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ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਮਨੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
nānak ammrīt manai māhi pāīai gur parasād.

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ਤਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਪੀਤਾ ਰੰਗ ਸਿਉ ਜਿਨ੍ ਕਉ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਆਦਿ ॥  
tinī pītā raṅg sio jin kau likhiā ādi.

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### The Battles of the Post- Vaisākhī of 1699

After the Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ) of 1699, the *Gurū's* Saṅgat (ਸੰਗਤ) grew exponentially. Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ) began to team with Sikhs (ਸਿਖ) who wanted to receive khaṇḍe-kī-pāhul (ਖੰਡੇ ਕੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ). The daily gathering grew in number and their presence struck new fears in the minds of the Hill Chiefs.

Rājā Bhīm Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਭੀਮ ਚੰਦ) saw the glory of the Anandpur Saṅgat as a threat to the territorial integrity of his state even though the *Gurū* entertained no such thoughts. The *Gurū* did not want war, but he was always ready to defend himself and others from tyrannical rulers. One day, when *Gurū Sāhib* was hunting with his Sikhs, a couple of Hill Chiefs and their men attacked his hunting party, hoping for an easy victory. They felt certain that they would either kill or capture the *Gurū* but they miscalculated. Neither the suddenness of the attack, nor the overwhelming number of the enemies perturbed the Sikhs. Every one of them fought with extreme courage. The *Gurū's* gold-tipped arrows never missed their mark and pierced through many soldiers. One of the chiefs was killed and the right arm of the other was torn off.

### The First Battle of Anandpur

This single defeat further aroused the fears of the Hill Chiefs and they assembled in one place to make plans for concentrated action. They even sought the help of the Governor of Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ), Vazīr Khān (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਖਾਨ), who lost no time in getting the Emperor's sanction for launching an army of ten thousand, led by Dīn Beg (ਦੀਨ ਬੇਗ) and Paimde Khān (ਪੈਂਦੇ ਖਾਨ). The allied armies of the Hill Chiefs took positions around Anandpur and tried to seal all entrances and exits. Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ) led a powerful offensive against the enemy forces; he was only fourteen at the time. The fierce engagement continued for days on end. During the battle, Paimde Khān advanced and challenged the *Gurū* to single combat and asked the *Gurū* to strike the first blow.

The *Gurū* refused to play the role of an aggressor and stated that he had vowed never to strike except in self-defense. Upon this Paimde Khān discharged an arrow which whizzed past *Gurū Sāhib's* ear. He unleashed another arrow which also missed the mark. The whole of Paimde Khān's body, except his ears, was encased in armor. *Gurū Sāhib* then discharged an arrow at his ear with such an unerring aim that Paimde Khān fell off his horse and never rose again. Dīn Beg was also wounded and he beat a retreat but was pursued by the Sikhs as far as Ropar (ਰੋਪੜ). This battle was fought in 1700.

### The Second Battle of Anandpur

*Gurū Sāhib* continued to increase his army and to collect weapons and ammunition. He kept himself in readiness for war for he knew that the Hill Chiefs would not let him rest. In November of 1700, a letter was sent to the *Gurū* asking him to either pay rent on the land he occupied or vacate it. If he agreed to do neither, he should get ready for war. The *Gurū* replied that the land had been bought by his father and so no rent was due and if the Rājās (ਰਾਜਾ) were determined to go to war, he was ready for them once again.

The Hill chiefs decided to attack the *Gurū* with their combined forces and to invite the assistance of a large number of Raṅgar (ਰੰਗੜ) and Gujjars (ਗੁੱਜਰ), who had a long-standing enmity with the *Gurū*. On hearing the news of the approaching war, Sikhs from the Mājāhā (ਮਾਝਾ) and Mālvā (ਮਾਲਵਾ) areas flocked to Anandpur with arms and horses. The Mājāhā Sikhs, under Dayā Singh (ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Ālim Singh (ਆਲਿਮ ਸਿੰਘ) and Ude Singh (ਉਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ) got ready to direct their attack against the hill armies.

As the invaders approached the city, Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh, with four thousand Sikhs, fell on the Gujjars and Raṅgar, who were advancing in great force. Their ranks were soon broken and they could not stand their ground any longer. The outnumbered Sikhs fought valiantly and managed to keep the enemy forces at bay. The Hill Chiefs were now convinced that they could not defeat the Khālsā in the field so they decided to set up a blockade. For over two months, they barricaded the city but with no success. At last, an intoxicated elephant, with his body covered with steel and with a spear projecting from his forehead was directed against the gate of the fort. He was followed by the Hill Chiefs and their armies who were all confident that they would occupy the *Gurū's* fort before nightfall. The *Gurū* blessed his Sikh, Bacittar Singh (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ), and commanded him to combat the elephant. Bacittar Singh, though small in stature, took a lance to meet the furious animal. He raised his lance and drove it through the elephant's head armor. Upon the impact of the lance, the animal turned around on the hill soldiers, and killed several of them.

