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NISHAAN

NAGAARA



**November 1984 Recalled
The Sikligar Sikhs
Shastar Nam Mala
(None) of the President's Men**

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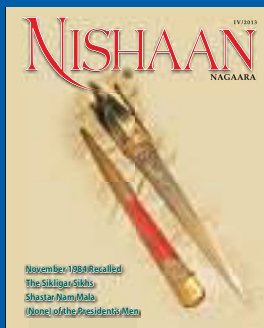
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'Katar' or pointed punch-dagger of Guru Hargobind
(Image Malkiat Singh)

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29 Years and counting... What difference do years make?

In June 1984, when the Indian army attacked the Harmandir (Golden Temple) in Amritsar and 40 other gurdwaras across Punjab, the government was able to ring Amritsar and Punjab with two of the heaviest security cordons ever seen. No one - certainly not a Sikh - was able to cross it. No news filtered out on the fate of the thousands of pilgrims gathered in the Darbar Sahib for the commemoration of Guru Arjan's martyrdom.

In 1984, the Indian government exerted absolute and full control over all media - press, television and radio. Rumours abounded but not an iota of news filtered out of Punjab.

The world has changed - and how. When Iran was in turmoil, the Iranian government failed to put a curtain of isolation around the country. The news filtering from there kept us glued to our televisions day and night.

Thanks to technology that did not exist in 1984 - the ubiquitous Internet, Cell phones, Twittering and You tube - the whole world knew what happened on the streets in Tehran just as it happened. The eyes of the world were and are upon Tehran, and the government is held to some restraint and worldwide embarrassment.

Less than six months after that army attack of June 1984, the Indian prime minister was assassinated and a reign of terror was let loose over unsuspecting Sikhs in Delhi and many cities across northern India. Once again, Sikhs were held up as the face of terrorism by the Indian government - in total disregard of the truth. And the world believed it.

The world has changed for the better. The iron control that was possible in 1984 can no longer

happen. The way the Indian government was able to portray Sikhs as terrorists across the world is no longer possible. The ignorance that most Indians still live in about what exactly happened in 1984 would not exist.

My Indian friends never tire of labelling the period "those bad or unfortunate times" that happened 29 years ago. The ball and chain of the past will only hold us back, they say. The new mantra is that India is now on a fast track of moving forward and even the financial troubles that plague the developed world can't tie India down.

Already the deniers of history tell us the "troubles" of 1984 lasted only three days in Delhi. The reason that not more than a handful of people have been charged with the wholesale killings of Sikhs over those days, they claim, is because a really monumental tragedy never happened. Perhaps a handful of people died. In any case it was anti-Sikh rioting - spontaneous because the country's beloved prime minister had been assassinated by Sikhs.

Yes, I too, am tired of listening to the same old litany of half-truths and distortions. I won't dwell on the history. It is quite well established. Within six hours of the assassination of India's Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in 1984, truckloads of armed thugs materialised in Sikh neighbourhoods. They had lists and addresses of Sikh-owned homes and businesses. They were armed with kerosene and weapons. They went on a spree of killing, burning, raping and looting. No Sikh was safe anywhere in India's capital city and many other towns and cities across the country.

Three days later, as if obeying an unseen commander, the frenzy stopped. Where were the police and army for those days? Safe in their barracks, of course. The government admitted to the death of over 2700 Sikh men, women and children in Delhi alone. That comes to better than 1300 victims for a 24-hour day or a shade over 50 per hour - almost one per minute.

And all the victims were unarmed. In 1984-India, trucks were not easily available; kerosene was rationed, requiring standing in lines forever; and lists of addresses were and still not easily assembled. In those pre-Google days, one could not download addresses at the touch of a button.

India has never shown such remarkable efficiency. To put a genocidal killing spree together within hours speaks of a sea change in management skills that has not been seen before or since. That's why I don't label it *anti-Sikh riots*. There was no spontaneity to the violence. Riots they were not.

The next step was monumental in its deception. The new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, signed an agreement with Sikh leaders promising to hold an inquiry and bring the guilty to trials. There have been over ten Inquiry Commissions in the past 29 years. Only a handful have been arrested for killing several thousand. In the meantime, evidence continues to degrade and disappear.

I think any government that treats its own citizens with such callousness has no right to govern. Yet, as our friends tell us, we must move forward. The ball and chain of the past will not save us. So, what is now for us to do?

The past is a prologue to the future. Without our connection to history, we become like an untethered balloon floating off to somewhere we may not want to go.

But the past must not hold us back, fixed in one place in time and space. In our personal lives, there is many a story that would be embarrassing to relive. Often they leave an indelible mark in our lives. Wouldn't it be nice if we could rewind the clock and expunge such times? If it were only so easy.

To move beyond such horrendous sins requires that we face them, acknowledge them and atone for them. And then we can carry forward with us the lessons learned.

How then to accomplish all that?

World opinion would likely not come to our aid all that readily.

Why? Because global realities and geopolitics tell us that India is the only counterweight to China, the only possible competition to China's growing heft in Asia. Also, we need to keep the Islamic world in check - it sits astride the world's oil resources and has access to a nuclear arsenal as well. India is ideally suited geographically and strategically to help us manage that stalemate.

To deny the logic of the injustice done to the Sikhs would be Orwellian. It does not wash. One can't escape the irony in that the India-born George Orwell named his fiction (*Nineteen-Eighty-Four*) for the year to which India and its bureaucracy gave its evil life.

The Indian judiciary, though not entirely independent, can deliver a modicum of justice. If that seems too awkward, perhaps a *Truth & Reconciliation Commission* would suffice. But that requires some truth and a lot of honesty, no matter how embarrassing it turns out to be. Many countries, besides South Africa, have tried this route successfully.

The way of such a Commission need not be embarrassing; it could even be liberating. Many nations - Sierra Leone, Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, Timor and Peru have trod this path. India and Pakistan need to too.

From such a step, honestly undertaken, neither the Indian government nor the Sikh leadership is likely to emerge unscarred and unscathed.

I think of all the times that we Sikhs have been accused of acting without patience and having gone too far. Now I know that we have been patient long enough and that we did not go far enough.

Now 29 years and several Inquiry Commissions later I would say: *Never let the story die.*

The essay has been taken from Dr IJ Singh's book entitled 'Sikhs Today: Ideas & Opinions', wherein, he dwells upon "matters that are fundamental to what we are and how we develop a sense of self."

Dr I J Singh



(None) of the President's Men

The Jaipur Column in front of Rashtrapati Bhawan. (Inset) Gyani Zail Singh, President of India in 1984.

Recollecting the first 72 hours of November 1984

In his engaging book titled 'Of Dreams and Demons: an Indian Memoir' the well-known writer, publisher and TV presenter, Patwant Singh presented forth a remarkable view of India and Indian life before and after Independence. In the chapter on 'The Eighties' which he describes as the 'Bloodied Landscape', Patwant records at firsthand those 72 hours from 1 November 1984 when the state-directed pogrom against the Sikhs as a community was unleashed. Even though the President of India was a Sikh, and Lutyen's Delhi had been largely built by Sikh contractors earlier in the century, no one was safe, not the iconic writer Khushwant Singh, the 'Victor of Bangladesh' Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, the war – decorated Brig Sukhjit Singh, Maharaja of Kapurthala, the senior diplomat Gurbachan Singh, no Sikh indeed till the diabolical plans had run their course by the night of 3 November 1984.

We assembled in my house on the morning of November to drive to a meeting which would prove a charade from the very start. The setting itself, Edwin Lutyens's monumental palace, designed for the Imperial Viceroys and set in 250 acres of landscaped gardens, was far removed from the Indian reality unfolding around it. I was reminded of the words (were they mocking our mission?) carved on the Jaipur Column that stands on the palace grounds:

*In Thought Faith
In Word Wisdom
In Deed Courage
In Life Service
So may India be great.*

These were once described as a 'noble epitaph for British rule and fitting counsel for the future masters

of India'. Another line, recording the consistency with which each of these virtues has been ignored by the new 'masters' of Independent India's destiny, should be added to update it as an appropriate epitaph for the Republic, whose President's 'wisdom' and 'courage' we were about to experience. The next hour in the study was as surrealistic as something dreamt up by Salvador Dali. Opening the discussion, I emphatically spelt out for the President of India Zail Singh the violence which was overtaking the Sikhs throughout the city. He, as President, was morally and constitutionally bound to put an end to it.

He said he did not have the powers to intervene.

We were momentarily silenced by this astounding remark.

'You mean to tell us', I said, 'that if the nation is going up in flames and people are being butchered in the streets, you have no power to stop the anarchy and bloodshed?'

There was no answer.

When we suggested he speak forcefully to the new — Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi whom he had sworn in the previous evening after side-stepping several procedures and proprieties expected of the President — he said he would do so in the next three or four days because he wanted to 'give him some time'.



Giani Zail Singh with Rajiv Gandhi whom he had sworn in as Prime Minister of India on eve of the pogrom.

'Blood is being spilt on the streets and you want three or four days to talk to the Prime Minister!'

He relented and said he would have a word with him that afternoon.

But he did not.

We told him to go on the air, use radio and television and make a stirring plea for sanity and balance.

He nodded glumly (but did nothing). When General Jagjit Singh Aurora asked him whether the Army would be called in to restore order, he said he was not in contact with the Home Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao (later India's Prime Minister), and suggested that Aurora should talk to him! It was like a bad dream. When we asked him how he would feel if any of his family were in such danger as Sikhs are all over Delhi — we did not know then that they were being massacred in many other states and in the trains as well — he did not answer. Nor did he respond to our suggestion that he should call all the Chief Ministers and heads of the Union Territories who had arrived in Delhi and tell them that he would take the most serious view of any transgressions against the Sikhs in their states. He did not do it.

I told him that even as we sat talking, crowds everywhere were whipping up a frenzy with the slogan *khoon ka badla khoon* ("blood for blood") and that he should demand that the police put a stop to it. The slogan-shouting continued unchecked for days.

As we were leaving, an aide told him that the Home Ministry had decided to call in the army. This was another one of the many lies we would hear at the highest levels of administration.

I returned home to find an urgent message from IK Gujral, an old friend and brother of the painter Satish Gujral, asking me to ring him back, which I did. He told me not to let Jagjit drive back to his house — which was quite near his own — because there was chaos on the streets. No Sikh was safe on them. He said he was coming over to work out a plan of action. (Gujral wrote in his diary that night: 'Delhi is burning. There are reports of trains arriving with corpses— it is like 1947. General Aurora spent the night with us. The hero of 1971 could not sleep in his own house in Delhi.')

Over lunch that day Gujral, Aurora and I decided to go and see the Home Minister who, in the Indian Cabinet, is in charge of the police, the intelligence agencies and the maintenance of law and order. We found him at home at 3 pm looking impassive and seemingly without a care. In its own way this meeting too was an uncanny replay of our earlier experience with the President.

We asked him if the army was being called in.



Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, the 'hero of Bangladesh.'

'It will be here in the evening.'

'How is it being deployed?' asked Aurora.

'The Area Commander will meet the Lt. Governor for this purpose.'

General Aurora suggested the setting up of a Joint



General Jagjit Singh Aurora with pictures of the famous surrender ceremony in Dacca, December 1971.

Control Room to co-ordinate the army and police actions, with Rao monitoring events from hour to hour.

'I will look into it.'

Anyone who has dealt with any government functionary in India should know what that means! We knew. The Army was not called till the night of 3 November. Had it been given charge of Delhi on the first day, the over 3,000 Sikhs would not have died, nor would their homes, shops, factories, taxis, trucks and places of worship have been set to the torch, under the indulgent eyes of the administration and a

partisan police force. The killings took many forms. Large crowds would seize individuals, pour kerosene or petrol on them and burn them alive. Another variation was to put tyres soaked in petrol around the necks of victims, who were held down by crowds while the tyres were lit with burning torches.

Early on the morning of 2 November, Romesh Thapar and Rolf and Jeanne Gauffin, the Swedish Charge d'Affaires and his wife arrived and said they had come to take me to the Swedish Embassy. 'It is unsafe for you to stay in your home,' Rolf told me. But though I was touched by their concern I refused.

Rajni Kothari, a respected political scientist (and not a Sikh), writing of those five days, recorded that women were 'forced to witness in full the torturous methods — pulling out of limbs and eyes, tearing off hair, beards being set on fire, piercing of bowels and kidneys with sharp weapons — through which their menfolk were put to death. Ivan Fera, who has reported on this aspect the best, sums it up well: "certain images had to be burned into the psyche" (Lokayan 3/1, 1985)

Writing in the same issue of *Lokayan*, Raj Thapar said: 'You can't call the killers homo sapiens. It has to be another mix. Because nowhere in the world has it happened quite in this way. Hitler organised mass-killing, but kept it away from the population, training the monsters separately, in a long unending chain of command'.

She continued:

How did a train arrive at Sunlight Colony station and disgorge its population of monsters, who burnt and killed and mauled and maimed at breakneck speed and then got on to that waiting train, which set off as the job was completed? Who gave the orders for that train, who brought those men, who equipped them? Or how was the train stopped at Shandara station and Sikhs pulled out and slaughtered? They say the station platforms were littered with the symbols of our savagery, up from Madhya Pradesh across the vast Indo-Gangetic plain, all the way to Bokaro...

And what of the Sikh view? In another article in *Lokayan* Dr. Darshan Singh Maini observed:

In Mrs Gandhi's case, the entire state machinery was shamelessly used, particularly during the last few years of her life, to create a halo of destiny and 'divinity'. Here was a pure politician who would be Saviour and Goddess! and since she had assumed all the airs and trappings of a 'goddess' in the eyes of the common person, her assassination

brought into play all those lethal impulses and mean-nesses of the spirit that go with a charismatic politics divorced from vision the mob and the leader had achieved a union of dark energies and wills. A whole river of Sikh blood was deeded for the 'ceremony' of immersion.

But the deed was done. The blackout of the collective conscience of elected officials, administrators, police, editors and bigots of every religion and persuasion will long haunt this country, even if the guilt of those who masterminded the killings leaves them undisturbed. The blood on Delhi's streets had yet to dry and the spirals of smoke were still rising from half-burnt bodies when glib explanations and justification ('It was the peoples' grief and anger expressing itself') started coming in.

Brigadier Sukhjot Singh and I went to see the President again on the evening of 6 November — this time to seek his intervention in bringing the criminals to book and to ask for help for the victims. It was like talking to a non-existent person. 'Meanwhile,' as Maini put it, 'Sikh homes and hearths across the length and breadth of this great land remained cold and unlit, the Sikh hearts in torment and travail. And all this, my countrymen, during the blood-stained Presidency of a Sikh!'



Brigadier Sukhjot Singh, the erstwhile Maharaja of Kapurthala who won the Maha Vir Chakra for gallantry in December 1971.

We fared no better with the Home Minister, who in seven years would become the Prime Minister of India. Gurbachan Singh and I went to see him on the morning of 10 November, on the same mission that had taken Sukhjot and me to Zail Singh. The niceties were maintained, tea was served, the appropriate expressions of concern were adopted, but the outcome was no different from the uncaring and unfeeling response of the President.

Contrast this response with the alacrity and concern with which the government acted immediately after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination and you get a better idea of how India's politics have been criminalised since then. In 1948, All India Radio had delayed the announcement of the Mahatma's death by almost three-quarters of an hour to give the government time to deploy the security forces to contain a backlash, in case his killer was a Muslim. From the Governor-General downwards—Mountbatten was still in office — everyone had moved swiftly to contain any possible violence.

In 1984 the state-owned TV network helped raise the level of hostility against Sikhs by mesmerising viewers with pictures of crowds demanding blood for blood after the news of Indira Gandhi's death — the blood of all Sikhs, as it turned out. And this was done under the auspices of HKL Bhagat, the Congress Minister for Information and Broadcasting, against whom accusing fingers for his complicity in the killings — quite distinct from his role as the broad-casting minister — have been pointed by several enquiry commissions. He has been protected by successive Prime Ministers and then continued as a senior functionary of the Congress party!

On the evening of 2 November, a few friends who had come to cover Indira Gandhi's funeral, among them John Fraser of Canada's *Globe and Mail*, Shyam Bhatia of London's *Observer* and Joseph Lilyveld of the *New York Times*, were with me when news was brought that my farmhouse and the one next door that I had helped Rasil build, had been burnt down. A mob with barrels of oil had come in trucks at around eleven in the morning and, after ransacking paintings, wall-hangings, prints, ceramics and over five hundred books, had poured kerosene over the furnishings and woodwork and set everything alight in two gigantic bonfires. When I went there three days later I could see in the burnt-out hulks of the buildings extensions of the lengthening shadows which were falling over

India, and it suddenly seemed pointless to pretend that life could go on as before. We sold our properties soon after that.

Not everyone had decency and goodness torn out of them in those days of India's shame. My friends Rajeshwar Dayal, the former Foreign Secretary, and his wife Susheela had dropped in to see me a couple of days after Indira Gandhi's funeral, wondering how they could show their concern at the injustice done to the Sikhs. Their most significant contribution, I told them, would be to persuade the government to set up an impartial commission of enquiry to identify those who had planned and directed the killings. If this was not done and the guilty were allowed to go unpunished, militant Sikhs would wreak a terrible vengeance for the crimes. It was clear by then that several Congress MPs, party officials and field workers had gone around putting markings on Sikh homes and businesses to facilitate the work of the mobs. A partisan police force had allowed the atrocities to be committed, while other government agencies and dealers had supplied thousands of barrels of kerosene — always in short supply in India — to help the arsonists with their job.

Rajeshwar Dayal understood it all. And he worked hard at it. Failing to get the government to enquire into the killings, he helped set up an independent Citizens' Commission with a former Chief Justice of India as its Chairman and former Commonwealth, Home and Defence Secretaries and himself as members. The report of the five-member Commission was a damning indictment of the 'masters' of modern India. Interestingly, when the Commission's members wished to talk to the Home Minister, PV Narasimha Rao was not available. Nor was he when, after the report's compilation, they wanted to present it to him in person. His arrogance towards them, who had done more for India than he, was appalling.



Giani Zail Singh with Rajiv Gandhi and his wife Sonia at a reception.

Rajiv Gandhi's actions also lacked foresight and conviction in the weeks and months following the November massacres. Even before showing a similar discourtesy to members of the Citizens' Commission by refusing to meet them, he took no note of the report on the killings, *'Who Are the Guilty'*, compiled by the People's Union for Democratic Rights and the People's Union for Civil Liberties. Members of these groups had with exemplary courage waded into the thick of the disturbances, recording the complicity of the Congress functionaries, the deliberate dereliction of duty by the police, the cruelly calculating way in which elected and administrative officials had ignored the phone calls and personal warnings of these two bodies. They were men and women of substance: lawyers, academics, journalists and civil rights activists. Not one of them was a Sikh, and those who had responded to the crisis had done so as human beings in an inhuman situation. But their report was ignored by the Prime Minister. The President of the Delhi Congress Committee went a step further. She called it a 'pack of lies' and warned those who had prepared it. They ignored her.

On 19 November, Rajiv Gandhi rationalised the killings at a huge public rally in which he made the astonishing statement that 'when a big tree falls the earth shakes'. Whoever wrote it into his speech did him a disservice and he himself was not perceptive enough to strike it out. Before the December 1984 General Elections the massive advertising campaign of the Congress party brazenly provoked anti-Sikh feelings. This unethical, ill-advised and crude campaign was cleared at the highest level. But even if Rajiv Gandhi was unaware of its thrust, which he could not have been, he should have stopped it after the first item appeared. He did not. To add to the disgust and anger of the Sikhs and other right-thinking people, some of the Congress leaders who had been named in *Who Are the Guilty* were not only given Parliamentary tickets to fight the elections but were made Ministers in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet.

The most extraordinary policy decision that seemed to have been secretly taken by his government was to discourage the judiciary and law enforcement agencies from identifying and punishing the guilty. Eight years and four Prime Ministers later, ten persons were convicted for the murder of 2,733 people (these are official figures) — with the prominent ones named in *Who Are the Guilty* deliberately left out. They — the politicians, police officials, administrators and pliant judges — have instead been rewarded.

For a brief and exciting period of his Prime Ministership, Rajiv Gandhi redeemed himself. In a statesmanlike move he signed a historic Memorandum of Settlement with Harcharan Singh Longowal on 24 July 1985. It was a magnificent bid to bring Punjab back from where the unprincipled politics of time had taken it.

I met Rajiv Gandhi two weeks before the Punjab elections. When Rajni Kothari and I called on him at his office in the South Block of the Secretariat — another one of Lutyens's monumental buildings — it was crawling with gun-toting security men. The ante-rooms were crowded but we were taken to his secretary's room — next to his own — and were shown in within a few minutes. He looked fit and at ease but soon went over the top when we brought up the subject of the guilty men of 1984. Two of them, known to have led the mobs during the massacres, had recently been shot dead by Sikh militants, and with this on his mind Rajiv Gandhi turned on Kothari and said angrily:

'I will hold you responsible if any more killings of this kind take place.' (Rajni Kothari as the President of the People's Union of Civil Liberties had jointly published *'Who Are the Guilty'*, which had named the two who had been killed in retribution.)

