



Centre for Distance and Online
Education, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Class: M.A.II (History)

Semester:III

Paper: I (HISTORY OF PUNJAB 1799-1849)

Unit:I

Medium: English

Lesson No.

- 1.1 Sources of Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- 1.2 Political Condition of the Punjab at the end of the Eighteenth Century
- 1.3 Ranjit Singh's rise to power with special reference to his relations with the Misals
- 1.4 Conquest of Multan, Attock, Kashmir and Peshawar
- 1.5 Anglo-Sikh Relations - cis-Sutlej States (1800-1809)
- 1.6 Anglo-Sikh Relations-Sindh Affair (1809-36)
- 1.7 Anglo-Sikh Relations - Tripartite Treaty (1836-39)

Department website www.pbidde.org

Syllabus

M.A.-II SEMESTER-III PAPER-I

HISTORY OF PUNJAB FROM 1799-1849 (COMPULSORY)

For Regular and Distance Education Students

Max.Marks:100

(Theory 75 and Internal Assessment 25)

Time allowed: 3 hours

Pass Marks : 35

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER-SETTERS

For Regular and Distance Education Students,

1. The Syllabus prescribed should be strictly adhered to. The paper-setters should keep in view the topics specified in each paper and not the title of the paper.
2. The question paper will consist of three sections: A, B and C. Sections A and B will have four questions each from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 12 marks each. Section C will consist of 9 short-answer type questions which will cover the entire syllabus and will carry 27 marks in all. There being no internal choice in this section, each short-answer type questions will carry 3 marks. Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the Sections A and B and the entire Section C. The candidates are required to give answer of each short-type question in 50 words i.e. in 7-10 lines.
3. If there is a question on notes, the choice offered in such question should at least be fifty percent.
4. The wording of the questions should be simple and easily understandable by an average student. There should be no vagueness.
5. The number of questions based upon quotations should not exceed two in a question paper.
6. The general standard of the questions should cater to the different intellectual levels - average, above average and below average.
7. Each paper is of 75 marks and three hours duration and 25 marks are of internal assessment.

NOTE: The paper setter should keep in view the topics specified in each paper and not the title of the paper.

Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the sections A and B and the entire Section C

The Break-up of 25 marks for Internal Assessment (Theory Papers) is below :

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Test | : 10 Marks |
| 2. Class Attendance | : 05 Marks |
| 3. Project Work/Assignment/Seminar/Field | : 10Marks |

Total Marks : 25 Marks

For private Students, the question paper will consist of three sections: A, B and C. Sections A and B will have four questions from the respective sections of the syllabus and will

carry 16 marks each. Section C will consist of 9 short-answer type questions, covering the entire syllabus, of 4 marks each and will carry 40 marks in all. (9×4=36 Marks)

Instructions for the candidates (for all papers)

Candidates are required to attempt two question each from the Section. A & B of the question paper and the entire section C. The candidates are required to give answer of each short type question in 50 words i.e. in 7-10 lines.

SECTION–A

1. Principal Sources for the study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign.
2. Political condition of the Punjab in late 18th century; Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rise to power with special reference to his relations with Misals.
3. Sikh-Afghan relations : Conquests of Attock, Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar.
4. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's relations with the British : 1800-1839.
 - a) Cis-Sutlej States
 - b) Question of Sind
 - c) Tripartite Treaty

SECTION–B

5. Nature of the State under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
6. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Administration : Central and Provincial Structure and Military Organisation.
7. Causes of the Second Anglo-Sikh War, (1848-49) and Annexation of the Punjab.

SECTION–C

For Regular and Distance Education Students Nine short answer questions will be set from the entire syllabus. The candidate will attempt all the 9 questions. These questions will be based upon terms, concepts, institutions and historical sources within the purview of the syllabus. The answer of these questions will be of 50 words i.e. 7-10 lines and will carry 3 marks each. Thus, the total marks for these questions will be 27.

For private Students, Nine short answer type questions will be set from the entire syllabus. The candidate will attempt all the 9 questions. The questions will be based upon terms, concepts, institutions and historical sources within the purview of the syllabus. The answer to these questions will be in 50 words i.e. 7-10 lines and will carry 4 marks each. (9×4= 36 Marks).

ESSENTIAL BOOKS

1. Fauja Singh & A.C. Arora : Maharaja Ranjit Singh
2. J.D. Cunningham : A History of the Sikhs
3. B.J. Hasrat : Anglo Sikh Relations.
4. B.J. Hasrat : Life and Time of Ranjit Singh
5. Bhagat Singh : Maharaja Ranjit Singh
6. Sita Ram Kohli : Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Punjabi)
7. G.L. Chopra : The Punjab as a Sovereign State
8. J.S. Grewal & Indu Banga (Eds) : Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times.
9. Sir Lepel Griffin : Ranjit Singh
10. N.K. Sinha : Ranjit Singh

REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Khushwant Singh : Ranjit Singh - Maharaja of the Punjab, 1780-1839.
2. Fauja Singh : Military System of the Sikhs.
3. Ganda Singh (ed.) : Ranjit Singh - First Death Centenary Memorial.
4. Ganda Singh : Private Correspondence relating to the Anglo Sikh Wars.
5. Bhagat Singh : Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.
6. Sita Ram Kohli : Sunset of the Sikh Empire.
7. A.C. Banerjee (ed.) : Anglo Sikh Relations
8. S.M. Latif : History of the Punjab.
9. Ikram Ali : History of the Punjab (1799-1947).
10. Hari Ram Gupta : History of Sikhs

SOURCES ON MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

- 1.1.1 Objectives
- 1.1.2 Introduction
- 1.1.3 Sources on Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- 1.1.4 Persian Sources
- 1.1.5 English Sources
- 1.1.6 Keywords
- 1.1.7 Long Questions
- 1.1.8 Short Questions
- 1.1.9 Suggested Readings

1.1.1 Objectives

After having gone through this lesson you will be able to obtain necessary information relating to important sources of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's life and times.

1.1.2 Introduction

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the famous and most powerful ruler of the Punjab amongst other Sikh rulers. He ruled over Punjab from 1792 to 1839. He invaded and conquered not only the whole of Punjab but also some Afghan territories and thus changed the course of history.

1.1.3 Sources on Maharaja Ranjit Singh

The primary sources on Ranjit Singh are largely available in Persian and English.

1.1.4 Persian Sources**1. Umdat-ut-Twarikh**

This most authentic and reliable source available on Ranjit Singh is written by Sohan Lal Suri who was a court diarist of Ranjit Singh. It gives information from 1469 to 1849. Captain Wade's remarks as to the value of this book is worth mentioning, "As a record of dates and chronicle of events tested by a minute comparison with other authorities and my own personal investigation, I am able to pronounce it in these two respects as a true and faithful narrative of Ranjit Singh's eventful life." "His (Sohan Lal's) record of events is faithful and coherent chronicle of the happenings in all parts of the Kingdom", opines B.J. Hasrat. Though this is not a critical source but all the

aspects of state administration and Maharaja's personality emerge clearly.

2. Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh

Diwan Amar Nath wrote his Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh in Persian at the instance of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and completed it in 1836-37. It is a year-wise account of the Maharaja's reign from 1800 to 1837, Sita Ram Kohli who edited this book says, "It is not only not inferior to any contemporary chronicle in point of detail, it far excels even diary of Sohan Lal and Bute Shah in richness of facts on general interest." He was the Bakhshi or paymaster of the irregular cavalry of Ranjit Singh's government. His father Diwan Dina Nath was an important minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Because of this he had an easy access to important records of the State and he personally knew some of the important persons of the Durbar. This book is one of the most important contemporary sources of information regarding Ranjit Singh's reign upto 1837. Now, this book has been translated into Punjabi and published by the Punjabi University, Patiala.

3. Twarikh-i-Sikhan

Twarikh-i-Sikhan by Khushwaqt Rai is a history of the Sikhs upto 1811. This book is not yet published but its manuscript is available in the Punjab State Archives, Patiala. He was an agent and spy of East India Company. He wrote this book on the request of British political Agent at Ludhiana. His dates are very correct. His approach is pro-British but he avoids to give too much of personal views. This is a great source of information about the early life of Ranjit Singh.

4. Akhbar Deorhi

A collection of news letters entitled Akhbar Deorhi Sardar Ranjit Singh Bahadur was discovered from the alienation Branch of the Divisional Commissioner's office at Poona in 1832-33 by Dr. Muhammad Nazim, an officer of the Archaeological Survey of India. After proper scrutiny of these news letters, HLO Garrett, the keeper of Records of the Punjab Government got them translated into English and published them in 1935 under the title *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*. It seems that these news letters were written for the information of the Peshwa at Poona by a news writer stationed at Lahore. These letters provide ample information about what was happening inside the royal palace and also Maharaja's day to day life, his engagements, his personal habits, his character and his pastime. These letters also give information about the financial, military and judicial system of Ranjit Singh. It also throws light on the relations of Ranjit Singh with neighbouring states.

5. Twarikh-i-Punjab

Ghulam Muhay-ud-Din alias Bute Shah : The author of *Twarikh-i-Punjab* belonged to Ludhiana. He completed this book in 1848. The fifth *daftar* (volume) is most exhaustive. It deals with Charat Singh, Mahan Singh and Ranjit Singh. He has devoted almost the entire *Daftar* to Ranjit Singh from his birth to his death, giving all historical events of his life including his occupation of Lahore, territories of Sikh misals and conquest of Multan, Kashmir, Attock, Derajat and Peshwar and also relations with the British and the neighbouring states. He was living in the cis-Sutlej area, therefore, he has expressed himself independent of any pressure or special regard for Lahore Darbar.

6. Ibratnama

Mufti-Ali-ud-Din's *Ibratnama* is another important contemporary Persian source about Ranjit Singh. He completed this book in 1854. He was in the service of East India Company and was posted near Punjab. He had also studied the works of Sohan Lal Suri, Amar Nath and Bute Shah. He claims his work to be superior than to theirs.

This book provides a lot of information regarding the geographical, social, political and economic conditions prevailing in the Punjab during his time. It has been divided into four parts. The first part gives information about the geography of the Punjab. The second part gives the history of Lahore from its foundation. In the third part he gives the history of Punjab from 1469 to 1849. In the fourth part, it gives information about the social and religious practices of Punjab and also mentions about the important countries of Ranjit Singh. The author has tried to give a complete picture of his time.

7. Char-Bag-i-Punjab

Char-Bag-i-Punjab was written by Ganesh Dass Vadehra. He was a Qanungo at Gujrat under the Lahore Durbar. It was completed in 1855 and was published by Historical Department of Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1965. Punjabi translation of this book is also available. Ganesh Dass had access to government records of the Sikh Kingdom. A detailed information about Ranjit Singh's conquests, his sons, courtiers is available in this book.

8. Khalsa Darbar Records

The Khalsa Darbar records available in Punjab State Archives, Patiala, provide us a lot of information regarding various aspects of the Lahore government from 1811 to 1849. Sita Ram Kohli prepared a catalogue of these records and published it in two volumes, the first in 1919 and the second in 1927. These records give a detailed account of the origin, development and working of the Central Secretariat of the Lahore Government and the provincial and local

governments. Sita Ram Kohli's catalogue is only an aid to consult the Khalsa Darbar Records.

1.1.5 English Sources

1. Origin of the Sikh Power

Towards the end of 18th century many European travellers and British officials came to the Punjab. *Origin of the Sikh power in Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* by Henry Prinsep was published in 1834 at Calcutta. Prinsep wrote on Ranjit Singh because of the British interest in him as a neighbour. He got his material from the reports of Political Agent, Murray and

C.M. Wade. The books contains a detailed information from Ranjit Singh's rise to power to his meeting with Lord William Bentick at Ropar.

According to B.J. Hasrat, "Origin of the Sikh Power in Punjab is a lucid, sketchy but informative narrative from 1742 to 1831. It is also apparently authoritative on the rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab based on early local histories and official records. He gives an account of the character and policy of Ranjit Singh, mode of his government and revenues and the strength of his army. His general observations on the manners and customs of the Sikhs were a guidance for further research for the writers on the subject who wrote after him.

2. The Punjab

Lt. Col. Steinbach wrote *The Punjab* in 1845. He was in the army of Ranjit Singh. He has written this book for the information of British public about the happenings in Punjab. It deals with the topography of Punjab, court of Maharaja and his successors.

3. History of the Punjab—Murray

Murray's two volumes, *History of the Punjab* (London, 1842) are full of details. His first volume has been based on Henry Prinsep's book. He was a British Political Agent in Ludhiana Agency. He remained in contact with Lahore Darbar for 15 years. He gives a detailed account of Ranjit Singh's reign.

4. A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore

Major Carmichael Smyth's book *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* (London, 1847) is a brief history of Ranjit Singh. His book was based on gossips and concoctions. According to Dr. Ganda Singh, "Smyth floated all types of gossips and scandals pertaining to the family of Ranjit Singh." He was a strong supporter of British and was trying to create an opinion in favour of British intervention in the Lahore kingdom. He, however, gives some useful information about the products of the Punjab—its trees, population, political boundaries, numerical strength of the Sikh Army, list of Sardars and chiefs and

prices of various commodities. The British publicly reprimanded him for writing wrong things about Ranjit Singh's Kingdom.

5. History of the Sikhs—M'Gregor

Dr. W. L. Mc Gregor's book *History of the Sikhs* (2 Vol., London, 1842) is a useful work on Ranjit Singh. He was a doctor in the British army. He came to attend an ailing Ranjit Singh in 1835. He gives a detailed account of the character and policy of the Maharaja. He did not like to present him in wrong colours. According to him "Many erroneous reports are in circulation regarding Ranjit Singh and it is but just, on the part of one who had experienced some degree of kindness and attention from him to place his character in its true light."

6. Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh

Captain William G. Osborne, Military Secretary of Lord Auckland wrote, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh* (London, 1841). He gives a very useful information about Ranjit Singh's court, important courtiers and his army. According to B.J. Hasrat, "His journal is a masterpiece of style and conciseness of narrative, replete with observations of the Maharaja, the Sikh Court and notable Sardars. Few contemporary British writers who had the privilege of observing Ranjit Singh at close quarters, have given us a more lucid narrative of the kingdom at its full zenith and glory than Captain William Osborne."

7. History of the Sikhs—Cunningham

J.D. Cunningham wrote *History of the Sikhs* in 1849. He was an Assistant in the North-Western Agency. His work is considered as a authentic and trustworthy account of the Sikhs, particularly Ranjit Singh's period and first Anglo-Sikh War. He has described Ranjit Singh as a ruler who laboured, "with more or less of intelligent design to give unity and coherence to diverse atoms and scattered elements to mould the increasing Sikh nation into well ordered state or commonwealth, as Gobind has developed a sect with a people and had given application and purpose to the general institutions of Nanak." His book is a first full account of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. Cunningham had incurred the displeasure of the British Government for bringing to light the suppressed documents in the Blue Book presented to Parliament in 1846. He was transferred and later dismissed from political service for his book.

Besides, some other sources which give valuable information about Ranjit Singh's reign are as such :

1. Forster : *A Journey from Bengal to England*, 2 Vols.
2. Franklin : *The Military Memories of George Thomas*.
3. Burnes, Alexander : *Travels into Bokhara*, 3 Vols. (London,

- 1843)
4. Moorcrafts & Trebeck's G : *Travels in Himalayan Province of Hindustan and Punjab*, 2 Vols.
 5. Jacquemont : *Letters from India*, 2 Vols. (London, 1835).
 6. Baron Hugel : *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab* (London, 1835).
 7. Masson, Charles : *Narrative of Various Journies in Balauchistan, Afghanistan and Punjab*, 3Vols. (London, 1842).
 8. Henry Fane : *Five Years in India*, 2 Vols. (London, 1842).
 9. Mohan Lal : *Travels in Punjab, Afghania and Turkistan* (London, 1842).
 10. Shahamat Ali : *The Sikhs and the Afghans* (1847).
 11. Malcolm : *Sketch of the Sikhs* (1812).
 12. Wade : (i) *Our Relations with Punjab* (1823).
(ii) *A Narrative of Service—Military and Political* (1847).
 13. Honigberger : *Thirty Five Years in the East* (London, 1852).

1.1.6 Keywords

1. Kingdom
2. Lahore Darbar
3. News Letters
4. Dafter

1.1.7 Long Questions

1. Write the important sources about Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
2. Discuss the Persian Sources relating to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1.1.8 Short Questions

Write Short Notes on:

1. Umdat-ut-Twarikh
2. Char-Bag-i-Punjab
3. Twarikh i-Punjab
4. Ibratnama
5. History of the Punjab

1.1.9 Suggested Readings

1. B.J. Hasrat : *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh.*
2. Ganda Singh : *A Bibliography of the Punjab.*
3. Fauja Singh & : *Maharaja Ranjit Singh : Polity, Society and A.C. Arora (edited) Economy.*

**POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE PUNJAB AT THE END
OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

- 1.2.1 Objectives
- 1.2.2 Introduction
- 1.2.3 The Misals
- 1.2.4 The Muslim Chiefs
- 1.2.5 Alien Adventurers
- 1.2.6 The Hill Chiefs
- 1.2.7 The Gurkhas
- 1.2.8 The British
- 1.2.9 The Marathas
- 1.2.10 The Afghans
- 1.2.11 The Lahore Campaigns
- 1.2.12 Keywords
- 1.2.13 Long Questions
- 1.2.14 Short Questions
- 1.2.15 Suggested Readings

1.2.1 Objectives

In this chapter you will be able to obtain necessary information about the political condition of the Punjab before Maharaja Ranjit Singh rise to power

1.2.2 Introduction

In the words of Khushwant Singh, "In the 1790's, the Punjab looked like a jigsaw puzzle consisting of fourteen pieces and five arrows piercing it from the sides." Twelve of these fourteen pieces were the Sikh misls ; the other two, the Pathan-controlled district of Kasur in the neighbourhood of Lahore, and Hansi in the south east under the English adventurer George Thomas. The five arrows were : the Afghans in the north-west, the Rajputs of Kangra in the north, the Gorkhas in the north-east, the British in the east, and the Marathas in the south-east. "If the political condition of the Punjab towards the close of 18th century is to be described in only three sentences, there can be no better description than the one given above.

1.2.3 The Misals

Ahmed Shah Abdali came to be the bitterest enemy of Sikhs and paradoxically their greatest benefactors. His invasions helped to destroy the administration of the Mughals in Punjab. In 1761, he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Marathas at Panipat and put an end to their designs upon the north-western India. Power vacuum thus created in the Punjab was adequately filled by the Sikhs. And in sheer helplessness after 1769, the Durani had to relinquish his plan of subduing the Punjab. The Sikhs, then became the rulers of the major parts of the country and established their unchallenged authority. The territory in the possession of the Sikhs lay for the most part, in the country between the Jamuna and the Indus. Within these limits the twelve Sardars held their possessions independent of one another.

The Faizalpuria or Singhpuria Misal founded by Nawab Kapur Singh held possessions on both the east and west of the Sutlej and some of the important villages under its charge were Jalandhar, Haibatpur and Patti. Under Khushal Singh, the successor of Kapur Singh the Misal had about 800 armed men.

The Bhangi Misal was the strongest Misal both in numerical strength and territorial possession. It had a sizeable army of 15000 soldiers. It had in its possession two chief cities of the Punjab—Lahore, the traditional capital of the Punjab and Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs. The Bhangis had captured Gujrat and a portion of the territory lying between the Jhelum and Indus upto Rawalpindi. Hari Singh, the founder of the Misal, had unsuccessfully tried to conquer Multan but he extended his territory upto Pakpattan.

