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ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ॥



ਰੰਗਲੇ ਸੱਜਣ

**RANGLE
SAJJAN**
(The Imbued Ones)



Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji



Translated by:

Bhai Jaspinder Singh Ji (Retd. Sqdrn. Leader)

Published by: Akhand Keertanee Jathaa (Toronto, Canada)

Rangle Sajjan

(Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji)



Translated by:
Bhai Jaspinder Singh Ji

ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਰਣਧੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਟ੍ਰੈਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ:

Books and Tracts written by Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji:

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ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਪਾਰਸ ਕਲਾ

ENGLISH

Autobiography of Bh. Saaheb Bh. Randheer Singh
Meaning of Sikh Baptism
Hair: A divine Gift
Divine Wisdom

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PREFACE

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji has not only written extensively on Gurmat topics but also practiced Gurmat way of life as a role model. This is amply supported by his being recognised with 'siropas' (robe of honour), by all the 'Takhats' (Highest Sikh Religious Seats). His devotion to Kirtan and high spirituality attracted an increasing band of like-minded Gursikhs. His subject book, 'Rangle Sajjan', is a memoir to twenty-three of his companions, who pre-deceased him after leading extraordinary lives.

There was always a high purpose behind his writings that were confined to promote Sikh ideals and spread Guru Nanak's message, prompted by Divine Being. He has quoted Gurbani liberally to support his arguments in his books. In fact he always listened to entire recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to select Gurbani quotes for the selected topics. However in the narration of lives of the selected Gursikhs, he has forcefully brought out how strength is imparted to their characters by virtuous and single-minded devotion on the Path of Spirituality. This is what the Khalsa Panth is about and named as the corporate body of Guru, while Sri Guru Granth Sahib represents the Guru spirit, embodiments of the common spirit of the Ten Gurus.

A simple life, child-like devotion with humility and selfless service bring about rapid spiritual progress and even the illiterate devotees attain wisdom and Gurmat knowledge. It is possible for men of intense spirituality to falter, but their sense of humility and realization of wrongdoing and atonement can bring them back to spiritual glory. Love for Divine-Being and remaining humble and obedient can win many hearts and make life truly blissful. Such are the virtues demonstrated in the narrated lives. Obviously it is intended to enthuse and motivate aspiring Gursikhs to follow worthy examples.

To translate this book into English was a crying need of our time for its wider reach for the benefit of our youth, who are not so proficient in the Punjabi language. With blessings of Satguru, this has been successfully undertaken by Bhai Jaspinder Singh Ji, his family and other enthusiastic young students. It is hoped that even in this first attempt, the original intended Gurmat message shall be conveyed. I

personally congratulate the team behind this work and do wish for the good work to continue.

June 25, 2000

Dr. Darshan Singh
Toronto, Canada

FOREWORD

Bhai Jaspinder Singh has rendered great service in rendering English translation of 'Rangle Sajjan' of Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji's book containing the remarkable life sketch of some multifaceted, God intoxicated persons imbued in Nam Simran, and thus making it available to wider circles.

The translation covering 23 chapters is in lucid and exquisite style making an enjoyable reading.

The Translator deserves the gratitude for the faithful and idiomatic rendering of the high order.

June 28, 2000

Balbir Singh
23 G Sarabha Nagar
Ludhiana 141001
Panjab, India

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

Imagine a retired soldier, with little basic education and total stranger to the literary world, being assigned the daunting duty of translating Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji's book! However such happens to be the Dispension-Divine. As a soldier, I could only agree to do my best rather than shirk a duty. It is hoped, that my readers in their magnanimity, would put up with the poor and faulty presentation and yet manage to get at the real message, to convey the Essence of Gurmat of the original book, 'Rangle Sajjan'.

It was during one of the July Samagams at Toronto, to commemorate the sacred memory of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji, that his old associate Dr. Darshan Singh Ji and Giani Amolak Singh Ji alluded to some life-stories, listed in 'Rangle Sajjan'. This served like igniting the fuse in the souls of young participants and enthused them to learn more in detail. On popular demand I translated four chapters of the book. It happened to be well received by our student community. Ever since this Samagam the active participation of Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji and Dr. Darshan Singh Ji, have led many aspirants to the Gurmat-Way of life by having been baptised and even become very good Kirtanias in regular Gurdwara programs.

During my visit to Ludhiana, I went to pay my respects to Bhai Balbir Singh Ji, son of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji. I told him about the interest of the Toronto youth in the translation of Bhai Sahib's books. In turn he asked me to undertake the translation of the entire book, 'Rangle Sajjan', as a 'real service'. That is how I came to look at it as a privilege to render 'service' and labour of love. I have truly enjoyed my work and many of my family and friends shared in it, proof-reading and typing. It is now fervently hoped that feedback will be received from enlightened readers to improve this translation, but that this effort will be of some use in the meanwhile.

April 26, 2000

Jaspinder Singh
24 Newdale Place,
Brampton, ON,
L6S 5Z2, Canada

INTRODUCTION

It is often seen that there is non-acceptance of the true incidents, pertaining to the lives of the Olden Saints, that have an element of amazing wonder. The argument is non-occurrence in the present day life of such incidents. Those, particularly with scientific mind, reject miraculous incidents as figments of imagination, that are untrue in real life. They believe that truth can always be verified through scientific means acceptable to human mind and intellect through perception. All else beyond this is wrong and false.

The life incidents of 23 individuals should adequately remove such doubts, as the recent true happenings, witnessed by many of the surviving people of our times. It establishes that the spiritual experiences continue in the current times, just as in the old. The reference is made only to the spiritual life of individuals. Human life has many ups and downs and only a few rare may have the sameness of spiritually high state throughout. Such a steady life is a Divine Gift, otherwise the danger of slipping is lurking at every step. Bhagat Kabir Ji says:

ਕਬੀਰ ਗਰਬੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਰੰਕੁ ਨ ਹਸੀਐ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਅਜਹੁ ਸੁ ਨਾਉ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ ਮਹਿ ਕਿਆ ਜਾਨਉ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਇ ॥ ੩੯ ॥

*O, Kabir! Never bloat with pride nor laugh at another's misery.
Who knows what thy own life may have in store for you yet.39.*

It is not easy to gain spirituality and to maintain is yet more difficult in view of the temptations or pit-falls. This can be seen in the life example of Bhai Sarwan Singh Ji, Phalewal, how he fell from the apex of spiritual height. None can boast that he or she is not subject to error. The daily prayer says,

“Utter WaheGuru, Thinking of those who bore the unbearable spiritual powers and overlooked other's faults.”

To bear the unbearable temptation to flaunt spiritual powers and ignore faults of others is the hallmark of truly great. Normally people get puffed up with pride even with little acquisition of Worldly power, what to talk of spiritual power. This is why in Sikhism, it is prohibited to indulge in miraculous showing off, that impedes spiritual growth. The purpose of this book is to illustrate how efficacious is the Simran, meditation of Nam and how to get imbued in Nam. This is why the book is Named “Rangle Sajjan, the Imbued Ones! This was written between 1952 to 1954 at Kumar Hatti, in Himachal Pradesh.

Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji has been devoted to a life of Kirtan from 1901 and it is due to this, that he attracted and made friends with many Gursikhs. Out of these, he has written about the life events of 23 deceased ones in this book. He is thinking of writing about some more, which may appear in future editions. It has been considered desirable to write only about those, who had completed their earthly sojourn. It is difficult to predict about a living being in his future conduct.

There are many amazing events in this book, which might lead some readers to spirituality. This is also a unique presentation in the present age of worldliness and might prove helpful to the divinely-oriented. It is hoped, that it will make enjoyable reading.

14th January 1956
(Nahar Singh Giani) Gujjarwal

marUmhI w 5]

ਮਾਨ ਮੋਹ ਅਰੁ ਲੋਭ ਵਿਕਾਰਾ ਬੀਓ ਚੀਤਿ ਨ ਘਾਲਿਓ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਰਤਨੁ ਗੁਣਾ ਹਰਿ ਬਣਜੇ ਲਾਦਿ ਵਖਰੁ ਲੈ ਚਾਲਿਓ ॥ ੧ ॥
ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਓੜਕਿ ਨਿਬਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥
ਜੀਵਤ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਅਪਨਾ ਚਲਤੇ ਰਾਖਿਓ ਚੀਤਿ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਜੈਸੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਕੀਨੀ ਠਾਕੁਰਿ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮੋਰਿਓ ॥
ਸਹਜੁ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਰਖਿਓ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਉਠਿ ਉਆਹੁ ਕਉ ਦਉਰਿਓ ॥ ੨ ॥
ਆਗਿਆ ਮਹਿ ਭੂਖ ਸੋਈ ਕਰਿ ਸੁਖਾ ਸੋਗ ਹਰਖ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਿਓ ॥
ਜੋ ਜੋ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਭਇਓ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਾ ਸੋ ਮਾਥੈ ਲੇ ਮਾਨਿਓ ॥ ੩ ॥
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ਧੰਨੁ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਸਫਲੁ ਓਹੁ ਆਇਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਖਸਮੁ ਪਛਾਤਾ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੫ ॥

MARU M:5

*Self-pride, worldly attachment, avarice and evil thought were secluded from mind.
Jewel of Nam and Virtues-Divine were the only stock-in-trade, that a devotee
carried forth to hereafter.1.*

*Lasting was Love-Divine of the devotee till the end. Serving Lord in life-time, he
enshrined Memory-Divine while departing for the hereafter.1.PAUSE.*

Never did he shirk in complying with Will-Divine.

*Dwelling in Bliss of Equipoise, the devotee always set out to whatever was warranted
by Duty-Divine.2.*

*He discerned not between grief and pleasure, but remained satiated in Divinely-
Ordained privation.*

Whatever the Will-Divine was accepted cheerfully.3.

With Grace-Divine, glorified was devotee both here and in the hereafter.

Blessed is he and worthwhile his life, O' Nanak, who perceived of the Lord.4.5.

< siqgr pBwid]

*There is but one Lord! Through Grace of the Enlightener, True
Satguru, He is realised.*

**MIRACULOUS WORLD
THAT OF
NAM-IMBUED DEVOUTS**

ੴ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ॥
THE ONLY LORD, EVER VICTORIOUS!

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਰੰਗੁਲੇ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ॥
ਭਗਤੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਸਹਜੇ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ੨ ॥

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮ:੩ [੮੫]

*O' Nanak, 'Rangle' are the Nam-Imbued.
Ever engrossed in Devotion, in Equipoise they remain.2.*

Sri Rag Ki Var M:3 [85]

**Loving Memoirs
Of
Dear Ones, Departees to 'GUR-PURI' in Hereafter**

Many joined the Jatha and left. What purpose would it serve to write about those fake Divine-Lovers. This is a narration of the lives of 'Gurmukh' devouts, who successfully ferried across worldly ocean departing in Glory, in brief.

The opening is made with life-sketch of the devout couple, Sri Baba Ram Singh Ji and Mata Prem Kaur:

CHAPTER 1

BABA RAM SINGH AND MATA PREM KAUR JI PHALEWAL (LUDHIANA)

The couple was deeply religious and resided at village Phalewal, about 5 kms South of Narangwal. Baba Ram Singh Ji was employed in the Army, but had quit at the early age of 33. He had always been greatly attracted towards spiritualism. His plan was that, after leaving the service, he would get baptised and would devote completely to a religious life. While in service, he had a vision that his desire would be fulfilled through a 'Nirban Kirtani Jatha' of dedicated Gursikhs, selflessly devoted to Kirtan and meditation. That is where he would experience true spiritualism and life of religious service, as one of the Jatha.

Prompted by his vision, he left the Army to realise his wish. He had landed property in the village and his family was just his issueless wife. She was a very obedient lady. Both decided to get baptised soon. Baba Ram Singh had already been named according to the Sikh rites and his wife was now named Prem Kaur. She came to be popularly known as 'Mata Prem Kaur'. Their marriage ceremony was also conducted again according to the Sikh rites 'Anand Karaj' during Baptism. From then on the couple were life long dedicated members of the Jatha, always happy to serve. Following the Sikh tenets, their life occupation became Nam meditation, service, and sharing. Their service in langar, free kitchen, was exemplary. They were both peace-loving, openhearted and self-contented people. Their lives were dedicated to service tirelessly with utmost humility. They were the pillars of service in Langar at the Samagams for many years. Never was there a shortage of food or lack of service. Their humility was infatuating for all those partaking food in the Langar. Their sweet words mingled with the holy food, prepared by them, produced Soul-lifting experience. Their meditation was continuous and not even a breath was wasted without Nam. This combination of service and meditation led them often to deep meditation in the Langar, that was specially located close to the place of Akhand Pathh and Kirtan. This enabled Bhai Ram Singh and Mata Prem Kaur Ji to listen to Gurbani while engaged in service. This double action of holy service and Divine word brought glorious shine

to their faces and their faces appeared as fonts of Elixir, causing ripples of spiritual joy in the hearts of beholders. They were the ideal couple, the very picture of 'two bodies but one in spirit'. Their spiritual advancement was made even as complete illiterates. This is in accordance with Gurbani:

ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਪੜਿਆ ਅਣਪੜਿਆ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ [੧੯੭]

***The one who meditates on the Lord,
attains the highest spiritual Glory whether a scholar or illiterate.***

Gauri M:5 [197]

Thus this couple was illiterate but surpassed many of the scholarly persons in Divine knowledge. They were always cheerful. Whenever somebody wanted something from the Langar, they would entertain with sweet words and supply the need. Their virtues of perseverance, contentment and tolerance were a rare sight and most commendable. They would offer all their earnings from their farmland in the name of the Guru. They had a unique cow, that yielded milk all the year round. The cow could be milked anytime, even at mid-night. We had named this cow 'Sura Gao' (the divine cow). Whatever they sowed meditatively on their land, after a shower, would grow, yielding a rich crop. Such was the Divine Blessing. Their homegrown pulse of whole 'Mash' (*phascolus radiatus*), prepared in an iron utensil was most delicious. No matter how many people ate, there was never a shortage.

The simple minded, Mata Prem Kaur Ji, attained the state of Divine Revelation. I discovered this when I would find that she had churned butter milk and specially baked bread of mixed grains, ready for me on my unannounced visits to Phalewal at all odd times. Once I asked her as to how she had come to prepare all fresh food whenever I visited without any notice. She smilingly pointed towards Bhai Sarwan Singh as the source of her information, giving details of starting and arrival as also the number of people accompanying me. Accordingly the food was prepared. I scolded Bhai Sarwan Singh for misuse of the occult powers. However he pleaded that it was not him, but the direct revelation to the Mata. This was just her modest way to put me off.

Rangle Sajjan

Such happenings very many. All this was the result of selfless service to God and Nam. Mata Prem Kaur kept her occult powers a hidden secret and never showed off. Occasionally before my jail term, she would say, "Bai (Elder brother)! There is going to be a prolonged separation. May God be with us." I would tell her that His Will would be done. This couple served with full dedication up to 1914, with ever more eagerness.

Baba Ram Singh's serenity and tolerance were limitless. He had so much love for me that he would not stay without me. There were always Samagams and gatherings of Akhand Kirtan. If ever there was a break, he would come to Narangwal accompanied by Bhai Sarwan Singh. There we would do Simran and Kirtan together. He was extremely regular in attending Kirtans. Once the entire Jatha went to the village Sarhali of Sri Babu Mal Singh Ji in district Amritsar. Enroute we were singing (Kirtan) hymns. Baba Ram Singh fell in deep meditation even while walking. On reaching Sarhali, Akhand Pathh Samagam started. As usual this couple took up the service in Langar. They were enjoying listening to the Pathh while engaged in service. Many a time elder brother of Babu Ji, Sri Bhai Waryam Singh Ji, would visit Langar to find out if anything was in short supply there. Every time Sri Baba Ram Singh Ji would re-assure him. There was never really a shortage with the divinely contented couple around.

Along with many others of the Jatha, I was imprisoned in the Ludhiana jail. After some time Bhai Ram Singh was also brought there. He had already prayed for joining us. However he suffered great hardships in jail due to old age and his rigorous discipline of Sarabloh Bibek, cooking and eating in iron utensils. The unjust British Rule had originally sentenced all of us to life imprisonment, but the revised term for Bhai Ram Singh was for two years. Thus he was freed much ahead of our release, yet his prayerful yearnings for our company were always there.

While still waiting for a reunion, he left for his heavenly abode about four months prior to my release. Even while departing his soul visited me in jail to bid 'Gur Fateh'.

The happy news was that he remained dedicated to the last in God-Love. The loss was just unbearable for Mata Prem Kaur. Though still alive on my return after imprisonment, yet she was a withdrawn person, a caricature of her old self, living in a world of her own. She met me very affectionately and had heart to heart talk. In a period of three years she also departed from this world, to join Baba Ram Singh at the Eternal abode.

Here is an example, worth mentioning, of Baba Ram Singh's kind, bounteous and compassionate nature. In his extended family relationship, there was a family that had unreasonable sense of animosity towards him since long. One of their members had gone abroad to Chinese and Malaysian islands to make his fortune. When he returned with considerable wealth, he had a terrible disease. A young man of six feet height and broad chest, his whole body got stiffened suddenly, incapable of bending or moving. He could only be helped by at least four persons either to lie flat or stand erect, without moving. He had tried all medical help abroad, but to no avail. He returned disappointed to Phalewal and wished to see Baba Ram Singh. When Baba Ji learnt of this request and his state of illness, he forgot all about the old inimical relationship and wished to be as helpful as possible. This was the time when the entire Jatha happened to be visiting Baba Ji. Taking leave of the Jatha, he went to see the ailing person. The patient cried bitterly while explaining his affliction. He made a request for an Akhand Pathh to pray for his well being, particularly when the Jatha happened to be there of Divine healers. He said that if he died after such an Akhand Pathh, he would be redeemed and if he regained health he would seek Baptism along with the entire family to live a dedicated life. Baba Ji on return repeated the request to the Jatha with tearful eyes. He prayed for the well being of the patient to the holy congregation, with the faith in efficacy of the Divine word and the prayer of holy ones. Who would ever have denied a request from Baba Ji? The next day preparations were made for the Akhand Pathh. The patient was brought by four persons in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Baba was in attendance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, waving the flywhisk while standing. Seeing the patient, he addressed with Divine fervour. "You have erred seriously, that you are not aware of at present. Describe your promise to the Guru in your prayer, while proceeding to make fortune in the foreign lands." It all came back to

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the memory of the patient and he told that, “Yes, Sir! I had made the promise to set aside tithe in the Guru’s name from my earnings. However I sinned against this. In the past ten, twelve years I made a lot of money. While the tithe amount kept mounting, I was lost in worldly pleasures, forgetting all about the promise. This is truly a serious lapse, which is the cause of my affliction.” It was decided, that the correct amount of tithe after calculating, be sent to Hazoor Sahib before the Akhand Pathh was started. The patient immediately dispatched the requisite money through his brother. Now that the Samagam was to start, Baba Ji put the condition, that he would listen to the entire recitation of the Pathh. He readily agreed and asked for permission to listen while lying on the ground, because of his ailment. This was granted. Baba Ji then gave him encouraging words of faith and hope. The Kirtan of Asa-Di-Var started at 4:00 A.M. and ended at 11:00 A.M. There was a congregational prayer before starting the Pathh. The patient was held by four persons in the standing position for the prayer. His body was just like a plank of wood. At the end of the prayer he fell in prostrate position in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. To everybody’s amazement he sat up on his own, without help. Sri Karah Prasad was distributed when Sri Jap Ji was read from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Baba had prepared Karah Prasad and distributed also. Offering the Prasad to the patient, he said, “This is the Elixir of Five elements, the most efficacious medicine of all. Eat this.” Soon after he ate, he felt rejuvenated and asked to be left on his own. The miracle was wrought by the Grace of the Guru and he was in normal health by the end of Sri Akhand Pathh. He could walk about normally. The entire assembly was wounder struck as also the medical practitioners. The whole family got baptised singing the Gurbani:

ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲ ਭਰੋਸੇ ਤੇਰੇ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਪਰਵਾਰੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ ਬੇੜੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਗਉ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ [੩੩੭]

*O, Lord of the weak! With Faith in Thee,
I have put my entire family on Thy Ferry.Pause.*

Gauri Kabir Ji [337]

This hymn was sung by the entire family. There was ‘Guru Ka Langar’ and shortly there after he again left for the foreign lands. Baba Ji in particular and the Jatha in general was highly praised for this

miraculous feat. Baba Ji wanted all the Jatha to leave immediately to avoid hearing the praise. This is an example of his magnanimity and aloofness from any praise or condemnation.

Hearing of the events concerning this couple from my wife, Kartar Kaur, pertaining to the period of my jail term, I would often be moved. However it would render this narration very long, if those were to be included. Thus we end it here.

‘Most Wondrous Couple of GURU-DEVOTEES’

(ਜੋੜੀ ਪਰਮ ਅਨੂਪ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਕਾਂ ਦੀ)

Mata Prem Kaur a picture of devoted love and service,
Baba Ram Singh, a personification of humble devout.

Such was wondrous couple of Guru’s devotees.

In the foot-prints of ancient devouts,
Reciting Nam while sharing their honest living,
Thus lived all through the elderly couple.366.

With resources meagre but life of contentment,
remaining patient in gratitude of Divine-like ascetics.
Content with Divine-dispensation and self-sufficient,
They enjoyed the riches of Nam-Wealth, gifted by Guru.
Indeed it was Kingdom true of Care-free life,
Real bliss and feeling abundance of royalty.
True wealth of Nam Treasure in abundance,
Yet never fearing of theft or robbery.367.
Worldly poor but abounding in Nam wealth,
They were truly rich with Eternal Treasure.
Those, who gather Nam-True, are not poor,
For Lord provides all to such devotees.
Bestowed with Rare Nam-Jewel,
Enjoy access to all Divine-Resources.368.

Difficult indeed is the life of Nam-devotion,
Yet service in Nam dedication bears rich fruit.
Hard service rendered to congregations of Guru’s devotees,
Ferried the two of old couple devouts.
Mata Prem Kaur remained intoxicated in humility and love,
Blissful remained the hearts of both aged ones.
Nam-imbued were these rare jewels of Guru,
Words fail to describe these Fragrant-Roses of Guru devouts.369.

[Extract from Jot Vigas, book of poems by Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji]

CHAPTER 2

KHANJAR WALIYE: SAINT-LIKE MAHANT SUNDER SINGH JI

It was in 1910 that I had an irresistible call from my beloved Gurmukhs Sri Babu Mal Singh Ji and Bhai Piara Singh Ji. Accompanied by Akhand Pathhis and Akhand Kirtani Jatha, I landed at Ambala Cantt. We had a prolonged session of Akhand Pathhs and Akhand Kirtans. In the Army Rasala No.18 Bhai Sunder Singh Ji was employed as Granthi. He was in his early youth with small, uniform growth of beard on his round, healthy face. Attracted spiritually by the Jatha programs, he was always seen along with another youthful Vir Arjan Singh (who became well known later as Bhuri wale Sant) following the Nam-imbued Jatha in a love-lorn state. He was highly strung with spiritual yearnings and his sleep had evaded him day and night. Such was the piercing of arrows of spiritual love. He had only one strong desire that he should get baptised by the Gurmukh Jatha at the earliest, so as to get similarly imbued with Nam.

Well versed in Gurmat tradition, Sri Bhai Piara Singh Ji (who has presently left for heavenly Abode) approached me with the request to include Granthi Sunder Singh Ji among the Pathhis. He explained that Bhai Sunder Singh Ji's recitation was fluent and faultless. In turn I lovingly explained that this Vir is as yet a candidate for Baptism, still in search of Nam-Nectar. How could he become a Pathi when he is still un-Baptised? This would be against the tradition of the Jatha. I realized that Bhai Piara Singh Ji was very keen to listen Pathh from the Granthi and therefore assured that his desire would soon be fulfilled once Bhai Sunder Singh is a Baptised Singh. His love yearnings are still ascending so let these rise up fully. Hearing this Sri Bhai Piara Singh Ji had nothing more to say. Sitting near by, Bhai Sunder Singh was listening to the above conversation. With folded hands he humbly submitted, "Truly I am not yet competent to become a Pathhi of this Jatha. I am still a beggar at their door. I have listened to many Akhand Paths and participated in many. I could recite with great fluency. However the bliss I am enjoying in listening to the Akhand Pathhs of this Jatha, I have not experienced before. Every Pathhi recites Gurbani as if shooting arrows that pierce hearts. This has changed the course of

my dry life. It appears as if I am soon going to be reborn with the essence of Gurmat Nectarian life.”

Bhai Sunder Singh Granthi had the insight to evaluate the pure Gurmat principles of the Jatha and firmly decided to join it. After a few Akhand Pathhs, it was his turn to get Baptised. Baptism ceremony was part of every Akhand Pathh and the Jatha was frequent visitor to Ambala Cantt. Once the decision was made known for Granthi Bhai Sunder Singh to get Baptised, he adopted the discipline of Sarbloh, use of pure iron utensils in advance. He was selected among the candidates for Baptism. His joy knew no bounds. He had prepared his inner self to be imbued with Nam-dye. The arrow of Divine-Love immediately hit the bull's eye of the target. No sooner had the five beloved ones sprinkled drops of Nectar into the mouth of this thirsty rain bird was the initiation of Gurmantar heard, such was the piercing of this Divine Arrow that the highest spirituality was attained. Such was the shining glory on the face of dear brother Sunder Singh Ji, that it was difficult to behold. The handsome face, imbued with the magical Nectarine Nam became highly splendid. He had considerable proficiency in Kirtan earlier and when he got tuned to Nam-Bani after Baptism, it attained new miraculous heights. The arrow of Shabad Kirtan originating from his heart pierced through many other similar jewels. He lost all pride of rank as distinguished Army Granthi. He was happy to be humblest of the humble seeking dust of the holy congregation. He became the dedicated servant of the house of Guru. His dedication to service was such that he lost ego of being Baba Ji as Army Granthi. He was ever intoxicated with Nam-Nectar, unaffected by his surroundings. He was engrossed in the enjoyment of celestial bliss. He forgot all about eating and drinking needs and neglected dressing up as a well-groomed Baba Ji. He wore only the dress of a Gurmukh, that of Kachhera, a grey shirt, Kirpan with Gatra (belt across the body) and the double turban (lower one of Saffron colour and the top one black woolen). He abandoned the formal dress of Granthi Baba of tight pajama, etc., yet he appeared resplendent and majestic. Today his recitation of Akhand Pathh, regaling and blissful to the listeners, is beyond all praise. The recitation is like raining of fragrant Nam-Nectar. He is the most fluent Pathhi today and yet most clear and flawless to the listeners. His recitation was uplifting and swaying the minds. He recited for hours together without any fatigue with ever-rising pitch. Alongside more

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and more glory shone on his face. His divine glow associated with Nam-Bani was unbearable for the beholders. The inner recitation of Nam went on with full force in unison with recitation of Akhand Pathh. That is how the moon-like face shone with freshness and also kept the listeners fresh and attentive.

This was a great, priceless jewel, added to the Jatha. Wondrous was his glory. In the Army Rasala No.18 he was thus a high-spirited Akhand Kirtaniya, Akhand Pathhi and one of the Baptizing Jatha of Immaculate Nam. Such was the divine blessing! The prevalent spiritual environment at Ambala Cantt. was so enriched that even the celestial angels would have been yearning for this. The Sikh Platoons, Rasalas, Regiments and Artillery happened to come together in this cantonment. This must have aroused the envy of even the stars of destiny, because this heavenly bliss was short lived. With change of historical circumstances, the army formations had to move away to new places of duty. With this, our visits to Ambala Cantt. also became rarer. The transfers of our Army friends ended the gatherings of love-lorn spiritual seekers. We accepted the coming events as the Divine-Will.

After my release from life-imprisonment the news I could get was that Khanjar walia Vir Sunder Singh was no more a Granthi in Army. He was now a Mahant of a Nirmala sect at village Lohgarh near Raikot. This was a hereditary position that Mahant Sunder Singh filled with distinction, preaching the essence of Gurmat. From Lohgarh he moved his base to the village Lohat Vadi. It became a centre for holy congregations with people joining from far and near. The environment of spirituality and rich feast of Nectarian bliss started attracting true lovers of Divine. The annual special gatherings included the Baptism ceremonies. Many were the beneficiary souls.

With my return to village Narangwal, there was continuous flow of countless holy ones, joining in holy congregations. That is the time that Vir Bhai Sunder Singh headed an impressive Kirtani Jatha from Lohat Vadi. He had the same personality of peaceful splendour, which I had known with a glowing face and black beard, like a cloud around the moon. However his body was not athletic but he had developed a paunch. We met as old friends after long separation, holding each other in tight embrace and separated yet again. I still remember parting

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji
words of Sri Beloved Vir Bhai Sunder Singh Ji. He said, “This is
blissfulness of fleeting times. The next meeting shall await the
destiny.” He returned to Loht Vadi. His continuous sitting in
meditation had caused fatal piles disease. He died, leaving his mortal
frame for his heavenly abode!

ਆਇਆ ਸਫਲ ਤਾਹੂ ਕੋ ਗਨੀਐ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ੫:੧੩ [੨੫੨]

Blessed is such a life.

Gauri Bavan Akhri M:5, P:13 [252]

CHAPTER 3 THE GOLDEN BHAI SARWAN SINGH

Though Bhai Sarwan Singh was of dark complexion, yet his Nam-imbued glowing face would radiate golden hue always. That is how I came to name him “The Golden Bhai Sarwan Singh”. He is other than Bhai Sarwan Singh of village Phalewal, whose original whereabouts are unknown. It is as if he appeared suddenly from nowhere to join Jatha just before my imprisonment. Soon after he got Baptised and attained the sublime spirituality instantly. He knew nothing of the Gurmukhi script nor could recite a single Gurbani Shabad from memory. He was totally illiterate and yet, like it is said in Gurbani:

ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਪੜਿਆ ਅਣਪੜਿਆ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ [੧੯੭]

*The mortal who contemplates of the Lord,
attains spirituality sublime whether literate or illiterate.*

Gauri M:5 [197]

He had access to great depths of Gurmat awareness. He was verily the personification of service. He was in his early youth without any signs of beard. He remained engrossed in service day and night. He was gifted in Nam-Simran, reciting Nam with every breath endlessly. During Akhand Pathh and Akhand Kirtan Samagams he offered for all kinds of service, selfless service. He would prepare langar for the entire congregation, no matter how large the numbers. He served all with his own hands in every way, including cleaning of utensils (that he would not share with anyone). He would keep the iron utensils of Sarb Loh in shining state of cleanliness. He would carry the sack of utensils on his head to every Samagam. He would sling over the shoulders the musical instruments of harmonium and tabla and yet carry more on his shoulders. In short, he tried to carry almost everything as far as possible. In accordance with his humble request langar was kept adjacent to the Akhand Pathh recitation. He was very keen on both listening to Akhand Pathhs and serving in the langar.

This kept on for years and his high spiritual state and access to the sublime remained secret except for the few close associates. His continuous selfless service with extreme humility bore the fruit on its own of deeply steeped love of Divine-Nam, surpassing even the accomplished ascetic spiritualists. He started envisioning the invisible and futuristic events. At all times whether sitting, standing or walking, he was engrossed in the practice of Nam-Simran. He never would showoff nor would anyone praise him and nor did he seek it. He would make provisions for bathing of all Singhs at 2.00A.M and then take bath himself. Sitting aloof in a cover and unknown to others, he would listen to Nitnem recitation along with Nam-Simran practice. This was his routine. I never saw him sleeping, nor in any undesirable company. He was always in the midst of holy Sangat. His only occupation was Nam and Seva. During Akhand Pathh Samagams he remained in langar through out the Sewa. His body thus remained engaged in service in Langar and consciously he would listen to Akhand Pathh. After the service, he would sit among the listeners of Akhand Pathh in a most inconspicuous way. He generally appeared to be a carefree and impulsive Sikh. Jewellers alone know the worth of jewels and precious stones. Everybody is not given to such awareness. His selfless service enabled him to soar in spirit and finally brought him the occult powers. However he never prided in his occult powers nor anyone knew about this. Even I remained unaware of these secrets.

