

Kaalsi Da Rikhi

The Hermit of Kaalsi

from

Sri Kalgidhar Chamatkar

by

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Part – 1

Raja Medni Prakash, who ruled the small state of Nahan in the Himalayan foothills, was having a meeting with his trusted minister, Vazir Harji.

Raja : “Have you any news, Harji?”

Vazir : “Your Highness, the news is not good, I am afraid. An engagement has been announced between the daughter of Raja Fateh Shah and the son of Raja Bhimchand.”

These two were the rulers of adjoining states and a constant threat to Nahan.

Raja : "So, it has happened!" (Looking at the heavens, he heaved a sigh). "For so long, the lack of a son has caused me such deep anguish, and now, we are faced with this new threat to my kingdom."

Harji : "I too, am extremely worried. As it is, Fateh Shah has been continuously threatening to declare war on us. With this alliance, he will make our lives miserable."

Raja : "What is the way out, then?"

Harji : "I have not been able to find a solution so far, and can only hope for some heavenly intervention to help us."

Raja : "It's been my experience that all the gods and goddesses cannot bring down heaven's blessings! I have prayed and made offerings at innumerable temples, for the gift of a son, but to no avail. I am now convinced that there is no truth in such things; they are only an illusion. But maybe, if we met a truly holy man and asked for his blessings, there

may yet be hope. I have heard of one, called Budhu Shah, but he is a Muslim. Then there is Ramrai, whose miraculous powers have made even Emperor Aurangzeb bow to him. The only problem is that he is an ally of our enemy Fateh Shah. So, all paths seem to be blocked for us. The only alternate left, is to increase the army and pile up the weapons and get ready to fight and if needs be, to die on the battlefield. This way, even though this world will be lost, at least, we shall go to the next with our honour intact.”

Harji : ”Yes, to keep in readiness for battle, is wise. And when there is threat from ones enemies, it is also sound statesmanship. It’s a warrior’s duty to die on the battlefield, but this must not be done with dejection and hopelessness. Effort, spirited effort must be made at all times.”

Raja : “I agree with you.”

Harji :(After thinking for some time) “I have heard of an old Brahmin, who is a very saintly

soul and master of the super-natural. He lives in the forest on the outskirts of Nahan. I suggest that we go and seek his blessings. Meanwhile, we must strengthen our armed forces, as your Highness was thinking. For this, you will have to explain the gravity of the situation to her Royal Highness, your revered mother, and convince her that the time has come to open the royal treasure so that the wealth accumulated by your ancestors, can be utilized now in defense of the kingdom.”

Raja : ”Yes, you are absolutely right. I shall go and speak to my mother immediately. When should we go to meet the Brahmin?”

Harji : ”I think tomorrow morning at dawn would be a good time. To all appearances, it should look as if you are going on a hunt. Once we reach the forest, we shall slip away.”

Raja : ”How far is this place?”

Harji : ”It’s about 20-25 miles east of here. On the banks of the Jamuna river where it

meets the Tons river, there is a small village, Kalsi. In the nearby woods, the Brahmin lives in a simple hut with a young boy, Chando, who takes care of him as well as a couple of cows."

Raja : "Very well. Make all the necessary arrangements, then."

Early next morning, the Raja, Vazir Harji along with a contingent of soldiers and some attendants, set off on their horses for hunting.

In the afternoon, they decided to take rest. While the others busied themselves setting up camp, the Raja and his vazir rode away and soon came to the clearing where the old Brahmin lived. The old man sat on a grass mat on a wooden platform in front of his hut. He appeared to be over 100 years old. There was no flesh on his body, all the bones could be seen, but though his shoulders were hunched and he looked very frail, he emanated an aura of great spiritual strength.

The Raja and Harji got off their horses and while the Raja stayed there, the vazir opened the rough door in the fence and went in. Going up to the old man, he bowed respectfully. The Brahmin recognized him and bade him welcome.

