

SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI.

SHER SINGH,
M. Sc. (Kashmir).

AKAL SAHAI.

SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI

BEING

SOME UNWRITTEN LEAVES IN THE LIFE
OF THE GURU.

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By

SHER SINGH, M. SC. (KASHMIR).

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FOREWORD.

I have the greatest pleasure and pride in paying my tribute of love, homage and devotion to Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji. When I was quite a child, I heard first of Him before even I heard of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, and ever since He has been my Hero and my Master. I have tried to understand Him slowly but steadily, but it was not until the Master revealed Himself by His grace in me that real comprehension came. It was at *Paunta* Sahib on the banks of the holy Jumna, that I met Him once suddenly, but I was spiritually then a babe, and my eyes were, therefore, over-flooded and over-powered by the repulgent Light, that beamed from His Face. Years passed. I wandered far and wide. Later I felt He sent me a messenger in the garb of a venerable old saint with a wonderful, grizzly, flowing beard. The saint related to me the glory and the sanctity attached to the breathing-place of the Master, namely Nander in Deccan. This was a little

gesture, an invitation to me to visit the Master's remains on earth. But, I was slow, tied to my post, and hence not quite ready to mind this beckoning. I was at fault; and then there came the mighty wrench, the volcanic rush, the glacial-drift which I have tried to describe in the story of my pilgrimage to the feet of the Master on the banks of the godly-Godawari. While there, I also tried to understand Banda Bahadur for no comprehension of Guru Gobind Singh ji can be complete until we understand the warrior who was verily a link between the Guru and the widowed-Punjab. This is why a pen-picture about this warrior follows.

I have tried to give in this tract not what has been already recorded, but a few of the missing pages from the history of this great prophet of love and war. I have also tried to explain how the great Guru synthesised these two poles on which the globe of human mind turns *i. e.* the philosophy underlying the Guru's crusades, for this portion of His life is misunderstood by even Tagore and Gandhi.

As a proof of the Guru's love for mankind at large, I have tried to reproduce purport of his talk with Saiyyad Budhu Shah who was a bosom friend of the Guru and who sided with the Guru rather than Aurangzeb, in the War of Righteousness that ensued between them.

For further information regarding the teachings and mission of the Tenth Guru, reference is invited to a companion-tract in Gurmukhi: *Dasmesh Darpan* which is being published simultaneously with this tract by the Sikh Religious Tract Society, Tarn Taran.

1-12-33.

SHER SINGH.

GURU GOBIND SINGH'S PERSONALITY.

How to approach its study ?

Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, is a world-figure of first-rate importance. It was he who established the Khalsa Commonwealth and conversely brought about the fall of the Mughal Empire. India which had become somnolent by centuries of foreign rule rose from its slumber and began to stir about and strike under him. In the first time in the history of Punjab, under the leadership of the Khalsa the stream of conquest began to move westward, and India, the down-trodden, became India the conqueror. Such was the extraordinary impetus which the Guru and his *Khalsa* brought to bear on the masses of the Punjab. One of the Sikh Generals in whom the Guru-given Light of *Nam* burnt brilliantly namely Hari Singh Nalwa, has been described recently by an English historian as the world's greatest General—head and shoulders above Napoleon and Wellington. So also was Banda Bahadur

who was literally a terror to the Mughals, and whose might is admitted as much by Mohammedan historians as by the Hindus. If such were the Guru's mind-born descendants, how deep, profound and electric must have been the great Guru himself whose whole life is one supreme object-lesson of love, sacrifice and devotion. Unfortunately, the world knows little of Him, and what little is known is so perverted and distorted that He may well be called the "Great-Misunderstood-One."

There are many reasons why the Guru's real life is so little known, but one of the important reasons is that the historians of the past and present have tried to look at Him much as they would like at any other historical general such as Caesar, Hannibal, Shivaji or Napoleon, generals who were, if anything, quite the reverse of Guru Gobind Singh. There may be superficial similiarity between the Guru and some of these successful Generals, but we have only to look deeper to find out how they fundamentally differed, and how that difference made quite a world of

change between them in their outlook towards God and man. As typical of the worldly generals, let us select Napoleon, for his successes were far more spectacular than that of any other general, and he ruled over greater part of Europe than even Caesar. The personality of Napoleon still dominates the imagination of the modern Europe, and we have even today Napoleons of finances, of business, of press, of the turf. But let us probe deeper into his personality and see him at close quarters. Mr. H. G. Wells, the greatest English historian of the modern times, deftly depicts his true character in the following telling words :

“ It would be difficult to find a human being less likely to arouse affection. One reads in vain through the monstrous accumulations of Napoleonic literature for a single record of self-forgetfulness. Laughter is one great difference between man and the lower animals, one method of our brotherhood, and there is no evidence that Napoleon ever laughed. Out of his portraits he looks at us with a thin scorn upon his lips, the scorn of the

criminal who believes that he can certainly cheat such fools as we are, and withal with certain uneasiness in his eyes. That uneasiness haunts all his portraits. Are we really convinced he is quite right? Are his laurels straight? He had a vast contempt for man in general and men in particular, a contempt which took him at last to St. Helena, that same contempt that fills our jails with forgers, prisoners and the like victims of self-conceit. There is no proof that this unbrotherly, unhumorous egotist was ever sincerely loved by any human being. He had never a gleam of religion, or affection or the sense of duty. He was, as few men are or dare to be, a scoundrel, bright and complete. We live in a world full of would-be Napoleons — Napoleons of commerce, Napoleons of finance, of the press, of the turf; half the cells in our jails and many in our mad-houses are St. Helenas. In all history, there is no figure so completely antithetical to the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, whose pitiless and difficult doctrine of self-abandonment and self-forgetfulness, we can rather disregard nor yet bring ourselves to obey. That summons to a new way of life

haunts our world today, haunts wealth of comfort and every sort of success. It is a trouble to us all. Our uneasiness grows. Napoleon was free from it. The cultivation of the Napoleonic legend seems to offer a kind of refuge—from solvation." Such was Napoleon who may well be called the Anti-christ of Europe who flung his armies across the East and the West, struck and struck with all his might, who won, lost, re-won and was at last confined like a great criminal in a forlorn den namely St. Helena, the Andaman of the West.

The modern youth looks up to figures of Napoleon, of Timur and leaders of that ilk, in world-history, and with that fashionable measuring-stock in its hand tries to measure the greatness of Guru Gobind Singh. No wonder that Guru Gobind Singh does not look so tall, by *that* standard. But does the measurer know the folly of his deed? He is trying to hold up the candle to the sun, measure light by darkness, which is the very height of absurdity! Guru Gobind Singh is no ordinary warrior, no worldly general, he does not have war but peace. He sings again and

again in his *Bani*, that mosques and temples are the same, the Hindus and Mohammedans and men of all other denominations are brothers, and that their solvation lies in love, amity and concord. If he took up sword against the rulers, it was not that he loved to do so but because he had no other alternative but to do so. His father had been cruelly murdered, and he was himself molested in his peaceful meditations in the Siwaliks, his Sikhs and sympathisers were hunted like hares, and there was no latitude for freedom of thought and worship. He took up the sword at last, but this was forced on him and it was an exceptional feature of his life, not his life's aim. It is true that the times did call for such drastic action, but even in the battle-field *Nam* congregations were held as a matter of routine and the wielder of sword was primarily a dispenser of the *Amrit i. e.* Spiritual Nectar. He fought to save not to kill ; he came to root out tyranny not to rear a worldly kingdom on the ruins of the Mughals. It is true that the Sikh Rule did follow in the wake of the Mughal, but this was merely an act of Providence : nature abhors vacuum and the Sikh

Rules applied the needful want. But to consider Guru Gobind Singh as wedded to war is an entire travesty of history. He fought as he had to, and then fought it out successfully, but war is but one string to his bow which had many more strings, the prominent note of his lyre being peace not war, concord not discord, life not death. Those who compare Guru Gobind Singh to Napoleon or Shiv Ji are therefore, fundamentally wrong, there can be no comparison between their aims and ideals; the comparison begs the question and is blasphemous.

This is, then, the first misunderstanding which has coloured the outlook of critics of Guru Gobind Singh, of whom Gandhi happens to be one. But, there is yet another and important reason which stands in the way of proper appreciation of the Guru. The intellectuals look everything with the candle-light of reason—they cannot and do not see reality face to face which is the special mission of *inspired-seers*. Inspiration is to reason as noonday sun is to twilight; the intellect is but a toy-replica of inspired-vision. Hence, the

liliputian intellectuals are bewildered fare always at a loss to understand and appreciate the actions of seers whose personality is *spontaneous* and is as much free as wind and water the elemental forces of Nature. Guru Gobind Singh, was such an inspired seer; He did what was best for the time—and hence, for all time.

Those who call him a “misguided Patriot” are mis-guided themselves in their judgment but we can afford to forgive them for like other intellectuals all the world over they say what they do not know. *Inspiration* is the very life-breath of the Gurus; it was this hidden force which made Nanak shed tears of blood on the battle-field of Eminabad where Babar slaughtered Indians like so many sheep and cows, and it was the self-same life-force which impelled Guru Gobind Singh to lay down his life, that of his children, of his parents at the altar of Indian liberty. The goddess of liberty is always propitiated by sacrifice, and is not the world a big cauldron in which the supreme one Himself is offered up as an eternal oblation? Hail, hail unto the

once more. How the sparrows were enabled to swoop at hawks, how the lambs tamed the lions is a miracle which the Guru alone could perform. He turned invertebrate masses into herds of lions whose roar rent the sky. How this wonderful change was wrought in a life time we will try to describe in the following pages describing life-sketch of the Guru.

GURU GOBIND SINGH AS BORN LEADER OF MANKIND.

1666—1708 A. D.

Patna life of the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna. Poh Sudi 7th 1723 Vikrami, 1666 A. D. to Mother Gujri, when his father, Guru Teg Bahedur, was absent in Assam where he had gone in connection with a peaceful mission to a prince of that province. The first few years of the babe's life were spent at Patna which is, therefore, an important "Throne" in the annals of Sikh history. The early life of Guru Gobind Singh recalled the innocent revelries of Krishna for he had won the hearts of the people, both young and old, including Raja Fateh Chand Maini, at that tender age. There was some hidden charm in his radiating face which made him at once the idol of Patna where he lived and moved like an angel wooing, bewitching and comforting every one with whom he came in contact. Sometimes, he would dart arrows from his blue bow and knock potsherds in innocent glee, but very often he would divide his mates into two

groups and engage them in contests of skill and power. Hundreds of boys followed at his heel and he would march through the lanes of Patna like a victorious general parading his troops. The Guru mixed with every one, loved every one and although he was only a child, yet many a parent used to look upon him as their Redeemer, for all that he did, appeared to be a foretaste of what was coming ahead. Years afterwards, when his Patna disciples came to his sequestered corner in the Siwaliks namely the city of Bliss, they found him the same charming youth darting mirth and joy all around; his characteristic Patna whoop would often throw all in joyful confusion in which every one forgets himself and rises superior to the world and its worries.

The Spiritual magnet attracts spiritual needles.

When he was six years old, the party moved towards Anandpur stopping at Lakhnaur in the Ambala District where also he became the centre of village life. Pir Araf Din who was held in high esteem by the local people once said his prayer facing eastwards instead of looking towards Mecca, and when

he was asked to explain, he stated how in his ecstatic dreams he was attracted towards this Divine Light which coming from the east in Patna was resident at Lakhnaur. The Pir soon met the Guru and bowed before him and asked his disciples to do the same.

Sayyed Bhikhan Shah another renowned Muslim Faqir also came and met the Guru being somehow attracted towards Him as a gignatic magnet attracts little needles. The Faqir sent for two little pitchers and placed them before the Guru; the Guru sent for a third and having first placed a hand on each, then covered the third with both hands. This brought tears of joy to the Faqir who explained to his followers that his test showed to him that a unique leader of mankind had been born. For by covering the pitchers, he had shown that Hindus and Mohamuedans would be equally dear to him, but that he would bring into being a new dispensation where every one could live and move as a free man. These and other incidents in which religious leaders of advanced old age flocked to a boy who was hardly able to talk, show that there

was something inborn in him which made him at once a dynamo of spiritual life, which dynamo was destined to become a centre of New life in India. Some such fascination irresistibly drew the wizards of the East towards Palestine where Jesus lay in the corn-bin, and we find the same phenomenon repeated whenever and wherever a spiritual prodigy is born. Here was then an extraordinary little child, the only son of the Guru, destined to become the tenth and the last of the Sikh Gurus.

When he started towards Anandpur, the whole of the city poured out in thousands to meet him and receive him. His education began here which included thorough study of the sacred book, besides proficiency in Sanskrit and Persian. Although the Guru became well versed in all of these languages, yet the Patna dialect which he learnt first in his life left a life-long impress on him, and his sacred compositions were hence couched more in Brij-Basha than in Punjabi.

Deputation of
Kashmiri Pan-
dits and Martyr-
dom of Guru
Tegh Bahadur

The Guru was hardly nine years old when a deputation of distressed Kashmiri Pandits sought shelter at the feet of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The policy of religious persecution which Aurangzeb pursued had converted practically the whole of Kashmir, and now only a little colony of Brahmins remained who came to the Guru to help them or else they were also bound to be wiped out from existence. The tale of woe related by them brought tears to the eye of everyone who heard it; it was clear that some drastic action was required. The Guru heard it all and felt more meditative than ever before. The little child sitting at the feet of his father and Master was all eyes and all ears, he felt what was passing in the mind of his father and was engrossing his attention: "What is it, dear father, which is enshrouding thine holy face in care and gloom?" asked the little son in earnest accents. The father said: "We are up against hard times; the rulers have forgotten their duty to the ruled and are treating them not like men but as wild beasts.

Such a state of brutality cannot be endured any longer. What cannot be mended must be ended. But this requires a sacrifice, the sacrifice of the purest and the whitest soul." The child listened, and then darted out at once "Papa, that is quite true, but who can be holier than your august head." To Guru Teg Bahadur, this talk did not come as a surprise for he did not expect anything less from his only son, but it did come to him as a testimony of the fact that a soul was there equal in depth and height to his own, and that he could now do what was the pressing need of the hour, leaving the future in the hands of the boy who had already shown his mettle and could be expected to discharge the onerous duties of his office as befitting the spiritual leader of the Sikhs. Guru Teg Bahadur repaired to Delhi where he was offered the usual alternative either to accept the ruler's religion or be beheaded. He accepted the latter and this passed away the holiest man of the times. A storm of dust swift over Delhi that night, but little did the Mughal Emperor know that this storm was destined also to carry off the Mughal Empire

which was now withering and before long would be like a dead leaf carried off by a whiff of wind. The Master passed away at Delhi—but He yet lived at Anandpur!

Annadpur, the
City of Bliss.

The matter does not rest there. Men sighed and cried but angels on high revelled in joy. For, they knew that dark clouds are really harbingers of new light and life. It may be that the horizon would remain clouded for sometime, but as surely as the day follows the night, better conditions were bound to prevail. The new sun was now destined to rise at Anandpur, the martyred Guru's quiet retreat at the foot of the Himalayas. The site chosen by the Guru was, indeed, an hermitage beyond the din and turmoil of the busy work-day world. Here, the weary and woe-begone came and sought refuge at the feet of the Master, the sick were healed and nursed, the hungry were fed, the unlettered were imparted instruction in hoary lore. When Guru Gobind Singh assumed the reins of the spiritual suzerainty, he decided to turn Anandpur into a veritable Paradise. Anand-

pur became a university where training was given in religion as well as in arms. The Guru's free kitchen ministered freely to the body while his discourses and his Dewans ministered to the soul of those who flocked to him from all corners of the Punjab. His Durbars were devoted to divine worship and many years were passed in narrating to the people the exploits of their forefathers including Rama and Krishna. The bards who attended the Guru's court, composed and recited poetry and thus the Lord's praise was the chief education of the Guru and those who clustered round him. He had come to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and at Anandpur, the people did feel that they were really in new surroundings, and that they had what they missed in the din and bustle of city life. The Guru was serene and calm like the placid waters of Mansarovar, and his tranquil face rained bliss on one and all. Anandpur became a place for pilgrimage and a congregating centre for the learned and woe-beladen.

Raja Rattan Rai, son of Raja Ram Rai of

Assam whom the Nineth Guru had blessed with this son, came to the Guru at Anandpur and as a token of his gratitude brought many presents including a white-striped elephant which waved a fan or *chauri* over the Guru, held a jug of water in his trunk while the Guru's feet were washed, wiped his feet with a towel, fetched his arrows and did many other things which astonished all those who saw the elephant. This elephant soon became an apple of discord for Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur who saw the elephant asked for its loan meaning never to return the animal. On the Guru's refusal to part with Rattan Rai's gift, Bhim Chand's wrath knew no bounds. Other hill chiefs who were already displeased with the Guru for letting *Sudras* mix with the *Keshtriyas* and bringing them to the same level, also joined Raja Bhim Chand. The discontented *Masands* who were either dispossessed or were not feeling safe under the Guru's vilotage also conspired against the Guru. Thus friction ensued between the Guru and the neighbouring hill Rajas, and as it had become necessary to do something in

self-defence, hence the Guru selected a beautiful spot on the banks of the Jamna and erected there a fortress called Paunta.

