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*1921*





THE SISTERS  
OF THE SPINNING WHEEL



*THE SISTERS*  
*of the*  
*SPINNING WHEEL*

*and other Sikh Poems*  
*Original and Translated*

By  
*PURAN SINGH*



*With an Introduction*  
by  
*ERNEST & GRACE RHYS*

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# INTRODUCTION

## I

THIS book of Puran Singh's poems is the latest offspring from a famous old root. It is founded on the *Granth Sahib*, and most of the songs that follow are in one way or another derived from that inspired book, which has sometimes been called the Sikh Bible. But as that is the youngest of the bibles, so these songs and lyrics are re-charged, we shall find, by the spirit of youth in poesy. It may be that the ideas, images and figurative expressions in these poems are often openly borrowed, and a fairly close transcript of certain passages may even at times be given. But whether the rendering be close or free, the religious emotion is always in essence the same, and it is always authentic. It runs right through the songs from beginning to end, and no reader can fail to be touched by its sincerity, grace and fervour.

English versions of the *Granth Sahib* have already been given to the public in the six volumes of Mr. M. A. Macauliffe's remarkable work on *The Sikh Religion*, and with his versions any reader who likes can compare Mr. Puran Singh's poems, and will find the comparison most interesting. In *The Sisters of the Spinning Wheel* we have a living emotional verse that conveys the ecstatic mood of the original, while it



adds a new impulse to the old one. In the other work we have a series of careful scholarly translations, faithfully rendering the Indian texts.

It was Rabindranath Tagore who carried over into the English tongue with a new power and melody the first convincing strains of Bengali poetry. Puran Singh has fortunately something of the same gift, and his music too freely naturalises itself in the English medium and makes good its accent, and one soon becomes aware of its living charm. Later, the spirit of his poetry is seen to involve a rare sense of delight in devotion, and the closer thought one brings to bear upon it the profounder its effect. All the evidences of a high spiritual ancestry are joined to the fine pageantry of the Eastern world that glows in the page.

The figured reality in this pageant carries us far, and uses vivid symbolism, to interpret the region of its imagination. The set symbol is the key to an ever widening world. The songs that open this fair region to us we may call parable, or picture, poems; and we shall find in reading them, that their mode often recalls that of other parable-makers. It was the method of many Eastern teachers; nay, was it not the method consecrated by Christ himself?

In other poems like "Simran," on the other hand, the thought, the inner ecstasy, is directly expressed without any aid to the imagination, without any ascent from the real to prepare the approach. And these we may term songs of worship.

No doubt some unevenness of workmanship was bound to result from this double method. It was at first thought it might be wiser to divide the poems



into two definite groups; but afterwards it was felt that the very irregularity lent a certain charm to the sequence: something like that which we find in a necklace of gems of different values, colours, shapes and sizes, strung on the one golden thread.

Perhaps the only serious difficulty that will be felt by the Western reader in understanding Puran Singh's book is the obscurity caused by the identification of the Guru, the earthly Master or teacher with the Almighty Father, the Guru Who is above all. The same word is often used for both. The passion of love for the Master who in himself unites God and man is expressed in a hundred ways throughout the book—most memorably in the remarkable poem, "A Turbanned Man."

This passion melts by degrees into the adoration of the Eternal One, and bound up with the worship of the spirit of God incarnate in the Guru, the Master and Teacher, is the worship of the Name of God. It is believed that an entrance into the presence and the heart of God can be made by the use of the symbol of his Name—the key, as it were, that admits us into his kingdom. This is that *NÂM*, which will be found throughout the book. *Nâm* stands both for the name of God, and for the union with God, to be attained by the devout repetition of His name. It is akin to the "calling upon God" mentioned in our own Bible. The word *Nâm* is an old Sanskrit word and is actually the same as our "name"; the Latin *nomen* and the Greek *ὄνομα* come from the same root. All through the book *Nâm*, the Name, is used as the Symbol of God, exactly as *Λόγος*, the Word, occurs in the Gospel of St. John. "And the Word was with God, and the Word



was God." In the poem called "Guru Nanak" we find it written: "It is true for us for ever, God himself cometh to man in the shape of Man who spells Him for us: this is Nâm. He is the sign and symbol."

The poem called "Nâm, the Name of the Infinite" needs to be specially studied in relation to this divine invocation. Also the poem "Guru Nanak" already mentioned, for that touches another difficulty that may affect Western readers—the passing of Spirit from one Guru or Prophet-Teacher of the Sikhs to another. This poem reminds one (though with a difference) of the Hebrew pedigree chants. It is a poetic recital of the descent of prophetic inspiration through the great leaders of the Sikh religion. So the Christian plenary inspiration, we may recall, was supposed to descend through the apostles. In the case of the Sikhs, however, the succession depended not on any direct election, but on a sort of spiritual elective fatherhood in each succeeding Guru, very much as, in our Bible, the Mantle of Elijah fell upon Elisha. Into each new Guru passed the spirit of him that was gone; each Guru in turn added to the Scriptures, if that special gift were his.

## II

Until recent years, when Mr. Macauliffe's work appeared, most of us were ignorant of the life and literature of the Sikhs. They were a people welded together by no community of blood or race, but were at first solely a religious community: afterwards a



religious and propertied community, and finally by virtue of a curious necessity a sect as military as religious. The founder of the sect was a simple village lad, called Nanak, born at Talwandi in the Lahore district of the Punjaub, A.D. 1469.

Nanak was a strange boy; he existed in the remote world of his own thought and imagination. He was the despair of his parents as many another dreaming incomprehensible child has been. He grew up surrounded by the usual picturesque beliefs and symbolic worships common to all primitive peoples in an earlier world. Almost from his cradle he seemed to take his own way. He lived, as he grew up, detached from the religious practices that went on about him. A pretty fable is told of his boyhood. He was sent out one Monday by his parents to herd some buffaloes on the plain, and he lay down under the shadow of a tree and soon became lost in his own thoughts. The herd wandered away: he never moved. In the late afternoon the villagers came out to look for him; and there he lay, reflecting silently: but behold the tree still cast its morning shadow over the young saint's head. It had never moved with the moving sun.

Whether the shadow moved or not is quite immaterial. The true miracle was the young lad's thought beneath the tree. He had to think himself out of ignorance, out of idol-worship and sacrifice, out of bigotry and prejudice, out of the stony prison of caste, out of every chain ever forged by his fellow men to enslave the mind. In the end, he achieved a perfect freedom. He discovered for himself the religion of love, of union with the spirit of God; the universal religion which is



being slowly welded together out of the chaos of men's diverse imaginings. Nanak's religion, framed in utter loneliness, face to face with the God in nature and the God in his own soul, is the religion of many Western thinkers to-day because it realises the central truth that is at the basis of all religion.

