



Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Politics, Society and Economy

FAUJA SINGH AND A.C. ARORA

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MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

POLITICS, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

FOUNDER OF THE SIKH EMPIRE



Portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh
done by Kehar Singh, Artist of the Maharaja's Court

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POLITICS, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

edited by
FAUJA SINGH & A. C. ARORA

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FOREWORD

The establishment of the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Punjab ushered in a new epoch in the history of this region. Under his rule, not only the unification of Punjab was accomplished, very significant gradual improvements were also witnessed in every branch of administration. The prevailing peace and order in the kingdom together with personal attention and efforts of the Maharaja, created very conducive environment for the development of agriculture, education, literature, fine arts, trade and commerce. Due to the liberal religious policy of the Maharaja the people of all the communities—Hindus, Sikhs Muslims and Christians—lived and thrived in the environ of communal harmony and goodwill.

A seminar organised in the Punjabi University in connection with the 200th birth anniversary celebrations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in August 1981, focused attention on those historical aspects of the period which had remained unexplored hitherto. Far from paying merely reverential tributes to the Maharaja, the papers presented in the seminar sought to make an objective study of various facets of the subject. The wide spectrum of the themes covered in the seminar, which are included in this volume will, I hope, help understand better the politics, society and economy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's times. Dr Fauja Singh and Dr A.C. Arora verily deserve to be complimented for producing this historical work of great importance. It is sad that Dr Fauja Singh was not destined to see this publication in the book-form. The University owes a debt of gratitude to late Dr Fauja Singh, an eminent historian who wrote and edited numerous valuable books for the Punjabi University, Patiala.

PREFACE

It was under the auspices of the Directorate of Planning and Development that a seminar on 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh : Politics, Society and Economy' was organised in the Punjabi University in August 1981 as a part of the 200th birth anniversary celebrations of the Maharaja. The present volume contains the papers presented in the seminar; its title also emanates scrupulously from the subject of the seminar.

It had been our desire and endeavour from the very beginning to cover hitherto unexplored aspects of the early nineteenth century history of the Punjab. With that object in view, various themes of the seminar were carefully selected and circulated among the scholars well in advance. The response was highly encouraging in terms of both the quantity of the papers and the variety of their themes.

A glance at the papers published in this volume will reveal a wide variety of themes they represent—Ranjit Singh's conquests and defence system, his relations with the neighbouring states, nature of the Maharaja's state, local administration, numismatics, agricultural system and land-market, life and manners of the common people, urbanisation, education, art and literature, trade and commerce, source-materials and historiography, etc. etc. Evidently, the socio-cultural and economic aspects of Ranjit Singh's times have been as adequately represented as the political aspects. We are beholden to all the scholars whose valuable papers appear in this volume. The limitation of space compelled us to curtail or condense some lengthy articles.

Grateful acknowledgements are due to Dr S.S. Johl, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, for his keen interest in, and kindly foreword to, this publication; to Dr Bhagat Singh, former Vice-Chancellor of the University, for his inaugural address; to Prof. Amarjit Singh Dhillon for his unstinted co-operation in the

conduct of the seminar; to Dr Kirpal Singh, Dr S.K. Bajaj, Dr S.D. Pradhan and Dr D. S. Dhillon for their assistance in the preparation of the press-copy; to Sh. R.K. Ghai for shouldering willingly the responsibility of seeing the book through the press; to Sh. Raj Kumar for preparing afresh the type-script; and to S. Hazara Singh, Head, Publication Bureau of the University, for supervising the printing. The illustration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh given in the beginning of this volume is the photographic reproduction of the portrait done by Kehar Singh, the court-artist of the Maharaja.

It is very sad indeed that Dr Fauja Singh at whose initiative the seminar had been organised expired suddenly on 8 April 1983. In the demise of this devoted and dedicated scholar of Punjab History the country has lost a distinguished historian. For one who has been his close associate for the past sixteen years and is co-editor in this volume, the tragedy is too deep for words. I take this opportunity to offer my most respectful homage and to inscribe my deepest sense of gratitude to the doyen of Punjab historians who is no more with us. To this tragedy may also be attributed the delay in the publication of this volume.

Department of History
Punjabi University
Patiala
April 18, 1984

A. C. ARORA
Professor & Head

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DR BHAGAT SINGH*

Dr Ganda Singh, Dr Fauja Singh, distinguished seminarians, ladies and gentlemen :

I consider it a proud privilege to extend to all of you a most hearty and cordial welcome to this seminar on 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh—Politics, Society and Economy'. This seminar, as you know all, has been organised in connection with the 200th birth anniversary celebrations of the Maharaja, an outstanding national hero of the Punjab. Born on 13 November 1780 at Gujranwala (now in Pakistan), Ranjit Singh had grown into a highly ambitious youth, possessing the princely qualities of courage and valour in extraordinary degrees. After assuming the headship of the Sukarchakia Misal in the closing years of the 18th century, he embarked upon a career of conquest. Within a decade he subjugated the coveted cities of Lahore and Amritsar, and brought under his sway the territories of most of the Sikh *misals* and those of the neighbouring Muslim and Rajput chiefs. His most admirable achievements as a conqueror were, however, the conquests of Attock, Multan, Kashmir, Derajat and Peshawar. All of these territories were hitherto held by the Afghan chiefs who owed allegiance to the King of Afghanistan. By subjugating and separating these territories from Afghanistan, the Maharaja rendered a signal service to the country. But for him, these valuable territories, including the picturesque valley of Kashmir, might, perhaps, have become part and parcel of Afghanistan for ever. Ranjit Singh thus succeeded in converting his heritage of a small principality into a vast kingdom having an area of 1,40,000

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square miles and stretching from the Sulaiman ranges in the north-west to the river Sutlej in the south-east and from Ladakh in the north to Rojhan (Sind) in the south-west. It is significant to observe that he owed the creation of this far-flung state largely to his own indisputable ability and soldierly qualifications.

Ranjit Singh was not only a brilliant soldier and a pre-eminently successful military general but was also endowed with a rare genius for organisation. In fact, his accomplishments as a warrior were excelled by his achievements as an organiser. He envisaged and enforced a system of administration which marked a substantial improvement over that of the Sikh, Muhammedan or Rajput chieftains who preceded him or were his contemporaries. Some European writers mistakenly have described him as an absolute 'Eastern Potentate' and his government as an unmitigated despotism. But it will be only fair to remark that his was a benevolent state. For the Maharaja always considered the welfare of his subjects as the primary object of his rule. He was not cruel or callous. Except in war he 'never wantonly imbrued his hands in blood.' On the other hand, he was known for his humanity and kindness which was, indeed, the most creditable trait of the Maharaja's personality. Highly conscious of his kingly responsibilities, the Maharaja exerted hard to look after the efficient working of the administration throughout his kingdom. Even the minutest details of administration did not escape his vigilant eye. With his prodigious memory he not only remembered the names of numerous towns and villages of his kingdom but also knew about the approximate land-revenue yielded by each. Evidently his government was remarkably enlightened and vigorous.

The Maharaja wielded his powers of monarchy not in his own or family's name but on behalf of and in the name of the Khalsa or the Sikh commonwealth which was a potent force in those days. He called himself as *Singh Sāhib* and his government as *Sarkār-i-Khālsāji*. He never assumed high-sounding royal titles. Although he had instituted a beautiful court on royal pattern which contained 'all that the imagination can conceive of human grandeur, yet the royal emblems of crown and throne

were conspicuous by their absence in his *Darbar*. He often used to remark that he was nothing more than the *nigara* (drum) of Guru Gobind Singh intended to announce the victory of the Khalsa. He attributed his sovereignty to the Gurus and his coin bore the famous Persian inscription :

deg-o-teg-o-fateh-o-nusrat-i-bedring
yāft az Nānak Gūru Gobind Singh

The inscription when rendered into English would mean :

‘Hospitality, sword, victory and conquest unfailing have been received from the Gurus Nanak-Gobind Singh.’

In the discharge of his kingly duties, the Maharaja was advised and assisted by a number of ministers and officials. Possessing an unerring judgement of human character, he selected right man for the right place. While making appointments he attached much importance—and very wisely so—to the hereditary instincts, traditions and talents of the various classes of his subjects. That is why most of his ministers and officials, belonging to various communities and classes, proved themselves eminently capable for the jobs entrusted to them. The Maharaja had instituted a number of *daftars* or departments which operated under the able directions of his finance minister. His kingdom was not a mere congeries of unconsolidated territories. It was divided into definite provinces, districts and villages, each of these units and sub-units being administered according to a more or less uniform pattern. The Maharaja evinced considerable common-sense and caution in the selection of local officials.

What had endeared the Maharaja to his subjects the most was his ready accessibility. He did not choose to live in his royal ivory tower, looking down upon the common people. On the other hand, he made himself easily accessible to the people and was ever prepared to listen to their complaints and grievances even against high officials and princes. He used to undertake tours of the different parts of his kingdom from time to time to apprise himself of the real needs and grievances of his subjects. At the capital the people were given the right to meet him and make all sorts of complaints at the time of his daily ride. He

had also placed a box outside his palace and the people could put their petitions in the box to get their grievances redressed promptly. The Maharaja was very considerate to the interests of the peasants and he made all possible efforts to protect them from exploitation at the hands of government officials, *zamindārs* and *jāgīrdārs*.

Having 'a wonderful insight and intuition in matters military', the Maharaja reorganised his army on western lines. Introduction of infantry, heavy artillery, drill and discipline among the soldiers and payment of monthly salaries, were some of the notable reforms brought about by him in the military system. As a result of these reforms, he succeeded in transforming a rabble of horsemen into a highly powerful, disciplined and well-equipped army. To this army may be attributed some of the momentous victories won by the Maharaja, especially in the north-west frontier. It was also this army left by him which subsequently offered the toughest ever resistance to the British Indian army during the First Anglo-Sikh War, and made the position of the latter highly critical at times.

Ranjit Singh possessed in a very high degree one particular kingly quality not usually found in most of the rulers : he always knew exactly how far he could go. He had the ability to call a halt to his ambition if he considered such a course in the best interests of his state. He aspired to subdue the cis-Sutlej region in order to satisfy his desire of becoming the sole master of all the Sikhs of the Punjab. But when the British authorities seemed determined to prevent him from conquering the territories of this region, he agreed to compromise by concluding the historic Treaty of Amritsar in 1809. Himself a shrewd statesman, he had a true estimate of the military strength of the British and he deliberately avoided what might have proved a fatal collision for him. He gave a similar proof of his practical wisdom by abstaining from the hazardous venture of conquering Afghanistan.

The Maharaja's claim to remembrance by the posterity rests, in no small measure, on his tolerant and liberal religious policy. Though a devoted Sikh who would never begin his day without

listening to *gurbani*; he was able to rise above the communal prejudices of his age and treated the men of different religious groups on equal footing. He gave full religious freedom to the non-Sikhs and imposed no restrictions whatsoever upon them. Hindus, Muslims, European Christians, and Dogra Rajputs occupied high jobs in his administration along with the men of his own community. This tends to suggest that merit, and not one's religion, was the criterion for all state appointments. The Maharaja showed as much regard for the sacred places of the Hindus and Muslims as for those of the Sikhs. That is why he could invoke most willing allegiance from all of his subjects irrespective of community, creed and caste.

It is not without significance that the Maharaja had become immensely popular during his life-time and passed into a legend after his death. It is a measure of his greatness that his departure in 1839 caused a void and the fabric built by his genius collapsed within a decade. His name continued to remain a household word in the Punjab among the high and the low for decades to come.

I have made some stray observations on the personality and achievements of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is for the distinguished historians and scholars gathered here to probe the various aspects of the subject on the basis of the available source-materials. I am glad to note that the scope of this seminar is not confined to politics alone but the contemporary society and economy have also been brought within its purview. I am told that about 40 papers are going to be presented and discussed in this scholarly gathering. I have no doubt that under the directions of Dr Ganda Singh, the doyen of Punjab historians, and Dr Fauja Singh, an authority on Ranjit Singh and post-Ranjit Singh period, the deliberations of this seminar will prove highly fruitful, and provide a source of inspiration to the young scholars in their research pursuits. With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating this seminar.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DR GANDA SINGH*

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Dr Fauja Singh, ladies and gentlemen :

I am grateful to the organisers of this seminar who have done me a great honour by asking me to preside over it. I have chosen to confine my address to examining the principal original sources for the study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times.

There is no shortage of literature on Maharaja Ranjit Singh. There are many contemporaneous works of both Indian and foreign writers who have given detailed accounts about his achievements and personality. The foreigners could not do full justice to him for extraneous reasons. The contemporary Persian sources are much more reliable. But it is an unhappy commentary on the modern writers on the Maharaja that they have made only a scanty use of these Persian sources. They have only based their writings on the observations of foreign travellers and the reports of the East India Company's officials. Here we briefly discuss the contemporary Persian and English sources.

Amīr-ul-Imlā, also named as *Muntakhab-ul-Haqāiq*, is a collection of letters written in Persian exchanged between the Sikh Sardars of the Punjab in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. These letters were collected by Dalpat Rai who died before he could compile them in some order, and, later, it was his brother Amir Chand who put them in the form of a book and named it *Amīr-ul-Imlā*. It was compiled in 1794-5. The manuscript comprising 254 pages is preserved in the British Museum, London, and I procured a photo-copy of it from

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there. The collection contains 247 letters addressed to or written by the chiefs of the Punjab and some outsiders, including those of Timur Shah, Zaman Shah, King of Britain, Ranjit Singh, Karam Singh Bhangi, Jai Singh Kanhiya, Fateh Singh, Sada Kaur and Gulab Singh.

There are many letters relating to Ranjit Singh and his House. Some letters clearly reveal Ranjit Singh's territorial ambitions and the apprehensions of other Sardars. A letter from the Subedar of Multan to Timur Shah mentions Ranjit Singh's entering the territory of Multan and seeking his help against Ranjit Singh. In one of his letters Ranjit Singh wrote to the King of England that kingship had been conferred on the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. None could dare to enter their territory. Many points of Sikh polity emerge from the study of this manuscript.

Khushwaqat Rai's *Tawārikh-i-Sikhān* is a history of the Sikhs from their origin to 1811. Its manuscripts are available in the Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Khalsa College, Amritsar, British Museum, London, and my personal collection. Khushwaqat Rai was an agent and intelligencer of the East India Company. He wrote this book on the desire of Colonel David Ochterlony, British Political Agent at Ludhiana, and completed it in 1811. The account of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is brought up to the end of Metcalfe's negotiations. The author is very conscious about the correctness of the dates and the events recorded. Since he wrote his book keeping in view the requirements of David Ochterlony, he did not allow too much of personal and subjective considerations to get into his narration. It is an excellent contemporary source for the early history of Ranjit Singh. At places it is marred by the author's pro-British bias.

A collection of news-letters titled *Akhbār Deohrī Sardār Ranjīt Singh Bahādur* was discovered from the Alienation Branch of the Divisional Commissioner's office at Poona in 1932-33 by Dr Muhammad Nazim, an officer of the Archaeological Survey of India. After proper scrutiny of these news-sheets, H.L.O. Garrett, the Keeper of Records of the Punjab Government,

got them translated into English and published them in 1935 under the title of *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817*. It seems that these news-letters were written for the information of the Peshwa at Poona by a news-writer stationed at Lahore. Most of the letters were written from the Fort of Lahore, the normal place of Ranjit Singh's residence but some of them were written from the towns of Wazirabad, Rajauri, Sialkot, Khem Karan and Fatehgarh.

These letters provide ample information about what was happening inside the royal palace, and also the Maharaja's day-to-day life, his engagements, his personal habits, his character and his pastimes. These letters are also replete with all types of information including financial, military and judicial systems then prevalent in the Punjab. From these letters we gather sufficient information regarding Ranjit Singh's attitude towards the neighbouring rulers, such as the British and those of Bahawalpur, Multan, Peshawar and Kashmir. The writer of these letters keeps himself completely detached in the course of drafting his despatches and this absence of the author's personal factor makes it historically a rare record.

Diwan Amar Nath wrote his *Zafarnāmā-i-Ranjīt Singh* (in Persian) at the instance of the Maharaja. It was completed in 1836-7. According to Sita Ram Kohli, the editor of this book, "it is not only not inferior to any contemporary chronicle in point of detail, it far excels even the diary of Sohan Lal and Bute Shah in richness of facts of general interest." It is a year-wise account of the Maharaja's reign from 1800 to 1837. Because of his holding the charge of the post of the *Bakhshi* or Paymaster of the Irregular Cavalry of the Lahore Durbar and because of his close relationship with the Maharaja's government, the author had free access to material for his work. Being the son of Diwan Dina Nath, a prominent minister in the Maharaja's government, Amar Nath was personally acquainted with many knowledgeable men at the court. His book, therefore, is one of the most important original sources of information regarding Ranjit Singh's reign up to 1837.

Akhbār Ludhiānā was a weekly Persian newspaper published at Ludhiana at the Mission Press under the supervision of the British Political Agency there. The *Akhbār* was started in November 1834. The main news in the *Akhbār* related to the Lahore Durbar. Therein we have accounts of the duties, functions and activities of the Maharaja's ministers, commanders, civil officers, princes and nobles. It also throws light on the Maharaja's sense of justice, his generosity and the well-being of his subjects in addition to various aspects of his administration.

Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdāt-ut-Tawārīkh* written in Persian is a very valuable contemporary record of Ranjit Singh's period. Sohan Lal, the author of this voluminous work, was the diarist at the court of the Maharaja and his successors. His father, Ganpat Rai, had been in the service of Sardars Charhat Singh and Mahan Singh. He wrote accounts of events of the Punjab from 1771 to 1811. Sohan Lal's narrative begins with 1811 and continues up to 1849. Thus the *Umdāt-ut-Tawārīkh* contains an eye-witness record of about 80 years.

The chronicle is divided into five *daftar*s. A copy of the book completed in 1831 and presented to Captain Wade, the Political Agent at Ludhiana, in 1831 has the following note on its flying cover by him, "As a record of dates and chronicle of events tested by a minute comparison with other authorities and my own personal investigations into its accuracy during my seventeen years' residence among the Sikhs, I am able to pronounce it in those two respects as a true and faithful narrative of Ranjit Singh's eventful life." The detailed part of the book is the narrative from 1812 onwards. The author records the day-to-day proceedings of the court date-wise. The third *daftar*, though covering a short period of nine years, is the most voluminous. It deals with the account of Ranjit Singh from 1831 to 1839 when the Maharaja touched the pinnacle of his glory.

The book was published by the descendants of the author in parts from 1885 to 1889 at the Arya Press, Lahore.

Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din *alias* Bute Shah, the author of *Tawārīkh-i-Punjab*, belonged to Ludhiana. He completed this book

in 1848. The fifth *daftar* is most exhaustive. It deals with Charhat Singh, Mahan Singh and Ranjit Singh. He has devoted almost the entire *daftar* to Ranjit Singh from his birth to his death, giving all the historical events of his life including his occupation of Lahore, of the territories of the Sikh *misals* and the conquests of Multan, Kashmir, Attock, Derajat and Peshawar, and also his relations with the British and the neighbouring states. Since Bute Shah was living on the other side of the river Sutlej, he has expressed himself independent of any pressure or special regard for Lahore Government.

Mufti Ali-ud-Din's *Ibratnāmā* is the history of the Sikhs from their origin to the annexation of Lahore in 1849. This work was completed in 1854. The book was originally planned and drafted by his father Mufti Khair-ud-Din in 1823 on the request of C.M. Wade but it was completed and finalised by Ali-ud-Din. The author had before him the books of such authors as Sohan Lal Suri, Diwan Amar Nath and Bute Shah. He finds faults with all of them and rates his own work as much superior to theirs.

The book is a mine of information regarding the geographical, social, political and economic conditions prevailing in the Punjab during the author's time. It has been divided into four parts. The first part deals with the geography of the Punjab, its rivers, climate, canals, nature of soil, land produce, flora and fauna, natural sources, and mineral and cattle wealth. In the second *daftar* he gives the history and the topography of Lahore from its foundation to his own time. In the third *daftar* he gives the history of the Sikhs from 1469 to 1849, and the fourth *daftar* deals with the customs and social practices as well as the religious ideas of the Muslim sects of Qadris, Suhrawardis, Naqashbandis and Chishtis, Hindu *faqīrs*, and the manners and customs of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs from birth to death, their eating and drinking habits and dressess, and also the life accounts of the eminent courtiers of Ranjit Singh. The author has tried to give a complete picture of his times in the various spheres, thus making it a valuable source-book of history for the first half of the nineteenth century.

Chār-Bāgh-i-Punjāb was written by Ganesh Das Badehra—a *qānūngo* at Gujrat under the Lahore Government. Because of his position as a revenue official, Ganesh Das had access to government records of the Sikh kingdom. The greater portion of the book is devoted to the House of Ranjit Singh. It was completed in 1855 and was published by the Sikh History Research Department of Khalsa College, Amritsar, in 1965. Detailed accounts of the conquests and consolidation of Ranjit Singh's kingdom, his sons, courtiers and various *doābs* of the Punjab, their important towns and villages with their special peculiarities and features, are available in this book. Ganesh Das shows a continuity in the Sikh polity from Banda Singh Bahadur to Ranjit Singh, with identical offices to be found at different levels of the Sikh governments in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries.

The Khalsa Durbar Records provide us with a mine of information regarding the various aspects of the Lahore Government from 1811 to 1849. These records are in Persian scribbled in *shikastā* style which at places present difficulty in decipherment. Sita Ram Kohli prepared a catalogue of these records and published it in two volumes, the first in 1919 and the second in 1927. These records yield a detailed account of the origin, development and working of the central secretariate of the Lahore Government and the provincial and local governments. Sita Ram Kohli's catalogue is only an aid to consulting the Khalsa Durbar records. A team of Persian-knowing scholars need to labour over the records to present an exhaustive study of their contents.

Besides these Persian sources there are some contemporary English sources also. Henry Prinsep's book *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* was published in 1834 at Calcutta. The author was inspired to write on Ranjit Singh because of the British interest in him as their friend and neighbour. Prinsep got his material from the reports of the Political Agents, William Murray and Claud M. Wade. This book contains a detailed narrative of political

events from Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore to his meeting with Lord Bentinck at Ropar in 1831. The author's concern in writing his account was more political than academic.

The Punjaub was written by Lt.-Col. Steinbach, an Austrian by birth. He was in the Lahore Army for nine years during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. In 1843 he joined the service of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. He got his book published in England in 1845. In his preface the author explained that he wrote his book with a specific motive of enlightening the British public about the state of affairs of the Punjab which they must seriously think of annexing to the British Empire in India. It is a small book and briefly deals with the topography of the Punjab, its limits, rivers, irrigation, towns, climate, production, soil, vegetables, mineral and animal wealth and manufacture of shawls in Kashmir, imports and exports, population, manners and customs of the Punjab, the court of the Maharaja and the Sikh religion.

W. L. M'Gregor's *History of the Sikhs* was published in two volumes in 1846 in London. He was a medical man and was attached to the First European Infantry when he first came to attend on Ranjit Singh in 1835-7. He had the opportunity to know about the Maharaja from a close quarter. He did not like to present him in wrong colours as most of the Europeans were then inclined to do. According to him, "Many erroneous reports are in circulation regarding Runjeet, and it is but just, on the part of one who had experienced some degree of kindness and attention from him, to place his character in its true light." Referring to the stability of the Maharaja's possessions M'Gregor says, "The manner in which Ranjeet retains his conquests entire, displays the energy of the man in even stronger light than all his victories in the field of battle."

Major G. Carmichael Smyth's *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* was written with an aim not to project Ranjit Singh's House as a family of high standing but to discredit the reigning family in the eyes of his contemporaries. The book was completed in May 1846. Smyth floated all types of gossip and

scandal pertaining to the family of Ranjit Singh. He was a strong supporter of the British and was trying to create an opinion in favour of British intervention in the Lahore Kingdom. He, however, gives some useful information about the products of the Punjab, its trees, population, political boundaries, numerical strength of the Sikh Army, list of Sardars and chiefs and prices of various commodities. Amusingly enough, Smyth does not hold Lahore Durbar responsible for providing a cause for the First Anglo-Sikh War. He wrote, "I only ask, had we not departed from the rules of friendship first?"

J.D. Cunningham's *A History of the Sikhs* was published in 1849. Cunningham who died in 1851 before he was forty was an engineer by profession. He belonged to a Scottish family of brilliant scholars and writers. He is said to have written as 'a Sikh'. His book deals with the history of the Sikhs from 1469 to 1848. Nearly one-third of the book is devoted to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Cunningham considered Ranjit Singh as a national ruler who laboured "with more or less of intelligent design, to give unity and coherence to diverse atoms and scattered elements to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well-ordered state or commonwealth, as Govind had developed a sect with a people and had given application and purpose to the general institutions of Nanak." Cunningham's is the first full account of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He corrected many wrong impressions about the Maharaja. He has also attached very useful appendices to his book. For the next four decades after the publication of Cunningham's work no British historian felt like writing on Ranjit Singh. Since its publication in 1849 Cunningham's book has been considered decidedly the best book on the subject written by a foreigner.

Besides these English writers many travellers including Baron Hugel, Jacquemont, Masson, Moorcroft, etc., have left very useful information about the Maharaja in their travel-accounts. The English writers generally write with a motive particularly keeping before them the interests of the British in India. So their works cannot match with the much more reliable contemporary

Persian sources of Ranjit Singh's period. But less attention has so far been paid to the contemporary Persian sources. The linguistic limitation of the scholars is, of course, the obvious reason for it. The universities in the Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu-Kashmir should, therefore, make all the Persian sources available to the scholars in English and Indian languages as an essential requisite for research in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries history of the Punjab.

FROM THE TREATY OF AMRITSAR TO THE CONQUEST OF MULTAN

(The Evidence of *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*)

DR J. S. GREWAL*

The phase of about nine years between the Treaty of Amritsar and the conquest of Multan in the political career of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, though relatively neglected by his historians, was important in many ways. It was during this phase that he consolidated his power in the former Mughal province of Lahore and increased his political influence in the neighbouring regions on his side of the river Sutlej which had come to form the eastern and southern frontier of his expanding territories. One purpose of this paper is to concentrate on this phase to look at the political process a little more closely than what has been done so far; another is to examine the evidence presented on this phase by the official chronicler of the Maharaja. In the process we may come to know a little more about the phase and the nature of the evidence of the *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh* which has been used by some of his historians, but rather cursorily. Neither in treating the phase nor in examining Sohan Lal's evidence, our aim is to be exhaustive.

During this phase Maharaja Ranjit Singh annexed a large number of forts, towns and villages belonging to a large number of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim chiefs. The Sikh territories annexed by Ranjit Singh included Haryana, Jalalpur, Manawar, Islamgarh, Bajwat, Gujrat, Chunian, Dipalpur, Satghara, Jethpur, Haveli, Muhiyuddinpur, Jalandhar, Patti, Fatehgarh, Sujanpur, Hajipur,

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Mukerian, Rawalpindi, Sri Hargobindpur and Miani. By the end of the phase, several families of Sikh chiefs were subverted, including the Bhangis of Gujrat, the Nakkais, Budh Singh Faizullapuria, the Kanhiyas excepting Sada Kaur, the Baggas, the Thehpurias and the Ramgarhias. Indeed, the only Sikh chief to survive, besides Sada Kaur, was Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, and both of them were completely subordinate to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Hindu territories annexed by Ranjit Singh included Kangra, Sayyidgarh, Kotla, Jandiala, Samba, Kathua, Guler, Nurpur and Jaswan. With the exception of Jandiala, all these territories were in the hills close to the plains. In the process, about half a dozen chiefs were subverted, and the most powerful hill principalities of Kangra and Jammu suffered diminution. The Muslim territories annexed by Ranjit Singh included Khushab, Kachh, Sahiwal, Kusk, Attock, Makhad, Jhang, Tulamba and Kot Nau. In the process, some Baloch and Sial chiefs were subverted and the rulers of Bahawalpur, Multan and Kabul lost some of their territories. Thus, before the conquest of Multan, the lower hills and upper and middle portions of all the five *doābs* fell under the effective control of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

For a proper understanding of the political process during this phase of Ranjit Singh's career, it is useful to make a distinction between administrative control and political control. Without annexing the territory Ranjit Singh had asserted his suzerainty over many a chief between 1809 and 1818 before taking over his territory. The only difference between Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and other Sardars such as Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Sahib Singh Bhangi, Budh Singh Faizullapuria, Kahn Singh Nakkai and Jiwan Singh of Rawalpindi, was that the territory of the former was left under his administration whereas the territories of the others were eventually taken over. Similarly, the Rajput chiefs of Nurpur and Jaswan had ruled in subordination to Ranjit Singh for a number of years before their principalities were annexed. The Baloch chiefs of Khushab and Sahiwal too had ruled in a

similar position before the annexation of their territories.

For retaining the administration of his territories in his own hands the subordinate chief had to fulfil certain obligations. He had to pay tribute annually to the Maharaja. He had to serve the Maharaja with contingents at his own expense. Succession to the position of a subordinate chief was recognized by the Maharaja on payment of *nazrāna* by the successor. Disapproval implied his removal. The subordinate chief had no right to have political relations with any sovereign or subordinate power. A default on the part of a subordinate chief on any of these accounts could result in punishment in the form of a fine, enhancement of the *nazrāna*, confiscation of a part, or outright annexation, of his territory.

The chiefs were obliged to take their subordination seriously. Delay in the payment of tribute invited a General of the Maharaja with forces adequate to deal with a chief. Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra, Raja Jit Singh of Jammu and several other chiefs can be found serving with their contingents in one campaign or another. When after the Kashmir campaign they returned to their territories without the permission of the Maharaja they were fined. The Raja of Chamba was fined for entertaining Shah Shuja against the wishes of the Maharaja. The hill chiefs were not the only subordinate chiefs to serve the Maharaja. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Jiwan Singh of Rawalpindi, Buddh Singh Faizullapur and Kahn Singh Nakkai, for instance, fought in the campaigns of the Maharaja with their own contingents at their own expense. The Muslim chiefs were no exception to this either.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was able to establish his political control over a large number of chiefs far beyond the area under his administrative control. The chiefs of Kulu, Chamba, Rajauri and Punch, among many others in the hills, were paying tribute to him and serving him with their contingents. This outer ring of vassal territories in the north virtually left only Kashmir out. And even the Afghan governor of Kashmir was asked to pay tribute. The Nawabs of Mankera, Multan and Bahawalpur

were paying *nazrāna* to the Maharaja. The case of Bahawalpur, like that of Bilaspur, was rather interesting. The Nawab was paying tribute to the Maharaja for his territories on the west of the Sutlej. The case of Multan was perhaps the most important. Its Nawab owed formal allegiance to the kings of Kabul at the beginning of the 19th century. Ranjit Singh had invaded his territory even before the Treaty of Amritsar to extort *nazrāna*. He became more assertive and insistent after the Treaty. Before long the Nawab of Multan was obliged to shift his formal allegiance from Kabul to Lahore. He accepted to pay a fixed annual tribute to the Maharaja. The conquest of Multan served as the last step in this political process.

Both for establishing his control over vassals and for new conquests Ranjit Singh made an increasingly effective use of his new infantry and his new artillery. Mian Ghausia, Misar Diwan Chand, Mazhar Ali, Sultan Mahmud, Ilahi Bakhsh, Shaikh Basawan, Dhaunkal Singh and Mihaan Singh figure prominently in the pages of Sohan Lal during this phase, and he does not fail to make specific mention of battalions and *topkhānas* despatched for the reduction of forts or the collection of *nazrāna*. The forts of Sardar Buddh Singh Faizullapur in Jalandhar and Patti, for instance, were reduced with the help of the *topkhāna* and infantry battalions. Sohan Lal's reference to the little known fort of Muhiyuddinpur near Kasur, and the time of its reduction and demolition, is very significant in this context. Ranjit Singh had thought of capturing this fort from one Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh during his expedition to Ferozepur before the Treaty of Amritsar, but held his hand in face of the massive and high walls of the fort. At the death of Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh within three years of the Treaty, the Maharaja asked his son, Duna Singh, to hand over all his forts to the functionaries of Lahore. On his refusal, the Maharaja sent the *topkhāna* and Duna Singh surrendered after the first bombardment. Infantry battalions and artillery were used to collect revenue from Nakka, to collect *nazrāna* from Fateh Khan of Sahiwal and the hill chiefs, and to defeat the forces of Wazir Fateh Khan in an

open battle near Attock. Jamadar Mihan Singh was specially honoured for his part in this battle. It was due largely to the effective use of infantry and artillery that the distant vassal chiefs and the Nawab of Multan felt obliged to make more or less regular payment of the annual tribute, and arrears from former years. It may indeed be suggested that the expansion of Ranjit Singh's infantry and artillery in the third decade was due to its tried effect during the decade after the Treaty of Amritsar, particularly in the successful campaigns of Multan, Peshawar and Kashmir.

Another important aspect of Ranjit Singh's policy during this phase was the effective use he made of diplomacy. There are frequent references in the *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh* to exchange of emissaries (*vakīls*) between the Maharaja and the British, the rulers of Kabul, the Nawabs of Mankera, Multan and Bahawalpur, and the chiefs of Hyderabad and Khairpur and Shikarpur, besides the Sikh chiefs of the Sutlej-Jamuna Divide and the vassal chiefs in the hills. Partly through this exchange, Ranjit Singh could form an independent assessment of the political situation from time to time, which enabled him to isolate the immediate object of his aggression. He appears to have been fully aware of the loosening of the control of the kings of Kabul over their governors and vassals, the conflicting interests of the rival claimants to the throne of Kabul and the factional interests of the Afghan *sardārs* based partly on clannish considerations. He gave political asylum to Shah Zaman in Rawalpindi which was then held by Sardar Jiwan Singh Thehpuria as a vassal, assigned Bhera to the Shah later for subsistence besides a daily allowance of fifty rupees from the treasury of the *kārdār* of Pind Dadan Khan, and eventually lodged him and his family in the *havelī* of Dila Ram in Lahore.

Shah Shuja, who was more active and more promising from the viewpoint of the Maharaja, was shown greater consideration and given more importance. It was suggested to Shah Shuja that Multan could be conquered for him. This was a diplomatic gesture made in self-interest. Tulamba was actually

taken over from the Nawab of Mulan and given to Shah Shuja for subsistence. When, later on, Shah Shuja decided to go to Kashmir, the Maharaja induced him to leave his family in Lahore. The Generals, sent to Kashmir in support of Wazir Fateh Khan against the Afghan governor of Kashmir who was supporting Shah Shuja, were instructed to bring Shah Shuja back at all costs. The Afghan governor of Attock was induced to hand over the fort against the interest and wishes of Wazir Fateh Khan. It was held by force, though the Wazir was told every time that if Multan was first conquered for Ranjit Singh, Attock could be returned to him. Apparently for the help given to Shah Shuja in a crisis, the *koh-i-nūr* was taken from him. The Afghans were losing ground not only on the field of battle but also in the field of diplomacy.

In his conflict with the Afghans during this phase Ranjit Singh knew that the sympathies of the British were with him rather than with the rulers of Kabul. But he was careful enough to cultivate the British diplomats and administrators concerned with the affairs of the Punjab. Invitation to Ochterlony to the marriage of Prince Kharak Singh, and then to Lahore, had a diplomatic dimension. Nevertheless, Ranjit Singh was not prepared to accept any help from the British in his conflict with the Afghans. According to Sohan Lal, Metcalfe offered the assistance of British battalions to Maharaja Ranjit Singh when Wazir Fateh Khan was threatening Attock. This offer was thankfully declined. The Maharaja was jealous of his sovereignty and the integrity of his dominions.

The political idiom of the times is equally interesting. No pretext was needed for the assertion of suzerainty over others because every one subscribed to the legitimacy of conquest by those who could conquer and rule. In the very first year after the Treaty of Amritsar, Ranjit Singh entered into a formal understanding with the Gurkhas that all the territories on the west of the river Sutlej belonged to him. But these territories were not in his actual possession. Soon afterwards he declared that all the hill chiefs were subject to his control. At the begin-

ning of the phase, Raja Sansar Chand was treated as a sovereign ruler; before the end of the phase, he too was reduced to the status of a vassal. In the case of Bhimbar and Rajauri, during Wazir Fateh Khan's expedition to Kashmir in which he was supported by the troops of Lahore, Ranjit Singh did not object to the Wazir's statement that Bhimbar and Rajauri were dependencies of Kashmir. Afterwards, however, Ranjit Singh did not hesitate to bring them under his influence, and Sultan Khan of Bhimbar did not hesitate to submit that he would perform all the duties of *mālguzārī*, *zamīndārī* and *ra'iyat-shu'ārī* for the Maharaja.

For annexing the territories of those who fell within the orbit of the political control of the Maharaja not only a pretext but also a justification was sought. Sardar Nidhan Singh Kanhiya, for instance, was removed professedly on account of his drunkenness resulting in the negligence of administration. Sardar Kahn Singh Nakkai's territories were given to Prince Kharak Singh on a request from him in the absence of the Sardar on a campaign to Multan. When his *dīwān* made a representation to the Maharaja he was told that it was a matter which could be settled by the Prince and the Sardar because of their close relationship. The territory was taken over by Prince Kharak Singh, but when he decided to leave nothing in *jāgīr* to Sardar Kahn Singh he was rebuked and the fort and villages of Bharwal were given to him. Even in his case, however, Sohan Lal implies that he was removed because of his mismanagement and his inability to deal with refractory *zamīndārs*. The moral principle is enunciated most clearly in the case of Fateh Khan of Sahiwal. He was asked to pay enhanced *nazrāna* and he started collecting additional revenues from the cultivators. The Maharaja announced that by shifting the burden to the subject people Ahmad Khan had lost the right to rule : the first principle of rulership was the protection and well being of the subjects. All the two hundred and fifty villages of the Baloch chief and his ten strong forts were taken over by the Maharaja.

After the annexation of a territory, Ranjit Singh used to

appoint a trusted and experienced functionary to settle revenue affairs besides the general administration of the territory. Such a settlement was generally based on all the available records and information provided by its former administrators. The ousted chief was generally given a portion of his territory in *jāgīr* for subsistence. If he offered to serve the Maharaja as a *jāgīrdār*, larger territory was given to him. At the same time *jāgīrs* were given to others, either to placate local interests or to create vested interests in the conquered territory. In the case of Gujrat the duty of settling the territory and its administration was entrusted to Faqir Azizuddin. His position is referred to as the *subadārī* of Gujrat. There is an indication here that the primary divisions of the dominions of Ranjit Singh were treated as provinces irrespective of their size. The most important functionary in the revenue administration was the *kārdār* who held a small territory under his charge, generally referred to as *pargana* or *ta'alluqa*. However, the term *ta'alluqa* was also used more literally for an area held by a minor chief. In the case of Jalandhar, Faqir Nuruddin succeeded in raising the revenue from over a *lākh* to about three *lākhs* of rupees. But this was not because he enhanced the rate of assessment, or changed the methods of collection, but simply because he collected the revenue in kind and stored it well to sell when the price was higher. Ranjit Singh appreciated the Faqir very much.

Ranjit Singh used to appoint *faujdārs* and *thānadār* in his dominions to maintain peace and order, to support the officials in the collection of revenues, and to join a commander appointed to lead a campaign. However, one of the important duties of the *thānadār* appointed to a town or a city was to protect the inhabitants of the place against the troopers. On one occasion when Ranjit Singh returned to Lahore at mid-night he ordered the *thānadār*'s men not to allow any one of the troopers to enter the city. Even their officers had to spend the night outside the city wall. When the siege of the fort of Jalandhar was in progress while the city had fallen, Ranjit Singh appointed a *thānadār* for the city to ensure that no person in the city was molested or

oppressed by the troopers, and that no trooper actually entered the city. Sohan Lal refers to the replacement of one *adālatī* by another, indicating that Ranjit Singh had started appointing special magistrates for the administration of justice perhaps even before the Treaty of Amritsar.

There are references in the *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh* to *jāgīrdārs*, *ijāradār* and *dharmarth* grantees, but this information does not add much to our understanding. Sohan Lal's use of the term *zamīndār* is rather ambiguous. But, quite significantly, he uses this term for the vassal chiefs also, like the chroniclers of the Mughal times. Sohan Lal's use of the term *thānadār* for some of the vassal chiefs is rather misleading. At one place he refers to Sardar Buddh Singh Faizullapurīa as the *thānadār* of Jalandhar when we know for certain that he was a subordinate chief. Similarly, Sardar Jiwan Singh Thehpuriā, the chief of Rawalpindi, is mentioned at one place as the *thānadār* of Rawalpindi. We know from the pages of the *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh* itself that he was the successor of Milkha Singh who had adopted Rawalpindi as his headquarters as a chief of the first generation. In the second decade of the 19th century, Jiwan Singh was subordinate to Ranjit Singh. We find him serving with his contingents in Kashmir in the joint expedition with Wazir Fateh Khan. In fact he died fighting in Kashmir. His sons were allowed to succeed to the 'old territory' on the condition of maintaining three hundred horsemen though they were eventually dislodged, and Rawalpindi was annexed.

On socio-economic history, Sohan Lal has very little to offer. There are some incidental and unintentional references, however, which tell us a little about matters socio-economic. We can get some idea of the important persons in the dominions of Ranjit Singh during this phase : Diwan Bhawani Das, Faqir Azizuddin, Hukma Singh Chimni, Atar Singh Dhari, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Prince Kharak Singh, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, Diwan Mohkam Chand, Sardar Dal Singh, Diwan Hukma Singh, Karam Singh Chahal, Misar Raja Ram, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Hafiz Ruhulla, Nihal Singh Atari, Hari Singh Nalwa, Akali Phula

Singh, Ram Singh Balli, Khushal Singh, Diwan Devi Das, Lala Bhawani Das, Munshi Karam Chand, Ramanand Sarrāf, Sardar Jiwan Singh, Mit Singh Padhanīa, Faqir Nuruddin, Bhayya Ram Singh, Diwan Ganga Ram, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Fateh Singh Chhachhi, Qutbuddin of Qasur, Sardar Hukam Singh Atari, Gurmukh Singh, Sardha Singh, Diwan Singh Doabia, Garbha Singh, Atar Singh Faizullapurīa, Sarbuland Khan Waraich, Sham Singh, Daya Singh, Hira Singh, Sada Singh, Ram Dayal, Moti Ram, Diwan Chand, Mian Ghausā, Mazhar Ali, Sultan Mahmud, Mihan Singh. Ilahi Bakhsh, Faqir Imamuddin, for instance. They all served the Maharaja directly in a civil or military capacity. Many of them became better known in the third and the fourth decades. The Faqir brothers, Diwan Bhawani Das, Khushal Singh, Sardar Dal Singh, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misar Diwan Chand and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia figure more prominently than the others in the pages of the *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*. The broad composition of the ruling class can be seen as being formed during this phase. However, the Dogras have yet to appear on the scene. None among the hill chiefs appears to serve the purpose which they would serve later. On the other end of the social scale, Sohan Lal refers to the existence of female and male slaves in the dominions of Ranjit Singh. But these references are extremely few, particularly about the male slaves (*ghulāmān*). The importance of slavery as an institution had decreased very much during the period of Sikh rule, and it was not revived by the Maharaja.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to receive presents from sovereign rulers as well as from his vassals, and he used to send gifts and presents in return. The important items of exchange are generally mentioned by Sohan Lal, giving an idea of the manufactures and commodities of various regions which possibly entered trade to cater to the needs of the ruling class. The *vakīl* of Mir Sohrab Khan of Khairpur, for instance, once brought five horses, a bejewelled dagger, a special matchlock (*tufang*, which could be a flint gun also), two *thāns* of *kimkhāb*, two *khes*

threaded with gold, a *lungi* threaded with gold, and several *thāns* of English cloth (*thānhā-i-firangī*). The *vakīl* of Wazir Fateh Khan brought *thāns* of *itlis* and *kimkhāb*, dry fruit and apples, melons and pomegranates. The *vakīl* of Nawab Muhammad Sadiq Khan brought a *thān* of *kimkhāb*, a *doshāla*, a *thān* of muslin, a *thān* of *gulbadan* and a turban. Among the presents given to the guests of the Maharaja at the time of Prince Kharak Singh's marriage were *dopattahā-i-banārasī*, *doshālas* of the first quality, *thāns* of the 'east', and *gulbadans* of Bahawalpur and Multan.

The *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh* contains information on many other matters for this phase as for the other phases of the career of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. There are frequent references, for example, to his movements, pilgrimages, thanksgiving bathings and charities, participation in festivals, treatment of those who served him, the different ways in which he received *vakīls* from various potentates, politicians or administrators, his interest in the army and the administration, his reliance on news received from his own official agents, and the like. As we observed in the beginning, our purpose was not to be exhaustive but to be selective in order to know something of the phase and something of our evidence. That purpose perhaps has been served.

A Gurmukhi Source of Ranjit Singh's Times

DR KIRPAL SINGH*

In 1956 while working in the Panjab University Library, Lahore (Pakistan) the writer of these lines came across a Gurmukhi manuscript which was in the Sanskrit Section of the library. It may be one of the reasons that it remained unnoticed. It was a worm-eaten manuscript without binding, wrapped in two cardboard pieces. It had no title as its first pages were missing. It struck me unique on account of following reasons :

1. It contains happenings of the Ranjit Singh and post-Ranjit Singh period.
2. Unlike *Fateh Nama Guru Khalsa Ji Ka* or *Var Shah Mohammad*, it is in the Punjabi prose.
3. In earlier portion of the manuscript every entry made begins with a date in the indigenous calender which gives the impression that it is a diary of various events.
4. Most of the *Roznamchas* of the period are in Persian but this manuscript is in the Punjabi prose in Gurmukhi script.

With great difficulty its photo-copy was brought to India and preserved in the library of Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This manuscript has got fifty-one folios in all, including six fly leaves at the end. It ends on the folio 45 as it is clear from the following colophon :

ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਬ ਭੋਗ ਪਾਵਤੇ ਹੈ । ਦੌਹਰਾ ॥
ਦੇਖੀ ਸੁਨੀ ਜੋ ਬਾਤ ਸੀ ਸੋ ਸਭ ਕਹੀ ਬਖਾਨ
ਕਵਿ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਹਿਤ ਹੈ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਚਤਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ

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ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਕਹਿਆ ਸੋ ਹਮ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਬਨਾਇ
ਜੋ ਜੋ ਆਗੇ ਕਹਿਣਗੇ ਸੋ ਲਿਖ.....ਦੇ ਤੇ ਆਇ ।

The colophon implies that Tara Singh wrote this manuscript as he saw events himself or as were brought to his ear by somebody. Who is that somebody? Perhaps he is Ram Singh as it has been stated there, "Whatever Ram Singh said I have recorded":

“ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਕਹਿਆ ਸੋ ਹਮਲਿਖਿਆ ਬਨਾਇ”

From the colophon cited above it appears that the informant of Tara Singh, the writer of this manuscript, is Ram Singh. From the records of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's period it appears that there were two prominent persons having this name—one was Bhayya Ram Singh and the other was Bhai Ram Singh. Bhayya Ram Singh was the brother of Jamadar Khushal Singh. His original name was Ram Lal and later on he became Ram Singh. Since he belonged to the North-Western Province, now called U. P., he was known as 'Bhayya' Ram Singh. He does not appear to be the informant of Tara Singh for various reasons. First, there is no epithet 'Bhayya' with his name. Secondly, the manuscript gives the information about chiefs of the Lahore Darbar with minute details which cannot be expected from an outsider. However this Ram Singh is a venerable man at whose bidding the writer has compiled this manuscript and is prepared to supplement it as he records :

“ਜੋ ਜੋ ਆਗੇ ਕਹਿਣਗੇ ਸੋ ਲਿਖ ਦੇ ਤੇ ਆਇ”

The study of the contents of the manuscript indicates that the author had intimate knowledge of the details of the court intrigues and mutual bickerings of different parties during the post-Ranjit Singh period. This type of information could only be recorded with the help of some well-informed courtier. The writer has referred to that informant as Ram Singh. From this point of view it appears to be Bhai Ram Singh as he was one of the prominent men in the Lahore Court in the post-Ranjit Singh period. He was the son of Bhai Vasti Ram, elder brother of

Gobind Ram whose *samadh* is in Dhab Vasti Ram, Amritsar. Since his name occurs in verse, for that reason the prefix 'Bhai' may have been omitted, keeping in view the rules of versification. This assumption gets confirmation from the writer's account of reconciliation (after the death of Raja Suchet Singh) between Hira Singh, the Prime Minister, and his uncle, Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu. It has been stated in the manuscript itself on folio 22, "When Raja Hira Singh realised that he had not been able to win courtiers to his side and the army was often rebellious, he sent Bhai Ram Singh and other courtiers as his *vakils* to Raja Gulab Singh. According to the instructions Bhai Ram Singh conveyed to the Jammu Chief to keep whatever territory he has been granted by the Sarkar (Maharaja Ranjit Singh). Being a wise man Gulab Singh understood the circumstances and agreed to make a compromise. He withdrew his forces towards Jammu."

It may not be out of place to mention here that according to the law of *zabti* the *jāgīrs* of Raja Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh had to be surrendered to Lahore Darbar, as such *jāgīrs* after the deaths of their owners always lapsed to the state. Raja Gulab Singh who had occupied these *jāgīrs* did not want to surrender them to Lahore Darbar. Raja Hira Singh assured him that he would not claim these *jāgīrs* and it was made the basis of compromise. The way it has been recorded, giving all credit to Bhai Ram Singh, leaves no doubt that the main informant of Tara Singh was Bhai Ram Singh himself. According to Shahamat Ali, Bhai Ram Singh was a Sanskrit scholar and had sufficient knowledge of Persian. He was well-versed in medical art. Being a scholar himself he would have encouraged Tara Singh to write this work. Bhai Ram Singh's family owned one *bunga* near Akal Takhat which was called 'Bunga Bhai Vasti Ram'. It has recently been demolished.

For the other details Tara Singh himself appears to have collected the scattered information. He had special aptitude of recording dates with events. He seems to have special regard for Jaimal Singh Kanhiya, brother of Jai Singh Kanhiya, the

founder of Kanhiya Misal. It is clear from his description of the deaths of Jaimal Singh, of his wife and of his daughter, Chand Kaur (wife of Kharak Singh).

However, it appears certain that the writer belonged to Amritsar because he has recorded the minute details of the events occurring in the holy city. It is clear from the following examples :

1. "Tuesday, Maghar 22, 1862 B.K. (December 6, 1805 A.D.). Jaswant Rao Holkar entered Amritsar. He was pursued by the British. At Amritsar the Maratha chief and Ranjit Singh exchanged turbans and swore loyalty towards each other and the chains of Holkar's elephants and horses were made of goldthen the Maratha Chief began to make purchases. Whatever came before his eyes he purchased—foodgrains, sweets, ghee, oil etc; whatever rate was demanded was paid without questioning. All commodities were stored. Since Guru Ram Dass was the protector of the city, stores were full with commodities. The Maratha Chief got tired but could not exhaust the stores. The goldsmiths, the cloth merchants, brass dealers, confectioners and priests grew rich....." (Folio 1a and 2b).
2. The banners at Darbar Sahib were wrapped with brocade cloth when Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir. The copies of Guru Granth Sahib were presented to be placed round the sacred tank (*Parkarma*) in order to benefit the Sarbat Khalsa (Folios 3).
3. Giani Sant Singh went to the Ganges to have bath on the occasion of Kumbh. He returned to Amritsar. . . . Then in the month of *Harh* he fell ill and expired. The ceremonies of *Ashtami* were performed at Dera Baba Attal Rai (Folio 4).
4. Pandit Jalla sent one platoon to Giani Gurmukh Singh's residence at Amritsar (Giani Gurmukh Singh had been killed previously). His sons, Bhai Parduman Singh and Maksudhan Singh, were house-arrested (Folio 18).
5. The fly leaves at the end are mostly devoted to the local

news of Amritsar. For instance, there is mention of construction of a new wall surrounding the city by the Britishers and visit of Lehna Singh Majithia to the holy city after the interval of three and a quarter of years. (Folio 48).

The author appears to be conversant with the literary language as well as the spoken language. The manuscript represents a unique mixture of both in Punjabi prose. A large number of colloquial words and phrases have been used which were current in those days. Some of them are noted below :

1. ਫੇਰ ਮਰਹੱਟੇ (ਜਸਵੰਤ ਰਾਓ ਹੌਲਕਰ) ਅਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਿਲੇ ਮਿਤਰ ਬਣੇ ।
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਜੀ ਮੈਂ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਚੁਲੇ ਲੀਤੇ ।
2. ਫੇਰ ਮਰਹੱਟਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਕਾ ਅਜਮੁਦਾ ਲਗਾ ਕਰਨੇ ।
3. ਸਾਵਨ ਦਿਨਾਂ 3 ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੂਆ, ਕਾਲਾਨੌਰ ਸੇ ਤੁਰਯਾ ਮਾਂਦਾ ਹੂਆ—
ਫਤੇਗੜ੍ਹ ਆਨ ਸਸਕਾਰਿਆ ।
4. ਕਾਲ ਨੇ ਉਨ ਕੇ ਮਾਰਨੇ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਬਿਧ ਆਨ ਬਣਾਈ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਵਾਕ ਹੈ :
“ਉਇ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਿਹ ਜਾ ਭਾਗ ਧੁਰ ਮੰਦੇ ।” (ਪਤ੍ਰਾ 35)
5. ਨਾ ਮੌਹੂਰਤ ਪੁਛਿਆ, ਨ ਵਾਰ ਪੁਛਿਆ, ਨ ਥਿਤ ਪੁਛੀ ਨਾ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਤ ਬਰਾਹਮਣ
ਕੋ ਮਨਾਇਆ, ਨ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਕਾਲ ਬੁੰਗੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਾਈ, ਨ ਮਥਾ
ਟੇਕਿਆ ਨ ਪਰੀਛਾ ਹੀ ਪਾਈ, ਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਹੀ ਲੀਆ । ਆਪਣੇ
ਆਪ ਹੀ ਲਾਹੌਰੋਂ ਕੂਚ ਕੀਤਾ । ਪੁਨਰ ਜੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਗੇ ਚਿਠੀਆਂ ਪਾਵਤੀ । (ਪਤ੍ਰਾ 42) ।
6. ਰਾਜੇ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਭ ਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਇ ਦਿਤੀ । ਕਹਿਨੇ ਲਾਗੀ (ਰਾਨੀ ਜਿੰਦਾਂ)
ਅਗੋਂ ਜੋ ਲੜੀਏ ਕਿ ਮਿਲ ਪਵਈਏ । ਤਬ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਲੜਨ ਕੀ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਤ
ਨਹੀਂ ਅਬ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੀ ਬਚਾ ਹੈ । ਤਬ ਮਾਈ ਜਿੰਦਾ ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋ ਨਾ ਲੈ
ਕਰਿ ਫਰੰਗੀ ਸੇ ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲੀ । ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਨਜਰ ਦਿਤੀ ਫੇਰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਆਈ
(ਪਤ੍ਰਾ 45) ।

Date of Compilation

There is no clear and specific mention of its date of compilation. But from its study we can determine its date of compilation. On the first folio while recording the wives of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the author has mentioned Rani Jind Kaur and her son Dalip Singh. It implies that the work was

compiled after the birth of Dalip Singh in 1838 A.D. The manuscript ends in the year 1846 when the British occupied Lahore. The study of contents of this work also confirms that it has more details of the post-Ranjit Singh period. On folio 6 there is use of word council by the writer as it has been stated :

“ਤਬ ਰਾਨੀ ਚੰਦ ਕੋਰ ਇਹ ਬਾਤ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੀ ।

ਆਪ ਹੀ ਰਾਜ ਕਰਨੇ ਲਗੀ । ਚਾਰ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਬਨਾਇ ਬੈਠੀ । ”

The word council was first used in the political sense in Punjab in 1846 when the Council of Regency was formed by the British to assist the British Resident in Lahore. This leads to the conclusion that the final shape of the present manuscript was given in 1846 A. D. It is likely that its writer Tara Singh had been collecting material, especially dates and events, long before putting them to pen in the final form.

The Main Contents And Historical Significance

A careful study of this manuscript will indicate that it has got two parts—the first part which deals with the miscellaneous information and the second part which deals with historical narration. Each portion has got its own importance.

The earlier portion which ends with the deaths of Chet Singh Bajwa and Maharaja Kharak Singh mostly deals with the news items. These news items have no link with one another. For instance, the existing manuscript (as some folios are missing) begins with the mention of Chand Kaur, daughter of Jaimal Singh of Fatehgarh, wife of Kanwar Kharak Singh and mother of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. Here it appears that the author is counting the *ranis* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as he writes, “Mai Sada Kaur gave her daughter in marriage to Ranjit Singh and from this wedlock Sher Singh Dulo and Tara Singh were born. Ranjit Singh married one bride from Kashmir and a son was born who was named Kashmira Singh. After the conquest of Peshawar the Maharaja married one lady from Peshawar and from her Peshawara Singh was born. (Generally it is believed that Maharaja Ranjit Singh named his sons, Kashmira Singh and Peshawara Singh, after his conquests of

Kashmir and Peshawar). The Maharaja also married one bride from the *Wadpagas* (who tied big turban) and the name of this *rani* was Jind Kaur. Dalip Singh was born from this wedlock. Dalip Singh's maternal-uncles were Jawahar Singh and Hira Singh" (Folio 1.) The writer continues. "In Sambat 1860 Bikarami Ranjit Singh celebrated Hola at Anandpur Ji. In Sambat 1862 in the month of Maghar dated 22nd, Jaswant Rao Maratha entered Amritsar. He was pursued by the British (Folio 2)." "In Sambat 1864, Bhado 7 (August 22, 1807) Ranjit Singh conquered Kangra. Before him Amar Singh had entrenched himself there."

It is clear that the writer does not give the day-to-day account and has recorded only those events which appear to him important. At places, there is a gap of years between one news item and the other. Nor do these news items relate to one subject or one aspect. Some of the news items refer to the deaths and marriages of some prominent Sardars. He writes, "In Sambat 1884 B.K. (1827 A.D.) in the month of Bhado, Budh Singh Sandhanwalia died at village Raja Sansi. Within twenty-four hours after his death Hardas Bania died as he was his god-brother and he could not bear his separation..... In Sambat 1886 (1829 AD) in the month of Asu, Gujar Singh was married in the fort of Amritsar." "In Sambat 1893 (1836 A.D.) in the month of Asun dated 22nd, Rattan Kaur, wife of Jaimal Singh of Fatehgarh, died. Sambat 1895, 22nd Wasakh, Tuesday (May 2, 1833): Gujar Singh Gill expired in Amritsar. He slept after heavy drinking. He fell from a window of his first floor. His skull was broken and he died." (Folios 4 & 5)

The information which Tara Singh has collected in the earlier portion indicates that he was not interested in writing the history of the period. This type of information which gives the dates of marriages and deaths is usually kept by the *Bhats*. Such-like information has been recently discovered and used by the modern scholars in writing the biographies of the Sikh Gurus (*vide* Dr. Fauja Singh's *Life of Guru Tegh Bahadur*). The author has shown special inclination towards Jaimal Singh Kanhiya of Fatehgarh and Gujar Singh Gill of Amritsar who might have

patronised the writer.

The second portion of the manuscript which begins from folio 6 and ends at folio 45 is much bigger than the first portion. Unlike the first portion which furnishes information regarding various items of diverse nature, the second portion deals with only one aspect, viz., the political history of Lahore Darbar from the death of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh to the British occupation of Lahore.

According to the writer Dhian Singh purposely suppressed the news of the death of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. He writes, "After cremating the body of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Nau Nihal Singh was walking on the route of Hazuri Bagh. The bricks fell from the balcony and struck the head of Nau Nihal Singh and Udham Singh Rajput, son of Gulab Singh, and broke their skulls. Raja Dhian Singh removed them inside the fort. Both of them died. Raja Dhian Singh did not disclose the death of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. The news of death was suppressed. If Chand Kaur or other people asked about it, the Raja would say, "There is no order to permit you to go inside. Nau Nihal Singh is alright. Nobody can go inside to meet him". The Raja called Sher Singh from Mukerian." (Folios 9 and 10)

The writer has not only recorded the important events in the chronological order with the dates and years in the people's parlance but he has also written about the people's superstitions and beliefs. Several ill-omens have been described before recording the death of Chand Kaur, wife of Maharaja Kharak Singh. He writes, "The banners of Darbar Sahib got broken, the people said that some calamity would come. The next month in Amritsar there appeared at evening time a pole star with a big flame visible from the sacred tank and pointing towards Lahore. Again the people said that some disaster would come and these ill-omens must bring misfortunes and destruction. And the same year Burj of Desa Singh Majithia got burnt. That too was considered an ill-omen. Sambat 1899 Jeth 10 (May 21, 1842): the maid-servant of Chand Kaur tied her with her bandeau and killed her with stones. She was cremated at

Anarkali. This was done at the instance of Sher Singh and Dhian Singh, who had gone to Wazirabad. When they returned they ordered to cut the hands of the maid-servants who had killed Chand Kaur just to give impression to the people that they had no hand in the murder." (Folio 10).

The writer at places has given new information which is not available anywhere else. According to the author, Baba Bikram Singh Bedi of Una got Sandhanwalias and Maharaja Sher Singh reconciled in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. He writes, "After lapse of some months Ajit Singh came to Lahore to meet Baba Bikram Singh of Una. Attar Singh came to Baba Bir Singh. Lehna Singh and Kehar Singh were released and their imprisonment finished. Then on one side sat Sandhanwalias and on the other Baba Bikram Singh and Sher Singh in the presence of holy Granth Sahib. Both sides placed their hands on the Guru Granth Sahib and swore that they would not play double game or cheat each other and that they would work together and become friends. They offered to each other the holy pudding. Sher Singh first put the holy pudding in the mouth of Sandhanwalias and they reciprocated the same way. Their jagirs were restored to them and they were granted more jagirs." (Folios 10-11)

The author has given comparatively a detailed account of Hira Singh's rule. This account covers more than one-third of the manuscript from Folio 16 to Folio 35. Almost all the important events of his rule have been touched, viz :

1. Confiscation of *jagirs*.
2. Struggle of Suchet Singh against Hira Singh and his death.
3. Hira Singh's compromise with Gulab Singh.
4. Death of Baba Bir Singh.
5. Hira Singh's differences with the army.
6. Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla's deaths.

Here the writer has rightly understood that there were three factors actively working in Lahore Darbar. The most important was the army. The major demand of the army was regular payment which was not forthcoming. The second important

factor was nobility. The nobility wanted their *jāgīrs* to remain intact. Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla wanted to make payment to the army after confiscating some of the *jāgīrs*. So some of the courtiers were offended. The discontented courtiers went to Baba Bir Singh of Naurangabad (Dist. Amritsar) who was asked not to entertain the rebels. Ultimately Baba Bir Singh was killed by the forces sent by Hira Singh. Hira Singh was misguided by Pandit Jalla who ultimately brought trouble to him. The third important factor was Rani Jindan and Jawahar Singh who wanted to perpetuate the rule of Maharaja Dalip Singh. How Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla became unpopular has been described, "To get their grievences removed the Panches of Amritsar went to Lahore. They (Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla) did not listen to them, rather insulted them by saying, "Who are you, great saints, and Bhais of Amritsar?" They remained there for three-four months but to no success." (Folio 31). "Pandit Jalla argued with Rani Jind Kaur not to give charities to poor Sikhs or Nihangs but to give charities to the Brahmins who read the scriptures" (Folio 32). This offended Rani Jind Kaur who instigated the Khalsa army against Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla.

How in the last phase Khalsa army became unruly has been described at some length. When Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla were pursued and killed the soldiers got huge wealth. "Now the Sikh soldiers became proud. They would not listen to any saint or holy man. When they offered pudding in Darbar Sahib, they did not take the pudding inside but distributed it among themselves by sitting near the banners; they used to say, "Guru is Khalsa and Khalsa is Guru, we are the Guru." (Folio 41).

According to the writer, Rani Jind Kaur was afraid of the army as it was becoming dominant. She advised the Sikh soldiers to fight against the British.

The author's historical insight and political awareness are limited. He has recorded that Jaswant Rao was being pursued by the British. Still he has taken no note of the political power of the British in India. Similarly he has mentioned Amar

Singh Gorkha opposing Ranjit Singh in Kangra but he has not paid adequate attention towards the Gorkha power. There is only a casual reference to the conquest of Kashmir. There is no mention of Afghan-Sikh relations.

The author's main interest, it appears, was to write the internal history, that is, the history of courtiers. Here too he has a narrow approach of recording dates of marriages or deaths. Nowhere has he discussed the role of different courtiers in the history of post-Ranjit Singh period. Despite all this, the author has supplied valuable information relating to socio-religious and political conditions of his times. His manuscript provides an important source-material for writing history of the Ranjit Singh and post-Ranjit Singh periods.

RANJIT SINGH AT WORK

DR INDU BANGA*

This paper is based on a collection of 462 Persian documents over 400 of which are Maharaja Ranjit Singh's *parwānas* to Sardar Tej Singh as the officer-commanding of the *campū-i-mu'alla*.¹ These orders were issued over a period of thirteen months and six days, from November 14, 1833 to December 18, 1834, and all of them bear the date and place of issue. Their office copies were acquired by Sita Ram Kohli and may therefore be called Sita Ram Kohli Collection.²

This Collection provides refreshing information on a variety of aspects related to the reign of Ranjit Singh. The bulk of these documents cover military matters not only because the orders are addressed mostly to the officer-commanding of the *campū-i-mu'alla*, but also because they are issued at a time when Ranjit Singh was anticipating an attack from Dost Muhammad Khan of Kabul. They cover various aspects of the organization of the army of the Maharaja : recruitment, training and promotion; leave rules and salaries; uniforms, equipment and supplies; discipline and punishments; composition and functioning of the *campū-i-mu'alla*; and the control exercised over the officers of the army. About a third of these orders have a bearing on the revenue administration, *jāgīrdārī* system, *dharmarth* grants; the ruling class and the management of the finances, including that of the royal household. In the process, these *parwānas* afford fascinating glimpses into the day-to-day administration of the kingdom of Lahore, in terms not only of the procedural formalities, but also of the wide-ranging concerns of the Maharaja and how he got things done.

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Ranjit Singh's mastery of the detail comes out most clearly in his control and direction of the movement of the armies. His detailed instructions include when to start, what route to follow, when to halt, and where to halt. The place of encampment was usually specified : it was generally situated on a high ground so that the camp would remain safe from floods; it was cool or warm according to the requirements of the season; and it abounded in fresh water, grain, fodder and fuel. The time taken for the transport of the different calibre of guns was also specified : the horse-guns, for example, were to cover the distance between Amritsar and Dera Baba Nanak in two days, while the heavy guns could take three days for the same distance. The mode and the order of crossing the rivers by the different units too figure in these orders.

Regarding the conveyance of cash and even of the empty treasure chests, the Maharaja specified the escort—the number of men—and also named their officers : twenty-five gunners of the camel swivel unit were to escort the treasure from Jehlam to Attock; whereas from Attock to Peshawar 150 men, including fifty-six Sikh soldiers, under Chanda Singh and Lala Ganda Mal, were to take over. According to another document, treasure chests were to be escorted by the agents of both Tej Singh and Lala Bhagat Ram, the pay-master (*bakhshi*) of the *campū-i-mū'alla*.

The orders make frequent reference to the procurement and maintenance of the transport animals of the army. The best quality *vilāyī* horses were purchased for the artillery or they were received in *nazrāna*; and explicit instructions were given regarding their daily feed, its quality and quantity as well as the sanctioned cost. Thus, an artillery horse was given four seers of gram and one *marla* of green fodder every day; in the case of the artillery unit of Ilahi Baksh, however, the quantity of gram was raised to five seers during the rainy season, because the horses were 'reported to have become lean.' The Maharaja also forbade the use of the artillery horses for riding.

As regards the other transport animals, camels were

generally received in *nazrāna* and allotted to different units, and bullocks were purchased from merchants at a bargain price. The documents do not say anything about the procurement of mules, but they do underline the Maharaja's anxiety to procure them. He issued repeated orders to Tej Singh to send the two mules that he had seized from the servants of Gul Begum, as the animals were required for carrying *shora* (saltpetre). Another detailed order also deals exclusively with a government mule having strayed into the camp area, and the anxiety of the Maharaja to recover 'the property of the state.' Jawahar Mal, the *dārogha* of the *mistrī-khāna* was 'to make a thorough search for the animal by personally going round on horse-back over the entire camp area occupied by the infantry battalions and the artillery units. Further, this was to be treated as 'very very urgent,' and the mule was to be recovered and sent to the 'Huzur-i-Wala.'

The regulation feed of a government mule was almost half of that specified for a horse. For feeding these animals, the *rakhs* (pastures) were also maintained and sometimes villages too were assigned. One order particularly refers to the negligence and dishonesty of the grooms attached to the horse artillery units, who, instead of bringing 'good quality of green grass,' had been supplying only 'the weeds and other wild growth growing along with the crops of the pulses like *moth* and *mash*.' *Bhusa* or dry fodder too was stored for this purpose. According to another royal order, Tej Singh was to ensure that 'the grass was ripe and fit for cutting and sorting for winter months.' The documents, in fact, place considerable emphasis on the arrangements for fodder, grain and other supplies and the officers concerned generally paid cash for these, and got the receipts which were shown later, at the time of the auditing of their accounts.

Ranjit Singh's concern for the proper manufacture and use of the equipment of the army is more clearly evident in these documents. The commandants of various units were to exercise 'close supervision' over the preparation of the articles

required by them. The articles manufactured in the *kārkhānas* (workshops) included bullets, cannon balls (*gola-hāi*), gun powder (*bārūd*), swords (*kirch*), leather stockings (*moza-charmi*), scabbards, belts, slings, ropes, banners (*nishān-khurd*), lamps (*toshdāns*) and canvas coverings (*chholdārī*).

The military requirements were manufactured on contract basis also. The Maharaja wanted Tej Singh to send under his personal seal an estimate of the cost of *chholdārī* if it was made locally, that is, in Lahore, and also the estimated cost if it was made at Kamalia. The jackets and lamps were similarly supplied on contract basis. The matchlocks too were supplied on contract basis. The matchlocks were manufactured by the smiths of Kotli and Nizamabad at the approved rates. Wherever only the handles or the butts needed repairing, the officers were to get that done rather than ask for new pieces. Details of the old and serviceable matchlocks per unit were to be periodically submitted to the Maharaja. Tej Singh was to personally inspect and report on those articles that were no longer serviceable.

One order expressly lays down the guiding principle that 'all purchases' are to be made 'in a spirit of economy.' Another order asks Tej Singh and General Sultan Mohammad Khan to 'inspect personally' the artillery unit of the latter and 'after carefully checking each article, submit a report as to what other articles are wanted.' Then the Maharaja enquires about the canvas coverings that were made a couple of years ago. 'What has happened to them,' he asks, and instructs them to 'check the stock by physical count and do further checking.'

The canvas coverings were, in fact, a regular part of the equipment issued to every unit of the army. They were needed to shelter the guards and time-keepers and also to protect the equipment and ammunition from the rain and the wind. In an emergency the Maharaja had to send a large tent and a canopy through his personal attendant (*khidmatgār*); the canopy was returned, but the tent was retained to cover the Magazine and to save it from any further damage.

As regards the gun-powder that had got damaged

somehow, Ranjit Singh clearly instructed that the damaged boxes were not to be carried on the marches. He did not believe in economising in the case of the inferior quality of the gun-powder bags (*kīsajangī*) either, and ordered them to be 'withdrawn.' Such powder could however be used up in the ceremonial volley-firing on Dussehra. Another order specifies the quantity of the ammunition to be distributed for the ceremonial firing among 30,000 infantry soldiers, at the rate of twenty-one cartridges per soldier. Furthermore, while getting the fresh ammunition manufactured, Tej Singh was to first exhaust the previous stock.

The Maharaja appears to have shunned considerations of economy when a company of soldiers was to be sent to Calcutta. He ordered the manufacture of special equipment and dresses and jackets for the soldiers, and plumes and daggers for their officers. Quilts were also issued to them, and the *khila'ts* consisting of *pashmina chaddars* were bestowed on the officers, according to their ranks. In case of the lower ranks like the Havaldars, Naiks, Sergeants and Fourriers, however, pairs of *chaddars* were to be cut into halves and then given.

The distinction between the articles meant for the troops and those for the officers comes out clearly with reference to the warm jackets made of *bānāt*. The royal order expressly says: "None of the officers like the Commandant, Adjutant, Major, Munshi, Risaldar or Jamadar is entitled to receive a jacket." Tej Singh was to get the jackets personally distributed among the troopers of the Akali regiment and submit his report to the Maharaja. At the time of the actual count, however, one piece was found short, and this was accordingly noted in the receipt given by Tej Singh's office.

Ranjit Singh appears to be rather keen on the use of these jackets by the soldiers. One order, dated 22nd October 1834, says: 'on the receipt of this, the infantry men should be directed to put on their new warm jackets for about the first three hours of the morning which may then be taken off. In the month of *Maghar* (November–December), however, they will be permitted

to wear the jackets for the whole day long.' To obviate any possibility of their misuse, the gunners going on leave were made to pay Re. 1/- for their jacket.

One interesting aspect of the soldiers going on leave may be noted here. Tej Singh is ordered to instruct them 'to come and pay their homage to the Hazur-i-Anwer if and when His Highness happens to be on tour in their respective ilaqa.'

It seems the Maharaja waited rather anxiously for the men returning from their leave of absence. Every evening Tej Singh was to send reports of the men arriving in the camp. If anyone deserted the camp, his particulars were to be noted and the information sent to Ranjit Singh. In one order, Tej Singh is asked to detail 150 men to pursue an absconder 'as far as the limits of Wazirabad or wherever believed to be.' The three gunners deserting to Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Prince Sher Singh were also pursued. A Havaldar deserting after receiving his salary was made to refund it.

The Maharaja tried to discipline the soldiers and officers in a variety of ways. He ordered Tej Singh to withhold the salary of those guilty of misconduct. The officers were, in fact, held responsible for the conduct of their men. They were to ensure that the swords were not worn in the cantonment or that the soldiers were not roaming about outside the camp or that there were no stragglers to harass the people when the army was on the move. Ranjit Singh also forbade night-marching. Practically every order for the movement of the troops also contains the express injunction that the troops should not be allowed to damage the crops or destroy the wooden equipment of the wells or harass the people on the way. The Maharaja also took a stern view of the soldiers and officers harassing traders.

Some of the documents refer to the punishments given for murder. Budh Singh, a Naik found guilty of dealing the fatal blow with his bayonet, was sentenced to imprisonment. His accomplice, Diwan Singh Havaldar, was permitted to return to duty, but the two months' salary of both Diwan Singh and Budh

Singh was deducted in two instalments. Twelve other troopers who too had been accomplices in the murder were fined five rupees each. In another case, the culprit's face was blackened and he was exiled across the Sutlej.

A yet another document brings out an interesting way of dealing with criminals. The Maharaja sent eight 'notorious robbers and dacoits,' who had been rounded up, to Tej Singh with the following instruction :

If they furnish reliable surety and are willing to take up service in the army, whether in infantry or irregular cavlary as it suits them, and further are willing to pay a fine of rupees six hundred and fifty they will be permitted to come to the Huzur-i-Wala along with their sureties.

According to another document, the number of such sureties being detained in the military lines was so large that the Maharaja had to send six of them to Tej Singh.

A positive way of disciplining the men was to hold regular parades in the morning and afternoon. Only in exceptional circumstances like the excessive rain or the cold were the soldiers exempted from the daily parades by the express orders of the Maharaja. However, while on field duty in the vicinity of Peshawar, parades and exercises were held on alternative days to give the necessary rest to the men and officers. The officers and the commandants of the artillery posted in this region were to practise in the manner taught by General Court; they were also to retain the French words of command.

To maintain the scheduled strength of officers in each battalion, Tej Singh is authorised to give promotions according to the following norm :

From a sepāhī to a Naik, the man should be senior in service and with a good record and with a good physique. The promotions from Naik to Havaldar and from Havaldar to Jamadar should also be determined by similar considerations. Use your common sense and discretion and keep in view the interests of the service and that of the state. Should it become necessary to fill the post of Subadar, you will make a refe-

rence to the Huzur-i-Anwar and one will be appointed. The Sergeant and the Fourriers should be selected from amongst the men who are literate.

In one case, the Maharaja wanted one Bachan Singh to be made a Jamadar; so he asked Tej Singh to create a vacancy by promoting one of the Jamadars to the rank of Risaldar. This, of course, was to be done according to the regulations regarding promotions.

For ensuring compliance with his regulations and orders, the Maharaja appears to have relied considerably on his postal arrangements and the news-writers (*akhbār-nawīs*). The regular postal system consisted of a net-work of courier-posts (*dak chaukīs*) at every six talies, which was reduced to three *kos* during the Peshawar campaign. The documents suggest that while the arrangements for conveying post were accepted as a necessary feature of the government, the posting of the news-writers, who were expected to report on the officers on the spot, was both feared and disliked. In one of his exceptionally lengthy orders, Ranjit Singh tries to pacify Tej Singh about the appointment of Misar Bindraban as the *akhbār-nawīs* :

Whenever a news-writer is appointed either by the Sarkar Wala or by the British, the officer or officers concerned begin to entertain fear and get frightened, lest the news-writer makes adverse reports (of their conduct). The Hazur-i-Wala is of opinion that in this matter you and other officers should follow the example of the Hazur-i-Wala himself. The Huzur-i-Wala permits all sorts of news-writers to send their reports from the court, without apprehending any fear. It is only the unworthy officers who would entertain fear from the news-writers and the unworthy officers are those who accept bribes, tyrannise over their subjects, and indulge in all sorts of immoral practices. They have indeed reason to be afraid of the news-writers but one who is above these need have no fear from them. It is, therefore, imperative that the news-letters from your camp should be despatched daily.

It seems that the Maharaja was assiduously trying to

establish norms regarding the conduct of his government at all levels. He had to be persistent and patient with his officers and men who were taking time to adjust with the discipline imposed on them. When the Maharaja himself deviated from an established practice, he generally explained the reason for doing so.

These orders repeatedly stress that 'honesty, economy and the interest of the state should be kept in mind' while discharging one's duties. An officer should not be swayed by bribes and personal considerations. He should use tact and persuasion in handling people, and avoid conflict and recourse to violence, as far as possible. A show of force was often advised, but the officers concerned were expressly ordered not to open fire unless actually attacked. Disciplinary action against the officers was generally meant to be symbolic and corrective. The Maharaja approves of an action taken by Tej Singh in this connection :

The news-letter sent by Misar Bindraban reveals that Lala Jawahar Mal *Dārogha Mistri-khāna* and Sheo Parshad Singh Commandant had quarrelled with each other and that you had held an enquiry into their conduct, and that Sheo Parshad Singh was proved to have been at fault, and that he was punished with one day's imprisonment, and that later on, on the recommendation of Lala Jawahar Mal *Darogha*, Sheo Parshad was forgiven and reinstated on his post as Commandant, and also honoured with a *khila'at* of the value of two hundred rupees. This is exactly what should have been done. A *parwāna* conveying necessary warning (for future) to Sheo Parshad Singh is also being issued from here.

However, the Maharaja took a very stern view of the *jāgīrdārs* and officers settling family disputes on their own or leaving their posts without his permission. Such cases were punished by fines, demotions and confiscation of *jāgīrs*. A few orders in this Collection deal exclusively with the dispute between Raja Fazl Dad Khan and Sardar Gurmukh Singh Lamba and the disciplinary action taken against them. Tej Singh himself was reprimanded several times for detaining Raja Hira

Singh's men or for interfering in his *jāgīrs* or in those of Misar Beli Ram.

As a matter of fact, most of the *jāgīrdārs* resisted the transfer of their *jāgīrs* and Tej Singh was often ordered to send one or two companies of infantry or a *risālah* of cavalry, sometimes accompanied by a couple of horse-guns, to settle a local dispute or establish the possession of the new assignee or resume the *jāgīr* into the *khālisa*. Even when the continued possession of the ancestral lands or wells was allowed, the underlying principle was that no one, not even the most respectable of the families or the most pious of the *dharmārth* grantees, should think that he could retain a piece of land without reference to the Maharaja.

Even the princes were not exempt from controls and checks. A considerable number of documents give the impression that in the enjoyment of *jāgīrs*, administration of revenue, auditing of accounts and the recruitment of men as well as the observance of military discipline, the princes were treated like the other members of the ruling class.

The *parwānas* are, in fact, replete with instances of checks and balances. Copies of an order were sent to all the persons concerned, ranging from *zamīndārs* of a village to the *kārdārs* or even the princes. One document in this Collection is sent directly to two subordinate functionaries of Tej Singh who received a copy for information. Besides the addressee or addressees, as the case may be, the orders generally contain the name of the person conveying it for drafting. He usually happened to be someone in attendance on the Maharaja: anyone from a *kursīwāla*, *sāfawāla*, *chhatrīwāla*, *bastanī-bardār* or a *gadwāi* to an officer in the army or civil administration. The person delivering the order also is generally mentioned; he was usually from the personal staff on the household of the Maharaja. The addressee paid a sum specified in the *parwāna* to the messenger, took his receipt and showed it at the time of the audit.

The accounts could be audited at a short notice only of a few hours as it happened with Tej Singh once. Another order

refers to the periodic audit which required : (i) the account of revenue collections, (ii) the account of the *tankhwāh parwānas* or pay-orders issued for collection, and (iii) the balance of cash with Tej Singh. In one order, Tej Singh was told to always keep with himself at least 10,000 rupees in cash.

