Chapter 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF GURU GOBIND SINGH AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOCIETY

Guru Gobind Singh's contribution during his life time has printed a new foot step on the canvas of Indian history and world civilization. He is the pride of the nation. During his tough fight with the Mughal tyrant and his struggle for the fulfillment of his noble mission, the tenth Guru not only preserved India's glorious heritage but also not deviated from the principles of life such as equality, liberty, fraternity etc., even at the cost of supreme sacrifice made by his family.

Now the question arises what were the ideals and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh? What are the ideals and virtues which he has inculcated in ordinary men and transformed them to warriors? How he synthesized the two types of potentialities - temporal and spiritual together by way of which he made his followers 'Saint' and 'soldier'? And how he made practical use of these ideals for making positive social change in the rigidity of the caste-based hierarchical structure of Indian society?

Before writing something about life and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh I want to clear one thing that the Ten Masters of Sikhism should be recognized as being one in spirit, and they are often known as the 'First, Second, Third, Fourth Nanak upto the Tenth.' In his autobiographical poem 'Bachitter Natak', Guru Gobind Singh describes the origins of his predecessors, and the concept of oneness of spirit of all the Gurus. It is clear from his writings that there is only one Word, one Guru and one interpretation. The Light was the same, only the body changed. He writes:
"The holy Nanak was revered as Angad, Angad was recognized as Amar Dass; And Amar Dass became Ram Dass. The pious saw this, but not the fools who thought them all distinct; But some race persons recognized that they are all one. They who understood this obtained perfection. Without understanding, perfection can not be obtained. When Ram Dass was blended with God, He gave the Guruship to Arjan. When Arjan was going to God's city, He Appointed Har Gobind in his place. When Har Gobind was going to God's city, He seated Har Rai in his place. Har Krishan, his son afterwards became the Guru. After him came Tegh Bahadur, who protected the frontal marks and sacrificial threads of the Hindus".

From the above-mentioned stanzas of piece of poetry of Guru Gobind Singh we can deduce that he describes the one identity of the succession of Gurus, and thereby also implies his own spiritual identity with Guru Nanak.

However it is clear that he does not mean literal reincarnation of the person of each flame of Guruship, so that the light remains the same while vehicle of light is different. Actually, at the time of appointing his next hierarch, Guru transmits his spiritual powers to that particular person to whom he is going to bestow Guruship. Consequently, we have in the Sikh Gurus ten distinct personalities, each having his own particular characteristic qualities yet all working towards the same end, with the same purpose and same goal in mind and teaching the same means towards that ends. Like the first five Gurus and the ninth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh was a great poet; like Guru Arjan Dev, he had a deeply mystic nature. Like Guru Har Gobind, the tenth Guru was a man of action, a warrior and a prince, and yet he often displayed the humility of Guru Amar Dass. Like Guru Nanak, he was also a conscious actor in the Divine drama of life, and he consciously strove throughout his life, to develop to the full, all these admirable qualities, which inevitable made him the complete, ideal and spiritual man. Hence, Guru Gobind Singh should be seen in this context.

In his autobiographical composition the 'Bachittra Natak' Guru Gobind Singh refers to the travels of his parents and his own arrival in the
womb of his mother, and the acts of pity and charity done by the Guru Tegh Bahadur at Trivani, the confluence of the three rivers namely Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati prior to his birth at Patna. He writes:

"Mur pit purab keeyas payana; Bhaant bhaant ke teerath nahana.
Jah hi jaat tribeni bhaiye; Puhn daan din karat bitaiye.
Tahi parkash hamara bhayo; Patna shahar bikhey bhav layo."

The verse ‘Tahi parkash hamara bhayo’ is interpreted by the Sikh scholars as suggesting that Guru Gobind Singh’s divine soul entered in womb of his mother at Allahbad. There persists difference of opinion about the date and year of the Guru Gobind Singh’s birth. Kesar Singh Chhabber and W. Irvine in ‘Later Mughals-1’ suggested 1660 A.D. as the year of Guru Gobind-birth while Bhai Randhir Singh holds 10th December, 1969 A.D. as the date of the Guru’s birth, Ganda Singh in ‘Makhiz-e-Twarikh-eSikhism-1’ records Dec.29, 1666 A.D. as Guru Gobind Singh’s birth. 22nd of December, 1666 A.D. is however accepted by majority of the scholars as the correct date of birth of the Guru. M. A. Macauliffe in his book ‘Sikh Religion’, J.D.Cunningham-‘Short History Of The Sikhism’, Dharam Paul Ashta-‘The Poetry Of Dasam Granth’, Kartar Singh – ‘Life Of Guru Gobind Singh’, Khuswant Singh-‘History Of Sikhs’, Indu Bhushan Banerjee-‘Evolution Of The Khalsa’, Trilochan Singh-‘Guru Gobind Singh’ are the authors who accepted 22nd of December 1666 A.D. as the date of birth of Guru Gobind Singh’s birth. Falling in the line with the majority opinion, we may accept that Guru Gobind Singh was born on 22nd of Dec.1666 A. D., corresponding to Poh 7, Samvat 1723. He was given this name because his father Guru Tegh Bahadur, before proceeding to Kamrup, had given instructions to his family members to name the new born baby as Gobind.
In Bachittar Natak Guru Gobind Singh says about his birth as follows:

"I shall now relate my own story, How God sent me into the world. When I was performing penance, on the hills of Hem Kund, where seven peaks are prominent. The place is called Sapt Shring where king Pandu performed Yog. There I practiced austerity, and worshipped the God of death. I performed such penance, that I got blended with God. My father and mother had also worshipped the Invisible One. And tried in many ways to merged with Almighty. The Almighty was pleased with their devotion to Him. When God gave Me the order I was send to this dark age, To which I had no wish to come, As I was meditating deeply at Lord's feet He cast on me His Light Benign, And sent me into this world; I stood up, folded my hands, bowed my head and said: Thy religion shall prevail in the world. In this way God sent me, Then I was born and came into the world. As He spoke to me, So I speak unto men. I bear no enmity to anyone".---------3

Jatinder Singh writes that the earliest evidence that Guru Gobind Singh was sent to this world by Almighty God for maintaining peace and harmony, and to teach the lesson of equality of mankind to the common masses had been confirmed the test carried out by Sayyad Bhikahan Shah, when the infant Gobind was only a few days old. The Sayyad saw a strange light in the heavens on the night of Guru Gobind's birth in far-off Ghuram and bowed to it saying: "God hath sent a new light on this earth". And he followed the direction of that light on this earth to see the face of the holy one. In order to put the young prince to test, he took two jars, one full of milk and the other full of water. Covering both, he placed them before the new born child, saying to himself:

"If he touches the milk pot, I would consider him a partisan of Muslims, And 'if he touches the other one; he would favour the Hindus'. But the child laid his hands on both."--------4
"Blessed, blessed art Thou, O Master of both." Exclaimed the Sayyed, "This country needed Thee now more than any one else."

Guru Gobind Singh occupies a very high place in the history of mankind on account of his versatility. He was a rare combination of multiple qualities and his activities were also varied. The Guru was a saint, soldier and man of letters confined into one.

It is undoubted truth that behind every specific idea and institution there is a man, behind every man there is age, and behind every age there is a past. The man preached his ideas through his personal example and qualities of the great order. Guru Gobind Singh had a manifold personality, both idealistic and practical. Even in the grim days of fighting, his face did not show any sign of sorrow and distress. He had a body full of vigour and strength. His courage had no parallel.

Guru Gobind Singh: A great humanist:

Guru Gobind Singh loved Humanity. His love embraced one and all without any discrimination. He received with open arms whosoever came to him. Even his enemies were welcomed and honoured in his darbar. He did not bear illwill against any body and always kept in view, his father's dictum, 'fear no one and strike fear in no one.' It is well known fact that when Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar (Utter Pradesh), Who had a long standing enmity with Raja Medni Prakash of Nahan expressed his desire to remain on good terms with the Guru who had come quite near to his territory and was now strong enough, the Guru not only showed his willingness to meet him but also received him with full honours at Paonta Sahib. The Guru made magnificent arrangements for the reception of the Raja. A huge Pandal was constructed to receive him. Precious carpets were spread on the ground and special ministerials were engaged for the sake of entertainment of the Raja. On his visit the Guru expressed the desire to come to an amicable settlement with the Raja of Nahan, who showed a gesture of goodwill. The Guru was pleased and appreciated the attitude of the Raja and calling Raja Medni Prakash in the open darbar, asked him to embrace Raja Fateh Shah and forget their old
enmity. It was a unique scene two enemies has became fast friends, by goodwill inspired by the Guru Gobind Singh.”------6

In the words of Prof. Bhagat Singh, Guru Gobind Singh was a great humanist and as such his recourse to sharp was with a view to helping humanity against oppression. Fighting was not of the Guru’s choice, much less of his liking, his arms were not meant for destruction or committing crime but means of self defense and protection of the needy. He never opted for a battle but it was thrust on him and in pure self-preservation he rode into the battle-field with a sword by his side, a gold tipped arrow in his hand; an ointment for the wounded in pocket, for he did not shoot for the fun of it or in a spirit of vendetta but to fulfill and unhappy worldly obligation. His each arrow had a tola of gold at its tip so that the wounded victim could purchase treatment with that gold and in the case of his death, the expenses of the obsequies could be adequately met.”------7

Guru Gobind Singh was human in his approach to men and matters, he could even forgive those committing the worst offence. Whenever any of his erring followers apologized and promised good behaviour in the future, the Guru gladly pardoned him. His heart melted at the very sight of the sufferer.

He could even pardon his enemies and persons who had betrayed him earlier. It is well known fact that at Anandpur, some of his Sikhs deserted him for fear of death. But, when the battle of Muketsar (the last battle fought by the Guru) was over he went to look after those who had been slain or wounded in the battle. The Guru felt that all those who had died were his sons. They were all his Beloved Ones who were fighting with him shoulder to shoulder against tyranny and aggression. The Guru moved about lifting the heads of the dead and putting them into his lap, wiped their faces with a piece of cloth, one by one. When the Guru reached near the body of Bhai Mahan
Singh, one of his sons, he (Mahan Singh) nodded meekly. The Guru told him that he was dying as a martyr and could ask for whatever he desired. Mahan Singh was delighted and opened his eyes, wet with tears. Mumbling in a choked voice he said to the Guru that he was a sinner and had no right to be made immortal. He had deserted the Guru when he needed him. The doors of heaven were closed for him. He requested the Guru to forgive him. That was the only prayer he had to make. He requested that the document of denunciation, 'Bedava' should be destroyed and he be pardoned along with other deserters, and accepted back into the Khalsa fold. The Guru smiled and took out the document, which he carried with him all the time. It was like an ulcer in his body. The Guru tore it off and forgave all the deserters and blessed them. Mahan Singh heaved a sign of relief and breathed his lost peacefully—nay he was immortalized. Who else could be large-hearted than the Guru. He forgave them with an open mind, the people who had been instrumental in compelling him to leave Anandpur.

In another occasion, when the Guru was on his way to Anandpur from Patna, he went for game shooting. He was then camping at Lakhnaur in Ambala District. Suddenly he met one man, Ghogha by name who was afraid of the Guru and tried to hide himself, as he had earlier committed the crime of abducting the maid servant of Guru Teg Bahadur. The Guru did not possess any revengeful spirit and pardoned, Ghogha, when he asked for it. Such stories could be multiplied manifold.

Equality Of Mankind:

Guru Gobind Singh believe in the equality of mankind. According to him all men are equal irrespective of their caste, community, race, country and religion. His was the mighty task to infuse a new life into the timid lifeless mass of humanity and to transform the harmless and innocent worshippers into a community of self respecting citizens. He had the capacity to transmute a humble commonplace man into a hero. He brought about a radical change in the religious structure of his followers. He emphasized the regulation of
private conduct of the Sikhs as a whole for the service of mankind and stressed the need for unity and tolerance. He also urged the people to build up a secular state, on a sound bases in India. Women were emancipated and untouchable were enfranchised.

Munshi Sujan Rai, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh writes in 1667 A.D. that “most of them (Sikhs) have cleaned their hearts of the pollution that arises from the worldly connections and they have torn as under the screen of worldly strife and wrangle from their bosoms. Relatives and strangers, friends and foes are all one to them. They treat all alike. With their friends they live harmoniously and with their foes they live in peace”.

Guru Gobind Singh’s motto was “Know all mankind as of one caste.” He was a great benefactor of the Hindu culture and preached the equality of all men. He was not against the Muslim or Islam but against the tyranny and aggression. He denounced all caste distinctions, and rejected the concept of caste-system (i.e., different codes of conduct for different castes). He advocated the uniformity of code for the high and the low alike. He preached national solidarity. He knit together all the castes into one brotherhood. The low and the high, the rich and the poor, were combined to form one fraternity. The week and the down trodden were always loved by him. In order to give the practical shape to his this noble ideal, the institution of Sangat (congregation) and Pangat (dining together) were introduced. He made no distinctions between the people of one caste and the other caste. He insisted on perfect qualities of true man-hood, and condemned the Hindu caste-system which divided the society into different sections. He abolished all social distinctions.

He exalts in the souls of a whole people love of comrade and human fellowship (stretching its arms all round the glove, full of power and helpful living, and radiating soul-consciousness in every home, in little acts of kindness to each other, to all living-beings animals and birds as well as
essences of all divinities). Freedom of the human mind and soul is the Guru’s passion. He says:

"Such kahun, Sun leo sabhe, Jin prem kio,
Tin hi Prabh payo."——9

I say verily, Unto you all, He who loves, Alone finds the Lord.

One of Guru Gobind Singh’s famous hymns reads:

‘Grant unto me this boon, O Lord, that I may never be deterred from doing good deeds. I should have no fear of the enemy when I go to battle, and turn victory certainly to my side, In my mind there is but one desire that I may ever be singing Thy praises. And, when the time comes, I should die fighting in the field of action.”——10

Know, the people are of God, Hurt not the people, If the people are hurt, O Nand Lal, It provoke’th the Lord into anger.

Guru reflected deeply on the preceding and contemporary social values and structures and articulated his own social thought. Although his primary interest was in the spiritual perfection and ultimate union of Jiva Atma with real one (Ultimate Reality), Yet he felt the necessity of establishing a social order wherein the spiritual values held dear by him could survive and thrive. That is why he tried his best to make his spiritual teachings the vis-a-t ego of the ideal social order of his vision. All his life and the life of previous Nine Guru’s from (Guru Nanak to Guru Tegh Bahadur) is a long saga of struggle for realization of that vision.

Guru Gobind Singh visualized and worked for a social set up wherein all are equal, with no prejudices or preference; where faith binds mankind together instead of dividing them, into warring factions; where people sweat to earn their livelihood through truthful means and philanthropic intent; where feeling of love and compassion for mankind in general are held high; and
where woman is not looked down upon as an object of carnal desire but is respected as mother, sister, daughter. The Guru was very aware of the fact that the vision of such a society can not be achieved through a miracle or with the help of Alladin’s lamp but he provided us with the required values and virtues to base this structure upon and with the requisite will to strive for its realization.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The doctrine of unity of reality is central to Sikh metaphysical thought. In fact, the entire gamut of Sikh philosophy is derived from this doctrine which also happens to be the bases of the idea of spiritual unity and ethnic equality of mankind. This later doctrine is the central point in the social philosophy of the Sikhs. This idea serves as the fount of all social values that help to construct an ideal social structure which is an open and inclusive society and not a closed and exclusive society.

