

Spiritual
Strength
Of
WOMEN:
Six-part series
[First edition]

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Grace of Waheguru

Sewa by
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*Be the Best, a Kaur Princess!
A Brave Lioness, with Pure Success!!*

INTRODUCTION

A warm welcome given to our esteemed readers to the first series of the 'Spiritual Strength Of Women', which was exhausted within 6 weeks of its release and is a great joy and encouragement to me. This is clear proof of the fact that the lovers of Sikhi yearn to know its history and follow its tradition. In this series, an attempt has been made to compile a few short stories together of Sikh women from our history who left shining examples of the great Spiritual Strength derived from Satguru jee.

Sikh history conveyed to us by our Gurus and ancestors must be told to the entire world. Hundreds of thousands of noble Sikhs and martyrs need to be acknowledged. I have ventured to humbly submit just a few of these that have been used in this series.

Summaries of the stories are as follows:

The first part is about the courage shown by one lady to enter Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), knowing that she will never come out of the complex alive. Her conversation between the two guards trying to dissuade her from entering and her astounding responses are something to really think about for ourselves.

The second is about how one woman and her tender-aged young son who take on five armed Turk soldiers who were lead to their hideout by a Hindu Pundit who betrayed the mother and son. A detailed account is given of the struggle and how these two pious souls overcame the might of the armed soldiers.

The third part shows how the presence and service from just *one* woman can benefit the Khalsa Panth so much. It is about a young woman who wishes to join the Khalsa fold, which has a dramatic effect on the rest of the Khalsa Army consisting of men, who finally welcome her with the utmost respect for her and treats her as if she was their very own Sister.

The fourth part is a heroine's tale of a Khalsa spy who fought bravely against Turkish soldiers in order to save herself, her honor and to complete the important mission she was given which in the end saved the lives of the Khalsa. Her service and sacrifice was greatly honored.

The fifth part is an autobiographical account of one highly spirited Gursikh and his encounter with a woman Saint. The given impression of her and her saintliness show that there are no bounds for a woman achieving the highest spiritual level and attaining that Oneness with God.

The sixth and final part shows how to attain this unique 'Spiritual Strength' through a woman's own experiences and lessons learnt. It gives very intellectual methods as to how and why women should achieve this 'Spiritual Strength', especially in today's modern world.

I have also added another part at the end which are of stories of Sikh women in recent times, whereby events have occurred to them and only their Spiritual Strength has been their savior. This is to show that those examples of Sikh women in history didn't just exist back then, they still exist *today!*

The first half of this series is mostly consists of the work and writings of Bhai Vir Singh. Those of you who have read the work of Bhai Vir Singh may be able to appreciate why I have chosen to put his writings first. Any reader of Bhai Vir Singh is so much carried away by his sweetness and the total heart that he/she is completely swept off their feet. I too was caught in the net of such enchantment. In the words of Bhai Vir Singh, his writings, "...highlights the glorious manner in which the Khalsa remained steadfast to its high principles even when faced with greatest of odds... Let me hope that it would help to re-imbibe among us the Spirit of bravery, humility, compassion and all the divine qualities with which our forefathers were blessed."

Crores and crores (millions) of thanks to the Wondrous Lord (Vaheguru) and Satguru jee who have enabled me to compile this series, in my humble way. The encouraging response given to these stories, written on Sikh women, has given me further inducement to go on writing more and more on the basis of the countless noble Sikh women embedded in our history. It is impossible for a man of my humble intelligence and limited knowledge to have written these stories and accounts myself, yet with Satguru's Grace, I have made a little attempt. I am confident that the learned readers will excuse me for my mistakes and will give their valuable suggestions.

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I have already received wonderful replies from Gursikh readers on the Internet who have read this series before it was printed and have given me their comments. One reply I admired which really tells what this series is about is by Daljit Singh and what he thought of the 'Spiritual Strength of Women' series:

"At one level it is aimed at Sikh Bibia but I think it goes deeper than that. I think it benefits the whole Panth. There really is no gender in Khalsa. And I don't think the Sikh Bibis are any less than the Singhs - I think we, as a male-dominated society, only want to recognize the Singhs as spiritual people and haven't left too much place for spiritual Bibis. When the Guru blesses a soul, the Guru doesn't see the gender of the body that the soul is residing in - nope, the Guru just blesses." Another reply I liked described the stories of each part as, "...such selected soul raising episodes."

This series is now ready for printing. The second volume may be out in the near future. If Akaal Purakh (God) and Satguru jee shower their Grace and Kindness on this humble slave, these may be produced and printed in several volumes along with recent stories towards the end of each volume, in the style in which I have already made by my humble attempts.

It must be remembered that no 'achar' (true moral character) can be built without the sincere worship of the One God (Ik Oankaar) and His Name, as directed by the Gurus. All of us must stick to the Path shown by our Divine Teachers. It is only through Naam Simran, Gurbani, Seva and saacha pyaar for the Guru that one can achieve Spiritual Strength.

The busy world of this present age of darkness (*Kalyug*) finds little or no time to think of God, the Gurus, or our history. Some who are curious to know about God, death and other relevant matters want to know something about these in the shortest possible time. It is with this view to create interest in them that this 'Spiritual Strength of Women' has been specially written, so that at least some of them may be tempted to further explore the ways and start reading our great history.

It is my humble request to the readers, *especially to all the Sikh women*, that you kindly teach yourself, others and your children, the unique *sakhis* (stories) of our Gurus and their history. You are the best teachers of your sweet children. You are the makers of their future. You are responsible for filling your home with True and Real Joys of this world and also for amassing Spiritual Wealth for use in the next world. Any wrong step, taken under the influence of mammon, in the name of the so-called modern civilisation, will land you in the ocean of miseries. Never forget the object of human life:

Bhai prapat manukh dehuria

Gobind milan kee eh teree buriaa||

Avar kaj terai kita na kam

Mil sadh sangat bajh keval Naam||

Through the grace of God, you've been blessed with this human (*manukh*) life,

This is your golden opportunity to meet the Lord ||

All other duties are of no use to you,

Meet the company of holy saints and meditate on the Name ||

(Guru Arjan Dev Ji)

Kindly do devote some time to meditate on the Name, to reading about Sikhi and doing selfless service to all. Each one of you should become a missionary of the great and Universal Sikh Religion. Do not rely on paid preachers. Perform Kirtan with your family members in your house, because it is the easiest and most effective way to realize and to obtain 'Spiritual Strength'.

I am thankful to Almighty God for showering His Grace and enabling me to get this work compiled and completed. I also respectfully and humbly offer my sincere thanks to Bhai Harjit Singh Lakhan and Bhai Taranjit Singh for their personal contribution. Also to Bhai Satnam Singh, Bhai Sundeep Singh, Bibi Amanpreet Kaur and Bibi Shanti Kaur, who have also assisted me in compiling this series. I'd also like to thank the worthy readers for their kind patronage and appreciation.

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VAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA
VAHEGURU JI KI FATEH

Vaheguru Ji's Khalsa

Vaheguru Ji's Fateh

The Khalsa belongs to God

All Victory belongs to God

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PART 1:

Learn how a woman is willing enough to risk her own life just to visit Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple)...

Two persons (Kaura Mal and Surat Singh) hurried to Amritsar and reaching there informed the organizers that Lakhpat was determined to order mass-massacre of the Sikhs. Anyone who went to Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) for the Sikh celebrations would be killed. Therefore no one should enter Harmandir Sahib the next day. Then they posted their men outside the city on the highways, so that they might turn back any Sikh who wanted to enter the city on the plea that entry to the Harmandir Sahib had been officially banned. While the religious-minded leaders accomplished the task of warning the people, Lakhpat, on the other hand, stealthily posted a large number of sepoys around the temple. He sat on the balcony of a nearby building and waited for the further developments.

