

and maternal uncle, Kirpāl Cand (ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਚੰਦ). He loved to play martial games, organize boat races, and arrange mock fights. Imitation bows and arrows served as toys for him.

An anecdote is told of his early days, which shows his fearlessness even at that age. One day, the Chief Officer of Paṭnā was passing by the place where Gobind Rāi was playing with his mates. The attendants called upon the boys to salute the *Navāb* (ਨਵਾਬ). The Gobind Rāi told his comrades not to Salām (ਸਲਾਮ) but to make faces at the officer. They did so and ran away, much to the embarrassment of the *Navāb* and his attendants.

Gobind Rāi was an extraordinary child who came to be the darling of many; both young and old, rich and poor, learned and simple, Hindūs and Muslims. There was some magnetic force in this charming child, some indescribable emanations darted forth from his mysterious personality, which bewitched all those who beheld him.

Every day he made some new love-conquests. With an army of over a hundred boys at his heels, he would march through the city like a victorious general parading his troops. Sometimes, he and his companions would jump into the Gaṅgā (ਗੰਗਾ) and begin splashing water over the devotees engaged in concentration before their idols.

During his stay at Paṭnā, the city was changed. Paṭnā itself was reborn; it never was to be the old city again. Its air was intoxicated with the presence of so lovable a being. Its streets echoed with the prattle and mirth of Gobind Rāi.

Adapted from Life of Gurū Gobind Singh.

The Battle of Bhaṅgāṇī (ਭੰਗਣੀ)

Beginning of the Battle	Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib's Army	The Hill Chiefs' Army
End of the Battle	Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib's Army	The Hill Chiefs' Army

Early Education at Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ) and Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib's (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) Martyrdom

Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ) left Paṭnā (ਪਟਨਾ) for Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ), then known as Makkhovāl (ਮੱਖੋਵਾਲ), in February 1672. It took about a year to reach Anandpur and the *Gurū* made several stops on the way. Most notably, he stayed in Lakhnaur (ਲਖਨੌਰ) for five or six months where he won the hearts of many.

Upon his arrival at Anandpur, Gobind Rāi was warmly received by his father, Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib and the local Saṅgat (ਸੰਗਤ). Under the care of his father, Gobind Rāi received his formal education. He had already learnt Gurmukhī (ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ) and could recite many *bāṇīs* of the *Gurūs* from memory. In addition to a thorough study of Ādi Granth (ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ), Gobind Rāi began to learn different languages. He learnt Fārsī (ਫਾਰਸੀ) from a man named Pīr Muhammad (ਪੀਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ) of Saloh (ਸਲੋਹ). Learned teachers and poets were hired to teach him languages, literature, history, mythology, and scriptures. The future *Gurū* also learnt horsemanship and the use of weapons. When he could snatch some free time from these serious occupations, Gobind Rāi took part in mock battles with his friends.

This blissful life at Anandpur was cut short rather abruptly. The Emperor Aurangzeb (ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ) had been engaged in a conversion campaign in which he ordered his deputies to convert the non-Muslim subjects of his empire over to Islām. This conversion campaign was especially severe and unrelenting in the region of Kashmīr (ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ). Aurangzeb wanted to convert the *Paṇḍits* (ਪੰਡਿਤ) of Kashmīr so that ordinary people would follow these learned members of the Hindū religion and accept Islām. The *Paṇḍits* were extremely distraught and decided to ask the ninth Nānak, Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib for help. They put their case before the *Gurū* and asked for guidance. Their tale of suffering and woe plunged the *Gurū* in to deep thought. *Gurū Sāhib* was deep in meditation when his son, Gobind Rāi, returning from his sports and games, sat in his father's lap and inquired why he was so deep in thought.

Gurū Sāhib replied, “The Muslim rulers have begun a ruthless campaign of tyranny in order to convert all. In their attempts to convert others, these rulers have become totally brutal and their hearts have turned to stone. The Hindūs are completely demoralized; they are suffering all this tyranny and humiliation with meek submission. The Mughals have to be reminded of human values like sympathy and compassion, and the spiritually broken Hindūs have to be re-inspired with life and courage. This difficult task can only be accomplished by a Great Soul but I do not know where to find such a one.”

“That is easy, father,” replied young Gobind Rāi. “Who could be holier than you, and who more pure?”

On hearing this, Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib resolved to go to Dillī (ਦਿੱਲੀ) and do what he could towards reforming the hard-hearted rulers. Urging his father to give up his life in order to help the helpless was Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib's first sacrifice for righteousness. Even at such a young age, he never shirked his responsibility and duty towards humanity.

