



CONTRIBUTION OF MAI BHAGO TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIKH HISTORY IN THE GURU PERIOD

PARNEET KAUR

Research Scholar, Department of History,

Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab).

Abstract: *Mai Bhago's name will always remain in history as a brave woman, an image of bravery and service. In history, she is also known by the name Mata Bhag Kaur. Bhai Vir Singh's book 'Mai Bhago' describes her as the first character in Sikh history who fought heroically on the battlefield as a heroine. She brought back the Sikh soldiers who had surrendered to Guru Gobind Singh and returned to him. She challenged and guided these Sikhs to commit martyrdom to obtain forgiveness from the Guru. These Sikh soldiers were martyred fighting for the Guru at the place of Muktsar. Guru Gobind Singh honoured these martyrs as "Mukte." There was no general like Mata Bhag Kaur, who brought the Sikh soldiers back into the war, inspired them to fight bravely, and fought bravely herself. She performed the roles of warrior and leader as well. Mai Bhago accompanied Guru Gobind Singh to the south and remained there until the end. Mai Bhago served as Guru Gobind Singh's bodyguard till his last days. Apart from this, Mai Bhago must have witnessed important events during Guru Gobind Singh's time, such as the completion of Guru Granth Sahib, the selection of Banda Bahadur as the Sikh leader, etc. On the whole, Mai Bhago's life epitomises Sikhism's fearless dedication to the principles of justice, equality, and righteousness. Her legacy serves as inspiration for Sikh women, who are reminded that they too can break societal barriers and play a vital role in shaping history.*

Keywords : *Mai Bhago, Guru Gobind Singh, Muktsar, Forty Muktas, Bhai Mahan Singh, Sikh history.*

Santokh Singh in 'Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth', Sainapat in 'Sri Gur Sobha', Giani Gian Singh in 'Panth Prakash', and 'Twarikh Guru Khalsa,' Sukha Singh in 'Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin', Saroop Das Bhalla's 'Mehma Prakash Vol. II', Kesar Singh Chibbar's 'Bansavalinama', Bhai Vir Singh's book 'Mai Bhago', Harbans Singh's 'Encyclopaedia of Sikhism', Kahan Singh Nabha's 'Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature' etc., not any source mentions the birth date or year of Mai Bhago. Most sources when describing Mai Bhago only provide information about her native village, her background, and her father and her four brothers. These sources do not provide any information about Mai Bhago's mother's name. Harbans Singh writes about Mai Bhago, she was born in her ancestral village, Jhabal, in the present-day Amritsar district of Punjab.[1] According to Kahan Singh Nabha, Mai Bhago was a descendant of Bhai Pero Shah, who was the brother of Guru Arjan Dev's innumerable Sikh, Bhai Langah.[2] According to Rattan Singh Jaggi, Mai Bhago's background was connected with the village of Jhabal (Amritsar). Bhai Langah, whose surname was Dhillon,

was a follower of Guru Arjan Dev. He contributed a lot to the construction of the Harimandir Sahib (Amritsar). *Bhai* Langah's brother, *Bhai* Pero Shah had two sons: Malle Shah and Harru. After four sons, a daughter was born in Male Shah's house.[3] Sawan Singh states about the birth history of *Mai* Bhago that was born in a well-known village, Jhabal, near Amritsar. She was the daughter of Malo Shah, the son of *Bhai* Pare Shah. Sawan Singh states in '*Noble and Brave Sikh Women*' that *Mai* Bhago's grandfather, Pero Shah, and his brother, *Bhai* Langah had served during time periods of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind. *Bhai* Langah had helped Guru Arjan Dev in the construction of Harimandir Sahib and was one of the five Sikhs who accompanied Guru Arjan Dev when he went to Lahore for martyrdom. It shows that *Mai* Bhago's two generations were closely involved with the Sikh Gurus.[4] In his book '*Mai Bhago*', *Bhai* Veer Singh also discusses *Mai* Bhago's background and mentions *Chaudhry (Bhai)* Langah, an elder who became a Sikh during Guru Arjan Dev's time period. *Bhai* Langah did an outstanding job during the construction of Harmandir Sahib. During Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom, he was with him and endured a lot of suffering. Pero Shah, Langah's brother, had a son named Male Shah, who worked as a Sikh in Guru Hargobind's household. Male Shah's daughter gained fame as *Mai* Bhago in Sikh history. [5] Saroop Singh Koshish, while writing about Mata Bhag Kaur, gives details about her two brothers, only named Bhag Singh and Dilbagh Singh.[6]

The above information indicates that *Mai* Bhago was born in Jhabal village. *Mai* Bhago's family had a long-standing connection with *Guru Ghar*. Which started with her predecessors *Bhai* Langah and Pero Shah. Her father, Male Shah, also had a good relationship with the Sikh Gurus and made an important contribution to the Sikh religion. The effect of all these will undoubtedly be on *Mai* Bhago too.

