



UNIQUE IDENTITY OF BHAGWAT BHAKTI ASHRAM AND VILLAGE NANGAL PATHANI IN THE UPLIFTMENT OF AHIRWAL REGION

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In 1857 when Rao Tula Ram had occupied the Headquarters of Rewari and made his own arrangements, Rao Ram Singh the grandfather of Rao Balbir Singh was appointed the Tehsildar of Rewari. When Britishers Government started arresting the companions of Rao Tula Ram then Rao Ram Singh hid himself at Gandala and neighbouring villages. He came back to Nangal Pathani in 1859 on the order of Mr. W. Ford, Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon.¹

Long ago there were the 'Pathans' at Nangal Pathani just like at Guriani (Distt. Rewari) according to the historical stories told by the ancestors. Ro Jiwa Ram (Rao Jiwan Singh), brother of Rao Tej Singh, settled here and this village was named as 'Jiwa Ram Nangal' with the passage of time. Rao Tula Ram and his successors belonged to the Afaria gotra. Rana Sanga was a contemporary ruler of Maideni Rao at Rajasthan Maideni Rao was solely the ruler of a nearby place, Chanderi. With the passage of time, Maideni Rao's Kingdom extended upto Tijara and many more places also. Maideni Rao belonged to the Afaria gotra, therefore, the origin of this particular gotra is with him.²

The different kngs and monarchs had their own categories like Rao, Maha Rao, Raja, Maharaja, Rana and Maharana. The Rao's were from a sub-category of the rulers and not the independent rulers. They ruled over the small estates. Hence it was a designation of the rulers. There is a famous saying that –

“One who had the Ten Ploughs – Rao

That who had the Eight Ploughs – Rana

And that with the Four Ploghs – A big Kisana”

