



Eminent Women in Sikh History

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Published by:

Satnam Trust

6933, 124th Street, Surrey,
B.C., Canada, V3W 3W6.

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Mata Sahib Kaur Ji



Mata Sahib Devan was the daughter of Bhai Har Bhagwan alias Ramu and Mata Jas Devi, a dedicated Sikh couple of Rohtas in the district of Jehum. She was a result of Guru ji's blessings. For this reason her parents decided to present her to Guru Gobind Singh ji. She was offered love and respect by her parents and the sangat because she belonged to the House of the Guru. When she was about nineteen years old her parents brought her to Anandpur Sahib.

At Anandpur Sahib they met Guru Gobind

Singh ji and expressed their wish to marry their daughter to

him. Guru ji had to decline the offer as he had two wives and four sons by them. When Bhai Har Bhagwan insisted that their daughter had been brought up in the perspective of she becoming the spouse of Guru ji, he agreed on condition that she would remain a virgin all her life. Three days later Guru Gobind Singh ji married her and later proclaimed her to be the mother of the Khalsa. Since then at the time of any Amrit ceremony all those who take Amrit declare themselves the sons and daughters of Guru Gobind Singh ji and Sahib Kaur and that they are the residents of Anandpur Sahib.

The fateful night of December 5 – 6, 1705 when Guru

will always be remembered for the deceitful and treacherous designs of the Mughals. Promises and words given in faith were forgotten and Guru ji's withdrawing column was attacked on the bank of the rivulet Sarsa. In the darkness of the night Guru ji's family and his Sikhs were separated. Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundari were escorted by Bhai Mani Singh ji and they reached Delhi via Ropar. The Sangat (Sikhs) of Delhi made appropriate arrangements for them with great respect.

After the critical and crucial events of Chamkaur Sahib and Sirhand Sahib in which the Sahibzadas made a unique and ever-shining history, Guru Gobind Singh ji reached Sabo ki Talwandi. Mata Sundari ji and Mata Sahib Kaur ji heard about the



sojourn of Guru ji and went to Sabo ki Talwandi to obtain the blessings of

Gobind Singh ji abdicated the fort of Anandpur Sahib

Guru ji. When the martyrdom of the Sahibzadas was

mentioned Guru ji narrated that he has sacrificed his four sons for the greatness of the Khalsa and what it matters if four are gone; thousands are alive in their place. After some time the great mothers were sent back to Delhi and Guru Gobind Singh ji set out on his journey to meet Emperor Aurangzeb in the South. He made this journey through the desert of Rajasthan. When he heard about the death of the emperor, he changed his plan of this journey and went to Agra via Delhi. His intention was to meet the new emperor, Bahadur Shah. Later in 1708, he

accompanied the emperor to the Deccan. Mata Sahib Kaur accompanied Guru Gobind Singh ji to Nanded.

At Nanded Mata Sahib Kaur ji's sojourn was on the beautiful bank of river Godavari where today stands Gurdwara Mata Sahib Kaur. Here Guru ka Langar was started by Mata ji and she gladly supervised the running of it. Until today this langar has continued. Just before Guru Gobind Singh ji left for his heavenly abode, he persuaded Mata Sahib Kaur to go back to Delhi and stay with Mata Sundari ji. When she departed from Guru ji, he gave her five

weapons which are said to have originally belonged to Hargobind Sahib ji. This time Mata Sundari ji and Sahib Kaur ji stayed in a large house near the gate of Turkman. Mata Sahib Kaur kept the five weapons with great respect. Jointly with Mata Sundari ji, they supervised the affairs of the Sikh community and issued several hukam-namas to the sangat in this respect. Nine of her hukamnamas are published by Punjabi University Patiala and they are also found in the book of Dr. Ganda Singh, Hukamnamas.

After the death of Guru Gobind

Mata Tripta Ji

"Blessed is the mother who gave birth to him," says Guru Amar Das ji on page 32 of S.G.G.S. Guru Nanak Dev ji raised his voice for the women folk who had suffered under the oppression of the male world. They lived to his word and made indescribable sacrifices for the new way of life founded by Guru Nanak Dev ji. His voice changed the antipathetic winds and opened a new era for the woman folk. The blessed mother who gave birth to Guru Nanak Dev ji

was Mata Tripta ji. Writers have failed to describe the refulgent glow that had appeared in the house of Mata Tripta ji and Mehta Kalu ji. The radiance of this refulgence was universal in nature and has enlightened all the four corners of this world.

Child Nanak's behavior used to worry Mata Tripta ji at times when he would prefer seclusion and isolation to go into deep meditation. She could not realize that this child Nanak had come to emancipate humanity. He

meditates not for himself but for the entire humanity. He has come to show a new way of life in which there was respect and equality for every human being irrespective of his sex, race or origin. Whenever child Nanak played and enjoyed she felt very happy. Whenever he saw a hungry person he ran home to get food for him. Whenever he saw a person sparsely clothed he went home and brought clothing for him. Mata Tripta ji never stopped him from these acts of



charity. Child Nanak never cried for milk. He always showed signs of contentment and satisfaction, but this behavior being unique worried Mata Tripta ji.