Accidently this secret was revealed one day. The Jatha made preparations to proceed to a village via Nabha to join Akhand Pathh Samagam at the house of a Gurmukh. It was the summer period of May-June. The Golden Vir, Bhai Sarwan Singh was also among the Jatha. While I was my tying turban, he sat on a cot and started dozing. He used to sleep briefly even while walking. In a brief period of 5 to 10 minutes, he got up with a start uttering ‘WAHEGURU, WAHEGURU’. Noticing anxiety and worry on his face, I asked him whether he had seen any queer events in his dream. He innocently replied, “What to say Sir! I saw that Akhand Pathh is being recited at a place and I am serving in the langar. Meantime a Pathhi is heading for the langar. I reckoned it to be you. On the way a dog bit his leg. Such was the wound the blood streamed with great flow. I hit the dog with a piece of wood to stop his bite. Seeing this horror I woke up. I felt as if this was a real happening.” Soon after we started on our way. The

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entire Jatha went walking. The village was at about 10 miles from Nabha. Soon after reaching the village, we started preparing for the Akhand Pathh. There was Akhand Kirtan during the early ambrosial hours and the Pathh commenced after that. I started reciting Pathh. When I was relieved by another Pathhi, I was asked to partake something from the langar. I was still under the intoxicating influence of Gurbani. With half-closed eyes enjoying contemplation of Nam, I was walking wearing wooden sandals. Just close to the langar was a pillar and behind that was a dog sitting. I was unaware of the dog and accidentally stepped on his forepaw. The dog caught my ankle in his jaws. So severe was the bite that blood came out in streams. Bhai Sarwan Singh was preparing the langar and sitting near the hearth. He got up and hit the dog with a piece of wood to free me from (the dog) him. Strangely I never felt any pain and despite the blood flowing, I was shouting happily, "Singh's dream has come true. How Wonderful! What a fulfillment of the forecast event!!" I was remembering Bhai Sarwan Singh's narration of the queer event and so I burst out with his secret. However Bhai Sarwan Singh had forgotten all about it. I was asked by Singhs of the Jatha about the dream and what was the astonishing fulfillment. I replied that there was nothing to describe here. It warranted privacy. The Singhs took me for bandage of the wound and now that we were away from the scene, they insisted on the information. In the absence of Bhai Sarwan Singh I explained about his envisioning the event in detail just as it occurred in reality. I also stressed not to discuss this with the Golden Vir, so that he enjoys his innocence in obscurity and away from public glare. It caught wind and everybody in the Jatha came to know of it. Suddenly there was a new respect for him in all hearts, yet none mentioned about his occult power and envisioning the event in advance. This is the uniqueness of the House of Guru that people enjoying sublime state of spirituality, envisioning the invisible, are able to control the uncontrollable power. This comes naturally to the Gursikhs, who make no show of it nor bloat with ego. Seeing the carefree and enthusiastic Vir Sarwan Singh, dedicated to Nam and service, none could imagine his high spirituality. The ease of equipoise is seen only among the free and humble Gurmukh Sikhs of the Guru. It is enough to demonstrate this event pertaining to this Vir, who can fathom the hidden secrets of the inconspicuous spiritual beings.

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji

After sometime I was whisked away to the jail, leaving behind such beloveds of the Guru. I never knew where they scattered to and where the Golden Bhai Sarwan Singh went! I have a feeling that he must have left for Abode-Divine or else he would certainly have come to see me. I know nothing from where he had come. I am left with his narrated memory. So here I end it!

CHAPTER 4

VIR NIRBHAI SINGH JI LALTON

I am under going life imprisonment and most likely it is the year 1920. Bhai Nirbhai Singh Ji was heading towards Calcutta to attend a Congress Conference. This was the special conference that passed 'Non-Cooperation' resolution. Before commencing his journey Vir Nirbhai Singh had decided to meet political prisoners in Hazaribag jail and then proceed to Calcutta. The jail is served by 'Hazaribag Road' railway station, located on the railway line to Calcutta. It is surrounded by 40 miles of deep forest. This place is a health resort in Bihar province that remains cool all round the year.

Vir Bhai Nirbhai Singh Ji has reached Hazaribag City and starts off for Hazaribag jail early in the morning during ambrosial hours. He is walking leisurely. It is all quiet, with dew in the air and light drizzle. Love-lorn, separated long ago, he is full of anticipated joy of the meeting. In this state of love yearning he is quietly reciting Gurbani in his heart while walking towards the jail, with bowed head in a state of self-absorption. Suddenly he hears a distant heart-rending recitation of Sloks of Mahala 9 from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He looks around with great surprise, trying to locate the source of recitation that has touched him. He is wondering that in this forlorn place, where there is no Sikh population who could be this lover of Gurbani who is reciting with pining heart the most touching Gurbani Sloks of the Ninth Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur Ji. He discerns that sound is from the direction of jail. He is perplexed all the more because in the surroundings of Jail there could only be Bihari population and yet the recitation is most touching and absorbing. With folded hands he just stands motionless to have a look of the on-coming holy face.

It is a Bihari Sepoy from the jail in his uniform, singing in sweet lingering melodious voice, engrossed in the love of Gurbani of the Sloks Mahala-9. Tears are freely flowing from his eyes. When he nears the statue like Vir Nirbhai Singh in his own intense love, both Sepoy and the Vir are oblivious to their state or consciousness. When the magical sound just approaches, Vir Nirbhai Singh gets startled. Seeing the Sepoy, he falls like a log at his feet. No amount of coaxing

from the Sepoy can make the Vir rise up. While the tears from the eyes of Sepoy are falling at the neck of the prostrating Vir, his own tears wetted the feet of the Sepoy. The Sepoy is very glad to behold the face of a Sikh and all his being is bathed in spiritual love.

The Bihari Sepoy was not yet a complete Sikh in appearance; he had a growth of beard on his face. He had fairly long hair on his head that were not yet long enough to tie a knot. It appeared that these were growing in natural slow fashion. Ever since the awareness of Khalsa discipline of keeping unshorn hair, he had stopped cutting these. At last he lifted the head of the Sikh from his feet. When the two were face to face, they asked each other simultaneously, "What is your name, What place are you coming from and where are you heading?" The Sepoy replied first, that he was an employee at the jail. This was followed by another question from Bhai Nirbhai Singh, "Who taught you the Gurbani and where did you learn this?" He replied that one of the political prisoners in the jail is a Saint with unshorn hair. Interrupting him Bhai Nirbhai Singh again enquired, "Is Bhai Randhir Singh Ji also one of these political prisoners?" Hearing the name, the Sepoy fell flat at the feet of Bhai Nirbhai Singh. He cried out with flowing tears that it was the Sadhu of this same name who has blessed him with the boon of these Sloks and given knowledge about Gurbani. Bhai Nirbhai Singh lifted the head of this love-lorn Sepoy and informed that he was heading for the jail to meet his saintly benefactor. The Sepoy humbly asked for any service for him. He stated that his all body, mind and wealth are dedicated to the holy one and again offered to make any sacrifice.

At the end of the dialogue of mutual respect and love, Bhai Nirbhai Singh approached the jail gate for meeting me. I was called by the Jailor for the interview. Just on seeing me the Vir broke down with uncontrolled sobs. He could not compose himself inspite of my efforts and those of the Jailor. He just could not speak. The Jailor asked him for the cause of so much crying. In the midst of his sobbings, Nirbhai Singh Ji said, "We are the wretches, who missed a lot. Blessed are these Bihari Sepoys to get redeemed through the holy company. What more can I say?" Saying this he kept wailing. Addressing me he said only this, "I am the same Nirbhai Singh whose forehead you lovingly touched with the iron Rosary of counting beads during Baptism

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ceremony, opening thereby the Tenth Gate of 'Dasam Dwar'. It was only then that I briefly envisioned the Divine Glory. I could not follow that with the ceaseless devotion nor had another similar spiritual experience. While you are in the jail, we are engrossed in the political rat race". He again resumed wailing loudly. The interview time was over and we got separated. While I was asked to go in and he was sent out. Longingly he would turn back to have another glance. I also stood statue like to watch him going without being disturbed. Finally the Sepoys took him away from my vision. In parting words, he shouted, that he would again see me on return from Calcutta. However that never happened. Nor was there another meeting, not even till date after return from long imprisonment. Beloved Vir, Nirbhai Singh Ji had, departed for Abode-Divine long back. Thus ends this narration. The pen can write no more!

CHAPTER 5

ANOTHER YOUTH FROM VILLAGE LALTON BUDDING VIR JASWANT SINGH JI

This episode relates to the period a few years prior to my life imprisonment. The Akhand Kirtani Jatha used to join the Sikh Youth Association in Ludhiana at their Gurdwara for the weekly and Gurburb Samagams. The Gurburb of Guru Nanak Sahib and Guru 'Dasmesh Sahib' The tenth Nanak; used to be particularly well attended. Under the able organization of the association secretary Bhai Lal Singh Ji (now Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh Ji) and Giani Nahar Singh Ji, the Sikh students of other schools of the city were also invited. On the occasion of 'Katak Pooranmashi Gurburab', a group of Sikh students from Mission High School Ludhiana also came to join the Gurburab celebration. Listening to the stimulating Kirtan by the Jatha many of the young, uninitiated souls got inspired.

One of the students from the mission school was the young Vir Jaswant Singh Ji. Though he was very young and belonged to a poor family, yet he was gifted with excellent qualities of head and heart. As a student of a Christian school, he had his hair cut and was totally ignorant of the Sikh Faith and the tenets. As a participant at the Gurburb celebrations, he experienced spiritual joy with a new awakening of his spirit. He was so moved that he left the Mission School to join the Khalsa High School. His high academic standing had earned him a very good scholarship in the Mission school. He decided to forego the scholarship to be able to enjoy the new spiritual environment. He joined the Khalsa High School Boarding House. I am not sure of the extent of financial help extended to him by the Khalsa School management. However his scholarship was restored and he was given some benefits like exemption from school fee etc. The Sikh students contributed towards the cost of his books expenditure. This Vir Jaswant Singh was not greedy nor had he changed to the new school with such a motive. This was his spiritual yearning that had wrought the change. He resolved to grow hair to establish his Sikh identity.

Soon he had tress-knot on his head. So, on the next Gurburb of 'Dasmesh Guru Ji' he got Baptised and became a full-fledged

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‘SINGH’. His spiritual progress astounded many well-experienced Sikh missionaries. He had profound insight of ‘Gurmat’, the divine wisdom of the Guru. He had innocent looks, very high ‘Gurmat’ thoughts and a spiritual glow on his face. Soon after Baptism his inner being blossomed forth with Divine Light and his face reflected the glory. His ‘Kirtan’ singing was extremely emotional and heart piercing at such young age. What distinguished him most was that inspite of his being engrossed in spiritual development, he retained his high academic performance. He was soon a young graduate with the B.A qualification.

By this time many of the Jatha, got imprisoned. During the Rakab Ganj Gurdwara agitation all the students, particularly this newly Baptised, cute, young, little Singh, were advised against participating in the agitation. He was highly insistent to join the brothers from Jatha in jail. It took quite a bit of trickery on our part to deny him this. Though he was refrained from joining agitation, yet he could not reconcile with parting from the jailed Singhs and became very sick. Every effort was made to make him accept Divine-Will, yet nothing worked and his love yearnings and his love-lorn state proved fatal. He passed away before my return from jail. Having found peace in Abode-Divine, he never returned to soothe those of us left behind. What more to write? At such a young age, it was amazing to see such deep study of Gurmat tenets and devotion. He would be in trance for hours during contemplation of Nam. His concentration was phenomenal. This was without a parallel, considering his age. This was the brief life story of young little Vir Jaswant Singh Ji that was short-lived but bright!

CHAPTER 6 BHAI SOHAN SINGH JI JANGPUR WALE

Turbulent times came and passed away speedily. Sixteen years of imprisonment for me were like sixteen nights. That was how I felt the passage of time in jails. However the loved ones, suffering pangs of separation, felt every year like passing of an eternal age. On my release in 1930 the love-lorn folks came to meet me in flood-like streams. My close relatives knew no bounds of joy. The welcome at Narangwal village was so intensely emotional that the surcharged tunes of Gurbani singing reverberated the sky. My beloved wife, Srimati Kartar Kaur sang feelingly,

ਘਰਿ ਆਪਨੜੈ ਖੜੀ ਤਕਾ ਮੈ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ਘਨੇਰਾ ਰਾਮ ॥

ਰਾਗੁ ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਘਰੁ ੩ [੭੬੪]

I await yearningly at my door, for great is my joy of anticipation.

Suhi M:1, Ghar 3 [764]

She was beside herself with happiness. However even this was surpassed in mirthful singing by the Jatha from Jangpur, depicting meeting after long separation of spiritual love in 'Gurbani'. Vir Bhai Sohan Singh Ji picked up the most apt 'Shabad' that pierced the hearts, particularly applied to my life:

ਤੁਮ ਘਰਿ ਆਵਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੀਤ ॥

ਤੁਮਰੇ ਦੋਖੀ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ਅਪਦਾ ਭਈ ਬਿਤੀਤ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ [੬੭੮]

*Come home thou O' friend of mine!
God Himself has eliminated thy foes
and over is the period of tribulation.Pause.*

Dhanasari M:5 [678]

What a scene it was! Sri Bhai Sohan Singh Ji's eyes were flooded with tears of joy and his face was resplendent with spiritual glory. It was difficult to behold him. In his state of intoxicated love, he led in repeated singing of each line of 'Shabad' followed by the entire Jatha. The entire assembly was moved to tears. The opening line was:

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ਜਿਨਿ ਤੁਮ ਭੇਜੇ ਤਿਨਹਿ ਬੁਲਾਏ ਸੁਖ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਘਰਿ ਆਉ ॥
The Lord, who sent you away has called you back!
Come home in comfort and peace.

This filled all the hearts with unbridled joy. The next line:

ਅਨਦ ਮੰਗਲ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਨਿਹਚਲ ਰਾਜੁ ਕਮਾਉ ॥ ੧ ॥
Sing happily of eulogy Divine in peace and enjoy eternal rule.1.

This was like blessing me and in fact has come true till date. Truly perpetual has been the joy of Akhand Kirtan Samagams ever since. This ceaseless bliss of holy company has erased the memory of past sufferings. The ecstasy of spiritual bliss of Nam-meditation has been no less than eternal rule with Divine-Grace. Then Sri Bhai Sohan Singh Ji sang the next line of joyous blessing:

ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਰਨੇਹਾਰੇ ਨਾਸਨ ਭਾਜਨ ਥਾਕੇ ॥
Ending thy strife, The Creator Lord has graced you with Divine-Glory.

As if to mark the on set of the continuous bliss were the words:

ਘਰਿ ਮੰਗਲ ਵਾਜਹਿ ਨਿਤ ਵਾਜੇ ਅਪੁਨੈ ਖਸਮਿ ਨਿਵਾਜੇ ॥ ੨ ॥
With Divine-Grace, perpetual is the singing of Divine-Eulogy at home.2.

There was repeated singing of these lines by the entire congregation and every one lost consciousness of time. Such was the spiritual sway! God knows how long this continued.

The following couplet was sung by Vir Sohan Singh Ji standing face to face with me:

ਅਸਥਿਰ ਰਹਹੁ ਡੋਲਹੁ ਮਤ ਕਬਹੂ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਬਚਨਿ ਅਧਾਰਿ ॥
Stay steadfast, waver not, enjoying the support of Guru's word.

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਕਾਰੁ ਸਗਲ ਭੂ ਮੰਡਲ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲ ਦਰਬਾਰ ॥ ੩ ॥
While Universal acclaim is here in this world,
honour shall you find in Court-Divine.

It felt like shower of blessings, coming from the entire congregation to enthuse me for the future. The ending lines created a heavenly environment:

ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਅ ਤਿਨੈ ਹੀ ਫੇਰੇ ਆਪੇ ਭਇਆ ਸਹਾਈ ॥

The Lord of all beings and Savior True has redeemed you.

ਅਚਰਜੁ ਕੀਆ ਕਰਨੈਹਾਰੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਚੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੨੮ ॥

O' Nanak! Wondrous is the act of Lord Supreme and Eternal is His Greatness.4.4.28.

The Shabad was sung for about an hour and a half with lilting tune of high pitch. This memory shall ever abide in my entire being as most unforgettable. While Sri Bhai Sohan Singh Ji has departed for heavenly abode, I have ever cherished his gift of this memory. He was destined for a short life. All his days were spent in holy congregation after acquiring spiritual bliss. So imbued was he with Divine-Love!

There were many visits from Jangpur Sangat to participate in holy congregations. Every such visit led to ever new exalted experiences that verily led to spiritual bloom and enrichment. According to the Gurbani quote, "Destiny always leads one by the nose to wherever he be destined". Sri Bhai Sohan Singh Ji joined as Granthi in the Army. He never returned there after. His devoted wife, Srimati Bibi Gian Kaur, was always by his side, discharging her duty of service with unparalleled love. I had visited Jangpur along with all the members of Jatha at his invitation before he joined the Army. Vir Sohan Singh Ji was greatly loved and respected by the local Sangat. Many were such loving souls of great dedication, difficult to name, every one so outshining as Gurbani Kirtanias. They are still around and helpful to the love-lorn widow of Vir Sohan Singh Ji. Ever lasting is the effect of loving memories of this Vir, late Bhai Sohan Singh Ji. In my dealings with him, I found him to be an evolved soul with high standards of Gurmat.

He departed in his early youth and I received the sudden news. The local Sangat organised Pathh of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and Akhand Kirtan Samagam. This was attended by the select members of Akhand

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Kirtani Jatha at Jangpur to pay our respect and pray for the departed soul and sympathize with his widow, Srimati Bibi Gian Kaur.

CHAPTER 7

Bhai Lal Singh 'Sarblohi' (Dhandra)

Sri Bhai Lal Singh Ji was a prominent Kirtaniya (singer) in Akhand Kirtani Jatha. He would sing in a shrill tune that moved the hearts of listeners. Though shrill, yet his voice was distinctly audible. His mood of singing had depth of devotional feelings that generated a similar response from the audience. He would go on and on, as if neither he nor the spellbound listeners were ever satiated with music divine. He was one of the rare ones, who could sing all through the night. He appeared a personification of devotion, staying fresh and alert all along. He was very proficient in playing a peacock-like musical instrument, Taus. He was popularly known as 'Bhai Lal Singh with The Peacock'. With the harmonium he would play new tunes of his own, as though the instrument was an integral part of him. Losing himself totally in Kirtan, he would bend and swing over the harmonium in frill ecstasy. The pitch of his naturally shrill voice would keep rising. He had frill grasp of the Gurbani being sung and thus his feelings of devotional love kept mounting. He always selected devotional shabads of yearning Godly-love. His accentuated feelings of deep devotion would create an environment of pining for love-divine that made his own teary eyes flow freely.

He came from village Dhandra in the district of Ludhiana. His ancestors were followers of strict Sikh-discipline of the faithful. He too abided by the discipline of 'all steel' (sarbloh) along with his wife as soon as he was initiated with Baptism. The Jatha had gone to his village for the baptising ceremony and thus he became an inseparable part of the Jatha. He broke away from his earlier associations and remained aloof from customary rituals. He was initiated with a band of highly devout, self-sacrificing individuals, who frilly accepted the Sikh code undermining the ensuing hardships. The whole village turned up on the occasion, yet none dared to join him in getting co-baptised nor did anybody match him in his seeking in spiritual hunger. Kirtan singing groups from adjoining villages also came to attend. The Jatha had already earned a name for a generous feasting and there was a special sense of abundance this time. There was unlimited supply of food, particularly Karah Prasad (sweet pudding of wheat flour, sugar and

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ghee in equal measure). All were equally served to their entire satisfaction in spite of the heavy gathering from surrounding villages.

One elderly person from the village Phalewal, Bhai Nand Singh was seated separately. This was done because this brave Singh had great appetite and would have to leave un-satiated if seated with others in a common row. While taking his special seat, he said, "You have guessed me rightly. However, today I am in a mood of taking only Karah Prasad. I wish to see whether you can meet my requirements." He was being served liberally. While he kept swallowing, the serving Singh too kept supplying into the steel bowl in front of Bhai Nand Singh. This went on to the delight of Bhai Nand Singh, swallowing happily with dreamy eyes. God knows how much he ate. The serving Singh estimated that it could be around five kilograms. The serving was stopped when he gave the indication with folded hands. I remember that this marvellous person showered a lot of blessings to reflect his happiness. Facing me he said smilingly, "Bhai Randhir Singh, I am fully satiated with Karah Prasad today. None could meet my fill requirement till date. It is only this blessed Jatha that could do it. May Satguru ever bring victory to 'Deg' and 'Teg'; unlimited food in common kitchen and the sword of universal welfare." Then he stood up, moving his left hand over his full belly and pointing his arrow with the right towards the assembled gathering he shouted repeatedly, "All and sundry shall join in (faith and Baptism) after facing disgrace without." This was a time when the Baptism was not so common yet.

The Jatha left soon after, taking leave of the newly baptised Bhai Lal Singh Ji and his wife. The couple remained steadfast in their strong Sikh faith all through their lives. Bhai Lal Singh Ji was of thin build and light body, yet he was full of bravery. Whenever occasion arose to champion a good cause, he was always in the forefront like a lion to meet any challenge. The following illustration should suffice.

In accordance with Divine-Will, I was in jail custody at Ludhiana along with members of the Jatha. Bhai Lal Singh was engaged in some mission of his own and was unaware of this event of our arrest. As soon as he got the news, he became restless and either wanted to join us in the jail or carry out a raid on the jail like Sikhs of olden times to free his brethren. The police of the British Raj kept strong guard around us

even in jail. They were gathering some basis and proofs to initiate the court case against us. They had to keep requesting extension of our custody in jail from the court to prolong it. Thus, the period was extended to many months in jail for the Sikhs. It was obligatory for the court to inform the accused about remand of their custody. In our case the British courts illegally ignored this and justice was thrown to the winds. The court orders for remand were read out to us in jail and date of next hearing informed. Once it so happened that either due to clerical error or ignorance of new judicial officer we were called to the Courts for our hearing. Our group of twenty Singhs with handcuffs came out of the jail under police guard and started marching toward the courts. There were two policemen armed with swords for every accused, marching along in close formation. Just as lion coming out of his den into the open air gets excited, similarly our brave Singhs put into the jail dungeons for months, on feeling fresh open air thought of their escape. They resolved by making signs that after subduing the guarding policemen they would make good their escape. However the farsighted Giani Nahar Singh among us controlled the situation and advised against this. It is a long distance from the jail to the courts. Escorting the Singhs lions-in-spirit, the well armed and more than double sized policemen were shivering in fear. In fact they were merely carrying weapons, unsure of their ability to use them. They would have surrendered their weapons on a single lion- like roar from the Singhs or had them snatched from their hands. Fear was clearly evident from their pale faces. They would panic at the slightest sound or gesture. About 100 yards from the courts, there was thick growth of trees that was lying uninhabited. We had to cross through this on our way to the courts. We had barely gone halfway through the trees when we noticed Bhai Lal Singh carrying an axe on his shoulder heading toward our party with the intent to challenge the escorting guards. He had been trying to find clues about us due to his pangs of brotherly love. On this day he suddenly found us as prisoners and was overcome by his martial spirit. Unmindful of the policemen he came close to us and started to walk with us. He started making signs for permission to attack the policemen and lead us to freedom. One weak-hearted among us commented that what could he do alone? The brave Singh roared back that, "A Singh is never alone, but equivalent to one and quarter lakh (sava lakh). Hearing this, the policemen were greatly frightened. They requested Bhai Lal Singh, "Kindly allow us to complete our duty.

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Once we finish, there will be a new escort party of policemen to escort the prisoners back to the jail. Meanwhile you may gather more help for you.” Bhai Lal Singh would not listen to their pleas and was ready to attack. Some of our farsighted companions pleaded with him for restraint with folded hands. Meanwhile, we approached the court compound. The court was also in panic. Seeing our arrival, they were anxious to send us back to the jail, saying that remand orders were to be read out in jail. This time we were escorted back through a safer route though longer in distance.

Poor Lal Singh Ji could not fulfil his heart's desire. Neither did we return via the forest trees nor could Bhai Lal Singh rescue us, much against his wish. There was absolutely no doubt that if we had returned via same route or had we accepted his offer in the first place he would have jumped into action and got us our freedom. This was a time when people feared to show signs of acquaintance with the accused. We were avoided generally and none dared to exchange greetings of Fateh with us. It was during my jail period that Bhai Lal Singh Ji left this world and his mortal frame for abiding in ‘Gur-Puri’.

CHAPTER 8

JATHEDAR BHAI RAM SINGH JI (GUJERWAL)

Jathedar Ram Singh Ji was the moving spirit behind the Jatha. From the very conception of Jatha, village Gujerawal, at a distance of three kilometers from Norangwal, was the center of Gurmat Samagams at the residence of Bhai Ram Singh. He was the spokesman of Jatha ideals. Though he was an illiterate person, but he was a dedicated being and always ready for any sacrifice. He would break the shackles of caste and get individuals of all castes Baptised without any reserve. He would encourage Sikh marriages, Anand Karaj, without consideration of caste. This was an outstanding service in the cause of faith. In fact he set an early example in the case of his own marriage out of caste and then kept helping others.

This was a period when a very few in Sikh Panth followed high ideals of the Faith like social equality. Most of the preaching remained unpracticed, even though Gujerwal had a branch of Singh Sabha from the very on set of the movement. The old tradition of caste system was still very strong. The general people ridiculed members of the Singh Sabha and opposed them. It was to set a personal example of breaking caste-barrier, that Jathedar Ji got married out of caste following Sikh rites of Anand Karaj. The majority, following the Hindu tradition, was opposed to this marriage and was holding out threat of social boycott of the Jathedar. Bhai Ram Singh came alone to Narangwal and narrated the events to me. This was our first meeting.

Finding Jathedar's stand based on high principles of Sikh Faith in accordance with Guru's teachings, I gathered Kirtani jatha and accompanied him to Gujerwal. There the on-going Sehj Pathh was nearing completion at his residence. Kirtan of Asa-Di-Var was performed in high spirits. Bhai Ram Singh Ji and his would-be wife were duly Baptised and Anand Karaj ceremony performed to solemnize the marriage. After the marriage Bhai Ram Singh himself declared publicly boycott of Hindu-minded village society. He thus broke away from his old brotherhood completely. He kept relationships and dealings only with Gurusikhs and thus set first example of its kind. All prominent members of Gujerwal Singh Sabha became close associates

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of Bhai Ram Singh. It was this bold stand that earned him the title of Jathedar and he gained social prominence. Bhai Ram Singh had no fear of any opponent and was always forthright and outspoken. He had an aura of authority about him that commanded respect and fear. Many of those talking big to oppose him, paled away in his presence. He had a strong healthy body all along. After the above Smagam, his face had a special glow and it was almost unbearable to face him. Leaving his old neighborhood, he constructed a new house in an independent open area. There were so many Smagams held at that new place, that Bhai Ram Singh earned the good-will of a large number of people from surrounding villages. However he maintained his dealings only with like-minded, Baptised Gurusikhs. In those days rare people offered to be Baptised. Those who did so, made great gradual progress under leadership of the Jathedar.

Gujerwal is a fairly big village. None of villagers of different beliefs ever dared to create trouble. Nobody could think of betrayal in the garb of Sikh. The non-believers were totally irrelevant.

Bhai Ram Singh was ever ready to make supreme sacrifice in the pursuit of worthy causes in the name of Guru and in light of Guru's wisdom, Gurmat. His house became hub of Akhand Kirtan Smagams and activities. Very few Singhs in the village shared his Gurumat thoughts. Lying between Phalewal and Narangwal his new house in Gujerwal became the central place for essence of Gurmat. Ah! I still cherish the memory of those times, when many departed past souls renowned in Gurmat, also visited to join the highly surcharged spiritual environment during Smagams at this house. Bhai Ram Singh was a self-cultivator of his land. This produced sufficient income for his sustenance. During the congregational Samagams there was plenty of Divine help in terms of wealth. There were many Baptising ceremonies held here that defy full description of the spiritual events.

The last Akhand Pathh Samagam was held in the absence of Jathedar Ram Singh and that was unique. Bhai Ram Singh was a reservist soldier from one army platoon. During the war all reservists were recalled to serve in the battlefield. This religious Samagam at his house was reported by unethical C.I.D staff as a political gathering. Bhai Ram Singh being on field service in army remained untouched

and unchallenged. However many of those who attended this Samagam were arrested and sent to jail. While the cases against the arrested persons were going on in the courts, Bhai Ram Singh returned from his field service. The service he rendered to the jailed person with mind, body and wealth resources available is worth writing in Golden letters. In producing defense witnesses and making available all other required help, he kept busy days and nights. He had no personal care or fear doing all that. His elder brother, who was on a visit from America, was also roped in this court case. Jagat Singh had differences and did not have good relationship with Bhai Ram Singh. He did not merit any help, yet Bhai Ram Singh returned ill will with good will. He strived to save Jagat Singh from life imprisonment and got his sentence reduced to few years in Jail. He extended full help to another co-villager, Bhai Surjan Singh. Bibi Joginder Kaur a devout Gursikh, wife of Bhai Surjan Singh received lot of support from him. He warded off all her troubles in absence of Bhai Surjan Singh.

I can never repay adequately for Bhai Ram Singh's acts of kindness. I was sentenced to life imprisonment and all my property was forfeited. My wife, Srimati Kartar Kaur Ji was overwhelmed by problems. She was deprived of all belongings and property. Even the articles gifted by her parents were to be auctioned away. Bhai Ram Singh displayed manly courage and took away whatever he could from my house and dispersed such to safe places in Gujerwal and Phalewal just a night before. He kept extending support in many ways in this period of trial that was invaluable. Only a man of his mettle, courage and devotion could do what he did. Narrations of these events by Srimati Kartar Kaur and compliments to Bhai Ram Singh for his selfless and sacrificing deeds of service are most unforgettable. He lived for sixteen years after my release from imprisonment. He was the happiest person out of all my associates and friends on my return home.

There were lots of visitors for many years to our house at Narangwal to meet me after release. Bhai Ram Singh took all the heavy responsibility to look after the visiting congregations. His devotion was par excellence. In the surrounding villages Jathedar Ram Singh Ji was most respected and acknowledged figure. He ever remained embodiment of selfless service day and night, without tiring. He was particularly caring for poor and needy and rid them of their troubles

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and poverty. It was customary for him to carry lot of milk supply on his head to the Gurumat Samagams and personally serve to the holy congregations. He was picture of health and personal strength and bravery. Those visiting from far off places were personally massaged by him in their sleep and never knew about this. Such was the selfless service of love and faith. His life was a tale of such untiring and selfless service and bravery in the mould of olden Gurusikhs. There was never a chance for anyone to serve him. He maintained his daily association with me, coming from Gujerwal to Narangwal. He found it hard to part. Yet when he ended his life sojourn, he did not even give me a hint nor were there any parting words. None could ever guess his untimely departure in view of his fine health. He left many of us to grieve his loss and cherish his memory. This is a brief tribute to his memory.

CHAPTER 9

BHAI KARTAR SINGH JI CANADIAN (NAWAN CHAND)

Bhai Kartar Singh had gone over to Canada at the early age of seventeen. He was spiritually oriented as a consequence of his previous births. Even in the far off country, Canada, he availed of the holy company of a Gurmukh devout, Bhai Waryam Singh at Vancouver Gurdwara. Thus he retained his religious fervor and practice to be continually in Chardi Kalaa (high spirits)! He took lead in acts of benevolence and religious duty. When the ship Kamagata Maru headed for Canada with hundreds of Sikhs on board, the British government of Canada did not allow the ship to dock ashore. It remained at the high sea for months with all the passengers. Bhai Kartar Singh rendered a unique and tireless service during this period of trial.

