

HIGH ROADS OF SIKH HISTORY

BOOK-I

by
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OF
SIKH HISTORY

FOREWORD

A few years back, the Punjabi University decided to reprint some of the old books of the great Punjabi writers. In pursuance of our policy we have already published some of these works. The writers include Professor Puran Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, Professor Teja Singh, Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid and Sardar Harinder Singh Roop.

The present series of the booklet entitled "Highroads of Sikh History", originally written by the late Professor Teja Singh, is in three parts. Part I contains 15 episodes from Sikh history; Part II gives character-sketches of some important personalities of Sikh history; and Part III presents a brief history of Sikhism.

These booklets are as much needed by our young men and women now as these were two generations ago. But, despite their usefulness and demand, they had been out of print. The University acquired copyrights and decided to publish them. The books are written in a simple language and can be easily understood by school boys. There is a great dearth of this type of literature in Punjab, and it is hoped that this series would be a welcome addition to the literature needed for moral and religious instruction of our young people.

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A TRUE BARGAIN

There are two kinds of men in this world. There are those who wish to make money, and lead an easy life. They care only for this world and never think of God or of the next world. There are also others whose hearts are not in the things of this life. They do not care much for money and wish only to remember God and do good to their fellowmen.

The number of men, who are pleased with the things of this world, is large. They who, like Guru Nanak, love God above everything are very few.

Guru Nanak spent most of his time in singing the praises of God. This he began to do when he was a child. It can, therefore, be said about him that, as the child was so the man became.

In his early life Guru Nanak would not do any of those things which other people are so fond of doing. His father and mother told him many times that he ought to do some work which would bring him money, but it was impossible to get him to think of making money.

He was asked to look after the cattle, but his mind was fixed on something else, and the cattle were left to themselves. Then he tried to

become a farmer, a shopkeeper, and a horse-dealer, but to none of these things could he give his whole heart.

His father and mother grew anxious about him. "What shall we do with this boys," they said, "who is so idle and careless?"

After spending a long time in thought, they made up their minds to give him another chance. He was presented with some money and sent to Chuharkana, in the district of Sheikhpura in the Punjab, to buy salt and turmeric and other articles with which to trade.

Guru Nanak set out with his pockets full of money. He had not gone very far when he met some holy men, who wore no clothes. Guru Nanak went up to them and asked, "How is it, good men, that you have no clothes on your bodies? Are you too poor to buy them; or have you given them up because you do not need them?"

They answered, "Young man, it is our rule not to ask anyone for food or clothing. If we get no food to eat and no clothes to wear, we know how to do without them."

This reply of the holy men delighted Nanak. He forgot about his work and remained with them. He had not been with them very long before he discovered that they had no food for many days. As soon as he was aware of this he

ran to the nearest village and spent all his money in buying eatables for them. Then he came back with flour and ghee and other things, and gave them a good feast. Thus he spent all his money in feeding the poor.

But do you think he was sorry? No. He was not sorry. He, in fact, felt very happy. When he was asked what he had done with the money, he replied: "I bought food with it for the hungry. This, as you know, is the best use to which money can be put. To buy salt and turmeric with it would have been useless; I have bought things which will be usefull here and hereafter. This is really a true bargain."

BABAR AND GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak was staying with Bhai Lalo, a carpenter of saintly character, at Eminabad (District Gujranwala) when Babar, the Great Mughal, attacked the place. The result was that Eminabad and the villages near it were destroyed, a great number of the inhabitants killed, and their houses plundered.

Though so many were killed, some were yet able to escape. Among these were Guru Nanak and his companion, Mardana. Their lives were spared, probably because they were strangers.

But though Guru Nanak and Mardana, the bard, escaped death, they were not allowed to remain free. They were taken prisoners and compelled to work like slaves. The Guru was made to carry loads on his head, and Mardana had to look after horses.

But, do you think this made the Guru unhappy? No; he was quite content with his lot and sang songs in praise of God even in prison. It is said that while he sang and Mardana played on his rebeck, the Guru's load remained suspended in the air and horses stood still.

The Governor of the Jail was filled with surprise, and he reported the matter to Babar.

The Emperor felt sorry that he had destroyed a city which contained godly men like Guru Nanak. He made up his mind to go to the jail and see the holy man for himself.

When Babar arrived at the prison, he saw women grinding corn with their hand mills feeling very sad and miserable. He found also that Guru Nanak was in a trance and, as the story goes, his hand-mill was working of its own accord.

The Emperor tried to awaken the Guru from his sleep, but could not. The latter's tender heart had been so much hurt by the misery of the women and the death of innocent men that he had forgotten all about himself.

At last he awoke and sang a song in which he said, "O God ! you have always been kind to our people. You have saved them from misery and death; come and help these unfortunate creatures !"

The words of this song pierced the heart of the Emperor, and he fell at the feet of Guru Nanak. He also asked him to accept a present. The Guru would not take anything, but requested Babar to release all the prisoners of Eminabad.

The Emperor did so, and the captives went happily to their homes, blessing the holy man to whom they owed their freedom.

This was not the only act of mercy which Guru Nanak made Babar perform. Guru Nanak

thought of the captives who were still in prison. He once more sang a song which moved Babar to pity. The Emperor clothed the prisoners in robes of honour and set them free.

This pleased the holy man greatly, and Babar asked for his blessing.

The Guru said, "Your empire shall remain for a time. Remember, however, that you should be just; respect all holy men, and give up wine and gambling. Above all, you should show mercy to those whom you have defeated; and worship God always."

These were very noble words, which Guru Nanak spoke to the Emperor. Do you not think they are as good for us as they were for Babar ?

SHEIKH SAJJAN

Guru Nanak did many wonderful things in his life. One of the most remarkable things he could do was to change bad men into good men. He, indeed, knew how to make the sinful noble.

Sheikh Sajjan was a robber who lived in the time of Guru Nanak, but he did not look like a robber. To the people who did not know him he appeared to be kind and God-fearing. It was his custom to spread his carpet every morning and pray to God. He also carried a rosary in his hand, and with its help he was in the habit of repeating the Name of God thousands of times every day.

