

The Japji Sahib
Guru Nanak's 15th Century
Poem

Transcript of
A Bilingual Reading

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Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak, known today as the founder of the Sikh religion, was born to a Hindu family in the village of Talwandi on the Indian subcontinent in 1469. One of the most famous stories about his childhood recounts his rejection of Hindu thread ceremony at the age of ten. Dissatisfied with the formal Hinduism that was his heritage, he seems to have undertaken a very serious religious quest, critically examining both Hinduism and Islam. Ancient stories tell of his enlightenment (or at least a deeply transforming experience) at the age of thirty, at which time he pronounced, "There is neither Hindu nor Mussulman so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God's path. God is neither Hindu nor Mussulman and the path I follow is God's." From this point onwards, the stories describe him as a Guru (one who dispels ignorance or darkness *gu*, and brings enlightenment or light, *ru*) and recount stories of his pilgrimages to Mecca, Sri Lanka and Tibet and to the main centers of Hinduism.

In most stories, Guru Nanak is seen as restoring both Hinduism and Islam from the formalism and ritual which had become ends in themselves, to the truths that lay within them. He can be seen as encouraging both Hindus and Muslims to perceive the truth which existed within themselves, to reach God without the aid of intermediaries such as the Brahmins and the Qazis, deploring and condemning the obscuring emphasis on ritual and superstition. Equally, it can be asserted that he was a defender of pure religion against superstition, or that in saying, "there is no Hindu and no Mussulman" he was condemning these faiths as ultimately futile. By most accounts, he was a reformer, speaking and acting against the caste system and for the uplift of women. Around 1521, Guru Nanak settled at Kartarpur, making a transition from a wandering teacher to the founder of a new faith. It was at this time that he, born a Kshatriya, expressly rejected the authority of the Brahmins and the Atharva Veda encouraging the use of his own compositions, The Japji, the Sodar and the Arati and meditation in their place. He said he was not a God, but a simple human being but by then the community had become a permanent body of believers. Twenty days before his death on September 22, 1539 he appointed a successor, Guru Angad, who was to consolidate the beginnings of the Sikh religion by collecting Guru Nanak's poems and hymns into what is now the holy book of the Sikhs, the *Adi Granth*.

[Adapted from *The Sikhs - Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* Cole and Sambhi, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979]

The Japji Sahib

The **Japji Sahib** is the first hymn in the *Adi-Granth*, the 1430-page book whose teachings are followed by 17 million Sikhs the world over. The word "Jap" (pronounced 'Jup') means 'meditation'. 'Japji Sahib' is a term of respect.

The poem, written in old Punjabi and recorded in Gurmukhi script reads as if Guru Nanak were being spoken to by a source of enlightenment and recording his own reactions and responses to the received ideas. It is truly Guru Nanak's manifesto, for in it he avows his strong monotheism, depicting the Hindu trinity of gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) as minor deities by contrast with the life force he is called to worship. He describes all ritual, renunciation, pilgrimage and reliance on intermediaries as fruitless for one desiring the grace of this formless Creator and says that a public mantra is available to all -- the Word being simply the name of God (*Naam*). Right conduct and sincere repetition and meditation are all that are required to progress through a series of spiritual planes, to the grace of the Almighty - an Almighty who has no attributes and is thus neither good nor bad, but simply Truth (*Sat*), before whom one should have no fear -- only awe.

This translation of the Japji Sahib is by Sant Kirpal Singh. It is hoped that a bilingual reading will retain the beauty of the original Punjabi while introducing the listener to the meaning of Guru Nanak's teachings.

About the Reader:

Shauna Singh Baldwin was awarded India's International Nehru Award (Gold Medal) for Public Speaking (1973) and the Shastri Award (Silver Medal) for Journalism (1974). She is the producer of the East-Indian American radio show, *Sunno!*. She lives in Milwaukee, WI where she is working on her second book.

The Japji Sahib

Prologue

*Ek Onkar
Sat Naam
Karta Purakh
Nirbhau Nirvair
Akaal Moorat
Ajooni Saebhang
Gur Parsad
Jap
Aad Sach jugad sach
Hai bhi sach Nanak hosi bhi sach*

There is One Reality, the Unmanifest-Manifested;
Ever-Existent, He is Naam (Conscious Spirit),
The Creator, pervading all;
Without fear; without enmity
The Timeless; the Unborn and the Self Existent
Complete within Itself.
Through the favor of His true Servant, the Guru,¹
He may be realized.
He was when there was nothing
He was before all ages began;
He existeth now, O Nanak,
And shall exist forevermore.

Stanza I

*Sochay soch na hovaiyi
jai sochey lakh vaar
Chuppaee chup na hovaiyi
Jay laye raha liv taar
Bhukhiya bhukh na utri
Jai banna puriya bhaar
Sahas sianpa lakh hoiye
Kiv Koorae tutae paal
Hukam razai chalna
Nanak likhiya naal.*

One cannot comprehend Him through reason, even if one reasoned for ages;
One cannot achieve inner peace by outward silence though one sat dumb for ages
One cannot buy contentment with all the riches of the world, nor reach Him with all mental ingenuity.
How may one know the Truth and break through the cloud of falsehood?
There is a Way, O Nanak, to make His Will our own, His Will, which is already wrought in our existence.

Stanza II

*Hukmi hovan aakaar
Hukam na kahiya jayee
Hukmi hovan jee
Hukam milae vadiyaae
Hukmi uttam neech
Hukam likh dukh sukh paieh
Ik-na hukmi bakhsis
Ik hukme sada bhavae-eh
Hukme ander sabh ko
Bahir hukam na koye
Nanak hukme je bujhe
Ta homaen kahay na koye.*

All things are manifestations of his Will;²
But His Will is beyond description.
By His Will is matter quickened into life
By His Will is greatness obtained;
By His Will some are born high and others low.
By His Will are men's joys and sorrows ordained.
By His Will (the pious) obtain salvation.
By His Will (the impious) wander in endless transmigration.
All exist under His Will,
And nothing stands outside.
One attuned with His Will, O Nanak, is wholly freed from Ego.

