

Grade: 7

Course: Virṣā (ਵਿਰਸਾ)

Lesson Number: 13

Unit Name: Sikh Misals (ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸਲ)

Title: An Introduction to the *Misal* Period

Standards

Standard 2: Sikh Misals

- Students critically evaluate the fratricidal affects of the *Misal* period and their downfall.
 - Students should identify the reasons for the downfall of the *Misals* and how their actions did not follow Gurmat (ਗੁਰਮਤ) teachings.

Objectives

1. Students will gain a brief overview of the *Misal* period. They will learn about the leadership, location and the history of each *Misal*.

Prerequisites

- Students should be familiar with some basic teachings of *Gurmat*.

Materials

- The article entitled “Brief History of Sikh Misals” (see Teacher Resources)
- Map of Pañjāb (ਪੰਜਾਬ) (see Teacher Resources)

Advanced Preparation

- The teacher should thoroughly read the article on “Brief History of Sikh Misals”. S/he may also want to do extra research if necessary.
- This is a 3-class unit. Teacher should read all three lessons prior to starting.

Engagement (15-20 minutes)

- Greet students and give them a couple of minutes to settle down and take out their notebooks.
- In order to introduce this topic, ask students what they know about *Misals*.
- Some students may want to know what the word *Misal* means so the teacher can spend some time discussing the definition. The teacher should give students a brief background about the origin of the misals (included in, Brief History of Sikh Misal).

Exploration (35 minutes)

- In order to get students to look at Sikh *Misals* in depth, get students to split up into groups of two or three (no more than three).
- Each group should be assigned one *Misal* to research and take notes on. The teacher can use the Brief History of Sikh Misals and photocopy the relevant sections for each group, or students can use other sources such as the Internet, other books, etc., if available.
- Each group should also get a copy of a historical map of Pañjāb. A map from the early 1900s is included in the Teacher Resources, but the teacher may want to use an earlier map if S/he has access to one.
- Ask each group to prepare a three to five minute presentation on the *Misal* that they are studying and locate that *Misal* on the map by circling the cities or districts that it occupied. Give students the rest of the class period to work on their presentation.

Explanation/ Extension (5-10 minutes)

- Before class ends, ask students to make sure that they include the following things in the final production of their presentation on the *Misal* that they are studying:
 - The leader of the *Misal*, the areas where it was located, the size of the *Misal* (number of members) and a brief historical overview of the *Misal*.

Evaluation (On-going)

- Students will offer their presentation in the next class (see next lesson plan for how to evaluate this assignment).

Teacher Resources

- Bainsarjī, Himādrī. The *Khālsā* and the Pañjāb: Studies in Sikh History, to the Nineteenth Century. New Dillī: Tulikā Books, 2002.
- Madrā, Amandīp Singh & Singh, Parmjīt. The Rise of the Sikh Confederacies, Warrior Saints: Three Centuries of the Sikh Military Tradition. New Dillī: Timeless Books, 1999.
- Singh, Saṅgat. The Sikhs in History. New Dillī: Uncommon Books, 1999.
- Sikh Misals. Sikh Information. January 27th, 2007. <http://www.info-sikh.com/PageMisal.html>
- Brief History of Sikh Misals. Sikh Missionary College. January 27th, 2007. www.rajkaregakhalsa.net/literature/General%20Sikhī/Brief%20History%20of%20Sikh%20Misals.pdf
- Sikh Misals. Sikh-history. January 27th, 2007. <http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/events/Misals.html>
- J.G. Bartholomew. Pañjāb. Imperial Gazetteer of India. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907-1909. p 394

Brief History of Sikh Misals (ਮਿਸਲ)

Origin of Misals

During the second Udāsī (ਉਦਾਸੀ) of Gurū Nānak (ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ), when he visited the *Sidhs* (ਸਿਧ) on Sūmer Parbat (ਸੂਮੇਰ ਪਰਬਤ), on being asked on what foundation he would raise the structure of Sikhī (ਸਿਖੀ), Gurū Nānak Sāhib replied, “On two pillars; one is Gurū Saṅgat (ਗੁਰੂ ਸੰਗਤ) and the other is Bāṇī (ਬਾਣੀ)”. The respect for Bāṇī, and sitting together in the form of saṅgat helped raise the Sikh organizations and institutions. Both Gurū Aṅgad Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ) and Gurū Amardās Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਸਾਹਿਬ) taught the Sikhs (ਸਿਖ) to respect the institution of Saṅgat and declared *Gur-Sabad* (ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ) as the heart of the Gurū. Words of wisdom propagated by so-called spiritual leaders other than the Gurū were branded as Kacī Bāṇī (ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ). The Sikhs were advised to leave such unauthentic sermons, which had not come out of the mouth of true Gurū. Gurū Rāmdās Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਸਾਹਿਬ) raised Ammrītsar (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ) as the centre of Sikhī (ਸਿਖੀ) and it became the pivot of Sikh Saṅgat. In order to safeguard the Sabad Gurū and the institutions, Gurū Arjan Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ) sacrificed his life. When two Sikhs sit together, it becomes Sādh Saṅgat whereas a lone Sikh is just a Sikh. Five Sikhs together are deemed to embody the presence of the Gurū. These views lent great strength to the Saṅgat. During the period from Gurū Harigobind Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ) to Gurū Teghbahādar (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ), the respect for Bāṇī and Saṅgat increased many folds. The enemies and opponents of Sikhī did much to reduce the respect of Bāṇī from the hearts of Sikhs, but they could not succeed in their aim. During the Gurū period, beside Saṅgat and Gur Sabad, the Gurū’s person was also respected and revered.

A stage came when Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ) contemplated that instead of the body of Gurū, the ideology, Saṅgat and Bāṇī be made supreme. He had also realized that the Sikhs had become well aware and would not fall into the trap of the doubts and suspicions created by ordinary mortals. Thus, he merged his personality in the Saṅgat, gave it the form of *Khālsā* (ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ) and adopted its form himself. This meant that the personality of the Gurū had now merged with the *Khālsā* and the *Khālsā* would now be the Gurū’s form. During the last hours of his life, Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib bestowed the honor of Gurūship upon Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ), thus raising its status to supreme level. Bāṇī was revered as it is; but now by issuing an edict, Sabh Sikhan ko Hukam hai Gurū Mānō Granth (ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ॥), he made it supreme, removing all doubts and suspicions. The body was Gurū *Khālsā*, where as the soul resided in Gurū Granth. Both

together became the Gurū. Thus, Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib blessed the Sikhs with an eternal leader to lead them during difficult times. Such a leader was omnipresent and beyond the cycle of birth and death. Thus, the Sikhs never wavered. After the demise of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib, Sikhs made Ammritsar the centre of their struggle. Sikhs would assemble at Ammritsar twice a year—once on Divālī (ਦਿਵਾਲੀ) and again on Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ). This assembly used to be called Sarbat Khālsā (ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ). They would pass resolutions and arrive at decisions in the presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib. All resolutions were passed unanimously, and once passed; these were called Gurmatās (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ). The passed Gurmatā was respected by Sikhs as the will of the Gurū. Everyone would revere it as such.

Selection of Five Beloved Ones

Whenever the Sarbat Khālsā assembled, its proceedings would commence after an Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ) or supplication to Vāhigurū (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ). Thereafter, invocatory command or *Hukamnāmās* (ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ) of the Gurū (Gurū Granth Sāhib) would be read out. Then the name of a Sikh would be proposed and accepted by Jaikārās (ਜੈਕਾਰਾ). Such a selected Sikh was called by the name of *Piārā* (ਪਿਆਰਾ). Then this selected *Piārā* would propose another name. On approval from all present, he too would be given the status of a *Piārā*. If anyone objected, he would be appropriately answered, after listening to his reasons for objecting. If the answer was not to the satisfaction of the Saṅgat, his selection was cancelled. In similar fashion, a third, fourth and fifth *Piārā* would be selected. These selected five used to be the recipients of all the honor of the Khālsā Panth. They would then move to the Akāl Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ) and sit in the attendance of Gurū Granth Sāhib. Then, a Sikh from the Saṅgat would put up a proposal for consideration. It would be discussed and passed as Gurmatā, if found suitable for the good of the Panth and the public at large. If ever some impediment would arise, the Pañj Piārās (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ) would intervene and take a suitable decision. The passed resolutions would virtually become the policy of the whole Panth, which became binding on all. For example, matters like how to deal with the Navāb (ਨਵਾਬ) of Paṭī (ਪਟੀ) and the *Navāb* of Jalandhar (ਜਲੰਧਰ), who had accepted defeat; how should they be treated; what arrangements of defense or re-organization were to be made in case of invasion by Abdālī (ਅਬਦਾਲੀ); would it be in order to take possession of Lāhaur (ਲਾਹੌਰ); when would be the right time to punish the Navāb of Kasūr (ਕਸੂਰ) for the atrocities perpetrated by him etc. All such decisions were taken unanimously.

This method remained in vogue till 1733. Thereafter, many *Jathās* (ਜਥਾ) came up. But whenever Sarbat Khālsā assembled, the individuality of the *Jathās* never existed. Then they became two *Jathā* — the Tarunā Dal (ਤਰੁਨਾ ਦਲ) and the Buḍā Dal (ਬੁਡਾ ਦਲ). Buḍā Dal remained at Ammritsar, to protect it, while Tarunā Dal went on campaigns. All *Jathedārs* (ਜਥੇਦਾਰ) used to render their account before the Akāl Takht to a person appointed by Navāb Kapūr Singh (ਨਵਾਬ ਕਪੂਰ ਸਿੰਘ). Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā (ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ) performed this duty for some time. The Tarunā Dal further divided itself into five *Jathās*, with Shām Singh (ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ), Bābā Dīp Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ), Karam Singh (ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ), Dān Singh (ਦਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ), Dasaumdhā Singh (ਦਸੌਂਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bīr Singh (ਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ) as the *Jathedārs*. Gradually, the area of influence of the Sikhs increased and, therefore, the number of *Jathās* also increased. By 1748, the strength of Dal Khālsā (ਦਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ) had gone up. Had it not been arrested, it would have crossed all boundaries. Navāb Kapūr Singh felt that in view of the threatened attack of Abdālī, there was a need to unite as one. So he told everyone to break their *Jathās*. It was a decision accepted by all. Tarunā Dal and Buḍā Dal too were broken. For the protection of Darbār Sāhib (ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) in Ammritsar, Akālīs (ਅਕਾਲੀ) were appointed. The entire organization was named Dal Khālsā. Its command was handed over to Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā. Navāb Kapūr Singh retired from active service of the Panth. Dal Khālsā was split into eleven *Jathās*. Each *Jathā* was placed under a

Jathedār. The area of jurisdiction of each *Jathā* was also defined so that there was no inter *Jathā* discord. The eleven *Jathās* and their *Jathedārs* were as under—

1. **Bhaṅgī** (ਭੰਗੀ) – Bhāi Bhūmā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਭੂਮਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and his son Bhāi Harī Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ)
2. **Nishānvālīā** (ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਵਾਲੀਆ) (The flag bearer) – Bhāi Dasaumḍā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਦਸੌਂਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ)
3. **Shahīd Singhī** (ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਸਿੰਘੀ) – Bābā Bīr Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bābā Dīp Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ)
4. **Rāmgarīā or Singhīā** (ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ/ਸਿੰਘੀਆ) – Bhāi Hardās Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹਰਦਾਸ ਸਿੰਘ) and then Jassā Singh who converted Rām Rauṇī (ਰਾਮ ਰੌਣੀ) into Rāmgar (ਰਾਮਗੜ)
5. **Nakāī** (ਨਕਈ) – Bhāi Hīrā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Natthā Singh (ਨੱਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ)
6. **Āhlūvālīā** (ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ) – Jassā Singh of village Āhlū (ਆਹਲੂ)
7. **Ghanaīā** (ਘਨਈਆ) – Khushhāl Singh (ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ) and Jai Singh (ਜੈ ਸਿੰਘ)
8. **Faizalpurīā or Singhpurīā** (ਫੈਜਲਪੁਰੀਆ/ਸਿੰਘਪੁਰੀਆ) – Navāb Kapūr Singh
9. **Ḍālevālīā** (ਡਾਲੇਵਾਲੀਆ) – Gurdīāl Singh (ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ), village Ḍālevāl
10. **Shukarcakīā** (ਸ਼ੁਕਰਚਕੀਆ) – Caṛat Singh (ਚੜਤ ਸਿੰਘ), village Shukarcak
11. **Karoṣsinghīā** (ਕਰੋੜਸਿੰਘੀਆ) – Karoṛā Singh (ਕਰੋੜਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Baghel Singh (ਬਘੇਲ ਸਿੰਘ)
12. **Phulkīām** (ਫੁਲਕੀਆਂ) – Bābā Ālā Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Amar Singh (ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ)

These *Jathās* became famous by the names of the *Misals* (ਮਿਸਲ).

Naming *Jathās* as *Misals*

Initially, these eleven groups were called *Jathās*, but very gradually, the word *Jathā* got replaced with *Misal*. A file of every *Jathā* was kept at Ammrītsar. It used to contain the exploits of its *Jathedār* and soldiers. Whatever loot was brought by a *Jathedār*, he used to have it recorded in his file and then deposit it with the treasury. They would all say, “Please write my details in the *Misal* (file.)” Thus, the word *Jathā* gradually dropped from their names and the word *Misal* got added, so much so that the Sikh soldiers started referring to each other as *Misals*. Even if some one brought anything in his individual capacity, he would ask the in-charge to record it in the *Misal* to which he belonged.

The Tasks of the *Misals*

Although outwardly the *Misals* became separate, they were still attached with each other. During any emergency, they used to come together and offer a combined front to the enemy. They could never imagine separating themselves from Dal *Khālsā*. They put their loot in a common coffer and shared their exploits. There was no selfishness and no ‘mine’ and ‘ours’. Whenever they assembled at Ammrītsar during Divālī and Vaisākhī, they never sat under their flag but that of Dal *Khālsā*. They were proud to call themselves Sarbat *Khālsā*.

The *Misals* took many joint decisions. They often held joint functions. Dealing with invaders and those who were against them were common matters for them. Physically, they were separate, yet their hearts beat in unison. Soldiers were at liberty to express their views, yet they honored the decision of their *Jathedārs*. Secondly; there was no high or low in the *Misal*. There were no gradations, nor sequences. All were equal. A *Jathedār* was a soldier first and a soldier was as important as a *Jathedār*. He who enjoyed the confidence and trust of all was normally appointed as *Jathedār*. Yet his wish was never final. Every soldier could communicate his views to the *Jathedār*. Maulvī Vālī Illāh Siddiqī (ਮੌਲਵੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਲਾਹ ਸਿੱਦੀਕੀ) has written: “Every person of the Sikh *Misal* was a free person. Every leader was a master as well as servant. He was a ruler as well as a follower. When alone, he is a saint, a fakīr (ਫਕੀਰ) or a Bhagat (ਭਗਤ) and when part of the Panth, he is the angel of death for his enemies.”. Dr. Sinhā says that the *Jagīrdārī* (ਜਗੀਰਦਾਰੀ) of Sikhs was neither on the lines of Europe

nor of *Rajputānā* (ਰਾਜਪੂਤਾਨਾ). Each head of the *Misal* used to obey the leader, but only to an extent. The opinion of every Sikh soldier was respected. It was a system that was spelt out by the need of the hour. No parallel of it can be found in India or even western countries.

Thirdly; every soldier had a right to leave a *Misal* and join any other *Misal* of his choice. This attitude was never looked down upon. It clearly establishes that the ultimate objective of all the *Misals* was the same. One who was leaving was sent by his *Jathedār* happily while the receiving *Jathedār* always felt happy to receive him. Thus, the advantage of the system was that the personality of the individual was maintained and respected. It was the moral duty of all the *Jathedārs* to keep their soldiers happy. A happy and contented soldier would never leave the *Misal*.

Development of the *Misals*

Till 1767, all *Misals* were focused on thwarting the invasions of Abdālī. Thus, they remained united under the common flag of Dal *Khālsā*, obeyed the command of one *Jathedār*, and honored all the decisions of Sarbat *Khālsā* without any reservation. After 1767, Abdālī was no longer a threat; the Mughal influence too had waned in Pañjāb (ਪੰਜਾਬ), and the Marāṭhās (ਮਰਾਠਾ) would not think of coming towards Pañjāb. There was no power in Pañjāb that was comparable to that of the Sikhs. At this point, selfish motives began to surface and political aspirations also arose. Consequently, all of the *Misals* started expanding their territory of jurisdiction. This became their prime objective.

Although the territories of each *Misal* were earmarked, their limits/ boundaries had not been defined. Taking advantage of this, each *Misal* started working towards defining their boundaries and jurisdiction. Raising forts in their territory was the first action they undertook. Then, the soldiers' position was made permanent and they were paid wages periodically. The *Misaldārs'* desire to extend their rule changed their attitude of love and respect into jealousy and hatred. Thus, the entire Pañjāb got divided into twelve parts. The existence of twelve *Misals* was confirmed. The attendance for Sarbat *Khālsā* at Ammritsar started thinning. Those who attended still showed total respect and regard to the Gurmatās. Those who were absent from the Sarbat *Khālsā*, started flouting such respected decisions. Many started raising objections. As a result, the holding of Sarbat *Khālsā* became infrequent. The last meeting of Sarbat *Khālsā* took place in 1805 during the time of Rañjīt Singh (ਰਾਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ). When the external threat of aggression, which had united the *Misals* ended, the *Misals* became independent and the common objectives which held them together also disappeared. Thus, political unity also ended.

Merits of *Misal* Organizations

Misals were historic necessities, without which the survival of the Panthic organization was not tenable. *Misals* not only helped keep the Panthic organizations united but also helped in the development and spread of Sikhī. The first merit of *Misals* was that the Panth got saved from division into small independent self-governing states, at logger-heads with each other. Navāb Kapūr Singh realized that if 63 *Jathās* can come up in 15 years, their strength can climb to a hundred in a few more. They would then not only become independent, but also break away from their pivot. So Navāb Kapūr Singh organized them into eleven *Jathās* after consolidating them into Dal *Khālsā*. The formation of eleven *Misals* also satisfied the ego of the *Jathedārs* and prevented them from getting scattered. Innately, it also provided them with time for development. Secondly, the organization of *Misals* increased the area of influence of the Sikhs. With the help of their associates, the *Misal Sardārs* (ਸਰਦਾਰ) took over the whole of Pañjāb. Thirdly, this *Misal* system proved very useful in protecting the country against external invaders. This system made the Sikhs invincible. Defeating a *Misal* did not mean the total defeat of the Sikhs because the other *Misals* used to unite and faced the enemy with courage. This is why the Mughals, Marāṭhās and then Afgāns could not succeed in their missions. The *Misal* system was such that no one could say that a strike at such and such place would

prove decisive. Every *Misal* revolved around a pivot, and any breakaway group would attach itself with another *Misal*. The services rendered by Phulkīān *Misal* during the Major Holocaust and Rāmgarīā *Misal* during the reign of cruelty of Mīr Mannū (ਮੀਰ ਮੰਨੂ) are two examples of such solidarity. Once the field of operation had become reduced, the *Jathedārs* of the *Misals* and the soldiers were familiar with every inch of the ground. Outsiders often became helpless in tracing them. Every river and brook became their friend. Fourthly, once the wish of every *Misal* was respected, the feelings of enmity and opposition disappeared. Since the area of operation of every *Misal* was defined, there was complete freedom. If any dispute or discord arose, the *Jathedār* of Dal Khālsā would make a decision without taking sides. Lastly, the unwritten charter of the *Misals* was such that every soldier was the master of his own will. A soldier could leave a *Misal* to join any other. Similarly, every soldier would get adequate opportunity to progress. By his own traits, a soldier could rise to the level of deputy *Jathedār* or even *Jathedār*. This possibility maintained a feeling of perpetual prosperity amongst the Sikhs and did not permit the birth of feudalism.

Demerits of the *Misal* System

Although the *Misals* had many historic and timely merits, they proved very harmful after 1767. This time was a period of vacuum in the history of India. Any stable, progressive, strong-willed and opportunist nation could exploit the conditions to establish a lasting rule by filling up the void. The Sikhs had all the characteristics to do so. It was not impossible for the Sikhs to establish an empire in Northern India. Forester, who came to India as a traveler in 1783, writes his impressions in his travelogues. He wrote that he had no hesitation in recording that the Sikhs would become the primary force among the Indian states and shortly after, they would prove destructive for their neighbors. What Sardār Raṅjīt Singh desired could have been fulfilled a century earlier. On the death of Nāṣaf Khan (ਨਾਜਫ ਖਾਨ) in 1782, there was no strong minister in Dillī. Sikhs wasted that golden opportunity. Shortly after this time, Shāh Ālam (ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਲਮ) the second had reached an accord with the Marāṭhās and the British Government had started to interfere directly in his affairs. With the stepping in of the British, the entire area under the Sikh protection was lost. The Sikhs remained confined to the land of the five rivers. Let us take a look at the harm done by the *Misals*.

1. **Mutual Discords and Opposition:** C. H. Payne writes that the *Misals* gave birth to jealousy, a trait that was alien to the Sikhs until that time. It now became a part of their character. Once the external threat was over, inner strife took birth. Scramble for land commenced. They started fighting with each other with the same gusto as they fought with the *Durrānīs* (ਦੁਰਰਾਨੀ). After the invasion of *Durrānīs*, the external threat would end and its place was taken up by doubts and suspicions. This set off fights within the house. When they should have been thinking about the political landscape of the larger India, they were wasting their time in fighting with each other.
2. **End of *Gurmatā* and Break up of Organizational Structure:** The *Misal* system virtually ended the principle of *Gurmatā* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ). The *Gurmatā* system had guided the community during the most arduous times; its end broke the pivot of unity. The common congregation at Vaisākhī and Divālī ended, the respect between the *Misal* leaders was over and the greatness of the organization broke. If these had remained, it can be said with certainty that Sikhs would have succeeded in laying the foundation of a mighty empire and would have presented an unparallel front in India. But everything that happened was against the expectations. As a result, the organizational structure broke and the authority of Sikhs remained confined to Pañjāb.
3. **A Blow to the Democratic Set up:** The birth of the Sikh nation and its organizational structure was in favor of democracy and democratic values. Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib had adopted this concept in creating the Khālsā. The selection of five beloveds and passing of *Gurmatā* was aimed at the fulfillment of this ideology. The truth is, that this was the main

principle behind raising eleven organizations: so that the existence of all could be maintained. But the *Misal* system ended the sentiment of democracy. When Raṇjīt Siṅgh adopted the age-old regal system of governance, he had also sown the seeds of the decline of the empire.

