

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
Ik oāṅkār saṭ nām kartā purakh nīrbhāo nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhān gur parsād.



THE SIKH BULLETIN GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI



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EDITORIAL

GURU NANAK vs GOD AND DIVINE

A Case for dropping God & Divine from translation of Gurbani.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (the Unabridged Edition) defines **GOD**:

1. The one Supreme **Being**, the Creator and Ruler of the universe.
2. The Supreme **Being** considered with reference to a particular attribute: the God of Battles.
3. One of several deities, especially a **male** deity, presiding over some portion of worldly affairs.
4. A Supreme **Being** according to some particular conception: the God of Pantheism.
5. Christian Science, the Supreme **Being** considered with reference to the sum of **His** attributes.
6. An image of a deity; an idol.
7. Any deified **person** or object.

DIVINE:

1. Of or pertaining to a god, especially the Supreme **Being**.
2. Addressed, appropriated or devoted to God or a god; religious; sacred: *divine worship*.
3. Proceeding from God or a god: *divine laws*.
4. Godlike: characteristic of or befitting a deity: *divine magnanimity*.
5. Heavenly; celestial: *the divine kingdom*.
6. Being a god; being God: *a divine person*.
7. Of superhuman or surpassing excellence.
8. A theologian; scholar in religion.
9. A priest or clergyman.

The above definitions of **God** and **Divine** are basically taken from the Christian faith which has given **human** attributes and **masculine gender** to the Supreme **Being**.

Guru Nanak rejected the whole concept of God, Divinity and Religion. He rejected the existing three **Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)** and three **Indian religions of his time (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism)** and their **Gods** and he was not about to start a yet another religion to add to them.

Religions divide people whereas Guru Nanak was a uniter who devoted his entire life to make mankind realize that **humanity is One**. He was among the early **philosopher scientists** of humanity. **He was not a Prophet** nor did he start a new religion. **Nor was his philosophy revealed** to him as is claimed by the three Semitic religions. **His philosophy was the product of his study of his surroundings** with the strength of his **'bibekebudhi'**, his discerning mind. Biggest disservice to his memory has been the creation of a new religion in his name, **Sikhism**.

Half way through his life, which was marked by native Hindu majority ruled by an alien people professing an alien faith, **Islam**, he came to the conclusion that the underlying cause of conflict among people was manmade religions and their manmade gods. Once he was convinced of that basic truth he gave up his normal life and set upon a course to deliver that message as far as his physical capacity would permit. Rest of his life was devoted to that goal.

Unknown to each other **Nanak** (1469-1539) was a contemporary of **Copernicus** (1473-1543) and **Martin Luther** (1483-1546). With the former he shared the same views about the nature of the cosmos and if he could have met Martin Luther he would have strongly advised him not to expend his energy in reforming Christianity. He would have served humanity better by speaking against manmade religions and their gods.

Guru Nanak was a child prodigy, showing early maturity when questioning his teacher on meaning of life and his priest on meaning of Janeu. A born linguist, he mastered Sanskrit and Arabic, two

languages in which the Hindu and Islamic literature was written, the literature that he read in depth, and Persian which was the official language of his time, at a very young age. He communicated in the countries he visited in their language, wore their clothes and ate their food.

Guru Nanak threw away centuries old *maryada* (*traditions*). At a very young age he refused to wear the *janeu*; discarded the *caste system*; preached against *idol worship*; recognised the *equality of mankind*; asserted the *equality of men and women*; opposed the practice of '*sati*' (self-immolation by widows upon their husbands' death, still prevalent in Hindu society), rejected the then prevalent concepts of *karma*, after life *salvation*, *tapasya*, *heaven* and *hell*, *incarnation*, *transmigration*, *84 lakh juni*, *yatra* to holy places, *fasting*, *multiple gods* and *goddesses*, and of course, unique only in his philosophy, wished '*sarbat da bhala*' **well-being of all**, not just one's own country or family. He gave us nothing like Ten Commandments or Sharia Law. Instead the Guru simply says **'do not commit an act that you will later regret and do not eat or drink that is unhealthy for your body and mind'**.

He wanted mankind to use '*bibekebudhi*', the discerning mind, the only species that has it.

Guru Nanak was one of a Kind, just as his concept of Kartar/Creator was One and Only. The world had never produced anyone like him before or since. His philosophy is unique and is applicable in all countries and cultures at all times.

He possessed a brilliant mind. He was a **Deist** two centuries before European intellectuals coined the term. **Deism rejected revelation and authority** as a source of religious knowledge with the conclusion that **reason and observation of the natural world are sufficient to determine the existence of a single creator of the universe.** Deism gained prominence among intellectuals during the Age of Enlightenment, especially in

Britain, France, Germany and the United States, who, raised as Christians, believed in one god but became disenchanted with organized religion and notions such as the Trinity, Biblical inerrancy and the supernatural interpretation of events such as miracles. Included in those influenced by its ideas were leaders of the American and French Revolutions.

It was the use of reason and observation that led Guru to write:

ਧਵਲੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥

Dhavlai upar ketā bhār.

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ ॥

Dhartī hor parai hor hor.

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ ॥

Tis te bhār talai kavan jor.

*What a great load there is on the bull!
There are countless earths beyond this earth.
What power holds them, and supports their
weight? AGGS M1, p 3*

Hindu philosophy believed that earth is supported by a mythical bull. Whenever that bull shifts the weight of the earth from one horn to the other, earthquakes result. But Guru says this is not the only earth. There are countless earths. What power supports their weight?

He then answers his own question:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

*Everything is subject to the Laws of Nature;
nothing is beyond the Laws of Nature.*

AGGS M1, p 1

ਸੈਲ ਪਥਰ ਮਹਿ ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਏ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਆਗੈ ਕਰਿ

ਧਰਿਆ ॥੧॥

*The Creator provides sustenance for every form
of life it created in water, on earth and even
inside the rocks.*

That was Guru Nanak's message two hundred years before the term Deist was coined. If he were born in Europe every one now would know about him. In the Indian sub-continent every new philosophy is, sooner or later, smothered under the shade of Brahmanical tree. That is what happened to Buddhism and now it is Sikhism's turn. Even Islam got brahmanized. Three countries of the Indian Sub-Continent, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, that were one country until 1947, are the only examples in the world where Muslims practice caste system.

Guru Nanak says there is no heaven or hell after life. We make our life heaven or hell by our own actions and any punishment or reward that is due to us is given during our mortal stay on Earth.

“Deism holds that God does not intervene with the functioning of the natural world in any way, allowing it to run according to the laws of nature.

How similar it is to my SB May-June 2012 editorial: “Guru Nanak's ‘God’ is bountiful ‘God’ of the entire universe and all the creation in it. **It does not micro manage Its Creation; nor It applies its laws selectively.**”

This similarity between my editorial and Deism belief has another companion:

“Once I understood ‘God’ as described by Guru Nanak I had no problem accepting it. My beef was with the ‘God/Gods’ of all the other religions that laid claim to divine revelation and proclaimed man to be created in the image of ‘God’. In reality what they have done is create ‘God’ in the image of man. [SB Sept-Oct 2011 Editorial]

We had started publishing chapters from Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal's book “Nankian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity” starting with

the November-December 2011 issue of the Sikh Bulletin. In the March-April 2012 issue we were going to publish Chapter 12 'Concept of God'. In preparation for that I decided to look for a book on evolution of the concept of God. The book that I chose to read on this subject was "The Evolution of God' by Robert Wright, published in June 2009 by Little, Brown and Company. This book put into words my thoughts that I had developed over time. It was also gratifying to learn that I shared a basic belief with Aristotle. "According to the book of Genesis, God created man in his own image, but according to Aristotle, men create gods after their own image."

God and religion are the two worst farces ever committed on mankind.

Religions cannot be reformed and that includes Sikhism. Martin Luther (1483-1546), a contemporary of Guru Nanak and, some even think they met, tried to reform Christianity. Result is Catholic Church just as strong but Protestant Churches have multiplied.

Origin of Universe according to Guru Nanak:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥

The universe exploded from one source of energy (One - Singularity) and started to expand. Thereafter many things appeared. AGGS, Jap 16, p 3.

Does that sound like 'Big Bang' theory? Yet we do not perceive Guru Nanak as a scientist but we do consider his contemporary, Copernicus, as a scientist. Alfred Wegener published his Theory of Continental Drift in 1912 but he was not believed because he was unable to provide a convincing explanation for the physical processes which might have caused this drift. But he was right nevertheless. **Similarly Guru Nanak was right about the origin of universe. It took only 500 years for the 'scientists' to propose that theory.**

Not only that, Guru Nanak also says that everything that has been created will die including this universe, only Creator never dies:

The Cosmos has coalesced and reformed several times according to the *Hukam*:

ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਸਾਰ ॥

ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥

The Cosmos has coalesced and reformed several times but the Creator is eternal. AGGS, M 5, p. 276.

Long before the modern scientific thought developed Guru Nanak sowed the seeds of it in the opening verse of Guru Granth Sahib and the bani 'Jap' that follows it.

Evolution of Life!

The Cosmos is continuously evolving, be it the Earth and the life on it. Guru Nanak postulates that life evolved in water and water is essential for the survival of life:

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥

The True One created the air; air produced water and it is water wherein evolved the world of life with Cosmic-consciousness (God-consciousness). AGGS, M 1, p. 19.

Similarly Guru Nanak turned the Hindu concept of transmigration into '**Origin of Species**' attributed to **Charles Darwin, 400 years after Guru Nanak.**

Homo sapiens evolved through countless forms of life like other species - ants, worms, moths, fish, elephants, deer, snakes and domestic animals like horses and bullocks - starting from inanimate matter, the basic elements. Moreover, he goes on to say that basic elements were recycled as inanimate matter like rocks and mountains before

the creation of the “building blocks of life” for the evolution of a living cell:

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥
 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ ॥
 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ ॥
 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ ॥
 ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ
 ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ ॥ ਰਹਾਓ ॥
 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸੈਲ ਗਿਰਿ ਕਰਿਆ ॥
 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਰਭ ਹਿਰਿ ਖਰਿਆ ॥
 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥
 ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਕ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

Many births (different evolutionary stages of life) created worm and insect. Many births created elephant, fish and deer. Many births created bird and snake. Many births created ox and horse, which are yoked. Similarly, it took a very long time for the human body to evolve through many evolutionary stages of life. Now is your time to meet the Master of the universe, the Creator. Pause. The matter constituting the human body was recycled many times as rocks and mountains. Many births resulted in abortion (defective mutations resulting in death of the species). Many births produced plant life. It took innumerable births to produce a human body. AGGS, M 5, p. 176.

The discovery of deoxyribonucleic acids (DNA) and the principle of the double helix have shown how self-regenerating molecular chains evolve naturally from nonliving matter.

Guru Nanak also postulated that there are other places with life in the cosmos:

ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਜੀਆ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਲੋਆ ਆਕਾਰਾ ਆਕਾਰ ॥

There are living beings in water, on land and in the Cosmos. AGGS, M 1, p. 466.

What is Death?

Referring to death Guru asks what has died. Then he answers his own question; nothing has died. Body has simply gone back to its elements. The breath mixes with air, body becomes dust and the spark of ENERGY merges with the ENERGY.

I see seeds of $E=MC^2$

The following quotes are from Dr. Baldev Singh’s manuscript ‘Nankian Philosophy (Gurmat): The Path of Enlightenment that we published in the January-February 2009 Sikh Bulletin and again in November-December 2015 Sikh Bulletin:

ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਉਣੁ ॥
 ਬੁਝੁ ਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮੂਆ ਹੈ ਕਉਣੁ ॥
 ਮੁਈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਬਾਦੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ॥
 ਓਹ ਨ ਮੂਆ ਜੋ ਦੇਖਣਹਾਰੁ ॥

The body is made of earth (various elements) and it is the air (breath) that keeps it alive. O wise one, then tell me who died because the body and the air it breathed are still here? It is consciousness that died along with disputes caused by egotistical pride, but the One (Creator) who takes care of all does not die. AGGS, M 1, p. 152.

The meaning of the four pithy verses becomes abundantly clear when we consider that ‘God’ is both manifest as Cosmos and un-manifest as omnipresent Hukam. Death of the body affects only the manifest form of God - the matter (elements) that constitutes the body. The matter goes back to earth and is recycled to create new life. The Omnipresent One (Hukam), which operates in all living beings and pervades everywhere is Everlasting. It is remarkable that **Guru Nanak defines death as the loss of consciousness,** which is similar to the modern understanding of death, medically speaking. Cosmos is the manifest form of God, which is continuously changing, but it does not change in Its total content.

Guru Arjan elaborates on this issue further. In the AGGS ghumar (potter), bhandra (pot) and miti (clay, earth) are used metaphorically for the Creator, being and the material that makes the being, respectively:

ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥
ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ ॥
ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ ॥
ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨ ਟੇਕ ॥
ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਅਗਲੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੁ ਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥
ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ ॥
ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥
ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ ॥
ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥
ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥
ਜੋ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥
ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

After death air [breath] merges into air, light merges into light (consciousness is lost when Hukam stops operating in the body) and the earth (lifeless body) becomes one with earth. What support is there for the one who cries over this loss? Who has died? O' who has died? O' enlightened beings get-together and ponder over this question. This is indeed a puzzle! Pause. Without any information about what happened to the dead, the one who was crying also dies. The ignorant fools shackled by doubts and attachments babble about death as if dreaming. This world is the creation of the Creator (Hukam). Coming (birth) and going (death) is controlled by the infinite Hukam. No one dies as no one is capable

of dying. The Eternal One does not perish. It is not what people think about "soul." I am awestruck by the one who understands this reality. Says Nanak, the Guru has dispelled my doubts. No one dies or no one comes and goes. AGGS, M 5, p. 885.

On Meat and Vegetables:

Addressing the High Caste Pandits who looked down on meat eaters the Guru says:

ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥
ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪੁ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥
ਗੈਡਾ ਮਾਰਿ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਕੀਏ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੈ ॥
ਮਾਸੁ ਛੇਡਿ ਬੈਸਿ ਨਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਾਣਸੁ ਖਾਣੈ ॥
ਫੜੁ ਕਰਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਦਿਖਲਾਵਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਸੂਝੈ ॥

.....
ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ॥

.....
ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤੁ ਸਭਿ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਹੋਏ ਜੀਇ ਲਇਆ ਵਾਸੇਰਾ ॥

.....
ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ॥

.....
ਮਾਸੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗਿ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਮਾਣਾ ॥

ਜਜਿ ਕਾਜਿ ਵੀਆਹਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ਓਥੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ ॥

Only fools argue about flesh and meat, because of utter ignorance.

What is meat, and what is vegetable? What is sin in eating either? They are both made of the same ingredients.

It was the practice of the Hindu gods to kill the rhinoceros, and make a feast of the burnt offering.

Those who renounce meat, and hold their noses when sitting near it, devour men at night. (Take advantage of poor and ignorant).

They practice hypocrisy, and make a show before other people, but they themselves are steeped in ignorance.

.....
In the flesh we are conceived, and in the flesh we are

born; we are vessels of flesh.

.....

All beings and creatures are flesh; the soul has taken up its home in the flesh.

.....

In the flesh we are conceived, and in the flesh we are born; we are vessels of flesh.

.....

Meat is allowed in the Puraanas, meat is allowed in the Bible and the Koran. Throughout the four ages, meat has been consumed.

It is featured in sacred feasts and marriage festivities; meat is used in them.

Human race is one.

Quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥

Ēk piṭā ekas ke ham bārik tū merā gur hāī.

The One 'God' is our father; we are the children of the One 'God'.

You are our Guru. AGGS M5, P 611

ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ

ਆਈ ॥੧॥

No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger.

I get along with everyone. AGGS M5, p 1299

To the above we should add that Guru Nanak was an environmentalist half a millennium ahead of his time.

ਪਵਣੁ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² ਪਾਣੀ³ ਪਿਤਾ⁴ ਮਾਤਾ⁵ ਧਰਤਿ⁶ ਮਹਤੁ⁷ ॥

Pavaṇ gurū pānī piṭā mātā dharat mahat.

Air¹ is like a Guru², water³ like a father⁴ and the Earth⁶ like the great⁷ mother⁵ (which provides all types of resources and food).

The positions of **Guru**, **Father** and **Mother** are the most highly regarded in Indian culture. By associating those with the three most essential life support elements Guru Nanak wants people to show the same consideration to these elements as they do to the three human relationships. In other words, do nothing that will pollute them.

His philosophy is found in the volume known as 'Guru Granth Sahib' where it has been supplemented by writings of five more Gurus and several Hindu and Muslim poets, all written in Hymns and to be sung to Indian classical music.

Basics of his philosophy are condensed in few words in the commencing verse of JappBani which is essence of his philosophy:

Commencing Verse from Guru Granth Sahib

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ik oaṅkār sat nām kartā purakh nīrbha'o nirvair
akāl mūrāt ajūnī saibha'n gur parsād.

I would interpret this opening verse in Guru Granth Sahib as:

'There is One and Only, a Singular Reality, whose True Name is The Creator, (Kartar) that created Itself; It has no human attributes such as fear, enmity, limited life span, an image and therefore it does not communicate with the Prophets directly or through others, as the Semitic religions claim, nor does it incarnate as a human as Hinduism claims. IT can only be comprehended through knowledge.'

That is also why Guru Nanak named the commune he established in his later life, '**Kartar Pur**' (Now in Pakistan) and salutation as '**Sat Kartar**'. His followers were called 'Nanakpanthi'.

What follows the commencing verse is a short but very forceful Truth: In the commencing line of 'Jap' that immediately follows the above opening verse the Guru doubles down. He unequivocally reasserts his firm belief that what he is saying is an absolute truth.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

True In The Primal Beginning. True Throughout The Ages. True Here And Now. O Nanak, Forever And Ever True. //1// AGGS M1 p1

It was there before the Creation, at the time of Creation, now and it will be there in the future, for ever and ever. It was there when there was *sunni*, nothingness. Out of this nothingness It created the cosmos, in an instant. **There is a single English word that describes what Guru is saying and that word is ENERGY.**

Guru Nanak is quite certain that ‘God’ is a singularity, unlike Hindu or Christian Trinity, and says its true name is **Creator (Kartar)**. It is the Creator of everything, visible and invisible. It created itself but unlike its creation It is timeless and formless.

But then he mentions two attributes that are purely human, fear and enmity, but says God does not show either. Then why mention it unless Guru Nanak also wishes man to aspire to be God like. If one treats others as he would like to be treated then there would be no enmity. **If there is no enmity, there is no hostility and fear will disappear.**

That is a strong indication of life course that Guru Nanak would like us to follow.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITOR’S COMMENTS ON THIS ISSUE:

This issue carries two articles by Karminder Singh Dhillon, PhD (Boston) of Malaysia. His articles have appeared in the Sikh Bulletin before but these two are very important to what the Sikh Bulletin is trying to do at this stage of its evolution, stress the real message of Guru Nanak.

First article laments the missed opportunities by those who claim to inherit Guru Nanak’s philosophy. His reference to ***Bhai Bala’s Janam Sakhi*** hit home hard. This was one of few books

on Sikhism that I read in 3rd grade while practicing reading and writing Gurmukhi taught by my mother at home in a Hindi medium Bikaner State. This book and ***Bachittar Natak*** were primarily responsible for turning me away from Sikhism by the time I turned eleven; **Mahabharat** and **Ramayan**, among other Hindu granths, that turned me away from Hinduism by age twelve and 1947 massacre of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims during the partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, that led me to abandon all religions before I entered my teenage years.

Karminder Singh has two strong messages for those who consider themselves Sikhs, one about the real message of Gur Nanak which is the theme of the Sikh Bulletin now and the real significance of Nishan Sahib, the flag fluttering at all Gurdwaras.

Rest of the Bulletin is devoted to Gurbani quotes and their translation in English by AWAT

AWAT stands for **A Word A Thought**, a novel way of selecting one quote from the GGS and elaborating on its meaning both in Panjabi and English. For the SB I chose the English version.

We first introduced our readers to AWAT in our **July-August 2015** issue by a letter from **S. Baldave Singh of Perth, Australia**, sent to us by **Dr. Jaswant Singh of Sikh Centre Singapore** on May 8, 2015.

This is a unique method and the quality of occasional English translation is a bit better than any available now. I tried to establish contact with the principals at AWAT through both these gentlemen because they are trying to do the same thing that I am but I hit a stone wall.

Neither of them either put me in touch with someone nor did they admit to be among the Principals themselves. So I have decided to publish what ever I have received from them in

this issue and a public appeal for a dialogue to improve the quality and emphasis of their work. Only omission from what I have received from them are quotes from **Bhatt Bani** because they do not reflect Guru Nanak's message; they are basically praises of the Gurus' person as the bards are prone to do and they would detract the English speaking people from Guru Nanak's philosophy.

I would request them to use their precious time to start with:

1. **JappBani** and concentrate on Guru Nanak's bani only since that is the core message of GGS.
And if they do they should look up Col. Manmohan Singh's translation of JappBani published in the September-October 2015 Sikh Bulletin.
2. Persuade them **not to use** religious terminology such as 'God' and 'Divine'. Guru Nanak unequivocally rejected all the manmade religious and their 'gods'. To use religious terminology to explain Guru Nanak's philosophy is blasphemy.
3. Watch out for **improper translation** of Panjabi words into English e.g two illustration below:

I

ਰਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਕਉ ਦੀਨਾ॥ ਕਾਮ ਰੋਗਿ ਮੈਗਲੁ ਬਸਿ ਲੀਨਾ॥

*haumai rog maanukh kau deenaa. kaam
rog maigal bas leenaa.*

Humankind is afflicted with the disease of egoism, and the disease of lust overwhelms the elephant.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1141

II

ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਰੋਗਿ ਪਚਿ ਮੁਏ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਨਾਦ ਰੋਗਿ ਖਪਿ ਗਏ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥

drisat rog pach mue pataᅅgaa. naad rog khap gae kuraᅅgaa.

