

SIKHISM AND SOVEREIGNTY

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With the above salutations to the august reader, this bouquet of diversity of Sikhism with Simran (Meditation), Sewa (Selfless Service of entire Humanity), Shaheedi (Martyrdom) and Sovereignty (Ardas - daily prayer of Raj Kare Ga Khalsa) is unfolded here in a simple narrative, in four historical periods :-1469 AD - 1708 AD

Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, founder of the Sikh Faith, laid the foundation of a New Panth or Guru's path. This was distinct from ways of Hindus and Muslims. New Guru Panth was based on Shabad "Hymn or word of Guru (teacher)" and Sangat (Congregation) gathering of people called Sikhs "meaning learners." Guru Nanak Dev Ji openly spoke about the atrocities committed by the then Ruler Babur. For this Guru Nanak Dev Ji was put into prison and assigned a task of grinding corn for the army of Mughals. Babur visited the prison and was very much influenced by pious face of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, granted Him liberty and respectfully invited Guru Ji in his tent for discussions. The incident is recorded in the portion of Shri Guru Granth Sahib ji as Babur Vani. Guru Nanak Dev ji said "of what use is being pious, if one does not have courage to speak out against injustice or to stand beside the weak, the poor, the oppressed and the needy. (1469 AD - 1539 AD)

In the history of Sikhism when Emperor Akbar and the King of Haripur went to meet Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Sikh Guru, at Goindwal Sahib, they together had to share langar in Pangat (sitting in a row in the congregation to share free food as equals), before meeting the Sikh Guru. Akbar was highly impressed by the tradition of free food and expressed his desire to grant fertile land to contribute in expenses of langar. Guru Amar Das Ji politely declined by stating that "God has given me every thing I need and my Sikhs voluntarily provide their services in running the langar." The Emperor then said "I see that you desire nothing for yourself but still I want to do something for you. I need your blessings. I wished to grant some villages. You refuse to accept. Instead I shall grant them to your daughter Bibi Bhani. After all, she is just like a daughter to me. No one is "high or low" and "rich or poor" in Sikh ethos. This tradition of free food in Sangat and Pangat continues till today in all Gurudwaras in all corners of the world. Tradition of serving free food was set by Guru Nanak Dev Ji with an incident called Sucha Sauda

‘True Transaction’, when Guru Nanak Dev ji spent the money meant for trade, to feed the hungry Sadhus. (1552 AD - 1574 AD).

The 5th Sikh Guru Arjan Dev Ji was the first Sikh Guru to be Martyred in Mughal custody in Lahore Jail in 1606 AD. According to Jahangir’s TUZK-E-JAHANGIRI (Jahangirinama) which discussed Guru Arjan’s support for Jahangir’s rebellion son Khusrau. Jahangir was jealous and out raged, most probably he did not understand the philosophy of Sikh Gurus. Emperor referred to Guru Arjan as a Hindu, who had captured many of the simple-hearted people along with the ignorant followers of Islam. Too many people were becoming influenced by Guru Arjan’s teachings and if Guru Arjan did not accept to become a muslim, this Guru has to be extinguished. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi cheered the punishment and execution of Guru Arjan, calling the Sikh Guru, an infidel. In contrast Mian Mir - the Sufi friend of Guru Ji, lobbied when Jahangir ordered the execution and confiscation of Guru Arjan’s Property.

According to the Sikh tradition, before his execution, Guru Arjan instructed his son and successor Hargobind to take up arms, and resist tyranny. His execution led Sikh Panth to become armed so as to pursue resistance to the persecution under the Islamic Rule. Michael Barnes states that the resolve and death of Guru Arjan strengthened the conviction among Sikhs that, “personal piety must have a core of moral strength. A virtual soul must be a courageous soul. Willingness to suffer trial for one’s conviction was a religious imperative.” (1581 AD - 1606 AD).

Unlike other Sikh Gurus who are fondly remembered for their spiritual insights, Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru is additionally credited for spearheading the militarisation of the religion. J.D. Cunningham - British Historian documents in his book titled History of The Sikhs “ So far as Hargobind knew or thought of philosophy as a science, he fell into the prevailing views of the period : God, he said, is one, and the world is an illusion, an appearance without a reality. ”

Guru Hargobind revealed himself in front of his devotees on 24th July, 1606. He wore a saffron gown, a churidar pyjama along with a turban and an aigrette pinned on it. He also donned a belt that held two swords from his waist. Gur Hargobind said “My rosary shall be the sword belt and on my turban, I shall wear the emblem of royalty.”

History reveals that Guru Hargobind emerged both as spiritual teacher and a military ruler. The swords worn by Guru Hargobind represented the philosophy of miri-piri symbolising power (miri) and spiritual skill (piri).

Apart from reinventing Sikh traditions through militarisation, Guru Hargobind also instituted the AKAL TAKTH (supreme seat) directly opposite Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar. The TAKTH emerged as a common space for Sikhs from all walks of life who could share their grievances and also address questions about their faith. Under Guru's Rule the Sikh Army managed to defeat emperor Jahangir's successor, Shah Jahan. Guru Hargobind fought four battles against Mughal forces and skilfully being better, won all of them. (1606 AD - 1644 AD)

Mukhlis Khan, a Muslim Historian who was also witness to the last war, fought between '6th Guru and Mughal s' has written this :

"Throughout the battle, the Guru's Face showed only Sublime Disinterest, far above the base interest of anger and desire for revenge, often associated with war"

Guru Har Rai Ji, the seventh Sikh Guru, is known for maintaining the large Army of Sikh soldiers that the sixth Guru had amassed, yet avoiding military conflict.

