**The Message of Bhagats**

**in**

**Sri Guru Granth Sahib**

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**Glossary**

(This Glossary seeks to explain the meaning of some key Punjabi and English words used in the book. The Punjabi words are in *italics*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Bhagat:* | One who is deeply devoted to God. |
| *Caste:*  (upper/lower) | Traditionally, Hindu society is divided into a hierarchical 4-tier caste structure -- Brahmin (priests), Kshatriya (rulers, warriors), Vaishya (traders, farmers), and Shudra (laborers). The top three (Brahmin, Kshatriya & Vaishya) are considered the “upper” castes, and Shudra is considered the “lower” caste. |
| Creator: | The Divine Being who has created everything -- men, animals, plants, insects, elements, planets, universe, constellations, and everything else. |
| Darvesh: | From the Persian word meaning “poor, needy.” This is the term used to denote a member of a religious - specifically Sufi - fraternity. |
| Deities: | In Bhagat Banee, deities (Hindu gods) are referred to by different names, e.g., Raama, Krishna, Gobind, etc. |
| God: | God (note the capital G in this usage). In Sikhism, the Divine Being (God) has been defined as the One who is Unformed and yet is in all forms. Thus, He is Un-manifest and Manifested. He is eternal, all-knowing, and sublime bliss. His rules originate, govern, run, and terminate creation. Sikhs believe in One God for all mankind. In Gurbani, God is known by many names, but two commonly used names are Akal Purakh (literally, “Timeless Being”) and Waheguru. |
| god: | See “Deities” above. |
| *Grist Jeevan:* | Literally: life of a householder. The Sikh Gurus practiced and emphasized the concept of life of a householder.  This was a significant departure from the prevalent Hindu belief that to obtain salvation one has to become a recluse. |
| *Gurmukh:* | A compound word Guru + mukh. It refers to one who has turned his/her face towards the Guru and follows and lives by (Shabad) Guru’s teachings in SGGS. |
| *Guru:* | A compound word Gu + ru. ‘Gu’ means darkness and ‘ru’ means light. So, Guru means someone who takes one from a state of ignorance to a state of enlightenment or bliss. In the religious context, Sikhs use the term exclusively for the ten Sikh teachers (Gurus) and Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). |
| He: | Noun; capitalized when referring to God. Sikh Gurus and the Bhagats consider the entire mankind as brides, and God as the sole groom. In this sense, everyone is of feminine gender and only God is male. |
| His: | Pronoun; for God. See ‘He’ for the reason for using the masculine gender. |
| His Grace: | Through God’s Grace one can obtain liberation/salvation. It also requires humility on the part of the seeker. |
| *Hukam:* | Literally: order or command. It refers to God’s rules governing the creation, sustenance, and ending of the universe. |
| Husband: | Since the Gurus and Bhagats referred to God as the sole “male” in the entire creation and as their husband, the rest of mankind is considered His wife. |
| *Jeevan Mukt:* | Literally: liberated while alive. Achieved by total acceptance of the Divine Will (Hukam). Such a person is equally accepting of the joys and sorrows in life. |
| Master: | When capitalized in this book, it refers to the spiritual Master, the Guru. |
| *Mool Mantar:* | It is the first verse in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It provides the foundational basis of Sikhi. It explains Guru Nanak Sahib’s definition of God. |
| *Naam:* | Literally: Name. When used in this book, Naam refers to God specifically. Naam enables the perception of the unperceivable. Naam also refers to the dynamic, creative principle governing the whole of creation. |
| *Naam Simran:* | Literally: Remembrance of Naam. Naam Simran is not the reciting or chanting of God's name, but the internalization of the reality that we call "God" in one's psyche. It suggests a deeper or meditative understanding of and a realization of the vision of God, as explained in SGGS. |
| *Rahao Tuk:* | The word “Rahao**”** is derived from Raha which means to cause to remain, fix, support, or restrain. The word Tuk means a line or sentence*.* The line containing the "Rahao" contains the central idea of the Shabad. It asks us to wait or pause, and to contemplate on the line or Tuk. |
| *Sat Naam:* | Literally: True Name. As the Naam is eternally True (“Sat”), it is called Sat Naam. Everything else in creation is transient – it was not there in the beginning, and it will cease to exist in time, therefore it is not “eternally True” or “Sat”. |
| *Shabad:* | Shabad, as used in Gurbani, refers to a hymn in SGGS. For a complete list of Shabads in SGGS, please refer to the list of Shabads (qqkrw SbdW kw) at the beginning of SGGS. |
| Sheikh: | Sheikh is an honorific title in the Arabic language. It commonly designates a religious leader who has inherited the title from his father or the previous head. The title carries the meaning of leader, head, elder, or a noble. |
| State of Sehaj: | Sehaj, a Sanskrit word, can be translated in several ways -- as one's natural or spontaneous state of being, or celestial or intuitive peace, intuitive poise, or natural or peaceful ease. So, ‘state of Sehaj’ can be considered as a state of intuitive poise. Self-realization is nothing but attainment of the state of Sehaj*.* |
| *Surat:* | Literally: wakefulness or awareness. As mentioned in SGGS, one advances to this state of awareness (Surat) by the Grace of God. |
| True Guru: | Literally: Satguru (siqgurU) for the Sikhs. The True Guru is the spiritual guide who helps one to attain the state of Sehaj and become Jeevan Mukt. |
| *Vaar:* | A form of poetic composition. Vaar is a narrative poem, sometimes in ballad style. Each stanza (Pauri) in a Vaar contains a complete idea. |
| Will: | The Will of God is His Hukam. See “Hukam” above. |

**Preface**

The compositions of 15 Bhagats are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). Guru Nanak Dev ji had himself collected the Bhagats’ compositions during his travels in India, and had personally handed it to his successor, Guru Angad Dev ji. These compositions were then handed over, unchanged, to successor Gurus until it reached Guru Arjan Dev ji, who in 1604 CE included them in the Adi Granth (later known as SGGS).

Compositions of these 15 Bhagats are consistent with Guru Nanak Dev ji’s vision and experience of God as enunciated in the ‘Mool Mantar’ on page 1 of SGGS, preceding the Jap ji Sahib.

This book covers many of these compositions, along with their simple translations and explanations. Its main purpose is to help the reader understand the primary messages of the Bhagats’ compositions, and to recognize how closely these are aligned with the Sikh Gurus’ teachings in the SGGS.

The inclusion of Bhagats’ compositions makes the Sikh scripture remarkable. Besides compositions of the Sikh religion’s founder Guru Nanak Dev ji and five of his successor Gurus, the SGGS includes compositions of others who believed in the one Creator and considered all humans as equal. The inclusion of these compositions as ‘Banee’ elevated the standing of these Bhagats, who were mostly from the so-called lower caste of Hindus or socially ostracized segments of Indian society. Most of these Bhagats had little or no formal education because of their caste or profession, yet they scaled such spiritual heights. The Gurus recognized this spiritual accomplishment by including some of their compositions in SGGS.

The Bhagats’ compositions often refer to mythological stories of Hindu gods, seemingly miraculous events, and ritualistic practices. By doing so, the Bhagats were able to connect with an audience comprised at that time mostly of Hindus familiar with such mythological stories and traditional (Hindu) religious practices in India.

In their Shabads in SGGS, the Gurus too sometimes refer to mythological stories connected with Hindu gods - Ram, Krishan, Vishnu, Inder, etc.; and to mythological figures - Pandav, Kaurav, Ravan, etc. to make their point clear to the masses which were familiar with those stories without endorsing the religious rituals practiced during that time.

As is true for many Shabads in SGGS, a literal reading of the Bhagats’ compositions, does not provide a correct understanding of their true meaning. The central message becomes clear only when the composition, especially its ‘Rahao Tuk’, is understood metaphorically, not literally. For the literal translations, and to explain their metaphorical meanings, the book relies mainly on the highly regarded writings of reputed scholars such as Prof. Sahib Singh and others.

Rather than dwelling on the Bhagats’ own lives or on the mythological stories they refer to in their compositions, the book seeks to explain the Bhagats’ compositions in the context of the teachings of SGGS. Guru Nanak Dev ji and his successor Gurus occasionally elaborated on the Bhagats’ compositions to clarify their central message, and to show its consistency with the Gurus’ own Shabads.

The book also refers to some of Bhai Gurdas’s “Vaars”, which he wrote a few hundred years after the Bhagats had left this world. In the span of those few hundred years, many stories had got associated with some Bhagats, claiming that they had miraculous powers. The devotees’ intent may have been to show respect and reverence for the Bhagats. Bhai Gurdas’s reference to these stories was probably intended to explain his message to an audience familiar with these mythological and miraculous stories. Like the Bhagats’ compositions, Bhai Gurdas’s Vaars also should be understood metaphorically, not literally.

Every Shabad in SGGS is considered “GurBanee,” whether composed by Gurus or Bhagats. Every Shabad is unambiguously consistent with the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji and the other Gurus in SGGS. Banee (Shabad Guru) is the True Guru. It teaches humans how to lead a spiritually blissful life (and become Jeevan Mukt). Everything in SGGS brings an understanding of and a dialogue with the Eternal so that we may understand the essence of God. The Bhagats’ compositions are no exception.

Anyone bowing to the Shabad Guru in the SGGS is also bowing to the compositions of these Bhagats in the SGGS. When properly understood, it becomes evident that Bhagats’ compositions are completely consistent with the other Shabads in SGGS. The Gurus have personally attested to this, by themselves including it in the Sikh scripture, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

1. **Bhagat Kabir**

Bhagat Kabir (1398-1448 CE)was born in Banaras, a city in northern India which was considered an auspicious (religious) place by Hindus. He is revered by Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike. Through his writings, he became well known as a teacher and social reformer. Kabir did not believe in the ritualistic practices of Hindus, nor in their belief in deities, Brahmanism, and the caste system. He questioned the strict orthodoxy of Hindu as well as Muslim priests.

Authors disagree on Bhagat Kabir’s year of birth and death. They also differ on whether he was born a Hindu or a Muslim. There are different stories associated with his background and early years. However, it is clear from Bhagat Kabir’s compositions in SGGS that he considered himself simply a human. He criticized both Hindu and Muslim rituals, saying that none of the rituals are of any help in getting closer to God. He passionately believed in God. Bhagat Kabir believed that every human being has been created by Him.

In his following composition included in SGGS, besides criticizing the Muslim ritual of circumcision, he questions both Hindu and Muslim priests as to the basis or religious texts on which they make claims about God favoring either Hindus or Muslims. He says that since God made both Hindus and Muslims, He would not discriminate against either.

ihMdU qurk khw qy Awey ikin eyh rwh clweI]

idl mih soic ibcwir kvwdy iBsq dojk ikin pweI]1]

**kw qY kvn kqyb bKwnI]**

**pVHq gunq AYsy sB mwry iknhUM Kbir n jwnI]1]rhwau]**

skiq snyhu kir suMniq krIAY mY n bdaugw BweI]

jau ry Kudwie moih qurku krYgw Awpn hI kit jweI]2]

suMniq kIey qurku jy hoiegw Aaurq kw ikAw krIAY]

ArD srIrI nwir n CofY qw qy ihMdU hI rhIAY]3]

Cwif kqyb rwmu Bju baury julm krq hY BwrI]

kbIrY pkrI tyk rwm kI qurk rhy pichwrI]4]8] Awsw, AMg 477

*hi(n)dhoo turak kahaa te aae kin eh raeh chalaiee ||dhil meh soch bichaar kavaadhe bhisat dhojak kin payee||1||kaajee tai kavan kateb bakhaanee ||paRhat gunat aaise sabh maare kinahoo(n) khabar na jaanee||1|| rahaau ||sakat saneh kar su(n)nat kareeaai mai na badhaugaa bhaiee ||jau re khudhai moh turak karaigaa aapan hee kaT jaiee||2||su(n)nat ke'ee turak je hoigaa aaurat kaa kiaa kareeaai ||aradh sareeree naar na chhoddai taa te hi(n)dhoo hee raheeaai||3||chhaadd kateb raam bhaj baure julam karat hai bhaaree||kabirai pakaree Tek raam kee turak rahe pachihaaree ||4||8||* SGGS, p. 477

**Translation:** O quarrelsome person! (instead of always arguing to prove your religion to be a true religion) contemplate within your mind from where the Hindus and Muslims have come? (Other than from God). Who put them on these different paths? (Since God has created both, how can He discriminate against either). (Just being Hindu or Muslim) who will go to heaven and hell? (i.e. just by calling yourself Muslim you cannot go to heaven, and just being a Hindu one will not go to hell).||1**||O Qazi, which books are you reading (and telling others that the Muslims will go to heaven and Hindus will go to hell). Scholars like you (who are biased, read religious books with prejudiced eyes) have all died. None of them have discovered the inner meaning. ||1||Pause||**Because of the love of a woman, if circumcision is done; I do not believe in it (that it has anything to do with getting close to God). If God wished me to be a Muslim, it would be cut off by itself. ||2||If only circumcision makes one a Muslim, then what about a woman? Throughout the life, she is man’s partner, and she does not leave him. (Therefore, instead of hanging in between) it is better to remain a Hindu. ||3||**Give up debating about holy books and remember God** (instead of meditating on God, you are engulfed in arguments), you fool, you are hurting yourself. Kabir has grasped hold of God's support, and the (confrontational) Muslims (engaged in futile arguments) have utterly failed. ||4||8||

rhwau dI qu~k: hy hwzI! qUM ikhVIAW ikqwbW iv~coN d~s irhw hYN (ik muslmwn nUM

bihSq qy ihMdU nMU dozk imlygw)? (hy kwzI!) qyry vrgy pVHn qy ivcwrn vwly (Bwv, jo mnu~K qyry vWg qA~sb dI p~tI A~KW A~gy bMn ky mzhbI ikqwbW pVHdy hn) sB KuAwr huMdy hn[ iksy nUM AslIAq dI smJ nhIN peI [1[rhwau[

For English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

In his following composition included in SGGS, Bhagat Kabir questions the Hindu belief in the caste system. He criticizes Brahmins for considering themselves as belonging to an “upper caste” by birth:

grB vws mih kulu nhI jwqI] bRhm ibMdu qy sB auqpwqI]1]

**khu ry pMifq bwmn kb ky hoey] bwmn kih kih jnmu mq Koey]1]rhwau]**

jO qUM bRwhmxu bRhmxI jwieAw] qau Awn bwt kwhy nhI AwieAw]2]

qum kq bRwhmx hm kq sUd]hm kq lohU qum kq dUD]3]

khu kbIr jo bRhmu bIcwrY]so bRwhmxu khIAqu hY hmwrY]4]7]

gauVI kbIr, AMg 324

*garabh vaas meh kul nahee jaatee ||braham bi(n)dh te sabh utapaatee ||1||kahu re pa(n)ddit baaman kab ke hoe ||baaman keh keh janam mat khoe ||1|| rahaau ||jau too(n) braahaman brahamanee jaiaa ||tau aan baaT kaahe nahee aaiaa ||2||tum kat braahaman ham kat soodh ||ham kat lohoo tum kat dhoodh ||3||kahu kabir jo braham beechaarai ||so braahaman kaheeat hai hamaarai ||4||7||* SGGS, p. 324

**Translation:** In the dwelling of the womb, there is no ancestry or social status. All have originated from the Seed of God. (Everyone is created by God) ||1||**Tell me, O Pandit, O religious scholar: since when have you been a Brahmin? Do not waste your life (in ego) by continually claiming to be a Brahmin. ||1||Pause||**If you are indeed a Brahmin, born of a Brahmin mother, then why didn't you come by some other way? ||2||How is it that you became a Brahmin, and I stayed of a low social status? How is it that I am formed of blood, and you are made of milk (instead of blood)? ||3||Says Kabir, we consider that person to be a Brahmin who contemplates on God. ||4||7||

**Sbd dw Bwv:** jo mnu~K au~cI jwq dw mwx krdy hn, auh mnu~Kw jnm AjweIN gvwauNdy hn[ swry jIv prmwqmw dI AMS hn[ au~cw auhI hY jo pRBU dI bMdgI krdw hY[

**Central message:** Those who falsely proclaim of being born in an upper caste waste their life. Everyone is created by God. Only the ones who contemplate on God attain a higher status (or state of consciousness).

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**2. Bhagat Kabir’s God**

Bhagat Kabir believed only in God. In his compositions included in SGGS, he addresses God by many names. Kabir preached a religion of love for all humanity, aimed at promoting unity amongst all castes and creeds, and all faiths. He speaks of God who is neither a man nor a woman, neither a human nor an angel, neither a yogi nor a celibate. God who is neither a mother nor a son. He is endless, inside every human heart, and outside too, everywhere. His nature and extent cannot be known, and He cannot be confined to a temple or a mosque. He has no body or blood. He is eternal and is neither born nor does He die. The births and deaths of all living beings are ordained by Him. He can be realized only through love and devotion for God. Those who realize Him are freed from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. They thus attain eternal bliss.

Bhagat Kabir’s following composition makes it unmistakably clear what kind of God he is talking about.

nw iehu mwnsu nw iehu dyau] nw iehu jqI khwvY syau]

nw iehu jogI nw AvDUqw] nw iesu mwie n kwhU pUqw]1]

**ieAw mMdr mih kOn bsweI] qw kw AMqu n koaU pweI]1]rhwau]**

nw iehu igrhI nw EdwsI] nw iehu rwj n BIK mMgwsI]

nw iesu ipMfu n rkqU rwqI] nw iehu bRhmnu nw iehu KwqI]2]

nw iehu qpw khwvY syKu] nw iehu jIvY n mrqw dyKu]

iesu mrqy kau jy koaU rovY]jo rovY soeI piq KovY]3]

gur pRswid mY fgro pwieAw] jIvn mrnu doaU imtvwieAw]

khu kbIr iehu rwm kI AMsu]js kwgd pr imtY n mMsu]4]2]5]

gONf, AMg 871

*naa ih maanas naa ih dheau ||naa ih jatee kahaavai seau ||naa ih jogee naa avadhootaa ||naa is mai na kaahoo pootaa ||1||eiaa ma(n)dhar meh kauan basaiee ||taa kaa a(n)t na kouoo paiee ||1|| rahaau ||naa ih girahee naa odhaasee ||naa ih raaj na bheekh ma(n)gaasee ||naa is pi(n)dd na rakatoo raatee ||naa ih brahaman naa ih khaatee ||2||naa ih tapaa kahaavai sekh ||naa ih jeevai na marataa dhekh ||eis marate kau je kouoo rovai ||jo rovai soiee pat khovai ||3||gur prasaadh mai ddagaro paiaa ||jeevan maran dhouoo miTavaiaa ||kahu kabir ih raam kee a(n)s ||jas kaagadh par miTai na ma(n)s ||4||2||5||* SGGS, p. 871

**Translation**: It (God) is not human, and It is not a god. It is not called celibate, or a worshipper of Shiva. It is not a Yogi, and It is not a hermit. It has no mother or is It anyone's son. (Yet It resides inside everyone.) ||1||**Then what is It, which dwells in this temple of (our) body? No one can or has found Its limits. ||1||Pause||**It is not a householder, and It is not a renouncer of the world. It is not a king, and It is not a beggar. It has no body, no drop of blood. It is not a Brahmin, and It is not a Kshatriya. (It resides in all of them, yet It is none of them.) ||2||It is not called a man of austere self-discipline, or a Sheikh. It does not live, and It is not seen to die. If someone cries over Its death (which keeps the body alive), that person loses his honor. (It appears to take birth in everyone and die). ||3||By Guru's Grace, (since) I have found the (true) Path (of life), both my birth and death have been erased (I am free of birth & rebirth cycle). Says Kabir, (I have realized) that the one which resides inside me is part of It (God). It relates to each other like the ink and the paper on which it is written. ||4||2||5||

**Sbd dw Bwv:** prmwqmw hryk jIv iv~c ivAwpk BI hY, qy sB qoN v~Krw BI hY[ jIvW vWg aus nMU jnm-mrn dw gyVw nhIN hY[

**Central message:** God resides in everyone, yet It is a separate entity. It is free from the cycle of birth and rebirth unlike creatures.

Bhagat Kabir commented on the prevalent religious practices of people seeking to attain merger (i.e. realization) with God. He unambiguously condemns most of these practices and rituals and concludes that realization of God is only possible with devoted remembrance and meditation of God. He made it clear that it is imperative that the mind be made free of ego. He said that ritualistic practices will not get you anywhere on this spiritual journey. In one of his compositions in the SGGS, he says:

ikAw jpu ikAw qpu ikAw bRq pUjw] jw kY irdY Bwau hY dUjw]1]

**ry jn mnu mwDau isau lweIAY] cqurweI n cqurBuju pweIAY]rhwau]**

prhru loBu Aru lokwcwru] prhru kwmu k®oDu AhMkwru]2]

krm krq bDy AhMmyv] imil pwQr kI krhI syv]3]

khu kbIr Bgiq kir pwieAw] Boly Bwie imly rGurwieAw]4]6]

kbIr jI gauVI, AMg 324

*Kiaa jap kiaa tap kiaa brat poojaa. Jaa kai ridhai bhaau hai dhoojaa. 1. Re jan man maadhau siau laieeaai. Chaturaiee na chaturabhuj paieeaai. Rahaau. Parahar lobh ar lokaachaar. Parahar kaam karodh ahankaar. 2. Karam karat badhe ahanmev. Mil paathar kee karahee sev. 3. Kahu kabir bhagat kar paiaa. Bhole bhai mile raghuraiaa. 4. 6* SGGS, p.324

**Translation:** What use is chanting, and what use is penance, fasting or devotional worship, to one whose heart is filled with the love of duality? 1. **O brother, link your mind to God*.* Through cleverness (without remembering God), He is not obtained. 1. Pause.** Set aside your greed and worldly ways. Set aside your lust, anger, and egotism.2. Ritual practices bind people in egotism; meeting together, they worship stones (but all these are futile).3. Says Kabir, He is obtained only by devotional worship. Through childlike love, God is met. 4.6.

**Sbd dw Bwv:** mwieAw dI Kwqr qy lok-ivKwvy dI Kwqr mnu~K jp, qp Awidk krm krdy hn, qy isAwxy bx bx ky ivKwauNdy hn – ieh r~b nMU imlx dw rwh nhIN hY[ jy pRBU nMU imlxw hY qW aus dI BgqI kro qy bwl-bu~D rho[

**Central message:** For the sake of worldly possessions and to exhibit to others, people perform rituals and pretend to be clever. One cannot meet God through these rituals. If one is serious about meeting God, then one should meditate on God with a childlike innocence.

[Note: It is important to understand the difference between innocence and ignorance. To treat an idol as God is not innocence, it is ignorance. We should not consider anyone our enemy and should respect everyone equally.]

Bhagat Kabir also makes it clear that ritualistic practices are fruitless, unless there is transformation within the human mind, and the mind becomes free of ego. He was against idol-worship. He commented on the practice of plucking flowers and offering them to a stone idol as part of ritualistic worship as follows:

pwqI qorY mwilnI pwqI pwqI jIau]

ijsu pwhn kau pwqI qorY so pwhn inrjIau]1]

**BUlI mwlnI hY eyau] siqguru jwgqw hY dyau]1]rhwau]**

bRhmu pwqI ibsnu fwrI PUl sMkrdyau]

qIin dyv pRqiK qorih krih iks kI syau]2]

pwKwn giF kY mUriq kIn@I dy kY CwqI pwau]

jy eyh mUriq swcI hY qau gVHxhwry Kwau]3]

Bwqu pihiq Aru lwpsI krkrw kwswru]

Bognhwry BoigAw iesu mUriq ky muK Cwru]4]

mwilin BUlI jgu Bulwnw hm Bulwny nwih]

khu kbIr hm rwm rwKy ik®pw kir hir rwie]5]1]14]ਆਸਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕਬੀਰ, AMg 479

*Paatee torai maalinee paatee paatee jeeau. Jis paahan kau paatee torai so paahan nirajeeau. 1. Bhoolee maalanee hai eau. Satguru jaagataa hai deo. 1. Rahaau. Braham paatee bisan ddaaree fool sa(n)karadheau. Teen dev pratakh toreh kareh kis kee seau. 2. Paakhaan gadd kai moorat keen(h)ee de kai chhaatee paau. Je eh moorat saachee hai tau gaRhanahaare khaau. 3. Bhaat pahit ar laapasee karakaraa kaasaar. Bhoganahaare bhogiaa is moorat ke mukh chhaar. 4. Baalin bhoolee jag bhulaanaa ham bhulaane naeh. Kahu kabir ham raam raakhe kirapaa kar har rai. 5. 1. 14.* SGGS, p. 479

**Translation:** (To offer to the idol), the lady-gardener tears off the leaves, flowers & petals, (but she does not know that) in every leaf, there is life. That stone (idol) for which she tears off those leaves - that stone idol is lifeless. 1. **(By serving the lifeless idol)** **lady-gardener is mistaken, (real One needs to be worshipped**) **God is the Living One. 1. Pause.** (O lady-gardener) the leaves are like Brahma, the branches are like Vishnu, and the flowers are like Shiva. When you openly destroyed these three gods, whose service are you performing (by your offerings)? 2. (The sculptor had) carved the stone and fashioned it into an idol, by placing his feet upon its chest. If this stone god were true (alive), it would have devoured the sculptor (for this insult). 3. Rice and beans, candies, cakes, and cookies - the priest enjoys these, while the mouth of the idol remains dry (because it is lifeless and cannot eat). 4. The lady-gardener is deluded, and the world is mistaken, but I am not. Says Kabir, God preserves me. God, my King, has showered His Blessings upon me and has saved me from this delusion. 5. 1. 14.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** (ie~k inrijMd mUrqI dI syvw kr ky) ies qrHW (ieh) mwlx Bu~l rhI hY, (AslI ieSt) siqgurU qW (jIauNdw) jwgdw dyvqw hY[1[rhwau[

**Central message:** God is alive forever. The lady-gardener is deluded by her offerings and service to a lifeless idol.

For English translation, see above. Bhagat Kabir believed in the omnipresent, formless God. He cannot be reached through rituals.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**3. Bhagat Kabir Challenges Rituals**

**Wearing a thread does not make one holy**

Brahmins display external symbols to establish their (so called) “upper-caste” status and privilege. Brahmin and Kshatriya men can put a saffron mark on the forehead and wear a cotton thread (Juneau) around their neck. A special religious “thread ceremony” is held for initiating ‘upper caste’ boys into adulthood, after which they can participate as adults in Hindu religious ceremonies and rituals. Wearing the thread is considered holy. Women and persons belonging to the (so-called) lower caste are forbidden from wearing this thread.

