

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SARDAR JASSA SINGH AHLUWALIA IN THE SIKH HISTORY

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Abstract:

In this study we research about the contribution of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to the sikh community. Jassa Singh was great personalities of the 18th century and the pioneer of the Ahluwalia Misal. He was born on May 03,1718 at Bhai Badar Singh's home at a village called "Ahlu" near Lahore. His father passed away very early when he was only a five years old Infant. His mother (Sister's Bhag Singh Hallowalia) envisioning the unpleasant conditions of that time, took him to the custody Mata Sundari (Guru Gobind's wife in Delhi). Jassa Singh spent his early childhood there. When he reached the twelve years of his age, his maternal Uncle Bhag Singh brought Jassa Singh and his mother back to Punjab. Back in Punjab, Jassa Singh got a pleasant upbringing and good education in Nawab Kapur's hands at Kartarpur. He executed this very education in leading the Sikh community. Later on, his contribution as the commander of Dal Khalsa, during 1748 to 1783, has also remained very important. In this way being a political and religious leader of the Khalsa Panth, Jassa Singh was a famous commander of Dal Khalsa.

Index Terms: The Contribution of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia

Jassa Singh was one of the great personalities of the 18th century and was the pioneer of the Ahluwalia Misal . At Bhai Badar Singh's home, he was born on May 03,1718 (*Vaisakh Sudi Puranmashi*, 1755 Bikram Samat) in a village called "Ahlu" near Lahore.¹ His father passed away leaving every thing on his own mother shoulders. Never the less, Jassa Singh's mother remained determined. Escaping the Unpleasant conditions of Punjab, she took Jassa Singh to Delhi and put him in the custody of Mata Sundari, where Jassa Singh was blessed with a lot of love and also got good education useful in both violent and violent conditions. Besides it, he learned Gurbani chanting and examined some religious texts as well. His devotion to Sikh religion made Mata Sundari very happy. In this way, Jassa Singh spent a pleasant Childhood there. When Jassa Singh

1. Dr. Gurcharan Singh Aulakh, *Mahan Jodhe-Sikh Guru Sahiban Te Jarnail*, National Book Shop Delhi, 2007, p.178.

was twelve years old, his maternal uncle Bagh Singh, one day, came to Delhi to take them back to Punjab. Just before their departure Mata Sundari handed him a shield, sword, bow and a bundle of arrows, and said:

"Serviceman will be submissive before you and your progeny."²

On their way back from Delhi, they stayed at Nawab Kapur Singh's residence in Kartarpur. Both Jassa Singh and his Mother Chanted 'Asa di war' early in the morning. Bhag Singh had a long lasting friendship with Nawab Kapur Singh. The chanting pleased Nawab Kapur Singh to a great extent, who, then, took Jassa Singh up in his bosom and blessed him with the words.

"You are my son-by-religion now onwards"

Ensuring his sister's approval, Bagh Singh handed Jassa Singh's arm to Nawab Kapur Singh who baptised him by consecrated water (by making him drink it). He gave him military education and also taught him horse-riding. The Nawab assigned him a job to look after his horses.³

This service again brought the Nawab more close to Jassa Singh. Who later, learned how to lead Sikh community from his devotion to the Nawab. Jassa Singh accompanied Nawab Kapur Singh on every expedition after 1729. He was a brave and courageous young man. He had become one of the eminent Sikh leaders by 1738. In January 1739, an Afghan ruler, Badshah Nadir Shah invaded Lahore. He defeated Zakriya Khan and returned to Delhi.

Nadir Shah Committed a number of robberies in Delhi, when he left India, he took its wealth and esteem with him. Jassa Singh robbed Nadir Shah's military several times at different places with the strong assistance of Sikhs. Such deeds intensified Jassa Singh's influence more among the Sikh people.⁴

During 1745 to 1746, Jassa Singh offered a remarkable assistance to Sikhs in their struggle against the Mughals. One of the Sikh groups was lead by both Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Sukha Singh Mari Cambo. A determined and cheap military was coming from the forest to hills. A militant of Ennabad army, Jaspat Rai (brother of Lahore's Diwan Lakhpat Rai) started chasing it. After his frequent teasings, a Singh named Nibahu Singh beheaded him. This news enraged Diwan Lakhpat Rai. To revenge his brother's murder, he surrounded a group of 15000 Sikhs in "Kahnuwan" forests with the help of Yahiya Khan, the governor of Lahore. It was the first instance in Sikh-history when Sikhs had to face a big loss. A large number of Sikhs got killed in this fight. This is why it is called 'Mini-holo caust' or ",chotta Ghallu ghara."

