I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi deals with the history of the Sikhs during the period after Aurangzeb’s death. The Sikh movement had played a very prominent role in the period prior to Aurangzeb. The origin of this movement can be traced to the birth of Guru Nanak\(^1\), the first Apostle of the Sikhs in 1469. Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a religious sect\(^2\). He was himself a man of saintly disposition. The fifteenth and the sixteenth century was a period of religious revival movement in the country. It was a religious movement and had a non-sectarian character primarily. It emphasized the significance of perfect harmony with secular life. The Sikhism as preached by Guru Nanak focuses attention on the importance of the worship of the Almighty, in which transcendence and immanence of God was emphasized. According to Guru Nanak, God was always in a state of unmanifest. He was beyond the sense-comprehension and had no forms. The second most important position was given to the Guru. He was equated with God and also with the word i.e. “the Bani”. Divinity of word was equated with the divinity of the sangat. Sikhism was not an amalgam of Islam and Hinduism. An eminent

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\(^1\) Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din has not provided background to the incidents narrated by him in the text so we have consulted different books in order to give the background.

\(^2\) This chapter is based on the following works:

historian and philosopher Dr.S.S. Hans has rightly observed that Sikhism was not amalgam of Islam and Hinduism but was an alternative to both\textsuperscript{3}.

Guru Nanak expected his followers to abide pure amidst the impurities of the world. Status of a woman must be considered equal to that of a man. Caste system was considered an enemy of the mankind wine and pork were prohibited\textsuperscript{4}. Similarly idol - worship and belief in incarnation of man were rejected. Superstitions were discouraged. Formal rituals and ceremonials were not to be practiced. Emphasis was placed on inculcating moral values. Equality, fraternity and brotherhood was given due importance. Guru Nanak was conscious that man couldn’t live in isolation from the society. He was more than fifty years old when Babur invaded India. The Mughals inflicted heavy loss on men and property. Women suffered the most. To condemn such brutalities on mankind, Guru Nanak made it paramount to seek an interview with Babur. What transpired between the two, we don’t know, but it is generally believed that Babur ordered his soldiers to free the man and let him do whatever he liked. This was the first political contact of the Sikhs with the Mughals. On his death in 1539, Guru Angad was nominated to the Guruship (1539-1552). He popularized the Gurmukhi script which became the sacred medium of literary expression. He also compiled the Biography of Guru Nanak. The institution of langar was also started by him.

He was followed by Guru Amar Das (1552-1574). The Sikh religion had become very popular during this period. Its popularity attracted Akbar\textsuperscript{5},

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Ibid}, p.53.
who visited his court and made a grant of 12 villages. He took some other steps also to make Sikh religion universal, which enabled Sikhism to assume a distinct identity of its own. Guru Ram Das (1574-1581) was the fourth Guru. He was a man of considerable merit. He had a quiet and peaceful disposition but was gifted with a lot of piety, energy and had vivid and effective expression. Akbar had a great respect for Guru Ram Das. He made a grant of 500 bighas of land in Amritsar. It ultimately developed into a celebrated temple of the Sikhs and became a central place of pilgrimage for the Hindus and the Sikhs\(^6\). The Guru took keen interest in encouraging trade amongst the people. Artists and craftsmen were patronized. Industry was promoted which fastened the spirit of enterprise. All these steps proved to be a great asset not only to the Sikhs but also to the Hindus and the Muslims. He was succeeded by his third son Guru Arjan in 1581. He guided the affairs of the community from (1581-1606). He took many steps for the consolidation of the community. He organized tours, met the sangats in different parts of the State. Sikhism spread very fast throughout the country\(^7\). They were also encouraged to donate ‘tithe’ of their subsistence to God. These tithes made it possible to lay the foundation of Amritsar, Jalandhar, Kiratpur, Taran taran etc. Construction of the Golden Temple was commenced in the middle of the tank. It became the central place of worship for the Sikhs. It must be mentioned that at this time Sirhind had become a centre for orthodox revivalism among the Muslims. Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi became the head of the Nakshbandi order of the Sufis. They became bitterly hostile to Guru Arjan’s popularity among the people. He completed the Adi Granth Sahib. It became their spiritual guide.