Hindus believe that the caste system and this practice of wearing a sacred thread (Juneau) is in accordance with their sacred texts (such as the Vedas). Bhagat Kabir did not accept this religious construct and practice. His response, which is recorded in SGGS in Raag Aasaa, is as follows:

hm Gir sUqu qnih inq qwnw kMiT jnyaU qumwry]

qum@ qau byd pVhu gwieqRI goibMdu irdY hmwry]1]

myrI ijhbw ibsnu nYn nwrwien ihrdY bsih goibMdw]

**jm duAwr jb pUCis bvry qb ikAw khis mukMdw]1]rhwau]**

hm gorU qum guAwr gusweI jnm jnm rKvwry]

kbhUM n pwir auqwir crwiehu kYsy Ksm hmwry]2]

qUM bwm@nu mY kwsIk julhw bUJhu mor igAwnw]

qum@ qau jwcy BUpiq rwjy hir sau mor iDAwnw]3]4]26] Awsw, AMg 482

*Hum ghar soot taneh nit taanaa ka(n)tt janeuoo tumaare. Tum(h) tau bedh paRahu gaitree Gobind ridhai hamaare. 1. Meree jihabaa bisan nain naarain hiradhai baseh Gobindaa. Jum dhuaar jab poochhas bavare tab kiaa kahas mukandhaa. 1. Rahaau. Hum goroo tum guaar gusaiee janam janam rakhavaare. Kabahoo(n) na paar autaar charaih kaise khasam hamaare. 2. Too(n) baam(h)n mai kaaseek julahaa boojhahu mor giaanaa. Tum tau jaache bhoopat raaje har sau mor dhiaanaa. 3.4.26.*  SGGS, p. 482

**Translation:** (O stupid Brahmin! You are proud of belonging to the upper class only because) You have a cotton thread (Juneau) round your neck (which we do not have around our neck, but see), we have a pile of cotton threads in our home. (In fact) We weave cloth daily out of that*.* (your claim of reciting Gayatri and Vedas is also false because) You only recite Gayatri and Vedas with your lips, whereas God Himself abides in my heart. 1. **Godresides on my tongue, my eyes, in my heart.** **O, Mukand! What answer will you give when the angel of death asks you about your deeds? (What have you been doing your whole life?) 1. Pause***.* For many lives you have pretended to be our savior. We are like mere cows, but you are our herdsman. You Brahmins were to lead us the way to liberation, but you have not done that. What kind of guardians are you? (You never guided us on how to cross this world-ocean.)2. (It is true that) You are a Brahmin (means you are proud of your birth, education that you received at Banaras, and I am a low caste weaver of Banaras (who is not allowed to receive your education). But listen to my wisdom? (Let me share it with you!) You are always searching for landlords and kings to beg at their door, but I meditate (day and night) on God*.* 3. 4. 26.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy kmly bRwhmx! pRBU jI myrI qW jIB au~qy, myirAW A~KW iv~c qy myry idl ivc v~sdy hn[ pr qYnUM jdoN Drmrwj dI hzUrI ivc pRBU vloN pu~C hovygI qW kIh auq~r dyvyNgw (ik kIh krdw irhw ie~Qy swrI aumr)?[1[rhwa[

For English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

**Reading of scriptures**

Brahmins did not allow persons belonging to the lower castes to read scriptures. They claimed that only Brahmins have the exclusive right to reach spiritual heights, and thereby command everyone’s respect. However, Kabir was a blessed soul. He not only challenged this practice, but he also pointed out the true nature of God’s work in these words:

**korI ko kwhU mrmu n jwnW] sBu jgu Awin qnwieE qwnW]1]rhwau]**

jb qum suin ly byd purwnW] qb hm ieqnku psirE qwnW]1]

Drin Akws kI krgh bnweI] cMdu sUrju duie swQ clweI]2]

pweI joir bwq iek kInI qh qWqI mnu mwnW]

jolwhy Gru Apnw cIn@W Gt hI rwmu pCwnW]3]

khqu kbIru kwrgh qorI] sUqY sUq imlwey korI]4]3]36] Awsw, AMg 484

koree ko kaahoo maram na jaanaa(n) ||sabh jag aan tanaio taanaa(n) ||1|| rahaau ||jab tum sun le bedh puraanaa(n) ||tab ham itanak pasario taanaa(n) ||1||dharan akaas kee karageh banaiee ||cha(n)dh sooraj dhui saath chalaiee ||2||paiee jor baat ik keenee teh taa(n)tee man maanaa(n) ||jolaahe ghar apanaa cheen(h)aa(n) ghaT hee raam pachhaanaa(n) ||3||kahat kabir kaarageh toree ||sootai soot milaae koree||4||3||36|| SGGS, p. 484

**(You all had been insulting me by calling me a weaver, but you do not know that even Godis a weaver), None of you understood that Weaver, who has stretched out the fabric of the whole world. ||1||Pause||** (O Brahmin!), While you were listening to the Vedas and the Puranas, I spent time weaving. (you used your time learning religious scriptures to make a living, I used my time weaving to make a living. Thus, there is no difference between two of us. Then how come you are proud of your knowledge of scriptures and of being a Brahmin?) ||1||He (God*,* the Weaver) has made the earth and sky as His loom. Upon it, He moves the two bobbins of the sun and the moon. ||2|| The Weaver (God) using the foot pedals (the cycle of birth and death) has woven the universe. My mind is pleased with that Weaver who has created everything. I, weaver, has realized (that The Weaver – God) and has found my own home, and recognize Him within my heart. ||3||Says Kabir, when that Weaver combs, He blends my thread with His thread. (i.e. He merges the universe in Himself). ||4||3||36||

**rhwau dI qu~k:** (qusIN swry mYnUM ‘julwh julwh’ AwK ky CuitAwaux dy jqn krdy ho, pr quhwnUM pqw nhIN ik prmwqmw vI julwh hI hY) qusW iksy ny aus julwh dw Byq nhIN pwieAw, ijs ny ieh swrw jgq pYdw krky (mwno) qwxw qx id~qw hY[1[rhwau[

For English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

Throughout his life, Bhagat Kabir proclaimed the existence of God. He strongly believed that all humans are created equal, and no one should be discriminated against based on (so-called) ‘low caste’ status of their birth.

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**4. God Makes a Devotee Fearless**

Throughout his life, Bhagat Kabir advocated against religious exploitation and ritualistic practices. Even while living in Banaras – one of the most sacred centers of the Hindu religion – he was not scared of the so-called “high caste” or other religious “elite” people around him. He did not feel weakened or demoralized despite many hurtful actions taken by these people, especially Brahmins who opposed his views. He was not fearful of discriminatory behavior by Muslims either. He faced every situation calmly, considering it the Will of God. He describes one such incident in his following composition in SGGS.

gMg guswiein gihr gMBIr] jMjIr bWiD kir Kry kbIr]1]

**mnu n ifgY qnu kwhy kau frwie]**

**crn kml icqu rihE smwie]rhwau]**

gMgw kI lhir myrI tutI jMjIr] imRgCwlw pr bYTy kbIr]2]

kih kMbIr koaU sMg n swQ] jl Ql rwKn hY rGunwQ]3]10]18]

BYrau kbIr jI, AMg 1162

*ga(n)g gusain gahir ga(n)bheer ||ja(n)jeer baa(n)dh kar khare kabir ||1||man na ddigai tan kaahe kau ddarai ||charan kamal chit rahio samai || rahaau ||ga(n)gaa kee lahar meree TuTee ja(n)jeer ||miragachhaalaa par baiThe kabir ||2||keh ka(n)bir kouoo sa(n)g na saath ||jal thal raakhan hai raghunaath ||3||10||18||* SGGS, p. 1162

(People opposing my religious views), Tied me up - Kabir - in chains and took me to the deep and profound mother Ganges (to drown me and kill me). ||1|| **(O brother), if one has consciousness immersed in the Lotus Feet of God*,* his mind is not shaken (despite any trouble); then there is no benefit to be gained by scaring that person (by torturing it). ||1||Pause||** (But instead of drowning) The waves of the Ganges broke the chains, and I, Kabir (started floating on the river as if) was seated on a deer skin. ||2||Says Kabir, (O brother! Your ritualistic practices and concept of bathing at holy places) your practices cannot help you and cannot become your companion. On the water, and on the land, only God is the Protector. ||3||10||18||

**rhwau dI qu~k:** (hy BweI!) ijs mnu~K dw mn pRBU dy suhxy crnW ivc lIn rhy, aus dw mn (iksy kSt vyly) foldw nhIN, aus dy SrIr nUM (kSt dy dy ky) frwaux qoN koeI lwB nhIN ho srdw[rhwau[

For English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

Bhagat Kabir showed unwavering faith and a calm state of mind during another life-threatening crisis described by him in SGGS.

Bujw bWiD iBlw kir fwirE] hsqI k®oip mUMf mih mwirE]

hsiq Bwig kY cIsw mwrY] ieAw mUriq kY hau bilhwrY]1]

**Awih myry Twkur qumrw joru] kwjI bikbo hsqI qoru]1]rhwau]**

ry mhwvq quJu fwrau kwit] iesih qurwvhu Gwlhu swit]

hsiq n qorY DrY iDAwnu] vw kY irdY bsY Bgvwnu]2]

ikAw AprwDu sMq hY kIn@w] bWiD pot kuMcr kau dIn@w]

kuMcru pot lY lY nmskwrY] bUJI nhI kwjI AMiDAwrY]3]

qIin bwr pqIAw Bir lInw]mn kToru AjhU n pqInw]

kih kbIr hmrw goibMdu] cauQy pd mih jn kI ijMdu]4]1]4]

rwgu gONf bwxI kbIr jIau kI, AMg 870

*raag go(n)dd baanee Kabir jeeau kee ghar doojaaikOankaar Satguru prasaadh ||bhujaa baa(n)dh bhilaa kar ddaario ||hasatee karop moo(n)dd meh maario ||hasat bhaag kai cheesaa maarai ||eiaa moorat kai hau balihaarai ||1||aaeh mere Thaakur tumaraa jor ||kaajee bakibo hasatee tor ||1|| rahaau ||re mahaavat tujh ddaarau kaaT ||eiseh turaavahu ghaalahu saaT ||hasat na torai dharai dhiaan ||vaa kai ridhai basai bhagavaan ||2||kiaa aparaadh sa(n)t hai keen(h)aa ||baa(n)dh poT ku(n)char kau dheen(h)aa ||ku(n)char poT lai lai namasakaarai ||boojhee nahee kaajee a(n)dhiaarai ||3||teen baar pateeaa bhar leenaa ||man kaThor ajahoo na pateenaa ||keh Kabir hamaraa gobi(n)dh ||chauthe padh meh jan kee ji(n)dh ||4||1||4||* SGGS, p. 870

**Translation:** They tied my arms, bundled me up, and threw me (before the elephant). (The elephant driver) is infuriated and has struck the elephant on the head. But the elephant (instead of squashing me under its feet) ran away trumpeting (in a different direction), (it seems the elephant is saying) I am a sacrifice to this image of God*.*||1||**O my God (and Master), the Qazi is shouting at the driver to drive the elephant (on Kabir), But You are my strength (I am not afraid of anything because of Your blessing). ||1||Pause||** (The Qazi is ordering the elephant driver)hit the elephant(drive him over Kabir) otherwise I shall cut you into pieces. But the elephant does not move (it appears) the elephant is meditating (on God) ||2||(They) rolled me into a bundle and threw me before the elephant. What sin I, a devotee of God, had committed? The Qazi was blind (in his religious fanaticism)) could not understand it; (on the other side) the elephant was again and again bowing to the bundle (of my body). ||3|| (Qazi ordered the elephant driver to stomp the elephant over me) three times, still his hardened mind was not softened (in pity). Says Kabir, (Qazi could not understand) God is my Master. The soul of Hi*s* humble servant dwells in the feet of God (no one can scare them). ||4||1||4||

**Sbd dw Bwv:** ismrn krn vwly bMidAW dI surq sdw pRBU-crnW ivc rihMdI hY, ies vwsqy auhnW nMU koeI frw Dmkw nhIN skdw[

**Central message** of the Shabad: Devotees of God have their consciousness centered on Him. Nothing can scare them in life. They truly become fearless (inrBau).

In these compositions, when taken literally, the personal experience described by Bhagat Kabir may be hard to believe and digest. These were not miracles performed by him to save his own life, or to impress the ruler and spectators, or to make them his followers. The message being conveyed by Kabir is that no matter what the threatening circumstances may be, our trust in God should not waver. One should keep on meditating on God and accept God’s Will, no matter what the outcome ultimately turns out to be.

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**5. Union of Soul with God**

There are many Shabads in SGGS by both Guru Jis and Bhagats where they use the relationship between husband and wife as a metaphor to describe a devotee’s relationship with God. Kabir uses this metaphor in a variety of ways, including wedding dress and list of guests. Kabir considers himself as the bride, and God as the bridegroom. This metaphor has been traditionally employed by devotees in India, referring to themselves as female and the God as male. In their thinking, all human beings are brides and God is the sole bridegroom. It is a declaration of the ultimate purpose of life, which is to unite the human being with God.

Kabir’s compositions are an expression of his experience of this communion with God. Just as the Indian bride at the time of her wedding, dresses in red color, Kabir says that he has dyed himself red. Bhagat Kabir’s composition in SGGS is as follows:

qnu rYnI mnu pun rip kir hau pwcau qq brwqI]

rwm rwie isau Bwvir lYhau Awqm iqh rMig rwqI]1]

**gwau gwau rI dulhnI mMglcwrw]**

**myry igRh Awey rwjw rwm Bqwrw]1]rhwau]**

nwiB kml mih bydI ric ly bRhm igAwn aucwrw]

rwm rwie so dUlhu pwieE As bfBwg hmwrw]2]

suir nr muin jn kauqk Awey koit qyqIs aujwnW]

kih kbIr moih ibAwih cly hY purK eyk Bgvwnw]3]2]24] Awsw, AMg 482

*Tun rai-nee mun pun rap kar hau paachau tat baraatee. Raam rai siau bhaavar laihau aatam teh rung raatee.1. Gaau gaau ree dhulahanee ma(n)galachaaraa. Maerh gireh aae raajaa raam bhataaraa.1. Rahaau. Naabh kamal meh bedhee rach le braham giaan auchaaraa. Raam rai so dhoolahu paio as baddabhaag hamaaraa. 2 Sur nar mun jan kautak aae koat tetees aujaanaa(n). Kaeh Kabir moh biaaeh chale hai purakh ek bhagavaanaa. 3.2.24* SGGS, p. 482

**Translation:** I make my body (to dye my mind) the dyeing vat (i.e. I keep my mind in the body so that it does not go astray). Within it (adding water of Naam, dye of devotion), I dye my mind (with the dye of virtues, red in color of love). I make the five virtues my marriage guests [Truth (*Sat)*, Contentment (*Santokh*), Compassion (*Daya*), Righteousness (*Dharam*), Humility (*Nimrata*)]. I take my marriage vows with God, my King; my soul is imbued with His Love. 1. **Sing, sing, O recently married brides! (five sense organs immersed in God’s devotion) the marriage songs of God because God, my King, has come to my house (heart) as my Bridegroom (the creator of the universe). 1. Pause.** In the lotus of my breath (taking the breath to the navel), I have made my bridal pavilion, and the Mantras of God’s wisdom are being chanted to solemnize the wedding. I have obtained the King (God) as my Husband - such is my great good fortune. 2. The angels, holy men, silent sages, and the 330,000,000 deities have come in their heavenly chariots (which represents the spiritual flight of the deities) to witness this spectacle of the marriage. Says Kabir, I have been taken in marriage by the God. 3. 2. 24.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy nvIaN vhUtIa! (pRBU-pRIq ivc rMgy igAwn-ieMidRa!) qusI muV-muV suhwg dy gIq gwE, (ikaNik) myry (ihrdy-) Gr ivc myrw pqI (jgq dw) mwlk-prmwqmw AwieAw hY[1[rhwau[

For English translation of Rahao Tuk*,* see above.

In the above Shabad, Bhagat Kabir has used many metaphors. To make the message clear and unambiguous, Guru Nanak Dev ji composed a similar Shabad in the same Raag. The Rahao Tuks of the two Shabads show close resemblance. Guru Nanak Dev ji’s Shabad in SGGS is as follows:

kir ikrpw ApnY Gir AwieAw qw imil sKIAw kwju rcwieAw]

Kylu dyiK min Andu BieAw shu vIAwhx AwieAw]1]

**gwvhu gwvhu kwmxI ibbyk bIcwru]**

**hmrY Gir AwieAw jgjIvnu Bqwru]1]rhwau]**

gurU duAwrY hmrw vIAwhu ij hoAw jW shu imilAw qW jwinAw]

iqhu lokw mih sbdu rivAw hY Awpu gieAw mnu mwinAw]2]

Awpxw kwrju Awip svwry horin kwrju n hoeI]

ijqu kwrij squ sMqoKu dieAw Drmu hY gurmuiK bUJY koeI]3]

Bniq nwnku sBnw kw ipru eyko soie]

ijs no ndir kry sw sohwgix hoie]4]10] Awsw m: 1, AMg 351

*kar kirapaa apanai ghar aaiaa taa mil sakheeaa kaaj rachaiaa ||khel dhekh man anadh bhiaa sahu veeaahan aaiaa ||1||gaavahu gaavahu kaamanee bibek beechaar ||hamarai ghar aaiaa jagajeevan bhataar ||1|| rahaau ||guroo dhuaarai hamaraa veeaahu j hoaa jaa(n) sahu miliaa taa(n) jaaniaa ||tih lokaa meh sabadh raviaa hai aap giaa man maaniaa ||2||aapanaa kaaraj aap savaare horan kaaraj na hoiee ||jit kaaraj sat sa(n)tokh dhiaa dharam hai gurmukh boojhai koiee ||3||bhanat naanak sabhanaa kaa pir eko soi ||jis no nadhar kare saa sohaagan hoi ||4||10||* SGGS, p. 351

When by His Grace, He came to my home (accepting my heart as His residence), then my companions (eyes, ears, tongue etc.) met together to celebrate my marriage. Beholding this play (my effort), my mind became blissful; my Husband (Master) has come to marry me (to let me stay in His lotus feet). ||1|| **O brides (my sense organs) so sing, repeatedly, the songs of wisdom and reflection (which can distinguish between virtue and evil). (O my tongue! Recite the glory of God so that I can refrain from blasphemy; O my ears! Listen to the glory of God so that I stop listening to blasphemy). My spouse, the Life of the world, has come into my home (heart). ||1||Pause||**When I was married with Guru’s guidance, I met my Husband (Master), and I came to know Him. The Word of His Shabad is pervading the three worlds; when my ego was quieted, my mind became happy. ||2||He Himself arranges His own affairs; His affairs cannot be arranged by anyone else. By the affair of this marriage, truth, contentment, mercy, and faith are produced. Rare are the Gurmukhs who understand it! ||3||Says Nanak, that God alone is the Husband of all. She, upon whom He casts His Glance of Grace (He manifests in her heart), becomes the happy soul-bride. ||4||10||

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy iesqRIa! (hy myry igAwn-ieMidRa! cMgy mMdy dI) prK dI ivcwr (pYdw krn vwlw gIq) muV muV gwvo (hy myrI jIB! isPq-swlwh ivc juV; qwik qYnMU inMdw krn vloN htx dI sUJ Aw jwey[ hy myry kMno! isPq-swlwh dy gIq suxdy rho, qW ju inMdw sunx dI bwx hty)[ swfy Gr ivc (myry ihrdy-Gr ivc) auh Ksm-pRBU Aw v~isAw hY jo swry jgq dI izMdgI (dw Awsrw) hY[1[rhwau[

For English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

Bhagat Kabir also declares that this communion has enabled him to become one with God seamlessly. Now, he is enjoying celestial bliss and will not be reincarnated. He shares with us the blessed feeling of union with God in his composition in SGGS.

kIE isMgwru imln ky qweI]hir n imly jgjIvn gusweI]1]

**hir myro ipru hau hir kI bhurIAw]rwm bfy mY qnk lhurIAw]1]rhwau]**

Dn ipr eykY sMig bsyrw] syj eyk pY imlnu duhyrw]2]

DMin suhwgin jo pIA BwvY] kih kbIr iPir jnim n AwvY]3]8]30]

Awsw, AMg 483

*keeo si(n)gaar milan ke taiee ||har na mile jagajeevan gusaiee ||1||har mero pir hau har kee bahureeaa ||raam badde mai tanak lahureeaa ||1|| rahaau ||dhan pir ekai sa(n)g baseraa ||sej ek pai milan dhuheraa ||2||dha(n)n suhaagan jo peea bhaavai ||keh Kabir fir janam na aavai ||3||8||30||* SGGS, p. 483

I have decorated myself to meet my Husband (Master*/*God*)*. But God, the Life of the World, the Sustainer of the Universe, has not come to meet me. ||1||**God is my Husband, and I am God*'s* naive bride. God is so great, and I am infinitesimally small. ||1||Pause||**The bride (me, the human) and the Groom (God) dwell together. We lie upon the one bed, but (yet) the union is difficult. ||2||Blessed is the soul-bride, who is pleasing to her Husband(Master*)*. Says Kabir, she (human) shall not have to be reincarnated again. ||3||8||30||

**rhwau dI qu~k:** prmwqmw myrw Ksm hY, mYN ausdI AMvwx ijhI vhutI hW (myrw aus nwl myl nhIN huNdw, ikauNik) myrw Ksm-pRBU bhuq v~fw hY qy mYN in~kI ijhI bwlVI hW[1[rhwau[

For English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

After the death of this great mystic poet of the 15th century, since his message had resonated with people from both the Hindu and Muslim communities, there was a tussle between Hindus and Muslims over the issue of his last rites. Eventually, in his memory a tomb and Samadhi were constructed, which are revered even today. Even in his death Bhagat Kabir had united those practicing different faiths, who were often at loggerheads with each other.

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**6. Bhagat Namdev’s God**

Bhagat Namdev (1270–1350 CE) was born in the village of Naras-Vamani, near Aundha Nagnath and Risod (presently called Narsi Namdeo), in Maharashtra state. His father, a calico printer/tailor, was named Damshet and his mother's name was Gonabai.

Most of the spiritual messages of Bhagat Namdev, just like those of the Sikh Gurus, emphasized the importance of living the life of a householder (“*grist jeevan*"). He believed that even a married person with a family could attain enlightenment. He emphasized that one of the truest forms of devotional meditation is for the husband and wife to jointly seek the blessed experience of God.

Namdev’s compositions condemning discrimination based on caste (high and low caste), Karam Kand (ritualistic practices), and idol worship are included in SGGS. He advocated belief in God who is omnipresent (ever present) and omniscient (all knowing).

In his compositions in SGGS, Namdev variously addressed God as Madho, Keso, Sanval, Ram, Ramaia, Naraian, and Beethal.

**Beethal**

It is erroneously believed by some people that Bhagat Namdev used “Beethal” to mean an idol of the Hindu god Krishna. He was in fact referring to God. In SGGS, the compositions of Bhagats, and of the Sikh Gurus too, used prevalent terminology to address God. The following examples from Bhagat Namdev’s compositions make it clear that he had used “Beethal” to refer to God:

eIBY bITlu aUBY bITlu bITl ibnu sMswru nhI]

Qwn Qnµqir nwmw pRxvY pUir rihE qUM srb mhI]4]2] Awsw, AMg 485

*e'eebhai beeThal uoobhai beeThal beeThal bin sa(n)saar nahee ||thaan thana(n)tar naamaa pranavai poor rahio too(n) sarab mahee ||4||2||*

SGGS, p. 485

God is here, God is there; without God, there is no world at all. Prays Namdev, O God, You are totally permeating and pervading all places and interspaces. ||4||2||

qyrw nwmu rUVo rUpu rUVo Aiq rMg rUVo myro rwmeIAw]1]rhwau]**……**

swiDk isD sgl muin cwhih ibrly kwhU fITulw]

sgl Bvx qyro nwmu bwlhw iqau nwmy min bITulw]5]3]

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਕੀ, AMg 693

*teraa naam rooRo roop rooRo at ra(n)g rooRo mero raamieeaa ||1|| rahaau ||j………saadhik sidh sagal mun chaaheh birale kaahoo ddeeThulaa ||sagal bhavan tero naam baalahaa tiau naame man beeThulaa ||5||3||*

SGGS, p. 693

God, Your Name is so beautiful! Your form is so beautiful! Your Love is so exceptionally beautiful, O my God. ||1||Pause||……….All the seekers, Siddhas and silent sages seek Him, but only a rare few behold Him. Just as Your Name is dear to all the Universe, so is God dear to Namdev's mind. ||5||3||

Namdev is using the word “Ramaiaa” in the Rahao Tuk, and “Beethla” in the last Tuk. Both these words refer to God.