He was taking a significant but non-conspicuous part as a member of Vancouver Khalsa Diwan and the Gurdwara. Among the Gursikhs there, he had the best command over the English language. There was a Mr. Hopkinson who got many dedicated Sikhs prosecuted and got them killed under false pretences. Bhai Kartar Singh could argue so well with Hopkinson, that the latter was left speechless. He never hesitated to settle matters with such government agents and informants. He always remained fearless and forthright and never shirked from an opportunity to subdue enemies of the Khalsa. Finally he was arrested and deported to the Punjab along with others. In the Punjab he got prosecuted for some old case in Canada and was also charged in the Third Lahore Conspiracy Case along with Bhai Balwant Singh from Doaba. Both were awarded the death sentence. While five were actually executed, including Bhai Balwant Singh, Bhai Kartar Singh's sentence got reduced to life imprisonment. He joined me in Hazari Bag jail. With the very first meeting we were drawn so near that we remained inseparable. It was a case of long separated souls from previous births that suddenly met in Hazari Bag jail. Through commonness of Gurmat thoughts we soon developed deep love for each other that proved life-long.

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He was born in village 'Nawan Chand' in district Ferozepur. There was another well-known freedom fighter by the same name. That was Sardar Kartar Singh Sarabha who was also sentenced to life imprisonment in the First Conspiracy Case. Bhai Kartar Singh had left for Vancouver at an early age. He was engaged to be married before his departure, but he wrote back from Vancouver that he did not intend to get married and the girl should be married off to his brother. This was done. He thus remained single and chaste all his life and a faithful devout. He was always keen to undertake selfless service and was full of love for the country. His natural bent was pure spiritualism in the light of Gurmat. All his service of religious devotion or sacrifice for the country was dedicated to the Guru, without a shadow of selfhood or personal ego. Once we came together, we remained so throughout life to our mutual delight. He got transferred from Hazari Bag jail to Raj Mundri along with me, in Madras state and then again to Nagpur jail. However from Nagpur to Lahore we reached separately one after the other, but did get joined once again. In the book of my autobiography, 'Jail Chithhian', I have written good deal about him.

He could quote a lot of Gurbani from memory. He used to recite Sri Sukhmani Sahib and Sukhmana Sahib to me and while doing so go into trance. He was very well acquainted with my family. He would love my family members and unknown members of the Jatha as if he knew everybody since long. Our common interest in spirituality made our close association very pleasant during the jail period. According to Divine-Will, I was released from Lahore jail in 1930, but he stayed back for many more years. Yet his detention in jail could not hold back his soul that gave me company. Finally he got released from Montgomery jail and joined me in person. He remained under surveillance for some time after release. He was allowed free meetings and permission to visit. He developed strong ties with my nephew, Bhai Sajjan Singh, and his family during this period. He even stayed after full release from jail with Bhai Sajjan Singh in Montgomery like a family member. There was so much of mutual love and trust that Bhai Kartar Singh was given complete responsibility to manage household affairs. From this remote place, he remained united with me in spirit. However when the pull of personal attraction became irresistible, he came to abide with me and forever remained so.

He was on very intimate brotherly relations with prominent members of the Jatha. His contribution in foreign activity was mostly concerned with his thoughts on Gurmat, Guru's teachings. He was an outstanding thinker and writer on religious thought. He was inconspicuous practitioner of Gurmat Nam-meditation. He was enjoying the highest spiritual experiences of 'Dasam Duar' and 'Unhad Shabad', hilarious joy of ceaseless contemplation of Divine-Nam at the highest body-center in human brain, unknown to others. He developed the occult power to know minds of others. However this was all his personal secret. After coming out of jail he took to homeopathic practice free of charge. His treatment of patients was very effective. Whatever cases he handled, those patients were fully cured. He therefore came to be known as Doctor Kartar Singh. He suffered from a whimsical mania occasionally that used to drive him mad. Though he was very successful in homeopathic treatment he also got interested in Greek medication. I used to discourage him strongly so as not to use the recipes of mineral extraction, yet he could never stop. This would turn friends into enemies and enemies into friends for him. However his close friends understood his weakness in him and ignored this wrongdoing. I used to discipline him quite a bit and often stop him from ill-advised activity. He too would listen and obey me.

But for this temporary mania, Bhai Kartar Singh was pure gold and highly influential. He was given to the highest research in spirituality and surprised many advanced Gurmat scholars with his original findings. His acceptance of Divine-Will, patience and thankfulness during his long period of imprisonment was exemplary and unparalleled. Initially he was sentenced to be hanged, but subsequently given life imprisonment. He was completely innocent of the charge for which he was tried and punished. In spite of his not being guilty, he never thought of himself as free from blame. He mentioned to me that he was guilty of unintended spiritual wrongdoing in this birth and he had to suffer for this in this very life. He had firmly resolved to write religious account of the history of Canada and Kamagata Maru ship near Vancouver that was not permitted ashore. He had just started, when he received the Divine-Call that ended his life at an early age. He had premonition of his death and had disclosed to me well before the event. He said that his life journey could end at an early date. He desired me to be around at his moment of departure, yet he departed

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unannounced. No sooner the news was received; all his admirers and close associates proceeded to the place of his death. However before our arrival, last rites had been performed. In answering my queries, his relatives also came to believe that he was still in highest spiritual trance and the breath was still held at the Dasam Dwar when his body was cremated. They told me that even though they believed he was dead yet the glow on his face was unbearable. Well, Divine-Will was done! While he was gone, rest of us sulked in memory of his virtues. It is not often that such precious, noble souls are born.

Bhai Kartar Singh was rare shining example of a Gursikh who brought the Sikh Nation and Gurmat religion to its highest glory. Whatever life he spent, Bhai Kartar Singh remained above selfish love for worldliness. He will always live in cherished memories of his many close friends and associates. I too miss him a lot, though I still feel his nearness. Many a times his soul has helped me through many problems and provided valuable hints.

CHAPTER 10

SAINTLY DR. BASANT SINGH JI

(RESIDENT OF SEKHWAN DISTT. SIALKOT)

It was during my absence of imprisonment, that young Dr. Basant Singh got himself Baptised by the Jatha members, who were residents of the newly colonized region between rivers Beas and Ravi of Punjab. He started observing all the principles of Gurmat living, Rehat, strictly. Mostly he stayed in district Lyallpur. He developed great brotherly affection with Jatha members and became deeply engrossed in love for me even without seeing me. His fondness grew just by hearing about me. This love for my unseen self became obsession with him, occupying his thoughts at all times. He kept praying for an early meeting in person.

In June 1923 volunteer service (Kar Sewa) for holy tank, Amrit Sarovar started, when I was in jail. A large number of Jatha members in hundreds volunteered for this service at Amritsar and held a prayer meeting for my well-being. I am told by those who participated in the service, my dear Gurmukh Bhai Mal Singh Ji and my wife Srimati Kartar Kaur in particular, that the Lyallpur Jatha also participated in large numbers. The Ardas was performed by Gurmukh Vir, Bhai Atma Singh Ji from Moga. During this prayer just with mention of my name this young Vir, Dr. Basant Singh fell unconscious. He was in a Love-Lorn state. He was brought back to consciousness after the Ardas. Ever since his love for me got strengthened beyond measure. It was neither breakable nor forgettable even for a moment. This loving Vir participated in all the Akhand Pathh Samagams to pray for my well-being and safe return from prison. He was ever praying for our early meeting. All this is inscribed deeply in my heart, as yearnings of pure spiritual love.

Finally the day dawned in 1930 when I was transferred from Nagpur Jail to Central Jail Lahore, prior to my release. Abiding close by in Lyallpur, Vir Basant Singh was convinced for an early meeting. Waiting for my release was most unbearable for him and patience could hold no longer. He made a prayer for immediate meeting with me in Jail. Those were the days of joint agitation against the Government by

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Congress and Akali parties with public emotions running high. It so happened that on a joint platform of Congress-Akali agitation, Dr. Basant Singh also made some kind of speech. This was enough to merit his arrest and award of sentence for six months in Jail. With Divine intervention he was challaned to undergo imprisonment in Central Jail Lahore. He then joined us in the ward for political prisoners. He was thrilled with fulfilment of his wish. He came running and fell on my feet. I was unaware of his identity. My constant companion, Bhai Kartar Singh Canadian, was able to lift him after great struggle. That is when I saw his face for the first time and could instantly recognize that he was a long separated spiritual mate. This was the initial recognition. On his narrating personal account, I was greatly touched. We were thus united in inseparable union under the auspices of one Divine-Wisdom of Gurmat, common principles, common ideology, worship of common Lord, treading same path as lovers of same Divine-Source. Such was the eternal, Divinely-Blest relationship of our Souls!

I happened to be released earlier from Jail, couple of months ahead of Bhai Basant Singh. Once he came out to join me, we remained together thereafter. He became a prominent figure in all subsequent Samagams. He was so young, with his beard just beginning to appear. However fuse of his Divine-Love was ignited within and the rocket of his yearning soul ever remained soaring to spiritual heights unfathomed. He had no such care as returning to his home or joining his family. It is rare to find one so devoted, abiding by Gurmat principle and closely living the code enunciated by Dasmesh Guru. He was young in age, but well advanced in Gurmat virtues, as though he was fully drilled in them even before his very birth. He was great practitioner of Nam-meditation and Divine-Nam permeated his entire being.

No worldly attraction interested him. His focus was only on the holy congregation of Gurmat Satsang. The volunteer service for holy tank, sarovar, at Tarn Taran Sahib was performed in 1931 after my release from Jail. Jatha participated in large numbers and Vir Dr. Basant Singh was prominent like the rising new moon. He always appeared to be intoxicated with Elixir of Divine-Nam. Unconcerned with hum-drum of life around, he remained spiritually engrossed within. He devoted

himself completely in selfless service. He served the gathered volunteers whole-heartedly. He gave up all worldly interests, including his family life, to devote fully to Jatha Samagams. His family doted all their affection on him. His parents and all siblings were already devout followers of Gurmat. Vir Basant Singh's influence further accentuated their Divine-Love. They all got Baptised and became followers of the Sikh Code, Rehat. One day the entire family prayed to the Sangat tearfully, that Bhai Basant Singh might be directed to stay with them at their village Sekhwan. Their emotional attachment to him badly needed his presence amongst them. They accepted his break with business activities to engage in Divine-Devotion as his full-time occupation. His very sight would work, as their life-support and not only the family but also many others around would benefit from his religious pourings. This would also give rise to Akhand Kirtan Samagams in the village. This was genuine and very moving supplication.

The pure Gurmat-Oriented request was accepted and Vir Basant Singh directed to live with his family. He was thus bound to comply with the direction and left with his family. In leaving he started walking backward for as long as could see us with his fixed gaze towards us. His companions were supporting him from behind, as if this love-intoxicated being was getting torn away much against his wishes. Thus he finally reached his village. Complying with his wishes, a hut was constructed in the family field at a distance of about half a mile. There he remained engrossed in Divine devotion all the time. He had left his medical practice since long; yet he was popularly know as Doctor Basant Singh. However his ardent Godly-Devotion earned him the name of Saint Basant Singh in surrounding villages. Thus his hut acquired the hue of an expanding holy place. A separate small Gurudwara was built for enshrining of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. There was a regular flow of spiritual seekers. During Akhand Kirtan Samagams there were miraculous happenings of high spirituality. Countless families got Baptised. The occult powers were ready for any service, but our dear Vir had no use for these. He remained dedicated to Divine-Love. He remained chaste and pure all his life. He could envision that he had a short life to live and thus refrained from marriage nor did he have any inclination for married life. He was ever married to the Primal Source-Divine. Worldly marriage would have been a

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mere distraction. Though he respected the Gurmat principle of married life, but he was aware of his short life and thus abstained from this obligation. None of his family ever dared to enforce marriage on him.

He wielded such an influence in entire Sialkot area and particularly Tehsil Narowal, that every village had Jathas of Baptised Sikhs. There was intense preaching of Gurmat teachings. We always found advance preparations for all our Samagams at Sekhwan. With large tents sidewalls, etc. It was like a heavenly place in midst of fields. It used to be gathering of thousands coming to enjoy the spiritual feast and such occasions were quite often. It was rare to find such fruitful preachings of Jatha principles in accordance with Gurmat. Whenever I chanced to go to Kashmir, he would insist for my short stay at the village. There was often a strong appeal for frequent visits. He held sway over the people in this area. This was mainly attributable to his selfless meditation, austerity and Nam-devotion. People naturally obeyed the discipline to comply with his direction and there was no age bar among Baptised Sikhs in following this exemplary regimental behaviour. Vir Basant Singh never sought personal adoration. Some half-baked in Faith used to consider it as prevalence of Saint-Dom. However there was no basis for such thinking. This was merely figment of their minds. Dr. Basant Singh had no appetite for such a thing.

The Gurmat kitchen at Sekhwan was always open for service. Dr. Basant Singh's younger sister-in-law, Bibi Pritam Kaur was in-charge of this service. The turbaned Bibi commanded great respect and never did anybody dare to misbehave. She was highly decent, meditating on Nam with each breath, just as Gurmukh Bibis of Yester years. Under her influence all the young ladies were also of the same mould. They remained engrossed in Divine-Thoughts during the entire service without wavering. Many young visiting ladies would fall in love with handsome and strong young Dr. Basant Singh, but he would always remain on the high pedestal of his Spiritual state engrossed in Divine-Nam. There was no place for an evil thought in the face of Gurmat ideology. The evil lies in the mind of person, who perceives evil.

Dr. Basant Singh often accompanied me to Kashmir and led me to a lonely spot on the bank of river Jehlum near head works. We used to sit atop high rocks by the bank side of the river, taking up independent

positions and remain in ecstatic daylong meditation. Many nights would pass in Nam engrossment. Every year he would head a large Jatha to Narangwal to commemorate Gurpurab Samagam of Dasmesh Guru, while singing Kirtan. At times, alighting at Kila Raipur railway station the Jatha would reach Narangwal at mid-night travelling by foot. This included Jatha of young turbaned Bibis. He was very good in Kirtan singing. They would rest on floor along with Sangat. They would be content with meagre, simple diet and would bring dry rations for langar on their heads. He was ever ready for supreme sacrifice including his entire family for sake of selfless service to others and not hold back any personal belongings. Here is one example that would suffice:

Service Rendered During Partition Holocaust

In 1947 India was divided on communal basis and Muslim League became a ruler party of Pakistan, the region awarded to Muslims. During exchange of population between Pakistan to secular India, there was a holocaust and misery unprecedented in history, was wrought on human beings on both sides of the border. The madness of religious hatred turned men into evil-spirited demons. The entire district of Sialkot had been awarded to Pakistan. Dr. Basant Singh engaged himself in the protection of other families ignoring his own. He guarded the historic Gurudwara Ber Sahib, Bawli Sahib, etc., unmindful of his personal safety. In those difficult times he proved instrumental in bringing Gursikhs' families to safety across the border at great personal risk. He settled the family of S. Harnam Singh Oberai at village Miran Mir near Ropar. I appealed to him to bring along his own family to a safe place. He proceeded to village Sekhwan with this objective. Before he could reach there, Sikh families of Tehsil Narowal in their thousands were already on their march after abandoning home and hearth. They had no clear sense of direction and badly needed Dr. Sahib's leadership. He then led a caravan of Sikh families numbering about Six million across river Ravi. However his own family got killed to the last person. This event coincided with rainy season in the months of July-August. He had been through a period of great physical exertion without proper food over many weeks in hot-humid weather. This selfless service was truly exemplary. He persevered in his objective of safety of the greatest numbers, as far as he could. The setback to his health could never be restored. He became anaemic and

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body stopped producing new blood. When he became bed-ridden, then alone he came to me in response to repeated requests. He was almost a skeleton of his old self. He was aware of his fast approaching end. All he desired was environment of holy sangat and my nearness till the very end. He would often recite the following:

ਕਬੀਰ ਮੁਹਿ ਮਰਨੇ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ਹੈ ਮਰਉ ਤ ਹਰਿ ਕੈ ਦੁਆਰ ॥
ਮਤ ਹਰਿ ਪੂਛੈ ਕਉਨੁ ਹੈ ਪਰਾ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ ॥ ੬੧ ॥

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ [੧੩੬੬]

*O' Kabir! I eagerly await death at the Divine-Door.
The Gracious Lord may then grace me with His Glance.61.*

Slok Bhagat Kabir Ji [1366]

Beholding Sixth True King, Lion and Futuristic Prediction

His last desire was fulfilled. He had performed so much penance and long Nam-meditations on top of the rocks and the caves near Kumar Hatti near Simla at such an early age that is almost impossible for any other person. The echo of his Simran can still be discerned in the river falls in Kashmir. Head works on river Jehlum is located at a lonely place between Sri Nagar and Baramula. He had an overseer friend there, who got a hut constructed for his meditation. Dr, Basant Singh meditated in the hut at night and by the riverside during the day. In the brink of the river, there were huge rocks that existed naturally. He would sit atop those rocks and lose himself in meditation. The adjoining waves of river water produced their own music along with the Nam-Simran rhythm within. I too enjoyed this experience along with dear Vir Basant Singh. It was difficult to break away from such celestial environment. We would continue sitting there for long hours. Finally on leaving there was persistence of this experience. Even while meditation in open air at Kumar Hatti, the Kashmir experience gets intermingled during spiritual flight of soul. One brother of the overseer friend of Dr. Basant Singh used to accompany him. He was a devout from birth and always remained very humble. He had many wonderful spiritual experiences. Whenever he felt like it, he would leave head works for the historic Gurudwara at Uri. It was generally known to the habitants of Uri and nearby places that none could stay in the Gurudwara or in close vicinity at night. A lion used to visit the place every night. The Gurudwara is situated across the river at an unhabitated place. This holy person was very friendly with me also.

He used to confide his most secret experiences to Dr. Basant Singh and myself. These narrations had a ring of truth about them. He told us about a particular night experience. He was seated on a rock outside Gurudwara and was so lost in meditation that he had no awareness of his body. He was suddenly jolted out of this state by roar of a lion. He got frightened beyond his wits, but soon started reciting the Gurbani shabad,

ਚਉਗਿਰਦ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਾਰ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਭਾਈ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ [੮੧੯]

Protected am I by Protection-Divine all around.1.

Bilawal M:5 [819]

It so happened that he got enclosed by iron wall all around, where lion could never attack. Thus protected, he became fearless and his Faith got fortified. He continued to soar in spiritual Bliss of Nam-meditation for long. Meanwhile Sixth King True, Sri Guru Har Gobind Sahib appeared in His Lustrous Divine Glory. A vast wealth of precious stones and jewels were revealed with the information that a time would come when the brave Singhs of Sri Dasmesh Ji would come to avail themselves of these treasures. Only those divinely destined shall find these secret treasures. God knows when such a time, shall come and who are thus destined to find their heritage wealth! While Dr. Basant Singh has departed already, I have no wish to explore this any further. Basant Singh Ji used to say. "When Satguru has bestowed the Treasure of Nam-Wealth, then why run after the false worldly treasures?" Truly he left with all the gathered Nam-Wealth for Eternal Abode. When his soul departed from body his attendant could vision the splendour of the departing Soul as bright glitter. For many a days and weeks he remained lost in the glory of this blissful memory. Even now he can recapture the blissfulness of that moment. Thus ends the brief life depiction of beloved Basant Singh.

CHAPTER 11

SRI BIBI HARBANS KAUR

Here is an amazing short life story of the great Sikh lady, wife of Late Devout Vir Sriman Sardar Joginder Singh Ji of village Raipur:

Sri Bibi Harbans Kaur Ji belonged to the ancient Gursikh family, devoted to Faith generation after generation, from Daudpur. Her paternal uncle, Sriman Sant Hira Singh Ji, was a leading light of the Jatha. His devotion to Nam-Simran and Godly-Love was exemplary. This young girl was born and brought up and greatly influenced by the high spirituality of her uncle. At the time of her birth saintly Bhai Hira Singh Ji prophesied, that she was destined to be great devout and her strong Sikh Faith would be worthy of emulation.

When She attained marriageable age, as a consequence of Sant Bhai Hira Singh Ji's blessing, she got married as per Gurmat Anand Karaj to Sriman Bhai Joginder Singh Ji. It was indeed a great blessing that such devout spiritual seekers got united in marriage. Though their economic condition was bordering on poverty, yet they enjoyed enrichment of Nam-Wealth. Their spiritual flourishing together was truly exemplary. Their minds got focused on pure Gurmat as soon as they got Baptised. With their total reliance on Efficacious Nam, they never cared much about worldliness. The handling of household duties by Bibi Harbans Kaur was so auspicious, that soon everything got transformed. The hard days ended into a sense of great prosperity. The talents of Bhai Joginder Singh Ji came to be recognized and rewarded by Patiala State. Though worldly riches now abounded, yet humility of spirit was retained. Sister Harbans Kaur Ji was living embodiment of Gursikh living in thought, word and deed. Her head was always adorned with light bluish turban. She had a strong healthy body and with turbaned head she carried herself with great dignity, worthy of great devout Sikh lady.

She personally attended to all household chores. The sound of Nam-Simran became automatic all the time along with her normal activities. It is rare to find such Faith in personal life. She would always take full head-bath. She followed this practice everyday, even soon after delivery of a new-born, not caring for medical advice against this. The blessing

of such firm Faith was, that she never suffered even a slight sickness throughout her life. She always eagerly looked forward to serve holy ones and her kitchen was always open for this service. She prepared food and served all by herself. The visitors were always fully satiated. This auspicious service never experienced any shortage.

She was very adept in reading the hidden meaning of actions of devout and their devotion. Once she was serving self-prepared food to the great spiritualist, godly Bhai Atma Singh from Moga. It so happened that suddenly Sri Bhai Atma Singh Ji went into trance and stopped eating from his plate, yet he kept munching with his mouth. His eyes were rolled up and his face shone in Divine-splendor. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji sitting close by was perplexed with this strange going-on. In amazement, he enquired the meaning of all this from his wife, that without taking food from his plate Bhai Atma Singh appeared to be partaking invisible food. Bibi Harbans Kaur Ji replied, "There is nothing to wonder. Bhai Randhir Singh is offering him morsels from Narangwal." Hearing this, Bhai Joginder Singh noted the time of the occurrence. At that very time I was served food by my wife, Srimati Kartar Kaur at Narangwal. I had taken only a few morsels and then stopped eating even though my hands took food from the plate.

My mother sitting by my side noticed this strange occurring. Puzzled by this, she enquired from Kartar Kaur explanation of this wonderment. Srimati Kartar Kaur could also read through the strange happening like Bibi Harbans Kaur. She promptly replied, "There is nothing unusual or surprising about it. He is feeding his Sarb-Lohia friend (sharing commonness of eating from Steel utensils) Bhai Atma Singh Ji, who is being served by sister Harbans Kaur at that house of Bhai Joginder Singh at Patiala." When I came out of my trance, I too noted the time. After few days Bibi Harbans Kaur, Sant Hira Singh Ji, the great devout Ascetic Bhai Atma Singh Ji and Bhai Joginder Singh Ji visited Narangwal. The mutual query was addressed and the events found to coincide.

Sri Bibi Harbans Kaur was such, outstanding and assertive that all wives of Patiala high officials and chieftains acknowledged her overpowering religious influence. The consorts of ministers and royal queens all held her in great respect. They used to send for other ladies

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to the palace, but none ever dared to ask Bibi Harbans Kaur. She was without a parallel in her chastity. Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji was then a member of Shromani Gurudwara Prabandak Committee (S.G.P.C). The agitation against British Rule by Akali-Panth was at its peak. Almost every member of S.G.P.C suffered imprisonment due to participation in this agitation. Bhai Joginder Singh was not keeping good health those days and had grown weak. However Bibi Harbans Kaur aroused his religious fervor like brave wives in Sikh history and encouraged him for the sacrifice of Jail-term. However at the moment of departure unintentional tears came to her eyes. Bhai Joginder Singh was astonished at this and asked the reason for this show of weakness after putting up a brave front thus far. Bibi Harbans Kaur put on smile and replied that the possibility of early reunion was remote. We seem to be destined for long separation. Sardar Joginder reassured her that he was fine now with her blessings and there was nothing to fear. In fact Bibi Harbans Kaur had envisioned her own death, though she never revealed this to him. By the time Sardar Joginder Singh returned after his term of imprisonment, Bibi Harbans Kaur had left for Heavenly Abode-Eternal. He could not cope up with the pangs of separation from his faithful godly wife. His health deteriorated fast. Though Bibi Harbans Kaur completed her life sojourn successfully as the very embodiment of Faith, yet the family left behind suffered incompleteness of their household affairs. The acceptance of Divine-Will by Bhai Joginder Singh was unique in bearing this terrible loss! (A separate chapter is included about Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji, because he too has left for journey to the Timeless.)

CHAPTER 12

SRIMAN SANT BHAI HIRA SINGH JI OF DAUD PUR

Dear Guru-blessed Bhai Hira Singh Ji was a real paternal uncle of Bibi Harbans Kaur Ji. He was very gentle and Godly-oriented person from the very beginning. Baptism of the double-edged sword further heightened his divine qualities. He would remain in Nam-meditation with single-minded devotion, in humble supplication with folded-hands, standing on one leg in Holy Presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib for night-long. Such was his regular practice of rare devotion. He was fervently praying to envision the Divine-Light. He would continue reading Sri Guru Granth Sahib solitary in love-lorn state. He was persistent in his wish and prayer within with all his being for early Divine-illuminated experience. His reading from Sri Granth Sahib was flawless and simultaneously he could carry on Nam-meditation automatically in intense Divine-Love.

One day he bolted all the doors in Gurudwara from within, he took his seat for reciting from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Just as he took his position he started feeling reverberations of meditation in Divine-Love throughout his being and lost consciousness of self. He soon tried to control himself and started praying. He had just commenced the recitation, that he was engulfed with Divine-Light within. He could not bear this unbearable experience. His body became very light like a Divine-plane. Enjoying Divine-Nectar imbued love, he held his breath in Divine-meditation at his navel. He suddenly soared and his body touched the Gurudwara Ceiling like a floating balloon. Guru-oriented, Gurumukh Sant 'Bhai Hira Singh Ji' was blessed with power to bear the unbearable as a Divine-Gift. He vehemently prayed in loving gratitude. Very slowly he descended to the floor, like a flying bird making a landing. He lied in prostration in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and thus remained in prayer for long to ask for boon to bear this unbearable state. He was thus blest thereafter, that none could discern his high spirituality. He remained non-conspicuous in the holy congregations in his fully flourished state of Nam-meditation. Only such enlightened Gurusikhs used to be asked to serve as members of the team of Five Beloved ones for Baptism ceremony such was the wont of this Jatha.

It was Divine-Will, that Sant Bhai Hira Singh Ji moved from his village Daudpur of district Ludhiana to Chak No. 361 in district Layallpur, where he had been allotted land. Soon the presence of divinely influences of this Gurumukh, pure and immaculate follower of Gurmat, was felt most vigorously. Many yearning souls were lit up with enlightenment of Divine-Nam. Almost entire village, Chak No. 361, came under the sway of Gurumat Baptism and presented a miraculous transformation into spiritual bloom. All persons were engaged in land cultivation and alongside kept up the practice of Nam-meditation. It appeared they were all receiving Divine-Help in their labors. They never felt physical tiring or sense of boredom in their exertions. They were skilled and successful in their profession of cultivation and raising of crops. They were tireless during reaping season and would go on for hours, as if driven by Divine-Effort. Carrying heavy loads on heads briskly they appeared to be walking in air. Some men of Divine-Vision could discern and bore witness that loads carried by Gurumukh Singhs were about two feet high above their heads and moved on their own.

There were many Akhand Pathh and Kirtan Samagams held at Chak No. 361 and at times Baptizing ceremonies too. The rare spiritual events that transpired then defy description. The Nam-practitioners Singhs of the village used to meditate in a single group. Such was the music generated that entire village would appear in trance. There was one Ganga Singh who delved in jest. Driven by his habit, he stood outside the door of meditation place. He found scores of people engaged in Nam-Simran in a loud voice with rosaries of steel in their hands. In aping them he made a rosary of thin string by tying little knots and started counting beads of improvised rosary while loudly reciting Nam. Just within fifteen minutes of his aping activity he fell flat on ground. He shrieked loudly and cried for help. Many people gathered around. On enquiry about his affliction, he pleaded, "Get me the sinner, pardoned by these Singhs". He kept rolling in pain and making pleas for mercy. After meditation the Singhs came out and lifted up Ganga Singh suffering in agony and hitting his head on ground. Ganga Singh in penance asked for forgiveness for his unpardonable sin and got himself Baptised. He thus became a great devotee of Sikh Faith. He tearfully narrated this self-experience to me.

This movement of getting Baptised spread to many surrounding villages and many joined in to enjoy devotion and Bliss of Nam.

Retroversion of Spirituality

There came a period of retroversion of high spirituality enjoyed by our dear Gurumukh, Saintly Bhai Hira Singh. All his high attainments of enlightenment within started coming to nought. He went around lamenting and humbly rolling among the shoes of holy congregation, Sangats. He would cry out that he had lost all his internal bliss and enlightenment of his self. He strived in every possible way, but could never regain lost glory. He roamed about in wilderness, meditated on parapets of wells standing on one leg, meditated for long on Divine-Nam, counted beads of rosary in presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib endlessly and yet his state of perplexity remained. He would come to Kirtan Samagams, but remained outside behaving like an insane person. He would rub dust of the shoes of sangat on his body and face. In fact all his measures to seek solace led to more and more misery.

Many well-wishers of Bhai Hira Singh, taking pity on his woe-begone state, approached Jatha with pleas on his behalf. However Gurmukh devotees, lost in love of Kirtan, never cared, yet persons with great perception of Truth and Divine-Will knew that time was not ripe for forgiveness-Divine. When it was propitious time, Bhai Hira Singh was called up by the chosen Five during Baptizing ceremony. I was in attendance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib on this occasion. Bhai Hira Singh presented himself. He was then called upon by the Chosen Five to explain his true story. He tearfully narrated that he was unaware of this cause of spiritual retroversion. He did not know of any wrong doing even in dream. The cause of down-fall was unknown to him and he was unable to regain glory that he once experienced. All his strivings had proved of no avail. The Divine-wrath remained mystery to him. At the prompting of the Chosen Five, I reminded Bhai Hira Singh, "Remember your glorious spiritual experiences at Chak No. 361. Was it all due to Grace of Guru or you took the credit upon yourself? Have you suffered from imperceptible self-pride, that the wonderful happenings were due to your own efforts?" This question shook him visibly from top to toe. The second question promptly followed, "Are you bestowing Gurumat Nam all by yourself in the tradition of your own Guru-Dom?" This brought him to senses and he lamented that he

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was guilty of this wrongdoing occasionally. For a while this practice appeared very rewarding, but soon proved futile. The Five Chosen Ones took hold of him and gave him a good shake, saying that, "This was an act of grave defiance. The authority bestowed on the Chosen-Five, representing Guru, was usurped by you alone. This was responsible for draining away of all spirituality of Nam." Bhai Hira Singh then wailed for forgiveness. The Five Chosen Ones awarded heavy punishment to Bhai Hira Singh and prayed for his forgiveness by the Guru. Satguru graced him and progress started and he started regaining all the lost Bliss and glory. Imbued with Divine-Love and splendor Divine shone on his face. He was back in holy congregations as his old self. Bhai Hira Singh was thus a Blest Soul and rare jewel among Gurusikhs, with his spirit ever soaring.

The time came for my going to jail. Bhai Hira Singh Ji wished to join the first agitation with Jatha, but Divine-Will decided otherwise. He was preparing to receive the Jatha returning from Jail, when he suddenly received Divine-Call and departed for Eternal-Abode. We were left behind as his love-lorn brethren. Now I wistfully look forward to join him in the hereafter! If justice is done to loving memory of Sri Sant Bhai Hira Singh, it would form a sizeable book. This is mere sampling of rich tribute that he deserves.

