**BABA MAHAN HARNAM SINGH JI**

**(BHUCHO WALE**)

The stretch of land between rivers Stalej and Bees of the holy Punjab became more holy when a charming baby was born to Mata Parham Kauri wife of S. Boor Singh, (Bal by cast and agriculturist by profession), in 1821 AD in the village of Mansoorwāl, district Kapurthala. The village falls on the rail track connecting Jalandhar with Amritsar. It is located at a distance of 8 kilometers approximately from Beas railway station. The birth of the child seemed in consonance with the divine order-

**Dhan(u) su vans (u) dhan (u) su pitā**

**Dhan(u) su mātā jin(i) jạn jané**

**Jin sās(i) girās(i) dhiyaya mera her her**

**se sāchī dargạh her jan bané. (1135)**

*Blessed is the lineage blessed are the parents who gave birth to the true servant of the Lord. Those who remember the God Lord with every breath and morsel they eat become the most favoured in the court of the true master.*

All who saw the divinely lighted face of the child felt enamored by the divine dispensation. Considering the happiness and the kindness granted by the almighty, the parents named the boy - Nihal Singh.

He was a kind hearted, carefree, calm and liberal person right from his childhood. Even in his early days, he showed a disposition of unconcern detachment free from the worldly attraction who preferred to spend his time in seclusion and devotion. That is why his friends and companions of the neighborhood had nick-named him as *‘Mastana’*, meaning the one who lives in a state of intoxication with his own self. Very often, even the elders of the village would address him by the same name. Even gurbani describes the state of such noble souls in the following hymn-

**Bhaiyā diwānā sāh kā Nānak(u) bourānā.**

**Haun her bin(u) avar(u)n ñạ jānā. 1. Rahāo. (991)**

*Hermitic Nanak has become crazy for his Lord.*

*Other than Him, I know not any one. Pause*

He was never interested in the games the children play at various stages of their childhood. What to speak of enjoying pranks and plays, he would even talk very little. That is why perhaps he could neither engross himself in school studies nor in the domestic chores including tilling of land. He was ever engrossed in the meditation of His Nam. The parents tried their best to involve him in acquiring necessary education or tender the land and the cattle and become a respectable agriculturist of the village. But those who are blessed with the divine order and involved in the spiritual pursuit are never effected by these temptations. All the same, he would occasionally accompany his elder brothers- Bara Singh, Dasaunda Singh and Nidhan Singh to work in the fields or take the cattle out for grazing. During all this time, his mind would remain attached with the Almighty like Bhagat Dhanna ji -exactly in accordance with the conversation between Bhagat Namdev ji and Bhagat Trilochan as recorded in the composition of Bhagat Kabir ji.

**Nāmā māyā mohiyā kahé Tilochan(u) mīt.**

**kahé chhipahu chhailai Rāmn ạ lavạhu chīt(u).**

**Nāmā kahé Tilochana mukh te Rām smāl(i).**

**Hāth pāo(n) kar(i) kām(u) sab(u) chīt Niranjan nāl(i) (1375)**

*“O Nāmdev the worldly wealth has bewitched thee*

*says his friend Trilochan.*

*why act thou printests the designs and fixeth not*

*Thy mind on the name of the Lord.*

*“Utter Thou the Lords name with thy month”*

says Namdev to Trilochan*.*

*“with thy hand and feet Thou may perform work*

*but keep thy mind with the immaculate Lord”.*

This was exactly the state of child Nihal Singh. He would often be so engrossed in meditation that he would even forget where he was. His friends or his brothers would often search the cattle and him and bring them home. The Gurubani describes the state of such persons as under-