Stanza III

*Gavay ko taan hovay kise taan
Gavay ko daat janay nesan
Gavay ko gun vadiyaia chaar
Gavay ko vidya vikham vechaar
Gavay ko saaj kare tan kheh
Gavay ko jea lai phir deh
Gavey ko jaapae disay door
Gavey ko vekhae haadra hadoor
Kathna Kathi na avae toat
Kath Kath Kathi koti kot kot
Denda De lainde thak pah
Juga jugantar khahi khah
Hukmi Hukam chalaeh raho
Nanak vigsae veparwaho.*

Some sing of His greatness, but only according to the power bestowed upon them;
Some sing of His bounties, taking them as His signs;
Some sing of Him as incomprehensible;
Some sing of Him, as transmitting dust into life and life into dust again: Creator and Destroyer, the Giver of life and its Withdrawer,
Some sing of Him as at once the nearest, and the most remote.
There is no end to His description.
Countless have tried to describe him, but He still stands beyond all description.
Ages upon ages, Man has fed upon it.
His Will directs the world;
And yet, O Nanak, He dwells beyond concern or care.

Stanza IV

*Saacha Sahib saach nae
Bhakhhiya bhao apar
Aakheh mangeh deh deh
Dat karey dataar
Pher Ke agae rakhiiae
Jit disae darbar
Muhou ke bolan boliye
Jit sun dhare piyar
Amrit vela sach nao
Vadiyae vechar
Karmi aavay kapra
Nadri Mokh duwar
Nanak aiveh janiye
Sabh aapey sachiar.*

True is the Lord, True His Holy Word;
His love has been described as infinite

Men pray to Him for gifts,
 which he grants untiringly.
 When all is His:
 What can we offer at His feet?
 What can we say to win His love?
 At the ambrosial hour, of the early dawn,
 Be you in communion with the Divine Word
 And meditate on His Glory.
 Our birth is the fruit of our actions
 But salvation comes only from His Grace.
 O Nanak, know the True One as immanent in all.

Stanza V

*Thapia na jae keeta na hoeh
 Aape aap Niranjan soeh
 Jin sevia tin paya maan
 Nanak gaviye guni nidhan
 Gaviye Suniyeh mann rakhiye bhao
 Dukh par har sukh ghar lae jaye
 Gurmukh nadang
 Gurmukh vedang
 Gurmukh rehiya samayae
 Gur Isar Gur Gorakh Barma
 Gur Parbati mayee
 Je hou jana akha nahi
 Kehna kathan na jayee
 Gura ik deh bujhayee
 Sabhna jee-a ka ik data
 So maen visser na jayee.*

He can neither be established nor created;
 The formless One is limitless, complete in Himself.
 Those who worship Him are honored
 Nanak, ever sing of the Treasure-house of all virtues.
 Let us sing of Him and hold communion with the Word, with hearts full of
 loving devotion;
 For then shall all sorrows end and we be
 led joyously Homeward.
 The Master is the Song Eternal or Word personified,
 He is the Vedas³, the scriptures;
 He is saturated with the Divine.
 He is Siva, He is Vishnu, and He is Brahma
 And their consorts Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati also.
 The greatness of the Master, even if known, cannot be described with
 mortal eloquence
 My Master has taught me one thing:
 All living beings have one father, Him I may never forget.

Stanza VI

*Teerath naava je tis bhaava
 Vin Bhaaney ke nae karee
 Jeti sirth upayee vekha
 Vin karma ke milae layee
 Mat vich ratan jawahar manik
 Je ik Gur ki sikh suni
 Gura ik deh bujhayee
 Sabhna jee-a ka ik datha
 So maen visser na jayee.*

If I may only please Him, 'tis pilgrimage enough;
 If not, nothing -- no rites or toils -- avails;
 Whichever way I look, I find that in His creation,
 None has won salvation without his grace, regardless of Karmas.
 You can discover untold spiritual riches within yourself;
 If you but abide by the teachings of your Master.
 My Master has taught me one lesson:
 All living beings have one father, Him I may never forget.

Stanza VII

*Jay jug charay aarja
 Hoar dasooni hoye
 Nava khanda vich jaaniye
 Naal chalay sabh koye
 Changa naao rakhai ke
 Jas kirat jug le
 Jay tis nadar na aavayee
 Ta vaat na puchhae ke
 Keeta under keet kar
 Dosi dos dhare
 Nanak nirgun gun karey
 Gun-vantia gun de
 Teha koe na sujhaiyee
 Jay tis gun koe karey.*

If one could extend one's life to four ages,⁴ nay make it ten times longer;
 If one were known throughout the nine planes of creation;
 And everyone therein followed him in respect;
 If every creature praised him to the sky:
 All this and more has no value if God's eye looked not kindly upon him
 Without His goodwill, he will be reckoned as the meanest worm amongst
 worms;
 And sinners shall charge him with sins.
 O Nanak, He bestows virtues on those who have none,
 And adds to the store of the virtuous.
 But there is naught that can bestow aught upon Him.

Stanza VIII

*Suniyae Sidh Peer Sur Nath
Suniyae dharat dhawal aakash
Suniyae deep loa patal
Suniyae poh na sakay kaal
Nanak bhagta sada vigas
Suniye dukh paap ka naas.*

By communion with the Word, one can attain the status of a Siddha,⁵ a Pir, a Sura, or a Nath;
By communion with the Word, one can understand the mysteries of the earth, the supporting bulls and the heavens;
By communion with the Word, the earthly regions, the heavenly plateaus and the nether worlds stand revealed;
By communion with the Word, we can escape unscathed through the portals of Death;
O Nanak, His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.