Vazir : "His Royal Highness is waiting outside and wishes for permission to enter."

The Brahmin immediately stood up on his trembling legs, and said,"It is my good fortune that he has come. Even though he comes as a king, he is welcome."

Vazir Harji moved forward quickly and helped the old man to sit, saying,"Please, don't strain yourself. The king has not come as the Ruler but as a seeker of your blessings." Then he went out and escorted the Raja into the old saint's presence.

The Raja bowed to the Brahmin and sat down near him. Once the formalities were over, the

Raja narrated the events which had led him to seek the Brahmin's help.

Brahmin : "I have lived and meditated in your realm for a very long time, and I cannot see it being destroyed. May the Almighty bless you and may your kingdom remain secure for a long time to come. But, there is real danger to you from this alliance between Fateh Shah and Bhim Chand, and the supernatural powers of Ramrai, who has complete control over the elements, can be a formidable force to contend with.

"I myself don't give importance to such powers, as my Guru – my teacher – had advised me not to waste time dabbling in miracles. My lifelong desire, and for which I have prayed constantly, is to have a vision of the Almighty, whether in human form or spiritually, it matters not. Alas! This remains unfulfilled till today," and his eyes filled with tears.

Vazir : "Forgive us for coming unannounced and interrupting your routine, but we are worldly people and impatient to find solutions to our problems."

Brahmin : "As it is the king's duty to protect his people, so it is the duty of the people to be patriotic and vigilant towards the land they dwell in. I have been very happy here and your coming is not an inconvenience. I pray that the Lord helps and guides you."

He paused and the next moment his face brightened and a glow appeared in his eyes. He closed them momentarily and then shook his head. When he opened his eyes, they were moist. After a while, he said,"O King, this is the 'Kalyug' and three parts of it are almost over. It is time now, for a great soul to appear on this earth, and it is my belief that he is here already, but I don't know the exact place where he lives. If you can find him then all your troubles will be over."

Raja : "How can we look for someone without knowing his whereabouts?"

Brahmin : "O King, I have spent my life praying to various gods and goddesses and some living 'gurus' too, in my search for the Almighty. Lately, whenever I have sat down to meditate, a saintly vision appears and tells me not to be disheartened, that He Himself has come into this world. He has a royal bearing and He is involved in battles. Hence, He wears armour. But He is the true saviour sent from Heaven to bring relief to suffering humanity. He is young with a divine aura around Him. If I could see Him, I am sure I could recognize Him."

Raja : "What is His name?"

Brahmin : "That I do not know. If only I had strength in my legs, I would have set out in search of Him. I cannot even go down to the river for my bath without the support of this lad. It is ironical that when the time has come for my life-long wish to be fulfilled, my feeble

body is letting me down. I pray that I may see Him before I die and experience the divine bliss which one feels in the presence of the Almighty. O Raja, you have strength, wealth and man-power; I beseech you to go in search of Him, so that my eager eyes can satisfy themselves with His 'darshan' before they close."

Listening to the Brahmin's words and sensing the deep longing of his heart, the Raja and his vazir wanted to set off at once. However, they pressed the Brahmin for some more details.

Brahmin : "He is young and extremely handsome. He has beautiful doe-like eyes, His arms are very long so that when He lowers them, His hands touch His knees. He emanates a powerful aura and though He wears weapons on His person and lives in royal style, He is the True One."

The Raja and the Vazir exchanged glances.

Raja : "Could it be the one from Kalhoor, one who is Bhima's enemy?"

Brahmin : "Enemy? He is no one's enemy! He is love incarnate, beloved of all!"

Raja : "Maharaj, if as you say, He is a messiah sent by the Almighty, then He should have the bearings of a saint like you – a man of peace! How can a warrior, carrying arms, be the spiritual messenger of God?"

Brahmin : "If you look back in time, you will see that we Brahmins only performed rituals, organized 'pujas', and recited the 'Vedas'. It was the Kshatriyas who not only ruled the world but followed the path of self-realisation. So, there is nothing odd in a messiah being in the form of a warrior and also being a 'Guru'! Go now and search Him out but please, don't forget me."

