



Battle of Amritsar:

Lighting our path into the future

Jeth, Nanakshahi 553



**KHALISTAN
CENTRE**

Written and produced by the Khalistan Centre

The Khalistan Centre is dedicated to supporting and cultivating Gurmat-driven leadership to further the struggle for Khalistan.

Jeht, Nanakshahi 553 / June 2021 CE



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ੴ ਸ੍ਰੀਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂਜੀਕੀਫਤਹ ॥ ਇਨਗ੍ਰੀਬਸਿੰਘਨਕੋਦਯੈਪਤਿਸ਼ਾਹੀ । ਏਯਾਦਰਖੈਂਹਮਰੀਗੁਰਿਆਈ ।

The Battle of Amritsar in June 1984 is the most significant moment of Sikh history in living memory. Throughout every era of Sikh history, the *sangarsh* (struggle) and *shahadat* (martyrdom) of the Khalsa has always been a victory to be celebrated—not something to be mourned.

Under the leadership of Sant Jarnail Singh jee, Sikh *jujharoos* (warriors) rejuvenated the Guru Khalsa Panth and reconnected us with the sovereign authority (*patshahi*) vested in the Panth by Akaal Purakh.

This is why June 1984 is a defining moment for our generation. In an era where Sikh *naujawan* around the world are seeking answers about what they should be doing for the Panth today, this *saka* (legend) carries the answers to our future.

In order to access these lessons however, we have to understand what those *gurmukhs* fought for in June and the subsequent struggle for Khalistan.

To comprehend our objectives today, we must understand:

The significance of Sri Darbar Sahib and sovereign Sikh spaces;

Guru Sahib's vision for justice and sovereignty that drives Sikh sangarsh throughout every era;

What June 1984 tells us about Sikh existence in the colonized world order today;

and the lessons Sikh *jujharoos* have left for us.

The Battle of Amritsar reminds us, that the Guru Khalsa Panth is a sovereign entity that can never submit to any worldly power; and that our future lies—not in state politics, or victim narratives built solely around “human rights”—but in the sovereign path of Gurmat by centring our life and *sangarsh* around the Guru.

From Sovereign Sikh Spaces to Halemi Raj

In July 1955, Sri Darbar Sahib was occupied by Indian security forces. The Granthi of the Akaal Takhat Sahib and Darbar Sahib, the *sangat*, and langar *sevadars* were all arrested; 200 protestors making their way to Darbar Sahib were killed; and many more were injured by police violence. All of this occurred because the Indian state understood the central role of Sri Darbar Sahib as the **focal point of grassroots Sikh power** during the Punjab Suba Morcha, a mass agitation to reorganize and decentralize the Indian state.

Before June 1984, Sri Darbar Sahib had been occupied 5 times since it was built. It was completely demolished and rebuilt multiple times. After June 1984, it was again invaded and occupied twice more by the Indian army (April 1986 and May 1988)—all in attempts to repress challenges to the Indian state's violent sovereignty.

In total, Sri Darbar Sahib has been invaded 8 times and has been rebuilt at least 3 times while Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib has been demolished and rebuilt twice.