The battle of Bhangani. The hill chiefs of Kangra, under the leadership of Bhim Chand, marched on the Guru and a fierce battle ensued at the village Bhangani, close to Paunta. The Guru's army consisted of local cattle-grasers, confectioners, cobblers etc., besides a few mercenaries who were Pathans. While the latter deserted the field, the Sikh soldiery did wonders killing many a hill chief. Sayyed Budhu Shah who was an ardent admirer of the Guru himself joined the conflict and two of his sons fell on the field never to rise again. The victory of the Guru was complete, the hill chiefs who tested the Master's steel at Bhangani did not dare to molest him in open warfare any longer. The Guru's army, drunk with victory was enraged, at the treachery of erstwhile friend Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar, and sought the Guru's permission to attack him and bring him captive before the Guru. But the Guru did not fight to conquer, he fought only in

self-defence, so he restrained his army and returned without even an inch of territory. After a short stay at Paunta, the Guru's army returned to Anandpur where once more the spiritual atmosphere was restored, and the soldiers doffed their uniforms to till land, to toil, and to imbibe *Nam-dan* at the feet of the Master.

Conflict with the Mughal Ruler: the Siege of Anandpur. The abode of Bliss became as of old a centre of good-will and peace. Messengers went out in all directions with the message of the Guru and the popularity of the town increased. The first to receive this message were, of course, the neighbouring hill chiefs, some of whom became friendly, but many of them who were blinded by deep-rooted prejudices and who could not feel the beauty of mankind coming to its own, looked at him with scorn and scoffed at him. Thus, two cross currents were set up at Anandpur. On the one hand, there was peaceful Movement which brought equality and fraternity among the masses, turning Anandpur into veritable land of bliss. On the other, hand, the ani-

mosity of the Hill-Cains was aroused, as they could not brook the idea of seeing their brothers attain their full manhood. The fight at Bhangari had driven the current of animosity underground and when other alternatives failed, the hill chiefs went and sought the aid of Emperor Arungzeb to oust the Guru from his citadel. The emperor who was watching the little Guru ever since his father was beheaded, was only too anxious to snatch at the opportunity of nipping the Khalsa commonwealth in the bud. His reporter had already informed him how on the eventful day of Baisakhi Samet 1756 (1699 A. D.), the great Guru had selected his five lieutenants *Panj Piyare* who had gone through the ordeal of blood, and no less than 20,000 people stood up in that gathering and promised to lay down their life in the fulfilment of his divine mission, and the number had since swelled to 80,000 and was ever on the increase. Aurangzeb was at that time in the Deccan. He ordered his Viceroys of Sarhind and Lahore to march at once against the Guru which they did besieging Annandpur in 1701 A. D. The

Sikhs fought with dauntless courage, verified by the unflattering flame of *Nam*, but the odds were quite disproportionate, for a small colony of resident Sikhs was surrounded by bees of Mughal disciplined forces including hill chiefs of Kangra, Nurpur, Chamba etc. Nothing daunted, the battle continued. Hunger, death and disease worked havoc in the colony, yet this dismayed not the Guru when force failed. The unscrupulous foe then took a treacherous vow and promised on Kuran and cow to give the Guru safe conduct, provided he evacuated the Anandpur fort. This vow had its desired effect.

The first of
Mugh: the forty
deserters.

Mata Gujri, mother of Guru Gobind Singh, who felt for the sufferings of the famished garrison told her son: "My son, leave the fort and save your people. The Mughals have promised not to molest us, and it is no good courting sure death." The Guru, however, knew better for oaths on holy books can as well be made and un-made by unscrupulous enemies. Taking the eve from the mother, some of the wavering Sikhs also came forward and said:

“We are dying of hunger, O True King, let us go.” The Guru told them it was not safe to leave Anandpur and to be at the mercy of the Mughal forces. He asked them to wait for a week more in which time he hoped, the machinations of the enemy would themselves become clear. But even this little period was too much for them and forty out of the thinned ranks decided to desert the Guru, so they went and informed him accordingly. The Guru told them to do what they liked if they would not abide by the command of the Master, but in that case he demanded from them a written declaration that they were no longer his Sikhs. The forty were determined to do anything to save their life, so after a little pause and searching of heart, they went and handed over the desired paper to him saying: “Take it. You are not our Guru and we are not your Sikhs.” As he extended his arm to receive the paper, his lofty plume waved in the air and rubbed against the rich trapping overhead, for the Guru jumped to receive the paper. ‘Go ye then, and do what ye like’ said he, folding and pulling the paper in his

vest pocket. They had been away from their hearts and homes for long and now they expected a hearty welcome from their families. But their families had already known of their infidelity, as the news of their desertion ran like into fire. Headed by mother Bhago, their sisters, mothers and daughters came and met the party at a distance from the village. Lady Bhago who was dressed in male costume addressed them and said "O cowards, ye have turned traitors at the time of dire necessity. Ye are not men but women, comè sit at home cook and spin, we will go and fight in your stead." The telling words of mother Bhago brought them to their self again, and shame faced they returned to the battle-field once more. They wanted to seek forgiveness for their desertion, but how could they face him with guilty conscience. So they decided to die for him and to wring forgiveness by their sacrifice. The Forty now set out in search for him as charged men.

Muktsar and the forty immortal. The Guru had left Anandpur by that time and had reached Khidrana, after many wanderings and when he

was there, he was informed that the enemy was coming towards him. The Guru mounted up his blue steed, took up his bow and arrows and went up a sand hill from where he watched the enemy. But, the enemy instead of marching on the Guru had first to fight the forty Sikhs who had just returned and were now encamped near a little pond. Wazir Khan, the Commander of the Royal force, saw the encampment from a distance and attacked the same, but, in return, they were greeted with ceaseless volleys of arrows and bullets shot by the forty. Although the odds were over-whelming, the forty decided to fight valiantly. The ground was littered with mutilated heads, arms and limbs. The intrepidity of these struck terror in the heart of mercenary soldiers of the Mughal army. Wazir Khan called a council of war. Kapura, a Government agent informed them that no water was available in vicinity and it was not advisable to risk life here, for the exact number of the Khalsa was not known. So Wazir Khan ordered retreat. The Guru had watched the whole scene with his own eyes, he had

seen the Khalsa fight and die with their faces towards the enemy. He knew who they were so he rushed towards them on his blue steed. He found all the Forty there, on the ground, breathless or on the point of death. He began to search them one by one, from amongst the dead. He took each individual head in his lap, wiped it and kissed it. He came across one who was yet breathing, albeit heavily, recognising him, the Master said: "Mohan Singh, my son, is it you, look unto me." The martyr at once recognised his Master, but his eyes were downcast, because the scene at Anandpur still rankled in his eyes. When he saw the kindly Master, a stream of tears trickled in his eyes, his cheeks flushed and he tried in vain to move his mutilated body to touch the Master's feet. The Master said: "Mohan Singh, you have conquered me. I am pleased with your devotion. It is never too late to mend." Mohan Singh mumbled: "Master, we are sinners, we deserted you at the time of dire necessity forgive us, save us, tear that scraf of paper we handed over to you on that eventful, and embrace the forty more."

The Master did what he was asked to do, and he took out that ray which he treasured in his vest pocket, and tore it: the *Be-dawa*. The forty were thus saved, they became Immortal *Mukte*, and the gory ground which they beautified with their blood is now known as *Muktsar*. The Tank was rebuilt and is known as the Tank of Salvation. The Master said: "Those who bathe in it on the 1st of Magh, shall be re-born ever as Muktas of old." The episode of Muktsar is a silver lining to the dark cloud which enveloped the Sikhs at Anandpur and which dogged them in all their wanderings in the sandy plains and dunes of the Malwa. Mother Bhago is the *Arundhati* of Sikh history, faithful, loyal and brave such as no earth-born ever was.

Siege of
Anandpur
(Continued.)

Anandpur siege had another silver lining to its dark cloud for the Mughal Commander-in-chief namely Saiyyed Khan who came as an enemy became a friend and disciple of the Guru after personally experiencing the Guru's powers in the field. How this unexpected miracle came to pass in a battlefield is worthy of special mention and

we will refer to it in detail later on describing the Master's magnetic personality. Here, it is enough to state that Anandpur, the city of bliss, did have its charming and magnetic atmosphere which could not but attract and influence even the avowed enemies of the Guru. When the Guru left Anandpur in 1704 A. D. he threw practically all valuables in the river, and it was only the literary treasure and little cash that was taken. The Guru left the City of Peace in bliss for hymns were chanted and the word resounded in the air when the fortress was evacuated. When the besiegers learnt that the Guru had left, they lost no time in chasing them, although they had solemnly promised not to do so. Severe fighting ensued on the banks of the *Sarsa nadi* and in the confusion that followed, the Guru's mother and his two youngest sons escaped with only one attendant namely Gangu. The Guru with his two eldest sons and a little party of Sikhs made towards Ropar. Most of the Manuscripts which were a result of twenty years' prolonged labour were either lost in the affray or washed away by the river and the *Dasam-Granth* which contains the

Guru's word, is but a dwindled part of the gigantic labour of the Guru on the banks of the Jumna and Sutlej.

Siege of
Chamkaur.

Henmed in from front and behind the Guru hurried towards Chamkaur where he occupied the mud-built house of a jat located on an eminence. The enemy surrounded the house and tried to force open the gate. The arrows and bullets of the Guru and his Sikhs, however, did not let them come so near. The missiles of the enemy fell thick like hailstorm on the thinned band of the Khalsa. The Guru was seated on the sand-hill and was darting his gold-headed arrows right and left which worked havoc among the wavering and chicken-hearted hill chiefs. The Khalsas were dying one by one but they knew that there was no ordinary cause. They were fighting practically single-handed against heavy odds because they were fighting the *asures*, and the cup of martyrdom was ready for them. The Guru watched the battle with divine calmness. So his master mind, the whole thing was a melodrame, in which he,

his sons and disciples, one and all, had to play their part and that effectively. So when he found his ranks thinned, he called for his own sons. His eldest son known as *Ajit* or unconquerable, said "Dear father, I cannot be conquered, let me go out first, to join my brothers that have gone before." The Guru knew that to send out his son would be court to sure death, but he asked his younger son Prince Jujhar to follow his brother. The younger one was hardly 14; the Guru dressed his turban with his own hand and gave him a little sword, a mere cutless. Both the princes advanced to measure their steel with heavy odds in front. Ajit performed prodigies of valour; his younger brother had never seen such an odd before. His heart sank under the deafening roar of cannon, and felt a lump rising in his throat and his lips were parched with thirst. He came back to the Guru to beg for a cup of water. But the Guru said: Dear Jujhar go where thy brother Ajit has gone, he has the cup of nectar ready for you which will quench your thirst." The prince did not wait for another hint and flashing his cutless, rush-

ed into the enemy's rank, killing and being killed, blood strickling through his elastic veins and turning the ground purple. The Guru's face was jubilant, and his countenance breathed unearthly satisfaction. Thus ended another memorable day as much famous in Sikh history as the Maghi-day of Muktsar fame.

When the brave boys had shed their blue blood, the remaining Khalsa gathered together and passed a resolution (*Gurmatta*) that the Guru must be saved at all cost, so obeying the *Panth*, the Guruship was entrusted to the Holy word, and Guru Gobind Singh escaped from Chamkaur accompanied by Daya Singh, Dharm Singh and a few others. The Sikhs who remained in the fort put the Guru's plume on the head of Sant Singh so that the Mughal forces thought that the Guru is still at Chamkaur, his head was cut off and taken to Delhi to regale the eyes of the Emperor. But the Guru was yet up and doing, and he was free from the grip of the Mughal hands.

Murder of the
innocent children:
Bhujangi
Khalsa.

The remaining two sons of the Guru namely Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh who barely 9 and 7 respectively fell in the death-trap of Gangu who in order to get hold of the cash with Mother Gujri, handed them over to the Governor of Sirhand, namely Wazir Khan. The usual alternatives of death or acceptance of Islam were offered to them. They remained undaunted and calm and refused to change their religion, on the other hand the loud shout of *Sat Sri Akal* rent the court-room with deafening cry. The Wazir of the Viceroy Suchanand, a Brahmin, told him that these are the progeny of cobra and should be smothered; Nawab of Malerkotla interceded for the innocent children. Ultimately they were bricked alive when their blood, flesh and bones were utilized in place of concrete and mortar. This was on 13th Poh Sambat 1762 (1705 A. D.), another red-letter day in the history of the Sikhs. The dauntless mien of the Guru's sons has since given another meaning to the word *Bhujangi*: 'cobra's progeny,' for it is now used in reverent terms

for all young-Sikhs, who are expected to come up to the standard of Fateh Singh and Zorawar Singh. Forster, an English historian has well said, that Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sarhind "sullied the reputation he had acquired in this service (that of persecuting the Guru) by putting to death, in cold blood, the two younger sons of Govind Singh." The Guru's mother when she heard this terrible news died of a broken heart. Thus all the four children, his father and mother were sacrificed by the Guru at the altar of Indian liberty.

The Guru heard this astounding news when he was in company of Rai Kalha, near Machhiwara, and although the latter wept tears of blood, yet the Guru sat unmoved, unruffled for he was above all mundane shocks. But at that time the cosmic impulse arose in him and involuntarily he took hold of his poniard and with its tip dug the root of a shrub that grew nearby. When Rai Kalha asked him the meaning of this spontaneous gesture, he said firmly: "My sons still live, they live in the would-be Khalsa

Commonwealth which will rise on the ashes of the Mughal Empire which is uprooted today, even as that little shrub is uprooted by my poniard." This was a great prophetic foreboding, and the fall of Mughal Empire may be said to synchronise from the day when the cold-blooded murder of innocent children took place. It is the blackest spot in the Mughal history, darker than Black Hole or Jallianwala episodes in Indian history left.

The epistle of victory: *Zafarnama*. One should have expected that the Guru should have felt most distressed at about this time of his life, for by now he had lost his four sons, the forty were gone, hundred and thousands of his followers were gone, his father and mother were no more, his wife was weaned from him, and from her children for all time, but it was at this time 1706 A. D. that he wrote from a village known as Dina his celebrated epistle: *Zafarnama* which literally means: the *Epistle of victory*, not of defeat. This is very characteristic of the Saint-General every line is pregnant with life and righteous indignation and the Guru tells

Aurangzeb that far from his being a follower of the Prophet, Aurangzeb was one of the foremost melingners of Mohammed, for he did not understand the A. B. C. of Religion. The Guru was not an idol-worshipper, he aimed at removing untouchability and bringing India back to its pristone glory. In this work, he was thwarted by the hill chiefs who conspired and intrigued to bring in the Mughal Emperor. The latter did not understand the move of the Hill Rajas, and gave in. This was not all. He has writtenseveral autograph letters to the Guru in which he took an oath on Qoran that the Guru and his Khalsa would not be molested if they evacuated Anandpur, and yet at Chamkaur and all along the route, the Mughal hordes had done their worst to destroy the Khalsa, they had even beheaded Sant Singh who looked like the Guru. Refering to the murder of his sons, the Guru remarked: "What though my four sons were killed, I remain behind like a coiled snake? What bravery is it to quench a few sparks of life? Thou art merely exciting a raging fire all the more... . As thou didn't forget thy word on that day, so will

God thee." Such is the righteous strain of this epistle that even the stone-hearted Aurangzeb could not but be moved. As to what effect it had on Aurangzeb will be discussed in detail separately, here it is enough to state that these outward reverses had made the Guru all the more resilient, all the more steeled to his iron resolve *i. e.* to win the cause of righteousness. He wrote in Vichitra Natak, that the greater the apparent reverse; the greater the righteous recoil (ਜਬਈ ਬਾਣ ਲਾਰੈ ਤਬਈ ਰੋਸ ਜਾਰੈ), and the celebrated epistle that he wrote in rhymed Persian is a true index of the greatness of the Guru. Mark Napoleon in a sequestered cell at St. Helena, he feels despondent; care-worn, bent on committing suicide, on the other hand, the Guru writes the Epistle of Victory on the day when his outward fortune is at lowest ebb—he is most himself when he is bent surrounded by the world!

Damdama or breathing place, and dictation of the *Ad-Granth*.

The Guru moved on from Dina to Kot Kapura, Dhilwan and while en-route witnessed

the battle of Muktsar which was fought by the Forty on their return from home, then stopped for sometime in the *Lakhi Jungle*, so called as the Nam-nectar had transformed the sun-burnt sandy-hills of Malwa into a veritable garden of Aden. Here, many of his followers: the saint-soldiers reclustered round him. Ibrahim, a Mohammedan saint who had passed many years in austerities in this scorching plain, came to the Guru, sat at his feet, and became a full-fledged Khalsa, re-named Ajmer Singh. How did this miracle come to pass deserves detailed mention and we will refer to it later. Suffice it to say, that whenever the Guru had little breathing time, the Nam-congregations were held, religious discourses were delivered, *Asa-di-War* was sung in the morning as a matter of routine, and the Anandpur blissful atmosphere was reproduced here, there and everywhere in Majha, Malwa and as we shall see at Nander. That was the Nectar which sustained the Sikhs, which stirred them with life anew, and which made no difference to them whether they lived or died, provided they were true to

the cause that was so dear to them and of which the Guru was the very head and heart. In the Lakhi Jungle, the poets and songsters sat on the sand-hills and under the scorching rays of the sun, sang of the cool atmosphere which *Nam* brings ; they sang *papia*—like of the Kingdom of Heaven that is our birth-right, if only we could apply ourselves to it. How pleased, moved and stirred were the disciples on seeing their Master would be evident from the following soul-stirring effusion of the Master which flowed out of his lips like water coming out of gargoyle :

“When they heard the call of the Beloved Master, even the buffaloes let drop the half-chewn grass from their mouths, and lifted in hurry their half-slaked lips from the pool ;

None lingered to wait for the other ; each came running all alone, such was the over-powering force of the fascination which overcame their heart ;

The period of fascination was over ; the Friend, the Master re-met and caressed them ; then they were relieved, comforted and great

was their rejoicing when they thanked their Lord."

