



The Message of Gurbani

Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh



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Publishers' Note

In his article, “**Sikhism—The Religion of the Third Millennium**”, Marcus Braybrooke, President Congress of World Religions UK, writes :

We can give thanks that as we enter the third Millennium, the central message of Sikhism, of our human unity in God's love, which as I believe, the interfaith movement has helped us to recognise as the message at the heart of all faiths, is now increasingly acknowledged by many of those who hold political and economic power. The challenge perhaps of this new Millennium is not only to hear that message but now at last to act upon it and to shape a world society which reflects the will of God.

—*Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 56,
Institute of Sikh Studies Chandigarh

Earlier, Toynbee, a great British historian, in his Foreword to *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* by UNESCO wrote :

Mankind's religious future may be obscure; yet one thing can be foreseen : the living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in these days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of the human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the Adi Granth, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world.

These observations of the great world-recognised scholars motivated us to publish the message of *Gurbani* in brief for the celebrations of the Third Centennial of the installation of *Gurbani* as *Guru Granth Sahib* in 1708. The essence of the message of the *Gurbani* is contained in the preamble to the *Guru Granth Sahib*, (*Jap, So-Dar, So-Purakh, Sohila*). The other two popular hymns, *Anand* and *Asa Ki Var*, which are desired to be recited daily, have also been included.

For the English rendering of these Hymns, we are thankful to Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh USA (former Dean, Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana), who had been sharing this message effectively for the last 20 years with the western youth. He has used simple and easily understandable language to communicate the great message of *Gurbani* to the readers, particularly the youth.

Acknowledgements

The Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society is obliged to the youth who desired us to prepare an English version of *Japji* in simple language. Their repeated suggestions made us undertake this project. Some members of the Society were requested to write the message of *Japji* in simple Punjabi words. Each member was given a set of four *pauris* for translation. The Punjabi draft was discussed with other devoted Sikhs and scholars in USA and Canada to obtain their inputs.

Encouraged by the response of the Sikhs with whom the message of the *Japji* was discussed, the project was extended to include the other two hymns, namely *Rehras* (*So-Dar, So-Purkh*) and *Sohila*, which form the preamble to Guru Granth Sahib. The message of *Japji* in Punjabi prepared by these efforts was translated into English.

Baldeesh Singh, a senior student of UBC Vancouver, Canada, typed the draft again and again to include the changes suggested by different Sikhs. Amar Singh, a high school student, Pittsburgh PA, USA, typed *Anand Sahib*, the inclusion of which in this book was decided later. The English version was sent to a senior high school student, Tejdev Singh, Virginia, USA for his suggestions. He corrected the draft and made very useful suggestions to revise some passages. Judith Bali kindly accepted our request to edit the draft before publication. Baldeesh Singh also prepared the format of the book to make it print-ready. Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh USA coordinated the preparation of this book.

The Society expresses its deep sense of gratitude to all the Sikhs who have contributed in one or the other way to complete this project of preparing and publishing this small booklet.

Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society
Vancouver, BC. Canada *

Foreword to the First Edition

Dear Youth, find here the message of *Japji*, *Rehras*, *Sohila* and *Anand*. They form the preamble to Guru Granth Sahib. This is to meet your long-standing need to know the basics of the Sikh theology. We hope you will find it a useful addition to your bookshelf. The book will also be of great interest to non-Sikhs who are interested in knowing the Sikh concepts regarding God, Satan, Creation, Heaven, and Hell. Hence, you can share it with your non-Sikh friends as well.

This book is the English version of the complete preamble to the Sikh scripture. However, the title of the book, *The Message of Japji*, was retained because *Japji* is a unique composition. It mentions the basics of the Sikh theology and the rest of the hymns in the scripture are considered to be detailed explanations of this theology. The Sikh scripture was first compiled and installed at the Harimandar Sahib (now popularly known as Golden Temple) in 1604 by the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev.

Though primarily written to meet the needs of the youth, all Sikhs will find it very useful. Every Sikh is required to recite *Japji* in the morning, *Rehras* in the evening, and *Sohila* at bedtime. This English version gives the message of the three hymns in simple, understandable language. *Anand Sahib* is recited at the end of every Sikh function before offering the closing prayer, *Ardas*. This hymn, therefore, has also been included. Most common questions asked are about God. A special article, “Who is God ?” has been added to answer these questions from Gurbani’s point of view.

We welcome any suggestions from readers to make it more useful for those interested in Sikh faith.

Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society

Foreword to the Second Edition

The second edition has been revised to include the message of *Asa Ki Var*. A new title, *Message of Gurbani*, therefore, has been given to the book.

Kirtan of Asa Ki Var is a tradition since the time of Guru Nanak. In every gurdwara, the morning function starts with the singing of the *Var* after the recitation of the *Nitnem* hymns. Since a couple of years, the *kirtan* of the *Var* is relayed daily on television from Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar for the devotees in India and abroad.

The *Var* starts with the mention of the creation and its supervision by the Almighty Lord Himself. The *Var* describes the status of different religions then practised in India. It points out how the religious leaders have reduced the sanctity of spirituality to the performance of meaningless rituals. It suggests that the whole humanity is one big family of God, our Father-Mother. Therefore, one should earn one's living honestly and help the needy for a peaceful and happy life here in this world, and to be honored in His court.

The messages in *Asa Ki Var* are delivered in simple language through easily understandable similes in our daily lives. Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh, USA was requested to provide a translation of the *Var*, we are thankful to him for this *sewa*.

Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society
Vancouver, BC Canada

Introduction

1. *Japji*, the preamble to Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture, reveals the mission of human life. It defines the goal as the realization (understanding) of God, the Almighty Lord, *Ik Oankar*, and describes the ways to achieve that. The hymns also caution us about the pitfalls in the path to that goal and the methods of avoiding them or overcoming them. The message of *Japji* can be understood properly only against the background of the religions that were practised when Guru Nanak appeared on the scene. About half a dozen of them are today called higher religions or major religions.

2. Human beings have always desired to live a long, happy and meaningful life. For this, the first thing they needed was food and physical comfort. This, of course, depended upon weather, which is controlled by sun, rain, winds, etc. First human beings, therefore, started the worship of the weather elements as gods. In due course of time, people realized that they are not just other animals; they have been provided with unique faculties and they command a special status on the earth. Therefore, their life is not just to be lived as animals live, i.e. eat, grow, produce children, get old, complete the biological cycle and die. They must have a higher purpose of life. This thought led to the revelation that they, as human beings, have a spiritual goal to achieve in their lives. Religions were thus born.

According to a simple definition of a religion, it may be defined as a package of what is needed for leading a virtuous life, that assures everlasting happiness to one's soul here and in the

next world (after death). This package, a set of beliefs, instructing do's and don'ts, of course, is different for different faiths. Many of them, in one form or the other, believe that Almighty God created this universe. He has reserved Heaven for the faithful people and those who lead a virtuous life. Those who ignore Him and His directions (called faith) will end in Hell. Some religions, however, do not involve God. They preach a life of restraint and meditation for freedom from pains and sorrows. Their goal also is to live in everlasting peace here and hereafter.

Religion is supposed to preach that all people, being the creation of the same Father-Mother, should have mutual love as brothers and sisters. It should unite people belonging to different nations, races and ethnic groups into one big family called humans. However, religions instead of decreasing have increased our ego, which has divided us into mutually hating groups. The message of *Japji* is that submitting oneself to His will can destroy our ego and permit the growth of love for humanity in the mind. It, therefore, helps people to move on the path of peace and realize the mission of human life.

3. *Japji* was composed by Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) during the last phase of his life when he settled at Kartarpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Earlier, **he had the revelation of the divine message that all people are equal, whatever their race, country, caste, or creed. No one can claim a franchise on the Creator, the Director of this universe; anyone who loves Him (by any name) realizes Him.** After this the Guru toured for about two decades to meet religious preachers of different faiths and share this revelation with them. He visited important holy places in India and abroad, including Mecca and Medina in the West, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the South, and Tibet in the Himalayas.

The message of the Guru he shared with the masses is very simple and easy to understand. To explain it, he founded the institutions of *sangat* and *pangat*. *Sangat* is a congregation where all people, irrespective of their faith, caste, creed, status, etc., get

together as equals to sing the praises of God, the Father-Mother of all humanity. In the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, we find the hymns of the Muslim, Hindu and ‘low caste’ devotees. By loving Him in their own way, they all realized God, which vibrates in every human being. The congregation, when people jointly prepare food and partake of it together as equals, is named *Pangat*.

A religious revolution was thus founded. Mutually hating Muslims and Hindus, high caste and low caste, rich and poor, men and women, all together formed one brotherhood who would pray together and eat together as equals. They became popular as ‘learners of the truth’, the *sikhs* (the word was later capitalized as Sikhs to identify the members of the faith). They were told to love the Lord by any or all names including Allah, Ram, Hari, Guru, Gobind, etc.

The mission of Guru Nanak was to unite the split-humanity into one brotherhood having mutual respect for each individual. The true religion according to him is to sacrifice personal interest for the common good of society and not the other way around to sacrifice others’ interests for selfish gains. He preached that the path of everlasting real peace and happiness is to love the lowly and help the needy. It is not merely the knowledge of this truth but its practice in daily life that makes a person holy. A hymn (*Vidya Veechari Tan Par-upkari*) tells that a ‘learned person’ is one who is motivated with a desire to help the needy.

4. More than one hundred translations of *Japji* have been published by different scholars in English, Punjabi, Urdu, and Hindi. They are verse-by-verse translations and the youth do not get a composite message of the whole canto to remember as a guide in their thinking and their lives. A few efforts have also been made both in English and in Punjabi to give the overall meaning of a *pauri* or a group of *pauris*. However, western youth find those translations loaded with divine words, many of which are jargon to them.

This is a joint effort by the members of the Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society, Vancouver BC, Canada. Their personal experience of the message obtained by reading *Japji* (and, of course, other *Gurbani*) over a long period, studying translations written by different authors, and listening to the discourses of different *Gianis*/scholars, has formed the basis of this translation.

Punjabi and its dialects are the main language of *Gurbani*. It includes lots of words from Hindi and old Indian languages. Words from other languages Arabic, Persian etc., of the regions visited by Guru Nanak are also there. Even the Punjabi language in vogue, when Guru Nanak composed these hymns, has changed a lot during the last 500 years. Hence the difficulty of the scholars to agree on only one meaning of a hymn. Scholars differ regarding the meaning of a hymn because of assigning its words and phrases to a particular language. The context in which a hymn is interpreted also changes the meaning of the hymn.

Because of the great subtlety and spiritual depth involved, every hymn may be interpreted to suggest more than one correct message but no interpretation may be completely correct. It is very difficult, impossible in some cases, to state the full spiritual message of a hymn in limited easily understandable words. While preparing this book, the aim always was to express the spirit of the message of the hymn and to maintain the continuity of the passage.

The objective of this translation, *if this can be considered a translation*, is to present the message of *Japji* in an easily understandable form, particularly to the western-educated youth. This book will be of great help to understand the verse-by-verse detailed translations already published by many authors.

The reader may study this book considering it to be a philosophical treatise rather than a traditional translation of *Japji*. An overview has also been written to meet the desire of the readers to know specifically about God and creation. Scholars will

also find here the mention of the purpose of life and how to face daily situations in the present day world.

In quite a few cases, it was not possible to choose the proper words to convey the message correctly. In such cases a consensus was reached on the ‘best fit’ words. The intention is not to publish a better or more authentic translation of *Japji* than those already available but to state its main message so that it can be easily conceptualized by common persons. It may not be fully correct when a certain word is translated into western terminology because of different connotation. The Society, therefore, welcomes the critical comments from the readers/scholars to make this translation as true to the original message as possible.

1

Japji Overview

The study of *Japji* reveals that God, the *Supremus*,¹ is the only everlasting reality and He/She² is without beginning or end. He created the universe according to His will. Both, the Creator and His creation, will ever remain beyond the comprehension of human beings. No one knows when, how and how much He has created. To obtain such knowledge is not the mission of human life; a seeker, therefore, need not be concerned about this issue. Rather, one should aim for the realization of the Ultimate Reality, rather His Will, to lead one's life on the right path.

Everything we get in this world is because of His Grace. No one gets anything on his own. In the invocation Guru Nanak narrates the virtues of God, and records that whatever he is going to state about Him is because of God's grace (*Gurparsad*).

Every human being has a reflection of the Lord within and the only barrier for His realization is one's ego, a wall that separates egotist from Him. Seekers can meet (see, realize, understand) Him by getting rid of their ego, and that is the mission of human life. One can achieve it by understanding and accepting (following) His will. This has been explained in the very first *pauri*.

It will be helpful if important divine words are explained

1. God is the supreme authority and the old Latin term for Him is *Supremus*; this term has been used because it expresses this major virtue of God very clearly.
2. God is both Father and Mother of humanity. Therefore, consider the pronoun 'He' to include the pronoun 'She' all through.

before attempting to describe the complete message of the text *pauri*-wise.

Ik Oankar, God

The English parallel for *Ik Oankar* is God, *Supremus* in Latin. The invocation recorded before scribing *Japji* starts with this word. Alongwith it, some of His virtues are mentioned in complex philosophical words. Each needs a chapter to explain its connotation. Briefly, they describe God as the Creator of the universe, beyond time (does not change with time, does not grow to get old or disintegrate as creation does), not-born, and evolved out of Himself (He has no parents, does not take birth or die).

Most of the virtues of God mentioned in the invocation more or less can be found in the books of other faiths. However, the digit one (*Ik*) written in the very beginning of the invocation before the word *Oankar* is very unique and it reveals a subtle philosophical concept. It forms the foundation of the philosophy of *Gurmat*, the faith revealed by Guru Nanak. It reflects that there is only one (the same) God for the whole of humanity. Many different names assigned to Him do not mean different (many) Gods for different faiths, that is, Parbrahm for Hindus, Allah for Muslims, Yahweh for Jews, God for Christians etc. They are all names of the same ONE Reality.

Regarding different theories about God and creation, the figure one is considered to reflect another aspect of the faith preached by Guru Nanak. ‘One’ means there is only one Reality, *nirgun, noumenon*, not visible, without physical form; like truth it possesses only virtues but no physical form. The same Reality evolved to become visible, *sargun, phenomenon*, the matter and all its forms. It means that Guru Nanak did not agree with the then prevailing Indian thought that God, soul, and matter are three different everlasting (no beginning, no end) Realities.

The text further reveals that the Lord cannot be installed (like a statue in a temple) because He is everywhere and we cannot

present Him in any one particular form. Of course, we can enjoy singing some of his virtues which are unlimited. (P. 5)³

Whole creation, sun, moon, wind, earth, etc. follow His *hukam*, obey His will (laws). All gods, Shiv, Vishnu, Brahma, Inder, etc. (who are, of course, all legendary) sing His praises. If as many more are created, even then they will not be able to tell all about Him (P. 27). If some rude person claims to describe Him, he will be found shallow, lacking intelligence and uncultured. (P. 26)

How great (large, virtuous, valuable, etc.) is God ? This is known only to Him. His virtues are beyond count. His creation has no limits. Only that person who could be as great as He is, (that means none) can describe Him. (P. 24)

His gifts and grace are unlimited. Everything, whether it appears to be good or bad, is delivered by Him. All apparent pleasures or sorrows also flow from Him (P. 2, 25). He manages the universe the way He wishes; no one can counsel Him. (P. 27, 30, 3) (Reading of chapter VI “Who is God ?” will help the readers to understand the message of the *Asa ki Var* better.

Gurparsad, His Grace

The invocation ends with the word *gurparsad*. It means ‘by the grace (*parsad*) of the Guru.’ The literal meaning of the word Guru is the Enlightener, the Destroyer of ignorance (God).

The invocation recorded ahead of *Japji* is in full form. It is also written (in full or short form) not only in the beginning of each set of Gurus’ hymns but also before writing the Bhagatas’ hymns to seek blessings of the gracious God. The whole invocation may be translated as : By the grace of the Enlightener (the Destroyer of ignorance) *Ik Oankar*, the One Everlasting Reality, the Creator, without apprehensions, without hostility, beyond time and space, not-born, self-evolved (has no father or mother).

3. ‘P’ refers to the serial number of the *pauri* from which the message has been taken.

In *Japji*, in addition to *parsad*, there are other words such as *nadar*, *karam*, and *bakhsis* used for the grace/blessings of God.

All gifts of life are His *karam*, blessings (P. 24) and they can neither be described (P. 25) nor valued (P. 26). Further, He is the only Giver and all people are mere recipients. Even freedom (*mukti*) from the cycle of birth and death is obtained by His grace. (P. 4, 25). An egotist may boast of being able to realize God by his own efforts but he will fail. Only those seekers realize Him who are graced (*nadar*) by Him (P. 32). One is identified (honored) in His court only because of His grace (P. 34). A seeker who lives in awe of the Almighty is graced and blessed with all favors (P. 38). Even if a person has very long life and is respected in the whole world, no one will care for him if he loses His grace (P. 7).

Hukam, His Will

Hukam, order/will of the *Supremus*, is a very important word in Sikh philosophy. The text of *Japji* starts with the mention of the significance of His will. *Pauri* one says that one should follow His will to remove the curtain of ignorance, ego, which separates the soul from the Lord. In other words, obedience to His will helps one to realize Him.

The next whole *pauri* explains the working of His will, which is the cause of all creation, both living and non-living. People undergo sufferings or comforts as the Lord wills. Everyone lives within His will (as a fish lives within water); no one is outside its influence. Those who understand His will get rid of their ego and achieve the mission of their life. (P. 1 and 2)

The Lord directs the working of the universe as He wills. While performing this responsibility, He, the Carefree, is pleased (not tired or bored) with it (P. 3). People receive whatever He ordains (P. 19) and they behave (observe His laws) as He wills (P. 37). They come to this world (are born) and leave it (die) according to His *hukam* (P. 20). Lord does whatever He wishes; no person can counsel Him what to do or not (P. 27, 30). After

describing the creation and innumerable kinds of people, the Guru suggests to the seeker that the right path of life is to accept gladly whatever the Lord wills. (P. 16-19 refrain)

Creation

As and when the *Supremus*, the Ever-existing, *noumenon*, willed to become visible, *phenomenon*, matter and life of the universe were accordingly created (P. 16).

When did He start the creation or adopt visible form ? Neither the day or the date, nor the season or the month when He became visible is mentioned in any religious book (P. 21). All suggestions are only conjectures or notions. This fact is known only to the Creator. If someone mentions it, that person, when judged, will not be found correct, acceptable, or respectable (P. 21).