Because of the disease of sight, the moth is burnt to death, and because of the disease of the sound of the bell, the deer is lured to its death.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1141

Rog here cannot be translated into its literal meaning **disease**. These are in the DNA of humankind, elephant, moth and deer as a result of their long evolutionar journey. They do seem to understand that and have used the correct words in their message description: **'The verses refer to the innate nature of the moth and the deer.'**

As my current and following editorials point out Guru Nanak did not start yet another religion. So it does not seem right to use discredited religious terminology to explain Guru Nanak's message.

I HAVE NO RELIGION

My Journey of Finding Guru Nanak (1469-1539)

The One and Only

[From The Sikh Bulletin March-April 2015]

Peace on Earth will not prevail until all the manmade Religions and their Gods are DEAD and mankind learns to live within Hukam.

First time I said that was at age twelve. Fifty years later, when a responsibility to operate a Gurdwara was thrust upon me, I tried my best to become a Gursikh; but eighteen years into that effort made me realize that a Gursikh has no place in Sikhism.

That was a great disappointment but not for long because I soon discovered that I was in excellent company of no other than Guru Nanak himself, the One and Only gift of the Creator to mankind, and under whose name Sikhism as a religion is being touted.

Truth is that Guru Nanak rejected the existing three **Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)** and three **Indian religions of his time (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism)** and **their Gods** and he was not about to start a yet another religion to add to them. Religions divide people whereas Guru Nanak was a uniter who devoted his entire life to make mankind realize that humanity is One.

His **first** pronouncement to this effect came upon his return from across the **Vein River** that oral tradition quotes him uttering his first words as **“Na Ko Hindu Na Mussalman”**; **(there is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim)**, meaning we are all members of the human family. His **second** pronouncement came during his visit to Mecca during his dialogue with Qazi Ruknuddin when Guru Nanak was found sleeping with his feet towards Kaaba. To Qazi Ruknuddin’s question to Guru Nanak about his religion the Guru responded, **“I am a man of The Creator, and belong to no religion”**. The **third** pronouncement is by **Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan**, on p.1136 of Adi Granth, **“Na Ham Hindu Na Mussalman’ (We are neither Hindus nor Muslims)**. He is using plural ‘WE’ because by this time the number of people believing in teachings of Guru Nanak had become substantial and distinct enough group to be reckoned by the state. **Note that he does not say ‘We are the Sikhs’**.

However, Guru Nanak was not the first person to reject religion as an institution. **Rumi (1207-1273)**, a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic who inherited and expanded a centre for Sufism in **Konya in Turkey** wrote: **“I’m not from the East or the West. I’m not Christian or Jew or Muslim. I’m not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen. I don’t belong to any established religion or any cultural system. I’m neither body nor soul, for I belong to the Soul of my beloved.”**

Hardev Singh Shergill

KNOWING GURU NANAK SAHIB JI

Karminder Singh Dhillon, PhD (Boston), Malaysia

Eminent Sikh scholar Bhai Gurdas Ji - a contemporary of Guru Arjun Dev ji, and in whose hand the first copy of Granth Sahib as narrated by the fifth Guru was written - describes the coming of Guru Nanak Paatshah in the following verses:

*Satgur Nanak Pargetiya Mitee Dhund Jug
Chanan Hoa
Jio Kar Suraj Nikelya, Tarey Chupey
Andher Paloa.*

Bhai ji says the coming of Guru Nanak was like the rising of the morning sun whose rays cut through the mist of dawn and lighted the skies, within which brightness, the mighty stars disappeared together with the darkness within which these stars reigned.

In spiritual terms Bhai ji is saying that Guru Nanak’s spirituality is one of enlightenment. It is an enlightenment that is as bright as the rising sun. It is an enlightenment that cuts through the mist of the existing (even if much bigger and older) spiritualities of ritual and superstition.

Some 400 years later, one of India’s most illuminated minds – Sir Ullama Mohamad Iqbal, PhD (Ludwig, Germany) – the son of a Kashmiri Brahmin who converted to Islam and the author of India’s national song Tarana-e-Hind – writes in his Urdu language book *Bang-e-dra* regarding the coming of Guru Nanak, as follows:

*Butkdaa Fir Baad Mudat Sey Roshan Hua
Nuur-e Ibrahim Se Aazar Kaa Ghar
Roshan Hua*

Once again, after an age, the Temple became radiant. Once again, the house of God shone with the glory of God.

*Shama-e Huq Se Jo Munavar Hai Ye Voh
Mehfil Na Thee
Barshey Rehmat Hue Lekin Zamee Kabil
Na Thee.*

Nanak was the lamp of enlightenment, but the audience was not one which prized illumination – it was blind. Nanak brought along the rain of mercy that poured from the heavens, but the land was not one which cherished rains – it was utterly barren.

*Aaah Budkismat Rahey Awaaze Huq Se Bekhabar
Ghafil Aapney Ful Kee Sheereene Sey Hota Hai
Sazar.*

Poor wretched people – they never did awaken to the call of Truth. Just like a mighty tree that is dead to the awareness of the sweetness of its own fruit.

Ullama Dr Iqbal's lament is a painful, but accurate depiction of the Sikh psyche in relation to knowing and understanding Guru Nanak. Put plainly: the Sikh psyche is blind to the enlightenment of Guru Nanak and the Sikh heart is barren to the blessings of Guru Nanak. Put even more plainly, the Sikh heart and mind is incapable of appreciating Guru Nanak.

Put even more plainly - the coming of Guru Nanak is a waste to the people of India.

Dr Iqbal captures this waste in the following verse:

Hind Ko Lekin Khyalee Falsafey Pur Naaz Thaa.

But the people of India were content to hold on, with (false) pride to their empty and imaginary spiritualities.

Powerful words!

Equally powerful a slap to the spiritual face of Sikhs of Guru Nanak, powerful but true, necessary even.

For how much does the average Sikh know about Guru Nanak? Much of what we know is narrated through some 2,000 odd stories that we euphemistically call *Sakhis*, and are repeated by our parcharaks, preachers, writers, historians, *kirtanias*, *dhadees* etc.

The source of these so called *sakhis* is **NOT** the writings of Guru Nanak.

The origins of these *sakhis* are a variety of books called *Janam Sakhis* – the oldest being composed

in 1733 by Dya Raam (writer) and illustrated with pictures by Alam Chand Raj (painter / artist). This *Janam Sakhi* – also called the B40 *Janam Sakhi*, (after its Accession Number assigned by the India Office Library in London) is thus written 264 years AFTER Guru Nanak's advent.

The most popular *Janam Sakhi* amongst Sikhs is Bhai Bala's *Janam Sakhi* – purportedly written by Guru Nanak's Hindu companion Bala.

Bala is a fictitious character. He did not exist. But that did not stop the establishment at Amritsar from displaying a painting of Guru Nanak with both Mardana and non-existent Bala at the entrance to the Darbar Sahib.



Guru Nanak's **only** companion was Mardana. How many Sikhs know of this basic untruth – that their entire story of Guru Nanak is written by a non-existent character?

Viewed collectively, these *Janam Sakhis* paint Guru Nanak as a mystic, a miracle performer, a faith healer, a magician, a purveyor of superstitious beliefs, a practitioner of super-natural powers, a recluse, an ascetic, an unproductive child, a neglecting father, demanding blind faith and so much more.

Snakes come over to shade him as he slept while

his cows ate the fields of others. His father slaps him for wasting his hard earned money. In the wink of an eye he brings back to life fields eaten by his cows. Elsewhere he drowns in a river and comes back to life three days later. He brings dead people back to life, and stops a mountain of a stone hurled at him with his palm. He flies over the mountains to meet Yogis and Sidhs residing there. He orders his son to hang out clothes to dry in the middle of the night and tells his disciple Bhai Lehna to eat a corpse. This is the Guru Nanak that Sikhs seem to know.

This is perhaps what Dr Iqbal meant when he said:

“*Hind Ko Lekin Khyalee Falsafey Pur Naaz
Thaa*”.

We wanted to stick to our “*khayalee*” beliefs and reject Guru Nanak’s real, practical and absolute enlightenment. To make our *khyalee* beliefs acceptable, we wanted to paint and portray Guru Nanak himself to be a practitioner and purveyor of our wrong beliefs.

So instead of wanting to stand in the divine enlightenment that was Guru Nanak, we pulled the Guru into the shadows of our own “*khyalee*” darkness. For this is exactly what the authors of much of 2,000 *sakhis* have succeeded in doing.

Guru Nanak wrote a great deal of *banee* – all of which is contained within the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Nine hundred and seventeen *shabads* and *saloks* of his are contained in the Guru Granth Sahib.

How many of these *shabads* have Sikhs read? How many have we understood? How many do our *ragis*, *-parcharaks*, *dadhees* and *kirtanias* preach – without resorting to some half-cooked *sakhi* to distort its meaning? How many have we attempted to apply his *banee* in our lives?

These 947 *shabads* are the real Guru Nanak. These 947 *shabads* are the divine enlightenment of Guru

Nanak and the Godly rain of blessings that he brought.

Will we continue to be blind and barren so as to ignore these 947 *shabads* that tell us of the real Guru Nanak and instead link with what are mostly half baked, half cooked, patently false, semi-false stories called *sakhis* that are plagiarised/stolen from others – especially from the bigger stars (*Tarey Chupey*) that Bhai Gurdas ji is talking about?

Let us just take one verse of Guru Nanak:

Hukum Rajayee Chalna, Nanak Likhiya Naal.

It is on page 1 of the Guru Granth Sahib. It captures the essence of Guru Nanak’s enlightenment – *Hukam*. Guru Nanak’s Sikhi is about *Hukam* – about attempting to know and understand the Will of the Creator; about wanting to abide by (*chalna*) and live one’s life within the confines of this will; about wanting to be part and parcel of this will (*likhiya naal*), and about making the will of the Creator as the object of our spiritual life (*rajayee*).

Should one apply the message of just this one SINGLE verse of Guru Nanak, 90 percent of the *sakhis* of the *Janam Sakhis* would crumble because they show Guru Nanak going against the Will of the Creator. How can a Guru tell us Sikhs to know, understand, and abide by the *Hukam* of the Creator, while he himself destructed the *Hukam* at every step of the way?

If we had read the *Banee* of Guru Nanak, we would know that his companion is Mardana who is placed in the GGS by Guru Nanak at three places. We would know that Bala did not exist because in the 947 *shabads* (and 40 *Vaars* of Bhai Gurdas ji), Bala is not mentioned even once.

We Sikhs need to cure the blindness that Dr Iqbal is pointing out for us. The cure is within the

enlightenment of Guru Nanak's 947 shabads and the rest of Gurbani. We also need to transform our barren hearts and souls so that we can contain the blessings that Guru Nanak brought for us. The way to irrigate these barren hearts and souls is again to connect with the messages of *banee*.

This year celebrates the 546th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak our Guru. One can almost hear the soul of the Guru cry out from the pages of the GGS: Enough of darkness and barren-ness; come to the enlightenment that Guru Nanak is:

*Gurbanee Es Jug Mein Chanan, Karam Vasei
Mun Aiye.*

Gurbani is the enlightenment (*Chanan*) within which the divine blessings (*Karam*) will fill the heart of the enlightened. End.

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THE SIKH NISHAN SAHIB DEMYSTIFIED.

Karminder Singh Dhillon, PhD (Boston) Malaysia

The *Kesri* (Xanthic) coloured flag that Sikhs respectfully call the *Nishan Sahib* and seen flying at Gurdwaras is to the Sikh place of worship as Sikh *Dastaar* or Turban is to Sikh identity.

A few points on its origin, function and manner of respect may be as useful to the reader as much of some commentary on worship-like rituals that have sprung up in recent times in relation to the Sikh flag.

Sikh scholar cum historian Kahn Singh Nabha writes that the *Nishan Sahib* was originally called *Jhanda* (flag) *Sahib* and that it was founded by Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. Folks who get offended when someone refers to the Sikh flag as "*Jhanda*" can take note of this fact.

In the village of Fagwara in Punjab, there is a historic Gurdwara marking the transit of the

seventh master Guru Har Rai Ji during one of his travels from Kartarpur to Kiratpur, called Gurdwara Jhanda Sahib, lending credence to the fact that the term "*Jhanda Sahib*" had come into existence then.

The Sikh Rehat Maryada and Nishan Sahib:

The Akaal Takhat sanctioned Sikh Rehat Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) or SRM has the following stipulation relating to the *Nishan Sahib* in Section 3, Chapter 4, Article V (r):

"Every Gurdwara should install a *Nishan Sahib* at some high location. The cloth of the flag should either be *Basanti* (Xanthic) or *Surmayee* (greyish blue) in colour. At the top of the *Nishan* there should either be a *Bhalla* (spearhead) or a *Khanda*." [a double edged straight sword, with convex sides leading to slanting top edges ending in a vertex.]

One is hard pressed to find a Gurdwara flying the *Nishan* in the the *Surmayee* colour these days, even if it was the standard colour of *Nishan Sahibs* flying in the Gurdwaras in townships where I grew up.

Function of the Nishan Sahib:

It is clear from the words "at some high location" in the SRM stipulation above that the primary purpose of the *Nishan Sahib* was to act as a sign board and a symbol of the Gurdwara.

If one reads Kahan Singh Nabha's writings of the original functions of the Gurdwara, one can see the logic of the Gurdwara needing a symbol that was visible from afar for Sikhs and especially for non-Sikhs.

Beyond being a primary place for the teaching and practice of Sikh Spirituality, the Gurdwara was to have a number of other functions.

The Gurdwara was meant to serve as a sanctuary

for the protection of dignity of women. If such a function sounds odd it is because we Sikhs have terminated this function for so long, that it is no longer part of our collective memory. I doubt our modern Gurdwara *parbhandaks* are even aware of this primary function of the Gurdwara.

I further doubt that a battered, displaced or otherwise needy woman seeking protection in our modern Gurdwaras would be accommodated in any meaningful way!

The Gurdwara was also meant to serve as a resting place for the weary traveller. Again, if this function sounds strange, it is also because we have stopped accommodating travellers in our Gurdwaras from a long time.

The Gurdwara was further to serve as a “meal-house” for the hungry. The key word is “hungry”. Serving meals to the well fed or those who have better cooked meals waiting in their houses does NOT fall in this category even if this has become the standard practice of *langgar* in our modern Gurdwaras.

All the above functions were meant *equally* for the Sikh and non-Sikh. It is on these functional grounds that Section 3, Chapter 4, Article V (k) of the SRM reads:

“No person, no matter which country,
religion or cast he/she belongs to,
is debarred from entering the Gurdwara...”

This then is the primary function of the *Nishan Sahib*. It is located high as a beacon of hope for any woman seeking to protect her honour, as a light house for a weary traveller seeking a place to rest, and as a welcome sign for a hungry/displaced/homeless person seeking a meal. The *Nishan Sahib* is, for all intents and purposes a sign board that stands tall and calls out for those who need protection, solace and a meal. It is inviting them, in the name of the Guru to come to the Gurdwara and be served.

Tall Sign Boards but Non-Functional Gurdwaras:

Gurdwaras have perfected the art of building taller and sophisticated *Nishan Sahibs* – complete with lights, pulleys, and other electronic display systems. Some are visible from tens of miles. Such would be wonderful if the Gurdwaras actually provided the appropriate services to those it did attract from afar by its 100 feet tall flag pole.

But if the Gurdwara fails to provide the basic functions as mentioned above, then its tall *Nishan Sahib* is akin to a defunct hospital that has a huge sign visible from ten miles, but tells patients who show up that there is no doctor, no treatment and no medicine there.

Worshipping the Sign Board:

But Sikhs have by and large, turned the *Nishan Sahib* into an article of worship. Sikhs are seen walking around the flag pole in *parkarma* (circumambulation style), folding hands to *metha tek* or bowing down to the concrete base of the *Nishan* repeatedly, rubbing their noses on the base, tying pieces of cloth or ribbons to the flag pole and then taking them home a few days later as blessed material, and much more.

Those who consider such practices as respect or reverence ought to think a little deeper.

One does not respect road rules by *metha tek* or bowing to road signs. One does not display any reverence to a welfare home by circumambulations of its sign board.

One does not acquire health by trying ribbons to the hospital’s sign board and then taking the ribbons home as equivalent to medicines. One does not become educated by doing repeated *parkirma* of, or by rubbing ones nose repeatedly on the school sign board.

If only everything was this easy! What then makes us think that we can acquire the Guru’s blessings

by doing all the above to the Gurdwara services sign board that is the *Nishan Sahib* but by doing nothing to ensure that the Gurdwara actually functions the way it was supposed to function?

A Sikh ought to consider his or her head as priceless to only bow before the Guru Granth Sahib. Bowing before just about everything within the precincts of the Gurdwara – gate, steps, stairs, mats, photos, base structure of the *Nishan Sahib* etc – even if they are all part of the Gurdwara’s physical structure - is to suggest that they are all equal in stature to the GSS.

Meaningless Practices Relating to the Nishan Sahib:

Sikhs are known for their penchant to slide down the slippery slope of rituals. Where we cannot steal from others, we invent our own.

One wonders where the idea of dressing up the flag pole came from. The logic of it is dumbfounding. The Gurdwara I attended regularly did not have such dressing and one illiterate *parcharak* from India took it upon himself to berate the *parbhandaks* and the *sangat* openly for allowing the “Guru’s Nishan” to stand “naked.”

He went on to call the dressing “*chola sahib*” (literally: holy dress) and said the covering was akin to the “*kachera*” and that its function was to protect the “dignity” of the *Nishan Sahib*.

I asked him after his pseudo *katha* if the *Nishan Sahib* should also be adorned with the remaining three *kakars* – *kirpan sahib*, *kra sahib* and *kanga sahib!*”

More Rituals:

Gurdwaras are known to change the *Nishan Sahib* on *Gurpurabs*. There is no mention in the SRM of such a requirement. Logic dictates that the *Nishan Sahib* ought to be changed when it is torn or appears faded. No need for any fanfare.

One would have surely witnessed the *Nishan Sahib* change being done in worship type rituals that can take a couple of hours and is witnessed by entire *sangats*.

Some Gurdwaras have constructed fulcrum type flag poles which allow the flag pole to be laid horizontal. Hours are then spent washing the pole in pails full of milk or yoghurt or *lassee*. The entire pole is then towel-dried and dressed up in cloth with tie backs.

Some Gurdwaras use cranes for the same purpose. Other have ladders. Doing such is *munmat*, or deviant practise, plain and simple. It is waste of milk, lasee, cloth, time and energy. It is not supported by the *maryada* or *Gurbani* and there are no historical records of Sikhs doing this in previous eras.

One can appreciate if the purpose of the *Nishan* changing ceremony is to educate or inspire love within the *sangat* for the *Nishan Sahib*. But the only “education” that takes place is one relating to self-constructed rituals.

Kahn Singh Nabha writes that the two majestic *Nishan Sahibs* that stand in the doorway of the Darbaar Sahib were first put up as wooden poles in 1775 by the Udasi Babas who ran the place then. They were broken up in a storm in 1841 and one was rebuilt by Maharaja Sher Singh and the other by Desa Singh Majithia. Both the flag poles are made of iron but adorned with copper plates. The high base was rebuilt in 1923.

Such facts illustrate that the *Nishan Sahib* can and has taken a variety of forms – wooden poles and flags of iron included. Nowhere however is the practise of covering up the pole with a “*chola sahib*,” or washing it in milk or *kachee lassee* shown as a practise except in recent times.

The Sign Must Fit the Function:

A *Nishan Sahib* is just that – a *Nishan*, a symbolic sign board. We can make it tall, big and visible

from as far as the eye can see so that it attracts those who are in need of Sikh sewa towards humanity to come to the Gurdwara. But then, it is our duty to ensure that our Gurdwaras are functional to serve such needs. What are we doing about creating truly functional Gurdwaras, is the question.

Having sign boards that are the tallest and most unique but having nothing to offer to those who show up in response to these sign boards is deception – fraud even.

Worshipping and undertaking ritualistic practices involving a sign board is to miss the point all together. Worse, it represents our own spiritual hollowness. End.

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AWAT A Word A Thought

ਅੰਮਾਵਸ ਮਹਿ ਆਸ ਨਿਵਾਰਹੁ॥ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਰਹੁ॥

*am̐maavas mahi aas nivaarahu. a̐ntar-jaamee
raam samaarahu.*

Message on the night of the new moon: Give up worldly desires from your mind and remember instead the All-knowing Divine.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **night** of the new moon, Bhagat Kabeer reminds us to give up the unnecessary **web of worldly desires and cravings** from our mind. Remember instead the Creator who is omnipresent and omniscient. He knows all our wishes and needs. If we remember Him, we tread on the right path. When we endeavor, we succeed. This is how our goals materialize.

Seek wisdom and realize your true self. Realise your potential and thus awaken your dormant power. When we do this, we shall attain the way to free ourselves from the web of darkness. We

shall become stress free. We shall attain spiritual joy.

Faith is reacting positively to a negative situation.

Robert H. Schuller, Televangelist, 1926-2015

Notes: The next 3 weeks we will cover the messages of the 15 days of the lunar fortnight. Each day is poetically captured within a divine message. These 15 days are not "locked" to any period but serve as small steps that guide us to living a life of purity, awareness and love.

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ਪਰਿਵਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰ॥ ਘਟ ਮਹਿ ਖੇਲੈ ਅਘਟ ਅਪਾਰ॥

*parivaa preetam karahu beechaar. ghaṭ mahi
khelai aghaṭ apaar.*

Message on the first day of the lunar fortnight: Contemplate on the Beloved who is formless and infinite, and yet vibrates through each and every body.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **first** day of the lunar fortnight, we are asked to remember and contemplate upon the **Primal Being**, the Beloved, who is formless and infinite, yet who resides in each and every one.