'If the Sikhs are still in India, Mr Gandhi,' I intervened, 'it is because of men like Rajni Kothari and others who showed impartiality and integrity during those days of November.' I also said that it would be a good principle to hold the killers and the colluders responsible for the crimes and not those trying to expose them.

Things settled down after a while and we made suggestions which would strengthen the detente the Accord had ushered in. We said that Punjab's governor, Arjun Singh, a former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh who had with rare tact and skill made the pact possible, should stay on as governor for another year to ensure its implementation. Since he had earned nation-wide praise for it, he would have a stake in ensuring its success. We also suggested that several major industries should be established in Punjab for channelling the energies of its hardworking people into more constructive pursuits, especially since the mechanisation of farming had left an increasing number of strapping young men with little else to turn to. As an adjunct to this, we stressed the need for a major institute in Punjab which could train its people — who already have an aptitude for technical innovativeness — into industrial designers.

We mentioned a whole range of other possibilities as we were convinced that merely to luxuriate in the aftermath of the Accord would be counter-productive. People had to be convinced of the new dynamics at work in the State.

None of these suggestions were realised. The governor was transferred out of the State within weeks and just about every other possibility was ignored. The oppressively opinionated circle of advisors around Rajiv Gandhi took over, and the Accord was effectively killed. Though it was a mistake on Rajiv Gandhi's part to hold the elections to the Assembly so soon after the Accord (against the advice of Longowal), he showed decorum and restraint through out the period prior to the polls by preventing official machinery from being misused to favour the Congress. The Akalis' convincing victory was an endorsement of the electorate's approval of the Accord. After formation of the Ministry and with hopes for the future beginning to rise, things began to unravel. The Centre's shifting embrace now encompassed other ideas which had more to do with undoing the Accord. And they succeeded. Rajiv Gandhi was neither shrewd enough to see through the machinations of those around him, nor possessed of the staying power to implement what he had initiated. The resulting disenchantment led to a resurgence of militancy and terror which continues to this day.

[This book was written in 1992, at the height of state repression in the Punjab].



Patwant Singh

The Sikh writer, publisher, political commentator, conservationist and philanthropist, Patwant Singh had a very rare ability to communicate compellingly with the wider world on many issues without losing touch with his deeply held faith.

A Palpable Anger

Acquittal of politicians in the 1984 case makes Sikhs feel like non citizens

It is a white hot May afternoon. Pappi Kaur walks up a dark staircase, past the sleeping dog and jumping over potholes, to her flat with deep purple walls. A bed dominates the room, with two chairs on the side. A child cries in the next room. The sound of a sewing machine muffles the cooler's whirring. Pappi changes her dupatta—a lighter one for a better picture—and settles down to narrate a story. One that she has retold countless times. "My father, my elder brother, three *chachas* and a *taya*," she says flatly. "Ten members, all gone." She lists names without any emotion. Pappi was 15 when the riots broke out. Her family was massacred in front of her. In Tilak Vihar, such 'lists' are quite common. It is a colony haunted by the ghosts of the past, which, like Caesar, are more powerful in death. And the wounds of what happened in those three days are still festering. After a Delhi sessions court on 30 April, acquitted Congress leader Sajjan Kumar of all charges in the murder of five Sikhs in the Delhi Cantonment area the anger in the area—kept at bay for years—is palpable. Many of the protesters who brought the capital to a standstill for a week post the verdict were from here.

"Earlier, the perception was that people did not get punished for riots," says HS Phoolka, a veteran lawyer who has been spearheading the victims' legal battle. "But in Gujarat post-2002 ministers have been handed out death sentences and there have been life imprisonment sentences, too. Nothing, however, has happened in Delhi." The comparison with the Gujarat riots comes up in most conversations. The verdicts in Gujarat have come within 10 years, as imperfect as they may be. Thus, for those who have been living with horrid memories, desperately fighting for justice, the Sajjan Kumar verdict is 'proof' that they do not matter. "Aren't we citizens of this country?" asks Pappi Kaur. Her son, Raju, is 25 years old. He wears a fitting T-shirt with the Nishaan Sahib on it. Raju belongs to a generation that did not see the violence, but has lived with its ramifications. "I don't have a family. My father got diabetes when I was 10. He couldn't work, so I had to go out earn," he says. "I

worked in a factory, then a car repair shop and now I run an auto. If I had elders, I could have studied. I could have become someone." Each court date—and there have been many—Raju ferries five young men from the area to the court complex for free. "We need to be united," he says. Twenty-nine years after the riots, the community is still trying to come to terms with what happened. The sense of anger goes beyond the uphill legal battle. It is about loss, betrayal and desperation.

"I remember when they were burning our people, the police stood around, laughed and said '*Murgeh jal rahe hain* (They are burning chickens)'," says Jagdish Kaur, the main witness in the Sajjan Kumar case. "With the kind of justice we are being handed out, we could be *murgeh*."

The resentment is not just among those who were directly affected. Ajit Singh, 37, runs a 'Turban Academy' in West Delhi's Rajouri Gardens. The tall, strapping Sikh started classes to teach people the art of tying the 'pug', as it is called because he wears a smart turban.

Ajit still remembers the riots in Delhi. "Our home had the *Ek Omkar* symbol outside and we had to hide it. We were terrified that people would know it was a Sikh household," he says. "Of course, what happened in 1984 matters. It is about justice."

The Turban Academy that Ajit and his partner Harpal run represents a changing community. The K of *kesh* (hair) may still be relevant in this part of the country—Ajit refused to shorn his hair post-1984—but, like learning how to drape a sari, the next generation needs a little help with the turban.

The anger, however, remains unchanged. "If I say I am angry that does not mean that I would take to the streets and adopt violent methods," says Harpal. "But it is important that justice is delivered."

Unlike the stories retold in Tilak Nagar of people being burnt and butchered and of the horrors in more affluent parts like Rajouri Gardens, the 'memory' is



Pappi Kaur, victim of the 1984 riots, with her son Raju. (From 'The Week')

being kept alive among the youth in modern ways. "You will get WhatsApp messages from people telling you about an incident that happened at that time. You can go online and see the pictures," he says. "None of these messages asks us to take up arms; it just asks us to not forget."

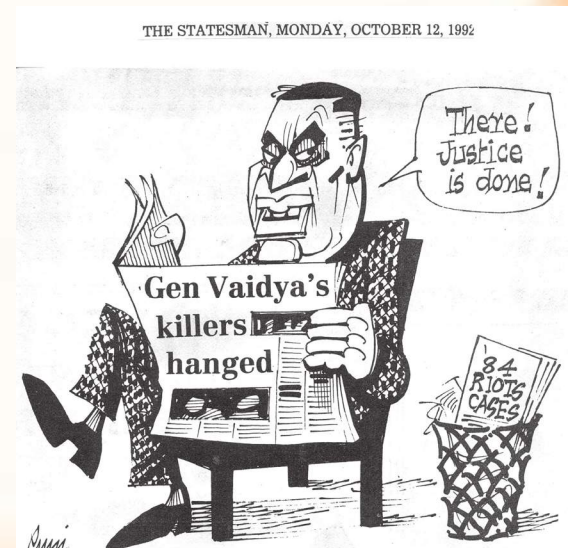
Pritam Singh, who lives nearby and has been working with *United Sikhs*, believes that the 'memory' is important. "If a community forgets its history, how will it move forward?" he asks. "Jews have pictures of their martyrdom in their drawing room walls. Every home has it. We, too, keep the memories alive."

The verdict of the 1984 riots apart, ruffled Sikh sentiments have been in the news recently. The possible hanging of Devender Bhullar, who is on death row and is allegedly mentally imbalanced, and the controversy over a plaque in the 'Operation Bluestar' memorial dedicated to Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, are sore issues.

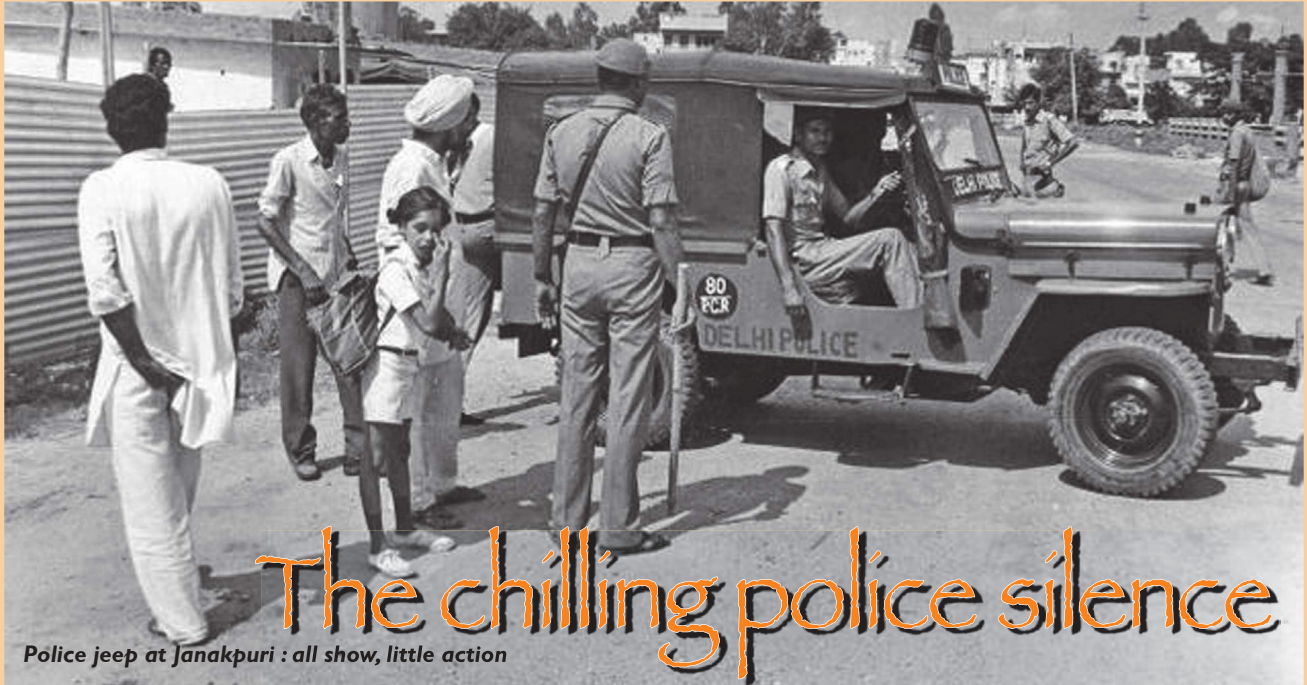
"There is a sense that we do not matter," says Talwinder Singh Buttar, a journalist and poet. "People need a sense of belonging. There is a lot of anger, but people are scared to show it. The Akalis have played politics with the verdict because it happened in Delhi. Here, if people want to protest, they fear police action."

For a community which has prided itself on being large-hearted and fun-loving, the 1984 riots and its sort of being wiped off from public memory rankle. "Just because the Sikh community has decided to get on with life, they have been taken for granted," says Malavika Singh, publisher of *Seminar*. "Three thousand people were killed. This is not like an accident in a factory. People went around doing this, and the state did not control it. Even Narendra Modi has, at least, put Maya Kodnani in jail." The ghosts of Gujarat may be still haunting Modi, but 3,000 who lost their lives in Delhi are invisible. "The names of those who led the mobs appear in commission after commission. In every committee report. But they disappear in police records," says Phoolka. "After every failure, I was reinvigorated with a fresh sense of purpose to fight, but after Sajjan Kumar, I was frustrated. It took me two days to get over it."

Mandira Nayar
(From The Week)



Cartoon by Puri over two decades back - and counting.



Police jeep at Janakpuri : all show, little action

The chilling police silence

With the debate on 1984 riots reignited, the focus is on how Congress leader Sajjan Kumar was acquitted in a major riots case where he was accused of inciting a mob that led to violence. A key factor in his acquittal was the testimony of a police constable from the local station who contradicted witnesses, saying Sajjan never visited that area. Moreover, serious questions have been raised on the testimony of the constable, given that the station records of the police station to which the constable belonged, is absolutely silent on the mayhem that was raging.

Between 1st and 2nd November 1984, on the worst days of violence, three independent witnesses from Raj Nagar in Delhi Cantonment area, who saw their family members being murdered, claimed to have seen Sajjan Kumar make inflammatory speeches. One of them was Jagsher Singh, who was 17 years old at that time. He claims to have seen Sajjan Kumar, then the Congress MP from outer Delhi, pull up on his car on the night of 1 November, and ask his supporters as to why they hadn't followed his instructions to kill more Sikhs.

Two others, Nirpreet Singh, who lost her father, and Jagdish Kaur, who lost her son and husband, also said they saw Sajjan. These statements became the basis of a CBI chargesheet against Sajjan, and was the strongest case in the 1984 riots.

And yet, in a verdict that sparked outrage, the judiciary chose to acquit Sajjan Kumar in this case in 2013 finding the testimonies unreliable. Instead, the

court relied on statements made by police constable from the Delhi Cantonment police station, Chajju Ram, that he never saw Sajjan Kumar visit the area. This is the same constable who goes on to say in his statement that "when I was on patrolling duty I did not notice any burnt house, or dead body."

This was indeed a shocking claim given that 340 people were killed in just three days in the area under Delhi Cantonment police station. Overall, nearly 3000 Sikhs were murdered in the Delhi riots.

The station diaries of Delhi Cantonment police station of 1 and 2 November only corroborate the chilling police silence. Right through the day, the entries log no unusual activity. At the end of every day, it says "all clear, nothing untoward to report." Shockingly, one of the few entries about rioting targets the Sikhs, claiming that in Palam Colony, Sikhs have "gathered and are rioting."

DP Singh, lawyer for the CBI has stated that "this clearly shows the lack of credibility of the police testimonies, and that the police were acting at the behest of their political masters". Sajjan Kumar's lawyer, Anil Sharma, continued to insist that his client never visited the Delhi Cantonment. Sajjan Kumar's acquittal in the Delhi Cantonment case has been challenged in the High Court by the CBI. But those who claim to have seen him incite mobs have little faith they will see justice.

Sreenivasan Jain

Delhi's missing policemen



“This was a case where the police acted in a pre-planned manner and every policeman was keeping his eyes closed”: the words of the public prosecutor earlier this year before a CBI court in the capital that is trying Congress leader Sajjan Kumar and five others. Kumar along with the others is accused of inciting mobs to attack Sikhs in 1984. The case against Sajjan Kumar is still on in court and a verdict may not be out before next year.

However, the question that still remains unanswered till today is, what was bulk of the Delhi police doing as mobs roamed the streets of the nation's capital in 1984, targeting Sikhs coming off trains and buses, pulling them out of their homes and shops and then killing them, often in the most brutal of ways—some with swords, others by putting tyres around their necks and setting them on fire.

Surely, the police couldn't have been scared of the mob? Were they asked to remain in the police stations as the mobs had a free run of the capital? And even if political leaders of the day may have asked them to look the other way, did the policemen not fail in their duty to protect innocent citizens?

After a virtual three-day free run of the capital by the mobs, some order finally returned on the evening of 3rd November 1984 when the police and the army finally started coordinating and started restoring order. But by then the damage had been done: 3000 innocents had been killed. Even young boys were not spared. Eyewitness accounts have recounted the horrific events of those dark days when even Hindu families who tried to give shelter to fleeing Sikhs were not spared.

“We were fleeing for our lives. I had two young boys who I know would be attacked,” says Mrs Kaur, a survivor of the 1984 riots who had been living in South West Delhi. She asked her neighbour who had daughters the same age as her boys for two salwar kameez, which she made the boys wear. Being Sikhs, both had long hair and Mrs Kaur asked both her boys to open their hair, “atleast from afar they may just pass off as women” she said. “They hadn't started killing the women yet,” she adds. She was lucky, they managed to escape on board a truck. She recounts the scene she saw on the road out of her colony which was attacked. “We saw an incident of a man with a tyre around his neck and him burning and screaming. The police vans were moving up and down. They could



Gallery of the 1984 horrors

see the man being attacked, why couldn't they stop it? What apathy was this?" says Mrs Kaur

"The Delhi police of 1984 have much to answer for," says H S Phoolka, a High court lawyer who has single-handedly spearheaded the quest for justice for some of the Sikh families.

After the 1984 riots, Ved Marwaha, a former top cop with the Delhi police and someone who would go on to serve as governor of two states was asked by the government to probe the role of the police. Mr Marwaha was given three months to do his job, but just as he had begun to complete his inquiry, he was taken to court.

"Several of the police officers who didn't like the way the enquiry was progressing, approached the High Court to stay my inquiry" recalls Mr Marwaha. The Court however refused to step in, but then, just as abruptly, the government asked him to stop his inquiry and another committee started investigations.

"I had studied records of police stations, the startling thing was that while there were hundreds of calls made to police stations, the registers which records the movement of policemen were absolutely blank. That means that either the police was sitting inside the police station or deliberately they did not

want to disclose where they were and what they were doing," emphasises Marwaha.

Till date, there have been more than 10 commissions and committees set up to probe the 1984 riots. And while 2 Commissions and Committees have recommended action against 142 policemen, proceedings could only be started against 35, as 72 of them had either retired or died.

"It's the last opportunity we have to try and provide justice. Most of the eyewitnesses have died as have many of the accused. But there are still some alive who saw what happened and there are still those who either took part in the carnage or failed to do their duty," says HS Phoolka.

Several Sikh organisations are working to petition the Prime Minister to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to look into the crimes that took place during 1984 riots. "If the Supreme Court could order an SIT to look into the Gujarat Riots, why not 1984?" wonders Phoolka.

So far, they have already got more than 50 thousand signatures, including signatures of top jurists, former judges and activists. Question is, will it be enough to finally get the wheels of justice moving?

Sidharth Pandey



Widows and families of the victims outside Bangla Sahib.

November 1984 Recalled

Sifting through the ashes of a charred history

Those who begin by burning books will end by burning people. In Delhi, sayings like this are often not understood. The Indian capital is one of those rare cities where such wisdom gets completely inverted: those who begin by burning people will end by burning books," thus writes Jaspreet Singh, author of the book *Helium*.

In November 1984, politicians of India's ruling party directed mobs to burn alive as many Sikh citizens as possible. Under directions of Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers, kerosene oil and white phosphorous was distributed to the mobs.

Witness testimonials talk about the innovative use of rubber tyres to simultaneously trap the target, create thick clouds of toxins and facilitate combustion.

After burning humans, the thugs took meal breaks and then burned more humans and then burned copies of the *Adi Granth* in gurdwaras. Sometimes they burned books and humans simultaneously.

The *Adi Granth* includes approximately 6,000 poetic compositions by 43 saints who lived in the vast Sub-continent. The work included in the book defies

caste, creed, region or religion, work which was created over five centuries.

In short, the men burned not only what was sacred to them too, but they also burned the very idea of India.

I was in Delhi in 1984. I saw the blackened remains of books. I saw ash particles floating in the air.



Mobs ignite Sikh-owned establishments in Lutyen's Delhi

A few days later, the head of the Government delivered a chilling speech to the nation justifying the burnings (and lootings and gang rapes). It is only 'natural', he said, "*When a Big Tree Falls, the Earth Shakes a Little.*" He rewarded accused ministers and MPs and announced medals for senior police officers who had facilitated the atrocity.

The Congress Party conducted its first major pogrom exactly 99 years after it was formed, and exactly 100 years after it was conceived in the hill-station of Simla. In a piece entitled 'Thomas Bernhard in New Delhi' for *The New York Times'* blog *India Ink*, I alluded to the nation's inability to mourn. No Partition memorials exist, for instance. The very idea of creating a November 1984 memorial would be repulsive to the ruling party. It has instead tried to impose 'forgetorials' and the perpetual mourning of so-called 'great leaders'. The piece was accompanied by Gauri Gill's black-and-white photos of survivors photos that carry a vast accumulation of time and traces of the horrus. People stare out, urging ordinary citizens to do something. Photographs of memory, silence, complicated grief and collective trauma.

Twenty-eight years after the atrocity, in September 2012, the Congress published a thick book: *A Centenary History of Congress, Volume V: 1964-84*. Co-edited by Mukherjee and Mukherjee, the 716-page book was released during the leadership of Congress President Sonia Gandhi. One of the editors, Pranab Mukherjee, is now President of India. The editors claim the *Centenary*

History series is an 'important historical work' in which 100 years of 'Indian politics'—not just Congress politics—have been treated with 'unparalleled thoroughness'. The fifth and final volume reports on a period of the Congress that spanned Indira Gandhi's rise to PM of India as well as her assassination, the rapid development and reform of the country...