**“Āth pạhạr her kā nām(u) lei.**

**Sach(u) updes(u) sevak ko dei.**

**Moh māyā kai sạn g(i)n ạ lep(u).**

**Mạn mạhe rākhai her her ek(u)” (287)**

*Around the clock he repeats God’s name*

*and give true counsel to His servants*

*He never immerses himself in the worldly attractions.*

*and keeps one Lord in his mind*

**Jināh sās(i) girās(i) n ạ visarai her nāmā mạn man t(u).**

**Dhan(u) se seī Nānakā pūran(u) soī sant(u). (319)**

*Those who evict not the name of the Lord from*

*their minds – eating or sleeping,*

*They alone are the blessed-says Nanak, and*

*the true saints they are.*

One day a noble and holy person visited their home, He was amazed to see a child of young age sitting unconcerned with his legs crossed and folded. He addressed his mother and said, “Young lady, he seems to me a revered person engrossed in the meditation of Lord’s name all the twenty four hours. Millions of people will be blessed by him. The world will worship him”. The mother replied, “To us, he is a simple child who is ignorant of the worldly ways: and we remain ever worried as to what would happen to him? The noble soul laughed and said, “O mother, he is a great saint. Don’t worry about him. Timeless and ever pervading Lord is ever by his side.”

**Santan kī mahimā kavan vakhānau.**

**Agādh(i) bodh(i) kicch(u) mit (i) nahi jānau. (181)**

*The glory of the saints I can’t describe.*

*Their knowledge is beyond comprehension that I*

*can’t even assess.*

**Sei sāh bhagwant se sach(u) sampai her rās(i)**

**Nanak sach(u) such(i) pāīai tih santan, kai pass (i). (250)**

*Those alone are rich and fortunate who has storehouse of Truth and God’s name. Truth and pity are obtained from the holyman -*says Nanak.

So this child is not a simpleton. He is here to salvage the world.

He was always beyond the pangs and pleasures, happiness and sorrow, summer or winter, sleep, hunger and remained in a state of detachment, ever in one hue as described in the Gurbani-

**Rain dinas rahé ek ran gā[[Prabh kan jānai sad he sn gā. (181)**

*Day and night, he remains in one state.*

*And ever feels the Lord by his side.*

**Āth Pehar nikat(i) kar(i) jāné.**

**Prabh kā kiyā meethā mānai. (392)**

*Through out the day-night he (saint) feels Lords nearness.*

*And accepts His doings without remorse but sweetly.*

**Nạ tis bhookhn ạ nn dn ạ khnā ā sovanā.**

*He is beyond hunger, sleep and forgets eating and sleeping.*

Considering his state, his mother paid more attention toward him than her other sons. She would herself bathe him and feed him. Often she would feel happy listening to the discourses; and feel depressed at his unconcerned life style.

One day a neighbouring lady visited his house along with her child and said to mother Pradhan Kaur, “ I have yet to finish my domestic chores. Can you keep the child with you for a while please.” So his mother asked him to pick up the boy for sometime so that she can finish her work. Despite repeated commands, he did not pick up the little child. When his mother (Pradhan Kaur) angrily asked him to pick up the child, he replied, “God alone will pick him up.” It is said that the boy expired after sometime. His (Nehal Singh’s) mother became angry and scolded him for having said like that. Seeing his mother’s rage, he laughed and said.” There is no need to fret and fume, O mother; he soon will come back to the family.”

His prophecies started becoming true right from his childhood.

**Nānak dās mukh te jo bolé īhān ūhān sach hové. (681-682)**

*Nānak the slave sayeth comes true here and hereafter***.**

**Jo jo chitavai dās(u) her māī.**

**so so kartā āp(i) karāī. (202)**

*whatever his humble servant perceives,*

*the creator causes accomplishment of all that.*

When he reached the age of eleven years, he was still popularly called *‘Mastana’* (Carefree) in the village. Some would consider him a holy person and address him accordingly. But he had risen above the petty consideration of respects and insults, happiness and sorrow and other mortal traits. So with whatever name he was addressed, he would reply. He was ever engrossed in the happiness of his association with the Lord’s lotus feet.