This *khayal* of the Guru should be read in conjunction with another in which the pangs of the Disciples on their separation from their Beloved as described by the Guru himself thus:

"Convey unto our Beloved, the woeful tale of his disciple :

Without Thee the luxury of soft beds and of the sweet rest is galling and excruciating like a disease ;

Life in a palace is like living among adders— if Thou art away ;

The goblet of wine is like unto a cross,

The wine cup is like a sharp poniard—if Thou art away ;

Yea, without Thee, these articles of comfort choke us, kill us even as a butcher's knife ;

A pallet made of turf and straw is dearer than a silk bed, if Thou art here,

Or else the palace burneth like hell fire—O, if Thou art away."

These two spontaneous out-pourings of love-stricken heart show that the tie which

united the Guru and his disciples was not that of money, nor that of any other worldly inducement, it was that of love, sacrifice, and a love all, the yearning of re-union with the Infinite. The way to heaven was always strewn with thorns. The way to new life lay through the cross. The saint-soldiers of the Guru were after this new life, bumper life which lives through life and death, through grave; yea, they were after life-eternal, hence it did not matter to them as to who fell, how many fell, for one and all did live—they lived the life-eternal which defies death, and which is the very essence of Nam-life.

From Lakhi Jungle, the other resting place was a place known as Talwandi Sabo where the Master's tent was pitched on a little mound. The Master rested here much longer, and the Anandpur atmosphere was reproduced in right earnest. Here the Guru's wife remet him and asked him "where are my Four." Pointing to hundreds and thousands of Saint-soldiers who were congregated in that big *maidan*, the Guru said: "For these, my sons, I have sacrificed the Four, what if

they are gone, hundred and thousands do live. The Four are not dead; they live and play in the lap of the Father in Heaven." Such was the fascinating atmosphere of Talwandi, that the Guru called it *Kashi* of the Sikhs, the Beneres, for here poets, philosophers and mystics had flocked in hundreds to the feet of the Master. The Guru also dictated here the Ad. Granth from his memory, as Kartarpur Custodians of the Sacred Book refused to part with their copy. The new *Bir*, comprised the *Bani* of Guru Teg Bahadur, as also one *slok* of the Tenth Guru. But that *slok* is worthy of special mention in as much as, it shows how the spirit of the Epistle of victory pervades the whole of his Bani. Guru Teg Bahadur had written :

- i. "The friends and well-wishers desert us in the end, no one sticks to the last;
O Nanak, the supreme one alone is the last pillar of support in such calamity" (55)
- ii. Strength vanishes, fetters fall in our feet,
there is no remedy;
O Nanak, in this dire calamity, the Supreme One comes to our aid even as He befriend-

ed the elephant when caught by the tortoise." (53)

Guru Gobind Singh interposed his own *shlok* in between which is as follows:—

"I have all the needful power, fetters fall off my feet, there is a remedy to every melody;

O Nanak, all is in the hands of the Supreme One, who is my Friend and Supporter." (54)

This *Shlok* is a eve to the whole *Bani* of the Tenth Guru, in which he expresses supreme faith in himself, in his mission and in his final victory. The place where the Guru Granth was re-written is known as *Dam-dama* or the resting place.

Dalla and Sikh
bravery: An
example typical
of Sikh attitude.

While at Dandama, another scene occurred which deserves special attention as it brings out the devoted attitude of the Sikhs and their bravery in such a way as cannot be illustrated better otherwise. Dalla was a chief of Dandama and he was Moslem by faith, but

he was friendly to the Guru. Dalla had heard of the Lord's privations, how he had lost his sons and narrowly escaped himself through the fidelity of a few faithful friends. Dalla touched the feet of the Master and said: "I am really sorry my Lord, you did not inform me, your servant. I keep always a company of no war veterans, who wield sword with rare dexterity and whose presence spreads panic in the ranks of the enemy." Thus Dalla was proceeding with his speech and pro-offer when a visitor entered and resting his head on Master's feet presented him a gun which he had made himself having spent love-labour at it for many days and nights. The Guru accepted the offer and addressing Dalla said, "Dalla, here is a chance, bring me one of your men, I want to try it." Dalla was confounded and mumbled: 'Lord, should human beings be used as targets, who would like to die for nothing' Dalla repaired to his camp and in order to prove his bravado which he had just uttered, tried to persuade one of his followers to come. Dalla's proposition was met with a storm of opposition in his own

ranks, and he returned to the Lord's presence with a drooping head. The Guru understood the meaning of that gesture and said to one of his attendants "Go in my camp and tell them I want one to try my new gun." The orders were conveyed. It erected a storm of confusion, all was hurly burly and about a dozen disciples reached the Guru's presence, some bare-footed, others yet binding their turban. The Guru selected one who came foremost: "Come out, you appear to be very fond of dying, stand here." The disciple stood, firm like a pillar, with his breast upheaved, ready to receive the bullet. The Guru raised the gun and was about to move the trigger when another who had just bound his turban, rushed forward with folded hands and said: "Sir, I request a little favour." He said: "The target for your aim is my real brother. Had he been singled out for a jagir by his father or any other grant, half of the property would naturally descend to me, but now that you are conferring on him the cup of immortality, I claim half of it." It amused the Lord and he said: "I grant it, come stand

behind your brother, so that my bullet may deal with you both squarely, but take care that the bullet does not miss you." Both stood straight, one behind the other, over anxious to receive the shot. The Lord shouldered the gun, aimed it at them and 'click' went off the gun, but the Lord took pretty good care to pass the bullet over their heads. The Sikhs did not swerve an hair-breadth. Dalla saw the whole scene with his eyes, he was amazed, moved and changed. He longed to be one of the sikhs, a moth who would burn on the Guru's flame. He was baptized and known as Dalla Singh. The Guru told him: "your men will now have enough of exercise, but you must do what the wrestling-brothers had taught." The words had electric effect for when Banda Bahadur came to Punjab, these new-born Sikhs did prove their mettle and their worth. Thus love-conquests were made, and new disciples picked up here, there and everywhere. Hundreds and thousands flocked to his standard, wherever he was. According to Trumplt, at Dandama alone, 1,20,000 disciples joined the

Guru.

Deccan life of the Guru. Soon after the receipt of *Zafarnama*, Aurangzeb passed away. He died in February, 1707. Bahadur Shah was then away in Afghanistan, and his younger brother, Mohammed Azim, who was with his father in Deccan, usurped the throne and took possession of the treasury. Thus Bahadur Shah who was rightful heir, was placed in the same position in which Dara Shikoh was placed by Aurangzeb. But Bahadur Shah had a strong link with Guru Gobind Singh in that his once Correspondence Secretary, namely Nand Lal, was now in the Guru's Durbar, where he wielded an influential opinion. So when the war of succession arose, Bahadur Shah approached the Guru through Nand Lal. He promised to undo all what his father had done, he promised to punish the Governor of Sirhand, he wanted to make full atonement for the wrongs of his father. Bahadur Shah knew full well that Guru Gobind Singh alone held the key to the situation for he was no ordinary man but '*Hind ka Pir*' all-India leader, above all

spiritual leader, *par excellence*. The Guru whose religion recognised no difference between a Hindu and Mohammedan, and who was always ready to help the aggrieved, met Bahadur Shah at Agra where the Emperor gave him a robe of honour and solemnly promised to carry out all the promises which he made and communicated through Bhai Nand Lal. The Guru and the Emperor remained together for some-time, and then they travelled together to the south through Rajputana, reaching Nander in Hyderabad Deccan where Bahadur Shah was able to get what he wanted *i. e.* the Mughal throne. The Guru had promised to get back the throne which he did for his friend and ally. But he would not be a farther party to the subjugation of Hindu India, hence the two parted company at Nander where the Guru began to preach the Word once more, and hundreds of men flocked to his standard to hear what the Master said, to be thrilled and to be electrified. Thus, Anandpur was reproduced once more on the banks of the Godavri, and even as that hallowed site was known as 'Citadel of

Peace' so this new town full of new life was re-named as Abchal-Nagar, the city Eternal. Day after day, the Guru held Nam-gathering baptized people, initiated them into his creed. The Mughal Emperor knew all this. He had promised to punish the Governors of Sirhand, to undo what his father did to the Khalsa Community at large: he could not carry out his promises, weak as he was, although he was named as 'the brave.' When a professedly brave man is coward at heart, then he becomes treacherous also, so in order to smother the still-born Voice which waxed eloquent again and again in his heart, he arranged to get the Guru murdered by a 'hired Pathan.' This diabolical deed occurred on the fifth of bright half of Katik, Sambat 1765 (A.D 1708) a year after his sojourn in that Eternal city of the South. The Guru had done good turn to the Mughal, but he was as much a traitor as Aurangzeb, although to keep appearances, he sent a doctor to dress the wound of the Guru. The wound heeled, but was re-opened when the Guru stretched his bow. Before He passed away, He held a Durbar, in which His

last words were as follows:—

“The *Panth*: the Khalsa is the corporate Guru, under the enternal guidance of the im-personal Guru: *Granth Sahib*. If ye follow that Divine Master, ye will never go astray. My blessings to ye all !”

The Master passed away—He is yet with us in the mystic Body of the *Guru-Granth*!

GURU GOBIND SINGH AS POET, PATRIOT & PROPHET.

As Poet. Every true seer is a poet for he hears the Music Divine which made the universe, and which is the eternal immaterial support of material world. All true *rishis* are thus psalmists, singers, poets who know Reality first-hand, and transcribe the same in glowing metrical accents. This is particularly true of the House of Guru Nanak of whom no less than seven Gurus were first and foremost divine poets. It is true the poetry of the remaining three has not been transmitted to us, but who knows they may have been as good poets, as the others. At any rate, it is known of Guru Har Gobind ji, that he was a great expert in Music, and all the *Dhuris* which are indicated in the martial songs known as *Vars* were dictated by him. Whether the remaining three Gurus were poets or not, this much at least is patent that they were great musicians and that they used to do Kirtan themselves in Sikh Congregations which were held by them morning and evening. And even to this day, the greatest among the

Sikhs do not talk much, they sing out what they have to say. For, music is the soul of life even as mathematics is the soul of intellect. Guru Gobind Singh was a poet *par excellence* because he was an unearthly singer. No other poetry displays so much variation such startling rhythms, their sudden alternations, accentuation and harmonious blendings as the poetry of Guru Gobind Singh. Here you find his soul-stirring *Swayyas*, alternating with half-prose *Kabits*, there you find the classical concise *Dohras* strung on to half a dozen varieties of *Chhands* which sparkle, ripple and then crackle into two-worded or even-worded *Chhands* which are like so many bright meteors shot out from the aesthetic heavens. There is endless variety of rhythms and words, and in one and the same compositions serried rays of words march out in kaliedoscopic orientations, and one feels enchanted, moved, carried off one's feet, for such is the irresistible fascination of the Guru's pregnant words.

Above all, the Guru is arch expert in writing martial poetry of which his *Risawal Chhands* and *Vars* e. g, the *Chandi-di-Var* are

best illustrations. Here you find explosive words in small units shot out at terrible speed, and the reader of the poetry feels transported for once to the battle-field where drums are beating, the cannons bellowing and banners flying. A great French writer said 'Give me martial lyrics and I will give you nation, and this is true for all time. No nation can live until it has soul-stirring poetry to feed the springs of heart. Guru Gobind Singh realised the great need of India and like a divine physician supplied the need. He knew that the Indians have any number of epics such as Ramyana and Mahabhartha, but the language in which they were written was either dead and forgotten, or if it was intellegible in its translations, the metres chosen were so dull, prosaic and cooling, that the effect produced on the reader was quite the reverse of what was intended. Imagine a man reading the exploits of Rama in Lanka, or those of Yudhistra and Krishna at Kurushetra, and instead of the reader being stirred on to activity, he finds himself somnolent, Arjan like averse to wielding arms--Is this not, in itself,

an irony of Indian art, for the reader instead of taking the lesson to heart, loving and liking the battle-field, finds himself averse to the battle-field. Such was the tragedy of Indian literary art; it had sunk into the slough of despond; even martial epics were written by un-martial and *Ahinsa*—loving writers. Thus the Kashtriya mentality was discounted, and even warriors like Rama and Krishna were portrayed as etiolated, non-violent, hermit-like men who fought only in the story, not in actual life. What could be worse, the literary art had touched the nadir. That was one reason, the most important reason why India, the home of Rajputs and the Khalsas, had become a prey to the recurring raids of foreigners who invaded it from north, and from south, from the hilly defiles and from the outspread ocean. The mentality of India had to be changed outright. How could that be done? It meant re-writing of the old Indian epics of which the most important one's were: *Ramayana*, (1698 A. D.) *Mahabharata* and the *Devi (Chandi) Chritra*. Secondly, a common language had to be found or created in which these

epics could be re-written, so that India, as a whole, could read it, be thrilled and moved together. What could be better language or dialect for this purpose than *Brij-Basha* which combined sweetness with the glory of ancient Sanskrit, and which dialect was chosen later on even by the Mughal Emperor: 'Zafar' to express his inborn sentiments. Thus the choice was made and the work started.

The task was tremendous. It could not be done single-handed and yet it had to be done. The Guru engaged no less than 52* bands or poets who helped him in his task, which was Herculean, as it had to suit the requirements of 33 crores of Indians. Although the above band of bards helped him, prepared for him rough translations for approval, yet the final rendering was entirely that of the Guru, who changed, corrected and

* Of these, the poetry of Bhai Nand Lal has been preserved to us intact. He quitted the Mughal Court and having set at the feet of the Master, drank Nectar of life. The persian composition *Zindgi-Nama* is his masterpiece. The Guru used to call him 'Nand-Lalla': Prince of Joy Re: his conversion see No. 19 Part II.

Saina Pati another poet wrote *Gur St.bha* giving important events of the Guru's life.

altered the drafts so fundamentally, as to fall in entirely with the lines laid down in his own poetry of which the best specimens are the *Jap*, *Akal Ustat*, *Bichitra Natak* (1705 A.D.) *Chandi-di-Var*, and the *Swayyas*. The above epics were translated, re-written and were couched in such a verse that even "a *sufi* or *Bania* read it, he is likely to be changed, electrified into new life." Such was the change which the Guru intended to engender in the Indian.

The *Dasam Granth* which contains this poetry is but a fractional part of his labour, for many of his compositions were washed down in the *Sarsa Nadi* while evacuating Anandpur. It took no less than 20 years to write, re-write and re-cast the old literature, and to add new poetry to it. The *Dasam Granth*, as it stands, was brought into cover by Bhai Mani Singh, but the compositions it contains, are either wholly of the Guru, or so fundamentally altered by him that we may take them to be as good as that of the Guru. It contains account of 24 Avtaras, particularly that of Rāma and Krishna, the *Shastra-Mala* which

is an enlogy of arms and the rosary of their names, *Zafar Nama* (1706 A. D.) or the celebrated Persian Epistle of Victory, the *Sri-Mukh-Bani* which is wholly the Guru's own composition such as the *Jap*, *Akal Ustat*, *Bichitra Natak*, the latter being autobiography of the Guru in splendid verse. Pieces like *Gyan Parbodh* show that they are parts only which had to be completed, but which were never completed owing to the pre-occupations of the Guru with war. At the end is a long collection of stories *Turya-Churitra* which bring out the female sex in its true bewitching colours cautioning the reader to be ever on his guard against the Eve and the Serpent who is her mentor. The pieces which comprise translations of old classical stories are also interspersed with personal touches. For instance, it is related in one of the *Turya Charitras* as to how he himself was entangled by the Eve, and how he escaped unhurt. The Gnrue's solemn advice to the Eve is reproduced elsewhere in His word. In the *Krishna* and *Rama* Chritras, he makes it clear that these *Avtars* are not his *Isht* whom he worships for

he worshipped only the Supreme One: *Akal Purakh*, but they are there as the Indian masses had to be tutored along those stereotyped lines. So the personal remarks which he makes in these sketches may well be reproduced:—

“I do not propitiate Ganesh, as others of in the beginning,
I do not meditate on Krishna or Vishnu
I have heard of them but acknowledge them not,
It is only the Supreme One’s feet that I adore.”

In *Ram Avtar*, he says:—

“O Lord! since I have taken shelter at Thy feet,
I have paid no heed to any one else,
Rama and Rahim, the Puran and Quran expound
different names and doctrines, but I accept
them not;
O Supreme One! all that I have written or
spoken is by Thy favour only.”

In the *Krishna Avtar*, he says that I am not so-called somnolent Brahman, I am a true Kashtriya who must belete and die, for that is the true Dharma of a righteous warrior.

In the *Vichitrā Natak*, he makes it clear

how the Supreme One had ordained and sent Him to spread righteousness on earth, as the the Supreme One's own Son : —

“Saith the Supreme :

“I instal and cherish thee as my own Son,
I send thee to form and spread New Faith,
Go and spread it, the Law of Righteousness,
Restrain people from senseless acts.”