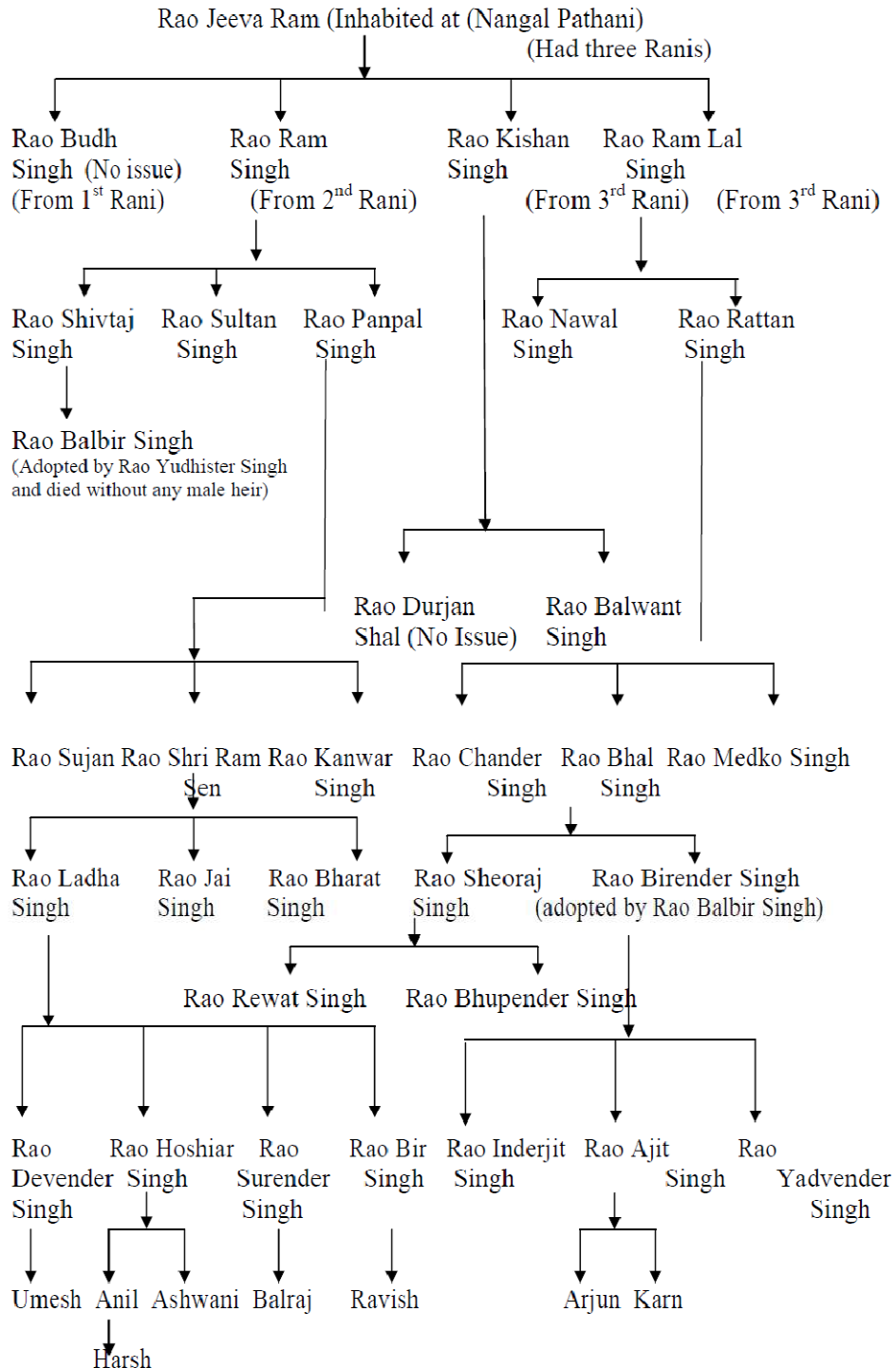


Maha Rao is greater than Rao while Maharana is greater than Rana. The King of Bundi was called Maha Rao as an example.³

Rao Yudhister Singh died without any issue. According to his testament he had given all the rights to his wife Rani Suraj Kanwar. Rani Suraj Kanwar adopted Rao Balbir Singh son of Rao Shivtaj Singh from Nangal Pathani.⁴ (Jiwa Ram ka Nangal)⁵ He was from the same lineage of Rao Tej Singh who settled his four brothers at frontier villages. Kishen Sahai in Lishan, Ram Bakash in Dharuhera, Swai Singh in Asiaki Gurawas and Jiwa Ram (Jiwan Singh) in Nangal Pathani. Rao Balbir Singh belonged to lineage of Rao Jiwa Ram. The family lineage of Rao Balbir Singh is as given below :



The family lineage of Rao Birender Singh was as given below⁶



Rao Balbir Singh was born on October 2, 1884 at Nangal Pathani⁷. He was very soft spoken, jolly, social and a good rider. Because of several qualities he wielded much local



influence. His contribution to the fields of political, religious and social are also appreciable. He followed the footmarks of Rao Yudhister Singh for the upliftment of the people Ahirwal.⁸

The works of Rao Balbir Singh in social and religious fields were also appreciable. The people of Rewari honoured with the title of 'Dharam Bhushan' and Chirag-e-Yaduvansh⁹. Before the first world war once Rao Balbir Singh met a Hindu Monk named Swami Permanad Ji Maharaj on Ghari Harsaru Railway station. He was so much influenced by the teaching of Swami Ji that he took him to Rampura and established the Bhagwat Bahakti Asharam, half a kilometer away in the west of Rampura.¹⁰

Rao Balbir Singh had great love for all flora and fauna. He had special love for peacocks. These are found in abundance in and around Rewari. On one occasion the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Eliet came to Rewari and stayed at night in Rampura near the Asharam. He got disturbed again and again by the crackles of peacocks.¹¹ In the morning he went to the Asharam for killing the peacocks. But Rao Balbir Singh requested him not to do so. The Deputy Commissioner could not tolerate it.¹² He called a meeting at Gurgoan Rao Balbir Singh also attended that meeting. However, Rao Balbir Singh was supported by other Indian present there. Ultimately, the Deputy Commissioner had to succumb to there pressure.

