that the family (of Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur) which wanted to expel Guru Sahib from this land does not exist any more. Ajmer Chand's male successors don't exist any more. Two of the last female descendants, who were still alive

(in 2002) don't have any child of their own; hence the very name of the family has vanished. But, on the other hand, the Sikhs, whom Ajmer Chand wanted to expel, have spread throughout the world. Ajmer Chand wanted to eliminate Guru Sahib and the Sikhs but Guru Sahib's name is ever alive. His capital now forms a part of the lake named after Guru Sahib (as Gobind Sagar). The State and even the city, which wanted to eliminate Guru Sahib, has itself ceased to exist. Bilaspur could not uproot Guru Sahib but itself disappeared from the map of the world. The present Bilaspur has been built on the hills around the original Bilaspur.

Gurdwaras of Anandpur Sahib

The Greater Anandpur Sahib is a holy city of the Sikhs. Two Guru Sahib (Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib) and their families, the families of Guru Hargobind Sahib and Guru Har Rai Sahib and hundreds of Sikh martyrs spent about eight decades (1626 to 1705) in this zone. Several Sikhs embraced martyrdom in this city. Hence, the whole of the town is a spiritual memorial of Guru Sahib and the martyrs. A visitor, while stepping on the land of this city must observe a special religious protocol as the whole of the city is a sacred zone. There are several historical Gurdwaras in the city that have been built at the sites where some important events took place. These Gurdwaras include:

Guru De Mahal

This was the first building of Chakk Nanaki. It was here that the foundation stone of Chakk Nanaki was laid on June 19, 1665. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, Mata Nanaki (wife of Guru Hargobind Sahib and mother of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib), Mata Gujari, Mata Jeet Kaur, Mata Sunder Kaur, Mata Sahib Kaur, four Sahibzadas, Bibi Tara Kaur (wife of Sahibzada Ajit Singh) used to live here. Gurdwara Bhora Sahib, Gurdwara Manji Sahib, Takht Damdama Sahib are a part of this complex.

Bhora Sahib

At the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib it was an eight feet deep *Bhora* (basement). Here, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib used to sit in meditation. Here, he composed some of his hymns also. Later, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib also used this basement for meditation and solitude.

Takht Damdama Sahib

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib used to hold his court here. It was here that Guru Sahib used to perform the activities of Akal Takht Sahib (hence it is known as Takht Damdama Sahib). It was the *Diwan-e-Khas* of Guru Sahib, where Guru Sahib used to receive the representatives of different States, diplomats and the other important guests. Here, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib was installed as the Tenth Nanak, on July 8, 1675. In March 1698, when Guru Sahib summoned all the *Masands* to verify their credentials, they were tried here. An old well of the time of Guru Sahib still exists. The guilty *Masands* were punished near this well.

Manji Sahib

This was the general congregation hall i.e. *Diwan-e-Aam*. Here, Guru Sahib used to address the common people. It was here that 16 Brahmins from Kashmir, escorted by Bhai Kirpa Ram Dutt, made a petition to Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, on May 25, 1675 requesting him to help stopping forcible conversion of the Hindus by the then newly appointed Moghul Governor of Kashmir.

Sis Ganj

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib embraced martyrdom at Delhi, on November 11, 1675. Bhai Jaita, Bhai Nanu and Bhai Uda brought his head from Delhi to Chakk Nanaki. The head was cremated on November 17, 1675 at this site. At that time this site was out of the boundary of village of Chakk Nanaki. It was a part of the territory of village Sahota. Later, on December 5, 1705, when Guru Gobind Singh Sahib left Anandpur Sahib forever, he came here and appointed Bhai Gurbakhsh Das as the caretaker of the shrines of the Greater Anandpur Sahib. It is believed that this shrine is the oldest structure of Anandpur Sahib.

Akal Bunga

This Gurdwara is situated exactly opposite to Gurdwara Sis Ganj. After the cremation of the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib addressed the Sikhs here and

asked them to bow before the Will of the Almighty. He also told them to be ready to launch a long struggle to bring an end to injustice and tyranny.

Manji Sahib/Damalgarh Sahib

This Gurdwara is in the boundary of Anandpur village. At the time of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, there was a big bunyan tree. After laying the foundation of the town of Anandpur Sahib, in 1689, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib used to hold congregations at this place, hence it was the new *Diwan-e-Aam*. Here, Guru Sahib also used to hold wrestling competitions. The four Sahibzadas used to learn art of warfare under this bunyan tree. It was here that Zorawar Singh Lota (known as *Paalit*), once, defeated Sahibzada Zorawar Singh in a wrestling competition and Guru Sahib proclaimed: "This Zorawar Singh too is my son."

This site has another significance in the Sikh history. On January 16, 1704, Ajmer Chand, the ruler of Bilaspur attacked Anandpur Sahib. A fierce battle was fought at Tarapur village. In this battle the Sikhs fought against the hill soldiers under the command of Bhai Maan Singh (known as Nishanchi). During this battle, Bhai Maan Singh was seriously wounded. When he fell down, the blue Khalsa flag also fell from his left hand. The battle, however, continued till the hill army retreated on the excuse of darkness. After some time, a soldier informed Guru Sahib (who was sitting under the bunyan tree, at the present site of *Damalgarh Sahib Gurdwara*) about the falling of the blue Khalsa flag. At this, Guru Sahib said, "The Blue flag of the Khalsa shall never get lowered in any situation and in any form." Guru Sahib tore a *Farra* (stripe) from his *Keski* (the under turban) and hung it on the left side of his *Dastaar* (turban) as a *hanging flag*. Guru Sahib declared that in future the leaders of the Khalsa army shall always carry a *Farra Nishan Sahib* (Khalsa hanging flag) in their turbans and it shall always furl high up in the sky." Some prominent Sikhs like Bhai Udey Singh, Bhai Aalam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh and Bhai Muhkam Singh, who were sitting by the side of Guru Sahib, also tore a stripe each from their blue *Keskis* and hung the same on the left side of their *Dastaars* (turbans). Sahibzada Fateh Singh, who was just six years old at

that time, too hung a blue stripe on the left side of his *Dastaar* (turban).

[*This was the beginning of the Khalsa Farra flag, which is, by some writers, attributed to Bhai Man Singh or Sahibzada Fateh Singh. Khalsa's blue Farra national flag is a must for the leader of each and every Jatha. This custom has been forgotten by most of the Sikhs, only the Nihangs have preserved it. But, on the other hand, most of the Nihangs have not preserved any other thing of the Khalsa army.*]

Farra is also known as *Damala*, hence the name of the Gurdwara *Damalgarh Sahib*.

Gurdwara Shaheedi Bagh

This Gurdwara on the road between Kesgarh Sahib and Anandgarh Sahib is associated with the memory of the martyrs of the battles of Anandpur Sahib. At this site several Sikhs embraced martyrdom. During the time of Guru Sahib, there was a garden where two battles were fought between the Sikhs and the hill armies. This Gurdwara is under the management of a Nihang organisation and is not a part of the S.G.P.C. administration. The management has, however, preserved the original colour of the Khalsa flag. At the time of Guru Sahib, the Khalsa flag was of the blue colour. It was only during the time of Ranjit Singh and the *Mahants* that the colour of the Sikh flag got changed from the blue to white, then saffron and even yellow. **This ignorance is still continuing.**

Gurdwara Mata Jeet Kaur Ji

This Gurdwara has been built in the memory of Mata Jeet Kaur, the first wife of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. Mata Jeet Kaur died on December 5, 1700. She was cremated here on December 6. This place is a part of Agamgarh village. During the time of Guru Sahib all the dead were cremated here. Diwan Dargah Mall and several other Sikhs too had been cremated at this site. Gurdwara Holgarh Sahib (at the site of the Holgarh fort) too stands nearby.