The village of Talwandi was surrounded by forests; Nanak who was already a poet passed much of his time there. After various unsuccessful attempts to earn his own living, he went as storekeeper to the governor of Sultanpur. To the astonishment of everyone he proved to be a jewel among store-keepers. He rose before dawn, bathed and prayed, and came like a fresh spirit of grace to weigh out salt and seed and tummeric and pepper. In justice and courtesy he was the same to rich and poor. He lived sparingly and all the money he received he gave to those who were in want. Mardana the rebeck-player came to him out of Talwandi: and when Mardana played one of the thirty-one measures Nanak would sing to it one of his own songs full of wisdom and strange meaning. Such a store-keeper never was and all men spoke well of him and depended upon him. But the saints are incalculable folk: one day Nanak disappeared into the forest. There during three days and nights he had a new and deeper vision of God; when he came forth again his store-keeping was over. Henceforth he was to be a dealer in the lives of men, the founder not only of a religion but of a people. With Mardana he wandered through India chanting his strange new songs to the old measures of Indian music. Carried on the familiar sounds and rhythms, the new meanings glided into



the understandings of the people and captured them before they were aware.

His chief message was the joy of pure union with the spirit of God. His second was the equality of all men and women before God. He preached universal brotherhood; he often reminds one of Walt Whitman in his feeling for the greatness of the people, and at times by the very rhythm of his prophetic verse. But it was no free people to whom Nanak addressed himself. Not even in the Byzantine Empire were the partitions of caste as strong as in India, where like iron walls they divided the different classes. With deed and piercing word Nanak attacked these powerful Taboos.

On coming to Saiyidhpur he went to stay in the house of a just man, a carpenter called Lalo. People cried out upon him because Lalo was of lower caste than his. Nanak took no notice and continued to eat with Lalo instead of in a separate place by himself. Soon after a rich and powerful man, Malik, gave a great feast; Nanak refused to go. Malik ordered him to be brought before him and reproved him for his double offence. Nanak then asked Malik for a piece of his bread and sent Lalo for a piece of his. Nanak then took a piece of Lalo's coarse bread in his right hand and a piece of Malik's fine white bread in his left. He squeezed them both. From Lalo's bread there issued milk, from Malik's came forth blood; the interpretation of which is that Nanak pronounced the bread of the carpenter pure, that of the rich man stained by oppression and cruelty. So fearless was Nanak! Small wonder that his Sikhs for hundreds of years have proved themselves bravest of the brave. But no valour in battle can equal the



courage of Nanak when he refused to sit and eat unclean bread at the rich man's table.

On another day he attacked the pride of caste shown by the Brahmans. When a Brahman wants to eat he draws a square upon the ground and makes his cooking place within the lines, and thus comfortably entrenched eats his meal. Wanting some lighted brands for his own cooking, Nanak stepped within a Brahman's cooking square and helped himself. The Brahman loudly objected and complained that Nanak had defiled his food. Nanak, who knew what sort of man the Brahman was, answered that it had already been defiled. And he spoke these lines:

Evil mindedness is a low woman, cruelty a butcher's wife, a  
slandrous heart a sweeper woman, wrath which ruineth  
the world, a pariah woman.

What availeth thee to have drawn the lines of thy cooking  
place when these four are seated within at the meal with  
thee?

Nanak was an artist as well as a reformer. His weapon was verse of terrible force, delightfully chanted to familiar rhythms that lived in the people's ears. Many oddly invented miracles are recounted of him, but what miracle could be more astonishing than the immortalising of that Brahman and the four terrible guests within his sanctimonious cooking-square by the peasant boy from the forest land of Talwandi?

Although he knew how to be severe he was seldom so. He had a charming way with him, and learnt how to turn men from their hardest purposes and make them his reverent disciples. As an illustration of this method one might tell of the very rich Duni Chand who asked the Guru to his house and treated him with much



affection. Nanak noticed that the house was stuck over with flags, and when he inquired what they might mean he was told that each flag stood for a lakh of rupees that the master had gained. Nanak then politely handed Duni a needle and bade him keep it until he asked for it in the next world. The foolish Duni took the needle to his wife and told her to put it by. "How can a needle enter the next world, said she. "Go and return it to the Guru." Duni Chand carried his wife's message to the Guru, who said: "If such a small and light thing as a needle cannot go to the next world, how can thy wealth reach there?" Duni Chand fell at his feet and prayed to know how his wealth might accompany him. Nanak answered, "Give some of it in God's name, feed the poor and that portion shall accompany thee."

After this Duni became his disciple and learned of him.

In common with all the great Saints of the Celtic and other Churches we find in Nanak a passionate love for nature and the open sky. When asked by the Brahmans to worship in their magnificent temple, Nanak composed one of his noblest poems by way of answer. Here are two verses of it:

The sun and moon, O Lord, are Thy lamps, the firmament Thy  
salver; the orbs of the stars the pearls enchased in it;  
The perfume of the sandal is Thine incense; the wind is Thy  
fan; all the forests are Thy flowers, O Lord of Light.

Puran Singh's version of this poem will be found on a later page.

It is a poem much venerated in the original and often translated. It is, however, as difficult to translate as one of Heine's lyrics, or a mediæval Welsh ode. For the



benefit of those who care to study this famous poem more closely let us add that in the temple of Vishnu or Jugannath lamps were lit for the evening worship, and offerings made on salvers studded with pearls. Flowers and incense were placed on the salvers, fans were used to make the incense burn. The whole ceremonial was gorgeous, but Nanak worshipped best under the open sky.

Nanak was strangely gifted: there can be no doubt that in addition to the powerful brain, the warm heart, the poet's tongue, and the many spiritual gifts which were his, the hypnotic faculty was added as well. Numberless miracles grew up about his personality: among them are indisputable facts, natural miracles that could only have been brought about by powers of unusual quality.

He foretold the coming of the terrible *Babar* who laid waste the north of India; and more especially the destruction of Sayidhpur.

Bringing a wedding procession of sin, Babar hath hasted from  
Kabul and demandeth wealth as his bride.

