

The Early Life and coming in contact of Guru Sahib

In early years of life before coming in contact of Guru Sahib, Bhai Bidhi Chand was a thief. His maternal village was Sarhali, a village in District Amritsar. The village was notoriously called as 'Sarhali of thieves'. He got this bad habit at the instance of bad elements while being at Sarhali.

At one incident it so happened that he stole away a few heads of cattle from a village at night. The alert villagers chased him with long sticks and spears so closely that he felt very insecure and terrorized and prayed for his safety and vowed to leave this habit forever. The villagers could not catch him.

He came in the company of Bhai Adli, a devout sikh of Guru Arjan Sahib ji. Bhai Adli took him in for a glimpse of the Guru Arjan Sahib Ji. He implored, "I am a thief, please own me and make me your own thief." The guru smiled and asked him to leave this bad habit and live a life in fear of God and in the service of poor; and thereafter he turned to be a devout true sikh of Guru.

Bhai Bidhi Chand was a healthy youth of good height and body. Now he became conscious of his soul and his mind became pure. **He devoted his whole life and was always ready to accept any command of the Guru.** He learnt sincerely the teachings of the guru and put them into practice. Pleased with his devotion and learning, **Guru Arjan Dev Sahib Ji appointed him to preach Sikh way of life and sent him to various villages and far off places for this purpose .**

Sacrifice of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib Ji

The Mugal Emperor Jahangir was a regular drunker. Sometimes it was his Begam Noor-Jahan who used to rule for all practical purposes. Sometimes he used to be very emotional and temporal. When emotional, he was kind even to herd of elephants and ordered to fan and blow air for them in summer. On the other hand at the instance of fanatic Muslims and jealous Hindus, Guru Arjan Sahib Ji was put to the custody of Dewaan Chandu Laal. Chandu Laal, having personal grudge against the guru, tortured Guru Arjan Dev Ji to death with the full knowledge of Jahangir. Jahangir did not listen even to the advice of Saneer Mian Mir, a Sufi faqir and religious leader, even for Noor-Jahan (Jahangir's wife). Saneer ji was a great friend of Guru Arjan Sahib. At the request of Guru Arjan, foundation stone of Hari Mandir (Golden Temple) was laid by Saneer Mian Mir. **(This has never happened in history that foundation of a great religious place of one faith is laid by a saint of other religion.)**

After the torturous martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib Ji in May 1606 at the hands of Jahangir, the sikh masses were in great distress, disappointment and illusion. The Guru who was enemy of no body, who served all without any discretion of religion, caste or creed, was sentenced to death just because he was being respected and loved by all, including Muslims and this was not acceptable to the fanatic Muslim clergy and rulers and a few jealous, selfish and greedy Hindu stooges of the Mughals.

Bhai bidhi Chand played a big role to go the masses and explain about the supreme sacrifice of the Guru, accepting sacrifice as Will of God but not to bow to the tyranny of a cruel ruler, even though the Guru was all powerful to punish the guilty ruler without facing any

suffering. The Guru wanted to teach his followers to face cruelty with courage even if it demanded supreme sacrifice. It was this philosophy, Bhai Bidhi Chand went to the masses to explain. A war in between good and evil has always been there, but some times it surfaces out openly.

Major happenings at the time of Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji

The VIth guru, Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji was just 11 years of age, when Guru Arjan Dev ji gave him the responsibility of Guru ship before giving himself away to the stooges of Jahangir. As advised by Guru Arjan Dev Sahib Ji to Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji, **the Sikh way of living took a new turn** . To infuse self respect and confidence in the general public and especially the sikhs, Guru Har Gobind Sahib ji adorned two swords of **‘Miri’(Sovereignty) and ‘Piri’(Sainthood)** . He asked the youth to understand the demand of time and get prepared for facing any atrocities with bravery. Young people offered their lives, horses and weapons to Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib declared that the time when all peaceful means fail to live a life of respect and peace, it is none less then essential to fight the barbarity of rulers with bravery. The famous British historian Mr. Mecaulif while writing about Sikh History has written that the Sikh youth came to the guru with folded hands and offered their lives and in turn asked only for two meals a day and a shirt every six months.

Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji founded Sri Akaal Thakhat Sahib (The Supreme Throne of God) in the premises of Golden temple, within 15 days of being sworn as the Guru. He asked Bards (Dhadees) to sing war-time stories of the war heroes in the lawn at Akaal Takhat, which is a practice even today. At this point of time, **Bhai Bidhi Chand brought 52 youths to the altar of the guru from his own village, who offered themselves to the guru. Bhai Bidhi Chand again played a big role in organising war battalions and rehearsals in between them.**

This activity baffled Jahangir. He imprisoned Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji in the famous fort of Gwalior in 1621 for about three years. In Gwalior, even the Jailer of the fort became devotee of the guru. Bhai Bidhi Chand along with Baba Buddha ji and Bhai Gurdaas Ji led groups of Sikh Sangats to Gwalior from Punjab and Kashmir. The Sangat started regular singing of Gurbani at the gate of the fort and taking rounds (Parikarma) outside the fort. At the instance of Saneer Mian Meer and other well wishers of the Guru, good sense prevailed and the Guru was set free by Jahangir. Not only himself, the Guru also got freed 52 hill chieftains who were already in jail before him. Thus Guru Har Gobind Sahib ji since then, is remembered with the name of ‘Bandi Chhor’(Releaver of prisoners). Saneer Mian Meer used to call Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji as Mehboobe-Illahi (Beloved of God). Jahangir realising that Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji has never claimed any land or collected any tax from public, left the way of confrontation with the Guru. He even handed over Dewaan Chandu Laal to the Guru. Chandu Laal was severely beaten to death by the sikhs and punished for his sins.