Kesgarh Sahib

Takht Kesgarh Sahib has been built on a mound. It was in a big hill at the time of Guru Sahib. Heavy rains have eroded a substantial part of this hill. It was the main congregation site during the time of Guru Sahib. Thousands of Sikhs could sit in between these hills. After the establishment of the town of Anandpur Sahib, Guru Sahib used to hold all the congregations here. The revelation of Khalsa also took place here. During those days there was another high hill near the present site of the main shrine of Kesgarh Sahib. It was known as *Tambu Wali Pahari* (literally: *the hill where a tent was pitched*). According to most of the sources, it was on this *Tambu Wali Pahari* that Guru Sahib had got pitched a tent in which five goats had been kept as a part of the ceremony of selecting the five *Marjiwras* (the living martyrs), who were later granted the title of *Punj Piarey*. This hill does not exist any more. Even the main hill on which Kesgarh Sahib Gurdwara has been built is now 10-15 feet lesser than it was in the sixteenth century. In those days there was a long range of the hills around Kesgarh Sahib. In 1973, a road was constructed linking Kesgarh Sahib with Anandgarh Sahib. As a result some hilltops had to be levelled, hence damaging the original landscape of Anandpur Sahib. (In 1998, the construction of another building, the Sikh Heritage Complex, was begun, which, when completed, will give a further blow to the heritage of Anandpur Sahib). On the day of the revelation of Khalsa, several thousand Sikhs visited the city. So one can imagine how much was the space around Gurdwara Kesgarh Sahib.

Kesgarh Sahib was built on the top of a hill like the Anandgarh Sahib fort, hence it was safe from the attacks by the armies. The hill army attacked all of the rest of the forts (Taragarh, Fatehgarh, Holgarh and Lohgarh) but Kesgarh and Anandgarh remained safe. It was only after the 7 month long siege of the Greater Anandpur Sahib that the Sikhs had to leave the city and these two forts also fell into the hands of the hill army. The hill army entered these forts on December 6, 1705 and dismantled them.

The building of Kesgarh Sahib has undergone several changes. After 1705, there was simply a one-room structure. In

the last decade of eighteenth century Baba Baghel Singh, of Karorsinghia Misl (who had built the Gurdwaras at Delhi) visited Anandpur Sahib. He began construction of the building of Kesgarh. Later, the ruler of Patiala also made additions to it. He also built a Bunga (hostel) for the visitors. Even after this, several alterations, additions and renovation were made. The S.G.P.C. built a number of *Sarans* (hostels) around Kesgarh Sahib. In 1997-98, the new building of the *Langar* was also built. Earlier, the *Langar* used to be served in the middle floor of the Gurdwara. In 1998, the lower courtyard of the main congregation floor, too, was widened. It is, now, almost double of the previous structure.

Kesgarh Sahib had been abandoned on the night between December 5 and 6 of 1705. For a number of years the place remained deserted. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Baba Sher Singh and Jalmast Singh stayed in this city and performed services in the Gurdwara. In 1760s Baba Gurbakhsh Singh Leel too served here for a couple of years. (He embraced martyrdom at Akal Takht Sahib on December 1, 1764). After Baba Gurbakhsh Singh, Bhai Sukkha Singh served as caretaker of Kesgarh Sahib. (He wrote *Gurbilas Patsahi Dasvin*). In 1814, Akali Phula Singh too spent some time here. From 1815 to 1900, Bhai Karam Singh, Baba Kharak Singh, Bhai Budh Singh, Baba Puran Singh and Bhai Amrik Singh served the Gurdwara. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Vaid Sampuran Singh moved to the city and began serving here. He was a good physician also; hence he rendered medical services as well. Bhai Amar Singh (died in 1948) and Bhai Bakhshish Singh too served here for several years. Bhai Bakhshish Singh was also one of the first members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which was selected at Akal Takht Sahib, on November 15, 1920. Besides these savants, Giani Resham Singh, Giani Partap Singh Mallewal, Jathedar Bir Singh, Master Ajit Singh Ambalvi, Giani Fauja Singh, Giani Bachitar Singh, Giani Sadhu Singh Bhaura, Giani Sharam Singh, Giani Maghar Singh, Jathedar Gurdial Singh Ajnoha, Jathedar Harcharan Singh Mahalon, Bhai Shawinder Singh, Bhai Balbir Singh and Manjit Singh served as the chief priests of Kesgarh Sahib. The services of Harcharan Singh Mahalon and Shawinder Singh were terminated during their tenure and Manjit Singh was accused of several sins (and perhaps

crimes). These three have remained the most controversial *Granthis* of this Gurdwara. The services at this Gurdwara used to be performed by a *Granthi* but after 1926 and especially after 1947, as it happened at Akal Takht Sahib in 1920, the main priest of Kesgarh too came to be known as *Jathedar* (which is not a proper term).

Relics at Kesgarh Sahib

Kesgarh Sahib is the main Gurdwara of the city. Several relics associated with Guru Sahib have been preserved here. The total number of these relics is 12. Out of these 12, six had been brought by Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh (a descendant of Baba Buddha who remained with Guru Sahib till his martyrdom) from Nander and the rest six relics were returned by the British authorities in 1966. These relics are:

Khanda (double-edged sword)

This is the Khanda with which Guru Sahib initiated the first five Khalsa on the day of the revelation of Khalsa. The length of this Khanda is 3 feet and three and a half inches (about 1.20 metres). The blade of this Khanda is about 2 feet and three inches (about 68 cm) long. This Khanda remained in the possession of the Sodhi family of Anandpur Sahib for several years. Later, they presented it at Kesgarh Sahib. This Khanda has never been used since the time of Guru Sahib; except in 1942 when it was taken to Akal Takht Sahib for performance of initiation ceremony. After 1942, this Khanda has not been used even for initiation. Due to its importance this historic Khanda it has been preserved in the treasury of Kesgarh Sahib.

Kataar

This dagger belonged to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. He used to keep it always on his person. A Kataar is a very useful weapon during hand to hand fight. Though small, it is, sometimes, more fatal than a sword.

Saif

This is a sort of double-edged sword. According to one source it was presented to Guru Sahib by the Moghul emperor Bahadur Shah. This source asserts that this *Saif* belonged to Hazrat Ali (son in law of Muslim Prophet Mohammed) and had been used by Hassan and Hussain, the sons of Hazrat Ali, during their battles. According to this tradition this *Saif* remained with the successors of Hazrat Ali who presented it to Aurangzeb for his services to Islam. After the death of Aurangzeb it came into the possession of Bahadur Shah who presented it to Guru Sahib. This theory does not stand water as Bahadur Shah could not have presented this historic *Saif* (which is surely of great religious importance to the Muslims) to Guru Sahib, as he (Guru Sahib) had not made any contribution to Islam. Even the wording written on this *Saif* proves that it did not belong to the Islamic leaders. According to Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, this *Saif* was resented by Syed Pir Budhu Shah to Guru Sahib. The length of this Saif is 4 feet and three inches (about 1.29 metre).

Gun

This gun was presented by a Sikh (from Lahore) to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib had issued a *Hukamnama* to the Sikhs to bring good horses, weapons and books to him. In response to this *Hukamnama* the Sikhs used to bring such gifts to Guru Sahib. This gun was brought to the Kesgarh Sahib after 1930 because it has not been referred to by Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha in his *Mahan Kosh*.

Naagani Barchha (she-serpent shaped spear)

This spear belonged to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. It is known as *Nagani Barchha* because its blade is like the shape of a female snake. It is the same spear with which Bhai Bachitar Singh had wounded the drunken elephant sent by the hill army to break open the gate of Lohgarh fort on September 1, 1700. The length of the spear is about 8 feet and nine inches (about 2.62 metres).

***Karpa Barchha* (palm shaped spear)**

This too was a personal spear of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. According to a source, when Guru Sahib got married at Guru Da Lahore (near Anandpur Sahib) in 1677, there was acute shortage of water in that area. According to this story Guru Sahib hit the earth with this spear which resulted into emergence of three springs of water (A *Sarovar* has been built on these three springs). A very important historic incident is associated with this spear. On September 1, 1700, Guru Sahib gave this spear to Bhai Udey Singh Parmar who went to the fort of Lohgarh to fight against the hill army. He severed the head of Raja Kesri Chand with his sword, hung it on this spear and presented it to Guru Sahib at Anandgarh fort. There are several marks of arrows on this spear. These signs remind the volley of arrows showered towards Bhai Udey Singh by the hill army in order to stop him while he was rushing towards Anandgarh fort with the severed head of Raja Kesri Chand. The length of this spear is 7 feet and eleven and a half inches (about 2.42 metres).

