



ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
Ik oāṅkāṛ saṭ nām kartā purakhḥ nirbhāo nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhā'n gur parsād.



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## Editorial

### *Excelling And Squandering – The Paradox Of The Sikh World.*

Amidst a variety of things the Sikh world excels in, it also has a penchant for wasting resources. Two phenomena on which the Sikh world has continued to squander enormous energy, time and resources are discussed in this issue through two separate essays. The first is *Nagar Kirtan* and the second involves certain activities related to demands for Sikh Sovereignty.

Since *Nagar Kirtan* is categorized as *Parchar*, it needs to be stated at the outset that *Parchar* is not being critiqued – the effectiveness of *Nagar Kirtan* is. While our *sangats* and Sikh youngsters especially are in dire need of the most basic of *Gurbani* and *Gurmat* knowledge and on the verge of declaring their faith as outdated and irrelevant to their lives; our community is bent on educating people about Sikhi out in the city's commercial areas, places frequented by tourists or other parade grounds. What is being critiqued is the chaos that accompanies the *Nagar Kirtan* – the inconsiderate parking, throwing of rubbish everywhere, acting loud, walking on anybody's lawn and disregarding all rules – to the extent of drawing the ire of the local communities.

Similarly, since Sikh demands for sovereignty are presented as being grounded in Sikh faith, history and culture, it also needs to be stated that none of these elements are the subject of a critique here. Political struggle or collective aspiration is not being critiqued either. What is being critiqued is sovereignty that is imagined entirely as control over land, institutions, or symbols. Such sovereignty rearranges domination under a different banner; replacing one master with another. What is being critiqued is the demand for power, borders, or recognition while remaining inwardly enslaved. This is a shallow ambition. It is shallow because without inner sovereignty, political sovereignty is fragile, easily corrupted, and easily lost.

**Karminder Singh PhD**  
**Chief Editor.**

ਆਵਹੁ ਭੈਣੇ ਗਲਿ ਮਿਲਹ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਹੇਲੜੀਆਹ ॥  
*Avho Bhainnaiy Gal Mileh Ank Sehaylrreah.*

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This *Shabd* is composed by Guru Nanak and recorded on page 17 of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji (SGGS) within *SriRag* – the first *rag* chapter of the SGGS.

ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲੁ ੧ ॥ *Sri Rag Mehla 1*  
 Sri Rag First Mehl.

ਆਵਹੁ ਭੈਣੇ ਗਲਿ ਮਿਲਹ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਹੇਲੜੀਆਹ ॥ *Avho Bhainnaiy Gal Mileh Ank Sehaylrreah.*

**Avho** – Come. **Bhainnaiy** – Lit. Sisters, female companions. Sp. Companions of the mind, senses. **Gal Mileh** – Meet in embrace of love. **Ank** – Close, dear. **Sehaylrreah** – Friends, accomplices.

Come, My Senses, Meet In An Embrace Of Love As Dear Accomplices Of My Mind.

ਮਿਲਿ ਕੈ ਕਰਹ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਸੰਮੂਥ ਕੰਤ ਕੀਆਹ ॥ *Mil Kay Kareh Khannea Samrath Kant Keah.*

**Mil Kay** – Come together. **Kareh Khannea** – Talk, storytelling, engage in discourse. Sp. Contemplation. **Samrath** – Lit. Capable, accomplished. Sp. All encompassing. **Kant** – Lit. Husband. Metap. Lord Master, Creator. **Keah** – Of.

Come Together To Engage In Contemplation Of Our All-Encompassing Lord Master.

ਸਾਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਅਉਗਣ ਸਭਿ ਅਸਾਹ ॥ ੧ ॥ *Sachay Sahib Sabh Gunn Augunn Sabh Asah.*

**Sachay** - Origin Sanskrit *Satya*, in Perpetual Existence, the Creator; the Creator who is in permanent existence. **Sahib** – Master. **Sabh** – All. **Gunn** – Virtues. **Augunn** – Vices. **Asah** – Ours.

And In Contemplation That Our Creator Master Is All Virtuous, While Vices Are All Ours Alone.

ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਤੇਰੈ ਜੋਰਿ ॥ *Karta Sabh Ko Tayrai Jor.*

**Karta** – Creator. **Sabh Ko** - Lit. Everything. Metap. All of creation. **Tayrai Jor** – Your. **Jor** - Force, influence, effect, sway, command.

O Creator Lord, All Of Creation Is Yours To Command.

ਏਕੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਜਾ ਤੂ ਤਾ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਰਿ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*Eyk Shabd Bichariay Ja Tu Ta Kya Hor. Rahao.*

**Eyk** – Of the one, pertaining to the one Creator, Divine. **Shabd** – Message or counsel of the *shabd*. **Bichariay** – Discoursed, understood. Sp. Internalized. **Ja Tu** – Other than You. **Ta** – Then. **Kya Hor** – Who else, what other, none else.

Having Internalized The Counsel Of The *Shabd* Pertaining To The One Divine, I Realize There Is None Else With Such Command.

ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਤੁਸੀ ਰਾਵਿਆ ਕਿਨੀ ਗੁਣੀ ॥ *Jaye Pucho Sohagani Tusi Raveya Kini Gunni.*

**Jaye** – Go. **Pucho** – Ask. **Sohagani** – Lit. Content brides. Sp. Realized beings. **Tusi** – You all. **Raveya** – Lit. Pleased, won over. Sp. Make oneself worthy. **Kini** – Which. **Gunni** – Virtues.

Go Ask the Realized Beings, O Mind, Through Which Virtues Did You All Make Yourself Worthy.

ਸਹਜਿ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੀਆ ਮਿਠਾ ਬੋਲਣੀ ॥ *Sehej Santokh Sigaria Mitha Bolnee.*

**Sehej** - 1. Calm, equipoise, tranquil. 2. Natural state. 3. State of submission. 4. Permanent (as opposed to cyclic and fluctuating), enduring, instinctive. intuitive. **Santokh** – Contentment. **Sigaria** – Adorned. **Mitha** – Lit. Sweet. **Bolnee** – Speech. **Mitha Bolnee** – Idio. Humility.

An Enduring State Of Contentment Adorned With Humility;

ਪਿਰੁ ਰੀਸਾਲੂ ਤਾ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਣੀ ॥ ੨ ॥ *Pir Risalu Ta Milaiy Ja Gur Ka Shabd Sunni.*

**Pir** – Lit. 1. Spouse, husband. 2. Master. Sp. Creator, Divine Lord within. **Risalu** – Provider of bliss. **Ta** – Then. **Milaiy** – Lit. Meet. Sp. Realize within. **Ja** – If, when. **Gur Ka Shabd** – Message or counsel of the Guru *shabd*. **Sunni** – Lit. Listen. Sp. Internalize.

Brings Realization Of The Blissful Divine Within; Whence I Internalize The Counsel Of The Guru *Shabd*.

ਕੇਤੀਆ ਤੇਰੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਕੇਵਡ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਤਿ ॥ *Kaytia(n) Tayria(n) Kudrti Kevad Teyri Daat.*

**Kaytia(n)** – Multitudes. **Tayria(n)** – Your. **Kudrti** – Nature, creation. **Kevad** – Immense, bountiful. **Teyri** – Your. **Daat** – Lit. Gift. Sp. Blessing, grace.

The Message Of The Guru *Shabd* Is That Your Creation Is In The Multitudes, And Your Grace Is Bountiful, O Divine.

ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ *Kaytay Tayray Jea Jant Sift Kreh Din Raat.*

**Kaytay** – Multitudes. **Tayray** – Of Your creation. **Jea Jant** – Life forms. **Sift Kreh** – Lit. Acclaim. **Din Raat** – Lit. Day and night. Metap. Continuously, unending.

**And Of Multitudes Are There Life Forms In Your Creation And Unending Is Their Acclaim Of You.**

ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਕੇਤੇ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ॥ ੩ ॥ *Kaytay Tayray Roop Rang Kaytay Jaat Ajaat.*

**Kaytay** - Multitudes. **Tayray** –Your. **Roop** – Lit. Form, shape. **Rang** – Color. **Roop Rang** – Metap. Types. **Jaat** – Lit. Caste, class **Ajaat** – Lit. Low caste, class. **Jaat Ajaat** – Metap. Rank, order.

**Of Multitudes Are The Types And Of Multitudes Is The Order Within Your Creation.**

ਸਚੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ *Sach Milaiy Sach Upjaiy Sach Meh Saach Smaye.*

**Sach** - Origin Sanskrit *Satya*, in Perpetual Existence, the Creator; the Creator who is in permanent existence. **Milaiy** – Lit. Meet, obtain. Sp. Realize. **Sach Upjaiy** – Emanate divinity. **Meh** – Within. **Saach Smaye** – Lit. Absorbed, imbued, imbibed, permeate, pervade in divine virtues.

**To Realize The Creator Within Is To Emanate Divinity And To Pervade In Divine Virtues.**

ਸੁਰਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਉਗਵੈ ਗੁਰਬਚਨੀ ਭਉ ਖਾਇ ॥ *Surt Hovaiy Pat Uugvaiy Gurbachni Bho Khaye.*

**Surt** – Consciousness. **Hovaiy** – Happens, occurs, brings about. **Pat** - Dignity, reverence. **Uugvaiy** – Emerge, emanate. **Gurbachni** – Lit. Speech of the Guru, sayings of the Guru. Sp. Messages of the *Shabd* Guru. **Bho** – Fear. **Khaye** – Lit. Consume, eat. Metap. Dissipate.

**Consciousness Of The Creator Within Emanates Reverence For Divine Virtues And Messages Of The Shabd Guru Dissipate The Fear Pertaining To Our Vices.**

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਆਪੇ ਲਏ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੧੦ ॥ *Nanak Scha Patshah Apey Laye Milaye.*

**Scha** - Origin Sanskrit *Satya*, in Perpetual Existence, the Creator; the Creator who is in permanent existence. **Patshah** – Lord. **Apey** – Self. **Laye** – Causes, enables. **Milaye** – Lit. Meet. Sp. Realize.

**Nanak, It Is The Conscience Within The Self That Enables The Lord Creator To Be Realized Within.**

*Man is not logical and his intellectual history is a record of mental reserves and compromises. He hangs on to what he can in his old beliefs even when he is compelled to surrender their logical basis.*

John Dewey - American Philosopher 1859 – 1952

## Man Jeetai Jag Jeet: Rethinking Sikh Sovereignty

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In Sikh thought, the question of freedom does not begin with panic about fate or arguments about science. It begins with a patient look at how people actually live. Most of us move through the day on habit. We react before we reflect. We repeat patterns we did not choose and defend identities we barely examined. Sikh philosophy does not deny this. The Guru Granth Sahib speaks plainly about cause and consequence, about how actions leave traces and how life unfolds through patterns we inherit and repeat. We are shaped by what we do, and by what has been done before us. But Sikh thought places human dignity in a quiet but decisive capacity: the ability to pause, to see this conditioning at work, and to realign the mind toward something steadier than impulse.

Guru Nanak Sahib named the force that keeps us trapped in these loops *haumai*. *Haumai* is not just arrogance. It is the restless sense of “I, me, mine” that turns every moment into a reaction and every difference into a division. When *haumai* is in charge, we feel free because no one is stopping us. But in truth, we are being pushed and pulled by fear, habit, memory, and social reward. Sikh philosophy is unsentimental about this. Acting on impulse is not freedom. Reacting on cue is not agency. It is simply another form of control, dressed up as choice.

Freedom, in the Sikh sense, begins with active cognitive alignment. This is not passive belief or mechanical repetition. It is mental work. It is the deliberate practice of bringing the mind back, again and again, to principles that interrupt ego-driven reactions. The Guru Granth Sahib says that if you can conquer your mind, you conquer the world. Not by force, but by clarity. Not by domination, but by steadiness. Each time fear rises and is noticed rather than obeyed, alignment is strengthened. Each time resentment appears and is met with restraint, the grip of ego loosens. This repeated realignment is the real discipline of Sikh life. To me, this represents what *simran* is.

As this alignment deepens, the sharp edges of “us versus them” begin to soften. The divisions created by ego lose their urgency. This is the movement away from duality. Not a vague feeling of unity, but a lived understanding that separation is something the mind manufactures. When the mind is no longer crowded with ego’s noise, the insight of oneness becomes practical.

This realignment is not mystical withdrawal, nor is it passive acceptance. It is an active discipline of attention. Sikh thought treats the mind not as a private inner theatre but as the primary site where freedom is either lost or recovered. Every reaction that goes unchecked strengthens the habits of ego. Every pause, every conscious return to principle, weakens the habits of ego. This is why Sikh practice places such emphasis on *surat*—attentive awareness. Without attention, even the most powerful ideas collapse into slogans. With attentive awareness, ordinary life becomes the field of transformation.

As the grip of ego loosens, the world is no longer experienced as a collection of threats and rivals. This is where non-duality becomes practical rather than philosophical. Duality is not simply a belief in difference; it is a reflexive way of seeing that divides experience into gain and loss, friend and enemy, victory and humiliation. Sikh thought does not deny difference, but it refuses to absolutize it. When the mind is trained to see without ego’s urgency, action becomes steadier. Decisions are no longer driven by injury or longing, but by discernment.

This is also where the question of sovereignty must be handled carefully. In modern political language, sovereignty is usually imagined as something external: control over land, institutions, or symbols. Sikh philosophy

does not reject political agency, but it is skeptical of shortcuts. A mind still ruled by ego merely reproduces domination under a different banner. Gurbani repeatedly returns to this warning: power without inner clarity does not liberate; it only rearranges the terms of bondage (ਬੰਧਨਿ ਬੰਧਿ ਭਵਾਈਅਨੁ ਕਰਣਾ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ *Bandhan Bandh Bhvayian Karnna Kchoo Na Jaye*) Bound in bondage, they are made to wander, and they cannot do anything about it. Guru Granth Sahib, 1414). In this sense, Sikh thought is neither anti-political nor romantic about politics. It insists on sequence.

What emerges instead is something quieter and more demanding: *ātm-giātā*, self-knowing. This is not self-absorption, but self-transparency. It is the condition in which one sees clearly how fear, pride, and resentment operate, and refuses to let them decide. From this ground, agency becomes possible without becoming aggressive. Justice can be pursued without turning into vengeance. Authority can be exercised without needing to dominate. This is the ethical core of *Miri-Piri*: outward responsibility anchored in inward clarity.

Guru Nanak Sahib's intervention, then, was not to redirect ambition toward a new throne, but to dismantle the throne within the mind. The revolution he initiated does not begin with seizing power, but with refusing to be ruled by impulse. Only from this refusal does a more durable form of freedom emerge, one that can sustain political struggle without being consumed by it, and collective aspiration without losing moral balance.

This sovereignty is not private or decorative. Sikh philosophy insists that inner freedom must show itself outwardly. This is the meaning of *Miri-Piri*. A person who has trained the mind is no longer ruled by appetite, fear, or intimidation. They act with courage without aggression, with justice without bitterness. They recognize dignity not as a slogan, but as a shared condition. This is why Sikh thought treats purely political ideas of sovereignty with caution.

Demanding power, borders, or recognition while remaining inwardly enslaved to ego is, in Sikh terms, a shallow ambition. Without inner sovereignty, political sovereignty is fragile, easily corrupted, and easily lost. This reflection does not dismiss Sikh political aspirations or historical pain; it simply asks that any outward claim to sovereignty be grounded first in the inner discipline and clarity that Gurbani places at the center of Sikh life (ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ *Takhat Bhaiy Takhtaiy Ki Layek*) He alone sits on the throne, who is worthy of the throne. Guru Granth Sahib, 1039).

It is important to be clear about what Sikh thought means by sovereignty, especially in a diasporic world where political language often carries the weight of loss, memory, and unfinished history. Modern nationalist thinking tends to treat sovereignty as a destination, something achieved once control over land, institutions, or symbols is secured. Sikh philosophy approaches the idea from a deeper starting point. It asks whether a people who remain inwardly divided, reactive, and ruled by ego can truly be sovereign, even if power changes hands (ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਬਉਰੀ ਮਨੁ ਬਉਰਾਇਆ *Dubhda Baori Man Baoraeya*). The insanity of duality has driven the mind insane. Guru Granth Sahib, 1342).

Gurbani does not dismiss political struggle or collective aspiration. It insists on order and grounding. Without active cognitive alignment, without loosening the grip of duality and *haumai*, external power remains fragile and easily corrupted. In Sikh thought, inner sovereignty is not a retreat from politics. It is the condition that makes just and enduring political agency possible.

The deeper revolution offered by Guru Nanak Sahib begins elsewhere. It begins with freeing the mind from its automatic loyalties and reflexes. History shows that political revolutions often replace one master with another. Sikh philosophy aims higher and quieter. Through active cognitive alignment, through the steady dismantling of ego and the abandonment of duality, a person moves from being a puppet of circumstance to a conscious participant in life. Such a person does not merely react to the world. They act from a place of clarity, responsibility, and true sovereignty, grounded in a reality that does not change when power shifts hands.



## Redefining Sikh Identity: The Crisis Among Sikh Youth in the Digital Age.

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### INTRODUCTION.

This essay explores the silent yet pervasive identity crisis confronting Sikh youth in the modern world, particularly within the global Sikh diaspora. We define this crisis as a sustained condition of uncertainty and internal conflict regarding how Sikh faith, cultural heritage, and personal aspirations are integrated within contemporary social landscapes. It manifests in distancing from religious practice, confusion over cultural norms, ambivalence toward visible Sikh identity, and a search for belonging within non-Sikh value spaces.

Our argument is that this crisis can be understood only as the outcome of multifaceted social, economic, cultural, and institutional transformations. Key drivers include diasporic pressures and intergenerational gaps arising from ongoing migration, the homogenising influence of globalisation and consumer culture (including Bollywood's long-standing stereotyping of Sikhs), experiences of discrimination, processes of secularisation, and widespread language loss. At a deeper historical level, we witness the dislocation of the agrarian ethic and a vacuum of inspiring leadership within Sikh institutions. The consequences are profound, resulting in psychological distress, social withdrawal, weakened cultural transmission, and community fragmentation.

In terms of a way forward, we argue for a radical reimagination of Sikhi that balances the preservation of core ethics with the freedom for critical engagement. Alongside this, we propose practical measures such as creating safe exploratory spaces for intergenerational dialogue and radically reimagining *parchar* to align with Guru Nanak's revolutionary, universalist vision, including confronting issues such as gender inequality, casteism and the inclusion on minorities within the wider Sikh family. The challenge for Sikh leadership is straightforward: unless there is a genuine willingness to awaken from a long-standing state of denial and to recognise the profound sociological shifts caused by globalisation and digital culture, which will only intensify, there is little hope of arresting what is, for Sikhs, nothing short of an existential crisis.

### THE NATURE OF THE IDENTITY CRISIS.

The identity crisis among Sikh youth resonates with Erik Erikson's framework of *identity vs. role confusion*, which constitutes a central psychosocial challenge of adolescence across modern societies (Erikson, 1968). Identity formation involves synthesising personal values, social expectations, and individual aspirations into a coherent self-concept. When this synthesis is disrupted, feelings of uncertainty, conflict, and disconnection emerge, aligning with Marcia's states of identity diffusion and moratorium (Marcia, 1966). Among diasporic Sikh youth, this crisis is compounded by the need to navigate hybrid identities—managing the tensions between the cultural norms of the “home” environment and those of the host society—resulting in forms of acculturative stress (Berry, 1997).

Jasjit Singh's (2012) research on young British Sikhs underscores how this negotiation often centres on religious nurture within the home, the role of extended family networks, and the influence of peer groups and social environments. His work illustrates that young Sikhs do not merely inherit religious identity; they actively

negotiate it through selective participation, reinterpretation of tradition, and new forms of spiritual engagement, often shaped by the schooling environment and wider social attitudes toward visible Sikh identity.

An identity crisis, in this context, thus denotes a persistent sense of disorientation about what it means to be Sikh—how faith, culture, family expectations, physical appearance, and career ambitions cohere in a rapidly changing world. Among Sikh youth globally, the crisis manifests as:

- Distancing from religious practices
- Confusion regarding cultural norms (language, marriage, dress, food)
- Ambivalence about visible Sikh identity
- Conflict between familial expectations and personal choices
- Seeking belonging in peer groups or digital spaces detached from Sikh values

Traditionally, such crises were moderated through family, *sangat*, and local peer networks. However, contemporary transformations—especially digitalisation—have disrupted these structures.