The Guru was back in Amritsar with full glory. The practice of organising congregational meetings, prayers, singing of Gurbani, thoughtful lectures as well as war stories continued at Akaal Takhat. People used to call the Guru as “Sacha Patshah” the true king of both the worlds. Hunting, martial rehearsals were the day to day activities. At one time the sikhs from Kabul while paying a visit to the Guru at Amritsar were bringing two horses as an offering to the Guru.

On the way to Amritsar, at Lahore these horses were snatched away by the Mugal forces and handed over to the Nawaab of Lahore and these were kept in a stable in the fort of Lahore. The Sikhs from Kabul implored the guru about their helplessness. The guru assured them that their offer is accepted and the horses would be with him.

The famous incident of recovering these two beautiful Turkey horses from the Nawaab of Lahore was an illustrious work of Bhai Bidhi Chand. He offered his services and asked for Guru's grace. It was a long planned action without bloodshed. Some people question the wisdom of this action. But perhaps this was the right way to deal with the wrongful actions of the mighty chieftains of Mughals, without harming anybody. Bhai Bidhi Chand, under the guise of a grass cutter, went to Lahore. Offered his services at the stable. After about 3 to 4 months he was employed specially to serve these two horses. When he was well mixed up with whole staff, he offered a party to the whole staff of the fort. By the night, when all were completely drunk, he took away one horse and reached Amritsar.

Shortly after this, the Nawaab and other officials of the fort sought help of fortune tellers. This time in the guise of a fortune teller, Bhai Bidhi Chand offered his services. He convinced the authorities that he could give correct information, provided similar situation is created at the fort. The baffled officials created similar situation to that at the time of the theft of first horse. Bhai Bidhi Chand took the second horse, announcing loudly to the officials locked up in a room, that he himself was the grass cutter and now the fortune teller. These horses belonged to Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji, the first one had reached there and the second one he was taking. And thus along with the horse he jumped into the river Ravi and came back to Amritsar. The officials could not do any thing except to laugh at their folly.

Role in four Crucial Battles

Muslims of Mugal clan were rulers. The Pathans and other clans were neither satisfied nor happy at their rule. Hundreds of Hindus and Muslims came to the alter of the guru. Subedaar Yaar Khan and Foujdaar Khawaja Sarai are worth mentioning. Guru Sahib had small group of organised soldiers with him. He wanted his sikhs to learn and practice martial art. Whenever there was a call for war by the Mughals, out of sheer love for the Guru, the sikhs came to the Guru with their weapons, from all sides of Punjab as well as Kashmir. The Guru divided his army into five groups. Bhai Bidhi Chand was the commander of one such group. His main work was that of intelligence and vigilance. He kept a watch on the movements of the Mugal forces.

Emperor Jahangir had died. His son Shah Jahan was the king. At one time Shah Jahan was at Lahore and he was out in a forest for hunting. Just at the same time Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji were also nearby in the same forest. The falcon (Baa) of Shah Jahan, flew along with the falcon of Guru, and came to the camp of guru. The Nawab of Lahore sent his soldiers to take back their falcon. The guru offered that if their falcon flies away of its own, he has no objection but refused to catch the falcon and hand over to them. This led to war in between the force of Lahore and the Guru. In fact Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji faced four wars raised by the forces of Lahore, Kashmir and Jallundar.

Ist Battle:

The first war took place at Pipli Sahib in Amritsar in May, 1628. Shah Jahan's falcon was the cause of war. Shah Jahan ordered Gulam Rasool Khan of Lahore to capture and produce the Guru and the falcon. About 500 sikhs led by Bhai Bidhi Chand, Praana, Jetha, Pairha and Pandhe Khan faced the Mugal army of 5000 soldiers. The Mugal forces ran away after the death of Gulam Rasool Khan and other 2 commanders and the Guru came out victorious.