He appeared to be very kind and hospitable. He had built a temple and a mosque in his village, and he allowed Hindu travellers to stay in the temple for the night. The mosque gave shelter to the Muslims who wished to pass a night in that village.

Sheikh Sajjan, however, was not what he seemed to be. At heart he was cruel and took pleasure in killing and robbing people. This is how he did it. At night he would ask his guest to retire to rest, and, as soon as they had fallen

asleep, he would throw them into a well, After this he would take whatever they had.

Guru Nanak happened to spend a night in this village. As soon as the Sheikh saw the Guru, he said to himself, "This man must have much, for he looks so happy. I expect to get a good deal from him."

Sheikh Sajjan treated Guru Nanak with courtesy. Then he asked him to retire for the night. The Guru begged leave to recite hymn to God, as he always did before going to bed. The Sheikh agreed and the Guru sang a song which said, "Bronze is very bright to look at ; but if you reap it, your hands get blackened with it, Similarly some people appear to be good, but they are like houses whitened on the outside, but empty within. A man should be good from inside as well as outside."

There was something in the song as well as the singer which filled the heart of Sheikh Sajjan with remorse. He, therefore, fell at the feet of the Guru and asked pardon for his sins.

The Guru said, "You can have pardon only if you do two thing. Tell me what evil deeds you have done. At the same time return to the people what you have taken from them."

The Sheikh confessed that he had been guilty of many murders. He promised also to give away to the poor all he had.

After this he became a follower of the Guru. It is said that the first Sikh temple was built on the place where Sheikh Sajjan had met Guru Nanak. The Sheikh himself became a preacher of the Sikh doctrine.

GURU NANAK AT HARDWAR

Guru Nanak was very fond of travelling. Accompanied by Mardana, the Muslim singer. The Guru visited many places in the Punjab, Bengal the South of India, and Ceylon. It is said that he even went as far as Mecca, the holy place of the Muslims.

Wherever the Guru went he did something uncommon, but everything had a lesson for At all times it was his desire to change our ways of thinking ; he desired to lead us from falsehood to truth.

In this lesson you will be told what the Guru did at Hardwar. It will seem to be funny to you, but it is not without its moral.

Hardwar, as you know, lies on the bank of the river Ganges. It is a holy city and Hindus from all parts of India go there. The Hindus believe that they can bring peace to the souls of the dead by throwing their bones and ashes into the Ganges at Hardwar. They think, also, that by taking a bath in that river they can wash away their sins.

Once Guru Nanak went to Hardwar, and there he saw a large number of Hindus. He was sorry to find that, though everybody tried to

make his body clean, none attempted to clean his mind.

Among other thing the Guru noticed some persons standing in the stream with their faces turned towards the east, and throwing water in that direction. They believed that the water thus thrown would make the souls of their dead forefathers happy. The Guru went into the stream and stood amongst them. Then he turned his face towards the west and began to throw water in that direction. This caused not a little surprise amongst the people. Some thought the Guru was a Muslim.

“But what right has a Muslim, to come here ?” they asked.

Others believed he was a Hindu who did not know what he was doing.

The Guru knew all they were thinking and saying about him. So he suddenly stopped and said to his neighbour, “Good man, what are all these people doing ? Why are they throwing water towards the east ?”

The man replied, “Because, by doing so, they will make the souls of their dead forefathers happy.”

“How far away do their dead fore fathers live ?” asked Nanak.

To this there was no reply. But another

Hindu, who was very old and wise, said "They live thousands of miles away."

On hearing this the Guru again threw water towards the west, until he was stopped by a man who said to him, "What do you mean by doing this?"

"I am trying to send water to my fields which lie to the west of this place," the Guru replied. "Before I came here I sowed seed in some fields, But as no rain fell, the crops dried up. I am hoping to make them grow again with this water."

"How far are your fields from here?" asked one of the men who stood near him.

"Only a few hundred miles away," was the answer.

At this they all laughed and said, "How can you water your fields which are so far away from here?"

To this the Guru replied, "If this water cannot reach my fields only a few hundred miles away from this place, how can it reach your forefathers who, as you say, are thousands of miles away."

On hearing this the people did not know what to say.

GURU ANGAD AND THE PROUD MONK

Before his death Guru Nanak chose Bhai Lahna, afterwards called Guru Angad, to succeed him as Guru. By doing so he rejected the claims of his own two sons to that great honour. So pleased was he with Bhai Lahna that he used to say to his wife, "Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das are thy sons ; Lahna, who obeys me, is my son."

In truth, Bhai Lahna was most obedient. On cold winter mornings as well as hot summer afternoons he was ever ready to carry out his master's orders. If he was asked to build a wall, he was ready to do the work of a mason. If the Guru wanted him to carry a bundle of grass from the fields, he did his work smilingly. To obey the Guru was the greatest desire of his heart. Once the Guru asked him to wash his clothes at midnight, and he was ready to do so at once, though the sons of the Guru refused.

His obedience was equal to his devotion. It was Guru Nanak's custom to rise three hours before the dawn and go to the Ravi to bathe. After his bath he recited sacred songs until the sun rose in the east. Bhai Lahna always rose before Guru Nanak.

Thus from the very first Bhai Lahna took great pleasure in obeying and serving his master. He was a very humble man, free from all vanity, and he continued to be humble even when he became the Guru of the Sikhs. A story is told of him which shows how noble and how free from pride he was.

Guru Angad lived at Khadur, a famous Sikh town near Tarn Taran in the Amritsar district. The people of that town had much faith in the Guru and thought he could tell them the way to God.

In that town lived another religious man known as the Tapa. This man, who was much respected by the Jats of the district, was very proud of his piety. He used to tell people that he could cure their ills, and punish evil by means of his great religious powers. Being jealous of Guru Angad, he told every man he met that the Guru was false.