The fighting continued for a few more days but both armies were deadlocked. The Hill Chiefs sought to work out an agreement with *Gurū Sāhib* in order to save face. They promised to remain on peaceful terms with the *Gurū* if he would only leave Anandpur temporarily. After being pressed by his Sikhs, *Gurū Sāhib* agreed to the suggestion and shifted to Nirmoh (ਨਿਰਮੋਹ), a village situated near Kīratpur (ਕੀਰਤਪੁਰ). The Hill Chiefs ignored all their promises and attacked the Sikhs from behind but the Sikhs fought bravely and resisted the attack with such energy that the forces of the Hill Chiefs had to retreat.

### **The Battle of Nirmoh**

Despite being frustrated in their plans by *Gurū Sāhib's* forces, the Hill Chiefs would not leave the Sikhs alone. They again applied to Vazīr Khān (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਖਾਨ), the Governor of Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ) for assistance against the *Gurū*. In September and October 1701, the Governor mobilized his troops and marched on to Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ). The Hill Chiefs were too impatient to wait for him and attacked the *Gurū*, who had stationed his troops a few miles from the city. On the arrival of the imperial army, the *Gurū* found himself surrounded by the enemies. His Sikhs, however, fought with their usual vigor and astounded the enemy with their persistence and determination. The enemy forces fell rapidly and lost all hope of victory. The Rājā of Basolī (ਬਸੋਲੀ) offered to take the *Gurū* to his own capital if Vazīr Khān undertook not to attack him from behind. Vazīr Khān agreed to this arrangement as a convenient manner of escape from the embarrassing position.

After a short stay at Basolī and then Bhabaur (ਭਬੌਰ), the *Gurū* returned to Anandpur. Nobody offered him any resistance upon his return and peace again returned to the city for a short time.

### **The Third Battle at Anandpur**

At one point in the year 1703, there were only 800 Sikhs in the *Gurū's* army at Anandpur. Rājā Ajmer Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਚੰਦ) summoned his allies, the Rājās of Handūr (ਹੰਦੂਰ), Cambā (ਚੰਬਾ) and Fatahpur (ਫਤਹਪੁਰ) with the object of chastising the *Gurū*. They all decided to attack the *Gurū's* forces at Anandpur immediately. In the previous battles of Anandpur, the Sikhs had mostly remained behind the battlements, but this time, they met the enemy in the open field outside Anandpur. The Sikhs fought with their usual courage and determination. The hill chiefs were unsuccessful in their attack and retired from the battle in despair.

Owing to the repeated pleas of the hill chiefs, the Emperor sent a large army under the command of General Sayad Beg (ਸਯਦ ਬੇਗ) and Ālif Khān (ਆਲਿਫ ਖਾਨ) to subdue the *Gurū*.

One of the generals, Sayad Beg was a mild admirer of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib but he had been hired by the Emperor to lead the force against the *Gurū*. Sayad Beg, along with the General Ālif Khān, marched on the *Gurū*'s forces near Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ). The battle was long and severe. Sayad Beg fought against the *Gurū*'s forces for a time, but all the while he was really just taking in the vision of the *Gurū* and his bravely fighting Sikhs. After a time, he laid down his arms and watched the fight in mute admiration, and then knelt before the *Gurū* and offered to sacrifice his body and soul for his service.

Meanwhile, Ālif Khān had been wounded and the desertion of Sayad Beg took away what little courage he had left. So he ordered a retreat and was hotly pursued by the Sikhs.

### **The Fourth Battle at Anandpur**

After seeing the inability of the Hill Chiefs in getting rid of the *Gurū*, the Emperor Aurangzeb (ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ) decided to take the matter into his own hands. He commanded Sayad Khān (ਸਯਦ ਖਾਨ), another General, to march at the head of a large imperial army to conquer and capture the *Gurū*. He was joined by the Hill Chiefs with their armies, and with this huge force at his back, he marched in the hope of a sure, complete, and speedy victory.

The *Gurū* had only 500 regular soldiers to oppose this mighty host since it was March of 1704 which is crop-cutting season. Despite these odds, however, the Sikhs fought more valiantly and with greater skill and endurance. Sayad Khān marveled at their heroism and wondered where their strength and power came from. His wonder was greater still when he saw Maimūn Khān (ਮੈਮੂਨ ਖਾਨ), Sayad Beg and other Muslims fighting side by side with the *Gurū*.

Sayad Khān was the brother of Pīr Buddhū Shāh (ਪੀਰ ਬੁੱਧੂ ਸ਼ਾਹ), who had spoken very highly of the *Gurū*. He had heard about *Gurū Sāhib*'s incredible strength and lofty principles but had been a little skeptical. He wondered why the *Gurū*, who was reputed to be a perfect saint, should engage in killing his fellow men. *Gurū Sāhib* knew what was passing in General Sayad Khān's mind, so he smiled and came forward to challenge him. Sayad Khān aimed a shot at *Gurū Sāhib* but missed. He had never missed before. There was a tremor in his heart. He advanced and, at the *Gurū*'s invitation, took aim for the second time, yet missed again. As *Gurū Sāhib* advanced further, Sayad Khān raised his gun to take aim but could not pull the trigger. He sat transfixed on his horse as the *Gurū* said, "Come, Sayad Khān! Fire your gun. I am so near!" Sayad Khān fell to his knees at the *Gurū*'s feet and begged him for forgiveness. *Gurū Sāhib*'s charming manner and appearance had melted the heart of the General who had come to capture him.

