

B 969.351

E 601

3-06810

外文书局

HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

1739—1768

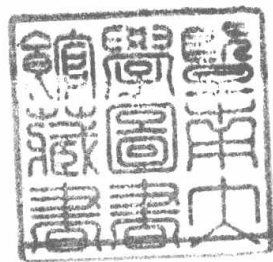
(Evolution of the Sikh Confederacies) VI

BY

HARI RAM GUPTA, M.A., Ph.D.,
FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, LAHORE.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

SIR JADUNATH SARKAR, C.I.E.



“The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”



CALCUTTA

1939

TO
MY TEACHER
PRINCIPAL
SITARAM KOHLI

FOREWORD

Professor Hari Ram Gupta's thesis on the Evolution of the Sikh Confederacies (*i.e.*, *misl*s), which I examined, along with Sir Edward Maclagan, the scholarly ex-Governor of the Panjab, for the Ph. D. degree of the Panjab University,—struck me as a work of outstanding merit which competently fills up a gap in our knowledge of modern Indian history. I have therefore urged the author to print it and have put him on the way to securing financial assistance for the purpose.

As Dr. Gupta has pointed out, while the history of the Sikh Gurus (terminating in 1715, if we include Banda) has been repeatedly worked over, and that of Ranjit Singh is still better known, the intervening period of the rise of the *misl*s and their occupation of the Panjab has not been studied by scholars. And yet this period is one of absorbing interest and historical importance, because it represents the formative stage of the Sikhs as a political power.

The subject, at the outset, presented difficulties only commensurate with its attractiveness and importance. How the evidence lay scattered mostly in manuscript sources in more than half a dozen languages and the manuscripts could be consulted only in several libraries,—in one case more than a thousand miles distant,—has been described by the author. I have seen this thesis when under construction and also in its finished state, and can testify to the industry and success with which Dr. Gupta has utilised an immense number of scraps of information and pieced them together into a compact readable whole.

The necessity of reducing the cost of printing has forced him to cut out all oriental quotations and even "justificative pieces" in English, and also to compress the foot-notes with extreme severity, and hence there is some danger of the reader underestimating the author's erudition and the reliability of his narrative. But I who went through this history in its original complete form in manuscript, feel confident that it stands in an unassailable position. The long critical bibliography first written by him has been similarly cut down, in printing, to a bare list of names, but it proves that the author has left no source untapped and taken nothing without a critical examination.

One period of Panjab history—and that of the Delhi Empire, too,—has thus been set up on a granite foundation. It ought to serve as a model to other workers on Indian history.

JADUNATH SARKAR.

P R E F A C E

Of all the provinces of India, the Punjab—the point of impact between India and the ever-moving peoples of the North-west—must always have a peculiar interest to a student of Indian history. Similarly, in the history of the Punjab, there is no other feature so interesting as the history of the Sikhs. Some aspect of the history of these people have been pretty fully treated by previous writers. For instance, the history of the Sikh Church and the early struggle between this community and the Mughal Government (1469-1716) have been very well described by European and Indian scholars. Again, the history of the Sikh monarchy under Ranjit Singh and his successors (1799-1849) has also been ably dealt with by standard writers.

The intervening period (1716-1799), however, if not altogether neglected, has not received the attention it deserves.* This period forms one of the most important chapters of Sikh history. It was during this time that the Sikhs evolved themselves, by the strength of their own arms, into one of the finest military peoples of the world. It was now that the Sikhs entered on their meteoric career by availing themselves of the many opportunities open to genius and ambition, for carving out independent principalities on the ashes of the Mughal Empire. It was then that they developed the germs of a worthier political existence and began to make themselves fit for the task of building up a kingdom. It was at this time that they played the most important part in the politics of Northern India, during the whirlwind incursions of foreign hordes from 1739 to 1767. It was in these days

that the Sikhs rendered the most invaluable services to the cause of our country by putting a dead stop to all foreign invasions from the north-west.

It was the importance of his period that induced the present writer to take up this subject, which proved in the end to be the most fascinating field that was ever found waiting for exploration by a historian. How far he has succeeded in his attempt it is for the reader to judge.