### **THE DIGITAL SHIFT AND THE ATTENTION ECONOMY.**

Digital culture has become one of the most significant forces shaping Sikh youth identity. Social media platforms are now primary arenas for identity construction and performance. Following Goffman's dramaturgical insights, these platforms encourage youth to cultivate idealised online personas, intensifying pressures of comparison, perfectionism, and conformity to globalised standards of beauty and success. This environment subordinates the ethics of Sikhi (*kirt karo, vand chhako, seva*) to aestheticized symbols. For many young Sikhs, identity becomes a consumable performance: stylised turbans, flags, weaponry, and tattoo motifs circulate widely as digital markers of belonging. Yet these often lack the depth to sustain identity during conflict or crisis.

### **EROSION OF TRADITIONAL SOLIDARITY.**

Online *sangat* facilitated through platforms such as Basics of Sikhi and various diaspora-focused influencers has created new, digitally mediated spaces for religious learning, identity work, and communal connection. While these environments broaden access and empower individuals—particularly younger generations—the shift from congregational participation to online engagement also introduces several challenges.

First, it can result in fragmentation, by displacing or diminishing participation in embodied, place-based community life, weakening traditional forms of collective practice.

Second, platform algorithms tend to privilege emotionally charged or ideologically rigid content, encouraging the formation of siloed interpretive communities and limiting exposure to diverse perspectives within the *panth*. An associated danger here is the promotion of cultism, especially where such platforms are dominated by charismatic individuals.

Third, the visibility of Sikh identities online renders communities vulnerable to coordinated misinformation campaigns, targeted hate, and other forms of digital antagonism that distort discourse and undermine communal cohesion.

Taken together, these dynamics illustrate how digital cultures are reshaping Sikh identity formation as a transnational, contested and deeply mediated process—one in which authority, belonging and meaning are continually negotiated across both physical and virtual domains.

### **MIGRATION AND DIASPORIC PRESSURES.**

Sikh youth navigating multiple cultural worlds encounter tensions between parental expectations and the norms of host societies. Parents, often shaped by radically different social realities, may fail to grasp the complexities their children face in Western contexts. Unrealistic expectations fuelled by social media, exploitative travel agents,

fragmented labour markets and misleading narratives from settled relatives contribute to disillusionment, sometimes pushing youth toward harmful behaviours.

Scholarship from *Young Sikhs in a Global World* (Jacobsen & Myrvold, 2011) shows that second-generation Sikhs interpret and negotiate these pressures dynamically. The contributors highlight the central role of family, home-based religious nurture, and community institutions in shaping identity. They also reveal that youth often deploy strategic agency—adopting, resisting, or modifying inherited traditions—to balance cultural expectations with global opportunities.

#### **GLOBALISATION, MEDIA, AND CONSUMER CULTURE.**

Global media normalise lifestyles and aesthetics incompatible with traditional Sikh identity markers such as unshorn hair and turbans. Bollywood's historic mockery of Sikhs has substantially eroded the self-esteem associated with visible identity. Although portrayals have improved in recent years, superficial representation persists, with Sikh characters frequently played by non-Sikh actors. This has contributed to shifting partner preferences and internalised stigma.

#### **DISCRIMINATION AND SAFETY CONCERNS.**

Visible Sikhs continue to experience xenophobia, misidentification, and post-9/11 backlash. The memory of state-sanctioned violence against Sikhs in India (notably 1984) deepens fear and may push some toward concealing identity. Human vulnerability in the face of violence intersects with the Sikh tradition of martyrdom, creating emotional contradictions for youth navigating personal safety and communal ideals.

#### **SECULARISATION AND CHANGING RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.**

Global trends of secularisation have reshaped religious commitment across many traditions. Among Sikh youth, this manifests as cultural '*Sikhness*' without ritual observance, questioning of doctrine, and detachment from institutional authority. Sikh teachings, which challenge priestly control, ritualism, and superstition, pose a threat to entrenched religious hierarchies across traditions. This has historically spurred attempts to dilute Sikh distinctiveness through fabricated texts and ritual assimilation.

#### **FAMILY DYNAMICS AND INTERGENERATIONAL GAPS.**

The weakening of extended family structures, accelerating urbanisation, and individualised lifestyles have disrupted traditional pathways of identity transmission. Values once embodied through communal living, *seva*, agrarian labour, and collective decision-making have diminished. Youth now seek meaning in isolation, disconnected from the moral frameworks that once grounded Sikh life.

Research by Jasjit Singh (2012) further shows that religious nurture is inconsistent, with young Sikhs often lacking structured guidance and relying on individualised exploration. This can both empower and destabilise identity formation, increasing confusion when institutional support is weak.

#### **EDUCATION AND ABSENCE OF RELEVANT CIVIC SPACES.**

Schools and universities rarely incorporate Sikh history or culture, leaving Sikh youth feeling invisible in civic life. The aspirational imagery of Western success, amplified by social media, reinforces migration dreams and a symbolic detachment from Punjab. Education systems in both Punjab and the diaspora often fail to cultivate intellectual depth, critical engagement, or Sikh ethical literacy.

**LANGUAGE LOSS.**

Punjabi and Gurmukhi proficiency continues to decline. This loss severs youth from the linguistic medium of Sikh scripture and cultural wisdom. Translation-heavy engagement is vulnerable to distortion, and parental neglect of Punjabi in the home exacerbates this disconnection.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL PRESSURES.**

Identity formation naturally induces anxiety during adolescence. In the Sikh case, this stress is intensified by the absence of meaningful role models and the persistence of ritualism. Many Sikh institutions—from the SGPC to local gurdwaras—remain bureaucratic, defensive, and ill-equipped to present Sikh philosophy as a vibrant, modern, universal path.

**DISLOCATION OF THE AGRARIAN ETHIC.**

The erosion of Punjab's agrarian foundations—once central to Sikh ethical life—has devastated economic stability and social identity. Debt, environmental degradation, migration pressures, and farmer suicides have created deep moral despair, undermining the dignity historically associated with agrarian labour and its spiritual resonance.

**CONSEQUENCES.**

The consequences of this identity crisis manifest across multiple levels of Sikh life. At a personal level, individuals may experience heightened psychological distress as they struggle to reconcile inherited traditions with contemporary pressures. This often feeds into patterns of social withdrawal, or conversely, into forms of high-risk assimilation in which young people distance themselves from visible markers of Sikh identity in pursuit of acceptance.

As these individual trajectories accumulate, they contribute to broader communal effects, the erosion of intergenerational transmission of language, cultural knowledge, and religious practice; the fragmentation of community structures that once provided stability and coherence; and a gradual decline in the public visibility of Sikhs within pluralistic societies.

Ultimately, these shifts weaken the collective political voice of Sikh communities, whose ability to organize, advocate, and assert their rights depends on both cohesion and public presence. Such patterns are becoming increasingly evident across Sikh populations worldwide.

**REMEDIES: TOWARDS A REIMAGINATION OF SIKHI.**

So far, we have sought to make sense of the nature of the challenge. In the final section of the essay, we offer some practical suggestions for a way forward. In doing so we must insist, actually youth rebellion must not be seen as simply a problem, but also an opportunity. The youth of today are the potential leaders of tomorrow. In this regard, the youth play a double edges role; by challenging the existing order, they offer the possibility of reform and renewal, without which no society can proceed. Indeed, the very birth of Sikhi is built on a radical rejection of many of the cultural norms of the society, which, as Bhai Gurdas states, were lost in a mist of ignorance and superstition.

Addressing the crisis, therefore, requires reclaiming Sikhi's radical, universal, and egalitarian foundations. Guru Nanak's teachings were revolutionary precisely because they rejected ritualism, caste hierarchy, and religious exclusivism. Contrary to myths portraying Guru Nanak as pacifist and Guru Gobind Singh as having militarized Sikhi, Nanak directly confronted political tyranny, including admonishing Babur, and articulated a fearless ethical vision.

**CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT.**

Young Sikhs increasingly encounter a plurality of interpretations; traditional, reformist, activist, diasporic, and digital. Reimagining Sikhi therefore demands the capacity to critically examine these narratives, assess their historical and textual grounding, and determine their relevance to contemporary ethical and social realities. Critical engagement empowers youth to move beyond passive inheritance toward informed, reflective participation in the tradition.

#### **ETHICAL PARTICIPATION.**

Reinterpretation must be rooted in the core Sikh principles of justice, compassion, and collective welfare. For youth negotiating complex social environments, ethical participation involves aligning personal choices, ranging from social media behaviour to political activism, with these values. It also includes resisting harmful practices such as factionalism or online hostility and instead cultivating a digitally responsible and community-minded presence.

#### **SPIRITUAL CREATIVITY.**

Contemporary Sikh youth often seek spiritual expression in ways that resonate with their lived experiences, linguistic repertoires, and cultural contexts. Spiritual creativity encourages new forms of engagement, such as multimedia katha, mindfulness-inflected *simran*, community-based *seva* projects, or artistic reinterpretations of Sikh narratives, while remaining grounded in the Gurus' teachings. This creativity helps maintain spiritual depth while ensuring the tradition remains dynamic and responsive.

#### **SAFE SPACES FOR IDENTITY EXPLORATION.**

Young people need environments—both physical and digital—where they can ask questions, express uncertainties, and explore multiple facets of their identity without fear of judgment. Such spaces help counteract the pressures of conformity and allow youth to integrate their Sikh, national, ethnic, and personal identities in authentic ways.

#### **BALANCED RELIGIOUS LITERACY.**

Many youths encounter either overly rigid or oversimplified interpretations of Sikhi. A balanced approach includes exposure to scripture, history, ethics, and contemporary scholarship, enabling nuanced understanding that avoids both dogmatism and superficiality.

#### **NORMALISATION OF MULTI-LAYERED IDENTITIES.**

Rather than forcing youth to choose between cultural belonging and modern aspirations, it is essential to affirm that layered identities; Sikh, Punjabi, diasporic, professional, queer, artistic, or otherwise, are legitimate and historically consistent with the diversity of the panth.

#### **CULTURALLY COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE.**

Access to mental health support that recognises Sikh cultural norms, migration histories, and religious frameworks is crucial. Practitioners should be trained to understand stigma, family expectations, and the spiritual dimensions of wellbeing within Sikh contexts.

#### **RESILIENCE AND COMMUNICATION SKILL-BUILDING.**

Tools for managing discrimination, navigating intercultural spaces, and communicating across generational divides help youth develop confidence and agency. These skills mitigate the risk of withdrawal or harmful assimilation.

## FAMILY-LEVEL REMEDIES

**Facilitated intergenerational dialogue.** Structured conversations, workshops, or mediated discussions can help bridge gaps between elders’ expectations and youth’s lived realities. Dialogue reduces conflict, fosters empathy, and transforms the family into a supportive site of identity formation.

**Modern approaches to cultural education.** Families can incorporate contemporary media, digital resources, and youth-oriented pedagogies into cultural learning. Moving beyond rote instruction toward experiential and collaborative methods makes cultural transmission more meaningful.

**Support for youth autonomy within shared values.** Healthy Sikh families respect agency while guiding youth toward core Sikh principles such as seva, equality, and humility. Encouraging autonomy strengthens trust and allows values to be chosen, not imposed.

## COMMUNITY AND GURDWARA-LEVEL REMEDIES.

**Youth-centred programming and leadership roles.** Gurdwaras must move beyond token involvement and create structured pathways for youth leadership, such as youth committees, research groups, seva coordinators, and governance mentorship opportunities.

**Inclusive practices that welcome questioning.** Communities should normalise inquiry rather than treat it as disrespect. Workshops, open forums, and accessible discussions with knowledgeable facilitators can help young Sikhs deepen their understanding without fear of dismissal.

**Professional mentorship networks.** Connecting Sikh youth with mentors across fields, such as law, medicine, arts, technology, public service—reinforces confidence, combats isolation, and provides tangible models of integrated Sikh identity in diverse professions.

**Promotion of diverse Sikh role models.** Highlighting Khalsa, Sehajdhari, Amritdhari, feminist, disabled, and global Sikh figures counters narrow stereotypes and reflects the pluralism of the panth, offering youth a wide spectrum of possible selves.

**Curriculum inclusion of Sikh history.** Integrating Sikh narratives, including migration histories, contributions, and experiences of discrimination, into school curricula fosters recognition and reduces ignorance-driven bullying. Also, extending the scope of langar to the streets and educational institutions following successive examples of ‘Langar on Campus’ and ‘Street Langar’ during the Covid crisis.

**Anti-bullying training and cultural competency.** Schools should implement staff training to address bias against visible Sikh articles of faith such as the *dastar* or *patka*. Cultural competency initiatives promote safer learning environments.

**After-school Punjabi and heritage programs.** Accessible language and heritage programs support intergenerational continuity and help youth retain cultural confidence, while combating the loss of linguistic foundations.

**Legal protections and advocacy.** Strengthening accommodations for the kirpan, turban, and unshorn hair—as well as anti-discrimination laws—protects Sikh identity in workplaces, schools, and public institutions.

**Diaspora cultural grants.** Funding for Sikh arts, archives, youth initiatives, and community-based research helps sustain cultural memory and supports innovative forms of engagement.

**Positive media representation.** Advocating for Sikh visibility in film, journalism, and public discourse counters stereotypes and affirms Sikh belonging in pluralistic societies.

**Gender, Sexuality, and Equality.** Sikh youth, especially those overseas, find it difficult to accept ongoing discrimination against women in Sikh religious practice. It is totally unacceptable that women are not allowed

even today to recite Gurbani or do kirtan inside the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Darbar Sahib in Amritsar. They are not allowed to carry the morning Palki. They do not have adequate representation in the SGPC or Gurdwara Committees.

Recognising these errors and remedying them would provide a better forum for Sikh women to renew their bond with Sikhi and be less dazzled by the clean-shaven images spewed by Bollywood as fashion icons. It is a matter of shame that Punjab is amongst the worst states in what concerns female infanticide before birth through abortions. Proper understanding of the Gurus' message to reduce this horror can be attempted by giving women their due place in Sikh institutions.

**Conversion, Interfaith Families and Mixed Marriages.** Sikh youth increasingly enter intercultural and interfaith relationships. Rather than viewing this as dilution, Sikhi's universalism offers a framework for harmonious coexistence. Identity formation in such families requires inclusive support rather than coercive demands. Recognize that identity navigation differs when families are interfaith ; resources should honor multiple heritages rather than demand exclusivity. Sikhs need to accept that interfaith, intercultural marriages will increase with increased migration to other lands. Such couples need not be seen as a deviation from the principles of Sikhi.

The Sikh partner in such relationships can influence his / her partner's outlook if he / she possesses proper understanding of the universal nature of our Gurus' teachings. It may not necessarily mean conversion of the non-Sikh partner to visual symbols of Sikhi but could make him / her share its core values in a harmonious relationship. Sikh society needs to be inclusive, not exclusive. Rigidity of thought in Sikhi is not in conformity with our Gurus' teachings. As a living faith, Sikhi has the capacity to absorb the increasing incidence of Sikh youngsters marrying or partnering with persons of other faiths, races, cultures. Rather than castigating such couples, the true essence of Sikhi should be communicated to the non-Sikh partner for making him / her aware of the universality of its humanistic thought. This will foster better understanding of Sikhi.

**Visible vs. Cultural Sikhs.** Not all young Sikhs will choose to be visibly observant. Respect the continuum of practice :identity support should not coerce visible markers but enable informed, free choices. Demonizing such youngsters is counterproductive. Proper understanding of their circumstances, coupled with mentoring by enlightened role models could persuade some of such youth to return to even external form of Sikhi.

Rigid emphasis on external identity has already made a large number of Nanak panthis like Sindhis dilute their links with what is being preached as orthodox ritual ridden Sikhi by various Taksals, Babas, Deras etc. On top of this, casteism has become rampant in Sikh society, a total contradiction to the Gurus' message. Such caste discrimination has obliged Ravidasias, Sikligar Sikhs, Vanjara Sikhs, Mazhabi Sikhs to turn to Christianity in large numbers.

Sikh institutions have failed to provide spiritual and material nurture to such underprivileged categories of Sikh society. Enlightened Sikh youngsters, especially those outside India, are already making a dent in such rigid caste systems by questioning their relevance in modern society. They should be encouraged to become iconoclasts challenging fossilized notions of ritual ridden Sikhi fostered by their elders till now. Rebellious character is normal for youngsters. It should not be feared but encouraged in a constructive manner to bring out true principles of Sikhi.

#### **CONCLUSION: BALANCING PRESERVATION AND FREEDOM.**

The Sikh identity crisis is, at its core, a crisis of imagination. It arises not from a loss of faith but from a failure to reinterpret Sikh teachings for the modern world. Sikh leaders have failed to offer compelling institutional vision, whereas Sikh youth, especially in the diaspora, show signs of leading a renaissance grounded in intellectual honesty, ethical engagement, and global confidence.

Perhaps the term 'identity crises' is not that helpful, and a more positive way to look at this issue is in terms of 'identity opportunity'. In truth, young Sikhs are understandable products of social change, discrimination,

and normal developmental exploration. Solutions, therefore, are not about pressing youth to conform, nor simply accepting disengagement ; they are about building bridges, educational, emotional, and institutional, so young people can make free, informed choices from a palette of belonging and resilience. Communities that succeed will be those that listen to youth, modernize their modes of transmission, protect rights and visibility in public life, and create enough cultural flexibility that being Sikh remains a living, meaningful option rather than a source of shame or conflict.

Existing Sikh leaders have failed to inspire Sikh youth to stay loyal to their identity and have generally served as bad role models. Nonetheless, they must find ways to let go and to yield leadership roles to Sikh youth. This process will not be easy but its early signs can already be discerned in forums where Sikh youth are boldly questioning rituals and practices which they feel are antithetical to the values of Sikhi. Mentors need to encourage Sikh youth to question established dogmas. Successful Sikh professionals, Sikh entrepreneurs need to be held up as role models for educated Sikh youth instead of Dera chiefs, Babas or preachers mouthing rituals as salvation. An observant Sikh as President of the World Bank is a better role model for an educated young Sikh than a semi-literate preacher talking in an idiom incomprehensible to educated young Sikhs who refuse to be spoon fed rituals. Examples exist of clean-shaven Sikh adults whose young children have readopted Sikh visual identity in the US, Canada, UK, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore and other places. The disastrous lack of leadership in Punjab cannot be allowed to overshadow these green shoots. Salvation will come from Sikh youth outside India. The more Sikh youngsters succeed professionally in their adopted countries, the more will the myth be negated that a visual Sikh identity is a burden for such advancement.

There is a crying need for Sikhs to provide academically excellent educational institutions inculcating true values of Sikhi in youngsters. There are several existing educational establishments run by Sikhs but hardly any of them are considered as markers of academic excellence. This is why Sikh families send their children to institutions run by other faiths which have scant motivation to inculcate values of Sikhi in Sikh students. In fact, their agenda is exactly the opposite. They preach their own faiths as better alternatives. Serving and retired renowned Sikh academics should be mobilized along with financial support from numerous Sikh high net worth individuals to provide such a level of education inspiring intellectual curiosity, ability to question existing ritualistic beliefs and use modern technologies like AI to free minds from falling prey to dogmas and prejudices.

Our Gurus did not offer a set of dogmas to be cherished. They offered a new way of seeing our existence as human beings. This truly revolutionary consciousness remains as vital today as it was five centuries ago. If Sikh institutions discover the humility to listen and Sikh youth the courage to lead, Sikhi may yet rediscover its purpose, not as a relic of the past but as a beacon for the future.

For Sikhi to flourish, Sikh youth must be empowered to question, innovate, and lead. Chardi Kala, the spirit of ever-ascending optimism, remains the key to this transformation. Sikh youth must be trusted to build the Sikhi of the future: not nostalgic, not ritualistic, but universal, ethical, and fearlessly compassionate.

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## Nagar Kirtan And Sikhi

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*Nagar Kirtan* (literally: neighborhood *kirtan*) has over the past few decades become standard fare for *Gurpurabs*. As more and more *gurdwaras* rush to jump on the bandwagon of taking the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (SGGS) and accompanying *kirtaneas* on a display-ride on the streets of their townships, and as more and more *sangats* compete to make their processions larger, longer, grander, and more entertaining, it may be worth weighing this concept from the point of view of *Gurmat* and *Gurbani*. What are we trying to achieve? What, if any, are the tangible benefits of the investment of time, money and energy into this moving exhibition of our Guru, the broadcasting of *kirtan* onto the streets of the city's commercial districts, and the display of our accompanying *sangat*. Most important, what, if any is the spiritual basis of this practice? Have Sikhs in general and *gurdwara parbandhaks* in particular become so debased in *Gurmat* that all that matters is to latch on to the latest trend, satisfy the entertainment needs of their *sangats*, and contribute to their local council's hunger to create events for their tourists?