Soon afterwards Babar took and destroyed the city of Saiyidhpur where Nanak was staying. All the country far and wide was devastated and the people, both Hindu and Mussulman, were massacred. Nanak was imprisoned at first and then set to carrying loads as a slave. One day when carrying a bundle on his head, he met his disciple Mardana, now serving his new masters as groom and leading a horse. They walked together a little way and then there passed by a little company of women, slaves of the conquerors, weeping and wailing aloud in their misery. Mardana asked his master what ailed



them. "Take your rebeck and play a tune for me," said the Master, "and I will sing to you the meaning of their woe."

"I cannot play the rebeck," said Mardana, "for I must use both my hands to hold this horse." "Say the Glory to God; let go the bridle and play," said the Master. Mardana obeyed, and the horse followed of its own will behind while the master sang to the rebeck the famous lament:

They who wore beautiful tresses and the partings of whose  
hair were touched with vermilion,  
Have their locks now shorn with the scissors: dust is thrown  
upon their heads,  
Now chains are on their necks and broken are their strings of  
pearls.

One of the terrible Babar's officers saw the two as they went along, making music while the horse followed behind. Above Nanak's head hung his burden suspended in the air. When the emperor heard of this strange spectacle he said that had he known that such holy men lived in the city he would not have destroyed it. In the end he bowed himself before Nanak the slave and granted him the lives of his captives and clothed them in robes of honour. Such are the undoubted miracles worked by the saint. Only the floating bundle appears apocryphal, though it should be said such strange appearances can be produced in India to-day by magicians who have that particular faculty.

Nanak had a noble conception of women and stood as their defenders against the contempt so often poured upon them by weaker men. He was especially a liberator. The Brahmans forbade the instruction of all women



and of men of low caste in their Scriptures. Religion was for the ruling male alone. In the words of Guru Amar Das: "Guru Nanak composed his hymns in the language of the people and wrote them in the ordinary characters so that men and women of all castes and classes might read and understand them."

Natural and simple in all things, the Sikh religion allowed marriage; most of the Gurus had one wife or none. The veiling and immuring of women was strictly forbidden by them. A Guru was once visited by the emperor's wives: only one, the youngest, kept her face veiled. "Mad Lady," said the Guru, "If thou likest not the Guru's face wherefore art thou come hither to gaze upon him?" And the young woman immediately became mad and ran to the forest casting away her raiment, till presently healed by the Guru. Nowhere is it suggested in the Sikh scriptures that a woman's God is her husband. On the contrary the Gurus directed the woman's thoughts upward to the worship of the one true God. It is told of Guru Teg Bahadur that knowing that a Matron of Dhaka had long earnestly desired to see him, he set out alone to her house. He called to her from outside and she was overjoyed and ran to meet him and prostrated herself at his feet. Then she led him in, seated him on a beautiful couch she had prepared, dressed him in cloth spun and woven by herself, and gave him a fine meal prepared by her own hands. The Guru told her to ask a favour; she answered that all she wished was to remain ever near him. He answered that she might behold him whenever, after bathing, she deeply meditated on God, directed her love to His lotus feet and repeated His



true name. There is a difference in this point between the atmosphere of the *Granth Sahib* and that of Puran Singh's book. The emotions are softer and more sensuous in the latter, the flavour of the poems is more Eastern, less modern.

Nanak laid great stress upon one point, upon which most of us, to-day, are in agreement. "Whoever," says he, "a watch before day, bathes in cold water and repeats God's name with love and devotion, shall receive nectar at God's door and be blended with him who is unborn and self-existent."

Of caste he says:

I have reduced my mind to the caste of fire and wind.

A most memorable saying.

Of the troubles of the world he says:

There are continual showers, squalls and threats; hundreds of thousands of waves succeed one another,  
Address the True God and there shall be no fear that thy boat shall go down.

He also says:

Abide pure among the impurities of this world—so shalt thou find the way of religion.

A pious priest of Lahore brought Arjan a poem abusing women which began:

Look thou not on woman even though she be cut out of paper,

to be included in the *Granth Sahib*. Arjan refused it, saying Nanak had said home life was the best of all.

The end of Guru Nanak was in keeping with his life. When it was known that he must die, he appointed Guru Angad as his successor. He continued to teach



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his simple and profound lessons to the crowds who visited him. His Mussulman followers begged for leave to bury him; his Hindus wanted to cremate him. The Guru said, "Let the Hindus place flowers on my right, and the Mussulmans on my left. They whose flowers are found fresh in the morning may do what they will with my body."

Then the Master told them to sing the noble psalm which ends:

Remember the Caller: the day is approaching

—and then the couplet:

They who have pondered on the Name of God and departed  
after the completion of their toil  
Shall have their countenances made bright; how many shall  
be set free in company with them!

The Master then drew the sheet over his head, uttered the "Glory to God" and made obeisance to Him and blended his light with Guru Angad's.

When the sheet was lifted next morning there was nothing found beneath it. The flowers on both sides were in bloom.

Such was the founder of the Sikh religion and such the manner of its founding. There were in all ten prophets in this strange dynasty. The first three teachers were quietists; men who were lovers of God and lovers of freedom—Nanak, Angad, and Amar Das.

Guru Angad was the beloved disciple of Nanak. When Guru Nanak died so great was Angad's grief that he went and lived alone in a little hut for six months. When his Sikhs came to find him, his love and his



sorrow got the better of his piety and he repeated aloud the following slōk, or couplet:

Die before the dear one thou lovest  
To live after him in the world is a curse to life.

He then took his seat as Guru among the people and taught and explained Nanak's hymns. He used the changing play of the life about him as material for his teaching. When watching the children at play he would tell his Sikhs they should be as pure and simple in heart as children, and then would they be dear to their Creator. He used sometimes to watch the wrestling matches in the early afternoons and there he would talk to the lookers-on, telling them how they might overcome anger and other deadly sins.

Presently a disciple came to him upon whom the mantle of the leadership of the Sikhs was to descend. This was Amar Das, born in the year 1479. He was a youth of gentle mind, who had a natural insight into the truth of things, and found himself therefore lonely in life; he longed for a religious teaching to fit his particular need, but could find no saint to his mind. "How can the lotus bloom without sight of the sun," he asked, "and how can a man get salvation without a teacher?" He was sunk more and more in sadness when one morning early he heard a sweet voice sing a beautiful chant. This was the voice of Guru Angad's young daughter who had lately married Amar Das's nephew. This girl used to get up a watch before daybreak, bathe, chant the hymns of Guru Nanak, and then make butter for the family. Heavenly butter it must have been, made by so sweet a saint.

