

Ratan Singh Bhangu's "Prachin Panth Prakash"

Story of the first appearance of the Khalsa

[Guru's striving for the Panth]

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PART IX

* **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.

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Writing the happening at revered Muktsar

(If it pleases you, let the relationship be repaired)

Quatrain: Kapura the cur comes again for mention. He sent a message to the Turks, 'you can arrest the Guru. I did not help him in any way.' 1. On hearing this, the Turks came ready to attack. Message was sent to the other side also. When talk of the attack became frequent, the Brars made preparations for running away. 2. They filled the skins with water with intentions of a long journey into wilderness. The middle country people became more patient and conditioned their minds to face death. 3.

[Page 110]

The Brars advised the True Guru, 'proceed towards the lengthier side of the wastelands.' The True Guru said, 'how will the people and these foot-soldiers with me cope with that?' 4.

Couplet: Then the Brars said to the Guru, 'you want to remain attached to the Sikhs. Those following the footsteps will find the way on the great descent.' 5.

Quatrain: Then the midland people advised, 'we will preserve the bond with the True Guru. If all of us follow you, all the Turks will advance after you.' 6. 'Wherever we go they will come. They will not retreat until repulsed in battle.' 6. The people of the jungle will not face battle. Singhs of the midlands have experienced battle'. 7. 'Allow the midland Panth to fight and die to make them abandon pursuing you.' Upon which the Guru said, 'advance further, to take position at a (strategically) proper place.' 8. They spent the whole night in discussion. The advance guard brought the news, 'the Pathans of Kasur are camping nearby. They will probably come following us.' 9.

Couplet: On hearing this all the Brars, who called themselves, 'young camels,' ran away. They consulted their own interest. They deserted even the respected True Guru. 10.

Quartet: They fled and hid in any direction in which they could arrange pretence for the flight. Some went away saying 'we will bring firm news.' While others pretended to be serving as advance guards. 11. True Guru's water vessel remained unattended near him. Some departed in one, some in the other direction. The entire army of the Brars, who received rupee a day as daily wages, dispersed unceremoniously. 12. The midland people were foot soldiers. They demanded no wages and subsisted on fruits of (humble) *jand* (*prosopis specigera*). With folded hands they stood before the Guru, 'may the Guru point out the strategy.' 13. 'We will give battle here, so that you may ride on into greater wilderness. They will not leave us alone unless repulsed. We will wrestle with the Turks in this wilderness.' 14.

[Page111]

Couplet: The respected True Guru accepted that very suggestion which the Khalsa gave. After looking around in front as well as behind, the Brars also returned to the Guru. 15.

Quatrain: They came and picked up the cot, 'there is no time to rest. The forces have almost reached.' The Guru sent for his horse. Remembering Him 'Whose Name is Truth,' mounted it. 16. The sun emitted some light as he departed towards the wilderness. The

visible raised dust indicated that the enemy had located the Guru and was fast approaching. 17. Then the Khalsa folded hands, 'let us take a stand at this very place.' The Guru nodded consent with a shift of the eyebrows, 'this is where you want to obtain martyrdom.' 18. The Khalsa immediately took positions and planted the battle colours. They struck the battle drum and created a sharp noise by firing their guns.' 19.

Couplet: The Turks heard the noise and they swooped down like an eagle. (The Sikhs) spread clothes over the shrubs to give appearance of tents. 20.

Quatrain: On seeing tents they became apprehensive. They had heard that the Guru was an excellent archer and his arrows could find a target at three kilometres. Some say, 'he is a magician.' 21. Many join the march but drop off on the way or retreat. They executed many a poor deserter found to be hiding. 22. Now hear about the True Guru; of where he took position on leaving the Singhs. There was a sand dune at a distance of three miles. His companions took up position just below it. 23. The Guru himself climbed and stood on top. There he stood watching those on this side. Now listen to the story of those Singhs. Much larger numbers descended upon them. 24.

Couplet: There were altogether only forty Singhs. They decided to fall one by one to keep the person of the Guru at a distance. 25.

Quatrain: As the Khalsa had decided, one by one they came out to battle unto death there. There was a mild slope downwards there. There stood some Singhs behind outspread undergarment curtains. 26.

[Page 112]

A lone person with a drawn sword, would fall like a lion, would kill many and die. On seeing the sword, the Turks would retreat to a distance and kill with arrows and bullets. 27. Those Singhs who had serviceable guns, loaded them with two balls each and fired. They could not know the secret of the number of Singhs. They took the Singhs to be in hundreds. 28. They perceived the Guru to be amidst them. Because of this they remained greatly hesitant. When they had inflicted injuries and had identified all of them, they then attacked and fell upon the pond. 29.

Couplet: Whosoever had remained alive, they killed him. They also took their weapons, clothes and armour. 30.

Quatrain: They felt the fierce sun and were bothered by thirst. They then retreated hastily. Listen to the story of the other side. The Guru stood atop the sand dune. 31. The Brars said, 'Guru let us go further. After killing the Singhs they will come after us.' The True Guru then said, 'the Turks have run away. They have suffered a defeat.' 32. The Turks ran away, suffering dust in the eyes, dumbfounded with mouths sealed. With the Guru's permission, an advance party was despatched. They brought the news that the Turks had departed. 33. The True Guru came back again. He came and dismounted near those Sikhs. Taking a handkerchief the Guru wiped their faces. Expressing happiness he showered choicest blessings on them. 34.