How much has He created ? According to the Indian tradition, there are three divisions of the worlds – the earth on which we live, those above us, and those below us. On this earth, Brahma has created 8.4 million kinds of lives from four sources (i) egg, (ii) womb, (iii) earth (plants), and (iv) perspiration (lice) (P. 27). Vishnu nourishes them and Shiv destroys them. Guru Nanak denies the existence of such gods. He says, God Himself has created the whole universe and He Himself directs it, the way He wills (P. 30).

His creation is unlimited. In addition to the earth, there are innumerable worlds, suns, moons. No one can say how many there are, for their number is beyond figures. When someone tries to know more, he finds that there is still much more than that (P. 16-19, 34, 35). Only He Himself knows how much He has created (P. 21). If someone tries to count His creation, he himself will be dead before he completes the counting because creation is infinite (P. 22).

Anyway, investigating how, when, and how much has been created by God is not the spiritual mission of human life. The Guru mentions the uniqueness and vastness of creation to make

the seeker wonder about the greatness and unlimited virtues of the Lord (P. 22). They make him voluntarily utter *Waheguru* (wonderful Lord) and have a desire to love Him, realize Him, and obey His will. '*Wahe*' is equivalent to 'wow' in English and '*guru*' means a source of knowledge, a teacher. *Waheguru* may be translated as "the source of spiritual knowledge and light, the destroyer of ignorance and darkness", hence wonderful Lord.

Heaven and Hell

Guru Nanak denied the existence of any physical place assumed to be Heaven, the place of the Lord where virtuous people will be taken after death to live and enjoy their life for eternity. Also, there is no place called Hell, the place of Satan, where all impertinent, non-religious, and bad people are destined to burn in fire forever.

Therefore, a Sikh does not seek Heaven nor does he worry about Hell. He loves the Lord. For Him, enjoying the love of God is living in Heaven. Ignoring Him and suffering from lust, ego, anger, and other vices is like living in Hell on earth. If a man loves to see God, what cares he for Salvation or Paradise ? (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 360). Everybody hankers after Salvation, Paradise or Elysium, setting their hopes on them every day of their lives. However, those who live to see God do not ask for Salvation. The sight of the Lord itself satisfies their minds completely. (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1324)

Satan

According to the Semitic philosophy, Satan is the personification of evil, the Devil. He misguides people to disobey God, thus making them liable to be sent to Hell. According to the Indian philosophy, the cause of misguidance is *Maaya* (something not what it appears to be, illusion). Being attractive and alluring, it draws people towards itself away from the path of Truth, God.

Guru Nanak does not believe in the existence of any other

authority, except the One Reality, God (P. 30). Satan is only the assumption to justify the cause of man straying away from God. The Sikh philosophy can be explained by the example of light and darkness. The darkness (ignorance, misguidance) has no existence of its own; it is a situation where the light (enlightenment) is deficient or absent. One more example can be given of another form of energy that is heat. Coldness has no existence of its own; it is nothing but a condition represented by the deficiency of heat, which is something real that exists and is measurable. Similarly, Satan (*Maaya*) appears to be there but is not a reality, it is ignorance of Truth, God. God is the only Reality.

All actions, appearing to be good or bad, take place according to His will. People land in trouble by not listening to the Lord and disrespecting His laws. This too is according to His will (P. 2).

Indian Gods

Indian scriptures mention the names of myriads of gods serving different aspects of human life. The three god-heads (*Trimurti*) are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiv. **Brahma** : All life flows from him. He has given birth to 8.4 million kinds of living beings. **Vishnu** : He provides food and other facilities to nourish and care for the living beings. **Mahesh (Shiv)** : He destroys life. He is the most powerful and dreaded god.

The secondary gods include Inder, Dharam Raj, wind, water, fire, sun, moon, earth etc. Inder, the rain god, is the senior most among these gods. Dharam Raj is the judge who rewards and punishes the souls after the death of human beings. He decides the cases of individuals and directs them to *Swarg* (Heaven) or *Nark* (Hell) after evaluating their deeds.

Guru Nanak does not believe in the existence of any gods. All creation, living and non-living, has been made by the *Supremus* Himself. He Himself manages the universe. He does what He wills. He does not get any counsel from anyone else (P. 30). All

gods are mythological and they cannot do anything; it is futile to worship them. They have been mentioned to be just waiting, like an ordinary person, at the gate of the Lord to have a chance for his audience. They sing virtues of the Lord to please Him (P. 27).

Incomprehensible

Incomprehensible, beyond description, and other such words, have been often used in *Japji* to describe God and His virtues. *Gurbani* deals with a spiritual message; for the benefit of humans, this message needs to be mentioned in worldly language. However, in many cases, language has no appropriate words to describe that message. Quite often we cannot express in words even worldly facts and situations that are related to our feelings and emotions. Sometimes, of course, we use an exclamatory word, wow, to tell that. The analogy is also given of a dumb person who relishes something sweet and tasty; he can only smile to express his happiness but cannot utter any words to describe it.

When Guru Nanak had to state some facts, figures or spiritual feelings for which there is no proper vocabulary in worldly language, he chose words with a negative connotation. For example, God is incomprehensible, His virtues are unlimited, His will is indescribable, etc. It is very difficult to understand the concepts expressed by these words. They need some explanation.

Such words have been used not only when stating a spiritual message but also when the incomprehensible vastness of His creation is to be mentioned. The highest number then used was *Sankh* (trillion) but the Guru uses the word *Asankh*, meaning not countable even in trillions, for describing creation. The Guru also tells that even the word *Asankh* is a wrong word because it refers to some number while His creation is without any limits, beyond numbers and figures, infinite so to say.

Further, peace and pleasure which one gets, when in tune with the *Supremus*, the vast ocean of virtues, can only be enjoyed. Such

feelings cannot be put in words. The favors granted to us by Him are so many that no one can count them. In all such cases, the Guru, therefore, uses some negative words. Such negative words have one common connotation and means the same, something that cannot be described or comprehended by man or stated in words, written or spoken. One can experience only a part of creation and imagine the limitlessness of the whole and feel awed by it.

Japji pauri-wise

The name of the composition is *Jap* and the word *Ji* is added for respect. There are thirty-eight *pauris* of the composition; a *pauri* is equivalent to a canto. *Japji*, in addition to the invocatory hymn, has two *slokas*, one in the beginning and the other at the end.

Invocation

By the grace of the Enlightener (the Destroyer of ignorance), *Ik Oankar*, the One Everlasting Reality, the Creator, without apprehensions, without hostility, beyond time and space, not-born, self-evolved (without father or mother).⁴

JAP—The name of the hymn.

The Inaugural Hymn (*slok*) : The *Supremus*, the Truth, was there before time began (prior to His adopting physical features, *phenomenon*). To begin with He was there. He is, and He will⁵ continue to exist forever even beyond time.

The messages revealed in the 38 *pauris* have been presented under six sub-sections for convenience of presentation.

4. This invocation in full or abbreviated form is mentioned at the head of composition or a set of hymns. It expresses thanks to the Lord with whose grace he could create this holy work.
5. Instead of the normal three, four tenses have been mentioned here. The extra tense refers to a period before matter was created and the measuring of time was started. Before the creation of sun, moon, earth, etc., God was in invisible form (*nominem*); there was, therefore, no reference point for measuring time during that state of God.

Human Mission and His Will

Since the animal-man evolved to become human-man,⁶ he has been in search of the Almighty Lord, Who created him and placed him in this environment. Many spiritual practices or paths were adopted by him to realize the ultimate Truth. For this, man submitted himself to many kinds of tortures, sufferings, and privations. He did not adopt family life, discarded all his belongings, even bared his body, ate very sparingly, and lived in forests and hills, etc. His mission was to realize the Creator, the Lord. Man wanted to get rid of his pain and problems of this life. He also desired to enjoy the bliss of his association with the Lord here and in the next life forever.

Guru Nanak, in the very first *pauri*, refers to such traditional efforts undertaken to realize the Truth and does not approve of such efforts. *Japji* details his approach for realizing the ultimate reality and enjoying the bliss (becoming *nihal*) of His grace.

To be able to understand (realize) Him, the practice of cleansing the body a million times (with the hope of removing the pollution and un-piousness) or performing undisturbed meditation and remaining silent for a long time is of no utility. Collecting mounds of wealth or developing to the highest intellectual level do not guide one to the path of the Lord. The Guru, therefore, himself raises a question that if all these traditional efforts are futile, then how else can one destroy the curtain of ignorance (ego) and attain the goal of human life ? The Guru also gives the reply that to realize Truth, the Lord, one must follow the *hukam* (order, will) of the Lord. (P. 1)⁷

The second *pauri* reveals that people suffer from the mistaken belief that the Lord and an individual human being are two unrelated personalities. Therefore, they believe that a person

6. The word "man" has been used as a common gender throughout. It refers to both men and women. The pronoun He/his also includes She/her.
7. End of *pauri* 1. In the original hymn, the number of *pauri* appears at the end. The same system has been adopted here as well.

can act independently from God and do whatever he wants to do. This ego acts as a curtain between the human soul and the Lord, keeping the two apart. *Gurbani* reveals that actually there is only one Invisible Reality, the *Supremus*, Who Himself has adopted all the physical forms visible to us. He is reflected in every human being. No one can do anything on his own, only the Divine Order prevails. Accepting His will, therefore, is the path that leads to the realization of the Lord. *Pauri* two explains it.

All matter (physical creation) is the result of God's will. Further, life is arranged the way He wills. The working of His will is beyond the comprehension of human beings and cannot be described. Some are placed high and others low according to His *hukam*. Comforts, as well as discomforts, are all His gifts. As He wills, some persons undergo endless cycles of birth and death while others may be graced and saved from it. Everyone acts within the jurisdiction of the *hukam*, just as a fish lives only while remaining within water but not out of it. Anyone who understands this *hukam* (realizes that all accomplishments are under Divine Order and not under the influence of any human being) gets rid of his ego. (P. 2)

The third and fourth *pauris* deal with the response of the people towards His glory.

People delve into His virtues with all their might. Some appreciate His gifts and His glories, which are beyond the comprehension of man. Some wonder at the way He creates and destroys both matter and life. It surprises some people that even though He is considered far away, He is all the time supervising us very closely. Millions speak about Him but still He remains beyond description. How surprising it is that He continues to bestow gifts age after age without break, but the recipients get weary; they end their life just remaining occupied in enjoying favors granted by Him. The universe continues to move on its path according to the *hukam* of the Lord. He remains always pleased (not tired or bored) with it. (P. 3)

The Lord grants gifts to all those who ask of Him. He frees people from the problems and pains of life. Knowing this, a person wants to seek such a Lord. For this, he wants to learn what he should do, and how he should submit himself to Him. The Guru tells that the language of the Lord is love. To realize Him, one should reflect on His virtues and love Him. (P. 4)

The next three *pauris* analyze different ways adopted to realize the Lord.

God, who pervades all creation, cannot be installed as a statue to be worshipped because no one particular form can represent Him. To worship Him, a devotee should instead dwell on the virtues of God, an ocean of excellence. This helps one to get over worries and achieve peace. Brahma, Shiv, and other gods are of no avail; God alone can save (from the assumed Hell) and help a person. (P. 5)

Bathing at holy places is also of no help along the path of the Lord. No one obtains any benefit unless ordained by the Lord. Valuable advice is obtained only from Him. (P. 6)

Therefore, a seeker prays that his mind may remain always tuned to the virtues of the Lord (it should never remove its focus from His virtues). Who provides all the needs of the living beings of myriad kinds. (P. 5, 6 refrain)

Worldly values have no significance in His court. A person may live for ages and even many times more; he may get respect from all the people and be known all over the world. If that person is not blessed by the Lord, he will be rated low and insignificant. No one will care for him. Only the Lord himself can grant honors and true respect to people. (P. 7)

Love of God

The benefit of knowing the virtues of the Lord is detailed in the next set of four *pauris* (8-11). Each ends with a refrain that listening to His virtues provides true peace to the seekers.

Listening to His virtues and reflecting over them, one obtains higher awareness. One becomes a holy person like a *sidh* or *pir*, who is considered to have realized God. He even becomes as holy as legendary gods such as Brahma and Inder are assumed to be. A seeker thus devoted to His virtues avoids spiritual death (neglect by God).

The devotees, tuned to His virtues, always remain in the state of peace and pleasure, free from any apprehensions. (P. 8)

A seeker understands the mysteries about the *Supremus* mentioned in the holy writings, learns the path to realize Him and remains voluntarily tuned to Him. The listener obtains the divine knowledge and enjoys contentment; he gets all the benefits assumed to be obtained by bathing at holy places and by studying religious books. By paying attention to the virtues of the Lord, even the ignorant and lost people get back on the right track.

The devotees, tuned to His virtues, always remain in the state of peace and pleasure, free from any apprehensions. (P. 9-11 refrain.)

The next set of four *pauris* (P. 12-15) refers to the spiritual status of a devotee who accepts the will of the Lord. Each ends with the message that the bliss a devotee enjoys is beyond description; he faces no pains or problems.

The spiritual status of a devotee who follows the will of the *Supremus* is beyond description. If someone claims to be able to describe it, he will suffer from his failure to express it in its entirety. Neither can it be told verbally nor can it be explained on paper in written form. (P. 12)

The consciousness of such a devotee develops to the highest level where he understands the universe. His soul will not be disrespected; no *yam* (an assumed messenger of the mythological judge, Dharam Raj) will take him to the court for judgment of his sins because he becomes free from sins. (P. 13)

A devotee will proceed unobstructed and with honors on the path of the Lord. Because of his involvement with a spiritual and

pious way of living, he will not stray to the wrong path. Such a devotee achieves *mukti*,⁸ the highest spiritual achievement. (P. 14)

All seekers, along with their associates who follow the same path, attain the goal of their life and they do not wander anymore searching for the satisfaction of their desires. (P. 15)

Excellence of the Supremus is such that one can only enjoy His bliss in his mind but cannot describe it. (P. 12-15 refrain)

Limitless Creation

The next set of four fairly long *pauris* (16-19) surveys creation and many kinds of lives generated by God. These *pauris* also refer to the nature of man inhabiting the earth; many human behaviors, both right and wrong, are mentioned. At the end of each *pauri*, seekers are advised to live with whatever happens under the *hukam* of the *Supremus* because accepting the will of the Lord is the path prescribed for a devotee.

The creation has no limits. Look at how the whole universe has been set. Referring to the notion of a bull supporting the earth (Indian mythology), the Guru mentions it to be impossible. He argues that there are countless worlds beyond worlds. Who supports them all ? None else but the laws of *hukam* are responsible for working of the universe.

There are innumerable kinds of lives on the earth. All obey his *hukam* designed for each. If anyone wants to prepare an assessment of them all, how huge would their volume be ? The excellence of God, His power, and His glory are beyond any

8. Connotation of the word *mukti*, or salvation, differs in different schools of Indian spiritual thought. It may mean :

- (i) Freedom from the cycle of birth and death and becoming one with the *Supremus*, the way river water joins sea and becomes one with it.
- (ii) Freedom of the soul from the physical body. A stage realized through deep long meditation when the seeker becomes completely free from earthly feelings of pain and pleasure, good and evil, and gets unattached to any worldly possessions, etc.
- (iii) Living at the spiritual level, becoming free from the emotions of the mind, anger, lust, etc.

estimates and counts. With His one decision, millions of kinds of lives started flourishing on this earth.

Anyway, how can one describe or conjecture about whatever is going on in nature ? Formless, Ever-True Lord ! Whatever pleases Thee, should be welcome by all seekers. (P. 16 refrain)

O Lord ! There are innumerable seekers who urge and actively work to get close to You. Countless meditate on Thee and live in Thy love. They worship Thee and for this they may even suffer tortures and privations. Myriads utter holy scriptures orally while as many give up the family life and their belongings to become recluses for the purpose of realizing Truth.

Countless *bhagats*, holy people, contemplate Thee, Thy competence and Thy virtues. Countless persons are contented with whatever is given to them by Thee and they enjoy sharing it with others. Myriads of brave warriors fearlessly face being hit by weapons. Innumerable devotees observe complete silence and keep their minds continuously tuned to the *Supremus*.

Anyway, how can one describe or conjecture about whatever is going on in nature ? Formless, Ever-True Lord ! Whatever pleases Thee should be welcome by all seekers. (P. 17 refrain)

There are countless people who are starkly stupid and ignorant. Innumerable are thieves and those who usurp the rights of others. Innumerable tyrants, murderers, and sinners also exist here. Myriads are liars, evil-doers, and slanderers. This is humbly observed by Nanak, a humble servant of God.

Anyway, how can one describe or conjecture about whatever is going on in nature ? Formless, Ever-True Lord ! Whatever pleases Thee should be welcome by all seekers. (P. 18 refrain)

Infinite is the visible and non-visible creation of the Lord, Who is beyond the comprehension of the physical senses endowed to human beings. Of course, seekers can use words to

write or to sing praises and to describe some of His innumerable virtues. The Lord has inscribed the destiny of all and they get whatever is ordained for them. All this is the reflection of His glory. There is no place without Him or where His influence and reflections are not in play.

Anyway, how can one describe or conjecture about whatever is going on in nature ? Formless, Ever-True Lord ! Whatever pleases Thee, should be welcome by all seekers. (P. 19 refrain)

In *pauri* 20, the Guru advises us how the mind can be freed from evil thoughts. In *pauri* 21, he says that only the Creator knows the age and limits of creation. Instead of being concerned with issues regarding creation and its why, when, and how, a seeker should love the Creator and His virtues to enjoy peace and pleasure.

An evil, sinful mind can be cleansed by the love of God, the way we wash our dirty body and clothes with water and soap. Deeds done by us, good or bad, determine the directions of our future life. According to the *hukam*, we reap what we sow. (P. 20)

Performing rituals such as pilgrimage to holy places, undergoing penance, practising mercy, giving charity,⁹ etc., are of little benefit, if any, for spiritual advancement. Genuine deeds that can take us near Him are to listen to His virtues, follow His *hukam*, and live in awe of the *Supremus*. One cannot be a devotee of the Lord, an ocean of virtues, without himself doing virtuous deeds. A mind that is always tuned to the glorious Lord ever remains filled with enthusiasm and pleasure.

The day, date, season or month when the creation was made cannot be known. It has not been mentioned in any scripture of the East or the West. Whatever is stated regarding its origin is just a conjecture. Only the Lord, Who made creation, knows these facts.

9. According to *Gurbani*, everything belongs to God, He alone gives charity. We humans merely share gifts of God given to us.

Anyway, how can one know the *Supremus* to describe Him and appreciate His gifts and blessings ? Many genii, one superior to the other, are saying praises of the Lord. Everyone has failed to know Him, Who is the cause of whatever is happening in the universe. If anyone believes himself to be something in comparison with the Almighty Lord, he will be considered an uncultured person without any manners and will not be welcome in His court, the next world. (P. 21)

Creation and the Glory of God

In *Pauri* 22, Guru Nanak surveys briefly the limits of the creation as considered by different faiths.