Awju nwmy bITlu dyiKAw mUrK ko smJwaU ry]rhwau]---------

nwmy soeI syivAw jh dyhurw n msIiq]4]3]7] iblwvlu gONf, AMg 874

Aaj naame beeThal dhekhiaa moorakh ko samajhaauoo re|| rahaau……..naame soiee seviaa jeh dhehuraa na maseet ||4||3||7||

SGGS, p. 874

O Pandit! I, Namdev, have seen God in this lifetime, (but you stayed ignorant, you could not see God). Let me explain to you ignorant person (why you are not able to see God). ||Pause||………The Hindu is sightless; the Muslim has only one eye. The spiritual teacher is wiser than both. The Hindu worships at the temple, the Muslim at the mosque. Namdev serves that One God, who is not limited to either the temple or the mosque. ||4||3||7||

Namdev is also making it clear that his “Beethal” is neither in the Hindu temple nor in the Muslim masjid. Instead, He is everywhere.

In the SGGS, the Sikh Gurus have also used the term “Beethal” for God*,* as is clear from following examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | nwmu nrhr inDwnu ijn kY rs Bog eyk nrwiexw]  rs rUp rMg Anµq **bITl** swis swis iDAwiexw] | ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫, AMg 925 |
|  | *naam narahar nidhaan jin kai ras bhog ek narainaa ||ras roop ra(n)g ana(n)t beeThal saas saas dhiaainaa||* | SGGS, p. 925 |
|  | Those who have the treasure of God*'s* Name in their heart, for them reciting God’s Name is the enjoyment of sensual desires of the world. Meditating on God with every breath is the pleasure, joy, and beauty. | |
| 2. | sB idn ky smrQ pMQ **ibTul**y hau bil bil jwau]  gwvn Bwvn sMqn qorY crn auvw kY pwau]1]rhwau] | ਦੇਵਗੰਧਾਰੀ ਮ:੫, AMg 536 |
|  | *sabh dhin ke samarath pa(n)th biThule hau bal bal jaau ||gaavan bhaavan sa(n)tan torai charan uvaa kai paau ||1|| rahaau ||* | SGGS, p. 536 |
|  | **O God,** existing beyond the influence of illusion! Bless me so that I can stay at the feet of the pious persons who praise *You*, whom *You* like, who can show me the path to a perfect way of living. ||1||*Pause*|| | |
| 3. | AYso prcau pwieE]  krI ik®pw dieAwl **bITulY** siqgur muJih bqwieE]1]rhwau] | ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫, AMg 205 |
|  | *aaiso parachau paio II karee kirpaa dhiaal beeathlai Satguru mujheh bataio II1II rahaau II* | SGGS, p. 705 |
|  | I have developed an intimate relationship (with God). With God***’s*** grace I am blessed that have told me of the Guru. II1II *Pause* II | |
| 4. | jIvqu rwm ky gux gwie]  krhu ik®pw gopwl **bITul**y ibsir n kb hI jwie]1]rhwau] | ਸਾਰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ , AMg 1223 |
|  | *jeevat raam ke gun gai II karahu kirpaa gopaal beeTHule bisar na kab hee jai II1II rahaau II* | SGGS, p. 1223 |
|  | I live (blissful spiritual life) by singing the Glorious Praises of God*.* **O Creator of the universe**! Please be merciful (to me) so that I may never forget (Your Name, Naam). | |

Like the Sikh Gurus, Bhagat Namdev has used many names for God*.* Beethal is one of them. He has used it to mean God, who is everywhere.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**7. Bhagat Namdev’s God Drinking Milk**

Bhagat Namdev’s following Shabad in SGGS, seemingly tells a story of how he made the idol ‘drink milk’, thereby enabling him to see God*.*

dUDu ktorY gfvY pwnI] kpl gwie nwmY duih AwnI]1]

**dUDu pIau goibMdy rwie] dUDu pIau myro mnu pqIAwie]**

**nwhI q Gr ko bwpu irswie]1]rhwau]**

suoien ktorI AMimRq BrI] lY nwmY hir AwgY DrI]2]

eyku Bgqu myry ihrdy bsY] nwmy dyiK nrwienu hsY]3]

dUDu pIAwie Bgqu Gir gieAw] nwmy hir kw drsnu BieAw]4]3]

BYrau bwxI nwmdyau jIau kI, AMg 1163

*dhoodh kaTorai gaddavai paanee|| kapal gai naamai dhuh aanee ||1||dhoodh peeau gobi(n)dhe rai||dhoodh peeau mero man pateeaai ||naahee ta ghar ko baap risai||1||rahaau||suoin kaToree a(n)mirat bharee ||lai naamai har aagai dharee||2||ek bhagat mere hiradhe basai||naame dhekh narain hasai||3||dhoodh peeaai bhagat ghar giaa||naame har kaa dharasan bhiaa ||4||3|* SGGS, p. 1163

(O my God! Your servant) Namdev has milked the brown cow and brought a cup of milk and a jug of water. ||1|| **O my Sovereign God! Please drink the milk (so that) my mind gets blissful. Otherwise, my consciousness will be restless. ||1||Pause||** Namdev hasfilled the pure heart-like-cup with the ambrosial milk and placed it before God (i.e., Namdev has drenched his heart with God*’s* name and has offered it to God) and begs God to drink the milk). ||2||God looked upon Namdev, smiled (and said) this one devotee abides within my heart. ||3||God drank the milk, and the devotee fell into a super-conscious state. Thus, (in this super-consciousness state) Namdev received the Blessed Vision of God. ||4||3||

**Sbd dw Bwv:** pRIq dw srUp, ijs nwl ipAwr hovy, aus dI syvw kIiqAW idl ivc TMF pYNdI hY[

**Central message** of the Shabad: By lovingly serving God, one truly experiences bliss.

However, in-depth analysis of the Shabad requires the following aspects of the Shabad (the words used, and what they refer to) to be carefully examined:

1. **Outcome of drinking the milk:** Those who believe in the story say that Namdev was able to see God upon the idol’s drinking milk. It defies logic. If Namdev was successful in meeting God with idol worship, he should have continued with idol worship for the rest of his life. However, his Shabad “Aneeley kunbh…..” shows that he was firmly opposed to idol worship.
2. **Innocence** (a state of mind)**:** The story says that Namdev was “innocent” when his father asked him to offer milk to the idol in his absence. The following Shabad of Bhagat Ravidas in SGGS makes a reference to God in relation to the story of Bhagat Namdev offering milk to God*.*

**hir hir hir hir hir hir hry]**

**hir ismrq jn gey insqir qry]1]rhwau]**

hir ky nwm kbIr aujwgr] jnm jnm ky kwty kwgr]1]

inmq nwmdyau dUDu pIAwieAw] qau jg jnm sMkt nhI AwieAw]2]

jn rivdws rwm rMig rwqw]

ieau gur prswid nrk nhI jwqw]3]5] Awsw, AMg 487

*har har har har har har hare ||har simarat jan ge nisatar tare ||1|| rahaau ||har ke naam Kabir ujaagar ||janam janam ke kaaTe kaagar ||1||nimat naamadheau dhoodh peeaaiaa ||tau jag janam sa(n)kaT nahee aaiaa ||2||jan ravidhaas raam ra(n)g raataa ||eiau gur parasaadh narak nahee jaataa ||3||5||* SGGS, p. 487

**By meditating on God with every breath, the humble are carried across to salvation. ||1||Pause||** Through God*'s* Name, Kabir became famous and respected (in the world) and the accounts of his past incarnations were torn up. ||1||Because of Namdev's meditation on God*’s* name, God drank the milk he offered, and he shall not have to suffer the pains of reincarnation into the world again. ||2|| Servant Ravidas is imbued with God*'s* Love. By Guru's Grace, he shall not have to go to hell. ||3||5||

**Sbd dw Bwv: nwm ismrn dI brkiq nwl nIvIN jwq vwly bMdy vI sMswr-smuMdr qoN qr jWdy hn[**

**Central message** of the Shabad: By meditating on God*’s* name, even those belonging to the (so-called) lower castes shall cross the world’s ocean (i.e., succeed in achieving the goal of this human life).

The essence of a Shabad is in the Rahao Tuk. In this Shabad, the technique for crossing (the world’s ocean) is explained as remembering God – not idol worship. Ravidas is providing examples of two Bhagats – Kabir and Namdev. Bhagat Kabir became famous by meditating on God. Bhagat Namdev impressed God by meditating on Him. Namdev was already practicing reciting God*’s* name before God (supposedly) “drank milk”.

1. **Where was the idol?** The story says that Namdev’s father used to bathe the idol every day and offer it milk. His father was from a “low” caste. It cannot be believed that being a low caste person, the father could keep an idol at home. This was the prerogative of the “higher” caste Hindus and priests. During those days, (so called) lower castes were not even allowed to go near a temple lest the temple gets defiled. It simply means that the story is wrong in suggesting that there ever was an idol to whom Namdev tried to offer milk while his father was away.
2. **Golden bowl:** The Shabad says that Namdev used a bowl made of gold to offer milk. It is difficult to believe that Namdev – a low caste person doing menial work – could afford a bowl made of gold to offer milk to the idol. In this context, it is interesting to refer to the following Shabad of Namdev in SGGS:

suieny kI sUeI rupy kw Dwgw] nwmy kw icqu hir sau lwgw[4[3[AMg 485

*suine kee sooiee rupe kaa dhaagaa ||naame kaa chit har sau laagaa ||4||3||* SGGS, p. 485

My needle (God*’s* Name) is made of gold, and my thread is silver (i.e. by His Grace, my mind is pure). (With this needle and thread) Namdev's mind is connected with God. ||4||3||

Taken literally, Namdev, being a tailor, was using a needle of gold to stitch clothes. It will also be difficult to believe that he was using silver (Rupey) for stitching. Gold and silver have been used as metaphors. Both gold and silver are precious metals and are considered pious for Hindu religious ceremonies. Thread follows the needle to sew clothes. Similarly, Guru’s Shabad (golden needle) connects (silver thread) the Devotee’s spiritual state (*Surat*) to God*.*

1. **Father of the house**: The Shabad “Doodh katorey Panee……”, refers to the father of the house (Ghar ko Baap) in the Rahao Tuk. As we can see from the following examples in SGGS, the “Ghar” in SGGS is used for the human body, and “Father” of the body is the spirit (Aatma, “*man*”).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Gr ky ijTyry kI cUkI kwix] | Awsw mhlw 5, AMg 370 |
|  | *ghar ke jiThere kee chookee kaan ||* | SGGS, p. 370 |
|  | I am no longer swayed by my elder brother-in-law (the fear of Death). | |
| 2 | Gr kI nwieik Gr vwsu n dyvY] | Awsw mhlw 5, AMg 371 |
|  | *ghar kee naik ghar vaas na dhevai ||* | SGGS, p. 371 |
|  | She (This illusion) has become the mistress of my home, and she does not allow me to live in it (does not let me have a state of blissful living). | |
| 3 | saukin Gr kI kMiq iqAwgI] | Awsw mhlw 5, AMg 394 |
|  | *saukan ghar kee ka(n)t tiaagee ||* | SGGS, p. 394 |
|  | My Husband (Master) has driven out the one who was my rival (illusion). | |
| 4 | Gr mih pMc vrqdy pMcy vIcwrI] | Awsw mhlw 3, AMg 425 |
|  | *ghar meh pa(n)ch varatadhe pa(n)che veechaarees* | SGGS, p. 425 |
|  | The five passions pervade in the heart of learned people, but here the five are well-behaved (they stay within the limit). | |
| 5 | Gr mih Twkuru ndir n AwvY] | sUhI mhlw 5, AMg 739 |
|  | *ghar meh Thaakur nadhar na aavai ||* | SGGS, p.739 |
|  | (One attached to worldly things) he does not even come to see his God living inside him. | |
| 6 | Gir rhu ry mn mugD ieAwny] | mwrU mhlw 1, AMg 1030 |
|  | *ghar rahu re man mugadh iaane ||* | SGGS, p. 1030 |
|  | Remain in your own home (self), O my foolish and ignorant mind. | |

There are numerous other instances in SGGS which make it clear that “Ghar” means ‘human body’. Also, the word ‘Reesai” in the Rahao Tuk of the main Shabad under discussion means “to take care”.

1. **Who drank the milk?**

In the Rahao Tuk, Namdev has addressed Godas “Gobindey Rai”. As we have seen, Namdev addressed God with many names. The word used by Namdev and others for idols is “Thakur”.This is clear from the following Shabad in SGGS.

AwnIly kuMB BrweIly aUdk **Twkur** kau iesnwnu krau]

bieAwlIs lK jI jl mih hoqy **bITlu** BYlw kwie krau]1]

jqR jwau qq **bITl**u BYlw] mhw Anµd kry sd kylw]1]rhwau]

AwnIly PUl proeIly mwlw **Twkur** kI hau pUj krau]

pihly bwsu leI hY Bvrh **bITl** BYlw kwie krau]2]

AwnIly dUDu rIDweIly KIrM **Twkur** kau nYvydu krau]

pihly dUDu ibtwirE bCrY **bITlu** BYlw kwie krau]3]

eIBY bITlu aUBY bITlu **bITl** ibnu sMswru nhI]

Qwn Qnµqir nwmw pRxvY pUir rihE qUM srb mhI]4]2] Awsw, AMg 485

*aaneele ku(n)bh bharaieele uoodhak Thaakur kau isanaan karau ||biaalees lakh jee jal meh hote beeThal bhailaa kai karau ||1||jatr jaau tat beeThal bhailaa ||mahaa ana(n)dh kare sadh kelaa ||1|| rahaau ||aaneele fool paroieele maalaa Thaakur kee hau pooj karau ||pahile baas liee hai bhavareh beeThal bhailaa kai karau ||2||aaneele dhoodh reedhaieele kheera(n) Thaakur kau naivedh karau ||pahile dhoodh biTaario bachharai beeThal bhailaa kai karau ||3||e'eebhai beeThal uoobhai beeThal beeThal bin sa(n)saar nahee ||thaan thana(n)tar naamaa pranavai poor rahio too(n) sarab mahee||4||2||* SGGS, p. 485

(If) I bring a pitcher, fill it with water and bathe God (then that bathing is not acceptable to God) because 4.2 million species of beings live in the water. (But my) God already lives (in those species) (and was taking the bath, then) how can I bathe (the idol).||1|| **Wherever I go, God is there (He exists in everyone) and He continually plays in supreme bliss. ||1||Pause||** If I bring flowers to weave a garland to worship God (then those flowers cannot be acceptable to God because) the bumble bee has already sucked out the fragrance. (But my God) already lives (in the bumble bee). God (already lives in the bumble bee and was sucking the fragrance of the flowers) then why should I use it to worship the idol? ||2|| If I carry milk and cook it to make pudding to feed the idol (then that milk cannot be acceptable because) the calf has already tasted the milk (but my God) already lives (in the calf and has tasted the milk) then why should I use it for the idol? ||3|| (In the universe), God is here, God is there; without God, there is no world of existence at all. Namdev prays to that God, You are totally permeating and pervading all places and interspaces. ||4||2||

**rhwau qu~k:** ਮੈਂ ਜਿੱਧਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਉੱਧਰ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ (ਸਭ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੋ ਕੇ) ਬੜੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਚੋਜ ਤਮਾਸ਼ੇ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।1। ਰਹਾਉ।

for English translation of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

Everywhere in the Shabad, when Bhagat Namdev is referring to idol worship, he is using the word “Thakur”. But when referring to God*,* he is using the word “Beethal”. It is clear from Namdev’s Shabad “Doodh katorey Panee……”, that “Gobindey Rai” refers to God. Namdev says he made someone drink the milk? Also, Ravidas says so in his Shabad mentioned under item 3 above. The question is who “drank the milk” offered by Namdev?

The story makes sense **only** if it is understood metaphorically, and not literally. Neither the idol (nor any God) was made to “drink milk” in the literal sense. It was his meditation that led Namdev to God. Bhagat Namdev is offering his pure heart (golden bowl) full of meditation (sweet milk). Thus, drinking of milk is symbolic of acceptance of Namdev’s efforts. Bhagat Namdev thus attained the state of *Sehaj* (peace and tranquility) (Bhagat *Ghar giyaa*).

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**8. Prayers Turning an Idol**

There are two Shabads in SGGS composed by Bhagat Namdev which are about praying to God*.* These Shabads seemingly suggest that by doing so, the “idol” of Beethal turned towards Namdev.

In using the word “Beethal,” Namdev is referring to God, as explained in Chapter 6. It is also important to remember that many of Namdev’s Shabads should be understood metaphorically, and not literally. The literal translation can be misleading or can easily lead to misinterpretation, as is the case for many other Shabads in the SGGS as well.

The relevant Shabads of Bhagat Namdev are given below. After the Shabad (in Punjabi), first the literal English translation is given and then the metaphorical explanation is given (in Punjabi), followed by its English translation. It is the metaphorical explanation in Punjabi and its English translation that convey the correct meaning of the Shabad and of its Rahao Tuk*.*

**The First Shabad of Namdev**

hsq Kylq qyry dyhury AwieAw] Bgiq krq nwmw pkir auTwieAw]1]

**hInVI jwiq myrI jwidm rwieAw] CIpy ky jnim kwhy kau AwieAw]1]rhwau]**

lY kmlI cilE pltwie] dyhurY pwCY bYTw jwie]2]

**ijau ijau nwmw hir gux aucrY] Bgq jnW kau dyhurw iPrY]**3]6]

BYrau bwxI nwmdyau jIau kI, AMg 1164

*hasat khelat tere dhehure aaiaa ||bhagat karat naamaa pakar uThaiaa ||1||heenaRee jaat meree jaadhim raiaa ||chheepe ke janam kaahe kau aaiaa ||1|| rahaau ||lai kamalee chalio palaTai ||dhehurai paachhai baiThaa jai ||2||jiau jiau naamaa har gun ucharai ||bhagat janaa(n) kau dhehuraa firai |3||6||* SGGS, p. 1164

**Literal translation:** Laughing and playing (enthusiastically), I came to Your Temple, O God*.* While Namdev (I) was worshipping, (but since people call me of low social caste) I was grabbed and driven out (of the temple).||1**||I am of a low social caste, O God*;* why was I born into a family of fabric dyers?||1||Pause||**I picked up my blanket and went back, to sit behind the temple.||2||As Namdev uttered the Glorious Praises of God*,* the temple turned towards God*'s* humble devotee.||3||6||

**Metaphorical meaning (in Punjabi)**:au~cI jwq vwilAW vloN SUdr-AKvWidAW au~qy ho rihAW vDIkIAW dy ivr~uD pRBU A~gy ros[ ijauN ijauN ieh ros SUdr-AKvWdy mnu~K dy AMdr svYmwn pYdw krdw hY, au~c-jwqIey dI AwkV GtdI hY[

**Metaphorical meaning:** Namdev is complaining to God regarding humiliation of a person belonging to the so-called low caste by those belonging to upper caste. By meditating on God*’s* name, as a person belonging to low caste gains self-respect, it reduces the negative impact on them of the arrogance (due to the ego) of those belonging to the upper caste.

**The Second Shabad of Namdev**

**mo kau qUM n ibswir qU n ibswir]**

**qU n ibswry rwmeIAw]1]rhwau]**

AwlwvMqI iehu BRmu jo hY muJ aUpir sB koiplw]

sUdu sUdu kir mwir auTwieE khw krau bwp bITulw]1]

mUey hUey jau mukiq dyhugy mukiq n jwnY koielw]

ey pMfIAw mo kau FyF khq qyrI pYj ipCMaufI hoielw]2]

qU ju dieAwlu ik®pwlu khIAqu hYN AiqBuj BieE Apwrlw]

**Pyir dIAw dyhurw nwmy kau pMfIAn kau ipCvwrlw]**3]2] ਮਲਾਰ , AMg 1292

*mo kau too(n) na bisaar too na bisaar ||too na bisaare aamieeaa ||1|| rahaau ||aalaava(n)tee ih bhram jo hai mujh uoopar sabh kopilaa ||soodh soodh kar maar uThaio kahaa karau baap beeThulaa ||1||mooe hooe jau mukat dhehuge mukat na jaanai koilaa ||e pa(n)ddeeaa mo kau ddedd kahat teree paij pichha(n)auddee hoilaa ||2||too ju dhiaal kirapaal kaheeat hai(n) atibhuj bhio apaaralaa ||fer dheeaa dhehuraa naame kau pa(n)ddeean kau pichhavaaralaa ||3||2|* SGGS, p.1292

**Literal translation: Please do not forget me; please do not forget me, please do not forget me, O God*.* ||1||Pause||**The temple priests have this belief that they belong to upper caste, that is why they are furious with me. Calling me low-caste and untouchable, they beat me and drove me out; what should I alone do now, O Beloved God? ||1||If You liberate me after I am dead, no one will know that I am liberated. These Pandits, these religious scholars, call me low-born; when they say this, they tarnish Your honor as well (Why should anyone meditating on You should be called one belonging to low caste?). ||2||You are kind and compassionate (to everyone whether he/she belongs to so called upper or lower caste); the power of Your Arm is unrivalled (How can anyone bully Your devotee?). (Upon hearing Namdev’s request) God turned the temple around to face Namdev, and with its back towards the Brahmins. ||3||2||

**Metaphorical meaning: ismrn dw nqIjw: inrBYqw Aqy AxK-svYmwn[**

By meditating on God, one becomes fearless and gains self-respect.

For understanding these two Shabads, it is important to know a little bit about Namdev’s background. It is known that Namdev spent a significant part of his life in Pandarpur. Everyone in Pandarpur knew who Namdev was. According to the Hindu caste system, he was from a (so-called) “low caste” (he was a tailor by profession). He was not allowed into Beethal’s temple for worship. Priests (“high caste” custodians of the temple) would not have allowed Namdev on a regular basis.

However, it is possible that one day while Namdev was absorbed in thoughts about God, and was in a spiritually elevated state of mind, he went to the temple. As expected, priests kicked Namdev out, as he was of low caste. Had Namdev been a worshipper of Beethal (idol) and a regular visitor, this would have not happened. Hence, if the Shabad is taken literally, this incident is inconceivable. Also, clearly, in the Rahao Tuk, Namdev is addressing God as ‘Ramaiyaa’, while in other places he addresses Him as ‘Beethal’.

From the above explanations of these two Shabads it seems that Namdev was perhaps pushed out of the temple. When he rested behind the temple, he continued contemplating on God. He was not an idol- worshipper and was not thinking of the idol inside the temple. Instead, he was thinking of God, and could feel the presence of God within himself.

Thus, both these Shabads have a common message. The literal translations give the (incorrect) impression that Namdev is referring to the benefits of worshipping idols of Hindu god*s* (such as Krishna) in temples, but when the Shabads are understood metaphorically they are in fact conveying a very important message against the caste system practiced by Hindus (which the Sikh Gurus firmly oppose), and in favor of the benefits of praying only to God, as the Gurus taught us, rather than to idols.

Other examples of this can also be given. Translating a Shabad literally clearly disregards the central message of Sikhi and can lead us towards a wrong path. For example,

nwnk nwm jhwj hY cVy so aqry pwr[

nanak naam jahaaj hai charey so utrey paar II

Nanak says God*’s* Name(Naam) is a ship. If you get on it, you will be able to get across.

It would be wrong to think that the literal translation gives the correct message. There is in fact no physical ship called ‘Naam’, so boarding it cannot take us to the other side.

In the referenced Shabads, Bhagat Namdev is describing his mental state. The correct meaning of his Shabads can only be understood metaphorically.

It must also be remembered that the “Shabad Guru” in the SGGS is the True “Guru” of the Sikhs. Every Shabad in SGGS must be respected as GurBanee, whether it is composed by Gurus or by Bhagats, Bhatts etc. Every Shabad teaches us how to attain a life of eternal bliss and how to live morally and in accordance with God*’s* Will in this world. This world then becomes heavenly. When properly understood, no Shabad describes actions which are impossible for a human (i.e., “miracles”). The Gurus say clearly that all physical actions follow the laws of nature (*Hukam*).

We also know that **all** the compositions in the Adi Granth compiled by Guru Arjan Dev ji in 1604 are fully consistent with the earlier Gurus’ teachings and Guru Nanak Dev ji’s message in the Mool Mantar. The SGGS teaches that Godis formless and does not manifest on this earth as a god or *‘*deity*’* or as an incarnation (such as Krishna), or as a man-made (stone) idol.

The SGGS has many Shabads about the benefits of praying to God*,* and none of the Shabads in SGGS, including the two Shabads of Namdev discussed above, accept or endorse idol worship.

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**9. Sheikh Farid – Humility & Kindness**

Sheikh Farid (1173–1265 CE) was born in village Kothowal near Multan, now in Pakistan. His full name was Farid-ud-din Masoud. His father’s name was Jamal-ud-din Suleman and mother’s name was Karsum Bibi. His mother was deeply religious. She belonged to the family of Hazrat Ali.

