



1936 - 1978

Shaheed Bhai Fauja Singh Jee, Amritsar

Bhai Fauja Singh was born on 17th May 1936 in District Gurdaspur. His father Sardar Surain Singh was a middle class farmer. After the formation of Pakistan they moved to the village of Gazneepur which is 6 miles on the Gurdaspur Dera Baba Nanak road.

During his childhood days Fauja Singh always used to be the leader of boys of a similar age in his village. He got baptised while he was studying in the tenth class, but because he did not receive the gift of Naam, the spiritual hunger inside him did not disappear and his mind was always elsewhere. At this small age he disappeared from home for one month and stayed with some Sants and Sadhs. After passing the tenth class he enrolled in Khalsa College, Amritsar, but still his mind was elsewhere. He then again disappeared. His family looked for him everywhere and even advertised in the papers. He stayed away from home for 2 years at the Deras of the Sants and Sadhs to try to satisfy his spiritual hunger. A false Sadh gave him a Mantar on which he meditated for 2 years. Then he was found and brought home and his family again put him into College.

During the time when Bhai Fauja Singh was in college, he mixed with some bad company and went away from Sikhi. But Guru Maharaj quickly put him back on the right path. In 1964, he got baptised at a smagam organised by the Akhand Kirtani Jatha. On Vaisakhi 1965 his marriage took place with Bibi Amarjit Kaur and on this occasion Bhai Jeevan Singh performed the Kirtan. At the age of 28 Bhai Fauja Singh again took up the appearance which was most loved by the Tenth Guru. Whoever the Guru blesses, he shows that person how to wear the uniform of Akal Purakh`s Khalsa army.

Bhai Fauja Singh learnt Gatka and persuaded other young Sikhs to learn it as well. He was the best Gatka player in the area and there was nobody around who could beat him.



"I have been in the Jatha for quite a while now and have been lucky enough to meet many highly spiritual Sikhs of the Guru. Bhai Fauja Singh was different, he had Bir Ras and Nam Ras. Bhai Fauja Singh was always ready to fight against un-righteousness and stand up for the truth. Some highly spiritual Singhs from the Jatha told him to just meditate. They did not think that in these peaceful times there would be a need for our people to give "Shaheedi". The Sikhs gave "Shaheedi" at the time of the Gurus because the Hindu Rajas, Mughal and Pathan rulers were trying to destroy the Sikh religion. But now the situation was different. Some brothers even joked about his Bir Ras."

(Prof. Gurmukh Singh).

After 1970 Bhai Fauja Singh started doing a lot of Seva for Gursikhs. He worked around Amritsar. He used to spend all the wages he and his wife earned on the Seva of the Singhs. Bibi Ji told us that sometimes he used to say "All the money we spend on ourselves is wasted but the money we spend on doing Seva for the Gursikhs is not wasted and is saved in our bank". Then he would say "The tenth Guru formed the Khalsa by shedding his blood. When this plant gets dried up, it needs more blood. Then the Guru`s beloved ones spill their blood to keep the Khalsa`s flag flying. This cycle comes approximately every 50 years".

According to Bhai Fauja Singh the Khalsa Panth's plant was drying up due to the cycle. He used to say to his companions that there is a lot of

disrespect taking place of our religion and future generations will ask what were our forefathers like, who accepted everything quietly.

The Akhand Kirtani Jatha has been doing the Panth's Seva through Kirtan, Gurbani, with the help of strict Gurmat Rehat Rehni. There have been many beloved ones of the Guru but few of them have persuaded the Panth to give Shaheedi as part of Panthic Seva. We all take Amrit on the condition that after that day our head is the Guru's, and when the need arises we shall not say "no" to laying down our head. We hear and read in the Ardas daily how our forefathers gave up their lives for their religion, cut their limbs and followed Sikhi until their last breath without a single hair being separated from their bodies. All these events seemed like past history, but the massacre at Amritsar has made the memory of those Shaheeds alive.

The words of Shaheeds are special. The spiritual bliss they get from reading verses like "Purja Purja Kat Marai Kab Hoo Nah Shadai Keth" only they know. Bibi Amarjit Kaur said that during his last six months, Bhai Fauja Singh kept saying to her, "Bring a picture of my dead body in front of you. Will you be able to bear it? Be strong and don't despair." Bibi Ji realised that one day he would give his life for the Panth.