Relics received from England

1. A large Spear
2. A Small Spear
3. A *Shamsheer-i-Tegh* (a sword)
4. A *Dah-i-Ahni* (literally: fire-like killer sword)
5. A golden Quoit
6. A shield made of the skin of a rhinoceros.

(These six relics belonged to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and had been taken to England by the British during their reign in the Punjab, 1849-1947).

Property and income of the Gurdwaras

Several Sikh rulers and others had fixed regular income for different Gurdwaras of Anandpur Sahib. ***All these figures are of 1925. The value of rupee at that time was several times higher than the present day value.*** For the Anandgarh Fort Gurdwara: 1600 rupees (The revenue of the villages of Chandpur, Burj, Chikuna, Mahendari. All these villages are near the city of

Anandpur Sahib). Rupees 37.25 per annum were paid by the Kalsia State. About 62.5-acre land was also attached to this Gurdwara. Gurdwara Sis Ganj had an income of rupees 900 (per annum) from the revenue of the villages of Saddu and Chakk Mukhera, rupees 37.25 from the Kalsia State, rupees 60 from the Patiala State and rupees 70 from the Nabha State. Kesgarh Gurdwara had an income of rupees 1150 (Half of the revenue of village Baddon, district Hoshiarpur) granted by Baba Baghel Singh, rupees 400 (from the revenue of village Geeganwal) granted by Sirdar Mit Singh, rupees 1100 (from the revenue of village Mannepur, near Anandpur Sahib) granted by Sirdar Charat Singh Dallewalia, rupees 75 (the revenue of village Mahen) granted by the Bilaspur State, rupees 375 by the Patiala State, rupees 1693.50 by the Nabha State, rupees 37.25 by the Kalsia State. Besides, 16.5 acre land was also attached to this Gurdwara. Gurdwara Manji Sahib (Damalgarh) had an income of rupees 80 (the revenue of village Surewal, near Anandpur Sahib) granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, rupees 25 from the Patiala State and rupees 18.50 from the Kalsia State.

The Forts of the Greater Anandpur Sahib

Besides these Gurdwaras, there were five forts in the Greater Anandpur Sahib. These were: Anandgarh Sahib, Lohgarh Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Taragarh Sahib and Holgarh Sahib. These forts were built by Guru Sahib during the period 1689 and 1700.

Anandgarh Sahib Fort

This was the first fort of the Greater Anandpur Sahib. The foundation of this fort was laid by Guru Sahib on march 31, 1689. Guru Sahib spent about 16 years in this fort. Though the family of Guru Sahib continued living at Guru De Mahal (village Chakk Nanaki), Guru Sahib, himself used to spend most of his time in this fort. This was the headquarters of Guru Sahib and the Sikh army. Most of the arms and ammunition of the Sikhs were preserved here. When Guru Sahib left Anandpur Sahib he began his final journey from this point. After the departure of Guru Sahib, the hill army occupied it on December 6-7, 1705. The hill army did not stay here but they demolished most the fort. It remained deserted for several decades. It was only at the time of Jathedar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia that Sikhs stayed here for some time. This too was not a very safe place for the Sikhs in those days. When it became a bit safer to stay here Jathedar Jassa Singh appointed some of his soldiers to take care of this fort. He also built a *Baoli* (a deep well with stair descending to water level) to solve the problem of water.

When Baba Baghel Singh visited Anandpur Sahib he spent a lot of money for the building of this Gurdwara. Later, in 1980s the *Kaar Sewa Wale* (voluntary service group) built most the present structure of the Gurdwara. The ignorant leaders of this

renovation group demolished all the signs of the old fort and its walls, which were still present at some places, even after a period of about 300 years.

Lohgarh Fort Gurdwara

Lohgarh Fort Gurdwara has been built at the site of the erstwhile fort of the same name. It was the strongest fort of the Sikhs. The gate of this fort was so strong that it was not possible to break it open. Here, Guru Sahib had set up a factory for manufacture of arms. Bhai Ram Singh Sikligar was the in charge of this factory.

The hill army attacked this fort on September 1, 1700. The invading army brought a drunken elephant with iron plates and sharp iron bars tied on its forehead in order to break open the main gate of this fort. When this elephant reached near the gate of the fort, Bhai Bachitar Singh struck it with the historic *Nagani* spear. The elephant was grievously hurt. It ran back to save its life. In doing so, the elephant killed several and wounded hundreds of the soldiers of the hill army. After this, the hill army did not dare attack this fort. Guru Sahib left Anandpur Sahib on the night of December 5 and 6, 1705. When the hill rulers came to know about the departure of the Sikhs, they occupied this fort on December 6 and 7. Within a few days they dismantled most of the fort. From 1705 to the middle of the nineteenth century this fort remained deserted. Later, the flow of the river damaged the outer wall of the remaining portions of the fort. Though the Sikhs had begun living at Anandpur Sahib, in the nineteenth century, but no one bothered for this fort. Within a few decades only a few portions of the outer wall remained in existence. These too were removed by the officials who, in the name of renovation, eliminated all the remaining signs of the fort.

Agamgarh/Holgarh Fort

The third major fort of the Greater Anandpur Sahib was Holgarh Fort. It was also known as Agamgarh Fort because it was in the territory of Agamgarh village, on the other side of Charan Ganga rivulet. This fort was built in order to protect the Greater Anandpur from the attacks of the Moghul army proceeding

towards Anandpur Sahib from Hoshiarpur and Nurpur side. This fort too came under the attack of the hill army on August 31, 1700. During those days there was a lot of open space between this fort and Charan Ganga rivulet. The dead bodies of the residents of the Greater Anandpur Sahib were cremated in this open space.

Holgarh is also famous for another event. The Sikhs used to observe *Hola Mahalla* in front of this fort. On this day, Guru Sahib held sports competition and martial arts exhibitions and other such competitions in this ground. The procession from Anandgarh fort, on the *Hola Mahalla* day, used to end in front of this fort. After the procession martial games and other sports activities were performed.

Fatehgarh Fort

Fatehgarh Fort had been built in the territory of the village Sahota. When construction of this fort was started Sahibzada Fateh Singh was born to Mata Jeet Kaur, hence the name of the fort. This fort too came under the attack of the hill army on August 30, 1700. At that time only three fourth of the fort was ready and only a few Sikhs were present in this fort, still the Sikhs fought bravely and defeated the invading hill soldiers.

Taragarh Fort

Taragarh Fort had been built in the territory of the village of Tarapur, on the border of the present Himanchal Pradesh and the Punjab. During the time of Guru Sahib, this was the border between the Sikh State of Anandpur Sahib and the Bilaspur State. This fort was built to defend the city from the attacks by the hill armies. From here the Sikhs could watch the activities of the hill soldiers and the other intruders. Ajmer Chand, the ruler of Bilaspur, wanted to occupy this fort. He made an attack on this fort on August 29, 1700 but was defeated badly. A large number of hill soldiers lost their lives. When Guru Sahib left Anandpur Sahib, this fort, too, was deserted. There was no Gurdwara till 1985, when the present building was built here.

Guru Da Lahore

The village Guru Da Lahore is situated in the hills, at a distance of about 11 km from Anandpur Sahib and about 8 km from Ganguwal. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib established this village in order to literally fulfil the wish of Bhai Harijas Subhikhi (father of Mata Jeeto Ji) who wished to get his daughter married at Lahore but it was not safe for Guru Sahib to visit Lahore in those days. The marriage of Guru Sahib and (Mata) Jeeto (Jeet Kaur after initiation) was performed here on June 21, 1677. There are four Gurdwaras at Guru Da Lahore. All these four are associated with the memory of the event of the marriage of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.

Gurdwara Tirbaini Sahib

It was the site of three small springs of water. According to a tradition Guru Gobind Singh Sahib struck his *Karpa* spear here in the earth resulting into creation of three springs (hence Tirbaini). Later, a Sarovar was built at the site. Now a fine Gurdwara has been built near the Sarovar.