Disbursement of cash from the treasury (*toshākhāna*) appears to have been minimised by the frequent issue of demand drafts or pay-orders drawn on a revenue collector or someone who owed money to the state. Thus, one source of income was often adjusted against a particular head of expenditure : the sale of salt and the income from the octroi were adjusted against the preparation of the jackets of *bānāt* : the *nazrāna* from the hill *rājas* against the cost of *ālta* for the Holi celebrations; the income from the regimental bazars against the cost of *chholdarī* and *chhappars* for guards; the fines for a murder against the expenditure of the *godwī-khāna*; and the sale of the wheat stock of Dinga against the salaries of the Ghorchara Khas. As a matter of fact, most of the pay-orders referred to in this Collection were issued for meeting the various requirements of the army, particularly the payment of salaries.

Some interesting insights into the payment of salaries also are provided by the *parwānas*. The standing instruction was to keep the salaries of both soldiers and officers in arrears by at least two months. In one case, when the pay-order could not be cashed, and the soldiers were likely to create trouble, the Maharaja advised Tej Singh to adopt the 'device' of deferring the payment of the salaries of one or two companies from every battalion and thus 'manage to tide over his monetary difficulty' caused presumably by the inability of Misar Mul Raj to collect revenues in time.

In the realization of the arrears of revenues, the Maharaja insisted on the use of 'necessary skill and discretion,' and yet 'not a *pie* must be left unrealised,' he instructed Tej Singh. Rather the *sardār* was to prove 'true to the salt of the government' by disgorging the arrears from the actual offenders,

and by 'not forcing the peasants to pay even a pie towards this amount.'

The orders also entrust the collection of a fixed quantity of grain to Tej Singh. He was to collect 4760 *mānīs* of wheat and barley from the villages held by him in *ijāra*, and send the 'entire quantity' to be stored in the fort of Lahore. Another order specifies the procurement price of the grain, the period within which it was to be collected, arrangements for its conveyance to Gobindgarh, and the cost of cartage. Through a yet another order the Maharaja appointed Saudagar *kursīwāla* to look after the collection and transport of wheat, barley, gram and oil-seeds from the *ta'alluqa* of Shahpur which was in the charge of Tej Singh. As was to be expected, Saudagar's *munshī* was told to prepare his own accounts and submit them independently of Tej Singh.

Some other interesting aspects of the orders addressed to Tej Singh are the settlement of the long-standing debts of some officers—in one case, of a soldier also; facilities and protection to be provided to the widows and dependants of the nobles; arrangements for religious ceremonies and distribution of alms; maintenance of the fruit-gardens, cow-studs and the *gadwī-khāna*; preparation of a large *ka'andarī* of *bānāt* and *daryāī* cloth for ceremonial use; repair of the silver poles of the mosquito net (*chhappar-khatā*) of the Maharaja; and the procurement of two pairs of wooden clubs (*munglīs*), weighing six and five seers each, presumably for his exercises. In short, in assigning duties to Tej Singh, the Maharaja did not make any distinction between military and civil functions, and those of a personal nature.

Ranjit Singh *parwānas* to Tej Singh underline his vigilance as well as his great capacity for work. They portray him as an indefatigable administrator and an astute tactician who controlled many strings at the same time. The Maharaja emerges also as a generous and considerate master who had a good understanding of human failings and who was both firm and patient with the men serving him. His orders project a monarch

who was absolute and yet his home-spun mode of functioning did not smack of absolutism.

Notes and References

1. Of the remaining documents, five are copies of the orders sent to others; thirteen are the office memoranda; and the rest are addressed jointly to Tej Singh and others.

2. Just a few weeks before his death, Sita Ram Kohli had passed on this valuable Collection to his former student, Dr. S.N. Rao, presently Registrar, M.D. University, Rohtak. I am grateful to Dr. Rao for making this Collection available to me. The Persian text and its translation, alongwith annotation, is being published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

GURBILAS PATSHAHI 10 AND GURBILAS CHHEVIN PATSHASHI AS SOURCES FOR EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY PUNJAB HISTORY

DR S. S. HANS*

Like the *janamsākhī* form, the *gurbilās* form was also used by writers to put forth ideas which were alien to the original works in that genre. Two important works of this kind are the *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10 and *Gurbilās Chhevīn Pātshāhī*. We propose to analyse both these works briefly in this paper to show that they tell us much more about the time in which they were composed than about the subject which they profess to treat.

The *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10, attributed to Koer Singh, is generally placed in the mid-18th century. However, not only the time but also the authorship of this work is doubtful. The supposed clue to its date is ambiguous. The word '*ekādas*' is left unexplained. The change of metre in dating the manuscript makes it all the more doubtful. Though the published version speaks of Koer Singh as the author, yet the editor seems to disagree with it.

This work is based on the *Bachittar Nātak*, the *Gursobha* and Sukha Singh's *Gurbilas Daswin Patshahi*. The last work in particular is closely followed in terms of episodes. At times the vocabulary remains the same though the metre is changed. A large number of passages are lifted from Sukha Singh's work with only slight changes. If the dating of Sukha Singh's *Gurbilās* is

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correct, then the *Gurbilās* attributed to Koer Singh should be an early 19th-century work.

There are several ideas which confirm the impression that the author of the *Gurbilas Patshahi* 10 held heterodox beliefs. In Sikhism, *kaliyuga* is an age that makes 'virtue' easy to practise. But the author holds the contrary opinion. Men cannot believe in God. Only a few would be redeemed. The *panj piyaras*, the Five Beloved, are held 'to be the Guru's associates in *satyuga*. They joined him again 'to be a part of the frame of Guru'. The writer seems to place the *Adi Granth* and *Purānas* almost on the same level. The Guru himself is shown as a worshipper of the Goddess at the *naurāta* festival.

Besides doctrinal heterodoxy Guru Gobind Singh is portrayed paradigmatically as a Hindu incarnation. Guru Gobind Singh's departure from Patna echoes the sentimentalities of Rama leaving Ayodhia for banishment. Images from *Rāmāyana* are recurring. Rama killed the demon Ravana with the help of monkeys. In the same way the Guru gave rulership to the Jats. The Guru takes after Hindu incarnations. He is Vishnu. Makhawal is like Brindaban. Guru Gobind Singh is Krishna. The climax of the Hinduized portrayal of Guru Gobind Singh is reached when Mata Gujri vanishes at the time of her death like Sita into the earth.

However, the author of the *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10 places greater emphasis on the doctrine of *Guru-Granth* than on that of *Guru-Panth*. The Khalsa are the 'sons of the Guru;' they would avenge themselves on the enemy of the Guru. The *Guru-Granth* is God. Guru Gobind Singh answers the question regarding succession by saying that the *sangat* is the *Khālśa* to wield the sword, and to follow the *shabd*. The Guru is the *Granth*. The *sangat* is the form of the Guru. If the Sikhs follow his teachings and observe the *rehat*, then, they would find the Guru amidst them. In contrast with the emphatic statements on the *Guru-Granth*, there are only ambiguous ones on the principle of *Guru-Khālśa*, except at the time of the creation of the Khalsa, which is required by the context.

In the *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10, there are echoes of difference between the Majha and the Malwa Sikhs. "The men of the hills are without spirit and religion. The Sikhs of the Majha are hard as stones in their faith. They are the rulers of the world. This is not the case with the Malwais". The acceptance of British overlordship by the Sikh chiefs of the Malwa could form the background for this opinion of the Malwais. In any case, the author of the *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10 was familiar with the presence of the English in the country.

The conciliatory tone of the author of the *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10 towards the Muslims is highly significant. Despite Guru Gobind Singh's mission to 'wipe out the Turks', an impression is given that the term covered the tyrannical rulers only. Guru Gobind Singh is visited by Muslim nobles. They find him 'an image of God'. The Mughal Khān-i-Khānān is amply honoured by the Guru. The pacificatory stance of the author towards the Muslims, together with the 'Hindu' portrayal of Guru Gobind Singh, makes one suspect that the *Gurbilās Pātshāhī* 10 carries a strong imprint of Sikh rule under Ranjit Singh for whom it was absolutely necessary to hold the three communities in some kind of a balance. Only the 'subjects' could be held in contempt for being sinful enough to constitute *kaliyuga*, which men could redeem to some extent by their 'individual' devotion to the *Guru-Granth*.

The *Gurbilās Chhevīn Pātshāhī* is believed to have been written by Sohan Kavi in 1718 A.D. In the published version the author chooses to remain anonymous. He is in the service of one called Dharm Singh who is 'presumed' to have been in contact with Bhai Mani Singh. However, there is a reference in this work to the nine-storeyed Baba Atal. The Harmandir is already 'golden'. The poet refers to Ranjit Singh demolishing the *sarāi* of Nurdin (Nuruddin) to construct the tank of Tarn Taran. There is a reference to the year 1834 A.D.

These facts are either interpolated or they point to the early 19th century as the time of the composition of the *Gurbilās Chhevīn Pātshāhī*. In fact, Macauliffe refers to Bhai Kahn

Singh's opinion that it was the work of a priest of the Golden Temple written during the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh. The author craves forgiveness from the reader for his metrical faults but not for any historical inaccuracies. He versifies what he is told by his teacher who gets changes made in the text.

On its close and critical scrutiny it may not be too unreasonable to observe that the *Gurbilās Ghhevīn Pātshāhī* has a negligible importance as a source of information on the life of Guru Hargobind. However, it tells us a good deal about the early 19th century. This *Gurbilās* advocates visits to Sikh shrines where a sacred bath can win heaven. There is a particular regimen to get a son. A Gauri composition of Guru Arjan is a prophylactic against wintry cold. There is a scriptural antidote to poison. A particular formula helps to cure fever. The reading of Bavan Akhri wipes out sins of numerous births. A man's life consists of twenty-four thousand in and out expirations. 'Sukhmani' has twenty-four thousand words. Thus, it helps one to fulfil all the desires. He who prepares *prasād* and makes an offering of robes for the *Granth* would not go to hell. The eighty-four steps of the *bawli* of Guru Amar Das have a religious symbolism. A recitation of Japu on each step enables a person to reach Guru Nanak in heaven. He who dies at the Golden Temple need not fear the messengers of death. A woman bathing in Kaulsar is sure to get a son. Visit to a certain temple helps one find suitable match for a daughter. All of those reflect the beliefs and practices of the people of early nineteenth century.

There is a boon for reading every chapter of this *Gurbilās*. In fact, one of the major concerns of the author is to show that Guru Hargobind himself moved about from one place of pilgrimage to another. He is particularly fond of shrines associated with Guru Nanak, Guru Angad and Guru Amar Das. He commissions his trusted followers to 'perform services' at places connected with Guru Nanak.

The *Gurbilās Chhevīn Pātshāhī* projects Baba Buddha as a great Sikh. He figures very prominently in the work. On his

departure from Ramdaspur to Lahore on the eve of martyrdom, Guru Arjan tells Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha to remain with Hargobind. He asks Hargobind to regard Baba Buddha as Guru Nanak. The last wishes of Guru Arjan were that Guru Hargobind should assume 'spiritual' and 'temporal' power, build the Akal Takht and regard Baba Buddha like Guru Arjan. Baba Buddha is not only the first priest of Harmandir Sahib but also the formulator of its rituals. He gives *mantars* like Guru Nanak, and bestows sons. The Sikhs go to Baba Buddha when Guru Hargobind overturned the pietist practices at Ramdaspur. It was Baba Buddha's advice that made Guru Hargobind turn his back on Kaulan. His proposal was confirmed by a voice from heaven. The Guru used to hold him by the hand. Guru Hargobind and the *sangat* never fail to look him up in his *bir*. Baba Buddha is provided with a residence close to the Guru at Hargobindpur. In fact, it was Baba Buddha who christened the town after Guru Hargobind. At the time of his death, all the Sikhs, including Bhai Gurdas, fall at his feet. He is succeeded by his son, Bhana, on his *gaddi*. The Guru is as deferential to the son as he was to Baba Buddha.

Baba Bhana takes the place of his father in the galaxy of distinguished Sikhs. Along with the Guru, he leads the funeral procession of Baba Gurditta which included Suraj Mal, Bidhi Chand, Jodh, the future Guru Har Rai, Ani Rai and Tegh Bahadur. He is the leading figure at the betrothal of Har Rai. Not surprisingly, Baba Bhana performs the *tilak* ceremony at the accession of Guru Har Rai to the *gaddi*. Bhana leaves his son Sarwan in the care of Guru Har Rai, presumably for an ancestrally distinguished career in Sikhism. Baba Buddha and his descendants are given the epithet of Sahib, normally reserved for the Gurus.

The *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi* is an excellent *corpus* of evidence on the nineteenth-century rituals of the Sikhs about the Granth, the ceremonies at Harmandir Sahib, and the rites of birth, marriage and death.

The *Gurbilās* is a combination of the *janamsākhī* genre and the

gurbilās form, without the doctrinal intent of the former and the socio-religious urgency of the latter. A conventional description of battle is followed by details of arrangement of a marriage, the foundation of a town comes before a skirmish, the killing of a few butchers keeps company with the succession of Guru Angad. Fighting, domestic rituals and Sikh mythography are neither related to one another nor subsumed under an over-vaulting religious principle, or a political urgency. Perhaps the work accurately reflects decline of religious enthusiasm under Sikh rule when it was reduced to a bundle of fetishes, certainly for the laity and possibly for the ruling classes.

[Note : It is regretted that for shortage of space it has not been possible to give the numerous references given by the author in support of his arguments].

PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLITICS OF THE PUNJAB DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE REIGN OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH : LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF A SECRET BRITISH SPY

*M.L. AHLUWALIA

Although much has been written on the life and times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore, yet the history of Punjab and her people during the first one or even two decades of the establishment of the Sarkar Khalsa Jee of Ranjit Singh has not yet been fully exposed to the public view. To some extent this is due to the fact that the contemporary court chronicles do not provide much information beyond the conquests made by the Maharaja and a few other aspects of his diplomatic career.

In contrast to these source materials, a few secret letters of one Captain Mathew provide very interesting details, not only about the political affairs of the Punjab, and the personality of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but also about the common people, the peasants and the townsmen alike, the law and order situation, the state of cultivation and trade, the golden temple and its priests, the sentiments of the Akalis and the ex-soldiers of the British Indian army then in the service of the Maharaja and so on.

It is needless to detail here the reasons why Captain Mathew was sent by the British in the capacity of a secret spy, when the Governor-General in Council had already decided to send to the Court of Ranjit Singh a duly accredited Envoy;

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both of these missions were a part of the diplomatic and military offensive which the English East India Company had mounted in concert with the Home authorities to counteract effectively the reported designs of France and Russia to invade India by the land routes across Persia and Afghanistan.

In this context the long Resolution of the Fort William Council dated 5th February 1808 is a very instructive Memoranda on British India's defence and foreign policy strategy in the beginning of the 19th century. By this Resolution it was decided to send accredited Envoys to the Courts of Ranjit Singh, Ameers of Sind, and the Nawab of Bahawalpur in India and to the rulers of Iran and Afghanistan. Yet on the recommendation of the military authorities, the Governor-General in Council also approved, *vide* their Resolution dated 29th February 1808, the spying mission of ex-Captain Mathew to Punjab under the cover of being a tourist, with a view to getting first-hand information useful from the military point of view. In order to cover any possible suspicion about the real object of his visit he was to send his secret reports in the form of private letters addressed to the Adjutant-General, Major-General G.H. Fagan by name, posing as his friend.

However, as one could find from his own letters, no one in the Punjab was believing that his visit was not secretly blessed by the British authorities for ulterior motives. He also committed the mistake of joining the caravan of Maharani Mehtab Kaur, wife of Ranjit Singh, who was then returning to her Estate in Batala after performing her ablutions in the Ganges at Hardwar on the festival of Baisakhi. Maybe, Captain Mathew's *munshi* and interpreter happened to be a native of Batala and so he wanted to make use of the good offices of Ranjit Singh's wife for a trouble-free tour in the Punjab.

From the few letters written by Mathew during April and early May 1808 the Governor-General also got alarmed, and on 20th June 1808 the Fort William Council decided to recall Captain Mathew from the Punjab. His secret mission thus flopped sooner than expected and its place was soon taken by the official

mission of Charles T. Metcalfe. Before, however, the orders of the British Government could reach Mathew, he had already held two meetings with Ranjit Singh at Lahore and also visited Amritsar.

One finds a lot of information in these few letters of Captain Mathew which is hardly available in that detail in other contemporary sources, including the extensive correspondence of Charles Metcalfe hereafter, relating to Punjab affairs. Moreover, Mathew's reports are frank and lucid, coming as they did from the pen of a soldier and not of a diplomat.

In his letters written from Batala dated 4th May 1808, he mentions *inter-alia* about the overtures made to him by Sardarni Sada Kaur, the mother of Rani Mehtab Kaur, for an alliance with the British against Ranjit Singh and her willingness to pay to them 6 annas in a rupee of the revenues of the Punjab, if she was placed on the throne in place of Ranjit Singh. He opines that it could be possible for the British to occupy the country of the Maharaja in alignment with Rani Sada Kaur :

'In conclusion, I can, with confidence, assure you that should it be any part of English policy or interest, to possess this country now, or during the life of the Ranee, it could be done without trouble or bloodshed by acting in conformity to her measures.'

Mathew mentions that the Musalman population in particular would prefer the British to take over Punjab as "they enjoy but few privileges and are held in great subjection, not being allowed to call the Uzan (call for prayers) in a loud tone of voice in any part of the Punjab" (letter from Batala dated 4th May 1808). This was, in fact, the hangover of the old religious animosity from which the Hindus and Sikhs had suffered for long under the rule of the later Mughals and also at the hands of Nadir Shah of Persia and Ahmad Shah Abdali of Kabul in particular.

Giving his impressions about the Punjab and its people, he writes :

'I much like the general appearance of this country. It

exhibits a pleasing prospect to the Eye, of high cultivation, many populous villages and of great comfort and happiness enjoyed by the inhabitantsa fine rich soil of the most productive quality for wheat, barley and other grains, and which under proper management would produce an immense revenue, even without great labour, for the husbandman generally speaking only ploughs the ground and sows his corn without any after attention to watering the crops, which are left in common to the coolness of the climate which however favourable is not sufficient. (*vide* Mathew's letters dated 17th April and 4th May 1808).'

He was impressed to see the general physique and health of the Punjabis : "I have at the different places seen vast numbers of men between 70 and 80 and very stout and tall." The Sikhs in particular created a great impression upon him. He remarks, "I do think the Singhnes and Singhs the very best people in, Hindustan, approaching much nearer to the European character than any of the other classes...". (letter dated 4th May 1808).

In his letter dated 29th May 1808, Mathew has all praise for the safety of life, property and honour enjoyed by the people of that part of the Punjab which was then under the direct administrative control of Ranjit Singh. He writes, "This part of the Punjab as well as all other parts where the Rajah's authority exists, is under good police, and safe for travellers; it seldom happening that capital crimes or robberies are committed.....single persons travel with their property without apprehension of danger."

Again in contrast to the derogatory language occasionally used by Charles Metcalfe about the manners and character of Ranjit Singh, Mathew notes in his diary, "The Raja is not only a most unaffected pleasing man in his manners, but of very good understanding, brave and liberal.....He is both feared and beloved by his men." Giving an account of his first meeting with the Maharaja and his impressions about the physical appearance and inquisitive nature of the latter, he writes :

'23rd (May, 1808) : paid my first visit to the Rajah, who received me in a grand Saloon, a part of the Moghul Emperor's Palace, he was extremely chatty and affable, is a little man of 28 years of age, blind of his left eye, which he lost in his infancy by the small-pox with which he is much pitted; his right eye is large and intelligent; he asked me a number of questions : what Religion I professed; what number of horses one of our Battalions could oppose; and I told him thirty thousand with a certainty of beating them and that a recent proof of their excellence was in Lord Lake's beating 25000 Marhattas with only 3500 Firelocks. The Rajah observed afterwards but not in my hearing, that 30,000 was a great many to beat but that he thought a good Battalion like ours might beat 20,000. He then asked me if I understood the training of Cavalry; if I could ride; If Goolandauzes could be got for him by my influence...He then enquired what kind of horses we preferred, and why we cut their tails; whether Europeans who desert from our servicing were men of any abilities; what we thought of the Marhatta Army, and if his Infantry could be made equal with ours. If I could lay a Gun well, make Guns and Gun Carriages etc. etc. to all of which I gave him suitable answers.'

He testifies to the fact that Ranjit Singh was an excellent horseman who possessed good breeds of horses :

He is a most capital horseman and rides every morning till 7 o'clock with only a few attendants, on a fine level plain between the Walls of the Town and River; has beautiful horses some of which are from Eran and Gandahar, but the finest are bred in this country, are very large and strong and have much the appearance of the English Horse''. (vide Mathew's letter from Lahore, dated 29th May 1808).

Since Ranjit Singh was then constantly fed by reports about the evil designs of the British towards him, the Maharaja seems to have made use of the presence of Mathew in the Punjab to warn the British. Mathew thus notes in his diary, "Although the

Raja is much afraid of us, he has been heard to say in vaunting moods that when the English taste the water of his sword, they will then know there is such a thing in Hindustan, which at present they are ignorant of."

As an astute statesman Ranjit Singh also availed of the channel of Captain Mathew to convey to the British authorities that he considered the entire country west-ward of the river Jamuna, with the exception of the military stations under British control, to be under his sovereign authority. (*vide* Mathew's letter from Lahore dated 30th May 1808).

Mathew gives a vivid description of Amritsar and its golden temple in the following words :

'Amrutsur stands in a wide open level, uncultivated plain of great extent all lying waste; it is an open town about six miles in circumference, and considered the Capital of the Punjab; the streets rather narrow, houses good, built of burnt bricks and lofty; but their apartments are confined. It may claim however some little superiority over the other principal towns of Hindostan, in point of architecture. It is the grand Emporium of trade for shawls and saffron from Cashmere, and other commodities from the Dukan and Eastern parts of India...From the residence of rich merchants and residence of Bankers, Amrutsur is considered a place of great wealth and of importance; here the Rajah has his treasury, which only amounts at present to a few lacs of Rupees, but he means to increase it in future;...I went to visit Amrutsur or the water of life, from which the place takes its name. It is a bastion of about 135 yards square, in the Centre of which stands a pretty temple...In this sacred place is lodged the Book of Laws, as composed by the Saint under a Silken Canopy written in the Goormukhee language. The temple is called Hurmundar or God's place; there are from 5 to 600 Rababeas or Priests of this temple, who have built good houses for themselves out of the voluntary contributions of people visiting it. Holkar made an offering of two thousand rupees and they receive

considerable sums from the Rajah, who visits it twice a day during his residence at Amrutsur when they press him for money telling him that Goorgobind gave him the Country, without whose will, he could not keep it...although no person can visit the temple the first time without paying a sum of money to the Akalees, who divide it equally; they are by no means averse to the monies so collected, being either expended on their personal wants, given in charity or laid out on additional buildings; and there is no instance of an Akalee accumulating money for any other purpose. Choirs of singers assemble at 3 o' Clock every morning and chant the contents from the Granth by reliefs during the day and till late at night in the temple, and at two other sacred spots, and with great solemnity exciting the mind to religious veneration and awe...The priests of this Temple may justly be considered a most happy people, as they acknowledge themselves to be, ever employed in prayer, song and heavenly musing, their minds weaned from all worldly pleasures, and never in want; the Rajah having set apart certain lands in *Jaidad* which alone would supply all their wants. (*vide* Mathew's letter from Lahore, dated 29th May 1808).'

In the same letter Mathew gives a detailed description of the Lahore Fort, Jahangir's mausoleum, Raja's (Ranjit Singh's) Mint, Cannon Foundary, Brass and Iron Guns.

Ranjit Singh, a shrewd diplomat, would not take Mathew on his words that he was visiting Punjab for the mere pleasure of sight-seeing. Accordingly, he asked Mathew to convey a *kharita* from him to the Governor-General, proposing an alliance. Mathew had to forward this *kharita* to the Governor-General which was received on 6th July at Fort William. For its importance this *kharita* is reproduced here *verbatim* :

'After conveying to your Lordship the expression of my desire for a joyful meeting, the order of which it is not in the power of language to describe, I proceed to inform you that by the blessing of God all is well in this quarter, and that

I am praying to Heaven to receive agreeable accounts of your Lordship's health and welfare. The ties of amity and friendship and the relations of harmony and concord which I have established with the English Gentlemen will have been made known to your Lordship by the written and verbal communications of the Right Hon'ble General Lord Lake. It is the wish of my heart that the foundations of a sincere and cordial friendship and union continuing daily to be strengthened and consolidated, the care and happiness of the people may be thereby promoted, which pleasing in the sight of God, and that this desirable object, may be accomplished in such a manner as to excite the envy of all our contemporaries.'

'From letters and representations which I have repeatedly received from Ruttun Cuor, widow of the late Tara Singh, from Rajah Bhaug Singh, Bhaee Laul Singh, Bhaee Chyn Singh and Rajah Jeswunt Singh, I am led to suppose that the British Government is making preparations for war. I know not what those persons may have written to your Lordship, but they repeatedly write to me that as yet, they have by the greatest efforts on their part succeeded in delaying the march of the British Troops. Accompanying, I send a copy of their letters. As I have never entertained any other sentiments than those of friendship and regard and as my doubts and apprehensions have now been removed by the arrival of Captain Mathew, I therefore write that a treaty of Amity and Alliance may be concluded between us through the Agency of that officer; that the enemies of the British Government shall be considered to be the enemies of this Government whom I am bound to expel, and in the like manner that similar proofs of friendship be afforded by the British Government on its part; which uniting itself with me the extermination of my enemies may be effected. Let the adjustment of these points be hereafter completed through the agency of the officer above named and let constant communication through the same channel be maintained between us.'

N. K. SINHA AS A HISTORIAN OF RANJIT SINGH

*DR S. K. BAJAJ

Narendra Krishna Sinha, an eminent scholar, was Asutosh Professor of History in the University of Calcutta. He has contributed a great deal to the historical literature of Indian and regional history. Though a specialist of regional history of the eighteenth century, his range of knowledge of Indian and world history which he demonstrates in his writings is certainly amazing. His grasp of the intricate filligree of eighteenth-century history indicates the quality of his historical craftsmanship and acute perception of historical situations. A great admirer of J. D. Cunningham and Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. Sinha was well aware of historians' limitations, tasks, and subjectivity, which is evident from his remark : "Historical judgements will always be influenced by values to which different minds will attach a different qualitative scale."¹

N. K. Sinha was deeply influenced by the national political climate of the age he lived in. Achieving maturity of mind and thought in the early thirties of the present century when he started seriously thinking of history, Sinha's impressionable mind witnessed kaleidoscopic events of 1920s and early 1930s which gave a mould to his mind and set of values which in turn determined his 'qualitative scale.' As regards the impact of freedom movement on his writings, we should remember that it was an era of revolutionary movement in Punjab,

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Bengal and Maharashtra; the first two were close collaborators. This explains the interest of Bengali historians in Punjab and Maharashtra.

Dr. N. K. Sinha has two prestigious publications to his credit which cover political history of the Sikhs from 1716 to 1839. In 1933 he got published the first edition of *Ranjit Singh*. Novice in the craft of history-writing as Sinha was at that time, he confessed in 'Preface' to the second volume that he "became almost ashamed of my hasty first publication."² He polished and enriched the second edition without making any change in his assessment of Ranjit Singh. It was only after the publication of *Rise of the Sikh Power* in 1936 that he felt confident and mature, enough which led him to revise his *Ranjit Singh*. Thereafter it has remained unchanged in its successive editions.

Inspired by the freedom struggle of the twentieth-century India, N. K. Sinha views the Sikh movement of the eighteenth century as a struggle for independence.³ After going through the existing accounts of the movement given by Cunningham, Latif and J. N. Sarkar, Sinha felt the need to illuminate the obscure corners of Indian history. The Sikh and Maratha struggles for independence, in the opinion of the author, were remarkable and decisive in character, which were launched by two persons, namely, Guru Gobind Singh and Shivaji against the Mughals. The former was the father of Sikh militarism⁴ and a great awakener of consciousness. Unlike any military dictator, Guru Gobind Singh believed in the collective wisdom of the community; therefore he imparted a new spirit, a new vision and new bonds of unity by granting his followers "new name, new dress, new equipment and new ceremonies."⁵ He converted them into "a religious-minded, war-like fraternity, intensely conscious of itself."⁶ Such a community confronted with life and death struggle emerged triumphantly from the ordeal. While analysing the reasons for their success, besides the spirit and idealism of the Sikhs, Sinha attaches great importance to Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasions. He writes :

'The actual results of Abdali's Indian invasions in Afghanistan are not so easily ascertainable but, in the

Punjab at least, he was indirectly largely responsible for the ultimate success of the Sikhs and his career in India is intimately a part of the Sikh struggle for independence.”⁷

Destabilisation of the tottering Mughal administrative structure at the centre and in the province of the Punjab by Abdali created opportunities for the Sikhs to establish their rule. Their clever strategy of employing guerilla warfare against the foreign invaders succeeded “because of popular sympathy and support, partly inspired by inspiration and partly by fear.”⁸ Sinha is of the view that the success was certain for no individual, however gifted and great, can fight with a nation in arms.”⁹ He further adds that no community possessed in greater measure than the Sikhs the sterling qualities of “constancy in disaster and hopefulness in defeat.”¹⁰ And a series of terrible reverses and suppression strengthened the will and vitality of the Khalsa. Admiring the glorious contribution of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, ‘a wholesouled patriot’ who led the war to successful termination, Sinha credits the whole nation for his success in his efforts.¹¹ Like a true nationalist, Sinha glorifies the deeds of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and does not view Ala Singh (Patiala’s) submission to the Durrani Chief as honourable.¹²

The movement of the Sikhs passed through ‘horrible reign of terror’ and patriotic betrayals.¹³ It got, in due course of time, transformed into ‘theocratic confederate feudalism,’ the concept by which he explains the rise and nature of *misals* in the Punjab. The misaldars in 1780s sought self-aggrandizement and began to hob-nob with neighbouring powers independently of each other. Sinha approvingly quotes the British documents which refer to the Sikhs of the period as “petty plunderers.”¹⁴ But fortunately it provided an opportunity to Ranjit Singh to establish his military monarchy on the ruins of confederate feudalism.”¹⁵

Being a nationalist, N. K. Sinha admires, besides other equally redeeming qualities of the Sikh movement, two important aspects, namely, the Sikhs as a ‘warrior nation’¹⁶ and the spirit of democracy of the Khalsa. He warns that the phrase

'theocratic confederate feudalism' should not be understood as it is understood in the West. The Sikh feudalism was entirely different from the medieval European feudalism in spirit and form.¹⁷ But this institution had decayed in the Punjab by 1768. And failure of this limited democracy, of democracy in spirit as Sinha calls it, led to the rise of military monarchy.¹⁸

'A man of superior capacity and enterprise,'¹⁹ Ranjit Singh was 'the man of destiny' to establish an independent military monarchy and put an end, once for all, to 'dissension, discord and mutual plundering'.²⁰ His "environment shaped his handiwork" as the Sikhs were 'a race nurtured in storm'.²¹ Moreover, fate had also "helped him by removing some of the big men" like Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.²² Rising from the common folk of Punjab, Ranjit Singh, 'a political architect,' skilful in his own way, worked out a scheme with remarkable success. He was as "inexorable as fate, unmoved by feelings of pity and compassion."²³ Nevertheless, he was "cautious, discerning, conciliatory, depending more on diplomacy than on force". He was 'more unscrupulous than cruel', and "never took life even under circumstances of most aggravated offence."²⁴ In his early period he formed coalition based on kinship and political friendship "which served as the ladder to achieve political supremacy. In all these cases the initiative always rested with the Lahore chief."²⁵

One of the aspects of Ranjit Singh's policy which disappoints the nationalist Sinha is his policy towards the British. To him the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809 was a diplomatic defeat of Ranjit Singh.²⁶ Unlike Khushwant Singh, Sinha nowhere attempts to prove that the cause of the Treaty was Ranjit Singh's distrust of the Marathas.²⁷ On the contrary, he believes that Ranjit Singh who had declined to involve himself in the big power politics between the Marathas and the English was rather impatient to enter into alliance with the British.²⁸ Whatever might have been the cause of Ranjit Singh's yielding in 1809—fear of British military might or complete isolation²⁹—one thing is certain that he lost the chance of moulding the

'Sikh nation into a well ordered state.'³⁰ His failure to absorb the cis-Sutlej state was 'a tragedy of Sikh militant nationalism', marking the disruption of the great creation of Guru Gobind Singh.³¹ While making an assessment of the historical significance of the role of Ranjit Singh. Sinha says that "in a small sphere," he was "an unsuccessful Bismarck and Lincoln in one."³² Because unlike Bismarck who unified Germany by diplomacy and war, and unlike Lincoln who saved the USA from a major split by launching a war on the South, Ranjit Singh could not unite the Punjab. The author has no doubt that Ranjit Singh had adequate power and political acumen to establish his monarchy in the whole of the Punjab on the ruins of Sikh commonwealth.³³

Although N.K. Sinha does not fully approve of the Treaty of Amritsar as a great diplomatic measure, yet he ungrudgingly accepts that it proved a great help to Ranjit Singh for he could extend his frontiers in the North and North-West unheeded by the British. After 1827, however, self-interest and the needs and purposes of both the British and Ranjit Singh kept them together. But in his relationship with the British, Ranjit Singh in the opinion of Sinha, was a horse to the British rider.³⁴ During the period after this date "Ranjit Singh" Sinha further asserts, "was a pathetic figure, helpless and inert." He "shows no courage or statesmanship that deserves our applause."³⁵ He regrets Ranjit Singh's constant reluctance to fight 'the inevitable war' with the British.

N.K. Sinha has his own views on the administration of Ranjit Singh. They are different from those of the European writers but are consistent with his general approach to Sikh history. In his opinion the hastily patched-up monarchy of Ranjit Singh had "a government of discretion," inflicted partially by the abuse of delegated authority and absence of laws and arts.³⁶ But to historians' surprise there were no major convulsions and conflicts. His regime was securer and more peaceful than that of the British.³⁷ Sinha is all praise for his administration, its unique feature being 'the popular character.' If military courage is democratized the

government cannot afford to flout the opinion of the people.³⁸ This is how the Khalsa became relevant to even the nineteenth century Sikh history.³⁹ In the words of Sinha, -'Ranjit's administration was the nearest approach to the ideal of popular monarchy that was possible in those days and in those circumstances.'⁴⁰

Ranjit Singh is compared with Lenin and Omar. Ranjit Singh was to Guru Gobind Singh what Lenin was to Karl Marx, what Omar was to Muhammad.⁴¹ One should not read literally in such statements of Sinha as comparisons are generally odious. What the author wishes to suggest is that Ranjit Singh compelled the entire system to gravitate round himself and Sikh valour flared up brightly⁴² which helped in the realization of Guru Gobind Singh's dream of establishing a free Sikh state.

N. K. Sinha is not oblivious of the defects of Ranjit Singh. To him the Maharaja was a man of intellect without conscience. Organisation of his kingdom was imperfect. His highly centralised and powerful government could not operate effectively in times of emergency. Although Sinha does not offer comparison between Shivaji and Ranjit Singh but one of his remarks is self-explanatory: "But history of Maharashtra after his (Shivaji's) death presents a striking contrast to that of the Punjab after the death of Ranjit Singh for he did not breathe in the hearts of people noble sentiments."⁴³

Sinha's *Ranjit Singh* has two sides of a coin. In his relations with the British, he is depicted as a weak, pathetic and inert figure, lacking both in diplomacy and statesmanship. The other side of the coin shows him as a man under whom the Sikh nation emerged brilliantly. His assessment of him as a popular military monarch, radiating the aspirations of the people of the Punjab and symbolising a tradition of freedom and strength is in the spirit of a reaction to the British writers. His ideas and approach thus do not differ from those of many Hindu nationalist historians. He is a nationalist, for he extends his unqualified approval of acts of those who fought against the

British. He is a Hindu nationalist for he regards the Mughals and other Muslim rulers as foreigners. His vision and conceptual understanding of history is typically similar to that of a Hindu nationalist of 1930s, for he analyses and explains the history of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century with personal priorities fixed by him.

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HIMACHAL IN ANGLO- SIKH RELATIONS (1815—1839)

CHANDERVERKAR*

The Treaty of Amritsar (25 April 1809) between the East India Company and Ranjit Singh made the river Sutlej the boundary between their then territorial limits in the plains. The Jawalamukhi Treaty was concluded by Ranjit Singh with Sansar Chand of Kangra on 5 Sawan 1866 (about 20 July 1809) and as a result of it the control of Kangra fort and Sandhata area by Ranjit Singh on 24 August 1809, made Ranjit Singh enter the trans-Sutlej Himachal areas which by 1839 came wholly in his possession and in tributary relationship with him except Lahoul and Spiti and trans-Sutlej areas of Bushehar. The Treaty of Malown (15 May 1815) at the conclusion of the Anglo-Nepalese war between David Ochterlony and Amar Singh Thapa (the British and Nepalese commanders respectively in the hills between the Jamuna and the Sutlej) resulted in the vacation of these areas by the Nepalese and their occupation by the British.¹

Thus on 15 May 1815, the British and Ranjit Singh came into territorial contact with each other in the hills as they had in the plains on 25 April 1809. The Sutlej thenceforth became the contiguous boundary between the two in the hills also. By that time Ranjit Singh had annexed the states of Kangra, Nurpur, Jaswan, Guler, and made Mandi, Suket, Kulu and Chamba his tributaries.

Three states—Bilaspur, Kulu and Bushehar—had their territories on both sides of the Sutlej. The fact of the Sutlej becoming the common boundary between the possessions of Ranjit Singh and the British was bound to place these three states under the dual political control of two independent governments

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and result in strains in relations between Ranjit Singh and the British Government. The capitals and the major portions of Bilaspur and Bushehar were on the cis-Sutlej side and those of Kulu on the trans-Sutlej side. From this geo-political compulsion it would be logical to expect that Bilaspur and Bushehar were influenced by the British and Kulu by the Sikh Darbar in respect of their smaller areas lying on the other side of the river. But this did not happen, because whereas the British began to exercise their effective control on the cis-Sutlej areas of Bilaspur, Kulu and Bushehar as soon as the Malown Treaty was signed, Ranjit Singh's control over trans-Sutlej Kulu and Bilaspur mainly remained only that of a receiver of tribute and fine. Whereas in Kulu the first tribute was realised in 1810, Bilaspur was made tributary after 1819. The trans-Sutlej Bushehar was only casually noticed in 1837-39 as mentioned hereinafter. It is in this context that we have to study Anglo-Sikh relations in the areas now forming the State of Himachal Pradesh.

BRITISH DONATION TO THE RAJA OF KULU (1816)

During the Anglo-Nepalese war, Raja Bikrama Singh (1806-1816) of Kulu sent his forces against the Nepalese to oust them from his cis-Sutlej possessions and to join with the forces of Bushehar. After the war, the British authorities restored to him the territories (Kinal fort and Chekul) which he had possessed in cis-Sutlej hills at the time of the Gurkha conquest and which he had lost to them.²

Since the Raja of Kulu had been invited to participate in the war, it was also decided to compensate him financially for the expenses incurred by him during it and also to offer him presents of broad-cloth in the name of the Governor-General. Ross saw in the offer of these proposed presents an opportunity for introducing European manufactured articles in Kulu.³

He suggested that the presents should be despatched under the charge of an intelligent and respectable person who might ascertain the tastes and demands of the people for broad-cloth and the likely return of commercial arrangements with them.⁴

The Governor-General in Council turned down Ross's suggestion of deputing an agent to Kulu as incharge of the presents, as Ranjit Singh was likely to take it as an attempt on the part of the British Government to form a convention with the trans-Sutlej hill states and that he might use it to justify any measures on his part to renew his intercourse with the cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs in whose affairs he had no longer any right to interfere. Matcalfe was, therefore, told that no particular importance should be attached to the presentation of money, broad-cloth and other articles to the Raja of Kulu.⁵

An amount of five thousand rupees was sent to the Raja of Kulu, but it angered Ranjit Singh so much against the Raja that he imposed on him a fine of ten times that amount.⁶ It also sounded as a hint to the British authorities to refrain from such attempts and a warning to his other tributary chiefs in the hills.

ATTEMPT FOR THE ENTICEMENT OF GURKHAS IN BRITISH SERVICE BY SHIV DATT RAI IN THE NAME OF RANJIT SINGH (1816)

Ranjit Singh had closely observed the events during the Anglo-Nepalese war and admired the stiff resistance offered by Nepalese to the British during it. This made him understand the value of the Gurkhas as infantry soldiers and he decided to have as many Gurkhas in his army as could be made to join it.

It is on record that on 17 August 1815 ten new Gurkhas were recruited in Ranjit Singh's army and he asked Abid Khan to go across the Sutlej and tempt the Gurkhas to accompany him to his court.⁷

Immediately after the close of the Anglo-Nepalese war, Shiv Datt Rai, the Vakil and confidant of Raja Mahan Chand of Bilaspur, laid claim to the Thakurai of Baghal on the plea that the Maharaja of Nepal had promised him in writing that it would be bestowed on him in jagir after its conquest by the Gurkhas, which however was not honoured by Amar Singh Thapa. He wanted the British Government to fulfil that unful-

filled promise as successors to the Nepal Government in the area. Ross refused to entertain his claim. At this, to win the favour of Ranjit Singh, Shiv Datt Rai set himself to the task of inducing Gurkha troops to quit British service and to join that of Ranjit Singh.⁸

On 3 March 1816, two letters, one from Shiv Datt Rai dated 23 February, and another from Sangat Singh, a Gurkha deserter, forwarding a *parwana* supposed to be from Ranjit Singh dated Amritsar the 13 Magh addressed to some officers of the 1st Nusseeree Battalion at Sabathu, were found inviting them to leave the British service and to join Ranjit Singh's army. On 4 March Ross asked Mahan Chand to restrain Shiv Datt Rai from such activities in future. Shiv Datt Rai, however, made a second attempt to induce Gurkhas to desert British service. On or about 5 April 1816, he sent a person from Bilaspur to Kotgarh to announce to the Gurkhas that those who might enter Ranjit Singh's service would receive superior rates of pay. The man was arrested by Lt. Mc. Harg, commanding at Kotgarh and sent to Sabathu. He had no letter with him from Ranjit Singh and could produce no proof of Ranjit Singh's involvement in the affair except his own confessions.⁹

The Government took the view that suspicions might have existed regarding the role of Ranjit Singh, direct or indirect, in the affair, but they were not based on sufficient ground and should not be regarded as a fit subject of representation to him and the matter was allowed to lapse.¹⁰

ANTI-RANJIT SINGH COLLUSION BETWEEN RAJA BIR SINGH OF NURPUR AND SHAH SHUJAH (1816)

Raja Bir Singh (1789-1846) of Nurpur was ousted by Ranjit Singh from his principality towards the end of 1815. He crossed into the cis-Sutlej territory and in May 1816 sent his Vakil to Ross (Assistant to A.G.G. Sabathu) requesting for British protection against Ranjit Singh. Ross discouraged such expectations.¹¹ When

all requests by Bir Singh for financial help and asylum failed, he prayed to be allowed to go to Ludhiana to be with Shah Shujah, the ex-King of Kabul. Ross informed Birch (Assistant to A.G.G. Karnal) that if provision made for Shah Shujah was used by him to encourage Bir Singh and provide a base for him within the British frontier, it would displease Ranjit Singh, who regarded Bir Singh as his most formidable enemy.¹² In view of this, Birch requested Murray to inform Bir Singh that the British Government had not thought it proper to acknowledge him or to allow him to visit Ludhiana as he was at war with its ally Ranjit Singh.¹³

Ranjit Singh's Vakil at Ludhiana informed Murray that Ranjit Singh had authentic information of Bir Singh's intentions of crossing the Sutlej during the absence of his troops towards Multan and creating a disturbance in Nurpur area and in the case of his defeat, he (Bir Singh) expected being again allowed to take refuge on the British side of the Sutlej. Ranjit Singh hoped that due to the friendship of the British Government towards him, the latter would deter Bir Singh from his adventure by warning him that he would not be allowed to return to the British protection after such a conduct.¹⁴

At this, the British Government informed Bir Singh, under intimation to Ranjit Singh,¹⁵ that although he was welcome to an asylum in the British protected territories, they were not prepared to interfere in his quarrel with Ranjit Singh and whereas they did not object to his right to attempt to recover his principality, they would not permit him to make use of the security offered to him by this asylum to collect means and material for carrying on hostilities against Ranjit Singh. He was also asked to withdraw his agent from Shah Shujah.¹⁶

Ranjit Singh acknowledged it most gratefully as the British Government's over-friendly attention to his interests.¹⁷

DESA SINGH MAJITHIA'S INCURSIONS IN CIS-SUTLEJ BILASPUR (1819)

In March 1819, Desa Singh Majithia, Ranjit Singh's *Nazim* in Kangra, sent a message to Raja Mahan Chand of Bilaspur to

pay tribute. On his refusal, Desa Singh moved into trans-Sutlej Bilaspur territory and asked Sansar Chand to join him. Mahan Chand invited Bir Singh who was residing in Baghal territory to come to his help in fighting Ranjit Singh.¹⁸ He was, however, forbidden from doing so by the British authorities under the threat of refusal of future asylum.

Desa Singh conquered Bassi and Bacchertu forts of the trans-Sutlej region. On 23 March, two hundred of Ranjit Singh's troops under Kakkar Mal crossed the Sutlej between Bilaspur and Makhawal and occupied forty-six villages. Kakkar Mal menaced and insulted Ross's servant who had been sent to expostulate with him.¹⁹

To vacate this aggression, Ross arrived at Bilaspur with the Nusseerees available at Sabathu. A Deputy of Desa Singh met him and offered apologies. Shortly afterwards, Desa Singh withdrew his troops about six miles from Bilaspur. Compensation was paid by the Darbar to those inhabitants of cis-Sutlej Kahlur (Bilaspur) who had been plundered. Ochterlony told Nand Singh, Vakil of Ranjit Singh, that this aggression was a direct violation of the Treaty of 1809 and that the British Government was bound to reply any attack.²⁰

Ranjit Singh severely rebuked Desa Singh for his conduct. Bassi and Bacchertu forts were restored. In 1820, the remaining trans-Sutlej Bilaspur was brought under tributary relationship. Yearly tribute was fixed at Rs. 4000, but no service demand was made. Ochterlony observed that the fact of the cis-Sutlej Bilaspur being under the protection of the British saved trans-Sutlej Bilaspur from being absorbed by the Lahore Government.

Ranjit Singh raised the issue that to defend his trans-Sutlej possessions, Mahan Chand could not raise troops and make other war-like preparations on his cis-Sutlej territories under the British protection.²¹ Ochterlony held that Mahan Chand had every right to use his whole force to resist Ranjit Singh.²²

SANSAR CHAND'S PLEADINGS FOR BRITISH HELP AND PROTECTION AGAINST RANJIT SINGH (1816-23)

Sansar Chand clandestinely approached the Governor-Gene-

ral through his friend Nawab Bamboo Khan. He addressed his paper of requests to the Governor-General seeking a written assurance to the effect that the fort of Kangra and his other possessions, which he had lost to Ranjit Singh, would be restored to him. The Governor-General refused to entertain his request on the ground that the British Government was on terms of friendship with Ranjit Singh but added that if any occasion arose, the British Government would be happy to show their goodwill towards him.²³

In August-September 1819, Sansar Chand sought an interview with the Governor-General and wrote to him and Metcalfe with a view to press his requests.²⁴ In 1821 Sansar Chand sent some hill birds as presents to the Governor-General, who replied that he was aware of the former's sincere attachement but there was no need of interchange of letters to convince him of it. He asked Sansar Chand not to send letters occasionally through the *harkaras* which was not free from difficulties and inconveniences, but to observe the established form of correspondence of sending letters through the Resident at Delhi.²⁵

APPA SAHIB WITH SANSAR CHAND AND ISHWARI SEN OF MANDI (1821-26)

In 1820, Appa Sahib after his escape from British custody went to Amritsar to seek asylum with Ranjit Singh, which he refused.²⁶ He then went to Sansar Chand who offered him not only an asylum but also agreed to mediate for him with the British Government for reconciliation on the condition that his stay did not displease the British Government.²⁷

During his stay with Sansar Chand, Appa Sahib entered into idle schemes with Prince Haider, a son of Shah Zaman, for the subjugation of India south and east of Sutlej. Prince Haider was to be the emperor of India from Delhi to Cape Comorin and Appa Sahib to be his Wazir holding the Deccan as a dependent sovereign; Punjab was excluded from the scheme. When Sansar Chand came to know of the scheme, he compelled Appa Sahib to quit.²⁸ He then (in 1822) went to Mandi²⁹ where he

stayed for four years up to 1826 and continued approaching the Lahore Government throughout for permission to raise troops, but in vain.

ASYLUM TO ANIRUDH CHAND OF KANGRA (1828-30)

Sansar Chand died in 1823. In 1828, his son Anirudh Chand was called to Lahore and asked to marry his two sisters to Hira Singh. Since Hira Singh's family was in a lower Rajput hierarchical order as compared to his, Anirudh Chand regarded the acceptance of the proposal as derogatory. Being afraid of giving an on-the-spot refusal, he requested permission to go to Sujampur-Tira to consult his mother. Soon after reaching there he despatched his sisters and mother to the British-protected territory across the Sutlej on the pretext of a pilgrimage to Har-dwar and then sent his refusal to Lahore.

To avenge this insult, Ranjit Singh came to Sujampur-Tira with an army of fifty thousand and defeated Anirudh Chand who ran across the Sutlej. The British authorities decided to provide an asylum to the family of Anirudh Chand and to Anirudh Chand himself if he sought it.³⁰

Anirudh Chand held the conquest of his territory by Ranjit Singh as a clear violation of the Jawalamukhi Treaty and requested the British Government to take his territories under their protection or accept the cession of territories and grant him pension. This was found inadmissible, but he was afforded asylum.³¹ His efforts for maintenance allowance were not encouraged in expectation that he might come to some accommodation with Ranjit Singh. The Court of Directors, however, instructed that in case all reasonable efforts for Anirudh Chand's reconciliation with Ranjit Singh failed, he should be assigned a provision.³²

JAGIR TO RANBIR CHAND THROUGH BRITISH INTERCESSION (1833-35)

Anirudh Chand died at Hardwar in 1830. His son Ranbir Chand was given asylum in Baghal (Arki). In 1831, he requested the Governor-General to recommend to Ranjit Singh to restore

to him his hereditary possessions so that he might live in peace and comfort.³³

The Governor-General stated that due to friendly relations and a treaty between the British Government and Ranjit Singh, he was precluded from recommending his case to the latter or affording him any assistance regarding his affairs to the west of Sutlej.³⁴ At this, Ranbir Chand sought an interview with Lord William Bentinck who was then at Simla. Bentinck sympathised with his misfortune and induced Ranjit Singh in his favour. He was asked to meet Wade at Ludhiana and on his advice went to Lahore. Ranjit Singh assigned to him the *pargana* of Mahal Morian as *jagir* (yielding about Rs. 50000).³⁵

RANJIT SINGH'S COMPLAINT AGAINST KHARAK CHAND OF BILASPUR (1835)

On 4 July 1835, Ranjit Singh complained through Lala Kishan Chand, his agent at Ludhiana, that Raja Kharak Chand of Bilaspur was tyrannising and oppressing his subjects on the right bank of the Sutlej. Wade found the complaint to be correct, but since Bilaspur stood in double relationship to the British Government and to Ranjit Singh, in view of his territory being on both sides of the Sutlej, Wade did not give any opinion in the matter which related to the territory under Ranjit Singh's suzerainty and referred it to the Government.³⁶ The Government let the matter pass by saying that Wade's letter was silent on the course Ranjit Singh intended to pursue towards the Raja and also on explanation of Ranjit Singh's motive of communicating it to him (Wade).³⁷

ASYLUM TO THE SON OF THE DEPOSED RAJA OF LADAKH IN BUSHEHAR

In 1835-36, Zorawar Singh conquered Ladakh and the deposed Raja requested the British Government through Tapp, the Political Agent at Sabathu, to allow him refuge in Bushehar or in any other hill state, to take Ladakh under their protection and to make him their tributary. The Government expressed

no objection to his taking refuge in Bushehar, but when there he was to refrain from acts of hostility across the frontier and to remain quiet and peaceful. Tapp was instructed not to encourage the Raja to expect British protection, and to abstain from sending any agent to attend the Raja.³⁸ The Raja's request to the Commander-in-Chief, Henry, to use his influence with Ranjit Singh in his favour was also turned down as Ladakh being trans-Sutlej area was not the concern of the British Government.³⁹

In October 1837, the Raja of Bushehar complained to Tapp that Gulab Singh's forces after expelling the son of the Raja of Ladakh from Spiti, where he had taken up asylum, were threatening to cross into his territory where he (Ladakh Raja's son) had fled to, and had detained his (of the Raja of Bushehar) two subjects in confinement.⁴⁰

On 30 October, Tapp issued a proclamation that those who would follow the son of the Chief of Ladakh into the territory of the Raja of Bushehar would be considered as the enemies of the British Government.⁴¹ He requested Wade to take this matter and that of the detention of two Busheharis by the Sikh Commandant with the Lahore Government.⁴² Wade informed Ranjit Singh that any infraction of the limits of Bushehar would be viewed seriously and requested him to order for the release of the two detained persons in a manner consistent with the friendly relations subsisting between the two Governments.⁴³

Coming to know of Ranjit Singh's mind in the matter Raja Dhian Singh sent Munshi Devi Singh to Bushehar to urge the Raja of Ladakh's son to return to Ladakh for reinstatement. The ex-Raja's son, afraid of treachery, asked for security from personal danger if he went back. At this, Devi Singh produced a letter purporting to be from Dhian Singh. Since it did not bear any impression of Dhian Singh's seal, he declined the invitation.⁴⁴

Wade wrote to Macnaghten that upto then Ranjit Singh had advanced no claims over trans-Sutlej Bushehar and was unlikely to do so if left to himself, but the Dogra brothers would draw him into it and the Sikh Darbar would then not only be usur-

ping a territory over which Ranjit Singh's supremacy had been questioned, but also depriving the British of one of the most important ways that they possessed of controlling the ambition of the Jammu family, in one of its most valuable points, whether as regards to their existing possessions or schemes for future aggression. He suggested that in view of it, the ex-Raja's son, whose service might at some period be of material advantage to the British interests, should not be permitted to have his asylum in a tributary state where his presence might become a nucleus of intrigue if not a cause of umbrage, but in the British territories. He added that if the negotiations, then in progress, through the Raja of Bushehar for the restoration of the Ladakh refugees to their country failed they should be shifted to the British territory and sanctioned a subsistence allowance.⁴⁵

The Governor-General did not agree to the shifting of the ex-Raja of Ladakh from his then asylum, but added that if he and his son sought asylum in the British territories, he would not object. A stipend of Rs. 200 per month was sanctioned to them and in addition a house was rented for them at Rs. 800 per annum at Kotgarh.⁴⁶ The Raja died at Kotgarh in 1838.

RANJIT SINGH'S MISSIONS TO SIMLA

Amherst visited Simla in 1827, Bentinck in 1831 and 1832 and Auckland in 1838. Ranjit Singh availed of these opportunities of their being near to Lahore by sending goodwill missions.

In 1827, Ranjit Singh wanted to meet Amherst personally, but at that time his health was not good. So he deputed Diwan Moti Ram and Fakir Imamuddin to lead the mission to Simla to pay his compliments. They arrived at Ludhiana on 6 April. Wade conducted them to Simla. Among the presents the mission had brought was a handsome tent made of shawls for King George IV and a large elephant and five horses for the Governor-General.⁴⁷ Amherst received them with much attention and care. They left Simla on 6 May fully satisfied. A special Darbar was held at the time of their departure where the two leaders of the mission were presented robes of honour.⁴⁸

Amherst reciprocated the compliments by sending a return mission.

On 2 February 1831, Bentinck sent a *kharita* for Ranjit Singh expressing his willingness to receive a deputation from him at Simla. The leaders of the mission chosen by Ranjit Singh were Faqir Azizuddin, Diwan Moti Ram, Hari Singh Nalwa, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia and Lehna Singh Majithia. It consisted of 1129 men, 9 elephants and 416 head of cattle. It visited Simla to express the usual goodwill and compliments, and to settle preliminaries for the October 1831 meeting between Bentinck and Ranjit Singh at Roper. The Mission was accorded a grand reception. It left Simla on 29 April.⁴⁹

The last mission of Ranjit Singh arrived at Simla on 2 May 1838. Tapp arranged *sheernee* and other articles of hospitality usual on such occasions and the Governor-General sent Rs. 2500 as *ziazat* to the head of the mission.⁵⁰ The mission presented Rs. 125 in cash and articles which among other things consisted of one pair of scarlet shawl *chaddars*, two Banarsi *dupattas*, one piece of muslin and one turban.⁵¹ Among the presents they brought was a lovely bed, with silver posts and legs and yellow shawl curtains.⁵² A Darbar was held on 7 May in honour of the mission; Auckland sat on a fillet chair in the centre; the six Sikh Sardars occupied the chairs to the right; other forty members of the mission sat on the chairs placed in a circle all round the room. Auckland mostly talked with Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia who was very quick in conversation.

On 11 May, Auckland held a farewell Darbar in honour of the mission and gave presents in exchange for those brought by it ⁵³

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RANJIT SINGH'S RELATIONS WITH THE JIND STATE

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Even before the birth of Ranjit Singh, cordial relations had been established between the Sukarchakia Misal and the Phulkian House of Jind. Though there was a distance of about 350 kilometers between the capitals of the two chiefships, which was not inconsiderable in those days when modern means of communication had not yet developed, the two Sikh Jat chiefships had cultivated intimate relationship with each other by means of a matrimonial alliance. Maha Singh, the son of the founder of Sukarchakia Misal, Charat Singh, was married to Raj Kaur, the daughter of the founder of the Jind State, Gajpat Singh. The marriage was celebrated in 1774 at Badrukhan, then capital of Jind¹, with pomp and grandeur worthy of the two chiefships. The bride was ever after called Mai Malwain, or the Malwa Mother.² Ranjit Singh was the offspring of this wedlock. According to one version he was born in the house of his maternal grand-parents in Badrukhan³, and not in Gujranwala, in November 1780.

After the death of Maha Singh in 1792, the affairs of the Sukarchakia Misal were managed for about five years by Mai Malwain, the lady from Jind, who was assisted and advised by Diwan Lakhpat Rai. In 1797 Ranjit Singh assumed the ruling power in his own hands. Some scandal-mongering British writers have alleged (to tarnish the fair name of the Maharaja, perhaps) that he had been tired of the intrigues of his mother with Diwan Lakhpat Rai, and therefore he got rid of them by putting both of them to death. Following these British writers Latif also has remarked that Maha Singh from the first day of his marriage had no faith in the fidelity of Mai Malwain who, he suspected,

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showered affection upon Lakhpat Rai, a man of engaging manners.⁴ Prinsep writes that Ranjit Singh gave his sanction, or at least connived at her being put to death, and the old chief Dul Singh is designated as the perpetrator of the act by means of poison⁵. Major Carmichael Smyth has also mentioned this scandal and blamed Ranjit Singh for matricide.⁶ But Indian writers do not agree with this view. According to N K. Sinha, the whole story is based upon 'mere gossip'.⁷ S. R. Kohli also considers the charge entirely false and fabricated.⁸ In the contemporary accounts of Sohan Lal Suri, Diwan Amar Nath and Bute Shah this story finds mention nowhere. It is possible that Sohan Lal and Amar Nath being in the service of Ranjit Singh, might not have dared to mention the scandal against their Maharaja but Bute Shah, who was in the service of the English East India Company, ought to have mentioned such an important event, if it had been true. Bute Shah, on the other hand, asserts that it was in consultation with his mother that he took the reins of government in his own hands.⁹ The allegation is also "certainly not consistent with the general character of the chieftain (Ranjit Singh)."¹⁰

By 1805 Ranjit Singh had subjugated Lahore and Amritsar and had become much more than a *primus inter pares* among the Sikh chieftains. He had widened the horizon of his ambition and aspired to become the sovereign of the whole of Punjab. A shrewd diplomat, he had already won over to his side the Sardars of some powerful misls such as Ahluwalia and Kanhiya and had been utilising their services for extending his dominions. At this time Raja Bhag Singh, the son of Gajpat Singh, was the ruler of Jind State.¹¹ He was the maternal uncle of Ranjit Singh. Both the relatives apparently harboured cordial and affectionate feelings for each other. Ranjit Singh had great regards and respect for his uncle and was ever ready to listen to his sober and sane advice. At the same time, he wished to avail of the services of his elder relative, and was willing to give him ample rewards in terms of territories and *jagirs*. Raja Bhag Singh, on his part, was a great well-wisher of his nephew. Highly impressed by the personal qualities and attainments of the

young Chief, he was ever prepared to lend him his valuable advice and assistance in the hope of sharing the spoils of his conquests. More than anything else, Bhag Singh was sincere to the interests of his own State. He was a man of great foresight, adept in political manoeuvres.¹²

Raja Bhag Singh was the first of all the cis-Sutlej Princes to seek an alliance with the British Government.¹³ Immediately after the Battle of Delhi on 11 September 1803, he joined the British camp under General Lake and assisted him in his operation against the Marathas. "His services were not important, but his influence had a good effect."¹⁴ Lake spoke of him as a 'friend and ally' of the British. In 1805 the astute Raja of Jind joined Lake in his pursuit of Jaswant Rao Holkar and accompanied him as far as the Beas from where he was deputed to Lahore as an envoy to his nephew, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Bhag Singh advised the Maharaja not to help Holkar against the British, warning him of the dire consequences of espousing the helpless cause of the Maratha fugitive. He convinced the Maharaja that it would be foolish and inexpedient to oppose the English. Since he was the maternal uncle of Ranjit Singh, his influence counted, among other things, in determining the attitude of the nephew who avoided encountering the better trained British forces by refusing to give any help to Holkar.¹⁵ Cunningham accepts the view that Bhag Singh's "services were not unimportant in determining that calculating leader to avoid an encounter with disciplined battalions and a trained artillery."¹⁶ Griffin also agrees that Bhag Singh's influence prevented Ranjit Singh from assisting the Marathas against the British.¹⁷ For this valuable service Bhag Singh was granted by the British Government the *pargana* of Bawanah (south-west of Panipat) and the *jagirs* of Mamrezpur and Nihana Kalan.

In 1806 Ranjit Singh decided to lead an expedition to the cis-Sutlej region. The pretext for this expedition was provided by a dispute which had arisen between the rulers of Patiala and Nabha over Doladhi village. Raja Bhag Singh, who was

a strong supporter of Nabha, invited his nephew Ranjit Singh to mediate in the dispute.¹⁸ Ranjit Singh's first Malwa expedition was swift and sweeping.¹⁹ He conquered many territories, settled the dispute between the Chiefs of Patiala and Nabha, exacted *nazrana* from the cis-Sutlej Chiefs and compelled them to recognise him as their supreme lord and master. Raja Bhag Singh was the principal gainer as a result of this expedition. He got from his nephew a substantial share of the conquered estates consisting of Ludhiana (24 villages), Jandiala (24 villages), Kot (2 villages), Jagraon (2 villages), Bassia (2 villages), all yielding an annual revenue of Rs. 23, 260.²⁰ While acquiring all these territorial concessions from Ranjit Singh, the shrewd Raja of Jind in collaboration with Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha, addressed a communication to the Resident at Delhi on 3 November 1806, giving assurance to the effect that Ranjit Singh had been invited by them to arbitrate in the settlement of a local dispute. A day earlier, Ranjit Singh had already written to the Resident to the same effect, adding: "Keep yourself at ease; the ties of friendship and union between the Hon'ble Company and me have been firmly established through the medium of General Lord Lake and my uncle aforesaid."²¹

In 1807 the dissensions between Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala and his wife Rani Aus Kaur, provided a second opportunity to Maharaja Ranjit Singh to launch expedition to the cis-Sutlej area. He got *nazrana* once more from the cis-Sutlej Chiefs and subjugated many territories of which he granted three villages of Ghungrana and twenty-seven villages of Morinda in Sirhind to the Raja of Jind, all having an annual income of Rs. 19, 225.²²

Though a virtual ally and accomplice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his two Malwa expeditions, Raja Bhag Singh did not want to lose the goodwill of his brethren cis-Sutlej Chiefs of Patiala, Nabha and Kaithal; much less did he wish to lose the confidence of the British authorities. He has been described as "a clever and cunning opportunist who ran both with the hare and the hound."²³ With insidiousness characteristic of him he shared

with his neighbouring brethren Chiefs alarm and anxiety over the successive inroads of the Maharaja into the cis-Sutlej region. The unlimited ambitious designs of Ranjit Singh and the liquidation of the trans-Sutlej *misals* at his hands, had made these principal cis-Sutlej Chiefs extremely apprehensive of their own fate. But they were too weak individually to oppose him and too much divided to act together.²⁴ Under the circumstances they decided in a meeting clandestinely held at Samana to seek the protection of the British. They were not unaware of the imperialistic designs of the British but, placed between the devil and the deep sea, they deliberately chose a lesser evil. In accordance with their decision, a deputation consisting of Raja Bhag Singh and other Chiefs or their agents held an interview with the Delhi Resident, Archibald Seton in March 1808, and sought British protection against Ranjit Singh's incursions. But Seton, after consulting the Supreme Government, put them off with an evasive reply.

Ranjit Singh had been watching the progress of negotiations between the cis-Sutlej Chiefs and the British Resident with great concern.²⁵ As soon as the negotiations in Delhi ended, he instantaneously sent his messengers to the cis-Sutlej region to invite the cis-Sutlej Chiefs to Amritsar. Raja Bhag Singh and other members of the deputation, thereupon, proceeded to Amritsar where the Maharaja "spared no efforts to detach them from their design of entering into any relationship with the British Government."²⁶ The cis-Sutlej Chiefs appeared more inclined than before to look to the clemency of Ranjit Singh. Raja Bhag Singh was obviously playing a leading role in bringing them closer to the Maharaja.

In April 1808 Maharaja Ranjit Singh decided to pay a visit to the Kumbh Mela of Hardwar. Through his agent, Mohar Singh Lamba, he got the permission of the Delhi Resident to visit the sacred place of pilgrimage where suitable arrangements were made for his reception. But at the last moment Raja Bhag Singh dissuaded him from going unless

accompanied by a large army on the ground that Mohar Singh might prove treacherous.²⁷ Accepting the advice of his maternal uncle the Maharaja dropped the idea of visiting Hardwar.

Raja Bhag Singh himself, however, visited the fair at Hardwar along with the Chiefs of Patiala and Kaithal. From Hardwar he proceeded straight to Lahore where he stayed for quite sometime. The English Envoy, C. T. Metcalfe, who met Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his camp at Kasur in September 1808, noticed the presence of Raja Bhag Singh in the Maharaja's camp. When Ranjit Singh suddenly broke up his camp in middle of negotiations with Metcalfe and started for his third cis-Sutlej expedition, the Raja of Jind accompanied him. The Raja launched an attack on the fort of Ghungrana which was held by Gujar Singh. While the siege of the fort was going on, Ranjit Singh's army appeared there suddenly and conquered the fort which was handed over by the Maharaja to one Karam Singh. Raja Bhag Singh continued to retain some of the villages in the neighbourhood of the fort. This sowed the seed of perpetual feud between Bhag Singh and Karam Singh.²⁸ The Raja of Jind was not happy with this action of the Maharaja and he decided to come closer to the British. In the beginning of December 1808, he addressed a number of letters to the British Resident at Delhi, informing him of the growing estrangement of the cis-Sutlej Chiefs from the Lahore Maharaja and seeking British protection for the Chiefships of Jind, Patiala, Nabha and Kaithal.²⁹

In January 1809 Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his agent Gurbakhsh Singh to Patiala for the purpose of requiring the attendance of Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha and Chain Singh, an official of Patiala, at the Lahore Darbar. As soon as Raja Bhag Singh came to know about the arrival of the Lahore Agent at Patiala, he at once left for Karnal with the object of proceeding to Delhi to meet the British Resident. He deliberately avoided meeting the Lahore emissary as he had no mind to attend the Lahore Darbar. The sudden de-

parture of Bhag Singh furnished Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala with a good pretext for not sending his agent to Lahore.³⁰

In accordance with the instructions of the British authorities, Raja Bhag Singh joined the British force under General Ochterlony at Dadupur on 18 January.³¹ At the instance of the Jind Raja some negotiations took place between the British General and the Lahore Agent which were not approved by the Supreme Government. The British force arrived at Ludhiana on 19 February 1809 and got from Raja Bhag Singh the fort and four or five thousand bighas of land of Ludhiana which the Raja had acquired as a result of his alignment with Ranjit Singh. He was given some compensation (Rs. 500 per month) for its loss, although his request for Karnal *pargana* or Panipat in lieu of Ludhiana was not accepted by the Government.³² It was decided by the Government to establish a cantonment at Ludhiana for the two-fold purpose of keeping in check the ruler of Lahore and controlling the mutual feuds and depredations of the Chiefs. Not long after, Ranjit Singh signed the Treaty of Amritsar (25 April 1809) with the British, withdrawing all his claims over the cis-Sutlej region, and by the *Ittilahnama* or Proclamation of 3 May 1809 all the cis-Sutlej Chiefs came under the British protection.

It will have been obvious that for about three years preceding the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar Maharaja Ranjit Singh had been very close with Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. It was the Raja who had dissuaded him successfully from joining the Marathas against the British; it was he who had inspired Ranjit Singh to lead cis-Sutlej expeditions and acquired for himself ample share of the spoils of conquest. Paradoxical as it may seem, it was also the Raja who had played a leading role in bringing the cis-Sutlej Chiefs under the British protection against the incursions of Ranjit Singh.³⁴ At the same time, he had considered it politic to keep up a pretence of friendship and cordiality with his promising nephew whom he owed so much. He had proved himself a highly successful diplomat who had gained from his connections both with Ranjit Singh and the British. It was a measure of his skilful diplomacy that in spite of his intimate

connection with the British authorities, of which the Maharaja could not have been unaware, he continued to enjoy the confidence of his nephew. It is significant to observe that Raja Bhag Singh was the first Sikh Chief who had realized the importance of seeking alliance with the British, for he had formed a true estimate of their military strength. Perhaps his influence on Maharaja Ranjit Singh, as well as his example, was an important factor in moulding the pro-British propensity and policy of the Maharaja in the years to come.

In 1813 Raja Bhag Singh suffered from a paralytic stroke which rendered him incapable of conducting the administration of the State. He desired that his younger son, Kanwar Partap Singh, should be his successor but his request was turned down by the British authorities. In 1814 Rani Sobrahi, one of the wives of Raja Bhag Singh, was appointed as Regent with the sanction of the British Government. This arrangement was not acceptable to Kanwar Partap Singh who raised troops secretly, attacked the fort of Jind and killed Rani Sobrahi and many of her supporters. The British authorities decided to take action against the Kanwar and entrusted the administration of the State to Fateh Singh, the eldest son of Raja Bhag Singh. The Kanwar ran away to Balawali and from there fled to Lahore. He requested Maharaja Ranjit Singh for asylum but the Maharaja refused to give shelter to the murderer and handed him over to the British authorities; the Kanwar died in Delhi as a prisoner of the British in 1816.³⁵

On the death of Raja Bhag Singh in 1819, Fateh Singh became the Raja of Jind. His reign of three years (1819-1822) was 'quite uneventful'. Ranjit Singh had friendly relations with him and received him cordially during his two visits to Lahore, first as Kanwar in 1817 and second as Raja in 1819.³⁶

Raja Fateh Singh was succeeded by his eleven year son, Sangat Singh in July 1822. During the minority of the new Chief the administration of the State greatly deteriorated. As the Raja grew in age, he developed a great liking for Maharaja Ranjit Singh and he aspired to pay him frequent visits. The Maharaja on

his part, had also great affection for his young relative and was always pleased to meet him.

In 1826 Raja Sangat Singh paid his first visit to the Lahore Kingdom. First he undertook pilgrimage to the sacred Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar, and from there he was conducted with honour by Ranjit Singh's Sardars to Lahore. The Maharaja received him warmly and entertained him lavishly. Both the relatives participated in the Holi festivities and many officials of the Maharaja gave presents to the Raja of Jind. Thereafter Ranjit Singh invited the Raja to accompany him to Jwala Mukhi. The Raja went with him upto Dinanagar where he waited for the return of the Maharaja. Before the Raja's departure the Maharaja granted him the *jagir* of Rain (Jalandhar Doab) consisting of twelve villages, worth Rs. 13,000 per annum.³⁷

In the following year (1827) Sangat Singh visited Lahore for the second time. The Maharaja was glad to receive him and granted him *jagirs* of Muhrapur (six villages) and Musapur (one village), yielding annual revenue of Rs. 10,500. Raja Sangat Singh also secured from Ranjit Singh the grant of the village Antiana, situated on the south of the Sutlej.³⁸ When the Raja seized this village from its owner, Ram Singh, the latter at once complained to the British Government.

Raja Sangat Singh's repeated visits to Lahore and his acceptance of *jagirs* from the Maharaja were considered 'highly reprehensible' by the British authorities and they decided to put a stop to this 'connection and allegiance'. The Raja was compelled to restore the village Antiana immediately to Ram Singh. At the same time, the Government dispensed a warning to the Raja that as a protected dependant of the British Government he was not at liberty to enter into correspondence or negotiations with a foreign power and that the grant or purchase of any estate from the Chief of Lahore without any reference to the Government was 'highly indelicate and improper'. Though the Jind Raja was allowed to retain the trans-Sutlej *jagirs* that had been granted to him by the Maharaja, the Government issued a general order in

1829 by which the protected Chiefs were prevented from accepting any *jagir* from the Lahore Darbar and they were required to abstain from all connection or contact with foreign power without the knowledge and sanction of the British authorities.³⁹

Despite this order of the British Government, the intimate connection between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Raja Sangat Singh did not, perhaps could not, cease. The Raja's *vakils* and agents continued to remain in attendance at the Lahore Darbar and the Raja continued to pay visits to the Maharaja with unabated enthusiasm, though they were generally of a complimentary nature. Towards the end of February 1831 the Raja visited Lahore in response to an invitation from Ranjit Singh. The two relatives exchanged rich presents and the Maharaja evinced all the courtesy and cordiality towards his guest. Giving his unwanted and uncalled for opinions about certain Sardars of the Maharaja, the Jind Raja said that Wasava Singh Sandhanwalia was an honest man possessing great intelligence and foresight whereas Lehna Singh Sandhanwalia was a cunning man well-equipped with trickeries of the age. At the instance of the Raja, Ranjit Singh wrote a letter to Fakir Aziz-ud-din, asking him to set his heart on the good services rendered by the Raja in the settlement of all the affairs that were vital and important.⁴⁰

In May 1831 Diwan Singh, a reliable agent of Raja Sangat Singh, presented himself before the Maharaja with 21 garments of clothes and one horse with a gold-threaded saddle. He also submitted a letter from the Jind Raja, assuring of his loyalty, obedience and humility. The Maharaja was pleased to receive the horse and ordered his men to make suitable arrangements for the entertainment of the guest.⁴¹

In the course of the celebrated Ropar meeting between the Maharaja and the British Governor-General, William Bentinck, held in the last week of October 1831, Raja Sangat Singh was among the conspicuous Sardars of the Maharaja who were seated on the chairs.⁴²

In the autumn of 1833 Diwan Singh, the agent of Raja

Sangat Singh again met the Maharaja with two horses and many other presents. The Maharaja enquired after the affairs of the respectable Raja and granted him Rs.250 in lieu of entertainment and a similar amount for the presentation of horses.⁴⁸

In 1834 Raja Sangat Singh, in response to a special invitation from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, proceeded towards Lahore in connection with the celebration of the Dusehra festival. When he reached Bassia, he was called back by the orders of the British authorities who did not like his unauthorised negotiation with the Lahore Darbar. The young Chief was so much frustrated on receiving the orders on 2 November 1834 that his heart was broken, and he suddenly expired the next day when he was a youth of hardly 24 years.⁴⁴

Thus throughout the reign of Raja Sangat Singh there were very close and cordial relations between the Lahore Darbar and the Jind State. According to Griffin, Raja Sangat Singh seemed more anxious to remain on good terms with Ranjit Singh than with the English Government.⁴⁵ He was almost in constant communication with Lahore Darbar and would pay frequent visits to the Maharaja. He had also acquired some *jagirs* from the latter. It appeared as if he were a notable courtier of the Maharaja's Court or a feudatory Chief of the Maharaja. His intimate connection with the Lahore Darbar was not relished by the British authorities who made efforts to put a stop to this intercourse. They turned against the Raja due to the maladministration of his State, his frequent absence from the capital and his continuance of negotiations with Ranjit Singh in violation of their clear orders. The Raja died, a disappointed youngman—a victim of infatuation for Ranjit Singh and ill-will of the British.

After the death of Raja Sangat Singh, Sarup Singh succeeded only to a portion of the Jind State, the remaining territories of the State having been annexed by the British. He was mainly concerned with getting back the lost territories of the State but his representations were turned down by the British authorities. Despite this, he always remained loyal and faithful to the Bri-

tish. At the same time, he maintained friendly relations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When a letter from the mother and wife of the Raja of Jind was received by the Maharaja, intimating that Sarup Singh was quarrelling, showing enmity and practising cruelty against the people, he (Ranjit Singh) declined to intervene on the ground that it was for the British authorities to take action according to their well-established regulation.⁴⁶ In 1838 an agent of Raja Sarup Singh visited the Lahore Darbar with presents of a horse, turban, *dohsala* etc. On the orders of the Maharaja the articles were delivered to Kanwar Kharak Singh and suitable arrangements were made for the entertainment of the guest.⁴⁷

Summing up it may be said that Ranjit Singh had generally maintained very intimate and cordial relations with the Jind State. Perhaps there was no other Sikh Chiefship with which he kept up so friendly relations for such a long time. In the early stages he had well utilised the services of Raja Bhag Singh who had assumed the role, as it were, of a mediator in the affairs of Manja and Malwa,⁴⁸ as also between the British and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He collected grants both from the British and the Maharaja. Although he played a leading role in bringing the cis-Sutlej Chiefships under the British protection, yet he continued to enjoy the confidence of the Maharaja. During the time of Raja Sangat Singh, the intimacy between the Lahore Maharaja and the Jind Raja had further developed. Himself being an incompetent and immature ruler, the young Jind Raja had burnt his boats for the sake of friendship with the Maharaja, thereby alienating the British Paramount. This, together with his indulgence in drinking, cut short his career and took his life in the prime of his youth. During the last five years of Ranjit Singh's reign the relations continued to remain friendly without any visible mark of intimacy, for the Maharaja was absorbed in facing acute problems elsewhere. Moreover, the British authorities did not permit intimacy between the two Chiefships as a matter of policy.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab* (Reprint New Delhi, 1964), p. 340.
3. See, for example, Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* in Punjabi (Delhi, 1953), p. 35 f. n.
4. Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 345-46
5. H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab* (Reprint Patiala, 1970), pp. 38-39.
6. Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* (Reprint Patiala, 1970), p. 14.
7. N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh* (Third Edition, Reprint Calcutta, 1960), p. 8.
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9. Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* in Persian, p. 635.
10. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
11. He had succeeded to the Chiefship on the death of Gajpat Singh in 1886.
12. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa—Raj Khalsa* in Urdu (Amritsar, n.d.), p. 134.
13. Behari Lal Dhingra, *Jind State : A Brief Historical and Administrative Sketch*, p. 2.
14. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 293.
15. Bashir Ahmad Farooqi, *British Relations with the Cis-Sutlej States 1809-1823* (Reprint Patiala, 1971), p. 2.
16. J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (Reprint Delhi, 1966), p. 116.
17. Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 294 and 475.
18. Farooqi, *op. cit.*, p. 2. The case had first been brought to the notice of the British authorities but they had refused to mediate in the dispute in consequence of the repeated instructions to avoid all connections with the States beyond the Yamuna. See Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
19. B.J. Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations 1799-1849* (Hoshiarpur, 1968), p. 54.
20. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II (Lahore, 1887), pp. 60-61; Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 295; Brij Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
21. Cited in B. J. Hasrat, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
22. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 295.
23. B. J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh* (Hoshiarpur, 1977), pp. 62-63,

24. G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State* (Reprint Hoshiarpur, 1960), p. 33.
25. Curiously enough, a confidential agent of Ranjit Singh, named Mohar Singh, had somehow managed to join the deputation of the cis-Sutlej Chiefs. See B.J. Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, p. 59.
26. Farooqi, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
27. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 296; Brij Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
28. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
29. For details see Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-300; also R.S. Mathur, *Raja Gajpat Singh 1738-1786* (Unpublished thesis, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, 1955), pp. 97-99.
30. Seton to Edmonstone, 19 Jan. 1809, cited in R.S. Mathur, *op. cit.* p. 99; also Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
31. Ochterlony to Edmonstone, 20 Jan. 1809, *Punjab Government Records--Ludhiana Agency*, Vol. II (Lahore, 1911), p. 33. (Here after PGR-LA).
32. For details about correspondence between Raja Bhag Singh, Ochterlony, Seton and Edmonstone on the subject, see PGR-LA), pp. 62-69, 71-75, 79, 85-86, 119-20.
33. Farooqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
34. In his correspondence with the British authorities he refers to "my zeal and attachment to the British Government under every circumstance", considers the British authority as "the guardian of the concerns of the great and the small in this quarter", and expresses himself to be "ready to agree to everything, even to sacrifice my life." The British authorities also believed that the conduct of Raja Bhag Singh had "certainly been highly commendable" and that he was "most sincerely desirous of restraining his (Ranjit Singh's) encroachments." See PGR-LA, pp. 44, 62, 71, 86.
35. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-44; Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-321; Farooqi, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
36. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
37. *Ibid*, p. 146; Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-24; Brij Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
38. Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-25.
39. *Ibid*, p. 325; S. N. Rao, *Cis-Sutlej Sikh States 1800-1849* (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Panjab University, 1953), pp. 183-84.
40. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* English translation by V.S. Suri, Dafter III (Delhi, 1961), pp. 12-14.
41. *Ibid*, p. 46.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 87,90.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
44. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
45. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
46. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, English Translation, p. 371.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 552.
48. "He (Bhag Singh) was a shrewd and calculating opportunist, foremost in every political transaction and a confirmed mediator in affairs of Manjha and Malwa." B.J. Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, p, 38.