Vazir : "Rikh ji, does He have long hair?"

Brahmin : "All holy men have long hair. In fact, the 'Vedas' describe the Almighty God as one with long hair and a beautiful, flowing beard."

Vazir (addressing the Raja):" This too fits the description of the person we are thinking about."

Brahmin : " His actions will be based on Truth and aimed at the good of all humanity. In Him there is the reflection of not one but ten spirits."

Raja : "Rikhi ji, from the details you have given, we have found a clear indication to one person. We will go directly to where, we believe, He lives. Once we find Him, we shall ask for His help and also request Him to come here."

Brahmin : "Yes,yes, do that. I am sure I shall recognize Him."

Raja : "Do you know if He is more powerful than Ramrai? Can He destroy my enemies? Can He bless me with a son?"

Brahmin : "O Raja, souls sent directly by the Lord, do not have to make an effort to develop supernatural powers. Their spiritual strength is such that whatever they say comes true, because their knowledge comes directly from God, but if you ask them to perform miracles, they will not do so. They believe in following the will of the Lord. They lack ego, which plagues the likes of you and me.

"Maybe it's God's will which has brought you to me so that I can help you with your search. I don't know how much time I have left, so go and find Him. You will get an answer to all your questions and my life-long yearning for His 'darshan' will be fulfilled."

Bidding the old Rikhi farewell, the Raja and his vazir departed. From the old man's description, they had concluded that the

person could be Guru Gobind Singh ji. Even if it turned out that He was not a messiah, they knew He was a brave warrior and the fame of His army had spread far and wide. If they could make Him a friend and ally, they would become a force to be reckoned with.

When they reached Nahan, the Raja sent his minister, Sobhu, with an invitation and a number of costly gifts, to meet Guru Gobind Singh ji at Anandpur Sahib. When the minister reached there, he wanted to meet Guru ji in private to convey the Raja's request, but Guru ji took the letter from him and read it out aloud, so that the whole congregation could hear. He then, told Sobhu that He would give him a reply the next day.

That evening, Guru ji discussed the matter with His uncle, Mama Kirpal Chand ji and some other advisers. He spoke about it to His mother also. Everyone was of the opinion that He should accept the Raja's invitation. The next morning, the minister was sent off to

Nahan to inform the Raja that Guru ji would be arriving there shortly.

All arrangements were made for the journey and on a pleasant October day, Guru ji accompanied by His mother, Mata Gujari, His family and other followers set off for Nahan. A company of 500 armed soldiers was in attendance.

After making a couple of halts on the way, they reached Nahan. The news of Guru ji's arrival had already reached the palace. Raja Medni Prakash and senior members of his court were at the outskirts of the city to welcome the holy entourage. The head priest performed the traditional 'aarti' with due reverence, as befitting to the descendant of Guru Nanak Dev ji.

Everyone came forward to bow respectfully and, in turn received Guru ji's blessings. Then, holding the reins of Guru ji's horse, the Raja led the party into the town.

A special mansion had been prepared for this occasion. A gurdwara, to mark the place, stands there to this day.

The news of Guru ji's arrival in Nahan and the royal welcome given to Him, echoed throughout the valley. Ramrai too, heard the news. He promptly sent a message to Fateh Shah, ruler of Srinagar, "Friend, the Master has arrived. Even though I have opposed Him, I sincerely believe in His supremacy. I will be unable to use my powers against Raja Medni Prakash now. As a well-wisher, I advise you to give up your aggressive stance towards Medni Prakash and hand back to him those areas which you have occupied."

Fateh Shah too had heard about Guru ji's arrival in Nahan with a small army. Now this message from Ramrai set him thinking. Ramrai's followers were spread all over the state, and going against his wishes meant losing their support. So, Fateh Shah quietly sent a message to Medni Prakash that as a gesture of goodwill, he was returning the

occupied territory to him. Raja Medni Prakash was overjoyed at this news and attributed it directly to Guru ji's spiritual power.