Jassa Singh, the founder of Ahluwalia Misal, continued leading his misal upto his death in 1783. He conquered Raikot and Kapurthala from its Muslim chief. He also formed a coalition with the Bhangis, Kanheyas and the Sukarchakyas against the Ramgarhia Misal and succeeded in capturing its territories. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was driven into the Haryana and he could not get back his territories during the life time of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The Misal made Kapurthala its headquarters. Jassa Singh's cousin and successor Bhag Singh (1783-1801) tried to extend his territories but failed.

The Kanheya Misal founded by Jai Singh possessed large parts of the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur. Before the end of the 19th century both Jai Singh and his son Gurbakhsh Singh, had died, leaving the Misal in the control of Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh. Jai Singh tried to have friendly relations with the Sukarchakya by marrying his grand-daughter Mehtab Kaur (daughter of Gurbakhsh Singh) with Maha Singh's son, Ranjit Singh. According to C.H. Payne, Sada Kaur was masterful and ambitious woman. She possessed both courage and ability. Her real aim was to render the

whole of the Punjab subject to her control and she sought to make Ranjit Singh's power subservient to her plan. But Ranjit Singh proved too shrewd for her.

The Sukarchakya Misal was founded by Charat Singh. After consolidating his position around Gujranwala, Charat Singh attacked Eminabad and drove out its Mughal faujdar. A little later he captured Sialkot. Maha Singh the son and successor of Charat Singh conquered Rasulnagar and Alipur. Maha Singh marched upto Jammu. After his death in 1794, Maha Singh was succeeded by his son Ranjit Singh.

Dallewalias were in the northern part of Ludhiana and Ambala and in some territories in Ferozepur and Jalandhar Doab. Tara Singh Ghaiba was the most important leader of this Misal.

Sangat Singh and Mohar Singh, the founder of the Nishanwalia Misal, were the standard-bearers of Dal Khalsa and hence they began to be called Nishanwalias. Their main possessions were Ambala and Shahbad.

Karora Singh was the founder of Karorsinghia or Punjgarhia Misal. Baghel Singh was its powerful ruler. He had set up his headquarters at Chailundhi,

30 miles from Karnal. He had 12,000 soldiers under his command. Baghel Singh's successor, Jodh Singh, further extended the territories of the Misal. This misal had Nawanshaher, Rurka and areas between Markanda and Jamuna river in its possession.

The Shahid or Nihang Misal held its possessions in the east of the Sutlej. The first great leader of Misal was Baba Deep Singh. Later on, Karam Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh headed this Misal. They had a small army of about two thousand troopers. Generally, the Shahids did not act independently rather they helped the other Sardars.

The Ramgarhia Misal was founded by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. He occupied tracts of territory in Rairki in the north of Amritsar. He was driven to the south of Sutlej in 1777 by the Kanheya, Ahluwalia, Bhangi and Sukarchakya Sardars who formed a coalition against the Ramgarhia. Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia became the master of a small territory near Sirsa in Hissar. He went even upto Delhi. After Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's death in 1783, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia came back to the trans-Sutlej area and recovered all his possessions. He made Sri Hargobindpur the headquarter of his possessions. His possessions included Kalanaur, Qadian, Dinanagar and some tracts of the Bist Jalandhar Doab. Jassa Singh was succeeded by his son Jodh Singh.

The Nakai Misal was founded by Hira Singh who carved out a small

estate in the Nakai territory situated between Lahore and Gogira in the direction of Multan. Ram Singh was a powerful chief of the Nakai Misal. He extended his sway over Chunian, Sahiwal, Sharakpur and Kot Kamila.

Chaudhri Phul a Sidhu Jat founded Phulkian Misal. He was the common ancestor of the Chief of Patiala, Nabha and Jind states. Ala Singh was the first great chief of Patiala House. He defeated Hyat Khan, the ruler of Bhatner and later captured the faujdar of Jagraon. He took in his possession, the territories around Barnala. Ahmed Shah Abdali appointed him his deputy in the Malwa. After his death in 1764, Ala Singh was succeeded by his grandson, Amar Singh under whom Patiala became a strong state. Their territories lay between Sutlej and Jamuna. He conquered Kotkapura, Saifabad and Bathinda, Hansi, Hisar and Rohtak . Amar Singh who died at the age of thirty five succeeded by his son Sahib Singh, who was a weak ruler.

Gajpat Singh was the founder of the Jind House. He conquered Jind in 1763. Gajpat Singh was followed on the *gaddi* by Bhag Singh. In 1809, this state passed into the protection of the British.

The first ruler of Nabha was Hamir Singh who founded the town of Nabha. Hamir Singh carved out a small state around Nabha and the state was extended by his successor Jaswant Singh.

The boundaries of these principalities were too inconsistent and shifting that any attempt to define these is bound to fail. The territories of the Ramgarhias and Kanheyas intermingled both in the upper Bari Doab and the upper Jalandhar Doab. Therefore, occasional quarrels over the collection and division of the revenues of certain areas were natural, only the approximate limits of a chiefs jurisdiction and his principal seat of authority could be indicated.

When two or more Sardars united together for a common cause against some power, there were at times differences over the sharing of the trophies of the victory. For example, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jai Singh Kanheyas who were close friends as members of the Dal Khalsa and remained on friendly terms while campaigning against their opponents, quarrelled during the conquest of Kasur over the division of their gains. Similarly, after operation in Chandausi (U.P.), Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Baghel Singh could not agree on the division of the fruits of their combined action and their parting of company resulted the fizzling out of their plan of an attack on Rohelkhand.

With the Sardars increasing anxiety for power and possession, the cohesion of the brotherhood of the Khalsa and their mutual co-operation

became weak and at times involved them in internal scrambles. Strong men in the Misals were ambitious to create new chiefships. This created a basis for rivalries between the Sardars and led to the system of political alliances that brought about mutual misunderstandings.

Thus, various reasons of minor consequences led sometimes to the ruffling of good neighbourly relations. These mutual misunderstandings, rivalries and minor clashes have been unjustly magnified by some of the present day scholars basing their observations on the accounts of some of the inadequately informed contemporary or semi-contemporary sources.

Of course, the Sardars were ambitious and naturally eager to extend their borders and make their states of greater consequence, but talking of utter disunity, internal commotion and strife, deep spirit of revenge, is a violent judgement of the situations. If the split between them had been so wide and unbridgeable they would never have been able to face Duranis, the Marathas and the adventurers like Perron and George Thomas who could make no headway into their territories or create a permanent impression in the land of the Sikhs.

1.2.4 The Muslim Chiefs

About thirty miles to the south-east of Lahore was situated Kasur which was under the Pathan ruler Nizam-ud-din whose loyalties were always to the land of his forefathers than to the Punjab. He disliked the rise of the Misals to power in the Punjab. During each invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali and his successor the Pathan ruling family of Kasur joined the invader to plunder their neighbours. When Shah Zaman, the grandson of Ahmed Shah Abdali tried to establish his rule in the Punjab, Nizam-ud-din was one of the first to offer himself. Nizam-ud-din was harbouring in his mind the design to conquer Lahore. He sent his spies to Lahore to gauge the situation and contact the Muslims there. But he did not succeed in his designs.

Multan was under the Muzaffar Khan of the Sadojai clan. A portion of Multan was conquered by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1752 and from the Afghan control it was conquered by Hari Singh Bhangi in 1771. But Taimur Shah, son of Ahmed Shah expelled the Bhangis from Multan in 1779 and appointed Shujah Khan as its governor who later became independent of Afghanistan. Shujah Khan was succeeded by his son, Muzaffar Khan who was contemporary of Ranjit Singh.

Dera Ghazi Khan and Bhawalpur were under Bhawal Khan. Peshawar was under Fateh Khan Barakzai, wazir of Shah Mahmud, the ruler of Afghanistan. Similarly, there were other small independent principalities like Pakpattan, Khushab and Bannu. Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan and Chiniot were

also in the hands of Muslims. Kashmir was under Ata Mohammad Khan. Attock was under his brother, Jahandar Khan. All these Muslim chiefs were against the rising power of the Sikhs in the Punjab and they considered it a threat to their power. From time to time, they formed alliances to check the growing power of the Sikhs.

1.2.5 Alien Adventurers

George Thomas was the English adventurer who took employment with Indian Chiefs. A little later, he raised a band of horsemen and set up a small principality of his own with Hansi as its headquarters. There he built a fort after his name known as 'George Garh'. He attacked the territories of the rulers of Patiala and Jind. He had acquainted himself with the situation prevailing in the Punjab and the relation of the Muslims with each other. In 1780, he came upto Sutlej at the head of a small force of five thousand men and sixty cannons. He wrote to the Governor-General of the East India Company that he planned to hoist the British flag on the banks of river Indus. He said, "This nation (the Sikhs) is not formidable as they have been represented and in all probability never will be formidable when opposed by regular troops." With such thinking and plans George Thomas had created a threatening situation in the Punjab.

French General Perron was in the employ of Daulat Rao Sindhia. He advanced against the Sikhs in December, 1798 and reached Karnal on first January, 1799. He called the Sikh Chief to him, which Sikhs resisted. Later a treaty was signed between the Sikh chiefs and Perron. He left the service of Sindhia and became a free booter and began plundering towns and cities in the neighbourhood of Delhi. He came into clash with the Sikh chiefs many a time. He fought George Thomas and turned him out of the Punjab. Later, Perron's own power was broken and his influence in the area liquidated.

1.2.6 The Hill Chiefs

There were many small chiefs in the Shivalik hills such as the rulers of Mandi, Suket, Kulu, Chamba, Nurpur, Kangra and Jammu. Kangra was under Sansar Chand Kqtoch who was very ambitious man. He wanted to extend his territories from the mountainous areas to the plains of the Punjab. He had annexed some of the adjoining areas of the Sikh Sardars. Since he wanted to expand into trans Sutlej areas of the Punjab, he was considered to be posing a great threat to the Punjab.

1.2.7 The Gurkhas

After suffering defeat at the hands of the Chinese, the Gurkhas of Nepal annexed Garhwal and Kumaon in 1794 and they extended their kingdom upto the borders of Kashmir. They also planned the conquest of Simla hill states.

Under the leadership of Amar Singh Thapa, the Gurkhas were seriously thinking of conquering the Punjab. There was an apprehension from the side of the Gurkhas also.

1.2.8 The British

In the early years of the fourth quarters of the 16th century the English were little away from the Punjab and, therefore, less formidable than the others. They wanted to protect the Nawab Wazir of Oudh whose territories were extended upto river Ganges. The Sikhs sometimes crossed the rivers and clashed with the men of the Nawab.

Warren Hastings, Governor-General (1774-85) of the East India Company, stationed at Calcutta, wrote back home that Punjab which was parcelled out into small principalities would soon fall victim of some ambitious chief who would ultimately establish his monarchy in the Punjab. This shows how the

English watched the political situations in all parts of country which they ultimately wanted to place under their control. The East India Company had also been watching with due concerns the progress of the Aghans into India. The English wanted that the Sikhs should not allow Afghans to control the Punjab, so that they may not have to face Afghans.

When the Marathas tried to conclude an agreement in 1785 with Sikhs against the Mughals, the English interfered and offered help to the Marathas and prevented an alliance between them. A stroke of British Col. John Cuming's diplomacy succeeded in bringing about a rupture between the Sikhs and the Marathas. John Cuming wrote to John Macpherson on March 27, 1785, "By engaging Ambajee and Malhar in hostilities with the Sikhs, I am happy to observe that I have chalked out sufficient employment for their forces at present.

Lord Wellesely, the Governor General of the East India Company was an imperialist and an annexationist. He wanted to elevate the British Government to position of paramount power in India. He gave up the Company's policy of non-intervention followed by his predecessor Sir John Shore (1793-98) because of the absence of central controlling power in India and the mutual jealousies and ambitions of the natives. After defeating the Marathas in many fields of battle he wanted to extend his sphere of influence in India as far as he could. He was anxious to come as close to the Punjab as possible. Although there was no immediate danger to the Sikhs from the English but the Sikhs were not unmindful of the long-range desire of the British. The strong and effective intervention of the English in the cis-

Sutlej states in 1809 by compelling Ranjit Singh to keep his hand of the territories of the cis-Sutlej chiefs, was a clear proof of their territorial intention.

1.2.9 The Marathas

The Sikhs in the north and the Marathas in the south have been torch bearers of freedom movement in India. On the invitation of Adeena Beg Khan to help him to become the Governor of Lahore, Balaji Rao Peshwa's brother Raghunath Rao, left Delhi for the Punjab on October 22, 1757. Accompanied by the Sikhs the Marathas entered Lahore about the middle of 1758. They stayed at Lahore for less than a month and in the face of the rising power of the Sikhs in the Punjab they thought it advisable to return from the Punjab.

In the beginning of 1761, the Marathas were pitted against the force of Ahmed Shah in the historic battle field of Panipat in a bid to place Punjab under their control. They had a crushing defeat at the hands of the Afghans.

In 1783, Jai Singh Kanheya and other Sikh Sardars met at Patiala to discuss the suggestion to formulate plan of Sikhs—Marathas alliance to wipe out Mughal rule from Delhi. For this purpose, the Sikhs sent a wakil to Mahadaji Sindhia but there was no encouraging response. In February, 1785, an effort was made by Sindhia to conclude an alliance with the Sikhs. But the British were able to drive a wedge between the Sikhs and the Marathas. On May 10, 1785, a treaty was concluded between the Sikhs and Marathas and it was decided that the chiefs of the Khalsa would help Sindhia with a force of 5000 whenever he was in need of help and would get a jagir in lieu of such help. And also, as the Sindhia was friend of the East India Company and the Nawab of Oudh, they should not be bothered by the Sikhs.

But the Marathas were always on the look out of an opportunity to control the affairs of the Punjab. In February 1787, Ambaji Ingle under orders of Mahadaji Sindhia led an expedition into the Sikh territories to extract tribute from Patiala and other Sikh States. But finding their companion Ghulam Qadir Ruhila had joined the Sikhs and also an agent of Jaipur had come to the Sikhs to form an anti-Sindhia confederacy, Ambaji returned to Karnal hastily.

In December, 1788, the Marathas crossed the Jamuna and threatened to invade Patiala. A sum of fifty thousand rupees was paid to them to avert that threat. Again the Marathas came in April, 1789 and princess Rajinder Kaur of Patiala fought bravely against them. The seige of Bahadurgarh continued for months. In the course of negotiations it was

agreed that Rajinder Kaur would meet Mahadaji Sindhia in Mathura and the Maratha force would return. The Marathas made unsuccessful efforts in 1790 and 1791 to regain their lost prestige. In 1794, force under the order of Daulat Rao Sindhia, the Marathas again started for Patiala. Under Sahib Kaur, Patiala forces met the Marathas near Mardanpur (south of Shambhu) near Ambala.

Whenever the Marathas threatened, the Diwan of Patiala or the queen immediately called the trans-Sutlej Sikhs to expell the Maratha forces. The Sikhs had declared themselves to be independent of Mughal emperor and refused to pay any tribute to him or acknowledge his authority. Mahadaji Sindhia as his regent wished to establish his authority under the garb of the Mughal rule over their freed territory and all his efforts were foiled by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore, the traditional capital of Punjab gave a death blow to the designs of the Marathas to hold the Punjab.

1.2.10 The Afghans

Ahmed Shah after subduing Mir Mannu in 1752 declared Punjab to be a province of Afghanistan. The Durrani chiefs came to the Punjab again and almost every time he was challenged by the Sikhs, some time at the cost of heavy sacrifices. Ahmed Shah realised that the Sikhs were fighting a war of life and death and under no circumstances they would allow Punjab to go into the foreign hands. The Sikh Sardars so organised themselves as to drive Ahmed Shah out of their land. After Ahmed Shah's death, his son Timur Shah tried to recover Punjab but failed. Though he kept up pretentions about northern India but the best he could do was to retain his hold on Kashmir and turn out the Bhangis from Multan.

After the death of Timur Shah in 1793, his son Shah Zaman ascended the throne of Kabul. The young Shah was very ambitious and as soon as he became the ruler of Afghanistan, he announced his intention of re-establishing the Afghan empire in India. He was a youngman of twenty three at the time of his succession. There were several revolts against him but he suppressed them all.

He sent several emissaries to the court of some of the Indian chiefs to create panic in their camps by giving inflated reports of the Afghan force. His men met the Mughal Emperor and the Maratha Chiefs. The Mughals and the Marathas received his emissaries honourably and gave them Khilats (robes of honour). The Governor General was in the know of the Afghan agent's activities and he wanted to be on friendly terms with the Afghans. He, therefore, addressed two letters to the Shah, one condolence on the death of his father,

and the other of congratulation on his accession to the throne. He also sent presents with these letters.

On receiving favourable reports from his agent the Shah decided upon an invasion of India. He left Kabul in December, 1793. His advance guard had a skirmish with the Sikhs as a result of which the vanguard was recalled by the Shah Zaman and he returned to Peshawar.

Now the Shah sent several agents to India to get assurances from the Muslims to join him against the Sikhs and Marathas. He also sent letters to Nizam of Hyderabad and also to the Governor General in the end of 1794 which were received by them by the end of 1795.

Shah Zaman left Kabul on 3rd November, 1795. From Peshawar he sent Ahsan Bakhat to Multan to collect men and money. The Sikhs fought against the advance guard and drove it back across the river Indus.

The success was achieved by the Sikhs against a part of Afghan army. The Sikhs were not united and thus they could not check the advance of the whole Afghan army. Majority of the Sikh chiefs cared only for their individual interests. Only Ranjit Singh viewed the problem of foreign invasion from a national point of view. He considered the entry of the Afghan ruler into the Punjab as a disgrace to the Indians in general and the Sikhs in particular. He approached the Marathas for help but there was no response from them. Shah Zaman captured Ranjit Singh's outpost of Rohtas. The Sikhs were attacked at Pind Dadan Khan and after a little fighting the Sikhs crossed the Jehlum and gathered on the southern bank of the river. Shah Zaman had stayed at Hasan Abdal for a week's time. Hearing of some trouble from the side of the king of Iran, Shah Zaman had to give up his Indian campaign. He speedily went back and reached Peshawar in January, 1796.

The Lahore Campaigns (1796-97 and 1798-99) : The Shah again sent emissaries to Shah Alam the Mughal ruler, and to Daulat Rao Sindhia and through his letter the Afghan ruler professed friendship for the Marathas and promised not to disturb the administration of the Mughals. He declared that his conquests would be confined to the territories of the Sikhs. Shah Zaman opened negotiations with the Sikhs as well. He asked the Sikh chiefs not to molest his troops and check his march towards Delhi. The Sikh Sardars expressed their willingness to allow the Shah safe passage through the Punjab provided he parted with a portion of his booty from Delhi. The Afghans were afraid of the Sikhs and they wanted assurance for their protection while passing through the Punjab. At the same time, Shah wanted to establish his

overlordship over the Punjab.

The Muslims of the Punjab hailed Zaman Shah as the champion of their faith and the rescuer of their country. The Shah crossed the Indus in December, 1796. The people of the Punjab were panic stricken because of the large army which the Shah was commanding. The Shah addressed a letter to Ranjit Singh not to obstruct his march. Ranjit Singh replied that he would fight against him as through the grace of Guru every Sikh was bound to be victorious. Lehna Singh permitted most of the residents of Lahore to go to place of safety. He was no match for the Shah. Afghan troops entered Lahore on 31st December, 1796 and Shah entered the town next day. On 11th January, 1797, Shah's men were defeated by the Sikhs at Amritsar. The Shah crossed Ravi on 30th January, 1797 on his return journey to Kabul. On his return, Sikh chiefs recovered their territories and killed the Afghan Governor.

