

Foundation of the Khalsa

The ensuing events show that the Guru wanted to create a new breed of men, steeped in nationalism and brotherly love, with a penchant for fighting, imbued with devotion to Akal, and ready to sacrifice their lives for their ideals. The Gurus were peace-loving preachers of love and devotion to the Formless One, often keeping aloof. The cruelty, plunder and heartlessness of the Muslims and the piteous plight of the Hindus, the denigration of their women and their Dharma prompted the Tenth Guru to come out of his seclusion and feel the pulse of the people. The antagonism of the Hill Rajas and the wars forced on him by them made him assume the mantle of a kingly saviour as well. He needed a band of devoted Sikhs, courageous, well versed in warfare, and eager to succour the oppressed as a religious duty. Such people were difficult to find in the Hindu society of his time.

He decided to institute a new order of universal brotherhood, imbued with devotion to Akal, filled with the ideal of self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. Such an order would demolish the existing barriers of caste and creed, high and low, man and woman, and pave the way for the advent of nationalism and bring unity. It would also help in bringing about the downfall of the tyrannical foreign rule. It was not the intention of the Guru to launch a crusade against the Muslims.

Accordingly, on the Baisakhi of Samat 1756 (1699 A.D.) the Guru gathered his Sikhs in great numbers at an open place at Anandpur. The Sikhs had come from far and wide at the invitation of the Guru. A huge tent and an enclosure had been set up in the field. When all the Sikhs had assembled, the Guru appeared with a naked sword in his hand and declared that as willed by Akal Purkh he was going to offer the head of a Sikh as the first sacrifice for the defence of Dharma. The blood of this Sikh shall serve as a living symbol of the defence of the country and Dharma, for the coming generations of Sikhs and inspire them to shed their blood for these ideals. The Guru called for a Sikh willing to offer his head to his Guru, to be sacrificed for the defence of Dharma and the country, to step forth and appear before his Guru. The blood of this Sikh shall revive the dead nation. On hearing the words of his Guru, Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore came before his Guru with folded hands and sedate dignity and offered his head to be cut off at once for this noble cause.

The Guru took him inside the tent holding him by the hand. The sound of a powerful stroke of the sword was heard from within and blood started flowing out of the tent. The people outside felt sure that the head of Daya Ram had been severed from his body. Guru Gobind came out brandishing a blood-stained sword and demanded the offering of another head. Dharam Chand, a Jat of Hastinapur offered himself. The Guru took him within and the above act was repeated. Guru Gobind Singh emerged with his bloodstained

sword. He asked for a head three times more and Himmat Rai, a Potter, Mohkam Chand, a Tailor and Sahib Chand, a Barber, offered their heads. They were taken in one by one by the Guru who each time acted in the manner mentioned above. It is difficult to find their peers in the annals of history. At the mere bidding of their Guru they offered their life and body to him. *Such an event had never taken place in any country of the world at any time before.*

It was with a two-fold purpose that the Guru acted in the strange manner depicted above. Firstly he wanted to find out whether the Sikhs, had in them, the stuff to sacrifice their all for the love of their Dharma and land, how far his efforts and exhortations over a long period had succeeded in producing the desired effect and whether the Sikhs had reached such a state that they could gaily sacrifice their lives for others. His Sikhs had risen to the occasion and creditably passed the severe test. He had asked for the heads of five Sikhs and five Sikhs, lovingly called the Five beloveds, had unflinchingly placed 'their necks under the sword of their Guru. This assured him that all Sikhs would willingly obey him through thick and thin and that his preparatory work had not gone waste. Guru Gobind Singh must have been immensely pleased with the result of his test.

Secondly, he wanted to bring it home to his Sikhs that only people like the Five Beloveds could successfully undertake difficult tasks for their Dharma and country, and that they all should be ready to make such sacrifices. What Five Beloveds had done, they all could. He had sown the thought of self-sacrifice in the minds of his Sikhs. Now he turned to its germination and blossoming into action. He took the 'Five Beloveds' out of the tent and held his court in the fort of Kesgarh. He armed the five and dressed them in a special uniform. He armed and dressed himself likewise and asked for water from the river flowing below. This water was poured in a receptacle of steel; some sweets (*patashas*) were added to it. Guru Gobind Singh himself recited the Five Banis and stirred the contents all the while with his *Khannda*. He called the preparation, *Amrit* (The Eternal-life-giving Nectar). And this was administered to the Five in the following manner. Five times he took out five handfuls of Amrit and made the five partake of them, while the six of them (including the Guru) shouted "Wahe-Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe-Guru Li Ki Fateh". This ceremony was termed 'Pahul' and the brotherhood was called the Khalsa and their Dharma called the Khalsa Dharma. All members of the Khalsa were instructed to add 'Singh' after their names.

