

# Ratan Singh Bhangu's "Prachin Panth Prakash"

## Story of the first appearance of the Khalsa

[Guru's striving for the *Panth*]

Tr. & analysis by Prof. Gurtej Singh\*

### PART X

\* **NOTE:** Since *Sri Gur-Panth Prakash* (by Bhangu) is in poetic form, the numbers at the end of sentences are couplet numbers and not reference numbers.

\* 742 Sector 8, Chandigarh. 160008. Email: akalsahaigurtejsingh@yahoo.com

#### Rain and the Story of the Malwa

{'I will make the Malwa land (productive)'}

Couplet: At one time in that country rain was needed. The entire congregation came to the Guru and stood around him with folded hands.<sup>1</sup>

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Quatrain: All came and said, 'the congregation has come to beg for rain'. The Guru led the congregational supplication and it started raining heavily at once.<sup>2</sup> The True Guru came and sat at the temporary resting place. The Guru told them that he was clearly seeing it happen. 'See, a river will come flowing here. The Malwa land will become productive.'<sup>3</sup> People of the jungle retorted, 'by tomorrow the water will go to its own place.' Then the True Guru said the pleasant words, 'I want Malwa to progress.'<sup>4</sup> 'I want sugarcane, wheat and rice sown here. It will become as productive as the land of Sarhind.' Upon which Dalla Singh said sharply, 'we find growing (coarse grain) barley and *moth* (*aconitifolius phaseolus*) more pleasant.'<sup>5</sup>

Couplet: The True Guru then disapproved: 'You have delivered a death blow to the people of the jungle. I wanted to see Malwa flourishing and you contented.'<sup>6</sup>

#### Episode of the march to the Deccan

('...Nauranga took the road to hell')

Couplet: The True Guru was at Talwandi and was in deep contemplation. A Sikh coming from the Deccan stated, 'Nauranga had taken the road to hell.'<sup>1</sup>

Quatrain: On hearing this, the True Guru said, 'he has left his sons to die fighting. It is now time to go to the Deccan.' The Singhs heard the Guru speak like this.<sup>2</sup>

Couplet: The True Guru said, 'Dalla Singh come with me and I will make you a sovereign of Delhi after destroying the prestige of Delhi.'<sup>3</sup>

Quatrain: His younger brother was standing near Dalla. He turned his face to Dalla and said, 'he will give you the kind of sovereignty he has given to his sons.'<sup>4</sup> The (earlier Guru's son) heard this, and spoke to the Guru, remorsefully shaking his head, 'I have always tried to explain, conversing with Jats is inviting inappropriate remarks.'<sup>5</sup>

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'These Jats of the Jungle expect new favours everyday and yet indulge in denigration'. The Guru said 'when did I provoke the Jats?' The Purohit said, 'he scoffed at you over the death of your sons.' The True Guru said, 'my sons, the Sikhs are alive and are attending to me. His sons are dead.' As he said this, Dalla's son died immediately. After that the Guru lifted camp.<sup>7</sup>

Couplet: He remained at Talwandi for nine months and nine days. Abandoning the big place of the Turks, he proceeded towards the Deccan.<sup>8</sup>

Quatrain: Dalla turned his face away from the Guru. He accompanied him for two or three journeys and returned immediately. Other people of the Jungle who went along with him, also became faithless and turned back. 9. When Kaul Sodhi of Kotha, heard that his son was accompanying the Guru, he sent his ministers after him. They picked him up along with

his cot and brought him back. 10. When the True Guru sent for the Sodhi, the people reported that his camp was deserted. Like that many people forsook him. The Guru saw those of the jungle running away. 11. The four houses of Mohan, Bhagtu, Behlo and Rupa remained in his presence for a long distance. They returned only when the Guru himself pleasantly dismissed them.<sup>12</sup>

#### **First the story of Banda is written**

(Meets mahant Jait Ram at the shrine of Dadu)

Couplet: When the Guru reached the Deccan where existed Dadu's shrine, he camped at an appropriate place with his five to seven thousand Singhs.<sup>1</sup>

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Quatrain: Drums were struck, flags were unfurled, recitation of the 'word' was commenced without any fear of restriction. Chandi Chariter, Chandi ki Var and Akal Ustat were recited.

