CHAPTER III
SANGAT
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BACKGROUND

One of the greatest achievements in the field of politics today is that almost every civilized nation is committed to a democratic form of government. The evolution of this system has a long and a varied history. It has passed through various phases, starting from the early period when men first learnt to live together in a family, obeying the orders of the head of the family, down to the present stage of an elected form of government, in which the power to rule is not vested in one man but in the whole nation. Centralization, which was the keynote of the politics in ancient times, has given place to decentralization which has gradually developed in modern times.

The world forces in the field of religion have moved quite parallel to the forces in the field of politics. In the ancient times, the priestly functions were monopolized by specially qualified men who had a strong hold over the religious feelings of the people. Gradually, they became tribal gods and prophets and their word became the law for the common man in religious matters. It is only in recent times that we find great prophets, like the Buddha, Christ, Confucius and Guru Nanak rising above the parochial level of the tribe and thinking and striving for the welfare of mankind as a whole.
The development of democratic institutions in religion had a very slow growth. A careful study of the Vedas shows that national life and activities in the earliest times in India were expressed through popular assemblies and institutions, like 'Samiti' and 'Sabha'. The 'Samiti' was the national assembly of the whole people having both political and non-political functions. It had its 'Pati', the president, who was insuperable in his powers. Samiti was regarded as eternal 'a daughter of Prajapati', the Creator. The 'Samiti' had a history extending from the later half of the millennium of the Rig-Veda down to about 700 B.C. In the Imperial epoch, this institution disappeared. Another important institution of the Vedic Age was the 'Sabha', known as the sister of the 'Samiti', one of the two daughters of 'Prajapati'. The 'Sabha' had its president as 'Sabha Pati'. The Sabha and Samiti both worked on the principles of co-operation.

The religious life of the people was organized through the Vidatha assembly, the parent folk-assembly which existed even earlier than the 'Samiti'. Limited Monarchy existed in the Vedic Age and in the post Vedic period. Kingship was dissolved and democratic government were set up in various places known as the 'Gunas', 'Sanghas' or Republics. Panini has given a very useful and valuable information about the existence

2. Ibid, pp. 16-20.
of the Hindu republic in India in about 500 B.C.  

The Buddha founded the religious Sangha known as Bhikkhu Sangha or the republic of the Bhikkhus, the constitution of which was a copy of the political Sangha. The Buddha adopted a democratic constitution for his own Church (Sangha). Besides the election of 'Sanghatthera', there was also the formal system of moving of resolutions. Definite rules were laid down regarding the method of moving resolutions in the assembly. Generally, the proposal was repeated twice, and if no objections were raised, it was taken as passed. In case of any objection, the consensus of the assembly was determined by the votes of the majority. Definite rules were laid down for the counting of the votes and there was a special officer for the purpose of ballot-voting by means of wooden sticks (salaka). For different kinds of ecclesiastical acts, like the inflicting of punishment for an offence, the restoration of the privileges of a monk, the admission or readmission of a monk into the Sangha, the minimum number of members required to form the panels was fixed. In certain cases, even the absence of a single member made an act invalid, and the resolution had to be passed unanimously. In every Sangha, office-bearers were elected by unanimous consent for carrying on various functions,

3. Agrawala, V.S., India as Known to Panini, p.424.

for example, the distribution of food and dresses, the provision of beds, the erection of monasteries, etc.\(^5\)

The Buddha, in a meeting of the Sangha, told his 'Bhikkhus' the seven principles for the welfare of a community, such as to meet together in full and frequent assemblies, to carry out the duties of the order in concord, to act in accordance with the rules of the Sangha laid down to honour, revere and support the elders, not to succumb to cravings and to feel delighted in a life of solitude, and to train their minds. These conditions were laid down as a keynote to the prosperity of the Bhikkhus.\(^6\)

The community of the monks (Sangha) and of laymen also form the chief disciplinary regulation in Jainism, with specific moral and spiritual codes prescribed.

Originally, the unity of God and the important rituals, such as daily prayers, fasts, alms, pilgrimage and belief in Mohammed as the Prophet of God were the main pillars of Islam. On the social side, it preached equality and brotherhood of Muslims, and, hence, the absence of a priestly class. But with the passage of time, this simple faith was divided into various sects and systems under the pressure of life and logic, such as 'Kharijia', and 'Shiah', 'Murjia' and 'Qadiriya'. The

rise of Sufism in Islam developed metaphysical systems and the organization of monastic orders. The Sufi order provided the companionship of saints which was necessary for spiritual welfare. The Sheikh regulated the conduct of the companions and watched their spiritual progress.7

CONTENTIONS OF THE SIKH GURUS

The organization of the Sangat system by the Sikh Gurus was a revolutionary step. It practically helped in levelling down distinctions of caste, creed and colour in the society. Removing the barriers of tribe and station, it worked for equality and brotherhood of mankind and elevated the spiritual life of the people.

Guru Nanak felt that the real cause of the people's misery was their disunity born out of the diversity of beliefs. Therefore, wherever he went, he left behind a Sangat, an association of followers with the instructions that they should build a gurdwara (Sikh temple) of their own, where they should meet regularly and sing the Guru's hymns. The forums of the Sangats were known as 'dharamsalas'. As a result of Guru Nanak's travels and the activities of the successor Gurus, there sprang up all over the country a network of temples and centres of Sikh missionary activities known as Sangats. Each of these Sangats was placed under the charge of a leader, known as Bhai ji, the revered brother, who presided over the

7. Tara Chand, Dr, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, pp.51-81.
congregations and instructed them in their spiritual, religious, social and moral duties. The Bhai ji, performed his duties in all humility, regarding it as a service entrusted to him by the Master.

The Sikh Gurus enjoined upon the Sikhs to join 'Satsang' or 'Sadhsangat', as the company of the holy people had manifold advantages. They believed that the influence of 'Satsang' was great on one's personality and even bad and wicked people could be reformed in the company of good people. They repudiated distinctions of caste and birth and advocated the worship of only one God. The society of truth-seekers and worshippers of God and 'Nam' was encouraged by them.

The 'Nam' (God's Name) is a symbol in Sikhism to denote the all-pervading and omnipresent spirit that sustains the Universe. The constant meditation on the 'Nam' destroys one's ego altogether. One can attain perfect 'Samyoga' (union) through 'Satsang', where one takes to 'kirtan' and the 'Nam'. His is a life of active service to all.

