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**GENERAL HARI SINGH NALWA**

**Published by S. Surat Singh Jogi, B.A., (Hons.)  
Secretary Cunningham Historical Society,  
28, Chamberlain Road, Lahore.**

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**Printed by Mr. Rachpal Singh Jau  
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GENERAL HARI SINGH NALWA

[1791—1837]

BY PERMISSION CURATOR LAHORE MUSEUM.

**GENERAL  
HARI SINGH NALWA**

**1791-1837**

**BY**

**AUTAR SINGH SANDHU, M. A.,**

**CUNNINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**LAHORE.**

**1935.**



TO

**Prof. JODH SINGH M. A.**

WITH

***Respect & Gratitude***



## Transformation

“It is no longer the record of a sect, who, revering the conciliatory and mild tenets of their founder, desired more to protect themselves than to injure others; but that of a nation, who adding to a deep sense of the injuries they had sustained from a bigoted and over bearing government, all the ardour of men commencing military career of glory listened, with rapture, to a (leader who).....  
.....called upon his followers, with every feeling of manhood, to lay aside their peaceable habits, to graft the resolute courage of the soldier on the enthusiastic faith of the devotee, to swear eternal war with the cruel and haughty Mohammedans, and to devote themselves to steel, as the only means of obtaining every blessing that this world, or that to come, would afford to mortals.”

*Malcolm.*



## PREFACE

IN WRITING oriental biographies it is very difficult to separate truth from fiction. 'The account of their lives is generally recorded either by devoted disciples and warm adherents or by violent enemies and bigoted persecutors. The former from enthusiastic admirations decorate them with every quality and accomplishment that can adorn men; the latter misrepresent their characters and detract from all their merits and pretensions.' So far so, that ordinary men are made national heroes and national heroes are shown as demi-gods. Hari Singh's biographer finds that he has to steer clear of those two extremes. There are writers who attach a superhuman power to his name. There are historians who regard him a barbarian. Much injustice has been done by European chroniclers who make the gross mistake of seeing things Indian through European glasses. So under the present circumstances, when the statements are poles asunder, the writer cannot reach the truth until he tests every statement on the touchstone of his historical judgment. After thorough investigation I have depended on the moderate accounts for facts and as for criticism I claim to be somewhat original. The Persian works like *Umdat-ul-Tarikh* and *Zafarnama Ranjīt Singh* are reliable accounts, but they do not give us a connected account of Hari Singh's life. Verification of dates has also put me to a considerable trouble. The Indian accounts mention the military activities only and hopelessly neglect the civil, revenue and police administration of the country. Economic aspect is not at all touched. We seldom hear about any reform or change made in these spheres. The Gazetteers throw some light but they are not of much use.



I have divided the sources of my study in order of their reliability into five sections and have arranged them as follows:—

1. Persian Published and Unpublished books written by contemporary historians.
2. Political correspondence of the East India Company's Agents, Travellers and Officials—chiefly for the North-Western Frontier Policy of the Khalsa Darbar.
3. Indian and Foreign tourists and military adventurers.
- 4\*. Papers of the British Deputationists.
5. Secondary authorities:—
  - (a) Accounts by Indian historians in Persian, Vernacular and English.
  - (b) Accounts by Foreign writers.

To make the Monograph more comprehensive I have not proceeded strictly chronologically. Hari Singh remained Governor of Hazara province from 1822 till his death in 1837. During this period of fifteen years he fought against Azim Khan, checked the Hindustani inroads, occupied Peshawar and occasionally interfered in the adjoining territories. To avoid confusion, I have dealt with his activities in the Trans-Indus lands in three separate chapters. This has made departure from strict chronological order inevitable.

Believing in the humanitarian and scientific principles of the modern world, I have tried to write this account in a dispassionate and disinterested manner. Throughout my work I have carefully avoided taking a communal view. I regard the Nalwa Sardar as a hero of the Panjab or of India, rather than a champion of the Sikhs alone. My aim is to carefully examine the stains of tyranny and

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\* In Bibliography No. 3 and No. 4 are mentioned under one head.

bigotry associated with the name of this general, and I shall think my labours amply rewarded if, through these pages, I succeed in giving my readers an impartial account of the life and work of a great hero. But surely it is not my object to overlook the evils of Sikh Rule and to eulogize Hari Singh or to condemn the Muslim ideas and governments or vice versa. I have tackled some of the controversial issues and have tried to deal with them in an historical rather than in a partisan spirit.

But history after all is 'a black business, an orgy of fantastic and luxurious cruelty.' It is the record of evils and atrocities committed by one party over the other. Human heart at one time turns to pity and at another to condemnation, but the duty of the reader is to take all along a scientific, sober and unemotional view of all that he studies. He should not be carried away by a bias or frenzy. 'Communalists are not born, they are made. All the communalism which disturbs the political, social and economic life of India is the result of wrong schooling in history. Much has already been done to spread this evil both by Indian and Foreign writers and by the Communal leaders. Let there be no more of this madness. India cannot be Mohammedan India or Hindu India.' All the communities must learn the art of living together. No community can annihilate its rival community for 'Nature though careless of the individual is careful of the race.' Hence to achieve the true happiness of life we should forgive and forget our past. We should not allow our minds to be biased by the historical past, 'for neither the Hindus nor the Musalmans are angels today and they have certainly not been so in the past. But however strong we feel that our co-religionists have at any particular period been persecuted or injured, it is not possible for us to redress their accounts before the Judge

who maketh His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just *and* on the unjust. It is our duty to work in the present for the future with the co-operation and goodwill which leads to the kingdom of Heaven and to a purified City and forgiving Lord. Forgive and ye shall be forgiven. For the same measure that ye mete out to others, it shall be measured out to you again. A young Indian's freedom for communal prejudices is not indicative of his patriotism only that may be a minor matter but a symptom of his spiritual well-being and his mental health.'

No line of this Monograph could have been written without the constant consultation of Works like Sohan Lal's *Umdat-ul-Tarikh*, Dewan Amar Nath's *Zafar Nama Ranjit Singh*, Griffin's *Punjab Chiefs*, Mason's and Hugel's *Travels*, Latif's *History of the Punjab*, Dr. Chopra's *Punjab as a Sovereign State* and Sardar Amar Singh's '*Chamkda Hira*,' — a book of extensive research work. I am deeply indebted to to Prof. Rajindra Singh, M. A., and Prof. Sant Singh, M.A., of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, for partly doing the cumbrous duty of going through the Manuscripts; to my friend, Mr. Harbant Singh, M.A., for general assistance, without whose help in various matters the task would have been rendered difficult; to Prof. Ganda Singh Kewal, Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, for giving me an easy access to his small but valuable library; to Mr. Rachhpal Singh Jaura, B. A., B. T., of the Jaura Educational Press, for his intelligent proof-reading and much hard work in other directions; and to Prof. Pritam Singh, M. A., for some valuable suggestions when the book was in press.

I must acknowledge grateful thanks to Dr. Gulshan Lal Chopra M. A., Ph. D., Bar.-at-Law, Offg. Keeper of Records, Panjab Government for his very kindly permitting me the

unrestricted use of certain manuscripts on the Sikh-Afghan relations lying in the Archives of his office; to Mr. S. N. Gupta, Offg. Curator, Central Museum, Lahore, for allowing me to reproduce a portrait and a coin of General Hari Singh Nalwa; to Dr. Randhir Singh Sandhu, M. D., President, Cunningham Historical Society, for the encouragement he has given me by publishing this monograph; and last though not the least to S. Harcharn Singh Bajwa, B. A., B. T., General Secretary, Central Khalsa Youth League, for arousing in me genuine and keen interest for research in this unexplored field of Sikh History, and without whose constant encouragement this labour of love could not have been undertaken.

Philloke,

(Gujranwala)

*8th May, 1935.*

**A. S. Sandhu.**



## CONTENTS

| Chapter |  | Page  |
|---------|--|-------|
|         | Foreword                               | v     |
|         | Preface                                | vii   |
|         | Introduction                           | xv    |
|         | Genealogical Tree                      | xxiii |
| I       | Early Life of Hari Singh               | 1     |
| II      | Early Life of Hari Singh (Contd.)      | 4     |
| III     | Nalwa Sardar as Governor of Kashmir    | 15    |
| IV      | Hari Singh Nalwa as Governor of Hazara | 26    |
| V       | War against the Hindustanies           | 37    |
| VI      | Annexation of Peshawar                 | 44    |
| VII     | Flight of Dost Mohammad Khan           | 55    |
| VIII    | Battle of Jamrud                       | 74    |
| IX      | Character and Achievements             | 91    |

### APPENDIX

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| I   | Coins struck by Hari Singh                     | 113 |
| II  | Why Hari Singh was generally victorious        | 113 |
| III | Hari Singh's Trans-Indus Land Policy           | 117 |
| IV  | Jagirs of Hari Singh                           | 123 |
| V   | Buildings erected by Hari Singh                | 124 |
| VI  | Character of a Sikh Soldier                    | 125 |
| VII | Treaty between Ranjit Singh<br>and Shah Shujah | 125 |
|     | Bibliography                                   | 130 |

### ILLUSTRATIONS

- |                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Portrait of Hari Singh | Frontispiece.    |
| 2. Impression of Coins.   | Facing page 113. |



## INTRODUCTION

INTOLERANCE in religion, centralization and absolutism in politics and discrimination in laws in society, were the chief characteristics of the Aurangzebian age. Forcible conversions to Islam desecration of temples, re-imposition of *Jezia*\*, closing of the State-service to the Non-Muslims, distrust and dismissal of the old and loyal servants were the results of Aurangzeb's whim and fanaticism. The Mughal Government, as all other Governments in those days, was autocratic and autocracy had demoralized the rulers. The Emperor himself was simple, austere and laborious. "He ate little, slept only three hours, and completely abstained from drink. He did not wear gaudy clothes, made a sparing use of jewellery, and kept aside all gold and silver vessels. He regarded the public treasury as a sacred trust and stitched caps with his own hands to defray his personal expenses. Unlike other kings he was free from lust, and the number of his wives fell short even of the prescribed standard" but these virtues were poor substitutes for his 'proneness to suspicion'† his 'bigoted intolerance' and his 'implacable vindictiveness', and even his high principles of life could not count much, because the Vazirs and nobles who surrounded his throne and provincial governors and regional commandants, who administered the far-flung provinces, were demoralized in the highest degree. They were immoral, dishonest and oppressive. Slave girls and *nautch* girls had 'undermined the foundations of the characters. Polygamy was also very common in the official circles. Aurangzeb had alienated the sympathies of his Hindu as well as Shia Subjects. He even created wide gulf

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\*..... a tax which Akbar had disdained, and Shah Jahan had not dared to think of.... ..'

†.....He had a taster and his physician had to lead the way, take pill for pill, dose for dose, that the Emperor might see their operation upon the body of the doctor before he ventured himself.'



between himself and his nobles. His policy of complete centralization was disliked by the high officials; as a matter of fact it was a gross political blunder for history had repeatedly shown that "instrument of power broke in the hands that held it too tightly." One man, however strong and energetic, could not wield so much power. Above all he was not even a man of family affections. He had imprisoned his father, murdered his brothers and nephews 'in some cases in clear violation of his solemn words.' To his sons and daughters he meted out a similar treatment. Sultan, his eldest son, was put in jail. Muazzam was disgraced very much. Kam Bakhsh who aspired to be the next emperor was 'put under restraint.' Even Zeb-un-Nisa, a talented princess, was sent to prison because of her sisterly devotion towards her brother Akbar.

And the nobles knew full well that a man like Aurangzeb could not be their friend and well-wisher. They did not love him. They only feared him. All this led to general discontent and later on to revulsions, rebellions and revolutions. The Marhattas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs all showed signs of disaffection and disloyalty. Generosity in politics was folly to him. The unforgiving Emperor intoxicated with power assassinated Guru Teg Bahadur after a great torture, murdered Sambhajee, the successor of Sivajee 'with circumstances of exceptional barbarity'\*and dealt in similar manner with Rajput Chiefs and Shia Kings. The narrow, ungenerous and high treatment of his enemies created a large number of antagonists for his successors. Discontent reached its zenith and the state of affairs had gone beyond remedy. No hand however gifted could mend the situation. 'Even [if] Aurangzeb had left a successor of his own mental and moral stature, it may be

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\* '.....limbs were hacked off one by one and flesh was thrown to dogs' [Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, Vol. IV, p. 403].

doubted whether the process of disintegration could have been stayed. This disease was too far advanced for even the most heroic surgery.' The Empire founded by the adventurous spirit of Babar and consolidated by the political sagacity of Akbar was thus set on the path of destruction by the unstatesmanlike nature of Aurangzeb and rapidly carried on by the incapability of his successors.

His death in 1707 removed the shadow of fear and the people openly defied the Imperial authority which had fallen into weak and incapable hands. "The Marhattas became so bold" says Lanepool, "that they plundered on the skirts of the Grand Army and openly scoffed at the Emperor and no man dared leave the Mughal lines without a strong escort." Somewhere else he remarks that "Even before the end of his reign Hindustan was in confusion and the signs of the coming dissolution had appeared." And the Emperor was constrained to admit that 'Sivajee was a Great Captain' and added 'My armies have always been employed against him for nineteen years and nevertheless his state has always been increasing.' Khafi Khan, an eulogizer of Aurangzeb, was also obliged to confess that "Every plan that he formed came to little good; every enterprize failed."

His successors were not even distinguished soldiers and wise diplomats as the Puritan Emperor—a son of diplomacy and remnant of the 'old lion-hearted stock.' "A kingdom which depended for its existence mainly on military strength was bound to be pulled to pieces like a child's map, when its destinies were controlled by men who were neither warriors nor statesmen and who could be utilized by self-seeking adventurers for their own aggrandisement." The centrifugal tendencies so common in Indian history made their appearance. Ambitious chiefs and disloyal nobles hoisted the flag of

revolt. The unnatural parts of the Empire, forcibly brought under subjection in the days of power, became independent in the golden age of plunder and the provincial *mansabdars* finding the sceptre to be in feeble hands set themselves as petty sovereigns.

The discontented subjects were also incensed. So tired of Muslim yoke, they devised schemes for independence. Under the available leaders they organized themselves against the government and tried their fortunes on the battle-fields. Out of those who stood for existence the Sikhs were smaller in number, undisciplined and unarmed; the enemy had a numerous army trained and equipped. The contest was most uneven. But their Great Guru, who 'had taken up sparrows and taught them to hunt down Imperial falcons', infused in them a spirit 'which would never let them bow before the most inhuman and persistent oppression and the most devilish persecution.' 'Let go my head, but live aye my true faith and discipleship' was the motto that he succeeded in engraving indelibly on the hearts of his Khalsa. 'Men who had never touched a sword or shouldered a gun', says Dr. Sir G. C. Narang "became heroes. Confectioners, washermen and barbers became leaders of armies, before whom Rajas quailed and Nawabs cowed with terror'. A well-known incident will illustrate this spirit. 'Once a new musket was brought to the Guru as a present. He wanted to try it as he humorously said at somebody's forehead. Several Sikhs came forward vying with one another to be his target, thinking it a great fortune to meet death at his hands. And the later Mughals found in these sturdy saint-soldiers their most stubborn and invincible foes. 'To fight such people', they concluded after experience, 'was to invite self-destruction.' Ahmad Shah Abdali, on hearing the account of the adventu-

rous life the Sikhs led, prophesied that these fearful men would become rulers some day.

G. R. C. Williams thus describes a Sikh:

"Hardy, strong-limbed, well-mounted and armed with a spear, sword and good matchlock, the Sikh Ulhan's endurance and rapidity of movement were quite commensurate with his rapacity enabling him to baffle, if not defy, superior numbers. At a pinch, he could march some twenty miles or thirty a day on no better fare than a little parched gram washed down with pure cold water. A tent he despised; baggage in the ordinary sense of the word he had none. Besides his weapons, his whole kit consisted of horse-gear, a few of the simplest cooking utensils, and two blankets, one for himself and another for his faithful steed. Although his tactics mainly resolved themselves into a prolonged series of skirmishes conducted somewhat after the Parthian fashion, yet in the strife of men contending hand to hand, he was terrible."\*

Such were the Sikhs, the children of the Guru, spirited and inspired. As for the Moghals, three or four generations of court-life had ruined their ancient manliness. Babar would have scorned to command such officers as surrounded Aurangzeb in his gigantic campaign. Instead of hardy swords-men they had become padded dandies. They were adorned for a procession, when they should have been in rough campaigning outfit. Their Camp was splendid and luxurious as if they were on guard at the palace of Delhi. The very rank and file grumbled if their tents were not furnished as comfortably as in quarters at Agra and their requirements attracted an immense crowd of followers, twenty times as numerous as the effective strength. So vast a host was like a plague of locusts in the country, it devoured every thing : and though at time\*

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\*Calcutta Review, No.119 (1875), taken from S.Nahar Singh's *Struggle for Breath*, p. 81.

it was richly provisioned, at others the Marhattas cut off communication.....and famine speedily ensued.' At another place remarks the same author that 'India had proved the Capua of Babar's veterans, and the enervating climate had relaxed their nerves and softened their training, while drink had become the curse not only of the Imperial house, many of whom died of it, but also of the nobles and the whole court. The heroic soldiers of the early Empire and their no less heroic wives had given place to a vicious and delicate breed of grandees. The ancestors of Aurangzeb, who swooped down India from the North, were ruddy men in boots. The courtiers, among whom Aurangzeb grew up, were pale persons in petticoats. Babar, the founder of the Empire, had swum every river he met during thirty years' campaigning, the luxurious noble around the youthful Aurangzeb wore skirts, made of innumerable folds of the finest white muslin, and went to war in palanquins.' Such was the contrast between the character of the rulers and their incensed subjects and here is to be found the secret of their colossal failure.

The work of destruction begun by Aurangzeb and helped on by the later Moghals was completed by Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Their policy was military adventure rather than territorial acquisition. They loved destruction and not construction. They preferred plunder to established Government. If Abdali had desired to carve a kingdom for himself in the Punjab, it is quite possible that like Alexander or Mohammad Ghori he would have been able to detach it from Hindustan.

The later Moghal kings became only titular sovereigns and even their nominal suzerainty over the Panjab gradually disappeared. The invasions did not harm the Sikhs at all.

They rather strengthened their organization, braced up their spirits and destroyed their internal enemies. The tide turned in favour of the Non-Muslims. The great Moghal Empire came down like the proverbial house of cards. Even severe persecution failed to crush the rebels. The pursuers were pursued. The ruled became the rulers. The servants became the masters. The Lord of Delhi was no more 'God of Hindus.\*' Accou~~nt~~s of their vast empire and invincible military strength became mere fables and myths. The Marhattas who were mere mountain-dwellers and practised only guerilla warfare turned their chieftainships into consolidated sovereign states. Their power even rose high. Shah-i-Alam, 'conqueror of the world', became the captive of the Marhattas in 1802. The Sikhs, who had run off to the hills and jungles for protection came out and established themselves on the plains as rulers. Within a few years the trace of Muslim rule from ~~the~~ Indus lands was effaced. 'It was not because of the natural mortality of the State but because of the defective basis of the political authority that the early empires fell, to impress mankind for ever with the sense of transient character of pomp and power.' Before long the Afghans were threatened even in their own homes. Afghanistan fell into evil days; the star of the Punjab was in the ascendant. The rulers whose forefathers trampled the Indian soil now trembled in the presence of their former subjects. And we find Dost Mohammad Khan one of the noblest and the wisest kings of the Afghans admitting the superior strength of the Panjab before Burns. He clearly stated that "of whatever the Afghans may boast, the military power of Afghanistan is not even one-tenth of that of the Panjab."

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\* "*Shwaro va Dilish waro va*—The Lord of Delhi is as great as God, has long been a maxim with the terrified Hindus" (Dr. Narang).

Thus ended the vast Muslim empire in India. How it came to an end in Kasur, in Multan, in Kashmir and in Peshawar is the subject of this Monogram. For no important battle was fought against the Pathans and the Afghans during the reign of Ranjit Singh in which Hari Singh Nalwa did not take part. His biography is the story of Sikh-Afghan relations for thirty years (1807-1837). In the following pages a dispassionate and disinterested attempt has been made to bring out the full significance of this phase of history.

# GENEALOGICAL TREE

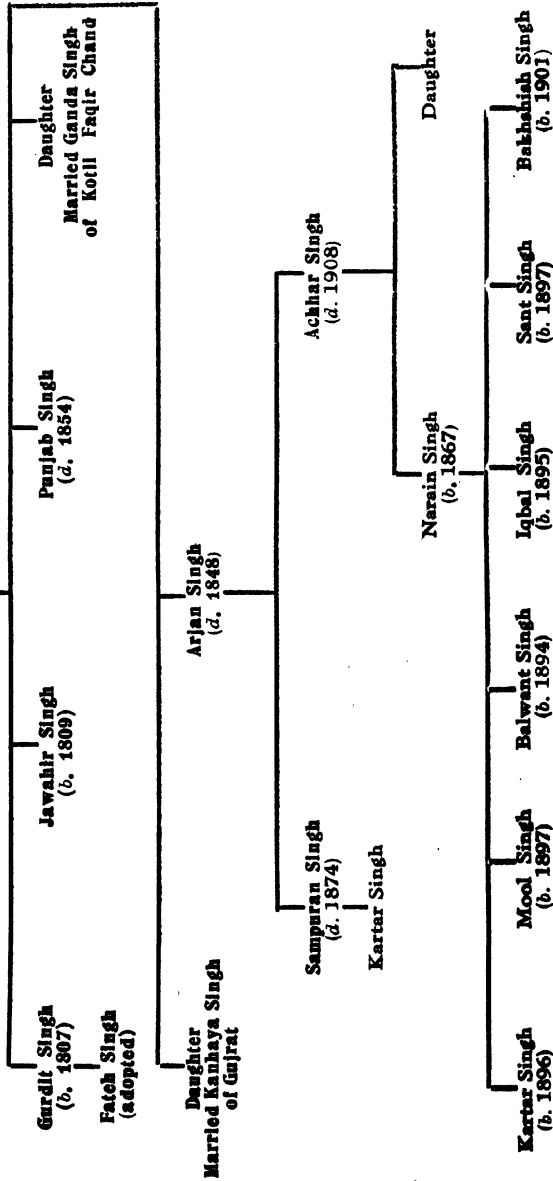
Hardas Singh  
(d. 1762)

Gurdial Singh  
(d. 1798)

HARI SINGH NALWA  
(d. 1837)

2nd wife : Desan

1st wife : Raj Kaur





1. Ahmad Shah Abdali came down in India in 1762. The Sikhs under Charat Singh resisted his passage through the Panjab. It is probable that Hardas Singh was killed in a skirmish against the Afghans. Lepel Griffin gives the date of this skirmish as 1752; but somewhere else he mentions 1762, which is of course more reliable.

2. Charles Hugel has mentioned one Chattar Singh as one of Hari Singh's sons. The following lines occur in his narrative (p. 207):—

“As he came opposite the gates (of the fort of Hari Singh at Haripur), they were opened, and a boy, attended by a numerous suite, issued from within them, bringing me a similar invitation, and a *nazar* also of one hundred and one rupees. I touched the money with my hand according to the prescribed custom, and gave it back, at the same time declining his hospitality, and requesting to know his name. It was Chattar Singh, the son of Hari Singh Nalwa, and the child was not more than ten years old. ....”

The above family table is given by Griffin and later on confirmed by Massy. He does not make any mention about Chattar Singh as stated by the said traveller. Leaving aside the views of Griffin about the character of the Sikh regime we can say that his works are generally more reliable than those of mere travellers.

On personal inquiries from the late S. B. Narain Singh, Honorary Magistrate, the representative of the family, I came to know that Hari Singh had no son, Chattar Singh by name. So under the circumstances there are reasons to believe that Hugel must have been misled.

3. Similar is the case with one Mahan Singh, defender of the Jamrud Fort in 1837. Dewan Amar Nath followed by Gian Singh and others asserts that Mahan Singh was either the son or the adopted son of Hari Singh. But this is wrong. The statements of his descendants, family bards and pandits led me to the conclusion that Mahan Singh was not the son of Hari Singh. He had already four sons and there could be no need for adopting any. In my opinion he was one of his trusted soldiers.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY LIFE OF HARI SINGH

(1791-1804)

IN the closing years of the eighteenth century the petty town of Gujranwala produced two men of great eminence—Ranjit Singh and Hari Singh—who moulded the destiny of the Punjab. They raised the Land of the Five Rivers from a mere principality under Delhi or Kabul to a sovereign state. They were the born leaders of the invincible Khalsa Army, which proved an insurmountable barrier against the constant influx of the greedy Muslim invaders since the death of Anangpal; and threw a wedge of the Sikh host between Kabul and Delhi.

At the outset a brief account of the family of Hari Singh is necessary. His ancestors belonged to Majitha, a village eight miles to the North-East of Amritsar. They were the retainers of the Sukar Chakia *Misl*. Hardas Singh, Hari Singh's grandfather, was killed in an action in 1762, and Gurdial Singh his father accompanied Charat Singh and Mahan Singh in all expeditions, and received in Jagir the village of Balloki near Shahdara. They were Uppal Khatrees by caste.

In the year 1791 A. D. (322 Nanak Shahi era—1848 B.) a son was born in the house of Gurdial Singh, then a *Deradar*\* in the retainers of the Sukar Chakia *Misl*. The boy was named Hari Singh. This illustrious child was the only son of his parents. He was very carefully brought up by his mother, Dharm Kaur. Little did she know that her son was destined to be "a happy warrior" and a saviour of his motherland. The promising lad had only completed seven years in 1798, when

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\* It was a rank in the Sikh Army prior to its Europeanization and was equivalent to the modern Risaldar.

his father breathed his last. Though the sudden and irreparable loss was too much for the family to be sustained, yet the Sardarni resigned herself to the will of the Almighty God and nursed the boy with the nectar of love and good counsel. She was never unmindful of his well-being. But the absence of a male protector in the family caused the enemy to cast greedy eyes on their belongings.

In 1801, at the age of ten, the boy was administered Pauhal and initiated into the Sikh religion. He took to riding in his twelfth year and began to manage his father's estate in the close vicinity of his town.