\(^7\) Ibid., p.56.
Guru’s popularity became an eye sore to the ruling emperor Jahangir. Ultimately he was put to death by the Emperor. His martyrdom had political ramifications too. He was tortured to death in 1606. It was a great tragedy for the Sikh community. The Sikhs were offended, but their hostility to the Mughals remained subdued. He was succeeded by his son Guru Hargobind (1606-1645). He was a man of warlike and adventurous spirit and gathered a small army around him. He defeated an imperial army near Amritsar in 1628. He died in 1645 after nominating his younger grandson Har Rai (1644-1661) as his successor. He was further followed by his son Har Krishan (1661-1664). Nothing important happened during the regimes of these two Gurus. Har Krishan died in 1664. After his death Guru Teg Bahadar son of Har Gobind was nominated as the ninth Guru (1664-1675). Under Guru Teg Bahadar religious differences among the Hindus and the Mughals accentuated. Earlier Guru Nanak had pleaded before Babur, against the large scale massacre of the Hindus and molestation of women at Eminabad. Persecution of the Hindus raised its head again in Kashmir. The persecuted Hindus met Guru Teg Bahadar and asked him to plead their case before Aurangzeb. The ninth Guru met the Emperor on behalf of them. Aurangzeb considered it a direct affront to him. He lost his cool and offered the Guru to seek conversion to Islam. This precipitated a crisis. On Guru’s refusal to embrace Islam, Aurangzeb put him to death. The gulf between the Sikhs and the Mughals was widened, Guru Teg Bahadar was succeeded by his son Guru Gobind Singh in (1675-1708). Though very tender and young in age he was a precocious child. A great writer, thinker, poet as he was, he proceeded to give to humanity a new concept of man like Greek and German philosopher i.e. of a noble soul in a noble body. He created the

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Khalsa in 1699. Men from far off countries turned in huge number to converge upon Anandpur Sahib, to embrace the cult of the ‘Khalsa’. The philosophy behind the ‘Baptism of the sword’ was creating a new social order for advocating the removal of inequality among human beings. In other words Guru Gobind Singh wanted that the religious principles of Sikhism as enunciated by the first nine Gurus should present the substance of life to organize a society on the basis of Egalitarian System⁹. It met with a huge response. Immediately after the death of Aurangzeb, the number of Sikhs increased. Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din witnessed with his own eyes rapid growth in the number of Baptised Sikhs. He further writes that the entire area from Lahore to Delhi was crowded with the Baptised Sikhs¹⁰.

Challenge of the Sikhs:-

   The death of Aurangzeb heralded in the State an era of political decline and uncertainties throughout the country and Punjab was no exception. There were certain forces which were presenting serious challenges to the stability of the Mughal rule in the Punjab. A Sikh movement had emerged as a distinct movement in the Punjab. It was spearheaded by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 A.D. It was primarily a religious movement. The cult of the ‘Khalsa’ was given the Baptism of the sword. The obvious purpose was to impart grace, elegance to human mind, personality and its own thought. It almost transformed the whole thinking of the mankind. The pessimistic thoughts disappeared pronouncedly from this cult. They emphasized the creation of a man with a noble soul in a noble body. The cult came into sharp conflict with Wazir Khan the faujdar

¹⁰ Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.21 (Lines 1-2)
of Sirhind and the Hindu Zamindars at the foot of hilly regions. It resulted in the expulsion of Sikhs from their Headquarters, Anandpur Sahib\(^1\).

In the conflict Guru Gobind Singh lost many Sikhs, four sons, and family members. He wanted to meet Aurangzeb but the meeting did not materialize due to the death of the emperor. He met his successor at Agra in 1707, Bahadur Shah who listened to him gave him hope of restoration, peace and justice. Bahadur Shah was soon engulfed in the fratricidal struggle for the throne. He went to the Deccan to deal with his younger brother Kam Baksh.