How is Satsangat, the society of the holy known? The Name of the one God is mentioned there.8

Rag Asa, M.I

8. समृद्धां दैवी नन्दने निम्ब वेद तथा स्यरसे

निव प्रब, दिप 1, लि: 72
In the society of the Holy, one becometh holy, and one runneth after virtue, forsaking his sins.

Rag Asa, M.I

One sitteth in the saint's holy society, and, through the True Nam, cometh the mind's peace.

Sri Rag, M.III

Associating with the Truth, one attaineth truth, and loveth the True Nam.

Var Vadhans, M.III

By good fortune doth one meet the saints, and then in association with them one singeth the praise of the Lord.

Gauri Guareri, M.III

The Priceless Nam in the society of the saints; and it is by great good fortune that one attains to it.

Ram Kali, M.III, Ashtpadian

Without the true Guru, one (truly) associates not, and, without the Word, one is ferried not across: If one uttereth even the Lord's praise all too spontaneously, One's soul mergeth in the ever-soul.

Rag Maru, M.III

9. उत्तम मन्त्र उत्तम ज्ञेयं तु तत्त्र तथेऽधर्मं येऽहे

10. मयो अस्त्रादित्यं भवानि भूष्यं योच

11. मयो सहभ्यं महिष्य सदौ तः प्रवचना

12. तयेऽज्जेन सदा मन्त्र भिन्नै भोत धुते यथार्थे

13. मयो मुक्तिः भिन्नं तांत्रिकं वक्रणं प्रस्तुतं उपजयम्

14. महत्त्वं चतुरस्त्रादित्यं तें तेत्रं विवेकं यथांगं येऽहे

क्षण अर्थम्, समर्थविश्वा? म: 1, र: 414

भि नान, भवन 3, र: 69

रजन रसमिति, भवन 3, र: 586

ब्रह्म भिन्न, भवन 3, र: 158

कम वर्षी, भवन 3, र: 909

भूस भवन 3, र: 1068
There are four castes and four stages of life.  
But he, who contemplates the Lord, is supreme among men.  
As the bitter 'arinda'(castor) plant,  
  near the sweet-smelling 'chandni' tree,  
becometh as fragrant as its neighbour,  
So doth the sinner, associating with  
the saints, become a saint.  

Gond, M.IV

The society of the saints is the school  
where one is instructed in the merits of God.  

Var Kaur, M.IV

He who sheds his lust, wrath,  
envy and the conceit of 'maya'  
Bringeth into his self virtue,  
  contentment, compassion and righteousness.  
And the load of birth and death is off his head,  
And joining the society(of the holy),  
his mind becometh pure,  
And the perfect Guru ferries him across.  
And then one's mind becometh the dust for others  
  to tread upon,  
And all creation of no ones but of loved friends.  

Asa, M.V.

15. यहाँ धर्म च हैं  
जानि बदल जाति जाय, जाय ने जानि धर्म जाय ने भवनावृत  
निक्षेप जातिभिंत स्वामी जातिभिंत  
हिंदु महात्मा भिन्न महात्मा  
तीर्थ मत जै तीर्थ मत जै मुनि  
त से विवेक सीमाः अवकाशः  

16. मां देव सूरज कुंजखुब इतसतः तैं नित कृत द्रव विनिक्षण  
करत मरणः, मां 4, प: 861  

17. कहा लेख भारतक भर भारत ते भेदज मां लूके जरे  
मां मौल्य लाभक पुरुष मां दिन भये विद जीजीर  
करे तत्र भव भव्ये मां भव भवये  
भिक्षु मां भव मां भव मां भव भव्ये मां भव भवये  
मां ती वह वहित तीर्थ मां भव मां तीर्थ मां मां  
मां भव वहित मां भव भव्ये भव भवये  

असा, मां 5, प: 379
Eternally blessed is the society of saints,
meeting whom one is imbued with the Lord.
By the Guru's Grace, getteth he eternal joy,
Yea, he who contemplates God, his mind is in bloom, and indescribable is his state.

Asa. M.V

Gather together, O brothers, and attuning yourselves to God, dispel your duality.

Basant. M.V

Kabir, blessed is the 'chandan' tree, girdled by useless growth:
But, this too becometh fragrant like the 'chandan', for it, in its nearness, livest.

Slok, Kabir

Kabir: associate only with the saint, which lasteth with thee like a friend:
Yea, associate not with the worshippers of maya, for, they destroy thee in the end.

Slok, Kabir

Kabir: even if one discoursed with the saints for a brief moment, it yieldeth fruit: for, the time one passeth with the saint is never lost.

Slok, Kabir
Without holy company man is caught
in the web of transmigration of the
soul and cannot get peace of mind.23

Bhai Gurdas, Var, 38

The Sikh Gurus laid great stress on 'Satsang', as, in their view, only Satsang could initiate one in the
worship of the Nam. Satsang could remove all the evils of
one's mind and, thus, help one in developing the power of
control over one's emotions and so effect the purification
of one's soul. The Gurus attached so much sanctity to
'Satsangat' that they considered that in it lay the true
dwelling of 'Hari'. In their opinion, it wielded great
influence in transforming even the lives of wicked people. A
touch of the good company could change the course of their
lives. While laying stress on the importance and value of
'Satsangat' they also made it clear that the company of bad
people could ruin their lives and they would be lost for ever
in the cycle of transmigration.

The Gurus also enjoined upon the Sikhs that they must
love and respect the 'Gurmukhs' (the God-orientated), who
were constantly busy in meditating on the God and had understood
the secret of true living. They laid stress on the service of
saints as a part of their sacred duty. The Gurus believed that

23. ਰਾਜ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਚੁਣ ਸੌ ਸੋਨਾ ਸ਼ਰਟੇ        
ਬੁਬੇਰਾ ਤੂਕ ਕ ਸੁਆ ਸੌ ਸੋਨਾ ਖੀਟ ਕੂਲਾ ਸ਼ਰਟੇ

ਰਾਜ ਮੁਕ਼ਤਾਮ, ਵਰ 38, ਪ੃ਹਾਈ 12

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Satsangat helped in the cultivation of virtues, like self-control and the concentration of mind. They regarded the 'Gurmukhs', as the viceregents of Hari on earth.