### THE TREND.

There is no doubt that *Nagar Kirtans* are in fashion. They take place all over Europe, North America and Asia. What started off as annual *Vesakhi* affairs have spilled over into just about any *Gurpurab*. But that is not the only metamorphosis. While the front portion of the procession may have some resemblance of it being a Sikhi related function (*panj pyares*, SGGS and *kirtanias*), the real action is elsewhere – in the gaudy floats, the blaring music, the *bhangra* dances, the *gatka* performances and everything related that makes the whole affair into a thoroughbred social event. To what extent a *Nagar Kirtan* of a particular community has become a full blown social *mela* depends very much on whether the event is in its infant stage (meaning the local *sangat* just got latched on) or has matured over the years (meaning the organizers have steadily increased its entertainment content). It further depends on how much competition exists from neighboring *gurdwaras*. In other words, how far down the slippery slope towards a full blown *Mauj Mela* (entertainment event) a particular *Nagar Kirtan* situation has become depends very much on how many years the *Nagar Kirtan* has been organized.

### EXPLAINING THE TREND.

Three explanations can be advanced to explain this trend towards *Nagar Kirtans*. The first is global and has its roots in the Inter-faith movement and the catastrophic 9/11 incident. The movement and the event do not have anything in common. Yet, the underlying philosophy of both is the same: namely the need for faiths to understand *other* faiths. The 9/11 event added an urgency to this philosophy. Due to Sikhs being mistaken as being part of the group that orchestrated 9/11, Sikhs felt a need to educate *others* about our faith – even if forcefully.

Because some *Kesadhari* turbaned Sikhs – mistaken for Osama-Taliban types - became victims of the aftermath of 9/11, a demand came to reside in the Sikh psyche: we have to educate non-Sikhs about our faith, our beliefs etc. Sikhs were being murdered, singled out for airport checks, ordered off airplanes and trains, and discriminated in their workplaces. Such lack of understanding about Sikhs needed correcting. Our leaders and *gurdwara parbandhaks* took up this clarion call without blinking an eyelid. That we have to take Sikhi to *everyone out there* became the mantra of Sikh leaders.

A large number of Sikhs, *parbandhaks*, organizers and supporters of the *Nagar Kirtan* “movement” based their justification for the need of this event on this principle. “We need to go out there, to show others, to educate others about what we are, who we are, what we do etc. We need to get rid of stereotypes and ignorance about Sikhs. How will the others know about our solemn practices, our great Scripture, our fantastic *Kirtan* and our superb culture if we kept it confined to within our Gurdwaras? We are thus doing the Sikhs and the *panth* a great service.”

There were core difference between the objectives of the Interfaith advocates and the demands of the post 9/11 period. The first is that the Interfaith movement stresses voluntarily *acquiring* an understanding of other faiths, but the post 9/11 demand wanted to *force* its understanding on others. The former can only be done with genuine desire, while the latter is done with a sort of vengeance: we will bring it to you whether you like it or not. It does not matter if the non-Sikhs want to know about us or not – we will just take our thing to them. The Interfaith movement invites others to come together to understand each other, while the post 9/11 demand wanted to compel others to be witness to its own beliefs and practices (here comes our *Nagar Kirtan*, our procession is within our right to assemble, move aside lest you get crushed!). The second difference is that the Interfaith movement allows for gradual, steady and genuine learning. The learning is incremental – one learns more and more as one goes along. The post 9/11 demand wanted to take Sikh culture and beliefs to others in a one big bang way – once or twice a year loud and long *dhmaka* (explosion) type procession (God have mercy if anyone stood in the way). The third difference is that the Interfaith objective is humble and thus genuine (come, lets share your beliefs and mine). The post 9/11 demand was an arrogant one, and thus dubious (can you see how good and great my beliefs are!).

The questions one thus has for these *Nagar Kirtan* die-hards are as follows: Can anyone (Sikh and non-Sikh included) be “educated” about the SGGS, *Kirtan*, *panj pyare*, Sikh religion or culture etc. through a procession? Can stereotypes and ignorance be removed through parades? Is it not the case that even if the issues and concerns were justified, the method chosen (processions) was wrong? What about the wrong messages that get sent out – both to Sikhs and non-Sikhs about wastages and a seemingly unending desire amongst Sikhs to undertake a one-way street type of forced “education” approach? What sort of *panthic* service is achieved by putting great amounts of time, energy, money and attention into such an unproductive ritual.

But a more important question is this. Have our *parbandhaks* educated themselves and their *sangats* so thoroughly through *parchar* within their gurdwaras that they must now educate the others out in the city streets? The truth is that our *sangats* and Sikh youngsters especially are in dire need of the most basic of *Gurbani* and *Gurmat* knowledge and on the verge of declaring their faith as outdated and irrelevant to their lives. One major reason for this is that our *gurdwaras* and their *parbandhaks* have failed us wretchedly. The major reason for this miserable failure is that the *parchar* within our gurdwaras has been reduced to piteously boring repetition of unbelievable tales called “sakhis.”

The second explanation for this trend of *Nagar Kirtans* in grand ways rests on the notion that form is easier than substance. It is easier to be seen doing something, rather than doing what is really required which happens to be difficult. Teaching our youngsters and *sangats* how to read the 1429 pages of the SGGS, to understand its core messages and to bring its spiritual meaning into our daily lives is a tough exercise. Putting the SGGS on a two-ton truck lit by 1429 bulbs and driving it through the streets is easy. Decorate it with 35 flags – representing the 35 contributors within the SGGS. Inspiring our *sangats*, our youths and even non-Sikhs to learn *kirtan*, to appreciate the intricate *rag* and *taal* system of *Gurbani* classical music and to mesmerize their souls through the stirrings of the spiritually elevating mix of *Shabd* and *raag* is very difficult. Hiring a group of *ragees*, loading them onto a 2-ton truck complete with a powerful sound system and parading them around town is the easy part. No one even has to listen to them. Organizing Punjabi and *gurmukhi* classes, *gurmat* sessions, running

kindergartens and libraries in *gurdwaras*, etc. – the substance of *gurdwara sewa* and leadership is difficult; and *parbandhaks* always have a ready laundry list of reasons - ranging from not enough of qualified trainers and poor response from the *sangat* – as to why this cannot be done and will not ever be done. But organizing the *Nagar Kirtan* requires no ability that is worth discussing. Above all, there is overwhelming response from the *sangat* (who does not want to have fun?). The result is an exercise in deception. We deceive ourselves into believing that Sikhi is being taken to the masses through our *Nagar Kirtan* sham. We deceive ourselves that our *parchar* amongst Sikhs is so complete that we have taken it to “others.” We deceive ourselves that we are doing the *panth* a service when in fact, it may be nothing more than a mockery. We deceive ourselves that we are celebrating a *Gurpurab* when in reality we are celebrating our own inadequacies. We deceive ourselves that the Guru’s blessings are with us in this elaborate *mela* (event), when the only blessing we have is the pat we give ourselves on our own backs for a great *Nagar Kirtan*. What can possibly qualify for a bigger fraud?

The third explanation lies in band wagoning. The Punjabi version is *bhed chaal* (literally sheep follower-ship, or sheep being led by sheep). No *gurdwara* wants to miss being on the wagon. No *parbandhak* wants to be left out. No one wants to be told that last year’s *Nagar Kirtan* was better, or that the one organized by the other *gurdwara* down the street was bigger, or that the one organized by the just voted out *parbandhak* committee was more entertaining.

#### THE BENEFITS.

There is no denying that *Nagar Kirtans* create joyous occasions and raise awareness of the existence of Sikhs within a local community. It gives those participating a good feeling especially when non-Sikhs capture the procession on film or camera. The participants get a sense of pride. It is not every day that policemen stop traffic to give priority to us. The organizers feel good when newspapers and televisions report the procession. It is nice to see our names in print, hear our voices on television and our activities reported.



But the reality is that these short-term benefits are not worth the investments of time, energy and money – all of which are limited for a community as small as ours. *Nagar Kirtan* is not a smart choice by any measure.

If Sikhs in a local community need to depend on *Nagar Kirtan* to raise awareness of their existence, then something is not right about these Sikhs. Such awareness would be more meaningful if achieved by regular and benevolent contribution to the community. Open a free medical clinic in the local *gurdwara* and get noticed in a meaningful and permanent sort of way. We know that newspapers and televisions report just about anything out of the ordinary. Amongst the first things a journalism student is taught is that while a dog biting a man is not news, it is indeed newsworthy if a man bites a dog. Are *Nagar Kirtans* in the news for the good they bring or for their notoriety to cause traffic chaos and disturb the peace of neighborhoods? If publicity is desired, then *parbandhaks* should strive to get into the news by contributing to worthy causes or by getting their *gurdwaras* involved in local community activities in some extraordinary manner. That would be a real service to the *panth*. Run a community kitchen and feed the homeless, adopt an orphanage, sponsor an old folks home patient, visit the local nursing home regularly – the list is long. The *gurdwara* will get into the news and there will be no reason to be embarrassed about it.

### **NAGAR KIRTAN IS BECOMING BIG BUSINESS.**

There are three reasons why *Nagar Kirtan* is set to become a permanent (albeit a generally useless) feature of the Sikh way of life. Two of these – our penchant for form over substance and *bhed chaal* mentality - have been described above. The third reason has to do with the “commercialization” of this event. Stalls selling stuff are fast becoming a part of the *Nagar Kirtan*. Business people go where the crowds are. *Nagar Kirtans* are sponsored by these business groups. They provide all that is necessary; such as talking to local officials on behalf of *gurdwara parbandhaks* to decide on routes and times for the procession. The *gurdwara parbandhaks* are pleased because it reduces their work load. In return these business people ask for advertising and publicity rights – effectively turning the *Nagar Kirtan* into a large and moving advertising screen.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE SANCTITY OF THE GURU?**

This is a question that is uppermost in the minds of Sikhs who are concerned about the right and wrong of *Nagar Kirtan*. Is there honor in parading the Guru in the streets? What is the *Maryada* of **taking** the Guru out on to places where the sanctity is always in doubt? What about disrespect, disregard or plain contempt amongst viewers who chose to light up a cigarette, take a sip from a beer can as the Guru passes by? What exactly is served by taking the Guru on this unmanageable journey to nowhere? What is the objective? What is the benefit? What do we want to achieve? Has anyone come to know that there are 1429 pages or 48 *raags* in the SGGS as a result of witnessing a *Nagar Kirtan*. Or that the language of the SGGS is such and such, or that so many Gurus and so many *Bhagats* have written it. Or that *xyz* is **one** of the messages of the 5,867 *Shabds* therein?

If a *Nagar Kirtan* must be held at all costs – can the Guru be left to reign with pride and dignity intact in the *gurdwara*? Can the Guru be left out of this raucous *mela*, this ego feeding event, and this commercialized and adulterated affair called *Nagar Kirtan*. Can we keep the Guru out of our self-aggrandizing and self-gratifying episode that is on fast track to get even more disrespectful? Or are we as participating *sangats* **all** prepared to share the blame, carry the burden and pay the price for the disrespect and disregard of our Guru?

### **WHAT ABOUT THE MARYADA OF KIRTAN?**

What does the *maryada* say about the sanctity of *kirtan*? What about the inviolability, the purity and the sacredness of the environment in which *kirtan* is to be recited and listened to? Are the messages of *Gurbani* (being sung as *kirtan*) suitable for loudspeaker blaring on the streets where people are generally expected to shout, scream, yell and shriek while attempting to listen to this *kirtan*? How exactly does one enjoy the benefits of *kirtan* except in an environment of silence, serenity, tranquility and quietude that we aspire to have in our *gurdwaras* or homes whenever *kirtan* is sung?

*Gurbani* says: *Raaj Leela Teray Naam Banaee, Jog Baneya Tera Keertan Gayee* (SGGS Page 385) Meaning Your *Kirtan* creates a beautiful situation and that unites me with You. Is the *Nagar Kirtan* atmosphere of disarray conducive for such unity? *Gurbani* further says *Kalyug Meh Keertan Pardhaana, Gurmukh Japeey Laye Dhiyana* (SGGS Page 1075) Meaning: In present times, *Keertan* is the primary method of spirituality, to be sung with complete focus. How would one focus in the frenzy of a *Nagar Kirtan*? These sprinkling of verses talk about the atmosphere, the state of mind and the environment that must exist for *Kirtan* to be considered *Kirtan*.

Or have we equated *kirtan* to folk songs or just about any other pop music that can be blared anywhere, to anyone in any sort of condition. People can eat corn, talk on the cell phone, shout across the street, and smoke a pipe or even pot while listening to folk songs from a passing float in a procession. But are we prepared to let this happen to *Kirtan*?

### IS NAGAR KIRTAN A SIKH PRACTICE?

Or are we just copy cats ? The Hindu gods and goddesses are depicted in statue form. A statue can only be at one place at any one time. So the *darshan* of the deity is normally done by people coming directly face to face with the statue. One way of maximizing this *darshan* is to occasionally take the statue to the devotees. So the deity is loaded on a beautifully decorated chariot and taken to them. These devotees wait eagerly outside their houses for the chariot to come, pay obeisance one after another and make offerings. Within such a context there is great benefit in taking the statue to the people.

The SGGS is the embodiment of the *Shabd* Guru. This Guru can be in multiple places at any given time. He is where the *Shabd* resides – which is in the hearts and minds of believers. There is no concept of physical *darshan* of the Guru Granth Sahib – the book structure, the paper or the *rumala* and *palki*. These are mainly containers for the *Shabd* to reside – just like a thumb drive that contains a digitized copy. So this taking of the Guru for a round of *darshan* for the people is out of context in Sikhi. But to whom is the Guru being taken to for *darshan*? Save for some thinking Sikhs who will not take part in the charade, almost all the Sikhs in the community are already in the procession. The *Nagar Kirtan* takes a route that is commercial and tourist connected. Are we expecting these non-Sikhs to do a *darshan* of the *Shabd*?

In this sense then, *Nagar Kirtan* is a copy of a ritual that belongs to people of another faith. This copying of the Hindu processions of their devi-devtas is dull and unimaginative to the core. We substituted everything of theirs with our physical things – the SGGS replaces the deity, our *ragees* replace their high priests who ride the chariot with the statue and our *sangats* with their hard-core believers who walk the entire path of the chariot. We could not even come up with an original name for this plagiarism! If theirs is a chariot, ours is plainly a charade. I am reminded of someone who described the *Nagar Kirtan* he had witnessed: *Eh Sikho(n) ki devi nikel rahee hai !* (The Sikh Devi is on her rounds).

### ABOUT BEING A NUISANCE.

As *Nagar Kirtans* get bigger, longer, more crowded, more commercialized and more frequent they have increasingly become a nuisance for the local communities. Traffic comes to a standstill, people's schedules get disrupted, homes and businesses get blocked and inevitably the local communities will ask their leaders to speak up against it. On Saturday, December 20, 2025, in the Manurewa suburb of Auckland, New Zealand, and again in Tauranga on January 11, 2026, a group of locals disrupted the *Nagar Kirtans* that were passing through the suburbs. The disruptors blocked the path of the *Nagar Kirtan*, performed a Haka (a traditional Māori ceremonial dance), and chanted their protest against what they termed a "foreign religion invasion," with banners reading "This is New Zealand, not India". The Police had to be called.

This ugliness was a long time coming. There is only so much chaos that neighborhoods can put up with. And the truth is that chaos has always been part of *Nagar Kirtans*. The Indian Express of – as far back as March 8 2008 - has this report in its Chandigarh edition: *Nagar Kirtan leaves behind a trail of traffic chaos*.<sup>1</sup> At one *Nagar Kirtan*, in Malaysia,

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<sup>1</sup> Some sentences of this report are reproduced as follows: *Most of the city's busiest routes were choked as the Nagar Kirtan procession progressed on Sunday. Apart from hundreds of devotees, the procession included more than 750 vehicles, 32 horses and 11 camels. The procession is likely to cause traffic chaos on Monday morning in southern parts of Chandigarh and Mohali. Chandigarh and Mohali Police have requested commuters to avoid certain routes. Despite it being a Sunday, there were impossible traffic jams on the roads. There was utter chaos on the roads, particularly in Sector 36 and 37. And with the intersection between Sector 34-35 closed, the procession caused major traffic disruptions in this area. Mohali Police said the road from YPS roundabout to Amb Sahib Gurdwara will remain closed for general traffic from 10 am to 12.30 pm. "We have tied up with the organizers of the rally and instructed them not to disrupt traffic. We have asked them to let emergency*

trees had to be trimmed to enable a *Nagar Kirtan* to pass through. This action offended the neighbors who vowed not to let the parade pass that way again.

### IS THERE ANY BENEFIT IN A NAGAR KIRTAN?

If one does a *google* search on *Nagar Kirtan*, one comes up with one web report after another extolling the tremendous success, the huge support, the great impact, and sensational triumphs of each and every parade. One gets the impression that a *Nagar Kirtan* gets boring fairly quickly and *parbandhaks* have to add new attractions – in the form of camels, horses, motor cycle outriders, elephants, peacocks etc. – every year. Any and every such addition is an achievement! Some web reports even (mis)quote *Gurbani* verses to entice their *sangats* to attend. One had Guru Amardas ji's verse "*Jhakhar Jhangee Meeh Varsey, Bhee Gur Dekhan Jae. Samund Sagar Hove Bahu Khara, Gursikh Langh Guru Peh Jayee* (Meaning, come rain, storm, or hailstones, I will go see my Guru. Even though the ocean is vast and salty, a *Gursikh* will cross it to go to his Guru). What connection this verse has with *Nagar Kirtan* is beyond me. Unless the web master wishes to suggest that the third Nanak attended *Nagar Kirtans*. As matter of fact, he did attend those of the chariot deity type regularly, but that was before he came to meet with Guru Angad.

Cast aside the rubble of the tremendous success, impact and triumph that we have heaped in self-praise and the question relating to the substantive benefit stands in its place like a sore thumb. Blow away the smoke screen of how many thousand attended, and how many witnessed it, the question of tangible benefits stands like a solitary tree in the vast desert – calling for the attention of those who are concerned.

### SO WHAT IS NAGAR KIRTAN REALLY ABOUT?

Overall it is about missing the point all together. *Nagar Kirtan* is about finding short cuts and taking the easy ways out of *parchar*. Real and substantive *parchar* required innovative solutions, hard work, dedication, and selfless commitment both from the *parbahandaks* and the *sangat*. *Nagar Kirtans* are easy to organize, and all *sangats* got to do is simply attend, walk along and enjoy the ride. *Nagar Kirtan* is also about doing business. There is a ready clientele for people who want to sell all sorts of stuff. *Nagar Kirtan* is about having a real big *mela*. It is further a reflection of our laziness in the spiritual and leadership realms. It is also about form over substance. *Nagar Kirtan* is further about letting the world see some of our ugliness. We don't care if the traffic is turned chaotic by our actions. We could not care if an ambulance or fire engine does not get to its destination because of our chaos. *Nagar Kirtan* shows a haughty and arrogant side of Sikhs – when it is our time and place, we are Kings in an inconsiderate sort of way (read the Indian Express report above to get a feel of such puffed up conceit of ours). As Kings for that one day, we park anywhere, throw rubbish everywhere, act loud, walk on anybody's lawn and disregard all rules. Finally *Nagar Kirtan* is about making merry at the expense of the honor & dignity of the Guru, *Kirtan* and the *Nagar*.

### WHAT IS IT NOT ABOUT?

*Nagar Kirtan* is certainly not about *Kirtan*. *Kirtan* is to be done, listened and enjoyed within the serenity, dignity and solace of a *diwan*, a *gurdwara*, home or any other place with such qualities. *Kirtan* cannot be done in a "farmer's market" or *sabjee-mandee* like atmosphere commonly found in the procession.

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*vehicles and school buses overtake the procession," said a senior police officer. The Indian Express, Chandigarh dateline March 2, 2008.*

*Nagar Kirtan* is not about the *Nagar* either. *Nagar* translates as village, *pind* or community. By definition, a *nagar* has to be residential, centered on homes or areas around the homes of believers, who for some reason or other cannot come to the deity, so the deity has to be brought to them. They wait eagerly for the arrival of the deity and make way for it voluntarily. They don't complain about traffic chaos and other disturbances. They don't have to wait for others to trim their trees to make way for their chariot. This is because they are devotees.

Our *Nagar Kirtan* takes to the streets passing commercial areas, places frequented by tourists or other parade grounds. The local authorities, police, government etc. support the *Nagar Kirtan* (even if reluctantly) because of its tourism potential, because it adds color and life to the city, county or town or simply because to turn down the request would invite allegations of discrimination against Sikhs. Similarly the people who turn up to see the parade are looking at it from an entertainment point of view. Sure enough our *Nagar Kirtan* folk never fail to entertain. *Panj pyare* with swords unsheathed, colorful brightly lit *palkis*, *ragees* singing ballads, *gatka* performers, *sangats* dressed in traditional garb and in some cases *bhangra* dancers are, from the point of view of non-Sikhs providing fairly good entertainment. The spectators have nothing to complain about because it is free. But the number of locals who sees the *Nagar Kirtan* as a nuisance is on the rise – as the two events in Southern Auckland prove.

#### WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT.

Sikhs and gurdwara *parbandhaks* have a propensity for *bhed chaal* particularly when it comes to ritualistic and un-*gurmat* practices. No question about it. Getting our gurdwaras, leaders and *sangats* as a whole to stop this wasteful and *bipran kee reet* rooted practice will prove to be a daunting task. No question about that too.

Those looking for guidance from the Akaal Takhat or other historical gurdwaras in India will be equally disappointed. The *parbandhaks* of these places do not have a genetic make-up that is different from our local *parbandhaks*. One of the largest *Nagar Kirtans* in the world is undertaken at Nankana Sahib during *Niranghari Gurpurab* under the auspices of SGPC. There are no Sikhs in this area save for a handful of SGPC *sewadars* who stay within the Nankana premises to keep the premises open. Tens of thousands of Sikhs come from Europe, America and Asia to take the Guru and groups of *Ragees* on parade to the neighboring Muslim communities. The Pakistani villagers make good money selling food, drinks, accommodation and other stuff to this money laden Sikhs. Some of them spin tales of Guru Nanak having given their ancestors all sorts of artifacts during the *Nagar Kirtan* beginning 1469 and charge the gullible modern-day *Nagar Kirtan*-ites money to do a *darshan* of (pay homage to) these artifacts. These artifacts are as fake as the notion that the *Nagar Kirtan* is a Sikh-practice. Decades of *Nagar Kirtan* has not created a single Sikh out there in the *Nagars* of Nankana, but the Sikhs never fail to pat themselves for a *Nagar Kirtan* well done.

Nevertheless, realization - if it does happen, and change - if it eventually comes, will emanate from thinking Sikhs for whom the sanctity and dignity of the Guru and *Kirtan*; and *real Sikhi parchar* are of paramount importance. It will come from blessed Sikhs who will stand up and boldly say no to the senseless parading of our Guru in the streets of downtown, to the equally futile performance of our divine *kirtan* to entertainment seeking crowds, and to irrational expenditure of time money and energy to undertake an event which has no basis in *gurmat* and *maryada*. Every thinking Sikh understands that we need to invest in our youth and future generations and that such investment must be in the form of substantive, real and meaningful *parchar*. *Gurpurabs* are opportunities for the imparting of such education (which must take place 365 days). *Gurpurabs* are not pretexts to waste money on futile parades and ego feeding processions. Our *gurdwaras* and *parbandhaks* continue to fail us desolately in this regard. If we cannot stop this down slide, at the very least, we must not be part of it.

## The Sikh Rehat Maryada Time for Reflection, Review, and Reform?

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Eighty years have passed since the *Sikh Rehat Maryada (SRM)* was officially ratified by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) by its resolution No. 97 at its meeting on 3 February 1945. Sikhism today is the fifth largest religion in the world with an estimated 25 to 30 million followers, 90% of whom live in India and 10% reside overseas. Significant Sikh diaspora communities exist today in Canada, the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, Malaysia, and New Zealand, and they have built gurdwaras wherever they have successfully established themselves. Not unlike the Catholic faith, the Sikh diaspora today are a diverse Theo-political community, and it could justifiably be argued that these communities have generally been perceived as being open-minded and progressive in their variant Sikh practices. The SGPC is said to be a mini-Parliament of the Sikh community within India, and the Sikh diaspora has hitherto had little say in the deliberations of the SGPC on religious and other matters. The role of our gurdwaras has also been changing as we evolve to a new paradigm. Does the *SRM* in its present form serve us well and is it time for the *SRM* to adopt and accept a more liberal framework for our practices and expectations? The SGPC needs to reinvent itself if it wishes to be viewed by the Sikh diaspora with credibility and more transparency in its leadership role. It is important to understand that the specific details of what we encounter in the *SRM* and in fact practice are strongly influenced by our own cultural orientation and belief systems. Does the *SRM* need to include a more explicit and flexible consideration of rules, regulations and practices pertaining to Sikh social conduct and including the control and management of our gurdwaras worldwide and the practices that take place therein? In short, is it time to revisit and review our *SRM* with an eye on wide ranging reform.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The *SRM* is the product of collective Panthic wisdom, cohesion and is the key to Sikh spiritual and social philosophy. In essence, the *SRM* constitutes “traditions and rules which govern the distinctive Sikh way of life and determine Sikh belief and practice. *Rahit* from the Punjabi word *rahena* (to live, to remain), means mode of living while *maryada* is a Sanskrit word composed of *marya* (limit, boundary, mark) and *ada* (to give to oneself, to accept, to undertake), meaning bounds or limits of morality and propriety, rule or custom.”<sup>1</sup> Guru Nanak and his nine successors “not only set for their followers a strict moral standard, but also a distinctive pattern of personal appearance and social behavior. The tenets of the Sikh faith and rules of conduct are not set in any formal treatise, but are scattered in their scripture and other religious texts and in their historical records.”<sup>2</sup> In a personal reminiscence, noted Sikh scholar Bhai Harbans Lal posited that “the seeds of the creation of this document (*SRM*) began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when there was a struggle for control of the gurdwaras. As the control of the gurdwaras switched hands to the Sikh Reform Movement (Akali Movement) of the time, there was a need to create a standardized, governing protocol for all the gurdwaras.”<sup>3</sup> Around 1925, an initial meeting took place, 150 people were invited, and the discussions lasted several days. The dilemma was that there were many *Rehat Maryadas*, both historically and currently in practice at that time. The SGPC wanted to consolidate all these traditions and come up with a singular version of the *Rehat*,”<sup>4</sup> A sub-committee was constituted in 1932 and several individuals and associations mainly in India submitted their opinions on the proposed *SRM* draft. Outside of India, it is of interest to note that a submission was also received from one Bhai Chatter Singh from a gurdwara in Seremban, Malaysia, as well as one from Bhai Jodh Singh, Kripan Bahadur, Alowal, (Malay State), and the Pacific

Coast Khalsa Diwan in Stockton, Northern California. The Gurdwara Committee in Momeo, Burma also submitted their opinions. The draft *SRM* went through several permutations and sub-committees, and it would take another 13 years before its formal acceptance and endorsement by the SGPC in February 1945.

There have been a few treatises on the *SRM* besides the foundational document, with Punjabi and English translations by the Khalsa Foundation and SGPC. Notable among these are *Darpan Sikh Rehat Maryada* by Giani Gurbax Singh Gulshan, explaining the rules and practices; [Sikh Rehat Maryada; History, guiding principles, and a contextual translation](#) by Manvir Singh et al. offering a historical context; and *Sakhi Sikh Rehat Maryada* <sup>5</sup> by attorney Gurcharanjit Singh Lambha. He provides a detailed account of the events and history and the different steps and processes that were involved and considered in the construction of the *SRM*. He posits that the impetus for the formulation of the *Rehat Maryada* was to provide practical guidance on the functional aspects of the operation and management of Sikh gurdwaras and ceremonies, and to foster a spirit of community wellbeing in the Sikh community. Furthermore, he cogently makes the point that the *Rehat* is for the whole (Sikh) nation that includes other than Khalsa like *sehajdhari* Sikhs. The [Internet Archive](#) has older versions of the original text.<sup>6</sup> However, the *SRM* is not without its flaws. Noted Sikh author and speaker Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon has devoted an entire section in his book *The hijacking of Sikhi* <sup>7</sup> that discusses the flaws in the *SRM* (personal email communication, 27 October 2025).

Sikh studies historian the late W.H. McLeod observed of the *SRM* that “in terms of organization it had not been well drafted, particularly with regard to its curious distinction between ‘personal discipline’ (*sakhasi rahini*) and ‘panthic discipline’ (*panthak rahini*). It is, however, eminently clear as far as most of its definitions and rubrics are concerned. Ambiguity does occur at certain points, but as we shall see, this was evidently deliberate. Whatever faults may be found with *Sikh Rahit Maryada*, the manual has certainly stood the test of time, assuming since 1950 the status of sole standard authority within the Panth. As a statement of orthodox Sikh belief and normative Sikh conduct, it now stands virtually unchallenged. Although one may certainly encounter a wide range of unsanctioned doctrine and behavior, the manual itself has no effective rival.” <sup>8</sup>

### WE LIVE IN CHANGING TIMES

In its present form, the *SRM* does not quite reflect current views, present day social changes, liberal thinking practices, and the evolving dynamics of Sikh communities worldwide both within India and overseas on a wide range of subjects including the management and more extensive role that our gurdwaras can play in community development and enhancement, Sikh marriage practices, *sehajdhari* Sikh representation on gurdwara management committees, donation of our bodies on death for medical research as an alternative to cremation practices, as well as political and social factors that continue to hinder women’s wider participation in gurdwara management roles, responsibilities, and activities. “Perhaps adopting a more gender-neutral language in *SRM* could be a meaningful step forward.” <sup>9</sup> Despite occasional examples, female representation in leadership, such as gurdwara management committees, remains uncommon both within India and overseas, and largely restricted to women focused organizations and/or more progressive and liberal minded gurdwara management leaderships.

### FEMALE GRANTHIS AND KIRTANIYAS

The *SRM* (Chapter 5, Article VI (a) clearly states that only a Sikh may perform kirtan in a congregation and only a Sikh, man or woman, is entitled to be in attendance of the *Guru Granth* during the congregational session (Chapter VI, Article VII (c). Sikhism’s principles, foundational texts, and reformist movements support women in religious leadership roles, including that of gurdwara granthi as ceremonial readers and custodians of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The SGPC which is considered the highest authority managing historic gurdwaras has also signed off on including women in these roles, and its diktat runs across gurdwaras in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and

Chandigarh. However, cultural practices in more conservative gurdwaras in India and overseas have largely tended to limit women's role in our religious practices. For various reasons, notably financial, the control of the gurdwaras in some of these countries is still largely in the hands of earlier generations of Sikh elders and at variance with the more progressive and open-minded Sikhs who have settled in these countries. Traditional patriarchal structures and social roles, such as women being primarily responsible for childcare and household duties have historically limited their wider participation in this and other religious roles. The practice of women serving as granthis is not widespread because social norms have often assigned men this role of public religious officiants. However, many diaspora Sikh communities today especially in Canada, Britain, the United States, and including Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore have taken a more progressive stance and allowed women to serve as granthis, perform religious duties and lead *ardas* in congregations. Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon, Chair of the Religious Affairs Committee at the Global Sikh Council recounted that, as early as 1990, his own *anand karaj* ceremony was performed by a female granthi in Malaysia. Gurdwaras in Malaysia known to have employed female granthis include Titiwangsa in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Kuyoh, Pusing, and Patani Road in Penang.<sup>10</sup> More recently, female members of the congregation at the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Revesby, New South Wales, were invited to take over all religious services in celebration of International Women's Day in Australia in 2022.

Bibi Jagir Kaur when she was SGPC President in 2004-05 (she was the first woman to hold this position in 1999-2000) was quoted as saying that she extended an invitation for women to perform *kirtan* in the Golden Temple and none of the applications she received were good enough and the matter ended there. Her move was also opposed by the orthodox Damdami Taksal. The Taksal believes that if women are allowed to sing inside the Golden Temple, it disrespects the tradition which has been followed since the times of the Gurus where only men have been allowed to sing. The suggestion that it is difficult for female *kirtanias* (hymn singers) to reach the high level of skill and status required to be a permanent *ragi* at the Golden Temple is a spurious argument. This prohibition is a direct contradiction and repudiation of the universal message of Sikhism, which advocates equality regardless of gender. Chapter V, Article VI (a) clearly states "Only a Sikh may perform kirtan in a congregation." In November 2019, the Punjab Vidhan Sabha passed a resolution urging the Akal Takht and SGPC to allow women to perform kirtan in the inner sanctum of the Harmandir Sahib. To date there has been little to no progress in enabling women to perform at the gurdwara, since the decision lies in the hands of the SGPC. This situation highlights an ongoing debate within Sikh communities about gender equality and the need to emphatically align practice with the principles and fundamental teachings of our Sikh faith. "The 2022 *Directory of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee* lists the appointees who will sing, play accompanying musical instruments and recite from the holy book in the gurdwaras managed by the committee. No women are listed as singers among the 62 *ragis* and *dhadis*; the situation for *kavis* (poets) is better with eight out of 20 posts going to women"<sup>11</sup> In this context it is relevant to note that in the late 1550s or early 1560s Guru Amar Das appointed Mai Matho as head of one *manji* (diocese/administrative center) as part of his innovative *Manji* system, establishing a significant role for women in spreading Sikhism and appointing them to lead spiritual centers.

In Christianity, considerable progress has been taking place in the Anglican, Episcopal, and Protestant denominations like the United Methodist and Presbyterian churches. In sharp contrast, the Catholic and Orthodox churches in following their interpretation and biblical texts and tradition, do not ordain women.

### **SIKH MARRIAGE, INTER-FAITH MARRIAGES, AND SAME-SEX MARRIAGES**

Chapter XI, Article XVIII (k) of the *SRM* clearly states that persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the *Anand Karaj* ceremony, by default barring a marriage between a Sikh and non-Sikh in a gurdwara in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, unless the non-Sikh partner embraces the Sikh faith and

officially changes their last name to Singh or Kaur. Some gurdwaras overseas have been known to permit interfaith weddings, while others prohibit them altogether, arguing rightly that any inter-faith marriage can take place separate from the *Anand Karaj* ceremony and other venues can be used.

In 2023, the Akal Takht as the highest seat of earthly authority for Sikhs, banned the carrying of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* 'saroop' at destination weddings with *Anand Karaj* ceremonies. The Akal Takht has in recent years been facing its own set of challenges, fraught with internal factionalism, disputes over the Jathedar's authority, political interference from the SGPC, and has literally been struggling to enforce its edicts and *hukamnamas* on an increasingly global and diverse diaspora, leading some to perceive it as weakened notwithstanding its symbolic and judicial authority. An SGPC meeting held in late December 2025 confirmed and supported the Akal Takht's earlier guidelines on banning Sikh marriage ceremonies from being held at commercial venues such as farmhouses, resorts, wedding palaces and their like. This pronouncement was perceived as a move in support of protests by Sikh groups in Canada and the UK in recent years, demonstrating against wedding vendors and rogue Sikh groups selling luxury versions of the ceremony to often unwitting families, unaware that they are breaking rules. The Akal Takht had earlier already mandated a ban on destination weddings and inter-faith *Anand Karaj* ceremonies, but a seeming rise in the issue in recent years has likely prompted this more detailed update. In essence, the core requirement is the proper handling and spiritual presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and compliance with the *Anand Karaj* ritual which typically takes place in a gurdwara, although arguments have been put forward for flexibility through respectful adaptations. A post-meet release also confirmed banning the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to create depictions of sacred Sikh figures, whilst other issues were discussed and remain under focus amidst wider reform, including state interference in management of sacred Sikh scripture. An update on this issue was expected in due course.

While some recent large studies inconclusively appear to suggest a genetic explanation, the *SRM* and Sikh scripture consider sexuality as a divine gift between a man and a woman and do not condone same sex *anand karaj* ceremonies. Some Sikh scholars and enlightened community members have rightly suggested that such couples should not be publicly ostracized and made to feel unwelcome in our gurdwaras. While there is no official Hindu position on same-sex marriages, some Hindu priests have been performing such marriages, and some Hindu groups have publicly supported same-sex marriages viewing them as a matter of equal rights. The Christian clergy hold similar views with the Church of England prohibiting same-sex couples from having a wedding within its churches, but its priests are allowed to lead a service of blessing or thanksgiving or dedication for same-sex couples after their civil ceremony.

### **SRM AND THE GOVERNANCE OF GURDWARAS**

In some situations, where gurdwaras were once seen as places of *vichaar* (reflection and conversation), they have in some countries, unfortunately come under the control of self-serving factions. Should the *SRM*, when it does indeed get revised, also be addressing wider questions of governance, management, and control of some gurdwara practices is more than just a rhetorical question. Regardless of location, it is common knowledge that gurdwaras survive on the donations of their sangats, have the potential to serve as centers of Sikh studies, youth leadership, and service infrastructure, and must ultimately be answerable to their sangats. More importantly, they also need to be delinked from partisan capture and flourish on greater transparency, accountability, development of their sangat communities in health, social development, and *gurmata* education, and foster their members to successfully compete in an increasingly globalized world. The definition of who constitutes a Sikh has been a constant source of debate for the SGPC, competing factions of the SAD and the wider Sikh community. Should governance and representation on gurdwara management committees be limited to *keshdhari* Sikhs when there are highly capable *sehajdhari* Sikhs with impressive credentials in management and financial expertise ready and

willing to serve on these gurdwara committees? Interestingly, The *Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925*, which over the years has gone through several amendments, had a significant amendment in 2016, wherein an earlier amendment was reversed, and is now aimed at excluding *sehajdhari* Sikhs from voting in the SGPC elections!

On a lighter note, Chapter IV, Article V (n) of the *SRM* states that sitting on a cushion, a distinctive seat, a chair, a stool, a cot, etc. or in any distinctive position in the presence of the Guru Granth or within the congregation is contrary to *gurmata* (Guru's way). If this ruling is strictly enforced, it would deprive many older and infirm members of our congregations from visiting their gurdwaras. Fortunately, common sense has prevailed. Likewise, we only need to take a closer look at the widespread practice of wearing nose and ear ornaments among our younger Sikh brethren and sistren if Chapter X, Article XVI (k) has any relevance in today's world?

### SGPC'S LIMITED INFLUENCE ON PANTHIC MATTERS OVERSEAS

The SGPC and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) were established a little over a century ago in 1920 and together represent two important religious/political institutions of the Sikh community in Punjab, India. They now face new challenges to their religious and political authority as the Sikhs increasingly become an international diasporic community. The SGPC is the elected body which manages historical Sikh shrines in most of north India including Punjab and has been described as the "mini-parliament" of the Sikhs and the SAD is the main Sikh political party in India.<sup>14</sup> The General House of the SGPC has 191 members of which 170 are elected members, 15 are nominated members, and 6 are ex-officio members. Owing to the lack of prior consultation, it is therefore not surprising to note that overseas Sikh organizations such as the American Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (AGPC), the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC), the Global Sikh Council (GSC), and the National Sikh Council of Australia have in recent years rejected diktats by the SGPC to abide on global Panthic matters such as amendments to the original *Nanakshahi* calendar. The Global Sikh Council has pointedly rejected attempts by "any local organization, especially the one under the control of a politician, to decide on global Panthic matters, and furthermore any decision, made by any committee, formed by the SGPC by exploiting the name of Akal Takht, to sabotage Nanakshahi calendar, the symbol of Khalsa Panth's sovereignty, will not be acceptable."<sup>15</sup> Religion and politics have always intersected and this relationship has evolved over time with varying degrees. American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr correctly observed that as long as there are religious motivations in politics, there will always remain questions of ethical governance.

It of interest here to draw comparison to the management of the Catholic church. The rulings of the Vatican, under the authority of the Pope, apply to all Catholic churches worldwide, but this authority is exercised through a hierarchical structure and is a matter of faith and discipline, not direct day-to-day control. The Catholic Church is a global entity with a central governing body in the Vatican, but it also has thousands of parishes that operate within the universal laws of the Church.

### DENOUEMENT

Sikhi is facing generational change and within the broader mainstream there have been divergent practices and emphases both within India and across the diaspora. The Sikh diaspora today is "rich in economic mobility yet weak in civic power, a faith conscious in ritual yet mute in policy. In the wider world of advocacy and policy making, the Sikh diaspora has remained conspicuously absent. The question before the diaspora is no longer one of ritual correction but of inner renewal. Can a profound tradition that arose in defiance of ritual survive being absorbed by the very culture it once challenged?"<sup>16</sup>

The Sikh diaspora has hitherto had little say in the deliberations of the SGPC on religious and other matters, and with some very notable exceptions worldwide, gurdwaras are largely confined to the celebration of Gurburabs and social event planning.

Does the SGPC have the moral strength to reinvent and divest itself from its political sponsors and take the lead in reform if it wishes to be viewed with credibility and more transparency in its leadership? Genuine review and reform of the SRM reform requires extensive consultation to reflect present day social changes and the evolving dynamics of Sikh communities within India and overseas. There is no dearth of diaspora Sikh scholars willing to serve as advisors to the SGPC. Will the SGPC take up this challenge?

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 <p>ਪੂਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਕੀ ਆਸੀਸ ॥ Poota Maata Kee Asees <i>The Message</i></p>	<p>Listen to a Tatt Gurmat explanation of the <i>shabd</i> Poota Maata Kee Asses and explore the spiritual messages therein.</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uevejwqG90">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uevejwqG90</a></p>
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## The Wrestling Match That Is Life.