In 1804, at the age of fourteen, he was sent to Lahore by his mother to wait upon Ranjit Singh in connection with some property dispute.\* The Maharaja was very glad to see† the youth and all eyes were attracted towards him as he entered the Durbar. The courtiers and all those who were present

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\* Some accounts mention that Hari Singh went to seek service under Ranjit Singh. But my personal enquiry from the descendants of his family leads me to the conclusion, I have stated above.

† Charles Masson followed by Latif says that 'born in the same town as Ranjit Singh, he (Hari Singh) had been his (Ranjit Singh's) play-mate in boyhood.' The statement is logically inconceivable. Ranjit Singh was born in 1780, while Hari Singh was born in 1791, eleven years later than the Maharaja. The difference of eleven years is quite a sound reason of their not being playmates. Ranjit Singh *had become the ruler of Lahore at the age of eighteen, while Hari Singh was just a child of six.* At the same time Suraj Singh author of "Chamakda Lal" and Amar Singh author of "Chamakda Hira" agree that Ranjit Singh had never seen Hari Singh before his entry in the court. These authors specially the latter deserve special regard for their efforts in this unexplored field. They have certainly done more laborious research in the biography of Hari Singh than either Charles Masson or Latif. Charles Masson's Travels, Vol. III, p. 387. Latif's History of the Punjab, p. 483.

admired the tall, well-built and graceful youth, whose presence was adding lustre to the already gay court of the illustrious Maharaja. He was questioned as to his lineage and residence by the Maharaja upon which he most respectfully and humbly disclosed his parentage, etc. The great Mahàraja was simply glad to hear all this. The fame of his adventures in hunting, of his skill in riding and many of his other qualities of head and heart had travelled beforehand. To crown all this, as stated above, Hari Singh's father, Gurdial Singh, had been an ally of Ranjit Singh's father, Mahan Singh, and grandfather Charat Singh. Having consideration and regard for the past services of Hari Singh's family and for his personal attainments, the Maharaja not only decided the arbitration in his favour, but offered to take him in his service. Now the Sardar had the full opportunity of displaying his feats like those of tent-pegging and musketry. His ability was at once discerned by Ranjit Singh, who, with his one eye, saw, as has been said, much further than most with two. By a happy coincidence there was a vast field of opportunity for the Sardar, as the Lahore kingdom was in the making as yet and there was many a contest awaiting a brave heart.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY LIFE OF HARI SINGH (*Contd.*)

(1804-1821)

ORIGINALLY Hari Singh was appointed an ordinary *khidmatgar* (personal attendant) till at last on one occasion he killed a terrible lion to add to his already growing fame. One day he went out into the jungle for hunting. During the chase of a deer all of a sudden he came across a huge hungry lion who in the twinkling of an eye dashed upon him. The brave Sardar did not lose his presence of mind but boldly received its blows on his shield in the left hand, while with his right-hand he pierced the belly of the animal with a dagger. By this time his followers had reached the spot and extended their hands for assistance but he forbade them to do so. It was a mighty man-eater in the devil's garb, who tried its utmost to overcome the Sardar but to no avail. The second stroke of the dagger made an end of the awful beast and finished the deadly combat. The lion pounced upon the horse during the fight and did away with it.\* A painter is reported to have accompanied the Sardar in his hunting expedition and drawn a portrait of this encounter with the king of beasts. The Sardar gave a copy of the portrait to Charles Hugel when he met him at Gujranwala in 1834.† For this unique act of bravery the Sardar came to be called as the '*Bag Mar*' (Tiger-killer).

The date and rank of his appointment is not known. We only learn from Dewan Amar Nath, the historian of the

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\* This event is mentioned by several historians like Allen & Co., Shahamat Ali and Latif, etc.

† "..... and Hari Singh gave me his portrait in the act of killing the beast." Hugel's Travels, p. 254.

Lahore Durbar that in 1804 he was given a commission in the army. The translation of the original runs thus—

“In 1804\* the Maharaja dispensed with the services of Hari Singh Nalwa† as an attendant and commissioned him as a Sardar with the honour of the command of 800 horses and footmen.‡”

The Maharaja always valued bravery and soldierlike conduct. His keen eyes were quick enough to observe these qualities in Hari Singh. Accordingly, he began to shower favour after favour upon him.

### Annexation of Kasur

In the year 1807 when Hari Singh had been three years in service, there came another opportunity for him to display his valour. Qutab-ud-Din, the ruler of Kasur, showed signs of disaffection and insubordination and tried to evade the annual tribute. When Ranjit Singh insisted on prompt payment Qutab-ud-Din in complicity with Muzaffar Khan, the then ruler of Multan, openly defied the authority and proclaimed a ‘*Jehad*’ against the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh did not count the odds against him. He at once held a grand Durbar and called upon his Sardars to lead an expedition. The Sikh power had not been consolidated. The army was not that which a few years later the Sikhs had, excellently trained and modelled on European system, but they were “no longer..... a sect

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\* Sir Lepel Griffin writes on page 185 of his *Punjab Chiefs* that “.....at the siege of Kasur in 1807 Hari Singh behaved with such gallantry that Ranjit Singh made him a Sardar and gave him a jagir.” The author seems to be wrong. As written above, Dewan Amar Nath mentions that he was made Sardar in the year 1804 and not in 1807, as Griffin states. The Dewan, being a contemporary writer, is more reliable than Griffin.

† For the etymology of the word Nalwa, see Chapter: Character & Achievements.

‡ Zafar Nama Ranjit Singh by Diwan Amar Nath, page 81.

who revering the conciliatory and mild tenets of their founder desired more to protect themselves than to injure others; but that of a nation.....commencing military career of glory."

Kasur had sustained four attacks during the days of Nizam-ud-Din Khan from 1800 to 1802. It was the fifth and the final attack in which Hari Singh took part. In this hazardous expedition he was given the command of a separate division. The Sikhs mobilised their forces. Jodh Singh Ramgarhia's help was also sought. On the other hand, the Muslims were equally determined to avenge themselves upon the Sikhs, and the Mullahs preached to their co-religionists to make short work of the infidels and thereby gain the glory of victors (*ghazis*) or martyrs (*shahids*). Both the enemies came face to face in very high spirits. The battle raged all day long amidst the shouts of 'Akal ! Akal !' and 'Allah-Allah-Allah-hu-Akbar !' For a long time neither side seemed to give way and the issue was uncertain, but late in the evening the Musalmans surrendered before the furious onslaughts of the Sikhs. Flushed with victory their ignoble spirit of revenge rose high and they perpetrated all sorts of atrocities. They chased the Pathans and put a number of them to the sword. They entered Kasur and pillaged the unfortunate town to their hearts' content. A large number of the captives were brought to the Capital. During this campaign the Sardar showed remarkable bravery and dexterity. He was the first to enter the city and had a good deal of share in chasing the enemy. He was young, brave, handsome and typical product of the age. He captured the imagination of the soldiers and retained to the end of his life such popularity as few generals have enjoyed. The triumphant Commander marched back to Lahore where he was most cordially received by his illustrious master. The acquisition of Kasur, the 'mythological sister rival of Lahore,' extinguished the only Pathan colony in the Central Punjab and

increased the popularity of the Maharaja among the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh was very glad to see this addition to his territory and he magnificently rewarded the Sardars.

During this short period of three years, the Sardar endeared himself to the Maharaja. His sudden rise to power proved an eyesore to many a courtier. They turned hostile to him but could not prove effective enemies. The Sardar gained great popularity day by day, both with the Maharaja and in the army.

### Tour of the Trans-Sutlej Country

The Sardar had shown his skill as a general. And now an opportunity came when he could display his ability as a statesman. Before long there arose a quarrel between Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala and his Rani As Kaur. The Raja moved out of the capital and the Rani became the ruler. The former applied for help to Ranjit Singh who then took his rising general, Hari Singh, with him and went down to the Sutlej personally. The Maharaja was successful in effecting a reconciliation between them through Hari Singh who played a conspicuous part in the negotiations for peace. It is said that the Maharaja acknowledged his ability as a statesman and promised him some responsible post.\* The Maharaja had a few soldiers with him. When on their way back from Patiala to Lahore the Pathans of Malerkotla tried to harass them; but through a sheer act of Hari Singh's gallantry, the assaulting party was utterly routed. This action of the Pathans enraged the Maharaja very much and he thought of dispossessing them of their territory and bestowing it on some Sikh chieftain as a jagir. But the Sardar thought most magnanimously and reminded the Maharaja of the services of their ancestor

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\* We do not find any sound historical evidence for this. It is only a hearsay.



Jamal Khan, who had done his best to dissuade Bazid Khan from committing the murder of the innocent *Sahibzadas* (princes) of Guru Govind Singh; while on the other hand the wretched Diwan Sucha Nand had excited the Governor to hasten their end. The Maharaja in recognition of those services graciously pardoned his mischief and spared his life.\*

### Annexation of Sialkot by Hari Singh

By 1808 Ranjit Singh had conquered almost the whole of the Central Punjab. Thereafter he extended his systematic aggression towards Sialkot and Jammu. Sialkot was ruled independently by Jiwan Singh. Hari Singh was sent to reduce it to submission. The ruling chief resisted vigorously and there was a hard contest between the two armies. The Lahore force could not conquer the fort on that day. Even on the following day during the battle the balance seemed to be in favour of the Sialkot army and the Lahore forces were about to waver when the Sardar summoned up his extraordinary courage and ran up to the rampart, scaled the walls of the fort and at the peril of his life planted his master's flag on it. The rear followed up at once and in no time they were the masters of the city fort and the valuable and fertile territory which extends upto Jammu and opens the way to the Kashmir valley. On his return Hari Singh was hailed very much by the Maharaja, so much so that on his entering the Durbar the Maharaja received him personally and greeted him with extraordinary courtesy. This was the first victory under the independent command of the Sardar and all the credit of its achievement went to him unshared by any rival commander.

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\* It was probably on this occasion that the Nalwa Sardar commenced the digging up of the tank at Mukatsar. Griffin mentions this event to have taken place in 1808.

### Annexation of Multan

Next, Hari Singh took part in the campaign against Multan. Ranjit Singh led seven expeditions\* to annex this Province. The chronicles do not mention in how many attacks, besides those of the years 1810 and 1818, the Sardar took part. In the former attack Hari Singh was much burnt by a fire-pot, thrown from the walls of the fort. He went to Gujranwala and it was after some months before he was again fit for service. On recovery he subdued the Mitha Tiwana country which he was allowed to hold as a jagir. During 1815 and the year following, Hari Singh subdued the Muslim chiefs of the submountain district within the Kashmir territory. He attacked and destroyed Rajuri with the help of a few cannons and guns. Ighra Khan agreed to pay a tribute of one lakh of rupees. But the Sardar was bent upon his annihilation. Ighra Khan made off during the night. The Sardar was very much enraged. He set fire to his house, cruelly ordered a general massacre, pulling down the forts and its ramparts. He stayed there for fifteen days after which he marched off to Naushehra.

On his way to Naushehra the Nalwa Sardar collected the amount of tribute due from the land holders of the Chenab bank to the Lahore Durbar. After this he went back to Lahore to join the last and successful attack of Prince Kharak Singh on Multan.

In the formidable attack of 1818, Hari Singh held the command of a division under the nominal leadership of

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\* The first attack was made in the year 1802, second in 1805, third in 1807, fourth in 1810, fifth in 1812, sixth in 1816 and seventh in 1818.

Prince Kharak Singh.\* The Maharaja prepared this expedition† with extraordinary care. He sent Rani Raj Kaur to Kamalia to superintend the affairs of Commissariat and Ammunitions. He himself went to Amritsar, the spiritual capital of his kingdom, and promised to pave the Harmandar Sahib (the Golden Temple) with marble in the event of his success against the gallant Muzaffar Khan. Further it is said he left the fort and took up his residence in the suburbs of Lahore, probably at Begam Kot and vowed not to enter the city until he heard the news of the conquest of Multan.

The unfortunate Nawab (Muzaffar Khan) also picked up his feeble resources to meet the impending peril. Like Qutab Khan of Kasur, he proclaimed crusade against the Sikhs though he did not meet a good response. He had already defied six attacks which had enormously reduced his strength in arms. The repeated exactions of the ruler of Lahore had heavily damaged his pecuniary resources. Thinking his position to be inferior to that of his enemy he applied for help to the British but “met with a courteous refusal.”

In the beginning of 1818 the army started from the capital and reached Multan within a month. The city was occupied without any serious resistance. The brave Nawab with a force of 3,000 men shut himself within the fort and despite the far superior number of the Sikhs, he defied the dashing onslaughts for a period of four months with his unrivalled bravery, feats of strength and art of war. On June 2, when the number of the besieged had been reduced to about five hundred, an irregular

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\* The principal Sardars in the campaign were Dewan Moti Ram, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Dal Singh, Dewan Chand and Hari Singh.

† It consisted of 25,000 horse and foot and an inexhaustive equipment of siege-guns and the famous Zam Zama.

force under Phula Singh who rose to be the commander of Akalis (immortals), 'a privileged sect of the fighting fanatics whose headlong valour had often turned the fortunes of a doubtful battle,' dashed with a desperate rush and got into the fort. They were, however, followed by other soldiers and hand to hand fight ensued, when the old Nawab 'determined to die rather than surrender' boldly challenged his antagonists "Come on like men and let us fall in a fair fight." True to his words, the old Pathan, maintaining his traditional chivalry, fell after a short time along with five of his beloved sons thereby winning the appreciation of the soldiers of both the sides. Sarfraz Khan, his eldest son, was brought to Lahore and was treated with an exemplary courtesy by Ranjit Singh. The Sikh soldiers, as at Kasur in 1808, got out of control of their officials and took to loot and plunder. The Maharaja's rejoicing at Lahore knew no bounds. Illuminations continued for several nights. Hindu shrines, temples, *gurdwaras* and mosques were sent valuable presents. He also despatched some money to Prince Kharak Singh to be distributed among the soldiers and those who had suffered at the hands of the Sikhs.

### Conquest of Kashmir

Ranjit Singh led three expeditions to conquer the Kashmir province. Hari Singh took part in the second and third, in July 1814 and May 1819 respectively. Ranjit Singh committed the mistake of dividing his troops on the treacherous advice of the Chief of Rajuri. The main division under his personal command was to reach Srinagar; while the other section was to be commanded by Jamedar Khushal Singh, who was sent in advance to clear the way through hostile territory. Sardar Hari Singh led the van\*. His detachment appeared before

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Dr. Chopra mentions this section under Ram Dyal, while

Baram Gala on July 8, and secured the possession of the passage by bribing the defenders. Proceeding further they occupied Mirpur and Haripur. When the army reached the twice-fatal field of Supin, a large host of the Afghans made a severe attack on the Sikhs and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. A great disorder prevailed in the Sikh army and it had to retreat for several miles. The Afghans chased them most mercilessly and many a soldier from amongst the retiring columns were killed. Nature was also antagonistic and behaved cruelly. Snow, rain and chill wrought havoc in the army. This gallant attack of the enemy shattered the Sikh army and they had to fall back on a small and undefended village.\* However they strove to withstand heroically but the Afghans behaved generously and allowed them to retire unmolested. This treatment deserves special mention. Had the Afghans ignored their code of honour and moral obligations, they could have attacked and completely annihilated the Sikh army. Thus ended the invasion of 1814 in such deplorable condition.

The third and final expedition was undertaken in May 1819. Azim Khan had lately gone to Peshawar and the province was ruled by Jabbar Khan, his younger brother.

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(Contd.) Latif and Griffin show it under Khushal Singh and Hari Singh.

\* A similar case of helplessness of advancing army, we notice when Napoleon III made a very humble surrender to the Germans at a weaver's cottage. "Can I do anything for Your Majesty," said the weaver's wife. "Only pull down the blinds," was the reply.

Mohammad Tughlak sent an army towards China and met with a complete failure, owing to extreme cold weather. Lord Curzon's expedition to Tibet also had the same fate.

Early in 1819, Pandit Bir Bal\* deserted his master and sought refuge with Ranjit Singh. He supplied all sort of 'information to the Maharaja concerning the strength and disposition of the Afghan troops and various routes' to the province. The avenging Pandit depicted his late master in black colours. He charged him of anti-Hindu policy and added that forcible conversions to Islam were made by the then rulers ; the Hindu women were abducted for the carnal lust of the Muslim chiefs ; temples were desecrated ; and cows were openly slaughtered. He assured the Maharaja that the Hindu population would be in entire sympathy with the deposition of Azim Khan and his family, and the Maharaja would be hailed as a deliverer.

Actuated by these assurances, Ranjit Singh prepared a formidable army and as in 1814, divided it into three parts. With one he himself remained at Wazirabad to serve as a reserve; the second was sent under Mir Dewan Chand, the victor of Multan; while the third was detached under Hari Singh and the nominal command of the Crown-prince Kharak Singh, with orders to help the Dewan.

On June 16, 1819, the enemy met at Supin under the command of the governor who offered a stubborn resistance, but yielded at last to the superior forces of the Sikhs.† The battle ended after a good deal of bloodshed and Jabbar Khan himself was one of the wounded. During this battle Hari Singh did not take any important part, for the detachment under him could not reach the scene of action

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\* Dr. Chopra names him Bir Dhar ; but relying upon Kirpa Ram, the author of *Gulzar-i-Kashmir*, I have called him Pandit Bir Bal. He was one of the able ministers of the Kashmir Government.

† The chronogram of this victory according to Bikrami Era is :

*Wahi Guru Ji ka Khalsa,  
Wahi Guru Ji ki Fateh.*

before the final surrender of the Afghans. But the Sardar was ordered to subdue a few chiefs who were struggling for independence. He successfully did this duty and before long there was peace in the province. In the year 1819, he recovered the fort of Darband from the possession of Painsa Khan and made for Lahore, via Pakhli and Dhantur, to present himself before the Maharaja at the Capital.

## CHAPTER III

### Nalwa Sardar as Governor of Kashmir

At Supin on June 16, 1819, Jabar Khan, the nominee of Azim Khan, submitted before the Sikhs after a strong resistance; and Kashmir, 'the focus of Asiatic civilization' fell in their hands. In 1818 Multan having been conquered, the last trace of the Durrani Empire was effaced from the Cis-Indus lands. After five centuries\* of Muslim rule in Kashmir, its death-knell was sounded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Before long in 1820, Dewan Moti Ram was appointed governor with Dewan Devi Dass as Settlement Officer. But misfortune was hovering over the head of the former. His eldest son, Ram Dyal, was killed in a skirmish at Nara in the Hazara territory. The unfortunate Dewan was too old to bear the shock. It is said that on hearing the news he fell flat on the floor in a swoon. The over-whelming sorrow and bereavement deadened his energies and utterly crushed his spirits. Finding himself unfit for service, he petitioned the Maharaja to allow him to retire to Benares to lead a retired life free from worldly cares and anxieties. After some evasive replies the Maharaja acceded to his request.† The Dewan met Ranjit Singh at Batala and handed over the charge; whereupon Hari Singh,

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\* 'In 1387-88 for the first time Kashmir came under the Islamic sway. Taking advantage of a certain confusion and disorder displayed by the last Hindu ruler, one Shahmir became the master of this valley.'

† Lepel Griffin in "The Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab" (p. 184) advances another reason for Hari Singh's appointment as a Governor. "In 1820," he says, "Hari Singh was appointed Governor of the conquered province (Kashmir) in the room of Dewan Moti Ram, who



who had successfully completed the subjugation of Darband and other neighbouring strongholds, with the assistance of Dal Singh and Bhawani Dass, was appointed to succeed him in November 1821.\* Before long Ranjit Singh successfully persuaded† the Dewan to give up the idea of leading a retired and devotional life at Benares and after a year reappointed him on his former post which he held till 1826.

(Contd.) was thought too gentle a ruler for crude and unsettled population." But the statement is baseless and false. The author tries to give a rather tyrannical colour to the Sikh regime. None of the writers of note agree with him. Latif and Cunningham mention Moti Ram's tendering resignation. I quote here lines from *Zafar Nama-i-Ranjit Singh* by Diwan Amar Nath, the court historian of the Lahore Darbar, who should be given preference to all the later historians. The translation of the original runs thus :—

"After acceding to the humble petition of Dewan Moti Ram, S. Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed Governor of Kashmir and sent with a costly *khilat*. The Dewan was allowed to stay in the Court. The accompanying pandits, having paid the tribute, departed."

- \* Dr. Chopra's research leads him to say that Hari Singh was appointed Governor of Kashmir in 1830. He writes, "In 1830 he (Hari Singh) was appointed Governor of Kashmir ..... " The Punjab as a Sovereign State, p. 165. But the date coincides neither with Persian MSS. nor with the contemporary English writers. It may be either a misprint or a misreading from some original work.

The exact date as given by Sohan Lal is *Katic*, 1877 B.

- † Sir Lepel Griffin says, "Hari Singh did not err on the side of leniency. He ruled with a strong hand and the Kashmiris hated him, so much so that the Maharaja was compelled to recall him in 1821 and appointed Dewan Moti Ram to the governorship." (Vide *Punjab Chiefs*, page 185). But this shows that he soon forgets what he had said previously, namely that Hari Singh was appointed only to rule strictly and says that he was recalled due to his merciless administration whereas this is also contrary to the facts. How could it be possible that Hari Singh ruled as he was expected or advised to do, and

During the Nalwa Sardar's office for one year he remained very busy in restoring peace and order in the turbulent areas. It being a newly conquered province, the life here was not very peaceful. The arrogant Kashmiris were to be subdued at the point of sword. There were some rebellions of minor importance in the valley, particularly in Mirpur, which the Sardar successfully subdued. He also got hostages from some of the influential and powerful rebellious chiefs to ward off the chances of further disturbance.

Hari Singh struck a coin after his own name at Srinagar, that remained current in Kashmir and other parts of the Punjab till its annexation by the East India Company in 1849. Like the present-day coin which is higher in face value than in intrinsic worth, it was "a base coin of 2/3rds value of common *sicca* rupee.\*" He also made a fine orchard on the bank of Jhelum during his time.

The Kashmir administration under Hari Singh has been vehemently condemned as being oppressive. Moorcraft writing from thence in the beginning of 1822 says, "Ranjit Singh slackens not his imposition but rack-rents from the unfortunate Cashmerians to the last farthing he can extort.

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(Contd.) even then he was recalled. This statement is groundless. The facts are that he was never sent with the deliberate motive to rule with strong hand nor was he recalled on this charge, but by his distinguished career he had endeared himself to the Maharaja who bestowed upon him this honour. When Dewan Moti Ram was successfully persuaded to relinquish the idea of going to Benares, he was re-appointed on his former post. Also it was for the intended invasion of the Mankera territory that Ranjit Singh wanted Hari Singh to accompany him.

\* *Vide* Vigen's "Travels in Cashmere," Vol. III, page 73. Shahamat Ali's "The Sikhs and the Afghans," page 51. A chronicler says that Ranjit Singh was very much pleased with his administration work and allowed him to coin money in his own name which was of course regarded to be a high mark of honour.

Rapacious as were the Durrannies, they were irregular in the oppression and made escape, securing (*sic*) fixed with something like feeling; but the Raja is a systematic grinder, oppressing most mechanically. If Mohammed Uzeem were immediately to make an attack from Peshawar across the mountain from Kashmir he would almost succeed in driving out the Sikhs from the aversion to the Sikhs existing not only in Musalmans but among the Hindu population." Somewhere else he writes, "Sikhs seem to look on Kashmerians as little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the Government from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu and two rupees if a Mohammedan."\*

The position is absolutely misjudged and the opinion is highly prejudicial. He ascribes a barbarian character to the Sikh regime. Ranjit Singh who has been admitted as a merciful and benevolent ruler even by his critics would not have tolerated the blood-sucking policy of his vassal. The land assessment was rather leniently carried out, so much so that the Sardar could not realise a substantial part of the estimated land revenue. He could not pay this to the government till it was excused by the Maharaja, who was pleased with his services rendered in the Hazara territory.†

Moorcraft conveys the idea of disregard for human life and step-motherly treatment towards the Muslim element of the population. But it is not supported by facts. Hari Singh was a gallant warrior but never a cruel soldier. There is not even a single instance to show that he ever shed useless blood.

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\* *Vide Moorcraft's Travels, Vol. II, p. 293.*

† ".....forgave him the unpaid balance of Kashmere,"  
*vide Griffin's Panjab Chiefs—District Gujranwala,*  
 p. 186.

He was of course bloody in war but very sympathetic in general disposition.

The writer seems to pay no regard to the troublous times. Risings in those days were frequent and signs of revulsion many. Dominion belonged to the longest sword and only a strong hand could maintain the territory won at the expense of life and money. The firm rule of Hari Singh was necessitated by the weak policy of his predecessor, which had in fact produced symptoms of disaffection. Moorcraft described the Sikh rule to be even worse than the Mohammadan rule.\*

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\* Hugel B. C., who travelled in Kashmir during the years 1833 and 1834, records his opinion of the administration in the following words. The opinion of course cannot be regarded as of great value to remove the unjustified stain of the so-called mal-administration of Hari Singh, but is a valuable statement to contradict the assertion that the Muslim rule in Kashmir was better than that of the Sikhs:—

“We came to Kashpara a plane village, remarkable for having the largest plane-trees in Kashmir. The tree I have often mentioned is considered of much importance by the natives who call it the end of misfortunes. On its branches criminals are hanged, a punishment of constant occurrence under the Pathan sway when the smallest offence was visited by death but now inflicted in case of murder. Men are too valuable to the present ruler of Kashmir to be lightly spared; penalties and stripes are therefore the usual punishments. The people seem to be contented with the justice dealt out to them and admitted to me that not more than one guilty person in every twenty is ever visited with reward due to his crimes. The dreadful cruelties perpetrated by their earlier rulers who for the smallest offence punished them with the loss of their nose or ears, make the poor Indian well-satisfied with their little oppression on the part of their governors or *thanedars*.”

“In comparison with the Afghans the Sikhs came as a relief to the Kashmirians.” Kashmir and Jammu Gazetteer, p.26. Cf. Cunningham's History of the Sikhs, p. 180. These opinions clearly compare both the governments and no doubt remains for suspicion.

This, however, is a glaring instance of mis-judgment which leads one to assume the whole of the note to be prejudicial and therefore misleading the subsequent historians.