Guru ji sent Mama Kirpal Chand ji to meet Fateh Shah and convey His message that fighting among the rulers of the hill kingdoms must be stopped. If they wanted their people to be happy and prosperous, they must create an atmosphere of friendship and peace. Only by uniting, could they repel the attacks of the invaders and save themselves from becoming their slaves.

Fateh Shah accompanied Mama Kirpal Chand ji to Nahan and here, in the benign presence of Guru ji, a treaty of peace and amity was signed by the two rulers.

Medni Prakash was very keen that Guru ji should make Nahan His permanent home. He escorted Guru ji to the most beautiful parts of his state and organized hunting trips into the thick jungles. Guru ji too, liked the natural

beauty of the state and one picturesque spot especially. It was at a height, overlooking the fast flowing river, Jamuna, and the thickly wooded hills beyond. Raja Medni Prakash ordered the builders and carpenters to erect a fortress - type home for Guru ji and His family. Extra rooms were to be built for the congregation. This place is called Paonta Sahib and there is a Gurdwara there along with some parts of the original structure.

When the people heard that Guru ji planned to stay here, they came from far and near. A temporary township of tents and assorted structures came up. Daily prayer and 'Kirtan' darbars were organized. Guru ji also arranged contests of physical daring in the river waters and on the land. He took frequent trips into the jungles to hunt ferocious animals. It was a time of joyful activity on every front – physical, mental and spiritual. Guru ji created the largest volume of poetry during this period. A number of writers, poets and artists gathered here and

received great encouragement and praise from Guru ji.

The construction of the buildings was going on very quickly as it was everyone's wish that Guru ji's next birthday (Gurpurab) should be celebrated with His entry into the new home.

The season had turned very cold, even though the hills were still without snow. One day, Guru ji appeared restless and reached the 'diwan' where 'kirtan' was being sung, much later than usual. He was heard murmuring to Himself, "It's so cold! The bones can't take the cold. Old, so very old now!"

Those who were standing nearby were puzzled at these words, but held their peace, knowing there was some secret behind it, which would be revealed to them in due course.

Suddenly, Guru ji turned to the Vazir and said, "Please, inform the Raja that I want to go for a hunt into the hills and would like him to

accompany me. Also ask him to arrange for a palanquin with 6-8 men to carry it.”

Part – 2

The Raja and his vazir had long forgotten their promise to the old Brahmin. With their immediate problems solved, they had become immersed in other matters. The old hermit still lingered; his desire unfulfilled. At times he would murmur to himself, "I love but my love is not returned. Will I ever experience the spiritual joy for which my soul is thirsting? To see Him with my own eyes before they finally close? Grant me this boon, O dear Lord! I know He is quite near; I can feel His presence," and he would begin to cry like a child.

The young lad, Chando, who looked after him, would become very upset, thinking that it was his fault that Rikhi ji was unhappy. He was a simple village boy, left at the 'ashram' by his mother when she felt that her end was near. Since then he had taken on the duties

of caring for the old man, keeping the place clean and milking the two cows, which supplied sustenance to both of them.

One day, the Rikhi called Chando to him and said, "Child, I feel that my days on this earth are coming to an end. I may go at any time. When that happens, place my body in the lap of the river Jamuna. You can take the cows and go back to your village. If one day you hear that a great saint has appeared in this world, go to Him and give Him my message. Tell Him that an old 'rikhi' living on the banks of the Jamuna, has passed on, taking an unfulfilled longing for your 'darshan' in his heart. He was too old and weak to come in search of you himself, nor could he send someone else to do his bidding as he had neither wealth nor servants. He was aware of your presence. He could sense it on the breezes sighing in the trees. Other than that he had no indication where he could find you. Carrying his wish deep in his heart, he has departed from this world. He prayed to you to keep his soul in your protection.'

