



FREE AKAL TAKHT

# FREE AKAL TAKHT

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## Modeling Regional Sarbat Khalsa 2016



# Today...

Distinct Panthic identity and thought unrecognized worldwide and lost internally

Some voices are either not included or minimized

Proceedings are kept private and confidential

13 resolutions, no plans

Misuse by outside agendas

# Imagine...

Central authority that is the voice of the Guru

Central authority that lets perspectives deliberate

Central authority that is transparent

Central authority you don't have to be ashamed of or make excuses for

Knowing your Panth is free of outside interference

# A Path...

Reclaim Guru gifted teachings and history

Consider proposals on Sarbat Khalsa Process

Consider proposals on Jathedar Criteria

Practice Self-Governance through Consensus

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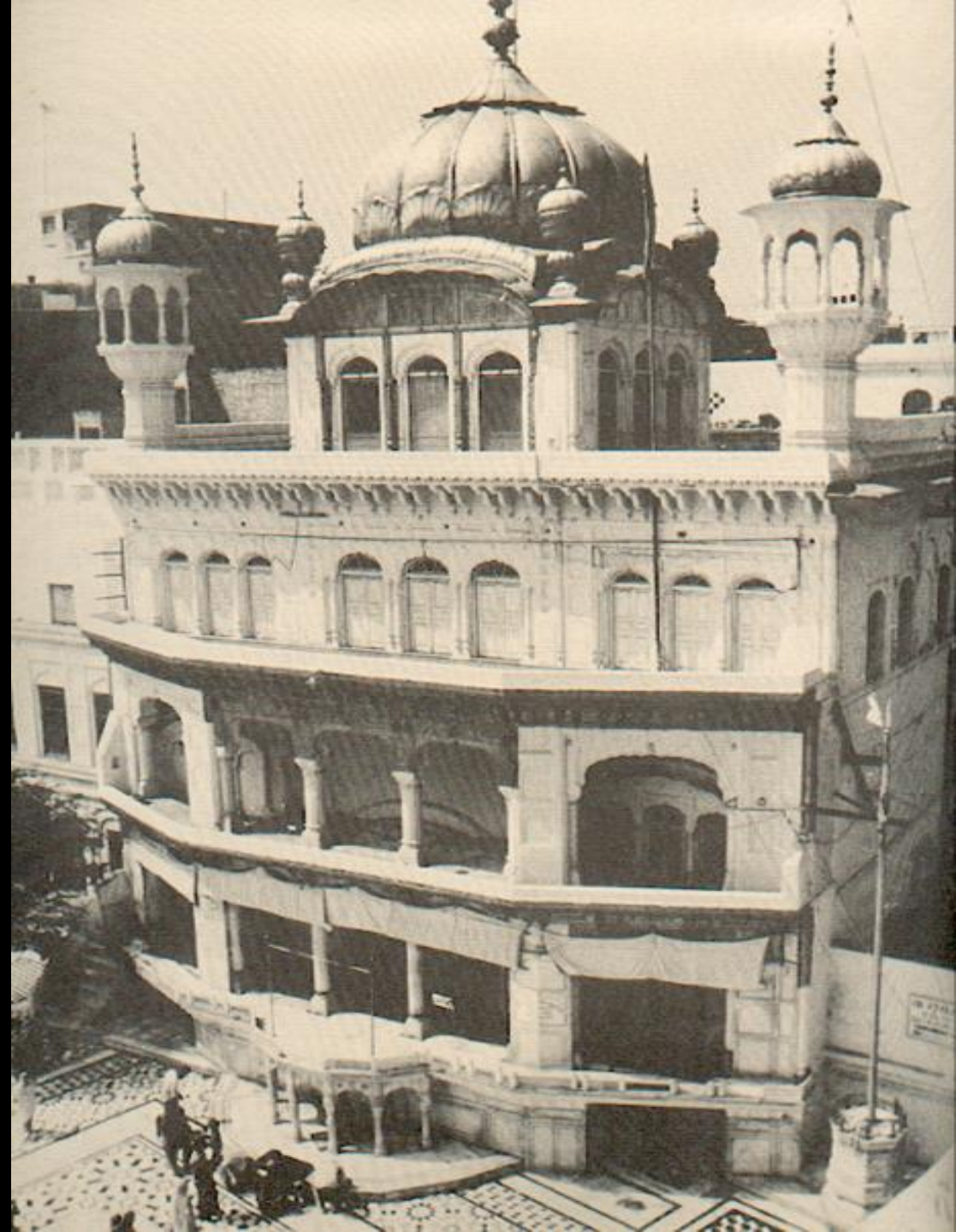


# PRESENTATION CONTENTS

**1** The Context: Guru's Authority  
Essential Truths. Guru Granth-Panth.  
Mechanisms of Guru Panth.

**2** Current State & Moving Forward  
Recent Events & #FreeAkalTakht

**3** 14 Proposals Consensus  
Procedure walkthrough & Questions



# 1

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## The Context: Guru's Authority

Essential Truths. Guru Granth-Panth.