Wade who was in no way a friend of Hari Singh or that of the Sikh Government wrote in a private letter (a true and a frank opinion) to the then Governor-General, "He (Hari Singh) was formerly entrusted with the Government of Kashmir which he held for two years proving himself one of the most able and popular Sikh governors which the Sikhs have had.\*" Wade being the political agent at Ludhiana for several years was a very keen observer of each and every movement of the neighbouring Sikh Government. He 'knew more about the affairs of Ranjit Singh than any other Englishman.' Grant of valuable territory of Pakhli and Dhantur in Kashmir to the Sardar after his retirement by his benevolent master is another proof that the services rendered by him as governor were appreciated. The Maharaja would not have given the jagir in case of Sardar's tyrannical rule, being most objectionable to the Darbar and undesirable to him.

In those hard days when the fanatic and barbarious measures were usually adopted by rulers to keep their subjects under rigid subjection, no mention is made of any general massacres and country-wide devastation in the records of the period. This shows that the Sikh rule differed fundamentally from the Mohammadan rule.† The former was a 'limited theocracy' without the evils of fanaticism while the latter was a 'church-ridden monarchy' supported by the over-bearing bureaucracy, blind with Islamic principles and intoxicated with

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\* Wade to Governor General 13th March, 1831. Bengal Political consultations Range 126, Vol. 25 (India Office MSS. Records).

† Cf. Malcolm, p. 115.

power. The Sikh rule even in the turbulent country under discussion was less oppressive than the needs of the time and the character of the people demanded. Above all it had not the least of fanaticism. The Sikhs unlike the Musalmans allowed people complete religious freedom. None of the Sikh Sardars with the possible exception of Akali Phoola Singh was intolerant. There were absolutely no religious restrictions or disabilities or invidious distinctions in Kashmir as Moorcraft says. To bring a turbulent population under law and order is not a sin. It is a moral duty and the Sikhs did it, through Hari Singh by subduing and crushing the stronger and protecting the weaker. ".....the best interests of mankind demand that in the presence of inferior peoples, the political authority should remain in the hands of the superior. No maudlin sentiment regarding the equality of man should endanger the control of the internal organization of States. No hazy ideas concerning the rights of man should prevent them from governing, if possible, educating in political methods the less advanced people.....history and political science do not admit of any right to barbarism."

Moorcraft was no mugwump. He advanced the monocle of the twentieth-century political science in adjudicating upon Sikh annals; and took no pains to weigh in scales contemporary Europe. We find that even in the European countries in those days (first half of the nineteenth century) the nature of rule was awfully severe. Liberal movements were ruthlessly crushed. Press was gagged. Strict espionage was introduced in every state. Patriots were outlawed and banished. All over Europe there was strong military rule. Even the English, then as now, leaders of a European civilization, were no less to blame, especially in the newly conquered territories. The treatment of Robert Clive with the Nawabs of Bengal, the

doubtful dealings of Warren Hastings with the Rohillas, the Begams of Oudh and Raja Nand Kumar, the unbecoming behaviour of Charles Napier towards the Amirs of Sindh and the aggrandising policies of Wellesley and Dalhousie, are not easy to explain in terms of modern political grammar.

The critics have completely ignored that Kashmir was visited by famine during the years 1820-22 and a good deal of discontentment was due to this. When the Nalwa Sardar assumed the reins of his office, Kashmir was politically, socially and economically in a state of confusion and chaos. It was with great prudence and energy that he restored order and recovered the prestige of the State in such a short period as one year. Even if we believe for one moment that Hari Singh's regime in the Kashmir valley was severe, no one can deny that it had at least one advantage over the Muslim rule, that it was impartial. In the pre-Sikh days "the administration of the country was left to the arbitrary decision of the governors, who in the absence of interference from Kabul relapsed into tyranny and mis-government"; whereas we find that Ranjit's controlling hand was always above his governors and no State servant could dare to ignore his instructions.

### **Combat of Khakha**

All these years Hari Singh remained busy chiefly in subduing and pacifying the chiefs. He fought only one battle of importance, known as the battle of Khakha. Some Hindu tribes on the bank of the Jhelum had been converted to Islam during the early invasions of the Muslims. They called themselves Khakhi Rajputs. Their leader was one Ghulam Ali who, it is said, was a very wicked and a turbulent robber. His followers indulged in brigandage and murder. He had already twice

evaded, rather defied, the Sikh regiments sent by the Lahore Court. But as soon as the soldiers quitted his territory he again re-assumed his habitual malpractices. Early in 1822, Hari Singh led an army against him. The Rajputs surrendered after strong resistance. Their chief, Ghulam Ali, was captured and sent to Lahore as a prisoner. The capture of the notorious chief and the subsequent subjection of the tribe overawed the *ilaga* and the adjoining people also meekly submitted to the new regime. By and by the Sikh sway was extended towards the northwest. Gratified at this, Ranjit Singh ordered a coin to be struck in Hari Singh's name as a fit reward for his meritorious services.

### Battle of Mangal

Nawab of Manker evaded the payment of tribute for some time. Ranjit thought of invading his territory. In April 1822, he summoned Hari Singh to attend on him along with his troops at an early date handing over the charge of his duties to Dewan Moti Ram. Hari Singh marched by Muzaffargarh and Pakhli, with seven thousand troops. When he reached Mangal he found a large tribal host—more than twenty-five thousand.\* Their leader, Mohammad Khan Tarain, determined to oppose his passage and was ready to give him a battle. With this small number of soldiers Hari Singh did not like to risk a battle. He, therefore, sent his wakil, soliciting the chief that he was travelling under Ranjit Singh's orders towards Hazara and had not

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\* A Sikh historian gives the number of the tribal army as 70,000, but it is inconceivable. To scatter such a large number with a small force of 7,000 soldiers, however brave and trained they might have been, was beyond the range of possibility. His successful combat against 25,000 men brought him no less credit. The latter number is given by Watson, the compiler of the *Hazara Gazetteer* (1908). Griffin gives the number as 20,000; but all accounts agree that Hari Singh's force did not number more than 7,000.



gone there to molest them in any way. But the haughty chief, intoxicated at the command of such a warlike tribe, did not pay heed to his request. He took the Sikh army to be an easy prey. Hari Singh soon came to know that he vainly induced for a passage. They were accustomed to get a toll on Kashmir export and demanded it from Nalwa as well. He offered a reasonable duty even, but they wanted every farthing with him which the Sardar did not like to part with.

Parleying having failed, the resort was to be had to arms. Little caring for his chances of success, he desperately attacked with vigour and stormed their stockades. The irregular Muslim mobs could not withstand the attacks of the trained Sikh battalions. After a few hours' deadly combat, the Nalwa Sardar routed them out and afterwards spread havoc in the turbulent country. The opponents lost two thousand men in the bloody action and their leader fled towards Sri Kot hills. The Sikhs also suffered heavily.\* Orders for devastation, by setting fire to the countryside, were issued but on a deputation from the elderly people, with promises of good behaviour in future, they were withdrawn. As a further punishment, Hari Singh imposed a fine of rupees five and a half on every house inhabited by Jaduns, exempting the widows, the orphans and the Sayyads. To strengthen his regime he built a fort at Nawanshahr and

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\* Mohammad Latif in his History of the Punjab (page 428) describes Mangal Combat in the following manner. The account differs materially from all other chroniclers, both contemporary and the later historians.

"The tribes of Pakhli and Dhamtur rebelled and Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was sent at the head of the troops to punish the offenders. He spread havoc in the invaded country and put the population of the disaffected villages to the sword. Pakhli and Dhamtur were burnt and thousands of people rendered homeless. After the acts of wanton barbarity, Hari Singh returned to Lahore." (April, 1822).

posted a small garrison to check further disaffection.

After this exemplary punishment, the Sardar moved southward and met Ranjit Singh at Khushab. Much pleased with the treasure and presents of fine horses from Kashmir and his splendid victory at Mangal, the Maharaja 'forgave him the unpaid balance' of accounts of his former charge. In the general Darbar he tore a scrap of paper saying, "Herewith the Kashmir Revenues;" and also appointed him the governor of 'all Hazara,' a turbulent and newly conquered province.

## CHAPTER IV

### Hari Singh as Governor of Hazara

(1822-37)

MUCH pleased with the heroic charge at Mangal, the Maharaja realised that only Hari Singh was able enough to stamp the Sikh regime among the turbulent frontier. So immediately after his retirement from Kashmir, as stated before, the governorship of Hazara was bestowed\* upon him, which he held till 1837 when he rode away both from Hazara and from this world to the Judgment Throne of the Creator, where sinners are punished for their sins and the good rewarded for their virtues.

Hazara territory lies at the foot of the Himalayas. Roughly speaking, this region resembles Italy in shape. In those days Hazara province was about 80 *koses* long and 30 *koses* wide. It is difficult to reach a definite measurement, for the extent of territory underwent many a change. Moreover, the limit of control over the different tribes by the Sikh Government cannot be exactly ascertained. So under the circumstances, rigid demarcation of the province is not possible. In addition to the present British district, there were a few villages to its southern side ; while Khanpur, Bakot and Kagon, which form a part of the present district, were ruled not from Haripur but from Srinagar.

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\* During this period, the Sardar went to Gujranwala on a few days leave. His appointment to this office was made at Chehlo Cheng, when Ranjit Singh was proceeding to Peshawar side for realization of the tribute.

From the Eastern side, Hazara was separated from Kashmir by the Jhelum ; from the Western side, it was separated from the fearful tribes of Peshawar by the Indus. Towards the North, ranged the Himalayas and towards the South it touched the border lines of Rawalpindi. Hazara " may be described geographically as a section of the earth's crust coming within the area of Himalayan disturbance."\* There is only a small part in the South-east, which, of course, can be called plain. So it is mainly a hilly district. Just in the North, hills attained a considerable height. Valleys of Mora, Lora and Khanpore are situated in its offshoots. Between the lap of the Eastern and the Western mountains, there are some narrow but fertile tracts of Pakhli, Mangal and Khanpore. So much is quite sufficient about the physical features of the country, for the readers to guess its bearing on the political condition, of which Nalwa Sardar was appointed Governor.

Before plunging abruptly into the details of Hari Singh's regime in this province, it seems very essential to speak something of its immediate past.

The commencement of the Sikh rule dates from the year 1818. Conquest of this province by the Sikhs was not a result of some great expedition or long-laid siege, like that of Kashmir or Multan ; but it was the outcome of the treachery of one Hashmat Khan, Turk of Manakrai.† He assassinated his fellow chieftain, Kamal Khan, and the latter's cause was taken up by Mohammad Khan Tarain. To save himself, Hashmat Khan, betrayed his country to the Sikhs. He extended an invitation to

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\* Memoirs of the Geographical Survey of India, Vol. XXVI by C. S. Middlemish.

† A village on the right bank of the Dor, opposite Haripur.

Makhan Singh, the Sikh Governor of Rawalpindi, to attack and conquer Hazara. The governors of Ranjit Singh, it may be remembered, had general permission to extend their territories at their neighbours' expense. With a small force of 500 men he invaded Hazara; and having partly subdued it, he built a fort at Serai Saleh\*, the richest part of the *Ilaqa*. Shortly after, the gallant chiefs mustered together and attacked the fort. The Sikhs withdrew with the loss of their general, Ram Dyal; and it was after reinforcements from Lahore that they were again able to subjugate the rebel chiefs. Amar Singh Majithia,† a wise diplomat and brave soldier, was the first governor. On his death in 1821, at the hands of Hassan Ali Khan, the Karral chief, he was succeeded by Kaur Sher Singh and his maternal grandmother Sada Kaur. The crafty Sardarni adopted Mohammad Khan Tarain as her son and through her usual diplomacy she ruled the land of treason successfully, when early in 1822 Nalwa took over.

Within three years of Sikh supremacy, the state of affairs in the country changed a little. The previous Sikh governors could not in fact establish the authority over the people. The country was in a hopelessly bad condition. There were many petty chiefs who did not tolerate any political control over them. Their very nature was averse to subjection; especially they could not bear the yoke of the Sikhs—the infidels. To change the existing order was an article of faith with them. They were always intriguing and quarrelling. A tribe conquered today rose for independence tomorrow. In fact they revived from the staggering blows so soon, that one was not far wrong to say that they were never unripe

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\* It is situated three miles from Haripur on the left bank of the Dor.

† He was one of the ancestors of Sardar Bahadur Dr. Sir Sundar Singh Majithia, C.I.E.

for a revolution. The peasants were fanatical and habituated to tell lies. They were not law-abiding and were generally disloyal, not only towards their government but also to their immediate landlords. Poverty reigned. In short, the state of affairs towards the beginning of the period under review was one of treachery, assassination, internecine wars and general lawlessness. How Hari Singh mended those turbulent people and restored peace and order in the province is given below. It has not been possible to write a full account; only a brief survey is attempted here.

Mohammad Khan met Ranjit Singh and apologised for his past conduct. The latter ordered Hari Singh to confer a jagir of Rs. 2,000 on him but Nalwa Sardar gave him one of Rs. 1,700 only; whereupon Mohammad Khan lodged a complaint against Hari Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh wanted to please both. He did not take Hari Singh to task for this violation of his orders; but gave another piece of land in the Kahater territory, raising his total jagir to Rs. 2,707. Nevertheless the Tarain Chief was not satisfied and tried to raise the population of Srikote against the Sikhs. Before long a group of defaulters gathered together in the hills of Gandgarh and openly defied the Sikh authority. Hari Singh led an expedition against them in 1823. Owing to inaccessibility of the artillery into the hills and the privileged position of the rebels which they had occupied, the Sikh forces were repulsed with considerable loss. This defeat rankled in the mind of Hari Singh; but he diverted his attention to the plains, where there was dire necessity of erecting a fort to consolidate the Sikh power. He laid the foundation of a fort which he named Harkishangarh\* and commenced to build a town half a mile to the East of the fort, calling it after his

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\* After Guru Har Kishan.

own name. Shortly after, this town became a busy commercial centre.\* The fort was not yet complete when the Sardar received orders to accompany the *Sarkar* towards *Derajat*. Leaving behind a small force of 200 cavalry and 500 foot, under the command of his son, Gurdit Singh,† the Sardar started to comply with the orders.

Encouraged by the absence of a strong hand at Haripur, the notorious chief picked up a quarrel with the Sikhs on an insignificant excuse.‡ He raised the country against the Sikhs and besieged the fort with strong vigilance. This disturbance spread like wild fire in the jungle. In the North the Sikhs lost the forts of Darband and Shingari with immense loss of life at the hands of Tansoli and Swaithi tribes. The latter committed heinous atrocities. They carried off several Hindu women to Nandihar and forcibly married them with

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\* Charles Hugel, an Austrian Traveller, who visited the town in 1833 described it in the following words :—

“ Half a mile from Kishengarh is Haripoor, surrounded by mud walls, which are fast falling to decay; it seems a place of no great importance from without, yet it has a large and densely crowded population and respectable bazar and was the largest town I have seen in Ranjit Singh's territories in this direction. The streets were full of life and the shops glittered with everything to delight an Indian taste. Every step diminished the number of my followers. One sat down at one of the stalls to smoke the pipe presented to him; another bought spices for his noonday meal; while their fellows supplied themselves with sweetmeats baked in grease or listened to the noisy music before the Hindu temple.”

† According to Hazara Gazette, the force was placed under the command of Mahan Singh.

‡ A Sikh soldier cut down a *shisham* tree from the Chief's land, thereupon dispute arose which ended in the rebellion.

Mohammedans. Hari Singh at once came back to Hazara to suppress the revolt. His first efforts were directed to relieve the besieged, which were quite successful with a small loss. Next he tried to relieve the town. Here the antagonists offered a strong resistance and both the parties lost heavily. After an unsuccessful skirmish near the town, the rebels shut themselves up in a mosque, which the Sardar set on fire and those, who tried to escape, were put to sword. This exemplary punishment pacified the disturbance. Before long there was lull in the country, where a few days earlier lawlessness ruled.

Having restored order in the plains, Hari Singh moved towards the North. He repaired to the fort of Mansehra and shortly after, one day early in the morning, he made an inroad in the Swaith territory with only 500 *sowars*. It was an avenging expedition. He seized about 1,000 Muslim women and children and later on exchanged most of his captives for the kidnapped Hindu women, through the mediation of Habib Ullah. After repairing the forts which were destroyed during the last insurrection, the Sardar made off to Mansehra. Staying here for a few days he marched towards Sarbaland Khan, the Chief of Pallal, and burnt his village, Shingari. He retaliated by closing Hari Singh's passage through Tanawal. With usual promptness and energy, however, Nalwa Sardar came out of the dangerous situation and gave them a hard battle in which the Pathans were badly defeated. Sher Mohammad Khan, the eldest son of the Nawab, who was well-known for his bravery, led the forces. He made dashing onslaughts on the Sikhs during the battle, but could not succeed. During the retreat that followed, Hari Singh shot Sher Mohammad Khan and many of his followers were also put to sword.



The allies of Hari Singh advised him to reduce Srikote to subjection, as it harboured all the chiefs and others who had set his authority at defiance. Early in October 1824, Hari Singh started with over-worked and unwilling soldiers to reduce Srikote. Through Malikyar he reached Nara next morning, but found the passage closed by huge assemblage of his enemies—Khanis and Mishwanis. Till afternoon the Sikhs could not make effective progress and Hari Singh calling upon his Sardars suggested to make a frontal attack. Some of the soldiers dashed in rage, but were repulsed with serious injuries. They advised the Sardar to renew the combat next morning, but he continued persistently. Evening approached. Number of his antagonists swelled. The Sikh soldiers dispersed and were routed everywhere. Late at night, even the personal guard of the Sardar was overpowered and he himself, seriously wounded. Throughout the night he lay senseless in the stones and was lifted up the field, next morning, by some of his soldiers who happened to pass by him. The army retired with the loss of 500 out of 700, the total strength brought in the field. The Pathans cut off the head of a man who resembled Hari Singh and took it away to Srikote. All the people believed him to be dead. Thus ended in pitiful plight the second expedition to Srikote.

The Maharaja, enraged at adverse fortune, presently repaired to the scene, with the object of teaching the relentless enemies a lesson. Before his arrival, Hari Singh had attacked Nagra; and as sure as eggs are eggs, he had made the opponents eat the humble pie. With the arrival of Ranjit, the gallant guts of the Sikh soldiery were galvanized anew. He summoned the Chiefs of Srikote. A few responded; and the rest disregarded the invitation to rapprochement. Surrounded by war veterans and virile warriors, Ranjit's penchant for field life was

stirred. Following a brief reconnaissance, the Maharaja led the serried Khalsa forces to victory. The enemy ran helter skelter. Ranjit and Nalwa were, once again, living words to scare the children. The Khalsa chucked the stiff-necked chiefs neck and crop. Two days later, Ranjit Singh departed with Mohammad Khan in bondage for the Trans-Indus lands. Hari Singh set up a citadel at Srikote ; and bade Lalji and his five hundred faithfuls *au revoir*.

Bad principles brewed trouble. Mahan Singh's nepotism rendered administration slack. The smug subordinates smelled no rat in the simulatory obedience of the subjects ; while underneath the thin veneer of the feigned submissiveness, discontent smouldered. In the garb of devotion a caddish camarilla hatched insidious plots. When Mahan Singh went to Rawalpindi to receive Hari Singh on his return from Lahore, Bostan Khan (nephew of Mohammad Khan) took up arms openly. The news flashed like the lightning. With commendable celerity the ireful Nalwa made for Hazara where he discovered an unexpected mass of insurgents. Prudence is the better part of valour. He halted and took counsel with Mahan Singh. Outnumbered, should they measure swords with the rebels, when the odds were heavily against them ? Still indecisive, they learnt that General Ventura was in Hasan Abdal on his way to Peshawar. He was called for assistance. The triumvirate of two Sardars and a Sahib triumphantly marched to an easy success. Bostan Khan was made a war captive. The lugubrious tale of a debacle, and manacled Bostan had best remain untold in these pages. Suffice it to say that some of the malcontents were despatched with the guns. Ere long Hari Singh came back to Rawalpindi. Here he asked Mohammad Khan to square the ransom

accounts of rupees five thousand and five hundred, which he had incurred to gain him liberty from the Maharaja. Mohammad Khan described the whole episode as 'arrant nonsense' which uncouth utterance cost him, first his liberty and then his life ; for soon after his incarceration, a poisonous potion was administered to him.

The compulsory exodus of Mishwanis from Srikote hills for five years had chastened them and Hari Singh thought fit to grant them leave to return. They in return never abused this gracious concession. On the contrary they proved an asset to the Sikhs in Hazara where, save occasional outbreaks of Painsa Khan, peace reigned. All was quiet on the North-west Front, because of the law-abiding habits of the Mishwanis.

At the suggestion of the Kashmir Governor, Hari Singh led an onset on Muzaffarabad. The Bamba Chief paid an indemnity of four thousand rupees. Swaithi Chief's house at Garhi Habib-ullah was turned into a *thana* with an establishment of three hundred. But this was short lived. As the Sardar turned back, the chieftains made short shrift of the *thana* and hustled out the Sikh force.

In 1830 Hari Singh, *enroute* to Peshawar, commissioned a Vakil to negotiate terms of peace with Painsa Khan who, instead, detained the Vakil and insisted on the release of his brother Jahandad Khan. Hari Singh was in a tight corner, and set Jahandad Khan free. Then followed a period of armed neutrality and fire hung in the balance till 1836.

The birth of the year 1836 synchronised with the mild disaffections of Kurral Sardars of Sakanra. But the coming of Mahan Singh set at rest the turbulent element. The Kurrals quitted the province. In the closing months of 1838, Hari

Singh undertook an expedition on Ayror. After various skirmishes, Painsa Khan and his troops took to heels and disappeared. The forts at Anar and Indus were duly garrisoned. Hari Singh then went back to Haripur. Not long after, he made his last journey to Jamrod and thence to the land of the Great Unknown.

### **Battle of Noshahra**

Azim Khan was not afraid of Ranjit Singh, whom he had badly defeated in 1819. The victory of the Sikhs in the following year against Jabbar Khan, Azim Khan's brother, was regarded by him not as a result of superior strength, but as a matter of chance. So he anxiously waited for any opportunity to try arms with his regained power. Ranjit Singh also desired war to establish his regime over the newly conquered area by inflicting a defeat on his possible antagonists and thus preventing any chance of further invasion from the North-western side. When both the sides want war, nothing can avert it.

Accordingly early in 1824, Azim Khan came down with his huge army like the proverbial Assyrians and stationed near Noshahra. Ranjit Singh took along with him, Mohkam Chand, Phula Singh and Hari Singh, the cream of the Sikh army and reached Indus by forced marches.

For a few days both the armies lay inactive. At last one morning the bloody combat ensued. Under the wise and brave leadership of their chief, Azim Khan, the Pathans fought gallantly and the Sikhs seemed to waver. Noticing the untoward circumstances, Ranjit Singh, with his never failing prudence and valour, came forward, with a standard in his hand. This served as a great encouragement to his soldiers and Phula Singh, a fanatic Akali, made a desperate frontal attack and

gallantly pierced through the ranks of the enemy. Nalwa and others also followed. Though at the cost of his life he utterly broke the solidarity of the Afghans which they could never recover. In the hand-to-hand battle that followed, the Pathans showed remarkable individual bravery; but henceforth united action being impossible, they could not make any mark. Ere long they wavered and fled. In this last attempt of Azim Khan, Pathans were said to have lost 10,000 men. The Sikhs also suffered terribly but irreparable was the loss of Phula Singh.\* Though uncontrollable and vindictive as he was, he was brave to an unsurpassing degree. Through his headlong valour he had often turned the fortunes of the day.

Azim Khan, the bravest of the Barakzai Sardars, once more thought of fighting the Sikhs; but their roaring national cries at dead of the night shattered his hopes. He attributed this enthusiasm of the Sikhs to fresh reinforcements.

The combat of Noshahra, like the battle of Buxar, bore important results. "It sealed the fate of Azim Khan and the supremacy of the Sikhs was established over the country lying between the Indus and Peshawar."† Ranjit did not attempt permanent occupation of this conquered territory but allowed the Barakzai Sardars to govern the country in his name as tributary rulers. The hard task of realizing the tribute was assigned to Hari Singh who carried it out till 1834, when it was actually annexed to the Empire.

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\* His remains lie near Noshahra on the bank of the river.

† Latif's *History of the Panjab*, p. 460.

## CHAPTER V

### War against Hindustanis (1827-1831)

“ A little fire is quickly trodden out ;  
Which being ~~suffered~~, rivers cannot quench.”  
(*Shakespeare*).

FROM 1827 to 1831, during the governorship of Hazara, Hari Singh fought against the fanatic Hindustanis, who rose under the leadership of one Ghazi Sayyed Ahmed Shah, son of Mohammad Uria. His “ short but adventurous career well illustrates the readiness with which the ignorant masses in India invest men of extraordinary religious zeal with the attributes of superhuman power.” The Ghazi was a Mohammedan in the truest sense of his faith—grave, conservative, exclusive, bigoted. With these vices, that often pass as virtues, he combined extraordinary boldness and a rare capacity for discipline and leadership. He was an eloquent speaker and preached against the traditional customs of the people whereby he often incurred popular displeasure.

! Sayyed Ahmad Shah was a native of Bareilly and an employee of Nawab Amir Khan Rohilla. The Sayyed made himself ‘notorious by attempting to promote bad designs in Hindustan, from which he was ordered by the authorities of the Company to desist or he must leave the country.’ Deciding to avail himself of the second alternative, he resigned his service and made up his mind to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. During his visit to Delhi, Maulvi Ismail and Maulvi Abdul Aziz\* joined him. From Delhi the Sayyed proceeded to Sind,

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\* Captain Wade gives the name of Maulvi Abdul Aziz as Abdul Haya.

whence he made his way into Khurasan, visiting Kandhar, Kabul and Peshawar, and 'working upon the religious prejudices of his sect; wherever he went, he succeeded in gaining a host of enthusiasts.' While passing through Sind, he visited the Chief, who became his proselyte and assisted him with money.

On his return from Mecca, Sayyed Ahmad Shah made his way to Afghanistan. For some time he 'continued exhorting the people in that part of the country to liberate themselves from the kafir's yoke' and join him in the prosecution of a religious war. Common religious beliefs were sufficient to enlist a vast number of soldiers. All the fanatic population of the Yusafzais, joined by the Barakzai chiefs of Peshawar and strongly imbued with the spirit of martyrdom, assembled under the banner of this fanatic Mohammedan.\* The whole of this army numbered 100,000 Muslims.† The Sayyed had formed his followers in three divisions. The first and second sections were commanded by Maulvi Ismail and Maulvi Abdul Aziz, respectively; while the Sayyed himself led the third.‡ The soldiers were full of zeal and courage. They were excited by the florid eloquence of the Mullahs and the songs of their glories past; but they were undisciplined, untrained and uncontrollable. They possessed neither skill nor experience.