The Shah again came to the Punjab and entered Lahore on November 27th, 1798. This time he disallowed his soldiers to enter the city and warned them against plundering. The War was against the Sikhs and the Shah wanted to isolate them from the Punjab Muslims. Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur was very eager to see Afghan power established in the province. Ranjit Singh repulsed the Afghans proceeding towards Amritsar. He encircled Lahore and at night rode up the Saman Burj and shouted a challenge to the Afghans : "O grandson of Ahmed Shah Abdali come down and measure sword with the grandson of Charat Singh". Shah Zaman's brother Mahmud was stirring up trouble in Afghanistan. Thus Shah was compelled to give up his plans to conquer the Punjab and returned to Kabul. Shortly thereafter, Ranjit Singh became the master of the situation and Afghan threat to the Punjab was permanently liquidated.

1.2.12 Keywords

1. Nawab
2. Battle of Panipat
3. Durrani
4. Jehlum

1.2.13 Long Questions

1. What was the political condition of the Punjab on the eve of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's accession to power?
2. Discuss the Political condition of the Punjab at the end of the 18th century.

1.2.14 Short Questions

Write short notes on:

1. The Lahore Campaigns
2. Shah Zaman
3. George Thomas
4. Mahadaji Sindhia

1.2.15 Suggested Readings

1. Cunningham : *A History of the Sikhs.*
2. N.K. Sinha : *Ranjit Singh.*
3. Khushwant Singh : *Ranjit Singh.*

RANJIT SINGH'S RISE TO POWER WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS RELATIONS WITH THE MISALS

- 1.3.1 Objectives
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1.3.1 Objectives

In this lesson you will get information about Maharaja Ranjit Singh's relation with Sikh Misals . You will also get information regarding circumstances favourable to Ranjit Singh's rise to power.

1.3.2 Introduction

Ranjit Singh was born on November 13, 1780 A.D. at Gujranwala. His father Mahan Singh died in 1792 A.D. For the next five years, the affairs of the Sukarchakia Misal were managed by his mother Mai Malwian. In 1796, Ranjit Singh was married to Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur of Kanheya Misal. Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanheya, was a woman of extraordinary courage, ability and ambition. She wanted to place the whole of the Punjab under her own dominion. In 1797 A.D. at the age of seventeen Ranjit Singh decided to end the regency of his mother, Dewan Lakhpat Rai and his mother-in-law.

1.3.3 Circumstances Favourable to Ranjit Singh's Rise to Power

At the time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power, Punjab was divided into a number of petty principalities and some of the leader were not happy with one another. The people of Punjab were generally devoid of sense of unity. The

Sikh confederacies had already been weakened. The Afghans were again threatening to establish their overlordship in the Punjab. The English had also started taking interest in this part of the country as their future sphere of influence. Besides, there was some Pathan possessions adjoining hill states under the Hindu Rajas and several small and petty principalities that dotted the map of Punjab.

The Bhangis, held the important cities of Lahore, Amritsar, Gujrat and Sialkot, were no match for Ranjit Singh. Gulab Singh Bhangi, the most important of them was said to have been too romantic to challenge seriously the rising chief of the Sukarchakia Misal and the second important leader of that Misal, Sahib Singh whose career had hitherto been marked by energy and enterprise had now become weak and indolent. The Ahluwalias were never a serious threat to Ranjit Singh. The Chief of that Misal, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had died in 1783 A.D. After the death of Bhag Singh, his son Sardar Fateh Singh succeeded him. Two young Sardars exchanged turbans at Tarntaran and swore perpetual friendship which was signed on the basis of equality but in practice the diplomatic genius Ranjit Singh made Fateh Singh play only secondary role. The Ramgarhias shared the city of Amritsar and the neighbouring districts with the Kanheyas. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, a brave and courageous man, could be an effective hindrance in the way of Ranjit Singh but he had grown old and was not strong enough to challenge the rising power of the young Sukarchakias chief. Friendly relations had been established between Kanheyas and the Sukarchakias, Nishanwalias, Karor Singhias, the Shahids, Nakais and Dalewalias were of small consequence and could be easily dealt with by any strong and ambitious man. In the cis-Sutlej region, the Phulkian Misal was a strong power but the chiefs of the Misal had been considerably weakened by the mutual jealousies and quarrels.

This was the picture that the plains of the Punjab presented to Ranjit Singh for consolidation into a coherent contiguous block. The hill chiefs particularly Sansar Chand Katoch and the Gurkhas of Nepal could create complications for Ranjit Singh. In the words of N.K. Sinha, "On the edge of this cockpit of North-Western Hindustan three nations, the British, the Sikhs and the Gurkhas were seeking an empire." But Ranjit Singh had no immediate challenge from the English though the danger was sure to come sooner or later. The Marathas too, did not pose any threat to the rising power of Ranjit Singh, though by 1798 they had huge resources and were controlling practically the whole of Central India. In 1796, Daulat Rao Sindhia and his French General Perron dominated the Delhi region and some Maratha chiefs like Dhara Rao had attacked the Sikh states of

Malwa several times.

In the East, the British Government had just risen to its majesty of power exercised a restraining influence on Ranjit Singh who was, therefore, obliged to look westward and had naturally come face to face with the Afghans. N.K. Sinha writes, "The description of the Afghans as a bellicose nation that has so often invaded India and can muster 30,000 armed cavalry is perhaps the best summary of Ranjit Singh's position vis-a-vis the Afghan monarchy.

The brief political survey of Punjab shows that the province was a congeries of small states, there was no individual power in the province which could pose any danger to the adventures of a strong man. As early as 1783 A.D, George Forster had predicted that "we may see some ambitious chief led by his genius and success, absorbing the power of his associates display from the ruins of their commonwealth the standard of monarchy." This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of Ranjit Singh who was only three years old at that time. According to Gough, these Misals were evolved to meet certain exigencies of that time.

But these exigencies had probably vanished by that time and even on national considerations the need of the continuance of the Misals was no longer there.

Earlier the existence of a common danger from beyond the North-West frontiers had kept them together. But now the danger from outside had almost disappeared and the Mughal power had already been thrown in the dustbin of history. Thus, the political situation in the beginning of the 19th century was eminently suited for the rise of a resolute and outstanding personality who might wield these conflicting and weak elements into an organised kingdom, and Ranjit Singh availed himself of this opportunity. Anarchy and political upheaval always hold an opportunity to men of genius.

In the words of Lepel, "There is perhaps no more notable and picturesque figure among the chiefs who rose to power on the ruins of the Mughal Empire than Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the founder of the short lived kingdom of Lahore."

1.3.4 Ranjit Singh on Road to an Empire

Zaman Shah's Invasion of the Punjab and Ranjit Singh's Resistance
Young Ranjit Singh who was aspiring for the consolidation of the Punjab had to face an ambitious aggrandiser, Zaman Shah Durrani, who succeeded to the throne of Kabul in 1793, and planned to seize the Punjab in 1795 A.D. He was obliged to return from Hassan Abdal. His third invasion attempted towards the end of 1797 A.D. was his first serious effort when he occupied Lahore on

January 3, 1797, A.D. His brother Mahmud Shah was stirring up trouble in Afghanistan. Therefore, leaving his officer Ahmed Khan Shahanchi, in possession of Lahore with 12,000 soldiers, the Shah returned to Kabul. Shahanchi was defeated and killed by the Sikhs near Ramnagar. Hearing the news of his general's death, the Shah swore to wreck a terrible vengeance on the Sikhs.

Shaikh Rahim Ali, an intellegencer sent by the English to Kabul, wrote on the 21st June, 1797 A.D. that the Muslim chiefs of Pind Dadan Khan, Rasulnagar, Jhang, Kasur and many other places had sent their agents to Zaman Shah inviting him to invade the Punjab and expel the Sikhs from power. In order to verify the authenticity of these representations the Shah sent his agent Ghulam Muhammad Khan with fourteen letters for various persons including the Governor General of East India Company and the Nawab of Oudh. The letters ran, "It is our intention to visit Hindustan and at a proper season shall accordingly set out when we shall encourage friend and chastise enemies. Let your mind be perfectly at ease and continue to walk in the path of allegiance and fidelity."

Zaman Shah marched to the Punjab in the winter of 1798 and reached Lahore on 27th November. In view of perilous national situation and on the suggestion of Baba Sahib Bedi, a meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa was called in Amritsar where a large number of Sikhs assembled.

Shah Zaman's forces were not allowed to advance unobstructed. On the 19th November, 1798 A.D. Shah's Wazir Wafadar Khan was attacked between Gujrat and Wazirabad by Ranjit Singh, Sahib Singh, Nahar Singh and Sondha Singh. Ranjit Singh sent for Bhag Singh, Gulab Singh Bhangi and Jaimal Singh who were staying at Amritsar at that time. Sada Kaur asked them to respond to Ranjit Singh's call and challenged them saying, "If you are disposed to assist Ranjit Singh, advance and help him, if not throw off that dress and take mine; give me your clothes and I will march against the enemy." (Sic). The Sikhs collected a body of fifty or sixty thousand fighting men.

The Shah despatched a contingent of Afghans to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh went out of the town and gave a tough fight to the Afghans and forced them to retire to Lahore and attacked the forces of the Shah to harass him.

The Shah was amazed at the intrepidity and bravery of the Sikhs. At the same time, he has receiving disquietening news from Qandhar and Herat. Under the circumstances, he thought it best to retire from Punjab.

During the visit of the Shah, Ranjit Singh's representative probably negotiated for the Subedari of Lahore. But at this stage the revered Sikh

Baba Sahib Singh Bedi pleaded with the Sardars to stop negotiating with the Durrani invader. They agreed to abide by his decision and when the Shah's agents came to the Sikh Sardar again, Sahib Singh Bedi said to them on behalf of the Sikhs, "We took the country by the sword and will preserve it by the same." Then the Shah gave up the plan to win over the Sikhs. But one of those chiefs whom the Shah seemed to have placated was Ranjit Singh, Sukarchakia chief.

On his return from the Punjab, Zaman Shah is said to have written to Ranjit Singh to take out the guns which he had lost in the swollen Jhelum and sent them to him at Kabul promising in return to grant him the Viceroyalty of Lahore. After the water in the river had gone down, Ranjit Singh extricated 12 guns of which 8 were sent to Zaman Shah and the remaining four placed in his own ordinance. About the close of the year 1799 A.D., Ranjit Singh received a rich *Khilat* from Zaman Shah in acknowledgement of his service for sending back the guns. Ranjit Singh had taken possession of Lahore much before the receipt of the *Khilat* and the conferment of the grant of Lahore on Ranjit Singh was meaningless. In fact, "each wanted to make use of the other to serve his own interest and the submissive attitude of the one and the conciliatory attitude of the other must be regarded as mere diplomatic camouflage to hide the real objective for which they were striving."

1.3.5 Ranjit Singh's Occupation of Lahore

Twenty six days after the Shah left Lahore on 4th January, 1799, the triumvirate—Chet Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh, returned to Lahore. On the return of Zaman Shah to Kabul, news arrived that Nizam-uddin of Kasur was planning an invasion of Lahore. To the people of Lahore, he was as unwelcome ruler as the triumvirate that ruled there at that time. Five months after the return of the trio, a petition was therefore, drawn up and signed by the leading citizens of Lahore including Mian Ashiq Muhammad, Mian Mohkam Din, Muhammad Bakar, Muhammad Tahir, Mir Shadi, Hakim Hakam Rai and Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and was submitted to Ranjit Singh by deputation. 'Only his presence', it was said, "was required at the capital, the petitioners engaging to do all that was necessary for securing the object in view."

The gates of Lahore city were opened to Ranjit Singh who accompanied by Sada Kaur, entered through Lahori gate. Without any resistance from the Sardars in possession of the city. Mohar Singh escaped and hid himself in the house of strawseller. He was captured and produced before Ranjit Singh who smilingly allowed him to retire in safety to his lands along with his movable

property. Sahib Singh was away from Lahore at the time. Chet Singh shut himself up in the fort and through Sada Kaur, Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law, he accepted submission. He was given a generous grant and turned into a grateful protege.

In Ranjit Singh's career, the capture of Lahore was of greatest significance and this possession made him the most powerful chieftain in Northern India. Lahore had always been a provincial capital and it gave Ranjit Singh an edge over other chiefs of the Punjab and enhanced his political prestige considerably.

1.3.6 Opposition to Ranjit Singh's Rise to Power and his Success

Nizam-ud-din of Kasur, who had been trying with the idea of securing for himself the Subedari of Lahore and had also made a request to Zaman Shah to that effect had been disappointed. The attitude of the Bhangis to Ranjit Singh turned from secret envy to open hate and they tried to intrigue for the diminution of his power.

Gulab Singh Bhangi called some Sikh Sardars of Amritsar and told them that Ranjit Singh had occupied their territories and established himself by force and if his power continued to grow, they would not be able to face him. So they decided to assemble their contingents immediately and reach Bhasin. But there was only one Sikh chief Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who threw in his lot with the Bhangis, the other being Nizam-ud-din of Kasur and they assembled at the village of Bhasin about 20 k.m. east of the capital. The opposition armies lay without action in their respective positions for two months when one night an excessive indulgence in liquor caused Gulab Singh Bhangi's death. The death of their leader disrupted the confederate army which melted away without achieving anything and their plans fizzled out.

In the early days of 1801 A.D., the chiefs, notables and other prominent citizens decided to offer the title of 'Maharaja' to Ranjit Singh. Baisakhi festival, April 12, 1801 was fixed for the ceremony. Ranjit Singh was anointed with the tilak of Maharajaship at a Durbar attended by all the important Sikh Sardars and Muslim leaders. He had hesitated the title earlier for fear of aggravating the jealousy of the other chiefs. Even at this time, a cordon of hostile powers was girding his small kingdom which was to grow in due course of time.

An important consequence of adopting this title was that by virtue of this title he assumed rights of sovereignty not only over the Sikhs, but also over the people living within the ill defined borders of the Punjab. With the independent charge of the Lahore Government and the title of the Maharaja, Ranjit Singh considered himself justified in claiming a sort of legal right to demand revenue

from the territories which had at any time paid it to the Government at Lahore. The Rajput hill chiefs and others should as well pay tribute to him and owe allegiance to the Lahore Government as under the Mughals.

Amritsar was the Mecca of the Sikhs and their most important city in the world. Anyone who aspired to be their leader and the Maharaja of the Punjab must have Amritsar to justify his title. Ranjit Singh planned to take charge of the city of Amritsar in 1805 accompanied by his allies, the Kanheyas, Nakais and Ahluwalias. It was then held by Mai Sukhan, widow of Gulab Singh. She surrendered without much opposition. The occupation of Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs, brought additional lustre to Ranjit Singh's name. This also gave him the possession of the *Zam Zama* gun (known as *Top-i-Bhangian*) lying at Amritsar.

Dal Singh of Akalgarh, an old Lieutenant of Mahan Singh, joined hands with Sahib Singh of Gujrat against Ranjit Singh. He was called by Ranjit Singh and relieved of his possession. Through the intervention of Sahib Singh Bedi the revered religious leader, Sahib Singh Bhangi was allowed to retain his possession. Nizam-ud-din of Kasur also surrendered to Ranjit Singh.

Sansar Chand of Kangra had adopted an offensive attitude towards the Sikhs. He had occupied some of the villages of Sada Kaur and had also taken possession of Bajwara. The hill chief was pursuing in the hills the policy similar to the one adopted by Ranjit Singh in the plains. Ranjit Singh reoccupied the village formerly under Sada Kaur and annexed some of Sansar Chand's territory. Ranjit Singh united the resources of the Kanheya and the Ahluwalia with those of his own. Their interests at this stage in some measure were identical. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Sada Kaur Kanheya were not friendly disposed to the Ramgarhias. The Ahluwalia chief at the same time needed the help of Ranjit Singh to keep some of his own ambitious vassals in restraint. He wanted to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Ranjit Singh. They took a solemn pledge that their friends and enemies would be common; and in every conquest made by their joint efforts Ranjit Singh would give some territory to Fateh Singh. The alliance greatly added to the strength of the Maharaja and served as a ladder by which Ranjit Singh climbed to political supremacy.

Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur, Jodh Singh of Wazirabad and also the chiefs of Jhang, Sialkot and Chamba etc. accepted Ranjit Singh's overlordship. It may be safely concluded that as a result of this policy, Ranjit Singh was able to consolidate in the Central Punjab into a single kingdom before the end of year 1809.

Ranjit Singh took over the territories of Tara Singh Gaiba of the

Dallewalia Misal situated on both sides of river Sutlej shortly after his death in 1807, as in the absence of any competent successor his territory could succumb to any outside usurper. He provided subsistence to the widow and the family of the Dallewalia chief and incorporated his force in the Lahore army. Tara Singh's sons Dasondha Singh and Jhanda Singh and their families got Taluqas of Mehatpur and Dhankani. The territories under Tara Singh included the town of Rahon, Nakodar and Naushera. The possession of these places by Ranjit Singh seems to have upset the chief of Malwa with an impression that the Maharaja meant to reduce the other chief as well to the position of the pensioners of the Lahore Government.

The Fyzullapuria possessions were seized by Dewan Mohkam Chand and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia in 1810-11 and placed under Lahore Darbar. In 1811 A.D., the territory of the Nakais which included Pakpattan was annexed by Mohkam Chand.

In 1812 A.D., on the death of Jaimal Singh Kanheya, his territories with Taragarh and Fatehpur were occupied. Shortly after the death of the Ramgarhia chief, Jodh Singh, in August 1815 A.D., the Ramgarhia territories were also taken. This addition gave him a revenue of six or seven lakhs of rupees. Four villages were given for subsistence to Sardar Jodh Singh's widow.

Sada Kaur who had been greatly helpful in Ranjit Singh's coming to power was estranged with him in 1821 A.D. and he annexed her territories to the Lahore dominions.

In the scheme of having a strong and a united Punjab there could have been no place for many independent and semi-independent chieftains. And evidently, it was, therefore, of urgent necessity that they all had to be brought into the fold of the new power.

It must, however, be said to the credit of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that he was always considerate and sympathetic towards the vanquished and granted them jagirs sufficient for their decent and comfortable living. He knew how to handle the situation.

It is true that Ranjit Singh's policy of absorption at time estranged some of the Sardars into his opponents but he was always tactful enough to win them over his side. He was thus to create a new Punjab with a strong and a compact kingdom with natural dependable frontier on all sides, as large a kingdom as France.

Thus, within a period of four decades, Ranjit Singh rose from the position of a petty Sardar to that of a ruler of an extensive kingdom. Scores of Sikh and non-Sikh chieftains in the Punjab or on its borders accepted his suzerainty.

His kingdom extended from Himalayas in the north east to desert of Sindh in the south west, from the Sutlej in the south east to certain important posts beyond the Indus on the south-west. His going beyond Indus is all the more significant because "the ruler of the Sikhs was the first monarch after Anangpal who not only checked the stream of invasions which during eight hundred years had been pouring into the Punjab from the north western frontier but also subdued the inhabitants of that area. Thus, he brought the scattered people of the Punjab under a uniform and consistent system of Government and thereby evolved a young and vigorous nation."

Divergent views have been expressed regarding Ranjit Singh's policy of unification. However, there could be much justification in his favour when we find that he united all the wavering elements together and converted the Sikh bands into a strong state with a strong political entity. Moreover, by digging out kingdom from the debris of confusion in the Punjab, Ranjit Singh channelised the big annual revenue of the Punjab, that amounted to over three crores of rupees, by using the same for social and economic progress of the people.

The position of Ranjit Singh among the Sikhs may be paralleled to that of Frederic the Great of Germany, who rose to power not so much as the king of Prussia, as the one man to whom all Germans could look as likely to raise that medley of principalities and electorates into the nation. Once the Maharaja had summed up his own achievements in the following words :

"My kingdom is a great kingdom, it was small, it is now large, it was scattered, broken and divided; it is now consolidated; it must increase in prosperity and descend undivided to my posterity. By counsel and providence combined with valour, I have conquered and by generosity, discipline and policy, I have regulated and consolidated my Government."