Farid lived a fairly simple life. He got his early education in Arabic and Persian from his grandfather Qazi Suaib. At the age of 16, Farid went on a Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca with his parents. At a young age he met his murshid (master), Quṭ-buddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, a noted Sufi saint. His mentor gave Farid a room in his khanqah (monastery) and advised him that the only purpose of taking birth in this world is to seek to realize God. To attain this, one must shun attachment to the pleasures of the world. After Quṭ-buddin Bakhtiyar died, Farid assumed the mantle of his late spiritual guide. Sheikh Brahm, whom Guru Nanak Dev ji met in 1500 CE at Pak Pattan, was the 11th descendant of Sheikh Farid. Guru Nanak Dev ji collected Farid’s compositions from Sheikh Brahm.

Farid was popularly known to his followers as “Shakarganj,'' which literally translates as “treasury of sugar” but metaphorically means “the abode of sweetness or kindness”. He touched many lives and showed them the true path to a spiritual life. He was extremely kind. Anyone having a conversation with him felt peace of mind. He preached that humility and kindness are the essence of all human virtues.

Two of Sheikh Farid’s couplets included in the SGGS highlighting humility and kindness are as follows:

1. ieku iPkw n gwlwie sBnw mY scw DxI]

**ihAwau n kYhI Twih mwxk sB Amolvy]**129] slok syK PrId ky, AMg 1384

*eik fikaa na gaalai sabhanaa mai sachaa dhanee ||hiaau na kaihee Thaeh maanak sabh amolave ||129||* SGGS, p.1384

Do not utter even a single harsh word (because) Godabides in all. Do not break anyone's heart (because) all (living beings) are priceless jewels. ||129||

**2.** sBnw mn mwixk Twhxu mUil mcWgvw]

**jy qau iprIAw dI isk ihAwau n Twhy khI dw**]130]

*sabhanaa man maanik Thaahan mool machaa(n)gavaa ||je tau pireeaa dhee sik hiaau na Thaahe kahee dhaa ||130||*

The hearts of all are like precious jewels; to harm (anyone) is not good at all. If you desire your Beloved, then do not break anyone's heart.

Guru Nanak Dev ji later elaborated on these Saloks in this way:

isMml ruKu srwierw Aiq dIrG Aiq mucu]

Eie ij Awvih Aws kir jwih inrwsy ikqu]

Pl iPky Pul bkbky kMim n Awvih pq]

**imTqu nIvI nwnkw gux cMigAweIAw qqu]**

sBu ko invY Awp kau pr kau invY n koie]

Dir qwrwjU qolIAY invY su gaurw hoie]

AprwDI dUxw invY jo hMqw imrgwih]

sIis invwieAY ikAw QIAY jw irdY kusuDy jwih]1] rwg Awsw, AMg 470

*salok mahalaa pehilaa ||si(n)mal rukh sarairaa at dheeragh at much ||oi j aaveh aas kar jaeh niraase kit ||fal fike ful bakabake ka(n)m na aaveh pat ||miThat neevee naanakaa gun cha(n)giaaieeaa tat ||sabh ko nivai aap kau par kau nivai na koi ||dhar taaraajoo toleeaai nivai su gauraa hoi ||aparaadhee dhoonaa nivai jo ha(n)taa miragaeh ||sees nivaiaai kiaa theeaai jaa ridhai kusudhe jaeh ||1||* SGGS, p.470

**Translation:** The simmal tree is straight as an arrow; it is very tall, and very thick. But birds which visit it (expecting to get sweet fruits to eat), depart disappointed. Its fruits are tasteless, its flowers are nauseating, and its leaves are useless. **Sweetness and humility, O Nanak, are the essence of virtue and goodness.** (Generally, in the world), Everyone bows down for selfish reasons; no one bows down to benefit someone else. When something is placed on the balancing scale and weighed, the side which descends is heavier. (i.e. one who bows is considered the greater). (bowing means humility at heart, not physically bowing. If it means physical bowing, then) The sinner, like the deer hunter, bows down twice as much. But what can be achieved by bowing the head when the heart is impure? ||1||

Guru Ji used a metaphor of simmal (also spelt semal) to elaborate on the significance of humility. The simmal tree (botanical name Bomba Ceiba, and common name silk-cotton) is fast growing, with beautiful and attractive red flowers. The birds attracted to it come with a hope of finding food but are disappointed as its fruit is acrid and bitter and its flowers are without juice. In other words, they are not of any use, despite being attractive and gorgeous looking.

Sheikh Farid believed that humans have an opportunity in this world to become saintly (*Darvesh*). But, because of greed, people become evil. He believed that to become saintly, one does not have to abandon family life. One can be a householder and yet meditate to realize God. Sheikh Farid’s compositions say that the following are characteristics of a saintly person (Darvesh): humility, no greed, belief in God, service to humanity, not causing hurt to anyone, honest living, and always remembering God.

These virtues of a saintly person are consistent with Guru Nanak Dev ji’s own Shabads and teachings.

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1. **Sheikh Farid – Simple Living**

Many of Sheikh Farid’s compositions instruct us about the characteristics of a saintly person who, while living a simple householder’s life, can still realize God. However, as is true for many other Shabads in the SGGS, a proper understanding of Sheikh Farid’s Saloks requires that these be understood metaphorically, and not literally. Some examples are given below.

**Simple Food**

Taken literally, Sheikh Farid’s following two Saloks give the impression that his practices were against the laws of nature when it comes to food:

**PrIdw rotI myrI kwT kI lwvxu myrI BuK**]

ijnw KwDI copVI Gxy shingy duK]28] slok syK PrId ky, AMg 1379

*Faridhaa roTee meree kaaTh kee laavan meree bhukh ||jinaa khaadhee chopaRee ghane sahanige dhukh ||28||* SGGS, p.1379

Farid, (earned through honest labor) my bread is simple (as dry as wood), and hunger is my appetizer. Those who eat buttered bread will suffer in terrible pain (i.e., simple bread earned through honest means is better. Wishing for rich, gourmet food becomes cause of misery) ||28||

**ruKI suKI Kwie kY TMFw pwxI pIau]**

PrIdw dyiK prweI copVI nw qrswey jIau]29] AMg 1379

*rukhee sukhee khai kai Tha(n)ddaa paanee peeau ||Faridhaa dhekh paraiee chopaRee naa tarasaae jeeau ||29||* SGGS, p.1379

Eat simple bread (earned through honest labor), and drink cold water. Farid, if you see someone having buttered bread, do not get tempted for it. ||29||

Sheikh Farid was a householder, and he led a balanced life. He was a role model, and his actions were a road map for others. However, some people allege that Sheikh Farid used to bite on a piece of wooden bread to satisfy his hunger. This defies the laws of nature and is obviously incorrect. One needs nourishment when hungry. The misunderstanding is the result of a literal translation of Sheikh Farid’s Saloks 28 and 29. When correctly understood, in Salok 29 Sheikh Farid is suggesting that one should eat simple food. In Salok 28, he is suggesting that eating even dry bread (earned through honest labor) satisfies hunger, and that even hunger can serve as a good sauce (Laavan). So, Sheikh Farid is advising not to become a connoisseur and indulge in lavish, elaborate, tasty foods for gastronomical pleasures. Sometimes people even resort to dishonest means to sustain such a lavish lifestyle. Instead, one should consider simple food, earned with honest living, as the best food.

For a proper understanding of his compositions in SGGS, we also need to read Sheikh Farid’s Saloks 16-36 as one group. Further, we need to understand their metaphorical rather than literal meaning. In these Saloks, Sheikh Farid is describing characteristics of a householder who is also a saintly person. The characteristics of such a person are tolerance, freedom from greed, belief in God*,* service to others, not hurting anyone, and engaging in honest living. Such persons humbly accept their financial status and always thankful.

To get an even deeper understanding of the above Saloks, we also need to look at the instructions of Guru Sahibs in SGGS regarding food:

**bwbw horu Kwxw KusI KuAwru]**

**ijqu KwDY qnu pIVIAY mn mih clih ivkwr]1]rhwau]**isrIrwgu mhlw 1, AMg 16

*baabaa hor khaanaa khusee khuaar ||jit khaadhai tan peeReeaai man meh chaleh vikaar ||1|| rahaau//* SGGS, p.16

**O Baba, the pleasures of some foods cause needless inconvenience. Eating them, the body gets sick, and ill thoughts enter the mind. ||1||*Pause*||**

In the above Shabad, Guru Nanak Dev ji says that food is essential for the survival of the body. This is according to the laws of nature. One should stay away from any food which hurts the body. The food should be simple and should be eaten only as needed. One can meditate on God*’s* Name(Naam) only if the body is healthy and strong.

**Householder’s Life**

Taken literally, Sheikh Farid’s following Saloks give the false impression that he is advocating torturing his body and retreating to a forest to meet God.

PrIdw qnu sukw ipMjru QIAw qlIAW KUMfih kwg]

AjY su rbu n bwhuiVE dyKu bMdy ky Bwg]90] slok syK PrId ky, AMg 1382

*Faridhaa tan sukaa pi(n)jar theeaa taleeaa(n) khoo(n)ddeh kaag ||ajai su rab na baahuRio dhekh ba(n)dhe ke bhaag ||90||* SGGS, p.1382

Farid, my withered body (because of indulging in vices) has become a skeleton. (Yet, these) crows are pecking at my palms (i.e. worldly pleasures and vices are pecking at my heart). Behold the ill fate of mortal beings (who indulged in vices), even now, they have not received God*’s* blessings. ||90||

kwgw krMg FMFoilAw sglw KwieAw mwsu]

ey duie nYnw miq Cuhau ipr dyKn kI Aws]91]

*kaagaa kara(n)g dda(n)ddoliaa sagalaa khaiaa maas ||e dhui nainaa mat chhuhau pir dhekhan kee aas ||91||*

The crows have searched my skeleton and eaten all my flesh (desires for worldly pleasure and vices are still pecking at my deteriorated body). I beg of the vices not to touch my eyes; I yearn to see my God. ||91||

kwgw cUMif n ipMjrw bsY q aufir jwih]

ijqu ipMjrY myrw shu vsY mwsu n iqdU Kwih]92]

*kaagaa choo(n)dd na pi(n)jaraa basai ta uddar jaeh ||jit pi(n)jarai meraa sahu vasai maas na tidhoo khaeh ||92||*

O crow do not peck at my skeleton; if you did not have an option and have landed on it, please fly away. Do not eat the flesh from that skeleton (O vices! do not entice my mind), within which my Husband Godabides. ||92||

Before we analyze the above Saloks, let us also look at Sheikh Farid’s views on where to find God.

PrIdw jMglu jMglu ikAw Bvih vix kMfw moVyih]

vsI rbu ihAwlIAY jMglu ikAw FUFyih]19] slok syK PrId ky AMg 1378

*Faridhaa ja(n)gal ja(n)gal kiaa bhaveh van ka(n)ddaa moReh ||vasee rab hiaaleeaai ja(n)gal kiaa ddooddeh ||19||*

Farid, why do you wander from jungle to jungle, crashing through the thorny trees? God abides in (your) heart; why are you looking for Him in the jungle? ||19||

The above Salok makes it clear that according to Sheikh Farid, God resides in a person’s heart.

It is interesting to ponder why Sheikh Farid is talking about torturing his body with hunger, and that crows peck on his skeleton-like body. We can see that the word “crow” has been used metaphorically for “vices” which peck on a person’s heart.

kwg aufwvq Bujw iprwnI]

kih kbIr ieh kQw isrwnI]4]2] sUhI kbIr jI, AMg 792

*kaag uddaavat bhujaa piraanee ||keh Kabir ieh kathaa siraanee ||4||2||*

SGGS, p.792

Kabir says – (I beg you to bless me with *Your Name*, while waiting for *You*) My arm is tired driving away the crows. (on the other hand, my life is over) The story of my life ends. ||4||2||

In his Saloks 90-92 (one can also see Saloks 88 and 89), Sheikh Farid speaks of the dangers of living life in the grip of human vices. In the SGGS, the Fourth Nanak also uses the word “crow” to mean a heart filled with vices.

AMimRq sru siqguru siqvwdI ijqu nwqY kaUAw hMsu hohY] gUjrI mhlw 4, AMg 492

*a(n)mirat sar Satguru sativaadhee jit naatai kuooaa ha(n)s hohai|* SGGS, p.492

The Guru, the Speaker of Truth, is the pool of Ambrosial Nectar (provider of spiritually blissful life); bathing (spiritually) within it, the crow (a heart always living in vices) becomes a swan (person filled with God*’s* name).

Hence, in essence, if we look at all of Sheikh Farid’s Saloks collectively, and understand them metaphorically rather than literally, he provides the following advice for becoming a pure-hearted person who can still realize God:

Do not speak ill of anyone; treat everyone as a friend; do not depend on others; serve others; do not be greedy; engage in honest living; always remember God; get up early in the morning; be humble; speak sweetly and softly; and do not hurt anyone.

His compositions in SGGS provide guidance on how to be a pious person, have a blissful life, and realize God even while living the life of a simple householder. The life of indulgence is not compatible for a spiritual seeker, and it produces physical and mental agony.

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**11. Bhagat Ravidas – Only Good Deeds Matter**

Bhagat Ravidas (1399–1520 CE) was born at Seer Goverdhanpur, Varanasi, U.P., India. His father’s name was Raghu Ram and his mother was Kalsa Devi. His father was a shoe merchant. When Bhagat Ravidas grew up, he took up the profession of shoe repairing. From the early age of seven, Ravidas was predisposed to share his food with others and to serve saintly persons. He was married, and spent his life as a householder.

Bhagat Ravidas was a great religious preacher, poet, and social reformer. He was a monotheist (i.e., a believer of God), and his thoughts are in alignment with Guru Nanak Dev ji’s teachings (Gurmat). He greatly admired Bhagat Kabir ji and Bhagat Namdev ji.

Bhagat Ravidas believed in God, and not in ritualistic practices for idol worship. His following Shabad in SGGS makes it clear.

dUDu q bCrY Qnhu ibtwirE] PUlu Bvir jlu mIin ibgwirE]1]

mweI goibMd pUjw khw lY crwvau] Avru n PUlu AnUpu n pwvau]1]rhwau]

mYlwgr byrHy hY BuieAMgw] ibKu AMimRqu bsih iek sMgw]2]

DUp dIp neIbydih bwsw] kYsy pUj krih qyrI dwsw]3]

**qnu mnu Arpau pUj crwvau] gur prswid inrMjnu pwva]4]**

pUjw Arcw Awih n qorI] kih rivdws kvn giq morI]5]1]

gUjrI sRI rivdws jI, AMg 525

*goojaree sree ravidhaas jee ke padhe ghar teejaaikOankaar Satguru prasaadh ||dhoodh ta bachharai thanahu biTaario ||fool bhavar jal meen bigaario ||1||maiee gobi(n)dh poojaa kahaa lai charaavau ||avar na fool anoop na paavau ||1|| rahaau ||mailaagar berhe hai bhuia(n)gaa ||bikh a(n)mrit baseh ik sa(n)gaa ||2||dhoop dheep nieebedheh baasaa ||kaise pooj kareh teree dhaasaa ||3||tan man arapau pooj charaavau ||gur parasaadh nira(n)jan paavau ||4||poojaa arachaa aaeh na toree ||keh ravidhaas kavan gat moree ||5||1||* SGGS, p.525

**Literal translation:** The calf has contaminated the milk in the teats. The bumble bee has contaminated the flower (by smelling it first), and the fish the water (milk, flower & water are thus no longer pure, worthy of offering to God). ||1||O mother, where shall I find any offering (which is untouched and pure) for God*'s* worship? I cannot find any other flowers worthy of the incomparable God (therefore, can I not worship God?). ||1||Pause||The snakes encircle the sandalwood trees (sandalwood is no longer pure). Poison and nectar dwell there together (in the same environment). ||2||Even incense, lamps, food are not worthy of offering (fragrance has already escaped), how should Your servants worship You (since nothing pure is available to offer You)? ||3||**I dedicate and offer my body and mind to You (these are only things I can offer). By God*'s* Grace, I attain God.** ||4||If I cannot worship You by offering anything which is pure, Says Ravidas, what shall my condition be by not offering You anything? ||5||1||

[Note – In Hindu religious practice, milk, flower, water, sandalwood, lamp, and some specific grains etc. are considered pure and worthy of offering to Gods during worship. Here, Ravidas is commenting sarcastically on the purity of these items. He argues that only purity of body and mind can please God, who resides inside everyone.]

For a proper understanding of this Shabad, it must be understood metaphorically, and not literally. The metaphorical meaning, first in Punjabi and then in English is:

**Sbd dw Bwv:** lok dyvI dyviqAW dIAW mUrqW nUM Apny v~loN su~cy jl, Pu`l qy du`D Awidk nwl pRsMn krn dy jqn krdy hn; pr ieh cIjW qW pihlW hI jUTIAW ho jWdIAW hn[ **prmwqmw AijhIAw cIzW dI Bytw nwl KuS nhIN huMdw[ auh qW mn dI Byt mMgdw hY[**

**Central message** of the Shabad – People try to please deities by offering water, milk, flowers, etc., which they consider to be pure. Ravidas argues that these have already been touched by someone else, thereby are no longer pure. God cannot be pleased with these items. **He can only be pleased by offering pure body and mind, which translates into doing good deeds.**

In SGGS, there are many references to mythical stories connected with Prahlad, Ram, Ravan, Duryodhan, etc. There are Shabads by Guru Sahibs and by Bhagats describing heaven, but belief in Hindu god*s* (i.e., manifestations of God on earth) and other figures in mythical Hindu stories is not taught by the Gurus in the SGGS. The audience (public) at the time of Gurus consisted mostly of Hindus who were knowledgeable about these mythical stories, so the Guru Sahibs often referred to the mythological figures in these stories to illustrate their (i.e., Sikhism’s) **different** point of view regarding God*.*

Hundreds of years after Bhagat Ravidas had died, Bhai Gurdas wrote about Ravidas’s fame prevalent amongst the Hindu masses.

nHwvix AwieAw sMgu imil bwnwrs kir gMgw Qytw[

kiF ksIrw sauipAw rivdwsY gMgw dI Bytw[

lgw purbu ABIc dw ifTw cilqu Acrju Amytw[

lieAw ksIrw hQu kiF sUqu ieku ijau qwxw pytw[

Bgq jnW hir mW ipau bytw ]17] BweI gurdws, vwr 10.17

*Nhaavan aaiaa sa(n)g mil baanaaras kar ga(n)gaa theta. Kadd kaseeraa saupiaa Ravidhaasai ga(n)gaa dhee bheTaa. Lagaa purab abheech dhaa ddittaa chalit acharaj ameTaa. Liaa kaseeraa hath kadd soot ik jiau taanaa peTaa. Bhagat janaa(n) har maa(n) piau beta. 17.*

**Literal Translation:** Once, a group of people went to Kasi (Varanasi) to have their sacred dip in the Ganga. Ravidas gave one Kasira (one-fourth of a penny) to one member and asked him to offer it to the Ganga. A great festival of Abhijit Naksatr (star) was taking place then, where the public saw this wonderful episode. Ganges, herself taking out her hand accepted that paltry amount, Kasira, and proved that Ravidas was one with Ganges as warp and weft are to a fabric. **For bhagats (saintly persons) God is their mother, father, and son, all in one.**

This Vaar needs to be understood metaphorically, and not literally. As explained above, **Ravidas believed in God. He was against ritualistic offerings to idols.** With the passage of time, stories ascribing miracles to Bhagats got prevalent in Hindu society. In his Vaar, Bhai Gurdas is referring to the prevalent story. His main intent is to show that Bhagat Ravidas was close to God.

This central message is clear from the last sentence. Bhagat Ravidas was always engrossed in the Naam, even feeling God*’s* love in the love of a mother, father, and son.

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**12. God’s Love vs Rituals**

Bhagat Ravidas believed that Godis all-abiding. He considered God closest of all and was immersed in His remembrance. His deep yearning and intense love for the God is reflected in these words:

jau qum igirvr qau hm morw] jau qum cMd qau hm Bey hY ckorw]1]

jau qum dIvrw qau hm bwqI] jau qum qIrQ qau hm jwqI]2]

**swcI pRIiq hm qum isau jorI] qum isau joir Avr sMig qorI]3]**

rwgu soirT bwxI Bgq irvdws jI kI, AMg 658

*Jau tum girivar tau hum moraa. Jau tum cha(n)dh tau ham bhe hai chakoraa. 1.* Jau tum dheevaraa tau ham baatee. Jau tum teerath tau ham jaatee. 2. Saachee preet ham tum siau joree. Tum siau jor avar sung toree. 3.

SGGS, p. 658

**Literal translation:** If You are the mountain, God, then I am the peacock. If You are the moon, then I am the partridge in love with it. 1. If You are the lamp, then I am the wick. If You are the sacred place of pilgrimage, then I am the pilgrim.2. **I am joined in true love with You*,* God. I am joined with You, and I have broken with all others.3.**

Here, we see that Bhagat Ravidas was totally imbued in God’s love, which he considers as true love. He emphasizes that by joining with God*,* he has broken off with others. This type of love is true, as there are no expectations in return. This is the highest and purest form of love which yields union with God. Guru Nanak Dev ji acclaims God*’s* love in these words:

mohI pRym ipry pRiB AibnwsI rwm] iblwvl mhlw 1, AMg 843

*mohee praem pirae prabh abinaasee raam ||* SGGS, p.843

Meaning: I am enticed by the love of my Husband, the Eternal, Imperishable God.

Bhagat Ravidas was a saintly person. His love of God acted like a magnet and attracted others to seek his company. He spread a message that “God created man, and not man created God”— meaning that everyone is created by God and have equal rights on this earth. Ravidas has given various teachings to the people about universal brotherhood and tolerance.

Ganga Aartee (the Hindu ritual of offering prayer to the Ganges river) is held daily at dusk. Bhagat Ravidas expounded on the Aartee, the traditional Hindu ritual of lighting of lamps in front of god(s), in these words (which must be understood metaphorically, not literally):

**nwmu qyro AwrqI mjnu murwry]**

**hir ky nwm ibnu JUTy sgl pwswry]1]rhwau]**

nwmu qyro Awsno nwmu qyro aursw nwmu qyrw kysro ly iCtkwry]

nwmu qyrw AMBulw nwmu qyro cMdno Gis jpy nwmu ly quJih kau cwry]1]

nwmu qyrw dIvw nwmu qyro bwqI nwmu qyro qylu ly mwih pswry]

nwm qyry kI joiq lgweI BieE auijAwro Bvn sglwry]2]

nwmu qyro qwgw nwmu PUl mwlw Bwr ATwrh sgl jUTwry]

qyro kIAw quJih ikAw Arpau nwmu qyrw quhI cvr Folwry]3]

ds ATw ATsTy cwry KwxI iehY vrqix hY sgl sMswry]

khY rivdwsu nwmu qyro AwrqI siq nwmu hY hir Bog quhwry]4]3]

DnwsrI Bgq irvdws jI kI, AMg 694

*Naam tero aaratee majan muraare. Har ke naam bin jhootte sagal paasaare. 1. Rahaau. Naam tero aasano naam tero aurasaa naam teraa kesaro le chhiTakaare. Naam teraa a(n)bhulaa naam tero cha(n)dhano ghas jape naam le tujheh kau chaare. 1. Naam teraa dheevaa naam tero baatee naam tero tel le maeh pasaare. Naam tere kee jot lagaiee bhio aujiaaro bhavan sagalaare. 2. Naam tero taagaa naam fool maalaa bhaar attaareh sagal joottaare. Tero keeaa tujheh kiaa arapau naam teraa tuhee chavar ddolaare. 3. Dhas attaa attasatte chaare khaanee ihai varatan hai sagal sa(n)saare. Kahai Ravidas naam tero aaratee sat naam hai har bhog tuhaare. 4. 3.*  SGGS, p.694

**Literal translation: (O God! Ignorant people worship idols, but for me) Your Name is (Your) adoration and is cleansing bath (at holy places). (O brother!) Without the Name (ofGod) all ostentatious displays are useless. 1. Pause.** Your Name is my prayer mat (upon which the Brahmin sits to perform idol worship), and Your Name is the stone (to grind the sandalwood). Your Name is the saffron (one worshipping the idol grinds saffron to sprinkle on the idol) which I take and sprinkle in offering to You. Your Name is the water, and Your Name is the sandalwood. The chanting of Your Name is the grinding of the sandalwood. I take it and offer all this (Your Name as sandalwood and saffron) to You. 1. Your Name is the lamp, and Your Name is the wick. Your Name is the oil I pour into it. Your Name is the light applied to this lamp, which enlightens and illuminates the entire world. 2. Your Name is the thread, and Your Name is the garland of flowers. The eighteen loads of vegetation (from which people pluck flowers to offer to Your idol) are all too impure to offer to You. Why should I offer to You, that which You Yourself created? Your Name is the fan, which I wave over You.3. (instead of meditating on Your Name) The whole world is engrossed in the eighteen Puranas, the sacred shrines of pilgrimage (thus they are lost in) the four types of creation. **Says Ravidas, Your Name is my Aartee, my lamp-lit worship-service. *Sat Naam*, is the food which I offer to You*.***

**ਭਾਵ: ਆਰਤੀ ਆਦਿਕ ਦੇ ਅਡੰਬਰ ਕੂੜੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿਮਰਨ ਹੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦਾ ਸਹੀ ਰਸਤਾ ਹੈ।**

**Central message** of the Shabad: All activities associated with idol worship are useless. **Meditating on God is truly worthwhile.**

Thus, understood metaphorically, Bhagat Ravidas says in this Shabad that for him Naam is in everything, everywhere, and in every action performed during the Aartee ritual. His reference to Hindu pilgrimage sites, Puraanas (Hindu sacred texts), and “four sources of creation” is also a way of explaining his understanding of the all-pervasive God to an audience consisting mainly of Hindus familiar with these Hindu ritualistic practices and religious beliefs.