4. **Breaking of Associations Led to Debacles:** The commencement of a rat race for achieving selfish ends destroyed the earlier associations, and closeness of purpose, in the Panth. Earlier the *Misals* used to become one in the event of any external aggression, but their mutual enmity increased to such an extent in 15 years that they never came together, even in the face of common threat to them. When united, they were capable of facing the might of Abdālī, but the greatest joke of history took place when the *Misals* of trans-Satluj (ਸਤਲੁਜ) were defeated by Ambā Piṅgle Rāṇe Khān (ਅੰਬਾ ਪਿੰਗਲੇ ਰਾਣੇ ਖਾਨ) and then Peron in 1787, 1790 and 1796 respectively. Some *Misal Sardārs* accepted defeat and began payment of yearly tribute to their vanquishers.

Sikhs Could not Become Mighty Power: The period from 1767 to 1799 was a period of turmoil in India. The big powers had ended while the smaller had not yet found their feet on the ground. The Mughal empire had been reduced to just a name. The Marāṭhās were also a spent force. Ahmad Shāh Durrānī (ਅਹਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੁਰਾਨੀ) of Afghanistan had expired in 1772 and the British were still in the far east of India. *Rohilās* (ਰੋਹਿਲਾ), *Jats* (ਜਟ), *Rājput* (ਰਾਜਪੂਤ) and *Navābs* of Avadh (ਅਵਧ) enjoyed some authority in Northern India but they were not strong enough. There was infighting amongst them and there was not one power that could be called strong due to its organizational structure. According to a contemporary writer: “There were internal fights and the country was crying out in pain. That was a blessed time for the Sikhs because the threat of the *Durrānīs* had also ended. Ahmad Shāh died in 1772 and his successor remained engrossed in his domestic affairs. He had neither the time nor the power to invade the Pañjāb.” The Sikhs took no advantage of the situation and remained involved in their petty disputes. The *Misals* could not fulfill their dreams of becoming a mighty power in Hindostan. So we can say it with conviction that the *Misals*, who had caused the Afgāns, Mughals and Marāṭhās to eat humble pie, got themselves involved in such small inner strife, that they proved themselves no better than a local power.

Brief History of the *Misals*

Eleven *Jathās* were constituted under the command of Dal *Khālsā*. These became famous as eleven *Misals*. The twelfth was not a part of Dal *Khālsā*, but was a *Misal* historically and constitutionally. It had its own area of jurisdiction. We must take a birds-eye view of the history of each *Misal* in order to understand how Raṇjīt Siṅgh managed to establish his rule in the territory west of river Satluj.

Shukarcakī *Misal* was one among the twelve that became the dominant *Misal* with the ascendance of Raṇjīt Siṅgh. After 1767, the entire Pañjāb came under Sikh rule in about six years time. The territory got divided into twelve *Misals*. The Sikhs commenced their own coin as well. The voice of “Deg Teg Fatih, Nusrat Be diraṅg, Yaft az Nānak Gurū Gobind Siṅgh” (ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫਤਿਹ, ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇ ਦਿਰੰਗ, ਯਫਤ ਅਜ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ!), started resounding in the Pañjāb. The *Khālsā* flag started fluttering from Sahāranpur (ਸਹਾਰਨਪੁਰ) in the East, to Aṭok (ਅਟੋਕ) in the West, and from Multān (ਮੁਲਤਾਨ) to Kāngrā (ਕਾਂਗੜਾ) in the North-West. Taimūr Shāh (ਤੈਮੂਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ), son of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī gave up his intentions of invading India, and Sikhs in particular. He made a few invasions, but these were not against the Sikhs; he needed to sort-out his own appointed rulers who had become defiant. Lāhaur and Pañjāb were not his targets. When a few selfish people of Pañjāb motivated him to come to Pañjāb, his reply was, “What has my father earned fighting the Sikhs?” Pañjāb came under the authority of the *Misals*. Every *Misal* had its own territory of protection. Many *Misals* remained in the Pañjāb but their authority became less imposing due to the sharp and fast stance of other *Misals*. Many thought it wise to merge themselves with others.

1. Faizalpurīā Misal: This was the most respected *Misal* among the Sikhs. Navāb Kapūr Singh was the founder and it was considered an honor to be part of this *Misal*. Navāb Kapūr Singh left the leadership of Dal Khālsā in 1749 but kept leading the *Misal*. He belonged to the village Faizalpur, therefore this name was adopted for the *Misal* as well. Later this very *Misal* was renamed as Singh purīā. Navāb Kapūr Singh led this *Misal* till 1753.

This *Misal* faced many enemies, and Navāb Singh Kapūr Singh himself had killed over 500 enemy soldiers. The *Misal* had a strength of 2500 soldiers. It operated across the river Satluj, right up to Dillī. After 1753, this *Misal* came under the leadership of Khushhāl Singh.. He too was a brave and gallant leader, who won territories on either side of the river Saltuj. He took possession of Jalandhar (ਜਲੰਧਰ), Nūrpur (ਨੂਰਪੁਰ), Bahirāmpur (ਬਹਿਰਾਮਪੁਰ), Bhāratgar (ਭਾਰਤਗੜ) and Paṭī (ਪਟੀ). He took active part in preaching of Sikhī. After him, his son Budh Singh (ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ) succeeded as the leader of the *Misal*. Budh Singh was not famous like his predecessors. Therefore, the popularity and importance of the *Misal* waned. Gradually, its area of influence shrank to Jaṇḍiālā (ਜੰਡਿਆਲਾ), Taran Tāran (ਤਰਨ ਤਾਰਨ) and Paṭī from the principal Mājha (ਮਾਝਾ) territory of the Pañjāb. Even this small area of jurisdiction was frequently interfered with by the Bhaṅgī Misal.

Since the *Faizalpurīā Misal* was located at Jaṇḍiālā, which is close to Amritsar, it was often the target of their enemy. The *Caudharīs* (ਚੌਧਰੀ) of Paṭī, *Phaujḍārs* (ਫੌਜਦਾਰ) of Taran Tāran and Nirañjanīās (ਨਿਰੰਜਨੀਆ) of Jaṇḍiālā had made this *Misal* the target of their wrath. Thus, its soldiers used to face the onslaught of the enemy perpetually. The enemy of the Sikhs always believed this *Misal* to be the pivot of the Dal Khālsā. Thus, dealing a death blow to it would break the back of the Sikh community. Yet the opponents could not succeed in their mission. The *Faizalpurīā Misal* always enjoyed the help of other *Misals*. Because of frequent blows over a long period of time, when the time of taking possession of the Pañjāb came, this *Misal* could not come to the forefront. Although it was much honored, yet when it came to extension of territories, the much hyped respect also waned. This respect was primarily on two accounts—first, because it was founded by Navāb Kapūr Singh, and secondly, because it bore the brunt of the attacks on itself in the event of aggressions from the Afgāns. This *Misal* was under Khushhāl Singh till 1783. The Bhaṅgī Misal, which was at its zenith, wanted to usurp the territory of this *Misal* but could not succeed. At last Ranjīt Singh annexed it into his kingdom.

2. Āhlūvalīā Misal: In terms of respect, this *Misal* was next only to the *Faizalpurīā Misal*. It holds an important place in Sikh history, and therefore was much revered. Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā was the founder of this *Misal*. As Navāb Kapūr Singh very ably led the Sikhs during the ‘Small Holocaust’ and did not let them slip into a state of dejection, similarly Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā led the Sikhs admirably during the invasions of Abdālī, the Vaḍā Ghalūghārā (ਵਡਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), oppressions of Adīnā Beg (ਅਦੀਨਾ ਬੇਗ) and Mīr Mannū, and the obstinacy of the Marāṭhās, and made them capable of ruling Pañjāb. The nation felt immense gratitude for his able leadership and service and bestowed on him the title of Sultān-ul-Kaum (ਸੁਲਤਾਨ-ਉਲ-ਕੌਮ) and made him Emperor of Lāhaur. When the matter of re-laying the foundation of Harimandar Sāhib (ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) came up, the entire community asked Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā to do the honor. These two events are enough to show the respect that he enjoyed among the Sikhs. When Navāb Kapūr Singh entrusted the leadership of the Panth into the able hands of Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā, it was not only a wise decision but also showed the foresight of Navāb Kapūr Singh. The Panth went through a period of turmoil from 1748 to 1767. It was the leadership of Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā that kept the nation on the path of progress and emerge victorious.

The elders of Jassā Singh belonged to village Āhlū. There lived a man by the name of Bhāgū (ਭਾਗੂ). Seeing the ascendancy of Sikhs, he sold all his belongings and purchased a horse. He joined the *Misal* of Navāb Kapūr Singh and was baptized with Khaṇḍe-dī-Pāhul (ਖੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ) and renamed Bhāg Singh (ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ). Soon, he organized his own *Jathā* but he always held Navāb Kapūr Singh's counsel as supreme. One day, Navāb Kapūr Singh visited his house. There he met his widowed sister who had taken Khaṇḍe-dī-Pāhul. She was singing Gurbānī very melodiously to the accompaniment of the *Rabāb* (ਰਬਾਬ). When Navāb Kapūr Singh heard her singing, he was full of praise for her devotion. He asked if the widowed lady had any issue, Bhāg Singh informed him that she had a son who had been staying with Mātā Sundarī (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ) and had just arrived. This boy was Jassā Singh. Navāb Kapūr Singh took one look at the child and said that he would become a famous warrior and a leading Sardār. Hearing this, the wise mother placed the hand of the child into the hands of Navāb Kapūr Singh. In a short period of time, the name of Jassā Singh became more known than his uncle Bhāg Singh. When Bhāg Singh died, the responsibility of the *Misal* fell upon Jassā Singh, since Bhāg Singh had no issue of his own. Thus, this *Misal* was named Āhlūvalīā. The jurisdiction and territory of the *Misal* was well defined. Its headquarters were in Doābā Jalandhar. It consisted of the area east of the river Biās (ਬਿਆਸ), Āhlū, Sariālā (ਸਰਿਆਲਾ), Silevār (ਸਿਲੇਵਾਰ), Bhupāl (ਭੁਪਾਲ), Gagarvāl (ਗਗਰਵਾਲ), Pār Talvaṇḍī (ਪਾਰ ਤਲਵੰਡੀ) and Sultānpur (ਸੁਲਤਾਨਪੁਰ). They were receiving revenue from Rāi Ibrāhīm (ਰਾਇ ਇਬਰਾਹਿਮ) of Kapūrthālā (ਕਪੂਰਥਲਾ). They also exercised their influence across river Satluj up to Koṭ Īsā Khān (ਕੋਟ ਈਸਾ ਖਾਨ) and Jagrām (ਜਗਰਾਮ). Although Jassā Singh was the leader of the *Misal*, yet his point of view was never selfish and limited to the *Misal*. The welfare and good of the Panth was at the core of his heart until his end.

This *Misal* too enjoys an honorable place in Sikh history. If Faizalpurīā Misal bore the brunt of all attacks, this *Misal* did not lag behind in confronting the foreign aggression. Adīnā Beg was a clever Navāb of his time. He did not relinquish his control over Jalandhar until his death. But this *Misal* kept his intentions in check. Adīnā Beg made many attempts on this *Misal* but had to keep quiet due to the strong reply of Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā. This *Misal* remained in power for long. Adīnā Beg also tried to pitch Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā (ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ) against the Āhlūvalīā Misal, but the Rāmgarīā Sardār did not fall prey to his guiles. No *Jathedār* dared violate the code of conduct with Jassā Singh around. During the occupation of Lāhaur, Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā was appointed Pātishāh (ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹ). After 1767, this *Misal* took possession of Kapūrthala and Jalandhar, but Jassā Singh had grown old and did not think it appropriate to take part in the rat race. In 1783, he breathed his last at Ammrtsar. Every one was much impressed by his nobility, magnificence and gallantry. After him, the leadership of the *Misal* fell into the hands of his nephew Bhāg Singh, a son of his brother. He was a weak ruler and could not succeed in the expansion of his jurisdiction. Instead, he earned a dispute with the Rāmgarīā Misal. After Bhāg Singh, his successor Phatah Singh (ਫਤਹ ਸਿੰਘ) became a foster brother of Raṇjīt Singh who merged this *Misal* with his own and used it for personal gain. The area of operation of this *Misal* remained confined to Kapūrthālā. At its zenith, this *Misal* had the strength of 7000 soldiers.

3. Rāmgarīā/Singhīā Misal: Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā was the founder and *Jathedār* of this *Misal*. He belonged to the village Icgil (ਇਚੋਗਿਲ). His ancestors were carpenters by profession, so he was addressed as Ṭhokā (ਠੋਕਾ), which almost became his surname. While he was well aware of construction and raising buildings, he was also an intelligent soldier and military General. Sarbat Khālsā decided to construct a garrison enclosure near Gurduārā Bibeksar (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਿਬੇਕਸਰ) for the protection and defense of Darbār Sāhib. This was named Rām Raṇjīt (ਰਾਮ ਰੋਣੀ). Sikhs were of the opinion that without a fort/ fortress, protection of the sanctum sanctorum was not viable. Therefore,

Jassā Singh was entrusted the task of raising Rām Rauṇī. When in 1748, this Rām Rauṇī was made into a permanent structure, Rām Rauṇī became Rāmgar. Although Jassā Singh was unhappy with Sikhs during the period of turmoil and adversities, he fought on the side of his brothers and saved Rāmgar. Since that day, the suffix Rāmgarīā got added to his name. His *Misal* too became known as the Rāmgarīā Misal. Ghanaīā Lāl (ਘਨਈਆ ਲਾਲ), the historian, writes that seeing his intelligence, cleverness, sweetness of conversation and very respectable appearance, Adīnā Beg was highly impressed with Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā. Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā made adequate contributions in the struggle for freedom and at no time had he backtracked himself.

Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā became cross with Dal Khālsā in 1750 on account of an incident regarding the killing of a new born girl. He was accused of this crime—an act which was against the tenets of Sikhī. The Dal Khālsā expressed its anger. Jassā Singh was peeved at being punished without making an investigation of the matter. Adīnā Beg, who had been looking for an appropriate time, entered into a treaty with Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā. This arrangement between them was frowned upon for some time. In accordance with the treaty Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā joined Adīnā Beg and Mīr Mannū in attacking Rām Rauṇī in 1751. The Sikhs were trapped inside Rām Rauṇī, with no avenue for escape. Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā, who was no less a Sikh at heart, could not bear the condition of the entrapped Sikhs. He detached himself from the army of Adīnā Beg and took the side of the Sikhs. As soon as he attacked, the enemy forces scrambled for cover and ran away. Jassā Singh kept confronting the Durrānīs along with the other *Misals* of Dal Khālsā.

He achieved many victories at far and near places in collaboration with Jai Singh Ghanaīā. When Khvājā Abad Khān (ਖ਼ਵਾਜ਼ਾ ਅਬਦ ਖ਼ਾਨ) tried to break the organizational structure of Dal Khālsā, Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā, along with the Sardār of Ghanaīā Misal handed him a crushing defeat. Even during the Great Holocaust, he bore the brunt of the attack equally. After Abdālī had withdrawn, Jassā Singh too commenced his campaign for expansion of his area of jurisdiction. He took Baṭālā (ਬਟਾਲਾ), Kalnaur (ਕਲਨੌਰ), Dīnā Nagar (ਦੀਨਾ ਨਗਰ), Kaudīān (ਕੌਦੀਆਂ), Srī Hargobindpur (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦਪੁਰ), Ghuman (ਘੁਮਨ) and some other villages of Ammritsar under his rule. His annual revenue also mounted to six lakhs. He was in complete control of the Doāb area of Jalandhar. The Ghanaīā Misal did not appreciate his occupation of Kalnaur and Baṭālā. Therefore, they fell apart with the Rāmgarīā Misal. In this state of pulls and pushes, Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā suffered much. So he had to go across river Satluj, leaving his own territory. His organizational structure was strong and there was no one as strong and effective between river Satluj and Jamunā (ਜਮੁਨਾ). Bābā Ālā Singh had expired and the Sardārs of Karōsinghīā Misal were not fit enough to confront him. He established himself as a powerful leader in a short time and established Sirsā (ਸਿਰਸਾ) as his central place. He attacked the Mughal palaces of Dillī and took away four guns. He collected a sum of ten thousand rupees as protection money from the *Navāb* of Meraṭ (ਮੇਰਾਠ). He razed Hisār (ਹਿਸਾਰ) to the ground, because its ruler had molested two Brāhmaṇ (ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ) girls, and collected about 5 lakh gold coins from there. He won many campaigns and battles in the Doāb of the Gaṅgā (ਗੰਗਾ) and Jamunā rivers. Had he stayed there for some more time, he would have emerged a strong power for ruling the entire Northern India. But he could never forget the territory that he had lost or was snatched away from him. In 1783, he collaborated with the Shukarcakīā Misal and attacked the territory of the Ghanaīā Misal. He also took over the territory of Baṭālā. The Ghanaīā Misal was much aggrieved but was not in a state to fight alone.

When Raṇjīt Singh married the daughter of Gurbakhsh Singh (ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ), and Sadā Kaur of Ghanaīā Misal, Sadā Kaur also got an opportunity to punish the Rāmgarīā Misal. So she attacked Miānī (ਮਿਆਨੀ), where Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā was stationed, with the help of Raṇjīt Singh in 1796.

Jassā Singh approached Bābā Sāhib Singh Bedī (ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਦੀ) to squash the matter, but Sadā Kaur (ਸਦਾ ਕੌਰ) did not listen to him. As a result Bābā Sāhib Singh felt displeased. It is said that Sadā Kaur had a very narrow escape at Biās (ਬਿਆਸ).

By now, Jassā Singh had grown old. Therefore, he felt it wise to lead a retired life at one place. He breathed his last in 1803. With his demise, the fame of the *Misal* also waned. Raṇjīt Singh took possession of the territory of this *Misal* when Budh Singh, son of Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā, accepted submission. This *Misal* was about 3000 soldiers strong. During his invasions across the river Satluj, this strength touched the 8000 mark.

4. Bhaṅgī Misal: This was counted as a formidable *Misal* amongst the Sikh *Misals*. In the early period, Faizalpurīā and Āhlūvalīā Misal reigned supreme. These two were much respected in the Panth, but after the departure of Abdālī, both these *Misals* did not take part in the rat race of supremacy. Thus, they lagged behind. Rāmgarīās were also pushed across the river Satluj. When it became effective to interfere in the power equation of Pañjāb, Bhaṅgī Misal was at its peak. Dr Sinhā is of the opinion that had Bhaṅgī Misal acted wisely, it would have ruled the Pañjāb instead of the Shukarcakīā Misal. Chajjā Singh (ਛੱਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ) was the founder of this *Misal*. He brought the *Jats* of his area into the fold of Sikhī and formed an independent *Jathā*. Then they started attacking small hamlets of the Mughal kingdom. Bhāī Bhīm Singh (ਭੀਮ ਸਿੰਘ) took over the *Misal* after Chajjā Singh. Bhāī Bhīm Singh had been baptized by Chajjā Singh and belonged to village Kasūr. During the invasion of Nādir Shāh, Bhīm Singh earned a good name for himself. They collected much of the plundered goods. After Bhīm Singh, Harī Singh succeeded as the leader of the *Misal*. Harī Singh was the nephew of Bhāī Bhīm Singh and was adopted as his son. This *Misal* earned a great deal of fame during his leadership. Harī Singh was an intelligent leader, a progressive soldier and a wise statesman. The writer of Tvārīkh-e-Pañjāb (ਤਵਾਰੀਖ-ਏ-ਪੰਜਾਬ) writes that Harī Singh was a clever and powerful man of shining abilities. He was very active during all the Sikh struggles and at no time had he been found wanting in effort. They kept winning and attacking territories up to a hundred miles or so and the Bhaṅgī Misal is the only *Misal* that had arranged for good horses for all its soldiers. They made Gilvālī (ਗਿਲਵਾਲੀ), Ammritsar as their headquarters. The centre of all Sikh struggles was Ammritsar alone; even the ruling power was keen to destroy the importance of Ammritsar for the Sikhs. Thus, this *Misal* earned a pivotal place by virtue of its position and the strength of soldiers of this *Misal* increased to 20 000. For their love of Ammritsar, and in order to save its honor, every soldier and progressive leader yearned to join this *Misal*. It was considered a matter of pride to be part of it. Harī Singh himself was a proud and progressive young soldier. Whenever he fought, he would appear to be intoxicated and people thought that he had consumed hemp/cannabis. Thus, the suffix Bhaṅgī got added to his name and the *Misal* also became famous by this name. This *Misal* expanded its area of jurisdiction a great deal after the departure of Abdālī. The boundary that was confined to an area around Ammritsar now extended to Cinaut (ਚਿਨੌਤ) and Jhaṅg (ਝੰਗ). The *Misal* also took possession of Siālkoṭ (ਸਿਆਲਕੋਟ), Nārovāl (ਨਾਰੋਵਾਲ) and Kariāl (ਕਰਿਆਲ) as well as Rāvalpīṇḍī (ਰਾਵਲਪਿੰਡੀ). Rājā Raṇjīt Dev (ਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਦੇਵ) of Jammū (ਜੰਮੂ) was brought to submission by the Bhaṅgīs, who took tribute from him. The *Misal* had the *Khālsā* flag raised even across river Sindh (ਸਿੰਧ). Rāī Singh Būrhīā (ਰਾਇ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੂਰਹੀਆ) had the Sikh flag fluttering across the river Jamunā. Even Raṇjīt Singh acknowledged defeat against this *Misal*. The Bhaṅgī Sardārs even planned to win Kashmīr, but their plans did not come to fruition. It was in the leadership of Harī Singh that Lahaṇā Singh (ਲਹਣਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Gujjar Singh (ਗੁੱਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ) and Sobhā Singh (ਸੋਭਾ ਸਿੰਘ) took their first *Jathā* to Lāhaur in 1765 and took over the city. Gujjar Singh even went to confront Mukbār Khān (ਮੁਕਬਾਰ ਖਾਨ) and had his authority established from the river Cināb (ਚਿਨਾਬ) to the river of Sindh. Mukbār Khān had

established his authority in this area and took it as his right to rule the area after Abdālī. By dealing a decisive defeat to him, the Bhaṅgī Sardārs ended his authority from the territory. Thus, Gujjar Singh made Gujrāt (ਗੁਜਰਾਤ) the centre of his activities. Carat Singh Shukarcakīā demanded his share after seeing the progress and prosperity of the Bhaṅgī Misal. Gujjar Singh asked him to launch a joint attack across the river Jhelam (ਝੇਲਮ) so that Mukbār Khān could be pushed across the river Sindh because the Shukarcakīā Misal could only be given a share once new territories were won. Both pitched their forces against Rohtās (ਰੋਹਤਾਸ) and conquered it. Gujjar Singh thought it politically wise that the jurisdiction of the Shukarcakīā Sardār be acknowledged across the river Jhelam. In 1764, Harī Singh expired. His son Jhaṇḍā Singh took over the leadership of the *Misal* and appointed Gaṇḍā Singh (ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ) as Deputy *Jathedar*. Jhaṇḍā Singh detached his mind from Jammū, Kashmīr and the Northern territories and concentrated on Multān. Multān was under the rule of the Afgāns and the Bhaṅgī Sardārs felt that the last sign of influence of the Afgāns should also be removed from the soil of Pañjāb. But Jhaṇḍā Singh was not aware of the strength of his opponents. Dawood's grand children of Bahāwalpur (ਬਹਾਵਲਪੁਰ) were at the fore front in extending assistance to Multān and Jhaṇḍā Singh (ਝੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ) launched the campaign without adequate preparations. The attack could achieve no results, so an accord was reached and Pāk Paṭan (ਪਾਕ ਪਟਨ) was fixed as the boundary between the two groups. Shortly after, the Bhaṅgīs started crossing the boundary of Pāk Paṭan. They prepared and attacked Multān again, and yet again they did not succeed. Then in 1771, Jhaṇḍā Singh thought of launching a severe attack on Multān. The victory was not expected to come easily. Fortunately for Jhaṇḍā Singh, the power at Multān got split into two parties: Sharīf Beg Takkal (ਸ਼ਰੀਫ਼ ਬੇਗ਼ ਤੱਕਲ), a leader of the breakaway group invited Jhaṇḍā Singh to join him. Taking advantage of the situation, Jhaṇḍā Singh occupied Multān. Shujāh Khan (ਸ਼ੁਜਾਹ ਖਾਨ) and the grandsons of Dāūd (ਦਾਉਦ) of Bahāwalpur ran away from the field and Sharīf Beg also ran away to Sindh. Divān Singh (ਦਿਵਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ) was appointed Governor of Multān. In the same year, the Bhaṅgīs attacked Rām Nagar (ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ) and captured the gun Zam Zamā (ਜ਼ਮ ਜ਼ਮਾ), which became famous by the name of Bhaṅgīān dī top (ਭੰਗੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਤੋਪ). This victory took the honor of Bhaṅgī Misal to the top. After Multān, they threatened Kasūr. Aslam Khān (ਅਸਲਮ ਖਾਨ), the Garrison Commander of Kasūr, was famous for the ill treatment of his subjects and for his immoral character. Kasūr was captured many a times by the Sikhs, who had punished the *Faujdār* (ਫੌਜਦਾਰ). Since the Sikhs were concentrating their minds and efforts towards Multān, the *Faujdār* re-imposed his power over the people. Thus after Multān, Jhaṇḍā Singh attacked Kasūr and took possession of the fort. The exploits of the Bhaṅgī Misal were known all over by now. Jhaṇḍā Singh wrote to General Barker, who was taking a keen interest in the state of Pañjāb in those days, and told him that the power of Dal Khālsā was indescribable; it was Dal Khālsā which had checked the frequent attacks of Abdālī. He also talked about the might of the Bhaṅgī Misal. This event dates back to 1773.