These lines of the Maharaja speak frankly of the policy that had been passing in his mind about the petty principalities that dotted the map of the Punjab. He wanted to place under one Government and weld together the 'scattered' and broken kingdom of the Punjab and aspired to 'consolidate' the 'divided'.

The unification of the Sikh principalities was bound to come but if it could form strong republic that would have been the price of the East. Though very fertile seeds of democratic and republican federal Government were present in the Sikh tradition and their past history but the consolidation and unification of the Punjab was the dire need of the country and for that a single controlling hand was a necessity. Therefore, the coming up of benevolent monarchy, was the only suitable solution, of the problems of the Punjab.

1.3.7 Keywords

1. Triumvirate
2. Misal
3. Monarchy
4. *Khillat*
5. Sikh Confederacies

1.3.8 Long Questions

1. Discuss Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy towards Sikh Misals.
2. Describe Ranjit Singh's relation with the Misals in light of his rise to power.

1.3.9 Short Questions

Write short notes on:

1. Shah Zaman 's Invasion
2. Sada Kaur
3. Occupation of Lahore
4. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia

1.3.10 Suggested Readings

1. N.K. Sinha : *Ranjit Singh.*
2. Khushwant Singh : *Ranjit Singh.*
3. Lepel Griffin : *Ranjit Singh.*

CONQUEST OF MULTAN, ATTOCK, KASHMIR AND PESHAWAR

- 1.4.1 Objectives
- 1.4.2 Introduction
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1.4.1 Objectives

In this chapter you will be able to obtain necessary information about Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Conquests : Conquest of Multan, Conquest of Attock, Conquest of Kashmir and Conquest of Peshawar.

1.4.2 Introduction

When Ranjit Singh assumed direct charge of the Sukarchakia Misal in 1797, there were several pockets of territory within the Punjab and outside in its neighbourhood which were still directly or indirectly held by the Afghans. Ahmed Shah Abdali had annexed Punjab, nominally atleast to his own kingdom of Afghanistan in 1752. In 1757, full Afghan control over the province was established when Timur, the son of Ahmed Shah Abdali, became its Governor. Timur, however, was not allowed by the Sikhs and Marathas to remain in Punjab for long. The Afghans were forced to leave the country in 1758. They, under Timur and later on under Zaman Shah, made several attempts to reconquer Punjab. Zaman Shah in his third invasion, actually occupied Lahore and appointed Ahmed Khan Shahanchi as its Governor. Shahanchi, however, was soon ousted by Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat. Zaman Shah's fourth invasion of Punjab in 1798 failed, because of the dissensions in his own ranks in Afghanistan. But this invasion shattered the Bhangi power in Lahore, and Zaman Shah being no more in a position to repeat his invasion, the way was cleared for Ranjit Singh who occupied this city in 1799 and assumed the title of Maharaja forthwith.

The Afghans had failed to keep Punjab as a whole, but there were several

territories within the province and in its neighbourhood, as mentioned earlier, over which Afghan nobles had been appointed as *Zamindar*, *nawabs*, etc. and which continued owing allegiance, real or nominal, to Afghanistan. Among these territories, more important were Multan, Attock and Kashmir. If Ranjit Singh really wanted to establish his authority all over Punjab, the Afghans had to be cleared from the territories they thus occupied within the province. But Ranjit Singh's ambition went much beyond. He wanted to clear Afghans not only from Punjab, but also from its neighbourhood.

1.4.3 Multan

Multan was not what it was in the time of the Mughals. Under the Mughals, the province of Multan included also the parts of the states which later on became Bahawalpur, the districts of Shikarpur and Jacobabad in Sind and the district of Mari and Sibi in Baluchistan. As the Mughal power disintegrated, the province was conquered by the Pathans. In 1739, Nadir Shah separated the southern part of the province between the state of Bahawalpur. The area of Multan proper which lay on the left side of the river Indus, excluding Bahawalpur, was conquered by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1752, who appointed a separate governor for it. The Multan proper was conquered by Hari Singh Bhangi in 1771. Timur, the successor of Ahmed Shah Abdali, supplanted the Bhangis in 1779, and handed it to the control of a relation, Muzaffar Khan of the Sadozai clan of Afghanistan. It was from Muzaffar Khan that Ranjit Singh had conquered the territory.

Ranjit Singh wanted to occupy Multan for several reasons. Apart from his general programme of supplanting the Afghan authority in Punjab, and of his policy of conquests and enlargement of his dominations, Multan offered inducement for its occupation also because direct route to the Bolan pass leading to Kandhar lay through it, and it was with a force stationed here that the pass itself protected. This route, naturally, also served the purpose of trade in which goods were exchanged with countries lying beyond the Bolan pass. Besides, Multan territories pierced between those of Bahawalpur and Sind, and their occupation would prevent these Muslim states from making a common cause against the Maharaja. The annual revenues of Multan were Rs. 680, 975, and besides, Muzaffar Khan was said to be in possession of a rich treasury.

Ranjit Singh's attention towards Multan was drawn as early as 1802 when he led his first expedition towards that side. But it was not before 1818 that he actually occupied and annexed Multan to his dominion. In between, he led as many as three more expeditions, i.e. in 1805, 1807 and 1810. The apologists of Ranjit Singh assert that this delayed occupation of Multan was not due to any weakness on his part but was due rather to his generosity that he wanted to

give his opponents chances to prove their loyalty. Besides it is asserted that Ranjit Singh was interested as much in the Multan treasury as in the Multan territories. As such, he was afraid, lest the final bid to occupy Multan should make its ruler to escape with all that he possessed. That is why every time he led an expedition he was satisfied with a huge Nazrana that he received and returned.

These arguments, however, do not seem convincing. In 1802, when he led his first expedition, the Maharaja's state was just an infant state. Most of the important territories yet remained to be conquered when Ranjit Singh invaded Multan in 1805 and 1807. It was only after the Treaty of Amritsar with the British in 1809, that the Maharaja became really a power to reckon with. The amount of resistance the Maharaja faced from Multan during his 4th invasion in 1810 and his last expedition in 1817-1818, clearly shows that the conquest of Multan was not an easy job, and earlier to 1818, the Maharaja was not strong enough finally to settle scores with Muzaffar Khan.

As mentioned above, the Maharaja invaded three times in 1802, 1805 and 1807 respectively, but each time retired after having received an indemnity. A serious attempt to capture Multan was made in 1810, when a strong expedition led by Dewan Mohkam Chand, occupied the city and besieged the Multan fort. But the walls of the fort proved impregnable, and even the famous Bhangi cannon could not cause a breach in them. C.H. Payne writes, Mohkam Chand was obliged through illness to relinquish the command and at the end of the month, Ranjit Singh made terms with the Nawab and raised the siege.

The final bid to occupy Multan was made towards the close of 1817, when Ranjit Singh despatched 25,000 soldiers including infantry, cavalry and artillery and one of his best cannons namely the Bhangi or the Zamzama. The command of this expedition was nominally placed in the hands of Prince Kharak Singh, but in reality Mirs Dewan Chand controlled the affairs. Muzaffar Khan was ready to face the situation by declaring a Jihad and inviting all the neighbouring Muslim states to participate in it. He even appealed to Afghanistan for help. But it seems, none came to his rescue, and he had to fight on his own.

The Sikh forces marched on January 4, 1818. Soon they reached Trimmu, from where a small force was despatched to occupy the forts of Khangarh and Muzaffargarh. A reinforcement under Fateh Singh Ahluwalia soon arrived. Before, however, the march onwards commenced an appeal was received from Muzaffar Khan that the Sikhs should retire. He promised to pay his tribute regularly henceforth and accepted the Maharaja's suzerainty. This, however, failed to deflect the Sikhs from their decided path. The city of Multan was

invaded and bombardment of its walls commenced. Several actions were fought and considerable number of human lives lost before the Sikhs succeeded in breaching the city walls. The Pathans shut themselves up in the fort and the city fell under the Sikhs control. The fort was now besieged and an appeal was made to Muzaffar Khan to make surrender, with the promise that he would be honourably treated and granted a Jagir which would provide sufficient means of livelihood. The Nawab agreed to negotiate terms, but before a Sikh deputation arrived on 16th May to clinch the issue, he changed his mind under the influence of some firebrands who aroused his sense of self-respect.

Bombardment of the fort was intensified and the Sikhs succeeded in causing a breach near its Khizri gate. The Pathans, however, put up a valiant resistance, and the breach was soon filled up with sand and earth. Soon after breaches followed, but were filled up one after another as they appeared. Many actions were fought, in which large number of men on both sides bit the dust, till one day, taking advantage of a comparative calm that had followed a day long fight, Sadhu Singh, a dare-devil Akali, made a lightening attack on a breach, butchered the Pathan guards and entered the fort alongwith a few of his followers. His shouts of Sat Sri Akal soon invited other Sikh soldiers to rush to the spot. The Nawab came out accompanied by his sons and nobles, all with naked swords, in their hands. A hand to hand fight ensued in the midst of which the Sikhs drew out their guns and made short work of him and five of his sons. The sixth son was badly wounded and the remaining two submitted to the Sikhs. They, alongwith rest of the family, were taken to Lahore where Ranjit Singh fixed an annual pension of Rs. 30,000 on them.

Ranjit Singh thus succeeded in occupying Multan after sixteen years of his efforts to do so. The event was celebrated with illuminations at Lahore and Amritsar and rich offerings were made at the Sikh temple at Amritsar. The title of Zafar-Jang, a role of honour and a jagir, were conferred on Misr Dewan Chand and suitable titles and rewards were given to others who had distinguished themselves in the fights.

1.4.4 Attock

Before, however, Ranjit Singh finally conquered Multan, the other places of strategic importance under the Afghan control, continued testing his masterful diplomacy and powerful arms. One such place was the fort of Attock situated on the river Indus. This fort had a great strategic importance. It lay on the general route through which all the Central-Asian invaders of India had come and hence it was the guard room of the Punjab on its north-west. With this fort in hand, Ranjit Singh not only could affectively control the turbulent tribes on his side of river Indus but could also use it as a jumping pad to conquer

the Afghan territories beyond.

1.4.5 Kashmir

Ranjit Singh's adventures in Attock, however, were a part of his bigger game in which he determined to occupy Kashmir. This beautiful valley had for long been under the direct control of Afghanistan. When Zaman Shah, the grand son of Ahmed Shah Abdali succeeded to the Afghan throne in 1793, he appointed Ata Mohammad as the Governor of Kashmir. Jehandad Khan, a brother of Ata Mohammad was the Governor of Attock. In the civil war that soon followed in the country, Zaman Shah was dislodged, blinded and forced to flee to India for refuge. Shah Mahmud became the next ruler in 1800. He was, however, removed by his half brother Shah Shuja who succeeded to the Afghan throne in 1803, Shah Mahmud reasserted his power with the help of Fateh Khan of the Barakzai tribe, and was able once again to capture the throne in 1809, when Shah Shuja was expelled from Afghanistan. For a while, Ata Mohammad tried to help Shah Shuja to stage a come back in Afghanistan, but soon differences arose and the latter was held as a prisoner in Kashmir, while his wife Wafa Begum fled to Lahore and took refuge in the court of Ranjit Singh. There she appealed to the Maharaja for help to get the freedom of her husband restored. And in the bargain she confided in the Maharaja that he could get possessions of the celebrated jewel "Koh-i-Nur" which was still with Shah Shuja.

First Expedition : It is in these circumstances that early in 1812 Ranjit Singh prepared to march on Kashmir. This, however, seems to be just an exploratory march. For the hill states of the Punjab yet being only half-subdued, and both Kabul and Kashmir in opposition, the Maharaja could not have thought of occupying Kashmir with one stroke. Besides exploration of the possibility of occupying Kashmir, the Maharaja wanted somehow to secure the person of the Shah Shuja. And in the process if he also could lay his hands on Attock, the whole adventure would be well worth its price.

About the same time, however, as the Maharaja prepared to march on Kashmir, Fateh Khan whom Shah Mahmud had appointed his Prime Minister after occupying the Afghan throne and who now had developed a predominant position in the country, determined on punishing Ata Mohammad for his audacity to have helped Shah Shuja. Both the Maharaja and Fateh Khan, thus marched their respective troops towards Kashmir at about the same time. When suddenly they came across each other, an interesting situation developed. "Neither party desired to come to blows", as Payne writes, "and neither was inclined to advance into the hill with the possibility of having its retreat cut off by the other if the opportunity offered."

A meeting was held at Rohtas to sort out a joint plan of action. Here an agreement was reached that Fateh Khan would march on Kashmir helped by the Sikh soldiers under the command of Mohkam Chand. The Sikhs would also give all facilities to the Afghan troops to march through Rajori and Pir Panjal. In the bargain, the Afghans were to help the Maharaja to conquer Multan, the Maharaja was also to be paid an amount in cash on which opinions differ. Thus, while according to Sohan Lal, the cash payment was to be an amount of ten lakh rupees, according to Murray, the amount was Rs. 9 lakhs. Ranjit Singh himself, however, in his letter written in April, 1813, demanded from Fateh Khan one-third of the Kashmir spoils, besides the Afghan help in the conquest of Multan.

After the Rohtas agreement the two parties jointly marched on Kashmir. At about this time, Ata Mohammad is said to have offered to join Ranjit Singh in a bid to clear the country of Fateh Khan's hold but we have no clear evidence to this effect, nor are we aware of the terms which he offered in the bargain. But making of a common cause with Ata Mohammad against Afghanistan at this stage was probably too ambitious a venture for Ranjit Singh, and he declined the offer if ever it was made. The very fact that he agreed only to play second fiddle with Fateh Khan in the whole affair, proves that he was not yet interested in the direct occupation of the valley. His march was only exploratory.

Helped by Mohkam Chand, Fateh Khan soon occupied Kashmir. But in the final stages of the game, he outwitted the Sikhs and refused to pay them the stipulated price. The Sikh forces had to leave the country in disgust, as the British records say.

The whole expedition, however, did not end up only as a futile exercise for the Sikhs. Apart from some local knowledge which the Sikhs obtained and which was to help them in their future campaigns in Kashmir, Ranjit Singh made two concrete gains. First, he got the person of Shuja from whom he later on was able to obtain the Koh-i-Nur, the prize which more than compensated for whatever losses he had suffered. Secondly, he secured the possession of the fort of Attock from Jehandad Khan. Alarmed at the occupation of Kashmir by Fateh Khan, Ata Mohammad himself surrendered at a nominal cost of one lakh rupees.

Fateh Khan had dumped the Sikhs, but the loss of Attock to him proved to be more than what he had bargained for. The strategic position of Attock and its capture by the Sikhs proved to be a great blow to his own ambitions. Fateh Khan's younger brother, Dost Mohammad, therefore, soon marched with 4000 Afghans to retrieve the situation. A battle with Sikhs at Chuch, the first

ever pitched battle fought between the Afghans and Ranjit Singh, however, gave the Sikhs a decisive victory. Emboldened by this, the Sikhs marched ahead and plundered the Afghan camp at Hazro.

The importance of Ranjit Singh's success at Chuch and Hazro cannot be over estimated. Had Fateh Khan been victorious, with Kashmir in his hands and he would certainly have attempted to win back the whole heritage of Ahmed Shah. "This was the first real victory of the Sikhs over the Afghans", says Burnes, "and was of utmost significance as the power of the latter collapsed altogether on the eastern side of the Indus which Ranjit Singh consolidated under his own rule." Some writers go as far as to say that Ranjit Singh could occupy and hold Attock against all Afghan attempts to dislodge him from the position, and could even march forward and beared the lion in his den at Hazro, why could he not have successfully held his own if he had accepted the offer of Ata Mohammad likethat of Jahandad Khan and occupied Kashmir like he did in the case of Attock ?

The Second Expedition : Ranjit Singh despatched his second expedition to Kashmir under Ram Dayal, the grand-son of Mohkam Chand in 1814. He himself followed personally to supervise supplies and enforcements. This time, however, the situation in the valley was different. The elements of a surprise attack were lacking. The man who now was the Governor of Kashmir, namely Azim Khan, the brother of Fateh Khan, was more resourceful and had greater experience both in the warfare and diplomacy. Besides, he was prepared to meet the attack before it came. For Ranjit Singh on the other hand, it was first experience to invade Kashmir entirely on his own. The Sikhs had to face the vagaries of nature, heavy rains and consequent difficulties in supply. Little wonder, Ram Dayal could stand a pitched battle only with a re-inforcement sent by the Maharaja. But that also failed to tilt balance in his favour.

Opinions differ as to the account and results of this battle. Dewan Amar Nath would like us to have it that the Sikhs killed 2,000 Afghans and returned only after Azim Khan acknowledged the supremacy of the Maharaja. Others, however, hold that both sides proved equal and the situation was saved by Azim Khan by invoking the friendship of Ram Dayal's grandfather Mohkam Chand, and in its name calling off the hostilities.

One cannot, therefore, deny that Ranjit Singh's objective in this campaign was much more than the mere trial of strength to remind the Afghans of their friendship with Mohkam Chand. The price the Maharaja paid both in men and money was not small. Some of his best generals like Desa Singh and Fateh Singh Chhachhi laid down their lives in this expedition.

The Third Expedition : The third expedition to Kashmir was sent under

Misr Dewan Chand in 1819. The situation in the valley this time was more favourable. Fateh Khan, the Prime Minister of Afghanistan had been murdered. Azim Khan left Kashmir to occupy his place. His successor in the valley Jabbar Khan, was less resourceful and weak both in resolve and experience. Moreover, the Sikh occupation of the Peshawar in 1818 sapped whatever self-confidence he had. The Khalsa arms in such circumstances easily succeeded in throwing him into the dust-bin of history and the valley passed under the control of the Sikhs.

The occupation of Kashmir had its importance. It gave a tremendous boost to the pride and prestige of the Maharaja, added considerably to his financial resources and extended his northern frontiers to their natural limits. The Maharaja had already humbled the Afghan in Multan and Peshawar in 1818, and removed the last vestige of the "one mightily Afghan power in the cis-indus territories". The small pockets of territories like Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Mankera, Tonk, Bonnu etc. were soon freed from the Afghan yoke. The Afghan invasions effectively rolled back across the Indus. And now was the turn of the Afghans to face the Sikh invasions into territories which they termed their own.

1.4.6 Peshawar

It is sometimes contended as some British records do that Ranjit Singh had a great ambition to conquer Afghanistan, thus "fulfilling the prophesy of the lawgiver in recovering sandal portals, an exploit which would shed lustre on Ranjit Singh's actions". There were indeed some among his courtiers and generals like Hari Singh Nalwa who insisted on following a forward policy towards Afghanistan. Ranjit Singh is said to have once remarked to Wade, the British political Agent at Ludhiana, "the French officers tell me, If I place ten regular battalions, two or three regiments of cavalry, and a few pieces of artillery at their disposal, they will engage and conquer Kabul and subdue the whole of Afghanistan to my authority."

But it seems, the Maharaja himself never seriously entertained the idea of this conquest. There may be reasons for this. He, thus, had already once experienced a disaster in Kashmir, and should not have easily undertaken another costly and risky venture such as this. His march into Afghanistan, besides, arousing the jealousy of the British, should not have been taken kindly by Russia. Besides, there were powerful frontier tribes between Afghanistan and his own country, which could not easily be tamed, and which could have made things utterly difficult for the Maharaja. His caution in this matter is indeed revealed from the fact that although he conquered these tribes, yet he never ruled them directly. He kept two frontiers on the North-West as later on the British did, but beyond that and upto the outer line, he

was content with having established only his supremacy. The tribes within two frontier lines were ruled through their chiefs. Ranjit Singh occasionally sending his troops to bring to order a refractory chief, or a rebellious tribe. His policy was that of "butcher and bolt" as the British later called it. The Sikh forces would venture into these areas with a lightning speed, would witness brutal punishments on the erring people but would immediately bolt, before indeed the reprisal came.