Gurdwara Paur Sahib

This too was the site of a spring of water. According to a tradition this spring was created by the stamping of the *Paur* (hoof) of the horse of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. A Gurdwara has been built by the side of this spring.

In fact these springs already existed here. Guru Sahib had selected this site because enough water was available for all those who would be attending his marriage. The stories of creation of springs by striking a spear or stamping a hoof were created by the writers later on.

Gurdwara Anand Kaaraj Sahib

This Gurdwara has been built at the site where the marriage rites (Anand Kaaraj) of Guru Sahib was actually performed, hence the name of the Gurdwara. The present building was built in 1960.

Gurdwara Sehra Sahib

This Gurdwara has been built at village Bassi, about one km before Guru Da Lahore. According to one source, here, Guru Sahib tied *Sehra* (nuptial garland) on his turban before finally proceeding towards Guru Da Lahore. But, this seems to be an after thought. Guru Sahib had rejected the ceremony of tying nuptial garlands. In fact, it is the place where the marriage party of Guru Sahib rested for some time before finally proceeding towards the marriage site.

Some Gurdwaras associated with Guru Sahib's stay at Anandpur Sahib

Gurdwara Nirmohgarh

When Ajmer Chand, after his four successive defeats, begged mercy of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and asked him (Guru Sahib) to vacate Anandpur Sahib for a few days so that he might save his face, Guru Sahib moved to this hill. The villages Hardo and Nirmoh are situated at a short distance from Keeratpur Sahib. Guru Sahib spent 10 days on this hill. On October 4, 1700, Guru Sahib, along with hundreds of Sikhs reached village Nirmoh. It was a journey of about 10 kilometres. Guru Sahib asked the Sikhs to pitch their tents at the top of the hill. This hill was safe from defence point of view because there was only one way to climb up the hill and on the other sides there were ditches, gorges and a rivulet. (the place was called *Nirmohgarh* because it was used by the Sikhs as a *Garh*, a small fort).

When Ajmer Chand came to know about the departure of Guru Sahib from Anandpur Sahib, he ordered his army to be ready to attack Guru Sahib at village Nirmoh. On October 8, 1700, Ajmer Chand led a big army to village Nirmoh and attacked Guru Sahib. When Guru Sahib saw the hill army he asked the Sikhs that he had told them the truth about the hill rulers that they won't keep their vows. At this the Sikhs said, "Let these ungrateful people come near us, we shall teach them a lesson." Within a short time the hill soldiers reached near the hill. The Sikhs, though much less in number, gave a befitting reply to the hill soldiers. The Sikhs repulsed the attack and killed a very large number of soldiers of the invading army. But they too lost some brave soldiers, including Bhai Sahib Singh *Diwan* (religious minister) son of Shaheed Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Mathura Singh son of Shaheed **Bhai**

Dial Das, Bhai Surat Singh, Bhai Deva Singh, Bhai Anup Singh Dhaliwal and Bhai Sarup Singh Dhaliwal.

This time Ajmer Chand had not expected a defeat. Now he decided to use other tactics. He sent his minister Parma Nand to the Governor of Sirhind requesting him to attack Guru Sahib. He sent some money as his contribution towards the expenses of the attack. He assured the Governor of Sirhind that Guru Sahib was stationed at a very insecure place with not many soldiers and a small quantity of arms and ammunition, hence in a much inferior military position. Ajmer Chand's proposals convinced the Governor of Sirhind and he agreed to attack Guru Sahib. He sent a large battalion under the command of Rustam Khan and his brother Nahar Khan to attack the Sikhs.

When Bhai Bachitar Singh and Chitar Singh (sons of Bhai Mani Singh) came to know about the movement of Rustam Khan towards Nirmohgarh, they took a vow to punish Rustam Khan in an exemplary manner. The other Sikh soldiers too expressed such a determination. On October 13, 1700, the army led by Khan brothers reached near Nirmoh village. They occupied a hill from where they could shoot arrows or make shelling with cannons at Guru Sahib's camp. They began their attack by shooting a ball from their cannon. The ball hit Bhai Ram Singh Kashmiri, a personal attendant of Guru Sahib. He was killed at the spot. It meant that the cannon ball could have hit Guru Sahib too. Guru Sahib immediately shot an arrow, which killed Rustam Khan, the chief of the invading army. Bhai Udey Singh also shot an arrow, which killed Nahar Khan. Though both the brothers had been killed, still the Pathan soldiers continued fighting against the Sikhs. The fighting continued till it was dark. In the evening the Moghul army beat a retreat. Though the Sikhs were victorious, they too suffered some losses including Bhai Ram Singh Kashmiri, Bhai Mohar Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh and Bhai Ram Singh.

The next day Ajmer Chand attacked again. This time he had a much bigger army. Guru Sahib divided the Sikhs in different units so that they could fight on different fronts. This led to heavy losses for the hill soldiers. By the evening dozens of hill soldiers had been killed. Two Sikhs, Bhai Jeeta Singh and Bhai Neta Singh also embraced martyrdom.

Basali, in those days, was a small State. It was ruled by Raja Salahi Chand, whose wife Heera Devi was the sister of Rani Champa (who had been one of the greatest devoted Sikhs of the history). Heera Devi, too, was an admirer of Guru Sahib. Both the sisters were the daughters of the ruler of Mandi State. Basali is at a distance of about 13-14 kilometres from Keeratpur as well as Nirmoh village. When he came to know that Ajmer Chand had taken a vow by the name of cow but had still deceived Guru Sahib, he led a small army towards Nirmoh village. When he reached near Sarsa stream, he sent his minister towards Nirmoh to ask Guru Sahib to leave the hill and accompany him to Basali. When Guru Sahib received Raja Salahi Chand's invitation, he gave his consent and asked the Sikhs to march towards Sarsa stream. When Guru Sahib and the Sikhs were moving towards Sarsa stream, the hill army again attacked them. The Sikhs went on fighting as well as advancing towards the direction of the stream. Bhai Udey Singh and his associates stopped the movement of the hill soldiers with their arrows. Within a short time Guru Sahib and most of the Sikhs crossed the stream. Rest of the Sikhs also crossed very soon. During this battle too a few Sikhs were killed. Those who embraced martyrdom included Bhai Kesra Singh and Bhai Gokal Singh.

Gurdwara Basali

Basali is a small hill village, about 6 km from Nurpur Bedi. At the time of Guru Sahib it was the capital of the small State of Basali, ruled by Raja Salahi Chand. Guru Sahib spent 15 days at Basali (October 15 to October 30, 1700). Guru Sahib had stayed in the palace of Raja Salahi Chand. Later, the Sikhs built a Gurdwara at the site of the stay of Guru Sahib. This Gurdwara was, later, occupied by some local residents who converted it into a residence. This site is at the top of the hill. Now only the remains of a *Samadh* (mausoleum) of Raja Salahi Chand can be seen outside the building, which, earlier, was a Gurdwara. There have been some attempts to recover the original building of the Gurdwara. The Sikhs have built another Gurdwara at the foot of the hill village of Basali at the site where the Sikh soldiers had pitched their tents in October 1700.

Gurdwara Kalmot

Kalmot is a small hill village. It is also known as Khera-Kalmot because the only passage to this hill village is via village Khera. It is about 14 km from Anandpur Sahib and about 25 km from Basali.

During his stay at Basali, Guru Sahib planned a tour of the hill areas for hunting. In the chase of animals, the Sikhs had to go into deep hill forests. After a long chase they came across a jackal. A Sikh shot at it. Though it was seriously wounded but it still continued running. The Sikhs chased it. When they reached near the village of Kalmot, the local residents, who were hostile to the Sikhs, came out of their houses and began quarrelling with the Sikhs. One of them shot at the Sikhs. Bhai Jeewan Singh was killed by this shot. This resulted into a battle between the Sikhs and the residents of the village. Several villagers were killed in this battle. Later, they apologised and the Sikhs returned to Basali.

The Gurdwara at Kalmot was built in the nineteenth century. Then it was a small room. Later, the Sikhs built a big building. But, as many Sikhs do not know it, only a few of them visit the Gurdwara. Only a single Sikh attends the Gurdwara.