This was his God-given mission and his whole life is one continuous record of struggle, sacrifice and ultimate triumph.

The *Chandi Chritra* was translated with the same aspect of the Supreme One, called *Shakti*, which was worshipped. The Guru made it clear at the end that he had no other object in translating this than that of rousing the masses to true martial glory. In his *Akal Ustat* and other writings, he makes abundantly clear that *Bhagauti* is the executive-energy of the Supreme One and that it is *Nam*, which is the heart and soul of Sikhism, but this cannot be attained by propitiating so-called *Devis*, but by purity and by *Simran*. Hence, the insinuation that the Guru worship-

ped Naina-Devi or any other Devi, and that *Hom* was held for the purpose, if an entric travesty of the Sikh history, it is undiluted blasphemy manufactured by avowed enemies or ignorant friends of Sikh religion who in their zeal to draw the Khalsa back to the old stagment faith, manufactured stories which are altogether repugnent to the *Bani* of the Guru, and the essence of the Sikh faith. As the matter is discussed at full length in the Gurmukhi portion of the book, hence, it need not be referred to any further here. Suffice it say, that the Guru never worshipped any *Devi*, *Ram*, *Krishna*, *Vishna*, or for that mattar any *avtara*, he worshipped only the *Akal Purakh* whose unimitable and thrilling description is given in *Akal Ustat*.

The battle scenes portrayed by the Guru are photographic and cinematographic descriptions of Reality; the usual scene is that of asuras fighting the *Devtas*, but there are infinite variations, Coup d' Etats, counteractions and in the end victory of the righteousness. The usual mythical heroes are retained, but one can see through the trans-

parent descriptions that '*Hiran-aksh*' means an asura with his eye angled (*Hiran*), *Dhumar-nain* means smoke-eyed asura, *Nis-umbh* means ignorance born of darkness (*Nis*), and so on. In other words, the war is between devilish attributes and heavenly attributes and not between historical figures. If this is understood, half of the endless and useless discussion as to *Devi* and its worship is automatically wiped out. Readers who want further light in this connection are invited to read the vernacular portion of the book which discusses the subject from the fundamental stand-point of *Nam*, which is the final arbiter of most points.

While a considerable part of the Guru's poetry is devoted to martial lyrics, yet hymnal lyrics are not missing. These are collected together in the *Ramkali Rag* and come somewhere half way in the *Dasam Granth*.

The special characteristics of his poetry may be summed up thus: surcharged emotion, volcanic force, sweet cadence, sudden change or alteration in rhythm, perfect blending and

euphonious assortments of words by alliteration or otherwise, devotional zeal, and above all spiritual fervour. The reader is all the time held spelt-bound, nerve-strung, and is ever at tip-toe of new enthusiasm. Extraordinary flow, high emotion and martial valour are strung together in the most copious vocabulary which combines Brij Basha, Punjabi and Persian in a consummate synthesis, and the result is the most inspiring, the most vitalising, the most military poetry ever written. Guru Gobind Singh's poetry is a true mirror of his dynamic personality, and there is, no doubt, that he succeeded immensely.

As a Prophet and Creator of Khalsa Commonwealth. But poetry is one string to bow, he is not only a poet but a prophet. His prophetic vision is a much more important part of him than even the poet-in-him, although the two go together and one cannot see them apart. In the *Bachitra Natak*, he makes it abundantly clear that he is the 'Messenger of God,' 'God's own Son' came to uproot evil and to establish righteousness on earth. He need not argue

like philosophers as to what is evil and Ahriman—the evil is there, and it has to be rooted out. He has to battle against it as a hero—hero in battle-field as he fought against Mughal forces, hero at home when he quieted his wife at the loss of Four, hero at a son when he sent his father to Delhi to be sacrificed, hero in art, literature, poetry, hero at every moment of his life. But the most important and the most enduring result of his heroic vision was the holding of the Durbar in which the *Khalsa* was selected and crystallised for the first time. This was on the first of Baisakh Sambat 1756 (1699 A. D.) when a great gathering was held at Kesgarh near Anandpur. In the vantage ground of the Guru's stronghold, a big tent was pitched, and outside it thousands of ardent devotees sat around in an out-stretched semi-circle. The Guru harangued them and told them that new duties would soon devolve on their shoulders, as they had been mere spectators and hearers so far, but they would be required to be *doers* before long. At the end of the speech, the Guru drew out his sword and said: "Is there

any one who would volunteer his head for the sake of religion and the cause that is dear to one heart *i. e.* righteousness." This sudden gesture and significant call produced consternation and at first a little wavering among the ranks, but lo! there stood up one solitary soul (Daya Ram Khatri of Lahore) who offered to lay down his head at the bidding of the Master. The Guru took him into his tent, there was a down-rush of a stream of warm blood, and the Guru came out once more from the closed tent, with his sword dripping the blood. Blood seemed to stream out of the Guru that day, and he asked for another head! Nothing daunted, another volunteered (Dharm Das of Delhi), and still another (Mukhan Chand of Dwarka, Sahib Chand of Bidar, Himmatt Rai of Juggnath), until five Dear Ones were chosen and taken into the same hidden enclosure. At each entry of new soul, the same stream of warm blood rushed out, and there was genuine consternation all round, but lo! when the Guru lifted the curtains, all the Five Dear Ones—*Panj Piycere* as they were called—

were there alive, attired in deathless robes of *Akalis*, and at their feet were the five heads of sheep that were served to give the Five Chosen Ones a blood bath as it were. The Guru baptised them with Sacred Water, the *Amrit* stirred with two-edged sword: *Khanda* which had been sweetened at the right time, by his spiritual-‘wife’ * Mata Sahib Kaur, the mother of the Khalsa. Before it was all over, he sat at the feet of his disciples and asked them to baptise the Guru with the self-same water ! Thus the great Guru stood before the Chosen Ones as their disciple, and so it has been well said:—

“Hurrah for the Guru ! He is both the Guru and the disciple !”

The Guru then addressed the whole assembly thus :—

‘My dear Sikhs ! Be of good cheer. Ye have responded and responded well. When

The Guru had but one wife namely Mata Jito who was re-named Mother Sundri (the beautiful) on her marriage.

The mother of the Khalsa was Sahib Devan who was a virgin—very much like a vestal virgin—dedicated to the cause of religion and who imbibed spiritual lessons only from the Master even as Miranbai does now from Mahatma Gandhi.

Those who take it otherwise are mis-informed.

Guru Nanak tested his followers, only one Sikh—Guru Angad—stood the ordeal successfully, today I find as many as five. This is a matter for sincere gratification for I feel sure that the task begun by me is bound to be completed and righteousness shall prevail. I trust others will follow the example of the Five Chosen Ones and do what they have done. I shall need them before long. Go, borrow not, toil and moil and earn an honest living, speak not falsehood or ill of any one else, covet none. Drink not, smoke not. Give freely, help the poor and suffering. Get up early and repeat *Japji* and act according to the behests of the Guru. Habitually contribute a tithe of your savings to the common kitchen which serve with your own hands.

Observe the *Rahat* that I enunciate today and in which the Chosen Ones shall be first attired. Never shave the holy *Keshas* as they are symbols of our being oriented God-wards—otherwise we are oriented towards the dust. The *Keshas* are the holy woods on which the honeyed-monsoon of *Nam* settles That must be your first token of Sikh faith. Therewith

goes *kangha* which keeps them clean. You must arm yourself with at least a *kirpan* for otherwise you will like unto sheep whom every way-faring wolf and tiger will ever trouble. Be ever armed; live and let live; the keeping of arms is a sure guarantee of peace. Mark the Supreme One, He is himself armed with Death; the Akal keeps eternal company with *kal*. That will then be the third tie between you and me. But in order to wield the sword, you must conserve your manly strength, you must be temperate. Wear *kachha* or breechas, for that will be constant reminder to you of the virtues of continuance and self-control. Above all, never forget the *Akal Purkh*, the Deathless One, the Timeless One; worship Him and worship no other Devi, *Devata*. I will give you a symbol of that Endless Entity: let that be the *Kara*, the endless-circle. Worship Him, worship no idol. Worship iron not the gold, and if you stand fast to these symbols, keep them in spirit, ye shall be ever oriented towards me (*Gur Mukh*) or else ye shall be turned the other way about (*Man Mukh*) My

blessings to ye, one and all. Beware, lest ye forget and go astray.”

The assembly listened with rapt attention, and nodded complete acquiescence. On that day, hundreds were baptised and soon after, the number reached 80,000. This sacred day when the Guru baptised and was himself baptised by the Chosen Ones is the red letter-day in the Sikh history for the foundation of Sikh Cymnonwealth *i. e.* of Sikh Democracy was laid on that day. Those who joined the new faith were known as the *Khalsa* or the Pure. The subsequent history of the *Khalsa* is one long drawn out rehearsal of the Kesgarh Baisakhi, and at every re-hearsal, the *Khalsa* rises fresh, re-born, rejuvenated even as Phoenix of old. No Ironsides, no other followers have been so true to their Masters, as the *Khalsas* were to their Guru. Hence, it is well said that the *Khalsa* is of the Guru, and the Guru is of the *Khalsa*.

In singing the evologies of the *Khalsa*, the Guru has spared no epithet, nor any metaphor, and the praise that he made in the

following telling words was proved by spilling his life-blood. The Guru's remarkable words are as under :—

- “Through the favour of the Khalsa, have I won
victories in battle,
Through the favour of the Khalsa, I could
bestow gifts and charity to the poor ;
Through the favour of the Khalsa, all my
troubles have been averted,
Through the favour of the Khalsa, I am rich
and strong ;
Through the favour of the Khalsa, I acquired
knowledge I have ;
Through the favour of the Khalsa, my enemies
are slain ;
Through the favour of the Khalsa, I am exalted,
otherwise there are crores of poor mortals
like me !

Such was the tribute which the Guru paid to the Khalsa, and the Khalsa, in turn, was ever true and faithful to him, knit up as it was with him with the indissoluble ties of the *Nam*. Little wonder that when the western historians saw this remarkable creation, they were made to confess that the Khalsa came out of the Guru even as *Minerva*

came from the head of Jupiter, meaning thereby an unearthly organic unity, such as can only exist among the mind-born children of the Pure Ones !

^{His Divine}
Word We have thus seen how the Divine Poet was primarily a prophet, a seer, a messenger of God, came to spread the Divine faith, to root out evil, and usher in the kingdom of Heaven or earth. The whole *bani* of the Guru is full of Divine love which recognises no distinctions of Caste, creed or colour. His utterances have cosmic outlook and the following is very typical of his broad-mindedness:—

“The temple and the mosque are the same; the Hindu prayer and the Muslman *Asan* are the same; all men are equal; it is through error that we see them different.

All men have similar eyes, similar ears, similar bodies, similar habits—they are, a compound of earth, air, fire and water.

‘Allah’ and ‘Abekh’ of the Mohammadans and the Hindus means the same Supreme One; the Purans and Qoran point but to the One;

they are one; it is one God who created us all;

As from one fire, millions of sparks arise; though separate to look it, yet they reunite in the fire;

As in one stream, millions of ripples are produced; the waves being made of water, are re-absorbed in water;

So, from God's form, non-sentient and sentient beings are born; they spring from Him, and in the end shall be re-united in Him."

This is as broad an outlook as it is true. If inspite of these utterances, his message is considered one-sided, the fault lies with the reader. The teachings of Guru Gobind Singh breathe the same catholicity, the same purity and universal outlook as that of Guru Nanak. If Guru Gobind Singh condemned false Moslem forms, so did Guru Nanak. As to the sword, it was not taken up against true religion but against its misconception. The Guru made it clear to Aurangzeb, that the Emperor was not a true follower of Islam, for he did not understand the inwardness of the religion. All true religions are one at heart

and the seers or prophets are a spontaneous result of the cosmic impulse which found its latest expression in Guru Gobind Singh. The message that he brought was a unique synthesis of self-abnegation rooted in self-activity, of sword wedded to divine love, of democracy rooted not in un-intelligent socialism but in all-seeing, all-enveloping *Nam*, which is the heart and soul of Sikhism. This Promethean fire had become dull, and Guru Gobind Singh revived it. India, the land of reputed warriors like Rama and Krishna, had forgotten the lesson they instilled into them, so they had fallen, the *Asurus* had invaded and repeatedly desecrated their holy places of worship, led them as beasts of burden, had robbed them of their property, children and their wives. India had become Sick Man of the East; it had to be cured. So Guru Nanak the peaceful had to pass through no less than phases, ten *avatars*, preferring India by prolonged sacrifice, and the last *avtar*, namely Guru Gobind Singh did what was the objective of the first Guru *i. e.* make India stand on its own legs. The Mughal Empire reeled and

at last fell and on its ashes the Khalsa raised a new Commonwealth. The tide of conquest turned westwards and thus in less than a century, the Khalsa proved that they were true sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

GURU GOBIND SINGH THE RISHI.

Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, represents, in himself, quite a climax formation, that is, the culmination of human personality. Standing on earth, he kissed the very heavens. He lived with us, he toiled for us, he laid himself down, his whole family a willing sacrifice at the altar of humanity. Yet, he was as much of the earth as are the azure heavens and the dancing sunlight. He combined in Him rare qualities such as leadership in war as also leadership in the domain of the Spirit; He is a born general yet also a soldier; He is a king on masnad yet the poorest among the poor labouring hard with them; He is a born statesman yet a saint for He knows no guile but is artlessness personified; a law-giver on the pulpit, a champion in the field, born leader of mankind, yet it is as a *Rishi*, the seer, that He shines the most. Ordinarily, we find a leader wedded to but one creed, be it violence or non-violence, be it social service or political service, be it devoted action in war or contemplation in some out-of-the-way place

in the Himalayas or on the banks of the Godavari, yet in Him we find all of these phases coalesced, brought together as in a living *Koh-i-Noor* with its million faces scintillating light in every direction. His many qualities are ranged round Him; in a gorgeous array, even as whorl of ruby-red petals round the lotus, and one knows not as to which series is the most essential or distinctive, for it the outer which is the brightest, while the inner is the very heart of the lotus. So also it is in the case of Guru Gobind Singh: hundred and one colours weaved in one design round him, like the heavenly rainbow, which is his outer garment, yet today we must look into his Inner-Self, the Interior, which sheds radium-like lusture for it is this light which is then refracted and re-arranged to produce the many-hued Bow! We must, therefore, peep down into the inner-self of this great leader of mankind, for there He is One, an exhaustless Treasure of Peace and Bliss, which is also the secret of his action. Who does not know of his endless sacrifices; the sacrifice of his kith and kin, of those who

were dearest and nearest to him, of his revered father and aged mother, of all the four sons, of himself, and of his devoted Sikhs? But how few know of the heart of this great seer who single-handed fought against the Imperial Mughals, who vanquished the strong and helped the poor, who brought about a spiritual revolution in India and left, for all time, his like in the deathless Khalsa, which crystallises all that is good and great, of the Spirit.

It was in my peregrinations in the forests of Dehra Dun that I had got a glimpse of the hidden heart of this great Man who comes once in the millenium. I was encamped in a little field on the banks of the Jamna, near Kalsi, and not knowing of the weird surroundings, I strayed down to the bank of the river where a ferryman picked me up and carried me over to the other bank. The sun had not yet risen, but his winged horses were already on the horizon and the firmament was coloured deep crimson when I took my seat in the ferry. My eyes were fixed on this fiery chariot when already my feet were on a solid pavement which led up by a few steps to an

open court-yard surmounted by a globular building which had been just laved in limpid light wafted by the morning breeze. The ribbed cupola, a prominent feature of this building, was yet wet with dew which darted iridescent light, as if to greet the visitor who was an utter stranger to this enchanted corner of the Himalayas. Fortunately for me, no one was in this building at the time, and I wondered hard in my mind as to what could be this holy building; so sweet yet forlorn, perched in the very midst of a forest, cut off from civilization, quiet corner except for the lullaby of the all too placed Jumna. As there was no one near about, I mused and wondered and drank the charm which possessed the building. I wished in my heart of heart that I would be the luckiest man if this building were mine and I were free to pass the remaining days of my life in this quiet corner, with none else to befriend me except the Jaunty Jumna, and the sun-kissed shrubs. My soliloquy was disturbed by a venerable old man who came from another building hidden in the neighbouring copses,

who informed me that I was in no less a place than the holy precincts of *Paunta Sahib*, the enchanted ground where Guru Gobind Singh passed as considerable a portion of his life as Jesus did in the environs of Nazareth! Paunta as we shall soon see, is a pivotal point in the Sikh history, Paunta is the first nursery of the Khalsa Panth. Ah! the unexpected pleasure of stumbling on Paunta Sahib. My veins tingled with delight, and my heart panted with pleasure, indeed my whole frame was a quiver with new-born joy! Imagine Allah Din having got back his weird lamp from the old magician! Ah! the superb felicity of seeing the first Seed of the Great Panth, the Khalsa Panth's womb! I remember I took later on a snapshot of this holy Gurdwara, but what velox-paper can rival the living-print which was fixed in the sensitive part of my soul, never to be deleted hereafter?