The Sikh scripture begins with the Mool Mantra which is believed to be the essence of the entire scriptural hymns and the first letter of which is 'Ikoankar Oan or Om is the name used for God in the Sikh canon as in the ancient Indian religious literature as well. However, Guru Nanak who composed the Mool Mantra prefixed ‘Ik’ to it. ‘Ik’ is in fact a numeral and not a word; it represents one. In other words we may say it denotes oneness of God. The suffix ‘Kar’ signifies the creative nature of the God.-------11

Guru Gobind Singh in ‘Akal Ustat’ Says: The epithets, Creator and Beneficent for God, signify the same thing and so are the Provider and the Merciful. Let no one, even by mistake, suppose there is difference. Worship one God who is the one Divine Guru for all, Know that His form is one, and that He is the one Light diffused in all. The temple and the mosque are the same; the Hindu worship and the Musalman prayers are the same. All men are the same; it is through error that they appear different.-------12
As from one fire millions of sparks arise, though rising separately, they unite again in the fire. As from one heap of dust several particles of dust fill the air, and after filling it, again return to that heap of dust. As in one stream millions of waves being made of water - So from God's form non-sentient and sentient things are manifested and springing from Him shall all be united again in Him.

Narain Singh writes, Guru Gobind Singh saw the one in all classes, races, sects, countries and religion. Once a Kalal (wine distiller) came to him for his darshan but conscious that he was considered by others as of low caste, he stood at a distance lest his approach should defile or be taken as a sacrilege. The Guru was deeply touched. He cheered him up by telling him that he was the jewel of the Guru (Guru ka lal) and should consider himself as such. It was his dream, then, to build a new race of humanity, nourished by love, in which all castes would merge into one brotherhood and become a mighty union of love, service and sacrifice.--------13

Guru Gobind Singh as Saint - Soldier:

Guru Gobind Singh was a true saint and soldier as well. He possesses both the qualities of saintliness and soldiership. Prof. Bhagat Singh writes, Guru Gobind Singh was a matchless archer, a fine shot, an expert swordsman and an embodiment of physical powers. A saint-soldier as he was he remained unperturbed and dauntless even in the midst of raining death. He wanted martial spirit to be instilled in his followers and thus it was enjoined upon them to keep arms specially sword on their person as an inseparable instrument of destruction of evil. Guru Gobind Singh made his Sikhs to believe that sword is the Arm of God with which He destroys the evil and the wicked and told them to adore arms.--------14

He further writes that the Guru had taken a decision to convert the Sikhs into a arm brotherhood of saints. The former method of initiation known
as *caranpahal* was changed into *amrit* ceremony. *Amrit* is being prepared with a double-edged sword. In the face of the cruel and bigoted attitude of the Mughal, the old ideas of humility and surrender were changed into one of self-assertion and self-reliance. The Sikhs could undergo this change successfully only if trained in the use of arms and inspired with an unbounded love and difference for them. The creation of the Khalsa was aimed at the realization of the great objective.---------15

In the words of Cunningham, Guru effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social adjusts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Guru Nanak.--------15

Guru Gobind Singh has been described by Bhai Nand Lal a poet and the devout of the Guru in these memorable words:

"The victor and the vanquished Guru Gobind Singh; Beloved of the Almighty Guru Gobind Singh; King and Saint Guru Gobind Singh; Inspirer of action Guru Gobind Singh; Friend of the oppressed Guru Gobind Singh."--------16

This is the most befitting tribute paid to the Guru who sacrificed his every thing to free India from the stranglehold of centuries old slavery and to restore human dignity to those who had lost all moral and ethical values associated with free people. He was the heroic champion of the oppressed and downtrodden and the valiant defender of the rights and dignity of man.

The Guru was not only a spiritual luminary but also a great leader of men. A doughty warrior, he wielded the pen with equal case as the sword. He combined in his person daring qualities and rare administrative ability. Being
a great organizer, he brought new awakening to a society demoralized and crushed under a tyrannic rule.

He infused a new life, a new vigour, a new energy, a new zeal, a new resolve into the hearts of the people who had been humiliated and degraded and had lost all hope of freeing themselves from the perpetual slavery. The Mughal rulers had not only crushed them physically but had also suppressed their souls. The country was in a state of deep frustration and the people saw no ray of hope. Guru Gobind Singh provided them with the silver lining and opened a new era in the annals of Indian history. He created a new nation and a new order. A warrior class was created in order that the people may be able to stand up and fight vigorously the oppressiveness of the then rulers of the country.

Prior to Guru Gobind Singh, the saints and the other religious leaders had not come into conflict with the authorities. Only Guru Har Gobind the sixth Guru had made use of physical force against the cruel Mughal rulers of that time. But after that no other Guru or religious person had made use of military force against the rulers. Actually after assassination of Guru Arjan Dev (Fifth Guru), the Sixth Guru had made an experiment either the common masses of that time are prepared for fighting tyranny or not. All other Sikh Gurus simply operated on the social and religious plane. Actually they know that mentally people are not prepared yet to fight with mighty and cruel rulers of that time. Guru Gobind Singh realized that without resort to sword at that critical juncture in the history of India, the country could not be saved utter humiliation. He took to sword out of sheer necessity at a time when all other means had failed for saving the honour of the nation.

It will not be for us to forget that, whatever else he might have been, Guru Gobind Singh was first and for most a great religious leader. None but a person of saintly disposition, highly spiritual and with complete resignation to the will of God.
S.R. Bakshi writes, Guru Gobind Singh's whole life and work are one marathon denial of the promise that ill will always follows all conflicts. For in his killings, there was never an element of malevolence. To him, war was a surgical operation to rid humanity of cancerous growths in its body politic. Only destiny had cast on him the mantle of a fighter. He had to kill his enemies without wanting to kill them. Even on the battle-field he was never the aggressor. It was only after he was attacked that he defended himself and ultimately silenced the enemy every time ----17

From his very childhood, Guru Gobind Singh started procuring all sorts of arms and weapons and practiced their use. He exhorted his followers also to perfect themselves in the use of arms. The news of Guru's liking for the arms spread like wild fire to even far off places and people with martial leanings and whose forefathers had fought in the army of Guru Hargobind, flocked around him. Guru's Darvar at Anandpur looked like a war camp. People in beautiful uniforms chaired the Guru on their shoulders. The Guru issued orders to his people to present him with arms and ammunition. He was delighted whenever someone presented him with a special type of a gun or a sword. His army gradually grew in size and strength and in course of time it became a fully trained and well equipped force, ready to fight aggression from whatever quarters it came and to face any eventuality. A new spirit was infused in the hearts of the people to fight for truth and justice. Guru's orders were fully obeyed and the people who were in possession of good type of arms presented them to the Guru willingly. However, from the course of events that followed, it was proved that these were preparations to attack anybody or to snatch away any one's rights but for defence and protection of the honour of the oppressed people who had suffered a great humiliation in the execution of Guru Teg Bahadur. People with patriotic favour and earnest zeal flocked around him and were ready to sacrifice their all at the call of their master.
Guru Gobind Singh as Saint-Poet:

Guru Gobind Singh was a great poet of his time. His poetry is without parallel in its linguistic felicity and his bold experiments and practical experience. The sublimity of the style is reflected in imaginative fusion of eloquent expressions drawn from Arabic, Braj, Persian, Panjabi and Sanskrit. It is a kind of cultural synthesis that fosters the spirit of tolerance and understanding and inculcates the feelings of fraternity. His message percolates to the grass roots through an unconventional use of diction in native current forms, employed metaphorically to express spiritual experience.

All the writings of Guru Gobind Singh are preserved in the 'Dasam Granth' which was compiled by a contemporary scholar Bhai Mani Singh. His writings can be classified as under:

1. Jap Sahib -----------------199 verses
2. Ustat -------------------271.5 verses
3. Bachitter Natak -----------271 verses
4. Chandi Chritter:
   (a) First version----------233 verses
   (b) Second version--------262 verses
5. Avtars Of Vishnu----------4370 verses
6. Mir Mehdi ---------------10 verses
7. Up Avtar ----------------1201 verses
8. Shabadas ----------------9 verses
9. Sawayyas ----------------32 verses
10. Shaster Nam Mala---------1318 verses
11. War Shri Bhagwati ji Ki--55 verses
12. Gain Parbodh -----------336 verses
13. Zafarnama ---------------111 verses
14. Hakayats ----------------756 verses
15. Charit Pakhian --------------7569 verses
16. Miscellaneous -------------59 verses
Total------------------------ 17062.5 verses

Guru Gobind Singh’s writings are inspired utterances charged with virility, heroism and chiralry. In a new idiom and metaphor of the sword, the guru invokes the might of the Eternal Being through the symbols of Shakti and weapons of War, an amalgam of spiritual idealism and asceticism. The sword marks the victory of the righteous people in heroic action. As such, the sword in Guru Gobind Singh’s poetry never figures as an instrument of aggression and self-aggrandizement.

Little description of compositions of Guru Gobind Singh as incorporated in ‘Dasam Granth’ is as under:

The Jaap Sahib:
Jaap Sahib comprising about two hundred stangas is included in the Bani chanted as a part of initiation ceremony of Amrit pan, the sikh mode of baptismation enjoined by Guru Gobind Singh. It is recited as morning prayer along with ‘Japji’ and ‘Asa Di Var’ of Guru Nanak Dev ji, Sukhmani of Guru Arjan Dev ji and the ‘Anand’ of Guru Amar Dass ji. Each stanga of Jaap has its independent identity and meaning but the poem as a whole forms a coherent unit of inter-related ideas.

Highlighting the qualities manifestations of the Formless God, The Ultimate reality, the Guru poet hails the Lord who extends His grace and benevolence to all.

Guru Gobind Singh pointedly emphasizes that God destroys the evil and demolishes the marks of tyranny. He protects the meek, the virtuous and the righteous but would not spare the vain and the wicked. Patterned on the Vishnu Sahasrar Nama that sings the glory of Vishnu in thousand names, the Jaap recounts numerous attributes and epithets of the Creator. The tenth master dwells upon the characteristics of the Unattributed Being (Nirgun
Sarupa) who is not bound by the distinguishing marks of colour, caste, lineage, form complexion, outline or costume. He writes:

"Chakr Chehan ar burn jat ar pat nahin jeh;
Roop rung ar rekh bhekh koyu kah na sakt keh."------19

The Supreme Being is unchangeable and eternal (Achal Murat), He is bright and luminous (Amitoj) but His glowing grace is realized through experience only (anubhav prakash). God is reckoned as the commanding Lord of the countless Indras and the king of kings (Sahu Sahan). He is the Supreme Master (Trribhavan-Maheep)- heaven, earth and under world.

God is eternal, merciful, formless and unique (Akaley, Kirpaley, Arropey, Anoopey). He is not arisen out of five elements (Abhutey), the unattributed God is devoid of confines (a jupey), shape (alokey) and grief or sorrow (a sokey).

Guru poet says, God is treasure of Merit (Nidhan), that defines all measurements (Amann) various manifestations proclaim His state but He remains unique and singular. He writes:

"Ajit hain, Abhit hain, Abah hain, Agah hain;
Aman hain, Nidhan hain, Anek hain, Phir eik hain."------20

The poet hails God as the brightest sun (Bhan bhaney), all veneration (manmaney) and as the most enchanting moon (chander chandrey). His spirit permeates poetry (geet geetey), music (tantaney) dance (narit naritey) and the sound of words (nad nadey) All objects are His expressions (samisti sarupey) . He is perfect Ascetic (param sidh), the Supreme Yogi (jigishwar) and the mighty Emperor (rajeswar0. All knowledge is vested in Him (param gyata) who extends motherly care (lok mata) to all creations and abides every where (samastual niwasi). In short He bestows eternal peace and delight to the human soul (sachdanand).
Akal Ustat:

Akal Ustat is another composition of Guru Gobind Singh which consists of 271 stanzas. It sings praises of Supreme Being, the Formless and All pervasive Reality. Guru poet introduces a new thrust of strength into the traditional attributes of the creator. God destroys the wicked and the tyrant. The image of Lord is not confined to the spiritual perspective alone. The Guru sought to infuse a new spirit of valor in his followers. The Sikhs were inspired to cultivate strength needed to defend righteousness. They came forward to offer resistance to tyranny, violence and oppression and seek the death of warriors on the battle-field.

In it the Supreme Reality (God) is mentioned as All Steel (Sarb Loh), Great Steel (Mahan Loh), all death (Sarb Kal) and Great Death (Mahhha Kal). Akal Purakh is presented as one carrying Sword in hand (Asipani) and also displaying the Sword on His banner (Asidhuj, Asiketu and Kheragketu). The Guru Poet, thus, presents God as the symbol of physical strength, dauntlessness and valor.

Making an opening reference to the shelter of the sword “Sri Bhagauti (Sword ji sahaye), the composition entitled “Sri Akal ji ki Ustat” begins with a quatrain in which the poet solicits the protection of the Immortal Being, represented as All-Steel and All-Death:

“Akal Purkh ki racchyahum nai; Sarb Loh ki rachhyahum nai.
Sarb kal ji rachhya hum nai; Sarb Loh ji di sada rachhya hun hai”. -------21

Enduring and steadfast is the form of the Supreme Lord; eternal is His voice. Bhawani , Parvati or Durga , the consort of Shiva , lives in the shelter of His feet.
"Charan sharan jeh bast Bhawani"------22

The immensity of God has not been scanned even by Brahma and Vishnu. The three-faced Brahma has repeatedly remarked that, God is beyond comprehension and description. He creates countless Indras and the dwarf manifestations of Vishnu (Bawan Avtaras). The all embracing authority of the Lord is evident from the phenomenon that He alone creates and destroys God like beings like Brahma and Shiva.

"Brahma Bisan unt nahe paye; Net net mukhchar batayeo.
Kot Indra up Indar Banaye; Brahm rudar upaye khapaye".------23

Though God is identity remains unexplained, His universal attributes are obvious and beyond any doubt. He is eternal, beneficient, bestower and Lord of all.

"Karta karam kadir kirpal, Adwai abhoot unbai dayal,
Data durat dukh dokh rahat, Jeh net net sabh bed kahat".-------24

In the tenth couplet of Akal Ustat Guru writes:

"He maketh all of us and destroys,
Pain, sorrow, sin—all these He wipes away".----25

"Who remembers Him withheart and soul,
A movement ev'n, is freed from karma's bond".------26

In another couplets from 51 to 55 Guru writes:

"On mounts and in the grottos and the caves,
on earth and in the sky alone is He".-----27
"In this world and the next, both here and there,
on lands below and heaven above is He".-----28

"No form He has nor is His uniform,
out of our sight He is all hatred free".-----29

"For Him no death, He needs no sustenance,
He can not be solit, His myst'y none can prove".----30

In above-mentioned piece of poetry we see how beautifully and comprehensively Guru defines the attributes of Supreme Being.

Chandi Charitra:

Guru Gobind Singh panegyrized the metaphor of valor and the sword in defence of righteousness. His poetic composition offer stirring narrations of how Durga, the destroyer of demons like Chand and Chamund and hence called 'Chandi'; put to sword rakshasas like Mehakhasur and his million in fierce battles waged between the demons and the demigods. Addressed by various attributive names of Bhawani the Eternal Power, Mahakali, the Deathless; Maha Maya, the consort of Lord Shiva, the Goddess come to be known as 'Durga' after She killed demon Durg. The outlines of the adventures of the indomitable power in suppressing tyrants and demons, taken from legends recounted in the Puranas, have been invested with a new thrust and orientation. Based on Markanday Purana, the story of Mata Durga blood curdling battles with bold demon-warriors like Mehkhasur, Lochan, Sumbh, Nisumbh, Sonut Bind, etc., is woven into the texture of these poems of epical grandeur and expressions. The power vested in deities like Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu emanate from Her.