Amar Das went to the girl and asked her to sing her



song again. She did so and then taught it him, telling him of her father Angad and of Guru Nanak and his faith. Presently the two set out together to find Angad and on seeing him Amar Das fell at his feet.

Guru Angad set himself to destroy superstition in Amar Das. He taught him, for this reason, to eat meat when it was set before him. "If you think of it," said the Guru, "there is life in everything, even in fruits and flowers. Whatever you eat, eat remembering God and it shall be profitable to you. Whatever comes to you without hurting a fellow creature is nectar: whatever you receive by giving pain is poison." When Amar Das showed irritation with an impostor, the Guru rebuked him, saying—"Thou shouldst have endurance like the earth, steadfastness in trouble and in happiness like a mountain. Thou shouldst be humble, for the humble shall ever be exalted. Behold how precious even the smallest diamonds are. The pearl is small, but consider its price," meaning thereby that even the humblest saint has a certain exquisite quality.

With the fourth teacher, Ram Das, a change began to creep in. The Sikhs had increased in numbers; they were beginning to group themselves together; to become a people. Ram Das founded the Golden Temple of Amritsar. He planned out the Sacred Bathing Pool from whose waters Amritsar (Essence of Nectar) takes its name.

Under Ram Das the Sikhs were become a people possessing property and an organisation. The quality of their profession of religion began now to be subtly altered. Under Guru Arjan, the Tank and the Temple of Amritsar were finished. So terribly had the Sikhs



to labour over this work that it is said that when Arjan saw the state of their bodies he fairly wept. Arjan was a poet and a mystic. He had a creative mind: by him and for him the *Granth Sahib* was compiled and all the scattered songs and sayings of the Gurus were written down. He was bold also and independent: therefore he was to discover some of the disabilities that attach to the gathering and keeping of property.

Jealousy and covetousness brought him enemies who used the power of the Emperor Jahanjir against him. He was ordered to pay a fine, which he refused to do, saying all his money was for the service of the poor. An attack was also made upon him by the religious, among both Hindus and the Mohammedans, because of the unorthodoxy of the *Granth Sahib*. They worked to inflame the mind of the emperor against him and he was ordered to alter or erase certain hymns, as well as to pay the fine. He was put to the torture. He bore the torture of burning and boiling water and the hot cauldron with unfailing firmness. One of the last poems he recited was as follows:

Dear God, merciful, joyous;  
Deep, profound, endless, sustainer of the earth;  
Lofty unfathomable eternal Lord,  
I live by remembering Thee.

His dying counsels which he bade the Sikhs carry to his son and successor Har Gobind were significant: *Let him sit armed on his throne and keep up an army as best he can.*

Accordingly while the first four Gurus or prophets of the Sikhs are represented as peaceful men, bearded and comely, sitting upon cushions with adoring disciples



about them, Har Gobind is drawn as a warrior, seated on his battle steed, a sword by his side. After the year 1606, being that of Arjan's martyrdom, the Sikh religion became subtly altered from its ancient direction. The Sikhs had found (what is ever the case all over the world, among animals as well as among men) that property of every kind must be defended by armed force.

Even the existence of a book like the *Granth Sahib* was an offence to those that thought differently. Exactly as the inoffensive Armenians were a prey to the Turks, so were Arjan and his people a mark for their armed neighbours. Therefore Har Gobind became a fighting man. He showed himself a chivalrous leader; much after the fashion of our Christian knights who knew mercy but never fear. Under Har Gobind and his successors, the Sikhs grew in number and power. Under Teg Bahadur, the ninth prophet and leader of the Sikhs, the question of resistance to oppression became more acute.

It was from the West that the oppressors of India came in ever succeeding floods. The Moslems that pressed upon Europe from the East, poured back over India from Syria and Gabul and Kandahar. Cruel as were these Moslems to the Christians, they were far worse to the Hindus, whose idols they abhorred. From Shahab-ul-Din (A.D. 1170) to Aurungzeb (1680) it is one tale of woe. Hundreds of gorgeous Hindu temples were razed to the ground. Massacres were common, gold, silver, and jewels were robbed systematically. One emperor had twenty thousand Hindu maidens in his harem. Probably the most striking example of



religious intolerance in the history of the human race was the method adopted by the Emperor Firoz Shah. When he destroyed the city of Bhilsa he razed all the Hindu temples to the ground, carried away their idols and had them placed in front of his fort where every day they were bathed in the blood of a thousand Hindus. The emperors had no objection to the religion of the Sikhs but they could not tolerate their brave and independent bearing. Under the Emperor Babar, Nanak was enslaved. Now, under Teg Bahadur, a terrible enemy to the Sikhs had newly arisen in the person of the Emperor Aurungzeb, who determined to convert all men within his reach to Islamism. Torture, robbery and murder, the usual methods of the tyrant, were freely resorted to. It was borne in upon Bahadur, by the operation of some secret wisdom, that through his own martyrdom, freedom of religion and the lives of many martyrs might be saved. This wisdom came to him as follows.

Messengers came imploring help against Aurungzeb. For some time Teg Bahadur sat in silence and pondered. His beloved son Gobind (afterwards the last Guru) was playing in the hall and seeing his father sad went to him and said "Father dear, why sittest thou silent to-day?"

The Guru seated his dear child near him and said, "My son, thou knowest nothing yet. Thou art still a child. The world is grieved by the oppression of the Turks. No brave man is now to be found. He who is willing to sacrifice his life shall free the earth from the burden of the Mohammedans."

Then the child, upon whom there rested already the



signs of leadership, answered, "For that purpose who is more worthy than thou, who art at once generous and brave?"

"When Guru Teg Bahadur heard this from his child's lips he divined everything that was to follow." This "everything" included his own surrender to Aurungzeb, his martyrdom, and his death which followed in due course.

So did the ninth teacher of the Sikh religion solve the problem which is still being set before us thinking beings—in what manner and to what extremity are aggression and violence to be resented? Let it be remarked that the two Sikh leaders who suffered torture and death, both approved in their last hours the fighting qualities of their sons.

Govind Singh, tenth and last Guru, appears in his picture as the most gorgeous cavalier imaginable. His charger prances the air in embroidered saddle cloth and splendidly designed caparison of gold. The Guru himself has an embroidered kilt and intricately adorned apparel. He wears a long black beard, carries bow and spear and scimitar, and his head is surrounded by a huge halo of solid and handsome workmanship:—beauty, splendour, wealth, saintship and war, all included in one.