It was at Paunta Sahib that the great Guru repaired to complete his plans. It was here that he taught his Sikhs the great secret of the Self, and enabled them to realise the

Nam by *Simran* and contemplation. It was here that fifty-two poets clustered round him and he compiled a treasure of art and poetry, much of which is unfortunately lost to us in wars that followed. It was here that he hunted and taught his Sikhs the rudiments of swordsmanship even as he taught them the how and why of sacrifice. The spiritual atmosphere of Paunta Sahib will be evident from the account of one Raghunath, a millionaire-disciple of the Guru, which story is a precious heirloom bequeathed to us from the past.

One fine morning, the Guru was sitting on the Jumna Ghat saying his evening prayers. Down flowed the Jumna, swift yet clear, while all around were hills dark with woods. Raghunath, proud of his wealth, came and bowed; "Sire, I have brought a trifling present, in token of my love. May be, it is unworthy of your acceptance, yet it is here." So saying he laid at the feet of the Master two gold bangles, inlaid with rare stones. The Guru accepted the present which was offered with love, and as if to display his pleasure,

began to play with one of these bangles, tossing it in the air and back again into his palm, when lo! the bangle slipped suddenly and rolled down into the river. Raghunath, who was all eyes at the time, jumped into the river therewith. The Master was absorbed in his meditation, yet he was not unmindful of what Raghunath was doing. Late in the evening, Raghunath returned from his quest, his eyes downcast, and his clothes dripping. "Master, I can still get the bangle, if you point out the exact place where it fell; in my over-enthusiasm, I have lost bearing of the site where it fell." So panted Raghunath, his eyes turned more to the river than to the Master. Knowing, as He did, all that passed in the mind of his disciple, the Guru threw the other bangle also in the river, and said; "Lo! Raghunath it is there." Raghunath stood aghast and could not believe his eyes. He was yet pre-occupied with his bewilderment when the Master ran towards him, took him in his arms, flooded him with kisses and said; "Raghunath, I got rid of the bangles purposely as I saw that they were a screen

between me and thee!" Raghunath fell at the feet of the Master and at that very moment was changed; he was no longer a disciple but the elect! What is true of Raghunath is true also of Bhai Nand Lal who came to the Guru as a Vaishnavite, but rose up into a mountain—high personality: the *Khalsa* such as Guru Gobind Singh alone can bring into existence. Thus, one by one he picked up his disciples, taught them the efficacy of *Simran*, and by so doing transmuted them into his own image! Rome was not built in one day, nor the great *Khalsa* Panth. Those who think otherwise deceive themselves and others. It was the patient preparation at Paunta which flowered, later on, at Kesh Garh Sahib. Without the one, we cannot think of the other. Paunta, therefore, was the great work-shop of the *Rishi* wherein he manufactured the spiritual weapons to be used later. Here, in these woods, the *Khalsa* laid up treasure of the *Nam* which when once accumulated can never be exhausted. Paunta is, therefore, the spiritual nursery of the *Khalsa* the stage of conception, even as Kesgarh

Sahib marks the place of birth. I cannot but draw pointed attention of the Panth to this womb of Sikhism, for in the materialism that is engendered by the existing civilization we are fast forgetting the very first rudiments of the Khalsa Panth; the *Nam*, accumulated in quiet surroundings, of which Paunta Sahib is a standing reminder. What if we gather the riches of the world, and lose our soul? No; Paunta Sahib which is to be a marble dream symbolic of contemplation on *Nam*, the choicest of our possession must loom once more largely in our imaginations. Wherever we are whether in Lahore or Amritsar, in London or Washington, we must erect our own Paunta Sahib, I mean a quiet corner where we may retire into ourselves to find out as to what we are and what is our goal, whether our cherished possession is the worldly lucre or the exhaustless Treasure of *Nam*? And if we are not so rich as to have a separate quiet corner let *Amritwela* be our Paunta Sahib, for then all nature is asleep, and only the lovers of *Nam* are awake. Let us rise sufficiently ahead of the early birds, for we

must sing before they sing. Man is noblest creation of God and he must surpass all other creation in contemplation.

Given the foothold of *Nam*, the riddle of Guru Gobind Singh's subsequent life is easily solved. Those who have read the great epic of Kalidass regarding the birth of the War-God know how Indra, with other gods, waits upon Shiva, to ask that Kumara, the war-god, may be lent to them as their leader in the campaign against Taraka. Indra prefers their request, where upon Shiva bids his son assume command of the gods, and slay Taraka. Great is the joy of Kumara himself, of his mother Parvati, and of Indra. At last Taraka is slain, and the war-god returns. Taraka is the evil genius of the bigotry and materialism which comes to life again and again, hence the necessity of Guru Gobind Singh; the war-god! Such Indians as do not understand the Guru's message, and are blindly tied to violence or non-violence must realise that by so doing they are not only false to the Guru, but to the gospel of the Gita which they profess to believe. For, the Gita is but an episode of the

Mahabhartha epic, and Guru Gobind Singh is the great actor who acted it out in this work a day life Akbar, the great; realised the paramount need of toleration, but Jahagir did not profit from the experience of his father, and Shah Jahan was at best lukewarm Aurangzeb, on the other hand, was bigotry personified and Guru Gobind Singh was the war-god, reborn to slay incarnate Taraka. Where it not for Guru Gobind Singh, all that is good and great in this ancient land of *Rishis* would have perished, root and branch. Guru Gobind Singh the greatest *Rishi* knew that as Mother India was in grave peril, it was no use dilly-dallying, for such vacillation would have been criminal. The surgeon no longer waits when the arm is venombitten; he must amputate the arm out of sheer love for the body. Likewise the forester or the gardener no longer waits when he finds a tree disease-ridden, he cuts it forthwith to save the remaining trees. It is futile to be tude to this or that convention: as is the malady so is the remedy, and grave maladies call for drastic treatment. The original contribution of Guru Gobind Singh, therefore, is that to *Nam* he wedded unstinted sacrifice

and thus saved India from that degradation to which the 'Wise'—Budha had unwittingly led her. As there is danger of similar relapse at the present time, one cannot help emphasising that the creed of Guru Gobind Singh alone can save India. but sacrifice that is not founded on *Nam* is no sacrifice, but mere idle display. The substratum of Sikhism is *Nam*; on that foundation all else rests. Let us first be true to our own selves. Let us not go astray from our own moorings, *Nam* is our bed-rock; *Nam* is our sword; *Nam* is our well-spring; *Nam* is nerve and muscle; *Nam* is our eternal youth and vigour. Let us, therefore, be firmly poised in the Name; so girded let us lay down our self at the alter of India, at the alter of humanity, wheresoever mankind is travelling. For, is not the Khalsa the right-hand arm of God Himself? This, then, is my humble message: as we march forward to the four corners of earth in loving service, let us hold fast to our *Simran-home*: I mean, Paunta Sahib, the fountain-head of the Khalsa Panth, Let Paunta Sahib be the morning-star and evening-star of this Pure Church, which is God's own!

TWO SAINTS MEET: GURU GOBIND SINGH JI AND SAIYAD BUDHU SHAH.

Friendship is a rare thing on earth. But wherever two friends meet there is really heaven. Such two unearthly lovers were Guru Gobind Singh and Saiyad Budhu Shah. Little is known to the world of Saiyad Budhu Shah except that he was a warm admirer of Guru Gobind Singh ji in whose service he laid down two of his sons, and that he belonged to villiage Sadhaura. But this much is admitted on all hands that Budhu Shah was a Mohammedan saint who was well-known for his piety. The term 'Shah' is reserved for such Mohammedan faqirs who outlive the dark period of their ignorance and climb up to that sun-lit peak where there is eternal sun-shine! In these days when the whole world is divided into water-tight partitions, misnamed religions, this love of one saint representing one such religion, to another Guru who was above so-called religions, is a happy object lesson which no march of time nor much dust on scrolls of history can effec-

tually conceal or hide for all time.

Saiyad Budhu Shah had spent much of his time in austerities like Baba Farid of old, and although he had spent the better part of his life in keeping Ramzan religiously and saying prayers regularly, yet the Divine Light was still somewhat smothered within him. He paid a visit to the Guru at Anandpur and the talk naturally turned on that blissful town. "Why have you called it Anandpur, my dear, it is so full of scrubs and thorny bushes which have bruised my naked feet while coming to you" said Budhu Shah. The great Guru took hold of the aching foot of Budhu Shah, rubbed it with his soothing hand and replied "If this path has troubled thee, my love, I am very sorry, but it is yourself who are to be blamed for trudging it on foot, why not use sandals or cover your feet with shoes, and walk it out?" "But I am an hermit, an ascetic whosubdues the flesh, not one who pampers it at the expense of his soul" replied the Saiyad somewhat hastily. "Quite Right" said the Master, but you need not smother the flesh to save your soul. There is a way in which

you can curb the flesh and yet not kill it, you can subdue the brute and yet use it as your pack-horse. The primary thing is life not austerities, union not seeking, and the emphasises that you lay on this and that outer ceremony is after all only an impediment, an obstacle, rather than help." There was a glow and glimmer in the eyes of the Master which radiated unearthly light all round and the same light could not but have its effect in the receptive soul of the Saiyad, who felt as if the flickering flame of his life had received fresh leese of oil and had begun to burn more brightly. With each word of the Master, a new window appeared to open in the dingy recesses of his soul, and with each such discovery a new thrill, tremor, awakening appeared to overflow his soul. When the cabin of his soul was thus over-flooded with light, the Saiyad exclaimed: "*Allah hu Akbar*" "Great is the God! I have realised today, how Great is the Supreme One and how repulgent is His 'Light. But one thing I must ask again, great Guru" said the Saiyad. "Yes, by all means," rejoined the Master, "I

would be only too glad to lighten the load on your soul. I know that there is dead load on your heart, which has been oppressing you, aching you, troubling you in your night-dreams. There are wrinkles on your eyes and there is that oppressive wrench on your brow which is very significant of this and which I noticed the very moment when I removed thorns from off your foot. I will be only too glad to pick off thorns out of your soul, if only you will unburden your soul to me."

The Saiyad felt relieved, the solid burden on his head already appeared to melt, to dissolve into thin air, but the oppressive vapours of his petrified worry, still lingered round him and he felt as if he must get rid of this pestilence also and breathe the pure salubrious air which flowed out of the mountain heights of the Master's blissful speech. "Tell me then, O, Master" said the Saiyad "tell me what is life, godly life, for which mortals thirst? Tell me it all, and conceal not what others conceal, for I have hungered too long, laboured too hard, worked so

strenuously but am still ever so far off from life as ever."

The Master embraced the Saiyad and hugged him close to his bosom so hard that the thin air between the Master and the saint turned into a vacuum and then the blessed Master explained: "Life, my dear, life is joy-eternal, peace-eternal, activity-eternal. It is long-sought-for, long-prayed-for consummation at last attained. It is joy without beginning and end. It is light that never was on sea or land. It is perfume that distils out of the honeyed-lotus of *Nam* and transmutes all with its heavenly fragrance. It is glory-eternal, beauty-eternal, ecstasy-eternal. Breathe *this* Air and you shall never die of consumption. Swim in *this* ether and you need no propulsion. Take these wings and you soar the uppermost heights, sail through the star lit spaces, yea, you become like the moon-crescent which sails in the azure-blue and is brimful with the *Soma*. Drink *this* Nectar and thou will be a redeemed soul, a regenerated soul, the *Khalsa*. Ah! the glory of it, ah! the bliss, the peace, the awakening!"

The light giltered into the cabin of Budhu Shah's soul, his flame leapt high. He felt the ecstasy, he danced in joy, he laughed, he swelled. He fell down in joy. The Master had waved the magic ward and Budhu Shah had become really a 'Shah' an Emperor of the world!

When the saint got up from his ecstasy, he fell at the feet of the Master and said: "Master, I have taken too much of thine valuable time. I was blind and have got eyes. I was deaf and have regained my ears, I was halt and I have re-found my lost limbs. But one thing more remains to be explained, if you could vouchsafe a little more time." "By all means, my dear, have we not enough time at our disposal—to the end of very time! What is it that weighs on your soul, what draws it down, what chokes your gullet still. I am at your disposal, ever at your side, for am I not your Friend?" rejoined the Master. "I thank thee, dear Friend, and this is why I came to thee, because I knew that Thou wilt help me even as thou helpst all others who knock at Thy door. I know now what is Life, what is

Freedom, what is Higher-Love, but what about my duty, my station in life. Need I work or need I not, now that I have been liberated from the getters of the world?" mumbled the Saiyad who was still somewhat mystified. "Work, that thou *must*, that each and every one must, or else thou wilt not be true to thine self or to thine Maker. Freedom is good, but it does not conflict with work, nay, work is the crown and the consummation of union, of Godly-Hunger. It is true, quite true, that the gates are thrown wide open to you today and that you go to and fro through the heights and depths of space, but even as the air in which thou swimnest is true to its allotted task, so must thou be true to thy station in life. The scrubbing of door-steps remains so also the care of house, but joys fill it and swell it to the sky; work, that thou *must*" emphasized the Master in stentorian accents, and the Saiyad nodded warm obeisance in approval.

This talk that passed behind closed doors at Anandpur one day sealed the friendship of the Guru with the saint for all time, and

when the Saiyad returned home, he felt, he did feel, that all is well with him now. Budhu Shah lived and died a true *Khalsa*, a devoted disciple and friend of the Guru who offered his all, his sons, his relations, his Mohammedan disciples, at the feet of the Master and little wonder that up till this day the Sikhs, all the world over, hold the saint in very high esteem. The Guru had already conferred on Budhu Shah the gift of *Nam*, than which there is nothing higher, greater or costlier, but as a further token of his love, He also gave the Saiyad a few long hair combed out while performing His toilet, and this gift was made as the disciples of the saint need still the long hairs, the holy *keshas*, which both the Guru and the saint possessed and treasured !

All hail to the great Guru and the saint, true friends here on earth as also Hereafter !!

GURU GOBIND SINGH SYNTHESISER OF LOVE & WAR.

(Being Philosophy of Life and War).

Guru Gobind Singh is one of the very few master-seers who knew Reality first hand and worked it out in the true scientific spirit. We all know how in every living organism two contradictory processes are reconciled namely constructive process or *anabolism* and destructive process or *katabolism*, and the joint name for these processes is *metabolism*. So also in the welfare of the world we have two processes: the upbuilding process of love and the weeding out process of War. Both of these process are working alongside each other in endless equilibrium, and we can no more separate one from the other than we can separate day from night. We talk glibly of such phrases as *Ahinsa* or Non-Violence, and so try to work it out as to avoid even the least of injury. But modern science gives the lie to this dubious doctrine. We find, therefore, a deadlock between Science and Religion, and it is this deadlock which the Great Guru

Gobind Singh solved. It was in the nineteenth century that Science reached its adolescence, and religion I mean organised religion, received corresponding set back. While the corner-stone of science is the theory of evolution the two pillars of which it rests are the law of struggle for existence and conservation of matter and force. We will take these each separately. The law of struggle for existence emphasises that there is continuous conflict between living organisms, and that in this complicated battle-field of life the weakest go to the wall, while those which are very fit and adapted to these environments triumph. Judged from this point of view, death, disease and suppression, whether physical or moral are like three prongs of one and the same trident which the goddess of evolution holds in her hand, and whereby she separates the fit from the unfit. All modern nations which are equipped tooth and nail with steel, dynamite and poison gases are firm believers in this creed, and Herbert Spencer may be called the high-priest of this rattling philosophy for he defined life as continuous adjustment

to that sternly beneficent process which eternally moves onward helping those which move along with the current, and weeding out all the rest. The theory of evolution is only a corollary of this law of tireless struggle and it tells us that such variations and adaptations as fall in line with this ever-progressing process are preserved, while others are doomed to death or gradual elimination. Man is supposed to have sprung from ape ancestors and according to this theory, he has lost his tail as it is no longer required, and for same reason he has lost his coat of hairs as he learnt to grow cotton and wool. The crucial test, therefore, whether anything will be preserved or not lies in this whether the adaptation or equipment in question sub-serves the possessor thereof; if useful it is kept or else thrown out, involving the possessor also in its doom. In other words, the evolution moves upwards and outwards on the wings of inflamed egotism and armed efficiency.

Already at about the close of the Nineteenth Century, we find Tolstoy protesting against the Spencerian view of life and evolu-

tion. He argued that we could understand on this theory struggle, competition and efficiency, but the theory of evolution does not and cannot explain as to how morality and service came into the world and at what stage of evolution do they represent impulses which are diametrically opposite to aggression or self-acquisition. While the law of struggle for existence demands trampling the weak under-foot; how is it that the prophets and seers rejoice in serving the weak, the down-trodden? Every religion espouses the cause of the weak and the poor and it is as a matter of fact a reaction against the aforementioned truculent doctrine of science. Religion has always regarded all men as equal in the eyes of God, while science has always believed in its contrary. That being so, it must be a riddle of the first magnitude to explain as to how and when morality, ethics and spirituality dawned on the mind of man when he was just emerging from the ape stage. If you try to find the solution of this riddle in the domain of science you will find yourself in a terrible fix. You can no more extract service

and morality from the law of struggle for existence than you can extract light from darkness or honey from the cobra-plant. You may explain that morality has no deeper root than simple co-adaptation whereby we have agreed to mutually reduce our crowns to provide for all trees growing in a forest, *i. e.* a sort of mutual give and take so that all may exist. Even if we accept this explanation for one moment in case of morality yet we cannot explain the noble impulse of service which threads through the whole creation. You cannot say that the mother has any ulterior motive when she suckles the babe nor that the cow has any selfish eye on her master's corn when she feeds him with milk. No, the impulse of service has its spring in the deepest fountain of life and can in no way be called as superficial. In any case, the law of struggle for existence cannot explain this, as it is quite the antithesis of that law, even as day is antithetical to night. Is there then no solution, is it a deadlock with out any key, a mystery that admits of no unravelling?