2. Dr. Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University Patiala, 2011, p.8.

3. Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Mislant Te Sardar Lahore Book Shop*, Ludhiana, 2006, p.82.

4. Harwinder Singh Khalsa, *Sultan-Ul-Qoum Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia(Artical) Ajit Newspaper (Dharam te Virsa)*, Bathinda, 29 May 2018, p.2.

This confrontation took place in 1746. It is said that Jassa Singh got his thigh injured by a bullet, never the less he exhibited a remarkable courage in this fight.⁵

Ahmad Shah Abdali ascended to the throne of Afghanistan after the death of Nadir Shah. He reached Lahore during his first invasion on India in 1748. Under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Sikhs seized his belongings and also annoyed him at an inn of Noor, near verowal. Hardly after two months, Jassa Singh, in collaboration with other Sardars and under a Rajput Slabat Khan's guidance, badly defeated the Mughal army at Amritsar. Salabat Khan was killed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in this fight.⁶

On the day of Vaisakhi March 29, 1748 group of Sarbat Khalsa got assembled at Amritsar. In this assembly, different Sikh-groups were merged into one making Dal Khalsa. Its leadership was attributed to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. It also included a small group of twelve assistant leaders.⁷ All the actions of Dal Khalsa were monitored by Jassa Singh. Thenceforth, Jassa Singh faced every problem with great courage and conscience. He played an important role for Dal Khalsa during the years from 1748 to 1783.

Mir Mannu became the governor of Punjab in April 1748. Immediately after his ascension, he made strict policies for Sikhs. A militant of Jalandhar-Doab, Adeena Beg surrounded "Ram Rauni" (Amritsar) under the guidance of Mir Mannu. Later on, just after Abadli's second invasion on Punjab, Mir Mannu, at Diwan Kaura Mal's suggestions, decided to pay 1/4 tax of Patti to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who, in turn, ensured that Sikhs will maintain peace in the region. This official treaty gave a rise to Sikh's income. In 1749, Jassa Singh aided Diwan Kaura Mal in his expedition of Multan against Nawaz Khan, the former governor of Lahore, who had been corrupting the region. Jassa Singh defeated him in the tight which took place between two village Dorana and Laghana. Diwan Kaura Mal became the viceroy of Multan, and donated an amount 11,000 rupees for the construction of the Sarovar (tank) of Sh. Harimander Sahib. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia also made him construct a gurudwara called "Bal Leela" at Nankana Sahib⁸, in addition to the repair of many other historical gurudwaras.

After Mir Mannu's death in 1753, the whole administrative system of Punjab got changed. Total nine governors of Lahore were changed during the three years from 1753 to 1756. Throughout this period of time Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, with the help of Sardars, killed Bucharhs of

5. Swarandeeep Singh Noor, *Sultan-Ul-Qoum Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia(Artical) Pahredar Newspaper*, Ludhiana, 03 May 2018, p.4.

6. Dr. Gurcharan Singh Aulakh, *Mohan Jodhe –Sikh Guru Sahiban Te Jarnail*, pp.180-181.

7. Simarjeet Singh, Satvinder Singh Phulpur, *Gurmat Parkash-Sultan-Ul-Qoum Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, S.G.P.C. Amritsar, 2018, p.83.[Magazines]

8. Dr. Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Kaura Mal Bahadur*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University Patiala, 2000, pp.49,51.

Lahore who had been committing cow-killing. Later on, he also won over the forts of both Fatehabad and Khawaspur. The latter is in the North of Goindwal near Bias.

