



## SHAHEED BHAI MANI SINGH JI GATKA AKHARA

### Saint Soldiers

From the very beginning the Sikh faith has been targeted and oppressed for being a collective faith with one main aim, to spread the truth of God. The very first Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji inspired the Sikhs to be peaceful, nature-loving humanitarians; however he also instructed them to be fearless in the face of tyranny and they themselves were put into prison. Persecution, torture and selfless sacrifice are something that the Gurus have taught Sikhs to live by and to endure when necessary. When the time comes to stand for truth, freedom, justice, honour and protection, regardless of the outcome, Sikhs should stand firm to their beliefs and should not flinch when carrying out righteous acts.

The concept of the Saint Soldier was instilled from Guru Nanak Dev Ji via Guru Angad Dev Ji, who after giving Katha (explanation of Gurbani) in their divans would encourage the Gursikhs to wrestle, stay healthy and practice the warrior lifestyle.

The Saint Soldier lifestyle didn't really hit home until the Shaheedi of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, after enduring a week of torture and then made to sit on a hot plate, whilst burning sand was poured over their body; Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji made it clear that the time had come for the Sikhs to bear arms and prepare themselves for a battle which would last an eternity.

Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji all took part in battles themselves at some period in their lives. The message was sent far and wide by Guru Gobind Singh Ji that without Kes and Shastars the Guru would not wish to see his Sikh. The keeping of Kes is fundamentally important for spirituality; each strand of hair allows the electric current pass through, which is said to then vibrate during simran and bhagati. The wearing of a Shastar is paramount for a member of the military, it is a constant reminder that as God's army the Sikh is prepared to uphold justice and fight until his last breath to defend his Guru, his beliefs and the beliefs of others.

Being a saint is only one half of a true Sikh, and being a soldier is also only one half of a true Sikh. A true Sikh is that person who has full faith and belief in Gurbani and has the capability of knowing when the time is right to draw the sword.