If we can realise this, we get close to divinity. We can thus free ourselves from the bondage of our mind, that is, our negative thoughts, feelings, perceptions, intentions, desires, memories and emotions. We can then allow goodness to pour forth in our thoughts, words and deeds. We are released of our worries, anxieties and fears. We are immersed in the infinite love of the Divine which runs through each of our cells.

Change your thoughts and you change your world

Norman Vincent Peale, author, 1898-1993

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ਦੁਤੀਆ ਦੁਹ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਅੰਗ॥ ਮਾਇਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਰਮੈ ਸਭ ਸੰਗ॥

*duteeaa duh kar jaanai a̐ng. maa-iaa braham
ramai sabh sa̐ng.*

Message on the second day of the lunar fortnight: (The world does not comprise only

matter) One, who recognizes its two aspects, understands that matter and Spirit both are blended with everything.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **second** day of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer states that the world comprises of **two aspects** - matter (*Maya, prakriti, Shakti*) and Spirit (*Brahm, Shiv*) both, as opposed to the belief that it is made up of only matter. The Spirit or the Divine, however, is free from Maya (the world and its snares).

The world is subject to change and alters. The Spirit or the Divine is constant. It does not alter like the phases of the moon. It pervades everywhere and in everything. Cling to the Constant and the Pure, not to the transient and impure – and realise the bliss of life, here and now.

Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places where other people see nothing.

Camille Pissarro, painter, 1830 – 1903

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ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀਆ ਤੀਨੇ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਲਿਆਵੈ॥ ਆਨਦ ਮੂਲ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਵੈ॥

triteeaa teene sam kar liaavai. aanad mool param pad paavai.

Message on the third day of the lunar fortnight:
One who brings equilibrium among the three modes of Maya – attains the highest spiritual state, the source of divine bliss.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: Making a reference to the **third** day of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer advises us to bring a balance in the *three gunas* (qualities or modes) which are believed to govern our worldly existence: *sattva* (purity, thought, goodness), *rajas* (passion, motion) and *tamas* (inertia, darkness).

In Indian philosophy, these are believed to be the mental tendencies that exist in all beings in various combinations and proportions. A person is classified as belonging to one of the three categories based on his or her predominant

quality. Their influence on an individual is profound and the general characteristic of the person is determined by the relative strength of these qualities. In human beings none of the qualities are in perfect equilibrium.

Hence the advice -- if we can bring a balance between these qualities, we can attain the highest state of spiritual harmony and bliss. This is a state where we shall forever be at peace with our fellow beings and ourselves. Such a state is developed with the association of the wise and devout. One is illumined within and without. One delights in spiritual peace and serenity forever.

If we ever want to achieve success and happiness we must live a life of balance, a life full of dedication and faith.

Anurag Prakash Ray

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ਚਉਬਹਿ ਚੰਚਲ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਗਹਹੁ॥ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਕਬਹੁ ਨ ਬਹਹੁ॥

chauthahi chañchal man kau gahahu. kaam krodh sañg kabahu na bahahu.

Message on the fourth day of the lunar fortnight:
Restrain your fickle mind and never associate with lust, anger, etc.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: Making a reference to the **fourth** day of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer reminds us to control our **fickle** mind, which is never stable. It always changes in thoughts, intentions, affections, loyalties, or preferences. It ever remains filled with evil passions and desires.

By grounding ourselves in divinity and thus having a clear mind, we can avoid getting trapped by vices like lust, anger, greed, etc. When we have too many desires, we lose focus. It is difficult to have clarity. This results in the mind becoming weak. A weak mind then makes it easy for wrong and evil thoughts to start growing. So first we should reduce our desires, and lessen our attachments with worldly desires. In this way we will be able handle things with a calm mind. We will not be seduced by wrong and negative thoughts. A stable mind allows us to be masters of

our destinies.

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ਪਾਂਚੈ ਪੰਚ ਤਤ ਬਿਸਥਾਰ॥ ਕਨਿਕ ਕਾਮਿਨੀ ਜੁਗ ਬਿਉਹਾਰ॥

pañchchai pañch tat bisthaar. kanik kaaminee jug biuhaar.

Message on the fifth day of the lunar fortnight:

The world is merely an expansion of the five transient elements,

yet man is occupied in the pursuit of gold and women.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **fifth** day of the lunar cycle, Bhagat Kabeer chides man by stating that the world is believed to be the creation of **five transient elements** - Earth, Water, Wind, Fire and Ether (space). Meaning man prides his ego even though our creation and longevity in life is temporary. We are composed of temporary or transient elements. Yet we are occupied with the pursuit of excessive greed for wealth and lust for sensual pleasures (these too are temporary and we quickly get bored with them since the sensual pleasures associated with them do not stay for a long time).

Rare are those who understand the transient nature of the world and strive to imbibe the essence of divine love and virtue. Those who do so, overcome their worldly temptations and enticements. They are emboldened and energized to face the ups and downs of life. They do not fear aging, anguish or death. They learn the way to live in the present moment and thus find the way to celestial peace and tranquility.

Faith is reacting positively to a negative situation.

Robert H. Schuller, Televangelist, 1926-2015

Notes: Traditional belief was that the earth (soil), air, water, fire (temperature) and sky (space) are the five elements. However, scientifically, the body consists of elements like oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium and phosphorus etc.

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ਛਠਿ ਖਟੁ ਚਕ੍ਰੁ ਛਹੁੰ ਦਿਸ ਯਾਇ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਰਚੈ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਰਾ ਰਹਾਇ॥

chhath khat chakr chhahooñ dis dhaa-i. bin parchai nahee thiraa rahaa-i.

Message on the sixth day of the lunar fortnight:

This body, believed to comprise of six chakras, runs in six directions. It cannot remain steady without enlightenment.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **sixth** day of the lunar cycle, Bhagat Kabeer refers here to the **six chakras** (literally wheels or circles), which are believed to be energy points or nodes in the subtle body in some old [Indian traditions](#) (he uses it only as a reference and as the basis of a context).

He states that the human body runs in six directions (four directions, plus up and down) i.e. in all directions for the sake of worldly pleasure and gratification. However, without spiritual enlightenment, the body cannot remain steady. It cannot remain content without acquiring spiritual values. **Hence, he says, shed your ignorance and duality. Hold on tightly to virtues such as forgiveness, patience and kindness.** Then, you will not have to worry about externalities or spend unnecessary time in practising rituals (while having doubts) anymore.

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ਅਸਟਮੀਂ ਅਸਟ ਯਾਤੁ ਕੀ ਕਾਇਆ॥ ਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਅਕੁਲ ਮਹਾ ਨਿਧਿ ਰਾਇਆ॥

ast-mee ast dhaat kee kaa-i-aa. taa mahi akul mahaa nidh raa-i-aa.

Message on the eighth day of the lunar fortnight:

The body is made of the eight ingredients. The King of the supreme treasure resides within it.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **eighth** day of the lunar cycle, Bhagat Kabeer makes reference to the traditional belief that the body is made up of **eight ingredients** – skin, hair, blood, veins, bones, muscles, flesh and semen – all just *a bunch of matter* (that can be used for everyday tasks, like walking etc.).

However, the divine essence lies within the body. Being open to and accepting the Guru's advice

provides us the key. **The one who understands this clue, turns away from transient worldly indulgences and discovers the hidden treasure trove – the divine potential inactive inside.** He is enriched internally and externally. He enjoys long-lasting bliss.

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ਨਉਮੀ ਨਵੈ ਦੁਆਰ ਕਉ ਸਾਧਿ॥ ਬਹਤੀ ਮਨਸਾ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਬਾਧਿ॥

naumee navai duaar kau saadh. bahtee mansaa raakhahu baandh.

Message on the ninth day of the lunar fortnight:
Control the nine gates of the body and thus keep your immoderate desires in check.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 343

Message: With reference to the **ninth** day of the lunar cycle, Bhagat Kabeer here advises us to discipline the **nine outlets or senses** of the body. These are - two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, one genital, and one anus.

Keep these under your watch and bring your unlimited cravings under control. Forsake your excessive greed and attachment to worldly entanglements. This will enable you to taste the fruit of spiritual delight and lead you to a life of spiritual stability.

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ਦਸਮੀ ਦਹ ਦਿਸ ਹੋਇ ਅਨੰਦ॥ ਛੁਟੈ ਭਰਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ॥

dasmee dah dis hoi anañd. chhootai bharam milai gobiñd.

Message on the tenth day of the lunar fortnight:
When the Divine is realised, delusion is dispelled and divine bliss is experienced in the ten directions.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 344

Message: Making a reference to the **tenth** day of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer shares his personal experience with us that when we realise the Master of the Universe permeating through the entire creation, all delusions and doubts are dispelled. We experience spiritual ecstasy in the **ten directions** (four directions, four corners, and up and down) i.e. all around, everywhere, inside

and outside. The Divine - the embodiment of light – is pure and immaculate. He is beyond any sorrow. Realising His presence in our being, we too find it easy to deal with life's problems. We overcome our anguish and misery, and experience a mystical delight.

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ਏਕਾਦਸੀ ਏਕ ਦਿਸ ਧਾਵੈ॥ ਤਉ ਜੋਨੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ॥

ekaadasee ek dis dhaavai. tau jonee sañkaṭ bahur na aavai.

Message on the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight: **When one heads in one direction, one does not suffer the pain of reincarnation (misery) again.**

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 344

Message: With reference to the **eleventh (ten plus one) day** of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer reveals that if we head towards **one direction**, we are sure to succeed. Meaning, if we are focused and sincerely endeavour to achieve our goal (single mindedly), we will find our destination – both worldly and spiritually.

Spiritually speaking, our goal is to realise the divine potential within all of us. Once we do so, we do not have to suffer the pains of misery in life again and again. Our body and mind become peaceful and pure. The treasure of divinity and spiritual bliss, which earlier appeared beyond reach, will now be found within. We attain harmony and serenity internally and externally.

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ਬਾਰਸਿ ਬਾਰਹ ਉਗਵੈ ਸੂਰ॥ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਬਾਜੇ ਅਨਹਦ ਤੂਰ॥

baaras baarah ugvai soor. ahinis baaje anhad toor.

Message on the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight: **When twelve suns rise, the bugles of spiritual joy sound throughout the day and night.**

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 344

Message: With reference to the **twelfth** day of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer here reveals to us that when **twelve suns** rise i.e. there is light equal to twelve suns – light of perfect wisdom dawns upon us - celestial pleasure is experienced

within continually. Then, one beholds the One Father permeating within all. One experiences a wonderful and incredible delight! A very strange thing happens – the mere human becomes God-like – fully accomplished and content, blossomed, blessed and blissful.

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ਚਉਦਸਿ ਚਉਦਹ ਲੋਕ ਮਝਾਰਿ॥ ਰੋਮ ਰੋਮ ਮਹਿ ਬਸਹਿ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ॥
*chaudas chaudah lok majhaar. rom rom mahi
basahi muraar.*

Message on the fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight: The Divine permeates in all the fourteen worlds, and in each and every bit of creation.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 344

Message: With reference to the **fourteenth day** of the lunar fortnight, Bhagat Kabeer here mentions about the **fourteen worlds** (seven higher ones and seven lower ones), an ancient belief in some religious traditions, and reminds us that the Creator pervades in all of them i.e. in the entire Universe, in all its parts, rather, in each and every bit of it. Bhagat Kabeer tells us to realize this fact and see the One Force working throughout the entire creation – without any gaps. Center yourself on the Beautiful and the Virtuous, operating behind every scene. Enrich yourself with wisdom and truth, and in this way attain spiritual contentment.

*

ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕਰਤੇ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਨੇ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਸਿਮਰਿਓ ਰਾਮੁ॥
*niñdaa karte janam siraano kab-hoo na simrio
raam.*

Life passed by slandering others, and one never remembered the Divine.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1105

Message: Forgetting one's true purpose and meaning of life, man seems more focused on how others live theirs. There is constant comparison of lifestyles, many an attempt to keep up with the rest. Using his five vices as a crutch to appear superior, he believes himself to be great and others

small. The lustful, the angry, the clever, the deceitful and the lazy waste their human lives focused on backbiting and gossiping about others. So engrossed in false thought, word and deed is man, that there is no time to give to divinity and to learn from divine wisdom. In place of joining the company of good people, man wanders around uselessly. How can such a man be saved?

When the debate is lost, slander becomes the tool of the loser. Socrates

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ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਨਹੀ ਛੂਟੀ ਨਿਫਲ ਭਈ ਸਭ ਸੇਵਾ॥
par niñdaa mukh te nahee chhooṭee niphāl bha-ee sabh sevaa.
(O man! Even after listening to scriptures) your mouth has not stopped slandering others, and thus all your worship service has gone fruitless.

Bhagat Parmanand, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1253

Message: Speech is one of the most difficult aspects of life to control. How many of us can honestly say that we have never said something unpleasant about someone else and then later realized that we should not have. The remarks cannot be retracted and consequences follow. Backbiting, slander and gossip are fruitless, futile actions. They create enmity and discord. Of what use is devotion to the Divine if we are unable to respect and be kind to His creation. With anger and greed and cruelty in us, how can we be of service to others? Whatever we do will remain fruitless. Join the company of the wise. Follow their wisdom and reflect on one's daily actions.

Slander slays three persons: the speaker, the spoken to, and the spoken of.

A Hebrew proverb

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ਰਿਦੈ ਸੁਧ ਜਉ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਹੋਇ॥ ਹਮਰੇ ਕਪਰੇ ਨਿੰਦਕੁ ਧੋਇ॥
*ridai sudh jau niñdaa hoi. hamre kapre niñdak
dhoi.*

If our heart is pure, and we are slandered, then the slanderer washes our clothes.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 339

Message: We slander and gossip about others but dislike others doing it to us. Bhagat Kabeer,

however, welcomes slander. He says it is pleasing. If one is pure of heart, there is no need to be hurt by another's remarks. Like the advice given by parents to their children, slander of a person makes one realize what one's 'wrongdoings' are? Slander pinpoints the faults. This makes us aware of the shortcomings in us. Being aware of these faults one can resolve to avoid them and purify the mind. This is like allowing someone to wash our clothes and rid them of all dirt. Slander therefore can be a gift. It is the one who slanders that pays the price.

Slanderers do not hurt me because they do not hit me. Socrates

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ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕਰਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ॥ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਕਾ ਪਰਗਟਿ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ॥
niñdaa kahaa karahu sañsaraa. niñdak kaa pargat
paahaaraa.

O people of the world!

Why do you indulge in slander? The habit of the slanderer is soon exposed.

Bhagat Ravi Das, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 875

Message: Man slanders because he is not wholly conscious of the wisdom and the teachings of the wise men. The habit has become so ingrained in man that he fails to see that he is doing anything wrong. Vices have taken control over him and this is the resultant behavior which he considers normal. Man has to become conscious of the Divine, of His presence in us, and of the presence of evil vices that control our behaviour, thoughts and speech. Only when our thoughts are purified through understanding and practice of this wisdom, can there be a significant change in our speech and in the manner in which we respect our fellow human beings.

Those who realize that slander is wrong can easily see the emptiness in others who continue that behavior. They see also that no matter what anyone says about them; if they are true to their word, they cannot be hurt. Appearing to be religious by performing practices such as pilgrimages, ritualistic baths, or countless feasts

cannot remove the emptiness of the behavior. When we hurt others we will be hurt in return.

Slander is a poison which kills charity, both in the slanderer and the one who listens.

Saint Bernard

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ਨਿੰਦਕ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਕਤਹੂ ਨਾਹਿ॥ ਆਪਿ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਹਿ॥

niñdak kee gat kat-hoo naahi. aap beej aape hee khaahi.

The slanderers never find peace. They eat what they themselves plant.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1145

Message: Guru Arjan, our fifth Guru, remarks that in slandering a saintly, devout or good person, man suffers in misery, pain and anguish. By his actions he pollutes his own mind and body. He places an unbearable burden upon his head and eventually reaps what he has sown. Habits die hard. The satisfaction, the feeling of importance, the righteousness continues without him realizing that he has scorched his own inner self.

Devotees need to be beyond hate and vengeance. Emulate good habits, and thus emancipate yourself from habits of slander or gossip.

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ਕਰਤਾਰ ਪੁਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਵਸੈ ਸੰਤਨ ਕੈ ਪਾਸਿ॥

kartaar pur kartaa vasai sañtan kai paas.

The Creator dwells with the saintly people in Kartarpur

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 816

Message: Some Sikh scholars are of the view that 'Kartarpur' here refers to Kartarpur founded by Guru Nanak (now in Pakistan) while others believe it implies the congregation or assembly of Sikhs (saadh sangat). Dr Ratan Singh Jaggi (Guru Granth Vishav Kosh, page 315) however believes the reference here signifies the founding and residency of Kartarpur, the town built by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Sahib, in 1594.

Guru Nanak's saintly and kind presence together with his wise words and attitude must have so

enthralled people of those times that people must have felt that the Guru was a perfect embodiment of the Divine and the most perfect of men. Even Guru Arjan who lived much later on in life must have heard of Guru Nanak's fame and saintly demeanor, must have felt the Guru's presence so close enough for him to compose a hymn in praise of Guru Nanak and the saintly people of Kartarpur.

In fact, there is no difference between the devoted Sikh and his or her Guru. Thus Guru Arjan is making reference to those times of peace and serenity when Guru Nanak and his devotees lived peacefully in Kartarpur. Also, since the Sikhs of the Guru followed his divine precepts, the Divine must have surely resided in their actions and words. So Kartarpur must indeed have been a heaven on earth.

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ਦਿਲਹੁ ਮੁਹਬਤਿ ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਸੇਈ ਸਚਿਆ॥ ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਸਿ ਕਾਂਢੇ ਕਚਿਆ॥
*dilahu muhabat jinnh se-ee sachiaa. jinnh man hor mukh hor si
 kaandhe kachiaa.*

They alone whose love is from the depth of their heart are true lovers. Those who have one thing in their heart and something else in their mouth (on their lips) are called false.

Sheikh Fareed, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 488

Message: Who do we call the true lovers? Those who love sincerely and from the depth of their heart, says Baba Fareed. Not those who make promises without meaning them. Such is the love that we should aspire to cultivate for the Divine and give to those around us.

When we are focused on the rat race of life, we miss out on the divine part of life. We end up being a burden on ourselves and others. In chasing our never-ending desires, we often do so at the expense of our health and well-being. And of course stress is inflicted on those around us as well. Our coming into this world is fruitless if all we do is run after materialism, ignoring our divine potential and neglecting our loved ones. One seeks to benefit oneself and in doing so, engages in

unscrupulous means - often playing the roles of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Therefore, shed your duality, shed your vices, and instead, revel in the soothing embrace of true and pure love!

You can love a person dear to you with a human love, but an enemy can only be loved with divine love. Leo Tolstoy

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ਆਜੁ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਟਾਕਿਮ ਕੂਂਜਰੀਆ ਮਨਹੁ ਮਚਿੰਦਰੀਆ
*aj milaavaa sekh phareed taakim koonjaree-aa manhu
 machindaree-aa.*

O Sheikh Fareed! You can meet the Divine today – just restrain your cranes (sensory organs) which prompt the mind (and always keep it on the wings).

Sheikh Fareed, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 488

Message: Can we meet our Creator? Yes, we can access our Creator here and now. Before this transitory abode of ours (our body) is lost, we must embark on the journey and walk on the right path. What is preventing us? What is our obstacle?

It is our wayward mind - that is the vehicle driving our body. The mind is further driven by our sensory organs and evil passions. We thus have to attune our mind and moderate its cravings. That is our true calling. We need to check its constant chasing after the world and its snares. We need to walk on the truthful path that the Guru tells us to tread on. Once we practice such restraint on our mind and its negative and unending yearnings, we shall achieve union with the Divine. We shall find peace.

It's good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure that you haven't lost the things that money can't buy.

George H. Lorimer, an American journalist and author, 1867-1937

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ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਮੇਲੀ ॥ ਜਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਅਲਹੁ ਬੋਲੀ॥
kar kirpaa prabh saadhsaang melee. jaa phir dekhaa taa

meraa alahu belee.

Through His grace the Divine has joined me with virtuous people (saadh sangat). And now when I see around I realize the Almighty is my Friend (always there with me).

Sheikh Fareed, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 794

Message: God does not want to be separated from us - He is manifested through His creation. He wants us to feel His presence within and all around. But man wastes precious moments of his life without realizing this. And then regrets all the wasted time gone by. This is the story for most of us. We lose our youth in search of transitory happiness. We have no time to engage in divine knowledge. We have no time to help those in need. We invest in relationships not merely for love and with sincerity, but for whatever extra wealth or pleasures that can satisfy our unending materialistic desires. All our associations with others come with strings attached.

This period of separation from the divine truth is a painful loss and one can never attain inner peace without seeking it. With the grace of the Divine, when we realise this, does our journey to peace and tranquility begin.

The journey of life is full of ups and downs, and none of our materialistic investments or superficial relationships will guide us through or help us. God is our true friend and like-minded people our true guides. Therefore, we must endeavor to think of that path early on while we are still in our youth, and through right guidance, enable ourselves to walk on the path of life successfully. In this way, we will find serenity and internal harmony and finally arrive at our purpose of life.

There is one thing, and only one thing, in which it is granted to you to be free in life, all else being beyond your power: that is to recognize and profess the truth.

Leo Tolstoy

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**ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੀ ਵੇਲਾ॥ ਭਰਿ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਜਬ ਉਛਲੈ ਤਬ
ਤਰਣੁ ਦੁਰੇਲਾ॥**

*beraa bañdh na sakhio bañdhan kee velaa. bhar sarvar jab
oochhlai tab taran duhelaa.*

(O friend) You couldn't make the raft when it was time to make it. Then when the ocean is full and overflowing, it will be difficult to cross it.

Sheikh Fareed, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 794

Message: There is a saying, "Make hay while the sun shines." Wise are those who live by this and prepare for the rainy day. We never know what will happen next and readiness is an asset. Similarly, our human life is a precious gift to bask in divine love and spread goodwill amongst people. However, caught up in the world and its snares, we do not perform the right actions at the right time.