A master saint of the Hindus on meeting and talking to Guru Gobindh remarked that he had the outward appearance of a lion, but that he was inwardly a saint. The Guru explained that his warlike appearance had been assumed to put fear on the Turks who had inflicted great misery and hardship on his country. A Moham-medan soldier described Gobind Singh to the emperor



at this time as “a young handsome man, a living saint, the father of his people, and in war equal to a hundred thousand men.”

When war was made by the hill-chiefs on the Sikhs, Gobind made a mighty drum, whose voice was heard in every corner of the hills; he rallied his men and led them out to victory.

After this defeat of the hill tribes it happened that some wandering actors visited the emperor's court. He ordered them to produce a Sikh play, which they did, in a poor way. But the emperor, who was not wanting in wit, gathered from it that the Sikhs loved each other much; and they seemed to him dangerous as being united by no common bond; so he determined they must be crushed. Thus it was that it became more and more necessary to rouse all the manly qualities of the Sikhs. The Brotherhood of Lions was indeed becoming formidable. One great scene is described when Gobind called his people together, having first ordered that five goats should be tied within an enclosed space near by. Then he stood up before the people and cried out in a great voice: “If there be any true Sikh of mine let him give me his head as an offering and proof of his faith.” One Daya Ram rose and said: “O True King, take my head”; the Guru led him within the enclosure and gave him a seat. Then he slew a goat and going to the people again cried out for a head. So he did till he had found five devoted ones, whom he led out and showed to the people. He said to them, “The Khalsa can now only be maintained as a nation by bravery and skill in arms. Therefore I now institute the custom of baptism by water stirred with a dagger and change my followers from Sikhs to Singhs or lions.”



## III

After this the Sikhs became more warriors than saints. It is true that Guru Gobind bade a Sikh woman cast a sweetmeat in the cauldron which he stirred with his dagger, signifying thereby the sweetness of women. Yet the difference may be felt between his contributions to the *Granth Sahib* and those of his predecessors. He became more like the Mohammedans and he and his bards began to write like them; as for instance: "Blest is his life in this world who repeateth God's name with his mouth and meditateth war in his heart."

So does Mars ever contrive to muddle the understanding of his sons. Yet it is impossible to deny Govindh a certain greatness of mind; it is felt in two lines from his famous letter to the tyrant Aurungzeb:

I am the destroyer of the turbulent hill-men.

Since they are idolaters and I am a breaker of idols.

This is the very voice and temper of the Iconoclasts of the Byzantine Empire.

As a fighting man his qualities were superb. An Iliad might be written of his vast struggle with a far superior force. He had the chivalrous gallantry of a Hector as well as the wisdom of a Ulysses. No tale of Trojan women is more moving than that of his noble wife and her four sons, heroes true to the quality of sire and grandsire,—not fearing, in their childhood to face an emperor and to speak the truth, with death before them. The successive deaths of all four were foreseen by their mother: having seen two perish and the remaining two being sent for by the emperor she



asked permission of her lord to quit her life, since she could be of no more use. Seeing that he too must leave her he gave his consent and she suspended her breath and passed away. Gobindh, indomitable, still battled on till the year 1708, when he died of his wounds which, but half-healed, burst open as he tried his strength on a mighty bow. He died like the lion he was and with his last strength left the beloved Book, the *Guru Granth* to his followers as his successors. He left the military power of the Sikhs strengthened and enlarged as the result of his noble personality and dauntless struggles.

One cannot think of the Sikh militant idea, especially after a terrible world-war, without trying to discover in Indian religion traces of the same belief in a deliverance of a chosen people by the sword. In the Vishmi-sûtra, a series of glosses and comments on the sacred laws, are to be found many passages that bear upon the recognition of the militant idea as inherent in the law. In the pages that expound the duties of a king, we are told that "six measures" of a military ruler are: making war, gaining allies, going to battle, encamping, securing the aid of a king yet more powerful, and marshalling his armies. There is no higher duty for men of the military caste, we read again, than to risk their life in battle. And then, for the necessary elements of a state they are seven: the king, the king's council, his fortress, his treasure, his army, his realm, and his royal ally. Again,—the attack of his enemies must be countered by force of arms. These and the like clauses and legal articles would be enough to show in themselves a rooted belief in the fighting powers, the militant



economy of states, and the military instinct of men. Not only that, the idea is implicit in the account of the Hell torments of the survivors and criminals, whose violent crimes are to be punished by violence. They are to be scorched by flames, sawn asunder, their backs, shoulders and heads fractured, their bodies hung with snakes, or shot through like St. Sebastian with sheafs of arrows and thorn-scored, and ground, cut and hacked to pieces.

It may be said that in the enumeration of the saving virtues, there is no account in Vishnu-sûtra of those of a martial kind—physical courage, prowess in arms, and the male energy. But the fighting instinct is recognised throughout its pages openly or figuratively; and at the close, when Laks'mi speaks to the goddess of earth she begins by saying:

Always am I at the side of the Destroying One, Vishnu, the  
shining slayer of Madhu, O Goddess, who shinest like  
gold!

The sense of warfare is often present in Indian religion; and the Sikh apotheosis of the fighting genius of its men empowered to save their people, is not a break with tradition. With the Sikhs, too, the cult of the sword is another expression of the struggle for a pure and free religion held by the morally brave: Nanak's conception of religion was not one for slaves. It bred freedom and truth; under the yoke of Islam there was no place for the free.

The temper of the Sikh religion was in sympathy with the more liberated Western mind. There was a universality in the ground of Sikh thought that attracted them to all who possessed the rudiments of clear and



devout thought. It was this quality of honesty and valour that brought them into sympathy with the English mind. The same universality of thought, the same purity of aspiration, belongs to the latest poet of the race whose work is destined to be almost as well understood in the West as in the East.

## IV

From time out of memory there have lived in India saints and thinkers who have been discontented with ritual and idol worship, and have thought their independent way to the worship of the pure spirit of God. These men were forerunners of the great Nanak; they are called the Bhagats, or lovers—perhaps the Devoted Ones would be a truer title; and among these Devoted we think Puran Singh should be numbered. They were, some of them, Mohammedans and some Hindus; a few of the hymns written by these early saints are given in the *Guru Granth*. In a poem expressing the grief of the soul when shut out from the confidence of God occur the lines on which Puran Singh has built the first poem in his book:

O black Koël, why art thou black?

THE KOËL. I have been burnt by separation from my Beloved:

Can she who is separated from her Beloved ever be happy?