ABOUT THE NAME OF MAI BHAGO: According to *Bhai* Vir Singh, because she was born after four brothers, she became well-known as Bhago.[7] Sawan Singh states that in the childhood of *Mai* Bhago or *Mai* Bhag Kaur, she was called Bhag Bhari, which means "fortunate." On being baptised, she was named Bhag Kaur. In Sikh history, she is known as *Mai* Bhago.[8] Rattan Singh Jaggi states that after the birth of *Mai* Bhago, the family began to prosper in every way. That is why she was named Bhagbhari. She was affectionately called 'Bhago'. [9] Simarjit Singh writes that after the birth of *Mai* Bhago, the family prospered in every aspect. Due to this, the daughter was named Bhagbhari, and all affectionately called her "Bhago". [10] Mohinder Kaur Gill writes that after the battle of Mukatsar, Guru Gobind Singh baptised (*Amritpan*, 1699) *Mai* Bhago and changed her name to Bhag Kaur. [11] Guru Gobind Singh baptised *Mai* Bhago and named her Bhag Kaur. [12]

CHILDHOOD: Not much information is available about *Mai* Bhago's childhood. *Bhai* Vir Singh stated that despite being female, she exhibited masculinity and courage, and after going to Guru Teg Bahadur's court with her father, she became a disciple of Sikhism. [13] Mohinder Kaur Gill states that *Mai* Bhago grew up in a very devout Sikh family where the tradition of Sikh bravery was inculcated in her from her childhood. [14] Kirpal Singh Chandan states in '*Itihasak Sikh Bibiyan*' that *Mai* Bhago has been courageous and fearless since childhood. She inherited qualities like bravery, truthfulness, and fearlessness from her family. [15] Rattan Singh Jaggi writes that *Mai* Bhago has been a firm believer in spirituality since childhood. When *Mai* Bhago was seven or eight years old, her parents brought her to meet

Guru Har Rai. During this time, after seeing her devotion, Guru Har Rai gave *Mai Bhago* the blessing of being a noble and learned Sikh. According to Rattan Singh Jaggi, on the basis of this information, it can be said that *Mai Bhago* may have come to Guru Har Rai's court during the Gurship period of 1644-1661 AD. At this time, she was seven or eight years old. After that, she also used to visit Guru Tegh Bahadur. It is assumed that *Mai Bhago* would have come in the middle of the gurship period of Guru Har Rai, so on this basis, it can be said that *Mai Bhago* was born around 1645 AD. When Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred in Delhi to protect the religion of *Kashmiri Pandits*, she became so angry that she even told his father that she wanted to go to Delhi with a sword and destroy the wicked (villains) who martyred Guru Tegh Bahadur. *Mai Bhago* continued to visit Guru Gobind Singh's court; she kept a close watch on the preparations for the religious war taking place there.[16] Gurbaksh Singh Saini writes that during the creation of the *Khalsa*, *Mai Bhago* was also there with her family. [17] All this shows *Mata Bhago's* connection with the *Guru Ghar*, which is evident from the *darshan* she received from time to time from various Gurus and her devotion to the *Guru Ghar*.

EDUCATION: No details are available about the education of *Mai Bhago*. *Bhai Vir Singh* writes about *Mai Bhago* practicing his weaponry with a short spear. Then she used to practice using weapons outside her house with long spear.[18] Sawan Singh states that *Mai Bhago* visited Anandpur with her father in 1699 AD, when Guru Gobind Singh created the *Khalsa* and baptised her along with other members of her family. She wanted to stay there to learn the martial arts and become a saint soldier, but her father brought her back because she was a woman and women did not take part in the Sikh army in those days. However, she longed to learn the art of warfare and horseback riding from her father. She made a top knot of her head hair and covered it with a small turban. She had a spear in one hand, a sword in the other, a shield on her shoulders, and other small arms in her belt. In the beginning, she aimed at small bushes outside the village with her small spear. Then she started piercing trees with her spear and learned horseback riding; soon she became a staunch saint soldier. [19] Mohinder Kaur Gill writes, it is believed that like her father, she showed keen interest in armaments and was also trained in using them. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Bhai Santokh Singh*, *Bhai Vir Singh*, and contemporary historian Shingara Singh contend that *Mai Bhago* always carried a long *sang* (sword; *sang* is a sort of spear that is used to cut shrubs and trees). Though *Mai Bhago* had visited Anandpur several times, her actual participation in a military campaign was only in the battle of Mukatsar, as this is the only recorded evidence. [20] Visakha Singh writes that *Mai Bhago* was very fond of reciting *Gurbani* and listening to *Guru Sakhis* (stories) from learned *Gursikhs*. [21] Bikram Singh writes in his book '*Parsangh Mai Bhago*' that *Mai Bhago* wore white clothes and loved *Bani*. *Mai Bhago* started reciting *Bani* at an early age.[22]