Bhagat Ravidas’s views on Hindu priests’ arrogance of being “high caste” Brahmins is as follows:

qr qwir ApivqR kir mwnIAY ry jYsy kwgrw krq bIcwrM]

Bgiq Bwgauqu ilKIAY iqh aUpry pUjIAY kir nmskwrM]2]

myrI jwiq kut bWFlw For FovMqw inqih bwnwrsI Aws pwsw]

Ab ibpR prDwn iqih krih fMfauiq **qyry nwm srxwie rivdwsu dwsw**]3]1]

mlwr bwxI Bgq irvdws jI kI, AMg 1293

*Tar taar apavitr kar maaneeaai re jaise kaagaraa karat beechaara(n). Bhagat bhaagaut likheeaai teh uoopare poojeeaai kar namasakaara(n).2. Meree jaat kuT baa(n)ddalaa ddor ddova(n)taa niteh baanaarasee aas paasaa. Ab bipr paradhaan teh kareh dda(n)ddaut tere naam saranai ravidhaas dhaasaa. 3. 1.* SGGS, p. 1293

**Literal translation:** The palmyra palm (toddy) tree is considered impure (as it yields wine), and so its leaves are considered impure as well. But if devotional prayers are written on paper made from its leaves, then people bow in reverence and worship before it. It is my occupation to prepare and cut leather; each day, I carry the carcasses out of the city. Now, the important Brahmins of the city bow down before me; **Ravidas, Your slave, seeks the Sanctuary of Your Naam.**

**The central message** of this Shabad becomes clear when we understand its metaphorical meaning, which is:

ismrn nIivAW nMU au`cw kr dyNdw hY[

Meditation on God elevates a person to a higher spiritual level.

Despite his fame, Ravidas considered that the absence of pride was his main spiritual achievement. Bhagat Ravidas credits God and His Grace for all his personal accomplishments in life. He says elsewhere:

AYsI lwl quJ ibnu kaunu krY]

grIb invwju guseIAw myrw mwQY CqRü DrY]1]rhwau]

rwgu mwrU bwxI irvdws, AMg 1106

*Aaisee laal tujh bin kaun karai. Gareeb nivaaj gusieeaa meraa maathai chhatr dharai. 1.* SGGS, p. 1106

**Literal translation:** O Love, who else but You could do such a thing? O Patron of the poor, Master of the World, You have put the canopy of Your Grace over my head. 1. Pause.

Here again, Bhagat Ravidas attests to his firm belief in worship of the God, and not in idol worship or rituals of any kind.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**13. Bhagat Jaidev**

Bhagat Jaidev (1170—1245 CE) was born in Kenduli, about twenty miles from Suri, in the modern district of Birbhum in West Bengal, India. His father was Bhoidev, a Brahmin of Kanauj, and his mother was Bamdevi. He was a celebrated Sanskrit poet. He became the most famous of the five distinguished poets who lived at the court of Lakshman Sen, king of Bengal, who dates from the year 1170. The five poets were called the five jewels of Lakshman Sen’s court, and the king was so proud of them that he erected a monument to preserve their names for succeeding generations.

Bhagat Jaidev believed that God is all-knowing and can do anything. Man, however great, powerful, and famous he may be, is nothing in front of Him. In fact, whatever a human being is, it is due to God's Grace.

His two hymns are found in SGGS. In his first composition he suggests that everyone should meditate on God only - the embodiment of ambrosial nectar. Doing so liberates everyone from worries of the cycle of rebirth, agony of old age, and fear of death.

prmwid purKmnoipmM siq Awid Bwv rqM]

prmdBuqM prik®iq prM jidicMiq srb gqM]1]

**kyvl rwm nwm mnormM] bid AMimRq qq mieAM]**

**n dnoiq jsmrxyn jnm jrwiD mrx BieAM 1]rhwau]**

ieCis jmwid prwBXM jsu sÍsiq suik®q ik®qM]

Bv BUq Bwv smib´AM prmM pRsMnimdM]2]

loBwid idRsit pr igRhM jidibiD AwcrxM]

qij skl duhik®q durmqI Bju ck®Dr srxM]3]

hir Bgq inj inhkyvlw ird krmxw bcsw]

jogyn ikM jgyn ikM dwnyn ikM qpsw]4]

goibMd goibMdyiq jip nr skl isiD pdM]

jYdyv Awieau qs sPutM Bv BUq srb gqM]5]1] gUjrI sRI jYdyv, AMg 526

*purakhamanopima(n) sat aadh bhaav rata(n) ||paramadhabhuta(n) parakirat para(n) jadhichi(n)t sarab gata(n) ||1||keval raam naam manorama(n) ||badh a(n)mirat tat mia(n) ||n dhanot jasamaranen janam jaraadh maran bhia(n) ||1|| rahaau ||eichhas jamaadh paraabhaya(n) jas savaisat sukirat kirata(n) ||bhav bhoot bhaav samabiyea(n) parama(n) prasa(n)namidha(n) ||2||lobhaadh dhirasaT par giraha(n) jadhibidh aacharana(n) ||taj sakal dhuhakirat dhuramatee bhaj chakaradhar sarana(n) ||3||har bhagat nij nihakevalaa ridh karamanaa bachasaa ||jogen ki(n) jagen ki(n) dhaanen ki(n) tapasaa ||4||gobi(n)dh gobi(n)dhet jap nar sakal sidh padha(n) ||jaidhev aaiau tas safuTa(n) bhav bhoot sarab gata(n) ||5||1||* SGGS, p. 526

**Translation**: In the very beginning, was God*,* unrivalled, the Lover of Truth and all virtues. He is wonderful, transcending creation; remembering Him, no one can comprehend Him completely. ||1|| **Dwell only upon the beauteous Naam, the embodiment of ambrosial nectar and reality. Remembering Him in meditation, the fear of birth, old age and death will not trouble you. |1||Pause. |**If you desire to escape the fear of the Messenger of Death, then praise God joyfully, and do good deeds. In the past, present, and future, He is always the same; He is the embodiment of supreme bliss. ||2|| If you seek the path of good conduct, forsake greed, and do not look upon other men's property and women. **Renounce all evil actions and evil inclinations and seek the Sanctuary of God. ||3|| Worship God, in thought, word and deed.** What is the good of practicing Yoga, giving feasts and charity, and practicing penance? (i.e. Saints know that practicing Yoga, giving feasts, and practicing penance are not helpful for spiritual progress. Only remembering Him is useful.) ||4|| **Meditate on God;** He is the source of all the spiritual powers of the Siddhas. **Jaidev has abandoned all other means and has come to Him for salvation. He existed in the past and will exist in the future everywhere.** |5||1[

It is interesting to note that there is a Shabad in the same Raag by Guru Nanak Dev ji with similar lyrics and meaning. It is on page 505 of SGGS and is as follows:

Bgiq pRym AwrwiDqM scu ipAws prm ihqM]

ibllwp ibll ibnµqIAw suK Bwie icq ihqM]1]

**jip mn nwmu hir srxI]**

**sMswr swgr qwir qwrx rm nwm kir krxI]1]rhwau]**gUjrI mhlw 1, AMg 505

*bhagat prem aaraadhita(n) sach piaas param hita(n) ||bilalaap bilal bina(n)teeaa sukh bhai chit hita(n) ||1||jap man naam har saranee ||sa(n)saar saagar taar taaran ram naam kar karanee ||1|| rahaau ||*

SGGS, p. 505

**Translation:** Those devotees who worship God in loving adoration, they thirst for the God*,* with infinite affection. They tearfully beg and implore (at God*’s* feet) in love and affection, their consciousness is at peace. ||1||**O my mind, meditate on the *Naam* and seek His Sanctuary. God*'s* Name(Naam) is the boat to cross over the world-ocean. Practice such a way of life. ||1||Pause||**

Guru Ji’s complete Shabad has many other similarities as well with Bhagat Jaidev’s Shabad, which cannot be a mere coincidence. They provide unmistakable evidence that Guru Nanak Dev ji had collected Bhagat Jaidev’s composition during his first Udaasi (travels) while visiting many places of Hindu pilgrimage in India.

In the second composition, Bhagat Jaidev says that by praising the God who has always been in existence from the very beginning, he has been able to reduce the separation from God.

cMd sq ByidAw nwd sq pUirAw sUr sq KoVsw dqu kIAw]

Abl blu qoiVAw Acl clu QipAw AGVu GiVAw qhw Aipau pIAw]1]

mn Awid gux Awid vKwixAw] qyrI duibDw idRsit sMmwinAw]1]rhwau]

AriD kau AriDAw sriD kau sriDAw sll kau slil sMmwin AwieAw]

bdiq jYdyau jYdyv kau rMimAw bRhmu inrbwxu ilv lIx pwieAw]2]1]

rwgu mwrU bwxI jYdyau jIau kI, AMg 1106

*cha(n)dh sat bhedhiaa naadh sat pooriaa soor sat khoRasaa dhat keeaa ||abal bal toRiaa achal chal thapiaa aghaR ghaRiaa tahaa apiau peeaa ||1||man aadh gun aadh vakhaaniaa ||teree dhubidhaa dhirasaT sa(n)maaniaa ||1|| rahaau ||aradh kau aradhiaa saradh kau saradhiaa salal kau salal sa(n)maan aaiaa ||badhat jaidheau jaidhev kau ra(n)miaa braham nirabaan liv leen paiaa ||2||1||* SGGS, p. 1106

**Translation:** By the Grace of the Guru: The breath is drawn in through the left nostril; it is held in the central channel of the Sushmanaa, and exhaled through the right nostril, repeating God*’s* Name sixteen times (i.e., all steps involved in Yoga are in meditating on God. (Because of vices, the weakened mind) I have realized that You and I are the same. I drink the Ambrosial Nectar (of Your Name). ||1||**Oh**! M**y mind, by meditating on the Name of God, the Source of virtue. My vision, that You and I are separate, has melted away. ||1||Pause||**I worship the One who is worthy of being worshipped. I trust the One who is worthy of being trusted. Like water merging in water, I merge in God. Says Jaidev, I meditate and contemplate the Luminous, Triumphant God(free of all vices*).* I am lovingly absorbed in the Nirvana of God*.* ||2||1||

There is a Shabad in SGGS by Guru Nanak Dev ji with similar lyrics and meaning, and in the same Raag. It is as follows:

sUr sru sois lY som sru poiK lY jugiq kir mrqu su snbMDu kIjY]

mIn kI cpl isau jugiq mnu rwKIAY aufY nh hMsu nh kMDu CIjY]1]

mUVy kwiecy Brim Bulw]

nh cIinAw prmwnµdu bYrwgI]1]rhwau] mwrU mhlw 1, AMg 991

*soor sar sos lai som sar pokh lai jugat kar maratu su sanaba(n)dh keejai ||meen kee chapal siau jugat man raakheeaai uddai neh ha(n)s neh ka(n)dh chheejai ||1||mooRe kaiche bharam bhulaa ||neh cheeniaa paramaana(n)dh bairaagee ||1|| rahaau ||* SGGS, p. 991

**Translation:** O Yogi!Get rid of your nature of being of agitated mind (heat up the Sun energy of the right nostril), include nature of being of peace of mind (i.e. cool down the moon energy of the left nostril); practice meditating on God with every breath (this is breath-control). (In reality, this is the method to be in tune with God), make such a change. In this way, the mind – as fickle fish – can be held steady; the swan-soul shall not fly away (towards vices), and the body will not crumble to vices. 1. You fool, why are you deluded (by Pranayaam) and going astray (from reality of life)? You have not been able to realize the source of supreme bliss. 1. Pause*.*

**Sbd dw Bwv:** hy mn! prmwqmw dw nwm jp, prmwqmw dI Et PV[ prmwqmw dy nwm nMU jIvn dw morQ bxw[ ieh nwm sMswr-smuMdr qoN pwr lMGx leI jhwj hY[

**Central meaning:** O my mind! Meditate on God*’s* name, lean on God. Meditating on God*’s* name should be your aim. This will get you across the world-ocean.

Bhagat Jaidev was a learned person and a poet, greatly respected for his dedication and commitment to meditation on God*.* Over time, many stories to highlight Bhagat Jaidev’s greatness got attached to him. Some of them show Bhagat Jaidev as a super-human with miraculous powers. Bhai Gurdas has drawn attention to one such story in the following words:

AKru ieku n AwvVY pusqku bMinH sMiDAw kir AwvY[

gux inDwnu Gir Awie kY Bgq rUip iliK lyKu bxwvY[

AKr piVH prqIiq kir hoie ivsmwdu n AMig smwvY[

vyKY jwie aujwiV ivic ibrKu ieku Awcrju suhwvY[

gIq goivMd sMpUrxo piq piq iliKAw AMqu n pwvYY[ BweI gurdws , vwr 10.10

*Akhar ik na aavaRai pusatak ba(n)neh sa(n)dhiaa kar aavai. Gun nidhaan ghar aai kai bhagat roop likh lekh banaavai. Akhar paReh parateet kar hoi visamaadh na a(n)g samaavai. Vekhai jai ujaaR vich birakh ik aacharaj suhaavai. Geet govind sampoorano pat pat likhiaaa (n)t na paavai.*

Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 10.10

**Translation:** He (Jaidev) could not put the words together, and hence closing his book went out in the evening. God, the repository of all virtues in the form of the devotee Himselfwrote all the songs for him. Jaidev got elated seeing and reading those words. He went out in the wilderness and saw a wonderful tree in the deep forest. Every leaf had the songs of Govind (a Hindu god but referring to God here) written on it.

As is the case for other Bhagats whose compositions are included in SGGS, this story must be understood metaphorically, not literally. Though the compositions were written by Bhagat Jaidev, his followers found them to be so meaningful that they began to say later that the words had instead been written for Bhagat Jaidev by a Hindu god (Govind). In this way they appropriate God providence for such creative and artistic endeavor.

Bhagat Jaidev travelled all over the country preaching the gospel of the love of God and of man. He lived a long life and died in the village where he was born, in 1245 CE, in happy retirement.

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**14. Bhagat Sadhna**

Bhagat Sadhna (1180 CE—unknown) was born in village Sehwan in Hyderabad, Sindh province, now in Pakistan. Born into a family of butchers, he took up the family profession of slaughtering goats and selling meat. As there were many shady trees and a drinking water source near his shop, it was frequented by all sundry travelers. Sadhus (Hindu religious mendicants) passing by would also rest in the shaded areas around his place. As he was extremely interested in spiritual subjects, he used to engage in discussions with these Sadhus.

There are many stories associated with Bhagat Sadhna’s composition in SGGS, e.g., worshiping a stone statue of Hindu god Vishnu, a princess attempting to lure Bhagat Sadhna for marriage, etc. The renowned scholar Prof. Sahib Singh has analyzed each of these stories in detail and has come to the unambiguous conclusion that all these stories associated with Bhagat Sadhna’s life, if taken literally, are without merit. [For reference please see Bgq bwxI stIk – pihlw Bwg, published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar, India.]

There is only one composition of Bhagat Sadhna in SGGS. It is in Raag Bilaaval and is on page 858. Bhagat Sadhna’s Shabad is as follows:

inRp kMinAw ky kwrnY ieku BieAw ByKDwrI]

kwmwrQI suAwrQI vw kI pYj svwrI]1]

**qv gun khw jgq gurw jau krmu n nwsY]**

**isMG srn kq jweIAY jau jMbuku gRwsY]1]rhwau]**

eyk bUMd jl kwrny cwiqRku duKu pwvY]

pRwn gey swgru imlY Puin kwim n AwvY]2]

pRwn ju Qwky iQru nhI kYsy ibrmwvau]

bUif mUey naukw imlY khu kwih cFwvau]3]

**mY nwhI kCu hau nhI ikCu Awih n morw]**

**Aausr ljw rwiK lyhu sDnw jnu qorw]**4]1] bwxI sDny kI, AMg 858

*Nirap ka(n)niaa ke kaaranai ik bhiaa bhekhadhaaree. Kaamaarathee suaarathee vaa kee paij savaaree. 1. Tav gun kahaa jagat guraa jau karam na naasai. Singh saran kat jaieeaai jau ja(n)buk graasai. 1. Rahaau.Ek boo(n)dh jal kaarane chaatirak dhukh paavai. Praan ge saagar milai fun kaam na aavai.2Praan ju thaake thir nahee kaise biramaavau. Boodd mooe naukaa milai kahu kaeh chaddaavau. 3. Mai naahee kachh hau nahee kichh aaeh na moraa. Aausar lajaa raakh leh sadhna jan toraa. 4. 1*  SGGS, p .858

**Translation:** God! Youprotected the honor of a selfish person who was full of lust (means You protected him from lustful vices) who disguised himself as a religious person seeking relationship with a princess (1).[1] **O Enlightener of the world, what merit is Yours if my previous misdeeds do not get erased, (means, if I continue on the path of vices based on my previous deeds) then what is the use of praising You (meditating on Your Name)? Why seek safety from a lion if one is to be eaten by a jackal? [1]. [Rahao]** For the sake of a single raindrop, the songbird suffers in pain (cries and waits). What is the use of an ocean of water if it is found after the songbird dropped dead from thirst? (means, O God! If my soul perishes in vices for want of one drop of Your name-nectar, then what is the use of the ocean full of blessings). [2] (while patiently waiting for Your blessings) my life has grown weary (of vices? If I drown (in ocean of vices) and die, and then a boat comes along, tell me, who shall climb the boat?[3] **I am nothing, I have nothing, and nothing belongs to me (besides this human life). I, Sadhna is Your humble servant. Now, protect my honor (and save me from drowning in this ocean of vices).[4]**

1. The reference here is to an ancient lustful story where a person disguises himself as religious person seeking the hand of the princess. Bhagat Sadhna is referring to this story in the first couplet to explain about God*’s* nature of saving humankind. The main point is in the Rahao Tuk, i.e., he is begging God to save him from human vices in this life.

**Sbd dw Bwv:** hy jgq dy gurU pRBU! jy myry ipCly kIqy krmW dw Pl nws nwh hoieAw (Bwv, jy mYN ipCly kIqy mMd krmW dy sMskwrW Anuswr hux BI mMdy krm krI igAw) qW qyrI Srn Awaux dw kIh gux hovygw? Syr dI Srn pYx dw kI lwB, jy iPr BI ig`dV Kw jwey?[1[rhwau[ --------hy pRBU! myrI koeI pWieAW nhIN, myrw hor koeI Awsrw nhIN; (ieh mnu`Kw jnm hI) myrI lwj r`Kx dw smw hY, mYN sDnw qyrw dws hW, myrI lwj r~K (qy ivkwrW dy smuMdr ivc fu~bx qoN mYnuM bcw lY)[4[1[

**The central message** of the Shabad is clear. Bhagat Sadhna begs God to save him from the multitude of vices in life. He feels incapable of protecting himself from these powerful human vices on his own. As his life is coming to an end and vices keep attacking him, he begs God to save him before his life ends. He further requests that since he has always been seeking God’s protection, he believes he would not continue to suffer the consequences (Karma) of his past misdeeds.

Bhagat Sadhna travelled through various parts of the Indian subcontinent preaching the love of God. During his travels he might have met and accompanied Bhagat Namdev. Bhagat Sadhna spent the last days of his life at Sirhind teaching others, and he died there.

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**15. Bhagat Trilochan**

Bhagat Trilochan (1267 CE - unknown) was born in village Barsi in Solapur district in Maharashtra, India. He belonged to the so-called Vaishya caste. He was a contemporary of Bhagat Namdev. Their homes were not far from each other. He heard about the fame of Bhagat Namdev and set out to meet him. Trilochan traveled to Narsi Bamni for an audience with Bhagat Namdev. The conversation between them is captured by Bhagat Kabir in his Saloks, and is in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) as:

## nwmw mwieAw moihAw khY iqlocnu mIq]

## kwhy CIphu CwielY rwm n lwvhu cIqu]212] slok Bgq kbIr jIau ky, AMg 1375

*Naamaa maiaa mohiaa kahai Trilochan meet. Kaahe chheepahu chhailai raam na laavahu cheet. 212.* SGGS, p. 1375

**Translation:** Trilochan says, O Namdev, the material world (maya) has enticed you, my friend. Why are you printing designs on these sheets, and not focusing your consciousness on God?

As we can see here, Bhagat Trilochan was shocked to find Namdev engaged in earning money, utilizing his training as a calico printer. Trilochan asked a pointed question as to why he was engaged in futile pursuits? Bhagat Namdev replies as follows:

## nwmw khY iqlocnw muK qy rwmu sMm@wil]

hwQ pwau kir kwmu sBu cIqu inrMjn nwil]213] AMg 1375

*Naamaa kahai Trilochanaa mukh te raam sa(n)m(h)aal. Haath paau kar kaam sabh cheet nira(n)jan naal. 213.* SGGS, p. 1375

**Translation:** Namdev answers, O Trilochan, say God*'s* Name with your mouth. With your hands and feet, do all your work, but let your consciousness remain with God.

Bhagat Namdev further elaborated on his response with examples from daily life, as under:

## AwnIly kwgdu kwtIly gUfI Awkws mDy BrmIAly]

## pMc jnw isau bwq bqaUAw cIqu su forI rwKIAly]1]

## mnu rwm nwmw byDIAly] jYsy kink klw icqu mWfIAly]1]rhwau]

## AwnIly kuMBu BrweIly aUdk rwj kuAwir purMdrIey]

## hsq ibnod bIcwr krqI hY cIqu su gwgir rwKIAly]2]

## mMdru eyku duAwr ds jw ky gaU crwvn CwfIAly]

## pWc kos pr gaU crwvq cIqu su bCrw rwKIAly]3]

## khq nwmdyau sunhu iqlocn bwlku pwln pauFIAly]

AMqir bwhir kwj ibrUDI cIqu su bwirk rwKIAly]4]1]

## bwxI nwmdyau jIau kI, AMg 972

Aaneele kaagadh kaaTeele gooddee aakaas madhe bharameeale. Pa(n)ch janaa siau baat batuooaa cheetu su ddoree raakheeale.1. **Mun raam naamaa bedheeale. Jaise kanik kalaa chit maa(n)ddeeale.1. Rahaau.** Aaneele ku(n)bh bharaieele uoodhak raaj kuaar pura(n)dhare'e. Hasat binodh beechaar karatee hai cheetu su gaagar raakheeale.2. Mandhar ek dhuaar dhas jaa ke guoo charaavan chhaaddeeale. Paa(n)ch kos par guoo charaavat cheetu su bachharaa raakheeale.3. Kahat naamadheau sunahu tilochan baalak paalan pauddeeale. Antar baahar kaaj biroodhee cheetu su baarik raakheeale. 4.1. SGGS, p. 972

**Translation:** (O Trilochan, as a boy) brings paper, cuts it and makes a kite, and flies it in the sky, keeps talking with his friends, yet he keeps his attention on the string (attached to the kite).1 **(O! Trilochan,** **my mind has been pierced by the Naam*,* like the goldsmith, whose attention is held by his work (while talking to others and paying attention to gold in the burning furnace).1 Pause**. (O Trilochan) The young girls in the city take pitcher (go outside the city), fill it with water, laugh, play, and talk with friends, yet keep their attention focused on the pitcher of water.2. (O Trilochan) cows are let loose out of a mansion with ten gates, to graze in the field. Cows graze up to five miles away, but keep attention focused on calves (similarly, my ten organs work to earn livelihood for the body, yet my mind stays focused on God).3. Says Namdev (I give you one more example), listen, O Trilochan: the child is laid down in the cradle, its mother works, inside and outside, yet she holds her child in her thoughts.4.1

**Sbd dw Bwv:** pRIiq dw srUp: kMm-kwr kridAW surq hr vyly pRBU dI Xwd ivc rhy[

**Central message:** While working to earn a living, the mind should remain focused on God*.*

The above answer, with illustrations from daily life, impressed Trilochan. He heeded the advice and started practicing it daily. After the visit with Bhagat Namdev, Trilochan returned to his village and started serving religious mendicants who came that way. Slowly, the daily meditation and service of religious men transformed Trilochan. The cravings for the material world disappeared from his mind, and it also rid him of the fear of death. Bhagat Trilochan then always sought the company of other spiritually minded people. He served saintly persons and started believing that their association (Sangat) influenced his thinking and conduct. He therefore sought the company of those who, like him, sought God*’s* protection and mercy. He used to sing:

## koeI koeI swjxu Awie khY] imlu myry bITulw lY bwhVI vlwie]

**imlu myry rmeIAw mY lyih Cfwie]1]rhwau]** isrIrwgu iqRlocn kw AMg 92

*Koiee koiee saajan aai kahai. Mil mere beeThulaa lai baahaRee valai. Mil mere ramieeaa mai leh chhaddai.1. Rahaau* SGGS, p. 92

**Sbd dw Bwv:** koeI ivrlw sMq jn (jgq ivc) Aw ky ieauN bynqI krdw hY – hy pRBU! mYnUM iml, glv`kVI pw ky iml[ hy myry rwm! mYnUM iml, mYnUM (mwieAw dy moh qoN) Cfw lY, jmdUq vgwqg Aw rhy hn, auhnW dy swmHxy mYQoN (pl mwqR BI) AtikAw nhIN jw skygw[1[rhwau[

**Central message** of the Rahao Tuk**:** Rare, exceedingly rare, is that friend who comes and says, "O my Beloved, take me into Your Embrace! O my God*,* please save me!" 1. Pause.