By then, the area of jurisdiction of the Bhaṅgī Misal had extended from Ammritsar to Multān and from Jammū to Rohtās. It was believed that this *Misal* would overpower all others and succeed in establishing its rule in the Pañjāb. But Carat Singh and Mahā Singh (ਮਹਾ ਸਿੰਘ) kept the progress of the Bhaṅgī Misal in check. In 1774, a dispute developed between Raṇjīt Dev of Jammū and his son, and the Bhaṅgīs decided to help Raṇjīt Dev. Both Ghanaīā and Shukarcakīā declared their intentions to help Brij Rāj Dev (ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਰਾਜ ਦੇਵ), the rebellious son of Raṇjīt Dev. Jai Singh Ghanaīā paid a handsome amount to have Jhaṇḍā Singh murdered in 1774. This was a huge blow to the Bhaṅgī Misal. Gaṇḍā Singh, the younger brother of Jhaṇḍā Singh took over the reins of the *Misal*. He strengthened the fort of Ammritsar and paid attention to his territory, but he had not forgotten the murder of his brother. He was looking for an opportunity that came his way soon, when the widow of

Nand Singh (ਨੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ), a member of Bhaṅgī Misal, had her daughter married to Tārā Singh (ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ) of Ghanaīā Misal and gave the area of Paṭhānkoṭ (ਪਠਾਨਕੋਟ) in dowry to the Ghanaīā Sardār. Gaṇḍā Singh did not like the turn of events and decided to attack Ghanaīā Misal. They fought at Dīnā Nagar (ਦੀਨਾ ਨਗਰ) where Gaṇḍā Singh fell during the campaign and died. His nephew, Caṛat Singh, died fighting at Paṭhānkoṭ. These two deaths broke the hearts of the Bhaṅgī soldiers. They handed over Paṭhānkoṭ to the Ghanaīās and turned back. The Bhaṅgī Misal now accepted Desā Singh (ਦੇਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ), a minor son of Gaṇḍā Singh, as their leader. He, however, could not control such a big and powerful *Misal*. As a result both Jhaṅg and Multān slipped out of their hands. In 1777, Muzāfar Khān (ਮੁਜ਼ਾਫਰ ਖਾਨ), the *Navāb* of Bahāvalpur, attacked Multān but Divān Singh defeated him. Next year, Taimūr Shāh (ਤੈਮੂਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ) launched an attack, but Divān Singh thwarted his efforts as well. Taimūr now attacked with a force of 18,000. The Bhaṅgī Sardār gave in and nearly 3000 Sikh soldiers lost their lives; Multān fell into the hands of Taimūr Shāh. Desā Singh tried to recapture the area of Jhang but he lost his life, in 1782, at the hands of Mahā Singh, and Gulāb Singh (ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ) became leader in his place. However, he got involved in worldly pleasures and the only achievement to his name is victory over Kasūr. Even this was a hollow victory since Kasūr was taken back from him by Nizām Dīn Khān (ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਦੀਨ ਖਾਨ) and Kutub Dīn Khān (ਕੁਤੁਬ ਦੀਨ ਖਾਨ) in 1794. When Raṅjīt Singh took possession of Lāhaur in 1799, Gulāb Singh hit upon a conspiracy to call Raṅjīt Singh to the fort of Bhasīn (ਭਸੀਨ) where he would be murdered. But Raṅjīt Singh came to the fort accompanied by a strong force and Gulāb Singh could not execute his conspiracy. Meanwhile, on the pretext of borrowing Bhaṅgī's top, he occupied Bhaṅgī's fort and Ammrītsar.

Lahnā Singh and Gujjar Singh of this *Misal* had subjugated a large area of Pañjāb and divided the territory held by them. In 1795, Gujjar Singh, Lahnā Singh and Sobhā Singh took possession of Lāhaur. Lahnā Singh ruled the city until 1797. In 1799, Raṅjīt Singh evicted the sons of Lahnā Singh (Cet Singh and Sobhā Singh) and took over Lāhaur.. Raṅjīt Singh was fully supported by Bhāi Gurbaksh Singh (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ), Hakīm Hākam Rāi (ਹਕੀਮ ਹਾਕਮ ਰਾਇ) and Mīrām Ishk Muhammad (ਮੀਰਾਂ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਮੁਹੱਮਦ). Once Lāhaur was lost, Gujjar Singh started paying attention towards North. He took possession of Gujrāt and then, in collaboration with some other Bhaṅgī Sardārs, won Jammū as well. He also took over the cities of Puñc (ਪੁੰਚ), Islāmgar (ਇਸਲਾਮਗੜ), Devā Botālā (ਦੇਵਾ ਬੋਤਾਲਾ) in 1786. He had a fort by the name of Gujjar Singh constructed at Ammrītsar. The fort of Gobindgar (ਗੋਬਿੰਦਗੜ) is now located there. Gujjar Singh had three sons named Sukhā Singh, Sāhib Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ) and Fatah Singh (ਫਤਹ ਸਿੰਘ). Sukhā Singh was killed at the hands of Sāhib Singh, who was married to an aunt of Raṅjīt Singh. Gujjar Singh and Sāhib Singh were annoyed with each other because Sāhib Singh had handed over the Muslim Garrison Commander of Rām Nagar (ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ) to Mahā Singh. This Garrison Commander had asked Gujjar Singh for refuge. This slip on the part of Sāhib Singh annoyed Gujjar Singh so much that he left the fort. He handed over all his territory to Fatah Singh and came to Lāhaur and died in 1788. Fatah Singh was not accepted as a leader by the members of Bhaṅgī Misal; instead, they selected Sāhib Singh. A pitched battle was fought at Sadhaurā (ਸਧੌਰਾ) in 1792. Due to his ill health, Mahā Singh left the field in the care of Sāhib Singh. He conspired to murder Raṅjīt Singh in the fort of Bhasīn (ਭਸੀਨ) but joined Raṅjīt Singh due to failure. In 1806, he accepted subjugation by Raṅjīt Singh and lived his life on a *Jagīr* (ਜਗੀਰ) of one lakh granted by Raṅjīt Singh until he died in 1811.

The Decline of Bhaṅgī Misal

The *Misal* that was expected to rule the whole of Pañjāb got reduced to a symbol by the end of the eighteenth century. There are many causes for its decline. At one point it enjoyed a pivotal place

amongst the *Misals*; it also had to face the onslaught of Abdālī's invasion. All of its leaders faced Abdālī's challenge with devotion and dedication and expanded their area of jurisdiction. But when the time came for consolidation, they did not pay adequate attention towards expansion. They ignored their past and their weaknesses. The unseen powers weakened them further. The primary cause of their victories was that they had established Ammritsar as their centre, but later on, they changed their centre to Gujrat, Jammū, Multān and Kasūr. Having left their centre and position of advantage, they were unable to protect all their territory. Once Multān slipped out of their hands, other territories also started slipping away.

Secondly, the occupation of Multān was not a wise idea. Statesmanship demanded that they remain concentrated in the centre and Multān had a huge concentration of Afgāns. Taimūr Shāh considered it a challenge to his pride when Bhaṅgī *Misal* enjoyed complete control over Multān, and was ever ready to invade Pañjāb. He attacked Multān in 1798; much against the Sikh tradition, the Bhaṅgī Sardār accepted defeat and showed cowardice. Multān was handed over to Taimūr Shāh. The Panth had respected the Bhaṅgī Sardārs for their courage and bravery, but with the fall of Multān, that respect too was dashed into the dust. They could not recover from this insult. The leaders of other *Misals* were always on the look out for opportunities and they started unfurling their flags on the territory of the Bhaṅgī Misal. When the Bhaṅgī Misal returned from Multān to Ammritsar, their glory had ebbed very low.

Thirdly, the Bhaṅgī Misal began to lose a lot of its good leaders. The Bhaṅgī Misal had progressed due to the good leadership of its *Jathedārs*. Then, all of the senior leaders started dying one after the other. The grief over Harī Singh's (ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ) death had hardly passed in 1764 when Jhaṇḍā Singh was murdered in 1774 and Gaṇḍā Singh expired in 1775. Carat Singh, who was his nephew and successor, died in battle the same year. It became difficult to bear one tragedy after the other. The leadership of the Bhaṅgī Misal slipped into the hands of weak and incompetent Jathedārs who were not capable of giving a fight. Fourthly, the Bhaṅgī Misal had incorrectly assessed the powers of the Shukarcakīā and Ghanaīā Misals, whose leaders were equally adept and wise. Moreover, the organizational structure of this *Misal* was well concentrated and united. On the contrary, the Bhaṅgī Misal was divided into many parts. Bhāi Lahṇā Singh, Bhāi Sobhā Singh, Gujjar Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh had their own, independently operating *Jathās* while remaining part of the Bhaṅgī Misal. They could do nothing to stop its decline. Whatever was remaining in this decline, was completed by Ranjīt Singh. By the end of eighteenth century, the Bhaṅgīs were lost in the annals of history.

5. Ghanaīā Misal: This *Misal* also took a very active part in the struggle of Sikh existence in Pañjāb. After the exit of Abdālī from the scene, this *Misal* earned a great name for itself. It was counted among the leading three *Misals*. Only the Bhaṅgī and Shukarcakīā Misal could offer them a fight for supremacy. The Ghanaīās had jurisdiction in a large area of Pañjāb and Jai Singh was the founder and *Jathedār* of this *Misal*. He was the son of Bhāi Khushhāl Singh. They were residents of the village Ghāhna (ਘਾਹਨਾ) which was about 15 miles South of Lāhaur. So, initially, the name of the *Jathā* and then that of *Misal* became known as Ghanaīā. It is said that when Bhāi Khushhāl Singh heard the episodes of martyrdom of the Sikhs, he decided to take Ammrit. He presented himself before Navāb Kapūr Singh and not only took Ammrit himself, but also inspired many other people of his area to adopt Sikhī. Gradually, he formed a separate *Jathā*. This *Jathā* was often sent to participate in important campaigns. Jai Singh had two more brothers. One was Bhāi Jhaṇḍā Singh and the other was Bhāi Singhā (ਭਾਈ ਸਿੰਘਾ). Nothing much is known about Bhāi Singhā in history books, but it is found that Bhāi Jhaṇḍā Singh and one Bhāi Bhāg Singh had joined the *Jathā* of Navāb Kapūr Singh. They had formed their own *Jathā* during the period of Navāb Kapūr Singh. By the time Navāb Sāhib expired, this *Jathā* had become fairly strong. In 1763, during the attack on Kasūr, this *Jathā* was in the lead.

Seeing the prosperity of the Bhaṅgī Misal, Jai Singh felt restless and planned to make the Ghanaī Misal as the leading *Jathā*. At first, he decided to take up arms against them directly, but seeing the power and strength of the Bhaṅgī Misal, he entered into a treaty with Shukarcakī Misal. Carat Singh was also looking for an associate so the arrangement worked out well for both. The Bhaṅgī Misal fought a battle against the combined might of the Ghanaī and Shukarcakī Misal on the bank of the river Basantar (ਬਸੰਤਰ) near Jammū. Jai Singh and Carat Singh came up against Jhaṇḍā Singh. Carat Singh was supervising the firing of explosives when a charge of explosives caught fire and burst on him. Carat Singh fell and was unable to regain consciousness. Jai Singh Ghanaī attacked the opposing forces in rage and Jhaṇḍā Singh was defeated and murdered on the spot. This event took place in 1774. After taking over the territory of the Bhaṅgīs in Jammū, they advanced towards the territory of the Rāmgarī Misal. The Āhlūvālī Misal also helped in this venture because Mālī Singh (ਮਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਘ) and another brother of Jassā Singh Rāmgarī had dishonored and disrespected Jassā Singh Āhlūvālī. They annexed the territory of Baṭālā (ਬਟਾਲਾ) and Kalānaur (ਕਲਾਨੌਰ) into their jurisdiction and forced Jassā Singh Rāmgarī to leave Pañjāb. After this success, Jai Singh attacked Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ) and Zain Khān (ਜੈਨ ਖਾਨ) was killed. Jai Singh managed to collect many valuables and military hardware from Sarhind; he also collected protection money from the kings of Garoṭā (ਗਰੋਟਾ), Hājīpur (ਹਾਜੀਪੁਰ), Nūrpur (ਨੂਰਪੁਰ) and Dātārpur (ਦਾਤਾਰਪੁਰ). In order to establish their supremacy, these kings readily accepted paying tribute. The Ghanaī Misal's most prominent victory was the occupation of Kāṅgrā (ਕਾਂਗੜਾ) fort and extracting protection money from Rājā Sansār Cand Kaṭoc (ਰਾਜਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਚੰਦ ਕਟੋਚ) of Kāṅgrā. Rājā Sansār Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਚੰਦ) asked for help from Jai Singh against Saif Alī Khān (ਸੈਫ ਅਲੀ ਖਾਨ), the *Faujdar* of Kāṅgrā fort. Jai Singh himself went to Kāṅgrā but by the time he reached Kāṅgrā, Saif Alī Khān had died. Jai Singh asked Jīvan Khān (ਜੀਵਨ ਖਾਨ), son of Saif Alī Khān, to vacate Kāṅgrā fort and took over the fort himself. Sansār Cand was very annoyed but had to keep quiet and felt it wise to accept defeat. This incident took place in 1775.

The Ghanaī Misal was unhappy with the prosperity of the Bhaṅgī Misal and Mahā Singh was also concerned. The receipt of protection money from the hill kings by Jai Singh Ghanaī caused a great deal of worry to Mahā Singh who spoke with Sansār Cand about the issue and entered into a treaty with him. They both combined their forces and attacked the territory of Jai Singh. It was a fearsome attack that uprooted the Ghanaī Sardārs. His son, Gurbakhsh Singh, died in the battle of 1784. Jai Singh agreed to confine himself within the general area of Gurdāspur (ਗੁਰਦਾਸਪੁਰ), and yet another mishap had to be borne by the Ghanaī Misal. Meanwhile Jassā Singh Rāmgarī had strengthened his forces in Pañjāb, entered into a treaty with Mahā Singh Shukarcakī and launched a direct attack. The Rāmgarī Sardār even prepared Sansār Cand to take revenge of the injury caused by the Ghanaī Sardār. The combined forces of these three *Jathās* were too much for Ghanaī Misal. The Rāmgarī Misal took back the territory of Baṭālā and Kalānaur. This campaign broke the back of the Ghanaī Misal and rendered it unfit for its sustenance. In order to end the feud, Jai Singh proposed the marriage of his grand daughter, Mahtāb Kaur (ਮਹਤਾਬ ਕੌਰ), with child Ranjīt Singh, son of Mahan Singh.

Jai Singh died in 1789 and the leadership of the *Misal* was taken over by Sadā Kaur (ਸਦਾ ਕੌਰ) because his only son, Gurbakhsh Singh had died in battle. Rānī Sadā Kaur was a capable and adept politician and stateswoman. She maintained discipline in the *Misal* and kept it consolidated until 1820. She was always on the look out for recapturing her lost territory but Ranjīt Singh did not let her dreams be realized. This *Misal* was about 5000 soldiers strong and at some points, this strength had even crossed 10,000. Had the *Misal* maintained its treaty with the Shukarcakī Misal, it would not have faced such a quick decline. It did not have enough strength to thwart any combined aggression and suffered a set

back against the combined onslaught of Bhaṅgī, Shukarcakīā, Ghanaīā and Rāmgaṛīā Misals.

6. Shukarcakīā Misal: If any one *Misal* benefited most from the internal and mutual rift of the *Misals*, it was the Shukarcakīā Misal. It fulfilled its dream of occupying all of the territory west of the river Satluj and established a regime free and independent from all interference. Undoubtedly, some other *Misals* kept earning fame from time to time, but the only *Misal* whose fame and honor remained stable was the Shukarcakīā *Misal*. This *Misal* enjoyed supreme respect from 1780 until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Other *Misals* were led by veteran leaders for a generation or two but this *Misal* was fortunate to have intelligent and farsighted leaders until the establishment of their independent empire: Caṛat Siṅgh, followed by Mahā Siṅgh, and then Raṅjīt Siṅgh. The founder of this *Misal* was Jathedār Naudh Siṅgh (ਠੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ). His ancestors belonged to the village Shukarcak so the *Misal* became known all over as Shukarcakīā.

Caṛat Siṅgh

Caṛat Siṅgh earned a name for himself during the Sikh struggle in the early part of the 18th century. There weren't any battles in which he did not participate in the forefront. He was the leader of one of the five *Jathās* of Tarunā Dal. During the withdrawal of Abdālī after his fourth invasion, it was Caṛat Siṅgh who chased him and caused him much damage. He also played a leading role in the confrontation with Adīnā Beg. The courage and feats of bravery that this *Sardār* showed during the Great Holocaust were praised by all. He suffered 23 wounds on his body, yet kept fighting. This *Misal* became very famous after the influence of Abdālī had ended in the Pañjāb. Many young people approached Caṛat Siṅgh with a request to take them into his *Misal* but he always maintained that he would not enroll anyone who was not a Sikh; only those who became Sikhs would be accepted.

The *Misal* plundered the villages and cities it conquered and occupied the territory across the river Jhelam in association with Gujjar Siṅgh of the Bhaṅgī Misal. Caṛat Siṅgh led the *Misal*, as the time and event demanded. When the Shukarcakīā *Sardār* realized that the influence of the Bhaṅgī Misal had increased all over Pañjāb, he joined hands with the Ghanaīā Misal and arrested their progress. They kept up a friendly attitude towards the Rāmgaṛīā Misal as well. One can say without a doubt that Caṛat Siṅgh was an unrivalled, shrewd and self-respecting general. Under the able leadership of Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh and then Jassā Siṅgh Āhlūvālīā, he acquired sharpness in his leadership traits. He was a calm person who had the courage to go through many adversities with finesse. His enthusiasm and sentiments for Sikhī were indescribable. He established Gujrāmvālā (ਗੁਜਰਾਂਵਾਲਾ) as the hub of all his activities. He was always in the forefront during confrontation with the Afgāns. It served him well to remain at Gujrāmvālā when the rat race of possessing territories and establishing jurisdiction commenced among the *Misals*. Even the Bhaṅgī *Sardārs* avoided confronting him. Gujjar Siṅgh felt that entering into an accord with them was a better option. Their combined forces invaded Rohtās and captured it. This fort had its own importance in Pañjāb and India. The campaign on Rohtās had made him so capable that he could take up arms with more powerful opponents and come out successfully. Even if defeated, it would not have any adverse effect on the *Misal*, and on top of this, every *Misal* was keen to help the Shukarcakīās. When he died in an accident due to the bursting of explosives near Jammū, it was generally believed that this *Misal* would also become ineffective. His demise was an unforgettable experience for the *Misal*.

The way Mahā Siṅgh handled the affairs of the *Misal* after the death of his father, and expanded its jurisdiction and territorial authority speaks volume of his leadership abilities. He, like his father, used all opportunities to his advantage. With the demise of Caṛat Siṅgh, under the leadership of Mahā Siṅgh, Ghanaīā Misal became more powerful.

Meanwhile, the Bhaṅgī Misal had lost its luster, whereas the Ghanaīā Misal was increasing its

influence and jurisdiction very fast. It succeeded in pushing the Rāmgarīā Sardār away from the territories of their interest. It was indeed a great achievement to obtain protection money from the hill kings. In collaboration with the hill kings, he handed a crushing defeat to Jai Singh Ghanaīā. The Shukarcakīā Sardār did not commit the mistake that other leaders of the *Misals* were making. He did not extend his territorial jurisdiction in the trans-Rāvī (ਰਾਵੀ) area, but stayed put at Rām Nagar and Gujrāmvalā. Instead, Mahā Singh took over the entire territory of Pīr Muhammad Khān (ਪੀਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਖਾਨ) within three months and captured many sacred items of the Muslim faith which he sent to Gujrāmvalā very respectfully. This act earned him a name all around. Next, he turned his attention to Jammū. When Balrāj Dev (ਬਲਰਾਜ ਦੇਵ), the king of Jammū, ran away from the city, the residents were much disturbed. Mahā Singh sent a message, that they had not come to plunder the city and that the residents should remain free of worry since he was only concerned with ruling the city. Everyone had words of praise for his wisdom and discernment. One must wait for an opportune moment to strike rather than rushing in direct confrontation and this was good statesmanship on Mahā Singh's part.