Guru writes:

"Joti jagmagai jagat mai, Chand, Chamund parchand; Bhuj dandan, dandani asur, Mandan bhuye nav khan. Taran Lok udharan Bhumah,"
Daint sangharan chandi, Karan Ees kala kamla Hari, 
Adarsuta jah dekho uhi lai”.-----31

The Guru poet hails the Goddess as Pari, Padmani and Parbati. She removes all imperfections (Marjini). She is Kalka, speaking incoherently under intoxication;” Namo Hingulan Pingulan Totlayang”.-----32

She is vested with tempered and spiritual knowledge (“Namo gyan bigyan ki gyan gyata”)-----33

The Sri Bhawani burns out sins and dispels sufferings (“Dokhdahi, dukh hanta”). She rides the lion (Sing bani) and finishes evil beings (Nit narayani dusat khapi).

She is Maha Maya who pricks the pride of demons and smashes their weapons (Nomo anjani ganjani disat gasba). And revels in the use of weapons (Nomo harkhani barkhani sastra dhara).-----34

She is Durga and Chandi. She is at home in both the scriptures and the use of weapons (Sastar beda, Saster gain). She tortures the foes (Ripantapni). She is the shelter of the whole world (Namo pokhani sarb alam panah) and possesses four/ eight arms (Chatur bahi, Ast bahi). She is universal mother (Loka Mata) who is the saviour of the saints and bestows all blessings (sabhai sant ubasi brung byud data, Namo tarni karni Lok Mata).

Bhai Randhir Singh in his book ‘Shabadarth Dasam Granth’ Vol. 1 refers to a composition bearing the title “Chhand Chhakka Sri Bhagavti Ji Ki”, also called ‘Ugardanli’. The following lines are recited at the completion of text:

"Dukh rog so, bhai mitey kalesa, Bahu such upjai anand parvesa.
Is bidhi dhurgey kirpadhari, The apan das kan leeyo ubasi”.-------35
Beginning with a prayer to the Lord manifested in the sword (Sri Bhaganti ji sahaye), the poet Guru undertakes the Var Durga, a stirring narrative of the exploits of battles, purporting to describe the valor Maha Shakti, the slayer of the demon Durg. The poem opens with reverential homage to Almighty God and nine Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Teg Bahadur. These lines form the first part of the prayer faithfully offered by the Sikhs. Then follows a worship of the scimitar, the Lord, who has created the world, including the deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and Maha Maya. The fourteen worlds (Chander Lokas), the seas, the mountains, the earth, the sky spread overhead without supporting pillars, the demons and the demigods are His creations. The same power created Durga to slay the demons. He gave strength to Sri Rama and Lord Krishana to destroy Ravana and Kansa.

The Guru poet writes:

"Khanda prathmey manayakai Jin sabh sansar upeya"
"Tain hi Durga sajkai, dhaintan da nas kriya, Taithon hi bal Ram lai,
nal banna Ravana ghaya, Taithon hi bal Krishana lai,
Kans Kesi pakarh garaya".——36

Chaubis Avatar:

Guru Gobind Singh in his introductory observations preceding the poetic rendering of the emergence of the twenty four incarnations of Lord Vishnu as recorded in Puranas, he inlights his readers that the Supreme Being dispels wickedness and promotes piety and religion in the world. Whenever morality and righteousness are thrown to winds, Incarnations appear on the earth to eliminate evil and re-establish goodness. A couplet from Dasam Granth reads:
"Jab jab hoat arist apara, Tab tab deh dharat Avtara, 
Kal sabhen ko pekh tamasa, Untahkal karat hai masa".------37

According to Guru Gobind Singh all these incarnations arise out of the Divine Power and are ultimately merged in that source. He writes:

"Aapan roop anatan dhar hi, 
Aapah madh leen puney kar hi".-------38

He further writes, all actions issue forth from God, although human agencies appear to done them. He is the Creator and the Destroyer but evil committed in the world is ascribed to the doer. As he writes:

"Kal aapno naam chhapayee, 
Awaren ke sir dai buryayee".----39

The Lord is unknown, endless, un-approachable. He is the friend of the saintly beings and the suffering humanity, the ocean of compassion, the dispeller of sorrow, the indescribable, the unborn, the creator, the bestower, the invisible and the incomparable.

"Roop anoop saroop apara, 
Bhekh abhekh sabhen te nyara. 
Dayak sabho ajachi sabh te 
Jan layo 'Karta 'hun tab te".----40

God is the Primal Power (Bhawani, Aadi Shakti) the Primal Being (Prathem Kal), the Oankar, the Akal Purkh and Prakirti. He is the Primal light that runs through all creatures.

"Ek joat sabh hi mah jano"------41
The whole world is His manifestation. The strong and the weak, the high and the low, are all expressions of His immensity. All creatures are answerable to Him.

"Eikah aap sabham mo biapa,
Sabh koyee bhin bhin kar thapa.
Sabh hi mah rum rahyo alekha,
Mangat bhin bhin te lekha".----------42

Supreme Lord, in brief, is the Creator and Destroyer but the blame of destruction goes not to God but to the evil forces.

"Aap kisoo ko dos na leena,
Auran sir buhayayee deena".-----43

Zafarnama:

The Zafarnama letter of the Guru consists of 111 couplets in Persian verse and is one of the most forceful epistles ever written in the language. Guru begins it with an invocation to Supreme Lord. Therafter the whole letter reads like a rebuke from a superior to one in an inferior position.

The Guru in this letter tells the Emperor that he had proved to be liar. He knows no religion and was utterly blind to truth. He feared neither God nor followed the Prophet’s way. Not only he but also his ministers of church and state told lies again and again. The Hill Rajputs who worshipped the idols had also thrown to winds their swearing by the cow. After getting vacated the fortress of Anandpur on false representations and oaths the imperial troops and Hill Rajputs attacked him near the Sirsa stream which was most mean on their part.
In verses 21 to 23 of the Zafarnama letter the Guru expresses feeling of regret for his having been compelled to take the arms and to be a party to bloodshed.

"With much reluctance I did yield
For battle to step into the field,
And weapons like a bow and arrow
In the bloody struggle to wield".--------44

“When all efforts to restore peace
prove useless and no words avail,
lawful is the flash of steel than
And right it is the sword to hail”.--------45

“Thou thyself say of what avail
Were all this bloodshed unto me,
An outcome of all pledges false,
An the Holy Qoran sworn by thee”.------ 46

Describing the battle of Chamkore the Guru says that his forty famished comrades fought with undaunted courage against the Emperor’s men who fell upon them like a locust swarm raising bitter shots and cries. There was tremendous loss of life and the battle field turned red with the blood of wounded and slain. Many Afghans with a boastful tongue took out their heels from the scene of that grim stir. At last, the sun went down and the moon the queen of night went up the sky in full glory. The Guru then came out of the redoubt, killed two enemy watchmen with his gold-tipped arrows and made good his escape through the blood thirsty enemy forces shouting, “Here goes Pir-a- H índ”.
In verse 44 of Zafernama Guru writes:

“Lord God the chastiser of proud arms
Rescued me safe from the cunning foes
No harm was done, not a hair was hurt,
For grace Divine full security bestows”.--47

Recalling the martyrdom of his four sons the Guru tells the Emperor that even this was of no avail to him because the Khalsa spirit was immortal and the sacrifice of the innocent princes had drawn thousands more under his banner to destroy root and branch the tyrant’s rule. It was no use putting out a few flames while a blazing fire was still raging to reduce to ashes the Imperial edifice built with cunning and cruelty.

In verse 78 he writes:

“Thou, the voice of my beloved sons
Thou, hast O king for ever stilled,
Of what avail is this hateful deed,
When I breathe alive fury filled”.--48

It was high time that the Emperor (Aurangzeb) should relinquish his savage regime the cup of his life being full to the brim with the sins he had done.

Verse 77 reads as:

“Do thou honour, O Mughal king,
The purpose right and wisdom true,
And to cruel deal with fellow men,
Must, O Mughal Lord, now bid adieu”.--49
If the Emperor was anxious to see him and bring the long-drawn agony to an end he (Aurangzeb) should come forth with a clean heart and issue a royal Firman ceasing all hostilities against the Sikhs and then alone a meeting could be arranged. The veil of ignorance will then be rent asunder and truth will clear to all. The Emperor should no longer torture fellow beings nor be misled by false reports and should also know for certain that his misdeeds would not go unpunished.

Verse 69 reads as under:

"Soil not your hands with others blood
Being forgetful of the wrath Divine,
For soon or late thy blood be shed
By unfailing sword of Heaven benign".------50

In verses 82 and 83 the Guru advised the Emperor that if he (Aurangzeb) does not care for his (Guru's) message then the Lord Supreme (God) will forget him (Mughal Emperor). And if he follow the path as shown by the Guru then his such act would be counted good in Lord's eyes.

"If thou still darest shun by words
And carest not for my message true,
Then know it for certain, O Alamgir,
That Lord Supreme shall forget you".------51
"If thou hail the advice I here give
And follow the path as shown by me,
In Lord (God's) eyes shalt thou rise
And thy work recompensed shall be".------52

Sawaiyyas:

Sawaiyyas is another spiritual poetry of Prophet–Poet Guru Gobind
Singh. Through this poetry he teaches his followers and other readers the attributes of the Supreme Lord who is the Creator of this universe. He (God) is the Creator of Trideva (Brahma, Vishnu, Mehesh) and Maha Maya as well. Guru poet also narrated qualities of a true Khalsa. A Khalsa puts his faith only in one God and repeats night and day the name of the apostle of Enlightenment and Light (Jagat Joat). He reposes loving confidence in Akal purkh (Puran prem partleet sajai) and would not put any faith even by mistake in observing fasts, worshiping graves, crimination grounds or places of sepulture. He knows only and only one God (Ek bina nah ek pachhanai) and does not practise pilgrimages, alms giving, non-violence penances or austerities (reerath, daan, daya, tap, sanjan). A true Khalsa is one who enshrines in his heart the light of the Perfect Being. Guru writes:

"Puran joat jagai ghat mai
   tab khalis tahe nakhalis janai".—53

The Primal Being is a manifestation of the Ultimate Reality, Enlightenment and Divine Glory (Maha Prabh sat saroop su joat parkasi). He fulfils all the longings of the human heart. By meditating on Him, we restrain human feelings. The All Pervasive Lord resides in every heart. God is unborn, invisible and indestructible (ajone, ajai, abinasi).

No scriptures (veid kateberi) have succeeded in unrevealing the secrets of God, the Primal, Formless, and Eternal Power. As an embodiment of compassion and benevolence. He abides in every soul. Sheshnag, Inder, Ganesh, and Mahesh (Shiva) have proved the Vedas but the immensily of the Eternal and the Imperishable Lord has eluded them. God is manifested in his creations but the ignored man fails to comprehend the reality:

"Aade abhekha ched sada Prabh beid
   Kateban bhed na payo;"
Deen dyal kirpal Kirpanidh sut sadaiv
Sabhai ghat chhayo Shesh (Suresh/indira)
Ganesh, Mahesh gahe phiral suriti than na aryore;  
Rey munn murh agurh eso Prabh tai kah kaj kaho bisrayo”-----54

God whose secret, unknown to the Sidhs, remains undisclosed in all religious books; saved Dhru, Prahlad and Ajamal. The courtesan was redeemed by repeating God’s Name. That very Naam, the Guru explains, is his shelter and support. All his thoughts are concentrated on that name:

“Beid Kateb na bhed lahyo tehe sidh samadhi sabbhai kar harey;
Simrat, shaster beid sabhi bauha bhaant Puran bichan bicharey
Aade anade agadhe Katha Dhrua se Prahled Ajamal tarey;
Nam uchar tari ganeka soyee nam adhar beeshar hamarey”--------55

Shabad Hazare:

‘Shabad Harzare’ is another most important poetic composition of Guru Gobind Singh. Through it Guru explains for the guidance of his Khalsa that true worship or aserticism lies in spirit, not in the observation of ritualistic ceremonies. The hymn suggests that ideal asceticism can be attained even at home where man cultivate the spirit of detachment. He need not go to the forest for this purpose:

“Rey munn also kar sanyasa;
Ben seg sadan sabhi kar samjhuh
Munn hi mahe udsa”----------56

In another hymn Guru-poet teaches, to a true Sanyasi, man has to cultivate continuance to serve as his matted hair (jut ki jata) and perform ablutions in terms of union with God (jog ko mujjari). Growing nails of daily religious duties (nem ke nakhuri), he should make enlightenment as his spiritual guide and besmear his body with the ashes called naam (Gyan – guru atam
To be a real ascetic, one has to eat little, have a brief sleep and practise charity, compassion and forbearance:

"Alap ahur sulap si nindra daya chhima tun preet".--------57

While narrating Supreme Lord's attributes Guru further says that He alone vindicates the honour of the seekers (Prabh jis tohah laj hamari). The Primal Being (Param Purkh), Supreme Lord (Parmehwar Soami) is known by several names.

He is the blue throated mention (neel kanth nar har narayan), the Lord of Lakshmi (Madhev), Great Light (Maha joati), the Destroyer of Madhes (Madhu maadem), Bestower of Salvation (Mann mukend), No Change (Nirbikar) nor Decay (Nirur) and Avoids Sleep (Nin-ambin). Himself devoid of evil passions (Nirbikh), the Lord preserves devotees from hell (Narak Niwari). He can survey past, present and future (Kal Trai Darsi) and dispel wickedness (Kukrit Parnesen Kari)--------58

In another hymns Guru Poet while addressing that Almighty Supreme Lord as his beloved friend says that the covering of the body with quilt is like living with shakes and the water -pot is not less painful than stakes and cup pierces me like a dagger. When the Lord turned His back upon me and the experience is as painful as the torture inflicted on the animals by the butchers. Oh dear Friend (God) I prefer to live with you even in want but I would not entertain the idea of living in luxury without You (God).

"Mittar piarey noo haal mureeden da kaihna;
Tudh bin rog rajayian da dadan nag niwasan de raihna;
Sool surahi khanjar payala bing kasayian da saihna;
Yarrhey da sanu sathar changa bhatth khenhyan da raihna".---59
Chaupai Sahib:

Chaupai Sahib is a prayer written by Guru Gobind Singh which is sung in the praise of Supreme Lord. O, Lord, extend your protective arms to save me, grant me the fulfillment of my desires. I pray that my mind may remain ever attached to your feet. Accept me, O God, as your own and cherish me.

"Hamri karo haath dai rachha,
Puran hoye chit ke ichha.
Tar charran munn rahey hamara,
Aapna jan kar partipara".----------60

Let all of my enemies be eliminated by Your kind grace. Protect me with your hands. I pray to Creator that my family and all my attendants and Sikhs may dwell in comforts and peace.

"Hamrey dushat sabhey tum ghawoh,
Aap haath dai mohey bachawoh.
Sukhi basai mero pariwara,
Sewak Sikh sabhai Kartara".----------61

Protect me, O Lord, the Saviour. You are the Cherisher and beloved Lord of the saints. Friend of the dispossessed and Destroyer of the wicked, You are the Supreme Master of the fourteen worlds:

"Raakh leho mohey rakhan harey;
Sahib sant sahaye prarey.
Deen bandhu dustan ke hanta;
Tum be puri chatur das kanta."----------62

Guru poet further writes, be sure that He (God) is my Guru who made the entire universe and created devas, demons and yaksas. He is the only Divine incarnation from beginning to eternity:

"Javan kal sabh jagat banayo;"
I make my obeisance to the Divine being who loves all creatures. He alone bestows divine attributes and comforts on his devotees. He destroys enemies without any loss of time:

"Namaskar tishi ko hamari;
Sakal parja jin aap sawari;
Siwaran ko sargun sukh diyo;
Sattran ko pal mai budh kiyo."--------64

_Supreme Lord_ is formless, changeless and independent. He is the primal being and self existent without any blemish and beginning. Only the ignorant boastfully assert that they know his mystery which is not revealed fully even in the _Vedas_:

_Nirankar nirbikar nirlambh;
Aad danil aanado asambh,
Ta ka murh ucharat bheda;
Jo ko bhev na pawat Beda.--------65

I seek your protection, _O Lord_, the wielder of the sword. Extend your patronage and protect me. Come to my rescue, _O Lord_, in all situations and guard me, against the machinations of my adversaries, the evil people:

"Kharhag ketu mai saran tihari;
Aap haath dai bho ubari.
Sarb tthaur mo hoyo sahayee;
Dusat daukh te leho bachayee.--------66-
Bachitara Natak:

*Bachitara Natak* is another unique poetry written by Guru Gobind Singh. Through it he tried to enumerate the attributes of *Supreme Power*. He (*God*) is the eternal and ultimate reality that remains unbound by the cycle of birth and death (*Nirankar, Nityang, Nirupang and Nirbanang*).

