

THE GREAT SIKH WOMEN

From

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Bibi Agya Kaur

Bibi AGYA KAUR,(d. 1918), wife of Bhai Takht Singh and his helpmate in promoting women's education among Sikhs to Which cause he was passionately devoted, was the daughter of Sardar Nek Singh of the village of Sultanpur, near Rahim Yar Khan railway station in the princely state of Bahawalpur.

She had been a resident student at the Sikh girls school, at Firozpur, founded in 1892 and nurtured by Bhal Takht Singh. Agya Kaur had studied at the Mahavidyala up to the high school level. Bhai lakht Singh's first wife Harnam Kaur who was a co-builder of the school died in 1906. He approached Agya Kaur's father to ask for her hand to be his ally in the enterprise he had launched upon. The nuptials took place at Sultanpur on 17 September 1910. On 17 February 1911, Bibi (lady) Agya Kaur left with her husband on a tour of some South Asian countries to raise funds for the school. At Sikh gatherings and at divans at the gurdwaras, she recited holy hymns, kirtan, and made fervent appeals for donations, for their nascent school.

Returning to Punjab on 3 March 1912, she resumed her duties at the Mahavidyala as a teacher and as a matron of the hostel. She was taken ill with influenza during the epidemic of 1918, aggravated in her case by an attack of pneumonia. She died on 27 October 1918. She left behind four children, one of her daughters rising to the position of Director of Public Instruction in Punjab.

Bibi Amro

Bibi Amro was the daughter of Guru Angad Dev ji, the Second Guru. She was born in 1532 in the village of Khadur Sahib, District Amritsar. She received her early education and training directly from her parents Guru Angad Dev ji and Mata Khivi. Guru Angad spent a lot of time with his children. He taught them the Gurmukhi script that he had revised and simplified which is used in Guru Granth Sahib. When she came of age she was married to Bhai Jasoo son of Manak Chand of Basarke village.

As was the custom of the day she was sent to live with her husband's family. Her father encouraged her to continue doing kirtan and to preach Sikhism to all that she came in contact with. Amar Das who was her husband's uncle was quite taken by her sweet melodious voice when he heard her singing shabads (holy hymns). It was she who first introduced him to the teachings of Sikhism. As his interest grew it was she who sent him to her father to learn more about these teachings. Amar Das was so deeply influenced by Guru Angad Dev ji that he became a devout Sikhs, so much that Guru Angad Dev ji announced him as his Successors. Thus Guru Amar Das ji, the third Guru got to his destiny of becoming a Guru through Bibi Amro ji.

Years later when Guru Amar Das ji gave structure to the Sikh Nation and organised his preachers into 22 teaching districts he put Bibi Amro ji in-charge of one of these districts that he called Manji. What Manji meant was that a person who was leading a Kirtan to be sit on the Manji while whole sangat in front of him.

The person occupying Manji was the Sikh preacher appointed by Guru Amardas. This appointment can best be compared to the position of Bishop in the Christian Church today. It was an administrative position, with full responsibility for the equality and content of the preaching. She also would have the responsibility of collecting revenues and making decisions for the welfare of her diocese. Her manji or diocese included Basarke, her husband's village, where they made their home. It is the direct result of the efforts of Bibi Amro and other Sikh preachers that Amritsar today is synonymous with Sikhism. Today, close to the village of Basarke, there is a tank (man made pond) bearing the name Bibi Amro da Talab (Tank of Bibi Amro) in her memory.

from the "Champion of Women" by Alice Basarke.

Bibi Balbir Kaur

The Akali movement had rejuvenated a new life among GurSikhs. Since the Sikh Raj period, this was the first time GurSikhs had asserted their religious independence and initiated non-violent efforts to seek control of their Gurdwaras. The bloody incident of Nankana Sahib and Guru-Kae-Bagh added fuel to the fire and served to strengthen the movement. As a result, the Sikhs raised slogans of India's freedom along with slogans for the independence of their Gurdwaras. Unfortunately, the level of commitment and self-sacrifice of Sikhs deeply disturbed the British. They sensed a potential threat to their control from this small community of lions. Expectedly, the British directed their terror machinery against the Sikhs. Along with Akalis, their sympathizers also troubled the British Psyche. As a result, the British forces arrested and confined all Akali sympathizers in the jails.

The Maharaja of Nabha, Ripudaman Singh, was an independent minded ruler. He never considered himself disjoint from his community. When Guru Khalsa Panth observed the eve of Nankana Sahib martyrdom, he too conducted Akhand Path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Nabha and wore black turban to participate in this Panthic observance. Subsequently, he visited Harimandir Sahib at Amritsar and consulted with Akali leaders who were outside the jails. Maharaja's activities deeply troubled the British. They could not tolerate such activities as they smelled some sort of a rebellion through such participation. The British action was swift. They initiated legal steps to seize control of Nabha rule and expelled Maharaja Ripudaman Singh.

The news of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh's expulsion spread through Guru Khalsa Panth like a lightening rod. It shook the very core of Sikh psyche. Such excesses by the British became unbearable for the Sikhs and the whole Sikh nation galvanized to fight against this injustice. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee (SGPC), working in collaboration with the Shiromani Akali Dal, conducted Akhand Paths at various places to openly express their outrage at this injustice and demanded the reinstatement of Maharaja. Sikhs initiated a Akhand Paath of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at the Jaito Gurdwara as well to express their outrage against this injustice. Unfortunately, it was not allowed to be completed. The agents of British empire, operating under British instructions, dragged and arrested the Granth Sahib who was reciting the Paath. As a result, the Akhand Paath was forcibly interrupted.

This incident was equivalent of pouring salt over open Sikh wounds. The expulsion of Maharaja was a political affair that the Panth was still struggling to grapple with. It hadn't yet resolved on how to best deal with this issue when the forced interruption of Akhand Paath served a deep blow from the rulers to the Sikhs religious sentiments. This was an open challenge to Guru Khalsa Panth's freedom and honor. Akali leaders decided to accept this challenge. They immediately announced a non-violent morcha for the resumption and completion of the interrupted Akhand Paath. Thousands of GurSikh Singh, Singhnia, children, and elders started flocking in Amritsar ready to shed their lives for this religious battle. They were all eager to reach Jaito. However, the Akali committee decided to send a Jatha of 500 GurSikhs. The remaining GurSikhs were asked to await the schedule for the next Jatha. Everyone was eager to proceed to Jaito, yet they had to accept their Jathedar's decision.

Under the echoes of Jaekara, "Jo Bolay So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal," this Jatha left Amritsar after having sought the Hukam from Sri Akal Takhat and pledged to remain non-violent. Thousands of supporters were present on this occasion. Singhnias were not allowed to proceed on this Jatha. But how could they remain behind and not participate in such a holy endeavor? They successfully sought permission to accompany the Jatha for organizing langar along the way.

The non-violent march of this Jatha was a unique event for the whole world. Organized in rows of four, these Saint-Soldiers proceeded bare-foot from Amritsar while reciting "Satnaam VaahGuru." Soon they reached their first rest-stop. The dedication and volunteer sewa of the local Sikhs testified to the whole world that the Sikh nation not only understood non-violence and how to die but how to honor its martyrs.

It became evident from the first rest-stop that the services of Singhnia, who had accompanied the Jatha for organizing langar, were not needed. Jathedar asked with them to return. Many did. However, several wanted to continue with their brave brothers and they did not return. Our Balbir Kaur was among this group. When Jathedar asked her to return, her eyes were filled with tears. She said, "Veer! Do not stop me from serving the living martyrs of Guru Gobind Singh. Sewa is the only essence of this life. Beside we never know when death will come upon us. I plead for permission to continue for Guru's sake. Let me proceed." Jathedar could not break her heart. He reluctantly gave permission, especially when faced with the utter display of self-sacrifice.

Balbir Kaur was 22 years old, full of youth and utterly beautiful. Guru's faith and feelings of selfless service for humanity had generated such a glow on her face that she seemed like a goddess of purity or an angel. She was not alone. She was accompanied by an year old beautiful son. The playful happy face of this child was not only Balbir Kaur's joy but the source of amusement for the whole Jatha. He played with everyone in the Jatha along the way.

The journey was nearing completion. Jatha prepared to depart from its final rest-stop. Jathedar stood on a high spot and pleaded for the return of the accompanying congregation. British forces had dug-in with machine gun. This information had previously reached the Jatha. Jathedar did not hide this information from anyone. He

said, "With Guru's blessing, a martyr's maela is being organized. However, only those GurSikhs, who have Sri Akal Takhat's Hukam, should proceed further. Others should return and await their turn."

The congregation stopped and let the Jatha proceed. However, not everyone obeyed the Jathedar's instructions. Several GurSikhs, eager to seek the martyrdom, found hidden routes parallel to the Jatha's established route. They advance in hiding, with the view that when the whole program of martyrdom is unveiled they too will participate to seek martyrdom. However, Bibi Balbir Kaur did not seek any hidden routes. She continued marching with her brothers while her son enjoyed the sight, simply watching people on either side.

When Jathedar learned of Balbir Kaur's continued march with the Jatha, he left his leading position and caught up with her. "Bibi, there is potential of firing ahead. You should not continue any further." Jathedar pleaded. "My Veer! Do not stop me. My quest for sewa has not been quenched yet. Allow me to enjoy this sewa. You tell me of the dangers from the potential firing ahead? Five hundred Veers are with me. Since they are continuing for sure death why shouldn't they be accompanied by a Bahan (sister). I too have partaken Gurus Amrit. I shall consider myself blessed if I too could accept martyrdom along with my brothers and reach Guru Gobind Singh's court. Here my quest has not been quenched by serving my Veers." Balbir Kaur again pleaded with tears in her eyes.

"But .." Jathedar was about to say something when he was interrupted by Balbir Kaur saying, "My child, this is what you wanted to point out. He too is Guru's blessing. If he too serve the Panth, what greater deeds could be beyond this." Saying this, Balbir Kaur again hugged her child who burst out laughing.

Jathedar pressured Balbir Kaur to return. Others pressured her too, but she did not budge from her decision to continue her march to death with her brothers. She insisted that the "non-inclusion of a Bahan along with 500 Veers in the pending martyrdom is an insult to the brave daughters of Tenth Guru. How could the Guru, whose amrit turned women into Singhnia, who bestowed equality to women, tolerate that not even a single daughter participate in his holy war? This is sacrilegious that Balbir Kaur simply could not allow."

The power of her persuasive arguments forced her brothers to accept her position. Even the Jathedar had to bow against her spirit of sacrifice and courage. Who so ever talked with her was perplexed and could not raise a convincing counter argument.

Jathedar having been forced to accept her decision, returned to his lead position in the march. Guru Khalsa's Kesri flag was freely fluttering in the winds. The Jatha exhibited a unique presence while the accompanying band's performance portrayed innocence. Under the guidance of their deeply held faith in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the command of their Jathedar, the brave force of Sant-Sipahis marched toward the Jaito Gurdwara. They were chanting "Satnaam VaahGuru." Every GurSikh in the Jatha was projecting calmness.

Hindu, Muslims, and Sikhs welcomed the Jatha all along of the way from Amritsar to Jaito, because of their participation in this religious task. They were served with

abundant amounts milk, kheer (milk and rice pudding) and other things. Flowers were showered upon these living martyrs along the way. Thousands of rupees were donated.

Now it was turn for people serving the British to extend their welcome. They too welcomed these braves GurSikhs with rifle and gun fire. They showered them with rain of bullets. Gurus non-violent force was prepared for such a welcome. They accepted this welcome with "Satnaam Sri VaahGuru's" Hukam and continued the sweet walk towards their goal without any interruptions. Witnessing the scene it appeared that the Jatha was playing holli (festival of colors). After all martyr's holli is a holli of blood. If someone's face was colored with blood, someone else's head, chest, or thigh were colored. Blessed were the GurSikhs, for no one's back was visibly colored. Many Veers fell to the ground but would rise immediately to continue their march. The bullets would hit their chest only to fall again. With courage they would either rise again or accept death to reach the Kalgidhar father's lap.

Martyrdom was being openly served by now. It was the same serving that Balbir Kaur had insisted to reached and accept. Let us focus our attention on her condition. She continued her march while hugging to her child. She loved the rain of bullets that she had eagerly awaited. By now her face was glowing with some unique brightness.

Suddenly, She was hit by a bullet in her forehead. A blood spring burst open. Her whole face was covered with blood, eyes were covered with blood. However, this did not affect her march. She continued with the chanting of "Satnaam VaahGuru" while her child played with the flowing blood on her face. It was all a game for the child.

Suddenly another bullet hit Balbir Kaur's child. The bullet pierced the child through his ear and then hit Balbir Kaur's chest. The child died immediately and proceeded to the Guru's court. Balbir Kaur kissed his forehead and place his body on a nearby platform saying "VaahGuru look after your amanat (temporarily entrusted to me for safe custody)." However, she did not stop. Her face had turned yellow from the loss of blood. She had no strength left to continue. Her walk was wobbly by now, yet her heart's quest had not been quenched. Chanting the tune of "Satnaam VaahGuru," she kept her pace with others. On the other hand, the bullets had not stopped raining. They continued showering as if their thirst for blood had not yet mellowed.

Surprisingly, another bullet came hissing her way. It hit straight in Balbir Kaur's chest, pierced her body and left from the other side. This bullet was the message of death, the one Balbir Kaur had been eagerly awaiting. With this bullet, her beautiful body fell to the ground. But not her soul. Her soul left to join her child in Kalgidhar Father's protection. Her deepest quest was finally fulfilled. Her blood filled face still exhibited peace and dancing valor.

Daughters of the Khalsa

translated by Baldev Singh from "Adarshak Singhnia" by Karam Singh

Bibi Bhani ji

Bibi Bhani was daughter of Guru Amar Das, consort of Guru Ram Das and mother of Guru Arjan Dev, was born to Mata Mansa Devi on 21 Magh 1591 Bk/19January 1535 at Basarke Gillan, a village near Amritsar. She was married on 18 February 1554 to Bhai Jetha (later Guru Ram Das), a Sodhi Khatri belonging to Lahore, then in Goindval rendering voluntary service in the construction of the Baoli Sahib. After marriage, the couple remained in Goindval serving the Guru. From Goindval Bhai Jetha was deputed by the Guru to go and establish a habitation (present-day Amritsar) on a piece of land gifted, according to one version, by Emperor Akbar to Bibi Bhani at the time of his visit to Guru Amar Das.

Three sons, Prith Chand (1558), Mahadev (1560) and (Guru) Arjan Dev (1563) were born to her. A popular anecdote mentioned in old chronicles describes how devotedly Bibi Bhani served her father. One morning, it is said, as Guru Amar Das was absorbed in meditation, Bibi Bhani noticed that one of the legs of the low wooden seat on which the Guru sat was about to give way. she at once put forward her hand to support the stool. As the Guru ended his devotions, he discovered how her hand was bleeding from the injury it had sustained. He blessed her saying that her progeny would inherit the guruship. Bibi Bhani died at Goindval on 9 April 1598.

Bibi Bhani was mother of Guru Arjan Dev, the Fifth Guru. Undoubtly Guru Arjan Dev was brought up as model GurSikh. Guru Arjan Dev was the first Sikh Martyr. Guru Arjan Dev compiled Adi Granth by collecting all the writings of gurus before him and installed it at Golden Temple, which is now The Guru Granth. Guru Arjan Dev completed the construction of Golden Temple.

Article taken from these book.

Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.