By 1791, the influence of the *Misal* had extended up to Rohtās. In 1792, Mahā Singh died in the prime of his age. It was a big loss to Shukarcakīā Misal but Ranjīt Singh took control of the situation very deftly. The way Ranjīt Singh established his rule over the Pañjāb is the subject of a separate chapter. It is said that if Mahā Singh had lived for some more years, the kingdom that survived and showed its impression for only forty years would have established a lasting empire in Pañjāb. The Shukarcakīās were about 7,000 soldiers strong and the strength of this *Misal* did not fluctuate much. The consolidation of Pañjāb and then establishing a rule goes to the credit of this *Misal*.

7. Nakaī Misal: The barricades of Lāhaur and Multān have special significance in the history of Pañjāb. These barricades were important during the invasions of Abdālī and Taimūr. Sikhs were well aware of the importance of these barricades and, in view of the position of Pañjāb, felt it necessary to occupy them. The task of occupying these barricades was undertaken by Hīrā Singh; this laid the foundation of another *Misal*, the Nakaī. The *Misal* advanced further and won much territory along river Satluj. Hīrā Singh was the son of Caudharī Hem Rāj (ਚੌਧਰੀ ਹੇਮ ਰਾਜ) of the village Bharvāl (ਭਰਵਾਲ). This village was part of the Cūnīā (ਚੂਨੀਆ) sub-division or Tahsīl (ਤਹਸੀਲ); it was also known by the name of Nākā (ਨਾਕਾ). Hīrā Singh took Amrit and made a *Jathā* along with other young men of the village. Very soon, this *Jathā* became masters of the Nākā area. They captured all of the barricades and contributed to the overall might and power of the Sikhs. They used to impede the progress of incoming invading forces, and would also cause damage to them when they were withdrawing. Thus, they were able to forewarn other *Misals* who would take timely action to react to the situations. During the Vaḍā Ghalūghārā (ਵਡਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), it was this *Misal* that informed the others that Abdālī was rushing at a great speed and covering distances in days that would have taken months. In 1767, Hīrā Singh received a complaint that Shekh Sujah (ਸ਼ੇਖ ਸੁਜਾਹ), the heir of Bābā Pharīd Gaḍḍī (ਬਾਬਾ ਫਰੀਦ ਗੱਡੀ) was violating the teachings of his ancestors and playing with the sentiments of Hindus, so Hīrā Singh attacked Pāk Paṭan. Jathedār Sāhib was killed during this attack and the army returned to Bharvāl. Hīrā Singh's son, named Dal Singh (ਦਲ ਸਿੰਘ) was a minor so the leadership passed on to the son of Dhannā Singh (ਧੱਨਾ ਸਿੰਘ) (brother of Hīrā Singh), Nāhar Singh (ਨਾਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ) who too did not live long. He died in 1768 fighting in the battle of Koṭ Kamālīā (ਕੋਟ ਕਮਾਲੀਆ).

After Nāhar Singh, the leadership of this *Misal* came to Rām Singh. When other *Misals* started expanding their territories, this *Misal* too concentrated its efforts towards Multān and Kasūr. The Bhaṅgī *Misal* knew the power and importance of this *Misal* and Gaṇḍā Singh sought help from them

to subdue Multān. Jathedār Rām Singh was an adept statesman. He had retained and maintained good relationships with all the *Misals* and this was the cause of his respect among them. The jurisdiction of this *Misal* extended to Cuniām (ਚੁਨਿਆਂ), Kasūr, Sharkpur (ਸ਼ਰਕਪੁਰ), Guggar (ਗੁੱਗਰ) and Koṭ Kamālīā. But when Rām Singh died in 1790, the leadership passed on to Giān Singh (ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ). This *Misal* was about 3000 troops strong. Since they were manning the barricades, they were expert fighters. Jathedār Rām Singh had kept the troops disciplined and orderly, but after his death, his soldiers started fighting amongst themselves. After the death of Giān Singh in 1804, Raṇjīt Singh annexed the territory and attached it on to his own kingdom. He granted a Jagīr of one and a half lakh to Kānh Singh (ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ), son of Giān Singh. At this point, the Bhaṅgī and Shukarcakīā Misals began to disagree and fight with each other. The Nakaī *Misal* had some areas adjacent to the other two, but was unable to maintain good relations between the two and the *Misal* remained confined to a few villages and ended its life span. Thirdly, none of its successors were strong enough to keep their territory intact. At the same time, the *Misal* had no high aspirations and so lost power within a few years.

8. Ḍālevālīā Misal: In 1745, the Sarbat *Khālsā* passed a *Gurmatā* or resolution that a fort should be constructed on the bank of the river Rāvī. It needed to be strong enough to stop the enemy and equipped for shelter. This fort was constructed in village Ḍālevāl (ਡਾਲੇਵਾਲ). After the fort came up, Gurdiāl Singh (ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ) was appointed its leader. He used to be the *Jathedār* of a *Jathā* of Tarunā Dal. He looked after the fort with the utmost care and fought when the need arose. And for the services rendered in connection with the defense of the fort, he was named Ḍālevālīā, just as the word Rāmgarīā had become the suffix of Jassā Singh. The nation showed the utmost respect to the martyrdom of Gurdiāl Singh. During the Choṭā Ghalūghārā (ਛੋਟਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), the Sikhs were surrounded from three sides. The river Rāvī was on one side, the other side was a desert and Lakhpat Rāi (ਲਖਪਤ ਰਾਇ) was following immediately behind with Yāhīā Khān (ਯਾਹੀਆ ਖਾਨ) and his army. The Sikhs decided to cross the river Rāvī. It was the peak summer month and the river was full to the brim. The current of the water was very strong. Gurdiāl Singh suggested that he would enter the river on his horse to see the swiftness of the current and gauge the depth of the water. He could not sustain the swift wave of the river and he, along with his brother, was washed away in by the current. Gurdiāl Singh died, but he managed to save thousands of lives. Had the caravan entered the river, all would have drowned. After Gurdiāl Singh, this *Misal* was led by Tārā Singh Ghaibā (ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੈਬਾ). He too was a soldier of the highest order. Like Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā, Harī Singh Bhaṅgī and Caṛat Singh, he was a great General who was ever ready to sacrifice his life for a noble cause. He fought shoulder to shoulder with his associate Generals. He and his *Misal* were treated with much respect. They confronted the invasions of Ahmed Shāh Abdālī with determination and were the first to take up cudgels with Jahān Khān. They were the first to confront the invaders at Ammritsar. This *Misal* had contributed substantially to the fight against Abdālī. They joined hands with the Bhaṅgī Misal at the time of attacking Kasūr and Tārā Singh Ghaibā plundered nearly four lakh rupees worth of loot. When Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ) was ransacked, Tārā Singh Ghaibā was in the fore front. This *Misal* had about 9000 soldiers.

After Abdālī, the Ḍālevālīās did not participate actively in the discords that rose amongst the *Misals* for many reasons. Firstly, Tārā Singh Ghaibā was old and was not fit to take part in the battle regularly. Secondly, he condemned their in-fighting, declaring it meaningless indulgence. Taking advantage of his old age, Raṇjīt Singh had sent Phatah Singh to capture the area under the jurisdiction of Tārā Singh, who was incapable of confrontation. Therefore, the authority of the *Misal* got restricted to a few villages. After Tārā Singh, the command of the *Misal* was taken over by Dasvandh Singh (ਦਸਵੰਧ ਸਿੰਘ) and Candā Singh (ਚੰਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ) but Raṇjīt Singh also annexed the remaining villages of the Ḍālevālīās in his kingdom.

9. Karoṣīnghīā Misal:

A rich man named Karoṣā Mal (ਕਰੋੜਾ ਮਲ) partook Ammrīt during the time of Navāb Kapūr Singh and became a Sikh. He was named Karoṣā Singh. He became a *Jathedār* of Tarunā Dal. In 1748, he made a separate *Jathā* of his own and it picked up name of Karoṣā Singh. This *Misal* also participated actively in the campaigns of the Sikhs; their help came by way of provisions and money. The area of influence of this *Misal* was east of the river Satluj. No one could do anything without the approval of Karoṣīnghīā Misal. Sirhand was its target and they were the first to plunder it. During the fourth invasion of Abdālī, it was the Karoṣīnghīā Misal that had attacked him in an astounding surprise move. The Misal exercised much control in Jalandhar Doāb (ਦੋਆਬ). After Abdālī had ceased his invasions, it kept up its influence in the cis-Satluj area and won many prominent victories. Jathedār Mastān Singh (ਮਸਤਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ) and Karam Singh (ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ) were the leading operators of this *Misal* and took very active parts in various campaigns. After their demise, Baghel Singh took over the responsibility of the *Misal*.

Baghel Singh was a leading General and a leader of his times. There was no place in Gangā-Jamunā Doāb (ਗੰਗਾ-ਜਮੁਨਾ ਦੋਆਬ) that he had not overcome. He reigned supreme from Jalandhar to Pilībhīt (ਪਿਲੀਭੀਤ) and from Ambālā (ਅੰਬਾਲਾ) to Alīgar (ਅਲੀਗੜ). His exploits, personality and character are examples for the entire community. Baghel Singh raised a *Dal* of 30,000 soldiers and won many battles. When he heard that Muhammad Khān, the ruler of Jalālābād (ਜਲਾਲਾਬਾਦ) had forcibly kept a Brāhmaṇ girl in his harem, Baghel Singh punished the miscreant ruler and respectfully brought the girl back to her home. This *Jathā* took over Alīgar, Khurjā (ਖੁਰਜਾ), Candausī (ਚੰਦੌਸੀ), Hathrās (ਹਥਰਾਸ) and Itāwā (ਇਟਾਵਾ) and Navāb Īsā Khān (ਨਵਾਬ ਈਸਾ ਖਾਨ), the ruler of these places, was defeated. In Pañjāb, Baghel Singh defeated Mohammad Khān and captured Nūr Mahal (ਨੂਰ ਮਹਲ). Rājā Amar Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ) tried to interfere in this area, but both armies faced each other at Guhrām (ਗੁਹਰਾਮ) and quickly reached an agreement. Amar Singh's son, Sāhib Singh, took Ammrīt at the hands of Baghel Singh.

No one could now come to Pañjāb from Dillī without the permission of Baghel Singh. He was such an adept statesman that every one obeyed him and agreed to his views. For instance, in 1780, when Abdullā Khān (ਅਬਦੁੱਲਾ) had sent Prince Farzandā (ਫਰਜ਼ੰਦਾ) against Amar Singh, Baghel Singh let him pass through his territory but when his army reached Paṭiālā (ਪਟਿਆਲਾ), Baghel Singh joined Amar Singh to settle the score with Prince Farzandā; the invading Prince had to accept defeat at the hands of the combined forces. Also, Manā Rāo (ਮਨਾ ਰਾਓ) Maratha decided to invade Pañjāb in 1787, Baghel Singh encircled his force at a vulnerable place and made them accept defeat. Baghel Singh had realized that the Mughal regime of Dillī was only there in namesake. So in 1789, he wrote to all the *Misal Jathedārs* to send some selected Singhs so that Dillī could be captured. Thus, an army of 40 thousand strong soldiers assembled under him. In the early months of 1790, Baghel Singh reached Majnū Tīlā (ਮਜਨੂ ਟਿਲਾ). They entered the city via Ajmerī (ਅਜਮੇਰੀ) Gate and established their control over that part of the city. From there, he attacked Katrā Nīlā (ਕਤਰਾ ਨੀਲਾ) and Mughal Muhallā (ਮੁਗਲ ਮੁਹੱਲਾ). The residents ran away and the Red Fort fell in the lap of the Sikhs. King Shāh Ālam (ਸ਼ਾਹ ਆਲਮ) sent Vazīr Gohar (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਗੋਹਰ), his Minister, to hold a dialogue with the Sikhs. They arrived at the following decisions:

1. That the *Khālsā* be given a sum of Rs. 3 lakhs.
2. That the *Kotvālī* (ਕੋਤਵਾਲੀ) of the city and the rights to collect the local tax be handed over to Baghel Singh.

3. That until the service of the historic *Gurduārā* was completed; Baghel Singh would keep 4000 soldiers with him.

The first *Gurduārā* that Baghel Singh raised was where Mātā Sundar Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ) and Mātā Sāhib Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ) were residing. Then he raised *Gurduārā Baṅglā Sāhib* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬੰਗਲਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ) in Muhallā Jaipur (ਮੁਹੱਲਾ ਜੈਪੁਰ), where Gurū Harikrishan Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ) had also stayed and died. A *Gurduārā* was also raised where both Mātā Sundar Kaur and Mātā Sāhib Kaur were cremated. Then he constructed *Gurduārā Rakāb Gañj* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਕਾਬ ਗੰਜ) where Lakkhī Shāh Vanjārā (ਲੱਖੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ) had cremated the headless body of Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) by setting fire to his house. The most difficult task was to find the spot where Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib was beheaded. During the search, they met an old water-carrier woman who had washed the blood of Gurū Sāhib after his martyrdom. She told him that the event took place under the Banyan tree near the mosque. When Baghel Singh had a platform constructed at the spot, some Muslims came to confront him. After a short skirmish, the Prime Minister also came. Baghel Singh told him that Sikhs will not sit silently until that spot had been paid the proper respect. The Prime Minister wisely got some land surrendered from either side. The platform remained in the same spot but another space was given to the Sikhs to have Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) established and was named Sīs Gañj (ਸੀਸ ਗੰਜ). A Sikh was appointed to take care of the place. In 1857, some more space was acquired by Rājā Sarūp Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ) of Jīnd (ਜੀਂਦ) and he extended the *Gurduārā*. Some Muslims tried their utmost to thwart the Sikh efforts of acquire the land but Rājā Raghbīr Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਰਘਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ) of Jīnd obtained permission from England. Thus, Sīs Gañj *Gurduārā* was raised where it stands today.

After identifying the historic places related to the Gurū Sāhibs and other important personalities of the Sikh religion, Baghel Singh returned to Shadaulī (ਸ਼ਾਦੌਲੀ). The king gifted him with an elephant, a gold chain, five horses and many other items. The king asked him why the Sikhs had so many *Jathās* who fought amongst themselves and yet united again; it was a mystery for him. Baghel Singh said that it was natural to have differences in view points. Sikhs might have made many *Jathās* but they remain members of the *Khālsā* and become one to face the enemy. They might be separate at home but when it comes to the whole community, they forget their separate identity and become ready to die for each other. As long as Baghel Singh lived (until 1802), one fourth of the revenue of the Dillī tax reached him at home. Zabātā Khan (ਜ਼ਬਾਤਾ ਖਾਨ), the son of Ghullam Kādar Rohilā (ਘੁੱਲਮ ਕਾਦਰ ਰੋਹਿਲਾ) who was known as half Sikh and half Rohilā of the Gurū, was brought into the Sikh fold by Baghel Singh. Ghullam Kādar Rohilā was only eleven years old at the time and was named Piārā Singh (ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ). It can be surmised that Sikhs could have established a sovereign state in North India had Dal *Khālsā* and other *Misals* helped Baghel Singh. An unfortunate development for this *Misal* was that Amar Singh of Paṭiālā had started direct confrontation. The discord remained during the times of Baghel Singh and was very damaging for this *Misal*. It was spread amongst the Sikhs that Baghel Singh was creating obstacles in the establishment of the rule. Baghel Singh was viewing everything with his sight fixed on the future. He was of the opinion that both Dillī and Marāṭhās should be associated with this venture. Since the power of Dillī and the Marāṭhās was waning, it would not be difficult to establish a Sikh empire. But discords with Paṭiālā caused much damage to the *Misal* and after Baghel Singh, the leadership of this *Misal* fell into the hands of Jodh Singh Kalsīām (ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਲਸੀਆਂ), the son of Gurbakhsh Singh Kalsīām.

Jodh Singh took over a large amount of territory; even the Phulkīām *Misal* could not survive before him. The king of Phulkīām, Amar Singh, gave away his daughter in marriage to the son of Jodh Singh. Sensing the prosperity of Rañjīt Singh, Jodh Singh accepted his patronization. Thus, the

importance of the *Misal* remained intact. The strength of the army of this *Misal* was never stable. Normally it was about 5,000 troops strong, but sometimes it increased to 15,000.

10. Shahīd Siṅghī Misal:

During the times of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, a *Jathā* of Siṅghs emerged who were ever willing to sacrifice their lives. Bābā Dīp Siṅgh, who took Amrit at the hands of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib was associated with this *Jathā*. Gurū Sāhib had given the name of Nihang Siṅgh (ਨਿਹੰਗ ਸਿੰਘ) to this *Jathā*. The Nihang Siṅghs were more concerned about the welfare of others than their own. The phrases and expressions which depict the prosperous and progressive attitude of the *Khālsā*, that have become popular amongst the Sikhs, are even today attributed to this *Jathā*. Other *Jathās* respected the courage and patience of the Shahīd Siṅghis.

After Bābā Binodh Siṅgh (ਬਾਬਾ ਬਿਨੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ), the leadership to the *Misal* was taken over by Bābā Dīp Siṅgh. He was a great warrior, a leading General, a seasoned soldier, and a thoughtful intellectual. He prepared many copies of Gurū Granth Sāhib while staying at Damdamā (ਦਮਦਮਾ). Damdamā was far away from the scene of struggle that Sikhs were perpetually involved in, but in the event of necessity, he would rush to help and offer the needed sacrifices. Gurbaksh Siṅgh, who defended Akāl Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ), along with his 21 companions, also belonged to this *Jathā*. Bābā Naudh Siṅgh (ਬਾਬਾ ਨੌਧ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bābā Hākam Siṅgh (ਬਾਬਾ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ) were the other leading personalities of this *Jathā*. When, by the order of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, Harimandar Sāhib was blown up and the sacred Sarovar (ਸਰੋਵਰ) (sacred water pool) was filled with filth, Bābā Dīp Siṅgh set out from Damdamā in 1761 with a vow to die at the door of the Vāhigurū, and obtained martyrdom in the precincts of Harimandar Sāhib. The leaders of this *Misal* generally kept their area of influence around Damdamā Sāhib and the cis-Satluj. Damdamā is still famous as the Chāvnī (ਛਾਵਨੀ) (cantonment) of the Nihang Siṅghs. After Bābā Dīp Siṅgh, Jathedar Karam Siṅgh became its leader. Thereafter, the glory of the *Misal* was enhanced by Akālī Phūlā Siṅgh (ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and Sādhū Siṅgh (ਸਾਧੂ ਸਿੰਘ). This *Misal* had a very small strength of soldiers. It was only about 2000 strong but its name remained famous on account of the courage and bravery of its troops. During the period of Raṅjīt Siṅgh, the *Misal* made Akāl Takht the centre of their activities. Raṅjīt Siṅgh did not think it wise to indulge too much in the affairs of this *Misal*, but he respected the *Misal* very much.

11. Nishānvālī Misal:

The flag has great significance for every army. The falling of the flag not only discourages the troops but is also considered an acknowledgement of defeat. ‘Don’t let the flag drop’ used to be the proclamation of the soldiers. So, selected Sikhs were pulled out of various *Misals* and placed in this *Misal*. If the flag bearer dropped in the battlefield, another would pick up the flag before it dropped or became lowered. Many tales of the bravery of this *Misal* are known in Sikh history.

The king of Dillī took Bābā Ālā Siṅgh aside and assured him that he would be made a king. Bābā Ālā Siṅgh was more interesting in keeping the Dillī ruler guessing, so he always conveyed his willingness to accept the conditions. At the same time, he kept harrassing Bhaṭṭiān (ਭੱਟੀਆਂ) and Sarhind by launching repeated attacks against them. He was arrested, but managed to escape. During the Choṭā Ghalūghārā, when the influence of Zakarīā Khān (ਜ਼ਕਰੀਆ ਖਾਨ) was weighing heavy on the Sikhs, he reached help to the Sikhs. He took Amrit at the hands of Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh and had the Bhavānīgar (ਭਵਾਨੀਗੜ) fort constructed in 1749. By 1752, he had captured a large territory and had made Patiālā its centre. During the fourth invasion of Ahmad Shāh Durrānī, Bābā Ālā Siṅgh plundered his caravan at Taimūr. He had also helped the Marāṭhās during the third battle of Pānīpat (ਪਾਨੀਪਤ) by providing them with the necessary supplies. In order to punish Bābā Ālā, Ahmad Shāh

Durrānī attacked Barnālā (ਬਰਨਾਲਾ), but Māi Phato (ਮਾਈ ਫਤੋ) exercised her statesmanship by sending him a tribute of four lakh rupees. Abdālī forgave him and acknowledged him as a ruler of a separate kingdom and Bābā Ālā Singh agreed to pay him yearly tribute. The Dal Khālsā did not like this and declared him a Tankhāhī (ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ). Bābā Ālā Singh accepted the subjugation of Abdālī again during the Vaḍā Ghalūghārā, which again annoyed the Sikhs greatly. They were about to attack Paṭiālā when Jassā Singh Āhlūvālī stopped them. Bābā Ālā Singh accepted Tankhāh (ਤਨਖਾਹ) (a religious punishment) and sought forgiveness. He died in 1765 and by then, he had captured 84 villages of Sarhind, Koṭkapurā (ਕੋਟਕਪੂਰਾ), Barnālā and Sanāvar (ਸਨਾਵਰ). Thereafter, his grandson Amar Singh became the leader of the *Misal*.

When, Bhāi Amar Singh was captured by the Mughals, they asked him to drop the flag but he did not budge. The Mughal commander shouted at him and said, “Throw the flag or your hands will be cut.” With great enthusiasm, Amar Singh said, “I shall hold it with my mouth.” “Your head will be cut,” the commander replied. Amar Singh said loudly, “He will protect it whose flag it is.” This *Misal* had no separate area of jurisdiction. Their soldiers were found in every *Misal*. They would obtain their share after every campaign. Jathedār Saṅgat Singh became the *Jathedār* of this *Misal*. He used to be in the forefront in every campaign of the Sikhs. After the exit of Abdālī, Saṅgat Singh made Ambālā his centre and exercised jurisdiction up to Karnāl (ਕਰਨਾਲ) in the South and Ropar-Kharaṛ (ਰੋਪੜ-ਖਰੜ) in the North. Jathedār Mohar Singh (ਮੋਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ) succeeded him. He was contented with whatever territory he had. Since he had no offspring, the *Misal* became leaderless. Ranjīt Singh took over this *Misal* and ended its existence.