8th Guru Har Krishan Ji received supreme level of spirituality in a very young age and set an example of service to humanity by serving the suffering people in swear epidemic of cholera and smallpox with complete devotion. Guru Ji himself was seized by attack of smallpox and eventually passed away. (1656 AD - 1664 AD)

9th Guru Teg Bahadur Ji preferred martyrdom and was executed on the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb for providing protection to Hindus and Sikhs against a 17th century Sharia law forcing them to convert to Islam, on 24th November 1675 AD.

Tenth master, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, transformed "Sikhs into a religious and military Commonwealth" by ordaining a new order on March 30, 1699 AD (Vaisakhi day) The Khalsa Panth, literally meaning the pure path for world wide community.

Qazi Nurul Islam states that Sikhism goes one step further for attitude towards other religions and its world views. "Sikhism is the religion which was founded on the Principles of Interfaith Understanding, Mutual Respect and Harmony."

Sir Aurobindo, the sage scholar of Pondicherry observed "A more striking instance was the revealing of Sikh religion, its long line of Gurus and the novel Direction and form given by the Tenth Guru in the Democratic Institution of Khalsa. The Sikh Khalsa was an astonishing way, an Original Novel Creation and its face was turned not to the past but to the future."

10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666AD-1708AD) declared “When all peaceful methods fail to change the mind of the wicked, it is justified to pick up the sword to save one’s honour.’ Sikh Gurus fought the wars only in defence and not for offence. When 10th Guru was busy in religious and academic functions at Paonta Sahib, a battle was forced by the Hill Kings. Sikhs won this first war fought at Bhangani to save the Hill Kings from the ferocious attack of Mughal Commander. Subsequently skirmishes with Hill Kings were won by Khalsa armies. Then the Hill Kings fearing the might of Sikh Army, joined forces with Mughal Army which led into four major wars. All these wars were won by Sikhs against much larger armies except the battle of Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Ji along with his soldiers had to vacate the Anandgarh Fort due to promises made by Hill Kings and Mughals which were never kept. Daulat Rai studied these facts thoroughly and wrote a book “Sahib - e - Kamal-Guru Gobind Singh”. He observed that, had the ungrateful Hindu Kings joined the Guru Ji, India would have gotten freedom much before the end of 17th century. 4 Sons and Mother of Guru Gobind Singh Ji met Martyrdom in this war. Guru Ji remained composed and wrote a letter ‘Zafar Nama’ (Declaration of victory) to Emperor about his officers relinquishing the path of truth by false promises. 1708 AD - 1849AD

The first Sikh war of freedom and sovereignty was fought by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur from 1708 AD to 1715 AD. Banda Singh Bahadur challenged and defeated the Mughal army. He captured Samana and Sadaura in 1709 AD. He won the battle of Chappar Chiri and captured Sirhind killing Wazir Khan on May 10, 1710 AD. He then established his head quarters at Lohgarh Fort (Mukhlispur) in lower Shivalik Hills which became the Capital of First Sikh State. Banda Bahadur struck coins in the name of Nanak-Gobind Singh with Persian inscriptions and issued orders under his seal.

Banda Bahadur ruled over the region bounded on the North by Shivalik Hills, on the West by river Tangri, on the East river Jamuna and in the South boundary of Karnal-Thanesar & Kaithal-Samana. He abolished the Zamindari System of land prevailing under the Mughal rule and declared the actual cultivators as the owners of the land.

Lohgarh Fort was captured by Mughal army and Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was brutally executed in Delhi on June, 1716 AD. After that the torch of the Khalsa was taken up by new warriors like Baba Deep Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh, Chaajja Singh, Bhuma Singh, Hari Singh Dhillon, Jassa Singh Ramgaria, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Budh Singh, Charhat Singh Sukerchakia and others. Nawab Kapur Singh became supreme commander

and organised Sikh MISLS (confederations) into Budha Dal and Taruna Dal. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia became joint commander of Dal Khalsa.

Khalsa remained engaged in a prolonged fight against Mughal Rulers who were practicing tyranny and terrorism. Mughal emperor Faruk Siyar issued edict of either Islam or death for Sikhs and a schedule of rewards for Sikh Head of Rs. 25/- and for captive alive Sikh Rs.100/-. This killing spree continued by Mughal Rulers like by Zakria Khan, Mir Manu, and Ahmad Shah Abdali.

Nadir Shah asked Zakria Khan (Governor of Lahore in 1739 AD) “ Who are these men with turbans and beards ? Where do they live ? Why can’t we finish them once for all. Zakaria replied “They are fakirs and have no houses, they live on horseback and camp in the forests.” Nadir Shah rightly observed “ I smell in them the power to rule. Keep an eye on them.” This prophecy became a reality by end of the century.

Zakria Khan ordered Martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh by cutting him to pieces joint by joint. He also ordered Martyrdom of Bhai Taru Singh by scaring his scalp.