Bibi Bhagbhari Ji

Bibi Bhagbhari ji was a disciple of Guru Amar Das ji. She was also one of the first Sikh preachers. Little could be found on the early life of Bhagbhari, sometimes also known as Bibi Bhago. She was very young when she became a disciple of Guru Amar Das. After learning all that she could, the Guru gave her the manji of Kashmir. That meant that she was appointed by Guru Amardas ji to preach Sikhism in the area of Kashmir valley, around Srinagar.

She went out as a missionary, worked hard with considerable success, but never returned to Punjab. She made her home in Srinagar. When she got older and was unable to carry out her duties, her son Sewa Das continued the work of the Guru, preaching and teaching Sikhism to all who would listen.

Bibi Bhagbhari dreamt of seeing her Guru one last time. She made a beautiful robe and prayed to be able to see him wear it. By this time, it was Guru Hargobind ji was on the Gaddi of Nanak as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. The Guru on hearing of her

devotion proceeded to Kashmir to meet her. He put on her robe and she blessed her lucky stars that she had been so honoured. The Guru stayed for some time preaching to the Sikhs in the area. While the Guru was in Srinagar, Bhagbhari who was quite elderly at this time, died a happy woman. An important shrine dedicated to this visit of the Guru still stands in Srinagar today.

Article taken from these book.
"Champion of Women" by Alice Basarke.

Bibi Dalair Kaur

Bibi Dalair Kaur - Martyr -17th Century Women

ALLAH HO AKBAR!!!!!" screamed the Moghul soldiers, with their heads down, one hand on the horse-reigns, one hand wielding a mighty sword, they charged up the hill determined to smash the fortress gates this time. A thousand arrows and bullets rained down from the over the high fortress walls. It was useless, they couldn't penetrate AnandPur, the Khalsa fort.

"RETREAT! RETREAT!" screamed a desperate General as he saw hundreds of his imperial forces drop to the ground. Back at base camp, an emergency meeting of General's was called. The jungle nights were cold, and hundreds of camp fires were seen all around the base of the hill. Anandpur Fort stood on top, impenetrable and untouched.

"9 MONTHS! 9 Long months in this wretched, mosquito infested jungle. When are those Fortress rats going to give up?" said Wajir Khan.

"Be patient General, even rats die one day" replied Jabardast Khan. "Patient! How much more patient can we be? We have over 1 million soldiers out there. One Million soldiers to kill that infidel Gobind Singh. Yet his Khalsa army has killed tens of thousands of our soldiers and we have barely scratched the fortress walls" thundered a raging Wajir Khan.

"Sit down Generals. As leader of the royal forces of his excellency Emperor Aurangzeb, I will make the decisions." Said Aurangzeb's General. He continued, "Let us review our tactics. We have 22 local Hindu Kings with us, we have the victorious armies of Wajir Khan and Jabardast Khan with us, and we have the military might of the Moghul Empire. One million soldiers, countless cannons, and an unlimited supply of arms. Fellow generals we have underestimated these Khalsa rats. Even though there can be no more than 10,000 soldiers in the fort, we have not been able to beat them through sheer force. They have the superior position on the hill top. Think of another plan Generals. We need a new strategy."

"Patience is the best strategy. It has been several months since we imposed the seige. I believe our seige is working fellow Generals. We have cut off all supplies of food and water to the fort, those rats must be almost starved by now. If we just wait another few months, victory will be ours." Said Jabardast Khan.

"It's already December, there's a cold and miserable winter in front of us. Our camp hospitals are bursting at the seams with sick soldiers, those wretched floods last month brought so many mystery illnesses, that hundreds of soldiers are dying every day. There is low moral amongst the troops and thousands of soldiers are deserting us every week, because they think we will never be able to capture the Fort. Do any of us want to spend the rest of winter like this? NO. I suggest we lure out the Khalsa rats and finish them with our swords!" raged Wajir Khan.

The room full of Generals stood up and cheered.

"Beloved Son and Guru, listen to your mother," said Mata Gujree. She continued, "You are beautiful and you have your father's blessing upon your head. Whatever you say is law, but I urge you to reconsider the offer of safe passage from the Royal forces. Aurangzeb himself has given his word, promising on the Koran that no harm will come to us."

"Mata Jee, it's nothing but a trick. Why would they offer us safe passage after they've been trying to kill us for 9 months?" said Guru Gobind Singh jee.

"Guru jee, you are our Father, we live for you and we will die for you," said Bhai Mani Singh, "but Guru jee we started off with 10,000 Khalsa warriors and now we have less than a thousand. Guru Jee, you are the King of this world and the King of the next world. It makes no difference to us if we live at your feet in this world or the next, but Guru jee this world needs you. You must survive, if you stay here you will die with the rest of us."

"O Beloved Khalsa jee, I would rather die fighting than walk away from this battle. But Khalsa jee, you are my Guru and you have ordered that we accept the offer of safe passage and leave the fort. So we will leave tomorrow. But, I don't intend to leave the fort unguarded. Bibi Dalair Kaur Jee, you are my trusted Sikh. I want you and the rest of my daughters to stay here along with 10 Khalsa men." Said Guru Gobind Singh Jee.

"Pita Jee, your words are true, bless us so we may do this duty and bring honour to the Khalsa," replied Bibi Dalair Kaur jee.

Guru Gobind Singh jee tapped her shoulder with the tip of his arrow.

As soon as Guru Gobind Singh jee left the fort, the combined forces of Moghal troops and Hill Rajas quickly abandoned their sacred oaths. They charged after Guru Gobind Singh jee and his 500 Khalsa soldiers. A bloody battle took place on the banks of the Sirsa river. Many Khalsa soldiers were killed and Guru jee's family was scattered. His younger sons and mother escaped with Gangu to his village. Later on he turned them in to the authorities for a reward. This led to their martyrdom.

Bhai Mani Singh and Guru jee's wife escaped and rode to Delhi. Guru Gobind Singh jee, his two older sons and the remaining 40 Khalsa soldiers escaped to the place called Chamkaur where another battle was fought. The Khalsa fought against the odds.

All 40 Khalsa, along with the older sons fought to the death. Guru Gobind Singh Jee was ordered by the Khalsa to survive and escaped to Mashiwadha.

While some of the Combined Moghul forces pursued the Khalsa, the rest rode to the fort to claim victory. Bibi Dalair Kaur saw that her beloved Guru and Khalsa had been betrayed and she prepared the Guru's daughters for battle. The Moghul soldiers broke their ranks and rode to the fort, burning and looting everything in their way. Bibi Dalair Kaur stood up in front of her sister's and spoke with passion, "Sisters, we have given our heads to our Guru-Father at the amrit ceremony. We have lived for Truth, now the time has come to die for it. Sisters, remember that we are all trained warriors and we will die fighting rather than be taken as slaves. Sisters, pick up your guns and get in position_it's a good day to die_BOLAY SO NIHAL_SAT SRI AKAL."

The enemy soldiers thought that the fort was empty and were taken aback by the sudden rain of bullets. Within a few minutes, hundreds of dead soldiers lay outside the fort. Seeing this, the remaining soldiers left their positions and ran for their lives. Wajir Khan was furious at not having captured the fort, he started screaming at his men "FIRE THE CANNONS! FIRE THE CANNONS." Intense cannon fire succeeded in breaking through a wall of the fort. No-one could be seen inside so the ground troops charged towards the fort. Suddenly, they were showered with bullets and line after line of soldiers dropped dead to the ground.

Wajir Khan was ruthless and kept sending more and more troops, eventually the Khalsa women ran out of bullets. Wajir Khan smiled as capture was imminent.

Bibi Dalair Kaur jee gathered her sister's together and spoke with her Guru-Father's blessing, "Sisters, we have fought well, now our time has come to die. It is up to us to die with honour. Remember the brave women from RajPut. When their husbands had died in battle and their fort was about to be captured, they would all jump into a fire and burn to death rather than let the enemy dishonour them. This was how their religion taught them to preserve their honour. Our Guru-Father is always with his Sikhs and protects his sons and daughter's honour. Sisters, our Guru-Father has trained us as warriors and we will die fighting alongside our husbands and brothers. Remember we are lionesses."

The enemy was advancing so rapidly that there was no time for further speeches. Bibi Dalair Kaur jee gave the signal and all Khalsa women drew their swords and positioned themselves behind the damaged wall. This was the only way for the enemy to enter.

Mighty soldiers began climbing in over the piles of rubble. When they saw 100 Khalsa women and 10 Khalsa men ready for battle they stopped in their tracks. They were expecting to find hundreds of Khalsa men, they never knew women could be warriors.

Witnessing the events from a distance, Wajir Khan yelled, "Cowards, are you afraid of women? They are gifts for you, capture them and do what you want with the rewards of your hunt." Bibi Dalair Kaur yelled back, "We are the hunters, not the hunted. Come forward and find out for yourself!"

Wajir Khan took up the challenge and rode into the fort with his men. Khalsa Lionesses attacked them from every corner and he dropped dead to the ground. Not knowing how many other Khalsa warriors were in the fort the Moghuls retreated yet again.

Jabardast Khan started yelling at his men "FIRE THE CANNONS! FIRE THE CANNONS." Intense cannon fire destroyed the already weakened wall. The fort's inner compound was clearly visible and no Khalsa warriors could be seen. Jabardast Khan was convinced that no one was left alive and this time he took thousands of troops with him into the fort. They searched every inch of the fort but did not find anyone. Jabardast Khan was furious. Where did the Khalsa lionesses disappear too? He screamed at his men to find them. The soldiers searched cautiously, expecting a surprise attack from any direction. Finally they concluded that the remaining Khalsa warriors must have escaped through some secret passage.

Orders were given to abandon the search and initiate looting. The very soldiers who were afraid for their lives started searching for wealth inside the fort. When they removed the piles of rubble from the fallen wall they found no wealth, they only found the bodies of our martyrs. The faces of Guru Gobind Singh jee's daughters were still radiant yet peaceful.

They and their Khalsa brothers and husbands had stood by their leader, Bibi Dalair Kaur. They died fighting to the death and received an eternal place at our Guru-Father's Lotus Feet.

Dayh Shiva bar mohe ehai, subh karman tay kabhoon na taro. Na daro ar so jab jaa-
laro, nischai kar apanee jeet karo. Ar sikh ho aapnay hee man hau, eh lalach hao gun
tao ucharo. Jab aav kee a-odh nidhaan banai, at hee ran mai tab joojh maro. 231.
(Guru Gobind Singh)

Give me this boon Lord, that I never refrain from righteous deeds. That I have no fear when fighting the enemy, That I attain victory with faith and fortitude, That I keep your teachings close to my mind. Lord, my desire is that I sing your praises and when the end of this life draws near, may I die fighting, with limitless courage in the battlefield.

"By Harjit Singh Lakhan (hslakhan@yahoo.com)
fictionalised version of a true story by Karam Singh in the punjabi book 'Ardashak
Singhnian' "

Bibi Deep Kaur

A contingent of Turkish soldiers is on active patrol. The area rulers have specifically assigned this contingent to keep a watch over the Sikh jatha that had gathered in Majha and would surely proceed to Anandpur Sahib for participating Dashmesh father's (Guru Gobind Singh) Dharam Yudh. Additional responsibilities assigned to this contingent included, instilling fear among people who either express sympathy

with the Sikh jatha or welcome it or serve it any way. For this reason, the Turkish contingent always moved ahead of the Sikh Jatha.

Three miles from the road leading to Anandpur Sahib in Hoshiarpur District, is a village, named Talban. Bibi Deep Kaur, the subject of our story, was resident of this village. There was only one Sikh house in this village -- Bibi Deep Kaur's residence. Today her husband wasn't home. He had already left for participating in Dashmesh father's Dharam Yudh. When Bibi heard of Jatha's arrival. She was filled with emotions of self-service. She explained her emotions and desire to other women in her neighborhood. But the Turkish soldiers had successfully frightened the residence of this village. Thus no one was willing to accompany her.

"Let them not proceed, if someone doesn't want to" Deep Kaur told herself. For how could one stay behind if they have even the slightest love for the Guru in their heart. Holding onto the quest of love and a glimpse of the Sikh Jatha, Deep Kaur proceeded alone and awaited the arrival of Sant-Sipahis.

Suddenly dust arose from afar. Her face brightened with joy. Her quest for Jatha's sight grew stronger. Now she started walking on the road toward the rising dust storm. Soon she realized that this was not the Jatha of Sant- Sipahis. Rather it was the contingent of evil Turkish soldiers. Surprised, she quickly moved off the road and tried to hide herself by sitting next to a tree.

As the Turkish contingent got closer, its commander caught sight of Deep Kaur. Seeing the youthful beauty, he lost all self-control.

He commandingly asked. "Who are you?"

"Whoever I am. How does it matter to you?" She answered fearlessly.

Commander's attraction grew stronger with her challenge.

He remarked softly, "By Shehansha's (ruler's) orders, I have been deputed to keep a watch on Sikhs in this area. Since the Sikh Jatha is heading this way, I need to ascertain whether you are a Sikh."

"If I were to be a Sikh, then?"

"Then we will have to arrest and sent you to Lahore." Deep Kaur heard his response.

But, being a Sikh how could she lie. Fearlessly, she announced, "I am Sikh."

The Turk Commander was astonished by her fearlessness. But as captive of her beauty, by now, he was aroused beyond any self-control. He spoke softly and said, "Beautiful, I am responsible for capturing Sikhs. You are a Sikh. I should arrest you, but I cannot do that. I cannot fulfil my responsibilities. For I have a heart that worships beauty and it is your's now. I am your captive."

Deep Kaur's face reddened with anger. She lashed out saying, "You should be ashamed of yourself talking to me like this."

"What is there to be ashamed of where hearts have met? I am your. Accept me and I shall keep you as my Begum (wife)." He said.

"I am a Sikh and married. If you ever uttered anything like this again I will snatch your tongue." Deep Kaur responded. By now she was shaking with anger.

"What kind of a beauty it would be that doesn't exhibit enticing or alluring behavior. I am impressed by your behavior. Now don't delay anymore and let's go. What are you going to get from these wild Sikhs." Saying this the commander dismounted from his horse and moved towards Deep Kaur while his contingent waited on the opposite side of the road.

As he dismounted, Deep Kaur stood up. Seeing him approach her, she challengingly said "Beware, if you touch my body I will not spare you."

Insane under arousal, the commander ignored her warning and instead proceeded to hug her. Deep Kaur pulled back with lightening speed. By now she had the small kirpan in her hand. As the commander approached, struck him in his stomach with the kirpan. A blood spring burst opened. With painful cries, he simply dropped to the ground.

By now Deshmesh's daughter had jumped into the war. As the wounded Commander sat on the ground, she viciously attacked him once again, sending his evil soul to burn in hell. Before, the Turkish soldiers could advance, she moved swiftly to take control of the commander's sword and was well-prepared for self-defense. Seeing their dying commander, the soldiers advanced shaking in anger and simultaneously attacked her.

However, the Deshmesh's daughter wasn't scared being out-numbered. Like a lioness, she stood fast for the challenge. She used the sword like a man and soon two soldiers fell to the ground while several others were severely wounded. Deep Kaur too sustained deep wounds on her face and neck. Although her wounds were profusely bleeding, she kept her courage and continued fighting like a man. Today, Turkish soldiers were challenged by a woman.

Far on the road, the sound of horses could be heard once again. This time the Sant-Sipahi's Jatha was approaching. As the Turkish soldiers saw the Sikh Jatha, they got scared, immediately mounted their horses and ran for their lives. The bodies of the Commander and five of his associates were left behind, lying cold on the ground.