Jaidev was perhaps the most interesting of those who are represented in the *Guru Granth*. He lived in the twelfth century. The king of Bengal (who must have been a cultivated person himself) wrote a one-line



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epitaph on Jaidev which was engraved on a monument to the memory of four poets. "Jaidev alone knoweth purity of style." He was an accomplished scholar; but so great was his love for the pure contemplative life that at last he denied himself pen, ink and paper. He would not sleep for two nights together under the same tree for fear he might attach himself to it and forget his Creator. At last a beautiful young wife mysteriously presented herself to him: for some time he refused her but at last was reconciled to her presence. He built a cottage for her and settled down to write poetry. He produced the poem called the *Gitgovind* which has been translated by both Sir William Jones and Sir Edwin Arnold. An astonishing proof of its poetical quality is to be got from this charming story: a gardener's daughter was one day gathering egg-plants near the temple of Juganath, Lord of the World; as she gathered she sang the following verse from the fifth canto of the poem:

The zephyr gently blows on the banks of the Yamuna while  
Krishna tarries in the grove.

The great idol came forth from his temple and followed the maiden wherever she went that he might listen to her song; and not without damage to his clothes, for he wore only a thin tunic which was torn by the branches. Next morning when the rajah visited the temple, he saw the state of the idol's dress. On asking the cause and being told of the idol's delight in the poetry of Jaidev the rajah issued an edict that the *Gitgovind* must only be recited in a clean and orderly place as the Lord of the World was in the habit of listening to it, and his clothes must be preserved



from damage. So much does Indian tradition honour the sweet singers of the race. Delightful country, when even the kings have a sense of style, where the gardeners' daughters sing poems, and the very idols are re-animated by numbers whose only magic is the magic of art!

It would seem that a great living stream of tradition, continually refreshed by small, clear, mountain-born brooks, flowed in Indian poetry, and was never left long without its new tributary. More than that, in reading the hymns and poems of the Sikhs one is led to think that the maintainers of it in each new period were under a kind of law that ruled their minds and bade them be tireless in the effort to continue the lyric stream and give it free outlet. This mingling of individual impulse with a collective tradition is seen in our Western poetry too, but not working to-day in the same way. What strikes one in the individual poet who succeeds to the lyric line, and devotes himself to the art of worthily continuing it, is his trustfulness, his almost child-like faith, in devoting his faculties to the task. He is like the child Arjan (in a story that is told in the life of Guru Amar Das), who three times put his hand into the Guru's sacred plate of food, and by that innocent persistence, won his right to the great succession, and became, as Amar Das put it, "heir to the plate." Or, he is like Jetha, Arjan's father, who had more than a touch of the same persistence. He built up and destroyed, to the seventh time, a little stage or platform on which the master should sit, working away at it and then unbuilding to build it again yet more perfectly, until the final test of his service was fulfilled. It is that very discharge from the



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vanity of the half-artist, who is so often eager only to be praised quickly and to gain applause, which strikes one in the Indian poets. Their clear spirit enabled them to become channels of the heaven-sent, clear flowing water of the true tradition; and that is the responsive and open-minded lyric spirit we find in the songs of Puran Singh.

### V

The story of the poet himself remains to be given, and this can be done, fortunately, in his own words, drawn from an autobiography-in-little which he sent to the present writers:

“ Ever since I was a boy,” he wrote, “ these Punjabi lyrics have been haunting me, I have spent days and days in their pure delight. There are moments when in deep association with their song, I feel irresistibly bound to go sharing my joy with others. In my younger days I embraced rocks and trees as I went, and cried for what I knew not.

“ I was born in 1881, in a village near Abbottabad (North Western Province Frontier). Our family has never been what they call rich, but we have always been happy in the wealth of feeling that came to us in abundance from our ancestors, especially from my mother’s side. My father, being a subordinate Government official, had to roam for most of the year in the frontier hills, inspecting crops and land-records; and we lived with our mother, mostly in the hill villages. Our mother did everything for us. She cooked for us, washed our clothes, took us to the hill streams and gave us a daily plunge in the crystal, biting cold water.



She took us to the village Sikh temple, made us listen to the hymns of the Guru every morning, and generally in the afternoon we all sat listening to the recital of the lines of the great teacher by the village priest. At night, all alone, we sat together round the fire as my mother and elder sister sat before their spinning-wheels, preparing thread for getting some cloth woven by the village weaver for the family. As you see, for most of the time, mother lived alone. She was by our side, but God alone was by her. She was equally unafraid of thieves and evil spirits: her courage was extraordinary. The whole village respected her. As you know, that part of the country is full of Pathâns, and even they admired my mother for her heroic spirit. Under these circumstances father came to us after long intervals, as a sudden delight of Heaven, which we childreu expressed by running aimlessly about, shouting: ‘Oh! father has come! father has come!’ We went and embraced him, then began clinging round the neck of a gentle fine mare he had, and gave him in every way a royal welcome home.

“He just made enough to make the two ends meet for the Indian village life which used to be so cheap in those old days. But we knew nothing of this. Our mother brought us up like little princes. We had ‘velvet coats’<sup>1</sup> and occasionally good English shoes to wear. She thus added to our mind from our infancy a divine richness which never attached any value to wealth, property, or any form of mere possession of things. Our house was always open to poor people, and whoever came to

<sup>1</sup> The children of India have velvet coats for winter ; but only rich people as a rule manage to get them for their children.



beg of my mother for a suit of clothes or a little money had it. No one was sent away from our door without being given a share of whatever we could give.

“My mother was known for her generosity and courage. She would serve her relatives for months, and on occasion nurse the sick and the wounded with her own hand day and night, single-handed and untiring. If she thought a certain thing was good and must be done she did it, in spite of the whole world’s opposition.

As for the outer environment of my childhood, the Pathan was there, with his love of death and danger, his untamed freedom of soul, and the quaint moral code which he faithfully followed, looking at me, taking me on his knees, and telling me his folk tales. The weird hill surroundings of Gandhârâ and Kagân, the daily baths in the crystalline waters of ever singing hill-streams, the solitude of night, the innocence of the day, filled us, girl and boy, with the elementary joys of life. I grew up like a little ‘Pathân’ child with a Hindu mind, that learnt the Song of the Guru in its cradle; and in my younger days looked just like a Pathan.