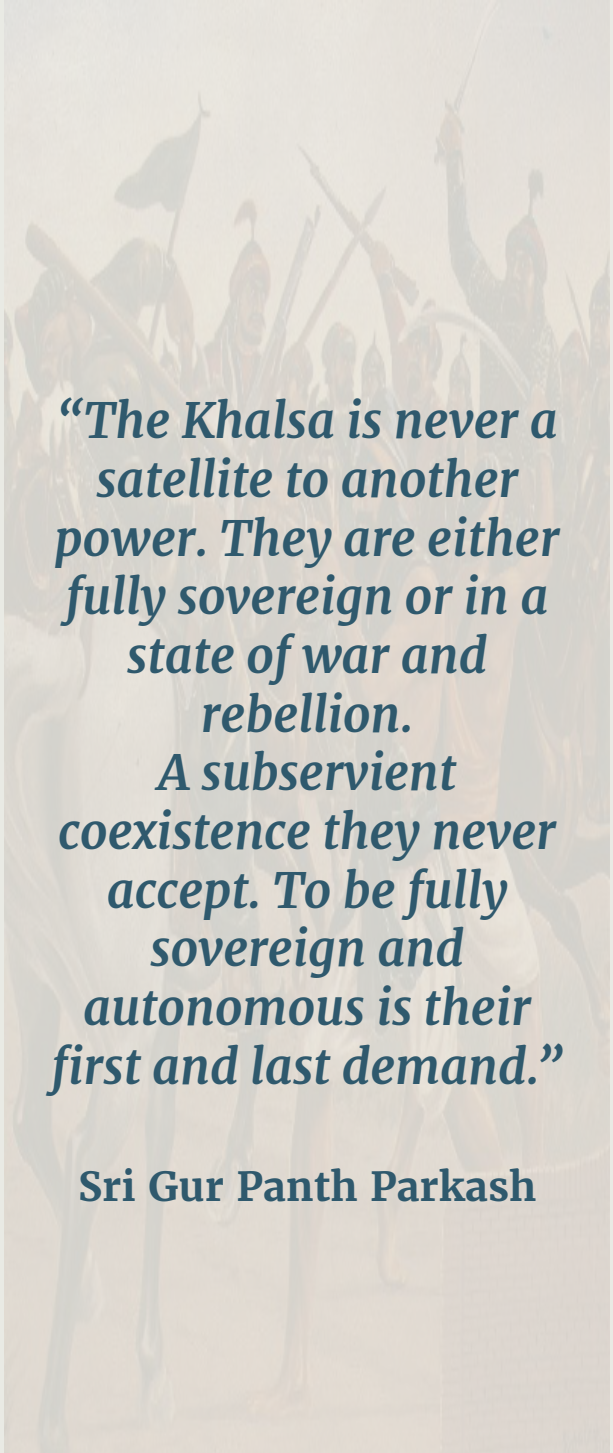
Every imperialist force that seeks to conquer Punjab—from the Durrani empire to the Indian state—has sought to destroy or occupy Sri Darbar Sahib. This is because every one of these powers realized its central role as a sovereign Sikh space where Sikh *sangat* gather as the Guru Panth to live their Sikhi autonomously, develop revolutionary leadership, organize communities to meet their social and economic needs, and to confront oppressive forces.

Although Lahore was the economic and political hub during the reign of *Sirkar-i-Khalsa*, Darbar Sahib and Akal Takhat were still the preeminent centres of Sikh power. Manifesting the *patshahi* of the Guru Khalsa Panth, these sovereign spaces sat separate and above the political administration of the time—even when it was run by Sikhs themselves.

In this sense, we see the relationship between Sikh spaces, the Guru Panth and any political

establishment or power. This sovereignty has been gifted and vested in the Guru Khalsa Panth by Guru Sahib themselves and cannot be surrendered or subordinated by anyone.

The endless blood of Sikh *shaheeds* that has flowed over each brick of Sri Darbar Sahib is a testament to this fact.



“The Khalsa 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.”

Sri Gur Panth Parkash

From 1469 till 1849, the Panth Khalsa managed its own affairs autonomously, built sovereign institutions, and set its own policy. Establishing towns and cities was key to furthering the vision of the Guru Sahiban to build a society that revered the shared divinity flowing throughout the universe and would be organized to fight any powers that violated this principle of *sarbat da bhala*.

Over 239 years during the *Gurukaal*, Guru Sahib guided the *niyara panth* (unique way/path) by transforming the Sikh into *gurmukh* and building every institution the Panth would need to solidify its power in all realms of existence. This is the essence of *Miri-Piri*—the spiritual and political sovereign authority vested in the collective Guru Khalsa Panth.

The awakened *gurmukh*, with the aid and guidance of the Guru, puts teaching into practice by uprooting violent oppression and exploitation. It is this practice that has regularly brought the Panth into direct conflict with the violent forces that seek to dominate and exploit other people, the Earth, or any other part of Akaal's creation.