RANJIT SINGH AND THE KAPURTHALA STATE

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Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the founder of the Kapurthala State, was a contemporary of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali. Taking advantage of the troubled times, he annexed territory on a large scale and made himself a leading Sikh Chief of his days. His bravery had been recognized, for he was usually victorious in his campaigns against his opponents.¹ Yet this brave man failed in his expedition to Gurjranwala against Charat Singh Sukarchakia, grand-father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who beat him back with loss of his guns and his baggage.²

Against this background both Fateh Singh, the nephew of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and Ranjit Singh, the grandson of Charat Singh, commenced their rule almost simultaneously in 1801.

Had Fateh Singh been a strong man, he might have chosen to measure his sword with Ranjit Singh, the rising star of the day. But he was "mild and good natured, seemingly simple, and undoubtedly wanting in energy." Thus he welcomed the offer of an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Ranjit Singh.³ Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh, on oath before the sacred Adi Granth, promised to help each other without receiving monetary compensation for it.⁴ They also exchanged turbans, and henceforth Ranjit Singh always addressed Fateh Singh as *Bhai Sahib*, even though the latter was younger to the former by four years.⁵ There is a controversy regarding the time and place where this exchange of turbans took place. Whether it was Fatehbad,⁶ Amritsar⁷ or Tarn Taran, it certainly effected friendship between the house of Ahluwalia and that of Sukarchakia, and the event in all probability took place in 1802.⁸

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The friendship began in all sincerity. Exchange of horses took place whenever the two Sardars met and Ranjit Singh would receive Fateh Singh with full honour.⁹ Fateh Singh assisted Ranjit Singh whenever he was required to do so. Amritsar was won in 1802 by Ranjit Singh with the unstinted co-operation of Fateh Singh¹⁰, who accompanied his ally also in the campaign against Raja Sansar Chand when the latter had plundered some villages in the territory of Sada Kaur.¹¹ During these operations in the *dodab*, Ranjit Singh seized Phagwara from the widow of Choor Mal and gave it to Fateh Singh.¹² Bhunga was also conquered at this time and handed over to Fateh Singh.¹³ Thus Ranjit Singh helped Fateh Singh in extending his territory.

The friendship between the two Chiefs became a cause for concern for other sardars, and many attempts were made to effect breach in this alliance. Sahib Singh Bhangi, before the military operation against him, sent his *Vakil* to Fateh Singh to dissuade him from intervening in the conflict between the Bhangis and Ranjit Singh. Sahib Singh also reminded Fateh Singh of the good relations that existed in the past between Jassa Singh and Gujjar Singh, and also sent a horse to Fateh Singh.¹⁴ But all this could not woo Fateh Singh.

The alliance between Fateh Singh and Ranjit Singh had also excited jealousy of Mangal Singh and Mohar Singh. Mangal Singh was the son of Haqiqat Singh, the *thanedar* of Nadala under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. He appears to have built a small *haveli* in Nadala without the permission of the Ahluwalia Sardar, Bhag Singh. When his perfidy had come to notice, he was turned out of his place.¹⁵ Mohar Singh was married to Karam Kaur, the daughter of Jassa Singh. He made every effort to succeed Jassa Singh, and was never reconciled to the succession of Bhag Singh on whom he even attempted murder.¹⁶

With all these forces working against the alliance, Ranjit Singh keenly protected the plant of friendship. The relations of the two Chiefs became strained in 1803 when Ranjit Singh occupied Sujanpur against the wishes of Fateh Singh. Ranjit

Singh made all efforts to repair the damaged relations; he sought the intercession of Mai Anokhi, Jassa Singh's widow, for reconciliation.¹⁷ His efforts proved successful and good relations between the two were maintained.

Ranjit Singh trusted Fateh Singh in military and diplomatic matters. When the Maratha Chief Jaswant Rao Holkar was driven north of the Sutlej by Lord Lake's pursuing army, it was mainly due to Fateh Singh's advice that the Maharaja was dissuaded from giving offence to the English by lending countenance to the fugitive prince.¹⁸ Fateh Singh Ahluwalia was the medium of intercourse,¹⁹ and he signed the treaty as plenipotentiary of Ranjit Singh and for himself on 1st January 1806, entered into by the British Government with the Sardars of the trans-Sutlej. In this treaty both Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh were styled as Sardars.²⁰

The Sardars of Jullundur, Doab such as Tara Singh Gheba, Budh Singh Singhpuria and Dharam Singh Amritsaria, opened negotiations with Fateh Singh, urging him to leave Ranjit Singh so that together they might turn out Ranjit Singh from the Central Panjab.²¹ Despite these efforts of the Sardars of the Jullundur Doab to wean Fateh Singh away, Ranjit Singh entrusted the defence of the Doab entirely to him.²²

The friendship between Fateh Singh and Ranjit Singh was, however, friendship between two unequals. Fateh Singh had neither the capacity nor the energy to assert his equality with Ranjit Singh, for he was a weak and yielding man. He thus fell by degrees under the powerful spell of the Maharaja, who finally treated him as a mere vassal, commanding his service on every military adventure and insisting upon his constant attendance at Lahore.²³

There were many occasions when Fateh Singh felt obliged to find himself in a subordinate position to Ranjit Singh :

Ranjit Singh would often bypass Fateh Singh and address his orders directly to the Ahluwalia officials.²⁴ Fateh Singh granted *jagirs* to the servants of the Lahore Darbar, and also

gave cash payments to the persons accompanying the Maharaja on his visit to Kapurthala.²⁵ The Ahluwalia Sardar was also asked to contribute a large sum of money into the *Toshakhana*.²⁶ It is said that once, in the absence of Ranjit Singh, Fateh Singh was attended upon by the dancing girls and musicians in Ranjit Singh's service. Fateh Singh distributed money, shawls and gold bangles to them also.²⁷

Fateh Singh was not in a position to pursue his foreign policy independently. He had an eye on the possessions of the Ramgarhias, but he was checked by Ranjit Singh for undertaking any such venture. On the death of Budh Singh, he wished to divide the territory of the deceased with Ranjit Singh, but the Maharaja rejected the proposal despite his earlier assurance to Fateh Singh that they would be appropriating the Ramgarhia territory.²⁸

Fateh Singh had also sent his *Vakil*, Chaudhri Qadir Bakhsh of Talwandi to the court of Ranjit Singh.²⁹ Presence of his *Vakil* at Lahore fulfilled one of the requirements of the suzerain-vassal relationship.

Fateh Singh did smart under the treatment given to him. It made him apprehensive about Ranjit Singh's designs. He, as early as 1811, desired to be regarded as separately connected with the English, so fearful he had become of Ranjit Singh.³⁰ In 1825, he fled across the Sutlej and took refuge at Jagraon, then under the British protection, abandoning his estates in trans-Sutlej region to the Maharaja. There was no real cause for this step on the part of Fateh Singh whose fears were apparently worked upon by the sudden advance of some of Ranjit Singh's regiments towards his borders.³¹ Chaudhri Qadir Bakhsh, Himmat Singh Jallewalia and some other officers were the real culprits behind the Jagraon episode. They forged letters and sent reports from Lahore deliberately framed to create misunderstanding between Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh. Fateh Singh was also informed that Ranjit Singh had confiscated the *jagirs* of Kanwar Kharak Singh and arrested Sada Kaur and his sending the army towards Doab, without the knowledge

of Fateh Singh, aimed at seizing the Ahluwalia's possessions. Fateh Singh, in his own territory, was also advised by his well-wishers to first get across the Sutlej and then to seek clarification from Ranjit Singh.³²

The Maharaja was surprised and annoyed when he found his old friend had been driven into the arms of the English whose settlements up against his Sutlej boundry had for some years caused him genuine concern.³³ But Fateh Singh had been so harried by Ranjit Singh's previous ways that he felt he must at all hazards secure a guarantee for the security of his trans-Sutlej possessions, such as had been accorded by them to the Phulkian Chiefs.³⁴

Ranjit Singh took pains to allay the fears of his ally. He wrote an *ahd-nama* before Guru Granth Sahib putting on it his *Kesri Panjah* and also sent a deputation to him to win him back.³⁵

Ranjit Singh had absolutely no eye on the territories of the Kapurthala State. If he wanted, he could have annexed the trans-Sutlej possessions of Fateh Singh. The British had frankly told Fateh Singh that they could protect his cis-Sutlej possessions only and his trans-Sutlej possessions could not be protected by them.³⁶ The British knew that their efforts to protect his trans-Sutlej possessions would cause an open rupture with Ranjit Singh, and they would not welcome it.³⁷

Had Fateh Singh been a man of equal ability and energy, he might have retained his equal status with Ranjit Singh. He lost his position in degrees and, though on his return to Lahore in 1827, he was received with marked honour and confirmed in nearly all his possessions,³⁸ yet he had accepted to become a vassal in clear terms, and as such started paying his *nazrana* to his Suzerain.³⁹

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2. *Ibid.*
3. Joginder Kaur (Ed.), *Ram Sukh Rao's Fateh Singh Pratap Prabhakar* (Amritsar, 1978), p. 118.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ranjit Singh was born in 1780 whereas Fateh Singh was born in 1784.
6. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, pp. 50-51; Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
7. Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 19.
8. All the sources agree on the year of this event.
9. Joginder Kaur, *op.cit.*, p. 119.
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11. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
12. Khushwaqt Rai, *Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., p. 144.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.
15. Ram Sukh Rao, *Bhag Singh Chander Udey*, MS., p. 147 a-b,
16. *Ibid.*, p. 154 a-b.
17. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, p.130.
18. File No. 41, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
19. J. D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (Reprint New Delhi, 1972), p. 116.
20. C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1931), p. 33.
21. Khushwaqt Rai, *op. cit.*, MS., p, 144; also Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
23. File No. 41, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
24. *Parwanajat of Kapurthala State Records*, Document No. 291/8.
25. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, pp. 453 and 476.
26. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar III, p. 107.
27. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-33.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
30. Govt. to Sir D. Ochterlony, 4 Oct. 1811.
31. File No. 41, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

32. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, pp. 453-55.
33. File No. 41, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
35. Joginder Kaur, *op. cit.*, p. 472.
36. Metcalfe to Murray, 14 January, 1826.
37. File No. 41, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
38. Resident at Delhi to Capt. Murray, 13 January, 1826.
39. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar III, p. 82.

THE SINO-SIKH TREATY (1842) IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

DR. C.L. DATTA*

In October 1842, the Lahore Darbar and the Peking Government signed an agreement about the frontiers of respective states under their control, Ladakh and Tibet. In order to understand various terms of the treaty in historical perspective, first let us study, *albeit* briefly, expansion of the Sikh Power in Ladakh and Baltistan.

Ladakh, now the trans-Himalayan frontier district of Jammu and Kashmir state and the biggest in size in the Indian Union, is situated in the upper Indus valley. In the east, it has a common frontier with West Tibet. In 1839 when it was conquered by General Zorawar Singh, its area was about 30,000 square miles and it was ruled by a Ladakhi Buddhist King, known as the Gyalpo.

Soon after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his emissaries to Leh (Capital of Ladakh) demanding tribute and customary presents,¹ which the Ladakhi kings had been paying to the rulers of Kashmir. After realising tribute,² the emissaries returned to Kashmir. In October 1820, the Maharaja's envoy again visited Ladakh, realised the tribute and exhorted the Gyalpo to make the payment regularly. The Prime Minister of Ladakh also sought assistance from the Sikh *nazim* of Kashmir against impending aggression from Baltistan.³ It appears that the Gyalpo continued to pay this customary tribute to the *nazim* of Kashmir until about 1834 when Ladakh was first invaded by General Zorawar Singh. In the *Antiquities of*

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Ladakh, political affairs in the early eighteen-thirties are described as follows :⁴

To say 'salam' to the King of Ladakh, there came annually from Kashmir an official called Malig, and together with him about 100 assistants, pony-men. In return of this, the King of Ladakh sent with a man from *Kha-latse*, called *Drag-chos-don-gruli*, various products of Ladakh, for instance a yak, a sheep, a goat, a dog and also more valuable things.

However, the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, a feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was not content with this shadowy suzerainty of his master over Leh. May be that after strengthening his position around Jammu and consolidating his power upto Kishtwar, he had set his heart to occupy the Kashmir Valley and wanted to encircle it from south and east. Anyway he deputed his Wazir, General Zorawar Singh Kahloria, who was the Governor of Kishtwar, to conquer Ladakh. In August 1834, Zorawar Singh invaded Ladakh for the first time. The fighting continued for a year and mainly in the Lower Ladakh, whose inhabitants, true to their previous traditions,⁶ offered stiff resistance to the assailants. In July 1835, Zorawar reached Leh and signed a peace settlement with the Gyalpo. The latter paid a huge war-indemnity and undertook to pay Rs. 20,000 as annual tribute. Although the Kingdom of Ladakh was restored to its ruler, hereafter he came under the effective control of the Lahore Darbar. In the winter of 1836, after his return to Jammu, Zorawar Singh presented to the Maharaja the *nazrana* which he had brought from the Ladakhi ruler.⁷

In the next three years, the Ladakhis revolted many a time and Zorawar Singh had to lead three more expeditions to quell the rebellions. Frequent requests of the Ladakhi rulers to seek assistance from the English East India Company's Government in India fell on deaf ears. ⁸ In 1839, to put a stop to the recurrence of revolts, Zorawar annexed Ladakh.⁹ Thus, this large Himalayan principality, like many others in the Western Himalayas, passed under the control of the Lahore Darbar.

After Ladakh, Zorawar Singh turned towards Baltistan which is situated to the south-west of Ladakh. It was also known by the name Iskardu or Skardu, from the name of its well-known fort and capital. Having an area of about 10,000 square miles, Baltistan was ruled by about eight petty chiefs but Ahmad Shah, who controlled the central district of Skardu, was the most powerful ruler.¹⁰ In the first three decades of the 19th century, there was constant unrest in Baltistan, for there chieftains either kept quarrelling among themselves or remained at war with the King of Ladakh in the east and the ruler of Gilgit in the west.¹¹

Exploiting a domestic quarrel in November 1839,¹² Zorawar Singh invaded Baltistan. He took with him many leaders of Ladakh and their armed followers. The attack was two-pronged : the first detachment marched over the Chhorbat La and the second, led by Zorawar Singh, entered Baltistan from Kargil. The invaders had to face many difficulties. The snow-fall had closed the narrow paths which had been obstructed with trees by the Baltis. After a few weeks of sojourn in most inhospitable terrain, provisions in the Dogra army also ran short. Nonetheless, the invaders overcame all these difficulties, as also the stiff opposition offered by Ahmad Shah. The latter was deposed in 1840, and Skardu, like Leh, also became a part of the Lahore Kingdom.¹³

After conquering Ladakh and Baltistan, Zorawar Singh decided to conquer western Tibet. This territory situated to the west of the Mayum Pass, included the districts of Rudok, Gartok and Taklakot. In this area are also located the holy places of Kailash Parbat and the Mansarowar Lake. West Tibet was reputed to possess gold-mines; it was also said that various monasteries situated in western Tibet were quite rich. So, Zorawar Singh's first object was to acquire the monastic riches and gold-producing lands. His second object was to ensure the normal flow of shawl-wool from West Tibet to Kashmir *via* Ladakh. After the acquisition of Bashahr, Kumaon, Garhwal and other hill states by the British in 1815, shawl-wool produced in West Tibet had started flowing into these territories.¹⁴ According to

British records, the third object of Zorawar Singh's invasion of West Tibet was to establish a direct territorial link between the Punjab and Nepal on the other side of the Himalayas. The British policy-makers in Calcutta knew that after Ranjit Singh's demise in 1839, his grand-son, Prince Nau Nihal Singh, *de facto* ruler of the Punjab, was a strong protagonist of Sikh-Gurkha anti-British alliance.

In the spring of 1841, after full preparations and taking with him the dispossessed rulers of Ladakh, Baltistan and their armies, Zorawar Singh invaded West Tibet. His attack was three-pronged : the first column under Gulam Khan over-ran the Tibetan posts of Churit, Chumurty, Tsaprang and Tholing. The second column under Novo Sunnum, plundered Tashigong, and the third and main column under Zorawar Singh conquered Rudok and Gartok, the district headquarters of West Tibet. Here, the first two columns also joined Zorawar Singh and the entire army moved in south-easterly direction towards the Mayum Pass. In September 1841, the invaders conquered Takla-Kot, another important Tibetan post situated about fifteen miles from the frontier of Nepal. Zorawar's conquest of West Tibet was complete.¹⁵

Zorawar Singh's success had reached its high watermark and the capture of West Tibet was the pinnacle of his glory. What followed was somewhat in the nature of an anti-climax. The alarms sent by the Tibetan functionaries about the activities of the assailants had been heard in Lhasa; a strong army was sent to deal with the Dogras. Zorawar Singh could not get any help either from Leh or from Jammu or Lahore. Surrounded in the depth of winter, he alongwith many hundreds of his soldiers was cut to pieces on 12 December 1841 near the Mansarowar Lake. About 1,000 of his soldiers were made prisoners-of-war. Thus, the plans of Zorawar Singh to conquer West Tibet were shattered to Smithereens.

After this victory, the Tibetans not only expelled the Dogras from West Tibet but also helped the Ladakhis and Baltis to

throw out the invaders from their states. But a relief force under the command of Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu defeated the Tibetans in many actions and pushed them out of Ladakh. Thus, the Dogras foiled the attempts of the Ladakhi Raja and Leh officialdom to regain independence. In September 1842, the war came to an end when a Peace Treaty was signed between the Dogras and the Tibetans.

The terms of the treaty, it appears, were negotiated by the ranking officers of both the sides i.e. Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu from Dogra side and Kalon Surkhang and Bakshi Shajput from the side of the Tibetans, and before signing the agreement, no reference was made either to Lhasa or to Raja Gulab Singh. To understand the treaty provisions, it is necessary to look at both the Persian and Tibetan documents, for the Dogra treaty lists only the restrictions placed on the Tibetans, and the converse is true of the Tibetan version. The Tibetans guaranteed that :

We shall neither at present nor in future have anything to do or interfere at all with the boundaries of Ladakh and its surroundings as fixed from ancient times and will allow the annual export of wool, shawls and tea by way of Ladakh according to old established customs.¹⁷

They further undertook not to help any of Gulab Singh's opponents who might enter Tibet and also offered not to place any hindrance in the way of Ladakhi traders who might visit Tibet.¹⁸

The Tibetan document containing the guarantees given by the Dogras stated that in future perpetual friendship shall prevail between the Dogras and Tibet. The Ladakhi King and his family were permitted to stay in Ladakh provided they did not "indulge in any intrigue" against the Dogras.¹⁹ The Ladakhi ruler, if he so desired, was allowed to send the annual gifts, to the Dalai Lama and his ministers. For the promotion of trade between the two powers, the Tibetan document contained two provisions. The first postulated that "no restriction shall be laid on the mutu-

al export and import of commodities like tea, and trading shall be allowed according to the old established custom.” The second required Leh to provide transportation (*Begar* or free cooliage) and accommodation for Tibetan traders in Ladakh. This privilege was on the basis of reciprocity. The Tibetans were obliged to arrange for transportation and accommodation for Ladakhi traders whenever the latter visited Tibet.²⁰

The above mentioned treaty did not bind the suzerains of both the sides. Therefore, on 17 October 1842, a supplementary treaty with similar provisions was concluded between the Governor of Kashmir, representing the Lahore Durbar, and Lhasa officials on behalf of China. A version of this treaty was procured by the officials of the Raja of Bashahr when they visited the Tibetan Governor of Gartok in November, 1842. English translation of the treaty which is being reproduced *verbatim* below, was sent to the Governor-General by J. C. Erskine, his Political Agent at Subathu :

- Art, 1 : That the boundaries of Ludak and Lhasa shall be constituted as formerly, the contracting parties engaging to confine themselves within their respective boundaries, and each one to refrain from any act of aggression on the other.
- Art. II : That in conformity with ancient usage, tea and Pushum shawl-wool shall be transmitted by the Ludak road.
- Art. III : Such persons as may in future proceed from China to Ludak or from Ludak to China, not to be obstructed on the road.
- Art. IV : That no renewal of the war between the Chiefs of Raja Gulab Singh and those of the Viceroy of Lhasa shall take place.
- Art. V : That the above-mentioned conditions shall remain in force without interruption, and whatever customs formerly existed, shall not be removed and continue to prevail.
- Art. VI : It is understood that in signing the above treaty, the contracting parties are bound to a true and faithful observance of all the provisions thereof, by the solemn

obligations attached to the Holy Place called "Gengri to the Lake of Shanta Lari and to the Temple of Kojoon Cha in China."

It may now be mentioned that the *Chronicles of Ladakh* fully support the above versions. According to them "Conquered Ladakh" with the frontiers it had during the time of Ladakhi Kings, was annexed by the "high govenment"²¹ (of Maharaja Sher Singh's Sikh empire). Everything on the Tibetan side of the border remained under Tibet and the periodical trade missions, based on reciprocal obligations were to continue as in the past.²²

Thus from a close scrutiny of versions of the Peace Treaty described above, it is clear that it restored *status quo ante* : Ladakh's political subjugation to Lahore Durbar was made very clear. The traditional trade relations between Leh and Lhasa were restored and the ancient boundaries reaffirmed.

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2. *Ibid.* ; see also P.H. Egerton, *Journal of a Tour through Spiti* (London, 1864), p. 41; A.F.P. Harcourt, *The Himalayan Districts of Koolo, Lahoul and Spiti* (Lahore, 1874), p. 77.
3. Foreign Department Political Proceedings (hereafter quoted as F.D.P.P.), 1822, No. 63. (National Archives of India, hereafter abbreviated as N.A.I.).
4. A.H. Frenck, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II (Calcutta 1926), p. 250.
5. Malig or Malik was an official appointed by the Governor of Kashmir to Leh to collect the customary tribute.
6. When Mirza Haider Dughlat, Commander of Sultan Abu Sayed of Kashgar invaded Kashmir in the 1530s, the Ladakhis in Lower Ladakh offered stiff resistance; at Suru, Maulana Kudash, one of Haider's lieutenants alongwith many of his soldiers was put to the sword. For details, see Mirza Mohammad Haider Dughlat *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (A History of the Moghols of Central Asia) tr. E.D. Ross and ed. N. Eleas (London, 1895), p. 462.
7. Foreign Department Political Consultations (hereafter quoted as F.D.P.C.), 8 August 1838, Nos. 28-29; see also S.L. Suri, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Dafar III, translated by V.S. Suri (New Delhi, 1961), p. 282.
8. For details, see F.D.P.C., 20 December 1837, Nos. 7-8 (N.A.I.),
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MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S DEFENCE SYSTEM

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh's extensive empire, which was the product of his conquests, needed a sound system of defence. Not only he had to deal with smaller powers but also with big powers like the British and the Afghans.

Ranjit Singh's defence system had taken into consideration the geographical situation, the military power of his opponents in relation to his own, the advances in weaponry and the web of political relationships. His defence system reflected, for the most part at least, a deliberate and calculated response to the situation in which he found himself. In other words, his defence decisions involved a calculated choice from a number of perceived alternatives of that course of action deemed most likely to promote the security interests of the state.

Ranjit Singh's concern about the military machinery was natural as it was this machinery which made him a power and through which he could achieve his aim. Soon he realised that changes in the military organisation and mode of warfare were necessary. The efficiency of the British military force was both an incentive and pressure for Ranjit Singh to introduce changes in the then existing system. The desire of Ranjit Singh 'to establish sovereignty over the Sikhs'¹ could only be achieved by building up a strong regular force on the European model. The flight of Jaswant Rao Holkar before Lord Lake made him realise that for the defence of his empire, a regular trained force on the European lines was necessary. It is said that he visited Lord

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Lake's camp in disguise in 1805.² Holkar, in the same year, also suggested to him to organise his army on the European lines.³

The reorganisation took place in three important directions, namely, the structure, the equipment and the mode of fighting. The infantry and the artillery which were not considered important in the Sikh traditional mode of warfare, now came to be regarded as the mainstay of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's force. So far as weapons were concerned, he was always eager to introduce the better ones. Ranjit Singh's infantry was given the flintlocks which gradually replaced the matchlocks.⁴ The carbines were introduced into the Ranjit Singh's army by the French officers, Ventura and Allard.⁵ The carbines were in common use in European armies. As its barrel was much shorter than the musket or the matchlock, it could be easily and effectively used by the cavalrymen. Towards the end of his reign, he tried to arm his army with percussion cap guns.⁶ The percussion cap gun was superior to the flintlock as it was fired by means of a detonator, i.e., a cap containing an explosive composition.⁷ The artillery had different type of guns including howitzers and mortars. Ranjit Singh introduced changes in the mode of fighting also. With the increase in the territory of his empire and power, he found that pitched battles had to be fought more frequently. In addition, with the increase in the British interest in the north-west frontier, the Maharaja realised the benefit and necessity of changing the mode of warfare from the traditional one to the European mode of warfare in self-defence. A steady fire from guns or muskets was considered more conducive than irregular attacks of cavalry. He soon raised regular forces on the European lines and imparted training to them in the manoeuvres of a European army. He succeeded in raising the efficiency of his regular army upto the level of the East India Company's troops. He was unremitting in his care to keep his defence machinery in a most efficient state of equipment and training. In 1845-46, when its efficiency was put to an acid test during the war with the British, it was found equal to the occasion.

The Maharaja not only modernised his army but also adroitly employed it for the defence of his empire. His position, to begin with, was not very comfortable. His empire was sandwiched between two strong powers—the British on the east and the Afghans on the north-west. In addition, the petty chieftains in the east and the pro-Afghan tribes in the north-west could easily put the security of his empire in danger by supporting the enemies of the Maharaja. He also knew that it was difficult to fight on all fronts. Hence, he decided to resort to diplomacy to secure at least one of his frontiers. Ranjit Singh was very well aware of the British strength. He found it expedient to maintain friendly relations with the British with the view of safeguarding his frontier in the east.⁸ Actually, such a policy was essential for the defence of his empire. He signed a treaty with the British at Amritsar in 1809 which decided the respective spheres of influence of the two parties with the Sutlej as the boundary between them. This treaty not only secured the eastern frontier of Ranjit Singh but also gave him a free hand in the areas west of the river. After this treaty, in the west of the Sutlej he embarked upon a gigantic programme of conquests and consolidation. One by one he conquered Kangra, Nurpur, Chamba, Basoli, Jammu, Sahiwal, Khoshab, Bhimber, Punch, Multan, Kashmir, Hazara, Mankera, etc.

It is true that for some time Ranjit Singh had no problem from the British side. The British did not interfere in the affairs west of the Sutlej. It was due to the fact that in the immediate post-1809 period the British, like Ranjit Singh, were busy in consolidating their position in their region. During 1809-1831, both sides remained neutral in each other's affairs. Some of the adversaries of Ranjit Singh, like the rulers of Kashmir and Multan, approached the British for help and protection against Ranjit Singh but the British did not lend them any support. Similarly, when Ranjit Singh was approached by the Gurkhas through the Raja of Bilaspur in 1815, by the ex-ruler of Nagpur in 1820, by the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II in 1822, and by the

Raja of Bharatpur in 1825, he did not support them against the British.

However, Ranjit Singh did not depend upon diplomacy alone for the defence of this side. Soon after Metcalfe's departure in May 1809, Ranjit Singh before moving to Kangra gave orders to place the forts of Phillaur on the Sutlej, opposite Ludhiana and of Gobindgarh in Amritsar in the best possible condition for defence.⁹ The walls were rebuilt, and a deep ditch was added to the works of both the strongholds. Later in 1835, when the British quietly occupied Ferozepur, Ranjit Singh reacted by deciding to build a strong fort on his side of the Sutlej at Kasur.¹⁰

Ranjit Singh was always eager to occupy strategic places for the defence of his empire. As mentioned earlier, on the British side the Sutlej served as the boundary line. Similarly, he tried to acquire strategic forts in other regions adjoining his empire. Usually, he did not grab any area with naked aggression but gratified his ambition with chicanery. This he would practise by instigating the seeds of dissension between him and his intended victim. He would direct his emissaries to incite border tribes to commit border depredations on his territory, so that he may have an opportunity of making reclamations from them."¹¹ He was a realist in diplomacy and by playing off one against another, he achieved his aim.

In the hilly region of Punjab, Ranjit Singh was able to acquire strategic areas. He had realised the importance of the Kangra fort. When the Gurkha leader, Amar Singh Thapa, advanced towards Kangra in 1806 with a view to establish a Nepali kingdom in the entire Himalayan range, the ruler of Kangra, Sansar Chand approachad Ranjit Singh for protection. The Maharaja saw an opportunity to occupy the Kangra fort. He, therefore, demanded the fort as a price for his support. Diwan Mohkam Chand was sent with a force for this purpose. The task, however, could not be completed

till 1809. In that year the Gurkhas re-appeared after their defeat. The Kangra ruler again sought Ranjit Singh's help who sent Desa Singh Majithia alongwith Diwan Mohkam Chand. The Sikh forces cut off the Gurkha line of supplies and defeated the Gurkhas after two engagements.¹² Later, the Kangra fort was occupied by Ranjit Singh.

A year earlier, Ranjit Singh had acquired other strategic areas in this region. In 1808, he seized Pathankot belonging to Jaimal Singh Kanhiya. Sialkot and Sheikhpura, situated north of the Sutlej, were seized next and annexed to the territory of the Lahore Chief by Diwan Mohkam Chand. The Diwan also seized various other places on both sides of the Sutlej, from the Anandpur Makhawal valley downwards and confirmed to his master all the territories formerly belonging to Tara Singh or to Baghel Singh.¹³

After the capture of Kangra by Ranjit Singh, the Sikh influence became supreme in the hill states which were either annexed or brought under his suzerainty. Nurpur and Jaswan were annexed in 1815 and Datur was annexed in 1818 after the death of its ruler.¹⁴ In 1825, the Kotla fortress was also occupied.

Thus Maharaja Ranjit Singh brought all the big and small states of the hilly region of Punjab under his control. By establishing his control in this region, he became master of a strategic area and a natural boundary line of the hills that separated the Gurkha kingdom from his own. This gave protection to his empire from the Gurkha menace.

For Ranjit Singh, north and north-west areas were more important for the defence of the empire. The Afghans had attacked Punjab several times in the past and had established themselves in the strategic positions. Ranjit Singh had himself seen the invasions of Zaman Shah. This must have impressed Ranjit Singh of the necessity of having a natural frontier on that side of the empire. In addition, there were many small and big states in the west of the Indus, which could create problems. Ranjit

Singh realised that their support to the Afghans could prove disastrous for his kingdom. Fortunately, in the Afghan country, there was a civil war going on; hence the Afghans could not devote attention to Punjab. However, the situation changed after 1809 as the civil war in Afghanistan had come to its end. Shah Mahmud was established on the Afghan throne with the support of Fateh Khan, the Barakzai Wazir. The Wazir after the end of the civil war wanted to get hold of all those territories like Peshawar, Attock, the Derajat, Multan and Kashmir which only some years back were parts of the Afghan empire. This certainly was an alarming situation for Ranjit Singh. It is true that Ranjit Singh had desired territorial expansion but it was not the only factor that weighed heavily on him. Equally important factor was the security of his empire from the Afghans. He decided to occupy the areas having military value like Kashmir, Attock, Peshawar, etc., to block the way of the invaders from that side. He achieved his objectives one by one.

First of all, he decided to take steps to protect his empire in the north. He realised the defence-significance of Bhimber and Rajouri. They commanded the approaches to the Pir Panjal mountains. In November 1812, they were occupied by the troops of Ranjit Singh.¹⁵ The acquisition of these two places was preliminary to the occupation of Kashmir.¹⁶ Ranjit Singh knew that after the end of the Afghan civil war, the Afghans would try to re-establish themselves on all those areas which were lost during the civil war. The Afghan success in this would have proved dangerous to the security of Ranjit Singh's kingdom. Hence, he tried to acquire all those areas which were important for the defence of his empire.

In the same year, Ranjit Singh joined hands with Wazir Fateh Khan to invade Kashmir. This is a testimony of the fact that Ranjit Singh was not prepared to take big risks. Had he alone invaded Kashmir, he would have faced opposition from two sides—one from the Governor of Kashmir and other from the Afghans. Their simultaneous opposition could have seriously

endangered the security of his empire. He, however, tried to make the best use of this opportunity. He occupied Attock when Fateh Khan was busy in Kashmir.¹⁷ Later, he was able to defeat the already exhausted army of Fateh Khan at Chuch. This victory gave Ranjit Singh supremacy on the eastern side of the Indus. After this, Ranjit Singh subjugated all those Muslim chiefs who happened to be wielding authority in the areas between the Punjab plains and the Kashmir valley.

Ranjit Singh who was waiting for a suitable opportunity to occupy other areas of strategic importance, got one in 1818. The moment he learnt that the Afghan government had been thrown into confusion by the assassination of Wazir Fateh Khan, he embarked upon the conquests of Kashmir, Peshawar, Multan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and Dera Ghazi Khan.¹⁸ It appears that Ranjit Singh crossed the Indus as he considered that the line of Sulaiman mountains would be a better frontier line.

Ranjit Singh's hold on the west of the Indus was in a precarious condition. The Pathan tribes settled in this area were turbulent and could easily be won over by the Afghans. Hence, in the north-west frontier region, Ranjit Singh had to make proper defence preparations against both the Pathan tribes and the Afghans. He made such a strong defence in this area that later when Syed Ahmed declared *jihad* against Ranjit Singh and tried to capture the fort of Attock, he failed to do so. Similarly at the other places like Akora, Gidar Galla and Saidu he failed in his attempt to capture the m.¹⁹

After this incident, a change is seen in his policy of controlling areas on the frontier.²⁰ Almost at this time Dost Muhammad had also established himself firmly in Kabul. This factor too must have contributed towards the change in his policy. He decided in favour of replacing the system of indirect control by that of direct control. He established direct control over Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and Bannu. In 1834, Peshawar was also brought under his direct control. Ranjit Singh at this time also thought of expanding his empire in the Sindh region partly due to his security requirements. The

tribes of Mazaris living in the south of Mithankot used to make frequent attacks into Ranjit Singh's territories. They were secretly encouraged in this by the Amirs of Sind.²¹ For this purpose, he ordered the construction of a strong fort at Dera Ghazi Khan which could be of great value for his expedition in the south. However, due to the intervention of the British, he did not succeed in his attempt to occupy Shikarpur which lay on the major route connecting India with West Asia. Similarly, in 1837 Ranjit Singh ordered the erection of a strong fort at Jamrud in the mouth of Khyber Pass, with the view of bridling the tribes which guarded that terrific inlet, and of securing a passage to Kabul.²²

Thus the defence system of Ranjit Singh was based on the occupation of the strategically important areas and construction of new fortifications where they did not exist before and repair of those already in existence. Ranjit Singh also placed sufficient number of troops and guns in the strategic areas.

There is evidence to believe that the concentration of fortifications and garrisons was the highest in and around Peshawar, particularly along the Attock-Peshawar-Khyber route. At the end of Ranjit Singh's reign, his army consisted of 37,638 men of regular force and 28,003 men of irregular force.²³ He also had 188 guns and 280 swivels. Besides, there were about 100 artillery pieces kept in the various forts of the kingdom.²⁴ Around Peshawar, Ranjit Singh had posted 13,397 infantrymen, 7,212 cavalrymen and 383 artillerymen with 14 guns.²⁵ Keeping such a large number of troops was a necessity for the kingdom. It was, however, only after the Afghan attempt to attack Peshawar that the number of troops was increased. Peshawar's troops were kept for two purposes—first to guard against the Afghan invasions and secondly to secure the kingdom from the tribal invasions. Peshawar was surrounded by areas of many tribes like Mohmands, Bajauris, Khattaks, Yusufzais, etc. As mentioned earlier, he had specially built the fort of Jamrud to guard the Khyber Pass, The fort at Peshawar (Bala Hisar) was protected in the north by

the Kabul river and in the south by the mountains. At Hashtnagar, situated near Peshawar, he kept several troops. In the north of Peshwar, a few small forts existed on the other side of the Kabul river, to guard against the Bajauris, and the Mohamands. Ranjit Singh also took steps to protect the road from Peshawar to Attock as it could be the route of any invader from the Afghan side. He posted garrisons at Khairabad, Jahangira, Akora and Naushera. The fort at Naushera was strong and was meant not only for defence against the Afghans but also against the revolts of the Yusufzais and the Khattaks.²⁶ Farther in the east, the fort of Attock was situated at a strategic point on the left bank of the Indus.²⁷ A fleet of boats was placed at Attock for crossing the river.²⁸ Still farther in the east, in the Hazara region, which was important not only for the defence against the Afghans but was strategically important for the defence of Kashmir, Ranjit Singh had placed 2,992 infantrymen and 700 cavalrymen.²⁹ He constructed near Hazara, a number of forts on both sides of the Indus river and in the interior such as Haripur, Kishangarh, Nawasahr, Manshera and Srikot.³⁰

In the south of Peshawar, there lay the region of Kohat. Around this place there were the Afridis, the Orakzais and the Khattaks who often created problems for the state. In addition, this place was important for the defence of the state as it lay on the route to the Kurram Pass. He had placed mainly cavalrymen in this area.³¹ As the area was mountainous and the troops had to deal with the tribes, the cavalrymen were most suitable. In the south of Kohat, in the Bannu region, around the Kurram river, forts were established for the defence of the Tochi Pass. Still in the south, in the Tank territory sufficient number of troops were garrisoned for the defence of the Gomal Pass. In the south of Tank, at Dera Ismail Khan, posts were maintained for the defence of the kingdom. In addition to the fort of Dera Ismail Khan, where the strength of the garrison was 250 men with four guns, there were forts at Isa Khel (100 men with 4 guns), Sarwurgurh (75 men with I gun), Grang (150 men with 3 guns), Gudhee Dilasar Khan (50 men with I gun), and Dour Bunno (250 men with 2 guns).³²

In the south of Dera Ismail Khan, there lay the territory of Dera Ghazi Khan, which guarded the Multan region. There, Ranjit Singh stationed garrisons of Sikh troops. Important posts were at Sayyedwala and Sanghur. In case of need, troops could be sent from Multan. In Multan, he maintained garrisons at the forts of Khoodian, Mulseewanwala, Mankera, Kote Mithan, Hond Dajel, Rojhan, Tulha, Muzufferabad and Shoojabad. The total strength in Multan was 3,375 troops with 19 guns.³³ This area was given importance by Ranjit Singh as it was situated near Sind and the Amirs of Sind could join hands with the Mazaris to invade his kingdom. The Bolan Pass had further increased its importance.

In the Kashmir region, the same policy of maintaining the forts at strategic places was adopted. Some of the important forts were Jangurh, Noushebra, Rajouree, Bahoo, Jasrouta, Santa, Ramnagar, Shergarh and Hariparbat. In Kashmir, the Maharaja had maintained about 2,712 men with 66 guns and 28 Zamburaks.³⁴ This was comparatively a safe area as compared to the north-western area; hence lesser number of troops were maintained here.

In the east hilly region, forts at Kangra, Bhuttian Sala Sukhee, Roheiloo, Kotlapur, Teerah, Kotla, Philaur, Mujeethia and Raja Sansee were maintained. There about 1,640 troops with 26 guns and 4 Zamburaks were garrisoned.³⁵ This area had become safe after the defeat of the Gurkhas; hence the number of troops was smaller.

In the plains of the east, he could not maintain a large number of troops as he had entered into a treaty with the British. However, he took measures for the defence of the empire by maintaining properly the forts in this region.

According to the available records, Ranjit Singh kept largest number of troops in Lahore of all the three arms, i.e., infantry, cavalry and artillery.³⁶ Towards the end of his reign around Lahore, there were about 13,071 infantrymen, 10,895 cavalrymen and 6,769 artillerymen with 204 artillery pieces.³⁷ From there troops could be rushed to any area whenever there was need. These facts prove that Ranjit Singh had taken into consideration

the geographical position, the dimension of distance and the tasks of logistics, and the dimension of time and its military utility for establishing his defence system.

On the basis of the above-mentioned facts, it can be said that Maharaja Ranjit Singh took sufficient steps to defend his empire. He modernised his military machine and erected and maintained forts at important places. The western frontier was given much importance while in the east he tried to secure his position partly by diplomacy and partly by force. In the west, he had realised the strategic importance of the Hindukush and of the deserts of Seistan and Mekran. He wanted to conquer Kabul and Sind.³⁸ However, circumstances did not allow him to do so. He, in fact, was looking for a natural frontier. The British, who checked Ranjit Singh in Sind, themselves tried to acquire later the natural barriers of the Hindukush, Seistan and Mekran. This is a testimony of the fact that Ranjit Singh had a proper grasp of defence matters. His line of defence southwards lay from the Peshawar valley to Dera Ghazi Khan. The line of defence stopped like a tide almost at the first contour of the rough country.³⁹ In other parts also, he occupied all important positions for defence.

To sum up, his defence system had three main elements—efficient military force, effective occupation of strategic positions and adroit use of diplomacy. Diplomatically he settled the problem of the eastern frontier. In the Kangra valley, too, he used diplomacy to create divisions amongst the rulers to achieve his aim. In the west, also, he won over some of the tribal chiefs in the same manner. He made use of newly-won-over friends against his enemies. In the vicinity of Dera Ghazi Khan, he won over the Lagharis and the Nutkanis and used them against the Khosas, Gurchanis and Mazari tribes.

Ranjit Singh's defence system can be properly understood if he is seen as acting in a matrix of internal and external forces which affected his behaviour through pulls and pressures. The most obvious and intractable of the external forces which constr-

ained his freedom of action are to be found in the harsh realities of his environment. As compared to the British, however, his own power was weaker. Even the Afghans on the north-western side were a force to reckon with. These facts over which he had no control inevitably narrowed the area of his manoeuvres. He did try to make changes in the external environment through diplomacy. Where he could not do so, he tried to adjust himself according to the situation. He was also aware of the domestic constraints working on him and he adopted the best course out of the available choices. Thus, two approaches are discernible in his defence system which were interrelated and interdependent : first, the improvement of institutional arrangements, and secondly, increased reliance on systematic analysis to determine the most efficient alternative method and allocation of troops at the strategic positions.

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RANJIT SINGH'S RELATIONS WITH SANSAR CHAND OF KANGRA

S.C. THAKUR*

Soon after assuming the charge of the Sukarchakia Misal, Ranjit Singh started his career of conquest. He conquered and occupied Lahore in July 1799. At about this very time, in the lower Himalaya, Raja Sansar Chand Katoch gradually brought the petty hill chiefs under subjection. Having become the master of the strong fortress of Kangra, he arrogated to himself the paramount authority in the hills and systematically reduced the chiefs of the surrounding hills as his tributaries.¹ Having heard the fame of the English and afraid of the Sikh power, Sansar Chand was on friendly correspondence with the former. He coveted the fertile plains at the foot of the hills, Hoshiarpur and Bajwara, with ambitions to extend his influence in the Jullundur Doab. In 1801 he had made encroachments on the possessions of Sada Kaur in the suburbs of Batala. But soon a force was sent under Fateh Singh Ahluwalia to expel the Kangra army from the occupied village. Ranjit Singh himself arrived at Batala with a strong force. Nurpur was occupied and Sansar Chand retreated towards the hills.² In 1803-04 he twice invaded the plains but was defeated and driven back by Ranjit Singh who was then rising to power.

Disappointed in his designs on the plains, Sansar Chand turned his arms against Kahlur (Bilaspur) and annexed a portion of that state lying on the right side of the Sutlej.³ Sansar Chand's action against Kahlur aroused keen resentment among the other hill states and they formed a coalition against him and sent a

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united invitation, through the Raja of Bilaspur, to the Gurkha commander to invade Kangra. They also promised the aid of their own contingents whenever he crossed the Sutlej.⁴ It was the time when Sansar Chand was raising his new army of Rohillas under Ghulam Mohammad, the deposed chief of Rampur,⁵ In 1805 Amar Singh Thapa, the Gurkha Commander, crossed the Sutlej at Bilaspur and Jainri in Suket and was joined by the various contingents from the Hill States of the Kangra group.⁶ All these Rajas took an oath of fidelity to the Gurkhas on the understanding that the Gurkhas were to retain Kangra fort and leave them unmolested in their territories.⁷ Letters in the Chamba archives reveal that most of the states on both sides of the Ravi were ready to combine against Sansar Chand.

The first encounter took place at Mahal-Mori where Sansar Chand made a brave stand but was defeated. Maharaja Holkar, who was then in the Punjab, offered to send troops to oppose the Gurkhas but Sansar Chand declined the offer.⁸

The Gurkhas then advanced further into the country. Sansar Chand first took up a position at Tira Sujampur to harass the enemy but later sought refuge in the Kangra fort alongwith his family. The Gurkhas laid siege to the fort but all their efforts to capture it proved fruitless. For four years they plundered and laid waste the whole country. The unpleasant memories of the period are still fresh in public memory.⁹ A portion of the country was held by the Gurkhas; other portions including the fort of Kangra remained in the hands of the Katoch. Each party plundered the districts held by the other. The people harassed and bewildered fled to the neighbouring states and to the plains of the Jullundur Doab.¹⁰ Other hill Chieftains, incited by Sansar Chand's former oppressions, made inroads with impunity which aggravated the general disorder.¹¹

After the struggle had continued for four years, Sansar Chand was rendered desperate and seeing no hope of relief, applied to Maharaja Ranjit Singh for help, the Kangra fort being offered as the price of his assistance.¹² Twice, it is said, the

Maharaja set out from Lahore to Kangra but turned back, once from Sujanpur near Pathankot and for the second time from Nurpur.¹³ Sansar Chand being in despair opened negotiations with the Gurkhas to arrange a surrender, if permitted to leave the fort with his family.¹⁴ The Gurkhas required Sansar Chand to come out of the fort and take an oath at the shrine of the Devi as a proof of his sincerity. Sansar Chand commissioned his Wazir, Naurang to take the oath on his behalf and thus persuaded them to retire from the gate of the fort leading to the river. Sansar Chand secretly left the fort to the charge of some of his officers, and retired alongwith his family, disguised as peasants.¹⁵

Once outside the fort and in safety at Tira Sujanpur, he again sent a request for help to Ranjit Singh. In May 1809 Ranjit Singh marched from Lahore. Negotiations with the Gurkhas were then broken off. By this time the hill chiefs had all deserted Amar Singh Thapa, and were engaged in cutting off his supplies to compel his retirement.¹⁶

For nearly a month discussions went on at Jawala Mukhi between Ranjit Singh and Sansar Chand regarding the conditions on which help would be given, Ranjit Singh demanding the surrender of the fort before proceeding to expel the Gurkhas. To this Sansar Chand declined to agree.¹⁷ At last, an arrangement was arrived at when the two monarchs met at the temple of Jawala Mukhi; Sansar Chand's terms were accepted and the Maharaja with his hands over the sacred flames, took an oath to do him no harm.¹⁸

It is probable that neither of them was sincere in his engagement to fulfil the terms of the treaty. Sansar Chand is said to have played a double role through the whole of the negotiations. Notwithstanding his engagement with Ranjit Singh, he could not reconcile himself to the loss of the fort and entered into a treaty with Amar Singh, promising to surrender it to him, with the hope of keeping it against both the claimants.¹⁹

The Gurkha Commander on hearing of the agreement with

Ranjit Singh wrote to warn him against placing any reliance on Sansar Chand and asking him to conclude an arrangement for disposal of the fort and territory for a money equivalent, but his proposals were rejected.²⁰

On the advice of one of his officers, the Maharaja then sent for Anirudh Chand, son of Sansar Chand, from Tira Sujampur. On his arrival, he was received with all honours and was placed under the charge of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia in order to hold him as a hostage for the fulfilment of the treaty.²¹ Ranjit Singh then advanced towards Kangra in August 1809 and attacked the Gurkhas who were already reduced in number and decimated by disease began to retreat and finally retired across the Sutlej.²²

After defeating the Gurkhas the Maharaja advanced to the town of Kangra and with the consent of Sansar Chand sent Fateh Singh Ahluwalia alongwith Anirudh Chand into the fort to require its surrender.²³ Naurang, the Wazir in charge of the fort, declined to make the surrender to anyone but his master from whom he had received the charge.²⁴ The Maharaja then said to Sansar Chand, "If you value the safety of Anirudh Chand, you must go in person to the fort and order its surrender, otherwise Anirudh Chand will pay the price." Sansar Chand and Ranjit Singh then mounted an elephant and proceeded to the fort where they received a message from Naurang that Sansar Chand should enter alone. The Wazir then asked for a written order from his master, absolving him of all responsibility and requiring him to surrender the fort. Having done this, Sansar Chand took the Wazir by the hand and led him out of the fort, and the Maharaja with a few of his officers entered the fort and took its possession.²⁵ To Sansar Chand, he gave a written undertaking, guaranteeing to him the possession of the state, except the portions attached to the fort since Mughal times, consisting of 66 villages in the Kangra Valley. A Sikh garrison was then placed in the fort,²⁶

Desa Singh Majithia was appointed the *nazim* or governor of the fort and the administrator of the Kangra hills. He is said to have treated Sansar Chand with all honours and respect. Thus, with the cession of the Kangra fort to Ranjit Singh, Kan-

gra as well as all the states of the Jullunder group became subjects and tributary to the Sikhs. From that time Sansar Chand retired to Tira Sujampur. Once a year, he had to go to Lahore to pay his respects to the Maharaja—doubtlessly a galling duty for him; but he was always treated with honour.

As years passed, Ranjit Singh seems to have become less considerate to his once powerful rival and we learn from Moorcroft that Sansar Chand was subject to further reduction of power. From loss of territory and other exactions by the Sikh ruler, his revenues declined from Rs. 35 lakhs to only Rs. 70,000. Sansar Chand died in Dec. 1823 after a reign of 47 years. He was in many respects a remarkable man and has left a record in these hills second to none as a ruling monarch. His name is still a household word far beyond the boundaries of Kangra.

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SUBJUGATION OF THE NON-SIKH CHIEFS OF THE PUNJAB PLAINS BY RANJIT SINGH

VEENA SACHDEVA*

At the beginng of Ranjit Singh's reign the Afghans, the Kharrals and the Pathans had their possessions in the Bari Doab, the Sials and the Chaththas in the Rachna Doab, the Balochs in the Chaj Doab, and the rest of the non-Sikh Chiefs were prominent in the Sindh-Sagar Doab.

Ranjit Singh's first important conquest was that of Rasulnagar. The Chaththa ruler of Rasulnagar, Ghulam Muhammad, had, in 1783, been defeated and killed by Ranjit Singh's father Maha Singh,¹ but his son Jan Muhammad had somehow managed to escape to Kabul. In 1797, with the aid of Shah Zaman, he had recovered his possessions.² In 1798 Ranjit Singh led expedition against Jan Muhammad who was defeated and killed and the fort of Rasulnagar was conquered. Ranjit Singh granted a small *jagir* to his sons and employed them in the irregular cavalry.³

In 1803-04 Ranjit Singh marched against the Kharrals who had their territories in Gogaira and about 40 villages around Sheikhupura.⁴ Saadat Yar Khan II, the Kharral chief, fled for protection to Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan. But soon afterwards he was called back and was given proprietary rights over 40 villages as a vassal of the Maharaja.⁵

In 1806 Ranjit Singh cast his eyes on Fatehjang which was under Rai Muhammad Khan Gheba. He sent a force under Fateh Singh Kalianwala who defeated the Gheba chief and conquered Fatehjang. Rai Muhammad Khan recognised the

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Maharaja's suzerainty. He was granted Kot and Khundi *ilagas*, village of Sher Bahadur worth 500 rupees and a revenue-free grant worth 1,075 rupees a year.⁶

Nizamuddin Khan, the Pathan chief of Kasur had submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1801. He had been allowed to remain in possession of his territories but on terms of vassalage.⁷ In February 1807, Ranjit Singh marched with his force to occupy Kasur. After a month's fighting Qutubuddin Khan, the then Pathan chief, surrendered. Ranjit Singh granted him the territory of Mamdot on the other side of the Sutlej in *jagir* subject to the service of 100 horsemen.⁸ His nephew Fateh-ud-din, son of Nizamuddin Khan, was also given a *jagir* for service.⁹

In January 1810 Ranjit Singh marched against Fateh Khan, the Baloch chief of Sahiwal. The latter was a vassal of Ranjit Singh from the time of his father Maha Singh and was paying 12,000 rupees yearly.¹⁰ Fateh Khan held out, though he agreed to pay 85,000 rupees as tribute.¹¹ Ranjit Singh then marched to Khushab which was under Jafar Khan Baloch. He captured the fort after a short siege.¹² Ranjit Singh now came back and attacked Sahiwal, as Fateh Khan had failed to pay him the tribute. The town was invested by Ranjit Singh on 7 February 1810. The chief surrendered but upon his refusal to cede a dependency of Sahiwal, named Lakhnomat, he was sent in irons to Lahore and was kept in close confinement.¹³ In February 1811, however, he and his father-in-law were liberated and he was granted a *jagir* at Jhang worth 14,400 rupees, subject to the service of 50 horsemen.¹⁴

Ranjit Singh's next important acquisition was Pindi Gheb. It was held by Nawab Jodrah, whose father Amanant Jodrah was a tributary of Charat Singh Sukarchakia.¹⁵ In 1813, he rebelled by refusing the payment of tribute to Ranjit Singh, but was not able to hold against him, and fled to Kohat, where he died. Ghulam Muhammad, his son, succeeded him and made terms with Ranjit Singh. The latter gave him in *chaharam* the *ilagas* of Sil and Bala Gheb. He was to serve Ranjit Singh as a military *jagirdar*.¹⁶

At this time Diwan Mohkam Chand destroyed Shamsabad in the Salt Range on the pretext that the Awans had favoured and assisted the Kabul army which was investing Attock, Ranjit Singh, however, restored the estate to the Awan family and allowed Muhammad Nasim Khan Awan to rebuild the village.¹⁷

Ahmad Khan Sial of Jhang had submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1803. However, he had been allowed to remain in possession of his territories but only as a vassal.¹⁸ In 1816, he was summoned to the presence of Ranjit Singh. On pleading inability to pay *nazrana*, he was sent to prison while his possessions worth 4 lakhs of rupees were occupied. He was released after a few months and was permitted to enjoy a subsistence *jagir* of 12,000 rupees at Mirowal.¹⁹

Muqarrab Khan Gakkhar, who was holding the territories from the Chenab to the Indus, including Pharwala (his capital) and Dangali, had been, in 1767, expelled by Gujjar Singh Bhangi from his territories. Now the Gakkhars were left with Pharwala only.²⁰ In 1818 Amar Singh Thepuria, a commander of Ranjit Singh, seized Pharwala. In 1826 Ranjit Singh, allowed some proprietary rights to the Gakkhars.²¹

The Tiwanas of Nurpur were the vassals of Ranjit Singh since 1803.²² In 1817 Ranjit Singh sent a force under Misar Diwan Chand against them. The fort was taken after a short resistance. Ahmad Yar Khan, the chief, fled to Mankera. Returning after a year he regained his possessions. In 1818, however, he was again driven out. Ranjit Singh granted Jhawrian worth 10,000 rupees in *jagir* to Ahmad Yar Khan, subject to the service of 60 horsemen.²³

From 1803 onwards, Ranjit Singh sent several expeditions to occupy Multan which was under the nominal governorship of Muzaffar Khan. But the Sikh forces had to retreat everytime after having a large sum as *nazrana*.²⁴ In 1818 Ranjit Singh succeeded in subjugating Multan. Muzaffar Khan had offered a tough resistance but was killed along with his six sons. Sarfaraz Khan and Zulfikar Khan, his two sons, were taken to Lahore.

The former was granted Sharakpur in *jagir* besides cash allowance for maintenance.²⁵

In retrospect, we can see that out of eleven non-Sikh chiefs, the territories of four were annexed while seven of them were made tributary before their territories were annexed. All of them were treated with much consideration. Eight of them were granted service *jagirs* while three of them were given *jagirs* for subsistence. If we compare Ranjit Singh's treatment of the non-Sikh chiefs with the treatment he meted out to the Sikh chiefs, we notice a kind of uniformity in Ranjit Singh's attitude. The subjugated chiefs, whether Sikh or Muhammadan, were generally made vassals before their territories were annexed. In fact, his general policy was to claim suzerainty over autonomous chiefs as a prelude to the annexation of their territories.²⁶ He granted *jagirs* to the heads of dispossessed families and gave them jobs as far as possible in administration or in the army.

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EVOLUTION OF SIKH KINGSHIP AND RANJIT SINGH

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Guru Gobind is said to have declared on the eve of his death : *Raj Karega Khalsa, aqi rahe na koe.....* ('The Khalsa shall rule, no opponent shall exist'). This couplet now forms a permanent and inseparable part of Sikh prayer, but it is not a legacy from the days of the Tenth Guru. It was 'composed and first sung by the Khalsa during the days of Banda Singh Bahadur.¹ For the Sikhs being cruelly persecuted by the Mughal Government this was a declaration of faith in their destiny. The military enthusiasm and moral fervour behind this inspiring declaration were drawn immediately from Guru Goind Singh's teachings, but he did not specifically ask the Khalsa to establish a *Raj*.

Unlike other religious teachers of medieval India, Guru Nanak had a deep awareness of the political problems of his age : maladministration, insecurity, and the crippling impact of an unenlightened system of government upon the people. He condemned Ibrahim Lodi's failure to defend his subjects against the invasion of Babur : 'A kingdom that was a jewel was wasted by the dogs'.² But he did not ask his disciples to rise against the corrupt Lodi regime or to resist the new regime established by the invader. He did not interpret the commission which he had received from God to include acquisition of temporal power which was to be used for the protection of the people. God is *asur sanghar* (the Destroyer of demons); to Him—and to Him only—man must look for protection.

During the liberal reign of Akbar Sikhism, patronised by the

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Emperor, had no occasion for confrontation with the State. In a local dispute with the Muslims Guru Amar Das asked his disciples to suffer without protest. 'It is not proper', he said, 'for saints to take revenge'.³ The Gurus pursued a programme of peaceful expansion and consolidation of the *Panth*. The organizational structure created by Guru Amar Das was developed and strengthened by Guru Arjan. Under the latter the Sikhs became, to some extent, a self-governing community; the *masands* collected regular contributions to the Guru's treasury from the disciples who were scattered over extensive territories. The author of the *Dabistan*, writing in the mid-seventeenth century, observed that 'the Sikhs accustomed themselves to the government of a *masand* or deputy'.⁴ Taking a clue from this statement, Trumpp concluded that 'the Sikhs were gradually accustomed to a kind of Government of their own, and began to feel themselves as a firmly organised and strong party within the State'.⁵ Proceeding a step further, G.C. Narang remarks that 'a State, peaceful and unobtrusive, had been slowly evolved'.⁶ This is a highly exaggerated view, unwarranted by Sikh or Mughal source-materials. The Sikhs had neither the intention nor the resources to build up a 'State', or even to organize a system of government parallel to the Mughal system. In paying contributions to the Guru through the *masands* they followed the traditional practice of the Hindus who made offerings in cash and kind to their religious preceptors. Indubhushan Banerjee admits that 'to the Sikhs.....all these developments might have seemed perfectly natural and to have been inspired by nothing but purely religious motives', but he lays stress on the point that 'the Mughal State could not but regard the Sikh organisation as one of immense possibilities which might at any time become a rallying point of disaffection...'.⁷ However, neither Jahangir's *Tuzuk* nor any Persian chronicle, contemporary or later, refers to the Sikh *Panth* under Guru Arjan as a potential 'rallying point of disaffection'.

One of the 'developments' referred to by I. Banerjee was the fact that Guru Arjan was called *Sachcha Padshah* or 'True King'.

This term was not a novelty introduced in the days of the Fifth Guru; it had been used by the Sikhs with reference to their Gurus even in the days of Second and Third Gurus. Gradually terms such as *chhatar* (canopy), *takht* (seat, throne) and *darbar* (court), which were normally used in connection with ruling princes, came into use among the Sikhs in literary and oral references to the Gurus. These were, however, mere 'eastern euphemisms used in respect of all revered *faqirs*', and in the second half of the sixteenth century no political connotation was implied. In later times the idea that Nanak was a ruling prince in former birth seems to have captured popular imagination. The author of the *Dabistan* heard from the Sikhs that Nanak 'was in former times the Raja called Janak and united the dignity of a king to that of a saint.'⁸

Military training began in the days of Guru Arjan, presumably because he considered it necessary to develop some form of defensive capacity in view of the growing influence of the Naqsh-bandi revivalists in the closing years of Akbar's reign. This significant step towards a new orientation of the *Panth* might have been accelerated by the increasing influx of the Jats who were not inclined by tradition and temperament to suffer injuries like 'saints'. The maintenance of armed contingents, which Guru Hargobind adopted as his firm policy and recommended to his successor, Guru Har Rai, need not be interpreted as a symbol of political ambition. The issues involved in the Sixth Guru's battles against the Mughals had hardly any political importance.

There were, however, certain symbolical changes. Unlike his predecessors, Guru Hargobind wore two swords, symbolising *miri* (temporal power) and *piri* or *faqiri* (spiritual power). Steps were taken to give a visible form to this dual concept. A raised platform about 12 feet high, *Akal Takht*, was constructed. It resembled the raised platform on which the Mughal Emperors sat while giving audience. On the *Akal Takht* the Guru took his seat. He introduced the custom of beating the drum which

in the Mughal army was an 'attribute of sovereignty'. He created the nucleus of an organized army. But these apparent indications of political ambition had a special meaning in the context of Sikh ideology. 'In the Guru's house', the Sixth Guru said, 'religion and worldly enjoyment shall be combined; the cauldron to supply the poor and needy and the scimitar to smite oppressors'. There is nothing either in his recorded activities or in the sayings attributed to him to indicate any intention on his part to establish his political power in defiance of Mughal authority.

Taking a broad view of the confused traditions relating to Guru Tegh Bahadur's career one might say that his contact with different classes of people, particularly the peasantry, in connection with their grievances against the Mughal Government, created an impression in official circles that he was an organizer of rebellion. The Guru, however, did not look upon his sympathy for the oppressed people in that light. As Sohan Lal tells us, in reply to the charge of sedition during his interrogation in Delhi in November 1675, he declared that he was a *daryesh* and had nothing to do with the overthrow of the Government.⁹ Guru Gobind Singh's clear statement in the *Bachittar Natak*¹⁰ rules out any political purpose on the part of his father.

Guru Gobind Singh's basic idea on the relations between the *Panth* and the Mughal Empire is recorded in the well-known passage in the *Bachittar Natak*: '*Babe Ke Babur Ke*' Macauliffe's translation of the passage¹¹ is generally regarded as unsatisfactory. Two Sikh scholars¹² have recently offered alternative translation. The three translators agree on all material points. First, the house of Nanak as also the house of Babur are creations of God, *i.e.*, both of them derive authority from God. Second, their spheres of authority are separate; for the house of Nanak it is spiritual, for the house of Babur it is temporal. Third, this division of authority is to be understood and accepted by

the Sikhs, *i.e.*, neither house should encroach upon the other's sphere. Fourth, the house of Babur punishes those who disobey the authority of the house of Nanak.

The first three points clearly indicate the Tenth Guru's acceptance of the temporal authority of the Mughal Emperor. There is not the slightest hint of challenge to that authority, or of any programme for establishment of Sikh sovereignty, or of acquisition of temporal power by the house of Nanak. On the other hand, the role of the house of Babur in upholding the house of Nanak is explicitly recognized in connection with the Guru's struggle against the Hill Rajas.

The *Zafarnama*¹³ was written in an entirely different historical context. The Guru had suffered crippling military reverses; the principal local agent of the Mughal Government, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, had cruelly executed his sons. Written in the greatest crisis of his life, this remarkable letter condemns Aurangzeb as 'a perjurer, and a worshipper of pelf, and a breaker of faith' But it does not challenge his temporal sovereignty, nor does it claim for the house of Nanak anything other than spiritual sovereignty. The Guru says: 'Thou art proud of thy empire, while I am proud of the kingdom of immortal God'. Read as a whole, the letter is not a declaration of war against the 'breaker of faith'; on the other hand, it indicates the Guru's earnest desire to meet him. It shows no basic change in the idea of relationship between the houses of Nanak and Babur which the Guru had stated in the *Bachittar Natak*.

II

Banda was sent to the Punjab by Guru Gobind Singh with instructions to continue the struggle against the Mughal Government. 'The Guru', says a modern historian, 'gave him a drum and a banner as emblems of temporal authority...'.¹⁴ There is, however, nothing to show that the Guru directed him explicitly to acquire 'temporal authority' in the political sense

by establishing a Sikh State. In view of the abolition of personal Guruship the Sikhs needed a temporal leader who could organize military confrontation with the Mughal forces. This position was assigned to Banda. His initial military successes and the collapse of Mughal administration led to a new political development, *i.e.*, the emergence of a Sikh State under his rule.

This State had a territorial base in area extending from Karnal to Ludhiana. It had a capital at Mukhlispur with its 'Iron Castle' (Lohgarh). Banda assumed royal authority; but he struck coins in the name of the Guru. He introduced an official seal. He started a new era, beginning with the fall of Sirhind. He had neither time nor opportunity to organize a regular system of administration; but his intention to raise a new political structure on the firm foundation of the common people's support was clearly indicated by the abolition of the zamindari system.

Banda made a definite—and temporarily successful—bid for 'total sovereignty'. In this respect he was a daring innovator, for even Guru Gobind Singh had claimed toward the close of his life nothing more than 'the kingdom of immortal God', *i.e.*, spiritual sovereignty. The abolition of Guruship had prepared the ground for separation of the temporal leadership of the *Panth* from its spiritual leadership. Banda, the chiefs of the *misals*, and finally Ranjit Singh as Maharaja, created a tradition of temporal leadership which was not invested with spiritual authority. But the State which emerged from their military successes had its roots in the religious tradition. Banda's coins and seal emphasized the link between his political creation and 'Guru Nanak-Gobind Singh'. This aspect of the Sikh political tradition explains Cunningham's description of the system of government evolved by the *misals* as 'theocratic confederate feudalism'. In explaining the word 'theocratic' he says: 'God was their helper and only judge, community of faith or object was their moving principle...'. Such a system

of government is not a 'theocracy' in the strict sense of the term. Cunningham's view is merely a pointer to the religious zeal which created and sustained the Sikh State.

The political structure raised by Banda collapsed with his defeat and death, but the struggle against the Mughals continued under collective leadership. After the disintegration of the Mughal Empire the Sikhs found a more formidable antagonist in Ahmad Shah Abdali. In 1761 they occupied Lahore. Jassa Singh was proclaimed king with the title of *Sultan-ul-Qaum*, but coins were issued in the name of the Guru.¹⁵ The assumption of the royal title pushed the idea of Sikh sovereignty to its logical conclusion. The use of the Guru's name in the coin was in accordance with the precedent laid by Banda, and carried the same quasi-theocratic significance.

Between 1767 and 1773 the Sikhs practically extended their power from Saharanpur in the east to Attock in the west, from Multan in the south to Kangra and Jammu in the north.¹⁶ The Sikh State had acquired a firm territorial base. In 1784 Bussy wrote that the Sikhs were 'masters of the country which lies between Delhi and the empire of Persia'. But it was not a unitary State, and a Sikh Monarchy in the proper sense did not come into existence. The territories politically dominated by the Sikhs were divided into *misals* or confederacies. Each *misal* had a hereditary chief who exercised extremely limited control over hereditary subordinate chiefs (*misaldars*). The only formal link between the *misals* was the *Sarbat Khalsa* which met twice a year at Amritsar during the *Baisakhi* and the *Dewali*. Decisions were taken by a majority of votes and incorporated in resolutions passed before a copy of the holy *Granth* which were called *Gurumatta*. The system clearly bears traces of theocracy, democracy and feudalism.¹⁷ The resolutions of the *Sarbat Khalsa* represented the theocratic element. 'From the Sikh point of view, this grand diet of the confederation deliberated and resolved under the inspiration of Invisible Being'.¹⁸ Its proce-

ture was democratic in form, for every one present could express his opinion freely. In fact, however, matters were decided by a few leading *Sardars*. Forster found in this system no deviation from the democratic principle. The *de facto* leadership of a few *Sardars* was a military necessity, a 'self-preserving regard, nothing more.'¹⁹ The relations between the *misal* chiefs and the *misaldars* represented the feudal element, particularly in the case of the *misaldars* whose primary, if not sole, obligation to the former was to offer active co-operation in offensive or defensive military operations.

This is really an over-simplified account of the *misal* system. The closing decades of the eighteenth century brought substantial changes in the relations between the *misal* chiefs and the *misaldars*, but in the absence of critical investigation into the source-materials even tentative conclusions are not permissible at this stage. But it is not incorrect to say that each *misal* was a miniature Monarchy and each *misal* chief was a king exercising sovereign power subject to his liability to act in general conformity with the resolutions of the *Sarbat Khalsa*. In the *Bansavalinama* of Kesar Singh, a late eighteenth-century work, Banda is mentioned in terms implying kingship. Some Sikh writers attributed the epithets of *Padshah* and *Sultan-ul-Qaum* to Jassa Singh. Monarchy was the only form of government known in India for many centuries, and the Sikhs in spite of their attachment to democratic ideas could not think of a republican polity. The form of government established by Ala Singh of Patiala was monarchical in character although he was one of the cis-Sutlej Phulkian *Misal* chiefs. The ideal Sikh State contemplated in the *Prem Sumarag* 'is not republican in character; it is a benevolent monarchy in which there is no institutional check on the power of the ruler and his use of this power'. Indeed, 'the chapter on the ideal Sikh State presents only a slightly modified form of the Mughal government'.²⁰

There are clear traces of the monarchical form of govern-

ment in the *misal* system, as also in the Sikh thought of the eighteenth century. The loose confederation in which the 'little kingdoms' were united was a product of religious ideas and external pressure, *i.e.*, the Afghan threat. That pressure was considerably relaxed after Abdali's last invasion in 1767. Two shrewd English observers anticipated the dissolution of the *misal* system in the early eighties. Forster wrote in 1783 : '...we may see some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success and, absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy'.²¹ No more accurate political prophecy could have been made. The *misal* chiefs were 'associates' engaged in incessant mutual strife, they brought the 'ruin of their commonwealth' and one of them raised 'the standard of monarchy'. Forster ruled out the possibility of the emergence of another 'commowealth of republican character.' Warren Hastings also predicted the emergence of one-man rule. He wrote in 1784 : '...should it so happen that one man of superior capacity and enterprise should acquire but a few degrees of power beyond his nearest competitors, it will be easy to trace in the primitive defects of such a government the gradual and easy means by which the whole might be enveloped within his own supremacy'.²²

III

Ranjit Singh, the young chief of the Sukarchakia *misal*, became the master of Lahore, held previously by the chiefs of the Bhangi Misal, on 7 July 1799. Having firmly established himself at the traditional capital of the Punjab and thereby asserting his pre-eminence over the other *misal* chiefs, he issued silver and copper coins from the newly established mint at Lahore which were called 'Nanak Shahi'. On one side was inscribed the picture of Guru Nanak and on the other side were inscribed the words *Guru Nanak Ji Sahai* in Persian and Gurmukhi. 'On some other coins the

inscription was the same as on the coins of Banda and the Dal Khalsa when they first occupied Lahore'.²³ This ran as follows :

Degh-o-Tagh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat Bedirang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh

('Kettle, *i.e.*, symbol of means to serve the people with food, Sword, symbol of power to protect the weak and the helpless, Victory and unhesitating Patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh').

This inscription was more than a device to mark continuity in the development of Sikh sovereignty. It was a clear declaration that the sovereignty was vested in the Guru. The names of the First and the Tenth Gurus were specifically mentioned; but in view of the special feature of the Sikh conception of Guruship—and indivisible and continuous Spirit operating through the mortal bodies of successive Gurus—it would be better to say that the sovereignty of the new Sikh State was vested in that Spirit.

It is said that Dhyan Singh on one occasion told Ranjit Singh that, as he was the ruler of the State, he should not tie a cloth round his waist like his humble servants. The Maharaja asked, 'In whose name is the coin struck?' Dhyan Singh replied, 'In the name of Guru Nanak'. The Maharaja told him that the ruler was the Guru in whose name the coin was struck, and he himself was simply the ruler's humble servant.²⁴

He often used to say that he was but the *nagara* (war-drum) of Guru Gobind Singh. Throughout his reign he acted as if he were a mere instrument of the Khalsa for the assertion and execution of its political supremacy. He spoke of his Government as *Khalsaji* or *Sarkar Khalsa*. The impersonal designation of *Sarkar* was used to denote the source of his orders. Ganesh Das, in his *Char-Bagh-i-Panjab*, uses the title of *sarkar-i-a'la* or *sarkar-i-wala* for Ranjit Singh.²⁵ He refused to sit on

a throne. He was addressed in the early years of his rule as 'Singh Sahib' like the ordinary members of the Sikh gentry. His name was never inscribed on his coins. 'The theocratic zeal and democratic spirit were far too deep-rooted to allow any individual to do such a highly objectionable thing.'²⁶

The principle of monarchy had intruded into the Sikh political system at its infancy, in the days of Banda, despite the democratic traditions of the *Panth*. Ranjit Singh's political genius gave it an exalted form. He made extensive conquests, created a powerful army, and established a regular and, on the whole, a benevolent system of administration. But he built upon old foundations; he was much less of an innovator than Shivaji. In creating the Maratha Monarchy Shivaji had no predecessor; but the Monarchy of Ranjit Singh had predecessors in the political organizations built by Banda and the *misal* chiefs. The continuity between the Lahore Monarchy and the *misals* is too clear to be missed. Ganesh Das finds no difference between Ranjit Singh and other Sikh rulers except the former's more successful pursuit of his political aims. Every *misal* chief, and even some *misaldars*, were anxious to extend dominions (*mulk-giri*) at the cost of others (*mulk-sitani*).²⁷ Ranjit Singh inherited this traditional urge and, being conspicuously abler than the Sikh chiefs of the eighteenth century, 'wrested from Kabul the fairest of its provinces', as Cunningham says. Even in his coinage he imitated the model laid down by Hari Singh and Karam Singh in a coin struck at Amritsar in 1780.

The discontinuation of the *Sarbat Khalsa* after 1805 was a bold innovation in view of the fact that Ranjit Singh was not yet the master of even the whole of the trans-Sutlej region. Perhaps he was emboldened by the conquest of Amritsar which was the climax of the long rivalry between the Bhangis in league with the Ramgarhias and the Kanhiyas in league with the Sukarchakias. It was a landmark in the 'consolidation of the numerous petty states into a kingdom', to quote Cunningham's words.

It was also the prelude to the decisive political separation between the trans-Sutlej and cis-Sutlej regions and the political

bifurcation of the Sikh *Panth*, 'In the geography of Mughal India the cis-Sutlej Sikh country was not a part of the Punjab';²⁸ but with the capture of Sirhind by the Sikhs 'vanished the last vestige of Imperial control over that portion of the empire of which it was the headquarters'.²⁹ The attempts of Mahadji Sindhia and Daulat Rao Sindhia to establish their political ascendancy over the cis-Sutlej Sikhs led to no concrete result. From the religious point of view the Malwa Sikhs formed an integral section of the Khalsa no less than the Manjha Sikhs. Ranjit Singh's bid to absorb the cis-Sutlej region in his kingdom was, as Cunningham says, an attempt 'to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well-ordered State'. But his policy alarmed the cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs. The instinct of self-preservation, the urge to prevent the absorption of their principalities in Ranjit Singh's expanding kingdom, drove them into the arms of the English. If the cis-Sutlej region is looked upon as a part of the Punjab, it would be incorrect to speak of 'The Punjab as a Sovereign State'.³⁰ As the cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs were feudatories of the East India Company, the Punjab never became a sovereign State. Ranjit Singh could not unite the Khalsa; his political ambition clashed with the interests of those chiefs, and the English exploited this disunity. Loyalty to the Khalsa could not override the mundane aspects of the political situation. Perhaps Ganesh Das is not quite wrong in 'minimizing the importance of the religious faith and feelings of the Khalsa in motivating their politics and giving them a sense of solidarity and cohesion'.

Conquerors guided by the urge for *mulk-giri* attach little importance to geographical, racial and religious factors. Ranjit Singh belongs to this category. His kingdom, as Vincent Smith says, was not 'a traditional Indian territorial State'. It had no geographical, racial or religious homogeneity. It was a Sikh State in a special sense : the ruler was a Sikh, the State was based on Sikh traditions, and the Army, the dominant element in the State, was predominantly Sikh. But the non-Sikhs—Muslim, Hindus,

and Buddhists—constituted a majority of the population; and even though the government was not based on votes, the non-Sikh sections of the population had political and economic weight which could not be ignored. It was not a Punjabi State, for the Kashmiris, the Tibetans, the Frontier Pathans and the Multani Sindhis were not Punjabis. It is futile to speak of 'Punjabi imperialism' carrying Ranjit Singh to the heights of power. It was his own political and military genius and the military tradition developing since the days of Guru Gobind Singh which brought him success. Had there been any 'Punjabi imperialism' or 'Punjabi nationalism' the cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs would not have resisted Ranjit Singh's overlordship and sought shelter under the Company's umbrella.

The heterogeneous State created by Ranjit Singh was a familiar phenomenon in India, and he made it acceptable to different religious communities by his liberal policies in religious matters. Sikhism had been a catholic faith since its birth, and that aspect of its character had not been affected by the cruelties inflicted by the Mughal state on the Gurus and the freedom-fighters of the eighteenth century. Ranjit Singh did not rule as the instrument of a theocracy or in the interest of the comparatively small religious community to which he belonged. As Vincent Smith says, he did not establish 'a dictatorship of one community over another'; in his state 'there was an element of partnership with other communities'. He is said to have told Fakir Aziz-ud-din in connection with his purchase of a copy of the *Quran* : 'God intended me to look upon all religions with one eye; that is why he took away the light from the other'. The story might be apocryphal, but it gives us a clue to his success in uniting the three principal communities—Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs—in a common enterprise.

The Muslims became the ruling community in the Punjab in the days of Sultan Mahmud. The ascendancy of the Sikhs was a great blow at their traditional position, both politically and economically. Ranjit Singh's wise policy reconciled them

to the new political order. The three Fakir brothers—Aziz-ud-din, Nur-ud-din and Imam-ud-din—enjoyed his confidence. There were many Muslim officers in high posts. The Syeds were favoured in the matter of assessment. The reciters of the *Quran* received liberal payments. The Mughal system of State-grants to Muslim theologians and men of learning was continued. After the annexation of Peshawar the *Qazis*, Syeds, *Alams* and *Faqirs* were given *khilats* and *jagirs*.

The *jihād* in the tribal areas in the north-west, organized and led by the Wahabi leader Syed Ahmad, was not a protest specifically against Ranjit Singh's treatment of Islam and of the Muslims in his State. It was a protest against the principle of non-Muslim rule over Muslims irrespective of the nature of that rule. The aim of the Wahabis was to convert India from a *dar-ul-harb* to a *dar-ul-Islam*. This explains their hostility to British rule as also to Sikh rule. They wanted a true Islamic Government which would be headed by a Caliphate pledged to implement the 'laws of God'. Their ideal was explained by Shah Ismail in an unfinished tract entitled *Mansab-i-Imamat*. They were intolerant towards those Muslims who did not accept their interpretation of Islam. They alienated the frontier tribes by rejecting the traditional doctrines of the Hanafi School which had guided those tribes for centuries. Their *jihād* against the Sikhs was coupled not a manner *jihād* against the non-conformist tribes. The Sikh State, based on harmony of religious faiths and co-operation of communities, was entirely out of tune with the Islamic State which was the goal of the Wahabis.

Like other able and self-confident rulers, Ranjit Singh sought to build up a centralized State. It has been said that he 'so completely centralized everything pertaining to his government in himself that his disappearance caused not a vacancy but a void in which the entire structure of government was submerged'.³² This is an echo of the statements of some

contemporary foreigners. Alexander Burnes wrote : 'He managed all the concerns of his State from matters of the highest importance to the merest trifle without a minister or advice'.³³ M 'Gregor wrote, on the authority of Fakir Aziz-ud-din, that the Maharaja paid careful attention to all matters from the shoeing of a horse to the organization of an army.³⁴ No ruler, however industrious and autocratic, can rule a kingdom alone. It is well known that Ranjit Singh depended to a considerable extent on the Jammu brothers, Fakir Aziz-ud-din and competent officers like Mohkam Chand and Dewan Chand. In military matters he relied upon the organizational ability of his European officers. It is true that he left the old *jagirdars* weak and created a new nobility grateful to and dependent upon him. But there were a 'considerable number of vassals' over whom he exercised 'suzerainty' resembling that of the Mughal Emperors over their vassals.³⁵ Their existence put a definite limit to centralization.