Early next morning, Diwan Kaura Mal and Surat Singh rode towards the temple to see what Lakhpat had decided to do, and when they approached the temple, the blissful music of the songs of the devoted Sikhs and their women singing, fell gently like rain in their ears. Both the Diwans were distressed, as they knew Lakhpat's evil plans. At the same time, they wondered what stuff are these Sikhs made of. They fear not death. Their faith is firm. But the pity is that Lakhu is determined to bathe in the blood of these brave men.

Reflecting for a while, these two men tied their horses and turned towards the tents. They were now near the gateway of the temple, when they saw a young woman whose beauty rivaled the full moon. She had a soiled round cloth (dastaar) on her head and a nine-year old child holding her fingers beside her. Both were reciting Gurbani (prayers).

Advancing towards them Diwan Kaura Mal asked them: "Where are you going?"

Lady (bowing towards them with folded hands): "We are going to Sri Darbar Sahib."

Surat Singh's face was flushed with indignation and he asked them: "From where have you come from? Did no one stop you from coming here?"

With great confidence the lady answered: "I am coming from Tung. Two men met me on the way and told me not to go to the temple, for we would be killed. So I turned back and changed my route and have come back here stealthily through the fields."

Diwan Kaura Mal: "Do you want to live?"

Lady: "There is nothing dearer than one's life, but ultimately it will also come to an end. Faith will outlive life. Therefore, it is not proper to sacrifice one's faith for preserving one's life."

Surat Singh: "If you would not have come to the temple, your religion would not have been endangered."

Lady: "Sir, to keep away on this *Gurpurb* celebration from the sight of the Guru is despicable. Where else can I find refuge? I do not care for my life, for it will not last long and will ultimately part my company, but my religion will be with me forever. When all others leave me, my faith will abide with me."

Surat Singh: "O Lady! How come you have so much courage? Your youth is meant for enjoying comforts. Why have you become so deeply religious- to the point of renunciation- at this age?"

Lady: "Guru Sahib has caught me by the arm and made me His devotee. Well, I know nothing, yet the murder of Harikirat Singh is fresh in my mind."

Kaura Mal: "That poor fellow was also killed. He is dead and gone."

Lady: "My God! Do the saints ever die? They return to their homes. Who of Woman born can kill the

Kaura Mal: "Well, are you still bent upon going to Harmandir Sahib?"

Lady: "As the Lord Wills!"

Kaura Mal: "Why are you not accompanied by you husband?"

Lady: "Sir, he is dead and gone to *Sachkhand* (God's Abode)."

Surat Singh: "Lady, listen to us and go back and save your skin and that of your child. Lakhpat is sitting over there and he will never let you go back alive!"

Lady: "Well, you keep away."

Surat Singh: "Have you no pity for this child?"

Lady: "I have compassion for him and therefore I have brought him with myself, otherwise I could have left him at home. I thought I should not go to *Sachkhand* alone; I should take a part and parcel of myself also to that holy place. After my death, possibly he may give up his faith as he is of a tender age."

Kaura Mal: "O God! It is marvelous! What is that stuff of which the hearts of Sikhs are made of? O the pity of it. Will Lakhpat really kill these pious people?"

Lady: "This is the blessing of *Amrit* (Sikh baptism) and the Grace of the Guru. If you love the Sikhs so much as appears from your actions, then please prevent Lakhpat from committing this sin, and fight against him. If there is any problem, inform the *Khalsa* (God's Army) living in any of the nearby jungles."

This appealed to the two Diwans very much. They could not prevent the lady from attending the celebrations which she felt was right. She began reciting her prayers and proceeded to Harmandir Sahib (House of God)....

(Story extracted from Bhai Vir Singh's novel, 'SUNDRI')

*Daughters of the Khalsa, in your strength our future lies!
Learn about the great spirit of which Sikhs possess, which no one could
ever understand. This Spiritual Strength derives from Guru Maharaj
(Guru Granth Sahib Ji). It's from Gurbani, Naam Simran, Seva and
saacha pyar for the Guru.*

*Give our children fearless minds to see the world through the Guru's eyes!
Let our future brothers and sisters strive to become the Khalsa
and continue to inspire others by becoming noble, fearless and
Chardi-Kala (high-spirited) Sikhs. Let them live up to the standards of
those countless Sikhs who spilled blood and laid down their head for
the Khalsa to remain DISTINCT and in Ever-Existence!*

PART 2:

Learn how one woman and a tender aged young boy take on five armed Turk soldiers???

In the forest, Bijai Singh was passing his days in meditation and singing the praises of the Lord God, when a Pundit came to disturb his peace. However, he was not a person who could be unnerved by such tidings. After bidding farewell to the priest, Bijai Singh purchased some flour, came back and had the meals cooked. After the meals, all the three members of the family engaged themselves in their routine work. During the day they used to prepare the baskets with *Tamarix diocia*. Bijai Singh, in the disguise of a 'Rangher' would go to sell these baskets in town after every two or three days. He supported his family with the sale proceeds of these baskets, which did not amount to more than two or three annas a day, but with which the contented and the unrepining fellow were quite satisfied. One really marvels at those Sikhs, who, forsaking all the comforts of life, had voluntarily accepted privations and sufferings, banishment and imprisonments, in order to uphold the integrity and sanctity of their Faith. Every Sikh must draw inspiration from them, because by adopting and upholding the Sikh way of life, one can redeem not only one's own life, but also that of the whole *Panth*.

On the third day after the departure of the Pundit, at about sunset Bijai Singh went to town to sell baskets. After him, Sheel Kaur and her son, while doing their work, kept themselves engaged in casual talks like this:

Son: Respected mother, I did not like that Pundit, somehow.

Mother: But why my dear child?

Son: Respected mother, I don't know why but, somehow he has not appealed to my eyes.

Mother: My dear son, as your father has said in the religious discourse yesterday, no body should be denounced for his or her caste. Our religion does not approve of it. Similarly, it is not possible to judge a person by his outward appearance. A person is good or bad according to how he acts. He alone is bad whose actions are not good.

Son: Then revered mother, why do the Sikhs fight the Mughals?

Mother: My dear child, not because they are 'Turks' or because of their creed or colour. It is because the actions of the Mughals who happen to be rulers are not good. Having being blessed with power by God, they should exercise it for the promotion of Truth and Justice. But instead, they are inhumanly cruel towards innocent and poor people.

Son: That is all right. And yet I have not liked the Brahmin. May be his actions are not good.

Mother: Have you see him do anything evil?

Son: No.

Mother: Why then, do you call him evil. It is not good to call a person evil. It is not good to call a person evil on the basis of suspicion alone.

Son: I am obsessed with this thought and I just can not shake it off.

Mother (despairingly): My dear son, suspicion seems to have mastered you. Suspicion is inimical and defiles the mind making it unfit for divine presence. My very dear child, this is a mental malady, therefore let us pray to God that you be rid of it.

Putting aside their work, the mother and the son went inside, and with folded hands began to pray thus "O' God, the Benevolent Lord, suspicion has entered the mind of my son; we are helpless to cure the malady and seek your divine help. Pray, wash the dirt of suspicion from Thy slave with the holy water of Thy grace and render it pure. You are our sole stay and support. Just as you protect us from wild

animals in this jungle, similarly protect our mind from the worldly sins so that we may be worthy of finding room near your holy feet.”

As the Sikh lady opened her eyes after these prayers, she heard some cries. As the mother saw through a slit in the door, she saw a thin lean fellow was being held by a Turk soldier, while two others were holding his arms and yet another was thrashing him, saying, “You accursed fellow, why have you needlessly troubled us by leading us into this difficult and thorny bush, where our bodies have been badly bruised. The onewho was being beaten was pleading for mercy saying, “Please spare me, all the signs are available now and the place must be quite near.”