Under the guidance of Guru Nanak Sahib jee, Sikhs built their first town, Kartarpur. Subsequent Guru Sahiban continued this by building many more towns and cities in the low-lands of Punjab, and forts in the hills and mountains preparing for the conflict that had been building since Guru Nanak Sahib shared their divine vision for *mukti* (liberation) in all realms of existence.

To further this vision, Sikhs in every era have manifested this purpose in their *jeevan*, and in the collective institutions built by the Panth. Our *maulikta* (our indigenous existence as Sikh) and our *patshahi* (our Guru bestowed sovereignty), demand that we **create space to exist outside the domination of any worldly power, build bases from which to offer shelter, dignity, and security, and ultimately—realize the purpose of the Khalsa by establishing *Halemi Raj*.**

From the *dharamsal* and 52 *manjhia* to the guerrilla *jathay* of the *misl* period, Sikhs developed sovereign spaces and institutions to ensure the collective expression of our *roohani ekta* (the mystic 'self' of the Panth).

From these indigenous Sikh forms of social organizing, developed powerful mechanisms for sovereign self-governance rooted in Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib, through the institution of the *gurdwara*.

Through this process, the Guru liberated the Sikh to live under and recognize the sovereignty of no authority other than Akaal Purakh who is inseparable from the *kudrat* (nature) of their creation. No entity—human, institution, or idea has the right to violate this *hukam* (divine command) and exercise domination and control over other elements of the universe. This conception of *Halemi Raj* at its core is a just sociopolitical structure which aims to further the dignity, co-existence and co-creation of *kainaat*—the entire universe. **This dignified balance is the sovereignty of Akaal Purakh in action, and Sikhs have given their lives to uphold this vision and practice.**

The eternal *patshahi* of the Guru Khalsa Panth and its vision for *Halemi Raj* is manifested in the world emanating from Darbar Sahib. From Sri Harimandir Sahib, and the throne of Sri Akal Takhat; fortifications like the Ramgharia Bunge; educational and social institutions, including langar, schools, accommodations; to the Nishan Sahib and our shastar (weapons)—**every facet of Darbar Sahib is a tangible manifestation of our *patshahi*.**

The Khalsa serves the universe through these institutions by providing refuge and defence for all oppressed and marginalized peoples, while working to uproot oppressive systems in all their forms.





ਚੌਂਕੀਆ ਝੰਡੇ ਬੁੰਗੇ ਜੁਗੋ ਜੁਗ ਅਟੱਲ॥

May the flags and military centres of the Panth remain forver sovereign and unconquerable.

Colonization and Exploitation of Punjab

The annexation of Punjab in 1849 solidified the military victory of colonial powers over the region. Between 1849 and 1947, the sovereign institutions of the Panth were undermined or attacked while our land and bodies were disciplined through colonial violence and policies of assimilation. The colonizers' goal across the world was to destroy diverse systems and ways of living to replace them with secularized "citizens"—subordinate to the newly imposed modern state and global capitalism.

The only way to facilitate exploitation and domination in Punjab was through genocidal violence to repress Sikh existence. By attacking the Panth and undermining the institution of *patshahi*, the colonizer was able to *impose the sovereignty of the modern state and trap future resistance* within the logic of nationalism and the structures of domesticated state politics.

Upon the British Transfer of Power, the Brahminical leadership of the Indian state aggressively escalated this colonial program of centralizing power and homogenizing diverse peoples—despite the resistance of countless groups. Punjab, Kashmir, and Bangladesh were strategically divided, and new borders were imposed by colonizers, creating the new countries of India and Pakistan. In Punjab alone, 13 million people were displaced from their homes and land.

This project violently subordinated Sikhs and Punjab under the unification and homogenization of the entire subcontinent within an artificial Indian identity which never existed previously. Despite such attempts however, South Asia remains a vast place with its diverse peoples retaining their own cultures, languages, and spiritual traditions—creating a clash with the Indian nation-state in many regions.