Gurdwara Bajrur

Bajrur is a village, about 9 km from Nurpur Bedi and about 15 km from Anandpur Sahib. A Gurdwara has been built in the memory of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. But, Guru Sahib had never visited this village. At the time of Guru Sahib, only Gujjar and Ranghar Muslims used to live here.

On March 15, 1701, the Sikhs of *Darap* area (area between the rivers Ravi and Chenab) visited Anandpur Sahib to make obeisance to Guru Sahib. On their way to Anandpur Sahib, they were attacked and robbed by the terrorist residents of this village. Chittu and Mittu, the ringleaders of the Ranghar and Gujjar gangs, not only robbed the Sikhs, but also challenged them to seek the help of Guru Sahib. When these Sikhs appeared in the court of Guru Sahib they reported the whole incident. Guru Sahib told them that had all of them taken *Khandey Di Pahul* and wearing *Kirpaans*, such a situation would not have arisen. He told them that they must always have some weapons for his/her defence.

After this Guru Sahib asked Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Bhai Udey Singh to lead a batch of 100 Sikhs and punish the terrorist robbers. On March 17, 1701, the Sikh soldiers went to Bajrur and punished the robbers and their collaborators. Chittu and Mittu were killed in the battle. After this, no one ever dared to attack the Sikhs visiting Anandpur Sahib.

Gurdwara Bassi Kalan

Bassi Kalan is at a distance of about 12 km from Hoshiarpur. A Gurdwara has been built here in the memory of a historic event from the life of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.

In March 1703, Devki Das, a Brahmin, visited Anandpur Sahib and told Guru Sahib that Jabar Jang Khan, the chief of an area in *Doaba*, had forcibly taken his wife. He requested Guru Sahib to help him in getting his wife back from the Khan. Guru Sahib at once ordered a band of 100 Sikhs under the command of Bhai Udey Singh and Sahibzada Ajit Singh to go to Bassi Kalan to get Brahmin's wife restored to him.

The next day this band reached Bassi Kalan and sent a message to the Khan to return the wife of the Brahmin. But, the Khan, instead of returning the wife of the Brahmin, ordered his men to attack the Sikhs. Soon a fierce battle began. All the hired soldiers of Khan were either killed or captured. Jabar Jang Khan too was killed. The Sikhs escorted the wife of the Brahmin to her residence. When this news reached the people of the area, they praised Guru Sahib and the Sikhs. Most of the residents of the area, including this Brahmin and his wife, embraced Sikhism. On the other hand, jealous Ajmer Chand became more inimical to the Sikhs.

Gurdwara Bibhaur Sahib

Gurdwara Bibhaur Sahib is situated on the bank of the River Satluj. It is at a distance of about one and a half km from Nangal. Bibhaur was a small hill State in the seventeenth century. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited this place in April-May 1692, on his way from Rivalsar, Mandi, Purmandal, Jammu, Pathankot, and Hoshiarpur to Anandpur Sahib. The ruler of Bibhaur gave a royal welcome to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib spent a few days in the palace

of the king. According to a tradition Guru Sahib had recited *Chaupai* hymn at this place. Earlier it was a small Gurdwara, now it is very impressive complex comprising of a big Gurdwara, *Langar* and a *Saran* (hostel). This Gurdwara has a beautiful panoramic view. It is surrounded by river on two sides and hills on one side.

Gurdwara Damdama Sahib (Katta Sabur)

This Gurdwara has been built in the village of Katta Sabur, about one km from the Nurpur Bedi-Balachaur road. According to a tradition Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited this place during his stay at Basali (October 15 to 30, 1700). This Gurdwara is also known as Katar Sahib.

Gurdwara Gur Palah

This Gurdwara is situated on the bank of the rivulet Suhan, on the border of Punjab and Himanchal Pradesh. It is at a distance of about 10 km from Nangal as well as Khera Kalmot. It was here that Baba Kaladhari (a descendant of Guru Nanak Sahib's younger son Lakhmi Das) met Guru Gobind Singh. By this time, none of the members of this family had joined Sikh faith. Baba Kaladhari requested Guru Sahib to initiate his family into Sikh faith. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib initiated Ajit Ram (son of Baba Kaladhari) and named him Ajit Singh. Later, some writer concocted a story that Baba Kaladhari had requested Guru Sahib, "I do not have any grandson, please, bless me with a son." Guru Sahib told him, "Get initiation into Khalsa and then you shall be blessed with a grandson." Several such-like hagiographic stories have been concocted by vested interests about Guru Sahib. Sikhism does not support miracles and such like blessings or curses. Birth and death are in the hands of Almighty only, hence this story is not in consonance with Sikhism.

Here, Guru Sahib had rested under a small *Palah* tree, hence the name of the Gurdwara. Even the village is, now, known as Gur Palah.

Gurdwara Baan Garh, Nurpur Bedi

Once the Moghuls led an expedition against Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. According to a tradition Guru Sahib shot an arrow towards the Moghul General (the Governor of Lahore/Sirhind). The arrow struck into the bedstead (they were sitting on). The Moghuls thought that that was a miracle of Guru Sahib. At this Guru Sahib shot another arrow. This arrow bore a letter also, which said, "It is not a miracle, it is just the art of arrow shooting." This story too seems to be an after thought or a concoction. It is not possible to shoot an arrow from Anandpur Sahib up to this place. This distance is not less than 10 km. There is no doubt that Guru Sahib was an expert of arrow shooting. This story might have been added to narrate Guru Sahib's prowess.

Gurdwara Bilaspur

Bilaspur is about 60 km from Keeratpur Sahib. It was the capital of the erstwhile Bilaspur (also known as Kehlor) State. Relationship between the Sikhs and the Bilaspur State began in 1613 when Guru Hargobind Sahib was imprisoned in the Gwalior Fort Prison. At that time more than 100 royal prisoners, including the rulers of Bilaspur and Handur, were inside this jail. They were released from the prison with the help of Guru Hargobind Sahib, on October 26, 1619. The rulers of Bilaspur remained grateful and loyal to Guru Sahib (till 1692) but after the installation of Ajmer Chand, the relationship between Bilaspur and the Sikhs came to an end. During the period of friendship of about seven decades, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and Gur Gobind Singh Sahib visited Bilaspur several times. It seems that Guru Hargobind Sahib and Guru Har Rai Sahib too might have visited the town. It was in the territory of the Bilaspur State that Guru Hargobind Sahib purchased the land of Keeratpur Sahib and established the new Sikh City State. Later, Guru Har Rai Sahib purchased the land of village Chanauli; Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib purchased the land of the village of Chakk Nanaki and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib purchased the land of the villages of Makhawal (present Anandpur Sahib), Sahota, Mianpur, Laudipur, Agampur, Tarapur.

From 1635 to 1705 (excepting the period from 1685 to 1688), this zone remained the major centre of the Sikh nation.

During this period all the rulers of Bilaspur State used to visit Keeratpur Sahib, Chakk Nanaki and Anandpur Sahib to make obeisance to Guru Sahib.

According to available historical sources, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib visited Bilaspur twice (1665 and 1672) and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited it at least four times (1672, 1688, 1691, 1692). Though the relationship between the Sikhs and Anandpur Sahib came to an end in 1692 but, later, during the time of the Sikh rulers, the Bilaspur State became a protectorate of the Sikh rulers. As a result, the rulers of Bilaspur built a Gurdwara in the palace of the king, in the memory of the visit of Guru Sahib. The Sikhs used to visit this Gurdwara frequently. After the annexation of the Punjab by the British, the royal family of Bilaspur banned the entry of the Sikhs in this Gurdwara. They, however, did not close the Gurdwara. In 1950s when the city of Bilaspur became a part of Gobind Sagar lake, the Gurdwara too had to be abandoned. Now a new Bilaspur city has been established around the old town and the Sikhs too have built a new Gurdwara.