CHARACTER: *Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha* writes that *Mai Bhago* was a woman of high moral character.[23] Mohinder Kaur Gill writes about the character of *Mai Bhago* by quoting Kartar Singh Kalaswalia's '*Sri Dusht Daman Parkash*' in '*Eminent Sikh Women*' that *Mai Bhago* was a tall and muscular woman with a broad face. Her unsurpassed strength, both spiritual and physical, made her a remarkable woman. She created a sense of unity among the Sikhs and also displayed exceptional bravery in battle. She gave credit for this power to Guru Gobind Singh.[24] *Bhai Vir Singh*, in

his book '*Sri Kalghidar Chamatkar (Vol. II)*' praises *Mai Bhago* and describes her as an ocean of light who provided correct guidance to numerous individuals. Who had deviated from their intended path. Mohinder Kaur Gill, in her book '*Eminent Sikh Women*', quotes *Bhai Vir Singh's* views about *Mai Bhago* and states that she was the shining ray of the Sikhs, who, akin to the 'Pole Star', guided the lost travellers.[25]

MARRIAGE: Kahan Singh Nabha does not write anything about the marital status of *Mai Bhago*. But it does not prove that she was unmarried. Harbans Singh writes that *Mai Bhago* was married to Nidhan Singh Waraich of Patti area.[26] Kirpal Singh Chandan states that *Mai Bhago* got married to *Sardar Nidhan Singh*, who was a resident of Patti.[27] According to Saroop Singh Koshish, her husband's name was Nidhan Singh Waraich.[28] Simarjit Singh writes that *Mai Bhago* got married to *Bhai Nidhan Singh*, who was the son of Chaudhary Desh Raj Waraich of Patti.[29] Rattan Singh Jaggi writes in '*Sikh Panth Vishvkosh*' that *Mai Bhago* was married to *Bhai Nidhan Singh Waraich* of Patti.[30] Santokh Singh in '*Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*' writes that when *Mai Bhago* met Guru Gobind Singh during the battle of Khidrana, at that time, she told him that she had come to Guru Gobind Singh with the hope of getting a son.[31] This fact also proves that *Mai Bhago* was married and her in-laws were in Patti. She had no child. Because not any historical source mentions anything about her child.

LIFE EVENTS: *Mai Bhago's* husband, Nidhan Singh Wraich, and her brothers, *Bhai Bhag Singh*, Dilbag Singh, Gharbara Singh, and Ganda Singh also martyred in the great and wonderful battle of Khidrana. After this battle, *Mai Bhago* neither returned to *Peke* (maternal home) village nor returned to her in-laws house. He became a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh. Three Gurdwaras are adorned in memory of *Mai Bhago's* village: Jhabal, Muktsar, and Nander. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, she spent the rest of her life here.[32] *Bhai Vir Singh* states in his book '*Mai Bhago*' states that *Mai Bhago's* memory is still reflected in a bunga that still stands near Gurdwara Hazur Sahib.[33] *Bhai Vir Singh* writes in his book '*Malwa Desh Ratan di Sakhi Pothi*' writes that *Mai Bhago* was a rich woman who came to the Guru with the gathering of *Malwa* people with the desire to get a son. *Mai Bhago* stayed with the Guru after the battle of Muktsar. She used to keep a *Sang* with her and used to guard the Guru's bed. [34] But on the basis of this information narrated by *Bhai Vir Singh*, it can be said that it is unlikely that *Mai Bhago* would have come to the Guru's shelter with the demand of getting a son. Because she was the woman who brought the sons of her family and clan to the battlefield and did not return home after their martyrdom. The second thing is that *Bhai Vir Singh* writes about the Guru but does not write about which guru he is writing about.