Just as ripples of waves disturb the peaceful surface of a sea before a storm, similarly there were signs of disturbance on the face of the young Sikh lady. Staring intently ahead and hearing with rapt attention, the brave woman had a foreboding of what was going to happen. She hugged her child to her bosom and said, “My dear son, you were right. The Pundit has proved to be treacherous. Deep within my heart, I too did have some misgivings, but I had managed to curb them. You must take heart now and act bravely. It is time to act according to the instructions of your father. Let us first offer prayers.”

At this, both of them joined their hands and prayed, “O’ Lord of aigrette (Guru Gobind Singh) and Master of armies, a horde of enemy is advancing and a hand to hand fight is inevitable. I am a feeble woman and he is just an innocent child, the two of us are faced with a formidable foe. You, in your mercy, exalt the low and support the poor. Pray, grant us the strength to face the enemy. May we lose our lives but not our Faith.”

By the end of these prayers, she realised the hut had been found out and the enemy was quite at hand. Addressing her son, she said, “Make haste to take up arms. Be very brave, do not be afraid of these Mughals and give them a good fight. Even if I happen to die, don’t ever lose your heart. Nor should you surrender your arms, even if you have to lay down your life. Don’t ever compromise with the enemy. Our Guru is on our side.”

The lion-hearted boy seized hold of the gun which was always kept loaded for emergency and also armed himself with a sword and a shield. The mother also took up a sword and a shield and both of them came out into the yard. By that time the enemy had also reached there. On its arrival the brave lady asked them calmly but firmly,

"Who are you?"

"We are soldiers and have come to arrest you. If you surrender voluntarily, well and good, otherwise we will have to use force to arrest you."

The soldier had hardly uttered word, 'arrest', when the boy pressed the trigger of the gun and the bullet hit him on the forehead killing him on the spot. Four of the remaining soldiers pushed forward in anger while the Pundit hid him at a distance. They were armed with swords alone because, on coming to know from the Pundit that they were of saintly dispositions, the soldiers had not expected them to put up a fight.

Meanwhile, when one of the soldiers tried to scale the hedge, the brave lady, with her sword, struck him on his shoulder with such force that he fell face down. Another blow from the lady cut through his neck. The remaining three soldiers, broke open the door and together fell upon the lion-hearted lady like an elephant. Meanwhile, the boy had reloaded the gun and from behind a cover fire straight into the chest of another soldier. Discarding the gun, he delivered such a quick blow with sword on the leg of one of the remaining two soldiers who had surrounded his mother that he fell down in a seriously wounded condition. But for this timely help from her son, she would have found it difficult to escape the swords of the professional soldiers. When his colleague was wounded, the other soldier tried to hit the lady with his sword with full force, but the brave woman warded it off with her own sword, which, however, was broken in the process. Rushing immediately in, she caught hold of the gun, and using it as a stick, hit the soldier who, in the meanwhile, had wounded her son. If he had been able to deliver another blow upon the boy, then he for sure would have died. But, with the blow from the lady, his sword fell from his hand. Getting frightened, he had hardly turned to gather his sword, when he received, yet another blow from the wounded child, from the right and still another, with but of the

gun, from the left by the wounded mother. He fell flat, bleeding profusely.

All the five soldiers had now been overpowered. Three of them were dead; the fourth was on his last breaths with a bullet wound in his breast, while the fifth, with a broken leg, although yet alive, was unable to walk. He was, however, still plotting in his mind to avenge himself. He pretended to cry with pain and pleaded for some water. The Sikhs are always inclined to do good to others. Believing him to be in real agony Sheel Kaur brought him some water. When she was trying to pour it, into his mouth, his right hand reached for a dagger under his shirt. Sheel Kaur had her back towards the door and was unaware that her husband had reached there. Instinctively realising that all was not well back at the hut, he had hastened back. When he saw the dead bodies, he realised that the inevitable had happened. Holding his breath, as he looked inside, he saw his wife and son giving water to the foe. His experienced mind immediately realised the danger, when he saw the hand of the enemy groping under his shirt. Leaping forward with the dexterity of a deer, he grasped the emerging hand with such force that only the end of the dagger could touch his wife. When the son saw his mother bleeding from the wound caused by the dagger held in the hand of the soldier, he inflicted a telling wound on his shoulder with his own dagger. Now Bijai Singh fully examined the bodies and found them cold and dead. The last of the soldiers however did have some life left in him as yet. After searching him thoroughly, he tended his wounds. After giving him some water he asked him to tell the truth behind the happenings.

The soldier, a Mughal by caste and renowned for his bravery, was full of admiration for the enemy. A child and a woman had overpowered five of the soldiers and were now offering him water and dressing his wounds. A sense of gratitude overwhelmed him and he told them the story in the following words:

"A resident of Lahore, today gave secret information to our officer that some Sikhs were living in this jungle. Acting on this cue, our officer ordered us to accompany him for the arrest of these Sikhs. Accordingly the five of us accompanied this informant. Since about midday we have been wandering around in the jungle and getting ourselves bruised by the thorny bushes, We were so tired that we were inclined to disbelieve the informant and actually planned to kill him. But his utterly servile begging compelled us to pity him and give him more time to recover the trail. After wandering for a very long time, we were able to find the place after all. As we had been told that the husband would be away to the town at this hour, therefore, we thought that it would not be difficult to arrest a woman and a mere child. As such, we were somewhat complacent. But, your wife and son gave us such a hot reception that we were completely taken aback and before we could recover we had already been beaten and grilled. For a soldier, it is not ill to be wounded or even to die, but it is a stigma and a shame to be humbled by a woman and a mere child. *Today, I am convinced that our days are now numbered and a community whose children and women folk are so passionately committed to their faith that in its defence they are willing to defy death, can never be conquered or forcibly subdued. They are bound to rule sooner or later. For one would never again fight against these valiant people and if I survive, I shall have nothing but praise for their essential human qualities.*

Bijai Singh: (Giving him a pat) But where is that informant?

Mughal: He ran away at the very first shot from the gun of your brave son. Sir, would you, please tell me as to when did you train your child in the skill of using sword and gun?

Bijai Singh: The skill of handling arms is in the very blood of the Sikhs, because we have such frequent recourse to them in defence of virtue.

Now, Bijai Singh, examined the wounds of his wife and son. There were not of any serious nature. He offered his humble thanks to Guru Gobind Singh for his mercy. He looked, in turn, towards the dead bodies of those cowards who had attacked an innocent woman and a child and, then, towards his dear wife and his beloved son. He hugged both of them to his bosom and said, "very well done. Bravely have you wielded the *Sword of the Khalsa* and truly have you upheld the glory of the 'Amrit' bestowed on us by Guru Gobind Singh. Such indeed should be our Faith. Great indeed is the Guru who himself protects us and redeems our honour."

(Story taken from Bhai Vir Singh's novel, 'BIJAI SINGH'.)

PART 3:

Learn how important just one woman can be to the benefit of the Khalsa Panth

(This story is taken from the times when Moghuls were invading and the Sikhs had to hide in jungles...)

For the Khalsa, things moved smoothly for some days. There was joy and hectic activity in the jungle. Under the shade of trees, these spiritual warriors were quite busy, but on the alert. They followed the daily chores of camp life. Some were reciting their prayers, some mending their clothes, some collecting fuel for the *Langar* (Free kitchen), while some went far and near in search of fruits. Altogether these lion-hearted Sikhs were enjoying themselves in this comfortable and self-supporting shelter. They had forgotten about their parents and their families. Their spirits were imbued with love for and devotion to Guru Gobind Singh. They regarded the preservation and protection of their faith as the goal of their lives. For this reason, they enjoyed their stay in this spot, feeling mentally free like fearless lions.

One evening when the whole group had taken their *Langar* (dinner) and were retiring to rest, Sardar Sham Singh talked to his companions thus:

Sham Singh: (addressing Surasti) "O respected lady! What is your plan about your own future?"

Surasti: "Sir, I will follow your orders."