She observed the behavior of child Nanak with concern, but always tried to conceal her anxiety. Whenever Mehta Kalu ji expressed his apprehension, she told him that Nanak was the effulgent glow of the Lord.

Whenever Mata Tripta ji used to express her heart felt feelings to Nanak ji, he told her that he had come to this world with a mission. She would feel blessed with such good fortune to have an exceptional person amongst them. Whatever he was doing only he understood and knew what he was doing. There was deep meaning in every action of his.

When Rai Bullar saw child Nanak lying under the shade of a tree and his face was shaded by a poisonous Cobra, he told Mehta Kalu ji not to say anything to child Nanak. "Because of him our village is surviving", said Rai Bullar.

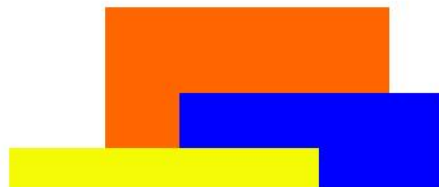
At one time Nanak was given some money to start some business. Instead of doing business he fed a few hungry ascetics. When Mehta Kalu ji came to know, he slapped him, but Mata Tripta ji hugged him and consoled him as a mother would do. She rubbed his cheek to reduce his pain not knowing that he has come to this world to eliminate the pains and sufferings of life.

The marriage of Guru Nanak Dev ji brought a lot of happiness to his mother, Mata Tripta. In great happiness she distributed sweets in the village. When Sri Chand was born her happiness could not be contained any more. She overflowed with happiness and gratitude. She was very fond of Guru Nanak Dev ji's consort, Sulakhani ji. When Guru Nanak Dev ji went on his long journeys to enlighten humanity, Mata Tripta ji looked after Sulakhni with extra care.

Guru Nanak Dev ji's total travels lasted for about fourteen years. Mata Tripta ji always consoled and cheered Mata Sulakhni ji during this period. By then they had realized and rec-

ognized the mission of Guru Nanak Dev ji. After the journeys when Guru Nanak Dev ji came back to Talwandi, Mata Tripta ji requested him to stay back as she apprehended the end of her worldly life was near. Guru Nanak Dev ji touched her feet and she hugged him. Guru ji explained to her that this world is like a dream. Attachments to this world are not real. The dead sustain their bonds with this world through their virtuous deeds. Guru ji assured her that she had led a wonderful life which was acceptable in the House of Lord. Everyone is answerable to God. No one is saved, but for his good deeds." He told her that she had led a pure and genuine life and have nothing to worry about her accountability. As water mingles with water so will her soul mingle with the Great Soul. While talking, she left this world in 1522 three days after the death of her husband, Mehta Kalu ji.

Guru Nanak Dev ji himself cremated her body and asked everyone to chant the Name of the Lord, Satnam Waheguru.



MATA GUJARI JI



Sacrificing oneself for the sake of establishing righteousness and justice has a lofty place in the realm of Sikh psyche. Sikhism teaches us a life of principles and probity. Guru Nanak Dev ji says in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib :

“If you are zealous of playing the game of love for humanity ;

Then enter upon my path with the head on your palm ;

Yes, once you set your foot on this way ;

Then find not a way out, and lay down your life.”

One such person was Mata Gujari ji who sacrificed her own life ; her husband, Guru Tegh Bahadur ji was a martyr ; her son, Guru Gobind Singh ji became a martyr ; her grandsons, Baba Ajit Singh ji, Baba Jujhar Singh ji, Baba Zorawar Singh ji and Baba Fateh Singh ji

sacrificed their lives for the principles of Sikhism and the freedom of mankind.

This great lady was born in Kartarpur in the district of Jalandhar in 1624. Her father was Bhai Lal Chand and her mother was Mata Bishen Kaur. Here their daughter, Mata Gujari, was married to (Guru) Tegh Bahadur in 1633. After the marriage ceremony, the couple moved to Amritsar. Gujari became a popular lady because of her humility, records of Gurbilas say. In 1635 the family moved to Kiratpur, in the Sivalik foot hills. Here she saw for the first time a battle fought by Guru Hargobind ji in which (Guru) Tegh Bahadur showed his dexterity in fighting. Guru Hargobind ji entitled him Teg Bahadur.

She lived at Kiratpur for nine years. When Guru Hargobind ji left for his heavenly abode in 1646, Mata Gujari, (Guru) Tegh Bahadur ji and her mother-in-law, Mata Nanaki ji moved to Baba Bakala now in the district of Amritsar.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji and Mata Gujari ji lived at Baba Bakala for 26 years and they meditated, detached themselves from the world, did exemplary service,

ruminated and cogitated. It is difficult to get such an example in this world. When Guru Teg Bahadur ji was martyred, Mata Gujari ji showed outstanding courage and valour that was appreciated by everyone. When Bhai Jaita ji brought the severed head of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Mata Gujari showed extra-ordinary courage. She bowed to the severed head and said, “You have done it and do bless me to have the courage to do the same.” She also did the same and set a precedence to all mothers of the world. When Guru Gobind Singh ji encouraged the Sikh Kaum to be resolute and determined to face the tyranny of the rulers, Mata ji showed happiness and blessed her son. It was the blessings of this determined mother that encouraged Guru Gobind Singh ji at all times.