Gurdwaras at Nahan, Paonta, Bhangani

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited Nahan on April 14, 1685 and spent a few days in the palace of the ruler of the State. Two Gurdwaras have been built in the town in the memory of the visit of Guru Sahib. Here too, some of the local Hindus hate the Sikhs and they always find excuses and opportunities to commit the acts of sacrilege of the Gurdwaras. Several incidents of attacks on the Sikh visitors to the Gurdwaras have been reported but the police have always remained silent observer to such crimes.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib founded the town of Paonta Sahib in April 1685. From April 29, 1685 to October 27, 1688, he stayed in this town. There are several Gurdwaras associated with the stay of Guru Sahib in this town. It was here that Ram Rai (who had been excommunicated by Guru Har Rai Sahib) visited Guru Sahib and apologised.

During Guru Sahib's stayed at Paonta, Fateh Shah, the ruler of Garhwal State attacked the town on September 18, 1688. A battle was fought at Bhangani. At Bhangani too two Gurdwaras

have been built in the memory of the battle and the martyrdom of the four Sikhs.

Gurdwara Nadaun

Nadaun is a town, about 12 km from Jawalamukhi and about 32 km from Kangra. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib had visited this town in 1691.

During those days, Dowager Rani Champa was the queen of Bilaspur State and Bhim Chand was the crowned prince. Both of them were loyal to Guru Sahib. In March 1691, the Governor of Lahore sent a battalion of the Moghul army, under the command of Alif Khan, to collect revenue and tribute from the hill States. Before his arrival Alif Khan had sent letters to the hill States to pay heavy amounts as taxes. When Bhim Chand received this letter, he sent his minister to Guru Sahib to save him from the attack of the Moghul army. Rulers of some other Hill States also sent similar requests. Guru Sahib assured them full help and asked the Sikhs to be ready for a fight against the invading Moghul army.

On March 19, 1691, the Sikh soldiers, under the command of Guru Sahib, reached the city of Nadaun, near Kangra (on the bank of river Beas). Guru Sahib divided the Sikh army in different units under the command of Bhai Nand Chand Sangha, Bhai Mani Ram, Bhai Aalam Chand Nachanna, Bhai Dharm Chand Chhibber, Bhai Udey Ram, Bhai Bachitar Ram etc. The next day Alif Khan's army attacked them. The Sikhs fought bravely and killed several soldiers of the invading army. The Sikhs had been waiting for an opportunity to fight for the past two and a half years (since the battle of Bhangani). The enthusiasm of the Sikh soldiers compelled Alif Khan to flee the battlefield. In this battle a large number of Moghul soldiers were killed. On the Sikh side, Bhai Sohan Chand (brother of Bhai Mani Ram), Mool Chand (son of Bhai Raghupati Rai Kamboj of Khemkaran) etc. embraced martyrdom. After the victory, Guru Sahib spent seven days in the palace of the ruler of Nadaun and then left for Anandpur Sahib. A Gurdwara was built in memory of the visit of Guru Sahib inside the palace of the king of Nadaun. The first building was a small one. Now a big building has been constructed.

Gurdwara Rivalsar

Rivalsar is a small town in the Shivalik range. One can reach Rivalsar via Mandi. Hundreds of years ago it was a great centre of the Buddhist religion. The signs of the Buddha shrines can still found there. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited this village in 1692.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib had helped the hill rulers against the attack of Alif Khan, in March 1691 and the Moghuls made no further attack for several months, yet, the hill rulers were afraid of the Moghul army. They expressed their fears to Bhim Chand (the king of Bilaspur State). Bhim Chand conveyed the feelings of the hill rulers to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib sent a message to Bhim Chand to call a conference of the hill rulers. Bhim Chand invited all the hill rulers at Rivalsar on March 29, 1692. Guru Sahib presided over this conference. The hill rulers requested Guru Sahib to grant them protection from the invasions of the Moghul rulers. Guru Sahib agreed to help them subject to the condition that they shall remain united and would never accept subordination of the Moghuls in any manner. When hill rulers accepted this, Guru Sahib agreed to patronise them. A Gurdwara has been built in the memory of the visit of Guru Sahib. Some of the local Hindus are hostile to the Sikhs and they have attacked the Sikhs in this town several times.

Gurdwara Bhattha Sahib

Gurdwara Bhattha Sahib has been built in the village of Kotla Nihang, about one km from Ropar. This place was the territory of a Pathan chief Shamas Khan (and later his successors). He had a small fort in the village. Guru Hargobind Sahib visited this place in 1635. He stayed at the residence of Bhai Shamas Khan. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib too visited the Khan family several times. There was a brick kiln belonging to the Khan family. According to a hagiographic narration the brick kiln became cold when Guru Sahib's horse stepped on it.

A fine Gurdwara has been built, on the ruins of kiln, in the memory of the visit of Guru Sahib. Another Gurdwara has been built by the side of the old fort (belonging to Bhai Nihang Khan) in the memory of Bhai Bachitar Singh who breathed his last,

inside this fort, on December 8, 1705. Though Guru Hargobind Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib too had stayed in this fort but the Gurdwara in the memory of their visit has been built on the ruins of the brick kiln only. At present, the fort is in the possession of some private owner. In the main Gurdwara, a sword and a *Kataar* (presented by Guru Sahib to Bhai Nihang Khan) have been preserved. In the other Gurdwara, built in the memory of Bhai Bachitar Singh, a shield (believed to be belonging to Guru Sahib) has been preserved.

Gurdwara Bari Sahib

Gurdwara Bari Sahib has been built in the memory of Bibi Mumtaj, in village Bari (about 20 km from Kotla Nihang). In this village a tomb of (Mata) Mumtaj too exists on another hill. Mumtaj was the daughter of Bhai Nihang Khan. When Moghuls visited his fort in search of the Sikhs, Bhai Bachitar Singh, who had been seriously wounded, was still inside his fort. The Khan lied to the soldiers that he (Bhai Bachitar Singh) was his son in law. Bibi Mumtaj took this lie as a command from the Almighty and accepted Bachitar Singh as her husband. After the death of Bachitar Singh, Mumtaj did not marry and spent her life as a saint. She spent the last years of her life in village Bari.

Gurdwaras at Keeratpur Sahib

Keeratpur Sahib was established by Baba Gurditta (son of Guru Hargobind Sahib) in 1624. Guru Hargobind Sahib had bought the land for this village from Raja Kalyan Chand when he (the Raja) visited Guru Sahib at Chakk Ram Das (Amritsar) in 1621. Keeratpur Sahib was carved out of the territory of the villages of Kalyanpur, Jiowal, Bhagwala and Bhatauli. All these four villages still have their separate identity. Though the territory of all these villages is known as Keeratpur but officially all the five villages have distinct entity.

Though Baba Gurditta had established this village but Guru Hargobind Sahib did not stay here. Guru Sahib moved to this village in May 1635. From May 1635 to 1664, Keeratpur Sahib remained the headquarters of Guru Sahib. Guru Har Rai Sahib and Guru Harkrishan Sahib were born here. Installation of Guru Har Rai Sahib and Guru Harkrishan Sahib was performed here. Guru Hargobind Sahib and Guru Har Rai Sahib breathed their last in this village. Keeratpur Sahib was the seat of the court of Akal Takht Sahib from 1635 to 1664. There are several Gurdwaras at Keeratpur Sahib:

Gurdwara Charan Kanwal/Kamal

This Gurdwara has been built in the memory of the visit of Guru Nanak Sahib and Bhai Mardana Ji. Guru Nanak Sahib visited this place during one of his missionary journeys. At the time of the visit of Guru Sahib the present village of Keeratpur Sahib did not exist. Only a few people lived in this area. A Muslim saint Bhai Buddan Shah used to live here, on a nearby hill. When he came to know about the visit of Guru Nanak Sahib he came to see him. He served Guru Sahib with goat milk and had a discourse with him (Guru Sahib). The tomb of Bhai Buddan Shah

still exists at the top of a hill nearby. The managers of this tomb have propagated that if a Sikh visitor to Keeratpur Sahib does not visit the tomb of Buddan Shah his pilgrimage remains futile. It is utterly wrong. Firstly, there is no concept of pilgrimage of Gurdwaras in Sikhism. A Sikh visits a Gurdwara to remember the history associated with that place and not for the purpose of pilgrimage. Secondly, a Sikh must not bow before any tomb or any other non-Sikh shrine. It is a sin for a Sikh to bow before such places. A Sikh should respect the feelings of others but must not worship in the shrines of the other religions. If a Sikh visits the tomb of Bhai Buddan Shah just for tourism purposes or for historical curiosity sake, then it is not wrong, but, to make offerings there is a sin for a Sikh.

