**FROM THE BANK OF SUTLUJ TO BARNALA**

Sitting in a small orchard outside Barnala, he was engrossed in meditation of Lords name. (Baba Nand Singh ji on his way from Bhadaur to Dhanaola had also rested here one afternoon. Baba Ishar Singh ji established Nanaksar Thath here with his own hands). After a couple of day, he saw an old women picking up dry twigs for burning. She was also weeping while picking up fire wool. Baba ji asked her, “Old woman, why are you crying ?” Initially she said that she was receiving what she was ordained for. He still persisted with his enquiry to which she disclosed that she was a widow with a five years old son. The son is suffering form a strange ailment that no one has been able to diagnose. I have put him through treatment according to my financial capability. I have taken him to various pious and holy saints but to no avail. He seems on his last days and his death is inevitable - today or tomorrow . He said, “Old lady, if he lives beyond your expectations, then what ?” She said, “If would be good if he survives.” He asked, “Would you do something.” The old woman replied that she was very poor and had no money to give in charity. He said, “We only want you to do one good act.” The old woman asked what it was.“Give away this child to some one,” replied Baba Harnam Singh ji.

“Whom should I give it to ?” She asked, “Who will accept him in this state of health ?”

“I will take him,” he replied.

“Do you wish to make him your disciple?” asked the old woman.

“How does it matter to you? I may or may not,” replied Baba Ji.

“Yes, I shall give him away once he becomes well,” she replied.

“Go and bring the child,” commanded Baba ji.

She went and brought the child immediately. Baba ji saw him and said-

“He has gone very weak.”

“See for yourself,” she said.

“Put him on the ground in front of me”.

She did, as was directed. Baba ji covered the boy with a sheet, and asked the old woman to go and tend to her work. Hesitantly she left. After picking up firewood, she came to sit by the side of the boy. Baba ji said -

“Go home and return after a *‘pehar’* (about three hours)”.

She left the place but not without casting glances a few times at the lying boy. She returned soon from her home. When she called Baba ji, he asked her to remove the sheet and look at her son. When she removed the sheet from his face, she was flabbergasted. The boy looked as if he had never fallen sick. Baba ji smiled and said –

“He is ours’ and not your’s any more. He will live with you but as our own. He would grow up to be an achiever. We will get all our tasks done by or through him.”

Saying this, he warned her to remain silent and not to disclose the episode to anyone. Then the old woman asked-

“Sir, what is your name ? Where have you come from.”

“I have coming wandering the country side. My name is-

‘Mahan Harnam Singh Roomiwalé’.

Then he asked the old woman about the boys name. When the old woman told his name, Baba ji said—

“This name is no good. We will give him a new name. Calls him ‘Mirchan Khana’ (Chilly eater).

“This is no name,” said the old woman.

“I may name him as I like. How am I concerned with others. You may take him away now. He will remain in a state of trance. He won’t talk with anybody. He will not be bothered by heat, cold, hunger or thirst.

Don’t run around to people with him. Keep him safe at home”.

Baba Jaswant Singh ji often related the episode as narrated by Baba Ishar Singh ji that Baba Mahan Harnam Singh ji had cured a child of a woman here at this place. So a *‘Thath’* by the name of *‘Nanaksar’* was raised on that piece of land. A holy reservoir was dug up and filled with water. A perpetual routine of meditation on Name and recitation of gurbani commenced. The sikh congregation would receive the divine sermons as enunciated by Guru Nanak, and are making their lives a success.

From here, Baba ji reached *‘Farwahi’* and then on to *‘Dhanaula’*. From Dhanaula, he reached *‘Bhai Rupa’* via Bhadaur. The foundation *‘log’* of *‘Bhai Rupa’* village was fixed by the pious hands of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib in the memory of one of his devoted sikh named *‘Bhai Rup Chand’*. Baba ji stayed here for many days and imparted divine knowledge to the descendants of Bhai Rup Chand and Baba Gyan Chand beside many other sikhs.