At last in the beginning of 1827, the insurgents

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 95, Letter No. 69.

† "It is stated by many that the present adherents (of Sayyed Ahmad) number 1,00,000 nearly."  
Punjab Records, Book No. 95, Letter No. 69, dated March 8, 1827.

The Author of *Tawarikh-i-Hazara*, Part II, states the number to be over 1,00,000 (p. 725). While Allen & Co. put the number at 1,50,000.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 95, Letter No. 69.

appeared in the vicinity of the fort of Attock, with the intention of laying siege to it. To prevent the enemies from crossing the Indus, Ranjit Singh despatched Hari Singh with 25,000 men.\* He was enjoined not to cross the river, till the *Sarkar* should arrive with reinforcements. But 'prudence was not part of Hari Singh's nature.' He was fit more for offensive than for defensive. Half of the force under Budh Singh Sandhanwalia, shortly after the approach of the insurgents, crossed the river and entrenched at Saidu,† where they were surrounded by the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. Budh Singh, however, induced the Barakzai Sardars of Peshawar to give up the cause of the Sayyed and "threw up a small breastwork of loose stones and extricated himself from this dilemma, so as to secure the praise even of his enemies." The Ghazis fought gallantly but the fortune did not smile on them. The untrained soldiers, however brave, could not stand against the disciplined and well-equipped warriors. Western science overpowered Eastern valour. Bombarding from his entrenchment he routed the enemy so completely, that it was long before the Sayyed was again able to appear in the field. The infuriated Sikhs did not pay heed to the cries for quarters and brutally slaughtered their opponents during the rout that followed. The Ghazis "lost 2,000 men, killed and wounded; while the losses of the Sikhs were estimated at 100 only."‡ But their success was retributed by the loss of their gallant general Budh Singh. When Ranjit Singh and Hari Singh arrived, the army marched to Peshawar, which was pillaged by the Sikhs.

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\* These numbers are quoted by Lepel Griffin; but Dr. G. L. Chopra gives the figures as 20,000 men; while the author of *Tawarikh-i-Hazara*, Part II, mentions the number to be at 22,000.

† Saidu is at a distance of five miles from Attock.

‡ *Tawarikh-i-Hazara*, Part II, p. 725.



The palace of Bala Hissar\* at Peshawar was set on fire and the chief public buildings were mercilessly pulled down. Ranjit carried away with him, as a hostage, the son of Sultan Mohammad Khan.†

After the defeat at Saidu and the consequent flight of the greatest of his followers, Sayyad Ahmad sought an asylum among the Yusafzais under whose protection he remained for about a year and a half. The Maharaja offered a reward for the capture of the Sayyed. The Yusafzais, however, did not like to betray a guest whose presence among them tended to strengthen and keep alive their noted spirit of independence and bravery.‡

Again in 1828 Nalwa Sardar came into conflict with the Hindustanis from the Trans-Indus lands and defeated them at Phulra.§ The opponents had two thousand allies from Hazara, who were chiefly Tanaolis. The "masonries vanished like phantom at the commencement of the combat and the fanatics themselves were cut up to a man, including their leader Ahmad Ali Shah, a nephew of the Sayyed." Nevertheless the Yusafzais were always giving trouble. After the return of the force which the Maharaja annually sent for the exaction of the tribute from Peshawar and the coercion of his feudatories in that part of the country, they missed no opportunity of harassing his garrison and subverting his authority.¶

Again in December 1828, the insurgents on the Attock,

\* There are two forts Bala Hissar by name, one at Peshawar and the other at Kabul.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 98, Letter No. 127.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 96, Letter No. 113.

§ Phulra is situated on the right bank of the Sivan river flowing west of Mansehra.

¶ Punjab Records, Book No. 96, Letter No. 114.

headed by Sayyed Ahmad, issued from their haunts and attacked the position taken up by the Sikhs at Hazro.\* A part of the army accordingly moved to the frontier. Hazro was plundered by Sayyed Ahmed ; but on the approach of Nalwa, the Sayyed was compelled to retire and seek safety in flight to the hills, which he had lately come from.†

The Muslim population between the Kashmir valley and the Indus were not willing subjects of Ranjit Singh. The enterprising Sayyed availed of this good opportunity to extend his influence towards that side.‡ He soon recovered from the staggering blows and emerged from the hills with reinforced power. Hari Singh was encamped opposite him with all his troops in that vicinity. Within a few days the Sayyed's forces, numbering about 5,000 strong, ventured to cross the Attock, alighted near Bhekerah and intercepted the communications of Hari Singh. The Sayyed began to incite the men of that region to rise against the Sikhs.

One day early in June, the Sikhs found themselves almost surrounded by their antagonists and were forthwith obliged to give battle. They engaged the enemy for an hour with fire-arms after which a hand-to-hand fight ensued. The Sayyed's followers soon wavered and dispersed. The Sikhs killed many of their opponents and the number is stated to have been 600 — killed and wounded. Like the Sikhs at Sabraon in 1846 many a Pathan perished while crossing the river. The people, who were incited to

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\* Hazro is situated on the left bank of the Indus within a few miles from the fort of Attock.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 96, Letter No. 182, dated December 7, 1828.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 98, Letter No. 100. But according to the compiler of the *Hazara Gazetteer*, "The Sayyed himself was not present in the action ; but Sayyed Ismail, his deputy."

join the army, had their houses and property destroyed by fire. The loss on the side of the Sikhs was stated to have been 150, wounded and killed.

Hari Singh reached Lahore on the 20th July and proceeded home on leave for a few days.

Shortly after this defeat, the resourceful Sayyed again enlisted a strong force of 7,000 men and defeated the Barakzai Sardars near Hoti\* Thus Peshawar again fell into his hands. Overjoyed with this success he struck coins in his name and assumed the title of *Khalifa*. Before long on the introduction of certain social reforms, the people rebelled and the Sayyed had to flee for life. Homeless as he was, the Yusafzais gave him shelter.

Alarmed at the defeat of the Barakzais, Ranjit started in person towards Peshawar. The Yusafzais were very much alarmed on his approach. To save themselves from punishment which the *Sarkar* might impose, they abandoned the cause of Sayyed Ahmad. Due to this division of interests, the Sayyed left for Punjtar and secured his protection. In the meantime the troops, which had been despatched under Hari Singh for the coercion of the Hindustanis, had approached. The Yusafzais of Punjtar were informed that if they did not deliver the Sayyed into their hands or expel him from the country, their homes would be laid waste and destroyed.† Before long, he left this place as well and moved towards Bamba Zabardast Khan. The chief of this place had invited him to form a coalition against the Sikhs. About the end of 1830, the insurgents "attacked the position of the Sikhs at Muzaffar-

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\* Hoti is situated about forty miles to the east of Peshawar.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 98, Letter No. 159.

abad and after a bloody action, the latter made a sally and completely succeeded in putting the opponents to flight\*." The Sayyed fled towards Mela Kot to rally his men.

The Hindustanis again assumed power and conquered much of the Hazara territory down to Bala Kot. The Sayyed, the Swaithy and the Kagon tribes associated themselves with the Ghazi. Sher Singh and Hari Singh while coming back from Kashmir met them under their veteran leader. A fierce combat took place in May, 1831. In the beginning of the action the balance seemed in favour of the Hindustanis, but the tide shortly turned in favour of the Sikhs. Henceforth, as ever, the Ghazis fought hard but they could not do well. They were routed by the furious onslaughts of the Sikhs and pursued for several miles. Many of them were killed, including their untiring general Ghazi Sayyed Ahmad. Blind with ignoble rage, a furious Nihang Singh, out of long cherished hatred for the Sayyed, threw his body into the river; but it was recovered lower down near the village of Tabhatta and a monument was raised over it.†

Thus ended the brilliant and glorious career of this gallant and dauntless adventurer, who selflessly strove so hard as to revive the vanishing glory of Moslem regime. His heroic sacrifice won him the posthumous title of Ghazi or Martyr. His character stands far higher above those who tried to achieve their private ends by giving a religious colour to their actions.

Shortly after this, Hari Singh was summoned to join the deputation which waited upon the then Governor General of the East India Company at Simla.

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\* Punjab Records, Book No. 98, Letter No. 160.

† "Ranjit Singh sent a prize of Rs. 50,000 to Sher Singh and Hari Singh for this victory over the Sayyed." Punjab Records, Book No. 137, Letter No. 117 [Wade to Princip].

## CHAPTER VI

### Annexation of Peshawar

SHAH SHUJA was the *dejure* king of Kabul. He was turned out by Dost Mohammad Khan, who forthwith became the *defacto* ruler of Afghanistan. The former, after some period of despair, sought shelter under the British at Ludhiana. Peshawar in those days was in the possession of the Barakzai Sardars, all real brothers of Dost Mohammad Khan. As stated elsewhere, they were not on good terms\* with the latter and they would fain rule as tributaries under the Sikhs rather than under their own brother. Ranjit Singh was perfectly sure of their irreconcilable enmity; but was equally suspicious of their probable attachment to the Shah, if he could come back and retake his lost throne.

On the other hand Shah Shuja applied simultaneously to the British and the Sikhs for help. But the former "adhered

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\* "The approach of danger does not seem to inspire the Barakzais with the sense of necessity of acting in concert. There is no unanimity among them. The report is that the Cabul Chief wrote Sardar Sultan Mohammad Khan at Peshawar to join him and consult on the means of meeting the threatened invasion of the Shah. Sultan Mohammad Khan replied that he had often solicited his brother, Dost Mohammad Khan, to assist him in resisting the encroachment of the Sikhs but he had always held his support and now he might extricate his own."

Punjab Records, Book No. 139, Letter No. 45, dated 15th July, 1833 From Captain Wade to the Governor General. We also find the said Captain writing to Macnaughten, Secretary to the Governor General in May, 1832:—

"There is enmity between Dost Mohammad Khan, the Sardar of Cabul, and his brothers of Peshawar. They have absolutely different interests."

Punjab Records, Book No. 138, Letter No. 21, dated May 19, 1832.

to their policy of perfect neutrality towards the different chiefs contending for power in Afghanistan. For them it was a matter of indifference whether the Barakzai or Suddozai families held paramount sway in Afghanistan; but under any circumstances it was of real importance to them that their national character should stand high with the people of the countries beyond the Indus and that they should maintain such a cordial and friendly intercourse with the leading men that would predispose them to expose their interest in case of future occurrence of such a state of affairs.\* With

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\* Punjab Records, Book No. 117, Letter No. 5, March 19, 1833.

In fact this was the outward policy; secretly the Company helped the Shah. "Lord William Bentinck had refused to connect himself in any way with politics of Afghanistan but he had suffered Shah Shuja to raise in 1833-34, an army of invasion under the shadow of British flag and had done everything but openly assist the enterprise he was undertaking for the recovery of his lost dominions." Kaye: *War in Afghanistan*, pp. 302-3.

Already in 1831, the Shah had applied for the assistance of Ranjit Singh in the recovery of his dominions; but the Maharaja had offered such hard terms for his alliance that the negotiations ended in smoke. Following is the text of these terms:—

That "the heir-apparent of the Shah shall always attend His Highness with a force, having also his family along with him; that he... shall be expected to accompany the Maharaja in all his journeys." Another demand put forth by Ranjit was for the delivery to him of the Sandal Wood Gates of Som Nath... Shah Shuja's answer to this demand is worth quoting, "Regarding the demand of the portals of Sandal at Ghazni, a compliance with it is inadmissible in two ways: firstly, a real friend is he, who is interested in the good name of his friend. The Maharaja being my friend, how can he find satisfaction in my eternal disgrace? To desire the disgrace of one's friend is not consistent with the dictates of wisdom. Secondly there is a tradition among all classes of people, that the forefathers of the Sikhs had said, that their nation shall in the attempt to bring away the portals of sandal, advance to Ghazni; but having arrived there, the

Ranjit Singh the Shah concluded a treaty on March 12, 1834,\* wherein he [ Shah ] acknowledged him [ Ranjit ] the master of Trans-Indus territories, including Peshawar and thus warded off the possibility of his alliance with Dost Mohammad Khan.

In the meanwhile Dost Mohammad captured the citadel of Jalalabad. His brothers at Peshawar began to be apprehensive, lest he should attack them. Their fears induced them to apply to the Sikhs for assistance who, on certain considerations, readily agreed. This proved dangerous for them. It clearly showed to the Sikhs, that their vassals were absolutely incapable of resistance, in case of aggression by the Shah or the ruler of Kabul.

Dost Mohammad was hated for sometime by the Afghans, and there was every possibility of the Shah's success in Kabul and then in Peshawar.† This increased the ever-waxing desire of Hari Singh for annexation. At the same time, the principal Hindu Dewans of Peshawar were also in secret correspondence with Nalwa Sardar for their deliverance from the yoke of their Muslim masters. He, therefore, advocated the ' Forward Policy '‡ to the Maharaja. Thus the unsettled state of Peshawar, the legitimate treaty rights§ of the Sikhs, the probability of its becoming tributary to Kabul

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foundation of their empire shall be overthrown. I am not desirous of that event. I wish for the permanence of His Highness's dominion."

\* See Appendix VII.

† "The intelligence of the Shah's approach has created a feeling of delight among all the Durranis. Several of them have gone towards Shikarpur."

Punjab Records, Book No. 189, Letter No. 26, dated May 8, 1833.

‡ "Sardar Hari Singh is supposed to have precipitated the annexation of that territory to his master's direct rule. He and other Sardars at His Highness's court, as well as the French officers have, I know, often attempted to obtain the Maharaja's consent to its occupation."

Punjab Records, Book No.140, Letter No.37, May 19, 1834.

§ See Appendix VII, as already referred.

under Shah Shuja\*, the advocacy of the forward policy, and numerous appeals from the non-Muslim and the *Shia* inhabitants of Peshawar for help, induced the ambitious ruler at Lahore to allow Hari Singh to permanently annex Peshawar to his dominions. Accordingly, a force of about nine thousand† troops under Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh, General Ventura and Court was sent from Lahore to Peshawar. It crossed the Indus at the end of April, 1834. Hari Singh, who was at this time in the Yusafzai Hills, 'was sent eleven *khillats* with orders to proceed to Peshawar to act as lieutenant under the nominal command of the Kunwar.‡'

\* Sayyed Mohammad Latif forgets perhaps, the long existing and never reconciling enmity ingrained in the veins of the Barakzai Sardars against their Kabul brother, when he boldly says that there was probability of Peshawar becoming tributary under Dost Mohammad Khan.

To find out the truth in the said remarks of the learned historians, I quote here from "Masson's Travels." He was then travelling in that country and was an eye-witness to all the haphazard transactions:—"The promptitude of their Kabul brother in the capture of Jalalabad has broken up the confederacy against him and they (rulers of Peshawar) now in turn began to be apprehensive, lest he should attack them and in truth they were at his mercy." (Also, see footnotes to page 44).

On June 17, 1834, Captain Wade wrote to Macnaughten, Secretary to the Supreme Government, about the annexation of Peshawar, as a consequence of the Shah's growing power. The original runs thus:—"His Highness has probably been induced to take immediate possession of Peshawar in order to secure it before Shah Shuja may become too strong to defy the extension of his claim to that territory."

Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 47.

† Sir Lepel Griffin gives the actual strength as 8,000; while Masson, an eye-witness, says that it was about 9,000 men.

‡ Captain Wade to Macnaughten. "His Highness has despatched strong reinforcements towards the



The whole force marched towards their destination under the 'pretence of levying an increased tribute' from the Barakzai Sardars,\* the tributary rulers of Peshawar. But they understood full well the real motives of the invading army. The Sikhs encamped several *koses* from the city, carrying on negotiations with Sardar Sultan Mohammad Khan for an addition to the tribute in horses which he had hitherto paid to the Lahore Government. The plea urged by Nalwa Sardar for increasing the demand was the presence of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. He insisted. As it was his first campaign, he was entitled to the honour of separate contribution of five horses which, though an infraction of subsisting engagements, Sultan Mohammad Khan and his brothers agreed after some discussion to deliver.† No sooner, however,

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disturbed districts as well as to Peshawar. The Maharaja's troops are stated to have entered that city and it is supposed he intends to retain it on the present occasion. It is the fourth time that it will have fallen in the hands of the Sikhs. His Highness has fully resolved in establishing his authority in it during the present season in person and had made extensive preparations to lead his army against it when his late illness arrested his design. Unable to go himself, he appointed his grandson Nau Nihal Singh to the nominal command of the expedition; while the actual direction of affairs has been left to Sardar Hari Singh and the French officers, Messrs. Ventura and Court. I may remark that the present is the first instance in which His Highness has brought his grandson forward. He is a fine youth of about thirteen years of age and the Maharaja is anxious to prepare him for public life."

Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 33, dated May 10, 1834.

\* They were Sultan Mohammad Khan, Pir Mohammad Khan Nawab Jabbar Khan, his son Abdul Ghias Khan and Naib Haji Khan.

† According to one account, the horses which were offered in the increased tribute were rejected as unsuitable.

they had complied with their requisitions then the Sikhs threw off their mask.\* The Peshawar Sardars, predicting the real intention of Hari Singh, had sent off their families and even valuable goods to Michen†—eleven miles north of the Kabul river. All the portable things, 'even the wooden shutters of their doors and windows' were carried to a safe place. "It was ridiculous," writes an eye-witness, "about twice or thrice a day to see the servants running out with the saddles on their heads and returning when they discovered that the alarm which had been given was a false one."

"Every thing at this crisis conspired to favour the schemes of Hari Singh. The arrival of Haji Khan, who had always been the chief instrument of the Peshawar Sardars for their brother's destruction, hastened the end. Having miserably failed in his malicious schemes against the Kabul Sardar,

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 37, May 19, 1834.

† "Sultan Mohammad Khan still remains at Peshawar. The report of Maharaja's proceeding to that quarter has made the Sardar resolved to remove all his property to Bejour." Punjab Records, Book No.139, Letter No.72, Dec.20, 1833. Again in June 28, 1833, Qazi Mustafa Khan from Peshawar conveyed to Captain Wade at Ludhiana. [Punjab Records, Book No. 139, Letter No. 45, July 15, 1833]. "In Peshawar the Sardars are in alarm. They have sent off their families to Bejour. Two Europeans have lately entered their service who are employed in raising the troops."

It was also communicated by Captain Wade to the Supreme Government in his letter No. 32 dated May 7, 1834 [P. R. B. 140] "Sultan Mohammad Khan, having heard the approach of Ranjit Singh's troops, has left Peshawar and marched towards the Michen Hills," where he was reported later on "to be concerting measures for recovery of the city."

Punjab Records, Book No.140, Letter No.37, May 19, 1834.

"This indeed had been the custom at Peshawar whenever there was a report of the Sikhs approaching its vicinity." Sayyed Mohammad Latif: *History of the Punjab*, p. 468.

the ill-adviser with a view 'to evince his capability' and loyalty came forward with a set of reforms to be inaugurated in the army. He proposed to reorganize it and dispense with the valuable services of the *Shias*, pronounced contemptuously as *kafirs*. They were the remnants of the old Gulam Khan of Peshawar, powerful and influential to a degree though not a very numerous body. This proposed political blunder at this critical juncture soon involved its perpetrators. The *Shias*, 'fearing the effects of his ascendancy,' opened a clandestine correspondence with the Sikh commander."

With such bright prospects in view, Nalwa Sardar in order to avail of full benefit asked Sultan Mohammad Khan, the Sardar of Peshawar, that Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh 'wished to view the city and it would be well if they evacuated it and retired to Beg Ali Mardan Khan.' Next day the Lahore forces moved towards the town. Sultan Mohammad Khan who always held 'a spy glass in his hand' also noticed it. There ensued a general panic. 'Horses were saddled and mounted in a trice. Whole of the house was evacuated as if by magic' and the once brave ruling Sardars fled into the adjoining hills leaving the city to its fate.

The Lahore forces proceeded in an orderly and respectable manner. "In the van," tells the same eye-witness, "was the young Shahzada on an elephant with Hari Singh and the variety of the Sikh chiefs attended by a host of cavalry. Behind them followed the battalions of General Court advancing in columns at a brisk pace." The conquest was on the whole bloodless. There were a few examples of 'spirited resistance' which of course showed that 'individual bravery' was not lacking among the Pathans. A brave Afghan gallantly attacked the Sikhs, killed about half a dozen. Some Pathans hiding themselves in the trees were soon attacked and

cleared off. Haji Khan 'who guarded the retreat path lost patience and pounced upon a party of the Sikhs. He resisted bravely for some time and it was only after reinforcements that the Sikhs got their way. Khan Mohammad Khan was mortally wounded in this combat and borne off the field.' The Sikh force surrounded the town and Nalwa Sardar occupied the Bala Hissar on May 6, 1934. He then 'jocularly inquired of one of the companions of Masson as to where the Sardars had fled who answered that they had gone to Takhal to prepare for battle. The Sardar mooked and said, 'O! No, No, *nasgai, nasgai*, 'they have run away', some to Kohat some to Khaibar.\* The Sikhs extended their protection to the citizens and there was illumination in the evening.† Thus 'the plot devised by the Sardars of Peshawar to effect the ruin of Dost Mohammad Khan immediately involved their own, and their fate affords an example of evil falling upon those who imagine it.'

Masson's Travels, p. 228.

The news of this victory was communicated by Ranjit Singh himself to Captain Wade in the following words:—

"By the Grace of God at the present auspicious moment I have been delighted by the arrival of happy news. The Barakzai Sardars destitute of foresight had arrayed at the dawn of the day with about 12,000 horse and foot in hostility against my troops.

"Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh took a spear in his hand and prepared to oppose them with great presence of mind in concert with Hari Singh Nalwa and Mr. Court with a discharge of artillery.

"At length the Barakzais repining at their timidity sought safety in flight and being dispersed on all sides Peshawar fell in the hands of officers of my government who extended their protection to the inhabitants of that place and their property. In the evening there was illumination in the city which was hailed both by Hindus and Mohammedans of the country as the harbinger of their deliverance from the hands of their tyrants."

After nine centuries of Muslim rule the important and rich city of Peshawar fell into the hands of the Sikhs. It was lost to Subuktagin by Jaipal in about 988 A. D., since then it ever remained in the hands of the Muslims either under Delhi or Kabul. The fate of the Afghans was to be lamented. Their days of glory had passed and their sharp swords turned blunt. There was time when the proud Rajput confederacies could not retake an inch of the lost land even after bloody battles. Now the same Afghans had fallen so low that they made a humiliating surrender of the town for which they had so often shed valuable blood. Like individuals, nations have also their evil days and the case of Moslems in the last two centuries is an appropriate example. In the East the 'golden sparrow' flew out of their hands to those who were ordinary chiefs, attendants and praise-singers at the Moghal court. In the West the vast Turkish empire disintegrated. Once embracing the whole of the Asia Minor and Egypt and a great part of Eastern Europe it was now crippled to a weak Asiatic nation, great in nothing but name. The once energetic conquering spirit of Islam had vanished and even the power of resistance utterly destroyed. Instead of illustrious sovereigns and brave generals it produced imbecile kings, paltry and disloyal soldiers. Kings like Dost Mohammad Khan who were gifted with qualities of head and heart were greatly reduced by the sensual vice of wine, women, disputes of authority, mutual jealousy and treachery of friends and nobles.

The bloodless conquest of Peshawar by Hari Singh does not bestow much glory on the Sikhs but it sheds great humiliation and pity on the Afghans in general and the Peshawar Sardars in particular. In place of adopting means of formidable defence against the invasion of Hari Singh they had 'sent away the flower of their troops' and while departing

the Sultan 'prohibited the citizens and countrymen from placing any resistance' in the way of the Sikh general.' He is reported to have a treasure of three lacs\* with him, which he carried away to the hills. With this amount he could have enlisted a sufficiently large army and offered effective defence. According to best accounts 'the force with Hari Singh did not exceed nine thousand men and had a show of serious resistance been made he would at least have been obliged to temporize.' † There is difference between men and men. When Azim Khan was alive in 1824 the gallant and mighty Ranjit with twenty-five thousand chosen warriors could not retain the city. Setting aside all favourable or unfavourable chances it was their moral, religious and the royal duty to afford shelter to the citizens. They should have died fighting on the battle-field like Nawab Muzaffar Jang, Nawab Jabbar Khan and Ghazi Sayyed Ahmad and many more who manfully faced the Sikhs rather than fly disgracefully as they chose to do.

We will surely do injustice to Hari Singh if we attribute the flight of the Sardars only to their weakness and cowardice. It cannot be ignored for one moment that the terror of his name was also one of the chief causes of Afghan despair. They had suffered repeated defeats at the hands of Hari Singh on different occasions and had openly acknowledged his bravery, his good generalship and his skill in war. They trembled even from his

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\* He would say ".....that he had reserved this for such a crisis as this and he would assemble the Ghazis and do many wonderful things. Haji Khan would, when such valorous speeches were made, embrace the Sardar saying, "he must kiss the lips from which such words flowed." What a good example of harmful pride and useless boast !

† "The Sikh army under Hari Singh consisted only of 9,000 men and had the Afghans been commanded by a competent leader they might have driven back a far stronger force and retained possession of the places."  
J. W. Kaye: *The War in Afghanistan*, p. 133.

shadow. No impartial writer can forget these causes of the downfall of Afghan influence in the Trans-Indus lands.\*

After cowardly retirement from Peshawar the Sardars did not attempt any concerted attack for re-occupation of the city but remained harassing the Sikhs in petty guerilla warfare. 'Night attacks are made on the Sikh camps in which they generally lose some lives and horses and are kept in constant state of vigilance,'† wrote Captain Wade to the Governor General. This was undoubtedly due to the 'machinations of Sultan Mohammad Khan though he posed to be innocent about these skirmishes.'

Having failed to induce Hari Singh successfully for the restitution of the recent surrender, Sultan Mohammad Khan despatched an envoy to the Lahore Court. But nothing could induce the Maharaja to restore it to him 'unless his troops found it difficult to maintain their position from the inveterate hostility of the Afghans who took every opportunity of forcing their enemy to relinquish their conquest.'‡

\* See Appendix No. II.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 38, dated May 22, 1834.