Tensions between the *Gurū* and the Hill Chiefs and the *Gurū*'s Sojourn in Pāumtā

After the martyrdom of Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib, Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib assumed responsibilities. Though only nine years old, the *Gurū* rose to the occasion and consoled the grief-stricken Sikhs, exhorting them to accept the occurrence with a spirit of acceptance to Vāhigurū's (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ) Will. The

Gurū saw to it that fear and demoralization did not creep into the psyche of the Sikhs. The Panth (ਪੰਥ) grew strong and integrated under the new dispensation. Anandpur (ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ) vibrated with a new spirit and confidence.

However, the frequent huge gatherings at Anandpur, the war-like activities, military preparations, and the beating of the Rañjīt Nagārā (ਰਣਜੀਤ ਨਗਾਰਾ) or the Drum of Victory, caused tensions between the *Gurū* and the Hill Chiefs, particularly Rājā Bhīm Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਭੀਮ ਚੰਦ). Bhīm Cand's objection to the regular beating of the drum, an emblem of sovereignty, was brushed aside. Bhīm Cand was especially annoyed because the beating of such a drum was believed to be the privilege of a royal family and it often meant the declaration of a war. He became even more jealous of the *Gurū* when devotees from the ruling house of Āsām (ਆਸਾਮ) brought him precious offerings. Among these offerings, were a costly embroidered canopy and an accomplished baby elephant, Prasādī (ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੀ). The elephant lovingly washed *Gurū's* feet and fetched arrows discharged by the *Gurū*. Bhīm Cand anxiously waited for a chance to snatch these gifts from the *Gurū*.

The occasion was provided by the wedding ceremony of Bhīm Cand's son, Ajmer Cand (ਅਜਮੇਰ ਚੰਦ), to the daughter of Fatah Shāh (ਫਤਹ ਸ਼ਾਹ), the ruler of Garvāl (ਗੜਵਾਲ). Bhīm Cand asked the *Gurū* to loan him the costly canopy and the baby elephant for the occasion. This was only a pretext employed by the Rājā to assert his authority and to take the articles and keep them for good. The *Gurū* saw through the evil intention of Bhīm Cand and declined to loan him the gifts. The *Gurū* stated that the gifts belonged to the Sikh Panth (ਸਿਖ ਪੰਥ) and not him alone. Bhīm Cand became very angry and sent his forces to attack some of the Sikhs who were traveling to Pāumṭā (then known as Nāhan - ਨਾਹਨ) from Fatah Shāh's daughter's marriage. The Sikhs fought bravely and reached Pāumṭā safely. The relations between the *Gurū* and Bhīm Cand remained strained and it became obvious that the Hill Chiefs would attack again. Therefore, the *Gurū* made preparations for the coming encounters with the crafty hill-men.

Gurū Sāhib was in Pāumṭā because he had been invited to shift his headquarters to Nāhan by the ruler of Siramūr (ਸਿਰਮੂਰ). In this idyllic setting, *Gurū Sāhib* cultivated the spirit of the Panth. *Gurū Sāhib* was captivated by the wondrous beauty and romance of the place which he selected for his camp. The place might have come to be called Pāumṭā, a word derived from "the foot of the horse;" it is also known as Bhaṅgāṇī, after the battle of Bhaṅgāṇī. Pāumṭā provided ample scope and opportunity for contemplation and creativity. The *Gurū's darbār* (ਦਰਬਾਰ) was the nucleus of literary figures who created literature for the heroic struggle to be waged for the sake of Dharam (ਧਰਮ) or righteousness. This tradition, which associates fifty-two poets with the literary darbār, was inherited by the Tenth *Gurū* from *Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib*. Among the new additions to the *darbār* was Bhāi Nand Lāl "Goyā" (ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ 'ਗੋਯਾ'), an accomplished scholar and poet of Fārsī (ਫਾਰਸੀ), who reached the *Gurū* at the Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ) held in 1682 A.D. His ancestors were ministers at the court of Ghaznī (ਗਜ਼ਨੀ). The talented poet presented to the *Gurū* an anthology of his poetry entitled *Bandgīnāmā* (ਬੰਦਗੀਨਾਮਾ), a volume of devotional poetry. The book was highly commended by *Gurū Sāhib* who gave the work a new title *Zindagīnāmā* (ਜਿੰਦਗੀਨਾਮਾ), the Book of Life.

During his stay at Pāumṭā, the *Gurū* also sent five Sikhs to Banāras (ਬਨਾਰਸ) to gain proficiency in Sanskrit and ancient literature. The *Gurū* gave due attention to the training of the Sikhs. Hunting and chase formed a part of the *Gurū's* routine at Pāumṭā. It is here that *Gurū Sāhib* and his Sikhs engaged in the battle of Bhaṅgāṇī against the Hill Chiefs.