One day he said to his mother, “we have to go now.” His mother thought that he was planning to go some where like he has been doing previously, and would come back after some time. So she gave him permission to go. Who can know the state of mind and innate feelings of great souls ? Obtaining permission from his mother, he left his home for good. Following the spiritual path he reached the abode of Sant Ram Singh ji of Dhilwan. He went through a course of Gurbani recitation including understanding its meanings. He understood the deep connotations of the worship in general and Sikhism in particular. He further strengthened his spiritual believes. During his stay of many years at this place, he learnt Vedant and Sikh philosophy and acquired adequate knowledge of Sikh history. Sant Ram Singh ji who was popularly known as ‘Soosianwale’ was a great scholar, adopt in Yog Shastar and Vedas. So, after imparting necessary knowledge to him and seeing his love, unprecedented inclination in worship and devotion to God, Sant Ram Singh ji changed his name from Nehal Singh to Harnam Singh. Thereafter he was sent to abode of Sant Mal Singh ji Nijjran. He further improved upon his spiritual education. He would spend most of his time in worship, recitation of Gurbani and meditation on His name. The holy congregation and other great and pious souls visiting the dwelling always found him in deep meditation of God Lord in a secluded spot.

**Her bhagat(i) her kā piār hai**

**je gurmukh karé bichār. (28)**

*Devotion to God is love for Him*

*if his true follower inflects on it deeply.*

**Sabadau(n) he bhagat jāpdé jin kī bānī sachī hoi.**

**Vichau(n) āp gaiya(n) nāun maneiyān sach milāvā hoi. (429)**

*God’s true devotees are reckoned by the truth of their words.*

*Their egoism is dispelled and meet the True Lord through*

*meditation of His name.*

**Bhagata(n) kī chāl nirāli**

**Chālā nirāli bhagatāh(n) kerī**

**bikham mārg(i) chalanā.**  **(218)**

*Strange are the ways of life of the devotes,*

*peculiar indeed are their ways,*

*since they tred the hazardous paths*.

He was aware that humility and humbleness are essential requisites for the worship of God. The mind should be free of pride and the thoughts high. The worldly cleverness, praises and respects are worthless. The path of love and devotion leads to the ultimate reality of oneness with God. The worldly ocean can be crossed by worship of the God. Gods worship is the true aim of human life. As the names of saints like Dhru Prahlad, Kabir, Namdev and Ravidas are immortal in the world, similar infallibility is obtained by His devotes. Who worship Him without desires of any return. But such worship is achieved by the grace of God and service of His devotes. Constant meditation of His name coupled with service purifies the heart. The mind becomes humble and modest. The evils of lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride disappear from his personality. Not only he alone but his whole family is emancipated.

**Āp mukat(u) mukat(u) karai sansār(u).**

**Nānak tis(u) jan kau sadā namaskār (295)**

*Emancipated is he and emancipates the whole world.*

*Nanak ever rever that servant of God Lord.*

During his stay here, he also derived the benefit of the service of the holy congregation and opportunity of enjoying their company.

**Vich duniya sev kamaīai**

**tā dargah baisan(u) paīyai**

**kahu Nānak bāh (n) ludaīyai. (26)**

*Earn Lords favour through service to humanity,*

*and earn a place of honour in His court,*

*and raise your arm with pride.*

Service and meditation are made a mention in many religions of the world. The service involves physical work, application of mind and contribution of money for the common welfare of the society . It binds a man with humanity breaking the shackles of religion, caste, family and high/low status. The traits of humility and truth slowly enters in to one’s life. These in return free a man from the bondages of attachment and affection and help him successfully complete the voyage of his life.

**Neh kapat seva kijai her keri**

**tā meré mạn sarab sukh paiyai. (861)**

*Service of the Lord with sincerely and pure heart*

*Shalt bless then with all comforts of life.*

**Satgur kī seva gākharī sir dijai āp gavaie.**

**Sabad(i) mileh(i) tā her milai sevā pavai sab Thāe. (27)**

*Strenuous is the service of the True Lord*

*demand total surrender and self pride.*

*understanding the wisdom of His word provide*

*acceptance of service and meeting with him.*

The meditation and service of His creation help a person improve his life in this world and secure the life there after. We should meditate on the name of one-the timeless, creator and who has manifested Himself in all His creations. His names may be innumerable. We serve the humanity and pious souls considering them to be the manifestation and image of God. Both meditation and service produces an unusual clarity in the mind of a person. His mind becomes pious and clean. The historical events of the life of all the Gurus shows that all of them were devoted meditators and willing servants, who reached the pinnacle of the highest level of spirituality to become Guru. We also have the life accounts of Bhai Ghananya ji and a few others, who achieved salvation through the process of service of mankind. The right course for achieving the ultimate reality and obtaining the attachment with the ever loving lotus feet of Lord for us through selfless service and meditation of His name carried out with perpetual devotion love and infallible faith.

