

**Grade: 6**

**Course: Virṣā (ਵਿਰਸਾ)**

**Lesson Number: 18**

**Unit Name: Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ)**

**Title: Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib and the period Post-Vaisākhī of 1699**

### **Standards**

**Standard 1: The Gurū-Prophet (ਗੁਰੂ) Period: Nānaks (ਨਾਨਕ) V-X**

- Students learn the history and times of the *Gurūs* from Gurū Harigobind Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ) until Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ), including famous Sikh (ਸਿਖ) personages.
  - Students learn the major events and importance of the lives of the last five *Gurūs*. In addition to the *Gurūs*, students will be introduced to famous Sikh personages such as Bhāi Nand Lāl (ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ), Bhāi Ghanaīā (ਭਾਈ ਘਨਈਆ), Mātā Sāhib Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ), and others. Activities should include lessons related to the *Gurūs* (e.g. Gurū Harikrishan Sāhib's - ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ - work in helping the poor and the sick). Besides focusing on the narratives of the *Gurūs*, their viewpoints on social issues and ethical living should be emphasized as well.

### **Objectives**

1. Students will learn about the major events and battles that took place after the inauguration of the Khālsā.
2. The lesson will end with the siege of Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ) and the Battle of Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ).

### **Prerequisites**

- Students should be familiar with the early life of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib.
- The teacher should be familiar with the life of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib.

### **Materials**

- Various books on Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (bibliographic information included in Teacher Resources)
- Board or chart paper and writing materials
- Construction/colored paper and markers

### **Advanced Preparation**

- The teacher should go over the various websites and books included in Teacher Resources.
- On the chalkboard, the teacher should draw a timeline from 1700 to 1704 and label the dates of the battles mentioned in Teacher Resources. This can also be done on a wall with construction paper.

### **Engagement (15-20 minutes)**

- Greet students and give them a couple of minutes to settle down and take out their notebooks.
- Review the tensions between the Hill Chiefs and *Gurū Sāhib*. This can be done by asking class questions such as the following:
  - Who was Rājā Bhīm Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਭੀਮ ਚੰਦ)?
  - Why was he jealous of *Gurū Sāhib*?

- Were there any altercations between Bhīm Cand and *Gurū Sāhib* before the Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ) of 1699?
- Explain to students that after the Vaisākhī of 1699, the Hill Chiefs again became concerned about the influence of the *Gurū*. From 1700 onward, *Gurū Sāhib* was constantly on guard against the attacks of the Hill Chiefs and the Mughal Emperor. Let students know that in today's class, they will be studying the battles and sieges that *Gurū Sāhib* was engaged in from 1700 to 1704.

### **Exploration (35 minutes)**

- Divide students into seven groups and assign each group one battle. Give each group some construction/colored paper and markers as well as the article on the battle that they will be studying (in Teacher Resources). Ask each group to make short notes on:
  1. Who began the battle and why?
  2. Where did the battle take place?
  3. When did the battle take place?
  4. Which armies were involved in the battle?
  5. Who are the important generals, soldiers mentioned in the article?
  6. Any important combat/matches that took place within the battle itself.
  7. One lesson that can be learned from the battle.
- Once the students have completed these notes, get them to post their construction papers on the relevant points of the timeline posted on the chalkboard/wall.
- Get the groups of students to share the lessons that they learned from the battles that *Gurū Sāhib* fought.
- Throughout the lesson, the teacher should emphasize the fact that *Gurū Sāhib* did not hold any enmity against a particular person, caste, religion, group or race. He was simply battling tyranny, oppression and injustice. Give examples from the battles to support your point.
- The following are some lessons that can be learned from each of the battles that *Gurū Sāhib* fought:
  - The First Battle of Anandpur: *Gurū Sāhib's* encounter with Paimde Khān (ਪੈਂਦੇ ਖਾਨ) shows that he only fought in self-defense. He never struck the first blow and did not terrorize anybody by being the aggressor.
  - The Second Battle of Anandpur: With the blessing of *Gurū Sāhib*, great odds can be overcome and the smallest person can stand up against the greatest obstacles (ex. Bacittar Singh - ਬਚਿੱਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ).
  - The Battle of Nirmoh (ਨਿਰਮੋਹ): With the blessing of *Gurū Sāhib*, the few can fight bravely and overcome an army of many. This battle also shows that treachery and deceit only takes a person so far and is ultimately of no avail against truth and righteousness.
  - The Third and Fourth Battle of Anandpur: *Gurū Sāhib* has no enmity with anyone, even in battle. He had love for everyone and people like Sayad Beg (ਸਯਦ ਬੇਗ) and Sayad Khān (ਸਯਦ ਖਾਨ), who were able to see this love amidst their combat with the *Gurū*, gave up their weapons and knelt before him in admiration and awe. The acceptance of devotees like Sayad Beg and Sayad Khān also shows that *Gurū Sāhib* did not discriminate against people from different religions or races. Though he fought against the Mughal army, his battle was against the oppressive rulers, not their religion (Islām).
  - The Siege of Anandpur: This battle teaches us that true loyalty is remaining by the side of your *Gurū* even when the situation appears hopeless. The Sikhs who stayed with *Gurū Sāhib* during the siege of Anandpur were true Sikhs because they refused to part with their *Gurū*. That is the type of love and faith that we should have in our *Gurū* (currently