CHAPTER 13

SHAWL-WRAPPED SANT SRIMAN ARJAN SINGH JI (RESIDENT OF PANJOKHRA)

Many souls were enjoying the spiritual bliss at Ambala Cantonment. Akhand Pathhs and Akhand Kirtans were being held with great dedication and Divine-Love in series for long. Sri Babu Mal Singh Ji was serving there in No.36 Rasala and was engaged in enlightenment of many others with Divine-Nam. Another dedicated faithful, Beloved of Guru, Bhai Piara Singh Ji was also stationed there as an officer in another army unit. He too was enjoying delight of intense spirituality. Pull of yearning love, emanating from these two loved ones, had brought here the Jatha, which was embodiment of Soulful Kirtan. These events have been referred in another chapter in detail.

Those days' Sikh units of cavalry, artillery, infantry, etc., happened to be based at Ambala Cantt. All units had their separate Gurdwaras, Akhand Pathhs and Akhand Kirtans were being performed in all these Gurdwaras in turn by the Jatha. Many were the miraculous events that took place and many immaculate beings with spirituality of high destiny got revealed and Baptised. One such person was Sepoy Arjan Singh, serving in No. 36 Cavalry unit. His youthful appearance had newly growth of beard. In this early age he was thirsting like rain-bird for Divine-Love. Obviously he was a great soul, who had made strivings in spirituality in his previous life. His spiritual craving made him a close follower of the Blissful Kirtani Jatha, in ceaseless pursuit. He was seeking to get Baptised at the earliest so as to establish his relationship with Guru as Gursikh and make fast progress towards highest spiritual union. The yearning of his love was limitless, yet the knowing adepts of the Jatha wanted to further heighten this feeling of Love and cement the genuineness. The date of his Baptism got postponed on various Samagams, though he would come prepared every time in anticipation. In his relentless seeking he would ignore freezing cold of winter as also sizzling summer heat. He went around bare-footed as a possessed man and thought only of God-Realization, the ultimate objective. His intense Love would find outlet as free flow of tears. Ready to make the ultimate sacrifice of his head for the sake of Love for the Lord, he presented a rare example among seekers of

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Baptism of Double-Edged Sword. He had absolutely no hesitation to offer his all, his self and all that he could call his own, in Name of the Guru. His close associates feared that he would abandon all worldly attachments and Government service immediately after Baptism and take to asceticism. He was explained time and again the strict Gurmat discipline and code of living, but his single-minded obsession would accept all. Ultimately his transparent sincerity of purpose moved the hearts of entire holy sangat and all pleaded for his being Baptised. 'The Chosen Five' accepted him. No sooner he received Baptism, his spirit soared to great heights and he went into trance. It was in his state of trance that leaving him to his friends, the Baptizing Jatha took leave.

Extreme Love-Lorn State of Bhai Arjan Singh

It is impossible to narrate the yearnings of love that Vir Arjun Singh went through. He could not continue in Government Service for long and left it in spite of the advice offered by Babu Mal Singh Ji and Bhai Piara Singh Ji to the contrary. Arjan Singh was married prior to his Baptism, but he was remarried to his wife according to Anand Karaj Ceremony. Yet Bhai Arjan Singh remained chaste all his life and he was devoid of any inclination for family life. He was ever looking forward to join holy congregations, SatSangat. He went into trance just as soon as he was Baptised. His sittings in meditation would continue for hours, unaware of hum-drum of life around. Such was his daily practice, untouched by worldliness. For weeks he would remain in meditation in midst of uninhabited forests, where he would originally proceed to collect firewood for Guru-Ka-Langar. He would lose all self-consciousness to remain in meditational trance. If he got news about Akhand Kirtan by Jatha, he would proceed there directly on foot. He would sit in deep meditation at the place of keeping shoes. He would avail of listening fully to Asa-Di-Var Kirtan. He would then proceed to fetch heavy loads of firewood, carrying on head and feed fuel to the burning hearths with his own hands. He had sweet words for all and the ladies were particularly touched by his words. These strange happenings at such early age were source of real wonderment. Some events of his life, witnessed by Bhai Surjan Singh, are given under.

Miraculous Events in the Life of Bhai Arjun Singh Ji

(a) I met Sant Ji (Bhai Arjun Singh) in 1912, when he was bringing firewood on his head for Guru-Ka-Langar. Earlier Sant Ji had listened to complete recitation of Sri Akhand Pathh in one sitting. He had chosen a closet, where none would enter. This was a secluded construction of olden times, where one could neither lie down nor stand up. Sant Ji sat there in meditation and got up only after the Bhog ceremony.

(b) The Second meeting took place during pilgrimage to Sri Nankana Sahib by the Jatha on foot. He had a taborin that he played upon while singing Kirtan. He would sit night long in solitude in forest near Nankana Sahib in deep meditation. In 1915 the entire Jatha was arrested. Sriman Sant Arjun Singh Ji was also called to Khanna Police Station by the police. He was questioned, "Do you know Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji?" He fearlessly replied, "I know him very well. Many times we have recited from Sri Guru Granth Sahib together. In fact the entire creation is acquainted with Sriman Bhai Sahib Ji". The police tried to get him around by saying, "You turn into prosecution witness and you will be set free." Sant Ji replied, "Who can ever withhold my freedom? I am ever free." Police ordered him to remain seated in the station compound. Sant Ji rolled a tree-stump lying near by and ignited it to provide heat and kept a pitcher of water for use. He had a steel bowl with him already. He took his position near the fire and was lost in meditation. He would put some ash of the stump in the bowl after five or six hours interval and drink it mixing with water. He remained seated thus for five or six days. All the policemen shivered in fear of the holy and regretted their action for getting on his wrong side. Fearing wrath of the godly person, all the policemen including officer-in-charge stood before him with folded-hands in apology, saying, "Sant Ji, please pardon our wrong-doing. We wrongly held you here." They made offerings of sweets and fruits. Sant Ji would not even look at them and remained self-engrossed. While the policemen were anxious to get rid of him, he was lost in deep meditation. He was not paying any heed to their remorseful words. Finally they brought a prominent Gursikh from Khanna. After great persuasion Sant Ji came out of the trance. He then enquired, "What have you to say?" The policemen pleaded, "Please grant us forgiveness. We wrongly held you here." Sant Ji enquired, "Do I need to come back here?" They promptly

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replied, “We shall never call you again.” Sant Ji got out of the Police Station and left for a place of his own choice.

(c) During Akali agitation to gain control of Sri Harmandar Sahib at Sri Amritsar, the keys were in possession of the Deputy commissioner. Sant Arjan Singh Ji walked straight into his official residence and confronted him saying, “Who are you to hold keys of Sri Darbar Sahib?” D.C. got flabbergasted with this courageous challenge to his authority. Sant Ji had the look of an ascetic. He had a shawl on his head for turban and was bare-footed. Meanwhile Police force arrived and took Sant Ji by the arm, leaving him outside D.C.’s residence. They explained to D.C that, “He is just way-ward person. It would be of no use arresting him.” Those days Guru Panth was engaged in taking control of their holy Gurdwaras in view of the corrupt practices of priests. Sriman Sant Arjan Singh extended his full support. During agitation for Gurdwara GangSar at Jaito, he joined the Jatha of 500 Singhs to enter the Gurdwara. Many of the Jatha were shot dead and the remaining were confined in the fort at Jaito. Thus Sant Ji was arrested and remained in Nabha Jail for two years. After his release he roamed about in Patiala area. He narrated his self-experience of those times thus:

“I had wandered to a village near Ropar and stayed at a Gurdwara. I started feeling pull of a yearning soul, making me restless due to inner goading. I was contemplating about this strange phenomenon. It was 10:00 PM when my restlessness became unbearable. I had a small wound on one foot. I experienced that if I proceeded Northward, pain would increase and if the direction was changed to South, the pain would subside. I started running Southward and kept running whole night. I stopped at the door of one house in a village early in the morning. I could not proceed further and knocked at the door. The door was opened and I entered. Just as I entered, a young lady fell flat on my feet and became unconscious. I then understood, that this Bibi had exerted the spiritual pull. Her fall generated tingling sensation in my body, causing intoxication. I too dropped to the ground unconscious. I do not know how long we remained unconscious on the ground. A person put us in separate beds. This feeling of intoxication persisted for long. This village was named Kalaur and Bibi was niece of Giani Gurbakhsh Singh ‘Bhadal’. She was married to S. Mehar

Singh of the village, who was an official of Patiala state. This Bibi had put milk in two glasses and left these on a table. She then resolved in her mind that she would take milk only after Sant Arjun Singh took the other glass. With this resolution, she sat in deep meditation early morning. Her miraculous pull brought me there to partake milk.”

(d) I happened to go to Rajpura once. I overheard two persons talking about an ascetic performing penance in the area of their village ‘Pilkani’. I enquired whether the ascetic was in Safforan robes or a Sikh. They replied he wears shawl and Sikh-type breeches, ‘Kachhera’. I decided to have a glimpse of the Saint. In my search, I came into a forestland with thick wild growth. I stopped at a straw-hut at a distance, with variety of flowers planted around. I approached the hut, removing my shoes outside and walked noiselessly towards the entrance. There I could see Sant Arjan Singh facing away from the entrance and entry was blocked with heavy thorny branches. Thinking that he was in meditation, I sat outside the hut in wait. After few minutes he came out and embraced me affectionately. He assured me that thorny blocking did not apply to me but was meant to keep out unwelcome intruders, who kept pestering. He offered to construct another hut for me and thus give him company. I agreed. Both of us then were living in the forest. We would rise at 1:00 AM and after our ablutions sit in our separate huts for meditation. Sri Guru Granth was enshrined in Sant Ji’s hut at a higher level while he rested on the floor. One night I heard loud pleading by Sant Ji at 2:00 A.M, “I do not need these commodities. I seek only Divine-Vision.” I enquired what it was about. He explained, “I have been instilled with all kinds of Gifts-Divine. The occult powers of Ridhis and Sidhis have entered within me. I am praying that all these may be taken away from me, yet these are being thrust on me. This is the problem I am facing.” I could only say that understanding of such matters was beyond my comprehension, which remained to be sorted out by Sant Ji alone. He had on-going recitation of Sampat Pathh to be completed in a period of five and half months. On completion of this and Bhog ceremony I returned to my village Gujerwal.

(e) There is a village near Rajpura, named Uksee, where Sant Ji performed penance. I had been there to see him. Away from the village, Sant Ji constructed his straw-hut and sat there for his

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meditations. He would remain engrossed in Divine-Nam all the twenty-four hours. One Bibi used to bring hot water for Sant Ji's bath at 2:00 A.M. daily from the village. She would bring food for him in daytime. Thus she served him whole-heartedly. One day a slanderer aroused anger of her father with falsehood of slander. In his fury, the father kicked Bibi in her side and she fell unconscious. The next day the leg that had kicked her developed pain. In matter of a few days it got infected with worms. Many persons carried Bibi's father to Sant Ji and pleaded for forgiveness. Sant Ji was unaware of the story behind this. Bibi had never mentioned this to Sant Ji. He told people that this affliction was not due to his curse but a case of Divine punishment and Lord only knew about it. Finally man died of this affliction. Sant Ji left the place after some time.

(f) He then came to Nand Pur Kalaur, where Nineth Guru had visited. He told the priest and priestess that they were to hand over the historic Gurdwara to the local committee. They agreed. A village Committee was formed and Sant Ji served personally in Gurdwara. I paid a visit there. Sant Kartar Singh was then appointed to serve in Gurdwara. He was running Guru-Ka-Langar with self-cultivation of land and devoted fully to the service. After his demise, Sant Jawala Singh is currently incharge of the service and is a great devotee of Gurumat Nam.

(g) Sant Arjan Singh Ji then moved over to Gurdwara 'Dukh Niwaran' Patiala. Here also Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib had visited. Maharaja Patiala Bhupinder Singh was against construction of this Gurdwara, yet Sant Arjan Singh and 'Nihang Singh' Ram Singh Ji started the construction work. A lot of work was completed during lifetime of Sant Arjan Singh. While engaged in this holy service, he left for Abode-Eternal, ending his life-sojourn. (Narrated by Surjan Singh)

Bhai Arjan Singh's Service to House of the Guru

Bhai Arjan Singh performed highly dedicated service at the four historic Gurdwaras, which will be remembered forever. After my imprisonment, he came in contact with Gurumukh, S. Gurdit Singh 'Magistrate', a great devotee of The House of Guru. This appeared to be an act of Divine-Will. S. Gurdit Singh had come to inherit Divine-Love through his family and was the very personification of dedicated Love. He had great inclination for research of historic Gurdwaras.

This got further boost when he came in contact with Sant Arjan Singh. They both started devoting their energies for this cause. Magistrate S. Gurdit Singh was an official of Patiala State. He started his research work in the state. He was always looking for old records referring to old history. These two persons commenced their work with prayer to The Lord. They came to know of a Muslim family in the state, who were engaged in profession of record-keepers of land generation after generation. Contacting the current records-keeper, 'Patwari' of this family, they searched through old records, held since long. It was through Divine-Blessing, that they could find four land-demise papers written in Gurumukhi Script pertaining to the period of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji. These were preserved in a tin container and thus saved from deterioration. On examining these, they were thrilled beyond measure. These pertained to the unknown, uncharted Gurdwaras of the Nineth Guru:

Gurdwara Sahib Nandpur Kalaur
Gurdwara Nathana Sahib
Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib
Gurdwara Muktsar Sahib

With discovery of this information the two devout Gursikhs got into their service work with rare dedication. Dear, S. Gurdit Singh soon left for Abode-Divine, yet high spirits of Sant Arjan Singh never got dimmed. He kept up his yeomanly service at Nandpur Kalaur. The hidden seat for enshrining Sri Guru Granth Sahib, according to the demise papers was located deep below. Some rivulet had made its course over the place and it had stagnant water around that made the place very muddy. Sant Arjan Singh Ji called for Volunteer-Service to fill up the place with earth and started leading the service. He carried basketful loads of earth on his head. His efforts bore fruit. Hundreds of cart-loads of earth filled up the place. Gurdwara's new construction was now on quite a raised ground. The old seat after excavation is located below at lower ground and is in good shape. The new building is beautifully built on a large scale. Landed property was attached to the Gurdwara. Sant Ji took pains and moved the officials to form a local Gurdwara committee and handed over control of the Gurdwara to the Committee. This system is still working.

Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib's Management

After successful completion of his task at Gurdwara Sahib Nandpur, he moved to the service at Nathana and then on to 'Dukh Niwaran Gurdwara Sahib'. He started locating the place as per the gathered record, 'Patta'. I here refer to my own experience and happening in this context.

Before my imprisonment, I used to visit my dear friend, Gurumukh Sri Bhai (Late) Joginder Singh Ji, every year at Patiala; I would stay with him for weeks together, sharing our personal thoughts. It was in 1913 that we were walking along the canal away from city and I felt the urge to ease myself before evening prayers, Rehras. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji proposed to head towards a thick forest on right side of the canal. At a little distance we noticed a large Banyan tree with very inviting cool shade. It occurred to us to sit in meditation there for a while. However we got so engrossed, that we did not feel like leaving the place. Thus we remained till it was time for Rehras. We lost the urge to ease ourselves, the purpose we had set for. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji was adept in interpreting Divine hints and concluded that the place must be related to some special past spiritual events. Lehal village was nearby. He gathered three very elderly persons of the village, who were beyond the age of eighty. They were requested to narrate any special occurrences pertaining to the Banyan tree. They told us that the near by pond is known as 'Pond of the Akalis' and is blessed with special healing powers. Irrespective of age or Faith, all persons hold the pond as very holy. We have personal knowledge that newly born anemic babies from Hindu and Muslim families got healed to glowing health with Nectarine water of this pond. This panacea is also efficacious in the case of sick animals that have been getting restored to normal health with sprinklings from the pond. On every fifth day of the waxing moon period many pilgrims of all Faiths from distant places come here for fulfillment of their cherished wishes. We have been witnessing these Divine-Miracles throughout our lives. However this place had not yet attained its due recognition.

After listening to villagers, Bhai Joginder Singh Ji brought few other Singhs for a prayer by Five Singhs, 'Ardasa' in the ordained manner. The prayer was to ask for Divine-Boon to reveal the true history of the

place. This was done with utmost religious fervor and reverence. I returned home after this. With changing times and Divine-Will I was imprisoned in Jail dungeons. The 'Pattas' were discovered by Magistrate S. Gurdit Singh and Sant Arjan Singh in 1927-28, as narrated earlier. This proved to be the place where Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib had visited. I cannot reproduce the full text of the 'Patta', but the salient features were as follows:

Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib had rested for sometime under the Banyan tree on his way to Delhi.

There is reference to the miraculous power of 'The pond of Akalis'.

There was a prediction, that in times to come a great city would flourish in the area. (Patiala city was not in existence then)

The pond would be transformed into a large, beautiful tank. Many would get healed of their afflictions on bathing here.

A majestic Gurdwara Sahib building would be constructed.

When Sant Bhai Arjan Singh Ji came to see Bhai Joginder Singh at Patiala and showed him the discovered records, Bhai Joginder Singh was extremely thrilled. He was filled with gratitude to the Lord for having granted our prayer in 1913. Though a State-official, yet he always had close relationship with Gurumukh Spiritualists. Sant Arjan Singh was his associate since long and was engaged in service to Gurdwaras with promptings-divine. With Bhai Joginder Singh as his help-mate, he became still more enthusiastic. They got into the job with full earnestness. Sant Ji remained engrossed in meditation day and night for months together. He remained lost in deep meditation at the forlorn place with his bare body, come winter or summer. Such was the auspicious effect of his penance, that the place acquired fame. S. Atma Singh, nephew of Bhai Joginder Singh, also joined the project. As an engineer, S. Atma Singh, produced a map of marvelous architecture for the Gurdwara Shaib building. It appeared that Hand-Divine was behind this. The map covered quite a few acres of surrounding land. This was occupied fearlessly by the dedicated workers. When I got released from Jail in 1930, Bhai Joginder Singh Ji took me to Patiala. That is the first time I got the news of Divine-Acceptance of our prayer. He showed me the work in progress. Akhand Kirtan Samagams were held at the place and first Sri Akhand Pathh by the Jatha performed most enthusiastically with great devotion.

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Jathedar Bhai Ram Singh of Budha Dal also joined bringing Singhs of his Jatha. He too became a keen help-mate of Sant Arjan Singh Ji. With ceaseless efforts of these two renowned persons for selfless service and dedication, Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib acquired high acclaim and fame. Main hurdle was opposition by Late Maharaja Bhupinder Singh in the place becoming a Panthic center of activity. However his opposition only furthered the glory of the Gurdwara Sahib at an astonishing pace. Maharaja transferred S. Atma Singh, Engineer to a far off place from Patiala, yet he kept guiding the project secretly. The building got fully constructed in accordance with the designed map. When we reached there for the Akhand Kirtan and Akhand Pathh Samagam, Sant Arjan Singh was there in the garb of a recluse. He joined us in Kirtan. When I noticed him in that garb, I chided him quite a bit, "How dare you put on this funny garb as a Gursikh?" He immediately removed his outer garb that was only a cloak for his inner wear of Khalsa insignia and thus proved his abiding Faith as a Gursikh. He told me smilingly, "With blessings of this garb, constant offerings of money keep pouring for Gurdwara Sahib. If you permit, I may keep this cloak over my dress of Five Kakkars." I was pleased to give my consent. He had barely put on the garb again, when two queens from Royal Palace arrived in great devotion. Both made offerings of Rupees five hundred each for Gurdwara Shaib to Sant Ji. Everybody around had a good laugh. Within hearing of the queens Sant Ji commented. "This is magic of the holy garb. The worldly Rajas, Ranis and other moneyed people are impressed by holy garb alone. They make handsome offerings and I keep dedicating it all to service of the Guru."

Sant Ji got busy in construction of the tank, Sarovar, sides. I went around the wondrous sight of Gurdwara Sahib to my great delight. However I was saddened to see great Banyan tree reduced to a mere stump. All the top branches and their vast expanse were gone. The memorable 'Patta' was reproduced on fixed board there. This truly was satisfying and pleasing. Charged with these emotions I held dear Vir, Sant Arjan Singh Ji in tight embrace. He being a man of great humility said, "It is all Blessing of Guru Sahib. This is made possible by the generous and untiring service of 'Gurmukh Sangat', congregations of holies. What can a poor non-entity person like me do by myself?" Full of gratitude to Divine-Power, he let his emotions flow freely in form of

uncontrolled tears. Humility of spirit filled all his being. He never relished the title of ‘Sant’ that people bestowed upon him. He led all his life in spirit of poverty. It is very rare to find chaste and righteous being in the mould of Vir Arjan Singh.

Astonishing Happening at Ambala

Once a person given to jesting and practical joking engaged innocent being, Sant Arjan Singh, in talk at Ambala. Keeping him busied in talk, he led him to the area of prostitutes. All the prostitutes gathered around and tried to incite passion and seduce young Bhai Arjan Singh Ji. Finding himself thus entrapped, he got infuriated and in Divine fervor, he sang Gurbani Shabad in loud voice with heart-rending emotion. All the prostitutes were shaken into realization of their sinful lowliness. They now pleaded with Sant Ji, “O’ Beloved of Guru Nanak, Gurumukh Sant Ji! Please pray to the Lord for our emancipation too. We promise to give up our way of sinful living.” Sant Ji came out of the place saying, “All shall have to get Baptised. Redemption lies only in Nam-Devotion.” They followed him with remorseful pleadings out into bazaar, but Sant Ji could dodge away from them. Many ladies in Patiala city worshipped Sant Ji for his holy garb and high spirituality. However Sant Ji kept all at a distance with his aloofness of spirit and never allowed touching of his feet. They used to lie prostrate at a distance to receive his words of solace according to Gurumat teachings. In spite of his best efforts, some would still manage to fall at his feet in his state of self-engrossed meditation. Sant Ji came to curse his own feet and towards his end suffered acutely due to affliction of his feet. He would smilingly comment, “I never regarded my feet as my own.” Yet he remained wary and shunning those touching his feet and inflicted a curse on his own limbs. May Guru Bless all guided by Godly dispensation!

Nearing End

He died young and yet his life set an excellent role model of Gursikhi. He had willed that his last rites should not be performed within the premises of Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib lest some persons set up a memorial and start worship against Gurmat tenets. However a good number of people wanted to cremate his body within the holy premises. A Divine-Provision was made to fulfill his last desire in keeping with Gurmat! The manager of Dukh Niwaran Sahib, Sardar Nirmal Singh,

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refused permission, against popular demand. Shortly thereafter I happened to visit there and asked the Manager about his reason for turning down popular demand for cremation of Sant Ji within premises of holy Shrine. He explained that it was to obviate chances of constructing memorial and its worship against Gurumat tenets. I appreciated this view and praised him for thus upholding Vir Sant Arjan Singh's will. I prayed for Satguru's Blessings for his Gurumat stand, but knew that people were alienated due to this decision and angered.

Sardar Nirmal Singh soon lost his well-paid job. Thereafter he could not find a good post and high salary, but wherever he worked he maintained uprightness of high principles. Such people are rare and Divinely Blessed, as it is not easy to oppose popular view to maintain high standard of following Gurumat in real life without Grace of Satguru.

CHAPTER 14

SRI DOOLESHAR VIR HIRA HARBACHAN SINGH

S. Man Singh, Head clerk in No.36 Cavalry, was staying at Ambala Cantt. He was a devoted Gursikh and often used to pray with tearful eyes for spiritual orientation of his youngest son, Harbachan Singh. He would thank the Lord for all that was bestowed on him, as the worldly position, wealth and all the comforts. Harbachan Singh was his most beloved child, yet devoid of all spirituality while the rest of the family would pray daily both morning and evening. He would ridicule the family devotion and the Sikh Faith. He was sent to Khalsa College Amritsar with a view to expose him to religious environment, that would possibly evoke his interest in the Faith. However inspite of his being educated there, he remained more of an atheist. S. Man Singh pleaded his helplessness towards reforming the boy to God and sought Divine intervention through his prayers to make Harbachan Singh God-oriented person.

He would make such prayers tearfully and finally these were answered. One day our humble Kirtani Jatha came to Ambala Cantt., attracted by the love of yearnings of our dear ones, Babu Mal Singh and Bhai Piara Singh. We were singing the Divine melody in great moods, when this young man passed near by. As he heard the Divine Words of the music, he sat down right on the spot in the dust of the road as a shot down bird falls. The more he heard, the more was the piercing effect and his restlessness. He even lost his bodily consciousness. Meanwhile, the great Divine hunter, benevolent Vir, Babu Mal Singh, sensing the appropriate occasion, got him lifted in the same sitting posture and brought him to the assembly. This tearful, new aspirant of God-Love, was further subjected to the sally of Divine Kirtan. He just remained statue-like throughout. The one who used to make so much fun of the Faith, was now under such a spellbound state! At the end of Akhand Kirtan, full recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Akhand Pathh, started. It was like the continuous pouring of Blissful Rain day and night for 48 hours, that imbued the soul of aspirant for Baptism. The mystic reciters further heightened the yearnings of Bhai Harbachan Singh for God Love. At 4:30 A.M. once again the Kirtan started just as the Pathh recitation ended and yet he sat motionless with closed eyes.

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Knowing this to be an eligible soul and with Divine Prompting, the Baptising ceremony was planned. Bhai Harbachan Singh was given a full bath and dressed up in the Khalsa garb. He presented himself before the Chosen Five and begged to be Baptised, with folded hands. Feeling the Divine Presence, he was enchanted with anticipation of the new event. As he received the first drops of 'Amrit' to drink and that were sprinkled in his eyes, his entire being got flushed with Divine Light and what followed was akin to:

ਦਰਸਨ ਦੇਖਤ ਹੀ ਸੁਧਿ ਕੀ ਨ ਸੁਧਿ ਰਹੀ
ਬੁਧਿ ਕੀ ਨ ਬੁਧਿ ਰਹੀ ਮਤਿ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਮਤਿ ਹੈ ॥
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਅਉ ਧਯਾਨ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਧਯਾਨ ਰਹਯੋ
ਗਯਾਨ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਗਯਾਨ ਰਹਯੋ ਗਤਿ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਗਤਿ ਹੈ ॥
ਧੀਰਜ ਕੋ ਧੀਰਜ ਗਰਬ ਕੋ ਗਰਬ ਗਯੋ
ਰਤਿ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਰਤਿ ਰਹੀ ਪਤਿ ਰਤਿ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ॥
ਅਦੁਭੁਤ ਪਰਮਦੁਭੁਤ ਬਿਸਮੈ ਬਿਸਮ
ਅਸਚਰਜੈ ਅਸਚਰਜ ਅਤਿ ਅਤਿ ਹੈ ॥੧॥੯॥

ਕਬਿਤ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ

*At the very sight all consciousness was lost,
There was neither awareness nor comprehension,
Neither any memory nor contemplation,
Without any sense of knowledge, rendered motionless,
It was beyond endurance and all self-ego was gone,
Lost in Divine Love, devoid of separate existence,
This is wonder of the wonder beyond measure.*

Kabit Bhai Gurdas Ji

It was three days and three nights that Bhai Harbachan Singh had remained in deep meditation. Just as the Kirtan was non-stop, so also was the meditation. The place was full with the holy congregation and the newly Baptised Khalsa was seated at the rear, behind everybody, imbued in Nam. Whereas his family had earlier been worried about his lack of religious interest, they were now worried for restoring him to a normal state of ordinary life. Only his deeply religious father, a Gursikh, S. Man Singh Ji remained unperturbed. He was infact in a thankful mood to see his son in advanced state of spiritualism. The Kirtan was in full swing, when suddenly from his sitting posture, the

young lovebird flew over the heads of the assembly straight to lie prostrate in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. His head touched ground, while his body swayed in the air like a winged fish jumping to fly in mid-air. This was a rare and wonderous scene, which held surprise for all. The Kirtan was at the peak and this scene also held on. Once again on Divine Prompting, the Kirtanias started to sing the Lavan, the hymns for a Sikh marriage. This was a marriage between a realized soul with the Divine Lord. The captivating Kirtan on that occasion was never heard before or since. All the spiritual beings experienced strange blissfulness. Just as the Divine couple made love, the holy congregation and the Kirtanias were also lost in Rapture. Soon after Kirtan of Lavan, the song of Divine worship, Aarti was sung. With this a sense of deep Bliss prevailed. As the words, "*Gopal Tera Aarta*" (O, Lord, Thy servant seeks Thy Shelter), the belly swaying in mid air came down to earth and the newly wed remained motionless in prostrate meditation.

All got stunned with premonition. To dispel all fears and anxiety, the chosen Five brought Bhai Harbachan Singh to his consciousness. With loving care, he was taken to the adjoining room for rest. General access was restricted and the family got reassured of his well-being. Resting for the night, he was still enjoying his simran. He took his morning bath along with others, meditated and recited daily prayers. Asa-Di-Var Kirtan started, with Bhai Harbachan Singh in attendance. Moved by the Kirtan, he laid prostrate while doing loud Simran. Along with the Kirtan, he kept his Simran in tune. In this Divine Rapture, all sense of time was lost. On distribution of Karah Prasad, Vir Harbachan Singh's hunger for Divine Love was satiated with the Prasad. Meanwhile the touring party, '*The divine friends who had arrived at home*' took leave to continue their sojourn. All departed, leaving behind the Love Lorn, Bhai Harbachan Singh all alone. Following this, whenever there was an occasion for a Samagam, this Divinely prompted, Bhai Harbachan Singh, would also come. His spirituality remained at the same peak. He never showed off his high state and remained a humble householder and a true renouncer.

Bhai Harbachan Singh was highly compassionate and large hearted. Very few equal him as unknown benefactor. He would think nothing of sacrificing his all for a good cause. Whenever it was thought of

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selecting him among the Chosen Five during baptising ceremonies, he would remain humble in offering his services. He was never stubborn and also abided by the general decisions. He never yearned for any position. He was Divinely blessed and enjoyed Divine favour. This continued for many years.

The march of times took him to foreign countries as member of the army before I was jailed in 1915. This was during the World War. It was a Divine Coincidence, that Babu Mal Singh Ji also accompanied him. While I enjoyed meditation during my life imprisonment in the jails, these two remained imbued in Nam even in the war torn foreign lands. The great souls like Bhai Harbachan Singh, Babu Mal Singh and young divine, Sant Maghar Singh Ji got involved in the war effort. Probably that sustained the bureaucratic government of the British or else it would have fallen due to the injustice meted out to many jailed spiritualists. There is no denying that sufferings of the holy ones, subjected to slavery of foreign rule and vicissitudes of the War, were much more than the sufferings of those of us, dedicated to freedom struggle, in the dark dungeons of Indian jails. I heard about the hardships under gone by Bhai Harbachan Singh, that can be better described by the personal witness, Babu Mal Singh Ji. I can only say, that when I met him on his return after the War, his face shone with even greater glory than I had known before. Though the military doctors and the well known civil medical practitioners had confirmed his suffering from a terminal disease, that could prove fatal any moment, yet this God-oriented, splendid personality remained in high spirits throughout. He was never seen wearing a worried look, in anger or unduly concerned. A picture of tolerance and peace, he was always in meditation, touching new heights in spiritual glory.

The incidents of his spiritual experiences are best known to his long-time associate, Babu Mal Singh Ji. How much to write about his divine virtuous character! One can go on and on. He was a true picture of an ideal Gursikh. Whenever I read the mention of accomplished Gursikhs in the Vars and Kabit Sawiyas of Bhai Gurdas Ji, I picture my dear, Bhai Harbachan Singh Ji, whose life bears close resemblance to the description. Even though he has bodily departed from this transitory world, yet I have never felt that he has left us. He was detached from Worldliness, like the lotus flower in water. Untouched by the worldly

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji

attachments or by the bodily sufferings, he left in a whiff for his heavenly abode. However his spiritual presence is always felt by the ones united with him in spiritual ties, as though he never departed.