The Christian missionaries were enticing the lower castes of Hindu religion for changing their religion. Rao Balbir Singh could not tolerate that. On one occasion when the Prince of wales came to India, the missionaries collected 50,000 Hindu of lower caste near old fort of Delhi for converting them to Christianity. On this occasion, Rao Balbir Singh sent some students of lower castes, who were getting education in the Asharam, with Swami Krishna Nand, a monk of Asharam. Students motivated the Hindus not to join Cherstianity by singing several Hindus changed their mind and did not become Christian¹³. Missionaries were never allowed in the Rewari area. Maharaj Ji and his disciples were always alert to hinder the missionaries activities.¹⁴

Once Rao Balbir singh was invited to Banaras by Hindu Mahasabha. Prominent Indian Brahamins were also present. Rao Balbir Singh was honoured the award of 'Dharam Bhushan' for his loyal services to the Hindu religion.¹⁵

The work of Rao Balbir Singh in the field of social services is more appreciable than the religious services. He did not believe in casteism and treated all people equally. He tried to give



right place in the society to the lower caste people. He opened a school in the Asharam in 1920 especially for the lower caste. He named that school 'Achhut Pathshala' However, it did not mean that only the students of lower castes were admitted in that school. He in fact worked to remove the stigma of casteism from the very childhood.¹⁶ Latter some students of that school made the efforts of missionaries useless for changing religion at Delhi on the arrival of Prince of Wales.¹⁷

Rao Balbir Singh also did a lot for woman education and Sanskrit language which is the symbol of our culture. For this purpose a 'Girl School' and a 'Sanskrit school' was started in the Asharam. Telhisdar Munshi Roopram and his daughter Suraj Devi from Ghari Bolni were employed teachers in these school. Lala Ramji. Dass from Bhatinda contributed for the building of the 'Girl School'.¹⁸ Pandit Piyare lal taught Sanskrit to the students of every caste. This school was run on the lines of Gurukuls.¹⁹ An Ayurvedic Hospital was also set up in the Asharam where patients were treated free of cost.²⁰ A press named 'Bhagti Press' was also established for popularizing the religious, social and cultural reforms.²¹

In this way Asharam became the center of religious, social and cultural activities by the efforts and endeavours of Rao Balbir Singh. He was the main pivot of the Asharam.²² Not only Rao Balbir Singh but the whole family was devoted to Asharam and Maharaj Ji. Many men and women celibates lived in the Asharam. Raj Kumari Sumitra Devi popularly known by the name of 'Bai Ji' daughter of Rao Balbir Singh was one of the women celibates. She remained celibates for the whole life. After the death of Rao Balbir Singh she supervised the Asharam. She worked for spcial reforms especially women upliftment. In 1968 she was awarded the great title of India '**Padam Shri**'.²³

The activities of Rao Balbir Singh were not only limited to the Asharam but its extent stretched out far and wide. His main emphasis was to encourage education among the people of this area. Because he knew very well that the people of this area could not be uplifted withoutn education²⁴.

During those days there was no high school in surrounding rural areas of Rewari. The poor farmers of rural area were unable to send their sons to Rewari for higher education owing to lodging problem. So Rao Balbir Singh donated a land for the hostel.²⁵ The people named it



Rao Chhaju Ram hostel because he was a highly respectable of the area.²⁶ This hostel still stands in good condition on the back side of Ahir Collage near railway crossing of Rampura. Now the people of of rural area started sending their children to Rewari for higher education.