Gurū Granth Sāhib and Gurū Khālsā Panth – ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ).

- The Battle of Camkaur: With *Gurū Sāhib*'s blessing, a single Sikh can fight against thousands and can overcome huge obstacles. This battle also shows us that true strength lies in truthful and ethical conduct, not in lies and treachery (ex. Even though the Mughal army swore false oaths and deceived the *Gurū*, they were unable to overcome the strength and power of the ethical Sikhs).

#### **Explanation/Extension (5-10 minutes)**

- Ask students to imagine that they were present at the siege of Anandpur and rations were running low. Some Sikhs are threatening to abandon *Gurū Sāhib*. What would you do? Write a letter to a family member or friend from Anandpur explaining the situation and your decision.
- If there is time, get students to read out their letters at the end of the class or at the beginning of the next class. The letters should be collected for evaluation of student understanding.

#### **Evaluation (On-going)**

- Students should know the details of the battles that *Gurū Sāhib* was engaged in after 1699. They should also be able to identify the lessons learned in each battle.
- Namely, they should understand that *Gurū Sāhib*'s battles were an attempt to oppose injustice and tyranny; they were not the result of enmity against a person, race or religion.
- This understanding will be demonstrated in the class activity as well as in the student letters.

### **Teacher Resources**

- Macauliffe, Max Arthur. *Gurū Gobind Singh: Life and Achievements Vol 1*. Dillī: National Book Shop, 1999.
- Singh, Kartār. *Life of Gurū Gobind Singh*. Ludhiāṇā: Lāhaur Book Shop, 1998.
- <http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/sikh-gurus/guru-gobind-singh-ji.html>
- <http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/Gurus/nanak10.html>
- <http://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/biographical/gobind-singh-guru.html>

### **The Battles of the Post- Vaisākhī of 1699**

After the Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ) of 1699, the *Gurū's* Saṅgat (ਸੰਗਤ) grew exponentially. Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ) began to team with Sikhs (ਸਿਖ) who wanted to receive khaṇḍe-kī-pāhul (ਖੰਡੇ ਕੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ). The daily gathering grew in number and their presence struck new fears in the minds of the Hill Chiefs.

Rājā Bhīm Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਭੀਮ ਚੰਦ) saw the glory of the Anandpur Saṅgat as a threat to the territorial integrity of his state even though the *Gurū* entertained no such thoughts. The *Gurū* did not want war, but he was always ready to defend himself and others from tyrannical rulers. One day, when *Gurū Sāhib* was hunting with his Sikhs, a couple of Hill Chiefs and their men attacked his hunting party, hoping for an easy victory. They felt certain that they would either kill or capture the *Gurū* but they miscalculated. Neither the suddenness of the attack, nor the overwhelming number of the enemies perturbed the Sikhs. Every one of them fought with extreme courage. The *Gurū's* gold-tipped arrows never missed their mark and pierced through many soldiers. One of the chiefs was killed and the right arm of the other was torn off.

### **The First Battle of Anandpur**

This single defeat further aroused the fears of the Hill Chiefs and they assembled in one place to make plans for concentrated action. They even sought the help of the Governor of Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ), Vazīr Khān (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਖਾਨ), who lost no time in getting the Emperor's sanction for launching an army of ten thousand, led by Dīn Beg (ਦੀਨ ਬੇਗ) and Paimde Khān (ਪੈਂਦੇ ਖਾਨ). The allied armies of the Hill Chiefs took positions around Anandpur and tried to seal all entrances and exits. Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ) led a powerful offensive against the enemy forces; he was only fourteen at the time. The fierce engagement continued for days on end. During the battle, Paimde Khān advanced and challenged the *Gurū* to single combat and asked the *Gurū* to strike the first blow.