2. As it rains in the burning heat of June, and the relieved frogs let out contented cries, as peacocks shriek with joy on hearing the rumbling clouds; so the Sikhs recite the 'word'.<sup>3</sup>

Couplet: Some were reading books, others the Guru's own word in the Granth. Some musicians were singing holding the rebec. The splendour of Indra's seat was seen reflected.<sup>4</sup>

Swayia: At one place the sound of ankle-trinkets could be heard, at another it was that of the long drum, and elsewhere it was the rebec or the clapping sounds. The melodious water flute, the three stringed sitar and *tanpura* were being played by masters. Yaksha, attendants of Kuber, Kinnars the heavenly dancers, Narad and Uluk the divine musician seem to be singing the four line verses with beautiful instruments. Such was the splendour spread before the Guru, that the court of Indra saw it and was ashamed.<sup>5</sup>

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Quatrain: Many people came and bowed at the True Guru's feet; some sought his permission to camp. Some walked around the Guru with burning incense, like stars revolving around the North Star. 6. Some would fall face downwards at his feet, as divine beings prostrating in the 'stick at rest form' to Indra. Some stood holding the tent, the canopy, as if trees had struck roots, (7) just like grouted pillars, not wavering in wind or sunshine.<sup>8</sup>

Couplet: Just as the sunflower turns to the sun, fans fan at the speed of lightning. The umbrella sways like a cloud and the huge tent was like the heavily clouded sky.<sup>9</sup>

Resembling Indra, sat the Guru holding the bow like a rainbow. The peacock feathers being waved over him seemed like dancing peacocks.<sup>10</sup>

Quatrain: People of the town were wonderstruck. Lakhs of people came to have a glimpse. A look at the Guru soothed minds, the whole town turned up with offerings.<sup>11</sup>

Couplet: On seeing the great splendour, the world was awe-struck. Abandoning Dadu's shrine they flocked to have a look at the True Guru.<sup>12</sup>

Quatrain: News reached the Shrine of Dadu that, he who is the Tenth Nanak, had come. The head priest came with his followers and threw open the doors of the shrine to him.<sup>13</sup> He paid much respect to the True Guru as was the tradition of saints and mendicants. He saw the Guru, interacted with him and was happy. 'You are Nanak, you are the glorious Guru,' he proclaimed.<sup>14</sup> The True Guru said all saints are one, and on meeting, like milk and water they renounce distinction. The name of the mahant was Jait Ram and he was a good person.<sup>15</sup>

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Couplet: He stood up with folded hands and prayed, 'we are fortunate and blessed that you have come to us.'<sup>16</sup>

Quatrain: 'Have a meal with us. Protect the tradition of saints and congregations. The True Guru was pleased, but said this, 'you may not be able to serve us all. I have many with me who eat meat. How will their hunger be fully satisfied?' So he replied saying, 'on the spiritual strength of Dadu they will eat sorghum.'<sup>18</sup>

#### **The second mention of Baba Banda**

Couplet: The Guru was invited to Dadu's shrine. He was pleased on seeing the institution. Because of the spiritual influence of the meeting of saints, hawks ate sorghum.<sup>1</sup>

Quatrain: Thus was the Dadu's shrine shown to the Guru. The True Guru caused flowers to rain. He commended the spiritual influence of saints and wished destruction to their detractors.<sup>2</sup> He also recited the portion of the respected *Sukhmani* which described the glory of saints. All kinds of discussion and exchange of information took place in an atmosphere of cordiality on both sides. 3. The mahant related his new experience, 'somehow I had gone to that place. His name is Narayandas. His establishment is aligned to a Bairagi (mendicant) sect.'<sup>4</sup>

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'He had prepared a well-decorated cot. He seated me on it. I thought he was honouring me but that wicked man was full of mischief'.<sup>5</sup>

Couplet: 'He seated me on the couch and then overturned it. He made much fun at my expense and let out peels of uncontrollable laughter.'<sup>6</sup>

