

the weakness of the unachieving Rustam-dil [the imperial commander] and others, who had been slow in his pursuit, was able to wander about in the plains of ignominy and flee into the Northern Mountains. . . .

When the Imperial Camp was pitched in the . . . hunting ground of [Jahan-gir] and [Shāhjahān], that ill-fated falcon of a fox [Bandā Bahādur] fled into the fort of Mukhlīspūr . . . [The Emperor], with relaxed mind, sat in luxury and comfort, while deputing the forces of the princes and nobles to storm the fort and kill the Infidels. Young men exhibited bravery to the extent of their strength and power. But the stormy winds, destructive floods . . . and the bitterness of the cold rendered men and horses useless and weak. . . . The period of the siege extended to two months. What stratagem and stroke did not come to that deceitful deceiver [Bandā]! At last owing to the disloyalty of some of the persons of the Imperial entrenchments, he made his luckless way in one direction, and going . . . to the hills of Jammū raised a tumult there. . . .

Now, owing to the good fortune of the victorious Emperor [Farrukh Siyar, 1713–1719], the time of that ill-fated one was near. . . .

I, the writer of these warning-laden pages, was then by way of service, posted under the Deputy-Governor. . . . What bold actions were then seen from those doomed ones [the Sikhs]! Every day, twice or thrice, forty or fifty of those black-faced ones would come out [of their fort] and from outside carry back fodder for their animals. Every time men of this [Imperial] army . . . tried to stop them, they cut the Mughals down with arrows, muskets and short arms, and went on their way. . . .

But God's mercy did not desert [the Mughals; they did not have to storm the fort]. . . . At last, owing to a number of causes, such as their confinement, the maddening stench of carcasses and putrid matter, the exhaustion of their store of grain and their dying of starvation, those wicked infidels came down to pleading with importunity and helplessness and made the offer that their base chief would [surrender] . . .

A fateful order was issued for the execution of the *Gurū*, his son, and the other sweepers [the Sikhs].

[*Ibratnāma*, trans. I. Habib in *Sikh History from Persian Sources: Translations of Major Texts*, ed. J. S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), 111–112, 122–123, 125–127.]

#### THE SIKH RELIGIOUS CODE: LIVES OF DISCIPLINE AND DEVOTION

The Sikhs as pictured by their enemies may seem to bear no relation to the Sikhs as pictured in their own religious literature, which breathes a spirit of devotion. As with many religious traditions, however, the truth of one's faith may become, in the eyes of one's enemies, fanaticism and bigotry. Sikhism is defined by devotion to the Gurus, especially the originator of the community, Guru Nanak; by reverence for the scrip-

ture, the *Granth Sāhib*; and by adherence to a code of devotion, social behavior, and discipline.

The code of devotion is embodied in what is known as the *rahit*, of which there are a number of versions, called *rahit-nāmās*. A few excerpts are given from what is believed by scholars to be one of the earliest extant versions, the *Chaupā Singh Rahit-nāmā*, dating, according to some scholars, from early in the eighteenth century. Like many religious codes, it is intended to define and identify the true believers, who accept the rigorous discipline of the faith.

By the grace of the Eternal One, the True Guru

The text which follows is the *Rahit* [or pattern of conduct] prescribed by the Satguru. What is the *Rahit*? The *Granth Sahib* tells us: If one follows the *Rahit* that disease [which is separation from God] progressively diminishes. . . . In the early morning the Gursikh [a devout Sikh] . . . should bathe or [at least] perform the five ablutions. Let him then recite *Japji* [thirty-eight short poems at the beginning of the *Ādi Granth* that are considered the core statement of faith] five times. According to Guru Ram Das he who recites *Japji* five times will acquire the radiance of [true] enlightenment . . . The Gursikh should then turn to whatever daily occupation is appropriate to the status conferred on him by the Guru. . . . When it is time to eat give a portion of your food to someone else, as you are able to afford. Invite another Sikh to sit with you in the place where you prepare your food [and share whatever you have with him]. . . . A Gursikh should not drink intoxicating liquor. As the *Granth Sahib* says: He who drinks dislodges his reason and becomes demented. . . . A Gursikh should not stare at another's wife and he should never have intercourse with any woman other [than his own wife]. . . . A Gursikh . . . should not cherish worldly things, and he should always be in complete control of his temper. . . . A Gursikh should be strictly loyal to his own dharma and should not endeavour to follow another's [way].

[*Chaupā Singh Rahit-nama*, trans. and ed. W. H. McLeod (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1987), 149, 150, 153, 155, from vv. 1, 2, 7, 11, 44, 65.]

### *MARATHAS: COURTIERS, REBELS, RAIDERS, AND STATE BUILDERS*

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Indian nationalists would see the Marathas as Indian patriots and freedom fighters, but in the selections given here they appear in many forms. At times they were courtiers at the Mughal courts; at other times they rebelled, contributing to the weakness of the empire through their invasion of the Punjab, Delhi, and other parts of the empire. They were also seen as plunderers of peasants and merchants throughout India.