The sight of approaching Sikh brothers filled Deep Kaur filled with joy. She quickly tried to move towards the road but couldn't. She had lost too much blood and thus was unable to walk. She simply fell unconscious to the ground. Sikh Jatha saw unconscious Deep Kaur and 6 dead bodies of Turkish soldier, upon reaching the location. It did not take them long to comprehend the situation.

Immediately, they spread a bed for Dashmesh's daughter, dressed her wounds and awoken her with medication. Then carrying her along, the Jatha proceeded to Anandpur Sahib for participating in the Dashmesh father's Dharam Yudh.

Fully aware of the situation, our Dashmesh father Guru Gobind Singh Ji was strolling outside his court awaiting the arrival of this Jatha. Seeing them arrive, he joyfully advanced to receive them and asked "Where is my daughter?"

Jatha members were confused. They did not understand the meaning of this question, since there were many Sikh women among the Jatha. Who did Guru Sahib honor with daughter's address? They could not understand.

In the meantime, Guru Sahib quickly moved towards the palki (palanquin) carrying the wounded Deep Kaur. Raising the palki curtain, he hugged and kissed her forehead, saying "This is my daughter Deep Kaur. Because of such daughter my Panth shall remain in Chardi Kala."

Sardarni Dharam Kaur

Rulers have to engage in various deceitful activities to strengthen their power base. To avoid embarrassment, such activities are commonly referred to as politics. Politics is simply a convenient acronym for deceitful activities. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh took control of the city of Lahore, he too used such tactics to bring all neighboring rulers, big and small, under his control. He used every conceivable means to successfully accomplish his vision. The Bhangi and Ramgariha Sardars (Rulers) were his strongest opposition. Ranjit Singh wanted to badly crush them and soon. The opposition leader, Sahib Singh Bhangi, was ruling Gujarat at the time.

Sardar Dal Singh was the ruler of Akalghadh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's father, Sardar Maha Singh, had conquered Akalghadh and established Sardar Dal Singh as its ruler. However, now Sardar Dal Singh was making overtures of self-independence. He even participated in opposition against Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The validity and correctness of his stance can not be justified, but it served as a reason enough for Maharaja Ranjit Singh's decision to establish control over the region.

However, Maharaja Ranjit Singh could not pick up enough courage to attack Sardar Dal Singh. He was afraid that Sardar Dal Singh would seek assistance from the opposition leaders, thus making his task even more difficult. Therefore, he sought the diplomatic route and initiated a web of deceit and deception. Sardar Dal Singh was sent an invitation, stating, "Dear friend, please come to Lahore. I need to discuss some important issues with you." Sardar Dal Singh reached Lahore based on this invitation, but Maharaja Ranjit Singh had something else in mind for him. Sardar Dal Singh was detained in Lahore fort while Maharaja himself left with a heavy force to conquer Akalghadh.

With Sardar Dal Singh neutralized, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was now sure that no one will oppose him and that he will be able to move into the city with open doors. He was very happy with his deceitful tactic and confident of his success. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh left Lahore for Akalghadh, he thought that the citizens of Akalghadh would come out in large numbers to welcome him. Indeed, he was welcomed but not with

flowers and garlands but with cannon fire. This welcome spoiled his whole scheme and caused him serious anguish.

When Sardar Dal Singh's young spouse, Sardarni Dharam Kaur, learned of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's deceitful tactics resulting in imprisonment of her husband and his moves to capture the city, she was filled with anger. She immediately decided to protect her independence and honor at any cost. As the attacking forces edged closer to town, she closed the doors of Akalgadh fort and started pounding them with cannon fire. Maharaja sent a demanding message, saying, "empty the fort, else your husband's life will not be spared."

Sardarni Dharam Kaur responded "You are deceitful. Why should I listen to you, my husband listened to you and you imprisoned him! I will avenge my husband's dishonor even if this means both of us die."

Maharaja was quite shaken by this response. What could he do? He put the Akalgadh fort under seize. Several months passed by, but the fort couldn't be captured. Sardarni Dharam Kaur was fighting bravely. From time to time, she would come out of the fort with a few brave soldiers for surprise attacks. Causing serious casualties among the royal forces they would disappear back into the fort with lightning speed. Her surprise attacks were causing havoc among the royal forces.

It was nighfall and Maharaja was reviewing the battle status with his Generals (Sardars) : Sardar Hari Singh Naluya, Sardar Nihal Singh Attariwalla and a few others. They had attacked Akalgadh expecting no resistance and instead it had turned into a long seize. Sardarni Dharam Kaur's frequent surprise attacks were forcing him to abandon the seize. They desperately wanted to abandon the seize but now the seize did not want to abandon them. Additionally, they would lose the respect of Lahore if they returned empty handed.

Suddenly, there was there was the sound of fighting outside. Sardarni Dharam Kaur had thrown another surprise attack. She was heading towards the Maharaja's tent and was killing many soldiers along the way. The Maharaja and the Sardars quickly drew their weapons and raced outside. Sardarni Dharam Kaur looked down at them from horseback, with a blood-red sword raised in her hand she looked straight into the Maharajas eyes - "It's time to talk Ranjit Singh!"

"Ranjit Singh, you deceitfully arrested my husband, thinking no one else would challenge you. You made a grave mistake. I have been blessed with same 'khanda-batta-da-amrit' of Guru Gobind Singh Jee that you have. Each Khalsa values independence and honor. So you have no right to steal it from us. Abandon the seize and leave by tomorrow, otherwise you will find yourself in a major war."

The Sardars stepped forward and attempted to arrest her but pulling their horses around Sardarni Dharam Kaur and her soldiers easily escaped through the Maharaja's royal forces as a knife cuts through butter. The Maharaja slowly uttered these words to his Sardars : "there is no hope of capturing this fort when it is protected by such a brave woman."

Early next morning, one of the Maharaja's Sardars came rushing into the royal tent. He reported, 'Sardarni Dharam Kaur's troops have begun intense fighting. We also have news that Sahib Singh Bhangi and Jodh Singh Vajiraba are heading towards us with large armies.'

Maharaja had never dreamt that a woman could do all this. Now, Sardarni Dharam Kaur's threat of last night had some significant weight attached. Maharaja gave orders for immediate abandonment of the seize and quickly left for Lahore. He immediately released Sardar Dal Singh saying, "My dear friend, no worldly power can subjugate a man whose wife is so brave, intelligent, and diplomatic."

Sardarni Dharam Kaur's bravery, courage, intelligence and political manoeuvres remain exemplary in Sikh history. It boldly announces to the world that the brave daughters of Guru Gobind Singh Jee are capable leaders.

from the Punjabi book "Adarshak Singhnia"

Bibi Harnam Kaur(1862-1902)

Bibi Harnam Kaur ji were a pioneer in the field of women's education, was born on 10 April 1882 in a Siddhu Jatt family of Chand Purana, a village in Ferozpur district of the Punjab. Here original name was Jiuni Bhagvan Das. Her father's name was Bhagvan Das and mother's Ram Dei. Bhagvan Das was a religious minded person, had become a disciple of an Udasi sadhu, Ram Das, of Ferozpur, after whose death he became the head of his dera or seminary. Here Jiuni and her mother joined him when the former was only an infant. She was a precocious child and had read Panj Granths, Dasam Granth and Hanuman Natak before she was six years of age. She then joined the local Arya Pathshala and learnt Hindi, but left off after six months because tlae Pathshala had no facilities to teach Gurmukhi. Later she was sent to the village of Daudhar, now in Faridkot district, where she studied for several years under Bhai Dula Singh. Meanwhile, Bhal Takht Singh, who had started a Gurmukhi school at Firozpur under the auspices of the local Singh Sabha, offered to open a school exclusively for girls. The Singh Sabha welcomed the proposal but was reluctant to let it be run by a bachelor. To overcome the difficulty, Jiuni's parents promised Takht Singh the hand of their daughter- The Kanya Pathshala, lit girls' school, was opened in Firozpur on 5 November 1902, and Jiuni joined it both to learn and to teach as an employee of the Singh Sabha. Her betrothal to Takht Singh took place on 11 October 1893 and they were married on 8 May 1894. She received the new name of Harnam Kaur when she was administred on 15 July 1901 pahul or the rites of the Khalsa.

The couple threw themselves and their heart and soul into their work . Harnam Kaur's monthly salary was Rs 6 and her husband's Rs 8. On 1 September 1900, tired of internal dissensions in the managemant of the Singh Sabha, they quit service, but continued to teach privately. Early in 1903, Bibi Harnam Kaur persuaded her husband to open a boarding school for girls at Firozpur. A number of parents offered to send their daughter's to the boarding school which was named Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyala and which started functioning from March 1905. Harnam Kaur worked hard to make

the Vidyala success. In addition to helping her husband at teaching, she looked after catering and lodging arrangements for their wards . She had also set up Istri Satsang, a women's religious society, which held meetings in the afternoon of every Wednesday, and a parcharak jatha or missionary group. But she did not live long to serve the cause to which she had dedicated herself, and died on 1 October 1906.

from the Punjabi book "Adarshak Singhnia"

Shaheed Bibi Harsarn Kaur

Sikh women are always known to have responded to the call of their duty. They have not allowed hardships and dangers to stand in the way of the performance of their moral obligations. Bibi Harsarn Kaur was one of these women who faced the odds to fulfill her obligations.

Guru Gobind Singh's two elder sons together with many other Sikhs, were martyred while fighting the foes at the battle of Chamkaur Sahib. Under pressure of supplications of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh was obliged to leave the place under cover of darkness. The enemy too, taking advantage of the lull and darkness, rested in the surrounding area where they had besieged the Sikhs.

After leaving Chamkaur Sahib, Guru Ji reached the village where Bibi Harsarn Kaur lived. When he met her, she at once recognised the Guru. She bowed to Guru Ji and asked about the Sahib Jadey. She had been a nursing sister to them. Guru Ji told her about their martyrdom. She hurried to Chamkaur Sahib and stole on cat's paw to the battle scene and recognised the martyred Sikhs.

She collected all the wood she could and piled them high. She placed the bodies of the Sahib Jadey and the Sikhs on the pile and set it afire. The big conflagration woke the enemy with consternation. All their expectations of getting prizes and honours were dashed to the ground. Now there was nothing left to show their identities of their victims.

In the light of the fire, they were amazed to espy a female figure with a javelin in hand near the pile. They approached her and demanded to know who she was and whence she came. But nothing could make her speak. They became furious and threw Bibi Harsarn, javelin and all in the fire. Thus she too obtained martyrdom on 23rd Dec 1704.

from the Punjabi book "Adarshak Singhnia"

Bibi Khem Kaur(1862-1902)

Khem Kaur Dhillon, Daughter of Jodh Singh Kalalvala and grand daughter of Sahib Singh Dhillon aka Bhangi of Gujrat, was married in 1816 to Prince Kharak Singh, eldest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She survived her husband and helped Anti-British forces in the second Anglo-Sikh war (1849) for which reason her Jagirs were considerably reduced

Bibi Prem Kaur

The green Thari Hills were soaked in blood. The powerful Pathan Army defended the hill top against a small troop of fearless Akalee soldiers. The Pathan Army heavily outnumbered the bravest battalion of the Khalsa Army, but these warrior lions of Guru Gobind Singh did not lose faith. United, like the waves in the ocean, by their deep blue battle-dress and turbans, they fought against all the odds and faced the rain of enemy bullets, stones, and arrows. Hacking their way through treacherous terrain, they hammered their way up the hill.

Time was running out for the Akalees, Maharaja Ranjit Singh hadn't arrived with reinforcements whereas the Pathans had won the support of thousands of local Muslims by distributing pamphlets that declared this battle as a war against Islam - Jihad. The Akalees belonged to Akal, the Immortal God, and with Akal on their side who should they be afraid of? Being outnumbered didn't scare them, Guru Gobind Singh Ji had transformed them with his 'khanda-batta da amrit' - the initiation amrit-nectar prepared in the indestructible iron battle-bowl and stirred by the most awesome of weapons - the double-edged Khanda sword. The words of their Guru father rang in their ears 'I will make one fight against 125,000, then and only then can I be called Gobind Singh!'. The Akalees belonged to Akal, they fought for their Guru's honour and their only hope in life was to die fighting courageously on the battle-field.

The future of the Sikh Empire, the Khalsa Raj, depended on this battle. The Akalees marched forward led by the courageous warrior Akalee Phoola Singh, the sun reflected like bolts of lightning from the sharp bladed discus-like chakr-weapons going around his mountain peaked turban. Raising his sword his thundering voice gave power to the battle cry jaekara - 'JO BAWLEH SO NIHAL..', (Whoever speaks it will be joyous..). Every single Akalee Lion roared the response 'SAT SREE AKAL' (Akal Is True!). The Akalee's spirits rose, new life was injected into them with each jaekara. They faced the Pathans with rejuvenated spirits, just seeing the fire in the Akalee's eyes was enough to send the Pathans running in all directions. Advancing into an almost deserted battlefield the Akalees had captured the hill top against all the odds.

But then, from out of nowhere, bullets and arrows started raining down on the Akalees, the Pathans had hidden in hill-caves and now charged out. Surrounding the Akalees they bombarded them with bullets and arrows. Akalee Phoola Singh took a bullet in the chest and the mighty lion fell. The great warrior Karnail Singh Bania also fell wounded by another bullet. The Akalees wanted to die fighting, but seeing their leader's serious condition they decided it was wiser to retreat. The Pathans chased them down to the foothills.

The wounded were carried for about a mile, they marched passed their ammunition depot and reached the camp hospital. A few young Khalsa women busily nursed the wounded lions. Looking towards the hill they saw the enemy forces charging down like an avalanche. The Khalsa nurses along with the remaining Akalee Warriors, gathered their wounded and once again retreated to a safer location.

The Pathans were exhilarated by the fact that victory was almost in their ruthless hands. They marched triumphantly towards the deserted Akalee Camp with the Islamic battle cry `Allah Hu Akbar' (God is Great). Reaching the undefended depot they desperately needed to find a mountain load of ammunition. Most of their army didn't have rifles and without them they knew they stood no chance against the Khalsa Army re-inforcements that were rapidly riding to the battle-scene. On finding thousands of rifles, their joy had no bounds and the skies reverberated with their war cries - `Allah Hu Akbar'.

Each soldier eagerly seized a weapon, but their hearts sunk down to the lowest depths of hell when they realised there were no bullets. Searching frantically they ripped apart every storage tent and overturned every stack of crates, like thirsty men in the desert they ran in all directions looking for even a tiny clue as to where the metal messengers of death could be, finally Allah was truly merciful and they located crate after crate full to the brim with the finest bullets stuffed full of gunpowder. Once again their joy had no bounds and the valleys echoed with `Allah Hu Akbar'. Surrounded by a sea of ammunition the Pathan Army danced like drunken men waving their new found guns in the air. Without warning, an incredible explosion suddenly shocked the sky and shook the mountains. Flames shot up hundreds of feet into the sky, like an erupting volcano spewing out it's insides with all the force and fury of ten thousand angry gods. Bodies went flying in all directions like fragile rag dolls. Within a blink of an eye, the Pathans dancing heaven had turned them into black logs of charcoal feeding the flames of hell on earth.