Couplet: The Guru had the distance of the dead body from the central place, measured. He assigned as much land to them as the steps they had travelled. 35.

Quartet: Some had fallen at twenty steps, some died at thirty, forty or fifty paces. Some had fallen at a hundred or two hundred paces. They had all died while advancing and without turning their faces backwards. 36. Many lay also at five or ten paces. The Guru created them into commanders of as many thousands. Among them were found two live Sikhs. They had been with the Guru at Anandpur. 37.

[Page 113]

When the True Guru wiped their faces, these Singhs partly opened their eyes. The true

Guru poured water into their mouths and breath somewhat returned to them. 38. The True Guru said, 'Sikhs! Ask for something. I am extremely pleased and will give what you ask for.' They represented, 'if you are pleased, repair our bond with you.' 39.

Couplet: The respected True Guru agreed. He threw out the paper from his pocket. He generously praised the Guru's Sikhs, 'you have shown concern and done a favour to all others.' 40.

Story of the Sabo and Sado country and of the Talwandi of Brars

[Dalla at Talwandi, Bhatinda exorcized]

(This is our Kashi)

Couplet: When the True Guru came to know that this deed was perpetrated by Kapura, he abandoned Jalanwal, Beeghar and marching on reached impregnable Sabo. 1.

Quatrain: The True Guru rode off towards Sabo. He came and camped at Talwandi. On the assurance of the chief, Dalla, he dismissed the Brars previously engaged. 2.

Couplet: 'If the True Guru comes to us, we will become his retinue. We will remain with him every day and will not desert him.' 3.

Quatrain: 'To the best of our capacity we will serve him. We will dedicate our minds, bodies and wealth to his service.' He brought along his entire family and made everyone a disciple of the True Guru. Some of his people offered gold coins, some silver coins, some hand-woven shawls, some cows, some buffaloes, and some the best mares. Some brought grain some worked in the common kitchen and others contributed clarified butter and salt. 5.

[Page 114]

Dalla summoned all the people of Sabo so as to deter a possible attack by the Turks. They were to assemble at a moments notice. Like Kapura they did not sleep at home. 6.

Couplet: The entire Jungle Country came and bowed to the True Guru who blessed everyone with happiness. They all came with presents and went back taking happiness. 7.

Quatrain: One day a large congregation gathered. They all gathered and made a request to the Guru. Truly is it said that the mouth of the Jat is too large because the throat was at one time opened up with an axe. 8. They said to the Guru, 'the Guru has come to our house, why should our suffering persist? We work hard and strive much, but prosperity does not abide in our homes.' 9. 'A devil resides at Bhatinda. It intercepts all the service we render.' On hearing this, the True Guru sent for Dalla. He administered *pahul* and made him a Singh. 10. And asked him, 'arrange for me to see Bhatinda. The devil should be expelled and the people should live happily.' Dalla Singh repeated the orders and set up camp at Bhatinda. 12.

Couplet: He camped at Bhatinda. The devil looked it up. A great dust storm with whirlwinds arose, unnerving many people. 13.

Quatrain: Some had fever, others had a headache and some others started uttering nonsense. 'Why have you come to bother me? I had provided myself a permanent place,' he said. The True Guru told him, 'these people have become my Sikhs. Leave them alone and go off somewhere further. Otherwise I will hand you over to the martyrs who will insult and kill you.' 14. He was imprisoned in the body of a person, tied up and tortured. 'You, along with your sons and grandsons will be set on fire and killed,' said the Guru. He replied, 'I am the brother of Makha, like him, send me also somewhere else. Or else let me become a Sikh and I will serve you with enthusiasm.' 16.

[Page 115]

Upon this the True Guru ordered him, 'go to Sarhind and reside in the middle of it. See Sarhind destroyed by the roots and depopulated. You may eat or spare anyone as you like.'

17.

Quatrain: He bowed his head and immediately took the road to Sarhind. Dalla Singh then said to the True Guru, 'permit a he buffalo to be given to Bhawani.' 18.

Quartet: Dalla Singh had one brought. Slaughtered it and had the (blood) spilt all around. The Guru then camped inside (the fort). The land of domestic animals became prosperous.

19. Bhais Dial Singh and Fateh Singh were sent for and administered *pahul* of the double-edged sword. The two carpenters were the grandsons of Bhai Rupa. Param Singh and Karam Singh his maternal grandsons also accepted the *pahul* of the double-edged sword. A Sodhi of Kotha village known as Kaul was called to him. He brought along the son of Abhey Ram. The True Guru was kind to him and retained him after administering *pahul* of the double-edged sword. 21. This is the remark the True Guru made: '(the human body) is a vessel and contains what is put in it'. He would call Sodhi Kaul to him every morning. He (the Sodhi) beheld him every morning. 22.

Couplet: The True Guru sat at the temporary resting place, and carving reed pens, threw them around. 'This place will be known as my Kanshi, even the low-witted will become learned here.' 23.

Quatrain: All the descendants of Mehraj came. They brought buffaloes, horses and the tenth part of their income. Both the sons of Kaul became Singhs and were named Ram Singh and Tiloka Singh. 24.

- End of Part IX
(To be continued)

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