".....marched towards Michen Hills and concerted measures for the recovery of the city.

Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 37, dated May 19, 1834.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 38, dated May 22, 1834.

## CHAPTER VII

### Flight of Dost Mohammad

DOST MOHAMMAD\* was proceeding to Kandhar for the

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\* "The name of this young warrior was Dost Mohammad Khan. Nature seems to have designed him for a hero of the true Afghan stamp and character. Of a graceful person, a prepossessing countenance, a bold frank manner, he was outwardly endowed with all those gifts which most inspire confidence and attract affection; whilst undoubted courage, enterprise, activity, somewhat of the recklessness and unscrupulousness of his race, combined with a more than common measure of intelligence and sagacity, gave him a command over his fellows and mastery over circumstances which raised him at length to the chief seat in the empire. His youth was stained with many crimes, which he lived to deplore. It is the glory of Dost Mohammad, that in the vigour of his years he looked back with contrition upon the excesses of his early life, and lived down many of the besetting infirmities which had overshadowed the dawn of his career. The waste of deserted childhood and the deficiencies of neglected education he struggled manfully to remedy and repair. At the zenith of his reputation there was not, perhaps, in all Central Asia a chief, so remarkable for the exercise of self-discipline and self-control; but he emerged out of a cloudy morn of vice, and sunk into a gloomy night of folly." [Kaye: *War in Afghanistan*, p. 108]

"It is not to be questioned that there was at this time, in the conduct of Dost Mohammad, as a ruler, much that may be regarded with admiration and respect even by Christian men. Success did not disturb the balance of his mind nor power hardened his heart. Simple in his habits and remarkably affable in his manners, he was accessible to the meanest of his subjects. Ever ready to listen to their complaints and to redress their grievances, he seldom rode abroad without being accosted in the public street or highway by citizen or by peasant waiting to lay before the Sardar a history of his grievances and sufferings, and to ask for assistance and



purpose of opposing the Shah but on being informed of the occupation of Peshawar by Nalwa Sardar he abandoned his design and went back to Kabul.\* Unlike his Peshawar brothers he was grave and sincere, pious and frank, bold and fearless. Self-disciplined and self-controlled as he was, obliging and polite of manners, always at the service of his subjects, he felt for their sufferings and bore his own with utmost submission trusting in the All-Powerful. His character was not only in great contrast with his ignoble brothers but his rules of conduct differed from the general Muslim disposition. What is rare in a true Muslim, he had in abundance with him. He condemned even conversions to Islam with selfish motives so often patronized and practised by the Muslim Rulers of India. He "thought it.....a disgrace to any creed and expressed in strong terms the contempt he felt for men who changed their religion to improve their fortune.†" His character was really worthy of admiration and reverence but to the misfortune of Afghanistan he had not the honest support of his brothers. Dost Mohammad Khan, a brave man, could not tolerate the disgrace which stained the fearless bravery and independent spirit of his race with splendid military traditions, whose very intention to move towards the south terrorized the whole of Bharatavarsha down to Cape Comorin.

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redress. And he never passed the petitioner, never rode on but would rein in his horse, listen patiently to the complaints of the meanest of his subjects and give directions to his attendants to take the necessary steps to render justice to the injured or to alleviate sufferings of the distressed. Such was his love of equity, indeed, that people asked, "Is Dost Mohammad dead that there is no justice." *Kaye: War in Afghanistan*, p. 122.

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 42, June 25, 1834.

† Allen & Co.: *History of the Panjab*, pp. 139-140.

He regarded the occupation of Peshawar by Hari Singh as a case of pure and simple usurpation, against the treaty obligations, and on May 25, 1834 he addressed an expostulatory letter in vaunting language to Ranjit Singh stating that 'notwithstanding his brothers had duly paid the fixed tribute, they had been deprived of their territory' by his general and further threatened that as soon as he and his brothers disposed of the Shah they intended attacking the Sikhs and driving them out of Peshawar and even from the Punjab.\* Viewing this threat with utmost contempt, Ranjit Singh showed his dissatisfaction with the previous arrangements and further wrote in an evasive manner that 'Nau Nihal Singh [he was only 13 years of age.]† .....had occupied that territory of his own accord. They should therefore send their agent to him.....After the rainy season it was His Highness's own intention to proceed in that direction. '‡ Further in a haughty tone the Maharaja added that the " ruler of Kabul should bear in mind that the last Sayyed Ahmad who came from Hindustan to the Yusafzai country could whenever he required, raise lakhs of people, yet he was quickly destroyed by one of his Sardars—Hari Singh."§

He found that his threats of vengeance had no effect and Ranjit Singh did not become a bit more tractable for these vaunts. The Sardars then corresponded with Hari Singh for an amicable settlement but it was evidently useless. So the Amir 'actively engaged in preparing to advance... ..to attack the Sikhs' and 'had already 20,000 men with him.¶

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 46, June 15, 1834.

† Bracketed words are mine.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 47, dated June 17, 1834.

§ *Ibid.*

¶ Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 71, dated September 7, 1834.

But this number was quite insufficient to stand against the Sikhs. On political grounds he did not like the assistance of the Shah of Persia,\* but a drowning man will even catch at a snake. He most undesirably despatched an envoy to the Shah "soliciting an alliance with him for the purpose of liberating his country from the inroads of the Sikhs and arresting their further progress."† Another message was sent to the British asking for their help in his endeavour "to dislodge the Sikhs from Peshawar" ‡ but in the usual manner met with a courteous refusal. Though the Company promised to persuade the Maharaja for an amicable settlement it refused to lend arms.

Both the parties earnestly engaged in preparing for the coming contest. On this side Ranjit Singh sent large re-inforcements § to the Trans-Indus lands¶ and by the end of the year the number reached 20,000 men. He also issued

\* "Dost Mohammad Khan could scarcely have desired to introduce Persian army into his native boundary on any pretext but he, no doubt, believed that moral influence of an alliance with Persia would be of support to him in his relations with the Sikhs. Punjab Records, Book No. 119, Letter No. 22).

† Punjab Records, Book No. 142, Letter No. 11, dated February 22, 1836.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 1, dated January 4, 1835. From Dost Mohammad Khan to Wade "you will promote and establish friendly relations between the two states and use your endeavours to assist us in capturing Peshawar from the Sikhs."

From Wade to Dost Mohammad Khan [December 12, 1834]:—  
"With regard to Peshawar it is not in my power to interfere in the matter . . . . . I have reported the subject to His Lordship and shall communicate the reply."

§ Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 87.

¶ Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 87, dated April 1, 1835. Captain Wade to Macnaughten, Secretary to the Governor General, Fort William.

orders for the immediate fortification of the Bala Hissar, which his army had so mercilessly devastated in the late operations of 1830.

Dost Mohammad ' adopted the common method of enlisting the popular sympathies by mingling religious antipathies ' with political rivalry, and aroused Muslim passions by declaring a holy war against the infidels. Resourceful and energetic as he was he could collect a numerous host to fight for him, in a very short time. He assumed the title of Amir-ul-Momnin\* [Commander of the Faithful] and struck coins† in his own name. This inspired the hearts of his followers and

\* "In the evening the Sayyeds, the Sheikhs, the Mullans, religious men and all the Mohammedans of the city assembled there and gave Dost Mohammad Khan the title of Amir-ul-Momnin or 'the leader of the faithful' because to prosecute a holy war with propriety it is necessary that the leader should possess of having their Khutba read in their own name."

Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 6, dated February 3, 1835.

"He had been recommended by some to assume the title of royalty, but he replied that as he was too poor to support his dignity as a Sardar, it would be preposterous to think of converting himself into a King." Kaye: *War in Afghanistan*, p. 133.

† "..... and a new coin was struck having the following inscription devised by Mirza Abdul Sami Khan, his Persian Secretary viz., "*Amir Dost Mohammad Khan-i-Azam Jang Jahad Kamar ba bast bazad Sikka Nasirash Haq bad*" meaning Dost Mohammad Khan Amir having formed the resolution of fighting for his religion has struck this coin (*sikka*). May God preserve him!"

Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 6, February 3, 1835.

"He may now be considered to have his rights to the throne of Kabul. [Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 4, January 27, 1835].

proved to be a wise policy. It attracted numerous hosts to his banner which stood for defending Islam. To obtain money was the next difficulty. "An Afghan Chief has a rude and somewhat arbitrary manner of levying rates and taxes" and Dost Mohammad did not make an exception to it. By following that 'good old rule', he is reported to have accumulated by contributions and exactions a treasure of twelve lacs of rupees.\* Thus on January 2, 1835, strong in men and money, the Amir started on his march towards Peshawar via Jalalabad. As they marched on and on "the great stream of humanity seemed to swell and swell as new tributaries came pouring in from every part and thousands became ten thousands. From the Kohistan, from the hills beyond, from the regions of Hindoo Kush, from the remote fastnesses of Turkistan multitudes of various impulses but all noisily boasting their true Mohammedan zeal came flocking to the Amir's standard..... horsemen and footmen, all who could wield a sword or lift a match-lock obeyed the call in the name of the Prophet.† "Savages from the remotest recesses of mountainous districts" writes an eye-witness, General Harlan, 'who were dignified with the profession of Mohammedan faith, many of them giants in form and strength, promiscuously armed with sword and shield, blows and arrows,

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 140 Letter No. February 3, 1835. Captain Wade to the Governor General:—

"The amount of money raised by the Amir to meet his expenses is stated to be less even than three lakhs and a half. Only one lac in cash and two lacs and a half in expectancy and with such poor resources showing his inability to keep the field beyond one month, his admitted fertility of genius might enable him to do so." (Masson to Wade, Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 39, April 28, 1835.) Accounts radically differ in both the letters. One cannot say which is correct.

† *Kaye: War in Afghanistan* p. 134.

match-locks, rifles, spears, blunder-busses, concentrated themselves around the standard of religion and were prepared to slay, plunder and destroy for the sake of God and the Prophet, the unenlightened infidels of the Punjab.”\*

Hari Singh stood gallantly in Peshawar, in Muslim land, and amid Muslim population at a distance of 300 miles from Lahore with only twenty thousand troops. Dost Mohammad with that dreadful assemblage of Muslim humanity might have defied the Sikhs and even the English [ which in fact he did a few years later ] but he could not defy Hari Singh. Fearing loss of life and property in the impending deadly conflict with the Afghans, some cowardly Sikhs and Hindus began to flee to the Cis-Indus lands. To check this, Nalwa Sardar posted Kanwar Kashmira Singh [ a son of Ranjit Singh ] at the Indus to stop any body going to the plains unless he could produce a written official permission.

The historic march of the Amir continued and at Dakoh he captured† Sultan Mohammad Khan and Pir Mohammad

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 9. dated February 13, 1835, from Captain Wade to the Governor General :—

“ Great exertions have already been made by Dost Mohd. to induce all his Mohammedan neighbours to join him in his determination of attacking the Sikhs and he is stated to have received the strongest assurances of support from them. On his return from Kandhar his first object was to instigate them to war against the common enemy of their religion and the victory which he gained over the Shah has given him a moral as well as a political influence among his countrymen which cannot fail to augment his power and resources. There is no Mohammedan chief of the best note between the Oxus and Sutlej whose co-operation he has not invited.”

† Dost Mohammad Khan suspected them of communicating with Nalwa Sardar. Three *Kasids* sent by the Sardar

Khan along with their treasures and delivered them to one of his military commanders. A portion of his troops under Mohammad Akbar Khan which had been sent in advance on the 10th of December, fought an engagement with an outpost of the Sikhs. Various encounters took place at different places without any serious result. In one of the skirmishes Hari Singh was worsted with a loss of 150 dead and disabled, and was obliged to retire to Peshawar. Another version is that ' the assailants were a large body of peasantry who made a night attack on a party of the Sikhs,\* who were entrenched near the entrance of the Khyber scheming to pass through the gate leading to Kabul. ' But the result in either case is reported to have been the same. This defeat simply aroused Hari Singh's spirit and he made hasty preparations for a formidable attack with his meagre resources. His heart was burning for speedy vengeance but he received order from Ranjit Singh ' to lull the designs of the Amir ' by exchange of negotiations till his arrival, and tried to detach Sultan Mohammad Khan from his Kabul brother's interest

to Pir Mohammad Khan were actually caught by the Amir who in a fit of anger ignored the rules of international warfare and despatched them away immediately.

From Captain Wade to the Governor General *vide* Punjab Records, Book No.141, Letter No.28, dated April 10,1835. Another letter (Punjab Records, Book No.140, Letter No.4, dated January 27, 1835) tells the number of the wounded and the dead as 500 men. But it seems to be wrong, as the encounter that took place does not appear to be a very deadly combat as the latter number (500) reveals. It was only a skirmish. With the exception of Allen & Co., no other historian has even referred to it. So the circumstantial evidence goes in favour of the second despatch, Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 28, and the first information, Punjab Records, Book No. 411, Letter No. 5, seems to be wrong.

by the offer of large bribes and pledges of liberal provisions for his support\*. Hari Singh was impatient† even after the receipt of these orders and wanted to decide the issue by a battle with 20,000 troops against overwhelming numbers (1,00,000)‡, but the persistent imperial command subdued his high spirits. Ranjit, fearing his general's impetuous nature, wrote again and again to defer the offensive till the Sarkar's arrival.

By the end of March re-inforcements came under Gulab Singh and Court§ The Maharaja approached¶ in the beginning of April by forced marches and saw the huge gathering of his antagonists in a semicircle around the disputed city as far as human sight could reach. The brave heart of Ranjit Singh quailed within him. Like Aurangzeb, who seldom won any fort without using the silver key, the Maharaja chose to

\* Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 6, dated February 3, 1835.

† ".....Dost Mohammad was halting.....at 5 *koses* off. the letter concluded by asking permission to attack the Afghans. A reply was sent that the *Sarkar* would be at Peshawar himself within two or three days and.....he [ *Sarkar* ] would act according to the circumstances. In the meantime to remain quiet unless the enemy should dare to commence the attack which he was at liberty to oppose [ them ] and do justice to his valour.' Punjab Records, Book No.101, Letter No.42, dated May 17, 1835. Accordingly Hari Singh postponed the battle till Ranjit's arrival and began negotiations with the Afghans.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 6 dated February 3, 1835.

§ Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 36 from Wade to the Governor General dated April 25, 1835.

¶ On his arrival Ranjit Singh took over the chief command and Hari Singh's part in the subsequent affairs is not of very great importance, but I cannot drop the proceedings here though I shall quickly cover the period.



fight the Afghans with the political weapon of intrigue rather than to give battle in an open field. In the hostile camp also the zeal for a holy war soon evaporated and all the Amir's schemes melted away like the snow before the sun. The counsels of discretion and conciliation prevailed against those of revenge in his heart and as Ranjit Singh reported to his friends beyond the Sutlej, the Amir himself entertained the messengers sent to his brothers by the Maharaja.....  
 .....Dost Mohammad Khan being alarmed of his [Ranjit Singh's] approach and the preparations he had made to attack him [Amir] had consented to be a party to the negotiations which he [Ranjit Singh] had opened with Sultan Mohammad Khan.....The Sikhs are impatient of the armistice that has taken place and had been urging him to allow them to attack.....\*

The despatch mentioned was sent apparently to negotiate with Dost Mohammad Khan, but in fact to bribe and detach his supporters.† As ever Ranjit's choice fell on the most appropriate man. Stubborn, rash, brave, and over-

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\* Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 41, dated May 15, 1835. This intelligence is of little importance for us. We find in fact another cause for the Amir's flight. And one may doubt even the truth of this as another account more reliable for several reasons does not tally with it. But we cannot attribute the flight to any other cause except the Amir's inability to fight against the Sikhs which he acknowledged before Captain Burnes on his visit to Kabul.

† The terms offered by the Maharaja and their settlement is given in the following letter of Wade to the Governor General :- "..... Ranjit Singh.....despatched Dr. Harlan to Sultan Mohammad.....with a view to detach him altogether from Dost Mohammad Khan's interest by offer of districts of Kohat, Tank and Bunno, a jagir for himself and his brother Sayyed Peer Mohammad Khan. Dr. Harlan seems to have succeeded . . . .in so far that a letter has been written from the Sultan to the Maharaja

bearing generals like Hari Singh were ignored and peace-loving, self-controlled and amicable courtiers chosen for the occasion. One Dr. Harlan, an American adventurer, who had long lived among the Afghans and was well-known as a clever and unscrupulous man was selected for this difficult duty. He was assisted by Faqir Aziz Din, Foreign Minister of the Lahore Darbar—a man of undoubted loyalty and admitted ability. The chief duty of the mission, as stated above, was to scratch the wound of enmity between the Barakzai Sardars, which operation the above doctor excellently performed and can be best described in his own words. "On this occasion" says he, very proudly as if he were performing a very honourable and noble duty, "of Dost Mohammad's visit to Peshawar which occurred during the period of my service with Ranjit Singh, I was despatched by the Prince as an ambassador to the Ameer. I divided his brothers against him, exciting their jealousy of his growing power and exasperating the family feuds with which, from my previous acquaintance I was familiar, and stirred the feudal lords of his durbar, with the prospects of pecuniary advantages. I induced his brother Sultan Mohammad Khan, the lately deposed chief of Peshawar with 10,000 retainers, to withdraw suddenly from his camp about nightfall. The chief accompanied me towards the Sikh camp, while his followers fled to their mountain fastnesses. So large a body retiring from the Ameer's control, in opposition to his will and without previous intimation, threw the general camp

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declaring that he is ready to accede to any terms that His Highness may offer, provided he will not engage with Dost Mohammad Khan into separate negotiations who is his *enemy* and wishes to recover Peshawar on his own account..... "Punjab Records, Book No.141, Letter No. 40, dated May 1, 1835 (Informer Masson).

into inextricable confusion, which terminated in the clandestine rout of his forces, without beat of drum, or sound of bugle, or the trumpet's blast, in the quiet stillness of midnight. At daybreak no vestige of the Afghan camp was seen, where six hours before 50,000 men and 10,000 horses, with all the busy host of attendants, were rife with the tumult of wild emotion."

Thus succeeded the old policy of divide-and-rule. Though it was mainly the issue of a political mistake committed by the Amir by denying his brother Peshawar, in case of its recapture, yet it was an act of extreme disloyalty and faithlessness on the part of his brothers. Sultan Mohammad proved traitor both to his brother and to his country. Now the Amir alone remained on the battle-field. It was not an easy thing for him to decide about his further course. He was on the horns of a dilemma. He did not know what to do and where to go in such a desperate plight. Remorse, failure, grief and faithlessness touched his heart one by one. "His minister.....supported.....by a few other chiefs was advising the Amir to wage war\* and the commander of his infantry stated boastingly that he would defeat the whole Sikh army with his own regiments and would bring Avitabile a prisoner. On the other hand Nawab Jabbar Khan considering the superiority of the enemy, proposed to

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\* *Life of Dost Mohammad Khan* by Mohan Lal, pp. 176-177.

We find the Amir's intention mentioned in a letter from Capt. Wade to the Governor General ".....Dost Mohammad Khan would not risk an engagement until he had ascertained what the intentions of our government were as he knew the great advantages which Ranjit Singh possessed over him and his object was to avoid an action."

retire without the hazards of a battle, and the Amir wisely agreed with him." Encouraged by the disunion effected in the enemy's camp, the Maharaja now chose to fight but the Amir acted upon his brother's advice and ran away at dead of night taking away his guns but leaving behind much of his camp equipment. ' Thus was the great expedition, so promising at the outset, brought prematurely to a disastrous close. Treachery broke up in a single night a vast army which Ranjeet Singh had contemplated with dismay.'

This remorseful flight took place on the 11th of May.\* It was at first supposed that ' the sudden disappearance was a stratagem on the Amir's part to lead the Sikhs into the Khyber hills where the Afghans might have been able to encounter them with more success ' than they could hope to do in the plains,† but it appeared shortly that he had made a final retreat to Kabul. To remove this doubt ' Raja Dhian Singh, Sardar Hari Singh and other chiefs went in pursuit for about ten *koses* as far as the Khyber Pass and ascertained that the enemy had made a march of fifteen *koses* on that day.‡

The way in which the Barakzai Sardars threw mud at one another during this crisis is not a pleasant story to tell. Dost Mohammad went straight to Kabul, " reseated himself quietly in the Bala Hissar and in bitterness of spirit declaiming against the emptiness of military renown, plunged deeply into the study of the Koran." Sultan Mohammad Khan, late ruler of Peshawar, came to Lahore with Ranjit Singh for further settlement. Hari Singh remained in the province

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\* Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 44, dated May 19, 1835 [from Wade to Governor General].

† Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 47 [from Ranjit Singh to his Agent at Ludhiana].

‡ *Ibid.*

as Commander-in-Chief on the frontier with 12,000 troops. Civil and revenue duties were also assigned to him. For about a year and a quarter, till July 1836, he remained busy in establishing order and civil administration in the province by revising and settling the new revenue terms and pacifying the tribal chiefs. In August he visited the *Sarkar* at Lahore and remained there for about a month rendering the previous accounts.

During the period of hostilities there occurred a few skirmishes of minor importance on petty matters of occupying privileged positions in the suburbs of the disputed city. Events after the flight are many but of little interest or consequence and can safely be omitted. However, an instance of aggressive assault by an avaricious and profligate Afghan chief over a Hindu marriage party and his deserved reward at the hands of Nalwa Sardar must be mentioned.

The Khan of Michni attacked a Hindu marriage party and snatched away the bride. The sufferers solicited him very humbly to restore her back but the Khan actuated with sensual passion, did not pay heed to them. He said that the rulers were entitled to every thing belonging to their subjects and he had not done exceptional injury if he had taken one out of many women of his heathen subjects. Their persistence was regarded as an act of disobedience and thereupon the autocratic Afghan chief ordered his soldiers to give them a good beating. The poor Hindus came back weeping and bewailing, not without serious injuries and lodged a complaint with Hari Singh regarding the most inhuman and aggressive attitude of the Khan. The Sardar heard it and devised a scheme for the chastisement of this ignoble Lord of Michni. Assuring them of his help he sent them to their respective homes.

Before long he made a vigorous night attack on the residence of the Khan. Despatching away the sentinels he set fire to the house. The Khan apologized for his misconduct and offered to return the bride. After heavy punishment Hari Singh came back and restored the bride to her husband, who felt very much obliged to the Sardar and willingly embraced the Sikh religion. He offered his name to be enlisted in the Sardar's army. The wife, whose name according to Sikh rites was Harsaran Kaur, joined the Mess Department of Nalwa Sardar's Forces.

### RETROSPECT

It is not easy to recall the reflections that might have passed in the Amir's mind before his ignominious flight, but certainly it must have been an hour of great humiliation and distress for the proud Afghan to retire like a fox in the thicket at the appearance of a lion. It appears that all what Dost Mohammad Khan did was in a fit of anger, without using his intellect in estimating his own military strength in comparison with Ranjit's and committed a gross mistake in declaring the so-called Holy War. We cannot account for the reasons which induced him to break the solemn oath to fight for his sacred creed and the righteous cause. Before embarking upon the zealous expedition the Amir ought to have ascertained the depth of friendship with his European friends, fidelity of his brothers, his own resources in men and money and that of his opponents. Dost Mohammad perhaps did not calculate any of these. So we find that the crusade was a rash and an unwise act, devoid of all political sense, and cannot be justified on any ground even by his apologists.

We conclude from the foregoing discussion the uselessness of his proposed invasion. Let us see if he acted wisely

in fleeing away when the circumstances for war were ripe and his soldiers clamoured for it most passionately. Those who praise his act that he avoided bloodshed and agonies of war can hardly stand, for we find the Amir declaring another *Jehad* within a short period of two years. Those who hold the view that he avoided defeat in this way, fail in judging the evil effects of his flight. It terribly reduced his prestige among his own warlike people which he had recently gained by inflicting a defeat on the Shah. It enhanced considerably the already-waning glory of the Sikhs and confirmed the belief that the Sikhs were far more powerful than the Afghans. A battle, even if it had been a glorious success, would not have added so much to the prestige of the Sikhs as this bloodless victory. His deposed brothers took shelter under Ranjit Singh and were still more closely attached than before. Dost Mohammad's refusal to give Peshawar to Sultan Mohammad Khan, in case of its recapture greatly widened the long existing gulf; and we find how in concert with Ranjit Singh and Hari Singh, he made designs of invading Kabul. Last but not the least, his English friends began to hesitate accepting his friendship and regarded him as coward and unstatesmanlike. In short its effects, direct and indirect, were fatal to the Amir's power even more than a defeat from Shah Shuja would have proved. The last attempt of the Afghans for the reconquest of Peshawar having utterly failed, the Sikhs got an important and commercial city almost without any price.

In this respect there can be no two opinions that it was absolutely a wanton act of rashness devoid of all political sense and judgment. It exhibited his unstatesmanlike nature and brought him remorse and loss in place of the expected honour and glory.

### Administration of Peshawar\* (1834-1837)

From the year 1823 to 1834 Peshawar was only a tribute-paying territory while the actual administration remained in the hands of the Barakzai Sardars. The Sikhs had nothing to do with its internal affairs. During this period Hari Singh was deputed to get the Nazrana,† but after the annexation in May 1834, Peshawar territory was formed into a separate province with Nalwa Sardar as its governor. This he held, till his death in 1837. During the later period he had the complete charge of police, civil and revenue administration.

As at Hazara the Sardar introduced the oriental police system whereby the surrounding villages were held responsible for any malpractice in their jurisdiction. This was the only possible method to check theft and robbery. It made human life safe even after darkness and some security of life and property was provided for by the State. By dint of hard labour he restrained a lawless people from many evil practices. Even the tribes like Khyberies trembled in their very dens at the name of Hari Singh.

We do not know much about civil and judicial administration, probably it was never interfered with by the Sikhs. The tribal organization remained as it was before 1834. Dr. Chopra

\* For this note on the administration of Peshawar my chief sources of information are Dr. Chopra's *The Panjab as a Sovereign State* and Mr. Sinha's *Ranjit Singh*. Failing to find it elsewhere in a comprehensive manner as the learned authors have given, I have mainly depended upon them. Their books are note-worthy works of elaborate research, sound judgment and impartial views.