CHAPTER 15

A UNIQUE LIFE STORY OF HIGHLY SPIRITUALISED LAD

BHAI GURBAKHSI SINGH JI 'KAMAL PUR'

He was a rare example of intense spiritual state at a very young age. It was a matter of destiny that Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was so deeply engrossed in spirituality as a student of tenth grade in Malwa Khalsa School, Ludhiana. The pangs of Divine Love were unbearable for him. He had strong belief that the assembly of those well versed in matters of Divine gather together somewhere near Ludhiana. It so happened, that Akhand Pathh Samagam had just commenced at village Narangwal in the house of Bhai Kishan Singh (Jung ke). The five persons selected for recitation of Pathh were accomplished GurSikhs, abiding by the life of meditational devotion and had acquired the status of Divine Recognition. Meanwhile, Giani Nahar Singh of the Khalsa High School arrived with a batch of school students, who were keen to get Baptised. This included Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh 'Kamal Pura'. Those, who desired to be baptised, took full bath and came to listen to the Akhand Pathh.

The tradition was that the hopefuls for Baptism were to listen to the entire recitation of Akhand Pathh for the 48 hours. All such students joined in the prayer for starting the recitation. Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh also stood in the prayer with great feelings of joy and anticipation. After the prayer, all the listeners took up their seats. Of all these, only Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh listened to the entire recitation from the beginning to the end. He went without any food or drink except the holy Karah Prasad as the divine gift. He never had any urge to leave and was devoted to listening Gurbani in thought, word and deed, fully engrossed. As he went on listening, the splendour of his face shined more and more gracefully. It appeared that he had inherited the devotional love from his God-oriented father from early childhood. This was his first such experience. It was as if he was getting drunk with listening to Gurbani's piercing words. His yearning to Love kept mounting. The readers of the Pathh also directed sallies of Gurbani to further accentuate this love of devotion and Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh's yearning kept mounting. This was the first example, noticed on close

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji
scrutiny, as if all his body hairs were responding to the stimuli, like it is
said in Gurbani,

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰੋਮਿ ਰੋਮਿ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ [੯੪੧]

Every pore of God-oriented recites the divine Naam.

Ramkali M:1 Sidh Gosht [941]

Either the efficacious recitation of Pathh or some previous experience of Gurmat Naam was leading to the state of uncontrollable ecstasy. The day and night continuous pouring of this Elixir through listening to Gurbani was causing intoxicating exhilaration. His face glowed in splendour and mixed with his youthful and natural handsomeness, such a glory was unbearable for a beholder. The word came from the Five chosen ones for the baptising ceremony after full bath once again. These Five were the same, who had been reciting the Pathh. Every candidate for Baptism started presenting himself before the chosen five. Only four of the hopefuls were selected to receive Baptism.

Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was found not to be lacking in any respect and was selected after full scrutiny. The next to be considered was Bhai Lal Singh, secretary Sikh Youth Society, Ludhiana. He could not listen to the entire recitation, yet he did listen most of it. There was not much problem in his selection. It pleased him immensely to have been selected. The third was Bhai Nahar Singh (now Giani Nahar Singh). Though his spiritual concentration was found wanting, yet he had an inspirational role for many others and this weighed with the five chosen ones. The fourth student was Bhai Khem Singh from village Rakba (he is no more).

As Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh received his first sip of Amrit, he lost all his bodily awareness and with the first sprinkling of Amrit in his eyes his eyes rolled up. His inner spiritual sense was awakened, though he lost all physical awareness. He was enjoying this inner bliss. His face shined with glory and his entire being was filled with Naam. The font of divine Elixir from within at the navel started functioning with full force. He joined his hands subconsciously, as though he was praying for the strength to bear this great unbearable spiritual experience. Thus he was able to enjoy his inner supreme bliss. Even the chosen five were amazed. This was the first such case, where quick spiritual

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change was observed during the baptising ceremony itself. What to talk of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh's inner experience even we the beholders felt the touch of divine awareness, of the spiritual world. All the bodily pain, hunger and sorrows were forgotten. There was no urge to eat or drink and this inner bliss was all that one wished to perpetuate.

We lost sense of time and at the end of baptising ceremony, I left for the Ravine accompanied by two other chosen ones. We found that the two newly baptised, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and Bhai Lal Singh were following us. It was as if in a moment we all reached our destination, the lovely spot in the middle of two villages Narangwal and Gujjarwal. By the side of the lake with clear water Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh sat in meditation. The rest of us watched him, from our distant sitting or lying position, in our state of rapture. This way our minds also took to deep meditation. Bhai Lal Singh was rolling in divine restlessness. We had come off to this forlorn place without the food being served. We felt we had been away for a few hours and that people after waiting were now about to head towards us carrying our food. All of us had the common urge to leave that place and go to some unknown place, where we might not be found.

God knows what propelled us and where. We found ourselves within the bounds of village Phalewal at a distance of about 5 km, not knowing how and when we crossed Gujjarwal. Here we decided to head for the cottage of Bhai Sarwan Singh, outside Phalewal. This was another lonely place. Outside the cottage and near the well sat Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and started the Kirtan with Piercing love cry. It reached far off in that wilderness as we all joined in this singing. Bhai Sarwan Singh brought out the musical instruments. We got lost in a long Kirtan session of bewitching music. When we opened our eyes we found many people of the village had joined us, including our dear Baba Ram Singh Ji and his wife Mata Prem Kaur with moist eyes. Telepathically it was decided to start another Akhand Pathh in the cottage. Everything was ready. In the same mood of intoxicated singing, we assembled in the cottage. Again Kirtan started in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib with yet more newly arrived Kirtaniyas. The Kirtan lasted till 1:00 am. All this was happening under the loving inspiration of Baba Ram Singh. We started the morning prayers, Nitnem Pathh and then Asa-Di-Var Kirtan at 4:00 am.

This was the first Kirtan where invisible noble souls joined in. It became so attractive and intoxicating, that whosoever came became lost in divine love and had no will to leave. Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was an immensely amazing sight.

At the end of Sri Asa-Di-Var Kirtan, Sri Akhand Pathh started at 11:30 am. Once again the Akhand Pathhis, the reciters, were incarnations of divine love, one better than the other. For hours at a stretch, the reciters would go on with a clear loud voice, piercing the hearts of the listeners, who were just spellbound. Every line of Pathh was making immense impact on the souls. The first Pathhi also sat near the next reciting one and got lost in meditation. Suddenly it occurred to me, that now Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh should start reciting. Neither, I knew nor had he actually been engaged in such pathh earlier. Instantly making Akhand Pathhi of a 16-year-old youth was the miracle of the Satguru. This heart to heart message prompted Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and he went and stood behind the two Pathhis. He picked up the line of the fast flow behind the two pathhis of Pathh recitation and recited in such a loud voice that the two pathhis lovingly gave way. Then the love-imbued Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, filled emotionally with a clear and loud tone started the Pathh. All were surprised beyond measure and got submerged in the pouring Gurbani Elixir. They all started swaying with the divine intoxication. The glory of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh's face was indescribable. It became an amazing sight. The men and women sitting far away got up and with folded hands started enjoying the bliss of Gurbani. This recitation continued for five hours. Everybody remained transfixed in whatever position they were. As the word spread in adjoining villages, people started pouring and the lonely spot became a place of rejoicing for a multitude of people. The entire Akhand Pathh was conducted in the same vein.

After the distribution of Karah Prasad, the five of us soon left for yet another unknown destination. Once again the prepared food and those serving it waited for us in vain. We were walking as though spellbound. This was Baisakh (April), 1910 and fairly hot. We were all bare footed. We had tied blankets on our heads as turban, Kirpans slung across our bodies, the circular chakkar around our necks, covered with a sheet and wearing kachheras. Nobody knew where we were headed. Wherever Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh stopped, singing soulful

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Gurbani, all would stop. Seeing the high spiritual state of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh all were happy, yet Bhai Lal Singh was woe begone and rolled over the hot sands. He was sorry that he could not attain the same intense state as Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh on Baptism. We used to drag the prostrating Bhai Lal Singh to continue our journey, that had no charted course or destination.

We found ourselves at the Kila Raipur railway station. The stationmaster was a keen Sikh devotee. He put chairs for us at the platform. Trains going in opposite directions were going to cross at this station. When it was nearing time, he came to ask me about the ticket and our new destination. We expressed our ignorance. He was perplexed and wanted to know what he was supposed to do. We still could not decide, yet we knew we were heading to some destined place. Finally it was decided that the station Master should stand before the ticket almirah with closed eyes and recite Mool Mantra and then wherever his hand would go, he should pull five tickets for us. We had explained that we had no money to buy the tickets. He went away saying that all money belonged to the Guru. He returned with tickets for Ambala Cantt. Bhai Sarwan Singh immediately concluded that this draw is made by the souls of Babu Mal Singh and Bhai Piara Singh. It so happened, that one of us, Bhai Waryam Singh had some money to pay for the tickets.

The train for Ludhiana arrived at the platform. Just before departure, two Sikhs from Kila Raipur came and offered us the syrup drink in iron bowls. They made an earnest request to accept the drink. We had been without food or drink for a long time. We gratefully accepted. The drink further rejuvenated our spirits and our meditated recitation of Nam became louder. In this imbued state, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh started singing the hymn soulfully:

ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੁ ਲਗੋ ਹਰਿ ਤੀਰ ॥

ਗੋਂਡ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ [੮੬੧]

My mind is pierced with the arrow of divine love.

Rag Gond [861]

As he sang, he became more and more intoxicated and the flow of his tears was uncontrollable. The yearning of love moved all the

passengers and irrespective of their faith, all had tears in their eyes with emotion.

Restlessness of a Muslim Holy

When the train reached the next station, a Muslim holy cried out, “O Lord! This young lad has slaughtered me. God knows what life giving substance he has obtained. I can be saved only if I too get this precious commodity or else this life is worthless.” Some ignorant people asked us whether Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was crying due to loss of some dear one. The Muslim Fakir would say, ***“O poor fools! Look at the splendour of his face. These are the symptoms of great Renouncers of the world.”*** This situation continued till Ludhiana. Many passengers forgot to get down at the intermediate stations. We had to change the train at Ludhiana. Many passengers started pleading with us to let them accompany us. Unmindful of all such pleas, we boarded the Ambala train in our own intoxicated moods. The Kirtan continued in our new compartment all through the journey. Many were the souls moved and left behind. There was to be another change at Rajpura, but the train was delayed and we reached Ambala late at night. What was the source of guidance is source of mystery. At 11:00 pm we knocked at the door of Bhai Piara Singh, who is now Col. Piara Singh, ‘Jaipur wale’.

The Happenings at Ambala Cantt.

Bhai Piara Singh was ready with food for us, as if he had been expecting us. He called Babu Mal Singh Ji from his quarter No.18 to join us. Babuji wanted to know why we walked down from the Cantt. Rly station, whereas on just a word transport could be arranged and they would have been there to receive us. Bhai Piara Singh, who had some inkling clarified that they were not aware of their journey. Interrupting him, our companion Bhai Sarwan Singh ‘The Redeemed Living’ said, pointing towards Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, that we had brought the ‘Divine Gift’ and we had been guided by the Divine power all along. This triggered Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh’s limitless yearning of Divine Love and the Kirtan started. However on Bhai Piara Singh’s insistence, that we had already been without food for many days and nights, we agreed to have dinner. Soon we were all in meditation. The army personnel had to go for duty in the morning and we went to a nearby well and relaxed on the sandy bed. The sun came up and none

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of the army men came back. We felt the urge to start our return journey. We were about to start when Babu Mal Singh came along with a bucket and rope. He had lowered the bucket in the well and was holding the rope. This is still fresh in my memory. He had understood in his mind about our decision to return through his inner power. He sang aloud this hymn with great emotion,

ਮੇਰੀ ਖਲਹੁੰ ਮੌਜੜੇ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਹੰਢਾਂਦੇ ॥

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ, ਵਾਰ ੯, ਪਉੜੀ ੧੮

The shoes of my skin wear the Sikhs of my Guru.

Bhai Gurdas Ji, Var 9, Pauri 18

These words were like a rasp to our souls. His feeling of intense love melted our hearts as he sang with his upturned face. He sang the hymn with great feelings and thus we gave up our plans to return. We became slaves to Babu Ji. The congregation assembled for Akhand Pathh Samagam and we returned as the humble dust of their feet.

The Samagam commenced with the usual tradition. All the army personnel of cavalry, platoons and artillery poured in. This was a unique soulful Asa-Di-Var Kirtan at 4:00 am. The sound of Kirtan reached far off. There were no loud speakers those days and in any case this was not required. The Kirtan used to be natural, automatic and spontaneous, mainly for the enjoyment of the Kirtaniya himself/herself and not to please others or win recognition. There was no consideration to have a great assembly. The lovers of Kirtan were drawn like moths to a lamp on their own, through the divine communication. In this case the word had already spread about the samagam. The devoted Sikhs, accustomed to get up in the ambrosial hours at 2:00AM, came down after reciting their Nitnem bani and got tuned to the divine word. As they poured in, the Kirtan became more and more forceful. The passage of time was not noticed and it all appeared as extension of the ambrosial hours. Soon after the prayer at the end of Kirtan, Sri Akhand Pathh started. The details of this Pathh are described in Bhai Harbachan Singh's life events. Here it would suffice to say that soon after the Pathh, another Akhand Pathh was started. At the end of second Pathh, Amrit Sanchar, Baptising ceremony, started. While all others left after distribution of Karah Prasad, those associated with baptising, the chosen five and the

hopefuls remained. The Akhand Pathhis, who had been reciting the Pathh were the chosen five, including Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh. The miraculous events during the ceremony are part of the story of Bhai Harbachan Singh Ji.

Patiala Samagam

At the end of Samagam all others took to their worldly duties and those devoted to divine love continued in their own pursuit. The foursome of Bhai Sarwan Singh, Bhai Waryam Singh, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and Bhai Lal Singh felt an urge to visit Hazoor Sahib. It was a divine occurrence, that at the same time Bhai Piara Singh and Babu Mal Singh, comprehending this untold decision, came forward with the requisite cash. At that time, I received the telepathic message to proceed to Patiala with the entire Jatha for starting Sri Akhand Pathh there. Bhai Atma Singh from Moga (who always remained Nam-intoxicated and was known as Avdhoot (ascetic) Atma Singh) had come from Patiala with this mission and was present throughout the Ambala Samagam. Though all had felt the pull for Patiala, yet the resolute, Bhai Sarwan Singh remained steadfast in his resolve to visit Hazoor Sahib. Bhai Waryam Singh also sided with him along with Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and Bhai Lal Singh. I had felt strong urge for Patiala. While I started for Patiala and happily agreed for the visit to Hazoor Sahib by the other four to satisfy their urge. However I had felt that they would reach Patiala before the end of Akhand Pathh there. Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, though inclined to accompany me, went away with the rest.

I reached Patiala to join in the Akhand Pathh. Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji and Bibi Harbans Kaur were delighted. The Patiala Sangat, that had caused the Divine pull, assembled. The life giving, blissful Kirtan started. The foursome, that had proceeded to Hazoor Sahib, returned soon after reaching there. They just did not feel like prolonging their stay. God alone knows how this transpired. I saw them to my surprise just before the Kirtan after Akhand Pathh Bhog.

Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh met me most affectionately. He had not eaten after departing from Ambala. Such were the pangs of our love. His radiant glory was further enhanced, that had infatuated all the beholders. As soon as Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh joined in Kirtan, there

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was an environment of spiritual aroma and powerful emotional singing, that engrossed all the listeners. At the end of Kirtan, a message from Ludhiana was received.

All were wondering at Malwa Khalsa High School, Ludhiana about the sudden-disappearance of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh and Bhai Lal Singh. Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh's father, who was a great Sikh and employed in a Frontier Sikh Army unit at Banu as a prominent Granthi, had come to Ludhiana to ask the school management for immediate meeting with his son. It is not known how he came to know about his disappearance. A rumor had gained currency that after Phalewal Samagam, the disappearance was a Divine Act to some unknown place. Nobody had yet known our whereabouts. However some Singhs of our Jatha had the hunch that truth would be known at Patiala. Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh had no more inclination to return to his School, yet he was ready to abide by the congregational decision. After some deliberation, it was decided to seek guidance from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Accordingly the Divine Scriptural guidance was sought. It read, "***Prehlad got imbued in Divine Nam and infatuated other students.***" This led to the decision, that this young student has a duty to spiritualise many others at school through his own example. This decision immensely pleased the messengers from Ludhiana and they took this news to Ludhiana of the expected return soon.

EVENTS AT LUDHIANA

The next day not only the students and the staff of the Khalsa High School but also those of the adjoining schools had assembled in the school Gurdwara. The members of Management Committee of the Malwa Khalsa High School were filled with eager anticipation of our arrival from Patiala. We, along with Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh landed at Ludhiana Railway Station. We were informed of the gathering at the school Gurdwara, waiting for us. We all started marching towards school in great devotional mood. To our surprise, we found halfway that Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was missing. We were flabbergasted as to what would we present to the assembly. Meanwhile Avdhoot (Ascetic) Bhai Atama Singh Ji consoled us not to worry, that Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh would land back soon from nowhere. We knew that he enjoyed some special spiritual powers, so we requested him to envision where Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was. He envisioned him to be meditating by the

riverside near a bush and offered to go and fetch him. He soon disappeared and we stood there praying. As we opened our eyes, we found both Bhai Atma Singh and Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh coming. We met embracing each other as though we were meeting after long. Happily then we again resumed our journey.

We found the assembled Sangat in Gurdwara enjoying Gurbani Kirtan. As we reached we were also singing Kirtan, led by Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh. He was pouring out his heart in the Divine melody. With his dress of black turban, kachhera, wrapping a cloth around him and wearing the Khalsa weapons like chakar, Kirpan, etc., he looked simple and yet held a Royal personality as a 'Ruler' of the entire world. The radiance of his youthful face was amazing, with a touch of Divine intoxication. He prostrated before Sri Guru Granth Sahib and when he got up, he sang a hymn loudly in a piercing pitch. The entire assembly was thrilled. Our singing first along with Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was followed by repetition singing by the entire congregation. At the end of this hymn singing, many students stood up to request for Baptism. The Second-Master of the school, Bhai Harbhagat Singh Ji, announced that the following day there would be Akhand Pathh at his house and the Baptizing Ceremony would follow for all the aspirants.

The scheduled Akhand Pathh Samagam started, but the aspirants for receiving Baptism desired that their beloved Babu Mal Singh, Bhai Piara Singh and Sri Bhai Harbachan Singh 'Duleshar' be present. As the Asa-Di-Var Kirtan started, the call of Divine Love brought all these three persons from Ambala Cantt. Somehow Sant Hira Singh Ji 'Daudpur Wale' also came along as also Sri Bhai Joginder Singh from Patiala. Such are the amazing coincidences in work of the Divine. The titillating Kirtan ended and Sri Akhand Pathh recitation started. The tradition was followed and there was continuous listening by full gathering of the entire Pathh. The emotions were particularly high when it was the turn of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh to recite and all were just swaying. All the aspirants for Baptism were particularly present throughout. Once again there was Akhand Kirtan after the Pathh. When Kirtan ended and the Karah Prasad was distributed, only the Pathhis, reciters of Pathh, as the Chosen Five and the aspirants for Amrit remained there.

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The most beloved, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, sat in attendance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. All was ready for Baptising Ceremony. About 150 aspirants waited in the adjoining room and were called in one by one to establish their suitability. Finally only 38 were selected, while it was felt that the rest need to be enamoured further more with Divine Love to qualify for being Baptised. Out of this selected group a few names that I remember are mentioned below:

1. Sri Bhai Iqbal Singh of Village Boparai (Ludhiana),
2. Sri Bhai Pradhan Singh of Village Jandi (Ludhiana),
3. Sri Bhai Kehar Singh,
4. Sri Bhai Sunder Singh Ghuman (Ludhiana),
5. Sri Bhai Santa Singh, a Budding Vir 'Musapuria' (district Jalandhar)
6. Sri Bhai Nirbhai Singh Ji of Village Lalton and others.

In turn they lit many more souls with Nam-enlightenment.

The chain reaction of this dedicated Love resulted in many more such groups of the Baptised Khalsa. All were keen Kirtanias and followed the code of inner and outer discipline strictly, in their daily living. They observed the meditational Ambrosial hours by rising at 2:00 A.M., full bath and recitation of Nit Nem Banis. Asa-Di-Var Kirtan was also a daily routine. Rest of the time was devoted to studies. Their continuous breath-by-breath Simran and strict discipline got the school authorities worried about the studies, yet all such students passed with high credits. In spite of their good showing in studies, some kind of criticism was always there. Wearing of the Kirpan was normally not allowed in schools, but nobody dared to object in their case. All the members of the management felt that Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh had converted the school from an institution of studies to the institution for spirituality, affecting all the students.

Bhai Puran Singh Ji 'Janetpur' started a separate kitchen for Sarbloh Bibek, for those eating food in iron utensils, prepared by Baptised Sikhs. He was so much devoted to this service, that he hardly had time to attend school. He had a very strong Faith. He was rarely seen sleeping and mostly remained in meditation. He always sat across Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh to listen attentively to the Kirtan. He was an accomplished Akhand Pathhi, who would go on reciting Pathh for

hours in loud and clear voice at a fast speed and yet each word could be understood by the listeners. During recitation, his face would glow. Thus there were two Akhand Pathhis and they hardly needed a third one for complete recitation of Akhand Pathh. There were series of Akhand Pathhs. Many such Akhand Pathhis had appeared. In the school boarding house these Divinely intoxicated ones remained ever imbued in Nam.

There was a Youth Organization, Bhujhangi Sabha, those days. All the Sikh Students were its members. They used to celebrate the two Gurburabs of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib and Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji every year with great fan-fare. There was no other Sikh Organization in Ludhiana, which could manage such celebrations. This was achieved with dedication of these young Baptised Sikhs, with Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh as their role model and leader.

Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh completed his matriculation from the school and took up service at Patiala. There he enjoyed the company of Bhai Joginder Singh Ji, Bhai Atma Singh Ji and Bhai Jaswant Singh Ji. In 1914-15 the entire Jatha got entangled in the Mutiny Cases. I was sent for 16 years imprisonment to far off places. During this period in pursuit of the household duties and in accordance with Divine Will, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh went to Arabian countries to earn his living. By the time I returned after my jail term, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh also returned from overseas. With his stay abroad and undesirable company, there was a slide down in his spiritual state from the apex, where he had reached.

However he still had the old influence of holy congregations in him and he once again regained his original state after presenting himself before the Chosen Five and the corrective measures. His wife, Bibi Kartar Kaur, also went through this ordeal. She was a straightforward spiritual being. She let out loud cries in the presence of the Chosen Five and had to be pacified by Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh. After this there were many Samagams held at Kamal Pura. As in Gurbani, *'The Divinely devoted are the redeemers of their entire family'*, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh got his whole family Baptised. All the villagers held him in great esteem and with his initiative the village got a Khalsa High School. He served as the Divinity teacher. He was seen at all the Jatha

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Samagams whether in Delhi, Abetabad, Kashmir, etc. He was verily a pillar of the Faith.

He was still young, when his earthly sojourn neared its end. He used to indicate to me that not many days were left for him, though he was seemingly whole and hearty. But when the final death call comes, nothing is of any avail. I was enjoying my meditational mood at my house in Narangwal, when his son, Kaka Harcharan Singh, came with a worried look. He informed, that Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh was very restless and that there was request for me to pray for his relief. The boy left immediately after this message. I prayed to the Satguru for his peace and that was about the time that he breathed his last, with these blessings for Eternal Peace! The next message of his death reached Narangwal in quick succession. Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh had desired, that his last rites be performed only in my presence. I rushed, to Kamal Pura. The entire family was reciting Nam, sitting around the bier. Many people had gathered from far and near. The entire school students and staff were ready with school band. The environment was very peaceful. The sense of grief prevailing then defies description. Thus departed my dear Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, leaving behind the mourning multitudes. Among the prominent, Late Divine Imbued Singhs of the Jatha, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh stands out as the foremost personality. I always treasure his memory deep in my heart.

CHAPTER 16

A GREAT SAINT SRIMAN BHAJ HARBANS SINGH JI 'MUNISHAR'

The title of 'Munishar', The Great Ascetic, was bestowed by members of Akhand Kirtani Jatha on Bhai Harbans Singh Ji. He was highly economical with words and would mostly remain self-engrossed in thoughts-divine. Thus he was a complete practitioner of 'golden silence' in accordance with Gurmat. Being head-and-shoulders high above general 'Munnis' self-contained holies, he came to be known as 'Munishar', greatest of them all! He kept his composure with rare distinction about his high spirituality, without making any show of it or sense of bloating over it. His breath-by-breath Divine-Memory, 'Simran', was a ceaseless automatic process. He was blest with Nam-Glory and his face shone in splendor-Divine. Rarest of the rare was his case of delving in 'Gurmat' at such an early age. He was personification of selfless service to others in need. He was untiring as practitioner in study of Gurbani and cover-to-cover recitation of 'Sri Gruru Granth Sahib'. Whenever a Singh in hard financial situation needed help in reciting 'Akhand Pathh', he would volunteer himself. He never accepted any offering for such service, not even the meals in spite of all the requests. He was observing the self-discipline of eating in iron utensils, 'Sarab-Loh', and take self-prepared meals only once in a day. He rendered this kind of service during 'Akhand-Pathhs' very frequently. Once he got wind of the news, he would be the first to reach and start off 'Pathh' recitation after making prayers all by himself. He would keep reciting for seven hours at a stretch, before others could join in to take turn of recitations.

There is a village, 'Mehma Singh Wala', at a distance of one mile from Narangwal. Bhai Harbans Singh belonged to this village. He would visit me every morning and evening. He was always keen to join me during outside samagams. Though young in years, yet his well-matured personality earned him respect of one and all in Jatha. He was a great devout and got Baptised at very early age. His father, Bhai Dharam Singh had proceeded to North America, where his services to the community were highly acknowledged. The family had good landed property. The land was cultivated by Bhai Harbans Singh's

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elder brother. Bhai Harbans Singh joined the army at the age of sixteen. There he came to enjoy the holy company of a 'Gurmukh Head Granthi' Bhai Kahan Singh ji of No. 15 Sikh Platoon. His marriage was proposed at an early age, yet his spirit of renunciation never let him indulge in family life. It would not be an over statement to say that, he remained chaste all his life. His thoughts were always focused on 'Nam' and 'Gurubani'. He had the spiritual power to know inner and unexpressed thoughts of others. He was a great companion to me. It was my repeated experience that at the very occurrence of a certain thought to me, he would start implementing it in action. Though blest with this unique power, he would never show off but remain self-contained. He was a very rare specimen of most unfatigable selfless service, endowed with all Gurmat virtues and ever blissful.

My first meeting with Bhai Harbans Singh Ji was in 1915, when I was under arrest in Mutiny case and being transferred from 'Lohat Vadi' to Ludhiana. Lohat-Vadi falls in Nabha State at about 20 Kms from Narangwal. I was held in custody there for about one and a half months. When I was informed of being challaned to Ludhiana, I sent a telepathic message to my close spiritual friend in village Gujerwal. I requested him to join me at Kila Raipur railway station during my journey from Ahmed Garh to Ludhiana. Complying with my request Vir Sri Surjan Singh Ji joined me in the same rail-compartment of the train. My escorts, a Police Sergeant and one Sepoy, were very considerate in allowing Bhai Surjan Singh to sit next to me. He had a young companion, whose growth of beard was just appearing. His face was radiant with spiritual glory that was unbearable to behold. It was sign of his high spirituality that his automatic 'Simran' of Nam with every breath was audible. He held all my attention beginning with the very first look at him. His sight induced Nectarian taste of Nam and made me forget all my worldly concerns. So engrossed I became with this young Living-Emancipated Bhai Harbans Singh that I ignored the purpose of my calling Bhai Surjan Singh in the first place. I enquired about his identity. Bhai Surjan Singh explained that Bhai Harbans Singh of 'Mehma Singh Wala' village had been released from military services and was new entrant into Jatha. He further told about his desire to offer himself for the highest sacrifice in pursuit of Jatha's ideals. This was the brief glancing of beaming and spiritually

brimming 'Vir' Harbans Singh. In all humility I conveyed my message to all members of Kirtani Jatha through Bhai Surjan Singh to remain non-conspicuous and keep out of trouble in the turbulent political times. This request was also made applicable to Bhai Harbans Singh Ji at that time.

Next I met Bhai Harbans Singh on my release after sixteen years of jail period. Full beard now adorned his face. Thereafter he became my constant companion. During Akhand Kirtan Samagams his single-minded devotion led his soul to high spiritual flight and highest Bliss. He was an excellent Kirtaniya and would sing in soaring spirits. He would observe silence for long hours after Kirtan. He spent his entire life in environment of 'Gurmat', blest with limitless Divine-Grace of Guru. Ever since I started coming to 'Kumar Hatti' hills for Nam-meditation, he used to be with me as 'True Munishar'. He was full of love for service. He would lose himself totally in engrossment of Divine-Meditation at top of the hills, without any body awareness. There is a clean piece of rock in those hills where he often sat in meditation. This has come to be known as 'Munishar's Stone'. He was beloved of every member of the Jatha, cherished by one and all. He would not allow any lethargic drowsiness in himself during meditation, standing on one leg nightlong. He was a man in hurry for merger into Divine and a 'Devoted-Lover'. This kind of single-minded Divine-Love was an act of Grace of the Lord at an early age. He had been a great devout in his earlier lives and in this life too; he was totally devoid of worldliness. Evil in thought, word or deeds was unknown to him. He was a man of transparent simplicity, honesty of purpose and princely bearing as Prince-Divine!

His earlier associate, Bhai Kahn Singh Granthi, happened to comment once that Bhai Harbans Singh must leave behind his posterity and proposed marriage for him. The suggestion found his acceptance, but he wanted a like-minded religious devout as a match. After coming in contact with me, this thought was abandoned by him. He always said that he was spiritually wedded to Lord Divine and there is no scope for another relationship. Blessed was this Provision-Divine, because he did not have to live for long. His fast approaching end could never be guessed by anyone. He suffered great bodily afflictions before death, yet he bore those with dignity and without murmur.

Many people approached me to say, “Why is such a pious being subjected to such serious terminal afflictions? There must be held a common prayer for him.” However I would picture the historical end-event enacted in the life of a great devout, Bhai Bhagtoo Ji, beloved Gursikh of Fifth King-True, Guru Arjan Dev Ji. This great soul, embodiment of Gurmat, too underwent acute suffering due to dysentery. Whenever his well-wishers expressed concern and surprise about his suffering. Bhai Bhagtoo Ji would say, “I am going to end all my sufferings here in this life and not take even an iota to be carried over.” If some people persisted, “you are a close devotee of the Guru Sahib. If you pray before him for complete riddance of affliction, surely His Glance of Grace can end the sufferings.” Bhai Bhagtoo would reply, “O’ blessed ones: It behooves not to make such a petty demand on Guru Sahib. A Gursikh is supposed to put up with all physical pain and hardships. It is a great weakness to make a show of these to Guru through prayer.” Similar was the state that Bhai Harbans Singh Ji ‘Munishar’ went through, departing finally for Abode-Divine. The Gurubani quote as ordained by Sri Granth Sahib following his demise is as follows and clearly refers to his highest achievement of objective in human life:

ਚਲਿਆ ਪਤਿ ਸਿਉ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਵਾਰਿ ਵਾਜਾ ਵਾਇਸੀ ॥
 ਮਾਣਸੁ ਕਿਆ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਕ ਸੁਣਾਇਸੀ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਭਿ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰਸੀ ॥

ਸੁਹਿ ਮਹਿ ॥ 1 [੭੩੦]

***Departs the devotee in glory after successful life with Divine-Honour.
 What to talk of humans, his fame shall be heard in all corners of the
 universe.***

***Says Nanak, not only the devotee is blissful but all his tribe shall be
 redeemed.***

Suhi M:1 [730]

The events that came to pass during ‘Akhand Pathh Samagam’ by the Jatha to observe his passing away were unique and surpassing all glory. It is not possible to forget such close associate in spiritual life. When I envision him and similar Gurumkh Virs awaiting me in the hereafter, ready to guide me there, I feel greatly blest. Left behind among worldly relations of Bhai Harbans Singh Ji was his Gurmukh aunt,

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji

Sister Gurdial Kaur Ji, as the lone worldly reminder of 'Vir Munishar Bhai Harbans Singh Ji'. She too has passed away obliterating all visible memory of him, yet he shall ever be remembered in the spheres of Jatha. The blessed souls shall meet him in the hereafter in 'Gur-Puri', Abode-Divine. Thus there is nothing to despair in view of Grace of Guru and His Bounty. It is a service to write this obituary in respect of this 'Beloved-Friend' with promptings of the Guru. May Guru fulfill the objective behind this labour of love and may the coming generations of evolved souls derive benefit from this exemplary life!