In the light of the above remarks, it would make it easier to understand as to how Ranjit Singh conquered Peshawar in 1818, but thought it advisable not to annex to his dominion before late as 1834.

The Conquest : Ranjit Singh conquered Peshawar in 1818, the same year as he occupied Multan. In 1818, the conditions in Afghanistan were precarious and they made the realisation of the Maharaja's ambition easy. We have already seen how Shah Mahmud recaptured the Afghan throne in 1809 with the help of Fateh Khan Barkzai, Fateh Khan was made Prime Minister. But the later had his own ambition, and relegating the monarch's authority to the background, he soon started wielding predominant authority over the state affairs. Fateh Khan had several brothers all of whom he appointed to important posts. The Afghans possessions across the Khyber which consisted of the territories of Peshawar, Naushera, etc. were handed to the Wazir's brother, Yar Mohammad Khan, Sultan Mohammad Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan to govern. Shah Mahmud tolerated the excess of his Wazir upto a limit but when that limit was crossed, his son Karmran had the Wazir done to death. It is the development which compelled Azim Khan suddenly to leave Kashmir and avenge himself on the miscreants for the murder of his brother. He was able to get both the monarch and his son imprisoned, and Shah Mahmud's cousin Shah Ayub was put on throne. The turmoil offered Ranjit Singh an opportunity, and it was to benefit from this that he invaded Peshawar in 1818, the year before he occupied Kashmir.

As the Sikh forces appeared before Peshawar, Yar Mohammad and Dost Mohammad the joint governors of the place fled to take refuge in the Yusufzai hills. Ranjit Singh, however, adopted a cautious policy. Instead of straight away annexing Peshawar to his dominion, he accepted a nazrana of Rs. 25,000 from Jehandad Khan, the ex-governor of Attock, and handed over the city. The Maharaja retired to Lahore. As soon as he returned, Yar Mohammad recaptured the city and expelled Jehandad Khan. The Maharaja reacted almost immediately and sent another Sikh expedition. Yar Mohammad himself having offered this time to become a Sikh tributary, the Government of the city was conferred on him, and the Sikhs retreated after having received a nazrana of Rs. 50,000 that the Afghan chief paid in cash.

The Battle of Naushera : Immediately after this, the Maharaja started conquering other border towns in the neighbourhood over which some independent Afghan chiefs ruled. This was considered necessary for the ultimate annexation of Peshawar itself. The Sikhs thus occupied Mankerah and Darban. In 1820, Dera Ismail Khan was captured in 1821 and Dera Ghazi Khan in 1822. In the meanwhile, occupation of Kashmir by Sikhs in 1819 boosted their morale.

The Sikhs continued to collect their annual tribute from Peshawar. In 1823, Azim Khan decided to challenge the Sikh infidels at Peshawar, and incited some tribal people inhabiting territories between Attock and Peshawar for Jihad.

The whole of this frontier area was soon inflamed. Prince Sher Singh was despatched from Lahore to meet the situation. He was followed soon by another force which consisted of some seasoned generals like Hari Singh Nalwa and Attar Singh Sandhanwalia. The Maharaja himself accompanied by Misr Dewan Chand followed shortly after. The two sides met in a sanguine combat at Naushera. The Afghans displayed the valour in their characteristic ferocity. Their primitive religious fanaticism became handy. The Sikhs lost some important leaders like Akali Phoola Singh, the Gorkha Balu Bahadur and Garbha Singh, and it looked as if they were on the verge of losing the day. Suddenly, the Maharaja himself jumped into the fray, shouting in the Sikh call of '*Sat Sri Akal*'. This played at the necessary trick. The Afghans thought that a reinforcement had arrived while the Sikh spirits were rejuvenated.

Burnes writes, "The Sikhs won a victory because of the word of '*Sat Sri Akal*'. Greatly distressed, Azim Khan "wept and tore his head, and inveighed vehemently against his brethren, who had brought so dire a calamity upon him", thus writes Latif. Ranjit Singh re-entered the city on 6th March, 1824 amidst the cries of '*Bole So Nihal*' and '*Sat Sri Akal*'. Yar Khan who had fled as the troops from the two sides approached returned. Maharaja Ranjit Singh found it politic to re-appoint him in his old position, but with annual tribute enhanced to Rs. 100,000 and the Sikhs returned to Lahore.

Latif writes "Just as the battle with Fateh Khan on the plain of Chuch decided the supremacy of Sikhs on the east of Indus, this campaign established his power between that river and Peshawar.

The Battle of Saidu

The Battle of Naushehra was followed by four years of peace in Peshawar, till in 1827 Sayad Ahmed appeared on the scene. He declared himself *Paghambur*, incited the Afghans for *Jehad* and captured Peshawar from Yar Khan. Hari Singh

Nalwa was sent to retrieve the situation. He defeated the Afghans at Saidu

and restored Yar Khan to his authority. Soon, however, the Afghans collecting in a more formidable number, murdered Yar Khan and reoccupied the city. This time Sher Singh accompanied by French Officer, Ventura, marched to face the challenge. Peshawar was recaptured. But the Maharaja, as R.R. Sethi writes, "still distrusted his ability to maintain his hold over that distant country and its fierce population between whom and the Sikhs there existed proverbial antagonism. Peshawar again was annexed, and this time Sultan-Mohammad, a brother of Yar Khan was appointed the governor on conditions same as before."

The Annexation and After : The final annexation of Peshawar came in 1834. Hari Singh Nalwa had been advocating forwards policy for quite some time. The Barkzai brothers at Peshawar also could not be relied upon for ever. Just about this time, Shah Shuja helped both by Ranjit Singh and the British, made one more bid to capture the Afghan throne, Dost Mohammad was now the Amir of Afghanistan. He, like his brother, Yar Muhammad had never reconciled to the loss of Peshawar. One of the condition on which Shah Shuja had been offered help by Ranjit Singh to recapture Afghan throne was that in the event of his success Shah would renounce all his claims on Peshawar. But soon after the agreement he was said to have behaved in such a manner as convinced Ranjit Singh that none of the Afghan rulers could ever be content unless they re- occupied the lost city. The Maharaja, therefore, took advantage of the situation. When Dost Muhammad got busy to meet challenge from Shah Shuja, the Sikh forces silently marched into the city, Sultan Muhammad fled. The annexation of Peshawar was announced on 6th March, 1834, and Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed its first Sikh Governor. When news of the annexation of Peshawar reached Dost Muhammad, he was busy in a battle with Shah Shuja. The news stung him into ferocity. He flung his troops in desperation and routed his enemy. Immediately after this he appealed to Ranjit Singh to surrender Peshawar to him and agreed to pay to the Sikhs the tribute Sultan Muhammad had been paying. The Maharaja's reply was curt to which Dost reacted with the declaration of War.

In the middle of April, the "two forces stood arrayed against each other on their respective borders". Dost Muhammad had made formidable preparations, and the Maharaja decided first to try diplomacy. He deputed an American adventurer Harlan and Faqir Aziz-ud-Din to negotiate peace with Dost. The real intention, however, was to delay the Afghan attack till the Sikh forces were concentrated, and to bribe some of his allies. The Maharaja's agents succeeded in both designs.

Dost Muhammad suddenly developed suspicion, but his brother Sultan Muhammad who had already been bribed, saved Faqir and Harlan from arrest.

In the meanwhile, Dost Muhammad was surrounded from different sides, and was suddenly brought within the artillery range. It was hazardous in the circumstances to give the Sikhs a battle and he preferred to retreat with bag and baggage on 11th May, 1835.

Before Dost Muhammad could recover from his shock, Ranjit Singh built a fort at Jamraud at the very mouth of Khyber Pass. Some other forts were also constructed to consolidate the Sikh position. On 30th April, 1837, last of the Afghan bids to dislodge the Sikhs came. Most of the Sikh troops had been sent away to Lahore to attend the marriage of Prince Nau Nihal Singh. Akbar Khan, a son of Dost Mohammad, took advantage of the comparatively unprotected state of Jamraud fort, suddenly delivered an attack. A fierce battle ensued in which both sides suffered heavy casualties. Hari Singh Nalwa died fighting in this battle, but day ultimately remained with the Sikhs.

When Ranjit Singh got the news of the death of Hari Singh Nalwa, he "Shed tears from the eyes of his soul." But he knew at the same time that Peshawar had been saved for good.

1.4.7 Keywords

1. Bolan Pass
2. Cis-Indus territory
3. Khizri gate
4. Zufer-Jang
5. Akali

1.4.8 Long Questions

1. How did Maaraja Ranjit Singh conquer Multan? What was the significance of this conquest?
2. Discuss the main stages of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's conquest and annexation of Peshawar?

1.4.9 Short Questions

Write short notes on:

1. Conquest of Attock
2. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa
3. Koh-i-Nur
4. Shah Shuja

1.4.10 Suggested Reading

1. Chhabra, G.S. : An Advanced History of the Punjab, Vol.II.

RANJIT SINGH'S RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH

- 1.5.1 Objectives
- 1.5.2 Introduction
- 1.5.3 Ranjit Singh and Cis-Sutlej States
- 1.5.4 Anglo-Sikh Relations
- 1.5.5 Metcalfe Mission
- 1.5.6 Keywords
- 1.5.7 Long Questions
- 1.5.8 Short Questions
- 1.5.9 Suggested Readings

1.5.1 Objectives

In this lesson we will discuss Maharaja Ranjit Singh's relation with the British. This lesson will also cover Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy towards Cis-Sutlej states.

1.5.2 Introduction**CIS-SUTLEJ STATES**

The cis-Sutlej i.e., the state in the Jamuna and Sutlej region. Four Misals, i.e., the Nishanwalias, the Nihangs, the Karorsinghias and the Phulkian had carved out principalities, in this part. Besides them there were the states of Ladwa, Thanesar, Buria and the Muslim states of Malerkotla and Kunjpura. The Phulkian Misal had, however, reduced others to insignificance.

The founder of the Phulkian Misal was Phul, nephew of Kala, a Sidhu Brar of Bhatti tribe and devoted Sikh of Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru. The Guru is said to have blessed Phul and brother Sandali during his stay at Nathana and prophesized the future greatness of their progeny, Phul was the common ancestor of the Rajas of Patiala, Nabha and Jind, called the Phulkian Rajas after him.

Phul was succeeded by Ram Chand. Ala Singh (1690-1765), the real founder of the greatness of the house of Patiala, was the third son of Ram Chand. In the Ghallughara of 1762 A.D., he was taken a prisoner by Ahmed Shah Abdali but was ransomed on the payment of 4 lakhs of rupees by his wife

Rani Fatto. Alla Singh passed away and he was succeeded by his grandson Amar Singh whom Abdali confirmed in his sovereignty. The Raja extended his dominion upto Sirsa and Bathinda but died in 1781 A.D. He was succeeded by Sahib Singh. The Marathas invaded the states but Bibi Sahib Kaur, the sister of Raja, repulsed them. Similarly, George Thomas, did not succeed in occupying this territory. But as soon as Sahib Singh took up the reins of Government in his own hands, decline set in because of his weak approach and imbecility.

When Ranjit Singh became the Maharaja there were Phulkian principalities, i.e. Patiala under Sahib Singh, Nabha under Jaswant Singh and Jind under Bhag Singh. In contrast to Sahib Singh, Jaswant Singh was more sober and Bhag Singh, the maternal uncle of Ranjit Singh was more shrewd and intelligent.

The political situation in the Malwa region and its proximity to Delhi whetted the expansionist appetite of Perron, the French General of Daulat Rao Sindhia, who after his ascendancy at Delhi in 1797 A.D., was determined to extend the influence of his Marathas Chief, on George Thomas of Hansi, the English adventurer, who laid a seige to Jind in 1798 A.D. Perron despatched the third Scindia brigade under Louis Bourquin to help the Malwa chiefs against George Thomas and the latter was driven off. Sahib Singh exchanged turban with Perron and acknowledged the Marathas supremacy. Perron then tried to cast his net upon Ranjit Singh but the Maharaja was too shrewd to fall in the Maratha trap. In 1803, Louis Bourquin was defeated by General Lake beneath the walls of Delhi and treaty of Surgi-Arjangaon sounded the death-knell of Maratha dreams in northern India.

In 1805 A.D., a serious menace loomed large on the Punjab, Jaswant Rao Holkar after his defeats at Farukhabad and Deeg sought help and refuge from the rulers of the Punjab. The cis-Sutlej chiefs assembled at Patiala and extended their sympathies to him. Beyond that they dared not to do anything as it was reported that General Lake had reached Karnal in close pursuit of the vanquished fugitive. Marathas chiefs Holkar had his ally Amir Khan Rohila maltreated Sahib Singh who was at loggerheads with his Rani, Aus Kaur. He is said to have remarked to Amir Khan, "God has assuredly given us two pigeons to pluck : do you espouse the cause of the one, while I take up the other."

Holkar did not stay long at Patiala, panic-stricken he fled to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh was extremely hospitable but he possessed enough political acumen to believe that Holkar had broken down and refused to be drawn into Anglo- Maratha conflict, which could have made the Punjab battle-field and jeopardized the stability of his infant kingdom. Holkar came to terms with the

British on 24th December, 1805. Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia also concluded a Treaty of Friendship with the English on January 1, 1806 by which Holkar would remove his army immediately and the British government agreed not to enter the territories of the Sikh chieftains as long as they abstained from any intercourse with its enemies. The wording of the Treaty was vague.

1.5.3 Ranjit Singh and the Cis-Sutlej States

In 1806, Bhag Singh of Jind, maternal uncle of Ranjit Singh, invited the Maharaja to intervene in the quarrel between Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha and Sahib Singh of Patiala. The bone of contention was village Doladhi, a border village 2 miles away from Nabha. One, Tara Singh, an official of the Patiala Darbar was murdered here. Sahib Singh accused Jaswant Singh for the crime and seized Doladhi in retribution. Jind supported Nabha, while Thanesar and Kaithal rallied round Patiala. A petty squabble was going to escalate into a war. To avert it, Ranjit Singh reached at the head of large army. He restored Doladhi to Nabha but to appease Sahib Singh, he gave him Bassian, Talwandi, Jagraon and 31 villages near about Ludhiana and the surrounding area was conquered and given over to Raja Bhag Singh.

A year later, Ranjit Singh was again invited to Patiala. Aas Kaur the artful Rani of Patiala invited Ranjit Singh to espouse her cause and intercede on behalf of her infant son, Karam Singh and get him a jagir. The Maharaja persuaded Sahib Singh to grant a jagir of Rs. 50,000 to the Kanwar. Rani Aas Kaur in gratitude gave to Ranjit Singh a diamond necklace worth Rs. 70,000 and a brass cannon Kara Khan.

Ranjit Singh's inroads into the Cis-Sutlej area caused a consternation. The aggressive intentions of Maharaja were clear. He was all out to annex these territories in order to unify the Punjab and raise a strong sovereign state. "If Ranjit Singh could have begun his Cis-Sutlej career several years earlier he might have taken full advantage of the Anglo-Maratha war and subsequent non-intervention phase of British foreign policy and might have forestalled the British in this region." (N.K. Sinha, *The Rise of the Sikh Power*, page 106). Perhaps Ranjit Singh did not feel himself strong enough to subjugate all the Malwa chiefs and contended himself with exacting tributes, *nazaranas* and guns.

The nervous chieftains secretly met at Samana. According to Bute Shah, the choice before them was immediate end at the hands of the Ranjit Singh as if by brain affliction or a slow death at the hands of the British as if by consumption. They preferred the latter. A deputation consisting of Raja Bhag Singh (Jind), Lal Singh (Kaithal), Chaen Singh (Dewan of Patiala) and Sardars of Jagadhari and Bhadour waited upon Archibald Seton, the British Resident at

Delhi, on March 15, 1808 A.D.

1.5.4 Anglo-Sikh Relations

The British, the Maharaja and Cis-Sutlej States

It was in 1799 A.D. that for the first time Ranjit Singh found a mention in the official despatch sent by Collins, the British Resident with Sindhia. He informed the Governor-General of the possibility of an alliance between Ranjit Singh and Shah Zaman. In view of Napoleon Bonaparte's plan of invading India, Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) sent Mir Yusuf Ali Khan along with Raur Mal, a Sikh Vakil to counteract the insidious proposal of Sikhs-Afghan alliance. Passing through the Cis-Sutlej area where the chief eyed his mission with distrust he reached Lahore in 1800 A.D. when the threat of Durranis had receded. Except establishing a vague type of rapport between the English and the Rajas of the Punjab, Yusuf Ali's mission does not appear to have made much impression upon Ranjit Singh.

In 1804 A.D., David Ochterlony the British Resident at Delhi heard of a treaty concluded by Ranjit Singh with General Perron at Karnal. His report was, however, not well founded.

In the third Maratha war, Wellesley desired to secure the cooperation or at least neutrality of the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh's response was encouraging as he showed his readiness to enter into a defensive treaty with the English. But Jodh Singh of Kalsia, Sher Singh of Buria, Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, Roy Singh of Jagadhari and Mehtab Singh of Thanesar were pro-Marathas and fought against the English in 1803 A.D. Punitive action was taken against them. Bhag Singh of Jind and Lal Singh of Kaithal were asked to join the expedition. They bargained for a price. Ultimately, except for Gurdit Singh of Ladwa all were granted amnesty. A portion of Gurdit Singh's territory was distributed. Ranjit Singh during these days, captured Phagwara and threatened Patiala. Sahib Singh sought help from the British but the latter did not want to quarrel with him.

Ochterlony's proposal (7th December, 1804) that the whole country upto the bank of Sutlej be annexed was turned down as 'wild, extravagant and futile'. The British policy with regard to the Sikh states was defined in a Minute drawn by Lumseden, the Chief Secretary to Governor General's Council at Calcutta (January 13, 1805). It opposed the subjugation of their territory as unjust and inexpedient. The government was averse to annexing it. To reduce the Sikh chiefs to the position of tributaries would too not bring any substantial revenue. Such suggestions were impracticable contrary to public law and meant unwarranted aggrandisement. The British Government did not wish to entangle itself beyond the Jamuna.

In 1805 A.D. while Ranjit Singh was occupied in the seige of Multan, Jaswant Rao Holkar reached Amritsar. The Maharaja cold shouldered him, sent him back and entered into a Treaty of Friendship and Amity with General Lake in January, 1806 A.D.

In the Malwa expeditions of Ranjit Singh, the English remained neutral. They thought it was a local affair and the transaction did not harm or concern them. In his letter to the Resident, Ranjit Singh assured Ochterlony, 'I am particularly attached to you (meant the English). Ochterlony reported that the proceedings of the Lahore Raja would in no way effect the tranquility of the Doab.

In their meeting with Archibald Seton on March 15, 1808, the deputationists showed their uneasiness and expressed fears that their states going to be grabbed up in one mouthful by the avaracious Maharaja. They sought protection from the power that held Delhi, which according to them, had always exercised paramountcy over them.

Seton considered their apprehensions ill founded. He reminded them of the neutral and non-interfering policy of the Company. He, however, agreed to forward their supplication to the Governor-General. Seton, however, received a sharp reproof from the government for giving the chiefs the hope that their request might be considered favourably. The reasons of this apathy was the reports of Bonaparte's designs to reach India through Persia and Afghanistan. The government was sending embassies to Teheran, Kabul and Lahore to encounter French intrigues. The interview of the Sardars would naturally be viewed with suspicious by the Maharaja. Thus, Cis-Sutlej chiefs received no positive assurance. The British in their own interests were desirous of establishing a closer contact with Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja too was keen to have an offensive and defensive alliance with them.