The author very much wished that he could have dealt with the whole of this intervening period. But with great disappointment, he had eventually to excise the earlier portion of it (namely the years 1716-1738), as there is very scanty material available. Whatever material exists, comes from Sikh sources, is based on tradition alone, with no contemporary evidence on record. Hence he has found 1739 as his most suitable starting point. It was in this year that the terrible Nadir, at the head of a numerous sturdy race of warriors, swept down the unprotected plains of India with irresistible violence. Not only did his campaign give the finishing stroke to the crumbling house of Babar, but it also brought to perfection the confusion and chaos prevailing in the country. It was now that the Hindu peasantry, crushed under the oppression of centuries, was disillusioned of the greatness of the mighty Mughals and as a consequence rose up in arms, out of sheer exasperation, against the Mughal Government. They joined the ranks of the Khalsa because they knew that these were the only people in the Punjab who could offer stout opposition to their oppressors. Consequently, the whole country between the Ravi and the Jumna was turned into a theatre of ceaseless struggle by a people fighting for independence. The present outbreak of the

Sikhs differed from those preceding it under Guru Hargobind, Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur, in this that whereas the latter were religious outbursts which had sprung up out of hatred and vengeance for the loss of their leader and their own oppression at the hands of the Government, the present struggle was a fight for the ideal of independence and sovereignty which the Sikhs had now placed before themselves.

The reason for selecting 1768 as the other limit of my enquiry is that this year witnessed the establishment of the Sikhs as a political and territorial power. They had successfully repelled the last invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the previous year. They had become undisputed masters of Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, and exercised sovereign power in the major portion of the province. They therefore stood between the Mughal Empire of Delhi and the Durrani kingdom of Kabul, and not only prevented the mutual contact of these two empires but also starved the Indian Muslim potentates by stopping the importation of fresh blood from the north-western regions to replenish their exhausted forces, and thus brought about their speedy death. This period therefore is the point of division between the disruption of the old Empire and the formation of the new kingdoms.

A word of explanation about the sources of this work seems desirable at this place. It is no doubt true that the documentary materials for this period are rather scanty. The court annals of Delhi refer only sparingly to Punjab affairs on account of the political and economic upheaval brought about by the constant foreign invasions, Maratha incursions and revolts of provincial governors. Continuous disturbances made memoir-writing either by

the governors of the provinces or by the high officials impracticable. Some personal memoirs were compiled by minor officials during the latter half of the 18th century, and such works are often genuine human documents vividly lighting up for us the atmosphere or social conditions of the age. The most notable of them are *Tazkirah Tahmasp Miskin* and Nur-ud-din's *Life of Najib-ud-daulah*.

Some writers and poets followed occasionally in the train of the invaders with a view to compiling accounts of their masters' brave deeds. While doing so they throw a flood of light on the condition of the country. The most important example of this class is Qazi Nur Muhammad's *Jang Namah*, preserved in a unique manuscript, which has unfolded for the first time the full details of the 8th Durrani invasion of 1764-65.

The Marathi news-letters and reports, written by the Peshwa's officials in the Punjab and Delhi, are also of the highest value as showing the other side of the shield. They are profuse in the wealth of details with absolutely correct dates and thus help to fill in the gaps in the existing Persian histories of the period. The letters sent by Antaji Mankeshwar and the Hingne family are indispensable. They have been printed by Parasnis and in the Bombay Government's admirable series of Selections from the Peshwas' Daftar, edited by Sardesai.

After the battle of Plassey (1757) the English became the masters of Bengal, and since then they evinced a keen interest in the affairs of Northern India. Numerous Persian letters were consequently addressed to the British Governor of Fort William by the Hindu and Muslim chiefs of note, and they supply us with valuable information and exact dates. At the time of the Durrani campaigns

numerous messengers were appointed to convey full details about the daily progress of the invader and of other events. Very minute and copious details are available about the last Durrani invasion of 1767. These letters have been translated and published by the Imperial Record Department.

A brief survey of all the works used in the compilation of these pages, is given in the Bibliography.