In the following decades, India's state-building process exploited and intentionally underdeveloped Punjab in order to serve its own nation-building, food security and national security objectives.

Punjabi was denied as the official language of Punjab, rivers were redirected, and the

management of natural resources was taken over by Delhi. The highly centralized structure of the Indian state allowed Delhi to directly rule over Punjab's civil administration to set policies that only served the interests of India and global imperialism.

Because of the excessive centralization, Punjab was made agriculturally dependent, relying almost exclusively on wheat and rice production, while every attempt to diversify the crop pattern or expand into other industries was denied by Delhi altogether. These policies manipulated Punjab socioeconomic structures leading to environmental destruction, vicious debt cycles and farmer suicides, denial of economic diversification, and forced migration of Punjab's youth.

In response, Sikh movements have strategically taken fluid and diverse forms to maintain the political autonomy, cultural existence, and economic sustenance of Punjab while simultaneously maintaining and reasserting Sikh sovereignty outside the scope of the state at every opportunity.

Despite the persistence of conflict, the Indian state has stubbornly refused any political settlement on the question of Sikh sovereignty and has avoided addressing the exploitation of the subcontinent under the structure of Indian imperialism. In the face of growing Sikh resistance in 1984, the Indian political establishment shifted gears from a policy of assimilation to *annihilation*. In June 1984, the Indian army invaded Darbar Sahib and embarked upon a genocidal campaign—that would last a decade—with the aim of *eliminating those Sikhs who posed a challenge to Indian sovereignty and imperialism*.

"Any knowledge of the "Amritdhari" who are dangerous people and pledged to commit murder, arson and acts of terrorism should be immediately brought to the notice of the authorities. These people may appear harmless from outside but they are basically committed to terrorism."

—Government of India, *Baatcheet* (Indian Army Bulletin), Serial Number 153 (June 1984).

Remembering the Battle of Amritsar

This invasion has come to be known by several names. While state narratives promote the military codename Operation Blue Star, Sikhs around the world memorialize June 1984 as the Battle of Amritsar and the *Theeja Ghallughara*.

The focal point within Sikh memory is not the state narrative of “law and order” or the viciousness of “human rights violations”, but about the Khalsa Panth’s agency to resist domination and oppression. Remembering the Battle of Amritsar as the *Theeja Ghallughara* places the battle within the wider frame of Sikh cosmology that connects *shaheeds* from June 1984 to the Battle of Chamkaur.

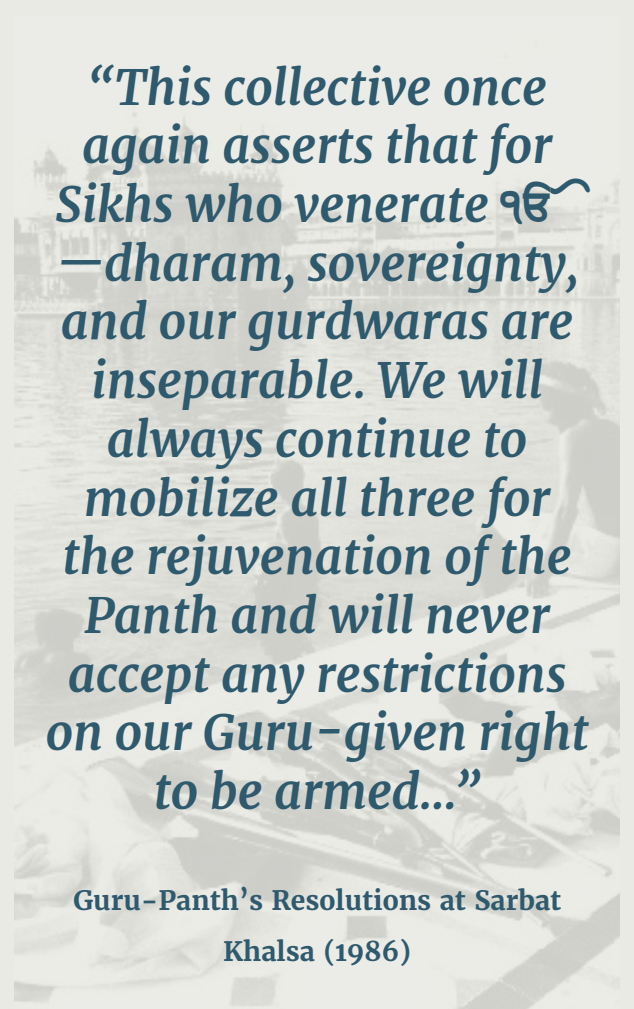
We draw parallels with the events of Sikh history not because we are shocked at the injustice and destruction, but because we are reminded of our strength; that against all odds, the *patshahi* of the Khalsa remains intact, it only ever needs to be expressed. The battle further demonstrates that Sikhs will always be prepared and knowingly embrace the inevitability of battle when making a stand to defend the sovereignty of Sikh spaces, and uphold our *patshahi*.