On one occasion the son of the chief of the Jats of Khadur, who did not believe in Guru Angad fell ill. All kinds of remedies were tried, but the boy did not get well. At last the father brought his son to the Guru. The Guru said that he would get well if he gave up drinking and served holy men and repeated God's Name. The boy said he would do so and, by the grace of God, he was restored to health.

Now it became known everywhere in the

town that the Guru had cured the headman's son. This made him all the more respected in the eyes of the people. The Tapa, however, boasted that he had brought about the cure and not the Guru. When the latter heard this, he said, "Let others speak ill of me, but I shall not speak ill of them." Thereafter he forgot all about the Tapa.

The Tapa, however, was ill-disposed to the Guru and looked for an opportunity to harm him.

It so happened that on one occasion no rains fell. Corn became dear and the cattle began to die. All the Jats of the town went together to the Tapa and begged him to bring about rain fall.

"Why have you come to me for help?" said he, "Go to Guru Angad whom you worship. You are rightly punished for your sins, for you have left me, a truly religious man, and worship Angad, who has a wife and children."

When they heard this the Jats said, "How can we ask the Guru to get us rains? He does not say that he can bring rain."

To this the Tapa replied, "If you turn him out of the city, you will have rain in less than twenty-four hours. If, on the other hand, he stays here, let him then cause the rain to fall."

The Jats went to the Guru and asked him to bring the rains. The Guru replied, "It is not

in the power of any human being to do so. Only God can cause the rain to fall."

The Jats told him that the Tapa would cause the rain to fall, if he left the town. The Guru at once prepared to leave. Many people tried to get him to change his mind, but he would not listen to them, and left the place.

Still there was no rain, and the Jats became angry. They thrashed the Tapa severely. Afterwards they went in a body to the Guru and asked him to come back.

The Guru came back to the town, but when he was told that the Tapa had been ill-treated by the Jats he felt sorry. He said to the people, "If you want to follow me, you should learn how to forgive even the wrong-doers."

GURU HAR GOBIND IN THE GWALIOR FORT

After the death of Guru Arjun, his son Guru Har Gobind succeeded to the *gaddi*. The musicians sang the Guru's hymns, and the Sikhs read the Granth Sahib, when he was declared Guru by Baba Budha.

But while other Gurus had lived in peace and had no occasion to fight, Guru Har Gobind was a warrior as well as a religious man. He said, "In the Guru's house there should be found always two things; charity to satisfy people's wants and arms to punish the wicked."

He, therefore, asked, the Sikhs to bring him arms and horses instead of money. He had also a body-guard of fifty-two brave and fearless Sikhs who were ready to lay down their lives for him at any moment. Above all, he was fond of hunting. After teaching religion to the Sikhs in the temple and taking his morning meal, the Guru was in the habit of going to distant forests in the afternoon to hunt, accompanied by bold Sikh hunters as well as hounds and hawks and leopards.

Thus the Guru was a soldier as well as a saint. It is said his glory was four times grea-

ter than that of the Gurus before him. While they had sat upon couches, he sat upon a throne.

All this was reported to the Emperor Jahangir by one Chandu, who had brought about the death of Guru Arjun. The Emperor was told that the Guru had become proud : it was time for him to be taught a lesson.

Jahangir, therefore, sent two courtiers to bring Guru Har Gobind to his court. When these courtiers came to the Guru at Amritsar, the Sikhs felt very much troubled. They feared lest Guru Har Gobind should also come to grief in the same way as his father.

Some wanted him to go; others, however, advised him not to obey the king at all. The Guru's mother was the most unhappy of all. "When my husband left for the Mughal Emperor's court," she said, "I felt very miserable. Now that you are going there too. I do not know what will become of me. It is impossible to live without you." The Guru, however, took leave of his mother and the Sikhs, saying that God would protect him from all harm.

He reached Delhi, where he met the Emperor Jahangir, who had many talks with him about God and other religious matters. All these showed to the Emperor the wisdom and nobility of the Guru.

One day Jahangir and the Guru went out hunting. In a forest the Emperor was attacked by a tiger, but his life was saved by the Guru who killed the tiger with a blow of his sword.

This proved to the Emperor that the Guru was strong of arm as well as noble of heart. After that he took the Guru with him wherever he went.

All the people showed great respect for the Guru, and the Emperor thought that, if this went on, his visitor would become too dangerous for the government to deal with. "Something should be done to save the state from harm," he thought to himself. He asked the advice of the ministers, who persuaded Jahangir to shut up the Guru in a fort and thus put him out of the people's sight.

The Emperor acted on this advice, and sent the Guru as a state prisoner to the fort of Gwalior.

In the fort the Guru was well received. The Governor Hari Das as well as the rajahs who were shut up there were made happy by his coming. They all thought that the Guru would set them free from their misery. They knew also that the fort would become a more pleasant place on account of the presence of the Guru there.

And they were right in thinking so. As soon as the Guru saw the dirty clothes and thin and weak bodies of the rajahs, he was moved to great

pity. He asked the Governor to give them clean clothes and wholesome food. This was done and the prison was changed from a hell into a heaven for them.

But though the Guru did much to make these rajahs comfortable, he himself went without food for a long time. He would only take the food that was bought with money obtained by honest work. Some Sikhs, therefore worked at a brass-smith's shop and bought food for the Guru with their day's wages. This food the Guru took with great pleasure.

The Emperor had thought that by throwing the Guru into jail, he would be weakening his influence. But the result was quite different. The sufferings of the Guru increased the people's respect for him. They came in large numbers to Gwalior and, after kissing the walls of the fort in which the Guru was imprisoned, went back to their homes.

Even some Muslims of great position raised their voices in sympathy for the Guru. At last the Emperor was moved to release the holy man.

When the Guru was about to leave the fort, the rajahs, who were there, felt very unhappy at his departure. The Guru therefore, would not leave the fort unless the rajahs were also released.

The Emperor was assured that if they were freed they would do no harm to the state. He

was satisfied and ordered that as many as could hold the skirt of the Guru were free to come out of the fort. The Guru put on a cloak having fifty-two pieces making up the skirt; and each rajah took hold of a tassel and come out. All blessed the Guru as saviour inside the prison as well as outside of it.