In quest of Him, I have come to realize that without 'Sadh-Sangat' one cannot achieve salvation.24

Ma, M.V

I'm but the dust of the saints' feet; yea, I seek ever their refuge. The saints are my only powerful support; the saints are my only embellishment. I am now pleased with the saints, for such was the writ of my past deeds; And I surrendered my mind to the saints. 25

Sorath, M.V

Such is the glory of the saints, That, associating with them, one is rid of all one's dirt, and myriads of one's sins being dispelled, one's mind becometh immaculate. 26

Bilawal, M.V

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24. ੇ ਨ ਨ ਸ਼ਨੂ ਕੁ ਲੀ ਰਿਤ ਮੇਖਾ
ੱ ਘ ਸੇ ਊਰਾਕ ਧਾਰ ਤ ਲੇਖ

ਸੁਸ, ਮਹਾਂ 5, ਪ: 373

25. ਅ ਸਿ ਲੂ ਤੀ ਦੁਹਵਾ ਫ਼ਿਕਰ ਅਧ ਸਿ ਟ ਲੋ ਸਵਲ
ੰ ਸ ਮਾ ਫ਼਼ਰੋ ਹੋ ਸਵਲ ਅਧ ਬਾਲਾ
ਅ ਸਿ ਲੂ ਨੀਘੂ ਖੱਟ ਅਧ ਸਿ ਟ
ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਰਿਤ ਮੇਥ ਬਿੱਕ ਜੁਲੀ

ਸੇਵਕ, ਮਹਾਂ 5, ਪ: 614

26. ਸੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਾ ਸਨ ਸੇ ਬਾਲੋ ਅਧ ਬਾਲਾ ਕੰਘਾ

ਵਿਰਹੰਦਰ, ਮਹਾਂ 5, ਪ: 809
By associating with the saints the face becometh bright.
By associating with the saints all filth is removed,
By associating with the saints divine knowledge is revealed.
By associating with the saints everything is decided,
By associating with the saints God is known to be near.
By associating with the saints the jewel of the 'Nam' is obtain
By associating with the saints we should strive for the one God—what mortal can express a saint's praises?
Nanak, the glory of saints is merged into that of God. 27

Sukhmani

By associating with the saints all enemies become friends.
By associating with the saints man becometh very pure
By associating with the saints man’s feet walk not away—
A man cannot be evil who associateth with the saints—
By associating with the saints man knoweth the supreme joy,
By associating with the saints, man abandoneth all self conceit.
Only God knoweth his saints' greatness—
Nanak, there is an understanding between God and His saints. 28

Sukhmani

27. ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਲੋਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਤੁੱਨੀ ਬੇਠ ਸਾਰਾ ਜੀ ਖੁਦ ਸੋਝੇ ਰੇਖ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਲੋਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਜਾਂਕੁਝ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਲੋਂ ਬੁਰੂਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰਣ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਲੋਂ ਖੁਸੀ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇਖੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਲੋਂ ਪੁਰੀ ਜਾਂਕੁਜ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇਖਣ ਪੁਰੁਸ਼ ਨਹੁੰਦੀ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਲੋਂ ਖੁਸੀ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨੀ ਦਰਸਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਮੋਂ ਪੁਰਾਂ ਭਾਵ ਸੰਭਾਲਿਆ

28. ਸਾਰਾ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੁਭਾਨੁ ਜੀ ਸਾਰਾ ਸਮੂਹ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਸੁਣੁ ਪੁਲੀਦਰ
ਸਾਰਾ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਵਿਆਮ ਮੋਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੋ ਦੇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਨਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੋ ਨਹੁੰਦੀ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਸਾਰਾ ਨਹੁੰਦੀ ਅਭਾਵਨਾਤਮ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇਖ ਦੂਰ ਪੁਰਾਂ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਸਾਰਾ ਯਦਾ ਪੁਰਾਂ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਚਹੁੰਦੀ ਪੁਰੁਸ ਸਾਰਾ ਪੁਰਾਂ ਕਰਦਾਰੀ

ਵਿਚਾਰਾਦਿ ਮੁਤਮਿਤ੍ਵ, ਪਾਣੀ 5, ਪਾਸ਼ 271

ਵਿਚਾਰਾਦਿ ਮੁਤਮਿਤ੍ਵ, ਪਾਸ਼ 271
In the dwelling of the saints God's name is found —
The merchandise thou comest into the world to obtain.
Renounce pride, weigh God's Name in thy heart.
And purchase it with thy life.
Load thy merchandise, set out with the saints.
And, having freed thyself from the entanglements of the deadly sins,
Everyone will congratulate thee;
Thy countenance shall be bright and
thou shalt obtain honour in God's Court. 29

Sukhmani

In the society of the saints man fixeth his attention on the one God.
They who sing the excellences and praises of God,
shall, Nanak, by the favour of Guru obtain their reward.30

Sukhmani

The Gurus laid stress on the company and service of the saints. They looked upon those persons as the real Sikhs who yearned for the company of such saints and revered them whole-heartedly. This idea has been elaborated by the Gurus in the following slokas included in the Guru Granthi:

29. निलए जनण तद्भन्दु कीँच जयंगह जय भय सौंड भेऊ परिषाज
जी भजिअड़ भेंग मेिक जभ भय जिकीय भेंग जेदी
लाह भेंग मैंइ भय जमक भज मार्य जिखिस्त मैंइ जीथ भेंग लुई भे मूर भेँग बाज़ रूख भेंग
लिख भरभुख हिलन धकड़ज रत्नाक ज दे मौर बजिअड़े

Guru Granthi, Sahib 5, p:283

30. तल का देश ने रहजिओ नल ने भेंग किन घनी
कुल भैथिइ तोड़क नल ने बरी कुल पूरक ठल जो नदे

Guru Granthi, Sahib 5, p:285
The saint is he, with whom the Lord is pleased, 
yea, the saint doeth only what the Lord doeth. 
The Lord shieldeth the saint with His mighty hands. 
And abideth He with the saint, night and day.31

Gond, M.V

The saints occupy themselves with the Name alone, 
and in the blissful song of the Lord they have their peace. 
To them alike are friends and foes, 
and other than God they know not another. 32

Asa, M.V

I hear Thy Gospel, O Lord, from Thy saints, 
For, Thy saints ever echo Thy praise and are filled with Thy song-divine and bliss.33

Bilawal, M.V

The poisonous dirt (of sins) of ages sticks to us: 
Lead us on to the society of the saints that we are rid of it. 
As gold, heated by fire, is rid of its impurities. 34