Gurdwara Sheesh Mahal

After the laying of the foundation of Keeratpur Sahib the first building to come up in the village was the residence of Baba Gurditta. Sheesh Mahal has been built at the site of the residence of Baba Gurditta. Guru Hargobind Sahib, Guru Har Rai Sahib and Guru Harkrishan Sahib too stayed here. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib also visited this place. This was the residence of Guru Sahib from 1635 to 1664. Later, the family of Baba Suraj Mall continued living here.

Gurdwara Takht Sahib

In May 1635, Guru Hargobind Sahib moved to Keeratpur Sahib. He built a throne at the site of the present Gurdwara *Takht* Kot Sahib in order to hold his court here. He performed the functions of Akal Takht Sahib at this place. Hence, it was the seat of Akal Takht Sahib from 1635 to 1664. (After this Bakala remained the seat of the Takht, followed by Patna, Bakala again, Chakk Nanaki, Patna, Chakk Nanaki again, Paonta, Chakk Nanaki again, Anandpur Sahib, Talwandi Sabo and Nander).

As it was the Takht, the ceremonies of installation of Guru Har Rai Sahib and Guru Harkrishan Sahib were performed here. Guru Har Rai Sahib got this Takht building fortified, hence it was also known as Takht Kot Sahib also. In some sources it has also been referred to as Kot Guru Har Rai Sahib.

Gurdwara Damdama Sahib

Here, Guru Sahib used to hold congregations. It was also known as *Diwan-i-Aam*. Guru Hargobind Sahib, Guru Har Rai Sahib and Guru Harkrishan Sahib used to hold congregations at this site.

Gurdwara Harimandir Sahib

Guru Har Rai Sahib had set up a big garden in this area. There were several fountains in this garden. This garden was rich with several plants of fruits, herbs and vegetables. According to a tradition Dara Shikoh (brother of Aurangzeb) once visited Guru Har Rai Sahib here. Guru Sahib gave him a herb that gave him relief from a chronic disease.

Gurdwara Chubachcha Sahib

Though it is a small building now, at the time of Guru Har Rai Sahib it was the store house of fodder for the horses, elephants and the other pets kept by Guru Sahib. According to different sources, Guru Sahib had 2200 horses, a couple of elephants, goats, buffaloes and cows etc.

Gurdwara Chubachcha Sahib (2)

The major stable of Guru Sahib's horses was, however, at village Chanauli (also known as Charnauli). Chanauli is at a distance of about 4 km from Keeratpur Sahib. This village was purchased by Guru Sahib from the ruler of Bilaspur in 1660-61. At Chanauli also there is a Gurdwara, also known as Chubachcha Sahib.

Gurdwara Tir Sahib

According to a tradition, once Guru Hargobind Sahib shot an arrow from this place. This arrow fell near the present site of Gurdwara Patalpuri. This Gurdwara has been built near Gurdwara Baba Gurditta.

Gurdwara Patalpuri

Guru Hargobind Sahib and Guru Har Rai Sahib were cremated here. During the time of Guru Sahib the dead bodies of all the residents of Keeratpur Sahib were cremated here. Even Baba Suraj Mall and Ani Rai (both, sons of Guru Hargobind Sahib), Bibi Rup Kaur (daughter of Guru Har Rai Sahib) etc. were cremated here. This Gurdwara was built in the beginning of the twentieth century. Nowadays a large number of Sikhs immerse the ashes of their dead relatives in the water, on the backside of the Gurdwara. This is not a good practice. According to Sikhism, the ashes of the dead should be immersed in flowing water and there is no sanctity of any particular site. Moreover, the flow of water near this Gurdwara is not much, hence most of the ashes remain lying in the shallow waters. It is becoming a health hazard also.

Gurdwara Bibangarh

Bhai Jaita (Jiwan Singh after initiation), Bhai Uda Rathore and Bhai Nanu Ram (Nanu Singh after initiation) Dilwali, while carrying the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib from Delhi to Anandpur Sahib, rested here (on November 16, 1675). From here, they placed the head in a palanquin and went to Chakk Nanaki to present it to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.

Gurdwara Baba Gurditta

This Gurdwara has been built on the top of a hill on the border of Keeratpur Sahib and Kalyanpur. Baba Gurditta (son of Guru Hargobind Sahib) used to live here. He was cremated at this place. This Gurdwara is near Gurdwara Tir Sahib.

Gurdwara Baoli Sahib

This Gurdwara has been built near a *Baoli* (deep well), on the foot of the hill of Gurdwara Tir Sahib and Gurdwara Baba Gurditta. There is another *Baoli* near Gurdwara Harimandir Sahib. Baba Gurditta built this Baoli in 1624. Baba Sri Chand began the digging of this Baoli.

Gurdwara Manji Sahib

This was the residence of Bibi Rup Kaur (daughter of Guru Har Rai Sahib). Bibi Rup Kaur was married to Bhai Khem Karan of Pasrur (district Sialkot) on November 4, 1662. She stayed at Pasrur for only three days and then moved to village Kalyanpur (adjacent to Keeratpur Sahib). Later, she moved to this house and spent the rest of her life here. Four relics belonging to Bibi Rup Kaur have been preserved here. These are: a hand fan made by the Bibi, a handkerchief embroidered by the Bibi herself, a *Seli-Topi* (a sort of cap) belonging to Baba Sri Chand (which he had presented to Baba Gurditta, the grandfather of Bibi Rup Kaur) and a volume of hymns from seventeenth century belonging to Bibi Rup Kaur. The old building of this Gurdwara was replaced by a new building in 2002-03.

Other Gurdwaras in this Zone

Gurdwara Mitthasar

Mitthasar is a village, near Kotla, about 3 km from Keeratpur Sahib and about 6 km from Anandpur Sahib. According to a tradition Guru Hargobind Sahib visited this village more than once. At the time of Guru Sahib, the water of all the wells in this village was brackish. Guru Sahib got built this well. The water of this well only is worth drinking.

Gurdwara Jindabri

This Gurdwara has been built in the north of the village of Jindbari/Jandbari. Jindbari is at a distance of about 8 km from Anandpur Sahib, about 2 km on the left side on Anandpur Sahib-Nangal road. Baba Gurditta (son of Guru Hargobind Sahib) spent some days in this village. Some vested propagandists have concocted a hagiographic story about Baba Gurditta giving life to a dead cow. Sikhism does not believe in such miracles. (Such like fiction has been propagated about Baba Atal also).

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib too visited Jindbari once on his way to Anandpur Sahib.

Gurdwara Barota Sahib

Gurdwara Barota Sahib has been built in the memory of the visit of Guru Har Rai Sahib. According to a tradition, Guru Har Rai Sahib used to tie one of his elephants to a *Barota* (a small bunyan tree) here, hence the name. Gurdwara Barota Sahib is situated in the village of Bhakola, about 2 km from Keeratpur Sahib.

Gurdwara Bhogpura

Bhogpura village is at a distance of about 4 km from

Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited this village once. A Gurdwara has been built to commemorate his visit to the village.

Gurdwara Attari Sahib

Attari is a small village in between Anandpur Sahib and Keeratpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib visited this village at least twice. A Gurdwara has been built to preserve the memory of the visit of Guru Sahib.