Mata Gujari ji stayed at Anandpur Sahib from 1675 to 1684 and aborted the intrigues of the Masands to send all offerings to Anandpur Sahib. When the Masands did not stop misusing their authority and offerings, Guru Gobind Singh ji issued an order to eliminate them.

The love between Mata Gujari (grandmother) and her grandchildren is famous, but she never forgot the principles of Sikhism. On the Vaisakhi day when Guru

Gobind Singh ji initiated the Khalsa, Mata Gujar ji persuaded the Sahibzadas to be initiated by taking Amrit.

When the Mughal troops and the hostile hill rajas laid a prolonged siege to Anandpur Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh ji had to evacuate on the night of 5-6 December 1705, Mata Gujar with her younger grandsons, Baba Zorawar Singh ji and Baba Fateh Singh ji was separated from Guru Gobind Singh ji and other Sikhs. They were accompanied by their servant, Gangu. He took them to his

village, Saheri, near Morinda. The treacherous Gangu betrayed them to the local Muslim officer. Mata Gujar and her grandsons were arrested on December 8 and confined to the cold tower known as Thanda Burj.

The Sahibzadas were made to appear in the court from day to day, but remained firm in their faith and did not succumb to temptations and to the threat of being killed. It was Mata Gujar ji who gave them inspiration each day before they left to the court. They were ordered to be bricked alive in a wall on

December 8. Since the masonry crumbled before it covered their heads, they were executed the following day. Mata Gujar ji could not bear the impact of the tragedy and died the same day. A kind hearted wealthy man of Sirhand Seth Todar Mall bought over the land for cremating the bodies of the Sahibzadas by laying gold coins on it. He cremated them the next day. At this place stands the Gurdwara Sahib Joti Sarup. At the Thanda Burj is Gurdwara Mata Gujar. The Sikhs from all over the world pay homage to Mata Gujar ji and the Sahibzadas during the last week of December every year.

Mata Sulakhni Ji

The foundation of a society in which all human beings would be regarded equal was laid when Guru Nanak Dev ji's marriage party went to Batala. People of all castes and creeds were invited to join this marriage party. They all sat at the same level to have their food although the caste system and the high and low system had a very strong hold and say in the society. Whatever Guru Nanak Dev ji did he always had his mission in the forefront.

Guru Nanak Dev ji was betrothed

to Sulakhni ji when he was about fifteen years old. He was married at Batala in September, 1487. Sulakhni ji was the daughter of Mul Chand and Chando Rani. Her father, Mul Chand, was a Chona Khatri and he held a minor revenue office at the village of Pakhoke Randhawe in the district of Gurdaspur.

Guru Nanak Dev ji insisted on simple marriage rites and his father-in-law agreed to break the tradition. Guru ji was asked to sit near a wall of mud which could

collapse on him because it was a rainy day. An old lady asked Guru ji not to sit next to the wall as it could fall at any time. Guru ji told the lady that the wall would not fall for centuries. A Gurdwara Sahib was built at that place and a portion of the wall still stands intact shielded in glass. It is called Gurdwara Kand Sahib.

The Janamsakhis have emphasised and given prominence to this fact that all the members of Guru Nanak Dev ji's marriage party sat at the same level and mingled with

one another freely. Guru Nanak Dev ji had come to this world with a mission of equality to all human beings. He has made this mission clear in a shabad that is written on page 62 of the S.G.G.S. :

“Call everyone high, none seems to be low ; for God, the only potter, has fashioned all alike, and His light alone pervades all creation.”

At the marriage no Vedic rites were held. Only kirtan was done. Even when the marriage party started the journey there were no special customs or rites. Everyone was dressed in simple clothes and the turbans elevated - the grandeur of the noble personalities.

When Sulakhni ji arrived at Talwandi no special customs or formalities were observed. Guru Nanak Dev ji established a family life, but his mind and soul were at the feet of the Lord at all times. This was another traditional belief from which he diverted. The

prevalent belief was to stay away from family life and resort to seclusion to meet God. He eliminated that belief and proved that family life was no obstacle in the path of meeting God. There was no need to resort to the mountains and jungles and to perform penances and austerities to meet God.

Guru Nanak Dev ji and Mata Sulakhni ji had two sons – Baba Sri Chand ji and Baba Lakhmi Das ji. Baba Sri Chand was born in 1489 and Baba Lakhmi Chand was born two years later.