Many Sikhs were tortured and killed by Mughal Army with their touts like Lakhpat Rai. First holocaust (smaller massacre) virtually wiped Sikh population in 1746 AD with 7,000 Sikhs being killed and 3000 captured. In 1748 AD Mir Manu became governor of Lahore. Mir Manu joined hands with Abdali and continued in the Tirade of terrorism and cruelty against Sikhs. Despite such annihilations, Sikhs kept on reorganising themselves and fighting Abdali army which attacked India seven times.

In 1756 AD Abdali attacked Delhi and toppled Mughal government. While he was returning with caravan loaded with gold, valuables and women prisoners, the Sikhs attacked him. The women prisoners were freed and escorted to their homes. Sikh army took away most of the treasures. This stunned Ahmad Shah Abdali. In anger, he desecrated Harmandir Sahib and filled the Sarovar with debris (1757 AD). This news disturbed 75 years old Baba Deep Singh Ji. Just before deciding to proceed towards Amritsar, Baba ji offered his prayer “If my head is severed, let it be, but do not sever my Sikh way of life.” Baba Deep Singh was joined by 5000 Sikhs who fought with confidence and ferocity against 20,000 strong Mughal army. Mughal army fled away in terror of Baba Deep Singh who continued fighting while holding his severed head in one hand and Khanda (Vertical two edged sword) in another. Sikhs won this battle and again defeated the Mughal Army in Hoshiarpur in 1758 AD.

In 1759 AD Abdali lost the battle of Lahore twice. In 1761 AD, Sikhs were able to occupy Lahore. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was conferred the title of 'Sultanul Kaum' (King of Sikh Nation) and installed as the leader of the Sikhs.

In sixth invasion in 1762 AD, Abdali returned with very large Afghan army. Knowing this, Sikhs vacated Lahore and moved towards Malwa for safety. But the cavalry of Abdali army took the slow moving Sikh men, women and children (about 60,000) by surprise near village Kup and slaughtered 30,000 of them mercilessly. This massacre was the heaviest blow for Sikhs (known as Wada Ghalughara-large massacre).

Sikhs recouped their strength again within months, took over Sirhind and pushed Abdali out of Amritsar and celebrated Diwali Day of Oct 1762 AD. Abdali invaded India for the seventh time in December 1764 AD. Sikhs fought a fierce battle but Afghans went berserk, looted and devastated the area as far as they could. Abdali felt helpless, sorrowful and dejected man before Khalsa and left for Afghanistan. Tyranny does not have a long life and tyrants always perish under the weight of their own sins. Khalsa left the jungles and descended in to the plains and became lords of the state again. In April 1765 AD Sikhs gathered at Akal Takht and decided to rebuild the Harmandir Sahib with devotion and vowed to protect it constantly from future desecrations. Amrit Sarovar was also cleaned. A lot of effort and money was spent on rebuilding the Harmandir Sahib. Regular daily recitation of hymns was started again.

After humbling Mughals, Sikhs formed independent principalities known as MISLS meaning confederations. They exercised sovereignty in Punjab and sang "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa" with firm belief that their prayers will become a reality one day. Having defeated the Afghan army in open battle, Sikhs under the leadership of Baba Baghel Singh, attacked Delhi and conquered it in 1783 AD. Shah Alam was the ruler. His Begum saved the reputation of her husband by becoming a sister of the Sikhs. Funds were allocated from Government revenues for regular maintenance of Khalsa army. Shah Alam also gave permission to build gurdwaras despite objections from Muslim people. It was during this period, Sis Ganj, Rakab Ganj, Bangla Sahib and other Gurdwaras were constructed under supervision of Baba Baghel Singh.

MISLS (confederations) ruled Punjab (1765 AD - 1799 AD) until Maharaja Ranjit Singh united them. Ranjit Singh entered Lahore on July 7, 1799 AD when he was 18 years of age. He hammered these Sikh factions into a Nation. Ranjit Singh declared himself as Maharaja on April 12, 1801 AD. He developed this nation into one of the

Most Powerful States in Asia. Sikh Rule extended from borders of China and Tibet in the North to deserts of Sindh in the South and from Afghanistan in the North - West to the river Ganga in the east (1801 AD - 1849 AD). Ranjit Singh called his rule as “Sarkar-a-Khalsa” and his court as “Darbar Khalsa.”

Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims lived happily in peace and prosperity. There was perfect law and order and there was no system of capital punishment (even for those who indulged in treason). Sikh Nation which possessed one of the most disciplined armies in the whole of Asia was highly respected even in Europe. Louis Philips of France and King William of England sent presents to the Sikh Monarch - Maharaja Ranjit Singh - from all the way from Europe. Many foreigners were employed in the Sikh Nation. Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in his sleep on 27th June, 1839 AD.