Mechanisms of Guru Khalsa Panth.

# Three Essential Truths & Four Mechanisms



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1. Gurus are Ik: Jot-Jugat
2. Guru is both Guru Granth Sahib AND Guru Khalsa Panth
3. Guru Khalsa Panth has 4 Mechanisms: Akal Takht, Panj Piare, Jathedar & Sarbat Khalsa

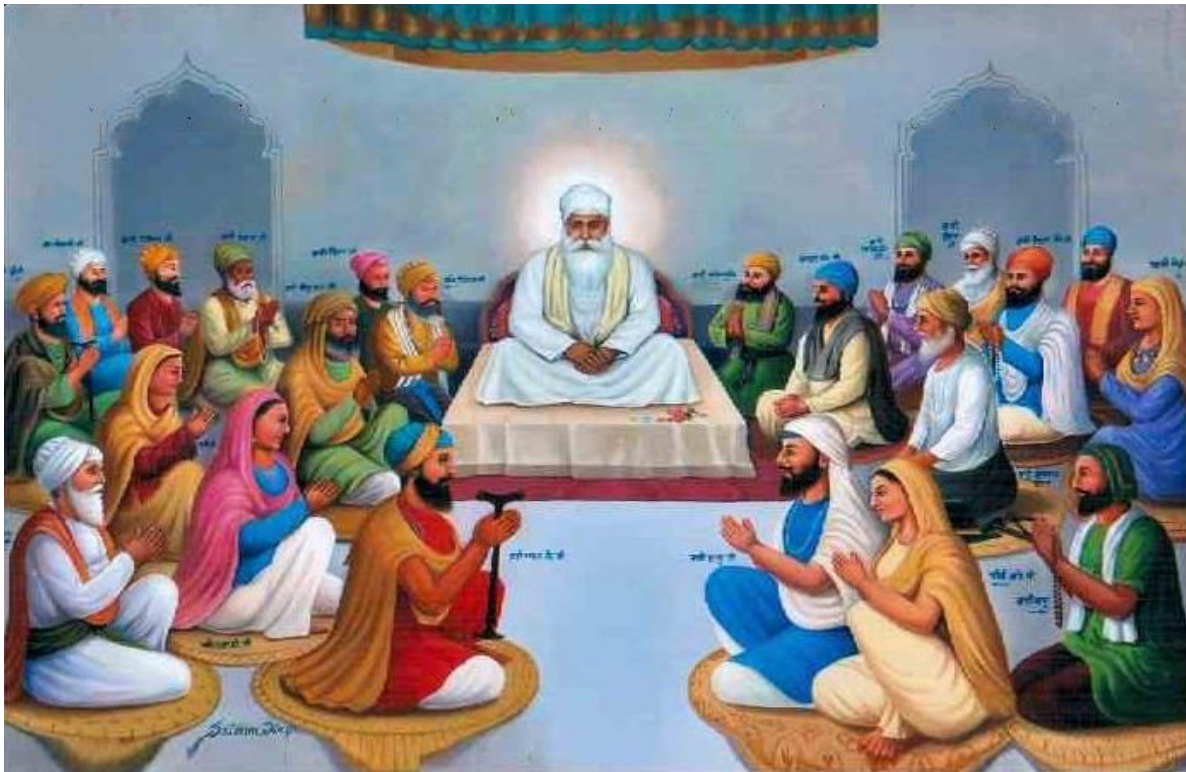


# ESSENTIAL TRUTH 1: Gurus are Ik – Jot & Jugat



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ਨਾਨਕਿ ਰਾਜ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਸਚ ਕੋਟ ਸਤਾਈ ਨੀਵ ਦੈ ॥  
ਲਹਣੇ ਧਰਿਓਨ ਛਤ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਅੰਮਿਤ ਪੀਵਦੈ ॥  
ਮਤਿ ਗਰ ਆਤਮ ਦੇਵ ਦੀ ਖੜਗਿ ਜੇਰਿ ਪਰਾਕਇ ਜੀਅ ਦੈ ॥  
ਗੁਰਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਰਹਰਾਸਿ ਕੀਈ ਨਾਨਕਿ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਥੀਵਦੈ ॥



Guru Amar Das Sahib with his 22 Manjidars

20<sup>th</sup> century Painting

- Guru Sahibs gradually manifested the socio-political sovereignty of the Guru
- Guru Nanak Sahib - **Dharamsalas** created wherever visited. Headquarters: **Kartarpur Sahib**
- Guru Amar Das Sahib - Organized Sikhs into **22 zones called Manji's**. Headquarters: **Goindval Sahib**
- Supremacy of Sangat Declared
- Guru Ram Das Sahib & Bibi Bhani- Founded and **built Ramdaspur (Amritsar)**
- Guru Arjan Sahib - **built Harmandir Sahib**
- Guru Hargobind Sahib - **built Akal Takht Sahib**