GURU TEG BAHADUR AND DHIR MAL

A poet has said that there are three main rules of conduct : the Iron Rule, the Silver Rule and the Golden Rule. Those who act upon the Iron Rule return always evil for good; the Silver Rule asks us to do good to those who are kind to us; but the Golden Rule is the noblest of all : it requires that we return good for evil. In other words, we should be ready to help even those who call themselves our enemies

In this story you will be told how Guru Teg Bahadur acted upon the Golden Rule. He did so by forgiving the enemy who was at his mercy.

After the death of Guru Har Gobind, his son Teg Bahadur had gone to live in Bakala with his mother and wife. Now it so happened that Guru Har Krishan had said on his death-bed that his successor would be found in that very village.

This filled the hearts of many relatives of the Guru with hopes of obtaining the *gaddi*. Many of them, therefore, set themselves up as Gurus as soon as Guru Har Krishan breathed his last.

This caused much trouble to the Sikhs. "Whom shall we call our real Guru ? Who is to

receive our offerings? Who will show us the true path? Who will make us follow the way of goodness?" These were the questions they anxiously asked themselves.

At last a Sikh came from Gujrat in the Decan with five hundred gold mohars. He had vowed to make an offering of these to the Guru, if he should escape shipwreck. His ship had reached the harbour safely and he had come to Bakala to make good his promise.

But his surprise was great when he saw so many men calling themselves Gurus. He did not know whom he should present the money. At last he hit upon a plan to solve the mystery.

He visited them in turn and gave two gold mohars to each. Every one of them was satisfied and blessed him. He found that each of these Gurus praised himself, but called all others false.

This led him to think that all of them were pretenders and that he had yet to discover the true Guru.

At length he found the true Guru. No sooner did he go to Teg Bahadur with an offering of two gold mohars than he said to him, "Where are the rest? You promised to offer five hundred gold mohars to the Guru."

At this the Sikh fell at his feet and called him the true Guru. Then he went to the house top

and shouted loudly, "I have found the true Guru ! I have found the true Guru !" Hearing this many Sikhs came and placed Teg Bahadur on the Guru's throne. After this Guru Teg Bahadur took up the leadership of the Sikhs and gave them instruction.

Dhir Mal, a relative of the Guru, whose claim had been set aside, became his deadly enemy. He plotted with other evil men to kill him. They shot many bullets at him, but though some struck the Guru, none proved fatal. His enemies, however, removed much of his valuable property while he lay sick. When the Guru heard this he did not feel any grief. The Guru, indeed, was one of those men who are ever the same in joy as well as in grief, in pain as well as in pleasure.

But though the Guru did not think of punishing Dhir Mal, the Sikhs resolved to get rid of the wicked man. They went in a body to his house, and, finding the door shut against them, forced their way in. Then they seized a *massand* or follower of Dhir Mal whom, he had asked to kill the Guru. They tied his hands behind his back and brought himself into the presence of the holy man. They brought also all the valuables that Dhir Mal had taken away. More than this, they took possession of all the personal property of Dhir Mal and carried it to the Guru.

When the Guru looked at Dhir Mal and his

companions, they hung their heads in shame. Tears filled their eyes, and with a look of humility, which cannot be described, they asked the Guru's pardon. "We have erred, O true King!" they said. "Forgive us. You are a father to us and, though we have behaved like bad sons, be kind to us."

When the Guru saw their heads bent with shame, he forgave them. He also returned their property to them.

To the Sikhs who told the Guru that the biter should be bit, the Guru said, "Forgiveness is a great virtue. It is better to forgive an enemy than to go on a pilgrimage. Practise forgiveness always, O true Sikhs!"

BHAI KANHAIYA

For a long time the Sikh Gurus lived lives of peace. They divided their time between serving men and singing hymns in praise of God. To feed the strangers, to instruct the Sikhs and to pray to God gave them great joy. For them worship was the only work.

But there came a time when the very saints had to fight. The Sikhs still sang of God and took delight in serving others, but service often took the form of dying on the battle field. How did this come about? How was saint changed into a holy fighter?

Guru Arjun Dev was much troubled by the the Emperor of Delhi, and in the end was put to death by him. Guru Teg Bahadur also suffered much at the hands of the rulling princes, and gave his life to save his religion. All these things led the Sikhs to believe that if they were to live they must learn to fight. Under Guru Har Gobind the Sikhs learnt how to use the sword, to shoot arrows, to march to the battlefield and fight the enemy.

Then they found a leader in Guru Gobind Singh who led them to battle against the enemies of their faith. Guru Gobind Singh was as well-

known for his bravery as for his piety. He was strong and handsome, and rode a dark steed on a saddle ornamented with gold. In his turban there was a crest set with jewels. He carried a bow which was painted green, and from his belt there hung a sharp sword. On his wrist sat a hawk.

Whoever looked on the Guru wished to be brave and good like him. The result was that Sikhs came from all directions, ready to do and die for him.

These Sikhs were not like ordinary soldiers. They were not cruel, and they did not find pleasure in taking human life. If we read about the battles in which Guru Gobind Singh fought, we shall come across many deeds of bravery as well as of generosity. Of one such deed we are going to tell you here.

The enemies of Guru Gobind Singh had surrounded Anandpur, the home of the Guru, from all sides. Their great desire was to drive him out of the place. The Guru, however, fought bravely, and his foes found it difficult to turn him out. While the battle was going on, a Sikh was seen going here and there over the battle-field, He was Bhai Kanhaiya. He was not a fighter, but still he liked to serve the Guru. So he thought to himself, "I shall go to the battle field and give water to the wounded and the dying soldiers. Thus I shall be able to do my bit for

the Guru”.

With this idea he moved freely among the soldiers. Guns roared, swords shone, and arrows flew in the air, but Bhai Kanhaiya was not afraid. He poured water down dying men's throats, and they opened their eyes and blessed the old man. He also gave drink to the soldiers; who were sick and tired and helpless. He thus comforted them and restored them to activity. But do you think he gave water to the Sikh soldiers only? No, he gave water to all, Sikhs and Muslims alike.