By now, the `Lion Of Punjab -Shere Punjab', Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had crossed the Attock river and appeared on the horizon like the the light of the rising sun after a dark and stormy night, the rays of hope reached out in all directions in the form of Khalsa Warrior after Khalsa Warrior. Whether riding on horseback or marching on foot, each battalion was headed by the the flag bearers waving the Khalsa flags high in the sky. They whispered `Waheguru, Waheguru' with each breath, their secret power given to them when they were blessed with `khanda-batta-da-amrit'. General Hari Singh Naluwa commanded them and they rode like the wind, attacking the remaining Pathans with so much power that they ran for their lives like headless chickens. The Khalsa Army claimed complete control of the battlefield. The skies echoed with the battle cry jaekara `JO BAWLEH SO NIHAL..', (Whoever speaks it Will be Joyous..). Every single Khalsa Lion roared the response `SAT SREE AKAL' (Akal Is True!).

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and General Hari Singh Naluwa looked around at the site of death and destruction, smoke was still emating from burning crates and bodies. The Akalee's told Maharaja Ranjit Singh that by some miracle Guru Gobind Singh jee himself had caused the explosion. They all knew that they would have suffered a total wipeout against a fanatical Pathan Army on a religious Jihad armed to the teeth with guns and bullets.

As they wandered around what used to be the camp, Maharaja Ranjit Singh noticed something, quickly dashing to the outskirts he kneeled down. The others followed him and they congregated around the dead body of a fair, innocent, young khalsa woman. She was lying face down on the ground less than 50 feet from the depot and away from the bodis of the Pathans. In her hand she was still tightly clutching a fire-torch!

It was the head nurse, Bibi Prem Kaur. This brave lioness daughter of Guru Gobind Singh Jee had given up her life to save the Khalsa Army from a humiliating defeat. While the other nurses retreated with the wounded Akalees, she had secretly gone to the depot and hidden near the bullet storage. Lighting the ammunition, the blast had blown her body away from the dead Pathans, as if to protect her innocence and honor her sacrifice.

This scene deeply moved Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his eyes were flooding with tears. Addressing her as his daughter, he gently raised her head onto his lap and tenderly wiped her face with his damp handkerchief.

The Khalsa warriors witnessed these scenes with tears rolling down their cheeks, Bibi Prem Kaur had sacrificed her own life so that her brothers would be saved. At her funeral the Khalsa Army band played on and the cannons fired in continuous salute as Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other Officers carried her coffin in a royal procession. Every Khalsa Warrior felt Bibi Prem Kaur's eternal love for Guru Gobind Singh Jee wash over them, with their heads bowed low, they said great, truly great is our father Guru Gobind Singh Jee.

The `khanda-batta-da-amrit' that Guru Gobind Singh jee used to transform the sparrows into hawks, jackals into lions, cowards into Khalsa, had now enabled Bibi Prem Kaur to make the ultimate selfess sacrifice. She was now a martyr that the Khalsa would never forget. By the Guru's infinite and unparralled grace and kindness she had single-handedly overturned a sure defeat for the Khalsa into an overwhelming victory.

"By Harjit Singh Lakhan (hslakhan@yahoo.com)
fictionalised version of a true story by Karam Singh in the punjabi book 'Ardashak Singhnian' "

Bibi Ranjit Kaur

The wild animals were howling in the nearby jungle, the wind was biting Ranjeet Kaur's face, she wrapped her midnight-blue shawl around a little tighter. Nothing to be afraid of, she quietly carried on repeating `Vaahi-guroo, Vaahi-guroo' in time to her steps and Guru Gobind Singh jee's glove of spiritual love completely protected her. She looked through the trees at the magnificent setting sun, for a moment she forgot all about the war and was lost in the magic and mystery of the Creative Being -

Karta Purakh. She felt as beautiful as a blossoming flower radiating love and life in all directions.

-`Vaahi-Guroo Jee Ka Khalsa, Vaahi-Guroo Jee Kee Fateh! Ranjeet Kaur Bhain Jee (sister)',

Ranjit Kaur quickly turned around and saw a young Khalsa warrior dressed in blue-battle dress, wearing a long curved sword down his left side, chain-mail armour across his chest and a three metal discus's around his blue pointed turban.

-`Vaahi-Guroo Jee Ka Khalsa, Vaahi-Guroo Jee Kee Fateh! GurMukh Singh Jee. Why are you out so late?'

-`Well I was about to ask you the same thing Bhain jee (sister), you know how dangerous it is for a woman to be out her alone while there are Turkish Soldiers patrolling the area. So Bhain Jee you better have a damn good excuse, otherwise you're going back with me.'

- "Veer jee (brother), our Jathedar (leader) has asked me to fetch some important news from the SarPanch (village chief) and anyway you're only 11 so you better run back to the Khalsa camp."

-"Bhain jee, I can't believe he sent you alone. You know the War for our Independence is at it's peak and there's trouble around every corner. Look, I've got an idea - it's safer for you to go back to the lake and rejoin the Khalsa Army and I will go in your place."

-"Why do you think it's any safer for you to go, GurMukh Singh?"

-"Bhain jee, it will be dark soon and I don't think it's right for a woman to go anywhere alone. I am a Khalsa Warrior, I carry 5 weapons and I am prepared to die fighting. I want people to tell stories about me and how brave Bhai GurMukh Singh was."

Just then a bat came flying out of the dark trees directly towards Bhai GurMukh Singh, he didn't know what was attacking him and screaming loudly he covered his face with his hands!

Ranjit Kaur burst out laughing and said "Veer jee, I too have been blessed with Guru's immortal `khanda-batta-da-amrit' nectar. I too carry a long sword over my blue battle-dress and wear a warrior's turban. Guru Gobind Singh Jee is always with me. But you my younger brother have much to learn about ego and you are probably at more risk than me! Besides, the SarPanch (village headman) will not give anyone except me the strategic papers. Furthermore, the Jathedar stressed that I go. So my dear little brother, you better ran all the way home otherwise I'm going to grab you by the ear, drag you home and after the Khalsa has finished their evening prayers, I'm going to tell them the story of the great Bhai GurMukh Singh and the black bat!"

"Okay, you win , but be careful." Saying this Gurmukh Singh ran down the path towards the lake while Ranjit Kaur went on with her journey towards the village.

Gurmukh Singh's fears were not unfounded. Small bands of Turkish soldiers were wandering around the lake seeking information on Sikhs. Every Sikh was aware of this. However, it did not deter Ranjit Kaur. She fearlessly went on her way to the village. She had absolute faith in the strength of her Guru's amrit and blessed sword.

Ranjit Kaur reached the SarPanch's house. The women came out and hugged her, they hadn't seen her for some time. It was getting late and the women insisted that she spend the night with them. Remembering what GurMukh Singh had said she agreed, it would be safer to travel during the day and Jathedar had given her permission to spend the night. The SarPanch took her to a private room and handed over the Strategic Papers, what she read spelled disaster for the Khalsa. She got up at once and covering herself with her shawl she headed back to the Kahnuwaan lake, the women tried to make her stay saying save your self. But Ranjit Kaur's life was not worth anything without her Khalsa family.

A large number of Ahmed Shah Abdalee's troops were on their way from Lahore to seize Kahnuwaan and these strategic papers contained orders to SarPanch to help the troops. Thousands of Khalsa lives were at stake and getting the information back to her Jathedar was foremost on her mind.

By now it was midnight. The skies were clear and the moonlight lit up the earth. In this calm and still atmosphere, Ranjit Kaur reached the outskirts of the quiet village and walked as fast as possible towards the lake. She had about 3 miles to cover, she increased her pace and marched with determination through the sounds of howling animals. She quietly carried on repeating `Vaahi-guroo, Vaahi-guroo' in time to her footsteps as she always did and felt Guru Gobind Singh jee's spiritual glove encase her.

Two Turkish soldiers with swords in their waist-bands, rode past her left side. She fearlessly looked at the soldiers and underneath her shawl she grabbed the handle of her sword, just in case. The heavenly moonlight glowed from Ranjit Kaur's angelic face and intensified her beauty. The soldiers suddenly pulled their horses across her path and quickly dismounting they tried to grab her hands. She darted away with lightening speed and threateningly said "They'll be trouble if you touch me!", she continued aggressively, `Who are you and what do you want?"

-"We are commanders of the royal forces" said the first soldier.

-"Then what business do you have with me?" said Ranjit Kaur.

Without answering, the second soldier loudly demanded "Who are you? And where are you wandering to at this time of night?"

-"Who ever I may be, you have no right to question me." Saying this Ranjit Kaur tried to walk past them at a fast pace.

The first soldier quickly moved to block her way once again and said, "we have orders to find out where the Sikhs are hiding. You look like a Sikh so until you explain what you are doing we aren't going to let you go anywhere."

- "That's right, I am a Sikh, what are you going to do about it?"

"Then consider yourself under arrest," said the first soldier, then he looked at the other one and said, "Khan Sahib, I think you better grab her and put her on your horse, because I don't know what I'll do if I get too close to her."

Both looked at Ranjit Kaur's face and then looked at each other and started laughing. Such overtures angered Ranjit Kaur. She started looking at them like a hunter at its' prey. Her eyes were red with anger.

There was a brief silence before Khan Sahib calmly said, "Beautiful lady, we have been sent to find the whereabouts of Sikhs. However, we are not animals. We are human. We too have pumping hearts in our chest. What kind of heart would it be that does not worship a beautiful angel like you."

Both men were intoxicated with Ranjit Kaur's beauty. A mere glimpse of her face had injected lustful insanity into them. Ranjit Kaur stared at their faces but remained silent. Upon completion of his sentence, the other soldier continued, "Beloved, what are you going to get from the wild Sikhs. Come with us. In Allah's oath we shall make you our Begum (wife). You can wear silk and eat whatever you like. You can even choose which one of us you want to marry!"

Ranjit Kaur still continued to silently stare at the soldiers. She had made her decision to continue or to die fighting. But her silence and non-responsiveness was misinterpreted by the men. Khan Sahib tried to grab her wrist, saying, "Come, sit on my horse. It is getting late my love."

Ranjit Kaur moved swiftly, taking two steps backward she drew her sword from under her shawl and reflecting the moonlight it flashed like lightning. She shouted "If you come any closer I won't be responsible for what happens!"

The soldiers burst out laughing. Khan Sahib said, "Angel drawing a sword! That's a first!"

The other soldier spoke "Isn't she beautiful when she's angry?"

This was the first time Khan Sahib had seen a woman protect her honor like a lioness, but she was still only a weak woman so he tried to grab her with his outstretched arms. A flashing sword dazzled him and he screamed in agony as his left hand dropped to the ground.

Having been bitten by the lioness the soldiers drew their swords and charged towards her. Ranjit Kaur wasn't sitting idle wearing bangles, she lunged forward at Khan Sahib again and cut off his sword hand. He retreated squirming in pain.

The other soldier was a skilled swordsman. His continuous attacks inflicted several wounds to Ranjit Kaur. Blood covered her whole face. Exhaustion was setting in by now. Suddenly, the strength of Guru's amrit injected so much courage into her, that she forgot all about her wounds and pains. Yelling the battle cry jaekara, "JO BOLAY

SO NIHAL, SAT SREE AKAL," her sword moved with such force that the soldier's head dropped to the ground and bounced like a ball. His body fell in a heap next to it.

Ranjit Kaur quickly looked around for Khan Sahib, but he had escaped without trace. Totally exhausted she still managed to search the heaped body and found several papers in the dead soldier's pockets. Seizing them, she mounted his horse and rode to the Kahnuwaan lake. As she approached the camp she mustered up every last ounce of energy and yelled `JATHEDAR JEE! JATHEDAR JEE!'. The Jathedar, several Khalsa Warriors and little GurMukh Singh came running out to meet her, seeing her blood red face and exhausted condition they carried her inside while little GurMukh Singh started crying. Her sisters wiped her face and cleaned her wounds while she searched around her clothing and handed the papers over to the Jathedar. He was amazed to find full details of the Turk's battle-plans. Ranjit Kaur was honoured greatly by the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh Jee's infinite and unparralled grace had given her the courage to fight her attackers and save her Khalsa family from a bloody massacre.

News of Ranjit Kaur's courage spread through out the Khalsa Panth. She is known as the "Brave Daughter of the Guru". Even her name means the Princess (Kaur) who is Victorious (Jit) on the battlefield (Ran) - like her parents knew she'd be destined for great things.

"By Harjit Singh Lakhan (hslakhan@yahoo.com)
fictionalised version of a true story by Karam Singh in the punjabi book 'Ardashak Singhian' "

Bibi Rajindar Kaur

BIBI RAJINDAR KAUR, (1739-1791) or Rajindan, Patiala princess known for her valorous qualities, was the granddaughter of Baba Ala Singh. The only child of her father, Bhumla Singh, who had died when she was barely four, she was brought up by her grandfather, and, in 1751, married to Chaudhari Tilok Chand, of Phagwara. Her husband died at a young age and the charge of the family estate, consisting of over two hundred villages, fell to her. When Baba Ala Singh was arrested in 1765 by Ahmad Shah Durrani for having fallen into arrears with the tribute and was being taken to Lahore, Rajindar Kaur went to her grandfather and offered to pay the money to secure his release. But the latter declined the offer saying that it was not proper to accept money from a daughter of the family. In 1778, Raja Amar Singh of Patiala, who was Rajindar Kaur's first cousin, was defeated by Hari Singh of Sialba. Rajindar Kaur came to his rescue with three thousand soldiers marching through the territories of the chiefs who had fought on the side of Hari Singh. During the reign of the minor Raja Sahib Singh, Rajindar Kaur was again in Patiala to defend the town against Maratha onslaughts. At the head of a strong force she marched as far as Mathura where peace parleys were opened with the Marathas.

Bibi Rajindar Kaur died in 1791 at Patiala after a short illness. She was cremated in the royal cemetery known as Shahi Samadhan.

Bibi Rajni Ji

In the era of Guru Ram Das, one cannot leave out Rajni, youngest daughter of Rai Duni Chand, revenue collector (kardar) of Patti. (The story has all the myth, magic and miracles of a genuine Sakhi, but is nevertheless a charming story). Rajni was a Sikh, a disciple of the Guru. One day she was sitting with her sisters admiring some new clothing they all had received from their father. The girls were ecstatic and exclaiming how good their father was to them. Rajni observed that all gifts are ultimately from God. Their father was merely an instrument of His greatness. Unfortunately for her, he overheard her comment and became very angry.

It was not the First time that she incurred his wrath because of her extreme piety. The infuriated father, believing her to be an ungrateful wretch, married her to a leper with a taunt that he would see how her God would help her lead a normal life. The leper was severely disfigured and a foul smell came from his body. The poor girl had accepted her fate ungrudgingly and worked hard to maintain herself and her crippled husband. She kept repeating the name of God, and was certain that he was testing her with this turn of events. She was forced to beg for a living. Still she bathed and fed her leper husband, never losing faith. One day, she reached the site of a pool on her way to a neighbouring village. Placing the basket containing her husband by the side of the pool, she had gone off on an errand, most probably to look for food. In the meantime, her crippled husband had seen a black crow dip into the water of the pool and come out white. Amazed at this miracle, the man crawled up to the edge of the pool and managed a dip. He found himself completely cured. When his wife returned, she was amazed to find her husband in good health. He was handsome and whole. At first, she was alarmed and suspected that he might be a different person. He had, however, kept one finger with leprosy marks un-dipped. He showed her the diseased finger as proof of his identity. The couple thanked God, and went to the Guru to seek his blessings.

The pool was the future site of the Golden Temple. The medicinal properties of the water were said to have come from Basil (Tulsi), which grew in abundance on its banks. Guru Amar Das used to pick the herb there to make poultices for an infected toe that plagued Guru Angad. The legendary importance of the site highlights the medicinal properties of the waters of the pool, Rajni's leper husband was cured in.