CONTRIBUTION OF MAI BHAGO

Mai Bhago's contribution to Sikhism can be traced back to her history before, during, and after the Khidrana War. Different historians and writers wrote their views about the role of *Mai Bhago*, which she made during her life time. According to *Bhai Vir Singh*, during the war of Anandpur, there was news that some Singhs of *Majha* had left the side of Guru Gobind Singh. *Mai Bhago* requested that her husband sacrifice both of their lives to Sikhism after learning about the events at Chamkaur and Sirhind. Her husband had served in many wars. Considering her honour, her husband

asked her not to fight with enemies. But *Mai Bhago* said, Don't worry about me. Saying that the youth of *Majha* have stigmatised *Majha*. She sat on her horse with her spear in her hand and prepared to sacrifice her life for Sikhism and to be blessed. The Sikhs of the villages also gathered in Jhabal. They all proceeded towards Malwa, and those Sikhs who had once left Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur also joined this party. Guru Gobind Singh went ahead, but this party stopped at Khidrana to stop the enemy army. *Mai Bhago* exhorted these Sikhs to bravely fight with their enemies. The leader of these Sikhs was Mahan Singh, under whom thousands of Sikhs were martyred while fighting against the enemy Turkish army. The story of fighting in the battle, *Mai Bhago* is described in such a way that Guru Gobind Singh approached Mahan Singh, who asked Guru Gobind Singh to forgive them for their mistake and asked him to tear the *Bedawa*. The Guru tore the *bedawa*, and after Mahan Singh was martyred, Guru Sahib performed the last rites of all the martyred Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh freed these Sikhs and named Khidrana as Muktsar.[35] After this, a Sikh came and told Guru Gobind Singh about a wounded woman who had also fought with the Turks. Guru Gobind Singh gave water to *Mai*, after which *Mai Bhago* narrated the full story of the war to Guru Gobind Singh, and how the Sikhs fought bravely. After this, *Bhai Vir Singh* writes how Guru Gobind Singh blessed *Mai Bhago* for her bravery. She, being a woman, inspired the Sikhs of *Majha* to show bravery and sacrifice their lives in the war; apart from this, she also participated in the war. Her husband and other brave sons of her family also suffered martyrdom in this war. She herself left no stone unturned in sacrificing herself for the Sikh nation.

Following this war, she began protecting Guru Gobind Singh as a bodyguard. During Guru Gobind Singh's visits to Talwandi Sabo, Delhi, Agra, and Nanded, she was also present with him. She was always present to protect the Guru, even in the presence of male guards at night. But the enemy attacked Guru Gobind Singh. *Mai Bhago* became the witness of Guru Gobind Singh's injuries, his treatment, his healing, his recovery.[36] According to *Bhai Vir Singh*, she witnessed Banda Bahadur's decision to become a follower of Sikhism.[37]

According to Gurbaksh Singh Saini, the battle of Khidrana, which took place on 21st *Vaisakh*, *Sammatt* 1762 (April 18, 1705 A.D.), lasted for six hours. In this war, like a wise general, she made a war policy to stop the Mughal army on the *Dhab* of Khidrana. *Mai Bhago* disguised herself as a man and fought the Mughal army with a sword. Only two wounded people in this war remained alive: *Bhai Mahan Singh* and *Mai Bhago*. [38] Santokh Singh writes a whole chapter about *Mai Bhago* in '*Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*'. He writes that out of forty Sikhs, a woman, *Mai Bhago* killed one Turk and threw him to the ground. Thus, *Mai Bhago's* bravery is demonstrated by him. Thus, he shows the bravery of *Mai Bhago*. [39]

Max Arthur Macauliffe writes that after the battle of Khidrana, in the process of collecting the slain, it was found that another person showed signs of life. This was the hero, *Mai Bhago*. The Guru addressed her, 'Taking off thy woman's dress, thou didst come to me with the *Majha* Sikhs. It is well that you have fought here. Blessings on thy (you) life! Arise and come with me.' She detailed the story of her Sikhs of the *Majha* and then continued, 'I obtained possession of a strong spear. When all the Sikhs were dead, the Turks advanced on me. I spitted several of them. Others directed their weapons against me, but thou didst extend thine arm to save me. Now that I have seen thee I am happy and have no further desire than to abide with thee.' [40] Saroop Singh Koshish writes that, at Bhag Kaur's encouragement, forty Sikhs, including his brother Bhag Singh, agreed to go with Guru Gobind Singh. It also gives

details about Mata Bhag Kaur's participation and injury in the battle of Khidrana. Mata Bhag Kaur's husband and brother Bhag Singh were martyred while fighting against the Turks in the war of Khidrana. After the war, Mata Bhag Kaur remained the protector of Guru Gobind Singh.[41]