After death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Khalsa empire was severely weakened by interior divisions and political mismanagement. This opportunity was used by British East India company to launch Anglo Sikh Wars. The British army suffered terrible casualties but prevailed to take control of Ferozeshah (1845 AD). British General Sir James Hope Grant recorded “Truly the night was one of gloom and forbidding. Perhaps never in the annals of warfare has a British Army, on such a large scale, been nearer to defeat which would have involved annihilation.” General Sher Singh Attariwala (most people may not have heard of him) commanded Khalsa Army against British Army in the second Anglo-Sikh war in 1849 AD. He was the only Sikh General all over Asia, whom British forces failed to defeat, despite being militarily and logically overwhelmingly strong. A British Officer quoted thus about the enemies (Khalsa Army) he faced on the battlefield of Chillianwala :-

“The Sikhs fought like devils, fierce and untamed. Such a mass of men, I have never set an eyes on and as plucky as lions. They ran right on the bayonets and struck their assailants when they were transfixed.” Sikh Empire was finally dissolved at the end of the Second Anglo Sikh War-1849 AD in to separate princely states and in to the British province of Punjab. 1849 AD - 1947 AD

Sikhs served in the British Army through out the British Raj. Sikh units fought in the first world war as the “ Black lions “ as well as during the second world war in Malaysia, Burma and Italy. The strength of the British army in Malaya was 104,625 troops and Sikhs represented 60% of the total Indian force that fought against the Japanese invasion of Malaysia and Singapore.

Sikhs were allowed to use traditional Sikh weapons such as Chakrams (Steel Rings) and Kirpan (Swords). It was not uncommon to see the Sikh Holy Scriptures - Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji being carried before marching of Sikh Battalion or even on the front lines of battling grounds.

The battle of Sarangarhi is one of the great battles in Sikh Military History. On 12 Sept, 1897 AD, a contingent of 21 soldiers from the 36th Sikh Battalion led by Havildar Ishar Singh held off an Attack by 10,000 Afghan Soldiers for several hours. All 21 Sikh Soldiers chose to fight till death, instead of surrendering to enemy. In the recognition of their sacrifices, the British Parliament paid them respect by awarding each one of them 'The Indian Order Of Merit' - Equivalent to the Victoria Cross.

In the last two world wars 83,005 Turban Wearing Sikh Soldiers were killed and 1,09,045 were wounded. They all died or were wounded for the freedom of Britain and the World - enduring shell fire with no other protection but the Turban alone - the Symbol of their Faith.

The Sikh Regiment is one of the most Decorated Army with 14 Victoria Crosses, 21 First Class Indian Order of Merits, Two Param Vir Chakras, 14 Mahavir Chakras, 5 Kirti Chakras, 67 Vir Chakras and 1596 other awards.

In "The Sikh Regiment In The Second World War" a book written by colonel F.T Bardwood, with forward by Sir Frank Messervy states :-

"Finally, we that live on, can never forget those comrades, who in giving their lives, gave so much that are great and good to the storey of the Sikh Regiments. No living glory can transcend that of their supreme sacrifice. May they rest in peace."

Sir Winston Churchill made a speech about the bravery of Sikhs in Parliament :-

"British people are highly indebted and obliged to Sikhs for a long time. I know that within this century, we needed help twice and they did help us very well. As a result of their help, we are today able to live with honour, dignity and independence. In War they fought and died for us, wearing the turban."

Martial India - F. Yeats Brown states :-

"Remarkable people, the Sikhs, with their Ten Gurus (Dispeller of Darkness), Five Distinguished Marks, and their Initiation Rites of water (Amrit) stirred with steel, The People who have made history and will make it again."

Historical Sikh Events related to Indian Independence movement needs to be referred here. Sikhs are the custodians of Indian Values but their contributions are being

forgotten slowly and gradually due to vested interest. It is now well known that the Sikhs Lost their Empire not in wars but in the dark cellars where aggression and treason joined hands to hatch a conspiracy against them.

The traditional traitors and brokers, like Dogras (Gulab Singh - Dhian Singh) UP Brahmins (Tej Singh - Lal Singh) and others, connived with the British Government to be able to raise their feudal estates on the ruins of Khalsa Empire.

Notwithstanding the laying down of arms, the passion of freedom continued to burn in every Sikh Heart, while all other people of India had completely reconciled to their subjugation. Sikhs were the only Nation which kept on motivated for freedom by their prayer, recited every day with beat of drums proclaiming “Raj Kare Ga Khalsa”

Britishers had hardly settled down in their new territorial acquisitions, when Bhai Maharaj Singh of Naurangbad had raised the standard of Revolt in 1847 AD. Bhai Sahib was deported to Singapore where he breathed his last in a jail.

S. Attar Singh Attariwala was another Sikh Hero to Revolt. After 1857 AD, the alien rulers of India tightened their rules but flame of freedom could not be suppressed. In 1872 AD, the love for freedom manifested in the revolution of non cooperative movement by Baba Ram Singh Namdhari. 65 of his followers were blown to pieces by guns at Malerkotla. Baba Ram Singh was exiled by British Government to Burma.

The Sikhs living abroad specially in West Coast of America formed a revolutionary party, known as “Gadder Party” in 1907 AD which became a head ache for Britishers.

Sikhs travelling by ship S.S. Kama Gata Maru were shot at when they reached Budge Budge. Many of them were shot dead while some of them escaped to spread the message of revolution against Britishers in every part of India (1912AD-1916 AD) During Martial Law Regime in 1919 AD, Sikhs raised bold and open revolt against the Britishers. Majority of the people massacred in Jallianwala Bagh were Sikhs.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement (1920 AD-1925 AD) to bring Gurdwaras under democratic control of Sikhs, exploded the myth of un-invincibility of the British Power in India. Even Mahatma Gandhi complimented the success of Sikhs peaceful movement and sent a telegram to Akalis in appreciation.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was so much impressed that he advised Hindus to baptise at least one of their family members as a Sikh, if they wanted to be free from British Rule.