One does not expect a pogrom-conducting (and pogrom-denying) party to excavate honestly its own crimes, but one is curious nevertheless. Leafing through the pages one realises that November 1984 is neither an 'Event' nor a 'Chapter'. Mukherjee and Mukherjee lump post-partition India's unprecedented pogroms together under a chapter titled 'Punjab Crisis'. As part of an initial appraisal, I began counting the number of words devoted to November 1984.

One. Two. Three... Hundred... Four hundred.

Four-hundred words.

One word for every ten Sikh citizens exterminated in Delhi alone.

After a careful reading, I realised that only 40-odd words of the 400 deal with the reality of November 1984, though even those lack the 'unparalleled thoroughness' promised by the editors. One word for every 100 people exterminated by the party in Delhi.

The catastrophe is first mentioned mid-paragraph, towards the end of the long chapter. The paragraph begins with 18 words almost justifying the murder of innocent civilians. 'While certain amount of anger and resultant violence on 31 October 1984 is understandable...'

Most sentences follow the same tone, either beginning or ending in an odd manner. What 'surprised' everyone was that top Congress leaders were 'suspected of flaming the anti-Sikh passions'. Only four leaders are named, their crime unacknowledged. While libraries all



Marina Arcade on fire as the mobs run rampant.

over the world are filled with books and documents that detail not just the crimes but also the precise mechanisms behind them, for India's Congress party, to this day, the names of the guilty exist only within the realm of suspicion.

Four words talk about women. Not as citizens, but as objects who belong to Sikh men: 'Rape of their womenfolk'.



Aftermath of war? No, Delhi in November 1984.

The chillingly sinister justification provided by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is strangely absent. Not even a trace! With 'unparalleled thoroughness', the editors have omitted the rewards received by guilty MPs and Cabinet ministers from the Prime Minister. Perhaps November 1984 never happened? (Indian diplomats in foreign missions still refer to this in terms of a 'conspiracy theory'.) There is no mention of the Congress party's massive ad-campaign vilifying minorities so as to win an important election, or the fact that two of the accused held important positions within the party, one of them a senior Cabinet Minister in the current administration.

'Several prominent citizens organisations... condemned... the failure of the state. Several inquiry commissions... censured the official machinery for

failure to maintain law and order.' Human rights organisations didn't call November 1984 a 'failure' of the State, or a 'failure to maintain law and order'. They called it a planned and systematic attack on Sikh citizens by members of the government.

There is no mention of the perverse misuse of language to describe what happened. 'Riots', for instance. The book doesn't even pose this as a question.

Not a word about the extraordinary miscarriage of justice for which the party is directly responsible. No discussion about the persistent use of words like 'natural' and 'spontaneous'. Nothing at all.

Instead, the party chooses to see the elevation of a 'turbaned Sikh' to Prime Minister as some sort of ironic justice.



Dr. Manmohan Singh, 2004

Seventy-six words are devoted to Manmohan Singh; 52 more words are devoted to Manmohan Singh's farcical 'apology': 'Sikh history has taken a full circle.' Perhaps it is not an absurd idea, even at this late stage, to check this statement with the women who were brutally raped or those who lost 21 members of their extended family in one single day. Or to verify the 'turning point' with the woman who, to this day, displays her husband's hair and amputated finger.

Where exactly are those 400 words headed? Towards what kind of closure? How does a narrative like this end, really?

This is perhaps the most astonishing thing about those 400 words— 400 words headed at the speed of light towards more and more shamelessness. Near the end of the paragraph 'about this dismal situation', the astonishing Congress party takes credit for the

good work done by students and professors of Jawaharlal Nehru University, "saving lives in November 1984."

Wise as it has become, the party doesn't hesitate to issue instructions to Sikhs. Take refuge, it tells them, in the *Adi Granth* (the same book burned in large numbers in November 1984):

Let yourself be lovingly absorbed in the Lord.

Somewhere, buried in those 400 words, there is also a guiltless, shameless use of a little girl's diary. A quote from Anne Frank: *Our religion will teach the world and all the people in it about the goodness, and that's the reason, the only reason we will have to suffer.*

Minutes after reading that quote, in a state of disquiet, I stumbled upon Jacques Derrida's *The Work of Mourning*, which led me to Sarah Kofman's poem *Shoah* (or *Disgrace*):

We will not pardon [...] for this crime, / Render it null, make it un-
happened, / Nullify it in forgiveness and forgetting.

...

So that those who died

...

That their memory may not be murdered / Let us not forget this Event!

Memory. Forgetting. Trauma.

So, how does one write the histories of burned books and a burned people? Histories of collective silences and the moral ruin of a nation? How does one comprehend lack of justice?

For anyone interested in State-sponsored genocidal violence in India, Justice Ranganath Misra's name keeps recurring, luminously. A pioneer of sorts, he is an example to future generations.



If there were such a thing as a shamelessness scale, he would belong to the uppermost, brightest section. As a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, Misra headed the first ever commission to investigate November 1984. (Several other farcical commissions followed.) In March 2013, when I interviewed retired history professor and human rights activist Uma Chakravarty in her living room in South Delhi, she revealed something shocking that a lawyer friend told her a few years ago. Uma kept her eyes shut while recalling the details. The young lawyer had witnessed first-hand Justice Ranganath Misra's inquiry commission. A Sikh man had been inconsolable during the proceedings. He had filed an affidavit; his son had been murdered brutally in November 1984.

Sardarji, Justice Ranganath Misra had said, your story is a bit like this one. Listen to me carefully. Imagine you and your son are going somewhere on a scooter. You stop at the railway crossing. Zillions of cars and scooters are waiting for the train to pass by. No one has any idea about a huge vulture flying high up in the skies, right above you. In the vulture's beak, there is a snake. Suddenly, it slithers and manages to free itself; the snake falls down, and finally lands on your son, sitting behind you on your scooter. The snake bites his neck. Your son dies that very instant. And that very instant, the vulture lands, collects the snake and flies away. See, it is no one's fault. Do you think it is somebody's fault? Not really. This is exactly what happened to your family. It is no one's fault.

One of the most significant books to examine the sinister role played by the Judiciary after 1984 was *When a Tree Shook Delhi*, co-written by Manoj Mitta and HS Phoolka. A Supreme Court lawyer, Phoolka has worked tirelessly over the last 29 years for justice for victims.

Two chapters in the book detail the manner in which Justice Misra conducted the ominous inquiry. On the surface, it was

an in-camera inquiry (apparently to protect witnesses), but all along, the judge released witness identities to lawyers working for accused Congress leaders, representing anti-victim groups that claimed the carnage was 'spontaneous'. The lawyers representing Congress leaders 'also received advance information from the commission about when each victim was due to depose... this information was used to intimidate the victims just before their deposition.'

At times, victims received the commission's summons and culprit's threats simultaneously. A number of victims complained about the threats, 'but to no avail.' In some cases, security tasks were assigned to the same local police then responsible for facilitating atrocities only six months earlier.

While the pogrom conductors 'and police were allowed to victimise the Sikhs all over again,' Phoolka writes, 'the media and other public spirited citizens were shut out.' Thousands of fraudulent anti-victim 'affidavits' also surfaced then.



Scene reminiscent of the post-1947 partition : but this is in 1984, nearly four decades later.

All along, Justice Misra shielded the culprits and suppressed the truth. He didn't even allow the victims' representatives access to government documents or an opportunity to cross-examine the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, the Police Commissioner of Delhi and seven other high-ranking officials. When the representatives insisted, the judge revealed that 'he had already examined five of the officials', thus excluding the victims' lawyers from crucial parts of the investigation. 'In a bizarre innovation, Misra was holding an in-camera inquiry within an in-camera inquiry.'

'The discovery of the secret examination of officials was the last straw for us,' writes Phoolka. 'It dawned on us that we were just being taken for a ride.' And because of the 'gag order Justice Misra had passed initially, nothing was being reported in the press.' After much agonising, the Citizens Justice Committee, representing the victims, submitted a letter of withdrawal.

Around then, Justice Misra asked Mr Phoolka not to get 'carried away'. He instructed the young lawyer to quit the CJC and work independently instead. 'He made a more blatant attempt to co-opt me. I tried to cut him short [by saying] that I was very much party to the decision. Misra said that if I accepted his offer to participate in the inquiry, he would, in turn, see to it that I was 'suitably rewarded'.'

Several Supreme Court lawyers acknowledge that Justice Misra, with strong links to the Congress party, was perhaps one of the most corrupt judges in post-Independence India.

In his final report, Misra gave 'a clean chit to Congress party as well as its leaders and the government... The police were accountable for errors of omission and commission.... But the upshot of all his exertions to cover up political complicity was that no individual, whether in the police or the ruling party, was indicted for his complicity in the massacre. Even as he maintained that he could not indict any of the culprits, Justice Misra went out of his way to exonerate HKL Bhagat and Rajiv Gandhi.'

Ranganath Misra went on to become the 21st Chief Justice of the Indian Supreme Court in 1990. He died a natural death at the age of 85 on 13 September 2012. In his condolence message, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said these chilling words: "Justice Misra was an eminent jurist and



The young boys of 1984....

parliamentarian who distinguished himself in the high public offices he held."

From 1998 to 2004, Misra was appointed a Member of Parliament (Upper House) by the Congress Party. In 2004, after the party returned to power, he was asked to look into various issues related to Linguistic and Religious Minorities. In 1993, nine years after the genocidal pogroms, he was appointed the first Chairman of the National Human Rights' Commission of India.

The writer Jaspreet Singh grew up in India and moved to Canada in 1990. His novel *Helium* is, in the author's own words, the story of a grand crime and the individual and collective trauma it caused. It is also the story of the collective silence and extraordinary miscarriage of justice in the aftermath of the violence of 1984. It was published by Bloomsbury India.



.... are now young men, who will "never forget 1984."

The (Second) Battle of Laungewala

Typical sands of Rajasthan, where the hamlet of Laungewala came into prominence in December 1971.

How that famous desert victory in December 1971, meant another victory for this hero in November 1984

In Nishaan's Issue IV/2009, under the title 'For Whom the Bells Toll ?' details were given of serving Sikh defence personnel, including officers, who were murderously attacked and killed during the pogrom of November, 1984. Amongst them was Flt Lt Harinder Singh, an IAF test pilot selected for Mirage 2000 conversion in France, even whilst he was in transit at New Delhi. Given were the names, ranks and service numbers of no less than 50 serving officers and men, 50 names, 50 shaheeds, 50 fewer thereafter to defend India. Some three decades later, the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India has not acknowledged, least of all lamented, the infamy of Indian citizens murderously attacking India's defenders.

Who then is the real enemy ? In this article, Major General Atma Singh AVSM VrC, regarded by many as the father of Indian Army Aviation and the true 'Hero of Laungewala', writes in first person his recollection of that horrific incident on 1 November 1984, when travelling by train from Delhi to his Brigade near Jhansi, when stopped at Bharatpur and confronted by mobs intent on murder.

It was in the last week of October 1984 that I was posted to Delhi on temporary duty from Talbeht, which is 40 kilometres south of Jhansi where I was commanding 24 Artillery Brigade, part of a RAPIDS Division. On 31 October, I was at the Directorate General of Artillery in Sena Bhavan when at about 1100 hours, there was a news flash that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had been shot at her residence and taken to hospital. Sometime during late afternoon news came that she was no more.

In the evening I went to SP Marg Officers Mess and was to return to Talbeht next morning. At about 1800 hours I went to Som Vihar, in RK Puram to meet with Major General Maujamdar who was my GOC and then on leave. By 1900 hours news came about the outbreak of 'riots' in Delhi. Gen Maujamdar advised me not to travel next day as he apprehended trouble all over. I told him that instead of civilian clothes, I would travel in uniform, assuming that our people would have respect for army men and in Brigadier's uniform with



Then Major, Atma Singh commanded the No. 12 (Indep) Air OP Flight which were instrumental in the decisive victory over enemy armoured forces at Loungewala in the Rajasthan desert, in December 1971

of his residence and said, "Sardar Sahib don't go out, if you have any problem, you stay with us for the night". By that time it was about 2030 hrs. I then went back to Gen Maujamdar, and the TV was flashing news of wide spread mayhem in Delhi.

I shared dinner with him. At about 2030 hrs he rang up Brigadier PJ Thomas, my coursemate posted at Army HQ staying in SP Marg Mess and asked him to pick me up if everything was okay on the way. He came in his ambassador car, I sat in the rear seat and PJ told me that although everything was alright on the way but I should duck down if I saw anyone on the roadside. All

red band on my turban, nobody would harm me. I also told him that I would travel only if the Punjab Mail was on time otherwise would return to the Officers Mess.

At about 2000 hrs I left Som Vihar's No.1 Gate to go back to SP Marg where I found a Sikh gentleman (later identified as a retired Brigadier staying in Som Vihar) with turban under his armpit walking in - he looked mauled. I was cautioned by the security guard not to go out. Then I came out of No.2 Gate of Som Vihar and looked for some conveyance. A civilian resident opposite Som Vihar came out

was quiet along the way except that we saw some stones littered on the road near Gurdwara Motibagh which had been attacked by the mob. We got back to SP Marg Mess safely.

Next morning I wore my uniform and reached New Delhi Railway Station. The Punjab Mail was right on time, although at the station I could sense an uneasy calm with less than normal crowds. The train too had fewer passengers : my AC compartment had only three more passengers. The train left on time and reached all stations enroute also on time.

At Agra station, I saw a Sikh passenger sitting on the bench being heckled. For a while I thought of getting down at Agra and proceeding to some army unit, but I reckoned that it would be safer to get down if I could see some military police personnel. Since there were none, I continued on the journey with some apprehensions (later I learnt from my relative Major BS Grewal who was on temporary duty at Agra, about some rumours that I had been murdered in the train).

After passing through Gwalior, the train stopped at Bharatpur where a



HAL Krishak AOP aircraft, the type flown by Major Atma Singh in the December 1971 Operations.

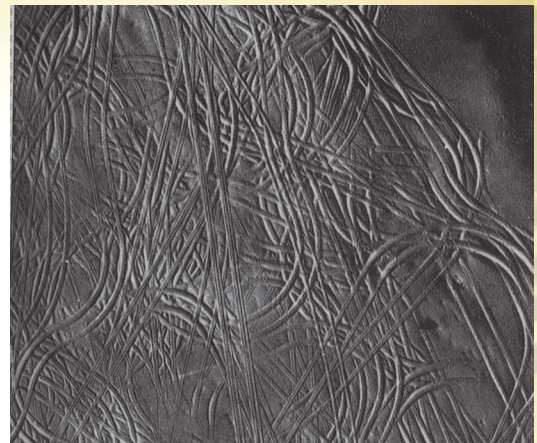


mob was waiting on the platforms. After about half an hour, a sub-inspector of the Railway Protection Force, travelling in my compartment which was at rear of the train, informed me that a mob from the locomotive side was coming down and pulling out all Sikhs, shorning their hair and those resisting being beaten up. I still thought any mob would not touch army personnel in uniform but with my temperament inherently remaining cool and calm under crisis, I started thinking of all options and contingencies in facing the mob.

First I told the RPF sub-inspector to go to the station master's office and ring the DC or the SSP and tell them that there was a VIP on the train and they should send an escort and evacuate him. He doubled up to the station master's office and returned after about 10 minutes with the encouraging news that he got through to the SSP who was sending a DSP in a jeep and I should only get down from the train on arrival of the DSP who would drive the jeep onto the platform.

Meanwhile, the mob had reached my bogey which we had locked from the inside. Its windows were dark and the mob was not able to see through and started banging on the doors. Then the mob broke the windows by hurling stones which created big holes through which one mobster shouted "*yeh bhi gadaar hai, iss ko bhi maro*" (he is also enemy, kill him too). The mob entered the compartment after unlocking the doors and I was now face to face with this 'enemy', whilst the mob continued shouting "*zindabad – murdabad*" slogans. I was at the end of the compartment where the RPF inspector was looking out for the police jeep. Apart from the men inside the compartment, there were unruly mobs on the platform and below on the rail tracks.

Every second mattered between then and arrival of the police jeep, which was to decide my fate. Keeping cool and calm I shouted at the mob : "*yeh tum kya kar rahe ho? Tumeh pata hai ke*



Pakistan Army tank tracks in the desert at Laungewala

Pakistan hamare oopar hamla karnewala hai, maine Jhansi se tank aur topkhana sarhad tak le ke jana hai. Agar aap mujhe maroge to tank aur topkhana aap leke jaoge ?"(What are you upto? Do you know Pakistan is going to attack us? I am going to Jhansi and take tanks and guns to the border. If you harm me, are you going to take tanks and gun to the border)? At the same I was looking out for the DSP and his jeep. The mob seemed a little shaken by my outburst and stopped shouting slogans. Then it occurred to me



Major Atma Singh receiving Vir Chakra from President VV Giri

that Bharatpur was in Rajasthan. I again shouted at the mob. "*Bharatpur Rajasthan mein hai ?*" (Is Bharatpur in Rajasthan ?) Mob said 'yes', then further exchanges followed as under :

"Aap ko pata hai, 1971 ke larai mein Jaisalmer aur Laungewala mein kya hua tha ?" (Do you know what happened in Jaisalmer sector at Laungewala in 1971 War ?)

'Yes' mob responded. "*Laungewala ki larai mein jo Pakistan ke tank barbad kiye the, woh maine hi barbad kiye. Mujhe sarkar ne Vir Chakra dia hai aur Rajasthan sarkar ne mujhe khas samman dekar zamin ek murrobha diya hai. Aap mujhe marne aaye ho?"* (I participated in battle of Laungewala. I was the one who destroyed Pakistani tanks. Government has awarded me Vir Chakra and Rajasthan Government has specially honoured me by giving land of one marraba and you have come to kill me ?)

The leader with whom I was now face to face in the narrow corridor then loudly exclaimed, waving his rod, "*Aap hamare bhai ho, aap ko koi haath nahin lagaiga.*" (You are our brother, no one will touch you). In a flash I got the feeling that Laungewala had given me a second victory - and of course a new life!

Just then, inspector RPF informed me about arrival of the DSP with a jeep but he was on No.1 platform whereas the train was on No.3 or 4 platform. But the DSP quickly jumped down and evading the mob, came upto the door where I was standing. I handed over my briefcase to him. Mob on the tracks was quietly watching this scene unfold. While following the DSP, I saw a Sikh jawan in uniform with his turban in his armpit in the mob. He seemed little mauled. I shouted, "*Tum bhi hamare sath chalo* (you also come with me)". He responded, "*Sahib mera kit bag to gari mein hai* (Sahib my kit bag is still in the train)". I looked sternly at him and told him to forget about his kit bag and come with me. He followed me and jumped into the rear seat where three policemen were seated. The DSP asked me to sit in the front seat in between the driver and him.

We were brought to the police lines and accommodated on first floor of the building away from the main police barracks. I asked the DSP to go back to the railway station and look for other Sikh army personnel and also bring them there. After some time he brought one JCO, three jawans and three Sikh civilians including an old lady who were on their way to their home town in Madhya Pradesh.

Fortunately there was a field telephone manned by a lone policeman through which I contacted civil exchange Bharatpur and booked a call to the army exchange at Gwalior which took about two hours to come through. I asked the operator to put me through to the station commander impressing on him urgency of the call.

The Army operator told me that the station commander was neither available in the office nor at home. Then I asked him to put me through to any commanding officer of a unit, preferably a *tope khana* unit. To my good luck he put me through to Lt Col Ajmer Singh, commanding an artillery regiment whom I recalled had been my pupil at Patiala, where we had flight trained 28 Air OP Officers in 1966-67. I requested for a jeep, a one-tonner and a three-tonner with armed escort as I also expected trouble in the Morena area, half way between Gwalior and Bharatpur known for harbouring criminals and dacoits.

I later learnt that the Punjab Mail and all subsequent trains had been stopped at Morena where Sikhs including many army men in uniform had been pulled out and killed by pushing them onto heaps of rice husk set on fire.

The escort from Gwalior arrived at last light. I first told the JCO incharge to go to the railway station once again to look for army personnel. To my surprise they brought back four Sikh jawans who were still near the station, one of them badly mauled by the mob as he had resisted and put up a stout fight. We wrapped him in a blanket and put him in the one-tonner.

After briefing the armed escort, we started for Gwalior. I had told the escort to keep their sten guns loaded and open fire only on my order. We passed through Morena and Chambal area and some small towns and villages astride the road where I had expected some trouble but we reached Gwalior without incident well past midnight, where Col Ajmer Singh received us.

Next day I contacted the Air OP Squadron located at Gwalior Air Force station, which then flew me to the Talbeht station grounds. My family and the brigade officers were anxiously waiting for me as they knew I had been on that fateful train.

The next day, I sent a detailed report about the brush with murderous mobs to GOC of the Division under which I was serving.

