

Historical Background

Sikhs:

Followers of Sikhism, the fifth largest religion in the world that was founded over five hundred years ago in Punjab, India. Sikhs follow the teachings of the founder, Guru Nanak, and nine subsequent Gurus. The Sikh faith is monotheistic. Equality, tolerance, justice, liberty, service and devotion are central tenets.

Guru Gobind Singh: (1666 to 1708)

He was the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. The martyrdom of his father and four sons in the fight against Mughal tyranny, did not deter him. It strengthened his resolve and he dedicated his life to restoring dignity and courage to the oppressed masses of India. He gave the Sikhs a distinct identity — unshorn hair and turban — and created a community of saint-soldiers.

Baaj:

Guru Gobind Singh is often referred to as “baajan wale”, the keeper of a falcon. Many Sikhs address the baaj with reverence, calling it “baaj sahib”.

Aurangzeb: (1658 -1707)

Aurangzeb was the last ruler of the Mughal Dynasty that had been founded by Babur in 1556. Many historians attribute the fall of the Mughal Empire to Aurangzeb’s bigotry. He oppressed non-Muslims and forced them to choose between Islam and death. The Sikhs incurred his wrath as they chose to resist rather than obey. He destroyed many Hindu temples and banned music, dance and other art forms.

Anandpur Fort:

It was one of the five forts built by Guru Gobind Singh to house the Sikh army in the township of Anandpur, Punjab. Guru ji held congregations even while battles were being fought. Anandpur literally means City of Bliss.

Bhai Kanhaiya: (1648 to 1714)

A water bearer during the time of war, he was brought to Guru Gobind Singh's court for giving water to the wounded of the opposing forces. Bhai Kanhaiya was commended by Guru ji for showing compassion and given a healing ointment with instructions to apply it to the wounded while he served them water.

Darbar :

At a time when the tyrannical regime of the country had infused fear in the people, Guru Gobind Singh boldly held congregations which were set up like a king's court. Many paintings of Guru ji depict him in rich robes with a sword draped on his side, his immaculate turban adorned with a plume, and a falcon on his gloved hand.

Punjabi:

The language of Punjab

Boley so Nihal, Sat Sri Akal:

Literal meaning: Whosoever declares that 'God is Truth', will be filled with joy.