† "A price (tribute) paid to the conqueror for the retention of a piece of territory by a defeated prince."



making some remarks about ".....Sikh Governors" says, "at first Hari Singh Nalwa and afterwards Avitabile administered the country. Both of them were compelled alike by the turbulence of the lawless tribes and other inhabitants, and by the geographical and political exigencies of the situation, to resort to peculiarly strong judicial and administrative measures."\*

Revenue assessments were revised and the terms of payment made a little easier. The state exactions were also reduced† by seven-eighths of the previous demands. "Beyond the Indus, owing to the distance from control, the less patient character of the population, the insecurity of property and scarcity of population the revenue system pressed more lightly on the people.....In all these tracts (excepting the peculiarly rich lands around Peshawar), the government share never exceeded one-third, usually averaged one-fourth to one-fifth and fell even to one-eighth of the crop. For certain crops—cotton, indigo, sugar-cane, tobacco and vegetables—money rates were always taken.‡"

Mr. Sinha concludes that "Ranjit Singh met with a moderate degree of success in the solution of his western frontier problem. So long as the Sikh Kingdom lasted, the frontier was

\* Dr. Chopra : *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, p. 141.

But in the far flung and cut off places this method was not possible. He had to allow some local independence to the tribal lords 'although acknowledging the Khalsa supremacy and paying all demands made by the Sikh Governor, each Khan was still despot as far as the management of his little Khanship was concerned and imposed taxes, levied fines, in many instances punished capitally without further reference.' When he was becoming aggressive a strong movable column was sent into his country to inflict the deserved punishment.

† Cf. *Tawarikh-i-Peshawar Hakumat-i-Sikhan*.

‡ Dr. Chopra : *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, p. 130.

defended against Afghanistan. The border was not, of course, brought under direct control; but that was not possible under the circumstances and they are still taking the ingenuity of the British Government. So far as the administration of the conquered territory on the Western Frontier was concerned, he was not wholly unsuccessful."\*

Hari Singh Nalwa struck a coin after his own name at Peshawar in 1834. This is lying in the Central Museum at Lahore.†

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\* Sinha: *Ranjit Singh*, p. 102.

† See Appendix I.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Battle of Jamrud

EARLY in 1836,\* Hari Singh Nalwa ordered the speedy erection of a fort at Jamrud, eleven miles towards north of Peshawar. It was erected at the beginning of the defiles of the Khyber Pass, through which, since the dawn of history, Musalman invaders, tempted by the riches of the Indian plains, had descended upon the country and plundered it most mercilessly. The fort was of a very small size and unprotected by nature or art; but the Afghan tribes could not defy its strength, for they possessed no artillery and it was almost impregnable for them. It was the policy of Nalwa Sardar to check this constant influx of raiders by shutting out the tribes at the very door, and in this way he may be said to have anticipated the British policy of protecting the frontiers. But the "occupation of Jamrud by the Sikhs," as stated by Dr. Chopra, "was looked upon by the Amir as threatening a further advance towards Afghanistan†" "and prelude to further aggressive measures in the intimidation and submission of the people of Khyber.‡ The Amir as stated elsewhere §was afraid of his brother, Sultan Mohammad Khan who, influenced by the Sikhs, had "commenced intrigues and designs for taking Kabul,¶ "and had actually arranged for the passage of a Panjabee force through

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\* On 6th. Poh, 1893, Hari Singh laid the foundation stone of the fort. It was completed in 54 days.

† Dr. G. L. Chopra: *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, p. 32.

‡ Charles Masson: *Various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab etc.*, Vol. III, p. 382.

§ Chapter VI, *Annexation of Peshawar*.

¶ Mohan Lal : *Life of Dost Mohammad Khan*, p. 226.

the Khyber pass.\*" He also "received repeated communications from the chiefs of the Khyberies demanding the despatch of some troops, stating that otherwise they would be obliged to acknowledge the authority of Ranjit Singh†" and above all, "the disgrace of the previous flight constantly preyed upon the Amir's mind and he at last decided that a battle must be fought with the Sikhs at all risks‡" to regain the lost prestige.

Impelled by these fears, which were real to a certain extent, the Amir proclaimed in 1834 a crusade against the infidel Sikhs, his "dangerous neighbours." Every adult Afghan, actuated by rewards in the Heaven after martyrdom, and the title of Ghazi if he survived, rallied to the Amir's banner. The fears of the supposed Sikh aggression and the total loss of the past glories of Islam were exaggerated beyond limit, and they perhaps did not think any sacrifice too great 'to defend their honour, hearth and home.' "Thus a large number of Mohammedan fanatics had assembled under the standard of Mohammad Akbar and of Afzal Khan [sons of the Amir§] whether stimulated by religious feelings or moved thereto by avarice of plunder. ||

It was Haji Khan Kakara¶ who, with his friend Sardar Ali Khan, first advanced to Jamrud with a force of 2,000 soldiers to cross swords with his bloodthirsty foes. He was a little later reinforced by 3,000 Afghan soldiers under the command of Azam Khan and Mohammad Haidar Khan. The presence

\* Kaye: War in Afghanistan. Also cf. Cunningham, p. 22.

† Mohan Lal: *Life of Dost Mohammad Khan*.

‡ Captain Wade to Governor General—Political Correspondence  
13th January, 1837.

§ Bracketed words are mine.

|| Mohan Lal: *Life of Dost Mohammad Khan*, p. 226.

¶ Sometimes written as 'Kakara.'

of Hari Singh, "the Murat of the Khalsa" and blight of the Afghans, was enough to frighten them. The skirmish, which followed, lasted for four hours and after an indecisive action the Afghans retired.

Haji Khan after his retirement remained silent for a few days, busy making vigorous preparations for a fresh crusade. At last, one night while the Sikhs, lulled to false security—the previous victory having relaxed their watch on the important posts—were fast asleep in the fort, Haji Khan made a vigorous night attack and succeeded in repulsing the Sikhs up to Peshawar. Hari Singh, though very furious at this repulsion, did not think proper to chastise any soldier. The whole army, however, again advanced to Jamrud on Chet 4, 1894 Bik. and reached there early in the morning. A terrible fight ensued. The Afghan forces reinforced by the neighbouring chiefs swelled every moment while the Sikhs had lost some of their soldiers. But nevertheless their invincible general secured decisive victory over Haji Khan who fled into the hills.

Meanwhile Hari Singh despatched many letters to the Lahore Darbar, but no reply nor any reinforcements came. Ranjit Singh and his ministers were busy in the most sumptuous and historical wedding of Naunihal Singh. The Darbaries, especially the Dogras, jealous of Hari Singh's success on the frontier, did not like to deliver any of his letters to the Maharaja. More than half of the soldiers were withdrawn from the frontier to make a parade display before the Company's Commander-in-Chief who had come to Amritsar to attend the marriage. Due to pestilence and lack of provisions, the number of Sikh troops on the frontier went on decreasing day by day. Hari Singh after inflicting a severe

defeat on Haji Khan Kakara returned to his provincial capital at Peshawar on Chet 6, 1894, where he fell ill with high fever.\*

While these skirmishes were going on, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan had "collected a force of 7,000 horse, 2,000 matchlock-men and 18 guns, and placed them under his son Mohammad Akbar Khan and Mirza Sami Khan, his capable and confident minister." With the army were three† other sons of the Amir, Mohammad Afzal Khan, Mohammad Azam Khan and Mohammad Haidar Khan, the last only a boy. The Afghans marched through the Pass and joined by some 12,000 or 15,000 Khyberies encamped before Jamrud. The fort was not at this time prepared against attack. It was garrisoned by only 800‡ Sikhs.§

Mirza Sami Khan, with the Amir's sons "and with a command of 8,000 (some accounts say 15,000) horses' and foot with 50 pieces of artillery¶" marched into the Khyber. One circumstance leading to another, the Afghans whose courage "was stimulated by fanaticism to an unusual degree of ferocity¶" advanced to the castle of Jamrud, when 'becoming bold by the non-appearance of Hari Singh, they commenced cannonade upon its southern face. The walls of the small fort were almost destroyed within a short period of three

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\* Cf. "Chamakda Hira by S. Amar Singh", p. 174. Also refer to pp. 154, 163. "Tawarikh Khalsa: Giani Gian Singh."

† Masson says that five of the Amir's sons including Mohammad Akram Khan were present in the Army (p. 382).

‡ Griffin: *The Panjab Chiefs*, p. 186.

§ Allen & Co. write on page 138 that "the Sikhs appear to have been nearly equal in number to their antagonists." The statement can hardly be believed to be true.

| Allen & Co., p. 138.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

or four days. The breach made by the charges of Afghans was so large that the interior of the fort was accessible even to a cavalry charge. The repeated requests of the besieged to Hari Singh at Peshawar brought no assistance and the provisions were almost exhausted. Even the water supply ran short. The army was exhausted not only for want of rest but also for want of food. It really exceeds the power of words to describe the pitiable condition to which the Sikhs were reduced. The soldiers were worn down by series of toil, privation, hunger, fear of enemy, and desperate resistance ; and the effective force was diminished by repeated losses. More than half of that brave force had fallen in this way. In these pitiable circumstances, thus worn and weakened, they were encircled by an army of twenty times their own number, and to add to their miseries the enemy was striking cannon balls on every side.

At last Mahan Singh Mirpuria, in command of the garrison inside the Jamrud fort, after holding out gallantly for about a week, wrote the following letter to the General at Peshawar, describing his soldiers' distressed and pitiable condition, and soliciting immediate succour :—

“ After compliments.

A countless host of the Afghans [Turks] are besieging the fort. During the day many a time they gallantly attacked the fort and terrible actions were fought. But to your good-luck and great name, they could not take it. If by tomorrow morning the Sikh reinforcements fail to reach and no arrangements for water supply are made, don't cherish any hope of the fort and the fort garrison.

Your obedient servant,

12th Baisakh.

MAHAN SINGH.”

But how this letter was to be sent to Peshawar? The Afghans were besieging Jamrud on all sides with vigorous vigilance. None could dare come out of the fort for fear of life. It was one Harsaran Kaur, a woman of dauntless courage, who volunteered herself for this most dangerous job. Putting on a dog's skin, she crawled out of the fort quite unnoticed. It was the same woman who along with her husband had joined the Sikh army after being rescued from the hands of the Khan of Michni by Nalwa Sardar. The Afghan chief had attacked their marriage party and had forcibly snatched away the bride. The husband became a soldier while the wife joined the mess department. She was very much distressed at this pitiable plight of the garrison and grateful as she was to the Sardar for her rescue she could not find a better opportunity to serve her rescuer than this. She showed patience and fortitude to a supreme degree. It is wonderful to see that a woman should be capable of undertaking such a risky duty. At the dead of night, she departed quite uncertain what cruel hands she might fall into. It was really an act of delivering herself to the enemy, well-known for its disrespect towards mankind. One is impressed with this example of uncommon and rare bravery in the exalted character of this true heroine. Her only companion in the way was her faith in God and love for her community. After travelling eleven lonely miles desolate and hilly, she reached Peshawar at 4 o'clock in the morning. The sentinel heard the knock at the door. A woman's voice in the darkness in that tract of land where the fair sex could not dare go out even during the day, filled the soldier with superstitious fear and he delayed to open the door. But the brave woman tauntingly asked the soldier from outside the fort and got her way in by telling the whole affair. Upon



her safe arrival a cannon was fired, with a view to encourage the besieged at Jamrud, amidst the hostile army and almost *in the jaws of death*.

On receipt of this message, Hari Singh was very much touched. He sent this intelligence on to his master at Lahore and himself started for the rescue of the besieged.\*

The Sikh chief, "ill as he was" with an army of about 10,000 men (6,000 foot, 1,000 regular cavalry, and 3,000 irregular), 20 pieces of artillery and a great quantity of ammunition and provisions came to the relief of the garrison.† On the first day he advanced only two miles. But the news of his approach gave a fresh life to the besieged garrison, so much so that they repulsed an assault of the Afghans with desperate courage killing 300 of the enemy. The next day was fortunately Friday and the enemy made no attack but remained busy in burying their dead and in offering their weekly prayers. Next morning Hari Singh reached Jamrud. His arrival was well timed. He was the soul which animated the entire body of the Sikh soldiery. His arrival encouraged the Sikhs and cooled the aggressive attitude of the Afghans. For a week the armies lay inactive opposite each other neither wishing to begin action. On the seventh day impatient of action and tired of awaiting the reinforcements from Lahore, he called a council of war and decided in favour of immediate attack. Early in the morning of the 30th April he gave signal for battle.‡

\* Cf. "Chamakda Hira". "Chamakda Lal" and "Tawarikh-i-Hazara," Part II, p. 750.

† Mohan Lal : *Life of Dost Mohammad Khan*.

‡ Kaye writes that..... "on the 10th of April Hari Singh came from Peshawar to its relief." The date given here is wrong; all other accounts agree that the battle was

The Sikh attack was directed against that part of the Afghan army where Zerin Khan, Naib Amir Akhundzada and Mulla Mehmind Khan were in command, and was completely successful. The Afghan troops were driven back, and all their leaders severely wounded and "the whole army, seeing the fate of the advanced divisions, wavered, turned, disappeared and fled, leaving the Amir's sons and Nawab Jabbar Khan on the field with a few soldiers adhering to them. Mohammad Haidar, a mere boy, who had never before seen battle, retired weeping in awe. Mohammad Afzal Khan, who at the head of 2,000 men was stationed on the plain, alone stood firm and kept his troops together. Hari Singh in the first instance, appeared to have the intention of attacking this body, but observing its steady attitude, suddenly wheeled round, and fell upon the divisions ranged amongst the small hills skirting the plains. The Amir's sons and Nawab Jabbar Khan, while 'scorning to fly, were in ravines and hollows separated from each other, unconscious of what was passing around them, and too afraid to ascend an eminence to ascertain the state of affairs.' The Sikhs thought the day was theirs and pressed on capturing fourteen\* guns;

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fought on the 30th and he came seven days earlier than the day of action.

Allen & Co. give the date as 22nd June, 1837. The date cannot be believed to be true at all. The authors seem to have entirely depended upon hearsay and not cared at all to look up into any standard work or the original records. The whole narrative, particularly that of the battle of Jamrud, is full of mis-statements. Not even a grain of truth is to be found in their story. Their version that armies under General Allard (this too is wrong) could reach Jamrud, when the garrison there had held for four days, is inconceivable. The army could be supplied there not earlier than a fortnight and that too marching at a double rate daily. Peshawar is about 300 miles from Lahore.

\* Griffin gives the number to be six.

but their desire for revenge and plunder carried them too far. At this moment, Shamas-ud-Din Khan, who had hitherto been absent, was on his way to the field. The flight and discomfiture of his friends could not induce him to check his progress and he swept down with a large body of Afghan Horse, a large number of whom had fled without combat and had returned with him. Driving the Sikhs back in confusion and with great loss, he completely changed the aspect of affairs.

While these events were taking place, a small party of the Sikh horse galloped over an eminence into the hollows where Mohammad Akbar Khan was placed, and of necessity, a conflict arose. The noise brought his brother, Mohammad Khan, from a contiguous ravine, where no one knew he was, and together making up about one hundred men, they repulsed the Sikh party, and Mohammad Akbar Khan, assisted by two or three of those near him, killed one of the infidel foes, on which account he arrogated to himself high credit. Nawab Jabbar Khan and Shujah Dowlah Khan had also united, and on the arrival of Shamas-ud-Din Khan made a successful charge, and recaptured a couple of guns. Mohammad Akbar Khan, who detested both of them, hastily came and struck a spear into the ground, thereby attributing to himself the merit of the affair.

Hari Singh now saw that his presence alone could retrieve the day, and in spite of the entreaties of his officers, Kahn Singh Majithia, Gurmukh Singh Botalia and Dewan Devi Sahai, he rode to the front and urged his men to occupy their ground and repulse the enemy. "Victory might still have come to the Sikhs, but Hari Singh who could alone ensure it, was struck by two balls, one in the side and the

other in the stomach." The second ball penetrated two inches into the flesh. Hari Singh realized that it was a mortal wound and that his end had approached.\*

To avoid discouragement of his soldiers by falling flat on the field he mustered his vanishing vigour and managed to ride up to his tent. Before his death he dictated a letter to his great master at Lahore. Shortly after, the bravest and the most dashing of the Sikh generals, the man, "with the terror of whose name the Afghan mothers still quiet their fretful children," rode away both from Jamrud and from History at the age of forty-six, full of glory victory and honour.

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\*The accounts of the battle as given by the historians—Europeans, Muslims and Hindus—do materially differ. I have almost entirely depended upon the European writers like Masson and Griffin. The battle has been described almost in their very words but I have not placed it in inverted commas since it is not entirely a faithful reproduction. It has been supplemented here and there.

Gian Singh Giani says that Hari Singh, after being wounded, fell down his horse. The soldiers, giving up the pursuit of their enemies owing to the growing darkness on their way back to the fort, found their Sardar lying unconscious. They put him on an elephant's back and brought him to the fort where after a short interval he expired. As to the disposal of his body historians differ. Some are of the opinion that his death could no longer be kept a secret and after a couple of days the body was cremated along with other soldiers. Others hold, prominent among them Gian Singh, who probably heard the details from some soldiers then in the army of Hari Singh, that the army was kept in ignorance about his death.

The body was post-mortemed and preserved in oil for several days till the arrival of reinforcements from Lahore. To avoid suspicion and ensure secret, food for the Sardar was sent daily to the tent in which he was supposed to be lying wounded. The servant, who was asked to say so by Mahan Singh, announced daily to the army that the Sardar was improving every hour and he had taken his meals with greater ease and in larger quantity than on the

Here at Jamrud lie the remains of this illustrious Sikh general, 270 miles off his beloved home, among the tombs of those haughty Afghan chiefs and peasants who defied his authority. Death is a great leveller. When It extends Its awful hands It reduces the arrogant and the humble, the tyrant and the benevolent, the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled to the same level. Hari Singh's departure from this transitory world was a loss not only to his family or his master, but it was also a great blow to the Sikhs, rather to the Panjab. Since his death the sharp and sparkling Sikh sabres turned rusty and blunt in the Trans-Indus lands. The Grand Lahore Darbar adorned by jewels from Asia, Europe and America did not produce as daring and wise a soldier as the versatile Nalwa Sardar. No Teja Singh, no Avitabile, no Court could replace him. The ball that struck the Soldier decided the future of the Sikhs within and without the Panjab. The fall of Hari Singh was the fall of the Sikh power in the North-West. Under Avitabile the sight of Peshawar 'gave cholera to the Sikhs' who had won repeated victories under the unrivalled command of Hari Singh before whom the Afghans fled rather than try conclusions on the field.

The *Smadh*\* of Hari Singh reminds us of the days when

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previous day. The secret was not divulged for fifteen days when Dhayan Singh and other Sardars arrived with sufficient forces to terrorize the Afghans. I have not been able to reach at any right conclusion and cannot say anything with certainty. The members of his family, whom I supposed to be in the know of such curious things, are silent about it.

\*There are two *smadhs* of Hari Singh—one at Jamrud and the other at Gujranwala in his late residential house which was confiscated in 1844 by the British in consequence of hesitating submission of his sons to the English and was sold to one of the Dewans of Eminabad for Rs. 5,000.

the 'fates of countries and nations hung on the point of a lance and when an individual whose bold heart beat fearlessly under his steel breast-plate was the sole founder of vast empires. To the proud inhabitants of the Land of the Five Rivers it is a memorial of their forefathers' sovereignty over the arrogant Afghan tribes. To a sane and brooding mind it is an example of instability of human greatness. A soldier, the flash of whose sword dazzled once the eyes of the Afghans from Attock to Kabul, is now lying helpless under a few stones. He, who triumphantly marched through foreign lands and climes, is now being trodden over by rats and squirrels. He who crushed the proudest antagonists yesterday, cannot kill the serpents and snakes that surround him to-day. He who by the thunder of his voice scattered and dispersed the vast hosts of the enemy cannot frighten the owl that disturbs him in his rest. It is a pity!

May you rest in Heaven! O, bravest of the Creation!!  
Peace be to your Ashes! Peace be to your Ashes!!

### Another Version

Gian Singh the author of the *Tawarikh Raj Khalsa* writes that some people believe that Hari Singh fell a victim to Raja Gulab Singh's machinations. The Raja was in charge of the revenue administration of Peshawar. Yar Mohammad Khan owed a sum of fourteen lacs to the Sikh government.

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It is nowadays, the residence of the District and Sessions Judge. His *smadh* at Jamrud was made by Gajju Mal Kapur of Peshawar, and bears the following inscription :—

“Tomb of the Sikh General Hari Singh Nalwa, cremated 30th April, 1887. Commemorated by Gajju Mal Kapur of Peshawar.”

The Raja promised to excuse the unpaid balance if Yar Mohammad could make short work of Hari Singh. An opportunity came in the battle of Jamrud. During the heat of the combat, Yar Mohammad Khan, who fought on Nalwa Sardar's side, shot him from behind. To strengthen this he argues that the ball struck the Sardar in his back, which shows that it did not come from the enemy's camp. He also adds that the remission of the said amount confirms the suspicion. The plot he says was divulged by one Col. Bija Singh Dogra.

The famous historian, whose works are considered by the Sikhs to be the only true accounts of their glorious days, miserably falls short of truth in this statement. Either the writer has intentionally fabricated this groundless story to create a bias against a member of the 'Dogra Trio' as is common among the Sikh chroniclers who attribute everything responsible for their dramatic fall to them, or he lacks even ordinary knowledge of chronological order of the Sikh annals.

Before annexation the internal administration was in the hands of the Barakzai Sardars. The annual tribute was collected by Hari Singh or Kanwar Sher Singh. After the annexation the administration of revenue, civil and police was entirely in the hands of Nalwa Sardar. It was after the death of Ranjit Singh that Gulab Singh was appointed Governor of Peshawar. So under the circumstances it is inconceivable that Gulab Singh had any hand in the death of Hari Singh. Again we find that Yar Mohammad Khan, the alleged slayer of Nalwa Sardar died in 1827 in a battle against the Hindustanis while Hari Singh was killed in 1887. The information about the balls is also wrong. According to most reliable accounts Hari Singh was struck by two balls, one in the front side of the right thigh and the other in the stomach and not

on his back as stated by the learned author. It is a gross mistake. The writer has not even cared to test the statement on the touchstone of historical data. It is quite illogical and does not contain even a grain of truth.

### Approach of reinforcements

The mortal injuries to Hari Singh spread panic in the army and the Sikhs retired to the fort again. Besides this, their resources in water had completely exhausted. But heaven sent aid. Most unusual at that time of the year as it was, it rained heavily and thus prolonged their occupation till the approach of reinforcements. The Afghans elevated at their partial success retired to Kabul again.

The heart-rending news was conveyed by Dhian Singh to the Maharaja, when he was early in the morning cleaning the teeth in his residential *burj* in the Lahore Fort. The Maharaja, on hearing the dismal tidings, turned mad and in a rage of fury beat Dhian Singh with a *garva* (water-can) and tauntingly inquired if he was glad to hear the tidings. His grief and sorrow knew no bounds. Bare headed as he was, he restlessly ran to and fro in the fort yelling like a hungry lion. Orders were at once issued to the flowers of the Sikh army to reach Jamrud immediately by forced marches. He gave orders to avenge the death of his beloved General by giving the Pathans an exemplary punishment. Similar orders were sent to other cantonments. The forces sent from Lahore reached Jamrud within twelve days by double marches. Contingents of Ram Nagar covered the long distance of 225 miles in a week's time.\* The furious Sikhs

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\*According to Mohammad Latif this long distance was covered in a short period of two days. But I think he exaggerates the matter. To cover such a long distance of 225 miles in two days with primitive means of transportation and communication is



committed horrible atrocities in the vicinity of Jamrud. Villages were plundered. Houses were set on fire. Many people were rendered homeless. After heinous devastations the avenging forces retired to their respective stations. Teja Singh was appointed the next Governor of the Peshawar province, but shortly afterwards he was replaced by General Avitabile, an iron-headed general of Ranjit Singh.

### Who won at Jamrud?

The battle at Jamrud was an indecisive combat. Both the parties claimed victory. Mohammad Akbar Khan a son of favourite wife of Dost Mohammad Khan was very much hailed at Kabul. His mother "gave feasts and illuminated the city in commemoration of the victory gained by her son and prevailed upon her husband to think and say that every honour and all applause was due to him alone." On the other hand, the Sikhs also claimed victory on the ground that they still held the fort. Akbar Khan did not ensure his success by turning the Sikhs out of the fort and recapturing Peshawar. His immediate retirement from Jamrud made the issue of the battle indecisive.

The victories of the battle were immaterial. Both the sides won equal number of guns except that the Sikhs won a very big cannon, fellow of the Zabar Jung at Ghazni. The claim of the Afghans to be victorious is not very sound. Their retirement is a clue to the fact that they could not ensure the victory they had won, by proceeding further. The partial victory they gained was the result of chance. Had not the Sikh general been wounded they would not have been able to achieve even so much. Rather it goes in favour of

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impossible. I follow Kanahya Lall, author of *Tawarikh-i-Makhzan* who writes six days—quite a reasonable time.

Also cf. Cunningham: *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 225.

the Sikhs. In India generally the fate of a general decides the issue of the battle. Cases of Porus, Mohammad Gauri, Hemu and Dara are excellent examples to support this. But here the Sikhs held their ground in spite of the panic that the death of their general had created. If the Afghans had defeated them on the field the Sikhs must have retreated. Their holding the fort and the immediate and quiet retirement of the Afghans are clear proofs that the battle did not result in a decisive victory. It was never a victory gained by the Afghans. At the most it was a drawn battle. We find the Afghans did not fight again when the Sikh reinforcements came from Lahore; but as usual ran away into the hills. The subsequent attitude clearly indicates that the Afghans were defeated. Mohan Lal writes that 'Hari Singh was mortally wounded and this gave the Afghans the victory.' It is impossible to agree to this arbitrary conclusion. Mere death of Hari Singh could not give Afghans a victory over the Sikhs. As stated above, it rather gives credit to the Sikhs.

Views of some eminent historians and that of Dost Mohammad Khan about this combat are quoted below, which will give the reader a fairly comprehensive idea and an impartial view. In fact this partial success sheds more glory on the Sikhs than the ordinary decisive victory :—

Charles Masson. "The Afghans had not really much to boast of in this action. Although Mohammad Akbar plumed himself in a transcendent victory. *The Sikhs scarcely acknowledged the defeat*, but their loss in the person of their chief [Hari Singh] was irreparable."