In retrospect

It has been nearly 30 years after this incident, upon which I have often reflected as another indelible memory of one's life journey. My autobiography will certainly include this chapter which I will term as the 'Shame of India'. There cannot be bigger shame for India's political classes as also misguided countrymen when one's own people attack and kill armed forces personnel in uniform who have been sworn to defend them against 'the enemy'. Has any subsequent Government of India bothered to record how many officers and other ranks, in uniform or otherwise, were killed during the 1984 pogrom and what happened to those who killed them ?

I have also been mulling over the following : if I was mauled and my turban removed, would I have continued in service ? The answer is I would certainly have resigned and gone home. And then done what ? Joined politics ? No, politics never as this is last resort of scoundrels.

Should I have resigned in the given circumstances ? The answer was no, because I was serving the country and not the bunch of rogues.

I am fond of collecting quotes and I was taken in by quote of a wise man of the west : 'Loyalty to the country - Yes. Loyalty to the Government - when it deserves it' !

As a subaltern I was taught key signal communications of the Army and various priorities of such signals which every officer and soldier must learn. When the signal 'flash' is sent, it must reach every unit within minutes. For the past 30 years, I have been troubled as to why Army HQ, fully aware that hundreds of armymen travelled every day by rail and road, did not send a flash signal instructing army units to fan out to protect them? The Indian Army could have saved the lives of many serving men who were murdered by their own 'countrymen' during the 72 hours of genocide. Did Army HQ require the Defence Ministry's permission to do so ? No ! Army Headquarters had failed miserably, letting down the very men to whom they were sworn to lead in war and peace. This was the worst kind of war - in peace.

Maj Gen Atma Singh AVSM, VrC

Commissioned in the Regiment of Artillery on 2 June 1955, Major General Atma Singh was nominated for the Air OP Course in 1962 followed by the Flying Instructor Course in 1966.

During his 34 years of service with the Indian Army, he performed regimental service for 16 years, which included command of a Field Regiment and Commander of an Artillery Brigade.

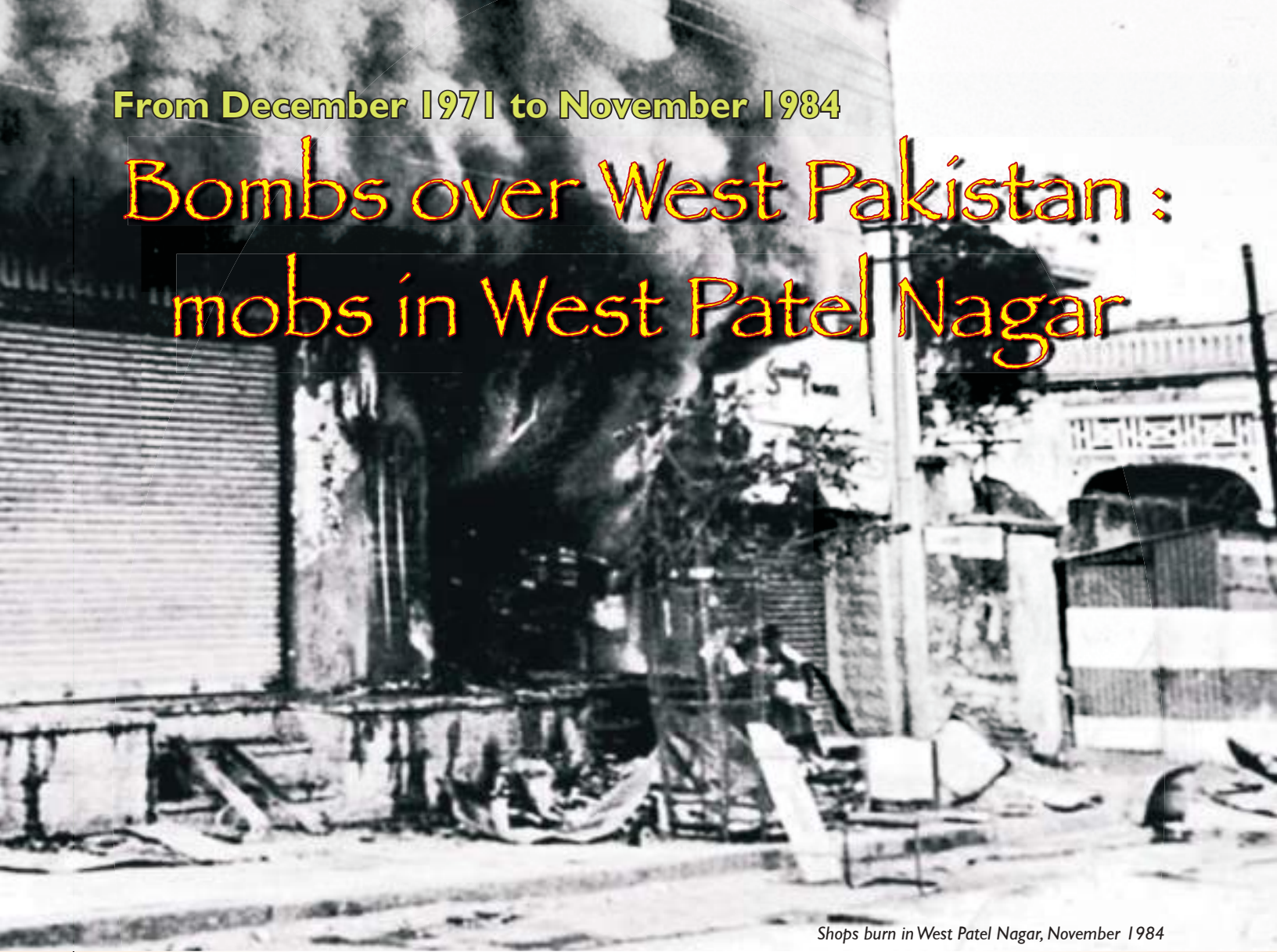


Later Major General, Atma Singh was awarded the Vir Chakra for gallantry in the famous battle of Laungewala and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal for distinguished service leading to formation of Army Air Corps

As an Army Aviator he served in Air OP units and Army Aviation for 18 years during which he commanded Independent Air OP Flights, Nos. 659 and 665 Air OP Squadrons, and was Brigadier Aviation at the Army HQ. He is truly regarded as 'father of Indian Army Aviation' and was privileged to be the first Additional Director General (ADG), Army Aviation from 1 November 1986 to 30 November 1988.

From December 1971 to November 1984

Bombs over West Pakistan : mobs in West Patel Nagar

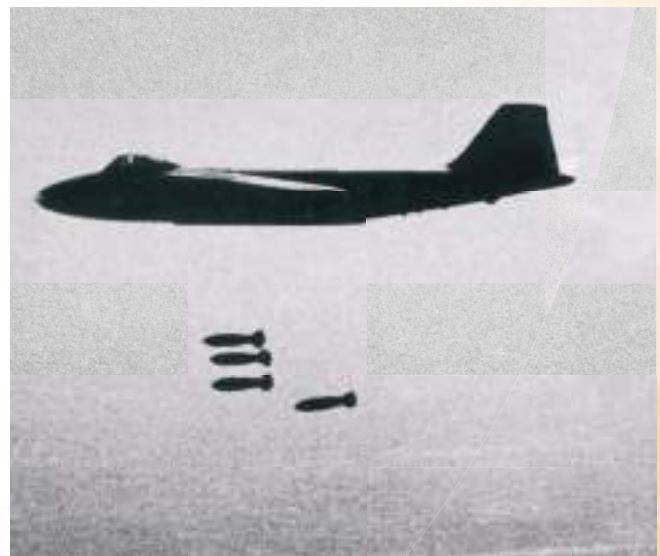


Shops burn in West Patel Nagar, November 1984

He led deep penetration bombing raids over hostile air space in December 1971, being awarded the Maha Vir Chakra "for outstanding bravery and courage". 13 years later, the Delhi police and administration took no time in ripping off his gallantry commendation and put him in the dock after he defended himself and his family from murderous mobs. Even if it be presumed that he did open fire to scare away the rioters, did the circumstances then prevalent not warrant action in self-defence ? This is the fate of Group Captain Manmohan Bir Singh Talwar MVC of West Patel Nagar, New Delhi.

An extract from official history of the Indian Air Force is pertinent.

No.5 Squadron and its Canberras struck hard and deep in December 1971, virtually against the same targets in



IAF Canberra dropping bombs over West Pakistan, December 1971

Pakistan they had in September 1965 and earning another Maha Vir Chakra for its Commanding Officer plus three Vir Chakras for other flying personnel of the unit. This time around, which was in effect the 'Third Round' of war between India and Pakistan, No.5 was commanded by Wg Cdr Man Mohan Bir Singh Talwar. Following the PAF's pre-emptive air strike on the evening of 3 December 1971, the first Canberras were airborne on operational missions at 2150 hours, just six hours later, in spite of their home air base, Agra, having been attacked an hour earlier.

Led by the CO, 5's first counter air missions were against the PAF air bases at Sargodha and Shorkot Road on the night of 3 December, catching the enemy by surprise, with runway lights still on to receive recovering PAF aircraft. 24 hours on, 18 sorties were mounted, eleven against Sargodha with repeat bombing of runways, dispersal areas and installations. Six missions were mounted against Shorkot and one at Lyallpur. All aircraft returned safely to base. The PAF paid a 'reciprocal' visit to Agra in the early hours of 5 December their B-57 attacking the IAF base even as the Canberras were landing back after their mission. However, there was no damage but other returning Canberras were diverted to Hindan and Sirsa airfields.

Railway tracks and yards, lines of communication were interdicted and six sorties mounted by the Tuskers against enemy armour advancing in the Chhamb sector. The Canberras also carried out tactical recce over the battlefield. On 8 and 9 December, 5 sorties were flown to Chhamb, 3 to Raiwind and 2 against the Jassar railways yards. On 10 December, three missions were flown in the Chhamb area and three bombing missions against the Lodhran railway yard.

Reacting to intelligence reports on enemy armour concentrations at Sulemanki, three sorties were mounted against the jungle target which was led by the CO Wg Cdr MBS Talwar, the Canberras carrying heavy loads of 2x4000 lb bombs each. Direct hits were scored and flashes registered, the Canberras recovering back to base even as 501 SU reported enemy night fighters attempting interception.

With the battle for Chhamb intensifying, eleven missions were flown by the Canberras on the night of 13-14 December but on the 15th, three raids were again flown against targets near Dacca in the east, parallel to which seven missions were also flown in the west, two each on Raiwad and Jaffanwal plus three against enemy concentrations close to Pasrur airfield. On the 16th, five missions were flown in the Chhamb and against Lodhran, with the CO carrying out a lone attack against Rohri Junction, staging via Jodhpur.

On 17 December, last day of the war, even as four Canberras were overhead Chhamb, two Canberras flown by the CO Wg Cdr MS Talwar and Sqn Ldr RC Kohli bombed Skardu airfield, in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, scoring direct hits on the runway.

As mentioned earlier, the CO Wg Cdr Talwar earned a well deserved MVC, No.5 Squadron flew a total of 273 hours by night and 33 hours during the 14-day war.

The official citation reads :

Wing Commander Man Mohan Bir Singh Talwar, Commanding Officer of a Bomber Squadron led five day and night bombing missions against very



Wg Cdr Manmohan Bir Singh Talwar, as CO No.5 Squadron, greets Air Chief Marshal PC Lal, Chief of the Air Staff just after the 1971 war.



Wg Cdr Manmohan Bir Singh Talwar introducing squadron personnel to Babu Jagjivan Ram, then Minister of Defence.

heavily defended enemy targets within the first 10 days of operations. On one of these missions, Wing Commander Talwar inflicted very severe damage to the Pakistani Air Force installations at Sargodha. In a daylight mission in

the Chhamb area in support of the army, Wing Commander Talwar attacked four enemy gun positions near the Munawar Tawi river and effectively silenced three of them facilitating the advance of our troops in difficult terrain. Both these targets were heavily defended; the latter was close to an enemy fighter base from where interception was also likely. Despite this, Wing Commander Talwar pressed home his attacks with great determination and much success. His conduct was an inspiration to the crews of the other aircraft, which he was leading.

The bold leadership, tenacity of purpose, flying skill and conspicuous gallantry displayed by Wing Commander Man Mohan Bir Singh Talwar were largely responsible for the many successes of his squadron.

Nearly 13 years later, now a retired Group Captain engaged in family business in the West Patel Nagar part of the north-west Delhi, Man Mohan was faced with mortal danger to himself and his family. Not from the 'enemy' across the western border but from that latent within the country.

On the fateful night of 1 November 1984, murderous mobs attacked Sikh homes and establishments in many parts of India's capital city, including West Patel Nagar. The full account of this ignominious chapter in India's history has yet to be recorded but war heroes such as Manmohan Bir Singh Talwar were not spared in this darkest period of India's contemporary history. Even as the mobs attacked, the Delhi Police looked away. The Group Captain, was forced to hide his family even as he took out his licensed shot gun to defend them. In the process, some mobsters were injured and ran away howling into the arms of the Delhi Police. Instead of coming to the rescue, these custodians of law rushed in to disarm Talwar and arrested him as 'a murderer', putting him in prison.

It was several weeks later that he was released on the intervention of the former Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh DFC but the 'case' continued in court thereafter.

What price gallantry ?



Air Marshal Arjan Singh commanded the Indian Air Force in September 1965 (later Air Chief Marshal and now Marshal of the Air Force).

In an earlier war (1965)



Wg Cdr PP Singh with his navigator Flt Lt HS Mangat who flew several dangerous missions at night, deep into enemy territory.

In an earlier war, the deteriorating situation in Kashmir had spiraled out of control and on 6 September 1965, full scale war broke out between India and Pakistan. The Indian Air Force was employed to

strike at vital enemy targets and virtually first off the mark were the Canberra bombers of No.5 Squadron with Canberras commanded at Agra by Wg Cdr Prem Pal Singh (later Air Marshal, Vice Chief of Air Staff), who personally flew six missions between the 6th and 9th September, his outstanding leadership being recognised through the early announcement of a Maha Vir Chakra. Apart from Sargodha, the Canberras carried out bombing raids on PAF airbases at Chaklala, Akwal, Kohat, Chak Jhumra and Risalwala. Most missions were at night, with full use made of the moonlight phase.

Another remarkable member of the Squadron was Sqn Ldr (later Gp Capt) Charanjit Singh who carried out perhaps the most audacious long range raid of the war, against the PAF base at Peshawar. With Flt Lt HS Mangat as his navigator, Charanjit made a precision attack at low level, inspite of intense anti-aircraft fire, earning reluctant respect of the enemy.

Both officers later received gallantry awards.



Gp Capt Charanjit Singh who, as a Sqn Ldr carried out the most spectacular raid on the PAF's airbase of Peshawar on the night of 13-14 September 1965.



1000lb bombs being loaded in the bomb bay of a Canberra bomber

The 'Sadda Huq' Controversy



The movie, *Sadda Huq*, is fiction but the facts upon which it is based are real and eminently verifiable.

*S**adda Huq* (literally 'Our Right') is different; it deserves thoughtful examination. It captures history that is less than 30 years old and therefore makes history just by the fact that it has been completed, received the Indian Censor Board's approval to be exhibited and now by the fact that there is a widespread move to ban it in India.

The facts of the 1980s exist. Recently, even the United States government issued a statement condemning the human rights violations by the Indian government against the Sikhs during those years. Perhaps the US government stopped short of labeling the killings of the Sikhs as attempted genocide because global business trumped human rights. But many international and Indian Human Rights activists and organisations have not been so easily deterred.

The Indian government and the majority of Indian (Congress) society have spawned a slew of deniers of history. The Indian government and its spokesmen have conceded at various times that over 3700 Sikh men, women and children were murdered in cold blood on the streets of the capital city, Delhi, within

48 hours – that would be over 1300 per 24-hour day or better than 50 an hour while the police stood by, even encouraging the mayhem. Other sources speak of a significantly larger number.

This happened in the India of 1984 where arms were licensed and not freely available; even kerosene that was used to burn Sikh businesses and people was tightly controlled. Remember that this was in the pre-Google days when names, ownership and address of Sikh houses and businesses could not be downloaded at the click of a mouse. And yet, such lists are what the attackers had in their hands.

Under pressure the Indian government agreed to mount a judicial inquiry into the killings to be followed by some semblance of justice. In the subsequent 28 years, over 12 Indian government commissions were convened and failed to identify more than five killers. It is as if thousands of Sikhs self-destructed and took the evidence with them.

This is the backdrop to the movie.

So what can the citizens expect in the presumably secular democratic republic that is India? What

are their rights? That's what *Sadda Huq* is all about. Literally translated the Punjabi title speaks of 'Our Rights.' The rights are self-evident – a modicum of justice, freedom of expression, a transparent attempt at accountability. These rights are the same even when we speak about the smallest minority. In fact the legitimacy of any democracy stems from its commitment to protect the least among its citizens.

Attempts have been made to capture the reality of those days in books and movies but they have largely been legally suppressed in India not because they were false depictions, but on the fanciful grounds that they would promote unrest in the country and undermine the unity and peace of the nation.

Yet somehow this movie got made. I understand that the Censor Board certified approval of it for wide showing. How that miracle happened remains a mystery. The one showing here in New York a couple of days ago did not exhibit the certificate as is done at the showing of every movie in India.

Somehow a copy got out of the country. This is worth celebrating. With the Internet and social media being as pervasive as they are, the genie is out of the bottle and isn't going back.

I found it most promising that a Sikh and a Hindu are the co-producers of the movie. The story is well developed and is firmly grounded in reality. The performers are way ahead of what you see in Punjabi movies. The dramatisation is realistic way beyond the usual Bollywood stuff.

Scenes of corruption within the Indian bureaucracy, rape, terrorism and brutality may upset delicate minds, but to water them down would dilute the story and rob it of its authenticity. Sikh characters are shown, and some are honest and honourable while others are venal, particularly in the police force. But that, too, is factual history. It is true that the police seeded its agents within the Sikh movement and not all 'terrorists' were honest or equally dedicated to the cause.

We seem to forget that when ordinary people rise against their own government even then governments must not use the same extralegal desperate tools that the rebels use. Governments have almost unlimited power and weapons. The ordinary men and women do not. The former must remain aware of the intrinsic limitation of attacking its own people because of the very fact that it exists to serve them.



In the final analysis, the matter raises two fundamental issues: what exactly are the rights and obligations of a government towards its own people? And what are the obligations and duties of citizenship? I am not going to attempt a fuller treatise on it at this time. But to my mind the obligations and duties of both a democratic government and its citizens stem from the same imperatives – transparency, accountability and participatory self-governance. Banning a movie and closing all conversation on it is like burning a book: I don't see how transparency, accountability and self-governance are enhanced.

The fact that the techniques and methods of the Indian government produced many more rebels than those who ever wanted to enter the struggle comes out clearly in the movie. And that is history.

Indian society needs to learn that banning books and movies is not the way to build a democratic nation. Bad ideas are best handled not by the heavy hand of law but in the free marketplace of ideas.

It turns out that now the movie has been banned in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi; other regions of India will likely follow suit. What will this achieve? The banning will only add to its well deserved pull.

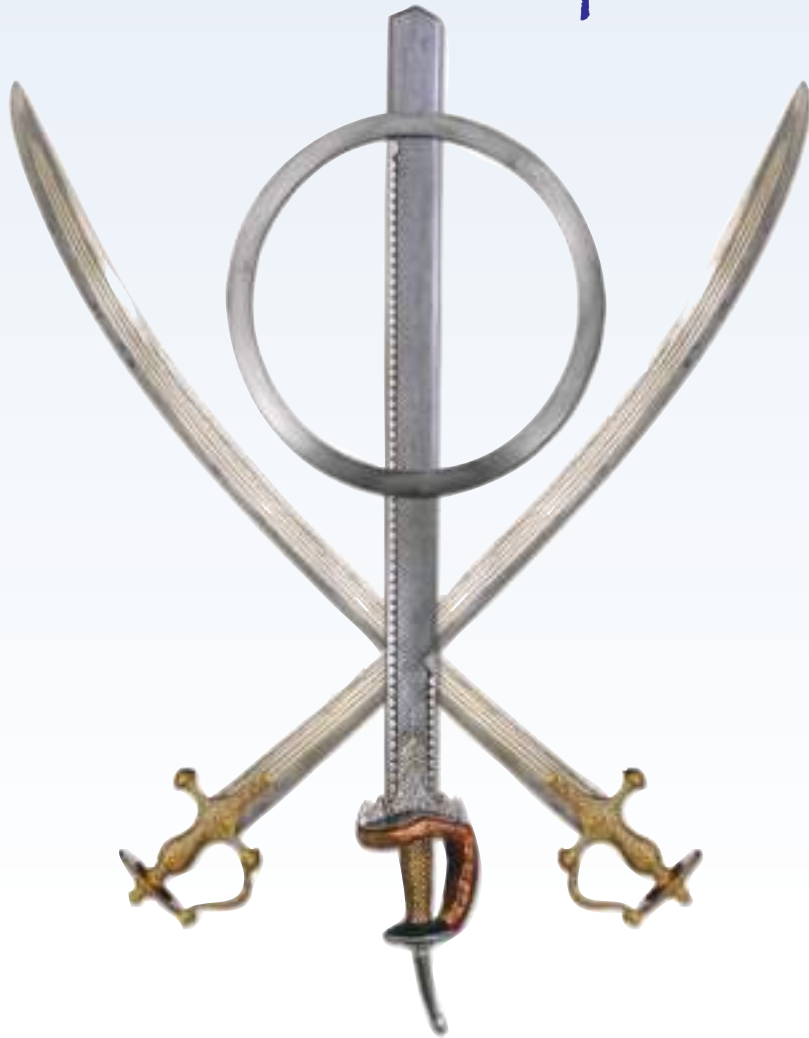
It has already come out of India and now nothing can stop its worldwide distribution. We live in the age of information. The Internet has forever changed our global landscape.