12. Phulkīān Misal:

To the eastern side of river Satluj, this was the only other *Misal*, beside Karoṣinghīā, which was famous. The Karoṣinghīā Misal ended with the death of Baghel Singh, but Phulkīān Misal remained for a bit longer. Even during the period of Ranjīt Singh, this *Misal* managed to retain its identity. This *Misal* never came under direct control of the Dal Khālsā, although its founder Bābā Ālā Singh acknowledged the patronage of Dal Khālsā. Bābā Ālā Singh had a son, Amar Singh who wielded the sword like his father. He attacked, defeated and killed Asād Alī (ਅਸਾਦ ਅਲੀ), the Governor of Jalandhar Doāb. In 1767, Durrānī bestowed the title of Rājā-e-Rājgan (ਰਾਜਾ-ਏ-ਰਾਜਗਨ) to Amar Singh. Amar Singh shortly occupied the territories of Malerkoṭlā (ਮਲੇਰਕੋਟਲਾ), Saidābād (ਸੈਦਾਬਾਦ), Sirsā (ਸਿਰਸਾ), Manīmajrā (ਮਨੀਮਾਜਰਾ), Koṭkapurā (ਕੋਟਕਪੂਰਾ), Farīdkoṭ (ਫਰੀਦਕੋਟ) and Baṭhiṇḍā (ਬਠਿੰਡਾ). Amar Singh did not interfere in the affairs west of the river Satluj. He also ignored territory beyond the river Jamunā. His *Misal* had about 1040 soldiers. The way he expanded his territory was enough to prove him to be a brave and courageous ruler. In March 1782, he too expired. Then his son Sāhib Singh became the head of the *Misal*. He was a minor, so the tasks of the *Misal* were attended to by Bībī Rajindar Kaur (ਬੀਬੀ ਰਜਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ) and Sāhib Kaur (ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ). The Marāṭhās, and even George Thomas, wanted to capture the territory of this *Misal* but could not succeed. With the occupation of Pañjāb by Ranjīt Singh, the whole situation changed. The states of Nābhā (ਨਾਭਾ), Jind (ਜੀਂਦ) and Kaithal (ਕੈਥਲ) were the off-shoots of this *Misal* even though their *Misaldārs* (ਮਿਸਲਦਾਰ) were different. This *Misal* did not get along well with Ranjīt Singh and sought help from the British. The British made Ranjīt Singh sign the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809. Thus, these states retained their independent identity.

Adapted from:

- Singh, Bhagat. *A History of the Sikh Misals*. Panjabi University, Patiala, 1993
- Sītāl, Sohan Singh. *Sikkh Mislām te Sardār Gharāṇe*. Lāhaur Buk Shaup, Ludhiānā, 1993
- *Brief History of Sikh Misals*. Sikh Missionary College; Ludhiānā. www.sikhmissionarycollege.net

**Guidelines for Preparing and Distributing Kaṛāh Prashād (ਕੜਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ) according to
the Sikh Rahit Maryādā (ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ)**

Kaṛāh Prashād (Sacred Pudding)

Article XII

- a. Only the sacred pudding which has been prepared, or got prepared according to the prescribed method, shall be acceptable in the congregation.
- b. The method of preparing the Kaṛāh Prashād is this: In a clean vessel, the three contents (wheat flour, pure sugar and clarified butter, in equal quantities) should be put and it should be made while reciting the Scriptures. Then covered with a clean piece of cloth, it should be placed on a clean stool in front of the Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ), the first five and the last stanza of the Anandu Sāhib (ਅਨੰਦੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ) should be recited aloud (so that the congregation can hear) [If another vessel of the sacred pudding is brought in after the recitation of the Anandu, it is not necessary to repeat the recitation of the Anandu Sāhib. Offering of the pudding brought later to the sacred Kirpān (ਕਿਰਪਾਨ) is enough.], the Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ) offered, and the pudding tucked with the sacred Kirpān for acceptance.
- c. After this, before the distribution to the congregation of the Kaṛāh Prashād, the share of the five beloved ones should be set apart and given away. Thereafter, while commencing the general distribution, the share of the person in attendance of the Gurū Granth Sāhib should be put in a small bowl or vessel and handed over [Giving double share to the person in attendance constitutes improper discrimination]. The person who doles out the Kaṛāh Prashād among the congregation should do so without any discrimination on the basis of personal regard or spite. He should dole out the Kaṛāh Prashād equally to the Sikhs, the non-Sikhs or a person of high or low caste. While doling out the Kaṛāh Prashād, no discrimination should be made on considerations of caste or ancestry or being regarded, by some, as untouchable, of persons within the congregation.
- d. The offering of Kaṛāh Prashād should be accompanied by at least two pice in cash.

Brief History of Sikh *Misals* (ਮਿਸਲ)

Origin of *Misals*

During the second Udāsī (ਉਦਾਸੀ) of Gurū Nānak (ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ), when he visited the *Sidhs* (ਸਿਧ) on Sūmer Parbat (ਸੁਮੇਰ ਪਰਬਤ), on being asked on what foundation he would raise the structure of Sikhī (ਸਿਖੀ), Gurū Nānak Sāhib replied, “On two pillars; one is Gurū Saṅgat (ਗੁਰੂ ਸੰਗਤ) and the other is Bāṇī (ਬਾਣੀ)”. The respect for Bāṇī, and sitting together in the form of saṅgat helped raise the Sikh organizations and institutions. Both Gurū Aṅgad Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ) and Gurū Amardās Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਸਾਹਿਬ) taught the Sikhs (ਸਿਖ) to respect the institution of Saṅgat and declared *Gur-Sabad* (ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ) as the heart of the Gurū. Words of wisdom propagated by so-called spiritual leaders other than the Gurū were branded as Kacī Bāṇī (ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ). The Sikhs were advised to leave such unauthentic sermons, which had not come out of the mouth of true Gurū. Gurū Rāmdās Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਸਾਹਿਬ) raised Ammrītsar (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ) as the centre of Sikhī (ਸਿਖੀ) and it became the pivot of Sikh Saṅgat. In order to safeguard the Sabad Gurū and the institutions, Gurū Arjan Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ) sacrificed his life. When two Sikhs sit together, it becomes Sādh Saṅgat whereas a lone Sikh is just a Sikh. Five Sikhs together are deemed to embody the presence of the Gurū. These views lent great strength to the Saṅgat. During the period from Gurū Harigobind Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ) to Gurū Tegh Bahādar (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ), the respect for Bāṇī and Saṅgat increased many folds. The enemies and opponents of Sikhī did much to reduce the respect of Bāṇī from the hearts of Sikhs, but they could not succeed in their aim. During the Gurū period, beside Saṅgat and Gur Sabad, the Gurū's person was also respected and revered.

A stage came when Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ) contemplated that instead of the body of Gurū, the ideology, Saṅgat and Bāṇī be made supreme. He had also realized that the Sikhs had become well aware and would not fall into the trap of the doubts and suspicions created by ordinary mortals. Thus, he merged his personality in the Saṅgat, gave it the form of *Khālsā* (ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ) and adopted its form himself. This meant that the personality of the Gurū had now merged with the *Khālsā* and the *Khālsā* would now be the Gurū's form. During the last hours of his life, Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib bestowed the honor of Gurūship upon Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ), thus raising its status to supreme level. Bāṇī was revered as it is; but now by issuing an edict, *Sabh Sikhan ko Hukam hai Gurū Mānō Granth* (ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ॥), he made it supreme, removing all doubts and suspicions. The body was Gurū *Khālsā*, where as the soul resided in Gurū Granth. Both together became the Gurū. Thus, Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib blessed the Sikhs with an eternal leader to lead them during difficult times. Such a leader was omnipresent and beyond the cycle of birth and death. Thus, the Sikhs never wavered. After the demise of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib, Sikhs made Ammrītsar the centre of their struggle. Sikhs would assemble at Ammrītsar twice a year—once on Divālī (ਦਿਵਾਲੀ) and again on Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ). This assembly used to be called Sarbat *Khālsā* (ਸਰਬਤ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ). They would pass resolutions and arrive at decisions in the presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib. All resolutions were passed unanimously, and once passed; these were called *Gurmatās* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ). The passed *Gurmatā* was respected by Sikhs as the will of the Gurū. Everyone would revere it as such.

Selection of Five Beloved Ones

Whenever the Sarbat *Khālsā* assembled, its proceedings would commence after an Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ) or supplication to Vāhigurū (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ). Thereafter, invocatory command or *Hukamnāmās* (ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ) of the Gurū (Gurū Granth Sāhib) would be read out. Then the name of a Sikh would be proposed and

accepted by Jaikārās (ਜੈਕਾਰਾ). Such a selected Sikh was called by the name of *Piārā* (ਪਿਆਰਾ). Then this selected *Piārā* would propose another name. On approval from all present, he too would be given the status of a *Piārā*. If anyone objected, he would be appropriately answered, after listening to his reasons for objecting. If the answer was not to the satisfaction of the Saṅgat, his selection was cancelled. In similar fashion, a third, fourth and fifth *Piārā* would be selected. These selected five used to be the recipients of all the honor of the *Khālsā* Panth. They would then move to the Akāl Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ) and sit in the attendance of Gurū Granth Sāhib. Then, a Sikh from the Saṅgat would put up a proposal for consideration. It would be discussed and passed as Gurmatā, if found suitable for the good of the Panth and the public at large. If ever some impediment would arise, the Pañj Piārās (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ) would intervene and take a suitable decision. The passed resolutions would virtually become the policy of the whole Panth, which became binding on all. For example, matters like how to deal with the Navāb (ਨਵਾਬ) of Paṭī (ਪਟੀ) and the *Navāb* of Jalandhar (ਜਲੰਧਰ), who had accepted defeat; how should they be treated; what arrangements of defense or re-organization were to be made in case of invasion by Abdālī (ਅਬਦਾਲੀ); would it be in order to take possession of Lāhaur (ਲਾਹੌਰ); when would be the right time to punish the Navāb of Kasūr (ਕਸੂਰ) for the atrocities perpetrated by him etc. All such decisions were taken unanimously.

This method remained in vogue till 1733. Thereafter, many *Jathās* (ਜਥਾ) came up. But whenever Sarbat *Khālsā* assembled, the individuality of the *Jathās* never existed. Then they became two *Jathā* — the Tarunā Dal (ਤਰੁਨਾ ਦਲ) and the Buḍā Dal (ਬੁਡਾ ਦਲ). Buḍā Dal remained at Ammritsar, to protect it, while Tarunā Dal went on campaigns. All *Jathedārs* (ਜਥੇਦਾਰ) used to render their account before the Akāl Takht to a person appointed by Navāb Kapūr Singh (ਨਵਾਬ ਕਪੂਰ ਸਿੰਘ). Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā (ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ) performed this duty for some time. The Tarunā Dal further divided itself into five *Jathās*, with Shām Singh (ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ), Bābā Dīp Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ), Karam Singh (ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ), Dān Singh (ਦਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ), Dasauṁdhā Singh (ਦਸੌਂਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bīr Singh (ਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ) as the *Jathedārs*. Gradually, the area of influence of the Sikhs increased and, therefore, the number of *Jathās* also increased. By 1748, the strength of Dal *Khālsā* (ਦਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ) had gone up. Had it not been arrested, it would have crossed all boundaries. Navāb Kapūr Singh felt that in view of the threatened attack of Abdālī, there was a need to unite as one. So he told everyone to break their *Jathās*. It was a decision accepted by all. Tarunā Dal and Buḍā Dal too were broken. For the protection of Darbār Sāhib (ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) in Ammritsar, Akālīs (ਅਕਾਲੀ) were appointed. The entire organization was named Dal *Khālsā*. Its command was handed over to Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā. Navāb Kapūr Singh retired from active service of the Panth. Dal *Khālsā* was split into eleven *Jathās*. Each *Jathā* was placed under a *Jathedār*. The area of jurisdiction of each *Jathā* was also defined so that there was no inter *Jathā* discord. The eleven *Jathās* and their *Jathedārs* were as under—

1. **Bhaṅgī** (ਭੰਗੀ) – Bhāi Bhūmā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਭੂਮਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and his son Bhāi Harī Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ)
2. **Nishānvālīā** (ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਵਾਲੀਆ) (The flag bearer) – Bhāi Dasauṁdhā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਦਸੌਂਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ)
3. **Shahīd Singhī** (ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਸਿੰਘੀ) – Bābā Bīr Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bābā Dīp Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ)
4. **Rāmgarīā or Singhīā** (ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ/ਸਿੰਘੀਆ) – Bhāi Hardās Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹਰਦਾਸ ਸਿੰਘ) and then Jassā Singh who converted Rām Rauṁī (ਰਾਮ ਰੌਣੀ) into Rāmgar (ਰਾਮਗੜ)
5. **Nakāi** (ਨਕਈ) – Bhāi Hīrā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Natthā Singh (ਨੱਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ)
6. **Āhlūvālīā** (ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ) – Jassā Singh of village Āhlū (ਆਹਲੂ)
7. **Ghanaīā** (ਘਨਈਆ) – Khushhāl Singh (ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ) and Jai Singh (ਜੈ ਸਿੰਘ)

8. **Faizalpurīā or Singhpurīā (ਫੈਜ਼ਲਪੁਰੀਆ/ਸਿੰਘਪੁਰੀਆ)** – Navāb Kapūr Singh
9. **Ḍālevālīā (ਡਾਲੇਵਾਲੀਆ)** – Gurdīāl Singh (ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ), village Ḍālevāl
10. **Shukarcakīā (ਸ਼ੁਕਰਚਕੀਆ)** – Caṛat Singh (ਚੜਤ ਸਿੰਘ), village Shukarcak
11. **Karoṣsinghīā (ਕਰੋੜਸਿੰਘੀਆ)** – Karoṛā Singh (ਕਰੋੜਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Baghel Singh (ਬਘੇਲ ਸਿੰਘ)
12. **Phulkīān (ਫੁਲਕੀਆਂ)** – Bābā Ālā Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Amar Singh (ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ)

These *Jathās* became famous by the names of the *Misals* (ਮਿਸਲ).

Naming *Jathās* as *Misals*

Initially, these eleven groups were called *Jathās*, but very gradually, the word *Jathā* got replaced with *Misal*. A file of every *Jathā* was kept at Amritsar. It used to contain the exploits of its *Jathedār* and soldiers. Whatever loot was brought by a *Jathedār*, he used to have it recorded in his file and then deposit it with the treasury. They would all say, “Please write my details in the *Misal* (file.)” Thus, the word *Jathā* gradually dropped from their names and the word *Misal* got added, so much so that the Sikh soldiers started referring to each other as *Misals*. Even if some one brought anything in his individual capacity, he would ask the in-charge to record it in the *Misal* to which he belonged.

The Tasks of the *Misals*

Although outwardly the *Misals* became separate, they were still attached with each other. During any emergency, they used to come together and offer a combined front to the enemy. They could never imagine separating themselves from Dal *Khālsā*. They put their loot in a common coffer and shared their exploits. There was no selfishness and no ‘mine’ and ‘ours’. Whenever they assembled at Amritsar during Divālī and Vaisākhī, they never sat under their flag but that of Dal *Khālsā*. They were proud to call themselves Sarbat *Khālsā*.

The *Misals* took many joint decisions. They often held joint functions. Dealing with invaders and those who were against them were common matters for them. Physically, they were separate, yet their hearts beat in unison. Soldiers were at liberty to express their views, yet they honored the decision of their *Jathedārs*. Secondly; there was no high or low in the *Misal*. There were no gradations, nor sequences. All were equal. A *Jathedār* was a soldier first and a soldier was as important as a *Jathedār*. He who enjoyed the confidence and trust of all was normally appointed as *Jathedār*. Yet his wish was never final. Every soldier could communicate his views to the *Jathedār*. Maulvī Vālī Illāh Siddīqī (ਮੌਲਵੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਲਾਹ ਸਿੱਦੀਕੀ) has written: “Every person of the Sikh *Misal* was a free person. Every leader was a master as well as servant. He was a ruler as well as a follower. When alone, he is a saint, a fakīr (ਫਕੀਰ) or a Bhagat (ਭਗਤ) and when part of the Panth, he is the angel of death for his enemies.”. Dr. Sinhā says that the *Jagīrdārī* (ਜਗੀਰਦਾਰੀ) of Sikhs was neither on the lines of Europe nor of *Rajputānā* (ਰਾਜਪੁਤਾਨਾ). Each head of the *Misal* used to obey the leader, but only to an extent. The opinion of every Sikh soldier was respected. It was a system that was spelt out by the need of the hour. No parallel of it can be found in India or even western countries.

Thirdly; every soldier had a right to leave a *Misal* and join any other *Misal* of his choice. This attitude was never looked down upon. It clearly establishes that the ultimate objective of all the *Misals* was the same. One who was leaving was sent by his *Jathedār* happily while the receiving *Jathedār* always felt happy to receive him. Thus, the advantage of the system was that the personality of the individual was maintained and respected. It was the moral duty of all the *Jathedārs* to keep their soldiers happy. A happy and contented soldier would never leave the *Misal*.

Development of the *Misals*

Till 1767, all *Misals* were focused on thwarting the invasions of Abdālī. Thus, they remained united

under the common flag of Dal *Khālsā*, obeyed the command of one *Jathedār*, and honored all the decisions of Sarbat *Khālsā* without any reservation. After 1767, Abdālī was no longer a threat; the Mughal influence too had waned in Pañjāb (ਪੰਜਾਬ), and the Marāṭhās (ਮਰਾਠਾ) would not think of coming towards Pañjāb. There was no power in Pañjāb that was comparable to that of the Sikhs. At this point, selfish motives began to surface and political aspirations also arose. Consequently, all of the *Misals* started expanding their territory of jurisdiction. This became their prime objective.

Although the territories of each *Misal* were earmarked, their limits/ boundaries had not been defined. Taking advantage of this, each *Misal* started working towards defining their boundaries and jurisdiction. Raising forts in their territory was the first action they undertook. Then, the soldiers' position was made permanent and they were paid wages periodically. The *Misaldārs*' desire to extend their rule changed their attitude of love and respect into jealousy and hatred. Thus, the entire Pañjāb got divided into twelve parts. The existence of twelve *Misals* was confirmed. The attendance for Sarbat *Khālsā* at Ammritsar started thinning. Those who attended still showed total respect and regard to the Gurmatās. Those who were absent from the Sarbat *Khālsā*, started flouting such respected decisions. Many started raising objections. As a result, the holding of Sarbat *Khālsā* became infrequent. The last meeting of Sarbat *Khālsā* took place in 1805 during the time of Rañjīt Singh (ਰਾਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ). When the external threat of aggression, which had united the *Misals* ended, the *Misals* became independent and the common objectives which held them together also disappeared. Thus, political unity also ended.

Merits of *Misal* Organizations

Misals were historic necessities, without which the survival of the Panthic organization was not tenable. *Misals* not only helped keep the Panthic organizations united but also helped in the development and spread of Sikhī. The first merit of *Misals* was that the Panth got saved from division into small independent self-governing states, at logger-heads with each other. Navāb Kapūr Singh realized that if 63 *Jathās* can come up in 15 years, their strength can climb to a hundred in a few more. They would then not only become independent, but also break away from their pivot. So Navāb Kapūr Singh organized them into eleven *Jathās* after consolidating them into Dal *Khālsā*. The formation of eleven *Misals* also satisfied the ego of the *Jathedārs* and prevented them from getting scattered. Innately, it also provided them with time for development. Secondly, the organization of *Misals* increased the area of influence of the Sikhs. With the help of their associates, the *Misal Sardārs* (ਸਰਦਾਰ) took over the whole of Pañjāb. Thirdly, this *Misal* system proved very useful in protecting the country against external invaders. This system made the Sikhs invincible. Defeating a *Misal* did not mean the total defeat of the Sikhs because the other *Misals* used to unite and faced the enemy with courage. This is why the Mughals, Marāṭhās and then Afgāns could not succeed in their missions. The *Misal* system was such that no one could say that a strike at such and such place would prove decisive. Every *Misal* revolved around a pivot, and any breakaway group would attach itself with another *Misal*. The services rendered by Phulkīān *Misal* during the Major Holocaust and Rāmgaṛīā *Misal* during the reign of cruelty of Mīr Mannū (ਮੀਰ ਮੰਨੂ) are two examples of such solidarity. Once the field of operation had become reduced, the *Jathedārs* of the *Misals* and the soldiers were familiar with every inch of the ground. Outsiders often became helpless in tracing them. Every river and brook became their friend. Fourthly, once the wish of every *Misal* was respected, the feelings of enmity and opposition disappeared. Since the area of operation of every *Misal* was defined, there was complete freedom. If any dispute or discord arose, the *Jathedār* of Dal *Khālsā* would make a decision without taking sides. Lastly, the unwritten charter of the *Misals* was such that every soldier was the master of his own will. A soldier could leave a *Misal* to join any other. Similarly, every soldier would get adequate opportunity to progress. By his own traits, a soldier could rise to the level of deputy *Jathedār* or even *Jathedār*. This possibility maintained a feeling of perpetual prosperity amongst the Sikhs and did not permit the birth of feudalism.

Demerits of the *Misal* System

Although the *Misals* had many historic and timely merits, they proved very harmful after 1767. This time was a period of vacuum in the history of India. Any stable, progressive, strong-willed and opportunist nation could exploit the conditions to establish a lasting rule by filling up the void. The Sikhs had all the characteristics to do so. It was not impossible for the Sikhs to establish an empire in Northern India. Forester, who came to India as a traveler in 1783, writes his impressions in his travelogues. He wrote that he had no hesitation in recording that the Sikhs would become the primary force among the Indian states and shortly after, they would prove destructive for their neighbors. What Sardār Raṇjīt Singh desired could have been fulfilled a century earlier. On the death of Nāṣaf Khan (ਨਾਜਫ ਖਾਨ) in 1782, there was no strong minister in Dillī. Sikhs wasted that golden opportunity. Shortly after this time, Shāh Ālam (ਸ਼ਾਹ ਆਲਮ) the second had reached an accord with the Marāṭhās and the British Government had started to interfere directly in his affairs. With the stepping in of the British, the entire area under the Sikh protection was lost. The Sikhs remained confined to the land of the five rivers. Let us take a look at the harm done by the *Misals*.

1. **Mutual Discords and Opposition:** C. H. Payne writes that the *Misals* gave birth to jealousy, a trait that was alien to the Sikhs until that time. It now became a part of their character. Once the external threat was over, inner strife took birth. Scramble for land commenced. They started fighting with each other with the same gusto as they fought with the *Durrānīs* (ਦੁੱਰਾਨੀ). After the invasion of *Durrānīs*, the external threat would end and its place was taken up by doubts and suspicions. This set off fights within the house. When they should have been thinking about the political landscape of the larger India, they were wasting their time in fighting with each other.
2. **End of *Gurmatā* and Break up of Organizational Structure:** The *Misal* system virtually ended the principle of *Gurmatā* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ). The *Gurmatā* system had guided the community during the most arduous times; its end broke the pivot of unity. The common congregation at Vaisākhī and Divālī ended, the respect between the *Misal* leaders was over and the greatness of the organization broke. If these had remained, it can be said with certainty that Sikhs would have succeeded in laying the foundation of a mighty empire and would have presented an unparallel front in India. But everything that happened was against the expectations. As a result, the organizational structure broke and the authority of Sikhs remained confined to Pañjāb.
3. **A Blow to the Democratic Set up:** The birth of the Sikh nation and its organizational structure was in favor of democracy and democratic values. Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib had adopted this concept in creating the *Khālsā*. The selection of five beloveds and passing of *Gurmatā* was aimed at the fulfillment of this ideology. The truth is, that this was the main principle behind raising eleven organizations: so that the existence of all could be maintained. But the *Misal* system ended the sentiment of democracy. When Raṇjīt Singh adopted the age-old regal system of governance, he had also sown the seeds of the decline of the empire.
4. **Breaking of Associations Led to Debacles:** The commencement of a rat race for achieving selfish ends destroyed the earlier associations, and closeness of purpose, in the Panth. Earlier the *Misals* used to become one in the event of any external aggression, but their mutual enmity increased to such an extent in 15 years that they never came together, even in the face of common threat to them. When united, they were capable of facing the might of Abdālī, but the greatest joke of history took place when the *Misals* of trans-Satluj (ਸਤਲੁਜ) were defeated by Ambā Piṅgle Rāṇe Khān (ਅੰਬਾ ਪਿੰਗਲੇ ਰਾਣੇ ਖਾਨ) and then Peron in 1787, 1790 and 1796 respectively. Some *Misal Sardārs* accepted defeat and began payment of yearly tribute to their vanquishers.