If we don't make the raft of divine love and virtue when it is the time to do so, then how are we going to face the dangers and perils of life? Life sometimes deals us with circumstances equivalent to tidal waves. We need to make the raft of divine wisdom, so that it will provide us the stability and courage to face the storm. We need to plant the seeds of right words, thoughts and actions to reap the fruits of love, peace and serenity.

I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.

Jimmy Ray Dean, an American singer, television host, actor and businessman, 1928-2010

ਹੁਣਿ ਵਤੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਬੀਜਿਓ ਅਗੈ ਭੁਖਾ ਕਿਆ ਖਾਏ ॥

Now, when it is the time to do so, one does not plant the seed of divine awareness, then what will the hungry soul eat in future?

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 450

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**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਖਾਕੁ ਨ ਨਿੰਦੀਐ ਖਾਕੂ ਜੇਤੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ ਜੀਵਦਿਆ ਪੈਰਾ
ਤਲੈ ਮੁਇਆ ਉਪਰਿ ਹੋਇ॥**

phareedaa *khaak* na niñdecai khaakoo jēṭ na koi. jeevadiaa pairaa
talai muiaa upar hoi.

O Fareed! Do not slander the dust; nothing is as great as dust. When we are alive, it is under our

feet, and when we are dead, it is above us.

Bhagat Fareed, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1378

Message: There is so much competition in the world. People are constantly seeking to be more successful than others. Each possession, be it a better phone, a better house, better car or a better job, adds to the ego of a person. He considers himself a higher being, and sometimes slanders the life, which he may once have been a part of. We consider ourselves more intelligent and modern than our elders. We are guilty of considering others inferior to us and look down on those not as fortunate as us.

Baba Fareed here reminds us that we are in no position to look down at anything. The use of the word dust (khaak) as something lowly, implies humility. The aim of the above couplet, using dust, as lowly material, is to signify that we are in no position to judge or fault others. When you accept your lowly position, then you are humbled. As the saying goes “Little drops of water and little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land”.

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ਸੇ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਜੇ ਨਿਗ੍ਰਹ ਕਰੈ॥ ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਕਰੈ॥

*so girahee jo nigrah karai. jap tap sanjam
bheekhiaa karai.*

One who restrains one's senses from vices, and begs for divine remembrance, diligence and self-discipline is a true householder.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 952

Message: Restraint from vices and cultivation of virtues is what makes us truly spiritual while still being householders. One needs to seek the virtues of contemplation, hard work and contentment (*jap, tap and sanjam*) in life. One needs to make his life full of good deeds and generosity, i.e. instead of merely making ritual donations to charity, our entire life needs to be imbued with the virtues of sharing and serving mankind genuinely and selflessly. Such a householder is pure and blessed. He does not need to abandon his normal

household life. He can taste the fruits of spirituality while leading a successful worldly life.

ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਕਾ ਕਰੇ ਸਰੀਰੁ॥ ਸੇ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਗੰਗਾ ਕਾ ਨੀਰੁ॥

The householder who makes his life full of virtue and charity is as pure as the water of the Ganges.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 952

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ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਸੇ ਕਰੇ ਜਿ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੈ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ॥

gurmukh udaasee so kare ji sach rahai liv laai
That Guru-oriented person, who (while leading a householder's life) keeps one's consciousness focused on Truth, practises true renunciation.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 588

Message: While leading a householder's life many of us are preoccupied with the need to satisfy our worldly desires. We do not pay attention to the Guru's wisdom. The Truth takes second place. There is anxiety in our minds, the fire of vices in our hearts, and egoism rules the day.

We can practise true detachment. To do so, we only need to be conscious and focused on divine teachings. Through practice of these virtues daily - the fire of desire is quenched, anxiety from the mind is removed, and egoism is eradicated. The body and mind are soothed and lasting peace is obtained. There is a need for self-realization, not for robes and rituals.

ਸੇ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਸੇ ਦਾਸੁ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਨਿਆ॥

Through Guru-orientation, one who attains self-realization is a true householder and Renunciate.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1332

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ਸੇ ਸਾਧੂ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਸੇਈ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਸਾਏ॥

so saadhoo bairagee soee hirdai naam vasaee.
One who enshrines the Divine Name within one's heart is a true sage and detached.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 29

Message: Some believe that to attain spiritual enlightenment one needs to abandon the life of a householder and become an ascetic. It is believed

that this would help in detaching oneself from worldly temptations, thus paving the way for enlightenment. However, unless the inner being is first attuned to spiritual qualities, physical detachment is of no use.

The Guru states that this physical detachment will not free the mind from worldly attachment and pride. One should therefore learn how to remain detached while leading a successful household life. This is balanced detachment. By attuning ourselves to divine thought, subduing our egotism and engaging in devotional worship - while being a householder - we nurture love for the Divine. We have to learn how to be untouched by anger, greed, selfishness and conceit while experiencing the life of a householder. In the company of the good and through good deeds, excessive attachment is shed and self-centeredness subdued, and hence the treasure of divinity is revealed.

ਸੇ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਜਿ ਉਲਟੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ॥ ਗਗਨ ਮੰਡਲ ਮਹਿ ਰੇਖੈ ਬੰਮੁ॥

One who recalls the Divine and erects the pillar of divine wisdom in one's mind is a true Bairaagi.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 953

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ਸੇ ਤਪਸੀ ਜਿਸੁ ਸਾਧਸੰਗੁ॥

so *tapsee jis saadh-saṅg.*

One who associates with good people (and thus abstains from evil) is a true ascetic.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1180

Message: It is a belief among some people that one can only become spiritual if one leads an ascetic life and practices penance.

According to our Gurus, a true spiritual experience, which brings eternal joy and contentment, is attained through the grace and wisdom of the Divine. Such an experience is attained when the essence of divinity comes to dwell in our heart and the melody of divine praises resounds within our being.

Let your love for the Divine translate into knowledge and practice of divine wisdom in daily life. Spiritual wisdom blossoms further in the company or association of humble and devout people. Only such a love can lead us to a state of profound bliss.

A quiet secluded life in the country, with the possibility of being useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them; then work which one hopes may be of some use; then rest, nature, books, music, love for one's neighbor — such is my idea of happiness. Leo Tolstoy, novelist and philosopher, 1828-1910

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ਸੇ ਇਕਾਂਤੀ ਜਿਸੁ ਰਿਦਾ ਥਾਇ॥

so *ikaantee jis ridaa thaa-i.*

One whose heart is stable and steady is a true recluse.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1180

Message: Some people believe that one can only find peace of mind in an isolated place where there is no distraction. Hence, in search of such quietness, they leave their normal household life and retreat to a secluded place. Physical seclusion may help us a little but will not bring true serenity and peace within. The reason for this is that our mind is not at peace. It is filled with doubt, delusion, anxiety and fear. Only when these are removed can the mind be stable and peaceful.

A true ascetic, the Guru says, is he whose mind is steady and stable. He seeks the Divine and realizes divine presence in everything and everyone. Enjoying the love and grace of the Divine, he is in perfect harmony while leading a normal household life.

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ਜਗੁ ਬੰਦੀ ਮੁਕਤੇ ਹਉ ਮਾਰੀ॥

jag *bañdee muk-te hau maaree.*

The world is held in bondage; only they who conquer their egoism are emancipated.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 413

Message: We are in bondage – the bondage of our own excessive attachment to the world and its snares. Everyone is held in this bondage. He alone who conquers his vices and his egoism is liberated. We are wise but rarely do we practice our wisdom. We have knowledge but rarely do we reflect upon it. Without self-realization we wander uselessly. We remain unhappy and mentally sick. Excessive indulgence exhausts us and ruins our lives.

Only through Guru-orientation can we understand this and enshrine divine wisdom in our mind. These bonds are only released when we nurture love and walk in accordance with the Guru's words of wisdom. Then, all delusions are dispelled. We are liberated while alive. We are united with truth and virtue. We realise the ONE permeating in all. The Divine is immaculate and the treasure trove of virtues. Peace is enjoyed only by seeking this Treasure.

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ਲਬੁ ਅਧੇਰਾ ਬੰਦੀਖਾਨਾ ਅਉਗਣ ਪੈਰਿ ਲੁਹਾਰੀ॥

lab adheraa bañdee-khaanaa augan pair luhaaree.

Gluttony is like the dark dungeon and demerits are like the shackles on man's feet.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1191

Message: Greed has always been the downfall of mankind. On earth there is an infinite source of provisions. All beings receive their rightful portions. One, however, is never satisfied with what one has, and constantly craves for more. Our fickle mind makes us wander away from righteous living and eventually leads us to vices. These soon become shackles on our feet. Yet we still fail to realize that our own greediness has now trapped us in a dark dungeon. How can we be released from our own prison? Divine wisdom is the key. Remember the Creator and always be grateful for His blessings. Seek His guidance. Realize your divine potential and be free.

Without 'ethical culture', there is no salvation for humanity. *Albert Einstein*

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ਗਈ ਬਹੋਰੁ ਬੰਦੀ ਛੋੜੁ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਦੁਖਦਾਰੀ॥

gaae bahor bañdee chhor nirañkaar dukh-daaree.

O Divine! You are the Restorer of what is taken away, the Liberator from captivity, without any particular form, and the Destroyer of suffering.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 624

Message: Who is this One who releases us from our bondage? As men of devotion we turn to the Divine to save our honor. He has the power to put us back on the path of righteous living. He has the power to free us from the shackles of our vices. He has the power to take away our suffering and give us peace of mind. He is the father who scolds yet forgives the innocent child who continually makes mistakes. He knows our state of mind. He listens to our prayers. But mere recitation of words is not enough. We need to humble ourselves before Him and seek His grace.

Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended upon man.

Francis J. Spellman, 1889 -1967

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ਨਾਨਕ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬੰਦੀ ਮੋਚ॥

naanak kau prabh raakh lehi mere saahib bañdee moch.

O my Liberator, the Divine! Please protect me, the Nanak (from the pain of separation from you)!

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 135

Message: Our liberator is the Divine. We remain in bondage as long as we remain separated from divinity. We face misery again and again due to our own actions, our wrong choices, being led by the world and its temporary sensual pleasures. The solution is clear. To be protected for all time, associate with the devout and wise people. Through gaining knowledge of the wisdom of the Divine, realize your mistakes. Through practice of these teachings revert to the right path. Pain and anxiety will soon vanish. There is no intermediary in this process. Your relationship with the Divine is direct. Only His light within you can release you from bondage. You only need to discover and ignite it.

Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they.

*Jean Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher, writer, and composer, 1712
-1778*

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ਫੂਟੇ ਆਂਡਾ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ॥

ਕਾਟੀ ਬੇਰੀ ਪਗਹ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੁੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ॥

phooto aañḍaa bharam kaa manahi bhaio pargaas.

kaateē beree pagah te gur keenee bañḍ khalaas.

The Guru has shattered the shackles on my feet, and has set me free. The egg of delusion has burst, and my mind has been enlightened.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1002

Message: The Guru's wisdom sets us free. We are no longer shackled by the world and its snares. We are no longer held captive. All delusions and doubts are removed and the mind is enlightened. By associating with right minded people we are able to release our fears and anxieties - past and future. With the blessings of the Divine we cross over the difficult ocean of life successfully. Here we attain a state of peace and serenity. We find life's true purpose. We are blessed with true wealth and riches.

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ਆਤੁਰੁ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ॥

ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਤ ਕੂਕਰੀ ਆਸਾ ਇਤੁ ਲਾਗੇ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਛਾਰ॥

aatur naam bin sañsaar.

tripat na hovat kookree aasaa it laago bikhiaa chhaar.

The world is miserable without the Name of the Divine. It clings to perishable worldly material, but the craving she-dog within it, is never satisfied.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1223

Message: Unfortunately, most of us feel miserable because we don't make divinity a part of our lives. Since we do not pause to listen, reflect and act on the Guru's wise advice, we continue our bad habits of clinging to false notions of worldly things like wealth, status, grandeur, luxury, etc.

Our attachment to things that may not remain with us forever (as the world is ever changing) is just like a she-dog that is always craving for more and more things. We are like the she-dog who has lost all self-control and is endlessly craving for attention and for something to do. We will never be satisfied and thus never be able to control our urges so long as we do not heed the divine message of our Gurus.

Notes: A condition known as "pica" can drive people and animals to crave the oddest things. Sometimes pica presents as an urge to lick metal or stone objects, and can be traced to some sort of mineral deficiency. In other cases, the pica is related to obsessive/compulsive behavior. (http://dogs.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Odd_Dog_Behavior)

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ਕੁਤੇ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਲਾਈਐ ਭੀ ਸੇ ਕੁਤੀ ਧਾਤੁ॥

kutte chañḍan laaeai bhee so kuttee dhaat.

One may apply sandalwood to a dog, but still his nature remains that of dogs.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 143

Message: A dog or any animal is – an animal – even if you bathe it properly and anoint it with sandalwood or any other fragrance. It will roll in the dust and get soiled again.

On the other hand, humans are known as the species at the top of the animal kingdom with the most developed mind and capable of language and rationalizing. Even though we may be a fine species, if we do not live up to the noble nature of our mind, we will end up allowing it to be defiled by the dust of wrong habits of thought and ultimately wrong actions, which will bring up the hidden beast behind our disguise.

Thus even if we beautify the body, the mind will never be satisfied. It will remain dirty and egoistic just like a dog that may have sandalwood applied to make it smell good, yet it barks and bites at every small opportunity because fundamentally

it's a dog. So the choice is ours, manifest the beast or the divine spark. Manifest our animal nature or our angelic tendency.

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ਸੁਆਨ ਪੁਛ ਜਿਉ ਰੋਇ ਨ ਸੁਖੇ ਕਹਿਓ ਨ ਕਾਨ ਧਰੈ॥

suaan poochh jiu hoi na soodho kahio na kaan dharai.

Like a dog's tail, (this mind) is never straightened and does not listen to what is told.

Guru Tegh Bahadar, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 536

Message: Here the nature and habits of our imperfect mind are compared with the tail of a dog, which is very hard to straighten. A dog's tail can never be straightened as that is its natural form.

In the same way, the minds of many of us have acquired negative habits and undesirable ways of reacting with people over the years. As time goes by, we become more set in our ways and refuse to change our negative ways of thinking.

This is especially worse when we do not believe that we need guidance and wisdom from elevated souls like our Gurus. The Guru reminds us to attempt to do the possible - change our habits and way of thinking because naturally we are supposed to be divine beings with divine potential in all of us.

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ਏਕੁ ਸੁਆਨੁ ਦੁਇ ਸੁਆਨੀ ਨਾਲਿ॥ ਭਲਕੇ ਭਉਕਹਿ ਸਦਾ ਬਇਆਲਿ॥

ek suaan dui suanee naal. bhalke bhaukahi sadaa baiaal.

A he-dog and two she-dogs reside within me and they start barking every early morning.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 24

Message: Using the analogy of a male dog – greed, and two female dogs – desire and craving, the Guru mentions that these reside in us all the time. At every instance these dogs who represent our negative and uncontrollable and excessive desires, bark or react negatively to the world around us.

Meaning, from day to day, the human mind exhibits bad habits and ways of thinking. Naive humans like us allow our desires and greed to overcome us. Instead, we need to cultivate positive qualities like contentment, patience, truth and others in our daily life.

If we remember to share our earnings with others it will reduce our greed. If we follow what our Gurus advise us, our craving and greed for worldly things will reduce to what is only necessary for us. So let's choose necessity over need.

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ਮਨੁ ਕੁੰਚਰੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਉਦਿਆਨੈ॥

man kuñchar kaaiiaa udiaanai.

The mind is like an elephant in the forest, the body.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 221

Message: The elephant here is seen as representative of the mind while the forest refers to our life. An elephant, on rampage in the forest, destroys anything in its path. The mind - seen as the elephant - allowed to run free, also causes untold damage in our life. The vices residing in the mind play havoc with our thoughts, damage relationships and take away our peace.

The elephant can only be tamed by the mahout. With the help of his goad, it is tamed and controlled, before it can be stamped and allowed to enter the court of a king. For the mind to be tamed, in order to receive honor in the court of the Divine, the Guru serves as the goad and the wisdom of the Guru's Shabad, the stamp. The wild nature of the mind can only be refined through the Guru's guidance. No other clever tricks can subdue the mind.

Only through subduing the mind, can the value of divinity be appreciated. When the mind surrenders, it is open to seeing and reflecting on the new horizons for wisdom and peace. Through awareness, it intuitively realizes the beauty of the divine essence, which abides in all of us.

ਮਮਾ ਮਨ ਸਿਉ ਕਾਜੁ ਹੈ ਮਨ ਸਾਧੇ ਸਿਧਿ ਹੋਇ॥

The mortal's business is with the mind. Only one who disciplines the mind attains perfection.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 342

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ਜਾ ਕਉ ਤੁਮ ਦੀਨੀ ਪੁਭ ਧੀਰ॥ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਨ ਆ ਵੈ ਪੀਰ॥

jaa kau tum deenee prabh dheer. taa kai nikaṭ na aavai peer.

O God! Pain does not approach him, unto whom you bestow the virtue of patience.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 188

Message: Patience is a divine virtue. It is a barrier between feelings and negative expression. Without this barrier, feelings find instantaneous negative reactions. This can cause hurt and pain to others as well as ourselves. For example, we strike out in anger and disappointment when our needs are not met and regret our actions later. Patience encourages self-restraint and offers time for reflection. It opens up your vision, gently. It gives you enough time to think through your action and words. The forces most challenging to patience are not other people, but simply one's own mind and body. Cultivate patience. It's a guardian angel that keeps pain away. It is a protective presence. It is an antidote to counter ill health and disease. One who masters patience is master of everything.

Patience is the best remedy for every trouble.

Plautus, a Roman playwright of the Old Latin period, 254 – 184 BC.

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ਖਿਮਾ ਗਗੀ ਬੁਤੁ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖੰ॥ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਿਆਪੈ ਨਾ ਜਮ ਦੇਖੰ॥

khimaa gahee brat seel saṅtokhañ. rog na biaapai naa jam dhokhañ.

Neither disease nor the fear of death afflicts him who enshrines forgiveness and takes vow of good conduct and contentment.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 223

Message: Our Guru's teachings emphasize the virtue of forgiveness, the patience to overcome and pardon the wrongdoings of others. Forgiveness brings the forgiver peace of mind and frees him or her from corrosive anger. Negative

feelings of disappointment and hurt, if left to fester in the mind, tend to breed ill-will and unhappiness which causes pain. One's mental and physical well-being is compromised as the body's immune system takes a toll. Through forgiveness we release these stored and pent up emotions. Hence the saying - you don't forgive someone for his or her sake - you forgive for your sake. When anger, disappointment and hurt give way to divine virtues of tolerance and compassion, this good conduct brings relief to the mind and body. There is no place for dis-ease. Imbibing divine wisdom in our way of thinking, coupled with good conduct and an easygoing disposition, induces a sense of great relief, peace and contentment in us. This is an excellent health tip for all to follow.

We achieve inner health only through forgiveness - the forgiveness not only of others but also of ourselves.

Joshua Loth Liebman, an American rabbi and author, 1907-1948.

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ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਹਢਾਇ॥

ਦੇਹੀ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇ॥

fareedaa bure daa bhala kar gusaa man na hadhaai. dehee rog na lagae palai sabh kichh paa-i.

O Fareed! Do good even to the bad (answer evil with goodness) and do not let anger come into your mind. By doing so, disease does not afflict the body and everything is obtained.

Sheikh Fareed, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1381

Message: ANGER, whether expressed or suppressed is well known to be detrimental to health.

Science and medicine both confirm that intense fury, hostility, and aggressiveness produce stress hormones in our body. These lead to or aggravate numerous ailments like heart disease, hypertension to name a few.

The Gurbani highlights this vice and its ill-effects on our mind and body. The cause may be outside but the punishment is internal. With awareness, we

are able to recognize this trait and its negative effects on ourselves and on those around us. We are better able to manage and control our anger before it affects our wellbeing.

To answer evil with goodness is not an easy task. With divine guidance we can rise to this elevated level too. By ridding the mind of anger, we gain so much more.

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burnt.

Buddha.

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ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਨੈ ਆਪੈ ਆਪ॥ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਿਆਪੈ ਤੀਨੇ ਤਾਪ॥

aap pachhaanai aapai aap. rog na biaapai teenau taap.

One who understands oneself realizes that the Divine Himself is pervading everywhere. He does not suffer from any illness or fevers.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 327

Message: When the mind begins to realize and recognize the Lord's omnipotence and that he is all pervasive, it becomes more aware and accepting and begins to see everything and everyone in a different and positive light. It also starts to dwell on its own inner consciousness. A journey of self-awareness begins and this brings about a positive change in thoughts and behaviour resulting in better self-control. The mind comes to terms with any adversity, is comforted and attains peace and calm. STRESS and TENSION are released and dissipated. This is one of the requisites of good health. There is enough anecdotal evidence today that spirituality is also an important daily ingredient for good health and a requirement in the medicinal prescription by the doctor.

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ਫਿਟੁ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਇ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਪੇਟੁ॥

phit ivehaa jeeviaa jit khaa-i vadhaa-iaa pet.

Futile is that life, in which one only eats to fill and bloat one's belly.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 790

Message: What makes life meaningful? A question that has as many answers as the number of people it is addressed to. The wisdom of the Gurbani emphasizes a balance between the material and the spiritual in one's life. Futile is a life that is directed by excessive greed - for food, material possessions, and desires of the senses. This imbalance will result in pain and suffering. Overeating and indulgence in rich and plentiful foods can lead to obesity, poor health and numerous complications. It is well known that obesity can cause hypertension, heart disease, joint problems and numerous other medical problems. Guru Nanak in this verse imparts to us that eating to bloat the belly is a storehouse for illnesses, suffering and pain.

