

# The Sikh



The 6th Guru, Sri Guru HarGobind Sahib Jee introduced the fusion of warrior prowess with a saintly discipline to the Sikhs. He built the Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib in Amritsar. The Guru welcomed gifts of arms, horses and kept an army which engaged in battles. He moved to later live at Kiratpur Sahib where he erected another Gurdwara called 'Takhat Sahib.' The political teachings of Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib and the subsequent 'Takhat Sahib' were that the Sikhs are now a fully-fledged nation with their own statehood and these 'Takhts' represented the physical building in which the decisions of the nation would now take place, similar to parliamentary buildings of nation states. This statehood was built upon by subsequent Gurus, but we will now discuss the 10th Guru's contributions.

The 10th Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee outlined his mission in his autobiography – Bachittar Natak by stating,

ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੋ ਆਏ ॥

I have come to this earth with this mission,

ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਏ ॥

Gurdev - the benefactor God has sent me to establish righteousness (Dharam).

ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੋ ॥

God said, 'Wherever you go, spread the message of Dharam

ਦੁਸਟ ਦੋਖੀਅਨਿ ਪਕਰਿ ਪਛਾਰੋ ॥੪੨॥

Vanquish the tyrants and evil-minded persons.' 42

ਯਾਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੰ ॥

I have taken birth for this purpose,

ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੰ ॥

All saints should understand this as my mission (on earth).

ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ॥

Spreading the messages of Dharam & protecting the saintly (is my mission).

ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ॥੪੩॥

Rooting out all tyrants (is my mission). 43



Also in Sri Dasam Granth, Maharaj also says

ਅਵਰ ਬਾਸਨਾ ਨਾਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਧਰਮ ਜੁਧ ਕੇ ਚਾਇ ॥੨੪੯੧॥

O Lord! I have no other desire, but to engage in war to establish Dharam.

Guru Sahib referred to the Khalsa as 'Akaal Purakh Kee Fauj' meaning they are the 'army of the immortal God.' So, any Sikh who becomes initiated as a Khalsa has a role as a soldier of the Guru, bearing the insignia of the Guru in wearing the 5k's (Kara, Kangha, Kirpan, Kashera, Kes with a turban).

## Worldly armies & military

All nation states keep a military to protect their lands and uphold the rule of law in line with their culture and customs. Peace is maintained through the maintenance of a military. The function of the military is to uphold peace and defend the nation, it may also be used to forward the agendas of that nation state, be it in expansionary moves or proxy wars.

Many nations have compulsory military service to ensure that all members of the public can be used in military service should the need arise. Their armies are trained in the use of arms and military training is in line with modern warfare. Most armies only have a limited period for service and age limitations for when people can serve, so most armies will only take soldiers in their prime (16-45years) and most armies will not allow service beyond 25 years.

The military is diverse in functions and many career options exist within armies from doctors, nurses, administrators to normal everyday soldiers and so forth.

## The Khalsa Nation

The Sikh Guru's lived as sovereigns and set up cities such as Kartarpur in Gurdaspur, Goindval, Amritsar, Tarn Taaran, & Kartarpur near Jalandar. Completely independent municipalities in Kiratpur Sahib and Anandpur Sahib were also founded and administered.



Hari Singh Nalwa (© SikhiArt.com)

After the Guru's period different Sikh kingdoms and states came about, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's tute, the Sikh Sardars (Misls) period and the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. All these states kept a military to defend their lands.

## Today's Sikh Army

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Sikhs are now a globally diverse community, living throughout the world. The majority Sikh community still resides in India, most reside in the state of Punjab. So, what role or function does this 'Akaal Purakh Kee Fauj' have for Sikhs today? Or is it merely now irrelevant, as there is no Sikh state to defend?

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee clearly states that the use of arms is only as a last resort,

ਚੁ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸ਼ਤ ॥  
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤੁ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਦਸਤ ॥੨੨॥

When all peaceful methods have failed, it is just to draw the sword.

Similarly, military action and/or use of violent means is only used by most nation states as a final response.



We now need to raise some questions for us all as Sikhs:

Have you learnt any martial arts?

Can you defend yourself and others if the need arose?

These are valid questions in line with the mission of the Guru's in setting up a nation of saintly warriors. We, the Khalsa, are now the flag bearers of this mission throughout the globe. Any person who refers to themselves as a 'Sikh' also most make these considerations, regardless of where they are, on their path to unification with Guru and God.