Hari Ram Gupta writes that the forty deserters from Anandpur lived in the *Majha* region in the district of Amritsar. As they had renounced the gurship of Gobind Singh in writing, they did not come to him out of shame. In one of their villages called Chubhal or Jhabal, there lived a young woman named Bhago. She was very zealous to serve the Guru. She was also smitten by the ignominy shown by her people towards him. She was determined to wipe out the badge of infamy. She wore a man's dress, rode on horseback, and collected forty deserters. Many more joined her. In a body, they marched towards Khidrana to meet the Guru and seek his pardon. They encamped for the night near the village. The next day, early in the morning, they saw a cloud of dust in the distance from Bathinda. By intuition, it struck Bhago that the Mughal troops were coming to attack the Guru. Bhago called her men to attention. They had arrived halfway between Bhago's camp and Tibi Sahib. On going farther on the battlefield, the Guru was greeted by *Mai* Bhago. She told him how the forty deserters had fought valiantly and then laid down their lives. The Guru was deeply touched by their sense of remorse and self-sacrifice. *Mai* Bhago followed the Guru to Nander. First, she lived at Gurdwara Nanak Jhira, which was one and a half kilometres from Bidar Town, and after some time, she shifted to Jinwara, ten kilometres from Bidar.[42] According to Hari Ram Gupta, she was the Joan of Arc [43] of Sikh history. She is the first Sikh warrior heroine who showed bravery on the battlefield. She was a good horse rider and a woman skilled in armour.[44]

Harbans Singh states that *Mai* Bhago, the sole survivor of the battle of Khidrana, i.e., Mukatsar (December 29, 1705 AD), was a descendant of Pero Shah, the younger brother of *Bhai* Langah, a *dhillon Jatt*, who had converted a Sikh during the time of Guru Arjan Dev. A staunch Sikh by birth and upbringing, she was distressed to hear in 1705 that some of the Sikhs of her neighbourhood who had gone to Anandpur to fight for Guru Gobind Singh had deserted him under adverse conditions. She rallied the deserters, persuading them to meet the Guru Gobind Singh, and apologise to him. She set off along with them and some other Sikhs to seek out the Guru, then travelled across the *Malwa* region. *Mai* Bhago and the men she was leading stopped near the *dhab*, or pool, of Khidrana, where an imperial army in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh had almost overtaken him. They challenged the pursuing host and fought furiously, forcing it to retreat. Guru Gobind Singh, who had supported them with a shower of arrows from nearby high ground, found all the men except one, Mahan Singh killed when he visited the battlefield. Mahan Singh, who had been seriously wounded, also died as the Guru took him into his lap. Guru Gobind Singh blessed those forty dead as the forty liberated ones'. He took into his care *Mai* Bhago, who had also suffered injuries in the battle. She thereafter stayed on with Guru Gobind Singh as one of his bodyguards, in male attire. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh at Nander in 1708 AD, she retired further south. She settled down at Jinwara, eleven kilometres from Bidar in Karnataka, where she immersed herself in meditation till her old age. Her hut in Jinwara has now been converted into Gurdwara Tap Asthan *Mai* Bhago. At Nander, too, a hall within the compound of *Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib* that is the site of her residence is known as Bunga *Mai* Bhago.[45]

Kahan Singh Nabha mentioned that when many Sikhs returned home after writing a disclaimer in the battle of Anandpur, *Mai* Bhago crushed them. Then *Mai* Bhago herself, riding a horse disguised as a man, uttered such logical

sentences, which made many Sikhs ready to attend the service of Guru Gobind Singh again. In *Sammat* 1762, *Mai Bhago* joined the Singhs, fought valiantly in the battle of Mukatsar, was severely wounded, and was persuaded by Guru Gobind Singh to undergo treatment. Guru Gobind Singh baptised her and named her Bhag Kaur. She was the bodyguard of Guru Gobind Singh. When Guru Gobind Singh passed away, she went to Bidar, and she also died here.[46]

Giani Gian Singh states that *Mai Bhago* had come with Singhs of *Majha* to fight against the Turks. After killing many enemies, she was sitting on the bank of the pond and washing her wounds. *Mai Bhago* was very happy to see Guru Gobind Singh, and she bowed to Guru Gobind Singh. He writes that the Sikhs of *Majha*, who had gone away after writing a disclaimer from Sikhism were taken to Guru Gobind Singh. Now, when she told the Guru the whole story of the martyrdom of the Singhs of *Majha*, the Guru remembered their deeds, and his eyes filled with tears.[47] *Santokh Singh* in '*Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*' also mentions that Khidrana is now known by the name of Mukatsar. Nobody is now calling it Khidrana.[48]