Dr IJ Singh

(This essay benefited greatly from the contributions of Amarjit Singh Buttar and Simarpal Singh Bharara, both of Connecticut.)

Shastar Nam Mala

The ode to weapons as a metaphor



Weapons have traditionally played an important role in Sikh religious practice and Sikh history. An arrangement of weapons is found on today's modern Nishaan Sahib as well as Nishaan Sahibs of the past.

A poem attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, the *Shastar Nam Mala*, in praise of God uses various weapons as metaphors, which is an important record of the large diversity of weapons in use and known to the Sikhs during the 17th and early 18th century when the poem was composed.

Part of the opening section of the 1318 verses of the poem are as below:

The Lord is One and the Victory is of the True Guru.

'Shastra-Nama Mala Purana' (the Rosary of the names of weapons) is now composed with the support of the primal power by the Tenth King.

Couplet :

O Lord ! Protect us by creating Saang, Sarohi (sword), Saif (straight sword), As (curved sword), Teer (arrow) tupak (gun), Talwaar (curved sword), Satratak (sword – destroyer of the enemy), Kavchantak (armour piercing sword), with all these weapons kindly protect me.

O Lord ! Create As (curved sword), Kripan (sword), Dharaddhari, Sail, Soof (trident), Jamaadh (two blade dagger), Tegh (broad and straight sword), Teer (arrow), Talwar (curved sword), causing the destruction of armour and enemies.

As, Kripan (sword), Khanda (double edged straight sword), Khadag (sword), Tupak (gun), Tabar (battle axe), Teer (arrow), Saif (straight sword), Sarohi (sword) and Saihathi (spear), all these are our guide.

You are the Teer (arrow), You are Saihathi (spear), You are Tabar (battle axe), and Talwaar (curved sword); he, who remembers Your Name crosses the dreadful ocean of life and death.

You are death and you are the destroyer of death, Kali. You are the sabre and arrow, You are the emblem of victory today and You are the bravest of warriors in the universe.

You are the Sool (trident), Saihathi (spear) and Tabar (battle axe), You are

the Nikhang (quiver) and Baan (arrow), You are the Kataari (dagger), Sel (lance), and all and You are the Kard (small knife), and Kripan (sword).

You are the arms and weapons, You are the Nikhang (quiver), and the Kavach (armour); You are the destroyer of the armour and You are also all pervading.

You are the cause of peace and prosperity and the essence of learning; You are the creator of all and the redeemer of all.

You are the day and night and You are the creator of all the beings, causing disputes among them; You do all this in order to view Thy own sport.

O Lord ! Protect us by smashing the armour with the blows of Your hands with the help of As (curved sword), Kripaan (sword), Khanda (double edge straight sword), Kharag (sword), Saif (straight sword), Tegh (broad and straight sword), and Talwaar (curved sword).

You are Kataari (punch dagger), Jamdaadh (two blade dagger), Bichhuua (crooked dagger) and Baan (arrow), O power ! I am a humble servant of Thy Lord's feet, kindly Protect me.

You are Baank (sword), Bajar (mace), Bichhuua (crooked dagger), Tabar (battle axe), and Talwaar (curved sword), You are the kataari (punch dagger), and Saihathi (spear); Protect me.

You are Gurj (club), Gadaa (mace), Teer (arrow) and Tufang (matchlock musket); protect me ever considering me as Thy slave.

You the Chhurri (knife), the enemy-killing karad (small knife) and the Khanjar (dagger) are Your names; You are the adorable Power of the world, kindly protect me.

Spiritual Significance

Why would the religious emblem of the Sikhs be composed of weapons?

An early travel account by a European explorer written a little over 80 years after the time of Guru Gobind Singh reveals the unique respect Sikhs have historically held for their weapons :

It is said that they have a sort of superstitious respect for their sword. It was by it they obtained their independence and power; and by it they preserve them. A Seik, though in other respects infinitely less scrupulous than any Hindoo, before he will eat with any

one of another religion, draws his sword, and passing it over the victuals, repeats some words of prayer, after which he will freely partake of them.

Quintin Craufurd, 1790

Weapons, especially the sword, have a deep spiritual meaning within Sikhism. The kirpan is one of the articles of faith that every baptised Sikh Khalsa is required to carry at all times. While the spiritual significance of each specific weapon appearing on a Nishaan Sahib is open to subjective personal interpretation, a clearly defined spiritual association between weapons and the Supreme Being was established early on in the development of the religion by the Sikh Gurus.

In the first lines of the Sikh daily prayer *Ardas*, Guru Gobind Singh asks Sikhs to remember the Supreme Being and all the Gurus. In referring to God, the Guru chose to use the unique metaphor of the sword (*Bhagauti*):

Ekh-oonkaar Vaaheguroo jee kee Fat'eh.

Sree Bhagautee jee Sahaa-e.

Vaar Sree Bhagautee jee kee Paat'shaahee D'assveen

ੴ ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ॥
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ॥
ਵਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੴ ॥

*God is One. All victory is of the Wondrous Guru (God).
May the respected sword (God) help us!*

Ode of the respected sword recited by the Tenth Guru.

ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਈਂ ਧਿਆਇ ॥
ਫਿਰ ਅੰਗਦ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਅਮਰਦਾਸੁ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੇ ਹੋਈਂ ਸਹਾਇ ॥

*Pritham Bhagat'ee simar kaae Guroo Nanak laeen'
D'hiaa-ae.*

*Phir Angad. Guroo t'ae Amar-Daas Ram-Daas-aae hoeen'
sahaa-ae.*

*First remember the sword (God); then remember and meditate
upon Guru Nanak.*

*Then remember and meditate upon Guru Angad, Guru Amar
Das and Guru Ram Das: May they help us!*

The word *Bhagauti*, meaning sword, has been misinterpreted by some to suggest that it is a reference to a Hindu diety with a similar sounding name and that these lines are evidence that Sikhs are worshippers of this Hindu diety! This is **not** the case as the Sikh context of the word has an altogether different meaning. The following lines from the poetry of Bhai Gurdas, the original scribe

of the Guru Granth Sahib help to clarify the Sikh definition of Bhagauti as a metal sword:

Bhai Gurdas, Varan XXV, 6

ਨਾਉ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਲੋਹੁ ਘੜਾਇਆ ॥

Nau bhagauti lohu gharaia

'Iron (a lowly metal) when properly wrought becomes a (powerful) sword.'

The Khanda

The *khanda* is an ancient sword that dates back to the medieval Indian period prior to the Islamic invasions of Punjab. Although it is a straight-bladed sword, unlike European straight swords, it was not used only for thrusting, but also as a hacking weapon designed for cutting and slashing while doing maximum damage due to the sheer force of its blade swing.

Most *khandas* of the 17th and 18th century have a thin, flat, broad, straight, steel blade approximately 90cm in length. Although the *khanda* is a double edged blade, it is reinforced with narrow fretted strips of steel reinforcement running down most of the length of the reverse edge and several inches down the front edge from the root. This design enabled the blade not only to be light and elastic, but also provides it with additional stiffness to withstand impact without bending out of shape and not chip or shatter easily.

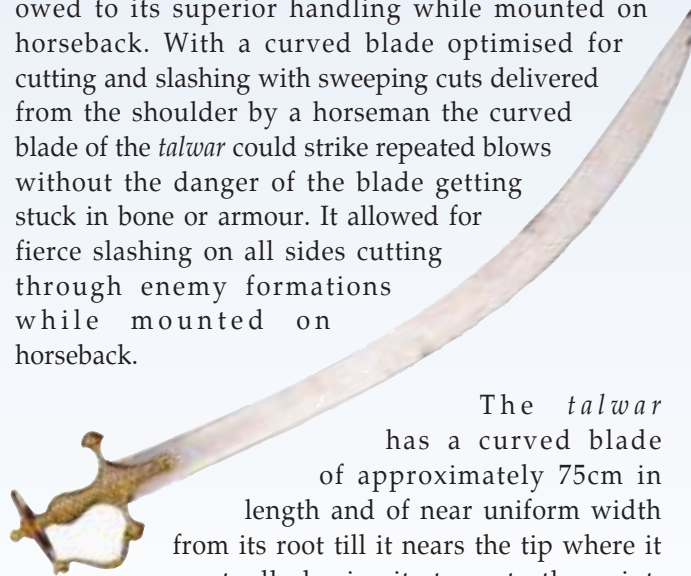
The hilt of the *khanda* evolved over time to a basket hilt to protect the hand with a wide finger guard, may have been influenced by European swords. Both the basket and finger guard feature thick padding to reduce the shock of blows. One of the most distinctive features of the hilt is the long tip that protrudes from top of the pommel which could be gripped by the left hand while making a powerful and deadly two-handed stroke.

With the advent of horsed cavalry in Sikh and Mughal warfare, the *khanda* was eventually replaced as the primary sword by the *talwar* which was better suited for mounted warfare. The *khanda* still remained in use and has been highly honoured by Sikhs throughout history. It is said to have been a weapon of last resort. When a warrior in battle lost his horse and was surrounded by the enemy, he would pull out the *khanda* and fight to the end while swinging the

blade with both hands and taking down as many of the enemy as he could. Perhaps this explains why the painting of Baba Deep Singh on the walls of Gurdwara Baba Atal shows him with two *khanda* swords, having achieved martyrdom while fighting insurmountable odds during the battle of Amritsar in 1757 against the forces of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

The Talwar

The *talwar* has historically been the quintessential combat sword used by Sikhs as their sacred *kirpan* owed to its superior handling while mounted on horseback. With a curved blade optimised for cutting and slashing with sweeping cuts delivered from the shoulder by a horseman the curved blade of the *talwar* could strike repeated blows without the danger of the blade getting stuck in bone or armour. It allowed for fierce slashing on all sides cutting through enemy formations while mounted on horseback.



The *talwar* has a curved blade of approximately 75cm in length and of near uniform width from its root till it nears the tip where it eventually begins its taper to the point. With its curved blade, the point of the sword cannot be effectively used for thrusting and the *talwar's* defensive capabilities are limited. In this circumstance defence was taken up by using the shield (*dhal*) in tandem with the *talwar* as an integral duo on the battlefield.

The blade was firmly attached to the hilt of the *talwar* commonly using a heated paste of lac or red dye from the papal tree which when it hardened provided a solid and effective adhesive between the two parts of the sword.

The hilt of the *talwar* has a button on top and a circular flat pommel disk often featuring the design of a flower. On some *talwars*, the button sometimes had a hole made to pass through a safety loop of leather or silk. This would be wrapped around the wrist so that the sword could not slip out of the hand, even if one lost one's grip. The grip of the *talwar* below the pommel disk narrows at the top and bottom while bulging out in the middle. The crossguard between the grip and the blade features two short

but thick rounded quillions. The index finger could be wrapped around a quillion rather than the grip providing the swordsman with extra manoeuvrability of the sword. Some *talwars* feature a knuckle guard extending from the quillion to the pommel disk, while others do not, and both styles of *talwars* were commonly used by Sikhs.

Guru Hargobind, the 6th Sikh Guru is said to have always carried two *talwars* representing his temporal and spiritual authority.

The Kirpan

In earlier times the sacred *kirpan* carried by Sikhs had traditionally been the full size *talwar* sword. By the 20th century the *kirpan* carried by Sikhs had evolved from the typical 30 inch blade of a *talwar* sword to a short blade less than 18 inches.

The change in blade length of the sacred *kirpan* from a sword to a knife was a difficult one for Sikhs and a direct result of onerous laws passed by the British in India. Under the Indian Arms Act (XI) of 1878, no person could carry arms except under special exemption or by virtue of a licence; the act was applied to the Sikh *kirpan* too. At the advent of World War I, the British government fearing that the ban would affect Sikh recruitment into the British Army, thought it advisable to relax the enforcement of the provision. Between 1914 and 1918, two notifications were issued by the British government giving Sikhs the freedom to possess or carry a *kirpan*. However the terms of these notifications were vague; the size and shape of the *kirpan* having remained undefined; prosecution of the Sikhs for wearing, carrying and manufacturing the *kirpan* continued. During the period of the Gurudwara Reform Movement (1920-1925), the British revoked the notifications and Sikhs were once again prosecuted and imprisoned, Sikh soldiers in the armed forces were even court marshalled and dismissed for keeping *kirpans*. In 1921 the *kirpan* factories at Bhera and Sialkot in Punjab were raided and all *kirpans* exceeding 9 inches in length were seized and the owners of the factories put under arrest. Eventually in 1922 after negotiations between the British and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee the Sikhs again won the right to carry their *kirpans*, although with a much shorter blade.

Chakkar (Quoit)

An ancient Indian weapon adopted by Sikhs as part of their standard battle gear, is the *chakkar* (quoit) unlike any other bladed weapons. It is a steel throwing ring with a razor sharp knife edge.

Sikhs would carry a number of these of various diameters around their necks or in their turbans. The most common size of the *chakkar* used in combat was typically 30cm in circumference and made of steel. By the mid 19th century the *chakkar* had become more of a ceremonial weapon rather than a combat weapon, especially preferred by members of the Nihang warrior sect. Decorative *chakkars* with beautiful gold inlays were not designed for combat but likely owned by princely rulers as a sign of their status or affluence



In his memoirs of the 'War in India' (1806), William Thorn writes :

Besides the matchlock, spear, the scimitar, which are all excellent in their kinds, some of the Seiks are armed with a very singular weapon, which they use with great and destructive effect against cavalry. It consists of a hollow circle, made of finely tempered steel, with an exceedingly sharp edge, about a foot in diameter, and an inch in breadth on the inner side. This instrument the horseman poises on his fore-finger, and after giving it two or three swift motions, to accelerate its velocity, sends it from him to the distance of some hundreds of yards, the ring cutting and maiming, most dreadfully, every living object that may chance to be in its way.

Katar (dagger)



A uniquely Indian design, the *katar* is a very efficient and deadly dagger and was the standard knife typically carried by Sikh warriors.

The *katar*, unlike other daggers, does not feature a standard handle but has a hilt consisting of two parallel arms connected by two or more cross pieces which form the grip and are set near the centre of the weapon.

A standard dagger, when held in the hand is at right angles to the arm and the force of the forearm drives it home when attacking. However, the *katar* is held by the cross grip like a naturally clenched fist and the blade is in line with the forearm rather than perpendicular to it, so that it is thrust forward like a straight punch. Not only does it have the force of the forearm behind it but also the weight of the body resulting in a much greater force when attacking.

The blade of the *katar* which is triangular shaped is straight and double-edged. In profile the blade thickens as it approaches the tip. Due to the massive force of a *katar* thrust, reinforcing the blade by thickening it towards the tip rendered it especially effective and deadly in piercing armour, particularly chain mail.

Tabar (battle axe)

A less common weapon sometimes carried by Sikh warriors was the *tabar* (battle axe.) A small light weapon, it was meant for one to two handed swings. The large triangular blade has one broad cutting edge and its crescent shape indicates that it was not designed for armour piercing.



Dhal (shield)

Most old paintings of Sikh warriors typically show them with a shield, either strapped on their back or hung from a shoulder, this shield known as a *dhal*. Because of the limited defensive capabilities of the *talwar* sword, the *dhal* shield formed the primary defensive weapon of the Khalsa.



Dhal shields were typically made of thick buffalo skin or sometimes the more durable rhinoceros hide which were lightweight yet very strong when dried and lacquered. *Dhal's* varied in diameter from 30cm to 90cm. Metal *dhal's* were also used although they tended towards the smaller sizes.

The convex curved surface of the *dhal* was designed to cause a lance head or arrow to glance off or slip from the curved surface. The *dhal* was held by passing an arm through two cross straps on the back. The straps were fastened to steel rings which were riveted to four metal bosses on the shield face. The inner lining of the shield was typically cotton, velvet or brocade. Both the bosses and the large smooth surface of the *dhal* provided artists an ideal surface for artistic decoration with patterns and figures, both animal and human.

From <http://www.sikhmuseum.com/nishan/weapons>

The Sikligar Sikhs

Sikligar Sikhs are descendants of the lohars (ironsmiths/blacksmiths) who traditionally specialised in the craft of making and polishing of weapons in the country. There are an estimated 50 million Sikligars in today's India, who also go by alternate names of Kamgar, Karinagar, Kuchband, Lohar, Panchal Saiqalgar, Saqqa, Siqligar. Their social status is that of 'Dalit'.



Sikligar Sikhs of central India (all photos by Jagmohan Singh)

Once commonly known as *Gaddilohars*, the term *Sikligar* was bestowed on them by Guru Gobind Singh who designated *Lohgarh* (the iron fort at Anandpur Sahib) as armoury of the Sikhs. The word itself is derived from the Persian *saqi/sakli*, lit. polishing, furnishing, making bright (as a sword), and the term *saqlgar*, which means the polisher of swords.

In medieval India, Sikligars were in great demand for the manufacturing of spears, swords, shields

and arrows. What the world knows of as 'Damascus steel', used in making some of the finest swords known to mankind, were in fact manufactured by Indian lohars and shipped to Damascus as layered iron pellets.

Recently, a gold-embellished steel armour decorated with Sikh Bani (hinted as possibly once owned by Guru Gobind Singh) was on display, made from this type of steel, which in India was called 'watered steel' as its surface resembles flowing water.



The tradition maintained: young Sikligar Sikh learns the craft...

A lohar by the name of Ram Chand, who had been initiated as a Sikh by Guru Gobind Singh to become Ram Singh, was the first Sikligar Sikh. Although not one of the *Panj Piores*, he was with them and Guru Gobind Singh fighting in the battle of Chamkaur and accompanied the Guru from the fort at night.



...which is honed to perfection as he grows to adulthood

Traditionally held to be of a 'low caste' (working with iron can make one appear dirty) the gaddilohars first came in contact with Sikhi during the time of Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) who had, after martyrdom of his father Guru Arjan Das, initiated the 'practice of arms' and 'statehood' among Sikhs with his declaration of 'Miri and Piri' (his two swords symbolising spiritual and wordly power). Sikligars seem to originally have been Rajputs of Mewar who came to Guru Hargobind perceiving the need for Sikhs to learn and master martial arts to ensure the growing community's survival against formidable odds.

The Sikligars today

The advent of modern weaponry and industrial technology affected the Sikligars economically. Engaged in the pursuit of what was now an obsolete occupation, they are today a poor and backward people, forming one of the scheduled castes as defined under the Indian Constitution. Also known as gaddilohars, they roam about in small groups carrying their meagre possessions on specially designed carts, making and selling small articles such as knives, sickles, betel nut cutters, sieves, locks, buckets and toys which they often manufacture from waste metal. The influence of Sikhism is still clearly discernible in the dress and social customs of some of the Sikligars. The males, especially those of the older generation, keep their hair long and wear turbans. Their womenfolk wear *salwar* and *kameez* like Punjabi women or *lahenga* and *choli* like Rajasthani women, while the use of *dhoti sari* is rare.



Sikligar ladies and children

Initiation of a Sikligar Child

The newly born child is, on the fourth day after birth, administered Amrit by five Sikhs; relatives and friends who assemble as *Sangat* where *karah prasad* is distributed, a special share of which is sent to members who maintain the Guru Granth Sahib or any 'breviary of gurbani' at home.

Sikligar Sikhs of Central and South India have great faith in Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib at Nanded, which they regularly visit. On the annual *Takht ishnan* (bathing ceremony) at the Takht Sahib, it is the special privilege for Sikligar Sikhs to clean and oil the old weapons which are preserved there as sacred relics.



Young Sikhligar continuing the tradition

If we consider their dedication and commitment to Sikhism, this 'lost tribe' ranks as amongst the foremost of practitioners. Lacking help from any quarter and living in penury, they still remain in *chardi kalaa* (high spirits), with a positive outlook on life. Their poverty however, has kept them beyond focus of the so-called



Sikligar family of Maharashtra

Sikh leadership. Neither Gurdwara Committees nor any worthwhile Sikh organisation has paid much attention to or tried to give the Sikligars 'a helping hand'.