Allen & Co. "The conflict was severe and the victory for some time balanced. Cannons were taken or retaken on both sides. *The Afghans, however, acknowledged that on this day they*

were worsted. The success of the Sikhs was counter-balanced by the loss of their commander."

Cunningham, J. "Two guns only were lost; *the Afghans could not master Jamrud or Peshawar itself*; and after plundering the valley for a few days, *they retired rather than risk a battle with the reinforced army from Lahore.*"

Lepel Griffin. "The results of the battle were not important. The Sikhs had lost their dashing general but *the Afghans had retired without attempting to improve victory*. Each army lost three guns and among those taken from the Afghans was one of immense size, the fellow of Zabar Jung of Ghazni."

Amir Dost Mohammad Khan. "1. He [the Amir] acknowledged that *he was not strong enough to cope with so powerful an adversary as the ruler of Lahore.*"

"2. My son and people may speak in exaggerated terms of our late success but it is too evident *that our power is not even one-tenth of that of the Panjab.*" [Burnes]

Peshawar Gazetteer. "*Even if the victory had been more decisive it would have been dearly purchased by the Sikhs...*"

Dr. G. L. Chopra. ".....but the battle can scarcely be said to have been incomplete; *for the Sikhs held their ground and when their reinforcements appeared, the Afghans retired precipitately to Kabul.*"

Mr. N. K. Sinha :—"In itself the action at Jamrud was of no importance. *The Afghans neither succeeded in occupying or destroying the fort of Jamrud nor in taking Shubkudur or Peshawar.*"

## CHAPTER IX

### Character and Achievements.

"To rule a kingdom it is necessary to have men like you,  
Hari Singh."—*Ranjit Singh*.

Hari Singh's ancestors belonged to Majitha\*, a village ten miles to the North-East of Amritsar. They were the retainers of the Sukarchakia *Misl*. During the first half of the eighteenth century they shifted to Gujranwala, the seat of their chieftain. Gurdial Singh, father of Hari Singh, accompanied Charat Singh and Mahan Singh in all expeditions, and received a substantial *jaqir* and enjoyed an enviable social position. Some historians have held that originally Hari Singh belonged to a very low family. It is certainly wrong. They were surely not as great as Hari Singh, but they were jagirdars and led quite decent lives.

Unlike Ranjit Singh, Hari Singh was good looking and of majestic bearing. In person he was fairly tall, rather above the usual height of men, with a very broad chest, an open and lofty forehead, keen, quick and intelligent eyes, a pointed and sharp nose, a long beard flowing down his breast, abnormally strong and muscular arms, a thundering and thrilling voice and a stern visage. His presence inspired awe and even dread. It is said that when he entered the Darbar at Simla, the ladies fainted in the gallery to see such a gigantic and majestic figure.

The origin of the world Nalwa is a matter of controversy

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\* This village has produced men of great eminence under the Sikh as well as the British Rules. Amar Singh, Jodh Singh, Uttam Singh and Lehna Singh in the former period; and Sardar Dyal Singh (the generous founder of the Dyal Singh High School and College, Library and the Tribune) Raja Surat Singh and Sardar Bahadur Dr. Sir Sundar Singh Majithia in the latter.

For the first time we find this nick-name attached to his name in the year 1804\*. It has not been determined with precision so far. The Punjabi writers mention more than half a dozen reasons for this; while in the folklore there are many stories both interesting and stupid, but foolish alike to believe. Sober history, however, believes that he had a very generous spirit. Magnanimous as he was he spent considerable amount in giving alms. For this reason he came to be called Nalwa after the mythical Raja Nal, well-known for his bounty. In his native town of Gujranwala, he is still remembered by pious people as Raja Janak of the age.

Sardar Hari Singh, it seems, had a versatile mind. He could both read and write Persian, the cultural language of the time. We come across occasional references to his letters to the court in Persian in the *Umadat-ul-Tawarikh*. But we do not know where and when he got his schooling. In fact, we know precious little in that way, of most of our generals, heroes, and saints, who consequently seem often to emerge from oblivion. Early at the age of fourteen he took service under Ranjit Singh and up to the last moment remained busy in warfare. In these circumstances he must have learnt something of the language in his childhood and later on developed the same while in the Hazara territory, moving among and dealing with the people who knew Pashto and Persian only.†

His conversation proved him to have thought and reasoned justly. He was "intelligent, frank and affable in his talk. He was also well-informed about the statistics of many of the European States and on the policy of the East India Company. This is why the Maharaja at once requisitioned his services in connection with the missions he sent to the British

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\* *Zafar Nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 31.

† *Hugel's Travels in Kashmir*, p. 225.

Government.....and according to Masson his deportment and intrepid conversation resembled those of Ranjit Singh who himself has been admitted as a brilliant son of diplomacy.”

In religion Hari Singh was a conservative Sikh. He received religious instruction at an early date. A strict adherent of Sikhism, he had an unquestioning faith in the creed. His knowledge of *Gurbani* seems to have been sufficient. He often quoted his Guru's sayings while addressing his soldiers. He loved to hear the *Gurbani* and generously rewarded its reciters. It is said that once Ranjit Singh sent Hari Singh to Amritsar with ten thousand rupees as state donation for the temple. In the way he came across a musician singing the charming hymns of the Guru. Enchanted with his recitations Hari Singh gave him the whole of the amount and donated the assigned sum to the *Gurdawara* from his own pocket. On his ring he had engraved\* the words 'Akal Sahai' (God help me).

By some he has been described as a bigoted Sikh.† In fact it is a misreading of the Sikh character as well as the conditions of the time. A conservative Sikh is not always a bigoted Sikh. The wars that Hari Singh waged were not against Islam, but were the outcome of a Napoleonic genius that did not for that matter differentiate between a Sikh and a Muslim. Besides, the Sikh army and especially the forces commanded by Hari Singh were composed of both the Sikhs and the Muslims. We find that Hari Singh commanded several battalions of Mohammedans. Further we know that some of the most trusted posts under him were held by the Moham-

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\* Prince Dara, eldest son of Shahjahan, had engraved "Prabhu" on his ring.

† Shahamat Ali : *Afghans and the Sikhs*, p. 53.

medans. Throughout his life Sheikh Nur Elahi\* and Qazi Hussain Bakhsh† were his confidential agents. His private jagirs were also administered by Muslims. In the light of these facts there is no reason for these allegations of bigotry against him except the prejudice of the accusers. Like his master he ruled the Hindus and Musalmans alike. If he was severe—we shall see whether he was or not—he was impartially so. The task before him was to subdue a people that had only unwillingly, if ever, recognized an overlord.

Hari Singh's career as a soldier begins at an early date. We find him behaving gallantly at Kasur in 1807 when he was only 16 years old. He was a born son of the sword. He did not receive any training as a soldier. It was his bold heart and innate genius which turned him into a dashing warrior and a great general. While fighting, like Alexander he did not care for his life and was frequently wounded.‡ He was not one of those theoretical generals, who, like Dupleix, could make battle plans, that looked sure and wonderfully clever in the office-rooms; but did not materialize in the field. He was a practical and a brave general and fought in the forefront of the battle. Through his sheer bravery he often changed the fortunes of a doubtful day. Eastern valour differs much from Western scientific methods. The former believes in the strength of the arm and the brave heart that beats within; while the latter puts his trust in machinery and tactics of the battle-field. Our general belonged to the former category. In the beginning of a battle the Sikhs were often overpowered by the Afghans owing to their superior numbers and the advantage of fighting in their own land, but the

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\* Mohammad Latif: *History of the Panjab*, p. 458.

† *Ibid.*, p. 474.

‡ He had twenty-seven wounds on his body.

ultimate success generally fell to the lot of the Sikhs. The reason was that many a time they decided the issue by a frontal attack and even lost valuable lives. Akali Phula Singh won the Nowshera battle by losing his life. Budh Singh Sandhanwalia likewise turned a doubtful day into a complete victory at Saidu. Hari Singh also belonged to this school of action. During the combat he at once jumped up to the place where he saw the opponents' pressure to be overwhelming. 'His doubtless courage had frequently placed him in a critical situation and he at last fell a victim to his bravery.' At the siege of Kasur, Multan and during the battles of Mangal [on his return from Kashmir] and Jamrud, everywhere he showed remarkable bravery and won the field by the sheer force of a courageous heart and a mighty hand. In addition to his reckless heart and feats of strength he was an adept in many risky and wonderful *war-sports*. The Englishmen were wonder-struck to see his feats at the meeting of the Governor-General with the Sovereign of the Panjab. His standard of the bravery of a Sikh was very high.\*

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\* "We mounted one of the chief's elephants and accompanied by himself and 200 horsemen, passed a few miles down the river to the village of Khyrakhuel, about five miles above Attock. The stream was here divided into three branches, and the first two gushed with amazing violence. I did not like appearance of the torrent; and though I said nothing, it would have willingly turned back; but how could that be, when I had been the foremost to propose it? The chief rallied his escort round him, threw a piece of silver money into the river, according to custom, and dashed into it. We followed, and the whole of our party reached in safety. While on the island, and preparing to enter the principal branch a melancholy accident occurred to some strugglers, who attempted to follow us. They were



Generalling counts much. Once in a battle fought between the Scotch and the English the former were defeated. In the rout that followed, a Highlander, who was being pursued, turned round and said, "Let us change the generals and we will fight." So, honest, wise and brave generals sometimes achieve victory with inferior and fewer soldiers, and paltrous leaders face defeat with better chances.

In strategy and tactics also Hari Singh out-generalled his enemies. Often times Nalwa Sardar won by his superior tactics. Once during the heat of a combat he showered rupees in the opponent's ranks. The soldiers directed their attention to collect money and thereby lost the solidarity of their ranks. The Sikhs made a frontal attack and won the day.

There were several occasions when we find that his opponents chose to flee rather than try conclusions with him. It was due to his admitted skill and established reputation as

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seven in number; and instead of crossing at the exact point where we had effected the passage, they passed a few yards lower down, with the water knee deep yet very rapid. The whole seven were unhorsed in a moment, and swept into the stream. The ferry-men ran to their assistance, and extricated them all but one poor fellow and two horses whom we could see struggle and at last sink. The others were rescued with great difficulty, and two of them were all but dead. We were shocked at this catastrophe, and proposed to return, but the chief would not listen to it. He gave a laugh and said, "What know ye, that these fellows (we thought they had all gone) may be kings in another world; and *what is the use of a Seik (Sikh) if he cannot pass the Attock?* (Indus). The principal branch, however, was still in our front; and as I only agreed to cross if the horsemen were left behind. "Leave my guard?" cried the chief, "Impossible". But we did leave it, and safely passed the ford."

a general. Once Abas Mirza of Persia inquired of Mohan Lal as to the power of the Khalsa Army. He replied that "as for his [Ranjit Singh's] army if Sardar Hari Singh were to cross the Indus, His Highness [Dost Mohammad Khan] would soon be glad to make good his retreat to his original government in Tabriz."\*

Another cause of his success was that his soldiers reposed implicit confidence in him and served him with devotion and loyalty. His democratic instinct always led him to consult his subordinates, officials and servants alike, in the matters of warfare. Among the Sikh Sardars he is the only general in whose conduct of war we do not observe any glaring defect.

As a statesman, Hari Singh's character stands high. Nalwa's frontier policy was very far-sighted. The Britishers, sons of diplomacy, have exactly followed it. He in fact anticipated the British policy of checking the northern menace at its gate which prior to him few kings had thought of. As for extending direct rule over the frontier we find that he was in fact capable of pacifying and completely subjecting the arrogant tribes as nobody else could do. Moreover in those days the glory of nations lay in the extent of their territory. And if Ranjit and his great general Hari Singh sought to enhance the glory of the Khalsa it was no mean a motive. If the subjection of nations is defensible in the name of civilization, Ranjit's campaigns against Peshawar were no less so. It was the Indian civilization asserting itself after an interval of a thousand years to assimilate its half civilised neighbours.

His policy of 'divide and rule' which statesmen have so often employed to exploit nations and keep them under rigid

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\* Mohan Lal's Travels, Introduction, p. XIV.

subjugation was also quite successful. By bribes and promises of liberal provision he often detached chiefs from the confederacies so often formed against him. However, he never resorted to meanness in battle or breach of etiquette in diplomacy. Sometimes we find that even Dost Mohammad in his acute passion for revenge ignored the rules of warfare and committed unjustifiable outrages. More than once he laid hands on the Sikh envoys and executed them. Sivaji treacherously murdered Afzal Khan and attempted a similar attack on Shaista Khan but in the whole of his career we do not find this general stooping down to meanness. 'Even in dealing with the Afghans he had scrupulous regard for honour.' He employed his dauntless courage where treachery may have served the purpose. In short, like Clive he was a very good statesman warrior.

Regarding his administration enough has been said at other places. Suffice it to say that judged by the standards of his age he comes off creditably even in this respect.

The immediate cause of the fall of the Sikhs was the wrong nomination of the next heir-apparent. Kharak Singh did not inherit even a single quality of his illustrious father. The prince was absolutely incapable of controlling such a military kingdom. His nomination to the throne was a fatal mistake that the Maharaja committed. The Rupar meeting was mainly arranged by the Maharaja to get his son acknowledged as the heir-apparent to the throne. All the gems of his illustrious court agreed and approved of it, but Hari Singh was against this arrangement.\* Ranjit Singh did not see even in 1839 what Hari Singh had observed in 1831. Hari Singh opposed it and subsequent history shows that his was an angelic vision and he rightly perceived the incapability of

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\* See Cunningham, p. 204.

the prince Kharak Singh. It is beyond the shadow of a doubt that if Hari Singh had outlived Ranjit Singh, the fate of the Lahore Monarchy would have been different. He would have been more than a match for Dhian Singh, the Iago of the Khalsa Darbar Tragedy. This dramatic fall would not have been such a painful story if there had been even a single honest, sincere and brave man in the whole of the Lahore court. "Among the Sikh barons who stood round the throne of young Maharaja Dalip Singh, there was not one who honestly laboured for his country or who could make the smallest sacrifice to save it."\*

Hari Singh's severity is proverbial. To this day in Peshawar and its neighbourhood mothers frighten their fretful children with his name.† We find some complaints lodged before Ranjit Singh against Nalwa's severe administration. "An audience was granted to the zamindars of Nowshera who presented a horse and complained of the severity with which they were treated by Hari Singh. The Maharaja assured that attention would be paid to their complaint."‡ Latifi calls him a wanton barbarian§ and Griffin condemns him in similar words.

The strict rule of the Sardar is an admitted fact. Even making some allowance for the bias of communalism among the Indian writers and the deliberate intention of defaming the rule of the Sikhs among the foreign writers it cannot be denied that the rule of the Nalwa Sardar was severe.

But let us see how far this severity was needed by the

\* Griffin: *Panjab Chiefs*.

† This will remind the reader of the similar but more remote instance of Agha Khan—a general of Aurangzeb—with whose name Pathan women frightened their children.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 141. Letter No. 4, May 17, 1832.

§ Latif: *History of the Panjab*, p. 428.

circumstances. The Afghans were rude and harsh. They did not tolerate orderly government or political control over them and especially that of the Sikhs, a nation alien to them in religion. Referring to their turbulent character Shahamat Ali says that "Should a water-course belonging to one be used by another, dispute is certain ; and the matter is seldom brought to a settlement without a good deal of bloodshed on either side. An Afghan considers it highly honourable to fight in the battlefield and distinguish himself by bold expedition. Old age does not command much respect among them ; and to be killed in full manhood is considered a distinction. When an Afghan chief goes out in the fields he is advised by his wife to behave bravely and not to run away."\*

Extension of sovereignty to the mouth of the passes was a political necessity as shown elsewhere.† So the only course was to subdue the powerful Afghans if the kingdom was to rest on solid foundations. This could not be done by persuasion. Strict repression was needed. Besides, there was always danger of formidable attack from beyond the hills. So not only to subdue the territory but firmly to establish also the Sikh rule was the dire necessity of the situation.

The present would justify the past. Even nowadays, the most civilized government, that India ever had, rules in the frontier with a stronger hand than it does elsewhere. In spite of the elaborate police administration crime is rampant in this part of the land. Even nowadays, to go out in the dusk is not safe.

The Afghans enjoyed a natural privilege. The country was hilly and 'full of ravines and hollows' of which the people took full advantage to defy the governmental authority and

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\* Shahamat Ali : *The Sikhs and the Afghans*. pp. 277-78.

† See Appendix : *Trans-Indus Land Policy of Hari Singh*.

disturb the public life. There are reasons to believe that if he had been appointed governor of Multan he might have behaved quite leniently. He did not rule indiscriminately. We find that he never charged any tax from the Sayyeds, the minors and the widows. Rulers like Ferozeshah and Aurangzeb did not spare even the priestly classes of other religions. In the reign of the latter, the *jazia* was imposed over the *pandits* as well. He inflicted severe punishments on the wrong doers; but punishments were severe in those days both in Asia and Europe and that method was "the only mode of governing people so turbulent and unprincipled as the Afghans." Hari Singh was not cruel as an administrator. He behaved rashly when he subdued any revolution or pacified any revolt. As an administrator he was sufficiently lenient. Perhaps none of the Maharaja's governors, except General Avitabile, was cruel whose administrative maxim was "a head for every crime."\*

It is said, Mohammad Khan Tarain was administered poison through the Sardar.† It is a grievous act and an indelible stain on his character. But in the world of politics this is not regarded so sinful. It was a political exigency and many of the illustrious and diplomatic kings often resorted to it. Timur killed over one lac of his captives to avoid their disaffection in the event of his absence. Balban murdered about forty slaves when he sat on the throne to lessen the danger of rival claimants. Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb despatched away their nearest relations for the same reason. Lord Clive committed forgery. Warren Hastings procured the death sentence of Raja Nand Kumar by questionable means.

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\* *Life of General Avitabile*: Calcutta Review.

† Watson: *Hazara Gazetteer*.

Sivajee, the apostle of Hindus, also resorted to evil means of treachery while dealing with his enemies. The murders committed with the intention of improving political conditions are pardonable, for history tells us that such assassinations often avert disasters and hence the public gains in the end. Had Teja Singh been despatched away at Ferozeshah during the night preceding the battle, the result of the combat might have been different.\*

Hari Singh's personal character was above reproach. He was not addicted to social evils, very prevalent in high society. He had two wives.† But it was not against the laws of his religion or society. Sikhism does not forbid polygamy. In those days it was an innocuous luxury to have more than one wife and it was supposed to be a concomitant of high social position. With other Sardars debauchery was common. Hari Singh was singularly free of this and allied evils.

Nalwa Sardar was not only a brave general and wise statesman but also a great engineer and builder. He erected several public buildings and a couple of private houses. One

\* Dismissal of Bairam Khan (Akbar's Tutor) and his subsequent murder was of great political benefit. This removed a fanatical influence from affecting the course of the young prince. Akbar developed in him the liberal spirit which had a great unifying effect.

“ An Italian named Orsini made an attempt on Napoleon III's life in January, 1858; and a letter from him to Napoleon on the eve of his execution, in which he adjured Napoleon to give independence to Italy, and assured him till he did so, both his own and that of Europe, would be in a 'chimera,' combined with the inclination, thus induced Napoleon to take up the Italian cause.”

† The names of his wives were Sardarni Raj Kaur and Sardarni Desan. The former belonged to Kauntrilla, a village in the Rawalpindi district (Statement of Sardar Bahadur Narain Singh). There is no reliable account to tell us about his family affections.

of them, his residential house at Gujranwala, is constructed on European design.\* It might have been planned by some foreigner. His public buildings are so numerous and so different in design and character† that their complete account will develop into a separate chapter. A chart giving the list of buildings erected by him is attached in the Appendix.‡

Hari Singh's services to Ranjit Singh and to the Panjab are numerous and valuable. In the Central Panjab he fought in almost all the important campaigns and many times imperilled his life. In the North-Western Frontier, his services are countless and cannot be faithfully recorded. He subdued Hazara, the land of treason, which Makhan Singh, Ram Dyal and Amar Singh Majithia had failed to pacify. He not only restored order in Hazara that owned only the nominal suzerainty of Ranjit Singh in 1822, but upto 1837 he continued adding to it. He subdued the formidable revolts organized by the Hindustanis and cut them to the last including their invincible and untiring leader who sought to carve out a kingdom for himself by using the name of his faith. It is quite possible that in the case of a weak defence in the frontier the aggressive attacks of the Sayyeds might have shattered the kingdom as the invasions of Mughals shattered the Tughlaq power.

\* Shahamat Ali : *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 53.

† Forts, Sarais, Thanas, Tanks, Temples and Wells,

‡ See Appendix.

The Sikh buildings are not of any importance. They stand absolutely no comparison with the Mughal architecture. The Mughals had achieved great success in this pursuit and the Sikhs never felt the necessity of erecting more buildings. Every big town had many state buildings. The fort at Amritsar, known as Gobind Garh, is of course a beautiful and well built stronghold erected by the Sikhs. We do not find any fort of the kind in India. Perhaps it is of French design.

Cf. *Umdat-ul-Tawarikh* by Sohan Lal, Vol. III, p. 440.



Moreover the majority of Ranjit's subjects professed the alien faith of Islam which fact was potent enough to raise a general revolt. But the Sardar's prompt, energetic and formidable defence shattered the Ghazi's hopes with which he had come from Hindustan.

“ A little fire is quickly trodden out ;  
Which being suffered, rivers cannot quench.”

In the Trans-Indus lands Hari Singh fought in the decisive battle of Nowshera ; he *over-ran* the country four times and collected the tribute from the Barakzai Sardars which was never possible 'without the demonstration of strong force.' In 1834 he annexed the province to the Sikh Empire without any serious resistance. This bloodless victory greatly enhanced the prestige and power of the Sikhs. The glory of the Sikhs was the glory of their North-Western Frontier policy which wholly depended on this general. It was Nalwa Sardar's iron-handed rule which subdued the arrogant Afghans. After his death the Maharaja once asked Sher Singh, the only prince who inherited his warlike qualities, to subdue a certain tribe near Peshawar, but Sher Singh gave evasive replies and did not dare to go.\*

'Hari Singh has left his impression on history,' says Mr. Sinha in his brilliant monogram on Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 'as Ranjit's Viceroy on Western frontier, the most difficult charge of Sikh Viceroys. The robbers slaughtered without mercy, the Kabul Monarchy overawed, the turbulent Afghan tribes kept down by his movable column—this was the record of Hari Singh on the Western Frontier. When the Maharaja shed tears on hearing the news of the death of Hari Singh, the tears were

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\* Punjab Records, Book No. 142, Letter No. 8.

since and when he described the deceased as a great '*nimak halal*' the epithet was also justified.\*"

For these meritorious services Hari Singh had vast jagirs† worth about Rs. 8,53,000, but with these jagirs he was required to furnish two regiments of cavalry, a battery of artillery and a camel swivel battery. Hari Singh was a contented man. He seldom bothered for pecuniary advantages. "The Maharaja said to his courtiers that Hari Singh Nalwa was constantly engaged in hostilities with the Afghans and zamindars in the vicinity of Attock and devoted his life in promoting the interests of his *Sarkar*. Still he took without hesitation what was offered to him.‡" Once in 1825 at the instigation of other *Darbaries* he was fined rupees five lacs for keeping less forces than expected. In 1834 he was raised to the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Khalsa Darbar Forces in Trans-Indus lands. General Avitabile when he accompanied him, was, however, not subordinate to Hari Singh. He was supposed to be coordinate or commander of a subsidiary force. The Sardar enjoyed no privileged position at the Court. The courtiers who remained at Lahore with the Maharaja made large fortunes. Even men like Suchet Singh, who did not add even an inch of land to the Sikh territory, were created Rajas, but Hari Singh was not granted this title. Also he was debarred from many privileges due to his constant absence from the court.

Otherwise the Maharaja held him in high esteem and

\* Sinha's *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 168 & 169.

† Various places held in jagir by the Sardar are given in Appendix IV.

‡ Punjab Records. Book No. 189, dated January 31, 1833. From Wade to the Governor General.

kept no secrets from him. Once Ranjit Singh gave a large amount of money to his courtesan, Moran. The State treasury was empty and the soldiers were clamouring for pay. The Maharaja had no source but to fall back on her. He told her that he had played chess with Hari Singh and lost eleven lacs of rupees and that Hari Singh would not leave him till he paid the amount. If she loved him as she often professed, she would buy him from Hari Singh for this amount. Moran willingly or unwillingly parted with the said amount and bought back her lover. The Maharaja thus got the money through Hari Singh and met his needs.

Through his bravery, energy and promptness he ever prompted the interests of the Panjab, checked the invasions of the greedy foreign invaders and established peace and order by the policy of 'blood and iron' in the land of 'revolt and treason.' He moulded the destiny of the Panjab and raised it from a mere principality under Delhi or Kabul to a sovereign state. He was in fact a born leader of the invincible Khalsa army which proved an insurmountable barrier against the Muslim invaders and thus saved the wealth and honour of the Land of Five Rivers. In fact he is one of the immortal heroes of the Panjab and deserves honour, praise and respect from the lips of all Hindus and Muslims alike. It is not difficult to determine Hari Singh's place in history. To the Mohammadans he is to this day a violently bigoted and cruel soldier, who wounded their religious feelings and destroyed their independence. To the Sikhs he is their national hero, a man of super-human powers, a demi-god. But the impartial writer must give a different opinion. To him the Nalwa Sardar was an intrepid and dashing soldier, farsighted statesman, sagacious and just ruler and faithful and loyal

servant of Ranjit Singh.\*

### His Descendants

The Nalwa Sardar had four sons. "Jawahir Singh and Gurdit Singh were sons of Sardar's first wife, Sardarni Raj Kaur, and Arjan Singh and Panjab Singh of his second wife, Sardarni Desan ; and the half-brothers had never been on good terms. Arjan Singh and Panjab Singh took possession of the late Sardar's fortified house at Gujranwala [now the residence of the District Magistrate] while Jawahir Singh and his brother held the town. So fierce was the dispute between them, that the Maharaja confiscated all Hari Singh's property and estates with the exception of Rs. 19,600 assigned to the brothers in the following proportion :—

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| 1. Panjab Singh  | Rs. 5400. |
| 2. Arjan Singh   | „ 6500.   |
| 3. Jawahir Singh | „ 5500.   |
| 4. Gurdit Singh  | „ 2200.   |

"Gujranwala was given, in jagir, to Mir Beli Ram and Hazara to Sardar Teja Singh in 1838.