Kartar Singh writes in '*Life of Guru Gobind Singh*' that a band of forty fully armed Saint soldiers from the *Majha* region started towards the Guru under the leadership of *Mai Bhago* of Jhabal and *Bhai Mani Singh* of Sursingh, district Amritsar. The battle was long and bloody and was fought on the 21st day of *Baisakh*, 1762, on May 8, 1705 AD. The Sikhs from *Majha*, under *Mai Bhago* and *Bhai Mahan Singh* were in the vanguard of the Guru's soldiers. All the Sikh soldiers fought with their usual courage and power. *Mai Bhago* was seen fighting in the foremost rank. Then the Guru Gobind Singh went to the place where *Mai Bhago* was lying senseless. She had not been severely wounded but had fallen down from utter exhaustion. A little aid revived her. She told the master what had occurred after he had left the party. He, in turn, told her of the last saving deed of *Bhai Mahan Singh* and added, 'he asked nothing for himself. He has done a great deed. He has reunited the broken ties and saved the honour of the *Majha* Sikhs. He has saved and preserved the root of Sikhism in the *Majha*. The Guru Gobind Singh was greatly pleased with *Mai Bhago* for what she had done. He got her removed from the battlefield and got her wounds treated and healed. When she was all right, he baptised her, and she became *Mai Bhag Kaur*.[49] *Mohinder Kaur Gill* writes that she was so devoted to Guru Gobind Singh that when her fellow villagers refused to accept his Gurship (*Bedawa* letter), she forcefully challenged them and proceeded towards the *Dhab* (pool) of Khidrana to participate in a campaign against the Mughals.[50]

On this basis, *Bhai Santokh Singh* gives the names of *Bhai Mahan Singh* and *Mai Bhago*. *Giani Gian Singh*, *Sumer Singh*, and *Kahan Singh Nabha* all write the names of *Bhai Mahan Singh*, *Bhag Kaur*, and forty-one other Sikh soldiers. *Mohinder Kaur Gill* states in '*Eminent Sikh Women*' that it is believed that *Mai Bhago* has lived through the time of five Gurus (Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur, and Guru Gobind Singh). However, historically, her only recorded meeting was with Guru Tegh Bahadur, whom she visited in Anandpur along with her parents.[51] *Gurbaksh Singh Saini* on page eighty-eight that after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, *Mai Bhago* worked as the bodyguard of Mata Sahib Kaur for some time.[52]

LAST TIME: *Gurbaksh Singh Saini* writes that in 1706, *Mai Bhago* also came to Talwandi with Guru Gobind Singh. Here, *Mai Bhago* used to be Guru's bodyguard and stayed with him all the time. Contributing to *langar*, preaching Sikhism, encouraging women to recite *Naam*, and baptising. There were many restrictions on women in Nanded, but

the women there were very surprised to see *Mai Bhago* disguised as a man.[53] Bhai Vir Singh states about the last time of *Mai Bhago* that she left Nanded and went to Bidar City after Guru Gobind Singh's demise. Here, she completed her life journey. But *Bhai Vir Singh* does not mention any year of the demise of *Mai Bhago*.[54] Sawan Singh writes that *Mai Bhago* accompanied Guru Gobind Singh to Damdama Sahib, Agra, and Nander (a city in the south of India) and lived there until Guru Gobind Singh left this world. After the Guru's death, she left Nander for Bidar (an important city nearby). She lived there for some time and preached Sikhism. She died at Bidar. There is a Gurdwara built in her memory near the main *Gurdwara Sachkhand* at Nander. Her spear is still preserved at the *Gurdwara*, along with the arms of Guru Gobind Singh.[55] *Giani Gian Singh* in '*Twarikh Guru Khalsa*' states that when in *Sammat 1763 bikrami*, Guru Gobind Singh died in Abchal Nagar, then *Mai Bhago*, who was always on the front line holding a spear in the battlefield. In Bidar, she made the whole city Guru's Sikh with his intellect.[56] *Gurbaksh Singh Saini* writes on page ninety, writes that she died on January 7, 1718.[57] Dr. Hardev Singh edited '*Gurbilas Patsahhi Dasvin* (Sukha Singh) states about the last time of *Mai Bhago* that according to the inscription established by the management of '*Gurdwara Nanak Jhira*' located at 'Bidar'. According to this inscription, when the residents of Janwara, Bala Roy and Rustam Roy, were freed from the imprisonment of Sitara Fort and came to visit the *Gur Asthan* at Nanded, *Mai Bhago* went with them to Janwara on their request. *Mai Bhago* breathed her last in the *haveli*(mansion) of these two.[58] But the date or year of *Mai Bhago's* death is also not available from this source.