# MECHANISM 1 : AKAL TAKHT SAHIB - The Panth's Headquarters

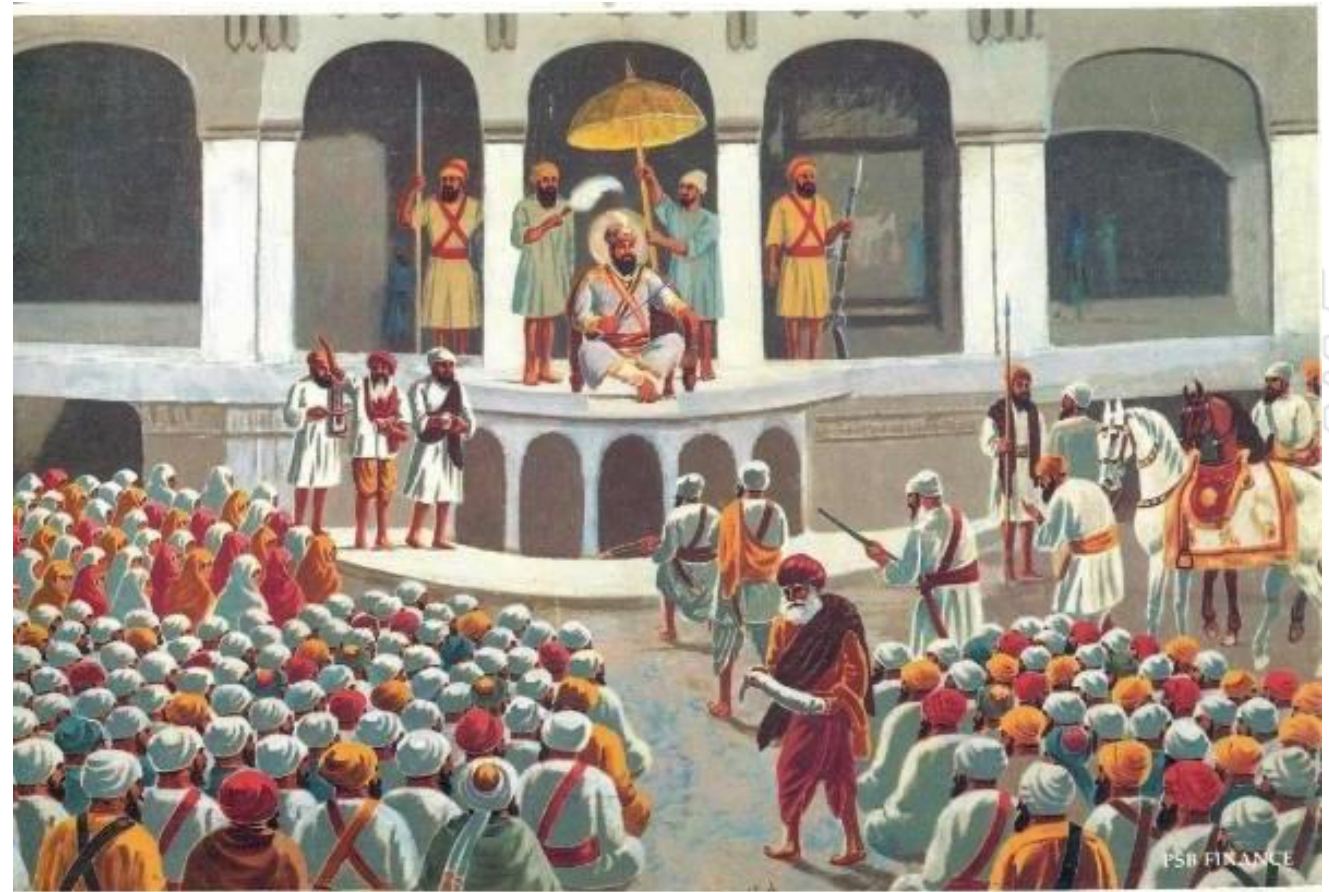


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In contrast to Harmandir Sahib, Akal Takht was built exclusively by Guru Hargobind Sahib himself and his two most exemplary Sikhs: Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha

As a political, social, judicial, military seat of power, the Akal Takht was open only to those who had made a firm commitment to the Guru

Harmandir Sahib is open to all, especially non-Sikhs but Akal Takht is not a Gurdwara. It is the Centre of our Sovereign Power



Guru Hargobind Sahib with His Sangat at Akal Takht  
*20<sup>th</sup> century Painting*

**The construction of Akal Takht was a bold and dramatic declaration of complete sovereignty**

# “ TAKHT IS WHERE THE GURU IS”



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## **Takht Kot Sahib at Kiratpur Sahib:**