Jawahar Lal Nehru faced a Jail Sentence while observing the peaceful Sikh Jaito Morcha where Sikhs faced the greatest Danger to their Lives from the British Empire.

F.C. Andrews saw the spirit of Christ manifesting itself in the peaceful suffering of Sikhs at the hand of British Police, in the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha at Amritsar.

S. Udham Singh waited for 21 long years to avenge the atrocities committed by Mr.D'yer in Jallianwala Bagh.

S. Bhagat Singh made supreme sacrifice for the national cause and set an example for his countrymen to follow.

I.N.A was first founded by General Mohan Singh and most of the soldiers joining the ranks were Sikhs. Rebel Units raised in Germany, Japan and Italy were also by Sikhs. Neta Ji Subhash Chander Bose took charge of INA later on.

There was no sphere of national struggle where the Sikhs were not in the fore front. The Sacrifices they have made are far greater qualitatively and quantitatively both. Though their population was 1.5% of the total population of India, their contribution in terms of sacrifices amount to more than 90% in the freedom movement of India. In the year 1942 AD to 1943 AD, indiscriminate arrests were made during course of 'Quit India Movement' - 70 % arrested were of Sikhs.

Sikhs made important contributions towards organising Indian National Army, the mutiny of Indian Navy and the Strike of Delhi Police in 1946 AD. Then Indian Independence happened resulting in the partition of 1947 AD when half of the Sikh population was torn apart from their kith and kins, from their ancestral homes and hearths, from their fertile land and from their religious places.

A leading article in Statesman written on 3rd Jan, 1948 AD stated :- "A mass transfer of population and disruption of tradition and economy, relatively harsher and much less manageable than any other calamity in the afflicted sub-continent has happened, which Sikhs have been forced to bear. Probably 40% of this small but doughty people were in one manner or another, described as refugees."

The negotiations during change of Power from British Government to the Indian Government resulted in Sikhs deciding to go along with Indian Government, rather than going for an independent Sikh State with rosy promises of treatment of equality.

In July, 1946 AD, The Indian Congress working committee met in Calcutta which affirmed the assurances already given to the Sikhs which was confirmed in a press conference by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru with the following flowery words :-

“The brave Sikhs of the Punjab are entitled to special consideration and there is nothing wrong in an area and setup in the North wherein the Sikhs can experience the glow of freedom.” In these words, an autonomous state to the Sikhs within India was promised.”

1947 AD - 2021 AD

After Partition events happened which lead to further grievances in Sikh Community.

In Punjabi Suba Demand most of the Hindus refused to acknowledge Punjabi as their mother tongue which resulted in trifurcation of Punjab into Haryana and Himachal and Sikhs obtained a majority state of Punjab on Nov 1, 1966 AD.

Subsequently a section of Sikh Leaders started demanding more autonomy for the State alleging that the Central Government has discriminated against Punjab. The early stages of Sikh agitation for equal rights was peaceful, leading one commentator to note :- “Over 100,000 volunteers have been arrested. A such a high number of arrests is undoubtedly a national record and so has been the peaceful nature in which the Satyagraha (protests) of this magnitude have been handled by extreme tolerance.”

Though the promise was never kept, Sikhs remained peace loving patriotic citizens of the Country and when ever the need arose, contributed to their level best. An example is the Fund Collection drive by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru after 1962 AD war with China, for National Defence Fund which spells that 130 Kg gold was donated by the Punjab Government, half of which had come from the people of Amritsar. NDF reported on November 28, that it had received Rs 8 Crore, of which 46 % had been contributed by Punjab. Congress could only collect 0.6 Kg of Gold.

Subedar Joginder Singh received posthumously the Gallantry Award “The Param Vir Chakra” for single handily killing more than 50 Chinese Soldiers, creating a History in Indian Army, in Sino-Indian war of 1962 AD.

Veer Chakra was awardee Late Lt. General Harbaksh Singh who was the hero of 1965 Indo- Pak War and was confirmed with The Padma Bhushan award in 1966 AD

Air Marshal Arjan Singh, an Icon of Military History (always be remembered as a war Hero) had successfully led a young IAF during 1965 AD Indo-Pak war. He was awarded posthumously with Padma Vibhushan for his astute leadership of Air Force. Lt General Jagjit Singh Aurora PSVM was the poster boy of 1971 AD Indo-Pak War.

In the eastern command Gen. Aurora led to an overwhelming victory, Splitting the Pakistan into two. With creation of Bangladesh, General Aurora also received the

surrender from (Governor of Pakistan) and Commander of the Pakistan Army - Lt Gen. Niazi along with 90,000 Pakistani Army troops. This was the largest surrender by an enemy army, since world war two.

Brigadier Kuldip Singh Chandpuri was a major in Indian Army in 1971 AD war. His valiant action in famous Battle of Longewala will always be remembered in Indian Military History. He was awarded Maha Vir Chakra for his exceptional Leadership.

Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon is the only Flying officer to be honoured by Param Vir Chakra. He was posted in Srinagar for the Air Defence in 1971 AD war. Anandpur Sahib Resolution included both religious and political issues and was unanimously adopted by Shiromani Akali Dal at the meeting held at Anandpur Sahib on 16-17 Oct, 1973 AD. It asked for recognising Sikhism as a religion separate from Hinduism. It also demanded that powers be generally devaluated from the Central to state Governments with more autonomy to Punjab Government. S. Harcharan Singh Longowal President of Akali Dal Stated :-

“Let us make it clear once for all that the Sikhs have no design to get away from India in any manner. What they simply want is that they should be allowed to live in India as Sikhs, free from all direct and indirect tampering with their religious way of life. Undoubtedly the Sikhs have the same nationality as other Indians.”

Despite the resolution declaring its goals within the context of the state and leaving the power of Foreign Relations, Defence, Currency and General Communication as subjects to Central Government, Indira Gandhi, Congress leaders and rivals of Akali Dal viewed Anandpur Sahib Resolution as a secessionist document.

In 1978 AD Nirankari baba Gurbachan Singh led a parade across Amritsar chanting anti Sikh slogans and claiming himself as ultimate Guru. He used Amrit to clean his feet and wiped them with pages torn from Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale sent peaceful protestors against this un-tolerable audacity of Nirankaris who started short gunning the innocent Sikhs and killed 13 of them in cold blood.

Baba Gurcharan Singh and 60 other Nirankaris were prosecuted but were acquitted on 4th January, 1980 AD. Sikhs suspected that the Nirankaris were aided and abetted by Central Government and the urban Hindu elite of Punjab. On 20th April, 1980 AD

Baba Gurbachan Singh - the Nirankari head was assassinated. Bhindranwale was accused and took shelter temporarily in Akal Takht Complex, to evade arrest.

In 1981AD, Bhindranwale voluntarily offered his arrest in Amritsar, where he was detained for 25 days, but was released because of lack of evidence. Every one knew he was completely innocent and was genuinely and exclusively dedicated to the teachings of the Gurus. In December 1983 AD, a senior police officer in Chandigarh confessed: 'It is really shocking that we have so little against him (Bhindranwale) while we keep blaming him for all sorts of things'.

BJP leader Subramani Swami met Bhindranwale five times and once spent five days with him in Golden Temple Complex in April, 1984 AD. Swami declared him as a simple saint who could not tolerate any injustice and in no way was a terrorist or anti national. Swami ji made this statement in Parliament that there was no evidence of Khalistan, movement, or of Arms & Ammunition, or transmitters in Golden Temple Complex and demanded a white paper for truth to come out in Public Domain.

In the wake of Indian Government's repression of Sikhs, some of them formed guerrilla bands to take on marauding police. In 1984 AD, in the designated Operation 'Wood Rose' Sikh youths between the age of 15 to 24 years, were picked up from their homes in large numbers. Many were tortured brutally, forcing them to take up arms against the state Government authorities.

"Any knowledge of the "Amritdharis" who are dangerous people and pledged to commit murder, arson and act of terrorism, should be immediately brought to the notice of the authorities. These people may appear harmless from outside but are basically committed to terrorism. In the interest of us all, their identity and their whereabouts must always be disclosed " Indira Gandhi during operation Wood Rose.

The Indian Government started alleging that Bhindranwale was killing Hindus and had allied with Pakistan to create Khalistan. The first time the phrase Khalistan used was by Hind Samachar news paper group. The Indian secret operation called 'Black Cats' was formed (by suggestion of Government) to disguise the Punjab Police as terrorists to kill Hindus in the countryside so as to defame Sikhs. Sant Bhindranwale condemned these killings of Hindus but was never outlined in News.

Russian Influence compounded by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, other communists and congress men, convinced Indira Gandhi of the non existent plan of formation of Khalistan by the Sikhs with the support of Pakistan. This lead Indira Gandhi to order military operation in June 1984 AD, Code Named 'Operation Blue Star' to clear Harmandir Sahib and thirty other Gurdwaras, from control of Sikh Militants The military

attack started on June, 3rd and continued till 8th June, 1984 AD, with tanks resulting in killings of around 3000 and injuries to 700 innocent visitors to Gurdwara Sahib. 200-250 Sikh fighters were also killed including Sant Bhindranwale.

The handling of the operation resulting in damage to the holy shrine and loss of life, lead to wide spread criticism of the Indian Government. The Indian Prime Minister herself was assassinated by her two Sikh bodyguards in retaliation. Following her death, 17000 Sikhs were killed in the 1984 AD riots all over India. On 10th Aug, 1986 AD, General Vaidya, incharge of Operation Blue Star, was killed in Pune in broad day light, on a main road.

After operation Blue Star, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi (Prime Minister) reached out with a compromise with Longowal called Rajiv - Longowal Accord on 24th July, 1985 AD. The Government accepted the demands of Akali Dal who in turn agreed to withdraw their agitation against the Government. Some of the demands of this accord could not be met due to some disagreements. This resulted in Harcharan Singh Longowal getting assassinated by the Sikh Militants, who were opposed to this Accord.

The subsequent Punjab Insurgency saw several secessionist military groups becoming active in Punjab. Indian security forces suppressed the insurgency in early 1990's by doing genocide upon the innocent Sikhs. Over 25,00,000 Sikhs were killed according to Jaswant Singh Khaira who was also killed in a fake police encounter. Khushwant Singh described these times as "I felt like a refugee in my own country. I felt like a Jew in Nazi Germany." In 2002 AD the claims of the popular right wing Hindu Organisation 'the RSS', were that the "Sikhs are Hindus" which angered Sikh sensibilities. Many Sikhs are still campaigning for justice for the brutalities and jail sentences suffered by them in those times, which does not seem to be delivered.