He hails the mighty *God* of *gods* and the *King* of kings who holds the swords in his hand (*Mahandev, Devang, Mahan bhup bhupang namo garhg panang*).-------67

The power of *God* is known to Him alone. How can a son tell his father’s birth and other details? His greatness becomes Him: “*Tumari prabha tumai bunnaayee; auran te nahi jaat batayee*”.-------68

Human intellect gets lost in trying to comprehend the mysteries of *God*. It is love and service that enables the poet (Guru Gobind Singh) to describe *God*: “*Tumari prem bhakti jab gaheho; chhor katha sabh hi tab kah ho*.”-----69

Relating his own history called the *Bachitara Natak* to the readers, Guru Gobind Singh explains how the *sodhi* dynasty originated. Tracing the emergence of the *sodhi* clan to the descendants of *Lav* and *Kush*, the two warrior-sons of *Lord Rama* who was the most celebrated hero of the *Raghuwansha* clan of *suryavanshis*, the Tenth Guru treats the establishment of the *sodhi padshahis* (beginning with Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Nanak) in the context of the eternal cosmic order moulded in the hoary past.

King *Rama* ruled as a benevolent and just king for a considerably long period. He was succeeded by his brave sons, *Lav* and *Kush*. They extended their empires to vast areas of land called the “*Madar Desa*”, the large tract of rich and fertile land falling between the rivers of *Jhelam* and *Beas*. They built two cities *Kasur* and *Lahore*. The splendid building of Lanka (*Ceylon*) and *Amravati*, the city of India, placed into insignificance before the stateliness and grandeur of the two
Lav and Kush enjoyed a long span of royal glory. Their descendants wielded the scepters of authority for long. They lived in perfect harmony as the survivors of their divine ancestor Rama. The peace of the two ruling houses was disturbed when Kalket (Descended from Kush) and Kal Raj (Descended from Lav) occupied their respective seats of authority. Both the Kings were blessed with a large number of sons and grandsons to carry their lives further.

There arose points of dispute between the two ruling houses. Armed conflicts followed. Kalket happened to possess peerless strength and he was the perfect master of the art of fighting a battle. He encountered little difficulty in pushing Kal Raj out of the city. Finding himself utterly weak and hence unequal to the adversary, Kal Raj thought it discreet to escape for his life. Kal Raj reached the Sanaudh country where he married a King’s daughter.

“Kal Ketu bali apara,
Kal Rai jinn agar nikara,
Bhaaj Sanaudh des te gaya,
Tahi bhupja biahak bhaya”.--------71

The exact location of the Sanaudh country has not been mentioned, though it is said to have situated near Banasas. The area around Mathura has also been referred to as the sanaudh country but it is all based on presumption, “Instead of
staying on in Panjab and leading a life of bondage, the *Kal Rai* of Lahore (the defeated King) decided to migrate with his family and followers and settled in an area around *Mathura* in Uttar Pradesh and *Bharatpur* in Rajasthan up to and around *Amarkot*. At that time, this area was commonly known as *Sanaudh Desh*”.-----72

A son born out of the wedlock of the *Kal Rai* to the local Princess was named *Sodhi Rai*. This was the beginning of the *Sodhi* dynasty. According to Macaulille “the inhabitants of the *Sanaudh* country, originally called *Sodhis*”.-----73

“The te puttar bhayo jo dhama,
Sodhi Rai dhra the nama.
Bans Sanaudh tadin te theea,
Param pavitar purkh joo keena.
Taan te putter putre hoye aaye,
The Sodhi sabh jagat kahaye”.-----74

The descendants of *Sodhi Rai*, called the *Sodhis*, acquired power and influence in the course of time. They amassed wealth and established their supremacy over different areas and ran their administration efficiently and enforced *religion* everywhere.

They performed sacrifices at royal coronations and held a number of *yajnas* to proclaim their status of ‘Maharaja Adhiraj’. The *Rojsu yajna*, performed by them, marked their victory over other kings. It was preceded by *Ashavaneedha yajna* to wash off their evils and sins. Such a *yajna* was solemnized with the sacrifice of a horse. Generally speaking, a decorated horse was let loose. When it came back from different countries, unchallenged and unclaimed, it was offered as a sacrifice.

“Rajsua bahu baran keeye,
Jeet jeeta dedesware leeye.
Bajmedh bahu beran krey,
Sakul Kalukh nij kul ke Harney”.--------75

Guru Gobind Singh points out that the new power of the Sodhis encountered dissensions and disputes engineered mainly by the greed of wealth and land. It is natural and general fact that most of disputes are arise out of Jar (wealth), Jameen (earth), and Joru (woman). The Guru poet observed that time can not be computed when enmity, dissension and pride added to greed dominate human actions.

“Kal na koyu karn sumara,
Bair baad ahankar pasara.
Lobh mooh eh jug ko huya,
Ja so shahat sabbhai ko muya”.--------76

The Sodhis came back to Panjab and waged war with their cousins, the descendants of Kush who could not hold out and were defeated. It was in a way, a re-writing of the previous history. Yielding Panjab to their Sodhis cousins, the descendants of Kush fled to Banaras for shelter. They attained proficiency in the recitation of the Vedas and came to be known as Bedis in the Panjabi language.

“Lavi sarb jeetai, kuri serb harey;
Bachey je bali, pran lai ke sidharey.
Chatur Bedpatthyung, keeyo kassi basung;
Ghaney burkh keenly, tahan hi niwashung”.--------77

The wheel of time turned full circle when nature brought a positive turn to the fortune of the Vedis. The Sodhi King of Panjab offered a hand of friendship and sent a letter of conciliation to the Vedis residing in Banaras. Responding warmly to the kind offer of the Sodis, the Vedi chief and his followers returned to Panjab.
The Sodhi King welcome the Vedis with warm reception and requested them to recite the Vedas they had mastered while at Banaras. They rendered soulful recitation of the Sam Ved, the Yajur Ved, the Rig Ved and finally the Atharva Ved. The Sodhi King was deeply touched by the recitation of the hymns that he handed over their royal power and crown to the Vedi (Bedi) chief, despite protestations to the contrary by his people and quietly made for the forest in the spirit of renunciation where he would seek the bliss of meditation as a liberated soul.

Overwhelmed by the spiritualistic urge of his cousin, the Vedi (Bedi) chief blessed the Sodhi King with prophetic utterances that when he assumed the name of ‘Nanak’ in Kaliyug, a high honour and status would be bestowed on the Sodhis.

“Bedi bhayo parsun raj kah paekai,
Det bhayo bardan neeai hulsae kai,
Jab Nanak Kal mai hun aann kahaye hai,
Jo Jagat pooj tohe param pad pae hai.”--------78

The Sodhi King was overwhelmed with a spirit of renunciation after hearing the recitation of the three Vedas and abdicated his throne in favour of Vedi (Bedi) Amrit Raj, the chief reciter, after the recitation of the Fourth Veda. The Vedi (Bedi) chief announced that the Sodhis would become the Guru in the fourth incarnation.

“Titya Ved sunab tum keea,
Chatur Ved sun bhu ko deea.
Teen janam hamhoon jah dhari hai,
Chauthey janam ‘Guru’ tohe karehai.”--------79

The words uttered by Vedi chief became prophetic with the birth of Guru Nanak Dev in a Bedi family of the Panjab. He showed the path of Godliness to the human beings lost in mad pursuits. The great
Guru rekindled the torch of religion and blessed his followers.

"Tin Bedian Ke kul bikhey pargatey Nanak Rai,
Sab Sikhen ko such daye jutr tah bhaye saheye."———80

Guru Nanak nominated Guru Angad Dev as his successor to keep aloft the spirit of religion and virtue. He was followed by Guru Amar Dass Who illuminated the soul of Guru Ram Dass and redeemed the word made to Jagat Rai Sodhi by Amrit Rai Bedi in his previous birth at 'Triyata yug'.

"Jab bardann samui who aawa,
Ram Dass tab Guru Kahawa,
The bardann puritan deeya."----------81

All the succeeding Gurus were mainly the manifestations of the Divine Light radiated in the person of Guru Nanak Dev. After Guru Ram Dass, the Guruship passed through the Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur, the defender of ‘Tilak-Janjhu’ (Hinduism) and religious freedom.

Then the same Divine Light transmitted to Guru Gobind Singh by Guru Tegh Bahadur which made him a 'Great-Warrior' (soldier), and a 'Prophet-poet' (saint) who spread the light of religion among the mortals on the earth, and virtuous people by way of which he wean away the misguided humanity from the snares of meaningless rituals and practices.

"Top sadat Hari mohe buleyo,
Ini kahke ehtok patthayo.
Mae apna sut tohe niwaja,
Panth parchar karbey keh saja.
Jahe tahan tai dharma chaleye,
Kabudh karan te lok hataye."----------82
No doubt, as written by Guru Gobind Singh the forefathers of Sikh Guru's especially of Guru Nanak and Guru Ram Dass, had their origin from Love and Kush, sons of Shri Rama. And on the basis of this some people consider that Sikh faith is not a separate ideology but is a part of Hindu religion. But, I am not familiar with this; actually Sikh ideology as preached by the Sikh Gurus is a new faith based on old Hindu religion (sanatan). Sikh Gurus accepted the existence of Hindu gods such as Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, King of the Devtas, Indra etc.; but, they do not consider them as Supreme. According to them there is only one Supreme Lord who created this universe and He alone is the Creator of all other gods including Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha. Some of the verses from Guru Granth Sahib read as follows:

"He the Lord Created the air and Established the earth, and put water and fire together (in the body). If He, as Rama, cut off the head of the blind, ten-headed Ravana, it would not make Him any the greater for that."—83

"How can I describe Thy Wonder, O Lord, For, Thou Pervadest all, with a single Mind. He who Created life and is the Master of its way, O, how can He be any the bigger for overpowering the Serpent (as Krishna did)"—84

"Of whose husband is He? And which, indeed, is His wife, When He Pervades all, through and through? Brahma, born of Lotus, whose companion is the Vishnu, left on a search of the world's end, But he found it not. If He, as Krishna, chopped off
Kansa's head how does it make Him any the greater for that?"—85

“When the Ocean was churned (by the angels and demons) and the (fourteen) jewels came into their hands, They fell out as to who did it all? (for they recognized not the wonders of God).

O Nanak, how could that Lord be considered, who apportions to each his lot as He Wills.”--------86

Another basic principle which separate Sikh faith from that of Hindu religion is the adaptation of discipleship. Before the introduction of Guru Gobind Singh’s amrit ceremony, the Sikhs used to be formally initiated into the Sikh faith through a ceremonial process, called pahul. Water poured on the cleaned toe of the Guru was sipped by prospective entrants into the Sikh fold. This ceremony was replaced by the new amrit ceremony, devised by the tenth Guru. It was more elaborate, more impressive and, therefore, had a longer lasting psychological impact.

In order to visualize the ceremony, as it is conducted today, one has to imagine an inclosure in which the sacred book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib, rests under a beautifully decorated covering. A Sikh is seated cross-legged, waving a white flywhisk over the covered book, ready to uncover it in order to intonate the sacred text at the right moment. A team of five Amriddhari Sikhs, wearing similar uniforms, sitting in the birasana posture, sit around an iron bowl full of sweetened water, their hands clasping the bowl and stirring the contents, by turns, with a double-edged sword, chanting prescribed sacred verses, again by turns, but fixing their gaze unitedly on the water in the bowl.

By the time the chanting and the stirring is over, the asperents also sitting in the birasana posture, are totally awed by the mystique inherent in the whole activity and are ready to subject their wills to the combined will of the five masters, who control operation inside the enclosure. Handfuls of the mystically-charged amrit are splashed gently, five times into the eyes of the
aspirants and same number of times on their hair-knots. One of the ‘Beloveds’ asks each aspirant to sip the remaining amrit in the bowl by turns. (After Guru Gobind Singh had administered amrit to the five ‘Beloved Ones’, he did something which is unique in the annals of religious history. He requested his five Amritdhari ‘Beloved Ones’ to also admit him into the Order of the Khalsa by administering amrit to him. This they did. This explains why he is remembered as “the Guru, who was also a disciple.”)

After administering the amrit, one of the nominated five Beloved Ones explains the full significance of the ceremony to the asperent in such words:

"You have been enrolled as members of the Exalted Order of the Khalsa, according to whose rules of conduct, immediately after enrolment, Guru Gobind Singh becomes your father and his wife, Sahib Kaur, your mother. Further, all of you will assume Anandpur to be your birthplace. Also, with effect from the date of ceremony you will be considered to have severed all connections with your previous faiths, beliefs, rites, customs, castes and birth-based, profession-based or family-based statuses. Sri Guru Granth Sahib will form your only spiritual guide. Now you have all become equal members of the Khalsa Brotherhood."—87
Guru Gobind Singh, the saint-soldier, was not a warrior by profession. He had to fight much against his wishes as the exigency of the time so demanded. Albeit, when he was forced to fight, he fought whole-heartedly. The following *swaiyya* of Guru Gobind Singh help us to understand his concept of *dharmyudh*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Deh siva bar mohe ehai, shubh karman te kabhun na tarun} \\
\text{Na darun ar so jab jae larun, nishche kar apni jeet karun} \\
\text{Aru Sikh hou apne hi man kou, eh lalach hau gun tau uchrun} \\
\text{Jab aav ki audh nidan bane, at hi ran mai tab jujh marun} ...
\end{align*}
\]

Guru Gobind Singh had to fight a number of battles against the hill chief and the Mughal forces but his conflict with the Mughal was more serious. Historians and writers do not agree on the number of battles fought by Guru Gobind Singh. They also give different years of these battles. For the sake of convenience and to comprehend the aforesaid problem and its solution it is the fitness of things to divide these battles into two categories, namely: the pre-Khalsa and the post-Khalsa battles. The general agreement among the secondary writers on the point that the Khalsa was instituted by the Guru in A.D. 1699 will prove helpful to us in doing so. Senapat, who is considered as one of the Darbar poets of Guru Gobind singh, some before rendering the account of the creation of Khalsa and the others after giving the account of the creation of the Khalsa. The later historian have mostly followed this chronology used by Senapat in his writing which is also corroborated by the
course of events of the life of Guru Gobind Singh as they took place. Hence, it is quite safe to place these battles in accordance with the chronology given in the account of Senapet.

**Battle of Bhangani**

The battle of Bhangani was fought between Guru Gobind Singh and the hill chiefs on October 3, 1688.