Mata Sulakhni ji's behavior was gentle and amiable. Although worldly attractions and attachments could not allure the mind of Guru Nanak Dev ji, Mata Sulakhni ji won over Guru ji's heart with her amiable demeanour. He gave her all the respect she deserved and used to call her “Parmeshwar Kie” (belonging to God). When Guru Nanak Dev ji was made the store-keeper at

Sultanpur, he sent Bhai Mardana to bring Sulakhni ji and the children to Sultanpur. Any hungry person who came to Guru Nanak Dev ji's house was served by Mata Sulakhni ji. Guru Nanak Dev ji used to divide his income into three parts. One third was for Dharmak purposes, one-third for the needy and one-third for the family expenses.

When Guru Nanak Dev ji went out to spread the Word of the Lord, Mata Sulakhni ji felt the separation, but never complained. She realised and apprehended the mission of Guru ji. For fourteen years Guru ji travelled and Mata ji looked after the children at Talwandi and lived on the income the family received from the land.

Finally, Guru Nanak Dev ji settled at Kartarpur as a family man and made farming as a means of income. Mata Sulakhni ji and two sons joined him. Mata Sulakhni ji passed away at Kartarpur.

Bebe Nanki ji

Bebe Nanaki ji was not only the elder sister of Guru Nanak Dev ji, but also the first person to recognize her brother sent by God to liberate humanity from illusions, misconceptions and superstitions. She was the first Sikh of Guru Nanak Dev ji who accepted the new way of life introduced by Guru Nanak Dev ji. She was the first confidante counselor and mentor of the God-sent liberator.

The father of Bebe Nanki ji was Mehta Kalyan Das (Kaloo ji) and her mother was Mata Tripta ji whose maiden village was Chahal in the tehsil and district of Lahore. Mehta Kalyan Das ji's village was Dehra Jama Rai in the tehsil of Taran Taran and district of Amritsar. He was a patwari (land officer) and was posted to the village of Rai Bhoe di Talwandi in the district of Sekhupura. Here he was in the service of Rai Bular.

Bebe Nanki ji was born in her mother's village, Chahal, and was thus called Nanki. She was of sober and abstemious nature and took replete interest in the family affairs. Her suggestions and ideas were well respected and acknowledged by her parents. When she was about five years old, child Nanak was born.

Nanki ji was sober of temperament and enjoyed the love and confidence of her parents. She loved her brother, Nanak, to the brim of her heart. She played with him when Nanak was a child and could not bear his separation even for moments. She used to put her brother to sleep by singing lullabies to him.

Bhai Jai Ram ji was in the Lodhi. He looked after the and sometimes had to go to Talwandi he met Mehta Kalu chief of Talwandi.

In those days it was a custom That was how Bibi Nanki ji very young age. Although endure the pain of her forget him and came back to year.

As Mehta Kalu ji wanted his living, he asked Bibi Nanki ji job for him. When Bhai Jai Ram ji asked Nawab Daulat Khan, he was very pleased to offer a job to Nanak Dev ji. He was made the store-keeper.



service of Daulat Khan at Sultanpur records of the land of Daulat Khan Talwandi to execute his duties. At ji who was in the same service for the

to marry girls at a very young age. was married to Bhai Jai Ram ji at a she had to move to Sultanpur and brother's separation, she could not Talwandi to see him several times in a

son, (Guru) Nanak Dev ji, to earn his to take him to Sultanpur and get some job for him. When Bhai Jai Ram ji asked Nawab Daulat Khan, he was very pleased to offer a job to Nanak Dev ji. He was made the store-keeper.

Bhai Jai Ram understood the angelic love of Bebe Nanki ji for her brother, Guru Nanak Dev ji. They pondered over this situation and decided to bring Guru Nanak Dev ji to Sultanpur. At the same time they wanted Guru Nanak Dev ji to get married before this move was made. We get many indications from history that Bhai Jai Ram and Bebe Nanki ji made arrangements to get Guru Nanak Dev ji married. Mehta Kalu ji and Mata Tripta ji were very happy to receive this news. For this reason Guru Nanak Dev ji went to Sultanpur first after getting married and not to Talwandi where his parents lived. Later he went to Talwandi and lived there for one month before he returned to Sultanpur.

When Guru ji met his sister Bebe Nanki ji, she fell at his feet. Guru Nanak Dev ji told her that as she was elder, he should touch her feet. Bebe Nanki ji said, "True, but you are not an ordinary person. To me you are a reflection of the Lord." Such was the faith of Bebe Nanki ji in her brother, Guru Nanak Dev ji. These words of Bebe Nanki ji also confirm that it was she who recognized Guru Nanak Dev ji as a reflection of God who has come to this world to show the True Path.

The house in which Bebe Nanki ji lived for about forty-three years is still there in Sultanpur. The well from which numerous people quenched their thirst also exists. The banyan tree which was planted by Bebe Nanki ji is also there. Under the shade of this tree thousands of people relaxed and enjoyed the cool environment. This cool shade is enjoyed by people even now.