The authors of Hindu scriptures did their best to know the limits of the creation. They all have mentioned the same statement that there is no limit to His creation. There are innumerable *patal*s (worlds below the earth) and innumerable *akash* (worlds, skies above the earth).

Semitic books say that there are 18 thousand worlds, but in fact they are the revelations of One Reality.

If someone could make an account of all that has been created by the *Supremus*, it would have been mentioned in the books. Actually, it is not possible to count it because the counter will be dead long before he can complete the counting. Therefore, Guru Nanak concludes that let us admit we cannot know the limits of His creation; only He knows how much He has created. We can merely describe Him as Uniquely Great. (P. 22)

Pauris 23 and 24 refer to the incomprehensible virtues of God. *Pauri* 25 mentions the bounties of the Lord and his glory. The Guru uses analogies to explain it.

As a river cannot know the limits of the sea into which it flows and is lost, a devotee cannot comprehend the virtues of the Lord even when he is drenched in singing them without a break. A king ruling all the lands and oceans and possessing mountains of wealth is nothing when compared to a non-entity who loves

the Lord and does not ever take his mind away from His blessings. (P. 23)

By ceaselessly singing, observing or listening to the virtues of the *Supremus*, one cannot get even close to their limits. Neither can it be imagined what He contemplates in His mind. There is no count of the persons who are doing their utmost to know the creation but they find no limits to it or its expanse.

Only that person can comprehend the *Supremus* who is as great as He is (meaning there is none). The Lord is infinitely bigger than the biggest. How big is He, one cannot even imagine. No one else but only He knows how great He is. (P. 24)

The Supreme Benefactor provides bounties beyond records while He himself covets nothing. Myriads of brave warriors and countless others look to Him for gratuities provided by Him. However, innumerable ungrateful people remain occupied in consuming his gifts, forgetting about the Giver.

Some people undergo sufferings and pain which too are according to the Will of God (not because of satan).¹⁰ According to the Divine Order, people remain tied to vices or they get free from all such bonds.

None else but *hukam* is responsible for the activities going on in the universe. If a naive person attempts to claim any say in it, he will be embarrassed for his foolishness. Few people understand that He alone decides what is to be given and to whom. One who is blessed with the desire and ability to chant His virtues is really the happiest of all and the true king. (P. 25)

In order to describe the limitless virtues of the Lord and working of His *hukam*, instead of using counts, the Guru adopts the measure of values in *pauri* 26. The Guru says that people can only appreciate but cannot estimate the value of His rule, which manages the universe.

Invaluable are His virtues and invaluable are those who deal

10. *Gurbani* denies the existence of Satan. It tells that whatever happens, which may appear to us to be good or bad, is according to His will.

in them. The stores and stocks of His virtues are invaluable and invaluable are also those who come (are born) to love them and then finally get absorbed in the Lord before they leave this world (die). His court and His laws are also invaluable. Weights and measures (standards) used to judge the deeds of the people are priceless. Invaluable are His orders, gifts, blessings and bestowings. People have tried to understand them with complete devotion, but His whole system is beyond evaluation.

All the devotees including the scholars, holy books, gods like Brahma, Inder, Krishan, *sidhs*, intellectuals, silently meditating seekers, demons, and devils have not been able to value His glory. Myriads have died while valuing His excellence but the fact is that if as many more are created, all of them even jointly will not be able to value Him.

He becomes as great as He wishes to be and only He knows about it. If any outspoken egotist wants to tell about it, he will be considered a most rude and mannerless person. (P. 26)

In the next long *pauri* 27, Guru Nanak expresses great wonder when he imagines the whole creation and His omnipotent laws. This *pauri* describes how living and non-living creatures obey His laws and appreciate the virtues of the incomprehensible Lord.

Lord ! What a throne and court (they do not refer to any physical place, it is mentioned in spiritual terms) You have from where You care for your limitless creation. Outside the gates of Your divine palace, countless musicians and fairies sing Your virtues and play on myriad types of instruments. O Lord, the whole of creation praises Thee, all the elements of nature, winds, water, fire, etc., sing Thy glory. All the gods, including Dharam Raj, Brahma, Inder, saints, *sidhs*, brave warriors, etc. praise Thy excellence. Through the ages, the scholars and sages chanted Thy virtues.

All the galaxies, the earth, heavens, and nether regions sing Your praises. All kinds of living creatures grouped into four

classes (according to the old Indian system, the four classes are : born from an egg, womb, earth, and perspiration) sing your limitless virtues. Further, Your devotees along with others blessed by You, remain tuned to Your virtues and continuously praise Thee.

Myriad others, whom it is not possible for me to enumerate, also utter Your praises. The *Supremus* is the only everlasting reality, without birth, without death. He built this stage, the universe, and is conducting this show endlessly. Look how many kinds of illusions and distractions he has included in this show ! He runs this drama the way it pleases Him. No one can advise Him for making any change in it. He is the omnipotent Lord, our obligation is to follow His will. (P. 27)

Symbols, Rituals, and Devotion

The next four *pauris* (28-31) refer to the symbols and practices adopted by the yogis. Each *pauri* ends with the refrain that advises devotees to express their sincere homage rather than just wearing symbols and practising mere rituals.

O Yogi ! wearing of external symbols and performing of rituals do not help anyone to overcome one's ego or to obtain the audience of the Lord. The way to destroy the curtain of ignorance, the cause of ego, is to practise contentment, earn honestly, and maintain full faith in the Lord. That is what your earrings, begging bowl and staff should mean to you. People who subdue their ego and can keep full control over their minds are true yogis and of the highest order. This task is more difficult to perform than to win the whole world. One can do it by keeping one's body and mind free from evil thoughts and evil actions.

One must all the time pay homage to the Supremus, Who is limitless, without beginning, without end, and ever the same throughout the ages. (P. 28 refrain)

O Yogi ! divine knowledge should be your food and a kind heart its dispenser. None else but the *Supremus* Himself should

be believed in as the Lord (not Shiv, in whom yogis believe). These steps will take you near your goal, help you destroy the curtain of falsehood and assist you to realize the truth. Performing miracles obtained through penance is not the proper path to the Lord. People harvest the fruit of the deeds done by them, they are born and come together as relatives and friends so that they can discharge their responsibilities towards each other. They depart their company according to His will, which runs the whole drama.

One must all the time pay homage to the Supremus, Who is limitless, without beginning, without end, and ever the same throughout the ages. (P 29 refrain)

Traditionally, it is believed that the Primal Mother gave birth to three gods (deities) to manage the continuous show of life on this earth. The first one, the Brahma, became the creator of life; the second, Vishnu, nourishes and cares for all living beings; the third, Shiv, judges people and in the end destroys them.

However, the Guru says that they all are only an assumption. The fact is that none else but the *Supremus* Himself creates life and cares for all the living beings. Further, He Himself judges them and destroys them. He runs this drama the way He wills without counsel from anyone else. What a wonder it is that the Lord, Who conducts this show and supervises everyone very closely, is not visible to anyone !

One must pay homage to the Supremus, Who is limitless, without beginning, without end, and ever the same throughout the ages. (P. 30 refrain)

The Lord has, once for all, founded food stores everywhere in nature to feed living beings. The Creator, the Ever-Truthful, watches all the activities going on everywhere.

One must pay homage to the Supremus, Who is limitless, without beginning, without end, and ever the same throughout the ages. (P. 31 refrain)

Pauris 32-33, teach the seeker the significance of His grace.

They advise the devotee to give up his ego and become humble to receive the grace of God.

One may get, instead of one tongue, a million tongues and many times more. He may recite with each tongue the name of the Lord for innumerable number of times. His attempt to be able to understand Him by such efforts is a mere boast. Such an egotist has no better chance to realize the Lord than an insect who believes it can reach the skies with his own efforts. One can realize Him only by His grace. (P. 32)

To speak or to keep silent, to beg or to donate, are not within one's competency; one cannot perform these acts on one's own. To remain alive, or to die, or to be a ruler and collect wealth about which mind is always worried, is not within our competency. All people are equal and no one should be judged as high or low. The only authority to conduct and supervise this show lies in the hands of the Lord. (P. 33)

The Five Khands

Pauris 34 to 37 describe the five *Khands*, that is, stages or steps toward realizing the human mission. These five steps are named as *Dharam* (duty) *Khand*, *Gian* (divine knowledge) *Khand*, *Saram* (endeavor) *Khand*, *Karam* (grace) *Khand*, and *Sach* (truth) *Khand*. *Khand* literally means a stage, a level, a division, a region, or a specific unit of land. Here it means a particular spiritual aspect of our life.

Most authors consider these steps to be spiritual stages to be achieved in sequence one after the other. The participants in the translating group presenting this message, however, accept them to be different approaches that guide seekers to their goal. They argue that one cannot adopt any step for *Dharam Khand* or reach *Gian Khand* without the grace (*Karam Khand*) of the Lord. Further, if these five steps are to be put into sequence, believing them to follow one after the other, *Saram Khand*, making an effort by the devotee, should be the first and not the third step. Also,

one can practise *Dharam*, righteous deeds, only after taking the step of making efforts (*Saram*). Obviously, the order of the *Khands* given in the hymn, *Dharam, Gian, Saram, Karam, Sach* does not fit in any sequence. It appears that all these steps work jointly to demolish the wall of ignorance with different intensities at different times with different individuals.

These are five virtues, which protect a man from the traditional five vices (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego). The vices are not classified into any sequence and neither do they misguide a person one after the other. All of them attack people at the same time, but different individuals to a different degree. Similarly, these positive forces help a person simultaneously. The concluding *pauri* and *slok* support this interpretation. They state that these virtues jointly act like a mint to design the mind to the final stage of His *nadar*, grace.

1. *Dharam Khand* (duty) : God has created nature, including night and day, dates and days, wind, water, fire, etc. There are many worlds. The Lord has assigned the earth as a place for humans to live a virtuous life. There are myriads of creatures, each with its own life patterns. Each has to do his duty, follow the will of the Lord.

In His court, the Lord delivers justice to all. He judges the deeds of the people whether they are right or wrong, good or bad. Those blessed with His grace are honored in his court. (P. 34)

Limitless creation is described in *pauri* 35.

2. *Gian Khand* (divine knowledge) : There are countless gods, Krishnas, Shivas, Brahmas, and others. There are innumerable *sidhas, buddhas* (wise men), *naths* (yogis), gods, and goddesses, etc.

There are countless lands, high mountains, oceans, suns, moons, winds, fires, etc. Kinds of sounds and sources of life are also innumerable. There are myriads of religious books and their learners. One is wonderstruck to find that there is no limit to what the Lord has created. (P. 35)

3. *Saram Khand* (endeavor) : The minds of the devotees who endeavor to adopt the path of truth become glorious and illustrious. Such minds become immensely beautiful because they become free of evil and sinful thought.

Such seekers become aware of divine wisdom. Their thinking evolves to become the same as that assumed to be of the mythological gods and *sidhs*. No one can describe their divine qualities. If someone does make an attempt to do that, he will have to repent for not being able to tell a bit of it. (P. 36)

4. *Karam Khand* (grace) : With the grace of the Omnipotent, minds of the devotees become powerful with the spiritual strength that no one else can possess. Immersed in the love of the Lord, seekers ~~become brave~~ and great warriors who fight evil. Their minds remain glued to the glory of the Lord. Their splendor and beauty (virtues) cannot be stated. They always occupy themselves with divine devotions. Such devotees never become disconnected from the *Supremus*, and, therefore, cannot be misguided by illusions or cheated by evil. By maintaining the love of the Lord in their minds, they always enjoy the bliss.

5. *Sach Khand* (truth) : The minds of the devotees tuned to the Invisible Creator realize that He is the Truth Himself and is spread everywhere; He is pleased to care for all creation with His grace.

Such devotees also come to know that there are innumerable galaxies without limits and beyond description but all obey His *hukam* and perform accordingly. The Lord is pleased with all of this. It is impossible to explain how the *Supremus* plans the functioning of the creation. (P. 37)

The last *pauri*, 38, uses the analogy of a goldsmith's mint (that designs beautiful ornaments) to describe how divine love builds virtues in the minds of the devotees and blesses them with bliss.

In the spiritual mint, the mind is designed to remove its vices and become virtuous. It is trained to practise contentment, learn

divine knowledge, maintain awe of the Lord and offer sacrifice for his Love. A goldsmith uses his furnace fire, hammer, and other equipment to design shapeless gold into beautiful ornaments. In the same way, the above-mentioned spiritual practices make the mind beautiful, that is, virtuous.

A devotee, thus, is graced with the blessings of the Lord that continuously release ‘nectar’ for the devotee to enjoy and make him *nihaal* (drenched with His bliss). (P. 38)

Concluding Hymn, *Slok*

The *Supremus* has created the earth along with all facilities, such as day and night, wind and water, etc. for the physical comfort and welfare of human beings. This provides them with the needed environment to perform their responsibilities and practise righteousness. In addition, the Lord has assigned parents to nurse the newcomers (babies) to this world and a guide (Guru, dispenser of divine knowledge) for spiritual guidance.

The stage is thus set for people to benefit from these favors of the Lord. In the end, we will all be judged for the good and bad deeds we do in our life and each will get full and fair justice. Those who love the Lord (follow His will) successfully complete the mission of their lives. They demolish the wall of ignorance (ego) and realize the Lord. Such devotees along with their associates are honored in His court.

2

Rehras

The second prayer in Guru Granth Sahib consists of nine hymns, grouped into two sets. The first set titled *So-Dar* includes five hymns and the second set titled *So-Purkh* includes four hymns. Together, they constitute the first section of the prayer called *Rehras*, which is to be recited by a Sikh everyday in the evening. The second section is not mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib, the title *Rehras* to the collection of these hymns was given later on.

First Set : *So-Dar*

So-Dar has five hymns. The first three hymns, which are to be sung in Raag Asa, introduce the seeker to the grandeur of the *Supremus*. They tell us that the whole of creation, living and non-living, obeys His will and sings His limitless virtues. In the first hymn all the mythological gods are mentioned as mere minstrels singing outside the gate of His palace. The second hymn refers to scholars, mystics and others who even jointly fail to evaluate His glory. The third hymn reminds us of His blessings that are as great as He is. He continues to give and His supplies never end.

So-Dar Raag Asa Mehla 1

So-Dar literally means “that gate” and it refers to the palace of the Lord, of course, not in physical terms, but in a spiritual sense. Raag Asa indicates the name of the musical mode. *Mehla 1* means the first Nanak, Guru Nanak Dev, the author of the hymn.

The title thus tells that the hymn was revealed to first Nanak, and it is to be sung in Raag Asa.

By the Grace of the Ik Oankar, the Supremus

This hymn is already mentioned in *Japji*, *pauri* 27 but without the title *So-Dar*. There are very minor changes in it, probably to fit the hymn to the musical mode for singing in a melodious tune. The message remains the same.

Lord ! what a throne and court (they do not refer to any physical place, it is mentioned in spiritual terms) You have from where You care for Your limitless creation. Outside the gates of Your divine palace, countless musicians and fairies sing Your virtues and play on myriad types of instruments. O Lord, the whole of creation praises Thee, all the elements of nature, winds, water, fire, etc. sing Thy glory. All the gods, including Dharam Raj, Brahma, Inder, saints, *sidhs*, brave warriors, etc. praise Thy excellence. Through the ages, the scholars and sages chanted Thy virtues.

All the galaxies, the earth, heavens, and nether regions sing Your praises. All kinds of living creatures grouped into four classes (according to the old Indian system, the four classes are : born from an egg, womb, earth, and perspiration) sing your limitless virtues. Further, Your devotees alongwith others blessed by You, remain tuned to Your virtues and continuously praise Thee.

Myriad others, whom it is not possible for me to enumerate, also utter Your praises. The *Supremus* is the only everlasting reality, without birth, without death. He built this stage, the universe, and is conducting this show endlessly. Look how many kinds of illusions and distractions has he included in this show ! He runs this drama the way it pleases Him. No one can advise Him for making any change in it. He is the omnipotent Lord, our obligation is to follow His will.—1¹

1. The digit in the end refers to the serial number of the hymn in the set concerned.

Asa Mehla 1

O my incomprehensible Lord ! You are like a vast fathomless ocean; You possess unlimited virtues and no one can ever know Your limits. *Rahao*.

Rahao means “Pause and think”.

The key verse that reveals the essence of the hymn is usually followed by the word *Rahao*. Therefore, the verse marked *Rahao*, whenever present, is translated first and recorded at the very beginning of the hymn.

All the people say that the Lord is great and limitless. They just say so because that is what they hear from the others. But only the person who realizes Him can know how great He is. Lord ! No one can evaluate Thee, because those who love Thee, merge in Thee.(i).²

All divine scholars, intellectuals, and mystics collectively attempted to evaluate Thee but they could not describe Thy glory. None else but Thee grants abilities to people to perform good deeds, undergo penance, and attain the qualities said to be those of a *siddh* and a yogi. No one can interfere in the granting of such gifts by You.(ii)–2

Asa Mehla 1

I pray that my mind may never forget the Lord, the *Supremus*. *Rahao*.

I am alive only when I remain tuned to You. No doubt tuning to You is a difficult task, but forgetting You means my spiritual death. An urge for Your love keeps me free from sufferings.(i).

People have done their best to sing His glory but they could not express a bit of it. Further, even if the whole creation collectively attempts to describe His glory, it does not matter to Him (it does not make His glory better or worse).(ii).

None else but He alone provides for all needs and comforts of the myriads of living beings. Neither does He die, nor are His

2. The sub-number refers to the end of the subsection of the hymn.

stores and supplies exhaustible. Therefore, He continues to dispense gifts forever.(iii).

The Lord is great; His grace and gifts also match His excellence. Those who ignore Him are lowly.(iv)–3

Raag Gujri Mehla 4

Mehla 4 means the fourth Nanak, Guru Ram Das

The fourth hymn expresses the prayer of a devotee to be tuned to the Lord and blessed with His *Naam*. Only the fortunate are devoted to the Lord, while those who follow their own mind suffer from ego and are unfortunate. The fifth hymn was revealed to Guru Arjun Dev. It encourages a seeker not to worry, because the Lord has taken over the responsibility of providing for all the living beings, even for the insects enclosed within stones. It advises him to join the company of holy people to obtain peace and grace.

My well-wisher Lord ! I pray Thee to reveal to me your *Naam*³ and make it my close associate. Further, I also request that singing of Your virtues may become my way of life. *Rahao*.

O worthy Guru, devotee of the Lord ! I am a non-entity, hence I request you to favor me with the revelation of *Naam*.(i).

The seekers who possess faith in the Lord and an urge to love Him are fortunate. In their association one learns virtues and is blessed with *Naam* that provides peace and pleasure to devotees.(ii).