Dhanasri, M.IV

31. मैं नहीं मैं तिन जग्गे वाम मैं बोहित ने देखे जंग 
भाषा भक्त 8, पृ867

32. मैं जव भुक भे मे जग दिग दे भवित वाम भुक न लगती 
देवरंज से है लकड़ु वाम भग भुक भुक धीरा भिनित 
भिन भुक नले दे भव हम्म भुक भुक भुक न लगती 
भाषा भक्त 5, पृ: 392

33. मैं ने खलीक भुक नी जज 
वाम भुक धीरा भिनित भहम 
पूरक पूरक वाम दिलि भुक भुक 
संस्करक भक्त 5, पृ: 820

34. माता माता ने सच्चे सीधे भेज लिख जान किव भय भरवी 
भिन भुक झीता जीता भर हम लिख हुई जी 
भागभागी भक्त 4, पृ: 666
We shed our ego of I-am-ness, end our desires, when, we seek the society of the holy. 35

Bhagat, M.V

The Sikh Gurus had an abiding faith in the company of the saints, holy men and the 'Gurmukhs'. They considered that the influence of their company could purify the mind and free it from egoism and preoccupation with the worldly persuits and lead to emancipation from bondage.

Now, I am jealous of no one;
Now that I have attained unto the society of the saints.
Yea, I am estranged with no one;
nor is anyone a stranger unto me.
Indeed I am the friend of all. 36

Kanka, M.V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTION OF SANGAT UNDER THE GURUS

The importance given by the Sikh Gurus to 'Sangat', 'Satsang', 'Sadh Sangat' in promoting spiritual life was not limited only to the purifying of one's thought. The Sikh Gurus believed in the miraculous effects of the Sangat in changing and transforming the very lives of the people, and they raised this institution everywhere they went and highlighted its importance to whosoever they met.

35. ਤੁੰ ਤੁਹਾਦੇ ਆਧੁਨਕ ਜੁਟਾ ਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਨਿਵਾਰ ਰਿਹਾਂ ਸੰਗਤ Harris, ਭਾਈ ਰਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ 5, ਪ: 542
36. ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੋ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਸੰਗਤ, ਨਾ ਹੇ ਮੈਂ ਸੰਗਤ ਲੇਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਨਾ ਹੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਸੰਗਤ ਲੇਖ ਸੰਗਤ Harris, ਭਾਈ ਰਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ 5, ਪ: 1299
The foundation of this institution was laid by Guru Nanak who started Sangat and got 'dharamsalas' built during the course of his travels for the congregation of his followers. He dispelled darkness and ignorance of the people and condemned the useless religious ceremonies of the Hindus and the Muslims in a very tactful and convincing manner.

Guru Nanak, while at Sultanpur, started doing 'kirtan' (the singing of the holy hymns) with Bhai Mardana and converted many people to his faith, of which Bhai Bhagirath and Bhai Mansukh are well known. During his lifetime, Guru Nanak undertook four great tours. During these tours, which extended far and wide, he converted people to his beliefs and started Sangat wherever he went, enjoined upon the people to sing praises of God.

During the course of his first eight-year-long tour, he visited several sacred places in the country. He visited Saidpur, the present City of Eminabad in the Gujranwala District (now in West Pakistan) and stayed with Lalo, a carpenter and enlightened him. He refused to partake of the feast of Malik Bhago, who was the steward of the Pathan owner of Saidpur and revealed to him and the Brahmins the futility of caste, colour and creed. He then visited the notorious

37. Ganda Singh, Dr, A Brief Account of the Sikh people, pp.10-11
robber Shaikh Sajjan and converted him to his views. It is said that the first Sikh Temple was constructed on the spot where this conversion took place. He then visited Kurukhetar and made many converts there. He enjoined upon his Sikhs to live in harmony, always remember God's Name and to acknowledge the greetings of others by saying 'Sat Karta'. The Guru told them that for the repetition of God's Name, the companionship of holy men was necessary and along with that, truth, contentment and restraint of the senses should be practised daily.

During his tour towards the east, the Guru with an earnest desire to find a religion acceptable to all people went to Gorakhmata, a temple of Gorakhnath in Uttar Pradesh, Benaras, Gaya, Kamrup, Puri, Ajodhan, Baisiar and Talwandi. In the course of his travels he had discussions with the Jogis at Gorakhmata, converted Chatur Dass, the Brahmin, and Krishan Lal and Har Lal, two eminent young Pandits of Benaras; converted Queen Nurshah of Kamrup and instructed her to give up occultism and repeat God's Name; met Shaikh Brahm(Ibrahim) during his visit to the shrine of Shaikh Farid, brought Jhanda, a carpenter at Baisiar into his fold. Thereafter, he visited his parents at Talwandi.

40. Meharban, Sodhi, Janam Sakhi, Gost, 112.
In his travels towards the west, the Guru again visited Pakpatan and met Shaikh Kamal and Shaikh Brahm and proceeded to Dipalpur, Kangapur, Kasur and Patti in the Lahore District. He then visited Windpur near Chola Sahib, Goidwal, Sultanpur, his old headquarters, where he had worked as a government official, Vairowal, Jalalabad, Kari Pathan-di in the Amritsar District, and Batala. He again visited Saidpur and met Bhai Lalo. He then visited Pasrur, Sialkot and reached Mithankot where he met Mian Mitha.

The practice of singing the hymns was initiated by the Guru for both morning and evening assemblies. As a result of these activities of the Guru, Sikh societies sprang up wherever he went. An important Sangat of this kind was established at Kartarpur, where in the early hours of the morning the 'Japji' and 'Asa-di-Var' were sung, followed by the reading of the Guru's hymns, which continued through the forenoon. After this, the breakfast used to be served. Then again in the afternoon, the reading and singing of the Guru's hymns were resumed. In the evening, Sodar was read. Then the Sikhs dined together. The repast ended with further singing. After the nightfall, the Sohala was read. During the day, when

41. Meharban, Sodhi, Janam Sakhi, Gost, 147.
42. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhian, 32-36.
not busy in prayers, the Guru gave instructions to all. He cleared the doubts of Malo and Bhago as regards the Hindu penances, which he described as acts of ignorance and expressed his views that devout singing and listening to the holy songs and praises of the Almighty were meritorious acts. When one Kalu asked him to define a holy man, he said that the holy person cherished the welfare of others and shunned the company of the wicked.  

In his journey to southern India, he reached the Dravidian country, now named Tamil Nadu. He went to Saravaji, and met Narbhi the Jain Priest and brought them round to his views. He then proceeded to Ceylon, and met Raja Sivanabh and his countrymen. They became his admirers. Back from the journey he went to Achal Batala on the fair of Shivrat, where he met Jogis and their leader, Bhangarnath, and dragged them out of the grooves of thoughts that led to the renunciation of the world.