Sham Singh: "There is no such thing as an order. We shall do our best as you desire. If you like, we can bring your husband and then you both live together here. If you want to be taken to your husband's place, we can do that. But the Moghuls will not leave our pursuit and you will be again under the captivity of Moghuls. Whatever you desire will be done. Balwant Singh is our brother. All the Sikhs love him. He is an ideal Sikh and a great warrior. You are his sister and the entire group here regards you as their sister."

Surasti: "Sir and my brethren! Married life does not appeal to me and as you know my husband has also renounced me. It was his duty to protect me which he has refused to do. I do not wish to return to that domestic kind of life again from which the Guru has pulled me away. My sole aim is that my entire life be dedicated to the service of the Khalsa. If you permit me, I shall live amidst my brothers here. In peacetime, I shall work in the *Langar* (Free Kitchen); in wartime I shall also stay with you and serve and look after my wounded and disabled brothers. I cannot brook the idea that while my brave brothers should offer their sacrifice for the protection of Sikh Dharma, I should refrain from devoting my life to my religion. I want this gift from you that I should read Gurbani, meditate on the Holy Word and serve the community. If my life is dedicated to my faith, there will be none more fortunate than me.

The eyes of a lion like Sham Singh were full of tears (of joy) and his body shook with emotion. He thought for a while and said:

"Our life is very hard; we have always to face calamities and ordeals. These days we can not move even in our own parts of the country. How will you face the sufferings of the group?"

Surasti: "God will give me courage. I shall bear all the sufferings and utilise my time in your service."

Sardar Sham Singh reflected for a while and replied:

"You are not an ordinary woman; you are a goddess. Blessed be your birth that you are full of love for religion. O respected sister! May God fulfil your wishes! From my side, there is no restriction or condition. You are free to serve the Khalsa community in any way you like. You make your life useful to others. But you must always have the courage of a man to face this kind of hard life."

Balwant Singh: "O sister! You have expressed your sentiments so truly. You have received the Guru's blessings. Truly you are the Guru's daughter. Your courage is that of a lioness. God will help you! May the hand of Mai Bhago bless you!

Surasti: "O my brother! This body is mortal and must perish. If it is used up in the service of the *Panth*

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(Sikh community) there is nothing more profitable for my soul than this. Remember how the children of Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed their lives to uphold the teachings of the Guru and how cheerfully Bhai Mani Singh had his body cut at every joint. O brother, if such great souls made such tremendous sacrifices, why should we crave to preserve our bodies. I have seen my parents, relatives and others and realised that all these worldly affections are false. You saved me from the burning pyre and put your life at risk and as such you have not acted like an ordinary brother. There is religious zeal and devotion in you; there is love for the Guru in your heart. You have a sense of self-respect. For this reason you have shown so much compassion to me. Now I feel that religion is a very valuable thing for it inspires one to true and noble action and, therefore, why should I turn my back to it. Perhaps you have a notion that a woman is physically weak and as such she must be mentally weak too. Please banish this idea from your mind. The heart of a woman is soft like wax and also hard like a stone; when the religious fervour inspires a woman, she becomes so firm that none can shake her resolve. I am not saying this out of brag or arrogance, but on account of a firm conviction in the Guru's grace. I know his blessings fill me with these sentiments."

Hearing this, Sham Singh and Balwant Singh blessed the lady. It was rather late in the night. All of them went to sleep after saying their prayers.

It was the season of spring and the early dawn was refreshing. The morning prayers made the environment blissful and it seemed that the jungle-camp was a heaven. Early in the morning, Guru Granth Sahib was ceremoniously installed and the congregation was held. First, Sham Singh informed the gathering that Surasti had decided to devote her life to the cause of Sikhism and that she; indoor and outside and in times of peace or war, desired to serve the Sikh community. For this reason, the lady should be baptised with *Amrit* and made the Khalsa and she should be considered as a spiritual sister. The entire congregation should regard her as a daughter of Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Sahib Kaur. She should be treated like a sister. Then she was baptised according to the ceremony of *Amrit* and given the name of Sunder Kaur and she became popular as 'Sundri'.

The joy of the Khalsa congregation knew no bounds. This was a lucky day when one of their own sisters who had been rescued from the jaws of a lion was ready to devote her life to the cause of Sikhism and would hereafter be sharing the hardships and sorrows of her brethren by dedication to their service for the remaining portion of her life. Every one in this group had been denied the sisterly affection and the tender love and intelligent guidance of women-folk. There was not one who had not severed his connection with his mother, sister and wife just for the preservation of his faith and had been leading the rough and adventurous life of a patriot guerilla for quite some time.

Dear reader! This young lady's vow of dedication produced such a radical impact on this warrior-group, ever-ready for sacrifice for preservation of moral and human values, that one and all began to look upon her as a sister or mother and offered thanks to the Guru. On such occasions the Guru's Word is understood in its true significance, when the human mind, free from sorrow, unconsciously gets in tune with the Creator.

O friends of the Sikh religion! Remember this auspicious occasion with devotion and you will for once shed tears of joy! How blessed and blissful were those days! Even in the period of *Kalyuga* (The Age of Darkness), when seeing a young maiden amidst them, the entire group looked upon her (Sundri) as a holy goddess, as their foster-sister with the same brotherly feeling as for their real sister. All of them greeted her with joy and bowed to her with reverence. This was the purity and excellence of character which the Guru had taught to the Sikhs. That is the reason why the community, overcome by the love of the Guru was ready to sacrifice itself. It was linked with the Guru through devotion and lived on the sustenance of the Holy Naam!

(This is an extract taken from Bhai Vir Singh's novel, 'SUNDRI')

PART 4:

Bibi Ranjit Kaur - Khalsa Spy

by Harjit Singh Lakhani (based on a true story.)

The wild animals were howling in the nearby jungle, the wind was biting Ranjit Kaur's face, she wrapped her midnight-blue shawl around a little tighter. Nothing to be afraid of, she quietly carried on repeating 'Vaahi-guroo, Vaahi-guroo' in time to her steps and Guru Gobind Singh jee's glove of spiritual love completely protected her. She looked through the trees at the magnificent setting sun, for a moment she forgot all about the war and was lost in the magic and mystery of the Creative Being - Karta Purakh. She felt as beautiful as a blossoming flower radiating love and life in all directions.

- 'Vaahi-Guroo Jee Ka Khalsa, Vaahi-Guroo Jee Kee Fateh! Ranjit Kaur Bhain Jee (sister)',

Ranjit Kaur quickly turned around and saw a young Khalsa warrior dressed in blue-battle dress, wearing a long curved sword down his left side, chain-mail armour across his chest and a three metal discus's around his blue pointed turban.

- 'Vaahi-Guroo Jee Ka Khalsa, Vaahi-Guroo Jee Kee Fateh! GurMukh Singh Jee. Why are you out so late?',

- 'Well I was about to ask you the same thing Bhain jee (sister), you know how dangerous it is for a woman to be out here alone while there are Turkish Soldiers patrolling the area. So Bhain Jee you better have a damn good excuse, otherwise you're going back with me.'

- "Veer jee (brother), our Jathedar (leader) has asked me to fetch some important news from the SarPanch (village chief) and anyway you're only 11 so you better run back to the Khalsa camp."

- "Bhain jee, I can't believe he sent you alone. You know the War for our Independence is at its peak and there's trouble around every corner. Look, I've got an idea - it's safer for you to go back to the lake and rejoin the Khalsa Army and I will go in your place."

- "Why do you think it's any safer for you to go, GurMukh Singh?"

- "Bhain jee, it will be dark soon and I don't think it's right for a woman to go anywhere alone. I am a Khalsa Warrior, I carry 5 weapons and I am prepared to die fighting. I want people to tell stories about me and how brave Bhai GurMukh Singh was."

Just then a bat came flying out of the dark trees directly towards Bhai GurMukh Singh. He didn't know what was attacking him and screaming loudly he covered his face with his hands!