Guru Gobind Singh went to Nanded. His meeting with Banda brought about a change in the movement\(^2\). The Sikhs throughout the State and in other parts of the country had been badly maltreated. They suffered by the atrocious conduct of the Mughal Faujdars. They had lacerated breasts and hearts boiling in rage for revenge. These two causes gave the movement a new direction. Guru Gobind Singh’s meeting with Banda Bahadur proved a turning point. He was convinced that time had come to wipe out all the brutalities, atrocities and persecution from the soil of Punjab. The Guru deputed Banda to Punjab on this mission. With his directions Banda marched on the road to Punjab. He came to know of Guru’s death, by a stab wound inflicted by an Afghan, perhaps, a Mughal officer deputed by Wazir Khan. Banda was sad but not disillusioned by the tragedy and proceeded on the march to Punjab to accomplish the designated mission.


Banda’s first objective was to give an all round strength to the movement. Imperial treasury was plundered to augment his own resources. Criminals and other such anti-social elements were also persuaded to purge their criminal thoughts and behavior from their minds. It afforded much needed peace and security to the common man. The abolition of the Zamindari system in the Mughal Revenue structure endeared Banda to a vast majority of the people\textsuperscript{13}. Wazir Khan was killed on May 13, 1710, Sirhind was occupied. Very soon he extended his state over the area stretching between the Ravi in the west and the Ganga in the east and from the neighborhood of Lahore to the vicinity of Panipat. These and many other such steps were the outcome of his rigorous determination to completely wipe out the terror of the Mughal sovereignty from the minds of the people. Battles at various places and drastic actions against powerful nobles were an indication of his resolve to give the people a new orientation in the State polity. Lack of forces, resources, heavy artillery and other requirements never discouraged him but often guided him to change his tactics. When Bahadur Shah attacked Lohgarh, he avoided direct confrontation and disappeared from the scene of battle. He died on February 28, 1712. Jahandar Shah came to power in Delhi. He deputed a trusted Mughal commander Muhammad Amin khan to besiege Banda, but he failed. Jahandar Shah was killed on February 11, 1713. On the February 22, 1713, Farrukhsiyar, occupied the Mughal throne. He deputed Nawab Abdus Samad Khan to smash Banda\textsuperscript{14}. Thus on assumption of Subadari at Lahore, he found a menacing situation for the Mughal rule in the Punjab. He had to measure swords with Banda and the Sikhs. The Sikhs were filled with wrath and


\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.23-24.
determination to avenge the injustice and brutalities committed against the community by the outrageous conduct of the Mughal governors and their followers. The new orientation given to the Sikh movement had overtone of political aspirations. They were fighting for the total emancipation of the people of Punjab from the alien domination.

**Disturbance in Dullah Bhatti Bar**

To the west of Lahore, an area starting at the distance of 10 Kohs from Lahore and spreading over a vast tract of desert in the west was known as Dullah Bhatti Bar\(^\text{15}\). Many tribes had settled in these regions and the most prominent of these were the Kharals, the Gondals, the Bhattis, and the Ranjhas. There were dense forests of thorny bushes throughout the land. It was a land of snakes, rabbits, foxes and some other wild animals. Muslim rulers had occupied these lands since the days of Mahmood but they never did anything to give the people instruction or material for making roads digging wells, and improving agriculture. This naturally prompted the tribes to make a living by robbing and looting the travellers. With the occupation of Lahore by the Mughals, there was some stir in the administrative circles to follow the tribes and to crush the ones who exhibited more audacity than others in plundering. Apart from this, military commanders used it as hunting grounds for themselves and for military exercises by their troops\(^\text{16}\). When Nawab Abdus Samad Khan assumed charge of Subadari at Lahore, he came to the conclusion that the activities of the tribes posed a serious threat and challenge to trade and commerce which was so essential for peace and growth of the State.


Revolt by the Pathan Rulers of Kasoor:-

The Afghans, who came from the north-west and settled in Kasoor and in the surrounding regions of the Central Punjab known as Majha, originally came to hire their services to the Zamindars and gradually sought employment under the Mughals as soldiers in the army or in the revenue and the agriculture departments. Hussain Khan Kheshgi was their leader. They started service under the Mughals but soon began to assume a semi-independent status. They had inveterate enmity and mutual hatred against the Mughals since the very beginning. They found it difficult to live in peace and reconciliation with each other. Khafi Khan says he was incited into rebellion by the Sayyad brothers who headed the Hindustani party in opposition to the Turani party. He took possession of several places in the neighborhood of Kasoor. He turned out many imperial Jagirdars and Faujdars. Abdus Samad Khan could not afford to allow such deadly forces to threaten the Mughals at Lahore. The Nawab accepted the challenge and the threat and proceeded against them.