So, on a very basic level we need to be willing to defend ourselves and others if the need arose. You don't necessarily have to be an expert in any martial art, but you sure need the will to defend yourself, as this is what the Guru requests from the Sikhs.

Some Sikhs may choose to join an army of a nation state, in order to live the life of a soldier and get the most up to date training in warfare possible. But, what can the rest of us do in terms of compulsory military service for our Guru?

We have a saying which is called being 'tyar bar tyar' which means that you are ready for any situation. This is the lifestyle of a Sikh, which would be reflected in,

- What clothes/shoes you wear? Are they practical to fight in. You may have to defend yourself or anyone else anywhere, anytime
- Are you reasonably fit, as a soldier should be? We all may struggle with weight problems but we should stay as fit as possible to play our role in the world
- Eating appropriately
- Physical health and knowing basic first aid and other health issues. If you were caught up in a field situation would you be able to respond appropriately?
- Are you saintly enough to maintain the high ideals of a Khalsa? Power through arms can be a slippery slope and can cause many excesses. Sikhs are to remain merciful and practical at all times.

Many more points could be made and sorry for any major omissions.

There will never be a shortage of tyrants in the world. When you don't have your own nation state, any movements or military strikes made will be termed with the terms of 'extremism, terrorism, paramilitary, civil war' as opposing nation states will not want any of this occurring.



Sikhs are to engage in actions of 'Akaal Purakh Kee Fauj' when the line has been surpassed and action must be taken, when all peaceful means have been exhausted and/or when the crimes are so heinous that action must be taken.

## **Head of State**

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The head of state is represented by two forms of the Guru – the spiritual embodiment of the Gurus is the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee.

The physical representation of the Sikhs is where 5 highly disciplined Sikhs take up decision making on behalf of the Sikh community. Traditionally leadership has been from within the physical confines of the Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib but the 'Takhat' can move as it did in the times of the 6th Guru to 'Takhat Sahib' at Kiratpur Sahib. The physical and emotional attachment to Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib will always remain, so whoever administrates this Gurdwara usually takes on the lead for Sikh affairs.

In 1984 the Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib was destroyed by the Indian army and 42 other Gurdwaras were simultaneously attacked.



The Sikhs responded by taking up arms and a war for independence from India was fought by various Sikh organisations, through arms. Whilst the armed struggle came to an end in 1992, with widespread bloodshed by the Indian state, the Khalistan movement still continues, albeit mostly a political movement. Wars are won by ideology, ideological warfare continues.



*How can Sikh organisations who have budgets of millions simply fob off cases of desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee – our head of state? How can we happily say we are the ‘Fauj’ (army) ‘Laddli Fauj’ (Guru’s beloved army) yet we never engage in battle? Or dealing with tyrants.*

Over the last few years there have been many, many cases of attacks upon Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee in Punjab and Indian states. These have been carefully orchestrated and coordinated, with Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee being ripped and burnt purposely. Very few individuals have been apprehended or caught. How can these attacks go unanswered? The head of state of the Sikhs is being murdered – yet Sikhs and Sikh organisations have done comparatively little to get redress. Yes, peaceful protests have been held which have led to nothing. Some cases of culprits being caught and punished have come to the surface, but they are very few. Once you attack a head of state and effectively kill or maim that head of state, it usually led to victory in historical battles.

We, the Sikhs cannot allow these attacks to go unanswered as a collective. We have money and human resources, but we are losing the fighting spirit the Guru eulogised. The ideological warfare to make us pacifists who do not react, is winning us over.

Events like Holla Mohalla were created by the Guru as downtime and to celebrate our martial spirit, but, let us be clear Holla Mohalla was started whilst the Sikhs were at war. We as a community are not at war now – but that means we should be more vigilant and not get held back by relaxation and internal disputes. How can Sikh organisations who have budgets of millions simply fob off cases of desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee – our head of state?

How can we happily say we are the ‘Fauj’ (army) ‘Laddli Fauj’ (Guru’s beloved army) yet we never engage in battle? Or dealing with tyrants. There will never be a dearth of tyrants in Kaljug (the present dark era).

Can the true Khalsa please step forward and start showing their prowess? We were once a nation that struck fear in the houses of marauding Afghans and all nations feared us as the most fierce warriors.

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Before anyone starts pointing fingers at the author – I engage in my battles as prescribed by the Guru in a way that I am absolutely comfortable with. The Khalsa and Guru know of this. I do not need to declare what this is for I am at peace with my actions.

This article was written to raise education and any terms used are not written to direct jibes at any organisation(s) – it is addressed to the whole Sikh community.

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