Ranjit Kaur burst out laughing and said "Veer jee, I too have been blessed with Guru's immortal '*Khanda-batta-da-Amrit*' nectar. I too carry a long sword over my blue battle-dress and wear a warrior's turban. Guru Gobind Singh Jee is always with me. But you my younger brother have much to learn about ego and you are probably at more risk than me. Besides, the SarPanch (village headman) will not give anyone except me the strategic papers. Furthermore, the Jathedar stressed that I go. So my dear little brother, you better run all the way home otherwise I'm going to grab you by the ear, drag you home and after the Khalsa has finished their evening prayers, I'm going to tell them the story of the great Bhai GurMukh Singh and the black bat!"

"Okay, you win, but be careful." Saying this Gurmukh Singh ran down the path towards the lake while Ranjit Kaur went on with her journey towards the village.

Gurmukh Singh's fears were not unfounded. Small bands of Turkish soldiers were wandering around the lake seeking information on Sikhs. Every Sikh was aware of this. However, it did not deter Ranjit Kaur. She fearlessly went on her way to the village. She had absolute faith in the strength of her Guru's *Amrit* and blessed sword.

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Ranjit Kaur reached the SarPanch's house. The women came out and hugged her, they hadn't seen her for some time. It was getting late and the women insisted that she spend the night with them. Remembering what GurMukh Singh had said she agreed, it would be safer to travel during the day and Jathedar had given her permission to spend the night. The SarPanch took her to a private room and handed over the Strategic Papers, what she read spelled disaster for the Khalsa. She got up at once and covering herself with her shawl she headed back to the Kahnuaan lake, the women tried to make her stay saying save your self. But Ranjit Kaur's life was not worth anything without her Khalsa family.

A large number of Ahmed Shah Abdalee's troops were on their way from Lahore to seize Kahnuaan and these strategic papers contained orders to SarPanch to help the troops. Thousands of Khalsa lives were at stake and getting the information back to her Jathedar was foremost on her mind.

By now it was midnight. The skies were clear and the moonlight lit up the earth. In this calm and still atmosphere, Ranjit Kaur reached the outskirts of the quiet village and walked as fast as possible towards the lake. She had about 3 miles to cover, so she increased her pace and marched with determination through the sounds of howling animals. She quietly carried on repeating 'Vaahi-guroo, Vaahi-guroo' in time to her footsteps as she always did and felt Guru Gobind Singh jee's spiritual glove encase her.

Two Turkish soldiers with swords in their waist bands, rode past her left side. She fearlessly looked at the soldiers and underneath her shawl she grabbed the handle of her sword, just in case. The heavenly moonlight glowed from Ranjit Kaur's angelic face and intensified her beauty. The soldiers suddenly pulled their horses across her path and quickly dismounting they tried to grab her hands. She darted away with lightening speed and threateningly said "They'll be trouble if you touch me!" She continued aggressively, 'Who are you and what do you want?'

- "We are commanders of the royal forces", said the first soldier.

- "Then what business do you have with me?" said Ranjit Kaur.

Without answering, the second soldier loudly demanded "Who are you? And where are you wandering to at this time of night?"

- "Who ever I may be, you have no right to question me." Saying this Ranjit Kaur tried to walk past them at a fast pace.

The first soldier quickly moved to block her way once again and said, "we have orders to find out where the Sikhs are hiding. You look like a Sikh so until you explain what you are doing we aren't going to let you go anywhere."

- "That's right, I am a Sikh, what are you going to do about it?"

"Then consider yourself under arrest," said the first soldier, then he looked at the other one and said, "Khan Sahib, I think you better grab her and put her on your horse, because I don't know what I'll do if I get too close to her."

Both looked at Ranjit Kaur's face and then looked at each other and started laughing. Such overtures angered Ranjit Kaur. She started looking at them like a hunter at its' prey. Her eyes were red with anger.

There was a brief silence before Khan Sahib calmly said, "Beautiful lady, we have been sent to find the whereabouts of Sikhs. However, we are not animals. We are human. We too have pumping hearts in our chest. What kind of heart would it be that does not worship a beautiful angel like you."

Both men were intoxicated with Ranjit Kaur's beauty. A mere glimpse of her face had injected lustful insanity into them. Ranjit Kaur stared at their faces but remained silent. Upon completion of his sentence, the other soldier continued, "Beloved, what are you going to get from the wild Sikhs. Come with us. In Allah's oath we shall make you our Begum (wife). You can wear silk and eat whatever you like. You can even choose which one of us you want to marry!"

Ranjit Kaur still continued to silently stare at the soldiers. She had made her decision to continue or to die fighting. But her silence and non-responsiveness was misinterpreted by the men. Khan Sahib tried to grab her wrist, saying, "Come, sit on my horse. It is getting late my love."

Ranjit Kaur moved swiftly, taking two steps backward she drew her sword from under her shawl and reflecting the moonlight it flashed like lightning. She shouted, " If you come any closer I won't be responsible for what happens!"

The soldiers burst out laughing. Khan Sahib said, "Angel drawing a sword! That's a first!"

The other soldier spoke "Isn't she beautiful when she's angry?"

This was the first time Khan Sahib had seen a woman protect her honor like a lioness, but she was still only a weak woman so he tried to grab her with his outstretched arms. A flashing sword dazzled him and he screamed in agony as his left hand dropped to the ground.

Having been bitten by the lioness the soldiers drew their swords and charged towards her. Ranjit Kaur wasn't sitting idle wearing bangles, she lunged forward at Khan Sahib again and cut off his sword hand. He retreated squirming in pain.

The other soldier was a skilled swordsman. His continuous attacks inflicted several wounds to Ranjit Kaur. Blood covered her whole face. Exhaustion was setting in by now. Suddenly, *the strength of Guru's Amrit* injected so much courage into her that she forgot all about her wounds and pains. Yelling the battle cry jaekara, "JO BOLAY SO NIHAL, SAT SREE AKAL," her sword moved with such force that the soldier's head dropped to the ground and bounced like a ball. His body fell in a heap next to it.

Ranjit Kaur quickly looked around for Khan Sahib, but he had escaped without trace. Totally exhausted she still managed to search the heaped body and found several papers in the dead soldier's pockets. Seizing them, she mounted his horse and rode to the Kahnuwaan lake. As she approached the camp she mustered up every last ounce of energy and yelled 'JATHEDAR JEE! JATHEDAR JEE!' The Jathedar, several Khalsa Warriors and little GurMukh Singh came running out to meet her, seeing her blood red face and exhausted condition they carried her inside while little GurMukh Singh started crying. Her sisters wiped her face and cleaned her wounds while she searched around her clothing and handed the papers over to the Jathedar. He was amazed to find full details of the Turk's battle-plans. Ranjit Kaur was honoured greatly by the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh Jee's infinite and unparralled grace had given her the courage to fight her attackers and save her Khalsa family from a bloody massacre.

News of Ranjit Kaur's courage spread through out the Khalsa Panth. She was known as the "*Brave Daughter of the Guru*".