The Indian state wanted to inflict a humiliating defeat; they thought a huge show of force would frighten the Khalsa *fauj* (army) into a cowardly surrender within a few hours. To their shock, the Khalsa fought until the last bullet. Even though the Khalsa arsenal was limited, Sikh *juhharoos* demolished wave after wave of Indian regiments. Ultimately, the army had to resort to essentially blowing up Sri Akaal Takhat and the surrounding buildings to prevent a devastating military defeat.

The Battle of Amritsar in June 1984 demonstrates that although our social and political context may change, the nature of Sikh *sangarsh* maintains its continuity today. This battle is our contemporary frame of reference through which we can clearly see the *Akaali* (timeless) nature of Sikh rebellion against domination.

In this sense, the Battle of Amritsar is an example of the continuity of Sikh revolution throughout every era, and it brings Sikhi to life in the current world order. The courage of the Sikh *juhharoos* is celebrated in *gurdwarah* all over the world; the Panth has made them into giants like Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh. They will live forever amongst our ancestors; celebrated through music, art, and every one of our future struggles.

Despite every attempt to distort the reality of the *ghallughara*, Sikhs around the world remember what this battle means for our existence. The invasion of Sri Darbar Sahib was not simply to repress the political demands of the Dharam Yudh Morcha to decentralize the Indian state, nor was it simply due to the intolerance and authoritarianism of Indian fascism. **Instead, the invasion carries many lessons for us about the nature of the modern state itself, and its actual relationship with the Guru Khalsa Panth.**



“This collective once again asserts that for Sikhs who venerate ੴ —dharam, sovereignty, and our gurdwaras are inseparable. We will always continue to mobilize all three for the rejuvenation of the Panth and will never accept any restrictions on our Guru-given right to be armed...”

**Guru-Panth’s Resolutions at Sarbat
Khalsa (1986)**

Patshahi and State Sovereignty

The evolution of the modern state and its proliferation throughout the world occurred directly under the process of colonialism. The colonizer imposed the colonial state structure around the world to eliminate expressions and modes of indigenous sovereignty (*patshahi*) and replace them with an authoritarian model that could exploit the land and people for the profit of Empire. The structure of the state itself has been developed and deployed as an imperialist structure to make exploitation and domination more efficient throughout the colonized world, and reproduced through nationalist movements to ensure the maintenance of global imperialism even beyond direct colonial rule.

The conflict between the Khalsa and the Indian state in June 1984 was therefore not simply due to demands for recognition or accommodation within the Indian state—but about conflicting conceptualizations about the nature of sovereignty itself, and the status of the Khalsa’s sovereign spaces in relation to the sovereignty of other power structures.