Stanza IX

*Suniyae Isser Barma Ind
Suniyae mukh salahand mand
Suniyae joeg jugat tun bhed
Suniyae Sast Simrit Ved
Nanak bhagta sada vigas
Suniyae dukh paap ka naas.*

By communion with the Word, one can attain the powers of Shiva, Brahma and Indra;
By communion with the Word, one can win esteem from all irrespective of one's past;
By communion with the Word, one can have yogic insight with the mysteries of life and self all revealed;
By communion with the Word, one can acquire the true import of the Sastras, Smritis and the Vedas,
O Nanak, his devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.

Stanza X

*Suniyae sat santokh gyan
Suniyae ath-sath ka isnan
Suniyae laagay sahad dhyand
Nanak bhagta sada vigas
Suniyae dukh paap ka naas.*

By communion with the Word, one becomes the abode of Truth,

contentment and true knowledge;
By communion with the Word, one gets the fruit of ablution at sixty-eight pilgrimages⁶;
By communion with the Word, one wins the honour of the learned;
By communion with the Word, one attains the state of *Sahaj*⁷;
O Nanak, His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.

Stanza XI

*Suniyae sara guna ke gah
Suniyae sekh peer paat-sah
Suniyae andhey pavhe rah
Suniyae haath hovae asgah
Nanak bhagta sada vigas
Suniyae dukh paap ka naas.*

By communion with the Word, one becomes the abode of all virtues;
By communion with the Word, one becomes a Sheikh, a Pir and a true spiritual king;
By communion with the Word, the spiritually blind find their way to Realisation;
By communion with the Word, one crosses beyond the Limitless Ocean of Illusionary Matter;
O Nanak, His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.

Stanza XII

*Munnae ki gat kahi na jaye
Je ko kahae pechhae pachtaye
Kagad kalam na likhan haar
Munnae ka beh karan veechar
Aisa Naam Niranjand hoye
Je ko mun janay mun koye.*

None can describe the condition of one who has made God's Will his own;
Whoever tries to do so, must realise his folly,
No supply of paper, pen or scribe can ever describe the state of such a one,
O, great is the Power of the Lord;
But few there be that know it,

Stanza XIII

*Munnae surat hovae mun budh
Munnae sagal bhavan ki sudh
Munnae muh chota na khaye
Munnae jum kae saath na jaye
Aisa Naam Niranjand hoye
Je ko mun janay mun koye.*

By practice of the Word, one rises into universal consciousness and develops right understanding;
 By practice of the Word, one develops clairvoyance and transvision of the whole creation;
 By practice of the Word, one is freed from sorrow and suffering;
 By practice of the word, one shall not go to Yama⁸ after his death.
 O, great is the power of the Word,
 But few there be that know it,

Stanza XIV

*Munnae marg thaak na paye
 Munnae pat seo pargat jaaye
 Munnae mug na challae panth
 Munnae dharam seti sambandh
 Aisa Naam Niranjan hoye
 Je ko man janay num koye.*

By practice of the Word, one speeds on to the Higher Spiritual Planes unhindered;
 By practice of the Word, one gets into the spiritual planes openly and honourably;
 By practice of the Word, one escapes the by-paths of Yama, the king of Death;
 By practice of the Word, one gets in Close touch with the Truth,
 O, great is the Power of the Word,
 But few there be that know it.

Stanza XV

*Munnae pavhe mokh-duwar
 Munnae parwarae sadhaar
 Munnae tarae tarae gur sikh
 Munnae Nanak bhave na bhikh
 Aisa Naam Niranjan hoye
 Je ko mun janay mun koye.*

By practice of the Word, one finally attains salvation;
 By practice of the Word, one leads one's kith and kin as well to freedom;
 By practice of the Word, one saves not only himself but, when he becomes an Adept, many others whom he guides;
 By practice of the Word, one freed from desires, escapes from the wheel of transmigration.
 O, Great is the Power of the Word,
 but few there be that know it.

Stanza XVI

*Panch Parvaan panch pardhaan
 Panchay pavae dargeh maan
 Panchey sohhe dur raajan*

*Pancha ka gur ek dhyan
 Je ko kahae karae veechar
 Kartay kae karnaeh nahi sumar
 Dhaur dharam daya ka poot
 Santokh thaap rakhiya jin soot
 Je ko bujhae hovae sachiya
 Dhavlae upar keta bhar
 Dharti hoar parae hoar hoar
 Tis te bhaar talae kavan joar
 Jee-a jaat ranga ke nao
 Sabhna likhiya vudee kalaam
 Eh lekha likh jaaney koye
 Lekha likhiya keta hoye
 Keta taan su-a-leh roop
 Keti daat jaanae kaun koot
 Keeta pasao eko kavao
 Tis te hoey lakh daryao
 Kudrat kavan kaha veechar
 Vaarya na jawa ek vaar
 Jo tudh bhavae sayee bhali kaar
 Tu sada salaamat Nirankaar.*

The saint (or the Word personified), is acceptable at His Court, and is the Chief Elect therein;
 The saint adorns the threshold of God and is honoured even by kings;
 The saint lives by and meditates on the One Word.
 Whoever discusses and expounds the mystery of His creation realises that the works of the Creator are beyond reckoning.
 Dharm or Word born of His Grace is the proverbial bull that is harmoniously sustaining the creation,
 Whosoever realises this verily knows the Truth.
 It is nothing but the Word, that is carrying the crushing load of the entire creation;
 For were this earth upheld by a bull, that in turn must be supported by some other planet and that by another, and so on ad infinitum.
 What a tremendous load!
 What other power could support it?
 None, but the Word.
 There is no end to the creation;
 There are countless forms of life with varied names, species and colors;
 Writ on the objective world by the Ever-flowing Pen of the Creator.
 Who can reckon His creation, and if one could, how great would be the count?
 How great is His Power and how beautiful His handiwork?
 Who can count the measure of His sweet bounty?
 With one Word of His, this vast creation blossomed into being;
 And a thousand streams (of life) sprang into existence;
 What power have I to conceive of thy wonderful nature?
 Too poor am I to make an offering of my life to Thee;
 Whatever pleaseth thee, is good,
 Thou art forevermore;

O formless One!