Rao Balbir Singh was very active in political field too. He was a regular member of the Hindu Mahasabha. Although he contested for the membership of Punjab legislative assembly but could not secure the sea. Since 1923, he contested almost every election for the legislative council. He won this seat in 1926, 1930 and 1937 mainly because of his personal influence and Hindu Mahasabha as the political system was not popular in the area by that time.²⁷

The members of Punjab legislative council had very limited right in those days. But Rao Balbir Singh with the help of Chaudhary Chhotu Ram got the Land control Act passed by the council. This Act stipulated that the land of farmer could not be attached, purchased or auctioned for inability of the defaulting farmer to repay his debt.²⁸

Rao Balbir Singh died on January 18, 1941 in Lahore at age of 56 years.²⁹ His activities in social, religious and political fields were remarkable. He worked not only for the upliftment of his own caste but also tried for equality and justice in the society.³⁰

Rao Balbir Singh died on January 18, 1941 without heir-apparent . According to his will, Rao Balbir Singh gave all the rights to his Rani Nihal Kaur for adopting the heir-apparent from the same lineage of Rao Tej Singh. In 1945, according to the will of Rao Balbir Singh, Rani Nihal Kaur adopted Rao Birender Singh³¹. Rao Tej Singh had settled his four brothers, by giving them jagirs at frontier villages. Rao Jeeva Ram, one of his four brothers, was settled at Nangal Pathani. Rao Birender Singh belongs to the lineage of Rao Jeeva Ram³². Rao Birender Singh did his graduation from a prestigious college of Delhi i.e. St. Stephon's College. Then he joined the Army as a Captain.

In 1947, Rao Birender Singh resigned from the Army as a Captain³³. He came to Rampura and took all the movable and immovable property of Rao Balbir Singh in his possession. Again in 1950 to 1951, he joined the Territorial Army as a Commissioned Officer³⁴. In the batch of 1949-50, Rao Birender Singh was selected for Indian Police Service but he did not join that service.³⁵



Entry in politics started when Rao Birender Singh contested the united Punjab assembly general election from Rewari Vidhan Sabha constituency in 1952, For the welfare of farmers and labourers, Rao made a party – Kisan Mazdoor Party in 1952. He was elected to unite the Ilaqa for the growth and development of the area member of legislative council in 1954 as an independent candidate from Ambala division. On 13th November, 1956, Rao Birender Singh was made the Deputy Minister by Pratap Singh Kairon, who became the Chief Minister. Second assembly elections were held in 1957. Kairon again became the Chief Minister of Punjab. Rao Birender Singh was made the Cabinet Minister in 1957 of revenue, transport and technical education, irrigation, power and public works department. Haryana was carved out on 1st November, 1966 because of the linguistic re-organisation of Punjab. The need of the hour was fresh election. Out of Punjab assembly was formed the Haryana legislative assembly. After Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, Rao Birender Singh resumed the Chief Ministership as the second Chief Minister of Haryana from March, 1967 to November 1967 for 243 days. He founded Vishal Haryana party in October, 1967. This party was represented by several members in Haryana assembly and Lok Sabha. It acted s the main opposition party in Haryana assembly for sometime. In 1978, Vishal Haryana Party was merged into Congress on the insistence of Smt. Indira Gandhi. In 1980, Rao Birender Singh won the election for Lok Sabha and was sworn in as an agriculture minister in the ministry of Smt. Indira Gandhi. He held several other portfolios too, the most important among them were - irrigation and rural reconstruction, food and civil supplies. In 1985, after the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi, Rao Birender Singh again won the election of Lok Sabha. Thereafter, in 1990, he contested the election as a candidate of Janata Dal and won.³⁶

Rao Birender Singh (20 Feb 1921 – 30 Sep. 2009) turned a new chapter in the political history of India. His entry to the political field occurred in 1952 in Independent India. There were twists and turns of the politics in the Ahirwal region. He is the pioneer of coalition form of government. He ascended the political throne from the regional to the mainstream politics. His ideology, strategy nd functioning made India strong. Rao Birender Singh emerged out victorious in the political field. He was soldier turned politician ready for the welfare of the soldiers as well as the farmers. He uprooted the social maladies following his social ideas. He worked a lot for the batterment and upliftment of the Ahirwal region, Haryana and the whole nation.³⁷ The village Nangal Pathani has produced powerful, intelligent, enthusiastic, honest and cheerful leaders to lead the country towards the path of success, progress, all round development, prosperity and a positive change.



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