- When Guru HarGobind Sahib relocated to Kiratpur he built a new Takht
- Guru HarRai Sahib and Guru HarKrishan Sahib were crowned here
- This is where the sixth to eighth Guru Sahibs exercised their socio-political power



## **Akal Bunga Sahib at Anandpur Sahib:**

- When Guru TeghBahadur Sahib built Anandpur he created this Takht
- It was here that Guru Gobind Singh Sahib issued his first command after the cremation of Guru TeghBahadur Sahib's remains

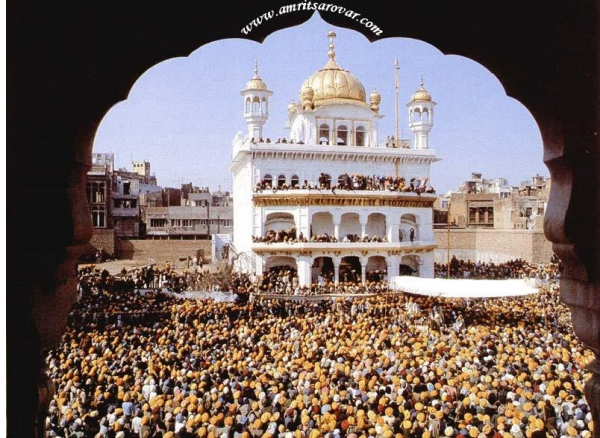


# ESSENTIAL TRUTH 2:

## Guru Khalsa Panth & Guru Granth Sahib



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ਖਾਲਸਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਣੀ (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਆਤਮਾ ਹੈ, ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਪਰਮਾਰਥ ਸਿੱਧ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਪੰਥ ਪੂਰਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ।  
ਬਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਵਤੰਤਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਗੁਰ ਪਦਵੀ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ

**Sikh Rehat Maryada: Article XXIII - Panth's Status of Guru-hood (SGPC Published English Translation)**

**This corporate entity is the Panth. Every Sikh has also to fulfill his obligations as a unit of the corporate body, the Panth. The Guru Panth (Panth's status of Guruhood) means the whole body of committed baptized Sikhs. This body was fostered by all the ten Gurus and the tenth Guru gave it its final shape and invested it with Guruhood.**

### ੧.ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ

ਸੇਵਾ,ਕੇਵਲ ਪੱਖੇ ਲੰਗਰ ਆਦਿ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੁਕ ਜਾਂਦੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ । ਸੇਵਾ,ਸਫਲ ਉਹ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਥੋੜ੍ਹੇ ਜਤਨ ਨਾਲ ਵਧੀਕ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੀਕ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਖਸੀ ਧਰਮ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਪੰਥਕ ਫਰਜ਼ ਭੀ ਪੂਰੇ ੧੫ ਕਰਨੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਪੰਥ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੇ 'ਪੰਥ' ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅੰਗ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਭੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਧਰਮ ਨਿਭਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ।

ੳ) 'ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ': ਤਿਆਰ-ਬਰ-ਤਿਆਰ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਨੂੰ 'ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ' ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਦਸਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਸੌਂਪੀ।

# MECHANISM 2: THE PANJ PIARE

## How the Panth became Guru



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The Panj Piare act as the embodiment of the Gurgaddi transferred to the Khalsa in 1699

**“In the twin doctrine of 'Guru Granth – Guru Panth', the two components have a complementary relationship with a distinct role assigned to each. For effective functioning of body and soul, they have to act together.**

**In practice the doctrine means that the body of the Panth has to take decisions on temporal matters dealing with a situation prevailing at a particular time strictly following the spiritual principles laid down in Guru Granth Sahib to carry out the will of God or sarbat da bhala.”**

***Guru Granth-Guru Panth, Dr. Kharak Singh***

**“Guru Nanak’s disciple Lahina is made Angad, literally, a limb of his own body... The historical succession from Nanak to Angad etched in the tenth Sikh Guru’s memory was eventually reproduced by him: he made the Khalsa a limb of himself on Baisakhi 1699”**

***The Birth of the Khalsa, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh***







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# MECHANISM 3: JATHEDAR

## Not a King or a Dictator, instead a Servant of the Panth

- Along with five arrows, the Khanda used to initiate the Khalsa, Panj Piare were appointed by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib to go with Banda Singh
- Banda Singh ordered to consult with the Khalsa represented by Panj for all social, political, and religious decisions
- Banda Singh only had executive authority in battle as a military commander
- Mission: Lead the Khalsa Fauj to free Panjab



Baba Banda Singh 'Bahadur' at Lohgarh Sahib

*20<sup>th</sup> century Painting*



# MECHANISM 4: Sarbat Khalsa

## The Khalsa as a whole making decisions creating Gurmata



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The Khalsa as a whole is Guru Panth

Large numbers of Khalsa warranted creation of a large gathering

When the Khalsa comes to a decision under guidance of Gurbani it is deemed decree of the Guru or Gurmata