In June, 1807, Napoleon signed a Treaty of Tilsit with Czar Alexander of Russia. On his arrival in India in July, Lord Minto, like his countrymen suffered from Francophobia as is evident from his letter dated February 2, 1808. He wrote, "Ardous as such an undertaking must necessarily be, we are not warranted in deeming it in the present situation of affairs to be altogether chimerical and impracticable under the guidance of a man (Napoleon) whose energy and success appear almost commensurate with his ambitions." To counteract the dreaded French designs, he departed from the policy of non- intervention followed earlier by Cornwallis and John Barlow. He sent embassies to Persia, Afghanistan, Sind and Punjab to conciliate the princes, to enter defensive engagement with them to oppose the projected French invasion. He also modified his policy towards the Cis-Sutlej states,

approved British protection to these because military experts had held that Sutlej was a better frontier than the Jamuna for purposes of defence. To carry out this policy, a twenty-three years old young diplomat Charles T. Metcalfe was accredited on a mission to Lahore. He was enjoined to adopt a non-committal attitude on the question of Cis-Sutlej states. Metcalfe has been described as 'an excellent public servant' who had already served as an assistant to the Resident at Delhi.

1.5.5 Metcalfe Mission

Accompanied by small escort of Muhammadan sepoys, Metcalfe left Delhi on July 28, 1808. At Patiala, Raja Sahib Singh received him with profuse demonstration of joy, surrendering the keys of the town for restoration to him as a gift from the British government. The Maharaja met him at Khem Karan near Kasur on 11th September, 1808. He eyed his mission with suspicion and Metcalfe felt sore that his reception lacked cordiality and he was regarding as a dangerous enemy to be guarded against." Matters worsened when Ranjit Singh got wind of the envoys clandestine intercourse with several Sikh chiefs and his attempts to despatch spies to Kabul. His sinister designs were evident from his hesitation to disclose the exact objects of his mission.

To the chagrin of Metcalfe, on 26th September, the Maharaja abruptly marched across the Beas directing the Mission to follow. The treaty with the British to counteract the French menace could wait till he established an *ipso facto* hegemony over the wavering Malwa princes. Evidently he meant to present a *fait accompli*, Metcalfe followed. On October 1, 1808, the Maharaja captured Faridkot, a tributary of Patiala and on 22nd he exacted a tribute of Rs. 100,000 from the Pathan ruler of Malerkotla, requesting Metcalfe to wait for him at Ghugrana.

Bhag Singh (Jind), Lal Singh (Kaithal) and Jaswant Singh (Nabha) now wooed and received favours of the Maharaja. After conquering Shahbad and Ambala he met Sahib Singh and other Cis-Sutlej chiefs at the sacred city of Lakhnaur, modern district of Ambala. He tried all means to dispel their fears and exchange turbans with Sahib Singh on 24th November, 1808. Thence he marched to Amritsar. Metcalfe arrived there on 10th December to resume negotiations.

At Amritsar, they came to brass tacks. Ranjit Singh desired :-

- (i) An offensive and defensive alliance with the British.
- (ii) The British should acknowledge his sovereignty over the whole Sikh country and not to oppose him over suzerainty on the Cis-Sutlej Chiefs.

- (iii) The British should not interfere in favour of Afghanistan in case of his quarrel with the Amir.

Metcalf considered these propositions reasonable though he suggested that Ranjit Singh's paramountcy over the Sikhs be made revocable if in future it was to the British advantage to do so. By October, 1808, the Franco Persian menace receded and with it the British attitude underwent a change. The demands of Ranjit Singh were regarded as outrageous and it was decided to take the Cis-Sutlej areas under British protection even at the risk of war with Lahore because the introduction of Sikh power in this region would disturb the security of British possessions. Metcalfe was censured for following Ranjit Singh in Malwa. Lord Minto issued orders to Lieut. Col. Ochterlony, the Garrison Commander at Allahabad, who had already worked as Resident at Delhi to make a demonstration of British might in the vicinity of Patiala. Additional forces were sent to Karnal, Saharanpur, Meerut, Delhi and Rewari. Archibald Seton was advised to convince the Malwa chiefs the benefits of British protection, the princeling of Buriya and Kalsia went over to the British, those of Kaithal and Thanesar waited, while Gurdit Singh of Ladwa declared his allegiance to Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh on his side also mounted the counter-offensive. Phillaur and Ambala were garrisoned. The chiefs of Jind and Nabha were summoned to Amritsar. He was prepared for the show down. Metcalfe served him an ultimatum on 12th December refusing to acknowledge Maharaja's paramountcy over the Cis-Sutlej states. Cold war started in all vehemence. Bhag Singh arrived from Jind to mediate. Ochterlony demanded the evacuation of Lahore troops from Ambala and Cis-Sutlej area. Sahib Singh expressed childish delight at their withdrawal and other Sardars vied with one another in the profusion of their goodwill to the British. On February 9, 1809, an 'Itilah Nama' (letter of information) was issued by David Ochterlony from Ludhiana declaring that Lahore forces would evacuate the fortresses of Kharar, Khanpur and other places and withdraw to the other side of Sutlej. "Shorn of all vagueness, the proclamation, was an ultimatum of war if the State of Lahore showed its unwillingness to concede the British demands."

These developments came as a bombshell to Ranjit Singh. "It seemed to shock that chief, wrote Metcalfe, "who immediately mounted his horse and was seen galloping furiously round the palace in a circle." He was perhaps subduing his fury. Faqir Aziz-ud-Din vigorously remonstrated with Metcalfe at the menacing attitude of his government.

A few days after came Moharram, an occasion for mourning of the Shia Muslims and one hundred Muslim escort of Metcalfe took out 'Tazia'. The

Akalis objected to their passage near the Darbar Sahib. A brawl occurred, Phoola Singh's Akalis fell upon them but the disciplined sepoy of Metcalfe repulsed them with casualties. This incident reinforced Ranjit Singh's conviction about the superiority of the British army. His discomfiture was complete.

On April 25, 1809 A.D. Ranjit Singh signed the Treaty, The Treaty of Amritsar. Article 1 : Perpetual friendship shall subsist between the British government and the State of Lahore... the British government will have no concern with the

territories and subjects of the Raja to the northward of the river Sutlej.

Article 2 : The Raja will never maintain in the territory which he occupies on the left bank of the river Sutlej more troops than are necessary for the internal duties.

Article 3 : In the event of violation... the treaty shall be considered null and void.

Article 4 : C.T. Metcalfe engages to procure within two months a copy of the same ratified by the Governor-General. By an *Itilah Nama* dated May 3, 1809, Ochterlony informed the chiefs of Malwa and Sirhind that they had been taken under British protection and they 'shall in future be secured from the authority and influence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh'. They were exempted from all pecuniary tribute to the British government. They would remain in full exercise of the right to authority in their possession. They would assist the British and expel the enemy of the British etc.

Why did Ranjit Singh sign the treaty and avoid arbitrament of war ? G.L. Chopra enumerates and explains the following reasons :

- (i) He entertained great fear of the English arms and discipline.
- (ii) He had seen how Sindhia and Holkar failed.
- (iii) He had witnessed how Metcalfe's escort had defeated the Akalis in an affray.
- (iv) Most of the Sardars who had been dispossessed were jealous and were likely to revolt. His authority was not adequately consolidated as yet.
- (v) Many years later, the Maharaja told Captain Wade that he left decision in favour or against the Treaty to Guru Granth Sahib received a favourable *Shabad* (word) in reply.
- (vi) His was an infant kingdom too weak as yet to face storms. With the solicitude inherent in all builders, he feared to expose the kingdom he had created to the risk of war and chose instead, the

policy of "yielding and yielding".

Critical Examination of the Treaty

The treaty of Amritsar is a land-mark in the history of the Punjab. While the English writers like Cunningham, Griffin, Payne etc., have praised Ranjit Singh for concluding an alliance with the British and have described it a master stroke of his statesmanship. Most of the Indian historians have vehemently criticised him for his timidity in signing under duress. The *advantages* which accrued to the Maharaja were as follows :

1. It gave him *Carte blanche* towards the north of Sutlej and enabled him to conquer Multan, Kashmir, Derajat and Peshawar.

2. It secured his eastern frontiers, left free his dominations to the North-West on one hand to the Himalayas on the other. Metcalfe had foretold that Ranjit Singh would reap the fruits of alliance in twenty year times. In 1827, he admitted the truth of the prophecy.

3. He carved out a formidable sovereign state "out of the jarring and discordant elements of the Hindus, the Muslims and Sikhs." (Ganda Singh, *The British Occupation of the Punjab*).

The British gains from the Treaty were apparent. With a friendly Ranjit Singh acting as a sentinel to the north of the Sutlej, they could deal effectively with the Nepalese, Gurkhas, the Pindaris, the Marhatas and the Burmese. They had cut Ranjit Singh to size and applied brakes to his aggrandisement towards Delhi. They had prevented him from knitting the Sikhs into compact Sikh monarchy. The seeds of discord were sown between the Malwa and the Majha Sikhs. They turned the Punjab into a buffer state to bear the brunt of possible attacks by the Russian, the French or the Afghans.

The Cis-Sutlej chiefs gained a long lease of life under the protecting bayonets of the British. They had been saved from imminent absorption and they returned their gratitude to the British whenever the latter were in difficulties. Their feudal perspective refused to distinguish between selfish and national interests. For almost a century and a half, these chiefs ruled arbitrarily, rode roughshod with the aspirations of their people and squandered away the revenues on court frivolities. Their only concern was to keep their masters in good humour. By their betrayal they had also disrupted the Khalsa, the creation of Guru Gobind Singh. The responsibility for the mis-rule in the area must be shared by the British. In 1818, Ochterlony confessed that his proclamation of 1809 had been based on an erroneous impression.

"The Treaty of Amritsar was a grievous blow to Ranjit Singh's dream of a Unified Punjab" (Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, Page 94).

The prestige of the Maharaja found itself at the lowest. The Sikhs were known for their militancy but their leader had given up his cherished goal without a fight. Ranjit Singh suffered a diplomatic defeat and had "to put his pride in his pocket and had to eat a humble pie.", writes N.K. Sinha. Besides checkmating his designs to become undisputed over-lord of the whole of northern India, the British had come nearer Lahore, which ultimately effected the stability of his kingdom if not during his life, it certainly did it after his death. It gave the English enough scope for their sordid machinations. This lay in why towards the end of his life, he prophesied 'Sabh lal ho jaega', i.e., the whole map of India will be painted red. It was cry of despair and pathos from an old lion. His mind was now constantly obsessed with the fear of their might and though the British, on occasions did violate some terms of the Treaty or interpreted it to their advantages as for instance, the area covered by the river Sutlej or disputed his lordship on his possession situated on the northern side of river etc. Ranjit Singh adhered to his plighted word like a classical and unsophisticated warrior even when they were in hot water and their position was vulnerable.

In defence of Ranjit Singh : It may be said that he knew his limitation and had grasped stark realities of the situation. He understood what was possible and what was not. The downfall of every Indian power, wrote Trotter, "which had measured arms with us, is a constant reflection with him" (Trotter, *Earl of Auckland*). The English by contrast possessed vast resources in men and war material and their armies were well-trained and well-disciplined. It was prudent on his part to recognize their strength and not decimate men in wild and ambition enterprises. "An armed conflict with the British under these circumstances might have proved disastrous and deprived India of a bright chapter in its history and the Khalsa its crowning glory in the days to come. Like a practical statesman, therefore, he made the best of a bad bargain" (Ganda Singh, *Occupation of the Punjab*, page 15). "Ranjit Singh took the whole thing philosophically and sportingly. He had played a political game of chess and lost it to an opponent, cleverer than himself and what was the end of the matter. There were better things for him to do than chasing a shadow, even if the shadow was a big chunk of the Indian Empire." (Faqir Syed Waheed-ud-din— *The Real Ranjit Singh*, page 81).

1.5.6 Keywords

1. Nihangs
2. Ochterlony's proposal
3. Malwa chiefs
4. Treaty of Amritsar

1.5.7 Long Questions

1. Give an account of Anglo-Sikh relations from 1800-1839.
2. Discuss the circumstances leading to the Treaty of Amritsar.

1.5.8 Short Questions

1. Cis-Sutlej States
2. Treaty of Amritsar
3. Metcalfe Mission

1.5.9 Suggested Readings

1. N.K. Sinha : *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 40 to 58.
2. A.C. Banerjee : *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, pp. 17 to 50.

**RANJIT SINGH'S RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH-SINDTANGLE AND
TRADE AND NAVIGATION TREATIES**

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1.6.1 Objectives

In this lesson we will discuss Maharaja Ranjit Singh's relation with the British. This lesson will also cover Maharaja Ranjit Singh's and Britisher's policy towards Sind and Shikarpur.

1.6.2 Introduction

Sind lies to the south of Punjab on both sides of Indus river and touches the Arabian sea on the west. It is surrounded on both sides by arid deserts. The river gives its name, its life and its wealth.

Akbar conquered Sindh in 1591 A.D. and it remained a part of Mughal empire upto 1737 A.D. Tribal people, called the Talpurs or Kalhoras, threw away the yoke of the Mughals and established their supremacy that year but two years later Nadir Shah, claimed Sindh. In 1773 A.D., Mir Fateh Ali, Baluch Chief deprived Timur Shah, son and successor of Ahmed Shah Abdali, of the province of Sind. Later on, it was parcelled out between his brothers Gulam Ali, Karan Ali and Murad Ali, who made Hyderabad their capital and his cousin Sohrab Khan and Thora Khan who made Khairpur and Mirpur respectively as their capitals. Fateh Ali was succeeded by Gulam Ali in 1802 A.D., Karam Ali in 1811 A.D. and then by Murad Ali, while Rustam Khan succeeded to the principality of Khairpur and Sher Muhammad to that of Mirpur. The Mir of

Hyderabad asserted a vague sort of suzerainty over the other two.

1.6.3 Sind and English

The East India Company looked with longing eyes on the river Indus for its navigational, commercial and political values. A factory was established at Thattabut because it did not yield enough returns, it was abandoned.

In 1800, Nathan Crowe, a civilian officer of Bombay, once again established commercial relations with the Talpur Mir of Sindh. But after two years, the Amirs suspecting the political designs of the British, expelled them. In 1808

A.D. Captian David Seton was sent to restore relations but his offensive treaty with Mir Gulam Ali of Talpur was abrogated by the Government of India. In view of the French danger Lord Minto sent Nicholos Smith to negotiate with Amirs of Sind. A Treaty was signed by Amir Gulam Ali in 1809 A.D. by which the Amirs agreed not to allow the tribe of the French in Sindh. Derryama, a Hindu merchant warned them about the intentions of the British. His estimate was that this tribe never began as friends without ending as enemies". In 1818 A.D., Ranjit Singh conquered Multan and three years later wrested Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan from the Daudpotras of Bahawalpur. This brought him to borders of Sind. In the meantime, in 1820 A.D. the British had occupied Chuch. In November, 1820, the British renewed and revised the Treaty of 1809 A.D. with the Amirs. In 1821 A.D., William Moorcraft in his report emphasised the navigational importance of the river Indus for purposes of commerce and trade. His suggestion was, however, dismissed by Lord Amherst as an unprofitable speculation.

1.6.4 Ranjit Singh & Sind

Ranjit Singh for long contemplated the conquest of Sind and Baluchistan which lay to the west of Indus. These areas were a part of the Abdali empire, which he had supplanted on this side of the Khyber. He had already annexed territories contiguous to it. Apart from commercial benefits and expansion of his kingdom the conquest of Sindh would carry his frontiers to the coast of the Arabian Sea, from where he could establish relations with the outside world.

He thought the British too should have no objection to his plans because the Treaty of Amritsar (1809) gave him a carte blanche on the western side of the Sutlej.

But the British thought otherwise, they had their own axe to grind, they desired to extend their influence towards Afghanistan to stall France or Russia or any other power from that side. They would not like the Sikhs to reach the sea, as their contracts with the European world could prove detrimental to their

interests. To them the Treaty of Amritsar precluded British interference south of the Sutlej only upto the confluence with the Indus and not beyond it. Though outwardly they showed all considerations for the Maharaja yet "in fact they aimed at encompassing his downfall by encircling the Punjab either by their own territory or by the territory of those who were subservient to their will and prepared to carry out their bidding in every matter."

In 1829 A.D., a great alarm had been caused in England at the advance of Russia towards the south-east. Instructions were sent to India to extend British influence on the Amirs of Sind.

1.6.5 Anglo-Sikh Relations and Sind

It was not unnatural on the part of Ranjit Singh to think of adding Sind to his Kingdom. It was equally natural on the part of the British not to permit him to do so. Both sides drew their respective plans.

But for Moorcraft's description the British government had no detailed information about the course of the delta and the navigability of the river. They now sent Alexander Burnes (1831) to survey the classical stream and deputed Trevelyan, Deputy Secretary to Government to collect information about trade and commerce of Sind. Alexander Burnes was sent to deliver a friendly letter from King William IV of England to Maharaja Ranjit Singh alongwith a present of coach and five horses. He sailed in the river Indus gauging its depth, measuring its width, charting its direction and collecting political and geographical information. It was a spurious mission made under a fictitious pretence, highly objectionable; unwarrantable in principle and inexpedient in policy, wrote Metcalfe in his indignant Minute dated October 25, 1830. It was a trick unworthy of British government', he wrote. But no body heeded it, Burne's report had whetted the thirst and the British had made up its mind. The Amirs objected to the use of the river for passage of the mission but had to yield.

"Alas", said a Sayyed witnessing Burnes' convoy, "Sind is now gone since the English have seen the river." His foreboding ultimately came out to be true.

Sikh forces occupied the Baluch districts of Herra and Dajil. General Ventura stood in readiness, 30 miles from Shikarpur. He had occupied all territories of Bahawalpur, west of the Indus as well as the tract between Indus and the Sutlej. The Maharaja as a successor of the Durani dominion demanded the customary tribute from the Baluch Amirs. Disunity among them had created a power vacuum and he was determined to fill it up. Vakils of the Amirs visited his Darbar to sort out points of dispute. In this way, they

acknowledge his supremacy. Three days before the historic meeting of Lord William Bentinck with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Ropar on 26th October, 1831, the Governor General had despatched Lieut. Col. Henry Pottinger, the Resident in Cutch to Sind to conclude treaties with the Amirs. Behind this lavish display of hospitality, the British diplomacy was shrewdly working in Sind. The Maharaja tried to find out the views of the British in Sind. Bentinck was evasive. Ranjit Singh's distrust in their bonafides increased all the more when the Governor General did not give a written assurance of internal relationship. "The relation established between the two governments would scarcely warrant such a pledge," commented Lord Bentinck. He, however, made it plain before his departure that the Lahore Durbar should consider its boundaries as finally settled and should content itself with those. It appeared that the mind of the Governor-General had been occupied all along with the desire to persuade

Ranjit Singh to give up his designs on Sind. "He lulled the Maharaja to sleep, stole a march him upon in bringing Sind under the influence of the British." (A.C. Banerjee).

The Amirs according to the Treaty "agreed to allow merchants and traders passage by the river and roads of Sind' facilities for transportation of goods and merchandise and levy of just and reasonable duties. The Amir of Hyderabad got the commitment that armed vessels or boats would not be employed on the Indus and military stores would not be imported by the river or by road. Restrictions were also placed on the future settlement of English merchant in Sind on the issue of passport to traders entering Hyderabad territories. Ranjit Singh made anxious enquiries from Wade about the parleys Pottinger was reported to be having with Amir. Wade kept him in the dark till December, 1832 A.D. When he came from Ludhiana to explain it was a commercial mission and the British government had no intentions to extend its political influence in Sind. "A sense of disappointment soon set in. Ranjit Singh had tried to befriend the English in the open-hearted way, the way Punjabis do; but each time the English returned his embrace, they put a hand in his pocket and took what was dearest to him and left protesting their goodwill. (Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*).