Before discussing the battles in historical perspective, we may have a look at the background of the whole situation. After the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675, Emperor Aurangzeb could fondly hope that there would be no trouble from that quarter. Koer Singh writes that the emperor must have cautioned the hill chiefs to keep a close watch on the activities of Guru Gobind Singh—the successor of Guru Tegh Bahadur. It is said that Dhirmalias and Ramrais were reporting to the emperor regarding the Guru’s path was beset with difficulties of unprecedented nature. His task was at once onerous and arduous. The edge of the Mughal repression was getting sharper and sharper every day. But the Guru was not dismayed with the magnitude of the problem. He began to mature his plan in the quite seclusion of mountains and beyond the ken of the Mughals. He captured the emotions of the people who flocked to him and infused life in their dead veins and instilled them with will to dare and stand to die. Guru Gobind Singh made it widely known through his hukamnamas that he will be pleased if besides monetary offerings, his followers brought to him presents in the shape of armaments, horses and other items of war. The Guru worshipped arms and who presented him weapons could win in his favour more easily than one who simply offered money. The response was encouraging. Raja Rattan Rai of Assam brought a panchkala—a combination of five arms viz. a lance, a rifle, a club, a dagger and pistol; five horses with golden trappings; a throne from which, by pressing a spring puppets emerged and played chauper and a water vessel of great value several costly and beautiful jewels and raiment, besides a beautiful capprisoned elements, commonly known a Parsadi hathi. Tradition holds that the young had
been trained to perform various acts of service and devotion. He held a jug of water, washed the Guru's feet and then dried them with a towel. He wiped the Guru's shoes and arranged them properly for him to put on. He fetched arrows discharged by the Guru. At the night he held lantern and showed the way to the Guru. Duni chand, a devotee from Kabul, presented a woolen tent on which were embroidered in gold and silver, numerous objects and scenes of beauty and splendour.

The fame of the element spread far and wide and many people came to see him. Sikh tradition states that Bhim chand asked for Parsadi elements and the tent which were presented by the Raja of Assam and Duni chand of Kabul; he wanted these items of loan from the Guru for the amusement of his guests and for the occasion of the betrothal ceremony of his son, Ajmer Chand. The Guru refused to part with these, as he doubted Bhim Chand's intentions. The refusal caused bitterness in the mind of Kehlur chief who took a vow to take revenge on the Guru. Although the Guru had left Mokhwal and settled at Paonta, Bhim Chand did not forget the humiliation suffered by him.

It is said that in 1985 Guru Gobind Singh received an invitation from Raja Medni Parkash of Sirmaur to stay with him for sometime. Most of the Guru's followers, who were opposed to war, succeeded in convincing the Guru's mother and grandmother of the inexpediency of an immediate war with Bhim Chand. They persuaded the Guru to accept the invitation and leave the place for some time. The Guru accepted the invitation probably because the chief in whose territory he resided might create difficulties. The Guru's staying on at the Mokhwal might involve him in trouble with the Mughal Government. Therefore, the Guru thought it better to leave the place. This decision of the Guru was a proof of his farsightedness. The question arises why Medni Parkash invited the Guru? There had been an enmity between the Sirmour ruler and the ruler of Garhwal for about four generations. Fateh Shah of Garhwal wanted to get back all the disputed territories under Medni Parkash by force. Medni Parkash was convinced that the Guru and his armed followers would prove beneficial for the state, incase of the forthcoming danger. According to the
Sikh tradition, once when Medni Parkash went with the Guru on an hunting excursion; he told the Guru that Raja Fateh Shah of Garhwal had often demanded the place where they stood and requested the Guru to build there a fort for the protection of the state. The Guru accepted the proposal. The foundation of the fort was laid down in August 1685. In due course of time the fort was erected. The Guru shifted to the new abode, which came to be known as Paonta.

Men and material poured into Paonta from all sides as Khishwaqat Rai writes “the people did begin to gather around the Guru exceedingly large numbers. He called himself a king and received royal honour from his followers. Rajas of Kehlur and Hindur began to fear that if he was allowed to continue in that way, he might become too powerful for them. For this reason they sometimes obstructed the people carrying offerings such as horses, elephants and money to the Guru. This was what provided the hill chiefs with a cause of hostility with the Guru. The Guru also ordered a big drum to be prepared which he named as Ranjit Nagara. It was a sort of war drum, which the Guru caused to be beaten when he went on hunting. “Such drums were generally carried with the armies in those days and such practices.” According to M’Gregor, “were followed by only Rajas and it looked as if the Guru had founded a separate state of his own.”

Another cause of the bitterness between the Guru and the hill chiefs was that the former’s army included the Pathans, the deserters from the Mughal army. Some of them were suspected to be responsible for the outrages on the subjects of the hill chiefs, in the form of taking supplies forcibly from the villagers, providing to a large extent, irritation to the hill chiefs and their subjects. This reflected adversely on the relations of the Guru and the hill chiefs.

Guru Gobind Singh received the invitation on the marriage of the daughter of Fateh Shah of Garhwal with the son of Bhim Chand of Kehlur. The Guru sent his representatives to attend the marriage. He sent a tombol
Bhim Chand started with the marriage party from Kehlur. He had to pass through Paonta on his way to Srinagar. Since he had brought troops with him, the Guru permitted only the bridegroom along with a small number of his men to cross the ferry near Paonta. The rest had to reach Srinagar by circuitous path. Fateh Shah who had cordial relations with the Guru felt sore when he came to know about it. Secondly, Bhim Chand was also enraged at the behaviour of the Guru. He threatened to return without marrying his son if Fateh Shah accepted the Guru’s presents. It is obvious that Fateh Shah’s assistance was sought under the threat of breaking the matrimonial alliance. Ultimately Bhim Chand exasperated and retaliated by coercing Fateh Shah to reject the tambol. Nand Chand came to know about the conspiracy of the hill chiefs. He took away the tambol from the khat (dowry) and rushed back to Paonta to let the Guru know the development at Srinagar. He also apprised the Guru that there was a danger of attack on them. The social obligations compelled Fateh Shah to cast all other considerations to the winds and he offered to join Bhim Chand to fight against the Guru. But Fateh Shah was reluctant and constrained to lead the allied forces. The Guru himself described several actions in which he was engaged. The personal bravery and military skill displayed by the Guru, as is evident from his own account in the Bachittar Natak, depict that the Guru combined in him the qualities of religious teacher and a military commander. This statement is also corroborated by the later writers. A graphic description of the battle has been given by the Guru himself in his Bachitter Natak. The remarks of the Guru that ‘Fateh Shahs raged and fought with me without any cause’, is not of much help of us to understand the cause of the battle. At any rate, the evidence of the Bachittar Natak, which is practically the only reliable authority on the subject do leave us guessing the causes of the battle. It is significant that the Guru nowhere mentions Bhim chand, Raja of Kehlur, in connection with the battle. If the name of Bhim Chand does not figure in the description of the Guru it could never mean to conclude that Bhim Chand was the basic or, in fact, the only potential reason that seem to have brought the Guru into collusion with Fateh Shah and this inference is implied in
account of Senapat. In the absence of the name of Bhim Chand in the account of the Guru, we may not presume that he did not participate in the battle. The Sikh records clearly refer to Bhim Chand's participation in it.

From the Guru's descriptions of the battle it appears that some the hill chiefs had made an alliance against him. So the 'basic and immediate' cause lay in the politics of the hill states. 'Fear and hope' seem to be the basis of plan of the hill chiefs to tackle the situation which arose due to the presence of Guru Gobind Singh at Paonta. Fear that the Guru may not establish independent principality, and hope, that all the hill chiefs if united would certainly stand better against the Guru gripped the hill chiefs. The hill chiefs formed a united front against Guru Gobind Singh. Senapat observed that Fateh shah overestimated his army and his brave generals, who had conquered many a battles and believed that they would defeat the Guru in a few hours. It appears that Raja Medni Parkash of Sirmaur was neither invited by Fateh Shah nor by Bhim chand to fight against the Guru. Guru Govind singh chose to check the enemy on the bank of river Giri at Bhangani. Having anticipated correctly the route that the Garhwal troops would follow, the Guru informed Budhu Shah of Sadhaura and Medni Parkash accordingly and marched with his men to the proposed battlefield and occupied a hillock. Choosing hid own ground for the battle, the Guru had won half the battle before it actually began.

In the chapter VIII of the Bachittar Natalk, Guru GoBind Singh gives in 38 stanzas a graphic account of the battle, in style, which is at once inimitable and unmatched and extracts from which even today arouse the dormant energies of the Indians against the enemies of their country.

The Guru narrates to us that he was absorbed in peaceful occupation amidst the scenic fascinations of Paonta when he and his men were provoked into fighting his stalwart cousins, Jit Mal, Gopal chand, Ganga Ram, Mehri chand, all sons of Bibi Veerro, led by their eldest brother Sango Shah, had to take the field against this unwarranted and wanton attack upon on their camp.
But the Guru’s presence of mind combined with oldness led him to take a calculated risk at the very outset of the battle. He ordered the major section of his forces to concentrate its attack on the Pathans. The units commanded by Kirpal, Dayal Ram, Sahib Chand and Dewan chand dashed to the battlefield with their crude arms. Sango Shah also led his forces on the right bank of rivulet Kalindri. Pandit Daya Ram and Mahant Kirpal Chand—the peace-loving devotees—too, with clubs and lathis or whatever they could lay hand upon, jumped into the fray. Guru Gobind Singh gives a very captivating description of fighting when he states, “Kirpal Chand give such a hard blow to Hayat Khan on the head, that his brain issued forth bubbling as butter flowed from the gopies, pitcher which Lord Krishna broke. Dewan Nand Chand, armed himself with spear and sword showed feats of bravery. Kirpal Chand, the maternal uncle of the Guru, lagged behind none, and faced gallantly the frontal attacks of the enemy. Sahib Chand, strove in the battle fury and slew bloodthirsty heroes and created havoc in the enemy’s ranks. The Pathans being demoralised fled from the battlefield.

The hill troops of Gopal (Raj Singh Guleria) and Hari Chand now took the lead. Guru Gobind Singh sent Jit Mal forward. He, or one of his men, succeed in hitting Hari Chand unconscious. In the confusion that followed, Kesari Shah Jaswalia and Mudhukar Shah Dhadwalia, two of the prominent chiefs of Fateh Shah’s side, escaped being killed only because the Guru’s desisted from hitting the fleeing enemy. After this Gopal and Raja Hari Chand became prominent in he attack and for sometime Guru’s prospects looked very dim. Now the command was given to Sango Shah, Who fought hard and led his men bravely. He killed Najabat Khan but he himself fell fighting. On seeing the death of Sango Shah, Guru, who had, as yet, taken no active part in the fray now personally undertook to direct operation, without caring the risk involved. The Guru strucked Bhikhan Khan in his face and the latter fled precipitately leaving the horse behind, which was immediately killed. Now began the dual between the Guru and Hari Chand. In utter desperation, Hari Chand discharged sharp arrows, which pierced his adversaries. It was a dreadful sight. Death stalked all
around. Heads rolled on the ground and blood flowed in streams. There was a hell of noise in the battlefield. Shrieks went to the sky. But this harrowing spectacle did not discourage the young Guru anyway. He was himself in the thick of the battle, riddling his enemies with his powerful shots. Hari Chand, in his rage, drew forth his arrows. The Guru explains this in Bachittar Natak: “He struck my steed with one and then discharged another at me, but God preserved me and it only grazed my ear in its flight. His third arrow penetrated the buckle of my waist belt and reached my body, but did not wound me. When I felt the touch of the arrow, my anger was kindled. I took my bow and discharged arrows. Upon this, my adversaries began to flee. I took aim at the young chief, Hari Chand who was killed. The hill men fled in consternation. The victory was mine, through the favour of Akal (god). The battle of Bhangani took a heavy toll on both sides. It was fought for about nine hours. By nightfall the enemy’s troops were nowhere to be seen. The Guru’s Sikhs had done a good job. They had displayed great skill in Sebring, slashing, slaughtering and shooting. The dead bodies on both sides were disposed off with honour. The wounded were properly tended. With the beat of drum the victorious Guru returned to Paonta. He bestowed robes of honour and other gifts upon the valiant soldiers and generals. Pir Budhu Shah was granted a robe of honour including fallen hair of the Guru, a turban, a comb, a dagger and a certificate of appreciation. The following factors contributed to the victory of the Guru.

Firstly, the battle was conducted under Guru’s personal supervision. Secondly, as against the calculations of the enemy, the Guru fought an offensive battle rather than a defensive one. Thirdly, the Paonta fort was placed under Ram Koer, Mehri and Kale Khan, able commanders for safeguarding the rear. Similarly, the rest of his army was divided into three groups under Kirpal Chand Sangro Shah and Budhu Shah with adequate reserves. The reserves were suitably positioned. Fourthly, Sango Shah was appointed as commander in charge of operation under the overall command of Guru Gobind Singh, who made the best tactical use of the ground, stationed his troops on the right bank of a ravine, which served as a rampart and he met
the ground of his own choice. Fifthly, before positioning his men as the tradition holds, the then blowing wind and its direction was put to his advantage by the Guru which accelerated speed of their arrows which killed hundreds of the enemy, practically rolling down a steep hill. Sixthly, the enemy on the other side had overestimated their power and under estimated that of the Guru. But when they came to grips with the Guru, they found themselves in precarious position, which resulted in panic and stampede in their ranks. Seventhly, the proper position of the Guru's soldiers worked havoc amongst the enemy. After this victory Guru Gobind Singh was in a stronger position. The moral of the Sikhs was so strengthened, as pointed out by Sukha Singh that his Sikhs made wild plan of attacking Srinagar and Delhi. He further writes that the Sikhs carried out several raids in the territory of Bhim Chand but he dared not came out openly to be an event which set the ball rolling towards a major clash between the Guru and the Mughals. As the plan of the Mughals had utterly failed to defeat the Guru by encouraging the hill utterly failed to defeat the Guru by encouraging the hill chiefs, they were convinced that the Guru was becoming too formidable a power. They lost their confidence in the hill rajas as a weapons against the Guru and it was doubtful if these chiefs would now occupy the same privileged position in the Mughal estimation as before. The politics, which ensued as a result of this battle was, therefore confused. And the hill rajas proved themselves to be utterly immature politicians buffeted about like pebbles on the seashore sometimes aligning themselves with this power and sometimes with that. The Guru had won a victory yet he did not acquire an inch of land or subdue a state exterminate its authorities and establish a political power. The Guru's fame spread far and wide and people flocked around him in even greater numbers. The arms supply also increased. The battle also gives the Guru an opportunity of understands the real character of these followers. He himself writes those who had kept themselves away from the battle I drove out of the place and I patronized those who had distinguished themselves there. Many days passed in this way and I fostered the faithful and rooted out all wicked. This was the first victory of Guru
Gobind Singh against the hill chiefs and this added confidence to the Sikhs.