“Mother wished to give me a good education. We had no good teaching, it is true; but whatever could be had, she gave. In spite of lack of funds, she willed it, and put me to school. She left the hills and villages and came to live at Rawalpindi, then a little town, now a very large cantonment. I was not a very diligent student, but one who had the knack of keeping his teacher impressed and of getting through exams. with ease. I never put my heart into what I studied, only minding the joys of life as it kept on changing from day to day in me. In these days, again,



though we were living in the city of our relatives, we were alone with our mother, as our ways were not quite in harmony with the sense of cities.

My mother used to go to bed early; she felt so tired after the day's incessant toil, while I went through my books. I still remember the lonely midnights; the earthen-lamp, and the midnight call of my mother to leave my books and go to bed. But then I only poured more oil into my lamp and took a new wick to complete my lessons. I passed the entrance examination which meant that I could get into a college for my 'higher' education. Then I had to leave my mother, for I had to go to Lahore. This tore me from the home associations so dear to me and deprived me of my mother's immediate care. At Lahore, while in the college, I constantly thought of my mother, how she toiled for us day and night, and how she gave us all a beautiful independence of mind by her own self-sacrifice and constant thought of us. Removed as I was from her to a little distance, she shone before me more than those distant diamond peaks of the high hills which I had left behind. One thing more I now see I got from my mother, a wonderful elasticity of mind. Naturally optimistic and strong in her faith, she took no time to return to herself when disturbed by any unpleasantness. She got reconciled to everything quickly again, as if she knew 'God is in Heaven and all is well.'

"While not yet a graduate, I got an open scholarship to go to Japan for study. Mother was against my going away from her, but I persuaded her, and so without much thinking, left for Japan. It was in



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1900. I was in the Tokyo Imperial University studying applied chemistry for more than three years, and learning a good deal of the industrial life of that country. I came in contact with the leading Japanese people and was a friend of many a family, where I found the love of flowers, of nature, and of Buddha. I met men of silence, men of joy, poets and artists, and I always sought for the hidden riches of the soul wherever I went. Towards the close of my stay there, I gained the new joy of freedom from self and everything dropped from my hands. I turned a monk. Tears of joy rolled from my eyes, and my words were soft as cherry flowers dropping in air. It seemed that I loved everyone and everyone loved me. If Japan was beautiful, people around me saw the evidence in me. A Persian poet says:

Are you going out to see gardens and roses?  
What a pity,  
Open the Door of Heart, enter and see  
What fiery roses bloom within.

“Such was my condition of full youth, lived in supreme innocence; floods of ecstasy overwhelming me, Buddha before me, behind me, above me, in me. And there I met an Indian saint who came from India. He touched me with Divine Fire and I became a Sanyasin. But now, as I see, he put many ideas in my head in pursuance of what these modern Hindu monks were keen about,—Nation-making, awakening India to its greatness, work, work, work. Though I was never much attracted by the vain pursuits of life, yet, to obey one who told me so much about Self-Realisation, I threw all my books of science and



notebooks aside, and started for India. On the whole, Japan was more conducive to the keeping of the Great Idea and the spirit of life, than my own country. But I arrived back full of dreams and sweet hopes, with which the Hindu Sanyasi had mixed thunder and lightning and the wish to be effective for 'work.'

"But in spite of the yellow robe, I could not forget the 'Nest' which I had left. In my absence, the circumstances of the family grew still worse and poverty threatened it. My mother heard of my arrival at Calcutta, and she lost no time in travelling to Calcutta to find me in that big crowded city without knowing my address. I wonder now why I did not cry when I first met her after such a long time? It was certainly due to that 'congealing' of my stream of tears which the Hindu Sanyasi produced in me. My father was with her. He was deeply hurt at seeing me a monk, though what I did was in the real fulfilment of his metaphysical ideas. He was bitter and sarcastic in his speech to me, but my mother soon reconciled herself to it, sympathised with me and even admired me for my taking the right direction. After a day or two, she asked me to accompany her to see my sisters, and I did. I returned to my 'Nest'—a poor mud house at Abbottabad—where my two sisters stood in the courtyard waiting for me, and by their side stood on their tiny legs my two younger brothers, little children peeping out of their half-starved frames for their brother; and a cry went up from them as my mother entered, leading her monk-son at midnight. The moon was shining full, and mother said to them: 'There! There is your brother.'



“There stood I, in full moonlight, in my orange garb, my mother pointing to me; and my sisters, breathless with joy, were suddenly struck with horror at seeing me, the Sikh boy who at all costs must respect the sacred Guru-given tresses and turban, a clean-shaven monk. But my old associations took no time to bridge the gulf and we ran into each others arms. They wept; I wept not, which I still regret. Nothing could describe the solace my coming home brought to the family.

“I found my younger sister, Ganza, was not well, and after about a fortnight of my arrival there she lay in my arms dying of fever. I asked her if she wished of me anything to be done for her sake.

“‘Brother! Marry the girl we have chosen for you.’

“‘Yes, I will, dear Ganga. Do not have any misgiving as to that.’

“I kissed her, and she passed away as I held her in my arms.”



## PREFACE

OUR Father Guru Govind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Khalsa, promised his own presence for all time on this earth, in the Mystic Person of "Guru Granth," which they call the Bible of the Sikhs. On this earth, all the Sikh Saints and Adepts are resumed and contained for us in this Mystic Person, who now is supreme. "Guru Granth," become flesh and blood, calls to us, his disciples, to come and touch him, saying, "Behold I am made man." He is a *living man*. He is a Man with a Divine appointment. Whenever His Lotus-Feet come nigh, I bow before him, I cry aloud in joy.

In moments of this joy and under the cool shades of "Guru Granth," I have tried to write down, mostly for myself, a portion of the sweetness with which His Grace filled me at times. These out-pourings of a single heart in God's Infinite Universe are offered here as a personal offering—as songs of joy, uttered in the name of the Prophet of the Glory of the Lord of All.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I must plainly say that these pieces can, at best, be said to convey a small portion of the Divine Idea that floods every page of "Guru Granth." It requires the whole of Divine Humanity to interpret for the life of man the meaning and music of "Guru Granth," that transcends this life



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on this earth and is heard beyond death. So do we believe.

I only publish these fragments in the joy of my total failure at an attempted rendering of a few pieces from "Guru Granth" into English. I would have been glad to have been overwhelmed in the Amrit floods that are set free by the touch of that Sacred Presence; but no, I am still on the banks of the stream. The true deliverance would have been to slip into the Infinite by a plunge in the all-forgetting and all-absorbing love of the Beloved.

The Auspicious Day has dawned!  
The Hour is fixed for my wedding with my Lord!  
Come, Comrades! Assemble and make rejoicings,  
Anoint the Bride with oil and pour on her your blessings!  
Comrades! Pray, the Bride may meet Her Lord!