Stanza XVII

*Asankh jap asankh bhau
Asankh pooja asankh tap tau
Asankh granth miukh ved paath
Asankh joeg mann rahe udaas
Asankh bhagat gun gyan veechar
Asankh sati asankh datar
Asankh moan liv laye taar
Kudrat kavan kaha vechaar
Vaarya na jawa ek vaar
Jo tudh bhavae saayee bhali kaar
Tu sada salaamat Nirankar.*

Countless there are that remember Thee, and countless those that love Thee;
Countless there are that worship Thee, and countless those that seek Thee in austerity and penance;
Countless there are that recite from sacred books Thy praises; and
Countless those that, absorbed in Yoga, stand indifferent to the world;
Countless those Thy devotees who contemplate Thy attributes and wisdom;
and
Countless those that practice truth and charity;
Countless are the heroes that boldly face the foeman's steel; and
Countless those who have vowed silence, meditate on Thee with unceasing love.
What power have I to conceive of Thy wonderful nature?
Too poor am I, to make an offering of my life to Thee.
Whatever pleaseth Thee is good:
Thou art forevermore;
O Formless One.

Stanza XVIII

*Asankh moorakh andh-ghoar
Asankh choar haraam khoar
Asankh amar kar jahe joar
Asankh gal vadh hatya kamaahe
Asankh paapi paap kar jaeh
Asankh kuriar kooray phiaahe
Asankh malech mal bhakh khaah
Asankh nindak sir kareh bhaah
Nanak neech kaha vechaar
Vaarya na jawa ek vaar
Jo Tudh bhavae sayee bhali kaar
Tu sada salaamat Nirankar.*

Innumerable are the fools, stark blind in ignorance; and

Innumerable the thieves and crooks that thrive on ill-gotten gains
Innumerable those that exercise tyranny and oppression; and
Innumerable the cut-throats living by heinous crimes;
Innumerable those that revel in shameless sins; and
Innumerable the liars that practice fraud and falsehood;
Innumerable the impious that live on unwholesome foods; and
Innumerable the slanderers who add to their burden by calumniating others;
Innumerable the many for lowly Nanak to describe.
What power have I to conceive of Thy wonderful nature?
Too poor am I, to make an offering of my life to Thee.
Whatever pleaseth Thee is good:
Thou art forevermore;
O Formless One.

Stanza XIX

*Asankh nao asankh thao
Agam agam asankh loa
Asankh keh sir bhaar hoye
Akhri Naam akhri salah
Akhri likhan bolan ban
Akhra sir sanjog vakhaan
Jin eh likhe tis sir nahe
Jiv farmaye tiv tiv pahe
Jeta keeta teta nao
Vin naavae naahi ko thau
Kudrat kavan kaha vechaar
Vaarya na jawa ek vaar
Jo tudh bhavae sayee bhali kaar
Tu sada salaamat Nirankaar.*

Countless Thy names and countless Thy places;
Unapproachable and inaccessible Thy innumerable heavenly plateaux;
Even by the word countless we fail to describe Thee;
By words we describe thee and by words we praise Thee.
By words, we acquire Divine knowledge, and in words are sung Thy hymns and attributes;
It is words we employ in speech and in writing;
In them is our fate ordained;
But He who ordains is above such writ.
As Thou ordaineth, so do we receive.
Thou art immanent in all;
And nothing is where Thy Word is not.
What power have I to conceive of Thy wonderful nature?
Too poor am I, to make an offering of my life to Thee.
Whatever pleaseth Thee is good:
Thou art forevermore;
O Formless One.

Stanza XX

*Bariyae hath paer t an deh
Pani dhoatae utaras kheh
Moot pleeti kapar hoye
De saboon laiye oah dhoye
Bhariyae mat paapa kae sung
Oah dhoapae Navae kae rung
Punni paapi aakhan nah
Kar kar karna likh lae jah
Aapey beej aapey he khah
Nanak hukmi avae jah.*

When the hands, feet and the body are besmeared, they are washed clean
with water;
When the clothes get dirty and polluted, they are cleansed by soap;
When one's mind gets defiled by sin, it can be purified only by communion
with the Word.
Men do not become saints or sinners merely by words,
But they carry deeds with them wherever they go.
As one sows, so does one reap;
O Nanak, men come and go by the wheel of birth and death as ordained by
His Will.

Stanza XXI

*Teerath tap daya dat daan
Je ko pavae til ka maan
Sunya manya nun keeta bhao
Unter gat teerath mal nao
Sabh gun teyray mae nahin koye
Vin gun keetay bhagat na hoye
Su-ast aath baani barmao
Sat suhaan sada mann chau
Kavan su-wela wakhat kavan
Kavan thit kavan vaar
Kavan si ruti maah kavan
Jit hova aakaar
Vail na paya pundati
Jay hovae lekh Puran
Vakhat na paeo Qadian
Jay likhan lekh Quraan
Thit vaar na jogi jaanae
Rut maah na koyee
Ja karta sirthi ko saajay
Aapay jaanae soyee
Kiv kar aakha kiv saalahi
Kiv varni kiv jaana
Nanak aakhan sabh ko aakhae
Ik-doon ik sihana
Vada Sahib vadi nayee*

*Keeta ja ka hovae
Nanak je ko aapo jaanae
Ag-gae gaya na sohae.*

Pilgrimages, austerities, mercy, charity and alms-giving, cease to be of any
consequence, when one gets an ingress into the Til -- the Inner eye;⁹
Communion with and practice of the Holy Word, with heart full of
devotion, procures admittance into the Inner
Spiritual Realms, washing away the dirt of sins at the Sacred Fount within,
All virtues are Thine, O Lord; I possess not one,
There can be no worship without practicing the Holy Word.
From Thee has emanated the Bani or the Holy Word, which is the path to
salvation;
Thou art Truth, enchantingly sweet, and my mind yearns for Thee.
What the occasion, what the epoch, what the week, what the day;
What the season, what the hour, when Thou first came into being or
expression The "pandits",¹⁰ could not discover it, else they would have
recorded it in the Puranas;
Nor could the qazis¹¹ determine it, else it would have been in the Quran;
Nor could the "yogis", or any one else divine it.
The Creator alone knoweth the hour, when He came into manifestation,
How shall I address Thee or praise Thee, O Lord?
How shall I describe Thee or know Thee?
O Nanak, one and all speak of Thee each wiser than the rest,
Great art Thou, and greater still, is Thy Holy Word,
What It Wills, cometh to pass,
Thy greatness Thou alone knoweth,
And those, O Nanak, that claim to know the most, shall have no honor in
the life beyond.

