



Guru Hargobind Ji

1595-1644



Family

- Born: 19th June 1595 at Guru Ki Vadali (Amritsar)
- Parents: Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Mata Ganga Ji
- Wife: Mata Mahadevi Ji (aka Mata Marwahi Ji)
- Children: One daughter Bibi Viro Ji and five sons: Baba Gurditta Ji, Suraj Mal Ji, Ani Rai Ji, Atal Rai Ji and (Guru) Tegh Bahadur Ji
- Gurgaddi: 1606

Guruship

- Guru Arjan Dev ji ordered Hargobind Ji to keep an army and take on the tyrants head on.
- Guru Hargobind Sahib succeeded Guru Arjan Sahib in 1606, at the age of eleven years
- After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib, the moment was crucial for the Sikhs
- Wore two swords, one of Spiritual Power – Piri and the other of Military Power – Miri
- Sikh was supposed to become a Saint-Soldier
- Guru Sahib kept seven hundred Cavaliers and sixty artillerymen.
- There was a band of Pathan mercenaries and Painsa Khan Pathan was made its chief.
- Riding, hunting, wrestling and many others martial sports were introduced.
- Martial songs lor Dhadhi Varaan were daily sung daily to inspire the Sikhs of heroic deeds. Abdul and Natha Mal were given the task in this respect.
- The Guru Sahib learnt the use of different weapons, besides riding wrestling and hunting

Lohgarh and Akal Takht

- Erected a wall around Amritsar city and constructed a small fort named 'Lohgarh' on the out skirts of the city.
- Guru Sahib revealed Sri Akal Takht Sahib also known as Akal Bunga (Tuineless Throned) just in front of Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in 1609.
- Akal Takht became the seat of preaching and praying in due course of time. At this place, Guru Sahib used to gave sermons to the Sikhs and discussions were held on the problems faced by the Sikh nation.
- Sikhs were encouraged to settle their own disputes themselves, some martial sports were also performed in the open courtyard before the Akal Takht.
- This development further consolidated the Sikh nation.
- The Sikhs called Guru Sahib 'Sachcha Patshah' (True Emperor) and the Sikh Nation followed the judgments or decisions taken on Sri Akal Takht Sahib enthusiastically

Gwalior Fort

- The emperor Jahangir was worried looking at the new lifestyle of the Sikhs.
- He got jealous of Guru Sahib and subsequently ordered to imprison him in the Gwalior Fort.
- Emperor Jahangir was falsely alarmed (about the military preparations by the Guru Sahib and Sikhs) by the same elements; enemies of the Sikh Nation, who were earlier responsible for the execution of Guru Arjan Sahib.
- After receiving summons from Emperor Jahangir, Guru Sahib proceeded towards Delhi before making serious consultations about rest, with all the leading Sikh personalities including Mata Ganga Ji, Baba Budha Ji, Bhai Gurdas Ji, Bhai Jetha Ji and Bhai Sahlo Ji.
- Guru Sahib appeared before the Emperor Jahangir and was received by the latter with due respect.
- A debate on Sikh religion and Sikh doctrines held between Guru Sahib and Jahangir (having pre-tempered mind against Guru Sahib) but the emperor remained unimpressed and ordered for the imprisonment of Guru Sahib at Gwalior Fort. Guru Sahib was detained in the fort upto three years i.e. from 1609 to 1612.

Gwalior Fort

- Bhai Bidhi Chand along with Baba Buddha ji and Bhai Gurdaas Ji led groups of Sikh Sangats to Gwalior from Punjab and Kashmir. The Sangat started regular singing of Gurbani at the gate of the fort and taking rounds (Parikarma) outside the fort.
- Sain Mian Mir and Wazir Khan (Governor of Lahore) approached Emperor Jahangir on behalf of Guru Sahib and secured the releasing orders.
- When Guru Sahib met Jahangir immediately after his release, he insisted upon Jahangir for the release of other fifty-two Hindu Princes on his personal surety (These Princes were said to be the rebellious ones).
- The request was obliged and all the prisoners were released in 1612.