Unfortunate are they who could not enjoy *Naam*, the love of the Lord. They suffer under the control of the *Yam* (a messenger of the mythological judge, *Dharam Raj*; he takes sinful people to the court of the judge for their punishment). Cursed is their life, who did not submit themselves to the refuge of the Guru, the enlightener.(iii).

Thanks to the holy congregation where a seeker is blessed with *Naam* and enjoys the love of the Lord.(iv)–4

3. *Naam*, it refers to the Lord Himself, His glory and His virtues.

Raag Gujri Mehla 5

O my Lord ! The grace of God saves even a lost person; when he joins the congregation of the seekers, he obtains the supreme spiritual status. *Rahao*.

O my mind ! Why should you worry ? The Creator has planned to meet the needs of everyone, even of the insects enclosed within stones. Of course, no one except Him, not even parents, relatives or friends can support anyone.(i), (ii).

Next, the Guru quotes the example of polar cranes to endorse his observations.

Cranes fly away to distant places leaving their young offspring behind. Have you ever thought who feeds them and who nurses them ?(iii).

Well, it is not a big deal for the omnipotent and the omniscient Lord; He is competent to perform many such deeds and even miracles. Nanak always submits himself to the Lord; His limits ever remain unknown.(iv)–5

Second Set : *So-Purkh*

So-Purkh has four hymns; first two hymns explain that God reveals Himself in His creation. All life is His play; whatever happens is His doing. He is both transcendent and immanent. The same Lord expresses Himself as a giver and as a beggar. He is a vassal and a master at the same time. Those who love Him are fortunate.

The third hymn suggests that the seeker should submit himself to the Lord; that is the only way to be saved from the fires of the vices. Finally, in the fourth hymn the seekers are reminded that the sole mission of human life is to love the Lord; other pursuits are futile. This rare chance (of being born as a human being) to realize the Lord should not be missed.

Raag Asa Mehla 4, *So-Purkh*

So-Purkh means a person who is immanent, one who is prevalent everywhere, hence God, the *Supremus*.

By the grace of Ik Oankar, the Supremus.

Lord ! Thou art the *Purkh*, the Truth, the Creator, incomprehensible and beyond limits. Everybody continuously meditates and thinks about Thee. All the living beings belong to You; You provide for all of them. Let the devotees pay homage to Him. How can a poor creature describe the *Supremus*, who is the vassal and the Lord at the same time ?(i).

Lord ! It is a great wonder that you being immanent vibrate in every living being, whether a beggar or a giver. There being none else, You are Yourself both the distributor and the consumer. Further, You being incomprehensible, no one can describe Your virtues. Nanak submits himself to those who serve and obey Thee.(ii).

The devotees who meditate on Thee live happily in this world and are saved from the custody of devils in the next world. The seekers who keep their minds tuned to the Fearless themselves become fearless and merge with Him. Nanak submits himself to such seekers.(iii).

Innumerable devotees meditate, pay homage, and worship Thee. For this they willingly undergo penance. Countless seekers recite holy books and perform all kinds of rituals. Fortunate are those whom the Lord accepts.(iv).

No one is comparable to Thee, the Primal Creator. Thou art beyond comprehension and continue to be the same throughout the ages. Whatever You do or whatever pleases Thee happens in the world. You made the whole creation and you destroy it as and when you wish. Nanak loves the virtues of the omniscient Lord.(v)-1

Asa Mehla 4

My Lord ! You are the Creator. Whatever pleases You happens. People obtain whatever You ordain for them. *Rahao*.

All creation meditates on Thee; only those graced by You obtain the invaluable *Naam*. Those who are tuned to You, meet

You, while those who follow their own mind are separated from You. You Yourself cause the people to meet You or stay away from You.(i).

O Lord ! All life is Thy play. Everyone is Your constituent and none is without You. As destined by You, some come close to You while some stay away from You.(ii).

He to whom You reveal Yourself realizes Thee and always talks about Your virtues. Those who worship Thee enjoy peace and merge with Your *Naam*.(iii).

There is none else without You; therefore, whatever happens is Your doing. You care for Your creation. This wisdom is revealed to those who are tuned to You.(iv)–2

Asa Mehla 1

O my silly mind ! Why don't you love the Lord ? By ignoring Him, you lose all your virtues. *Rahao*.

The world is like an ocean. Instead of water, it is filled with desires, which torch human beings like fire. People get stuck in the mud of greed and drown in this ocean.(i).

To remind a seeker of his common weakness and advise him to live an humble life, the Guru on his behalf says that I am neither a chaste nor a virtuous person. I am not a man of letters. I have remained an idiot all my life. To be saved, I submit myself to the shelter of those who do not forget Thee.(ii)–3.

Asa Mehla 5

O human being ! Do not let your life be wasted in the world of illusions. You must do something to get over the ocean of vices, the worldly attachments. *Rahao*.

The gift of human life is an opportunity to realize the Lord. For this, one should join the congregation of the holy people and tune the mind to the virtues of the Lord. Other pursuits are of no avail.(i).

In the end, Nanak guides a seeker to pray to the Lord and

thus be saved by Him (*Gurbani* tells there is no saviour but He).

O Lord ! neither have I practised meditation or penance, nor have I done holy deeds or served the holy people. I am a lowly person; I submit to Thee; please grant me Your asylum.(ii)–4

3

Sohila

This is the third and the last composition of the preamble. Hymns classified under different *raagas* (musical modes), which form the main body of the *Gurbani*, begin after this composition.

This hymn is to be recited by a Sikh before going to bed. *Sohila* means a marriage song. After the ceremony, the bride leaves for the house of the groom. The analogy of marriage is used to remind us that, like a bride, every soul will finally depart to the house of the Lord and at that time the body will go into eternal sleep. The hymn cautions in very strong words that one must always keep in mind the day when he will leave this world forever (will die). As that day is sure to come, therefore, one must live a virtuous life and love the Lord, the ‘Husband’, whom every soul, a ‘bride’, is to finally meet.

Sohila consists of five hymns. The first three hymns were revealed to the first Nanak. The hymns number 4 and 5 were revealed to the fourth Nanak and the fifth Nanak respectively.

Raag Gauri Deepki Mehla 1

In this hymn, the analogy of a loving wife is mentioned. We know that the bride is pleased to move to the house of her husband with whom she is to enjoy her life. The hymn impresses a seeker to love the Lord, the goal of every soul, and the source of all happiness and peace. In this hymn the soul is addressed as a bride who is preparing herself to depart to meet her ‘Husband’, the Lord.

By the grace of Ik Oankar, the Supremus.

O my Soul ! Sing the *sohila* songs (special songs that are sung when the bride is readied for her marriage) of the fearless Lord, the Husband. Singing His praises provides one with peace and pleasure. *Rahao*.

O my Soul ! You must go to the congregation where praises of the Lord are sung and virtues of the Creator are discussed. In that company you should reflect on the glory of the Lord in your mind and love Him.(i).

All the time and every moment, He cares for His creation. His gifts and blessings are beyond counts.(ii).

The date of the ‘marriage’ (leaving this world for meeting the Lord, the date of death) of every soul has been fixed. O my friends, devotees of the Lord ! Please bless me so that I am accepted by my ‘Husband’, the Lord.(iii).

Dear friends, we know that the turn of everyone of us is sure to come. Everyday we find some of us ‘leaving’ to meet Him. Let us remember the virtues of our Lord well before the day when we receive the call for our departure (death).(iv)-1

Raag Asa Mehla 1

The second hymn reveals that the Lord is the sole cause of all creation and philosophies. Whenever any philosopher says anything about Him he talks about Him alone. The analogy of the Sun, that is the sole cause of all seasons, is given to explain this.

O my soul ! Join¹ the congregation in which virtues of the Lord are sung because your welfare lies there. *Rahao*.

There exist six scriptures (six *shastras*, the six Hindu philosophies about the ultimate Reality, *Parm-atma*, Great Soul). They mention six doctrines regarding the same One Reality.(i)

There is only one sun but it causes many seasons and multiple units of time counted as moments, minutes, hours, days, dates and months. Similarly there are many systems (philosophies,

1. The suggestion is addressed to one’s self.

doctrines) but they all describe different aspects of the same one Creator.(ii)–2

Raag Dhanasri Mehla 1

In this hymn Guru Nanak uses the metaphor of performing traditional *Arti* (worship, prayer) before a statue. Lighted lamps and jewels are placed in a plate. The plate is waived in circles in front of the statue of the god/goddess to be worshipped and hymns are sung in his/her praise.

Instead of this ‘fake’ *Arti*, the Guru advises people to observe and appreciate how nature performs the *Arti* of the Lord all the time. He rejects the traditional *Arti* ritual and tells the seekers to be obliged to the Lord and to join nature in worshipping the Creator.

O God, the Savior ! In what a pleasant way nature is performing Your *Arti*. All the hearts beat like drums to produce the melodious tunes for Your *Arti*. *Rahao*.

Lord ! What a wonderful *Arti* before You is being performed by nature. The sky is like a vast plate, the sun and the moon are the two lamps in it. The stars in the sky shine like jewels in the plate. The flowers and vegetation provide the sweet and pleasant scent all around.(i).

O Lord ! You Yourself are the cause of the primal energy (life) in all living beings. Therefore, when observed in phenomenon form, You have myriads of physical forms, eyes, noses, feet, etc. But being noumenon, You have no physical form, no eyes, no nose and no feet.(ii).

The truth, that the ‘light’ relayed by the same one Lord enlivens every creature, is revealed by the enlightener (the Guru). The true worship of the Lord is to respect His will, that is, to willingly accept whatever He does. His working is a wonder for all the people.(iii).

Dear Lord, my mind always loves you, the way a bee loves the sweetness and the smell of a flower. Please bless me and favor me with your *Naam*, your virtues.(iv)–3

Raag Gauri Poorbi Mehla 4

Ego is the cause of all vices and problems. It has to be avoided for enjoying peace and pleasure. The analogy of a thorn in one's foot is mentioned. As and when a person walks, the thorn in the foot pricks and hurts. To be able to walk comfortably one must remove the thorn. Ego acts like a thorn and it continues to prick the mind unless it is removed and is replaced by the love of the Lord.

O mortal ! Give up your ego and completely submit yourself to the guide, the enlightener (the Guru). This is the most sacred action to be performed by a seeker. (It frees one from all vices and provides peace and pleasure). *Rahao*.

Mind is completely occupied by vices such as lust, anger, etc. These evil thoughts can be removed by listening to the advice of a holy person. If destined by Him, the seeker meets an enlightener who helps him tune his mind to the virtues of the Lord. This makes the mind free of vices and provides peace and comfort to Him.(i).

Ego, like a thorn, pricks a person who ignores the Lord and who does not enjoy His love. As he proceeds on with his life, an egotist suffers pain and problems. Finally, the judge punishes him.(ii).

On the other hand, a devotee remains tuned to the virtues of God and gets rid of the cycle of birth and death. He realizes Him Whose glory is known everywhere.(iii).

O God, we are weak and lowly. Please protect us. Thou art a great Savior. One who depends upon You and loves You enjoys peace and pleasure.(iv)–4

Raag Gauri Poorbi Mehla 5

In this fifth and last hymn, the reader is strongly reminded to awaken himself from his slumber, ignorance. One is cautioned to love the Lord and complete the mission for which he was given this chance, the highest life among all the creatures.

O mortal ! Every moment your end is getting nearer and nearer. You must complete the assignment for which you were sent to this world (love the Lord and get rid of your ego, the root cause of all vices). *Rahao*.

O my dear friend, I humbly remind you that this is a chance to listen to the advice of the holy people. You must earn your credit in this life so that you (your soul) can live without any worry and in peace here as well as in the next world.(i).

The life in this world is full of vices and apprehensions. However, those who tune their mind to the Omniscient get over these problems. Whomever the Lord blesses, he understands Him, the incomprehensible.(ii).

Do complete your assignment (love the Lord, and keep the mind free from vices which destroy its peace and tranquility) under the guidance of the enlightener (guide, Guru). You will be saved from the cycle of birth and death and enjoy peace in your ‘own house’² (in the lap of the Lord, the Father-Mother of all).(iii).

O God, omniscient and omnipotent, please fulfil my request. Assure me the association of those who love you. That is where I get peace.(iv)–5

2. As stated earlier, Gurmat does not believe in any Heaven (or Hell) assumed by some faiths. For a devotee, the real heaven is to enjoy the audience of the Omnipresent Lord, that is, to feel Him always by his/her side.

4

Anand

Raag Ramkali Mehla 3, Anand

The hymn '*Anand*' revealed to the third Nanak, Guru Amar Das is in the Ramkali musical mode.

Ik Oankar Satgur parsad

By the grace of *Ik Oankar*, the Supremus, the true guide.

The name '*Anand*' means bliss, spiritual peace and complete contentment. The composition consists of 40 *pauris*, stanzas. The hymn teaches that when one is still a child, attachment to the worldly comforts (*maaya*)¹ takes over the mind of every human being. The transient love of the parents and relatives misguides the child away from the right path, the love for *Naam* (virtues of the spiritual Father-Mother, God). Thus a person under the influence of *maaya* wastes the valuable gift of human life. He ignores the love for truth (God) and remains occupied in worldly pursuits to satisfy his ego, lust etc. Those who love His *Naam* are drenched in *anand* (bliss).

The people graced by the Guru² are fortunate. The teachings of the Guru (*Gurbani*) reveal truth to the seekers and help them

1. The word *Maaya* has a very wide connotation. It means illusion, magic, mysterious power; *maaya* has also been defined as anything the desire of which distracts a person from the virtuous path. It misguides one to love worldly possessions under the influence of ego, lust, greed, etc.
2. Guru literally means enlightener, guide; a holy person who reveals the virtues of God. The word Guru has often been used in *Gurbani* for God because God Himself guides the seekers to follow the virtuous path.

to get rid of the influence of *maaya*. They live a virtuous life (they love God and serve people). Having been saved from vices, such devotees revel in *anand*, bliss, and they realize the mission of human life.

Pauri-wise Message

Pauris 1-6

Singing virtues of God provides spiritual bliss, *anand*, to the devotees. Their pains and problems go away because they get rid of their vices (greed, ego, anger etc), the cause of human woes. Only those persons who are graced by God with His *Naam*³ receive *anand*. Others who get lured by *maaya*, illusion, ignore Him. For pleading the case of the seekers before God, Nanak prays, “What can the poor fellows do on their own ? No one can achieve anything without Your grace. Lord ! Be merciful to them all.”

O my dear friends ! I have obtained *anand*, peace and pleasure, because I found the True Guru. I met him through love, without undergoing any strenuous efforts or rituals. (This method is antithesis of the path of physical sufferings, *jap*, *tap*, *sanjam*, etc., for realizing the truth). Now, my mind is enjoying great joy, as if angels are singing melodious songs. Let all seekers sing His praises; those who attune their minds to the Lord, enjoy the bliss.—1⁴

O my mind ! Love the Lord all the time; He destroys all your pains and problems. He is competent to take care of all your needs. Why should you ignore the omnipotent Lord ? O my mind ! Always remain tuned to Him.—2

O True Lord ! What is that You do not have ? (You have every conceivable thing with You.) However, your gifts are received only by those people to whom You grant them. Those

3. *Naam* means God's virtues, God Himself; God in immanent form.

4. In the original hymn each *pauri* is numbered at the end. The same system of numbering the *pauris* has been adopted here.

who always reflect on Your virtues and sing Your praises (always keep You in their mind) receive Your *Naam*. Those who are blessed with Your *Naam* obtain divine peace and pleasure (literally, they enjoy all kinds of celestial musical sounds). Lord ! You possess everything.—3

Naam is my (refers to a devotee) support. It fulfilled all my desires and it provided me complete comfort and peace. I am sacrificed for the Lord having such virtues. Dear seekers, therefore, love the Lord Who is the support of all of us.—4

God ! They are fortunate people who are blessed by You. Their minds enjoy *panch sabad*⁵ (celestial melody). Your blessings help seekers to overcome vices (ego, anger, greed, etc.) and to get rid of the fear of the death. People graced by the Lord contemplate on His virtues. They enjoy comfort and continuous spiritual bliss (*Anhad Wajay*).⁶—5

This life is futile without devotion to God. But what can poor fellows surrounded by vices do ? Lord ! You are the gardener (caretaker) of the people. Please be merciful to them. Except You, there is no other competent person to help them. The helpless human beings can achieve nothing without devotion to the Lord.—6

Pauris 7-15

Though many people speak about *anand*, it is attainable only from the Guru (guide, the enlightener). No one can achieve *anand* by one's own efforts, because no one is competent to protect himself from the lure of *maaya*. Love for *maaya* misguides people away from God, the source of *anand*.

5. *Panch sabad* literally means five musical sounds; these sounds are produced by the vibrations of a string, metal, drum, etc. The term refers to the spiritual attainment of a seeker when he can internally listen to these sounds. According to some religions and Yogis, one obtains this stage through deep, long, yogic meditation. The Guru rejects this philosophy. He states that mind drenched in the praise of God enjoys *panch sabad*, gets all the spiritual peace and pleasure assumed to be obtained by hard and long meditations.
6. *Anhad Wajay* means divine bliss, divine symphony, not just five celestial tunes, which the Yogis claim to hear through meditating postures.

Intelligent actions of the people are of no avail to save them from *maaya*. One must follow the advice of the Guru to get rid of the influence of *maaya*; seekers must cherish God's love in their mind and submit themselves completely to Him. Only by His grace can one receive *Naam*, *the amrit* (love of God, which keeps the soul 'alive') the most valuable gift from God. It is only *Naam* that protects seekers from *maaya*.