Our Guru's left us with good advice: Naam Japo - constantly nurture love for divinity. Kirat Karo - work hard and earn your livelihood by honest means. Wand Ke Chhako - share the fruits of your labour with the needy and less privileged as an expression of love and compassion for mankind.

Man is more miserable, more restless and unsatisfied than ever before because half his nature –the spiritual—is starving for true food, and the other half – the material – is fed with bad food.

Paul Brunton, a British theosophist and spiritualist, 1898 -1981

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ਗੀਤ ਸਾਦੁ ਚਾਖੇ ਸੁਣੇ ਬਾਦੁ ਸਾਦੁ ਤਨਿ ਰੋਗੁ॥

geet saad chaakhe sunē baad saad tan rog.

One hears various songs, and tastes various flavours, but these sensual pleasures (if devoid of divinity) are useless, they bring only disease to the body.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1010

Message: Music, song and dance excite the senses, as do certain flavours. Carried to the extreme these indulgences can be addictive. Once addiction sets in, these are detrimental to the wellbeing of the individual. It is the excessive indulgence in these activities without a balance

derived from the Guru's wisdom that is the cause of the dis-ease. Our Gurus have always advised moderation in all of our actions. Follow their wisdom and be moderate in your indulgence.

Use, do not abuse; neither abstinence nor excess ever renders man happy.

Voltaire, a French Enlightenment writer, historian, and philosopher,
1694 - 1778

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ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਕੀਏ ਰਸ ਭੋਗੁ॥ ਤਾਂ ਤਨਿ ਉਠਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਰੋਗੁ॥

khasam visaar kee-e ras bhog. taan tan uṭh khalo-e rog.

When forgetting the Master one enjoys sensual pleasures, then diseases rise up in the body.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1256

Message: Sensual pleasures taking precedence over divine love has always been the greatest downfall of man. Pleasurable feelings and emotions can mislead one to extremes of indulgence, misjudgment and wrongdoing. The pleasure derived, although euphoric, is generally transient and fleeting. What is left behind as a result of man's action is regret, pain and suffering. The ripple effect of this is usually wide. However, when the Divine is not forgotten, and He dwells in man's mind, His wisdom guides. Using His gifts in a wise manner brings long lasting peace and happiness.

ਭੋਗੀ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਵਿਆਪੈ ॥

Suffering and diseases afflict a sensualist.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1189.

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ਮਿਠਾ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਖਾਇਆ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਤਿਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਚੋਗੁ॥

mīṭhaa kar kai khaa-iaa piaare tin tan keetaa rog.

O dear! Whatever one consumes as sweet, gives rise to disease in the body.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 641

Message: Man is always looking for more than he has. He is easily enticed and distracted. For example, sugar and sweet tastings are always very inviting and indulging, yet they are one of the most inherent causes of disease and poor health. Today – excessive sugar intake is a well-known

cause of Diabetes and its accompanying complications. Our Gurus were indeed propagating good health practices throughout their teachings.

In terms of relationships, material possessions or success in a career, man is always looking for more, a sweeter option. Sadly, too much of a good thing eventually leads to untold pain and misery in our lives. The arrogance with which we forge ahead, the manner in which we look down on others who do not meet up with our expectations, the greed with which we want more of everything – these lead to dis-ease in our lives. The wisdom from the Gurbani points us to self-control and contentment. It tells us to keep in check the tendency to veer towards the sweet, the attractive, and the pleasurable.

Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship.

Buddha.

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ਬਹੁ ਸਾਦਹੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ॥ ਭੋਗਹੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਸੁ ਅੰਤਿ ਵਿਗੋਵੈ॥

bahu saadahu dookh paraapat hovai. bhogahu rog su ant vigovai.

From excessive indulgences one receives pain, and from excessive relishments one contracts diseases, and thus in the end one suffers.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1034

Message: Worldly pleasures and temptations are plentiful and man easily succumbs to them. The more materially successful we are, the greater our indulgence. Excessive indulgence in food, intoxicants or other forms of transient pleasure, has a negative effect on our body causing illness, pain and suffering. The wisdom from the Gurbani states that we are allowed to enjoy the fruit of our labour, but should do so in moderation. It is the excess that is the cause of the pain. To counter this pain, the body needs to have some spiritual nourishment.

It is up to you today to start making healthy choices. Not choices that are just healthy for

your body but healthy for your mind.

Dr. Steve Maraboli, speaker and author

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ਐਸੇ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਸਹਜ ਕੀ ਮਾਤੀ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਭਾਇ ਸਮਾਣੀ॥

ਸੁੰਦਰਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਿਚਖਣਿ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਾ ਸਿਆਣੀ॥

*aise raṅg raatee sahaj kee maatee ahinis bhaai samaaṅee.
suṅdar saai saroop bi-chakkhaṅ kaheei saa siaa-nee.*

She who is imbued with divine love, engrossed in the state of spiritual bliss and absorbed in the devotion to the Divine day and night is called beautiful, good-looking, clever and wise.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 722

Message: Realizing His presence within and feeling the love of the Divine, a wise one willingly gives up false attachment to the self. There is no place for egoistic cleverness. Accepting whatever the Divine does as being good, one surrenders oneself to Him. With this total commitment through devotion, one links the consciousness with the Divine. One who is immersed in this love is beautiful, radiant and truly wise.

ਗਿਆਨ ਅਪਾਰੁ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਸੇਭਾਵੰਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ॥

Infinite wisdom is the decoration of a glorious woman.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 426

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ਰੂਪਵੰਤਿ ਸਾ ਸੁਖੜਿ ਬਿਚਖਣਿ ਜੇ ਧਨ ਕੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਜੀਉ॥

*roop-vañt saa sukhar bi-chakkhaṅ jo dhan kañt piaaree
jeeu.*

The woman who is pleasing to her Husband Divine is beautiful, wise, and sensible

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 97

Message: In worldly life, when one is united and in love with one's spouse, everything looks beautiful and pleasant. Similarly, in spiritual life, one who is in love with the Divine, the true Master or Being of all beings, and practices godly qualities in one's life is known to be good or beautiful.

The Divine dwells within us and so does His love. However one's egoism refuses to see this. Instead,

looking outside, it tries to fulfill its own desires in seemingly clever ways. It gets intoxicated with greed and pride. It gets engrossed in the material world. The joy one is looking for outside, is already within. Beautiful, wise, and sensible is the one who knows this. Through good deeds and by transforming oneself in a virtuous manner, such a person wins the love of the Divine.

If people were more concerned with how they looked on the inside than on the outside, the world would be a nicer place to exist.

David Walsh, Irish sports journalist, born 1955

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ਸਾ ਸਭਰਾਈ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਪਿਰ ਕੈ ਹੇਤਿ ਪਿਆਰਿ॥

saa sa-bhrraa-ee suñdreee pir kai het piaar.

She who is imbued with the love and affection of her Beloved is truly noble and beautiful.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 426

Message: To be worthy of the love of the Beloved, one needs to bring the mind under control. Ego driven and scattered in search of its desires, the mind can only be tamed through spiritual wisdom. It needs to constantly reflect on this wisdom and allow divine virtues to become a natural part of us. It needs to shed toxicity, and instead, live in harmony with the Will of the Beloved.

Through the practice of Truth, a door opens to the love and affection of the Beloved Divine. Immersed in this love, one is truly noble and beautiful.

No matter how plain a woman may be, if truth and honesty are written across her face, she will be beautiful.

*Eleanor Roosevelt, an American politician, diplomat and activist,
1884 – 1962*

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ਆਪਣੇ ਕੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਸਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਸਭਰਾਈ॥

aapṇe kañt piaaree saa sohaagañ naanak saa sa-bhrraa-ee.

Nanak! The woman who is loved by her

Husband Divine is happy and noble.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 722

Message: The reference here can be seen in the light of an old belief in Punjab that the husband is the honour of a woman in her in-law's house, and her brothers are her honour in her parent's house. A woman with brothers was believed to be honourable and fortunate.

Every man and woman wants to be loved and honoured. How much happier can one be if the love comes from the Divine - the source of love - in its purest form? But how does one obtain this love? Be selfless, devoted, and make a commitment to serve the Divine.

Sadly many fail to do so. We remain foolish and ignorant while indulging in material and sensual pleasures that will yield nothing. We are intoxicated with greed, pride and egotism. It is we who do not know how to enjoy the love of the Divine who is so close to us. It is an honour to be loved and cherished by the Divine. Do we even think about that? Happy and noble is the one who is aware of this love, and who, through virtuous actions, can receive and return it in the same measure.

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ਮੁੰਧ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਜਿਸੁ ਘਰਿ ਸਹਜਿ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥

muñdh suhaavee sohnee jis ghar sahaj bhataar.

Pleasant and beautiful is the woman in whose heart the Husband Divine comes to dwell through the wisdom of the Guru.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 787

Message: Beautiful is the person who realizes that the Divine lives within the heart. This realization comes only from understanding the wisdom imparted by the Guru. Being aware of the divine presence on a daily basis, makes a person conscious of the need to be a living example of divine attributes such as love, kindness, humility; to name a few. There is no place for ugliness or unpleasantness if we let the light of divinity shine through. There is no need for further outward

decoration. True divinity is where such beauty exists.

Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart. Kahlil Gibran

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ਵਾਜਾ ਮਤਿ ਪਖਾਵਜੁ ਭਾਉ॥ ਹੋਇ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ॥

vaajaa mat pakhaavaj bhaau. hoi anañd sadaa man chaa.

Make wisdom your music instrument and divine love your tambourine; thus bliss and lasting

pleasure is produced in the mind.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 350

Message: With music of the tambourine and wisdom the intent, the Guru promises that bliss and endless peace and pleasure will be produced in the mind of the devotee. This will happen when wisdom is used together with the divine love for God and humanity in general as well as the environment and other beings. With wisdom from the Guru to sharpen our minds, we can practice good discernment in our everyday thoughts, feelings and actions. There is an equal emphasis on the heart and mind so that we can look at life and live life with a balanced perspective. Such an attitude of using both aspects will lead us to be in rhythm with God's Will and divine message as this will produce permanent peace internally and externally.

There are only two things worth aiming for, good music and a clean conscience.

Paul Hindemith, a German composer, violist, violinist, teacher and conductor, 1895 - 1963

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ਘੁੰਘਰੂ ਵਾਜੈ ਜੇ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਗੈ॥ ਤਉ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਾ ਕਰੇ ਮੇ ਸਿਉ ਆਗੈ॥

ghuñgh-roo vaajai je man laagai. tau jam kaha kare mo siu aagai.

Playing or dancing with bells is fruitful only when the mind is attached to the Divine. (And once the mind is held steady) what can the Messenger of Death do to me hereafter?

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 356

Message: Making reference to the practices of

playing bells while singing hymns or tying bells around one's ankles and dancing in the temples, the Guru reminds us that external dance and music can only be rewarding if one's mind is attuned to divinity and steadied. In fact, the mind is held steady only through attachment to the Divine - by emulating divine attributes within. Once someone wins over one's self and becomes attached to the Divine, then such a person is safe and has no fear of death and its seeming horrors. Then the mind and heart is at peace and life is also peaceful like the sweet tinkling of ankle bells.

ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰ ਬਾਧਿ ਭਏ ਰਾਮਦਾਸਾ ਰੇਟੀਅਨ ਕੇ ਓਪਾਵਾ ॥

ਬਰਤ ਨੇਮ ਕਰਮ ਖਟ ਕੀਨੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭੇਖ ਦਿਖਾਵਾ ॥

ਗੀਤ ਨਾਦ ਮੁਖਿ ਰਾਗ ਅਲਾਪੇ ਮਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਗਾਵਾ ॥

Tying bells around their ankles they dance in the temples to earn their living and call themselves 'servants of God'. Others go on fasts, take vows, perform the six rituals and wear religious robes for show. Some sing hymns and melodies through various musical modes, but their minds do not sing of the Lord.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1003

Men profess to be lovers of music, but for the most part they give no evidence in their opinions and lives that they have heard it.

Henry David Thoreau, an American author, poet, philosopher, abolitionist, naturalist, tax resister, development critic, surveyor, and historian, 1817 - 1862

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ਕਬੀਰ ਰੈਨਾਇਰ ਬਿਛੋਰਿਆ ਰਹੁ ਰੇ ਸੰਖ ਮਝੂਰਿ॥ ਦੇਵਲ ਦੇਵਲ ਧਾਰੜੀ
ਦੇਸਹਿ ਉਗਵਤ ਸੂਰ॥

*kabeer rainaa-ir bichhoriaa rahu re sañkh majhoor.
deval deval dhaahree desahi ugvat soor.*

Kabeer: O conch shell! Remain in the ocean, if separated from it you shall scream at sunrise from temple to temple.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1371

Message: Bhagat Kabeer gives the image of a conch shell which typically belongs in the ocean. It seems he is reminding us humans that we must remain true to our inner, divine, real and pure self.

We should not try to show off our self-centeredness and egoism by screaming out loud our presence. We need to shed our attachment to the world by not acting and reacting to it.

As the conch shell has been separated from its real self, the ocean - we humans too are separated from our real divine self while living in a world of attachments. We should remain divine and true to our self or else we will end up being made the tools of other human beings who will test our self and in that way make us exhibit our anger, greed and other vices after abandoning our spiritual nature.

Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything. It is the essence of order and lends to all that is good and just and beautiful. Plato

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ਕਬੀਰ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਹਉ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਮਾਂਦਲੁ ਕੰਧ ਚਢਾਇ॥ ਕੋਈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੇ
ਨਹੀ ਸਭ ਦੇਖੀ ਠੇਕਿ ਬਜਾਇ॥

*kabeer sabh jag hau phirio maandal kañdh chadhaai. koe
kaahoo ko nahee sabh dhekhee thok bajaai.*

Kabeer: I have wandered all over the world carrying the drum on my shoulder. I have carefully looked into and studied the whole creation - no one belongs to anyone.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1370

Message: Bhagat Kabeer implies that he has with his booming drum tried to announce his presence in the world. He has tried to please the people by following the ways of the world and trying to go with the tide of human behavior and experience by making others happy. Unfortunately, no one seems to care about him and his wishes as it is human nature for everyone to be self-centered towards one's own needs.

Thus no one belongs to anyone - meaning everyone is for himself and herself. We have to progress on the spiritual path ourselves.

I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs, and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.

George Eliot, an English novelist, journalist, translator and writer, 1819 -1880

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ਜੀਲ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੈਸੇ ਬਜੈ ਰਬਾਬ॥ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਬਿਰਥੇ ਸਭਿ ਕਾਜ॥

jeel binaa kaise bajai rabab. naam binaa bir-the sabh kaaj.

As without string a rebec cannot be played, so without the Name of the Divine all worldly affairs are futile.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1140

Message: Using the image of a rabab or rebec, a stringed instrument, the Guru says that without knowledge and practice of the Name of God – (God’s attributes and guidance on how to be a good human being), the life of a human being and his worldly endeavours are of no use. Meaning - such a person cannot play a fruitful role in life, just like a rabab without a string, which cannot entertain listeners with its good music.

Basically without the guidance of the Guru and the lovely divine attributes that we can acquire from Him, we cease to be useful human beings on this earth. Even if we have all the riches and comforts of the world, we will still be lacking. Without divine blessings, we cannot function as an instrument of God’s kind benevolence and loving grace. We need divine support to be a positive influence to humanity.

Music is the language of the spirit. It opens the secret of life bringing peace, abolishing strife.

Kahlil Gibran

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ਜਹ ਜਹ ਜਾਉ ਤਹਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸੇਵਾ॥

jah jah jaau tahaa teree sevaa.

O Divine! Wherever I go, I serve you.

Bhagat Ravi Das, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 659

Message: The ultimate purpose of life is fulfilled when we realise the presence of the Divine in our life and that of others around us. We lead our life in the service of the Divine. We dedicate our life, every act of life, to His love and devotion. A relationship with Him alone is permanent. In the words of Bhagat Ravi Das, we are already an inseparable part of the Divine. If He is the mountain, then we are the peacock. If He is the moon, then we are the partridge in love with it. If He is the lamp, then we are the wick. If He is the sacred place of pilgrimage, then we are the pilgrim. Let us be joined in true love with the Divine and break away from all that leads us astray from the divine love. Let us come to His shelter and serve Him wholeheartedly. Wherever you go, see Him and serve Him. There is none other than Him. He Himself is pervading everywhere.

Ah! What a divine religion might be found out if charity were really made the principle of it instead of faith.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, poet, 1792-1822

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ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ॥

vich duneeaa sev kamaa-ee-ai; taa dargah baisan paa-ee-ai

When one serves while living in the world, then one finds a place in the divine court.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 26

Message: Sikhism is founded on the principles of ‘sarbat da bhala’ - working towards the common good of all. Apart from serving within the Gurdwara and the community, Sikhs are encouraged to help the wider world community through voluntary work. One of the biggest services one can do for mankind is to help equip others with knowledge and education. Every child should be educated to meet the challenges of the ever changing face of the world. With education, one must also inculcate in children the messages of divinity which keep humanity intact.

We should be prepared to give up some of our

time, talents and energy to help others. Those who perform this kind of selfless service - without any thought of reward or personal gain - truly portray the virtue of humility. Selfless service for the greater good of all - let that be our adage and our path to bliss. Serve and swing your arms in joy!

ਜੈਸੇ ਸਤ ਮੰਦਰ ਕੰਚਨ ਕੇ ਉਸਾਰ ਦੀਨੇ, ਤੈਸਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਸਿਖ ਕਉ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ
ਸਿਖਾਏ ਕਾ॥

*As if one has built seven temples in gold, so is the
virtue of teaching a word to a pupil.*

Bhai Gurdas Ji

*

ਜਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਤਮ ਕਾਮਾ॥

jan kee sevaa ootam kaamaa.

*(O Lord!) Serving your servants is the ultimate
good deed.*

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 164

Message: The Gurbani advises us to always associate with devout people. The company of wise and dedicated people is an inspiration to us. Their single minded focus on being true servants of the Divine and the wisdom with which they fashion their lives in this world, despite being surrounded by constant temptation, is something we all need to recognize and emulate. By associating with them, we enrich ourselves. The true devotees are entrenched in divinity and serve all of society. They do not differentiate by colour, creed or race. For, they are enlightened and aware of the Divine in all. We must learn from their experience and adopt the “service to all” attitude so as to give something back to society at large. Sharing with and helping our fellow beings is the ultimate good deed.

I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is
all service.

I served and I saw that service is joy. — Kahlil Gibran, artist, poet
and writer, 1883-1931

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ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰੇ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਾਰੁ॥

gur kee sevaa sabad veechaar. haumai maare karnee saar.

*One who serves the Guru, reflects upon the
Guru's Shabad, subdues one's egoism and
becomes a person of virtuous deeds.*

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 223

Message: After the Almighty comes the Guru. He was a person at one point in time. Today however, the term refers to the wisdom contained in the *Shabad* Guru – the Guru Granth Sahib. Service to the Guru therefore, is to reflect upon the wisdom contained in the words of the Gurbani. Upon reflection and understanding, our very first deed should be to get rid of our egoism. It is the cause of all problems facing us. Conquer the five thieves - lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. This is the secret of liberation and enshrining the One in our heart and life. The two - the egoism and the *Shabad* - cannot live side by side. Getting rid of egoism allows for spiritual virtues to bloom.

*

ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਤੁਮ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਦੂਜੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ਜੀ॥

har kee tum sevaa karahu doojee sevaa karahu na koi jee.

Serve only the Divine; do not serve any other.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 490

Message: These words focus on the primary teaching of the Guru Granth Sahib - serve (worship) only the One Almighty and no other deity or person. Serving the One, we are able to resolve our affairs and obtain the fruits of our hearts desires. Let the One be your love. Let your way of life be a portrayal of this love for the One and for mankind of which He is a part. Let your words spread His wisdom and sing only His praises. Let your actions put the words into practice and speak louder than your words. When your mind is saturated in this manner, you naturally walk on the path of service to the One Almighty. You will not wander or waste your precious life in vain.

ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਮਨਹੁ ਚਿੰਦਿਆ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਦੂਜੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਾਇ
ਜੀ॥

*Serving the Lord, the fruit of one's heart's desire
is obtained; serving another, the life is wasted.*

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 490

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ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸਾ॥

paataalaa paataal lakh aagaasaa aagaas.

There are hundreds of thousands of nether worlds and hundreds of thousands of skies.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 05

Message: In ancient times, some people believed there were three worlds (Earth, heaven and a nether region or hell), while others assumed there were fourteen – seven upwards (aakaash) and seven downwards (paataal). Yet others believed a different number.

However, Guru Nanak, being supremely wise and humble as he was, did not claim to know the exact number of worlds — a task he knew was practically impossible! Instead, he knew for sure that the Creator's glory is endless. Thus he says that the **Universe is infinite and beyond measure**. There are billions of stars and their revolving planets and moons. Our sun is but one of the billions of stars of our galaxy - the Milky Way. There are countless solar systems just like ours. Only the Creator of the Universe would know the real number. This view of infiniteness is also held true by current available scientific information.

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ਨਹ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਨਮੈ ਨਹ ਕਿਛੁ ਮਰੈ॥ ਆਪਨ ਚਲਿਤੁ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਕਰੈ॥

nah kichh janmai nah kichh marai. aapan chalit aap hee karai.

Nothing is born and nothing dies, the Creator Himself is playing His wondrous play.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 281

Message: The law of conservation of energy states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed: it can only be transformed from one state to another.

We are all one single force and we contribute to the power and to the growth of this force. Like the Creator, this force has always been there and will always be there infinitely. It is only through our

delusion of labelling ourselves as a separate and small 'I' within the Ocean of the Creator's Supreme 'I' that we think we are different.

Gurbani explains that there is only One Creator of whom we are all part and parcel of. Nothing exists beyond the Creator and creation. There is no other.