Battle of Naduan

As a matter of fact after the battle of Bhagwani of Guru Gobind Singh was back at Anandpur. There were rejoicings on his safe return. According to Archer, “Anandpur was an uncentral and distant place but it was founded to meet the needs of time as the coming events justified the selection of the place.” The Guru began his organizational work with regard to military preparations there for the ensuing encounters against the enemy. In addition to preparing his people for the coming encounter with the organized might of the enemy and acquiring military stores and equipment, he commenced erecting strong forts at Anandpur. Bhim Chand chief in Bilaspur in whose territory Anandpur lay was aware of the activities of Guru. Rather he paid a few visits to the Guru during this period. Koer Singh writes that Bhim Chand was very much impressed by the Guru’s organised work. The religious philosophy that was being preached at Anandpur gradually yielded strong influence on people. They flocked to the Guru in the larger numbers. Moreover, encouraging by he Guru’s presence among them and taking the advantage of Aurangzeb’s continued in Golcunda in the south for many years for some of the hill chiefs had not been paying their yearly tribute to the imperial exchequer at Delhi and were raising their heads against the central authorities. This was not for the first time that the hill chiefs refused to play but prior to this a number of times as and when they found the center’s position weak they declined to make the payment. It had become aparent that the once mighty empire of the Mughals was in the process of decay. Nevertheless, the success of Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani impressed the hill chiefs about the strength of the Guru’s arms who after winning over him for their own cause fought the battle of Nadaun taking him as their ally against the Mughals.
In the 1960 orders were issued from the Mughal Darbar to Main Khan imperial commander of the Mughal army to realize the areas from the defaulting hill chiefs. Mian Khan according to the instructions of Muhammad Azim the governor of the Punjab, himself stayed back on the left bank of river Ravi. He dispatched his nephew military commander, Alif Khan, the grandson of Saidula Khan, Wazir of Shahjahan, with a strong contingent to bring to book the recalcitrant chiefs namely Kirpal Chand of Kangra, Dayal of Bijarwal, Kesari Chand of Jaswal, Prithvi Chand of Dhadhwal, Sukhdev of Jasrota and others. The chiefs of Kangra Bijarwal, Mandi and Kotkhai submitted without resistance. Kirpal Chand and Dayal told Alif Khan that if he could subdue the chief of Bilaspur he would obtain the surrender of all the hill chiefs. They also submitted that they themselves would join hands with Alif Khan against Bhim Chand of Bilaspur. Acting on the suggestion, Alif Khan sent an envoy to Bhim Chand asking him to submit but the latter not only refused but also kept himself ready to fight. According to Giani Gain Singh, the Mughal force demanded the arrears in a single installment which was not within the means of the hill chiefs and, therefore, they cast in their lot with Bhim Chand who had already refused to pay. Not only this, Bhim Chand immediately formed a coalition with Gopal of Guler, Kesari Chand of Jaswal, Ram Singh of Jaswal, Prithvi Chand of Dadhwal and Sukhdev Raj of Jasrota against Alif Khan and his hill allies namely Kirpal Chand of Kangra, Dayal of Bijarwal and their associates. However, it is to say that the Guru considered it proper to give military assistance to the oppressed people even if they were his enemies. He probably believing it as a 'dharmyudh' marched personally at the head of contingent armed with bows and arrows and a few muskets.

Alif Khan had made Naduan, his base. He hurriedly raised there a wooden fortress on an elevated ground. On the other hand, Bhim Chand immediately advanced to give battle to the enemy. Alif khan was forstalled by Bhim Chand at Nadaun. No doubt, Bhim Chand was a strong hill chief, but to fight with the Mughal forces, was by no means an easy task for him. He along with his allies took an offensive step. His side led the first assault.
Little wonders that his men retired to the base instead of giving a fight. This was due to fact the position of the enemy being better from strategic point of view, the arrows and shots struck only the wooden rafters below. Kirpal and Dayal repulsed the attack. Bhim Chand organised another offensive attack on a larger scale. Similarly, Kirpal and Dayal came out of the fortress and a furious battle raged inflicting heavy losses on both the sides. Kirpal Chand killed many brave men of Bhim chand. Kirpal fought with great determination and bravely and exhibited the true virtue of a Rajput. The loss of men and material disheartened Bhim Chand and he was expecting defeat, as his two attempts had proved unsuccessful. But, at this critical juncture Guru Gobind Singh, with armed contingent, reached the battlefield. The Guru’s arrival created panic in the frontal ranks of the Mughals. The move of Mughal troops enraged Bhim Chand who, invoking the name of Hanuman, exhorted all his associates to climb up the hill together. The move, finally, succeeded. They breached the fortress and forced the enemy’s army to come out in the open and engaged in a pitched battle. Kirpal Chand and his followers were in circled by Nanglu(Kehlurias), Panglu (Hindurias), Chendela Rajputs—Jaswalias and Gulerias, who were advancing in order and pressed hard from all sides. Guru Gobind Singh himself writes about his personal combat with Dayal of Bijarwal during the course of battle. He states: “The insignificant creature (himself) took of his gun and aimed at one of the rajas. The raja (Dayal of Bijarwal) reeled and fell upon the ground, so unerringly was the shot directed. But even then the army chief thundered. Then I threw up gun and took up arrows in hand. Then the Almighty hastened the end of the fight and the enemy was driven out in the river. It is said, at the nightfall, the fighting contingents returned to their respective quarters. But in the mid-night Alif Khan along with his men fled from the battlefield. The battle was fought on 22 chet, 1747 corresponding to march 20, 1690.

After the victory, some of the allied chiefs of Bhim Chand rushed to their respective places fearing the forthcoming Mughal attack. Bhim Chand and Guru Gobind Singh remained there. During his eight days, on the right
bank of the river, the Guru visited palaces of the various hill chiefs before he
took leave of them. Sukha Singh writes that Bhim Chand, who was still at
Nadaun, was contacted by Kirpal, who acted as intermediary between Bhim
Chand and Alif Khan. He brought about an understanding between the two.
Guru Gobind Singh has also referred to the agreement that two parties came
to terms and, therefore, the story ends. But we do not have any reference,
which let us know why, or under what circumstances they concluded the
agreement. It seems that Bhim Chand, after the victory, realised that the
enmity with the Mughals, at any rate, would not prove beneficial for him, as
his resources were very poor. Secondly, some of the hill chiefs were already
in the Mughal camp and some other also, after the battle, patched up their
differences with the governor of Kangra. Thirdly, to avoid future destruction
of the state at the hands of Mughals, Bhim Chand thought it proper to
negotiate. Perhaps, he was not very much sure about the Guru’s help in
future due to the ideological difference between them. But one thing is
evident from the activities of Bhim Chand that he must have submitted to the
Mughal due to their dominating position. Consequent upon Bhim Chand’s
role in the battle of Nadaun Guru Gobind Singh severed his relations with
him. ..91

Khanzada’s Experdition:

After the battle of Nadaun Guru Gobind Singh spend some years in
peace at Anandpur. To give his Sikhs a strong social base, the Guru not only
invited his followers, but also urged them to make Anandpura as their home.
The Sikhs become more confident of themselves because of their earlier
successes at Bhagwani and Nadaun. Consequently, his call evolved a great
response and his establishment grew rapidly.

On the other hand Emperor Aurangzeb received the news of the
failure of the expedition of Alif Khan and the activities of Guru Gobind
Singh at Anandpur in particular, which ruffled the Emperor much. The
Guru’s congregation and rapidly increasing military strength seemed to have
unnerved the Kangra foujdar and the other hill chiefs. The Emperor immediately ordered his officer in Punjab in 1693 to restrain the Guru from holding the assemblies of the Sikhs and indulging in martial activities. Even this order could not deter the Guru and the Sikhs to celebrate the Baisakhi of March 29, 1694, in which the Sikhs from various parts of the country participated. Then the Mughal authorities though it prudent to curb the Guru’s rising power at the earliest. Macauliffe writes that one Dilawar Khan, a Mughal commander, who had attained the power in the Punjab during the insurrections, which arose while Emperor Aurangzeb was employed in Deccan, became jealous of the Guru’s fame and success and sent his own son Rustam Khan, popularly known as Khanzada with a force of one thousand men to exact tribute from the hill chiefs. He marching with alacrity, reached near Anandpur. He wanted to take the Guru by surprise. The enemy’s troops crossed the river a little before midnight and just at this time the Guru’s scout ran to inform him of the fact. The Guru himself writes that ‘as the enemy crossed the river, his servant Alam, a deodidar, awoke him. Immediately alarm of nagara was sounded. The Sikhs with unparallel swiftness and promptitude took up their armour and with the zeal of crusader rushed out to meet the invader. The quick formation of the Sikhs, the zestful and stentorian war cries, beat of drums, roars and echoes of the guns tore the stillness of the dark wintry night. All this gave an exaggerated impression of their number, which bewildered the enemy. The muskets of the Sikhs, which began to discharge volleys of shots and murderous fire, altogether terrified the Mughal forces. They were completely unprepared for all this and were constrained to reel back without giving battle. The Khan fled shamelessly without using his weapons. The mighty heroes ran deserting the battlefield. Thus, the Guru came out victorious without a fight as he writes, “through God’s favour the wretched fools could not even touch me, and fled.” It is said that even the climate seemed to side with the Sikhs. The rain fell in torrents and the water of the hill stream swept many of the enemy’s soldiers and compelled the rest to flee for their lives. The Guru himself writes that many of the invaders lost their lives in the cold water of the nallah or rivulet. Since then the Sikhs began to call this river as himayato nallah – a helping rivulet.
As regards the year of commencement and end of the battle, contemporary and near contemporary writers do not give any comments; secondary historians, however, give different years of the battle although without authenticating the reasons of their accepting the year of the battle... 92

Hussain Khan’s Expedition or the battle of Guler

Dilawar Khan was very much disappointed on Rustam Khan’s unsuccessful expedition against Guru Gobind Singh. Hussain Khan was then chosen by Dilawar Khan who was perhaps the ablest commander with the Knagra foujdar to lead the expedition against the Guru. According to the Guru Gobind Singh himself, Hussain Khan assured Dilawar Khan of teaching a lesson to the Guru and started for Anandpur at the head of two thousand soldiers. Thus the object of this expedition was to extract tribute and subjugate the Guru to the Mughal rule. On the way Hussain Khan plundered Amarkot and subdued Raja Madhukar Shah of Dhadwal and took his sons prisoners. He also ravaged Dun. He put to sword many other hill chiefs of note and devastated their territories. The Guru whole-heartedly condemned Hussain Khan for plundering the poor populations of the hill chiefs. In order to secure the help of the some of hill chiefs against the Sikhs, Hussain Khan committed atrocities on them. Bhim Chand of Bilaspur and his ally Kirpal Chand of Kangra found suitable time to cast their lot with Hussain Khan, most probably with a view of achieving double purpose, winning the favour of the Mughals and annihilating the Guru and the movement he was piloting. Even they offered their services for the subjugation designs of the Mughals and the hill chiefs resulted in his making preparations to foil their plans. Raj Singh, Raja of Guler and Ram Singh of Jaswan also proceeded to negotiate with Hussain Khan. They offered money they brought with them but the amount fell short of the expectations. He not only rejected the offer but also threatened them with dire consequences if they did not pay rupees ten thousand due from them as revenge. They pleaded their inability to pay and went back; they shut themselves in the fort of Guler. Thereupon Hussain
Khan laid siege of the fort. The siege lasted for fifteen pahars (six hours) and the food supply to the inmates was also stopped. However, once again Gopal sued for peace but Hussain Khan turned down his appeal on the ground that he would accept nothing less than ten thousand rupees. According to Santokh Singh, Gopal of Guler sought Guru Gobind Singh's help. The Guru sent a contingent of 300 horsemen to help Gopal under the command of Lal Chand, Ganga Ram, Kirpal Ram, Agri Singh Brar and Bhai Snagatia. The Guru also sent followers named Sangatia and seven other Sikhs to reopen the negotiations on behalf of Gopal. Thus, Sangatia, who was sent on good will mission under the changed circumstances, had to fight on the side of Raja of Guler. Sangatia, on his own security, brought Gopal in Hussain's camp to negotiate but the two parties could not reach an amicable settlement. Kirpal Chand and Bhim Chand, being the enemies of Gopal suggested Hussain Khan to capture or assassinate Gopal. The later came to know their sinister move and managed to escape. Kirpal lost temper and attacked Gopal and thus the battle began. According to Bachitter Natak, Kirpal of Kangra, Bhim Chand of Kehlur, Kimmat, Himmat and other chiefs fought on the side of Hussain Khan. On the other side, Gopal of Guler, Raja Chander of Chandella and the Sikhs under the command of Sangatia fought against the invaders. In the fierce action that ensued both Hussain Khan and Raja Kirpal of Kangra were slain. No doubt, Hussain's bravery won lot of applause. Himmat and Kimmat also fell fighting. On the side of Gopal, Sangatia and his seven associates were also killed. Gopal got the complete victory despite heavy odds. Guru Gobind Singh wrote in Bachitter Natak: "Gopal was victorious and the battle came to an end. Everybody, then, went home and the rain of bullets which was originally intended for me was showered by the Almighty elsewhere." As regards the year of the battle, contemporary writers do not give any comment. However Sewa Singh in his Shahid Bilas, gives a specific date, i.e. 20 March 1696. Thus the expeditions of Hussain which began prosperously ended in complete disaster. He did not move tactically in the battle. He insulted the two chiefs when they tried to negotiate with him. He committed atrocities on the people of the hill areas, which resulted in the loss of sympathy of the hill people as well as the chiefs. Hussain Khan had to pay
a very high price for his life. Secondly, the Mughal’s administration in the hill area fell in disarray. Thirdly, the Sikhs also irked under the authority of the Mughals and the hill chiefs. This was seen in the next expedition sent by the Mughal authorities against the Guru under the command of the Rajput Commanders namely Jujhar Singh and Chandan Rai. Before the expedition reached Anandpur, it was challenged by Gaj Singh of Jaswal at Bhallan, 14 kilometers away from Anandpur. Its leader, Jujhar Singh, was killed in the contest which sealed the fate of the adventurer and his followers.

Shazada Muazzam’s Expedition

The news of the repeated failure of the Mughal against the Guru Gobind Singh particularly at Anandpur reached Aurangzeb in the Deccan. This news annoyed the Emperor who send one of his sons, Prince Muazzam afterwards known as Emperor Bahadur Shah to manage the affairs of the Punjab which were in disorder. The Prince stationed himself at Lahore and sent Mirza Beg, one of his Generals, with a force to chastise the Guru, his followers and the hill chiefs. On his arrival, most of the people including the hill chiefs were frightened. Many deserted the Guru and sought shelter in the hills. The Guru writes, “They did not understand the ways of the Almighty. They did not know where their safety lay.” At this Aurangzeb’s son was inwardly agitated. He sent his commanders in this direction. He demolished the habitation of the disloyal person who had left me. The hill chiefs were severely punished but the Guru was left alone. The reason was the intercession of Bhai Nand Lal a devoted Sikh of the Guru who was then a secretary to the Prince. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh believed that there was a secret alliance between the Guru and the Prince. That is why the deserters of the Guru’s house were punished. Kapur Singh did not agree with Teja Singh and Ganda Singh put forth the following arguments in support of his contention:

There was no agreement between the Guru and the Prince; the Guru not any time accept the Mughal sovereignty; there is nothing regarding the agreement in any of the Guru’s writings above all if there would have been any agreement then the preparation on the part of the Guru does not seem to
be proper. It means that the Guru had some doubt about the Prince for which he was preparing himself against the Mughal’s authority.

On the above grounds, Kapur Singh says that the agreement was a myth and not a historical fact. But we do not accept the unhistorical statement of Kapur Singh that there could be no alliance between the Guru and the Prince. Later on in 1707, we notice that both had concluded the agreement though under the changed circumstances and their relations remained cordial. In the words of Gokul Chand Narang, “The Guru thus escaped without any harm but the rajas were taught a severe lesson by Mirza Beg. The Prince inflicted upon them defeat after defeat, gave up their country to plunder, set fire to villages, took hundreds of prisoners and in order to teach a lesson to them shaved clean, and their faces blackened, seated them on donkeys and made an exhibition of them throughout the disturbed area. Commenting on this Indubusan Banerjee writes, “we however, find it difficult to accept the minute details put forth Gokul Chand Narang though there cannot be possibly be any doubt as the Guru himself referred that the rajas were taught a severe lesson on this occasion. ....93

Prince Mauzzam who had been deputed by the Emperor Auranzeb to initiate action against the Guru did not carry out the instructions of the Emperor either out of records for the Guru or with a view to improving the relation with him and changing his stance against the non-Muslims. Mauzzam had faith in saints whether Hindus or Muslims and did not like to offend them. On the contrary, he believed in their blessings. The Prince considered the Guru as darvesh. The Prince was certainly for the reconciliation with the Guru. Thus, through the intervention of Prince, peace came to the northern Punjab. The Guru began to devote whole of his time to spiritual secular affairs. On the Guru’s part, he could not have trust on the hill chiefs who were apprehensive on his rising power. They could join hands any time to fight against the Guru to weaken his power. So, the Guru was always on his guards against any future designs of the hill chiefs and the Mughal with whom his conflict was more serious due to the fanatic nature of the monarchy. Therefore, he visualized the creation of the Khalsa, primarily
keeping before him the defensive requirements of the community. Of course, knowing full well his limitations, the Guru could not plan aggressive decisions against the Mughals or the others. The pre-Khalsa battles give a clear idea to the Guru as to what was in store for his and how he would face and meet his future.