Bhai Fauja Singh used to say some very special things and everybody would wonder where he discovered these truths. He used to say that a greedy person could never be religious. To be a religious person you have to be honest and content and live by the Will of God. He had honesty, meditation and contentment. He ate what he received happily, and was never greedy, living by the will of God.

"I first met Bhai Fauja Singh in 1972 at the Darbar Sahib. He did not know me but he said his Fateh to me and met me like we had been old friends. He took me to where he was staying and kept me there for two or three days. During this first meeting he told me something very secretive which I am sharing with the readers after his Shaheedi. He told me that in his previous life he was in Baba Deep Singh's Jatha and became Shaheed at Lohgarh. Now again he has done Shaheedi for the Khalsa Panth in the holy city of Amritsar near Lohgarh. Those that have seen and met Bhai Fauja Singh all agree that he was filled with the spirit of "Mohai Marnai Ka Chow Hai".

Shakespeare said "What's in a name?", but the name Bhai Fauja Singh given to him by his parents, from the Hukamnama of the Guru Granth

Sahib Ji, was definitely a true picture of him. Bhai Fauja Singh really was a soldier of the Guru`s army in this and his previous life."

(Prof. Gurmukh Singh)



In August-September 1977 in Gurdaspur Jail, he wrote a poem under the title of Kurbani. This was probably his first and last poem because as far as it is known, he was not a poet. This poem was written 7-8 months before his Shaheedi. There are two main points that come to light. First is the declining state of the Khalsa Panth. The soul that has met the Khalsa in his last life and gave his blood for that Khalsa, how can he accept the present situation? Even though he was only. 42 years old, because he had been doing the Seva of the Khalsa Panth, the one or two events that happened in Amritsar were intolerable for him. The incident that took place in the Misri Bajar in 1972 in which the Guru Granth Sahib Ji was treated with disrespect showed Bhai Fauja Singh's true personality. He was a farm inspector at the time. Even the police were scared to arrest the criminals. Bhai Fauja Singh intervened and caught the criminals and punished them accordingly. He was very saddened by the fact that our Panthic leaders tried to keep the whole incident quiet in case it may lead to some Hindu-Sikh conflict. He could not understand how a Sikh could quietly sit by as somebody was insulting or treating the Guru Granth Sahib Ji with disrespect. He always had one question in his mind, "What has happened to the Khalsa Panth?"



The question arose again on 17th October 1975. The Sikh Sangats were celebrating Sangrand at Gurdwara Bhai Salo Ji. The Langar was being served at the time. Some thugs came and treated the Guru Granth Sahib Ji with disrespect and beat up the Sevdar and Granthi of the Gurdwara. They also made plans to burn down the Gurdwara Guru Keh Mehal that night. When Bhai Fauja Singh heard about this incident in the evening he got together some Singhs and went there straight away.

First they went to see the disrespectful treatment of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji at Gurdwara Bhai Salo and the damage done to the Gurdwara. After seeing this incident the Singhs started shouting "Sat Sri Akal" and went off to protect Gurdwara Guru Keh Mehal. The thugs surrounded the Singhs from tall buildings on all four sides and started throwing stones, bricks and acid bottles at them. Even though the Singh's clothes and bodies were covered in blood, they did not care for their own lives and protected the Gurdwara from being burnt down. After 1972, this was the second painful event to happen at the Sikh headquarters, Amritsar. The Panthic leaders at that time pretended as if nothing had happened and accepted no responsibility even though so much damage had happened at the Gurdwara.

The result of these actions by the Singhs was that the troublemakers now knew that one lion among sheep was more than enough. After this second incident in 1975 Bhai Fauja Singh did not sit quietly at home. Guru Maharaj stopped his daily presence at the office at the end of October 1975. He received money sitting at home, and he assumed this to be God's blessing. He said laughingly in Jan 1978 to Prof. Gurmukh Singh, "Satguru is having his Seva done and is giving my wages from the Punjab Government."