This was reported to the Guru by some Sikhs who did not like Bhai Kanhaiya helping their enemies. “Muslims are our foes,” said they; “we wish to defeat them. But this old man is saving their lives by giving them water.”

At this the Guru called Bhai Kanhaiya and asked him, “Is it true that you have been giving water to hundreds of the Muslim soldiers?”

“Yes, True King,” said the Bhai, “I have been giving water to all, Sikhs as well as Muslims. And in doing so, I have been acting upon your own advice. It was you who told us that all God's creatures are one, and we should treat them all alike.”

The Guru was happy to hear these words. It was all true, and Bhai Kanhaiya had been behaving nobly. So he sent him away saying,

“You are a holy man. You have understood my teaching correctly. Go on doing your noble work.”

Those who follow Bhai Kanhaiya are called Sevapanthis or Men of Service. These men do not beg alms, but live by honest labour. Their greatest pride is to serve others.

GURU HAR RAI AND THE FLOWERS

“Rise early in the morning. Fill your hearts with the love of God. Always practise charity. Speak with civility. Be humble. Do good to others. Do not eat or sleep too much. Spend only what you earn with your own hands. Day and night go and mix with pious men and sing with them the Guru’s hymns.”

What would you think of the man who writes such noble words ? Surely you would think him to be a man pious as well as humble, God-fearing as well as tender.

Such indeed was Guru Har Rai, He was known for his simplicity far and near. He never ate rich food, but lived on simple fare, He took some hours off from his time for sleep, and spent them in thinking of God.

He received the rich and the poor with equal kindness. Whatever offerings people brought him he gave away to the poor. He told the Sikhs also to have free kitchens to give food to all strangers.

He was so noble that he forgave his enemies as soon as they asked his pardon. When the eldest son of Shah Jahan fell ill, the Emperor requested the Guru to give him some medicine.

The Guru at once forgot that Shah Jahan had been once his enemy. He sent him a medicine which soon cured his son.

He was kind not only to men, but even to birds and animal and flowers.

Though fond of the chase, he caught animals not to kill them but to keep them. He had a zoological garden of his own where these animals were kept. His followers used to visit the garden and take delight in watching the movements of the animals.

He was especially fond of the deer. But he caught the deer not for their flesh. He loved to keep them in his garden.

One day as he was hunting, he saw a snake that had been sorely wounded, and was able to move only with great difficulty. Many worms had settled on its skin and were causing it much pain. The Guru saw its sad condition and was moved to great pity. He, therefore, freed it from its pain.

He was tender to all, men and birds and flowers. He especially loved the rose, and it gave him great pleasure to spend his time in a garden. There he looked at the beautiful flowers and praised their Maker.

One day he was passing through a bed of roses. Roses bloomed everywhere, and this

delighted his heart, He admired their colour and perfume, but, above all, he sang the praises of God who had made such beautiful things.

As he was moving about in that bed of flowers, a rose was broken off its stem. You will understand that he did not remove the flower from its stem himself, but it had fallen off by chance. It was a simple thing, you would say. But the child Har Rai was not like us, who for mere play love to pluck flowers, uproot trees, shoot birds and kill animals.

He began to weep and was very sorry that the flower had been broken. He felt as sad as we would feel when we injure someone we love.

What was he to do then? He would take care that in future no flower was broken from its stem on account of his carelessness.

He, therefore, wiped the tears from his face. Then he tucked up his blouse with his own small hands, so that it did not touch or injure the flowers. After this he again began to move about in that bed of roses.

THE FORTY WHO WERE SAVED

Have you ever been to Muktsar in the district of Ferozepur and seen the large tank there? A big fair is held in Muktsar every year on the Maghi day. This fair is attended by thousands of Sikhs from all over the Punjab. They think it an act of piety to visit Muktsar. It is because the forty Sikhs called Immortals died there. The place was named after them.

Who were the Forty Immortals?

Anandpur, the home of Guru Gobind Singh, was surrounded by the armies of his enemies, the Governors of Sirhind, Delhi and Lahore as well as the Rajas and hill chiefs of Kangra, Nurpur, Jammu, Chamba and others. Their one desire was to turn the Guru out of his stronghold of Anandpur.

The Guru, however, would not go. Almost all his soldiers were killed and his food supplies were cut off, and yet the Guru did not think of leaving Anandpur. So it was thought that nobody could conquer his proud spirit.

When force failed, the enemies began to try gentler methods. They sent word to the Guru that if he left Anandpur, he and his Sikhs would be allowed to leave the place without any harm.

Mata Gujri, mother of Guru Gobind Singh,

was feeling the sufferings of the Sikhs very much. So she said to her brave son, "My son, change your mind. Leave the fort now and save your people. The Turks and the Rajas promise not to harm us when we leave this place. Why should you then have needless fears? If you live you will take this place back from your enemies. But to remain here now means certain death. Have pity on your dear Sikh soldiers. They are dying of hunger, and they can expect no help from anything."

When the Sikhs heard what Mata Gujri had said to the Guru, they took heart. Soon they also said to the Guru, "We are dying of hunger, O True King! If we remain here, death is certain. If we leave this place we shall live and fight our enemies. So allow us to go."

In spite of this the Guru would not leave Anandpur. At last he told his people to wait for five days more, and then he would depart.

But some of the Sikhs were not willing to wait. They thought to themselves, "We have served the Guru for a long time, but he does not care for us at all. We have asked him to leave this place, but he asks us to stay here and starve. If we obey him, we die; but if we leave this place, we shall live and fight. So it is better to break with the Guru. Let us tell him he is no longer our Guru and we are no more his Sikhs."

At this some forty Sikhs left Anandpur, but when they were back in their homes they felt very

miserable. They were hated by everybody, because they had deserted their Guru in the hour of need. Nobody desired to speak to them, and none wished to call them his friends. Even their women chided them. "You are cowards," said they, "worse than women. He who calls you men, is himself a coward."