Ranjit Singh was modest enough in certain cases to declare publicly that his decisions were open to correction on the basis of representation by his officers. In a *farman* addressed to Fakir Nur-ud-din in 1825 it was stated : 'if even His Highness himself should issue an inappropriate order against any resident of Lahore, it should be clearly brought to the notice of His Highness so that it may be amended'. In another *farman* addressed to Sardar Amir Singh and Fakir Nur-ud-din in 1831 they were asked to bring the matter to the notice of the Maharaja 'if His Highness, his beloved son Kharak Singh ji, Kanwar Singh ji, Raja Kalan Bahadur, Raja Suchet Singh ji or Jamaderji should commit an inappropriate act...'.³⁶ These *farmans* illustrate Shahamat Ali's statement that the 'entire direction' of the 'affairs' of Ranjit Singh's Government, 'foreign or domestic, is, according to the oriental saying, on the tongue of His Highness'.³⁷ But this 'pure despotism'—to use Shahamat Ali's expression—kept itself open to correction; it not only tolerated but even invited contradiction from subordinates. It is true

that the structure of the Government virtually collapsed after Ranjit Singh's death, but centralization was not its sole, or perhaps even the most important, cause. There is no reason to believe that the *jagirdars* could save the Monarchy if their wings had not been clipped by the autocratic Maharaja.

The Army, it has been said, was left 'too powerful for his weak successors to control'; it had a 'very strong *esprit-de-corps* which may be explained by the analogy of a trade union'.³³ This statement seems to reflect the idea propagated by ordinary English writers that, after the removal of the Maharaja's iron hand, the Army became a selfish and undisciplined rabble. But Cunningham, whose knowledge and sympathy penetrated into the heart of the situation, writes: 'The efficiency of the Army as a disciplined force was not much impaired, for a higher feeling possessed the men, and increased alacrity and resolution supplied the place of exact training'. This 'higher feeling'—the loyalty to the tradition of the Khalsa—explains the surprising fact noted by him, *viz.*, the Army 'looked upon itself, and was regarded by others, as the representative body of the Sikh people, as the Khalsa itself assembled by tribes or centuries to take part in public affairs'.

The traditional link between the soldiers and the Khalsa was not at all weakened in the reign of Ranjit Singh. The official form of salutation in the Army was *Waheguru ii ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*. The Khalsa tradition was expressed in the naming of the forts, *e.g.*, Gobindgarh. The Sikh Army was not an extraneous mercenary element like the Pretorian Guard in the Roman Empire. It was a People's Army, for the Sikhs were soldiers to a man. The Sikh soldier had created the Sikh State and was an essential factor in its government, expansion and defence. When he found its independence threatened by external attack and internal treachery, he was prompted by 'higher feeling' to sacrifice himself in its defence. Through the Army the common people stood against the deliberate betrayal of the Sikh Commonwealth

by its corrupt leaders after Ranjit Singh's death. Governor-General Hardinge—himself a distinguished military commander—realized that this was neither indiscipline nor political adventurism. He describes the role assumed by the Army as a 'democratic revolution'.³⁹ Through this 'democratic revolution' the essence of Sikhism proclaimed its survival even though the *Raj* of the Khalsa fell into the grasp of an alien power.

The survival of the democratic spirit in the Army is a significant testimony to the greatness of Ranjit Singh. It is generally said that he established a military Monarchy. It is true that he created the Sikh State through the Army and that throughout his career he attached priority to its needs. No other method could have secured for the Sikhs an independent and sovereign State in nineteenth-century India. That this State owed its origin, expansion and security to the Army was reflected in a statement attributed to him : 'My sword procures for me all the distinction I desire'. In the governance of the State, however, he did not use methods which were normally adopted by military Monarchies of the past or military dictators of the present century. He did not allow the Army to dictate policies or to dominate administration. He kept the Army confined to its proper sphere in a well-governed State. It was not used as an instrument of tyranny nor was it allowed to challenge the will of the ruler. At the same time, it was not forced, or even persuaded, to adopt a passive spirit, forgetting the duties and ideals prescribed for the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. It loyally served a single master who had established a Khalsa *Raj*.

The term 'military despotism' used by some European writers⁴⁰ to describe Ranjit Singh's system of government is misleading. The spirit of the Army, as also of the people, was not one of abject submission to a despot but of willing obedience to competent leadership. For Ranjit Singh it was no mean achievement to evolve a working compromise between the needs of a military Monarchy and the deep-rooted Sikh ideals of equality, fraternity and service to the *Panth*. The military Monarchy

was really a co-operative commonwealth. Instead of crushing the spirit of the people the Maharaja, who issued orders under the impersonal title of 'Sarkar' and preferred to be addressed as 'Singh Sahib', established a rapport with the common man. In a sense the Monarchy was a republic with a permanent president who never forgot either his peasant ancestry or his inalienable allegiance to *Panth Khalsa Ji*.

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4. *Dabistan*, tr. Troyer and Shea, Vol. II, p. 268.
5. Trumpp, *Adi Granth*, p. Ixxxii.
6. G. C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 37.
7. Indubhushan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, pp. 264-66.
8. *Dabistan*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 268.
9. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, *Daftar II*, pp. 48-49.
10. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 311.
11. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 305; I. Banerjee (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 189) follows Macauliffe.
12. Gopal Singh, *History of the Sikh People*, p. 277.
13. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 201-06; Gopal Singh, *Thus Spake the Tenth Master*, pp. 148-61.
14. Ganda Singh in *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. IX, edited by A. C. Banerjee, and D. K. Ghose, p. 230.
15. According to the *Khazana-i-Amira* Jassa Singh 'blackened the face of the coin with his name'. Browne says that he had 'several of these in my possession.' N. K. Sinha (*Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 73) says that the coin in the name of the Guru was issued in 1765. See J. S. Grewal, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 172.
16. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
17. See J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-100.
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19. Forster, *Travels*, Vol. I, p. 285.
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21. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 286.
22. Quoted in N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
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25. J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
26. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
27. J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, pp. 106, 175.
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31. J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-08.
32. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 190.
33. Burnes, *Travels in Bokhara*, Vol. I, p. 297.
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CONCEPT OF KINGSHIP IN THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS OF RAM SUKH RAO

(Summary)

J.S. BAINS*

Towards the end of Ranjit Singh's reign, Ram Sukh Rao wrote his three historical works in Gurmukhi: *Jassa Singh Binod*, on the life and exploits of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (1718-1783); *Bhag Singh Chandaruday*, on Fateh Singh's father; and *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, on the life of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Though these works cover a period of about a century, the last three quarters of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, they are especially useful for the study of Ranjit Singh and his times, because they were written with reference particularly to his reign.

Ram Sukh Rao's views and ideas about the concept of kingship are scattered over the three manuscripts, and when put together, present an interesting reading. These may be grouped into two parts: the personal attainments of an ideal king, and the conduct of government by him.

An ideal king, according to Ram Sukh Rao, has five pillars of strength: dauntless courage, noble lineage, wealth and wisdom, faithful ministers, and complete control over his senses. He rules over this world as a representative of Narayan.

As regards the functions of a king, his primary duty is to maintain peace and order, command forces, defeat enemies, conquer territories and organise administration. He must redress the grievances of his subjects. In the collection of revenue and taxes, he should abstain from greediness. He should adjust his expenditure according to his income. While administering

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justice he should be very sagacious and discerning. He should be tolerant towards various religious sects.

Ram Sukh Rao applies his concept of kingship to Fateh Singh who is depicted as a powerful and enlightened ruler, a good administrator, a brave warrior, a patron of arts and letters, God-fearing, tolerant, generous and charitable. In his relationship with Ranjit Singh, Fateh Singh is presented as a sincere friend and ally. Ram Sukh Rao lays stress also on the dependence of Ranjit Singh on Fateh Singh and on the prestige enjoyed by the Ahluwalia chief amongst the rulers of the region.

KASHMIR UNDER RANJIT SINGH

DR MADHVI YASIN*

Born on 13 November 1780, in the Sukarchakia Misal, Ranjit Singh was destined to carve out an empire out of the chaos and confusion resulting from the downfall of the Mughal empire, the Maratha bid to rule the Punjab, and the Afghan incursions into the Punjab. Thus the upheavals in the Punjab provided him a springboard. The division of the Punjab into tiny fragments whetted the ambition of Ranjit Singh to build a large state. This was the most cherished dream of his life. His dream was shattered by the adroit and superior diplomacy of the English East India Company, which foiled his plan of annexing the cis-Sutlej Sikh states. The Treaty of Amritsar, signed on 25 April 1809, made river Sutlej the southern boundary of his kingdom. The treaty sealed the fate of the united Sikh state, as the cis-Sutlej States were cut off from it; nevertheless it gave to Ranjit Singh a blank cheque to expand towards the north and north-west.¹ Thus the treaty provided him an outlet to advance at the expense of the Kabul monarchy, which held under its weak hold a large part of the northern and north-western India. Ranjit Singh occupied Kashmir in 1819 after two unsuccessful attempts.² Kashmir added a feather in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's turban.³ The fertile and picturesque valley was not only a financial asset, but it also extended the frontiers of his state to China and Tibet.⁴ He realised tribute from Ladakh, and enjoyed the trade privileges of his predecessor-rulers of Kashmir, the Mughals and the Afghans.⁵

The victorious troops of Ranjit Singh under the command of Diwan Chand Zafar Jang entered Srinagar on 15 July 1819. The Sikh rule lasted from 1819 to 1846 when the valley of

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Kashmir was handed over by the British to Raja Gulab Singh Dogra of Jammu. Under Ranjit Singh eight governors were appointed from 1819 to 1839 :

1. Diwan Moti Ram (1819-20), first term.
2. Hari Singh Nalwa (1820-23).
3. Diwan Moti Ram (1823-24), second term.
4. Diwan Chuni Lal (1824-25).
5. Diwan Kirpa Ram (1826-30).
6. Bahama Singh Ardali (1831-33).
7. Kanwar Sher Singh (1833-34).
8. Col. Mehan Singh (1834-41).

During the first term of Moti Ram, cholera broke out in an epidemic form taking a heavy toll of life. Moti Ram's mild but sympathetic administration could not streamline the administration.⁶

Hari Singh Nalwa inherited the after-effects of a famine, resulting in agricultural and economic stagnation, breakdown of law and order, suspension of trade and industry, and lack of rapport between the Punjabi bureaucracy and the Kashmiri masses due to language.⁷

He demonetised the Afghan currency as foreign, and issued new coins known as Hari Singh Rupia,⁸ commemorating the inauguration of the new rule.⁹ He directed his machinery towards the economic regeneration of the valley which was then on the verge of a decline.

One of his humanitarian measures was to liberate agriculturists from the bondage of *begar*. He restored them their freedom, personality and sense of security. The liberated peasantry directed their energy and labour towards their profession with dedication and sense of purpose.¹⁰

Similarly he encouraged shawl industry by grant of loans in cash and kind to shawl-weavers and making shawl-wool available to them.¹¹ He encouraged the cultivation of saffron. He reduced the government share, as a measure of incentive, to the growers.

He afforded them facilities to bring more saffron-growing soil under cultivation.¹²

He also tried to revive the declining paper industry by granting financial assistance to the workers. He encouraged them to manufacture varieties of paper. Unfortunately, the English East India Company stopped the purchase of Kashmiri paper, which was a great setback to the industry.¹³

He provided a fillip to the trade and commerce of the valley by abolishing all the hedges obstructing its smooth flow. He discontinued false and unstandardised weights and measures.¹⁴

Hari Singh Nalwa also brought about socio-religious reforms. The disabilities imposed upon the Kashmir Pandits under the Afghan rule in respect of their worship and dress were removed.¹⁵ The Hindu converts to Islam under the Afghan rule were allowed to return to their original faith. Many *gurdwaras* were constructed at Matan, Baramula, Kathidarwaza, Srinagar etc.—the places associated with the visits of Guru Nanak and Guru Har Gobind. New Sikh colonies were also established. Thus during the governorship of Hari Singh Nalwa an era of social and economic reforms was inaugurated in Kashmir. Wade wrote to Macnaghten that Hari Singh Nalwa had proved himself 'one of the most able and popular governors which the Sikhs have had.' His recall by Ranjit Singh in 1823 put out of gear the administrative machinery which he had put back on the rail with great labour.¹⁶

Diwan Moti Ram, during his second governorship, continued the agricultural reforms of his predecessor.¹⁷

During the governorship of Diwan Chuni Lal (1823-25) Kumedan Gurmukh Singh, a Sardar of strong views and rash decisions, was appointed as the Chief Administrator and collector of Revenue to keep a check upon the governor. Gurmukh Singh reduced the governor to a non-entity. He implicated Khwaja Muhi-ud-din, a respectable citizen in a cow-killing case. He treated the Khwaja most shabbily on false evidences. On getting reports against them the Maharaja recalled both the officers.

The next governor, Kirpa Ram (1826-30), though a god-fearing man, fell a victim to the charms of a boatwoman and the sylden surroundings of the valley. He earned a sobriquet 'Kirpa Shorin'¹⁸ for his indulgences in 'Char Chinar', an islet in the Dal lake. He had entrusted the whole administration to the care of one Sheikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-din. But the great earthquake of 1828, followed by a cholera epidemic, spoiled his work.¹⁹

Kirpa Ram was recalled by Ranjit Singh for his delinquencies.²⁰ The administration was taken over by Bahama Singh as a stop gap arrangement.

The next governor was the son of Ranjit Singh, Kanwar Sher Singh (1833-34). Ranjit Singh knew his weakness for wine and women, and therefore Wassakha Singh was appointed as his *diwan* to help him in administration.²¹ Wassakha Singh kept the Kanwar in the lap of wine, women, and revelry, and freely ambezzled the revenue.

Fed up with the maladministration and economic breakdown in Kashmir under Sher Singh, Ranjit Singh appointed a triumvirate representing the three denominations—Hindu, Sikh and Muslim—in the interest of good government. It consisted of Jamadar Khushal Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, and Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-din. But the experiment failed. A devastating famine and the ruthless extortion by the three administrators, especially Khushal Singh, reduced the Kashmiris to the position of destitutes and beggars.²² Khushal Singh was severely reprimanded for this by the Maharaja.

The total collapse and breakdown of the administrative machinery due to human failling and nature's wrath, made Ranjit Singh send a capable, resolute and discriminating administrator.²³ He was Colonel Mehan Singh. The Colonel acted effectively. He recorded through his officers, Pandit Ganesh Dhar and Qazi Mohammad Afzal, all the assets of the state including the religious places. This work was done after a lapse of 250 years. The record was a stupendous manual, designated as *Dastur-ul-Amal*.²⁴ It also contained the rate of taxes to be paid by the *ryots*,

businessmen, traders, and others to the Government.

He turned his attention towards the improvement of agriculture. The panacea was self-sufficiency in food. He imported food and other provisions from the neighbouring states of Punch, Rajouri, Bhimbar, Jammu and also from the Punjab to feed the starving masses.²⁵ He boosted the sagging morale of the cultivators by personal contact. He directed the revenue commissioners to grant *pattas* to the cultivators for the new plots of land. Hoarders of grain and black marketeers were ruthlessly punished irrespective of their caste and creed. The outstanding example is of Jagar Nath, the *mahant* or keeper of the temple, who was hanged on the nearest poplar tree for selling the grain in black.²⁶ His poultry farming in the rural development programme diversified occupational potential.²⁷ It also helped in providing food and cash to the people. Like Ala-ud-din Khalji he gave deterrent punishments to the stockists, shopkeepers, and weighmen for using wrong weights and measures.²⁸

Mehan Singh also made efforts to promote shawl-wool industry. Shawl-wool came via Ladakh from Tibet and Yarkand. Since 1834 the shawl-wool was diverted to Jammu by Raja Gulab Singh, and by the East India Company to Rampore and the Kangra Valley. Quite naturally the shawl industry in Kashmir felt suffocated. Mehan Singh, a fearless and just administrator, compelled Gulab Singh to allow shawl-wool to be diverted to Kashmir instead of Jammu.²⁹ The Colonel abolished many discriminatory taxes, e.g. the *Zar-i-Nikah* tax,³⁰ which induced the shawl weavers to return to their country. Availability of cheap food-stuff was another incentive to them. The scrapping of the private enterprise was a great boon to the weavers. The government take-over of the shawl industry gave much needed relief to the weavers.³¹

Mehan Singh established the *Dharmarth* Department under instructions from Ranjit Singh, for which the Maharaja granted one lakh rupees to begin with. The Maharaja also ordered that an extra levy be charged on the revenue payable to the govern-

ment and be deposited in the *Dharmarth* fund. Out of this fund regular grants in cash and kind were given to temples, *gurdwaras* and mosques.³²

Still there was one greater problem waiting for Colonel Mehan Singh to prove his mettle. It was the menace of *Galwans* or *thugs*. They had become a serious law and order problem. The travellers were not safe. A long heavy club with long rings was their principal weapon.³³ Khaira Galwan was their leader. These *thugs* committed dacoities and kidnapped beautiful girls and brides from the marriage processions. Colonel Mehan Singh, like Colonel Sleeman of the British India, caught them in his dragonet. They were given exemplary punishment. The *Galwans* were totally extirpated.

Unlike his Sikh predecessors, Mehan Singh was also a builder. He repaired the Shergarh fort,³⁴ laid out by the Afghan governor, Amir Khan Jawansher. He also laid out Basant Bagh. The present tall and stupendous chinar trees in the Basant Bagh project the towering personality of their planter.³⁵

But the destiny played its cruel trick. The great flood and the tribal uprisings diverted his attention from public utility projects to defensive measures. He stood the test of war, when he was challenged by the uprisings in Punch, Hazara and Muzaffarabad.³⁶ Colonel Mehan Singh, the last of the governors of Ranjit Singh, was undoubtedly the ablest of all.

It will be useful to point out some general features of Ranjit Singh's rule in Kashmir. The prime characteristic of Ranjit Singh's rule was secularism. *Dharmarth* fund established under his directive was for all people without any distinction of faith. Maharaja had given specific orders to his Commander Diwan Chand, when marching to Kashmir, to create an atmosphere of communal harmony.³⁷ Maharaja's wrath acted as a deterrent to save the Khangah Muhalla mosque from demolition at the hands of Phula Singh Akali.³⁸

The Shia-Sunni clash during the Muharram festival, when

the Shia community was persecuted, angered the Maharaja so much against the governor Bahama Singh for his dereliction to duty, inefficiency and unpreparedness to tackle the situation, that he was immediately recalled.³⁹ His standing orders were that the people of Kashmir should be made happy, and their happiness would bring to "his kingdom prosperity and felicity."⁴⁰

A salutary feature was the linking of the Kashmir valley with the Punjab and other parts of India. Trade, commerce, and intercourse which had come to a grinding halt since 1753, the year of the establishment of the Afghan rule, was geared up once again. The Gilzai Pathans and Durrani Afghans' monopoly over the exports had ended. The Kashmiris resumed control over their trade. They exported their products like shawls, woolen rugs, saffron, fresh and dry fruits, vegetables, *zeera*, papier machie articles, wooden boxes, wicker baskets, opium and wine etc., and imported salt, sugar, tea, chinaware, copper and brass, utensils, medicines, and spices, etc. The *rahdari* obstructions on the free movement of goods removed after the political subjugation of the hill states and Derajat in 1831, speeded up trade and commerce, and also provided the Kashmiri labour class avenues for employment. Kashmir became a trading centre. It was connected with Tibet and Central Asia *via* Ladakh; with the Punjab *via* Jammu, Muzaffarabad and Rajauri; and with Kohistan, Derajat, Peshawar, Kabul and Iran *via* Karna, Muzaffarabad and Hazara.⁴¹

The Kashmiri merchants became an affluent community with an international credibility. Moorcroft testifies that while he was in Kashmir the merchants from Delhi, Benaras and Kashmir, "tendered their services to advance whatever cash I might require for my bills on Hindustan".⁴² Many Kashmiri merchants had also settled in Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow, Agra and Benaras.⁴³ The Kashmiri traders were used by the East India Company as their spies in Kashmir, Yarkand, Bokhara, Kashghar and Russia.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself was very much interested in

the promotion of shawl trade—a rich source of revenue. When the Maharaja came to know that the Persian shawl merchants had started leaving Kashmir, he asked his favourite Kashmiri merchant, Samad Joo, to search for them and persuade them to stay and start their business again in Kashmir. The government in Kashmir was ordered to do its best in rehabilitating them.⁴⁴

To alleviate the sufferings of the people in Kashmir, Ranjit Singh issued directives to his top officials that all restrictions including the duties on the free movement of the cereals to Kashmir be removed forthwith. The corn merchants were directed to send their stocks directly. Those guilty of hoarding were put behind the bars.⁴⁵

For the good and efficient government in Kashmir, Ranjit Singh followed the Mughal practice of appointing two officers in the provinces, *nazim* and *diwan*, who would keep a watch on each other. With every non-Sikh governor of Kashmir, Ranjit Singh generally appointed a trustworthy Sikh *diwan* to assist him and also to keep a watch over him.⁴⁶

During the period of Ranjit Singh's rule, some notable progress was made in the field of literature. Pandit Ram Lekhari in 1824 compiled *Ekadashi* prefaced with the *Teeka* (commentary) of Japuji in Gurmukhi script. He also wrote *Ramayana* in the Gurmukhi script. The Pandits and Muslims of the valley continued their rich tradition of learning uninterrupted. Mirza Goulam Mehdi Mujrim's *Diwan-i-Mujrim* composed in 1830 is an excellent work of great historical importance portraying the social condition of his time. The *Masnavi* of Khazir Shah depicts the true social and economic picture of the times. Hamid-ul-Lah's *Rebujnama* is also the study of his times, and a valuable source of history of the Sikh rule. Pandit Birbal Kachru's *Majma-ut-Tawarikh* is a scholarly epitome of the religion and philosophy of Hinduism and Islam.

In the end we may say that Kashmir, during the twenty years of Ranjit Singh's rule, had its periods of prosperity and adversity

both. Some of the administrators like Hari Singh Nalwa and Mehan Singh were competent and efficient while some others like Moti Ram, Kirpa Ram and Sher Singh failed to discharge their duties properly. Human failures were intensified by natural calamities. So far as Ranjit Singh was concerned, he was always out to help the valley out of its difficulties. On the one hand, he never hesitated to penalize corruption, oppression and inefficiency; on the other, he established colonies of Kashmiris in the Punjab to help them in their days of adversity.

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19. G. T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and Iskardu*, Vol. II, p. 282.
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25. Birbal Kachru, *Majma-ut-Tawarikh*, f. 262 b.
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42. W. Moorcroft and C. Treback, *Travels in the Himalayan Province of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir*, Vol. II, p. 164.
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TRADE AND COMMERCE UNDER MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

DR BHAGAT SINGH*

According to Steinbach, the tranquillity, which prevailed during the later years of the rule of Ranjit Singh, stimulated traffic and a considerable commercial intercourse between the Punjab, British India and Afghanistan was the result. The Punjab had many trading centres which included the cities of Lahore, Amritsar, Peshawar and Multan. Amritsar was known as the commercial emporium of Northern India.¹ The Punjab also carried on brisk trade with Turkestan, Iran, Central Asia and Tibet.

Imports And Exports

Punjab which produced a variety of manufactures and agricultural products exported the same to different parts of India and Central Asian countries. The exports of the Punjab included grains, pulses, sugar, rice, ghee, oil, salt, cotton, manufactured silk, wollen fabrics, shawls, blankets, cloth, paper, gold and silver articles and enamelled works. The Punjab imported from Afghanistan, Central Asia and hill areas, dry and fresh fruits, groceries, Persian carpets and ornamental wood-work. From India and Europe it imported fine cotton cloth, ivory, spices, glass, copper hardware, gold and silver, etc.² The nobles and rich courtiers of the Lahore Durbar and the Punjab chiefs produced chandeliers, mirrors, painting and other curios from European countries and other parts of the world like Syria and China.

Horses of good breed were imported from Afghanistan and Central Asia. People of Turkistan bred horses for export to

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Hindustan. Apart from the military demands of the government for the supply of good horses, the animal was also commonly used for conveyance, pleasure-riding and racing particularly by the upper classes. Good horses always found a profitable market everywhere. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very fond of good horses.

Means of Transport And Transit Duties

The trade was carried on with the north-west and south-east by means of horses, camels, mules and donkeys. The old class of grain carriers, known as *vanjaras* engaged hundreds and thousands of oxen in their trade. Their migratory habits, their large stocks of bullocks, wagons and pack horses and their intimate knowledge of goods and routes of the country were specially suited to them.

But from one part of the Punjab to another all the five rivers afforded the readiest channels of transport and from the south to the western point of the territory of Sind, Cutch and Western India the produce and manufactures were transported by the boats of the Indus.³ Transport by the rivers was comparatively cheaper.

With such wide exchange of commodities the people had a good variety and choice of articles available to them at competitive rates and the flow of the manufactures and the produce gave government good income in the form of duties. According to Moorcroft, the total revenue from Kashmir amounted to thirty-six lakhs per annum.

The system of town duties, transit and custom duties prevalent in large towns in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh brought to his exchequer annually a sum of 24 lakhs of rupees. This included the town duties of Amritsar and Lahore farmed out to Raja Dhian Singh for 8 lakh rupees,⁴ the miscellaneous town duties and excise duties amounting to one and a half lakh rupees and transit duties from the banks of the Sutlej to Peshawar of 5 lakh rupees. Fiscal posts were set up at the main

gates of the towns and all merchandise which might pass through the gates was subjected to custom duties. No distinction was made between the articles of daily use and luxury. Duties were charged both on import and export goods. Transit duties were imposed on cotton, sugar and indigo, and excise duty was charged from the silks of Multan and the shawls of Kashmir. In case of costly articles the property could be insured or secured with 'beema'. In case of government property or things brought by the British or from one government to another, or anything that was considered by the government to be exempted from transit or any other duty, a *rahdari* was issued to the custom officers.⁵ *Rahdari* was an order⁶ issued to a competent authority of the customs department by the Lahore government not to charge any duties on certain articles from a certain place to its destination, both places mentioned in it. Town duties were farmed out to the highest bidders in the big towns.

Besides the transit and custom duties referred to above, the traders had to pay some other taxes called deductions which included amounts payable to commission-agents, weighmen, wholesale dealers' servants and to watchmen or persons engaged to look after the goods.

Trade Routes

During the period under study the main routes from the Punjab to Qandahar lay through Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan and to Kabul through the Khybar Pass. The caravans of traders travelled from Kashmir to Ladakh, Lhasa and Yarkand through the mountain-routes. Mohan Lal who travelled through the Punjab and Afghanistan during Ranjit Singh's time mentions the internal and external trade routes of the Punjab through which the bulk of the trade was carried on at that time. Despite the fact the traders along with their goods had to pass through the inhospitable jungle and hill areas, the roads were sufficiently free from the robbers and plunderers presumably because of the Lahore Government's special care to make the movements of the

goods from one place to another as secure as possible. Mohan Lal writes about five separate routes between Dera Ghazi Khan and Qandahar leading to the trading centres of Persia, Afghanistan and Turkistan.⁷ For commercial traffic there were six routes between Sind and Qandahar *via*, Rojhan, Badhni, Ghauspur and Shikarpur.⁸ Punjab did large-scale trade with Kabul, Kunduz, Balakh, Bokhara, Mashad, Herat, Sistan and Qandahar. Opium, tobacco, silk, shawls and cloth, specially muslin and indigo, were the main articles of trade with these countries. From Herat and Qandahar caravans carried the goods of Central Asia to Sind *via* Bolan Pass and from Kabul and beyond through the Khyber Pass to Peshwar, Bannu, Lahore, Amritsar and thence to Delhi. Merchants of the Punjab also maintained trading intercourse with Kashmir and Lhasa.

Trading Castes

There were two major classes of traders in the Punjab : upper middle class traders and lower middle class traders. The traders belonging to the first category were mostly settled in big cities like Lahore, Amritsar, Multan and Peshawar. Besides being very busy in their commercial activities they served as bankers to the traders and the industry in the Punjab. They were known as *Shahukars*. They can be split up into different caste-groups that functioned in different parts of the state. Khattris and Kirars plied their trade in Jullundur, Amritsar and Lahore districts. In villages they functioned as shopkeepers, grain-dealers and money-lenders. They were also active in trade in the districts of Rawalpindi, Hazara and Multan.¹⁰ The Kirars did not enjoy good reputation as traders. As businessmen and traders the Khattris were considered the best and Kirars the worst. The Kirars fleeced the illiterate and the ignorant villagers particularly the peasants and played every type of fraud on them as money-lenders and shopkeepers. Aroras carried on trade in the areas of Derajat, Multan and Lahore. Soods conducted trading activities in Rawalpindi. Banias, Pahari Mahajans and Bohras carried on their business in the eastern and southern districts of

the Punjab. Muslim Khojas were busy in trade in the districts of Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Jhang and Shahpur. The Prachas who were Muslims inhabited Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and Lahore. They mainly traded in cloth, skins, indigo and silk in the towns of Central Asian countries.¹¹ Soods and Mahajans had flourishing business in trade in the hilly areas of the Punjab. They also worked as money-lenders particularly for the peasant class. The Soods were very shrewd and prosperous businessmen. These classes of the traders and businessmen monopolised both internal and foreign trade particularly with Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

The lower middle class traders and businessmen included people who were engaged in such trades as the selling of meat, liquor, vegetables and cattle. Those dealers included *Banjaras*, cattle dealers, hawkers, Baluch camel-men and petty hardware sellers. Some professional classes could be added to this list as divers, *palladars* (carriers of grains in markets), makers of fire works, astrologers, stone-cutters, vendors of cooked food. Thus a variety of traders, big or small, were functioning in the Lahore kingdom during the period under study.

Main Trading Centres

During Ranjit Singh's time Lahore with a population of 75,000 was an important market for internal and external trade. John Lowrie called Lahore as the 'Delhi of Punjab.'¹² Articles from Lahore were exported to the various towns of the Punjab, India and many other countries of Central Asia and Europe. Lahore was particularly famous for its trade in shawls, cotton cloth, silk and weapons. Multan Silk was used in large quantity at Lahore. Lahore being situated on the Grand Trunk Road and having been the traditional capital of the Punjab, had assumed the dimensions of an international city particularly in the field of industry and trade.

After its conquest in 1805 Amritsar was converted into a big trading centre by Ranjit Singh. Before Ranjit Singh the tax-collectors tried to extract or squeeze maximum money from the

shopkeepers and traders of Amritsar. Misar Chhajju Mal was appointed by the Maharaja as the collector of taxes and octroi and custom duties for the entire town with the special instruction that only reasonable taxes should be charged. He was succeeded by Rullia Ram as head of the custom department. In the early years the Maharaja kept his treasury here for some time. A *taksal* (mint) was also set up here for the minting of coins.¹³ For the highly developed shawl industry raw material came from the Kangra hills and some countries of Asia. Baron Hugel writes, "Amritsar is a larger city than Lahore. The wealth of the whole Punjab seems collected in it, and the great merchants have made it their abode.....Amritsar is the most bustling of all the cities of the Punjab; in every street, the most beautiful productions of India are seen exhibited for sale."¹⁴ Ganesh Das Badehra, another contemporary writer and an employee in the Maharaja's Government, states, "Today there is no other city in the whole of the Punjab which is as large as Amritsar. The merchants from all countries have come to Amritsar and settled here. Many Khattris of Lahore have adopted Amritsar as their home."¹⁵ Walter Hamilton regarded Amritsar as a 'grand emporium of trade' for shawl and saffron of Kashmir and for various other commodities from the Deccan and eastern Parts of India.¹⁶

In 1833-34 Mullah Rahim Shah of Bokhara purchased Amritsar Shawls from Kabul worth Rs. 17,000 and sold them in Russia and in his country at Rs. 34,000.¹⁷ The Kirmani wool of Central Asia was brought to Amritsar through Herat and Amritsar. Shawls were carried to Persia through Herat.¹⁸ Jacquemont wrote in 1832 that Amritsar was throbbing with trading activities of Hindu Khattris and Banias, Muslim Khojas, Kashmiri Muslims and Afghans.

Multan was another famous centre of trade during the period under study. Sawan Mal, who became its governor in 1821, worked very hard for the development of this town during the next twenty-five years. It was a large town with a population

of about 60,000 of which two-thirds were Muhammadans and one-third Hindus.¹⁹ As referred to above it had a flourishing industry of silk and cotton. According to Masson who visited Multan in 1827, "There are still numerous bankers and manufacturers of silk and cotton goods. Its fabrics of shawls and *lungis* are deservedly esteemed and its brocades and tissues compete with that of Bahawalpur."²⁰ The main markets of Multan Silk were Amritsar, Bahawalpur, Khairpur (Sind), Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan which had communications with the traders of Shikarpur, Sind, Peshawar, Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and Bokhara. The merchants of Shikarpur resided at Multan and carried on trade with the Central Asian countries. The insurance of merchandise and its freight for silk trade between Multan and Amritsar amounted to fifty rupees per maund and the custom duties were additionally payable by the owner.²¹ In relation to trade Multan served as a link between India and Central Asian countries.

Wazirabad was a town with about 40,000 population. General Avitabile had spent a lot of money in decorating and improving the town.²² It was mostly inhabited by Khatri traders.

Peshawar was not a big centre for any particular manufacture. But having been situated on the highway to Kabul it served as an entrepot of commerce. The shawl merchants from Kashmir and fruit dealers from Kabul passed through it. Khatri, Aroras and Brahmins living in Peshawar controlled the local trade. They also served as money-lenders for the rural population.

Rawalpindi was a big market for grain and cloth. There were about 400 merchants of grain and *ghee* busy in local trade. The town had about 500 shops.

Dera Ghazi Khan was a big centre for the manufacture of cloth. The *lungis*, sheets, *gulbadan* and *pattus* were woven there. The cloth manufactured at this place was known for its durability.²³ Out of the total 1600 shops in the town 530 were dealing in cloth. Sugar-cane was also cultivated there. In 1838 about 200 maunds of indigo was sent from here to other

parts of the Punjab and India. The export of indigo earned for Lahore Government a revenue of 1,30,000 rupees,²⁴

Pind Dadan Khan was a big centre for the trade of salt which was exported to many parts of the Punjab, India and the neighbouring countries. John Lowrie writes that he met a string of sixty or seventy camels loaded with salt brought from Pind Dadan Khan.²⁵

Attock was famous for trade in timber which was brought from Kabul and Swat by the river Landa. A factory for making boats was also established there. The price of a boat ranged between Rs. 700 and Rs. 1,000.²⁶

Jhang was known for manufacturing coarse cloth. It imported various articles from Amritsar and Lahore²⁷ and sold them in the neighbouring areas.

Srinagar was the biggest centre of trade in the Kashmir valley. It had a flourishing shawl trade with the Punjab, India and many foreign countries. The Shia merchants of Persia traded with Tibet and Ladakh in Kashmir Shawls were exported to India, Afghanistan, Persia, China, Turkey and Armenia. Similarly there were many other towns as Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Sialkot and Bahawalpur which had specialised in the manufacture and trade of certain goods.

Trade in Rural Areas

Since the villages were more or less self-sufficient in their economy, most of the trade was done in the urban sector of the society. The village population had their own modest internal trade. There were tiny markets in the small towns or in the big villages. The pedalers and the moving merchants were commonly found in the village markets. At the annual or periodical fairs at the towns the retail merchants and small shopkeepers of surrounding areas obtained their new stock of goods.

Special cattle fairs on a very large scale were held at important places for the sale of every type of cattle, particularly horses, oxen, cows and buffaloes. People came from long distances

either to buy or sell their animals. The cattle were sold or purchased with the help of brokers who skilfully raised the prices of the animals, charging their commission from both the parties.

Banking and Currency

Big merchants did not find it safe to carry money on their persons from one place to another. The bankers issued *hundis* (bills of exchange) on their correspondents elsewhere for values received. The rich nobility and big merchants kept their money with the *shahukars* or bankers in the big towns as Amritsar, Lahore and Multan. Almost all the Sikh chiefs in the eighteenth century kept their money with the *sarafs* and *shahukars* of Amritsar or elsewhere and issued *hundis* whenever they were in need of money. Before Ranjit Singh set up his treasuries in his *parganas* and at the capital, he kept his money with the bankers of Amritsar. The bankers served the ruling classes, and also the *ijaradars* (farmers of revenue) as sureties.

Money-lending was also practised as a separate profession. The system of lending money on interest was very common. Bonds known as *tamasuks* were executed. The money-lending community flourished in their business, as they would lend money at a very profitable rate of interest which was generally between 12% and 20% annually. If a *shahukar* tried to charge exorbitant rate of interest the *Kardar* immediately intervened because the exploitation of *shahukars* might cause a decline in cultivation and consequently loss in state revenue. These *shahukars* and *mahajans* as money-lenders and bankers were extremely popular with all the upper classes whose extravagance and constant demand for money was so well-known. The lower classes had also to depend on the *shahukars* for their odd demands for money for the celebration of their social occasions.

The peasants generally borrowed money from the *shahukars* for the purchase of cattle, purchase of seed, payment of land revenue, purchase of food stuffs and to meet the expenses of marriages and other rituals.

Sometimes the village *shahukar* received the payment] of his money out of the surplus of the first good yield and avoided to exact usurious interest. He tried to function on the basis of mutual understanding sharing humbly the prosperity and adversity of the cultivators.

Various kinds of coins were in use during Ranjit Singh's period. There was an old rupee valued at ten annas according to Hindustani rates. This coin had an Emperor of Delhi's name on it. The transactions in the Kashmir shawl market were made in this rupee. The second coin of rupee was called Nanakshahi. It was valued at sixteen annas throughout the dominion of Ranjit Singh but was valued at $14\frac{1}{2}$ annas at Delhi. The troops and other officials were paid in these coins. There was a third kind of rupee called Hari Singhee that passed current in Kashmir. On one side of this coin was written 'Sri Akal Jiu' and on the other 'Hari Singh.' This was worth twelve annas. It was also known as small rupees. It was minted in Kashmir when Hari Singh was the governor of that province. There were many other rupees minted in other parts of India as Bahawalpur rupee, Ahmadpore rupee, Shikarpur and Khairpur rupee, Bijashahi rupee, Zamanshahi rupee, Murshidabad rupee, old Company's rupee, etc. that were current in the Punjab also. Their worth was determined according to the exchange rates fixed according to their monetary value.²⁹

The *sarafs* were allowed by the Government to manufacture and conduct the circulation of currency coins of small denominations. According to the Intelligence Report from Kashmir, "The bankers of the city have been ordered to keep not more than Rs. 40 worth of pice in their shops ready for sale. Formerly, 40 pice were sold for a rupee while at present the bankers have been directed to sell them at the rate of double that amount for the rupee. The old coin has been discontinued and a new one circulated. For the sake of a trifling profit to government the bankers have been made to suffer a severe loss. The old rupee was valued at eleven annas six pies but now it has been

reduced to nine annas six pies."³⁰ Nanakshahi rupee was valued at 16 silver annas and each anna valued at 4 copper *paisa*. Thus the Nanakshahi rupee passed current for 64 copper *paisa*. The *paisa* was further divided into two and a part was known as *dhela*. We come across many references to gold *mohars* but they were not in general commercial use. These were mostly used for hoarding purposes especially by the aristocracy. Generally the *mohars* were given as nazar on ceremonial occasions. Generally the value of a gold mohar of one tola varied in view of the quantity of the metal and its availability from Rs. 13 to Rs. 17.

The currency was minted at Lahore and Amritsar. The mint could coin 8,000 rupees a day. The cost of production of one hundred rupees to the government was 98½ rupees on account of the weight of the pure silver, thus allowing 1½ per cent for the expenses and the profit of coining. The annual profit to the government from the mint of Lahore was seldom more than 3,000 rupees.³¹ The distinctive feature of the currency was its monetary and not token value. The weight of the Sikh coins was heavier than that of the East India Company's coins of equal worth in British India. There was no token currency in vogue during Ranjit Singh's period.

Ranjit Singh's attitude towards Trade

According to Cunningham, "Ranjit Singh took from the merchants as much as they could profitably give."³² Every article was subjected to duty upon its entry to a town, again when it was taken to a shop and a third time when it was exported or taken out of the town. Still this did not lead to the discouragement of traders and merchants, and trade continued to flourish.

Ranjit Singh took special pains to provide protection to the traders from way-layers. He was always ready to pay his personal attention to the problems of the traders. As far as possible, the Government avoided interference in the routine affairs of traders. He encouraged the traders of the Punjab to trade with the other countries. It is said that the

Russian ruler wanted to have trade relations with the Punjab and he wrote to Ranjit Singh to that effect and assured welcome and security to the traders from the Punjab.³³ According to Pandit Debi Parshed there was no danger to the traders in Ranjit Singh's time. He provided them the necessary peace and security and in return they paid him reasonable taxes.³⁴

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2. Steinbach, *The Punjab*, p. 53.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4.
4. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, p. 65.
5. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Vol. V., p. 121.
6. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar IV, Part III, p. 24.
7. Mohan Lal, *Journal of a Tour Through the Punjab, Afghanistan etc.*, p. 406.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
9. B. J. Hasrat., *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh*, p. 397.
10. *Rawalpindi District Gazetteer* (1893-94), p. 126.
11. David Ross, *The Land of Five Rivers and Sindh*, pp. 88-90.
12. John C. Lowrie, *Two Years in Upper India*, p. 164.
13. Steinbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.
14. Baron Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab* (1845), pp. 391, 393.
15. Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 294.
16. *Amritsar Past and Present*, p. 131.
17. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
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19. Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, p. 94.
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21. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 398.
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24. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
25. Lowrie, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
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TRADE AND COMMERCE IN THE PUNJAB UNDER MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

JATI RAM GUPTA*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh introduced among his chiefs and nobles a taste for fine clothes.¹ He encouraged the manufacture of silk cloths at Multan by giving silk cloths to his nobles and courtiers.² According to Lt. William Barr, the pride and vanity of the residents of Lahore consisted "in the fineness of their apparel and beauty of their ornaments."³ As a result of this, there was a thriving business in silk, jewellery and other similar articles at Lahore.⁴ The manufacture of woollen cloths also got encouragement from the Maharaja. Their consumption was considerable and it was vastly increased by the large standing army of the Maharaja.⁵ Among the woollen manufactures the most important was the shawl of Kashmir. The yearly income from the shawl manufacture, exclusive of all expenses, came to 18 lakhs of rupees and it was entirely realized in kind.⁶ All this had a remarkable impact on trade and commerce of the country.

In 1837 the Maharaja made all efforts to encourage the merchants of Lahore and Amritsar to trade with Bombay by the Sutlej and the Indus rivers. He came forward to compensate them for any loss they might incur in the venture. He himself sent 30 or 32 boats loaded with wool *shakartari* (sweet potatoes), rock salt etc. worth one or two lakhs of rupees to Bombay by the Sutlej and Indus rivers from where pieces of *banat* and English chintz would be brought in return.⁷ According to J.D. Cunningham, he was much praised for the interest he took in commerce.⁸

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27. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
28. M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasantry in Prosperity and Debt*, p. 202.
29. *Foreign Department Secret Consultations*, 1 Nov. 1843, No. 19.
30. *Intelligence Report from Kashmir dated 18 August to 22 October 1836*.
31. *Foreign Dept. Sec. Cons*, 26 December 1846, No. 7.
32. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
33. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 422.
34. Dabi Parshad, *Tawarikh-i-Gulshan-i-Punjab*, p. 152.

Internal Trade

The internal trade, which flowed freely from one part of the kingdom to another, was mostly in the hands of Aroras, Banias, Khattris, Khojas, Gosains,⁹ etc. The Gosains were wholesale dealers. They were found in the hills of Kangra. They dealt in *charas*, s hawl wool and woollen cloths.¹⁰ Among the Sikhs the Bedis and Sodhis were the chief merchants and traders. One-fourth of the duties levied on goods was remitted to the Bedis¹¹ while the Sodhis were exempted from half of the tolls.¹² The Khojas, Muslim merchants, were whole-sale dealers in hides.¹³

There were two modes of conducting transactions—cash system and barter system. Cash system was universal in towns and cities. In rural areas, particularly in hills, the barter system was followed. Cotton cloths, coarse chintzes and blankets were brought to Kulu from the plains of the Punjab and were exchanged for opium and musk by the merchants of Kulu.¹⁴

As regards the cash system, Ranjit Singh introduced his currency in the year 1801. It was struck at Lahore and was called Nanakshahi currency. It did not bear the name and effigy of the Maharaja. It consisted of rupees and *paisas*. A rupee was made of silver and its weight was 11 *mashas* and 2 *rattis*. The *paisa* was made of copper and weighed 11 *mashas*. On the obverse side of the coin was inscribed the following couplet :

Dego-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat bedirang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.

On the reverse side of the coin were inscribed the date and the name of the mint.¹⁵ The Nanakshahi rupees were, some-time after, classified into *purana*, *chalan* and *chitta* rupees as they were distinguished from one another in respect of the time of issue. The Nanakshahi rupees coined from Sammat 1841 to Sammat 1869 were called *purana* or old rupees. Those struck from Sammat 1869 to 1879 were known as *chalan* rupees and those struck from Sammat 1879 onward were called *chitta* rupees. This classification according to the chronological order was

immaterial for the money-changers because in practice if the slightest discolouration took place on the face of the *chitta* coin, it immediately took a lower place in the scale of value under the denomination of *maila chitta* (dirty-white). If it was positively dirty, and much less bruised, it passed into the rank of *chalan*. If it was chipped or drilled in any way, it became a *surakhi* or hole-bearing rupee. The absurdity of these arbitrary distinctions was well known from the fact that an extensive business was done at Lahore by renovating the depreciated *chalan* rupees into *chitta*¹⁶ by surface washing.

The mints functioned at Lahore, Amritsar, Srinagar and Multan. Towards the close of his reign, the Maharaja closed all the mints, excepting those at Lahore and Amritsar. The mints at Lahore and Amritsar were supplied with silver bullion from Ladakh and Muthra and also with Tipu Sultan's rupees obtained from the Deccan and Bombay. When the Maharaja closed the mints at Srinagar and Multan, he "did not proscribe the circulation of all pre-existing coins."¹⁷

In addition to the Nanakshahi currency, there were many other currencies in circulation. There was the Company's rupee called 'Chehradar' or face-bearing. It was seen at Lahore for the first time when the camp of Mr. Macnaghten was pitched there. The sepoy of the escort were glad to exchange the Company's rupees for 15 or 15½ annas of Nanakshahi rupees. Subsequently, when the British government, agreeably to the 16th article of the Tripartite Treaty of 1838, remitted an instalment of 5 out of 15 lacs of rupees to Lahore on account of Sindh tribute, the market value of the Company's rupee went up and the shroffs began to accept it at a discount of 2%. The passage of British forces through the Punjab, British money transactions at Peshawar and the Commissariat expenditure in all parts of the Punjab raised the value of the Company's rupee very nearly equal to the Nanakshahi rupee.¹⁸

The silver rupee in use at Dera Ghazi Khan was called Shah Shuja rupee. It was one anna and four pies less than the Nanak-

shahi rupee in value.¹⁹ The Mehrabi currency in circulation at Leia consisted of rupees, annas, takkas and paisas. 60 *paisas* or 31 *Takkas* made one Mehrabi rupee. 37 Mehrabi *takkas* made a Nanakshahi rupee. One Nanakshahi rupee was equal to 1 rupee and 3 annas of Mehrabi currency.²⁰ One Nanakshahi rupee was equal to one rupee and three pies of Thatta currency.²¹ A rupee struck at Multan was called Chilki rupee. One hundred Chilki rupees were equal to eighty Nanakshahi Chalan rupees.²² At Rawalpindi Zamanshahi currency was in circulation. Besides the Zamanshahi currency, other currencies were also in circulation.

Weights and Measures

Like currency it is essential to know the different weights and measures in use in the kingdom. 8 *chawals* made 1 *ratti*; 8 *rattis* made 1 *masha*; 12 *mashas* made 1 *tola*²³; 100²⁴ Nanakshahi rupees made 1 seer and 40 seers made 1 maund which was commonly called Lahori maund.²⁵ 85 Mahmudi rupees made a seer and 42 seers made a maund.²⁶ At Dera Ghazi Khan Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk's weight was in vogue. 80 rupees of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk's currency made a seer and 40 seers made one maund.²⁷ At Leia 84 Mehrabi rupees made a seer and 40 seers made 1 maund.²⁸ In Thal 85 rupees made a seer and 42 seers made a maund.²⁹ A Multani *hath* was equal to one foot and eleven inches and two *haths* made a *gaz*.³⁰ A *Kos* was equal to about one mile and a half.³¹

Some Commercial Towns and Cities

Among all the commercial cities and towns in the Sikh kingdom, Amritsar stood on the top. Since its occupation by Ranjit Singh, Amritsar rose in importance and became a great mart and trading capital of the Punjab. Almost every commodity sold at Lahore came from Amritsar. Amritsar being a whole-sale market things were much cheaper here than at any other town or city in the Punjab. The merchants of Amritsar were wealthy and had mercantile connections with the principal towns and cities of India and also with Afghanistan, Bokhara, etc.³² Lahore was an important centre of trade in arms, jewellery and fancy cloths.³³

Gujranwala was a great mart of trade in *ghee* which was exported to Lahore and Amritsar.³⁴ Hoshiarpur was a centre of trade in white cotton cloths which were exported to distant places like Afghanistan.³⁵ Nurpur was a great thoroughfare where roads from Kashmir, Chamba and Ladakh met. The produce of Kashmir, Ladakh and Yaqand was bought and sold here. It was also a centre of trade in shawls.⁶³ Rawalpindi was the chief mart of trade between Amritsar and Peshawar. It was an important centre of trade in raisins, almonds, grapes and blankets. It was frequented by the merchants of Peshawar and Kabul. The dry fruits were much cheaper here than at Lahore.³⁷ Multan was a great centre of trade in silk fabrics, pottery and toys.³⁸ Madho Das Multani, Bhara Mal, Manu Malik, Roshan Das Multani, Sham Singh Multani and Narayan Das were some of the important bankers and merchants of Multan.³⁹ Peshawar was the entrepot of commerce between British India and countries north of the Hindukush. From British India it was accessible not only by land but also by the Indus which was navigable for boats of considerable weight. From the sea to Attock there was no obstruction whatsoever. The shawl merchants of Kashmir and fruit dealers of Kabul passed through Peshawar.⁴⁰ The chief articles of manufacture at Peshawar consisted of *lungis*, shoes, belts, *yakhdans*, *kullahs*, fans, mats, felts, pottery etc.⁴¹ Srinagar was famous for the manufacture of shawls all over the world. Arms, jewellery, leather-work, polished paper, and aromatic oils were manufactured here on a large scale and were of superior quality.⁴² These were transported to different parts of the Punjab. Pind Dadan Khan was celebrated for salt mines and copperware. Salt was exported on mules and camels. The annual income from the salt mines amounted to 18 lakhs of rupees.⁴³ Dera Ghazi Khan was called the 'Gate of Khorasan' because most of the trade of Khorasan with the Punjab was conducted *via* Dera Ghazi Khan. From Dera Ghazi Khan the road led to the Bolan Pass and was used by large caravans.⁴⁴ The notable in-

dustry of Dera Ismail Khan was lacquered turnery in wood. Here scarves were also manufactured.⁴⁵ Dera Ismail was one of the greatest marts on the Indus and an entrepot for the merchandize of India and Khorasan. Indian and English piece-goods were imported from Amritsar, Multan etc. The exports consisted of gram, madder, wool, ghee etc.⁴⁶

Custom Duties

Customs duties were levied on almost every article of every day's use, without any discrimination between luxuries and necessities of life. Fuel, gram, vegetables etc. were all subject to custom duties. According to Lepel Griffin, duties were levied under 48 heads. An article paid duty on being taken into a town, a second time on being taken to a shop and a third time on re-export.⁴⁷ According to Mohan Lal, when a merchant at Multan exported silk, he paid 8 annas per seer and 12 annas per seer when he sold it in the city; on indigo he paid Rs. 6 and 8 annas per maund; on English cloth at the rate of 7%; on broad cloth 10 annas per yard; on spices 8%; on cotton Re. 1 and 5 annas per maund; on raisins and other fruits of Kabul Rs. 5 to 6 per camel load, Rs. 5/—per horse and Rs. 2/—per camel.⁴⁸

It is generally belived that the duties were very high. According to Alexander Burnes, a tax of Rs. 60 was levied on each horse between Peshawar and Lahore and this almost suppressed the trade in horses.⁴⁹ The reason is that Maharaja Ranjit Singh wanted to improve the breed of horses on his own soil and for this purpose he had established studs at Patti, Dingah, etc. It was necessary for him to discourage the import of horses from Afghanistan, Khorasan, etc. The horses of Jhelum could serve his purpose well. He wanted to develop indigenous industries and did not want to import from foreign countries what could be produced in his own kingdom.

Use of Hundis or Bills of Exchange

The system of payment by *hundi* was in force.⁵⁰ The chief

of Jhang sent a *hundi* for one lakh of rupees which was given over to Diwan Chand by orders of Ranjit Singh.⁵¹ The *Vakil* of Nawab of Mankera told Ranjit Singh that a sum of Rs. 50,000 would be paid by *hundi* at Amritsar.⁵² Hugel on his journey to Kashmir in 1835 took a *hundi* from a banker of Ludhiana to a banker in Kashmir who told Hugel that he could take money from him when he required.⁵³

A *hundi* for Rs. 101/6 Nanakshahi Chalan rupees at Multan fetched Rs. 100 at Amritsar, 17 days after date. A *hundi* for Rs. 99 Nanakshahi Chalan rupees at Multan was worth Rs. 100 in Jaisalmer, 19 days after date. A *hundi* for Rs. 67 Nanakshahi Chalan rupees at Multan was worth Rs. 100 (Kabuli rupees) at Kabul, 31 days after date. A *hundi* for Rs. 95/12 Nanakshahi Chalan rupees at Multan fetched Rs. 100 (Shikarpuri rupees) at Shikarpur, 21 days after date.⁵⁴

Similarly Mr. Leech has given the rates of *hundi* at Rawalpindi for different places for the year 1837.

Price Structure

Prices form an essential feature of trade and commerce. It is very difficult to narrate here the complete structure of prices which prevailed in the Sikh kingdom at different places throughout the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A couple of examples will suffice to enable the reader to form an impression about the prices in the kingdom.

Prices at Phagwara in 1809

Wheat flour	I maund per rupee
Barley	I maund 10 seers per rupee
Gram	I maund per rupee
Moth	I maund per rupee
Moong	35 seers per rupee
Urd	35 seers per rupee
Gur	I maund 15 seers per rupee
Rice	20 seers per rupee. ⁵⁵

Prices at Peshawar in 1834

Wheat	65 lbs for a rupee
Barley	96 " " " "
Bara Rice	8 " " " "
Sheep	Rs. 2/- per head
Bullock	Rs. 12/- to Rs. 14/- per head ⁵⁶

Checking of Profiteering, Smuggling and Blackmarketing

Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed Bazar⁵⁷ Chaudharis in every city and town to regulate prices and check profiteering, smuggling and blackmarketing. In 1825 Ranjit Singh summoned Chet Singh, Qiladar of Lahore, and asked him as to why he had imprisoned the *banias* of Lahore. He stated that the said *banias* were raising the prices of gram day by day without any reason and justification. One day there was a clash between these *banias* and certain customers in regard to the sale of gram. There was a free use of swords and three or four persons were wounded. He went to the spot of occurrence and inquired into the matter. He found that the customers were quite innocent and that the said *banias* had locked up *kothas* (godowns) of grain and refused to sell the grain. He released them after giving them a warning to sell the grain at reasonable prices.⁵⁷ In 1834 the Maharaja was informed that wheat from the Government stores was selling at 17 seers per rupee, while the Mahajans of Lahore city were selling wheat at 13 seers per rupee. The Maharaja issued orders that the Bazar Chaudharis should be summoned and directed to see that wheat was not sold at less than 16 seers per rupee, failing which heavy fines would be imposed on the defaulters or their ears and noses would be cut off.⁵⁸ In 1838 the *shahukars* or merchants who had sealed their underground *kothas* (stores) of grain, made up their mind to dispose of their stores at high prices in view of the scarcity of gram. But they were forbidden to do so by the officials. The *zamindars* with sticks in their hands assembled on the site at the instigation of the officials and prevented them from selling their stores. Thereupon, the *shahukars*, leaving their stores behind, escaped to Ludhiana for safety of their lives.⁵⁹

II. External Trade

Most of the external trade was in the hands of Shikarpuri merchants. They conducted trade with Hyderabad, Bombay, Khangarh, Jaipur, Bahawalpur, Dajil, Mithankot, Shikarpur, Sangar, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Amritsar, Peshawar, Kabul, Qanduz, Khulum, Balkh, Bokhara, Meshed, Herat, Sistan, Qandahar etc. through their agents and made big profits.⁶⁰

Next to the Shikarpuri merchants were Lohanis or Pownidah merchants who were not as rich as the Shikarpuri merchants. They carried on trade between Turkistan and India by means of camels and ponies. They loaded their goods on camels at Bokhara and after a journey of fifteen days, reached Khulum. In Khulum they changed the camels for ponies, and then passing through Haibak, Khurram, Saighan, Bamian, Ghor, Dashi, Khinjan, Kaushan, Sokhta Chinar, and Chuukur they reached the city of Kabul. Here they sold Russian sugar loaves, lace, tea, fur, nankin, etc. From Kabul they marched and halted at Dand. Then passing by Kotawaz they arrived at Kharoti. After crossing the Sulaiman mountains, they followed the route along the bank of the river Gomul and reached Kotki. There they crossed the range of the mountains, called Ghoelara and entered Majingarh where they bought provisions. Starting from Majingarh they passed through Zaikhani and arrived at Darband where they left their families and divided themselves into three groups. Those who wished to go to Hindustan (Delhi), pursued their route through Dera Ghazi Khan, Khangarh, Bahawalpur, Bhatner, Hissar etc. The second group reached Multan through Kahari and Leia. The third group arrived at Amritsar *via* Dera Ismail Khan, Darya Khan and Asipur. If there was no skirmish with the Waziris on the road, twenty marches from Ghazni brought the caravan to Darband and 10 marches more to Multan.⁶¹ They entered India in October or November and after completing their commercial transactions returned to Bokhara after about 5 months in April or May.⁶²

Trade with Afghanistan

Great trade flowed between the Sikh kingdom and Afghanistan. Coarse and fine fabrics of Hoshiarpur, cotton lungis of Peshawar, chintzes of Multan, shoes, shields and tea were exported to Kabul.⁶³ Imports from Afghanistan comprised raw silk, Kabul leather, embroidered *choghas*, *pattus*, *postins*, horses, furs, drugs, spices, dyes like *girmiz* and *majith*, blankets, wool, fruits, both fresh and dry, like almonds, raisins, etc.⁶⁴ Amritsar, Peshawar and Rawalpindi were the great marts for the merchandize of Afghanistan.⁶⁵

Trade with Balkh and Khorasan

Fine cotton cloths of Hoshiarpur were exported to Balkh.⁶⁶ The merchants from Khorasan travelled to India throughout the year, following the route by Dera Ismail Khan and Mankera and crossing the sandy desert at Trimo on the road to Tulamba.⁶⁷ Taimurshahi and Shujakhani chintzes and indigo worth Rs. 5,50,000 were exported from Multan to Khorasan and Turkistan every year. In 1835 indigo worth Rs. 75,000 was exported from Dera Ghazi Khan to Khorasan. Dera Ghazi Khan exported coarse cotton cloths, chintzes, *bafta*, silk cloths like Taimurshahi, Shujakhani, Daryai, Gulbadan and Ilaichi (cardamom) to the value of Rs. 15,000 to Khorasan every year.⁶⁸ Dyes such as cochineal, *majith* and *Kusumbh* and drugs were imported from Khorasan.⁶⁹

Trade with Turkistan

The biggest item of export to Turkistan was indigo which did not grow in Turkistan. It was used to colour cloths dark blue. On an average 500 camel loads of indigo were sent to Turkistan every year.⁷⁰ Sugarcane too did not grow there. Sugar was sent from Jullundur,⁷¹ and Bara Rice from Peshawar.⁷² The inhabitants of Bokhara wore turbans of white cloth exported from the Punjab. They were about 30 yards long and one foot broad and were sold for a *tilla* each in Turkistan. They were

in universal use among both the sexes.⁷³ Tea was sent from Amritsar. It was in great demand at Bokhara.⁷⁴

Pashm or wool was imported from Turkistan. It was sold in Turkistan from $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 *tillas* per maund which was equal to 256 lbs of English weight.⁷⁵ Turkistan, especially Bokhara, supplied Multan with silk of three kinds, namely, *labiabi*, *charkhi* and *hoshkani*. These silks were purchased in Bokhara at Rs. 7, 9 and 12 per seer and were sold at Multan at Rs. 10, 12 and 15 per seer. One camel load ($6\frac{1}{2}$ maunds) of the first Kind of silk cost at Bokhara 440 *tillas* or Rs. 2837/8.⁷⁶ Skins, *kalabatun* (gold thread), *butkis*, *tillas*, *kanawaiz*, etc. were also imported from Bokhara.⁷⁷

Trade with Persia

The chintzes of Multan, Bara Rice of Peshawar and shawls of Kashmir were exported to Persia.⁷⁸ Carpets were imported from Persia.

Trade with Russia

The passion for Kashmiri shawls among the Russian nobles and gentry was so great that they paid Rs. 12,000 per pair.⁷⁹ The shawls of Kashmir were sent to Russia in considerable number every year. One of the most important articles of import from Russia was the qirmiz dye or chochineal. It was used to dye raw silk. It was brought from the sea-ports of India.⁸⁰ Russian leather, nankins and velvets were imported from Russia. Russian nankins were worn at Peshawar. Russian nankins were available at Lahore as well.⁸¹

Trade with Sindh and Bahawalpur

Multan exported carpets and silk fabrics to the value of Rs. 20,000 to Sindh every year. Multan also exported *khes*, gulbadan and chintzes to Shikarpur every year⁸² and imported pearls from Shikarpur.⁸³ The white cotton cloth of Rahon⁸⁴ and Hoshiarpur, famous for its durability, was exported to the territories, south of the Sutlej, mainly Bahawalpur.⁸⁵ Dera Ghazi

Khan exported madder to Bahawalpur where it was used to dye the fabrics.⁸⁶ The Punjab rock-salt was sent to Bahawalpur.⁸⁷ English cloths, cambrics, chintzes, long cloths, muslins and *nainsukh* worth Rs. 1000/- were annually brought to Dera Ghazi Khan from Bahawalpur. The merchants sold the said goods at a profit of Rs. 250/- after paying the town duties.⁸⁸

Trade with British India and Rajasthan States

The weavers of Hoshiarpur manufactured cotton cloths and muslins on a large scale. White cloths were sent to Delhi and white and red cloths were exported to Jaipur and Bikaner.⁸⁹ The Punjab rock-salt was exported as far as Delhi.⁹⁰

Behr Dalanu and Maujgarh, situated under the Sakhi Sarwar hills, had mines of Multani *mitti* or clay. It was used in Hindustan for washing hair. It was both white and yellow. It was purchased at the mines at the rate of 15 maunds per rupee. It was sent to Delhi where it was sold at Rs. 2 per maund.⁹¹ Dera Ghazi Khan exported indigo to Bikaner. It was bought at Rs. 55 per maund at Dera Ghazi Khan and sold at Rs. 60 per maund at Bikaner.⁹² The shawls of Kashmir and other articles of trade found way into British India *via* Harike.⁹³ The silk cloths of Multan were exported to British India *via* Jaisalmer and Bikaner in preference to the route of Sind.⁹⁴ Multan exported chintzes worth Rs. 50,000 to British India every year.⁹⁵ Horses, tobacco, ghee, hides, oils, safflower, wrought metals, etc. were also exported in considerable quantities every year.⁹⁶

English and Indian cloths, lakh, *jist*, *qalai*, copper and brass pots and *kenari* were imported into Multan from British Hindustan.⁹⁷ Locks, padlocks, bolts, screws, hinges etc. found ready sale in the Sikh kingdom and were imported from British India by land. Watches, cutlery, jewellery, china, and glass wares were imported from British India. But their use and demand was confined to the nobility and gentry of the Sikh kingdom. The general public had no taste for them. The forks, spoons etc. were not in demand as the Punjabis took their meals with

hands.⁹⁹ Pearls and precious stones were imported and were much prized by the nobility.

The merchandize were brought from Bombay by sea to the port of Bhaonagar. There the merchandize were laden on camels and brought to Pali by way of Palampur and Sarohi. From Pali the merchants took the goods to Shikarpur *via* Jaisalmer and *via* Nagpur to Amritsar.¹⁰⁰

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very much anxious and ambitious to promote trade and commerce between his kingdom and British India by the Indus. He, therefore, concluded treaties with the East India Company in 1832, 1834, 1838 and 1839. For the same purpose a treaty was also concluded with Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, the ruler of Afghanistan, in 1838.¹⁰¹

Trade with Tibet

Both Punjab and Kashmir sent to Ladakh shawls, chintzes, copper, tinned vessels and grain.¹⁰² One of the most important articles of import from Ladakh was the shawl wool. In Ladakh the woop was made into ropes, blankets, bags and woollen cloth for home use and wrappers for bales of merchandize. It was not considered fit for the manufacture of shawl. It was sent to Kangra, Chamba, Kulu, Kashmir and Punjab. About eight hundred loads were annually sent to Kashmir.¹⁰³ The wool of wild goat, called *Asli Tus*, was exported to Kashmir from Tibet and it was used for the manufacture of shawls.¹⁰⁴ The sheep of Tibet also constituted an item of trade. Being larger and stronger than other breeds, they were used as beasts of burden and sent to the hill states like Kulu, etc.¹⁰⁵

Tea was the next item of trade with Ladakh. Kashmir and Punjab imported it in large quantities from Tibet.¹⁰⁶ Borax was another important item of merchandize imported into the Punjab. It was brought through Ladakh from Bhot, sometimes by the Bhotias themselves but commonly by the people of Lahoul who carried it to Kulu and Chamba where it was refined

and then sent to the Punjab and Hindustan for the use of silver-smiths and braziers. The hilly states of the Punjab imported salt from Tibet for home consumption.¹⁰⁷

Trade with Yarkand

Indigo was the main item of export.¹⁰⁸ The imports from Yarkand consisted of felts made of lamb wool, dry sheep skins for cloaks, camelots fabricated from the hair of camel, shawl wool, fine tea, yambo silver, steel for chakmaks, boots, Russian leather, velvets, brocade, horses and drugs.¹⁰⁹

Trade with China

Tea was the main article of import from China. It was brought mainly through Lahassa but some of the fine tea was brought by way of Yarkand. It was brought in square lumps consisting of the leaves firmly compacted as if they had been wetted. They were covered with coarse, yellow paper, stamped with a seal in Chinese characters and packed in the raw skins of yaks. The package was an addition provided at Lhass, as the tea reached there in a package of grass.¹¹⁰

The Kashmiris preferred the Tibetan tea to the English and even Chinese tea, notwithstanding the absence of aroma and perfume. It was found in lumps of black colour. The tea which the English prepared under instructions of the Chinese at Dera Doon and Kumaon was much better. The green and black teas were both prepared from one and the same plant; differing only in the manner of preparation, the former requiring more time, i.e. three days, while the black tea was made in a day. In China both black and green teas were prepared in a single day. The Bokharians and Russians generally used the genuine Chinese tea.¹¹¹

Trade with Europe

The shawls of Kashmir were sold in France and England and the shawl merchants of Kashmir were always in communication with the merchants of these two countries.¹¹²

III. Means of Transport

The means of transport have a great bearing on the trade and commerce of a country. Goods were carried from one place to another chiefly in carts driven by oxen. A cart moved very slowly and took a lot of time to reach the destination. Then came the animals—asses, horses, mules, ponies, camels, elephants etc.

Ass was the common beast of burden, used to carry every sort of load. It was generally kept by a potter to carry earth to make pots. The horses and mules of Jhelum were strong and sturdy and were capable of carrying heavy burdens. In the south of the Panjab camels were equally serviceable.¹¹³ They were cheaper than mules. No carts were used in those parts.¹¹⁴ Mohan Lal took his seat in the pannier on the back of a camel and starting from Multan reached Shah Sher Ali in 6 hours, a distance of about 11 miles. Elephants were kept by men of status and were generally used for riding from one place to another. Rivers were also crossed on them. Ponies were in common use in the hilly areas and were used to carry loads. Porters were employed where ponies could not work. They worked in hills and carried heavy burdens on their backs.¹¹⁵ On his way to Kashmir from Pind Dadan Khan, Victor Jacquemont proceeded as far as Mirpur on camels. At Mirpur he substituted camels for mules to carry his goods. At Punch mules were replaced by porters.¹¹⁶

The rivers of the Punjab, though navigable, were not used for purposes of trade and commerce to any great extent.¹¹⁷ Boats were used to carry animals, human beings and goods from one bank of the river to another.¹¹⁸ On the river Jhelum there were 50 boats which were used to carry salt from Pind Dadan Khan to different parts of the Punjab. Some boats could carry 500 maunds of salt.¹¹⁹

All the cities and towns of the Sikh kingdom were linked with one another by roads. Though unmetalled, the roads were fit for wheeled traffic. In certain places the roads were excellent.

The road from Patti to Lahore, for instance, was in a very good condition. Knowing that the road was in a good condition. Moorcroft started from Hoshiarpur for Amritsar in the evening.¹²¹ From Multan to Ouraishi the road was sandy and covered with thorny bushes.¹²¹

Such being the state of roads, a traveller could reach Peshawar from Lahore, a distance of 250 *kos*, in a month. In spite of all handicaps and hurdles, certain it is that trade and commerce in the kingdom of the Maharaja was in a flourishing condition.

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57. *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa*, dated 3 August 1825.
58. *Ibid.*, dated 19 March 1834.
59. *Ibid.*, dated 21 March 1838.
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66. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 84.
67. A Burnes, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 130.
68. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 405.
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70. Steinbach, *op. cit.*, p. 53 ; Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
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73. *Ibid.*, p. 435.
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79. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-99, 435.
80. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 412.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
82. A Burnes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 400.
83. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 283.
84. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 55.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-99, 435.
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87. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 397 ; Steinbach, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
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89. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 84.
90. A Burnes, *op.cit.* Vol. I, p. 55.
91. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

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95. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
96. *F. D. P. C.*, 5 July 1841, No. 23, Steinbach, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
97. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
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112. Honigberger *op.cit.*, p. 181.
113. A Burnes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 289
114. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 398.
115. Honigberger *op.cit.*, p. 178.
116. Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, Vol. II, pp. 40-41.
117. A Burnes, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 105, 282-83, 306.
118. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-79.
119. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-29.
120. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 87
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THE CITY OF JAMMU AND ITS ECONOMY IN THE TIME OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

DR. FAUJA SINGH*

George Forster, an Englishman in the pay of the English East India Company, passed through Jammu in 1783 in the course of his overland journey from Bengal to England. Baron Charles Hugel, a German from Austria, did the same in 1834 on his way to Kashmir. But neither of them has left anything more than a few casual references to the city of Jammu.¹ The case with Major R. Leech, however, is different. He was the Ist Assistant Governor General's Agent N.W.F. and visited Jammu in 1837. Later he submitted a lengthy report to the Government of India², on what he had observed in Jammu. This paper is primarily based on this report, as yet unpublished.

The object of the visit will be clear from r. Leech's own words, given below³ :

'So desirous was Government in 1837 to obtain a discription of this place that Capt. Mackeson was desired to visit it on his return from Cashmeer. This I believe he was unable to effect owing to the suspicion entertained and difficulties thrown in his way by the Sikh authorities.'

This was the time when the British were getting alarmed by the expansion of Russian influence in Central Asia and in Iran. The Treaty of Turkomanchai (1828) had given the Russians a firm foothold in the civil and military circles of Iran. By the same Treaty Russians had also occupied some Persian territories in north Iran. As if to divert the attention of the Persians from their losses, the Russians were now prompting them for an attack

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on Herat. The British were afraid that if Herat fell to the invaders, the position of Afghanistan would become precarious. McNeill, British Minister to Persia, in 1836 had pointed out that a Russian regiment at his farthest frontier post on the western shore of the Caspian, had as great a distance to march back to Moscow as onward to Attock on the Indus, and was actually farther from St. Petersburg than from Lahore. Therefore, every little advance of Russo-Persian troops towards or into Afghanistan added to the British fears regarding the security of their Empire in India. In 1837 Capt. Barnes was sent to Kabul to negotiate a defensive alliance with the Afghan Amir Dost Muhammad to meet the Russian danger. Nearer home, the British had extended their influence to Sind by the commercial treaties of 1832 and 1830 and were already seriously thinking of converting their commercial influence into a political one by establishing a Residency there. Read in the context of all such new developments, the British anxiety to obtain information about Jammu acquires great significance. This shows that the idea of separating the hills from the plains of the kingdom of Lahore, on what so much stress was subsequently laid by Lord Ellenborough and Lord Hardinge, had entered into the thinking of British statesmen even when Ranjit Singh was alive.⁵

The survey of Jammu conducted by Mr. Leech personally or under his direction by Narsing Dass of Shikarpur is of a fairly comprehensive nature. It furnishes information on a number of aspects of life in Jammu, such as the fort, the palaces of Raja Gulab Singh, Raja Dhian Singh and Raja Suchet Singh, the city of Jammu, number of troops stationed there, professions, number of shops both in the town and the cantonment, currency, weights, measures, bills of exchange, current prices, amount of productions, import and export duties, trade and commerce, revenue of the city, revenue of the dependancies of Jammu,⁶ and the lands held by the Jamwal Brothers both in *jagir* and farm. In brief, it is a vast amount of data collected in the survey, and though it is difficult to admit the accuracy of everything given here, its

importance for the study of the economy of the Punjab under Ranjit Singh cannot be denied or underrated. However, here only that part of data will be taken note of as is relevant to the city of Jammu and its economy.

The Fort, Palaces, Garrisons and Town

As goes the account, Jammu had a strong fort situated at the extremity of a range of hills and overhanging the river Tavi, a tributary of the Chenab. The fort had a great command over the neighbouring country without being commanded from other points of the range in its rear.⁷ It was surrounded by a dense jungle. The ascent to it was everywhere impracticable on account of the rugged nature of the hill on which it stood, except by 570 rude steps. Its resemblance to the forts of Kalinjar and Ajegarh in Bundelkhand was noted. The fort was so situated as effectually to command the road leading to Kashmir *via* Poor Mandal. It had 6 towers or bastions, the largest of which had 6 embrasures. The gateway was facing the south. There were 8 garrison guns, 6 of which were mounted on the walls and 103 swivel guns. The magazine contained about 2000 maunds of ammunition and 4000 maunds of iron. The fort contained 2 tanks and 10 granaries. The usual garrison had a strength of 450 men. There was also one well for the supply of water at the foot of the steps leading up to the gateway of the fort.

Near the town of Jammu were three palaces belonging to the Dogra brothers, Rajas Dhian Singh, Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh. The palaces were protected by 10 guns planted in front of them. The guard usually consisted of 150 men including 60 golandaz (gunmen), each of whom was paid Rs. 6 p.m. The guard in 1837 comprised 5 Pathans from Hearat, 60 Dogras, 30 Rohillas, 30 Sikhs and 25 Punjabi Musalmans. The stables attached to the palaces had about 80 fine saddle horses. Inside the palaces there were 50 guns, 10 or 11 forges and 50 camel swivel guns.

Baron Hugel writes that Gulab Singh's palace was "a

pretry white edifice",⁸ built about 150 feet above the river Tavi.

The town of Jammu was on the top of an eminence about 150 feet above the level of the Tavi and somewhat higher than the level of the fort. Hugel's description of the town is rather dismal and is summed up in one sentence⁹: "From Bala a spacious flight of steps leads down to the river and another takes the passenger up to Jammu, where, in every direction, the sight of falling ruins and decaying edifices bespeaks its former greatness¹⁰ and present poverty; while the indispensable bazar fills up a large vacant space between the palace and a mass of dilapidated buildings." May be that this is a prejudiced view of the place because the writer did not receive a good reception there. Any-how, the view is not wholly confirmed from the account of the town given by Leech,

The population of the town at that time is not exactly known. The Punjab census of 1854¹¹ puts it at 10,000. This was only a rough and ready affair and cannot be accepted as anything more than a broad estimate. The census of 1881 which is much more dependable gives its population as 8,000¹²; Population of Jammu in the time of Ranjit Singh could not be more than 8,000; rather it might be much less, ranging possibly between five and six thousand.

Baron Hugel speaks of a garden of Raja Gulab Singh, situated on the bank of the Tavi, at the foot of the hill. It was prettily laid out in the Indian taste, says he, with a pavilion in the centre where a variety of animals were kept in separate cases, some on account of their rarity, others for the purpose of being reared.¹³

The river Tavi flowing at the foot of the hills on which stood the city of Jammu gave only slight protection to it except when it was in spate. It rose among the mountains of the outer Himalayan range, 40 miles to the north and fell into the Chenab about 20 miles to the south-west. During the rainy months the

current of its water was so rapid that it was not easily fordible but at other times when the water level was low, people could cross it without much difficulty. Normally there was no bridge across it.

The City and Cantonment Bazars

According to the information collected by Leech himself,¹⁴ there were in the city of Jammu in 1837, 18 grocers, 16 safflower dyers, 34 sarafs, 10 tobacconists, 6 braziers, 2 tinsmen, 6 banking houses belonging to saddlers, 15 carpenters, saddle frame-makers, 10 sugarcane sellers, 6 European cloth sellers, 2 goldthread makers, 11 shoe sellers, 9 milkmen, 1 mutton butcher, 8 toymen, 12 washermen, 6 earthen-ware men, 4 timber merchants, 120 grain sellers, 48 shoe makers, 32 pastry cooks, 3 earthen-vessel sellers, 1 copper smith, 19 blacksmiths, 5 painters, 14 leather breech makers, 1 custom house, 8 porters, 9 grocery-ware houses, 110 shops closed, 4 mercers, 10 indigo dyers, 36 sellers of plain coarse cloth, 16 Musalman bread sellers, 1 seller of intoxicating drugs, 6 barber shops, 5 oil pressers 6 parched gram sellers, 2 hay merchants, 4 hemp sellers, 15 green grocers, 3 farriers, 14 goldsmiths, 1 oilman, 16 tailors, 21 distillers, 6 Hinder bakers, 4 sellers of glass bangles, 10 darners, 4 shawl embroiders, 26 saltware houses, 12 granaries, 141 shawl weavers, 210 other weavers, 6 blanket dyers, 5 sword makers, 2 makers of brass inkstands, 11 stampers of gold flowers on cloth, 14 gold and silver beaters, 5 silk embroiders, 12 pipe makers, 10 comb makers, 5 leather merchants, 2 bamboo sellers, 4 cotton sellers.

As compared with the city bazars, the cantonment bazar was much smaller. It was composed of 11 grain sellers, 5 milkmen, 6 pastry cooks, 2 grocers, 5 cotton cleaners, 31 prostitutes, 2 potters, 2 tailors, 4 powder sellers, 2 blacksmiths, 2 shoe makers, 2 spirit sellers, 1 ware-house belonging to Agha Muhammed Hashim, 2 blanket sellers, 4 dyers, 1 Hindu temple, 1 furniture maker, 2 comb makers, 1 baker (Razashah), and 1 earthen-ware man.

In addition, there were 123 mills situated on the bank of

the Tavi. They paid each 6 annas and 6 *watees* of flour a month as tax.

Currency, Weights and Measures¹⁵

The currency of the place was Nanakshahi which was the standard currency of the state of Lahore. In this system 4 *couris* were equal to one *gut*, 15 *guts* equal to 1 *paisa*, 2 *paise* equal to 1 *taka* and 72 *paise* equal to one rupee. The survey of Leech also gives the exchange ratios of various currencies used in commercial transactions. These ratios are in terms of the standard currency of the English East India Company. Some of the exchange ratios prevalent at the time of the survey are as follows :--

		Rs. As. P.
Old Delhi gold Mohur	—	16—4—0
Moran Shahi gold Mohur	—	15—0—0
Mohur Shah Shuja	—	16--12—0
Mohur Temur Shahi	—	15—8—0
Mohur Zaman Shahi	—	16—0—0
Mohur Jeypuri	—	15--13—0
Hari Singhee rupee of Kashmir	—	0—10—3
Chitta Nanak Shahi	—	1—0—3
Old Company rupee	—	1—0—3
Old Thatta rupee	—	1—0—6
Zaman Shahi rupee of 1211 to 1223 Hijra	—	0—15—0
Delhi Mahmudi rupee	—	1—0—6
Old Lahori (maila) rupee	—	1—0—0
Moran Shahi rupee	—	1—0—0
Kashmiri rupee of 1202 A.H.	—	0—6—3
Peshawar Nau Nihal Singn rupee	—	0--12—0
Zaman Shahi 1224 A.H.	—	0--14—0
Shujawala rupee	—	0--14—0
Saneemar ghunde of Kala Bagh	—	0--12—0
Bahawalpuri rupee	—	1—0—0

Ahmedpuri rupee	—	0--12—0
Shikarpuri and Khairpuri rupee	—	0--14—9
Ake Shahi rupee of Jaisalmer	—	0--15—6
Rupee of Hyderabad	—	0--12—0
Rupee Zaman Shahi 1228 A.H.	—	0--13—0
Furruckabadi rupee	—	1—0—6
Maksudabadi rupee	—	1—1—0

Naturally, these exchange rates were based on the prices of gold and silver current at the time and the actual weights of the different coins. The prices of these metals in Jammu in 1837 were as follows :

	Rs. As P
Gold (Butki) per tola of 12 mashas—	16—13—0
Gold beaten „ „ „ —	17— 1—0
Gold dust „ „ „ —	14—12—0
Gold dust of Kashmir „ „ —	13— 0—0
Silver 11 mashas —	1— 0—0
Bokhara Tilla per tola —	16— 0—0

As regards weights, 30 *paise* Nanakshahi were equal to one seer, 5 seers equal to one *wattee* and 8 *wattees* equal to 1 maund¹⁶ of Amritsar. For weighing precious metals like silver and gold, *rati*, *masha* and *tola* were used. 8 *ratis* made one *masha* and 12 *mashas* one *tola*. For grains the method of measurement was also in use, comprising *paropi top* (*topa*), *daropa*, *pae* and *man*. 4 *paropis* were equal to one *topa*, two *topas* equal to one *daropa*, five *topas* or two *daropas* equal to one *pae* and 50 *pae*s equal to one *manee*. One *topa* of rice weighed $3\frac{1}{2}$ seers and one *topa* of other grains weighed 4 seers.