*Gagan Damama Bajio, parioh nischaney gao
Ket jo mand-io surma, ab joojan ka dao
Soora so pehi-chaneyha, jo lareh deen keh het
Purja Purja kut mureh, kabahoo na chad-eh ket*

The battle-drum is beaten in the (mind's) sky, the target is pierced through
The warriors enter the battlefield (against the vice), now is the time to fight
One is known as a warrior only if they fight for righteousness
Even being battered to bits they never desert the battlefield. (Bhagat Kabir Jee)

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PART 5

HOLY MOTHER GULAB KAUR

I went to Haripur to see a very enlightened woman Saint, who had achieved, the state of blessedness. The Sikhs of Haripur who knew me also came to meet me. But I was anxious to see this woman Saint whom people called Mother Gulab Kaur, and the tales of whose supreme renunciation and saintliness had impressed me deeply. It would be proper to write here briefly about the early life of this woman Saint who had achieved the highest spiritual state. She was the first real Saint I met in life. Her story as told to me by a Sikh from Haripur is as follows:

Gulab Kaur's husband was a very religious man. The spiritually enlightened husband had a devote and very pious wife in Gulab Kaur. The love and service of her husband was to her, the love and service of God. Like the inseparable Sheldrake and the moon, she could not live apart from her husband even for a moment. According to the wishes of her husband she had memorised the *Sukhmani Sahib and Bavan Akhari* and she recited these prayers every day. She was however not leading much of a contemplative life. She was too absorbed in the love of her husband. She did not yet know the spiritual significance of the divine Name, when her husband died at quite a young age. The death of her husband came as such a blow to her, that she turned her mind away from the world and like a true Sati (she who sacrifices herself along with her dead husband), she died to the physical world around her, only to live in spiritual ecstasy of divine silence. The light of God began to shine in her pure soul. The love for her husband gradually changed into an intense love for God in which she became deeply imbued.

She was beautiful and quite young. The spiritual grace on her face revealed her radiant soul. It was difficult to look straight into the red, dazzling glow of her face. She renounced the world and left her home. In this fearless state this young Child of Light wandered away, detached and free like a bird. Her mind was always fixed on God and she spent her days in deep meditative mood. She appeared to have lost all her body consciousness. Deeply absorbed in the divine Name, Mother Gulab Kaur moved about with a radiant charm on her face. There are innumerable stories about her saintliness and spiritual powers, which for want of space cannot be related here. Wherever she went, her meditative silence and spiritual beauty attracted people. The streets, the villages or even the forests bloomed with life and with the spirit of reverence, when she was there. She became very well known in Haripur, Hazara and the surrounding areas. She was so deeply absorbed in her meditative moods that she rarely spoke to anyone.

In ecstasy he laughs

In ecstasy he weeps.

At times he becomes silent.

Guru Nanak: *Var Asa* p 473

Such was the spiritual condition of this saintly lady. She became careless about her clothes. All she had was an underwear (*kach*) and a blanket wrapped around her body. When I expressed my desire to meet her, people said: "She does not allow anyone to come near her. She drives away everyone by throwing stones at them. Out of fear no one goes near her. No one has seen her talking to anyone. Sometimes she is seen mumbling some words in a soliloquy. It is not easy to go near her. If you want to see her from a distance I can show her to you. If you wish to go near her, you may go at your own risk. Otherwise we do not dare to go near her."

After saying a short prayer, I set out to meet Mother Gulab Kaur. I came to know that she was sitting in front of a shop which was closed. People showed her to me from the corner of a street. She was sitting with a blanket around her body and her back was towards us. While other people turned back, I moved on nearer her. Even her face was covered with the blanket. As I moved on with reverence and devotion close to her, the Holy Mother through her inner vision, having divined my presence, stood up with electric suddenness, and turning towards me with folded hands, she greeted me with the Khalsa greeting:

"Vah-Guru ji ka Khalsa

Vah-Guru ji ki Fateh"

'The Khalsa is of God

Victory unto the Wonderful Lord.'

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I was deeply moved and the people who looked on were quite surprised. One or two people dared now to come further. Mother Gulab Kaur was still standing with folded hands. In humble adoration I moved forward to touch her feet, but with her lotus like pure hands she prevented me from doing so. She was about to spread her blanket for me to sit, but I begged her not to do so, as a humble person like me could not bear to see such a divine soul like her bestow so unusual a respect and reverence on me, which I did not deserve. "I seek a humble place in the dust of thy feet Holy Mother", said I. I sat near her on the ground leaving the blanket with her. She sat there in a calm meditative mood, and I can still visualise her saintly figure sitting in silent contemplation. The profound impression of her divine personality is deeply engraved in my heart. It is difficult to describe the spiritual influence of the great personality and its cool and thrilling effect on my heart and soul. I felt purified and exalted and my heart began to beat louder with the rhythm of divine Name. There was a spiritual union of our souls and in this mystic silence we conversed with each other. The thought waves emanating from one were understood by the other. What need was there to speak. After sometime the Holy Mother spoke in a melodious voice saying: "I am only a lone traveller. How shall I entertain you? I am just a lone traveller."

In a very sweet and musical voice she repeated these words again. Then she suddenly got up, asking me to keep sitting there for a while. She took her blanket and in an intoxicated mood moved towards a fruit shop. She picked up some fruits from the shop, brought them there and offering them to me said:

"Accept this humble offering of one who is dedicated to the Lord". I accepted the great Saint's offering of love and felt greatly blessed. Then she said: "May you ever be blessed. All blessings on you, noble Sikh of the Guru. The Guru has indeed lighted a wonderful lamp". In a sublime state of mind she showered blessings and love on me. I begged the Holy Mother to bestow benediction on me and pray that this lamp which had been lighted by the Guru may ever keep on burning. She said: "It will keep on burning with ever increasing light." We were both standing and she now wished me to depart. I asked the Holy Mother, "When may I get a chance to have a glimpse of her divine personality again". To this she replied:

"Spiritually united souls never feel any separation. On the physical plane there may not be any meeting but we will meet again in the Presence of the Lord." And then in a tone of blessing she said, "you have now received the divine call to perform *Akhand Paths*. Go, be blessed, and enjoy spiritual enlightenment. On the way pay homage to the *Panja Sahib* Gurdwara.

These were the few words she spoke in the short meeting between us. I bowed low to touch her feet. There were tears in her eyes. I too was overwhelmed with tears. Placing her hand on my back she blessed me again and helped me to rise to my feet. After completing the pilgrimage to *Panja Sahib* and Amritsar, I came back to the village and met the divine friends from whom I had been long separated. By the grace of the Guru there was one *Akhand Path* after another and my spiritual condition became more and more exalted. I do not know for how many years and months this undisturbed peace and bliss lasted until suddenly the hawks of fate pounced on a carefree bird and then started the saga of long prison life.

(Background history of Mother Gulab Kaur)

It is learnt that Mai Gulab Kaur was born in Village Burhan in Campblpur district in the year 1920 AD. She was the daughter of Bhai Darha Aml, a *sahajdhari* Sikh and devotee of the Guru. She was married at the age of fifteen to one Bhai Des Raj of Haripur in 1935 AD. The couple stayed in Sohewale Mohalla in Haripur. She had one son and two daughters. Ten years before her death her husband died. Mai Gulab Kaur died some time in the year 1949-50. She spent the last ten years of her life in a state of spiritual intoxication. Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh says that when he met her, she wore a *kach*, and wrapped her body in a blanket. She was *amritdhari* (baptised) and lived strictly according to the Khalsa code of conduct, but it was not known where and when she was baptised. At Haripur people called her Gulabo, the mad woman. The Muslims revered her as a great saint, and respected her more than the Sikhs and Hindus.

(This is an extract from BHAJI SAHIB BHAJI RANDHIR SINGH's Autobiography.)

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PART 6:

With the Vaisakhi celebrations and the coming of the millennium, Shanti Kaur Khalsa assesses the spiritual position and strength of Sikh women. Drawing from both Sikh philosophy and personal experiences, she demonstrates the importance of being a Sikh woman in today's world...

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As we enter the change of the millennium, the role of the woman has changed and will continue to change dramatically. Striving to maintain ourselves in the age of technology, we find years pass with such speed and anxiety that sometimes we do not know what maintains us except the blessing of God's companion. A woman carries the responsibility of the physical, mental and spiritual well being of her family. This is a serious job that can reap great rewards, but also carries dire consequences when not done successfully. In addition to that, many women have added the weight of work and career. When there is constant pressure and no relaxation, when there is no outlet, when there is a constant deficit in our mental and physical capacity, it results in a shattered mind and the loss of happiness and inner peace. We suffer as women, and our generations suffer as a result. This is a dilemma that is shared by women in every country, of every religion, on every continent.