As to the scope of the subject, we may say that this short period of nearly 30 years is fraught with the most important and epoch-making events which ever took place in the history of the Land of the Five Rivers. It witnessed as many as ten foreign invasions from the dreaded Nadir Shah and his general Ahmad Shah Durrani, one Maratha incursion, the gradual but total collapse of Mughal rule in the province, the rapid growth of the newly formed Durrani empire, the life and death struggle of the two most eminent powers of the day, the Durranis and the Marathas, over the spoils of the once mighty empire of the Mughals, the sudden and serious set-back of the Maratha power at Panipat in 1761, and finally the rise of the insignificant Sikhs from nothingness into a sovereign power.

The story told in the following pages, therefore, is, on the one hand, one of the marchings and countermarchings, and of extremely painful and horrid deeds ever done by man to man; and on the other hand, it is also a wonderful record of the sufferings and hardships endured by the Sikhs in the cause of faith and freedom.

In the compilation of these pages the author has always kept in view the principle of going back to the

original. He has made use of all the contemporary materials as well as secondary sources of trust and value, available chiefly in unpublished Persian works and Marathi, Gurmukhi, Urdu, English and French records, mostly unused by any previous writer on the subject. No second-hand authority, however, has been given preference over a contemporary writer. The original authorities, on the other hand, have been subjected to a careful examination as far as possible. No pre-conceived notions have been allowed to interfere in the interpretation of facts. As a consequence of his researches, carried on for full four years, the writer has tried not only to supply a lost chapter of Indian history, but also to correct several prevalent errors and to establish a correct chronology.

The Sikhs seldom wrote their histories and the Hindus did not care much to record their doings. The Muslims took rather a prejudiced view of the Sikh deeds which mainly went against them.

Secondly, where old records exist, they are not always made available to the research student. Some of the material is in the possession of persons and Indian States who, for one reason or another, do not like it to be utilized by the student of history.

Then comes the difficult question of interpretation. In cases where complete histories are already available, new materials can be easily utilized ; but where the annals are meagre and fragmentary, as in the case of Sikh history in the 18th century, the task of the historian is extremely difficult. Moreover, most of his authorities are neither printed nor edited. He is expected to correct the wrongly spelt proper names, without having a second manuscript to collate with the one lying before him. Survey maps also

fail him in many cases in removing this difficulty, because the places once of note have fallen either into ruin or into insignificance.

Still more formidable was the lack of expert guidance, and so the author was almost entirely thrown on his own resources. There was the minor difficulty of language too. The materials lie spread over a wide range of languages, Persian, Marathi, Gurmukhi, Urdu, Hindi, English and French, and it was with some trouble that the writer managed to use the various works written in these languages. In the words of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, it is quite proper to say that "to expect perfection in such a branch of study is hardly more reasonable than to ask a goldsmith to give a proof of his professional skill by prospecting for gold, digging the mine, extracting and refining the ore, and then making the ornament."

In conclusion, it is the author's most pleasant duty to express his feelings of gratitude to his revered teacher, Professor Sîta Rām Kohli, the veteran scholar of Sikh history, at whose suggestion and with whose valuable assistance he undertook and completed this task. The author owes a heavy debt of obligation to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, for his very kindly permitting him the use of his extremely valuable and rare manuscripts, most of which are either rotographs of British Museum manuscripts or copies of those in the India Office Library. He also generously placed at his disposal all other books he needed including his pencil translations of Father Wendel's "History of the Jats" and many Marathi records. His ungrudging help in discussing some of the topics with the writer proved of great use in clearing up many obscure points. His thanks are also due to Professor Sri Ram

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	v-vi
PREFACE	vii-xiv
CONTENTS	xv-xx