When Guru Nanak Dev ji returned from his second journey at the end of 1518 A.D., Bebe Nanki ji asked him to stay there for some time because her end was near. Guru Nanak Dev ji cremated the body of Bebe Nanki ji with his own hands. After three days of her death, Bhai Jai Ram ji also passed away. He was also cremated by Guru Nanak Dev ji himself. Their remains were discarded in the river in which Guru Nanak Dev ji disappeared for three

Bibi Bhani Ji (1535 – 1598)

Sikhism has given a lofty place to women in the society. Guru Nanak Dev ji raised his voice to end the near slavery position of the Indian women and gave them an equal place in the society. Guru Amar Das ji even appointed ladies as preachers. Mai Bhago was given the charge of the manji (center of preaching) in Kashmir. Mai Sewan was made the head of the center of preaching in Kabul. Both the ladies did very well. There are many ladies in Sikh history who are embodiments of service, dedication and sacrifice. One such lady was Bibi Bhani ji.

Bibi Bhani ji was the daughter of Guru Amar Das ji, consort of Guru Ram Das ji and mother of Guru Arjan Dev ji at the village of Basrke Gillan near Amritsar. At the age of nineteen she was married to Bhai Jetha, who later became Guru Ram Das ji. At the age of seven Bhai Jetha ji lost both his parents and was looked after by his grandmother in her village Basarke. He earned his living by selling cooked beans in the market- place. At the same time he had so much of compassion for the suffering and hungry people that he often gave away his food to the hungry people. Later he travelled to Khadur Sahib and then to Goindwal, a new habitation founded by (Guru) Amar Das ji. He came into the view of Guru Amar Das ji and Mata Mansa Devi who recognized his upright character and steady service and gave their daughter, Bibi Bhani, in marriage to him. Bibi Bhani ji won over the confidence and patronage of her father, Guru Amar Das ji, with her guileless, sincere and candid service. With the strength of this service she changed mythology into history. She not only earned the blessings of her father but also the establishment of a sincere, honest and guileless rule for the benefit of mankind.

She gave birth to a warrior of endurance who faced atrocities and savagery with so much of courage that everyone was moved to the peak of astonishment. Patience and endurance defeated tyranny.

From her very childhood she was inclined towards praying and meditation. She loved solitude and always sang the praises of the Lord. Her attitude was always cool, well-tuned and well behaved. Her humility became proverbial and everyone admired her sobriety.

Whenever she went out with her girl friends to the swings, she always asked the permission of her respected father. Whatever counsel he gave her, she always narrated it to her friends. Most of the time Guru Amar Das ji told her :

“This world is perishing in egoism, and knows not the way of life.

He who walks in accordance with Guru’s will, such a person obtains the immortal status.” (SGGS Page 508)

Bibi Bhani ji always conveyed the message of her father to her friends. She explained to them also that we are much absorbed in worldly games and forget that the sword of death is always hanging on our heads. We should always prepare ourselves to face the eventual catastrophe. She used to sing to them a sentence of Guru Nanak Dev ji’s hymn :

“Such calls and summons are sent to every house, every day.

(Satguru) Nanak reminds : meditate on the One,

who sends calls ; that day will come soon.”

Bibi Bhani ji’s life was very simple and she always wore simple clothes. One incidence comes in Bibi ji’s life when a Sikh wanted to present clothes of silk to Bibi Bhani ji with the permission of Guru Amar Das ji. Bibi Bhani heard this

and at once sang a sloka of Asa di Vaar :

“False is gold, false is silver and false is the wearer.

False is the body, false is the raiment, and false is peerless beauty.”

The Sikh agreed and withdrew his words. He again emphasized that the langar should always be active and serve the needy.

When Prithi Chand insulted his father for not choosing him the successor, Bibi Bhani ji played a very important role by consoling him. She also explained to him that in the House of Guru Nanak Dev ji service is always accepted and many decisions are made on the point of service. She pointed out to him that from the very beginning Guru Nanak Dev ji always made decisions based on service.

Mata Khivi Ji

The greatness of a society can be easily appraised from the level of respect and reverence it offers to its women folk. At the time of the advent of Guru Nanak Dev ji on this earth the women folk were no better than slaves in India. The women folk were equalized to a bundle of sins and her very existence was made fun of. Existence of such notions and conceptions were condemned by Guru Nanak Dev ji for the first time in the history of India. Such a voice was not permitted to exist in those days, but Guru Nanak Dev ji raised his voice against such unjust and unethical practices in the society.

Guru Nanak Dev ji realised that unless the women folk enjoyed the freedom to build up their personality without any prohibitions mankind cannot have a brave and fearless society. The children cannot be much different from their mothers. For this rea-

son Guru Nanak raised his voice for the betterment of the women folk.