CHAPTER 17

GURUMUKH, CHILD-LIKE VIR PRITAM SINGH JI 'EIANA'

ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਹੋਂਦੇ ਤਾਣਿ ਜੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਤਾਣਾ ॥
ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਹੋਂਦੇ ਮਾਣਿ ਜੁ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਮਾਣਾ ॥
ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਛੋਡਿ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਹੋਇ ਇਆਣਾ ॥
ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਖਸਮੈ ਦਾ ਭਾਵੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ॥
ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਲੁਭਾਣਾ ॥
ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਚਲਣ ਜਾਣਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਮਿਹਮਾਣਾ ॥
ਦੀਨ ਦੁਨੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਰਵਾਣਾ ॥੩॥ (੧੨)

I am sacrifice unto him, who makes not a show of his powers.

I am sacrifice unto him, who lives humbly even when bestowed with honour.

I am sacrifice unto him, who acts child-like in spite of high wisdom.

I am sacrifice unto him, who cheerfully accepts Divine-Will.

I am sacrifice unto him, who yearns to tread path of the Guru-Oriented.

I am sacrifice unto him, who is aware of life-sojourn as temporary in this world.

Such a being is acknowledged in Faith-Godliness, here in this world and hereafter.3. (12)

The above Pauri of Bhai Gurdas Ji very aptly describes the way of life in case of Bhai Pritam Singh Ji 'Eiana'. Though he was only 20-22 years old, yet his bodily development and strength was reminder of olden brave and strong Singhs. However he never showed off his heftiness and was ever submissive. He was also a spiritual giant, but remained inconspicuous. He had earned a place of honor for himself at an early age and was being acknowledged by big Sikh chiefs, army officials and high state authorities. Yet all the recognition did not go to his head and he remained his normal humble self. He was never given to worldly clever manipulations. He was full of Gurmat, Divine, and Virtues like a store-house of wisdom and yet behaved child-like all the time. His talk reflected innocence and simplicity of a child, full of love

and sweetness. Here was a case of wisdom of high order cloaked in child-like simple words. Such was his wont from the very beginning. His title of 'Eiana' was colloquially pronounced 'Niana' commonly. He was therefore popularly known as 'Niana Ji' because of his child-like language, full of loving sweetness. The remaining lines of the above quote shall find application in his life in the following narration.

Before getting Baptised, he was named 'Bhai Surjan Singh Ji' that got changed to 'Pritam Singh'. However his old army associates kept calling him 'Bhai Surjan Singh Niana'. Badungar Nagar is located at a distance of one and a half miles from Patiala. Well-known S. Joginder Singh Ji resided there. Adjoining his residence was located a Vet-hospital for the cavalry horses of Patiala cantonment. Compound walls of the two buildings were close to each other. 'Eiana Ji' was employed as dispenser in the hospital. In addition he looked after gardening in the compound and performed duties of 'Granthi' of the attached Gurudwara.

He had spiritual inclinations as he grew up in early life. There were frequent Kirtan Smagams at S. Joginder Singh's place. He would come quietly and enjoy the blissful environment of SatSang on all such occasions. Soon after departure of visitors he would find time to enjoy company of Gurmukh Bhai Joginder Singh Ji. Listening to his religious discourses, he would try to arrive at the 'Essence of Gurmat'. Their relationship grew into mutual love. 'Niana Ji' was thus Baptised into a practicing Singh of the Jatha with loving coaxing from Bhai Joginder Singh Ji. There upon he would remain engrossed in Nam-Meditation all day and night. Serving with hands, his mind would be devoted to Divine-Memory. He would rise early at 2:00 A.M., take bath and devote to daily recitation of prayers up to 4:00 A.M. Thereafter he would read 'Divine Commandment for the Day' from Sri Guru Granth Sahib and then start singing Kirtan all by himself. This used to be his routine. He was devoted to listening and performing Kirtan, unconcerned about any audience. He would often be singing alone soulfully in sweet tunes. He was an expert in playing harmonium and tabla. The remarkable thing about his Kirtan singing was that he would confine himself to pure text of Gurubani without any use of outside words. He would even discourage other Kirtanias from mixing outside words while singing Gurbani Kirtan. This act of Faith

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in purity of Kirtan had very salutary effect in army circles of Sikh-Sangats and his respect got enhanced. They gathered around him in a sizeable Jatha of army Kirtanias. This Jatha was specially sought in all Samagams in the army units. Many army officers got initiated into singing Kirtan, thus expanding band of 'Nirban Kirtanias' of 'Pure-Gurbani'

Bhai Eiana Ji's devotion to duty was also unique. In the light of Gurmat he did his honest labor. He was liberal at heart and carefree by nature, independent and keeping to himself. Humble at heart, he personified dignity of Gurmat. The care-free life that he enjoyed could easily invoke envy of a King. His wife also matched him in simple transparency of Gurmukh way of honest living. She too abided by the code for Baptised in Faith and remained obedient to her husband. The couple was contented with their simple living, blessed with patience and contentment of Gurmat teachings. Never would an unsavory word escape from their lips, instead they were submissive and sweet in their dealings. They would ensure that whatever was said was in conformity with Gurmat. They enjoyed equipoise in both pleasure and pain, ever abiding by Divine-Will in gratitude to the Lord. As Guru-Oriented Gurumukh beings, they would shun all evil company. Bhai Pritam Singh was great lover of treading Gurmat Path-Divine only. No greed could entice him to deviate from this Path. He was not given to worldly pleasures and understood worldliness to be unreal. He treated life as a temporary sojourn. He would often say, "One is like a guest for brief stay at the inn-like world and must soon depart for the here after."

His face induced a sense of peace in the beholders. He would attend all big Samagams of the Jatha after taking leave from his duty. He was an accomplished 'Akhand Pathhi', reciter of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Kirtaniya. His voice was loud and clear that could easily be heard by all and understood. He would ensure his presence at the annual Samagam of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Gurburb. All those Kirtan-lovers, who relished his Kirtan remained spell bound. His singing of Asa-Di-Var Pauris was so soulful, that the essence of Gurubani would sink in every heart. If ever he missed Gurupurb Samagams, many of his fans would miss him too saying, "Why has not the Pauni-Singer Singh come?" In the life-time of Gurumukh Bhai Joginder Singh Ji,

‘Bhai Eiana Ji’ accompanied him to all the Samagams. After his death ‘Bhai Eiana Ji’ remained grief stricken, and mediating at Patiala. He would often repeat Gurubani quote:

ਜਿਸੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਮਰਿ ਚਲੀਐ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਜੀਵਣਾ ॥

Proceed ahead of the Beloved in death.

It is disgraceful to out-live the Beloved.

SRI RAG-KI-VAR M:2 [83]

His tears flowed uncontrollably saying this quote. Such was true love that existed between Bhai Joginder Singh Ji and Bhai Pritam Singh Ji ‘Eiana’

My visits to Patiala were also rare after Vir Joginder Singh Ji’s death. However whenever I chanced to visit Patiala, I made sure to look-up ‘Eiana Ji’ or send for him. I would wish to avoid visiting Badungar, because the place reminded me of Vir Joginder Singh Ji and old memories would make me restless. Thus such visits were very rare. I tried very humbly to coax ‘Vir Eiana Ji’ to come out of this grief and join in Kirtan Samagams whenever invited. He was of very congenial nature and accepted my heartfelt request. He started visiting on invitation Samagams in Patiala cantonment and nearby places. His rare single-minded devotion made a deep impression on such occasions. Whenever he received my telepathic message, he would rush to Narangwal and engage in long session of spiritual discourses before returning. He was highly mindful of his Government Service duty.

He was still young when he received Divine-Call. Before the end, he would often repeat, “*Think of departing as the world is only a visiting place.*” He suffered from typhoid fever to cloak his death. Many well-meaning doctors and physicians insisted to treat him, but he would not listen envisaging Divine-Will. With rising temperature, his Nam-Recitation became louder. The beholders of this scene were flabbergasted. It is thus that he passed away in cheerful acceptance of Divine-Will. All his associated of Kirtan Samagams gathered at Narangwal when the news spread. All joined in this very special Akhand Pathh and Akhand Kirtan in homage to him and in turn received Divine-Blessing of Nam-Nectarian. All those pining in love

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of separated soul were dealt with heavy dose of 'Pineal Songs' of Gurubani. Since the demise of Bhai Pritam Singh Ji 'Eiana' his close friends, Vir Parsan Singh Ji from Patiala, has taken his place in Gurmat Samagams, rendering useful service. Master Joginder Singh Ji 'Badundi' was a close admirer and a friend. He must be treasuring in his heart more intimate details of Niana Ji's life. He might one day share those at suitable opportunity.

CHAPTER 18

BHAI PRABHAKAR SINGH JI

Vir Prabhakar Singh Ji got Baptised at seventeen and was saturated ever since, imbibed with Nam-Nectarian. He had only two more years to live in silent self-engrossment. He had devoted a great deal to spiritualism in earlier life, so Baptism worked as a ‘Catalyst’ to hasten his past spiritual revival and further progress. He was aptly named ‘Prabhakar Singh’ after Baptism. He belonged to village Lalton in district Ludhiana, but after his rebirth in House of Guru he remained wedded to the world of ‘Sat-Sang’, holy congregations. Such dedication to Gurmat is a rare of the rarest phenomenon in the vein of Gurbani quote in Anand Sahib, ***“With utmost Faith, abiding at Door of Guru, rare ones are ushered into the ‘Tenth Hidden Door’ where Lord is envisioned in All His Glory.”*** Such was the rare specimen of a Gurmukh, Guru-oriented and fully dedicated Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji, outshining many of the old Ascetics and ‘Munishars’ doing penance for ages. He was quietly relishing his highest spirituality. He remained aloof and untouched by worldliness and its attachments. He could remain in solitude of Nam-Devotion in environment of ‘Sadh-Sangat’. He would not engage in worldly discussions, but keep reciting Nam in holy company of Gurmukhs, happy in self-absorption like the proverbial ‘a dumb person enjoying sweets’. He was so fond of listening to Gurbani Kirtan that he would remain in same postures, listening for hours together. He never revealed his inner self to anyone but bore his exalted experience silently in happiness of own mind. His elevating spirits always kept soaring higher and higher. There was never a frown on his face, but always beaming and carefree. He would remain serene under all circumstances. His spiritual devotion in previous birth was so much that only a little would suffice in this life.

Many of the Jatha proceeded to Jails as ordained by Divine-Will. Dear Prabhakar Singh could not cope up with pangs of separation. The case was still under trial and pronouncement of life-sentence was yet to be made, when I envisioned in the dungeons of jail the soul of Vir Prabhakar Singh leaving his body and taking flight upward to the hereafter. Next day I got the news of his death.

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Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji was a quiet, loving and a blooming youth. He had through single-minded devotion experienced high spirituality within, bearing the unbearable silently at a very early age. He enjoyed the Bliss of inner enlightenment without any outward show. He was an untiring listener of Akhand Kirtan with Single-minded devotion. He would take a corner seat at the rear and remain seated in a single posture of quiet meditation. He came to be known as the Silent-Ascetic, 'Moandhari Singh'. He became most yearning spiritual seeker just as he got Baptised. He lost awareness of body and interest in food. Word-Divine alone became his source of sustenance day and night in self-engrossment. The splendour of his face indicated his inner state of enlightenment and brimming with Divine-Nectar. He had sought Baptism with utmost spiritual urge and went into trance soon after imbibing Nam-Nectarian. This was the fruit borne by his meditational labors of earlier birth that could be the envy of great Yogis and Ascetics. In fact all penance devoid of Gurmat is of little avail, even if practiced for ages. I had envisioned such miracles during spiritual strivings of young Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji that were pleasantly astounding. In his humility by nature and engrossment in spirituality, he was completely free from thoughts of worldliness. He was humble through and through in the light of Gurmat, thinking of himself as mere dust of everyone's feet. He was never prone to anger nor his face ever frowned. His face was radiant with inner happiness, uttering only loving sweet words. He was chaste all his life and even in his youth no evil thought ever occurred to him. His family wanted to arrange his marriage, but he would not listen to it. The ceremony of engagement for marriage was being forced on him, but in the nick of time he got up, saying, "***This is not in accordance with Gurmat.***" Leaving behind his gathered relatives he came to Sat-Sang of Jatha and narrated his Story. All got astonished at his boldness and rock-like Faith. He could escape marriage thus under the plea of Gurmat tenets or else he was almost roped in. He had no inclination for marriage. Not that he was against the institution of marriage, but a marriage devoid of Gurmat was an unwelcome tying of two individuals instead of a wholesome union. Such rock-like Faith at an early age is exemplary. While many of the Jatha got imprisoned in 1915, he started delving even more deeply in single-minded Nam-Devotion. He shared great love with me. I held him in high esteem and never addressed him without honorific suffix of

‘Ji’. I still maintain the same deep regard for him and keep his memory alive all the time.

It is bond of this unbounded love that prompted departing soul of Sri Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji to grant me the last vision, while I was confined to dungeons of jail. It was the same smiling face that took skyward flight after the meeting, bound for Abode-Divine, never to return! This happened in 1915. Bhai Lal Singh Ji of my village, Narangwal, was arrested and brought to Ludhiana Jail. After a couple of days he described eventful days of the end. According to him it was indeed a very unusual death. Mother of Bhai Lal Singh, Mata Mehtab Kaur Ji was by the bedside of Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji at the final moment. She had great motherly love for Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji. During Sat-Sang Samagams at Narangwal he always stayed at their house and came to be regarded as second son after Bhai Lal Singh, both equally dear to Mata Mehtab Kaur Ji. Few days prior to the death Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji sent telepathic message to Mata Mehtab Kaur Ji, requesting her to come to his bedside at Lalton. Serving this Gurmukh son towards the end of his life-journey was thought of as welcome opportunity by her and a blessing. She remained dedicated all through day and night to rare motherly love and service. She was in attendance all the while, glancing at the splendid face in Divine-Bliss. Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji continued his Nam-Simran, breath by breath, till the very end. This was most amazing. He would neither talk nor listen to anything other than this. He would request his visitors to recite Gurbani or go and take rest away from him. He did not allow anyone near him with the exception of Mata Mehtab Kaur Ji. He breathed his last in his blissful state. His face never indicated any suffering or any trace of bodily pain. He never uttered any sigh of pain; instead it was difficult to behold his ‘Glorious’ face. It was only for Mata Mehtab Kaur to behold the departing in spiritual Glory of Bhai Prabhakar Singh Ji. With his hands folded together he uttered the Khalsa Salutation of Guru Fateh and departed like a visiting pilgrim returning to his ‘Home’ – Abode-Divine!

CHAPTER 19

A GLIMPSE OF THE KHALSA OF OUR OWN TIMES

BHAI SARWAN SINGH JI PHALEWAL

(DISTT. LUDHIANA)

Bhai Sarwan Singh Ji, a true Gurmukh, belonged to village Phalewal, Ludhiana. He was an accomplished Gursikh, without being conspicuous, living a householder's life as the most ordinary person. I was unaware of his high spiritual attainments, even though we lived so near. Here comes destiny. Our meeting was not yet destined. This is how it happened.

I met Babu Mal Singh Ji for the first time at the Panch Khand Samagam. I had not known him earlier. We were resting in the same room at night. From the conversation he started, it appeared that he was familiar with my name. He explained, that there was a highly spiritual Sikh from Phalewal, living un-conspicuously, named Bhai Sarwan Singh, who had told him about me. Bhai Sarwan Singh had been Baptised at our Jatha's samagam and knew about me, though I had not known him. Soon after his Baptism, this Gursikh attained a high spiritual state. Babu Ji said, that he had been eagerly looking forward to meeting me after my introduction by Bhai Sarwan Singh. Now after this incidental meeting and mention of Bhai Sarwan Singh, I became interested to avail the earliest opportunity to meet him.

On return to Narangwal, I immediately got ready and started off on foot for Phalewal. I had never been there before and didn't know anyone in that village. Master Niranjan Singh of our Jatha from Narangwal was employed at Khalsa Primary School, Phalewal. I thought of approaching him to find out about Bhai Sarwan Singh. I recalled Babu Ji telling me, that Bhai Sarwan Singh was a village Head-man (Nambardar) also. When I neared the village, a thought came to my mind, that if he was really an evolved soul as described, then let him meet me before entering the village. As I approached the village the eagerness kept mounting and I even forgot about this thought, I had a little while ago. This too was an act of Divine Will. Just outside the village, I saw a mendicant type of person coming from the village. He wore only a kachhera and a small turban, without a shirt and wearing a

Kirpan. He greeted me with Gur-Fateh and passed by driving a buffalo, with a staff in hand. It just did not occur to me to know about him.

On entering the village, I noticed a Dharamsal, place of worship, where some elderly people were sitting in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. I made my obeisance and took seat. All these Sikhs knew me and enquired about the purpose of my visit. I explained, that I was looking for a Singh named Bhai Sarwan Singh Nambardar. They replied, that he had just left driving a buffalo and in all probability crossed me. I enquired whether he is the same person without a shirt. They confirmed that he is the same person of very ascetic nature. We were still talking about this, when the person returned and sat next to me. As soon as my eyes contacted his eyes, we became one. He immediately took me away from there, saying that we would go to meet Master Niranjn Singh in the school. He led me to the school compound without any further conversation. Master Niranjn Singh was surprised to see me. Regarding the purpose of my visit, I just pointed towards Bhai Sarwan Singh who smiled and asked Master Ji to call it a day. It was late in the afternoon and Bhai Sarwan Singh proposed Kirtan in his cottage. Master Ji let off the students and closed the school.

The three of us marched to the cottage, which was located just outside the village in the fields. This was a beautiful thatched cottage at a lovely spot. The music instruments were already there, Bhai Sarwan Singh handed over harmonium to me and himself took the small drum, Dholki. Master Niranjn Singh got cymbals, 'Chhenne', in his hand. The Divine inspired Kirtan started. Bhai Sarwan Singh was an accomplished Kirtaniya, expert in both drum and harmonium. He got spiritually intoxicated with the very first hymn and lost self-awareness. Hours went by. When I opened my eyes, I noticed that Bhai Waryam Singh of the village was also sitting with us, singing melodiously. Only four of us were in the Kirtan and it lasted for many hours. Suddenly, a voice said, that it's time for Rehras and to start with So-Dar Kirtan. After Rehras, we did Ardas and took the Gurwaak and I remember the last line quoted that; ***"My love has come to stay in my house."*** After the ceremonious closing of Sri Guru Granth Sahib for the night, the harmonium was offered to Vir (Brother) Sarwan Singh, the drum to

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Master Ji and the cymbals to Bhai Varyam Singh and the Kirtan started again. I remember Bhai Sarwan Singh started with, "*My love has come to stay at my house.*" It was highly enjoyable resounding session for two hours. Suddenly, I felt a strange pull for Narangwal and left immediately with my three companions.

On the way back, we were attracted by the sight of ravine, Dhab of Gujjarwal and sat there. This is located midway between Narangwal and Gujjarwal as a barren, lovely spot. This ravine is associated with interesting history, where a stream used to flow. Bhai Sarwan Singh, coming out of his deep meditation at times used to narrate that occasionally he heard the sound of the hooves of the 'Blue Mount' and beheld Sri Guru Gobind Singh riding the side of the old ravine. The present dry ravine had a fig tree close by. In the times of our elders there were boundary disputes between the two villages for a long time and many young lives were lost. Ultimately the ravine became the accepted boundary, with the ravine in the limits of Gujjarwal. This was known to be a haunted place and nobody ever crossed this way even in daytime. Cries and shouts of old battles could be heard. I have personal experience of this, but my fears vanished after Baptism. I had selected this lovely and peaceful place for meditation. I used to recite the Divine Nam whole night with full voice, while people mistook this as battle cries of the haunted souls! No one ever approached out of fear.

The battle cries had stopped after the first two nights of my visits there, while I enjoyed many sessions of deep meditation and lovely Kirtan programmes. This continued for many days and nights. The fig tree became dead and disappeared. Often I used to be alone there. The adjoining land belonged to one devout Sikh, Baba Jaimal Singh of Gujjarwal. He used to watch me in my meditations. As an act of philanthropy, he got a portion of the ravine dug, so that clean underground water formed a pond. In the rainy season, rain water used to accumulate there. In winter months, this used to be very clear and clean water, forming into a lake of about 5000sq yds. This water was available round the year. The Baba also planted shady trees on the sides of this lake for the benefit of visiting devotees, coming to meditate here. However during my life imprisonment period, these trees dried off, as the Baba passed away and there was no one to take

care of this place. These trees were a cross breeding of fig, Banyan and margosa (Neem) trees, known as Tirbeni.

This Baba had very ambitious plans for this place, which remained unfulfilled due to circumstances. At the time of present narration also this place is quite attractive.

The Spiritual State of Bhai Sarwan Singh

Our quartet of four Kirtanias reached this spot and did not lose time in starting Kirtan. We had brought along the music instruments. We were so lost in the Kirtan, that we passed into deep meditation. My wife, Kartar Kaur, visioned all this and came along late at night with our dinner. She shook us out of our stupor and had brought the steel utensils for serving food to the four persons. After getting our hands washed, the food was served. With half-closed eyes, drenched with Divine Love, while we were eating we watched this lady, a picture of true loving devotion. Bhai Sarwan Singh uttered a cry of pure love at her sight. In humility he had his head on her feet, saying “The holy sight of this Revered Mother has killed my hidden imperceptible ego. This ego had led me to believe, that I alone enjoyed the super-vision, extra-ordinary. I see visions in normal life and was feeling proud. This self-conceit has been destroyed today. I wonder how this Mother envisioned our presence here from a distance of one mile and known our exact number to bring food and utensils for four of us.” She partook of the food left by me. She always remained without food, till such time that I ate first. It was past mid-night. Bhai Sarwan Singh, feeling his tummy, said that, “sitting is no more possible. I am returning to Phalewal for rest and you should also accompany mother back to Narangwal.” After this event, many times it so happened, that Bhai Sarwan Singh would spend whole nights roaming between the villages, intoxicated with Ambrosia of Nam and uttering the cries of God-love in the wilderness of nights, chanting Divine Nam.

He was an amazing Kirtaniya and also sang in high pitch. The echo of his Divine Love in Kirtan was never ending, but ever ascending in spirit. When on the drum, then also he was just super with untiring arms and hands. While singing, he used to get lost in the highest meditation at Dasam Dawar, the Divine Temple in man. This used to be indicated by a typical sound. This led to many hours of motionless

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body state. His body used to become hard as if it was made of steel. What to talk of motion, even the breathing would stop. It was seen in this state, that his steel like arms could not be bent even with the force of ten men. Those who understood this, never tried to disturb him but left him to enjoy his rapturous spiritual state. When he used to come out of this high stage, his body would be lightened and have a Divine Lustre. I was a witness to this transformation. The ignorant people used to comment, that he was a patient of epilepsy. In his wakefulness or sleep, the automatic chant of Nam was continuous. At times he used to go in trance while travelling alone, and remain on ground for hours. The passers-by took him to be dead and ran away from him. They would call the neighbourhood to announce that there was a dead body of a Sikh. When the sympathetic people reached the spot, they would find the Singh sitting in meditation and chanting Nam.

He was such a renouncer, that he never had a worldly care. The duties of Nambardar were performed with Divine help, collecting the village revenue in his carefree state of Divine drunkenness and depositing the same at Ludhiana Treasury. It would happen that out of the collected revenue, amounts of Rs 500/- would be taken away by bad characters. He would return smilingly to Narangwal instead of Phalewal, where he knew people would be talking about the loss. He would confide to me, "Bai (Brother), someone has stolen the collected revenue." I would console, "Never mind, Guru shall take care." Hearing this, he would head back and find the lost money on his way to Phalewal. The bad characters responsible for this loss would be rounded up by the police and being un-vengeful, he would help to set them free. He would even ask them if they needed the money, they could keep it and the Guru would replace this for him. Many such bad characters were so moved by this attitude of Bhai Sarwan Singh, that they left their evil ways and became Baptised Sikhs to live honestly. Bhai Sarwan Singh never used to get angry.

The Incident At Ambala Railway Station

Once I was going to meet the loved ones Sri Babu Mal Singh and Piara Singh Ji, who were in the Army at Ambala Cantt, along with the Jatha, including Bhai Sarwan Singh. They were being transferred to a remote place and we wanted to meet them before their departure at the cantonment. At the railway station all were self-occupied and Bhai

Sarwan Singh got lost in his deep meditation while standing. It so happened, that he was standing outside a ticket-issuing window, which was then closed and he stood alone. However, a train arrived and the tickets were to be issued to the passengers from that window. We were all set to march to the cantonment and unaware of this. There was a rush of passengers to buy tickets at the window blocked by Bhai Sarwan Singh. Shortly a police constable on duty arrived at the scene, but Bhai Sahib was unconcerned with the happenings and completely lost in himself. The policeman shook him a few times, but without an effect. In anger, he gave a full slap at the face of Bhai Sarwan Singh, and Bhai Sahib opened his eyes and the constable shouted, “Don’t you know the tickets are issued here. You have been repeatedly told to move away from this place, where standing is not allowed. Now this slap serves you right, as you would not listen otherwise.” Just watch this now:

Bhai Sarwan Singh was not at all disturbed due to the slap, instead he fell flat on the feet of the constable and apologised for his lapse. But as soon as Bhai Sahib touched his feet, the constable fell flat on his back and started wailing loudly, “O people! Help!! Please get me a pardon from this Sikh.” Hearing this plea for help many people gathered there. Writhing painfully on ground was the constable shouting his pleas. When he was asked, what was his problem? He replied, “This Sikh is going to kill me.” He was again asked what had hit him. The constable said, “ He has not hit me, he has finished me. He has drawn all my power by falling on my feet. I don’t know what miracle he has performed. My salvation is only in his pardoning me.” The constable explained how, unaware of Bhai Sahib’s meditational state, he had slapped the Sikh for blocking the window and the Sikh instead of remonstrating, had fallen on his feet to apologize for the mistake. On hearing this, one Christian remarked, “This is amazing. Our Lord Jesus has taught if a Christian is slapped, he should offer the other cheek to appease the angered person, yet his Sikh has fallen to the feet of the angered. What can be more amazing?” I addressed this person by telling him of the Gurbani teaching,

***“Farida! React not in anger to give a blow for blow,
but instead kiss the feet of the aggressor before going home.”***

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A Hindu commented contemptuously, that “This Sikh must have held the feet to escape further punishment. He should have taken a revenge on the constable, but being a weakling he submitted cowardly.” Not to prolong the issue, we told him that he was entitled to his views. All of us including Bhai Sarwan Singh started marching towards the cantonment. It so happened that the Hindu Mahasha was also to go to the Sadar Bazaar in cantonment and followed us. Halfway on our journey, it was time for Rehras Pathh. We washed ourselves at the nearby well and after Rehras we proceeded onward. There was cluster of trees and I felt the urge for natural call. Bhai Sarwan Singh and myself proceeded towards the trees, while he went far into the trees, I remained nearby. I had just finished washing myself, when I heard the cries for help of a woman. Bhai Sahib was closer to the spot of crying. He reached there immediately alone. He saw four drunken British policemen trying to gang rape a poor girl, who had come to collect firewood. Instinctively Bhai Sarwan Singh snatched away their lances and gave all the four such a thrashing, that they were all lying flat. He tied all of them and put them back in the Tonga in which they had arrived. Meanwhile I also reached there. Seeing this, I called all our friends. The Hindu Mahasha was also with them and saw what had happened. It was explained to him that it was the feat of just one brave Sikh. This Sikh had earlier set the example of extreme tolerance when slapped by a policeman, and a Christian was full of praise for him. But now when it was a rescue mission, he has displayed the bravery of laying flat four burly British policemen single-handed. Hearing this, the Mahasha cried uncontrollably saying, “Khalsa Ji! Pardon me. I never knew the two distinct aspects of a Sikh personality of extreme tolerance and unparalleled bravery, but now I know that Singhs of Guru Gobind Singh are unique, endowed with all virtues.” Meanwhile the tied up Britishers were crying with pleas of forgiveness and with a promise never to repeat such an act. They wanted to know their fate after this tying. We replied, “You will be taken to your officers for due punishment.” They said, they have already received enough bodily punishment. Our bodies are swollen and there are bruises due to the injuries. What more punishment can be given? Charge us fine of Rs 50/- and forgive us.” We told them to apologize to the poor girl and give the whole amount to her, with the promise never to repeat such a dastardly act. Finally we started our onward march, reciting Rehras on the way. This example of Bhai Sarwan Singh is just as a sample of the

instincts of Divine Virtues in all the practicing Sikhs, devoted to Nam-meditation. These are instilled in them in full measure to execute the Divine Will. Bhai Sarwan Singh's life is a unique role model. He was also a fluent reader of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He could recite the pathh for seven hours continuously in high pitch, that could be heard in remote corners of the village. Loudspeaker is no substitute for such clear loud voice and these were not available then. His recitation was special in that while reciting the pathh loudly, he also used to carry on with breath-by-breath meditation of Nam

With this technique, he could control his breath at the navel and recite pathh of two pages at a time in single breath. At such a time his face had a glow of Divine splendour, amazing to watch. In this rapturous state, he used to lose awareness of his body. Seeing this state once, his close relatives thought that he had lost his mind. With this mistaken belief, they tied him with a thick chain and a pillar for 24 hours. There was no knowledgeable Singh around for his help. It was wintertime and he got a fever of 106°F. Even so, he did not lose heart and kept reciting hymns from Gurbani. It was the time of ambrosial hours that while tied up and suffering from high fever, Bhai Sahib was singing the following hymns and thinking of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

For the sake of a princess, one took up a false garb.

Even such lustful and self-centred one was saved. ||1||

What is thy compassion, O lord, if one is to suffer for past actions?

Why seek the shelter of a lion, if one was to suffer a jackal? ||1||(Pause)

The rain bird suffers for a single raindrop.

What is the use of finding an ocean after death? ||2||

How to persevere in this tiredness of life?

What use it would be to get a boat after a death by drowning? ||3||

I have no power of my own nor another support,

Save my honour at this occasion, O Lord, Sadna is Thy Slave. ||4||

Reciting the line, “***Save my honour at this occasion***” again and again he fainted. The villagers heard the sound of the hooves of a galloping horse over the housetops and a few roofs came down and the chain tied to Bhai Sarwan Singh was snapped and the high fever was gone. The glimpse of the Guru banished all afflictions. This real happening was narrated to me by the retired Head-master of Khalsa High School,

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Ludhiana. Master Dharam Singh of Phalewal and many god souls of village Gujjarwal also heard the sound of hooves of the passing horse from the direction of the Ravine. One Brahman, Harnam Das even claims that he had a momentary glance of the blue mount and the Splendid Rider. God alone knows the truth, yet there is no doubt left that the Guru revealed the miraculous happenings on this occasion.

Bhai Dharam Singh was prominent among the Singhs of the Jatha from Phalewal, with the strong faith. He held Bhai Sarwan Singh in high esteem and had great respect for him. Though outwardly he appeared rough, yet he was the most humble in his thoughts and actions.

