

Bhāī Vīr Singh (1872-1957)

The year 1898 saw the publication of Bhāī Vīr Singh's novel Sundarī, a landmark in modern Pañjābi literature. Some critics went so far as to call it the first novel of the Pañjābi language. The plot dealt with the trials and travails of a small Sikh community during the Mughal Empire in the 18th century. This immensely popular novel ran into 35 editions.

Courtesy of: [http://www.Pañjābilok.com/poetry/Bhāī\\_vir\\_singh.htm](http://www.Pañjābilok.com/poetry/Bhāī_vir_singh.htm)

Sundari Forward Translated by Bimal Kaur

The events in this story took place during the last days of the Mughal Raj. Sikhs were hounded from place to place with a price on their heads. Their only refuge was the deep, dark forest. In villages and cities, it was a death sentence to be seen in the company of a Sikh, and if one member of a Hindu family opted to become a Sikh, he was declared dead to keep the family safe. In spite of the oppressive times and rulers, Sikhs continued to live in a state of 'CHARRDIAN KALAN'. Their acts of bravery and courage in opposing the cruel rulers and protecting the common man were carried out with their usual elan. Most note worthy were the nightly raids made to rescue girls from the clutches of the Mughal kidnappers and restoring them to their families. Often some families refused to accept the young women as, according to them, they had become tainted. In such cases the Khalsa Panth became the adoptive parents of these girls and arranged their marriages, so that they could lead lives of respectability.

Courtesy of: <http://www.sikh.net/publications/Sundarī/Sundarī.html>