Many people talk about *anand* but it is explained only by the Guru. Those seekers who are favored by the Guru understand it. By His grace, the Guru removes their sins and enlightens their mind. Seekers, whose vices (literally greed) are destroyed by His favor, become virtuous. Thus, graced by the Guru, they enjoy spiritual peace.—7

Lord ! Only they enjoy *anand* whom You grace. Other fellows remain helpless. Some people because of ignorance wander everywhere, while others whom You bless with Your *Naam* get sanctified. By the grace of God, some persons follow His Will; therefore, their minds become free from vices. Lord ! only those persons who are blessed by You receive *anand* from You and enjoy spiritual peace.—8

Dear devotees of the Lord, please come on; let us get together to sing the praises of our Lord Who possesses infinite virtues. How can we realize Him ? Well, for this you should completely submit yourself to Him; your body, mind, and whatever you consider to be yours, offered to Him and you should follow His will. Therefore, let us listen to His *Hukam* (order, will) and sing His virtues.—9

O my clever and restless mind listen ! No one has ever realized Him through his cleverness. It is the greed for worldly possessions that misguides people; they are mere illusions (*maaya*). However, this is according to the will of God because no one else but He Himself has created this *maaya*. No one can realize Him by getting attracted to this fascinating *maaya*.—10

O my mind ! If you desire to enjoy peace, always sincerely love the Lord, the Protector. Worldly relations, family, and friends

will not stand by you forever. Why get attached to transient relations ? Those people who pursue such a path of life repent in the end. O my mind ! Listen to the teachings of the Lord and remain tuned to Him; He alone will abide by you and protect you all through.—11

Lord, the incomprehensible ! No one can know Your limits. Only You know how great You are. All kinds of living beings created in this world are Your play (drama). Who can describe Your virtues or Your greatness ? People are alive and they act, (literally speak), because You Yourself vibrate in them. Lord, You are infinite and beyond reach.—12

Amrit,⁷ which is sought by both angels and human beings, is obtained from the Guru. When the mind of a devotee is tuned to His *Naam*, he/she receives *amrit*. God ! You have created all living beings, some of whom got attracted to You and who love You. Their greed, ego, and other vices are dispelled. Only those who are favored by the Lord receive *Naam, the amrit*.—13

The lifestyle of the devotees is unique and their path is extremely difficult to follow. One has to give up greed, ego, desire, and futile (meaningless) talk. This path is very narrow, fine like a hair, and is laid with sharp blades (the path is treacherous and dangerous, it is extremely difficult to move on it). By the grace of the Lord the desires and vices of the seekers, who submit themselves to Him, vanish. All through the ages, the way of the devotees has been unique and difficult.—14

Lord ! People move on the path that is assigned to them by You. What can people know about You ? When You kindly guide them to the path of devotion, they always dwell on Your excellence. By your grace, to whomsoever You reveal Your

7. *Amrit* literally means an anti-death drink. It is mythological holy water, which if drunk, keeps death away. *Gurbani* does not believe in any such holy water. According to *Gurbani*, real *amrit* is the *Naam* of the Lord, which keeps the soul alive, that is, tuned to the Lord. In other words, devotees receive everlasting spiritual peace and pleasure when they tune their mind to His *Naam*. Ignorance of *Naam* (God) is spiritual death.

virtues, peace and pleasure is obtained by them. O Lord, the people move on the path You assign to them.—15

Pauris 16-25

Gurbani hymns (Guru's teachings) are the Guru. Mere talking about the virtues of *Gurbani* does not help anyone; a seeker should follow the guidance given by the Guru to carry out the mission of human life. This is how one can submit himself to the Guru and get rid of the vices. Not just the performance of the rituals but sincere living according to the directions of the Guru provides serenity to the seekers. To pursue *maaya* (spend life enjoying worldly pleasures and ignoring the love for God) is wasting one's valuable gift of life. The two, love for *maaya* and love for *Naam*, do not go together; a seeker can follow only one of these two paths. A true seeker listens to the Guru and practises love for *Naam* (God's virtues). This path guides one to *mukti* (salvation, the highest spiritual achievement). All utterings made by people other than the Guru are false because they are not related to the love for *Naam*; hence listening to them is futile. They do not help any person to save himself from the allurement of *maaya*. Only by God's grace, can we receive the most valuable gift, *Naam amrit*. Even the angels (mythological holy people) search for it.

The divine hymn is pleasure-and-peace-giving and sung by the Guru. Those people, who have been designated by the Lord to enjoy it, tune their minds to listen to it. Many others merely talk about it but no one can enjoy it by talking alone. The joyful hymns are told only by the true Guru.—16

The devotees who meditate on You get rid of their vices and become sanctified. All of their family members, relatives, and associates also become virtuous. Anyone who sings, listens, or dwells on the praises of the Lord becomes virtuous. Every seeker becomes holy who contemplates the Lord.—17

Mere performance of a ritual does not provide serenity

(spiritual peace), and without it, one cannot get rid of his apprehensions. Doing rituals superficially proves futile. How can then the pollution of the mind be cleansed ? To remove the pollution, one should attune one's mind to the Lord and sing sincerely His praises. It is only by the grace of God that one can obtain serenity and get rid of his apprehensions.—18

Those seekers whose minds are occupied by vices but who merely perform rituals (pretend to be holy) lose the game of their life. They ignore death and suffer from the urge for worldly pleasures. They do not listen to the teachings of the scriptures, but wander like ghosts to satisfy their desires. People who forget the Lord and instead love illusion waste their valuable human life.—19

Those people who are honest and sincerely follow the path of the Lord are true seekers. Their minds are free from vices and they are not false at all. Their minds always dwell on the true Lord. Such seekers win the game of their life. Seekers whose minds are free from vices always remain tuned to the Lord.—20

Any seeker who listens to the Guru and keeps his mind tuned to the Lord follows the right path of life. He gives up his ego and does not care for anything except the will of the Lord. May it be known to all that such a seeker is a true devotee and treads the path for the realization of the Lord.—21

If a person turns his back on the Guru⁸ (he loves *maaya* and not the Guru), he will not be able to achieve *mukti* (spiritual goal, peace). This is always true; one may verify it from holy thinkers. A person may undergo any number of cycles of birth and death (may try any number of times), but he will not be able to achieve his *mukti* without following the directions given by the Guru. Yes, such persons can also get onto the path of realization of the Lord if they listen to the teachings of the Guru. All seekers, when they think, will know the truth that no one is redeemed (achieves *mukti*) without submitting himself to the true Guru.—22

8. Guru refers to God and *Gurbani* describes His virtues.

Dear devotees of the Guru, come on and let us sing the hymns of the True Lord. These hymns are the most sacred and sanctified words of the Guru. People blessed by the Guru tune their minds to the hymns. Dear friends, always sing the hymns of the Lord, imbibe *Naam amrit* and remain drenched in the love for God.—23

All advice, which is not according to the teachings of the Guru, is false. False are also those who give or listen to such advice. Some people merely utter holy words to claim their holiness; their minds being occupied with vices, they do not obtain any gain from such uttering. Their minds are lured by greed though they speak holy words superficially. Advice told by anyone other than a true Guru is false because it does not lead the listeners to peace.—24

The word of the Guru is a ‘jewel’ of supreme value studded with gems and diamonds (virtues of the Lord); therefore, the mind is attracted to it. Divine word (advice) of the Guru helps a devotee to love the Lord. This gift is received only by those whom the Guru ‘awakens’. The word of the Guru is like a precious jewel because it is studded with *Naam* (delivers *Naam* to a devotee).—25

Pauris 26-30

God Himself has created both the soul (spirit) and *maaya*. This truth is revealed to those whom the Guru awakens. Ignorant people spend their life under the influence of *maaya*. Blessed people live a spiritual life and they remain in tune with the virtues of God. Love for *maaya* is like fire and it ‘burns’ many people. Love for *Naam* saves people from this fire the way an infant is saved in the womb of the mother. To realize such a worthy Lord one should submit himself to the true Guru.

God created both the soul and *maaya* (illusion) according to His will. He is conducting the stage (the world) Himself as He wishes; He is pleased to watch it. He reveals this truth only to a few persons. Such persons get themselves free from

distractions (negative influences) caused by *maaya* and keep the word of the Guru in their minds. Those persons who are so designated by God tune their mind to His virtues. To only a few persons is revealed this truth that God Himself is the Creator of the soul and *maaya*.—26

Simritis and *shastras* (the Hindu scriptures) merely mention what is sin and what is sacred. They do not describe spiritual truth. Spiritual *anand* (bliss) cannot be obtained without the guidance of the Guru. Ignorant people lose their life because they remain involved in one of the three *gunas*,⁹ greedy life, lavish life, or contented/satisfied life. Only those who tune their minds to the Lord become awake and can realize the final stage, the Truth. They live a spiritual life and do not waste their lives influenced by the three *gunas*.—27

O man, listen ! Why ignore the One Who protects you in the womb of the mother ? Why forget Him Who nurses you in the womb ? Nothing can hurt or harm a person who loves the Lord, however, He Himself makes people love Him. Seekers, therefore, always think of Him. Why should one ignore such a bountiful Lord ?—28

There is fire (heat) in the womb of the mother; there is *maaya* in the world that ‘burns’ the minds of the people. This is a play conducted by God Himself. A child is born according to His will. The family is pleased at a child’s birth. Involved in the love for the family, the child forgets the love for the Lord. As a result the child is captivated by the love for *maaya*, a kind of fire (the worldly desires that trouble the mind and do not let it have peace). *Maaya* means greed for worldly possessions. Everything that distracts a person from the love for the Lord and makes him

9. According to the old Indian scriptures, the life of human beings has been classified into four divisions to identify their spiritual level. The first three levels belong to the worldly life while the fourth one means the spiritual level. Out of the three *gunas*, the lowest one is *tamo* (darkness, life of ignorant and greedy persons) followed by *rajo* (life of pleasure and enjoyment) and *sato* (a truthful, contented life without greed). The top most, the fourth stage, is above all the three, it is living in the spiritual stage of life.

love worldly possessions is *maaya*. However, those who are graced by the Lord remain tuned to the Lord even when living a worldly life.—29

The virtues of the Lord are invaluable and He cannot be realized by paying any amount of wealth. No one has been able to know Him, even though millions of people yearn for Him. If a true Guru is available, one should submit to Him, give up his ego, and listen to the Guru's advice. Thought of (love for) the Master of our souls makes His virtues prevail in our minds. They are lucky people in whose hearts the invaluable Lord is enshrined.—30

Pauris 31-39

The next nine *pauris* remind a person of the unique gifts given by God to every human being. They include the human body with all its faculties to *think* (mind), *sing* (tongue), *see* (eyes), *listen* (ear) etc. *Gurbani* reminds that these faculties should be used to seek God and not misused by a human being. Every seeker should always *think of* the Lord, *sing* His virtues, *see* Him prevailing everywhere and *listen* to His praises. This path leads a seeker to the realization of the mission of human life; however, it is revealed only to those who are blessed by God.

The Guru has told me that the mind is a merchant and the merchandise in which we have to deal is God's virtue. O my mind ! always remember the Lord. The remembrance is the profit (gain) one should aim to earn. The capital for the business is available to those who are liked by Him. Love for the Lord is the commodity in which my mind, the merchant, deals.—31

O my tongue ! You are lured by the wrong tastes; that is why your craving is not satisfied. The 'thirst' cannot go away unless you 'taste' the love for the Lord. When you 'drink' that love, you will never feel 'thirsty' (greedy for worldly wealth) again. This love is obtained by the lucky seekers whom the Guru meets. All other cravings are discarded once the love for the Lord is cherished in the mind.—32

O my physical body ! You came into this world because of the soul given to you by God. God Himself is the Father-Mother Who gifted you with the soul and that is how you became conscious of the world. By the grace of the Lord, you were revealed the truth about this drama (play). God is the sole founder of this world; you became known to the world when He put the soul into you.—33

I am very pleased because my mind is tuned to the virtues of the Lord. Dear friends, let us sing the praises of the Lord Who has enshrined Himself in my heart. Friends ! No sorrows or pains will bother you if you sing His virtues. That is the auspicious day when we bow (submit) to the Guru and the mind is tuned to the Lord. Submission to the Guru by the seekers reveals His virtues to them. Through the word of the Guru, one knows His virtues and enjoys the love for His *Naam*. The Lord, the cause and conductor of this world, Himself meets the seekers (guides the seekers to realize Him).—34

O my body ! what deeds did you do since you came into this world ? You did not even contemplate the Creator Who gave birth to you. By the grace of the Lord, the mind of the seeker is blessed because it is destined that way. Only those seekers become successful (in realizing Him) who keep their mind tuned to Him.—35

O my eyes ! God gave you ‘light’ to be able to see. Whatever you see, do not believe it to be anything else than Him; the whole universe that you behold is a manifestation of the Lord Himself. By the grace of the Lord, I came to know the truth, that the cause of all phenomena is the One Lord; there is none else but Him. The blind eyes of an ignorant person come to understand the reality of the universe when they realize the Lord.—36

O my ears ! You have been designed by Him to listen to the Truth. Therefore, listen only the Truth, the praises of the Lord. It provides peace and pleasure to the mind and the body; the tongue is also pleased with its taste. The Infinite Truth (God) is unique and cannot be described. Therefore, my dear ears, you

should always listen to His praises and thus be sanctified. You were provided to me only for this purpose.—37

God put the soul in the body, a cage (literally cave), and made it capable of speaking. He provided it the capability of speaking and physical senses (literally nine openings, two nose openings, two ears, two eyes, two excretory opening and a mouth). This body has been blessed with one more (the tenth opening) sense but that is not visible (cannot be seen by eyes). It is the faculty of love and devotion provided to the mind. It is revealed to those seekers who cherish the teachings of the Guru. Such seekers receive the Lord's *Naam*, the source of all the treasures of the world (literally the nine treasures, the number mentioned in Indian mythology). O my mind ! The beloved Lord has provided all the faculties to the body by installing a soul in it.—38

The songs (hymns) revealing the virtues of the True Lord should be sung in the eternal house, the congregation of the seekers; only the Truth is praised there. O God ! Only those seekers, who are loved by You and are guided by the Guru, contemplate on You. The Truth (the everlasting Lord) is the Master of all people and only those who are favored by Him get this gift. Therefore, we should sing the praises of the Lord by joining the gathering of the seekers.—39

Pauri 40

The concluding *pauri* explains that by the grace of God devotees can save themselves from the influence of *maaya* (worldly allurements). They enjoy spiritual bliss and they always find God prevailing everywhere. Therefore, all their worries and woes are dispelled; all their pains and problems remain away from them.

O fortunate people, listen ! one enjoys the bliss only when the worldly desires of the mind are controlled (that is when the mind has no other desire but to love the Lord). At this stage one realizes the Lord and finds Him prevailing everywhere. All the

pains, woes, and sorrows are dispelled by listening to His virtues. By the grace of the true Guru the seekers and the holy people become filled with His love. They observe Him (His virtues) in His hymns. The devotees who sing and listen to His praises become sanctified. Those seekers who submit themselves completely to the Guru (by giving up their ego) enjoy *anand*, the everlasting spiritual bliss, in their minds.—40

Conclusion

The message of the hymn *Anand* may be summarized in the following words :

The human life is a chance to realize God and enjoy spiritual bliss, *anand*. However, as soon as a person is born he/she is captivated by *maaya*, desire for worldly pleasures. By the grace of God, if a seeker follows the advice of the Guru and loves God's virtues he/she gets rid of the influence of *maaya*. Such a devotee observes God conducting the whole show and enjoys bliss, *anand*, all the time.

5

Asa Ki Var

Introduction

The hymn, Asa Mehla 1 Var Slokan Nal, authored by Guru Nanak, is popularly called *Asa ki Var*. A *Var* is a narration of deeds of a brave hero, usually related to a war/battle, which he had won (or in which he had become a martyr). It comprises of *pauris* (stanzas) which are sung in a special musical measure to touch the emotions of the listeners. Generally *sloks* are recited before the *pauri* to introduce the listener to the contents of the *pauri*.

In the beginning, there is a note which directs that the *Var* is to be sung in the same tune as that of the *Var* of King Usraj. He was the legal heir to the kingdom of his father, however, the queen, his step-mother, ordered his killing to let her sons become the rulers. The minister, who was assigned this job, left Usraj in a jungle, but simply cut one of his arm to show it to his step-mother as a proof of having murdered him. From there, Usraj ended up in another kingdom, where people supported him and helped him fight a war with his step-brothers. He won the war and got the kingdom back of which he was the legal heir. The moral is that in the end the Truth defeats the Vice.

The *Var Asa* has the same lesson. It tells that the birth-right of a man (human being) is to love God. He has to face many vices, which ruin his life. Those who listen to the advice of *satguru* overcome vices, and follow truth. They succeed in realizing the mission of human life and are honoured in his court.

Var Asa contains 24 *pauris*, each *pauri* is preceded usually by at least two *slokas* (and in some cases three or four, upto a maximum of five in one case). Out of a total of 59 *slokas*, 44 were revealed to Guru Nanak Dev and 15 to Guru Angad Dev. These *slokas* were added at the time of compilation of Guru Granth Sahib.

The summary of the message of the 24 *pauris* of the *Var* is given below.

The Message of the *Var*

God revealed His virtues (*Naam*) through the creation. He alone, not the gods as assumed by the ancient sages, is responsible for our birth, nursing and death; He conducts this ‘play’ as it pleases Him. We will be judged according to the deeds done by us. Those who love virtues enjoy peace and pleasure while those who follow worldly pleasures and commit sins are punished in His court (1, 2, 3).

We continue to undergo life cycles. Those who are graced meet the true guide, the *satguru* and listen to him. He removes their ego and leads them to Truth. Such devotees remain humble, do good deeds and, therefore, do not suffer in hell (4-5). Without *satguru* nobody can realize the Lord who reveals Himself through the *satguru*. Guidance provided by him helps people to rid themselves of attachment and thus end the cycle of birth and death (6).

The seekers love God and do not seek pleasure from material wealth. Graced by Him, the seekers meditate on His virtues and realize the Lord. The unfortunate egotists ignore Him and waste their lives (7-8).

Graced by Him, the humble devotees give up their desire for worldly wealth and meditate on Him, they are rewarded. Others waste their lives (10). We are helpless creatures. People blessed by the Lord, love Him, others get lost (11). We are judged not by our worldly knowledge, but by the deeds we do. Egotists suffer in His court (12).

We should be obliged to the *satguru* who teaches us Truth

and guides us to love the Lord. Those who ignore Him (and love worldly wealth) are destined to be doomed. The Guru is the safe ‘boat’ that helps us cross the ‘sea’, the worldly turbulences, to overcome the vices (13). In the end, worldly wealth shall have to be left and the sinful people will appear bare (without good deeds) in His court and repent (14). People graced by Him, observe His will and realize the Lord (15).

God takes care of every person and directs their lives as He wills. He may transform a person into a king and may make him a beggar again (16). Every life will come to an end, we should not waste it in pursuit of transient worldly pleasures (17).

We should respect *satguru*, who possesses great virtues. People blessed by the Lord meet *satguru* and their vices vanish (18). Many people suffer from their desire for worldly possession. Why take pleasure in owning them, when we know we are to leave them here. Learned people do not talk ill of other people, they keep away and do not get involved with the foolish person (19).

God Himself is conducting and watching this drama (creation). We have to leave this world; we should, therefore, meditate on Him as long as we breathe (20). We reap what we sow, hence, we should love the Lord which provides peace. One should not hurt the feelings of anyone, God is displeased with such actions (21). Those who obey their Master (respect His will) are honoured by Him. Those who disregard Him, suffer. We should be obliged to Him for His blessings; we cannot demand favours from Him, we can only pray to him for His blessings (22). Virtues of God are unlimited. He alone creates and destroys. Some people are put in prison (suffer) while others ride horses (enjoy their lives). All happens according to His will (23). God is the sole director of this world. There is no one else to depend upon. We do whatever He wills (24).