Thus ill-treated by their people, they made up their minds to return to the Guru and die for his sake. The Guru had left Anandpur by that time, and had reached Khidrana, now called Muktsar, after many wanderings.

While he was at Khidrana, a Sikh who had been told to sit on a tree to keep watch said, "The enemy is coming." On hearing this the Guru took up his bow and arrows and mounted his horse. He then went to a sandhill and watched the enemy from there. But in the meantime they had been stopped on their march towards the city by some Sikhs. Who were these men? They were the forty brave Sikhs, who had resolved to go back to their Guru.

Leaving their homes they had come to Khidrana in search of him. Here they challenged the enemy who were pursuing the Guru. Their foes were many and they were but a few; nevertheless they did not allow this to frighten them. They fought bravely and died in the service of him whom they loved most.

After the battle was over, the Guru visited the battlefield. Great was his surprise to see that

some of the Sikhs, who had left him for fear of their lives, had willingly sacrificed themselves for his sake.

One of them Mahan Singh, who lay dying, kissed the feet of the Guru and requested him to pardon them for their desertion. The Guru forgave them and said, "It is never too late to mend. The Sikhs who have died here for me, shall be called 'Immortals' on account of their bravery."

And thus it was that they were henceforth known as the Forty Immortals.

THE FIVE BELOVED

It was the Baisakhi Day, New Year's Day of the Indians. A big fair was held at Anandpur, to which people came from all parts of the country.

When Guru Gobind Singh saw the devout and fearless Sikhs assembled at Anandpur in large numbers, his heart leapt with joy. He ordered carpets to be spread on a plot of raised ground. He said also that the open space near the mound should be enclosed by tent walls.

People wondered what the Guru meant by all this. They began to wonder all the more when the Guru asked a trusted Sikh to go to the enclosure at mid-night and tie five goats there. He forbade him to tell this to anyone, and gave orders that no one was to go within the tent walls.

Next day the Guru rose very early. After he had said his prayers and recited the Japji Sahib, he put on his armour. Then he told the people that there would be a meeting in the open ground.

At this the Sikhs ran to take their seats on the ground fixed for the meeting. They were very eager to hear the words of the Guru, because they always filled them with courage and hope.

When all were seated, the Guru rose from his seat. He drew his sword and asked the

Sikhs, "Is there any one amongst you ready to lay down his life for me?" At this everybody grew silent.

When no reply was received, the Guru asked the same question a second time. Even then the people kept silent. But the Guru was determined and he said a third time, "If there is any true Sikh here, let him give me his head as an offering."

What reply could the people give? They had gone there to find life, but here was the Guru asking them to throw it away. He was testing their faith.

At last one Daya Ram of Lahore rose and said, "O True King, my head is at your service." The Guru's face shone with joy. He took Daya Ram to the enclosed space, and asked him to sit there. He then came out, after cutting off a goat's head with one stroke of his sword. He showed to the Sikhs the sword from which drops of blood were falling. At this many grew pale with fear.

The Guru asked again, "Is there any other true Sikh who will give me his life?" This question of the Guru made people tremble with fear. "What is the matter with the Guru?" they asked. "He has already taken the life of poor Daya Ram. Is he not satisfied with that? Why does he want more blood?"

But Dharam Das of Delhi answered, "O Great

King, take my head." The Guru then looked stern, took Dharam Das to the enclosure, and seated him near Daya Ram. He then killed another goat, and came back to the Sikhs with the sword, dripping blood.

But imagine the surprise of the Sikhs when he asked for the head of a third man. This made the people think that the Guru had gone mad. So they went to his mother and said, "The Guru does not know what he is doing. He has already killed two Sikhs, but he is not satisfied with that. He asks for more blood. It is time for you to interfere".

The mother heard all this and sent word to Guru Gobind Singh. But the Guru was so intent on his own purpose that he did not mind what others were saying.

The third person to answer the Guru's call was Muhkam Chand of Dwarka. The Guru took him to the enclosure, killed another goat, and showed the sword, covered with blood, to the Sikhs.

The Guru called out for a fourth Sikh. This made all fear for their lives. Some ran away to seek safety, and others stood with their heads bent with shame. At last one Sahib Chand, a resident of Bidar, came forward and said, "True King, take my life. It is not worth much." The Guru did as he had done before. Then he came forth and asked for a fifth Sikh's head.

On this most of the remaining Sikhs left the place and fled in all directions. Amongst those who remained was one, Himmat of Jaggannath, who said to the Guru, "You can take my life, by all means." The Guru took him also inside the enclosure, and killed the last goat.

He then looked at the five true Sikhs, and his heart was filled with joy. He said to them, "You are mine, and I am yours. There is no difference between you and me now."

He asked them to put on beautiful clothes and come back to the place, where some Sikhs were still to be found.

They did so, and the people, who looked at them, marvelled at their glory as well as at wisdom of the Guru. In their hearts they were ashamed of themselves.

The Guru then spoke "thus, In the time of Guru Nanak there was one true Sikh, Bhai Lahna, but now we have five. The Sikh religion will live therefore and no power will be able to destroy it. Moreover, people formerly were baptised with the water in which the Gurus had washed their feet—this was a sign of humility. But now, if we are to live, we should be brave and know the use of arms. In future, therefore, at the time of their baptism, the Sikhs shall drink water stirred with a dagger. It shall be called *Amrit*. This water will turn jackals into lions, timid people into brave warriors."

After this the Guru poured water into an iron vessel and stirred it with a two-edged sword. He then repeated over it certain sacred verses. His wife also came with Indian sweetmeats, called *patasha*. The Guru put the sweets into the water and said, "Now that I have put sweets in to the water, the Sikhs will cultivate sweetness live in peace with each other."

After that he asked the five Sikhs to stand. When they had repeated the first verse of the Japji he gave them five palmfuls of the *Amrit* to drink. He also said to them. "You are now Singhs or lions. You must wear long hair, a comb, a sword, a pair of drawers and a steel bracelet. You should practise arms and never turn your backs when on the battlefield. You should always help the poor and protect those who seek your help."

