

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KHĀLSĀ

The Khālsā is to practice religious discipline, maintaining his or her honor by power of weapons, thus preserving peace in this world. “All the virtues we hear and the excellencies of mind: These are the natural qualities of the Khālsā. This is to be a new and unique type of person, who bears arms and constantly lives in the presence of God; who strives and fights against evil [perversion of mind] with his gaze riveted to the stars. Such is the goal to achieve which the Khālsā has been ordained. And lo, it is a well-armed and well-integrated person.” Bhāi Ratan Singh Bhangū (ਭਾਈ ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੰਗੂ), gives the essential characteristics of the Sikhs. He says, “The Khālsā is never a satellite to another power. They are either fully sovereign or in a state of war and rebellion. A subservient coexistence they never accept. To be fully sovereign and autonomous is their first and last demand.” Also when asked by Captain Murray, the British Charge-de-affairs at Ludhiānā (ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ) in about 1830, as to from what source the Sikhs derived the validity of their claim to earthly sovereignty, for rights of treaty or lawful succession they had none; Bhangū, replied promptly: “The Sikhs’ right to earthly sovereignty is based on the Will of God as authenticated by the Gurū, and therefore, all inferior sanctions are unnecessary.”

George Forester in his book, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, writes: From the observation that I have made of the Sikhs, they appear to be a haughty and high-spirited people. Once I traveled in the company of a Sikh Horseman for some days, and though I made several tenders to my acquaintance, he treated them all with great reserve ... His answer, when I asked him very respectfully, in whose service he was retained, seemed strikingly characteristic of what I conceive to be the disposition of the Sikh Nation. He said in a tone of voice and with a countenance which glowed with and was keenly animated by the Spirit of liberty and independence, that he disclaimed an earthly master, and that he was a servant of only the Gurū. Kāzī Nūr Muhammad (ਕਾਜ਼ੀ ਨੂਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ) who accompanied Ahmad Shāh Durrānī (ਅਹਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੁਰਾਨੀ) on his seventh expedition against the Sikhs in the winter of 1764 also writes: Sikhs are courageous like the lions in the field of battle. If you wish to learn the art of war, come face to face with them in the field. They will demonstrate it to you in such a way that one and all will praise them for it. Truly, they are like lions and in times of peace, they surpass Hatim (in generosity), leaving aside their mode of fighting. Here is yet another point in which they excel all fighting people. In no case would they slay a coward; nor would they put an obstacle in the way of a fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well to do lady or a maidservant. They do not make friends with adulterers or housebreakers.

## KHĀLSĀ IN PRACTICE

In 1710, the Sikhs set up a republic in the heartland of the Mughal empire in South Asia under the leadership of Bābā Bāndā Singh Bahādur, wherein they gave the land to tillers in a feudal society, proclaimed equality of all people as citizens of a state, and declared that power emanated from and justly belonged to the people and not to a hereditary privileged class.

<b>Territory</b>	Between the rivers Jamunā and Sutlej; it extended from Sadhaurā to Rāikot and from Māchivārā to Ludhiānā. Three provinces: Sarhind, Samānā, & Thanesar.
<b>Capital</b>	Lohgarh (Mukhlispur)
<b>Kingship</b>	The <u>Khālsā</u>
<b>Army</b>	Consisted of three groups under the Bandā - loyal Sikhs, mercenaries and irregulars.
<b>Coins</b>	Obverse: “Coin struck in both the worlds by the guarantee of Gurū Nānak’s sword – By the grace of the Sacā Sāhib [Sovereign God], victory to Gurū Gobind Singh, the king of kings.” Reverse: “Minted in the Age of Peace by the blessed fortune of the <u>Khālsā</u> – Sanctioned by the glorious Throne in the City. Year 2.”
<b>Seal</b>	“The ever-expanding prosperity, the strength of arms, and continuous victory and common weal are all guaranteed to humankind by Gurū Gobind Singh, the Nānak.”
<b>Calendar</b>	Year beginning with the victory at Sarhind, 1711.

When Bahādur Shāh issued a royal edict seeking “complete genocide” of the “followers of Nānak,” the Sikhs publicly announced, “We do not oppose Muslims; our fight is only against oppression.” This high level of evolution of political awareness and instinct in 1700s was not a common phenomenon. For fifty years, under the most callous and terrible persecutions, where the aim was complete genocide, the Sikhs not only refused to submit, but refused to abandon their cry, “We want liberty or death! We want liberty or death.” And in the end, once again, they had their liberty. Sikh supremacy was then established in the form of Sarbat Khālsā, the Sikh Commonwealth, and then it slid into the form of the Sikh Empire, which was called the Sarkar-i-Khālsā, from 1750s to 1850s. The Sikh hegemony then extended from the Jamunā river in the heartland of India to the frontiers of Afghānistān, and from Indus to the Tibet and China.

## Pictures

### Bandā Singh Bahādar



<http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/images/portraits/banda.jpg>



<http://www.info-sikh.com/piczz6.jpg>