In brief, the above lesson of the *Var* may be stated as below :

The world has been created by God and He alone (not any assumed god) cares for us all. He judges us not by our worldly

knowledge but by the deeds we do. The seekers that are blessed by Him meet Satguru (spiritual guide). He removes their ego, teaches them virtues, leads them to love God and realize the mission of human life. Those who love worldly possessions suffer from vices and waste their life. Why pursue possessions when they are going to be left behind after death ? We cannot demand anything from the Lord, we can pray to Him for His blessings. God is the sole director of this play (the people act on the world stage), whatever He wills happens. Accepting His will is the path of a devotee.

Pauri-wise Meanings

By the grace of the Enlightener (the Destroyer of ignorance), *Ik Oankar*, the One Everlasting Reality, the Creator, without apprehensions, without hostility, beyond time and space, not-born, self-evolved (without father or mother).

Asa Mehla 1

Var in Asa musical mode by the first Nanak and also his *slokas*, tune to be the same as that of the *Var* of Tunda Usraj.

A brief introductory note is given at the head of each of the 24 units of the *Var* to help the reader to understand the message of the hymn.

The *Var* consists of 24 units; a brief introductory note is given at the head of each unit, to help the reader to understand the message of the hymn.

I.

The Guru tells the story of the world from the very beginning of the universe. First, God revealed Himself as limitless creation (God became visible in phenomenon form). Not any assumed gods, but He Himself has created this world and is managing it according to His own sweet will, independent of any counsel. The Guru rejects the myth mentioned in Indian scriptures that god

Brahma created all the lives, god *Vishnu* nurses them and god *Shiv* will destroy them. People are judged not by god *Dharam Raj* but by God Himself. Those who sing His virtues (make efforts to practise those virtues) are honoured in His court. The egotists who follow their own will and ignore God's will, repent when chastised in His court.

Slok Mehla 1 (*Mehla* first, the first Guru, Guru Nanak Dev) : My Guru is great who converts ordinary human beings into enlightened holy people in no time. I am fascinated and grateful to him for his grace.

M:2—(*Mehla* second, the second Guru, Guru Angad Dev) : Even if there are hundreds of moons and thousands of suns, their combined light will not be able to remove the darkness (spiritual ignorance) in the minds of the people.

M:1—The egotists, who ignore their Guru, are like diseased plants of sesamum which grow alight but their pods are filled with smut instead of grains. They are useless hence rejected by the owner to be taken away by strangers. Egotists, like diseased plants, are not accepted by the Owner (God), hence they are taken over by the vices.

Pauri

God (*nirgun* invisible form) revealed Himself, His *Naam* (His glory, virtues) and made this creation (became *sargun*, visible form). God is graceful, He nurses the whole universe and cares for everyone. He bestows life and also takes it away. Being immanent (in-dweller), He watches this whole play. (P. 1)

II.

World is not an illusion, it is real but transitory. God is both immanent and transcendent.

Slok M:1

God ! Your creation, regions and worlds, are real (they exist; they are not a dream as assumed by some ancient sages). Your

deeds and thoughts are True, Your court and Your orders are True, Your blessings are everlasting. Millions and Millions who sing Your praises are also true; true is also their capacity and strength to sing Your virtues. Your attributes and qualities are true. Those who meditate on You are also true. However, those who suffer repeated cycles of birth and death are false (unreal).

M:1—God is great because His virtues are great and He always delivers justice. He is great because He functions forever, and because He understands the prayers and inner feeling of everyone. He is great because He gives on His own without consulting anyone else. His functions cannot be described, He created whatever He willed.

M:2—God, in immanent form, dwells in the world. As willed by Him, some are graced while others are ignored. According to His will, some get misled by *maaya* (illusions) while others get saved from it. No one can know who will be saved by Him. His will can be understood through a *gurmukh*, God-attuned person, to whom God reveals Himself.

Pauri

After creating the human beings. God also set a court to judge their deeds. Full justice is delivered there and the sinners get identified. The deceivers get no refuge there, they are lead to the Hell with blackened faces (dishonoured). Those who love the Lord become the winners; the cheats lose in the court of the Judge (God). (P. 2)

III

God had created a marvelous world; when one observes nature, one is filled with awe.

Sloak M:1

Marvelous are many kinds of sounds of *Gian* (branches of divine knowledge). Marvelous are the living beings with many

variations, their forms and hues and some moving about with naked bodies.

Marvelous are the functions performed by water, wind and fire. Marvelous is the earth with many kinds of lives; marvelous are the people with many kinds of tastes. Marvelous is getting together of people and then getting separated from each other. Marvelous are their cravings and their gratification.

Marvelous are His virtues and His praises; the fact that some go astray and some adopt His path is also marvelous. It is marvelous that some find Him near, some find Him far away while some behold Him within them.

One is wonderstruck to observe so many marvels. Only the blessed people understand this mystery.

M:1—Whatever is happening is according to His will (Nature). The prevailing fears and joys are caused by Nature. Nature rules the whole universe, including Heaven and nether regions. Nature is the source of all the divine knowledge including that in the Vedas-Puranas and the Semitic books. Nature is the cause of all life activities, eating, drinking, dressing and the feelings of love.

Various kinds of distinctions, race, colour, forms etc. are the expression of Nature. The prevailing good and evil including ego are because of Nature. Earth's dust, water, air, fire, etc., are the work of Nature. God ! You are the cause of all this Nature, your virtues are the most sacred. The whole universe obeys God's will and He prevails everywhere.

Pauri

When the life ends, the body becomes a heap of ash (dust) and the soul moves ahead. The person who wasted his life in worldly pleasures (without good deeds) is 'arrested' and produced in His court where his deeds are judged. When chastized, he repents but to no avail. Ignorant fellow wasted the valuable chance of human life. (P. 3)

IV

The hymn tells that God is the Lord of the universe and everything in it is controlled or directed by Him.

Sloak M:1

The winds blow and the rivers flow under His discipline (All respect laws of Nature). The fire serves as ordained by Him. As planned by Him, the earth bears the unlimited load (of living and non-living). Under His discipline Inder (assumed god of rain, clouds) moves about upside-down. Dharam Raj (assumed judge for the souls) observes His discipline. To obey His discipline, sun and moon travel forever over a vast distance with no end to their journey.

Sidhas, Buddhas, gods, Nathas, obey Him. Birds fly in the sky as ordained by Him. Great heroes and brave men follow His discipline. Millions come (are born) and millions go (die) as willed by Him. Everyone is destined to carry out His orders. Only the Lord, *Nirankar* (without physical form) is everlasting and there is no one to whom He has to listen.

M:1—The formless Lord is without a boss (to obey or fear); all others including the holy ones, Ram, Krishan, and Vedic lore, are of no significance. To understand the Lord, many dance like circus stars (actors). Some perform drama acts in the streets (to impress people) and tell stories of kings and queens in meaningless words. They wear valuable necklaces and earrings, but even their bodies become ash in the end. (Their actions are fake and have no spiritual value).

One cannot obtain enlightenment just by talking about spirituality. It is extremely hard to become enlightened. One can be divine when blessed by Him and not by acting smart which all is futile.

Pauri

People undergo cycles of birth and death. Those blessed by

the Lord, meet *satguru* (genuine spiritual teacher). *Satguru* explains to the people the holy word (message of the Lord) and saves them. No person is as gracious as *satguru*. By meeting him, people rid themselves of their ego and they realize Truth. *Satguru* leads people to Truth. (P. 4)

V

Referring to the fake actors who play the drama of the lives of *Avtars* (Rama and Krishna) for their livelihood, Guru Nanak draws our attention to the real drama played by nature to enjoy the wonders of the Lord. All of us have to leave this world after spending the time granted to us; one should therefore remain humble all the time.

Slok M:1

In this play, the *pahars* (a three hour unit of time) are the Krishan and herdsmen, *gharis* (one eighth of a *pahar*) are the *gopis* (milkmaids, who loved Krishan and enjoyed romantic plays with him), and the sun and moon are the gods. Air, fire, and water are like ornaments to decorate the actors. The earth with all things on it provides the stage and the materials to perform the play.

Ignorant people, indifferent to this drama played by nature, however, get involved in the material pleasures of the world and waste their human life.

M:1—The disciples play on the instruments while their teachers dance and sing to play the drama. They swing their heads and move their feet raising dust, which falls back on them. Spectators watching this drama smile and go home (without learning any spiritual lesson, though actors claim the drama to be a religious act). They swing and act for merely earning their living (not for praising God). They dress and act as milk-maids, Krishan, Sita and Ram, the *Avtar* kings. They mistakenly believe it to be the worship of the Lord.

The Lord is fearless and formless, His glory is true. The

whole universe is His creation. Only the blessed people worship Him, it makes their lives pleasant and peaceful. Those blessed by Him follow His advice. By His grace they cross the ‘sea’, overcome their ego and other vices.

One cannot overcome vices by acting, dancing and swinging around. Innumerable things rotate and swing. Oil extractors, spinning wheels, grinding stones, potters wheel, whirl-wind etc. all rotate. Tops, churns, grain threshers, birds and butterflies continue to move round and round. Many things are rotated about a pivot. Some persons get rotated by being attached to *maaya* (worldly attractions, illusions). Every person is acting the way as willed by God. People, who dance and act for making their living, leave the world repentant (they do not obtain any spiritual gains).

Dancing is merely fun for relaxing the mind. People, who sincerely respect and regard Him, enjoy the love of God.

Pauri

Those, who remember the Lord, the Formless, are saved from Hell (suffering from endless birth and death). Both our body and soul belong to Him, it is futile to count His blessings because we cannot mention all what He gives to us.

If you seek good, you must act rightly and remain humble. No one is competent (has in his power) to avoid old age (death), it takes over all of us. Every person has to leave this world when his time here is over. (P. 5)

VI

Guru Nanak refers to some beliefs of other faiths and then he gives his own opinion in respect to those philosophies.

Slok M:1

Muslims love their *Shariat*, they recite and contemplate over it. They believe that those, who follow the code of *Shariat* to realize God, are the true believers. Hindus praise Him by reciting

Shastras and worship His idols. They perform pilgrimage, make offerings and light incenses.

Yogis meditate for controlling their minds by tuning it to void (thoughtlessness) and love God as *Alakh* (beyond description, incomprehensible). They believe God is transcendent (subtle, beyond physical senses) and the universe is His body. The munificent feel pleased when they contemplate giving charity. The world appreciates it but they ask for many times more money from God in reward for the charity given by them.

Thieves, liars and evil people lose whatever (wealth of merits) they had with them at birth. Of what use were their lives ? They wasted their lives. There are innumerable lives in water on the earth, on other lands, on abodes of assumed gods (*Puris*) etc. God takes care of everyone and He knows whatever they demand from Him.

The devotees of the Lord are desirous of singing His virtues (not for amassing worldly wealth) and they love Him. They always meditate on Him and they beg for the dust of the feet of (respect) virtuous people.

M:1—The Guru tells that no method of disposal of the dead body has any spiritual benefit (advantage) to the soul. The Muslims bury their dead. The body becomes dust after lapse of certain time. When such a soil (clay) is dug by a potter, it is used to make earthenware and bricks; these wares are dried and then burnt in fire. The purpose of saving the body from the fire could not be achieved by burying the body. Only God knows the truth of life after death.

Pauri

No one can understand Him without *satguru* (spiritual guide), God reveals Himself through *satguru*. Meeting him helps devotees to obtain liberation (freedom from vices; birth and death) because he removes your ego. The best path (the wise act) is to live in devotion to God and that is the way to realize Him, Who is the Universal Cause of life. (P. 6)

VII

Ego is a curtain which separates the creations (human beings) and the Creator. The Guru explains it in detail.

Sloak M:1

Ego is the cause of coming into and departing from this world.

- Bound in ego, one takes birth and dies.
- Bound in ego, one gives away or receives.
- Bound in ego, one gains or loses.
- Bound in ego, one is truthful or a liar.
- Bound in ego, one thinks of vices or virtues.
- Bound in ego, one goes to Heaven or to Hell.
- Bound in ego, one is pleased or repents.
- Bound in ego, one gets dirty or cleanses himself of the sins.
- Bound in ego, one thinks of his caste and suffers.
- Bound in ego, one is an idiot or a wise person.
- Bound in ego, one does not understand liberation.
- Bound in ego, one suffers from illusions (*maaya*) and their effects.

When one realizes that he is suffering from ego, he returns to the path of the Lord. Otherwise, without this knowledge, one burns himself by merely talking about ego (but not understanding it). Whichever way one views the world, his mind gets infected by that view. However, it is the divine writ that directs everybody.

M:2—An egotist is identified because he performs all his actions under the influence of ego. Bound by ego, one suffers undergoing the life cycles.

How does ego arise and how can one get rid of it ?

Ego is there because of His will and we act under the influence of ego. Ego is a serious malady but there is also a treatment for it. Blessed by God, one obeys the Will of the Lord (instead of following his own will); by this way one can eliminate the pain of ego.

Pauri

Those people serve God, who are contented and devoted to Truth. They refrain from evil acts, they practise virtuous deeds. They break away from the worldly bonds, and they live a temperate life.

God, you are the great benefactor and you give more and more everyday. Through laud is the Lord realized. (P. 7)

VIII

In this hymn, the Guru explains that the Creator has created unlimited number of worlds and many different kinds of lives; He manages and cares for this whole universe. In the second hymn, the Guru tells that hollow rituals performed by the people with the hope of spiritual benefits are all in vain.

Slok M:1

There are innumerable human beings, vegetations, sacred places, coasts, clouds and fields. There are earths, continents, regions, oceans, mountains and galaxies. There are many kinds of creatures He has created; they may come out from eggs, wombs or soil. Only He knows their extent Who created them.

After creating the creatures, God continues to care for them; the Creator is concerned for all the creation made by Him. The Founder is mindful of the world founded by Him. Let us hail Him, bow to Him, whose court is eternal. Without sincere love for such a Lord, religious rituals have no meaning.

M:1—One may do millions of good/holy deeds, one may practise millions of approved religious rituals, one may perform charities at sacred places and practise yoga in the forest (undisturbed), one may exhibit millions of brave deeds and die in the battlefield fighting, one may meditate in million ways and have millions of dialogues regarding *Gian* (spiritual knowledge), and one may study heaps of religious books, yet they all are useless. The only way to be accepted in His court is the Grace

of God (not by one's ego-filled actions) according to Whose will people come and go (take birth and die).

Pauri

God, you are the only true Lord who dispenses Truth. Whosoever is graced by You realizes Truth and practises Truth. Those who contact *satguru* realize Truth. The idiots cannot understand Truth. Such egotists waste their chance (do not make any spiritual gains) of human life. What for did they take birth ? (P. 8)

IX

The hymn stresses that one may study as much as one can; without the love of God, all study is of little use. The second hymn states that hollow rituals performed to satisfy one's ego are useless, they may even be painful.

Slok M:1

One may study cart-loads of books,
 One may study heaps of books,
 One may study boat-loads of books,
 One may study books which can fill the cellars,
 One may study books month after month,
 One may study books year after year,
 One may study books with every breath,
 One may study books for the whole of his life.

The only thing which counts towards peace is the love of the Lord, rest all study is of little use rather it may increase one's ego, which causes harm instead of any good to the person.

M:1—More a person studies, greater the ego he develops and more he is bothered by it. More pilgrimages one performs, more he boasts about it. Further, to pretend to be holy, one may adopt different garbs and undergo penances; they are self-inflicted pains (without any spiritual benefits). One may abstain from food

and clothes, but it is merely hurting one's body (and mind) because of dual faith (divided love both for God and for one's own ego).

Becoming a *moni* (mute) by adopting silence is misguiding oneself. How can one be enlightened without listening to Guru's advice ? To claim to be a holy person by walking barefoot is merely undergoing suffering. Eating filthy foods and smearing body with ash is fooling oneself and losing respect. Without love for the Lord, such rituals have no value. One may live in graveyards or in the wilderness, such ignorant persons gain nothing but only regrets.

By obtaining guidance from *satguru*, one can realize the virtues of God. Freedom from ego, anxiety, and hopes (desires) is possible only through the grace of God.

Pauri

God is pleased with His devotees, they sing His virtues and they try to be virtuous. The unfortunate find no refuge in His court, hence they wander about. Some egotists do not think of their reality, the cause of their existence (God).

The Guru says that he is a mere singer of His virtues and considers himself a low-caste whereas others may claim the pride of their high caste (because of which they ignore God). Guru urges the company of those who love the Lord. (P. 9)

X

The hymn tells that everything in the world is continuously changing; all physical attractions are illusory hence their love is futile. Creator is the only Truth whom we should befriend and love. The second hymn explains how the everlasting God, the Truth, can be realized and the mind cleansed of all the sins. In the *pauri*, the Guru values the association of holy persons, who love God.

Slok M:1

The whole world, the king, the subjects, palaces, houses and those living in them are transient, not everlasting. Gold, silver, and valuable clothes (worldly wealth) and the matchless beauties, who wear them, will not last. The relationship of husband and wife and their indulgence are in vain. People attracted to these transient relations ignore the Creator.

Whom can one befriend, the whole world is changing ? Illusions being pleasant, people get attracted towards them, hence they ruin their lives. Nanak tells humbly that without Him everything in the world is transient.

M:1—One can understand Truth only when one's mind is committed to the Lord. It removes the dirt of ignorance and cleanses the mind. One can understand Truth, if one loves the Lord; one gets liberated when one is pleased to listen to His *Naam* (virtues). One can understand Truth, when one understands the technique (correct way) to love the Lord. One should prepare the 'field', cleanse his body (mind) of the vices, and 'plant' *Naam* (love of the Lord) in it.

One can understand Truth, when he gets the correct guidance; he feels sympathy for the helpless, serves them and does good deeds. One can understand Truth, when one performs pilgrimage to his soul (reflects in his own mind) after getting guidance from *satguru*. The mind of such a person rests in peace (instead of running about for illusory pleasures). Nanak humbly submits that those who understand Truth, get their minds cleansed of all the sins, because Truth acts as a panacea for such maladies.

Pauri

The dust of the feet of the holy persons is the most valuable gift for me, if I can get it, I will apply it to my forehead (I respect and beg for the association of holy persons). One should give up this greed for false worldly possessions and devote his mind to the incomprehensible Lord. We reap what we sow. We can get the

company of the holy persons, if the Lord has so ordained, otherwise, because of our ignorance, our efforts go waste and we fail to realize the mission of our life. (P. 10)

XI

The hymn stresses the need of an undivided (loyal) love for the Lord by quoting a common example of a pulse seed, which if split, does not grow to produce a plant. In the second hymn, the Guru reminds people of their degraded life, urges them to give it up and follow the right path.