Baba ji made his next sojourn at Bhucho after visiting numerous villages like Kotha Guru ka, Bhagata, Seereeay wala, Baja Khana, Dhilwan, Kot Kapura and at least a dozen more falling enroute. His Bhucho stay became his permanent abode. Many a time he had told the congregation during his discourses that village Bhucho and Roomi are the places of his meditation in his previous births. That is why he feels more at peace with himself staying here. The place also reminds him of numerous blessings bestowed upon him by the Almighty . Baba ji also made a dwelling by the name of *‘Dera Baba Roomewala’* there at village Bhucho. This place is about 4 kilometers away from Bhucho and about 15 kilometers from Bhatinda. It is about half a kilometer form the road cross Bhatindas-Barnala. He blessed this place and attached many sikh congregation with the holy feet of Guru Nanak. Many group of saints and holymen would often come to him for divine discourses and receive direction for treding the spiritual path. Many would come to rid themselves of their tribulations. He would grant everyone’s wishes.

Baba ji’s most common advise to all and sundry was based on the following quotes from gurbani**.**

1. **“Sarab Rog ka ankhad(u) nām(u)” (274)**

*Meditation on Lords name is the panacea of all the ills.*

1. **“Seva Kart hoé nihkami.” (286)**

*Service without desire for reward is the most noble*

*and helps attain the Lord.*

**(c) “Nạ kar chint chinta hai Karté” (1070)**

*Don’t worry; The Creator worries for everyone.*

**(d) “Je Lo eh sadā such bhai: Sādhū sangat gureh batāī. (1182)**

*Oh brother ! for perpetual happiness, keep company of saints and holy men tells the Guru.*

**(e) “Manas sevā kharī duhetī. Sādh kī sevā suhetī.” (1182)**

*Service of a man is painful while service of a holy man is blissful.*

**(f) “Satgur kī sevā safal hai**

**Je ko karé chit(u) lai.” (552)**

*Service of the True Lord with devoted heart is*

*acceptable.*

**(g) “Pun(u) dān Jap tap jeté sab ūpar(i) nam(u).” (401)**

*All alms, charity, austerity& worship are below*

*meditation of His name.*

**(h) “Mạn nām(u) Jap(i) nām(u) ārādh(i)**

**Andin(u) nām vakhānī.**

**Updes(u) sun(i) sādh santan kā**

**Sab chūkī kan(i) jamānī.” (608)**

*Oh my mind, meditate on name, repeat and contemplate on it every day and night.*

*Listen to the sermons of saints and holy men to allay thy fears of life and death.*

Baba ji would impart sermons to his congregation on the complicated subjects of compassion, truth, worship, devotion, duty, contentment, humility, others welfare, charity and diligence etc. He would often say that the truth pervades in the three era. Truth fullness is highest trait of all. Truth is the basis of all actions of life.

**“Sachonh orai sab(u) ko upar(i) sach(u) āchār(u)”.**

*Truth is higher than all yet truthful living is higher than truth.*

A devoted sikh of the Guru has to achieve the spiritual height by freeing himself from the evils of lust, anger, desires, attachments and pride; which is possible by following the truthful path as dictated by the Gurus in Sikhism. Guru’s sikh is not to destroy these traits but improve upon their effect by reformation. Lust must be converted into discipline, anger into bravery, desires to contentment while attachment and pride should be converted into unrewarding love and service; and self pride respectively. One who can exercise control over these in virtuous traits reaches the sublime stage of seeing the formless Lord God by becoming a seeker of the spiritual path.