Stanza XXII

*Paatala paatal
Lakh aagasa aagas
Oarak oarak bhaal thakay
Ved kehan ik vaat
Sehas athara kehan kateba
Asloo ik dhaat
Lekha hoey ta likhiye
Lekhey ho-ey vinaas
Nanak vadda aakhiye
Aapay jaane aap.*

There are millions of nether regions and skies above skies;
Man has wandered endlessly in His search;
The Vedas also say the same,
The Muslim books speak of eighteen thousand universes, but
it is the same Power that sustains them all:
If It could be accounted for, an account of it would have been recorded.
All attempts at description are in vain;
O Nanak, admit His greatness;

He alone knows Himself.

Stanza XXIII

*Salahi salah
Aeti srat na paaiya
Nadia atay wah
Pawah sumund na jaani-eh
Samund sah sultan
Girha seti maal dhan
Keeri tul na hovni
Je tis manno na veesreh.*

His devotees praise Him, yet never attain full knowledge of the infinite;
Like streams tumbling into the ocean, they know not the depths therein,
Even kings and emperors with heaps of wealth and vast dominion,
Compare not with an ant filled with the love of God.

Stanza XXIV

*Unt na sifti kehan na unt
Unt na karnae den na unt
Unt na vekhan sunan na unt
Unt na jaapae kiya mann munt
Unt na jaapae keeta aakar
Unt na jaapae paravaar
Unt Kaaran kaetey bil-lahe
Ta ke unt na paye jahe
Eho unt na jaanae koye
Bohtaa kahiye bohtass hoye
Vadda Sahib ucha thau
Uchay uppar uchaa nau
Ae-wad ucha hovae koye
Tis uchay ko jaanae soye
Je-wad aap jaanae aap aap
Nanak nadri karmi daat.*

Endless are His praises, endless the words of commendation;
Endless His works and endless His gifts;
Endless His vision, and endless His inspiration;
Endless and beyond understanding is His purpose;
Endless His creation and endless the ends thereof.
Endless men's search in anguish for His limits, but His limits cannot be found.
Endless He is, and none can know His end;
The more we say, the more He is.
Exalted is the lord, and exalted His abode;
More exalted still His Holy Word,
He who reaches His height,
He alone may glimpse Him.
O Nanak, He alone knows His greatness;

And it is only His glance of Grace, Can lift us to His height.

Stanza XXV

*Bohta karam likhiya na jaye
Vadda data til na tamaye
Kaetey mangeh jodh apaar
Kaytia ganat nehi vechaar
Kaetey khap tutte vekaar
Kaetey moorakh khahi khahe
Kaytia dukh bhukh sud maar
Eh bhi daat teri dataar
Band khalasi bhanae hoye
Hoar aakh na sakey koye
Jay ko khaik aakhan paye
Oh jane jetia muh khahe
Aapay jaanae aapay dey
Aakhe se-bhe keyi kay
Jis noo bakhস্য sifat salah
Nanak Paatsahi Paatshah.*

His benevolence is manifold, and none can record it;
He is the giver of all, coveting nothing in return;
Many are the warriors, who are beggars at His door,
And many more, whose number is beyond reckoning;
Many are those who, misusing His gifts, wallow in sensuality
Many who, receiving his gifts, deny him;
Many the fools who only eat and enjoy, but think not of the donor.
And many lie afflicted by hunger, misery and pain, which too are thy gifts, O Lord.
Bondage and salvation both go by Thy Will;
None else has any say therein.
If some dare claim otherwise, he shall soon have cause to repent of his temerity.
He knows all and bestows accordingly.
but few there be that realise this.
O Nanak, on whom He bestows His Gift of the Song Celestial is the king of kings.

Stanza XXVI

*Amul gun amul vapaar
Amul vapariye amul bhandaar
Amul avhe amul lae jah
Amul bhaye amula smahe
Amul dharam amul debaan
Amul tul amul parvaan
Amul bakhshish amul nesaan
Amul karam amul farmaan
Amulo amul aakhiya na jaye
Aakh aakh rahay liv laye*

*Aakhey ved paath puran
 Aakhey padhey kare vakhiyan
 Aakhey Barmay aakheh Ind
 Aakhey gopi te Govind
 Aakhey Isar aakhey Sidh
 Aakhey kaytay keetay budh
 Aakhey danav aakhey Dev
 Aakhey sur nar mun jan sev
 Kaytay aakhe aakhan pahe
 Kaytay keh keh uth uth jahe
 Aetay keetay hor kareh
 Ta aakh na sakeh kaye kay
 Je-vad bhavae te-vad hoye
 Nanak jaanae saacha soye
 Jay ko aakhae boal vigar
 Ta likhiya sir gaavara gavaar.*

Peerless are His attributes and peerless the pearls therein.
 Peerless are His dealers and priceless His wares and stores.
 Peerless are the Customers that come and priceless the goods they buy.
 Peerless is His love and peerless those that lose themselves in It.
 Peerless is His law and peerless His Court,
 Peerless His smiles of justice and peerless their measure.
 Peerless is His generosity, peerless His acceptance.
 Peerless His mercy and peerless His commands.
 How peerless! How priceless! Who can describe Him?
 His devotees singing His praises have sunk in silence,
 And so have the Vedas, the Puranas¹² and the learned.
 The Brahmas and the Indras, sing of Him,
 And the Gopis and Govinds¹³ do likewise. The Siva, and the holy Siddhas
 sing of Him,
 The mortals and the immortals all, sing His praises.
 Countless speak of Him, and
 Countless are about to make an attempt, and Countless more departed,
 while singing of Him,
 Still He remains and shall remain indescribable.
 Man can behold Him only as He reveals Himself unto him,
 O Nanak! Know Him as the only True One.
 And those that claim to understand Him,
 They are surely the most foolish of men.