Sikhs have now grown into a Multinational Community with foot print in every corner of the world. Total Sikh Population stands at 30 Million world wide - out of which 83.2% live in India (Which is 1.72% of Total Population of India). In every country of the world , Sikhs are making inroads by excelling in every walk of life.

S. Manmohan Singh is a highly respected Indian worldwide as an Economist, Academia, and Politician who has served as the 13th Prime Minister of India from 2004 AD to 2014 AD for Ten Long years.

Air Marshal Arjan Singh is the only Indian 5 Star General and famous world over.

In the United States the former US Ambassador of the United Nations and former Governor of California - Nikki Harry was born and raised as a Sikh.

Nuclear Scientist S. Piara Singh Gill worked on the Manhattan Project.
Fibre Optics Pioneer was a famous USA scientist named S. Narinder Singh Kampany.
Physicist, Science writer and Broad caster is a Sikh - Simon Singh.

S. Kartar Singh Thakral of Thakrla Holdings Singapore is a successful businessman with total assets equivalent to 1.4 Billion Dollars.

Bob Singh Dhillon is the first Indo- Canadian Billionaire.

S. Ajay Pal Singh Bagga is CEO of Master Card.

Indian born Canadian Sikh - Harjit Singh Sajjan is the Canadian Minister of Defence.

Now Sikhs and their religion is being recognised as a distinct religion world wide.

The American Non- Profit Organisation “United Sikhs” has successfully fought to have Sikhs included in the US Census as “Ethnic Minority” and with belief that “they (SIKHS) are more than religion”.

Sikhism is now a State-Registered Religious Denomination Community in Australia. Sikhs are now a Dominant Ethnic Group in Canada.

Sikhism is legally recognised as a Separate Religion in U.K. under the UK’s Race Relation Act -1976 AD.

Sikhism is one of the youngest major religion and world’s fifth largest Organised Religion. As the world population comes in direct contact with Sikhs now and gets impressed by its simplicity and clarity of thought, they are now adopting Sikh Religion voluntarily. 3HO - an organisation of Bhajan Singh Yogi - popularly known as Gora Sikhs were mainly centred around Espanola- New Mexico, Los Angeles and California. Some of the famous personalities who have adopted Sikhism is listed here

Bhai Mardana - Companion Of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the first adoptee of Sikh faith from Islam.

Alexander Atkins - actress and daughter of former British cabinet Minister Jonathan Atkins adopted Sikh Religion and named as Uttrang Kaur Khalsa.

Babaji Singh Khalsa a Mexican Sikh who is credited for translating Guru Granth Sahib, the holy text of the Sikhs into Spanish Language.

Vic Briggs a convert to Sikhism, currently plays classical Indian and Hawaiian Music became Vikram Sing Khalsa and was the first non - Indian to perform Kirtan at Harmandir Sahib.

Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa born in 1943 AD as Mary May Gibson in Illinois, is a teacher of Kundalini Yoga and is the founder director of the Golden Bridge Yoga Centre. Kristen Lindholm - former model and actress -won prizes for ballroom dancing - is a yoga instructor in New Zealand and is known by the Sikh name Vikram Kaur Khalsa.

Martin Singh is a Canadian converted to Sikhism and apolitical belonging to the NewDemocratic Party. He is a pharmacist and a business man and lives in Brampton.

Dharma Singh Khalsa born in Ohio - is the President and Medical Director of the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention foundation in Tucson, Arizona .

Syed Prithipal Singh (ne Mushtaq Hussain) only son of Muzafar Hussain and grand son of the famous Bakur Shah Muslim family of Mirpur, Kashmir, became a Baptised Sikh, inspired by Sikhism.

Sikhism has inspired many national and international philanthropists to engage in the Service of Society from the inspiring last lines of Daily Sikh Prayer (Ardas) :-

“Nanak Naam Charhdi Kala - Tere Bhaane Sarbat Da Bhala ”

By the grace of the Name of God every one will remain in high spirits (positive, buoyant, and optimistic) and His (God's) blessings will come “ wellbeing of every one in the world.”

“Sarbat Da Bhala” which means ‘blessings for every one’. The term outlines one of the most important Sikh principles literally meaning “may every one prosper”. Such is the Sikh Philosophy, far reaching and far sighted.

KHALSA AID is an International NGO with aim to provide aid in disaster areas and in Civil Conflict Zones around the world. The organisation is based on the principle

“ Recognise the whole human race as One ”

UNITED Sikhs is Associated with United Nations Department of Public Information

It is a global NGO of Humanitarian Relief and Advocacy with headquarters in New York and empowering those in need especially disadvantaged minority communities.

SIKH RELIEF NGO registered in Europe, North America and India, is supporting Sikhs and societies world wide social well fare. One of the special services being

rendered by them is welfare of prisoners under which they are providing relief and assistance for education for the children of prisoners.

WORLD SIKH ORGANISATION (WSO) Canada protects the Interest of Sikhs in Canada and around the world and advocates protection for the human rights for all.