Sakhi relates that if you keep faith in God then one day all rewards are paid. Bibi Rajni had always kept the faith in Guru and God, being happy with whatever she had and thus was rewarded at the end.

Article taken from these book.
"Champion of Women" by Alice Basarke.

Bibi Sahib Kaur

Bibi Sahib Kaur (1771-1801) was a warrior and leader of men who played a prominent part in the history of the Sutlej states from 1793 to 1801, was the elder sister of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala. Born in 1771, Sahib Kaur was married at an early age to Jaimal Singh of the Kanhaiya clan, who resided at Fatehgarh and was master of a greater part of the Bari Doab above Dina Nagar in present-day Gurdaspur district of the Punjab. In 1793, Raja Sahib Singh, in view of mounting dissensions within his state, recalled his sister Bibi Sahib Kaur to Patiala and entrusted to her the office of prime minister. She had not been long in Patiala when she had to return to Fatehgarh at the head of a large Patiala army to rescue her husband who had been captured by Fateh Singh, a rival chief. Back in Patiala she faced a large Maratha force marching towards the town in 1794 under the command of Anta Rao and Lachhman Rao.

Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Jodh Singh of Kalsia and Bhanga Singh of Thanesar joined hands with her while Tara Singh Ghaiba sent a detachment of troops. The joint force, numbering about 7,000 men, met the enemy at Mardanpur near Ambala where a fierce engagement took place. The Sikhs were severely outnumbered and would have retreated had not Sahib Kaur, alighting from her rath, i.e. chariots made a brave call with a drawn sword in hand for them to stay firm in their ranks. The next morning they made a sudden charge on the Marathas who, taken by surprise, retired towards Karnal in utter confusion.

Bibi Sahib Singh of Una charged the Pathan chief of Malerkotla with cow-killing and attacked him. He was saved by the timely succour given him by Sahib Kaur. In 1796, in response to the request of the Raja of Nahan who had sought help from Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala to quell a revolt in his state, Sahib Kaur proceeded to the hills with a strong force and soon reduced the insurgents to submission. The Raja was reinstalled on the gaddi and, at the time of Sahib Kaur's departure, he presented her with many rich and valuable gifts in token of his gratitude. In the summer of 1799, George Thomas, an English adventurer, who had become very powerful and who ruled the country in the neighborhood of Hansi and Hissar, turned his attention to the Sikh territories on his northern frontier and reached upon Jind. Sahib Kaur led out a strong contingent to relieve the besieged town and, assisted by the troops of other Sikh chiefs, she forced George Thomas to withdraw.

Owing to differences with her brother, Bibi Sahib Kaur had to leave Patiala to take up residence in Bherlan, near Sunam, which fell within her jagir and where she had built a fort changing the name of the village to Ubheval. She died there in 1801 in the prime of her life.

After the death of the Maharaja Alla Singh, the founder of Patiala rule, his grandson Maharaja Amar Singh became the ruler of Patiala. He too, like his grandfather, turned out to be intelligent and brave. He clobbered his opponents and extended his rule stretching up to the river Jamuna. His subjects trusted him and were willing to give their lives for his cause. And likewise the Maharaja was extremely considerate of his subjects. Because of this trust and closeness among the ruler and his subjects, this rule made increasing progress. It seemed certain that Maharaja Amar Singh's tactics and braveness would further extend the boundaries of his rule.

Unfortunately, we humans plan something while our Creator has something in store for us. At the moment when Patiala rule was at its peak, the young newly wed Maharaja passed away suddenly. All happiness were replaced by sadness, expectation by hopelessness, positiveness by negative attitudes. The future of Patiala seems to hang among major difficulties and facing numerous dangers.

Maharaja Amar Singh's death came unexpected in his youth. He left behind two prince and a princess. This princess is the heroin of our story, Rani Sahib Kaur. She was the eldest among her brothers. At the time of Maharaja's death, she was 15 years old. Younger than her was Maharaja Sahib Singh of 7 years and the youngest, Kanwar Budh Singh. The rule was passed on to Maharaja Sahib Singh. However, he was the ruler in name only. The real control was in the hands of Diwan Nanu Mal who was the most trusted advisor during Maharaja Amar Singh's period. Unfortunately, after the master's death, his trust quickly evaporated and was replaced by selfishness. He aligned with the Marhathas and initiated efforts for Patiala rule's destructions from its roots. Diwan's attitude also influence the other servants of the empire. They too initiated pursuits for their selfish gains. As a result, corruption, looting, and injustice reigned in the empire. Justice and peace simply fled away like a bird. The empire was in immediate danger now. On one hand the inner situation was fast deteriorating while on the other hand, the external enemies were eager for its destruction. Child Maharaja Sahib Singh was terrified of the emerging situation.

By now Bibi Sahib Kaur had been married and was happily living with her in-law. No women is willing to leave her home, yet Sahib Kaur took immediate action upon learning of the situation in her brother's empire. Her love for the younger brother drove her to set aside her own happily married life and immediately proceed to protect the Patiala rule.

A working machinery isn't difficult to operate. However, only a knowledgeable mechanic can operate a machine whose essential parts have seriously deteriorated. That was the situation of Patiala. However, the daughter of Khalsa was undeterred. She cleverly fix the broken machinery and attempted to operate it.

Slowly the situation started improving. The situation though improved significantly, hadn't completely recovered when a mob of Marhathas soldiers advanced to conquer Patiala. The famous Lakshami Rao was the commander of the Marhata forces. He was commanding a force of 100,000 men. The news of the impending attack also reached Rani Sahib Kaur. The rulers of Jind and Kaethal had already accepted the conditions of Marhathas and paid large sum for their safety. This made the situation even more grave for Patiala.

Marhathas were fast advancing towards Patiala. Their success with Jind and Kaethal had given a huge boost to their confidence. On the other hand. Patiala's inner situation wasn't completely recovered. In everyone's estimations, Patiala forces were incapable of defending themselves against the Marhathas. Bahadur Sahib Kaur was well aware of this assessment. But she neither twitched nor loss her confidence. In such situation, even the bravest men could loose their courage. Yet this brave daughter of the Khalsa remained undeterred. Her composure was unchanged, as if she didn't know the concepts of failure. She wasn't discouraged. She had partaken Guru's amrit which can

give lease of new life even to the dead. It can instills courageous spirit in birds to defeat hawks. Then why should she be afraid? Fear couldn't even approach her. She ordered the sounding of the battle drums, Nagara, while preparing to face the invading forces. During the darkness of the night, she summoned and gathered Bhai Bangha Singh Thanaesar, Jodh Singh Kalsia, Deep Singh and Bir Singh Bhadodhiaie, Tara Singh Ghaeba and other Chiefs of the neighboring rules and made all necessary preparations. Even before sunrise, the skies echoed with sounds of Khalsa's Jaikara "Jo Bohlae So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal" while the Sikhs advanced to welcome the invading forces with the tips of their swords. Before reaching Kuch, she addressing a small group of select associates. She said in sweet yet firm voice

"Brothers, the enemy thinking of you as few and weak, is advancing to snatch your freedom. Our freedom is a blessed reward of our Guru Sahibans. Our Tenth Pathshah addressed this rule as `your home is same as my home.' This is Guru's rule and that of his GurSikhs. This is your freedom as well as your honor. Could you tolerate Marhata feet reaching here to crush your freedom and honor? ..."

Every soldier collectively responded "Never, Never!"

Continuing with her speech, she said, "My brothers, this is what I expected from you. You are Sikhs of the Guru and I am confident that you will not allow the enemy to advance any further. The remaining issue is that of numbers. But remember, our Tenth Guru engaged 150,000 against each Sikh. You are Sikhs of the same Guru. Thus don't worry about the huge numbers of the enemy force. We are within our rights and following the truth. We are raising our swords in defense of our freedom. Guru is with us. Recognize your duty and responsibilities. the victory is yours. Take oath with me that we shall die but not allow the enemy to advance even a foot."

The whole force collective took their oath. Subsequently, Bibi Sahib Kaur did her ardas following which the skies echoed with the sounds of Jaikaras, "Jo Bohlae So nihal, Sat Sri Akal," and the battle drums. Now the brave soldiers of Patiala advanced in defence of their honor.

While these few brave soldiers of Patiala left their capital, Ghanta Rao and Lakshami Rao left Ambala with their forces towards Patiala. Both sides clashed in the open fields of Mardaan Pur. Upon facing each other, it became evident that not only the Marhata force was large in numbers they had heavy artillery and cannons. In comparison Sikhs were few in numbers and did not possess any cannons. There was no match among both sides. It was clearly evident that Sikhs would simply disappear facing the Marhatas as salt when mixed with flour.

The Marhata Sardars sent their envoy to convey a message, "why are you bent upon getting your men killed for nothing, give up and surrender."

Bibi Sahib Kaur's face reddened with anger upon hearing this message. "Surrender," she repeated. Then addressing the Marhata envoy, she said, "Surrender! Guru's Sikhs know no surrender. Go tell your sardars that if they have any desire to live, they should return immediately. If not, Khalsa's sword awaits them. They may approach with their coffins."

Confident of their strength, the Marhata Sardars got aggravated hearing this response. Winning over a few Patiala soldiers was no challenge for them. They signaled the Marhata cannons to initiate shelling.

Competition between Swords and Cannons? This was a unique event in the history of battles. However, such competition was clearly visible in the fields of Mardaan Pur. On one side the cannons of Marhatas were blindly firing shells. While on other side, Guru's brave soldiers were advancing with their swords. Bibi Sahib Kaur, dressed in male attire and riding on horse back, was directing her soldiers with an unsheathed sword.

The Sikh soldiers fearlessly advanced into the enemy's fortified positions. Now the soldiers were directly facing each other and the cannons became useless. The battle of swords ensued. Sikhs were renowned for their skills in using swords. For once the Marhatas got scared. Witnessing the weakness of their soldiers, Lakshami Rao advanced with fresh horsemen and attacked the Sikhs. At this moment, the Sikhs too were in need of some fresh reinforcements. But where could they get it? All their resources were tied in the battle with none to spare.

Intense battle pursued all day. Sometimes the Sikhs had the upper hand while other times the Marhatas seemed to have the upper hand. The battle field was filled with dead bodies with flowing rivers of blood. The Sun God couldn't witness this bloody battle and hide behind a hill.

At this moment, the Sikh's position was grave. They were surrounded in the enemy's siege with no visible way to escape. Even at this moment, Sahib Kaur courage came handy. Seeing a weak segment in the enemy's siege, she shouted the Jaikara, Jo Bohlae So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal, and forcefully attacked this segment. Her courage and the Jaikara instilled new courage among the Sikh soldiers. Using their swords, the Sikh soldiers successfully broke through the enemy's siege. Ghanta Rao and Lakshami Rao were astonished as their well planned scheme simply evaporated in front of their eyes.

By now it was nightfall, the soldiers couldn't see each other and thus both forces returned to their camps for rest. Celebration in Marhata camps and mourning in Sikh camps was evident. The reason being that the Sikhs took heavy casualties in today's battle. The Sikh Sardars and soldiers were discouraged. Despair and disappointment was prevalent among them. However, Bibi Sahib Kaur was neither disappointed nor in any despair. She appeared to be peaceful yet serious, as if engrossed in some deep thoughts.

Select few Sikh Sardars gathered in Bibi Sahib Kaur's tent to assess the day's battle. It was assessed that more than half of the Sikh force had been wiped out.

Sardar Jodh Singh said, "Bibi Ji! Tell us what to do now?"

"You tell me what to do brother?" Bibi ji answered in slow and soft voice, as if trying to probe the inner thoughts of the Sardars. After all the Sardars had collectively come to her with some apparent consensus. Jodh Singh did not respond. But Dalip Singh Bhadodhiaie said, "Bibi Ji! The status of the battle is clear. There is no hope for any

type of victory. The time to give our lives is upon us. Although, Guru's Sikhs aren't afraid of this but ..."

He couldn't complete his sentence when he was interrupted by Bibi Ji's question, "But what?"

Silence prevailed. For a long time no one responded. Seeing no answer, she repeated her question "Brothers! Tell me what we should do now?"

"Bibi Ji! What can we do. We will fight bravely. We shall fight in the face of sure death. We shall happily accept our death. It is true that we have no hope of victory. But a Sikh's duty is to fight. We shall fight, for we can not witness any encroachment of Patiala's freedom or honor while living. However, we have a serious request of you, that you should return to Patiala. The battle field isn't in our control and we can not sustain your capture by the enemy forces," Bhai Bangha Singh Thanaesar hesitatingly uttered this response.

Hearing this Bibi's face got reddened with anger as if her honor had been challenged. However, this quickly disappeared and was replaced with peace and seriousness. She said, "Your courage is commendable that you can not witness any encroachment of Patiala's freedom or honor. Prior to such encroachment you would like to give up your lives. But how could you assume that Maharaja Amar Singh's daughter could tolerate and witness the encroachment of Patiala's freedom and honor. How could you assume that her personal life is more important to her than these things. Brothers! No one can live for ever in this world. One day we all have to die for sure. And if this live is expended preserving freedom and honor what better honor can there be than this. Sahib Kaur is prepared for this. Granted, I am a women and for sure weak. But brothers! I too have partaken the amrit of same Guru that you have partaken. Then why would I hesitate facing death? Don't even think about it. If I leave here I shall leave in victory or I shall not leave at all." Saying this, tears dropped her cheeks. Apparently, the mere suggestion for her return to Patiala, inflicted some deep pain in her.

Sahib Kaur's words created silence in the meeting while everyone got deeply engrossed in thoughts. After a while Sahib Kaur continued "You say we have no hope of victory. I cannot accept this. We are fighting the battle of truth and righteousness. VaahGuru is with us. I am confident of our victory. Don't get discouraged."

Saying this, she stood up and started pacing around the tent as if she was about to take a major decision. Soon her face lightened up with happiness as if she got convinced of her victory. Addressing her Sardars she said, "Guru Sahib has shown me the way to our victory. What we need now is your courage."

Everyone's attention was now focused on Bibi's face. They replied in unison, "we are prepared to follow your orders."

Bibi said, "Look! Strength itself isn't enough for For winning a battle. In fact the understanding and deployment of strategy is more beneficial. We too can defeat the Marhata forces with strategy."

"Tell us what to do" everyone responded collectively.

"At this moment the enemy forces are celebrating their victory. As such they are careless in their egoistic happiness. If we were to suddenly attack them now, our victory is assured and the freedom and honor of Patiala can be preserved."

All Sardars were astonished. They didn't know that Sahib Kaur was equally sharp in battle strategy. This decision was taken around 10:30pm. Until midnight all battle preparations were carried out quietly. This decision invigorated new courage among the Sikh forces. Soldiers started coming out of their tents after preparing themselves for the battle. Bibi Sahib Kaur now dressed in male attire, riding horseback with unsheathed sword, face her soldiers and gave a short speech, "Brothers! Time has come for either victory or death in this battle for preserving the freedom and honor of Patiala. Advance keeping faith in Guru. Victory shall be yours. Your swords shall be the death message for the egoistic Marhata. Prove the strength of our Tenth Guru's Amrit."