In the following Shabad, Bhagat Trilochan very clearly explains the futility of external rituals. The only way to attain permanent bliss is by meditating on God.

## AMqru mil inrmlu nhI kInw bwhir ByK audwsI]

## ihrdY kmlu Git bRhmu n cIn@w kwhy BieAw sMinAwsI]1]

## Brmy BUlI ry jY cMdw] nhI nhI cIin@Aw prmwnµdw]1]rhwau]

## Gir Gir KwieAw ipMfu bDwieAw iKMQw muMdw mwieAw]

## BUim mswx kI Bsm lgweI gur ibnu qqu n pwieAw]2]

## kwie jphu ry kwie qphu ry kwie iblovhu pwxI]

## lK caurwsIh ijin@ aupweI so ismrhu inrbwxI]3]

kwie kmMflu kwpVIAw ry ATsiT kwie iPrwhI II

bdiq iqRlocnu sunu ry pRwxI kx ibnu gwhu ik pwhI]4]1]

gujrI sRI iqRlocn jIau, AMg 525

*Antar mal niramal nahee keenaa baahar bhekh udhaasee. Hiradhai kamal ghaT braham na cheen(h)aa kaahe bhiaa sa(n)niaasee. 1.* ***Bharame bhoolee re jai cha(n)dhaa. Nahee nahee cheeni(h)aa paramaana(n)dhaa. 1. Rahaau.*** *Ghar ghar khaiaa pi(n)dd badhaiaa khi(n)thaa mu(n)dhaa maiaa. Bhoom masaan kee bhasam lagaiee gur bin tat na paiaa.2. Kai japahu re kai tapahu re kai bilovahu paanee. Lakh chauraaseeh jini(h) upaiee so simarahu nirabaanee.3*. SGGS, p. 525

**Translation:** If someone has not cleansed the filth from within, but is dressed as a recluse, has not recognized God in the heart-lotus, then there is no use becoming a Sannyaasee? 1. **O Jai Chand, everyone is deluded (that by dressing as a recluse one can realize God, but it is wrong) -- the embodiment of supreme bliss cannot be realized thus. 1. Pause.** If someone nourishes body with food begged from door to door, wears the patched coat and the earrings of the beggar, for the sake of wealth, applies the ashes of cremation to the body, but without a *Guru*, then one cannot find the essence of reality.2. Why bother to chant your spells? Why bother to practice austerities? Why bother to churn water? Meditate on God – who is free of all vices – and has created all species of beings.3. Why bother to carry the water-pot and wear a dress made of patches? Why bother to visit the sixty-eight holy places of pilgrimage? Says Trilochan, listen, mortal: if one has no corn – there is no use trying to thresh? 4. 1.

**Sbd dw Bwv:** swrI lokweI (ies BulyKy ivc) Bu~lI peI hY (ik inrw PkIrI ByK DwirAW prmwqmW iml pYNdw hY, pr ieh glq hY, ies qrWH) prmwnMd pRBU dI soJI kdy BI nhIN pYNdI[1[rhwau]

**Central message** of the Rahao Tuk:Everyone has this illusion that by dressing as a religious person one can get closer to God. It is wrong. One must keep the mental focus on God.

In the following Shabad, Bhagat Trilochan is addressing his own soul, and is saying that one should not blame God*,* because one gets happiness or suffering because of one’s own deeds.

**nwrwiex inMdis kwie BUlI gvwrI]**

**duik®qu suik®qu Qwro krmu rI]1]rhwau]**

sMkrw msqik bsqw sursrI iesnwn ry]

kul jn mDy imil´o swrg pwn ry]

krm kir klµku mPItis rI]1]

ibsÍ kw dIpku sÍwmI qw cy ry suAwrQI pMKI rwie gruV qw cy bwDvw]

krm kir Arux ipMgulw rI]2]

Aink pwiqk hrqw iqRBvx nwQu rI qIriQ qIriQ BRmqw lhY n pwru rI]

krm kir kpwlu mPItis rI]3]

AMimRq ssIA Dyn liCmI klpqr isKir sunwgr ndI cy nwQM]

krm kir Kwru mPItis rI]4]

dwDIly lµkw gVu aupwVIly rwvx bxu sil ibsil Awix qoKIly hrI]

krm kir kCautI mPItis rI]5]

pUrblo ik®q krmu n imtY rI Gr gyhix qw cy moih jwpIAly rwm cy nwmM]

bdiq iqRlocn rwm jI]6]1] DnwsrI bwxI BgqW kI iqRlocn, AMg 695

*naarain ni(n)dhas kai bhoolee gavaaree||dhukirat sukirat thaaro karam ree||1||rahaau||sa(n)karaa masatak basataa surasaree isanaan re||kul jan madhe miliyeo saarag paan re||karam kar kala(n)k mafeeTas ree||1||bisavai kaa dheepak savaiaamee taa che re suaarathee pa(n)khee rai garuR taa che baadhavaa ||karam kar arun pi(n)gulaa ree||2||anik paatik harataa tirabhavan naath ree teerath teerath bhramataa lahai na paar ree||karam kar kapaal mafeeTas ree||3||a(n)mirat saseea dhen lachhimee kalapatar sikhar sunaagar nadhee che naatha(n)||karam kar khaar mafeeTas ree||4||dhaadheele la(n)kaa gaR upaaReele raavan ban sal bisal aan tokheele haree||karam kar kachhauTee mafeeTas ree||5||poorabalo kirat karam na miTai ree ghar gehan taa che moh jaapeeale raam che naama(n)||badhat tiralochan raam jee|6|1|* SGGS, p. 695

**Translation:** **Why do you slander God? You are ignorant and deluded. Pain and pleasure are the result of your own actions. ||1||Pause||**The moon dwells in Shiva's forehead; it takes its cleansing bath in the Ganges. Among the men of the moon's family, Krishna was born; even so, the stains from its past actions remain on the moon's face. ||1|| Aruna was a charioteer; his master was the sun, the lamp of the world. His brother was Garuda, the king of birds; and yet, Aruna was made a cripple, because of the karma of his past actions. ||2|| Shiva, the destroyer of countless sins, Master of the three worlds, wandered from sacred shrine to sacred shrine. And yet, he could not erase the karma of cutting off Brahma's head.||3|| Though the nectar, the moon, the wish-fulfilling cow, Lakshmi, the miraculous tree of life, Sikhar the Sun's horse, and Dhanavantar the wise physician - all arose from the ocean, and the lord of entire creation; and yet, because of its (bad) karma, its saltiness has not left it.||4|| Hanuman burnt the fortress of Sri Lanka, uprooted the garden of Rawan, and brought healing herbs for the wounds of Lachhman to please Hindu god Raamaa; and yet, because of his karma, he could not be rid of his loin cloth.||5|| **Trilochan says, the karma of past actions cannot be erased (by worshiping idols, bathing at holy places etc.), O my soul; this is why I meditate on the Naam*.* (I do not blame God for pains. I get it because of my deeds.)** ||6||1||

**Bwv:** prmwqmw nUM dos dyxw glq hY[ mnu~K Apny kIqy krmW krky du~K-su~K pwauNdw hY[

**Central message:** It is futile to blame God. One gets suffering or happiness because of one’s deeds.

In the above Shabad, Bhagat Trilochan is referring to Hindu gods (such as Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu) and to mythological figures (such as Aruna, Dhanavantar, Krishna, Hanuman, Raam and Lachhman) in prevalent Hindu mythological stories. He does this to make his point clear to a predominantly Hindu audience familiar with such stories.

However, his central message is that all the ritual actions mentioned in the Shabad (as examples of common Hindu rituals and religious practice) are of no use. Only by performing good deeds and mediating on God can one make progress on the spiritual path.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**16. Bhagat Beni**

There is limited biographical information about Bhagat Beni (mid-15th – mid-16th century, CE).He is considered a contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Some believe that he was born in a village named Asni in Bihar. A festival is held in Asni every year to celebrate his life. By birth, Bhagat Beni was a Hindu of the Brahmin caste, and he became a learned scholar. The poet Kal refers to Bhagat Beni’s praise of Godand his meditative nature in the following verse in SGGS:

Bgqu byix gux rvY shij Awqm rMgu mwxY]

jog iDAwin gur igAwin ibnw pRB Avru n jwxY] sveIey mhly iphly ky 1, AMg 1390

*Bhagat ben gun ravai sahaj aatam ra(n)g maanai. Jog dhiaan gur giaan binaa prabh avar na jaanai.* SGGS, p. 1390

**Translation:** **The devotee Beni sings His Praises;** He is the Master of Yoga and meditation, and the spiritual wisdom of God*;* He knows none other except God.

Three of Bhagat Beni’s compositions are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib under Siri Raag (p. 93), Ramkali (p. 974), and Prabhati (p. 1351) musical measures. In these compositions, he has severely denounced in an apt and enigmatic tone the practice of ritualistic actions and has advised us instead to always remember God who is the provider of all. His composition on page 93 of SGGS is as follows:

ry nr grB kuMfl jb AwCq aurD iDAwn ilv lwgw]

imrqk ipMif pd md nw Aihinis eyku AigAwn su nwgw]

qy idn sMmlu kst mhw duK Ab icqu AiDk pswirAw]

grB Coif imRq mMfl AwieAw qau nrhir mnhu ibswirAw]1]

**iPir pCuqwvihgw mUiVAw qUM kvn kumiq BRim lwgw]**

**cyiq rwmu nwhI jm puir jwihgw jnu ibcrY AnrwDw]1]rhwau]**

bwl ibnod icMd rs lwgw iKnu iKnu moih ibAwpY]

rsu imsu myDu AMimRqu ibKu cwKI qau pMc pRgt sMqwpY]

jpu qpu sMjmu Coif suik®q miq rwm nwmu n ArwiDAw]

auCilAw kwmu kwl miq lwgI qau Awin skiq gil bWiDAw]2]

qrux qyju pr iqRA muKu johih sru Apsru n pCwixAw]

aunmq kwim mhw ibKu BUlY pwpu puMnu n pCwinAw]

suq sMpiq dyiK iehu mnu gribAw rwmu irdY qy KoieAw]

Avr mrq mwieAw mnu qoly qau Bg muiK jnmu ivgoieAw]3]

puMfr kys kusm qy Dauly spq pwqwl kI bwxI]

locn sRmih buiD bl nwTI qw kwmu pvis mwDwxI]

qw qy ibKY BeI miq pwvis kwieAw kmlu kumlwxw]

Avgiq bwix Coif imRq mMfil qau pwCY pCuqwxw]4]

inkutI dyh dyiK Duin aupjY mwn krq nhI bUJY]

lwlcu krY jIvn pd kwrn locn kCU n sUJY]

Qwkw qyju auifAw mnu pMKI Gir AWgin n suKweI]

byxI khY sunhu ry Bgqhu mrn mukiq ikin pweI]5]

sRI rwg bwxI Bgq byxI jIau kI, AMg 93

Rae nar garabh ku(n)ddal jab aachhat uradh dhiaan liv laagaa. Mritak pi(n)dd padh madh naa ahinis ek agiaan su naagaa. Tae dhin sa(n)mal kasaT mahaa dhukh ab chit adhik pasaariaa. Garabh chhodd mirat ma(n)ddal aaiaa tau narahar manahu bisaariaa.1. **Phir pachhutaavahigaa mooRiaa too(n) kavan kumat bhram laagaa. Chet raam naahee jam pur jaahigaa jan bicharai anaraadhaa. 1. Rahau.** Baal binodh chi(n)dh ras laagaa khin khin moh biaapai. Rus mis medh a(n)mrit bikh chaakhee tau pa(n)ch pragaT sa(n)taapai. Jap tap sanjam chhodd sukirat mat raam naam na araadhiaa. Auchhaliaa kaam kaal mat laagee tau aan sakat gal baa(n)dhiaa.2. Tarun tej par tria mukh joheh sar apasar na pachhaaniaa. Aunamat kaam mahaa bikh bhoolai paap pu(n)n na pachhaaniaa. Sut sa(n)pat dhekh ih man garabiaa raam ridhai te khoiaa. Avar marat maiaa man tole tau bhag mukh janam vigoiaa.3. Pu(n)ddar kes kusam te dhaule sapat paataal kee baanee. Lochan srameh budh bal naaThee taa kaam pavas maadhaanee. Taa te bikhai bhiee mat paavas kaiaa kamal kumalaanaa. Avagat baan chhodd mirat ma(n)ddal tau paachhai pachhutaanaa.4. NikuTee dheh dhekh dhun upajai maan karat nahee boojhai. Laalach karai jeevan padh kaaran lochan kachhoo na soojhai. Thaakaa tej uddiaa man pa(n)khee ghar aa(n)gan na sukhaiee. Beni kahai sunahu re bhagatahu maran mukat kin payee. 5. SGGS, p. 93

**Translation:** O man! When you were coiled in the cradle of the womb, upside-down, you were absorbed in meditation (of God). (Then), You took no pride in your perishable body; night and day were all the same to you-you lived unknowing, in the silence of the void (of ignorance). Remember the terrible pain and suffering of those days now that you have spread out the net of your consciousness far and wide (in the worldly affairs). Since you left the womb and entered this mortal world; you have forgotten God from your mind. 1. **Later (once life is over), you will regret, and repent - you fool! Why are you engrossed in evil-mindedness and skepticism? Think of God, or else you shall be led to the City of Death. Why are you wandering around, out of control? 1. Pause.** (First), You played like a child, craving sweets every moment. (since) you become more entangled in worldly attachments, the five vices torture you. Abandoning meditation, penance and self-restraint, and the wisdom of good actions, you do not worship and adore God *(Naam)*. You are overflowing with sexual desire, and your intellect is stained with darkness; you are held in the grip of sexual desires.2. In the heat of youthful passion, you look with desire upon the faces of other men's wives; you do not distinguish between good and evil. Drunk with sexual desire and other great sins, you go astray, and do not distinguish between vice and virtue. Gazing upon your children and your property, your mind is proud and arrogant; you cast out God from your heart. When others die, you calculate how much wealth you will get; you waste your life in the pleasures of sexual organs. 3. Your hair is whiter than the jasmine flower, and your voice has grown feeble, as if it comes from the seventh underworld. Your eyes water, and your intellect and strength have left you; but still, your sexual desire churns and drives you on. And so, your intellect has dried up through corruption, and the lotus flower of your body has wilted and withered. You have forsaken the *Banee*, the Word of the Immortal God, in this mortal world; in the end (of your life), you shall regret and repent. 4. Gazing upon the tiny bodies of your children (and grandchildren), love has welled up within your heart; you are proud of them, but you do not understand. You wish for the dignity of a long life, but your eyes can no longer see (that you will everything behind). Your light has gone out, and the bird of your mind has flown away; you are no longer welcome in your own home and courtyard. Says Beni, listen, O devotee: who has ever attained liberation after such a death? (if one stays entangled in sexual desires while living and could not be liberated while living) 5.

**rhwau dI qu`k:** hy mUrK! qUM ikhVI m`qy, ikhVy BulyKy ivc l`gw hoieAw hYN? (smW h`QoN gvw ky) Pyr h~Q mlyNgw, pRBU nUM ismr nhIN qW jmpurI ivc DikAw jwvyNgw, (qUM iPrdw hYN) ijvyN koeI AmoV bMdw iPrdw hY[1[rhwau[

**Central message** of the Rahao Tuk:Later (once life is over), you will regret, and repent - you fool! Why were you engrossed in evil-mindedness and skepticism? Think of God, or else you shall be led to the City of Death. Why are you wandering around, out of control? 1. Pause

**Sbd dw Bwv:** jgq dI mwieAw ivc Ps ky jIv pRBU dI Xwd Bulw dyNdw hY; swrI aumr ivkwrW ivc hI guzwrdw hY[ buFypy ivc swry AMg kmzor ho jwx qy BI hor hor jIaux dI Aws krI jWdw hY, pr pRBU dI Xwd vl iPr vI nhIN prqdw[ies qrWH mnu`Kw jnm AjweIN gvw jWdw hY[

**Central Message** of the Shabad: One gets entangled in worldly affairs and wastes his whole life engaged in various human vices. When all organs get weak in old age, one still wishes for a long life. One does not meditate on God. Thus, the entire life goes waste.

Since Bhagat Beni was born into a Hindu Brahmin family, he was fully aware of the religious beliefs and ritualistic practices of Brahmins. However, he was clear that these practices were of no spiritual value. Only by meditating on God can one experience spiritual bliss. In SGGS, he explains this belief as follows:

ieVw ipMgulw Aaur suKmnw qIin bsih iek TweI]

byxI sMgmu qh iprwgu mnu mjnu kry iqQweI]1]

**sMqhu qhw inrMjn rwmu hY] gur gim cInY ibrlw koie]**

**qhW inrMjnu rmeIAw hoie]1]rhwau]**

dyv sQwnY ikAw nIswxI] qh bwjy sbd Anwhd bwxI]

qh cMdu n sUrju pauxu n pwxI] swKI jwgI gurmuiK jwxI]2]

aupjY igAwnu durmiq CIjY] AMimRq ris ggnµqir BIjY]

eysu klw jo jwxY Byau] BytY qwsu prm gurdyau]3] ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਬੇਣੀ ਜੀਉ, AMg 974

*EeiRaa pingulaa aaur sukhamanaa teen baseh ik Thaiee. Benee sa(n)gam teh piraag man majan kare tithaiee. 1. Sa(n)tahu tahaa nira(n)jan raam hai. Gur gam cheenai biralaa koi. Tahaa(n) nira(n)jan ramieeaa hoi. 1. Rahaau. Dhev sathaanai kiaa neesaanee. Teh baaje sabadh anaahadh baanee. Teh cha(n)dh na sooraj paun na paanee. Saakhee jaagee gurmukh jaanee. 2. Upajai giaan dhuramat chheejai. Anmirat ras gagana(n)tar bheejai. Es kalaa jo jaanai bheau. BheTai taas param gurdheau. 3.* SGGS, p. 974

**Translation:** The energy channels of the EeiRaa, Pingala and Shushmanaa: all three dwell in one place in the body. This is the true place of confluence of the three rivers: this is where my mind takes its cleansing bath. i.e., one has no need for practice of EeiRaa-Pingala-Shushmanaa. 1. **O Saints,God dwells there (inside human heart); only rare persons understand this by Guru’s grace. All-pervading God lives there.1 Pause.** (if someone asks) What is the insignia of God*'s* dwelling? (the answer is) The unstruck sound current of the Shabad vibrates there. (to remove the darkness of mind) There is no moon or sun, no air or water. The Gurmukh becomes aware and knows the Teachings. 2. (When one is in tune with God) Spiritual wisdom wells up, and evil-mindedness departs; the nucleus of the mind sky is drenched with Ambrosial Nectar. By knowing the secret of this device, one meets God*.* 3.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy sMq jno! mwieAw-rihq rwm aus AvsQw ivc (mnu`K dy mn ivc) vsdw hY, inrMjn sohxw rwm prgt huMdw hY, ijs AvsQw nwl sWJ koeI ivrlw mnu~K siqgur dI srn pY ky bxWdw hY[1[

**Central meaning** of the Rahao Tuk: O saintly ones, God dwells inside the human heart; and only a few people understand this by God*’s* Grace. The all-pervading God lives there.1 Pause.

Bhagat Beni believed that spiritual liberation can only be attained when a person is alive, and not after death. He expressed his views about (so-called) “sacred” Hindu rituals in these words:

qin cMdnu msqik pwqI] ird AMqir kr ql kwqI]

Tg idsit bgw ilv lwgw] dyiK bYsno pRwn muK Bwgw]1]

**kil Bgvq bMd icrWmM] k®¨r idsit rqw inis bwdM]1]rhwau]**

inqpRiq iesnwnu srIrM] duie DoqI krm muiK KIrM]

irdY CurI sMiDAwnI]pr drbu ihrn kI bwnI]2] pRBwqI byxI jI, AMg 1351

*Tun chandhan masatak paatee. Ridh antar kar tal kaatee. Thag dhisaT bagaa liv laagaa. Dhekh baisano praan mukh bhaagaa. 1. Kal bhagavat bandh chiraa(n)mun. Karaoor dhisaT rataa nis baadhan. 1. Rahaau. Nitaprat isanaan sareera(n). Dhui dhotee karam mukh kheeran. Ridhai chhuree sa(n)dhiaanee. Par dharab hiran kee baanee.2.* SGGS, p. 1351

**Translation:** You rub your body with sandalwood paste, and place basil leaves on your forehead. But within your heart is a lethal knife. You look like a thug; pretending to meditate, but like a heron you stand and wait on people to cheat them. You try to look like a Vaishnaav as if the breath of life has escaped you. (i.e. you appear to be a pious person) 1. **You (engulfed in vices) pray for hours to idol. But your gaze is evil, and your nights are wasted in worldly affairs. (your meditation on idol is of no use) 1. Pause.** You (engulfed in vices) perform daily cleansing rituals, wear two loincloths, perform (other) religious rituals and put only milk in your mouth. But in your heart, you have drawn out the sword. You routinely steal the property of others. 2.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** (hy ivSeI mnu`K! qUM auNJ qW) kljugI suBwv ivc pRivrq hYN, pr mUrqI nUM icr q`k nmskwr krdw hYN, qyrI nZr tyFI hY (qyrI ingwh ivc Kot hY), idn rwq qUM mwieAw dy DMiDAW ivc r`qw hoieAw hYN (qyrIAW ieh mUrqI NUM nUM bMdnW iks ArQ?)[1[rhwau[

**Central message** of the *Rahao Tuk*: You, engulfed in vices, pray for hours to an idol, but your gaze is evil, and your nights are wasted in worldly affairs. Your meditation of idols is of no use.

Within a few hundred years of Bhagat Beni’s death, many fictional stories of “miracles” got associated with him. In these stories, his admirers attributed supernatural and miraculous powers to him. Their intention may have been to show that he was somehow larger than life. Bhai Gurdas narrates one such story in the following words:

vfw sWgu vrqdw Eh iek min prmysru iDAwvY[

pYj svwrY Bgq dI rwjw huie kY Gir cil AwvY[

dyie idlwsw quiskY AxgxqI KrcI phMucwvY[

EQhMu AwieAw Bgq pwis hoie dieAwlu hyqu aupjwvY[

Bgq jnW jYkwru krwvY ]14] BweI gurdws, vwr 10.14

*Vadaa Saangu Varatadaa Aoh Ik Mun Pramaysaru Dhiaavai. Paij Savaarai Bhagat Dee Raajaa Hoi Kai Ghari Chali Aavai. Dayi Dilaasaa Tusi Kai Anaganatee Kharachee Pahunchaavai. Aodahu Aaiaa Bhagati Paasi Hoi Daiaalu Haytu Upajaavai. Bhagat Janaan Jaikaaru Karaavai.*

Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 10.14

**Translation:** One day while concentrating on Godwith single-minded devotion, a strange miracle happened. To protect the glory of the devotee, GodHimself in the form of a King went to his house. In great joy, He assured Beni’s wife and made available all the necessities and some money for expenditure. From there He went to His devotee Beni and caressed him affectionately. This way He always has His devotees acclaimed.

As is the case for many other compositions in the SGGS, this story too must be understood metaphorically, and not literally. Bhagat Beni was a well-educated scholar with humble temperament. Of course, God did not literally “Himself, in the form of a King”, go to his house. Metaphorically speaking, through meditation Bhagat Beni came to the realization of God. In the last line of the Vaar, Bhai Gurdas says that those who live life according to God*’s* principles, as devotees of God, earn the respect and praise of others. He is illustrating this point by using a prevalent story connected with Bhagat Beni.

The central message of all of Bhagat Beni’s Shabads in SGGS is thus similar. He severely denounces rituals and other austerities of "Hath Yoga". He asks the common man to learn and practice the real essence of true religion, which is the remembrance of God and meditation on His Name(Naam).

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**17. Bhagat Ramanand**

Bhagat Ramanand (1400 – 1470 CE) was born in Prayag, which was later renamed Allahabad, the name by which it is known today. His mother was Sushila and father was Punya Sadan Sharma, both Gaur Brahmins. He was a famous religious teacher of his time, whose equally famous disciples were Kabir, Ravidas, Sain, Dhanna, and Pipa.

Ramanand was above caste considerations and taught his ideology even to people from the so-called low castes. Ramanand believed that in the spiritual pursuit, one must forget one's (supposed) “caste identity” and social status. He believed that everyone had an equal right to meditate on God, in the same way that everyone has equal rights on air, water, and the earth. Through religious teaching of the poor and people of low castes, he took a very radical approach to preaching.