ITI HASAK NISHANIA: The relics associated with Mata Bhago in the form of her weapons and places associated with her still exist today. Harpreet Singh Nazz writes that three *Jamburaks* (small canons) and one small canon associated with *Mai Bhago* are kept at *Sri Hazur Sahib*.[59] Simarjit Singh states that after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the asceticism of *Mai Bhago* increased, and she left Nander for Bidar. Here, she actively preached Sikhism. It is here that she left her perishable body at Jindwara village, near Hazur Sahib. Gurdwara is located here in memory of *Mai Bhago*.[60] Rattan Singh Jaggi writes that *Mai Bhago* died in the town of Jinwara, which is ten kilometres away from Bidar. Here a *Gurdwara* is situated in the memory of *Mai Bhago*, named '*Gurdwara Tap Asthan Mai Bhago*'. Even now, there is a *bunga* named after *Mai Bhago* located in Hazur Sahib, in which some of its weapons are also kept.[61] Kahan Singh Nabha claims that one of *Mai Bhago's* weapons (*Fala*) can be found in Guru Gobind Singh's arms collection kept at Hazoor Sahib.[62]

CONCLUSION: *Mai Bhago* contributed to the spread of Sikhism; she preached mostly in Bidar. She sacrificed her husband and brother for Sikh *Panth*. Mohinder Kaur Gill writes that "the tradition of tying turbans on the head among Sikh women seems to have started with *Mai Bhago*. She led the Sikhs who strayed from the path, showed them the real path again, and connected with the Guru, the broken knot." Apart from the war of Muktsar, there is no mention of *Mai Bhago* participating in any other war. After the war, she served Guru Gobind Singh as a bodyguard. She held this responsibility till the last days of Guru Gobind Singh. For some time, she also served Mata Sahib Kaur as bodyguard. She also contributed in the service of *langar* and in preaching the name of God. During the service of Guru Gobind Singh, She also witnessed events such as the completion of *Guru Granth Sahib's* enthronement, making Banda Bahadur

the Sikh leader, and Banda Bahadur's wars with the Mughals. She performed the roles of warrior, leader and bodyguard very well. *Mai Bhago's* life represents Sikhism's fearless dedication to justice, equality, and righteousness. *Mai Bhago's* legacy is a source of inspiration for Sikh women, who are reminded that they can overcome societal obstacles and play an essential role in shaping history.

REFERENCES:

1. Harbans Singh, (editor-in-chief), *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism, Vol. I*, Punjabi University, Patiala, fourth edition, 2002, p. 323.
2. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature (Mahankosh)*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2021, p. 790.
3. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishvkosh, Part-II*, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, p. 1354.
4. Sawan Singh, *Noble and Brave Sikh Women*, Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2009, p. 48.
5. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, pp. 3-4.
6. Saroop Singh Koshish, *Guru Kiyān Sakhian*, ed. Piyara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, second edition, 2008, p. 172.
7. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, p. 4.
8. Sawan Singh, *Noble and Brave Sikh Women*, Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2009, p. 48.
9. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishvkosh, Part-II*, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, p. 1354.
10. Simarjit Singh, *Mata Bhag Kaur Ji Da Sikh – Sangat Vich Yogdan (Anandpur Sahib to Nander)*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 2020, p. 5.
11. Mohinder Kaur Gill, *Eminent Sikh Women*, Vijay Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 57.
12. Gurbaksh Singh Saini, *Sant Sainapati Sherni Mai Bhago*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, first edition, February, 2017, p. 67.
13. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, p. 4.
14. Mohinder Kaur Gill, *Eminent Sikh Women*, Vijay Publications, New Delhi, NA, p. 57.
15. Kirpal Singh Chandan, *Itihasak Sikh Bibiyan*, Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana, 2013, p. 55.
16. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishvkosh, Part-II*, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, p. 1354.
17. Gurbaksh Singh Saini, *Sant Sainapati Sherni Mai Bhago*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, first edition, February, 2017, p. 35.
18. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, pp. 12-13.
19. Sawan Singh, *Noble and Brave Sikh Women*, Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2009, pp. 48-49.
20. Mohinder Kaur Gill, *Eminent Sikh Women*, Vijay Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 57.
21. Vishakha Singh, *Malwa Itihas*, Gurmat Parcharak Singh Sabha, Tihara, Kishanpura, Ferozpur district Punjab, NA, p. 483.
22. Bikram Singh, *Parsangh Mai Bhago*, Bikram Singh Bikram Publishers, Jodhpur (Rajasthan), NA, p. 5.
23. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature (Mahankosh)*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2021, p.790.
24. Mohinder Kaur Gill, *Eminent Sikh Women*, Vijay Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 64.
25. Bhai Vir Singh, *Sri Kalghidar Chamatkar (Vol. II)*, Utaradah, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, twenty-fifth edition, February 2011, p.212. also see, Mohinder Kaur Gill, *Eminent Sikh Women*, Vijay Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 64.
26. Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Vol. I*, Punjabi University, Patiala, fourth edition, 2002, p. 323.
27. Kirpal Singh Chandan, *Itihasak Sikh Bibiyan*, Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana, 2013, p. 57.
28. Saroop Singh Koshish, *Guru Kiyān Sakhian*, ed. Piyara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, second edition, 2008, p. 172.