The SIKH FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL was founded by S. Narinder Singh Kampany-the father of fibre optics in 1967 AD the with Moto to “Inspire, Educate, and Engage” everyone.

As per Mahan Kosh (Dictionary and Encyclopaedia) the meaning of Gurdwara is ‘Door to the Guru’ i.e a place for Assembly and Worship for all those who believe in Sikhism. It is a place to learn spiritual wisdom. It’s also a place for religious ceremonies. It’s a place where children learn the Sikh Faith, Ethics, Customs, Traditions and Text. Gurdwara is also a community centre offering free food, shelter and companionship to those who need it. It can be located from far off by the saffron fluttering Nishan Sahib (Sikh Flag).

Gurdwara has become popular for world over for free food - Langar to any one, without any discretion of colour, cast, creed or faith. Any one can seek shelter here.

Many opposition leaders took Shelter in Gurdwaras (some dressed as Gur Sikhs) to avoid arrest during emergency enforced by Mrs India Gandhi in 1975 Ad which was in place till 1977 AD. About 80,000 Sikhs were also put behind bars all over India.

Ms Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, an Indian diplomat, sister of Jawahar Lal Nehru and first female President of United Nations General assembly, stated this about emergency:

“Punjab which has been in forefront of resistance of oppression, kept its colours flying during emergency also. It was in Punjab and Punjab alone that a large scale resistance was organised against it. The worst thing that happened during Emergency was that the brave Nation was frightened into submission and no body spoke except in hushed tones. In Dehradun, where I was, I hung my head in shame, and wondered‘ if this was Bharat ‘ for which we, the freedom fighters, had suffered. Even those not actually in prison, were no less than in jail. Only in Punjab the Akalis organised morcha (Protest) against this. Punjab’s lead in such matters would continue.”

Sikhs have proved their commitment to serve humanity world over for any calamity, voluntarily and without personal gain, political gain or false accolade. Where ever the need arose, whether it was a pandemic brought by disease or natural disaster or war,Sikh volunteers were there to serve humanity of any faith or colour, at times facing

all kinds of difficulties of train or logistics and even opposition of local residents. Bertrand Russel (Philosopher-Mathematician) 1872 AD - 1990 AD had commented.

“If some lucky men survive the onslaught of the third war of atomic and hydrogen bombs, then the Sikh Religion will be the only means of guiding them. When asked, “isn’t this religion capable of guiding mankind before the third war?” He said ‘yes it has the capability, but the Sikhs haven’t brought out in daylight the splendid doctrines of this religion, which have come into existence for the benefit of the entire mankind.

This is their greatest sin and the Sikhs can not be freed from it “Far a Sikh, the word of Guru Matters and Sikhs are fully devoted to the Will of God.

“ Naa Ko Murakh, Naa Ko Siyana, Varte Sub Kichh Tera Bhana “

A quote from Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji meaning “ As per individual perception, No one is foolish and No one is intelligent - Whatever is happening is happening by the consent of God.

Another quote from Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji expresses the Philosophy of a Sikh :-

“ Naa Ko Bairi Nahi Begana - Sagal Sang Hum Ko Ban Aai “

Meaning, no one is my enemy and no one is stranger, I perfectly get along with all.

Another quote from Shri Guru Granth Sahib ji expresses the commitment of a Sikh :-

“ Maira Mujh Mein Kich Nahin, Jo Kich Hay So Tera
Tera Tujh Ko Saunp Tay, Kya Lagai Hai Maira ”

Nothing within myself is mine. Whatever there is, is yours (God)

If I surrender to you (God) what is already yours, what does it cost me.

Every religion teaches one thing in common i.e to be a good human being. Sikh religion goes beyond that and teaches the philosophy of service to Entire Humanity.

World over in every Sikh Temple, every day, Sikhs recite in their prayer ‘Raj Kare Ga Khalsa - Aaki Rahe Na Koye ‘which means “Only the purest of pure will rule the world and non faithful will never survive. (The person who is sincere to God will command the humanity and non trustworthy will be destroyed). Khalsa means “Pure and ‘Sovereign Free’ to rule in the hearts of every one in the world.

Guru Gobind Singh had professed :-

“ Jab Lag Khalsa Rahe Niara, Tab Lag Tej Dio Mai Sara
Jab Eh Gahe Bipran ki Reet, Mai Na karo In Ki Pateet “

So long as Khalsa retains his distinct identity, I shall give him my entire radiance and strength. But if he takes up a non-Sikh way of life, then I shall have no confidence in him and will withdraw My Support and protection. Every where in the world, in every Sikh temple, there is presence of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji - which has been translated into many world languages. With this, global humanity is learning to understand the philosophy of Sikh religion. Many are falling in love with the Sikhs and Sikhism and several are willingly adopting this Faith. So time is not far off when the entire world, which has become a global village, will become enlightened by the essence (message) of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and will follow the path of free and fair sovereignty.

Milton Friedman writes in his book 'Sikh Jeewan Jach' :-

“Sikhs exterminate and extinguish the hunger of their country by dint of hard work and also safeguard the borders from foreign invasion. They have performed very dynamic, glorious, and effective role in breaking the shackles of slavery of India ever. If the Sikhs are given the leadership, there would not be any problem of multifaceted development of the country and that of poverty. So much so the problem of foreign attacks would be finished once for all.”

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