Now let us have a look at the life, activities and demeanor of Mata Khivi ji wife of Guru Angad Dev ji. She was well known for her service



son that was saturated with the love of humanity. It was a labour that was absorbed in the soul of mankind. A service that overcame all the bridges that divided humanity. It was an activity that sprung from the depths of a heart. Imbued in the feelings and perceptions of the lowliest hu-

mans this service sanctified the very roots of ill-thinking. In the garden of life it sowed the seeds of respect and veneration for all human beings without any discrimination. The rays of such a service we find in the sanctified life of Mata Khivi ji.

Mata Khivi ji was born in the small village of Sangar which was located near Khadur Sahib. Her father was a successful business man by the name of Devi Chand. According to Mahankosh she was married to Bhai Lehna (Guru Angad Dev ji) in 1519 A.D. Bhai Lehna ji's father was Baba Fern ji. After trying his luck of doing business at Sangar and Hari Ke

Patan, he finally started business at Khadur Sahib. In 1526, Baba Fern ji passed away and the burden of running the business fell on the shoulders of Bhai Lehna. Bhai Fern ji was a devotee of the Devi of the mountains and led a group every year to pay homage to this Devi.

year to pay homage to this Devi. When he passed away, this responsibility also fell on the shoulders of Bhai Lehna ji.

It happened that Bhai Lehna ji heard the Bani of Guru Nanak Dev ji from Bhai Jodh ji. For this reason Bhai Lehna made up his mind to visit Guru Nanak Dev ji at Kartarpur Sahib when he would next go with his group to the Devi of the mountains. This happened in 1532 and Bhai Lehna ji had two children then, Bhai Dasu ji and Bibi Amro ji. When Mata Khivi ji received this news the sober lady remained poised. She just said, "I will remain as pleases him."

From 1532 to 1539 Baba Lehna ji remained in the company Guru Nanak Dev ji and passed all the tests set by Guru Nanak Dev ji. He was on the true path of absorbing his soul with the soul of Guru

Nanak Dev ji. At the same time Mata Khivi ji absorbed herself in service, bani and the sangat (Sikh congregation). Mata Khivi ji's routine was to get up in the ambrosial hours of the day and complete the household work and then go into the service of the Guru's kitchen. Many devotees were demeanor. Guru Angad Dev ji looked after the sangat and Mata Khivi ji looked after the langar. Her service became proverbial and the sangat was very happy and comfortable with her service and company. When Mata Khivi ji heard that the Gurgadi would go to Guru Amar Das ji, she felt very happy. She always consoled her sons by saying that the burden of the Guruship was too heavy for them. It was a great responsibility.

After Guru Angad Dev ji left for his heavenly abode, Mata Khivi ji still continued her service in the kitchen of Guru Amar Das ji. Mata ji set this tradition of doing service in the kitchen. It was an exalted service that kept the kitchen going to this day. This tradition of service also brought about the tradition of sangat and pangat.

When Mata Khivi ji became old, she went back to Khadur Sahib and stayed with Baba Dasu ji. When Amritsar was inhabited, she lived there for some time. In 1582, she left for her heavenly abode at Khadur Sahib. Guru Arjan Dev ji came over for her cremation.

Bibi Amro Ji

In the Sikh tradition a girl in the house is considered a blessed an-gury. She fills the environment of the house with sweet words and these words shape the personalities of the children who grow up in such an environment. In such a congenial environment virtuous living grows and flourishes spontaneously. Norms of behaviour are soaked in cultural and ethical standards spontaneously and instinctively. One such child was Bibi

Amro ji daughter of Guru Angad Dev ji and Mata Khivi ji .

Bibi Amro ji was brought up in the spiritual environment of the Guru and Mata Khivi ji. Her soul was saturated with the indomitable spirit of profound thoughts and emotions. She had taken dips into the ocean of spirit, compassion, charity, mercy and kindness. Day and night she was ab-

sorbed in the soul of Gurbani the embodiment of these divine virtues. The feminine touch, a golden palpate to the spiritual inwardness imbued the environment of the house of Bibi Amro ji.

Bhai Amar Das, a devout Hindu, was a zealous follower of Vaishnav faith, and used to bathe in the Ganges river every year. But he

could not get solace and alleviation from this practice. He was frantically in search of a spiritual teacher who could show him the right path.

One morning while he was engaged in his reflections, he heard a voice from his brother's house chanting the religious hymns. He found out that it was Bibi Amro, his brother's daughter-in-law recently married to his nephew, Baba Jasu. The words of these hymns captivated his mind and he found out from Bibi Amro that the author of these hymns was Guru Nanak Dev ji, but she acquired them from her father. He requested Bibi Amro to accompany him to her father. On reaching Guru Angad Dev ji's house at Khadur Sahib, Amar Das fell at the feet of Guru Angad Dev ji as he had discovered his Guru. He decided to stay there and to lead a life of devotion and service to Guru Angad Dev ji. A great deed was accomplished by Bibi Amro ji.

Bhai Amar Das ji born at Basarke, near Amritsar. His father was Baba Tejbhan ji, a prominent business man. He was a religious man and had four sons, Guru Amar Das ji, Bhai Isher Das ji whose son was Bhai Gurdas ji, Bhai Khem Rai and Baba Manak Chand. All of them were religious men and obedient to their father. Bibi Amro was married to Baba Jasu ji who was the son of Manak Chand.

