

# **Ratan Singh Bhangu's "Prachin Panth Prakash"**

## **Firstly, a Story of the first appearance of the Khalsa**

### **[Guru's striving for the Panth]**

*Tr. & analysis by Prof. Gurtej Singh\**

#### **PART VII**

\* **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

#### **Martyrdom of the elder princes – Battle of Chamkaur**

Couplet: The owner was apprehended from outside, he caused the doors of the mansion to be opened. Some Singhs entered along with the Guru, both the princes were amongst them.<sup>1</sup>

Quatrain: The Malerkotla forces came and laid siege. There was no grain in there. They had no strategy of warfare. The entire army stormed the walls.<sup>2</sup> The Khalsa met the attack with those hand held weapons that still remained with them. Pathans were beaten and repulsed. In the meanwhile Nahar Khan attacked.<sup>3</sup> He came enquiring, 'is there Guru somewhere? Point him out to me and I will reach there.' The True Guru then spoke to him and said, 'defend yourself; the arrow is coming in your direction.'<sup>4</sup> The arrow pierced his armour and struck him in the chest going right through him. He swung and fell to the ground. Some of his men carried away his body.<sup>5</sup>

Couplet: Majority of those who had come with Nahar Khan were killed, some by the True Guru, some by the Khalsa and the rest by the blows of the princes.<sup>6</sup>

Quatrain: His brother Khwaza Khizar came to know the news. He was well known as a brave person. He came like an intoxicated elephant but his face turned yellow on seeing the dead body.<sup>7</sup> He saw the True Guru in the image of a lion. He shamefully hid his head behind a wall. The True Guru challenged him much, 'let me and you fight it out.'<sup>8</sup>

[Page 94]

On seeing the True Guru's arrows, he was overcome by fear. He himself remained sitting behind the wall. He ordered others to attack.<sup>9</sup> Then Wazir Khan suddenly came there. He also came and joined battle. Thereafter the hill people came there. They also exerted themselves much.<sup>10</sup>

Couplet: All became tired of exertion but could not breach the place. They laid siege and settled down after suffering many casualties.<sup>11</sup>

Quatrain: Now, I relate the story of those inside. There were no grains anywhere inside. The wall itself was not well built and had no ramparts<sup>12</sup>, behind which the defenders could save their heads and freely wield their weapons. There was not even a grain to roast. Had it been there, where was the time to eat?<sup>13</sup> Gunpowder and lead were exhausted and not an arrow was left in the quivers. No water could be found for the injured. Such was the difficulty that they faced.<sup>14</sup> Their arms became tired of wielding weapons. The bodies became tired. There was no strength left in them. Still the Singhs did not relent. They ran to wherever the attack was more determined.<sup>15</sup>

Couplet: Then the True Guru told the Singhs, 'lead and gunpowder are exhausted. Hold your swords and walk briskly around the mansion.'<sup>16</sup>

Quatrain: The Singhs agreed to it. They circumambulated the mansion in pairs. Such was the strategy adopted there that more would come when the first died.<sup>17</sup> Many Singhs met death thus sallying forth. The true Guru noticed that only few more were left. He then said, 'do not now venture out. Holding your swords, stand near the wall.'<sup>18</sup> The Turks realised that the gunpowder and lead had finished inside the building. All of them from all sides attacked

together making loud noises.<sup>19</sup>

[Page 95]

Some were on foot and others were mounted, dust arose and fog ensued. They placed ladders and grabbed the wall. The Singhs cut off their hands.<sup>20</sup>

Couplet: As they climbed from all sides and reached the wall with their hands, the Singh cut their hands off. Their strategy did not pay and they fell to the ground.<sup>21</sup>

Quatrain: They had one or two shots each. They fired them when they came too near. They fell the Turks singly and in twos and threes. Many bodies of the Turks piled up there. When such pandemonium was prevailing there, Prince Jujhar Singh made a decision in his mind. Such life is not worth living, where father dies fighting and the son lives on.<sup>23</sup> Abhmanyu died while his father Arjun was living and so also Meghnath died while Ravan lived. This is the known tradition of knights that we renounce the breath within the sight of fathers.<sup>24</sup> He grabbed the sword and sallied out. He killed and fell whosoever resisted him. That side was devastated. It appeared to the enemy that an entire army had come and attacked.<sup>25</sup>