Tours

- Shortly after the release from the Gwalior Fort and having cordial relations with the state, Guru sahib started to re-consolidate the Sikh Nation.
- He tried his best to dissuade Meharban (son of Pirthi Chand) from harbouring hostile designs against Sikhs and Sikhism.
- Guru Sahib undertook Dharam Parchar tours to spread Sikhism.
- He started from Amritsar and covered thousand miles in India. In Punjab he visited Kartarpur and made it as headquarter of Sikh Nation in Doaba.
- Guru Sahib also covered the 'Malwa' region of Punjab where the cult of Hindu Goddess and "Sakhi Sarwar" was fascination the lowly and downtrodden simple living people. The entire Malwa region embraced Sikhism and went a long way in integrating the Sikh Nation. This was a major achievement by Guru Hargobind Sahib.
- Guru Hargobind Sahib visited an old Sikh religious preaching centre Nanakmata (Gorakhmata) that Guru Nanak Sahib established it.
- Guru Sahib returned Amritsar. Guru Sahib also held a detailed discussion on the spiritual and religious issues
- Visited Kashmir in 1620

Tours

- Guru Sahib spent the last decade of his life (from 1635 to 1644) at Kiratpur Sahib, which is situated in the hill state of Hadur (Nalagarh), founded by Baba Gurditta Ji (Guru's son)
- Guru Sahib devoted his much time in reorganizing the Sikh Nation and updating the preaching centres by establishing a new system called Dhunas. Baba Gurditta Ji was made the incharge of religious affairs and he further appointed four head preachers area vice: Almast Ji, Phaul Ji, Gonda Ji and Baba Hansa Ji.
- Guru Sahib made reconciliation with Udasi sect headed by Baba Sri Chand Ji.
- Guru Sahib's religious tours and preaching made the Sikhism more popular in different parts of India.

Start of Conflict

- After the death of emperor Jahangir the policy matter of the new young emperor Shah Jahan changed considerably
- He ordered to destroy all the temples and Gurdwaras, which were under construction
- The sacred Baoli of Guru Arjan Sahib in Dabbi Babar, Lahore (now in Pakistan) was desecrated and converted into a mosque
- In 1629 Mukhlis Khan was made the Governor to Lahore
- Qazi Rustam Khan lodged a complaint with the new emperor, who was incensed earlier by the fanatic Muslims and Hindus against the Sikh Nation and Guru Sahib
- He obliged the complaint and revised his policy matter; earlier adopted by his father Jahangir towards Guru Sahib. The possible conflict out of charged circumstances was inevitable.
- Guru Sahib fought five battles during the regime of emperor Shah Jahan, and all were won

Note: For a detailed account of battles, please visit: www.gurmatacademy.org

Sikhs

Some Gursikhs who fought along with Guru Sahib:

- Mathura Bhat Ji (son of Baba Bhikha Ji), Bhai Nanu Ji, Bhai Saktu Ji, Bhai Jattu Ji, Bhai Pirana Ji, Bhai Paras Ram Ji, Bhai Jagannath Ji and Bhai Kalyana Ji, Bhai Bidhi Chand, Rai Jodh, Bhai Jetha Ji, Bhai Dasa Ji and Bhai Sohela Ji

Note: Close to the end of his life he sent Bhai Bidhi Chand on a missionary tour and sent Bhai Gurdas Ji on a tour to buy horses from Kabul. This was to show the Sikhs that a Sikh should be all-rounded and is capable of everything and always have the spirit of Miri-Piri (Saint-Soldier).

Joti-jot

- After the battle of Kartarpur, Guru Sahib crossed the Sutlej River and reached Kiratpur Sahib where he established another spiritual and preaching center of the Sikh Nation.
- Here, Guru Sahib spent ten years of his life and breathed his last on 28th February 1644.
- Before his death Guru Sahib nominated his grandson Har Rai Sahib (The second son of Baba Gurditta Ji) as his successor.

Sakhi - Garib da mooh - Guru di Golak

Guru Har Gobind once visited Kashmir. There lived his faithful follower Sewa Das who was always longing to serve the Guru. Sewa Das lived in the town of Srinagar where the Guru planned to go. On the way, however, another faithful follower, Kattu Shah, met the Guru and requested him to stay with him in his cottage for some days. The Guru promised to stay with Kattu Shah on his way back. He advised Kattu Shah to sing God's praises day and night.

Kattu Shah was so faithful that from the very moment the Guru departed, he began to recite hymns. He was so absorbed in God's Name that he forgot even sleep and did not care for food. Many days passed: yet Kattu Shah continued remembering God day and night without a break. He became very thin and weak but the Guru's words were still ringing in his ears.

One day a group of pilgrims, on their way to see the Guru, broke their journey at Kattu's cottage. Kattu opened them water and did all he could to help them. He was sorry that he did not have anything else to offer the pilgrims. Kattu noticed a honeypot which the pilgrims were carrying to the Guru and requested them to show him the honey. When the pilgrims showed it to him he asked to have a little on his finger to taste, but the pilgrims refused, saying, "We cannot offer you any honey because it is meant for the Guru only and we cannot offer your leavings to the Guru." Kattu insisted but in vain. At last he said, "The Guru never eats the whole of anything himself. He always sends offerings to his Langar (Kitchen)." The pilgrims, however, were not satisfied with Kattu's answer and therefore they refused to part with even a drop of honey. Kattu looked at the honeypot and said, "I wonder if the Guru will accept your offering!"