When the five Sikhs had been baptised, the Guru stood before them with folded hands and asked them to baptise him. They felt they were not fit to do so, but he urged them to do it. At last they did as they were commanded. The Guru was baptised and he called the five Sikhs his *Panj Payare* or the Five Beloved.

AMRITSAR

As Benares is a holy city of the Hindus and Mecca a sacred city of the Muslims, so Amritsar is a holy city of the Sikhs.

Four hundred years ago Amritsar was a small village. Guru Ram Das, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs, dug out a tank there. This was called Amritsar or the "Tank of Immortality." The city, which grew round the Tank was called Ramdas-pur, after its founder.

Guru Arjun, the next Guru, continued the work of his father, and built a beautiful temple in the centre of the Tank. It is called the Golden Temple now. Guru Arjun made this town the chief city of the Sikhs, and named it Amritsar.

The city grew in size and prosperity. When the Sikhs took up arms it was still their chief town.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan invader, attacked the city. He destroyed the temple and filled up the tank. This offended the Sikh feelings.

They began to rebuild the city. They repaired the temple as well as the tank, and improved also the city in many other ways.

Amritsar went on increasing in size and importance till Ranjit Singh came to rule over the Punjab. As a noble Sikh it was his great desire to make Amritsar a big city. He also wished to make the Golden Temple beautiful. Large sums of money were spent on it. It was Ranjit Singh who placed sheets of copper gilt on the temple. From these gilt sheets it came to be known as the Golden Temple.

But Amritsar is important not only in the religious way. It is also a great centre of trade. Two fairs, one at the Baisakhi in April, the other at the Diwali in November, are held there every year. These fairs were at first only religious, but now they are useful for purposes of trade also.

Amritsar is known especially for its shawls which are made by Kashmiri weavers. Carpets also are made there, and they sell for heavy prices. The city is also famous for its silk goods. Among other things, it produces soap, carved wood, ivory and brass-work, and it does a brisk trade in cloth, grain, and ghee.

If you ever go to Amritsar, you should not miss seeing the Golden Temple. Its walls are made of marble, and its dome is plated with copper gilt. Under the dome you will find the Granth Sahib, the sacred book of the Sikhs. The temple stands in the middle of a pool of clear water. On all four sides are buildings splendid to look at.

The most notable of all these buildings is the Akal Takht, or the Throne of God. In this place are kept the swords and other weapons of the Gurus. There is a tower, known as Baba Atal, which was built in memory of a son of Guru Har Gobind. It is nine storeys high, because the boy was nine years old when he died. Other buildings are also very high. If you wish to have a fine view of the city, you should go to the top of one of the minarets to the east.

Other places of interest are the Town Hall and the Hall Bazar. The Ram Bagh, the pleasure garden of Ranjit Singh, is a fine place for an evening walk. The fort of Gobindgarh to the west of the city was built by Ranjit Singh, and is worth seeing even today.

The Durgiana is a temple, in the midst of a tank, built by the Hindus. It is visited by a large number of people every day. People also go to see the Khalsa College which has very fine buildings and playgrounds. Sikh students from all parts of the Punjab go to study there.

SIKH SOLDIERS

India has many martial classes. There are the Dogras, who make quiet, clean and steady soldiers. There are the Jats also. They are big men, slow in movement but stubborn fighters. The Pathans are quick, and the Garhwalis are brave.

But of them all the Sikhs make the best soldiers. Some time back an Englishman wrote thus about the Sikh soldiers, "They are very brave and can bear hunger and cold. To them a march of fifty miles a day is nothing. They do not care for rich food. They can live on a little parched gram, which they wash down their throat with cold water. When they move out, they do not take any tents with them. They do not care for any luggage; all they take with them is a *lota* for water and two blankets. One blanket they use for themselves and, with the other, they protect their steed from the cold."

This was written about the Sikh soldiers many years ago. This does not mean that they have relaxed, for they are as brave now as they ever were.

During the Great War, which was fought against the Germans, the Sikhs proved themselves to be among the finest soldiers in the world. This

will be clear from what follows.

A Havildar, who had been a gymnastic instructor, was in command of his section. Suddenly he and his men were attacked by the Germans, who killed most of them. Still the Havildar did not lose heart, and went on fighting with his bayonet. In this way he killed several of the enemy. After some time, however he found that his weapons were bent or blunted. This did not dismay him, and he seized a sword from the hand of a dying soldier and went on fighting. He himself was wounded five times, and yet he did not lay down his sword. He returned from the field victorious, but very ill. It took a year for his wounds to heal.

There is another story which shows the heroism of the Sikhs in France.

A trench was held by a Company of the 15th Sikhs. The enemy in large numbers lay opposite and was planning an attack.

In order to fight successfully the Sikhs needed bombs. But from where were they to be obtained ?

An officer offered to carry the bombs over a distance of two hundred and fifty yards. But could he have done that alone ?

Ten Sikhs volunteered to accompany him, carrying with them a hundred bombs in boxes. Thus they moved on for sixty yards, but then they came under heavy fire. Man after man was

shot dead, and only three were left when they reached within thirty yards of their goal. The Bombs were, however, quite safe.

By this time the Germans understood the object of the movement of these soldiers. They rained bullets on them in such large numbers that it was impossible to go farther. The boxes were therefore, broken open, and the three Sikhs carried as many bombs as they could. One of them was then shot dead, and only two were left. Still on they went crawling over the dead and the wounded. Thus walking through mud and water, they at last reached their goal.

An English General to whom this story was told said, "Who will doubt after hearing this story that the Sikhs *are* Singhs (lions)?"

PRINCE NAU NIHAL SINGH'S MARRIAGE

In the year 1837 the city of Amritsar was the scene of much joy and merrymaking. Prince Nau Nihal Singh, the grandson of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was about to be married. The Maharaja wished that the marriage should be the best of its kind in the history of the Punjab. He and his sardars had spent much time and money, therefor, in making preparations for this happy event.