This antithesis between physical assertion on the one hand; and law of service, on the other, is indeed a riddle—a riddle greater than what confronted Hæckel and other scientists. But Guru Gobind Singh already solved it, and in order to appreciate the solution we must first understand the mysterious mechanism we call Man. Those who call man a brute or at best a machine merely look on one side of the shield and do not see the other. Man is a composite creature; he has got both the brute and the divine in him, not as it were cross-fertilised but in co-existence. The brute-in-man is of the earth and is therefore, earthly; it is he who thirsts for the flesh, who has endless craving for the lucre, who is never tired of hoarding and possession and who walks on the road for struggle of existence. The god-in-men is there in us with the ultimate object of riding this animal, curbing his passions and eccentricities but unfortunately the beast is so very powerful that he tramples the rider under foot. Perhaps, the dual nature of man will be understood better if we compare the

brute to matter, and the rider to spirit. Now, each of these has its own law of existence: matter has inertia and must gravitate to its own ego-centre, the Spirit, on the other hand, is free from the bondage of inertia or gravitation, and therefore, tends to expand, overflow and envelope the whole universe. All matter is ego-centric, but the spirit is the negation of any particular centre even as light is as much common to a hidden niche or corner as to the boundless heaven above. The spirit is, therefore, universal and transcendent, and no sooner man realises this: his higher-self, he is no longer governed by the law for struggle of existence but is drawn to a higher and nobler law which is the law of service; for it is *this* law which knits the whole humanity into *one*. It is *this* law which makes the sun rise after each sunset and bathe the dark earth in a golden shower of light; it is *this* law which turns the earth on its axis and produces day and night in endless cycle; it is *this* law which makes the earth curve in and out as if it had its share in the *tandava*-dance of the universe which produces

seasons enfolding themselves in endless successions, it is *this* which makes the ocean, lips the earth in endless embrace, it is *this* which oozes out of sun-lit clouds in the form of gold each morning and evening; it is *this* which pours the unction of soothing rain on the parched earth and which reciprocates love in gorgeous array of leaf, flower and fruit, which her children eat. It is *this* which draws child to the arms of his mother, a disciple at the feet of his master and the whole universe back to Formless One when the cycle has had its prescribed course, to be sent back, unfolded, displayed once more with the added momentum of accumulated energy and experience, from age to age, aeon to aeon, to endless eternity!

We are of the earth when we fight and quarrel like cats and dogs in the street; that is our first stage in life, and it is then and then alone when the law of struggle for existence applies to us. But that law is merely my schoolmaster; it is not my father much less my loving mother. But when we have cast off the shell of materialism and are

re-born in the Spirit, then we are no longer thr earth, but the salt of the earth ! It is to the latter category that all saints, seers and benefactors belong. The law of struggle for existence is still there on earth, but those who are re-born have come out of the orbit of earth, and with the wings of love and service have soared up into the heaven where there is no longer the centripetal force of inertia. nor the discordant forces of competition but everything in unison, in harmony, in symphony, which is essence of the universe !

These are then the two poles on which the universe revolves ; our feet are on earth but our head is destined to touch the sun-lit clouds above. Even here, there is equilibrium between head and feet, and both of them are required, for there is nothing earth but subserves the purpose. The materialists merely emphasise the crawling nature of man, in other words his ape-propensities ; they do so because they do not see the other side of the shield. There are unbalanced spiritualities, who merely look to the heavens above and ignore that our feet are after all poised on

this solid earth ; they stress the spirit discarding or even denying matter. But Guru Gobind Singh tells us of that Supreme Equilibrium (*Sahaj*, as it is called in Sikhism) in which man has his eyes up-turned all the time to the deathless Spirit, but is not unmindful of the earth, he battles against the forces of evil, of darkness, of disease and disruption. for it is in that way alone that man can soar upwards. Guru Gobind Singh is therefore, both a *Yogi* and a *Yodha*, the Warrior Saint, a climax-formation which reconciles both Science and Religion. His disciples are no longer Quietists, world-relinquishing *Bairaghis*, or non-co-operating protestants, but armed Crusaders who are ready to fight the forces of evil to the bitter end, to fight not for further possession but that all mankind may have what God has made for one and all. The Khalsa are not only crusades but angels of the Spirit, Seraphim nearest to God, for they are tied on Him by the silken strings of *Nam* and *Simran*. It is this ambrosia which is administered to them on the day of their initiation. This

synthesis of science and religion, this reconciliation of the law of struggle for existence and law of sacrifice and service, of the warrior and the saint, of the Hero-in-action and the Hero-in-love is then the great consummation which great Guru Gobind Singh wrought. Were it not for this synthesis, the hoary Hindu civilization would have come to a premature end, even as Greek and Egyptian Civilisations are no more. Guru Gobind Singh is, therefore, a regenerator of the Hindu world and a Saviour of India, but his synthesis and solutions apply not only to the peculiar conditions of India but to the world at large, for did he not aim at the unification of the whole in one Commonwealth of Nations, or did he not say that mosques and temples are same, the Hindus and Muslims are the same,—sons of the same *Wahiguru*. Victory is, to the Deathless One and the Khalsa is also of Him!

SHRI GURU GOBIND SINGH THE MAN & THE SAVIOUR.**I.**

The greatest epithet that has been applied by man to man is the Son of man. This is how Jesus Christ is lovingly remembered all over the Christian world, and rightly. But there is another epithet which overtops all others by its sheer majestic simplicity and that is the word man, spelled in the German-way with the capital M: the Man, and I would apply that unadorned word to Him who, in my opinion, was the greatest of all men that mankind has known. As I look back on him through the vast abyss of time, with its procession of men and women, of poet and philosophers, of leaders of mankind and saviours, of prophets and seers I see him in the very forefront, the very embodiment of Life, head and shoulders above all others? He combines in Him all that is good, grand and sweet; the honeyed-humility of Nanak, the lamb-like virtues of Jesus Christ sacrificing himself at the altar of humanity for a better and a freer world, the cloud-rapt wisdom of Sakymuni-

Buddha, the bubbling energy of the Light of Arabia, the sun-kissed glory of Krishna, the homely grandeur of wandering Rama—all these and many more colours knit up into one integral whole even as the seven colours of a spectrum are reconciled in an Himalayan-Rainbow! Here, then we have a complex, extraordinary, dynamic personality is yet like known to the outside world. We, in the Punjab, know how in that from an angel walked on earth shedding the light of His countenance on the weak and the down-trodden but outside Punjab, he is mis-understood and mis-interpreted, and even the greatest of present-day Indian poets Dr. Tagore misreads the whole tenor of the Sikh Movement when he says that it was a step backward when Guru Gobind Singh substituted the sword for the plough. There is, therefore, proverbial darkness under the lamp I mean, in this land of the Gurus. Not that there is prevarication, but there is at bottom a genuine mis-understanding which must needs be cleared by the disciples of the Guru, who know him better. It is, therefore, the duty of the writer to show

where the misunderstanding lies, and why the Nightingale of India has failed to understand the Phoenix of the East.

As has been stated already, we have concerned with a very complex, many sided Personality and before we profess to *know* him, we must know him at more than one point. In the cognate sphere of science, we know how difficult it is to know a tree merely from its exterior: we must study its root, stem and flower at different places, and at different times before we may know the plant. In other words, close and correct examination makes it necessary to study different *sections* of different parts of the same plant. Even so, in the life of a man, we must have many sections, many snapshots as it were, out of the infolded unfolding film of man's life. It is not possible, considering the brief space at my disposal, to do more than outline some silent aspects of the life of the Guru but here are three cross-sections of this giant Teak Tree which had its roots in the Land of the Five Rivers, stretching its flowers and foliage up to as far as the sandal-plains of the Deccan.

In the first scene, we see him, as may be expected, in the thick of a battle, in the precincts of Anandpur, with Imperial forces headed by General Saiyad Khan. The drums are beating, the banners flowing, and all around there is dust, dirt and blood. General Saiyad Khan is obviously very much pre-occupied with his army. He has many engagements and his mind must be full of plans. All this is true, but the General has heard of the Guru from Saint Budhu Shah, and his inner mind is convulsed more by spiritual yearnings than by war passions. In his heart of hearts, he devoutly wishes to see the Guru, to sit at his feet, and lo! the all knowing Guru is there by his side, mounted on his blue steed! Saiyad Khan is at first bewildered: he thinks all this is a phantom, a projection of his over-worked mind; he rubs his eyes, but the golden figure of the Guru is still there—the Lord of the White Hawk, with flowing beard! Enraptured he falls at the Guru's feet, and implores him to confer on him the Secret of Immortality! "All this life,—these weary years—have I passed in vain, in sun and shade", says General

Saiyad Khan, "Confer on me, O Lord, the bliss of ineffable union, that thou didst confer on Budhu Shah." "That Life, that boundless life will be, no doubt, thine, but thou must rise *up to* it, and this battle-field is the last place for one who has yet to find out the Truth" replied the Guru. "What must I do, O Lord, to get a glimpse of that Fairy Land, of which Nasiran, my sister, mentioned to me the other day, when I went to condole with her, on the death of her children in the battle field!" rejoined Saiyad Khan. "That Promised Land is, no doubt, real—truer than this solid earth—but thou must first seek and get the key to its hidden portals," and the Guru "That key! how may I get the same?" said the breathless General "If thou wouldst have it, here is the prescription:

"O mortal ! thus practise thou
 Renunciation ; regard thine earthly resort
 A wilderness, thus 'stablished
 Remain detached in thine own heart!
 Thine matted hair shall be thine self-control,
 Yearning for God-union thine morning bath,

Instead of growing long nails
Let boundless life be thine coveted path!
Let the Guru-given Word
Thine mortal-self inflame,
And mayst thou apply
Ashes only of the *Name*!
Eat sparingly and sleep sparingly,
Practise virtues: loving kindness and mercy,
Let thou be steadfastly poised
In contentment and tranquillity!
Transcend thou the Triple Cord of passions
The fetters of lust, anger, greed and pride,
Let assinine obstinacy and morbid attachment
Never becloud the horizon of thine mind!
Thus, alone thou shalt
Thine Quintessential-Self behold,
Thus, alone thou shalt meet Him
The Being Supreme—the Being Untold!!”

(*Sabad-Hazare* of Xth Guru.)

The battle still rages, the trumpets blow, the guns boom, the cannons thunder, but Saiyed Khan is no longer the old General, he is a humble Sikh of the Gurus, who retires forthwith into the secluded hills of Kangra, to accumulate the exhaustless riches of *Nam*!

Even as in the case of Saiyad Khan, so also in the case of every one of us, we have first to retire into ourselves to prove the most difficult of all problems—the Bionomial Theorem of the Self, of *Atma*! The voice of of the G_{uru} still rings, as it did in the battle-field; “Prove thine own self first! All the rest shall follow.” This is the A. B. C. of Sikhism.

II.

Time flows on; the scene shifts. This time, it is a comparatively quiet place, along the river side, in a secluded hut an ascetic is absorbed in sedentry spiritual exercises far away from the din of city life, and from the cockpit of battles—the Punjab. It is the lonely hut of a Hindu Bairagi, namely Banda at Nander, in Deccan. The Guru comes and occupies all of a sudden what was considered a sacrosanct couch, which was that of the Banda’s Guru, and which no one dared touch, for Banda was reputed to have magical powers! The news was communicated to Banda who had gone out, sometime

before. Furthermore, he was informed that the Guru had hunted two wild goats and had cooked them in the forbidden square of the Bairagi. This was adding insult to injury, so Banda thought. He rushed back to the Guru with all the fury of a mad man ready to take revenge then and there. Banda was an orthodox vegetarian and was like one possessed; his feelings may better be imagined than described. He ran full tilt at the Guru, wishing to dispense even with the necessity of explanation, but he had hardly caught the eye of the Guru, when his wrath was lulled to sleep, and transmitted into active worship. The sheen from the Guru's eyes dispelled the glimmering darkness from Banda's mind and he fell at the feet of the Master. "I have been waiting for gleam of Light, O Lord, but I have never had such influxes, as to-day. I am literally flooded with Light, transmuted, tranfigured! Forgive me, if I unwittingly offended Thee, as I did not know Thee, and accept me as one of Thy disciples and servants," muttered the magical-Banda. "Banda! I knew thee, I could half see thee

from the vantage ground of Anandpur; I knew that thou didst need me, but thou hast yet to travel a long, long distance before thou mayst become a *Khalsa*—an age-long journey from the Realm of Devotion and Meditation to the Realm of self-less Activity—-from *saramkhand* to *karamkhand*! I cannot say whether thou hast yet fully completed thine probation in the purgatory stage of *sarmkhand*, rejoined the Master. “An age-long journey, I have heard of it; I have an idea that I listened one day from the lips of a disciple (*Sikh*), the Five Rungs that lead gradual to the Throne of the All-High! But, I see further Light ahead, I am prepared for all the rough and tumble of active workaday life—if only Thou wouldst lend me Thine helping hand, and shed on me the shower of Thine Grace,” whispered Banda. “Of Grace, thou shalt have full measure, and thou art no longer *Banda* (slave), but the Lion equipped with full Treasure of Guru’s Grace (*Gurbakhsh Sinyh*); but remember: Grace Divine is a highly volatile principle, it evaporates as soon as warmed up by the livid flame of self-seek-

ing! Remain steadfastly continent! Do the Master's will only and do not do thine own! Thou shalt take care of the Khalsa, but the Khalsa shall take care of thee, lest thou stray, for there are pitfalls and back-slides even at the very Apex of *Hemkunt!*"

Banda takes the vow and there-with the leaden cudgels which he flourished with such marvellous strength throughout the length and the breadth of the Punjab. No Hercules nor Atlas could do the wonders he did in the brief span of a few years! Sirhand was razed to the ground and ploughed, Ambala and Jullundur were subdued, and the banner of Gurbaksh Singh flew from Lahore in the north to Delhi in south and the Mughal Emperor trembled at his name!

But Banda slipped back, after a spurt!

III.

The third and the last scene is most typical and happens to lie midway between the above two, not only as regards situation and time, but as regards the condition of the soul hungering for illumination. It is the

sun-burnt plain of Malwa, sparsely covered by *jand* and other xerophytic trees, which was destined to be called henceforward the Forest-worth-millions (*Lakhi jungle*). Anandpur had been just surrendered and Nander had not been reached when this little miracle occurred. Hidden in one of the corners of this jungle, there lay an old hermit, immured, as it were, under the ever-increasing burden of years. This was Sayyad Ibrahim who had spent the greater part of his life in meditation, but meditation which bore no fruit. Dana Singh, an old friend of the Sayyad, had become a Sikh, and there was something in the sheen of his eyes which bespelled an extraordinary change. Sayyad Ibrahim implored his friend to take him to the Master, which he did. It was an auspicious moment when the Sayyad stepped into the presence of the Guru, for *Asa-di-var* had just been chanted and Bhai Nand Lal and other bards who accompanied the Guru were offering up their new-born mind-children at the feet of the Guru. The Sayyad sucked the spiritual aroma even as the bumble-bee sucks honey

out of a nectary. The more he heard, the higher was his transport, until there was but a step from the finite to the Infinite—but what a tremendous step! When the poet's gathering (*Kavi-Durbar*) was over, the Sayyad took an opportunity to unlock the castle of his heart to the Guru: "Master, I have grown grey in meditation, but I am still as far from the goal as ever. My friend, Dana Singh, was initiated the other day, and is already soaring high up into the vault of Infinity. Bless me, O Lord, with the same magic, the Prime Secret," beseeched the crumbling anchorite. "Thou shalt get what thou seekest but didst thou try the short cut—the only royal road—of *Simran*," rejoined the Master, taking him into his arms as a mother takes the new-born child. "Aye, my Master, I have tried it, and I seemed very near reaching the goal, but every time the Promised Land is in sight, I feel the ground slippery under my feet; I slip and fall back," gasped the spiritual babe. "Well that being so, thou must take all precautions to conserve thine energy. It appears to me that thou

art like a pitcher which hath so many holes : no water can ever lie in a vessel such as that ! ” retorted the Master. “ That is exactly mine difficulty : what what must I do to conserve mine energy ! ” enquired the would-be Sikh. “ There is but one remedy, ” affirmed the Master “ thine golden tresses of hair ! Conserve these, if thou must conserve thine spiritual resources, ” continued the Master. “ Explain to me, my Lord, explain to me still more ; you talk in enigmas, and I am still a new-born babe and know not the lore of wisdom. How ? Why do these tresses treasure the Store-house of Spiritual Electricity ? ” mumbled the would-be Mahma, for that was his other name. “ It is as simple and clear as the noonday sun, my dear ; these tresses conserve spiritual energy even as those forests on the yonder Himalayas conserve the moisture dropped by the benignant monsoons : remove those forests to-day and the whole of India will be deluged in one day ! No, not for nothing was man, the image of God on earth, equipped with this exceptional habiliment ! Pause ! Ponder ! Consider ! ” Ibrahim jumped

at the idea, did what he has told and before long he was taken into the fold of Sikhism and Christened Ajmer Singh, for it was Ajmer and its surroundings which he was to fertilise with the Guru-given Monsoon! Mahma Singh grew up into a towering personality, and unlike Banda, lived and died a true Sikh, in other words, the very embodiment of the Guru's dream—a Khalsa! There is an offshoot of the Sikh Fold which is still associated with his name!