The days are long gone when Guru Hargobind Sahib wore the swords of *Miri* and *Piri* to protect the masses from tyranny. When he felt the need of arms, he remembered these brothers from the Marwar. These were the same Marwari brothers whose chief Rana Partap was inspired by Sri Chandji the son of Guru Nanak, to sacrifice his all for faith. He fought the Mughals valiantly, losing the battle of arms but not battles of the mind. They accepted the vagaries of forests but not the servitude of Mughals. They adopted the profession of manufacturing arms and took it upon themselves to supply these to fellow Sikhs in their fight for survival against the Mughal oppressors.

On invitation from the Guru, they became permanently attached to the Guru Ghar. They not only manufactured the arms but also fought in battles, many attaining martyrdom. When Guru ji sent Bhai Jetha and Bhai Bidhi Chand to look for artisans, Bhai Kehar Singh Rajput was first to offer his services. Men brought by him made the weapons used by the Sixth and Tenth Gurus in their battles with the Mughals and the Pahari Rajas. In between, during the period of 'peace' when the need for weapons waned, their occupation was adversely affected. The residents of Chittaurgarh did not behave well with their forlorn brothers and so they returned to Marwar. Marital relationships were then forged within the tribes and tradition of exchange also began according to the need of the times.

Some Sikligars associated with Guru Tegh Bahadur went with him to Assam and continued to supply weapons for the royal armies there. Their fate took a turn towards the positive when the Tenth Guru assumed leadership of the Panth. He called upon his followers to bring weapons with them and Sikligars contributed their mite. When Bhai Veeru provided details of his brethren, the Guru asked him to exhibit weapons and ordered Bhai Nand Singh and Bhai Chaupa Singh to inspect these arms. Guru Sahib too paid a visit to the exhibition.

The Sikligar-made weapons were extremely beautiful and brilliant, so sharp that "they would have severed even the heads of elephants." The makers of these weapons were themselves warriors and vowed to battle against *Sava Lakh*, "a lakh and quarter".

Observing the sheen of their weapons and valour, Guruji himself bestowed them with the title 'Sikligar'. The swords, arrows and other weapons made by them were enthusiastically adopted by the Guru.

Lohgarh becomes the Sikh Armoury

The weapon manufacturing activity began in the fort of Lohgarh under the supervision of these Marwari artisans. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, "Marwaris were very active in making weapons." They prepared four types of weapons : *Amukat* which can be used with hands much like swords ; *Mukat*, which can be launched from one's hand, and *Muktamukat*, which can be used in both manners. Bhai Ram Singh was made responsible for their manufacture. He was the first to be baptised from among the Sikligars receiving the *phaul* from the Tenth Guru himself. He belonged to Bugiana, though he was not one of the Panj Piaras, but was with them and the Tenth Master at the Battle of Chamkaur, where he displayed fighting skills, intimidating the enemy before leaving the fortress under cover of darkness with the Guru whom he rejoined near Machhivara.

He would clean the weapons with much dedication. Once when he was cleaning a Togh by putting it under his feet, a group of Sikhs chided him, "Why are you touching the sacred weapon with your feet ?" They went away but the Sikligars thereafter sat with the weapons balanced upon their heads. When Guruji saw this he asked Ram Singh the reason and on being told, Guruji laughed and said, "Just as a sculptor makes a sculpture pressing it under his feet but people later worship it, likewise you made weapons with much dedication and honour. So you are excused from such remarks !"

Bhai Badan Singh and Bhai Modan Singh accompanied the Tenth Guru to Nanded. In the times thereafter, the Sikhligars were divided into smaller groups and roamed through various towns and villages, manufacturing and selling their ware. Some served the royal houses, including that of Maharaja Ala Singh and contributed in rescuing thousands of Hindu men and women from the tyrant Abdali. When the Maharaja of Nahan asked for weapons and weapon makers, Sikligars Mohan Singh, Madan Singh and Tehal Singh joined him. During the revolt of Misar Naudh, Sikligars Kesar Singh, Mehtab Singh, Khum Singh, Ghulab Singh, Margind Singh, Jawahar Singh showed their mettle in battle. This earned much honour in the court but they were treacherously betrayed by the Misar.



A Sikligar Sikh of today.

During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's era, the Sikligars also began making matchlocks and rifles, giving them famous names such as *Toredar*, *Kotli*, *Pata*, *Churidar* and *Sada*. These were manufactured in large scale at the workshops of Lahore. British occupation of the Punjab hit them hard and they were banned from weapon manufacture and for some time, even being declared a criminal tribe ! For sustenance, they began roaming the countryside and making small household

The name Sikligar was given by the 10th Guru to those descendants of Bhai Ram Singh (Marwari Loхар) who would manufacture weapons for war and then polish them (Sikli means to polish). According to history, there were two Ram Singhs, one as mentioned above the other, Ram Singh Parmar, grandson of Bhai Mani Singh, who fought alongside Guru Gobind Singh at Chamkaur Sahib. He was an expert in wielding weapons, and was later captured alongwith Banda Bahadur and martyred in Delhi. Sikligar history is traceable only after 1595 AD. Three Marwari tribes were intimately related to Sikhism and suffered martyrdom from Guru Hargobind's time. Earlier, Maula Bakhsh would manufacture weapons, but later the Guru sent for Marwari weapon makers and Bhai Kehar Singh's services were availed of. With him came many others in the trade. When peace prevailed, these craftsmen returned to Marwar but were disowned by their brethren. Thus they became Vanjaras or roaming artisans. Their expertise was revived during Guru Gobind Singh's time as weapons were required in large numbers, and Vanjaras them came into Sikh mainstream.

For all practical purposes, Lobanas, Vanjaras and Sikligars fall in the same clan but it is difficult to give a definite assessment of their numbers. According to Dr Harbhajan Singh of the Punjabi University, Patiala they number about 50 million and are settled in 20,000 clusters called Tandas, they claim their origin from Rajputana and call themselves Rajputs. As an aside, under the influence of Bhai Mansukh, Sri Lanka's King Shiv Nabh also embraced Sikhism.



Makhan Sha Lobana of Sikligar declaring that 'the Guru has been found'



Representative Sikligar weaponry on display

implements, which did not really earn them much of a livelihood.

Sikligars are now scattered in different parts of India. In Punjab, there are many in Ludhiana, Chamkaur Sahib and Baba Bakala (*Basnie*), Patiala, Sirhind, Gobindgarh, Ferozepur, Moga (*Ladnie*), with some still wanderers (*Uthnie*) around Ablowal, Karnal, Panipat, Bachitar Nagar. Outside the Punjab, Sikligars reside in large numbers in Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

The writer has travelled to and seen their condition in different parts of India; they are mostly living in penury as their profession has become obsolete in this new machine age. However, their pride does not let them to do other services, on top of which, they are largely illiterate, do not own land or homes, only get basic sustenance. They do not have the means to construct Gurdwaras, so as to keep them associated with Gurughar. These Sikligars who partook amrit from the Tenth Guru have remained associated with Sikhism and keep the 5Ks and abstain from intoxicants. They follow, to every extent the Sikh maryada but deprivation now is taking them away from Sikhism and some have fallen from this faith. If not attended to in time, then Sikhism would lose its 'iron men'.

Col. (Dr.) Dalvinder Singh Grewal



At the Gurdwara Sahib



Announcing an event in Jalgaon

Iron Men in the new Age

A gunshot pierces the air on a dark night in Jalgaon City in northern Maharashtra.

A young man shouts: “*Jo bole so nihaal...*”

...“*Sat Sri Akaal!*” comes the thundering response from nearly 150 residents of a small slum settlement in the city’s Tamapur neighbourhood. The cry is repeated thrice; so are the shots, fired from a licensed, double-barrel, 12-bore rifle.

This traditional Sikh greeting means “Blessed is the person who says God is the ultimate truth.”

The Sikhs in this settlement are in the midst of the traditional *jayakara* ceremony with which one Sikh welcomes another. But, as the gunshots indicate, this is not a typical ceremony, and these are not ordinary Sikhs.

These are Sikligar Sikhs, a community that believes in the teachings of Guru Nanak, keep their hair intact and wear their turbans high, but has almost nothing else in common with the mainstream Sikhs from the Punjab.

They don’t even speak Punjabi. Their language is Sikligari, a blend of Punjabi, Marwari and the local languages and dialects of the regions in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana where they are settled.

The Sikligars were originally a tribe of ironsmiths from the Marwar region (now in Rajasthan) known for their mastery in polishing weapons. In the 17th century, when the Sikh Guru Hargobind Saheb needed weapons for his army fighting the Mughals, he sent his men to seek out this tribe and bring them to Punjab.

There, the community mastered the art of making weapons, adopted Sikhism and became disciples of the Guru, who is said to have bestowed on them the title of ‘Sikligar’, from the Persian ‘sakalgar’ or ‘polisher of metal’.

In the early 1700s, the Sikligars followed Guru Gobind Singh to Nanded in Marathwada, from where they gradually dispersed into *deras* or settlements across the neighbouring states.

For nearly 300 years after the Guru’s passing, the Sikligars led secluded, nomadic lives, earning a living doing what they knew best — making weapons.

Then came the 1857 uprising and the British government banned manufacture of arms. Overnight, the Sikligars lost their livelihood. “Deprived of our ancestral profession, most Sikligar families moved deep into the jungles to make and sell arms secretly,” says Harjeet Singh Bavri, 37, a Sikligar metal welder from Jalgaon who now also works as an activist within his community.

Those who quit the arms business were left impoverished, eking a living as blacksmiths on the outskirts of towns and cities. They had little access to schools or gurdwaras and, according to many Sikligars, were marginalised as ‘lower-caste’.

Over the past decade, this isolation has begun to lessen as urbanisation expanded the towns and small cities outside which they had settled, and mainstream Sikhs from Punjab, Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi have now begun reaching out to integrate this forgotten arm of their community and pull them out of poverty, illiteracy, neglect and crime. The impact of these initiatives is slowly starting to show results.

New directions

The biggest visible change in the Tamapur dera over the past five years is the cluster of 30 brick-and-cement houses that Bangalore and Mumbai-based non-profit organisation *Akhar: Seva of Humanity* has helped its residents build.

“Six years ago, we lived in crude tin huts and did not even have a gurdwara,” recalls Barkat Singh Bavri, 58, the Tamapur priest who now presides over a small, one-room gurdwara built in the centre of the dera, the residents of which are all members of his extended family.

The Sikligars were originally a tribe of iron-smiths from Marwar in modern-day Rajasthan.

They are now spread across nine states, with the majority living in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh



In the early 1970s, the Bavris of Tamapur quit such weapon-making and turned to the welding business.

Their success is stamped on the intricate iron grilles across Jalgaon's doors and windows, but the community still remained largely unlettered.

"We really want to change this. A few years ago, we wouldn't bother to attend school regularly, but now we want to study so that we don't remain backward," says Jagat Kaur, 17, a Class 12 student who, with the help of *Akhar* volunteers, completed a needlework course recently and plans to enroll in a teacher-training course next.

Education, in fact, is the biggest change wrought by the NGOs working with the Sikligars. In the Sangat Sahib dera in Bhusawal, a town 20 km east of Jalgaon, all 25 brick homes are clustered around a single-storey institute where *Akhar* offers children free after-school tuition.



Sikligarh Sikh children in the classroom

Here, as in Tamapur, all children below the age of 15 are enrolled in Marathi or Hindi municipal schools, with younger ones now being enrolled in English-medium schools. "Two years ago, we began sending preachers to Jalgaon to teach youngsters how to read the Guru Granth Sahib," says Kulwant Singh, president of the Mumbai chapter of *Akhar*. "Today, these children are taking over the duties of priests in their gurudwaras."

"We want to ensure that the next generation marries later, has fewer children and has more working and earning women," says Rai Kaur Andhrele, 23, a first-year BA student who was married at 15, is a mother of two and is now being trained by *Akhar* to teach in the Bhusawal dera school.

Though the change is beginning to take effect, there is much more that needs to be done, say activists.

In more distant villages such as Chalisgaon, for instance, Sikligars are still struggling with abject poverty. Here, families make kitchen knives, sickles and metal trays for a living, earning just enough for the day's food, wearing donated clothes and living in crumbling plastic-and-bamboo shanties. *Akhar* has now begun building concrete homes for them.

Aarefa Johari (From Hindustan Times)

AKHAR - Sewa of Humanity

It was in the year 2007 that some like-minded people guided by the Principle of Universal brotherhood, and equality came together to make a lasting change in the lives of the under-privileged people. As a result AKHAR-SOH was born.

In India there are 250 million people living below the poverty line, and the weakest among them are the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. People belonging to these communities are landless, and they travel from one place to another place for business purpose.

AKHAR was started with the aim of improving the socio-economic condition of nomadic/semi-nomadic tribes. Sikligars belong to the semi-nomadic tribe and their socio-economic condition is very weak.

Presently AKHAR works for Sikligars directly in the state of Maharashtra and indirectly through the other like minded organisations in other parts of the country. "We aim to uplift them through education, and bring them at par with the other sections of the society."

Please contact S Ravinder Singh & Balwinder Singh on akharsoh.org



Guide to Sikh History & Traditions (Part II)

Continuing the questions, with answers, as compiled
by S. Gurdeep Singh

◀ **When was Banda Singh Bahadur born ?**

- ❖ 27 October 1670 AD.



◀ **What was his name in childhood ?**

- ❖ Lachhman Das

◀ **What does 'Bairagi' mean ?**

- ❖ One who gives up worldly life; a sect of Vaishnavs.

◀ **Name the Bairagi who inspired Lachhman Das to make him his disciple?**

- ❖ Janaki Prasad

◀ **What was Lachhman Das named by the Bairagis ?**

- ❖ Madho Das Bairagi

◀ **Name the old Yogi that Madho Das met in Nasik and learnt 'Tantric Science' (secrets of yoga and occultism) from?**

- ❖ Aughar Nath

◀ **When and where did Guru Gobind Singhji meet Madho Das ?**

- ❖ Autumn of 1708 at Nanded

◀ **What did Guru Gobind Singhji name Madho Das after administering Amrit (Pahul) to him ?**

- ❖ Banda Singh

◀ **What does 'Banda' mean ?**

- ❖ The Guru's Slave

◀ **Who stabbed Guru Gobind Singhji ?**

- ❖ A pathan from Sirhind (sent by Wazir Khan)

◀ **What title was given to Banda Singh by Guru Gobind Singh Ji before he left for Punjab?**

- ❖ Banda Singh 'Bahadur'

◀ **Who were the five 'Panj Pyare' sent with Banda Singh ?**

- ❖ Bhai Binod Singh
- ❖ Bhai Kahan Singh (son of Bhai Binod Singh)
- ❖ Bhai Baaj Singh
- ❖ Bhai Daya Singh
- ❖ Bhai Ram Singh (brother of Bhai Baaj Singh)

◀ What were the emblems of temporal authority bestowed upon Banda Singh before his departure to Punjab ?

- ❖ A Nishaan Sahib (flag) and a Nagaara (drum)



◀ Whom did Guru Gobind Singhji nominate as the first Jathedar (commander of the forces) of the Khalsa Panth ?

- ❖ Banda Singh Bahadur

◀ Which was the first town that Banda Singh's army captured ?

- ❖ Sonapat

◀ Why did Banda Singh Bahadur's army attack Samana ?

- ❖ This was residence of Sayyed Jalal-ud-din, the executioner of Guru Teg Bahadur, and of Shashal Beg and Bashal Beg, executioners of the younger Sahibzadas at Sirhind.

◀ When was Samana conquered ?

- ❖ 26 November 1709 AD

◀ Name the ruler of Sadhaura who had tortured to death the great Muslim Saint, Sayyed Buddhu Shah, because of his help to Guru Gobind Singh ji in the battle of Bhangani?

- ❖ Osman Khan

◀ Who abolished the Zamindaari (absentee landlord) system ?

- ❖ Banda Singh Bahadur

◀ When did Banda Singh Bahadur attack Sarhind?

- ❖ 12 May 1710 AD. (The battle was fought at Chhappar Chiri, 20 kms from Sarhind)

◀ Who killed Wazir Khan?

- ❖ Fateh Singh killed him in the Battle of Chappar Chiri.

◀ Which Sikh woman was abducted by Sher Muhammed Khan of Maler Kotla and had committed suicide to save her honour?

- ❖ Bibi Anup Kaur (Banda Singh's forces dug the grave to perform her last religious rites)

◀ Whom did Banda Singh appoint as Governor of Sirhind?

- ❖ Baaj Singh

◀ Whom did Banda Singh appoint as Governor of Samana ?

- ❖ Fateh Singh

◀ What did Banda Singh Bahadur name the Fort of Mukhlispur?

- ❖ Lohgarh meaning 'Iron Fort'. (For all intents and purposes, this became capital of the Sikh territories.)

◀ What main actions were carried out by Banda Singh Bahadur at Lohgarh ?

- ❖ He struck coins in the name of the Guru.
- ❖ He introduced an official seal for his state documents and letters.
- ❖ He introduced his own *Sammat* or calendar year from the date of his conquest of Sarhind.

- ❖ He totally abolished the Zamindari (landlord) System of the Mughals which had reduced the cultivators to slaves.

◀ **What did Banda Singh Bahadur's Official Seal read ?**

- ❖ *Deg o Teg o Fateh o Nusrat Bedirang Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh* (The Kettle and the Sword, Victory and ready Patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak - Guru Gobind Singh)



A hukamnama (edict) from the hands of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, sent to Bhai Dharam Singh and Param Singh of Village Bhai Rupa. It contains the Mohar or seal - conceived by Banda Bahadur widely used in later Sikh Coinage.

" *Deh Teg Fateh Nusrat-i-bedrang, Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*"
The cauldron to feed, the sword to defend, and the resultant victory have been achieved with the spontaneous help received from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. This hukumnama also makes mention of the 'Panj Hathiara' - the Five Weapons. (Source: Sikhnet)

◀ **What do *Deh*, *Teg*, and *Fateh* mean ?**

- ❖ *Deh* means Kettle (symbol of charity, of the means to feed the poor)
- ❖ *Teg* means Sword (symbol of power to protect the weak and helpless)
- ❖ *Fateh* means Victory!

◀ **Why was a green banner raised by the Mullahs of Lahore ?**

- ❖ The green banner, also called the Haidri Flag, then proclaimed a crusade (*jihad*) against the Sikhs.

◀ **What was the new war-cry that Banda Singh Bahadur introduced ?**

- ❖ 'Fateh Darshan' meaning 'Victory to the Presence'.
However, the Khalsa continued with the salutation 'Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh'!

◀ **Which Sikh sacrificed his life, disguising himself as Banda Singh Bahadur to facilitate Banda Singh's escape from the fort of Lohgarh?**

- ❖ Bhai Gulab Singh (on 10 December 1710)

◀ **When did Emperor Bahadur Shah die ?**

- ❖ 18 February 1712

◀ **Who ascended the throne for just 10 months after the death of Bahadur Shah ?**

- ❖ Jahander Shah

◀ **Who defeated Jahander Shah to take over the throne of Delhi ?**

- ❖ Farrukh Siyar

◀ **When were the Sikhs forced to evacuate Sadhaura and Lohgarh and withdraw to the Jammu hills ?**

- ❖ In October 1713 AD

◀ **What was Banda Singh Bahadur's second wife's name ?**

- ❖ Sahib Kaur

◀ **Who was the Governor of Lahore when Banda Singh retreated to Gurdas Nangal in April 1715 AD ?**

- ❖ Abd-us-Samad Khan (father of Zakhriya Khan)

◀ **What was the Sikh enclosure at Gurdas Nangal called ?**

- ❖ Fortress (Garhi) of Gurdaspur

◀ **After eight months within the fortress of Gurdaspur, who had tactical differences with Banda Singh ?**

❖ Binod Singh proposed evacuating the enclosure and follow their old tactics of cutting through the enemy's lines. Banda Singh was not in favour of this, but Binod Singh, as advised by Kahan Singh, his son, left the enclosure.

◀ **When was the Fortress of Gurdaspur captured by the Mughals ?**

❖ 7 December 1715 AD

◀ **Why were the bodies of Sikhs ripped open ?**

❖ In search of gold coins supposedly swallowed by them.

◀ **Where were Banda Singh and his companions taken from Gurdas Nangal ?**

❖ To Lahore by Abdus Samad Khan and then to Delhi under the charge of his son, Zakhriya Khan.