"Sardar Jawahir Singh had been appointed to command at Jahangira in 1832 and two years later he was sent on duty to Peshawar, and was engaged in many of the actions with the Afghans up to the time of his father's death in April, 1837.

In October, 1848, Sardar Arjan Singh joined the rebels. He shut himself up in the fortified house at Gujranwala, with 100 or 150 men, and openly defied the Government. A small

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\* Baron Charles Hugel observes:

"Hari Singh's manners and conversation are very frank and affable, and having acquainted myself beforehand with the history of this most distinguished member of Ranjit's

detachment sent by the Darbar to bring him to Lahore was unsuccessful ; but when a body of troops sent by Brigadier Campbell, and a squadron of skinner's horse marched against him, he fled. The defences of the house were destroyed and the property found in it confiscated.

"Sardar Jawahir Singh, whose sympathies were with the rebels, and who was at any rate, an enemy of Raja Teja Singh had been arrested and kept a close prisoner in the house of Gulab Singh Kalal in Lahore. He, however, managed to win over his guards to the popular side and he and six soldiers escaped together to Gujranwala. Mir Rallia Ram who was then in authority, at that place, tried to seize him, but Jawahir Singh was not to be caught a second time, and escaping from the town he joined the army of Raja Sher Singh. He fought against the British with great gallantry at Chillianwala and Gujrat, and he was the man who led the dashing charge of Irregular Cavalry at Chillianwala, which so nearly ruined the fortune of the day.

"Panjab Singh was the only one of the brothers, who

court, I surprised him by my knowledge when he had gained the appellation of Nalwa, and of his having cloven the head of a tiger who had already seized him as its prey. He told the Diwan to bring some drawings and gave me his portrait, in act of killing the beast, Hari Singh Nalwa was the person sent by Ranjit to invite Lord William Bentinck (p. 255) to confer with the Maharaja at Simla : and as I happened to know most of the persons he had met there, our conversation was very, different from the majority of such interview in India and really consisted of a due exchange of ideas, and of reference to events which had actually taken place. His conversation proved him to have thought and reasoned justly : he is well informed on the statistics of many of the European states, and on the policy of the East India Company; and, what is very rare among the Sikhs, he can both read and write the Persian language."

remained faithful to his government, and his jagir alone was exempted from confiscation. He died in 1854.

"Arjan Singh died in 1848 soon after his escape from Gujranwala. His two sons who are still living have each a small allowance of Rs. 96.

"In 1857, Sardar Jawahir Singh was one of the first of the Panjab Sardars selected by the Commander-in-Chief for service in Hindustan. Proud of the confidence, reposed in him, Jawahir Singh served throughout the war with a gallantry and devotion which none surpassed. He was Risaldar and Senior Native Officer of the first Sikh Cavalry at Lucknow, Bithor, Cawnpur, Kalpi, and wherever that noble regiment was engaged, Jawahir Singh was present. He was eighteen times engaged with the enemy and at the close of 1859, he received, as a reward for his services, a jagir of Rs. 12,000 p.a. He had previously received the first class Order of British India, for distinguished services in the field. In 1862, he was made an Honorary Magistrate of Gujranwala, where both he and his elder brother Gurdit Singh resided.

"Sardarni Desan, mother of Panjab Singh and Arjan Singh and Sardarni Raj Kaur, mother of Jawahir Singh and Gurdit Singh both lived till 1849 and held jagirs of Rs. 800 and 700 respectively.\*"

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\* Griffin: *The Chiefs and Families of Note in the Panjab* pp. 186-7.



# **APPENDIX**





*Obverse.*

*Reverse.*

## APPENDIX I

### Coins

Two coins were struck by Hari Singh. One was struck in 1822 at Srinagar. It remained current in the valley and other parts of the Punjab till 1849. Like the present-day coin which is higher in face value than in intrinsic worth, it was also a base coin of 2/3rd value of common *sicca* rupee.

Another was struck at Peshawar in 1834. This is lying in the Lahore Museum.

(SEE OPPOSITE)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ۱. پشاور جلمی صرب<br>۱۸۹۰ بکرمی *                                 | ۲. دیک تیغ فتح نصرت<br>یافت از کرد گوبند سنگه *   |
| 1. Possession of Peshawar.<br>Coined in 1890, Bk.-1833-4<br>A. D. | 2. <i>Deg (free Kitchen)</i> , sword,<br>victory, and prosperity<br>received from Guru<br>Gobind Singh. |

## APPENDIX II

### Why Hari Singh was generally victorious ?

The Nalwa Sardar seldom suffered a defeat at the hands of his antagonists. Different historians mention different causes. The Sikh writers vainly intoxicated with the short-lived glory of their military rule attach super-human power to their generals who successfully

fought against the Muslims. They exaggerate both the bravery of the Sikhs and the timidity of the Afghans, and ignore other causes, direct or indirect, responsible for their victorious career. The European chroniclers on the other hand give all credit to the new and scientific methods of warfare, adopted by the Sikhs. The Muslim historians fail to bring out the real causes and vehemently misuse their intellect and energy by calling the Sikhs bad names such as Kafirs, Dogs, etc. Let us enumerate the causes in a disinterested and dispassionate spirit.

Dissension among his enemies was a great evil of which the Sardar took advantage many times. In the Hazara territory we find that the different chiefs seldom agreed with one another. They never made a common cause and lacked unity so badly required to face an enemy. The Barakzai Sardars never united with one another.\* The brothers out of sheer jealousy hated their capable brother, Dost Mohammad Khan who had ability though not the resources to stand against the Sikh aggression. Whenever a confederacy was organised, its members fell victims to personal gains and their schemes shattered like a house of cards. Only once in 1834 we find all the brothers uniting themselves against the Sikhs. Their union for a few months enabled them to enlist a large army the sight of which quailed the brave heart of Ranjit Singh and he did not dare to wage war against them. Before long Sultan Mohammad Khan betrayed his brother and thus treachery broke a power which the Sikhs had 'contemplated with dismay.' The disloyal chiefs quarrelled among themselves and offered assistance to the Sardar to extend his terri-

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\* We had enough of contemporary statements confirming this in the character of Peshawar Annexation.

tory. One Shah Yaqub offered to secure the tributary dependence of Kabul, if he was conferred the governorship of Peshawar\*—a very base instance of the lack of patriotism. The various chiefs cared for themselves and no body cared for Afghanistan. Though numerically far superior to their invaders, their mutual jealousies and petty rivalries always wrought havoc among them.

Lack of efficient, experienced and honest leadership was another cause for the successive defeats which the Muslims sustained. Unfortunately Afghanistan did not produce a single veteran general who could successfully compete with the gallant warrior like the Nalwa Sardar. The once energetic spirit of her generals was in dejection, otherwise there was no lack of individual bravery as witnessed on several occasions. Instead of illustrious sovereigns and brave generals it produced imbecile kings and disloyal soldiers. Those who were gifted with the qualities of head and heart were greatly reduced by earthly evils of wine, women, disputes for authority and mutual jealousy. "Had there been a strong government at Kabul after the death of Abdali, or even after the deposition of Zaman Shah, as there was before 1773, the extension of Ranjit Singh's territory must have been retarded." With the possible exception of Sayyed Ahmed even in personal character Hari Singh far excelled his opponents. The former though claimed a fair comparison with the latter as a man but could not be compared with him as a soldier. Moreover Hari Singh was often assisted by excellent soldiers from the chosen band of adventurers that gathered round the court and camp of Ranjit Singh. It "was as curious a mixture as ever met in any monarch's presence."

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\* Cf. Punjab Records, Book No. 33.

Introduction of the scientific system of warfare through the European adventurers at Lahore Darbar was no less responsible for this. Hari Singh was equipped with a fine artillery which his enemies lacked. The tribal armies had not even a single piece of this valuable branch of warfare. Even small forts like that of Jamrud proved impregnable to the Afghans while the Sikhs wrought havoc with it. Hari Singh's opponents did not feel the dearth of men. They could get warlike Afghans in large numbers but the drawback was that they were undisciplined and untrained in war tactics whereas the Sikhs were excellently trained on the European lines and well understood the ins and outs of this bloody affair. The English people had repeatedly shown that no body of soldiers, however brave, could stand the onslaughts of a trained force.

Last though not the least, the kingship at Kabul was weak and unstable as compared with that of Lahore. The Maharaja possessed a fertile and rich piece of land with immense resources while Dost Mohammad often had to face the financial stringencies. For days and days it is said 'he passed his life without a piece of loaf and his horse without a straw of grass.' So under the prevailing state of affairs Dost Mohammad could be no match for Ranjit's army. Above all even his life was not secure. Many times his native foes had attempted to make short work of him and he expected foul play even from his courtiers.

To sum up. Lack of unity among the Afghan chiefs, want of good generals, scarcity of trained soldiers, lack of Arms and Ammunition, and jealousy among Muslim military leaders, unrivalled bravery and matchless generalship of the Nalwa Sardar were the chief causes of the successive Afghan defeats in Trans-Indus lands.

While enumerating these causes we cannot ignore for one moment the difficulties of fighting in an alien land and mountainous regions cut off from Lahore by 300 miles in those days of primitive means of communication and transportation. Dearth of water was another difficulty which often harassed the Sikh forces in the hilly and Muslim country. Lack of geographical knowledge, no less, put them to troubles in the land of treason and rebellion.'

### APPENDIX III

#### **Hari Singh's Trans-Indus Policy**

Ranjit Singh did not like the extension of direct control beyond Indus.\* It was Hari Singh's Forward Policy which brought the Maharaja into the field. Thereafter there was no going back. The Nalwa Sardar often sought his master's permission to occupy Peshawar which he ultimately got. Having occupied Peshawar he intended to capture Jalalabad and then to proceed to Kabul. He often offered bribes to the chieftains of the Khyber to give him passage, but he could not get it. This intention is quite evident and is supported by several statements.† Now let us see how far this policy was wise. Was it necessary to extend the Sikh rule beyond Indus in the interest of the Sikh government of the Central Punjab? Was not Indus a good geographical boundary? What sort of rule this ought to have been, direct or indirect, through Sikhs or through Muslim agency? Was it possible for the Sikhs to conquer and retain it permanently?

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\* ".....the Maharaja is himself averse from a wish to take Peshawar but this usurpation had been brought about by Hari Singh (Punjab Records, Book No. 140, Letter No. 47, dated June 17, 1834.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 139, No. 27, dated July 1, 1832.

The Afghans were warlike, hardy, and hostile to the Sikhs. This hostility was a matter of notoriety under Hari Singh whose strong hand alone restrained them from attacking the Panjab. A calm consideration of this fact can convince every man of common sense that no permanent peace could be made with the Afghan tribes beyond Indus. But if he had given up the sovereignty of Peshawar territory and retired to this side of the Indus he had to make a stand to defend a frontier of some 650 miles from the North of Hazara to Shikarpur divided from the hostile, warlike and powerful Afghan tribes by a river fordable at many places. Let military men say what army could defend so exposed and so extended a frontier against such adversaries all plunderers and all ripe for inroads and border war. Above all the border populations of the Sikh territory [chiefly consisting of the Muslims] was as hostile to them as their antagonists beyond the Indus. One cannot ignore for one moment that the Muslims on the left side of the Indus were at one with the Muslims on the right bank owing to the community of religion which played an important part in politics. To suppose that Hari Singh with all his power in arms, personal bravery and energy could establish peace on the border is absurd. It would have been a perpetual guerrilla war with an army of 8,000 men [the strength with the Nalwa Sardar till 1834]. Even if such an army could do it, that army would have been an unsupportable drain on the Khalsa Darbar without any compensation for it. Instantaneously another question arises. Could the Sikhs halt there? The answer is in the negative. To occupy a territory is something else; to retain it another thing. Any attack on the Sikhs by a powerful general would have compelled them to retreat. The Muslim population and many other enemies would have

fallen upon the retiring columns and added to the misery of the Sikhs. The Sikh soldiers would have suffered a defeat. Such a retreat would certainly have created a great distress and ultimate disintegration among them. To remain stationary on the Indus was impossible. There was no choice but to advance. The Sikhs in that project had safety and the hope of future. The history of India tells that no invasion could be checked on the plains. It was only possible to withstand at the very mouths of the passes. The invaders besides becoming desperate while fighting so far off from their homes were supported by the internal enemies of the Indian governments. Battle of Tarain and battles of Panipat are sound examples to support this argument. There are at least ten or twelve passes in the large barrier of the Sulaiman Range which were the only outlet of the enemy. To check the enemy at the threshold must have been easier than to face it on its way to Delhi. To guard efficiently those passes was a good protective measure than to stand on the defensive in actual attack. The former presented no difficulty while the latter was scarcely possible. The first demanded a small army while the second required a huge army. The occupation of Peshawar added extra revenue to the government while the boundary line at Indus could not have brought any. This revenue could cover a substantial part of the military expenditure if not the whole, So the critical examination of the facts clearly indicates that the extension of the sovereignty of the Panjab over the Trans-Indus lands was essential not only in the interest of the glory of the Sikh government, still less in the increase of revenue but for the very safety of the Sikh regime in the Land of Five Rivers. So we find that the Indus was not a



good geographical boundary and General Hari Singh's policy of controlling Peshawar and its vicinity was quite justified. It was an act of wise and foresighted statesmanship which only a few sovereigns of India could realize. Thus regarded, he may be said to have anticipated the British Frontier Policy.

The next question before us is whether the Sikh control on the Trans-Indus lands ought to have been direct or indirect. The entire population was of war-like Mohammedans.<sup>3</sup> They hated orderly government. Any sort of direct control, however nominal or formal, was irreconcilable with their spirited nature. They did not tolerate even their subjection to the Mogals. Akbar could not extend his sway beyond the Attock\*. His successors through military strength could conquer this territory but the nature of their control was certainly nominal. Rebellions and revolutions were very common and the governors and rulers cruelly made their way for their sovereignty. If the Mogal rule was so much hated the Sikh control could not be pleasant who were not even their co-religionists and were hated not only as their masters but also as men†.

There was always discontentment and distress. The chiefs at once revolted whenever any opportunity came. Apart from the difficulties of defending the frontier invasions, Hari Singh had to subdue several internal rebellions. Their repression created still more disaffection. The Sikhs

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\*The name of the Indus was changed to attock by Akbar in 1558. After his failure to extend his ways beyond this river, he contented himself by calling it the Attock (stop).

†.....an Afghan cannot hear the name of the Sikh uttered in his presence without spitting three times and of truth they are worthy of thousand spits and not alone three. Karamat Ali to Wade, Punjab Records, Book No. 141, Letter No. 1.

commanded no love from the Afghan subjects. It was only through the longer swords that they ruled. They met with many difficulties in establishing their authority if at all it can be regarded to have been established. Much bloodshed was occasioned and the Sikhs lost many men every year. Brave and veteran generals like Ram Dyal, Makhan Singh, Amar Singh Majithia, Phula Singh Akali, Budh Singh and Hari Singh lost their lives in restoring order. The personal security of the rulers was also always at stake. General Avitabile tells us that "he never slept twice in the same room but shifted his bed nightly and had a fleet horse waiting saddled at all hours under the private gates of his place ready to carry him away post haste."\* Besides this it was a great financial loss. The expenditure far out-weighed the revenues. The total income† as given by Shahamat Ali is only Rs. 45,000 and we find that besides the salary of 10,000 troopers the Maharaja paid Rupees Nine lacs to Hari Singh alone. This was the state of affairs political and financial. Under these circumstances mere glory (a deceptive glory) of the Sikh rule in the Trans-Indus lands was very costly. It was a gross political mistake culminating in consequence on the British Frontier; the narration of these falls outside the scope of this work.

So we find that fixing the frontier line at the Indus was dangerous and extending direct Sikh rule in the territory beyond Indus was pregnant with serious difficulties. The only course was to restore the pre-arrangements which existed till 1834. To ensure more security the Barakzai brothers could be offered a subsidy as the English had done with so many native rulers. This arrangement would have completely

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\* Life of General Avitabile : Calcutta Review.

† Sikhs and the Afghans by Shahamat Ali, p. 279.

curtailed the chances of the Barakzai brothers becoming independent or of any invading expedition crossing the Indus. It would not have, at the same time, stained the Sikh conduct by ignoring the treaty obligation rights. By following this scheme there would not have been any financial deficit which was a constant drain on the treasury of the State. I, therefore, do not regard the policy of direct administration adopted by Nalwa Sardar as a wise act of statesmanship.

Was it possible for Hari Singh to conquer Kabul and retain it? The Nalwa Sardar cherished the designs of the conquest of Kabul which were frustrated by his early death ".....they may take the possession of the path of Khyber and gradually extend the Maharaja's authority to Cabul in the same manner as his occupation of the fort of Attock enabled him to overawe and afterwards subvert the independence of Peshawar."\* This was the scheme advocated by Hari Singh and some of the French officers in the Maharaja's Darbar.

The military strength of the Punjab was surely more than that of Afghanistan. The conquest of Kabul could be possible but as regards its permanent occupation no one can forget that it was absolutely impossible. Had Hari Singh attempted to introduce his authority beyond the Khyber, it would have been a complete failure. The Sikhs would have been surrounded by population who had religious animosity, feelings of personal hatred and were conscious of their strength and security in the mountains. The natives of the country would not allow them any peace. While at Peshawar the Sikhs could receive reinforcements from the Panjab, but no aid could reach them at Kabul. They would have found

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\* From Captain Wade to the Governor-General Punjab Reccrds, Book No. 138, Letter No. 27, dated July 1, 1832.

themselves out off from their supplies. While at Kabul they would be constantly exposed to most harassing attacks. Dangerous onslaughts and starvation would have compelled them to relinquish their conquest not without loss of men, money and honour. The retreat would have been a rout and perhaps they would have met a worse fate than the English did in 1842.

Let it be repeated. Frontier policy of Hari Singh was partly wise and partly unwise. The extension of the Sikh control beyond Indus was a necessity. The Panjab could not be safe from the North-Western attacks until the Sikhs controlled the passes. Indirect rule of the province was better than its direct control. It would have been easy to manage through Muslim agency, for the reasons mentioned above. To conquer and add Kabul to his master's dominions was a will-o'-the-wisp and a design pregnant with serious dangers.

## APPENDIX IV

List of the Towns and Territories held in jagir by Hari Singh at the time of his death :—

1. Dhantore. 2. Khanpore. 3. Kolera. 4. Kachi Banu. 5. Kala Garh. 6. Nurpore. 7. Metha. 8. Piwana
9. Chola Yar. 10. Gujranwala. 11. Sheikhuwal. 12. Dhana.
13. Khatak.

Amounting to Rs. 8,53,000.

Sohan Lal : *Umdatul Tawarikh*, p. 405.

## APPENDIX V

List of the Buildings, State and private, erected by  
Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.

|     | Place.                        | Date.   |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Muktsar Tank                  | 1808*   |
| 2.  | Fort at Nawan Shahar (Pukhli) | 1822  |
| 3.  | [Haripore] Harkishangarh Fort | 1822  |
| 4.  | Dennah Fort                   | "   |
| 5.  | Darband Fort                  | "   |
| 6.  | Khanpore Fort                 | " 1831  |
| 7.  | Siri Kot Fort†                | "   |
| 8.  | Sherwan Fort                  | "   |
| 9.  | Terbela Fort‡                 | " 1831  |
| 10. | Nagra Fort                    | "   |
| 11. | Oghi Fort                     | "   |
| 12. | Seera Saleh Fort              | " (originally<br>built by Milkha Singh and repaired by Hari<br>Singh) |
| 13. | Jehangir Fort                 | Peshawar 1832   |
| 14. | Bala Hissar Fort              | " rebuilt (only rampart<br>and gate)                                  |
| 15. | Hari Singh Burj               | "   |
| 16. | Hassan Abdal Gurdwara,        | Rawalpindi  |
| 17. | Jamrud Fort                   | Peshawar 1835-36  |
| 18. | Well at Jamrud                | "   |
| 19. | Newshehra Khurd Fort          | "   |
| 20. | Gujranwala Fort (kuohcha)     |   |
| 21. | " Barandri                    |   |

\* It is not certain date.

† Not certain about the builder he was probably Hari Singh.

‡ This was constructed by Amar Singh Majithia in 1821.  
Hari Singh just repaired and added a little to it in 1831.

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| 22. Residential house    |      |
| 23. Pathe Grah           |      |
| 24. Haripore city        | 1822 |
| 25. Nawan Shehr (Pakhli) | 1822 |

## APPENDIX VI

### Character of a Sikh Soldier

"The Sikhs have been reputed deceitful and cruel; but I know no grounds upon which they can be considered more so, than the other tribes of India. They seemed to me, from all the intercourse I had with them, *to be more open and sincere than the Mahrattas, and less rude and savage than the Afghans.* They have, indeed, become, from national success, too proud of their own strength, and too irritable to their tempers to have patience of the wiles of the farmer; and they retain, in spite of their change of manners and religion, too much of the original character of their Hindu ancestors (for the great majority are of the Hindu race) to have the constitutional ferocity of the latter. The Sikh soldier is, generally speaking, *brave, active, and cheerful,* without polish, but neither destitute of sincerity nor attachment; and if he often appears wanting in humanity, it is not so much to be attributed to his national character, as to the habits of a life, which, from the condition of the society in which he is born, is generally passed in scenes of violence and rapine."

(Malcolm).

## APPENDIX VII

Translation of the treaty concluded between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Shujah-ul-Mullik, dated the 12th March, 1934:—

*Preamble.*

Relations of friendship having been firmly established between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk so that there neither is nor ever shall be any alienation or difference of interest existing between them, they agree to adopt the following articles in consideration of the terms of good will and friendship by which they are reciprocally actuated.

1. Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk disclaims all titles on the part of himself, of his heirs, successors and all the Seddozies to whatever territories lying on either bank of the River Indus that may be possessed by the Maharaja, *viz.* Kashmir including its limits East, West, North and South together with the fort of Attock, Chetch, Hazara, Khebel, and with its dependencies on the left bank of the aforesaid river and on the right bank, Peshawar with the Eusafzai territory, Kheleks, Hasht Nagar, Michnie, Kohat and all places dependent on Peshawar as far as the Khyber Pass; Benoo the Viziri territory Dour Tank, Corank, Kalabagh and Khushal Garh with their dependent districts, Dera Ismail Khan, and its dependency together with Dera Ghazi Khan, Kot Mathan and their dependent territory Sengher, Heren Daujel, Hajeepore, Rajanpore and the three ketchees as well as Menkerah with its district and the Province of Multan situated on the left bank. These countries and places are considered to be the property and to form the estate of Maharaja; the Shah neither has nor will have any concern with them. They belong to the Maharaja and his posterity from generation to generation.

2. The people of the country on the other side of Khyber will not be suffered to commit robberies or aggression or any disturbances on this side. If any defaulter of either state, who has embezzled the revenue, take refuge in the territory of the other, each party engages to surrender him.

3. As agreeable to the treaty established between the British Government and the Maharaja, no one can cross from the left to the right bank of the Sutlej without a passport from the Maharaja, the same rule shall be observed regarding the passage of the Indus whose waters join the Sutlej and no one shall be allowed to cross the Indus without the Maharaja's permission.

4. Regarding Shikarpur and the territory of Sind lying on the right bank of the Indus the Shah will abide by whatever may be settled as right and proper in conformity with the happy relations of friendship subsisting between the British Government and the Maharaja through Captain Wade.

5. When the Shah shall have established his authority in Kabul and Kandhar he will annually send the Maharaja the following articles: *viz.* 55 high bred horses of approved colour and pleasant paces, 11 Persian Seemitors, 7 Persian Pognons, 25 good mules, fruits of various kinds, both dry and fresh, and Sardahs or musk melons of a sweet and delicate flavour (to be sent throughout the year) by the way of the Kabul river to Peshawar, grapes, pomegranates, apples, juices, almonds, raisns, *pistahs* or chimots and abundant supply of each as well as pieces of satin of every colour, choghas of fur, kimkhabbs wrought with gold and silver, Persian carpets altogether to the number of 101 pieces. All these articles the Shah will continue to send every year to the Maharaja.

6. Each party shall address the other on terms of equality.

7. Merchants of Afghanistan who will be desirous of trading the Lahore, Amritsar or any part of the Maharaja's possessions shall not be stopped or molested on their way. On the contrary strict orders shall be issued to facilitate their



intercourse and the Maharaja engages to observe the same line of conduct on his part in respect to traders who may wish to proceed to Afghanistan.

8. The Maharaja will yearly send the Shah the following articles in the way of friendship: 55 pieces of shawls, 25 pieces of muslin, 11 dopattahs, 5 pieces of kimkhab, 5 scarves, 5 turbans, 55 loads of Bareh rice (peculiar to Peshawar).

9. Any of the Maharaja's Officers who may be deputed to Afghanistan to purchase horses or on any other business as well as those who may be sent by the Shah into the Panjab for the purpose of purchasing piece goods or shawls etc. to the amount of Rs. 11000/- will be treated by both sides with due attention and every facility will be afforded to them in execution of their commission.

10. Whenever the armies of two the states happen to be assembled at the same place, on no account shall the slaughter of kine be permitted to take place.

11. In the event of the Shah taking an auxiliary force from the Maharaja whatever booty may be acquired from the Barakzai in jewels, horses, arms, great or small shall be equally divided between the two contracting parties. If the Shah should succeed in obtaining possession of their property without the assistance of the Maharaja's troops the Shah agrees to send a portion if it by his own Agent to the Maharaja in the way of friendship.

12. An exchange of missions charged with letters and presents shall constantly take place between the two parties.

13. Should the Maharaja require the aid of any of the Shah's troops the Shah engages to send force, commanded by one of his principal officers. In like manner the Maharaja will furnish the Shah when required with an auxiliary force

composed of Mohammadans and commanded by one of his principal Officers as far as Kabul when the Maharaja may go to Peshawar the Shah will depute a *shahzada* to visit him on which occasion; the Maharaja will receive and dismiss him with the honour and consideration due to his rank and dignity.

14. The friends and enemies of the one shall be the friends and enemies of the other.

15. Both parties cordially agree to the foregoing articles. There shall be no deviation from them. The present treaty shall be considered binding for ever.\*

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\*Punjab Records Office, Lahore.

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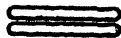
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