With the tri-centenary of the Khalsa, we find that Guru Gobind Singh gave us the answers to these modern age problems more than three hundred years ago. Woman is strong by nature. Woman is spiritual by nature. By fine-tuning our uniquely feminine attributes with the Guru's Rehat, Guru Gobind Singh assures us purity. We become not women, not men, but something far and beyond...*we become KHALSA!* In these difficult times, it is required that a woman should not only be pure. She needs to be purifying. Her very presence should create an effect on her surroundings that uplifts and illuminates those with whom she comes in contact. The formula is clear, the solution is simple in nature, and success is guaranteed. This is the simple strategy of *Bana, Bani, Simran, and Seva.*

**BANA (The Khalsa Uniform):** Bana is our own flag. Bana is our nishan that states unequivocally who we are. If we have the dress and fashion of a movie star, that makes a statement as to who we are. If we wear the clothes of a beggar, that also tells the world what our status is. And if we wear the bana of the Khalsa, this makes a statement of strength that cannot be ignored by the hardest of hearts. Bana is the image and dress of grace. Bana is the five K's of the Khalsa: Kesh, Kacherha, Kanga, Kara, and Kirpan. Each one of these beautiful accoutrements gives us strength and beauty. Bana is a statement that says, with a look, that I belong to Guru Gobind Singh, and He belongs to me.

*I belong to the Khalsa and Khalsa belongs to me as the drop of water forever merges into the ocean.*

[Guru Gobind Singh]

I would like to share with you my own story and experiences in relation to the bana of the Khalsa. When I first became a Sikh, twenty-three years ago, I had never seen an Indian Sikh woman. I knew only American Sikhs, and in fact, very few of those. But I knew that Kesh and Dastar were part of the 5-K's of Guru Gobind Singh. And I knew that Guru Gobind Singh promised:

*If the Khalsa maintains the distinct path,  
I shall give them all my strength.  
But if the Khalsa leaves this path,  
then I will withdraw my recognition.*

[Guru Gobind Singh]

Well, as a young woman of 18 years, full of the spirit of life and the excitement of discovering the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, it never occurred to me to not wear a turban. The Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh wore the dastar, and that was who I wanted to be. So it was with great sincerity that I tied my first turban.

As you can imagine, the most dramatic effect of wearing a turban is not physiological, but rather it is social. Wearing a turban gave me pride and confidence. My parents and my friends were stunned. They thought they had lost me, but of course they had not. Rather the experience of being distinct has made me more committed to the welfare of those around me, because everything I do is highlighted and examined by others.

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Now that I have lived my life experiencing the benefits of the turban, I can tell you honestly that you are missing a great advantage by not doing so. I have been given the respect and the status of a spiritual woman, even when I myself have been filled with self-doubt and misgivings. This I see as Guru Gobind Singh Ji fulfilling his promise, giving me strength even when I do not have strength myself. This beautiful dastar proclaims to the entire world that I belong to Guru Gobind Singh and that is a reality I will never deny.

**BANI (The Word of God):** By the Grace of God, we are Sikhs of the Shabd Guru. We bow to no man. We worship no images. We bow to the Word, the Shabd, the sound current. As women, we cannot underestimate the power of our own words and language. Our words contain the power of love and hate, and we should be mindful of how to communicate with all of God's children. How do we do this? Through exercising the daily recitation of Nitnem and Gurbani. The daily prayers of the Sikh are a beautiful form and format that rearranges our neurological processes to provide us with a direct connection with the infinite creative energy of the universe. This is the heart of the Guru's teachings. And if we do not experience this ourselves, we will most likely deny this experience to our children.

Siri Guru Amar Das Ji tells us about the power and projection of the Bani:

*"Great! Great is the Bani,  
the Word of the Formless Lord.  
There is no other as Great as He is."*

This is why we say that our Guru is the Shabd Guru. The Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is not a "book," it is not a "bible;" it is a 'living Guru' that guides us, protects us and enlightens us. The whole science of Gurbani has the power to make a person divine just in its recitation. It does not require a deep and scholarly understanding or interpretation for an impact on our consciousness because Bani is understood by the heart, not the head. The entire Siri Guru Granth Sahib is the calling out of the Beloved. A woman does not need to be dependent on saints and preachers, being led around like a donkey with a string in her nose. All that is needed is the inner experience of God that can be brought to us from our own Guru, the Living Guru, the Shabd Guru. That is the miracle, the science, and the blessing of Bani.

**SIMRAN (Remembrance of GOD):**

In the first line of Sukhmani Sahib, Sri Guru Arjun Dev Ji tells us:

*To the one who meditates on Him, there comes a perfect peace.  
And all pain and sorrows depart.  
Meditate on Him, who contains the universe.  
Whose Holy Naam is the whisper on the lips of the entire creation.*

Simran provides us with the answer to maintaining our balance and equilibrium. Naam Simran is the use of the Gurmantra; the meditation and recitation of Waheguru. How do you do simran? There are many answers to that question as there are people to ask. The simple answer is: simran is not a technique but a process. At any time that is peaceful, but especially in the early morning before dawn, sit and concentrate on the Holy Naam. Project out with focused clarity. If you beam the signal out, you will get a clear signal back. This cleanses the subconscious mind, clarifies the conscious mind, and gives us the experience of bliss and peace. In the divinely human experience, we understand our depth and dimension, gaining access to our inner strength, direction and intuition.

Don't you wonder about yourselves sometimes? You are born with no claws, no hoofs, and no superior strength. As a human being it appears we have been born with no defence mechanism. Have we been created by God as the only defenceless creature in His creation? No. Our strength lies in our intuition. When you can intuitively sense what is going to happen, then you can avoid entering a wrong sequence and you will not end up with an unwanted consequence. That is the best defence we could possibly have. And what gives us intuition? The mind. How does the mind develop intuition? Through meditation. Intuition works when there is no fear involved, no greed involved, no attachment involved and no lust involved. The subconscious mind has to be a clear channel and then the conscious mind perceives the information that is coming from the intuition.

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We all have that power as human beings because every mind is part of the universal mind. However, women are created with an enhanced subtly, an accentuated sensitivity, which gives us great depth and dimension. For women, simran is an essential tool of life, a quintessential feminine strength. To ignore this aspect is to not water the most beautiful flower that grows in our garden. Simran gives us the key to know ourselves and the ability to know and love God.

**SEVA:** If the strength of one is great, the strength of the many is even greater. Seva is the knot that ties us to each other, ties us to our Guru, and transcends us from our own individual consciousness to the expansive nature of universal consciousness. No matter how great our stature, no matter how vast our authority, if we separate and isolate ourselves through the definition of ego, then we are far less than what our potential could be. Service to each other and service to Guru Ji, when done with a loving heart, with no desire for reward, breaks the bonds of ego and frees the soul.

Guru Amar Das Ji tells us:

*Fruitful is the True Guru's service,  
if anyone performs it by engaging his mind in it  
Heart desired boons are attained  
and ego departs from within.*

Throughout Sikh history, women have displayed a seemingly endless capacity for seva. Service to others is in our nature, the very bones of our being. It is part of our beauty and part of our strength. By doing seva, we lose the limitations of our finite self, and expand into the infinite strength of the body of the Khalsa. Through seva we remain humble, for seva is an activity that is not recognized as an individual action. The heavy and enormous burden of appreciation and recognition is not a factor in the performance of seva. It is personal, anonymous and deeply expansive. We become part of a whole that is unbreakable and unparalleled. Seva is actually our physical link to the Guru. By serving the Khalsa, we have the experience of serving our Guru, touching that great wisdom with our own hands.