Sakhi - Garib da mooh - Guru di Golak

The pilgrims reached the Guru's camp and placed the offering before him. The Guru looked at the honeypot, smiled, and called one of the pilgrims to come and take the lid off the pot. Everybody was surprised to find that the honey had turned rotten and was giving out a foul smell. The Guru said, "Dear friends, the Guru is never hungry for offerings. Whatever you bring to me is distributed among the people. Today? however, I wish that this honey should be given only to those who have brought it." The pilgrims were extremely surprised and curious to know how their fresh honey could turn so bad. They did not know what to do. They begged the Guru's pardon whereupon he said, "Listen my friends, the Guru does not want to grow fat on the offerings of his Sikhs. The idea of the offerings is that those who can spare should help others in need. The offerings you bring to me are for the common good. God wants us to help the blind, the lepers, the orphans, the old people and all those who are sick and helpless. With the help of your offerings, Guru Arjan started a home for lepers at Tarn Taran. Wherever you find a needy person, place your offerings there and understand that in this way they will reach me. The offerings that do not reach the needy are useless. Take this honeypot away, this is the result of refusing to help the needy in whom is the spirit of the Guru. Go to my kitchen, prepare fresh food and take it to Kattu Shah at once."

The pilgrims immediately did as they were told but one of the Sikhs asked the Guru, "Why, O Guru, do you prefer a Sikh to yourself?"

Sakhi - Garib da mooh - Guru di Golak

The Guru smiled and sang this hymn of Guru Ram Das :

"No one knows the secret of the Guru's mind or what shall please him.

The Guru resides in the hearts of his Sikhs,

He is pleased with him who loves them.

As the Guru tells them, so do they act and pray.

The work of the Sikhs, finds favour.

The Guru works through the Sikhs and none shall reach the Guru

Except through the Sikhs.

The Sikhs should work for those who remember God and serve His people.

The Sikh should have no connection with wrongdoers.

Nanak proclaims that unless men remember God and help His people,

Their labour goes to waste."

The Guru explained his point further by singing another hymn :

"The Guru is a Sikh and the Sikh is a Guru,

They are both one, but it is the Guru who gives instruction.

He puts the spell of God's Name in his heart;

O Nanak, God can easily be realized through following the Guru."

All the Sikhs bowed before the Guru and understood the right way of making offerings.

Source: <http://www.sikhmissionarysociety.org/sms/smspublications/inthegurusfootsteps/chapter6/>

Sakhi 2 - Bhai Bidhi Chand retrieves horses

At one time the sikhs from Kabul while paying a visit to the Guru at Amritsar were bringing two horses as an offering to the Guru. On the way to Amritsar, at Lahore these horses were snatched away by the Mugal forces and handed over to the Nawaab of Lahore and these were kept in a stable in the fort of Lahore. The Sikhs from Kabul implored the guru about their helplessness. The guru assured them that their offer is accepted and the horses would be with him.

The famous incident of recovering these two beautiful Turkey horses from the Nawaab of Lahore was an illustrious work of Bhai Bidhi Chand. He offered his services and asked for Guru's grace. It was a long planned action without bloodshed. Some people question the wisdom of this action. But perhaps this was the right way to deal with the wrongful actions of the mighty chieftains of Mughals, without harming anybody. Bhai Bidhi Chand, under the guise of a grass cutter, went to Lahore. Offered his services at the stable. After about 3 to 4 months he was employed specially to serve these two horses. When he was well mixed up with whole staff, he offered a party to the whole staff of the fort. By the night, when all were completely drunk, he took away one horse and reached Amritsar.

Shortly after this, the Nawaab and other officials of the fort sought help of fortune tellers. This time in the guise of a fortune teller, Bhai Bidhi Chand offered his services. He convinced the authorities that he could give correct information, provided similar situation is created at the fort. The baffled officials created similar situation to that at the time of the theft of first horse. Bhai Bidhi Chand took the second horse, announcing loudly to the officials locked up in a room, that he himself was the grass cutter and now the fortune teller. These horses belonged to Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji, the first one had reached there and the second one he was taking. And thus along with the horse he jumped into the river Ravi and came back to Amritsar. The officials could not do any thing except to laugh at their folly.

Sources

- <http://www.gurmatacademy.org/gurus/guru-hargobind-ji/>
- http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Guru_Hargobind
- <http://www.sikhmissionarysociety.org/sms/smspublications/inthegurusfootsteps/chapter6/>
- <http://www.sgpc.net>