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Guru Arjun ji has this shabd on page 74 of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

ਹਉ ਗੋਸਾਈ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਵਾਨੜਾ ॥ ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਉਚ ਦੁਮਾਲੜਾ ॥ ਸਭ ਹੋਈ ਛਿੰਝ ਇਕਠੀਆ ਦਯੁ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਆਪਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੭॥ ਵਾਤ ਵਜਨਿ ਟੰਮਕ ਭੇਰੀਆ ॥ ਮਲ ਲਥੇ ਲੈਦੇ ਫੇਰੀਆ ॥ ਨਿਹਤੇ ਪੰਜਿ ਜੁਆਨ ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਥਾਪੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਕੰਡਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੮॥ ਸਭ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ਆਇਆ ॥ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਸਨਿ ਵਾਟ ਵਟਾਇਆ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਚਲੇ ਮੂਲੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੯॥ ਤੂੰ ਵਰਨਾ ਚਿਹਨਾ ਬਾਹਰਾ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਹਜਰੁ ਜਾਹਰਾ ॥ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਤੁਝੈ ਧਿਆਇਦੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਰਤੇ ਗੁਣਤਾਸੁ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੦॥ ਮੈ ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਦਯੈ ਸੇਵੜੀ ॥ ਗੁਰਿ ਕਟੀ ਮਿਹੜੀ ਜੇਵੜੀ ॥ ਹਉ ਬਾਹੁੜਿ ਛਿੰਝ ਨ ਨਚਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਲਯਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੧॥੨॥੨੯॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 74}

Ha°o gosā°ī dā pahilvānṛā. Mai gur mil uchḥ dumālṛā. Sabḥ ho°ī chḥinjh ikṭhī°ā dā°yu baiṭhā vekḥai āp jī°o. ||17||  
 vāt vajan tamak bḥerī°ā. Mal lathe laiḍe ferī°ā. Niḥṭe panj ju°ān mai gur thāpī diṭī kand jī°o. ||18|| Sabḥ ikṭḥe ho°e ā°ī°ā. Ghār jāsan vāt vatā°ī°ā. Gurmukḥ lāhā lai ga°e manmukḥ chāle mūl gavā°e jī°o. ||19|| ਫੁੰਨ ਵਰਨਾ ਚਿਹਨਾ  
 bāhrā. Har ḍisēh hājar jāhrā. Suṇ suṇ tujḥai dḥi°ā°īḍe tere bhagatṛ rāṭe guṇṭās jī°o. ||20|| Mai jug jug dā°yai sevṛī.  
 Gur katī mihḍī jevṛī. Ha°o bāhur chḥinjh na nachū Nānak a°osar laḍḥā bhāl jī°o. ||21|||29|| SGG 74.

**ਹਉ ਗੋਸਾਈ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਵਾਨੜਾ ॥ ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਉਚ ਦੁਮਾਲੜਾ ॥  
 ਸਭ ਹੋਈ ਛਿੰਝ ਇਕਠੀਆ ਦਯੁ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਆਪਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੭॥**

**Ha°o gosā°ī dā pahilvānṛā. Mai gur mil uchḥ dumālṛā.  
 Sabḥ ho°ī chḥinjh ikṭhī°ā dā°yu baiṭhā vekḥai āp jī°o. ||17||**

Guru Ji paints a picture describing human beings collectively attending a wrestling event (Sabḥ ho°ī chḥinjh ikṭhī°ā), in an arena. Since according to Gurbani God has embedded himself as part of his creation, Guru Ji says that God (dā°yu) is also attending this wrestling event (baiṭhā vekḥai āp jī°o), along with all the human beings.

Guru Ji says that in this wrestling arena he was a weak wrestler (pahilvānṛā). Since God created him, Guru Ji calls God his promoter (Ha°o gosā°ī dā). Recall Don King as the promoter of Mike Tyson. With the help of and connection with the Shabd Guru (Mai gur mil), Guru Ji says that he became a strong wrestler. He became a champion. Traditionally when a wrestler won a championship, he was given a turban. The wrestler would tie his turban a unique way (with a high fanlike shape on the top. uchḥ dumālṛā) and would run around the arena trying to cheer up the environment and to engage the people in his victory celebrations.

Guru Ji's message for us in these lines is that in the arena of life, we all are players. The people who seek the support of the Guru in their life (meaning the ones who listen and adopt the message of the Gurbani, in their life) become champions in the game of life.

**ਵਾਤ ਵਜਨਿ ਟੰਮਕ ਭੇਰੀਆ ॥ ਮਲ ਲਥੇ ਲੈਦੇ ਫੇਰੀਆ ॥  
 ਨਿਹਤੇ ਪੰਜਿ ਜੁਆਨ ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਥਾਪੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਕੰਡਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੮॥**

**vāt vajan tamak bḥerī°ā. Mal lathe laiḍe ferī°ā.  
 Niḥṭe panj ju°ān mai gur thāpī diṭī kand jī°o. ||18||**

Guru Ji continues to create a picture of what is happening within the arena. There are various musical instruments being played. Some instruments are being played by the mouth (vāt vajan), there are drums (tamak)

and there are trumpets (bherī ā). The wrestlers (Mal) entered the arena (lathe) and are running around the circles (laide ferīā), warming up to the cheers of their fans. As mentioned above Guru Ji articulated himself as being one of the wrestlers in this arena. He says that in the various matches, he controlled (Nihṭe) and pinned down five young and strong wrestlers (panj juān mai). Remember in the previous lines Guru Ji calls himself a weak wrestler. How did he beat five strong wrestlers when he himself was weak? He responds to this question by saying that he was able to accomplish this with the encouragement and coaching of his Guru. Pictorially, Guru Ji says that his coach (Shabd Guru) gave him a pat of encouragement (gur thāpī dīṭī) on his back (kand jīo).

Guru Ji says that his coach (Shabd Guru) gave him a pat on his back and as a result he defeated five wrestlers. How is this possible? How can a pat result in a weak wrestler beating a stronger one? As discussed, many times before, the five wrestlers are a metaphor for five major weaknesses of the human personality namely, kaam (desire), krodh (wrath), lobh (greed), moh (attachment) and ahankar (ego or pride). When Guru Ji says that he defeated five wrestlers he implies that with the lessons that he learned from the Gurbani of Guru's and Bhagats before him, he was able to take control of (defeat) these five weaknesses of mind.

Guru Ji's message for us in these lines is that in the arena of life, we all are players. The people who seek the support of the Guru in their life (meaning the ones who listen and adopt the message of the Gurbani within their life) become champions in the game of life. They can control their weakness based on the guidance/coaching/mentoring of the Shabd Guru.

ਪੰਚ ਦੂਤ ਮੁਹਿ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅੰਧੇ ਸੁਧਿ ਨ ਸਾਰਾ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੁ ਅਪਣਾ ਘਰੁ ਰਾਖੈ ਪੰਚ ਦੂਤ ਸਬਦਿ ਪਚਾਵਣਿਆ ॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 113}

Panch dūt muhēh sansārā. Manmukh andhē sudh na sārā.  
Gurmukh hovai so apṇā ghar rākhai panch dūt sabaḍ pachāvṇiā. ||2||

These five enemies are plundering and wreaking humanity. The blind, self-willed *manmukhs* (the *Gurmukhs* take direction in their life from the Gurbani, the manmukhs are controlled by their vices) do not understand that their life is being destroyed by these five enemies. Those who become Gurmukhs; their mind is protected by the impenetrable vest of Guru's advice/wisdom. The five enemies are destroyed by following the lessons/messages/wisdom conveyed within the Shabd Guru. ||2||

ਸਭ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ਆਇਆ ॥ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਸਨਿ ਵਾਟ ਵਟਾਇਆ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਚਲੇ ਮੂਲੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੯॥

Sabh ikṭhe hoē āiā. Ghar jāsan vāt vatāiā.  
Gurmukh lāhā lai gaē manmukh chāle mūl gavāē jīo. ||19||

A **Gurmukh** can be considered as a person who follows the advice of the *Shabd* Guru, in living life. Additionally, it is also defined in Gurbani as a state of the mind that has internalized/adopted the Shabd Guru.

ਬਹੁਤਾ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਮੁਆ ਨ ਲੋੜੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਸੁ  
ਖ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥  
ਨਾਮ ਵਿਹੁਣੈ ਕਿਆ ਗਣੀ ਜਿਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥੬॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 63}

Bahuṭā jīvaṇ mangīai muā na loṛai koē.  
Sukh jīvaṇ tis ākhīai jis gurmukh vasiā soē.

**Nām vihūṇe kiā gaṇī jis har gur ḍaras na hoᵉ. ||6||**

During most of our life we ask God for material things (Bahutā jīvaṇ mangīᵉai) and long life. We never ask God to help us get rid of/kill vices from our mind that makes our life miserable (ai muᵉā na loṛai koᵉ). The life of a person who has adopted the *Gurmukh* state of mind (jis gurmukh vasiᵉā soᵉ), lives life following the lessons from Shabd Guru is full of happiness and tranquility (Sukh jīvaṇ ṭis ākhīᵉai). Guru Ji says that what is the use of living a long life (Nām vihūṇe kiā gaṇī) which is devoid of Gurmukh state of mind and Godly virtues (jis har gur ḍaras na hoᵉ).

A **Manmukh** lives in a state of mind that is the opposite of *Gurmukh*. A *Manmukh* mind has lost control and is constantly running after material things and leaves no stone unturned to get more. Actions of a *Manmukh* are predicated on five major weaknesses of the human personality namely, kaam (desire), krodh (wrath), lobh (greed), moh (attachment) and ahankar (ego or pride). A person with Manmukh state of mind has no understanding of the Shabd Guru and is always unhappy and unsatisfied.

**ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਮੈਲਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ ॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 414-15}**

**Manmukh mailā sabaḍ na pachhāṇai.**

The mind of person with Manmukh state of mind is filthy and corrupt (Manmukh mailā). Why is that? It is because a person with such state of mind fails to recognize the impact /power of the message/lessons of the Shabd Guru (sabaḍ na pachhāṇai).

**Laahaa** (lāhā) means profit, benefit, gain etc. Spiritually, in Gurbani we are constantly reminded that our life is meant for earning a specific type of Laahaa/profit. This specific profit is related to earning wealth of Godly Virtues and Wisdom by conquering our instinctive mind (running after material things).

**ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਜੀਤਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਲੈ ਲਾਹਾ ॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 699}**

**Man ṭan jīt sabaḍ lai lāhā.**

O' mind, profit from the message of the Shabd Guru (sabaḍ lai lāhā). By following it, one can win over the instinctive mind (Man ṭan jīt) that is constantly running after material things.

Guru Ji continues to use the example of a wrestling arena to convey his message. He says that people/spectators have all collected/joined in one place/arena (Sabh ikṭhe hoᵉ āᵉā). However, their path for going home is different (Ghar jāsan vāt vatāᵉā).

People/spectators all collected/joined in one place/arena implies us (humanity) living our lives. We are sent to the arena of life by God. The diverse path of going home implies us having different states of mind or value systems. Guru Ji says that the person with Gurmukh state of mind lives a profitable life (Gurmukh lāhā lai gaᵉ). Their profit is not counted in terms of big bank balance, properties, cars, etc. Their profit is counted in terms of possessing Godly virtues. On the other hand, while the Manmukhs, just like Gurmukhs, have the ability in their life to adopt Godly virtues (mūl), yet they don't (gavāᵉ jīᵉ). Their profit in life is counted in terms of big bank balance, properties, cars, etc. as opposed to virtues for a Gurmukh.

**ਤੂੰ ਵਰਨਾ ਚਿਹਨਾ ਬਾਹਰਾ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਹਾਜਰੁ ਜਾਹਰਾ ॥  
ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਤੁਝੈ ਧਿਆਇਦੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਰਤੇ ਗੁਣਤਾਸੁ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੦॥**

**Ṭūṉ varnā chihnā bāhrā. Har ḍisēh hājar jāhrā.**

**Suṇ suṇ ṭujhāi ḍhīᵉāᵉḍe tere bhagaṭ rate guṇṭās jīᵉ. ||20||**

Unlike humans, Guru Ji says that O' God, you don't have any color (ਫੁੰਨ ਵਰਨਾ). He says that O' God, you don't (bāhrā) have a special sign (ਚਿੰਨਾ) that indicates your presence within the creation. Logically speaking God should not exist, yet his manifestation and presence can be felt everywhere around us (Har ḍisēh hājar jāhrā).

ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ ॥  
ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 684}

Puhap madh ji<sup>o</sup> bās basat̄ hai mukar māhi jaise chhā<sup>o</sup>.  
Faise hī har base niranṭar ghat hī khøjahu bhā<sup>o</sup>. ||1||

The fragrance exists in the flower, yet it cannot be seen (Puhap madh ji<sup>o</sup> bās basat̄ hai). The reflection exists in the mirror, but to see it someone must step in front of it (mukar māhi jaise chhā<sup>o</sup>). Similarly, God exists, he exists everywhere (within and around us, Faise hī har base niranṭar). We just need to look deeper and harder, especially within ourselves to find him (ghat hī khøjahu bhā<sup>o</sup>).

O' God, by constantly reading and listening to your virtues through Shabd Guru your devotees (ṭere bhagat̄) sing your praises (Sun̄ sun̄ ṭujhai d̄hi<sup>o</sup>id̄e). Such devotees themselves embody/exemplify the virtues of God. If their life is a picture, the colors within the picture are Godly virtues (ṭere bhagat̄ raṭe). Guru Ji calls God the immense/immeasurable treasure of virtues (gunt̄ās jī<sup>o</sup>).

ਮੈ ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਦਯੈ ਸੇਵੜੀ ॥ ਗੁਰਿ ਕਟੀ ਮਿਹਡੀ ਜੇਵੜੀ ॥  
ਹਉ ਬਾਹੁੜਿ ਛਿੰਝ ਨ ਨਚਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਲਯਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੧॥੨॥੨੯॥

Mai jug jug ḍayai sevṛī. Gur katī mihḍī jevṛī.  
Ha<sup>o</sup> bāhur chhinjh na nach<sup>o</sup>ū Nānak a<sup>o</sup>osar laḍhā bhāl jī<sup>o</sup>. ||21||2||29||

To conclude, Guru Ji says (Nānak) that this life is the only opportunity (a<sup>o</sup>osar laḍhā) we have in our hands. We should use this opportunity wisely to search (bhāl jī<sup>o</sup>) and connect with God within us. In this arena of life, we should not waste time by pursuing mayaic things. We should not dance to the tune of maya, in our life (Ha<sup>o</sup> bāhur chhinjh na nach<sup>o</sup>ū). Instead, we should serve God, every second of our life (Mai jug jug ḍayai sevṛī). What does serving God mean?

ਸੇਵਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਏ ॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 684}  
Saevaa Surath Sabadh Chith Laaeae ||

Seva is defined as focusing our attention focusing our mind (Surath) onto the Shabd Guru (Sabadh Chith Laaeae).

By serving God, based on the direction provided within the Shabd Guru (Gur), we will be able to break the noose of maya from around our neck (katī mihḍī jevṛī). Meaning that our state of mind will change from being a Manmukh to a Gurmukh. We will no longer be running after material possessions, instead we will collect the treasure of virtues within our mind, during our lifetime.

## Guru-Granth and ‘Guru-Panth’: Wherein Lies The Truth?

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**“THE GURU-GRANTH AND THE ‘GURU-PANTH’ TOGETHER FORMS THE COMPLETE GURU”** — this saying is now frequently heard from stages. This misleading idea is being repeated so often by Panthic scholars that it is gradually settling into the Sikh psyche.

References to the 'Guru-Panth' are also found in the writings of the eighteenth-century Sikhs. It is necessary to challenge this notion born of ignorance, because for a Sikh nothing can be equal to the Guru, and the Sikh's Guru is the *Shabd* — that is, only Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The Guru is One and is perfectly complete:

*There is one Bani, one Guru, and one Shabd to contemplate. (Ang 646)*

*My Guru is perfect, perfectly complete. (Ang 901)*

*Perfect is the Guru, perfect is His power. (Ang 1339)*

*Says Nanak: when one meets the Perfect Guru, the mind's anxieties depart. (Ang 1002)*

**CONFUSION ARISES FROM DOCTRINAL WEAKNESS.** The concept of the Shabd-Guru is unique and profound and can only be understood through deep reflection on Gurbani. Sadly, in Sikh life today, the space and time for Gurbani-vichar is shrinking, which is why ideas that are not in harmony with Gurmat are taking root in Sikh psyche.

Human weakness has always been that following a physical leader (deh-dhaari) feels easier on the spiritual path, but in reality, it leads to exploitation. While no one doubts that Guru in human forms were conclusively ended in Sikhi, failure to grasp the depth of the Shabd-Guru concept leads people to make the ‘Panth’ itself into the Guru — which is simply another human form.

This doctrinal weakness is often justified by historical arguments. For example:

**1) Guru Gobind Singh Ji Received Khande-Di-Pahul From The Panj Pyare And, With The Principle Of “Aape Gur Chela,” Established Them As Equal To The Guru.** The creation of the Khalsa is indeed a unique chapter in human history, but it does not make the Panj Pyare equal to the Guru. Through this act, Guru Gobind Singh Ji entrusted ordinary Sikhs with the responsibility of spreading Sikhi and dismantled priestly authority. The Sangat may select five initiated Sikhs to administer Pahul, but this is a responsibility — not authority equal to the Guru. Even in Gurbani, the Guru asks for the dust of the Gursikh's feet, out of responsibility of Gursikh to spread the Naam (“Avrai naam japaave”), not because the Gursikh is equal to the Guru:

*Nanak begs for the dust of that Gursikh who himself contemplates on the Naam and inspires others to do so. (Ang 305)*

*Nanak asks for the dust of those, who are like-minded dear Gursikhs. (Ang 307)*

**2) The Panj Pyare Ordered Guru Gobind Singh Ji To Leave The Fort Of Chamkaur.** This was a strategic military decision taken in a specific situation through collective counsel. It does not make the Panj Pyare equal to the Guru. Similarly, Guru Arjan Sahib accepted the advice of the Delhi Sangat regarding a rejecting marriage proposal for (Guru) Hargobind Sahib of Diwan Chandu's — but that did not make the Delhi Sikhs equal to the Guru.

When Guru Gobind Singh Ji made doctrinal decisions, he did not seek anyone's approval or advice. When he ended the line of Gurus in Human form and bestowed Guruship on Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, he did not ask the Panj Pyare — because this is not the domain of the Sikhs; it belongs only to the Guru.

Yes, the Guru has given us the concept of Panj-Pradhani (collective leadership) for resolving Panthic matters. But Panj-Pradhani or Panj Pyare must take guidance from Gurbani — that is, from the Guru — not become the Guru itself.

**WHAT IS THE NEED BEHIND SUCH DEVIATION?** Why does the Sikh, under the pretext of 'Guru-Panth,' wish to become the Guru? Some argue that Guru Granth Sahib imparts guidance while the 'Guru-Panth' carries out actions, and that teaching without action is meaningless — therefore both must be combined.

This is shallow thinking. Why can these actions be done as Gursikhs? Good collective decisions can be made as Sikhs — why claim Guruship?

The real reason is that Sikhs have felt need of certain actions and decisions which are not aligned with Guru Granth Sahib, 'Guru-Panth' is the product of this very need. Issuing 'hukamnamas' (fatwas) to silence scholars is part of this. Various institutions and sects try to legitimize anti-Gurmat practices under the name of Rehat Maryada. That is why, despite being approved by the so-called 'Guru-Panth,' these Maryadas contradict one another and also contradict Gurbani.

Even the word "Panth" is being misused. In Gurbani, *Panth* means a path, not a body of people. Thus, the literal meaning of 'Guru-Panth' is the path shown by the Guru, not a group of initiated Sikhs. Those who walk on the path are Panthic; but they are not the Panth itself. A Sikh must walk on the Guru's path, not declare himself the Panth: *Without the Guru, the panth is not known; how can one proceed?* (Ang 229)

**THE GURU'S TASK.** Let us now look at the main functions of the Guru and ask whether any "Guru-Panth" can perform them:

*The True Guru cherishes the Sikh.*

*He is forever compassionate to His servant.*

*The Guru removes the Sikh's evil intellect.*

*Through the Guru's Word, the Sikh utters the Naam.*

*The True Guru cuts the Sikh's bonds.*

*The Guru's Sikh turns away from vices.*

*The True Guru gives the Sikh the wealth of Naam.*

*The Guru's Sikh is most fortunate.*

*The True Guru arranges both this world and the next for the Sikh.*

*Nanak: the True Guru cares for the Sikh with His very life. (Ang 286)*

*The True Guru is the perfect giver of the Naam, whose treasure is inexhaustible. (Ang 49)*

*Without the Shabd, illusion does not depart, nor does ego leave from within. (Ang 66)*

The True Guru is the divine treasury of Naam, that is divine virtues. Through the Naam, the Guru removes evil intellect and vices, cutting the bonds of delusion. It is only through contemplation of the Gur-Shabd, one becomes free of doubt and ego.