On April 10, 1754, the Khalsa attributed him the title of "Nawab" in front of Akal Takht at Harimander Sahib. He got this title because Nawab Kapur Singh had died in 1753. So Jassa Singh became the Nawab and also the religious and political leader of Khalsa Panth. He defeated a powerful army, with the aid of both Aziz Khan and Bakhsida Khan, sent by Mir Mannu's widow Mughalni Begham. This victory encouraged the Sikhs, who, later, invaded Tarntaran successfully. Apart from it, Jassa Singh confronted Adeena Beg near Khadur Sahib. He won this fight and took possession of Fatehabad in 1754 which remained his permanent region till his death.⁹

In the year of 1754, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia also faced an army sent under Aziz Khan by Lahore Darbar. He defeated it at the place called Rao-Jagraon and snatched their goods as well. He had also killed Umed Khan, a commander of Lahore.

By 1755, Jassa Singh he had set control over many villages of Punjab, and had establishment 'Rakhi Parbadh' which ensured the security (rakhi) of the villages falling under his control. This '*Parbandh*' increased the Sikhs income because the natives have to pay 1/5 part of their production to Sikhs.

In June 1755, under the leadership of Jassa Singh, Sikhs won over and robbed the regions of Narnohal, Karnal and Jaipur. In the next year they took possession of Kalanor, Batala and Amritsar including several surrounding regions. Sikhs had taken many regions of Punjab under their control by 1756.¹⁰ All such achievements are attributed to the great leader Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Later on, under his leadership, Sikhs roabbal Abdali in 1757 which enraged his son Timur Shah, who in turn, made robberies at Kartarpur. But Jassa Singh interrupted Abdali in Fatehabad a cross the boundrics of Goindwal and snatched everything he had. Abdali could not defend himself.¹¹

Timur Shah, who had been appointed the governor of Punjab by Abdali, dishonored the Darbar Sahib. Jassa Singh revenged him in collaboration with Adeena Beg In fact Timur Shah had banished Adeena Beg from military, and also had sent a powerful army under Murad Khan and Buland Khan against him. The letter asked Jassa Singh Ahluwalia for aid, who then, defeated the

9. Sumant Dhamija, *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia(1718-1783)*, Esha Beteille, Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2012,p.184.

10. Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Sikh – Twareekh-II (1708-1839)*, The Sikh University Press,2014, p.199.

11. B.R. Grover, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, (Translated –Narinder Singh Kapoor) Punjabi Academy, New Delhi,1991, p.230.

rivalsat Mahilpur (Hoshiarpur). Later on, Jassa Singh invaded Jalandhar. As a result, Adeena Beg had to pay 1.25 Lakh rupees to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.¹²

In March 1758, Adeena Beg, Marathas and the army under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia all invaded Sirhand. Both Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Marathas made a significant contribution in making Adeena beg the governor of Lahore in 1758.

In March 1759, Jassa Singh was accompanied by Singh sardars Vahirin which visit to the "Hola-Mahala" of Anandpur Sahib. Throughout this visit, an assailant of Sirhand, Sadika Beg attacked Jassa Singh who got two fatal injuries. Later on, Sadika Beg apologised, and also sent an installment of tax to ensure reconciliation.¹³

In October 1759, Abdali came to India and confronted Jassa Singh Ahluwalia accompanied by Singh Sardars near Lahore. In this fight around 2000 Duranies got killed. In 1760, some brave fighters such as Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh etc. invaded Lahore as per the decision of Gurmat. After a prolonged seizure of eleven days, they were requested to leave by Naib Mir Muhammad Khan who offered them an amount of 30,000 to spare the city from any bloodshed.¹⁴

In 1761, when Abdali was on his way back to Afghanistan taking around 2200 newly-wed Hindu girls with him, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia confronted him near Goindwal land rescued the girls. All the girl were sent back to their homes by him.¹⁵ This very deed brought the title of "Bandichhor" to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

After some time, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia seized some other places including Tarntaran and Goindwal etc. Later, he also aided Charat Singh against Ubaid Khan who had attacked Gujranwala. Ubaid Khan got defeated and ran off to Lahore, as a result Singh's attacked Lahore and seized it. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was made the king of Lahore and, in addition, was also given the title of "*Sultan-Ul-Qoum*". He lunched a coin with the following inscription on it:

"Sikka Jad Dar Jahan Ba fazle Akal

Mulak Ahmad Grifat Jassa Kalal."