Stanza XXVII

*So dar keha so ghar keha
 Jit beh sarab samalay
 Vajay Naad anek asunkha
 Kaytay vavoan-haray
 Gaaveh tuh no pauan pani baisantar
 Gaaveh Raja Dharam duwarway
 Gaveh Chit Gupt likh jaaney
 Likh likh Dharam vicharay*

*Gaaveh Isser Barma Devi
 Sohan sada sawaray
 Gaveh Ind Indasan baethay
 Devtian dar naley
 Gaaveh Sidh samadhi under
 Gaavan sadh vicharay
 Gaavan jati sati santokhi
 Gaaveh veer kararay
 Gaavan pandat parhan rakhisar
 Jug jug Veda naaley
 Gaavan mohniya man-mohan
 Surga mach pyalay
 Gaavan ratan upaye tayray
 Ath-sath teerath naalay
 Gaaveh jodh mahabal soora
 Gaaveh khani charay
 Gaaveh khand-mandal var-bhanda
 Kar Kar rakhay dharay
 Seyi Tudh no gaaveh jo tudh bhavan
 Rattay tayray bhagat rasaley
 Hoar taytay gaavan
 Se maen chit na aavan
 Nanak kiya vicharay
 Soyi soyi sada sach Sahib
 Saacha saachi nayee
 Hai bhi ho-si jay na ja-si
 Rachna jin rachayee
 Rangi rangi bhati kar kar
 Jinsi maya jin upayee
 Kar kar vekhae keeta aapna
 Jiv tis di vadiyayee
 Jo tis bhavae so yee karsi
 Hukam na karna jayee
 So Pat-Sah Saaha Pat-Sahib
 Nanak rahan rajayee.*

How wonderful Thy gate; how wonderful Thy mansion,
 From whence Thou watchest Thy Great Creation,
 Countless the instruments and the harmonies that play therein,
 Countless the measures, countless the singers, that sing thy praises.
 The Elements -- Wind, Water and Fire -- sing of Thee,
 And of Thee sing the king of Death and his recording angels
 To Thee sing the gods and goddesses whose beauty is of Thy making.
 To Thee sing Siva, Brahma and likewise Indra from his throne
 To Thee sing the Siddhas in their meditation, and the Sadhus
 in their contemplation.
 To Thee sing the ascetics, the righteous, the contented; and the heroes no
 less.
 To Thee sing the learned pundits and the rishis from age to age reciting
 from the Holy Vedas.
 To Thee sing the heartenslaving nymphs in the heaven, the earth and the

nether regions.
 To Thee sing thy jewels (saints) and the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage.
 To Thee sing the mighty warriors, the heroes of great prowess, and all
 living creatures.
 To Thee sing the earthly regions, the heavens and the universes created and
 supported by Thee.
 Those that please Thee also sing Thy praises and are saturated with Thy
 love and devotion,
 And there are countless more that sing of Thee, whom one cannot even
 remember,
 All lie beyond the ken of Nanak,
 He is and is alone the ever-existent Lord.
 He is the Truth and true is His Holy Naam,
 He is, and shall exist forevermore,
 He who created all Creations shall never depart though worlds be
 destroyed.
 He who made Nature with its many colors and many forms, looks after His
 own handiwork, as it behooves His own
 Greatness.
 He is the Supreme Master and does what He lists,
 He is the King of Kings, the Almighty Lord,
 And ours, O Nanak, is only to abide His Will.

Stanza XXVIII

*Munda Santokh saram pat jhoali
 Dhiyan ki kareh bibhoot
 Khintah kaal kuwari kaya
 Jugat danda parteet
 Aayee panthee sagal jamati
 Mannjeetae jug jeet
 Aades tisae aades
 Aad aneel anaad anahit
 Jug Jug eko ves.*

Let contentment be your ear-rings,
 And endeavor for the Divine and respect for the Higher Self be your wallet,
 And constant meditation on Him be your ashes.
 Let preparedness-for-death be your cloak,
 And let your body be like unto a chaste virgin.
 Let your Master's teachings be your supporting staff.
 The highest religion is to rise to Universal Brotherhood,
 Aye to consider all creatures your equals.
 Conquer your mind, for victory over self is victory over the world.
 Hail, Hail to Him alone,
 The Primal, Pure, Eternal, Immortal, and Immutable in all ages.

Stanza XXIX

*Bhugat gyan daya bhandarin
 Ghat Ghat vaajeh Naad
 Aap Nath nathi sabh ja ki
 Ridh sidh avra saad
 Sanjoag vijoag due kaar chalaveh
 Lekhey aaveh bhag
 Aades tisae aades
 Aad aneel anaad anahit
 Jug Jug eko ves.*

Let Divine knowledge be your Bread¹⁴.
 Let Mercy be your steward.
 Let the Divine Music Vibrating in all be your Trumpet.
 He is the only Lord and has strung Creation according to his Will.
 Wealth and supernatural Powers estrange one from the Lord.
 The World goes on the two principles of Union and Separation,
 And all receive their share, as He Ordains.
 Hail, Hail to Him alone,
 The Primal, Pure, Eternal, Immortal and Immutable in all ages.

