



CREATING SPACES
TO SHARE OUR STORIES
AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES

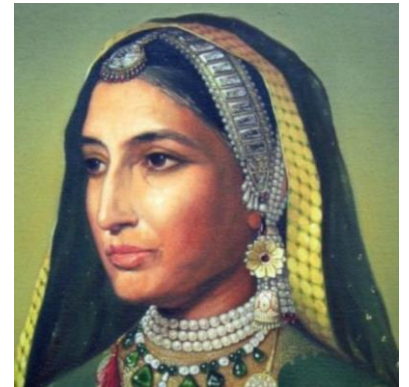
What makes a Good Leader? – SIKHI

Background:

Sikhi began in the 15th Century (AD) in Punjab, North-West India. It was founded by Guru Nanak. A Guru is someone who leads you from darkness (gu) to light (ru), also known as a teacher.

There were 10 human-form Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Guru, declared that the eternal Sikh Guru is the Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the ruler of the Sikh empire from 1801 to 1839. He was a charismatic figure that followed the Gurus and expanded Sikh rule across South Asia. This story is about his wife, Maharani Jind Kaur and her leadership which followed his death



Maharani Jind Kaur, The Last Queen of the Punjab - (Story can be found on back)

Follow up questions:

1. From this story, what do you think the characteristics are that make a great leader?
2. From this story, what do you think are the characteristics that make a bad leader?
3. What do you think are the difficulties that Maharani Jind Kaur would have faced as a leader in the 19th century? How might she have overcome these challenges?
4. Can you think of something brave which you or someone you know has done?

Maharani Jind Kaur, The Last Queen of the Punjab

Maharani Jind Kaur was the wife of the famous ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and mother of Maharaja Duleep Singh.

After her husband's death and the uncertainty over who would become the next ruler the throne eventually passed to her young son. However, as a result of his young age she became 'The Queen of the Punjab' and took over the Sikh empire. At the time she was ruling, the Sikh empire was under threat from other empires in the region. Maharani Jind Kaur has been described as the bravest Queen of the Punjab who did the Kingdom of Punjab proud. She spent her life fighting to protect the Sikh empire and resisting the rule of the British. It is noted that she was a beautiful young woman and her beauty was used to portray her as a woman that was incapable of being nothing other than a pretty young woman. Despite this she was a strong leader who was able to unite the Sikhs during a time period of struggle and unrest.

During her reign she was exiled, and her young son Maharaja Duleep Singh was taken to Britain. During her exile she was tortured both physically and emotionally but eventually escaped and sought refuge in Nepal. Eventually, towards the end of her life Maharani Jind Kaur and her son were reunited, and she was the first Sikh woman to arrive in Britain. During this reunion Maharani Jind Kaur told her son stories about the history of the Sikh empire and his charismatic father. As a result of this she ignited a fire within her son that inspired him to reconnect with his faith that he had lost when he came to Britain.

Maharani Jind Kaur's life is inspirational because she continued to fight for her strong values and beliefs despite her difficulties. She never gave up on her faith even in the most difficult times and was an icon and rose to be the heroine that was desperately needed. Her bravery and leadership turned the tide in one of the most important points in Sikh history. Through her inspirational leadership, she was able to inspire her son, Maharaj Duleep Singh to learn more about his faith. Her story is one of pain, struggle and despair but also one of courage, fearlessness and strength.