

and forbade her to go for help. She replied that if Jīnd was captured, nobody could save Paṭiālā for long. She collected troops and left Paṭiālā without the approval of her brother. On the way, many other Sikh chiefs joined her to stand against the Irish invader.

On the battlefield, Thomas opposed them with heavy artillery fire and the Sikhs had to retreat. In the beginning of 1799, Sāhib Kaur collected nine thousand Sikh troops under her command, attacked Thomas' strongholds and cut his supply lines. Her bravery inspired others and the number of her forces increased. After a blockade of one hundred days, Thomas retreated from Jīnd. The Sikh forces pursued him but they too had to retreat when Thomas attacked them while they were sleeping. When the forces returned to Jīnd, they were scolded and taunted by Sāhib Kaur for their cowardice. She said that she would take the field personally to show them how to fight. They felt humiliated and resolved to conquer or to perish.

The Sikhs again attacked Thomas, who offered peace on the condition that that each party should remain in possession of the territories they held before the siege of Jīnd. Every Sikh chief, except Sāhib Singh, was in favor of accepting the terms. Like a wise politician, Sāhib Kaur tried her best to persuade her brother to agree to the peace terms, but he, being a stubborn man, did not agree and Sāhib Kaur signed the treaty on behalf of the Paṭiālā state. This enraged Sāhib Singh, who instigated by his wife, arrested Sāhib Kaur and imprisoned her at Paṭiālā. She appealed to Thomas for aid, who marched to Paṭiālā to help her. He had to fight Paṭiālā forces on his way and consequently, both sides suffered heavily. When Thomas reached near Paṭiālā, the weak-minded Sāhib Singh yielded, accepted the peace terms, and released his sister.

Sāhib Singh was extremely vindictive and possessed of a cruel nature. He again imprisoned Sāhib Kaur in the fort of Paṭiālā. She managed to escape and went to the fort at Saṅgrūr (ਸੰਗਰੂਰ). She was again caught and imprisoned, and seemingly murdered in the prime of her life, during her imprisonment in 1779. Thus ended the life of a brave Sikh heroine.

A noble and brave stateswoman, Sāhib Kaur's courageous deeds will be remembered throughout the generations. In independent India, she would have proved an excellent Prime Minister. Bhāi Kānh Singh (ਭਾਈ ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ), author of Mahān Kosh (ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼), writes that she made unique efforts to save and expand her brother's state. Muhammad Latīf (ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਲਤੀਫ), a famous Muslim historian, writes that the Marāṭhās defeat was due to the fact that Sāhib Kaur herself took part in the battlefield and thus inspired her army. There is no doubt that Sāhib Singh would not have survived as the ruler of Paṭiālā, but for the help of his brave and self-sacrificing sister.

Adapted from: Daughters of the Khālsā, translated by Baldev Singh (ਬਲਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ), from Ādarshak Singhṇīām (ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ), by Karam Singh (ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ).

*Adapted From: Singh, Harbans, The Encyclopedia of Sikhism and*  
[http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/women/bibi\\_sahib\\_kaur.htm](http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/women/bibi_sahib_kaur.htm)

### **Bhāi Hakikat Rāi (ਭਾਈ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਰਾਇ)**

Bhāi Hakikat Rāi was born in Siālkoṭ (ਸਿਆਲਕੋਟ) in 1724 A.D. His father was Bhāi Bhāg Mal Khatrī (ਭਾਈ ਭਾਗ ਮਲ ਖਤ੍ਰੀ). His maternal grandparents were Sikhs (ਸਿੱਖ) and he was married at a young age to Durgī (ਦੁਰਗੀ), the daughter of Sardār Kishan Singh (ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ). Bhāi Hakikat Rāi became a Sikh early in his life due to the influence of his mother. During the Mughal rule, children used to go to mosques to study Fārsī from *Maulvīs* (ਮੌਲਵੀ) (Muslim priests). Bhāi Hakikat Rāi was also learning Fārsī from a maulvī, and he was the only non-Muslim pupil in this school. One day, while the maulvī had gone out, Bhāi Hakikat Rāi had a quarrel with a boy. In order to tease Bhāi Hakikat Rāi, the boy was insulting to a goddess. In anger, Bhāi Hakikat Rāi insulted Fātimā (ਫਾਤਿਮਾ) (an important Muslim woman) in retaliation. When the Muslim boys heard him calling names, all of them gave him a sound thrashing. He returned home weeping.