The fifth master while describing the unvirtuous traits explains the attachment as-

**“Hé ajit sūr sangrāmn ati balnā bạhu mạrd nạh.**

**Gan gandharb dev mānukh(u) pạsu pankhī bimohnạh.” (1358)**

*“O worldly love- the invincible hero of the battle field (of life)*

*Thou art capable of crushing very powerful ones.*

*Thou even fascinatest the celestial messengers, musicians,*

*gods, mortals, animals and birds.”*

It is stated that the site of his dwelling place was a high mound which was erstwhile in the occupation of “Nirmala Sadhus”. Sant Baba Wadhawa Singh ji used to live here. He had a good deal of disputation and discussion with Baba Wadhawa Singh ji who soon realized that you are a high ranking holy soul. Therefore he started all his tasks after receiving his blessing and acceptance. Baba ji even had a Sehaj Path (Recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib not within the bounds of specific period of time). Performed by Baba Wadhawa Singh in memory of his deceased mother. It was here that one Bhai Neela Singh became one of his ardent follower.

During his sojourn here, Baba ji had a piece of cloth tied on his eyes. He never looked at fire. Whenever anyone came to him with loving devotion, he would ask him to show his respect by prostrating himself before that place since it was the holy spot where many hermits and mendicants lived and carried out long hours of meditation and penance. Anyone who would visit him with humility and devotion for grant of a wish would be asked to touch his forehead at the holy spot that he had named Sukoon Ghar.” He would than remark that his stamp is now borne on that forehead. “All your desires would be fulfilled and even carriers of death would cause no harm to you in the world hereafter. The cycle of birth and death would break for ever,” he would often tell them.

Whoever visited his abode, Baba ji would record complete information about the visitors name, father’s name, address, caste, maternal and paternal grandparents and other near and dear relatives. Many a time the Sikh congregation would ask as to why such a record was being maintained by him, he would often grin and say, “All this information will become handy someday. Even today many writings can be found in that *‘Dera’*. It was here that Baba Nand Singh ji of Kaleran reached him. On the very first day, he gave necessary spiritual sermons to Baba Nand Singh ji realizing that Baba Nand Singh ji was a great noble soul and explained to him how to perpetually recite the first step (Pauri) of *‘Jap(u)Ji’* Sahib. Baba Nand Singh ji received his spiritual education from him during his stay here. He was blessed with many more virtues beside the technique of *‘Sampat’* path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji. Baba Nand Singh ji stayed with him for nearly 12 years.

Baba ji life style was that of an ascetic and mendicity. He lived a carefree life. If in a mood, he may eat a meal otherwise remained quiet for months. It is said that he seldom consumed water even during summer months and never needed a hot cover after a cold water bath during peak winter months of December-January. He was ever engrossed in worship and meditation. Many devotees and holy men who happened to stay in the *‘Dera’* saw these facts with their own eyes. He was never seen sleeping at anytime. Either he was seen strolling and constantly repeating *‘Name’* or engaged in deep meditation sitting on the ground with his legs crossed.

All the acts of benevolence performed by him on his sikh congregation can’t be recorded. Their description too is impossible. His preaching’s were universally applicable or emphasized to follow the most common tenets of religion. Meditation on Name, speaking the truth earning livelihood honestly and keeping company of good people were often the subjects of his sermons. A few examples of his quotes are as under-

*“The formless God Lord is the fountain head of knowledge and power.”*

*“Guru Nanak is the embodiment of God and deliverer of people in the Dark age (kalyug).Recite his Bani (Sermons in poetic form) and reflect on him.”*

*“The word ‘ Waheguru’ is a ticket to the eternal abode of the Lord”.*

*“Guru Nanak is the common divine asset-Guru of Hindus and Pir of Muslims”.*

*“Guru Nanak’s home provides all needs of this and the world here after. No one ever faces dis-appointment in fulfillment of their hearts desires.”*