The Maharaja was sullen towards Wade and did not conceal the fact that the commercial interest of the British government had compromised his political designs and operation west of Indus. Wade laboured hard to explain that by making the Indus and Sutlej a channel of commerce the revenues of the Lahore government would be augmented. He took great pains to argue that extension of trade would not mean extension of power. But Ranjit Singh's faith had been shaken. He clearly understood that the treaties of navigation were

only a cover for political aggrandisement. He expressed his disgust openly to an old Christian missionary, Dr. Josph Wolff, who visted him in 1832. "Why do you not preach to the English in Hindustan, who have no religion at all ?" said the Maharaja.

Wade invited the Maharaja to participate in the navigation scheme. He met him at Pind Dadan Khan in October, 1832 A.D. and tried to bring him round to sign a similar treaty with regard to Sutlej. The Maharaja was sceptical. He had been through the British diplomacy and wanted an unequivocal assurance from them in his affairs.

On December 26, 1832 A.D. a treaty was signed with the Lahore Darbar. It included clauses by which the Indus Sutlej navigation was to be regulated. Tariff duties were to be collected by nominated officers. The means to protect trade on the route were also specific. Mackeson was appointed British Agent for the Navigation Treaty.

Supplementary treaties with Lahore and Bahawalpur were made embodying tolls to be collected. British agents would reside at Mithankot and Harike to supervise the collection of tolls. The Indus Navigation Treaty was found unprofitable. Maritime intercourse between Upper India, Central Asia and Europe could not be maintained. The participating states had been forced to join it. So far as Ranjit Singh was concerned, he entertained a fond hope that cooperation in commerce would have his way for the occupation of Shikarpur. The Amirs, particularly that of Hyderabad, resisted it to the last, "Let the British government resort to force. I have agreed to nothing," he blustered. But under threat from Pottinger he signed it in 1834 A.D.

In 1836 A.D. Russian designs in Persia and Afghanistan caused alarm, "As the threat increased, all zeal in promotion of commerce in Sind, and elsewhere began to abate. British political objective in Sind and Afghanistan necessitated a different policy. The advance of Sikh power in Sind was to be prevented and supplanted by British influence."

Under Lord Auckland (1836-1842), British diplomacy threw overboard the commercial basis of their relation. In view of the Russo-Persian threats, "the British interests required that extension of Sikh power checked along the whole course of the Indus and closer ties be effected with Sind."

Burnes was sent once again on a commercial mission to Mithankot, Hyderabad, Kandhar and Kabul. Pottinger accompanied him to Hyderabad Wade would desist the Maharaja from pursuing an aggressive policy towards the Amirs.

Shikarpur and Ranjit Singh

Failed in his attempts to become the master of Sind, the Maharaja planned to capture Shikarpur the key to Sind. From 1802 A.D. this rich emporium of trade and commerce commanding the Bolan Pass had become fixed objective for his expansion southwards from Multan.

The district of Shikarpur had never been a part of Sind. It was jointly owned by three Mirs, though it was administered by the imbecile Mir of Khairpur. The Mizari free booters plundered the town now and then.

In 1820 A.D. Shah Shuja took refuge in the town of Shikarpur but was expelled from here by Muhammad Azim Khan, the Wazir of Kabul. In 1823 A.D. Ranjit Singh extracted a tribute from the Amirs of Talpur. Next he subjugated the Daudpotas of Bhawalpur and advanced upto Thatta Bhakhar. In 1825 A.D. he made an abortive attempt to capture Shikarpur by force.

In 1834 A.D. Sawan Mal, the Governor of Multan was ordered to lead a punitive expedition against the Muzaris—living below Mithankot, nominally under the Amirs of Sind, who frequently made raids across the border. Their leader Behram Khan submitted at Amarkot and agreed to become a tributary of the Lahore Durbar. Rojhan, the capital city of the Mazaris was occupied and Shikarpur was threatened. In 1836 A.D., Behram Khan again raided Mithankot, Prince Kharak Singh and Ventura were now sent to put an end to Mazaris danger for ever. They reduced Rojhan and occupied Ken, their second important city. A Sindhian force at Ken resisted Sikh forces. Ranjit Singh put the Sindhian Vikils of Lahore under surveillance. The Amirs were declared tributaries of Lahore. 12,00,000 was demanded as a tribute as also the cession of Khairpur. Kharak Singh was ordered to collect the tribute and attack Shikarpur after Dussehra.

Shikarpur and the British

Amherst's government adopted an attitude of calculated supineness. Bentinck felt Ranjit Singh was ambitious, annoying and vexatious. Metcalfe, who officiated, considered their own policy to be basically unprincipled but Auckland was haunted by the fear of the wild bear. He decided to carry out, what Metcalfe had condemned, a policy of forced intimacy and gratuitously offered to protect Sind 'the only enemy that it has to fear'.

A friendly remonstrance was made on his bellicose postures with regard to Shikarpur. Wade reached Lahore to say that real wrongs of Lahore government could be obtained by British mediation. He assured the Maharaja that his measures against the Mazaris could not be objected to.

Shah Shuja, the exiled king of Afghanistan, who was at Ludhiana

reported to be contemplating massing of forces in Sind with a view to invading Kabul was warned that he would forfeit the privilege of asylum and maintenance allowed to him and his family.

Col. Pottinger was directed to negotiate in Hyderabad with the shifty, weak and unreliable Amirs. Ranjit Singh's request for 50,000 stands of arms was curtly declined because the commerce on river Indus must be peaceful in nature.

The Maharaja's attitude 'was swaggering and less friendly than usual', wrote Wade. He was reluctant to relinquish his right upon Shikarpur. He had paid Rs. 125000/- to Shah Shuja in 1832 and the latter had ceded his suzerainty on the Amirs to the Lahore Durbar. He challenged the right of the British to intervene on the West of the Indus. It was against the treaty of 1809. The British government refused these arguments and put their own interpretation to the treaty of 1809 A.D. Wade kept Ranjit Singh in the dark about Pottinger's mission in Sind. It was a game of duplicity as usual.

Encouraged by interposition of the British, Amirs became obdurate. They refused to pay the tribute and mobilized their forces against the projected offensive of prince Kharak Singh.

Pottinger proposed a subsidiary alliance with the Amirs under which a British Resident would be stationed at Hyderabad and a subsidiary force would protect the Amirs, the expense of the British detachment would be met by ceding 1/4 of Shikarpur and its dependencies. The Amirs wavered and made counter proposal. "As the Sindhian fish tried to wriggle out of the net of British diplomacy the Indian government pulled the string tighter" (Hasrat, page 146). After lengthy wrangling the Amirs signed the treaty on April 20, 1838 by which they agreed to receive and accredited British Minister at Hyderabad and the British accepted to use their good offices for adjusting the Sikh-Sindhian dispute.

Ranjit Singh was extremely reluctant to abandon his claims on Shikarpur. With empty phrases, British diplomacy soothed the Maharaja. The pugnacious Sikh Sardars, particularly Raja Dhian Singh, were exasperated at the attitude of their ruler. They brandished their swords and wished their leader to fight out the British. He silenced them by recalling the fate of the Marathas.

Eventually, he acceded to the wishes of government of India with some sulking. He was told that the evacuation of Rojhan would facilitate settlement of differences of which he agreed. The Sikh garrison was withdrawn and settlement to Mazari question was left for the determination of the British. "The Maharaja", wrote Macnaughten, "is a powerful chief. He had been a most faithful and consistent to us and deserves to be treated with the greatest

consideration." Was it a compliment or an insult, historians had to decide?

The English continued to harp on perpetual friendship and paid fulsome compliment to the Maharaja but intoxicated with power they appeared to be prepared for a confrontation. Ranjit Singh was a far sighted statesman and a seasoned general. He refused to fall into their trap. He knew his limitations. "His borders had been occupied by them both on the south, and south-west... surrounded on three sides by hostile enemies, with no friend on the fourth, Ranjit Singh did not wish to run the risk of war with the British on several fronts. His resources were less than 20 percent of those of the British. Circumstanced in this way, Ranjit Singh was left with the only alternative of giving up his claim to Shikarpur." (Ganda Singh, *The British Occupation of the Punjab*, pp. 23-24).

Metcalf was right in his estimate that "Ranjit Singh is not famous for desperate enterprises." In their hearts, the British felt guilty. Auckland, one of the architects who thwarted Ranjit Singh on Sind and Shikarpur, wrote to John Hobhouse, President of Board of Directors, on October 7, 1836, "Are we to put one construction of the Treaty at one time and another as suits our convenience? If we cannot, we can hardly say that we have any right to interfere between Ranjit Singh and Sind. We are very arbitrary when we take anything in our hands."

Ranjit Singh totally bewildered. Murmuring of dismay were also heard among his ministers. One of them, Dhian Singh was out-spoken to remark that the Maharaja behaved like a helpless woman, who wailed and abused but too powerless to do anything. 'All will turn' was a cry of despair. "Had he felt strong enough he might have attempted to check by force of arms what he considered to be the unjustifiable interference of the English in his designs against Sind. This seems probable from the persistence with which he maintained his claim on Shikarpur and urged his right of free action in Sindh even after the commercial treaty of 1832 A.D." But happily he was conscious of the inferiority of his military resources. Hence, although he adopted for a time a very defiant attitude, he did not push matters to the extreme but fell back on his old policy of conciliation and forbearance.

1.6.6 Annexation of Sind

During the First Afghan War, Sind was the British base. The Amirs remained faithful to their commitments. To retrieve the fall of prestige sustained by the reverses, the British arms suffered at the hands of the Afghans, the British resolved to annex Sind. On the basis of certain vague charges of disaffection on the part of the Amirs, a hot-headed General Charles Napier, was sent to Sind in September, 1841. He tried to impose a revised

subsidiary treaty upon the Amirs, demanding cession of territory and fuelling to British steamers and denying them the right to mint money. The Amirs were provoked to take up arms, but were routed at Miani. Sind was annexed in August, 1843. Napier noted in his diary, "We have no right to siege Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful humane piece of rascality it will be..... What a confession" !

1.6.7 Keywords

1. Amirs
2. Lahore Durbar
3. Pottinger's mission
4. Pind Dadan Khan

1.6.8 Long Questions

1. How did the question of Sind and Shikarpur affect the Anglo-Sikh relations?
2. Give an assessment of Ranjit Singh's policy towards the British.

1.6.9 Short Questions

Give Short Notes on:

1. Shikarpur
2. Sind Tangle
3. Raja Dhian Singh

1.6.10 Suggested Readings

1. P.E. Roberts, *Historical Geography of India*, pages 323-332.
2. Chopra, G.L., *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, pages 72-79.
3. Bikramjit Hasrat, *Anglo Sikh Relations*, pages 119-147.
4. Sayyed Abdul Qadir, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Memorial*, pages 154 to 169.
5. Ganda Singh, *British Occupation in the Punjab*, pages 19-54.
6. Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, (Punjabi), pages 186 to 190.
7. N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, pages 63-116.
8. A.C. Banerjee, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, pages 17-50.

RANJIT SINGH'S RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH TRIPARTITE TREATY

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1.7.1 Objectives

In this lesson we will study Maharaja Ranjit Singh's relations with Afghans. The relations between Britishers and Ranjit Singh were not as friendly as they should have been. We will study the Tripartite Treaty signed by Ranjit Singh.

1.7.2 Introduction**Chaotic Conditions in Afghanistan**

The history of Afghan monarchy, says Kaye, "is the history of a long series of revolutions. Seldom has the country rested from strife, seldom has the sword rested in the scabbard." Zaman Shah was defeated and blinded by his brother Mahmud Shah (1800-1803) and the latter was expelled by Shah Shuja. Fateh Khan Barakzai, a powerful wazir acted as the King maker. The Durrani tribe was divided into Khails or clans, the ruling clan being known as Popalzai. But the Wazir was a man of another clan, the Barakzai. Kings, "were mounted and unseated as if it were a game of musical chairs" (Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*). The Barakzai expelled Shah Shuja in 1809 A.D. He fled to India and became pensioner and a pawn, sometimes in the hands of Ranjit Singh and at others with the British. The eighteen Barakzai brothers, sons of ruler Wazir Paindeh Khan's eight wives, led by Fateh Khan now controlled the titular rulers. In 1811, Fateh Khan sent his Vakil Goddar Mal to assure Ranjit

Singh of his friendship. But in 1818 Mahmud Shah successfully conspired to kill Fateh Khan. The Barakzais avenged by sacking the ruling Sadozai dynasty from Kabul and installing their own to its place. Mahmud Shah and his son Kamran escaped to Herat, Shah Shuja became a fugitive and Shah Zaman, who at one time had kept the British Indian Empire in a state of chronic unrest, in 1810 "turned his sightless eyes towards the Punjab tapping his way with his cane to beg for asylum from Ranjit Singh" (Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*).

The Barakzai brothers who parcelled out the Abdali empire into principalities were actually jealous of one another. Mohamed Azim Khan held Kabul, Yar Mohammed Peshawar, Purdil Kandhar and Dost Mohammed Khan ruled over Ghazni. This afforded Ranjit Singh the much sought for opportunity to mature his designs and carry them out thoroughly. He conquered Attock (1813), Multan (1818), Kashmir (1819), Derajat (1821) and defeated the Afghans in 1823 in the battle of Chhuch. It was chaotic political condition of Afghanistan and the superiority of Khalsa's military equipment and organisation more than anything else which facilitated the extension of the Sikh Kingdom. The Afghan pockets like Kasur, Jhang, Sahiwal, Bhera and Khushab etc. were annexed without resistance. A son of the soil had at length succeeded in salvaging the image of his country and restoring the Punjab her birth-right. The ruler of the Sikhs was the first monarch after Anangpal who not only checked the recurring stream of invasions, which during eight hundred years had poured into the Punjab from the North- Western corner but also subdued and governed the inhabitants of that locality. Herein lies the real justification, if this be all necessary for that policy of blood and iron, which Ranjit Singh employed to achieve his end (G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*).

Afghanistan remained a cock-pit of intrigues upto 1826 A.D. Shah Mahmud. who had defeated both Shah Zaman and Shah Shuja died in 1819 and was succeeded by his son, Kamran. The latter danced to the tune to Azim Khan Barakzai, whose brother Fateh Khan was killed in 1818 at the instance of Kamran. Azim Khan invited Shah Shuja, who since 1816 had been living with a harem of 600 wives at Ludhiana as a pensioner of the British to avenge the murder of his brother Fateh Khan. But Shah Shuja had not yet reached Peshawar, when Azim Khan transferred his allegiance to Shah Ayub and Shuja had precipitately to make his way to Shikarpur.

Azim Khan's paramountcy crumbled in 1823 when to save Naushera, Akhaura and Peshawar from falling into the hands of Ranjit Singh, he bearded the lion of the Punjab in his own den and measured swords with him. He was

badly defeated at the battle of Tibba Tehri, one of the most furious battles the Maharaja had to fight in which he lost the battle scarred staunch Akali Phula Singh. Azim Khan did not survive his defeat and died broken hearted six months later. He was succeeded by his son, Habibullah Khan but Dost Mohammad Khan, a Barakzai brother as crafty as others, who was governor of Ghazni, ousted Habibullah and established himself as the ruler of Kabul, while Sherdil Khan a brother of Azim Khan held Kandhar and Sultan Mohammad Khan seized Peshawar. Only Herat and Bokhara remained with the Sadozai ruler, Kamran. In this way, the grand empire of Ahmed Shah Abdali stood completely dismembered. Dost Mohammad set himself frantically to the arduous task of salvaging as much of the shipwreck empire as he could. But he was beset with warlike Sikhs on the east and by the Shah of Persia on west beside his own jealous Barakzai kinsmen. The most serious contender to the throne of Kabul was, however, Shah Shuja, a protege of the British and Ranjit Singh.

1.7.3 Shah Shuja's Relations with Ranjit Singh

Born under an unlucky star, Shuja Mirza dethroned his brother Shah Mahmud in 1803. But the Barakzais defeated him at Nirmula in 1809 and hounded him out of Afghanistan. He sought asylum with Jahandad Khan, governor of Attock but the latter handed him over to the safe-custody of his brother Atta Muhammad Khan, governor of Kashmir who in turn made him a captive. Wafa Begum, senior Begum of Shah Shuja, then at Lahore promised to give Koh-i-noor, the world famous diamond, to the Maharaja if he re-united her with her husband. A joint expedition under Mohkam Chand on behalf of the Lahore Darbar and Fateh Khan on behalf of the ruler of Kabul invaded Kashmir in 1813. Mohkam Chand succeeded in emancipating Shah Shuja from the claws of death and bringing him back alive as a freeman, though otherwise the expedition did not yield much to the Lahore Darbar. The Maharaja had to use his tact, cajolery and coercion to get from the Shah the promised gift of Koh-i-noor. It would not be out of place to mention here that Ranjit Singh, true to the spirit of the Treaty of Amritsar had sounded Col. Ochterlony about his intention to invade Kashmir, when the former visited Lahore to represent his government on Prince Kharak Singh's marriage in 1812.

Shah Shuja was not a welcome guest with the Maharaja. Though he enjoyed lavish hospitality for which the Darbar was famous, yet was kept under surveillance. He constantly brooded over the loss of his kingdom and cherished hope winning it back with the help of Ranjit Singh or the British or both. In April, 1815, he effected a dramatic escape from Lahore and treaded his way to Ludhiana. Here too, he smarted under the vigilant eye of Col.

Ochterlony, but waited for an opportune time, when he should again make a bid for recovering his patrimony. The British government advised Ochterlony to make it clear to Shah Shuja and Wafa Begum that they had no claim to British protection or intervention. They, however, increased his pension from 18 to 50 thousands. In early twenties when Kabul became a cockpit of internecine struggle, the ill-fated Shah Shuja was tempted to try again but was repulsed and fled back from post to pillar to reach Ludhiana, once again to enjoy the honoured repose with the British.

Ranjit Singh exploited to his advantage the convulsion taking place in Afghanistan. He defeated and subdued the turbulent Pathans and in 1823 entered Peshawar, a prize he had coveted for long. Quixotically generous and also well awake to the situation then prevailing, he did not annex it but gave it back to Yar Mohammad Khan, who acknowledged his overlordship and became a tributary chief.

1.7.4 The British Mistrusted Ranjit Singh

The rapid expansion and phenomenal consolidation of the Kingdom of the Sikhs surpassed all calculation of the British and caused a rethinking in their policy of cautious neutrality beyond the Indus. Though by the treaty of 1809 they had given Ranjit Singh a *Carte blanche* on the other side of the Sutlej, yet the addition of Multan, Kashmir, Derajat, Mankera, Attock etc. to his kingdom within a short span of 14 years after the Treaty of Amritsar and his expansionist designs towards Sind, Shikarpur, Peshawar and the trans Indus tribal "No man's Land" were looked upon with jealous distrust and possibly injurious to the security of the British Indian Empire, in view of Russian advance to the borders of Afghanistan. Dr. Murray admitted that between 1822, their relations with Ranjit Singh were not as friendly as they should have been and captain Wade with undisguised concern that the well accounted army of Ranjit Singh, trained by European officer "is still looking on the hills of Afghanistan with some appetite for advancing to Kabul."