In his journey to the North, he went as far as Srinagar in Kashmir and made many followers including Brahm Dass, an eminent Kashmiri Pandit. He penetrated into the Himalayas and scaled lofty peaks and arrived at Mount Sumer, where he had

discussions with the Sidhs and composed the 'Sidh Gost'.
He returned to the Punjab and travelled in the north-western direction and reached Hasan Abdal and humbled Wali of Kandhar, a bigoted and selfish priest and then proceeded to Mecca, the holiest place of Mohammedan worship. He brought round the Wazis and Mulas to his views, and then went to Madina and Baghdad, from where he returned to the Punjab and, after a brief stay at Multan, went to Kartarpur where he gave up the pilgrim's dress and started preaching his doctrines to the people. He discoursed on religious subjects and diffused spiritual light and dispelled mental darkness. The Sohila was chanted in the evening and the Janj in the early hours of the morning in the religious assemblies or Sangats started by him at Kartarpur.

The holding of religious assemblies or congregations of the Sikhs was continued by Guru Angad at Khadur. The musicians sang the 'Asa-di-Var' in the morning. The Sikhs, particularly the lepers, who came from great distances returned to their respective homes after being heated, singing the Guru's praise. The Guru preached and expounded Guru Nanak's hymns. At about 9'O clock in the forenoon, the whole Sangat sat in a line and received sacred food from the Guru-ka-langar. The Guru was

46. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi; 49-50
particularly fond of children and their sports. He used to witness sometimes wrestling-matches in the early afternoon and would often take the opportunity of instructing people assembled there to overcome anger and other deadly sins. After that, he would sit with the Sangat where Balwand and Satta, the two famous minstrels of the durbar entertained the congregation with vocal and instrumental music. The sodar was then sung and food distributed. It was followed by further singing of Guru's hymns and then the Guru and his disciples retired for the night. Guru Angad during his visits to various places removed the doubts of Jogis of different sects, such as Harinath Jogi, Gujjar, (a blacksmith); Dhinga, (a barbar); and Paro, of the Julka tribe; Malu Shah (a Mughal soldier); and Kidaru, Mana and Khiwa, of the village of Bhairo, and made them his followers.48

In the times of Guru Amar Dass, the Sangat used to assemble at Goindwal where the Sikhs met and treated one another affectionately, as if they were brothers. All men were allowed to have free access to the Guru. They sat in a line and ate together, followed by the singing of the sacred hymns by the Sangat. He exhorted them to do good to all and not to get conceited, not to look at the wives of other persons with an evil eye, to shun evil company, to give up cunning, falsehood

and hypocrisy, to meditate on the Guru's instructions and to associate only with the virtuous. The Sikhs once asked the Guru who were the greatest saints and worshippers of God. The Guru replied that they who repeated the Lord's Name, renounced pride and restrained their desires were the greatest saints.49

The Guru, because of the enmity of Dattu, left Goindwal for Basarke where a Jat built a residence for him. The Guru got its door bricked and on it had these words written: "whosoever openeth this door is no Sikh of mine, nor am I his Guru". The Guru's Sangat was much distressed at losing their Guru and they sought the help of Bhai Budha and eventually went to the Guru's house at Basarke. They made an opening in the wall and all entered through it. The Guru demanded their explanation but eventually could not resist the love and devotion of his Sikhs and returned to Goindwal and resumed spiritual and ethical instructions to them.50

Guru Amar Dass, during his visits to various places, removed the doubts of many people and converted them to his faith. Notable among them were Bhai Paru, Bhai Lalo, Mahesha of Sultanpur, Kingurinath (head of a band of Jogis), and Alayar (a rich Mohammedan householder of Delhi whom he sent

as a missionary to DevantaX to organize Sangat). He asked Gopi, Mohan Mal, Ram and Amru, Bhai Malhan, Ranu Mehta, Gobind and Dipa, Gango, Ughar, Taru and Jhanda to associate with saints, avoid evil company, meditate on the Holy Word and sing the Guru's hymns. He converted Bhikha, a bard of Sultanpur. He visited Hardwar in compliance with Akbar's suggestion, crossed the Sutlej and went up to Pehoa, a place of pilgrimage near Thanesar or Kurkhetar, and converted many Brahmins. He then proceeded to Thanesar, Kankhal and Hardwar where he was received by the Jogis, Bairagis, Sanyasis, Brahmacharis and Pandits. He converted Gango, (a Khatri of Basi tribe), Phiria and Katra of places in the neighbourhood of Delhi, and asked them to go among the people to preach the true Nam. Crowds of people gathered round them when they heard them singing hymns of the Guru and embraced Sikh religion. The monasteries of the Jogis were converted into Sikh temples, Bhai Dipa, Bhai Khanur, Bhai Lalu, and Bhai Kidara were the important Sikhs of the Dalla Sangat. 51

As a result of the increasing influence of the Sikh Gurus on the people, the number of their followers increased and thus the Sikh Sangats were formed in every part of the country. Several Muslims, too, were converted to the Sikh faith. As the number of followers increased, it became difficult to control them effectively. Guru Amar Dass took a great

administrative step to solve this problem and divided his spiritual empire into twenty-two provinces, each known as 'Manji', which was further divided into 'Piris'. The charge of each 'Manji' was given to a devoted and pious Sikh whose duty was to preach the Guru's teachings in his locality and to act as a leader for the Sangat of that locality. The charge of such 'Manjis' was given to men of merit without consideration of caste, creed or sex. A Muslim of Kapurthala was given the charge of a 'Manji' and several 'Manjis' were placed in the charge of women. According to Dr G.C. Narang "the organization of the Manji system must have gone a long way in strengthening the foundations of the church and carrying on the propaganda in all parts of the country. Besides carrying the Sikh message far and wide it gave the Sikhs an organization which was later converted into a revenue-producing agency."

Guru Ram Dass, in obedience to the orders of Guru Amar Dass, visited Amritsar to preach God's Name and to build a place of pilgrimage at Amritsar. He spent many months at Amritsar, supervising the execution of the holy tank. He induced the Sangat to join the excavation work of the tank under Bhai Budha's supervision. Sikh Sangats from far and wide

came and participated in this sacred task.