In the evening, when the Muslim boys reported the incident to the Maulvī, he was enraged and asked for Bhāi Hakikat Rāi to be brought before him immediately. At the message from the boys, Bhāi Hakikat Rāi and his father went to the Maulvī. As soon as they arrived, the Maulvī caught hold of Bhāi Hakikat Rāi and started beating him. The Maulvī beat him to unconsciousness but his anger did not subside. He arrested Bhāi Hakikat Rāi and sent him to Amīr Beg (ਅਮੀਰ ਬੇਗ), the administrator of Siālkoṭ. The next day in court, the Kāzī (ਕਾਜ਼ੀ) informed Bhāi Hakikat Rāi that for the sin of hurting the feelings of believers he could be burnt alive by pouring oil on him, or even torn apart alive by dogs. His sin would, however, be pardoned if he embraced Islām. Bhāi Hakikat Rāi refused to become a Muslim. By order of Amīr Beg, Bhāi Hakikat Rāi was hung feet up from a tree and beaten, but he did not agree to embrace Islām.

Amīr Beg then sent Bhāi Hakikat Rāi to Zakrīā Khān (ਜ਼ਕਰੀਆ ਖਾਨ), the Governor of Lāhaur (ਲਾਹੌਰ). His mother, Gorām (ਗੋਰਾਮ), said to him, “Son! No doubt I shall lose a son by your death, but if you give up your faith I shall be called the mother of a deserter and faithless son. I pray to God to bestow on you the will to keep your faith even if you have to sacrifice your life.” When Bhāi Hakikat Rāi did not agree to embrace Islām even after further torture, he was martyred by the orders of the Governor in January, 1735 A.D.

*Adapted from: Bed Time Stories Written by Santokh Singh Jagdev. Published by SGPC*  
<http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/Sikh-History/Sikh-Martyrs-Bhai-Haqiqat-Rai.html>

### Bhāi Manī Singh (ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ)

Bhāi Manī Singh was the most learned and revered Sikh of his time. He was born in 1662, in Kambovāl (ਕੰਬੋਵਾਲ), near Sunām (ਸੁਨਾਮ) in the Paṭiālā (ਪਟਿਆਲਾ) district. His father was Kālā Dullat (ਕਾਲਾ ਦੁਲੱਤ) and mother was named Daiā Kaur (ਦਇਆ ਕੌਰ). When Bhāi Manī Singh went with his parents to pay homage to Gurū Tegh̃bahādar Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) at Anandpur Sāhib (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ), he was so fascinated by the Gurū (ਗੁਰੂ) and the *Saṅgat* (ਸੰਗਤ) that he did not want to return home. His parents left him under the care of Mātā Gujārī jī (ਮਾਤਾ ਗੁਜਰੀ ਜੀ), who treated him like her own son. He was about the same age as her son, Gobind Rāi (ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਰਾਇ).

Bhāi Manī Singh took Amrit (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ) at the hands of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ) on the day of the inauguration of the *Khālsā* (ਖਾਲਸਾ). When Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib left Anandpur Sāhib on the night of December 20, 1704, his family got separated at river Sarsā (ਸਰਸਾ) in the confusion created by the Mughal attack. Bhāi Manī Singh took Mātā Sundarī jī (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਜੀ) and Mātā Sāhib Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ) to Dillī (ਦਿੱਲੀ) via Ambālā (ਅੰਬਾਲਾ).

In 1706, he escorted Gurū Sāhib's wives to Talvaṇḍī Sābo (ਤਲਵੰਡੀ ਸਾਬੋ) where the Gurū was staying. There, Gurū Sāhib dictated to him the whole Granth Sāhib (ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ), including the hymns of Gurū Tegh̃bahādar Sāhib.

When Gurū Sāhib left Āgrā (ਆਗਰਾ) with Emperor Bāhādur Shāh (ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ) for Nander (ਨੰਦੇੜ) in 1707, Mātā Sāhib Kaur and Bhāi Manī Singh accompanied him. There, Gurū Sāhib immersed in the Eternal Light on October 7, 1708. Bhāi Manī Singh escorted Mātā Sāhib Kaur back to Dillī where she lived with Mātā Sundarī for the rest of her life.