29. Simarjit Singh, *Mata Bhag Kaur Ji Da Sikh – Sangat Vich Yogdan (Anandpur Sahib to Nander)*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 2020, p. 6.
30. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishvkosh, Part-II*, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, p. 1355.
31. Santokh Singh, *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Vol. 11th (Part-III)*, translator, Ajit Singh Aulakh, Bhai Chhatar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, first edition, 2007, pp. 464-465.
32. Punjab History Conference (40th Session), March 14-16, 2008, Proceedings, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 168.
33. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, p. 22.
34. Bhai Vir Singh, (ed.), *Malwa Desh Ratan di Sakhi Pothi*, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, Third edition, June, 2018, pp. 62-63.
35. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, pp. 14-19.
36. Ibid., pp. 19-23.
37. Ibid., p. 22.
38. Gurbaksh Singh Saini, *Sant Sainapati Sherni Mai Bhago*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, first edition, February, 2017, pp. 56-58 & 61, 65.
39. Santokh Singh, *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Vol. XIV*, (ed.), Bhai Vir Singh, Bhasa Vibhag, Punjab, second edition, 2011, p. 6037.
40. M. A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, Vol. V*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1996, pp. 214-215.
41. Saroop Singh Koshish, *Guru Kiyani Sakhian*, ed. Piyara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, second edition, 2008, pp.172 – 173 & 176.
43. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs (1469-1708), Vol. I*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 306,307 & 308.
43. Jaon of Arc was a national heroien of France. During hundreds years of War, she was honoured as a defender of French nation.
44. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs (1469-1708), Vol. I*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2008, p. 308.
45. Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Vol. I*, Punjabi University, Patiala, fourth edition, 2002, pp. 323-324.
46. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature (Mahankosh)*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2021, p. 790.
47. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa, Part-I*, (ed.), K. S. Raju, Bhasa Vibhag, Punjab, third time, 1993, p.1050.
48. Santokh Singh, *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Vol. XIV*, (ed.), Bhai Vir Singh, Bhasa Vibhag, Punjab, second edition, 2911, p. 6044.
49. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, pp. 198 – 201.
50. Mohinder Kaur Gill, *Eminent Sikh Women*, Vijay Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 57.51. Ibid., p. 57.
52. Gurbaksh Singh Saini, *Sant Sainapati Sherni Mai Bhago*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, first edition, February, 2017, pp. 71-73.
53. Ibid., p. 81.
54. Bhai Vir Singh, Bhag Singh Anakhi, (ed.), *Mai Bhago*, Khalsa Tract Society, Chief Khalsa Diwan Campus, Amritsar, NA, p. 23.
55. Sawan Singh, *Noble and Brave Sikh Women*, Bhai Chhatar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2009, p. 51.
56. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa, Part-I*, (ed.) K. S. Raju, Bhasa Vibhag, Punjab, 1993, p. 159.
57. Gurbaksh Singh Saini, *Sant Sainapati Sherni Mai Bhago*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, first edition, February, 2017, p.90.
58. Hardev Singh, Ed., *Sri Gur Bilas Patshahi Dasvin (Kavi Sukha Singh)*, Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib, 2018, p. 37.
59. Harpreet Singh Naaz, *Iihasak Sikh Nishaniyan*, Lahore Books, Ludhiana, 2017, p. 144.

60. Simarjit Singh, *Mata Bhag Kaur Ji Da Sikh – Sangat Vich Yogdan (Anandpur Sahib to Nander)*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 2020, p. 31.
61. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishvkosh, Part-II*, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, p. 1355.
62. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature (Mahankosh)*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2021, p. 790.