Basic Tenets of the Khalsa

The following basic tenets of the Khalsa were set up:

1. Whosoever adopts the Khalsa Dharma shall partake of Amrit in the same manner as administered by the Guru.
2. Whosoever takes 'Pahul' shall be bound to add 'Singh' to his name.

3. Wheresoever five Sikhs assemble, Khalsa Dharma shall perfectly exist there and for the purpose of the 'Pahul' these five shall act as the Guru. They can be any five Sikhs without any distinctions. Accordingly, the Guru himself was administered 'Pahul' by the 'Five Beloveds' and his name changed to Gobind Singh from Gobind Rai.
4. Whosoever joins the Khalsa Dharma, shall be called a 'Singh'. He shall keep hair on his head, keep a weapon of steel like Kirpan on his person, wear a short (Kachha) and an iron Bangle (Kara) and keep a comb (Kangha) in his hair. From the very time of the establishment of the Khalsa, the keeping of these five essentials called the Five *Kakkars*, became a must for every Singh.
5. All Sikhs shall be equal brethren in the Khalsa without any, distinction of high or low. Their previous castes and creeds and surnames stand nullified. All the Sikhs shall eat together from the same vessel.
6. All Sikhs shall stand freed of all previous distinctions of birth, caste, creed and doings. They shall start life anew in the Khalsa Dharma.
7. It is imperative for all Singhs to attribute all spiritual and temporal powers to steel. It shall be their bounden duty to keep weapons of steel, and gain proficiency in their use in a battle.
8. The Singh who dies in battle or takes part in a crusade (*Dharam Yudh*) and destroys his enemy, who is never disheartened though vanquished shall attain a high stature.
9. The Singh shall not wear a Janju.
10. Liberation can be attained only through Khalsa Dharma.
11. The Singhs should discard all rites and rituals of the Hindus, but should respect the latter's Temples and religious feelings and defend their Dharma and country when endangered.
12. It is the duty of the Singhs to destroy the enemies of the people.
13. The Singhs shall worship the Lord through truthful actions and pray to the One Formless Akal only and not to any of his creations.
14. They shall bow before the Guru Granth Sahib only and not before any man, tomb or grave.
15. The Singhs shall hold Guru Nanak Dev as their spiritual guide and Supreme Lord, venerate all his successors and obey their injunctions.
16. They shall occasionally take a bath in the holy *Sarovar at Amritsar*, the main *Tiratha of Sikhs*.
17. They shall accost each other with "Wahe-Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe-Guru Ji Ki Fateh" and discard all other forms of greetings.
18. They shall not use tobacco.
19. They should hold Khalsa as the repository of His Divine Power.

Guru Gobind Singh forbade the entry of the following kinds of people into the Khalsa Brotherhood:

- *The Massands*, who managed the affairs of the Gurdwaras in those days They had degenerated into a class of timid, worthless and indolent Pujaris.
- The followers and devotees of Dhir Mal called 'Dhir Malleey', who contented with Guru Tegh Bahadur for Guruship and violently opposed him and went to the extent of firing at him.
- 'Ram Raeeay', the followers of Ram Rai, a collateral of Guru Gobind Singh who contested the Guruship and created all kinds of trouble for the Guru.
- The killers of new-born daughters. Since such people as had become habitual killers of their daughters were likely to continue the evil practice even after joining the Khalsa, they were excluded from the ranks of the Khalsa. The Sikhs were asked not to deal and intermarry with such people.

By laying the foundation of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh delivered his message of love and initiated the completion of his mission. He inscribed in glowing letters the story of the Khalsa and its rules on the pages of Time. Only his signature remained to be appended to it. In due course he signed with his love and this Document of Universal Love and Brotherhood was attested and witnessed by the sacrifice of his four sons. Now the document was completed in all aspects for the coming generations of the world to peruse and cherish.

The ceremony of initiation into the Khalsa Dharma was completed. As a protest of disapproval, many high castes, Kashatris and Brahmins, who were present in the gathering, walked out. And upholding the customary ways of the high castes, they created a furore, taking the event as an *unwarranted interference* in their Dharma, based mainly on caste system and hollow rites and rituals. The Guru addressing his Sikhs declared that he had obeyed the mandate of Lord Akal, which enshrines the uplifting of the lowly and the down-trodden. Disregarding the out-bursts of the high castes he prophesied "Those whom the high castes spurn now shall be my heirs after my death and become the equals of the highest".