IV.

We have hurriedly glanced over three typical phases of the Guru's manifold activity. I have purposely omitted other scenes *e. g.*, the selection of the *Panch Piyaras*—the Five Beloved—for they are better known to the Sikhs than their own father and mother! But let us be very clear in our mind as to what do these incidents mean.

As to Sayyad Khan the Guru's discourse is, like Krishna's discourse to Arjana, the bewildered Pandu, but is far truer and more real, because it is an incident of but yester-

day while the Gita fades back into the mist of time—into philosophy and myth! The first lesson—the A. B. C.—of Sikhism, then, is the solution of the great Riddle of Existence, that of the *Atma* or *Nam*—it is *this*, which must first be tackled, for once connection is established with that Transcendental world of Beauty, the Sikh is on the highroad which leads to the second step *viz.* of Activity. Tangled in this silken-knot of Spirit naught but *Simran* will undo this entangled web of *Maya*. But the task is well worth the time and trouble, for is not this the goal where to the amoeba creeps and climbs through æons of time until it reaches the topmost rung of the ladder—the Man! Those who have reached this sun-lit Apex sing like David, *gustate et videle*: that is to say, ‘*Taste and see.*’ For, a soul must taste first before it can see this naked Glory of Infinite Light!

The goal is very distant. Banda is one step ahead of Sayyad Khar. in that he has already run the greater part of the gamut of meditation. He is just on the threshold of the Realm of Service and Activity (*karam-*

khand). But he has not yet stepped therein. The Guru picks him up and throws him into the vortex of *self-less* activity. This must be distinguished from so-called activity mis-named service, which is an easy method of catching the public eye, for the latter is ego-centric, where as the activity of *karamkhand* is centred only in the cosmos. Here it is that Sikhism parts company with all morbid forms of mysticism, rightly dubbed quietism. Guru Nanak outlined in the Japji, and demonstrated it in many ways, above all, by the rejection of his passive son in favour of Lehna, the active. Guru Gobind Singh crystallised and precipitated those great dynamic forces which Nanak had set into motion. The *Khalsa* is the true child of the Japji in that this is the consummation to which the Japji clearly tends. Not the saint, but the soldier-saint is the objective, for does not God Himself battle ceaselessly with the forces of darkness? Whenever there was likelihood of any misunderstanding, in this direction, the Guru put his right foot foremost to remove all ambiguity. For instance, he changed and

transvaluated two of the couplets of Dadu and of Guru Teg Bahadur, dropping quietism in favour of high-strung self-less activity. We need not labour the point any further : suffice it to say that the soul of Sikhism is the *karam-khand* activity not stolid passivity wherein the Nightingale of India likes to see the Sikh re-submerged. That would be a greater fall and slide-back than that which the Buddha set in. "The possession of God," says Ruysbroeck, the prince of Western mystics, "demands and supposes perpetual activity. He who thinks otherwise deceives himself and others. All our life as it is in God is immersed in blessedness. And these two lives form *one*, self-contradictory in its attributes; rich and poor, hungry and full, active and quiet." The fact of the matter is that the Sikh Movement is the only healthy form of Mysticism in India—the mysticism that has stood the test of time.

The last great lesson is that of Brother Mahna Singh *alias* Ajiner Singh, who is a typical *Khalsa*—the Man complete with no possibility of fall or atavism. He became a centre of divine fecundity, a torch of Light

even as Brother Kanahaya became the great leader of service—of Sewapanthis Red Cross Army in the Punjab. These unobtrusive little men now buried partly in the glimmering sands of the materialistic times are veritably the Pyramids of Sikh Life, which will stand out and speak, albeit mutely, unto the end of time! India needs them; the world needs them—these holy Brethren of the Tress-knot! Of these, Brothers Mani Singh and Taru Singh rise up among others like the Himalayas, full of beauty and strangeness; compared with them, the other Sikhs may look homely and plain. But there is no break, no discontinuity between a plain and a mountain; it is pushed out of plain and is part of us! The value is the value of the whole, of the great struggling sacrificing humanity: the Sikhs.

When we look back and feel once more the thrill, the throb, wherewith the Guru quickened the dead ashes of the Punjab into Life-everlasting, we sing spontaneously: Hallelujah! Hallelujah unto the Son of Man, the Man! whose birthday we celebrate to-day !!

AURANGZEB AND GURU GOBIND SINGH.

Little is known to the world as to why Aurangzeb, the monarch of India decided to have his tomb at Daulatabad in the south than at Delhi or in any other Mughal centre in the north. It is true that at the time he was engaged in a campaign against Deccan when he suddenly fell ill and died but the Emperor left a word that he should be interred there *i. e.* far away from the Punjab. This has been generally construed into Emperor's love for the south, but the fact of the matter is that while the Emperor was at Ahmadnagar, he received from the Guru the celebrated epistle known as the '*Zafarnama*' which was sent to him through Daya Singh and Dharm Singh. This epistle is one of the most remarkable letters ever written by a man of letters. But apart from its literary value, it had a much deeper significance in that it contained much plain-speaking which the Emperor who lived in an hypnotic world of artificial ceremonies, had never heard before. This epistle, therefore, came like a

bolt from the blue to the Emperor and when he read it with his own eyes, then the mirror of his heart broke into numerous small pieces. The epistle contains several matters which require detailed commentary, but here we are concerned only with such personal remarks as darted like serpent arrows and pierced the brittle shield of the Emperor's heart. The following extracts may be of interest to the reader. Addressing the Emperor, the Guru informed him of his plighted word as under:—

“I have no faith in thine oath to which thou tookest the one God as witness, I have not a partile of confidence in thee. Thy treasurer and thy ministers are all false. He who pulleth faith in thine oath on the Quran inirteth his own ruin. The insolent crow cannot touch him who cometh under the protection of the *huma*. He who cometh under the protection of a powerful tiger cannot be waylaid by a goat, a bufflalo, or a deer....Had I not known that thou wert crafty and deceitful as a fox, I would never on any account have come hither.....How could forty even of the bravest succeed when oppo-

sed by a countless host?..... What though my four sons were killed, I remain behind like a coiled serpent? Did I not know that thou, O faithless man, wert a worshipper of wealth and perjurer? Thou keepest no faith and observest no religion. Thou knowest not God and believest not in Mohammed... When thou didst swear by Mohammed and called the word of God to witness, it was incumbent on thee to observe that oath. Were the Prophet himself present here, I would make it my special duty to inform him of thy trachery.... As thou didst forget thy word on that day, so will God forget thee. God will grant thee fruit of the evil deed thou didst design.....I do not deem thou knowest Godwhen thou lookest to thine army and wealth. I look to God's praises... Lay not the axe to thy kingdom. When God is my Friend, what can an enemy do even though he multiply himself a hundred times."

These plain words of the Guru fell like a lightning on the heart of the Emperor and it was such an unbearable shock that from that very day he began to pine and decline. It

is true that Aurangzeb was very abstemious and devoted to his own religion, but he realised now, too late in the day, on receipt of this candid letter, that he was still as far away from Religion as ever, for did not the Guru inform him that the holy Prophet would not befriend him on the Day of Judgment? "Even the Prophet would not befriend Aurangzeb!" Yea, that was the mighty declaration of the Guru this terrible judgment wholly uprooted the tree of Emperor's hope, and Aurangzeb the mighty emperor trembled like an aspen-leaf, when he read and re-read each and every letter of this epistle, with horrified eyes. The effect of the epistle was electric. As may be expected, the Emperor could not write even a line in reply to this for the heart that wields the pen had already fainted, but when the envys namely Dharm Singh and Daya Singh returned, they informed the Guru that the Emperor was confined to bed—his death-bed, the very moment he read the letter. Soon after the Emperor passed away, but before he died so, he snatched an opportunity to seek the spiritual solace

of his Pir and Master at Daulatabad, near Ellora. The Emperor informed him of the incubus that weighed on his heart and implored: "Help me, O my Master, on the day of the judgement, for I feel the ground slipping from underneath my feet." His Pir and Master assured him that he will do all that lay in his power. But the Emperor had a dreaded night-mare of his fate to be and wanted a tangible token of guarantee. His Pir and Master replied: "What guarantee need I give thee?" and the failing heart of the Emperor mumbled the following trembling words which brought about his interment, where his remains now lie: "My Master, this *Zafarnama* of the Guru has snatched all peace out of my heart. I feel, I do feel, that the victory after all lies with the Guru, not with me and this is why His Epistle reads as the 'Epistle of Victory,' not of death. My head reels, my heart sinks within me and I feel as if all my life has been washed, ruined, gone to dogs. I dread to go back to Punjab, to that far-off Delhi, the scene of my frivolities and follies; I dread to go anywhere. I

fear the Day, the terrible Judgment Day. But, some little corner of earth I must occupy, and I crave : let that be under the shadow of your feet— far away from that holy Anandpur whose memory I would fain efface it all from my heart ! ” . . . and with these words on his lips the Emperor passed away, lying for all time where he does, in a desolate sun-burnt corner of the Deccan !

* * * *

Lest it might be thought that the Guru had any grudge with the Mughal dynasty, what followed soon after is an eloquent testimony of the fact that the Master was all-justice, all-kindness for He spared no effort to win at once for the rightful heir, Bahadur Shah the Mughal throne and in so doing the Guru incurred extraordinary pains. The Guru also referred in very enlogistic terms to Babar whom Baba Nanak blessed, and hence it must be clear that the Guru had no personal enmity against this person, he punished only those who had gone astray from the path of righteousness. Thus the great Guru proved in his person that His life-

mission, as He stated, was to—

“Extend the reign of Righteousness on earth,
Sieze and destroy the evil and the sinful.”

(Akal Ustat)

The sword of the Guru cut in twain the petrified darkness of world, and his arrows pierced the bosom of bigotry. And thus it was possible for Him to prove by His own sacrifice what He wrote once:—

“The successors of both Baba Nanak and Babar
Were created by God Himself,
Recognise the former as spiritual,
And the latter as temporal kings.”

Had other successors of Babar loved India as Akbar and Shah Jehan did, then the Mughals might yet have ruled!

AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER !

Why He chose Deccan for rest ?

Two things had always perplexed me in otherwise transparent life history of our last Guru whom I revere with all my heart and soul. But although I bow to him daily in spirit yet this does not stand in the way of my thoroughly understanding Him as also all events of his life. I can understand the little Boy under ten listening to the woe-laden tale of Kashmiri Pandits and asking His father to lay down his precious life for the weak and stricken, for Guru Gobind Singh was a born patriot. I could understand his sacrificing four children at the altar of Indian liberty, for Guru Gobind Singh was a martyr *par excellence*, i.e., one who does not only sacrifice himself but his nearest and dearest, one of all, in one all-enveloping act of transcendent sacrifice. I could also understand as to why He weaned the Khalsa from further devotion to a personal Guru, for he realised that the cumulative effort of the ten Gurus had borne fruit and the nation was ready to stand on its feet under the guidance of an impersonal Guru,

the *Gūru Granth*. But, I could not understand as to why the last Guru passed the last days of his eventful life in that far-off Deccan Peninsula which was cut away from the arena of his normal activities. It would not help to state that he went there with the Mughal Emperor and then he stayed there until the traitor stabbed Him, for he stayed there far too long both before and after this event. And if he cared to return, He could have been moved back to Amritsar or Anandpur on the sick-bed, for the Emperor was so friendly and the faithful Khalsa would have been only too glad to return to their land of the Five Rivers. It was, therefore, clear that he stayed in Deccan because he thought he *must*, but what made Him do so—that was just my riddle and it is this which is the crux of this writing. The other riddle is, of course, Banda Bahadur, *i. e.*, as to why he was sent back to the Punjab instead of the Guru Ji returning himself. For the present, I will confine myself to Enigma No. 1. These two enigmas stood out in the sea of mind like two jutting rocks against which the little vessel of my fancies

always struck and re-struck. I had read quite a number of histories relating to the Sikh period and yet not one could throw any light on this or that enigma for histories are only concerned with the outer details of one's life; they do not go deep down to the rock-bottom from where the fountain of Life springs and bubbles up. These enigmas assailed me from right and left like missiles of fire, and I did not know if ever I could find a satisfactory solution, or anything like a clue to these missing chapters in the blazing career of the greatest Man who walked on earth and who has left his replica in that master architecture of soul which we call the Khalsa Nation. But great as was my bewilderment, still greater was the manner in which light trickled into the soot-besmirched cabin of my soul. I do not believe in miracles so called, but what happened the other day with me cannot be described anything short of a miracle as will be apparent from what follows:—

It was a very busy day in Srinagar, the capital of the Happy Valley when I had concluded a string of engagements, and had just

alighted the car to return to my sequestered corner in the Jammu hills when a telegram was delivered to me which on opening read that a band of dacoits had locked my father-in-law in Gwalior where he has a village of his own and had taken away my brother-in-law of whom no clue could be had from the last fortnight! This was a very distressing bit of news and I must confess that at that time the Happy Valley appeared to me to be turned into a vale of tears. Needless to say that the required leave was arranged and for the next two or three days I was bolting in fast vehicles, now passing deodar-lined hills of Batote, then bannana-gardens of the blessed Amritsar, then far-famed domes and spires of the Taj Mahal and lastly that historical fort in the heart of Gwalior which has still a platform on which the Sixth Guru passed many a year absorbed in meditation until one fine morning orders came from the Emperor to set at liberty not only the Guru but quite a galaxy of imprisoned Rajas and Maharajas who sat at the feet of the Master in the rock-girt Fort-temple of Maharaja Man Singh!

While at Gwalior, I was informed that the above news was only too true and that no clue was forth-coming as to the missing youth. But I had still to catch the meter-gauge light railway and reach suburbs which I did without loss of any time. I had just alighted on my destination when I was informed that there was no longer any anxiety for the missing relative had returned at about the same moment, quite hale and hearty after about three weeks detention by robbers who were armed tooth and nail. This good news synchronising with the termination of my journey was miraculous enough but I did not know that this, in turn, was merely a fore-taste of what other wonders were about to follow. As I was so near to Hazur Sahib, Nander, we decided to go there as a token of gratitude and devotion to the great Guru who had, no doubt, rescued the youth from the jaws of death. Unfortunately no one could accompany me except my wife, as other relatives of mine were far too busy with the aftermath of the case. But we thought we were free like birds in the air, as we had now thrown off

the shackles of anxiety.

We whisked off to Hazur Sahib Nander (Dèccan) but we were not like ordinary pilgrims who go in *Tirath Yatra* trains well-escorted, by set routes. Early in the morning, I woke up to find a little hillock crowned by a temple and I was informed that this temple belonged to the Sage Vashista who had austerities close to another sage namely Agasta, both of whom brought to my mind the wonderful myths which are aglow with the glory of Rama. I had hardly gone one station ahead when I could see a large rounded hillock surmounted by a fort dominating a vast plain which had in one of its corners a tall tower over-towering all such towers that I had seen in Delhi or Agra. I was surprised to see on closer vision that the outer wall of the fort was not built of stones but was *one* big stone for several miles of circumference! I was informed that the huge tower was the 'Tower of Victory' which Aurangzèb or some other emperor had raised to commemorate the consolidation of power in the South. As to why the Great Mughal Emperor was enamour-

ed more of the south than Delhi and Agra in the north was also a little riddle to me but this was soon solved when I got down at the Daulatabad station for that was the name of the village in the Nizam's territory which had the Fort of the Tower of Victory. The Fort is carved out of the underlying rock trap which outcrops here and there and this explained why it was all *one*, for the rock is volcanic and does not consist of layers or blocks. The country a'l around is scattered with Mohammedan Shrines, here, there and everywhere but cut off by long expanses of scrub forest in which thorns and prickles are pre-eminent. These shrines are, with few exceptions, in a very dilapidated condition and one does not see a single man for miles around. I was informed on festival days there are festive gatherings in some of the shrines but for the rest of the year, they were deserted and gloomy. Near Kagzipur, the village where paper is made, I saw a shrine which bore the somewhat modern label, *i. e.* 'the Saint with a thousand disciples' and I was explained that the central shrine was that of a pre-eminent

Mohammedan Saint while the little shrines out in the distance, all around in scrub forest, were those of his teeming disciples. This could explain the multiplicity and the number of the shrines, but I could not understand why they were so forlorn, dilapidated, deserted and cut off one from the other; they appeared to me like little oases, no doubt, but oases in a gloomy, all-enveloping *desert* of black soil and bushes. I also saw simple but ostentatious tomb of the austere Emperor Aurangzeb and just opposite to him lay the Shrine of his Pir who held in his hand the heart strings of the Emperor, and then understood the how and why of the Mughal Emperor migrating down towards the south. Great as is the might of wealth, but greater still is the grip of religion for did not the great Mughal lie prostrate on the feet of his Master, far away from the so called civilized haunts of Delhi in the north? Aurangzeb may or may not be great as an Emperor or as administrator but who that sees him lying at the feet of his Master will doubt that he had a heart which could be stirred by spiritual yearnings.