Couplet: Amidst the dust and low visibility prevailing there, no distinction between enemy and friend was possible. There was much confusion which caused killing own forces.<sup>26</sup> After killing many Turks there, respected Jujhar Singh attained martyrdom. After him came Zorawar Singh, he was seen striking like a lion.<sup>27</sup>

[Page 96]

Quatrain: On seeing the brother he could not bear the grief. Holding the double-edged sword rushed to follow him. He went and employed weapons like his brother, dealing death to those who resisted.<sup>28</sup> Some he touched with his sword and some with the shield. Whosoever was touched was cut up. None stood against him. They were killed with guns.<sup>29</sup> Like this both the brothers attained martyrdom there against the Pathans. This is what happened to both the children of the Guru in the year 1762 (1705 CE).<sup>30</sup>

### **More about the situation at Chamkaur**

(...I returned my sons)

Couplet: Fighting thus continued until the time of sunset arrived. The leaders retreated to the camps after setting up watch posts all around.<sup>1</sup>

Quatrain: They arranged intense vigil all around with man standing next to man. More with more men were posted. In between them, none could penetrate at night.<sup>2</sup> One would surmise, 'the Guru will not be contained' and then again, 'how will he fly off?' In all four directions are his would be captors. A hundred thousand surrounded him.<sup>3</sup> Neither can he grow wings and fly away to some place, nor can he enter into the earth. Very rightly, the Guru was in real difficulty. It was as the people had speculated.<sup>4</sup> The True Guru could think of nothing viable. He had no fighting forces left. The princes had attained martyrdom. It was a matter of serious concern for the True Guru.<sup>5</sup>

Couplet: 'I have returned my sons' thought the True Guru. 'There appears to be no escape for me and others. Whatever happens is His Will.'<sup>6</sup>

Quatrain: However, it is well that the Turks are responsible for our deaths. The words of our ancestors have been fulfilled. Now let me bestow Guruship on the Khalsa. He placed the mark of Guruship on the Khalsa.<sup>7</sup>

[Page 97]

Where the Guru himself was sitting, he ceremoniously installed Sant Singh. He himself carefully tied his own turban on the head of Sant Singh.<sup>8</sup> His own aigrette he put on his head and made him wear his own dress. The Singh was made to sit in the position of a Guru, as Guru Nanak had anointed Angad.<sup>9</sup> The Khalsa was asked to come and pay ceremonial respects. The True Guru bestowed sovereignty upon the Singhs. Sant Singh

was instructed thus: 'do not be captured. Become a martyr.'<sup>10</sup>

Couplet: Jeewan Singh Ranghreta, who was known for wielding the gun well, was seated in another tower in the middle. He was all alone.<sup>11</sup>

Quatrain: Others were seated at other crucial places though the gunpowder was exhausted. Of all the Singhs there were forty here. They were tired and tormented by sleep. The Guru was much concerned about those who lay wounded and dead. There was Ghani Khan a Pathan with the Guru. His brother reached there.<sup>13</sup> He called upon the Guru, 'come out we will look after you.' This call reached the Guru's ear. He called the Pathan and explained matters to him.<sup>14</sup> 'Take me with you and I will make you eternally happy.' The Pathan was complete in faith and replied, 'I certainly will take you along.'<sup>15</sup>

Couplet: There was a concealed passage in a tower. The Guru had it opened. He wore a short sword around his waist and held another in his hand. He put some gold coins in his pocket.<sup>16</sup>

Quatrain: As the True Guru emerged and plunged forward, he could not proceed further because of the stationed guards. The True Guru then shouted within their hearing, 'the Hindu has escaped.'<sup>17</sup> 'Escaped!' cried everyone all around. The True Guru repeated (the cry) in the same manner. Asking the Pathan to march ahead, the Guru penetrated the Turks and rapidly advanced towards the river.<sup>18</sup> Advancing and attacking, he reached the tall grass. Going further, he spotted a person grazing buffaloes.

