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CHAPTER 6

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and the Dal Khalsa

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CHAPTER 6

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and the Dal Khalsa

The First Sikh Ruler and the Sikh Confederacy

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Early life of Banda Singh Bahadur
- Meeting with Guru Gobind Singh Ji
- Chappar Chiri, Sirhind and Lohgarh
- Martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur
- Sarbat Khalsa, Buddha Dal and Taruna Dal
- Ghallugharas and the twelve Misls

PART A Baba Banda Singh Bahadur – The First Sikh Ruler

Early Life and Transformation

Born	27 October 1670 at Rajouri (Jammu & Kashmir)
Original name	Lachhman Dev
Later names	Madho Das (as an ascetic); Guru Gobind Singh Ji named him **Gurbakhsh Singh**, and he became famous as **Banda Singh**

Lachhman Dev → **Madho Das** → **Gurbakhsh Singh / Banda Singh**

Meeting with Guru Gobind Singh Ji

The meeting between Banda Singh and Guru Gobind Singh Ji proved to be a turning point in Sikh history. Deeply impressed by the Guru's teachings and philosophy, Banda Singh took a solemn oath to avenge the martyrdom of the Guru's sons and to seek justice against **Wazir Khan**, the Governor of Sirhind.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji bestowed upon him:

- A **drum (nagara) and a banner (nishan)** – symbols of sovereignty
- **Five arrows** – representing divine authority
- An advisory council of **five Sikhs**: Binod Singh, Kahan Singh, Baj Singh, Daya Singh and Ram Singh

Military Campaigns and Achievements

THE VICTORY AT CHAPPAR CHIRI

On **12 May 1710**, Banda Singh won his most important victory at the **Battle of Chappar Chiri**, where Wazir Khan was killed. This victory led to the capture of **Sirhind** and fulfilled his oath to Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

After capturing Sirhind, Banda Singh:

- Made the **Mukhlisgarh** fort his capital and renamed it **Lohgarh** ("Fort of Steel")
- Introduced official seals and coins bearing the names of **Guru Nanak Dev Ji** and **Guru Gobind Singh Ji**

- Retained **Persian** as the language of administration
- Abolished the **Zamindari system** and gave land to the tillers

Martyrdom

Banda Singh's rule ended in **December 1715**, when he was captured by the forces of Mughal emperor **Farrukhsiyar**. He was taken to the tomb of **Khwaja Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki** in Delhi and given a choice between conversion to Islam and death.

When he refused to convert, his four-year-old son **Ajai Singh** was brutally killed before his eyes. On **9 June 1716**, Banda Singh Bahadur was executed and became a martyr for the Sikh cause.

PART B Dal Khalsa – The Sikh Confederacy

Formation and Leadership

After the martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur, the Sikhs reorganised themselves. From **1733**, they held meetings twice a year at **Amritsar**, on **Vaisakhi** and **Diwali**. These meetings were called **Sarbat Khalsa** and focused on the safety and progress of the Sikh community.

- **Nawab Kapur Singh** became the leader of the Sarbat Khalsa. He got the title of "Nawab" from **Zakariya Khan**, the governor of Lahore, who wanted to win over the Sikhs by giving this honour.
- In **1739**, **Nadir Shah**, the ruler of **Persia (Iran)**, invaded India; on his way back through Punjab, the Sikh forces looted his army of its plunder.

Military Organisation

Nawab Kapur Singh divided the Sikh forces into two groups:

Buddha Dal
Veteran (older) soldiers who trained the younger recruits

Taruna Dal
Young and energetic warriors

Periods of Persecution

Event	Year & place	Details
Chhota Ghallughara (Lesser Holocaust)	1746, Kahnuwan (near Gurdaspur)	The execution of **Bhai Mani Singh**, Head Granthi of Harmandir Sahib, by Zakariya Khan in 1738 caused deep resentment among the Sikhs. Conflict grew, and Mughal forces led by **Yahiya Khan** killed about **7,000 Sikhs**.
Wadda Ghallughara (Great Holocaust)	February 1762, Kup-Rahira (near Malerkotla)	After the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), the forces of **Ahmad Shah Abdali** attacked the Sikhs and about **50,000 Sikhs** were killed – the darkest period in Sikh history.

Revival and the Misl System

Despite these problems, the Sikhs showed great strength. When **Ahmad Shah Abdali** invaded in **1748** and weakened the Mughal army, the Sikhs united again under **Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia** (also called **Sultan-ul-Qaum**).

The Dal Khalsa was organised into **twelve Misls** (confederate units), though only eleven were part of the main confederacy:

Misl	Leader	Misl	Leader
Ahluwalia	Jassa Singh Ahluwalia	**Nishanwalia**	Dasaundha Singh
Bhangi	Chhajja Singh / Hari Singh	**Phulkian**	Chaudhari Phul
Dallewalia	Gulab Singh	**Faizullapuria (Singhpuria)**	Nawab Kapur Singh
Sukerchakia	Charat Singh / Ranjit Singh	**Kanhaiya**	Jai Singh Kanhaiya
Shaheedan	Baba Deep Singh	**Nakai**	Hira Singh Nakai
Ramgarhia	Nand Singh / Jassa Singh	**Karorsinghia**	Karora Singh

NOTE

The **Phulkian Misl** remained independent and was **not** part of the Dal Khalsa confederacy.

Territorial Expansion

After the Wadda Ghallughara, the Sikhs regrouped with new strength and took back lands from the **Indus** to the **Yamuna**. But after Jassa Singh Ahluwalia died in **1783**, the Dal Khalsa grew weaker, which paved the way for the rise of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh**.

QUICK REVISION

- Banda Singh: born **1670** Rajouri · Chappar Chiri **12 May 1710** · capital **Lohgarh** · abolished Zamindari · martyred **9 June 1716**
- Nawab Kapur Singh: title from Zakariya Khan · **Buddha Dal & Taruna Dal**
- Chhota Ghallughara **1746** (Kahnuwan) · Wadda Ghallughara **1762** (Kup-Rahira) · Dal Khalsa **12 Misls** (Phulkian outside)

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