Sikhs Could not Become Mighty Power: The period from 1767 to 1799 was a period of turmoil in India. The big powers had ended while the smaller had not yet found their feet on the ground. The Mughal empire had been reduced to just a name. The Marāṭhās were also a spent force. Ahmad Shāh Durrānī (ਅਹਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੁੱਰਾਨੀ) of Afghanistan had expired in 1772 and the British were still in the far east of India. *Rohilās* (ਰੋਹਿਲਾ), *Jaṭs* (ਜਟ), *Rājput̃s* (ਰਾਜਪੂਤ) and *Navābs* of Avadh (ਅਵਧ) enjoyed some authority in Northern India but they were not strong enough. There was infighting amongst them and there was not one power that could be called strong due to its organizational structure. According to a contemporary writer: “There were internal fights and the country was crying out in pain. That was a blessed time for the Sikhs because the threat of the *Durrānīs* had also ended. Ahmad Shāh died in 1772 and his successor remained engrossed in his domestic affairs. He had neither the time nor the power to invade the Pañjāb.” The Sikhs took no advantage of the situation and remained involved in their petty disputes. The *Misals* could not fulfill their dreams of becoming a mighty power in Hindostan. So we can say it with conviction that the *Misals*, who had caused the Afgāns, Mughals and Marāṭhās to eat humble pie, got themselves involved in such small inner strife, that they proved themselves no better than a local power.

Brief History of the *Misals*

Eleven *Jathās* were constituted under the command of Dal *Khālsā*. These became famous as eleven *Misals*. The twelfth was not a part of Dal *Khālsā*, but was a *Misal* historically and constitutionally. It had its own area of jurisdiction. We must take a birds-eye view of the history of each *Misal* in order to understand how Rañjīt Singh managed to establish his rule in the territory west of river Satluj.

Shukarcakīā *Misal* was one among the twelve that became the dominant *Misal* with the ascendance of Rañjīt Singh. After 1767, the entire Pañjāb came under Sikh rule in about six years time. The territory got divided into twelve *Misals*. The Sikhs commenced their own coin as well. The voice of “Deg Teg Fatih, Nusrat Be diraṅg, Yaft az Nānak Gurū Gobind Singh” (ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫਤਿਹ, ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇ ਦਿਰੰਗ, ਯਫਤ ਅਜ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ!), started resounding in the Pañjāb. The *Khālsā* flag started fluttering from Sahāranpur (ਸਹਾਰਨਪੁਰ) in the East, to Aṭok (ਅਟੋਕ) in the West, and from Multān (ਮੁਲਤਾਨ) to Kāngrā (ਕਾਂਗੜਾ) in the North-West. Taimūr Shāh (ਤੈਮੂਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ), son of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī gave up his intentions of invading India, and Sikhs in particular. He made a few invasions, but these were not against the Sikhs; he needed to sort-out his own appointed rulers who had become defiant. Lāhaur and Pañjāb were not his targets. When a few selfish people of Pañjāb motivated him to come to Pañjāb, his reply was, “What has my father earned fighting the Sikhs?” Pañjāb came under the authority of the *Misals*. Every *Misal* had its own territory of protection. Many *Misals* remained in the Pañjāb but their authority became less imposing due to the sharp and fast stance of other *Misals*. Many thought it wise to merge themselves with others.

1. Faizalpurīā *Misal*: This was the most respected *Misal* among the Sikhs. Navāb Kapūr Singh was the founder and it was considered an honor to be part of this *Misal*. Navāb Kapūr Singh left the leadership of Dal *Khālsā* in 1749 but kept leading the *Misal*. He belonged to the village Faizalpur, therefore this name was adopted for the *Misal* as well. Later this very *Misal* was renamed as Singh purīā. Navāb Kapūr Singh led this *Misal* till 1753.

This *Misal* faced many enemies, and Navāb Singh Kapūr Singh himself had killed over 500 enemy soldiers. The *Misal* had a strength of 2500 soldiers. It operated across the river Satluj, right up to Dillī. After 1753, this *Misal* came under the leadership of Khushhāl Singh.. He too was a brave and gallant leader, who won territories on either side of the river Saltuj. He took possession of Jalandhar (ਜਲੰਧਰ), Nūrpur (ਨੂਰਪੁਰ), Bahirāmpur (ਬਹਿਰਾਮਪੁਰ), Bhāratgar (ਭਾਰਤਗੜ) and Paṭī (ਪਟੀ). He took active

part in preaching of Sikhī. After him, his son Budh Singh (ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ) succeeded as the leader of the *Misal*. Budh Singh was not famous like his predecessors. Therefore, the popularity and importance of the *Misal* waned. Gradually, its area of influence shrank to Jaṇḍiālā (ਜੰਡਿਆਲਾ), Taran Tāran (ਤਰਨ ਤਾਰਨ) and Paṭī from the principal Mājha (ਮਾਝਾ) territory of the Pañjāb. Even this small area of jurisdiction was frequently interfered with by the Bhaṅgī *Misal*.

Since the *Faizalpurīā Misal* was located at Jaṇḍiālā, which is close to Amritsar, it was often the target of their enemy. The *Caudharīs* (ਚੌਧਰੀ) of Paṭī, *Phaujḍārs* (ਫੌਜਦਾਰ) of Taran Tāran and Nirañjanīās (ਨਿਰੰਜਨੀਆ) of Jaṇḍiālā had made this *Misal* the target of their wrath. Thus, its soldiers used to face the onslaught of the enemy perpetually. The enemy of the Sikhs always believed this *Misal* to be the pivot of the Dal Khālsā. Thus, dealing a death blow to it would break the back of the Sikh community. Yet the opponents could not succeed in their mission. The *Faizalpurīā Misal* always enjoyed the help of other *Misals*. Because of frequent blows over a long period of time, when the time of taking possession of the Pañjāb came, this *Misal* could not come to the forefront. Although it was much honored, yet when it came to extension of territories, the much hyped respect also waned. This respect was primarily on two accounts—first, because it was founded by Navāb Kapūr Singh, and secondly, because it bore the brunt of the attacks on itself in the event of aggressions from the Afgāns. This *Misal* was under Khushhāl Singh till 1783. The Bhaṅgī *Misal*, which was at its zenith, wanted to usurp the territory of this *Misal* but could not succeed. At last Rañjīt Singh annexed it into his kingdom.

2. Āhlūvalīā Misal: In terms of respect, this *Misal* was next only to the *Faizalpurīā Misal*. It holds an important place in Sikh history, and therefore was much revered. Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā was the founder of this *Misal*. As Navāb Kapūr Singh very ably led the Sikhs during the ‘Small Holocaust’ and did not let them slip into a state of dejection, similarly Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā led the Sikhs admirably during the invasions of Abdālī, the Vaḍā Ghalūghārā (ਵਡਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), oppressions of Adīnā Beg (ਅਦੀਨਾ ਬੇਗ) and Mīr Mannū, and the obstinacy of the Marāṭhās, and made them capable of ruling Pañjāb. The nation felt immense gratitude for his able leadership and service and bestowed on him the title of Sultān-ul-Kaum (ਸੁਲਤਾਨ-ਉਲ-ਕੌਮ) and made him Emperor of Lāhaur. When the matter of re-laying the foundation of Harimandar Sāhib (ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) came up, the entire community asked Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā to do the honor. These two events are enough to show the respect that he enjoyed among the Sikhs. When Navāb Kapūr Singh entrusted the leadership of the Panth into the able hands of Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā, it was not only a wise decision but also showed the foresight of Navāb Kapūr Singh. The Panth went through a period of turmoil from 1748 to 1767. It was the leadership of Jassā Singh Āhlūvalīā that kept the nation on the path of progress and emerge victorious.

The elders of Jassā Singh belonged to village Āhlū. There lived a man by the name of Bhāgū (ਭਾਗੂ). Seeing the ascendancy of Sikhs, he sold all his belongings and purchased a horse. He joined the *Misal* of Navāb Kapūr Singh and was baptized with Khaṇḍe-dī-Pāhul (ਖੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ) and renamed Bhāg Singh (ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ). Soon, he organized his own *Jathā* but he always held Navāb Kapūr Singh’s counsel as supreme. One day, Navāb Kapūr Singh visited his house. There he met his widowed sister who had taken Khaṇḍe-dī-Pāhul. She was singing Gurbānī very melodiously to the accompaniment of the *Rabāb* (ਰਬਾਬ). When Navāb Kapūr Singh heard her singing, he was full of praise for her devotion. He asked if the widowed lady had any issue, Bhāg Singh informed him that she had a son who had been staying with Mātā Sundarī (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ) and had just arrived. This boy was Jassā Singh. Navāb Kapūr Singh took one look at the child and said that he would become a famous warrior and a leading Sardār. Hearing this, the wise mother placed the hand of the child into the hands of Navāb Kapūr

Siṅgh. In a short period of time, the name of Jassā Siṅgh became more known than his uncle Bhāg Siṅgh. When Bhāg Siṅgh died, the responsibility of the *Misal* fell upon Jassā Siṅgh, since Bhāg Siṅgh had no issue of his own. Thus, this *Misal* was named Āhlūvalīā. The jurisdiction and territory of the *Misal* was well defined. Its headquarters were in Doābā Jalandhar. It consisted of the area east of the river Biās (ਬਿਆਸ), Āhlū, Sariālā (ਸਰਿਆਲਾ), Silevār (ਸਿਲੇਵਾਰ), Bhupāl (ਭੁਪਾਲ), Gagarvāl (ਗਗਰਵਾਲ), Pār Talvaṇḍī (ਪਾਰ ਤਲਵੰਡੀ) and Sultānpur (ਸੁਲਤਾਨਪੁਰ). They were receiving revenue from Rāi Ibrāhīm (ਰਾਇ ਇਬਰਾਹਿਮ) of Kapūrthālā (ਕਪੂਰਥਲਾ). They also exercised their influence across river Satluj up to Koṭ Īsā Khān (ਕੋਟ ਈਸਾ ਖਾਨ) and Jagrāom (ਜਗਰਾਓਂ). Although Jassā Siṅgh was the leader of the *Misal*, yet his point of view was never selfish and limited to the *Misal*. The welfare and good of the Panth was at the core of his heart until his end.

This *Misal* too enjoys an honorable place in Sikh history. If Faizalpurīā *Misal* bore the brunt of all attacks, this *Misal* did not lag behind in confronting the foreign aggression. Adīnā Beg was a clever Navāb of his time. He did not relinquish his control over Jalandhar until his death. But this *Misal* kept his intentions in check. Adīnā Beg made many attempts on this *Misal* but had to keep quiet due to the strong reply of Jassā Siṅgh Āhlūvalīā. This *Misal* remained in power for long. Adīnā Beg also tried to pitch Jassā Siṅgh Rāmgarīā (ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ) against the Āhlūvalīā *Misal*, but the Rāmgarīā Sardār did not fall prey to his guiles. No *Jathedār* dared violate the code of conduct with Jassā Siṅgh around. During the occupation of Lāhaur, Jassā Siṅgh Āhlūvalīā was appointed Pātishāh (ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹ). After 1767, this *Misal* took possession of Kapūrthala and Jalandhar, but Jassā Siṅgh had grown old and did not think it appropriate to take part in the rat race. In 1783, he breathed his last at Ammrtsar. Every one was much impressed by his nobility, magnificence and gallantry. After him, the leadership of the *Misal* fell into the hands of his nephew Bhāg Siṅgh, a son of his brother. He was a weak ruler and could not succeed in the expansion of his jurisdiction. Instead, he earned a dispute with the Rāmgarīā *Misal*. After Bhāg Siṅgh, his successor Phatah Siṅgh (ਫਤਹ ਸਿੰਘ) became a foster brother of Raṅjīt Siṅgh who merged this *Misal* with his own and used it for personal gain. The area of operation of this *Misal* remained confined to Kapūrthālā. At its zenith, this *Misal* had the strength of 7000 soldiers.

3. Rāmgarīā/Siṅghīā *Misal*: Jassā Siṅgh Rāmgarīā was the founder and *Jathedār* of this *Misal*. He belonged to the village Icoḡil (ਇਚੋਗਿਲ). His ancestors were carpenters by profession, so he was addressed as Ṭhokā (ਠੋਕਾ), which almost became his surname. While he was well aware of construction and raising buildings, he was also an intelligent soldier and military General. Sarbat Khālsā decided to construct a garrison enclosure near Gurduārā Bibeksar (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਿਬੇਕਸਰ) for the protection and defense of Darbār Sāhib. This was named Rām Rauṇī (ਰਾਮ ਰੌਣੀ). Sikhs were of the opinion that without a fort/ fortress, protection of the sanctum sanctorum was not viable. Therefore, Jassā Siṅgh was entrusted the task of raising Rām Rauṇī. When in 1748, this Rām Rauṇī was made into a permanent structure, Rām Rauṇī became Rāmgarī. Although Jassā Siṅgh was unhappy with Sikhs during the period of turmoil and adversities, he fought on the side of his brothers and saved Rāmgarī. Since that day, the suffix Rāmgarīā got added to his name. His *Misal* too became known as the Rāmgarīā *Misal*. Ghanaīā Lāl (ਘਨਈਆ ਲਾਲ), the historian, writes that seeing his intelligence, cleverness, sweetness of conversation and very respectable appearance, Adīnā Beg was highly impressed with Jassā Siṅgh Rāmgarīā. Jassā Siṅgh Rāmgarīā made adequate contributions in the struggle for freedom and at no time had he backtracked himself.

Jassā Siṅgh Rāmgarīā became cross with Dal Khālsā in 1750 on account of an incident regarding the killing of a new born girl. He was accused of this crime—an act which was against the tenets of Sikhī. The Dal Khālsā expressed its anger. Jassā Siṅgh was peeved at being punished without making

an investigation of the matter. Adīnā Beg, who had been looking for an appropriate time, entered into a treaty with Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā. This arrangement between them was frowned upon for some time. In accordance with the treaty Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā joined Adīnā Beg and Mīr Mannū in attacking Rām Rauṇī in 1751. The Sikhs were trapped inside Rām Rauṇī, with no avenue for escape. Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā, who was no less a Sikh at heart, could not bear the condition of the entrapped Sikhs. He detached himself from the army of Adīnā Beg and took the side of the Sikhs. As soon as he attacked, the enemy forces scrambled for cover and ran away. Jassā Singh kept confronting the Durrānīs along with the other *Misals* of Dal Khālsā.

He achieved many victories at far and near places in collaboration with Jai Singh Ghanaīā. When Khvājā Abad Khān (ਖ਼ਵਾਜ਼ ਅਬਦ ਖ਼ਾਨ) tried to break the organizational structure of Dal Khālsā, Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā, along with the Sardār of Ghanaīā Misal handed him a crushing defeat. Even during the Great Holocaust, he bore the brunt of the attack equally. After Abdālī had withdrawn, Jassā Singh too commenced his campaign for expansion of his area of jurisdiction. He took Baṭālā (ਬਟਾਲਾ), Kalnaur (ਕਲਨੌਰ), Dīnā Nagar (ਦੀਨਾ ਨਗਰ), Kaudīān (ਕੌਦੀਆਂ), Srī Hargobindpur (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦਪੁਰ), Ghuman (ਘੁਮਨ) and some other villages of Amritsar under his rule. His annual revenue also mounted to six lakhs. He was in complete control of the Doāb area of Jalandhar. The Ghanaīā Misal did not appreciate his occupation of Kalnaur and Baṭālā. Therefore, they fell apart with the Rāmgarīā Misal. In this state of pulls and pushes, Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā suffered much. So he had to go across river Satluj, leaving his own territory. His organizational structure was strong and there was no one as strong and effective between river Satluj and Jamunā (ਜਮੁਨਾ). Bābā Ālā Singh had expired and the Sardārs of Karōsinghīā Misal were not fit enough to confront him. He established himself as a powerful leader in a short time and established Sirsā (ਸਿਰਸਾ) as his central place. He attacked the Mughal palaces of Dillī and took away four guns. He collected a sum of ten thousand rupees as protection money from the *Navāb* of Meraṭ (ਮੇਰਠ). He razed Hisār (ਹਿਸਾਰ) to the ground, because its ruler had molested two Brāhmaṇ (ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ) girls, and collected about 5 lakh gold coins from there. He won many campaigns and battles in the Doāb of the Gaṅgā (ਗੰਗਾ) and Jamunā rivers. Had he stayed there for some more time, he would have emerged a strong power for ruling the entire Northern India. But he could never forget the territory that he had lost or was snatched away from him. In 1783, he collaborated with the Shukarcakīā Misal and attacked the territory of the Ghanaīā Misal. He also took over the territory of Baṭālā. The Ghanaīā Misal was much aggrieved but was not in a state to fight alone.

When Ranjīt Singh married the daughter of Gurbakhsh Singh (ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ), and Sadā Kaur of Ghanaīā Misal, Sadā Kaur also got an opportunity to punish the Rāmgarīā Misal. So she attacked Miānī (ਮਿਆਨੀ), where Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā was stationed, with the help of Ranjīt Singh in 1796. Jassā Singh approached Bābā Sāhib Singh Bedī (ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਦੀ) to squash the matter, but Sadā Kaur (ਸਦਾ ਕੌਰ) did not listen to him. As a result Bābā Sāhib Singh felt displeased. It is said that Sadā Kaur had a very narrow escape at Biās (ਬਿਆਸ).

By now, Jassā Singh had grown old. Therefore, he felt it wise to lead a retired life at one place. He breathed his last in 1803. With his demise, the fame of the *Misal* also waned. Ranjīt Singh took possession of the territory of this *Misal* when Budh Singh, son of Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā, accepted submission. This *Misal* was about 3000 soldiers strong. During his invasions across the river Satluj, this strength touched the 8000 mark.

4. Bhaṅgī Misal: This was counted as a formidable *Misal* amongst the Sikh *Misals*. In the early

period, Faizalpurīā and Āhlūvalīā Misal reigned supreme. These two were much respected in the Panth, but after the departure of Abdālī, both these *Misals* did not take part in the rat race of supremacy. Thus, they lagged behind. Rāmgaṛīās were also pushed across the river Satluj. When it became effective to interfere in the power equation of Pañjāb, Bhaṅgī Misal was at its peak. Dr Sinhā is of the opinion that had Bhaṅgī Misal acted wisely, it would have ruled the Pañjāb instead of the Shukarcakīā Misal. Chajjā Singh (ਛੱਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ) was the founder of this *Misal*. He brought the *Jafs* of his area into the fold of Sikhī and formed an independent *Jathā*. Then they started attacking small hamlets of the Mughal kingdom. Bhāī Bhīm Singh (ਭੀਮ ਸਿੰਘ) took over the *Misal* after Chajjā Singh. Bhāī Bhīm Singh had been baptized by Chajjā Singh and belonged to village Kasūr. During the invasion of Nādir Shāh, Bhīm Singh earned a good name for himself. They collected much of the plundered goods. After Bhīm Singh, Harī Singh succeeded as the leader of the *Misal*. Harī Singh was the nephew of Bhāī Bhīm Singh and was adopted as his son. This *Misal* earned a great deal of fame during his leadership. Harī Singh was an intelligent leader, a progressive soldier and a wise statesman. The writer of Tvārīkh-e-Pañjāb (ਤਵਾਰੀਖ-ਏ-ਪੰਜਾਬ) writes that Harī Singh was a clever and powerful man of shining abilities. He was very active during all the Sikh struggles and at no time had he been found wanting in effort. They kept winning and attacking territories up to a hundred miles or so and the Bhaṅgī Misal is the only *Misal* that had arranged for good horses for all its soldiers. They made Gilvālī (ਗਿਲਵਾਲੀ), Ammrītsar as their headquarters. The centre of all Sikh struggles was Ammrītsar alone; even the ruling power was keen to destroy the importance of Ammrītsar for the Sikhs. Thus, this *Misal* earned a pivotal place by virtue of its position and the strength of soldiers of this *Misal* increased to 20 000. For their love of Ammrītsar, and in order to save its honor, every soldier and progressive leader yearned to join this *Misal*. It was considered a matter of pride to be part of it. Harī Singh himself was a proud and progressive young soldier. Whenever he fought, he would appear to be intoxicated and people thought that he had consumed hemp/cannabis. Thus, the suffix Bhaṅgī got added to his name and the *Misal* also became famous by this name. This *Misal* expanded its area of jurisdiction a great deal after the departure of Abdālī. The boundary that was confined to an area around Ammrītsar now extended to Cinaut (ਚਿਨੌਤ) and Jhaṅg (ਝੰਗ). The *Misal* also took possession of Siālkoṭ (ਸਿਆਲਕੋਟ), Nārovāl (ਨਾਰੋਵਾਲ) and Kariāl (ਕਰਿਆਲ) as well as Rāvalpiṇḍī (ਰਾਵਲਪਿੰਡੀ). Rājā Raṅjīt Dev (ਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਦੇਵ) of Jammū (ਜੰਮੂ) was brought to submission by the Bhaṅgīs, who took tribute from him. The *Misal* had the *Khālsā* flag raised even across river Sindh (ਸਿੰਧ). Rāī Singh Būrhīā (ਰਾਇ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੂਰਹੀਆ) had the Sikh flag fluttering across the river Jamunā. Even Raṅjīt Singh acknowledged defeat against this *Misal*. The Bhaṅgī Sardārs even planned to win Kashmīr, but their plans did not come to fruition. It was in the leadership of Harī Singh that Lahaṇā Singh (ਲਹਣਾ ਸਿੰਘ), Gujjar Singh (ਗੁੱਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ) and Sobhā Singh (ਸੋਭਾ ਸਿੰਘ) took their first *Jathā* to Lāhaur in 1765 and took over the city. Gujjar Singh even went to confront Mukbār Khān (ਮੁਕਬਾਰ ਖਾਨ) and had his authority established from the river Cināb (ਚਿਨਾਬ) to the river of Sindh. Mukbār Khān had established his authority in this area and took it as his right to rule the area after Abdālī. By dealing a decisive defeat to him, the Bhaṅgī Sardārs ended his authority from the territory. Thus, Gujjar Singh made Gujrat (ਗੁੱਜਰਾਤ) the centre of his activities. Caṛat Singh Shukarcakīā demanded his share after seeing the progress and prosperity of the Bhaṅgī Misal. Gujjar Singh asked him to launch a joint attack across the river Jhelam (ਝੇਲਮ) so that Mukbār Khān could be pushed across the river Sindh because the Shukarcakīā Misal could only be given a share once new territories were won. Both pitched their forces against Rohtās (ਰੋਹਤਾਸ) and conquered it. Gujjar Singh thought it politically wise that the jurisdiction of the Shukarcakīā Sardār be acknowledged across the river Jhelam. In 1764, Harī Singh expired. His son Jhaṇḍā Singh took over the leadership of the *Misal* and appointed Gaṇḍā Singh (ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ) as Deputy *Jathedār*. Jhaṇḍā Singh detached his mind from Jammū, Kashmīr and the Northern territories and concentrated on Multān. Multān was under the rule of the Afgāns and the