Mātā Sundarī came to know of the trouble that was brewing between the Tat *Khālsā* (ਤਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ) and Bandaī *Khālsā* (ਬੰਦਈ ਖਾਲਸਾ) factions. She appointed Bhāi Manī Singh as Granthī (ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ) of Harimandar Sāhib (ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) and sent him to Amritsar (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ) with Kirpāl Singh (ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ), the maternal uncle of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib. On his arrival at Amritsar in 1721, Bhāi Manī Singh restored peace among the *Khālsā* and put the affairs of Harimandar Sāhib in order.

By 1738, the Mughal government at Lāhaur (ਲਾਹੌਰ) had strictly prohibited the Sikhs to visit Amritsar and bathe in the holy tank. To overcome this restriction, Bhāi Manī Singh applied to Governor Zakrīā Khān (ਜ਼ਕਰੀਆ ਖਾਨ) for permission to hold the Divālī (ਦਿਵਾਲੀ) festival at Harimandar Sāhib. The permission was granted for a tribute of Rs. 5000. Bhāi Manī Singh hoped that he would be able to pay the sum out of offerings made by the Sikhs who were invited.

However, Bhāi Manī Singh had not known of the governor's true intentions earlier. The governor claimed that he was sending a force of some officers to keep order during the festival but Bhāi Manī Singh knew that something did not appear right. The large force sent by the governor was under the command of Divān Lakhpat Rāi (ਦਿਵਾਨ ਲਖਪਤ ਰਾਇ) who hated the Sikhs and was a sworn enemy of them. The force wasn't sent to keep order, but to keep the Sikhs away from Amritsar. Lakhpat Rāi and the governor were afraid of allowing too many Sikhs to congregate. They had decided to have the force march into the city on the day of the festival so that the Sikhs would become afraid and leave on their own. Bhāi Manī Singh destroyed their plan by sending out another letter telling Sikhs not to come to Amritsar.

Bhāi Manī Singh was arrested for not paying the stipulated sum. He was asked by the Kāzī (ਕਾਜ਼ੀ) to embrace Islām or face death. Bhāi Manī Singh stoutly refused to barter his religion. Zakrīā Khān ordered his execution in 1738.

Bhāi Manī Singh's body was cut to pieces joint by joint. His gruesome martyrdom inflamed the passions of the Sikhs. They pledged to uproot the evil forces of the Mughals.

*Adapted from: Singh, Harbans, The Encyclopedia of Sikhism and The Gurū's Word and Illustrated Sikh History*

### **Assasination of Massā Raṅghar (ਮੱਸਾ ਰੰਘੜ)**

As a result of renewed persecutions by Zakrīā Khān (ਜ਼ਕਰੀਆ ਖਾਨ) the Governor of Lāhaur, the Sikhs left the plains and sought shelter in the Shivālik (ਸ਼ਿਵਾਲਿਕ) Hills. Nādir Shāh (ਨਾਦਿਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ) of Persia, after ransacking Dillī (ਦਿੱਲੀ) in the early months of 1739, was on his way back to Persia. He was passing by the Shivālik Hills when Sikhs fell upon his rear and looted much of his booty. Nādir Shāh halted at Lāhaur and questioned Zakrīā Khān as to who these dare devils were. Zakrīā replied, "They are a group of *fakīrs* (ਫਕੀਰ) who bathe in their Gurū's tank twice a year and disappear." "Where do they live?" asked Nādir. "Their homes are their saddles," was Zakrīā's reply. Nādir Shāh warned him, "Take care, the day is not far when these fakīrs will take possession of your country." These remarks of Nādir Shāh worried Zakrīā and he launched an all out campaign against the Sikhs. He fixed prices on Sikhs' heads and put the whole machinery of the government, including *Caudhrīs* (ਚੌਧਰੀ) and *Zamīndārs* (ਜ਼ਮੀਂਦਾਰ), to crush the Sikhs.

The worst and most heinous crimes were committed by Massā Raṅghar (ਮੱਸਾ ਰੰਘੜ) of Maṇḍiālī (ਮੰਡਿਆਲੀ). He was the most active of the *Caudhrīs* (ਚੌਧਰੀ) in carrying out Sikh murders. He filled many cartloads of Sikh heads and sent them to Zakrīā Khān. He was put in charge of Harimandar Sāhib (ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ), at Ammritsar, (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ) by the Governor. He turned the holy precincts into a stable and the innermost sanctuary into a dance-hall where he smoked, drank liquor, and enjoyed the dance of women.