1.7.5 The British and Syed Ahmed Brelvi

Syed Ahmed's cry of *Jihad* (crusade) which set the north-western frontier ablaze between 1827 and 1831 against the infidel Kingdom of the Sikhs increased this distrust. The Syed originally belonged to Kharoi in the Bareilly district, a British possession and was at one time a camp-follower of Amir Khan Pindare. His recruiting centres for the Ghazis and Mujahids were also located at Lucknow, Allahabad, Delhi etc. all within British territory. "The British government looked on un-concernly, while the little army marched through their territories" (Dr. Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*).

He designed himself as Imam Mehdi Khalifa, a Wali etc. The trigger happy Pathan tribals, particularly the zealot Yusufzai rallied strong under his flag. Dr. Ganda Singh quotes the evidence produced by the author of *Hayal Taiyaboto* state that Syed Ahmed had informed the British governor of N.W.F. Province through the Deputy Commissioner and not only connived but positively abetted at the activities of this fanatic leader. Ranjit Singh crushed the revolt ruthlessly, defeated and slew Ahmed at the battle of Balakot (1831). General Avitabile mopped up the rebels and destroyed their mountain defiles. Naturally, Ranjit Singh was not happy at the British policy of bravado against him. Actually, the British had embroiled the Maharaja in the frontier to distract his attention from Sind where clever diplomatic moves had already been initiated by Lord William Bentinck.

1.7.6 Conquest of Peshawar

Foiled in his attempts to conquer Sind, Ranjit Singh sought to retrieve his prestige by incorporating Peshawar in his Kingdom. Shah Shuja by the Treaty of 1834 relinquished his claims upon Attock, Kashmir, Derajat and Peshawar in favour of Ranjit Singh and the latter sent him Rs. 1,25,000 need for his contemplated invasion upon Kabul. Shah Shuja attacked Qandhar in 1834 but the Shah who always regarded his personal safety more than victory was defeated, fled in panic, and came back to Ludhiana. Dost Mohammad's victory aroused apprehension in Ranjit Singh's mind that he might add Peshawar to his Kingdom. In 1834, therefore, he sent a large army under Kanwar Naunihal Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa, Ventura, Court and others to attack Peshawar. The Sikh army entered the city on 6th May, 1834 and occupied Bala Hissar. With the occupation of Peshawar Ranjit Singh carried the battle into the country of invaders. The loss of Peshawar came as a rude shock to Dost Muhammad. He assumed the title of Amir-ul-Momin and declared jihad against Ranjit Singh. It was followed by a major victory of Maharaja and the crest-fallen Amir retreated precipitately. Hari Singh Nalwa followed up his success and reached the fort of Shah Qadar at the mouth of the Khyber.

Russo-Persian Treaty

Though the policy of British government in relation to Ranjit Singh's ambition was not in keeping with the Treaty, the stipulation of giving the most favoured treatment, yet did not alienate him either because Russian menace was looming large. Czar Alexander had annexed Georgia and Armenia, the two Persian provinces by the Treaty of Gulistan (1813). In 1828, Fateh Ali, the Shah of Persia had to conclude another humiliating Treaty of Turkomanchi with Czar Nicholas. Canning's policy of non-interference in Central Asian encourage the Russians to draw up plans of expansion towards the

Khanates, Herat and Qundhar. The encroaching of vast autocracy threatened the north western bastions of the Mughal Empire and most vulnerable part of the frontier of British Empire. The ascendancy of Palmerston at the British Foreign office and his Russo-phobia, geared the government of India into action. William Bentinck made much of the danger of Russian invasion and took steps to maintain Indian forces in a state of efficiency. But he was opposed to approve any scheme of the ex-king Shuja, a pensioner at Ludhiana to embark upon an invasion of Kabul to expel Dost Mohammad. His overtures to Ranjit Singh to achieve his objective in 1826 and 1829 too met with unconcealed British decision. The aggressive policy of Czar Nicholas, however, changed the situation.

The Russo-phobia and British Policy

On his arrival in India early in 1836, Lord Auckland, a cold, cautious reflecting man had been instructed to counteract Russian influence in Persia and Afghanistan adopt a scientific frontier and remove cause of distrust with Ranjit Singh, without of course, surrendering advantages that had accrued to them by Indus Navigation Treaty. He was authorized to enter into commercial as well as political (another name for conquest, Kaye) with Dost Mohammad, so that in the event of the fall of Herat considered as a Key to Kabul, Afghanistan should act as a buffer state. Alexander Burnes, who had won credit for a successful mission to Ranjit Singh in 1830 was sent to Dost Mohammad but the latter demanded a price. The British must get him Peshawar to salve the Afghan sentiments. Single-handed he tried but the Sikh flag now flew over Jamraud. In 1837, he made another effort to average his humiliation but Afghan had to flee in confusion. A stray shot of a hiding Pathan, however, proved fatal for Hari Singh Nalwa, the flower of Sikh chivalry, the Murat of Sikh army. His ghost, however, haunted the Pathans and the country upto Jamraud remained with the Khalsa.

Dost Mohammad was eager for an alliance with the British but the demand for the restoration of Peshawar proved to be an unsurmountable hurdle. As Amir or President of an ill-cemented oligarchy he was bound to conform to the feeling and wishes of the chiefs who represented the Afghans in his Durbar. Burnes informed him though he had no authority to meddle in politics, yet he would request his government to exact its friendly influence with the Sikh ruler, if he (Amir) abjured all relations with Russia. Actually, Wade was using his office as usual to open up a chance of British mediation in the Sikh Afghan bone of contention, though the Maharaja felt highly suspicious at the long stay of Burnes and his negotiations at Kabul. The reports of Burnes were emasculated and mutilated by unspating hand of state anatomist. Ranjit

Singh reinforced Peshawar as a precautionary measure because personally Burnes was reported to be in favour of Peshawar's restoration to Dost Mohammad. Wade intimated the Governor General that Ranjit Singh would not at any cost give up Peshawar. Wade was as much as in favour of Shuja as Burnes was friendly to Dost." (*History of India*, Keene, Page 14). The British government neither sanctioned nor prohibited Shah Shuja's expeditions to Kabul in 1833 which proved abortive.

Auckland's curt reply to Dost Mohammad that "it was not the practice of the British government to interfere with the affairs of independent states", left the Amir cold and receiving no positive assurance from the British emissary, the crafty Dost Mohammad swung over to Russo-Persian side and in late December, 1837, he received the Russian agent Vickovich and a letter from Count Simonrich with marked favour. Burnes had to return from Kabul five days later. "Apparently, from this time the Great Design pursued its fruitful course's (Keene, *History of India*, Vol. II).

The Great Design-Proposal for the Treaty

It was now decided to remove the cautions mistrust of the old Sikh ally. Dost Mohammad was told 'to unlearn the method of bluster and practice humility and peace.' Wade suggested that Shah Shuja, the ex-king of Afghanistan, be restored his throne with the help of Sikh arms. Macnaughten improved upon this idea by stating that the exiled Shah might be made subsidized monarch with the armed help of Ranjit Singh. Burnes wished the British to involve directly in the venture. The Blue Book containing Auckland's correspondence made public in 1859 reveals that upon February, 1838 Auckland still hoped to the adjustment by any mode acceptable to the parties of difference between Lahore and Kabul. The Persian seige of Herat and the likelihood of its fall, however, made Dost Mohammad nervous and he made frantic overtures to British for an alliance. The complacent neutrality of the British threw him in the lap of the Russians.

Alarmed by extension of Russian influence in Kabul, Auckland took the fatal plunge. On the basis of Treaty of 1833 between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, referred to earlier, Auckland resolved to placate, "the men of Lahore and restore the discredited pensionary on the throne of Kabul and depose the pro-Russian Amir, Dost Mohammad. The members of the Secret Committee including John Hobhouse, President of Board of Directors, and Palmerston concurred with the above view that a "King of their own making would be a stronger barrier against the Russo-Persian menace than a loose federation under the Dost." (Keene, *History of India*, Vol. II, page 144).

Macnaughten Mission to Ranjit Singh

In May, 1838, Lord Auckland sent a mission to Maharaja Ranjit Singh under Sir William Macnaughten, which included Wade, Osborne, Macgregor and Drammond. They waited on him at his camp in Adina Nagar on June 3. Two proposals were made. The first envisaged the restoration of Shah Shuja on the basis of Sikh- Afghan Treaty of 1833 with British money and a Division of the British army. The second allowed a free hand to Ranjit Singh to take independent action against Dost Mohammad. The Maharaja felt flattered by the British recognition of his treaty of 1833 'like adding sugar to milk' and accepted the first proposal of restoring Shah Shuja. But he disliked the complete view of the scheme and active cooperation of old allies. It chafed that he was to resign all hope of Shikarpur and that he was to inclose within the iron arms of English rule." He suddenly broke his camp at Adina Nagar on June 20 and came to Lahore where Macaughten resumed negotiations and Burnes also joined in mission. The Lahore Durbar was divided on the issue and Raja Dhian Singh particularly vehemently opposed any such alliance. "The old lion had turned sulky and refused to sign the treaty wishing to stipulate all sorts of concessions", reported Osborne. He wanted Jalalabad and Shikarpur or a heavy tribute from Amirs, if restored. It was suggested the Shah would pay a sum of Rs. 200000 annually and could requisition for Lahore troops subject to prior approval of the British. "It was not realized that such a price for the surrender to Sikh claims of Jalalabad and Shikarpur was to cheat both the British government and the Shah" (Macnaughten). It would have depleted the Afghan resources and also hurt Afghan pride. The Shah told Macnaughten that such a provision would be derogatory to the honour of the Amir and would also tarnish the name of the British government. But he had no choice in the matter and agreed in the end. Thus, "the Governor-General", observes Kaye, "conceived the idea of reinstating the old deposed dynasty of Shah Shuja and they picked him out of dust of Ludhiana to make him a fool and a puppet."

1.7.7 The Tripartite Treaty

The Tripartite Treaty signed by Ranjit Singh on June 26, 1838, and was approved by the Governor-General. It was a treaty of alliance and friendship between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja and received latter's signatures on July 23, 1838.

The treaty contained 18 articles. Shah Shuja disclaimed all title to all the territories lying on either bank of the river Indus. The places that belonged to the Maharaja and his posterity were specified. People on other side of the Khyber would not be suffered to commit robberies or aggressions or any disturbances on this side. No one should be allowed to cross the Indus without the Maharaja's

permission. After he had established his authority in Kabul, the Shah would annually send specified number of horses, mules, fruits, *Kim Khabs*, carpets etc. Merchants would not be send specified quantity of shawls, muslin, scarfs etc.

Whenever the armies of the two states assembled at the same place, kine should on no account be slaughtered. Booty acquired from the Barakzais should be divided equally. The Maharaja would furnish the Shah, when required, with an auxiliary force of Muhamdans. The Shah also engaged to send a force in furtherance of the treaty. "The friends and enemies of each of the three high powers shall be the friends and enemies of all." (Article 14). Shah Shuja, after the attainment of his object would pay without fail to the Maharaja 2 lakhs Nanakshahees in return for stationing 5000 Muhammadans army men in Peshawar territory for the support of the Shah; whenever the British Government in concert and counsel with the Maharaja deemed their aid necessary. The Shah would refrain from entering into negotiations with any foreign state without the knowledge, and consent of other two parties, etc.

Why did the Maharaja Sign the Treaty ?

The British had to placate Ranjit Singh in becoming an active partner in the projected undertaking. But the Maharaja was too shrewd a man to become a tool in the hands of a cunning friend much less their stooge in resuscitating the Sadozai power in Afghanistan, which had since the middle of the eighteenth century, for about fifty years perpetrated horrible atrocities on the Sikhs. He had also tasted the bitter fruit of his friendship with the British who took him for granted in every step they took. Thus, had checkmated his plans to unite the Sikhs for the Malwa region to form Guru Gobind Singh's common wealth of the Khalsa. They had out-witted him in the Sind and Shikarpur. Time had arrived for him to call the bluff. He would not like them to encroach in his sphere towards the North. The English must be made to realize that friendship was a two way traffic. Macnaughten had, therefore, to use all his diplomatic acumen to allay his suspicions. The danger of Russia or France never terrified him. He must secure his due for the task he had to share.

Though Ranjit Singh suffered from a paralytic stroke in 1835 and was ebbing out in physical health yet he displayed extraordinary vigour in the parleys with the mission. "With simple Jat commonsense, he had realized the immediate advances to be gained by agreeing to a preposition in which his liability was limited." (B.J. Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, page 172).

He felt that the time had arrived for him to become arbitrator in the destiny of Afghanistan and could perceive that if he did not participate in contemplated action, Lord Auckland might go it alone and then he would miss

an opportunity of installing greatful neighbouring ruler of his own choice. He realized that if Shah Shuja was reinstated it would be to his advantage to have a hand in the transactions. Shah Shuja was a weakling in contrast to Dost Muhammad and would be more accommodating in sorting out and settling Sikh-Afghan disputes. At the same time, he was not afraid of Dost Mohammad. The latter confessed to Burnes that he could not do Ranjit Singh any harm and fear of Dost Muhammad did not certainly compel Ranjit Singh to conclude the Tripartite Treaty. (N.K.

Sinha, page 102). Shah Shuja has already confirmed Sikh annexations of Kashmir, Attock, Hazara, Peshawar and all territories on the bank of Indus. In lieu of his claim over Shikarpur, Ranjit Singh would receive 15 lakh rupees annually.

A payment of 200000 Nanakshahis annually along with other valuable articles including 55 well-bred horses, stipulated in the treaty tantamounted to the acknowledgement of Sikh supremacy, even though jarring words like tribute or stipend etc., were not used in the treaty. It was on Ranjit Singh's demand for horses that the vanquished Dost Mohammad in 1835 shrank from coming to terms with Maharaja for the Amir apprehended that he would be regarded as a tributary of Lahore. Shah Shuja agreed to make horses a gift to this connoisseur. An auxiliary force of 5000 to be maintained in trim readiness at Peshawar. This force would make the Shah dependent on Sikh arms to quell rising in Afghanistan and the tribal belt. That would bring the Amir within the vortex of the influence of Lahore Durbar which could dabble in the Afghan affairs in furtherance of its own designs on Afghan possessions up to the Hindu Kush. He accepted a collective plan of operation because for an independent action he had neither the intentions nor the means. It seems Ranjit Singh had fully realized the strategic importance of the Hindu Kush and of the British Government to the observance of the terms of Tripartite treaty. This treaty reaffirmed that 1833 treaty between the Maharaja and Shah Shuja with the British Government added as an underwriter, (Waheed-ud-din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, page 101). The article that the foreign relations of the Government of Afghanistan would be under the joint control of the Sikhs and the British, insured the security of the Punjab from the North West. The tripartite made no specific mention of the route for the movement of British Army invading Afghanistan. The commission gave Ranjit Singh the argument for refusing passage of their troops and supplies towards the Khyber through his territory. The presence of large foreign armies marching through the Punjab would have reacted adversely on the morale of the Sikh forces and on the mind of the Punjab public.

Ostensibly Ranjit Singh had reached the summit of his ambition, he was

acknowledged to be an arbitrator in the fate of the empire which had tyrannized over his peasant fore-fathers and he was treated with the greatest distinction by the foreign paramounts of India "(Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, page 311).

An Estimate of Treaty

In his letter to the secret committee dated 13th August, Lord Auckland justified the Treaty by stating that "the welfare of our possessions in the East requires that we should in the present crisis of affairs, have a decidedly friendly power on our frontier and we should have an ally who is interested in resisting aggression."

The Governor General created a sense of trust with Ranjit Singh, which his predecessor had lost by the policy towards the Sind Amirs and Shikarpur. In place of undisguised foes doubtful friends, he won over the steady support of Ranjit Singh. It would, therefore, be claimed "damp the spirit of disaffection all over India and frustrate the views of their enemies."

To those who criticised the concessions given to Ranjit Singh, Auckland's hope was that "the Maharaja was weak and dying. It was probable that on his death no single individual would succeed to the undisputed power which the genius had raised up."

All the signatories of the Treaty of 1838 had their own ends to achieve. While Shah Shuja yearned for throne of Kabul at all costs, Ranjit Singh desired to make the Shah an instrument of his ambition in the North West and Auckland kept up the pretence of restoring the Shah by a skilful grafting on the Sikh- Afghan Treaty of 1833. The British, however, mistrusted the Sikhs as doubtful allies in any military operations. "The Maharaja", says Skyes, "generally was not disposed to help the scheme enthusiastically since he realized that if it were successful the power of the British would be increased to his detriment."

Alarmed by the British expedition, the Shah of Persia raised the seige of Herat in September, 1838. "The danger from Russian intrigues thus completely passed away and a golden bridge was built for a retreat from an untenable position." (Roberts, 317). But the Great hawks at Simla were now infatuated with their schemes.

The Aftermath

The first Afghan war started with a bang. Lord Auckland issued a bombastic declaration from Simla in October 1, 1838 justifying action against Dost Muhammad. In November he met Ranjit Singh at Ferozepur and discussed plans of invasion. The Maharaja, however, refused to make the Punjab

a highway for the movement of British troops and supplies. The Army of the Indus under the command of the John Kene accompanied by Shah Shuja moved to Qandhar by way of Bolan and Khojak passes. The Sikh army under Naunihal Singh, Col. Basanwan marched through the Khyber. Shah Shuja entered Qandhar in April, 1839. Dost Muhammad surrendered in 1840 and Shah Shuja was restored to Masnad at Kabul after an exile of 30 years.

On 27 June, 1839, Maharaja Ranjit Singh passed away at Lahore. His forces had reached eastern slopes of the Suleman with Shah Shuja's accession to the throne. Auckland was honoured with earldom, Sir John Kene with peerage and Macnaughten with baronet. But the Shah depended upon the support of British bayonets and alienated his countrymen. His power soon collapsed like a house of cards. The chiefs of the Afghan clans became contumacious and closed the passage. The loose morals of the British officers quartered at Kabul, stirred up a fierce and abiding resentment in the minds of towns men." The scandal was open, undisguised and notorious (Kaye). General Elphinson, old and incapable, was appointed the commander of troops at Kabul. In the autumn of 1841, the smouldering embers of revolts burnt red-hot. In November, Burnes was dragged out of his house and cut to pieces. The ill-starred Shah Shuja was slain, Macnaughten signed a humiliating treaty on December 11 with Akbar Khan, son of Dost Muhammad. Macnaughten was assassinated a few days later. Thus, the three principal actors in the drama of Afghan politics perished at the hands of the Afghans. The generals lost their heads and troops their morale. They retreated. It became a rout and massacre. Only Dr. Brydon staggered into Jalalabad the sole survivor of 16000 men. It was just a partial reverse for Auckland. But he was replaced by Lord Ellenborough. On his arrival he declared that the British Government would no longer imperil its armies in the Indian Empire, to support the Tripartite Treaty. Pollack attacked Kabul on September 16 and was joined by North. The main bazar of Kabul was blown up. The armies then returned carrying the gates of the temple of Somnath taken away by Mahmud of Gazni in 1025. Antiquarians, however, disputed that the gates were not the original one. Dost Muhammad was released and he re-established himself at Kabul.

1.7.8 Keywords

1. Popalzai
2. Ghazi
3. Amir-ul-Momin
4. Jihad
5. Mujahid

1.7.9 Long Questions

1. In what circumstances did Maharaja sign the Tripartite Treaty?
2. Who were the beneficiaries of the Tripartite Treaty?

1.7.10 Short Questions

Write Short Notes on:

1. Shah Shuja
2. Syed Ahmed Brelvi
3. Conquest of Peshawar
4. Why did the Maharaja Sign the Tripartite Treaty?

1.7.11 Suggested Readings

1. B.J. Hasrat : *Anglo-Sikh Relations*
2. N.K. Sinha : *Ranjit Singh*
3. A.C. Banerjee : *Anglo-Sikh Relations*

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