Of all the things I have learned in this life, of all the things I wish to teach to the children of is the blessing of living the Rehit (Code of Conduct). This beautiful path, laid down by the Tenth Master, will carry us into the 21st Century with direction and strength. It is the this way of life, and that I pray that they will teach to their children, the most important key to the future, the solution to today's problems, and the answer to tomorrow's questions. As women it is our sacred responsibility to understand it, live it, enjoy it, and teach it to our children - *the next generation of Khalsa!*

***Waheguru Jee Ka Khalsa  
Waheguru Jee Kee Fateh***

by Shanti Kaur Khalsa

**EXTRA PART:**

**Learn the stories of the Spiritual Strength of Women of TODAY!!**

*This Bibi jee....*

“...it wasn't just in the old days, I myself saw with my own eyes a Bibi jee carrying the shopping home and a guy came up with a knife and this Bibi jee knocked him out cold. I nearly fainted, just before I was about to do something aswell! Yes! Yes! YES!

One Bibi jee who lives close to me used to do Choupai Sahib jee de paath all day and once she was going to the Gurdwara at 3 in the morning, and three guys blocked her way and asked for her money, she had only money to Matha Tek! She said I did not know what happened but I let out this amazingly load JAİKARA!

BOLEEEEEEEEEEEY! SONEY!HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAL!

SAAAATSRIAKAAAAAL!

...and they disappeared just like that!

Recently a Bibi jee who works at a bank was telling me that a Punjabi person came to her at the counter and said 'Have you hurt your head' (meaning her dastaar was a bandage) This brave Singhni Warrior, daughter of Guru Gobind Singh Jee, totally humiliated him in the middle of the bank in front of everyone. She said, "how dare you say that to a Sikh lady? How dare you offend my GURU'S IDENTITY? If Guru Gobind Singh Jee were here would you say that to him?" He felt so ashamed and apologised twenty times. She said that if there weren't a bulletproof glass between you and me I would punch your lights out. She loved her Dastaar and she stood up for it. Her colleagues consequently respected her more and her dastaar and her Sikhi. She is now due for a Promotion!

The Bibi jee in the bank is very humble and I was amazed that she could even do this but she had been hassled by this person many times (I am sorry if I did not explain before, my fault). She had already tried to explain to him that he was hurting her feelings, but everytime he would come to her and say hurtful things. Honestly, I can't even explain to you. It was like light was coming out of her because she was so pure and so honest and so close to God. That's how I want to be in my life to be!”

VaaheguruJeeKaaKhalsaavaaheguruJeeKeefateh!

(words from Bhai Taranjit Singh)

**Safarish: Reference or Recommendation**  
**A short story!**

There was once this Chardee-Klaa Gursikh Penji who lived alone with her mother. They were quite poor of wealth and barely survived. Her mother would wash dishes and clothes, work very hard to educate her daughter and send her to University. This penji used to go to the gurdvara every morning first to listen to simran, nitnem then Asa Di Vaar. After this she would go to college. With Guru Jee's Kirpaa she passed her exams and got her BA qualifications. One day she got an interview for a job. She was so happy and went to the gurdvara and thanked Guru Nanak Dev Jee for his kirpaa! She felt so much love for Guru jee.

TOO DATA DATAAR TERA DITA KHAVNA  
*'You are the giver of givers, I eat what you give me'.*

She heard this shabad and she bowed down to Guru Jee and said:  
"Guru jee, I am going to interview now, who do I have besides you, you are my only hope, please look after me. She said 'Fateh!' to Guru Jee and left.  
"VAAHEGURUJEEKAALKHALSAA  
VAAHEGURUJEEKEEFATEH!"

When she got to the interview there were other girls and boys there. They were discussing who had whose Safarish (reference). One boy said I have the Chief ministers safarish, another girl said I have the D.I.G.'s Safarish, and another said Vaseer's safarish, then came I.G., ISD, PSD, SDO, etc, etc (I don't know what they mean but they are important rich people in powerful positions).

When she sat down they all looked at her and asked why don't you speak, whose safarish do you have? She looked at them and she started to cry. She said I am poor and the only Safarish I have is from my Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Jee. When the door opened to interview room, the person who was doing the interviews overheard they're conversation, when he heard what she had said he also started to cry. He wiped his tears and called her in. When she was called, she remembered Guru Jee and said, I am your daughter Guru Jee, I am scared please stay with me and look after me. When she walked in, the interviewer asked her to sit down in the highest seat. She said, "no you sit there." He said, "no please sit down child." When she sat down he said to her, "I have heard that you have brought Safarish from Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Jee?"

"Yes!" she replied, "I have no one else."

He said: "Child, in all my time here I have had safarish of all types of people, chief ministers, politicians, D.I.G.'s in high positions, but never have I had a Safarish of someone so high as Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Jee. I would be honored if you would accept my job. I would consider myself extremely lucky to receive Safarish from Guru Nanak Dev Sahib jee."

This is beant Kirpaa! She started to cry, accepted the job and ran to the Gurdwara and jumped onto Guru Granth Sahib Jee Maharaja's charan and started to cry again. "Guru Jee you are the protector of the poor, I love you so much".

VAAHEGURUOOO! SABH TE VADHA SATGURU NANAK, JIN KAL RAKHEE MEREE  
*'The highest of all is Satguru Nanak, who protects me and looks after me always.'*

(contribution from Bhai Taranjit Singh)

VaaheguruJeeKaaKhalsaavaahguruJeekeeFateh!

**ENLIGHTENMENT**

A blessed Gursikh mother I know told me that when she was deeply, deeply in a state of *Vairag* (sadness at being separated from God), that she had one thought on her mind, day and night, and that was to have Guru Nanak Dev Ji's darshan. One night guests came and they slept in the bedrooms and the Gursikh took the couch downstairs. Lying down, under the covers in the dark room, her meditation, her desperation reached a peak. Blinding, power light and love burst open inside her mind – it was Guru Nanak Dev Ji's radiance. Afterwards she noticed that she had sweated profusely because of Guru Ji's awesome power.

BHAIRAO, FIFTH MEHL: The True Guru has listened to my prayer. All my affairs have been resolved. Deep within my mind and body, I meditate on God. The Perfect Guru has dispelled all my fears. ||1|| The All-powerful Divine Guru is the Greatest of all. Serving Him, I obtain all comforts. || Pause || Everything is done by Him. No one can erase His Eternal Decree. The Supreme Lord God, the Transcendent Lord, is incomparably beautiful. The Guru is the Image of Fulfillment, the Embodiment of the Lord. ||2|| The Name of the Lord abides deep within him. Wherever he looks, he sees the Wisdom of God. His mind is totally enlightened and illuminated. Within that person, the Supreme Lord abides. ||3|| I humbly bow to that Guru forever. I am forever a sacrifice to that Guru. I wash the feet of the Guru, and drink in this water. Chanting and meditating forever on Guru Nanak, I live. ||4||43||56||  
(Guru Granth Sahib ji, panna 1152)

(Story from Bhai Harjit Singh Lakhan)

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*Daughters of the Khalsa, in your strength our future lies!  
Learn about the great spirit of which Sikhs possess, which no one could ever understand.  
This Spiritual Strength derives from Guru Maharaj (Guru Granth Sahib Ji).  
It's from Gurbani, Naam Simran, Seva and saacha pyar for the Guru.*

*Give our children fearless minds to see the world through the Guru's eyes!  
Let our future brothers and sisters strive to become the Khalsa and continue to inspire others  
by becoming noble, fearless and Chardi-Kala (high-spirited) Sikhs.  
Let them live up to the standards of those countless Sikhs  
who spilled blood and laid down their heads  
for the Khalsa to remain DISTINCT and in EVER-EXISTENCE!*

**Dedicated to  
the sacred, gracious and benevolent memory  
of our Divine Father  
SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH SAHIB  
and our Divine Mother  
MATA SAHIB KAUR  
and all the fearless Sikh women  
who suffered in-humane tortures  
for freedom and faith  
and are an inspiration to us all**

**Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**

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***Be the Best, a Kaur Princess!  
A Brave Lioness, with Pure Success!!***