Bibi Amro had learnt a lot of Gurbani by heart. She had a sweet voice that could captivate the attention of the others. Whenever she recited Gurbani the whole environment was filled with sweet aroma. She adhered to the advice of her father and arose during the early hours of the day everyday. She always recited Japji Sahib before she did anything else. There was talk in Basarke that an angelic being has come to this house.

Guru Angad Dev ji used to teach children learn Gurmukhi and Gurbani by heart everyday. This was how Bibi Amro also learnt Gurbani by heart. It is mentioned in history that he loved the children so much that he became oblivious of anything happening around him. When Hamanyu came to see him, Guru ji remained indulged in the children for some time before he paid attention to him. Bibi Amro ji was respected by everyone not because she was the daughter of Guru Angad Dev ji, but for her meditations and service. Following the advice and daily practice of her father Bibi Amro continued reciting Gurbani during the early hours of the day.

When Baba Amar Das ji heard Gurbani being recited by Bibi Amro ji, the shabad was :

“Conduct is the paper and mind the ink-pot. Good and bad are the writs, recorded there.

As the past deeds drive the man, so walks he.

To Thine excellences, there is no limit, O God.

Why remembers thou not the Lord in thy mind, O mad man ?

Forgetting thy God, thy virtues shell dissolve away.”

Bibi Amro's recitation of Gurbani during the early hours led the way for Baba Amar Das ji going to Khadur Sahib and commencing a life of service and devotion.

Bibi Amro ji's memorial is in the village of Basarke. She learnt Gurbani and spread Gurbani, a great deed.

Mai Bhago Ji



Jhabal, a village in the district of Amritsar, has made significant contributions in Sikh history. Baba Langah, Mai Bhago, Karam Singh historian and many others are outstanding figures of this village. Mai Bhago was a descendant of Pero Shah who was the younger brother of Baba Langah, a Dhillon Jatt. He had converted a Sikh during the time of Guru Arjan Dev ji.

Pero Shah had two sons – Malo Shah and Haroo. Malo Shah had a daughter who became a prominent figure in Sikh history. Her early name was Bhag Bhari and later she was called Mai Bhago.

Mai Bhago was of valiant and audacious nature from her early age. She learnt about the Sikh Panth from her parents. She visited the durbar of Guru Teg Bahadur ji with her parents. When

Guru Gobind Singh ji was proclaimed the Gurm, she witnessed the ceremony with her parents.

Mai Bhago was married to Bhai Nidhan Singh Varaich of Patti. In 1705, she came to know that a few Sikhs had deserted Guru Gobind Singh ji under adverse conditions and returned to their homes. Mai Bhago was really distressed, afflicted and agitated by this news and resolved to rectify this situation by showing dedication, devotedness and commitment to the Sikh cause and the great Guru Gobind Singh ji. She rallied the Sikhs who had deserted the Gurm and persuaded them to redress their faith in the Gurm by going back to him and beg for pardon from him. She promised to lead them back to the ever-forgivable Gurm ji. A few other Sikhs also joined this group who wanted to dedicate themselves practically to Guru Gobind Singh ji.

Their journey started right across the Malva region with Mai Bhago ji leading the group on a horse with a three feet kirpan dangling from her waistband. In whichever village they had their sojourn for the night they addressed the Sikhs and awakened them to the cause of Sikhism and the aim of life. They also convinced the Sikhs to have full faith in their Gurm. Travelling across Punjab, Mai Bhago ji's group reached the dhab of Khudrana

which Guru Gobind Singh ji captured and surrounded. The pool was the only source of water in this area.

The first encounter was between the Mughal army and forty Sikhs of Bhai Mahan Singh. They organised themselves in such a way that one Sikh advanced first and was followed by five supporters. Gurm ji watched the battle from a high dune and also shot arrows at the enemy ranks. It was difficult for the enemy to carry on fighting for long because the Sikhs had captured the only source of water. The Mughal army made three or four attacks at intervals but they were met by small groups of Sikhs who fought valiantly to the last drop of their blood. The Mughal army was under the impression that the Sikhs were in large numbers. The long fight made the Mughal soldiers thirsty. Notwithstanding their thirst they decided to retreat. About three hundred horses were killed by the Sikhs. The Mughals retreated to Kotkapura in search of water.

Gurm ji went down to the place where the battle was fought and carried the bodies of the Sikhs and wiped their faces and blessed them lavishly for

their sacrifices. At the end was the body of Bhai Mahan Singh. Guru ji felt his pulse that was still working. He cleaned his face and asked him his last wish. Bhai Mahan Singh opened his eyes and said, "Waheguru", "Dhan Guru". Guru ji asked him to express his desire. Bhai Mahan Singh ji said, "Please take us into your fold." Guru ji tore the letter of desertion and said loudly, "Wonderful is the Khalsa." Mai Bhago was also lying nearby and listening to what was going on. Guru ji approached her and blessed her lavishly. Guru ji blessed all the forty who had died fighting to keep Sikhism alive. He entitled them as the Forty Liberated Ones.