Today a large section of Sikh society is trapped in illusions and fake ritualism. From among these, the so-called ever-ready (*tiaar-bur-tiaar*) groups sometimes call themselves 'Dal Panth Khalsa' and at other times claim to be the 'Guru-Panth'. How can the Sikhi prosper by turning away from the Guru? So let us learn to set our actions right as humble Gursikhs: *One who sells his mind to the True Guru — his tasks are fulfilled. (Ang 286).*

## Stop the Brahminical Conspiracy to Rewrite Guru Tegh Bahadur's Legacy

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Let us be absolutely clear.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji did NOT sacrifice his life to protect Brahminical supremacy. He did NOT die for Tilak and Janeu—symbols that have historically been used to enforce hierarchy, purity, and caste privilege. If Guru Nanak Dev Ji rejected the janeu as a sign of hypocrisy, inequality, and domination, why would the Ninth Guru suddenly give his life to defend the same instrument of oppression? He wouldn't. He didn't.

What Guru Tegh Bahadur protected was:

- Freedom of conscience
- Human dignity
- The right of the powerless to resist tyranny
- The spiritual freedom of every oppressed community

But today, a dangerous conspiracy is unfolding.

RSS and Brahminical forces are sugar-coating their poisonous propaganda, rewriting Sikh history, and inserting themselves as beneficiaries of the Guru's sacrifice.

They want to turn the revolutionary Sikh movement into a protector of Brahminical symbols.

This is not just distortion — It is deliberate sabotage of the Sikh revolution.

Brahminical agencies want:

- Sikhs to forget the Guru's fighting message
- Sikhs to serve as the "shield" of Brahminical supremacy
- Sikhs to lose their anti-tyranny identity
- Sikhs to become political tools instead of a sovereign Panth

But we must remember:  
Guru Tegh Bahadur stood for the oppressed, not the oppressor.

He stood for the humble, not the high-born.

He stood for human conscience, not caste arrogance.

Anyone who says the Guru died "for the janeu of Brahmins" is part of a project to dilute Sikhi and drag the Khalsa back into the very caste structure the Gurus broke.

Sikhi is not the bodyguard of Brahminism.

Sikhi is the destroyer of Brahminism.

Beware of the new sugar-coated narratives.

Beware of the modern 'Pujaris' of Manuvad hiding in Sikh garb.

Beware of any attempt to make Sikhi serve Brahminical politics.

Guru Tegh Bahadur is the Sadhar of Humanity, not the defender of caste supremacy.

Let this be understood:

Sikhi stands with the oppressed, never with the oppressor.

Those who twist history to protect Brahminical supremacy are enemies of the Panth.

## ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡ



### ਬਿਰਹਾ, ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ, ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਲਾਪ (ਸੇਖ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੱਤ - ਆਖਰੀ ਭਾਗ)

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#### ਬਿਰਹਾ

ਮੇਰੀ ਸਮਝ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਸਿਖਰਲੇ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਕੁ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੀ ਉਸ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਨ ਦੀ ਤਾਂਘ, ਇੱਕ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਦੁੱਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਦਲ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਖਰੀ ਪੜਾਅ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਦੇਰ ਦੂਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ। ਪਰ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਛੋਟੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਆਮ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਲਈ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਤਾਂ ਆਮ ਜਿਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਮਾਲਕ ਲਈ ਬਿਰਹਾ, ਇੱਕ ਵਿਰਲੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਹੈ। ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਈ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇੱਕ ਐਸੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁੱਖ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਸੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਬੇਹੱਦ ਤਿੱਖੀ ਤਾਂਘ ਹੈ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਚਿੰਤ ਖਟੇਲਾ ਵਾਣੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਵਿਛਾਵਣ ਲੇਫੁ ॥  
ਏਹੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਤੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਚੇ ਵੇਖੁ ॥੩੫॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਮੇਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਦੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ, ਤੈਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਦਾ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਲਣ ਦੀ ਤਿੱਖੀ ਤਾਂਘ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾਏ ਹੋਰ ਕੁੱਝ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਾਲਕ।

**ਬਿਰਹਾ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਤੂ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ॥  
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਬਿਰਹੁ ਨ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੇ ਤਨੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਮਸਾਨੁ ॥੩੬॥**

ਉਸ ਮਾਲਕ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਂਘ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਤਾਂ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਭਾਵ ਨਹੀਂ। ਬਿਰਹਾ ਹੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਿਲ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਫਰੀਦ ਜਿਸ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਮਾਲਕ ਲਈ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਪਜਦਾ, ਉਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਮਾਨ ਹੈ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਗਲੀ ਸੁ ਸਜਣ ਵੀਹ ਇਕੁ ਢੂੰਢੇਦੀ ਨ ਲਹਾਂ ॥  
ਧੁਖਾਂ ਜਿਉ ਮਾਂਲੀਹ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਤਿੰਨੁ ਮਾ ਪਿਰੀ ॥੩੭॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਕਹਿਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਬੜੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਨੇ ਪਰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਲੱਭ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਇੱਕ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਲਈ ਤੜਫ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ।

#### ਸਚਿਆਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ

ਹੁਕਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੀਕੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਹੈ। ਹੁਕਮ ਹੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਔਕੜ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਹੈ। ਸੇਖ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਕਈ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਭਾਵ ਹੁਕਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਲੋੜੈ ਦਾਖ ਬਿਜਉਰੀਆਂ ਕਿਕਰਿ ਬੀਜੈ ਜਟੁ ॥ ਹੰਢੈ ਉੰਨ ਕਤਾਇਦਾ ਪੈਧਾ ਲੋੜੈ ਪਟੁ ॥੩੮॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਸਚਿਆਰ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਾਹਿਸ਼ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਰਖੇਜ਼ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਮੰਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੀ ਬੀਜੀ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

**ਕੰਧੀ ਵਹਣ ਨ ਢਾਹਿ ਤਉ ਭੀ ਲੇਖਾ ਦੇਵਣਾ ॥ ਜਿਧਰਿ ਰਬ ਰਜਾਇ ਵਹਣੁ ਤਿਦਾਉ ਗੰਊ ਕਰੇ ॥੮੪॥**

ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਹਿਸਾਬ-ਕਿਤਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਸਵੱਟੀ ਇਹ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਮਾਲਕ ਦੀ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਿਲਾਫ਼ ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਬਸ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਉਸਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਚੱਲੇ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਡੁਖਾ ਸੇਤੀ ਦਿਹੁ ਗਇਆ ਸੁਲਾਂ ਸੇਤੀ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਖੜਾ ਪੁਕਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਣੀ ਬੇੜਾ ਕਪਰ ਵਾਤਿ ॥੮੫॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੰਘ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਰਬਾਦੀ ਵੱਲ ਚਲਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

**ਲੰਮੀ ਲੰਮੀ ਨਦੀ ਵਰੈ ਕੰਧੀ ਕੇਰੈ ਹੇਤਿ ॥ ਬੇੜੇ ਨੇ ਕਪਰੁ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਪਾਤਣ ਰਹੈ ਸੁਚੇਤਿ ॥੮੬॥**

ਭਾਵੇਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਲੰਬੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੈਂ ਹਰ ਪਲ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾ ਰਹਿ ਪਾਵਾਂ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਰਬਾਦ ਹੋਣੋਂ ਬਚ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਅੰਤਰ ਆਤਮਾ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਰਹੇ। ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਰਹੋ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਮਾਲਕ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣਾ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਹਉ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਤਿਨੁ ਪੰਖੀਆ ਜੰਗਲਿ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਵਾਸੁ ॥  
ਕਕਰੁ ਚੁਗਨਿ ਥਲਿ ਵਸਨਿ ਰਬ ਨ ਛੋਡਨਿ ਪਾਸੁ ॥੧੦੧॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਮੈਂ ਪੰਛੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਜੇ ਜੰਗਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ। ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ, ਚੁਗ ਕੇ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੁਤਿ ਫਿਰੀ ਵਣੁ ਕੰਬਿਆ ਪਤ ਝੜੇ ਝੜਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥  
ਚਾਰੇ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਢੂੰਢੀਆਂ ਰਹਣੁ ਕਿਥਾਉ ਨਾਹਿ ॥੧੦੨॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਉਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਰੁੱਤ ਹੋਵੇ, ਪੱਤੇ ਝੜ ਜਾਣ ਜਾਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਆ ਜਾਣ। ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਦੇਖਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਉਹ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਥਾਂ ਹੋਵੇ।

**ਮਃ ੫ ॥ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਇਕੁ ਕਰਿ ਦਿਲ ਤੇ ਲਾਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ॥  
ਅਲਹ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਭਲਾ ਤਾਂ ਲਭੀ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥੧੦੯॥**

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਫੁਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਫਰੀਦ, ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਨਣ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਦੂਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਨੇ। ਇਹ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਮਾਲਕ ਉਸੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਆਤਮਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਦੁੱਖ-ਸੁੱਖ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

**ਦਾਤੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੰਦੀਆ ਕਿਆ ਚਲੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ॥  
ਇਕਿ ਜਾਗੀਦੇ ਨਾ ਲਹਨ੍ਹਿਕੁ ਇਕਨ੍ਹੁਹਾ ਸੁਤਿਆ ਦੇਇ ਉਠਾਲਿ ॥੧੧੩॥**

ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਉਸ ਮਾਲਕ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਉਮਰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਜਾਗਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਈ ਸੁਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਜਾਗ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਨੇ।

### ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ

ਸ਼ੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸਲੋਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਸਦੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਹੁ-ਮੁੱਲੇ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਉਤੇ ਬਣੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਆਓ, ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੀ ਕੁੱਝ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਝਾਤੀ ਮਾਰੀਏ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸੋਈ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਢੂਢਿ ਲਹੁ ਜਿਥਹੁ ਲਭੀ ਵਥੁ ॥ ਛਪੜਿ ਢੂਢੈ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਵੈ ਚਿਕੜਿ ਡੁਬੈ ਹਥੁ ॥੫੩॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਅਜੇਹੀ ਉੱਤਮ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਚੁਣ ਜੋ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਦੇਵੇ। ਪਾਖੰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਡੁੱਬੀਆਂ ਜਾਅਲੀ/ਫਰਜ਼ੀ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕਤਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਿਕਲੇਗਾ ਸਿਵਾਏ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਖ਼ਰਾਬ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਤਿਲ ਥੋੜੜੇ ਸੰਮਲਿ ਬੁਕੁ ਭਰੀ ॥ ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਸਹੁ ਨੰਢੜਾ ਤਾਂ ਥੋੜਾ ਮਾਣੁ ਕਰੀ ॥੪॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਜਦੋਂ ਤੂੰ ਹੁਣ ਸਮਝ ਹੀ ਗਿਆ ਏਂ ਕਿ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬੜੀ ਛੋਟੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਮਝਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੀਵੇ। ਅਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਮਾਲਕ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਹਉਮੈਂ ਘਟਾ ਲਈ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਗਵਾਏ ਆਪਣੀ ਹਉਮੈਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਬੂ ਕਰ।

**ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਲੜੁ ਛਿਜਣਾ ਪੀਡੀ ਪਾਈਂ ਗੰਢਿ ॥ ਤੈ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਮੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਕੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਡਿਠਾ ਹੰਢਿ ॥੫॥**  
**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਤੂ ਅਕਲਿ ਲਤੀਫੁ ਕਾਲੇ ਲਿਖੁ ਨ ਲੇਖ ॥ ਆਪਨੜੇ ਗਿਰੀਵਾਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖੁ ॥੬॥**

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਟੁੱਟ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਪੱਕੀ ਗੰਢ ਪਾ ਲਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਤਜਰਬਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੇਖ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ।

**ਕੰਧੀ ਉਤੈ ਰੁਖੜਾ ਕਿਚਰਕੁ ਬੰਨੈ ਧੀਰੁ ॥ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕਚੈ ਭਾਂਡੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਕਿਚਰੁ ਤਾਈ ਨੀਰੁ ॥੯੬॥**

ਕਿੰਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਦਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਲੱਗਾ ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਰੁਖੜਾ ਬਚਿਆ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਬਚੀ ਰਹੁ ਜੇ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਨਹੀਂ। ਫਰੀਦ, ਕਿੰਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਤੱਕ ਕੱਚੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਾਣੀ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਤੱਕ ਮੇਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿ ਸਕੇਗੀ। ਭਾਵ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਛੋਟੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਕਰ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਨਹੀਂ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦਰ ਦਰਵੇਸੀ ਗਾਖੜੀ ਚਲਾਂ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਭਤਿ ॥ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਿਉ ਠਾਈ ਪੋਟਲੀ ਕਿਥੈ ਵੰਞਾ ਘਤਿ ॥੨॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਬੜੀ ਔਖੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਉਸੇ ਰਾਹ 'ਤੇ ਤੁਰਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਉੱਤੇ ਆਮ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੁਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਹੁਣ ਮੈਂ ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਵੱਲ ਕਦਮ ਪੁੱਟਾਂ ਵੀ, ਤਾਂ ਜੇ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਮੈਂ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ/ਮੋਹ ਦਾ ਬੋਝ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪਿੱਛਾ ਛੁਡਾਵਾਂ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੰਗਲੁ ਜੰਗਲੁ ਕਿਆ ਭਵਹਿ ਵਣਿ ਕੰਡਾ ਮੇੜੇਹਿ ॥**  
**ਵਸੀ ਰਬੁ ਹਿਆਲੀਐ ਜੰਗਲੁ ਕਿਆ ਢੁਢੇਹਿ ॥੧੯॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਉਂ ਕੰਢਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਖੱਜਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਭਟਕ ਰਿਹਾ ਏ। ਜੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਵਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਉਂ ਲੱਭਣਾ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਇਨੀ ਨਿਕੀ ਜੰਘੀਐ ਥਲ ਡੂੰਗਰ ਭਵਿਓਮ੍ਹਿਰੁ ॥ ਅਜੁ ਫਰੀਦੈ ਕੂਜੜਾ ਸੈ ਕੋਹਾਂ ਥੀਓਮਿ ॥੨੦॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਉਸ ਕਰਤੇ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਐਨਾ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਵੱਡੇ-ਵੱਡੇ ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਾਹ ਸਕੇ। ਉਸ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਲੱਭਣਾ ਸੀ, ਮੇਰੇ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਤਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਵੀ, ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਹਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹਾਂ।

**ਆਪੁ ਸਵਾਰਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥**  
**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਹੋਇ ਰਹਹਿ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੋਇ ॥੯੫॥**

ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਵਾਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਸੁੱਖ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ। ਫਰੀਦ, ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਰਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਲਵੇਂਗਾ।

**ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦਰਵੇਸੀ ਗਾਖੜੀ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਪਰੀਤਿ ॥ ਇਕਨਿ ਕਿਨੈ ਚਾਲੀਐ ਦਰਵੇਸਾਵੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥੧੧੮॥**

ਫਰੀਦ, ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਸੌਖਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉੱਪਰੋਂ ਉਸ ਲਈ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਵੀ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਨਹੀਂ (ਸਤਹੀ ਹੈ)। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਰਾਹ ਉੱਪਰ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਚਲਦੇ ਹਨ।

**ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ**

ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਗੇ ਨੰਬਰ ਲੈਣੇ ਹੋਣ, ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡੀ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡਾ ਵਪਾਰਿਕ ਸੌਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਸਰ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਜੀਹ, ਤਿਆਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਟੀਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਪਾ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ। ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਜਾਂ ਕਹਿ ਲਵੋ ਸਚਿਆਰ ਬਣਨ ਦਾ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਵੀ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡਾ, ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਅਤੇ ਤਕੜਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਜੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਆਉਂਦੇਖੀਏ।

**ਫ਼ਰੀਦਾ ਗਲੀਏ ਚਿਕੜ ਦੂਰਿ ਘਰੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੇਹੁ ॥ ਚਲਾ ਤ ਭਿਜੈ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਰਹਾਂ ਤ ਤੁਟੈ ਨੇਹੁ ॥੨੪॥**

ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਸਚਿਆਰਤਾ ਵੱਲ ਦੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਰਸਤੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਘਟੀਆ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਚਿੱਕੜ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਮੇਰੀ ਦੂਰ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਮੈਂ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਿੱਜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਇਸ ਰਸਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਮੁਸ਼ੱਕਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ ਪਰ ਜੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਾਲਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਟੁੱਟ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

**ਭਿਜਉ ਸਿਜਉ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਅਲਹ ਵਰਸਉ ਮੇਹੁ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲਾ ਤਿਨਾ ਸਜਣਾ ਤੁਟਉ ਨਾਹੀ ਨੇਹੁ ॥੨੫॥**

ਪਰ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਰਾਹ ਔਖਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਫੇਰ ਹੁਣ ਔਖ ਦਾ ਮੀਂਹ ਹੀ ਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਰਾਹ 'ਤੇ ਤੁਰਾਂਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਜੇ ਉਸ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਦਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਰਹੇ।

**ਫ਼ਰੀਦਾ ਮੇ ਭੋਲਾਵਾ ਪਗ ਦਾ ਮਤੁ ਮੈਲੀ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਗਹਿਲਾ ਰੂਹੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਈ ਸਿਰੁ ਭੀ ਮਿਟੀ ਖਾਇ ॥੨੬॥**

ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੱਗ (ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਪੱਤ/ਲੋਕ ਲਾਜ) ਦਾ ਫ਼ਿਕਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਮੈਲੀ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ। ਪਰ ਮੈਂ ਅਗਿਆਨੀ ਨੇ (ਮੇਰੀ ਅੰਤਰ-ਆਤਮਾ ਨੇ) ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ (ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਬਿਠਾਈ) ਕਿ ਇੱਕ ਦਿਨ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ।

**ਫ਼ਰੀਦਾ ਬੇ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਕੁਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਨ ਭਲੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥ ਕਬਹੀ ਚਲਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥੧੦॥**

ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਜੀਵੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ, ਕੋਈ ਭਲੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਹ ਮੇਰਿਆ ਲਾਲਚੀ ਮਨਾ। ਮੈਂ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਇੱਕ, ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੇ।

**ਉਠੁ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਾ ਉਜੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਸੁਬਹ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਿ ॥ ਜੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਸਾਂਈ ਨਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਕਪਿ ਉਤਾਰਿ ॥੧੧॥**

ਰੱਬੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਵਾਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਰੱਬੀ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੰਵਾਰ ਲੈ। ਉਹ ਮਨ ਜੇ ਸਾਂਈ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾ ਰਹੇ, ਉਹ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਮਰਿਆ ਹੀ ਹੈ।

**ਜੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਸਾਂਈ ਨਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਕੀਜੈ ਕਾਂਇ ॥ ਕੁੰਨੇ ਹੇਠਿ ਜਲਾਈਐ ਬਾਲਣ ਸੰਦੈ ਥਾਇ ॥੧੨॥**

ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਕਰਾਂ ਜੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਬਾਲਣ ਸਮਾਨ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਾਂ ਜੇ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਰਹਿਤ, ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਰ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

**ਤਨੁ ਤਪੈ ਤਨੂਰ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਲਣੁ ਹਡ ਬਲੰਨ੍ਹੁ ॥ ਪੈਰੀ ਥਕਾਂ ਸਿਰਿ ਜੁਲਾਂ ਜੇ ਮੂੰ ਪਿਰੀ ਮਿਲੰਨ੍ਹੁ ॥੧੧੯॥**

ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਤੰਦੂਰ ਵਾਂਗ ਤਪਾ ਲਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਡ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਲਣ ਵਾਂਗ ਮਚਾ ਦਿਆਂ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਖ਼ਾਤਰ ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਰਦਾ-ਤੁਰਦਾ ਥੱਕ ਜਾਵਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਸਿਰ ਪਰਨੇ ਤੁਰ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਜਾਵਾਂ।

**ਤਨੁ ਨ ਤਪਾਇ ਤਨੂਰ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਲਣੁ ਹਡ ਨ ਬਾਲਿ ॥  
ਸਿਰਿ ਪੈਰੀ ਕਿਆ ਫੇੜਿਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪਿਰੀ ਨਿਹਾਲਿ ॥੧੨੦॥**

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਨਾ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੰਦੂਰ ਵਾਂਗ ਤਨ ਤਪਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੱਡ ਬਾਲਣ ਦੀ। ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿਰ ਅਤੇ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਦੋਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਐਨਾ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੇਵਾਂ; ਉਹ ਮਨਾਂ, ਉਸ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਪਾ ਲੈ।

### ਹਉ ਢੂਢੇਦੀ ਸਜਣਾ ਸਜਣੁ ਮੈਡੇ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਲਖੀਐ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦੇਇ ਦਿਖਾਲਿ ॥੧੨੧॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਫੁਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸੱਜਣ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਲੱਭ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੈ। ਨਾਨਕ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਐਸਾ ਕੋਈ ਰੂਪ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਛਾਣ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਭ ਲਵਾਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਸਦਕਾ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ।

#### ਮਿਲਾਪ

ਔਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨਾ, ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ, ਹੁਕਮ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਰਨਾ - ਇਹ ਸਭ ਮੁਸ਼ੱਕਤ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਤੇ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਉਸ ਇੱਕ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਦੀ ਕਵਾਇਦ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਬਾਰੇ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਲਾਭ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਸਲੋਕ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਨ।

### ਕਿਝੁ ਨ ਬੁਝੈ ਕਿਝੁ ਨ ਸੁਝੈ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਗੁਝੀ ਭਾਹਿ ॥ ਸਾਂਈਂ ਮੇਰੈ ਚੰਗਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਤ ਹੰ ਭੀ ਦਝਾਂ ਆਹਿ ॥੩॥

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਗੁੱਝੀਆਂ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਹਸਰਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ। ਮੇਰੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਨੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਇਹ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਇਛਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋਇਆ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਝੁਲਸ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ।

### ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸਕਰ ਖੰਡੁ ਨਿਵਾਤ ਗੁੜੁ ਮਾਖਿਉ ਮਾਂਝਾ ਦੁਧੁ ॥ ਸਭੇ ਵਸਤੂ ਮਿਠੀਆਂ ਰਬ ਨ ਪੁਜਨਿ ਤੁਧੁ ॥੨੭॥

ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਸੱਕਰ, ਖੰਡ, ਮਿਸ਼ਰੀ, ਗੁੜ, ਸ਼ਹਿਦ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਝ ਦਾ ਦੁੱਧ। ਇਹ ਸਭ ਮਿੱਠਾ ਤੇ ਆਨੰਦ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਖੇੜੇ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਨਹੀਂ। ਭਾਵ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਨੰਦ, ਆਤਮਿਕ ਆਨੰਦ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ।

### ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਭੂਮਿ ਰੰਗਾਵਲੀ ਮੰਝਿ ਵਿਸੁਲਾ ਬਾਗ ॥ ਜੇ ਜਨ ਪੀਰਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਿਆ ਤਿੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਅੰਚ ਨ ਲਾਗ ॥੮੨॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਫੁਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਇਸ ਰੰਗ-ਬਿਰੰਗੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਇੱਕ ਕੰਡਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਬਾਗ਼ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਬੜਾ ਮਨਮੋਹਕ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜੀਅ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ, ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨੇ।

### ਮਃ ੫ ॥ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੰਤੁ ਰੰਗਾਵਲਾ ਵਡਾ ਵੇਮੁਹਤਾਜੁ ॥ ਅਲਹ ਸੇਤੀ ਰਤਿਆ ਏਹੁ ਸਚਾਵਾਂ ਸਾਜੁ ॥੧੦੮॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਫੁਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਕਿ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਿੱਜ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ ਦਰਿਆ-ਦਿਲ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਝਾਕ ਹੈ।

### ਮਃ ੫ ॥ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੁਨੀ ਵਜਾਈ ਵਜਦੀ ਤੂੰ ਭੀ ਵਜਹਿ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਸੇਈ ਜੀਉ ਨ ਵਜਦਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਅਲਹੁ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਾਰ ॥੧੧੦॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਫੁਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਕਿ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ, ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਤਾਲ ਉੱਪਰ ਨੱਚਦੀ ਫਿਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਅਸਰ ਕਬੂਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਓਹੀ ਹਾਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਓਹੀ ਅੰਤਰ-ਆਤਮਾ ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਅਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਓਟ ਆਸਰਾ ਉਹ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਜੇ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ।

ਬਾਬਾ ਸ਼ੇਖ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਦੇ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਬਾਰੀਕ ਤੱਤ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਬਹੁਤਿਆਂ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਕ-ਇੱਕ ਸਲੋਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਐਨੀ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇੱਕ ਸਲੋਕ ਉੱਪਰ ਹੀ ਇੱਕ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਉਮੀਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੇਖ ਫ਼ਰੀਦ ਦੇ ਸਲੋਕ ਸਮਝਣ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਕਈ ਜਗਿਆਸੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਆਵੇਗਾ। ਤਰੀਕਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਗੱਲ ਸਮਝ ਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਹੈ, ਗੱਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਉਤਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਹੈ।

## ਜਿਉਣਵਾਲਾ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ...

### ਕੀ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਤਰ ਹੈ?

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ਬਹੁਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ, ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਦੇਖੀ ਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਜਮਾਤ ਦੇ ਹਾਮੀ ਅਕਸਰ ਏਹੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੁਣੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਕਿ, “ਦੇਖੋ ਜੀ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਐਵੇਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਾੜਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੇਈ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਵਾਸਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰੀ ਲਫਜ਼ ‘ਰਾਮ’ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਰਾਮ ਲਫਜ਼ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁੱਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ 2048 ਵਾਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ। ਰਾਮ 1758 ਵਾਰੀ, ਰਾਮੁ 254, ਰਾਮਿ 8 ਵਾਰੀ, ਰਾਮੈ 19 ਵਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਰਾਮਹਿ 9 ਵਾਰੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੋ ਤਿੰਨ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਰਾਮ ਲਫਜ਼ ਇਸ ਜਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਸੀ?

ਕੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਰਾਮ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਜਗਤ ਦਾ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਰਾਮ ਇੱਕ ਹੀ ਹਨ? ਕੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅੱਜ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਰਾਮ ਮੁੱਲ ਖਰੀਦਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਰਾਮ ਵਿਕਾਊ ਮਾਲ ਹੈ?

ਅਥਰਵੇਦ ਦਾ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ ਤੇ ਰਾਮਤਪਨੀ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੇ ਰਾਮ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੈ। “ਰਾਮ ਉਹ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਰਬ-ਥਾਈਂ ਰਮਣ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਨ ਰਮਣ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ” ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜੋਗਿ-ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਰਾਮ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਏਹੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਏਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਬਾਲਮੀਕ ਰਮਾਇਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਸ਼ੋਤਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਰਾਮ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਲਈ ਨਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਚੁਣਿਆ ਸੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਆਸਰਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਨਵ-ਜਨਮੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੀ ਖਬਰ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਵਧਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਖਬਰ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਵਾਪਸੀ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਏਹੀ ਭੇਜਦੇ ਹਨ, ਕਿ ਬਾਲਕ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਰੱਖਣਾ। ਜੇ ਕਰ ਅੱਜ-ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਕੋਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਮ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਰੱਖ ਲਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਖਸ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਸਵਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ? ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜੇ ਰਾਮ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਨਾਮ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਰਾਮ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ, ਦਾ ਰਾਜੇ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ, ਉੱਥੇ ਬਕਾਇਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੱਗੇ ਚੱਲ ਕੇ ਲਿਖਾਂਗਾ।

**ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਰਾਮ ਜੰਮਦਾ ਮਰਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ।**

ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਥਾਪਿ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ॥ ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰੁ ॥  
 ਜੇ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੇ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ॥ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਆਪੇ ਘਟ ਥਾਪਿ ॥  
 ਆਪਿ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਧੰਧੈ ਲੇਈ ॥ ਜੋਗਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਜਗ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਸੋਈ ॥  
 ਕਰਿ ਆਚਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਿਵ ਹੋਈ ॥ 15 ॥  
 ਪੰਨਾ 931, ਮ:1 ॥

(ਹੇ ਪਾਂਡੇ! ਉਸ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਪੱਟੀ ਤੇ ਲਿਖ) ਜੇ ਸਦਾ ਹੀ (ਬਹੁ-ਰੰਗੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ) ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਆਪ ਨਿਰਵੈਰ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਤੇ (ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਗਤ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ) ਧੰਦਾ ਭਟਕਣਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ। ਉਹ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਆਪ ਹੀ (ਸਿਸ੍ਰੁਟੀ) ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਜੀਵ ਬਣਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੇ ਕੁੱਝ (ਜਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ) ਦਿੱਸ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਹੈ (ਭਾਵ, ਉਸ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ)।

ਸਗਲੀ ਥੀਤਿ ਪਾਸਿ ਡਾਰਿ ਰਾਖੀ ॥  
 ਅਸਟਮ ਥੀਤਿ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਜਨਮਾਸੀ ॥ 1 ॥  
 ਭਰਮਿ ਭੂਲੇ ਨਰ ਕਰਤ ਕਚਰਾਇਣ ॥

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥1॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥.....॥  
 ਸੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੇਨੀ ॥3॥  
 ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ ॥4॥1॥  
 ਪੰਨਾ 1136, ਮ:5 ॥

ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਥਿਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਸੇ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਕਹਿ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਸ਼ਟਮੀ ਨੂੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਜਨਮੇ ਸੀ। ਭਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਏ ਹੋਏ ਲੋਕ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਰਬੂਜੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਖਰਬੂਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਕੱਟ ਕੇ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਸਾਡਾ 'ਨਾਰਾਇਣ' ਤਾਂ ਨਾ ਜੰਮਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਮਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਤੂ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਨ ਆਵਹੀ॥  
 ਤੂ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਾਜਹਿ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਾਜਿ ਸਮਾਵਹੀ॥  
 ਤੇਰਾ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ਕਿਉ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਧਿਆਵਹੀ॥  
 ਤੂ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਵਰਤਹਿ ਆਪਿ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਦੇਖਾਵਹੀ॥  
 ਪੰਨਾ 1095, ਮ:5 ॥

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਰੂਪ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਜੂਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਦਿੱਸਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਸਹਿਤ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਵੇਖਣ ਲਈ [gurugrantdarpan.net](http://gurugrantdarpan.net) ਤੇ ਜਾਓ ਜੀ।

ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਸਾਫ਼ ਹੋਈ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ, ਰਾਮ, ਭਗਵਾਨ, ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਯਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੈ, ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਮਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮੁੱਖ ਹੀ ਸਭ ਜਾਏ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਆਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਠਾਕਰ, ਭਗਵਾਨ, ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਯਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਫਲਾਣੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ।

ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਰਮਿਆ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਰਾਮ ਹੈ।

ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਮੁ॥ਰਾਮ ਰਮਤ ਰਾਮੁ॥ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਰਾਮੁ ॥  
 ਬੋਲਹੁ ਭਈਆ ਸਦ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਰਬਗੇ ॥1॥  
 ਪੰਨਾ1202, ਮ: 4 ॥

ਹੇ (ਮੇਰੇ) ਮਨ ! ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਮ (ਦਾ ਨਾਮ) ਜਪਿਆ ਕਰ, (ਉਸ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ) ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸਦਾ ਹੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਹੇ ਭਾਈ ! ਸਦਾ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਕਰੋ, ਉਹ ਸਭ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਸਭ ਕੁੱਝ ਜਾਣਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ ।।

ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਕਰਿ ਬਿਉਹਾਰ॥ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਅਧਾਰ॥  
 ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਇ॥ਰਮਤ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਭ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ॥1॥  
 ਪੰਨਾ 865, ਮ:5 ॥

ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਰਮੇ ਰਾਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ।ਸਾਧੇ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਜਾਨਉ॥  
 ਯਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੋ ਰਾਮੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਾਚੇ ਤਾਹਿ ਪਛਾਨੇ॥1॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
 ਪੰਨਾ 1186, ਮ:9 ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਦੇ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਰਾਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਰੀਰ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਸਵੰਤ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਰਾਮ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਵਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣੋ। ਉਹ ਹੀ ਸਦਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲਾ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਤਾਂ ਮਰ ਗਿਆ, ਮਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਿਆ ਬਲਕਿ ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਆਤਮ ਘਾਤੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ "ਆਤਮ ਘਾਤੀ ਹੈ ਜਗਤ ਕਸਾਈ" ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਸਨਾਤਨੀ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲਾ ਰਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਹੈ।

**ਸੰਕਟਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਰੈ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਰੇ॥  
ਕਬੀਰ ਕੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਐਸੇ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਮਾਈ ਨ ਬਾਪੇ ਰੇ ॥2॥ ਪੰ  
ਨਾ 338, ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ॥**

ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਦੇ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕੌਣ ਹੈ? ਕਬੀਰ ਦਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ/ਠਾਕੁਰ ਉਹ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਾਂ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਪਿਉ। ਪਰ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਦੇ ਬਾਪ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਤਾਂ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਹੈ।

**ਰਾਜੇ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਦਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ।**

**ਰਾਮੁ ਝੁਰੈ ਦਲ ਮੇਲਵੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਲੁ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ॥  
ਬੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜੁਝੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥  
ਸੀਤਾ ਲੈ ਗਇਆ ਦਹਸਿਰੇ ਲਛਮਣੁ ਮੁਓ ਸਰਾਪਿ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪਿ ॥25॥  
ਪੰਨਾ 1412, ਮ:1 ॥**

ਜਦੋਂ ਸੀਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਵਣ ਲੈ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਰਾਪ ਨਾਲ ਮਰ ਗਿਆ ਯਾ ਮੁਰਛਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਝੂਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਿਆ ਤੇ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਅਗੇਰੇ ਮੱਦਦ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ।

**ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਰਾਮਚੰਦੁ, ਸੇ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਥਾ॥  
ਰਾਵਨ ਸੇਤੀ ਸਰਬਰ ਹੋਈ, ਘਰ ਕੀ ਜੋਇ ਗਵਾਈ ਥੀ॥3॥  
ਪੰਨਾ 874, ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ॥**

ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੂੰ ਓਸ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈਂ ਜਿਸਨੇ ਰਾਵਣ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਾਈ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਘਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੀ ਗਵਾ ਲਈ ਸੀ?

**ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਆਰਾਧੀਐ ਹੋਈਐ ਆਰੋਗ॥  
ਰਾਮਚੰਦ ਕੀ ਲਸਟਿਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਰੋਗੁ॥1॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਪੀਐ ਨਿਤ ਕੀਚੈ ਭੋਗੁ ॥  
ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੈ ਵਾਰਣੈ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ॥1॥  
ਪੰਨਾ 817, ਮ:5 ॥**

ਹੇ ਭਾਈ ! ਸਦਾ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, (ਸਿਮਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਤਿ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਆਦਿਕ) ਰੋਗਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਈਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਹੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੋਟੀ ਹੈ (ਜਿਸ ਸੋਟੀ ਦੇ ਡਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੋਈ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਸਿਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੁੱਕ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ)। ਇਸ (ਸਿਮਰਨ) ਨੇ (ਹਰੇਕ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਹਰੇਕ) ਰੋਗ ਦੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

**ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬਾਂਧਿਓ ਸੇਤੁ ਬਿਧਾਤੈ॥ਲੰਕਾ ਲੂਟੀ ਦੈਤ ਸੰਤਾਪੈ॥  
ਰਾਮਚੰਦਿ ਮਾਰਿਓ ਅਹਿ ਰਾਵਣੁ॥ਭੇਦੁ ਬਭੀਖਣੁ, ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਰਚਾਇਣੁ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਾਇਰਿ ਪਾਹਣੁ ਤਾਰੇ ॥ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਕੋਟਿ ਤੇਤੀਸ ਉਧਾਰੇ ॥40॥  
ਪੰਨਾ 942, ਮ:1 ॥**

ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਨੇ 'ਰਾਮ ਸੇਤੂ' ਪੁਲ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਰਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ, ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਯਾ ਨਾਲ ਤੁੱਲਣਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋ? ਪਰ ਵੇਖੋ ਪੁੱਲ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ(ਰਾਮਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਜੀ ਨੇ) ਲੰਕਾ ਲੁੱਟੀ ਤੇ ਰਾਖਸ਼ ਮਾਰੇ। ਲੰਕਾ ਲੁੱਟਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕੀ ਕਹੋਗੇ, ਲੁਟੇਰਾ ? ਰਾਮਚੰਦਰ (ਜੀ) ਨੇ ਰਾਵਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਿਆ, ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਰਾਮ ਤੋਂ ਹੋ ਗੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਰਾਵਣ ਦੇ ਭਰਾ ਨੇ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਤ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਰਾਵਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਸਕਿਆ। ਕੀ ਇਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹੈ? ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਹ ਮੁਖਬਰੀ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੱਜ-ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਐਕਟਰ ਅਕਸ਼ੇ ਕੁਮਾਰ, ਯੂ.ਪੀ.ਦਾ ਤੱਤਕਾਲੀਨ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ, ਹੇਮਵਤੀ ਨੰਦਨ ਬਹੁਗੁਣਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦਾ ਵਪਾਰੀ, ਓਂਕਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਥਾਪਰ, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਥੱਕਦਾ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਤਾਂ

2500 ਵਾਰੀ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜੇਕਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕੱਢ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਕੀ ਕੁੱਝ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੱਚਦਾ, ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਰਾਮਚੰਦ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ।

**ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਤਰ, ਰਾਮ ਮੁੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਖਰੀਦਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ।**

**ਕਬੀਰ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਨ ਮਹਿ ਭੇਦੁ ਹੈ, ਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੁ ॥  
ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਭੈ ਕਹਹਿ, ਸੋਈ ਕਉਤਕਹਾਰ ॥190 ॥  
ਕਬੀਰ ਰਾਮੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਹੁ, ਕਹਿਬੇ ਮਾਹਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ ॥  
ਏਕੁ ਅਨੇਕਹਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਗਇਆ, ਏਕ ਸਮਾਨਾ ਏਕ ॥191 ॥  
ਪੰਨਾ 1374, ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ॥**

ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਿਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਸੋਚੋ! ਇੱਕ ਰਾਮ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਰਾਸਧਾਰੀਏ ਭੀ (ਰਾਸਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਂਗ ਬਣਾ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ) ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ (ਇਹ ਰਾਮ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਾ ਦਸ਼ਰਥ ਦਾ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਹਦੀ ਮੂਰਤੀ-ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਵਿਅਰਥ ਹੈ) ॥190-191 ॥

**ਕੋਟਿ ਕੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਰਜਾ ਪਵਣੁ ਪੀਅਣੁ ਅਪਿਆਉ ॥  
ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਦੁਇ ਗੁਣੈ ਨ ਦੇਖਾ ਸੁਪਨੈ ਸਉਣ ਨ ਥਾਉ ॥  
ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਉ ॥1 ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 14, ਮ:1 ॥**

ਇਸ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਲੋਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਏਹੀ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਤੀ ਰੱਤੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਲ ਵੀ ਦੇਈਏ, ਜੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਲੰਮੀ ਉਮਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਮਣ ਕਾਗਜ਼ਾਂ ਤੇ ਦਾਤੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਤਤ ਲਿਖ ਵੀ ਦੇਵਾਂ, ਜੇ ਪੰਖੀ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਅਸਮਾਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉੱਡਦਾ ਹੀ ਰਹਾਂ, ਮਤਲਬ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ।