Angered at his defeat, Shah Jahan immediately ordered for another attack. Just after 10 days Subedar of Kashmir, Muklas Khan, and other commanders like Bahadur Khan, Kalandar Khan, Mirza Tahar Beg, Kale Khan, Shams Khan with 15000 soldiers attacked Amritsar. Bhai Bidhi Chand, Bhallan, Jattu, Painde Khan along with about 5000 Sikhs were with the Guru. The Sikh army took shelter in the fort Loh Garh, at Amritsar. It was first time, a cannon made out of a hollow trunk of a tree was used by the sikh army. After a wall of the fort was damaged by the cannons of the Mugal forces, the Sikhs came out in open. The fight spread in the city of Amritsar and the city was looted by the Mughals. The sikhs of various villages from all sides started rushing to the city with their weapons. The Guru himself took part in the fight. Mukhlas Khan challenged the Guru to face him. He lost his life at the hands of the Guru and thus the field was in the hands of Sikhs. Five Mugal generals and on the Guru's side Bhai Bhana, Baga, Sobha, Bhagan, Dhama Chand gave away their lives.

It was the time of marriage of Bibi Veero, Guru Ji's daughter. Within this war time Guru Sahib's family was shifted to Jhabaal, a village South- East of Amritsar and next day marriage was conducted.

IInd Battle: After the marriage of his daughter and the war at Amritsar, Guru Sahib came to Kartar pur and then moved to Har Gobind Pura. Har Gobind Pura was founded by Guru Arjan Dev Ji in the name of his son Har Gobind. In 1630, Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji went to this place to make a protective wall around the town. While looking at the bad relations between the Guru and Shah Jahan and taking advantage of this Bhagwan Chand Khatri, a close relative of Dewaan Chandu and tax collector for the Mughals, warned the Guru and the sikhs to go away from there. Daily one after the other day he started coming and abusing sikhs as well as Sikh Gurus. Even beating by sikhs could not stop his abuses. Ultimately he was beaten to death. His son Ratan Chand, sons of Chandu, and Meharban a cousin of Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji and son of Prithi Chand, instigated Abdulla Khan, Subedar of Jallandar to attack the Guru at Har Gobind Pura. Without consent of Shah Jahan, Abdulla Khan, along with eight commanders and the Khatri enemies of the guru with about 20000 soldiers attacked the forces of the Guru. Ratan Chand , Karam chand and Abdulla khan came face to face with Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib fought with all the three and killed them one after the other.

IIIrd Battle: After Bhai Bidhi Chand had recovered Guru's horses from Lahore, a third war took place in 1631 at Mehraj, near Nathane ki Dhab, now called Guru Sar. Lalla Beg and Kammar Beg with about 20000 soldiers challenged the Guru's forces. After severe fight when Lalla Beg was killed, the Mugal forces took to their heels.

IVth Battle: Painde Khan was brought up by the Guru since his childhood and he bravely took part in the wars by the side of the guru. In 1632, at the instigation of his relatives, other Muslim enemies of the Guru and of his own ego of strength and power, he revolted and became enemy of

the guru. Even Dhir Mall, son of Baba Gurditta joined the Mugal forces and was traitor to his father and grand father Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji. Thus Kale Khan commander of Jallundar, Painde Khan ,Dhir Mall and the like Khatries challanged the sikhs at Kartar pur. Bhai Bidhi Chand, Baba Gurditta, young Teg Bahadar (the would be 9th guru at that time) took part in the war. In the field, at the hands of Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji, his mentor, Painde Khan was fatally injured. Lying injured at the feet of the Guru, he asked for his forgiveness, the Guru blessed him and reminded him to read Kalma, the Muslim way of prayer before departing.

Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji, in his heart was a symbol of peace and full of patience but outwardly he was a king, a true king (sacha patshah) full of valor, strength and power. He was very regular in listening Gurbani and Kirtan and explaining true meanings of Gurbani to the Sadh Sangat (congregation). While writing about the Guru in a field of war a Muslim historian Mohsin Fani writes that even in war field, he was a Guru. He was never first in attacking the enemy, in fact no body was his enemy, but who so ever challanged him to fight, he gave them full opportunity for attack, of course he was fully alert to protect himself and then he would caution and attack and at the same time advise how to use the weapon, and with his skill, kill the attacker. It was this enormous patience and strength that he was always victorious in war.

Last days of Bhai BIDHI Chand

Bhai Bidhi chand took active part in all these wars. In peaceful times Bhai bidhi Chand was a preacher . Bhai Bidhi Chand was a close friend of Sundar Shah, a follower of Saneer Budhan Shah. Sundar Shah was a resident of Deo Nagar, near Ayoudhia. Sundar Shah and Bidhi Chand wished that they should leave this world at the same time and place. In 1638, Sundar Shah came to have a glimpse of the Guru at Kirat pur and asked Bhai Bidhi Chand to come along.

Alongwith Sundar Shah, Bhai BIDHI Chand took his leave from Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji and went to Deonagar. The two friends spent three days reflecting together on the teaching of Guru Nanak, whereafter, both died at the same time (14 August 1640). Sundar Shah's disciples buried the one in accordance with Muslim rites and cremated the other in accordance with Sikh rites, and raised shrines in their honour. Some time later, Lal Chand, a nephew of Bhai Bidhi Chand, brought some earth from the site of his shrine at Deonagar over which he built a samadh in his ancestral village, Sursingh.

As was the Guru like wise was his sikh Bhai Bidhi Chand. Guru Har Gobind Sahib ji called him as 'BIDHI chand Cheena, Guru Ka Seena'.