Subsequently, the sky echoed with the sounds of Jaikaras, "Jo Bohlae So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal." The Sikh forces advanced and gave a surprise attack to the enemy forces. Even before the enemy became aware of what happened their soldiers were killed by the Sikh swords. In minutes the field was filled with dead bodies. The suddenness of the attack as well as the darkness made it difficult to distinguish among their own and Sikh soldiers. As a result, many enemy soldiers died fighting among themselves. Bibi Sahib Kaur was moving around encouraging her soldiers with Jaikaras. Her sword too killed many enemy soldiers.

This surprise attack by the Sikhs completely changes the status of the battle. Their defeat turned into a victory while Marhata's victory changed into a defeat. When Ghanta Rao and Lakshami Rao saw the shining sword of Bibi Sahib Kaur upon them, they found escape as the best way out. They quickly collected their remaining companions and ran towards Hisar. Now the battle field was in total control of the Khalsa.

The true status of the battle became evident with sunrise. Uncountable enemy soldiers lay dead. Apart from the dead bodies, the enemy cannons, ammunition, ration, and treasury were left behind.

Bibi Sahib Kaur awarded all this wealth and distributed it among the Sikh soldiers. She captured the cannons and the ammunition and took them to Patiala. Upon reaching Patiala, she was welcomed with huge celebration. Celebrations unparalleled in Patiala history. Why not? After all her courage and battle strategy had not only saved the freedom and honor of Patiala but instilled such terror among the Marhatas that they never thought of advancing towards Punjab again.

Bibi Sahib Kaur's name is engraved in the fine pages of Sikh history. What are the daughters of Khalsa capable of can be assessed from the above accounts. Who can say that GurSikh women are weak compared to their male counterparts. Sahib Kaur's sword became an object of terror for the Marhatas.

Daughters of the Khalsa

translated by Baldev Singh from "Adarshak Singhania" by Karam Singh

Bibi Sachan Sach ji

When any one wanted an audience with Guru Amar das, they had to comply with some simple instructions. First, they had to eat from the Guru's kitchen with all his other guests regardless of status or gender. Women were asked to remove their veils. The Raja of Haripur was no exception. He came with his entourage of wives, and all were asked to have a meal first. The youngest wife was very shy and refused to remove her veil. The Guru asked her what the problem was. In those days, women never ate with men and were certainly not used to be spoken to by men. The poor girl was totally confused and embarrassed. She ran out to hide herself. The Raja wanting to please the Guru, feigned disgust with her behaviour and abandoned her altogether. Thus, when he returned home, she was left behind, alone and frightened. This was 500 years ago, when women were not able to work and support themselves independently. This poor girl was far away from family and friends. She hid in the forest, and people said she went totally insane.

The Guru had many disciples and they all did their chores together and listened to the Guru's teaching. There was one such man who came from a place near Shaikhupura which is now in Pakistan. He left his home and joined the Guru's camp at Goindwal. He took upon himself the responsibility of bringing firewood daily for the kitchen. One day, while he was in the forest, he had a terrible clash with an insane woman. She was filthy, her clothes were torn, and her hair was matted. He startled her when he accidentally tripped over her. She reacted by screaming and biting and clawing. He managed to subdue her with kind words and a strong arm. Covering her with his shawl, he brought her to the Guru. After taking a bath and eating well in the kitchen, the lady was invited to join the congregation and listen to the prayers and the teachings.

A great peace entered her soul and she was able to slowly regain her strength and self-esteem. She was once the Rani of Haripur, but no one knew her real name. As she grew stronger and joined the others in chores as well as prayers, she was often heard muttering "sachan sach" meaning "truth is truth". This soon became her nickname. As time passed, she became totally cured, and showed her devotion and commitment. The Guru was impressed with her commitment and devotion. She eventually married the gentleman who had rescued her against her will from the forest. Mata Sachan Sach was made a masand and sent with her husband to his home in west-Punjab to preach the word of God.

Article taken from these book."Champion of Women" by Alice Basarke.

Bibi Viro

Bibi Viro ji was daughter of Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) and Mata Oamodan, was born at Amritsar on 11 July 1615. She was married to Bhai Sadhu, son of Bhai Dharma, a Khosla Khatri of the village of Malla. She was deeply religious and as well as a warrior in the mould of her Brother like Tyag Mall (Guru Tegh Bahadur).

The nuptials were performed on 94 May 1699 at Jhabal, 15 km southwest of Amritsar. She was the mother of five sons, Sango Shah, Jit Mall, Gulab Chand, Mahri Chand and Galiga Ram. She raised them very well and with deep Sikh values. All the five sons took part in a battle fought on 18 September 1688, between Guru Gobind Singh and Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar (Garhwal) at Bhangani, 11 km from Paonta, in the present Sirmur district of Himachal Pradesh, Sango Shah and Jit Mall dying in action.

Article taken from these book.

Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.

Mai Bhago

Mai Bhago was was a descendant of Pero Shah, the younger brother of Bhai Launga a Dhillon Jatt who had converted a Sikh during the time of Guru Arjan. Born at her ancestral village of Jhabal in present-day Amritsar district of the Punjab, she was married to Nidhan Singh Varaich of Patti. A staunch Sikh by birth and upbringing.

Mughals and hilly chiefs had surrounded Anandpur and were demanding it be evacuated. They called that any Sikh who says that "he/she is not anymore a Sikh of Guru Gobind" will be left untouched. A group of 40 Sikhs, led by Mahan Singh Brar told Guru Gobind Singh that they are not his Sikhs anymore. Guru told them that they have to write it in a document that "they are not his Sikhs anymore" and sign it. All forty Sikhs signed this document Bedava and left Guru Gobind Singh. Mai Bhago was distressed to hear that some of the Sikhs of her neighborhood who had gone to Anandpur to fight for Guru Gobind Singh had deserted him under adverse conditions. Hearing her taunts, these Sikhs were ashamed at their deed. She rallied the deserters persuading Guru, then traveling across the Malva region.

Meanwhile, Guru Gobind Singh had to evacuate the fort of Anandpur, his children were lost in the confusion. Two youngest one's Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, went along with their grandmother (mother of Guru Gobind Singh). While elder one's Ajit Singh and Jhujhar Singh were with their father. Then at battle of Chamkaur Guru's elder sons attained martyrdom, Guru was saved by five Sikhs and he evacuated Chamkaur and was traveling in Malva region, being pursued by Mughal forces of Aurungzeb. Traveling day and night in the Jungles of Malva region, imperial Mughal forces were in constant pursuit of Guru. Guru Gobind Singh reached village of Khidrana, when Mai Bhago and the men, she was leading stopped near the dhab or pool of Khidrana where an imperial army in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh had almost overtaken him. They challenged the pursuing host and fought furiously forcing it to

retreat. All forty Sikhs attained martyrdom in this pitched battle, in which Guru himself was supporting them with a shower of arrows from a nearby high ground, found all the men except one Mahan Singh, killed when he visited the battlefield. Mai Bhago and Guru Gobind Singh ji were the sole survivors of this fiercely fought battle.

Mahan Singh, who had been seriously wounded, also died as the Guru took him into his lap. Guru Gobind Singh blessed those forty dead as the Forty Liberated Ones. He took into his care Mai Bhago who had also suffered injury in the battle. She there after stayed on with Guru Gobind Singh as one of his bodyguard, in male attire. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded in 1708, she retired further south. She settled down at Jinvara, 11 km from Bidar in Karnataka where, immersed in meditation, she lived to attain a ripe old age. Her hut in Jinvara has now been converted into Gurdwara Tap Asthan Mai Bhago. At Nanded, too, a hall within the compound of Takht Sachkhand. Sri Hazur Sahib marking the site of her residence is known as Bunga Mai Bhago.

Kabul Wali Mai

Kabul wali mai, or the lady from Kabul is the name chroniclers have given to a woman who rendered devoted service during the digging of the baoli at Goindwal under the supervision of Guru Amardas. Day after day says Sarup Das Bhalla in Mahima Prakash, she toiled away at the site, without anyone knowing who she was, and where she had come from. One day Guru Amar Das told the Sikhs that lady was from Kabul and that she had by her love of the almighty and duty towards her husband attained spiritual insight.

An old manuscript Mahima Prakash sri Guru Amar Das and an inscription at Gurdwara Haveli sahib at Goindwal mention a lady being in charge of the Manji or Sikh centre at Kabul they give her name to be Mai Sevan.

Unfortunately nothing else is known about such great soul. There are million other such great souls who through the years have tirelessly, effortlessly worked hard to uplift sikhs and Sikhism.

Article taken from these book.
Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.

Mata Gujri Ji

Mata Gujari was the daughter of Bhai lal Chand Subulikka and Bishan Kaur, a pious couple of Kartarpur, in present-day kapurthala district of the Punjab. Lal Chand had migrated from his ancestral village, Lakhnaur, in Ambala district, to settle at

Kartarpur where his daughter Gujari was married to (Guru) Tegh Bahadur on 4 February 1633. The betrothal had taken place four years earlier when Tegh Bahadur had come to Kartarpur in the marriage party of his elder brother, Suraj Mall. Bishan Kaur, the mother, had been charmed by the handsome face of Tegh Bahadur and she and her husband pledged the hand of their daughter to him. After the marriage ceremony, the couple came to reside in Amritsar. Bride Gujari won the appreciation of everyone "Like bridegroom like bride" records Gurbilas Chhevi patshahi. "Gujari is by destiny made worthy of Tegh Bahadur in every way " In 1635, Mata Gujari left Amritsar with the holy family and went to reside at Kartarpur, in the Sivalik foothills. After of Guru Hargobind left this world in 1644, she came with her husband and mother-in-law, Mata Nanaki, to Bakala, now in Amritsar district of the Punjab. There they lived in peaceful seclusion, Tegh Bahadur spending his days and nights in meditation and Gujari performing the humble duties of a pious and devoted housewife. After he was installed Guru in 1664, Guru Tegh Bahadur, accompanied by Mata Gujari, went on a visit to Amritsar, traveling on to Makhoyal, near Kiratpur, where a new habitation, named Chakk Nanaki (later Anandpur) was founded in the middle of 1665.

Soon after this, Guru Tegh Bahadur along with his mother, Nanaki, and wife, Gujari, set out on a long journey to the east Leaving the family at Patna, he traveled on to Bengal and Assam. At Patna, Mata Gujari gave birth to a son on 22 December 1666. The child was named Gobind Rai, the illustrious Guru Gobind Singh of later day. Guru Tegh Bahadur returned to Patna in 1670 for a brief stay before he left for Delhi, instructing the family to proceed to Lakhnour, now in Haryana.

Mata Gujari, accompanied by the aged Mata Nanaki and young Gobind Rai, reached, on 13 September 1670, Lakhnour where she stayed with her brother Mehar Chand, until she was joined by her husband. An old well just outside Lakhnour village and reverently called Matta da Khuh or Mata Gujari DA Khuh still commemorates her visit. From Lakhnour the family proceeded to Chakk Nanaki where Guru Tegh Bahadur rejoined them in March 1671 after spending some more time traveling through the Malva region and meeting sangats. At Chakk Nanaki, 11 July 1675 was a momentous day when Guru Tegh Bahadur left for Delhi prepared to make the supreme sacrifice. She showed courage at the time of parting and bore the ultimate trial with fortitude. Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed in Delhi on 11 November 1675, and, Guru Gobind Singh then being very young, the responsibility of managing the affairs at Chakk Nanaki, initially, fell to her. She was assisted in the task by her younger brother, Kirpal Chand.

When in face of a prolonged siege by hostile hill rajas and Mughal troops Chakk Nanaki (Anandpur) had to be evacuated by Guru Gobind Singh on the night of 5-6 December 1705, Mata Gujari with her younger grandsons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, aged nine and seven year respectively, was separated from the main body while crossing the rivulet Sarsa. The three of them were led by their servant, Gangu, to the latter's village, Saheri, near Morinda in present day Ropar district, where he treacherously betrayed them to the local Muslim officer. Mata Gujari and her grandsons were arrested on 8 December and confined in Sirhind Fort in what is referred to in Sikh chronicles as Thanda Burj, the cold tower. As the children were summoned to appear in court from day to day, the grandmother kept urging them to remain steadfast in their faith. On 11 December they were ordered to be bricked up alive in a wall, but, since the masonry crumbled before it covered their heads, they

were executed the following day. Mata Gujari ji were imprisoned on top of a tower which was opened from all sides without any warm clothes in very cold month of December. She continued the tradition of Sikhism and without complaints give her body singing guru ki Bani. Mata Gujari ji attained martyrdom the same day as her grandsons. No doubt Guru Nanak Dev ji had said "Why isn't woman equal to man when she is who gave birth to kings, and protectors of Dharma". Mata Gujari ji through upbringing of her grandsons played such an important role in Sikhism that as Sikhs, we can owe our existence to her. It was due to her teachings that 6 year old and 9 year old did not bulge from their Dharma and attained martyrdom. Thus continuing and emphasizing the institute of martyrdom in Sikhism. Seth Todar Mall, a kindhearted wealthy man of Sirhind, cremated the three dead bodies the next day.

At Fatehgarh Sahib, near Sirhind, there is a shrine called Gurdwara Mata Gujari (Thanda Burj). This is where Mata Gujari spent the last four days of her life. About one kilometer to the southeast of it is Gurdwara Joti Sarup, marking the cremation site. Here, on the ground floor, a small domed pavilion in white marble is dedicated to Mata Gujari. The Sikhs from far and near come to pay homage to her memory, especially during a three-day fair held from 1113 Poh, Bikrami dates falling in the last week of December.

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Bebe Nanaki Ji

Bebe Nanaki ji was elder sister of Guru Nanak and the daughter of Kalian Chand (Baba Kalu) and Mata Tripta, was born in 1464 in her mother's home at village of Chahal, now in Lahore district of Pakistan Punjab. The Guru's love for his sister is referred to in most touching terms in some of the Sakhis. A sister's love

for her brother is a perennial theme of Punjabi folklore. There are many stories of Nanaki's deep and devoted affection for her brother, Nanak. Five years older than Guru Nanak, she was the first to recognize his spiritual eminence and to become his devotee. She protected Nanak from their father's wrath, when repeatedly he disappointed and angered him. She was with him throughout the early years of his childhood. When Guru Nanak Dev was only Six years old in 1475, Nanaki was married to Jai Ram, a revenue official of very good reputation, at Sultanpur, which is in the present native state of Kapurthala, and was then the capital of the Jalandhar Doab. Nanak continued to live at home. He rebelled against any norms that were imposed without reason. He loved to be in the company of saints who were The wise men of the day, and gave money away to the poor and the hungry. His father despaired of never being able to make him behave and take on a respectable position in the village. And so it was that his father gave up, and so, at the age of fifteen,

Nanak was sent to live with his sister, and to work for her husband. It was Jai Ram who arranged the wedding of Nanak to Sulakhani, daughter of Moolchand Chand Khatri and Mata Chando of the village Pakhoke, District Gurdaspur. Herself Childless, Bebe Nanaki adored her brother, Nanak, and felt herself blessed when he came to join the Nawab's service and put up with her at Sultanpur.

She arranged Guru Nanak's marriage and she loved his sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi das, as her own. Guru Nanak reciprocated her affection and after he had quit the Nawab's service to go out to preach his message, he did not fail to visit Sultanpur and meet his sister between whiles. Once as he visited her in 1518, Bebe Nanaki seeing her end near, detained him a short while. As she had wished, she departed this life in the presence of her brother- Guru Nanak Dev ji. Three days later, her husband, Jai Ram, also expired. Guru Nanak himself performed their obsequies. There is no doubt that perhaps first Gur Sikh was none other than Bebe Nanaki and second Gursikh was Mata Sullakhni ji, Guru Nanak Dev's Wife.