Stanza XXX

*Eka mayee jugat viyayee
 Tin chaylay parwaan
 Ik sansari ik bhandari
 Ik laye debaan
 Jiv tis bhavae tivae chalawae
 Jiv hovae furmaan
 Oah vekhae unaa nadar na aavae
 Bohta eh vidaan
 Aades tisae aades
 Aad aneel anad anahit
 Jug Jug eko ves.*

The Great Mother, conceiving, brought forth three regents;
 The first creating, the second sustaining, and the last destroying.
 What he desires, they perform.
 They work under His Will.
 But great the Wonder, though He watches over them, they behold Him not.
 Hail, Hail to Him alone.
 The Primal, Pure, Eternal, Immortal and Immutable in all ages!

Stanza XXXI

*Aasan loe loe bhandaar
Jo kich paya so eka vaar
Kar Kar vekhae sirjan haar
Nanak sachey ki saachi kaar
Aades tisae aades
Aad aneel anaad anahit
Jug Jug eko ves.*

He resides in all the planes of creation.
And has in them His munificent stores, which were supplied only once and
need no replenishing,
Whatever we receive, we receive by His decree.
It is He who has created His creation,
And He who watches over it.
O Nanak! the works of the True One are genuine.
Hail! Hail, to Him alone,
The Primal, Pure, Eternal, Immortal and Immutable in all ages.

Stanza XXXII

*Ik-doo jeebhao lakh hoye
Lakh hoveh lakh-vees
Lakh lakh gayra aakhieh
Ek-Naam Jagdis
Ait raah pat-pauriya
Charihya hoye ikees
Sun gallaa aakaas ki
Keeta aayee rees
Nanak nadri payiyae
Koori Koorae thees.*

Let one tongue grow to a hundred thousand, nay even twenty times more,
And each of them endlessly chant His holy name.
In this way lie the steps that lead Godwards, by ascending which one
becomes one with Him.
On hearing of the Heavens, even worms aspire to reach them,
Not knowing that salvation comes only through His Grace,
And those who say otherwise, are vain babblers and liars.

Stanza XXXIII

*Aakhan joar chupae na joar
Jaoar na mangan dayan na joar
Joar na jeevan maran na joar
Joar na raaj maal nun soar
Joar na surti gyan veechar
Joar na jugti chutae sansaar
Jis hath jaoar kar vekhae soaye
Nanak uttam neech na koye.*

You have no power to speak or to be silent,
No power to ask or to give.
You have no power over life or Death
No power over wealth or state for which you are ever restless.
You have no power over spiritual awakening,
No power to know the Truth, or to achieve your own salvation.
Let him who thinks he has the power, try.
O Nanak! none is High or Low, but by His Will.

Stanza XXXIV

*Raati ruti thitee vaar
Pavan paani agnee paataal
Tis vich dharti thaap rakhee dharam saal
Tis vich jee-a jugat ke rang
Tin ke naam anek anunt
Karmi karmi hoe veechar
Sachaa aap sachaa darbaar
Tithae sohan panch parwaan
Nadri karam pavae nissan
Kach pakaye oathae paye
Nanak gaya jaapae jaye.*

Creating the day and the night, the months and the seasons,
The fire, the wind, the water and the nether regions,
Amidst all these, He set up the earth as Dharm Khand, or the arena of
action.
And He peopled it with creatures of many colors and many forms,
Creatures of whom there is no count.
All are judged according to their deeds,
For True is the Lord and immaculate His Law.
Those acceptable to Him are honored in His Court,
And it is only through His Grace that one may gain that distinction.
The imperfect are perfected there,
O Nanak! It is there that this mystery is revealed.

Stanza XXXV

*Dharam khand ke eho dharam
Gyan khand ka aakhoh karam
Kaytay pavan paani vaesantar
Kaytay Kaan Mahes
Kaytay Barmay gharat ghareeah
Roop rang ke ves
Ketia karam bhoomi mer kaytay
Kaytay dhoo updes
Kaytay Ind Chand Soor Kaytay
Kaytay mandal des
Kaytay Sidh Budh Nath kaytay
Kaytay Devi ves
Kaytay Dev Danav Muni kaytay*

*Kaytay ratan sumund
Ketia khani ketia baani
Ketey paat narind
Ketia surti sevak kaytay
Nanak unt na unt.*

Thus much of the Realm of Dharma;
And now Gian Khand the Realm of Knowledge:
Countless its elements, air, water and fire,
And countless Krishnas and Sivas,
And countless the Brahmas fashioning various creations of countless forms
and countless hues.
Countless the Fields of Action, countless the golden mountains,
And countless the Dhruv,¹⁵ meditating therein.
Countless the Indras, countless the suns and moons, and countless the
earthly and stellar regions;
Countless the Siddhas, the Buddhas, the Naths, and countless the gods and
goddesses.
Countless the Danus, and the Sages, and countless the bejewelled oceans.
Countless the sources of creation, countless the harmonies, countless those
that listen to them,
And countless the devotees of the Word,
Endless and unending, O Nanak!, this realm.

Stanza XXXVI

*Gyan Khand meh gyan parchand
Tithae naad binoad koad anand
Saram khand ke banee roop
Tithae ghaarat ghariyae bahut anoop
Ta-kiya galla kathiya na jaah
Jay ko kahae pichhae pachhtaye
Tithae ghariyae surat mat mann budh
Tithae ghariyae sura sidha ki sudh.*

Divine Knowledge illumines all in the Realm of Knowledge,
While Divine symphonies play unending music, and Joy and Bliss reign
supreme.
Next the Realm of Ecstasy, where the Word is enrapturing.
Everything created here is marvelously strange, and beyond description,
Whoever tries to describe the same must repent his folly.
Herein the mind, reason and understanding are etherealised, the self comes
to its own, and develops the penetration of the gods and sages.