Gaz, *girah*, and *hath* were the measures used for measuring cloth etc. 16 *girahs* made one *gaz*, 4 *girahs* one *gith* and 4 *giths* one *gaz*. One *gaz* was equal to two standard *haths*. The measures for the measurement of land are not mentioned by Leech but it may be presumed that they were *sarsai*, *karm*, *marla*, *kanal*, *bigha* and *ghumaon* as were prevalent in other parts of the kingdom.

Prices current in 1837

Leech gives a lengthy schedule of commodities sold in Jammu and their prices.¹⁷ Among the foodgrains are mentioned wheat, rice, bajri and barley. The pulses include moong, masar, moth and gram. Ghee, oils, honey, sugar, molasses, tobacco, salt, bhang and cotton are also mentioned among the marketable commodities. Besides, there are references to the sale of a large variety of cloths, dried fruits and metals. The more important of the commodities and their prices are given below :

		Rs	As	P
Ghee per maund kacha	—	4—	0—	0
Oil of til " "	—	2—	12—	0
Molasses per 14 wattees	—	1—	0—	0
Coarse sugar from Mankot per maund pucca	—	6—	0—	0
Sugar of Chapral per maund	—	8—	0—	0
Sugar of Doaba per maund	—	10—	0—	0
Sugar white of Dinanagar & Mukandpur per maund	—	11—	4—	0
Oil seeds per 20 wattees	—	10—	0—	0
Cotton per maund	—	3—	5—	0
Wheat goji per 18 wattees	—	1—	0—	0
Wheat cachee per 17 monopolized by the Rajas	—	1—	0—	0
Rice per manee	—	5—	2—	0
Bajri per 18 wattees	—	1—	0—	0
Indian corn per 20 wattees	—	1—	0—	0
Moong " 15 "	—	1—	0—	0
Gram " 20 "	—	1—	0—	0
Honey " 6 "	—	1—	0—	0
Tobacco " 9 "	—	1—	0—	0
Bhang " 40 "	—	1—	0—	0
Salt " 11 "	—	1—	0—	0
Barley " 28 "	—	1—	0—	0

Walnuts	„ 1400 „	—	1— 0—0
Pudina	„ 24 „	—	1— 0—0
Sodar Safed	„ 20 „	—	1— 0—0
Ajwain	„ 9 „	—	1— 0—0
Raw hemp	„ 8 „	—	1— 0—0
Soap	„ 4 „	—	1— 0—0
Methi seed	„ 16 „	—	1— 0—0
Khoa	„ 3 „	—	1— 0—0
Saunf	„ 9 „	—	1— 0—0
Taramera	„ 1 maund	—	2—12—0
Ginger	„ „	—	3— 0—0
Tea per one pucca seer		—	3— 0—0
Black pepper per maund		—	10— 0—0
Safflower	„ „	—	9— 0—0
Walnut bark per 16 wattees		—	1— 0—0
Bahera per 9 mds.		—	1— 0—0
Gulbanafsha for 1 wattee		—	1— 0—0
(Kashmiri)			
Red pepper for 10 wattees		—	1— 0—0
Camphor per 10 wattees		—	1— 0—0
Amaldas per 9 mds.		—	1— 0—0
Anardana per md.		—	1— 0—0
Almonds per md.		—	1— 0—0
Opium of Kishtwar per <i>pucca</i> seer		—	6— 8—0
Saffron of Kashmir & Nurpur per <i>kacha</i> seer		—	9— 0—0
Nagar moth per 16 wattees		—	3— 8—0
Masar per 24 wattees		—	1— 0—0
Rasounth from Nurpur per md. <i>kacha</i>		—	1— 0—0
Tin per md.		—	20— 0—0
Copper per md.		—	19— 0—0
Brass per md.		—	16— 0—0
Bell metal per md.		—	15— 0—0
Iron from the mines of Suket, Mandi, Chamba, Riyasi and Akhnur per md.		—	2—10—0

Leather hides per score	—	12 to 20 rupees
Wax per watee	—	0— 8—0
Quick silver per seer	—	2— 8—0
Vermillion per seer	—	2—12—0
Indigo (Kharuja) per md.	—	41— 0—0
Indigo (Bareilly) per md.	—	34— 0—0
Indigo (Bahawalpur, Ahmedpur, Multan & Dera Ghazi Khan)	—	28— 0—0
Wasma per 12 watees	—	1— 0—0

Cloths

Salu (38 gaz x $1\frac{1}{8}$ gaz)	—	from 12 to 14 rupees
Doria (12x1)	—	" $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ rupees
Chintz 16 patterns (16 x 1 gaz)	—	" 6 to 12 rupees
Red broad cloth (38 x $\frac{3}{4}$ gaz)	—	" 20 to 30 rupees
Susi (14 x 1 gaz)	—	" 6 to 7 "
Abra ($4\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{1}{4}$ gaz)	—	" $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 "
Muslin ($8\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{1}{8}$ gaz)	—	" $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 "
Khasha (16 x 1)	—	" 3 to 6 "
Dopatta 2 patterns (3 x $1\frac{1}{4}$ gaz)	—	" 2 to $2\frac{3}{4}$ "
Gulbadan and daryali.		
Silk fabrics 10 colour per gaz	—	4 as. to 1 rupee
Silk fabrics of Mirzapur "	—	6 as. to 1 "
Silk thread by colours per seer	—	Rs. 12 to 20 "
Khasa bulbul chashans 2 breadths (checked ($8\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ gaz) per gaz)	—	from 1 to $1\frac{3}{4}$
Khasa (plaid) 2 breadths (17 x $1\frac{5}{8}$ gaz)	—	" $1\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 rupees
Leather breeches per score	—	" 10 to 15 rupees
Rugs (chadree) $1\frac{1}{2}$ breadth per md.	—	6 to 7 "
Carpets cotton ($1\frac{3}{4}$ x $1\frac{3}{8}$)	—	10 to 20 "
White blankets ($2\frac{1}{4}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ gaz) per score	—	Rs. 22—0—0
Black blankets ($2\frac{1}{4}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ ") "	—	24—0—0

Jammu—a Commercial Centre

Jammu was well-connected with the outside world : with

Amritsar, Jullundur and Ludhiana by means of a trade route passing through Sialkot; with Lahore, Multan and Pathankot by a route passing through Sialkot, Wazirabad and Gujranwala; with Gujrat, Jehlum, Sind, Pind Dadan Khan, Rawalpindi, Attock, Peshawar and Kabul by another trade route; with Kala Bagh, Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu; and with Kangra, Jawala Mukhi, Kulu, Mandi and Suket by a route *via* Pathankot. There were also trade routes connecting Jammu with Kashmir *via* Pir Panchal with Ladakh *via* Kishtwar, and with Basopli, Nurpur and Chamba and then onward with Tibet by some other routes. All these connections helped Jammu in matters of external trade and commerce. The groceries of the mountain came to Jammu and from there were exported to Wazirabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Ramnagar, Pind Dadan Khan, Peshawar, Amritsar, Lahore, Ludhiana, Multan and Mithankot. The trade between Amritsar (and the Doab) and Kashmir or between Kashmir and the hill states of Nurpur, Chamba, Kangra, Kulu and Mandi mostly passed through Jammu. Jammu imported alum from Kalabagh, Madder from Kolachi, wool from Ladakh¹⁸ and Kashmir, indigo from Kharuja (Khurja) and Bareilly, iron from Riasi, paper from Sialkot, fruit of Khorasan from Wazirabad and ivory from Amritsar.

Leech has also given a schedule of import and export duties levied in Jammu.¹⁹ Some of the information gathered by him is given below :

1. Alum from Kala Bagh 0-1-6 the rupee and 0-0-3¼ the load.
2. Madder from Kolachi 0-1-6 the rupee and 0-6-0 the load.
3. Groceries from the mountains going to Wazirabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Pind Dadan Khan, Ramnagar, Peshawar, Amritsar, Lahore, Ludhiana, Batala, Doab, Multan and Mithankot 0-1-6½ the rupee and 0-3-0 the load.
4. Shawl cloth of Kashmir if sold in Jammu per kacha maund Rs. 13 from the seller and Rs. 3 from the buyer.
5. Shawl cloth to Amritsar Rs. 13 per kacha maund.

6. Shawl cloth of Kashmir if bought in Jammu per kacha maund 6 rupees.
7. Tobacco from the districts 0-1-0 the rupee.
8. Pedlary from Amritsar, Lahore and Jullundur 2-10-0 per load and 0-0-6 the rupee.
9. Pedlary from the suburbs and dependancies of Jammu 0-1-0 the rupee.
10. Silk thread of colours 0-8-0 per kacha seer and 0-0-6 the rupee.
11. Milk and timber 2 annas the rupee from the buyer.
12. Vegetables and fruits 0-1-6 per load.
13. Indigo from Khruja and Bareilly Rs. 2-10-0 per kacha md. and 0-0-6 the rupee.
14. Metal utensils Rs. 2-10-0 per load and 0-0-6 the rupee.
15. Costly groceries as pepper, ginger, tea, vermillion, quick silver etc. en rout to Kashmir 7 rupees the load.
16. Iron from Riyasi to Amritsar 0-1-6 the load and 0-1-0 the rupee.
17. Horses sold in Jammu 5% from the seller.
18. Slave girls sold 1/4 Govt. share from the seller.
19. Cloth from Amritsar to Kashmir per score 0-10-0.
20. Plain cloth, plaid and coarse, from the neighbourhood 0-1-0 the rupee.
21. English cloth from Amritsar 0-0-9 the rupee.
22. Silk cloth from Amritsar 0-1-0 the rupee.
23. Cotton cloth from the neighbourhood 0-1-6 the rupee.
24. Cloth from Wazirabad—susi, chotahi; kathi, plain and lungi, 0-1-0 the rupee.
25. Gram monopolised by the Rajas—a small quantity only imported by merchants 0-2-0 the rupee.
26. Shawl cloth borders and chadars 0-1-0 the rupee and plain shawls of Jammu Rs. 13-0-0.
27. Fruits from Kashmir to Amritsar 1-12-0 per md.

28. Groceries of the mountains going to Tibet 0-0-6 the rupee.
29. Leather from the neighbourhood 0-5-0 per bullock load.
30. Oil from the districts 0-1-0 the rupee.
31. Ghee " " 0-1-6 the rupee.
32. Sugar from the Doab 0-1-0 the load and 0-0-6 $\frac{1}{4}$ the load.
33. Molasses from the Doab 0-3-0 the load and 0-1-0 the rupee.
34. Soft sugar to Kashmir 2-4-0 the load.
35. Cotton cloth and thread en route to Kashmir 1-12-0 per md.
36. Wool from Kashmir 0-1-6 the rupee.
37. Coarse wool from Jammu to Amritsar Rs. 1-4-0 per md.
38. Wool of Kashmir from Jammu to Amritsar Rs. 6-0-0 per md

Bills of Exchange

There were, broadly speaking, two methods by which large amounts of money could be transmitted from one place to another. One was to carry the money physically with the help of some transport, say mules, ponies, horses, camels, bullocks and bullock-carts. The other method was the use of hundis or bills of exchange. A hundi was a sort of cheque and was a very convenient mode of transmitting large sums of money. All that was required was to pay a small commission on the amount to be transmitted. The rate of commission depended on a number of factors : (i) distance involved; (ii) period of maturity; (ii) competition among dealing agencies.

The different rates of commission in vogue at Jammu in the year 1837 are given below :²⁰

	Rs. As. P.
1. For 100 white Nanakshahi rupees on Amritsar 11 days after date	101—6—0
2. For 100 maila Nanakshahi rupees on Jullundur 13 days after date	101—8—0

3. For 100 maila Nanakshahi rupees on Gujranwala 11 days after date	100-12-0
4. For 100 maila Nanakshahi rupees on Dinanagar 13 days after date	100-12-0
5. For 100 maila Nanakshahi rupees on Phagwara 13 days after date	101-0-0
6. " " " on Lahore 9 days after date	100-10-0
7. The same on Pind Dadan Khan 15 days after date	101-2-0
8. The same on Ramnagar 9 days after date	100-14-0
9. The same on Sialkot 3 days after date	100-4-0
10. The same on Batala 11 days after date	100-11-0

Hire Rates for Transport

For carrying goods of trade and other goods animal transport was mostly used. The hire rates were different for different kinds of transport. For the same transport, too, different rates were charged for different places, according to the distance involved. The following table gives the hire rates for ponies from Jammu to other places: ²¹

1. Jammu to Amritsar or Lahore (60 kos)	— 2-0-0
2. Jammu to Wazirabad (30 kos)	— 1-0-0
3. " " Gujranwala (40 kos)	— 1-4-0
4. " " Gujrat (37 kos)	— 1-2-0
5. " " Ramnagar (42 kos)	— 1-8-0
6. " " Pind Dadan Khan (70 kos)	— 2-12-0
7. " " Kashmir (88 kos)	— 5-0-0
8. " " Batala	— 1-8-0
9. " " Rahon and Doab	— 1-8-0
10. " " Jullundur and Phagwara	— 1-12-0
11. " " Ladakh (200 kos)	— 15-0-0
12. " " Tibet (140 kos)	— 10-0-0

13.	" "	Basohli (30 kos)	—	1—4—0
14.	" "	Akhnur (40 kos)	—	1—8—0
15.	" "	Bhimbar (40 kos)	—	1—12—0
16.	" "	Kangra (70 kos)	—	4—0—0
17.	" "	Chamba (65 kos)	—	4—0—0
18.	" "	Punch (90 kos)	—	5—8—0
19.	" "	Jawala Mukhi (70 kos)	—	4—0—0
20.	" "	Kashghar	—	35—0—0
21.	" "	Kabul (300 kos)	—	35—0—0
22.	" "	Peshawar (200 kos)	—	14—0—0
23.	" "	Delhi (220 kos)	—	15—0—0
24.	" "	Ludhiana (100 kos)	—	7—0—0

Revenue of the City of Jammu

According to the calculations of Mr. Leech the city of Jammu derived a large income from the taxes levied in the city itself. The following schedule²² informs us about the different duties and the revenue yielded by each. It is not known how this immense information was collected, but even if it is not 100% correct, it is useful in as far as it provides a peep into the working of the city's economy.

		Rs.	As	P.
1.	Tax on Milkmen	—	400	0—0
2.	Produce of hemp lac in the neighbourhood	—	21,854	0—0
3.	Rahdari from Jammu to Kashmir	—	5,000	0—0
4.	Tax on spirit sellers	—	240	0—0
5.	Tax on charas	—	50	0—0
6.	Tax on leather	—	1,160	0—0
7.	Tax on ghee	—	720	0—0
8.	Grazing Tax (1 anna per buffalo or 1 cow, 2 as. per one camel and $\frac{1}{2}$ anna per sheep or goat.)	—	6,150	0—0
9.	Tax on gambling	—	480	0—0
10.	Tax on vegetable stalls	—	181	0—0
11.	Tax on Hindu prostitutes of the mountains	—	150	0—0

12. Tax on mills	—	400—0—0
13. Customs house	—	18,550—0—0
14. Tax on ground on the Tavi from the pargana of Thabh to that of Ekalgow. (16000 Jaribs)	—	14,141—4—0
15. Groceries from the mountains	—	10,000—0—0
16. Taxes on the road to Poormandal	—	5,691—0—0
17. Tax on butchers	—	360—0—0
Total		85,095—0—0

To sum up, the foregoing account of the city of Jammu and its economy is significant for several reasons. Such a quantum of information about a single city in the kingdom of Ranjit Singh, particularly bearing on economic aspects of its life, is rarely met with. But though this information pertains exclusively to Jammu, indirectly it helps us understand much more clearly the general organisation of urban centres in the kingdom as a whole. For instance, the pattern of import and export duties and of taxes levied in the town, the functioning of money market and the prices of commodities, throws much useful light on urban life in general. As for the city of Jammu, though small in size, comes out from this survey as an important commercial centre having close links with the plains, Kashmir, Ladakh, Tibet and the hill states between the Ravi and the Sutlej. Still another significance of the account lies in the light which it throws on the position of the Jamwal Rajas. A very treat source of their strength lay in the important geo-political situation they occupied. The position not only provided them with a secure base to build themselves up as powerful chiefs but also enabled them to swallow much of the revenue yielded by trade and town duties.²³

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England* (London 1798), p. 84; Baron Chales Hugel, *Travely in Cashmere and the Panjab* (London 1845, Reprint 1970), p. 69.
2. *Foreign Dept. Secret Consultations* (hereafter quoted as *F.D.S.C.*) dated 18 November 1843, Nos. 18-19.
3. *Ibid.*, No. 18.
4. Lord Ellenborough to the Queen, 20 November 1843, Ellenborough to the Duke of Wellington, 20 Nov. 1843—*Private Correspondence Relating to Anglo-Sikh Wars* (ed. Ganda Singh), pp. 463-64. Lord Hardinge based his treaties of Lahore and Amritsar (1846) on the same idea of separation between the plains and the hills of the kingdom.
5. Sir Henry Fane, British Commander-in-Chief, was invited to attend the marriage of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh in 1837. He was shown great honour all through his stay. Still he exploited the opportunity to form an estimate of Ranjit Singh's strength and on that basis to calculate how much British army would be required to conquer and occupy the Punjab. "That able commander", writes Cunningham, "was ever a careful observer of military means and of soldierly qualities ; he framed an estimate of the force which would be required for the complete subjugation of the Punjab." *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 227.
6. The services of this man were engaged for a specific purpose. He travelled through the Punjab under the instructions of Leech, often in the guise of a *fakir*, as for example he did while gathering information about Raja Gulab Singh's fort in Jammu and the palaces of other Dogra Rajas there.
7. Baron C. Hugel gives a different view. He holds the situation of the fort to be untenable. He writes : "Our course lay over the plain, which in one place I found suddenly invaded by the deep bed of a stream whence a hill rises almost imperceptibly or the summit of which Gulab Singh has lately built the fort of Bala. It does not speak very favourably of his military judgement, for, however handsome its ornamented walls may look, rising as it were out of the river from his palace on the other note of the Tohi (Tavi 2) at Iammer, as a strong place it is quite untenable, being overlooked by other heights most easy of access." *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, p. 69. This view is shared by David Ross, author of *the Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh* (Reprint Patiala, 1970), p. 143.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

10. The reference here is to the days of Raja Ranjit Deo when Jammu is said to be at the height of its prosperity. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
11. Quoted in Debi Prashad, *Gulshan-i-Punjab* (Urdu), p. 161.
12. Quoted in David Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
13. Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
14. *F.D.S.C.*, 18 November 1843, No. 19.
15. *Ibid.*
16. These were known as *kacha* weights, for example *kacha* ser, *kacha* man. The *pucca* weights were also known and used. One *wattee* had two *pacca* sers and one *man* had 40 *pacca* sers. A five-ser weight was called *panseri* and a ten-ser weight, *daseri*.
17. *F.D.S.C.*, 18 November 1843, No. 19.
18. Around the mid-thirties Raja Gulab Singh tried to divert the entire wool trade of Ladakh to Jammu. This caused great suffering to the wool merchants and shawl weavers of Kashmir. The position was later retrieved by Col. Mehan Singh, *Nazim* of Kashmir.
19. *F.D.S.C.*, 18 November 1843, No. 19.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Major Leech gives an exaggerated picture. But this is not without substance. "It is supposed that on the whole they must realize 1,00,00,000 rupees a year of which they give no account to Ranjeet Singh. They trade to such an extent as to have 2000 camels and 5000 mules in constant requisition. Their goods pass free from taxes. Their profits from this alone are said to amount to 5,00,000 rupees. The tax they levy on shawl cloth alone made in Kishtwar, Chamba, Noorpoor, Rajond and other parts of Rajwara amounts to 2,00,000 rupees as they have the farm of the salt mines of Pind Dadan Khan. They, besides storing it up in their forts, sell yearly among the high lands 2,00,000 rupees worth." See *F.D.S.C.*, 18 November 1843, No. 22.

AMRITSAR : ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

DR (MRS) ANAND GAUBA

Trade and industrial activities provided Amritsar the highest rank among the cities of the Punjabi. In 1830 Lahore, one of the biggest centres of trade and industry,¹ manufactured articles valued at over two lacs only while Amritsar manufactured goods to the value of Rs. 6,90,284.² The estimation of the trade can be made from octroi figures which showed the income of Rs. 9,00,000 annually for Amritsar alone against Rs. 16,00,000 for the whole of Punjab.³ The chief items of import were gold, silver, iron, silk, wool, leather, furs, cotton and silk cloth, ivory, glass, spices, dry fruits, dyes and horses.⁴ It exported mostly wheat, rice, cotton, sugar, poppy, indigo, salt, hides and skins, and shawls. Timber was imported for local constructions.

Amritsar was known for its many long bazars where wares of all types were available. Jacquemont saw Khattris, Aroras and Banias among Hindus and Khojahs among Muslims as the chief traders.⁵ Kashmiris dealing mainly in shawls were also found there⁶. On the whole, Khattris and Aroras dominated the trade activities of all types as most of them had migrated from Lahore to Amritsar, in the 18th century, seeing Lahore unsafe because of the repeated Afghan attacks. Takhat Mal, Kishan Das Arora, Lal Chand Chopra and Tek Chand Khanna were among the big traders and influential persons of the city⁷. Bedis of Vairawal and Goindwal monopolised the export of cotton and sugar to Multan to be carried to Afghanistan, and in return imported madder (*majith*) dye for the Amritsar market.⁸ Some of the traders were enormously rich like Rama Nand Bania and Samadjoo

Kashmiri Shawlwala. Amritsar had a number of specialised *mandis* (markets), mostly concentrated in the south of the *Harmandir* complex, developed during the days of Ranjit Singh by his nobility. Katra Ahluwalia in the north-east with Bazar Nauhrian specialised in cloth.⁹ Gandham Mandi, Gilwali,¹⁰ Chawal Mandi, Majith Mandi, Bazar Patragan, Dal Mandi, Lakar Mandi and Guru Bazar, the oldest market, were the chief wholesale business centres.

The trade of Amritsar can be broadly discussed under :

(i) the imports of agricultural produce and manufactured articles to be re-exported as they were ;

(ii) the imports of raw materials to be re-exported as manufactured goods.

Amritsar was the biggest 'centre of goods in transit' for the Kingdom of Lahore. Among the imports meant for re-export agricultural produce played the most important part which was imported from its own hinterland, other parts of the Punjab, Hindustan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Amritsar received in huge quantity its surplus agricultural produce, both in food-grains and cash crops like cotton and sugar. This import was made mostly through minor marts or focal points like Dera Baba Nanak, Jandiala, Ramdasapur, Majitha, Tarn Taran, Sri Hargobindpur. Dera Baba Nanak and Sri Hargobindpur acted as ports for conveying goods through water. Wheat was mostly imported from Batala and the suburbs of Amritsar ; cotton from Tarn Taran and Gurdaspur ; sugar and sugarcane from Batala, Ajnala and Hoshiarpur. Oils seeds came from Tarn Taran; ghee, opium, wood, lime, hemp and ginger from the hills.¹¹ Sujjanpur sent rice, turmaric, hemp, ginger, dyes and wood of hills. Saffron, fruits and timber came from Kashmir. Rock salt of Kala Bagh, Khewra and Pind Dadan Khan, called 'Lahori Loon'¹² was imported in large quantities to Amritsar for redistribution to other parts of the Punjab, Hindustan and Afghanistan for which there was a specialised market called 'Namak Mandi.' Ralia Ram

Chungiwala held rock salt mines in *ijara* for a long time. The external trade of agricultural produce was carried on with Afghanistan and Central Asia in greater quantity than with Sind and Hindustan.¹³ The goods were conveyed both through land and water as Amritsar was near the navigable rivers like Ravi, Beas and Sutlej for which most important ports were Dera Baba Nanak, Vairawal, Hari Ka Pattan¹⁴ and Sri Hargobindpur. Lohanis, Khojas and Shikarpurias monopolised the transportation and carrier agencies. Heavy goods were mostly sent through water. Trade with Kabul was carried on *via* Gomal Pass for which Multan acted as the *entrepot*.¹⁵ The Khairbar route was discontinued because of the uncertain conditions on that side.¹⁶

Besides agricultural produce, there were other items too for which Amritsar acted as the transit port. It imported many items for re-export to Europe (particularly Russia, England and France), Turkey, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Far East and to Hindustan. The chief items imported from Afghanistan were dyes, spices and dry fruits. Turkey sent carpets, Tartary furs; chintzes and feather came from Russia; and iron from hills particularly Mandi Suket.¹⁷ For the trade with Yarkand, Kashgar, Turfan, Tibet and China, Ladakh acted as a very important post. Moorcroft in 1820s was specially sent to Ladakh by the British to see the possibilities of the trade on that side. During those days, Ladakh sent to Amritsar and other parts of the Kingdom of Lahore Asli Tus, China tea, silk, shawl, wool, borax and precious stones of Tibet, brocade, velvet and broad cloth of Russia, horses and drugs of Yarkand and dry fruits specially apricots of little Tibet. In return, it imported cotton cloth, copper and tinned vessels from China and Yarkand.¹⁸ Tea of China could find reasonably good market in Amritsar because of the presence of Kashmiri residents in the city in large numbers,¹⁹ From other parts of the Punjab, Amritsar imported hides and skins and from its own hinterland a

paper called 'souria' of Ajnala and coarse cloth of Batala and Majitha.²⁰

Pasham was imported from Tibet and wool from Kirman to weave *pashmina* shawls in quality and quantity only next to Kashmir. This industry seems to have started establishing itself since 1820s with the immigration of Kashmiris to Amritsar in large numbers.²¹ In the first decade of that century Amritsar was only a market of the shawl trade, imported chiefly from Kashmir and some from Noorpur and Basoli. After giving them finish the shawls were exported to other parts of India like Hyderabad Daccan and Luchnow. In 1830s Amritsar manufactured shawls worth Rs. 30,000 and imported them worth Rs. 2,00,000. In 1840s their manufacture value shot up to Rs. 4,00,000 and their import rose to Rs. 6,00,000. There were now 2000 *dukāns* for shawl sale and manufacture with one wearer and one *shagird* each, against only 30 in 1830s.²² Shawls were manufactured in pure *pasham* of Tibet to start with but later *kirmani* wool from *Bokhara* was mixed to make them cheaper. Some were woven in kirmani wool only. Shawls were made both in Jamawar' (floral designs) also called 'Kanikar' and in 'amlikar' (plain cloth embroidered with thread with needles). Amritsari shawls could find markets as far as England and France. One merchant of Amritsar showed to Hugel orders for shawls from these countries.²⁴ Some coarse woollens were also manufactured which after being dyed scarlet were exported. Jacquemont particularly refers to a thick woollen cloth like 'Serge' for military uniforms and '*pattu* (tweed).²⁵

Raw silk was imported from Bokhara, China and Bengal to manufacture silk fabrics like *daryai* (a plain silk cloth), *gulbadan* (a striped cloth for trousers), and *dhoop chhaon* (a double shaded cloth), most of which was locally consumed by the nobility of the Maharaja. Some of it was exported too²⁶. Out of the three leading silk manufacturing centres of the Panjab, Amritsar was the chief. It had 900 weavers and 735 winders. A total of 2205 persons were engaged in this trade and manufacture.²⁷ Mostly short-

width cloth was seen on the looms. However Maharaja Sher Singh in 1840s introduced long-width silk cloth but it died with him.²⁸ Silks of Bokhara called 'Khara Kundadar' and 'Khara Singla' were preferred to other silks.²⁹ The Khattris generally acted as the capitalists³⁰ for the supply of the materials. Important places in the core of the city were occupied for the manufacture and trade of silk, like Bazar Patranga, an extension of Guru Bazar, the chief and the oldest shopping centre, Kucha Daryai Bafan, Kucha Ala Bukh Daryai Bafinda and others.

Mostly coarse and some fine cotton cloth called *Susi* was also prepared in the city and in its suburbs. One locality which specialised in it was 'Gali Jullahian'. Cotton cloth after dyeing it black and red was sent to Afghanistan and hilly areas.

Amritsar topped in the metal work of all types : Gold and silver works like gold leafing for which the domes of the central building of the *Harmandir* are the living examples; the craftsmanship of silver carving and panelling for which the Darshani Darwaza and the doors of the central building speak for themselves; and gold ornaments, some of them being still preserved in the *toshakhana* of the Durbar Sahib. This was done largely by *sunars* (Hindu) *Zargar* (Muslim), *Kundandoz* if working in Kundan; *chhatara* if working on silver, copper and brass carving; *khandla kar*, *dabkai*, and *tilakar* and *tarkash* if engaged in ware drawing and tinsil work. Gali Sunaran, Kucha Zargarani, Kucha Tarkashan and Kucha Tilakaran had large numbers of families working on gold and silver. Guru Bazar and Bazar Kaserian were their main working centres. Gold and silver in clay work on arms called *kofrigari* continued even during the early British rule.³¹

The second group of metal work was brass and copper confined to utensils only. However, to some extent three-dimensional life-size metal grotesque figures like that of the lion (Durga Vahan), the bull (Siva's Nandi Bull), idol of Durga in Durga Shivalya; golden covering of the domes of the Durbar Sahib and

Kalsas of the temples were also made, but were much inferior to those made in South India. Brass and metal work was in the hands of the immigrants of United Provinces, and their trade was the monopoly of Banias.³² Two district schools of art in metal were prevalent in the city. One worked in the usual brass and copper wares of the plains and the other worked in tinned and chased copper peculiar to Kashmir. Among the latter were *Somarars* and plated *thalis* in tinned copper enriched by concentric ornamental bands cut through the tin into the copper ground. Arms and gun industry was under supervision of Lehna Singh Majithia and Faqir Noor-ud-Din. Lehna Singh invented Suraj Mukhi gun. Hugel had high words of appreciation for that.³³ The Maharaja always encouraged engineers and technicians to manufacture superior arms, better than those of the British army. He conferred honours on Lehna Singh, Nidhan Singh and Gulab Singh for the same and paid high wages to the workers. A skilled worker got 2 rupees per day and unskilled 1/2 rupee in these workshops.

The artistic handicraft works of fine art were also manufactured, like ivory and wood work. Ivory work can be divided into four categories : ivory carving, inlay, turning and painting for which Amritsar alone was the centre in the Kingdom of Lahore. Ivory combs, boxes, knives and other decoration pieces were prepared with beautiful carving. Perforation work was done particularly on combs and boxes. Figures of monarchs and nobles were also worked out for which Ranjit Singh was the chief subject.³⁴ Ivory inlay on furniture and doors was in great demand for which craftsmen from Hoshiarpur were specially encouraged to settle in Amritsar. The inner side of the main gate of the Darshani Darwaza of the central temple of the *Harmandir* is still a living example of that art. Ivory miniature paintings were also very important part of this work started perhaps during the last decade of the Sikh rule.³⁵ Ivory turning work (*chura* or bangle-making) was centralised in Katra Mohr Singh and the centre for this trade was outside the Durbar Sahib.³⁶

Bhai Natha Singh, Hira Singh, Deva Singh and Mangal Singh were known for perforation work and inlay. Turning work was virtually the monopoly of *Bhai* Sardul Singh, Ganga Singh and Chur Singh³⁹

The famous architectural wood-carving, notably on doors, windows, and overhanging balconies, was indeed the admirable work of art, the remnants of which are still available in the houses in Chaurasti Attari area—particularly doorways formed in elegant carved designs divided in squares with iron or brass bolts in the centre for decoration in the Persian style. Some models of artistic furniture made in Amritsar were exhibited by Bhagwan Singh, son of Jamadar Khushal Singh, in the exhibition of 1864 which earned high appreciation.³⁸

Marble-cutting and inlay work was also a well-known art of the city for which the *Harmandir Sahib* complex is an evident proof. Marble-cutting *Karkhanas* were set up in the vicinity of the *Durbar Sahib*.

Perfume-making was another industry which specialised in Amritsar and Lahore to cater for the need of the *harems* of the Maharaja and the nobility. It was exported too, to some extent. Roses were sown in big gardens around the city to be supplied as raw material for perfumes. Besides this, *hina* and *khas* were also used for perfumes.³⁹

Horses from Afghanistan and cattle from other parts of the Punjab were imported to be re-exported to Hindustan. On every Baisakhi and Diwali these animals were brought to Amritsar for sale. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was specially interested in horses. Kakezais dealt in horse trade, who lived in their separate locality, Kucha Kakezaianin (Katra Baggian).

From what has been discussed above it may be concluded that Amritsar was the chief centre of trade and manufactures in the Punjab, which earned for the kingdom of Lahore nearly 1/3 of the total revenue from octroi. This, together with its

large number of specialisations, made it the best dry port of the Maharaja's Kingdom which met the royal demands and also of the lower middle classes.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Amritsar, Multan and Lahore were the three chief centres of trade and industry in the descending order. See Henry Cope, 'The Silk trade and Industries of the Panjāb', *Journal of Agri-Horticultural Society of India*, Vol.X, Part 2, 1858, p. 57.
2. *Foreign Department Political Consultations*, 29 Dec. 1852, No. 144.
3. 'The Punjab Administration', *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XXI, Sept. 1853, pp. 237-38.
4. Steinbach, *The Punjab*, p. 53.
5. H.L.O. Garrett (tr & ed), *The Punjab A Hundred Years Ago* (containing the accounts of Victor Jacquemont, the French scientist and A. Soltikoff, the prince and artist of Russia) (Reprint Patiala, 1970), p. 27.
6. Muslims accounted for 48% of the total population of the city of which half were Kashmiris. See Davies and Blyth, *Report on the Revised Settlement of Amritsar, Sowarian and Taran Tarun Purgunnahas of Amritsar District* (Lahore, 1860), p. 14.
7. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (tr.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, being translation of Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-I-Punjab* (Amritsar, 1975), p. 133.
8. Davies and Blyth, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
9. Nauhrias of Jagraon were called by Ahluwalia Chiefs to settle in their Katra as traders.
10. Ali-ud-din (MS) *Ibratnama*, SHR 1772 (Khalsa College Library, Amritsar), p. 84.
11. *Amritsar District Gazetteer (1883-84)*, p. 48.
12. Besides rock salt, evaporated salt from Drung salt spring, saltpeter, alum, barilla, *naushader* (ammoiac) were also imported.
13. *Punjab Administration Report 1954-55*, para 88. Boats of Amritsar were seen conveying goods in huge quantity : Report on the Navigation in the Rivers of the Punjab, (Lahore 1865), p. 52 ; see also Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans* (Reprint Patiala, 1970) p. 47.
14. *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1883-84*.
15. Trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia was more popularly known as Kabul trade.

16. Lohani traders were very eager for the re-opening of the Khaibar Pass route with Peshawar as its chief mart. They even expressed their wish before Mohan Lal Kashmiri in 1830s on his visit that side. They told him that if the Lahore Kingdom had compromised with Khaibaris, their trade could prosper. See Mohan Lal *Journal of Tour Through the Punjab, Afghanistan, Turkistan, Khorasan and Parts of Persia* (Reprint Patiala, 1970), pp. 77-78.
17. *Punjab Administration Report 1854-55*, para 87.
18. Moorcroft and G. Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces, Hindustan and the Punjab in Ladakh and Kashmir in Peshawar, Kabul and Kunduz and Bokharo from 1819-1825*, (Reprint Patiala, 1970), pp. 108-198.
19. F. C. Channing, *Report on Trade and Manufactures of the Punjab for the year 1880-81*, pp. 6, 42. Till then tea was not grown in India. It was solely imported from China in the form of bricks called 'dom' in Kashmir and 'Ponkhan' in Lassa.
20. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 48.
21. Moorcroft and G. Trebeck, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
22. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, pp. 39-40.
23. Thornton, *A Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p.55. Kirmani wool was easy to spin and the shortage and high cost of *pasham* also led to the temptation of the admixture of wool.
24. Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab* (tr. & ed.), T. B. Jarvis (Reprint Patiala, 1970), p. 390.
25. H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 27.
26. Henry Cope, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
27. Multan and Lahore were the next two centres in descending order.
28. Baden Powell, *Handbook of Art and Manufactures in the Punjab*, p. 62.
29. *Loc. cit.*
30. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
31. Bhagwan Singh, son of Khushal Singh, exhibited his armour, helmets, guns, daggers and swords with *Koftgari* works in the exhibition of 1864 A.D. See Baden Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
32. *Monograph on Brass and Copper Wares in Punjab 1886-87*, Appendix A, Statistics. In 1880s there were 20 such manufacturers established since the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
33. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 43. *Somavar* with a perforated base admitted air to a charcoal stove which occupied the centre of the vessel. It was used by Kashmiris for preparing tea called *Kohva*. Russia imported *somavars*.
34. Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh* (Reprint Delhi, 1967), p. 88.
35. Miniature painting style was introduced in the Punjab with the European influence. Emily Eden in 1839 had high words of appreciation for the ivory

- paintings in this style of Azim : Emily Eden, *Up the country* (London 1866), p. 263. Hassan-al-Din was another artist who migrated to Amritsar in 1842. He became popular for the first painting of November 1843. The subject was the child Maharaja Dalip Singh patting his pet surrounded by his chiefs : W. G. Archer, *Victorian and Albert Museum Paintings of Her Majesty's Stationary Office* (London 1966), see plates.
36. David Ross, *The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh* (Reprint Patiala, 1970), p. 193.
 37. *Monograph on Ivory Carving in Punjab, 1900*, para 13.
 38. Baden Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-04. The round table was laid with 50 different pieces of wood. Its base representing reeds on lake with swans support the table carved in white as water lillies.
 39. There were about 12 shops cum manufactories of Khatris in Karmo Deori and Misri Bazar in this work. This information has been gathered by interviewing the present dealers engaged in their ancestral trade since the time of the Sikh Rule.

SOME ASPECTS OF EXPORT AND IMPORT TRADE UNDER RANJIT SINGH IN THE LIGHT OF POTEDAR COLLECTION, CHURU

DR R.K. SHARMA*

A major means of export and import of trade materials was the caravan (Parsian *Karwan*). It provided the maximum of safety and security and made an important contribution to commercial life in those days. Kabul, Kandhar, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pind Dadan Khan, Jhang, Multan, Sialkot, Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Rohtak, Ambala, etc. were some of the prominent meeting places of the caravans from West and Central Asia and China. Traders with their luggage, pack animals, mounts, and carts generally preferred to accompany a caravan in case they could not form their own. When Mirza Mal Potedar left British territory on pilgrimage to Kurukshetra, he was granted a *parwana-i-rahdari* for safety and protection. He needed it because without it he could not proceed. For further protection of the caravan, armed sentries and guards were hired. Ranjit Singh was aware of hazards of travel and trade and ordered strong measures to maintain peace and security and to protect trade from robbery and theft. Still sometimes robberies, thefts and attacks on caravans took place which indicates that the guards sometimes failed in their task as this is clear from the *Arzee* of Mirza Mal. Severe punishments were inflicted on caravan robbers if they were apprehended, for the Maharaja was of the opinion that it was the duty of the state to protect the traders under his jurisdiction.

Rahdari for Export and Import : *Rahdari* was a permit for travel for which a minor fee was charged. The proceeds were utilised for guarding the roads. *Rahdars* were appointed by the govern-

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ment. Though *rahdars* had but a limited jurisdiction, they played an important part in guarding roads and looking after the export and import business and the welfare of the caravans, traders and the entire business community. *Rahdari* was generally levied in proportion to the number of carts, bullocks, or persons in party. The Potedar papers give a detailed list of articles, their prices and the tolls levied on them in different places in the Punjab. There were innumerable toll chowkis. On all these chowkis *rahdari* was levied. On the Lahore-Delhi route, a caravan paid tolls at Lahore, Amritsar, Ambala, Karnal, Panipat and Delhi. Mirza Mal travelling from Churu to Amritsar in December 1827 and following the same route via Rewari, paid *rahdari* on the way at Rewari, Delhi, Ambala etc. Similarly on the way back he had to pay tolls at several places. The merchants had to declare their money, merchandise and the purpose of their visit on the borders, especially those who wanted to go to British territories and sometimes also to Kashmir and Afghan borders. The customs officer on duty entered their names, the purpose of their visit and their merchandise in his register. The merchant then received a certificate from the collector of customs so that on his return he would not be asked to pay more than what was agreed upon. Toll-chowkis were maintained on rivers as well as on land. The system of paying a toll on crossing borders and rivers was regularised by the Maharaja. Fiscal posts were set up at the main gates of the main towns of the Punjab, and all merchandise which might pass through the gates was subjected to custom duties. Custom duties were levied on dried and fresh fruits of Afghanistan, military goods from Rajasthan, shawls of Kashmir, indigo, sugar, gold, silk, etc.

The main route from Punjab to Rajastan lay through Lahore, Karnal, Delhi, Rewari, Churu, and then from Churu to Merta, from Merta to Jodhpur and from Jodhpur to Falodhi Pokran and Jaisalmer and so on up to Sindh. The caravans of Seth Mirza Mal also travelled from Kashmir to Rajasthan. The Potedar

papers also inform us about the trans-Himalayan routes; there is some information also there about the Amritsar-Kuroli route, the Amritsar-Simla route, the Ambala-Chamba route and the Ambala-Sirmur route. The Potedar papers throw a flood of light on some other internal routes as well. For example, we come to know from these about private papers the routes connecting Rohtak, Bhiwani, Ambala, Sirsa, Bikaner and Churu with one another.

During the period under study Amritsar, Lahore, Multan, Bahawalpur, Peshawar, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Shikarpur, Kabul, Herat, Wazirabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhang, Srinagar, Jammu, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Ambala, Rohtak, Bhiwani, Jind, Patiala, Rewari, Nabha, Simla, etc. were famous centres for export and import trade.

Among the business communities which were actively involved in trade under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Potedars of Churu played a leading role. They were invited by the Maharaja to set up and develop business centres in various parts of the Punjab and several concessions and facilities were provided to them to develop these centres. Rather, they enjoyed special royal protection, as is quite evident from the records of the Potedars of Churu edited and published by Govind Aggarwal. The Potedar papers further reveal that besides plying their commercial activities, the Potedars also served as bankers to the Maharaja.

Export and Import of Raw Materials : Wheat was grown in the Punjab in plenty. The records of the Government of Ranjit Singh show that its price was only 1 rupee per maund. Being so cheap it was a major item for export to British territories in India. Saffron was produced only in Kashmir and after its annexation to Ranjit Singh's kingdom its production reached its highest point and was also an important export item. From India indigo was brought into the Punjab as the indigo prepared here was not sufficient. The manufacture of cotton cloth, woollen cloth, and silks were the biggest industries of Punjab, for which raw materials like wool and silk were imported from outside. Such minerals as gold, silver, diamonds, jewels, etc., were imported from outside.

In this trade a leading role was played by the caravans of Seth Mirza Mal. Among articles of luxury imported from abroad, mention may be made in particular of silk velvets and embroidered curtains together with other furnishings and decorations. In this connection also Seth Mirza Mal had a notable role to play.

Opium was another important item of foreign trade. During Ranjit Singh's reign Ludhiana, Amritsar and Lahore were the chief centres of its production. Later, it began to be produced in Kashmir and other hilly regions also. It is interesting to note that Ranjit Singh had a special liking for *mishri* (sugar crystals) of Bikaner which was imported to the Punjab from there. Great stores of salt-petre also came from Rajasthan. Churu became a good centre of salt-petre, both refined and unrefined. It was required for the manufacture of gunpowder and the artillery units of Ranjit Singh's army. Amritsar and Lahore were important import centres. Most of this trade was handled by Seth Mirza Mal.

URBANISATION IN PUNJAB DURING THE TIMES OF RANJIT SINGH : A CASE STUDY OF LAHORE AND AMRITSAR

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As the cities are one of the oldest features of civilized life, the scholar have become interested in the study of urbanisation, particularly urbanism of a pre-industrial society.¹ Except a few useful works on some towns, urbanisation in Punjab has not been extensively studied.

Ranjit Singh's period needs some close attention as during this time some new towns came into existence and a few old towns were rehabilitated. This paper is an attempt to examine some of the issues pertaining to urbanisation in the pre-colonial Punjab or in the first half of the nineteenth century. The study is limited to Lahore and Amritsar because these not only emerged as the leading towns but also showed different patterns of urbanisation.

In a historical perspective, it will not be out of place to mention that during the Mughal period, the cities like Lahore, Delhi and Agra 'developed to a size comparable to the greatest towns in the world at the time', and, there was a definite increase in the urban population in India in the seventeenth century.² This growth of towns is generally attributed to various factors such as political stability, administrative significance, industrial growth, commercial feasibility and their strategic importance. The major cities were not only politico-administrative seats but also cultural and economic centres. In Punjab, Lahore was the leading town. As it was the capital city of the Lahore Suba, there were many beautiful buildings and gardens. But Lahore

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was more important as an economic centre. There were a large number of artisans working independently or in the *karkhanas* (workshops). There was a flourishing internal and external trade, carried on mainly by Hindu Khatri. Lahore was also a transit centre for the trade between Central Asia and the rest of India.

In the eighteenth century, Lahore and other towns in Punjab began to decline. The constant invasions from the North-West and the chaotic conditions created due to the absence of efficient government, greatly hampered the growth of industry and commerce in this region. In Lahore many people shifted to the walled city for safety. Some merchants and artisans migrated to Jammu, Amritsar and to modern U. P., and the population of the city was greatly reduced.³

In the time of Ranjit Singh, the process of urbanisation again began. In total, there were about 120 towns in the Sikh dominions. Many towns like Lahore, Multan, Sialkot, Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan, which had declined in the eighteenth century, were rehabilitated and again became the major cities of the Punjab. The growth of Amritsar as the largest city of Punjab was remarkable as before the rise of Ranjit Singh it was only a small town. As in the Mughal period, the expansion of the major towns during this period was also horizontal as well as vertical.⁴ This growth was horizontal in the sense that the areas outside the cities were gradually developed. At the same time, the smaller towns were vertically tied with the big cities. For instance, in the beginning of the eighteenth century Batala town used to send grain and other goods to Lahore for their disposal to other places in Punjab as well as in India. During the times of Ranjit Singh when Amritsar became the leading commercial town, the goods started coming there from smaller towns.⁵

It has been generally pointed out that the political stability given by Ranjit Singh was mainly responsible for the growth of urbanisation. Ranjit Singh's effort to improve industry and commerce has also been highlighted as a major factor contribut-

ing to development of towns. In other words, the process of urbanisation is explained in terms of political factor, it is pointed out that the ruling power played an important role in it. This point of view is in accordance with the sociological theories given by L. Mumford⁶ and G. Sjoberb⁷ who emphasise the dominant role of political power in the growth of towns. Undoubtedly, the strong centralised state of Ranjit Singh curbed feudal anarchy and paved the way for the growth of trade and industry. But urbanisation is primarily a socio-economic phenomenon and therefore, cannot be explained in such simple political terms. In fact a study of urbanisation in a total societal framework would be more rewarding.

Economically defined the city is a 'settlement where majority of the occupants are engaged in other than agricultural activities.'⁸ But this definition strictly applies to a industrial town. In a preindustrial society, where agricultural economy was predominant, the development of any town greatly depended upon agricultural hinterland. Amritsar and Lahore had a very fertile hinterland of the Bari Doab region. Irfan Habib has pointed out that in Medieval India the urban population was parasitical, based upon expropriation of agricultural surplus produce⁹ This also applies to the period of Ranjit Singh which was very much a part of the Medieval Indian polity and economy. The surplus produce was either consumed by non-agricultural population living in the towns or was exported outside the kingdom. Ranjit Singh's encouragement to cultivate the wastelands with a view to developing the revenue also increased the surplus produce; and this proved useful to meet the demands of growing urban population. In all the towns there were separate markets for the agricultural produce. Grain was the main item which was brought from the countryside to the towns. Large quantity of cash crops such as cotton, sugarcane and indigo were sent to the towns and were also exported outside the kingdom. Thus the relation of the city as agent of trade and commerce to the land was one of the important aspects of urban economy of this time.¹⁰

A substantial obstacle which hampered the relationship of the town and the countryside was the collection of revenue in kind. In this case the economic relation between the town and the countryside was dominated by the one-sided influx of the agricultural produce. But Ranjit Singh also collected revenue in cash, and this might have increased the commercial potentialities of the agricultural produce, though in a small manner. Whatever may be the method of converting the agricultural produce into cash, it certainly increased the participation of urban merchants in the marketing of agricultural produce. But it is difficult to see this shift in quantitative terms.

The other obstacle in Medieval India to the development of relations of the towns and the country-side was the self-sufficiency of the village communities. It is also generally believed that the village communities in the Punjab were self-contained. But Yu. V. Gankovsky, a Russian historian, claims that the 'disintegration of the natural economy and social division of labour were in slow but steady progress in Punjab'.¹¹ It cannot be denied that the people living in the countryside greatly depended upon the import of some items like salt and iron. On the other hand, there was a large flow of agrarian produce to the towns. The production of cash crops not only increased the inter-dependence of town and the village but also weakened the hold of village-communities. In fact, through the mechanism of markets and with the growth of money economy, there was a substantial exchange of goods between villages and cities. Thus the gradual linking up of the village economy with the urban economy proved helpful to the growth of towns.

The development of trade and industry during the times of Ranjit Singh, was a major factor for the urban development. There were large numbers of artisans in the cities, working independently or in the workshops. Some of them were also employed in royal *karkhanas*. These artisans were engaged in the manufacture of silk and cotton textile, metalware, shoe-making, embroidery, and the manufacture of ornaments, weapons and many other articles. The towns were also centres of external and inter-

nal trade. A large number of items such as grain, indigo, carpets and metalware were exported to Central Asia. In return, the Punjab imported fruits, horses, raw silk, wool, copper, etc. A flourishing transit trade was also done at Amritsar. There were also commercial relations with the English East India Company and goods like sugar and shawls were exported to Delhi.

It is well known that Maharaja Ranjit Singh took keen interest in industry and trade. He patronised shawl industry by giving shawls as presents. He also encouraged merchants from outside his kingdom to do trade in the Punjab. The external trade was given encouragement also with the view to securing goods for the court and the army. Moreover, Ranjit Singh also considered trade as a big source of revenue. Therefore, he imposed numerous duties on traders and artisans. But these duties did not hamper the growth of trade and industry in any way. This gave surprise to the British Officials as is evident from the following report :¹²

That such a multiform system of taxation did not harass the people,.....can scarcely be supposed, but still commerce did, somehow, thrive and a sturdy people grew and multiplied to a degree which under such disadvantages European political economists would have thought hardly possible.

A major factor for the development of trade and industry was the security which Ranjit Singh gave to the merchants. Hindu merchants, who dominated in trade and commerce, perhaps, felt more secure during the Sikh rule. Another reason for the growth was the constantly increasing demand of various items by the court, nobility and the army. But the most significant factor for the development of industry and trade was the involvement of large merchants' capital in shawl, silk, cotton and other industries. For instance, shawl and silk industry of Amritsar were greatly financed by Hindu Khatri merchants.

The growth of money economy during the times of Ranjit Singh also helped in the process of urbanisation. At the village level wherever revenue was collected in cash, the money transactions began to increase, though in a small manner. The pea-

sants, in order to pay the revenue, either sold their produce to the local merchants or took loan from the *sahukars* (money-lenders). In those areas which specialised in the production of cash crops money entered increasingly. Ranjit Singh paid a large amount of money as salaries to soldiers and other official staff. This gave them opportunity to buy more commodities from the markets. Thus the market system became more strengthened and this led to the development of towns.

In an industrial society, there is always mass migration from rural areas to cities. But in the pre-industrial society the migration is never sharp and sizable. In the times of Ranjit Singh, many artisans living in the villages shifted to towns to improve their social and economic conditions.¹³ Large numbers of Kashmiri artisans also migrated to Amritsar and other towns. With their coming to Amritsar, shawl industry increased tremendously.

As stated earlier, Lahore and Amritsar developed greatly during this period. Amritsar even surpassed Lahore and became the leading city of the Punjab. The population of Amritsar was more than that of Lahore. According to the first census report of 1854, the population of Amritsar was 1,12,188 against 94,143 of Lahore.¹⁴ Amritsar also became the main economic centre of the kingdom. Ranjit Singh collected Rs. 7,00,000 as octroi duty from Amritsar whereas Lahore only yielded Rs. 5,00,000.¹⁵ The number of shops in Amritsar was 4500 against 3000 in Lahore. Smyth says that Amritsar 'may in a commercial point of view be considered the wholesale and Lahore the retail shop of the Punjab.'¹⁶ Why Lahore could not be the leading town particularly when it was the capital city? It is more surprising because Lahore was one of the major cities of the Mughal period. How Amritsar, on the contrary, could rise to the position of biggest city? A comparative analysis of the development of these two towns would be useful for the better understanding of the process of urbanisation in pre-colonial Punjab.

In 1799 Ranjit Singh captured Lahore. He repaired the fort, palaces and Shalamar gardens. The city wall was rebuilt. New mansions were also built by the nobles and merchants. Due to the court and the army, commercial and industrial activities of the town greatly increased. Ranjit Singh encouraged merchants from Rajasthan and other places to do business at Lahore. He also tried to establish shawl industry in Lahore, but, unfortunately, it could not develop. Lahore was known for arm production. Besides this, cotton, silk, ornaments and other industries were also there. But the development of the town was checked due to a number of factors. According to Cunningham, the security arrangements for merchants at Lahore were not as good as in Amritsar.¹⁷ Therefore, a large number of merchants of Lahore migrated to Amritsar. Moreover, with the disruption of Lahore-Kabul route through the Khyber pass, Lahore lost its importance as commercial centre.¹⁸ But the major factor was less investment of merchant capital in the industries at Lahore. For instance, in 1849-50 the manufactures of Lahore valued only Rs. 2, 50, 000 whereas the manufactures of Amritsar valued Rs, 7,00,000.¹⁹ Thus Lahore developed mainly because it was the seat of political power. But at the same time, Lahore failed to become the leading town primarily because the economic activity there was comparatively lesser than that at Amritsar.

Ranjit Singh captured Amritsar in 1805 and the town soon rose into prominence. He frequently visited Amritsar along with his large staff of Darbar. He built in Amritsar a new fort called Govindgarh and a large army was kept there. He also built new palaces and made all efforts to improve and beautify Amritsar. *Harmandir* was renovated. Many nobles, particularly Sikhs and merchants, also made beautiful buildings in the city. All these factors gave a great impetus to commercial and industrial activities of the town. Many towns and villages were linked with Amritsar as it was the leading centre for trade and commerce. It was also 'grand entrepot for trade with Central Asia'.²⁰ With the disruption of the

Khyber pass route to Kabul, the trade from Amritsar to Kandhar through Jhang and Dera Ismail Khan became more popular. The notable industries of Amritsar were shawl, silk, cotton, woollen carpets, etc. But shawl industry was the most popular. In the beginning shawls worth Rs. 200,000 were imported and worth Rs. 30, 000 were manufactured in the town.²¹ But in 1833, due to the famine in Kashmir, large numbers of Kashmiris shifted to Amritsar and began to work in the shawl industry. The large demand of the shawls and availability of Kashmir artisans encouraged merchants to invest capital in this industry. Therefore, soon shawls worth Rs. 4,00,000, were manufactured in Amritsar. The import of the shawls also increased to Rs. 6,00,000.²² Evidently Amritsar rose because it was the main centre of economic activity.

The above study makes it clear that the process of urbanisation in Punjab again began in the times of Ranjit Singh. However, the pattern of this urbanisation was almost the same as it was in the times of Mughals.

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STRUCTURE AND POSITION OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION IN PUNJAB, 1799-1839

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When the Sikh *misaldars* became masters of the Punjab in 1765, they showed much concern for the prosperity of the peasants and the development of agriculture. In this connection Franklin writes : "The Sikh territories are said to contain prodigious quantities of cattle, horses, oxen, cows and sheep, and grains of various kinds are produced in abundance."¹ Another writer says : "The country is said to be in a state of high cultivation which I believe is because they carry into it all the cattle fit for tillage which come into their possession, collect a very moderate rent and that mostly in kind and during any internal disputes their soldiery never molests the husbandman."²

These accounts of contemporary foreigners show that Sikh *misaldars* used to give much attention to agriculture and peasants. This, then, was Ranjit Singh's heritage in the field of agriculture. He established a degree of peace and security which the people of this state had not enjoyed for about a century.³

In the time of Ranjit Singh great stress was laid on extensive agriculture. Many incentives were given to the farmers for this purpose. Irrigational facilities were provided to make the land more productive.⁴ In the Doab of Bist Jullundur, close to the two rivers, intensive cultivation was practised in the time of Misar Rup Lal. Elsewhere, too, efforts were made to bring more and more land under the plough by Ranjit Singh.⁵ The cash crops such as indigo, sugarcane and jute etc. were also cultivated in the different parts of this state.

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Dr. Henry Honigberge writes that various types of fruits like mangoes, palms, apples, walnuts, water-mellons and grapes were cultivated in the Punjab during the Khalsa period, while in the areas of Kashmir, Peshawar and central plains different vegetables and flowers were sown which were unknown elsewhere in the world.

The following major crops were grown in the time of Ranjit Singh in Punjab :

1. Rice : It was extensively grown in the Hoshiarpur region, Kangra hills and Kashmir.⁶ In the *pargana* of Khalil Mohammad in Peshawar the cultivation of Bara rice was done on a large scale. The quality of this rice was very fine like our *basmati*. It is said when Bara rice was cooked its length was $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and its smell could be felt even in the neighbourhood.
2. Wheat : It was the premier crop of the kingdom. Different local varieties of wheat were cultivated, specially in northern and central zones of the Punjab. The most common variety of wheat was *Triticum vulgare*. It was suitable for all conditions—both irrigated and *brani* areas. The *wadanak* variety was also sown. In the southern tracts beyond Multan, dwarf wheat with rounded grain and small ears was cultivated.⁷ St. Col. G. B. Trevenheers says, "The finest wheat I have seen in the Pnnjab is in the small valley of Boorhan, not far from Hasan Abdal. The highest production of wheat was in Ferozepur and Sheikhupura area. More or less wheat was cultivated throug out the empire of Ranjit Singh."⁸
3. Gram : This crop was also grown with wheat but its area fluctuated with rainfall. It was generally sown on poor, unirrigated land and harvested a fortnight earlier than wheat. Its yield also varied from region to region.
4. Barley : This was sown sometimes mixed with wheat and grams. It had about fifty-one samples.⁹ Its highest yield

was in Sheikhpura, i.e. 25 maunds per acre. In Jullundur and Ferozepur the average yield was 20 and 18 maunds per acre respectively.

5. Maize : It was the principal foodgrain of the mountain, sub-montane and central tracts and was extensively cultivated in all the three areas.¹⁰ It too had many varieties. Mr. Baden Powell reported that one specimen from the hills (yellow) was remarkably good, quite equal to that produced in America.¹¹
6. Pulses : There were many varieties of pulses sown in the Punjab, such as mash, urd, mung, etc. It was a main component of the diet of the rural population.¹²
7. Hemp or San : It was cultivated in almost every district of the Multan Province. Flax was another fibre which was cultivated in the Punjab for oil seeds and fodder.
8. Sugarcane : It was grown mostly in the sub-montane tract between Jammu and the Chenab.¹³ This was a very profitable crop. Gur and sugar were made from it and were used by all the people of the Punjab.
9. Indigo : This was mainly cultivated in the *parganas* of Kehrur and Burhanpur. From these *parganas* it was sent to the other parts of the Punjab and India.

Methods of Cultivation: The traditional method of cultivation was that six or seven ploughings were done before wheat or barley was sown. In this way the ground was completely pulverised. Many disparaging remarks have been made about the native plough, its simplicity and lightness and its merely scratching the ground, but a little reflection would show that under the peculiar circumstances of our climate and soil it was probably the best.¹⁴ There was different farming operations practised in those days. Where the ground was in dry open state the drill was used in sowing, with the object of delivering the seed deep into the soil. A piece of flat heavy wood (sohaga) was then drawn over the furrows to smooth them and keep in the moisture.

A good deal of trouble was also taken in hand-hoeing and weeding for some of the crops, such as sugarcane, maize and longer kinds of millets.¹⁵ The plough used for the cultivation of land was made of wood with an iron blade or an iron-shaped wooden blade. This was drawn by a single yoke of oxen. On the whole the cultivator was not aware of any better methods of sowing or of selection of better seeds, as we see to-day. Three methods of sowing were prevailing : 1. scattering; 2. dropping the seed into furrows by hand; 3. drilling.

The cultivator had no special knowledge of rotation of crops. The same crops succeeded each other, year after year, on the same ground. There was no regular system of changes for the renovation of the soil.¹⁶ Land near towns, villages and wells was heavily manured. The dung and urine of animals, sweepings of the town and vegetable refuse were mainly used for manure. The manure was generally spread on the field at the time of ploughing. Weeding and hoeing were done only in the case of valuable crops like sugarcane.

Crops were cut entirely by hand and in harvesting all local menials were employed. Grain was mostly trodden out with the aid of cattle. The attitude of Ranjit Singh's government was sympathetic towards agriculture and many facilities were given to the peasants.

The agricultural labour generally was furnished by village, *kamins*. They were from low castes and all sorts of menial work was done by them. The caste-system also played an important role. In the hills of Kangra, Hoshiarpur and sub-montane areas the high-caste people did not touch the plough. If they did they were relegated to the status of second-grade *zamin-dars*.¹⁷

Labour was also needed for clearing water channels and lifting up water from wells to water the crops. At sowing and reaping times the *amins* were required to help the *zamindars*. This labour was called *cher* in rural tracts, specially in Multan.¹⁸

Irrigation: Agriculture in the Punjab largely depended upon

rainfall which was not always timely and certain. If the monsoons were in time, the prospects of *Kharif* crops were good, otherwise they were very poor. In winter there was some rain in the Punjab brought about by the cyclones of the Persian Gulf. This rain was very useful for wheat and barley. By and large the cultivation of crops was at the mercy of rain in those times. After the fall of the Durrani Empire when the Sikh *misaldars* became masters of the Punjab, they did nothing for the development of irrigation. This was because of many reasons, such as their jealousy of one another and their unstable territories. In the beginning of the 18th century when Ranjit Singh consolidated his empire in the Punjab, the problem of irrigation was taken up more seriously. Ranjit Singh knew that if the cultivator grows more or better crops, the income of the Government would increase. Secondly, until and unless the condition of the cultivator improved, there would be no development in general.¹⁹ Thirdly, though the land of the Punjab was fertile, yet to get more production from it irrigation was necessary. Fourthly, in case monsoons were late or failed, crops would be harmed. Hence steps were taken to procure water for the crops from artificial irrigation methods. The following were the measures taken by Ranjit Singh for this purpose :

- (i) **Wells :** Well irrigation was very common in Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Riarki (Gurdaspur), Ajnala (Amritsar) and Darap (parts of Sialkot and Gujranwala districts).²⁰ The soil of this area was not very hard and it was easy to sink a well. These wells were of two main categories : (a) *kacha* wells, (b) *pucca* wells. *kacha* wells were dug in the earth without masonry walls or casing. In some areas they worked very nicely but generally they fell off, specially in the low khadir, within two to three years. On these *kacha* wells various methods were used to lift the water. The most common among them were *dhanki* and *lao charas*. *Pucca* wells were those which had an internal wall of masonry and *pucca* casing. These wells were generally worked by *hurth* or Persian wheel. Sometimes over large wells there were two sets of wheels, bearing belts and pots placed parallel to each

other. Such a well was called *do malah* or *do hurtha* or *do chuthi* in the Punjab. These wells were often the joint property of several owners who used them by turns.²¹ Diwan Sawan Mal in Multan and Misar Rup Lal in Jullundur encouraged the cultivators to sink wells for the development of agriculture. People were given loans and incentives for this purpose, such as reduction for some years in land revenue. The total number of wells in Ranjit Singh's time was about 1, 36, 638, 53.²² The Persian wheels were common near the river banks, specially in western and central Punjab. It is also said that the well system was the easiest and the least expensive system of irrigation.

- (ii) **Bandhs** : This method was generally followed in hilly areas where during the rainy season water was collected for irrigation. The *bandhs* were of two types—Mund Bandhs and Pand Bandhs. A Mund Bandh was generally made at the head of a stream. These *bandhs* were usually found in the north-west, south-east and south-west of the Punjab. The method was useful to irrigate land in the hills.
- (iii) **Kuhls** : This method was common specially in rice-growing areas. The *kuhls* were under the control of the people, and official interference was practically nil. In the Aik circle of the Daska tehsil of the Sialkot district a somewhat similar system existed which brought fertilizing silt to the fields.²³ The *kuhls* were very common in the areas of Kangra and Sultanpur Lodhi (Kapurthala District).
- (iv) **Chashmas** : These were perennial springs. They were mostly found in Kallan, Kohar, Chumba, Soloi, etc. at the foot of the hills. The fruit gardens of Choa and the sugar-cane of Saloi depended upon these springs in the Jehlum district.
- (v) **Jhallars** : A *jhallar* was a kind of a Persian wheel or a common well transferred to the bank of a river. A small pool was excavated immediately below the *jhallar* to collect water and to afford the wheels a sufficient surface to work upon. As almost the whole expense consisted in the wood work

used, *jhallars* were constructed in large numbers and abandoned again without materially affecting the prosperity of the *zamindars*.²⁴ The *jhallars* were commonly found in Nur Mahal (Jullundur) and in Multan.

- (vi) **Canal Irrigation :** In the time of Ranjit Singh there were canals in almost all the *parganas* of the Khalsa Raj.²⁵ These canals were very useful for irrigation, navigation and revenue (*abkari* taxes).

Ranjit Singh was perhaps among the first few rulers of the Punjab who thought of utilizing the river water for irrigation purposes in the *Suba* of Multan.²⁶ Canal irrigation brought prosperity to the inhabitants, increase in the government revenue and minimised the famines. The approximate area under canal irrigation increased to 10,000²⁷ acres by the close of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. The following were the main canals :—

Hasli Canal : Originally this canal was dug up in the time of Akbar for supplying water to the Shalimar garden at Lahore. But it had got filled up by the end of the Mughal rule and the Shalimar gardens had to go without canal water for about 25 years and the trees in the gardens did not bear fruit for years.²⁸ Ranjit Singh reconstructed the canal more or less on the old lines in the earlier part of the 19th century. At the same time, through the influence of two *udasis* another branch of it was brought from Madhopur down to Amritsar with the idea of supplying water to the holy tanks and the Ram Bagh at Amritsar.²⁹ Because of the sacred nature of the task, the Sikhs of various villages along the entire course dug their respective portions voluntarily. In this way up to Amritsar the digging was done free and no one demanded any money. After Amritsar the digging was done on remuneration basis on the assurance that whatever water would be left after the requirements of the holy tanks and the Ram Bagh, would be given to those *zamindars* who would take part in the digging of this canal. Both the branches of the Hasli canal were perennial whereas the canals taken from the rivers Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab and Indus were working only for some time in the year.³⁰

Canals from the Sutlej

1. **Wah Ganda Singh :** It was taken off from the river Sutlej at a place four miles upward, near Ganda Singh village. It supplied water to Lahore.
2. **Lower Sutlej Canal :** It irrigated the Multan area and was taken off from the river Sutlej's right bank. Most of the construction work of this canal had been done in the 18th century by the Daudputra tribe. In 1831 Diwan Sawan Mal enlarged and improved it.
3. **Sardar Wah :** It was taken off at Shahpur Joshi and it watered the *pargana* of Kehrur. It had 265 *jhallars* working on it. Its water was useful for the cultivation of indigo.
4. **Bahawal Wah :** It was taken off from the river Sutlej at Fatehpur and it irrigated the area up to Kokur. More than 820 *jhallars* were working on it. This canal was also useful for navigation.
5. **Sultan Wah :** This canal was taken off from the river Sutlej at Fatehpur and watered the area of Chotani. In fact, it was a branch of the Bahawal Wah.
6. **Zoam Wah :** This was taken off from the Sutlej at village Niamat Ali and it watered about 45 villages up to Donapur. About 215 *jhallars* were working on it. It was also used for navigation.
7. **Kabul Wah :** It was also taken off from the Sutlej at Niamat Ali village and went up to Burhanpur. It was very useful for Indigo cultivation.
8. **Dewan Sawan Mal Wah :—** It was taken off at village Imam Lota from the Sutlej in the time of Diwan Sawan Mal. It watered the land of Kachi and 250 *jhallars* were working on it.
9. **Mohammad Wah :—** It was taken off from the Sutlej at Shahpur Joshi. It supplied water to 12 villages and 200 *jhallars* were working on it. It ended at Kot Arani. A very small sum

was taken as tax from those who used the water of this canal. This was done just to encourage the people to take water from it for the cultivation of land.

Canals in the Suba of Peshawar

1. A canal was taken off from the river Bara village Sangu. It watered the *pargana* of Khalil Mohammad. Here the Bara rice was cultivated on a large scale. Besides the gardens of Badana, white grapes, peaches and many other fruit gardens were irrigated by this canal. The length of the canal was 42 *kos* and it flowed throughout the year. One of its branches watered Peshawar, Dēbandh and Mauza Zakhi and then it joined the river Nagu Man.³¹
2. *Katha Sheik* provided water to the area of Peshawar city where vegetables, fruits and mulberry trees were cultivated. The mulberry fruit was very sweet and after drying it was sent to many other parts of the country.

Canals of Hashat Nagar

1. *Budni Canal* : It was taken off from the river Swat and it irrigated the Hasht Nagar area. The produce of this area was sugarcane, chillies, maize, wheat, mellon (phuti) and fruits of various other kinds.³²
2. *Swat Canal* : It was also taken off from the Swat and it watered Doazai, Charsada and Prang areas. The sugarcane crop of this area was very famous. The production of rice and mellon was also well-known.
3. *Kalpali Canal* : This canal watered twenty-two villages of the Hoti Mardan area and helped a lot in the production of foodgrains.

Canals of Dera Ghazi Khan : A part of Dera Ghazi Khan's area was watered by canals from the river Indus. Here about fourteen canals were taken off from the west bank of the Indus. The construction of these canals had been done by the Mirani Chiefs and other native rulers. During the Maharaja's time their condition was improved. The total area irrigated by these canals was 1374 sq. miles.³³

Canals of Multan

1. *Skindar Wah* : It was taken off from the river Chenab. It irrigated the area of Nawabpur and Chaju Shah. It also gave water to 21 villages of Skindarabad. It was flowing from April to September and 140 *jhallars* were working on it. The canal was also useful for navigation.
2. *Wali Mohammad Wah* : It was taken off from the Chenab at Kan and went up to Chetara. It also watered some areas of Multan, specially the *parganas* of Suraj Kund and Multan. Its depth was useful for big boat navigation.
3. *Shahpur Canal* : It was taken off from the Chenab at Kamuha and went up to Multan. The major contribution of this canal was to *kharif* crops. It also watered the area in the north of Multan, called Seetal Di Marri ; 170 *jhallars* were working on it for irrigation.
4. *Gozala Canal* : It was taken off from the Chenab at Kampur and went up to village Amanullah. It was also useful for navigation.
5. *Dhandud* : This canal was taken off from Chenab at Joshi and it went up to the Mukampul Halvi area. It was also used for navigation and 70 *jhallars* were working on it.
6. *Bakht Wah* : It was also taken off at Kampur from the Chenab and went up to Amanullah Mukam. It was also navigable and 110 *jhallars* were working on it.
7. *Durana Sangara Canal* : This was taken off from the Chenab at Kama. It supplied water to a large area of Multan and 168 *jhallars* were working on it.³⁴

Canals from the River Ravi

1. *The Mian Channu Canal* : It supplied water to the *pargana* of Mian Channu. Its length was 35 miles and was useful for navigation.
2. *Siddhani Canal* : It was taken off from the Ravi at Chuntras of Ramachandra and Lachhman. Its length was 44 miles and was useful for navigation.

Canals of the Majha Area :

There were a few canals in the Majha tract also. Alexandar Burnes says that if the Majha area was developed during Ranjit Singh's time in agriculture, it was all because of canals.³⁵

These canals helped to cultivate the barren areas and to get more yield from the fields. The Government also got more land revenue as the income of the cultivators increased.

Water Rates : Ranjit Singh's Government charged different rates for these canals in the form of *abwabs* :

1. Those who used canal water for the cultivation of land were supposed to pay Rs. 2/- per acre per year.³⁶
2. For a *jhallar* which irrigated 25 bighas, the water rate was charged at the rate of Rs.2/- for *rabi* and *kharif* crops per month, i. e. Rs. 12/- per year. But while fixing those rates the quality of land was always kept in mind.³⁷
3. For a well charges were half of those for a *jhallar*, i.e. Re. 1/- for *rabi* crops per well and Rs. 2/- per well for *kharif* crops.³⁸
4. About 100 flour mills were working on these canals with the help of water. A nominal tax was charged from these mills.
5. For navigation small duties were charged from the traders. A big amount of money *accrued* to the state treasury from these rates. In 1837 about 37,500 acres of land was irrigated by canals.

This shows that the duties on water were not heavy. Canal and well irrigation in the provinces of Multan and Lahore made the state revenues stable.³⁹ Every year these canals were repaired and half the expenditure of repair was paid by the Government while the other half was paid by the *zamindars* concerned. So we can say that the Government adopted a very helpful and favourable policy towards the development of agriculture. Loans and other incentives were given to cultivators to enable them to take more interest in agriculture. Ranjit Singh knew it very well that unless the condition of agriculture improved, there would not be any improvement in the life of the people. In hour of need loans (*tacavi*) were advanced to the farmers.

Not only this, troops were under orders not to damage any crops when they were on march. Water rates in newly cultivated areas were very low. Diwan Sawan Mal in Multan and Misar Rup Lal in Jullundur were famous for their generosity in this respect. Farmers were allowed to pay taxes in kind or cash.

The overall condition of agriculture under Ranjit Singh was quite good. It was largely because of the political stability and peace brought about by him. But it was also due to his policy and helpful attitude. People had faith in him and he was always ready to undertake welfare works for the people, specially for the farmers.

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE LAND MARKET IN THE PUNJAB DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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In the 19th century it was commonly believed by many British officials that a market in land which characterised the British Indian economy was conspicuous by its absence in the Punjab under Sikh rule.¹ In the present century also this 19th century legacy persisted and frequently dominated the official mind.² A noted authority like Calvert even argued that creditworthiness of an agricultural holding depended largely on the security of tenure which the Sikhs failed to offer to the proprietors of land. Consequently, during Sikh rule 'when the cultivator ploughed with a sword by his side and the Collector came for the revenue at the head of a regiment', land was practically unsaleable 'except in the immediate neighbourhood of the big towns'. But it can be learnt from the same authority that with the introduction of law and order under British rule, land gradually became a valuable asset and its prices rose over the years.³

The present paper, however, stems from a feeling that the development of a market in land was not altogether a new phenomenon in the agrarian society of the Punjab during British rule. Available official and private records clearly indicate that 'the right of property in the land' was 'unequivocally recognised' by 'descent, purchase and gift'⁴ atleast in some parts of the Punjab. While analysing this problem, this paper would also try to point out that contrary to common assumptions, land market, however, remained comparatively dull during the 1850s under British rule.

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Actually quite a significant number of alienations took place in the eastern submontane and central districts which enjoyed the blessings of Sikh rule for more than three decades in the 19th century. Here the soil was fertile and the nature was bountiful. The Bhandari records from the Gurdaspur district clearly pointed out that in matters of permanent alienations, all 'possible precautions' were taken by the authorities concerned to ensure that the transfer of property, with all the rights and assets pertaining to it, from one owner to another, 'was complete, final and irrevocable.'⁵ From Ganesh Das's *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*⁶ we have a detailed list of villages in the Gujrat district, purchased by the Khattris at the time of Mughal rule in the Punjab. They had earlier made fortunes as government officials and traders which they often invested in the purchase of land. In Jullundur also, 'a market for land, and the practice of buying and selling land' existed in the first half of the 19th century. Temple (who was perhaps one of the earliest British revenue officials going through the *jamabandi* records in this part of the province) found the Khattris in possession of some lands 'acquired by sale, mortgage, and such like transfers'.⁷ A recent village enquiry on Vilyatpur (a village in the Jullundur district) also points out that transfers among the Sahotas (a subcaste of the Jats who constituted the bulk of the village proprietary body) 'occurred before British annexation as well'.⁸

Similarly in the south-west of the province, mainly in the districts of Multan and Montgomery, a great change in the proprietary right took place as a result of extension of cultivation over the waste land under Diwan Sawan Mal.⁹ This region was a scantily peopled area, with an annual rainfall of five inches and it was held by 'a motely group' like the descendants of former pastoral tribes, holy men, broken down *jagirdars* and other officials.¹⁰ These indigenous proprietary groups were not generally rich enough to undertake the task of extending cultivation over the waste by means of costly artificial irrigation from the wells. Naturally when Diwan Sawan Mal assumed the governorship of this part of the Punjab, a very significant attempt was made of

'appropriating unoccupied waste lands'. He himself executed numerous public works 'because without them agriculture would not prosper, and the revenue would not be paid'.¹¹ With this end in view he made life and property secure, encouraged enterprising Khatris to settle and hold lands at a favourable rate, especially in the case of new cultivation. The *kardars* were particularly instructed to treat them well¹² so that they could find some interests in investing their savings in the improvement of cultivation. Actually many of them sank wells, took lands on mortgage and ploughed back their surplus over their cultivable holdings, thereby leaving behind a healthy tradition of agricultural enterprise in this part of the province.¹³ These men were regarded as *chakdars* (by virtue of sinking wells); they were virtually independent of any proprietary control in matters of arranging cultivation around the wells¹⁴ and enjoyed a 'heritable and transferable right' over their holdings. These changes greatly eclipsed the authority of the indigenous proprietary body and Thorburn's enquiry of the late 1880s admitted that many mortgages in this part of the province often went back to the good old days of Sikh rule.¹⁵

Alienations of lands were equally an established practice in some of the trans-Indus *tahsils*, like Bannu and Marwat. In Bannu *tahsil*, mortgages were predominantly made by the Bannuchi *mallicks* to the Sayyads, universally exempted from paying taxes because of their dominant position, in religious matters. By virtue of their privileged position, they gradually 'grew rich, and began to invest their savings out to usury'. The Bannuchi *mallicks* usually borrowed throughout the year and in return were often obliged to mortgage some lands to them. It was found that 'very seldom the original debt was repaid.'¹⁶ Consequently, a large-scale alienation of land took place and on the eve of the annexation of the Punjab it was estimated that 'fully two-thirds of this prolific valley, to which nature never denies a crop' 'passed away from sheer poverty out of the hand of the *zamindars* (Bannuchi *mallicks* into the possession of the mortgagees, chiefly Syuds' who 'had plenty of funds to invest in the misfortunes of others'.¹⁷ According to Herbert Edwardes, they acquired approximately one-

sixth of the total cultivated area even before the introduction of British rule.¹⁸ In Marwat also, mortgages of lands were quite frequent and these transfers were mostly between the Bannuchi *mallicks* and their Hindu creditors, the Aroras. The mortgages were generally of an usufructuary nature and the indebted *zamindars* paid one-tenth of the produce to their creditors. But if the *zamindar* debtor died, the Arora-creditor could place no further claim because the man who borrowed the money from him is dead, and his debts are not binding on his heirs.¹⁹

In the cis-Indus Dera, Bhakkar and Leiah *tahsils* of Dera Ismail Khan district, proprietary right in wells was clearly established 'under Native Government' and a large portion of well mortgages dated back to the pre-annexation days.²⁰ In the Gundapur area of the Kulachi *tahsil*, according to one estimate, 'not less than one half the land' 'was in pawn in the year 1848.'²¹ Here the landholders frequently 'found it necessary to mortgage the property; in which case, by a most unjust custom, one-tenth of the tenant's share of the produce was assigned to *girweewalluh* (creditor), by way of interest on his loan'.