# Explanation of Sarbat Khalsa



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“When the chiefs and principal leaders meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of general good and actuated by the principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and the commonwealth to which he belongs. After the prayers (ardas) and distribution of Karah Parshad, the session commenced: **Then distinction of original tribes, which are on other occasions kept up, are on this occasion laid aside in token of their general and complete union in one cause.** The Akalis then exclaim, “Sardars (chiefs), this is a Gurmata on which prayers are again said aloud. The chiefs after tills sit closer and say to each other, **“the sacred Granth is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes and to be united”.** This moment of **religious fervour and ardent patriotism** is taken to reconcile all animosities. They then proceed to consider the danger with which they are threatened, to settle the best plans for averting it and to choose the generals who are to lead their armies against the common enemy”

*John Malcolm, 'Sketch Of The Sikhs', Asiatick Researches, 1810*



Sikh Jatha in the Jungles in the Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century

*20<sup>th</sup> century Painting*

The “Sarbat Khalsa” or the whole people, met once at the Akal Takht, Amritsar the highest seat of Panthic authority, on the occasion of Dewali or Baisakhi, and felt that they were one. All questions affecting the welfare of the nation were referred to the Sangats, which would decide them in the form of resolutions called Gurmattas. A Gurmatta duly passed was supposed to have received the sanction of the Guru, and any attempt made afterwards to contravene it was taken as a sacrilegious act.

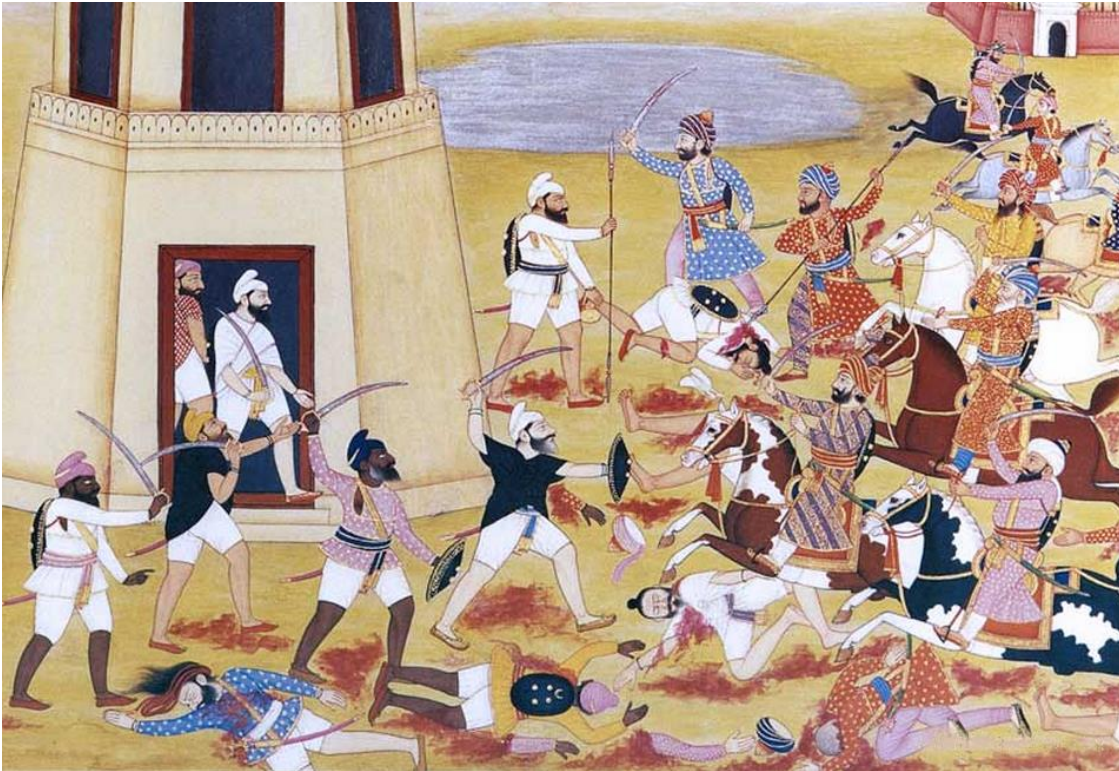
*Principal Teja Singh*



# Sarbat Khalsa Historically



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The Khalsa Fights Mughal Forces  
*19<sup>th</sup> century Painting*

- 1726: Plunder government treasuries, raid government armories and stables, and punish government informers and lackeys
- 1745: Reorganize the Panth into 25 Jathas of 100 Sikhs each and to carry on raids against Mughal strongholds
- 1758: Reorganized the Misl
- 1760: Resolved to attack Lahore
- 1761: Decided to assassinate Harbhagat Niranjan
- 1762: Resolved to fight Abdali at the destroyed ground of Akal Takht Sahib