His story with Sant Mal Singh ji made him free from the five evils (Kām, Krodh, Lobh, Moh, Ahankar) beyond the three maladies (Ādh, Biādh and Upādh). Having achieved seven basic knowledges, he started living a life free of the three traits (Rajo, Sato and Tammo) and started living a life of a recluse. With meditation and service he crossed the barriers of the supermacy of knowledge, deeds and engrossment. During his stay here, he enjoyed the Nam of Gurbani, learnt the philosophy of Sikhism and tasted the sublime pleasure of devoted worship. Gurbani says the following for such great and noble souls-

**Bhagat(i) kareh mạr jīvaré .**

**gurmukh(i) bhagat(i) sada hoé.**

**O nā kao dhur(i) bhagat(i) khazāna bakshiya**

**mait(i) nạ sakai koé.**

**Gun nidhān(u) mạn(i) paiya**

**eko sacha soé.**

**Nānak gurmukh(i) mil(i) rahe**

**Phir(i) vichhora kade ạ hoe. (589)**

*They alone worship God devotedly who are living dead*

*and obey Lords command as His worship*

*Them are blessed with treasure of worship by the Lord*

*that none can destroy*

*Virtues of Lord imbibe in to their mind- He alone is true one.*

*Those with mind towards Lord separate not from him ever -says Nanak.*

**Sat(i) santokh daiyā dharam nām dān driraiya**

**Gurusikh(i) lai gurusikh sadaiya.****(Bhai Gurdas ji)**

*(Gursikh is he who practices others on Truth, contentment, clemency, a definite way of life, noumen meditation and giving in alms) .*

After acquiring much needed knowledge from Sant Mal Singh ji, he set out on the tour of the country. First of all he reached Amritsar - a town raised by the Guru. He stayed here for many years enjoying the peaceful and tranquil environment of the holy place beside meeting many other pious souls. He recited *‘Jap(u)Ji’* 7,25,000 times during this period. From here, he set out towards Anandpur Sahib, Kiratpur Sahib and went first to Badrinath via Ambala and Jagadhari and then Rishikesh. He derived maximum benefit of acquiring knowledge of Hindu scriptures from the company of Hindu saints and learned scholars. He was very near Hemkunt. His mother was ill at home and she was remembering her son. So he reached home. When his mother was told that *‘Mastana’* has come, she opened her eyes, looked at him and went into eternal sleep. After performing all the rites of his mother, he felt totally relieved of all his responsibility of the house and left it for good.

He set out now to free the mankind of all its ills and maladies as was ordained by Almighty. He rose above the bondages of affection with relations and other acquaintances.

**Chint achintā sagalī gayī**

**Prabh Nānak Nānak Nānak maī. (1157**)

*Verily all my worries disappeared and Nanak Nanak Nanak has become His embodiment.*

**Jee dān dé bhagatī laryan(i) her sio lain(i) milaiye. (749)**

*They beston the boom of worship upon them*

*enabling them meet with God.*

In foresight, he started holding contacts and giving audience with the people who were inclined towards spirituality. His temperament was of a fearless, non-inimical and desiring good of all and sundry. He would never accept any pressure to bear upon him from political or social leaders and lived life according to the Divine order. It was indeed difficult for a common man to understand his spiritual, inner self, well being of others and the state of experience of the two worlds. His facial expression and its effect was so deep and piercing that no one could look straight at his face. He never proclaimed his self at any time.