But the land market had to function under certain constraints during Sikh Rule. Besides it had its own regional variations and these were determined by various factors, such as the security of tenure, availability of credit, pressure of population on land, fertility of holdings, and techniques of cultivation as practised by the different peasant communities under given geographical conditions. Accordingly, the market in land was comparatively of a restricted nature in most of the dry inhospitable trans-Indus districts of Kohat and Dera Ghazi Khan, except along the tracts protected by artificial means of the irrigation either from wells or periodic river floods. Further the fierce tribalism of the warlike Muslim *zamindars* also greatly clamped down the prospect of brisk land transfers in this part of the province. Here credit was very 'shy'²² because the creditors had very little prospect of attaching their debtors' holdings. Such steps often stirred up fierce tribal hatred, eventually leading to creditors' tragic end of life.²³

In some cases also, the growth of a land market was retarded by an effective implementation of the pre-emption laws discouraging sale of lands to outsiders.²⁴ Again in some parts of the province, in the context of abundance of waste and scarcity of population, land had practically very little value. In most of the south-eastern districts we do not generally come across any great pressure of population on land. In many cases there was even a cry for cultivators to plough the lands and share the heavy land revenue demand of the state and it became the paramount consideration of many proprietors 'to have it distributed on the greatest number of shoulders'. Consequently, cultivators were encouraged to settle and share the state burden and in fact they 'were little distinguishable from the proprietors in other respects, except that they do not necessarily acquire the right of ownership.'²⁵

With the introduction of British rule in the Punjab, it is often argued, these social and economic constraints disappeared and a brisk market in land steadily developed in the province. Prof. K. Mukherjee, for example, pointed out that British rule brought about a very significant change in the land laws of the province by conferring 'heritable and transferable right' to the owners of land. Along with it came the newly 'constituted law courts and] British judicial system' which 'sought to protect and enforce private property right in land'. This 'creation' of private property right made landed estate immensely attractive and it 'became forthwith a saleable asset which enhanced the credit of the peasant proprietor' and 'commanded a slowly rising exchange value'.²⁶

But this view on the development of land market in the Punjab during the first few years following the introduction of British rule is not wholly borne out by the contemporary official records. Actually during the 1850s land did not become a saleable asset as Prof. Mukherjee made us believe. Land prices were then usually low and he also placed an undue importance on the role of British law courts in the effective development of a market in land in the 1850s. Contemporary revenue records and reports from the district officers further point to the fact that

interference by the civil law courts was particularly discouraged on matters relating to land transfers and it was only in the mid 1860s they were allowed to take any cognizance of this issue.

Again recent researches on the development of land market in Eastern India under the East India Company's rule pointed out that the 'formation of a land market resulted from three sets of circumstances', one of which was 'the insistence on the part of the government on sales of defaulting zamindars' estates as a device towards ensuring the security of revenue'.²⁷ But in the context of the agrarian economy of the Punjab of the 1850s, this view does not entirely hold good. During the early years of British rule in the Punjab, the provincial administrative machinery did not actually insist on sale of lands. The Punjab Board of Administration (set up shortly after the annexation of the province) openly discouraged permanent transfers of lands to outsiders because transfers would foster 'hatred between classes' eventually leading to the gradual breakdown of the 'idyllic village community system in the Punjab'. They would also lead to the deterioration of the revenue-paying capacity of the villages. The Board generally adopted a protective policy in matters of land transfers and made it a principle to maintain and protect the hereditary village communities 'in all their integrity'.²⁸ As early as 1852 it was categorically asserted that 'landed property shall not unnecessarily be brought to the hammer'.²⁹ Again in 1854 the Punjab Civil Code reiterated the pre-emption laws with regard to permanent transfers of lands. In 1856 the right of pre-emption was further extended to usufructuary mortgages and in 1857 in the background of the 'Mutiny' disasters, the government placed renewed stress on the protective principles and proposed some additional restrictions on all compulsory sale of lands for debt. The early official predilections were also an outcome of the bitter consequences of the harsh sale law operations in Eastern India and the North-Western Provinces during the late 18th and 19th centuries. Accordingly, these officers contemplated introducing some such steps as would bring all compulsory sales of land for debt under regular official scrutiny and sanction, and tried to

justify their actions on grounds of political and social considerations.³⁰

During the early 1850s the land revenue policy of the government also partly retarded the development of a brisk land market in the province. Besides their provisional nature,³¹ the early settlements (commonly known as the summary settlements) also did not permanently fix up the record of rights. It was only at the time of the regular settlements that the government seriously took up the problem. Thus in the absence of any permanent record of rights, landed estates could hardly become a regular marketable commodity during the early years of British rule.

The development of a land market was further retarded because of a general fall in the prices of agricultural produce.³² This fall in the prices was largely due to the fact that during the first three years following the annexation, the harvests with a few isolated exceptions were remarkably favourable. 'Cultivation was extended even on the *barani* lands without much exertion on the part of the *zamindars*'. 'These circumstances, joined to the general peace and security of the country and the fact that large bodies of the disbanded *khalsa* and discharged employees of the Lahore Administration had to turn attention to agriculture for a subsistence', all contributed to cause 'so great an increase of produce as to reduce the prices of grain to an unprecedented extent.'³³ Grain in consequence became a glut in the market. In 1851 and 1852 wheat fetched only one half as much as the average price of the five years before annexation.³⁴

Besides these general causes, prices of food-grains also fell due to the scarcity of silver. Under Sikh rule regular cash remittance of the soldiers employed in the *khalsa* to their home constituted a very important source of income of the *zamindars*. Many a highly taxed village paid half its revenue from its military earnings. Thus money circulated freely.³⁵ But shortly after the annexation, the *khalsa* was summarily disbanded; it put an abrupt end to the cash remittance of the soldiers leading to scarcity of silver in the countryside. Further during these

years the Indian portion of the army employed in the Punjab was largely Hindustani. 'A considerable share of the Punjab revenues was paid to them as their wages, of which they spent a part in the Punjab and remitted the remainder to their homes. Many lakhs of rupees were thus annually drained from the Punjab'.³⁶ This again led to a general fall in the prices. These were the circumstances in which a considerable number of districts witnessed the introduction of the summary settlements. These settlements almost everywhere reduced the demands of the Sikhs; but the fixed cash demand imposed by the new government in the context of a general fall of prices as well as the rigidity in its collection, largely set off the advantages of the cultivators. The revenue management was also extremely bad and often excessive demands³⁷ were made from the people by harsh and illegal methods.

Naturally, this high rate of assessment caused much hardship to the people and its effects were felt universally by the rural folk. In Ambala, for example, the assessment was pitched so high that many *zamindars* considered it prudent to desert their holdings as if they were of little value.³⁸ In Thaneswar (Karnal) also this high assessment led to a general impoverishment of the peasants; but 'revenue continued to be realised' and 'coercive measures were constantly adopted'.³⁹ In Amritsar, particularly in its Narowal *pargana*, the situation was equally grave. Blyth, Extra Assistant Commissioner, in a memorandum to the government pointed out that high rate of assessment had immensely increased the 'embarrassments' of the people.⁴⁰ In Sialkot the effect of summary settlements was equally disastrous and it did not escape the watchful eyes of the settlement officer.⁴¹ In this background land could hardly become a regular marketable commodity during the early 1850s.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. S.S. Thorburn (Commissioner and Superintendent, Rawalpindi Division) accused the government of introducing the fatal gift of private property right on land along with the technical law courts and harsh land revenue assessment. All these innovations, according to him, amounted to a radical change in the concept of property right in the rural economy ; they eventually paved the way for the development of a brisk market in land under British rule. For his views, see *Musalma ns and Money-lenders in the Punjab* (Edinburg, 1886) and *Punjab in Peace and War* (Patiala, 1970). See also, *Annual Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab, 1871-72*, p. 13.
2. In 1921-22, for example, the Punjab Government pointed out that under Sikh rule 'land had no value both because there was no one to purchase it and because there was no excess profits to be made from it. Sales of land were practically unknown before the advent of British rule'. *The Land of the Five Rivers*, Vol. I, p. 278.
3. H H. Calvert, 'The Price of Land in the Punjab', *The Journal of Indian Economics* (1971), p. 389. See also Clive Dewey, 'The Agricultural output of an Indian Province : The Punjab, 1870-1940', unpublished seminar paper, University of London.
4. H. C. Fanshawe, Officiating Junior Secretary to the Financial Commissioner, Punjab's No. 231, 7 November 1888, Rev. and Agr. (R) May 1891, 1-8A; *Punjab Government Records*, Vol. I : *Records of the Delhi Residency and Agency, 1807-57* (Lahore, 1911), p. 74 ; Irfan Habib, 'Evidence for Sixteenth-Century Agrarian Conditions in the Guru Granth Sahib', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1, March 1964, pp. 64-72 ; Irfan Habib, 'The Social Distribution of Landed Property in Pre-British India', *Indian Society : Historical Probings, Essays in Memory of D.D. Kosambi*, R. S. Sharma (Ed.) (New Delhi, 1974), p. 313.
5. J. S. Grewal (Tr. & Ed.), *In the Bye-Lanes of History* (Simla, 1974), pp. 40,43.
6. J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Trs. & Eds.), *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab* (Amritsar, 1975), pp. 27-28.
7. *Jullundur Settlement Report, 1851, Parliamentary Papers, 1854, LXIX*, p. 265.
8. Tom G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur, 1848-1968* (California, 1974), p. 131.

9. He was the youngest of the three sons of Hoshnak Rai, a Chopra Khatri of Akalgarh. He was made Governor of Multan in 1821. He retained this post till his death in 1844. 'By his energetic and just government of the province, Sawan Mal succeeded in raising the province to a state of prosperity it had never attained'. *Gujranwala District Gazetteer, 1893-94*, p. 29; *Multan District Gazetteer, 1901-02*, pp. 59-60.
10. James Douie, *The Punjab Settlement Manual* (Lahore, 1930), p. 54.
11. *Muzaffargarh Settlement Report, 1882*, p. 51.
12. Sita Ram Kohli, 'Land Revenue Administration under Maharaja Ranjit Singh', *The Panjab Past and Present*, V, p. 448.
13. R. K. Seth and Faiz Iahi, *An Economic Survey of Durrana Langana-a village in the Multan District* (The Board of Economic Enquiry, Punjab, Village Surveys No. 11, Publication No. 54, Lahore, 1938), viii, p. 89; Remarks by E. Brandreth, Commissioner, Multan division, *Extracts from the Annual Land Revenue Report, 1968-69*, p. 53.
14. *Muzaffargarh Settlement Report, 1850*, pp. 14-15.
15. Note on Indebtedness by S. S. Thorburn, Commissioner, Rawalpindi Division, *Selections from the Records of the Office of the Financial Commissioner* (Hereafter *F.C. Selections*), New Series No. 11, No. 37, No. LXV, para 3.
16. H. B. Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49*, Vol. I (Patiala, 1971), p. 77.
17. *Punjab Government Records*, Vol. V : *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49, Political Diaries of Lieut. H.B. Edwardes* (Allahabad, 1911), p. 224.
18. Edwardes, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.
19. H. B. Edwardes, Asst. Resident's letter dated 1st March, 1848, Foreign (Secret) Department Consultations, 28 April, 1848 Nos. 69-75. But the Settlement Officer of Hazara reported that with all his assets, 'the debts of grandfather also descended to the father and from him to his son'. For details, see *Hazara Settlement Report, 1876*, p. 85.
20. *Dera Ismail Khan Settlement Report, 1880*, p. 363.
21. Edwardes, *op. cit.*, p. 398.
22. Note by Thorburn, *F.C. Selections*, New Series, No. 11, No. 37, No. LXV, para 3.
23. Edwardes. *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.
24. Pre-emption laws were certain 'tribal principles regulating the succession to, and power of disposal, of land. In these matters the holder of the estate for the time being was subject, generally speaking, to the control of the group of agnates who would naturally succeed him. They could as a general rule, altogether prevent alienations by adoptions of gift, or by sale for the holder's own benefit'. It, therefore, followed 'that when a proprietor was compelled by necessity to sell, these agnates should be offered the

- opportunity of advancing the money required, thus saving what was really their own property'. James Douie, quoted in H. K. Trevaskis, *Land of the Five Rivers* (Oxford, 1928), pp. 321-22.
25. *Punjab Government Records*, Vol. I : *Records of the Delhi Residency and Agency, 1807-57*, pp. 76-77.
 26. Karunamoy Mukherjee, 'Land Prices in the Punjab', M. K. Chaudhuri (Ed.), *Trends of Socio-Economic Change in India, 1871-1961* (Simla, 1969), pp. 529-44.
 27. Binay Bhusan Chaudhuri, 'Land Market in Eastern India, 1793-1940, Part I, The Movement of Land Prices', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XII, March 1976. pp. 1-2.
 28. Extracts from Government of India's No. 418, 31 March 1849, para 7, C.L. Tupper (Ed.), *Punjab Customary Laws*, I (Calcutta, 1881), p. 49.
 29. *Punjab Administration Report, 1849-50 and 1850-51*, p. 78.
 30. For details, see Remarks by Richard Temple, Commissioner, Lahore Division, *Gujranwala Settlement Report, 1874*, p. 33 ; *Gujranwala District Gazetteer, 1893-94*, pp. 146-47.
 31. James Douie, *op.cit.*, p. 23.
 32. *Punjab Administration Report, 1849-50 and 1850-51* Appendix A.
 33. Brij Narain, *Eighty Years of the Punjab Food Prices, 1841-1920* (The Board of Economic Enquiry, Punjab, Publication No. 13, Lahore, 1926), p. 36.
 34. James Douie, *op.cit.*, p. 22
 35. *Punjab Administration Report, 1849-50 and 1850-51*, pp. 17, 81.
 36. Brij Narain, *op.cit.*, pp. 39-40.
 37. *Punjab Administration Report 1849-50 and 1850-51*, para 274; also 1856-57 and 1857-58, para 57.
 38. *Ambala Settlement Report, 1893*, p. 33
 39. *Karnal-Ambala Settlement Report, 1891*, p. 16.
 40. Memorandum by Blyth, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Narowal, *Amritsar Settlement Report, 1860*, pp. 164-65.
 41. *Sialkot Settlement Report, 1865*, pp. 55-56.

THE PEASANT PROPRIETORS IN THE DISTRICTS OF JULLUNDUR AND HOSHIARPUR IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

RADHA SHARMA*

Before Ranjit Singh brought the Jullundur Doab under his control, it was occupied by several Sikh chiefs. Among them were Baghel Singh, Tara Singh Dallewalia, Budh Singh Faizullpuria, Attar Singh Singhpuria, Chaudhari Choor Mal Phugwaria, Khazan Singh Mulakwalia, Kaur Singh and Sudh Singh Kakar, Tara Singh Gheba, Dewa Singh Doabia, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Jhanda Singh Kathgarhia, Dharam Singh Bungawalia, Jodh Singh Malsia, Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh Kuthia, Bhup Singh Hoshiarpuria, Mohar Singh Waraich, Karam Singh, Gurdit Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. There were a few non-Sikh chiefs like Abdulla Khan Hadiabadia and Rajabali Khan.¹ Maharaja Ranjit Singh gradually absorbed the territories of all these chiefs. In 1807 Tara Singh Gheba died and his large possessions in the Jullundur Doab were taken over by Ranjit Singh.² By 1811 Budh Singh Faizullpuria was ousted from Jullundur, and the Ramgarhia possessions like Begowal, Urmar-Tanda, Banga, Dasuha and parts of Hoshiarpur were taken over.³ After 1816 Fateh Singh Ahluwalia was the only remaining Sikh chief and he was reduced to the status of a vassal, receiving orders from the Maharaja⁴. Thus from the second decade of the 19th century the areas which later formed the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur remained under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors until the Treaty of Lahore in 1846.⁵

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The conquered territories were governed by Mohkam Chand from 1806 to 1814.⁶ Between 1814 and 1831 the area was governed by Moti Ram, Avitabile, Faqir Nur-ud-din and Ghulam Mohi-ud-din.⁷ In 1832 Misar Rup Lal became the governor and remained there upto 1839.⁸ After his death Ghulam Mohi-ud-din and his son Imam-ud-din took charge of the Doab.⁹

The total area in these two districts was 19, 36, 902 acres, out of which 11,61,774 acres, forming about 58 per cent, was under cultivation.¹⁰ According to the early British administrators, the population of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur was 11, 22, 218 and the number of people engaged in agriculture was 6,17,806 which constituted about 54 per cent of the total.¹¹

Among the proprietors of land, there were some who held large areas, a whole village or even a number of villages. More generally, however, in the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, the proprietors held small pieces of land. The big proprietors did not cultivate their lands; the term non-cultivating proprietors would be appropriate for them. The small proprietors, who cultivated their own holdings, may be termed peasant proprietors. We can visualize that some peasant proprietors gave a part of their holding to others as tenants who could themselves be proprietors of very small holding.¹²

In the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur the number of peasant proprietors was much larger than that of the non-cultivating proprietors. Out of 1, 15, 140 proprietors of land 1, 11, 736 were the peasant proprietors who cultivated about 72 per cent of the total area under cultivation.¹³

The Jats formed the single largest group with 47 per cent of the total peasant-proprietors in the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur. In Jullundur their proportion was 53 per cent and in Hoshiarpur 42 per cent.¹⁴ In Jullundur, they very largely belonged to Sandhu, Gill, Kang, Man, Sidhu, Bains, Atwal and Dhaliwal clans.¹⁵ The Rajputs formed the next important group with 25 per cent of the total peasant-proprietors. Their proportion was nearly the same in both the districts.¹⁶ Among the less important and less numerous castes were Gujars, Arains, Sainis, Awans

and Kambohs. The Arains were 17 per cent in the district of Julluhdur.¹⁷ The Gujars were 10 per cent in the district of Hoshiarpur.¹⁸ The proportion of other castes among the peasant proprietors was very small.

Tha Jat villages in these two districts were 42 per cent of the total, being 50 per cent in Jullundur and 34 per cent in Hoshiarpur. The revenue paid by the Jats was 47 per cent of the total revenue. They contributed 56 per cent of the revenue in Jullundur and 38 per cent in Hoshiarpur.¹⁹ The total Rajput villages were 22 per cent and they paid 23 per cent of the total revenue.²⁰ Among the less numerous peasant proprietors, the Arains contributed 14 per cent of the revenue of Jullundur²¹ and the Gujars paid 4 per cent in Hoshiarpur.²² The rest of the revenue was shared by *Sainis, Kambohs, Awans, Brahmans, Tarkhans, Lohars Chamars* and Potters.

Among the peasant proprietors, there were some traditionally non-cultivating castes who owned small patches of land here and there, like the *Tarkhāns, Lohars, Khatrīs* and *Chamars*. It is, however, difficult to ascertain their exact proportion among the peasant proprietors. In the district of Hoshiarpur, we find 281 *Khattris*, 257 *Tarkhans*, 100 *Lohars* and 386 *Chamars*, who not only owned land but also cultivated it.²³

The methods of assessment prevalent during this period were *Batai* and *Kankut*.²⁴ The state demand varied from one-third to one-half of the total produce.²⁵ Collections from the peasants were generally made in kind. Attempts were made to fix a money assessment in a few instances, but it was found that the people could not be induced to continue it for more than one or two harvests.²⁶ The assessment under Misar Rup Lal was generally regarded as 'light and equitable'. It was only after 1839, under the the Shaikhs, that the assessment was raised by 25 per cent.²⁷

There is some evidence to suggest that the number of peasant proprietors was increasing during this period. The former big

proprietors, mostly Rajputs and Sayyids, were ousted from their lands by the Jats who were the actual cultivators of land during the Sikh rule. The former proprietors were recognised as *talluqdars*.²⁸ The peasant proprietors paid a certain share of their produce to the *talluqdars* in recognition of their hereditary lordship.²⁹ The rights of *talluqdars*, however, were no longer extended to the ownership of land.³⁰

The proprietors who gave a part of their holding to tenants, received, in a few cases, *malikana* from them.³¹ This was in addition to what the tenant had to pay as land revenue.

In retrospect we may say, in the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, the bulk of landed property was held by the peasant proprietors, who were mostly the Jats and Rajputs. There were some artisan castes like *Tarkhans*, *Lohars*, *Chamars* etc. who also held land. It cannot be said with certainty whether they occupied land during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign or continued to possess it from the earlier period. Among the peasant proprietors, there were some who paid only land revenue to the state; there were others who paid revenue to the state as well as *talluqdari* allowance to the *talluqdars*; and there were still others paying land revenue and collecting *malikana* from the tenants. The state policy was to encourage cultivation through 'light and equitable assessment', and temporary remissions during natural calamities.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The names of these chiefs are mentioned in John Lawrence, *Summary Settlement of Trans-Sutlej States : Foreign Political Proceedings*, 31 December 1847, No. 2443, para 55.
2. Lepel H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs : Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families in the Territories Under the Panjab Government* (Lahore 1865), p. 552.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.

4. For detailed account of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia's position as vassal, see Joginder Kaur (ed.), *Ram Sukh Rao's Sri Fateh Singh Partap Parbhakar : A History of the Early Nineteenth Century Punjab* (Patiala, 1980), pp. 27-34.
5. *District Gazetteer of Jullundur 1883-84* (hereafter quoted as D. G.), p. 7. See also J. D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (Reprint New Delhi, 1972), p. 372.
6. L. H. Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 552-53.
7. According to P. S. Melvill, the Doab was governed by Mohkam Chand and his son Moti Ram from 1806 to 1830 : *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Oonah, Hoshiarpur, Gurshunkur and Hussaiana Purgunahs of the Hoshiarpur District 1852*, p. 21 (hereafter quoted as *S. R. Hoshiarpur*); Ganesh Das has also mentioned Avitabile and Faqir Nur-ud-din during this period : *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, p. 381, quoted by Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, p. 71.
8. *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, p. 22.
9. Ghulam Mohi-ud-din had already served as governor during 1830-31 but had to be recalled due to his oppressive policies. See *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, pp. 22-4.
10. The total area in the district of Jullundur was 8,59,662 acres out of which 6,43,425 acres was under cultivation (vide R. Temple, *Report on Settlement of the District Jullundur 1852* (Lahore, p. 8) ; and in Hoshiarpur out of 10,77,240 acres 5,18,349 acres was under cultivation (*Vide S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix II, p. 67).
11. The total population of the district of Jullundur was 5,67,991 and its agricultural population was 2,98,211 (*S. R. Jullundur*, p. 8) ; the total population of Hoshiarpur was 5,54,227 and its agricultural population was 3,19,595 (*S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix I A).
12. J. S. Grewal, 'The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh : Structure of Power, Economy and Society', *Sita Ram Kohli Memorial Lectures* (Punjabi University, Patiala 1981), p. 15.
13. See *S. R. Jullundur*, p. 8 ; *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix II, p. 67.
14. The total number of the Jat peasant proprietors in Jullundur was 35,346 (*S. R. Jullundur*, n. p.) ; Their number in Hoshiarpur was 19068 (*S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix III, p. 68). See *Foreign Political Proceedings* 31 December 1847, No. 2443, para 14 ; also *Report on the Administration of the Punjab for the Years 1849-50 and 1850-51*, p. 172.
15. *D. G. Jullundur*, p. 25.
16. The total number of Rajput peasant-proprietors in Jullundur was 17,219 (*S. R. Jullundur*, n. p.) Their number in Hoshiarpur was 11,393 (*S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix III, p. 68).
17. The total number of Arains among the peasant proprietors in the district of Jullundur was 11,328 (*S. R. Jullundur*, n. p.). See also *Foreign Political*

Proceedings, 31 December 1847, No. 2444, para 9.

18. The total number of the Gujars among the peasant proprietors in Hoshiarpur was 4412 (*S. R. Hoshiarpur*, p. 18).
19. The Jat villages in the district of Jullundur were 663 and the revenue paid by them was 7,26,425 rupees (*S. R. Jullundur*, n. p.) : Their villages in Hoshiarpur were 518 and the revenue paid by them was 3,89,214 rupees (*S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix II, p. 68). See also, J. A. L. Montgomery, *Papers Connected with the Revenue Rate Report of Tahsil Hoshiarpur* (Lahore 1884), p. 3.
20. The Rajputs held 192 villages in Jullundur and paid 1,80,247 rupees as revenue to the state (*S. R. Jullundur*, n. p). They held 453 villages in Hoshiarpur and paid 3,29,618 rupees as revenue (*S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix III, p. 68).
21. *S. R. Jullundur*, 'Statement showing the castes of Agriculturists in the Zillah Jullundur'.
22. *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, Appendix III, p. 68.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Batai* was popular with the cultivators as a method of assessment according to which he paid a share of the produce, and *Kankut* meant appraising of the standing crop and was little less popular than the former.
25. *Foreign Political Proceedings*, 31 December 1847, No. 2443, para 31 ; *S. R. Jullundur*, p. 35. See also Indu Banga, *op. cit.*, p. 91
26. *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, p. 21.
27. See *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, p. 22 ; also Indu Banga, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
28. *S. R. Jullundur*, p. 42 ; *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, p. 57.
29. *Talluqdari* allowance was either a ser or two in the maund of the produce or a percentage on the government revenue varying from 2 to 10 per cent. Sometimes it was fixed with reference to the past *malikana* collections : *S. R. Hoshiarpur*, p. 57 ; *S. R. Jullundur*, p. 42.
30. Indu Banga, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
31. *Malikana* means the proprietary dues paid by the tenant to the proprietor which was generally a percentage (varying from 2 to 10 per cent) of the land revenue : Indu Banga, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

LIFE AND MANNERS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE IN RANJIT SINGH'S PANJAB, 1799—1839

DR. HARI RAM GUPTA*

The system of taking census did not exist in the first half of 19th century. Foreign travellers at different times made their own estimates. In 1830 Steinbach thought that the population of the Panjab under Ranjit Singh was about 12 lakhs. In 1831 Alexander Burnes estimated the total population of the Panjab at 35 lakhs. Henry Lawrence about the time of Ranjit Singh's death put the Panjab population at 15 lakhs. We may accept Alexander Burnes' figures approximately.

Distribution of population

The population in the Sikh kingdom mainly consisted of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Steinbach in 1830 put the ratio of Hindus and Muslims at three to one. Colonel Bellasis in 1830 gave the ratio as two to one. The appraisal of the British authorities at the time of annexation in 1849 was that in the Sikh kingdom from the river Sutlej to the Khaibar Pass Muslims were two-thirds of the total population, and of the remaining one-third Hindus and Sikhs shared equally half and half. This calculation appears to be nearer truth.

As regards Lahore the capital of the Sikh kingdom, John Lawrence, Officiating Resident at Lahore, wrote on 12 January 1848 that the Muslims exceeded the Hindus of all sects in the proportion of three to two.

As one passed from Lahore to the north-west and south-west, the Muslim population steadily increased until it was

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entirely Muslim across the Indus. The Sikhs were found in majority in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar, called Majha or the middle tract. The number of Hindus increased as one moved towards the east.

The Hindus

There was not a single village in possession of a Hindu *zamindar* in the Sind Sagar Doab, which was about 400 kms long and from 50 to 150 kms wide. About 12,000 Hindus lived there in villages and towns as traders. Approximately the same number of Hindus could be found in the Chaj Doab. In the hilly area of this Doab, about 3 lakhs Hindus lived there. In the hill territories in the Rachna and Bari Doabs the Hindus formed an overwhelming majority. In West Panjab, Hindus lived mostly in towns and cities. In hundreds of villages, not a single Hindu could be found.

The Sikhs

There was almost no Sikh population west of river Jehlam, and there were few Sikhs to be found 50 kms south of Lahore. To the east of Lahore, the Sikhs did not compose more than one-third of the entire population. "The paucity of Seiks," wrote Alexander Burnes in 1831, "in a country, ruled and governed by them, is remarkable". Alexander Burnes estimated the total Sikh population in the Panjab at 5 lakhs. The Sikhs lived mostly in villages. According to Ibbetson, not even 8 per cent Sikhs lived in towns. The Jats formed about two-thirds of the entire Sikh population. Of the remaining one-third, about 20 per cent consisted of village workers, and the rest of Brahmans, Khattris and others who had embraced Sikhism.

The Muslims

The rich and influential Muslims having several wives, slave girls and concubines in East Panjab lived in towns and cities. In the West Panjab they resided mostly in villages. Excepting Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Multan there were fewer towns in the west inhabited by the Muslims than in the east.

The Village

The people in the Panjab lived mostly in villages. The towns and cities were few and far between. The intervening distance between two villages was not more than 3 kms. Mud-built houses raised in a haphazard way was the rule. A big or a rich village alone could boast of a couple of *pakka* houses. Most of the villages were surrounded by a mud-wall for defence and protection. Many of them had ditches around them outside the wall. Every Muslim village had one or more mosques. A Hindu village had a temple and a Sikh village a gurdwara. Each village had its own bazar. The number of shops in a village was an index to its prosperity. The village well was a popular rendezvous. Files of women thronged it with earthen or brass jars upon their heads in the morning and evening. Sanitation was bad. Streets were dirty, filthy and unswept. Dirty water flowed therein.

A Panjab village was self-sufficient. It grew its own food. It wove its own cloth. It tanned its own leather, built its own house, made its own implements and vessels. The village shopkeeper played the part of a banker and was generally called Shahji. Each village generally looked to the outside world for salt, spices, fine cloth and coins.

Migration

There was little migration in the Sikh kingdom. The people in rural area lived and died in their home villages. The temporary demand for labour or for service in the Sikh army brought about some migration. It did not extend to long distances. Temporary migration of people from one place to another occurred some time due to local failure of food cereals and fodder. Floods were also a cause of migration. Generally, the youths went alone, leaving their families behind. Only in cases of severe famines the whole family moved in search of food and fodder for their animals.

Periodic migration took place between Afghanistan and Panjab. The marts of Lahore, Amritsar and Delhi attracted

traders from Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Turkistan and Afghanistan. The most famous of these traders were Pawindahs also known as Lohanis. They arrived in the Panjab in September every year, accompanied by their women and children. They paid custom duties to the Sikh authorities on the Indus. After disposing of their merchandise, they spent winter in the Panjab. They went back in April with the merchandise of India loaded on their mules and camels.

In some cases parmanent migration took place. Owing to the severity of famines in Kashmir in 1783 and 1833, and maladministration many Kashmiri families settled at Gujrat, Amritsar and Nurbur. In 1847 about 4,000 Kashmiri working-apprentices left Srinagar for Lahore to settle there permanently.

In 1808 many families of Muslim nobility migrated from Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Derah Ghazi Khan, and other places to Bahawalpur. There they were employed in high offices of the State. They settled there permanently.

The Holy Men

Brahman : At the top of Hindu society stood Brahmans. A Brahman was revered by Hindus and Sikhs alike. His presence was essential at every stage of life of a Hindu. Without his advice no child was named, betrothed or married, nobody was cremated, no journey was undertaken, no house was built, and no agricultural or commercial operation begun. Ploughing was looked down upon by them. A Brahman could hold land which he gave to others to cultivate for him. Some Brahmans were also traders in towns and villages. The Mohyal Brahmans in the West Panjab served as soldiers. Brahmans well-versed in Hindi and Sanskrit were called Pandits. They organised *Katha* and *Kirtan*, viz. discourses and singing of holy hymns from the *Gita*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Some Brahmans also practised astrology. There were many Brahmans in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The most important of them was Misar Diwan Chand, the conqueror of Multan and Kashmir.

Bedis : The sacred people among the Sikhs were the Bedis and Sodhis. The Bedis were called *Nanakputras*. They were mainly travelling merchants, and enjoyed the sole monopoly of trade in Central Panjab. On account of their holy character they moved about fearlessly. One-fourth of the duties levied on goods was remitted to them. They wore on their turbans a woollen cord to be easily distinguished. They received *nazrana* from their disciples. They held extensive revenue-free estates. Charan Singh, a Bedi of Phagwara, was granted two villages as such by Maharaja Ranjit Singh; the Maharaja had a profound regard for the Bedis. In 1826 two Bedis called on the Maharaja. He got up to receive them and showed them every respect. He cheerfully received *chhoti ilaichi* in a plate, and gave them Rs. 5,000. The head of the Bedis was Baba Sahib Singh of Una. The other strongholds of Bedis were at Derah Baba Nanak and Batala.

Sodhis : The Sodhis were held in high esteem by all the Sikhs. Under the Sikh government they were subject neither to service nor to tribute. As merchants and traders they were exempted from half tolls. They possessed jagirs worth lakhs of rupees as dharam-arth. Sodhi Sadhu Singh of Kartarpur was a prominent Sodhi of the times. The strongholds of Sodhis were at Anandpur, Kiratpur, Chamkaur, Dharamkot, Kartarpur and Guru Har Sahae.

Sayyids : Among Muslims the Sayyids were on top. They were held in great reverence by all Muslims. They were regarded as direct descendants of the holy Prophet. They had pride of blood and rank and owned vast lands. They often mortgaged lands for money. They gave their daughters in marriage only to Sayyids. The Sikh government granted to them certain favours and concessions. The amount of revenue to be charged from them was fixed at a lower rate. In the Frontier Province, to evade payment of revenues to the Sikh rulers, they stirred up

religious feelings of the lawless tribes and instigated them to fight a holy war against them.

The Agricultural Clans

Rajputs : The Rajputs were excellent soldiers, but poor cultivators. Pride of blood was their greatest impediment. Prejudice against the use of plough was so strong among them that they would follow any other pursuit except agriculture. They let out their lands to tenants. Only the poorest Rajputs tilled the land themselves. They preferred pastoral to agricultural pursuits. On account of strict purdah system, their women stayed indoors. The entire field-work was done by men. The Rajputs were Hindus as well as Muslims. The Hindu Rajputs were found mostly in the hills and in a small number in the plains. The Muslim Rajputs lay scattered in different parts of the Panjab. The number of Sikh Rajputs was very small. They were found in Sialkot, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts.

Jats : The Jats were the backbone of agricultural population in the Panjab. They were Muslims in West Panjab, Sikhs in East Panjab and Hindus in Haryana. They were 'husbandmen from the womb'. The market-gardening castes like the Arains, Malis and Sainis were, perhaps, more skilful cultivators on a small scale, but they could not rival Jats as landowners and yeoman cultivators. The Jats worked in the fields from sunrise to sunset and from infancy to old age. Their knowledge of crops and cattle was unrivalled. According to Sir Lepel Griffin, the Jats outnumbered Rajputs by three to one.

Kambohs : After Jats the Kambohs were the finest cultivators in the Panjab. They were found in the upper Sutlej valley down to modern Montgomery and throughout the northern portion of the eastern plains.

Role of women in agriculture : The Jat women did a lot of field work, except ploughing and sowing. They worked as hard as their men-folk. Men ploughed the fields, harrowed and sowed

seed and threshed corn ; women crushed clods, put manure, hoed and weeded fields, mowed ripe crops, gathered millet and maize, picked cotton, cut grass, collected fuel, watched ripening crop, and gleaned behind reapers. This gave rise to the following saying :

Changi ran Jatti

Hor sab Chatti

The Pastoral Groups

Kathias and Kharrals : The pastoral group consisted of the Kathias, Kharrals and Gujars. There were extensive grazing grounds in the western plains called Bar. This region was inhabited by the nomad pastoral tribes such as Kathias and Kharrals. They settled on a spot until the pasture within reach was exhausted. Then they moved their encampments to the new grounds. Their houses consisted of temporary sheds made of reeds and grass. They were hardy and industrious. They were predatory and warlike people. They owned large herds of cattle and camels. They supplied milk, butter and ghee to Lahore and Amritsar. They cultivated grain in fields round their habitations. They were notorious cattle-thieves.

Gujars : Gujars were graziers rather than cultivators. They kept cows and buffaloes, more than any other tribe. Their love of cattle was so great that they observed regular mourning over the death of a milch cow or buffalo like the death of a family member. They lived at places where there was a grazing ground for their flocks and herds. Their women carried milk, butter and ghee to the market for sale. The Gujars were notorious cattle-lifters.

The Commercial Classes

Khatris : The Khatris formed a large portion of the mercantile class. They were enterprising merchants who monopolised the trade of the Panjab and Afghanistan, and did a great deal of business in the other neighbouring countries too. They were also principal financiers or money-lenders. There were few zamindars who had no account with them. They had a share, whether large

or small, in the estates either by mortgage or by sale. They enjoyed good reputation for their culture, enlightenment and refinement. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Khattris were held in great respect. They were appointed to high posts in civil and military departments. They produced great warriors and administrators. The most prominent Khatri courtiers of the Maharaja were Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal Chopra and Hari Singh Nalwa (an Uppal Khatri).

Banyas : Among other commercial classes were Banyas. They were mainly Agarwals and lived solely by commerce. They were found mainly in the Jalandhar and Upper Bari Doabs. They were practically unknown to the west of Lahore. Mahajans were the traders in the hills.

Aroras : Aroras lived mainly in the districts of Multan, Derajat, Kohat and Peshawar. They were traders par excellence of the south-western Panjab. They were versatile, active, enterprising, industrious and thrifty. They were found in Afghanistan and Turkistan also. In the Lower Chenab area they were admirable cultivators. They were found among Sikhs and Muslims also.

Labanas : The Labanas, like Banjaras, were carriers of grain and merchandise. They were employed by Khattris and Aroras. They possessed great courage and endurance. They were found chiefly in the districts of Gurdaspur, Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Gujrat. A large colony of Labanas existed at Bahawalpur where they were mostly Sahajdhari Sikhs.

Khojahs : Khojahs were Muslim merchants in the central and western parts of the Panjab. They had colonies at Chiniot and Jhang. Their special trade was in tanned hides.

Prachas : The Prachas derived their name from parcha (cloth). They dealt in clothes, silk, indigo and tea. Their transactions extended to Afghanistan and Turkistan. They lay scattered in Central Panjab.

Gosains : Gosains were leading traders in Kangra hills. They possessed a monopoly of opium and *charas* trade which they

purchased in Kulu and sold in the plains of the Panjab. Their transactions extended throughout India.

Maniars : The Maniars sold glass bangles in villages and towns.

The Artisans

There were numerous artisans, both superior and inferior. The superior artisans included Sunar (goldsmith), Niyaria (gold refiner), Daoli (washer of gold), Thathera (manufacturer of metal vessels) and Tarkhan (carpenter). The inferior artisans were Raj (mason), Lohar (blacksmith), Kumhar (potter), Julaha (weaver), Chhinba (Calico-printer), Dhobi (washerman), Darzi (tailor), Pinja (cotton-carder), Teli (oil-presser), Jhinwar (water-carrier), Kalal (distiller of wine), Machhi (fisherman), Bhatyara (baker), Mallah (sailor or boatman), Khumra (stone-cutter) and Nai (barber).

Menial families

Chuhras : The menial families comprised sweepers, leather-workers, etc. A sweeper was called Chuhra, Bhangi, Khakrob or Mehtar. Among his manifold duties were sweeping, repairing of houses and cattle sheds, collection and patting of cattle-dung into cakes. News of death was communicated to a friend or relative through him. The flesh of dead animals belonged to the sweeper. The Sikh Chuhras made fine soldiers, and were extensively enlisted in the Khalsa army.

Chamars : The Chamars were tanners and leather-workers. They claimed all the dead animals of the village. They made and mended shoes, thongs for carts and whips for carters and horsemen. They were followers of Ravi Das. The Sikh Chamars were called Ramdasia after the name of Guru Ram Das who had invited Chamars to join Sikh religion.

Performing People

Among performers were included Dums, Bhats, Bahrupias, Bhands snake-chamars, Bazigars etc. Dums were also called Mirasis. They acted as bards, buffoons, genealogists, musicians

and minstrels. A Bahrupia was an actor or a mimic, and assumed many forms of character. A Bhand or Naqqal was a storyteller, joker and buffoon. A qalandar was a monkey-man. He was seen leading bears, monkeys and other performing animals. Snake-charmers were called Saperas. They inherited the art of snake-catching from their fore-fathers. They entertained the masses by the dance of their cobra to the tune of their bin and by displaying different kinds of snakes. The Nats and Bazigars were a gipsy tribe of vagrant habits. They wandered about with their families, performed acrobatic feats and subsisted on the voluntary contribution obtained from the people.

The Frontier Tribes

Baluchis : Among the frontier tribes were included Baluchis and Pathans. In the Sikh kingdom, the Baluchis were found in the southern frontier, on the western side of river Indus in the districts of Derah Ghazi Khan and Derah Ismail Khan. In Muzaffargarh district and in Bahawalpur they formed a large portion of the whole population. They were always armed with swords, matchlocks, etc. Almost everyone of them possessed a mare of his own. If a Baluch did not have a mare of his own, he shared it with another on a quarterly basis. The Baluchis were expert riders and good fighters. They considered war as their trade and despised agriculture. They were notorious thieves, robbers and marauders. The Baluchis gave a lot of trouble to the Sikh government.

The Mazaris, a Baluchi tribe, raised their head and created disturbances. Sawan Mal built forts at Dajal, Harrand and Amarkot, and garrisoned them well. He led several expeditions against them. Rojhan, the capital of the Mazari tribe was occupied. The fort of Kin, situated to the south of Rojhan, fell, and the Mazaris were reduced to subjection.

Pathans : The Pathans were the dominant people throughout the whole tract west of the Indus as far south as the southern border of Derah Ismail Khan district. To the east of river Indus they held the Chach country in Hazara and Rawalpindi districts.

The Pathan colonies existed along the left bank of the Indus till it finally left the Salt Range. The Pathans were notorious robbers and thieves, adept in night attacks. Once they harboured a grudge against a person, they never forgot it in their lifetime. They were exceedingly proud. They considered Hindus and Sikhs as their national foe. They were capital horsemen and owned good horses. They made excellent soldiers. They were first rate skirmishers and excellent marksmen. They had their own code of honour.

Of all the Pathan tribes, the most powerful were Yusafzais, Afridis and Waziris. The Yusafzais occupied both the banks of the Indus. They were hospitable and freedom-loving people and great warriors. The Yusafzais never paid revenues to the Sikhs without the use of arms. They were deadly enemies of the Sikhs. In fighting against the Sikhs they called themselves *Ghazis*. Their prominent leaders were Fatah Khan of Panjtar, Arsalah Khan of Zaidah and Paindah Khan of Darband.

The Afridis held the Khaibar Pass. They levied blackmail on travellers and merchants passing through their territory. They abducted Hindus and Sikhs, both male and female, and released them on receiving a handsome ransom. In 1837, Hari Singh Nalwa forced a body of Afridis to release a few Sikh prisoners. In the engagement he lost six men and twenty horses. On the enemy side three men were captured alive and sixty were killed.

The Waziris were a powerful tribe spreading from Kohat southwards to Derah Ismail Khan. They were a wholly lawless people. When crops were ready to be harvested, they descended from the hills, plundered and withdrew. In 1827 they laid waste a large area near Derah Ismail Khan. A strong force was sent to punish them. They often plundered the country and carried off Hindu men and women for ransom.

Manners of the People

In the society under discussion, a great reverence was shown for age and rank. A senior member and a father always sat at the

head and a junior member at the foot of a cot. In Peshawar district, a son always sat in the presence of his father on a cot turned upside down. A son addressed his father as Pitaji, Abbaji and mother as Mataji or Manji. An elderly woman was addressed as Manji or Maiji. The parents called their children as Kaka, Muna, and Kaki or Munni. The rustics called them Munda and Kuri. An elder brother was addressed by the younger brothers as Bhaiji, Virji or Bharaji, and the elder sister as Bahanji or Didi. A wife never uttered the name of her husband and called him as Shila's or Ram's Bapu. Similarly the husband never addressed his wife by name.

A Brahman was addressed as Missarji or Pandit Ji. The Mohyal Brahmans were called Bakhshiji, Mehtaji, Diwanji or Raizada Sahib. A Khatri and a Banya were addressed as Sethji, Lalaji or Shahji. A Rajput was called Ranaji, Thakurji or Chaudhri Sahib. The Dogra Rajputs of Jammu were called Mianji. A Sayyid was addressed as Mir Sahib, and a Pathan as Khan Sahib. A barber was called Raja. A Sikh was addressed as Khalsaji or Sardarji. A Musalman of high status was called Khudawand-e-Nemat.

An inferior, while visiting a superior, had to take off his shoes outside the gate. The custom of advancing a short distance to receive a guest or visitor of status was known as Rasam-e-Istiqbal. When two men met or departed, they shook hands with each other. In Peshawar district, the two persons on meeting embraced each other, one passing his hand three times from right to left round the other's breast. On departure too the ceremony of embracing was repeated. Women embraced each other with their arms thrown around each other's neck, and screamed aloud a chorus on the occasion of departure. A Hindu showed his astonishment by uttering the words 'Ram, Ram,' a Sikh by 'Wah Guru' and a Muslim by 'taubah, taubah.'

The Hindus greeted each other with 'Ram, Ram,' or 'Jai Ram Ji Ki' or 'Namaskar.' The reply was returned in the same words. A Brahman was saluted with 'pairi paina' or 'palogan' or 'Matha tekana.' The reply was 'Sukhi raho' (May you be happy).

The Bedi Sikhs saluted each other with 'Matha tekana.' When two Sikhs met, the junior saluted the senior with 'Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wah Guruji ki Fateh,' or 'Sat Sri Akal.'

A Muslim saluted the other with the word 'Salam-Alaikam' and the reply was 'Alaikam-Salam.' A Muslim saluted a Hindu or Sikh with the word 'Adab Arz.' A Hindu saluted a Muslim with 'Sahib Salam.' The reply was given in the same words, and to a younger person with 'Umar daraz.'

A Hindu swore by the Ganga, a Sikh by the Holy Granth, and a Muslim by the Holy Quran.

The war cries of Hindus were, 'Ram Ram, Mahadev' and 'Jai Jai Kar,' of the Muslims, 'Ya Ali' or 'Allah, Allah', or 'Allah-o-Akbar'; and of the Sikhs, 'Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa' or 'Sat Sri Akal'. The flag of the Hindus was of saffron colour, of the Muslims of green colour and of the Sikhs of yellow colour.

Note : The above article is based largely on the primary sources such as *District Gazetteers*, *District Settlement Reports*., *Foreign Department*, *Political*, *Miscellaneous* and *Secret Consultations* and numerous contemporary Persian, Urdu and English works. Due to shortage of space we regret our inability to give the comprehensive bibliography.

Editors

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JHAGRA JATTI TE KHATRANI DA

DALJINDER SINGH JOHAL*

Historians of Punjabi literature are prone to read and study the Punjabi *Qissas*, *Vars* and *Jangnamas* of the period of Sikh rule as the most distinguished units of the popular poetry. Much has been written on them whereas only scant attention has been paid to some other local genres and themes. Among the modern Punjabi scholars, Piara Singh Padam has done a commendable job by undertaking the work of editing *Punjabi Baran Mahen*, *Punjabi Majhan*, *Punjabi Jannan* and *Punjabi Jhagre*. He has paid attention to the rural folk poets in his editorial notes. While the first two of these literary types represent socio-cultural and seasonal themes, the last two (i. e. *Jannan* and *Jhagre*) derive their subject matter from the stereotype social situations. They provide a meaningful evidence on the socio-economic conditions of the time. The present paper aims at analysing the significance of one of these literary forms : The *Punjabi Jhagre : Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani da*.

Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani da appears to have been popular in the district of Amritsar during 18th and 19th centuries. It has been recorded in a manuscript form by Talsa Singh, a resident of Amritsar. It was written in 1839. From the song itself we do not get any clue about its actual compiler. Some of the modern scholars are, however, of the opinion that poet Saundha of Kala, a village near Amritsar, was the compiler of this song. But, in the absence of any authentic evidence, we can only infer that Talsa Singh found its oral version and wrote it. In 1880s Richard Temple had also recorded an oral version of this song which shows how the singers made alterations in it with the passage of

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time. In *Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani da* written by Talsa Singh there are, in all, 36 double rhyme stanzas. In Punjabi, the metre may be called *dwayyia chhand*. A Jat's wife and a Khatri's wife are represented as the two opposite characters in the *Jhagra*. Initially, the poet attributes the cause of their quarrel to the short-tempered and unruly nature of the women and underlines the medieval attitude towards them. 'Quarrelling with all and under-rating her husband, such loose tongued woman should be instantly hanged,' says the poet. However, the actual purpose of the poet seems to have been to depict the conflict of values between these two leading caste groups of the society. In the prevalent socio-economic set up, the Jats and the Khatri were holding on to the two predominant occupations : agriculture and banking business. In this song, both *Jatti* and *Khatrani* are depicted contending to establish their respective superiority over the other. The *Khatrani* tries to assert her caste superiority. She is proud of the ancient solar (*Surajvanshi*) origin of the Khatri. Jats are referred to as having little respectable status.

The economic argument of the *Jatti* seems to be more assertive. In her view the Khatri are not born money-lenders (Shahukars). Their economic status owes much to the Jat agriculturists. Probably they have become owners of big mansions much on account of the interest money. Jats, it appears, were hard pressed under debt. 'You bitch ! You have robbed us of the last grain; fie on you buisness woman ! You feel no shame,' says the *Jatti* to *Khatrani*. Moreover, The *Jatti* is amply aware of the indispensable role of Jats in the social set up. 'The kings flourish over the labour of the Jat farmers and they revel in hunting expeditions.' 'Bravo the hard earning Jats; every one is benefited by them'. 'Jats bring the deserted villages under cultivation ; rest of the non-Jat population of the villages is totally worthless.'

Their cultural and value conflict extends to the questions of marriage and social customs. Jats, being agriculturists, had the greatest longing for male births in their families; However, a rich Khatri might spend a lot over the dowry of his daughter. To

the wonder of the Jats, they would cheerfully bring up their girls. Khattris stick to their marriage customs. 'A Jatti can have many husbands and still she is respected; whereas a Khatrani cannot afford even the slightest blot on her chastity.' *Khatrani* views with contempt the widow remarriage among the Jats. For *Khatrani* the elder brother's wife is equivalent to the mother, while the younger brother's wife should be treated as a daughter.' But 'the shameless Jat', she says, 'throws the robe of marriage over both of them'.

In conclusion it may be said that in contrast to the heroic and romantic poetry, *Jhagras* as a literary genre represents the tendency towards poetic realism. Its distinguishing feature is that it keeps relatively a close relation with the ordinary world of experience and action. If we read some more *Jhagras* in addition to the one we have seen, we would find that this type of literary tradition has a special historical significance as marking the influx into narrative poetry of that ever-broadening sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men. They derive their material from the short and simple annals of the poor. *Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani da* has revealed how it takes a form of humorous transcript from contemporary manners. It depicts the delightful character studies loosely set in the economic argument.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE KISSĀS OF FIRST HALF OF NINETEENTH CENTURY

SAHINDERJIT SAGAR*

There are varied conceptions and expositions of social change in the literature of the nineteenth century. The present paper intends to explore the social change that has been accounted for in the Punjabi *kissās* written during the time of Ranjit Singh. The *kissā* is a peculiar poetic genre in which the theme is always taken from the folk-tradition. So the theme of a *kissā* does not contain the possibility of including any innovation. However, the treatment of themes and the literary framework in which a particular theme has been dealt with is more significant. In the Punjabi *kissā* literature we find three major traditional elements, destiny, morality and supernatural power. The first two elements represent the forces that constitute the concept of social dynamism of the medieval *kissā* poets. The third element is the expression of the concept of change according to the point of view of the medieval *kissā* poets. The latter element, i. e. the medieval vision of the *kissākārs*, is more important for the students of Punjab history. In *kissā* literature, all human activities are predestined. They are the reflection of the external forces that are beyond the control of man. But there is one force present which is supposed to be under the control of man, that is morality. The characters, in *kissās*, are free in the realm of morality. The concept of destiny in the *kissā* literature is a justification for the existing social order. Morality is accepted as a qualitative scale of the social norms. However, in *kissās* the given morality violates these norms and gives a hint of social change in a subdued manner.

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But the role of morality turns about when the poet identifies his interests with the ruling class. In that situation he justifies the social order. However, on the other hand, we find a strong tendency among *kissākārs* that only by elevating human being morally, it is possible to hold control over the destiny of a man. In fact, this approach to the social reality is idealistical in the reflection of the consciousness of the age.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a great patron of art and literature. His period is quite rich in *kissā* literature. Prominent *kissākārs* of Ranjit Singh's time are Hasham Shah, Qadir Yar, Imam Baksh, and Ahmad Yar. All of them are Muslim poets. Although these poets are the contemporaries of Ranjit Singh, yet their works do not appear to have been written during the Maharaja's period. For example, the works by Hasham Shah seem to have been written before the ascendancy of Ranjit Singh. Similarly, it is indicated by the internal evidence of text of *Sassi Punnu*, a work of Ahmad Yar, that it was composed after the demise of Maharaja (1839 A.D.). But the compositions of Qadir Yar and Imam Baksh are, no doubt, works produced during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. For the purpose of study of the social change in the time of Ranjit Singh, one work of each of these *kissākārs* has been analysed in a chronological sequence. The works are *Kissā Sassi Punnu* (Hasham Shah); *Shāh Behrām* (Imam Baksh); *Kissā Puran Bhagat* (Qadir Yar); and *Sassi Punnu* (Ahmad Yar).

Hasham Shah's works provide an understanding of the background of milieu, and social change that emerged later in the establishment of Sikh rule. We find that there is almost a total absence of the supernatural element in his works. But a sharp reaction to the social chaos is visible in the thinking of his characters.¹ They have a fighting spirit.² Their morale is very high. They are always ready to sacrifice themselves.³ Usually they are depicted as fighting against the cruelty of the nature.⁴ As in Thomas Hardy's novels, the blind destiny is tyrannical in these *kissās*. It transforms the whole narrative into a tragedy. The desperation of his age, particularly of a section of society,

finds full expression in the clash of moral power against the odds of destiny as expressed by the poet in a peculiar manner. As we know, the second half of the eighteenth century was the period of great political upheaval in the Punjab. The society had experienced a tremendous political change. The Mughal power had almost declined and a new political power had emerged in the form of Sikh misals. This political change brought about a change in social realms too. A new class acceded to the political power. Hence, the lack of supernatural elements in the works of Hasham is understandable since the concept of change is already implied in the social intercourse of the period.

The treatment of the themes in *kissās* by Hasham delineates the author's identification with a class. He has a soft corner for the class whose political power had declined. The decline of one out-going ruling class has been identified with the decline of morality.⁵ According to Hasham, the seed of decline lies in the degeneration of the moral character of this class. Hence, his emphasis on morality reflects his wish to reinstate the class in order to revive its lost glory. Similar conclusions have been drawn by J. S. Rahi in his research paper entitled 'Hasham Shah'. According to him, "Historically, Hasham's concept of blind destiny is the religious transformation of the desperation of his social situation."⁶

The concept of morality in *Sassi Punnu* is different. The moral values that are prevalent in the society have nothing to do with morality, which the poet emphatically refers to as transcendental. This reflects an effort that the poet wants to place the characters of his *kissās* in the stage of the transcendental world. Indirectly, it also suggests that the change in the society is short-lived and temporary.

Imam Baksh's *Kissā Shah Behram* reflects a different social situation. Whereas for Hasham, the social change of the late eighteenth century seems to be short-lived, Imam Baksh visualises a fear of permanency.⁷ It is because of this fear that we do not

find the fighting spirit in the characters of his *kissā*⁸. On the other hand, this element has been transformed into a supernatural one.

Unlike Hasham, the concept of change and the rehabilitation of the earlier situation, as visualised by Imam Baksh, is only possible with the help of supernatural power. The unjust and cruel Prime Minister (?) who was put on the throne in the absence of Shah Behram was killed by Deo Safaid on the request of Shah Behram. The legitimate heir, the son of Shah Behram (?), was put on the throne.⁹

Though the poet underlines the moral aspect of his character, yet it lacks a force and it depends on external help which is depicted by the poet in the form of supernatural power.¹⁰ The destiny is equated with the will of the Almighty (*bhānā*).¹¹ Whatever good or bad happens on this earth is the expression of this Will. In order to change the Will of God, the only way is the transcendence of one's character. For this not only a high moral character is required but also one has to sacrifice the comforts of this world.¹² Only then the supernatural power can be approached to achieve one's ultimate goal. This concept is a purely Sufi way of worship. But, how a Hindu was to achieve the highest elevation? It can be seen in QadirYar's *Kissā Puran Bhagat*.

Kissā Puran Bhagat unfolds yet another horizon of the problem. The poet's interest is identified with the established ruling class.¹³ Consequently, not only the destiny becomes more firm and cruel but also morality assumes an opposite role.

Whereas the earlier *Kissākars* had a problem of legitimizing the reign of Ranjit Singh, for Qadir Yar no such problem is there. Though he wrote most of his *Kissās* for general masses, yet he was an advocate of the ruling class. Significantly no particular reference to the masses is there in his composition. With the exception of Luna, all other characters belong to the blue blood.

As referred to earlier, the emphasis on morality has a different purpose. Unlike other *kissās*, *Kissā Puran Bhagat* does not

provide a background of struggle for any social change. In fact, Qadir Yar is not concerned with the forces of social change. On the other hand, his concept of morality serves as the bulwark against all attempts to change. It tries to maintain the status quo. Puran does not accept the incestuous relationship with Luna, his step-mother. He does not like man-to-man relationship and pleads for the kinship relationship. He prefers to die than to accept the change.¹⁴ Even the poet comments that those who attempt to make undesirable changes have to repent at last.¹⁵ This concept of morality was even mythicised and justified by the poet. According to him, a morally just person could endure any hardship and ultimately emerges as a successful person. According to Qadir Yar, the concept of morality as the basis of transcending one-self could work in the realm of religion. Indirectly, this idea suggests that the poet sympathises with the social change which had already taken place. As he already visualised the stable power, he shifts the idea of social change to the realm of religion.

The concept of destiny has a distinct and wider meaning. Puran does not blame Luna and his father.¹⁶ Indirectly, it is suggested that the change is not the product of human efforts, hence it is futile to make any attempt. This passive element also suggests the poet's acceptance of the legitimacy of the Sikh rule.

Sassī Punnu by Ahmad Yar not only reflects a different situation but also appears to assess the reign of Ranjit Singh. The work was written after the demise of Ranjit Singh. In this connection, the significant suggestions are the reflection of royal grandeur and the glorification of Sassi's death.¹⁷ As we know, the poet was invited by Raja Gulab Singh to write the exploits of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1838.¹⁸ Moreover, unlike the *kissā* of Hasham, Ahmad Yar depicts Sassi's father conferring *jagirs* on Sassi for her maintenance.¹⁹

In the *kissā*, destiny is inevitable. Even a capable person could not change it. But at the same time, it has a dual characteristic: inevitability, and doubt. Any event can be avoid-

ed. Sassi feels sorry that if she had acted on the advice of Punnu, she would not have suffered separation.²⁰

Here morality has a dual role. Not only it helps Sassi to transcend herself but also the cause of the tragedy lies in her innocence—an outcome of her moral character. Sassi's dealing with *hot* is the cause of her tragedy.²¹

The treatments is suggestive of a growing change in the realm of politics. It is an indication of the political situation arising after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The given reaction to the behaviour of *hot* is the reflection of the poet's understanding of the new political situation arising out of the new political forces.²² We can speculate that Ahmad Yar identifies the advent of the British in the Punjab as *hot* with malicious intention.

The concept of change in most of *kissās* has found expression in figure 12. In *Shāh Behrām*, Deo Safaid has to wait for twelve years for bringing Shah Behram to his country²³ Similarly, Puran spends twelve years in the well before being salvaged by Gorakh Nath.²⁴

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Piara Singh Padam (Ed.), *Hasham Rachnawli*, Sardar Sahit Bhawan, (Patiala, 1969, 2nd ed.), p. 138 :

ਜਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਹੋਤ ਸੱਸੀ ਛਡਿ ਤੁਰਿਆ, ਆਖਿ ਵਿਖਾ ਦਿਨ ਕੇਹਾ ।

ਦੋਜਖ ਇਕ ਪਲ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਹੋਸੀ, ਤਪਿਆ ਤਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਜੇਹਾ ।

ਦਿਲ ਦਾ ਖੂਨ ਅੱਖੀਂ ਛੁੱਟ ਆਇਆ, ਜਾਲਮ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਅਵੇਹਾ ।

ਹਾਸਮ ਮਾਰ ਰੁਲਾਵੇ ਗਲੀਆਂ, ਬਾਣ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੀ ਏਹਾ । 85 ।

2. *Ibid.*, p. 138 :

ਤੋੜਿ ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਸੱਸੀ ਉਠ ਦੋੜੀ, ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਲਿਟਾਂ ਘਰ ਬਾਰੋਂ ।

ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਆਨ ਕਿ ਹੋਹ ਸੱਸੀ ਨੋ, ਜਿੰਦ ਜੁ ਤਾਂ ਪਰ ਵਾਰੋਂ ।

3. *Ibid.*, p. 143:

ਸਿਰ ਧਰ ਖੋਜ ਉਤੇ ਗਸ਼ ਆਈ, ਮੌਤ ਸਸੀ ਦੀ ਆਈ ।

ਖੁਸ਼ ਹਰ ਯਾਰ ਅਸਾਂ ਤੁਧ ਕਾਰਣ, ਬਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਨ ਗਵਾਈ ।

More concrete exposition of this idea can be seen in 'Kissa Sohani Mahiwal'. See *Hasham Rachnawali*, p. 118 :

ਇਕ ਧਿਰ ਸ਼ੌਕ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਖੇ, ਹਾਰ ਨ ਸਿਦਕੋਂ ਮੂਲੇ ।
ਜਿਨ ਕਿਨ ਜਾਨ ਬਚਾਈ ਮਰਨੋਂ, ਮਤਲਬ ਲਇਆ ਨੂੰ ਮੂਲੇ ।
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਦਕ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਦਾ ਰਖਸੀ, ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਮੌਤ ਕਬੂਲੇ ।
ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਹਾਰ ਨ ਸਿਦਕੋਂ ਮੂਲੇ, ਹੋਗ ਭਲਾ ਇਤ ਮੂਲੇ । 13੨ ।

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-41.

5. J. S. Rahi (Dr), 'Hasham Shah' in *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, ed. by J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar 1980), p. 3.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

7. Imam Baksh, *Kissa Shah Behram*, ed. by G.L. Sharma (Ravi Sahit Prakashan, Amritsar, n.d.), pp. 109-10:

ਇੱਕ ਦਿਨ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਬਹਿਰਾਮੀ ਆਹਾ ਸਿਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਤੇ ਸਾਇਆ,
ਗਿਆ ਅਸਾਂ ਥੀਂ ਉਹ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦਾ, ਵੇਲਾ ਵਕਤ ਖੁਦਾਇਆ ।

00 00 00

ਪੰਜ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਦੀਬਾਨੇ ਉਮਰ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਹੋਈ,
ਬੇਤਕਸੀਰ ਅਮੀਰ ਹੋਏ ਹਾਂ ਵਾਤ ਨਾ ਪੁੱਛੇ ਕੋਈ ।

00 00 00

ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਕਿਸਮਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ, ਰਾਈ ਜ਼ਿਮੀਂ ਅਸਮਾਨੋਂ,
ਦਾਣਾ-ਪਾਣੀ ਰਿਜਕ ਅਸਾਡਾ, ਗਿਆ ਨਿਖੱਟ ਜਹਾਨੋਂ ।
ਜੇ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਅੱਜ ਹੈਂ ਤੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਾ, ਵਾਗ ਅਸਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਮੋੜੀਂ,
ਨਮਕ-ਹਰਾਮ ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀਂ ਗਰਦਨ ਤੋੜੀਂ ।

Also see, p. 106:

ਇਹ ਕੀ ਦਾਵਾ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦਾ, ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਰੇਗਾ,
ਪਰਬਤ ਨੂੰ ਜੇ ਟੱਕਰ ਮਾਰੇ, ਮੂੰਹ ਸਿਰ ਭੰਨ ਮਰੇਗਾ ।
ਕਿਉਂਕਰ ਖੋਹ ਲਵੇਗਾ ਮੈਥੀਂ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸਮਿਆਣੇ,
ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਮਾਸ ਸਲੂਣਾ ਲਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਣੇ ।

8. *Ibid.*, p. 115:

ਜਾਂ ਬਹਿਰਾਮ ਸੁਣੀ ਇਹ ਵਿਰਥਾ, ਲੂੰ ਲੂੰ ਗੁੱਸੇ ਹੋਇਆ,
ਪਰ ਉਹ ਤੁਫ਼ਾਨ ਗਜ਼ਬ ਦਾ, ਉਸ ਨੇ ਵਿੱਚੋ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮੋਇਆ ।
ਦਿਲ ਦਾ ਭੇਦ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਨਾ ਉਸ ਜਾਹਰ ਕੀਤਾ,
ਨਾ ਉਸ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ, ਬੈਠ ਰਹਿਆ ਦੁੱਖ ਕੀਤਾ ।

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-30.

10. In the *Kissa, Shah Behram* receives a number of magic articles like a stick, cap and a pair of shoes etc., from Deo Safaid, Surkhab, Gandhak and Gandal. With the help of these articles he achieves his goal.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 108 :

ਦੂਰ ਬਹਿਸਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਹਿਜ਼ਾਦੀ, ਕੁੱਛੜ ਬਾਲ ਅੰਵਾਣੇ,
ਚੌਜ਼ਖ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਿਆ ਬਹਿਸਤੀ, ਵੇਖੋਂ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਭਾਣਾ ।
ਕੈਦ ਹੋਏ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਦੀਖਾਨੇ, ਬਾਬ ਗੁਨਾਹ, ਤਕਸੀਰੋ ?
ਦੱਸ, ਕਿਤੇ ਵੱਲ ਨੱਥੇ ਕੋਈ ਡਾਢੇ ਦੀ ਤਕਸੀਰੋ ?

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 156 :

ਕਹਿੰਦੀ, “ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਸਾਂ ਨੇ, ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਅੰਗ ਨਾ ਲਾਇਆ,
ਜ਼ਾਹਰ ਬਾਤਨ ਰੱਬ ਅਸਾਨੂੰ, ਸ਼ੰਕ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਇਆ ।
ਇਹ ਸਿਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਫ਼ਜ਼ਲ ਇਲਾਹੀ, ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਦਰਗਾਹੋਂ,
ਮੈਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਬਹਿਰਾਮ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ, ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਪਾਕ ਗੁਨਾਹੋਂ ।

00 00 00

ਹੁਸਨ ਬਾਨੋ ਕਹਿੰਦੀ, “ਸੁਣ ਮਾਈ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਗੇ,
ਸੈ ਦਰਿਆ, ਪਹਾੜ ਨ ਦਿੱਸਣ, ਕੁਝ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੱਗੇ ।
ਕੀ ਫਰਹਾਦ ਆਹਾ ਜਦ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਸਜ਼ਾਅਤ ਪਾਈ,
ਪਾੜ ਪਹਾੜ ਕੀਤਾ ਦੋ ਟੁਕੜੇ, ਵਿਚ ਦੋਂ ਨਹਿਰ ਵਗਾਈ ।

00 00 00

ਜੇ ਸੈਆ ਤਲਵਾਰਾਂ ਦਿੱਸਣ, ਤਾਂ ਭੀ ਮੂੰਹ ਨਾ ਮੋੜੇ,
ਜਾਨ ਜਾਏ ਤੇ ਤਾਂ ਭੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨਾ ਤੋੜੇ ।

13. Qadir Yar says that he received a well in reward for narrating the story of Puran Bhagat. See, Qadir Yar, ‘Puran Bhagat’ in *Qadir Yar*, ed. by Gur-charan Singh (Punjab Language Department, Patiala 1969), p. 20.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 30 :

ਕਾਫ ਕਹੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਸੁਣੀਂ ਸਚੁ ਮਾਤਾ
ਤੋਰੇ ਪਲੰਘ ਤੇ ਪੈਰ ਨਾ ਮੂਲ ਧਰਸਾਂ ।
ਅਖੀਂ ਫੇਰ ਕੇ ਮੂਲ ਨਾ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਕਰਾਂ,
ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਸੂਲੀ ਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਨ ਕਬੂਲ ਕਰਸਾਂ ।

15. *Ibid.*, p. 36 :

ਕਾਦਰਯਾਰ ਅਣਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਜਿਹੜੇ,
ਆਖਰ ਫੇਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਛੋਤਾਵਨਾ ਈ ।

16. *Ibid.* p. 54 :

ਮੇਂ ਮਾਇ ਤੇ ਬਾਪ ਦੇ ਵਸ ਨਾਹੀ,
ਸਭੇ ਰਬ ਦਿਖਾਂਦਾ ਸੂਲ ਮੈਨੂੰ ।

17. Ahmad Yar, *Sassi Punnu*, ed. by Ujagar Singh, (2nd ed. Ludhiana, 1963,) pp 84, 120-1 :

ਸਈਆਂ ਤਲੀਆਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਲਣ ਪਾਈਆਂ।

ਭੈਰੋ ਰਾਗ ਗਾਵਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਪਿਆਰਾ ।

ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ ਨਵਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ

ਬੈਠੇ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਫੁਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਖਾਰਾ । 136 ।

ਦੇਹ ਰੰਗ ਮਹਲ ਤੇ ਲਾ ਡੇਰਾ,

ਬੈਠੇ ਆਸ਼ਿਕ ਤੇ ਮਾਸੂਕ ਮੀਆਂ ।

ਛੇੜਨ ਗਾਇਕਾਂ ਸੁਰਾਂ ਤੰਬੂਕਿਆ ਦੀਆਂ,

ਅਰਗਵਾਨ ਸਿਤਾਰ ਦੀ ਘੁਕ ਮੀਆਂ ।

ਕੈਫਾਂ ਪੀਵਦੇ ਤਕ ਤਕ ਜੀਵਦੇ ਨੇ,

ਆਹਮੇ ਸਾਮ੍ਹਣੇ ਬੈਠ ਮਲੂਕ ਮੀਆਂ ।

00 00 00

ਹੂਰਾਂ ਸੋਹਰੇ ਫੁਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁੰਦ ਲਿਆਈਆਂ,

ਉਨੂੰ ਕੋਸਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਵਾਈਏ ਜੀ ।

ਕਫਣ ਸੀੜ ਬਹਿਸ਼ਤੀਆਂ ਹੁੱਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ,

ਅਦਰੀਸ ਦੀ ਹੂਹ ਲਿਆਈਏ ਜੀ ।

ਉਹਦਾ ਆਣ ਜਨਾਜ਼ਾ ਰਸੂਲ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ,

ਨਬੀਆਂ ਆਣ ਜ਼ਮਾਇਤ ਸੁਹਾਈਏ ਜੀ ।

ਅਹਮਦਯਾਰ ਫਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਚੀਰ ਪੱਥਰ,

ਉਹਦੀ ਵਾਹ ਜੇ ਕਬਰ ਖਣਾਈਏ ਜੀ । 244 ।

18. See, Introduction., *Ibid.*, p. 6.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 54 :

ਲੈ ਮਿਲਕ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਤੇ ਖਾਹ ਬੈਠੀ,

ਰੱਬ ਵਾਹ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਇਆ ਏ ।

† *Ibid.*, p. 93 :

ਪੁੰਨੂੰ ਆਖ ਰਹਿਆ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤਤੜੀ ਨੂੰ,

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਹੋਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਿਸਾਹ ਮੋਈਏ ।

ਜਿੰਦੂ ਆਪਣੀ ਦੀ ਬਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਰਣ,

ਘਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਣ ਨੇ ਲਾਹ ਮੋਈਏ ।

ਇਹ ਤੇ ਆਏ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਫਰੋਬ ਕਾਰਣ,

ਕਰ ਜਾਣਗੇ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਨਾਹ ਮੋਈਏ ।

21. *Ibid.*, p. 103:

ਅਹਮਦਯਾਰ ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਘਰ ਅੱਗ ਫੂਕੀ
 ਭਾਹੀਂ ਭੜਕੀਆਂ ਜਿਸੀ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਨੀ ।
 05 00 00
 ਹਉ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੈਂ ਮਾਰੀ ਏ ਛਾਲ ਆਪੇ,
 ਪਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਰਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂ ਲਾਹੇ ਲੱਥੜੀ ਨੂੰ ।

22. See footnote 20 above.

23. *Kissā Shah Behram*, p. 76:

ਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਬੀਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਏਵੇਂ, ਦੇਵ ਹੀਲਾ ਕਰ ਰਹਿਆ,
 ਸ਼ਾਹ ਬਹਿਰਾਮ ਨਾ ਆਇਆ ਕਾਬੂ, ਕਰ ਹੀਲੇ ਮਰ ਰਹਿਆ ।
 ਓੜਕ ਫਿਰ ਸਹਿਜਾਏ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਵਰਤੀ ਕਜ਼ਾ ਰਬਾਣੀ,
 ਚੁਕ ਲਿਆ, ਰੱਬ ਡਾਢੇ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਵਤਨੋਂ ਦਾਣਾ ਪਾਣੀ ।

24. *Kissa Puran Bhagat*, pp. 38-9:

ਕਾਫ਼ ਕਈ ਜੋ ਮੁੱਦਤਾਂ ਗੁਜ਼ਰ ਗਈਆਂ
 ਬਾਰਾਂ ਬਰਸ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਖੂਹ ਪਾਇਆ ।
 00 00 00
 ਬਾਰਾਂ ਬਰਸ ਨ ਆਦਮੀ ਮੂੰਹ ਲਗਾ,
 ਪੂਰਨ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਸੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰੋਇ ਕੇ ਜੀ ।
 00 00 00
 ਸੋਹਣੀ ਸੁਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਫਰਕ ਕੋਈ,
 ਹੱਥ ਪੈਰ ਮੈਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਓਸ ਵੇਲੇ ।

EDUCATION DURING MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S REIGN

DR. M.R. KANSAL*

Respect for learning has always been a remarkable feature of the East. To this Punjab was no exception. It preserved educational endowment despite foreign invasions and civil wars. "The most unscrupulous chief, the avaricious money-lender, and even freebooter vied with the small landowner in making peace with his conscience by founding schools and rewarding the learned. There was not a mosque, a temple, a *dharm-shalā* that had not a school attached to it, to which the village youth flocked chiefly for religious education." To entertain a *maulvi*, *pandit* or a *guru* was thought to be a privilege of the wealthy men and rich landlords. They were held in high esteem. There were hundreds of secular schools in which Persian and Lande were taught. These schools were popular, irrespective of the caste considerations. The learned men thought it to be their *dharma* to educate their co-religionists.

In respectable Muhammadan families, husbands taught both their wives and their children. The Sikhs also did not fail in their duty. They zealously followed the cultural pattern inherent in the village set up. "Through all schools there breathed a spirit of devotion to education for its own sake and for its influence on the character and on religious culture whilst even the sons of trading community, who merely learnt what they absolutely required in order to gain a livelihood, looked with respect, amounting to adoration, on their humble *Pandhas* who had taught them the elements of two R's."²

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According to historians, education cannot be said to be progressing during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's times. No doubt, during the Maharaja's reign the Punjab witnessed about 40 years of peace. Still, since the foundation of the Sikh power rested upon military organisation, therefore its main emphasis lay on military matters, particularly among the Sikhs. The case with the Hindus and Muslims was somewhat different. Their institutions continued to flourish during the Maharaja's period. The Sikh education in Gurmukhi may be said to have been in infancy. It needed much more development to come up to the level of Persian, Urdu or even Hindi.

The Concept of Education

There was no conception of education as a common form of training, to be given to all alike, the aim of which should be to teach children to read and write their own vernacular, to keep simple accounts and to gain some elementary knowledge of people and things outside their homes. The education during the Maharaja's times was "instruction by compartments for particular objects—in Persian for service under Government, in Arabic, Sanskrit and Gurmukhi for religious purposes, in Lande Mahajani for trade." The first Director of Public Instruction, Punjab, Mr. Arnold wrote graphically regarding the concept of education in the Punjab in his very first annual report. According to him, "To educate a boy by teaching him his native language is to the native almost a contradiction of terms. Persian is something and Sanskrit is something but what is Urdu? and Punjabi counted for even less than as a medium of instruction, the Gurmukhi schools being merely for teaching the Sikh religion."³

System of Education in Punjab

There was a system of indigenous education in the Punjab and there was no system of State Education as we find it today. The school was an institution which a village community was expected to maintain as a matter of course. The State by encouraging and patronising men of light and learning supplied the initiative and it rendered substantial material help to the village

schools in the form of free-hold grants without attaching any strings. The people as a whole did not look upon education as something apart from religion because religion was a great force and it was thought to be the means of natural development. However, each community looked upon its own religion for the purpose of development and education. The Mohammadans laid stress on the study of Koran and the Hadis, the sayings and teachings of the Prophet. To a Sikh, as a member of the ruling class, education in addition to what the Hindu schools might give him, meant access to the study of *Granth* as well as learning to ride and being a warrior. But the ordinary Sikh child was averse to learning the multiplication tables.

Various types of Institutions

The various types of institutions were *pathshalas*, *madrasas* and Gurmukhi schools. These were respectively Hindu, Muslim and Sikh schools, chiefly or entirely devoted to the propagation of religious teaching. Elementry knowledge of *shastras* was imparted in the *pathshalas*, the *Koran* was repeated and learnt in the *madrasas* and *Granth Sahib* was taught in the Gurmukhi schools.

The chatsalas, i. e. Mahajani and Lande schools, met the demands and requirements of the trading community. In these schools the *Pandha* (if a Hindu), and the *Mian* (if a Muslim) taught his young pupils mental arithmetic and how to keep business correspondance and *bhai-khata*.

The school house was primitive, such as a private dwelling, the village town hall, the shade of a tree, a temporary shade or the courtyard of a temple. The Muslim schools were nearly all connected with the village mosques. The same endowment supported both the institutions, i. e. the school and the mosque. Rent-free lands were granted on tenure basis for this purpose by the State or by the elite, the land-owning classes. They were also held in *kutiyas* of *fakirs* or in the houses of liberal persons.

Persian was the official language during the Sikh times. It was the language of the literate—the *lingua franca* of the official

class. Ranjit Singh conversed in Punjabi and recommended the study of Gurmukhi to those who came near him. The necessary instruction was provided by *maktabs*, Arabic Koran schools and Persian schools. The teachers were invariably Mohammadans. Writing was taught and standard Persian works, especially *Gulistan* and *Bostan*, were the standard courses. The Koran was read in Arabic and the didactic and poetical works of Saadi in Persian; at the Sikh schools the Guru Granth was taught. In the Persian, Arabic and Gurmukhi schools, which formed the great majority, the study was confined to sacred books.

In most of the cases, the teacher was remunerated for his services with cash or kind or both. The system of regular fee was not favoured but occasional gifts were made by the parents on certain festivals. But occasionally the whole community would subscribe for the support of the school, each member contributing so much per plough, which was considered to represent his means.⁴

Higher Education

There is not much to say about the higher education during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. Still we find references to a few institutions where Philosophy, Astrology and Medicine were taught in Hindu secular schools.

According to Leitner, Astrology attracted the Hindus more than the Sikhs. The Mohammadan *madrasa*, besides religious literature, taught Fiqah and the Yunani system of medicine. The most important Sikh seats of higher learning were the Akal Bunga, Amritsar, Damdama Sahib, and Dharmshala in Raipur. Leitner writes : "In Amritsar alone, besides the Golden Temple and the Bungas attached to it as also the Mushaharas and Mubahisas to which I have alluded, there are over 300 Dharmshalas in which Gurmukhi is taught. Raipur has a special place in my account of the indigenous schools which will incidently show whether land or wells granted rentfree by the Sikh Government have been resumed or assessed by us in the very refuge of Gobind Singh (DAMDAMA), one of the most sacred of the Sikh Deras in

which was once the rural University of the Sikhs, the village Rai Pur.”⁵ This institution had a system of fees in cash or kind which were preferentially given to the Dharmshalas or the Deras rather than to the Bhais in person.

Sadhu Bhup Singh taught crowds of *fakir* pupils from every part of the Punjab. Indeed the *fakirs* have been the chief means for the popularization of the religions irrespective of the caste. Regarding the character of such *fakirs*, T. V. French, Bishop of Lahore, giving evidence before the Education Commission, 1882-83 stated : “Some of the best teachers in the world I should think are some of the Hindu Faquirs, Sanyasis, Jogis and the like doing Guru’s work but they teach nothing at present except their own philosophies and religious systems.”⁶

Bhai Juna Singh, a *granthi* in Amritsar, taught Arithmetic, *Vyakaran* and Puranas at his house. Bhai Budha, according to Leitner, was one of the most successful translators of Sanskrit works in Gurmukhi. Bhai Santokh Singh’s rendering of Sanskrit works in Gurmukhi poetry was regarded as a masterly performance. Baba Ganga Ram translated and adopted Sanskrit grammar into Gurmukhi.⁷

Apart from these institutions of higher learning there were a number of *Akharas* of Nirmalas, Udasis and Brahamans in which was carried on the teaching of higher learning in Sanskrit and Gurmukhi, the subjects being Literature, Philosophy, Poetics, Astronomy, Mathematics, Literary Criticism etc.⁸

Rev. Lowrie, who visited Lahore at the invitation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1835, describes Amritsar as a centre of learning like Banaras. It had a large number of Gurmukhi and Sanskrit schools during Ranjit Singh’s time. It had also a considerable number of colleges housed in monasteries and *bungas*. According to Leitner, there were 13 higher Koran, Arabic and Persian schools, 20 Gurmukhi schools, 12 Mahajini schools and 56 Sanskrit *pathshalas* in Amritsar. Besides this, Gurmukhi was studied in five *Bungas* and three *Akharas* and Sanskrit in two *Bungas* and two *Akharas*.