Bhaṅgī Sardārs felt that the last sign of influence of the Afgāns should also be removed from the soil of Pañjāb. But Jhaṇḍā Singh was not aware of the strength of his opponents. Dawood's grand children of Bahāvalpur (ਬਹਾਵਲਪੁਰ) were at the fore front in extending assistance to Multān and Jhaṇḍā Singh (ਝੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ) launched the campaign without adequate preparations. The attack could achieve no results, so an accord was reached and Pāk Paṭan (ਪਾਕ ਪਟਨ) was fixed as the boundary between the two groups. Shortly after, the Bhaṅgīs started crossing the boundary of Pāk Paṭan. They prepared and attacked Multān again, and yet again they did not succeed. Then in 1771, Jhaṇḍā Singh thought of launching a severe attack on Multān. The victory was not expected to come easily. Fortunately for Jhaṇḍā Singh, the power at Multān got split into two parties: Sharīf Beg Takkal (ਸ਼ਰੀਫ਼ ਬੇਗ਼ ਤੱਕਲ), a leader of the breakaway group invited Jhaṇḍā Singh to join him. Taking advantage of the situation, Jhaṇḍā Singh occupied Multān. Shujāh Khan (ਸ਼ੁਜਾਹ ਖਾਨ) and the grandsons of Dāūd (ਦਾਉਦ) of Bahāwalpur ran away from the field and Sharīf Beg also ran away to Sindh. Divān Singh (ਦਿਵਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ) was appointed Governor of Multān. In the same year, the Bhaṅgīs attacked Rām Nagar (ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ) and captured the gun Zam Zamā (ਜਮ ਜਮਾ), which became famous by the name of Bhaṅgīān dī top (ਭੰਗੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਤੋਪ). This victory took the honor of Bhaṅgī Misal to the top. After Multān, they threatened Kasūr. Aslam Khān (ਅਸਲਮ ਖਾਨ), the Garrison Commander of Kasūr, was famous for the ill treatment of his subjects and for his immoral character. Kasūr was captured many a times by the Sikhs, who had punished the *Faujdār* (ਫੌਜਦਾਰ). Since the Sikhs were concentrating their minds and efforts towards Multān, the *Faujdār* re-imposed his power over the people. Thus after Multān, Jhaṇḍā Singh attacked Kasūr and took possession of the fort. The exploits of the Bhaṅgī Misal were known all over by now. Jhaṇḍā Singh wrote to General Barker, who was taking a keen interest in the state of Pañjāb in those days, and told him that the power of Dal Khālsā was indescribable; it was Dal Khālsā which had checked the frequent attacks of Abdālī. He also talked about the might of the Bhaṅgī Misal. This event dates back to 1773.

By then, the area of jurisdiction of the Bhaṅgī Misal had extended from Amritsar to Multān and from Jammū to Rohtās. It was believed that this *Misal* would overpower all others and succeed in establishing its rule in the Pañjāb. But Carat Singh and Mahā Singh (ਮਹਾ ਸਿੰਘ) kept the progress of the Bhaṅgī Misal in check. In 1774, a dispute developed between Ranjīt Dev of Jammū and his son, and the Bhaṅgīs decided to help Ranjīt Dev. Both Ghanaīā and Shukarcakīā declared their intentions to help Brij Rāj Dev (ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਰਾਜ ਦੇਵ), the rebellious son of Ranjīt Dev. Jai Singh Ghanaīā paid a handsome amount to have Jhaṇḍā Singh murdered in 1774. This was a huge blow to the Bhaṅgī Misal. Gaṇḍā Singh, the younger brother of Jhaṇḍā Singh took over the reins of the *Misal*. He strengthened the fort of Amritsar and paid attention to his territory, but he had not forgotten the murder of his brother. He was looking for an opportunity that came his way soon, when the widow of Nand Singh (ਨੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ), a member of Bhaṅgī Misal, had her daughter married to Tārā Singh (ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ) of Ghanaīā Misal and gave the area of Paṭhānkoṭ (ਪਠਾਨਕੋਟ) in dowry to the Ghanaīā Sardār. Gaṇḍā Singh did not like the turn of events and decided to attack Ghanaīā Misal. They fought at Dīnā Nagar (ਦੀਨਾ ਨਗਰ) where Gaṇḍā Singh fell during the campaign and died. His nephew, Carat Singh, died fighting at Paṭhānkoṭ. These two deaths broke the hearts of the Bhaṅgī soldiers. They handed over Paṭhānkoṭ to the Ghanaīās and turned back. The Bhaṅgī Misal now accepted Desā Singh (ਦੇਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ), a minor son of Gaṇḍā Singh, as their leader. He, however, could not control such a big and powerful *Misal*. As a result both Jhaṅg and Multān slipped out of their hands. In 1777, Muzāfar Khān (ਮੁਜਾਫਰ ਖਾਨ), the *Navāb* of Bahāvalpur, attacked Multān but Divān Singh defeated him. Next year, Taimūr Shāh (ਤੈਮੂਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ) launched an attack, but Divān Singh thwarted his efforts as well. Taimūr now attacked with a force of 18,000. The Bhaṅgī Sardār gave in and nearly 3000 Sikh soldiers lost their

lives; Multān fell into the hands of Taimūr Shāh. Desā Singh tried to recapture the area of Jhang but he lost his life, in 1782, at the hands of Mahā Singh, and Gulāb Singh (ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ) became leader in his place. However, he got involved in worldly pleasures and the only achievement to his name is victory over Kasūr. Even this was a hollow victory since Kasūr was taken back from him by Nizām Dīn Khān (ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਦੀਨ ਖਾਨ) and Kutub Dīn Khān (ਕੁਤੁਬ ਦੀਨ ਖਾਨ) in 1794. When Raṇjīt Singh took possession of Lāhaur in 1799, Gulāb Singh hit upon a conspiracy to call Raṇjīt Singh to the fort of Bhasīn (ਭਸੀਨ) where he would be murdered. But Raṇjīt Singh came to the fort accompanied by a strong force and Gulāb Singh could not execute his conspiracy. Meanwhile, on the pretext of borrowing Bhaṅgī's top, he occupied Bhaṅgī's fort and Ammrītsar.

Lahnā Singh and Gujjar Singh of this *Misal* had subjugated a large area of Pañjāb and divided the territory held by them. In 1795, Gujjar Singh, Lahnā Singh and Sobhā Singh took possession of Lāhaur. Lahnā Singh ruled the city until 1797. In 1799, Raṇjīt Singh evicted the sons of Lahnā Singh (Cet Singh and Sobhā Singh) and took over Lāhaur.. Raṇjīt Singh was fully supported by Bhāī Gurbaksh Singh (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ), Hakīm Hākam Rāi (ਹਕੀਮ ਹਾਕਮ ਰਾਇ) and Mīrām Ishk Muhammad (ਮੀਰਾਂ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ). Once Lāhaur was lost, Gujjar Singh started paying attention towards North. He took possession of Gujrāt and then, in collaboration with some other Bhaṅgī Sardārs, won Jammū as well. He also took over the cities of Puñc (ਪੁੰਚ), Islāmgaṛ (ਇਸਲਾਮਗੜ), Devā Botālā (ਦੇਵਾ ਬੋਤਾਲਾ) in 1786. He had a fort by the name of Gujjar Singh constructed at Ammrītsar. The fort of Gobindgaṛ (ਗੋਬਿੰਦਗੜ) is now located there. Gujjar Singh had three sons named Sukhā Singh, Sāhib Singh (ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ) and Fatah Singh (ਫਤਹ ਸਿੰਘ). Sukhā Singh was killed at the hands of Sāhib Singh, who was married to an aunt of Raṇjīt Singh. Gujjar Singh and Sāhib Singh were annoyed with each other because Sāhib Singh had handed over the Muslim Garrison Commander of Rām Nagar (ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ) to Mahā Singh. This Garrison Commander had asked Gujjar Singh for refuge. This slip on the part of Sāhib Singh annoyed Gujjar Singh so much that he left the fort. He handed over all his territory to Fatah Singh and came to Lāhaur and died in 1788. Fatah Singh was not accepted as a leader by the members of Bhaṅgī Misal; instead, they selected Sāhib Singh. A pitched battle was fought at Sadhaurā (ਸਧੌਰਾ) in 1792. Due to his ill health, Mahā Singh left the field in the care of Sāhib Singh. He conspired to murder Raṇjīt Singh in the fort of Bhasīn (ਭਸੀਨ) but joined Raṇjīt Singh due to failure. In 1806, he accepted subjugation by Raṇjīt Singh and lived his life on a *Jagīr* (ਜਗੀਰ) of one lakh granted by Raṇjīt Singh until he died in 1811.

The Decline of Bhaṅgī Misal

The *Misal* that was expected to rule the whole of Pañjāb got reduced to a symbol by the end of the eighteenth century. There are many causes for its decline. At one point it enjoyed a pivotal place amongst the *Misals*; it also had to face the onslaught of Abdālī's invasion. All of its leaders faced Abdālī's challenge with devotion and dedication and expanded their area of jurisdiction. But when the time came for consolidation, they did not pay adequate attention towards expansion. They ignored their past and their weaknesses. The unseen powers weakened them further. The primary cause of their victories was that they had established Ammrītsar as their centre, but later on, they changed their centre to Gujrāt, Jammū, Multān and Kasūr. Having left their centre and position of advantage, they were unable to protect all their territory. Once Multān slipped out of their hands, other territories also started slipping away.

Secondly, the occupation of Multān was not a wise idea. Statesmanship demanded that they remain concentrated in the centre and Multān had a huge concentration of Afgāns. Taimūr Shāh considered it a challenge to his pride when Bhaṅgī *Misal* enjoyed complete control over Multān, and was ever ready to invade Pañjāb. He attacked Multān in 1798; much against the Sikh tradition, the Bhaṅgī

Sardār accepted defeat and showed cowardice. Multān was handed over to Taimūr Shāh. The Panth had respected the Bhaṅgī Sardārs for their courage and bravery, but with the fall of Multān, that respect too was dashed into the dust. They could not recover from this insult. The leaders of other *Misals* were always on the look out for opportunities and they started unfurling their flags on the territory of the Bhaṅgī Misal. When the Bhaṅgī Misal returned from Multān to Amritsar, their glory had ebbed very low.

Thirdly, the Bhaṅgī Misal began to lose a lot of its good leaders. The Bhaṅgī Misal had progressed due to the good leadership of its *Jathedārs*. Then, all of the senior leaders started dying one after the other. The grief over Harī Singh's (ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ) death had hardly passed in 1764 when Jhaṇḍā Singh was murdered in 1774 and Gaṇḍā Singh expired in 1775. Caṛat Singh, who was his nephew and successor, died in battle the same year. It became difficult to bear one tragedy after the other. The leadership of the Bhaṅgī Misal slipped into the hands of weak and incompetent Jathedārs who were not capable of giving a fight. Fourthly, the Bhaṅgī Misal had incorrectly assessed the powers of the Shukarcakīā and Ghanaīā Misals, whose leaders were equally adept and wise. Moreover, the organizational structure of this *Misal* was well concentrated and united. On the contrary, the Bhaṅgī Misal was divided into many parts. Bhāi Lahṇā Singh, Bhāi Sobhā Singh, Gujjar Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh had their own, independently operating *Jathās* while remaining part of the Bhaṅgī Misal. They could do nothing to stop its decline. Whatever was remaining in this decline, was completed by Raṇjīt Singh. By the end of eighteenth century, the Bhaṅgīs were lost in the annals of history.

5. Ghanaīā Misal: This *Misal* also took a very active part in the struggle of Sikh existence in Pañjāb. After the exit of Abdālī from the scene, this *Misal* earned a great name for itself. It was counted among the leading three *Misals*. Only the Bhaṅgī and Shukarcakīā Misal could offer them a fight for supremacy. The Ghanaīās had jurisdiction in a large area of Pañjāb and Jai Singh was the founder and *Jathedār* of this *Misal*. He was the son of Bhāi Khushhāl Singh. They were residents of the village Ghāhna (ਘਾਹਨਾ) which was about 15 miles South of Lāhaur. So, initially, the name of the *Jathā* and then that of *Misal* became known as Ghanaīā. It is said that when Bhāi Khushhāl Singh heard the episodes of martyrdom of the Sikhs, he decided to take Amrit. He presented himself before Navāb Kapūr Singh and not only took Amrit himself, but also inspired many other people of his area to adopt Sikhī. Gradually, he formed a separate *Jathā*. This *Jathā* was often sent to participate in important campaigns. Jai Singh had two more brothers. One was Bhāi Jhaṇḍā Singh and the other was Bhāi Singhā (ਭਾਈ ਸਿੰਘ). Nothing much is known about Bhāi Singhā in history books, but it is found that Bhāi Jhaṇḍā Singh and one Bhāi Bhāg Singh had joined the *Jathā* of Navāb Kapūr Singh. They had formed their own *Jathā* during the period of Navāb Kapūr Singh. By the time Navāb Sāhib expired, this *Jathā* had become fairly strong. In 1763, during the attack on Kasūr, this *Jathā* was in the lead.

Seeing the prosperity of the Bhaṅgī Misal, Jai Singh felt restless and planned to make the Ghanaīā Misal as the leading *Jathā*. At first, he decided to take up arms against them directly, but seeing the power and strength of the Bhaṅgī Misal, he entered into a treaty with Shukarcakīā Misal. Caṛat Singh was also looking for an associate so the arrangement worked out well for both. The Bhaṅgī Misal fought a battle against the combined might of the Ghanaīā and Shukarcakīā Misal on the bank of the river Basantar (ਬਸੰਤਰ) near Jammū. Jai Singh and Caṛat Singh came up against Jhaṇḍā Singh. Caṛat Singh was supervising the firing of explosives when a charge of explosives caught fire and burst on him. Caṛat Singh fell and was unable to regain consciousness. Jai Singh Ghanaīā attacked the opposing forces in rage and Jhaṇḍā Singh was defeated and murdered on the spot. This event took place in 1774. After taking over the territory of the Bhaṅgīs in Jammū, they advanced towards the territory of the Rāmgaṛīā Misal. The Āhlūvālīā Misal also helped in this venture because Mālī Singh (ਮਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਘ) and another brother of Jassā Singh Rāmgaṛīā had dishonored and disrespected Jassā Singh

Āhlūvālīā. They annexed the territory of Baṭālā (ਬਟਾਲਾ) and Kalānaur (ਕਲਾਨੌਰ) into their jurisdiction and forced Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā to leave Pañjāb. After this success, Jai Singh attacked Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ) and Zain Khān (ਜੈਨ ਖਾਨ) was killed. Jai Singh managed to collect many valuables and military hardware from Sarhind; he also collected protection money from the kings of Garoṭā (ਗਰੋਟਾ), Hājīpur (ਹਾਜੀਪੁਰ), Nūrpur (ਨੂਰਪੁਰ) and Dātārpur (ਦਾਤਾਰਪੁਰ). In order to establish their supremacy, these kings readily accepted paying tribute. The Ghanaīā Misal's most prominent victory was the occupation of Kāngrā (ਕਾਂਗੜਾ) fort and extracting protection money from Rājā Sansār Cand Kaṭoc (ਰਾਜਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਚੰਦ ਕਟੋਚ) of Kāngrā. Rājā Sansār Cand (ਰਾਜਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਚੰਦ) asked for help from Jai Singh against Saif Alī Khān (ਸੈਫ ਅਲੀ ਖਾਨ), the *Faujdar* of Kāngrā fort. Jai Singh himself went to Kāngrā but by the time he reached Kāngrā, Saif Alī Khān had died. Jai Singh asked Jīvan Khān (ਜੀਵਨ ਖਾਨ), son of Saif Alī Khān, to vacate Kāngrā fort and took over the fort himself. Sansār Cand was very annoyed but had to keep quiet and felt it wise to accept defeat. This incident took place in 1775.

The Ghanaīā Misal was unhappy with the prosperity of the Bhaṅgī Misal and Mahā Singh was also concerned. The receipt of protection money from the hill kings by Jai Singh Ghanaīā caused a great deal of worry to Mahā Singh who spoke with Sansār Cand about the issue and entered into a treaty with him. They both combined their forces and attacked the territory of Jai Singh. It was a fearsome attack that uprooted the Ghanaīā Sardārs. His son, Gurbakhsh Singh, died in the battle of 1784. Jai Singh agreed to confine himself within the general area of Gurdāspur (ਗੁਰਦਾਸਪੁਰ), and yet another mishap had to be borne by the Ghanaīā Misal. Meanwhile Jassā Singh Rāmgarīā had strengthened his forces in Pañjāb, entered into a treaty with Mahā Singh Shukarcakīā and launched a direct attack. The Rāmgarīā Sardār even prepared Sansār Cand to take revenge of the injury caused by the Ghanaīā Sardār. The combined forces of these three *Jathās* were too much for Ghanaīā Misal. The Rāmgarīā Misal took back the territory of Baṭālā and Kalānaur. This campaign broke the back of the Ghanaīā Misal and rendered it unfit for its sustenance. In order to end the feud, Jai Singh proposed the marriage of his grand daughter, Mahtāb Kaur (ਮਹਤਾਬ ਕੌਰ), with child Rañjīt Singh, son of Mahan Singh.

Jai Singh died in 1789 and the leadership of the *Misal* was taken over by Sadā Kaur (ਸਦਾ ਕੌਰ) because his only son, Gurbakhsh Singh had died in battle. Rāñī Sadā Kaur was a capable and adept politician and stateswoman. She maintained discipline in the *Misal* and kept it consolidated until 1820. She was always on the look out for recapturing her lost territory but Rañjīt Singh did not let her dreams be realized. This *Misal* was about 5000 soldiers strong and at some points, this strength had even crossed 10,000. Had the *Misal* maintained its treaty with the Shukarcakīā Misal, it would not have faced such a quick decline. It did not have enough strength to thwart any combined aggression and suffered a set back against the combined onslaught of Bhaṅgī, Shukarcakīā, Ghanaīā and Rāmgarīā Misals.

6. Shukarcakīā Misal: If any one *Misal* benefited most from the internal and mutual rift of the *Misals*, it was the Shukarcakīā Misal. It fulfilled its dream of occupying all of the territory west of the river Satluj and established a regime free and independent from all interference. Undoubtedly, some other *Misals* kept earning fame from time to time, but the only *Misal* whose fame and honor remained stable was the Shukarcakīā *Misal*. This *Misal* enjoyed supreme respect from 1780 until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Other *Misals* were led by veteran leaders for a generation or two but this *Misal* was fortunate to have intelligent and farsighted leaders until the establishment of their independent empire: Carāt Singh, followed by Mahā Singh, and then Rañjīt Singh. The founder of this *Misal* was Jathedār Naudh Singh (ਨੌਧ ਸਿੰਘ). His ancestors belonged to the village Shukarcak so the *Misal* became known all over as Shukarcakīā.

Caṛat Siṅgh

Caṛat Siṅgh earned a name for himself during the Sikh struggle in the early part of the 18th century. There weren't any battles in which he did not participate in the forefront. He was the leader of one of the five *Jathās* of Tarunā Dal. During the withdrawal of Abdālī after his fourth invasion, it was Caṛat Siṅgh who chased him and caused him much damage. He also played a leading role in the confrontation with Adīnā Beg. The courage and feats of bravery that this *Sardār* showed during the Great Holocaust were praised by all. He suffered 23 wounds on his body, yet kept fighting. This *Misal* became very famous after the influence of Abdālī had ended in the Pañjāb. Many young people approached Caṛat Siṅgh with a request to take them into his *Misal* but he always maintained that he would not enroll anyone who was not a Sikh; only those who became Sikhs would be accepted.

The *Misal* plundered the villages and cities it conquered and occupied the territory across the river Jhelam in association with Gujjar Siṅgh of the Bhaṅgī *Misal*. Caṛat Siṅgh led the *Misal*, as the time and event demanded. When the Shukarcakīā *Sardār* realized that the influence of the Bhaṅgī *Misal* had increased all over Pañjāb, he joined hands with the Ghanaīā *Misal* and arrested their progress. They kept up a friendly attitude towards the Rāmgaṛīā *Misal* as well. One can say without a doubt that Caṛat Siṅgh was an unrivalled, shrewd and self-respecting general. Under the able leadership of Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh and then Jassā Siṅgh Āhlūvālīā, he acquired sharpness in his leadership traits. He was a calm person who had the courage to go through many adversities with finesse. His enthusiasm and sentiments for Sikhī were indescribable. He established Gujrāmvalā (ਗੁਜਰਾਂਵਾਲਾ) as the hub of all his activities. He was always in the forefront during confrontation with the Afgāns. It served him well to remain at Gujrāmvalā when the rat race of possessing territories and establishing jurisdiction commenced among the *Misals*. Even the Bhaṅgī *Sardār*s avoided confronting him. Gujjar Siṅgh felt that entering into an accord with them was a better option. Their combined forces invaded Rohtās and captured it. This fort had its own importance in Pañjāb and India. The campaign on Rohtās had made him so capable that he could take up arms with more powerful opponents and come out successfully. Even if defeated, it would not have any adverse effect on the *Misal*, and on top of this, every *Misal* was keen to help the Shukarcakīās. When he died in an accident due to the bursting of explosives near Jammū, it was generally believed that this *Misal* would also become ineffective. His demise was an unforgettable experience for the *Misal*.

The way Mahā Siṅgh handled the affairs of the *Misal* after the death of his father, and expanded its jurisdiction and territorial authority speaks volume of his leadership abilities. He, like his father, used all opportunities to his advantage. With the demise of Caṛat Siṅgh, under the leadership of Mahā Siṅgh, Ghanaīā *Misal* became more powerful.