The boy learnt the Rikhi's words by heart and then repeated them to him to see that he had not forgotten anything. Then he cried out, " If you go, what will I do?"

Rikhi : "You can go in search of Him. Maybe you will have better luck than I. Maybe when you give Him my message, He will bless you and allow you to stay with Him."

Boy : " But how will I recognize Him?"

Rikhi : " He is tall, slimly built, very strong, young, has long hair and a soft, curly beard. He carries weapons on His person and has an aura of power and authority, yet His expression is warm and sweet. And yes, one more thing. He has very long arms and when He lowers them, His hands reach to His knees."

The boy looked happy; now he had something which would be easy to check. He immediately stood up to see the length of his

own arms and then he checked the length of Rikhi ji's arms. Then he smiled, satisfied that he would have no difficulty in recognizing the 'Avtaar'.

Suddenly, a thought struck him and he asked, "Rikhi ji, will He lower His arms if I ask Him to?"

The Rikhi smiled at his simplicity and said, "Child, you stay close to Him but don't ask anything. At some time He will surely lower His arms, and then you can see. Once you are sure, fling yourself at His feet and give my message to Him."

Boy : "Does He have a name?"

Rikhi : "I don't know, but people will refer to Him as 'Guru Avtaar'."

Boy : "Guru, Guru, yes, I can remember that. Shall I go now and look for Him? Then you can see Him with your own eyes. But – but if I go, who will take care of you? If I had a

brother, I would have left him with you, but I have no one.”

Rikhi : ”Don’t be unhappy! After finishing your work here, you can go down into the valley every day and if you meet any passer-by you can ask him. Maybe we will get some news in this way.”

This remark cheered up the boy. Happily, he set about his chores and the moment he was free, he ran down to the village. Here he spent his time looking at the arms of the men and gauging their length. Then he began to ask the people if they had heard of a saint – a Guru – who had recently appeared. Disappointed with their replies, he went to the river the next afternoon, waiting eagerly for a passing traveller. But days passed and no one came that way.

The weather was becoming extremely cold and the Rikhi could feel the chill seep into his bones. One day, he could not even get up to take his bath. Calling Chando near, he said

in a feeble voice, "Child, my time has come. My hands and feet are very cold. You have been like a son to me. Don't forget what I asked you to do."

For a minute, Chando felt dizzy. Two years ago, his mother had died; her hands and feet too had become very cold. He could see the scene clearly even now. Chando's world had consisted of only two people – his mother and Rikhi ji. And now, he was going to be left alone. He rushed out, wiping the tears with his knuckles. Quickly, he lit the small stove and taking it inside the hut, placed it near Rikhi ji. Then he covered him with a blanket and any other piece of cloth he could lay his hands on. He ran out and climbed a near-by rock looking anxiously at the path down below – maybe He will come even now?

He ran back to the hut but could see no change in Rikhi ji's condition. In sheer desperation, a scream escaped from his throat. The sound revived the Rikhi and in a trembling voice, he asked, "Has He come?"

Chando only heard the word, "Come" and shouting, "He has come! He has come!" he rushed out. His voice echoed back from the distant hills and then there was silence. Like a demented soul, he began to run through the hushed forest, stopping only when he heard voices and the jingling of the harness of horses. Some riders came through the trees. One was slightly ahead of the others. Chando paused and took a long look at him. He felt a thrill run through his slight body, but to be sure, he had to see the rider's arms. The riders stopped in the clearing and got off their horses. Mattresses were placed on the green grass and the leader sat down.

Poor Chando! He hid behind a shrub, barely able to contain his impatience. He wanted to rush back to the hut to be with Rikhi ji, but some strong emotion held him rooted to the spot, as he waited for the leader of the group to stand up so that he could see the length of his arms.