Female Education

People in the Punjab were not opposed to female education provided it was of a religious kind. They were happy if a girl could recite the Koran, read the Granth or Janam-Sakhi or study the Ramayana or Bhagwat Gita at home. Mohammadan girls generally read the Koran at the mosque school while Hindu girls were confined to homes. The teachers were generally mullahs, *Bhais* or the family priests.¹⁰ But apart from these, there were to be found Punjabi women as teachers. According to Leitner, "The Punjabi woman has however not only always more or less educated herself but she has also been educator of others."¹¹ During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time there is evidence of several female schools in some of which boys of tender age were also admitted. There were also numerous Koran schools for both boys and girls, which were supported by pious widows. There were several schools conducted by the female teachers. like Nawakot and Moharwal in the Lahore district, Vairawal and Fatehabad in Amritsar district.

In the Hindu higher classes both the parents were enjoined to instruct their children including daughters in their religious duties. Among Mohamadans nearly all girls were taught the Koran but no Sikh girl could claim the title and privileges of a learner unless she was able to read the *Granth*. Apart from this, female education included duties of the household like sewing and cooking, art of embroidery and the keeping of accounts in a very elementary manner. The wives of *maulavis* and *bhais* were generally taught by their husbands.

Maharaja's Patronage to Education

The Maharaja patronised education and learning very liberally though he himself was an illiterate. The Sikh *sardars* in his court were not illiterate as is generally alleged. Lehna Singh Majithia was a mathematician and an engineer. He is said to have translated Euclid from Arabic into Persian. Several European contemporaries testify to his skill in devising the machinery of which a leather gun useful for artillery purposes

seems almost mythical. Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh studied the higher branches of Mathematics and Astronomy under the famous Akhwand Ali. Ahmed who was specially called from the frontier to Lahore. Lehna Singh combined knowledge of Arabic with that of Sanskrit, so did Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia as also Attar Singh of the same illustrious house. Baba Uda Singh Bedi of Gunachour in the Jullundur district was also an author of merit. He was very poor. The British Government, after annexation of the Punjab in 1849, confiscated his *jagir* which the Maharaja gave to him in perpetuity. Sardul Singh s/o Gian Singh was also an author and was given a similiar treatment. He struggled for existence when his *jagir* was taken over by the British Government. Mention may be made of the Udasi *fakir* of Amritsar and also Baba Somar Singh of Wassowal in the Amritsar district, who, *inter alia* has written a well-known *History of Gobind Singh*.¹² In Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time there were many famous Gurmukhi, Arabic and Persian teachers who imparted instructions of a high order, and enjoyed *jagirs* and stipends from the Maharaja. Their *jagirs* and stipends were resumed by the British after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. The most important were¹³ :—

1. There was a large school in Bhai Juna Singh's house at which both the religious *granth*s, and subjects like Arithmetic, *Vyakarn* and Puranas were taught. No fee was charged while bread was supplied to the students.
2. Bhai Lakhun had a school in his house teaching religious books. His *jagir*, the only means of subsistence granted by the Maharaja, was confiscated in 1849.
3. Bhai Ram Singh, a very learned man of Maharaja's time, had a very flourishing school to which students from distant parts of the country flocked and took lessons in all the higher departments of learning such as *Vyakarn*, *Granth*, *Kavya Alankar*, Poetry, Pingal, Literature, History, *Niti* etc. He enjoyed a subsistence allowance from the Sikh Government

which was stopped by the British.

4. Bhai Kharak Singh Dhuppia enjoyed a similar grant and imparted similar instruction, being a man of great learning.
5. Bawa Amir Dass Udasi and Budh Singh were other learned men belonging to Maharaja's times, who imparted instructions of the higher order.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh not only gave *jagirs* and grants to Sikh Institutions but encouraged Arabic and Persian schools as well. In the Maharaja's days Arabic and Persian schools of high standard existed in many parts of the Punjab where Mathematics, Mechanics, Logic, Philosophy, Medicine, etc. were taught. Students from long distance flocked to these schools and were supplied food and books free of cost.

At Batala there was a large and widely known school of Mian Sahib of the Qadiri family which drew its students from distant countries like Iran. A *jagir* was given which was confiscated by the British later on. There was a similar school at Sialkot under the late Maulvi Sheikh Ahmed, a very famous literary man of his times. There was a grand school of Bara Mian at Lahore. It may be called a college. It was liberally aided by the Sikh Government. There was another institution in Moran's Mosque under Khalifa Sahib. Students from Persia and Arabia got lessons in all branches of learning. Khawaja Suleman had a flourishing school at Saingrosa in the Dera Gazi Khan district. Men from Khorasan and Hindustan received high education here.¹⁴ Apart from these, the Maharaja gave grants and *jagirs* to numerous *Hakims*, *Hindu Vaid*s, *pathshalas* and artists. Ilahi Bakhsh was the principal architect in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's times. Saidu and Hijat were the famous gun makers of Maharaja. Pandit Mola Ram had a *pathshala* in Amritsar which received grant from the Maharaja. Mention may be made of the *jagirs* enjoyed by Bhai Baghel Singh (23 ghumaons 4 kanal), Pandit Jaswant (7 bighas 14 biswas) for the progress of Sanskrit and Imam Bakhsh (40 bighas). Bhai Ram Singh had a *jagir* of Rs. 1200 per annum for the maintenance of a Gurmukhi school

which he kept in his own *Bunga*. Pandit Tukta Sahai of Rohtas, one of the most distinguished scholars in the Punjab, was given a big land grant in different villages by the Maharaja for the maintenance of a *pathshala* which was the first of its kind in the province.¹⁵

In the end, it may be pointed out that though the Maharaja was himself illiterate, he had a great love for learning and education. Although his Government was a military organisation, yet he had made substantial contribution to the system of indigenous education which was in practice in those days by making grants of land and money for the maintenance of such institutions. It will be no exaggeration to say that the Maharaja not only supported the existing institutions, but made certain original contribution to the field of education. He gave grants irrespective of religion or caste. English, Hindi or Sanskrit and Persian were taught to the royal children. Pt. Radha Krishan, Zahiruddin and Bhai Ram Singh were entrusted with the education of Prince Kharak Singh and Hira Singh and Ranjit Singh took keen interest in their education.

The Maharaja was keen on introducing the study of English in Lahore and invited the Ludhiana Mission to open a school but since the Mission insisted on the study of Bible as an integral part, the plan could not materialize.

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1. G. W., Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab* (Introduction).
2. H. R. Mehta, *History of the Growth of Western Education in Punjab*, p. 6.
3. *Beginning of Western Education in Punjab for the year' 1856-57*, published by Govt of Punjab (Preface).
4. *Report on the Administration of Punjab, 1849-51*, p. 12.
5. Leitner, *op. cit.*, p. 35
6. *Ibid.*

7. R. L. Ahuja, *Growth and Development of Education During the Sikh Times in Punjabi* (unpublished Ph. D. Thesis) p. 210.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. H. R. Mehta, *op. cit* , p. 11.
11. Leitner, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-51.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

THE CULTURAL BASIS OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S STATE

DR. FAUJA SINGH*

In order to understand the character, personality and policy formulation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh properly and in the correct historical perspective it is essential to look into social roots. Ranjit Singh hailed from a Sikh Jat peasant family which, like other ordinary peasant families of the times, was little known outside the village Sukarchak to which it belonged. The first ancestor of his, of whom we hear, was Budh Singh who is said to have taken *Amrit* from Guru Goind Singh and participated in his battles. It is said that after Guru Gobind Singh, he also took part in the battles of Banda Singh. His son Naudh Singh followed his example and participated in the battles of the Dal Khalsa. But it was not until Charat Singh, the grand-father of Ranjit Singh, that the family gained some recognition and territory. It was indeed under him that the Sukarchakia Misal to which Ranjit Singh belonged had its humble beginning. Later, Maha Singh, father of Ranjit Singh, made some additions to the territories of the Misal and raised its status to some extent, without obscuring, however, the social origin of the family.

The historical context in which the rise of the family took place is extremely important. When in the time of Banda Singh Bahadur the Sikhs took to open fighting against the government of the day, business people who were in the fold of Sikhism began to feel that the Sikh movement was taking a dangerous turn and left it either wholly or partially with the result that the movement henceforth became almost entirely a peasant movement. Those Sikhs who

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fought under the Khalsa banner of Bande Singh or the Dal Khalsa, whether against the Mughals or the Durrani of Kabul, were overwhelmingly drawn from the ranks of Punjab peasantry, particularly the lower ranks. Even when the long drawn out struggle against the Mughals and the Afghans had been won and small independent principalities (*misals*) established through the length and breadth of the Punjab, the demeanour of the Sikh chiefs continued to bear the stamp of their rural, tribal and peasant origin. Though possessed of independent political authority now, they moved freely and informally among their people, often ran public kitchens at their residences and assumed no airs in their general behaviour with the people. "Was it not a marvel", writes Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, "to see the Sikh chiefs squatting on the ground in the midst of their subjects, plainly dressed, unattended by an escort, without any paraphernalia of government, talking, laughing and joking as if with their comrades, using no diplomacy with them but having straightforward dealings, simple manners, upright mind and sincere language?"¹ Such is the category of chiefs to which Ranjit Singh's grandfather, Charat Singh, and father Maha Singh, belonged.

The cultural background which Ranjit Singh thus inherited from his family was a major factor in the shaping of his character and personality. By the time Maharaja Ranjit Singh began to wield his authority in the Punjab, Punjabi culture had struck deep roots. Its major characteristics could now be identified as freedom from taboos, liberality, adaptability, toughness, militancy, open-mindedness, practicability, industriousness and independence of spirit.

There is no doubt that Ranjit Singh imbibed these influences of Punjab's cultural ethos in ample measure. He acquired them partly through inheritance from his family springing from the tribal peasant stock of the Punjab and partly from his social environment. To what extent they were reflected in his personal-

10. R. P. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
11. M. S. Randhawa, 'Two 19th Century Punjab Artists' published in *The Tribune*, 27 July, 1969.
12. See Art Gallery at Chandigarh.
13. Pandit Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgushta-e-Punjab* (Persian manuscript) (Lahore, n d), Folio No. 170 (Punjab State Archives, Patiala); Manuscripts of Janamsakhis at Punjab State Archives, Patiala, and Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar.
14. Specimens of Ivory paintings, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
15. W.G. Archer, *op. cit.*, pp 19-20, fig. 11.
16. Art Gallery at Chandigarh. However, the identity of the Sikh Sardar is controversial; see Victoria and Albert Museum, figure No. 18; also W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, p 20, fig. 10.
17. W.G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Vol. I (Text), p. 164.
18. W.G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, plate Nos. 1 to 7.
19. *Ibid.*, fig. 26
20. *Ibid.*, fig. 42.
21. K.C. Aryan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture* (Islamic period) (Bombay, 1964), p. 123.
24. General Allard entered the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in May 1822 and in his residence the wall-paintings reflect the mixed western style. Mostly the wall-paintings were hunting scenes and animals.
25. W. Barr, *Journal of a March from Delhi to Peshawur and from thence to Cabul, including Travels in Punjab* (London, 1844), pp. 99-102.
26. W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, p. 84.
27. Paintings preserved in the Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Accession No. 9.
28. *Ibid.*, Accession No. 49.
29. *Ibid.*, Accession No. 38.
30. *Ibid.*, Accession No. 59.
31. W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, fig. 77.
32. *Ibid.*, fig. 78.
33. *Ibid.*, figs. 72 and 75.

A STUDY OF THE SIKH NUMISMATICS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COINS OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

MADAN JIT KAUR*

Apparently a coin is merely a piece of metal having some definite shape and weight and bearing recognised symbols on its face, impressed upon it by a responsible authority. But the significance of coins as a source of history is of outstanding importance. The coins are connected with the political, administrative, social, economic, religious and cultural life of the period to which they belong

As regards the numismatics of the Sikh period, we find that with one notable exception of C. J. Rodgers, practically nothing has been done in this sphere of historical research. The subject of Sikh numismatics has hitherto received little attention from the students of history. The cause of this neglect is not difficult to explain, as the collection of coins in our country has been left mostly to private individuals. The coins are either dispersed or sold to antiquarian dealers, mostly Europeans, and therefore they are less accessible to Indian researchers. Another reason why the subject has been neglected is the difficulty to decipher the inscriptions on the coins. Consequently, little work has been done upon the coins of Punjab under the Sikhs.

The present study attempts to make a broad analysis of the Sikh coins issued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In this paper the views expressed by me are in fact only deductions from the drawings of the Sikh coins I have borrowed from Rodgers' collection¹, a list of Sikh coins from British Museum, London, and a number of Sikh copper coins in my

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motivating force cannot be altogether ruled out. But it has to be noted that if the impact of Punjabi culture reinforced by the liberal Sikh religious tradition had not predisposed the Maharaja to act in a spirit of tolerance and liberalism, no amount of expediency could have prompted him to go as far in his policy as he actually went. Even Akbar who was the most liberal of the Mughal Emperors and who thought so much of expedient considerations did not go as far as Ranjit Singh did. Whereas Ranjit Singh gave the highest positions, such as prime ministership, foreign ministership etc., etc., to members of other communities, Akbar could not go beyond associating one or two non-Muslim ministers with his court which thus predominantly remained Muslim in character and composition. Moreover, although the relevance of expediency more or less remained the same under Akbar's successors, they failed to introduce into their policies the same degree of catholicity as Akbar had done for the obvious reason that their inherent inclinations towards liberalism were not equally strong. Another relevant point in this context is that the liberal trends which Ranjit Singh showed are also found in the attitudes of the *misal* chiefs of the earlier period. Could we say, then, that these predecessors of Ranjit Singh were also being expedient? It may not be wholly correct to assume that; the reality seems to be that due to certain cultural and religious influences working on their minds, liberalism had become part of their very nature. The same is true of Ranjit Singh.

In the end, it may be remarked that as a result of the secular policies pursued by Ranjit Singh different sections of the people of the Punjab were brought much closer together than had ever been the case before. Complete harmony and cooperation characterised their mutual relations. Their religious beliefs and practices were fully respected by the state and they had unstinted freedom to carry on their worship in any way they liked. The only restriction was on cow-killing or eating of beef, which too was really inspired by the desire to promote communal harmony rather than to suppress the feelings of any particular section of

the population. Although Ranjit Singh was a Sikh by faith and practice, his government was considered to be not of Sikhs alone but of all people inhabiting the land. He was surely the beau ideal of the people many of whom looked upon him as" an *Avtar*, reincarnation of God, gifted with miraculous powers. G. C. Narang writes: "People showered upon him their heartiest blessings. They regarded him as their liberator and their protector, one who after centuries of barbarous attacks from the North hurled back the invaders and raiders to their mountain lairs. They bestowed upon him their unstinted love and affection and revered him as a God-sent guardian of their hearths and homes and upholder of their national honour." The chief reason why they thought and spoke of him in such glorious terms was that he, through his simple, peasant-like and typically Punjabi ways and manners, had placed himself thoroughly in tune with the throbs of their hearts.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. H. R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. III (Lahore, 1944), p. 131.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
3. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jangnama*, edited by Ganda Singh (Amritsar, 1939), p. 158. The substance of the Qazi's statement is as follows :—

Leaving aside their mode of fighting there is another point in which they excel all other fighting people :

In no case would they slay a coward or put any obstacle in the way of the fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well-to-do lady or a maid-servant. There is no adultery amongst the dogs (Sikhs) nor are these mischievous people given to thieving. Whether a woman is young or old, they call her a *budhiya*, an old lady, and ask her to get out of the way.

4. This has been described by Indu Banga as an ideology of consolidation. She says, "As a matter of fact, the Sikh rulers derived stability from the equilibrium of the various opposites in the Punjabi society and thus there was a logic in nurturing these opposing elements through conscious state action". Presidential Address, Punjab History Conference Proceedings, March 1980, p. 92.

MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SIKH ART

D. S. DHILLON*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the builder of Sikh Empire, invaded Kangra in 1809 A. D. and compelled its ruler, named Sansar Chand to surrender the fort. Ranjit Singh appointed a Sikh Sardar, Desa Singh Majithia, as Governor of Kangra Hill; later on he annexed Kotla in 1811 A. D. and then Guler in 1813. About 1828 A. D., Ranjit Singh also annexed some other hill states. The control of the hill states by the Sikh governors, appointed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, brought about co-mingling of Pahari and Sikh culture. "It happens thus that the invasions of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh on hill states bring about social and cultural interaction between the people of hill and plain, more popular than before."¹ These interactions were also seen in the mutual interest of the painters. The Rajput royal artists now came under the service of the Sikh governors and hence their paintings were influenced, not directly but indirectly, by the Sikh governors according to their own interest. The hill states during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh got cultural diffusion. The result of this cultural influx was the emergence of another school of art under the patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

No doubt, the views of the scholars are not homogeneous over the issue whether there developed any independent school of art during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh or not. According to R. P. Srivastava, "there would be no historical blasphemy if we designate this type of work as Sikh painting since the patronage was hundred percent by the Sikh Chiefs as was the case with Mughal and Pahari rulers."² Coomarswamy also recognizes the

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entity of a Sikh school of painting.³ W. G. Archer observes in this connection :

Of a greater significance as social symptom is the phase of Kangra painting connected with the Sikhs. As was natural in a people with no traditional art of their own, the Sikhs had evidently adopted whatever art-terms were current in the areas they ravaged. They were, thus, unconsciously the 'art carriers' of the Punjab hills. From about 1810 A. D. onwards, certain Kangra painters seem to have adjusted their subjects to Sikh requirements and thus a second provincial Kangra school was established, its chief centre being Lahore and Amritsar.⁴

On the other hand, Mulak Raj Anand has remarked that since the painters of the Punjab came from Punjab hills, therefore, "the paintings of the early 19th century under Sikh patronage cannot be called Sikh paintings."⁵ In the words of M. S. Randhawa, "In Kangra paintings, particularly those of Nurpur and Guler which were close to the plains, the dress of the women is typical Punjabi; they were usually shown as wearing 'Suthan' that resemble breaches, Kamij and 'dupatta.'⁶

Be that as it may, there is no gainsaying the fact that Sikh school of painting originated from the influence of Kangra *Kalm* and began to emerge clearly during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. During early 19th century, of course, no independent Sikh school of painting existed but towards the end of 19th century there developed Sikh art and its traces were eventually found at Lahore and Amritsar along with murals in a somewhat rough style. According to Archer, "Until the second quarters of the nineteenth century no paintings that is truly Sikh, can be said to exist."⁷

The great empire set up by Maharaja Ranjit Singh employed varieties of artists, irrespective of their caste and creed and the work of these artists was displayed to public also. Moreover, these artists also developed a mutual relation with other sister art centres and hence it increased the range of cultural,

religious and social contact of the Sikh artists. The names of some of the eminent artists of the period are: Ram Singh, Kehar Singh⁸ (Sikh artist), Mohammed Baksh, Sher Mohammed⁹ (Muslim artist) and Augus Theodore, Emily Eden (a lady artist), Beron Hugel, and an Austarian visitor Vigne. These artists served not only the royal patron but also catered for the aesthatic need of the ordinary people. "All sorts of things were painted, viz. individual portraite, frescoes in temples and gurdwaras of Lahore, Amritsar, Goindwal, Tarn Taran, Khadur Sahib, Baba Bakala and Batala etc. Apart from this type of work manuscripts were also illustrated."¹⁰

The art developed at the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not display the royal portraits only, as was the case with the Mughal painting, but also other paintings concerning the life of common men like *langris*, jugglers,¹¹ agriculturists, nihangs, etc.¹²

The work of art and craft witnessed tremendous progress towards the end of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Sikh painters like Kehar Singh and others introduced some techniques of western style of painting. It was perhaps due to the impact of the western artists employed at the court of the Maharaja. Later on, some of the Sikh painters, especially Kishan Singh and Bishan Singh who were the disciples of the famous court artist Kehar Singh, developed Kangra-Sikh style in their own techniques which in due course of time assumed the character of an independent Sikh school of art with its prominent centre at Amritsar.

The illustration work too developed during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. No doubt, the illustrations on the Sikh sacred writings were on the Mughal pattern but the legendry and mythological subject-matter also became the source of illustrations on the sacred writings. Many new versions of *Janamsakhis* were prepared which were decorated with illustrations.¹³

The most notable works of the artists, however, are the depiction of the courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and paintings on small ivory pieces.¹⁴ Art of glass work too fully develo-

ped during the end of 19th century and this may be attributed, to a great extent, to the royal patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The various art centres in the hill states of Mandi, Suket, Kulu, Guler, Nurpur, Chamba etc. have yielded us many paintings of the Sikh princes and Sikh Gurus. Many courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other Sikh Sardars were portrayed at these centres. For example, at Guler, the painting of Desa Singh Majithia carousing with a Guler lady¹⁵ and Desa Singh Majithia presiding at a wedding reception¹⁶ are noteworthy. Another important painting of the Guler style is the portrait of Guru Har Krishan¹⁷ (Guler c. 1815-1820). Here the child Guru is shown standing on a rug with verticle stripes, holding a bow in one hand and arrow in the other. Behind the Guru are shown two attendents, one with a fly whisk and other with a bow and quiver and arrow. The Guler centre of hill paintings, developed during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, has yielded maximum paintings of the Sikh Gurus,¹⁸ in typical Guler style and Pahari dress.

The Sikh paintings during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh envisaged a way for making a mutual understanding of artistic touch even between the East and West. A change of social customs also brought a change in the techniques, styles and dress of the paintings. This is obvious from the numerous paintings drawn in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is believed that the Maharaja himself at first resisted to be portrayed, perhaps due to the injustice done to him by nature. An artist, named Jiwan Ram from Delhi made portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in such an artistic way, neglecting the pock marks of the face and damaged left eye, that the Maharaja himself liked that portrait very much. This opened the way for his other portraits.

The European artists employed at the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh adopted western style in their paintings. The drawings of an Hungarian artist, August Schoft, at Lahore Court and later on at Amritsar during the reign of Maharaja Sher

Singh reflect unmistakably Schoft's impact on the paintings of the Punjab's artists. Emily Eden (sister of the Governor General, Lord Auckland) herself painted Maharaja Ranjit Singh in many sitting poses. Her work, *Portraits of the Princes and People of India*, is a grand album for the study of Punjab paintings. Some of her lithographic work is distinctly Punjabi in character, which inspired the Punjab court artists to introduce such elements in their own paintings. For example, in fig. 26 of Archer's work, *Paintings of the Sikhs*¹⁹ Maharaja Ranjit Singh is shown seated in a chair with sturdy body, long beard and turban in a Punjabi style. This portrait has a striking similarity with the paintings drawn by Kehar Singh, a court artist of the Maharaja.

The European artists, no doubt, made some contribution in the development of Sikh paintings, during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's times but they were unable to portray the interior of Punjab, e. g. the Punjabi customs, typical Punjabi dress, a farmer going with his buffaloes and the bullock carts etc. Their paintings, on the other hand, are distinguished for introducing some European elements. For instance, some paintings of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Sher Singh sitting in arm-chair are prominently of the foreign style, having very delicate features with very thin fingers like those of ladies.²⁰

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the Sikh artists contributed their valuable wealth in the treasure of Sikh paintings. It is said that Kehar Singh, a Sikh painter, painted a dove and put it over the bed of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; it became difficult for the Maharaja to distinguish between the real and unreal bird. Thus, having been deeply impressed with the artistic skill of Kehar Singh, the Maharaja appointed him as court artist. Kehar Singh was the first Sikh traditional artist who made portraits of royal courtiers showing a distinct character. Later on, it became customary for the Sikh nobles and their families to sit before the artists for their drawings; those drawings were now made not only by the European artists but also by the Sikh traditional artists.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh made a signal contribution by initiating

the work of floral and ornamental decoration of the Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar. Alongwith the traditional Sikh artists, he also commissioned some Muslim Moharaqqash of Faizabad to decorate Golden Temple of Amritsar.²¹ However, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the work was carried on by four Sikh trustees, viz. Bhagwan Singh, Jawahar Singh, Mangal Singh Ramgarhia and Rai Bahadur Kalyan Singh.²²

Bhai Kehar Singh, the court artist of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was the originator of the Sikh school of art which emerged at Amritsar and displayed its skill while doing the floral work at Golden Temple, Amritsar. The nephew and pupil of Bhai Kehar Singh, named Bhai Bhishan Singh and his grandsons, named Bhai Nihal Singh and Bhai Jawahar Singh, maintained the art tradition developed by their ancestor Kehar Singh during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The floral and ornamental decorations of the interior of Golden Temple suggest the existence of a distinct school of art. "From this it will be seen that details of somewhat florid order dominate the style, but although few of the structures of the Sikhs aspire to any special architectural significance, no one can fail to be attracted by their animated and picturesque appearance."²³ Verily, the floral designs either painted or in metal and the skilful works of brass and copper of the Golden Temple excel the crafts and workmanship of Sikh artists.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh we get good evidences of mural paintings in the palaces of the Sikh nobles. The walls and ceiling of newly erected private houses of the traders, the *havelies* and palaces of the aristocrats and nobles, the Hindu temples and the *Akharas* of the mahants (followers of Sri Chand) etc. were painted and decorated. The traditional style of painting was naturally more suited to mural painting. In the wall-paintings of the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh mostly the Sikh nobles and European officers have been portrayed with various scenes of battles and hunting.

The earliest example of mural painting was at Lahore in the

suburb of Anarkali, in the residence of General Allard²⁴ where the paintings of dragons, lances and foot soldiers were drawn. Wall-paintings were also found in the house of Avitabile who was also a French officer in the service of Ranjit Singh. The greater part of wall-paintings were significantly the paintings from Hindu mythology and some animals on a white ground. From the work of W. Barr, *Journal of a March from Delhi to Peshawur and thence to Cabul* (London, 1844), we get some reliable examples about the murals on various buildings in the Punjab.

The most important and notable wall-paintings during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are the murals at Lahore Palace. Here the gateways are decorated with paintings of figures like wild animals and some fighting scenes. The most peculiar mural is the one "representing the Maharaja in the presence of Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh sect ; the holy father being most splendidly robed in a suit of embroidered gold and sitting, whilst his disciple, who has done so much to extend the domains of his followers, is dressed in bright green silk, and standing, with his hands joined in a supplicatory manners. Behind the Baba, keeping guard, is an Akali with a drawn sword and with but very little covering." ²⁵

Anoter important mural of the period is in the fort of Hari Singh Nalwa at Gujranwala.²⁶ The picture, representing the battle of Jamraud, is divided into two parts ; on one side Hari Singh Nalwa is shown while on the other side his antagonist Akbar Khan is shown.

The notable feature of these murals is that they reflect some 'European taste' and 'Pahari style'. But towards the end of the Maharaja's reign the murals developed at Lahore court and at Amritsar assumed the character of a new distinct style representing the evolution of Sikh school of paintings. One of the remarkable features found in the Sikh painting is the lack of attention paid to the portrayal of females. In the Mughal, Pahari and Rajasthani paintings, the female character is generally dominant ;

the best finish and delicate touch is given to female paintings which excel male paintings. But in the Sikh school of art, though Pahari ladies are shown with Sikh Sardars in some paintings, there is very little attention paid to the female paintings.

An examination of the various paintings preserved in the Sikh archives, Punjab State Archives, *gurdwaras*, museums etc. will enable us to understand the development of Sikh school of paintings. The paintings of Maharaja Ranjit Singh,²⁷ Hari Singh Nalwa,²⁸ Akalis,²⁹ and Darbar Sahib at Amritsar³⁰ by the Sikh artists reflect the gradual development of the Sikh art of painting and its special characteristics as stated above. The comparison of these paintings with the paintings now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), such as two Sikh cultivators,³¹ two Akalis³² and Sikh warriors³³ etc. reveals unmistakably some of the distinguishing characteristics introduced by the Sikh artists in the nineteenth century.

In fine, the builder of Sikh empire Maharaja Ranjit Singh made a laudable contribution in the emergence of Sikh school of art. His thirst for the Sikh paintings evidently laid the foundation of this school which began to develop towards the later half of the nineteenth century.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. R. P. Srivastava, 'Some Aspects of History of Arts of Punjab Sikh States' in *The Sikh Sansar*, a quarterly Journal of the Sikh Foundation, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 1976 (California), p. 28.
3. A. K. Coomarswamy, *Rajput Paintings* (Oxford, 1961), p. 25.
4. W. G. Archer, *Kangra Painting* (London, 1952), p. 24.
5. Mulak Raj Anand, *Album of Indian Painting*.
6. M. S. Randhawa, *Kangra Valley Painting*, Introduction, The Publication Division, Govt. of India (Delhi, 1954), p. 2.
7. W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs* (London, 1966), p. 18.
8. Syed Wahid-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh* (Karachi, n. d.), p. 121.
9. B. N. Goswamy, 'Sikh Painting: An Analysis of some Aspects of Painting' in *Oriental Art*, Vol. I, Spring (England, 1969), p. 4.

ity may be gauged from the manner in which he conducted himself, ran his administration, dealt with his defeated foes and treated his subjects belonging to different religions, status groups and occupations.

However, the question may be asked here : When Ranjit Singh was not merely a product of Punjabi culture but also a product of the Sikh religious tradition, how can it be said that the traits of his personality, character and administration seen in the foregoing pages were entirely due to the influence of Punjabi culture on him ? Surely this is a very pertinent point because Ranjit Singh was, indubitably, a devout Sikh. In the words of Waheeduddin : "His daily routine began with early morning prayers. He would have his bath, dress, put on his arms and go to the prayer room where he would listen to recitation from the Holy Granth. After that he would place over his eyes and forehead the 'marvellous Kalgi' of Guru Gobind Singh. Only after he had gone through this whole routine, would he sit down to transact the day's business. So great was his faith in the Granth Sahib that he never took any big decision or launched upon any important undertaking without seeking its guidance. On occasions he would take auguries from it even in minor matters."² His flag was the Khalsa flag. His principal coin was known as *Nanakshahi* and bore words from the Persian inscription inscribed on the coins of the Dal Khalsa or Banda Singh, which referred to Gurus Nanak and Gobind Singh, as the bestowers of sovereignty. His official seal referred to Akal (a Sikh name for God), the Helper of Ranjit.

The Maharaja's devotion to Sikhism, however, did not make him a bigot or a narrow-minded zealot. This was because of the liberal character of the Sikh faith as preached by the Sikh Gurus. The Gurus had never condemned any religion; rather they had regarded the different creeds as so many paths leading to realization of God. This liberal Sikh tradition was further strengthened during the 18th century. The Sikh warriors, whether

they were fighting against the Mughal rulers or the Durrani invaders, never allowed themselves to forget the true catholic spirit of the religious tradition, a reality to which eloquent testimony has been provided by the *Jangnama* of Qazi Nur Muhammad,³ an eye witness account of Ahmad Shah Durrani's invasion of 1764. Even when later the Sikhs established their *misals* and became rulers of the land, this religious tradition did not forsake them. So it is not incorrect to think that Ranjit Singh was considerably influenced by the Sikh tradition.

However, the influence of Sikhism did not run counter to that of Punjabi culture. They are not antithetical to each other, rather a close relationship exists between them. In fact, it was the Punjabi cultural factor in Guru Nanak which had differentiated his tenets from those of the Hindu Bhaktas in other parts of the country. If Sikhism in his hands took a practical turn and demonstrated greater commitment to social reality it was in so small degree due to the impact of Punjabi culture. Later in the time of Guru Hargobind if the Sikhs elected to meet force with force, it was also to a great extent due to the typical Punjabi reaction to injustice and tyranny. In its turn Sikhism, too, greatly enriched the cultural characteristics of the Punjab. Understood in this sense, the two, Sikh religious tradition and Punjabi cultural tradition, may be taken to be complementary to each other. In the case of Ranjit Singh at least this may be admitted without any doubt.

Expediency is another important factor which played a part in shaping the attitude of Ranjit Singh. Shrewd as he was, he could well understand that the Sikhs, though brave, constituted a small minority in the total population of the Punjab and therefore it was necessary for him to conciliate the other communities of the region, particularly their landed aristocracy and religious classes, or to maintain a working balance of opposing interests and forces.⁴ The interests of the state he was so keen on building up, demanded of him the adoption of liberal and conciliatory policies towards the sister communities. This argument is well advanced and the factor of expediency as a

personal collection.² The perusal of Rodgers' study of the Sikh coins published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Part I, Vol. 50, 1881 (pp 71-93) suggested to me the need of examining the Sikh coins in order to ascertain if any other collections are available to confirm or extend the research made by the British scholar a hundred years ago. In this quest I have been able to procure photostat copies of some coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors preserved in the British Museum.³ This list was submitted to the British authorities prior to the monumental work of Rodgers on our numismatics. The study has been supplemented with information collected from various authoritative books available on Indian coins in the library of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The main purpose of this study is just to give some useful information on the Sikh coins so as to promote deeper probes into the subject.

Coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh conquered the city of Lahore on *Hār Sudī* 5, *Sambat* 1850 BK (July 7, 1799 AD) ; he did not strike his first rupee till the following year. Ranjit Singh convened a big assembly of important people in April 1801. The assembly was held inside the fort of Lahore. People came from far and near to offer their greetings to the Maharaja. One of the decisions announced on this occasion was to establish a mint at Lahore. The ceremonies connected with the opening of the mint were gone through the same day, and the new rupees which were struck and presented on the following day for the Maharaja's inspection were given away in charity.⁴ The accepted weight of the silver standard was 11 *mashās* and 2 *ratīs*⁵. These coins did not bear the name of the Maharaja⁶ and followed the old Sikh inscription of the first Sikh coin issued by Banda Singh Bahadur in *Sambat* 1767 BK (1710 AD) which was followed by the Dal *Khālsā* also.⁷ However, we find some modifications and additions in the legend and the design of the coins issued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The rupees of *Sambat* 1857 are shown on figs. 7 and 8 under Illustrations 'A'. These were perhaps the first rupees issued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. These are silver coins. These rupees were

called *Nānakshāhī* rupees and still known by that name. The obverse of these coins shows the legend attributed to the grace of the Gurus ; on the reverse is embossed the year and place of its minting. These coins also bear on the reverse a peepal leaf and an arrow, (*bāna*)⁸. The peepal leaf is a traditional Indian symbol signifying the eternal tree of life.⁹ The sign of arrow symbolizes power and strength.¹⁰

Mr. Rodgers, apparently not familiar with the coins struck by Banda Singh Bahadur, regarded the inscription of these coins to have been borrowed from the coins struck by the Sikhs in *Sambat* 1822 (1765 AD). He could not decipher the coins correctly and made a defective reading of the above-mentioned coins.¹¹ The complete and correct reading of the inscriptions on these coins can be read thus :

Obverse	Reverse
<i>Shāh</i>	<i>Zarab darul Saltanat Lahore</i>
<i>Nānak Wāhab ast</i>	<i>Sambat 1857 (leaf Symbol)</i>
<i>Fateh-i-Gobind Singh Sāhib Shāh</i>	<i>Maimant Jalūs Manūs</i>
<i>Shāhān Fazal-i-Sachā Sāhib ast</i>	
<i>Sikkā zad bar seem-o-zar.</i> ¹²	

The words on the obverse mean : 'Lord Nanak is the granter of all boons, Victory is of Gobind Singh, the King of Kings. By the grace of the True Lord the coin struck is in silver and gold'. The inscription on the reverse means : 'Struck at the seat of government, Lahore, in the auspicious *Sambat* 1857'.

After these issues, coins were struck regularly every year at Lahore and Amritsar and many other places. The rupees of the next two or three years follow one of the preceding types.¹³ The point to be noted here is that the Amritsar rupees from *Sambat* 1861 BK show a new sign, 'a double branch' which has been supposed to represent a peacock tail (see figs. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, Illustrations 'A'). All these seven coins carry this symbol with little variations. On one of these coins (fig. 17, Illustrations 'A'), there is an ornamental figure deciphered by scholars as that of an *ārsi* (thumb mirror) worn by the women of the

Punjab. The dates of these seven coins are *Sambats* 1860-1866 BK (1803-1809 AD), the period in which Bibi Moran, the favourite Muslim wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was exercising a considerable influence over the Maharaja. It is said that once she had a wager, like Empress Nur Jahan, that she would get her name engraved on the state coins. According to Cunningham, Moran obtained a great ascendancy over the Maharaja and persuaded him to commemorate their love by striking a coin in her name.¹⁴ But she only succeeded partially in her aim, because instead of her name, a mark only in the shape of a tail of *Mor/mayur* (peacock), was allowed to be imprinted on the silver rupees. They were called *Morānshāhī* rupees as distinguished from the *Nānakshāhī* rupees and remained current till *Sambat* 1884 (1827 AD). There is another probability also : the peacock is also an emblem of *Durgā*, the goddess of *Shaktī* (power).¹⁵ The peacock coins may as well be taken as referring to an ancient Hindu deity Kartikkyā, the god of war, whose vehicle was *Sikhivāhianā* (the peacock). This symbol is found on the ancient Indian coins of the Kushāṇa Emperor Huvishka and Kumar Gupta.¹⁶ Therefore, it is possible that the legend of Moran is not correct and may be a later fabrication of a section of people who were antagonized with the Maharaja for his association with a Muslim courtesan.

The *Morānshāhī* coins are the same as those of the Sikh rupees struck at Amritsar in *Sambat* 1835 BK (fig. 2, Illustrations 'A').

The Amritsar rupees issued afterwards keep their usual inscription. The Lahore rupees of *Sambat* 1874 BK (see fig. 18, Illustrations 'A') have a third line of the obverse as on fig. 8, Illustrations 'A'. Apart from the coins minted at Lahore and Amritsar, there were coins struck at Multan, Srinagar and Peshawar as well. Multan was conquered in 1818, Kashmir in 1819, Derā Ghāzī Khān in 1819-20 and Peshawar in 1834 AD. New mints were established at these places. We have the coins of Multan (figs. 19, 32, Illustrations 'A'), Kashmir coins (figs. 34, 56, 67, 72 and 73, Illustrations 'A'), Peshawar coins (fig. 24, Illustrations 'A') and Derā Ghāzī Khān coins (figs. 50 and 70, Illustrations 'A').

tions 'A'). The designs, devices and inscriptions of these coins follow those of the Lahore and Amritsar mints. Fig. 14, Illustrations 'A' shows a rupee struck at Multan Dar-ul-Aman (Abode of Peace) in *Sambat* 1878 (1821 AD). The legend is the same as that on the Lahore rupees. The reverse shows the popular symbol, peepal leaf, the name of the mint and the date.

We are informed by Rodgers that rupees were minted regularly on the general pattern with the date of issue upto *Sambat* 1884. The coins struck after that bore the same year *Sambat* 1884 for the next ten years, until 1894 BK. The reason for the retention of the year *Sambat* 1884 on all these coins is not precisely known. One view is that the Maharaja did so under the influence of a superstition.¹⁷ Another probability, which seems to be more malplausible, is that it was done to put an end to the malpractice the money-changers had introduced : that of levying an arbitrary which rate of discount on rupees of previous dates without reference to actual diminution of weight by wear ?¹⁸

The above-mentioned state issues of Ranjit Singh retaining the year *Sambat* 1884 bear the real dates of minting also, which are placed on the obverse. For instance, fig. 20, Illustrations 'A', represents a silver rupee bearing the *Sambat* 1884 on the reverse and *San* (18) 86 on the obverse. The symbols of the peepal leaf and two cross swords are also present. The name of the mint town is not given on any of these two coins.

The coin in fig. 23, Illustrations 'A', is a peculiar Sikh coin of the present series and deserves a special notice. The inscription on the obverse contains the usual legend and is clearly visible. The reverse has two figures on it, Guru Nanak and his Muslim companion Mardana. The Guru is seen in a meditating pose (*asana*) and Mardana is fanning him with a *chaur* (flywhisk). It is a Lahore coin bearing the year *Sambat* 1885 on the reverse, though the real date is *Sambat* (18) 93 as shown on the obverse. This is the only known Sikh coin bearing human images.

The *Sambat* 1885 has a few coins of its own but they were struck in Kashmir.¹⁹

The coins struck from *Sambat* 1894 onwards bear their real date only. Fig. 24, Illustrations 'A' represents a rupee struck at Peshawar probably by Prince Nau Nihal Singh. It bears the date of the battle of Jamrud (April 1837) in which the brave Sikh general lost his life. The same date is marked on each side of the coin. The obverse has on it portions of the usual legend :

Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat-i-Bédīrang
Yāft az Nānak Guru Gobind Singh

The inscription on the reverse reads :—

Zarb-i-Peshāwar-San-i-Jalūs (Sambat) 1894

It is a light silver rupee, weighing only 135 grains.

Fig. 25, Illustrations 'A', is a silver rupee of *Sambat* 1894.

The real date of its minting is on the obverse but it contains the year *Sambat* 1885 on its reverse with a *Katār* and a new motif in the form of a round leaf which is probably a *gāda/gurj* (a mace or club of wood or iron). Mace symbolizes power and had been a favourite weapon in ancient Indian warfare.²⁰

Fig. 34, Illustrations 'A', is a silver rupee weighing 115 grains. It is a Kashmir rupee. The inscriptions on its both sides are in Gurmukhi. We have on the obverse a sword crossing a shield with the usual Sikh legend. The reverse has a leaf symbol with the inscription :

Zarb-i-Kashmir
Srī Akāl Purukh Jī
(Sambat) 1894

Gold coins were also struck by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Figs. 33 and 70, Illustrations 'A', are examples of the gold coins issued by the Maharaja. Fig. 33, Illustrations 'A' is a gold *mohur* weighing 169 grains. It bears neither the date nor the name of the mint. It has on the obverse the usual Sikh inscription in Gurmukhi characters mentioning the names of the Sikh Gurus. On the reverse is the thrice repeated expression of :

Wah Guru Jī
Wah Guru Jī
Wah Guru Jī

Fig. 74, Illustrations 'A' is a gold *mohur* of the Maharaja. It has the year *Sambat* 1861 (1804 AD), but no indication of the mint town. It has the inscription of the silver rupees of figs. 26 and 27, Illustrations 'A'.

Siccā falūs (copper coins) were also struck at various mints. The copper coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are remarkable for their heavy weight and bold execution. They bear dates, symbols and legends similar to those on the silver and gold coins of the reign. Fig 35, Illustrations 'A', is a copper coin of the Amritsar mint weighing 570 grains. It has on the obverse a new symbol of cross (with four 'Trisūls') and a new legend : *Akāl Sahāi Guru Nānak Jī*. On the reverse is the leaf symbol with the inscription : *Zarb Srī Amritsar Jī Sambat 18 (80)*.

Fig. 36, Illustrations 'A', is a copper coin in hexagonal shape with a new symbol, a flag-staff or the *niṣān* (the representation of Sikh temporal power) or *Dhvajā*.²⁸ It has on the obverse and the reverse the same inscriptions as those borne by the above coins. It does not bear any date and weighs 633 grains. Fig. 37, Illustrations 'A' is another Amritsar copper coin weighing 308 grains. It has a flower on the obverse and a round leaf or bud or *gadā* (mace) symbol on the reverse with incomplete date (*Sambat* 188).

Fig. 38, Illustrations 'A', is also a copper coin of Amritsar of *Sambat* 1885, weighing 269 grains with the leaf symbol and the usual inscriptions. It has got some decorative lines on the outer circle of the *Chakra* symbol and some dots and flowers on the obverse.

Figs. 39, and 40, Illustrations 'A', are also copper coins of the Amritsar mint in hexagonal shape with a leaf symbol on both the sides. They have no dates. Fig 40 further has decorative lines on the outer circle like those of fig. 38, Illustrations 'A'. It weighs 256 grains.

Fig. 41, Illustrations 'A', is a smaller copper coin of the Amritsar mint of a lesser weight (175 grains only) but having the

same inscription and legend. The date is incomplete.

Figs. 45 and 46, Illustrations 'A', show the obverses of small copper coins struck at Amritsar with *katār* and *niśān* (flag) symbols. Fig. 47, Illustrations 'A', is also a copper coin of the Amritsar mint with a leaf, and a flower (or a star) as symbols.

Fig. 48, Illustrations 'A', is a quarter anna (*pao anna-i-Nānakshāhī*) of *Sambat* 1896 with the leaf symbol. Fig. 49, Illustrations 'A', is a copper coin of *Sambat* 1896 (the date is given on both the sides). The obverse has the word *san* (year) in Gurmukhi letters under the date. The reverse has a leaf symbol ornamented with beads. There is an extra letter 'ain' on the reverse. Mr. Rodgers has classified it as a coin struck from the *Derājāt*.²¹

Fig. 50, Illustrations 'A', indicates the reverse of a copper coin with a flower symbol and the inscription : *Zarb-i-Derā (Derājāt)*.

Fig. 51, Illustrations 'A', is a copper coin having two leaves on the obverse, with the same inscription on both the side : *Akāl Sahāi Guru Nānak Jī*.

Fig. 52, Illustrations 'A', is a copper coin of the Amritsar mint with a leaf symbol. Fig. 53, Illustrations 'A', is also a copper coin with *Akāl Sahāi Guru Nānak Jī* on the obverse. It has a round leaf or a mace symbol on the reverse with the inscription : *Khālsā Jī Zarb Srī Amritsar Jī*. The coin has no date. Rodgers has classified it as a coin struck by the *Khālsā*.²² But we do not agree with him; our observation is that as the government of Ranjit Singh was called '*Sarkar Khālsā Jī*', it may be taken as a coin of Ranjit Singh and the full inscription on the reverse should be read as : *Sarkār Khālsā Jī; Zarab Srī Amritsar Jī*.

Fig. 57, Illustrations 'A', is a copper coin struck in *Sambat* 1881 with leaf and arrow symbols on the reverse. The inscription on the obverse is in Persian. Fig. 58, Illustrations 'A', is a crude copper coin from a different mint. It has the leaf symbol on the obverse with '*Bābā Nānāk*' in Gurmukhi letters ; on its reverse is the lily flower (sign of purity).

Fig. 67, Illustrations 'A', is a small copper coin. It has on the obverse the legend *Akāl Nanak Jī*. The inscription on the reverse reads : *Zarb-i-Khitta-i-Kashmir*, 1789. The editor of *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Part I, Vol. 50, 1881 deciphered it as *Sambat* 1865 (1807 AD).²³ Fig 68, Illustrations 'A', is an extraordinary copper coin. Its shape is irregular. The obverse has the word 'Nānak' in the centre in Persian script with apparently the leaf symbol all around. The reverse has also a peepal leaf with the date *Sambat* 1894 (1837 AD). The inscription is not very clear.

Fig. 72, Illustrations 'A', is a crude copper coin. It has on the reverse in Persian : *Zarb-i-Kashmir*. On the obverse is *Sambat* 1880 (1823 AD) in a circle. This coin was struck four years after the conquest of Kashmir. According to Rodgers : "The rough coins of Ahmad Shah (Abdali) struck in Kashmir are exactly of this type : lump of copper stamped and made current."²⁴

Fig. 73, Illustrations 'A', is another irregular copper coin of Kashmir. It has on the obverse in Gurmukhi characters : *Nanak (K) (Zarb-i-) Kash (mir)*

The reverse has a motif of an ornament, *Has* or *Hansali* worn by Indian women around their necks.²⁵ In its centre is a flower or a dotted rays symbol. It has no date but from its mode of manufacturing it is supposed to have been minted at the same time as the above-mentioned coin was. We have a variety of specimen *Sikkā falūs* issued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh under our list marked as Illustrations 'B'. Out of this series of 69 coins, figs. 1 to 7, 9 to 29, 30, 32, 39 to 42 have been deciphered as state issues struck during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²⁶ As regards legends, inscriptions and symbols, these coins are similar to those in Illustrations 'A'. Almost all these coins have the peepal leaf symbol which is invariably found in almost all the *Sikka falus* of the Lahore Kingdom. The significant point to be noted here is that these coins vary in weight and are an evidence of the existence of a great variety of *Sikkā falūs* struck during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Fig. 1, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 181 grains. Fig. 2, Illustrations 'B', is a coin of *Sambat* 1880 (1823

AD), minted at Amritsar. Fig. 3, Illustrations 'B', is a coin probably of the same year weighing 172 grains. Fig. 4, Illustrations 'B' weighs 173 grains. Fig. 5, Illustrations 'B', represents *Yak falūs* (one paisa). Fig. 6, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 184 grains. Fig. 7, Illustrations 'B', is a coin struck in *Sambat* 1881 (1824 AD). Fig. 9, Illustrations 'B', is a coin struck at Amritsar in *Sambat* 1885 with the legend '*Akāl Sāhai*'. Fig. 10, Illustrations 'B', is a coin of *Sambat* 1884 (1827 AD). Figs. 12, 14 and 16 are Amritsar coins of *Sambat* 1885 (1828 AD). Fig. 17, Illustrations 'B', is another Amritsar coin weighing 591 grains. Fig. 18, Illustrations 'B', is an Amritsar coin weighing 318 grains. Fig. 19, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 137 grains. Fig. 21, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 171 grains. Fig. 22, Illustrations 'B', is another Amritsar coin weighing 125 grains. Fig. 23, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 135 grains. Fig. 24, Illustrations 'B', is another Amritsar coin weighing 144 grains. Fig. 29, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 131 grains. Fig. 40, Illustrations 'B', is a *Pao-anna-i-Nānak Shāhī* ($\frac{1}{4}$ anna) of *Sambat* (18) 96. These coins were called *Khalsia Paisa*. Fig. 41, Illustrations 'B', is a coin weighing 140 grains. Fig. 55, Illustrations 'B', is a copper coin of *Sambat* 1887 (AD 1830) with the *Chakra* (wheel) symbol.

I have a variety of copper coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh from the Amritsar mint in my collection. Out of these I have selected nine specimen coins to be mentioned here. One of these coins has the full inscription of the Sikh rupee of the fig. 31, Illustrations 'A', on the obverse ; on the reverse it has '*Akāl Sahāi*' with the leaf symbol. Its size is usually large and inscriptions on both sides are in Persian. The rest of the eight copper coins are of the standard size with '*Akāl Sahāi*' on the obverse. They have on the reverse '*Zarab Srī Ambarsar Jī*' in Gurmukhi with the leaf symbol. One of these coins has the flag symbol on the obverse and another has the symbol of 'katār'.

Conclusion

The most striking feature of the coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is that they show a close association with religion and

other famous local legends. They have on them 'peepal leaf' and 'crossed swords'. It is only a few of those coins which do not bear the date and place of minting; other coins have both of these. The pictures of individuals are not present. However, there is one exception—the picture of Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana. This was struck in 1893 Sambat. Chivalry, power and fearlessness are depicted in the coins in the form of crossed swords.

It seems that the mints at Lahore and Amritsar and other places in the Maharaja's kingdom did not always have trained workers, and therefore, some of the coins have irregular shapes and only half of the words can be read; the blocks made appear to be bigger than the coins.

The coins in use were made from three metals: gold, silver and copper. Copper coins were most commonly used and were heavy-weight. A large number of silver coins were struck. However, one point does not go unnoticed that there was lack of uniformity in the weight of coins, which must have surely affected the foreign trade. Lack of standardisation of currency must have created problems.

The first coin was struck in 1857 Sambat and after 1861 Sambat coins were regularly struck till 1884-1893 Sambat. Nanakshahi coins were in use during the Maharaja's period. The basis of Moranshahi coins has yet to be confirmed. The coins also show the influence of Hinduism on the mind of Ranjit Singh.

This paper is presented in the hope that it would arouse the interest of more scholars and make the scientific study of coins during Ranjit Singh's reign a possibility.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See C.J. Rodgers, 'On the coins of the Sikhs', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 50, Part I, 1881, pp. 71-93.

Chas. J. Rodgers, was an Honorary Numismatist to the Government of India. He lived in Amritsar for more than a quarter of a century and prepared a catalogue of the Moghul and Suri coins. Rodgers also collected a considerable number of Sikh coins as a private individual during his stay

at Amritsar. These coins were purchased by him from money-changers. Later on these were acquired by the Government of India and were transferred to the Imperial Museum, Calcutta. Now this collection is lying in the British Museum, London. The present study provides photostats of copies of 75 coins (marked as Illustrations 'A') from Rodgers' collection, which were originally published in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Part I, Vol. 50, 1881. The coins represent the best collection of Sikh coins.

2. Some of these copper coins have been acquired with the help of S. Prakash Singh, Principal, Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar and the rest of them have been procured from S. Harbhajan Singh Chawla, Antique and Art dealer, Amritsar.
3. These are 69 in number and represent the first lot of the Sikh coins collected by European scholars. A photostat copy of these has been procured with the help of Dr. C. S. Chan, Sandhu of Coventy, London. These photostat copies are included in this study marked as Illustrations 'B'.
4. S. M. Latif, *History of the Panjab* (Reprint New Delhi, 1964), p. 353.
5. S. R. Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Punjabi) (Delhi, 1953), p. 53.
6. Keeping in view the Sikh tradition of coinage of not bearing the name of the chief or ruler, and the total absence of coins in the name of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, we have rejected the coin on fig. 8, Illustrations 'B', as fake and manipulated. This coin bears the name of Ranjit Singh with the following inscriptions :

Obverse

Srī

Sambat 1884

*Ranjit Singh Kasaf-i-Akāl Sikkā
manūs*

Reverse

Bābā Nānak

*Degh Tegh Guru Gobind
Singh Fazal*

It seems this coin was manufactured later on with ulterior motive to make profit by selling it to antique dealers showing its rarity. Even the minting, design and perfect circle of the die indicate that it is not a product of Maharaja's mint.

7. The view of the Punjab historian Rai Kanhaiya Lal, related to the orders of the Maharaja on this occasion for composing and selecting a couplet or eulogistic legend, containing the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, as suitable proposals for inscriptions on the state issues (*Tārīkh-i-Panjāb*, Urdu, p. 179) have been rejected keeping in view the fact that the distich said to have been selected had already appeared on the coins issued by Banda Singh Bahadur long ago and was regularly used by the *Khālsā* in their coins. In this connection, we agree with the observation of Dr. Ganda Singh that, out of devotion, the Maharaja ordered that the coins of his

kingdom be struck in the name of the Guru, the real King, with the old Sikh inscription :

“*Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat-Bedīrang.*

Yāft az Nānak Guru Gobind Singh”

See, ‘Maharaja Ranjit Singh—A Short Life Sketch’, *Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XIV, Part II, October 1980, p. 10.

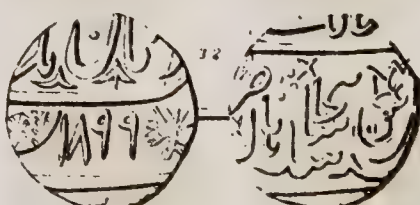
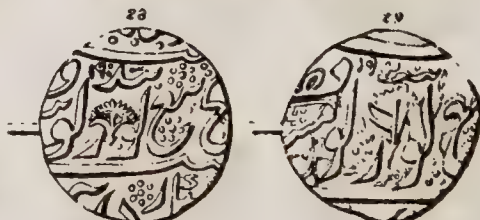
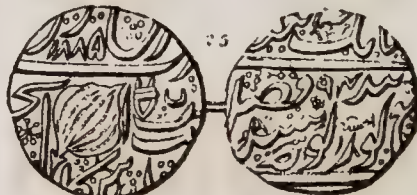
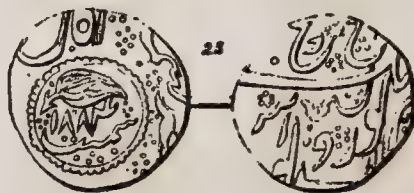
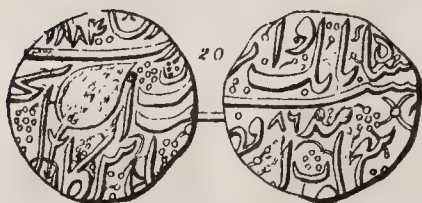
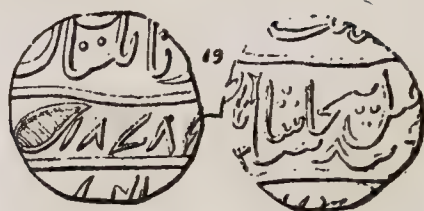
8. Rodgers has mistaken it as an anchor. See, Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
9. Margaret and James Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism, Its Mythology Folklore and Development 1500 BC—AD 1500* (London, 1937), p. 27.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
11. See, ‘On the Coins of the Sikhs’, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 50, Part I, p. 82.
12. This legend is found in full or in portions on most of the coins struck from the Lahore mint in the subsequent period during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors.
13. Figs. 9 and 10 under Illustrations ‘A’, show the obverse of two coins of *Sambats* 1860 BK and 1864 BK, both struck at Lahore and bearing the same inscription as that of the figs. 7 and 8, under Illustrations ‘A’. These coins are a proof of the fact that this legend was a specimen of the Lahore mint.
14. *History of the Sikhs* (Reprint Delhi, 1966), p. 159.
15. Margaret and James Stutley, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
16. See, S. K. Maity, *Early Indian Coins and Currency* (New Delhi, 1970), p. 111.
17. According to this, the number of breaths which a man will take in his life time is numbered when he is born, the more slowly he breathes, the longer he lives. Ranjit Singh who fell seriously ill in *Sambat* 1884 BK (1827 AD), may have thought that if he could manage to drag out one year to the extent of ten, his life would be prolonged, the number of years being originally fixed. See, Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
18. We find a similar example, though of a slightly different nature, in the case of coins of Emperor Shah Alam struck from Murshidabad retaining the 19th year of his reign (1773AD). Actually these rupees were struck by the East India Company in 1773 AD when a great variety of currencies bearing the name of Shah Alam were suppressed in the territories subject to the Company. These rupees were called the *Sicca* rupees. The unvarying date (in the 19th year) remained unaltered in order to put a stop to a practice which the money-changers had introduced of levying an arbitrary rate of discount on rupees of previous dates, without reference to any actual dimi-

nution of weight by wear. On these coins the place of coinage remained always nominally the same, whether the coin was actually struck at Murshidabad, Dacca or Calcutta. See, H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of the Judicial and Revenue Terms* (Reprint Delhi, 1968), p. 447.

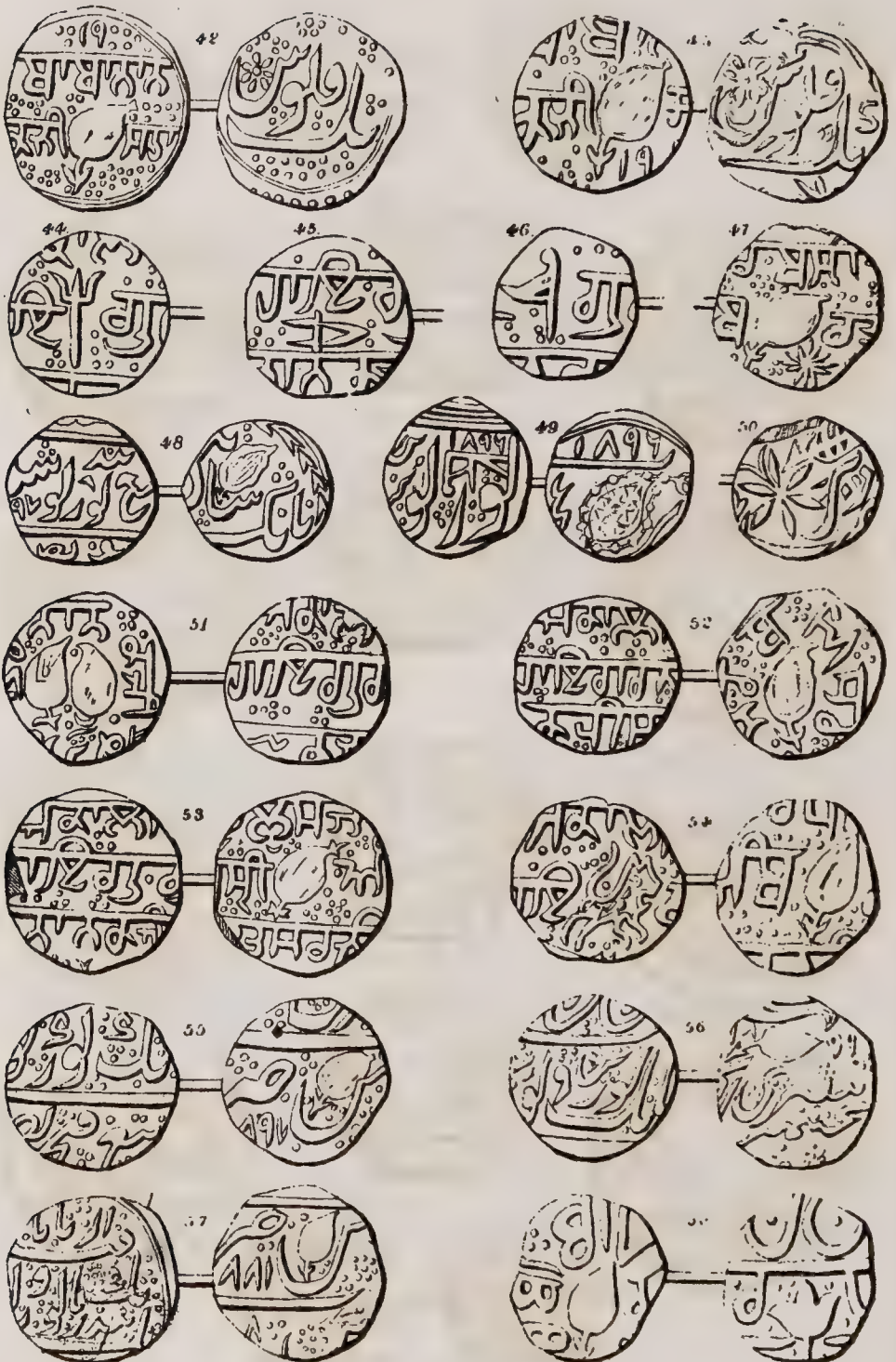
19. G. L. Chopra, *Panjab As a Sovereign State* (Reprint Hoshiarpur, 1975), p. 155.
20. Margaret and James Stutley, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
21. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
25. Rodgers has described it as two swords, back to back, between which is a flower or dotted rays. *Ibid.*
26. The coin on fig. 8 of this series has been considered as fake and manipulated and therefore is not included in this study. The subject has been discussed in detail in f.n. 6.

ILLUSTRATION 'A'









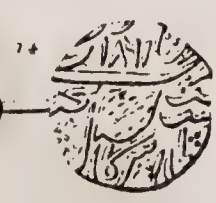
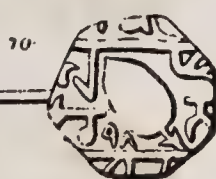
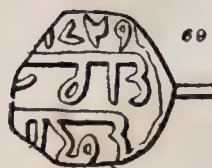
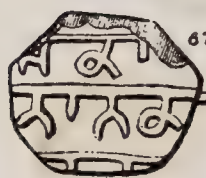
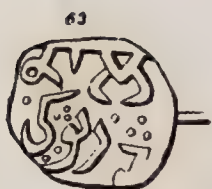
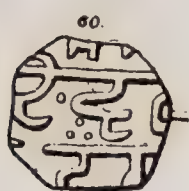
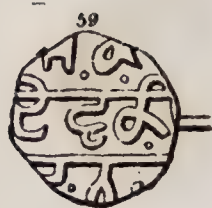
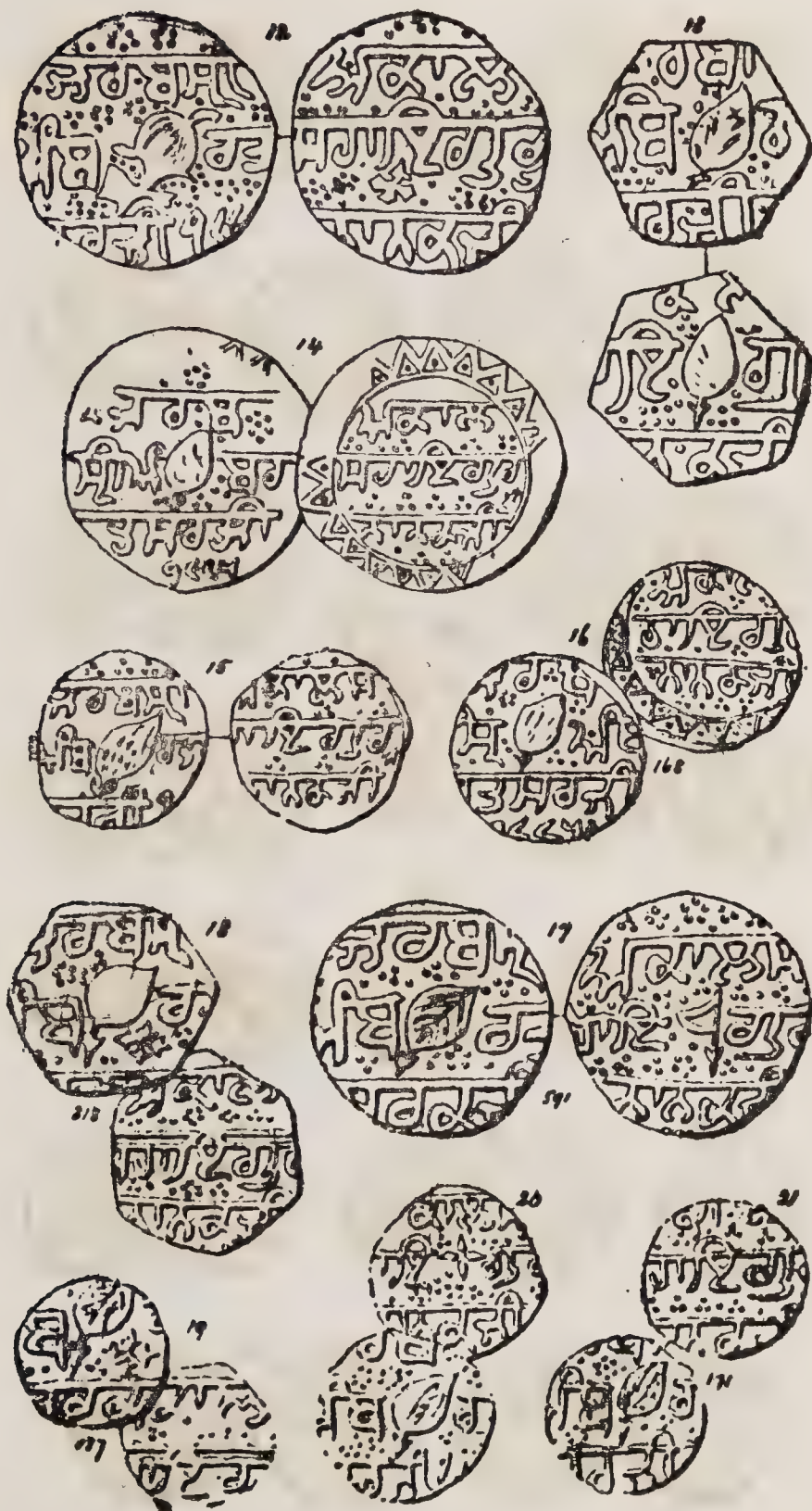


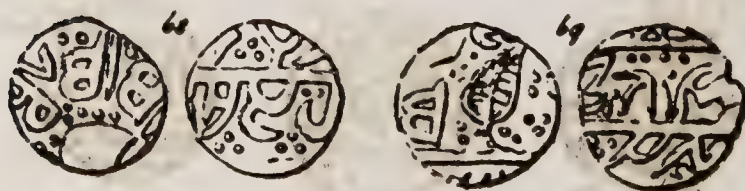
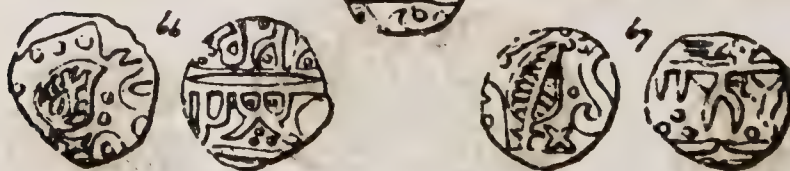
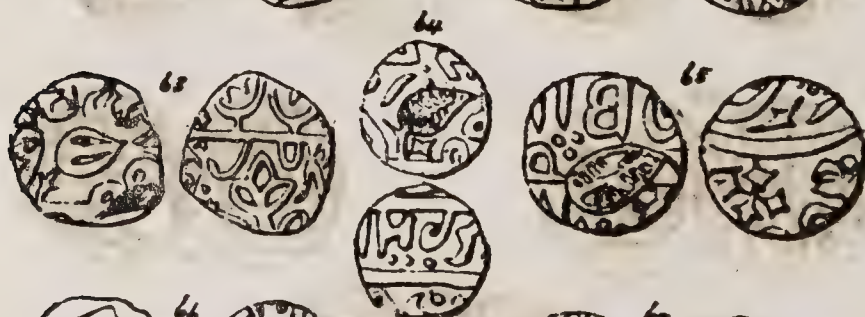
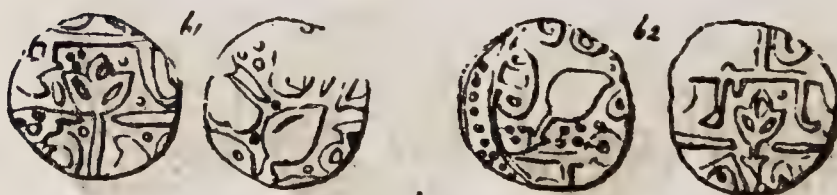
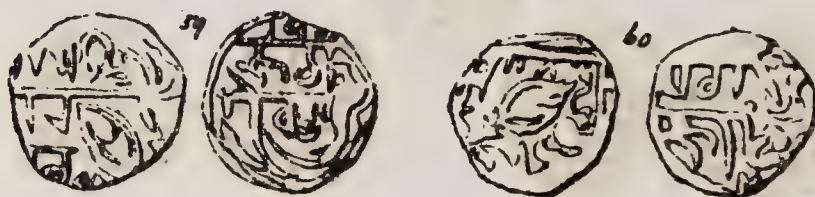
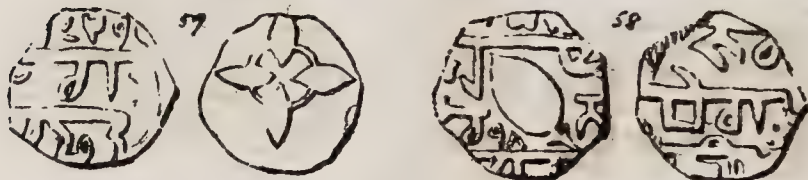
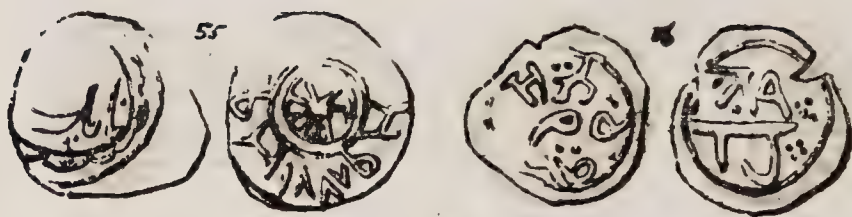
ILLUSTRATION 'B'











MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S PLACE IN HISTORY

RAJINDER SINGH*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's place in history may be determined by the way he met the challenges, which confronted him.

The fall of the Mughal empire had unleashed centrifugal forces and the country presented a sorry spectacle of disunity. Shortsighted princes animated only by passions of self-aggrandizement indulged shamelessly in Machiavellian intrigues and sordid machinations and doomed the country's future. The situation benefited the lords of the East India Company, who by following the policy of *divide et impera* played off one element against the other and ultimately became the masters of the sub-continent from the Carnatic to the Gangetic plain. The Afghans, the Rajputs, the Jats, the Rohillas, the Mughals and the Marathas, were knocked out one after the other. India was conquered mostly by Indian sepoys and Indian money. By the beginning of the 19th century she was in bonds.

The Punjab was the next on the British list of conquest. But fortunately it threw up a mighty leader in Ranjit Singh, who called a halt to the north-ward advance of the British steam-roller. After his conquest of Lahore in July 1799, he applied himself zealously to the task of welding diverse atoms into a formidable kingdom in the Punjab and not only closed 800 years of incursions from the north-west, but also turned the tide of conquests from the East to the West. He tamed his turbulent misaldar-brethren and harnessed their energies to subjugate pockets of Pathan, Afghan and Rajput resistance, carving out a kingdom 14000 sq. miles in area from the fringes of Tibet to the banks

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of the Sutlej. As a shrewd general, he possessed a sense of limits and therefore did not defy the English, who were at the time commanding overwhelming forces of well-drilled and better trained armies. Their resources in money, men and arms were far in excess of his own. The Treaty of Amritsar (1809) however gave him a rude jolt and henceforth he husbanded the dormant strength of the Punjabis and channelized the whole wealth to increasing and remodelling on western lines all branches of his armed forces. From less than 8000 he increased its numerical strength to 75,000, employed seasoned generals like Allard, Ventura, Court and others who improved its turn-out, discipline, striking power, manoeuvres, celerity and precision. In about twenty years it became a perfect machine and a match for the British. Apart from making the Punjab invulnerable, it removed all un-employment, ameliorated the lot of the peasantry and improved all-round economy. Industries and handicrafts catering to the needs of the army, received a fillip. This lent him respectability that had been lost in 1809 and the British wisely avoided offending the Maharaja by remaining neutral when he subdued the Sadozais, the Daudputras in the west and the Afghans in the north. In June 1838 they persuaded him to become a party to the Tripartite Treaty and recognized him as an arbiter in the fate of the Afghans. The Indian-ness in Maharaja Ranjit Singh however chafed at his country being in foreign yoke. He secretly corresponded with the Peshwa, the Rajas of Marwar and Bharatpur and sent emissaries to Nepal and Burma to form a united front to break the Firingi shackles.

Besides being a builder of a strong kingdom, the Maharaja was also a capable administrator. For the first time after Akbar, the country enjoyed peace and prosperity. He established a government which suited his people and the times they lived in. He introduced no innovations, made no sharp break with the past, nor bothered about the niceties of administrative theories. Life continued to run along the old grooves. Even-handed justice was dispensed. Law and order reigned supreme ; high-way robberies, decoities and armed encounters were seldom heard

of. Crime was in check and communal troubles never occurred. Through his admonitory orders he repeatedly reminded Nazims and Kardars of their duties to the peasantry. He would not tolerate acts of tyranny, highhandedness or extortion. On his surprise and frequent visits, he personally redressed the grievances and promptly decided the cases brought to his notice. Nothing could escape his vigilant eye. At the same time, he claimed no Divine Rights or Infallibility for himself. He exhorted Faqir Nur-ud-Din to point out any lapse committed ever inadvertently by himself or his princes.

The economy of the state rested on even keels. The resources were utilized within the slate. There was no drain. Punjab was self-supporting in everything. Unemployment and beggary were conspicuous by the absence. Prices were the lowest. According to Hugel, an average family of a labourer could live on 9 *annas* (56 paises) a month. Taxes, including one on land, were not back-bending. Whatever was collected went back to the people. Agriculturists and non-agriculturists lived in fraternal love and good neighbourliness. Ranjit Singh was paternal in his solicitude for public welfare. The people were as proud of him as he was of them.

His concept of kingship was different from other rulers. It was quite his own. He did not assume high-sounding titles nor did he issue coins in his name, nor affix his effigy upon them. He was a mere *Ranjit-nagara* (drum) of Guru Gobind, a *Raptia* (messenger) of Guru Nanak and a *Kukar* (dog) of their Darbar. His seal bore the inscription 'Akal Sahai Ranjit' on it. His government was *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* and he was lovingly called *Singh Sahib* or simply *Sarkar*. He never forgot for a moment that it was the sword of the Khalsa, which gave him validity, stability and strength. As a devoted Sikh he ascribed all he achieved to Guru Ram Dass and his only ambition was to preserve the commonwealth of Guru Gobind Singh and win laurels for the glory of the *Panth*. He must live up to the teachings of his Gurus and must be just, honest and benign to one and all irrespective of religion, caste and colour. All humanity, he recognized, was

one. The ideas of toleration, broad-mindedness and co-existence were deeply rooted in the Sikh tradition which stood for *sarbat ka bhalla* (good of all).

His outlook was singularly secular—far in advance of his times. He was not an intolerant dreamer and stood for non-interference in the religions of others. But no faith lay outside the bounds of his charity and endowments. The Harimandir at Amritsar, the Jawalamukhi Mandir at Kangra, the Vishwanath Mandir at Benaras, the Sunehri Masjid of Lahore, the Khanqas of Madho Lal Hussain, Data Ganj Bakhsh at Lahore and scores of other *gurdwaras*, temples and mosques received rich grants and gifts from the Maharaja. One-tenth of the state revenues were given away in charity. To bring about emotional integration important festivals of all communities were jointly and officially celebrated. All seeds of discord were sought to be removed. His rule was founded on the willing co-operation of his people.

The constitution of the court, the camp and recruitment to all officers of Lahore Darbar reflected its secular character. All offices were open to talent. Every person could rise to the highest rung of the ladder without let or hinderance. Dogras, Syeds, Mians, Brahmins, Khatris, Baniyas, Sandhanwalias and Majithias as well as Europeans adorned the cosmopolitan court of Ranjit Singh.

To call him a despot or an absolute ruler will be a gross injustice to him. Despotism smacks of high-handedness and here was Ranjit Singh who never wantonly imbrued his hands in blood. He was, no doubt, the pivot who gave directions but there was element of partnership of all and the government was seldom meddlesome. Vindictiveness was unknown to him. He treated his vanquished rivals with unheard of clemency: they were well provided for and not left to rot in a state of penury and desperation. True, there was no written constitution to restrict his powers and democratic institutions did not exist, but he was the product of his country, where royal kings and loyal subjects had always been the rule. Constitutional kings had also been an exception in

contemporary Europe. Kings like George III in England and Louis XIV and Louis XV in France indulged in clever devices to circumvent the will of their people. His other western contemporaries like Nicholas I (1825-55) in Turkey and Manchu Emperors of China were remorseless rulers, who killed and exiled their unruly subjects in thousands.

Ranjit Singh played no ducks and drakes with his subjects and allowed ample scope for the realization of individual ambition. Though he possessed wide powers and prerogatives and his word was law, yet in doing so he was only following the time-honoured practices of the land. People obeyed him by instinct.

His compassion for the poor, the handicapped and the down-cast has been described in many a legend. But he showed no mercy to the corrupt and dishonest. He took to task Jamadar Khushal Singh, Avitabile, Moti Ram, Wasakha Singh and did not spare even Hari Singh Nalwa at one time or the other, when charges of corruption, extortion and high-handedness were proved against them. At the same time, he gave a word of praise to Amar Singh Majithia in Hazara, Rup Lal in Jullunder, Sawan Mal in Multan and Lehna Singh in Amritsar for evincing solicitude for their subjects.

In short, his rule was efficient, mild and beneficial. Despotism is not an appropriate term to describe it. He was modest, humane and humble with no fetish for the trapping of royalty. He abolished capital punishment—a step not abjured even by present-day democracies. A despot rules by sword which Ranjit Singh did not. Comparing him with Ashoka and Akbar on one side and Napoleon Bonaparte or Mehmet Ali of Egypt on the other, is also a vain exercise. No two kings could be alike. There is no doubt that Ranjit Singh was a kind-hearted ruler like Ashoka but he never even thought of making Sikhism a state religion as the former did in the case of Buddhism. He was liberal and tolerant like Akbar, but he issued no Infallibility Decree nor founded a Din-i-Ilahi. His rise and fall may be meteoric like Napoleon but he did not antagonize the church nor

did he attempt to bite more than what he could properly chew. Pasha Mehmet Ali, by contrast, proved an unwise statesman, who recklessly threw down a gauntlet to many super powers and ruined himself. Thus history does not find the like of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ; he was unique in many respects. To Marshman he was the most extraordinary man and M'Gregor thought he possessed powers of mind rarely met in East or West while Gardner believed that men like him could change the face of the world. Others too have been no less lavish and profuse in paying tributes to him. He had many firsts to his credit and became a legend even during his life-time. Stories of his justice and generosity became a part of our folk-lore. The 'Lion of the Punjab' continues to live and grow in people's imagination. His memory finds an ever-lasting place in the hearts of his grateful countrymen and he is remembered as an emancipator, builder and maker of the Punjab from the Sutlej to the Khyber. Wordsworth's eulogy in praise of a Hero appropriately applies to Maharaja Ranjit Singh too :

'Yet shall thy name conspicuous and sublime
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star, such glory is thy right.'

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਰਣ

ਡਾ. ਅਜਮੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਪੁਨਰ ਮੁਲਅੰਕਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਇਕ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਸਰੋਤ ਹੈ। ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅਰੱਸਤੂ¹ ਨੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਨੂੰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਸੱਚ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਣੀਆਂ, ਹਕੀਕਤਾਂ, ਅਤੇ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਉਸਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਿਕ ਪਰਿਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਤੱਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੌਰਲੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ 'ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ' ਖਿਆਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਰੈਨੇ ਵੈਲਿਕ² ਨੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ 'ਕੌਮੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਦਿਸਦੀ ਝਲਕ' ਨਾਲ ਉਪਮਾ ਦਿਤੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਦਰਪਣ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਉਸ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਦਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਿੰਬ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।³ ਪਰ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਸਰੋਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ-ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਦਾ ਚੇਤਨ ਰੂਪ ਧਿਆਨ ਰਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਬੁੱਧੀ, ਭਾਵ, ਕਲਪਣਾ ਆਦਿ ਸਭ ਕਰਮਸ਼ੀਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸੁਚੇਤ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਅਚੇਤ ਮਨ ਵੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆਵੰਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਰਜਨਾਤਮਿਕ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਚਿਤਰਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਭੂਤਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਨਕਸ਼ ਵੀ ਲੂਕੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਕਾਲੀਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਵਿਕੋਲਿਤਰੇ ਪਰ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਣ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੋੜ ਕੇ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਉਘਾੜੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਖੋਜ-ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਚਿਤਰੀ ਗਈ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਤਿੰਨ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ : 1) ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਿੱਧਾਂਤ; 2) ਮੁਗਲ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਪਤਨ ਦੇ ਕਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ; 3) ਇਸ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਜੋ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਸਾਮਰਾਜ ਪੰਜਾਬ

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ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਜਿੱਤਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਆਧੁਨਿਕੀ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪਨਪਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਕੁ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਸਨ ?

