

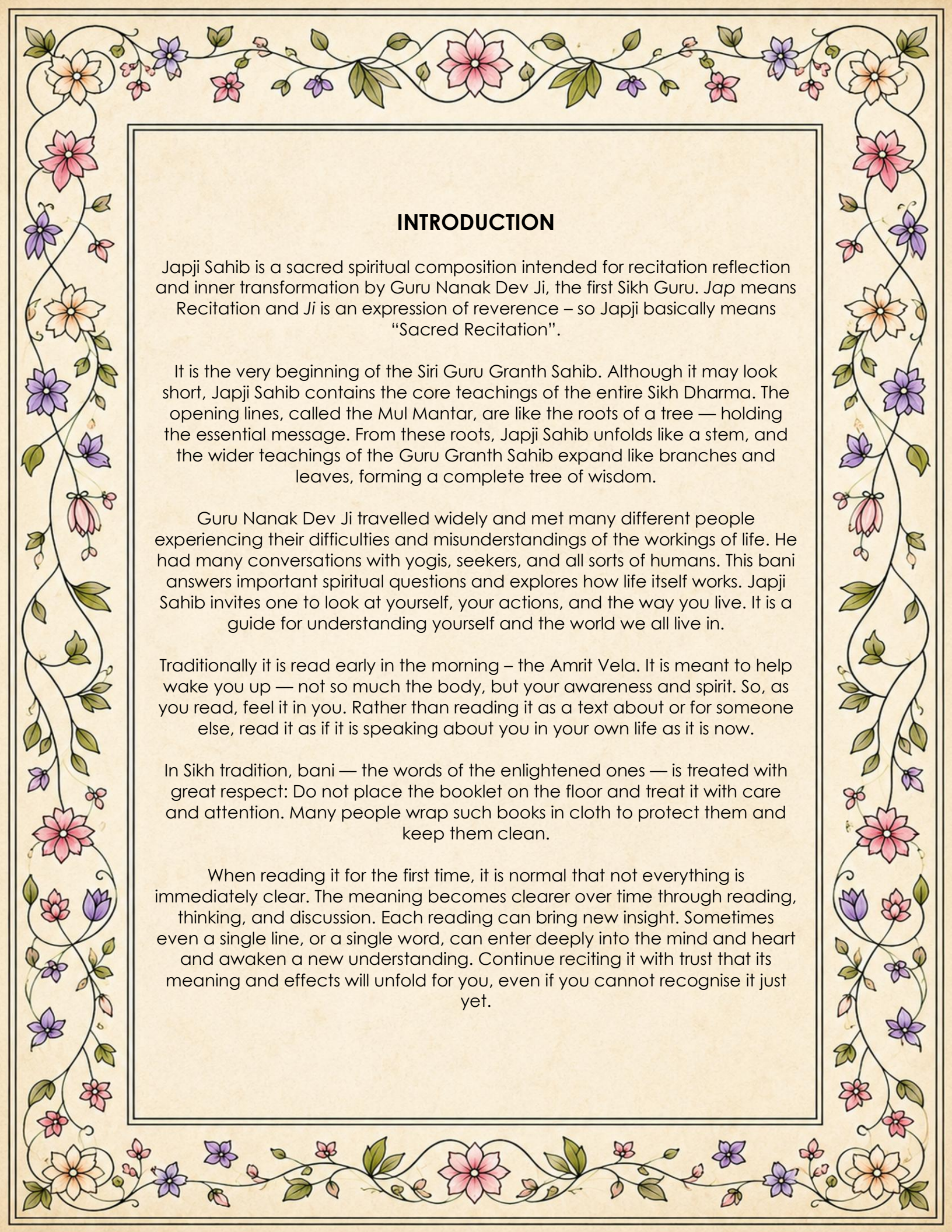


JAPJI SAHIB

A STUDENT TRANSLATION
MIRI PIRI ACADEMY

revealed by
GURU NANAK DEV JI





INTRODUCTION

Japji Sahib is a sacred spiritual composition intended for recitation reflection and inner transformation by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first Sikh Guru. *Jap* means Recitation and *Ji* is an expression of reverence – so Japji basically means “Sacred Recitation”.

It is the very beginning of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Although it may look short, Japji Sahib contains the core teachings of the entire Sikh Dharma. The opening lines, called the Mul Mantar, are like the roots of a tree — holding the essential message. From these roots, Japji Sahib unfolds like a stem, and the wider teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib expand like branches and leaves, forming a complete tree of wisdom.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji travelled widely and met many different people experiencing their difficulties and misunderstandings of the workings of life. He had many conversations with yogis, seekers, and all sorts of humans. This bani answers important spiritual questions and explores how life itself works. Japji Sahib invites one to look at yourself, your actions, and the way you live. It is a guide for understanding yourself and the world we all live in.