Thus Gurbani believes in the adage:

ਨਾਕੇਬੈਰੀਨਹੀਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲਸੰਗਿਹਮਕਉਬਨਿਆਈ॥

No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger to me; I get along with everyone.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page, 1299

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ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ॥ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ॥

kaee baar pasario paasaar. sadaa sadaa ik ekañkaar.

The Creator has expanded (and contracted) this creation a myriad of times; only He, the One Absolute, exists forever and ever (is beyond change).

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 276

Message: When did creation or the Universe start? Was there creation before, or is this the first time that we are here? Or has the Universe existed before? These are big questions before the science fraternity today.

With our current understanding we believe we are the only ones who wield power or the only ones who have ever been around in this Universe. However the verse above indicates that the Creator and the created Universe or Universes have been around many times before we ever came. Gurbani reveals thus.

Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it's the only one you have.

Emile Chartier, philosopher, 1868-1951

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ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥

kaee janam bhae keet pataᅅgaa. kaae janam gaj meen kuraᅅgaa.

(O man!) For many lifetimes you were an insect,

and for many lifetimes an elephant, a fish and a deer, etc.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 176

Message: The verse here makes references to the history of human evolution from apes to modern humans. Since Gurbani is addressing human beings, he reminds us that it took many millions of years for us to evolve into better thinking beings. Thus, now is the time to meet the Divine or realize the ultimate aim of life to become good human beings and help transform the world into a garden of peace. We should make full use of this precious opportunity of human life. It's through right guidance, right company and diligent effort that we can make our life fruitful for ourselves and others.

It took less than an hour to make the atoms, a few hundred million years to make the stars and planets, but five billion years to make man!

George Gamow, physicist and cosmologist, 1904-1968

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ਤੂੰ ਪੇੜ ਸਾਖ ਤੇਰੀ ਫੁਲੀ॥

toon ped saakh teree phoolee.

(O Creator!) You are like a Tree, and creation is like your branches, which have blossomed from you, the Tree.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 102

Message: What a beautiful illustration of the Creator and creation! Are they one or two different entities? What relationship do they have with one another? Gurbani enlightens us through the example of a tree. In this verse, the tree and its branches metaphorically express the Creator and creation and reiterate to us that each species and each life cycle has blossomed from the One Root.

This is how the world was created. Only the Subtle or Unseen reveals itself in the form of the Manifest or Seen. Hence, we, the creatures, are inseparable part of the Creator. It's only our mind's delusion that makes us think that the Divine and we are two different entities.

The same can be said of humanity in general. We are united as one human race though we have diverse looks, origins, etc. There is no other than the ONE. Embrace this Oneness and be in spiritual harmony, internally and externally all the time.

The divine reveals itself in the physical world.

Albert Einstein, 1879 – 1955

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ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਪੁ ਪਰਵਾਣ॥

satgur kee sevaa ih tap parvaan.

Practising what the true Guru has advised/instructed is the acceptable and approved penance.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 948

Message: There are various ways of undergoing penance and austere practices to control one's mind or receive divine blessings. In Sikh tradition, however, practising the Guru's teachings and leading a righteous, truthful and meaningful life is the most revered practice.

If we reflect upon it, we soon realize that undertaking penance is still an easier option than working hard, earning an honest living, cultivating love and care for the people around us, sharing what we have with them and still being content, humble and grateful. Hence, treading such a path as this is the true penance, which is accepted and approved in the eyes of the Divine. One who practices these receives true peace and happiness.

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ਨਾਤਾ ਸੇ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ॥

nhaataa so parvaan sach kamaaeai.

The cleansing bath of one who practices Truth is approved and accepted.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 565

Message: The Guru says the practice of Truth is the only way to cleanse the body and mind. Religious practices such as a cleansing bath are futile if these are not a part of truthful living. Falsehood in the mind and worldly greed cannot be washed away by washing the body. It can only be removed through the practice of rightful

actions.

We should consciously reach out to the Divine with truth in the heart. Conduct life in the way of the Guru. Accept the Will of the Divine. Grace will follow. We are cleansed not by our acts of charity and performance of religious rituals, but by the practice of truthful behaviour and the contemplation on Divinity.

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ਏਹਾ ਸੰਧਿਆ ਪੁਰਵਾਣੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ॥

ehaa sañdhiaa parvaan hai jit har prabh meraa chit aavai.

That evening prayer, which brings my loving Divine to my consciousness, is acceptable and approved.

-Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 553

Message: Prayer is a means through which one personally tries to connect with the Divine. No connection can be made if the mind is wandering and not focused. An acceptable and rewarding prayer is where the loving Divine comes into one's consciousness and this is reciprocated with a feeling of love for the Divine. At this time of prayer, the self is detached from worldly surroundings and there is only reverence for the Divine.

Prayer is a reminder of the love of the Divine. It reminds us to enshrine love for the good and to be rid of the attachment to evil. It is our guide to enlightenment. It leads us to conquer duality, delusion and ignorance. It takes the mind to a stable and peaceful abode.

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ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੁਰਵਾਣੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣਸੀ॥

velaa sach parvaan sabad pachhaansee.

True and acceptable is that time when one recognizes the Word of the Guru.

-Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 422

Message: One can only attune the mind to the wisdom of the Divine when this wisdom is sought consciously and practiced in daily life. The time

taken and spent on this effort is given divine approval and will bear fruit. The Guru's Shabad teaches us to live this life as truthful a manner as we possibly can. Through the grace of the Divine and daily practice of truth, contentment and love, we are assured of finding peace amidst the turmoil of life. Knowledge of this wisdom and its daily practice brings about spiritual fulfillment. With the acceptance of the Divine as an anchor and support and privy to one's pain, there is nothing to lose. There is everything to gain.

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ਜੇ ਸਉ ਵਰਿਆ ਜੀਵਣ ਖਾਣੁ॥ ਖਸਮ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੇ ਦਿਨੁ ਪੁਰਵਾਣੁ॥

je sau varihaa jeevan khaan. khasam pachhaanai so din parvaan.

If one lives and eats for hundreds of years, that day alone is approved and accepted when one recognizes one's Master, the Divine.

-Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 350

Message: No one lives a day in this world without give and take. Our days revolve around satisfying the urges of the heart, being blinded by materialism, and guided by our needs and desires. Few are aware of the Creator. Even fewer are moved by the idea of the Divine.

A day approved and accepted in spiritual terms is the day in our life when we surrender to the Master, by recognizing the divine presence not only in ourselves but also in everyone and everything else. Listen to the divine teaching with love and humility. Connect with it with your inner consciousness. When thinking or simply talking, keep in mind what the Divine is saying to us. Let go of the arrogance and let the intellect be cleansed.

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ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਨਿ ਸਮਝਾਈਐ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ॥

gur bin kin samjhaa-ee-ai man raajaa sultaan.
The mind is like the king, the emperor; who can preach to it without the Guru?

-Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 61

Message: The mind wanders around assuming itself to be a king or a ruler who is in charge of its subjects. It considers itself to be superior. It is arrogant and sees no need to pay heed to anyone. It does not realize it is totally deluded.

In truth, power is only in the hands of the Creator. To remove its delusion, the mind needs the Guru's guidance. Only the wisdom from the Guru's Shabad can tame the mind and lead it to the realization of itself and its relationship with the Creator. Once the essence of reality is known, the mind applies itself to the service of the Divine. Egotism and selfishness are eliminated and it is attuned to divine Truth.

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ਕਹੈ ਕਬੀਰੁ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਰੇ ਸੰਤਹੁ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਉਡਨੁ ਪੰਖੇਰੁ ਬਨ ਕਾ॥
*kahai kabeer sunahu re sañtahu ih man udan
 pañkheroo ban kaa.*

**Kabeer says, O saints! Listen, this mind is like
 the bird flying above the forest.**

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1253

Message: The bird is representative of the mind and the forest the material world we live in. The mind is compared to a bird flying in the forest. It is footloose and fancy free. It flies around captivated by all its attractions. Although the mind feels content in these surroundings, thrilled to enjoy worldly pursuits, little does it realize that this is all temporary, a fragile vessel that will soon be broken.

Just as the bird feels safe flying around in the forest, we feel safe relying on our families - parents, spouses, children and close relationships. Sadly, even these are not permanent. There is only one who can control and be a permanent support for the mind - the Divine. To reach for this support we need divine awareness. We need to reflect on and understand the wisdom of Gurbani.

**To understand the heart and mind of a person,
 look not at what he has already achieved, but at
 what he aspires to.** Khalil Gibran

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ਐਬ ਤਨਿ ਚਿਕੜੇ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਮੀਡਕੇ ਕਮਲ ਕੀ ਸਾਰ ਨਹੀ ਮੂਲਿ ਪਾਈ॥
*aib tan chikro ih man meedko kamal kee saar
 nahee mool paaee.*

**The vices in the body are like the mud puddle
 and this mind is like the frog, which does not
 appreciate the lotus flower at all.**

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 24

Message: The mud puddle depicts vices that we are so influenced by and enjoy in our life. The frog represents the mind, which allows itself to roll around in pleasure in the mud. The lotus flower grows alongside but does not get noticed. Although rooted in the mud, it has left the dirt behind and stands beautiful, fragrant and full of nectar. Then there is a bee that constantly buzzes around both the flower and the frog.

The words of the Guru like the buzzing of the bee that are constantly heard by the mind - the frog - but totally ignored, because it is having too much pleasure. We live our life in this manner. Divine wisdom is available to us. Nectarous blooms resulting from this surround us, but we are too busy enjoying a roll in the mud.

We can, like a lotus flower, grow out from the mud. A seed can sprout from soil that has enough water into a beautiful blossom. Plant the seed of divine awareness in your mind. Make good deeds the soil. Water the seed with truth, and the seed will sprout.

**The voice of conscience is so delicate that it is
 easy to stifle it; but it is also so clear that it is
 impossible to mistake it.**

Madame De Stael, writer, 1766-1817

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ਮਨ ਖੁਟਹਰ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਸਾਸੁ ਤੂ ਮਹਾ ਉਦਮਾਦਾ॥ ਖੁਰ ਕਾ ਪੈਖਰੁ ਤਉ
 ਛੁਟੈ ਜਉ ਉਪਰਿ ਲਾਦਾ॥

*man khuṭ-har teraa nahee bisaas too mahaa ud-
maadaa.*

*khar kaa paikhar tau chhootai jau oopar laadaa.
O devious mind! (Like a donkey) no faith can be
placed in you, you are very intoxicated. The
donkey's leash is only removed, after the load is
placed on his back.*

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 815

Message: Generally, donkeys are portrayed as stubborn, foolish and lowly. A donkey's leash is only removed, after the load is placed on its back. However, donkeys have a keen sense of curiosity. Their reputation for stubbornness is due to their highly-developed sense of self-preservation. It is difficult to force a donkey to do something which it considers to be contrary to its best interest. Nevertheless, it can be trained. Show him or her by words and actions that you can be trusted and they will learn what we want them to do.

In the same vein, the mind when left to its own devices, is seen as foolish and stubborn as a donkey - hence the comparison. Left to its own devices, it is engrossed in worldly pleasures. It forgets that the Divine is its companion, helper and best friend. It is totally taken in by its vices. It is intoxicated and hence devious and foolish.

As a donkey can be trained to serve its master, so can our mind be brought under our control. Through the insights of the Guru, we are able to rein in the mind just as we leash the donkey. As the donkey comes to carry the load without resistance, so the mind can slowly find clarity and be enlightened.

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਸਭ ਬਾਤ ਜਾਨਤ ਹ ਅਉਗਨ ਕਰੈ॥ ਕਾਹ ਕੀ

ਕੁਸਲਾਤ ਹਾਥਿ ਦੀਪ ਕੂਏ ਪਰ॥

*The mind knows everything, and knowing it
makes mistakes. What good is a lamp in one's
hand, if one still falls into the well?*

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1376

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ਦੇਹੀ ਗਾਵਾ ਜੀਉ ਧਰ ਮਹਤਉ ਬਸਹਿ ਪੰਚ ਕਿਰਸਾਨਾ॥

dehee gaavaa jeeu dhar mahtau basahi pañch kirsaanaa.

*The body is a village, the mind is the owner of its
land, and five farm-hands live there.*

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1140

Message: Imagine you are the manager of a company and some people work under you, but none of them obey your instructions. When asked, they give excuses and construct clever arguments. You will end up losing not only your staff's respect but also the business.

Likewise, our body is like a village, and the mind is like the owner of its land. The five sensory organs, our eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin are like the five farm-hands (workers) who live there and work for the owner, the mind. But they don't heed the call of the mind. They have gone out of the mind's control and instead of planting crops like rice etc., they are destroying them.

If the mind controls the five senses, then the senses will plant the right crops and give the mind a good harvest. Meaning, if we control our senses and perform the right actions, we will reap the right rewards too. We will have good results in our life. We will make ourselves and others happy too.

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ਪੰਚ ਪਹਰੂਆ ਦਰ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਤੇ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਨਹੀ ਪਤੀਆਰਾ॥

*pañch pahrooaa dar mahi rahte tin kaa nahee
pateeaaraa.*

*Five watchmen stand at the gates of the house,
but they cannot be trusted. Bhagat Kabeer, Guru
Granth Sahib, Page 339*

Message: Imagine you have a big house with five gates. For its security and safety, you employ five watchmen who always stand at each of the gates, but are very negligent and irresponsible, and you are unable to trust them. What will happen? Its most likely precious things inside the house will be plundered and stolen.

Furthermore, if we do not pay these guards a good

salary and do not provide good food and lodging for them, they will be stressed, unhappy and unable to concentrate, much less work productively.

Similarly, the five senses are supposed to safeguard the body and the mind's welfare at all times. If we do not nurture and pay sufficient and good attention to our five senses in a positive manner, then we can't trust them to do their work well. If we feed the senses positive and creative thoughts they will be able to better safeguard us and help the mind not to stray. So this is a win-win situation not only for the mind and the senses but ultimately the body as well. Keep the mind and the senses in service of the Divine and humanity and the body will never be uneasy too. It will be at ease all the time.

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ਕੂਮਟਾ ਏਕੁ ਪੰਚ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ॥ ਟੂਟੀ ਲਾਜੁ ਭਰੈ ਮਤਿ ਹਾਰੀ॥

kooṭāa ek pañch panihaaree. ṭoṭee laaj bharai mat haaree.

There is one well, and five water-drawers. Even though the rope is broken, the fools continue trying to draw water.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 325

Message: Imagine there is one well, and there are five people who are trying to draw water from it even though the rope is broken. What will you call them? Foolish and ignorant, right? The well is the body and its five senses the water drawers. The broken rope refers to the senses that have grown old and weak physically, yet they are still trying to draw water from the well (drawing pleasure from the body, continue indulging in vicious pleasures).

Through contemplation on Gurbani teachings, such an understanding is acquired that the body, mind and senses begin to tread on the right path. They abandon their old behaviour and habits. The five senses are transformed or born again and refreshed. Since they do not indulge in negative and sinful activity anymore, they are no more weighed down with negativity. The mind becomes clear as the vision and hearing are cleared. Neither the mind nor the senses nor the body is foolish

anymore as it now indulges in the right actions that are good and meant to help others.

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ਪੰਚ ਬੈਲੁ ਗਡੀਆ ਦੇਹ ਧਾਰੀ॥ ਰਾਮ ਕਲਾ ਨਿਬਰੈ ਪਤਿ ਸਾਰੀ॥

pañch bail gaḏeeaa deh dhaaree. raam kalaa nibhai pat saaree.

The five bulls pull this small wagon of the body. Its honor is preserved as long as the Divine Force functions within it.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 879

Message: Five bulls represent the five senses that support or pull the wagon (the human body). The body continues moving and working till the life force within supports it. However when the axle of the wagon is broken, its structure falls to the ground and scatters. Likewise, when the life force supporting the body leaves it, the body and its organs wither away.

Hence, let's realise life's transitory nature. Restrain our senses from falling into the trap of worldly temptations and vices. Instead of following the path of externalities and rituals, seek guidance from Gurbani. Make best use of your body and its parts, and harness the five senses fruitfully before they are exhausted and vanish.

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ਤਰਵਰੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਪੰਖਿ ਮਨੁ ਤਰਵਰਿ ਪੰਖੀ ਪੰਚ॥

tarvar kaaiia pañkh man tarvar pañkhee pañch.

The body is a tree, the mind is a bird; there are five more birds in the tree.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 934

Message: Besides the mind, there are also its five senses that help the body to experience the world. In fact the mind uses the tools of its five senses to function. The mind, like a bird itself, needs to master the other smaller birds - the five senses. If the five senses are not kept in check and stray away, the mind will lose control of them.

Birds that abandon the tree are exposed to the dangers of hunters and their traps. United, the birds will not fall into the trap of the hunter; they

are strong and conscious enough to fight the net. However, if they are tempted and disperse away seeing food scattered by the hunter, they risk being caught in his noose. Their folly comes at a heavy cost. Similarly, without the clarity and control of the mind, the five senses stray away and end up experiencing and being trapped repeatedly by the net of greed, lust, anger and other vices.

Thus the five senses end up being trapped by the hunter, which is Maya – the sensory world and its temptations out there. So the choice is ours. Either we slide down the slippery slope leading us to the traps of Maya that will forever render us unable to escape from worldly entrapments, or we listen to Gurbani and let divine wisdom guide us to control our five senses so that we can be balanced and poised.

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ਸੋ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਜੇ ਆਪੁ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਸਚਿ ਨ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥

so moorakh jo aap na pachhaan-ee sach na dhare piar.

One who does not understand one's self and does not enshrine love for Truth is a fool.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 492

Message: Who are we? We are a working physical body, an efficient machine created and working according to the laws of nature. Unlike a machine though, we all have a divine centre, a subconscious that is part of the Universal Entity. The 'self', that lives this life, which we all proclaim to know and to understand, is but a shadow of who we really are. We are a divine creation and the Divine lives within us. Not recognizing this 'self' makes one a fool. We need to be aware of the Truth – that the ever existing, all pervasive reality is the true essence of every being.

If only we could understand that we are all created by and from the same source. Only by contemplating and tuning our mind to this Truth, can its secret be revealed to us. When the mind is illumined by the Guru's teachings, it does not need to look around for answers. We are no longer

foolish when we seek, yearn for and desire the wisdom of the Divine.

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ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇ ਕੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਣਾਇਦਾ ਸੋ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਗਾਵਾਰੁ॥

naanak je ko aap gaṅaaidaa so moorakh gaavaar.

Nanak! If one considers oneself great (takes undue pride in oneself), one is unwise and foolish.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 516

Message: All human beings have some sense of pride. However, there are varying degrees of pride, some having more and others less. Riches, fame, power, beauty, talent, etc. are all obvious things that lead to pride. The worst kind of pride is pride of thought – the 'I' factor. "I did this... I am... I know...." We need the wisdom to be aware that all success, talent comes from the Divine. We are His instruments. These are His gifts given to us to share for the service of mankind. It is foolish and unwise to be proud and think "I did it all".

It has become natural for a feeling of pride to set in when one does something good or achieves something. Our egoism encourages this. Be aware that to think in this manner is to be unwise. The egoism will resist any change of thought, but the resolve to do so and the wisdom - must be stronger. The world of form comes and goes as easily as do our lives. We are not in control. We should be grateful and thank the Divine for all that we have been given and humbly accept His blessings.

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ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਬੁਝਈ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ॥

naanak hukam na bujha-ee aṅdhaa kaheai soi.

Nanak! One who does not understand Hukam, the Divine Will, is called blind, ignorant.

Guru Angad Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 954

Message: Hukam as mentioned in Gurbani is the Divine Order/Will. Just as the Divine is beyond description so it is with His Order. All of life is

His visible expression. It is that vital principle which creates, sustains and regulates the Universe. All creatures are born, live and die under His order. Evil and virtue both are His creation. By His will alone distinction comes to some but not to others. One who does not understand this is blind to the reality and truth of life.

To understand this, is to remove self-centeredness, which is the driving force in most of our lives. Through this understanding we accept the diversity of human life and experience. One has the freedom to live life either in accordance with this or in discord. Submission eventually leads to peace of mind. But most of us choose to live otherwise. Once realization sets in, one lives in harmony with the whole of creation, everything and everyone around us.

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance. Confucius

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ਧਨ ਭੂਮਿ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਕਰੈ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ॥ ਸੇ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਅੰਧਾ ਅਗਿਆਨੁ॥

dhan bhoom kaa jo karai gumaan. so moorakh aṅdhaa agiaan.

One who takes undue pride in one's wealth and lands is a fool, blind and ignorant.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 278

Message: Taking undue pride in the ownership of material possessions is a mark of foolishness. The greed and egoism that encourages this, blinds one to the truth of our humble existence and we continue to live in ignorance. We act with the consciousness that we are the doer. We are unaware of the joy and freedom that come from knowing that the Divine is the giver of life and all its necessities. To cut life off from its divine invigorating source depletes it of the truly satisfying joys of existence.

Houses, money, cars are necessary to modern existence but can never make one truly happy. The material life must not be neglected but it should be lived in divine consciousness. Acquire what you

need with the principal thought in mind that the Divine is the giver of life and its necessities.

Few people know how to balance spiritual and material life. Many think that they must first have prosperity. And only then think of divinity. But those who ignore divinity to seek the perishable material things end up wallowing so deeply in the mud of desires and worries that they cannot extricate themselves.

Foolishness is more than being stupid, that deadly combination of arrogance and ignorance.

Paul David Tripp, author, b.1950

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ਮੂਲੁ ਨ ਬੁਝਹਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਸੇ ਪਸੂਆ ਸੇ ਢੋਰ ਜੀਉ॥

mool na boojhahi aapṅaa se pasooaa se dhor jeeu.

They who do not understand their Root are like beasts, animals.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 751

Message: Animal instinct is to focus on itself and to meet its basic needs. It has a basic instinct for survival. There is no spiritual dimension in its life.