# Review:



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## Three Essential Truths

1. Gurus are ik with each building on the previous Gurus teachings
2. The Guru is both Guru Granth Sahib AND Guru Khalsa Panth
3. Guru Khalsa Panth has 4 Mechanisms: Akal Takht, Panj Piare, Jathedar, & Sarbat Khalsa

## Four Mechanisms of Guru Khalsa Panth

1. Akal Takht
2. Panj Piare
3. Jathedar
4. Sarbat Khalsa



# 2

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## Current State & Moving Forward

Recent Events & #FreeAkalTakht

# Deficiencies of Sarbat Khalsa in the last Century



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Not every group had an equal say  
Dominated by certain groups

Not fully sovereign, still under  
British/Indian laws and governance

Created systems modeled on the  
British/Indian legislature (SGPC)





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## November 2015: Many Deficiencies but a way forward



Many of the Matthe were powerful, well thought out and in keeping with Sikh principles

Dominated by certain groups

No procedures or process

No Implementation

Started discussion worldwide

Decision to hold another Sarbat Khalsa in April, now Nov 2016

# Destiny Out of Panth's Hands

- We are one of the world's largest faiths and yet are the only one without our own independent governing body
- Our supreme religious institutions are officially under the laws and regulations of a state that has actively discriminated and persecuted many in our Qaum
- Unlike every other community's central authority, control of our institutions is fought over by political parties of India
- Instead of being a supreme body, as Guru Hargobind Sahib created it to be, Akal Takht has become a pawn of politicians



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Parliament House, New Delhi

Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 gives Indian State  
Legal Control of Our Panthic Institutions



# #FreeAkalTakht Mandate

## SUPPORTING 2 RESOLUTIONS DECLARED AT NOV '15 SK



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### *Resolution #2*

***Reaffirms Akal Takht Sahib is Guru-gifted sovereign Sikh institution which must become fully independent again.***

*A draft committee is to be constituted comprising of Sikhs both from the Homeland and the Diaspora by 30 Nov 2015 to report on Akal Takht Sahib System which includes Sarbat Khalsa and Jathedars governance and process. Plan to be adopted by Vaisakhi 2016 when the next Sarbat Khalsa is to be held.*

### *Resolution #5*

***Creates World Sikh Parliament to represent global Sikhs under aegis of Akal Takht Sahib.***

*A draft committee is to be constituted comprising of Sikhs both from the Homeland and the Diaspora by 30 Nov 2015 to report on its structure and governance. Plan to be adopted by Vaisakhi 2016.*





# #FreeAkalTakht Guiding Principles

## THE FUNDAMENTALS BY WHICH WE WORK

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1. Guru-inspired
2. Proactively inclusive
3. Consensus-building
4. Collaborative
5. Transparent
6. Open-minded
7. Long-term
8. Provocative
9. Systems focused
10. Reclaim & reinterpret



# Timeline of Activities



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**January**  
Town-Halls  
First Road

**March**  
World Sikh  
Conference  
AUS

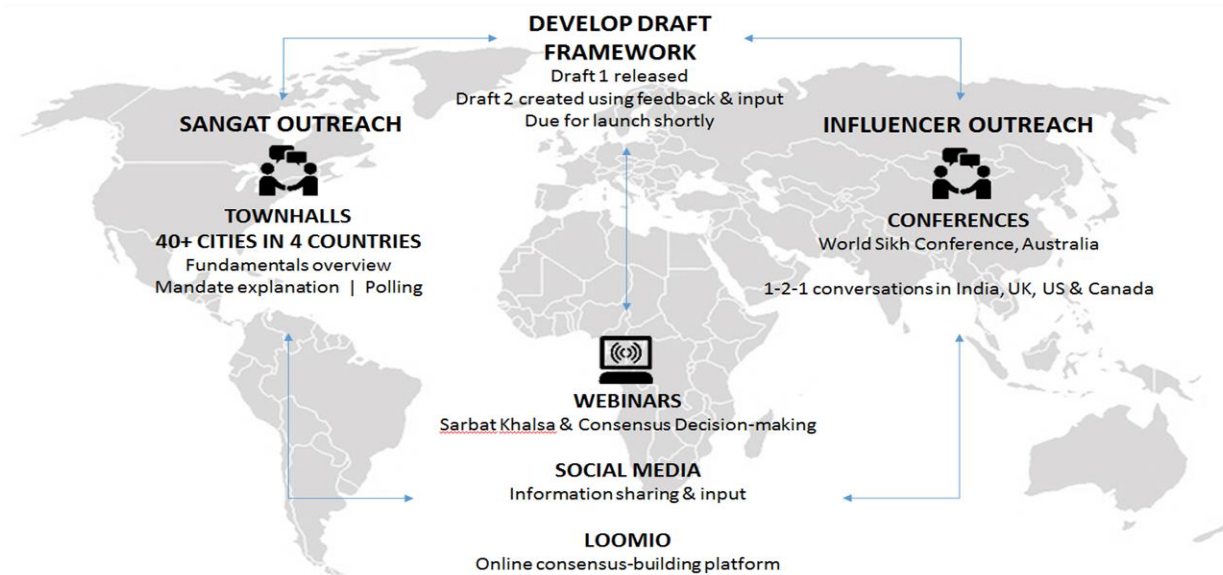
**July**  
Framework  
Draft #2  
Released