CHAPTER

<p>I. SIKH PLUNDERING BANDS, 1739-45 ..</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Introductory, 1—The Sikhs take advantage of Nadir's invasion, 2—Sikhs rob Nadir's rear, 5—Restoration of order after Nadir's departure, 6—Persecution of the Sikhs, 7—Sikh life in exile, 10—Sikhs begin to visit Amritsar, 13—Government policy of relaxation, 14—Zakariya Khan dies, 16—appointment of Punjab viceroy delayed, 17—Sikhs revive their strength, 18—Sikhs organize themselves into regular plundering bands, 20.</p>	<p>1-23</p>
<p>II. THE DAL KHALSA, 1745-48 ..</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Sikh aggressions, 24—Jaspat Rai's murder by the Sikhs, 25—Lakhpat Rai's massacre of the Sikhs, 26—Civil war between Zakariya Khan's sons, 31—Recovery of strength by the Sikhs, 33—The Sikhs build the fort of Ram Rauni at Amritsar, 35—Shahnawaz Khan's Government, 37—First Durrani campaign, 38—Peaceful progress of the Sikhs, 43—Sikhs fall upon the retreating Afghans, 45—The Dal Khalsa established, 46—Constitution of the Dal Khalsa, 52.</p>	<p>24-56</p>
<p>III. THE SIKHS AND MUIN-UL-MULK, APRIL 1748-NOVEMBER 1753</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Muin-ul-mulk takes charge of the Government of the Punjab, 57—Muin's difficulties</p>	<p>57-83</p>

in his new government, 58—Punitive expeditions against the Sikhs, 59—Siege of Ram Rauni Fort, 60—Sikhs settle down to a peaceful life, 62—Muin-ul-mulk's precautionary measures, 62—Sikhs plunder Lahore during the second Durrani invasion, 63—Renewal of Sikh persecution, 65—Nasir Khan's rebellion, 66—Revoit of Shahnawaz Khan, 67—Renovation of Sikh oppression, 69—The Sikhs are driven out of the Punjab plains, 70—The third Durrani invasion, 72—Punjab lost to the Mughal Empire, 74—The Durrani conquers Kashmir, 76—Sikh ravages, 76—Persecution of the Sikhs renewed, 78—Swelling of the Dal Khalsa, 82—Death of Muin-ul-mulk, 83.

IV. THE "RAKHI" SYSTEM, NOVEMBER 1753-APRIL 1757

84-101

Sikhs are left unhampered, 84—Baby rule and petticoat government provided for the Punjab, 84—Death of Muhammad Amin Khan and the Begam's profligacy, 85—Eunuchs' rule at Lahore, 87—Revolts and counter-revolts in Lahore, 87—Dissolution of government in the Punjab, 89—Rapid rise of the Sikhs, 90—The establishment of the "Rakhi" System, 93—The fourth Durrani invasion, 95—Sikh lawlessness, 99.

V. THE SIKHS AND TIMUR SHAH, MAY 1757-MAY 1758

102-120

Introductory, 102—Sikhs are disturbed in their quiet progress, 103—Jahan Khan's fight with the Sikhs, 104—Sodhi Barbhag Singh of Kartarpur belaboured, 108—The Sikhs concert a plan of action, 117—Defeat of the Afghans by Adina Beg and the Sikhs, 110—The Sikhs baffle the Afghans, 112—

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Maratha invasion of the Punjab, 113— The fall of Sirhind, 114—Expulsion of the Afghans from the Punjab, 115—Myth of Sikh occupation of Lahore in 1758, 120.	
VI. BEGINNING OF TERRITORIAL ACQUISITION, JUNE 1758-OCTOBER 1759 ..	121-132
Adina Beg Khan fights the Sikhs, 121—Sadiq Beg Khan of Sirhind defeats the Sikhs, 124—Adina Beg Khan dies, 125—Anarchy in the Punjab, 126—Settling of the Sikhs as territorial chieftains, 130.	
VII. PEACEFUL PROGRESS OF THE MALWA SIKHS UNDER ALHA SINGH, 1739-1761 ..	133-140
Origin of the Malwa chiefs, 133—Progress under Alha Singh, 133—Alha Singh helps the Imperialists, 135—Extension of territories, 136—Aid to the Delhi Emperor, 137—Change of policy, 137—Alha Singh helps the Marathas at Panipat, 138—Alha Singh receives a rescript from the Durrani, 139.	
VIII. SIKHS TAKE LAHORE AND COIN MONEY, OCTOBER 1759-DECEMBER 1761 ..	141-158
The Durrani-Maratha struggle, 140—Consequences of the battle, 145—The appearance of numerous Sikh forts in the Punjab, 146—The Sikhs attack Lahore, 148—The Sikhs harass the Durrani, 149—Administrative arrangements made by the Durrani, 150—Sikhs spread havoc all over the Punjab, 151—Abdali's General Nur-ud-din is defeated by the Sikhs, 153—Khwajah Abed defeated and routed by the Sikhs at Gujranwala, 155—Capture of the Capital and coining of money, 157.	
IX. "GHALLU GHARA" AND AFTER, JANUARY-DECEMBER 1762 ..	159-181
The Sikhs besiege Jandiala, 159—Great	