Hereafter Mai Bhago stayed in the company of Guru Gobind Singh ji as one of his bodyguards. She dressed herself in male attire.

When Guru Gobind Singh ji left for his heavenly abode in 1708 at Naded, she went further south and settled at a place called Jinvara. She immersed herself in meditation and lived to attain a ripe old age. At this place stands Gurdwara Tap Asthan Mai Bhago. Within the premises of Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib is Bunga Mai Bhago in her memory.

Maharani Jind Kaur Ji (1817 – 1863)

Maharani Jind Kaur Ji was the wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ji and the mother of Maharaja Daleep Singh ji who was the last Sikh sovereign of the Punjab. Maharani Jind Kaur was the daughter of Manna Singh Aulakh of Gujranwala. She was a brave and determined lady. She remained in obscurity until she gave birth to a son in 1838. She and her son lived in seclusion under the care of Raja Dhian Singh in Jammu. They had the chance of coming to Lahore in August 1813. In the same year Maharaja Sher Singh and Raja Dhian Singh were assassinated. In September 1843 Raja Hira Singh son of Dhian Singh managed to capture the Fort of Lahore and the army proclaimed

Daleep Singh the sovereign of the State. Hira Singh was appointed the Wazir and his adviser was Pandit Jalla. They did not show Maharani Jind Kaur the courtliness she was entitled to.

This state of affairs was not to the taste of this energetic and efficient Maharani. She and her brother, Jawahar Singh, managed to convince the army for support. She also goaded the army to overthrow Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla and Jawahar Singh was installed the wazir. She proclaimed herself the regent and became the symbol of the Khalsa ruling the Punjab in the name of her son. She organised the Khalsa Council giving representation to the prominent Sardars, but the problems confronting the Maharani were numerous.

Gulab Singh was accused of being a traitor to the Panth. In 1845 an army marched to Jammu to chastise Gulab Singh. He was brought to Lahore as a hostage, but he paid a fine of 68,00,000 rupees and returned to Jammu with a promise of good behaviour. Jawahar Singh was assassinated by the army on suspicion for his hand in the murder of Kanvar Pashaura Singh. The Maharani was shaken, but she poised herself together and with the approval of the Khalsa Council appointed Misr Lal Singh as the Wazir.

Gulab Singh remained treacherous and maintained liaison with the British. He passed on military intelligence to Brigadier

Wheeler at Ludhiana on the eve of the First Anglo – Sikh war (1845-46). He was rewarded lavishly by the British after the war.

After the treaty of Bharoval in December 1846, Maharani Jind Kaur surrendered political power to the council of ministers appointed by the British Resident. Although she retired gracefully to a life of religious devotion at the palace, she was unnecessarily treated with suspicion. Viscount Hardinge wanted her to be sent away from Lahore in March 1847. She was suspected for many things and in September 1847 sent to Sheikhpura and her allowance was reduced to 48,000 rupees. Implicating her in a fictitious plot she was sent to Benaras.

In 1848, Major Macgregor who was in attendance on her made

allegations that she was in correspondence with Mulraj and Sher Singh at Multan. A few of her letters were intercepted. She was moved to the Fort of Chunar, but she escaped to Nepal disguised as a maid-servant. Although she was not welcome at Kathmandu, she was granted asylum by Jung Bahadur, the Prime Minister, because of her being the wife of late Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Nepalese Government gave her an allowance for her maintenance.

The British Resident in Kathmandu had very close surveillance on her and her sojourn in Nepal till 1860. She was suspected of engaging in political intrigues to revive the Sikh dynasty in the Punjab. Under pressure from the British the Nepal Durbar turned hostile towards the Maharani. She quietly protested against the humiliating restrictions imposed on her. Anyway, the

breach between her and Jung Bahadur widened day by day.

Towards the end of 1860, the Maharani was told that her son, Maharaja Daleep Singh was about to return to India and she could visit him in Calcutta. Mother and son hugged each other after fourteen years. Crying she told her son that although our kingdom has gone, but Sikhism should not have gone. Daleep Singh's eyes were full of tears and he admitted that under wrong influence he abandoned his religion, but now he had come to know that there is no other religion comparable to Sikhism and he had already decided to become a true Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh ji. The Maharani was overjoyed with the fulfillment of two wishes. Daleep Singh took his mother to England where she died on August 1, 1863 at Kensington.



Books on Sikh Religion by Principal Amar Singh:

- 1. Rudiments of the Sikh religion.**
- 2. Axiology of the Sikh religion.**
- 3. Hagiology of the Sikh religion.**
- 4. Epistemology of the Sikh religion.**
- 5. Buds refused to bloom.**

Type setting and layout

by

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Khalsa School, Vancouver.