Meanwhile, the Bhaṅgī *Misal* had lost its luster, whereas the Ghanaīā *Misal* was increasing its influence and jurisdiction very fast. It succeeded in pushing the Rāmgaṛīā *Sardār* away from the territories of their interest. It was indeed a great achievement to obtain protection money from the hill kings. In collaboration with the hill kings, he handed a crushing defeat to Jai Siṅgh Ghanaīā. The Shukarcakīā *Sardār* did not commit the mistake that other leaders of the *Misals* were making. He did not extend his territorial jurisdiction in the trans-Rāvī (ਰਾਵੀ) area, but stayed put at Rām Nagar and Gujrāmvalā. Instead, Mahā Siṅgh took over the entire territory of Pīr Muhammad Khān (ਪੀਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਖਾਨ) within three months and captured many sacred items of the Muslim faith which he sent to Gujrāmvalā very respectfully. This act earned him a name all around. Next, he turned his attention to Jammū. When Balrāj Dev (ਬਲਰਾਜ ਦੇਵ), the king of Jammū, ran away from the city, the residents were much disturbed. Mahā Siṅgh sent a message, that they had not come to plunder the city and that the residents should remain free of worry since he was only concerned with ruling the city. Everyone had words of praise for his wisdom and discernment. One must wait for an opportune moment to strike rather than rushing in direct confrontation and this was good statesmanship on Mahā Siṅgh's part.

By 1791, the influence of the *Misal* had extended up to Rohtās. In 1792, Mahā Singh died in the prime of his age. It was a big loss to Shukarcakīā Misal but Raṇjīt Singh took control of the situation very deftly. The way Raṇjīt Singh established his rule over the Pañjāb is the subject of a separate chapter. It is said that if Mahā Singh had lived for some more years, the kingdom that survived and showed its impression for only forty years would have established a lasting empire in Pañjāb. The Shukarcakīās were about 7,000 soldiers strong and the strength of this *Misal* did not fluctuate much. The consolidation of Pañjāb and then establishing a rule goes to the credit of this *Misal*.

7. Nakaī Misal: The barricades of Lāhaur and Multān have special significance in the history of Pañjāb. These barricades were important during the invasions of Abdālī and Taimūr. Sikhs were well aware of the importance of these barricades and, in view of the position of Pañjāb, felt it necessary to occupy them. The task of occupying these barricades was undertaken by Hīrā Singh; this laid the foundation of another *Misal*, the Nakaī. The *Misal* advanced further and won much territory along river Satluj. Hīrā Singh was the son of Caudharī Hem Rāj (ਚੌਧਰੀ ਹੇਮ ਰਾਜ) of the village Bharvāl (ਭਰਵਾਲ). This village was part of the Cūnīā (ਚੂਨੀਆ) sub-division or Tahsīl (ਤਹਸੀਲ); it was also known by the name of Nākā (ਨਾਕਾ). Hīrā Singh took Ammrīt and made a *Jathā* along with other young men of the village. Very soon, this *Jathā* became masters of the Nākā area. They captured all of the barricades and contributed to the overall might and power of the Sikhs. They used to impede the progress of incoming invading forces, and would also cause damage to them when they were withdrawing. Thus, they were able to forewarn other *Misals* who would take timely action to react to the situations. During the Vaḍā Ghalūghārā (ਵਡਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), it was this *Misal* that informed the others that Abdālī was rushing at a great speed and covering distances in days that would have taken months. In 1767, Hīrā Singh received a complaint that Shekh Sujah (ਸ਼ੇਖ ਸੁਜਾਹ), the heir of Bābā Pharīd Gaḍḍī (ਬਾਬਾ ਫਰੀਦ ਗੱਡੀ) was violating the teachings of his ancestors and playing with the sentiments of Hindus, so Hīrā Singh attacked Pāk Paṭan. Jathedār Sāhib was killed during this attack and the army returned to Bharvāl. Hīrā Singh's son, named Dal Singh (ਦਲ ਸਿੰਘ) was a minor so the leadership passed on to the son of Dhannā Singh (ਧੱਨਾ ਸਿੰਘ) (brother of Hīrā Singh), Nāhar Singh (ਨਾਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ) who too did not live long. He died in 1768 fighting in the battle of Koṭ Kamālīā (ਕੋਟ ਕਮਾਲੀਆ).

After Nāhar Singh, the leadership of this *Misal* came to Rām Singh. When other *Misals* started expanding their territories, this *Misal* too concentrated its efforts towards Multān and Kasūr. The Bhaṅgī *Misal* knew the power and importance of this *Misal* and Gaṇḍā Singh sought help from them to subdue Multān. Jathedār Rām Singh was an adept statesman. He had retained and maintained good relationships with all the *Misals* and this was the cause of his respect among them. The jurisdiction of this *Misal* extended to Cuniām (ਚੁਨਿਆਂ), Kasūr, Sharkpur (ਸ਼ਰਕਪੁਰ), Guggar (ਗੁੱਗਰ) and Koṭ Kamālīā. But when Rām Singh died in 1790, the leadership passed on to Giān Singh (ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ). This *Misal* was about 3000 troops strong. Since they were manning the barricades, they were expert fighters. Jathedār Rām Singh had kept the troops disciplined and orderly, but after his death, his soldiers started fighting amongst themselves. After the death of Giān Singh in 1804, Raṇjīt Singh annexed the territory and attached it on to his own kingdom. He granted a Jagīr of one and a half lakh to Kānh Singh (ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ), son of Giān Singh. At this point, the Bhaṅgī and Shukarcakīā Misals began to disagree and fight with each other. The Nakaī *Misal* had some areas adjacent to the other two, but was unable to maintain good relations between the two and the *Misal* remained confined to a few villages and ended its life span. Thirdly, none of its successors were strong enough to keep their territory intact. At the same time, the *Misal* had no high aspirations and so lost power within a few years.

8. Ḍālevālīā Misal: In 1745, the Sarbat Khālsā passed a *Gurmatā* or resolution that a fort should be constructed on the bank of the river Rāvī. It needed to be strong enough to stop the enemy and equipped for shelter. This fort was constructed in village Ḍālevāl (ਡਾਲੇਵਾਲ). After the fort came up, Gurdiāl Singh (ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ) was appointed its leader. He used to be the *Jathedār* of a *Jathā* of Tarunā Dal. He looked after the fort with the utmost care and fought when the need arose. And for the services rendered in connection with the defense of the fort, he was named Ḍālevālīā, just as the word Rāmgarīā had become the suffix of Jassā Singh. The nation showed the utmost respect to the martyrdom of Gurdiāl Singh. During the Choṭā Ghalūghārā (ਛੋਟਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), the Sikhs were surrounded from three sides. The river Rāvī was on one side, the other side was a desert and Lakhpat Rāi (ਲਖਪਤ ਰਾਇ) was following immediately behind with Yāhīā Khān (ਯਾਹੀਆ ਖਾਨ) and his army. The Sikhs decided to cross the river Rāvī. It was the peak summer month and the river was full to the brim. The current of the water was very strong. Gurdiāl Singh suggested that he would enter the river on his horse to see the swiftness of the current and gauge the depth of the water. He could not sustain the swift wave of the river and he, along with his brother, was washed away in by the current. Gurdiāl Singh died, but he managed to save thousands of lives. Had the caravan entered the river, all would have drowned. After Gurdiāl Singh, this *Misal* was led by Tārā Singh Ghaibā (ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੈਬਾ). He too was a soldier of the highest order. Like Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā, Harī Singh Bhaṅgī and Caṛat Singh, he was a great General who was ever ready to sacrifice his life for a noble cause. He fought shoulder to shoulder with his associate Generals. He and his *Misal* were treated with much respect. They confronted the invasions of Ahmed Shāh Abdālī with determination and were the first to take up cudgels with Jahān Khān. They were the first to confront the invaders at Ammritsar. This *Misal* had contributed substantially to the fight against Abdālī. They joined hands with the Bhaṅgī Misal at the time of attacking Kasūr and Tārā Singh Ghaibā plundered nearly four lakh rupees worth of loot. When Sarhind (ਸਰਹਿੰਦ) was ransacked, Tārā Singh Ghaibā was in the fore front. This *Misal* had about 9000 soldiers.

After Abdālī, the Ḍālevālīās did not participate actively in the discords that rose amongst the *Misals* for many reasons. Firstly, Tārā Singh Ghaibā was old and was not fit to take part in the battle regularly. Secondly, he condemned their in-fighting, declaring it meaningless indulgence. Taking advantage of his old age, Ranjīt Singh had sent Phatah Singh to capture the area under the jurisdiction of Tārā Singh, who was incapable of confrontation. Therefore, the authority of the *Misal* got restricted to a few villages. After Tārā Singh, the command of the *Misal* was taken over by Dasvandh Singh (ਦਸਵੰਧ ਸਿੰਘ) and Candā Singh (ਚੰਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ) but Ranjīt Singh also annexed the remaining villages of the Ḍālevālīās in his kingdom.

9. Karoṛsinghīā Misal:

A rich man named Karoṛā Mal (ਕਰੋੜਾ ਮਲ) partook Ammrit during the time of Navāb Kapūr Singh and became a Sikh. He was named Karoṛā Singh. He became a *Jathedār* of Tarunā Dal. In 1748, he made a separate *Jathā* of his own and it picked up name of Karoṛā Singh. This *Misal* also participated actively in the campaigns of the Sikhs; their help came by way of provisions and money. The area of influence of this *Misal* was east of the river Satluj. No one could do anything without the approval of Karoṛsinghīā Misal. Sirhand was its target and they were the first to plunder it. During the fourth invasion of Abdālī, it was the Karoṛsinghīā Misal that had attacked him in an astounding surprise move. The Misal exercised much control in Jalandhar Doābā (ਦੋਆਬਾ). After Abdālī had ceased his invasions, it kept up its influence in the cis-Satluj area and won many prominent victories. Jathedār Mastān Singh (ਮਸਤਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ) and Karam Singh (ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ) were the leading operators of this *Misal* and took very active parts in various campaigns. After their demise, Baghel Singh took over the responsibility of the *Misal*.

Baghel Singh was a leading General and a leader of his times. There was no place in Gangā-Jamunā Doāb (ਗੰਗ-ਜਮੁਨਾ ਦੋਆਬ) that he had not overcome. He reigned supreme from Jalandhar to Pilibhīt (ਪਿਲੀਭੀਤ) and from Ambālā (ਅੰਬਾਲਾ) to Alīgar (ਅਲੀਗੜ). His exploits, personality and character are examples for the entire community. Baghel Singh raised a *Dal* of 30,000 soldiers and won many battles. When he heard that Muhammad Khān, the ruler of Jalālābād (ਜਲਾਲਾਬਾਦ) had forcibly kept a Brāhmaṇ girl in his harem, Baghel Singh punished the miscreant ruler and respectfully brought the girl back to her home. This *Jathā* took over Alīgar, Khurjā (ਖੁਰਜਾ), Candausī (ਚੰਦੌਸੀ), Hathrās (ਹਥਰਾਸ) and Itāwā (ਇਟਾਵਾ) and Navāb Īsā Khān (ਨਵਾਬ ਈਸਾ ਖਾਨ), the ruler of these places, was defeated. In Pañjāb, Baghel Singh defeated Mohammad Khān and captured Nūr Mahal (ਨੂਰ ਮਹਲ). Rājā Amar Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ) tried to interfere in this area, but both armies faced each other at Guhrām (ਗੁਹਰਾਮ) and quickly reached an agreement. Amar Singh's son, Sāhib Singh, took Amrit at the hands of Baghel Singh.

No one could now come to Pañjāb from Dillī without the permission of Baghel Singh. He was such an adept statesman that every one obeyed him and agreed to his views. For instance, in 1780, when Abdullā Khān (ਅਬਦੁੱਲਾ) had sent Prince Farzandā (ਫਰਜੰਦਾ) against Amar Singh, Baghel Singh let him pass through his territory but when his army reached Paṭiālā (ਪਟਿਆਲਾ), Baghel Singh joined Amar Singh to settle the score with Prince Farzandā; the invading Prince had to accept defeat at the hands of the combined forces. Also, Manā Rāo (ਮਨਾ ਰਾਓ) Maratha decided to invade Pañjāb in 1787, Baghel Singh encircled his force at a vulnerable place and made them accept defeat. Baghel Singh had realized that the Mughal regime of Dillī was only there in namesake. So in 1789, he wrote to all the *Misal Jathedārs* to send some selected Singhs so that Dillī could be captured. Thus, an army of 40 thousand strong soldiers assembled under him. In the early months of 1790, Baghel Singh reached Majnū Ṭilā (ਮਜਨੂ ਟਿਲਾ). They entered the city via Ajmerī (ਅਜਮੇਰੀ) Gate and established their control over that part of the city. From there, he attacked Katrā Nīlā (ਕਤਰਾ ਨੀਲਾ) and Mugal Muhallā (ਮੁਗਲ ਮੁਹੱਲਾ). The residents ran away and the Red Fort fell in the lap of the Sikhs. King Shāh Ālam (ਸ਼ਾਹ ਆਲਮ) sent Vazīr Gohar (ਵਜ਼ੀਰ ਗੋਹਰ), his Minister, to hold a dialogue with the Sikhs. They arrived at the following decisions:

1. That the *Khālsā* be given a sum of Rs. 3 lakhs.
2. That the *Kotvālī* (ਕੋਤਵਾਲੀ) of the city and the rights to collect the local tax be handed over to Baghel Singh.
3. That until the service of the historic *Gurduārā* was completed; Baghel Singh would keep 4000 soldiers with him.

The first *Gurduārā* that Baghel Singh raised was where Mātā Sundar Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ) and Mātā Sāhib Kaur (ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ) were residing. Then he raised *Gurduārā Baṅglā Sāhib* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬੰਗਲਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ) in Muhallā Jaipur (ਮੁਹੱਲਾ ਜੈਪੁਰ), where Gurū Harikrishan Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ) had also stayed and died. A *Gurduārā* was also raised where both Mātā Sundar Kaur and Mātā Sāhib Kaur were cremated. Then he constructed *Gurduārā Rakāb Gañj* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਕਾਬ ਗੰਜ) where Lakkhī Shāh Vanjārā (ਲੱਖੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ) had cremated the headless body of Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) by setting fire to his house. The most difficult task was to find the spot where Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib was beheaded. During the search, they met an old water-carrier woman who had washed the blood of Gurū Sāhib after his martyrdom. She told him that the event took place under the Banyan tree near the mosque. When Baghel Singh had a platform constructed at the spot, some Muslims came to confront him. After a short skirmish, the Prime Minister also came. Baghel Singh

told him that Sikhs will not sit silently until that spot had been paid the proper respect. The Prime Minister wisely got some land surrendered from either side. The platform remained in the same spot but another space was given to the Sikhs to have Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) established and was named Sīs Gañj (ਸੀਸ ਗੰਜ). A Sikh was appointed to take care of the place. In 1857, some more space was acquired by Rājā Sarūp Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ) of Jīnd (ਜੀਂਦ) and he extended the *Gurduārā*. Some Muslims tried their utmost to thwart the Sikh efforts of acquire the land but Rājā Raghbīr Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਰਘਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ) of Jīnd obtained permission from England. Thus, Sīs Gañj Gurduārā was raised where it stands today.

After identifying the historic places related to the Gurū Sāhibs and other important personalities of the Sikh religion, Baghel Singh returned to Shadaulī (ਸ਼ਾਦੌਲੀ). The king gifted him with an elephant, a gold chain, five horses and many other items. The king asked him why the Sikhs had so many *Jathās* who fought amongst themselves and yet united again; it was a mystery for him. Baghel Singh said that it was natural to have differences in view points. Sikhs might have made many *Jathās* but they remain members of the *Khālsā* and become one to face the enemy. They might be separate at home but when it comes to the whole community, they forget their separate identity and become ready to die for each other. As long as Baghel Singh lived (until 1802), one fourth of the revenue of the Dillī tax reached him at home. Zabātā Khan (ਜ਼ਬਾਤਾ ਖਾਨ), the son of Ghullam Kādar Rohilā (ਘੁੱਲਮ ਕਾਦਰ ਰੋਹਿਲਾ) who was known as half Sikh and half Rohilā of the Gurū, was brought into the Sikh fold by Baghel Singh. Ghullam Kādar Rohilā was only eleven years old at the time and was named Piārā Singh (ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ). It can be surmised that Sikhs could have established a sovereign state in North India had Dal *Khālsā* and other *Misals* helped Baghel Singh. An unfortunate development for this *Misal* was that Amar Singh of Paṭiālā had started direct confrontation. The discord remained during the times of Baghel Singh and was very damaging for this *Misal*. It was spread amongst the Sikhs that Baghel Singh was creating obstacles in the establishment of the rule. Baghel Singh was viewing everything with his sight fixed on the future. He was of the opinion that both Dillī and Marāṭhās should be associated with this venture. Since the power of Dillī and the Marāṭhās was waning, it would not be difficult to establish a Sikh empire. But discords with Paṭiālā caused much damage to the *Misal* and after Baghel Singh, the leadership of this *Misal* fell into the hands of Jodh Singh Kalsiām (ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਲਸੀਆਂ), the son of Gurbakhsh Singh Kalsiām.

Jodh Singh took over a large amount of territory; even the Phulkīām *Misal* could not survive before him. The king of Phulkīām, Amar Singh, gave away his daughter in marriage to the son of Jodh Singh. Sensing the prosperity of Rañjīt Singh, Jodh Singh accepted his patronization. Thus, the importance of the *Misal* remained intact. The strength of the army of this *Misal* was never stable. Normally it was about 5,000 troops strong, but sometimes it increased to 15,000.

10. Shahīd Singhī Misal:

During the times of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib, a *Jathā* of Singhs emerged who were ever willing to sacrifice their lives. Bābā Dīp Singh, who took Amrit at the hands of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib was associated with this *Jathā*. Gurū Sāhib had given the name of Nihang Singh (ਨਿਹੰਗ ਸਿੰਘ) to this *Jathā*. The Nihang Singhs were more concerned about the welfare of others than their own. The phrases and expressions which depict the prosperous and progressive attitude of the *Khālsā*, that have become popular amongst the Sikhs, are even today attributed to this *Jathā*. Other *Jathās* respected the courage and patience of the Shahīd Singhis.

After Bābā Binodh Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਬਿਨੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ), the leadership to the *Misal* was taken over by Bābā Dīp Singh. He was a great warrior, a leading General, a seasoned soldier, and a thoughtful intellectual. He

prepared many copies of Gurū Granth Sāhib while staying at Damdamā (ਦਮਦਮਾ). Damdamā was far away from the scene of struggle that Sikhs were perpetually involved in, but in the event of necessity, he would rush to help and offer the needed sacrifices. Gurbaksh Singh, who defended Akāl Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ), along with his 21 companions, also belonged to this *Jathā*. Bābā Naudh Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਨੌਧ ਸਿੰਘ) and Bābā Hākam Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ) were the other leading personalities of this *Jathā*. When, by the order of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, Harimandar Sāhib was blown up and the sacred Sarovar (ਸਰੋਵਰ) (sacred water pool) was filled with filth, Bābā Dīp Singh set out from Damdamā in 1761 with a vow to die at the door of the Vāhigurū, and obtained martyrdom in the precincts of Harimandar Sāhib. The leaders of this *Misal* generally kept their area of influence around Damdamā Sāhib and the cis-Satluj. Damdamā is still famous as the Chāvnī (ਛਾਵਨੀ) (cantonment) of the Nihang Singhs. After Bābā Dīp Singh, Jathedar Karam Singh became its leader. Thereafter, the glory of the *Misal* was enhanced by Akālī Phūlā Singh (ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ) and Sādhū Singh (ਸਾਧੂ ਸਿੰਘ). This *Misal* had a very small strength of soldiers. It was only about 2000 strong but its name remained famous on account of the courage and bravery of its troops. During the period of Raṇjīt Singh, the *Misal* made Akāl Takht the centre of their activities. Raṇjīt Singh did not think it wise to indulge too much in the affairs of this *Misal*, but he respected the *Misal* very much.

11. Nishānvālīā Misal:

The flag has great significance for every army. The falling of the flag not only discourages the troops but is also considered an acknowledgement of defeat. ‘Don’t let the flag drop’ used to be the proclamation of the soldiers. So, selected Sikhs were pulled out of various *Misals* and placed in this *Misal*. If the flag bearer dropped in the battlefield, another would pick up the flag before it dropped or became lowered. Many tales of the bravery of this *Misal* are known in Sikh history.

The king of Dillī took Bābā Ālā Singh aside and assured him that he would be made a king. Bābā Ālā Singh was more interesting in keeping the Dillī ruler guessing, so he always conveyed his willingness to accept the conditions. At the same time, he kept harrassing Bhaṭṭīān (ਭੱਟੀਆਂ) and Sarhind by launching repeated attacks against them. He was arrested, but managed to escape. During the Choṭā Ghalūghārā, when the influence of Zakarīā Khān (ਜ਼ਕਰੀਆ ਖਾਨ) was weighing heavy on the Sikhs, he reached help to the Sikhs. He took Amrit at the hands of Navāb Kapūr Singh and had the Bhavānīgar (ਭਵਾਨੀਗੜ) fort constructed in 1749. By 1752, he had captured a large territory and had made Patialā its centre. During the fourth invasion of Ahmad Shāh Durrānī, Bābā Ālā Singh plundered his caravan at Taimūr. He had also helped the Marāṭhās during the third battle of Pānīpat (ਪਾਨੀਪਤ) by providing them with the necessary supplies. In order to punish Bābā Ālā, Ahmad Shāh Durrānī attacked Barnālā (ਬਰਨਾਲਾ), but Māī Phato (ਮਾਈ ਫਤੋ) exercised her statesmanship by sending him a tribute of four lakh rupees. Abdālī forgave him and acknowledged him as a ruler of a separate kingdom and Bābā Ālā Singh agreed to pay him yearly tribute. The Dal Khālsā did not like this and declared him a Tankhāhīā (ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ). Bābā Ālā Singh accepted the subjugation of Abdālī again during the Vaḍā Ghalūghārā, which again annoyed the Sikhs greatly. They were about to attack Patialā when Jassā Singh Āhlūvālīā stopped them. Bābā Ālā Singh accepted Tankhāh (ਤਨਖਾਹ) (a religious punishment) and sought forgiveness. He died in 1765 and by then, he had captured 84 villages of Sarhind, Koṭkapurā (ਕੋਟਕਪੂਰਾ), Barnālā and Sanāvar (ਸਨਾਵਰ). Thereafter, his grandson Amar Singh became the leader of the *Misal*.

When, Bhāī Amar Singh was captured by the Mughals, they asked him to drop the flag but he did not budge. The Mughal commander shouted at him and said, “Throw the flag or your hands will be cut.” With great enthusiasm, Amar Singh said, “I shall hold it with my mouth.” “Your head will be cut,”