

After leaving Camkaur, *Gurū Sāhib* spent the night in the ferocious jungle of Māchīvārā (ਮਾਛੀਵਾੜਾ) where he was reunited with Dayā Singh, Dharam Singh and Mān Singh, who had been separated from him in the escape from Camkaur. From Māchīvārā, *Gurū Sāhib* journeyed to Kaṭpurā (ਜਟਪੁਰਾ) where he learned of his mother's fate and the brutal martyrdom of his younger sons who had been bricked alive by the Governor of Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ). At this point, *Gurū Sāhib* had sacrificed his entire family (his father, mother and four sons) for the sake of the Khālsā Panth, yet he felt no regrets and blamed no one. He only thanked Vāhigurū (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ) for giving him the opportunity to serve humanity. Despite all the hardships and struggles that *Gurū Sāhib* had to overcome, he remained in high spirits.

Adapted from: [http: Macauliffe, Max Arthur. Gurū Gobind Singh: Life and Achievements Vol 1](http://Macauliffe, Max Arthur. Gurū Gobind Singh: Life and Achievements Vol 1) and www.allaboutsikhs.com/sikh-gurus/guru-gobind-singh-ji-6.html

The Battle of Khidrāṇā (ਖਿਦਰਾਣਾ)

After leaving Jātpurā (ਜਟਪੁਰਾ), *Gurū Sāhib* traveled through Dīnā (ਦੀਨਾ) where he is reported to have written the Zafarnāmāh (ਜ਼ਫਰਨਾਮਾਹ) or the Epistle (letter) of Victory to the Emperor Aurangzeb (ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ). From Dīnā, the *Gurū* moved into a forest area extending from the bank of the river Satluj (ਸਤਲੁਜ), near Firozpur (ਫਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ), to the waters of Baṭhiṇḍā (ਬਠਿੰਡਾ). Moving from Kāmgaṛ (ਕਾਂਗੜਾ), Dhālīvāl (ਧਾਲੀਵਾਲ), Bhagtā (ਭਗਤਾ) and other villages, *Gurū Sāhib* reached Koṭ Kapūrā (ਕੋਟ ਕਪੂਰਾ). Here, *Gurū Sāhib* learned that the forces of Vazīr Khān (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਖਾਨ) were near at hand and could pounce on the *Gurū* at any moment.

Gurū Sāhib selected the pond at Khidrāṇā (ਖਿਦਰਾਣਾ) known as Khidrāṇe dī Dhāb (ਖਿਦਰਾਣੇ ਦੀ ਢਾਬ), across the Lakkhī (ਲੱਖੀ) Jungle on the borders of a sandy desert as the field of action. The pond of water, the only source of water for miles, had gone dry. Here, *Gurū Sāhib* was joined by the forty Sikhs (ਸਿਖ) of Mājḥā (ਮਾਝਾ) who had deserted the *Gurū* at Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ). The Forty Liberated Ones, or Calī Mukte (ਚਾਲੀ ਮੁਕਤੇ), were led by a young woman in military attire named Māi Bhāgo (ਮਾਈ ਭਾਗੋ), who had persuaded the Sikhs of Mājḥā to come and seek pardon from the *Gurū* for their desertion. They arrived at the site of battle before *Gurū Sāhib*'s army. Māi Bhāgo and her husband, Bhāi Mahā Singh (ਮਹਾ ਸਿੰਘ), proposed to engage the Mughal forces at the dry pool of Khidrāṇā so that they would bear the brunt of the Mughal army's onslaught. Big white sheets of khaddar were spread on the shrubs so that the enemy might think that the Sikhs were encamping there in great numbers. The next morning (8 May 1705), the combined forces of *Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib* engaged the Mughal troops in fierce fighting. *Gurū Sāhib* himself watched the action from a sand-hill and shot arrows at the advancing troops of the army and later entered the battlefield himself to assist his armies. The forty Sikhs from Mājḥā all went down fighting but in the end, the vagaries of weather, the non-availability of water and the vehement resistance put up by the Sikhs compelled the Mughal army to retreat after heavy losses.

After the battle, *Gurū Sāhib* went about the field and personally showered blessings on the warriors who had laid down their lives in the battle. He came upon Māi Bhāgo, the only Sikh to survive from those who came from Mājḥā. The *Gurū* was moved by their sacrifice and devotion. Mahā Singh lay heavily wounded nearby and was very close to death. As a last request, the warrior entreated *Gurū Sāhib* to tear up the disclaimer or *bedāvā* (ਬੇਦਾਵਾ) he had written to the *Gurū* at Anandpur. *Gurū Sāhib*, who had always carried the document on his person, tore the *bedāvā* into pieces and blessed all the forty Sikhs. Mahā Singh breathed his last in peace in the arms of his *Gurū*. The pond of Khidrāṇā came to be known as Mukatsar, the Tank of Salvation.

Adapted from: Life of Gurū Gobind Singh