ਅੱਧੀ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਜਿਹੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਸਲਤਨਤ ਬਣੀ, ਉੱਭਰੀ ਤੇ ਮਿਟ ਗਈ। ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਸਾਮਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਹਵਾਸ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਾਨਿਕ ਭੂਪਵਾਦੀ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਧਾੜਵੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਿਤਾਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਠਭੇੜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਲਾਸੀ ਮਿਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਗੌਰਵ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਸੁੱਖ-ਸਾਂਤੀ ਦਾ ਮੂੰਹ ਦੇਖਿਆ।

ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਾਲ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ-ਪਰਿਪੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਤੌਰ-ਤਰੀਕਾ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮੁਗ਼ਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ-ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਉਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਸੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਬਣਨ ਨਾਲ ਹਾਕਮ ਦੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ, ਹਾਕਮ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਆਈ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਰਾਜ ਸਾਮੰਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਅੰਗ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਸਾਮਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਆਈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਸੰਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਆਇਆ। ਸਾਮਰਾਜ ਨੇ ਦੇਸੀ ਉਦਯੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਤਬਾਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਥੋਂ ਲੁੱਟੇ ਹੋਏ ਸੋਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਰਜ਼ੁਆਜ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ। ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਥੇ ਵਧੀਆਂ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਢਲਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਉਥੇ ਸੂਈ ਦਾ ਬਣਨਾ ਵੀ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਕੱਚੇ ਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਮੰਡੀ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ/ਹਿੰਦੂਸਤਾਨ 'ਸਨਅਤੀ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ' ਦੀਆਂ ਬਰੂਹਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਖੜਾ ਸੀ ? ਇਸ ਵਿਵਾਦ-ਪੂਰਣ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਉਤੇ ਮਾਰਕਸਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਵਾਨ ਦੋ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।⁴ ਇਰਫ਼ਾਨ ਹਬੀਬ,⁵ ਵੀ ਆਈ ਪੈਵਲੋਵ ਆਦਿ ਪੂਰਵ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ-ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਰਜਨੀ ਪਾਮ ਦੱਤ, ਏ. ਆਰ. ਡਿਸਾਈ ਆਦਿ ਇਸ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਲਝਾ ਕੇ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਰਥ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਸਹੀ ਅਨੁਮਾਨ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਮੰਤਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਟੈਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਸਾਮਰਾਜ ਤੋਂ ਪਿਛੇ ਸੀ। ਧਨਾਡ਼ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਪਾਰੀ-ਵਰਗ ਰਾਜਾ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੱਕੀ ਭਿਆਲ ਰਖਦਾ ਸੀ, ਵਿਰੋਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਰਦਾ। ਧਨਾਢ਼ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਹਾਕਮ ਨੂੰ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਆਦਿ ਲੋਕ-ਭਲਾਈ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਲਈ ਰੁਪਇਆ ਕਰਜ਼ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਸੇਠ ਰਾਮਾ ਨੰਦ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਾਇਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਤੇ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੁਝ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਪਰ ਇਹ

ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਜਥੇਵੰਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਟੱਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਲੈ ਸਕਦੇ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਵੱਧਣ ਲਈ ਅਜੇ ਰਾਹ ਸਾਫ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਸਾਮਰਾਜੀ ਜੂਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਜੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰ ਬੁਰਜ਼ੁਆਜ਼ੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੌਮੀ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅੰਸ਼ ਭਾਰੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ-ਵੰਡ, ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ-ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ-ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਰਤਕ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਦਿਸ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਮੁੱਲੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਉਪਲਭਧ ਹਨ। ਕਾਵਿ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਰ, ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਿੱਸਾ ਤਿੰਨ ਕਾਵਿ-ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਰਥ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਝੁੱਲੇ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਰਤਕ ਵਿਚ 'ਸਾਖੀਆਂ' ਆਦਿ ਵਿਚ। ਇਸ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਠਾਠ-ਬਾਠ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਵੰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨੋ-ਸ਼ੌਕਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਵਨਯਾਰ, ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ, ਗਵਾਲ ਭੱਟ ਆਦਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕਾਵਿ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾਵਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਵੀ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰੀ ਜਮਾਤ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ। ਕਿਰਸਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੰਦਿਆ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਦਾ ਜੌਹਰ ਦਿਖਾ ਕੇ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰੀ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅਟਾਰੀਵਾਲੇ ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਲੂਆ ਆਦਿ ਨੇ। ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰੀ, ਵਿਦਿਵਤਾ, ਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਚਾਪਲੂਸੀ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰ ਬਣੇ। ਡੋਗਰੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਕੌਲ, ਜੋ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਘੋੜ-ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਨ, ਸੋਲਾਂ ਲੱਖ 20 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਰੁਪਏ ਸਾਲਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਸੀ।¹⁶ ਗਵਾਲ ਭੱਟ ਨੇ, ਜੋ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸੀ, ਧਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸੰਮਤੀ-ਸ਼ਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਕਾਰ ਕਲਮ-ਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ :

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮਹੀਪ ਧਯਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੈਠੇ ਅਤਿ ਆਨੰਦ ਮੇ, ਬਿਪ੍ਰਨ ਕੋ ਪਗ ਪੁਜ ਦੇਤ
ਮਨਭਾਯੋ ਹੈ।

ਮੋਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਮਾਲੈ ਜਿਗਾ ਜਟਿਤ ਮਸਾਲੈਂ ਬਾਲੈ, ਕੰਗਨ ਦੁਸਾਲੈ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਤ ਸੁਹਾਯੋ ਹੈ
ਕੇਤਨ ਕੋ ਹਾਥੀ ਦੇਤ ਹੋਦਨ ਸਮੇਤ ਸਾਜ, ਕੇਤਨ ਕੋ ਘੋੜੇ ਸਾਜ ਸਰਸ ਲਗਾਯੋ ਹੈ।
ਕੇਤਨ ਕੋ ਭੂਮਿ ਦੇਤ, ਕੇਤਨ ਕੋ ਗਾਮ ਦੇਤ, ਕੇਤਨ ਕੋ ਧਾਮ ਦੇਤ, ਦੇਤ ਨ ਆਘਾਯੋ,
ਹੈ। 471 (ਵਿਜਯ-ਵਿਨੋਦ)

ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਦਾ ਜਲੌਅ ਸੂਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮਾਤ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉੱਚੀਆਂ ਅਟਾਰੀਆਂ, ਮੋਤੀ-ਹੀਰੇ, ਲਾਲ-ਜਵਾਹਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਭੂਸ਼ਣ, ਕੀਮਤੀ ਵਸਤਰ, ਸੋਨੇ-ਚਾਂਦੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਿੰਗਾਰੇ ਹਾਥੀ-ਘੋੜੇ, ਪਾਲਕੀਆਂ, ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ, ਦਾਸੀਆਂ, ਪਰਦਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੀਆਂ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ, ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਹਵੇਲੀਆਂ, ਮਨਮੋਹਨੇ ਬਾਗ, ਅਨੇਕ ਖਾਣੇ ਤੇ ਪਕਵਾਨ, ਐਸ਼ੋ-ਇਸ਼ਰਤ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਥਾਵਾਂ

ਉਤੇ ਆਮ ਹੀ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗੁੱਸੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੇੜੀਆਂ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਕੈਦ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ—ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸੰਧਾਵਾਲੀਏ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਲਹਿਣਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਦ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਸੁਲਹ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਬਹਾਲ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਅੰਗ ਬਣ ਗਏ :—

ਵਸਿਆ ਰਾਜਾ ਸਾਹਸੀ, ਫਿਰ ਹੋਇ ਸਵਾਇਆ।

ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਆਏ ਮੁਲਖ ਵਿਚ, ਰੱਬ ਫਿਰਕਾ ਪਾਇਆ,।

ਮਹਿਲੀ ਬੈਠੀਆਂ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ, ਕਰ ਰੂਪ ਸਵਾਇਆ।

ਖਿਜਮਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ, ਰੱਬ ਰਾਜ ਦਿਵਾਇਆ। 120।

(ਸਿੰਧਾਵਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ-ਹੀਰਾ)

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੰਦਾ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜੋ ਸਾਮੰਤ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਖਾੜਕੂ ਲਹਿਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਰੁਖ ਵਿਚ, ਭੂਪਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਗਈ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਾ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਦਵੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ 'ਆਖਰ ਰਾਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਂ ਪੁੱਤ ਸਰੀਕ ਦਾ ਈ'⁸ ਜਾਂ 'ਰਾਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਰਾਜਿਆ, ਫੜ ਵੀਰ ਕੁਹਾਏ',⁹ 'ਰਾਜੇ ਅਕਸਰ ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਨ ਹਾਰੇ'।¹⁰ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਅਹੁਦਿਆਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੂਬੇਦਾਰ, ਜਰਨੈਲ, ਦੀਵਾਨ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਥਾਂ ਪੁਰ ਥਾਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਖਾਲਸਾ ਫੌਜ ਦੇ ਘੋੜ-ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ, ਤੋਪਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੰਗ ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਨਾਮਕਰਣ, ਪੈਦਲ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਰਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਿਸ਼ਕ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ : 'ਲਾਲੋਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਣੇ ਫੁੱਜਾਂ ਬਾਕੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਤੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਜੋ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ'।¹¹ ਫੌਜ ਦੇ ਪਰੇਡ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਲੱਖ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੱਸੀ-ਪੁੰਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਿੱਸਾਕਾਰ ਹਾਸਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦੇ ਵਾਸਤਵ ਮੁਹਾਂਦਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨੰਗਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਕਾਲੀਨ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਕਸ਼, ਆਦਮਖੌਰੇ, ਜਾਲਮ, ਚੋਰ, ਪਲੀਤ ਜਿਨਾਹੀ, ਖੁਦਾ ਦੇ ਡਰ ਤੋਂ ਕੌਰੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ।¹² ਇਸ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਸਰਬੋਤਮ ਕਵੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਕਥਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਮੰਤ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਜਨ-ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਉਤੇ ਜਲਮ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਹਾਕਮ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਰੀਰਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ-ਦਿਮਾਗਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਵੀ ਰਾਜ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਕਾਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਆਮ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਅਚੇਤ ਹੀ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਭਰੇ ਪਏ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਹੁਣਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ

ਵਿਚ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ ਸੋਚਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਜਦੋਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਿਤਰ ਦੇਹ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਸਤੀ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਹੈਰਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਚੇਤਨ ਸਨ। ਕਾਦਰਯਾਰ ਤੇ ਫਜ਼ਲ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਆਦਿ ਕਿੱਸਾਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ 'ਸੋਹਣੀ ਮਹੀਵਾਲ' ਦੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ¹³ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਦੇ ਹੁਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਨੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਹੈਰਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਨ ਪਾਣੀਉਂ ਮਰ ਗਿਆ। ਪਰ ਉਹ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਆਪ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਆਪਣੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਦੇ ਹੁਸਨ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਫ਼ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਲਾਮ ਜਾਂ ਨਫਰ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਛੋਟਾ ਤੇ ਘਟੀਆ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਰਾਜਾ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਮਾਜ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਪਰਛਾਵੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਗੁਲਾਮ, ਨੌਕਰ-ਚਾਕਰ, ਪਹਿਰੇਦਾਰ, ਉਸਦੇ ਮਗਰ ਮਗਰ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਭਾਗ, ਸੁਖ, ਆਰਾਮ, ਐਸ਼, ਆਨੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਗ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਦਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਦੁਰਭਾਗ, ਦੁੱਖ, ਤਕਲੀਫ਼, ਸੰਕਟ, ਨਿਰਾਸਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਦਾਸਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭੂਪਵਾਦੀ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਮੌਰੂਸੀ ਸਿਲਸਲਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਾ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਲ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਫੌਜ ਆਪਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰ੍ਹੇ-ਆਮ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਾਜ-ਮਾਤਾ ਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦਾ ਉਤੇ ਕਟਾਖਸ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ : "ਕਿਹੜੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਾ ਪੁੱਤ ਮੋਇਆ ਸਾਥੋਂ, ਜੇੜੇ ਡੂੰਘੇ ਵੈਣ ਤੂੰ ਪਾਵਨੀ ਏਂ,"¹⁴ ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਕਿੱਸਾ ਕਾਵਿ ਦਾ ਨਾਇਕ ਤੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾ ਤੇ ਨੁਹਾਰ ਭੂਪਵਾਦੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਜੁਲਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਵੰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਬੰਦਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰੀਆਂ ਜਾਗੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੀਂ ਭਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਸਾਮੰਤ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਵੰਸ਼ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਦੀ ਨੂੰ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਭੱਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਜਾਗੀਰਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ। 'ਸੰਧਾਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ' ਦੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ ਦਰਸਾਈ ਹੈ। ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ-ਅਰਥ ਖਾਤੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਗੀਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਸਦਾਂ ਲਾਈਆਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ, ਮੰਦਰਾਂ, ਮਸਜਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ। ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫਿਰਕਿਆਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਸਾਧੂਆਂ, ਨਿਰਮਲਿਆਂ, ਸੇਵਾ-ਪੰਥੀਆਂ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਗੀਰਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ। ਸਾਵਨ ਯਾਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸਦਾਵਰਤ, ਛਤੀਲ ਤੇ ਪੁੰਨ ਲਾਏ ਸਨ। ਕਵੀ ਲੱਖ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਤੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਦੁੱਕਦਾ ਹੈ :—

ਇਕ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਇਕ ਪੜ੍ਹੈ ਕਤੇਬਾਂ, ਲਿਖਦੇ ਏਕ ਬਿਚਾਰੇ, ਬੈਠ ਨਿਆਰੇ।

ਕਈ ਮਕਾਨ ਮਸਜਦਾਂ ਤਕੀਏ, ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ਮੱਠ ਭਾਰੇ, ਠਾਕੁਰ ਦੁਆਰੇ।

ਮੌਮਨ ਫ਼ਕਰ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਵਰ ਅਰੁ, ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਾਧ ਪੁਜਾਰੇ, ਰਾਮ ਪਿਆਰੇ ।

ਕਹਿ ਲਖ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਗੀਰਾਂ ਖਾਵਣ, ਪਾਵਨ ਰਸਤਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ, ਕਰਨ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ 128 ।

(ਸੱਸੀ-ਪੁੰਨੂੰ-ਲਖ ਸ਼ਾਹ)

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਸਵਰਨ ਸੇਵਾ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਨਾਥ ਮੰਦਰ ਲਈ ਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ 22 ਮਣ ਸੋਨਾ, ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇ ਮੰਦਰ ਉਤੇ ਸੋਨੇ ਦਾ ਛੱਤਰ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ, ਮਸੀਤ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਦਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਾਮੰਤਵਾਦੀ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਦੀ ਪੈਂਠ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਕੀਦਤ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਨ । ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਾਕਮ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਜਾਰੀ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ, ਡੂੰਘਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੇ ਅਣਲਿਖਿਤ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਦੂਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਦੇ ਜਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੁੱਟ-ਕੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਭਰਦੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੱਕੀਆਂ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ । ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਥੋੜੀ ਦੇਰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ-ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਲੋਕ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੋਸ ਅਤੇ ਰੋਹ ਦਾ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ । ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ।

ਸਾਵਨ ਯਾਰ 'ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੀ' ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ, 'ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੈਂਠ ਲਾਈ, ਖੁਲ੍ਹੇ ਰਸਤੇ ਵਪਾਰੀਆਂ ਰਾਹ ਰੁੰਦਾ' । ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਵਪਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਦਾ ਉਚੇਚਾ ਖ਼ਿਆਲ ਰਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਵਪਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਵਪਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਬੇਹਤਰੀ ਹੋਈ । ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਰਮਾਇਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਬਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਦੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਪੈਸਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ; ਦੂਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਪਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਕਮ ਆਪਣਾ ਏਕਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਵੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ; ਤੀਜੇ ਵਪਾਰੀ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੀ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਚਲਦੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੌਹਣੀ-ਮਹੀਵਾਲ ਦੇ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਦਰਯਾਰ ਨੇ ਇੱਜ਼ਤ ਬੇਗ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ । ਉਹ 'ਕੁਲ ਰਖਤ ਫਰੋਖਤ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਲਿਆ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਚੁਕਾਇ' ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ । ਵਪਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਹਾਕਮ-ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਗਾਹਕ ਸੀ । ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪ ਲੂਣ ਤੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਾਲਿਆਂ ¹⁵ ਦਾ ਵਪਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ । ਇਬਰਤਨਾਮਾ ¹⁶ ਦੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਲੂਣ ਦੇ ਵਪਾਰ ਦੀ ਦੇਖ-ਭਾਲ ਰਾਜਾ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਸੀ । ਵਣਜ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਖੱਤਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਜਾਤ ਦੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ।

ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਹੁਲਾਰਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਫੌਜੀ

ਅਫਸਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਾਣਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਨ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਾਣੀ ਜਮਾਤ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਫਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਆਇਆ। ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਜੱਟਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਲੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੋਇਆ। ਕ੍ਰਿਸਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਵਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਰੂਪਾਂਤਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਾਣੀ ਵਲ ਰੂਪਾਂਤਰਣ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ :—

ਜਦੋਂ ਪਿਆ ਹਰਾਸ ਤੋ ਕਰਨ ਗੱਲਾਂ, ਮੁੰਡੇ ਘੋੜ ਚੜੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਛੋਕਰੇ ਸੀ।

ਵਾਹੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਤੇ ਰੋਟੀਆਂ ਖੂਬ ਖਾਂਦੇ, ਅਸੀਂ ਜੱਟਾਂ ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੌਤਰੇ ਜੀ।

ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦਾ ਖੂਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਮਿਲਖ ਵਾਲੇ, ਅਸੀਂ ਦਬਕੇ ਲਾਵਾਂਗੇ ਜੋਤਰੇ ਜੀ। 77।

(ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਫਿਰੰਗੀਆਂ)

ਖੇਤੀ, ਜੋ ਵਸੋਂ ਦੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਹਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਧੰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਬੈਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੋਗ ਉਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਸੀ। ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਲਈ ਖੂਹ, ਤਾਲਾਬ ਤੇ ਚੌਅ ਸਨ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਹਿਰਾਂ ਵੀ ਖੁਦਵਾਈਆਂ ਸਨ।¹⁷ ਪੈਦਾਵਾਰ ਉਤੇ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਇੱਜ਼ਾਰੇਦਾਰੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੈਦਾਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਰਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਸੀ। ਕਾਸ਼ਤਕਾਰ ਹਰ ਫਸਲ ਦਾ ਉਸਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਲਗਾਨ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਗ਼ਰੀਬ ਸਨ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਗਲ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ-ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਕੁਝ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ ਮਿਲੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਵਿਜਯ ਵਿਨੋਦ ਦੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਸੁਧਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਕਾਵਿ ਬਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ :—

ਕੀਨੀ ਤਜਵੀਜ਼ ਹੈ ਤਸੀਲ ਕੀ ਅਸੀਲ ਐਸੀ,

ਢੀਲ ਬਿਨ ਅਵਿ ਦ੍ਰਵ ਮੁਲਕ ਤੈ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੇ।

ਟੂਟੈ ਜਿਮੀਦਾਰਨ ਕੋ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਬਯਾਜ ਰੁਪਯਾ ਦੇ,

ਰਿਆਯਤ ਕੈ ਲੈਲੋ ਦੈ ਦਿਲਾਸਾ ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਹੈ।

ਫਸਲ ਫਸਲ ਮੈਂ ਹਿਸਾਬ ਕੋ ਚੁਕਾਇ ਲੈਨ,

ਬਾਕੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਾਖਨੀ ਬੁਸੁੱਧਿ ਕੋ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ।

ਦਿਨ ਦਿਨ ਮਾਸ ਮਾਸ ਬਰਖ ਬਰਖ ਦੇਸ ਦੇਸ,

ਬਿਸਵਾ ਬਢੈ ਤੈ ਬਢਾ ਆਮਦ ਆਪਾਰ ਹੈ। 29।

... ..

ਕੂਲੇ ਕਾਟਿ, ਖੱਡੇ ਕਾਟਿ, ਨਦੀ ਕਾਟਿ ਨਹਰੈ ਲੈ,

ਖਾਈ ਭਰਵਾਈ ਠੌਰ ਠੌਰ ਤਟ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੈਂ।

ਰਾਹਿ ਰਾਹਿ ਨਾਕੇ ਨਾਕੇ ਚੌਕੀ ਯੋ ਬਿਠਾਇ ਦੀਨੀ,

ਧਾੜਵੀਂ ਅੰ ਚੋਰ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਆਵੇ ਕਹੁ ਕੈਸੇ ਹੈਂ ।

(ਵਿਜਯ ਵਿਨੋਦ-ਗਵਾਲ ਭੱਟ)

ਕਵੀ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ 'ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਬੰਦੋਬਸਤ'¹⁸ ਵਿਚ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ।

ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਕਾਰਣਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਘਰੇਲੂ ਦਸਤਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਹੋਇਆ । ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਦਰਜੇ ਦਾ ਵਪਾਰਿਕ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ । ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਾਰੀਗਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਸਬ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਿਰਬਾਹ ਤੌਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ । ਲੱਖ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ 1247/1831 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਰਚਿਤ ਆਪਣੇ 'ਸੱਸੀ ਪੁੰਨੂੰ' ਦੇ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਭੰਬੋਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਚਿਤਰ ਖਿੱਚਿਆ ਹੈ ਵਾਸਤਵ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਵੀ ਦੇ ਅਵਚੇਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਚਿਤਰ ਸਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸਨੇ ਡੇਢ ਸੌ ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਕਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਦੇ ਬੰਦ 27 ਤੋਂ 45 ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ।¹⁹ ਨਾਂਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਲੱਖ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਾਰਿਸ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮਾਤ ਪਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਏਨੇ ਕਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ-ਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਵੇ । ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਂਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧੰਦਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਰਾਫ਼, ਅਤਾਰੀ, ਪਾਪੜਗਰ, ਕਸੇਰੇ, ਛੀਂਟਗਰ, ਰੰਗਰੰਜ ਲਲਾਰੀ, ਟਕਸਾਲੀ, ਚਿਤੇਰੇ ਜੜੀਏ, ਨਿਆਰੇ, ਝਿੱਲੀਆਂ ਕੁੱਟ, ਦਫਤਰੀਆਂ ਕੁੱਟ, ਕੋਫਤਗਰ, ਠਠਿਆਰੇ, ਰਹਿਕਲੇ, ਖਾਤਮਬੰਦ, ਕੰਘੇਗਰ, ਸਿਕਲੀਗਰ, ਐਨਕਗਰ, ਦੁਰਬੀਨੀਏ, ਸੋਜਨਗਰ, ਸਿੰਗਰੇਗਰ, ਕਾਰਚੋਬ, ਕੰਜਗਰੇ, ਰਫੂਗਰ, ਸਾਬਣਗਰ, ਠਿੱਕੇਗਰ, ਮਨੀਆਰ, ਕਾਗਜ਼ਗਰ, ਅਤਸਬਾਜ, ਨੇਜਾਗਰ, ਫਲੋਰੇ, ਚੀਨੀਗਰ, ਕੂਜਾਗਰ, ਕਫਸਗਰ, ਤੇਲੀ, ਖਰਾਸੀ, ਨੀਲਗਰ, ਨੂਠਾਰੀ, ਚੂਨੇਗਰ, ਸੰਗਦਾਹੇ, ਸਰਕੀਗਰ, ਸਤੋਰੇਜ਼ੀਆ, ਨਾਨਬਾਈ, ਕਾਬਾਬੀ, ਮਾਛੀ, ਚੰਮਰੰਗੀਏ, ਜੁਰਾਬੀ, ਹਜਾਮ, ਸਾਫੀਏ, ਜਰਾਹਿ, ਕੰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਰਮ ਕਢਣ ਵਾਲੇ, ਝਾੜੂਗਰ, ਬੇਲਦਾਰ, ਕਲੰਦਰ, ਬਾਜ਼ੀਗਰ, ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਵੇਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ, ਬੰਗਾਲੀ ਜਾਦੂਗਰ, ਨਟ, ਪੁਤਲੀਗਰ, ਮਦਾਰੀ, ਬਹੁਰੂਪੀਏ ਆਦਿ ਆਦਿ ।

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮੀ, ਕਮੀਣ, ਗੁਲਾਮ, ਚੂੜੇ ਆਦਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਮਾਤਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ । ਆਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਉੱਚੇ ਅਹੁਦਿਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਦਰਜੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਥਾਂ ਪੁਰ ਥਾਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ :

ਕੋਣ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਨੀਚ ਕਹਾਉਂਦਾ ਏ ।

(ਸੱਸੀ ਪੁੰਨੂੰ—ਹਾਸਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ)

ਧੋਬਣ ਜਾਤ ਕਮੀਨੀ ਕਰ ਕੇ, ਛੋਡਿ ਗਏ ਤੁੱਦ ਤਾਂਈ ।

(ਸੱਸੀ-ਪੁੰਨੂੰ-ਹਾਸਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ)

ਕਾਮੇ ਦਾਸ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਹੋਰ ਨੌਕਰ, ਵਿਰਲੇ ਹੋਣ ਇਹ ਨਿਮਨ ਹਲਾਲ ਮੀਆਂ ।

(ਸੌਹਣੀ-ਫਜ਼ਲ ਸ਼ਾਹ)

ਸੀਸਾਨਾਈਆਂ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਖੋਹ ਦੇਖੇ, ਜ਼ੋਰ ਕੰਮੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਜੱਟ ਲਾਂਵਦੇ ਨੇ । 39 ।

(ਸੱਸੀ ਪੁੰਨੂੰ-ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ)

ਕਵੀ ਜੋਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਂ ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹੀਰ ਦੀ ਮਾਂ ਜਦੋਂ ਹੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਕ ਦਾ ਮਿਹਣਾ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਯਾਰ ਦੇ 'ਨੀਚ ਨਾਈ' ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਤਾਹਣਾ ਮਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ :

ਮੇਰਾ ਯਾਰ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇਸ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ ਜਹਾਨ ਜਾਨੇ,

ਤੇਰਾ ਯਾਰ ਜਗ ਦਾ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਨੀਚ ਨਾਈ ਨੀਂ ।

ਰਾਝਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਤਖ਼ਤ-ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਚੌਧਰੀ ਨੀ,

ਤੇਰਾ ਝੁਰਕ ਝੁਥੂ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਜਗਤ ਨਾਈ ਨੀਂ ।

(ਹੀਰ ਰਾਝਾ-ਜੋਗ ਸਿੰਘ)

ਕਵੀ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹੀਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਲਕੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਵਾਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਕ ਅਤੇ ਜੱਟਾ ਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਫਰਕ ਦਾ ਟੱਕਰਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ :

ਕਿਥੋਂ ਘਤ ਸੈਂ ਹਾਰ ਹਮੇਲ ਨੱਢੀ, ਕਿਥੋਂ ਲਹੇ ਝਰੋਖੇ ਦੀ ਪੌਣ ਨੰਡੀ ।

ਦਿਨੇ ਰਾਤ ਰਾਝਾ ਲੇਟੇ ਮੱਥਰਾਂ ਤੇ, ਕਿਥੋਂ ਲਵੈ ਪਲੰਘ ਨਿਵਾਰ ਨਢੀ । 112

ਥਾਵੇਂ ਚੂੜੇ ਪਹਿਣਸਾਂ ਸਬਜ਼ ਵੰਗਾਂ, ਗਲ ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਖਸਾਂ ਹਾਰ ਮਾਏ ।

ਬਦਲੇ ਨੱਥ ਦੇ ਲੋਗ ਹੰਡਾਵਸਾਂ ਮੈਂ, ਕਰਾਂ ਰਾਝੇ ਦਾ ਨਿਤ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਮਾਏ ॥ 13 ॥

(ਹੀਰ ਰਾਝਾ-ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ)

ਜਾਤਪਾਤ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਵੀ ਜੋਰ ਉਤੇ ਸੀ । ਸਾਰਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੰਡੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ । ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਦੇਸ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਥੇ ਕਬੀਲੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਬੀਲਾ ਜਾਤ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਜਾਤ ਅਤੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬੰਦਾ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ।²⁰

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਵਾਦ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਪੱਕੀ ਕੀਤੀ । ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਾਨ-ਪਾਤਰ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ । ਪਰ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਕਿਰਸਾਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ 'ਲਾਗੀਆਂ' ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ । ਤਦ ਹੀ ਹਾਸਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਸੱਸੀ-ਪੁੰਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ : 'ਬੂਹੇ ਉਤੇ ਸੱਦ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਡੂਮ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਨਾਈ ।' ਇਥੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਦਰਜਾ ਮਿਰਾਸੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੈ ।

ਸਟਾਈਨਬਖ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਿਯਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮਰਦਮਸ਼ੁਮਾਰੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ

ਕਾਰਣ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਮਾਨ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਐਖਾ ਹੈ।²¹ ਅਜੁਧਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ ਤਸੀਲਦਾਰ ਨੇ 1850 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਕੁਲ ਵਸੋਂ 85,305 ਦਸੀ ਸੀ। ਇਦੇ ਵਿਚ 35,144 ਮਰਦ, 28,842 ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ, 21,319 ਬੱਚੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 49,695 ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ, 32,109 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅਤੇ 3,501 ਸਿੱਖ ਸਨ।²²

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਸਵੈ-ਨਿਰਭਰ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ-ਇਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਿੱਸਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਹ ਸ਼ਾਦੀਆਂ, ਮਰਣੇ ਪਰਣੇ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਚਿਲਤ ਰਸਮਾਂ-ਰਿਵਾਜ਼ਾਂ, ਵਹਿਮਾਂ-ਭਰਮਾਂ, ਰਹੁ-ਰੀਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਸੂਝ ਦੀ ਵਿਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਅਗਿਆਤ ਕਵੀ ਨੇ ਕੰਵਰ ਨੌਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਵਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਰਾਂ ਮਾਂਹ ਕਾਵਿ-ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਵਿਬੱਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਉਤੇ ਪਰਦੇ ਦਾ ਬੋਝ ਵਧ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਤਕ ਦੇਹ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਤੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਇਸਦੀ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਕਾਵਿਬੱਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।²³ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਕਾਰਣ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਟਾਰੀਵਾਲੇ ਦੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਵੀ ਸਤੀ ਹੋਈ। ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਦੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਮਾਨ ਰਾਣੀ ਚੰਦ ਕੌਰ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਕੌਰ ਦੇ ਪਰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਘਿਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਭਲੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਕੌਰ ਵੀ ਫੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਘੋੜੇ ਉਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਲੜੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਹੋਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਸਿੰਘਣੀ ਦੇ ਜੁਝਾਰੂ ਗੁਣ ਉਤੇ ਨਾਂਹਵਾਚੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਿਆ। ਮਰਦ-ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਹੋਰ ਘਟ ਗਈ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਸੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਥਾਂ ਪੁਰ ਥਾਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਾੜੀ ਲੜਕੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖਰੀਦੋਂ-ਫਿਰੋਖਤ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਆਦਮੀ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਕਈ ਵਿਆਹ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਸਾਵਨਯਾਰ 'ਮੋਰਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹੋਂ' ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ 'ਚੰਗ ਚੰਗੇਰੀਆਂ ਜੀ' ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਵਲੇ ਸਮਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ, ਚੈਨ ਨਸੀਬ ਹੋਇਆ ! ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਮਨ ਤੇ ਚੈਨ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਬਿੰਬਾਵਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ :

ਸਾਵਨਯਾਰ ਕੁਆਰੀਆਂ ਰਾਹ ਪਈਆਂ-ਨਹੀਂ ਬਕਰੀ ਖੌਫ ਪਲੰਗ ਦਾ ਏ। 5।

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ਦੁੱਬ ਬਕਰੀ ਦੀ ਬਘਿਆੜ ਬੱਧਾ, ਜਿਸ ਅਦਲ ਪਾਇਆ ਇਸ ਤੋਰ ਦਾ ਈ ।
ਲਏ ਸਾਰ ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਮਾਣਿਆ ਦੀ, ਜਿਨ ਰਾਜ ਕੀਤਾ ਵੰਡ ਗੌਰ ਦਾ ਈ । 6 ।
(ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੀ-ਸਾਵਨਯਾਰ)

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ਜਿਹੜੇ ਰਾਜ ਕੁਆਰੀਆਂ ਰਾਹ ਤੁਰਿਆ, ਡਰਦਾ ਛੇੜਦਾ ਨਾਕੋ ਖੌਫ ਮਾਰੀਂ ।
(ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੀ-ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ)

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਦੁਆਰਾਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ-ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਰਤੇ ਅਮਨ ਚੈਨ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਅਰਥ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੈ । ਭੂਪਵਾਦੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਆਰੀਆਂ ਲੜਕੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਇਕੱਲੇ ਸਫਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਭਾਵ-ਪੂਰਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ । ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਡਰ ਜਰਵਾਣੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੈ, ਚੋਰ ਤੇ ਧਾੜਵੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੈ; ਬਘਿਆੜ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੈ, ਬਕਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ । ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦੀ ਉਸਤਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸੁਰ ਵੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਮਧਮ ਹੈ ।²⁴

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਕਾਲੀਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਜੋ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਉਘੜਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਰਖਦੀ ਹੈ ।

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ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਦਮ*

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਵਾਗ ਡੋਰ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਲਈ ਹਰ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਉਹ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਪੁਰਖੀ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਭਵ ਸਨ। ਹੈਨਰੀ ਲਾਰੰਸ ਨੇ ਠੀਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਮੰਚ ਤੇ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਸਰਬਨਾਸ਼ ਹੋ ਚੁਕਾ ਸੀ। ਸੋ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸੁਤੰਤ੍ਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਪੁਨਰ ਉਥਾਨ ਅਸੰਭਵ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਸਿਹਰਾ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਹੀ ਸਜਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਕਲਾ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਣ। ਮੈਕਗ੍ਰੇਗਰ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਬੜੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਕੇ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਸਦਾ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਰਗਰਮੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਬੀਤਦਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪਾਂ ਲਈ ਕਦੀ ਨ ਕਦੀ ਸਮਾਂ ਕੱਢ ਹੀ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸਦੇ ਇਸੇ ਸ਼ੌਕ ਤੇ ਲਗਨ ਦਾ ਸਿਟਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਪੁਨਰ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਦੌਰ ਦੌਰਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਕਦਰ ਹੋਣ ਲਗੀ।

(੧) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ : ਸਾਡੇ ਮਜ਼ਮੂਨ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਹਨ : ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ। ਪਹਿਲੇ ਅਸਾਂ ਦੇਖਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਦਲੀਲ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਰਾਜ-ਕਾਜ ਲਈ ਫਿੱਟ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਦਫਤਰੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਕੰਮ-ਕਾਜ ਇਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਚਲਾਉਂਦੇ।

ਦਰਅਸਲ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਘੁੰਤਰਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਕਾ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਮੀਟ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੰਜ-ਸੱਤ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਧਾੜਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੁੱਟੇ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਕੇਹੇ ਜਿਹੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਮਾੜੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ,

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ਸਾਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਹੁਨਰ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤਾ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਕਰਤੱਵ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ-ਸੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪੂਰਣ ਭਾਂਤ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰੇ। ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਟੇਟ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਛੋਟੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕਾਬਜ਼ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਨਵਾਬਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੁੰਡਲ ਘੇਰਾ ਪਾਈ ਬੈਠਾ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਉਤੋਂ ਹਮਲਾਵਰ ਨਿਤ ਨਵੀਂ ਛੇੜਖਾਨੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਬਦਅਮਨੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲਕੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਲੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੋਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜੋ ਦੋ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੁਤੰਤ੍ਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੜੱਪਣ ਲਈ ਤਾਬੜ ਤੋੜ ਜਤਨ ਕਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੱਕ ਨਕੇਲ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਦੋ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਸਨ-ਅਫ਼ਗ਼ਾਨ ਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼। ਅਫ਼ਗ਼ਾਨ ਪੱਛਮੋਤਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਤੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਦਿਲੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉਤੇ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਲਾਈ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਕਦੋਂ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਕਰੀਏ।

ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਜਾਣੂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਰਬਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਫੌਜੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਜਿਸਦੇ ਬਲ ਬੋਝੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਾਰੂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੱਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ। ਸੋ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਈ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਕਾਰਜ ਇਹੋ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਹਰ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਇਥੋਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਸਥਿਰ ਤੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਅਜੇਹੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਔਖਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਕੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸੋ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਹੋ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਿਸਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਅਵੱਸ਼ਕਤਾ ਸੀ। ਰਾਜ-ਕਾਜ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਚਲਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਦਫ਼ਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਲੂ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪੱਕ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ। ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਹਿੰਦ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਕਈ ਗੁਆਂਢੀ ਮੁਸਲਮ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਕਲਚਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਭੁਗਤਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ, ਇਸਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਿ ਈਸਟ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਵੀ ਲਗਭਗ ਸੌ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਤਕ ਇਸੇ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਹਿੰਦ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਚਲਾਉਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ। ਅਜੇਹੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਈ ਸਹੀ ਰਸਤਾ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਦਫ਼ਤਰੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਕੀ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ, ਇਹ ਪੂਰਨ ਅਮਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਹਨ। ਜਿਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਕੀਤਾ, ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਜੇਹਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ

ਸੀ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਦਾਲਤੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਕਦਮ ਉਠਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝੀ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣਾ ਕੰਮ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਸੋ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਲੋਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਮੀਟਕੇ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਇਸਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਇਹ ਸਰਾਸਰ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਬਿਆਨੀ ਹੈ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਹੋਰ ਅਗੇਰੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਦੇਸੀ ਰਾਜ ਨੇ ਅਜੇਹੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਕੀਤੀ, ਇਸਦਾ ਜਵਾਬ ਹੈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸ. ਕਪੂਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵਧੀਆ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦਿਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਮਰਹੱਟਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਬਣਾ ਲਈ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੰਮ-ਕਾਜ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਚਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਰਾਠੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਾਇਆ; ਅੱਜ ਪੇਸ਼ਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਕੱਢਣਾ ਉਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਮਰਾਠੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਕਾਬਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਪੇਸ਼ਵਾ ਨੇਤਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਭੁੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਇਹੋ ਮੁਨਾਸਬ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਾਲੂ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਪੂਰਾ ਫਾਇਦਾ ਉਠਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਜਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ। ਸੋ ਜਦ ਕੋਈ ਪੱਖਪਾਤੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਇਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਬਣਨ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਮਨੋਕਲਪਨਾ ਦਾ ਮਹਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਡਿਗਕੇ ਢਹਿ ਢੇਰੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਤੇ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਚਾਈ ਭੋਰਾ ਭਰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਅਮਲੀ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਤਅੱਲਕ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਗੱਲ-ਬਾਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਦਫਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਹੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਤੇ ਵਰਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਕਿਤੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਮਹਿਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਵੀ ਇਸਤੇਮਾਲ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਚਿਠੀ ਪੱਤਰ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਯਾ ਅਹਿਦਨਾਮੇਂ ਲਿਖਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜਨਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਇਉਂ ਨਗੀਨਿਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਜੜੇ ਪਏ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਦਾ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਅੰਗ ਹੋਣ। ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਮੋਹਰ ਵਿਚ 'ਅਕਾਲ ਸਹਾਇ' ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ।

(2) **ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ :** ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਵਰਧੀ ਦਾ ਤਅੱਲਕ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਹਨ। ਉਸ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਕਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਾਸ ਰੱਖਕੇ ਕਈ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਲਿਖਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਕਿਤਨੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਜਾਂ ਅਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਕਵੀ

ਸਬੰਧੀ ਪੂਰੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਫਲਾਨੇ ਕਵੀ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਲੇਕਿਨ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਕਵੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਸਤਫੀਦ ਹੋਏ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਲਿਸਟ ਲੰਮੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਦੋ ਦਰਜਨ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਵਰਣਨ ਯੋਗ ਨਾਮ ਇਹ ਹਨ :

- 1- ਸੱਯਦ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ
- 2- ਮੌਲਵੀ ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ
- 3- ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਾਹੌਰੀ
- 4- ਪੰ. ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਾਹੌਰੀ
- 5- ਭਾਈ ਸੌਂਧਾ ਸਿੰਘ
- 6- ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ
- 7- ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸਿੰਘ
- 8- ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼
- 9- ਸਾਵਣ ਯਾਰ
- 10- ਜਾਫਰਬੇਗ
- 11- ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਦਾਸ
- 12- ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸ
- 13- ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ
- 14- ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ
- 15- ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ
- 16- ਗਵਾਲ ਭੱਟ
- 17- ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਿ੍ਗੰਦ
- 18- ਮੇਘ ਸਿੰਘ
- 19- ਸ਼ਿਵ ਦਿਆਲ
- 20- ਜੈ ਸਿੰਘ
- 21- ਸਹਾਈ ਸਿੰਘ
- 22- ਮਿਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਜਰਾਤੀ
- 23- ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ
- 24- ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਾ ਆਦਿ

ਸੱਯਦ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ (1734-1843 ਈ :) ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਇਸ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰ-ਸੂਚੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਜਗਦੇਉ ਕਲਾ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦਾ ਜੰਮਪਲ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਹਕੀਮ, ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਚੰਗੀ ਸੁਰਤ ਰਖਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸਬੰਧਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਰਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ। ਕੁਝ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੀ ਕਵੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸਦਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਲੇਕਿਨ ਰਵਾਇਤ ਬੜੀ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਹੈ। ਅਜ ਤੋਂ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਲਾਇਟਨਰ*, ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦਾ ਮੁਖੀ ਸੀ, ਨੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਉਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਬਾਗੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਅਧੀਨਗੀ ਕਬੂਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧੀ ਤੇ ਅਰਬੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰੱਖਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ। ਹੌਲੀ ਹੌਲੀ ਇਹ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵਧਦਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਇਰੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਸਰਦਾਜ਼ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਗਈ। ਰਵਾਇਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਦੋਹੜੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਗਦੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਡਿਊਢ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਸੁਣਕੇ ਰਾਜੀ ਸਨ :-

ਕਾਮਲ ਸ਼ੌਕ ਮਾਹੀ ਦਾ ਮੈਨੂੰ, ਨਿਤ ਰਹੇ ਜਿਗਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਦਾ, ਲੂੰ ਲੂੰ ਰਸਦਾ
ਰਾਂਝਣ ਬੇਪ੍ਰਵਾਹੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਨਾਹ ਨ ਦਸਦਾ, ਉਠ ਉਠ ਨਸਦਾ
ਜਿਉਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਹਾਲ ਸੁਣਾਣਾਂ ਰੋਵਾਂ, ਵੇਖਿ ਤੱਤੀ ਵਲ ਹਸਦਾ, ਜਰਾ ਨ ਖਸਦਾ
ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਕੰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਰ ਕਸ ਦਾ ਆਸ਼ਕ ਹੋਣ ਦਰਸ ਦਾ ਬ੍ਰਿਹੋਂ ਰਸਦਾ।

ਭਾਈ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਾਹੌਰੀ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਤੇ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਉਸਦੀ ਉਚੇਚੀ ਕਦਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, 'ਅਯਾਰਦਾਨਸ਼' ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੀ ਬੜੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਦੇਸੀ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਲੋਕ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਭ ਉਠਾ ਸਕਣ। ਚੂਨਾਚਿ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ 'ਬੁਧਿਬਾਰਧਿ' ਨਾਮ ਹੇਠ ਇਸ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ :-

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੁ ਨਾਮ। ਜਹਿ ਜਗ ਜੀਤ ਕਰਯੋ ਸੁ ਗੁਲਾਮ

* The famous Mathematician and Arabic scholar Hashim Shah wrote numerous novelettes in Panjabi, which are still much read. He got a *jagir* near Jagdeo in recognition of his literary eminence and his Arabics scholarship secured his pardon from the ever-forgiving Ranjit Singh, when he had once joined in a revolution against the 'Sikh Sirkar' the 'Servus Servorum' of the Panjab. Hashim Shah's 'Shirin Ferhad' in Panjabi, his story of 'Sassi Pannu' and of 'Sohni Mehiwal' still form the delight of thousands. See, *History of Indigenous Education in the Panjab* (1883).

ਲਵਪੁਰ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਂ ਕੀ ਰਜਧਾਨੀ । ਤੇਜਵੰਤ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਮਹਾਨੀ ।⁴⁷

ਤਾਂ ਨਿਪੁ ਮੋਹਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਕੈ, ਕੀਨੋ ਬਹੁ ਸਨਮਾਨ
ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿਜਬ, ਚੀਤ ਚਢੀ ਅਤਿਆਨ ।⁶⁰

ਕਹਾ ਸੁਖਨ ਮੁਖ ਸੋ ਬਿਗਸਾਇ । ਸਭਾ ਸੁਭਗ ਜਹਿ ਰਹੀ ਸੁਹਾਇ
'ਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਰਿਧ' ਜੁ ਨੀਤਿ ਕਹਾਵਤ । ਕਵਿ ਕੁਲ ਜਾਂਕੀ ਕੀਰਤਿਗਾਵਤ
ਨਾਮ ਅਯਾਰ ਦਾਰਸਹਿ ਜਾਸ । ਸੋ ਭਾਖਾ ਅਬ ਕਰੋ ਸੁ ਰਾਸ
ਸੁਨ ਨਿਪੁ ਬੈਨ ਅਨੈ ਚਿਤ ਧਾਰਿ । ਭਾਖਾ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਕਰੀ ਸਵਾਰ
ਦੋਹਾ ਅਧਰ ਚੋਪਈ ਬਨਾਈ । ਹੁਤੀ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋ ਭਾਈ ।

(ਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਰਿਧ)

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਜਮਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਭਾਈ ਸੌਧਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਿੰਡ ਕਾਲਾ ਜਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦਾ ਵਾਸੀ ਬੜਾ ਅੱਛਾ ਲਿਖਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਕਵੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ 1808 ਵਿਚ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਰਚਨਾ 'ਹਾਤਮਨਾਮਾ' ਦਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਰਲ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਸਾਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ :—

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੂਪਾਲ ਕਾ, ਅਸਥਿਰ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਰਾਜ
ਇਹ ਹੈ ਭਾਵਨੀ ਦਾਸ ਕੀ, ਸੰਵਰਹਿ ਤਾਂ ਕੇ ਕਾਜ
ਜਬ ਲੋ ਅਸਥਿਰ ਜਗਤ ਮਹਿ, ਗੰਗ ਜਮੁਨ ਕੋ ਨੀਰ
ਤਬ ਲੋ ਤਾਂ ਕੇ ਰਾਜ ਕਉ, ਰਾਖਹਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਘੁਬੀਰ

(ਹਾਤਮਨਾਮਾ)

ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਰਾਇਪੁਰ ਜਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਦਾ ਵਸਨੀਕ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੋਹੂ ਵਿੰਡੀਏ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਘੋੜ ਸਵਾਰ ਸੀ, ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜਨ ਤੋਂ ਉਤੇ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਇਕ 'ਸਿਹਰਫੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਸਾਹ ਕੀ' ਵੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਭਲੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਆਣੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ, ਸਰਕਾਰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਬੁਲਾਉਣਾ ਠੀਕ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਅਲਫ ਅਪ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੱਚੇ, ਸਾਹਿਬ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਿਆ ਜੀ
ਚਾਰੋਂ ਵਰਣ ਕੇ ਬੀਰ ਬਣਾਇ ਸਾਜੇ, ਸਾਧਾਂ ਗਊਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਕੜਿ ਉਬਾਰਿਆ ਜੀ
ਪਾਇਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਰਥਲੁ ਬਲਾਇਤਾ ਦੇ, ਕਾਫਰ ਤੁਰਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘੇਰ ਕੇ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਜੀ
ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਿਆਲ ਹੋਇਆ, ਨਜ਼ਰ ਮਿਹਰ ਦੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਤਾਰਿਆ ਜੀ।
ਜੇ ਜੰਗ ਮੇਂ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀਤੇ, ਓਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਈ ਹਾਰ ਨਾਹੀ
ਗਿਣਤੀ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਆਂਵਦਾ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦਾ, ਫੌਜਾ ਦਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰ ਨਾਹੀ

ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਰਿਆ, ਗੁਰੂ ਫਜ਼ਲ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਰ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਡਾਢਾ ਪੰਥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ, ਜੀਧੇ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਉਰਾਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਰ ਨਾਹੀ।

ਗਾਫ਼ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਿਆਰਮਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਭਉਜਲੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਤ ਭੋਗਦੇ ਭੋਗ ਵਲਾਇਤਾ ਦੇ, ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸੂਰਮੇ ਹਠੀ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਰਿਆ, ਓਹਦੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ ਭੀ ਆਸ ਕਰਦਾ, ਕਦੀ ਅਸਾਂ ਭੀ ਫਜ਼ਲ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰ ਹੋਏ।

ਸਾਵਣ ਯਾਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਥੇ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲਾਸਾਨੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਓਥੇ ਉਹ ਮੌਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਤੇ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਦਾ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਨੋਂ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੁਕਿਆ। ਉਹ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਸਾਫ਼ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਨਿਮਾਣੇ-ਨਿਤਾਣੇ ਰਾਰੀਬਾਂ, ਹਲਵਾਹ ਤੇ ਹਟਵਾਣੀਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਕਰਨੈਲ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ :

ਅਲਫ਼ ਏਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਦਰ, ਇਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਆਫਰੀ ਦਉਰ ਦਾਈ ਦੁੰਦ ਬੱਕਰੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਘ ਆਣ ਬੱਧਾ, ਜਿਸ ਅਦਲ ਪਾਇਆ ਇਸ ਤਉਰਦਾਈ ਲਏ ਸਾਰ ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਮਾਣਿਆਂ ਦੀ, ਜਿਨ ਰਾਜ ਕੀਤਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਗਉਰ ਦਾਈ ਸਾਵਣ ਯਾਰ ਬੇਟਾ ਮਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਾਇਆ, ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਲੀ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਾਈ। ਹੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੇਰਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸਾਰੇ ਮੁਲਖ ਉਤੇ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਧੰਨੀ ਘੋਪ ਵਲਾਇਤਾਂ ਬਲਖ ਤਾਈ, ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸਣੇ ਕੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਠੱਠਾ ਭਖਰ ਛਛਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਥਲੀਂ, ਹੋਰ ਸਿੰਧ ਤੇ ਸੈਣ ਐਰਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਸਾਵਣ ਯਾਰ ਪਹਾੜ ਤੇ ਮਾਲਵਾ ਜੀ, ਲੱਖੀ ਜੰਗਲ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਹਲ-ਵਾਹਕਾਂ, ਕਿਰਤੀਆਂ, ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਘਾਲਾਂ ਘਾਲਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਆ ਤੇ ਵਡਿਆਇਆ, ਉਹ ਸਚਮੁਚ ਇਕ ਅਨੋਖੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ। ਜੋ ਚੀਜ਼ ਕੇਵਲ ਮੁਗਲ ਜ਼ਾਦਿਆਂ ਯਾ ਪਠਾਣ ਜ਼ਾਦਿਆਂ ਤਕ ਮਹਿਦੂਦ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਿਆਮਤਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ :

ਖੇ ਖੂਬ ਡਿਠੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ, ਕੈਂਠੇ ਸ਼ਾਲ ਦੁਸ਼ਾਲੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਥੀ ਘੋੜੇ ਰੰਬਾਰੀਆਂ ਉਠ ਝੂਲਾਂ, ਸੁਇਨਾ ਕਾਕੜਾ ਖੋਤਿਆ ਕੁੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਈਆਂ ਡੂੰਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੰਮੀਆਂ ਟਹਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਸੁਇਨਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਗਾਇਕੇ ਸੁੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੰਗ ਲਾਇਆ, ਜ਼ਰੀ ਬਾਦਲਾ ਦੇ ਹਲ-ਜੁੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਇਕ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਸੀ, ਉਸਨੇ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੀਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਵੀ ਕੰਨੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਹ ਨਿਝੱਕ ਹੋਕੇ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ :—

ਅਲਫ਼ ਆਖ ਤੂੰ ਸਿਫਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਾਲੀ, ਸਿੰਘ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਧਾਰੀ ਜੀਹਦ ਰਾਜ ਕੁਆਰੀਆਂ ਰਾਹ, ਤੁਰੀਆ ਛੇੜਦਾ ਨਾਹਿ ਕੋ ਖੋਫ ਭਾਰੀ

ਭੰਗੀ ਰਾਮਗੜ੍ਹੀਏ ਰਾਜੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਕੀਤੇ, ਲਈ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਾਰੀ
ਜਾਫਰਬੇਗ ਜਿਹਦੇ ਵਲ ਰੱਬ ਹੋਵੇ, ਫਤੇ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਕਾਰੀ ।

ਤੇ ਤਾਬਿਆ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਰਾਜੇ, ਸੰਦਲਦੀਪ ਬੀਕਾਨੀਰ ਜੀਨ ਤਾਈ
ਧੁਰੇਂ ਟਾਪੂਓ ਨੰਦਨੋ ਚਲ ਗੋਰੇ, ਹੱਥ ਬੰਨਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਤਾਜੀਮ ਤਾਈਂ
ਚੰਬਾ ਕੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਭੁੰਟੰਤ ਥੀਂ ਆਵਹਿ ਟਕੇ, ਸਾਰਾ ਮੁਲਖ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਈਨ ਤਾਈਂ
ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਧਮਕ ਡਾਢੀ, ਟਕੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਚੀਨਮ ਚੀਨ ਤਾਈਂ

ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਦੇਹਾਂਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੜੇ ਪਤੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ
ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਗੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਹਿਰ ਮਿਲਾਕੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਿਆ । ਇਸ ਗੱਲ
ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਕੁਝ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਜਾਫਰਬੇਗ ਦਾ ਬੇਬਾਕ
ਬਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ :—

ਦਾਲ ਦਗਾ ਫਿਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਡਾ, ਆਕਿਲ ਆਖਦੇ ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਾਰੇ
ਦਗੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਆ ਦਿਲੀ ਤਖਤ ਏਨ੍ਹਾਂ, ਦਗੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਏ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਕੋਟ ਭਾਰੇ
ਅੰਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਦਗਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਬਣੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਖਾਸ ਪਿਆਰੇ
ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੀਦ ਕੀਤਾ, ਰਹੇ ਪਾਸ ਅੰਬੀਰ ਮੁਸਾਹਬ ਸਾਰੇ

ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਕਵੀ ਹੈ, ਉਸਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਬੈਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਲਈ
ਬੜੀ ਅਪਣਤ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਪਰਗਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ । ਉਸਨੂੰ ਚੰਗਾ ਨਿਆਂਕਾਰ, ਧਰਮ
ਅਵਤਾਰ ਤੇ ਦਾਨੀ ਦੱਸਕੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ :—

ਐਨ ਉਮਰ ਦਰਾਜ ਜੁ ਹੋਇ ਤੇਰੀ, ਵਿਚ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤੂੰ
ਸੀਹ ਬੱਕਰੀ ਇਕਠੇ ਨੀਰ ਪੀਵਣ, ਹੱਕ ਨਿਆਉਂ ਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਅਉਤਾਰ ਹੈ ਤੂੰ
ਹੀਰੇ ਮੋਤੀਆ ਚੂਨਿਆਂ ਪੰਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ, ਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਬੜਾ ਅਪਾਰ ਹੈ ਤੂੰ
ਸੂਰਜ ਚੰਦ ਰਾਜ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਰਾਂ, ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤੂੰ ।
ਗੈਨ ਗਮ ਨਾਹੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਰਾਜ ਅੰਦਰ, ਸਾਰੀ ਖਲਕ ਘਣਾ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇਆ ਏ ।
ਗਿਲਜੇ ਮਾਰ ਨਵਾਬ ਖਰਾਬ ਕੀਤੇ, ਦਲ ਮੁਗਲ ਪਠਾਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਘਾਇਆ ਏ ।
ਦੋਹੀ ਫਿਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਦੇਸ ਸਾਰੇ, ਹੋਇਆ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਤੇਜ ਸਵਾਇਆ ਏ ।
ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਸਿਧਿ ਪਾਈ, ਕਲ੍ਹ ਕਾਲ ਮੈਂ ਹੁਕਮ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਏ ।¹⁹
(ਬੈਤਾਂ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੀਆਂ)

ਭਾਈ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਬੈਤਾਂ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ
ਹਾਲ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ । ਪਰ ਉਹ ਵਡੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਤਾ ਦਸਦਾ
ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ :—

ਤੇ ਤਰਹ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਅਜਬ ਭਾਰੀ, ਤੋਪਾਂ ਰਹਿਕਲਾਂ ਸਣੇ ਜੰਬੂਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ

ਕਲਾਨੌਰ ਫਿਲੌਰ ਪਿਸ਼ੌਰ ਤਾਈ, ਟਕੇ ਦੇਵਦੇ ਨੀ ਮਾਰੇ ਹੂਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ
ਤੇਗ ਢਾਲ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਤੁਫੰਗ ਨੇਜੇ ਕੌਣ ਅਟਕਦਾਈ ਅੱਗੇ ਸੂਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ
ਪੈਣ ਭਾਜੜਾਂ ਚੀਨਮ ਚੀਨ ਤਾਈ, ਕਾਬਲ ਕੰਬਦਾ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਖੰਘੂਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ।⁴

ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਾ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਲੋਕ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਫਿਰੰਗੀ ਵੀ
ਉਸਨੂੰ ਟੋਪੀ ਲਾਹਕੇ ਸਲਾਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ :

ਹੂਈ ਦਿਨ ਬਦਿਨ ਜੀਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੀ । ਜੁ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਨ ਕਰੈ ਸਿਫਤ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਕੀ ।⁴⁰
ਗੁਰੂ ਪੁਸ਼ਤ ਉਸਕੀ ਪੈ ਮੱਦਤ ਧਰੈਂ । ਸਭੀ ਲਾਟ ਆਕਰ ਮੁਤਾਬਤ ਕਰੈ ।⁴⁰
ਸਿਰੋਂ ਲਾਹਿ ਟੋਪੀ ਕੋ ਕਰਤੇ ਸਲਾਮ । ਕਰੈ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਮੁਲਕ ਕੀ ਤਮਾਮ ।⁴¹

ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਬੈਂਤ ਵਿਚ ਕਲਮ-ਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਫਲ
ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ । ਉਹ ਆਪਣਾ 'ਜੰਗ ਨਾਮਾ' ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੀ ਇਉਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਮਹਾਂ ਬਲੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਯਾ ਪੈਦਾ, ਨਾਲ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਹਿਲਾਇ ਗਿਆ ।
ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਪਿਸ਼ੌਰ ਚੰਬਾ, ਜੰਮੂ ਕਾਂਗੜਾ ਕੋਟ ਨਿਵਾਇ ਗਿਆ ।

ਤਿਬਤ ਦੇਸ ਲਦਾਖ ਤੇ ਚੀਨ ਤੋੜੀ, ਸਿੱਕਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਮ ਚਲਾਇ ਗਿਆ ।

ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦਾ ਜਾਣ ਪੰਚਾਸ ਬਰਸਾਂ, ਅੱਛਾ ਰਜਕੇ ਰਾਜ ਕਮਾਇ ਗਿਆ ।⁴¹

ਇਸ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਰਾਇ ਬੜੀ ਵਜ਼ਨ
ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਦੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ
ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਸੁਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ।

ਰਾਜੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਸਿਰ ਦੁਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਤੇ ਅਫਾਤ ਆਈ

ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਜੀ, ਅਗੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਡੀਸਰੀ ਜਾਤ ਆਈ ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਟੁਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਪਰਗਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ
ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ, ਸੂਰਬੀਰ, ਸਿਆਣਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ
ਸਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਰਾਜ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ
ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਹਰ ਪਾਸੇ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਵਡਿਆਇਆ । ਦੂਸਰੀ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਕਿ
ਉਸਦਾ ਰਾਜ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ, ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਰਾਜ ਸੀ । ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ
ਵੀ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਨਾ ਲਿਆ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਜੇਹਾ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਿਆ ।
ਇਸੇ ਸਾਂਝ ਤੇ ਸੰਮਿਲਤ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦਾ ਸਿਟਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ, ਫੌਜ, ਖੇਤੀ-
ਬਾੜੀ, ਵਪਾਰ, ਕਲਾ-ਕੌਸ਼ਲ, ਇਮਾਰਤਸਾਜ਼ੀ, ਚਿਤ੍ਰਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ—ਸਭ
ਪਾਸੇ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਕੀਤੀ ।

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਦਫਤਰੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸਦਾ

ਸਹੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸੁਤੰਤ੍ਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਿਰ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਦੇਸ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਲ ਉਸ ਪੂਰਾ-ਪੂਰਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿਤਾ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜਦ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ-ਪੂਰੀ ਕਦਰਦਾਨੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਗੀਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਚੰਗੇਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਸੀਦਾਗੋਈ ਦੇ ਖਾਤੇ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ, ਲੇਕਿਨ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕੌਮੀਅਤ ਦੇ ਜਜ਼ਬੇ ਦਾ ਠਾਠਾਂ ਮਾਰਦਾ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ-ਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਮਾਣਕ ਮੌਤੀ ਲਿਆ ਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਵੇਂ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਇਕ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਬਿਖੜੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਇਕ ਹੋਣਾ ਸਚਮੁਚ ਹੀ ਮਾਅਰਕੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ।

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ

ਸੁਖਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ¹ ਦੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਬੜੀ ਹੀ ਬਚਿੱਤਰ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਾ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕੁਝ ਇਕ ਐਸੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਉਲਟ ਹਨ। ਇੱਕ ਸਮਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਐਸਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਸਮਝਕੇ ਹੀ ਹਰ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਨ-ਮਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਜਾਗੀਰਾਂ², ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਇਕ ਸਮਾਂ ਐਸਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਜ਼ਾਦਾਨਾ ਸਰਗਰਮੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਤੰਗ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਰਗਰਮੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਫੌਜੀ ਅਫਸਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।³ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ,⁴ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ, ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜੱਥੇਦਾਰ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਸਮਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਐਸਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸਖਸੀਅਤ ਕਰਕੇ, ਉਸਦੇ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ, ਆਪਣੀ ਭੁੱਲ ਬਖਸ਼ਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ⁵ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਰਾਖਾ⁶ ਅਤੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਕ ਸਮਾਂ ਐਸਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਮੋਤੀ ਰਾਮ ਵਰਗੇ ਸਿਰਕੱਢ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਦਾ ਹੈ।⁷

ਦੂਸਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ, ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਲਗਪਗ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਐਸਾ ਰੁੱਖ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ, ਇਕ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਹੈਸੀਅਤ ਵਿੱਚ, ਆਪਣਾ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਪਰਵਾਹ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਇਸਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਹਰ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੀ ਲਿਆ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਮਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਰਨ ਦੇ

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ਅਥਾਹ ਮਜ਼੍ਹਬੀ ਜੋਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਦੇ ਸਨ।¹⁰ ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਿ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ¹¹ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਸ਼ਹਿਰਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਦੇਣ ਸੀ। ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਸ਼ਹਿਰਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਠਾਣਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਜ਼੍ਹਬੀ ਜੋਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਸਨ।¹³ ਪਠਾਣੀ ਗਾਜ਼ੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਜ਼੍ਹਬੀ ਜੋਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਹੀ ਠੱਲ੍ਹ ਪਾ ਸਕੇ।

ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਸਿਰਮੌਰ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਸਨ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ, ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਲੰਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਜਦੋਂ-ਜਹਿਦ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਤਾਬਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਇਕ ਮੁਖੀ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਵੀ ਕੁਝ ਕਰੇ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਲਈ ਕਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਤਾਬਿਆ ਹੇਠ ਰਹਿਕੇ ਕਰੇ।¹⁴ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਉਹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ। ਅਕਾਲੀ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰ ਸਨ। ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਵਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ, ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲਿਆ। ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਇਆ। ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਭਾਈ ਦੀ ਹੈਸੀਅਤ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ।

ਜਿਥੇ ਉਪਰ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਥੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਸਲੀ ਰੁੱਖ ਜਾਂ ਵਰਤਾਓ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਅਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਨਿੱਖਰ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੱਟੜ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਦੋਸਤਾਨਾ ਰਵੱਈਏ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਪੰਸਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।¹⁶ ਉਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਾਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਲਕ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਉਸ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਅਹਿਦਨਾਮਾ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਧੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। 1809 ਈ. ਦੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੀ ਸੰਧੀ ਦੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਸਨ। ਇਸੇ ਮੁਖਾਲਫ਼ਤ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਮੈਟਕਾਫ਼ ਦੇ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਝਗੜਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਅਕਾਲੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਗਾਖੇ ਸਨ। ਮਿਸਟਰ ਮੈਟਕਾਫ਼ ਦਾ ਉਤਾਰਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ। ਅਕਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੁਲ੍ਹੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਘੁੰਮਦੀਆਂ ਫਿਰਨ। ਮਿਸਟਰ ਮੈਟਕਾਫ਼ ਦੇ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਸੀਆ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਸਨ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਝਗੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰਕੂ ਰੰਗਤ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਖੜਾ

ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਝਗੜੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਝਗੜਾ ਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਮੁਹੱਰਮ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਤੇ ਕੱਢੇ ਗਏ ਜਲੂਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਨਫਰਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੀ।¹⁷ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਉਸ ਪਸਾਰੂ ਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਇਕ ਰੋਹ ਦਾ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਹਰਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸਨੇ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਆਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ।

ਇਸ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਹੋਏ ਜਾਂ ਨਾ ਹੋਏ, ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਫਰਜ਼ ਨਿਭਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਹਰ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਅਫਸਰ, ਜਰਨੈਲ ਜਾਂ ਯਾਤਰੂ ਦੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਲਗਦੀ ਵਾਹ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਖੌਲ ਉਡਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ। ਲਾਲਾ ਸੋਹਣ ਲਾਲ ਸੂਰੀ, ਐਸੀਆਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹਰ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਅਫਸਰ ਜਾਂ ਯਾਤਰੂ ਦੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਫੌਜੀ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਨੀਯਤ ਕਰ ਰੱਖੇ ਸਨ।¹⁸ ਪਰ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਇਤਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਰੋਸ ਦਾ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਹਰਾ ਕਰ ਹੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਲਿਖਾਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਤੀਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਪਰੇਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਜੋ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਲਿਖਾਰੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਯਾਤਰੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਲਿਖਤੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਰੈਕਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਿਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਐਸੇ ਸੰਤ-ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਵਿੱਚ “ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਾਡਲੀਆਂ ਫੌਜਾਂ” ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ-ਮਰਯਾਦਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਖਾਉਣਾ ਹੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਸੀ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੋਚਿਆ। ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੁਕਮਰਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਨ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਨੀਲੇ ਬਾਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੈਸ ਹੋਕੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ, ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਡਰਾਉਣੇ ਰੂਪ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਯੂਰਪੀਅਨ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਵਾਇਦ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੋਰ ਫੌਜੀ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਪਸੰਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਯੂਰਪੀਅਨ ਢੰਗ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਕਵਾਇਦ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਨਫਰਤ ਵਜੋਂ “ਕੰਜਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਚ” (dance of the dancing girls)

ਕਹਿਕੇ ਮਖੌਲ ਉਡਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਆਪਣੇ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ, ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਹਿਣੀ-ਬਹਿਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਇਕ ਗਲ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਉੱਭਰਕੇ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਸੀ। ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਮਝੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਣਾ ਜਾਂ ਫੁਟਿਆਉਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਅਥਾਹ ਫ਼ੌਜੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਸੀ, ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਜਾਂ ਚਾਰ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਸੀ।¹⁹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਚਲ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਆਪ ਵੀ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਉਹ ਹਰ ਐਸੀ ਗੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੇਜ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਰੋਸ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਉਸਦਾ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਗੈਰ-ਸਿੱਖ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਬਣਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ, ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਪੰਥਕ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਤਅੱਲਕ ਸੀ, ਉਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਦਖ਼ਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਦੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਜ਼ਾਦਾਨਾ ਸਰਗਰਮੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਗੈਰ-ਸਿੱਖ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਐਸੇ ਕਦਮ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ।

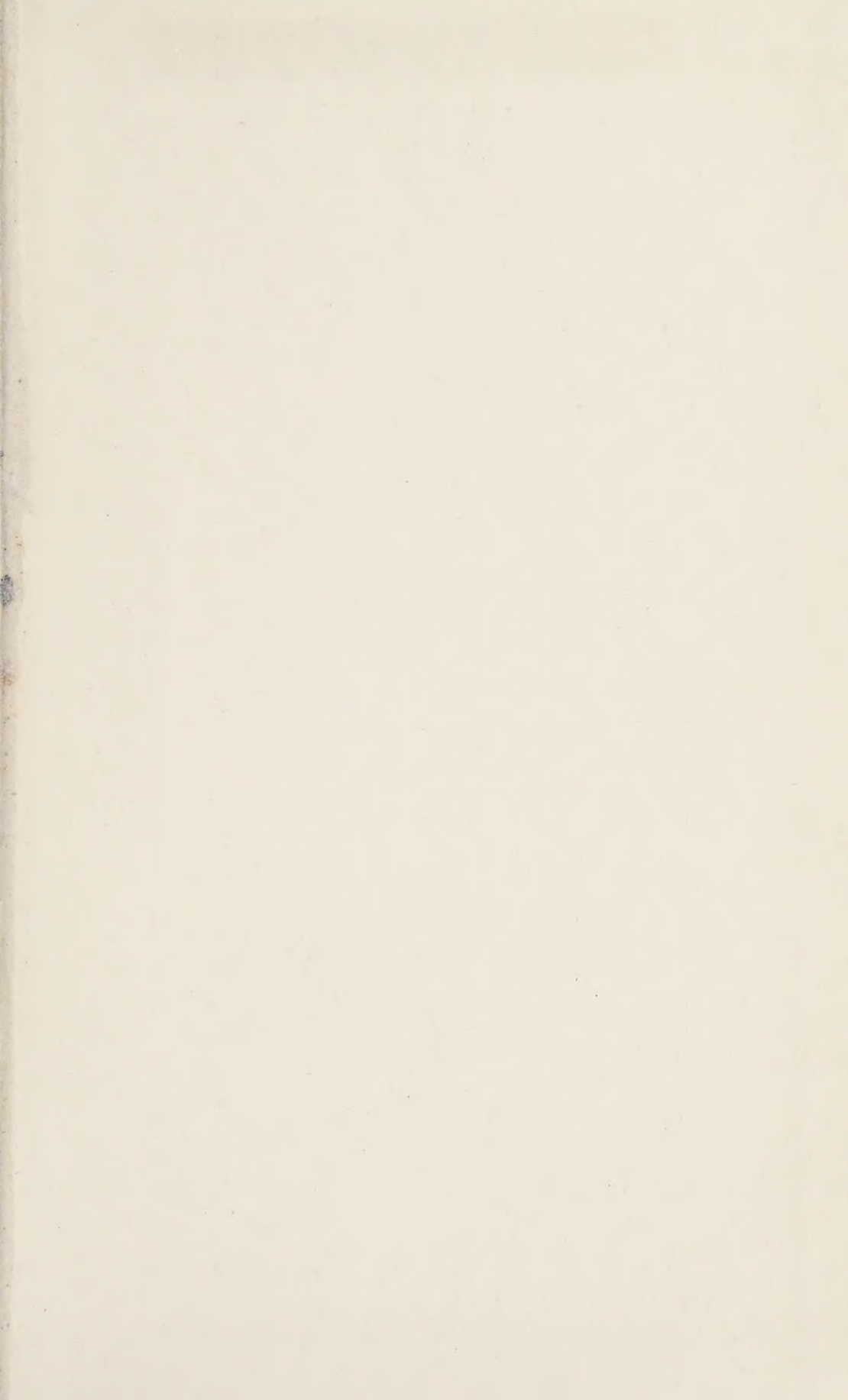
ਹਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ

1. ਅਕਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਹੰਗ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਅਰਥ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, “ਨਿਹੰਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਉਪਾਸ਼ਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਅਕਾਲ ਜਪਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਣ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਨਾਮ ਭੀ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।” (ਪੰਨਾ 527) ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਦੋ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਆਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜਦ ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਫਤਿਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੀਲਾ ਬਾਣਾ ਸਜਾ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਸਜਾ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਏ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤ ਲਿਬਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਬਾਣੇ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਨਿਹੰਗ ਪੰਥ ਚਲੇਗਾ। (ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ ਪੰਨਾ 527); ‘ਇਤਕਾਮ’, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵੀਕਲੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, 24 ਮਾਰਚ 1981 ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਸ਼ੋਕ ਦਾ ਲੇਖ “ਨਿਹੰਗ ਸਿੰਘ”, ਪੰਨਾ 7। ਦੂਸਰਾ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਜਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਚਮਕੌਰ ਦੀ ਗੜੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਕੇ ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਸੌਢੀ ਕੰਵਲ ਨੈਣ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਨੀਲੇ ਬਸਤਰ ਉਤਾਰਕੇ ਜਦ

- ਅੱਗ ਦੀ ਭੇਟ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੀਲੇ ਬਸਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਲਈ, ਇਸ ਨੀਲੇ ਕੱਪੜੇ ਤੋਂ ਨੀਲੇ ਬਾਣੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਿਹਗ ਪੰਥ ਚਾਲੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਦੇਖੋ, 'ਮਾਲਵਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ', ਵਿਸਾਖਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਨੇਤਪੁਰਾ, ਪੰਨਾ 437.
2. ਸੋਹਣ ਲਾਲ ਸੂਰੀ, 'ਉਮਦਤ-ਉਤ-ਤਵਾਰੀਖ', ਦਫਤਰ ਤੀਜਾ, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਵੀ. ਐਸ. ਸੂਰੀ, ਪੰਨੇ 15, 33, 54, 78, 256.
 3. ਉਕਤ, ਪੰਨੇ 73, 115, 174, 344 ਅਤੇ 400.
 4. ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਸੰਗਰੂਰ ਜਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਬਾਂਗਰ ਦੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਸੀਹਾਂ ਨਾਮੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਨ 1761 ਈ. ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਇਆ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਸ੍ਰ. ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੀ। ਬਚਪਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਸਲ ਦੇ ਜੱਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਨੈਣਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛੱਕਿਆ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨੈਣਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਆਪ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਜੱਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਾਪੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਉਪਰ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਜੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ ਸਨ। ਦੇਖੋ, ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੰਨੇ-1-3; ਗਿਆਨੀ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ (ਨਵੰਬਰ 1946), ਪੰਨਾ 310; ਖੁਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ, 'ਏ ਹਿਸਟਰੀ ਆਫ਼ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਸ', ਜਿਲਦ ਪਹਿਲੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 207 ਅਤੇ 'ਸਿੱਖ ਰੀਵੀਊ' ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਰਾਜੇਂਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਲੇਖ, ਮਾਰਚ 1981, ਪੰਨੇ 42-43.
 5. ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 83; ਗਿਆਨੀ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 398.
 6. ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 37, ਗਿਆਨੀ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 307.
 7. ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 23; ਕੇ.ਕੇ. ਖੁੱਲਰ, 'ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ', ਪੰਨਾ 73.
 10. ਖੁਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨੇ 207 ਅਤੇ 215.
 11. ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਫਤਿਹ ਲਈ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ 1816 ਈ. ਵਿੱਚ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਸਿੱਖ ਫੌਜ ਭੇਜੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਅਕਾਲੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਨਵਾਬ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਨਾ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਨਵਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਦੇ ਮਾਤਹਿਤ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ। ਫਿਰ 1818 ਈ. ਦੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਸਮੇਂ ਵੀ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਕਿਲੇ ਦੀ ਫਤਿਹ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤੀ ਜੋਸ਼ ਦੀ ਦੇਣ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਗੂ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੀ। ਦੇਖੋ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੌਹਲੀ 'ਫਤਿਹਨਾਮਾ', ਪੰਨਾ 64; ਐਨ. ਕੇ. ਸਿਨਹਾ, 'ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ', ਪੰਨਾ 58 ਅਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 251.
 12. ਨੁਸ਼ਹਿਰੇ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਫੌਜ ਵਲੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਮਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਅਗਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਨੀਯਤ ਦਿਨ ਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦਿਨ ਇਹ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਣ ਤੇ ਕੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਹਨ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਤੋਪਖਾਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਮਾਨ ਉਡੀਕ ਕੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਪਰ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸਦੀ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਮਤੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨੀਯਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਗਾਜ਼ੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤੀ ਜੋਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਲਈ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ ਗਏ। ਦੇਖੋ, ਬਾਬਾ

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 60; ਖੁਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੰਨਾ 264; ਐਨ. ਕੇ. ਸਿਨਹਾ, ਪੰਨਾ 26.

13. ਖੁਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 207.
14. ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨੇ 21-22.
15. ਦੇਖੋ. ਕੇ. ਕੇ. ਖੁੱਲਰ, “ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ”, ਪੰਨਾ 71.
16. ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸਬੂਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਿਸਟਰੀ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਵੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਕ ਵੀ ਮੌਕਾ ਐਸਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲੀਆ ਨੇ ਜਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਫਿਰਕੇ ਉਪਰ ਹਮਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਦਾ, ਸਿਵਾਏ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ, ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਉਥੇ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਹਾਕਮ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਆ। ਇਹ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਚਲਾਕੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰਕੂ ਰੰਗਤ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਖੜਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।
17. ਸੋਹਣ ਲਾਲਾ ਸੂਰੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨੇ, 73, 115, 174 ਅਤੇ 255.
18. ਗਿਆਨੀ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 308 ਅਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਤੀ, ਉਕਤ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 25.



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