The news of this desecration reached a party of Sikhs residing in Jaipur (ਜੈਪੁਰ). Mahtāb Singh (ਮਹਤਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ) of Mīrāmkoṭ (ਮੀਰਾਂਕੋਟ), and Sukkhā Singh (ਸੁੱਖਾ ਸਿੰਘ) of Mārī Kambo (ਮਾਰੀ ਕੰਬੋ), took upon themselves to avenge this gross insult to their holiest of holy shrines. Both left for the Pañjāb (ਪੰਜਾਬ) and reached Ammritsar in August, 1740. They disguised themselves as Muhammadans and filled two bags with well rounded brick pieces. They entered the precincts of Harimandar Sāhib under the pretext of paying their land revenue. Tying their horses outside the main gate, they made straight for the inner most sanctuary where Massā Raṅghar was being entertained by a dancing girl. While Sukkhā Singh watched the entrance, Mahtāb Singh went inside and placed the two bags of revenue before Massā. As Massā bent over to pick up the bags, Mahtāb Singh briskly drew his sword and with lightning speed chopped off Massā's head. Before Massā's guards could recover from the shock, the two Sikhs had fled with Massā's head. Mahtāb Singh and Sukkhā Singh galloped back to Jaipur carrying Massā's head on a spear.

Zakrīā Khān was vexed. He collected all the *Caudhrīs* of the areas around Ammritsar to help him trace the assassins in return for a high prize. Harbhagat Nirañjanīā (ਹਰਭਗਤ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੀਆ) of Janḍiālā (ਜੰਡਿਆਲਾ) discovered that it was Mahtāb Singh of the village of Mīrāmkoṭ who had assassinated Massā Raṅghar. He reported his finding to Zakrīā who ordered the arrest of Mahtāb Singh. Village

Mīrāmkoṭ was surrounded, but Mahtāb Singh was not found. In the year 1745, when Mahtāb Singh came to his village to see his family, a local resident informed the Muslim officials of his presence. Mahtāb Singh was arrested and taken to Lāhaur. He refused to embrace Islām and was publicly broken on wheels under the orders of Zakrīā Khān. Sukkhā Singh obtained martyrdom fighting against Mughal forces in the Choṭā Ghalūghārā (ਛੋਟਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ) or Lesser Holocaust of 1746.

#### Resources on Assassination of Massa Ranghar:

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#### Bābā Dīp Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ)

Bābā Dīp Singh was born and raised in the village of Pāhūviṇḍ (ਪਾਹੂਵਿੰਡ), in the district of Ammritsar. He received Ammrit (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ) from the hands of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib himself. He was one of the most scholarly Sikhs of his time. Copies of the Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ), written in his own hand, or promulgated by him, are accepted as most authentic, especially the four copies installed by him at the four *Takhts* (ਤਖਤ). Bābā Dīp Singh was in charge of the Gurduārā of Talvaṇḍī Sābo (ਤਲਵੰਡੀ ਸਾਬੋ) called Damdamā (ਦਮਦਮਾ).

In 1757, Ahmad Shāh Abdālī (ਅਹਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਬਦਾਲੀ) was returning to Afghanistan with thousands of young Hindu women, and a big booty loaded over 28,000 elephants and 80,000 cavalry horses. The Sikhs found him and plundered his baggage, cut off the rear force of his army, rescued the captive women in large numbers and sent them to their homes. Ahmad Shāh Abdālī was enraged at the Sikhs. He sent a large force which plundered Ammritsar, demolished Harimandar Sāhib (ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ), and filled the holy tank with dirt and refuse.

Bābā Dīp Singh was at Damdamā when he heard about the desecration of Darbār Sāhib (ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ). He immediately started with eight Singhs to right this wrong. On the way, large numbers of Singhs joined him. At Saṅgharāṇā (ਸੰਘਰਾਣਾ), he drew up a line and asked the Singhs to cross over only if they were willing to lay down their lives. They all crossed over without hesitation. By the time he reached Taran Tāran (ਤਰਨ ਤਾਰਨ), he had about 1000 men with him, ready for the supreme sacrifice. They marched from there in the gala dress of bridegrooms, with festal ribbons on their wrists and saffron sprinkled on their robes, symbolizing their readiness to embrace death as a loved one.