Quatrain: 'He makes fun of all the six Hindu schools of thought and is not afraid of any Hindu or Muslim holy man. He is a slanderer of saints, is an acolyte of none and regards himself a person holy for Hindus and Muslims.'<sup>7</sup> The *mahant* said, 'do not venture that side. Maintain distance from him on your journey.' The True Guru replied, 'whatever is willed by the True Guru will happen. It does not behove me to avoid him.'<sup>8</sup> 'Point out the way to his place. Let me know the name of the village and location of the place. I will go and see his miraculous powers and to know the teacher on account of whom he has prospered.'<sup>9</sup> 'If he confronts me I will destroy his miraculous powers; if he is reconciliatory, I will put him on the true path. I will make him a servant of the Truthful Nanak, and the most favoured of my Sikhs'.<sup>10</sup>

Mahant's words:

Couplet: 'On the banks of the Godavari, there is a town named Nanded. In the nice southern corner of the town is his place.'<sup>11</sup>

Quatrain: 'He was a pauper who joined a saint on a journey. Initially, he travelled around much. Eventually he met an accomplished master of *mantra*.<sup>12</sup> He served him much. He imparted complete knowledge to him. He passed on the booklet and revealed the secret, making him an equal to himself.'<sup>13</sup>

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On handing over the booklet he instructed him, 'do not publicise the matter to the world. If it remains a secret, it will remain with you. If you make it known, your breath too will depart along with it'.<sup>14</sup>

Couplet: A fort, a woman, wealth, a horse, a weapon, a philosopher's stone, an effective medicine and supernatural power inducing magical formulae (*mantras*) are usurped by kings.<sup>15</sup>

Quatrain: Kings and emperors do not leave off pursuing and inflict a terrible death. They believe that the wielder of miracles will obtain political power over the world.<sup>16</sup> They are afraid of being killed easily. This fear drives them to harass (the wielder). Kings desire to control such a person, like rivals to the throne they eliminate them.

<sup>17</sup> Now listen to the name of the book. It was *Sidh Annunian Mantran*. The author was a

prominent acolyte of Gorakh himself, called Mehat, so the elderly were heard to say.<sup>18</sup> The book contained all the knowledge, which is rare in the world. It contained magical formulae, the essence of magical secrets (*tantra*), knowledge for casting mystical diagrams and an account of days and auspicious time.<sup>19</sup> It had chemicals useful for locating the philosopher's stone, anti-dotes for snake poison and the essence of all miraculous powers; methodology of erecting delusions to ensnare Shiv and Indra and wonderful tricks from Orissa.<sup>20</sup> It had knowledge of dissolving in water, rising above, of the skies, mode of starting or dousing miraculous fires and methods for dousing them and expertise for standing and eating flames.<sup>21</sup>

Couplet: There were words on mastering which, everything commanded, materialised. One could grant milk, male progeny or wealth to whosoever one pleased.<sup>22</sup>

Quatrain: The ability to see everything underground, to immediately summon whatever is hidden or covered there; to converse with woods, vegetation and formulae for creating philosopher's stone (were all there).<sup>23</sup>

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It could turn males into females and females to males. It had method of knowing well hidden thoughts of others and the power to attract, beguile and sow differences.<sup>24</sup> The evil-doers could be eliminated, followers saved and stars plucked from the sky; the stubborn fort reducing formulae and those for winning in battlefields.<sup>25</sup> Wind, rain, hailstones, blizzard and lightning could be commanded and directed from any direction to any direction. Boons or curses would not be wasted.<sup>26</sup>

Couplet: (All supernatural beings like) ghosts, *pret*, *jogans*, *siddhas*, *birs*, *yakshas*, *rakshas*, dancers at Kuber's court would attend on being summoned by one who patiently studies it.<sup>27</sup>

Quatrain: The knower could determine who would win and who would lose. He could order amicability with lions, snakes, scorpions, mosquitoes, large bees and also with kings and their subjects.<sup>28</sup> Words for comforting those robbed, deceived or those bitten by venomous insects (were there). He who reached alive could be cured and even one dead by snakebite who reached, could live.<sup>29</sup> A person bitten by a mad dog or jackal would overcome all poison on hearing words; a lion, a tiger or a wolf would not be able to open its mouth or use its claws.<sup>30</sup> (It contained) methods of growing trees on land, and extracting chemicals for causing loss of memory, for curing the effects of arsenic, opium, bhang, alcohol or poison.<sup>31</sup>

Couplet: (There were) all eight miraculous powers, (namely,) the power to increase or decrease in size, to become excessively heavy or excessively light, to gain whatever is desired, to merge into the earth and to re-emerge, to control inanimate objects and to create objects. 32.