Seeing the Divine madness of Bhai Sarwan Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh used to feel angry and in extreme situations even scolded him. Never the less he would shield him out of great personal love. At times he would ignore Bhai Sarwan Singh's trespasses, yet he had great faith in the words uttered by Bhai Sarwan Singh. While studying for B.A., Bhai Dharam Singh fell seriously sick due to pressure of studies and improper diet. The medical opinion suspected T.B. He brought this to the notice of Bhai Sarwan Singh, who casually said, " You have no T.B., your detractors might have this." After this Bhai Sarwan Singh came to me at Narangwal and proposed to have Akhand Pathh for the well being of Bhai Dharam Singh, in view of medical suspicion of T.B. in his case. We all agreed, but put the condition that Bhai Dharam Singh has to listen to the entire recitation of Akhand Pathh for 48 hours. The Pathh started with Bhai Dharam Singh sitting in attendance. As far as possible, he listened to the Pathh. Divine Will prevailed and Bhai Dharam Singh became whole and hearty. Such is the power of faith. The faithful, with unshaken faith in Bani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib are known to be saved in all situations. This was the first example of miracle of faith among the educated youth. Bhai Dharam Singh had known similar happenings in the Jatha and had a strong belief in the spontaneous words of Bhai Sarwan Singh in his Divine madness.

Close associates of Bhai Sarwan Singh had witnessed many unusual and super-natural happenings in his life. In spite of this exalted spiritual state, there appeared some defects, especially an imperceptible ego. Excessive praise led to this hidden malady gradually to bring about a change in him. I had been warning many of his admirers not to

address him as “*The Living Emancipated One*” in his presence. According to Gurmat it is strictly forbidden to praise on the face and slander in the absence, yet the people did not refrain from praise in spite of the warning. As a result, Bhai Sarwan Singh suffered from suppressed ego, that kept building up and one day it exploded to the surface. Jatha was performing Akhand Kirtan of Asa-Di-Var at Ambala Cantt Gurdwara for many days. One day Bhai Sarwan Singh was missing. He kept lying at the roof where we were housed along with some of his companions. I started missing the loved Kirtaniya. Finally, I requested his special friend, Babu Mal Singh Ji, to go and call Bhai Sarwan Singh. Babu Ji went and shook the lying, Bhai Sarwan Singh saying, “The entire congregation is missing you in Asa-Di-Var Kirtan. The program is on and not finding you, people are restless.” With eyes closed and still lying down, Bhai Sarwan Singh replied, “The Asa-Di Var Kirtan is going on in my mind.” Stunned with this show of arrogance, Babu Mal Singh Ji returned and repeated Bhai Sarwan Singh’s words to me. I again requested Babu Mal Singh and Bhai Piara Singh to try once again. Bhai Sarwan Singh was known to have very high respect for Bhai Piara Singh, yet again the original words were repeated by Bhai Sarwan Singh, that “I am enjoying Asa-Di-Var program in my own mind.” Then Babu Mal Singh Ji remarked, “What is this assembly in your mind without the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib?” Both reminded him, that with Sri Guru Granth Sahib in his cottage, he calls the cottage a Gurdwara and not a mere cottage. This led to further insolent talk under the maddening pride and ego, like “For me a Mandir, Masjid and Gurdwara are all same. I will destroy the cottage at Phalewal and get rid of your Sri Guru Granth Sahib.” Hearing this tasteless talk, both of them returned to the Gurdwara. At the end of the program his words were brought to the notice of the entire assembly. All confirmed that his words amounted to blasphemy. His ego had finished him. The only way to save him through correctional punishment was to boycott him from the Jatha completely. None from Jatha was to have any dealing with him. This was the Gurmata passed unanimously. Bhai Sarwan Singh thus fell down from the pinnacle of spirituality. All boycotted him, except for two Singhs meeting him secretly. Those were his close friends. These two were summoned and warned that any further contacts with the boycotted Sarwan Singh would lead to their own boycott. Both apologised and promised to abide by the ruling.

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After this, his ego suffered a severe blow when left all alone. The realization dawned on him and he sought the shelter of the sangat, holy congregation. He started attending every samagam, lying among the shoes of the sangat and suffering in the sun. A month passed by and no one took notice of him. Finally he dropped to his knees and cried for help. He said, **“Let the congregation prescribe any punishment to me, but kindly grant me pardon.”** It was unanimously decided that he should ride a donkey, with blackened face and a necklace of shoes around his neck, to go around the five villages while stating his act of blasphemy for which he was punished. He gladly accepted this punishment. This was the result of his past good deeds and his good fortune, that he obeyed the sangat. This is how he proceeded.

He borrowed a donkey from the village pot-maker, mixing oil with black soot he blackened his face, wore a shoe necklace and rode the donkey. He travelled through the five villages: Phalewal, Gujjarwal, Narangwal, Lohgarh, and Mehma Singh Wala. Unmindful of his high family background, he would stop every now and then to own his act, which had invited the punishment. When he came to Narangwal, a program of the Jatha was in progress at my house. My mother came out crying to embrace him, she made him get off from the donkey and brought him before the holy congregation. All were moved by this sight. I was asked to clean his face and seat him in this congregation. It took an hour to clean the face and his cleaned face acquired the glowing cleanliness. The new sight of splendour on his face was difficult to bear. He looked a picture of humility. He spent the rest of his days in a high spiritual state, observing the code of Bibek of Sarb Loh. He served the congregation with ten fold more enthusiasm.

Bhai Sarwan Singh was now respected a hundred times more in the sangat and yet he remained humble, without any show of his supernatural Divine powers. He remained imbued with Divine Love. Meanwhile the Divine took me to a term of life imprisonment. It was in my absence, that my dearest brother, Vir Sarwan Singh passed away. I have no news of how he died. This piece is homage to the sacred memory of Bhai Sarwan Singh.

CHAPTER 20

ECSTATIC VIR SRI BHAI JOGINDER SINGH JI (RESIDENT OF RAIPUR)

Ever blest with ecstatic, 'Bismad', spiritual state imbued with 'Gurmat' was Bhai Joginder Singh Ji, the most reliable pillar of Akhand Kirtani Jatha. He was born in village Raipur. His rebirth in House of Guru was occasion of great transformation and miraculous event. This was truthful application of Gurbani quote,

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਜਨਮੇ ਗਵਨ ਮਿਟਾਇਆ

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ:੧ ਸਿਧਿ ਗੋਸਟਿ [੯੪੦]

No more transmigration of rebirths after birth in House of Guru

Ramkali M:1 Sidh Gosht [940]

Soon after Baptism he took to the life of model Gurmat living. He was the lone chieftain among Patiala-state officials to lead Gurmukh way of life, strong in faith.

I first met him at Patiala during a visit to Dr. Sardara Singh Ji. He was then up-coming, promising youth. Dr. Sardara Singh Ji of Gujerwal village was a staunch faithful and practitioner of Gurmat living. This common bond often brought me to him at Patiala. It always so chanced that few minutes prior to my arrival or soon after Bhai Joginder Singh Ji would be there too. Gurmat discussion would follow and Bhai Joginder Singh Ji was a keen listener. I asked Dr. Sardara Singh about the identity of this young aspirant of faith and how he could get the wind of my visits. He told me that it was indeed a case of yearning love for 'Gurmat Sat-sang', holy company delving in wisdom of Guru. He was a true seeker, in search of Path-Divine, shunning all other worldly company. He was anxious to get Baptised at the earliest opportunity. He had made a thorough study of Gurmat doctrines and mentally accepted them. He was thus awaiting the auspicious time to get Baptised through 'Divinely chosen and Blessed Five'. However he had to wait considerably long, going to holy congregations as an aspiring Sikh. He had shared his resolve to get Baptised together with his wife. Finally the long awaited day dawned when the blessed couple

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boarded the ship of Guru by getting Baptised and started exemplary Gurmat way of life.

Gurmukh sister Harbans Kaur was his wife and her life sketch has been dealt with earlier. As state official he was known as Sardar throughout Patiala, but in Gurmat circle he was addressed as 'Bhai Joginder Singh'. After Baptism his Faith was fortified ten-fold. Whosoever shared his thoughts on Gurmat, he alone knows the bliss derived during the discussion. His researched Gurmat views very highly valuable. His influencing words led many to implicit faith in Gurmat. He was a high scholar of Gurmat and Gurmukh in practice. Among the prominent Sikhs, he shone like a rare jewel, ever soaring in high spirits. His high rank and social status never went to his head and instead his purity of Gurmat life was unique. He never compromised against code of Gurmat living during his long worldly service, remaining above board spiritually. The then Maharaja Patiala threw hints many times that if Bhai Joginder Singh would tie and dress his beard as per state-code, he would be given higher promotions. However, blest by The Guru, Bhai Joginder Singh never took the bait. He maintained his style as Gurmukh of flowing beard. His wife too never gave up turban in spite of repeated coaxing from wives of state-officials and queens.

Bhai Joginder Singh Ji would often visit me at Narangwal before my imprisonment. In his yearnings for sat-sang he would start off from Patiala irrespective of what hour it was of day or night. He never took official leave and yet never missed any sat-sang samagam, large gatherings of Jatha. He was so blest, that never was he questioned for his absence by his superiors. Though he was weak in health, yet he listened Akhand Pathh and Kirtan Samagams many a times, sitting in same posture all through. He never bothered for eating or drinking, accepting only whatever he was offered while enjoying spiritual nourishment. In fact he was sustained by Nectarian-Nam and remained engrossed in Nam-meditation. He had tasted Divine-Nourishment of most delicious Nam-Elixir and in comparison all other food appeared trifling. His outstanding quality was non-stop Nam-Simran while discharging his official duty flawlessly. His 'Simran', Divine-Memory, was automatic irrespective of his physical activity. He remained self-contained in coping with the unbearable intense spirituality. His early stages of Nam-meditation was in the company of highly accomplished

Nam practitioners whom he would freely reveal his personal experience without any reserve.

Astonishing Spectacles of Spiritual Experiences

Once Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji came to me at Narangwal from Patiala in great excitement and sense of anticipation. He had resolved to undertake ceaseless meditation and enjoy the highest spiritual bliss. Seeing his determination, I pleaded with him that though his determined will power was a good omen, yet it would not pay to be adamant in matters spiritual. It is better to be content with loving Divine-Devotion and leave the rest to God's Grace. It behoves us to pursue Nam-Simran as Gursikhs in the light of Gurmat teachings with patience and perseverance. Divine recognition and realization should be considered Gifts-Divine and matter of Grace. Says gurbani:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਧਰ ਲਾਗਾ ਜਾਵਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਦਰੁ ਲਹੀਆ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ [੮੩੪]

Keep treading along Guru's Path, you shall find Divine-Door with Grace of Guru.

Bilawal M:4 [834]

Listening to this, he accepted this command-Divine as faithful devout of Gurbani. This kind of perseverance and strong faith is rare to come across. He stayed for the night at Narangwal at the meditational place along with other Nam-devotees resting on mats spread on the floor. This night he experienced the first spiritual spectacle. He was totally lost in spiritual meditation. Being his first experience, he had still to learn to cope up with astounding and unbearable spirituality as one goes along. He shouted uncontrollably, "Bhai Sahib! What is happening? All the village dogs are barking within me." I replied, "Dear brother, do not get perturbed. You shall further witness all the universal goings on in your mind. You have to detach yourself from all that and remain focused on the ecstatic play of love in Nam-Meditation. Ward off other distractions." Acknowledging my words he resumed Nam-simran. After about half-an-hour, he stood up with hands folded together. His face was drenched in sweat. I again solaced him not to get frightened. He sat down after praying for few minutes. He expressed that this was enough for the day and he was unable to continue anymore. Telling about his new vision, he said, "My great

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hurdle now is that my invisible body along with soul is passing through the eye of a small needle against my will. I fear that this may cause my death.” Hearing this, I laughed and prayed for Divine Help for him to cope up with unbearable astounding experiences. Thereafter he enjoyed equipoise in envisioning spiritual spectacles, without fear.

It was unique happening that all his children were highly blest with divinity in early childhood. However this phenomenon disappeared with age. Strong of Faith as Gursikhs, the couple used to initiate their new-borns first with Nam-Nectarian in accordance with Gurmat and follow up with other instructions. It was this background that offsprings of devout couple Bhai Joginder Singh Ji and Bibi Harbans Kaur Ji were spiritually high right from birth, even if they could not sustain it in later life. However high spirituality as children was phenomenal and highly impressive. Their eldest son, Anand Singh, astounded every one first and then I personally witnessed miracles-Divine in the case of youngest, Bibi Charan Kaur. Young Anand Singh won recognition before my term of imprisonment, displaying uncommon powers. He was just learning to speak, when his words revealed his high spirituality. Many exalted personalities of the state would visit Bhai Joginder Singh’s residence to behold auspicious sight of the child, Anand Singh. Notable Singhs of ‘Namdhari’ sect were particularly fond of him and frequent visitors. They believed that the boy was the spirit of another ‘Namdhari’ child, who got blown up with cannon fire along with Baba Ram Singh Ji during agitation of ‘Namdharis’ against British Rule. However I could not share this belief. I firmly believe that a selfless martyr is never subject to rebirth, yet it cannot be denied that it was due to the revelatory words of child Anand Singh that such a belief was formed. He had the miraculous powers to envision the secret events of others’ lives. This was his speciality. Whenever a baptising ceremony was organized at Bhai Joginder Singh’s residence, we would subject the candidates for Baptism to initial scrutiny by this boy. It was in my presence, that a prominent preacher of the state presented himself in Sangat sitting in presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib for getting baptised. Child Anand Singh was also part of the congregation and he cried out that the preacher had committed deadly sins that remained unknown. He further said that unless these sins were clearly confessed by him before ‘The Chosen Five’, he could not be clean of heart and the Dye of Nam, may

not be effective in his case. Hearing this, aspirant of Baptism fell flat in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He was not even conscious of hurting his forehead against floor with the fall. He was incessant in his pleas that he may be saved through Forgiveness-Divine. He admitted that he was a great sinner. The truth was, that, deeply impressed by spiritual powers enjoyed by child Anand Singh, this sinning preacher had resolved to seek Gurmat Baptism through Jatha. Now that the boy revealed his unknown sins, the opportune time arrived with new strengthening of faith in mind of the preacher. It left no doubt in his mind, that if a seven year old was blest with so much spirituality, he too could get spiritual transformation after Baptism through 'Chosen Five' of the Jatha. He was thus presented before "The Chosen Five" in his state of confessional mood. Whatever was confessed by the preacher, exactly same had already been revealed to me by the boy. This was a moment of great surprise for me. Many were similar incidents that I witnessed in respect of Anand Singh. It was during my imprisonment that young Anand Singh too ended his life-sojourn. However it was very depressing to hear that he had fallen from his high pedestal later in life. Rest of the children were born during my imprisonment. I am therefore not aware of events of their childhood life. However the youngest Bibi Charan Kaur was only 3-4 years old, when I got released from jail. Highly surprising are the events that I witnessed in early life of this child, that were truly miraculous. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji would hold her in his lap while attending Akhand Pathh and Akhand Kirtan Samagams. I noticed many a times that in such early childhood she would engage in loud Nam-Simran, sitting in the lap of her pious father. She would go into trance in spiritual flights of highest stage. It was then impossible to behold Divine-Glory reflected by her face. On coming out of the trance, she would narrate in her lisping words of a baby futuristic events, that would be amazing to the listeners. She astounded people around with her miraculous powers as a child of 7-8 years. During Samagams at Bhai Joginder Singh's residence, there used to be good gatherings of spiritual seekers. Food was being served round the clock. She would always be engaged in serving food or laying beds for the visitors untiringly. While serving with hands, her mind was occupied in ceaseless Nam-Simran. It was devastating that destined evil influences took hold of her suddenly and her spirituality got completely degenerated.

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It is befitting now to describe the wonderful event of Gurnat Anand Karaj of the elder daughter, Bibi Sharan Kaur. This is an illustration of deep faith in Gurnat values in full measure, that is historic and shall be remembered for long. The marriage of my daughter Bibi Daler Kaur was fixed to be held at Narangwal at my place. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji had come to join us along with other Gurmukh invitees on the occasion. His daughter, Bibi Sharan Kaur had accompanied him. The Akhand Pathh prior to the Anand Karaj ceremony was in progress and many were listening to the blissful recitation by Master Joginder Singh Ji from village Badundi. It was like heavenly pouring of words-Divine that was indeed very soulful. Master Ji's face shone in spiritual splendour and his beard just about appearing in early youth. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji was deeply moved by this recitation. In whisperings tones he started telling me that he desired a match like this Akhand Pathhi for his daughter, Sharan Kaur. I happened to comment that there could not be another just like him. Hearing this from me, Bhai Joginder Singh said very determinedly, "Well, then get my daughter married to him here itself, following Anand Karaj of Bibi Daler Kaur." He never bothered to check out the family background of the proposed bridegroom or his financial status, leave alone his caste, etc. The decision was spontaneous. I also gave my concurrence subject to approval by Bibi Sharan Kaur after seeing Master Ji. Bhai Joginder Singh readily agreed with my view. He requested me to get the message across to Bibi Sharan Kaur by sending word through my wife, Srimati Kartar Kaur Ji. This was done and approval of Bibi Sharan Kaur was sought. As a progeny of devout couple, Bhai Joginder Singh and Bibi Harbans Kaur, Bibi Sharan Kaur gave this befitting reply, "Tayi Ji (auntie), where is the need for my concurrence? Who can improve upon the selection for my match made by Sri Bhai Sahib Taya Ji and my father? Whatever they decide is in my best interests. I shall never have any objection to their decision." In a coincidence Divine, just then Master Joginder Singh Ji 'Badundi wale' descended the stairs after being relieved from Akhand Pathh duty and passed close to my wife and Bibi Sharan Kaur. My wife pointed towards him and told Bibi Sharan Kaur, "He is the proposed groom. He has crippled feet by birth and that is why your Taya Ji and father wanted you to see him in person. Now you make your decision with all your wisdom to avoid repentance later." In this age of Kalyuga Sharan Kaur's reply was most astounding. Charged with emotion, reflecting her strong Faith, "Tayi

Ji! Is this match more unbecoming than the cripple match selected for Bibi of 'Dukhbhanjani' story. You know how rewarding had been Faith in her case. This is all too well known to be described. I fully approve of this match without any reservation." Srimati Kartar Kaur Ji was most astonished with the reply and in turn we were thrilled. We both felt like worshipping the feet of Bibi Sharan Kaur. Thus finally this couple was married soon after the ceremony of marriage of Bibi Daler Kaur at the same place. Master Joginder Singh Ji wedded Bibi Sharan Kaur, daughter of Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji without the rigmarole of a marriage party or dowry. There were no invitations to relatives and friends. Bhai Joginder Singh had not come prepared for this Anand Karaj, but had come only as an invitee to my daughter's marriage and his daughter happened to accompany him. Such is the story of unparalleled Faith of Bibi Sharan Kaur, that shall be remembered forever. Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji too demonstrated living in true spirits of Gurmat values. This is most exemplary, without a precedent and unlikely to be repeated commonly. It was too spontaneous. Whole of Narangwal was bewildered with this queer match, knowing that Bhai Joginder Singh Ji belonged to neighbouring village, Raipur. These four, five villages are considered to be aristocratic and the people are very proud of this, in absence of Faith in Gurmat. Lineage of Grewals is considered to be very high. These villages never offer their daughters in marriages to people of lowly considered villages like 'Badundi' though the brides from these villages are accepted in large numbers. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji trampled this wrong belief under his feet and cared only for true Gurmat values.

Later on there was public talk among the village-gossipies saying "Joginder Singh, supposed to be a high official of Patiala State, has given his well-accomplished and decent daughter in marriage to a cripple from village 'Badundi'." This talk went on for quite sometime as village-gossip, but nobody dared to bring it up before me. I too never cared about this meaningless criticism based on self-conceit. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji was much high in his thinking to care for this. In the world of Gursikhs the event was highly acclaimed. After these two marriages all the gathered sangat of devout Gurmukhs proceeded for the next marriage ceremony of my son, Balbir Singh Ji. Public reaction against Bhai Joginder Singh Ji died down its natural death with time. Anand Karaj of Bhai Balbir Singh Ji, conforming to similar

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Gurmat was equally applauded. Fear of public criticism was shoved away once again in this case. Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji having enjoyed blissfully three Anand Karaj ceremonies returned to Patiala along-with Bibi Sharan Kaur Ji. Master Joginder Singh Ji went over to Patiala and returned with his bride, Bibi Sharan Kaur, to his village 'Badundi'. They have lived happily together thereafter in rare marital bliss. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji is highly satisfied with the relationship.

Sometime after 1915, during my jail-period, Bhai Joginder Singh Ji had been elected member of 'Shromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee' to represent our region. This body was declared rebellious by Government and all members imprisoned. I was already in jail. Vir Joginder Singh Ji joined the second agitational Jatha and was sentenced to a jail term of two years. Though he was not in good health, yet he was happy to volunteer for Panthic cause. Authentic reasoning of Gurmat and pride of Faith were great assets of Bhai Joginder Singh Ji. Such deep and gifted Gurmukh thinkers are rarely found in Khalsa Panth. Before my imprisonment some of my friends including Bhai Joginder Singh Ji and Bhai Atma Singh Ji 'Moga' had difference of opinion with me and were angry. However when the political case was in the court, they came in my defense as witnesses. They suffered pangs of separation for long years of jail term, yearning in mutual love. They rushed to meet me after release at Narangwal. This destined love persisted for rest of our lives. There were frequent rush of visitors coming to meet me after sixteen years of life imprisonment and constant holding of Akhand Kirtan Samagams. Bhai Joginder Singh Ji joined with Babu Mal Singh Ji to make arrangement for the double storey of our house to provide much needed accommodation and space of Akhand Pathhs and Samagams. This is an excellent token of the memory of Bhai Joginder Singh and blessed by holy gatherings during samagams like annual Gurburb celebration of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Whatever religious books on Gurmat Topics I have written under Guru's promptings got initiated on suggestions from Bhai Joginder Singh Ji. He wanted that stress on Gurmat principles and their importance should be worded in the language and backing of Gurbani. Thus the first book that came in print was 'Ki Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Di Pooja But-Prasti Hai?' meaning 'Is worship of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji an act of Idolatry?' The first edition was printed before my imprisonment and I had not given my name as its author. However

later during Akali Movement somebody changed the title page and printed my name.

Though Bhai Joginder Singh Ji was not so stout physically yet he cultivated his land personally. He had built his residential building in Badungar Nagar near Patiala Cantonment. The adjoining land around the building in an area of few bighas was kept for self-cultivation. Even as high state official he never considered below his dignity to plough the land himself.

The common bond of spiritual love between the two of us was so strong that through telepathic message he would call me to Patiala at his will anytime. Stay of many weeks would still not satisfy him. It was so destined that he became very weak and was growing still weaker. With his spiritual insight he could envision the approaching end. One day he told me, "It appears death call is fast approaching." He further requested with emotional surcharge of tearful eyes, "I heartily desire that you be near me at the final moment. In this time of uncertainty you, please, stay on here and do not leave!" I was bound to comply with it. In fact I too desired to serve him as best as I could. His increasing physical weakness only further strengthened him in Nam-Simran in soaring spirits. He had called Master Joginder Singh, his son-in-law also from Badundi. He did not exhibit any sign of remorse and his face shone in spiritual Glory.

"Guru-oriented devout contemplates of God with every pore of his body" Gurbani quote was being enacted. Before his end he had instructed to cut off all mention of worldly affairs and instead requested for Gurbani recitation continuously. Master Joginder Singh Ji started recitation of Sukhmani Sahib. It was then decided to recite Gurbani from four-part volumes of Sri Guru Grant Sahib, by sitting on a higher adjoining bed day and night.

In this service we were helped by Military Captain Sardar Tirlochan Labh Singh Ji. He sent select Akhand Pathhis from The Military. Included in this group was a young Gurmukh from Panjokhra, Vir Sri Bhai Atma Singh Ji. After this initial meeting that inspired mutual love, we became lasting friends forever. His love for me had been kindled earlier. In passing away of Bhai Joginder Singh Ji and

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associated spiritual events further inflamed it. With recitation of Gurbani, Nam-Simran by Bhai Joginder Singh Ji became louder and intense. It was as though a Divine figure was resting in the form of exemplary Gurmukh, angelic Bhai Joginder Singh Ji. His tongue and breathing were engaged in Divine-Memory and his hands folded together. It depicted that he was envisioning The Lord and getting Thrilled by Sight-Divine and wearing a smile. His forehead and face reflected splendidous Glory. I too was enjoying the Bliss of this event. Gurbani recitation was going on with full Divine fervour. There was an environment of Holy Presence. Bhai Joginder Singh had his eyes open. Beholding Sight-Divine, he occasionally threw a glance at me. In complete satisfaction of love, he was ready to depart for Abode-Divine. His intense Nam-Simran in loud voice had put everybody around in trance. These were meditations of full consciousness! Considering the final moment of departure at hand, I had fixed my eyes on face of Bhai Joginder Singh. Movement of his tongue and lips were indeed very captivating. Finally 'Guru', 'Guru' alone could be heard and with this his breathing was ended.

I have not even an iota of doubt, that Sri Bhai Joginder Singh Ji had landed straight in Abode-Divine and merged with Spirit-Divine. Akhand Kirtan of Celestial Music was heard and Play-Divine of a life-sojourn ended thus!

CHAPTER 21

SRI BIBI JOGINDER KAUR JI

“Tiny-being that wrought big events!” very much applies to the life story of Bibi Joginder Kaur Ji. She was the wife of my companion friend, Sri Surjan Singh Ji, resident of village Gujerwal. She was born at village ‘Muthde’ Doaba in prominent ‘Namdhari’ family. Bhai Surjan Singh was also from a well-known ‘Namdhari’ family. In Divine-dispensation, Bhai Surjan Singh Ji resolved to get Baptised in Gurmat Samagam of Akhand Kirtani Jatha. The Sikh tenets require both husband and wife to be Baptised, as a couple. Thus it became mandatory for Bibi Joginder Kaur to join her husband in Baptising ceremony. However, her parental family was deadly against this and even advised her to break off the marriage. Bibi ji replied very boldly, “It was your selection to find my husband for life long. With what face do you ask me to divorce your own choice? My loyalty to him is my sacred duty now. In fact I am even more eager than my husband to seek Baptism in Gurmat Samagam. In pursuing this Divine-prompted desire of Faith and high spirituality we are not committing any sin”. She was threatened of social boycott, but she never cared.

Yet another strong opposition came from Bibi’s father-in-law. He promised to make her the only nominee to inherit all his assets, if she would decline Baptism. However she refused to be trapped by this snare of greed and instead accepted to lead a life of beggary as faithful wife. In short, trampling over all opposition, the couple got Baptised. She had instant experience of intense spirituality and was completely lost in Nam-Simran. Saturated with Nam-Nectarian, she could cope with the unbearable spiritual Bliss. Her head was now adorned with double turbans, ‘Dumala’. She proved to be thorough in word and action in the wont of Braves of Faith all her life.

It was most gratifying to behold her pious sight of short stature, sharp beautiful natural features. She acquired new vigor of youthfulness and glowing face after Baptism. It was difficult to face her majestic, spiritual look, that was characteristic of olden Sikh ladies. She appeared delicate in body and yet enshrined limitless bravery of spirit. To illustrate this the following should suffice:

CONFRONTATION AT CHAMKAUR SAHIB

The entire Jatha, including ladies, used to visit Chamkaur Sahib during annual commemoration of Martyrdom Day of the two elder sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. We used to travel by foot up to Doraha and then on it was through ferry-boat in canal. The Samagams at Chamkaur Sahib offered many blissful events. However it was most unpleasant that during procession of Hola-Mohalla, the then controlling Nihang Singh priests did not allow Sangat entry into the Gurdwara Katalgarh Sahib historical place of Martyrdom of Elder Sahibzadas, Baba Ajit Singh Ji and Baba Jhujhar Singh Ji. We could only circumambulate at the outer periphery. Though Jatha was ever irresistible, yet we were restrained by humble request made by convener of these Samagams, Babu Vir Singh Ji, and Bhai Hira Singh Ji 'Ragi'. This was repeated every year. However it was a different story during pilgrimage in 1914. When we disembarked from the ferry-boats at the Canal-bridge, we were received by a large gathering of local sangat, including Babu Vir Singh Ji and Bhai Hira Singh Ji. Some fiery Singhs informed us that priests have gathered hundreds of Nihang Singh and they were spoiling for trouble. They had already pushed out of the Gurdwara a party of pilgrim-ladies most disgracefully. Like the proverbial saying, "When pierced by an arrow, then alone full fury is evoked," the entire Jatha got infuriated and charged with religious fervor. It was announced there and then that no earthly power could hold back Jatha from paying homage inside the Gurdwara by making circumambulation of inner periphery: 'Parkarma'. Thus started Kirtan in do or die mood and Jatha was proceeding towards Gurdwara. Hearing the irrevocable decision, even the peacemakers felt helpless. None dared to intervene, even Bhai Hira Singh Ji commented that none could stop them now. Following the Jatha was multitude of people in thousands. The lion-hearted, Bibi Joginder Kaur, holding an arrow in hand was leading the Jatha. A mere fleeting sight of her splendorous Glory was unbearable for me. Like a river in spate the entire assembly singing Kirtan neared the Gurdwara. Many more people joined there. Gurdwara was being guarded by Nihang Singhs. They were armed with arrows and bared swords. The sinners were haunted by their sinful thoughts. Their claim to hold back sangat from paying homage inside Gurdwara was hollow. Who could hold back surge of emotional religious love of the devout with firm determination? It was decided to carry on the march to enter Gurdwara while singing Kirtan. One mindless burly Nihang Singh of good build

shot an arrow aimed at my neck, but it missed with Provision-Divine. Bhai Surjan Singh Ji, accompanying me stopped the arrow with his hand. His injured hand bled profusely. The on lookers thought that a murder had been committed. The Nihangs were also frightened, thinking consequences of a murder. It was mere flow of blood that did not amount to murder, yet not in vain!

Seeing this stage of violent confrontation, Bibi Joginder Kaur leaped into action like a lioness. Challenging my attacker, she snatched away arrow from the giant-like Nihang Singh and said, “O’ evil-being! Have you no fear of the Piety of Gurdwara Sahib and the holy congregation, Sangat, that you shoot arrow at your own brethren? This single act of boldness was enough to arouse reaction from Singhs and they attacked the priests to push them out of Gurdwara Sahib. We continued to advance and singing Kirtan. All the Nihang Singhs fled away. Their abandoned weapons came as booty to the Jatha. We circumambulated around both inner and outer peripheries, singing Gurbani Kirtan. It was now time for evening prayer, So-Dar. Standing in presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib we sang So-Dar. Bibi Joginder Kaur in her mood of bravery and Love–Divine requested for Chaupae Sahib’ Kirtan, Gurbani of Supplication to Lord by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji. This was done with utmost devotion and gusto. All enjoyed the rare Bliss of this Soulful Kirtan.