After Sayad Khān's defection, Ramzān Khān (ਰਮਜ਼ਾਨ ਖਾਨ) took command and fought with great energy against the Sikhs. The *Gurū* shot an arrow which killed Ramzān Khan's horse. The Sikhs rallied and presented a bold front to the enemy, but being too few in number, were overpowered by the opposing force. When the *Gurū* saw that there was no chance of retrieving his position, he decided to evacuate Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ). The Imperial army plundered the city and proceeded back to Sarhind. When the imperial army was resting at night, the Sikhs made a sudden attack, which created great confusion in the enemy camp. Those who turned to oppose the Sikhs were killed and only those who fled escaped the vengeance of the *Gurū*'s pursuing army. The Sikhs also deprived them of all the loot they had captured at Anandpur. After this, the *Gurū* returned and took possession of the city.

### **The Siege of Anandpur**

Formulating a new strategy, the allies reappeared again and laid siege to Anandpur. All entrances and exits were plugged. The Sikhs faced shortage of provisions and water. Grains could not be procured

and the Sikhs detained in the beleaguered fort found it difficult to live on scanty rations; many grew desperate to leave Anandpur. A number of Sikhs wrote a *bedāvā* (ਬੇਦਾਵਾ) or disclaimer and severed their connections with the *Gurū* so that they would be able to go back to their homes. Pressure continued to be built on the *Gurū* to leave Anandpur. *Gurū Sāhib* was not inclined to abandon Anandpur but he was encouraged by his Sikhs to leave the fort. The party set out from the fort during the stormy night of 20 December 1704. The Mughals promised *Gurū Sāhib* that if he left Anandpur, he would not be followed or harassed. But just like before, they went back on their oaths and solemn assurances and started after the *Gurū*.

After going to Kīratpur (ਕੀਰਤਪੁਰ) and Nirmohgar (ਨਿਰਮੋਹਗੜ), the *Gurū* proceeded towards Ropar where the party reached the banks of the Sarsā (ਸਰਸਾ). On account of the rain, the stream was flooded and almost impossible to cross. The party was just contemplating how this stream could be crossed when the enemy forces came up from behind. Severe fighting ensued and many Sikhs were killed. Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ), with a number of Sikhs, stoutly arrested the progress of the Imperial forces while the rest began to wade through the Sarsā. Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh held off the enemy for as long as he could and then joined the *Gurū* on the other side of the Sarsā.

In this confusion, the *Gurū*'s mother and his two younger sons were separated from the rest of the party. The *Gurū*, along with the surviving Sikhs, proceeded towards Ropar. Mātā Sundrī (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ) and Mātā Sāhib Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ) stayed at the house of a trusted Sikh at Ropar and then moved on to Dillī (ਦਿੱਲੀ). Meanwhile, *Gurū Sāhib* moved from Ropar to Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ). At that time, he had with him his two elder sons, Sāhibzādā Ajīt Singh and Sāhibzādā Jujhār Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਜੁਝਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ) and forty Sikhs, including his Pañj Piāre (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ).

### The Battle of Camkaur

After the *Gurū* crossed the Sarsā on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1704, someone brought him the news that a few miles off in front lay a large Imperial army which was coming to help the allied forces against him. On 22 December 1704, *Gurū Sāhib* decided to devise his defense at the *haveli* (ਹਵੇਲੀ), a mud structure, or gaṛī (ਗੜੀ) of Camkaur (ਚਮਕੌਰ). He posted eight of his soldiers to guard each wall of the fortress, two at the gate, and two to keep watch and go around giving directions. He himself, with two more Sikhs and two sons held the top storey. Ammunition was distributed and all were ready to defend the place with their lives.

At nightfall, the Imperial armies came up and surrounded the village. Early the next day, a section advanced in order to storm and capture the fortress. They felt certain that the *Gurū* would be killed or captured within a few hours. The advancing army was greeted with a volley of arrows and skirmishes. Though few, the Sikhs were inspired by love and faith in their *Gurū*; they went in batches to attain martyrdom. Both of the elder Sāhibzādās gave up their lives fighting fiercely in this battle. The *Gurū* himself joined the battle and rained showers of arrows. The remaining five Sikhs, Dayā Singh (ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Dharam Singh (ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ), Mān Singh (ਮਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ), Saṅgat Singh (ਸੰਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ), Sant Singh (ਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ), passed a *gurmatā* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ) and asked the *Gurū* to leave the fort in the interests of the Kḥālṣā Panth (ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ). The *Gurū* bowed before the dictate of the Pañj Piāre, offered his Kalgī (ਕਲਗੀ) to Sant Singh who resembled the *Gurū* in appearance and escaped unhurt, much to the annoyance and discomfiture of the Mughals who were hoping to capture *Gurū Sāhib* dead or alive. Dayā Singh, Dharam Singh and Mān Singh were also ordered to leave the fort while Sant Singh and Saṅgat Singh remained in the gaṛī to breathe their last as martyrs.