Gurdwaras yet to be built

The above Gurdwaras are associated with the memory of the stay of Guru Sahib (Sixth Nanak to Tenth Nanak) in this zone. Besides, there are Gurdwaras at Chamkaur, Machhiwara and on route to Talwandi Sabo (Guru Gobind Singh Sahib's last journey). But, still, there are some places where Gurdwaras have yet to be built. A Gurdwara has been built at **Malakpur** (6 km from Ropar) in the memory of Bhai Bachitar Singh (who was wounded here in a battle on December 6, 1705). But, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib had also visited this village at least twice. He was arrested from this village on July 12, 1675. No Gurdwara has been built in his memory. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib spent about three months in the **Bassi Pathanan** Fort prison. A Gurdwara has yet to be built there also. There is no Gurdwara at **Purmandal, Jammu, Hoshiarpur, Pathankot, Ajner** (district Ludhiana). Gurdwara at **Nirmohgarh** too has not yet been completed. A Gurdwara in the memory of the martyrs of village **Jhakkhian** (December 6, 1705) too has yet to be built.

Message of Anandpur Sahib:

Live and let live.

Goal of Anandpur Sahib:

Right of self-determination to every one.

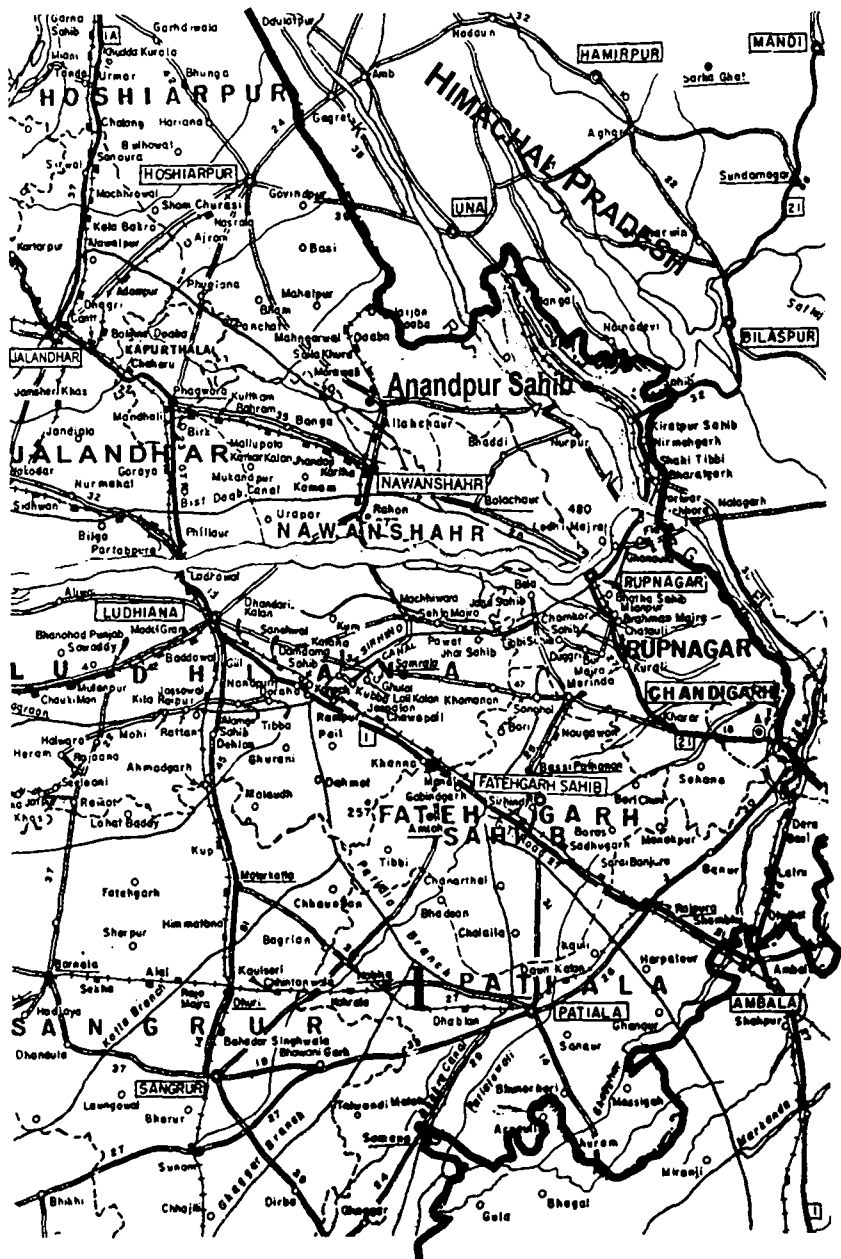
Slogan of Anandpur Sahib:

Neither fear nor frighten any one.

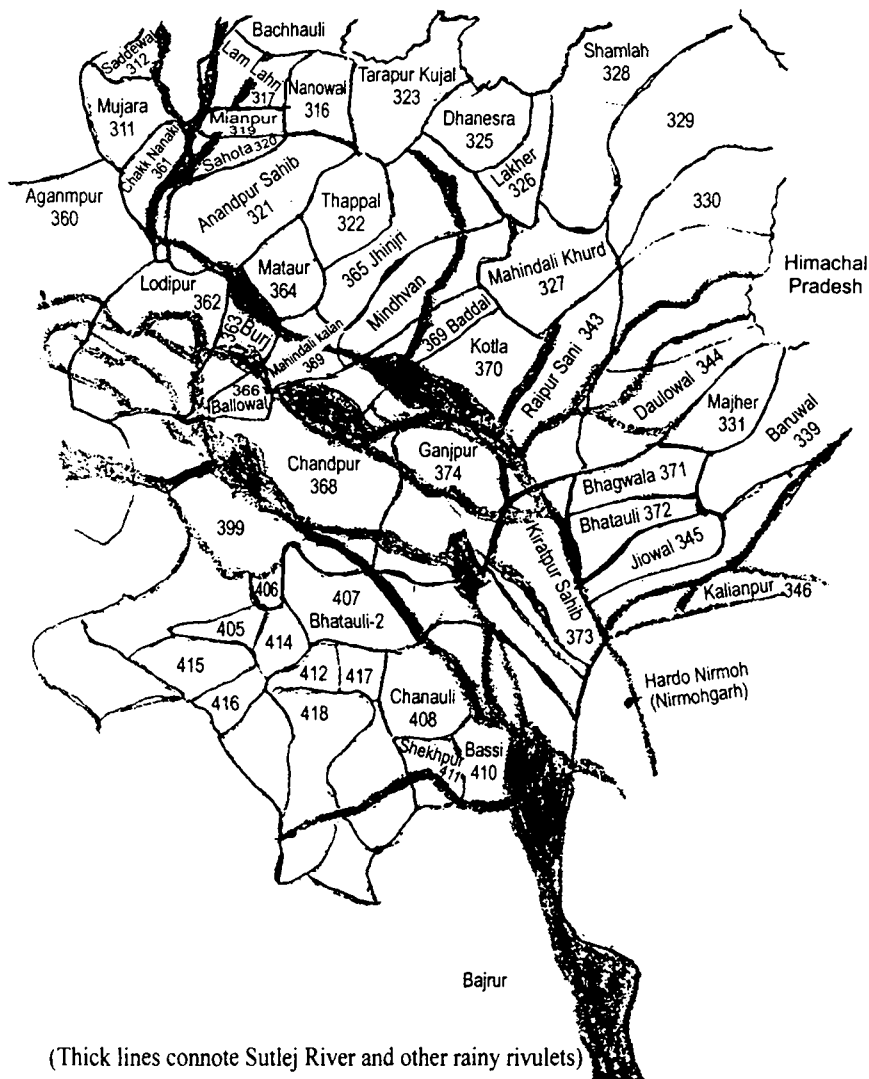
Commitment of Anandpur Sahib:

**Protection of the weak and oppressed and
annihilation of injustice, cruelty and inhumanism.**

Anandpur Sahib in the Map of Punjab



Demarcation of the Villages of Anandpur



(Thick lines connote Sutlej River and other rainy rivulets)

According to Government record, the village Chakk Nanaki bears the number 361, Anandpur Sahib 321, Aganmpur 360, Lodipur 362, Mianpur 319, Sahota 320, Thappal 322, Tarapur 323 and Mataur bears the number 364. All these are separate villages.

Kiratpur Sahib bears the number 373, Bhagwala 371, Bhatauli 372, Jiowal 345, Kalianpur 346 and Chanauli 408.

A Map of Anandpur Sahib in 1925 A.D.

● Connotes Gurdwara