Suddenly, one of the attendants came up with a jug of water and the leader got up to wash his hands. Chando stood, holding his breath, not daring to blink. The tall man washed his hands and then, his face. Taking a towel, he wiped his face and then, he lowered his arms. Chando could not believe his eyes! Surely the hands had touched the knees! Chando let out a shout and completely forgetting his master's admonitions, he rushed up chanting, "He has come, He has come!" and kneeling in front of Him, he took hold of His hand and pulled it downwards till it touched the knee. Then nodding to himself, he said, "Yes, it is so."

He looked up and in a pleading tone, asked, "It is you? Really you? It is, isn't it? Please, say yes, that you are He – the Avtaar – my master has waited for – the Guru Avtaar ? Please, please, say you are He!"

Guru ji stood quietly. His hand was held tightly by this innocent boy, who tugged at it even as words tumbled out of his mouth,

imploring Guru ji to confirm His identity. Guru ji looked at him with great compassion, a gentle smile lighting His eyes. Before He could say anything, Chando's face darkened, his brows drew together and he said, "I know you are He, the Avtaar! I have a message for you, a message from the Rikhi of Kalsi. He knew you, Lord, and he was desperate for your 'darshan, yes... he," and his voice choked with tears. After a pause he continued," I am sure he must be dead by now. My mother too, was dead in this much time. He had told me that you would have very long arms and he begged me to find you and give you his message ...and "(closing his eyes tightly in concentration, he recited the words exactly as the old Rikhi had spoken them).

As the words came to an end, Guru ji closed His eyes. He held Chando's small hand tightly in His own and asked, "Child, is Rikhi ji really dead?"

Chando : " I am sure, sir. So much time has passed since I left him. Oh, it's so late. I must go back and take care of his body," and he hopped from one foot to another impatiently.

Guru ji smiled sightly and said : "No, my child, Rikhi ji is not dead."

Turning towards Raja Medni Prakash, Guru ji said, "Come, let us leave immediately. There is a debt on your head which is long overdue. Don't worry about the food, we will have fresh milk today."

Quickly everyone leapt on to their horses, one of the attendants lifting Chando in front of him, and the party moved off at a brisk trot.

The Rikhi's hut was surrounded by a thorny hedge with a make-shift gate in the middle. Pushing this open, Chando rushed inside. Rikhi ji was lying just as he had left him.

Guru ji moved forward and lifting the blanket, checked his pulse and felt his forehead. It was cool to the touch and he did not appear to be breathing.

Chando gave a wail and exclaimed, " Oh, you too have died like my mother, and I was not even here to light a lamp for you. She too had wanted more light, but – but I did give your message, see?" And he began to sob bitterly.

Guru ji's eyes were moist at the anguish of this simple, loving boy. But His face wore a look of concentration as His hand rested on the old man's chest, which still retained some warmth. Quickly, Guru ji sat down near the Rikhi and placing his head on his lap, began to gently massage his scalp. He instructed the others to massage the Rikhi's hands and feet.

In a short while, the Rikhi's eyes fluttered open and then closed again. Very faintly he

said, "Has He come? Chando beita, has someone come? Who is caressing my hands and feet?" He looked at the people sitting near his feet and asked, "Who are you? Where is Chando?"

Chando came near and eagerly said, "Rikhi ji, it is He. He is here. I found Him! I found Him!" and he clapped his hands joyfully.

The Rikhi took a long breath and moving his head, he looked upwards questioningly. Guru ji supported his head and bending forward kissed him on his forehead. The Rikhi's face glowed suddenly and with new-found energy he reached up and clasped Guru ji's hand, sometimes kissing it, sometimes placing it on his forehead and then holding it tight against his chest, as if he would never let it go.

All who watched were profoundly moved. Chando looked on, not understanding but feeling the warmth and love flowing from Guru ji to the Rikhi. He too wanted to be a part of it. He looked at Guru ji's long, slender hands

and he too, wanted to hold and kiss them. But he hesitated, knowing that these hands were infusing fresh life into his beloved Rikhi ji and so he waited.