Excerpts taken from these books.

Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh.

Mahima Prakash written by Sarup Das Bhalla, Patiala 1970.

Mai Kishan Kaur(1860-1959)

Mai Kishan Kaur is known for her tearless role in the Jaito agitation. She was the daughter of Suba Singh and Mai Sobham of the village of Lohgarh in Ludhiana district. The family, goldsmith by profession, later migrated to Daudhar in Moga tahsil of present-day Faridkot district. Kishan Kaur was married to Harnam Singh of Kaolike village, near Jagraon, in Ludhiana district. He was a dafadar or sergeant in cavalry who later resigned from the army and migrated to Barnala, where he died at the young age of 33. Three children, two sons and a daughter, were born to Kishan Kaur, but all of them predeceased their father. Kishan Kaur, now a childless widow, came back to live at Golike. She took the pahul or rites of the Khalsa in 1907 and decided to devote the rest of her life to the service of the Guru. She took a leading part, in 1912, in the construction of historical Gurdwara (,tlrusal-, dedicatdd to Guru Hargobind, near the 1- village Allready over 60.

She took active part in the Jaito agitation of 1922-24. The Government of India had forced Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, the ruler of Nabha state known for his independent attitude, to abdicate. The Sikhs of Jaito, which fell within his territory, planned to hold prayers for his well-being and restoration. By order of the British-controlled state administration, a posse of armed police entered Gurdwara Gangsar, where an akhanad path or non-stop recital of Guru Granth Sahib was in progress, it not only interrupted the service but also brutally imprisoned the entire sangat gathered there denying them exit and permitting no provisions from outside to reach them. Jathedar Dulla Singh and Suchcha siigh of the village of Rode organized a land of volunteers, popularly known as Durli Jatha, who collected the required rations and managed through feint and force to unload them inside the Gurdwara compound Mai

Kishan Kaur was a member of this hand which later arranged rations for the Shahidi Jathas and the huge crowds that accompanied them.

The first Shahidi Jatha, lit band of martyrs, 500 strong and vowed to non-violence, was to reach Jaito on 21 February 1924 in a bid to enter Gurdwara Gangsar at any cost to recommence the akhand path. The state Government was equally determined not to let them do so and had deployed armed police and military contingents with orders to open fire, if necessary. Mai Kishan Kaur and her companion, Bibi Tej Kaur, went to it disguised as ladies of the Hindu trading association, collected intelligence about government's plans and preparations, and joined the jatha to convey the information he jatha accordingly rescheduled their march and instead of going straight to Gurdwara Gangsar, changed course suddenly and headed for Gurdwara Tibbi Sahib, half a kilometre to the north. State troops, however, barred entry even to that shrine and opened fire on the jatha. WIat Kishan kaur, with her small band of volunteers, at nce busied herself attending the wounded. she along with 21 others was arrested and Prosecuted. The trial commenced at Nabha on 17 May 1924 Kishan Kaur was sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment. Released on June 1928, she was accorded a warm welcome the following day at Amritsar, where a siropa or robe of honour was hestowed on her from the Akal Takht. The Sikhs everywhere acclaimed her courage and sacrifice.

Mai Kishan Kaur continued to serve Gurdwara Gurusar at Kaonke till her last day She died there on 10 August 1959.

Mata Daya Kaur Ji

In One would expect women to have played a significant role in determining the image of the Sikh religion. This would be particularly true of The wives of the Gurus. They created the foundation of the Sikh traditions. And were, therefore, instrumental in building a firm structure for the emergence of a Sikh Nation. While the Gurus primarily did the teaching, it was the women who looked after the rather mundane details of every-day life. They managed the households and the kitchens. Without them, it would have been impossible to demonstrate, in any substantial way, that the doctrines of equality, hard work and fair play were at all attainable. The primary sources of Sikh history have ignored this important aspect of the basic teaching of The ten Gurus. Yet, however little is available there is enough to substantiate that the women of Sikhism played as important a role in The organization and establishment of tradition as any man.

Mata Daya Kaur ji is described as a lady of gentle disposition, charitable and religious. She gave birth to Lahina on March 31, 1504, at Matte di Saran near Mukstar in The district of Ferozepur. Her son later became known as Guru Angad. Daya Kaur's maiden name was Ramo. She was married to Ferumal, a well-to-do trader, shopkeeper and village priest. The family was very pious and worshipped a female deity. Some sources say it was Chandi, hut Dr Gopal Singh, in his History of The Sikh People, says it was Durga. Which deity, matters little in the telling of this event.

Every year Ferumal would make a pilgrimage to the shrine of the said goddess in the Shivalik hills. He took his son with him, and there they would tie bells to their ankles and dance in homage to the goddess. At that time, their village was sacked during Bahar's invasion. The family moved to The village of Khadur, district Amritsar. When Ferumal died, Lahina kept up the practice of leading a group of people from his village in pilgrimage, to pay their homage to their female deity. The family had a well respected friend by the name of Mai Bhirai. She was like a sister to Ferumal and was also a devout follower of Guru Nanak. It is said that she arranged the marriage of Lahina to Khivi.

Undoubtly like Mata Tripta ji had an affect on Guru Nanak Dev's mind, in similar fashion Mata Daya Kaur raised Bhai Lahina ji (Later Guru Angad Dev).

Article taken from these book.
Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.

Mata Jito ji

Mata Jito ji was wife of Guru Gobind Singh ji. she was the daughter of Bhai Hari Jas, a Subhikkhi Khatri of Lahore. The betrothal had taken place in 1673. The father-in-law had desired that the bridegroom should come at the head of a marriage party to Lahore where the ceremony should be performed with due dignity.

The fateful events leading to the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur intervened, and in the changed circumstances it was not possible for the young Guru to go to Lahore. Therefore a temporary encampment was raised near the village of Basantgarh, 10 km north of Anandpur, and named Guru ka Lahore where the nuptials were held on 23 Har 1734 Bk/21 June 1677.

On 30th March 1699, Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa at Anandpur. He declared that this Khalsa will be both Saints as well as Soldiers. When Gobind Singh was preparing amrit (nectar) for initiating the Khalsa, on this occasion , stirring clean water in an iron bowl with a khanda or double-edged sword, Mata Jitoji, as the tradition goes, came with sugar crystals which were dropped into the vessel at the Guru's bidding. Sweetness was thus added to the alchemy of steel. Mata Jito ji was the first Khalsa Woman.

Three sons were born to Mata Jitoji — Jujhar Singh (14March 1691), Zorawar Singh (17 November 1696) and Fateh Singh (25 February 1699). Mata Jito Ji raised her three sons on the martyrdom tales of their grandfather Guru Tegh Bahadur and great great grandfather Guru Arjan Dev ji. She told them a Sikh never runs from a battle field. It was because of her teachings that all her three sons attained Martyrdom Jujhar Singh when was only 15 years old fighting with Mughals at Chamkaur, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh who were only 9 and 6 years old at the hands of Wazir Khan, Mughal Governor of Sarhind, when the young Sahibzades would not convert to Islam.

Mata Jitoji left this world at Anandpur on 5 December 1700, years before the martyrdom of her sons or the events leading to the battle of Chamkaur. The cremation took place at Agampura, near the Holgarh Fort. A memorial shrine now stands upon the spot.

Article taken from these book.
Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.

Why did Guru Gobind Singh have more than one wife?
How many marriages did Guru Gobind Singh have?

The wrong impression that the Guru had more than one wife was created by those writers who were ignorant of Punjabi culture. Later authors accepted those writings indicating more than one marriage of the Guru and presented it as a royal act. During those days kings, chiefs, and other important people usually had more than one wife as a symbol of their being great and superior to the common man. Guru Gobind Singh, being a true king, was justified in their eyes to have had more than one wife. This is actually incorrect.

In Punjab, there are two and sometimes three big functions connected with marriage, i.e., engagement, wedding, and Muklawa. Big gatherings and singings are held at all these three functions. In many cases, the engagement was held as soon as the person had passed the infant stage. Even today engagements at 8 to 12 years of age are not uncommon in some interior parts of India. The wedding is performed a couple of years after the engagement. After the wedding, it takes another couple of years for the bride to move in with her in laws and live there. This is called Muklawa. A dowry and other gifts to the bride are usually given at this time of this ceremony to help her to establish a new home. Now, the wedding and Muklawa are performed on the same day and only when the partners are adults.

A big befitting function and other joyful activities were held at Anand Pur, according to custom, at the time of the engagement of the Guru. The bride, Mata Jeeto Ji, resided at Lahore, which was the capital of the Mughal rulers who were not on good terms with the Gurus. When the time for the marriage ceremony came, it was not considered desirable for the Guru to go to Lahore, along with the armed Sikhs in large numbers. Furthermore, it would involve a lot of traveling and huge expenses, in addition to the inconvenience to the Sangat, younger and old, who wished to witness the marriage of the Guru. Therefore, as mentioned in the Sikh chronicles, Lahore was 'brought' to Anand Pur Sahib for the marriage instead of the Guru going to Lahore. A scenic place a couple of miles to the north of Anand Pur was developed into a nice camp for the marriage. This place was named Guru Ka Lahore. Today, people are going to Anand Pur visit this place as well. The bride was brought to this place by her parents and the marriage was celebrated with a very huge gathering attending the ceremony.

The two elaborate functions, one at the time of engagement and the other at the time of the marriage of the Guru, gave the outside observers the impression of two marriages. They had reason to assume this because a second name was also there, i.e., Mata Sundari Ji. After the marriage, there is a custom in the Panjab of giving a new affectionate name to the bride by her inlaws. Mata Jeeto Ji, because of her fine features and good looks, was named Sundari (beautiful) by the Guru's mother. The two names and two functions gave a basis for outsiders to believe that the Guru had two wives. In fact, the Guru had one wife with two names as explained above.

Some historians even say that Guru Gobind Singh had a third wife, Mata Sahib Kaur. In 1699, the Guru asked her to put patasas (puffed sugar) in the water for preparing Amrit when he founded the Khalsa Panth. Whereas Guru Gobind Singh is recognized as the spiritual father of the Khalsa, Mata Sahib Kaur is recognized as the spiritual mother of the Khalsa.

People not conversant with the Amrit ceremony mistakenly assume that Mata Sahib Kaur was the wife of Guru Gobind Singh. As Guru Gobind Singh is the spiritual but not the biological father of the Khalsa, Mata Sahib Devan is the spiritual mother of the Khalsa, Mata Sahib Devan is the spiritual mother of the Khalsa but not the wife of Guru Gobind Singh.

From ignorance of Punjabi culture and the Amrit ceremony, some writers mistook these three names of the women in the life of Guru Gobind Singh as the names of his three wives. Another reason for this misunderstanding is that the parents of Mata Sahib Devan, as some Sikh chronicles have mentioned, had decided to marry her to Guru Gobind Singh. When the proposal was brought for discussion to Anandpur, the Guru had already been married. Therefore, the Guru said that he could not have another wife since he was already married. The dilemma before the parents of the girl was that, the proposal having become public, no Sikh would be willing to marry her. The Guru agreed for her to stay at Anand Pur but without accepting her as his wife. The question arose, as most women desire to have children, how could she have one without being married. The Guru told, "She will be the "mother" of a great son who will live forever and be known all over the world." The people understood the hidden meaning of his statement only after the Guru associated Mata Sahib Devan with preparing Amrit by bringing patasas. It is, therefore, out of ignorance that some writers consider Mata Sahib Devan as the worldly wife of Guru Gobind Singh.

Mata Sundri Ji

Mata Sundari ji was wife of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), was the daughter of Bhai Ram Saran, a Kumarav Khatri of Bijvara, in present-day Hoshiarpur district of the Punjab. She was married to Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur on 4 April 1684. On 26 January 1687, at Paonta, she gave birth to Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh. Consequent upon the evacuation of Anandpur on the night of 16 December 1705, Mata Sundari, along with Mata Sahib Devan, was escorted by Bhai Mani Singh to Delhi.

She rejoined Guru Gobind Singh in 1706 at Talvandi Sabo, where she heard the news of the martyrdom of her son and the other Sahibzadas as also of the death of her aged mother-in-law, Mata Gujari. She went back to stay at Delhi while Guru Gobind Singh left Talvandi Sabo for the South. At Delhi, Mata Sundari adopted a young boy whom she named Ajit Singh because of his resemblance to her own late son. After the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded in October 1708, the Sikhs looked up to her for guidance. She appointed Bhai Mani Singh to manage the sacred shrines at Amritsar and also commissioned him to collect the writings of Guru Gobind Singh. She also issued under her own seal and authority hukamnamas to sangats. The hukamnamas since discovered and published bear dates between 12 October 1717 and 10 August 1730.

Mata Sundari was disappointed in her adopted son, Ajit Singh. Emperor Bahadur Shah treated him as the successor of Guru Gobind Singh, called him to his court and gave him a robe of honour in September 1710. This went to his head and he started living in style as a courtier. He grew arrogant and haughty even towards Mata Sundari who disowned him, and migrated to Mathura. Ajit Singh was later convicted for murder and was put to death on 18 January 1725. Mata Sundari returned to live in Delhi where she died in 1747. A memorial in her honour stands in the compound of Gurdwara Bala Sahib, New Delhi.

Article taken from these book.
Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.

Mata Tripta

The history of Sikh women has to start with Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh Religion.

According to the Bala Sakhis, Guru Nanak was very fond of his maternal grandmother. They were very close. Her name was Mata Bhirai, she was married to Rama of the village Chahal near Lahore.¹ She was likely a frequent visitor to the home of Mata Banarasi, his paternal grandmother. In the prevalent custom of a joint family system, a woman always went to live in her husband's family household, and because it was the custom for the grandparents to raise the children, one can assume that he would have been brought up by Mata Banarasi,² his paternal grandmother. She was the mother of two sons, Kalu and Lalu, and wife of Shiv Ram, resident of Talvandi Rai Bhoi Ki, now called Nankana Sahib.

Much of what we know about the women of that era, has to be conjecture. One must look at what is known about socio-political, as well as the economic situation of the era, before one can even begin to guess what life must have been like for any given woman. The oral history or Janamsakhis give clues to events, but cannot be taken too seriously, in that they are coloured by the tellers' own perception and background. As with any oral history, the story changes with time. Each story-teller tries to put his personal stamp on the story, as well as embellishment, so that it is always told better than the time it was told before. We do know that at that time in Hindu society, woman, at least in theory, controlled the family finances. In fact, they probably controlled only the portion of income that dealt with the personal household; i.e., the groceries and small household items. In a joint family system, even that would be limited to the "mother-in-law" and not to all the women. Also, it would be subject to the whims of the man of the house. Nevertheless, this was the situation at the time of the birth of the first Guru.

The mother of Guru Nanak was Mata Tripta.³ He was born on the third day of the month of Vaisakh, Saturday April 15, 1469.⁴ A midwife assisted Tripta on the occasion. Her name was Daulatan.⁵ MacAuliffe narrates in the tradition of the Janamsakhis that the midwife, when interrogated the following morning by Hardial,

the astrologer, as to nature of the child's voice uttered at birth, said it was "as the laughing voice of a wise man when joining a social circle."