◀ **Which Sikh broke the chains around his hands and feet when Emperor Farrukh Siyar taunted him?**

❖ Baaj Singh

◀ **How many soldiers did Baaj Singh kill after breaking through?**

❖ Seven soldiers

◀ **When was Banda Singh Bahadur executed ?**

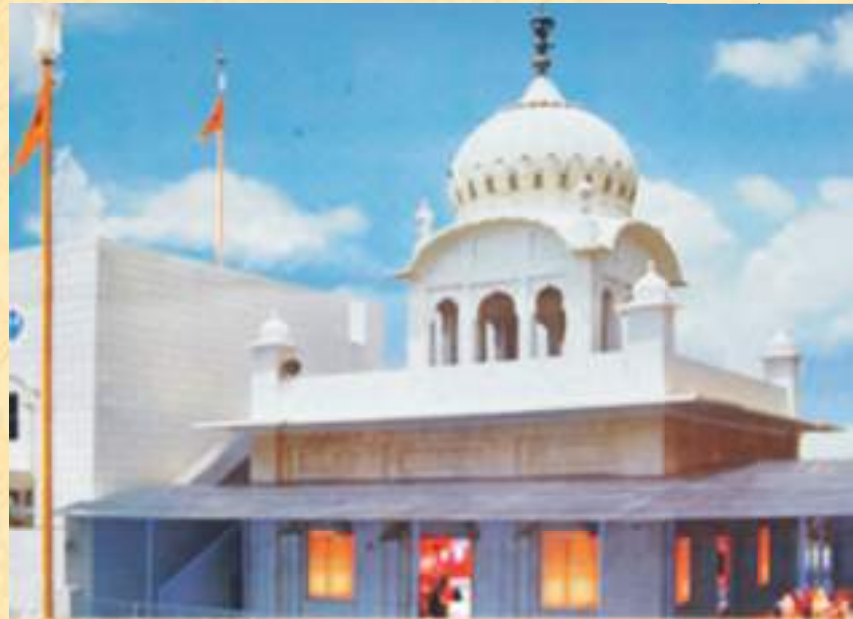
❖ 9 June 1716

◀ **Which son of Banda Singh Bahadur was also brutally killed ?**

❖ Ajai Singh, the 4-year old child was hacked and brutally mutilated.

◀ **In which manner was Banda Singh Bahadur executed ?**

❖ His eyes were first removed by the point of a butcher's knife. His left foot and then his two hands were severed



Present day Gurdwara at Mehrauli, at the site where Banda Singh Bahadur was martyred.

from the body. His flesh was then torn with red-hot pincers, and finally decapitated and hacked to pieces limb by limb.

◀ **What is meant by 'Chardi Kala' ?**

❖ Ever buoyant spirit



◀ **Who were the 'Bandeis' ?**

❖ Those whom had apotheosised Banda Singh Bahadur and claimed an equal share in affairs of the Panth.

◀ **What was a group of staunch followers of Guru Gobind Singhji called ?**

❖ Tat Khalsa (the 'True Khalsa')

◀ **Whom did Mata Sundri in Delhi send to Amritsar to resolve the dispute between the Bandeis and Tat Khalsa ?**

❖ Bhai Mani Singh and Kirpal Singh. The former was appointed Granthi (head priest) of Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar in 1721.

◀ **When was Zakhrya Khan appointed as Governor of Lahore ?**

❖ In 1726 AD when his father, Abdus Samad Khan was transferred to Multan.

◀ **How many men did Tara Singh Vaan have with him to face the Mughal army sent by Zakhrya Khan ?**

❖ 22: all were martyred fighting the Mughal army in 1726 AD.

◀ **Who was given the title of 'Nawab' ?**

❖ Kapur Singh of Faizullapur

◀ **On what conditions did Kapur Singh accept Nawabship, when a Jagir was offered to the Sikhs by the Lahore Governor as a move toward peace with the Sikhs ?**

❖ Under the conditions that (1) he should be permitted to continue to serve in Guru-ka-langar, (2) to look after the horses and (3) that the feet of five Sikhs should touch this Royal Command, so as to reject it with contempt – or to sanctify it for acceptance.

◀ **What were the two divisions of the Dal Khalsa ?**

❖ Buddha Dal (the army of the veterans) and Taruna Dal (the army of the young). The Buddha Dal was entrusted with looking after holy places, preaching the Gurus' word and prachar into the Khalsa Panth. The Taruna Dal was the more active division and were to be the vanguard at times of emergencies.

◀ **Who led the Buddha Dal ?**

❖ Nawab Kapoor Singh (image below)



◀ **Who was the head of the Taruna Dal, stationed at Amritsar ?**

❖ Charat Singh Sukarchakia

◀ **Who supervised both the Buddha Dal and Taruna Dal ?**

❖ Nawab Kapoor Singh

◀ **When was the Jagir presented to the Sikhs annuled ?**

❖ 1735 AD.

◀ **When did Bhai Mani Singh ask the Governor of Lahore for permission to hold the Diwali festival in the Golden Temple at Amritsar ?**

❖ In 1738 AD, Bhai Mani Singh was to pay Rs. 5000, the festival to last 10 days. However,



this was not done as the Governor's Diwan Lakhpat Rai prevented pilgrims from entering Amritsar.

- ◀ **Which Sikh martyr was one of the 52 'Darbari kavis' (poets) of Guru Gobind Singhji ?**
 - ❖ Bhai Mani Singhji
- ◀ **How many immediate family members of Bhai Mani Singh were martyred for Sikh Panth ?**
 - ❖ Twenty one: 11 brothers and 10 sons.
- ◀ **With renewed persecutions, where did the Sikhs retreat?**
 - ❖ Most left the plains and sought shelter in the Shivalik hills, Lakhi Jungle and the sandy deserts of Rajputana.
- ◀ **In which year did the Sikhs attack Nadir Shah on his way back to Persia and divested him of much loot ?**
 - ❖ 1739 AD.
- ◀ **What was Nadir Shah's prophecy about Sikhs ?**
 - ❖ Nadir Shah told Zakhriya Khan that "the time is not far when these people (Sikhs) would raise their heads and become the rulers of this country."
- ◀ **What were the rewards offered by Zakhrya Khan for the capture and destruction of Sikhs ?**
 - ❖ Ten Rupees paid to anyone giving information which lead to the arrest of a Sikh.
 - ❖ Fifty Rupees paid to anyone bringing the head of a Sikh.
- ◀ **What did Massa Ranghar do during the persecution of the Sikhs in Zakhriya Khan's period ?**
 - ❖ Brought in cartloads of heads of Sikhs
- ◀ **What did Massa Ranghar do after being appointed as the chief of Amritsar by the Mughal governor ?**
 - ❖ He held charge of Golden Temple and banned Sikhs from visiting it, turning the holy precincts into a stable and the inmost sanctuary into a nautchhouse.

◀ **Who were the two Sikhs who killed Massa Ranghar ?**

- ❖ Bhai Mehtab Singh and Bhai Sukha Singh

◀ **How did they kill Massa Ranghar ?**

- ❖ In August 1740, they reached Amritsar. Disguising themselves as Mohammedans and filling two bags with well rounded brick-bats, they entered the precincts of the temple under the pretext of paying their land-revenue. While Sukha Singh guarded the entrance, Mehtab Singh cut off the head of the tyrant.

◀ **Where did Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh take the head of Massa Ranghar ?**

- ❖ Budha Jorh in deserts of Rajasthan.

◀ **How was Mehtab Singh martyred ?**

- ❖ Publicly broken on the wheel.

◀ **On which road did Bhai Bota Singh and Bhai Gurja Singh charge tolls to travellers?**

- ❖ Grand Trunk Road near Sarai Nurdin: one Anna (6.25 Paise) per cart and one paise per donkey-load.



Tracing route of the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar

◀ **What was the fate of Bota Singh and Garja Singh ?**

- ❖ Bota Singh wrote to the Governor of Lahore announcing the tax he was levying on travellers. Zakhriya Khan sent a detachment of 100 horsemen to arrest him. Bota Singh and Garja Singh refused to surrender and died fighting.

◀ **When did Zakhriya Khan die ?**

❖ June 1745 AD

◀ **Who was the successor of Zakhriya Khan ?**

❖ His son, Yahiya Khan

◀ **Why and how were Subeg Singh and Shahbaz Singh martyred ?**

❖ Subeg Singh, who had contracts with the government, was martyred under suspicion that he was giving intelligence to Sikhs. His 15 – year old son, Shahbaz Singh was martyred because he refused to convert to Islam

◀ **What was Diwan Lakhpat Rai's brother's name ?**

❖ Jaspat Rai, Faujdar of Eminabad

◀ **When Jaspat Rai attacked the Sikhs visiting Eminabad, who killed him ?**

❖ Nirbhau Singh got onto Jaspat Rai's mount and cut off his head

◀ **What does 'Ghalughaara' mean in English ?**

❖ Holocaust

◀ **When did the 'Chhota Ghalughaara' (First Holocaust) occur ?**

❖ 1746 AD

◀ **In the 'Chhota Ghalughaara', what were the names of the Nawab and the Hindu Diwan who led the Mughal attack on the Sikhs as they crossed the Ravi River ?**

❖ Yahiya Khaan and Lakhpat Rai (his Hindu Diwan)

◀ **How many Sikhs were killed in the 'Chhota Ghalughaara' ?**

❖ At least 7000 were killed and 3000 taken as prisoners to Lahore, where they were beheaded at the 'Nakhas', after being subjected to indignities and torture.

◀ **When did Yahiya Khan lose power ?**

❖ Was ousted by his younger brother, Shah Nawaz Khan, the Governor of Multan, in March 1747. Lakhpat Rai was also thrown in prison.

◀ **When was Nadir Shah assassinated ?**

❖ 8 June 1747 AD.

◀ **Who ascended the throne of Afghanistan after the assassination of Nadir Shah ?**

❖ Ahmed Shah Durrani (also known as Ahmed Shah Abdali)

◀ **Whom did Shah Nawaz Khan invite to invade India ?**

❖ Ahmed Shah Durrani, ruler of Kabul.

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani establish his control over Lahore ?**

❖ 12 January 1748 AD.

◀ **Who defeated Ahmed Shah Durrani ?**

❖ The Mughals in the battle of Manupur, near Sarhind, in March 1748.

◀ **After his defeat, when Ahmed Shah Durrani left Sarhind, who attacked the Durrani, retrieving considerable wealth and horses from them?**

❖ Sardar Charat Singh Sukarchakia

◀ **Who became the new Governor of Lahore and Multan ?**

❖ Mir Mannu, on 11 April 1748 AD

◀ **When was Jassa Singh Ahluwalia born ?**

❖ 3 May 1718 AD

◀ **What was Jassa Singh's father's name ?**

❖ Badar Singh

◀ **How old was Jassa Singh Ahluwalia when his father died ?**

❖ 5 years of age



Jassa Singh Ahluwalia

◀ **Who took care of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia when his father died ?**

❖ Mata Sundri ji

◀ **How long did Jassa Singh and his mother serve Mata Sundri in Delhi ?**

❖ For about 7 years.

◀ **Whom did Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's mother leave him with (as his god-father) ?**

❖ Sardar Kapur Singh.

◀ **Who lead the attack on Salabat Khan to liberate Amritsar from under his control in March 1748 ?**

❖ Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who severed the head of Salabat Khan in the battle.

◀ **Name the twelve Sikh Misls (a confederacy of clans under their respective chiefs leagued together).**

- ❖ Ahluwalia (led by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia)
- ❖ Bhangi (led by Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi.) Also called Dhillon Sardars.
- ❖ Dalewalia (led by Gulab Singh Dalewalia)
- ❖ Faizalpuria (led by Nawab Kapoor Singh Virk)
- ❖ Kanaihya (led by Jai Singh Kanaihya)
- ❖ Karor Singhia (led by Karora Singh Dhaliwal)
- ❖ Nakai (led by Hari Singh Nakai)
- ❖ Nishanwala (led by Dasaundha Singh)
- ❖ Ramgarhia (led by Nand Singh Sanghania)
- ❖ Sukerchakia (led by Nodh Singh.) Ranjit Singh's Misl.
- ❖ Shaheed (drew their name from Baba Deep Singh Ji Shaheed)
- ❖ Phulkian (led by Ala Singh)



Sikh Misls in the field of battle

◀ **What were these Misls collectively called ?**

❖ Dal Khalsa

◀ **Who was founder of the Dal Khalsa ?**

❖ Nawab Kapur Singh

◀ **When was Jassa Singh chosen the Supreme Commander of the Dal Khalsa ?**

❖ 29 March 1748 AD

◀ **What is a 'Rauni' ?**

❖ A thick boundary wall or enclosure, not a fortress or a fort, but a minor shelter.

◀ **What was name of the Rauni built in Amritsar in April 1748 ?**

❖ Ram Rauni, after the name of the fourth Guru, Guru Ramdas, built near Ramsar.

◀ **When and whom did Nawab Kapur Singh appoint as new Jathedar of the Khalsa Panth ?**

❖ Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in 1753.

◀ **Who laid the foundation stone of Harmandar Saheb when it was rebuilt by the Taruna Dal ?**

❖ Jassa Singh Ahluwalia

◀ **Name the Sikh warrior awarded the title Sultan-ul-Quam (King of the Khalsa Panth)?**

❖ Jassa Singh Ahluwalia when he defeated the ruler of Lahore in 1761

◀ **When did Jassa Singh Ahluwalia occupy Kapurthala ?**

❖ In 1778.

◀ **When Adeena Beg failed in his negotiations with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia whom did he bring in to serve with him ?**

❖ Jassa Singh Ramgharia, his three brothers and some associates.

◀ **When was Ram Rauni seized and for how long ?**

❖ In October 1748 by Adeena Beg and Jassa Singh Ramgharia and the seige went on for three months October-December, 1748.

◀ **What did Jassa Singh Ramgharia then decide?**

❖ To leave the royal army.

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the second time ?**

- ❖ December, 1748 AD, nine months after his first invasion in March, 1748.

◀ **Who made an offering of Rs.11000 for the service of the holy tank at Harmandir Saheb ?**

- ❖ Diwan Koura Mal: the holy tank which had been filled up by the orders of Lakhpat Rai in Yahiya Khan's time, was dug up and cleaned.

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the third time ?**

- ❖ January 1752 AD

◀ **When was Diwan Koura Mal killed ?**

- ❖ March 1752 AD

◀ **When was persecution of the Sikhs by Mir Mannu renewed ?**

- ❖ March 1752 AD

◀ **How did Mir Mannu treat Sikh women ?**

- ❖ He tortured them brutally and forced them to abandon their religion.

◀ **How many years did this slaughter of Sikhs continue ?**

- ❖ Four years

◀ **What price did Mir Mannu pay for the severed head of a Sikh ?**

- ❖ Rs. 80 (equivalent to one year's pay)

◀ **When did Nawab Kapur Singh die ?**

- ❖ 7 October 1753 AD

◀ **When did Mir Mannu die ?**

- ❖ 2 November 1753 AD

◀ **When was Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia formally appointed as the political and religious leader of the Khalsa Panth in place of Nawab Kapur Singh ?**

- ❖ 10 April 1756 AD

◀ **Who had the Gurdwara 'Fatehgarh Saheb' built at the spot where the infant sons Guru Gobind Singhji were bricked alive ?**

- ❖ Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in 1764



◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the fourth time ?**

- ❖ 28 January 1757

◀ **How did Ahmed Shah Durrani violate the Harmandir Saheb ?**

- ❖ When Durrani attacked Amritsar, he destroyed Harmandir Saheb and filled up the tank with carcasses.

◀ **Who was Baba Deep Singh ?**

- ❖ Baba Deep Singh was in charge of the Gurdwara at Talwandi Sabo, called Damdama Saheb, having been baptised by Guru Gobind Singhji himself. He was one of the most scholarly Sikhs of his time and had helped the tenth Guru, along with Bhai Mani Singh, in preparing final version of the Adi Granth.
- ❖ On hearing about desecration of Harmandar Saheb by Durrani, he began to avenge this and



during the battle of Goharval, received a mortal wound, but supporting his severed head, went on fighting until the end in the precincts of Harmandir Saheb.

◀ **When did Adeena Beg die ?**

❖ 15 September 1758 AD

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the fifth time ?**

❖ 25 October 1759 AD

◀ **When was the historic battle of Panipat fought ?**

❖ 14 January 1761 AD

◀ **Why was Ala Singh condemned and fined by the Dal Khalsa ?**

❖ For his act of submission to the invader. In March 1761, Ala Singh was made ruler of Sarhind in return for a tribute of five lakhs annually.

◀ **How many Hindu women were restored to their families when the Sikhs attacked the Durrani forces returning from Delhi ?**

❖ About 2200.

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the sixth time ?**

❖ 3 February 1762 AD

◀ **On what date did the 'Wada Ghalughaara' (Greater Holocaust) occur ?**

❖ 5 February 1762

◀ **In the 'Wada Ghalughaara', out of the 30,000 Sikhs, how many were massacred by the Mughal forces ?**

❖ 10,000 (mainly women and children)

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani blow up Harmandir Sahib with gunpowder ?**

❖ 10 April 1762 AD. The tank after being desecrated with the blood of cows was filled with refuse and debris.

◀ **How was Durrani wounded ?**

❖ As the buildings were being blown up, a flying brick-bat struck him on his nose and

inflicted a wound from which he never recovered.

◀ **Why did Hari Singh Bhangi lead an expedition against Kasur ?**

❖ To free the wife of a Brahmin of Kasur on 10 April 1763.

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the seventh time ?**

❖ October 1764 AD

◀ **When did Ahmed Shah Durrani (Abdali) invade India for the eighth and last time ?**

❖ November 1765 AD

◀ **What caused Ahmad Shah's death in June 1773 ?**

❖ The brick-bat that hit his nose during his desecration of Harmandar Saheb made a wound that turned cancerous and eventually caused his death.

◀ **When did Jassa Singh Ahluwalia pass away ?**

❖ 20 October 1783 AD

◀ **What city did Sardar Baghel Singh occupy in the year 1790 ?**

❖ Delhi

◀ **Which Emperor did Sardar Baghel Singh's forces defeat in order to capture Delhi ?**

❖ Shah Alam II

◀ **How large a cavalry force did Sardar Baghel Singh command at Delhi ?**

❖ 30,000 men



Baghel Singh's cavalry in Delhi

◀ **What is this place in Delhi still known as?**

- ❖ Tees Hazari (30,000)



Present day Courts at Tees Hazari

◀ **When and where was Ranjit Singh born ?**

- ❖ 13 November 1780 at Gujranwala

◀ **What was Ranjit Singh's father's name ?**

- ❖ Mahan Singh (son of Sardar Charat Singh)

◀ **What was Ranjit Singh's mother's name ?**

- ❖ Raj Kaur



Ranjit Singh

◀ **Who was entitled 'Sher-e-Punjab' (Lion of Punjab) ?**

- ❖ Maharaja Ranjit Singh

◀ **For how many years did Maharaja Ranjit Singh rule?**

- ❖ 40 years (1799-1839)

◀ **Who was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law, playing an important part in his life ?**

- ❖ Sardarni Sada Kaur, wife of Jai Singh, the Kanhaiya leader.

◀ **Who was the first wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ?**

- ❖ Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sardarni Sada Kaur.

◀ **Which wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave birth to Kharak Singh in 1802 ?**

- ❖ Rani Raj Kaur, daughter of Nakai Sardar Khazan Singh

◀ **Name the sons of Ranjit Singh?**

- ❖ Sher Singh and Tara Singh (born of Mehtab Kaur), Dilip Singh (born of Jind Kaur), and Kharak Singh (born of Rani Raj Kaur).

◀ **Which world famous diamond did Maharaja Ranjit Singh wear on his arm ?**

- ❖ Kohinoor diamond



The Koh-i-Noor diamond in Queen Elizabeth's crown

◀ **Who presented the Kohinoor diamond to Maharaja Ranjit Singh ?**

- ❖ The wife of Shah Shuja, former king of Kabul, whom Maharaja Ranjit Singh rescued from his enemies in Kashmir.

◀ **Where was the first great victory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh against the Afghans ?**

- ❖ Attock on the river Indus

◀ **At Multan, which famous gun was used by the troops of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ?**

- ❖ Zamzama tope (cannon)



◀ **When did Maharaja Ranjit Singh occupy throne in Lahore ?**

- ❖ 7 July 1799 AD



The court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

◀ **When did Maharaja Ranjit Singh annex Amritsar ?**

- ❖ 1802 AD

◀ **When did Maharaja Ranjit Singh annex Multan, Kashmir, Peshawar, and Bannu ?**

- ❖ Multan in 1818 AD, Kashmir in 1819 AD, and Peshawar and Bannu in 1823 AD

◀ **In which year did the enthroning of Ranjit Singh take place ?**

- ❖ Baisakhi day of 1801 AD

◀ **What was the name of the commemorative coin issued on this auspicious occasion ?**

- ❖ Nanakshahi coin

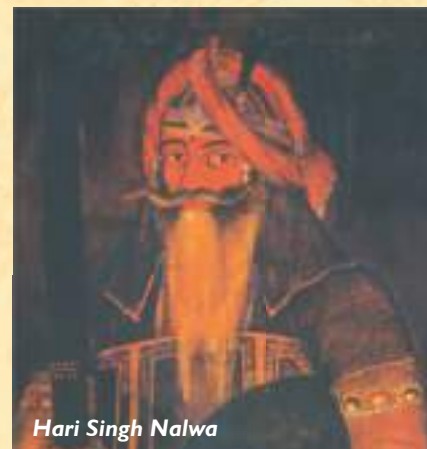


◀ **How long did the Sarkar Khalsa rule the Punjab ?**

- ❖ 50 years (1799-1849 AD)

◀ **Why was Sardar Hari Singh given the last name 'Nalwa' by Maharaja Ranjit Singh ?**

- ❖ He slayed a tiger with a sword while on a hunting expedition with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, thus saving both his life and the Maharaja's.