The Rikhi's eyes were gazing up at Guru ji, gratefully and adoringly. Again and again his lips moved as he said, "Shukar, Shukar!" in thanksgiving to the Lord.

Guru ji blessed him, saying, "Nihal, Nihal, Nihal! Say 'Waheguru'."

The Rikhi felt as if each and every part of him echoed the word, 'Waheguru' again and again. With every breath he felt stronger. "Truly He has come! I am not imagining this. But I have not even greeted Him properly," and he tried to get up so he could touch his forehead to Guru ji's feet.

Guru ji continued to hold him in His arms, telling him to rest till full strength had returned. "You need to take some

nourishment. Is there some fresh milk?" He asked.

Hearing the word 'milk', Chando jumped up and quickly brought a bowl of fresh milk. Guru ji took it from Him and helping the Rikhi to sip it said, "Drink this, O beloved of my Lord!" and the old man drank eagerly, feeling new life coursing in his veins. The Raja brought a cushion and arranged it so that the Rikhi could rest comfortably against it.

Guru ji now, looked at Chando, smiled and said, "Come, my son, bring milk for us too. We are guests in Rikhi ji's house. Since he is not strong enough to carry out the duties of a host, you must look after us. Hurry, child!"

Chando was in two minds. He wanted to rush to obey the sweet command, but he continued to stare at Guru ji's hands as if hypnotized. Guru ji was only too aware of the struggle going on in the lad's mind. Smilingly, He extended His right hand. Chando leapt forward eagerly and catching it in both his

hands, began to shower kisses on it, pausing once to look up adoringly at Guru ji's face.

In his childish delight, he was not aware of the solemnity of the occasion nor of the magnitude of the gift being showered upon him. He was only aware of an acute joy, which made him stutter, "Wah, Wah, Waheguru!" His eyes closed and he became still.

Guru ji lifted Chando in His arms, saying gently, "Awake, my son, awake to an eternal life, Chand Rai. Come, we are all hungry and thirsty. Aren't you going to bring some milk for us?"

Chando looked as if he was in seventh heaven. He went out and was soon, back with a pitcher full of foaming, warm milk. Guru ji filled all the bowls and gave to everyone and then to Chando. Lastly, He, Himself took some.

The sun had set and darkness was spreading. They made camp and decided to leave at dawn the following day. In the morning, the Rikhi requested Guru ji to let him stay back in the 'ashram', as he did not wish to be a burden. "I cannot serve you in any way, my Lord, please leave me here," he pleaded. But Guru ji reassured him and helped him into the palanquin, in which he would be comfortably carried to Paonta.

Guru ji then turned to Chando and gave him an enquiring look," Chando beita, what do you want to do? Would you like to stay here and look after the cows?"

Chando ran forward and clutching at Guru ji's beloved hand, pleaded," I want to be with you, but you all go ahead and I will follow with the cows. I can look after them in Paonta so you can have fresh milk every day. That is all I want."

Guru ji laughed and said, "All right. I promise to drink the milk of your cows only."

Leaving two attendants to guide Chando to Paonta, Guru ji and Raja Medni Prakash departed with the Rikhi.

Many people had come to Paonta for the 'Gurpurab' and lavish celebrations had been planned by Guru ji's family and the 'Sangat'.

When Guru ji failed to return on 'Saptami' (day of the Gurpurab), everyone was filled with disappointment. But next day when He and His party arrived, a wave of gladness swept the place and everyone rushed to greet Him.

Later, after the completion of 'kirtan' and 'ardas', Guru ji spoke:

"THITT VAAR NA JOGI JANAI RUTT MAHU NAA KOI"

"The Lord who has made the days and seasons had sent us on a mission. When there is celebration there must be a gift. That gift Waheguru ji gave us two days ago and

we have brought it along in the form of a devoted soul, who had spent his whole life in meditation. We have brought him, the Rikhi of Kalsi, to the 'darbar' of the nine Gurus so he can spend the rest of his life here as a member of the 'Sadh Sangat'."