Only one composition of Bhagat Ramanand is included in SGGS. It is on page 1195 and is as follows:

**kq jweIAY ry Gr lwgo rMg]**

**myrw icqu n clY mnu BieE pMgu]1]rhwau]**

eyk idvs mn BeI aumMg] Gis cMdn coAw bhu sugMD]

pUjn cwlI bRhm Twie]so bRhmu bqwieE gur mn hI mwih]1]

jhw jweIAY qh jl pKwn] qU pUir rihE hY sB smwn]

byd purwn sB dyKy joie] aUhW qau jweIAY jau eIhW n hoie]2]

siqgur mY bilhwrI qor] ijin skl ibkl BRm kwty mor]

rwmwnµd suAwmI rmq bRhm] gur kw sbdu kwtY koit krm]3]1]

rwmwnMd jI, AMg 1195

*Kat jaieeaai re ghar laago ra(n)g. Meraa chit na chalai man bhio pa(n)g. 1. Rahaau. Aik divas man bhiee uma(n)g. Ghas cha(n)dhan choaa bahu suga(n)dh. Poojan chaalee braham Thai. So braham bataio gur man hee maeh. 1. Jahaa jaieeaai teh jal pakhaan. Too poor rahio hai sabh samaan. Bedh puraan sabh dhekhe joi. Uoohaa(n) tau jaieeaai jau ieehaa(n) na hoi. 2. Satguru mai balihaaree tor. Jin sakal bikal bhram kaaTe mor. Raamaana(n)dh suaamee ramat braham. Gur kaa sabadh kaaTai koT karam. 3.1 .* SGGS, p. 1195

**Translation:** **Where should I go? (Now) My home (heart) is filled with bliss. My consciousness does not go out wandering. My mind has become steady. 1. Pause.** One day, a desire welled up in my mind. I ground up sandalwood, along with several fragrant oils. I went to a temple to worship. (Now) my teacher has shown me that God(whom I considered to be in the temple) resides within my own mind. 1. Wherever I go (for pilgrimage or in a temple), I find only water and stones. But You are totally pervading and permeating in all. **I have searched through all the Vedas and the Puranas. I would go there, only if God were not here (in my heart).** 2. I am a sacrifice to You, O my Guru. You have cut through all my confusion and doubt. **Ramanand's master is the All-pervasive God*.*** The Word of the Guru's Shabad eradicates the (bad) karma of millions of past actions. 3.1.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy BweI! hor ikQy jweIey? (hux) ihrdy-Gr ivc hI mOj bx geI hY; myrw mn hux foldw nhIN, iQr ho igAw hY[1[rhwau[

**Central message** of the Rahao Tuk: O Brother! where else I should go. Now, I find bliss within me. My mind does not wander, it is always at peace.

Though Bhagat Ramanand was born into a Brahmin family, in the above Shabad he condemns the temple-oriented ritualistic practices of the so-called Hindu upper castes. He says that bathing in “holy” places or the worship of idols does not help attain a mental state of higher consciousness. By following the path suggested by a True Teacher*,* all doubts get cleared, and one realizes that the all-pervasive God resides within oneself. Only a True Teacher’sShabad can help overcome bad karmas of past actions.

The incident of Bhagat Kabir accepting Bhagat Ramanand as his religious teacher is succinctly captured by Bhai Gurdas in his Vaar as:

hoie ibrkqu bnwrsI rihMdw rwmwnMdu gusweIN[

AMimRqu vyly auiT kY jWdw gMgw nHwvx qweIN[

Ago hI dy jwie kY lMmw ipAw kbIr iqQweIN[

pYrI tuMib auTwilAw bolhu rwm isK smJweI[

ijau lohw pwrsu Cuhy cMdn vwsu inMmu mhkweI[

psU pryqhu dyv kir pUry siqgur dI vifAweI[

Acrj no Acrju imlY ivsmwdY ivsmwdu imlweI[

Jrxw Jrdw inJrhu gurmuiK bwxI AGV GVweI[

rwm kbIrY Bydu n BweI ]15] BweI gurdws, vwr 10.15

*Hoye birakat banaarasee rahi(n)dhaa raamaana(n)dh gusaiee(n). Amrit vele uTh kai jaa(n)dhaa ga(n)gaa nhaavan taiee(n). Ago hee dhe jai kai la(n)maa piaa Kabir tithaiee(n). Pairee Tu(n)b uThaaliaa bolahu raam sikh samajhaiee. Jiau lohaa paaras chhuhe cha(n)dhan vaas ni(n)m mahakaiee. Pasoo paretahu dhev kar poore Satguru dhee vaddiaaiee. Acharaj no acharaj milai visamaadhai visamaadh milaiee. Jharanaa jharadhaa nijharahu gurmukh baanee aghaR ghaRaiee. Raam Kabirai bhedh na bhaiee. 15*

Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 10.15

**Translation:** Being detached from the world, Brahmin Ramanand lived in Banaras (Kashi). He would rise early in the morning and go to the Ganges to bathe. Once even before Ramanand, Kabir went there and lay in the way. Touching with his feet Ramanand awakened Kabir and told him to speak ‘Ram’, the true spiritual teaching. As the iron touched by philosopher’s stone becomes gold and the margosa tree (Azadirachta indica) is made fragrant by sandalwood, the wondrous Guru turns even animals and ghosts into spiritual beings. Meeting the wondrous Guru, the disciple wonderfully merges into the great wonderous God*.* Then from the Self springs a fountain and the words of the *Gurmukh* shape a beautiful form. Now, Ram and Kabir became identical and nothing separated them.

Bhagat Ramanand was known for composing his works and discussing spiritual themes in vernacular Hindi, believing that this makes knowledge accessible to the masses. Several well-known books in Hindi and Sanskrit are attributed to Ramanand.

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**18. Bhagat Sain**

Bhagat Sain (1343 – 1433 CE) was born in village Sohal Thathian, in Amritsar District. His father was Mukand Rai and his mother was Mata Jivni (also known as Jiwan Devi). His father belonged to the Golhen caste of barbers. He got married to Sahib Devi at Lahore, and had a son named Nayi. Sain was a barber at the court of Raja Ram of Rewa, then called Bandhavgarh.

In SGGS, Guru Arjan Dev ji has described the spiritual achievements of Bhagat Sain through selfless service in these words:

nweI auDirE sYnu syv] bsMqu mhlw 5, AMg 1192

*Naiee udhario sain sev.*  SGGS, p. 1192

**Translation:** Sain the barber was saved through his selfless service.

Bhagat Sain’s following composition is included on page 695 of SGGS.

DUp dIp iGRq swij AwrqI] vwrny jwau kmlw pqI]1]

**mMglw hir mMglw] inq mMglu rwjw rwm rwie ko]1]rhwau]**

aUqmu dIArw inrml bwqI] quhNØI inrMjnu kmlw pwqI]2]

rwmw Bgiq rwmwnµdu jwnY] pUrn prmwnµdu bKwnY]3]

mdn mUriq BY qwir goibMdy] sYnu BxY Bju prmwnµdy ]4]2]

DnwsrI Bgq sYx jI, AMg 695

*Dhoop dheep ghirat saaj aaratee. Vaarane jaau kamalaa pate. 1. Mangalaa har mangalaa. Nit mangal raajaa raam rai ko. 1. Rahaau. Uootam dheearaa niramal baatee. Tu-hee niranjan kamalaa paatee. 2. Raamaa bhagat raamaanand jaanai. Pooran paramanand bakhaanai. 3. Madan moorat bhai taar gobindhe. Sain bhanai bhaj paramanandhe. 4. 2.* SGGS, p. 695

**Translation:** I offer myself as sacrifice to You, (offering myself as sacrifice is really) worshiping You with incense, lamp, and ghee. 1. **Hail to You, God, hail to You!Again and again, hail to You, God, Ruler of all! With Your grace there is permanent bliss (of your Name inside me). 1. Pause.** O God! You are immaculate and pure (You are) sublime lamp and pure wick (for worshipping You). 2. One who performs devotional worship of the all-pervading God, he enjoys the supreme joy and bliss with His Grace. 3. Says Sain, (Oh! my mind) remember God, the embodiment of supreme joy, who carries me across the terrifying world-ocean. 4. 2.

Bhai Gurdas explains in his Vaar 10.16 that a devotee’s grandeur is manifested by the grace of God Himself. Bhai Sahib illustrates this point through a legendry story associated with Bhagat Sain:

suix prqwpu kbIr dw dUjw isKu hoAw sYxu nweI[

pRym Bgiq rwqI krY BlkY rwj duAwrY jweI[

Awey sMq prwhuxy kIrqnu hoAw rYix sbweI[

Cif n skY sMq jn rwj duAwir n syv kmweI[

sYx rUip hir jwie kY AwieAw rwxY no rIJweI[

swD jnW no ivdw kir rwj duAwir gieAw srmweI[

rwxY dUrhuM sid kY glhuM kvwie Koil pYnHweI[

vis kIqw hauN quDu Aju bolY rwjw suxY lukweI[

prgtu krY Bgiq vifAweI ]16]

Sunn parataap kabeer dhaa dhoojaa sikh hoaa sain naiee|prem bhagat raatee karai bhalakai raaj dhuaarai jaiee|aae sa(n)t paraahune keeratan hoaa rain sabaiee|chhadd na sakai sa(n)t jan raaj dhuaar na sev kamaiee|sain roop har jai kai aaiaa raanai no reejhaiee|saadh janaa(n) no vidhaa kar raaj dhuaar giaa saramaiee|raanai dhoorahu(n) sadh kai galahu(n) kavai khol painhaiee|vas keetaa hau(n) tudh aj bolai raajaa sunai lukaiee|paragaT karai bhagat vaddiaaiee ||16|| Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 10.16

**Translation:** Hearing the glory of Kabir, Sain also became a disciple. In the night he would immerse in loving devotion and in the morning, he would serve at the door of the king. On one night some sadhus came to Sain and the whole night was spent in singing the Lord's praises. Sain could not leave company of the saints and consequently did not perform the king’s service the following morning. (Metaphorically speaking), God Himself took the form of Sain. He served the king in such a way that the king was overjoyed. Bidding farewell to the saints, Sain hesitantly arrived at the palace. From a distance the king called him nearby. He took off his own robes and offered them to Bhagat Sain. ‘You have captivated me (with your service)’, said the king and his words were heard by one and all. God Himself manifests the grandeur of the devotee. 16.

Bhagat Sain had many disciples of all Hindu castes, low and high. One of his most famous disciples was a Brahmin named Kordass. Bhagat Sain gave him religious instructions and explained the true way of life. He contributed to reducing unjust and immoral social systems like the Hindu caste system, untouchability, etc. There is a temple called Dehra Baba Sain Bhagat, Partabpura in Jalandhar in his memory. Bhagat Sain died in 1433 CE at Kashi (Banaras).

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**19. Bhagat Dhanna**

Bhagat Dhanna (1415–1475 CE) was born into a family of farmers in village Dhuan Kalan, in Tonk District of Rajasthan. His father was Bhai Panna and mother was Mai Reva. Three compositions of Bhagat Dhanna are included in SGGS.

**Bhagat Dhanna’s first Shabad** on page 487 of SGGS is as follows:

BRmq iPrq bhu jnm iblwny qnu mnu Dnu nhI DIry]

**lwlc ibKu kwm lubD rwqw min ibsry pRB hIry]1]rhwau]**

ibKu Pl mIT lgy mn baury cwr ibcwr n jwinAw]

gun qy pRIiq bFI An BWqI jnm mrn iPir qwinAw]1]

jugiq jwin nhI irdY invwsI jlq jwl jm PMD pry]

ibKu Pl sMic Bry mn AYsy prm purK pRB mn ibsry]2]

igAwn pRvysu gurih Dnu dIAw iDAwnu mwnu mn eyk mey]

pRym Bgiq mwnI suKu jwinAw iqRpiq AGwny mukiq Bey]3]

joiq smwie smwnI jw kY AClI pRBu pihcwinAw]

DMnY Dnu pwieAw DrxIDru imil jn sMq smwinAw ]4]1]

Awsw bwxI Bgq DMny jI kI, AMg 487

*Bhramat firat bahu janam bilaane tan man dhan nahee dheere. Laalach bikh kaam lubadh raataa man bisare prabh here. 1. Rahaau. Bikh fal meeTh lage man baure chaar bichaar na jaaniaa. Gu-n te preet baddee an bhaa(n)tee janam maran fir taaniaa. 1. Jugat jaan nahee ridhai nivaasee jalat jaal jam fa(n)dh pare. Bikh fal sa(n)ch bhare man aaise param purakh prabh man bisare. 2. Gyan praves gureh dhan dheeaa dhiaan maan man ek maae. Prem bhagat maanee sukh jaaniaa tirapat aghaane mukat bhe. 3. Jot samai samaanee jaa kai achhalee prabh pahichaaniaa. Dhannai dhan paiaa dharaneedhar mil jan sa(n)t samaaniaa. 4. 1* SGGS, p. 487

**Translation:** **One wanders through countless incarnations (while craving for worldly material and pleasures), the body perishes and mind stays restless, even the wealth does not always stay with the person. Attached to, and stained by the poisons of desire and greed, the mind forgets the jewel of God*.* 1. Pause**. O my stupid mind! The poisonous fruit seems sweet to the demented mind, which does not know the difference between good and evil. Turning away from virtue, his love for other things increases, and he weaves again the web of birth and death. 1. O my mind! You do not know the way to God, who dwells within your heart; burning in the trap of desires, you are caught by the noose of death. Gathering the poisonous fruits, you fill the mind with them, and forget God. 2. Whom the Guru has given the wealth of spiritual wisdom, he practices meditation, his mind becomes one with Him; he embraces loving devotional worship for God, comes to know peace, is satisfied and satiated, and is liberated. 3. One who is filled with the God’s Light recognizes the undeceivable God*.* I, Dhanna, have also obtained God*,* the Sustainer of the World; in the company of humble Saints, am absorbed mentally in *Naam.* 4. 1.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** (mwieAw dy moh ivc) BtkidAW keI jnm guzr jWdy hn, ieh srIr nws ho jWdw hY, mn Btkdw rihMdw hY qy Dn BI itikAw nhIN rihNdw[ loBI jIv zihr-rUp pdwrQW dy lwlc ivc, kwm-vwSnW ivc, rMigAw rihMdw hY, ies dy mn ivcoN Amolk pRBU ivsr jWdw hY[1[rhwau[

**For translation** of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

Bhagat Dhanna is saying in the last sentence of the above Shabad that he met or “merged in” God in the company of the holy persons. However, these terms, as well as the central message of the entire Shabad, must be understood metaphorically, not literally.

To explain Bhagat Dhanna’s composition further, just next to Bhagat Dhanna’s above Shabad, Guru Arjan Dev ji has added his own Shabad. It is on the same theme, and is also on page 487 of SGGS. It is as follows:

goibMd goibMd goibMd sMig nwmdyau mnu lIxw]

**AwF dwm ko CIpro hoieE lwKIxw]1]rhwau]**

bunnw qnnw iqAwig kY pRIiq crn kbIrw]

nIc kulw jolwhrw BieE gunIX ghIrw]1]

rivdwsu FuvMqw For nIiq iqin iqAwgImwieAw]

prgtu hoAw swDsMig hir drsnu pwieAw]2]

sYnu nweI buqkwrIAw Ehu Gir Gir suinAw]

ihrdy visAw pwrbRhmu Bgqw mih ginAw]3]

ieh ibiD suin kY jwtro auiT BgqI lwgw]

imly pRqiK gusweIAw DMnw vfBwgw]4]2] Awsw m:5, AMg 487

*mahalaa panjavaa||gobi(n)dh gobi(n)dh gobi(n)dh sa(n)g naamadheau man leenaa||aadd dhaam ko chheeparo hoio laakheenaa ||1|| rahaau||bunanaa tananaa tiaag kai preet charan Kabiraa||neech kulaa jolaaharaa bhio guneey gaheeraa||1||ravidhaas dduva(n)taa ddor neet tin tiaagee maiaa ||paragaT hoaa saadhasa(n)g har dharasan paiaa||2||sain naiee butakaareeaa oh ghar ghar suniaa ||hiradhe vasiaa paarabraham bhagataa meh ganiaa||3||eeh bidh sun kai jaaTaro uTh bhagatee laagaa||mile pratakh gusaieeaa dha(n)naa vaddabhaagaa ||4||2||*

SGGS, p. 487

**Translation:** **(Bhagat) Namdev’s mind was always absorbed in Naam*.* (With God*’s* blessing), the calico-printer, worth half a penny, became worth millions (since he was no longer dependent on anybody)1 Pause.** Abandoning weaving and stretching thread, Kabir cherished love of God*'s* lotus feet. A weaver from a lowly family became virtuous. ||1||(earlier) Ravidas used to carry dead cows every day. (since) he renounced the world of Maya, he became famous by keeping company of the learned persons (Saadh Sangat), the Company of the Holy, and obtained the Blessed Vision of God. ||2||Sain, the barber, the village drudge, was praised by every householder. God dwells in his heart, and he is counted among the devotees. ||3||**Hearing this, Dhanna the Jaat applied himself to devotional worship. Dhanna was so very blessed by personally experiencing the God.** ||4||2||

In this Shabad, Guru Arjan Dev ji says clearly that the various Bhagats (Namdev, Kabir, Ravidas, Sain, and Dhanna) became enlightened, or achieved prominence, or gained respect of the sangat, or realized God through constant meditation or absorption in Him. Of course, Bhagat Dhanna did not literally meet God personally. Guru Arjan Dev ji also says that the other Bhagats started worshiping God in the company of holy persons (Sadh Sangat). When Dhanna learned about it, he too felt very blessed after he started worshipping God in the company of holy persons.

**The second composition of Bhagat Dhanna** is on page 488 of SGGS. It is as follows:

ry icq cyqis kI n dXwl dmodr ibbih n jwnis koeI]

**jy Dwvih bRhmMf KMf kau krqw krY su hoeI]1]rhwau]**

jnnI kyry audr audk mih ipMfu kIAw ds duAwrw]

dyie Ahwru Agin mih rwKY AYsw Ksmu hmwrw]1]

kuMmI jl mwih qn iqsu bwhir pMK KIru iqn nwhI]

pUrn prmwnµd mnohr smiJ dyKu mn mwhI]2]

pwKix kItu gupqu hoie rhqw qw co mwrgu nwhI]

khY DMnw pUrn qwhU ko mq ry jIA frWhI]3]3] Awsw m: 5, AMg 488

*re chit chetas kee na dhayaal dhamodhar bibeh na jaanas koiee ||je dhaaveh brahama(n)dd kha(n)dd kau karataa karai su hoiee ||1|| rahaau||jananee kere udhar udhak meh pi(n)dd keeaa dhas dhuaaraa||dhei ahaar agan meh raakhai aaisaa khasam hamaaraa ||1||ku(n)mee jal maeh tan tis baahar pa(n)kh kheer tin naahee ||pooran paramaana(n)dh manohar samajh dhekh man maahee ||2||paakhan keeT gupat hoi rahataa taa cho maarag naahee |kahai dha(n)naa pooran taahoo ko mat re jeea ddaraa(n)hee |3|3|* SGGS, p. 488

**Translation:** **O my consciousness, why don't you remain conscious of God? Do not recognize anyone else. You may run around the whole universe, but that alone happens which God does. ||1||Pause||**In the water of the mother's womb, He fashioned the body with ten gates. He gave it sustenance and preserved it in fire of the womb – (O mind see) my God is such (merciful). ||1||The mother turtle (lives) in the water, and her babies are out of the water (on the sand). (Babies) have no wings (to fly to their mother to get food), and (mother turtle) has no teats (to provide milk to babies). God, the embodiment of supreme bliss takes care of them. See this and understand it. ||2||The worm lies hidden inside the stone - there is no way for him to escape out in search of food. Says Dhanna, God takes care of him. Fear not, O my soul. ||3||3||

**The central message** of the *Rahao Tuk* is:

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy (myry) mn! dieAw dy Gr prmwqmw nUM qNMU ikauN nhIN ismrdw? (vyKIN) qUM iksy hor qy Aws nwh lweI rKIN[ jy qUN swrI isiSRtI dy dysW prdysW ivc vI Btkdw iPryNgw, qW BI auhI kuJ hovygw jo krqwr krygw[1[rhwau[

**Its translation** is as given above.

This composition of Bhagat Dhanna is thus fully consistent with Sikhi principles as per the teachings of the Sikh Gurus in SGGS.

**The third composition of Bhagat Dhanna** is on page 695 of SGGS. It is generally sung with the Aarti Shabad. It is as follows:

gopwl qyrw Awrqw]

**jo jn qumrI Bgiq krMqy iqn ky kwj svwrqw]1]rhwau]**

dwil sIDw mwgau GIau]hmrw KusI krY inq jIau]

pn@IAw Cwdnu nIkw] Anwju mgau sq sI kw]1]

gaU BYs mgau lwvyrI] iek qwjin qurI cMgyrI]

Gr kI gIhin cMgI] jnu DMnw lyvY mMgI]2]4] DnwsrI Bgq DMnw jI, AMg 695

*dha(n)naa ||gopaal teraa aarataa ||jo jan tumaree bhagat kara(n)te tin ke kaaj savaarataa ||1|| rahaau ||dhaal seedhaa maagau gheeau ||hamaraa khusee karai nit jeeau ||pan(h)eeaa chhaadhan neekaa || anaaj magau sat see kaa ||1||guoo bhais magau laaveree ||eik taajan turee cha(n)geree ||ghar kee geehan cha(n)gee ||jan dha(n)naa levai ma(n)gee ||2||4||* SGGS, p. 695

**Translation: O God - protector of the earth, I am a beggar at Yourdoorstep, (please fulfil my needs); You fulfil all needs of those humble beings who worship You with devotion. ||1||Pause||** Lentils, flour, and ghee - these things, I beg of You. My mind shall ever be pleased. Shoes, fine clothes, and grain of seven kinds - I beg of You. ||1|| I beg of You lentil, flour and oil which can nourish my body. I also beg You for shoes and beautiful dresses as well as special grain. 1. I beg of Youwater buffalo, and a fine Turkestani horse. I, Your humble servant Dhanna, also begs You for a good wife to care for my home. ||2||4||

**rhwau dI qu~k:** hy ipRQvI dy pwlx vwly pRBU! mYN qyry dr dw mMgqw hW (myirAW loVW pUirAW kr); jo jo mnu`K qyrI BgqI krdy hn qMN auhnW dy kMm isry cwVHdw hYN[1[rhwau[

**Its translation** is as given above.

The word “Aarta” in the Shabad rhymes with “Aarti,” and is sung with the “Aarti” Shabads. The word Aarta is from Sanskrit and means “beggar”. However, Bhagat Dhanna’s Shabad on page 695 has nothing to do with the traditional Aarti ritual performed by Hindus. It does not contain any word related to the materials (e.g., flowers, incense, lamp, etc.) used by them as essential elements for performing an Aarti. Instead, in this Shabad, Bhagat Dhanna is requesting (begging) God for the necessities essential for sustaining human life on earth.

It is true that God provides for everything without our asking for it. Yet, there is no prohibition on asking for things necessary for living a life on this earth. There are quite a few Shabads in SGGS where a devotee seeks items necessary to make a living. It must also be noted that one should not ask anything from anyone other than from God*.*

The SGGS says, for example, that:

* mWgau rwm qy siB Qok]

mwnuK kau jwcq sRm pweIAY, pRBU kY ismrn moK]rhwau]

DnwsrI m: 5, AMg 682

Maa(n)gau raam te sabh thok II maanukh kau jaachat sram paieeaai prabh kai Simran mokh II 1 II rahaau II SGGS, p. 682

I beg only from God for all things. I would hesitate to beg from other people. Remembering God in meditation, liberation is obtained II Pause II

* mY qwx dIbwx qU hY myry suAwmI, mY quDu AwgY Ardwis]

mY hor Qwau nwhI ijsu pih krau bynMqI, myrw duKu suKu quD hI pwis]1]12]

sUhI m: 4, AMg 735

Mai taan dheebaan toohai mere suaamee mai tudh aagai ardhaas II mai hor thaau naahee jis peh karau bena(n)tee meraa dhukh such tijh hee paasII 2 II SGGS, p. 735

You alone are my strength, and my Court, O my Master: unto *You* alone I pray. There is no other place where I can offer my prayers: I can tell my pains and pleasures only to *You*. II2II

Bhai Gurdas in his Vaar 10.13 explains that to seek God one must become innocent and pure. To illustrate his point, he mentions one of the prevalent mythical stories connected with Bhagat Dhanna’s life. This Vaar too should be understood metaphorically, not literally. The Vaar is as follows:

bwmHx pUjY dyvqy DMnw gaU crwvix AwvY[

DMnY ifTw cilqu eyhu puCY bwmHxu AwiK suxwvY[

Twkur dI syvw krY jo ieCY soeI Plu pwvY[

DMnw krdw jodVI mY iB dyh iek jy quDu BwvY[

pQru ieku lpyit kir dy DMnY no gYl CufwvY[

Twkur no nHwvwil kY Cwih rotI lY Bogu cVHwvY[

hiQ joiV imniq krY pYrI pY pY bhuqu mnwvY[

hau BI muhu n juTwlsW qU ruTw mY ikhu n suKwvY[

gosweI prqiK hoie rotI Kwih Cwih muih lwvY[

**Bolw Bwau goibMdu imlwvY** ]13] BweI gurdws, vwr 10.13

*Baamhan poojai dhevate Dhanna guoo charaavan aavai. Dhannai ddiThaa chalit eh puchhai baamhan aakh sunaavai. Thaakur dhee sevaa karai jo ichhai soiee fal paavai. Dhanna karadhaa jodhaRee mai bh dheh ik je tudh bhaavai. Pathar ik lapeT kar dhe Dhannai no gail chhuddaavai. Thaakur no nhaavaal kai chhaeh roTee lai bhog chaRhaavai. Hath joR minat karai pairee pai pai bahut manaavai. Hau bhee muh na juThaalasaa(n) too ruThaa mai kih na sukhaavai. Gosaiee paratakh hoi roTee khaeh chhaeh muh laavai. Bholaa bhaau gobind milaavai. 13.* Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 10.13

**Translation:** A Brahmin would worship Gods (in the form of stone idols) where Dhanna used to graze his cow. On seeing his worship, Dhanna asked the Brahmin what he was doing. “Service to the Thakur gives the desired fruit,” replied the Brahmin. Dhanna requested, “O Brahmin! If you agree, kindly give one Thakur to me.” The Brahmin tagged a stone on to a bell, gave it to Dhanna just to get rid of him. Dhanna bathed the Thakur and offered him bread and buttermilk. With folded hands and falling at the feet of the stone he begged for his service to be accepted. Dhanna said, “I will also not eat because how can I be happy if you are annoyed.” (Seeing his true and loving devotion) God was forced to appear and eat his bread and buttermilk. **In fact, innocence like that of Dhanna can lead to the achievement of closeness to God*.***

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**20. Bhagat Pipa**

Bhagat Pipa (1425 CE - unknown) was born into a Rajput royal family ([Kshatriya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kshatriya) caste) at Gagaraungarh, in the present-day Jhalawar district of Rajasthan. He became the king of Gagaraungarh at a young age, succeeding his father. He abdicated the throne to become a mystic poet of the Bhakti movement.