The priests after their disgraceful retreat started sending telegrams to high Government officials in Ambala and Ropar to inform of ‘dacoity’ and making plea for relief. We did not take any serious note of their reporting to Government. We were thrilled by this first homage inside the Gurdwara Sahib. The organisers were quite shaken by the events. Observing the ambrosial hours, we started ‘Asa-Di-Var’ Kirtan within the holy precincts of Gurdwara Katalgarh Sahib; The Kirtan was still to be concluded, when police party with rifles and bayonets arrived at about 11A.M. from Ropar. They were headed by a British Captain and included one Muslim inspector and one Arya-Samaji Magistrate. They were put up in the adjoining School building. A message was received that, Bhai Randhir Singh is wanted by ‘Sahib’. I burst out that, “There is no ‘Sahib’ other than Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.” Bibi Joginder Kaur boldly added, “Singhs are not bound to report to any petty ‘Sahib’”. Bhog ceremony was performed of ‘Asa-Di-Var’ Kirtan. At about that

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time the weak-minded leading personalities of Chamkaur Sahib presented themselves at the school. A paper of Mutual Settlement was made out and passed around for signatures. When a resident of Chamkaur Sahib, Sardar from Behlolpur, was signing, a bold advocate commented in loud voice, "There is no significance of signature by the local people. The dispute is between the visiting Sangat and the priests. There cannot be any agreement without their participation and concurrence." Now that we had free time, we got information about the attempted agreement. With a view that a wrong agreement may not be arrived at, I went to the school in fully saturated spiritual state. I loudly voiced the Khalsa Salutation on entering. The British Captain, other officials and every body around stood up. I was offered a chair, then I noticed that all of the Nihang Singh Jatha were disgracefully seated on floor. I could not bear this insult to Nihang Singhs. I said, "It is highly disgraceful that the Beloved Soldiers of Guru's House are prostrating on the floor. How can I accept a chair?" I addressed Nihang Singhs, "Don't you realise this as insult to you?" With this all were seated on benches. The Captain requested me humbly, "This is an application for mutual-settlement of the dispute. Kindly append your signatures." I asked the agreement to be read out to me first. I noticed the following wording, "The local and visiting devotees shall take out Hola Mohalla processions and pay homage at Gurdwaras, but the circumambulation of outer periphery of Gurdwara Katal Garh Sahib alone is permissible. To visit inside the Gurdwara devotees shall be permitted one by one. However if some devotee is suspected to belong to Scheduled caste, 'Choohra', that person shall not be allowed." On hearing this I snatched away papers of agreement and tearing away trampled under my feet. The British officer got flabbergasted and asked, "What is this?" I replied, "Have you come to start a disturbance or arrange for peace?"

He agreed that his purpose was to establish peace. I convinced him that the last sentence would only brew more trouble. If mischievous people keep pointing at random as 'Choohra', who would put up with this insult? I told him that he had not understood the real mischief behind this wording. On his asking for elucidation, I advised him, "It appears you are new to this country and are unaware of the prevalent conditions. Your subordinates will ignite public disturbance and earn the blame for you." In his fury he wanted to say something, but I stopped him. I proceeded thus:

I asked the 'Samaji' Magistrate, "What is your religion?" He replied that he was 'Arya Samaji'. I enquired. "After purification of the Scheduled castes according to your Faith, are they allowed to freely visit your temples or not?" Magistrate said, "Yes, they enjoy equal freedom of entry." Then I asked the Muslim inspector, "What is your Faith?" He replied that he was Muslim. I further asked, "Those who get initiated in Islam do they still face discrimination as Scheduled castes? Are they allowed entry into Masjids?" He said, "Yes, they are free to go." Finally I asked the Captain, "What is your religion?" He replied that he was a Christian. I asked him, "Is there any discrimination on the basis of caste for getting Baptised as Christians?" He replied, "No". I then stated, "Likewise our ceremony of Baptism too has the efficacy to purify many folds." Thus the British officer gained awareness of reality.

The 'Samaji' officer now instigated the Captain that Gurdwara was property of the priests and none could be allowed to trespass. This initiated further discussion. I protested, that the Holla Mohalla would always be taken out and those guilty of creating trouble should be brought to book under the law.

When general sangat became aware of the details of our discussion the organisers shivered sensing more trouble in future, but the vast majority was aroused with religious fervour. On the suggestion of Master Chanda Singh, it was decided to form a Committee of eleven people and their decision would be binding for further action. The Committee went into session at 'Garhi Sahib' to come out with 'Gurmata', decision made according to Gurmat and in presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Meanwhile Babu Vir Singh's brother came to announce, "Why are you so down-cast in lowly spirits? I am coming from the school. The officer-in-charge has sent for the head-priest of Gurdwara." I asked the advocate to bring the Head-priest first to me. I urged him to state facts truthfully. The Captain asked him about ownership of the Gurdwara. He replied that it belonged to Panth, entire Sikh Nation. He was then questioned about his status. To this he replied, that he was a servant of the Panth. "Who are these other priests?" Captain asked further. The reply came, "These are my employees."

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The decision was made in favour of Sangat. The British Officer also joined in Hola Mohalla celebrations. This was a truly magnificent procession.

This was a fore-runner victory of Panthic-Control of Gurdwaras and first event of Gurdwara Sudhar Lehar (Movement for improved – Management of Gurdwaras). Sri Bibi Joginder Kaur was a living example of old-timer Sikh ladies of Guru's House, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with their Singh brethren in soaring spirits. She had impressive and commanding personality.

In 1915 leading personalities of Jatha had been arrested in connection with 'Lahore Conspiracy case'. Warrants were also issued to arrest Bhai Surjan Singh Ji, husband of Bibi Joginder Kaur. A police party arrived in village Gujjarwal to search Bhai Surjan Singh's house. However he was not present then. Bibi Joginder Kaur put a lock on her outer gate and stood on guard like a lioness. She warned the police party that they could not search in absence of her husband. She roared further, "Be warned and stay away! Any attempt to approach shall lead to serious consequences." Blue turban adorning her head and a sword in hand, She presented an awe-inspiring personality. This discouraged the police from any action. The law also prevented search in absence of a male family member, but law was never cared for then or even now. It was only the bold challenge of Bibi Joginder Kaur that restrained the police. Many other houses had been searched in absence of male members. Only Bibi Joginder Kaur proved exception and worthy example of outstanding Sikh-lady. She faced police courageously and checked their nefarious activity.

She was embodiment of brimming Spiritual Divine-Love, pining with utmost yearning. She was blest with soaring spirit of high spirituality. When she found that many of the Jatha Singhs were arrested, she too felt the urge to volunteer for being arrested and join them. What held her back was the absence of her absconding husband. She was filled with fury of indignation hearing of the acts of cruelty of British Government in dealing with arrested Singhs. Most of us had been arrested, but Bhai Surjan Singh was still absconding. One day he came home. Immediately brave-hearted Bibi proposed to him, "Let us join our brethren in jail. What have we to gain remaining outside?" Vir

Surjan Singh Ji was able to refrain her from this after great struggle. However he presented himself at the jail. This was the result of promptings of his wife. Our case was under trial in Lahore Jail by a special Court. Three judges constituted the court, two being staunch Britishers heavily biased against us and one Indian, adulating his foreign masters. With court in session there was heavy guarding outside the jail. That is the time when Bhai Surjan Singh presented himself before the Jail-Superintendent for being taken inside. He was highly surprised with this and asked, “Who are you and what brought you here?” Bhai Surjan Singh replied, “My companions are under trial and my warrants have also been issued. So please, take me inside. I was not aware of all this, but as soon I came to know I have come here.” Superintendent enquired, “ Did your family members not stop you from coming to jail?” Bhai Surjan Singh replied, “There is none other than my wife.” Superintendent, “Did your wife not try to hold you back?” Bhai Surjan Singh, replied that “On the contrary, only her strong pleas have brought me here.” This astounded all the jail officials. Bhai Surjan Singh was presented in jail along with us. The Chief Judge, Mr. Scott, wanted that the accused be handcuffed before bringing him to the Court. However Jail-Superintendent, E.L.Ward, commented, “Don’t you realise, that the accused has presented himself voluntarily? You are just exhibiting your cowardice by getting him hand-cuffed.” Well, Divine-Will came to pass. All the Jatha Singhs were sentenced to life-imprisonment and some of us were sent to Central Jail, Multan.

An Event At Multan

Bhai Surjan Singh was imprisoned with me in Multan Jail, locked up in different cells. Sri Bibi Joginder Kaur Ji came to the Jail for interview. She had requested for meeting me first and then her husband, Bhai Surjan Singh Ji.

Her first request was not acceded, but she was allowed to meet Bhai Surjan Singh Ji. During the meeting Dr Ram Lal Ji was also present as one of the jail officials. The words conveyed by Bibi Joginder Kaur Ji were most astonishing to all the jail officials. Dr. Ram Lal Ji narrated all this to me as follows:

“I read books like Bije Singh, Sundri of Bhai Sahib Vir Singh Ji repeatedly. I thought of these as mere flights of imagination and failed

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to believe that such bold Sikh-ladies could have existed in flesh and blood. However in beholding and listening to a Bibi, who came for and interview today, I am not just astonished beyond measure but also extremely delighted. The reason for my delight is that all my earlier doubts have been banished. What I had thought to be mere fiction about bravery of Sikh-ladies, I saw in this lady of flesh and blood. I am now fully convinced that there are souls blessed with 'True Khalsa Spirit' in full measure. This lady has surpassed all that I read in books like Bije Singh, etc. about bravery of Sikh-ladies. Whatever I witnessed with my own eyes and heard with my own ears leaves no room for any further confirmation."

He described all that was said during that meeting, however only a sample of those words is presented to avoid lengthy presentation. "Facing Bhai Surjan Singh Ji, Bibi told him that he was blessed to agitate against British Rule. She too wished with all her heart to be able to participate. She reminded him that he was Sikh of the Guru Sahib, who had sacrificed all his four sons and the entire family in service of the Panth and country. That he must remain unshaken in pursuit of his Gurmat ideals and never bring the Spirit of Bravery of Gursikhs to disgrace. She assured him that she was safe in Hands of the Lord and there was nothing to worry about her. There could never be any obstacle to the spiritual meeting between the two. The gifted Nam-Fearless, bestowed by Satguru on Baptism, was enshrined in the hearts of both and must become their life-sustaining Force. Thus fear of any kind had to be shunned. In any case body was perishable and would come to an end. If one could dedicate life to religious duty what could be better end than that? Here in this world and in the hereafter Nam-imbued souls were bound together in Bliss. That the Sacrificing Services must bear fruit and bring freedom to the Country one day. She stressed to make Divine-Nam as the only support of life. That adversity was the testing time of firmness in Faith. That following in the footsteps of Bhai Randhir Singh Ji would ensure radiance of one's face in glory both here and in the hereafter. At this Bhai Surjan Singh disclosed inadvertently that Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji had not taken any food or drink for last twenty-one days. This disclosure ended the meeting abruptly. The interviewees were sternly told to part away immediately. Bhai Surjan Singh wanted to say something in protest. However Bibi Ji checked him from pleading with the cruel. She assured

him that they would talk to each other every day at will and who could ever stop? The spiritual meeting was irrevocable. The jail officials threatened Bibi Ji that if she failed to leave immediately, she would be pushed out. Hearing the insulting words, Bibi Ji's face reddened with Divine-Fervour and challenged the threatening officials to approach her. She warned that she would tear anyone making such attempt to pieces. None could bear the look of her face in fury and splendorous with Divine-Glory. Jailor then requested her humbly with folded hands to leave. Dr Ram Lal described that all the jail officials were shivering from head to foot in fear. Such was the unbearable sight of her face in fury, like a lioness. This became talk of the day throughout the jail and mere thought was causing shivering in the cowards." Dr. Ram Lal resolved that he too would seek Baptism of Gurmat with all his family and sought my blessings for bestowing of Sikh Faith by the Guru. I hope this would suffice as specimen of what thoughts were transpired.

After that day, I envisioned the glorified face of Bibi Joginder Kaur everyday during my jail period. Finally I envisioned the sight of her moment of death in Hazaribag jail. I noted the date and it was confirmed after a lapse of many weeks that Sri Bibi Joginder Kaur had indeed departed from this world on that very day. Too many are the miraculous events of her life to write about. Dedicated to selfless service, ever-ready for any sacrifice, She was always soaring in Spirit. Rare are such persons. Her life would verily serve as Lighthouse for coming generations of Sikh-ladies.

She had her only son, who contacted the epidemic of influenza in October 1918. Bhai Surjan Singh was then in Multan Jail, when both mother and son died with a gap of one day. She was an embodiment of patience and gratitude to Divine in her last moments.

CHAPTER 22

MOTH OF LIGHT – DIVINE DR. GURDIP SINGH JI

His earlier name was Nand Singh. He was born and brought up at Narangwal and got married in early life. His father was Dr. Charan Singh 'Slotri', veterinary doctor. He had been renamed Asa Singh after Baptism, yet he was always known as 'Charan Singh', the discarded dead name as Gursikh. He had been Baptised in young age along with me and was known as my 'Sunehria Vir'. He was of a very young age and Baptism had deep spiritual effect on him, but only for a short time. He had very sweet disposition and was well built. I always addressed him by his Gurmat name, Asa Singh. He was to be arrested in 'Lahore conspiracy case' in 1914 along with me, but he managed to escape to Calcutta and then to Burma. There he became veterinary doctor and got into service. He sent for his family, consisting of his wife, one son Nand Singh and one daughter Nand Kaur. Thus the family was reunited in Burma.

I do not know much about early life of Nand Singh in Burma. Only his bosom-friend, Dr. Tirlochan Singh, can throw some light. All I know is that he received his education there and became a doctor. He was a renouncer by nature like ascetics and a great spiritual seeker. It was in fulfillment of ultimate objective of God-Realization that he had pursued in his previous life. His simplicity and purity in life led him to be taken in by any fake holy one. However he could discern fakes from real like swans 'separating water from milk' with his natural gift, though after full conviction with time. Once so convinced, he would immediately abandon them. With his spiritual thirst unquenched, he would remain yearning for true Sat-Sang, holy company. Wherever a prominent Saint existed in Burma, he went on to follow him with full dedication and faith till the end. He would worship him like God. Dr. Tirlochan Singh was his companion in spiritual pursuit and knows the details of events. However I am not much concerned with this earlier life as Nand Singh in Burma. I had first serious contact with him when he returned to Narangwal disappointed after his long search for spiritual solace, having tried ascetics of different hues. He continued to be a humble seeker with utmost spiritual yearning. His visit coincided with Sat-Sang Samagam, providing a feast of soulful Kirtan of Gurbani

Singing. I do not know how this love-lorn, Nand Singh, got wind of Sat-Sang.

The true seekers have the means to reach their objective, helped by Divine-dispensation. This was the first occasion to meet this young Divine-Lover, fully charged emotionally. His accompanying sister was also a co-seeker of spirituality with equal fervor. The Baptism Ceremony was being held. The experienced Gurmukhs immediately identified them as old associates of previous birth. Dear Nand Singh was the highest candidate for Baptism and his sister, Bibi Nand Kaur, was not far behind in spiritual merit. She very much desired to join her brother for Baptism together. However this was not possible, because she was required to get Baptised only as a couple along with her husband. The husband was as yet untouched by spiritual concern and remained aloof from the environment of Sat-Sang. However Bibi Nand Kaur firmly believed that her silent prayers would soon bring her husband around and he too would be ready for Baptism. She reconciled with postponement of her own Baptism, much against her wishes, in view of the restraint of Gurmat principle and strong faith and hope of redemption together with her husband. Her sacrifice of willful acceptance to withhold her spiritual progress in compliance with tenets of Faith, perseverance in hope and faith in Divine-Dispensation was highly appreciable.

I remember Nand Singh sitting inside among aspirants for Baptism in anticipated spiritual transformation while his devout sister was happily swinging in ecstasy outside in verandah. It appeared that she too would share the spiritual flights of celestial Bliss with her brother even in her present state, sitting outside. The final moment arrived and Vir Nand Singh was being transformed into Blessed Gurdip Singh. He was sitting before the 'Chosen Five' with hands folded together in great anticipation. He was thirsting most like rain-bird for the Divine-Nectar.

Just as he imbibed Amrit from the 'Chosen Five' and was initiated with 'Gur-Mantar', the Divine-Nam, his eyes rolled upward and his spirit soared in highest flight. His Simran of Nam was the unique example of Gurbani-quote, "Gurmukh Rome Rome Har Dhiyave", contemplating Divine with every pore of his being.

Tears of gratitude for bestowing of Divine-Grace were flowing freely. The face shone in Splendor-Divine and his natural charm was enhanced many-fold in splendid glory. Nand Singh of few earlier moments was transformed beyond recognition. He presented the sight of moon-enamored bird in his fixation of Divine-Love. He had a considerable credit of spiritual merit carried over from previous life and had made endless strivings even in this birth. His consciousness was fully awake to receive the very first drop of Divine-Nectar. Just as he received 'Swanti-Boond' like rain bird, there was inner gushing of Spiritual-Nectar within. As soon as he heard 'Gur-Mantar', initiated by 'Chosen-Five', Divine-Nam utterance became automatic from every pore of his being. Initial switching-on kept the Nam-Simran going ceaselessly like working of a pendulum for many years to come. Nectarine-Nam reflected Divine-Light within, and Lord in Full Glory was envisioned! How could Gurdip Singh, engrossed in tasting Nam-Nectar now, have known that the vision of his yearning would be envisioned within his own being? Divine-Light not only filled his inner being but could also be envisioned without, everywhere.

His Love-Yearning eyes of long kept him engrossed in enjoyment of Divine-Vision with single-minded concentration. Enlightenment of 'WAHEGURU-Nam' presented the vision of the self-Named Lord in Real-Being. This is how the tongue and the eyes of Gurdip Singh in ecstasy were completely engrossed with Divine-Wonder. He had attained his long awaited self-fulfillment. He was a picture of gratitude in thanks Giving for Divine-Grace, uttering 'Kartar! Kartar!' With increasing repetition of utterance, manifold miraculous Divinely Glorious hues, were reflected by his face.

This was amazing sight indeed! Whosoever saw youthful Gurdip Singh in this Blissful state also became ecstatic. The most unique happening of this occasion was that Vir Gurdip Singh's sister, Nand Kaur, went into trance, sitting outside. Her Nam-Simran started automatically, as if she had direct spiritual communication with her brother, center of her loving-concern. It is customary to confine the environment of Baptism Ceremony only to the concerned individuals to the exclusion of general sangat. The 'Chosen Five' received Divine-promptings that Reborn in Guru's House, Vir Gurdip Singh, may be

glanced by his Divinely-intoxicated sister, Nand Kaur, from outside through window-glass. With first glance itself Bibi fainted, unable to cope up with the sight of Piercing of Ecstatic Divine-Love and its Glory. Falling flat, she lost her consciousness for many hours. Though she regained her composure, yet Vir Gurdip Singh continued to be in trance inside. The Baptism Ceremony was over since long and his other companions had left. The Chosen Five decided to leave him undisturbed in his Blissful State alone in Presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Granthi Singhs on attendance duty of Sri Granth Sahib were being rotated. However Vir Gurdip Singh remained in same meditational posture, without movement of a limb nor did his eyes blink. Ah! This was great imbibing of Divine-Nectar!

The gathered Sangat was anxious to behold Vir Gurdip Singh and was getting restless. Finally I was told to somehow bring him out of his trance, so that he may come out for sangat to have a glimpse. In compliance of Sangat's direction, taking hold of myself I entered to share in Blissful Play-Divine. Lovingly I touched Vir Gurdip Singh in his deep-meditation. In his state of Intoxicated-Divine-Love, I could barely manage to support him with my shoulder in half-carrying. Finally he was in the midst of eagerly waiting Gursikhs outside. All were beholding his Glorious Sight in devotion. Slowly he regained his normal composure. His lips moved and there were resounding of Kirtan-Divine for long. It is not known how long it took Vir Gurdip Singh to return to normal life and duty towards family. His wife too was Baptised along with him and thus the couple returned to Burma as devout Gursikhs. His Divine-infatuated presence of Nam-enlightenment first regaled Gursikh-Sangat in Rangoon and then many other cities. Under his powerful influence of complete Faith-dedication, a prominent Kirtani Jatha came into being, ushering an environment of spirituality. Many were moved to experience his state of Divine-Bliss and indeed acquired the same highest Bliss like one lamp lighting another.

The transformation in old Nand Singh to Vir Gurdip Singh of high spirituality was most astounding to his associates in Burma. The aspiring Gursikhs in their early youth were highly benefited. The city of Paeboi was particularly blessed with a heavenly atmosphere of devotional Sat-Sang. Quite a few years later Dr. Randhir Singh of

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Gurjerwal returned to Punjab from Burma. This is his narration, “Burma is now truly blessed with heavenly spiritual environment in the region of Paeboi. Rangoon has also experienced some of this Blissfulness. Though I am hardened worldly mortal devoid of all spirituality, yet I can always spot the Essence of Gurmat whenever I chance to come across. I happen to have name common with you, ‘Randhir Singh’. While you have progressed spiritually, I too have made similar if not higher strivings in service for Panthic causes. However I remain a stranger to matters spiritual, yet it is Guru’s blessing that I can evaluate accurately real talent of Gurmat in Panth, Khalsa nation. There are two shining examples of Jatha, Vir Wishakha Singh and Vir Amar Singh (Pooran Singh) in Rangoon. Though socially they fall in category of not-so-well-to-do people, yet one bows to them for their high spirituality. Like the hidden jewels, wrapped in rags, they have been identified by the jeweller in me. Let me elucidate that their spiritual enlightenment has been helped by Dr. Gurdip Singh Ji, who got imbued spiritually here and then carried the Flame to Burma.”

Dr. Gurdip Singh served his patients most selflessly. His soothing words eradicated half the problem of disease. In the case of patients with poor means and low castes, he devoted special attention day and night going to their houses. He spent his own money for their medicines and care, bringing them full relief and enthusing new life. Irrespective of the social status of a patient, he would rush to attend the patient even at mid-night. Making money was never his objective. Starting with words of reassurance and solace, he would make as many rounds as required till the patient was fully cured.

He was renowned for his caring and ideal ethical behavior with patients. All his patients were nursed back to full health. He left his high medical position in Burma, thinking of service as mere enslavement. He setup his medical practice to serve Narangwal, Gurjerwal and surrounding villages most selflessly. He would not charge even for medicines from the poor. Even the rich were not quoted medical fees. Cheerfully he would answer any calls from patients without regard to time or prevalent weather of incessant rain, storm, etc. His devotion and professional care brought most satisfying

results to his patients. Making it free for the poor, he charged very reasonably from the rich.

However even the well-to-do families would not pay cost of medicines and would ask for credit facility that never got repaid. Many of the village-physicians had to pack up their practice. The high-class medical service rendered by Dr. Gurdip Singh never got true appreciation. His personal financial resources got dried up. Under this circumstance, his veterinary doctor father recalled him to Burma. With his influence in Government circles, he got Dr. Gurdip Singh rehabilitated to his previous position. However the father had drawn relationship with his son, Dr. Gurdip Singh, that never could flourish. The details do not interest me, but I mainly attribute this to diversity of interests of worldliness as against spiritual pursuit. My main purpose is to give a life-sketch of Dr. Gurdip Singh Ji and not concern myself with family relationships.

Dr. Gurdip Singh Ji lent his surroundings an air of blissful spirituality wherever he stayed. He went around establishing Sat-Sangs, congregational seats, and interest in Kirtan. Leading an exemplary life of a devout Gursikh on Path of Gurmat, he helped many aspirants of Gursikhi. His family life was led dutifully in a spirit of detachment of true renouncer. He remained obedient to his elders and complied with Gurmat code fully in spirit of dedication. For reasons unknown, he seemed to have been in a hurry to merge with Light Eternal. Praying secretly for end of his life-sojourn, he readied himself for the moment of departure. His life remained beyond reproach and in a spirit of detachment like a lotus flower in water. Such was Gurmat ordained family life that ended too early. Sitting in a secluded corner in Burma, he departed with self-invited Divine-Call, never to return again! Here we are left as his love-lorn admirers, to cherish old memories.

CHAPTER 23 YOUNG PREM SINGH “PINING-DEVOUT”

He truly remained pining for Divine-Love throughout his short-lived life. Departing for Divine-Love, he left me too pining-in-love. This chance-meeting, ever-lasting in memory, runs thus:

The entire Akhand Kirtani Jatha, including Babu Mal Singh, had come to village Boparai at the house of Sri Bhai Iqbal Singh for Akhand-Pathh Sat-Sang Samagam. According to dispensation-Divine, a whole family from Vadali (Ala Singh Wali) of Maen-Doab came there for Gurmat Baptism. Jathedar Ganga Singh was their intermediary. With great loving devotion they got Baptised along with other aspirants and all felt spiritually transformed. Young Prem Singh was particularly smitten by Divine-Love in his astonishing transformation. He was deeply imbued with spirituality. Engaged in meditation of Divine-Nam all were losing awareness of their bodies in total engrossment. Seeing youthful Prem Singh in enjoyment of Divine-Glory, a common thought occurred separately to Gurmukh Bhai Mal Singh Ji and me at the same time. It was thought that this young-man's marriage with our loving young girl, Kulwant Kaur, would be most befitting. The concurrence of thought between two of us got confirmed and made resolute without exchanging words. Sri Babu Mal Singh Ji talked to Jathedar Ganga Singh Ji and the family from Vadali that this young Prem Singh now belonged to us (hinting the proposal). It further transpired that he was still an eligible bachelor. He was a student in some school near Vadali. Babu Ji further proposed that the boy 'may take admission in Sri Mukatsar High School, where Bhai Iqbal Singh was serving as Head master. This would ensure personal supervision by Bhai Iqbal Singh as also provide chance to benefit from holy environment of Sri Muktsar Darbar Sahib, historical shrine. Bhai Iqbal Singh Ji readily agreed to this arrangement. Thus Prem Singh Ji passed his matriculation from there. Next he took admission in Khalsa College Sri Amritsar and passed in Faculty of Arts (F.A.)

It was then time for much awaited 'Anand Sanjog', the destined marriage. Finally the day arrived and a marriage party of Gurmukhs, singing Gurbani Kirtan, landed at Narangwal. This was the first

occasion for Sant Bhai Jawala Singh Ji's visit. It turned out to be a long session of Akhand Kirtan. This was a summer gathering of devout souls, basking in spiritual environment. Gurmukh Prem Singh, the groom, was in most blissful state. Early morning Asa-Di-Var Kirtan started. It was full-moon night. Waves of Kirtan sound reached afar. The initiating prayer, 'Ardasa', by Gurmukh Bhai Mal Singh Ji brought a touch of flourishment to the yearning souls. The renowned Akali 'Ragi' Bhai Lachhman Singh Ji 'Gandharb' (title means 'celestial singer') started classical Kirtan in Divine-fervour. In addition to harmonium there was mingling of the tunes of 'Nafris' (flute type musical organs), played by two accompanying artists. The prominent Kirtanias of the Jatha were also present. The Anand marriage was performed in astounding prevalence of Bliss. The devout Bibi Kulwant Kaur was thus wedded to Gurmukh youthful Prem Singh. It was a perfect match of both physical and spiritual beauties. Prem Singh Ji's charm fascinated one and all. I had come to admire him at the very first sight and that developed into still deeper love with this new relationship. They lived happily together in highest marital bliss.

Before I started coming to 'Kumar Hatti' hills, I was invited to secluded area of Solan hills by Sardar Basheshar Singh Ji, a high official of Patiala State, at his residence, along with entire Jatha. A long period of four-months was spent there. There was adequate arrangement for comfortable stay for all and the Langar expenses were borne by Sardar Basheshar Singh. The blest couple of Vir Prem Singh Ji and my beloved girl, Kulwant Kaur were also part of this gathering. The very sight of youthful Prem Singh was enough to make Sardar Basheshar Singh ji and his wife Bibi Sagar Ji fall in deep love with him. Vir Prem Singh was appointed to an attractive post in Patiala state. Sardar Basheshar Singh was then among the prominent state officials, belonging to a highly reputed family. He came to admire high character and bearing of Prem Singh and almost adopted him. Though appointed as state employee, Prem Singh spent many years staying close to S. Basheshar Singh Ji. He served with utmost loyalty, intelligence and awareness. Prem Singh had excellent dealings with associated officials of both superior and subordinate categories. He came to be loved by one and all for his enthusing blissfulness and everyone claiming special relationship with him. His devotion to duty and obedience was such that he was ever willing for anything anytime,

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anywhere, without slightest hesitation. Though in my case he enjoyed a privileged position of almost son-in-law, yet he remained most humble and ready for any service. He never exhibited any sense of self-pride or haughtiness. Enjoying the blessedness of many sat-sang samagams, his privileged relationship with me was never exhibited due to his deep humility. He always had sweet words for all, which were sweetened with his inner disposition and not just faked. It is this sweetness of disposition that wins recognition in House of the Guru and devoid of this virtue have no place. It is Nam-Simran, ceaseless Divine-Memory. It was Grace of the Guru that Prem Singh enjoyed both spiritual and worldly recognition.

The high social status of his family was well acknowledged in Vadali. It was so destined through Divine-Will that all members of this august family died within a period of one year. The house, once filled with hustle and bustle of activity, wore a deserted look. Prem Singh's mother was first to depart and her glory too departed with her. Next it was turn of his younger sister and elder brother. Prem Singh's son of about 3 years too died. Bibi Kulwant Kaur was left with two baby-daughters. His father was next victim of death, leaving all matters to the sole care and responsibility of Kaka Prem Singh. However in the general collapse, he too did not endure. None could anticipate his recall by Divine so soon. I was enjoying Spiritual Bliss at 'Kumar-Hatti' and Bibi Kulwant Kaur was also with me. A sudden news came that beloved of all, Prem Singh, while riding a bicycle between Sirhand and Bassi collided head-on with a Tonga and died in accident on the spot. All bewailed his untimely death in family circles and among spiritual associates. There was a wave of sympathy. Proceeding from Kumar-Hatti I headed for Narangwal. In the following Akhand-Pathh Samagam all bereaved souls were gathered. The sole representative of the once large family was our beloved girl, Bibi Kulwant Kaur. A third daughter was born to her after few months of Prem Singh's death. Accepting Divine-Will and drawing solace from spiritualist sympathizers, she is spending her days at her parental home. She had enjoyed a deep loving relationship with her husband, Prem Singh Ji.

The couple had accompanied me on my first tour of Kashmir. They were deeply steeped in enjoyment of Akhand Kirtans. Prem Singh had a pen-name of "Behbal", that I was not aware of. When I found him in

soaring spiritual flight and losing all other awareness I happened to comment that he was a great 'pining-lover of Divine'. It was then that a knowing person informed me of his pen name that carried the same meaning. However he was never called by this name during congregations of Sat-Sang.

Time would pass and so would many a youthfulness, yet the memories of the beloved would never fade. The Nam-imbued devout, abiding in the hereafter, must be relishing great environment of high spirituality and would not look back here. How would those yearning for onward progress ever to look back! Wounds of separation of the love-lorn can never heal. The call of death does not discern the age of child, youth or old, but follows dictation of Master-Divine to lead mortals to the hereafter. Departed are the charming while riding the crest of spirituality and particularly those untouched by worldliness ended their life-sojourn beautifully in Bliss. This upheaval is a blessing in disguise for me. The pangs of this separation from Nam-imbued souls of devout, keeps me aloof from worldliness. The death always appears to be hovering overhead. It is a gift of these departees to the hereafter! My salutations to the Graced ones of Guru's House, whose souls departed one after the other to merge into Divine!!

ਹਉ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਮੀਤਾ ਅਵਰੀਤਾ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਜਿਨ ਸਿਉ ਗਾਡਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਲੀਅਤਾ ਦੀਤਾ ॥
ਲੀਆ ਤ ਦੀਆ ਮਾਨੁ ਜਿਨੁ ਸਿਉ ਸੇ ਸਜਨ ਕਿਉ ਵੀਸਰਹਿ ॥
ਜਿਨੁ ਦਿਸਿ ਆਇਆ ਹੋਹਿ ਰਲੀਆ ਜੀਅ ਸੇਤੀ ਗਹਿ ਰਹਹਿ ॥
ਸਗਲ ਗੁਣ ਅਵਗਣੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਹਿ ਨੀਤਾ ਨੀਤਾ ॥
ਹਉ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਮੀਤਾ ਅਵਰੀਤਾ ॥

*I am sacrifice unto my spiritually-awakened friends.
Those are the ones, my inseparable beloveds of common love.
How can the beloveds of unbreakable ties of love be forgotten?
Their very sight is enthralling and they remain ever so close to heart.
Ever blessed are they with all virtues, without a flaw.
Sacrifice am I unto my friends of spiritual-awakening!*

Suhi Chhand M:1 [765]