His life had become a light house for others since it had acquired the lines and true shades of Sikh philosophy. It was a most appropriate example to be emulated. Regard less of the economic, social or education status of the people, he provided them with equilateral advise to tread the right path as dictated by the message of gurus. As a fountain head of truth, piety, humility and humbleness, he started preaching the principals of Sikhism to numerable people who would gather with a desire to make success of their lives. This temperament of his can be

summed up in the following lines of Gurbani –

**Sant bhagat parvān(u) jo prabh(i) bhāiya.**

**Seī bichakhan jant jinnī(n) her dhiyaya. (652)**

*Saints and devotees are acceptable whom He loves.*

*Wise are those who meditate on thy name.*

The formless god sent saints and devoted holy men who visit this world for causing good to a large population of the society. They come to cool the inflamed minds of the people, set their life course on righteous path to improve their stay here and in the world hereafter. They devote their life to such noble cause. Baba Harnam Singh ji too set out with this noble mission in his mind.

Starting from his village, he reached Jagraon. A muslim pir Lappe Shah (holyman) resided here. Baba Harnam Singh ji exchanged his views with him and aprised him of his spiritual path. He reached his maternal grandparents village ‘Mianwind’ after a couple of halts enroute. Thou he had reached a state of detachment from the worldly affair-*‘Ghar he mahé udāsā’* as described in gurbani, yet he was happy to meet his maternal grandfather Kahan Singh, grandmother Nand Kaur, maternal uncles Mahetab Singh and Gulab Singh and a few other relatives. This meeting was no different for Baba ji than any previous one he used to have with Sangat (holy congregation). He advised them to create faith, love & service for the house of Guru Nanak. He preached that we must worship God rising above the feeling of worldly attachments. God has given this human form to us for accomplishment of this mission. The villagers too were dispensed with adequate counseling to follow the path shown by the gurus.

**Haumai mamtā moh chhutā jā sang(i) miliyā sādhé.**

**Jan kahai Nānak(u) mukat(u) hoā her her nām(u) arādhé. (542)**

*Egoism, affection and worldly love leaves when one begets*

*company of saints.*

*Nanak the humble servant achieved emancipation*

*by perpetual recitation of Lords name.*

**Moh(u) ar(u) bharam(u) tajuh tum bīr.**

**Sāch(u) nām(u) ridé ravai sarīr. 1. Rahao (356)**

*Give up the worldly attachments and doubts*

*O brother*

*And let the true name be repealed in thy heart*

*and every bit of the body.*

One way of escaping entrapment in the slush of attachment is meditation of God’s name. Those caught in the web of attachment are also affected by lust, anger and false pride. Such a person cannot escape the wrath of 84 lakhs species. One and only one way to escape the delusive network is to shed idleness and adopt contemplation on god, honest earnings and giving one tenth of one’s earning in charity to the guru’s coffer for use on matters religious.

**Ghāl(i) khāé kicch(u) hathonh dei**

**Nanak rah(u) paccchaneh sai (1245)**

*He alone has recognised the true path*

*Who earns his livelihood and shares some with others.*

Honest earning and meditation leads a man to the door step of Lord God. All his tribulation are wasted away. In the words of Guru-

**Udham(u) karendeā jīu tūn kamāvadian sukh bhun ch**

**Dhiaidia tūn prabhū mil(u) Nānak uttarī chint (522)**

*Earn with sincere effort and live to enjoy its pleasure.*

*Meditating on Thy name Nanak shalt meet The Lord,*

*vanishing thy anxiety*

*.*

Similarly the gurbani emphasizes that fortunate are those who get an opportunity to meditate and serve. One reaches the highest ecclectical state through these two actions.

**Udham(u) karoh vadbhāgī ho simiroh her her rāé.**

**Nānak jis(u) simrat sab sukh hoveh dukh dard bharam jāé. (456)**

*O fortunate yee, make deliberate effort to meditate on Lord,*

*Remembering whom grants happiness and dispels pangs, pains and illusions-*says Nānak.

From here, he reached Moga via Sultanpur and imparted pious counsel of Guru Nanak to the devotee sikhs. He held a discourse with Sant Mehar Singh at village Singha. He stayed there for a month as desired by his host. To awaken the conscience of the people of Malwa, he reached Barnala via Nihal Singh wala, Hathoor, Kangar and Bhadaur, spreading the elixir of gurbani.