Mata Tripta was reputed to be a kind lady. The young Nanak had a sociable nature, and, therefore, had many friends. He liked to treat them often. We know from the oral history tradition that Mata Tripta would sometimes slip him a coin or two to spend on his friends. She also often made sweets for him to share with his friends. She loved her son dearly, but his rejection of tradition and custom was a source of constant aggravation. Her son, Nanak, questioned the authority of the Brahmin priests, refused to wear the holy thread, and rejected the validity of the caste system. Mata Tripta did not understand the divine mission of her rebellious son. This is clear in the story⁶ of Nanak's return from his first travel. His parents met him at the edge of town. Nanak was overcome with emotion, and wept when he met his mother. She offered him sweets and asked him to remove the beggar's gown and put on the clothes she brought him. She obviously worried about the friends and neighbours and what they would say, should they see him like this. On the same occasion his parents were much distressed. They believed that his travels and the rejection of present conventions were a sign of great unhappiness. His father, Kalu, was greatly disturbed when he exclaimed; "Only if I knew what has disappointed you in life, I would set things right. If you want to marry another woman, I'd get you one, if another house, I'd provide you with it." This clearly was a generation gap. His parents, who were well-to-do and respected in their community, were greatly disturbed, because they did not understand why he would not conform to social customs of the day.

Matho Murrari

There was at that time a young boy whose name was Prem. His mother died in childbirth. His father and other relations died in some epidemic when he was quite young. Being alone in the world, he soon contracted leprosy. The disease ravaged his body, and soon his fingers and toes fell off one after the other. He was reduced to crawling about to move himself from one place to another.

He had heard of the Guru and resolved to go and meet him, hoping that somehow he could be cured. Leprosy was a dreaded disease and nobody would allow him to approach. Still, he listened to the singing (kirtan) and preaching from outside the Guru's place. On hearing of his plight, Guru Amar Das went out to see him. The Guru himself looked after him, bathing him and wrapping him in clean clothes. He was given to eat from the Guru's kitchen, and allowed to join the congregation for prayers and hymn singing.

It is said that his health improved and that slowly he was cured; whether this cure was of mind and spirit, or of his physical body, is left for the reader to speculate. The Guru gave Prem a new name, Murrari, which means destroyer of the demons. Guru Amar Das then asked his Sikhs if anyone would give his daughter in marriage to this young man. A man named Singha offered his beautiful daughter, Matho, to be his bride. Naturally, the mother oo Matho was quite upset.

She told the Guru that she objected to this marriage, for her daughter was virtuous and intelligent. This man had no family and no wealth. Matho's mother argued that she did not even know who the father or mother had been. Guru Amar Das told her that he was his son. He was both father and mother to him, and that he had great plans for him and her daughter. The couple would be known as Matho Murrari. The wedding took place. Both husband and wife served the Guru and took extensive training from him. When Guru Amar Das organised his parishes, he appointed Matho to head one of them. Murari was to assist her in every way possible.

Article taken from these book.
"Champion of Women" by Alice Basarke.

Rani Sada Kaur

When Kabul's ruler, Badshah Jamaan, was convinced of continued his inability to rule Punjab, he sent a secret message suggesting Ranjit Singh to assume control of Lahore. The Lahore residents too were fed-up with continuously changing rulers with every sunrise. So when they learned of Shah Jamaan's message, they too sent a message asking Ranjit Singh to take control of Lahore.

Ranjit Singh was in Ram Nagar when he received both messages, from Kabuls Badshah as well as the Lahore residents. He was being offered the throne of Lahore. Accepting this offer wasn't as easy as it sounded wasn't. Neither the Lahore residents had organized any militia for Ranjit Singh's support and nor had Kabuls Badshah offered any military help. Ranjit Singh's own force weren't enough for the task. Besides, the Bhangs and Ramgahria Sardars were his sworn enemies. As such the acceptance of this tempting offer wasn't easy. And Ranjit Singh couldn't reach a decision.

Very few people are aware of the fact that Ranjit Singh's control over Lahore wasn't due to either his strength or intelligence but the result of an intelligent and brave woman's resolve and wisdom. And that woman was Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law, Rani Sada Kaur Walia of Batala.

Having received messages from Shah Jamaan and Lahore residents, Ranjit Singh immediately left Ram Nagar and reached Batala.

After greeting his mother-in-law with "Jo Bolahe So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal," he respectfully touched her feet. Rani Sada Kaur instantaneously moved forward to hug him and lovingly fondled his head.

Immediately, both were engrossed in conversation. Ranjit Singh explaining the whole situation and asked, "Matta Ji! Tell me, what should be done now?"

"What have you thought?" Asked Sada Kaur in response.

"Just to proceed, attack and capture Lahore." Ranjit Singh answered.

"How much force do you have with you?" Sada Kaur inquired once again.

"Oh, some 3500 soldiers."

"And here we have some 2000. So, say 5000 in total."

"Yes."

"Then, Biba, are you expecting to attack and successfully capture Lahore with this force?"

Sada Kaur's question brought disappointment on Ranjit Singh's face. He lowered his head and got lost in deep thoughts. Lahore was under the control of three Sikh Sardars. Amritsar was under control of his archenemy Ramgahria and Bhangi. If he was to announce his attack and leave Batala with a force of 5000, he wouldn't even reach Lahore, leave aside capture it.

Observing Ranjit Singh in deep thoughts, Sada Kaur said, "Yes, there is a way to success."

"What?" Ranjit Singh asked eagerly.

"No one should learn anything prior to your arrival in Lahore." Sada Kaur explained.

"How is this possible?" Saying this, Ranjit Singh once again got lost in thoughts.

"Everything is possible, Biba!" Sada Kaur said laughingly. She had a strategy in her mind.

Forces were given orders to advance. But when the commanders inquired "Sardar, Where to?"

"To bathe at Amritsar." Responded Sada Kaur.

The news spread all over like wildfire that Rani Sada Kaur, accompanied by her son-in-law, is going to bathe at Amritsar.

The whole party left Batala in the afternoon and reached Sri Darbar Sahib by the evening. Everyone bathed in the sacred pool, paid homage, and the camped just outside the city. Now Rani Sada summoned all the commanders for a meeting and explained her strategy. It was midnight by the time her meeting ended. Immediately, the horses were saddled and the party was on the move. By sunrise, Ranjit Singh accompanied by her mother-in-law and 5000 soldiers reached the Lahore gates and established a cantonment in Nawab Wajir Khan's territory. He managed to sneak into Lahore without anyone's knowledge. This was a result of Sada Kaur's strategy.

Noticing Ranjit Singh, the Lahore rulers sent some forces to defend. But these forces did not engage in any battle. Why not? This was the magic of Sada Kaur's strategy that had its intended impact. Sada Kaur successfully negotiated surrender and offered them employment upon taking control of Lahore.

The Lahore residents kept their word. They opened the gates of Lahore entrances. Ranjit Singh entered Lahore, without a single bullet ever gracing anyone or anything. Two Sardars ran away while the third raised rebellion from the fort.

Ranjit Singh's forces immediately seized the Fort. But they had no cannons. So the soldiers started firing from their trenches. Firing at the fort was like firing at a mountain. What effect could bullets have on a mountain? Absolutely, none. Similarly, their bullets couldn't have any effect on the fort. Mughal rulers had diligently built an extremely strong and defensible fort. So inside Lahore, Ranjit Singh faced yet another situation. Once again he had to seek Sada Kaur's advice. "Matta Ji! What should we do now?" He asked. "Are you convinced that the fort can be captured with bullets?" Sada Kaur answered with a question. Ranjit Singh immediately recognized his mistake and responded in a very low voice, "No!" "Then why are you wasting ammunition?" Ranjit Singh lowered his head.

After some thought Sada Kaur said, "Kaka, give orders to stop firing."

Ranjit Singh was convinced of his mother-in-law's wisdom. Without understanding or questioning what she wanted to do, he obediently gave the orders to stop firing. Brave Sada Kaur raised a white flag, came out of her trench, and moved towards the fort. She found Chaet Singh's emissary waiting for her at the fort's gate.

She said, "I want to see Chaet Singh."

"Who are you?" Chaet Singh's emissary questioned.

"I am Rani Sada Kaur from Batala. I want to meet with Chaet Singh for his own benefit."

The emissary left and returned after a short duration. He announced, "Sardar is only prepared to talk inside the fort."

"Doesn't matter, I can come inside. To me, Chaet Singh is same as my son, Ranjit Singh." Saying this Rani followed the emissary inside the fort. Chaet Singh was a distant relative too.

Entering the fort, Sada Kaur immediately assessed the situation. In her assessment, the situation inside the fort was rapidly deteriorating.

Upon meeting Chaet Singh, she said, "Biba! I have come for your sake. I don't wish you any harm."

Chaet Singh was already concerned and her words further scared him. He didn't know what disaster was awaiting him.

"Ranjit Singh is entrenched with heavy canyons. With great difficult, I managed to convince him to stop firing. His fate is shining while his destiny is around the corner. All Sardars have accepted his conditions. You don't have enough strength to face him. Consider, you may be killed." Rani Sada Kaur explained.

"If I am to die, then why not die like a brave soldier?" Chaet Singh responded.

"There is no need to die. After all you have children. If I desired death for you, why would I come this far? I have come to save you." Sada Kaur answered.

She repeated once again "Biba! Leave the fort. This will not only save you and your family's life but I will take personal responsibility for your continued sustainment."

Sada Kaur's words hit the right target. Chaet Singh agreed to leave the fort. After two hours, he accompanied Sada Kaur into Ranjit Singh's tent and deposited the keys to the Lahore fort. As per her agreement, Rani Sada Kaur ensured that Chaet Singh got his Jagir in compensation. The fort was under Ranjit Singh's control now while the Kesri flag fluttered over it. Without Sada Kaur's brave and wise moves, the fort couldn't have been captured so easily and that too in such a short time. Any delay could have been nothing less than disastrous, as the enemy forces were already on their way to get it released from his occupancy. Having captured the fort, Ranjit Singh now controlled Lahore. All gates to the city were ordered shut and the fort was reinforced with canyons and prepared to defend against any possible attack. In the meantime, news reached that Jodh Singh Ramgahria, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Sahib Singh Bhangi, Nijaam Deen Ksuriya and numerous other Sardars with heavy forces had camped in the fields of Baseen. They were awaiting additional reinforcements and planned to attack Lahore.

Ranjit Singh got extremely worried -- not that he was scared of the battle but because of his own estranged forces. After the victory at Lahore, he had neither allowed his forces to loot the town nor had he paid their salaries for several months. The soldiers had openly declared that they wouldn't fight any more battles without their salaries. On the other hand Ranjit Singh coffers were empty. His treasury was in Sialkot, which was inaccessible due to blockage by enemy forces. As a result fetching anything from the treasury was almost impossible and out of question. Then what could be done? He had no answers to resolve this situation. That morning, he had expressed his anxiety to Rani Sada Kaur. She has assured him that some arrangements will be made. However, it was a matter of funds, large sums in lakhs of Rupees. Where could Rani produce such a large sum? He was deeply disturbed with such thoughts.

His anxiety was worsening while he roomed the main hall. Once a while some thought would come to him but disappear as easily. His anxiety wasn't lessening at all, instead continued to get worse."Rani Ji is headed this way." The watch-keeper announced. "Let her come." Ranjit Singh said while his face lighted up expectedly. Rani Sada Kaur arrived. But she wasn't alone. A 100-year- old Muslim gentleman accompanied her. Ranjit Singh started gazing them expectedly. His worries had worsened to such an extent that he couldn't understand anything.

Nevertheless, when he learned from Sada Kaur that the accompanying old man knew the location of Meer Manus buried treasures, his worries transformed into happiness. Sada Kaur had spent the whole day trying to find the old man. Woman could be so wise and intelligent, no one had ever realized before. Ranjit Singh hadn't thought of this even in his dreams. Yet it was crystal clear, right in front of him. With deep respect, he touched his mother-in-law's feet and expressed gratitude to VaahGuru.

Based on the old man's instruction, a corner of the fort was dug up where Meer Manus hidden treasure, worth crores of Rupees, was discovered. This solved Ranjit Singh immediate problem. Soldiers were not only paid all their salaries in arrears but also given two months advance. Now every soldier was eager to fight for his master. It was nothing but a simple matter of money. Digging yet another place based on the old man's instructions, yielded a huge stock of arms and ammunition. After honoring the old man with numerous gifts and bidding him farewell, Ranjit Singh turned his attention to defensive preparations against the pending enemy attack.

Sada Kaur accompanied Ranjit Singh in the battle of Baseen. It was her wise moves, once again, that resulted in a large number of enemy forces joining Ranjit Singh. Now Ranjit Singh reentered Lahore with resounding echoes of battle victory.

Now he was in full control of Lahore and faced no immediate threat. Sada Kaur, having positioned her son-in-law on the Lahore throne as the new Maharaja, prepared for her return to Batala. Ranjit Singh accompanied her until Amritsar. He considered her a Goddess. Why not? After all she was the maker of his fate. Without her wisdom, he could never have occupied the Lahore throne. In reality, she was the true founder of the Sikh rule.

Rani Jindian

Rani Jind Kaur the mother of Dalip Singh, the ruler of Lahore kingdom, was the brain behind the rising of 1848-49 against the British authorities. She was known for her intelligence and intrepid spirit, Jindan was one of the few persons who was intensely disliked and also feared by the British.

Rani Jindan played a conspicuous role in the Punjab politics after her son's elevation to the throne of Lahore kingdom. The British entered into a treaty known as the treaty of Bhyrowal with the Lahore kingdom in December 1846 which made the British the virtual masters of the Punjab. They had not only excluded the Rani from participating in the negotiations which led to the signing of the treaty but also of all share in the government of the Lahore Kingdom. She was removed from the Regency Council, which was to conduct the administration during the minority of Maharaja Dalip Singh. She hatched a plot to murder the British Resident and the members of the Regency Council who collaborated with the British. Prema, an old retainer of Gulab Singh, along with some other persons were to execute the plan. The plan however failed but the British could not take action against the Rani for lack of evidence. But

they wanted to get rid of her and imposed restrictions on her movements. The chiefs of the Lahore Darbar were forbidden to see her.

The Queen had become a symbol of national dignity. She continued to urge the freedom fighters back in the Punjab to continue the struggle dauntlessly. Through her trusted band of servants, she continued to send letters and messages to Dewan Mul Raj, Sardar Chattar Singh and Raja Sher Singh, the chiefs of the rebellion.

As soon as the British came to know of the secret designs of the Rani, they transferred her to the Chunar fort on 6 April 1849. On the same evening, she escaped from the fort in the guise of her attendant and proceeded towards Nepal. She reached safely in the Nepalese territory on 27 April. The Government of India confiscated all her jewels and other property at Benaras and allowed her to stay in Nepal on a monthly pension of one thousand rupees.

In Nepal, Rani Jindan, carried through her secret plans for the expulsion of the British from the Punjab. She wrote letters to influential people both inside and outside Punjab to rise once again against the British. In the rising of 1857, she found a fresh opportunity to stimulate a rising in the Punjab. But her efforts were again rendered futile by the vigilance of the British.

Being sadly disillusioned, the Rani ultimately thought of seeing her son Maharaj Dalip Singh, who was then staying in England as a Christian gentleman. Her health was shattered and she became almost blind. The British Government allowed Dalip Singh to come to India and to take his mother along with him to England.

Disillusioned, her health shattered and almost blind she went to England to stay with her son Maharaj Dalip Singh. Rani resided in a separate house in England till her death in 1863. As per Rani's last wishes, Dalip Singh brought her body back for cremation to India, but was disallowed by the Britishers to perform the last rites in Punjab. He therefore cremated her body at Nasik and returned to England.

Article taken from these books.

Encyclopedia of Sikhism edited by Harbans Singh ji.