Stanza XXXVII

*Karam khand ki banee joar
Tithae hoar na koyee joar*

*Tithae joadh mahabal soor
Tin maeh Ram rahiya bharpoor
Tithae Seeto Seeta mahima mahe
Ta ke roop na kathney jahe
Jin kae Ram vasae mann mahe
Tithae bhagat vasae ke lo-a
Kaey anand sachaa mann soae
Sach Khand vasae Nirankaar
Kar Kar vekhae nadar nihaal
Tithae lo-a lo-a aakaar
Jiv jiv hukam tivae tiv kaar
Vekhae vigsae kar veechaar
Nanak kathna karra saar.*

Higher still stands Karm Khand, the Realm of Grace,
Here the Word is all in all, and nothing else prevails.
Here dwell the bravest of the brave, the conquerors of the mind, filled with
the love Divine,
Here dwell devotees with devotion, incomparable as Sita's.¹⁶
Illumined with beauty ineffable,
All hearts filled with God, they live beyond the reach of death and
delusion.¹⁷
Here dwell the Bhagats or Sages drawn from all regions,
Who rejoice in the True One and live in perpetual bliss.
Sach Khand or the realm of Truth is the seat of the Formless One.
Here He creates all creations, rejoicing in creating.
Here are many regions, heavenly systems and universes,
To count which were to count the countless,
Here, out of the Formless,
The heavenly plateaux and all else come into form,
All destined to move according to His Will.
He who is blessed with this vision, rejoices in its contemplation.
But, O Nanak, such is its beauty that to try to describe it is to attempt the
impossible.

Stanza XXXVIII

*Jat pahara dheeraj suniyar
Ahran mat Ved hathiar
Bhau khala agan tap tau
Bhaanda bhau amrit tit dhaal
Ghariye Sabad sachi taksaal
Jin kau nadar karam tin kaar
Nanak nadri nadar nihai.*

Make chastity your furnace, patience your smithy,
The Master's word your anvil, and true knowledge your hammer.
Make awe of God your bellows and with it kindle the fire of austerity,
And in the crucible of love, melt the nectar Divine,
Only in such a mint, can man be cast into the Word.
But they alone who are favored by Him, can take unto this Path,

O Nanak, on whom He looks with Grace, he fills with Everlasting Peace.

Finale

*Pawan Guru paani pita
Mata dhart mahut
Divas raat do-e daayi dayia
Khelae sagal jagat
Changaiyan, Buriayan
Vaachae dharam hadoor
Karmi aapo aapni kae nerey kae dur
Jinhi Naam dhiyaiya
Gaye masakat ghaal
Nanak te mukh ujhlay
Keti chutti naal.*

Air is the master, Water the father, and the Earth the mother,
Day and Night are the two nurses in whose lap the whole world is at play.
Our actions: good and evil, will be brought before His court,
And by our own deeds, shall we move higher or be cast into the depths.
Those who have communed with the Word, their toils shall end.
And their faces shall flame with glory,
Not only shall they have salvation,
O Nanak, but many more shall find freedom with them.

Notes

1. *Guru* means a spiritual teacher -- one who has reached the highest plane in the spiritual journey, one is no longer separate from the Almighty and who has become His mouthpiece. Literally, "Guru" means a dispeller of darkness or ignorance.
2. A reference to the Hindu concept of *Karma*.
3. The Master encompasses all the attributes of the gods of the Hindu Trinity -- *Brahma* the Creator, *Vishnu* the Preserver and *Siva* the Destroyer described in the Hindu Scriptures known as the *Vedas*. The Master combines all the powers of *Parvati* the Hindu goddess of devotion, *Lakshmi*, the Hindu goddess of wealth, and *Saraswati* the Hindu goddess of learning.
4. An allusion to the Indian myth of four *yugas*, or cycles of time.
5. A *Siddha* is a man endowed with supernatural powers. (a reference to Hindu mythology). A *Pir* is a spiritual teacher (Muslim cultural allusion). A *Sura* is a Hindu god. A *Nath* is an adept in yoga. A *Dhaul* is a bull, which in Hindu mythology is supposed to be supporting the Earth and the heavens.
6. Here Nanak alludes to the Hindu belief that pilgrimage to sixty-eight holy places brings purity, and says meditation on the Word is a simpler route to spiritual cleansing.
7. *Sahaj* is defined as the state when the turmoil of the physical, astral and causal worlds are transcended and the Great Principle of Life is seen within.
8. A reference to a Hindu myth: *Yama* is the king of Death, before whom all are brought to account. Nanak says that one who practises the Word escapes *Yama* altogether, being received at the Astral World by the Master.
9. *Til*: Literally, a mustard seed. Here it is used for the ganglion between and behind the two eyes. Hindus call it the *Shiv Netra* or Third Eye, the seat of the soul in man, where the soul collects itself and is enabled to rise in the higher spiritual planes.
10. *Pandits*: learned men conversant with Hindu scriptures such as the *Vedas* and *Puranas*. By definition, of the Brahmin caste.

11. *Qazi*: A muslim learned in Islamic religious law and theology. *Quran*: The holy book of Islam.
12. *Siva*: Hindu deity. *Siddha*: disciplined souls - i.e. sages and seers.
13. *Gopi*: Literally, a milkmaid. In Hindu mythology, the mythical 'admirers' (mistresses) of Krishna, who were said to be tireless in singing his praises. *Govind*: Another name for the Hindu god, Krishna.
14. A reference to the symbolic rituals of the *yogins*, devout practitioners of yoga. When their food is ready, an angel sounds a trumpet to call them to partake. Nanak uses the analogy to call all to feast at a spiritual banquet.
15. *Dhru*: A saint proverbial for his/her steadfast meditation. *Danu*: Hindu Demigods.
16. *Sita*: The wife of the Hindu mythological hero Rama. The Hindu epic, the *Ramayan*, tells of Ram's quest to recover Sita from abduction, only to cast her out at the end on suspicion of infidelity. The story goes that Sita's devotion was not affected by his desertion.
17. The delusion of *maya*, material things.