Revolt of Isa Khan Munj:-

Isa Khan Munj and his father Daulat Khan Munj were also Afghans, who started their career from a humble origin. They gradually became more powerful and started threatening the security and stability of the Mughal State of Punjab and its capital at Lahore. Isa Khan started practising force and occupied people’s possessions and Jagirs through forcible collection of government revenues from far and near. He proved himself a source of great nuisance. He enjoyed the protection of Samsam-ud-Daulah, Khan-i-
Dauran the Mughal noble, favorite of Muhamad Shah(1719-1748). The Nawab sent Shahdad Khan Kheshgi to control the situation.

**Degradation of the Mughal Nobility:-**

The eighteenth century in Indian history is known for the decline of the Mughal Empire. William Irvine and Sir Jadunath Sarkar who wrote the first detailed histories of this period, attributed the decline to a deterioration in the character of the emperors and their nobles. Aurangzeb was considered to be the arch-culprit. He was a religious bigot, and, therefore, failed. He had created more problems during his reign than he was able to solve. It is true that some of them he inherited, but many of them he himself created. He discriminated against certain sections of the nobility which had served the empire like members of a large joint family.

The Mughal nobles who were the pillars of the empire, scummed to the fatal vice of love for ease and luxury. There was inefficiency in the Mughal army. It was composed of diverse racial elements and religious groups such as Turks, Afghans, Rajputs and Hindustanis. With the death of Aurangzeb on March 3, 1707, civil war broke out among his sons. He breathed his last and his three sons entered into a bitter fratricidal war for the possession of the throne of Delhi. Mu’azzam ascended the throne under the title of Bahadur Shah. Though a man of mild and equitable temper, learned, dignified and generous to a fault he was too old to prevent the decline of the Empire. His death on February 27, 1712 was followed by another war of succession among his four sons,

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Jahandar Shah, Azim-us-Shan, Jahan Shah and Rafi-us-Shan. The last three were killed and Jahandar Shah occupied the throne. Zulfikar was the king maker. Both were executed by Farrukhsiyar, who proclaimed himself emperor in 1713. On February 22, 1713, he transferred Abdus Samad Khan Diler Jung from Kashmir to Punjab to put an end to the Sikh revolt. Farrukhsiyar owed his throne to the two Sayyad brothers Husain Ali, deputy governor of Patna, and Abdullah governor of Allahabad, who began to exercise a real power in the State and placed one prince after another on the throne. Party policies formed an important phase in the court life during the reign of Farrukhsiyar. The deterioration in the character of nobility during the eighteenth century had a large share in hastening the decline of the Mughal Empire. Jealousy and rivalry among the nobles in different sections, particularly the Turanis, the Iranis, the Afghans and the Hindustanis was also the other reason for the decline. These parties remained under control till the death of Bahadur Shah. The Mughal imperial court had become a centre of intrigues and counter intrigues by one party against the other.

**Revolt in Kashmir:**

In the times of Bahadur Shah and Jahandar Shah (1708-1713), Nawab Abdus Samad Khan was functioning as a Governor of Kashmir. On Feb 27 1713, Farrukhsiyar transferred Nawab Abdus Samad Khan to the Punjab to exterminate the Sikhs. Zakariya Khan was made faujdar of Jammu. Zabardast Khan was sent to Kashmir. The decline of the Mughal Empire was also responsible for the revolt in Kashmir. No emperor after Aurangzeb ever visited Kashmir. Religious differences and the communal disharmony had turned the State into a hot bed of intrigues and conspiracies. Natural
consequences were leading to a huge turmoil in the State was added the central
government’s neglect which failed to provide the people and the State with a capable
governor who could ensure peace and prosperity urgently needed for the people and the
State. The Nawab was well-aware of the state of affairs in Kashmir. When Farukhsiyar
transferred him from Kashmir to Punjab, the situation there got worse. Disturbers of
peace all around raised their heads in the State and the most prominent of them was
Sharf-ud-Din Kashmiri, whom the Hindus and the Muslims both hated from the core of
their heart. It was under these circumstances that he was asked by the Emperor to restore
peace to the land of beauty.