CHAPTER

PAGE

"Ghallu Ghara", 160—Alha Singh is taken prisoner, 165—Sacred buildings of the Sikhs at Amritsar are destroyed, 167—Abdali stays in the Punjab, 168—Abdali re-conquers Kashmir, 169—Sikhs run to Malwa where they are maltreated by the Brar Jats, 170—The Sikh feelings: the alloy is gone and the purified Khalsa remains, 171—The Sikhs attack Zain Khan, 172—The Durrani is baffled by the Sikhs, 173—Confusion caused in the country by the Sikhs, 174—Sikhs muster strong in the neighbourhood of Karnal, 174—Abdali fails in dispersing the Sikhs from Amritsar, 175—Ahmad Shah leads an expedition against the Sikhs towards the Lakhi Jungle, 179—Shah leaves for Afghanistan, 180.

X. THE CONQUEST OF THE SIRHIND PROVINCE, JANUARY 1763-JANUARY

1764 182-196

The exploits of the Sikhs, 182—Sack of Kasur, 183—The Jullundur Doab is over-run, 185—Jahan Khan is defeated on the Chenab, 185—Malerkotla is laid waste, 186—Plunder and massacre of Morandah, 187—Fall of Sirhind, 189—Partition of Sirhind territory, 192—Possessions of the various Misl, 195.

XI. SIKH RAVAGES IN THE PUNJAB AND GANGETIC DOAB, FEBRUARY 1764-JANUARY 1765

197-210

First Sikh raid into the Gangetic Doab, 197—The Sikhs intimidate Kabuli Mal, the Lahore Governor, 198—Jahan Khan is routed, 200—Ahmad Shah is harassed at Batala, Jandiala and Lahore, 201—Charat Singh takes Rohtas, 202—Sarbuland Khan

is taken captive, 203—The Sikhs ravage south-western Punjab, 204—Second Sikh invasion across the Jumna, 206—Sikh-Jat alliance against Najib-ud-daulah, 207—The Sikh-Rohila contest outside Delhi, 208.

XII. SIKHS MOLEST THE DURRANI DURING HIS EIGHTH CAMPAIGN, DECEMBER 1764-MARCH 1765

211-225

Ahmad Shah Durrani reaches Lahore, 211—Ahmad Shah destroys Amritsar, 212—Ahmad Shah's march to Batala, 213—The battle of the Jullundur Doab, 214—Ahmad Shah advances to Kunjpura via Pinjor, 215—Plans for crushing the Sikhs dropped, 215—Alha Singh's submission to the Durrani, 216—Beginning of the pitched battles of the Sikhs, 218—The battle of the Sutlej, 218—Second day's fight with the Sikhs, 220—The battle of the Beas, 222—Ahmad Shah leaves India, 223—Possessions of the Sikh chiefs, 224.

XIII. ASSUMPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY APRIL-SEPTEMBER 1765

226-236

The Sikhs take Lahore and issue their coin, 226—The Sikhs extend their territories, 230—Bari Doab, 231—Rechna Doab, 232—Chaj Doab, 234—Sind Sagar Doab, 236.

XIV. SIKHS AND NAJIB-UD-DAULAH, SEPTEMBER 1765-MAY 1766

237-247

Sikhs plunder Najib's country, 237—battle between the Sikhs and Najib near Shamli, 239—Sikhs plunder the Jat country, Rewari and Jaipur, 241—The Sikhs fight Marathas near Dholpur, 243—The Sikhs plunder the country of Najib but are defeated by him, 244.