The *Gurū* refused to play the role of an aggressor and stated that he had vowed never to strike except in self-defense. Upon this Paimde Khān discharged an arrow which whizzed past *Gurū Sāhib's* ear. He unleashed another arrow which also missed the mark. The whole of Paimde Khān's body, except his ears, was encased in armor. *Gurū Sāhib* then discharged an arrow at his ear with such an unerring aim that Paimde Khān fell off his horse and never rose again. Dīn Beg was also wounded and he beat a retreat but was pursued by the Sikhs as far as Ropar (ਰੋਪੜ). This battle was fought in 1700.

### **The Second Battle of Anandpur**

*Gurū Sāhib* continued to increase his army and to collect weapons and ammunition. He kept himself in readiness for war for he knew that the Hill Chiefs would not let him rest. In November of 1700, a letter was sent to the *Gurū* asking him to either pay rent on the land he occupied or vacate it. If he agreed to do neither, he should get ready for war. The *Gurū* replied that the land had been bought by his father and so no rent was due and if the Rājās (ਰਾਜਾ) were determined to go to war, he was ready for them once again.

The Hill chiefs decided to attack the *Gurū* with their combined forces and to invite the assistance of a large number of Raṅgar (ਰੰਗੜ) and Gujjars (ਗੁੱਜਰ), who had a long-standing enmity with the *Gurū*. On hearing the news of the approaching war, Sikhs from the Mājha (ਮਾਝਾ) and Mālvā (ਮਾਲਵਾ) areas flocked to Anandpur with arms and horses. The Mājha Sikhs, under Dayā Singh (ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Ālim Singh (ਆਲਿਮ ਸਿੰਘ) and Ude Singh (ਉਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ) got ready to direct their attack against the hill armies.

As the invaders approached the city, Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh, with four thousand Sikhs, fell on the Gujjars and Raṅgar, who were advancing in great force. Their ranks were soon broken and they could not stand their ground any longer. The outnumbered Sikhs fought valiantly and managed to keep the enemy forces at bay. The Hill Chiefs were now convinced that they could not defeat the *Khālāsā* in the field so they decided to set up a blockade. For over two months, they barricaded the city but with no success. At last, an intoxicated elephant, with his body covered with steel and with a spear projecting from his forehead was directed against the gate of the fort. He was followed by the Hill Chiefs and their armies who were all confident that they would occupy the *Gurū's* fort before nightfall. The *Gurū* blessed his Sikh, Bacittar Singh (ਬਚਿੱਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ), and commanded him to combat the elephant. Bacittar Singh, though small in stature, took a lance to meet the furious animal. He raised his lance and drove it through the elephant's head armor. Upon the impact of the lance, the animal turned around on the hill soldiers, and killed several of them.

The fighting continued for a few more days but both armies were deadlocked. The Hill Chiefs sought to work out an agreement with *Gurū Sāhib* in order to save face. They promised to remain on peaceful terms with the *Gurū* if he would only leave Anandpur temporarily. After being pressed by his Sikhs, *Gurū Sāhib* agreed to the suggestion and shifted to Nirmoh (ਨਿਰਮੋਹ), a village situated near Kīratpur (ਕੀਰਤਪੁਰ). The Hill Chiefs ignored all their promises and attacked the Sikhs from behind but the Sikhs fought bravely and resisted the attack with such energy that the forces of the Hill Chiefs had to retreat.

### **The Battle of Nirmoh**

Despite being frustrated in their plans by *Gurū Sāhib's* forces, the Hill Chiefs would not leave the Sikhs alone. They again applied to Vazīr Khān (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਖਾਨ), the Governor of Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ) for assistance against the *Gurū*. In September and October 1701, the Governor mobilized his troops and marched on to Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ). The Hill Chiefs were too impatient to wait for him and attacked the *Gurū*, who had stationed his troops a few miles from the city. On the arrival of the imperial army, the *Gurū* found himself surrounded by the enemies. His Sikhs, however, fought with their usual vigor and astounded the enemy with their persistence and determination. The enemy forces fell rapidly and lost all hope of victory. The Rājā of Basolī (ਬਸੋਲੀ) offered to take the *Gurū* to his own capital if Vazīr Khān undertook not to attack him from behind. Vazīr Khān agreed to this arrangement as a convenient manner of escape from the embarrassing position.

After a short stay at Basolī and then Bhabaur (ਭਬੌਰ), the *Gurū* returned to Anandpur. Nobody offered him any resistance upon his return and peace again returned to the city for a short time.