On getting the news that the Sikhs were going to gather in thousands at Ammritsar for celebration, Jahān Khān (ਜਹਾਨ ਖਾਨ), a General of Taimūr Shāh Abdālī (ਤੈਮੂਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਬਦਾਲੀ), ordered Aṭal Khān (ਅਟਲ ਖਾਨ) to march upon Ammritsar and punish the Sikhs. A war was proclaimed with the beat of drums, calling upon all Muslims to be ready for a holy war against the Sikhs. Aṭal Khān took some time before he arrived in Ammritsar, but Jahān Khān was immediately able to collect a force of about 2000 horsemen to fight against the Sikh force.

The Sikh force, under Bābā Dīp Singh, came face to face with Jahān Khān's force near Goharvāl (ਗੋਹਰਵਾਲ), midway between Ammritsar and Taran Tāran. Both forces engaged in a fierce battle. Such was the fury with which the Sikhs fought, that the forces under Jahān Khān were unable to master the situation; they fled in all directions. Jahān Khān tried to rally them with threats, but with little effect. In the meantime Aṭal Khān arrived with his fresh army and artillery. This turned the tables on the

Sikhs. There was much carnage. Almost every companion of Bābā Dīp Singh lost his life fighting valiantly in the battle. Bābā Dīp Singh's own head was severed from his body. But, as legend has it, he had vowed not to lay down his life before visiting the precincts of Darbār Sāhib, he cut through the enemy forces supporting his severed head in one hand and fighting with the other. He reached the precincts of Darbār Sāhib and laid his head inside the *Parkarmā* (ਪਰਕਰਮਾ). He attained martyrdom on November 11, 1757. His supreme sacrifice and noble daring are commemorated in the *Parkarmā* of Harimandar Sāhib to this day.

*Source: Singh, Harbans, The Encyclopedia of Sikhism and The Gurū's Word and Illustrated Sikh History*

### **Bhāi Botā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਬੋਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bhāi Garjā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਗਰਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ)**

In 1739, Zakrīā Khān (ਜ਼ਕਰੀਆ ਖਾਨ) launched an all out campaign of persecution against the Sikhs. Rewards were offered for the capture and extermination of Sikhs. It was declared lawful to plunder Sikh houses and to seize their property. The whole machinery of the government, including *Caudhrīs* (ਚੌਧਰੀ) and *Zamīndārs* (ਜ਼ਮੀਂਦਾਰ), was put into motion to crush the Sikhs. Thousands of Sikhs were murdered. Cartloads of their heads were taken to Lāhaur for obtaining rewards from Zakrīā.

Under such conditions of persecution, Sikhs took shelter in the Shivālik (ਸ਼ਿਵਾਲਿਕ) Hills, Lakkhī (ਲੱਖੀ) jungle, and the sandy deserts of Rājputānā (ਰਾਜਪੁਤਾਨਾ). A few, who still chose to remain in Mājha (ਮਾਝਾ), had to pass their days in local forests, bushes, or by taking shelter in *Khulāsā* (ਖੁਲਾਸਾ) (*Sahajdhārī* – ਸਹਜਧਾਰੀ, or slow-adapting Sikhs) houses. Sometimes Muslims, and even Hindus, would boast that Sikhs were afraid of appearing in the plains. Such taunts would cause some daring Sikhs to come out of their hiding places and make their presence felt.

The Sikhs, as a collective body, refused to oblige the enemy by venturing out of their hide-outs in large numbers. However, individual Sikhs made history by openly challenging governmental authority. One of them was Botā Singh (ਬੋਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ), from the village of Bharānā (ਭਰਾਨਾ). He, along with Garjā Singh (ਗਰਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ), brought much ridicule to Zakrīā Khān. In spite of the Governor's ban on Sikhs visiting Amritsar, these two would, time and again, come to have a dip in the holy tank in the night and then disappear into the bushes near Taran Tāran (ਤਰਨ ਤਾਰਨ).

One day, a party of wayfarers noticed Bhāi Botā Singh and Bhāi Garjā Singh near Nūrdīn (ਨੂਰਦੀਨ). One of the wayfarers said, "Look, there in the bushes are two Sikhs". The other wayfarer replied, "They can't be true Sikhs. They must be some cowards who are afraid of showing their faces in the open. The Sikhs are not afraid of coming out". This remark stung Botā Singh and Garjā Singh. They decided to come out and make their presence felt, even to the government. They took a position on the Grant Trunk Road, near Sarāi Nūrdīn (ਸਰਾਇ ਨੂਰਦੀਨ), and as a show of bravado, began to collect a toll of one *Ānā* (ਆਨਾ) per cart and one *Paisā* (ਪੈਸਾ) per donkey-load. Botā Singh's aim in collecting the toll was to prove to Zakrīā Khān that in spite of all his efforts to exterminate the Sikhs, they were very much in existence. He therefore informed the Governor, through a letter, of his new passtime. In the Panjābī folklore, this letter is still sung as follows:

ਚਿੱਠੀ ਲਿਖੇ, ਸਿੰਘ ਬੋਤਾ।

ਹਥ ਹੈ ਸੋਟਾ, ਵਿਚ ਰਾਹ ਖਲੋਤਾ, ਆਨਾ ਗੱਡਾ, ਪੈਸਾ ਖੋਟਾ।

ਆਖੀਂ ਭਾਬੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ, ਯੂੰ ਆਖੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੋਤਾ।

Ciṭṭhī likhe, Siṅgh Botā.

Hath hai soṭā, vic rāh khalotā, Ānā gaḍḍā, Paisā khotā.

Ākhīm Bhābo Khāno nū, yūm ākhe Siṅgh Botā.

*Thus writes a letter Siṅgh Botā,*

*With a big stick in hand, on the road I stand. Levying an Ānā for a cart; and a Paisā for a donkey.*

*Tell my sister-in-law Khāno, thus, says Siṅgh Botā.*

The Governor, highly incensed, sent a force of one hundred horsemen to arrest him. But, the two Sikhs refused to surrender and died fighting. Their only weapons were big sticks cut from Kikkar (ਕਿੱਕਰ) trees.

*Source: Siṅgh, Harbans, The Encyclopedia of Sikhism and The Gurū's Word and Illustrated Sikh History and The Gurū's Word and Illustrated Sikh History*

### **Martyrdom of Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh (ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ)**

Zakrīā Khān, the Governor of Lāhaur (ਲਾਹੌਰ), had been carrying on a cruel campaign of persecution against the Sikhs, since they were the most visible threat to the Mughals. The Sikhs had, as a result, disappeared into hills, forests and deserts where Mughal armies could not reach them. As the Khālsā warriors were out of Zakrīā Khān's reach, he wreaked his wrath on gentle and harmless Sikhs. These peaceful Sikhs earned their living with honest labour and shared their earnings with those in need, irrespective of their race, religion, or caste.

Notable martyrdoms have always lighted new fires in Sikh hearts. One such martyrdom was that of Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh of Pūlā (ਪੁਲਾ), a village in Mājha (ਮਾਝਾ) track. He was a pious, kind-hearted young man of 25, devoted to the service of the Sikhs whom the cruel rule had driven into the wilderness. He cultivated his fields and lived in peace, reciting Gurbāṇī (ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ). He shared his field's produce with his brethren and offered them shelter whenever required. This was considered treason by the Mughal rulers.

Harbhagat Nirañjanīā (ਹਰਭਗਤ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੀਆ) of Janḍiālā (ਜੰਡਿਆਲਾ), who was instrumental in the arrest of Bhāi Mahtāb Siṅgh (ਭਾਈ ਮਹਤਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ) of Mīrāṁkoṭ (ਮੀਰਾਂਕੋਟ), was always seeking information about Sikhs to pass on to the Governor of Lāhaur for a reward. He came to know of Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh's activities and informed Zakrīā Khān. Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh was arrested and brought to Lāhaur.

He was offered a high position with the government, and a marriage with a beautiful damsel from a respected Mughal family, if he embraced Islām and cut his hair. Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh defiantly refused to give up his faith. He told the Governor, "Even if I were offered the kingship of the whole world and the beauties of paradise, I would not barter my faith. I am prepared to die but I will not let even a single hair of mine be cut". In June 1745 Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh bluntly refused the proposal saying that his hair was inseparable from his scalp. By the orders of the Governor his hair was mercilessly scraped off along with his scalp. Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh stood the ordeal bravely, reciting the words of Japu jī Sāhib (ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ) and calling on the name of God.

Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh was taken back to prison and tortured there for many days. During this time, Zakrīā Khān became seriously ill, with diseased kidneys and could not pass urine. His abdomen swelled up with intense pain and he had hard time breathing. In these hours of unbearable suffering, he realized that he had caused suffering to thousands of innocent Sikhs. He sent a messenger to Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh and asked for forgiveness. Bhāi Tārū Siṅgh, intoxicated with the love of God, was in a state of bliss.