[Page 98]

He had recognised the Guru and had started announcing loudly.<sup>19</sup> The True Guru handed him gold coins. Upon he shouted all the more. The Guru saw that he might succeed in the attempt to get him captured. He would not be mollified by any means.<sup>20</sup>

Couplet: The Guru lunged forward and thrust his dagger into his stomach. He grappled much but was released only when his breath flew away.<sup>21</sup>

### **Writing about the happening at Machhiwara**

('... accepted after purifying with the all steel dagger)

Quatrain: When the True Guru went further, he reached near Machhiwara. After settling the True Guru, the Pathan went and brought along Gulaba the Khatri.<sup>1</sup>

Couplet: Listen to the story of Machhiwara of how the Guru stayed at the house of a Khattri and of how the Sayyad Pathans served him by carrying him on their heads.<sup>2</sup>

Quatrain: He served some food. The Guru ate while remembering (God). At sunset he brought him inside. The mansion became his abode.<sup>3</sup> One or two Singhs walked to the place. The Guru ordered them to conceal themselves. One day the Guru ordered a goat. He had it slaughtered by the Singhs. As the True Guru ate meat, bones were thrown into the house of the Turk. On seeing the bones the Turk remonstrated and abused the Khattri, 'you throw bones into my house!'<sup>5</sup>

Couplet: Then the Khattri approached the True Guru saying, ' I am an extremely weak person. I will be killed should the Turk comes to know.'<sup>6</sup>

Quatrain: The True Guru threw money. The Qazi took the bribe and kept quiet. Like this the Guru stayed here for ten days and then desired to march on.

7

[Page 99]

The Pathan persuaded the Sayyid to collaborate and they had a dress prepared for the True Guru. They assumed the appearance of *hajjis*, let the hair loose and put on blue dresses.<sup>8</sup> They had similar dresses prepared for the Sikhs. Pathans held the ritual prayer water containers and started on the journey.<sup>9</sup> They went announcing (the Guru) as the holy man of Uchh. Their names were Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan. Thus they went lower in the direction

of Multan and reached the village Kanech.<sup>10</sup>

Couplet: There lived a *masand* there whose name was Fatta. The True Guru called him and said, 'somehow help me in the onward journey.'<sup>11</sup>

Quatrain: 'Give me the mare you have. I will give you plenty of money instead.' Bad times then descended upon him. He refused, 'for giving the mare to you I will hang.'<sup>12</sup> Then the True Guru said to him, 'you will not escape death by hanging even now.' He was later taken to Lahore and hanged. The effect of the True Guru's word on him could not be negated.<sup>13</sup> When the True Guru was marching rapidly ahead, the Turks surrounded him at Doraha public rest house. They said, 'let the holy man stay here overnight and accept our hospitality.'<sup>14</sup> The Sayyid Pathans wriggled out of the situation saying, 'the holy man is on perpetual ritual fast. He speaks little, tells beads and breaks fast with only a grain of barley.'<sup>15</sup> The other acolytes will accept your feast' this is the arrangement they came to.

[Page 100]

Couplet: The Singhs were now afraid, 'what will now happen to us? How will we be able to retain our commitment to faith, to the Guru and the world?'<sup>17</sup>

Quatrain: The True Guru then advised them, 'stir it with the all steel dagger.' No one ever stands converted by force and intimidation. One is converted (to Islam) only by companionship of a Muslim woman.'<sup>18</sup> 'You may also find justification in another manner. Conceal some food and bring it along. If some doubt still lurks in your minds, immerse yourselves five times in the tank at Amritsar.'<sup>19</sup> The Sikhs did as suggested. The Turks enquired, 'why did you touch it with the dagger?' The Pathans replied, 'a new religious law (*shariat*) has been promulgated. To do that is now lawful for the *hajis*. When in the morning, they uncovered the tray and looked at the food, their minds were at rest on seeing sweet-butter pudding and rice. From there they travelled to Mohi, Lamma Jattapura and camped at Bhagta.'<sup>21</sup>

**(End of Part VII)**  
**- To be continued**

□