12. Dr. Roshan Lal Ahuja, *Maharaja Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Warish Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 2011, p.51.

13. *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana, 1995, p.28. [Magazines]

14. Swaran Singh, *Abdali, Sikh Te Wadda Ghallughara*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2016, p.49.

15. James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the skills-II*, The East India Company Logographic Press, London, 1788, p.22.

But some historians opine that this very coin was in fact, lunched under the name of both Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh, where as some others also believe that it had been taken from a 51 years old coin of Banda Bahadur's times which had the following inscription:

*"Deg o Teg o Fateh o Nusrat Bedirany
Guru Nanak Guru Gobind Singh"¹⁶*

This was the first political victory of Khalsa. On hearing Singhs seizure over Lahore, Abdali hurriedly headed towards Punjab in 1762, which is known as his Sixth Invasion. He confronted the Sikhs including a large number of children, women and aged ones, near Malerkotla in "Kup" Village. This fight resulted in the death of around 10,000 Sikhs. This dreadful bloodshed is called "Great Holo-caust or "Wadda Ghallughara." Jassa Singh Ahluwalia above all, got 22 wounds in this fight. It exhibits the remarkable strength of him.¹⁷ On his return, Abdali exploded Sh. Harimandir Sahib with gunpowder, but the Sikhs did not lose strength. He was still in Lahore, when a Sikh army under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia invaded Sirhand in May 1762. As a result Zain Khan agreed to pay tribute to the Khalsa.

Having defeated the governor of Malerkotla called Bheekhan Khan, The Singhs invaded Sirhand on January 14, 1764. They beheaded Zain Khan, as a result Sirhand got divided. Jassa Singh got the places including Naraingarh, Bharhog, Barwalia, Jagroan and Fatehgarh etc.¹⁸

A few weeks after his seizure of Sirhand, the Sikh army under Jassa Singh attacked and defeated Kabli Mal, the governor of Lahore, who accepted the proposals of Singhs. On April 17, 1765, they again seized Lahore this time permanently. Since, Abdali proposed a treaty for reconciliation to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, but the Sardars rejected because they had always believed in their success.

By the year of 1767, Jassa Singh had won over many regions. In 1769, he was holding, control over the places such as Naraingarh, Bharhog, Jagravan, Kot Essa Khan, Fatehgarh, Esaarhu and some other regions of Sirhand. Some places across Doaba-Jalandhar such as Talwandi, Jandiala, Noor Mehal, Banga, Blachor, Habbetpur, Chohalla and Kaimpur etc, were the regions under the matter of 10 lakh rupees. Across the Bari-Doab region he had control over the places including Sarhali, Goindwal, Fatehabad, Kot Muhammad Khan, Jalalabad, Veroval, Mehtab Kot, Budhala and Sathiala etc. He seized Raikot as well in 1771.¹⁹

16. Dr. Gurcharn Singh Aulakh, *Mohan Jodhe –Sikh Guru Sahiban Te Jarnail*, p.184.

17. Ibid., p.184.

18. Dr. Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, p.115.

19. Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Raj Kive Banya?*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2006, p.194.

Although Jassa Singh made a large number of victories during his time period. But his victory over Kapurthala is considered to be the most important one. It took place in 1777. But other some historians also said that he had already seized Kapurthala and its neighbouring regions in 1759. But Muslim Bhatti Rajput Rai Ibrahim, the governor of Kapurthala, had been avoiding his due taxes and tributes, so Jassa Singh invaded Kapurthala in 1773 ensuring his direct control over the region.