The Guru visited Lahore and turned his parents' house into a temple and built a well for the performance of ablutions by the Sikhs and, thus, created a Sangat there. As a result of the Guru's teachings, men of all classes and religions flocked around the Guru to hear his sacred hymns and a large number of them became converted to form Sangats. The Guru converted Handal of Jandiala at Goindwal, blessed him and asked him to return to his native town, repeat the Holy Nam and initiate others into the faith of Baba Nanak. Handal formed the Sikh Sangat at Jandiala.55

The Guru converted Tiratha, Bishan Dass, Nanak Chand, Paru, Maiya, Japa, Kanhaiya, Tulsa, Dharam Dass, Dugar Dass, Dipa, Jetha, Sansari, Bula and Tirath. They asked the Guru how they could be saved. The Guru told them to go away morning and evening to the congregation of the holy and to meditate on God's Name, to serve the holy, to build a temple of God and feed the wayfarers.56

Guru Arjan Dev undertook the construction of the sacred tank and 'Harimandar' or Temple of God at Amritsar with the help of the Sikh Sangat. He appointed his most trusted Sikhs like Bhai Budha, Bhai Salo, Bhai Bhagtu, Bhai Piara, Bhai Bahlo

and Bhai Kaliana to supervise the construction which was eventually completed with the service and contribution of the Sikh Sangats under the supervision of Bhai Budha, Bhai Bhagtu and Bhai Bahlo. The Guru told the Sikh Sangat that as the tank was built through the sincere efforts of the devout Sikhs, all sins would be removed and all desires would be fulfilled by bathing in it and by reciting the Nam.\(^{57}\) The construction of the tank and the Harimandar and the sanctity attached to it by Guru Arjan, gave a rallying place to the Sikhs and, thus, led to the development of a mighty Sikh Sangat at Amritsar. Guru Arjan Dev visited Khem Karan, Chunian and other villages where he preached and started Sikh Sangats.\(^{58}\) He went to Jabar where he remained for sometime and converted Kidara, Kheda, Mukanda, Tulsa, Lalu and others. The Guru visited Lahore and rested in Dabi Bazar where a 'bowli' (a stepped well) was constructed. People of all classes, hearing the Guru's fame, flocked to see him. Jogi Sambhunath, the Hindu saints Kahna and Chhajju, the Muslim saints Shah Hussain, Wali Shah, Shah Sulaiman, Shah Anayat, Qadari, Shaikh Wali Shah and others came to see him and got their doubts removed. The Guru visited the shrine of Guru Nanak at Dera Baba Nanak in the Gurdaspur District and proceeded to Barath to see Baba Sri Chand. Thereafter, he


\(^{58}\) Gian Singh, Giani, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p.82.
returned to Amritsar. The Guru, apprehending a raid from Sulahikhan, left Amritsar and returned to Wadali.

Guru Arjan sent Madho to instruct the Kashmiris when a deputation of the Kashmiris waited upon him. He told Madho to instruct them to rise early, repeat and sing the Guru's hymns, associate with holy people, and share their food with others and live in humility.

The Guru accepted the advice of the Sikhs of Delhi who requested him to reject his son's matrimonial alliance with Diwan Chandu Shah's daughter. The Emperor's Diwan was a very haughty person and had used unbecoming language for the Guru. The Guru, in spite of his knowledge that it would sow the seeds of strife, rejected the marriage presents of Chandu Shah and accepted the betrothal presents of Narain Dass of the village of Dallia who had offered the hand of his daughter to the Guru's son, Hargobind. The Guru had so much love and respect for his Sikhs that even in the parting words, while leaving for Lahore under the orders of Jehangir, he instructed Hargobind, to treat his Sikhs with utmost courtesy.

Guru Arjan organized the Masand system which was a very revolutionary step in the organization and development of the Sangat. The activities of the Sikh Gurus had gradually increa

60. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Surai Prakash, Vo.VI, pp.2240-42.
Besides the institution of langar, a lot of money was required for the constructions of tanks, temples and for founding new cities which were undertaken by the successive Gurus. The 'Manji' system which was organized in the time of Guru Amar Dass worked merely for the propagation of the Sikh faith. The Sikh faith had spread to all parts of India. All this necessitated reform and the Guru exhorted his Sikhs that every true Sikh should contribute 'daswandh' or one-tenth of his income, towards the Guru's funds and appointed special representatives in each locality. The representatives were called 'Masands' and their duty was to collect funds and spread the teachings of the Sikh faith. They were asked to bring the collections to the Guru annually on the Baisakhi Day, when a grand durbar was held. In the times of the Afghan Kings, the nobles were styled as 'Masnad-i-Ala' or His Excellency. Because of the frequent use of the term, it was changed into Masand by the Sikhs. The Guru was called 'Saccha-Padshah' the 'True King' and his agents were styled Masands. The Masands of the Guru were mostly Jats. These Masands sent for some time the offerings of the Sikhs to the Guru, but afterward they became greedy and dishonest. The Masands propagated the Sikh faith and collected the contributions which were willingly made by

the Sikhs. The Guru never made it obligatory on the Sikhs to make contributions. The Sikhs gave due respect to the Masands, as they were the representatives of the Guru, and in their mutual disputes, the Sikhs went to them in preference to approaching the State. This resulted in an overall improvement of the financial resources of the Guru and it became easier for him to undertake the construction of tanks and temples for the propagation and consolidation of the Sikh faith.

Guru Hargobind laid the foundation of the 'Takht Akal Bunga' 1663 A.D., and took his seat on it. The Guru accepted in his array several warriors and wrestlers. Five hundred youths came for enlistment from 'Majha'. He enrolled fifty-two heroes as his body-guards apart from several unemployed men who flocked around him. The Guru used to sit there in the afternoon and give audience to his visitors and followers. The Guru's hymns were sung by the minstrels, and Sodar was read in the evening when everybody stood up and offered prayer to the Almighty with folded hands. Musical instruments were played. The Sangat then bowed to the Guru and the assembly was adjourned. A sacred concert was held later on and hymns were sung in 'Kalian' and 'Kanra' ragas (musical measures). After that, Abdulla gave martial songs to the Sikh assembly to inspire the Sikhs with heroic deeds and then the Sohila

was read and the Guru retired for the night. The Guru mainly recited Guru Nanak's composition to his Sikhs.