Slok M:1

As the Truth is lacking, the darkness of falsehood is prevailing all over in our lives, and we behave like goblins. Those who plant the whole-seed of *Naam* (love God sincerely, their love is not divided between God and worldly pleasures) win honours.

How can the split-seed grow (how can those with divided love realize their goal) ? Not only should the seed be whole, but the environment should also be favourable for it to grow. Look ! a starched cloth cannot be dyed unless it is cleansed with mordant. The fear of God (sincere regards for God, the relationship a child has for his parents) and active desire to meet Him provide the environment required to achieve the goal.

Ignorance (darkness) keeps away from those who are dyed in Truth i.e. drenched in the love of the Lord.

M:1—Society is being ruled by the greed, ‘the king’, supported by sinful actions, the ministers; lies are the ‘administrators’; lust, the vices, are the ‘councillors’ to plead the cases in the ‘false’ court. Ignorant public, without the knowledge of truth, helplessly suffer from vices. The religious teachers sing tunes and perform dance (Merely perform hollow rituals in the name of religion). They decorate themselves for acting and tell aloud the episodes of the lives of the heroes and brave fighters.

Having become fools, the Brahmans are busy in amassing wealth through deceptions and fake assurances. The religious teachers wish for liberation, but they waste their efforts by performing mere rituals. The *Jati*, the celibates, (who claim to remain un-married to be a great holy deed) do not know the path of the Lord. They mistakenly believe that giving up family life is becoming a holy person. Everyone claims himself to be a perfect person without any short-coming. However, one is judged truly when his deeds are valued in His court.

M:1—God is supervising us all; whatever is manifested is destined by Him. Every person is doing his best to reach his target, but what He does only that takes place.

In His court, we have to deal with different kinds of persons (compared to those we find in the worldly courts); they do not value high caste or any physical powers. Good persons are only those who actually receive honours in God's court (not those who make their fake claims based on their caste, authority or power in this world).

Pauri

Those who are blessed by the Lord remember Him. God, You have created this multicoloured (different kinds of lives) world; we are helpless creatures. Some may and others may not be approved (accepted) by You in Your court. Only they (who are graced by You realize You) and they do so without their special effort. (P. 11)

XII

The first hymn guides the seekers to respect the will of God without judging it to be good or bad. The other hymn rejects the Brahmanical belief of dividing people into castes by birth and assigning separate duties to each caste. According to the Guru the sacred duty of every person is to love God.

Slok M:1

Sufferings may work as a cure to make us healthy while our comforts may become the cause of our sufferings. (When in trouble, we think of God for peace and hence we follow the right path of life to get out of trouble. Involved in pleasures, we forget Him and land in problems and pains.) However, those who receive His bliss, are saved from the pain.

How wonderful it is that God is permeating in Nature, i.e. God is vibrating in His limitless creation. (Pause.)

God dwells in the whole universe and is reflected in every soul. He is the True Master. Whosoever praises Him, crosses the sea of problems (achieves the goal of human life). God performs whatever He wishes (Nobody can counsel Him).

M:2—It is believed that the duty of a Yogi is to meditate and realize *Gian* (knowledge); Brahmans are to study Vedas; Khatri's have to become heroes (to fight); duty of Shudras is to do menial jobs to serve the high caste.

Actually all persons are equal and the duty of every person is the same and it is to love God. The Guru states that anyone who understands his real duty (practises love for the Lord) is a holy person and the Guru submits to (respects) that person.

M:2—The One Supreme Lord is reflected through the soul of all gods and human beings. Anyone who understands this fact is a holy person and the Guru respects that person.

M:1—The way a pitcher holds water, devotion to God holds the mind in peace. As a pitcher is needed to hold water, Guru is needed for the realisation of God.

Pauri

If a learned person is found to be sinful, it does not mean that an illiterate person be punished. Men are known (rated, judged) by the deeds they do (and not by their learning). One should not commit such acts which make one liable to be punished in His court; there it makes no difference whether one is a learned person

or not. Those who follow their own will (Do not respect the will of God) and commit sins are punished in His court. (P. 12)

XIII

The first hymn refers to the statement of old Indian literature and beliefs. In the second hymn, the Guru continues to mention the Brahmanical beliefs and then delivers his message to the seekers.

Slok M:1

The nature of society and ethos depend upon the social environment and the driving force of the age. In the age of Truth, the *Satyug*, people are contented and they are driven by the desire of righteousness. In the age of *Treta*, the society is characterized as self-restrained (disciplined) when ‘might’ is the driving force and the heroes are honoured. *Dwapar* is the age of penance and austerity, people sacrifice for the needy, they give charity. It is *Kalyug* age, when fire of greed prevails in society and the people are directed by falsehood.

M:1—According to the Sam-veda, God (during *Satyug*) was white-robed (Refers to the Hans-Avtar, the Swan incarnation). The truth prevailed all over and the people loved and practised truth. According to Rig-veda, (*Treta-yug*) god Ramchandra was on the top of all gods and his name prevailed.

The Guru says actually sins of the seekers are washed only when they remember the Lord and they achieve *mukti* (liberation).

According to Yajur-veda, (the age of *Dwapar-yug*) Krishan of the Yadav race was the god worshipped. He forcibly abducted Chandraval (a woman married to Govardhan Mal); Krishan brought *paarjaat* (from the garden of Indra), a wish-fulfilling tree, to please his *gopi* (milk-maid named Satyabhama) with whom he had romance in the Brindavan, a garden in Mathura, U.P., India. Atharv-veda was expounded during *Kalyug* and Allah was the name of God (refers to the rule of Muslims in India). Turks and Pathans became the rulers and they introduced blue clothes.

The Guru says that a seeker should be devoted to God and remain humble (give up his ego); such a person can achieve *mukti* (liberation).

Pauri

I am a sacrifice to *satguru* whose association helps people to remember God. Those, who abandon the Lord and love something else, are sure to drown in the sea of the vices. Only a few realize that *satguru* is a boat to provide us a safe passage over the ‘sea’ i.e. worldly problems. By his grace, he safely takes us across the ‘sea’. (P. 13)

XIV

Not ego but genuine humbleness is the path of a seeker.

Slok M:1

Simbal (a silk cotton tree) grows to be a giant tree; it is tall and widespread. (By analogy it refers to the ego of the man) Birds recognise it from a distance and get attracted to it. However, they are disappointed when they find that neither its flowers nor fruit, nor even its leaves are edible.

The Guru tells the seekers that not ego but sweetness and humbleness are essence of good behaviour (virtues).

People bow (show fake reverence) to others for their selfish motives, but few bow genuinely, they show sincere desire to serve others. Yes, bowing (showing reverence and being humble) is good, the pan of a balance which dips down is recognised as heavier (superior). But be careful and know that sinful people (crooks) bow a lot. A hunter, who intends to kill a deer, bows very low. The Guru tells us to remember that physical bowing is meaningless if the mind is controlled by the vices hidden in it.

M:1—Performing worship, the Brahman recites scriptures and prays. He worships stone-idols to pretend to be a holy person. Lies are the beautiful ‘ornaments’ of his mouth (He tells lies all

the time); at the same time, however, he dwells on three-line holy *mantra* (*gayatri*). He keeps rosary around his neck and puts on a sacred spot (*tilak*) on his forehead to show his holiness. He wears two un-stitched clothes, *dhotis*, to cover his legs and body; and another piece to cover his head.

This all is futile for those who understand the true religious deeds. They sincerely follow the path of God. None but *satguru* can reveal this path.

Pauri

We shall have to leave the body and its beauty here in this world. In the end we shall have to bear the consequences of our good and bad deeds. Those who lived under the influence of ego, the path ahead for them is very difficult. Egotist appears bare (without good deeds) in His court, therefore, he feels frightened there. He regrets the evil deeds committed by him. (P. 14)

XV

The Guru explains the futility of the hollow rituals and advises the seekers to love God and practise truth. *Janju*, the sacred Hindu thread is made of twisted cotton and is with a knot. Referring to the practice of wearing the thread by a Hindu for his initiation into the faith, the Guru makes his observation as below :

Slok M:1

For a true *janju*, compassion should be the cotton, contentment the thread, moral restraints (self-control) the knots, and good behaviour the twist. O Pandit, if you have this moral *janju*, let it be worn by the soul (mind). It will neither break nor get soiled. Neither it will be burnt nor lost. Blessed are those seekers who wear it.

The thread is purchased for a few pennies and is worn by a Hindu while sitting on a sanctified place. Brahman tells a secret word in the ear of the wearer and becomes his 'guru', his mentor;

when the wearer dies, the cotton *janju* remains here and the person moves ahead without it.

M:1—One may mistakenly believe that the *janju* ritual sanctifies him. It does not help him if he continues to commit thefts and immoral acts, and he also continues to tell lies and speak bad words. Many swindles and frauds are committed by the mind (of the *janju* wearer), day and night.

The Brahman prepares the cotton thread. Its wearing is celebrated by butchering and cooking a goat. When the thread wears out, a new one is put on. The Guru tells that if the *janju* has the required strength (moral strength) it never decays and will last forever.

M:1—One is honoured in His court when one loves God. Therefore, one should wear the thread of remembering the virtues of the Lord. This sacred thread never decays and it remains with the wearer in His court (provides spiritual benefits).

M:1—What use is the wearing of a cotton *janju* if one does not overcome his passion and if one's feet, hands and tongue lack morality and continue to commit bad deeds. What moral right does such a mentor have to put *janju* (cotton thread) on other persons, when he himself goes about without himself wearing the moral thread ?

The Brahman charges fees from his clients for performing marriage and telling about the auspicious days for such functions to them. Look at this strange drama ! The blind (immoral greedy) man claims himself to be the moral person (wise man). (Extracting money for fixing auspicious days to conduct such functions is considered immoral and the Guru criticises this practice).

Pauri

The compassionate and gracious Master guides a disciple to do the right deeds.

Only that devotee obeys the Lord whom he so ordains. Those who listen to His command are accepted in His court. Seekers who

do what the Master expects them to do, receive whatever they wish. They are honoured in His court. (P. 15)

XVI

In the previous unit XV, the Guru exposed the immoral behaviour of the priests of his time. In the hymns below he portrays the split personality of the Brahman officials. To retain their positions, Brahmins had to please their Muslim rulers. They even adopted their life-style and read their scriptures. Brahman officials stooped very low and even influenced the priests with their own vices. They let the cow and a Brahman be taxed even though they preached that cow dung is sacred.

The Guru advises them that instead of appeasing the temporary local rulers, they should be loyal to the Almighty Ruler, God, who cares for all creatures; He can make any person a king today and reduce him to the level of a beggar tomorrow. The Guru addressed the Brahman officials and pointed out their hypocrisy.

Sloak M:1 .

You charge toll from a Brahman and a cow but you believe that cow dung is sacred and its use (for purifying your kitchen with the cow dung pluster) is a way for your salvation. You practise Hindu rituals, put on *dhoti*, sacred mark on the forehead and wear a rosary but you obtain your sustenance from the Muslims, to whom you call *malechh* (dirty foreigners).

You do Hindu worship in your home, but outside you recite Muslim scriptures and practise the ways of the ruling Muslims, the Turks, to appease them. Better, you discard this hypocrisy because salvation lies in loving the Lord sincerely and with undivided loyalty.

M:1—Describing the prevailing hypocrisy, the Guru continues :

Those who perform *namaz*, prayer, (Muslim officials) devour human beings (are highly corrupt) and those who wear

Janju (Hindu officials) carry the dagger (suck the blood of innocent people). The priests who perform rituals at the Hindu officials' homes also share this 'blood' (priests get donations from the officials and thus are a party to this corruption, a serious sin of oppressing the masses).

Both the 'business' and the 'capital' (their public dealings) used by these Brahmans are false. People tell lies to earn their livelihood. Modesty and virtue are seen nowhere, falsehood is reigning everywhere. Brahmans put on the sacred mark on their forehead and wear a particular type of *dhoti* (adopted by a sect of holy people) but keep a 'dagger' in their hands and act as butchers at large. (They pretend to be religious but are highly corrupt). To be accepted by the Muslims, they wear blue clothes (normally despised by the Hindus) for obtaining their living from them.

Brahmans eat *Halal* (meat prepared according to Muslim rituals, which is prohibited to the Hindus), but do not let anybody else go near their cooking/eating place. They demarcate their eating place and sanctify it. However, those (Brahmans) who sit within this place are hypocrites. They do not let any person go near this area, his entry is believed to pollute their food; however, with their polluted bodies they commit immoral acts. They (Brahmans) perform the ritual of cleansing their mouths but it does not clean their minds.

The Guru advises the seekers to remember the True Lord; one can get free of pollution only when he realizes the Lord (practises virtues).

Pauri

God keeps every person in His mind and He is directing us as He wills. He himself honours His disciples. Being the Super Lord of this universe, he guides and assigns jobs to every person. In case, He no more graces a king, he may be reduced to nothing, just a beggar, who even on begging may not get any alms. (P. 16)

XVII

It was preached that the charity given to the Brahmans gets transferred to the ancestors (in the heaven) of the giver. To expose this cunning technique of the Brahmans to rob the masses, the Guru sarcastically points out the injustice to which such beliefs can lead to. The second hymn also tells that purity of mind is achieved by the love of God and not by the physical cleansing of the body.

Slok M:1

If a house-breaker steals some goods and donates them to the Brahmans in charity, those goods (as preached by the Brahman and believed by his client), will reach the ancestors. The ancestors will be held guilty (a great injustice to them for no fault of theirs) when the stolen goods are found from them. Further, the Brahmans will also be charged for handling and passing on the stolen property. The justice demands that the hands of the Brahmans be cut (that was the law of the rulers in those days) for this act, an appropriate punishment for cheating the masses.

The Guru, therefore, extols people to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow; he stated that sharing of only such honest earnings can be ‘received’ in the next world (this holy act is recognised in his Court).

M:1—As a woman is considered unclean because she gets periods recurrently (according to the Hindu beliefs), similarly a liar’s mouth (referring to his mind) remains defiled because he always tells lies. Not they, who wash their bodies, but they whose minds are filled with love of God are clean persons (because they speak truth and do not tell lies).

Pauri

Wealthy people may possess high class horses, owe colourfully decorated harems, build huge palaces and mansions and thus be well-established in this world. Further, they may

indulge in all kinds of pleasures they wish in their mind. However, if they ignored the love of God, they are the losers, they wasted the chance of human life (for making spiritual gains). Engrossed in enjoying their wealth, they forget about their pending death. We must remember that youth has definitely to yield to old age and to death. (P. 17)

XVIII

According to the Hindu beliefs a house is believed to be defiled (for a month or so) whenever there is a birth or death. Hence, outsiders are not supposed to eat food from that house for a specified period until the prescribed ceremony has been performed for removing the defilement. The XVIII stanza ridicules this belief. The Guru in the second hymn speaks about the real defilement which one must avoid to keep oneself pure.

Slok M:1

If it is accepted that a house is defiled by *sutak* (a birth) then defilement exists everywhere. In cow dung and in wood (both of which are all around us) insects are born all the time. Every grain has a life in it (it has the ability to give birth to a plant). Further, water is the basic cause of life and it is always there in the kitchen. How can the defilement be got rid off from there ?

The Guru says that such defilement (which is based on ignorance) is removed by understanding the truth (enlightenment).

M:1—Mind is defiled by greed (and other vices); tongue is defiled when it lies; eyes are defiled when they covet others beauty or wealth; ears are defiled when they listen to slander. The Guru states that such defiled persons (though human beings, the crown of all creatures) are charged and are lead to His court for punishment.

M:1—Belief in defilement is based on one's ignorance, love of something else (worldly attachment) instead of God. Human beings are born and die as ordained by Him. Birth and death are

according to His will. Food and drinks are provided by God and hence not defiled. Those who understand Him, do not get defiled.

Pauri

We should glorify *satguru* who has many great virtues. One can observe them if the Lord helps one to meet *satguru*. If the Lord wills, the disciple develops those virtues in his heart. When God graces a disciple, He roots out all his evil thoughts (vices) from his mind. A person graced by Him is considered to have been granted gifts whose value is more than all the worldly wealth. (P. 18)

XIX

In this hymn the Guru enlightens people to remove their wrong beliefs related to purity and defilement of food. No food is defiled to begin with. However, when eaten even the most pure and sanctified food has to pass through the mouth and stomach where it gets dirty. Similarly a human being, the cream of the creation, has no pollution. However, when he commits sins, his mind gets polluted.

Slok M:1

First, the Brahman cleanses (purifies) himself (he takes a shower). Then he sits in a pure clean (demarcated and sanctified) place. He is served with clean food (not defiled by any person's touch or sight). To eat this clean food, he has to put it in his unclean mouth. He recites *mantras* from the scriptures. The food, however, gets polluted when it passes through the body and is discarded to a dirty place. Now, the question arises as to who should be held responsible for making the clean food to become dirty ?

The grain, water, fire, salt and butter are regarded as gods according to the Hindu belief. Hence, the food prepared from them is also pure and sanctified. But food, consisting of these gods, is put in his dirty stomach by a Brahman. (He commits this sin of making the sanctified food dirty, defiled).

The Guru tells that the mouth (a person) which does not utter the virtues of the Lord and eats food without remembering Him (without thanking Him, without saying grace), is polluted; he deserves spitting on his face (deserves disrespect).

M:1—The Guru questions the Brahmanical belief that a woman is inferior to man.

Man is conceived and nursed in the womb of a woman; man is born of a woman; man is engaged and married to a woman. In fact, it is because of woman that the human race continues. If a woman (wife) dies, man seeks another woman; through a woman a family is established. Why call a woman inferior who gives birth to kings (great men) ?

A woman is born of a woman; in fact no one is there without a woman (mother). God alone is independent of a woman (He is self-evolved and not born of a woman).

The Guru tells that anyone, man or a woman, who praises the Lord, is fortunate. In His Court of Justice such devotees are honoured.

Pauri

Everyone is suffering from attachment (desire of becoming owner of the vast wealth), few can be identified who are safe from it. We have to reap ourselves the fruit of our deeds, good or bad.

We know, we have to leave the world (all its wealth), then why suffer from the vice of pride (claiming ownership). One should not utter bad words (which may hurt any person); it is a good lesson not to involve in a debate/controversy with an ignorant person (without any learning, full of pride). (P. 19)

XX

Our life is going to end one day and we (our deeds) will be judged; therefore, be honest and sincere to keep your mind clean, free from vices.

Slok M:1

We should not utter impolite words, they effect our own mind and personality. Such a person is known as uncivilized and ill-mannered. A discourteous and uncivilized man is disrespected and turned out of His court. An unpleasant and uncivilized person is called a fool and he gets a shoe-beating (dishonour).