### **The Third Battle at Anandpur**

At one point in the year 1703, there were only 800 Sikhs in the *Gurū's* army at Anandpur. Rājā Ajmer Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਚੰਦ) summoned his allies, the Rājās of Handūr (ਹੰਦੂਰ), Cambā (ਚੰਬਾ) and Fatahpur (ਫਤਹਪੁਰ) with the object of chastising the *Gurū*. They all decided to attack the *Gurū's* forces at Anandpur immediately. In the previous battles of Anandpur, the Sikhs had mostly remained behind the battlements, but this time, they met the enemy in the open field outside Anandpur. The Sikhs

fought with their usual courage and determination. The hill chiefs were unsuccessful in their attack and retired from the battle in despair.

Owing to the repeated pleas of the hill chiefs, the Emperor sent a large army under the command of General Sayad Beg (ਸਯਦ ਬੇਗ) and Ālif Khān (ਆਲਿਫ਼ ਖਾਨ) to subdue the *Gurū*.

One of the generals, Sayad Beg was a mild admirer of *Gurū* Gobind Singh Sāhib but he had been hired by the Emperor to lead the force against the *Gurū*. Sayad Beg, along with the General Ālif Khān, marched on the *Gurū*'s forces near Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ). The battle was long and severe. Sayad Beg fought against the *Gurū*'s forces for a time, but all the while he was really just taking in the vision of the *Gurū* and his bravely fighting Sikhs. After a time, he laid down his arms and watched the fight in mute admiration, and then knelt before the *Gurū* and offered to sacrifice his body and soul for his service.

Meanwhile, Ālif Khān had been wounded and the desertion of Sayad Beg took away what little courage he had left. So he ordered a retreat and was hotly pursued by the Sikhs.

#### **The Fourth Battle at Anandpur**

After seeing the inability of the Hill Chiefs in getting rid of the *Gurū*, the Emperor Aurangzeb (ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ) decided to take the matter into his own hands. He commanded Sayad Khān (ਸਯਦ ਖਾਨ), another General, to march at the head of a large imperial army to conquer and capture the *Gurū*. He was joined by the Hill Chiefs with their armies, and with this huge force at his back, he marched in the hope of a sure, complete, and speedy victory.

The *Gurū* had only 500 regular soldiers to oppose this mighty host since it was March of 1704 which is crop-cutting season. Despite these odds, however, the Sikhs fought more valiantly and with greater skill and endurance. Sayad Khān marveled at their heroism and wondered where their strength and power came from. His wonder was greater still when he saw Maimūn Khān (ਮੈਮੂਨ ਖਾਨ), Sayad Beg and other Muslims fighting side by side with the *Gurū*.

Sayad Khān was the brother of Pīr Buddhū Shāh (ਪੀਰ ਬੁੱਧੂ ਸ਼ਾਹ), who had spoken very highly of the *Gurū*. He had heard about *Gurū Sāhib*'s incredible strength and lofty principles but had been a little skeptical. He wondered why the *Gurū*, who was reputed to be a perfect saint, should engage in killing his fellow men. *Gurū Sāhib* knew what was passing in General Sayad Khān's mind, so he smiled and came forward to challenge him. Sayad Khān aimed a shot at *Gurū Sāhib* but missed. He had never missed before. There was a tremor in his heart. He advanced and, at the *Gurū*'s invitation, took aim for the second time, yet missed again. As *Gurū Sāhib* advanced further, Sayad Khān raised his gun to take aim but could not pull the trigger. He sat transfixed on his horse as the *Gurū* said, "Come, Sayad Khān! Fire your gun. I am so near!" Sayad Khān fell to his knees at the *Gurū*'s feet and begged him for forgiveness. *Gurū Sāhib*'s charming manner and appearance had melted the heart of the General who had come to capture him.

After Sayad Khān's defection, Ramzān Khān (ਰਮਜ਼ਾਨ ਖਾਨ) took command and fought with great energy against the Sikhs. The *Gurū* shot an arrow which killed Ramzān Khan's horse. The Sikhs rallied and presented a bold front to the enemy, but being too few in number, were overpowered by the opposing force. When the *Gurū* saw that there was no chance of retrieving his position, he decided to evacuate Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ). The Imperial army plundered the city and proceeded back to Sarhind. When the imperial army was resting at night, the Sikhs made a sudden attack, which created great confusion in the enemy camp. Those who turned to oppose the Sikhs were killed and only those

who fled escaped the vengeance of the *Gurū*'s pursuing army. The Sikhs also deprived them of all the loot they had captured at Anandpur. After this, the *Gurū* returned and took possession of the city.