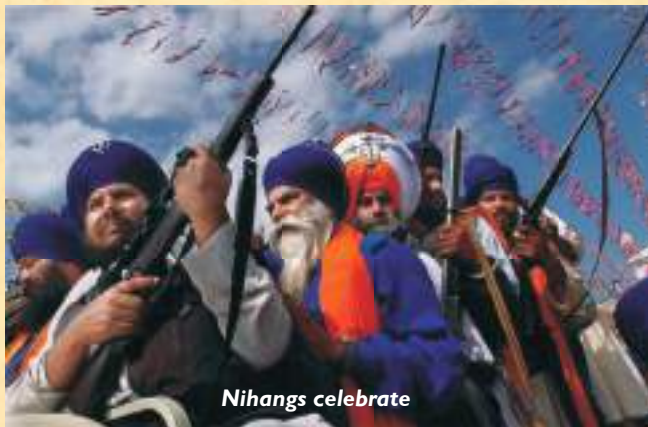


Hari Singh Nalwa

- ◀ **What does 'Haria Raghle' mean ?**
 - ❖ Pathan women would caution their children with the warning that "Hari Singh has come"!
- ◀ **Which famous Gurdwara did Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa build ?**
 - ❖ Gurdwara Panja Saheb
- ◀ **What fortress of great military importance did Hari Singh Nalwa build ?**
 - ❖ Fortress at Jamrud (below)



- ◀ **What is the literal meaning of the word 'Nihang' ?**
 - ❖ A Persian word which means 'crocodile'.



- ◀ **Who caused the Ghazis to say, "Toba Toba, Khuda Khud, Khalsa Shud!"?**
 - ❖ Akali Phula Singh
- ◀ **In which year was Akali Phula Singh made Jathedar of Akal Takht ?**
 - ❖ 1807 AD

- ◀ **As Jathedar of Akal Takht, how did Akali Phula Singh punish Maharaja Ranjit Singh ?**
 - ❖ When Ranjit Singh was involved with a Muslim woman, Moran of Lahore, Akali Phoola Singh, declared him a 'Tankhaiya'. Ranjit Singh admitted his mistake and bowed down to receive his punishment (50 lashes). However, the Panj Pyaras took a lenient view and fined him sava lakh (Rs.1,25,000).
- ◀ **Across the river Kabul, whose tomb (samaadhi) stands witness to the warrior's undying chivalry?**
 - ❖ Akali Phoola Singh
- ◀ **When did Maharaja Ranjit Singh pass away ?**
 - ❖ On 27 June 1839
- ◀ **When did Maharaja Ranjit Singh's successor Maharaja Kharak Singh die ?**
 - ❖ 6 November 1840 AD (his son, Naunihal Singh died on same day too).



- ◀ **Who killed Kharak Singh ?**
 - ❖ He was killed in a conspiracy hatched by the Dogra rivals.
- ◀ **Who was the successor of Maharaja Kharak Singh ?**
 - ❖ Maharaja Sher Singh on 18 January 1841 AD
- ◀ **When was Maharaja Sher Singh murdered ?**
 - ❖ In September 1843 AD

◀ **Who was his successor ?**

- ❖ Maharaja Duleep Singh, son of Maharani Jind Kaur, whilst he was still a young child. (painting below)



◀ **Who went to England to meet Maharaja Duleep Singh and was responsible for his public renunciation of Christianity and return to the Sikh faith ?**

- ❖ Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, who had been the chief agent of Maharaja Duleep Singh in India during his struggle against the British Government.

◀ **Whom did Maharaja Duleep Singh nominate as his would-be prime minister ?**

- ❖ Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia.

◀ **When and where did Maharaja Duleep Singh die ?**

- ❖ At Paris on 22 October 1893

◀ **When was the First Anglo-Sikh war fought ?**

- ❖ 1845-46 AD



Battle of Ferozeshah

◀ **When was the Second Anglo-Sikh war fought ?**

- ❖ 1848-49 AD



Battle of Gujarat

◀ **When was the Brahma Samaj established ?**

- ❖ The Brahma Sabha, later known as Brahma Samaj, was founded by Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal in 1828.

◀ **When was the Arya Samaj established ?**

- ❖ At Bombay in 1875. The seed was sown by the publication of Swami Dayananda's 'Satyarth Prakash' in Hindi.

◀ **Who started the Nirankari Movement ?**

- ❖ Baba Dayal, a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, founded the Nirankari Darbar at Rawalpindi in 1851 AD (this later became a sect.)

◀ **What does Nirankar mean ?**

- ❖ The Formless One

◀ **When was Baba Dayal born ?**

- ❖ At Peshawar in 1783.

◀ **When did Baba Dayal die ?**

- ❖ On 30 January 1855.

◀ **Who succeeded Baba Dayal ?**

- ❖ His eldest son, Baba Darbara Singh.

◀ **What was Baba Darbara Singh's contribution to the 'Anand Marriage' ?**

- ❖ On 13 March 1855, Baba Darbara Singh held a conference at Rawalpindi where a young couple was united in wedlock by

the Anand Marriage, circumambulating the Guru Granth Sahib four times. Thereafter four 'Lavan' composed by Guru Ram Das ji and shabads were recited.

◀ **Who started the Namdhari Movement (also known as Kuka Movement) ?**

- ❖ Bhai Balak Singh of Hazro but his follower Baba Ram Singh Namdhari gave it a more positive orientation.

◀ **When was Baba Ram Singh born ?**

- ❖ On 3 February 1816.

◀ **How many Kukas (Namdharis) were executed by the British ?**

- ❖ Sixty-five Kukas were blown from British cannon on 17-18 January 1872, when they protest-marched against the butchers of Malerkotla.



◀ **When and where did Baba Ram Singh die ?**

- ❖ He was deported to Rangoon where he died on 29 November 1884.



◀ **Who created the Singh Sabha at Amritsar ?**

- ❖ Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia of Raja Sansi, in 1873. He was the president of the society and Giani Gian Singh the secretary.

◀ **What were the main objectives of the Singh Sabha ?**

- ❖ To restore Sikhism to its pristine purity; to edit and publish historical and religious books; to propagate current knowledge, using Punjabi as the medium, and to start magazines and newspapers in Punjabi; to reform and bring back into the Sikh fold the apostates; and create interest amongst influential Britishers and encourage association with the educational programme of Sikhs.

◀ **When was the Second Singh Sabha established ?**

- ❖ At Lahore in 1879, with Dewan Boota Singh and Professor Gurmukh Singh as President and Secretary, respectively.

◀ **What was the Singh Sabha at Amritsar renamed as?**

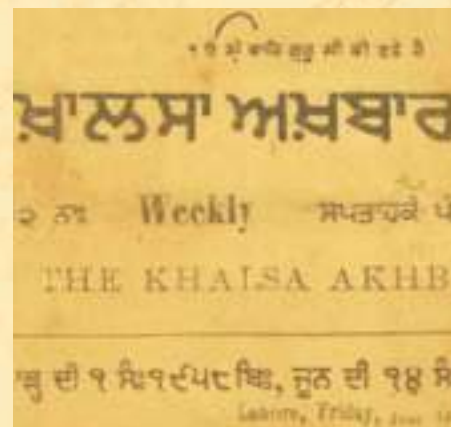
- ❖ The Amritsar Singh Sabha became the central organisation and other Singh Sabhas became associated; its name then changed to Khalsa Diwan. Baba Khem Singh Bedi became the President and Professor Gurmukh Singh Chief Secretary.

◀ **When was the Khalsa Diwan at Lahore established ?**

- ❖ Professor Gurmukh Singh founded the Khalsa Diwan of Lahore in 1886.

◀ **What was name of the newspaper started by the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore ?**

- ❖ The 'Khalsa Akhbar' was started by the Khalsa Diwan, with Bhai Dit Singh as its editor.



◀ **Which were the most important works of Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha ?**

- ❖ Bhai Kahan Singh was a great scholar of Sikh literature. Some of his important works include:

Mahankosh (Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature which was his magnum opus); *Ham Hindu Nahin*; *Gurmat Prabhakar*; *Gurmat Sudhakar*.



◀ **When was the Khalsa College founded at Amritsar?**

- ❖ In 1892



Main building of Khalsa College in Amritsar

◀ **When did Professor Gurmukh Singh die ?**

- ❖ In 1898

◀ **When was the Chief Khalsa Diwan started ?**

- ❖ The Lahore Khalsa Diwan could not survive the incessant shocks of the deaths of Sir Attar Singh (1896), Professor Gurmukh Singh (1898), and Bhai Dit Singh (1901). Its place was taken by the

Chief Khalsa Diwan, at Amritsar, that held its first meeting on 30 October 1902. Bhai Arjan Singh was elected President and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia its Secretary.

◀ **Who was Baba Teja Singh?**

- ❖ Baba Teja Singh founded a new association called the 'Panch Khalsa Diwan', which did much useful work in propagating the mission of Guru Gobind Singhji.

◀ **When was the Anand Marriage Act passed ?**

- ❖ The Anand Marriage Act, legalising the Sikh form of marriage, was passed in 1909.

◀ **When was the Kirpan exempted from the Arms Act ?**

- ❖ In 1914



◀ **When did the Sikhs organise a political body of their own ?**

- ❖ The Sikh League, which held its first session at Amritsar in 1919

◀ **What was name of this new phase of reform that began among the Sikhs ?**

- ❖ The Akali Movement

◀ **At Guru-ka-Bagh, what was the name of the British official who ordered the merciless beating of non-violent, protesting Akalis, of whom 904 were hospitalised ?**

- ❖ SGM Beatty

◀ **Which Udaasi Mahant lodged the complaint against Akalis for cutting timber from Gurdwara land ?**

❖ Sundar Das

◀ **When did the violence against Sikh volunteers stop ?**

❖ 13 September 1922

◀ **Why did the Sikh Sangat of Panja Saheb stop the train passing through the Panja Saheb railway station ?**

❖ To feed the Akali prisoners from Guru-ka-Bagh, who had not been given any food by the British authorities.

◀ **Who were the two Sikhs who were crushed to death under the train at Panja Saheb ?**

❖ Partaap Singh and Karam Singh on 31 October 1922

◀ **What does 'Ghadr' mean ?**

❖ Revolutionary

◀ **How did the Ghadr Movement get its name ?**

❖ The word 'Ghadr' was name of the newspaper edited and published for the Hindustani Association of the Pacific Coast, founded at Portland, USA, in 1912. This inspired revolutionary activities in India and also came to be known as the 'Ghadr Movement'.

◀ **When was the Khalsa Diwan Society established in Vancouver ?**

❖ In order to fight the unjust immigration laws, the Indians (mostly Sikhs) organised the Khalsa Diwan Society in Vancouver in 1907, with branches in other provinces.

◀ **What was the 'Komagata Maru' ?**

❖ A Japanese steamliner chartered by an affluent businessman, Gurdit Singh, to bring Indian immigrants to Canada in 1914. The ship departed from Hong Kong, stopped in Japan and then headed to Canada. Its passengers included 376 Indians, all Punjabis, amongst whom 340 were Sikhs. The ship was turned back at



Vancouver where landing was refused and returned eventually to Calcutta.

◀ **When did Komagata Maru reach Vancouver ?**

❖ On 23 May 1914. After two months of acrimonious legal battles, the ship was forced to leave Vancouver on 23 July 1914. (Only 24 passengers were given permission to legally stay in Canada).

◀ **Where was the Komagata Maru redirected to when it approached Calcutta ?**

❖ To Budge Budge, about 17 miles from Calcutta, where 20 Indians were killed by British troops.

◀ **When did the massacre at Jallianwala Baagh occur ?**

❖ On 13 April 1919 AD

◀ **Who ordered his troops to fire on the unarmed men, women and children assembled at Jallianwala Baagh ?**

❖ General Reginald Dyer

◀ **How many people were massacred at Jallianwala Baagh ?**



The memorial at Jallianwala Baagh, Amritsar

- ❖ The dead numbered between 370 and 1,000, or possibly more. This brutality stunned both India and Britain.

⚡ **Why did Udham Singh assassinate Sir Michael O'Dwyer ?**

- ❖ As the Lt. Governor of Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer had approved General Dyer's actions at Jallianwala Bagh.



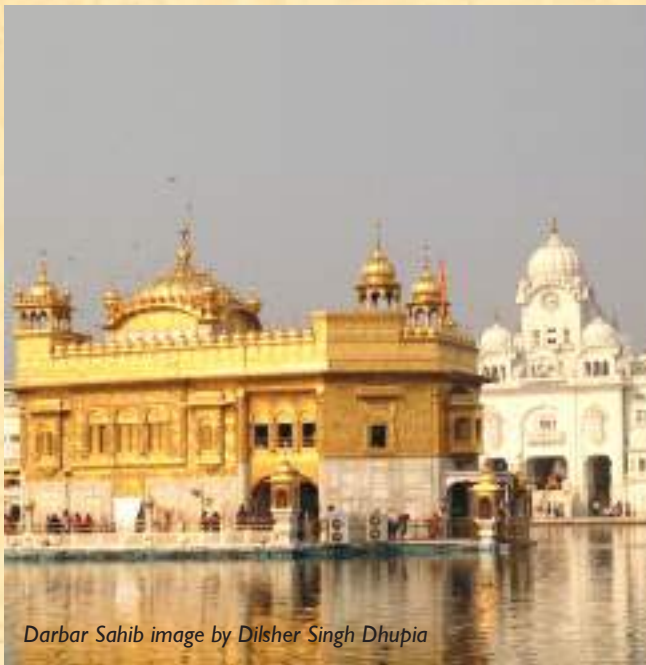
Udham Singh

⚡ **When was the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee (SGPC) formed?**

- ❖ On 15 November 1920

⚡ **What was its main objective?**

- ❖ To administer the Harimandir Sahib Complex and other important historical gurdwaras.



Darbar Sahib image by Dilsher Singh Dhupia

⚡ **Who was elected as president of the SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee) in 1921 ?**

- ❖ Baba Kharak Singh (on the right)



⚡ **Who was Manager of the Golden Temple when the complex in Amritsar was controlled by the Akalis in October 1920?**

- ❖ Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia

⚡ **When was Gurdwara Tarn Taran freed from the control of the mahants ?**

- ❖ 26 January 1921

⚡ **Who were first martyrs of the Gurdwara Reform Movement ?**

- ❖ Bhai Hazara Singh and Bhai Hukum Singh, who achieved martyrdom at Gurdwara Tarn Taran

⚡ **What was the name of the Mahant who controlled Gurdwara Nanakana Sahib ?**

- ❖ Mahant Narain Dass

⚡ **When was Gurdwara Nankana Sahib freed from the control of Mahant Narain Dass ?**

- ❖ On 21 February 1921



Gurdwara Tarn Taran

◀ Who had possession of the keys to the Toshakhana ?

❖ Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia

◀ On what date were the keys returned to the SGPC ?

❖ 19 January 1922

◀ Who described this as the "first decisive battle for Independence won" ?

❖ MK Gandhi

◀ Which are the most important works of Bhai Vir Singh ji ?

❖ *Guru Nanak Chamatkar; Kalgidhar Chamatkar; Baba Nodh Singh; Merey Saeeyan Jeeo*

◀ Which were his novels?

❖ *Sundri, Bijay Singh, Satwant Kaur*



◀ What title was given by the Government of India to Bhai Vir Singhji?

❖ Padma Bhushan in 1956

◀ When did the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee accord acceptance of the present form of the Sikh Rehat Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) ?

❖ By their resolution No.14 of 12 October 1936. The SGPC's Advisory Committee on Religious Matters again considered the draft in its meeting on 7 January 1945 and made recommendations for certain additions to and deletions from it.

◀ Guru Granth Saheb contains the compositions of how many Bhagats ?

Fifteen Bhagats. They are :

- ❖ Jai Dev
- ❖ Nam Dev
- ❖ Trilochan
- ❖ Parmanand
- ❖ Sadna
- ❖ Ramanand
- ❖ Beni



- ❖ Dhanna
- ❖ Pipa
- ❖ Sain
- ❖ Kabir
- ❖ Ravidas
- ❖ Farid



- ❖ Surdas
- ❖ Bhikhan

← **Which Bhagat has contributed the highest number of hymns in Guru Granth Saheb ?**

- ❖ Bhagat Kabir ji (541 hymns out of a total of 922 by 15 bhagats)

← **In what year was Kabir Dasji born ?**

- ❖ 1398 AD.



Kabir Das

← **What caste did Kabir Dasji belong to ?**

- ❖ Julaha

← **What was the hereditary occupation of Kabir Dasji ?**

- ❖ Weaving

← **Who was Kabir's Guru (teacher) ?**

- ❖ Swami Ramanand

← **Name the two collections of Kabir Dasji's works?**

- ❖ *Kabir Granthavali* and *Bijak*

← **When was Faridji born ?**

- ❖ 1173 AD



Baba Farid

← **Guru Granth Saheb contains the compositions of how many 'Bhattas' ? Name them.**

- ❖ Eleven Bhattas: they are *Mathra; Jalap; Harbans; Bal; Sal; Bhal; Kulh Sahar; Nal; Kirat; Gayand; Bhikha.*

← **What are 'Chaupadas' ?**

- ❖ Hymns of four verses.

← **What are 'Ashtapadas' ?**

- ❖ Hymns of eight verses.

← **How many cantos (Ashtapadas) are contained in Sukhmani Saheb ?**

- ❖ Twenty Four

← **According to the index of Ragas at the end of Guru Granth Saheb ji, what is the total number of Ragas and Reginis ?**

- ❖ Eighty Four

← **How many has the Guruji used ?**

- ❖ Thirty One, the first being Sri Raag and the last Jaijvanti.

← **Name these 31 Ragas**

- ❖ *Sriraag; Majh; Gauri; Aasa; Gujri; Devgandhari; Bihagarha; Vadhans; Sorath; Dhanasari; Jaitsari; Todi; Baerari; Tilang; Suhi; Bilawal; Gond; Ramkali; Nat Narayan; Mali Gourha; Maru; Tukhari; Kedara; Bhairou; Basant; Sarang; Malar; Kanrha; Kalyan; Prabhati; Jaijvanti*

◀ **Composition of the 'Dasam Granth' :**

- ❖ *Jaap Saheb; Bichitra Natak; Akal Ustat* (includes the 10 sawaye of the daily Sikh prayer); *Shabad Hazare; Sawaya Tatees; Zaffarnama; Chandi Charitra; Gian Parbodh; Chaubis Avtaar; Shastra Nam mala; Hikayat; Charitropakhyan*

◀ **Who developed the Nanakshahi Calendar ?**

- ❖ The Canadian Sikh, Pal Singh Purewal, a retired computer engineer.

◀ **Is the Nanakshahi Calendar a Solar or Lunar calendar ?**

- ❖ Solar Calendar

◀ **Which is the first year of the Nanakshahi Calendar ?**

- ❖ The year of Guru Nanak Devji's birth (1469 CE)

◀ **What is the year length of the Nanakshahi Calendar ?**

- ❖ Same as the Western calendar: 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 45 seconds.

◀ **What is length of months in the Nanakshahi Calendar ?**

- ❖ 5 months of 31 days followed by 7 months of 30 days. During the leap year (every 4 years), the last month (Phagun) has an extra day.

◀ **Months of the Nanakshahi Calendar in order?**

- ❖ *Chet* (starts 14 March)
- ❖ *Vaisakhi* (starts 14 April)
- ❖ *Jeth* (starts 15 May)
- ❖ *Haarh* (starts 15 June)
- ❖ *Saavan* (starts 16 July)
- ❖ *Bhaadon* (starts 16 August)
- ❖ *Assu* (starts 15 September)
- ❖ *Kattak* (starts 15 October)
- ❖ *Maggar* (starts 14 November)
- ❖ *Poh* (starts 14 December)
- ❖ *Maagh* (starts 13 January)
- ❖ *Phagun* (starts 12 February)

◀ **Days in the Nanakshahi Calendar in order?**

- ❖ *Aetvaar* (Sunday)
- ❖ *Somvaar* (Monday)
- ❖ *Mangalvaar* (Tuesday)
- ❖ *Budhvaar* (Wednesday)
- ❖ *Veervaar* (Thursday)
- ❖ *Shukarvaar* (Friday)
- ❖ *Chanicharvaar* (Saturday)

◀ **When was the Nanakshahi Calendar implemented by the SGPC?**

- ❖ On 14 April 2003.

◀ **Which year of the Nanakshahi Calendar corresponds with the years 2012-2013?**

- ❖ Samat 544 of the Nanakshahi Calendar.