**September**  
Model Sarbat  
Khalsa BC

**February**  
Framework  
Draft #1  
Released

**April**  
Town-Halls  
Second Round  
**14 Proposal Focus  
(Polling)**

**August**  
Model  
Sarbat  
Khalsa UK



# #FreeAkalTakht Objectives

## SHORT-TERM & LONG-TERM



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### SHORT-TERM

#### Process

- Model Sarbat Khalsa Process
- Consensus over Election
- Transparency

#### 14 Proposal's

- Jathedar
- Sarbat Khalsa

### LONG-TERM

#### Facilitate creation of detailed processes on:

- Sarbat Khalsa
- Akal Takht Sahib Functions
- Panj Piare duties & selection process
- Jathedar duties & selection process
- Relationship between Sarbat Khalsa, Akal Takht Sahib, Panj Piare & Jathedar

3

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## 14 Proposals Consensus

Procedure walkthrough & Questions



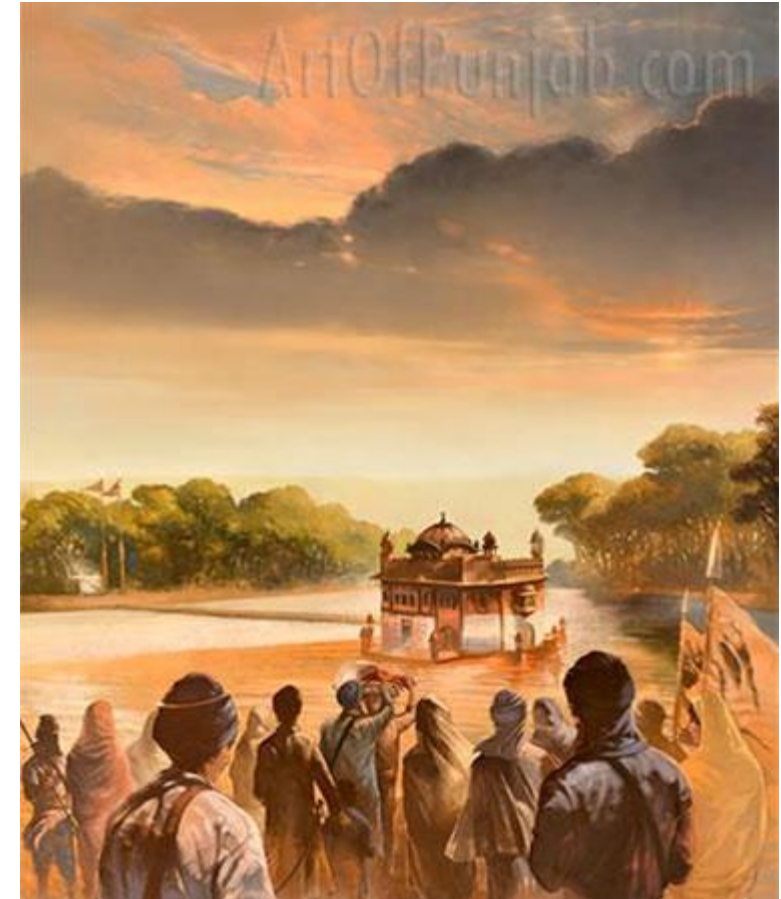
# Principles of Sarbat Khalsa (*Short Version*)



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**Based on Gurmat concept of Sangat. Sarbat Khalsa is a “large-scale” Sangat. The Sarbat Khalsa differs from European/American models.**

1. Free/Soverign institution under no authority except Guru Granth & Guru Panth
2. Perspectives/proposals must not violate **Guru Granth Sahib Ji** and historical precedent it does not matter how popular it is
3. Open/Transparent process for all Sikhs if they have **allegiance to Guru Granth and the authority of Guru Khalsa Panth**
4. Majority rules program rejected Common Minimum program pursued
5. Influence by individuals avoided Guru declared Sangat supreme
6. Personal animosities, and internal disputes left behind for Panth
7. Participation requires full surrender to Sangat/Panth
8. All must be open to constructive criticism



Sarbat Khalsa  
*21<sup>st</sup> century Painting*

# Where the 14 Proposals came from?



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## 13 Proposals WSC

- 7 Jathedar Criteria
- 6 Sarbat Khalsa Process

## Polling

- Agree, Disagree, or Stand Aside
- USA, Canada, & UK

## Ahead of UK Model Sarbat Khalsa

- Collected detailed feedback on proposals at UK town-halls
- #FreeAkalTakht team made modifications ahead of time to reconcile major concerns that would create unattended divisiveness