**ਕੰਚਨ ਸਿਉ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੋਲਿ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਦੇ, ਰਾਮੁ ਲੀਆ ਹੈ ਮੋਲਿ ॥1 ॥  
ਅਬ ਮੇਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਅਪੁਨਾ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥ ਸਰਜ ਸੁਭਾਇ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥  
ਪੰਨਾ 327, ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ॥**

ਸੋਨਾ ਸਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਲ ਕੇ ਵੱਟੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਰੱਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ, ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੁੱਲ ਵਜੋਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਰੱਬ ਲੱਭਾ ਹੈ। 1। ਹੁਣ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਮੇਰਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ; ਸੁਤੇ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਗੰਢ ਬੱਝ ਗਈ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ।

ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਤਾਂ ਹਰ ਅਡੰਬਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਦਾ। ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਝੜੀਆਂ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਏਹੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਹੈ? ਜਿਸ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਓਹੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਇਸ ਸਾਰੇ ਅਡੰਬਰ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ/ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ;

**ਪੜੀਐ ਨਾਹੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਬੁਝਿਐ ਪਾਵਣਾ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 148 ॥**

ਪਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ, ਸਮਝ ਕੇ, ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਗੰਧਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਪਿਛਾਂਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਟਦੇ। ਰਾਮ ਮੁੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਖਰੀਦਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਪਰ ਹੁਣੇ ਹੁਣੇ ਨੌਂ ਕਰੇੜ ਦਾ ਲੈਂਪ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਚੜ੍ਹਾ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਰੱਬ ਮੁੱਲ ਲੈ ਵੀ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ? ਅਸੀਂ ਲੰਬੀਆਂ ਲੰਬੀਆਂ ਅਰਦਾਸਾਂ ਭਾਈਆਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਕਰਵਾ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਝੂਠੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਲਈ ਰਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਜੇਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਪਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਤੇ ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਤਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਯਾ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ, ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਆ, ਮਾਤਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਿਆ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਓਨਾ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ 'ਸਿੱਖੀ ਬਾਣਾ' ਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਗਿਆਨੀ ਪਿੰਦਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਕਿੱਕਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਠਿਆਈਆਂ ਝੜਨ ਦੇ ਅੰਬਾਰ ਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਸਕੀਨ ਵੀ ਇੱਕ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਹਨ "ਸਿੱਖ ਬਾਣੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ"।

ਸਿੱਖ ਭਰਾਵੇ! ਸਮਝਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੀ ਕਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਪੈਣੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਸਾਰੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਂਗੇ।

## ਕੰਵਰ ਦੀ ਕਲਮ ਤੋਂ....

**ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ॥**

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ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ॥ “ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ॥” ਸਲੋਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਪੰਗਤੀਆਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੬) ਉੱਤੇ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਨੇੜੇ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਈ ਲੋਕ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਈ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਲੋੜ ਤਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਰ-ਬਾਰ ਤਾਕੀਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ: **“ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਗੁਰੀਆ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥** (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨) ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਹੀ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ: ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜਨਮ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਕੋਲ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬੁੱਧੀ, ਸੋਝੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਝ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਲ, ਭਾਵ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਡੰਗਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਤਨੀ ਸੋਝੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਜਿਤਨੀ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜਨਮ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਤਮ ਗਿਣਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਜੇਕਰ ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜਨਮ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਨਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਡੰਗਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਅਰਥਾਤ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਭੁੱਖ, ਲੋੜ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਆਰਥ ਤੱਕ ਹੀ ਸੀਮਤ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਇਹ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ?

ਇੱਥੇ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਨੇੜੇ ਜਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਦੂਰੀ ਦਾ ਮਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਮਸਲਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ, ਸੁਆਮੀ ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਤਾਂ ਹਰ ਇੱਕ ਦੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਵੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਸਵਾਲ ਇਹ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹਰ ਇੱਕ ਦੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਵੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕੋਈ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਵੱਸਦੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਵੱਸਦੇ ਰੱਬ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਨੇੜੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ? ਰੱਬ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਜਾਂ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਫਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਦੂਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਨੇੜਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਤਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ “ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ” ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੋਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਇੱਕ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਹੈ। ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਬਹੁਤ ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗਿਆਨ ਸੁਚੱਜਾ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਚੱਜਾ ਵੀ। ਸੁਚੱਜਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਕੁਚੱਜਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸ਼ੈਤਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਰੈਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਹ ਬੁਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾਉ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੁਭਾਉ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਚੰਗੇ ਜਾਂ ਮੰਦੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਦੂਰ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਜਿਸ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਹੈ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ? ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਜਾਂ ਰੇਖ ਆਦਿ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਈਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਚਲ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਪਛਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਈ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਗੁਣੀ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਰੱਬ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਖਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਣਤਾਸ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਣਤਾਸਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ: **“ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਗੁਣਤਾਸ॥”** (ਗ:ਗ:ਸ: ਪੰਨਾ-੧੭੮)॥ ਇਸ ਪੰਗਤੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਣਤਾਸ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪੰਗਤੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹ ਤਾਕੀਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਅਪਣਾਏ ਜਾਣ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਯਾਦ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ

ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸੇ ਨੂਮ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣਾ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਰੱਬੀ ਗੁਣ ਅਪਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਸੇ ਅਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ: **ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ॥** ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ: "ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ॥" ਭਾਵ ਜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਧਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਭਾਵ ਰੱਬੀ ਗੁਣ ਅਪਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਕੰਮ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਹਣੇ-ਸੁਲੱਖਣੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੀ ਹਨ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਅਸਲ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਧਿਆਉਣ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਨੂਮ ਠੀਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਅਰਥ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀ ਪਾਠ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਧਿਆਉਣਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਕਈ ਲੋਕ ਤਾਂ ਕੀਮਤ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪਾਠ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਭਾਈਆਂ, ਪੰਡਤਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਨੂਮ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਾਂ ਕਈ ਨੇਮ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ-ਕਥਾ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹੀ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਕਈ ਤੀਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਈ ਕਰਮ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਜੇ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡਾ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਹੈ।

ਇੱਥੇ ਇਹ ਖਾਸ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪਾਠ, ਕੀਰਤਨ ਆਦਿ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਪੰਡੂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਲਾਭ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਜੇਕਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਜੋ ਸਚਿਆਰ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂਮ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਧਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਵੇਖਿਆ ਗਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਕੇਵਲ ਰਸਮੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਦੇਖਾ ਦੇਖੀ ਹੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡ ਹੀ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ: **"ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸੁਨਿ ਕਛੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਨ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਪਸੁ ਜਿਉ ਉਦਰੁ ਭਰਉ ॥"** (ਗ:ਗ:ਸ: ਪੰਨਾ ੬੮੫) ਭਾਵ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਜੋ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੇਕਰ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸੋਝੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਡੰਗਰ ਖਾਣਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਪੇਟ ਭਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ-ਕਥਾ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਕੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂਮ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਹੈ। ਐਸੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਕੈਸਾ ਹੈ। ਵੇਖਣਾ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਠ ਪੂਜਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਰਮ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਸਵਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਡੰਗਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਹ ਕੇਵਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਜੀਉ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਜਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕਰਮ ਹਨ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਦਿਖਾਵਟੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕਤਾ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ: **"ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ"**

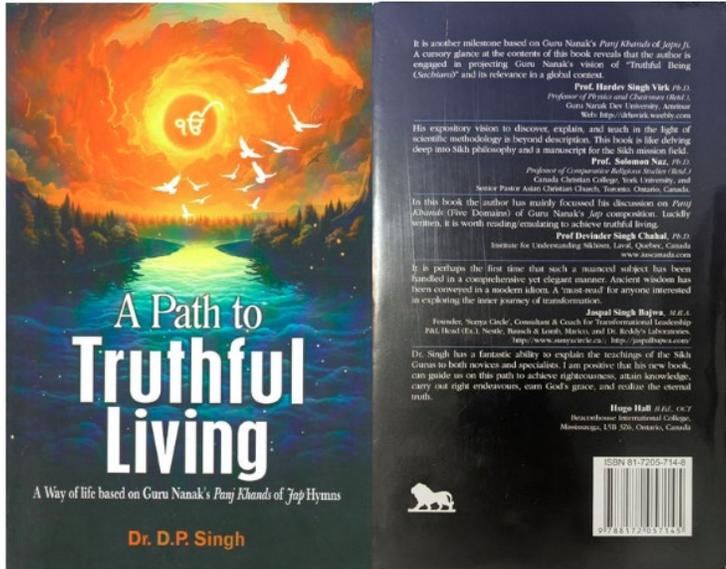
ਇੱਥੇ ਇਹ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੈਕਟੀਕਲ, ਅਮਲੀ, ਸਾਰਥਕ, ਅਨੁਭਵੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਖਾਵੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਖਾਵੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਵੇਸ਼ਭੂਸਾ ਆਦਿ ਨੂਮ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂਮ ਸਚਿਆਰ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂਮ ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ, ਗੁਣਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਝਵਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਜੋ ਫ਼ਜ਼ੂਲ ਦੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਸ ਨੂਮ ਕੁਝ ਦੀ ਦਿਵਾਰ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸ ਕੁਝ ਦੀ ਦਿਵਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਅਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਨ ਹੈ: **"ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੁੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ॥"** (ਗ:ਗ:ਸ: ਪੰਨਾ-੧)॥

ਹਥਲੇ ਸਲੋਕ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਜੋ ਨੁਕਤਾ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਹੈ: "ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ॥ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀ ਪਾਠ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਜਾਵੇ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵ ਹੈ, ਗੁਣਵਾਨ, ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਝਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬੁੱਧ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਨਾ। ਇਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ, ਗੁਣਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਝਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਮਝੋ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਕੰਮ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਐਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਜਲਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਐਸਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹੀ ਸਲਾਹਉਣ ਯੋਗ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਗੁਣ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਜਿਤਨੇ ਅਉਗੁਣ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਉਤਨਾ ਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜਿਤਨੇ ਗੁਣ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਉਤਨਾ ਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਹੁਣ ਹਰ ਇੱਕ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸ ਨੇ ਕਿੰਨੇ ਕੁ ਗੁਣ ਜਾਂ ਅਉਗੁਣ ਧਾਰਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਪਤਾ ਚੱਲ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਕੌਣ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਕੁ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕੌਣ ਕਿੰਨਾ-ਕੁ ਦੂਰ ਹੈ।

## BOOK REVIEW



**TITLE:** A Path to Truthful Living. (*A Way of Life based on Guru Nanak's Panj Khand of Jap Hymns*)

**AUTHOR:** Dr. D. P. Singh  
Director, Centre for Understanding Sikhism,  
Toronto, Canada

**PUBLISHER:** Singh Brothers, Amritsar;  
Website: [www.singhbrothers.com](http://www.singhbrothers.com)

**ISBN:**81-7205-714-8; Price: Rs. 395.00;  
Pages: 256; First Edition: 2025.

**REVIEWER:** Dr. H.S. Virk,  
Prof. of Eminence (Hon.),  
SGGS World University, Fatehgarh Sahib

Dr. D.P. Singh is a brilliant Physicist by training, a practicing Gursikh, and a dedicated researcher of Science and Sikhism. I was wondering how a physicist would justify his new venture as the Director of the Centre for Understanding Sikhism? After reading his half a dozen books on the Sikh religion, I am fully satisfied and testify that DP Singh is one of the best Sikh theologians in the Sikh world. He has not only imbibed the spirit of Sikhi based on the core principles of the Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, but also interpreted its message for Sikhs in general and Sikh Youth in particular using scientific methodology.

Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal, a celebrated Scientist and a Theologian himself, mentions briefly in the introduction that DP Singh deems it necessary to give a background of the contents of this book before the discussion of the main theme. He presents the main topics under discussion by DP Singh and elaborates on the social and cultural background in which Guru Nanak launched his revolutionary mission to reform society, which was riven by the decadent religiosity of his times.

The author explains the purpose of writing “A Path to Truthful Living” in his Foreword: “This book is not a mere intellectual exercise or a scholarly treatise. It is a heartfelt exploration of Guru Nanak’s timeless teachings, presented in a way that seeks to touch the very core of our being”. The author further elaborates the central theme of his book: “The Panj Khand are five distinct domains of existence described by Guru Nanak in his profound compositions. Through the exploration of the Dharam Khand (Domain of Righteousness), Gyan Khand (Domain of Knowledge), Saram Khand (Domain of Endeavour), Karam Khand (Domain of Grace), and Sach Khand (Domain of Truth), we are encouraged to reflect on the nature of our thoughts, actions, and beliefs”.

“A Path to Truthful Living” has 16 Chapters. I will call the first seven chapters peripheral to the book's main theme. The author begins his narrative with “Guru Nanak- His Life and Time”, followed by “Jap Ji – An Introduction”, “Concept of Truth in Guru Nanak’s Hymns”, “Maya - The Veil of Illusion”, “Truthful Being (Sachiar)”, “Hukam”, and “A Path to Truthful Living”. Chapter 1 summarizes the life, teachings, and legacy of Guru Nanak in a concise manner. DP Singh displays his ingenuity and scholarship in delineating the history and philosophy of Guru Nanak. Chapter 2 explains the message of Jap in a nutshell: “*Jap Ji* defines a way for the truthful living to realize the Ultimate Truth”.

Chapter 3 describes the concept of ultimate truth (Reality) and its realization by quoting appropriate hymns from Nanak Bani. The author concludes: “Ultimate Truth is a phenomenon free from the duality of apprehender and apprehended. The ultimate Truth can be realized only through a truthful way of living and by imbibing the love for Truth (God) in one’s life, and not by theorizing or speculating”.

Chapter 4, “Maya - The Veil of Illusion,” beautifully distinguishes between the Sikh and Advaita Vedanta concepts of Maya, a cornerstone of Hindu philosophy. The author enumerates eleven ill effects of Maya in his discourse. He concludes: “*Maya* is the corrupting influence of the world that alienates humankind from God. The root of *maya* is egoism”. Chapter 5 defines “Truthful Being (Sachiara)” and his role in society: “Guru Nanak’s ideal of *sachiara* (God-conscious truthful being) is free from *haumai* (self-centeredness) and vices, conflicts, and problems, the ego creates. He has shed duality, and his ego has been eliminated. He is not a conditioned or rationalized practice of virtue, but he practices good spontaneously”.

In Chapter 6, “Hukam – It’s Meaning, Scope and Significance”, the author illustrates his deep understanding of this concept, which governs all creation and activity in this Universe: “In Guru Nanak’s view, the *hukam* signifies the divinely instituted and maintained principle governing the existence and movement of the universe. It controls the universe, physical and psychical, and governs everything within it”. However, according to Gurbani, *Hukam* is indescribable: “*The extent of Your hukam cannot be perceived; no one can describe it. (Sri Raag M. 1, p. 53)*” Chapter 7, “A Path to Truthful Living,” is the foundation on which the structure of this book is erected, and its title is based. The author has done full justice to defining the concept of Truth in human life and its implications: “Truth is the foundation for a fair and just society.” He develops his thesis based on three cardinal principles (*Naam, Daan, Ishnaan*) and ten daily practices for a truthful living.

Chapter 8 “*Panj Khands* (Five Domains) – A Pathway to Ultimate Reality” is a core Chapter of this volume. The author has explained the *Panj Khands* based on the liturgical text of Guru Nanak, called Jap Ji. These are defined in Jap Ji: 1. *Dharam Khand* (Domain of Righteousness), 2. *Gian Khand* (Domain of Knowledge), 3. *Saram Khand* (Domain of Endeavour), 4. *Karam Khand* (Domain of Grace), 5. *Sach Khand* (Domain of Truth). These *khands* are not related to any celestial spheres in the literal sense of the word, but rather represent different phases of human life toward reaching Ultimate Reality.

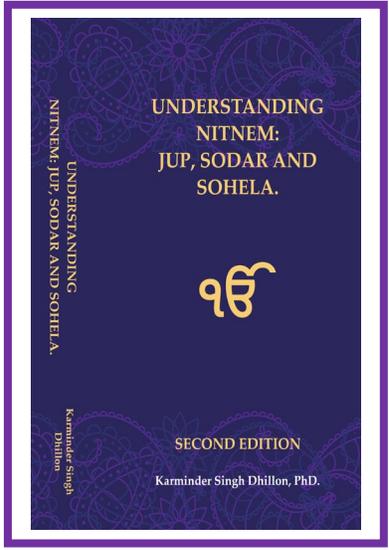
Chapters 9-13 elaborate on the *Panj Khands* of Jap Ji, ascribed to Guru Nanak. The author has made a unique contribution to Sikh literature by defining and explaining five phases of human life in a scholarly manner, quoting appropriate hymns from Gurbani. In Dharam Khand, the devotee works in full cognizance of the worldly phenomena and their primal source of creation. Being fully aware of the universal law of cause and effect, the person is conscious of its immutability. The author recommends 10 daily practices from Sri Guru Granth Sahib to help you build your relationship with God. Chapter 10 “Gian Khand” pertains to spiritual knowledge: “Sikhism,



**AUTHOR:** Dr. D. P. Singh  
Director, Centre for Understanding Sikhism,  
Toronto, Canada



NEW BOOKS



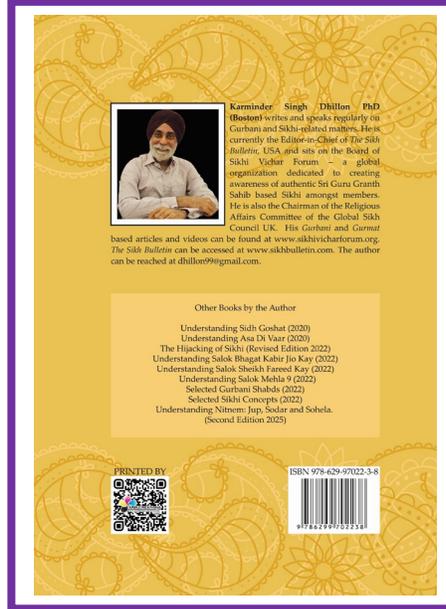
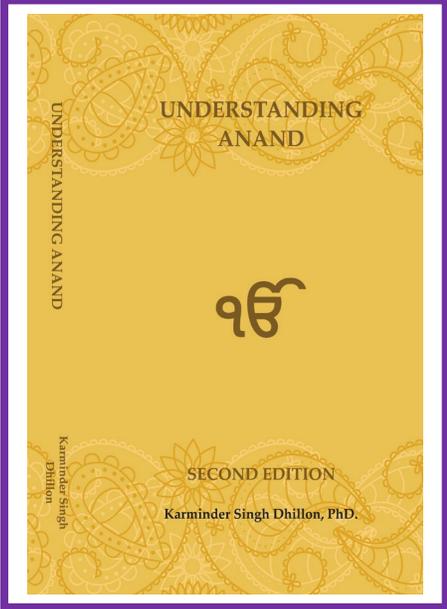
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Manuscripts must be in English or Gurmukhi and must begin with a title page that includes the names, e-mail addresses, and affiliations of all authors. References must be properly cited.

Manuscripts need to be submitted online to [editor@sikhbulletin.com](mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com) or [dhillon99@gmail.com](mailto:dhillon99@gmail.com) and must be in Microsoft Word (.doc). The preferred font for English characters is Calibri font size 11. Gurbani and Gurmukhi characters must be in Unicode (Nirmla UI).

The maximum length for each article in a regular issue is 5,000 words.

### Note on Use of Gurbani Verses and Translations by Authors

When quoting Gurbani in their articles, authors are required to provide the Gurmukhi version of the full verse and a romanised version. Mention must be made of the page where it is to be found in the AGGS. In line with the aspirations of *The Sikh Bulletin*, authors must provide translations of Gurbani verses that break from the mould of vedantic, yogic and literal slants prevalent in orthodox translations. Articles relying solely on Gurbani translations as provided by Sant Singh Khalsa MD's English Translation will NOT be published.

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**Thank you for your continued support of The Sikh Bulletin. Editor.**

*One of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today.*

**Dale Carnegie, American Writer (1811 – 1955)**