Commonly accepted year of the expedition of Shahzada Muazzam is 1696 after which the major activity of Guru Gobind Singh from our point of view pertains to the year 1699 when he instituted the Khalsa.

Post Khalsa battles of Guru Gobind Singh

Historians and writers differ in regard to the years of the battles of Guru Gobind Singh fought against the Mughals and the hill chiefs. Contemporary sources like Bachitter Natak and Sri Guru Sobha do not contain any reference to the dates or years of the battles. However the Senapat's account is helpful to us in fixing up the chronology of these battles in a typical manner, distinguishing the account of the pre Khalsa and post Khalsa battles with that of the creation of the Khalsa. Later historians have accepted the order of the battles given by Senapat. As the sequence of the account of the battles given by Senapat tallies with the commonly accepted series of events taking place in the life of the Guru Gobind Singh, we can safely accept the arrangement provided by Senapat.

First battle of Anandpur – August-September 1700 AD

After the creation of the Khalsa in 1699, the Mughals and the hill chiefs waged a number of battles against the Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur. The growing military strength of the Guru and increasing number of his followers unnerved the hill chiefs. The Guru, as a matter of fact, wanted peace for the Khalsa in order to grow and organize itself but the hill chiefs found in Guru’s mission and reforms something fundamentally paradoxical of what they held. Sohan Lal Suri is right when he states that the neighbouring hill chiefs particularly Ajmer Chand, the chief of Bilaspur, looked upon the activities of Guru Gobind Singh as dangerously political. To
them, the Guru appeared to be full of ambition for the conquest of dominion mulkgiri wa jahandari. The hill chiefs had already an armed clash with the Guru. With the creation of the Khalsa, they thought that their religion was in jeopardy. Consequently, Ajmer Chand wanted to restrict the activities of the Guru. Thus he wrote to the Guru that either he should pay money for the land he occupied or quit it. Senapat writes:

_Bhej dio likh ke oeh ne ab_

_Chhado GuruJi Bhum hamari_

_Keh kachhu dam diya kar_

_Keh judh karo baat bichari_ ... 94

But the Guru refused to pay the money.

There is a strong tradition that the Guru’s stand at this juncture was that his father Guru Teg Bahadur had himself purchased the land and the question of leaving the place did not arise. The subsequent events also depict that the Guru throughout his struggle with the Mughals justified his claim over Anandpur.

Koer Singh states that the land attached to Anandpur did not yield sufficient produce forever-growing number of Sikhs there. The Sikhs were subsequently compelled to go to the forests and the adjoining villages to produce fuel, grains and provisions. The people of the villages generally gave trouble to the Sikhs on these occasions. The Sikhs were, therefore, infrequently, compelled to employ force resulting in constant conflict with the hill men. The hill potentates took sides with their clansmen and instead of exercising their influence in favour of peace and facilitating the purchases of supplies, they invariably resorted to menacing and threatening postures, which made matters still worse. Thus, Ajmer Chand was left with the alternative of making good his claim at the point of spear. He sought the help of the chief of Handoor against the Guru. ... ₲
Ajmer Chand of Kehlur, Bir Singh of Jaswal and Madan Pal of Sirmaur met in conference and sent an envoy to the Mughal Government at Delhi soliciting help against the Guru. The request was forwarded to the Emperor in the Deccan where he was busy in fighting against his enemies. Emperor Aurengzeb replied that the imperial army could be deputed to their help if they were prepared to meet their expenses. The hill chiefs willingly agreed to do so and the two imperial panj hajaris, Painda Khan and Dina Beg were dispatched with their troops to join the three hill chiefs to march on Anandpur. A contemporary Persian chronicler, Mohammad Qasim Lahori writes that Aurangzeb had already sent instructions to the faujdar of Sirhind to be watchful of the activities of Guru Gobind Singh. In the later chronicles, only a general statement is made that the faujdar of Sirhind was directed to deal with Guru Gobind Singh firmly. What is emphasized in the statement is that the Guru was to be deprived of his hearth and home if he did not desist from military activities.

The two opposing armies met at Anandpur. Painda Khan declared a crusade or jehad against the Sikhs and asked his men to sacrifice their lives for the holy cause of fighting against the non-believers. The Guru had only seven thousand men whereas the army of the allies was above twenty thousand. According to Macauliffe, the Guru addressing his Sikhs said, “If you die fighting, you shall enjoy all the happiness reserved for martyrs.” Thus, encouraged by the Guru’s words, Sahibjada Ajit Singh, Jassa Singh, Alam Singh and Ude Singh fell upon the advancing parties of the hill chiefs. Many Rajputs and Ranghars were put to sword by Ajit Singh, thus acquitting himself with exceptional credit. It is said that the attack of the Sikhs was so severe that the enemies had to trace their footsteps back by the evening despite their number being large. Hence the Guru got success on the very first day. Next day the combined forces of the allies besieged Anandpur. But they could not harm the Sikhs. The Sikhs, on the other hand made a severe attack. The invaders were loosing fast before the on slaughts of the Sikhs. Pianda Khan died fighting against the Guru’s men. Dina Beg, who fought for some time, fled from the battlefield. The Sikhs followed the fleeing Mughal army but the Guru
ordered his men not to pursue them. Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra suffered injury in the course of fighting. A large quantity of arms and ammunition fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Thus, the first battle of Anandpur had been won.

Second battle of Anandpur - October 1700

After the first battle of Anandpur, some of the hill chiefs gathered together to discuss the further perspective of battle with Guru Gobind Singh. They ultimately resolved to forge a joint front against the Guru. Thus the hill chiefs of Jammu, Nurpur, Mandi, Kulu, Dadhwal, Srinagar (Garhwal), Guler, Chamba etc., assembled to plan a vigorous action against the Guru. Some of the local people were also persuaded to join them. The Guru's eldest son, Ajit Singh, commanded the Sikhs for the first time. Sher Singh, Nahar Singh, Alam Singh, Udey Singh and Daya Singh were the other important leaders. Five hundred armed Sikhs who had come from Majha were being commanded by Duni Chand. Surging forward, the hill chieftains sharpened the attacks. Ajit Singh rushed forward with his men towards the enemy and caused a dent in their forces. The hill chiefs lost their men in great numbers and by the evening they had to retreat and the first day was definitely of the Guru. The next day's fighting also yielded the same result.

On the following day the combined forces of the allies besieged Anandpur. According to the enemies plan, Kaseri Chand, Maternal Uncle of Akmer Chand, was sent to break the gates of Anandgarh fort with the help of an intoxicated elephant. The animal's body was covered with steel and a spear was projecting from his fore head. Ultimately the elephant was severely wounded on the forehead by Bachitter Singh. The wounded elephant then shot back into the Rajput ranks and trampled many of them under his feet. Kesri Chand pranced his feet restlessly, right and left, when Udey Singh, son of Bhai Mani Singh fell upon him and throwing him off his horse cut off his head and lifting it on his spear brought it triumphantly to his camp.
Finding their position very weak, the hill chiefs decided to employ a little craft by asking the Guru to evacuate Anandpur. The Guru refused. He resisted the onslaughts of the invaders. To save their position, the hill chiefs proposed to the Guru, on oath, that they would be friends with him in future, only if he left Anandpur, may be temporarily. The Guru was fully aware of the false oaths of the hill chiefs yet he agreed to their proposal under the pressure of some of his Sikhs. He shifted to the village of Nirmoh, situated at a distance of about four kilometers from Kiratpur. The hill chiefs immediately looted the forts of Lohgarh and Keshgarh and the adjoining villages of Anandpur.

Battle of Nirmoh-1700A.D.

The contemporary sources are silent as usual about the date and year of the battle. But there is unanimity among the later writers who on the basis of contemporary events hold that the battle was fought in 1700.

Not unexpectedly the Guru was attacked by the hill chiefs on one side and the Mughals forces under Wazir Khan pressed hard from the other side. As the Guru followed the defensive strategy, the enemy’s main object was obviously to weaken the defence. The local Gujjars also joined hands with the enemy against the Guru. Thus their number was much larger than that of the Sikhs. In Senapat’s simile “the enemy surrounded Nimoh as the stars surrounded the moon.” The Sikhs faced the enemies valiantly. Macauliffe observed that ‘Wazir Khan bit his thumb, and said he had never before witnessed such desperate fighting.’ The enemies were repulsed who once again made a vigorous attack. Ultimately, Guru Gobind Singh was constrained to evacuate Nirmoh probably because of the use of cannon by the Mughal faujdar. He led his men across the river Satluj into a friendly territory along with Sahibzada Ajit Singh, Mokham Singh and Udey Singh. But in the battle, one of the five beloveds, Bhai Ssahib Singh, is stated to have been killed. But before most of them could cross the river, they were overtaken by the allies who were naturally keen to obstruct their passage. The Sikhs fought desperately for about
four hours and eventually succeeded in crossing the river into the territory of chief of Jaswan, who was an old ally of the Guru.

**Battle of Basoli-1700A.D.**

Senapat has not given the date and year of the battle of Basoli. However he regards the arrangement of the year of the battle he has described it after the battle of Nirmoh fought in 1700. The sequence of the events, as they took place, also turns in favour of the year 1700.

After pausing for some time after the battle of Nirmoh, the hill chiefs made an appeal to Wazir Khan, the governor of Sirhind, for help. After hearing the defeat of the imperial army in the first battle of Anandpur, Aurangzeb is said to have sent an order to Wazir Khan to proceed against the Guru. The Mughals under the command of Wazir Khan and in collaboration of the hill chiefs marched against Guru Gobind Singh. The Mughals made an initial attack upon the Guru's men from one side and the hill chiefs from another at Anandpur. Their strategy proved a success. After initial fighting, the Guru finding himself largely outnumbered, decided to retire to Basoli as he had already received an invitation from Dharam Pal, the chief of the place.

The army of the Mughals and the hill chiefs pursued the Guru who faced a pitched battle in which they were completely rolled back. The Guru along with Sahibzada Ajit Singh, Mokham Singh, Alam Singh and Daya Singh stayed at Basoli for some time.

On his way back to Ananadpur, the Guru stayed for some time at Bhambore, whose chief had a great respect for him. At this time the Gujjers and the Rangars of the village Kalmot attacked a party of the Sikhs who had gone on a hunting expedition. The Sikhs defended themselves strongly with the result that a very sanguinary contest ensued. But the villagers were no matches for the Sikhs and they were soon compelled to submit. The fort at Kalmot was conquered by the Guru. According to Senapat, sometime later the Kalmotians
returned under the cover of darkness to make another attack but as the day
dawned, they were again unable to withstand a sortie by the Sikhs and
withdrew from the battlefield. The hill chiefs particularly the chief of Kehlur
got unnerved by their defeats. The chief of Jaswan along with some other
chiefs preferred for an open alliance with the Guru. They approached the Guru
for peace. The Guru welcomed the offer of peace and returned to Anandpur. He
built a new fortress at Anadgarh knowing full well the moral character of the
hill chiefs who were on the look out of an opportunity to attack him.

First battle of Chamkour-1702 A.D.

Naturally, the peace between the Guru Gobind Singh and the hill chiefs
could not continue for a long. The Guru visited Kurukshetra on the occasion of
Solar eclipse to preach against the false rituals among the masses there. Some
of the hill chiefs planned to attack the Guru on his way to Anandpur with the
help of Mughal commenders, Sayyid Beig and Alif Khan who were going from
Lahore top Delhi. They had a contingent of about ten thousand men under
them. Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur persuaded the commanders to help him in
expelling the Guru from his territory on the payment of two thousand rupees a
day. Alif Khan had a grievence against the Guru as he had already suffered at
his hands in the battle of Nadaun. He agreed to join the hill chiefs in the battle
against the Guru. The Guru was encamping near Chamkour when he was
suddenly attacked by the Mughal commanders. Although small in numbers, the
Sikhs gave a resolute fight to the imperial army. On hearing this four hundred
Sikhs arrived from Anandpur at once to assist the Guru. The in-expected
reinforcement made the hearts of the enemy sink. When the fight was at its
thickest, an amazing thing occurred. Sayyaid Beg who had already heard much
about the Guru, was very much impressed by seeing him in the battlefield. He
threw his arms and kissed the rakab of the Guru’s horse. As such Sayyaid Beig
parted company with Alif Khan. Some of the Muislim soldiers also joined the
Guru. This disheartened Alif Khan who left the battle field and beat a hasty
retreat. He was hotly pursued by the Sikhs. This was a great victory of the
The Guru returned to Anandpur. The diplomacy of the hill chiefs yielded to the solid strength of the Sikhs.

**The battle of Anandpur – 1704-1705 A.D.**

Contemporary sources are silent about the year of this battle. Senapat has given an account of this battle under the head “Battle of Anandgarh”, after the account of the battles of Basoli and Kalmot. Most of the later historians are unanimous in placing this battle in the year 1704-05.

On hearing Guru Gobind Singh’s return to Anandpur, the Sikhs started visiting him in large numbers and more frequently before. Their concourse created the problem of supplies. Their need combined with their new temper resulted to conflict with neighbouring villages. To all the appearances, the Guru and his followers were becoming more formidable than ever before. Ajmer Chand and Kehlur were very much perturbed. Notwithstanding the disastrous defeats, the hill chiefs were determined to allow no respite to the Guru. They sent envoys to the viceroy of Delhi to explain that the Guru would not spare his Majesty’s loyal and unoffending subjects to abide in peace. They prayed for really effective help from Emperor. The appeal was forwarded to the emperor in Deccan. The emperor ordered a strong army to be sent against the Guru under Sayyied Khan. As usual, the hill chiefs joined him with their armies. When the allied armies attacked Anandpur, there were only five hundred Sikhs with the Guru. Most of the Sikhs were away to their homes as it was the harvesting season. Sayyid Khan, the Mughal General, who was the brother-in-law of Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaur, was amazed to find many Muslims like Maimun Khan, Sayyid Beig in the Guru’s army. After Sayyid Khan who died fighting in the battle, the command of the Imperial army was taken up by Ramzan Khan who led the charge with renewed vigour and fury. Under him, the imperial army fought with determination. Ramzan Khan was
struck down by an arrow discharged by the Guru. The enemies were filled with fury. In spite of the gallant fight put up by the Sikhs, they could not hold their own against the heavy odds of the invaders. The Guru had to evacuate Anandpur.

The continuous repulses at the hands of the Guru, disheartened the authorities of Delhi, Sirhind, Lahore and Jammu as well as the hill chiefs. Ajmer Chand of Kehlur sent an appeal to Emperor Aurangzeb to take command against the Guru personally and destroy his power root and branch.

Consequently Aurangzeb sent express orders to Wazir Khan of Sirhind and Zabardast Khan of Lahore to proceed with a large army against the Guru. Macauliffe writes that Emperor also dispatched a personal letter to the Guru holding out a mild threat. He wrote, “There is only one Emperor. The religion and the mine are the same. Come to see me by all means, otherwise I shall be angry... If thou come, thou shalt be treated as holy men or treated by monarchs.” The letter was brought by a Qazi to whom the Guru according to Macauliffe handed over the reply, “My brother! The sovereign who hath made thee Emperor hath sent me into the world to do justice but thou hast forgotten his mandate.”