From what has been said above the readers will be able to pick up, *albeit* very dimly, of the weird Deccan area which forms the back ground to the closing life of our Saviour. But this was not all. When I enquired from my informant if there was any other temple or shrine near about, the kind guide said: "Sir, do you not know of the world-famed rock temples at Ellora and Ajanta to see which tourists pour in each year from Europe and America"? I said "No, but I should be very glad to see them if they were near about." The guide told me that the Ellora caves which are the best of all rock-cut temple-caves in any part of the world were but a few hour's journey from Daulatabad. I therefore, drifted in that direction. I use word the drifted advisely for it was not I who went there with a set purpose but an Invisible Hand took hold of me at Srinagar in Kashmir, rocked me up and down until it brought me in the environs of the Hazur Sahib at Nander. I will not describe the rock-temple here for they deserve a separate article to themselves, but this much I must say that if ever fairy-tales could

become true and be represented in stone, it is there in the rock-cut temples of Ellora! You find there huge elephantine images of the Buddha, of Vishnu, Indra, and indeed, of all Indian gods cut out of one rock like that weired fort at Daulatabad, and these images are the most impressive that I have ever seen. It is true that they are not in silver and gold, but that is the only reason why they have not been tampered with or razed by iconoclastic band of idol breakers. The word 'elephantine' cannot convey exact picture of the effigies represented. for the elephant is, perhaps, the ugliest and most unsee nly of all animals, but those images at Ellora are the very embodiments of beauty, serenity and grandeur. The Indian art of sculpture seems to have reached its climax there, a climax never to be reapproched! Hence, it is well said by the modern man that these temples were made by gods themselves—for, no amount of wealth can reproduce what religious zeal alone could have accomplished in the historic past. The Ellora caves are famous for still another reason for here you have side by side quite an array of

all shades of the Hindu religion: the Buddhist temples in one wing, the Jain in the opposite wing, and that masterpiece: the Kailash temple in the centre which is a little world in itself as it contains all the Hindu gods carved out of one rock, in one temple, which eclipses the surrounding *stupes* and monasteries in the same manner as the sun eclipses the stars! Here then we have all cultures displayed side by side; the Islamic culture in the neighbourhood of the Tower of Victory, the Hindu and Buddhist in the rock-cut temples close by on which gods themselves have lavished their best skill. There is, no doubt, that the whole environ is very holy and is crammed with that unearthly Light 'which never was on sea and land.' If you can picture to yourself a background such as that which is at once the confluence of all cultures and their common radiator, if you can picture to yourself a fairy-land of world-religions arranged in a mosaic of interlacing art of the Spirit, if you can conjure in your imagination gold and petrified ebony (for such is the trap rock of which the temples are made) lavished in endless profusion, for

miles all around, and last but no least, if you can visualise quite an array of discordant religious phases struggling for pre-eminence and priority among themselves, then and then alone you can realise why the Great Guru chose *this* enchanted arena as a befitting centre for the stronghold of Sikhism in the south. The master-architect, the *visvakarman*, the Supreme God had raised here a number of spiritual pillars were struggling for pre-eminence not realising that they were all required, that they were quite in order only they required the *Taj*, the soul-dome, which Guru Gobind Singh built at Nander which was to crown them all and knit them together in one spiritual cement which is Sikhism. I have only to add the finishing touch and I think my task is over for my first riddle why the great Guru chose that of all places as his resting ground, is solved for all time. I returned from Ellora full of new ideas and discoveries, and when I alighted the train at Nander in pitch dark at night my joy knew no bounds when a friendly bearded face assailed me with *Sat Sri Akal* and asked me if I wanted to go

“*Sach Khand*”! “Yes to *Sach Khand* I must go, for I had come there all the way from Kashmir to Deccan,” I replied. I was soon put into a commodious, cushioned lorry which the Gurdwara service supplies gratis to all pilgrims, and in a few minutes I was in the outskirts of that blessed land where angels fear to tread, for do not the remains of the last Guru lie in this hallowed spot? What followed must be described separately, but I cannot forget or adequately describe the sweet glitter of the little lamps which darted flashes of light like the morning stars and revealed to me the golden dome hidden in the womb of darkness. The same Hand which brought me hither, rocked me like a little child, and when I slept I felt, I did feel, that here at last I had found *My Master* even as that great Emperor found *his*, close by to the Tower of Victory!

BANDA BAHADUR & GURU GOBIND SINGH-A CONTRAST

In the whole of Indian history, there is no figure which appears to me so wonderful, so enigmatic as that of Banda Bahadur. Born of poor parents in the lonely hills of the Siwalik, this unknown soul had wandered as far down as Nander in Deccan and it was there that Guru Gobind Singh met him. To transform this little sparrow into a hawk was no less than a miracle. But such miracles were not unusual with the Guru whose *amrit* worked wonders whenever and wherever used. Thus was Bachittar Singh of the Anandpur fame transformed by the Guru into a hero, in a trice, to meet a difficult situation that has arisen there. Thus was Sayyad Khan, a Mughal General, weaned from the ranks of the enemies, in the very thick of a battle, instructed, tutored and initiated, so that Sayyad Khan the general became a disciple and God-fearing Sikh. Such miracles were the order of the day with the great Guru Gobind Singh. But those little miracles were more or less personal and

had at best local significance. But, this was a different case. Banda had only to be touched, to be electrified, when he became a terror not only for the Punjab, but for the whole Mughal Empire. Consider what Banda did : he sacked Samana, Sirhand, Sadhaura and many other cities established his rule between Lahore and Delhi. Thus, the work of centuries was covered in less than a decade. Indeed, Banda Bahadur worked like an Hercules or like the *Hanuman* and he did in the twinkling of an eye what Sivaji and other patriots could not do in many years.

In the European history, I had read of a somewhat parallel case namely that of Jeanne D' Arc, a peasant girl born in an unknown village of France, who led armies against the British to relieve Orleans, and was successful in getting the throne back for the Dauphin who was wrongfully dispossessed. Here, was, therefore, an Indian Joan of Arc, who worked on a much bigger scale and with more startling results. Evidently this was a mystery and it had to be unvelled.

The second thing, therefore, that attract-

ed me in my South-Indian tour was the shrine of this hero which is quite close to the Nander Gurdwara. Banda Bahadur's shrine commands a magnificent site on the bank of the Godavri facing the sun. I was struck by the general calm and quiet that still prevails in this spot and even the holy river seems to have acquired that tranquility which few Southern Indian rivers possess. I was pointed the *Imli** tree under which this hero sat and practised austerities when he was as yet only a *Bairagi*. This tree which I measured to be 8 feet in girth must have had many cycles, grown, passed into seed, and re-grown. But I could feel that it was happy where it was for it was fatter than all such trees in the adjoining jungle, and it was evidently loth to leave this hallowed spot for it was worshipped and kissed by many a pilgrim from the Punjab. The fruits of this tree are used as presents to the pilgrims, and I have little doubt that like the leaves of the tree that grow on Tansen's tomb in Gwalior, this tree has magical qualities in which Banda Bahadur

* *Tamarix Emblica*.

excelled. My mind was full of ideas and dreams when I perambulated round the holy shrine, but my head was sorely perplexed with the enigma that I have already referred to namely, why did not the great Guru himself return to the Punjab, why should Banda Bahadur have stepped into his shoes and did the rest? My mind was thus surcharged with many a question and cross-question when I entered into the inner temple where side by side with the out-spread Guru Granth, there were quite a number of swords, daggers, poniards and other instruments of war displayed on a little sofa close by. There was a lonely attendant in service who was sleeping when I came, for evidently few pilgrims come to such far-off shrines as this, so much of the time of these attendants must needs be passed in sleep. When I had paid my obeisance to the Guru, I asked detailed information about the instruments displayed and I was informed that they belonged to the great Hero. But deep down in my soul, that pert little query still made me uneasy, so being no longer shut, I bubbled out this to that

lonely soul who though not lettered had evidently the charms of simplicity and sincerity which are and must ever remain associated with the spot. "Why did not the great Guru return to the Punjab to pay the mischief-mongers in their own coin? Two of his sons were butchered alive, the remaining two were bricked up in walls and yet the great Guru did not return to the scene of his erstwhile activities, and passed his days in peace in place cut off, all this way, from the Punjab." I muttered in slow trembling accents. I knew that this soul may not be able to give me polished reply such as we get in schools and colleges, but if holy surroundings have their effect, and if walls have ears, and if 'mediums' have mouths to convey messages hidden deep down in sub-liminal self, then I expected to be told the truth and the whole truth. My informant was not startled in the least and even as a school master instructs to tiny student, he began to explain it all to me. "Sir, do you not know that Guru Gobind Singh never wielded an arm but to save a soul? Whoever died under

his blow died only on earth to rise in heaven. He was a messenger of God, He was all-love, He was saviour come on earth. He fought to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, not to wreck vengeance or build any empires." "This is quite true," I mumbled. "If this is true, then it should also be clear to you, as to why he did not return in person to the Punjab for love entertaineth no revenge. Not for him to take up arms against those who slew his sons, not for him to seek tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye! When he took up arms before, it was for the stricken-Punjab, for the sore-at-heart Kashmir, for the distressed Mother India, but not for any personal consideration. "All this is quite true" said I "but where comes in the Banda." "Just here" said he, "Banda was not Guru Gobind Singh, but his shadow; call him his supplement, if you like, but really he was the echo of Guru Gobind Singh. The sword of Banda struck but had no balm, he fought to kill but not to save " Then all of a sudden light jumped into dark recesses my heart like the glimmer of a fugitive lightning and I realised after all

that Banda Bahadur was what we call Nemesis in history *i. e.* Terrible Vengeance which comes *of itself*, reaching, recoiling on the tyrant like that boomrang of the Red Indians. Aurangzeb had sown wind and was now reaping whirl-wind. This explanation by that unlettered little soul of Nander came like a revelation to me for I realised that there is Justice in History as indeed there is justice in our own lives. Banda was born retribution, he was not Guru Gobind Singh but his reverse!

This startling little discovery of the mission of Banda Bahadur was confirmed when I read in history Banda's own description of his mission which he declared before a Mohammeden Viceroy a little before he was beheaded. Said he to Muhammed Amin Khan: "In all religions and sects, whenever disobedience and rebellion among mortal men passeth all bounds, the Great Avenger raiseth up a severe man like me for the punishment of their sins, and the due reward of their deeds :

'When He wisheth to desolate the world,
He placeth dominion in the hands of a tyrant'

“When He desireth to give the tyrant the recompense of his works, He sendeth a powerful man to give him his due reward in this world: as thou and I can see” On this Banda’s flesh was torn from his body by red-hot pincers and he expired under horrible tortures.

Banda Bahadur was a wonderful hero, dauntless, terrible, terrific. No other Indian wrestled so fearlessly with the Mughals as he did. No other Indian triumphed so rapidly as he did. Not for him to beat about the bush like Siva Ji, not for him to watch and wait. He moved like lightning, and used sledge-hammer blows. And although he lived like a meteor *i e.*, blasing life of transient splendour, yet his name will sparkle in history. He has come and gone, but the lesson that he taught will be a terrible object lesson to all kings and Emperors. During his execution, he uttered the following words to his executioners:—

“Who hath not suffered for his acts ?

Who hath not reaped what he hath sown ?

Forget not that ye shall obtain retribution for your deeds ; wheat springeth from wheat and barley from barley !”

GURU GOBIND SINGH JI'S HOLY WORDS.

Although the Guru's sacrifices and other doings are fairly well-known, yet there is great ignorance about his *Bani*, or writings. Hence, the following few extracts from His Writings will be of interest:—

I. Description of the Supreme Being.

In addition to other usual characteristics of the Supreme One, Guru Gobind Singh Ji addresses *Wahiguru* as under, bowing to Him and seeking His aid in his mission on earth:—

“I bow to Thee who holdeth the gold-tipped
Arrow in Thine Hand ;
I bow to Thee who art fearless, God of gods,
garbless, eternal ;
I bow to Thee who wieldeth the Scimitar, the
Kirpan, the Falchion and the Dagger to
smite darkness and evil ;
I bow to Thee who art ever the same, changeless ;
I bow to Thee who by invisible arrows punisheth
the wicked,
I bow to Thee whose Light pervadeth all the
fourteen worlds,

I bow to Thine Arrows and the Musket,
I bow to Thine sword, be-dazzling, spotless,
invincible ;
I bow to Thine powerful Mace and piercing
Lance before which naught is impregnable ;
I bow to Thine refulgent discus which though
invisible yet verily is ;
I bow to Thine invincible devouring Teeth,
that hold the world in a terrible grip ;
I bow to Thine Arrow backed by the cannon
which strike terror in the enemy's camp ;
I bow to Thine Sword and the Papier which
chop off the heads of all tyrants,
Yea, I bow to all of Thine weapons which Thou
wieldeth, to all such weapons as Thou
hurleth !
Thou turnest men like me from boneless blades
of grass into firm Himalayan mountains ;
Then Thou, O Lord, there is no other cherisher
of the poor"—(*Akal Ustat* 86).

II. Description of those who are on the Wrong Track.

Many people are wasting their time and energy in following the wrong track and in so doing they give up food, their occupation

or all active life. The Guru condemns them thus :—

“Who eat filth are swine-like,
Who bespatter themselves with dust are like
donkeys or elephant.

Who live at places of cremation are jackal-like.

Who live inmured in tombs are owlsh,

Who wander in the forest are deer-like,

Who impose silence or their tongue are like
dumb trees,

Who impose rigons of too much continence are
enact.

Who wander barefooted are beggar-like,

How shall man, devoted to wrath and lust and
henpecked by his wife, be saved without the
divine knowledge ?

Who liveth in the forest is like an evil spirit,

Who drinketh only milk is child-like,

Who liveth mainly on air is serpent-like,

Who eateth grass only and renounceth the world
is like an ox or a calf.

Who aimeth at flying in the air is no more than
a bird,

Who engageth in selfish concentration is no
more than an heron, a cat or a wolf,

Those who are really enlightened, they know

although they do not declare, that all such
are verily mistaken !

Who liveth and wriggleth on earth is like a
worm,

Who liveth to fly is no more than a sparrow,

Who eateth only the fruit is no more than of
monkey's cadre,

Who wandereth unseen is like an hot goblin,

Who swimmeth on water is only a swimming
spider,

Who eateth fire is like a *chakor*,

Who worshippeth the sun is merely another
lotus plum,

Who worshippeth the moon is at best only a
water.—(*Akal Ustat* 71-73).

Thus the whole world is obsessed by this
or that whim, and not knowing the Reality
wander far and wide !

III. His autobiographic description of His Mission on earth.

I come down from the holy *Himkunt*
mountain of Seven Horns of Silvery Snow,
where I lay absorbed in sleep of love, a state
of ecstasy which the Pandu chief aspired to

reach! Great were mine austerities and protracted mine devotion. I worshipped Him from whom Great-Death and the Vitalised Nature sprang like a mighty ebb and flow! Thus entwined with the Lotus-Feet of the One, I become *one* with Him! My father and mother performed holy austerities on earth, and by their devotion attached themselves to the Lord and the Master. This pang of ecstatic love had its response in the Supreme Heart who sent me down, a return of their lovē offering. Thus, I was born in this *Kal Yug*, my being still flooded with the same Light-eternal, with the same mystic devotion. Loth was I to come to this world, but I had no option but to come as the Supreme One had to obeyed!.. ...

The Blessed One spoke thus with His lotus lips: "Thou art my own, Mine only Son! I send thee to spread My Religion. Go and extend my Religion and restrain those who are mis-guided."

I stood up, bowed my head and folded my hands unto my Lord and Master, and

urged :—

“Down I go, my Lord, Thy Religion shall prevail as Thou vouchsafest Thine pro-offered blessing !”

I tell the world what the Lord told unto me. I bear no enmity to any one.”

(*Vichitra Natak, Chaupai*).

IV. All men are equal in His eyes !

“The temple and the mosque are the same,
The Hindu mode of worship and Muslmin mode
of prayer mean the same,
All men are equal in His eyes, it is through
error we think them different.”

(*Akal Ustat, 86*).

V. How to attain the Supreme One.

“How doth it avail to sit like a crane meditating
idly,
How doth to help thee to bathe in all the seven
seas,
Thou wasteth time here and masseth thine future ?
Infatuated and swayed by the flesh, thou spendest
life in vain !

Lend me their ear, I tell ye truth, O world !
They alone find the Lord who entertain true
love to the Beloved !!—(*Shabd Hazare*).

VI. His idea of the result of sacrifice.

This he wrote about his father's sacrifice,
while yet a child:—

“Guru Teg Bahadur is gone,
The world says alas ! alas !
The heaven rings with halle Injahs !
Welcoming the Hero on His return Home !!
The angels sing : the Victor comes back !!
(Vichitra Natak).

No commentary appears to be called for.
To write or add a word is to hold candle to
the Sun !!

THE END.

Besides, the lives of the other Gurus, by the same author, are expected to be published shortly. Sri Guru Amardev's Life and Anand Sahib, rendered into English and annotated, will come out first.

OTHER BOOKS ON SIKHISM.

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| 1. Life of Guru Gobind Singh—Prof. Kartar Singh, M. A., Khalsa College | 2/8/ |
| 2. Japji rendered into English and annotated—Prof. Teja Singh, M. A. | 1/-/ |
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