After the 1975 incident Bhai Fauja Singh organised a new programme. He mentioned in his poem that "the Joth (Light) in the Khalsa was disappearing and we will again awaken it". In June/July 1976 a group of Singhs commenced religious preaching in 10 villages in Gurdaspur over 10 days. Prof Gurmukh Singh was lucky enough to be among this Jatha. Bhai Fauja Singh had a very bad impression from the previous incidents regarding Sikhs living in the cities, and thought that they were not prepared to sacrifice their lives.



So he turned his attention to the villages so that perhaps the sleeping Panth, which was asleep in village life, may be awakened by telling them; about Satguru`s history, performing Gurbani Kirtan and taking Amrit. This Jatha also held Gatka demonstrations. After the Kirtan, Bhai Fauja Singh would talk to the Sangat and this had a good effect on the Sangat. A similar Smagam was held in March 1977 for 15 days at Khalsa Farm, where Bhai Fauja Singh persuaded young Sikhs to learn Gatka and told them of the problems of the Sikh Panth today, They also performed Kirtan and meditated.

During this period, another incident happened which again showed the courage and spirit of Bhai Fauja Singh. The Police arrested a Hindu woman. During her interrogation, the Police officers began to rape her. Her husband, unable to stop her from being gang-raped, went to the magistrates to secure her release and file a complaint about the Police. However they refused to intervene. He then went to various pundits and mullahs for help, but none wanted to go against the Police. Eventually he went to the Singhs. People had informed him of a Singh called Bhai Fauja Singh of Amritsar. Bhai Sahib had become very prominent due to his fearless attitude. He immediately went to see Bhai Sahib, who at once with some Singhs went to the Police station. On seeing the pitiable state of the woman, he immediately released the woman, and severely punished the guilty police officers. Later he was sent to prison for this

action. However he showed that the Khalsa which rescued innocent women in Sikh History, is still alive today to save humanity from injustice.

In the poem "Kurbani" Bhai Sahib warns the Khalsa Panth about the disrespect of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib taking place everywhere, which he could not tolerate. He could not accept the insults at Guru Maharaj from the Nakali (fake) Nirankaris. At the end of the poem Bhai Sahib writes that my head is yours, Vaheguru, and I shall offer it to you. Bhai Fauja Singh was a great soldier, who selflessly and joyfully spent his life in fighting against injustice and standing up for the truth.



For over 30 years the Nakali Nirankaris have tried to oppose the Sikhs. They would speak wrongly in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji; they would call the Kar Seva in Harmander Sahib, Bikar Seva; make fun of the Rehat-Rehni; say that Gurbani was meaningless, and insult the Panj Pyarai. Even though all this was happening the Sikh leadership closed its eyes and ears and did not care about the deeply hurt minds of the Sikhs. Because of this stance taken by the Sikh Panth, the Nirankaris grew in confidence. They grew so much in confidence that on the day of the birth of Khalsa, the Vaisakhi of 1978, in Amritsar, their leader sat under a canopy with a fan being waved over him, and held a procession through the streets boasting that Guru Gobind Singh Ji made 5 beloved ones and I have made 7 stars, (Sat Sitaraes).

At this time the Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagam was taking place and Bhai Fauja Singh was doing the Seva of kneading the flour for the Langar. Immediately after hearing the news he went outside to where everybody was gathered. Together with some other Singhs, he made a decision on what to do and then started the Ardas. This was his Shaheedi Ardas and the last Ardas that he ever did.

On the day of Vaisakhi 13th April 1978 about 125 Singhs went to peacefully protest against the Nirankari procession and against Nakali Nirankari Gurbachan Singh's insults against the Gurus. Bhai Fauja Singh was barefooted and all the Singhs were reciting Gurbani. The Nakali Nirankari army fired at the unarmed Singhs, and Bhai Fauja Singh and 12 other Singhs became Shaheeds and 70-75 Singhs were wounded. After his Shaheedi, the Leaders and Jathedars of the Panth stated that Bhai Fauja Singh and the other Singhs had given "Shaheedi" for the great task from which we had been hiding. They had not only woken the Panth, but also made us stronger, so that we can pay more attention to this in the future.