The Mughal forces from two different directions of Lahore and Sirhind met at Ropar. Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur Ghamand Chand of Kangra, Vir Singh Jaspalia, Rajas of Kulu, Mandi, Guler, Chamba, Srinagar (Garhwal), Dadhwal, Bajarwal, etc also joined their forces with those of Mughals. This formidable army marched against the Guru to have another trial of strength with him. On the other hand, the Guru also prepared for the expected attack. The Sikhs army had been divided into distinct command. Sahibjada Ajit Singh was made in charge of the Army units guarding the fort at Keshgarh. Sher Singh and Nahar Singh with five hundred soldiers were defending Lohgarh another contingent of the same size under the command of Alam Singh and Uday Singh was to look after Agampura and the parts of the city while Mohkam Singh, one of the
five beloveds, was in charge of the fort of Lohgarh. The Guru who himself was at the head of the contingent, positioned himself in Anandgarh.

The Town of Anandpur was surrounded from all the sides by the forces of allies. On the first day, Wazir Khan lost nine hundred men and similar numbers of hill soldiers were killed. For two days, severe fighting was going on and the enemy's attempt to capture the fort was totally foiled. Finally, they decided to besiege the fort. The siege was organized in such a perfect manner that all the ingress and egress for both goods and persons was completely stopped. As the provisions were running short, the price of eatables, particularly flour, rose very high. Even at high price it was not available. There was the scarcity of the water too. The small parties of the Sikhs were going out to fetch water and found hard to fight their way out. Similarly when the food position became extremely serious, the Sikhs were driven to some dangerous expedients in order to relieve it. At dead of night bands of the Sikhs began to fall on the places where the allies had kept their stores. The enemies tightened their hold so much that the life inside the fort became utterly difficult. In this way, siege continued for many months but the besiegers' forces could not enter the town. How long under such an odd situation one could resist. Thus some of the Sikhs began to feel desperate. In this exigency, the Guru invited help from his Sikhs. He issued several letters of which one A.D. 1704 (BK1761) is quoted below. The letter was addressed to Bhai Mukhya and Bhai Parsa:

May the Guru show his grace on all his disciples. Respect the Guru, repeat his name, you will have best in life. The entire sangat is my Khalsa. Come with cavaliers, footman, gunners and daring youth. Every Sikh young man coming to pay respect would be blessed with prosperity. He would flourish fully. The Guru would fulfill all their desires. Come for Darshan. ....... 97

Ajmer Chand got divided the course of small hilly channel taken off from Charanganga, which supplied water to Anandpur, and thus stopped the water supply to the inmates of the fort. Wazir Khan formed a plan with the allies to capture the Guru alive and send him to Aurangzeb to win his pleasure
and good will. He opened negotiation with the Guru promising safe evacuation. The Mughal officers tried to convince the Guru on the oath of Quran that in case of evacuation of Anandpur, the Guru would not be harmed in any way. In fact, the Guru had no faith on their promises. Being under great pressure from the inmates, he decided to leave Anandpur but not before he tested the enemy’s assurances. It is said that the Guru sent for a number of bullock carts and pack mules. These were immediately supplied. The Guru filled sacks with rotten material such as worn shoes, dirty clothes and broken earthen vessels. All the riffraff was wrapped in velvet pieces and loaded on mules and oxen to make a show that the Sikhs were retiring with their luggage. As soon as the Mughal army saw the cavalcade, they fell upon them and started looting.

The allies, however, ultimately regretted and appealed to the Guru once again to evacuate Anandpur. The Sikhs also made humble request to the Guru to avail the opportunity provided by the enemy and to evacuate Anandpur.

In this desperate state of affairs, the Guru agreed to evacuate Anandpur. It is said that before his departure from the city, the big gun of the fort was thrown into the nearby Satluj River, the tents and other such materials were burnt and a lot of valuables were buried in the bed of the river. The evacuation began at dead of night intervening December 20-21, 1705. It was raining and swift cold wind was blowing. The entire camp was divided into two parts. The Guru’s mother, wives, two younger sons – Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh and other women of the household together with the manuscripts prepared by the Guru and his scholars left in the first batch. Udey Singh, the bravest commander of the Guru was put incharge of this batch at the head of two hundred horsemen. The Guru and his people reached the flooded Sirsa and had to face the enemy which account forms the subject matter of the proceeding pages.

Battle at Pariwar Bachhors Sahib on the Bank of river Sirsa – 1705 A.D.
The first batch, which left Anandpur, had to wait on the right bank of the river Sirsa as it was in flood due to heavy rain. Hardly the Guru's party reached the bank of Sirsa when it was attacked by the enemy forces. There was severe fighting despite darkness and rain. When the Guru was heavily engaged, another detachment of the Mughals advanced and made an assault on the first batch. In the fighting Udey Singh and most of his men lost their lives. The place of the battle is enshrined by the Gurudwara Parivar Bachhora.

Some daring Sikhs pushed their horses into the swollen water and carried Guru's family across the river. But in this attempt, precious articles were lost in the turbulent waves. Some of the Sikhs also drowned while attempting to cross the river Sirsa.

The members of the Guru's family were divided into two groups. Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kour accompanied by Mani Singh hurriedly went towards Ambala and thence to Delhi where they found shelter with a disciple named Jawahir singh. The Guru's mother and his two younger sons Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were taken by Gangu, an old domestic servant of the family, to his native village Saheri, on the Ropar-Morinda road. A small Gurudwara is erected at Saheri in the memory of the sons of the Guru Gobind Singh. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu and Giani Gian Singh two brothers Jani Khan and Mani Khan, the local Ranghars of the town Morinda, about 20 kms to the north-west of Sirhind, had been responsible for the capture and ultimately murder of the younger sons of Guru Govind in December 1705. Sukha Singh writes that Gangu inform the Muqadam, who sent force to capture the children and handed them over to Wazir Khan; they were bricked alive and beheaded despite the advice of Nawab of Malerkotla to the contrary. The Guru's mother Mata Gujri died of grief caused by the sad demise of her grandsons.

The Guru also suffered equally. Having put up a tough fight he also threw his horse into the swollen current. When the Guru reached the other bank of the river, he was left with his remaining two sons, the five beloved ones and thirty five others Sikh, 43 souls in all, out of about 400. At Ropar news was
brought to him that about a thousand Mughal troops were advancing against him from Sirsa. There from, the Guru marched towards Chamkaur passing through Kotla, Batha Sahib and Burmajra.

**The Battle of chamkaur – 1705.**

Senapat is silent about the year of the battle. Some of the later writers hold that it was fought in 1704, whereas some others put it in 1705 without referring to the source of evidence. The sequence of the historical events already referred leads us to accept the evidence Guru Kian Sakhian according to which the battle was fought in 1705.

As referred to Guru Gobind Singh, after the conflict at Sirsa with the allied forces, planned to move towards Chamkour, the Malwa territory, south of the Satluj.

The question arises as to why chamkaur was chosen by the as his next place of shelter. Perhaps there were two reasons. Firstly, the Guru was having very cordial relation with the Chaudhari of that place. Secondly, he was fully aware of the geographical situation of the area as he had already stayed there for some time on his return journey from Kurukshetra.

Guru Gobind Singh came to a garden situated in the southern side of the town of Chamkour. According to Senapat, a jat Choudhari named Garibu, the owner of the garhi invited the Guru and handed over the garhi to him. Malcolm writes that the “Raja of Chamkaur received the Guru in a kind and friendly manner” and not only handed over the fortress but also assisted him in the combat that followed. But according to Koer Singh, Sukha Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh, Rattan Singh Bhangu and Macauliffe, the possession of the garhi was taken forcibly by the Guru and its owner was made captive. But this does not seem to be true.
Under the circumstances Chamkaur was the only the nearest place of protection available to the Guru as the Mughal forces reinforced with the fresh contingent from Delhi were hotly pursuing him. The Mughal army commanded by Khawajah Muhammad and Nahar Khan encompassed Chamkaur on all the sides. The Guru fully aware of his limitations decided to face the challenge boldly as there was no other alternative. The Guru was having only a small band of forty faithful Sikhs.

Guru Gobind Singh placed his men on strategic positions and himself along with his two sons and some Sikhs took positions in the top storey of the garhi, for giving a cover to the arrow shots. He sent his doughty men in small batches of five each to contend with the army outside and meet death. This was done to create the impression that the garrison was not so thin as the Mughals thought. By this technique he was able to keep the enemy at bay for the whole span of one day and one night. None of them turned his back upon the enemy. These courageous men suffering from hunger, fatigue and disaster kept the enemy repulsed and fought with unswerving prowess in their self-defence. Commenting on the tactics of the Guru, Indubhusan writes:

The defence that he extemporized at Chamkaour, where, as tradition affirms, the Guru with only forty chosen companions kept at bay for several hours a whole host of the opposing troops had hardly a parallel.

It was indeed a very unequal combat between a handful of Guru’s men and a large number of the enemy. Writing probably about the battle subsequently in his letter in Persian addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh said, “What could forty famished men do when such a large number fell on them abruptly.”

The Guru put to death with arrows a number of persons who tried to get into the garhi. Nahar Khan, an officer of the imperial army and great warrior also attempted to scale the wall of the garhi, but was shot dead by the Guru’s arrow. Khawaja Mardud, another proud Mughal officer, who earlier pledged to
capture the Guru alive and present him before the Emperor, was wounded. The Guru writes that the despicable Khawaja Mardud had not the courage to leave the shelter of the wall and come into the open. Alas! Had I seen his face I would have unhesitatingly bestowed an arrow on him. Macauliffe writes, "Zabardast Khan, the Lahore viceroy, was greatly distressed on seeing many of his men slain, and called on his army at once to destroy the handful of Sikhs who were causing such havoc in the imperial ranks. When the swords of the Sikhs were broken and their arrows spent, they spitted the army with their spears." 

Tradition holds that two elder sons of the Guru Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh begged their father one after the other, to be allowed to court death in the only befitting manner open to the Guru’s Sikhs. The Guru permitted them cheerfully to go and fight against the heavy odds of the enemy. They displayed marvelous courage and made battle with veteran’s determination and skill. They cause much destruction in the ranks of the enemy before they were overcome. They died as heroes before the eyes of their father, delighting his heart with the noblest and daring of the deeds recorded in the history. The Sikhs kept the enemy at bay till sunset at the place where at present a huge building of Gurudwara Katalgarh enshrines in their immortal memory. According to the local tradition, Bibi Sharan Kour of the village Raipur situated about 2 miles from Chamkaur was very much perturbed on hearing the death of the two sons of the Guru in the battle field. Fully sure of locating their dead bodies, she made up her mind to accomplish the last rites of both. She, with a lamp in her hand reached the battlefield and with great difficulty she recognized the bodies from their plumes. In the process of performing the last rites of the Sahibzadas she was caught and slain by the Mughal soldiers.

In a few hours battle on a single day, two sons of the Guru, three of the five beloved one and thirty two other followers laid down their lives at the alter if faith and freedom. Thus by nightfall, the Guru was left with only five Sikhs to defend the place. They also persuaded the Guru to leave the place in the night in the hope that if the Guru could manage to escape the holocaust, he
could organize the Khalsa again to fight the Mughals in future. If he stayed on in the garhi for the night, he was to meet his end next day.

At the dead of night, the Guru along with his three companions, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh and Bhai Man Singh escaped eluding the vigilance of the guards. Only two Sikhs – Sant Singh and Sangat Singh – offered to remain in the garhi. The Guru put the kalghi on the forehead of Bhai Sant Singh who had a close resemblance with the Guru. He also put on the similar dress and sat in the place of the Guru.

In the morning, the battle was resumed and the two Sikhs - Sangat Singh and Sant Singh - holding the garhi raised arrows on the enemy's army, which encircled them. The Sikhs fought courageously, with unflinching tenacity and heroism. But the building was soon scaled. Both the Sikhs were killed and the Mughals rejoiced the capture of the garhi. But very soon they were sorely disappointed to discover that neither of the Sikhs was Guru Gobind Singh.

For sheer valour and endurance, the battle of Chamkour that ensued has scarcely and parallel. After the battle the Guru passing through various places enroute reached Dina from where he ultimately reached Khidrana (Muktsar). A battle was fought at that place against the Mughals, the critical appraisal of which is delineated here.

Battle of Khidrana (Muktsar) – May 1706

Contemporary sources as usual are silent about the year of the battle of Muktsar. However the arrangement of the battle as given by Senapat in Sri Guru Sobha and the stay of the Guru at Dina after visiting different places on his way from Chamkaur to Muktsar, probably has made the secondary writers to place the battle in May 1706. In the absence of contemporary evidence, the course of events as they took place also help us in placing this battle in May 1706.
After the battle of Chamkaur, the Guru visiting different places reached Dina and stayed there for some time. The Sikhs began to flock there with the result that he had a large number of followers under his command. Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, was perturbed to hear of the fresh accretions to the Guru’s standard. He planned to capture the Guru and sent a large army against him. The Guru did not approve Dina as a place fit to be used as a battlefield and left it in search of a strategic place. From Dina the Guru reached Bhagta. He was given warm welcome there. Then the Guru reached Kotkapura. Here is a local tradition that local chieftain of the place Kapura by name was requested that the Sikhs should be allowed to use the fortress which might protect them in case of the attack by the Mughals. Kapura refused to oblige the Guru. His companions went back to the fortress and closed its doors upon them.

Leaving Kotkapura, the Guru reached Dhillwan from where he moved on to Jaito. Information was brought to him there that Wazir Khan was coming with over five thousand soldiers. From Jaito, the Guru moved towards Khidrana. Santokh Singh writes that Kapura, who has begged pardon of the Guru for his lapse of not accommodating him in his fortress suggested the Guru that Khidrana was the safest place for imminent clash with the Mughals. The Sikhs wished to occupy Khidrana tank, which was the holy reservoir of water in the vast desert before the Mughal forces could hold it. Suraj Parkash bears testimony that a number of Sikhs started from Majha under the leadership of Bhai Bhago of Jhabal and Mahan Singh of Rataul along with the forty Sikhs, who has deserted the Guru during his siege of Anandpur. Some of the influential men from Lahore were also with them. Many more Sikhs joined the party on the way and, by the time it met the Guru in the neighbourhood of Khidrana, it has swelled into a fairly large number.

But Senapat writes that the Sikhs from all directions assembled under the command of the Guru. The Guru along with the advance party was leading, posted himself on a sand hillock, about a mile away. The Sikhs following him encamped in a forest in the neighbourhood of a tank. In order to confuse the
enemy, some of the Sikhs camouflaged the bushes in the area with their clothes. This turned the space into forest of tents. This was done to create the impression that the Sikhs army was living in the tents.

The huge body of troops raised by Wazir Khan attacked the Sikhs at Khidrana. Bute Shah states that the Mughal forces under Wazir Khan inflicted the worst atrocities on the Sikhs.

There is a strong tradition that Mai Bhago, a great woman of Jhabal and devotee of the Guru, dressed as warrior, encouraged the Sikhs under her command to display their valour. She fought bravely in the foremost rank, killing several of the hostile soldiers with a spear. She was wounded in the battlefield but lived to serve the Guru and the Sikhs for many years to come. The forty Sikhs of Majha who had deserted the guru in the battle of Anandpur also fought very bravely. They showed their mettle as the toughest fighters and laid down their lives for the cause of the Guru at Muktsar. However, the Khalsa caused a great loss to the enemy.

Burning and scorching heat, which was throttling and suffocating the enemy added fuel to fire. Consequently, the army of the Mughals retired after suffering defeat.

The battle of Muktsar delineated above was the last battle fought between the Guru Gobind Singh and the Mughals. During the interregnum between the battles of Chamkaur and Muktsar, the Guru during his stay at Dina wrote a historic letter to Emperor Aurangzeb.

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