The defining characteristic of the modern state is its claim to exclusive and absolute sovereignty over the lands and bodies within its jurisdiction. In order for the state to survive, it requires unchallenged and unparalleled control over the entire territory—without any alternative centres of power. This control is secured and maintained through the facade of the “law” as well as the monopoly over “legitimate” violence. **In this sense, Sri Akal Takhat—and any other *gurdwara*—can only ever be “places of worship” subordinated under the ultimate sovereignty of the state.**

In contrast, the Guru Khalsa Panth, under the leadership of Sant Jarnail Singh jee, reaffirmed the Khalsa’s commitment to maintain our *patshahi* and reasserted Sikh sovereign authority to maintain arms in the pursuit of *sarbat da bhala*. **Just like every other era of Sikh struggle, our *gurdwaras* are the sovereign spaces that manifest and house this grassroots power of the Khalsa to ensure *gareeb di rakhia and jarvanay di bhakhia* (protection of the humble and destruction of the tyrants).**

The invasion of Darbar Sahib—and dozens of other *gurdwaras*—was meant to eliminate those asserting Sikh sovereignty in direct challenge to the Indian state, while reasserting control over sovereign Sikh spaces under the guise of state law and Indian secularism. Through this genocidal violence, the state sought to restore Sikh politics to the leadership of Akali Dal politicians who engaged solely in secularized identity politics—beholden to the ultimate authority of the Indian state.

“We cannot allow a few scoundrels to hold the government of India at ransom. We shall see to it that they are on their knees in just two hours.”

–General K.S Brar on 2nd June 1984, as quoted in *The Sikh Unrest and The Indian State*, R.N. Kumar





ਜੰਗ ਹਿੰਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਮੁੜ੍ਹ ਹੋਸੀ,
ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੁਸੀਆਂ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਰਦਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ।
ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੰਗ ਇਹ ਖਤਮ ਹੋਣੀ,
ਜੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਤਦੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਜੋ ਹਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ।
- ਭਾਈ ਗਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ

Hind and Punjab are at war again, though our sovereignty has been stolen from us. This war will not end, until we regain what was lost.

- Bhai Gajinder Singh jee

Khalsa Panth & the Colonized World Order

Sikh *jujharoos*, led by Sant Jarnail Singh jee, understood our current *sankat* (crisis) lay in our condition of *gulaami* (subjugation/slavery)—not simple discrimination by the Indian state. *Discrimination* and mistreatment are merely symptoms of **powerlessness**. This lack of political power and agency inevitably means we have no authority to establish policy or structures for the purpose of *sarbat da bhala*.

The political and economic issues plaguing Punjab and Sikhs in India—the loot of Punjab’s natural and human resources, policies of cultural assimilation, and imperialist domination of Punjab are *symptoms* of *gulaami* that must be addressed accordingly.

Along these lines, Sikh *jujharoos* did not submit to the state as the sole source of “power” nor were they seeking “rights” to be conferred by the state—they proactively and definitively lived with *annkh* (dignity) as a transformation and goal in itself. In this sense, Sikh *jujharoos* were not making requests for “equality”, “rights” or “justice” to be conceded by the state.

Because Sikh *jujharoos* did not see the state as the source of power, justice, and sovereignty, they instead regenerated Khalsa institutions outside the framework of the state to build power with the blessings of Guru Granth-Panth and support of *sangat*. By rejuvenating the Khalsa’s lifeworld, Sikh *jujharoos* began the regenerative process to develop the necessary institutions to ground and rehabilitate Sikh subjectivity in the world—the only avenue to genuine liberation. From collective leadership through *gurmatta* and Sarbat Khalsa, to political struggle through *dhadi ballads*, *amrit sanchar*, and *shaheedi smagams*, a new mode and space of politics was chalked out—separate from the state—which revived the revolutionary praxis of the Khalsa in a meaningful way.

By restructuring *panthic* institutions as the ground of our existence and power—supported by the means to maintain our autonomy through armed self-defence—Sikh *jujharoos* simultaneously undermined the state’s sovereignty and authority, while

building a *Khalsae* alternative from the ground up.

Whereas the state claims an exclusive monopoly over the right to force, Sikh *jujharoos* illustrated the centrality of *shastar* (arms) to maintaining our *patshahi*—eviscerating the illusory separation between the mythic “religious” and “secular”. Without the cover of jungles or mountains, Sikh *jujharoos* defied the basic tenets of guerrilla warfare by waging a massive armed struggle in the countryside of Punjab due to the pervasive support within the Sikh *sangat* of Punjab.