First of all, the Rajas of the Patiala, Jind, Nabha and Faridkot, the Nawab of Maler Kotla, the sardar of Kapurthala, and the hill Rajas of Mandi and Nurpur came to take part in the marriage. Of the British officials who had been invited, Sir Henry Fane, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India, was alone able to attend.

The General was first met by Prince Sher Singh and other at Hari Ka Patan, on the Sutlej. Five miles away from Amritsar, Sir Henry Fane was received by Prince Kharak Singh, the Prime Minister, and other high State Officials. First he was presented with a purse of Rs. 5,000/- to be

given away in charity, and then he was taken to his camp. He was at that time accompanied by about 3,000 horseman, whose clothes shone brightly with jewels.

Among those who went to receive the Commander-in-Chief, Raja Dhian Singh, the Prime Minister, looked most impressive. The dress he wore was very costly. It was covered all over with jewels. The horse he rode had been brought from Persia. Its saddle and bridle were worked with gold. It is said that on the breast of the Prime Minister shone a French breast-plate.

The Commander-in-Chief was taken to his camp, where he was presented with 2,100 budkis of gold and 500 trays of sweetmeats.

Next day he met the Maharaja in his garden-house in the Ram Bagh. The Lion of the Punjab, though old, was yet strong. He was dressed in yellow, and rode an elephant. He was followed by his sardars, who were covered with gold, silver and jewels.

The meeting took place under a canopy, in front of the house of the Maharaja. It is said that the floor was covered with rich Kashmir shawls, and the canopy itself was supported by silver poles. The Maharaja, on meeting the General, asked him many questions about the British army and its methods of warfare.

That very day marriage presents were given to the bridegroom. Sir Henry Fane presented

eleven thousand rupees and Raja Dhian Singh one lakh and twenty-five thousand. In all, the presents came to the value of fifty lakhs of rupees.

Next day the bridegroom was invested with the bridal wreath at the Golden Temple. There the Maharaja made an offering of five hundred rupees to the Granth Sahib. He also gave away great sums in charity.

In the afternoon the marriage party started for Attari, in the district of Amritsar, where the bride's father lived. On the way the Maharaja scattered money among thousand of the poor who lined the road on both sides.

Thus the marriage procession reached the house of Sardar Sham Singh, father of the bride. Then guns were fired, drums were beaten, and pipes and trumpets sounded. Sardar Sham Singh presented the Maharaja with one hundred and one gold mohars and five horses. Other princes and sardars also got mohars and horses according to their importance.

Then the bridegroom was taken to the castle of the Sardar, where people were waiting to receive him. First he was introduced to the people present. After this, the marriage ceremony was performed. The wedding being over, there was a display of fire works.

Next day a big enclosure was formed in the open. It was five miles round and had eighty gateways. All the gates were guarded by soldiers.

Their duty was to see that none went out without receiving a rupee; and that one who had received the money once did not come in again. It is said in this way more than a million rupees were distributed.

This distribution of money was a grand spectacle. The dowry was equally grand. The bridegroom was given one hundred horses with golden saddles and bridles, one hundred and one cows, one hundred and one buffaloes, one hundred camels, eleven elephants, ornaments worth thousands of rupees, gold and silver utensils, silks, shawls, jewels and pearls. The clothes for the bride were numerous. They covered the space of an acre.

After the marriage the party reached Lahore. Next day in the Shalamar Garden a grand feast was arranged. The Garden was lighted with many lamps, and flowers were seen everywhere. It looked like the garden of Paradise.

After entertaining the guests the Maharaja showed his army to the General. The army was eighteen thousand strong and was well armed and clothed. The Maharaja was delighted to see the British army also, and learnt many useful things about war from the General.

Then Sir Henry Fane was shown jewels. He also joined the Holi festival when the Maharaja with his own hands covered him with red powder and yellow saffron.

After this he took his leave. Beautiful shawls, swords, an elephant and horses were given to him at the time of his departure.

SARAGARHI

You know how brave and fearless the Sikh soldiers are! They never fear danger, nor do they lose their hearts in times of difficulty. They die fighting on the battle field, but never run away from it.

Many stories are told of their bravery. They all show that the Sikhs will die, rather than give way to the enemy. It is said that no one can conquer to the soul of the Khalsa. He always remains proud and fearless to the end.

Have you heard the story of Saragarhi? This story shows of what stuff the Sikh soldiers are made.

Saragarhi is a mile and a half from Fort Lockhart in the North-Western Frontier Province. It is not really a fort, but a military out post. How it was defended by the Sikhs on the 12th September, 1898, against the Afridis is a tale of unique courage and chivalry.

Twenty-one soldiers of the 36th Sikhs were living at Saragarhi. They had never been to war, but soon they were to know what a war was like, for they were attacked by one thousand Pathans carrying arms. It was thus a case of twenty-one against a thousand.

You will think that the Sikh soldiers were filled with fear on seeing so many raiders. No, they were not at all afraid. The Pathans attacked them again and again, but the Sikhs stood firm.

This went on for more than six hours. The foes fired at the Sikhs, and wounded and killed some of them, but even this did not make them surrender the fort.

At last the soldiers who were living in Fort Lockhart heard of the desperate condition of the Sikhs at Saragarhi. One hundred of them set out to help them, but before they could reach Saragarhi, the enemy drove them back.

Thus the Sikhs at Saragarhi were left alone to defend themselves.

For a long time the Afridis were unable to enter the fort by the main gate. Then they thought of another way to get in. Without being seen by anybody, some of them began to cut their way through one of the walls. In this they succeeded. When the Sikh soldiers saw them inside the fort, they shot at and killed some of them.

It is said that one Sikh soldier, though lying wounded on a *charpai*, still fired at the Pathans. Even though he was himself dying, he killed four of his enemies and wounded more.

At last only one Sikh was left to defend the guard-room. Before he himself died, he had killed twenty of the Afridis.

In this way twenty-one Sikhs had killed two hundred of their enemies and wounded many more, and thus died, defending their fort.

Many English writers have praised the bravery of the Sikh soldiers at Saragarhi. They have said that it is the Sikh soldier alone who could fight against such large numbers with such courage.