Baba ji would advise people to obey true guru’s order implicitly. That was the way to achieve emancipation. He would also advise people to shed their egoism and teach them the method of meeting with God through living and devotional worship. He laid the foundation of the blemish-less code of conduct based on the philosophy of Sikhism. He attached the people with Guru Granth Sahib through singing the praises of Lord and giving out invaluable advise based on the Divine Order received daily through gurbani. He would recite historical and other self experienced episodes while explaining gurbani. For the emancipation of the congregation . He would also quote freely from the writings of Bhai Gurdas ji and Bhai Nand Lal ji to facilitate understanding of gurbani. To maintain concentration of the audience, he would even relate incidents or cut remarks which would set them laughing. He would use very simple language as used in Malwa region of the Punjab. But his main characteristic was that his mannerism, sight of his ever happy face and sweet smile would have such magnetic pull on the minds of the congregation that thousands would listen to his singing and discourses in rapt attention for hours. Important subjects were often explained twice or even thrice. His intentions every time were that every individual must derive maximum benefit from the discourses and carry with him a bag full of happiness. The Gurbani has described such deeds in the following lines-

**“kāté agyān timar nirmalīya**

**budh(i) bigās bibekā.**

**Jionn jạl tarang phen(u) jạl hoī hai,**

**Sevak thakur bhae ekā”. (1209)**

*Destroying the darkness of ignorance blemish less with discriminately intellect has blossomed*

*As the wave of water becomes water again, the servant and the master has become one .*

The feeling of separation between the holy men and the Lord disappears as the Gurbani vouches for it

**“Her herjan dué ek hai bib bichār kacch nāhe.**

**Jạl te upaj tarang jion jạl hi bikhai samahe.**

**Gurū sikh(u) sikh(u) gurū hai eko gur updesh chalaé.”**

*Lord and his servant are both one,*

*The feelings of two does not exist.*

*Like a wave of water is one*

*When it reforms the water again.*

*A teacher and taught, disciple and teacher becomes one,*

*if the disciple follows the sermons of the teacher.*

During his stay here, Baba ji not only showered his benevolence on the saints and his devotees but he visited every nook and corner of Northern India to allay the miseries of the people. The cross section included poor, land tillers, nomads, thieves, mendicants, householder, the details of which world become a voluminous work.

**(a) “Atal bachan sadhū janān sab mạhé pạrgạtāiā ” (812)**

*The words of pious souls are immutable is apparent to all.*

**“Nanak dās mukh te jo bolai īhān ūhān sach(u) hovai. (681)**

*All utterances of Nanak the humble servant come true here and there after.*

**(b) “Māī sat(i) sat(i) sat(i) her sat(i) sat(i) sat(i) sadha.**

**Bachan(u) gurū jo pūré kahio mein chhīk(i) gānthrī bādhā. ”**

**(1204)**

*O mother the Lord is ever pervading and so are his saints.*

*The words that my perfect teacher has given me, are tied in a firm knot in my mind.*

Shortly before the time of his demise, Baba ji would often say that he has much to do but what is available to him was very small. He was obviously referring to the time left with him to achieve the desired results. He gave many indications like this but no one could really understand their implications. Many near ones often remarked that had they understood they would have prayed for favours. On the eve of his departure for his heavenly abode and after having completed his routine on Poh Wadi Satmi, 1927; Sant Narain Singh ji Mehanawale who was present by the side of Baba ji said, “ Baba ji- your body is burning as if you have very high fever ”. Baba ji replied that he was right and asked him to send for lady Khem Kaur Jandanwali. The old lady came. Baba ji told her that he was about to depart for his heavenly abode, and that the event should be accepted as Divine *‘Will’* and no one was to lament and indulge in condolences. Within a few minutes his light of life merged with the Divine Light. The holy congregation went into a rapt grief. The ambience was loaded with sorrow. This was such an unexpected event that no body would believe it easily. The devotees started gathering in the *‘Dera’* and very soon it became an ocean of humanity. The devotees were unable to bear the pangs of separation from their respected Babaji who loved them all very much. Baba ji was cremated on the mound itself. Baba Nand Singh ji attended the cremation. He paid his homage and circum-ambulated the pyre. The holy place has since then been looked after first by Baba Narain Singh ji, then by Baba Ishar Singh ji and now by Baba Khem Singh ji.

**‘Kot(i) madhé koī sant dikhāiyā’**

*(The lord produced a saint amongst millions of people)*