As a result, Rai Ibrahim was left with a town of Kapurthala, in addition to 27 other villages under his control. His rank was reduced to be that of a landlord only. The remaining regions were put under the direct control of Fatehabad. But when Rai Ibrahim again delayed the payment of his due taxes, Jassa Singh invaded him in 1780, resulting in his complete seizure of Kapurthala. In addition to it, the neighbouring 27 villages were also entitled under Fatehabad. Rai Ibrahim was allowed a pension for survival.²⁰

A part from all such deeds, another significance aspect of Jassa Singh's personality is manifest in his aid provided to Jaats against Rohillais. Najib-ud-Doula Rohilia had been making robberies in the region. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia decided to help Jatts in their efforts to prevent Afghans entrance into Punjab.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia sorted out the tensions among Sikh-Sardars at different points of time. He also brought reconciliations between Sikh-Sardars and Raja Amar Singh Patiala. Sikh-Sardars were angry because of the aid that Raja Amar Singh had offered to Abdali. But Jassa Singh established a unity among them. Besides it, he also aided Raja Amar Singh when the latter was attacked by Abdul-Ahad, the advisor of Shah Alam -II.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had to fight against another Sikh Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who had been causing threats to the Sikh community. Both of them had once, been good friends but, then, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had started defaming. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia by joining hands with his other rivals. In 1776, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brothers including Mali Singh, Tara Singh and Khushal Singh all captivated Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who had gone to take bath at Achal Sahib about 2 miles away from Batala. They brought him to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia to Hargobindpur. In this way the rift between both Sardars got widened. Seeking revenge, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia invaded Jassa Singh Ramgarhia with the help of kanahiya Sardars and Mahan

20. B.R. Grover, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, (Translated –Narinder Singh Kapoor), pp.160-161.

Singh Shukarchakiya. They fought bloody fights at Kalapur and at Hargobindpur near Batala and near Kalanor.²¹

During his last years, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia did many deeds. He made Sodi Gulab Singh of Kartarpur drink consecrated water and also made him a member of Khalsa Panth. Similarly Kunwar Bagh Singh also drank consecrated water at Kartarpur under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia guidance. Besides it, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia also made the Raja Amar Singh's son Maharaja Sahib Singh Patiala drink consecrated water and join the Khalsa Panth.²²

This great personality spent the last 4-5 years of his age serving at Sh. Darbar Sahib. He also spent some time to repopulate the city. He left Amritsar very rare and, when does, only to help the needy people.

However, in old age Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had stopped going on expeditions, never the less he aided the Singhs during their attack on Delhi. The Singhs, in fact, had invaded Delhi due to its weak Darbar Sahib. They stayed at Bairari and robbed the rich people of Malk-ganj Sabji. There after, they reached Muglapura. By the evening, they had seized the Red fort and had put the blue Nishan Sahib of Khalsa on it. This incident took place in 1783.²³

After this invasion when Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was going to Amritsar to celebrate Diwali, he made a stay at a village called Bandala where he ate a watermelon and continued. He got abdominal pain on the way which caused his death on October 20, 1783. He was cremated at Amritsar. His grave was made at the gurudwara of Baba Atta.²⁴ A postal stamp was launched in his memory in 1985, so the world may remember him.²⁵

So, in the end we may conclude that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's remarkable contribution to Dal Khalsa, During 1748 to 1783, has remained very important. He assembled Sikhs at Political level, defeated, Afghansand, Mughals, and above all made independent seizure of many regions and in this time, his misal has been done progressing.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was also are religious leader of his times because he, besides free service at Sh. Harimander Sahib, also provided financial aids to some other religious buildings such as Masjids and Khangaahs. Some Sikhs, Sayids, Brahmas and Fakirs were among the people who also got economical aid.

21. Sohan Singh Seetal, *Rise of the Sikh Power and Ranjit Singh*, Dhanpat Sons, Jhullundur, 1971, p.425

22. Surjeet Singh Gandhi, *Sardara Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Language Department, Punjab-1988, pp.130-132.

23. Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Sikh- Twarikh-II(1708-1839)*, The Sikh University Press-2014, p.283.

24. Dr. Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, p.208.

25. Swarndeeep Singh Noor, *Pahredar Newspaper(Artical)*, p.4.

In this way, being the commander of Dal Khalsa and a political and religious chief of the Khalsa Panth, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a famous leader. His name will always shine in the world for his remarkable contribution to the Sikh community.

F. Yeats Brown explains the bravery of the Sikh community by saying:

"These are very unique people

These Sikhs..... These people

Who have made history and will again make it"

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