### The Siege of Anandpur

Formulating a new strategy, the allies reappeared again and laid siege to Anandpur. All entrances and exits were plugged. The Sikhs faced shortage of provisions and water. Grains could not be procured and the Sikhs detained in the beleaguered fort found it difficult to live on scanty rations; many grew desperate to leave Anandpur. A number of Sikhs wrote a *bedāvā* (ਬੇਦਾਵਾ) or disclaimer and severed their connections with the *Gurū* so that they would be able to go back to their homes. Pressure continued to be built on the *Gurū* to leave Anandpur. *Gurū Sāhib* was not inclined to abandon Anandpur but he was encouraged by his Sikhs to leave the fort. The party set out from the fort during the stormy night of 20 December 1704. The Mughals promised *Gurū Sāhib* that if he left Anandpur, he would not be followed or harassed. But just like before, they went back on their oaths and solemn assurances and started after the *Gurū*.

After going to Kīratpur (ਕੀਰਤਪੁਰ) and Nirmohgar (ਨਿਰਮੋਹਗੜ), the *Gurū* proceeded towards Ropar where the party reached the banks of the Sarsā (ਸਰਸਾ). On account of the rain, the stream was flooded and almost impossible to cross. The party was just contemplating how this stream could be crossed when the enemy forces came up from behind. Severe fighting ensued and many Sikhs were killed. Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ), with a number of Sikhs, stoutly arrested the progress of the Imperial forces while the rest began to wade through the Sarsā. Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh held off the enemy for as long as he could and then joined the *Gurū* on the other side of the Sarsā.

In this confusion, the *Gurū*'s mother and his two younger sons were separated from the rest of the party. The *Gurū*, along with the surviving Sikhs, proceeded towards Ropar. Mātā Sundrī (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ) and Mātā Sāhib Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ) stayed at the house of a trusted Sikh at Ropar and then moved on to Dillī (ਦਿੱਲੀ). Meanwhile, *Gurū Sāhib* moved from Ropar to Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ). At that time, he had with him his two elder sons, Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh and Sāhibzādā Jujhār Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਜੁਝਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ) and forty Sikhs, including his Pañj Piāre (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ).

### The Battle of Camkaur

After the *Gurū* crossed the Sarsā on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1704, someone brought him the news that a few miles off in front lay a large Imperial army which was coming to help the allied forces against him. On 22 December 1704, *Gurū Sāhib* decided to devise his defense at the *haveli* (ਹਵੇਲੀ), a mud structure, or gaṛī (ਗੜੀ) of Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ). He posted eight of his soldiers to guard each wall of the fortress, two at the gate, and two to keep watch and go around giving directions. He himself, with two more Sikhs and two sons held the top storey. Ammunition was distributed and all were ready to defend the place with their lives.

At nightfall, the Imperial armies came up and surrounded the village. Early the next day, a section advanced in order to storm and capture the fortress. They felt certain that the *Gurū* would be killed or captured within a few hours. The advancing army was greeted with a volley of arrows and skirmishes. Though few, the Sikhs were inspired by love and faith in their *Gurū*; they went in batches to attain martyrdom. Both of the elder Sāhibzādās gave up their lives fighting fiercely in this battle. The *Gurū* himself joined the battle and rained showers of arrows. The remaining five Sikhs, Dayā Singh (ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Dharam Singh (ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ), Mān Singh (ਮਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ), Saṅgat Singh (ਸੰਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ), Sant Singh (ਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ), passed a *gurmatā* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ) and asked the *Gurū* to leave the fort in the interests of the *Khālāsā*

Panth (ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ). The *Gurū* bowed before the dictate of the Pañj Piāre, offered his Kalgī (ਕਲਗੀ) to Sant Singh who resembled the *Gurū* in appearance and escaped unhurt, much to the annoyance and discomfiture of the Mughals who were hoping to capture *Gurū Sāhib* dead or alive. Dayā Singh, Dharam Singh and Mān Singh were also ordered to leave the fort while Sant Singh and Saṅgat Singh remained in the gaṛī to breathe their last as martyrs.

After leaving Camkaur, *Gurū Sāhib* spent the night in the ferocious jungle of Māchīvāṛā (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 Māchīvāṛā, *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](http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/sikh-gurus/guru-gobind-singh-ji-6.html)*



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*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](http://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*