## Ahead of BC Model Sarbat Khalsa

- #FreeAkalTakht team added 1 proposal on global representative distribution to global Sarbat Khalsa

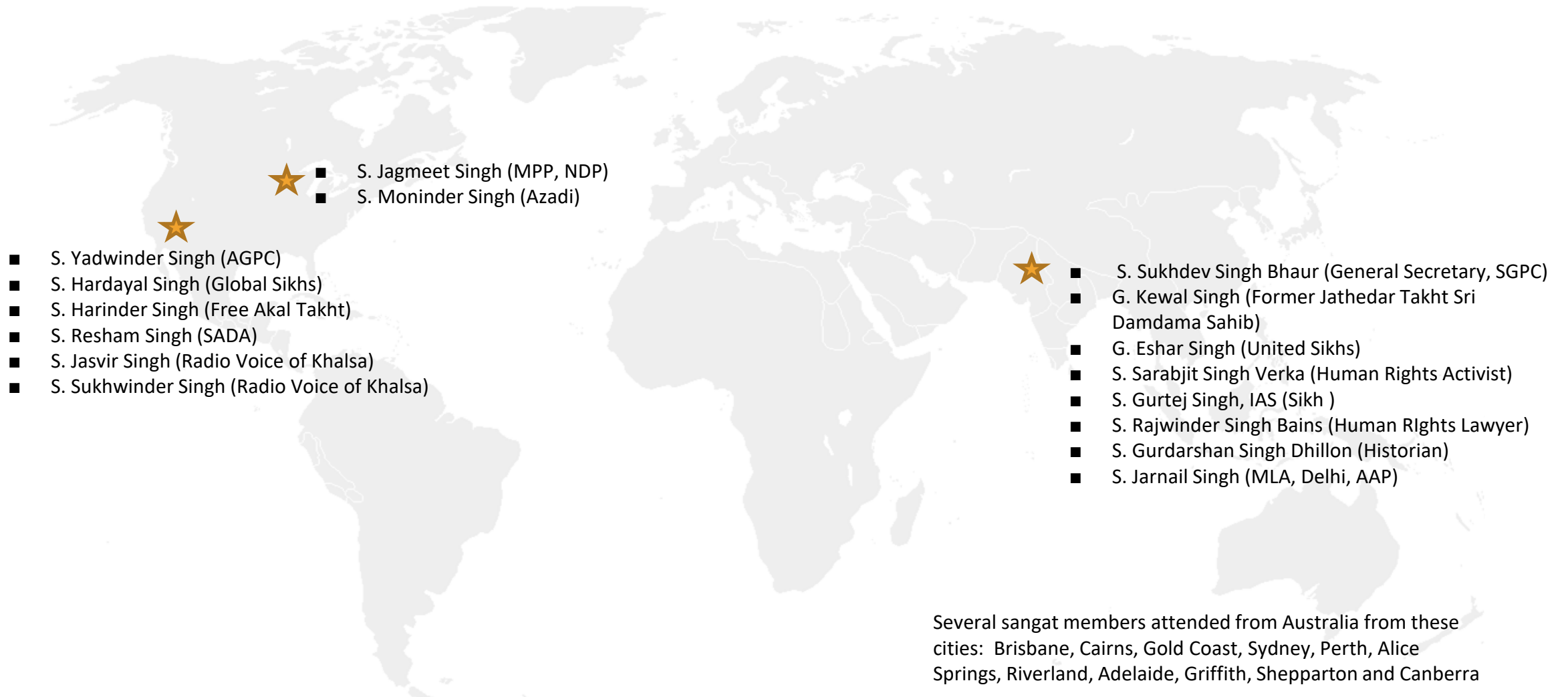


# WORLD SIKH CONFERENCE: MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

## ATTENDEES (MARCH 10-13, 2016)



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# What happens next?



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## Session 2: Individual Polling

- Agree, Stand-Aside, Disagree, Block
- Disagree/Block require comment/explanation
- You may comment as you wish

## Break

- 15 Mins
- Data into presentation for all to see
- Prepare blocks for Session 2
- Results presentation

## Polling Results

- Presentation on Results

## Session 3: Consensus Building

- All blocks for the same proposal will be grouped together
- A table will be assigned to each group of blocks
- Tables validate the blocks
- Table will rewrite proposal so that it reconciles concerns of the validated blocks

## Q/A

- Open question and answer session with #FreeAkalTakht team

# What will be in this Data Package #FreeAkalTakht is making?



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- Explanation of Model Sarbat Khalsa process for arriving at consensus (common minimum program)
- All stance data collected in tables and charts
- All rewritten proposals
- A set of recommendations to the Panth for anyone wishing to host and conduct the Global Sarbat Khalsa