Guru Hargobind and his mother went to Guru Nanak's shrine to see Baba Sri Chand. The Guru also visited Daroli and Pilibhit to uphold the cause of Almast with whom the Jogis had picked a quarrel. He also wanted to pay a visit to Sain Dass, one of the Guru's devotees at Daroli in the present District of Ferozepur. Sain Dass had built a mansion for the Guru and had vowed that no one would be allowed to live in it unless the Guru first stayed there. When the Guru arrived with his retinue in Nanak Mata, near Pilibhit, the Jogis ran away. He met Almast and blessed him and the temple was restored to him. The Guru preached in the neighbourhood to his Sikhs and started regular Sikh 'Sangats' there under the guidance of Almast. The Sikh Sangats at Amritsar prayed for the early return of the Guru to Amritsar and sent a letter to him to return quickly to be among his Sikhs and to grace the temple of his forefathers. The Guru returned to Amritsar and started preaching to the congregations and occasionally went on shooting excursions. Whenever the Guru was free, he would generally sit in the open air and receive his Sikhs. The places which he frequented are now known as Pipli, Lohgarh, and Charasti Atari in Amritsar.

A band of Sikh followers from localities in the west came to see the Guru late in the night. The Guru wanted to give them dinner, as they were hungry, but the 'Sewadars' of the 'langar' told him that it was too late. They told him that the fire had died out and the cooked food had been distributed. The Guru was reminded of a room full of sweets prepared for the marriage of his daughter. The Guru sent for the keys which were with his wife, Damodari. She refused to part with the keys until the bridegroom's party had partaken of the sweets. The Guru felt unhappy and gave vent to his sentiments, saying that his Sikhs were even dearer to him than his own life.

The Guru laid the foundation of a new city called Shri Hargobindpur. It was completed with the labour rendered by the Sikh Sangat. The Guru dug the first shovelful himself. He constructed a temple as well as a mosque at Shri Hargobindpur, both for his Sikh followers and for his Mohammedan troops and labourers.

The Guru was invited by Sain Dass to attend the Baisakhi fair at Daroli. He left Amritsar and told his Sikhs to take care of the temple in his absence. The Guru and his party were accorded a warm welcome at Daroli by Sain Dass.

then visited the village of Tuklani to see his devoted Sikhs, Sadhu and Rup Chand. He laid the foundation in Samvat 1688 of a village known as Bhai Rupa and then returned to Daroli. The Guru asked his Sikhs whether they should stay there or proceed to spread the faith. After getting the approval of the Sangat the Guru stayed with Sadhu and Rup Chand whom he exhorted to practise charity and humility and always to remember God.

Once the Sikhs asked the Guru as to whom they should turn for spiritual guidance in his absence. He advised them to consider any Sikh who came to them invoking the name of the Guru as their guide. The author of the Dabistan-i-Mazahib says that anyone with the Guru's name on his lips could enter the house of a Sikh at midnight and be given due respect and warm welcome without any consideration of his being a wicked person or a dacoit.68 Every person who approached the Sangat was whole-heartedly welcomed as a friend or brother and prayers were offered to invoke the blessings of Sat-Guru. This system was adopted by the Guru himself. Guru Har gobind was, thus, able to gain a huge following of the Sikhs at Kiratpur.

Considering that his end was drawing near, the Guru ordered his masands to bring all the Sikhs on the first day of the moon in Chet (mid-March to mid-April). The Sikh Sangats thronged from all quarters to Kiratpur to see the Guru on the

68. Mohsan Feni, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.240.
appointed day. He gave instructions to the Sangat and fixed a
day for a great assembly to select his successor. On the said
day, when all had assembled, the Guru rose and uttered prayers
to the Almighty for the success of the proceedings and put
Har Rai on the Guru's Gaddi. He instructed him to have the
company of the holy Sikhs twice a day. Apart from other
instructions, he asked the Sangat to love, recite and listen to
the Guru's hymns in Satsang and remember the True one with
devotion.69

During the period of his Guruship, Guru Har Rai used
to hold his Court at Kiratpur, which was attended by the Sikh
Sangats. There the Guru listened to the sacred hymns and gave
instructions to the Sikhs. He gave suitable passages from the
Guru Granth to recite to the Sangat daily. He impressed upon
them to have faith in the words of Guru Nanak and to worship
God, to do honest labour, to serve the saints, to read the
Guru Granth, to distribute food after Sohila and to have faith
in the Almighty alone. He asked them not to use the offerings
for personal use, not to worship any idol or other inanimate
object, not to mourn death of anyone, not to have faith in
gods and goddesses, and to feed the guests and not to send them
away disappointed. He further asked them not to hurt anybody's
feelings.

Guru Har Krishan at a tender age used to resolve the doubts of his Sikhs, and gave them religious instructions at Kiratpur. Sikhs came from all quarters to see him and he sent them in all directions to preach the true faith among the people.

When the Guru was called to Delhi, he met crowds of Sikhs on the way who came to see him from distant lands. He gave them instructions in the true faith and removed their doubts. He removed the doubts of a Brahman at the Village of Panjokhara near Ambala. In Delhi, he gave suitable replies to the Emperor's queries. He also blessed the people of Delhi who were suffering from plague. The Guru fell ill seriously in Delhi and instructed his Sikhs to remember God's Name constantly. He impressed upon them the fact that the world was transitory and, as such, they should resign themselves to the will of God.

Guru Teg Bahadur went in Samvat 1722 (1665 A.D.) to Amritsar in response to the invitation of Dwarka Dass and Bhai Garhia to bathe in the sacred tank. The Masands closed the door of the Harimandar and refused him entry. The Guru, however, accepted the invitation of the Sangat of the village of Walla. Mata Hariyan begged the Guru to spend the night there and the women of the City of Amritsar accompanied him. The Guru blessed

them and gave religious instructions to the Sangat at Walla and returned to Bakala. He crossed the Beas and reached the village of Hazara near Kartarpur, where a temple was built to commemorate his visit. The Guru next visited the village of Durga near Nawanshahar and then proceeded to Kiratpur. The jealousy of the Sodhis did not allow him to take rest. He purchased land from the Raja of Kahlur and laid the foundation of the town of Anandpur. 