He was a philanthropist and a pious man at heart who served religious mendicants wholeheartedly. He went to Banaras and adopted Bhagat Ramanand as his mentor and teacher. He was in search of spiritual solace and said that one should search within oneself for God. He disdained the idea of finding God in any form in the outer world.

There is only one composition of Bhagat Pipa in the SGGS. He says that the body itself is God*’s* temple (Kaiau deval). One should look inward to find God*.* One need not make stone images of Him and burn incense or light candles in front of them.

Bhagat Pipa’s composition on page 695 of SGGS is as under:

kwXau dyvw kwieAau dyvl kwieAau jMgm jwqI]

kwieAau DUp dIp neIbydw kwieAau pUjau pwqI]1]

**kwieAw bhu KMf Kojqy nv iniD pweI]**

**nw kCu Awiebo nw kCu jwiebo rwm kI duhweI]1]rhwau]**

jo bRhmMfy soeI ipMfy jo KojY so pwvY]

pIpw pRxvY prm qqu hY siqguru hoie lKwvY]2]3] DnwsrI Bgq pIpw jI, AMg 695

Kaaiyau dhevaa kaiaau dheval kaiaau ja(n)gam jaatee. Kaiaau dhoop dheep nieebedhaa kaiaau poojau paatee. 1. Kaaiaa bahu kha(n)dd khojate nav nidh payee. Naa kachh aaibo naa kachh jaibo raam kee dhuhaiee. 1. Rahaau. Joe brahama(n)dde soiee pi(n)dde jo khojai so paavai. Pipa pranavai param tat hai Satguru hoi lakhaavai. 2. 3. SGGS, Pg. 695

**Translation:** (Search) within the body, as God (resides there). (Therefore, searching within) the body is for me becoming a Jangam and my body is the place of pilgrimage. (Searching within the body) is for me lighting my incense, lamps, and my offerings. 1. **I searched throughout many realms, (eventually) I found the nine treasures (Naam) within the body. Nothing comes, and nothing goes (means, I am free of birth-and-death cycle); (with His Grace) I pray to God for Mercy (inside my body). 1. Pause.** The One who pervades the Universe also dwells in the body; whoever seeks Him, finds Him there (inside the body). Pipa prays; God is the supreme essence; He reveals Himself through the Guru. 2. 3.

**The central message** of the Rahao Tuk is:

dys dysWqrW nUM Koj ky (Aw^r Awpxy) srIr dy AMdr hI mYN pRBU dw nwm-rUp nO iniD l`B leI hY, (hux myrI kwieAW ivc) prmwqmw dI Xwd dw hI qyj-pRqwp hY, (aus dI brkq nwl myry leI) nw kuJ jmdw hY nwh mrdw hY) (Bwv, myrw jnm mrn imt igAw hY)[1[rhwau[

**Its translation** is as given above.

Bhagat Pipa emphasizes the following four points in his composition:

1. Do not remember God superficially. Do it with an intense feeling.
2. Remembering God is the real worship.
3. God resides inside everyone and permeates the whole universe. He is also the Creator of the universe.
4. Only the Guru can help one meet God.

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**21. Bhagat Bhikhan**

Bhagat Bhikhan (1480—1574 CE), was a medieval Hindu religious preacher. He was one of the most learned men of the time of Emperor Akbar. He lived a remarkably simple life. A married man and householder, he was held in high repute for his piety and learning. He was guided by pious and high thinking. For many years, he was engaged in teaching and instructing the people. His fame spread far and wide. Two of Bhagat Bhikan’s compositions are included in SGGS.

**The First composition of Bhagat Bhikhan**

This composition of Bhai Bhikhan on page 659 of SGGS is as follows:

nYnhu nIru bhY qnu KInw Bey kys duD vwnI]

rUDw kMTu sbdu nhI aucrY Ab ikAw krih prwnI]1]

**rwm rwie hoih bYd bnvwrI] Apny sMqh lyhu aubwrI]1]rhwau]**

mwQy pIr srIir jlin hY krk kryjy mwhI]

AYsI bydn aupij KrI BeI vw kw AauKDu nwhI]2]

hir kw nwmu AMimRq jlu inrmlu iehu AauKDu jig swrw]

gur prswid khY jnu BIKnu pwvau moK duAwrw]3]1] sorT Bgq BIKn, AMg 659

*Nainahu neer bahai tan kheenaa bhe kes dhudh vaanee. Roodhaa ka(n)Th sabadh nahee ucharai ab kiaa kareh paraanee. 1. Raam rai hoh baidh banavaaree. Apane sa(n)teh leh ubaaree. 1. Rahaau. Maathe peer sareer jalan hai karak kareje maahee. Aaisee bedhan upaj kharee bhiee vaa kaa aaukhadh naahee. 2. Har kaa naam a(n)mirat jal niramal ih aaukhadh jag saaraa. Gur parasaadh kahai jan Bhikhan paavau mokh dhuaaraa. 3. 1*

SGGS, p. 659

**Translation:** (O human! in old age due to weakness) water flows down from your eyes, your body has become frail, and hairs have become milky-white. Your throat is choked (with phlegm) and cannot utter even one word clearly; what are you doing even now? (Why are you not meditating on God? Why are you still attached to the body?) 1. **O Beautiful Raam! O God! If You become Physician, You save Your devotees (from attachment to the body) (i.e. You Yourself become the Physician and save Your devotees from attachment to body). 1. Pause**. (O human! Because of old age) your head aches, body burns, and heart is filled with anguish. (every part of the body is in pain) Such is the disease that has struck me; there is no medicine to cure it. (still we are attached to the body). 2.(To get rid of the attachment to the body) **Naam, the ambrosial water, is the only medicine in the world.** Says servant Bhikhan, By Guru's Grace, I have found the Door of Salvation and am free of the bodily attachment. 3.1.

**In the Rahao Tuk,** the word “Raam” does not refer to god “Ram” of the Hindu epic Ramayana. Instead, it refers to All pervadingGod*.* The Shabad also says that “Naam, the ambrosial water, is the only medicine in the world.” This composition of Bhagat Bhikan resembles that of SheikhFarid which speaks about the vulnerability of old age. Bhagat Bhikhan's advice is to drink the nectar of Naam whilst one is alive.

**The Second composition of Bhagat Bhikhan**

This composition of Bhai Bhikhan on page 659 of SGGS is as follows:

AYsw nwmu rqnu inrmolku puMin pdwrQu pwieAw]

Aink jqn kir ihrdY rwiKAw rqnu n CpY CpwieAw]1]

**hir gun khqy khnu n jweI] jYsy gUMgy kI imiTAweI]1]rhwau]**

rsnw rmq sunq suKu sRvnw icq cyqy suKu hoeI ]

khu BIKn duie nYn sMqoKy jh dyKW qh soeI]2]2] sorT Bgq BIKn, AMg 659

*Aaisaa naam ratan niramolak pu(n)n padhaarath paiaa. Anik jatan kar hiradhai raakhiaa ratan na chhapai chhapaiaa.1. Har gun kahate kahan na jaiee. Jaise goo(n)ge kee miThiaaiee.1. Rahaau. Rasanaa ramat sunat sukh sravanaa chit chete sukh hoiee. Kahu Bhikhan dhui nain sa(n)tokhe jeh dhekhaa(n) teh soiee.2. 2*  SGGS, p. 659

**Translation:** Such is the Naam*,* the invaluable jewel, the most sublime wealth, which I have found through good deeds. By various efforts, I have enshrined it within my heart; this jewel cannot be hidden even if one tries to hide it. 1**. (the bliss one experiences while singing) The Glorious Praises of God cannot be explained by speaking. It is like the sweet candies given to a mute (as the mute cannot explain the sweetness he is experiencing). 1. Pause.** (this jewel – Naam),the tongue speaks, the ears listen, and the mind contemplates God; they find peace and comfort. Says Bhikhan, my eyes are content (by contemplating on God); wherever I look, there I see God*.* 2. 2.

Here, Bhagat Bhikhan describes the effect of Naam-Simranon man's body, soul, and mind. The taste of Naam is indescribable, says Bhagat Bhikhan, just as a mute man cannot explain the taste of sweet candy. If you ask this mute person to describe his experience of the taste of candy, he will remain silent, as he cannot speak. But he will just smile, and that says everything. Similarly, the knower of the Absolute Truth(Naam) becomes speechless and silent, and thus behaves like a mute. The Naam provides indescribable comfort and joy to the mind. Remembering Him is comforting. Bhagat Bhikhan says that his eyes have experienced contentment by remembering God. Now, in whichever direction he looks, he perceives God*.*

Metaphorically, the **central meaning** of the above Shabad is:

prmwqmw dw nwm iek AYsw Amolk pdwrQ h Yjo BwgW nwl imldw hY[ ies rqn nUM Anyk jqn kr ky BI ihrdy ivc (gupq) r`KIey, qW BI lukwieAW ieh lukdw nhIN[1[

Naam is a precious jewel. It can only be obtained by one’s good deeds and God*’s* Grace. Once the gift of Naam has been received, one may try to hide this precious jewel in the heart, yet it cannot be hidden. Others will perceive the purity of the devotee’s heart.

The essence of both the Shabads of Bhagat Bhikhan is that it is man's deeds that cause him suffering and discontentment. Caught in the web of Maya (material world) and love for his body, man is engaged in seeking quick fixes, like adding patches of leather for mending a shoe. However, he can secure liberation from such a situation only if God bestows His Grace on him. Then the path to spiritual liberation will become open to him. God’s Grace would certainly be bestowed upon him provided he remembers God, who is the Curer of all ills of the world.

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**22. Bhagat Parmanand**

Bhagat Parmanand (1483–1574 CE)was a highly respected religious preacher and poet. He was born into a Brahmin family in village Kannauj, District Farrukhabad. He is believed to have resided at Barsi, situated to the north of Pandharpur, in present-day Sholapur district of Maharashtra state in western India. He died at age 91, after a long and fruitful life.

**Bhagat Parmanand’s one composition** is included in SGGS. It is on page 1253, and is as follows:

**qY nr ikAw purwnu suin kInw]**

**AnpwvnI Bgiq nhI aupjI BUKY dwnu n dInw]1]rhwau]**

kwmu n ibsirE k®oDu n ibsirE loBu n CUitE dyvw]

pr inMdw muK qy nhI CUtI inPl BeI sB syvw]1]

bwt pwir Gru mUis ibrwno pytu BrY ApRwDI]

ijih prlok jwie ApkIriq soeI AibidAw swDI]2]

ihMsw qau mn qy nhI CUtI jIA dieAw nhI pwlI]

prmwnµd swDsMgiq imil kQw punIq n cwlI]3]1]6]

swrMg Bgq prmwnMd jI, AMg 1253

***Tai nar kiaa puraan sun keenaa. Anapaavanee bhagat nahee upajee bhookhai dhaan na dheenaa. 1. Rahaau.*** *Kaam na bisario karodh na bisario lobh na chhooTio devaa. Par ni(n)dhaa mukh te nahee chhooTee nifal bhiee sabh sevaa. 1. BaaT paar ghar moos biraano peT bharai apraadhee. Jeh paralok jai apakeerat soiee abidhiaa saadhee. 2. Hi(n)saa tau man te nahee chhooTee jeea dhiaa nahee paalee. Paramaanand saadhasangat mil kathaa puneet na chaalee. 3. 1.6.* SGGS, p. 1253

**Translation:** **You have accomplished nothing by listening to the Puranas. Neither eternal devotion has welled up within you nor have you served the needy. 1. Pause**. (by listening to Puranas) You have not forgotten lust, and you have not forgotten anger; greed has not left you either. Your mouth has not stopped slandering and gossiping about others. All your effort (for reading the Puranas) has gone waste. 1. (even after listening to Puranas) you fill your belly by breaking into the houses of others and robbing them. But when you go to the world beyond, your guilt will be well known, by the acts of foolishness which you committed. 2. O Parmanand! (by listening to sacred books) Cruelty has not left your mind; you do not cherish kindness for other living beings. You have not joined the Saadh Sangat (Company of the Holy) to talk about God (which can make you pure). (You have not developed any interest to keep company of the Holy).3. 1. 6.

**The central message** of the Rahao Tuk is:

hy BweI! purwx Awid Drm pusqkW sux ky qUM KitAw qW kuJ BI nhIN; qyry AMdr nwh qW pRBU dI Atl BgqI pYdw hoeI qy nwh hI qUM iksy loVvMd dI syvw kIqI[1[rhwau[

**For the translation** of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

In this composition, Bhagat Parmanand specifically mentions “the Puranas” (which are sacred Hindu texts), but his message covers other religious scriptures as well. He is quite clear that the mere reading of scriptures is futile if that action has not also inspired one to serve fellow beings. He commends sincere devotion of God, which can be accomplished much more easily in the company of religious preachers and saintly persons (as in a Sadh Sangat). He also says that human vices such as lust, wrath, avarice, and slander must be expunged from the mind, for they render all service to others fruitless.

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**23. Bhagat Surdas**

Bhagat Surdas(1478–1586 CE) was a preacher, poet, and musician. He was a saintly person. His name literally means the "slave of melody". His parents had named him Madan Mohan at birth, but as he did not like the name, he changed it to Surdas. Bhagat Surdas's dates of birth and death are somewhat uncertain. Some say he was born in 1478 CE, while others say he was born in 1528 CE in Siri village near Delhi.

Even though Bhagat Surdas was born completely blind, he became a scholar of Persian, Hindi, and Sanskrit. His lilting music and fine poetry attracted many followers and earned him many laurels. As his fame spread far and wide, the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605 CE) became his patron. Akbar was a great admirer of learned people. He appointed Bhagat Surdas the governor of a state. Being a person of simple and compassionate nature, Bhagat Surdas used his position to help the poor.

There is just one line composed by Bhagat Surdas in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). It is on page 1253, and is as follows:

**Cwif mn hir ibmuKn ko sMgu]** swrMg Bgq sUrdws jI, AMg 1253

*Chhaadd man har bimukhan ko sa(n)g.* SGGS, p. 1253

**Translation:** O mind, do not even associate with those who have turned their backs on God.

In general, in SGGS the name of the Bhagat who composed the Shabad is written above the Shabad(s). Bhagat Surdas’s verse is an exception. The name of the composer is not written before the Shabad. However, the authorship of the Shabad becomes clear from the heading of the next Shabad, which says “ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ਸੂਰਦਾਸ”. Here, Guru Arjan Dev ji is explaining how to leave the company of those who have turned their backs on God. Guru ji is thus elaborating on the preceding composition by Bhagat Surdas.

Guru Arjan Dev ji’s Shabad, also on page 1253 of SGGS, is as follows:

ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ਸੂਰਦਾਸ ॥

**hir ky sMg bsy hir lok]**

**qnu mnu Arip srbsu sBu AripE And shj Duin Jok]1]rhwau]**

drsnu pyiK Bey inribKeI pwey hY sgly Qok]

Awn bsqu isau kwju n kCUAY suMdr bdn Alok]1]

isAwm suMdr qij Awn ju cwhq ijau kustI qin jok]

sUrdws mnu pRiB hiQ lIno dIno iehu prlok ]2]1]8]

swrMg Bgq sUrdws jI, AMg 1253

*Har ke sang base har lok. Tun mun arap sarabas sabh arapio anadh sahaj dhun jhok.1. Rahaau. Dharshan pekh bhe nirabikhiee paae hai sagale thok. Aan basat siau kaaj na kachhooaai su(n)dhar badhan alok.1. siaam su(n)dhar taj aan ju chaahat jiau kusaTee tan jok. Bhagat Surdas ji mun prabh hath leeno dheeno ih paralok.2.1.8.* SGGS, p. 1253

**Translation: (O Surdas!) The people of God dwell with God (thus, (metaphorically) they part company with those who have turned their back on God). They dedicate their minds and bodies to Him; they dedicate everything to Him. They are intoxicated with the celestial melody of intuitive ecstasy. 1. Pause.** Gazing upon the Blessed Vision of God*'s* Darshan, they are cleansed of corruption. They obtain absolutely everything (i.e. they get rid of ill desires). They have nothing to do with anything else; they gaze on the beauteous Face of God. 1. (O Surdas!) But one, who forsakes the elegantly beautiful God, and harbors desire for anything else, is like a leech on the body of a leper (and suck the contaminated blood). But hey Surdas! For those whose mind God holds in *His* Own Hands, they are blessed in this world and the world beyond (i.e. they live in a state of bliss in this world and the world beyond). 2. 1. 8.

**rhwau dI qu~k:** (hY sUrdws!) prmwqmw dI bMdgI krn vwly bMdy (sdw) prmwqmw dy nwl vsdy hn (ies qrWH sihj suBwie by-muKW nwloN auhnW dw swQ C`ut jWdw hY); auh Awpxw qn mn Awpxw sB kuC (ies ipAwr qON)sdky kr dyNdy hn, auhnW nUM AwnMd dy hulwry AwauNdy hn, sihj AvsQw dI qwr (auhnW dy AMdr b`J jWdI hY)[1[rhwau[

**For translation** of the Rahao Tuk, see above.

It is interesting to note that although the Shabad has been composed by Guru Arjan Dev ji, in the last Tuk the name of Bhagat Surdas has been used instead of Guru Sahib as the composer (as “Nanak”, as is the convention in SGGS).

The explanation for this usage is as follows: There are a few Saloks in SGGS among Sheikh Farid’s Saloks which are in fact composed by the Third Nanak and the Fifth Nanak. In those Saloks, the name used is “Farid” instead of Nanak. Guru Sahibs felt a need to expand on Farid’s Saloks to clarify the point unambiguously. Since the compositions were in connection with Sheikh Farid’s Saloks, the Bhagat’s name was used in the Saloks. But since the Saloks were composed by Guru Sahibs, they made this clear by adding “Mahla 3” and “Mahla 5” in the beginning of the Saloks. The same practice was followed by Guru Arjan Dev ji when he elaborated on the composition by Bhagat Surdas on page 1253 of SGGS, as given above.

In India, Bhagat Surdas’s poems are credited with improving the literary value of the Hindi language, transforming it from a rustic to a polished language. His numerous Padas (verses) composed in Brajbhasha are considered a treasure house of the best in Hindi poetry.

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3. *Bhagat Banee Steek* (Punjabi), Parts 1-5, Prof Sahib Singh, [www.sikhbookclub.com](http://www.sikhbookclub.com)
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5. “Sikhi to the Max”, website, for transliteration and English translation of Gurbani. (Adapted by the authors for clarity and consistency). <https://www.sikhitothemax.org/>
6. Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) website for Bhagats Kabir and Ravidas, [www.sgpc.net/ebooks](http://www.sgpc.net/ebooks).
7. *An Introduction to Sri Guru Granth Sahib* by Gurbachan Singh Talib, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University Patiala, for Appendix 1 (# of compositions of Bhagats in SGGS).
8. *Se Bhagat Satgur Man Bhae* by Roop Singh (Editor). Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC).

**Appendix 1: Compositions of Bhagats in SGGS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Bhagat’s Name** | **# of Compositions** |
| 1 | Bhagat Kabir | 534 |
| 2 | Bhagat Namdev | 62 |
| 3 | Sheikh Farid | 123 |
| 4 | Bhagat Ravidas | 40 |
| 5 | Bhagat Jaidev | 2 |
| 6 | Bhagat Sadhna | 1 |
| 7 | Bhagat Trilochan | 5 |
| 8 | Bhagat Beni | 3 |
| 9 | Bhagat Ramanand | 1 |
| 10 | Bhagat Sain | 1 |
| 11 | Bhagat Dhanna | 4 |
| 12 | Bhagat Pipa | 1 |
| 13 | Bhagat Bhikhan | 2 |
| 14 | Bhagat Parmanand | 1 |
| 15 | Bhagat Surdas  (Note: Only one line is by him, and rest of the Shabad is by Guru Arjan Dev Ji) | 1 |

**Appendix 2: Bhagats in Chronological Order**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Bhagat** | **Period (CE)** |
| 1 | Bhagat Jaidev | 1170-1245 |
| 2 | Bhagat Sheikh Farid | 1173-1265 |
| 3 | Bhagat Sadhna | 1180-unknown |
| 4 | Bhagat Trilochan | 1267-unknown |
| 5 | Bhagat Namdev | 1270-1350 |
| 6 | Bhagat Ravidas | 1399-1520 |
| 7 | Bhagat Sain | 1343-1433 |
| 8 | Bhagat Ramanand | 1400-1470 |
| 9 | Bhagat Dhanna | 1415-1475 |
| 10 | Bhagat Pipa | 1425-unknown |
| 11 | Bhagat Kabir | 1398-1448 |
| 12 | Bhagat Beni | Mid 15th – mid 16th century |
| 13 | Bhagat Surdas | 1478-1586 |
| 14 | Bhagat Bhikhan | 1480-1574 |
| 15 | Bhagat Parmanand | 1483-1574 |

*Note*: Authors differ on the dates of birth and death of Bhagats. They also differ on other aspects of Bhagats’ life – place of birth, religion, miracles associated with their lives. To be consistent, most of the data has been taken from Sikhi Wiki.

**Other Books by the Authors**

Books by Bhupinder Singh:

1. *Connecting with the Master* - A collection of essays on topics related to Sikhism (Sanbun, 2006)
2. *Gurmat Quotient (GQ)* - Book on development of Spirituality (Sanbun, 2008)
3. *Rehraas - With meaning and commentary in English* (Sanbun, 2008)
4. *Why are we Here?* - Become exploring the purpose of human life (Sanbun, 2009)
5. *Fish Eat Fish World* – An Illustrated Children’s book (Gracious, 2017)
6. *Humility* – A Spiritual Journey (Gracious, 2018)
7. *In Bully’s Eyes* – An Illustrated Children’s book on Bullying (Unique, 2019)

Books by Paramjit Singh Sachdeva:

1. *Appreciating Sikhism* (New Delhi, UBSPD, 2008).
2. *Appreciating All Religions — Religious Literacy in Small Bites* (Bloomington, AuthorHouse, 2011).
3. *Sikh Dharam,* Punjabi translation of *Appreciating Sikhism* (Chandigarh, Unistar Books, 2015).

Books by Karamjit Singh & volunteers of Sri Hemkunt Foundation:

1. *Guru Nanak Dev ji* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8)
2. *The Second – Fourth Nanaks* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
3. *The Fifth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
4. *The Sixth – Eighth Nanaks* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
5. *The Ninth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
6. *The Tenth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
7. *The Sikhs* 1718-1801 (English & Panjabi, for ages 12-14)
8. *The Message of Bhagats in SGGS* (English for ages 15-17)

**Back Cover**

Guru Amardas Ji has said about Bhagats:

khY nwnku cwl Bgqw jughu jugu inrwlI ]14]

kahai naanak chaal bhagataa jugahu jug niraalee ||14|| SGGS, p 917

Says Nanak, the lifestyle of the devotees, in every age, is unique and distinct.

This book highlights messages of the 15 Bhagats whose compositions are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). This book covers many of these compositions, along with their simple translations and explanations. Its main purpose is to help the reader understand the primary messages of the Bhagats’ compositions, and to recognize how closely these are aligned with the Sikh Gurus’ teachings in the SGGS.

The Bhagats’ compositions often refer to mythological stories of Hindu god*s*, seemingly miraculous events, and ritualistic practices. By doing so, the Bhagats were able to connect with an audience comprised at that time mostly of Hindus familiar with such mythological stories and traditional (Hindu) religious practices in India.

Rather than dwelling on the Bhagats’ own lives or on the mythological stories they refer to in their compositions, this book seeks to explain the Bhagats’ compositions in the context of the teachings of SGGS. Guru Nanak Dev ji and his successor Gurus occasionally elaborated on the Bhagats’ compositions to clarify their central message, and to show its consistency with the Gurus’ own Shabads.

The book will convince a reader that when properly understood, the Bhagats’ compositions are completely consistent with the other Shabads in SGGS. The Gurus have personally attested to this, by themselves including them in the Sikh scripture, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.