Many of us live our lives in this way. We need basic necessities to live in this world. So our focus tends to be on trying to build a comfortable life for our family and ourselves. Without realizing it, we soon become trapped in the desire for more. Having luxuries, we now fear losing them. Worries and misery are the results of a materially busy life, devoid of divinity.

Those of us who are aware of some spiritual dimension in our life tend to live a life of duality. Seemingly spiritual on the surface, but we have no deep conviction. We are still no better than the animal and live in delusion. The Divine is our root which we have forgotten. The Divine is the source of all life and all prosperity. Not understanding His role in our life and not giving Him, His due position and veneration, we remain no better than animals.

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ਸੋਈ ਨਿਚਚਲੁ ਸਾਚ ਠਾਇ॥

soee nihchal saach thaaai.

One whose mind is focused on the true place (state of equipoise, peace) is spiritually steady.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1180

Message: The quest for a state of mental stability has been one of the prime objectives of seekers in all religious traditions. This quest led some to austere penances (self-induced tough physical practices) and others to meaningless rituals. Yet others abandoned their family lives and went into the wilderness in search of such a spiritual abode.

Gurbani enlightens us that only when we acquire the right understanding can we attain a state of spiritual stability. Living a life with a meaningful purpose and being engaged in thoughtful actions causes the mind to stay focused. Such a mind is steady and stable at all times despite any storms and dangers that come our way. A mind that concentrates on the right things and acts honestly and wisely is never misled in this stormy ocean of life though the boat it is on may rock several times.

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ਸੇ ਨਿਕਰਮੀ ਜੇ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ॥

so nihkarmee jo sabad beechaare.

One who reflects upon the Guru's Shabad is truly detached, unselfish.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 128

Message: Through reflection upon the Guru's Shabad, one attains divine wisdom and is able to subdue one's egoism. Once one gets rid of egoism, one becomes detached. Such a Guru-minded person, who ponders over the Guru's Word, realises the Divine Will as all-powerful and thus aspires to improve his life and others' with determination and correct action.

Meaning, such a person doesn't get attached emotionally and mentally to notions of good and bad. Neither does this person expect any benefit from his or her good actions on others, but merely does the right actions without any hope of reward.

Such a person is fully immersed in noble actions while examining the meaning of the Guru's Word. The ego is silenced of wasteful thoughts and thus the person is clear in his life purpose. Stability of the mind brings concentration, peace, and ultimately success in all endeavours.

ਹਉਮੈ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਕਰਮੀ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ॥

One who displays egoism is not detached.

Guru Amar Das, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 128

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ਸੇ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਜਿਨ ਭਉ ਪਇਆ॥

se nirbhau jinh bhau paiaa.

Fearless are they who abide by God's fear.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1180

Message: Fear of the Divine in Gurbani represents awareness of the omnipresence of the Divine. Hence, they who are conscious of the all-pervasive presence of the Divine never do anything wrong. Their in-built virtues of integrity and honesty inspire them to walk truthfully whether somebody watches over them or not.

They consider themselves accountable and answerable to the **Creator and the creation**. So they will think twice before doing something that is against the divine principles taught by Gurbani. By cultivating such a way of life in which they use divine awareness as a moral compass, they transcend all worldly fears. They do this not out of fear of God but because they are in awe of God's benevolence, power and reach everywhere.

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ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਨਾਵੈ ਸੋਈ ਜਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਮੈਲਾ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥

ar naam naavai soee jan nirmal phir mailaa mool na hoee.

That person who bathes in the Name of the Divine is pure, and is never polluted again.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1234

Message: The Name of the Divine in Gurbani denotes the qualities of the Divine in all their infinity. In fact, it is the power, the grace and the loving presence of the Almighty. Since the Almighty is beyond any physical manifestation, His Name refers to His divine presence full of the

infinite and limitless divine qualities, such as compassion, forgiveness, love etc.

Thus bathing in the Divine Name is a poetic way to describe how the devotee immerses in learning about the divine qualities of the Creator and how one can live a fruitful life while imbibing these qualities through the teachings of Gurbani. Such a person becomes pure in all aspects and free of all vicious thoughts. He or she never gets engrossed in the filth of sinful actions.

ਸੇ ਤਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਨ ਪਾਪ॥

That body in which sin does not arise is pure, unsullied.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 198

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ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਨਿਰਧਨੁ ਹੈ ਸੋਈ॥ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥

kahi kabeer nirdhan hai soee. jaa ke hirdai naam na hoee.

Kabeer says that poor is one who does not enshrine the Name of the Divine in one's heart.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1159

Message: Often, we gauge and measure a person by how much wealth and success he or she possesses. Gurbani however says that the poor is one in whose heart divinity or goodness is absent. Conversely the rich is someone who lives by practising truth and goodness while engrossed in the daily actions and interactions of the world.

Hence Kabeer says one who does not have divine consciousness in his heart is poor. Worldly wealth is transient and is left behind when one departs from this world.

Secondly as much material wealth one may gather, one is never satisfied. The mind is always hungry and continues craving for more and more. It is the wealth of divine knowledge and values, which when acquired, truly enriches us.

Prefer knowledge to wealth, for the one is transitory, the other perpetual. Socrates

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ਜਾ ਕੈ ਰਹਿ ਯਨੁ ਸੇ ਸਚ ਸਾਹੁ॥

jaa kai har dhan so sach saah.

One who possesses divine wealth is a true merchant.

Guru Arjun Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 189

Message: What is divine wealth? It is divine wisdom. In our relationships, when we choose the more loving direction, the kinder impulse, the more encouraging word; each time we silence a complaint, a criticism, we are in touch with the Divinity in us and open to more of its infinite wisdom.

We work hard to accumulate wealth in our lifetime, to live comfortably, but material prosperity alone does not guarantee a good life. The true wealth of the merchant lies not in the material wealth one has accumulated over time but rather in how one has infused divine wisdom and knowledge alongside in one's life.

We have to remember the One Divine Creator who is the driving force of our lives. We have to acknowledge the Doer behind the scene. We cannot buy divine favour or grace with our material wealth. These come from a relationship we choose to establish and strengthen. All of life is ego driven and one can only do so much with it. The truly rich are those who know that the value of divine wisdom and its workings in our lives far exceeds the value of money.

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ਜਿਸੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਸੋਈ ਵਡ ਰਾਜਾ॥

jis naam ridai soee vad raajaa.

One who enshrines the Name of the Divine in one's heart is a great king.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1155

Message: By living to be the embodiment of the love and goodness of the Divine, one can become a King. With goodness as a guiding force, one becomes the 'capital' of divine wealth. All virtues and their respective power will be in one's hands. With the hand of the Divine placed on one's forehead, one can be accomplished, successful and

strong. Respected by all, one will be carefree and independent, enjoying peace, calm and poise. As the embodiment of the Creator, one's position of honour and respect is long-lasting. As one sees the Divine manifested in the creation, one sees Him present in everyone and everything.

Sadly the reverse is the other possibility. The person who is self-centered is not going to achieve much in comparison. Power, wealth and respect gained without right guidance is limited in its capacity to do good for oneself or others. Subject to one's egoism, success is short lived. Do you wish to be a King or a subject?

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ਸੋ ਸੁਰਤਾਨੁ ਜੁ ਦੁਇ ਸਰ ਤਾਨੈ॥ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਜਾਤਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਆਨੈ॥

so *surtaan* ju dui sar taanai. baahar jaataa bheetar aanai.

One who shoots two arrows, and gathers one's outgoing mind is a true sultan.

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1160

Message: The mind works in its own ways, sometimes it is disciplined and at others skittish and playful. He alone can be a true leader – sultan – who can bring this mind under his control. Everyone else struggles to do so, sometimes winning over it and at others losing to it. There is a constant struggle for control of the mind that goes on between vices and virtues. Those of us, aware of the wisdom of the all-pervading divinity within us, can turn to it for help. They, who can then crush their vices, are indeed to be respected. Human passions emerging from our five senses, our burning desires can only be brought under control through the wisdom of the Divine, should we choose to heed it.

A strong, respected leader shoots two arrows. One arrow is to rein in the wandering mind, so as to bring it to a stable place. The second is to battle the conflict that now arises between the needs of the inner spiritual self - the virtues - and the desires of the outer material self - the vices.

The canopy of true royalty – true name and fame - spreads over the head of one such person who can win this battle between the mind and the warring senses knowing that the unconditional love of the Divine is with him.

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ਸਗਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨੁ॥ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਮਿਟੈ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥
sagal purakh mahi purakh *pradhaan*. saadhsaṅg jaa kaa miṭai
abhimaan.

One who rids one's arrogance by associating with the virtuous is the supreme among all persons.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 266

Message: Arrogance – I know it all – how commonplace this human attribute has become in our lives. We all have the potential for arrogant tendencies. These are particularly strong when we fear people will see us for who we really are. We build walls around us to hide our vulnerability. Publicly or just inside our mind we make ourselves to be bigger and better than the other, often knocking others down at the same time.

Constant focus on I, me and mine separates us from the realization of our common connection with others and the Divine, and from our realization of our place in the divine order. We are all One. We come from the same source. Inordinate preoccupation with self, blinds one to the reality of our relationship with others. Only when we rid ourselves of the egoism, can we make space for divinity and wisdom and fulfilling relationships in our lives. Coming to know where we stand in the divine order makes us humble. Through this humility comes our respect and honour for others and from others. We reign supreme in humility. This is a paradox in human reality.

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ਸੋ ਵਡਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਾਮ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ॥

so *vadaa* jin raam liv laaee.

One who is attuned to the all-pervading Divine is great.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 188

Message: Man equates greatness with the amount of wealth one has and one's position in society. To sustain this wealth and position is a difficult task. One has problems with others over it. This can be lost at any time or one will have to leave it behind when one dies. The anxiety surrounding this, hardly gives one time to enjoy the pleasure of it.

Where greatness is attuned to divinity at all times, there is no such anxiety. When one is lovingly attached to the Divine, and manifests divine qualities in daily life, there is nothing to lose. Godly qualities in a person give him or her exalted position in the eyes of the rest. The respect and honour given to one is out of reverence and not material gain. Goodness cannot be bartered, hence its greatness.

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ਸੇ ਸੁਖੀਆ ਜਿਸੁ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ॥

so sukheaa jis bhram gaiaa.

One whose delusion has been dispelled is happy and peaceful.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1180

Message: We have many delusions. We believe that only worldly pleasure and abundance of wealth can bring happiness. Hence we carry on craving and chasing after worldly comforts. We also feel that other people are our source of happiness. Hence we depend upon them and expect them to bestow happiness on us.

However, to find true happiness and peace of mind, Gurbani states that we need to overcome all such delusions. How? Seek only the support of the Almighty. Realise His divine presence in your life. Work hard and strive to improve your attitude towards life - to build better relationships and a better future. Learn to be happy with what you do, and what you have at present. Learn to enjoy the simpler pleasures in life and accept what the Lord gives you.

The secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less. Socrates

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ਦੁਹੁ ਬਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਸੋਈ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ਭਾਲੀਐ॥

duhoo bivasthaa te jo muktaa soee suhelaa bhaaleeai.

One who is liberated from both the conditions (abundance and shortage) is comfortable and happy.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1019

Message: Comfort lies in a balanced way of life with neither extreme abundance nor shortage in our daily wants. Extreme abundance brings with it the fear of losing it. It brings arrogance and anxiety. Shortage, on the other hand, causes us to be worried and run desperately for success.

How can we be liberated from the two? We need to strive to honestly earn a decent income to attain the essential comforts in life. At the same time, we must remember the Creator with gratitude and serve others in humility.

Hence work hard and be happy with whatever you have. Accept sorrow and joy as part of earthly life. This is the path to lasting peace.

ਜਿਸੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਚਿੰਤਾ॥ ਜਿਸੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਥੋਰੀ ਸੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਭ੍ਰਮੰਤਾ॥

The household which is filled with abundance suffers anxiety, and the one which has little, wanders searching for more.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1019

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ਨੈਨ ਸੰਤੋਖੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਪਾਇਆ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਫਲੁ ਸੇ ਆਇਆ॥

nain sañtokhe prabh darsan paiaa. kahu naanak saphal so aiaa.

The eyes of one who beholds the Divine are content.

Nanak says the birth of such a person is fruitful.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 804

Message: What should we look at and focus on in our daily lives? What should we visualize? What can make our greedy eyes contented and minds peaceful?

Gurbani says submit to the Divine wholeheartedly. Seek that wisdom which leads to higher consciousness. Nurture love for a divine vision.

Only when the all-pervading presence of the Divine is felt in our life, can our heart and mind be contented and at peace.

The eyes, which were filled with worldly greed, hatred and envy, are transformed when the enlightened mind instructs them to instead behold the blessed vision of the Divine all around – in everyone and everything. Our heart and mind blossom when we cherish love and affection for all. This is what makes our life fruitful and rewarding. Only then can our existence on this earth be termed meaningful.

When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace.

Jimi Hendrix, musician, singer, and songwriter, 1942-1970

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ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਆਇਆ ਸੇ ਪਰਵਾਣ॥ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਅਪਣਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਜਾਣ॥

jag mahi aa-iaa so parvaan. ghat ghat apnaa su-aamee jaan.

Blessed is one's coming into the world who realises one's Master dwelling in each and every heart.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 198

Message: If we remember our Master, the Almighty, all the time – if we focus on the virtues and wisdom of the Divine (at whichever level in life we may be), we obtain an elevated and more enlightened state of mind.

Once we realise the greatness of the Creator, we also know that the Creator is everywhere and in everyone. Thus all are dear to us as we are all children of the One. Realisation of the universality of mankind and acceptance of the Will of the Divine make us beautiful and wise. Blessed is the birth and life of those who see the Beautiful manifested in each and every heart.

There is a great man who makes every man fees small.

But the real great man is the man who makes every man feel great.

Gilbert Chesterton, an English writer and philosopher, 1874 – 1936

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ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਸੇ ਕਾਢੀਅਹਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸੰਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਜਿਨਾ ਵਾਸੇ॥

vadbhaagee se kaaḏheeahi piaare sañt-sañgat jinaa vaaso.

O Bhai! Those who associate with saintly people are called very fortunate.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 802

Message: What changes a human from a beast of irrational thoughts and behavior into someone who sees the Divine in all hearts and decides to work for the benefit of mankind? The company of good, smart, and wise people.

Such company can be found in caring and knowledgeable parents, helpful friends, colleagues, and course mates on the journey to become better persons. Most importantly good company starts with having an enlightened group of devotees, who congregate to listen to the counsel of Gurbani, discuss its message and apply it in their lives.

Such people who seek good company as mentioned above are said to be very fortunate. Contemplating on the Divine, their minds are illuminated and purified. All fears of birth and death and other delusional chatter from the world are eliminated.

Rid of wasteful thoughts and endeavours, they transform themselves and those around them in the quest to expand a community of learners who strive to help the unfortunate.

ਸੇ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਜਿਸੁ ਨਾਮਿ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਤਰੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥

Fortunate is one who has love for the Divine. The world is liberated by associating with such a person.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1150

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ਮਾਇ ਬਾਪ ਕੇ ਬੇਟਾ ਨੀਕਾ ਸਸੁਰੈ ਚਤੁਰੁ ਜਵਾਈ॥

maai baap ko betaa neekaa sasurai chatur javaaee.

The son is dear to his mother and father, and the wise son-in-law to his father-in-law (and mother-in-law).

Message: We all wish we had ideal and loving

relationships. Parents will love their children and their sons and daughters-in-law and vice versa. Among the closest relationships we have is the one between the parent and the child. No matter how close the relationship at the beginning, cracks will appear once excessive emotional attachment sets in as conditions are laid and boundaries are set.

There is one other closer relationship we all have but fail to notice, the one with our true parent, the Divine within us all. The love of the Divine for us is unconditional, nonjudgmental and limitless. Wrapped in the outer emotional relationships, which are the cause of our misery, we fail to acknowledge the one most fulfilling relationship all of us can have.

Unlike worldly relationships, the stronger the emotional attachment to the Divine the more fulfilling our life becomes. As our ultimate journey leads us to the Divine, should we not be nurturing this relationship alongside the others?

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ਬਾਬੁਲ ਕੈ ਘਰ ਬੇਟੜੀ ਬਾਲੀ ਬਾਲੈ ਨੇਹਿ॥

baabul kai ghar betree baalee baalai neh.

***A daughter, while in the home of her father,
loves to play with dolls and toys.***

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 935

Message: Every one of us would like to live this life in a carefree manner with someone providing us with comfort and security as the daughter mentioned in the line above. Life's reality however is harsh and we need to equip ourselves with wisdom, awareness, courage and endurance – some key qualities to help us to bear the stresses and strains of life and our relationships.

With an awareness of the presence of the Divine in us at all times and with the backing of the wisdom of Gurbani, we are able to practice the very virtues that would ensure that no matter what issues or problems we face, we are able to face them squarely. Like the confidence the daughter has while in her father's home we too can be confident

being in the presence of the Divine – our Parent - and in His strength and security. Life may not be such a challenge after all.

The root of suffering is attachment. *Buddha*

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ਬੀਰ ਚਲੇ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਬਹਿਣ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਇ॥

beer chale ghar aapnai bahin birahi jal jaai.

***When the brother departs for his home, the sister
burns with the pain of separation.***

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 935

Message: The love between a sister and a brother has been considered to be pure and long lasting. Sometimes a brother plays the role of a father in a sister's life and at times the sister plays the role of a mother. Captured in this verse here is an example of a beautiful experience of a sibling relationship. In Indian custom, when a brother comes to his married sister's house after a long time, she wishes and insists he stays with her for a few days. But as per the norms of the society and the constraints of a busy life, the brother leaves her soon. As the brother departs for his home, the sister feels the pangs of separation.

This close sibling relationship is the analogy used to portray our close relationship with the Divinity inside of us (the purity and strength). As we lead our worldly lives, we stray away from this close relationship. Doing so we feel the pain of separation. Gurbani constantly reminds us through its wisdom that the closer we remain to the Divinity within us i.e. live our lives according to its virtues, the further away from the pain of worldly relationships we will be. We all face a myriad of problems in this life. It is the degree of closeness to the Divine and the daily practice of divine wisdom that determines how we face the challenges confronting us.

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ਕਾਮਣਿ ਲੋੜੈ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਰੁਪਾ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਲੁੜੇਨਿ ਸੁ ਖਾਧਾਤਾ॥

kaaman lorai suinaa rupaa mitr luren su

khaadhaataa.

The wife yearns for gold and silver, and friends yearn for good food.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 155

Message: It is a bitter truth and a fact of life that driven by excessive greed for wealth and pleasure, sometimes our spouses yearn only for more and more worldly possessions and comforts. And our friends and relatives – they will be there with us when we experience good times. They will look for parties and good food. However very few remain sincere as many of them, like free loaders, are only concerned with their own happiness and enjoyment.

No one really cares about you – what goes on inside of you. No one cares if your peace of mind and emotions are being plundered in the bid to delight them. If you refuse to do as expected, there is a risk of losing them or dealing with their annoyance. You continue to entertain them. This may at times cause you to go against your own beliefs to gain their acceptance, or destroy yourself, your core being.

Dare to stand up and say no when you have to. You cannot please everyone. You cannot satisfy those who are arrogant or greedy. At the end of the day, it is you who has to pay for your actions or weaknesses. Follow your heart and do what you have to.

Ordinary riches can be stolen, real riches cannot. In your soul are infinitely precious things that cannot be taken from you. Oscar Wilde

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ਕੁਆਰ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਜੈਸੇ ਕਰਤ ਸੀਗਾਰਾ॥ ਕਿਉ ਰਲੀਆ ਮਾਨੇ ਬਾਝੁ ਭਤਾਰਾ॥

kuaar kañniaa jaise karat seegaaraa. kiu raleeaa maanai baajh bhataaraa.

Even if a young girl adorns herself like a bride, how can she enjoy conjugal pleasure without her husband?

Bhagat Kabeer, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 792

Message: Most of us, like the young girl mentioned above, adorn ourselves with outer worldly possessions. Our focus is on the pleasure we derive from our five senses. They drive us to establish a position for ourselves in this life, to accumulate wealth and material comfort. To us these provide the ultimate satisfaction. They become the foundation of our success.

Somewhere along the way we realize something deeper is missing. The young bride soon realizes that bridal adornment alone cannot provide the conjugal pleasure. She needs the presence of the husband. Likewise, we too realize that despite the wealth and material comforts we have accumulated, our life remains unfulfilled.

What we need is the awareness of the presence of the divine spark in us, the awareness of divine wisdom which will fill the void we experience. We need to seek a relationship with Gurbani. Only that can enlighten us.

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ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਸਰੋਵਰ ਤਹ ਕਰਹੁ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ਮਨਾ॥

har charan sarovar tah karahu nivaas manaa.

O mind! Dwell in the pool of the Lord's feet.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 544

Message: The Divine is referred to as a pool - the pool of divinity and goodness – the pool of truth, wisdom and virtue. The Divine is formless and without any feature or form. However, poetic personification of the Divine depicts Him as a Being, having features similar to His creation. Hence, the feet here do not represent any physical existence. They represent the sanctuary of the Divine - His love, devotion and remembrance or awareness of His omnipresence at all times.

In olden times, bathing at the places of pilgrimage was considered a holy act by the majority of people. Hence, instead of merely condemning the act and refuting the false notions of outward baths, Gurbani advocates that the true place of bathing is not external. It is the state of divine consciousness and love where true divinity is found. It is the

practice of purity and virtue that transforms us into better beings.

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ਗੁਰੂ ਸਰਵਰ ਮਾਨ ਸਰੋਵਰੁ ਹੈ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਪੁਰਖ ਲਹੰਨਿ॥

gur sarvar maan sarovar hai vadbhaagee purakh lahanh.

The pool of the Guru's wisdom is the true Maan-sarovar, which the very fortunate ones find.

Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 757

Message: The verse here gently disapproves outward shows of spirituality and ritual practices that promise a ticket to heaven. Only the Guru - the Guru's words of wisdom (Gurbani) - is the true pool or lake.