This support was further strengthened by the revolutionary solidarity forged between *jujharoos* and other struggling and oppressed peoples around the subcontinent and beyond. Through this process, Sikh *jujharoos* chalked out a radical vision for the abolition of the imperialist Indian state and the possibility of a society-polity built on *sanjhivalta* and *sarbat da bhala*.

In this legacy, the Khalistan *lehar* (movement) was advanced after June 1984 as a revolutionary resistance to abolish the Indian state, capitalist exploitation, and Hindutva’s caste-based supremacy—with a clear commitment to advancing the liberation of the oppressed across the subcontinent.

“The Khalsa Panth will always support the struggles of those that adhere to the principles of equality, doing labour and sharing its wealth while reciting naam. This assembly of the Sarbat Khalsa strongly endorses the armed struggles of the peoples of the world, especially those in India who are fighting against this tyrant colonial rule for their rights and independence...”

Guru-Panth’s Resolutions at Sarbat Khalsa (1987)

Battle of Amritsar and a Sikh Future

Sant Jarnail Singh jee's legacy is not in the realm of political maneuvering or legalistic reform. The notion of *gulaami* is not merely political rhetoric but a deep theorizing of the condition of Sikhs in today's world: **the domination and alienation of Sikhs from their source (Guru Granth–Panth) and the homelessness (disenfranchisement / lack of political agency) this causes.** In this sense, homelessness refers to the reality that we are constantly living in a colonized world order and trying to find ways to fit and survive through some degree of assimilation.

Sant Jarnail Singh jee was—and is—reviled by the modern (Indian and Western) establishment because Sant jee stopped playing by the rules of the modern state. Sikh *jujharoos* stepped outside the framework of modern/Indian nationalism and challenged its basic premises—the supremacy of Western modernity manifested in secularism and the liberal political order where the state operates as the ultimate moral force and source of sovereignty.

Sant jee fearlessly rejected these violently imposed structures through the *oatt* (support) of the Guru. The Guru has always been the source of epistemic authority and political power for the Khalsa, and this is the first step in our liberation today—as illustrated by our *shaheeds*: **to free ourselves from imperial domination beginning from epistemic liberation (thinking and being according to the framework of *gurmat* rather than the state).**

By shattering the domestication of Sikhs in subservience to the colonial and “post”-colonial state, mobilizing Sikhi as a dynamic force and an indigenous way of being in the world to counter the ideologies and structures of the state, the Sikh *sangarsh*, reignited by Sant Jarnail Singh jee's *shahadat*, is a manifestation of the Guru's blessing and a continuation of the dream of Kartarpur sahib.

Sant jee eviscerated the conceptual hegemony of the “modern” West and the Indian state simultaneously—reconnecting the *panth* with its spiritual source and the political praxis that emerges from this. **Reinvigorating a**

Sikh subjectivity in today's world order, Sant jee resisted *gulaami* by empowering Sikhs to struggle for their *mukti* (liberation) through building grassroots Sikh power in the *sangat* and sovereign Sikh spaces.

This outlines our objective and praxis clearly for the future.

“The time has come to turn the wounds of “Operation Bluestar” into a source of divine inspiration. Following the example of the Guru Sahiban, we must move from these ashes, as rays of knowledge, and turn them into the sun itself.”

–Dr. Gurbhagat Singh

The context of June 1984 simultaneously connects us to our history, our current challenges, and the answers to our future—reminding us that our *shaheeds* are not figures of history, stuck in the past, but living forces that guide us through every struggle and conflict.