M:1—With minds defiled, they (Brahmans) pose to be virtuous and thus try to fool the masses. Even if one bathes in all the holy waters (68 sacred places of pilgrimage) the mind is not cleansed of its defilement.

Those who are holy (honest, sincere) inside and do not boast of their greatness (remain humble) are truly nice persons. To realize the Lord, they love His *Naam*, His virtues. They may be happy, sad or absorbed in their thoughts, but they remain devoted to Him. Being brave they do not care for anything else but love of God. The ‘food’ they beg for the journey of their life is love of His virtues and they take it as and when He gives them.

They understand that there is only one court of justice and there is only one judge for all the human beings. Deeds of every person are thoroughly investigated for delivering full justice. The evil persons are punished the way oil seeds are crushed for oil (to free them of their evil thoughts, the sinners are put through painful life).

Pauri

God, all creation has been made by you, and it functions as designed. Both good and evil people created by you are living in this world; You are watching them all.

Every person, who has come into this world, shall have to leave when his turn comes (and he has to appear before the Lord). Then why ignore Him, Who gifted us this life ? Let us perform our assignment (to remember Him), when we are still alive. (P. 20)

XXI

A true devotee should respect the Will of God and not judge it.

Slok M:2

What kind of devotion (for God) is it if one is also attached to something else ? A person is truly devoted only if he remains committed to Him through thick and thin. If one judges His actions to be good or bad, that person cannot be called a devotee.

M:2— If a person expresses his obeisance to his Master but at the same time defies His orders, he has, to begin with, chosen an absolutely wrong path; his both behaviours are fake. Such a disciple cannot find acceptance by his Master.

Pauri

We should always remember the Lord, obeisance to whom provides comfort and peace. When we know that we have to reap what we sow, why should we commit evil deeds ? We should never do anything wrong (un-social, immoral act) and we must think of the long range effects of our actions. We must do good deeds, they in the end benefit us in His court. (P. 21)

XXII

In this unit the Guru provides guidance to seekers for adopting the right behaviour towards God, the Master. It is explained by referring to the analogy of a master and his servant.

Slok M:2

If a devotee chatters a lot to express his pride and argues with the Master, he does not find His favors. If he serves the Master after giving up his ego, only then he is welcome by Him. A devotee who completely submits to the Master finds approval in His court.

M:2—Irrespective of what one claims from his mouth,

whatever is in his heart becomes visible from his deeds. If a person sows poison (evil deeds) but wants *amrit* (sweet life-giving nectar) in reward, is this justice that he expects ?

M:2—Friendship with a child (an ignorant person, an irresponsible person) cannot be meaningful. Because of the lack of wisdom, he is likely to commit foolish actions. (The spiritual lesson is that our mind, like a child, is ignorant and is always tempted to do foolish actions. A person, who is guided by his mind's desires, has to suffer in the end).

Something can be put in a vessel only if its previous contents are taken out (our ego has to be removed, if we want to retain *Naam*, love of the Lord, in our heart). One cannot issue orders to the Master, one can only pray to Him. If one acts fake (cheats) the end result is disappointment. Only those who sincerely sing His virtues and submit to Him, are pleased.

M:2—Friendship with a child (ignorant person, fool) or a very senior / superior person (egotist, boastful) does not last. That is like a line drawn in water (the line does not stay, it immediately vanishes).

M:2—A child (an ignorant person) is not expected to do right deeds. Maybe, he does one good deed but he is likely to commit mistakes in other cases.

Pauri

One is regarded as a true servant of the master only if one behaves and acts the way it pleases the master; one gets lots of honours and also rewards for ones work. If one treats one self equal to ones master (argues with him and questions his decisions), one earns displeasure of the master. Such a servant may lose his job and be insulted.

He must understand that whosoever provides him his sustenance, he must be obliged and be thankful to the giver. A servant cannot issue orders to his master, he needs to pray to him for whatever he needs from him.

The spiritual lesson the Guru conveys to us through the

above metaphor is that a disciple should accept the will of God and be always thankful to Him for whatever gifts He gives or does not give to him. (P. 22)

XXIII

Through this hymn, the Guru enlightens us that if one makes a spiritual progress and believes it to be the fruit of his own labour, he is infected by ego. Actually, whatever we obtain is a gift from Him. We should be thankful to Him for His grace.

Slok M:2

If one believes that whatever one has got are the wages of his labour, it cannot be considered a gift from Him. The fact is that whatever we receive is because of the grace of the benevolent Lord.

M:2—What kind of a devotee a person is, if he is scared (frightful) of the Lord ? Only he is a true servant (devotee) of the Lord who feels one with Him (removes all the distance between him and the Lord).

It is like a good son who is close to his father and bears respect in his mind for him. The son does not do anything, which displeases him (The son has regards for his father but is not scared of him).

Pauri

We cannot comprehend the limits of His creation. He alone makes creation and He Himself destroys it as He wills. Some suffer as slaves while others live as lords, enjoy the ride of teams of horses.

Whatever He orders, He also executes those orders Himself, to whom then can one appeal ? The Guru says we should respect His will because the Creator Himself looks after all His creations. (P. 23)

The spiritual lesson is that one should respect the will of the Lord; He knows what is best for us.

XXIV

God has created this world and is directing the whole drama Himself. He assigns us our duties. We should not nurse any hatred against those with whom we disagree because the thinking and ideas, people possess, are His gifts. We should try to respect the Will of God, do not rate any person to be inferior.

Slok M:1

All the vessels (human bodies) have been fashioned by Him and He Himself has given their contents (characters). Some contain milk (possess virtues) while others remain on fire (suffer from ego and jealousy). Some enjoy high quality life while others have been deputed to serve them. They, who are graced by Him, live a spiritual and peaceful life.

M: 2—God Himself plans and fashions all human beings, He nurses and cares for them all. He creates all living beings, He develops them and destroys them. We cannot appeal to anyone else except Him, because He Himself is all in all.

Pauri

We cannot count the virtues of the Great Lord. He, the gracious Lord, is the Creator of the nature. He provides sustenance to all living beings; the creatures do whatever duty He has assigned to them. He is all in all, He does whatever He wills. (P. 24)

6

Who is God ?

Know Him on your own without any intermediary

Today, everybody is searching for a satisfactory answer to the age-old question, “What or Who is God ?” All are anxious to know whether He/She is there or not. The definitions of God as given by different religions are not verifiable by the standard scientific technique. This has made some people disbelieve in God. To know the answer, we have first to define God as precisely as we can. It is only after we agree on the definition of God that we can decide whether He exists or not.

The fact is that God defies any definition. It is a word with most complex meanings and connotations. The difficulty arises because God is a Spiritual Being and we have to describe Him in terms of the material world. It is like measuring the value of gold in terms of currency bills that have no intrinsic value, and the face value of which varies in each country. The language of God is love. It is not expressible in words of any of the thousands of languages we humans use to communicate with each other. The language of love is understood only by the heart. Agreed, we are unable to write or speak this language but all of us can experience it, feel it and enjoy it. The faculty of love (the sixth sense) provided to us by the Lord opens the door to His court and helps us to communicate with Him. This is the only way we can understand Him. No intellectual calculations, however complex they may be, will ever help us to define or describe God.

According to the dictionary, God is *the Creator and the Ruler of the universe; eternal and infinite; omnipotent and omniscient; Almighty, Supreme Being.*

The definitions given by different faiths do not disagree with any of the above descriptions of God. Other qualities of God generally accepted are that He is omnipresent, incomprehensible, immanent and transcendent. Further, God has been described as gracious, kind and caring for all creation. Some also believe that God created eternal Heaven for the comfort of faithful people after their death; they also believe in Hell where all non-believers, who ignore His commandments, will suffer forever.

How do we realize Him ? And if He is there how do we enjoy His blessings ? A very brief historical review of the revelation of God may help us to understand the answer.

Revelation

The first need of human beings on this earth is not God but good food for their lives and a favorable environment for their physical comfort. This depends upon weather that is controlled by sun, rain, winds, etc. Therefore, the earlier humans believed the weather elements to be gods and started their worship. In due course of time, through the process of evolution their brains became bigger and more complex. They observed that, unlike all other animals, human beings have been provided with unique faculties. They command a special status among all living beings, large or small. This advancement in their thinking lead them to believe that there must be some higher mission of their life other than just completing their biological cycle, that is, eat, grow, procreate, get old and die.

At some stage of this development, persons of supreme intelligence specially gifted by God were born, of course, at different times and in different regions of the world. Those who made worldly inventions and thus contributed to the physical comfort and knowledge of human kind were known as scientists.

The holy people who revealed God and His virtues were called Prophets. They provided spiritual guidance to humanity and were considered as God-incarnate, God's son, God's messenger, God-blessed, guide to God etc. Each prophet told people the mission of human life.

These messages were delivered in different regions of the world and at different periods of history; hence they were in different languages. They all believed in one Supreme Authority, the Creator; of course, they gave their own name to Him. We now address Him with the general and popular name God. Different methods of worship preached by different prophets for understanding Him were given different names, commonly known as religions.

Misunderstanding God

Different names for the same God were unfortunately believed to refer to different Gods Who were mutually callous and antagonistic. This conclusion is totally wrong and baseless because of the very definition of God explained above and accepted by all religions. However, this erroneous belief continues to persist. As a result, people got split into mutually hating religions even when all believe in the *same one* Lord. In other words, people are fighting to put their own labels (names of their religions) on the bottles of water (virtues of God) which have been filled from the same fountain (God). Remember, our need is water and not the label. Why bother about the label ? Value the water, which we need to satisfy our thirst.

In fact, instead of dividing people, religions should have united all tribes, races and nations into one great brotherhood of humanity. We humans should have accepted all names of the Father-Almighty as genuine, the way a biological father is addressed as dad, daddy, papa and by other innumerable names in the thousands of languages of the world.

Mistakenly, the believers of each faith consider only *their*

God to be the *true* and *genuine* God. Every *other* God, which actually is another Name for the *same* God, is preached to be *false* and *fake*. This misplaced urge to prove the genuineness and superiority of their faith caused the followers of the ruling faith to inflict (sadly, they do it even today) inhuman tortures and mass killings of the believers of other faiths. No reference to such horrible wars is needed; it is a well-known record of history, a dark spot on the tradition of religions. Politically strong religions have attempted to subdue or eliminate people of other faiths by labeling them as ‘non-believers’. This was and continues to be considered a service to the faith, but these acts are rated as heinous crimes in the court of God whom they want to please.

Discovering God, Father-Mother of Whole Humanity

A day was destined to come when people would experience Truth by accepting ONE and the SAME God with as many names as they may love to give Him. God, as it was stated earlier, is ‘love’ and one can love Him by any name or even without assigning Him a name. The analogy of a child loving his mother explains it well.

The child is devoted to the mother heart and soul without knowing her name. The child believes that the mother, irrespective of her name, is the source of love, comfort and every other thing needed for his/her happiness. A child may call her mom, mama, mother or by any of the other innumerable names in different languages of the world. However, in the heart of the child one thing remains unchanged—the love and faith in the affection and protection provided by the mother.

All of us have experienced this and hence we can learn a lesson, “Love the Lord, the Father-Mother of all humanity, the way we love our dad and mom. All people are His/Her children; love them as your brothers and sisters.” If we practise this lesson, there will be peace all over the earth, and it will become like Heaven we are desirous of getting into after our death.

This revelation was received by Nanak (1469-1539) of Punjab and many other devotees (*bhagats*). The message received by Nanak and immediately told to the people is recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib as, “Do not divide people into Hindus and Muslims.. All people are the children of the same Lord; Allah and Ram are both His names.”¹ “No prophet or community can lay their sole claim on Him. Anybody who loves Him can realize Him.”²

To share this message from the Almighty, Nanak founded the institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat*.

The name *Sangat* was given to a congregation of people (irrespective of the faith in which they were born) who sit together as equals and jointly sing praises of the Lord in any language they can speak. All people including Muslims, Hindus, low castes and untouchables (mistakenly so-labeled by the ego-filled high caste), men and women, educated and illiterate, rich and poor etc., all sat together in the *Sangat* as equals to remember His virtues and pray to Him. The *Sangat* adopted all the names of God then prevalent, such as *Allah* (a Muslim name for the Lord), *Ram* and *Krishan* (used by the Hindus), *Niranjan* (loved by yogis) and many other commonly used names. They worshipped nothing but the Lord by reflecting on His blessings for the whole of humanity.

When they jointly prepared and partook of food together as equals and without any discrimination among them, their gathering was named *Pangat*.

In 1604, the fourth successor to Nanak compiled the hymns revealed to Nanak and other holy people devoted to God. This compilation, the ‘sacred book’, contains the experiences of realizing God by about two dozen spiritual seekers, including Hindus, Muslims, so-called low castes and even untouchables.

1. P. 1136, these two names actually refer to all faiths. Hindus and Muslims were the two major faiths then practiced in India. Hindus loved the Lord by the name Ram, whereas the Muslims called Him Allah. They suffered from strong mutual hatred hence, only these two names are mentioned.

2. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 658.

They were born at different times and in different regions of the sub-continent, now divided into India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

God Realized³

These devotees independently found that all people are created and loved by the *same one* Lord. To realize Him and enjoy His blessings, these holy people advised that one should treat and love all people as members of one big family, the humanity.

Here is the English version of the excerpts taken from some of their hymns (references to the original writings in the ‘sacred book’, Guru Granth Sahib, are given for interested scholars). They all state in different words of their own that the ‘glow’ of God is equally reflected in all humankind. The Lord prevails everywhere; there is no other except Him.

Nanak, 1469-1539, the founder of the Sikh faith; born to the Hindu parents in the Punjab, now in Pakistan; travelled widely and visited all the major centers of religions in Asia, including Hardwar, Varanasi, Gaya, Ujjain, etc., in India; to share his revelations with the Muslim theologians, he went to Mecca and Baghdad in the Middle East; he visited Sri Lanka to talk to the Buddhists; Nanak also ascended deep into the Himalayas to have dialogue with the *sidhs* and the yogis.

We are all equal children of the same One Father.—Page 611

There is a reflection of His Spirit in everyone; all ‘glow’ only with His light.—Page 13.

Kabir, 1398-1518, a ‘low caste’ weaver, born to a Hindu mother, raised by a Muslim couple, lived in Varanasi, a Hindu sacred city in north India :

The whole world was created by the One Divine Light. All people are His creation; no one is inferior or superior (good or bad).—Page 1349

3. Based on a paper, “Path for Peace” read by Sant (Professor) Teja Singh of Mastuana in a peace conference held in Tokyo, Japan in 1956.

Nam Dev, born in 1271, a ‘low caste’ calico-printer of Maharashtra (Southwest India) :

None else but the Lord Himself speaks in all living beings, whether they trail on the ground, walk on their legs or fly in the air. Those who give up all desires and become devotees of the Almighty Lord find Him not away (different) from themselves.—Page 988

Farid, 1173–1266, a famous Muslim Pir (holy person) highly respected by the masses and even rulers of India, lived in the southwest of the Punjab (Pakistan) :

Do not be rude to any person, the same Divine Master dwells in the heart of every human being. If you want to realize the Lord, do not hurt the feelings of anyone, you will hurt Him residing therein.—Page 1384

Bhikhan, a Sufi fakir, lived during the 16th century in Lucknow, north India :

The Lord blessed me with the priceless jewel, His love (the Divine Name). One can enjoy it but, like a dumb person, cannot describe it. I observe Him revealing Himself everywhere in the whole universe.—Page 659

Ravi Dass, contemporary of *Bhagat Kabir*, a shoemaker, born as an ‘untouchable’ but later honored as a holy man even by the Brahmans who claimed to be of high caste and laid their sole right on God; lived in the holy city of Varanasi :

All thoughts of mine and thine, second or third (other than One Creator) have vanished from my mind. I observe only Him vibrating everywhere in the whole universe.—Page 345

Peepa, ruler of a small kingdom in central India, lived during the 15th century :

Instead of involving yourself in ritual worship, seek the Lord within yourself. The same Lord, Who is in the whole universe, dwells in every heart. Those who search (love) Him realise Him. —Page 695

Rama Nand, a great Vaishnav Brahman, famous for his

teachings; Kabir and some other spiritual persons were his disciples :

O Lord ! You are All-pervading. You are a living Reality in every human being. You have made me realize You (the Divine Master) in my own heart.— Page 1195

Jai Dev, a Brahman of Bengal, lived in the 12th century with a king of Kanoj, famous for his spiritual hymns, compiled *Geeta Gobinda*, a well known religious composition :

O my mind ! Sing the virtues of the Lord (love the Lord), all kinds of discrimination and otherness will vanish from your mind (you will experience Him everywhere.)—page 481

God Described

The analogy of gravity, sun, moon, and nature may help us to describe God. The force of gravity exists everywhere in all countries and it affects all living and nonliving things all the time. We experience gravity everywhere but we cannot say, "Look ! This is gravity." We cannot limit it to a particular place because it is an all-pervading force having no form or shape. Obviously, it cannot be observed as something physical. God, like the force of gravity, is here, there and everywhere; He is not limited to any particular definable form anywhere to be visible to our human eyes. Like the force of gravity, His influence works everywhere and all the time.

Gravity existed and influenced us even before it was discovered by Newton, a scientist, a person of unusual intelligence. God existed even before He/She was revealed to gifted devotees. A few of the devotees, the spiritual scientists, who recently confirmed His existence and His love for us have been mentioned above. To understand Him, one has to drench Himself in His love, in His virtues.

We know that the sun and the moon shine equally for all people. No individual, nation, race, or faith can claim a sole right to them. In the same way, God loves all people and no one can

claim a franchise on Him. In nature, we enjoy flowers of multiple colors and of innumerable shapes and sizes. In the same manner, we should love and enjoy the garden called humanity, full of different colors, cultures, and languages.

Hating anyone because of his/her faith, race, color, caste, nationality, status, etc., displeases our common Father, God. Forcing your faith on the weak is a great sin. Therefore, those who tease, torture, or kill people because of these differences will ever suffer in the worst hell. Those who help the weak and needy enjoy the peace and pleasure of Heaven here and hereafter. That is why Guru Nanak advised people to pray everyday, "**God ! In Thy Name, bless the whole of humanity.**"

Finally, by any or no name a rose is a rose and it smells good. God is God by any or no name. Let people enjoy His love and blessings. We know the taste of a food only when we eat it, not when we just see it or know its name. We have not just to know the virtues of God but to live accordingly, that is, to wish well for all humanity and think ill of no person. Not only do we have to talk, discuss, and believe in this path, but we have to follow this path to reach the House of God. Nobody can walk on your behalf, you have to do the 'walking' yourself on this path. Do it and realize Him prevailing everywhere. May God bless us all and remove hatred of any kind from our minds so that we can 'see' Him vibrating in every human heart all the time.