The Divine is subtle and inaccessible. How then can we meet Him and cleanse ourselves of the dirt we carry? It is through the words of Gurbani that the light of wisdom dawns. It takes away all darkness and delusion. All evil is dispelled. Divinity sets in. We are enlightened about the omnipresence of the Divine through Gurbani as we apply the lessons taught in our lives. This is how the true cleansing occurs and our minds are rid of delusions and false beliefs.

ਤੁਮ ਜਲ ਨਿਧਿ ਹਰਿ ਮਾਨ ਸਰੋਵਰ ਜੇ ਸੇਵੈ ਸਭ ਫਲਣੈ॥

O Divine! You are the ocean of pure water, the true Maan-sarovar Lake; whoever serves you obtains all fruits.

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 977

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ਕਉਆ ਕਾਗ ਕਉ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਰਸੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤੈ ਵਿਸਟਾ ਖਾਇ ਮੁਖਿ ਗੋਰੈ॥

kaoo-aa kaag kau ammrit ras paa-ee-ai triptai vistaa khaai mukh gohai.

Even if a crow is fed ambrosial nectar, it is satisfied only by eating manure or putting dung in its mouth.

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 493

Message: Look around us and one sees man constantly focused on the material aspects of life – wealth, comfort, and health. We worry about the

loss of these in our lives and this pushes us to work harder rather than smarter.

Gurbani's wisdom is here to help make us smarter, but even when it is presented to us, we disregard it because it takes time, effort and energy to understand and practice. The positive aspects of wisdom are sidelined by our focus on the hungry need for the material.

Like the crow, which chooses not to taste the nectar, but prefers to eat dirt, man too chooses not to even taste the sweetness that will come from the power of Guru's wisdom. We are crows who prefer to be fed filth and dirt instead of the sweetness we can have from the wisdom of Gurbani. Through the Guru's teachings we not only nurture the spiritual side of our nature but the spinoff is a less stressful and wholesome human side as well.

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਤਿਵਾਦੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਨਾਤੈ ਕਉਆ ਹੰਸੁ ਹੋਰੈ॥

The true Guru who always speaks truth is the pool of nectar; bathing within it, a crow (an evil person) becomes a swan (a virtuous one).

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 493

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ਬਿਸੀਅਰ ਕਉ ਬਹੁ ਦੁਧੁ ਪੀਆਈਐ ਬਿਖੁ ਨਿਕਸੈ ਫੋਲਿ ਫੁਲੀਠਾ॥

biseear kau bahu doodh pee-aa-ee-ai bikh niksai phol phuleethaa.

Even if a poisonous snake is fed large amounts of milk, you will still find poison inside it.

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 171

Message: Snakes are generally avoided by most people as the venom they carry is a threat to life. When a person is described as a 'snake', reference is being made to his or her negative characteristics, such as being untrustworthy, treacherous, backstabber and so on.

In the context of this verse, a self-centred human is represented by a snake. An egocentric person controlled by conceit, hardened by the evil nature

of his mind and devoid of any compassion or understanding for others, carries this poison that is so pervasive that it destroys all relationships. The assumption that you alone control your life, along with the attachment to material and sensual enjoyment, leaves no place for an understanding of the ultimate purpose of life and a relationship with the Divine.

The venom of the snake cannot be neutralized by feeding it milk. Only an expert snake charmer can de-fang and neutralize it. Likewise, the venom in us can only be neutralized by the Guru's Shabad, its wisdom, the sweetener. This is how the bitterness within turns to sweetness. Why choose to act like a reptile when you have been given a human life?

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ਗਦਹੁ ਚੰਦਨਿ ਖਉਲੀਐ ਭੀ ਸਾਹੂ ਸਿਉ ਪਾਣੁ॥

gad-hu chañdan khauleeai bhee saahoo siu paan.

Even if a donkey is anointed with sandalwood paste, it still rolls in the dirt.

Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 790

Message: Human beings are supposed to be wise, as embodiments of the Divine. Sadly, the world around us, and our life situation, takes over our minds to such an extent, that we are left no better than the donkey. We fail to rise up to the elevated spiritual position that we are fortunate to have been gifted.

A donkey is not aware of the value of being smeared by the fragrance of sandalwood and would rather wallow and roll around in the dust.

We human beings are no different. The wisdom of the Divine is already a part of us but we fail to be conscious of its presence in our lives. As the donkey dismisses the sandalwood, we humans too dismiss the sweetness of this wisdom. It is so much easier to roll around in the dust of material possessions and give in to our sensual desires.

Not realizing the value of the Guru's teachings, we live life in the outer arena of egotism and falsehood, supposedly smart but actually making asses of ourselves.

ਚੰਦਨ ਲੇਖੁ ਉਤਾਰੈ ਧੋਇ॥ ਗਰਯਬ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਭਸਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਹੋਇ॥

If you anoint a donkey with sandalwood paste, it will rub it off. The donkey prefers the dust.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 267

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ਸੰਧਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਤ ਇਸਾਨੁ ਕਰਾਹੀ॥ ਜਿਉ ਭਏ ਦਾਦੁਰ ਪਾਨੀ ਮਾਹੀ॥

sañdhiaa praat isnaan karaahee. jiu bhae daadur paanee maahee.

People take their ritual baths in the evening and morning just as the frogs bathe in the water.

Bhagat Kabir, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 324

Message: A bath is meant to cleanse the body and it serves its purpose well. However, it cannot go any further to help cleanse the spirit. Those who take ritual baths in the hope of developing spiritually are compared to frogs that bathe in the water but cannot progress beyond that.

Cleansing of the spirit requires an effort. One needs to be conscious of a spiritual side that only humans are fortunate to have and not the animals. From this consciousness arises the understanding that this spirituality needs to be developed to have a meaningful and peaceful life on earth.

Gurbani acts as a guide and provides the wisdom, which when practiced in our daily lives, cleanses the spirit just as a bath cleanses the body. Rituals of any kind cannot cleanse the spirit. A ritual or a bath cannot make us more compassionate, kind and understanding. It cannot make us less critical of others, less egoistic and less stubborn. The only thing effective is the conscious shift in our mindset, moving us closer to acquiring divine qualities. Why perform so many rituals? Sip instead the essence of Divinity from Gurbani!

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ਜੇਵਹਿ ਕੂਪ ਸਿੰਚਨ ਕਉ ਬਸੁਧਾ ਉਠਿ ਬੈਲ ਗਏ ਚਰਿ ਬੇਲ॥

*jovahi koop siñchan kau basudhaa uṭh bail gae
char bel.*

***Farmers yoke the oxen to work the well and
irrigate their fields, (but if they are inattentive)***

the oxen go and graze the creepers.

Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 368

Message: Although we pray and sing divine hymns in so many ways and through various melodies to try to focus our minds on the Divine, the mind still plays games with us. Most of the time it stays at the doorstep of the temple, only to be collected after we have completed our prayers and leave for home and our daily routine. As the oxen need to be yoked by the farmer, we need to control our mind. As the oxen stray and graze in the field when the farmer is inattentive, so does our mind stray when we are not fully focused on our task at hand.

The body is like a field. We need to plant the seed of Divinity in it. We need to water this seed with good values, our Guru's teachings. Only then can some good sprout out of it. It is due to our negligence that the mind strays from this task. We need to keep our mind in control and linked to the Divine if we want a good crop.

*

ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਕਉ ਦੀਨਾ॥ ਕਾਮ ਰੋਗਿ ਮੈਗਲੁ ਬਸਿ ਲੀਨਾ॥

*haumai rog maanukh kau deenaa. kaam rog
maigal bas leenaa.*

***Humankind is afflicted with the disease of
egoism, and the disease of lust overwhelms the
elephant.***

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1141

Message: When we think of a wild elephant, its three main aspects come to mind. Its enormous size, its wild nature and its lustful urges. Its disease of lust is better understood from the following context. Knowing its lustful nature, one of the methods used to capture wild elephants in the Indian subcontinent was to use a female as a

decoy. Large pits were dug near pathways where the elephants usually came to drink water. Lured by its excessive lust, the elephant used to rush towards decoys of a straw skeleton or trained female elephants and fall into the pit. Trapped and captured, it lost its world of freedom only to be now driven by the will and wish of the mahout.

Humankind is no different. Totally unconscious of the hold that egoism has on us, we allow it free rein in our life. The disease of egoism is manifested as a feeling of excessive pride or acute self-importance. An individual may be proud of a whole host of things. For example, worldly material possessions, personal beauty and intelligence, superior spirituality, charitable work...the list can go on. There is no limit to a sense of excessive pride. This sense of importance results in a feeling of superiority towards others. Related to this comes jealousy, enmity, restlessness leading to friction in relationships and a general dis-ease in life. Humankind is just as much trapped and captured by egoism as is the elephant by lust.

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ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਰੋਗਿ ਪਚਿ ਮੁਏ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਨਾਦ ਰੋਗਿ ਖਪਿ ਗਏ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥

*drisat rog pach mue pataṅgaa. naad rog khap gae
kuraṅgaa.*

***Because of the disease of sight, the moth is burnt
to death, and because of the disease of the sound
of the bell, the deer is lured to its death.***

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1141

**Message: The verses refer to the innate nature
of the moth and the deer.** The overriding desire in the moth for light, leads it towards burning candles and hot artificial lights. Attracted to and lured by the flame or light, it comes too close and is burnt to death. Similarly, the deer has a desire to move towards the sound of the bell. Hiding in a bush, the hunter produces the sound that lures the deer towards him. It is shot and killed. Neither the moth nor the deer has control over their desire.

]How many of us actually have a vision of where we are headed in life? We make many decisions without careful thought only to regret the consequences later. There is a saying “like a moth to a flame”, which is used to describe a person with an unswerving yet self-destructive attraction. Is human behavior sometimes not similar to what is described above? Should we not be more focused on our line of vision – to see where our decisions are taking us – before we get burned? Hopefully, ours is not a self-destructive path but it may be so if we allow our senses, greed, lust or just the thrill of the chase, free rein.

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ਹੇਤ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ॥ ਤ੍ਰਿਬਿਧਿ ਰੋਗ ਮਹਿ ਬਧੇ ਬਿਕਾਰਾ॥

het rog kaa sagal saṅsaaraa. tribidh rog mahi badhe bikaaraa.

The whole world is sick with the disease of attachment. Afflicted with this disease of attachment to the three modes of Maya, people indulge in vices.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1140

Message: Attachment is a disease most commonly found in humankind. Look around and you will realise how pervasive this sickness is. We attach to the material world through our wealth and possessions. We attach to our loved ones through controlling and demanding relationships. We attach to our sense of self through arrogance and conceit.

Maya can be described as a curtain through which we see a distorted view of the world. The attachment to Maya creates a delusion and we are caught in the web of our egoism. Due to ignorance, we do not see the presence of the divine essence in us. Maya takes us away from it. Passion is born of unlimited desires, longing and attachment to mundane worldly objects. Egoism, powered by passion focusses on wealth and possessions. Selfishness, fear, greed, lust - actions performed in the mode of passion result in misery and sorrow.

Goodness in the form of enlightened actions, love, compassion, tolerance should take us to a place of righteousness with no expectation of reward. But humans become egoistic even in their acts of righteousness.

The modes of Maya, ignorance, passion and goodness are inherent in one's nature. Like three intertwined strands of a rope, they determine our character and conduct. Our whole life is sadly wasted away by this disease of infatuation with the world. This leads us deeper into the web of vices, failed relationships, and into the emptiness of falsehood, which many of us consider to be life.

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ਜੇ ਜੇ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੇ ਸੇ ਰੋਗੀ॥ ਰੋਗ ਰਹਿਤ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਜੋਗੀ॥

jo jo deesai so so rogee. rog rahit meraa satgur jogee.

Whoever I see is diseased. Only my true Guru who is imbued with the Divine is free of disease.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1140

Message: Every one of us is diseased, suffering from some or another ailment. But the Divine has given us, the ordinary humans, an antidote to this disease: Gurbani, the wisdom of the Divine, the teachings of the true Guru. Once we are able to access this wisdom and practice its messages, we will recover from our illness.

An awareness of the existence of a divine essence in each one of us moves the curtain or veil of delusion we have been wrapped up in. Letting the divine qualities of love, compassion, empathy override hatred, cruelty, conceit, etc. remedies our maladies.

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ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦੀਓ ਮੇਹਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਬੰਧਨੁ ਤੇ ਛੁਟਕਾਏ॥

kar kirpaa deeo mohi naamaa bañdhan te chhutkaae.

The Divine, through His beneficence, has blessed me with Naam and freed me from the shackles of Maya.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 671

Message: The shackles (traps) of Maya are the world and its snares or the corrupting worldly delights. The shackles that enslave human beings are the greedy pursuit of riches; evil-thoughts; superstitions and illusions; vices, and the fear of death, etc.

The excessive greed for wealth, in its various forms, misleads us all throughout our worldly existence. Worldly attachments and entanglements trap us further in their clutches. By seeking the sanctuary of Naam or the wisdom of Gurbani, we are freed of all our worldly entanglements; no longer are we weighted down by them. Instead, like an eagle we soar into the sky with our new-found freedom from delusions.

Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher, writer, and composer, 1712 - 1778

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ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਚਿੰਤੁ ਬਿਰਾਨੀ ਛਾਡੀ॥ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਮੇਹ ਮਨ ਬਾਸਨ ਦੇ ਕਰਿ ਗਡਰਾ
ਗਾਡੀ॥

*saadh-saṅg chiñt biraanee chhaaḍee. ahaḡ-budh
moh man baasan de kar gaḍ-haa gaaḍee.*

By associating with the virtuous, I have renounced my other worries; I have dug a deep pit and buried my egotistical intellect, attachment and evil desires of the mind.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 671

Message: Ignorant humans forget that their vicious desires are the chains which yoke them throughout life. These desires cause them to worry all the time.

The bonds of egotism (name and fame) lead us to misery, and sometimes cause us to do unpleasant things in life, which sink us even deeper in the mud of ignorance and suffering.

However, by associating with wise people and reflecting on the Name of the Divine, we are freed of all our worries and anxieties because our egotism, and attachments and wasteful cravings of our mind do not control us anymore.

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ਬਿਨਸਿਓ ਢੀਠਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਫੁਠਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਲਗੇ ਗੁਰ ਮੀਠਾ॥

binsio dheethaa amrit voothaa sabad lago gur meethaa.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 671

The Word of the Guru seems so sweet to me; all my stubbornness is gone, and ambrosial nectar rains down within me.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 671

Message: The teachings of the Guru, which appeared to be insipid earlier, have now become sweet and stimulating to the soul's taste. This love and devotion towards divinity and wisdom enables us to overcome our stubbornness and obstinacy.

The mind relaxes as it seems something nectarous and soothing is raining within our hearts. Calmness and peace begins to dwell within us and the rays of such warm pleasantness touches other hearts too. This shower of blissful nectar is for everyone to experience.

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ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਮਈਆ ਡੀਠਾ॥

jal thal mahee-al sarab nivaasee naanak ramaee-aa deethaa.

Nanak! I have realised the all-pervading Divine in the water, on the land, and in the sky.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 671

Message: The ultimate objective of life is attaining higher consciousness or divine-consciousness. It is to be enlightened about the Oneness that pervades all – everywhere, in everything, in all beings and in all places – in water, on the Earth and naturally beyond the Earth.

The Divine Presence permeates everyone, the rich and the poor, the high and the low. Only such a divine vision that enables us to see this Unity and Oneness can overcome the divisions that the frail human minds have created due to delusion and ignorance.

To see the Divine in all is the true purpose of meditation or reflection on Naam, the Divine Name. That is the true goal of a spiritually

oriented life for anyone of any religion or race.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT BY AWAT & OTHERS

Dear Dr Bhabra and other members:

Thank you very much for informing about AWAT. They are doing very good service to make the people to understand Gurbani. But their translation is not different than those already available on Internet. For example,

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦੀਓ ਮੋਹਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਬੰਧਨ ਤੇ ਛੁਟਕਾਏ॥

kar 57irpa deeo mohi naamaa bandhan te chhut-kaae.

The Divine, through His beneficence, has blessed me with Naam and freed me from the shackles of Maya.

Guru Arjan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 671

This site (AWAT) has also been examined by me, Mr Hardev Singh Shergill, Editor, Sikh Bulletin and Mr Jesse Schell, editor of our work. My analysis about this phrase is as follows:

NAAM – AWAT

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦੀਓ ਮੋਹਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਬੰਧਨ ਤੇ ਛੁਟਕਾਏ ॥

Kar 57irpa dīo mohi nāmā bandhan te chhutkāe.

AWAT:

The Divine, through His beneficence, has blessed me with **Naam** and freed me from the shackles of Maya.

Sant Singh Khalsa:

Granting His Grace, God has blessed me with His **Name**, and released me of my bonds.

Manmohan Singh:

Ever since I obtained the Blessed Vision of the **Darshan of the Holy**, my days have been blessed and prosperous.

Prof Sahib Singh:

ਕਰਿ ਕਰ ਕੇ =। ਮੋਹਿ ਮੈਨੂੰ =। ਤੇ ਤੋਂ =। ਛੁਟਕਾਏ ਛੁਡਾ ਲਿਆ =।

(ਹੇ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ (ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੇ ਨਾਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ,
(ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਬੰਧਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਡਾ ਲਿਆ (,

The translation of WAT and Sant Singh Khalsa is not much different; however, Manmohan Singh's and Prof Sahib Singh's translations are quite different.

The most important point (NAAM) to be explained is missing in all the translations.

What is the NAAM in this phrase?

We need to understand Gurbani in its real perspective.

HOW???

Please think over it.

The following sentence completes the phrase.

ਮਨ ਤੇ ਬਿਸਰਿਓ ਸਗਲੇ ਧੰਧਾ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਚਰਣੀ ਲਾਏ ॥੧॥

Man te bisri-o saglo dhandhā gur kī chṛṇī lāe. ॥1॥

Sant Singh Khalsa:

I have forgotten all worldly entanglements, and I am attached to the Guru's feet. ॥1॥

Manmohan Singh:

I have found lasting bliss, singing the Kirtan of the Praises of the Primal Lord, the Architect of destiny.

॥1॥

ਤੇ ਤੋਂ =। ਸਗਲੇ ਧੰਧਾ ਝੰਬੇਲਾ-ਹਰੇਕ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਝਗੜਾ =। ਲਾਏ ਲਾ ਕੇ =

॥੧॥

ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਚਰਨੀ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਮਨ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਰਾ ਝਗੜਾ ਝੰਬੇਲਾ ਲਹਿ ਗਿਆ-॥੧॥

Devinder Singh Chahal

Camp, Jalandhar

On Mon, Feb 22, 2016 at 10:33 AM, Harjeet Bhabra <hbhabra@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hello Everyone,

I am forwarding you an email "A Word A Thought". I have been getting it for some weeks now and it is very enlightening. Each week they pick a new theme and 5 days in a week they focus on a word each day from Gurbani that have a common theme. You have to subscribe to receive the emails regularly.

Just thought you may find it interesting and may wish to subscribe.

Best regards,

Harjeet

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The Washington Post Editorial
By Editorial Board February 24 at 3:08 PM

GOP LEADERS, YOU MUST DO EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER TO STOP TRUMP

THE UNTHINKABLE is starting to look like the inevitable: Absent an extraordinary effort from people who understand the menace he represents, Donald Trump is likely to be the presidential nominee of the Republican Party. At this stage, even an extraordinary effort might fall short. **But history will not look kindly on GOP leaders who fail to do everything in their power to prevent a bullying demagogue from becoming their standard-bearer.**

A few days ago [we criticized Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus](#) for his assertion that a Trump victory in November would silence the doubters. “Winning is the antidote to a lot of things,” Mr. Priebus had said. We argued that winning would not erase the bigotry and ugliness of Mr. Trump’s campaign, nor remove the dangers of a Trump presidency. On Wednesday, the GOP chairman, perhaps wanting to show that he can match Mr. Trump in eloquence, [responded](#): “That is the stupidest editorial that I have ever seen.”

So it falls to other leaders to decide if their party will stand for anything other than winning. A political party, after all, isn’t meant to be merely a collection of consultants, lobbyists and functionaries angling for jobs. It is supposed to have **principles**: in the Republican case, at least as we have always understood it, to include a commitment to efficient government, free markets and open debate.

Now it is faced with a front-runner who, in the interval between the two Priebus comments cited above, [said of a protester, “I’d like to punch him in the face.”](#) This is a front-runner with no credible agenda and no suitable experience. He wants the **United States to commit war crimes**, including torture and the murder of innocent relatives of suspected terrorists. He **admires Russian dictator Vladimir Putin** and sees no difference between Mr. Putin’s victims and people killed in the defense of the United States. He would **round up and deport 11 million people**, a forced movement on a scale not attempted since **Stalin** or perhaps **Pol Pot**. He has, during the course of his campaign, **denigrated women, Jews, Muslims, Mexicans, people with disabilities and many more**. He routinely trades in wild falsehoods and doubles down when his lies are exposed.

Certainly there are Republican leaders who understand all this: **(Where are they hiding and why? Is winning at any price their primary principle? Ed.)** people such as House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.); former president George W. Bush and former presidential nominees Bob Dole, John McCain and Mitt Romney; and governors, senators and community leaders across the country. Some have spoken up over the course of Mr. Trump’s campaign, and then stepped back; others have been silent. The silence may reflect an absence of courage and also an element of calculation: There was an assumption that Mr. Trump would fade, and that confronting him would only make him stronger.

The calculations have proved wrong. If Mr. Trump is to be stopped, now is the time for leaders of conscience **(Republican conscience has slowly deteriorated since the time of General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Ed.)** to say they will not and cannot support him and to do what they can to stop him. We understand that Mr. Trump would seek to use this to his benefit, and that he might succeed. But what is the choice? Is the Republican Party truly not going to resist its own debasement?