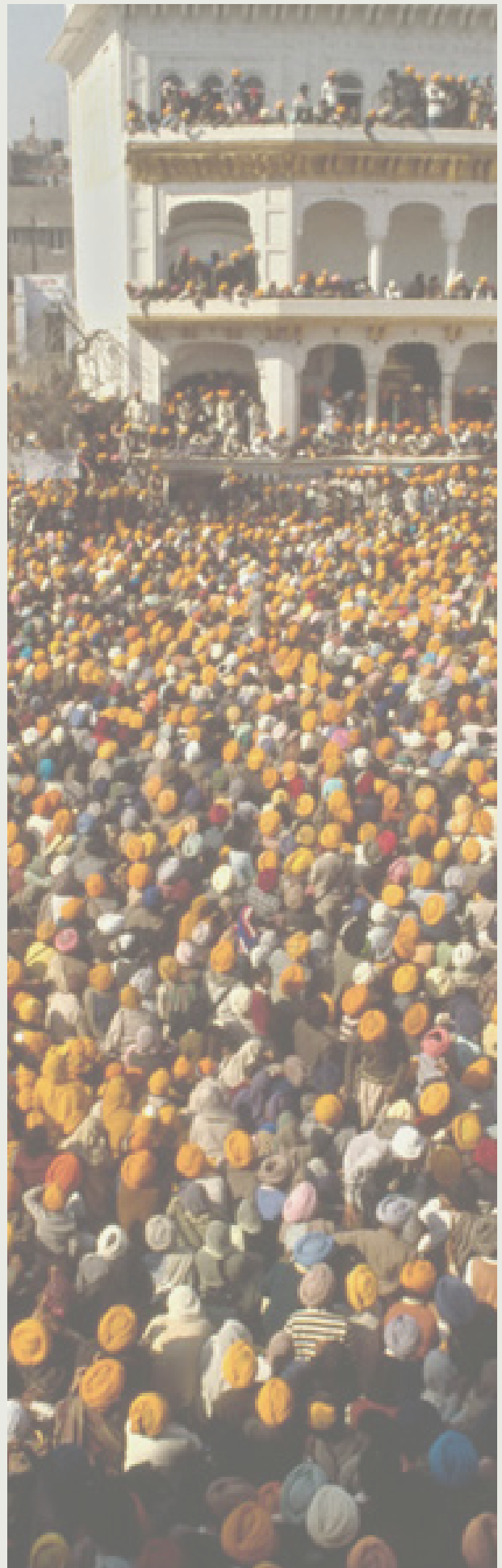
We forget neither the Battle of Amritsar, nor the *shaheeds* of the Khalistan *sangarsh*. Instead, we revere them as *chanan munare* (towers of light) that steel our resolve to continue the struggle and dedicate ourselves to the purpose and sovereignty of the Guru Khalsa Panth.

Our *sangarsh* today is not simply for a seat at the table of world powers; we want a new way of sitting and navigating the world altogether that is rooted in our own epistemology and values. This requires a just global order in which we are grounded and exist as *Sikh*—not citizens or nations. This is the radical project asserted by Sant Jarnail Singh jee and the Sikh *jujharoo lehar* for Khalistan. Our *shaheed* shattered the illusions of modernity/coloniality and the Indian state by reasserting the Guru Khalsa Panth's authority as *Meer* (political sovereign) and *Peer* (spiritual sovereign) in this world.

Rejecting the sovereignty of the Indian state, these *gurmukhs* revived the Khalsa's own institutions as the source of our political power and defended these through the force of our *peer* ("saints", ie weapons). **The praxis of our *shaheed*—reforging *simran* and *sangarsh* together on the battlefield—unapologetically rejected the imposition of a disfigured modern/colonial identity and re-centred Guru Granth-Panth as our source of life.**

Those *jujharoos* who drew their final breaths fighting the oppressive Indian state lit our path to liberation while playing Guru Nanak Patshah's *game of love*.

This is the path we must follow into the future.



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ਇਨਗ੍ਰੀਬਸਿੰਘਨਕੌਦਯੈਪਤਿਸ਼ਾਹੀ ।
ਏਯਾਦਰਖੈਂਹਮਰੀਗੁਰਿਆਈ ।

*“These poor/humble Sikhs have been bestowed patshahi so they
may remember the quality of their Guru.”*

Sache Patshah Dhan Sri Guru Gobind Singh jee



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