Traditionally it is read early in the morning – the Amrit Vela. It is meant to help wake you up — not so much the body, but your awareness and spirit. So, as you read, feel it in you. Rather than reading it as a text about or for someone else, read it as if it is speaking about you in your own life as it is now.

In Sikh tradition, bani — the words of the enlightened ones — is treated with great respect: Do not place the booklet on the floor and treat it with care and attention. Many people wrap such books in cloth to protect them and keep them clean.

When reading it for the first time, it is normal that not everything is immediately clear. The meaning becomes clearer over time through reading, thinking, and discussion. Each reading can bring new insight. Sometimes even a single line, or a single word, can enter deeply into the mind and heart and awaken a new understanding. Continue reciting it with trust that its meaning and effects will unfold for you, even if you cannot recognise it just yet.

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Ek Oangkaar
One, whose expression unfolds as the universe

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ

Sat Naam
Its name is truth

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ

Karta Purakh
Creative conscious presence

ਨਿਰਭਉ

Nirbhau
Without fear

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ

Nirvair
Without hate

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ

Akaal Moorat
Timeless form

ਅਜੂਨੀ

Ajooni
Unborn

ਸੈਭੰ

Saibhung
Self-existent

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Gur Prasaad
This is realized through the
Guru's grace

॥ ਜਪੁ ॥

Jap
Recitation

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

aad sach jugaad sach.
True in the beginning. True Throughout the Ages

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚ ॥੧॥

hai bhee sach naanak hosee bhee sach. ||1||
True still now. Nanak, will remain true. ||1||

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ਸੋਚੈ ਸੋਚ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀ ਲਖ ਵਾਰ ॥

sochai soch na hova-ee jay sochee lakh vaar
By ritual bathing one does not become pure, even if one bathes
hundreds of thousands of times.

ਚੁਪੈ ਚੁਪ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਲਾਇ ਰਹਾ ਲਿਵ ਤਾਰ ॥

chupai chup na hova-ee jay laa-ay rahaa liv taar
By remaining silent, inner silence does not arise, even if one
remains continuously absorbed in deep inner focus.

ਭੁਖਿਆ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਉਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੰਨਾ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਭਾਰ ॥

bhukhi-aa bhukh na utree jay bannaa puree-aa bhaar
The hunger of the hungry is not satisfied, even if storehouses are
filled to the brim.

ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

sahas si-aanpaa lakh hohi ta ik na chalai naal
Thousands of clever strategies, even hundreds of thousands of
them – not one truly accompanies you.

ਕਿਵ ਸਾਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

kiv sachi-aaraa ho-ee-ai kiv koorhai tutai paal
So how can one become truthful? How can the barrier of
falsehood be shattered?

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਇ ॥੧॥

hukam rajaa-ee chalnaa naanak likhi-aa naal ||1||
By living in accordance with Hukam – Nanak, this is written within
our very being ||1||

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ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

hukmee hovan aakaar hukam na kahi-aa jaa-ee.
Through Hukam forms come into existence, but the Hukam itself
cannot be described.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥

hukmee hovan jee-a hukam milai vadi-aa-ee.
Through Hukam living beings are created. Through Hukam one is
granted honour.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਉਤਮੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਆਹਿ ॥

hukmee utam neech hukam likh dukh sukh paa-ee-ah.
Through Hukam some are high and some are low. Through what
is in Hukam the experiences of joy and suffering are obtained.

ਇਕਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀਸ਼ ਇਕਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਦਾ ਭਵਾਈਯਾਹਿ ॥

iknaa hukmee bakhsees ik hukmee sadaa bhavaa-ee-ah.
Some, by His Command, are blessed and forgiven; others, by His
Command, wander aimlessly forever.

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

hukmai andar sabh ko baahar hukam na ko-ay.
Everything is within Hukam. Nothing exists outside of it.

ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥੨॥

naanak hukmai jay bujhai ta ha-umai kahai na ko-ay. ||2||
Nanak says, understanding Hukam, one no longer speaks from
ego. ||2||

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ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਤਾਠੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਕਿਸੈ ਤਾਠੁ ॥

gaavai ko taan hovai kisai taan.
Some sing in praise of the power of the One— but only if they
have been given the power to do so.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਦਾਤਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਨੀਸਾਠੁ ॥

gaavai ko daat jaanai neesaan.
Some sing in praise of the gifts of the One, recognizing them as
the One's sign.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਗੁਣ ਵੀਡਯਾਈਯਾ ਚਾਰ ॥

Gaavai ko gun vadi-aa-ee-aa chaar.
Some sing of the virtues and beautiful greatness of the One.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਵਿਦਿਯਾ ਵਿਖਮੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

Gaavai ko vidi-aa vikham veechaar.
Some sing about the One through their knowledge and deep contemplation.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਸਾਜਿ ਕਰੇ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਹ ॥

Gaavai ko saaj karay tan khayh.
Some sing that the One creates the body and reduces it to dust.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਜੀਯਾ ਤੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਦੇਹ ॥

Gaavai ko jee-a lai fir dayh.
Some sing that the One takes life and gives it again.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਜਾਪੈ ਦਿਸੈ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

Gaavai ko jaapai disai door.
Some sing that the One who is meditated upon, is seen far away.

ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਵੇਖੈ ਹਾਦਰਾ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥

Gaavai ko vaykhai haadraa hadoor.
Some sing that the One is close and present here.

ਕਥਨਾ ਕਥੀ ਨ ਯਾਵੈ ਤੋਟਿ ॥

Kathnaa kathee na aavai tot.
Speaking and describing the One, never reaches an end.

ਕਥਿ ਕਥਿ ਕਥੀ ਕੋਟੀ ਕੋਟਿ ਕੋਟਿ ॥

Kath kath kathee kotee kot kot.
Speaking and speaking, the One has been described millions,
millions and millions of times.

ਦੇਦਾ ਦੇ ਡੇਦੇ ਖੁਕਿ ਖੁਹਿ ॥

Daydaa day laiday thak paahi.
The Giver keeps giving; the receivers grow physically tired of
taking.

ਜੁਗਾ ਜੁਗੰਤਰਿ ਖਾਹੀ ਖਾਹਿ ॥

Jugaa jugantar khaahee khaahi.
They keep consuming and consuming through the epochs,
across eras.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਚਲਾਏ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

Hukmee hukam chalaay raahu.
The One who operates through Hukam, keeps the Hukam
unfolding along its path.

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਿਗਸੈ ਵੈਪਰਵਾਹੁ ॥੩॥

Naanak vigsai vayparvaahu. ||3||
Nanak says, understanding this, one blossoms into a joyful, worry-
free state.

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ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਆਪਾਰੁ

saachaa saahib saach naa-ay bhaakhi-aa bhaa-o apaar.
The Master is true and permanent. His name is truth - spoken with
boundless love.

ਆਖਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ॥

aakhahi mangahi dahi dahi daat karay daataar.
People speak and ask: "give me, give me" again and again, the
giver keeps giving

ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਆਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥

fayr ke agai rakhee-ai jit disai darbaar.
So, what can be placed before Him, by which His presence
becomes visible?

ਮੁਹੋ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

muhou ke bolan bolee-ai jit sun Dharay pi-aar.
What words should be spoken which upon hearing, awaken his
love?

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

amrit vaylaa sach naa-o vadi-aa-ee veechaar.
In the Amrit Vela, meditate on the True Name and contemplate
His greatness.

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥

karmee aavai kaprhaa nadree mokh du-aar.
Through one's actions, the human body is obtained; Through
Grace the gate of liberation opens.

ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਸੁਭ ਆਪੇ ਸਾਚਿਆਰੁ ॥੪॥

naanak ayvai jaanee-ai sabh aapay sachiaar. ||4||
Nanak says, understand it this way - all that exists is the True One
himself. ||4||

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ਥਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

thaapi-aa na jaa-ay keetaa na ho-ay.
It cannot be established through effort, nor can it be created.

ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥

aapay aap niranjan so-ay.
That One is self-existent, self-sustaining, and Pure

ਜਿਨਿ ਸੇਵਿਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

jin sayvi-aa tin paa-i-aa maan.
Those who serve and align themselves with the Divine obtain true
honour

ਨਾਨਕ ਗਾਵੀਐ ਗੁਣੀ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ॥

naanak gaavee-ai gunee niDhaan.
Nanak says, sing the praises of the one - the treasure of all virtues.

ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥

gaavee-ai sunee-ai man rakhee-ai bhaa-o.
Let it be sung, let it be deeply listened to, and let love be held
within the mind.

ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਹਾਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਘਰਿ ਤੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

dukh parhar sukh ghar lai jaa-ay.
Suffering is removed, and peace is brought into one's inner
being.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਦੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵੈਦੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਹਿਯਾ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

gurmukh naadaN gurmukh vaydaN gurmukh rahi-aa samaa-ee.
Through becoming Gurmukh the Naad is realized; through
becoming Gurmukh true wisdom is revealed; through becoming
Gurmukh one is absorbed in the all-pervading reality.

ਗੁਰੁ ਈਸਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਬਰਮਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬਤੀ ਮਾਈ ॥

gur eesar gur gorakh barmaa gur paarbatee maa-ee.
The Guru is Shiva, the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru is Brahma; the Guru
is Parvati, the Divine Mother.

ਜੇ ਹਉ ਜਾਣਾ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹਣਾ ਕਥਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

jay ha-o jaanaa aakhaa naahee kahnaa kathan na jaa-ee.
Even if I were to understand, I could not fully express it; this
cannot be described in words.

ਗੁਰਾ ਇਕੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥

guraa ik dahi bujhaa-ee.
There is One Giver for all beings — may I never forget this.

ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੋ ਮੈ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥੫॥

sabhnaa jee-aa kaa ik daataa so mai visar na jaa-ee. || 5 ||
there is only the One, the Giver of all souls. May I never forget
Him! || 5 ||



COMMENTARY

1st Pauri

This pauri explains that human beings are separated from truth (*Sach*) by a “wall” of falsehood (*kūr*), which represents illusion, ego, and misunderstanding of reality. Because of this misalignment, people experience endless desire, dissatisfaction, and confusion. They try to overcome it through methods such as ritual cleansing, silence, accumulation of knowledge or possessions, or intellectual thinking—but none of these address the real problem.

Guru Nanak then asks the central question: how can one become *sachiārā* (truthful, aligned with reality) and break this barrier? The answer is to live in *Hukam*, the divine order that is not external but already embedded within existence and within us. By aligning our lives with *Hukam*—accepting and flowing with reality as it is rather than resisting it—we move from illusion to truth. This is not something we create through effort; it is something already “written within” us, waiting to be recognized and consciously lived.

2nd Pauri

In this pauri, Guru Nanak Dev Ji explains the nature and expression of *Hukam*, which includes the many opposites and conditions present in the world. *Hukam* itself cannot be fully described through human words, but its qualities become visible through what unfolds in life.

Hukam includes everything we experience in this world—everything around us, both good and difficult. Guru Nanak says that when we truly understand *Hukam*, we are no longer trapped within our self-centeredness or our small personal desires within the larger order of existence.

Relating back to the question asked in the first pauri, this pauri explains what *Hukam* is and how understanding it helps us move toward truth in our lives.

3rd Pauri

The third pauri begins with the word *Gāvai*, which means “to sing.” After understanding *Hukam* and no longer resisting its flow, a person no longer speaks from ego but begins to sing and praise from within.

The first ten lines show different ways people praise the Divine—some sing of power, some of virtues, and some of gifts and blessings. This creative act of singing inspires beauty and carries a vibration that touches the soul.

The last four lines are key to understanding this pauri. The Guru invites us to shift from being a taker to becoming a giver. To be a giver means to practice *seva* and to serve others without expecting anything in return. Everything described in this pauri exists within *Hukam*, and understanding this brings a state of inner ease and freedom from worry.



4th Pauri

This pauri shows that the Divine is truth and limitless love. Even though people continually ask for more, the Divine continues to give without end.

Rather than only asking for more, we can focus on living and speaking in ways that bring us closer to the Divine and create love within us. Taking time in the early morning to reflect on the True Name and the greatness of the Divine helps strengthen this connection.

Our actions shape our lives, but true liberation ultimately comes through divine grace. In the end, everything is already connected to truth—we simply need to recognize it.

5th Pauri

Pauri 5 teaches that the Divine cannot be created—it already exists as a self-sustaining and pure reality beyond *Maya*. Guru Nanak redirects spiritual focus from external rituals toward inner transformation through *Naam*—remembering the Divine and holding it in the heart through singing, listening, and deep remembrance.

This remembrance becomes a deeper form of *seva* expressed through awareness and devotion. As one follows this path, the ego gradually weakens and inner peace replaces suffering. Through the Guru's wisdom, one begins to realize the oneness of existence—that the same Divine light is present in all—and understands the fundamental truth that there is only one Giver sustaining every being.

Naad is the subtle harmony of the Divine present within creation, which one begins to perceive when becoming *Gurmukh* – a person oriented toward the Guru.