The Guru left Anandpur to spread the Sikh faith and consolidate the Sangats. He halted at Mullohwal in the Patiala State and formed the Sangat there. He asked the Sikhs to constantly remember and repeat God's Name, and then proceeded to Handiaya, where a severe epidemic of fever had taken a heavy toll of human lives. The people of the village went to see the Guru and received his blessings. The Guru saved them from the epidemic and gave them religious instructions and proceeded to Dhilwan, from where he went to the villages of Khiva and Bhiki and then to Maur. The Guru preached God's true Name to the people and formed Sangats. He proceeded to Maisar-Khana and then to Talwandi Sabo, presently known as Damdama, and then to Kot Dharmuwala, Dhamdhan in the Bangar Tract, to Tekpur known as Bahar-Jakh, and to Kaithal and Barna, where he preached the true faith to the people and asked them to give up the use of

72. Tarlochan Singh, Dr, Guru Teg Bahadur, pp.162-67.
tobacco. The Guru then proceeded to Kurkhetar on the occasion of a solar eclipse where he was very well received by the people. The Guru preached the true Name of God to the people and formed a Sangat. He proceeded to Bani-Badrpur, crossed the Jamuna and went to Karamanak and met Maluk Dass, the eminent saint. He gave him religious instructions and removed his doubts. The Guru visited Agra, Itawa, Priyag and Benaras, where a platform was raised later in the memory of his visit. At Benaras he rested in a house known as 'Shabad ka Kotha'. The place is known as 'Bari Sangat' or the Great Society.73 The Guru proceeded to the River Karamansha, and removed the doubts of the people residing near by. From there, he proceeded to village Sarasrawan, where he met a devoted Sikh, Chacha Phaggo, who had built a beautiful building for the Guru and had kept it locked, vowing that until the Guru blessed that building he would not live in it. The Guru then proceeded to Gaya where he dispelled the doubts of a Brahman and asked him to meditate on one God alone. The Guru then visited Patna where he was visited by a large crowd of Muslims who bowed before him. He gave them religious instructions and stayed with Bhai Jetha, a devoted Sikh at Patna.

Guru Teg Bahadur after being summoned to Delhi under the order of Emperor Aurangzeb, met his friend Saif-ul-Din at Saifabad near the Fort of Bahadurgarh on way to Delhi.74

73. Tirlochan Singh, Dr, Guru Teg Bahadur, pp.196-206.
temple was raised there in memory of the Guru's visit. The Guru gave instructions to the people to form Sangats there. He then proceeded farther and halted at the village of Garhi near Samana, where he met a Pathan friend and then he proceeded to the villages of Hali and Chikha in the present District of Karnal. There, he gave religious instructions and formed Sangats. He then proceeded to the village Karha, and then went to Khatkar, a village in the Patiala District. The Guru continued his journey, preaching to the people and forming Sangat wherever he went, till he reached Agra where he was arrested and brought to Delhi.  

Guru Gobind Singh, like his predecessors, formed the Sangat at Anandpur, where the hymns were sung daily. The Guru was happy to listen to the Asa-di-Var. He gave divine instructions to the Sikhs after daybreak and practised martial exercises. He used to receive his Sikhs in the afternoon and in the evening the Rahiras was sung. The Guru was fond of wearing uniform and arms and asked his Sikhs to practise archery and musketry. He entrusted the work of making a big drum to Nand Chand. The Masands who were afraid of his increasing

military strength, represented to the Guru's mother, Mata Gujri, that this step of the Guru would make the Hill Rajas hostile. She spoke to the Guru but he remained firm. The Masands also directly represented to him but he did not listen to them and when the big drum was completed, the Guru celebrated it with the offerings of prayers and distributed sacred food to the Sikh Sangat. The drum was named 'Ranjit Nagara' and the whole Sangat of Anandpur went to see it when it was beaten.  

The Guru asked the Masands to come to Anandpur along with the Sikh Sangat on the Baisakhi festival. They collected large sums of money, but they gave half of the amount to the Guru and they kept the remaining half for themselves. He asked them why they had brought so little money. They were annoyed and left the Guru's Court and represented to Bhai Chetu that the Guru had threatened them with serious consequences. Chetu spoke to the Guru on behalf of the Masands and the Guru told him that he and his followers needed severe punishment for embezzling the offerings of the Sikhs. The Guru also told him the innumerable stories of torture and harsh treatment meted out to the poor Sikhs. The Guru punished the culprits and pardoned those who were innocent. Among the innocent ones was Bhai Phero, who lived in the locality called Nakka between the Ravi and the

Beas. He was given a robe of honour and a number of other Masands were also acquitted, as Bhai Phero pleaded their cases. The Guru ordered that in future the Sikhs should present their offerings direct instead of through the Masands.

Guru Gobind Singh invited the Sikh Sangat at Anandpur on the Baisakhi festival in 1699 A.D. and laid the foundation of the Khalsa brotherhood by giving them the baptism of the sword and enjoined upon them certain rules of conduct. After baptizing the Five Beloved Ones, he stood up in all humility before them and asked them to baptize him in the same manner. They hesitated, but he told them that there was no difference between him and the 'Khalsa'. The creation of the 'Khalsa' organized the Sikh Sangats on a sound democratic footing. The religious congregations of the Sikhs were now transformed into an organized militant body on democratic lines to fight aggression and tyranny. But the spiritual aspect of life was never ignored. The creation of the Khalsa brotherhood blended the spiritual and worldly life into one and vested in them high powers to take decisions, binding on everybody, irrespective of position and rank.

In his wars against the Mughals, the Guru after leaving the Fort of Anandpur proceeded to Chamkaur with the thirty-five chosen Sikhs. He was hotly pursued by the Imperial forces. The Guru's party fought very bravely, but since the number of the Sikhs was too small, they requested the Guru to leave the fort. The Guru was hesitant to leave, but he was ordered in the name of the Khalsa and he had eventually to agree. He seated near him Dayal Singh, Dharam Singh, Man Singh, Sangat Singh and Sant Singh, who alone were left from his army and entrusted the Guruship to them. He told them that he would always be present where the five Sikhs assembled. He told them that whosoever gave food and clothing to the five Sikhs, all his desires would be fulfilled. The Guru circumambulated three times, laid his plume, crest and arms in front of them and uttered "Sri Wahguru-ji-ka-Khalsa, Sri Wahguru-ji-ki-Fateh". This episode underlines the desire of the Guru to decentralize all powers and to share it with the Sangat. Indeed, he elevated the Sangat to the supreme position.

Guru Gobind Singh once saluted with his arrow the tomb of Dadu, a saint of Naraina known as Daduvara in Rajputana.

Man Singh represented to the Guru and quoted his own instruction that nobody should worship the tombs, cemeteries and cremation-grounds and asked him why he had saluted the tomb. The Guru told them that he had done it intentionally to find out whether his Sikhs remembered his instructions and expressed regrets and sought forgiveness. The Guru was fined rupees one hundred and twenty-five by the Sangat which he readily paid.