Couplet: It was described how the happenings of the past, the present and the future could be told.<sup>33</sup>

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Couplet: O! Friend! Writing everything there was in the book, will increase the volume of this work. It could facilitate sight of God or bring about salvation.<sup>34</sup>

Quatrain: Such, such was the book that Banda had received. He could not retain its secret but made it known. He who puts saints to test is in fact one who denigrates them.<sup>35</sup> The Mahant repeated it many times, 'you must certainly not venture in his direction.' The True Guru said, 'I will not desist at all. I will certainly go and see him.'<sup>36</sup> 'As you have seen the hawks eat sorghum. You returned defeated from his place. Send one of your followers with me so that he can witness our meeting.'<sup>37</sup> 'If the spiritual power of the Truthful Nanak is ever increasing, then he will bow at my feet'. After saying this and after inquiring about the

residential address of Banda, the True Guru departed. <sup>38</sup>

Couplet: The True Guru went there and camped on seeing the place. The Persian wheel over the well there was revolving without bullocks to the surprise of the world.<sup>39</sup>

Quatrain: He had created a very pleasant place, one enchanting to the mind. Inside it was a great cot with a cushion and a pillow placed over it. <sup>40</sup> It was suspended in the air one and quarter yards above the ground. It was for Narayandas to sit on. He overthrew anyone else who sat on it. He had made such arrangements.<sup>41</sup>

Discourse about the meeting with Banda

(Then he stated, 'I am your servant')

Couplet: The time at which the True Guru reached, Banda had gone elsewhere. On seeing the bed spread out luxuriously, the Guru sat upon it spontaneously.<sup>1</sup>

Quatrain: His he goats were slaughtered by the Singhs, were processed and consigned to the cooking pots. His followers went and called out to him, incited him to rage and brought him along.<sup>2</sup>

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He became terribly angry on seeing the bed (occupied) and gave orders to the vexed Birs (supernatural attendants). The Birs went to lift up the bed. The True Guru pressed it with an arrow.<sup>3</sup> Then (the supernatural) Mokals exerted themselves. It was not raised even to a finger's width. <sup>4</sup> On seeing the bed unmoved, he was consumed like a coal. In rage he spoke to the Mokals, 'make his life depart immediately. Why do you take so long?'<sup>5</sup>

Couplet: The Mokals then replied, 'we have spared no effort. Whatever pain we inflict upon him reverts back on to us.'<sup>6</sup>

Quatrain: 'The quantity of pain that we want to inflict on him, we suffer it at heart, increased by a quarter more. If we try to get near him we are scorched by a furious fire'.<sup>7</sup> Then the Mokals said, 'we stand defeated against him. When we come near him, we are singed by our own fury.'<sup>8</sup> 'We are relieved only when we bow our heads. Then we become contented and extremely joyous'. On hearing such words from them, he was shocked and much terrified. <sup>9</sup> When he looked into the eyes of the True Guru, he saw much more power than he himself had. Then he directed his Birs against the Sikhs who had slaughtered his goats.<sup>10</sup>

Couplet: Then the Birs came near the Singhs, they were found protected by an arrow encircling, like the Sudarshan Chakra.<sup>11</sup>

Couplet: When the Birs turned back from the Sikhs, then he was convinced, 'he is the complete True Guru and I am not even an equal of his followers.'<sup>12</sup>

Quatrain: Then he accepted subservience and fell at his feet. Then the True Guru spoke, to ask, 'to what order do you belong? Who is your mentor? Why do you ridicule saints?' <sup>13</sup> 'Is there none like you in the world? Are you alone the repository of great skills?'

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Couplet: 'He who ridicules saints, is degraded. It is the legitimate preserve of jokers, jesters, street magicians and the kind.'<sup>15</sup>

Quatrain: Then he said, 'I am your slave. I am your Singh and you are my Guru. Forgive me for what happened in the past. If it happens again, treat me as it pleases you to.'<sup>16</sup> 'I have now become your servant. I will carry out the particular orders that you give me. Accept me as a servant and keep me with you as a servant.'<sup>17</sup>

- End of Part X  
(To be continued)

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