PURAN SINGH.

DEHRA DUN,  
*February, 1915.*



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POEMS FROM THE LAND OF THE  
FIVE RIVERS





# THE SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

## POEMS FROM THE LAND OF THE FIVE RIVERS

### KOEL (THE BLACK CUCKOO)

#### I

KOEL! what lightning fell? what singed thy wings?  
What keeps thee fresh, yet charred?  
Concealed in the mango-leaves, thou singest!  
Thy high-pitched strains wake in my soul a thousand  
memories!  
Why so restless that thy spark-shedding notes go forth  
kindling fire?  
Lo! The roses are on fire which winds and waters catch!  
The shades of mangoes burn!  
What a rain of sparks art thou, O little Bird!  
Koel! what lightning fell? what singed thy wings?

#### II

The Fire of Love has charred my wings, and made me  
anew,  
I am restless! Where is my Beloved?  
The sight of mango-blossoms fires me all the more!  
The greener the garden, the brighter burns my heart!  
My flaming soul asks, "Where? where is my Beloved?"  
"Speak! speak! why are the leaves so still?"



## 4 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

### CHÂTRIK

O CHÂTRIK! <sup>1</sup> Lover of the cloud-clad skies, a thirst,  
a longing for the nectar drop!

Thou hast the soul of a disciple that pants for *Harí Nâm*!  
A weird cry thou pipest as thou flittest from wood to  
wood, for the season of clouds.

How with thy half-opened mouth, thou callest for the  
Pearl that lies in the Treasure-House of the  
*Sâwan*-clouds!

Ah! In what a bitter pain waits thy impatient thirst,  
which no lower heights can quench.

For thee all rivers and lakes are, as it were, dry.

Thy soul waits for thy own drop from clouds, the  
dwellers of the sky.

Brave lover! Thou lookest not on oceans of waters  
around,

Thou seemest to be the throat of the Sun-scorched lands  
and thou appealest for the Heaven-reflecting  
drop which rejoiceth the earth, all birds, all  
animals, and all mankind!

Thou art the Heart of a Saint, which beateth not in  
thy own struggling wings alone, but beats  
beyond thyself in the nectar-drop all-cooling,

<sup>1</sup> Châtrik or Sârang is the vernacular name of a bird who in the Punjabi poetry, like the Bulbul in the Persian poetry, is the chief companion of the poet of love. It is said to be the chief lover of the clouds that gather in the Indian sky in the month of rain or *Sâwan*. It is said to remain thirsty as long as it cannot have the rain-drop from the clouds. The season of rain after the fierce beating of the sun for several months in the tropics is a universal blessing.



mother of the God-given Month of Rain, whose sudden showers bless us unawares.

See how the drops dance in mid-air, rewarding thy hopes, thy longings and thy love, and filling thy heart and soul with the whole Infinite. Thy share one drop, one little, little drop of Heaven.

### RÂJHANS (THE PRINCE OF SWANS)

RÂJHANS ! The Golden Swan! Is it thy plumage that shines, or the sunrise on the eternal snows?

The dweller of *Mân-Sarôwar*, the lake on the roof of the world! Thy golden beak parts milk from water, in the living stream thou art a liberated soul!

A rosary of spotless pearls is in thy beak, and how sublime is the lofty curve of thy neck against the Heaven's vast azure!

Thou livest on pearls, the Nectar drops so pure of *Harí Nâm*.

Great soul! lover of the azure, transparent Infinite! Thou canst not breathe out of the *Mân-Sarôwar* air, nor canst thou live out of sight of those loftiest peaks of snow, and away from the diluted perfume of musk blowing from the wild trail of the deer!

Thou art the Spirit of Beauty, thou art far beyond the reach of human thought. Thy isolation reflecteth the glory of the starry sky in thy Nectar Lake of Heart in whose waters the sun daily dips himself!



## 6 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Thou hast the limitless expanse of air, the companionship of fragrant gods,  
And yet we know thou leavest those Fair Abodes to come to share the woes of human love,  
Thou alightest unawares on the grain-filled barn of the humble farmer; awakening Nature's maiden hearts, thou informest love.  
It is thy delight to see woman love man, the small ripplings of a human heart in love flutter thee in thy lofty seat,  
Thou art the soul liberated through love, thou knowest the worth of love, flying for its sake even midst the cities' smoke and dust, perchance, to save a human soul through love!!

## PÂRAS, THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

*Pâras!* Thou art so mixed with common stones that only the straying sheep may chance to strike thee with her small sharp-pointed hoof, so discovering thee!  
When the shepherd sees the foot of his sheep agleam with gold, he says to his comrades, as together they sit and spin the wool, mixing black with white,—  
“O comrades! Be sure the ancient *Pâras* truly lives, as proved by the gleam in the sheep's foot.”  
Thus a poor shepherd here and there, who has a few sheep and a staff and a black blanket for his all, but with a love-rich heart and eyes that look up



to Heaven when in need, owns the proof that it *is*.

*Pâras!* that thou art with us in this world is known, yet countless eyes have roamed over the drifting sea of boulders in vain!!

No wise man's seeking nor longing ever found thy transmuting crystal, not a glimpse of thee had they though lives on lives were spent in search of thee.

In vain we look for thee in stones, thou art in the eyes of the saint, in *Simran* deep.

The divine-made man is *Pâras*, *Pâras* is *Harí Nâm*, a saint whose touch transmutes all baser metals into gold!

If he looks at a courtesan, she is transmuted by his glance, her metal is changed; she becomes a virgin-goddess and a saint!

The robbers, the thieves, the rogues and cut-throats turn their backs on sin and face the Sun of Righteousness, when once through their blood and bone vibrates a single glance of *Nâm*,

When once the Master wills, the chambers of thought are washed, the veils lift up, and lost and unclaimed men are made sons of God.

When once the Man of God arises in Man, all lower desires and soilings gathered in lives bygone are blown away as the sun blows off by its golden breath the night.

The Transmuter of men is *Harí Nâm*, he is *Pâras*, his is the art of *alchemy*.

One metal may change into another, the copper into gold, even one tree into another, the thorny



## 8 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

*Acacia* into the scented Sandal, but what are these changes worth, if his glance come not vibrating through me, and change not my metal by blending his soul with mine, and lift me up into the Sky by his higher life of love and God?

### THE WOMAN

#### I

A MAN of Simran passed a street where the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel, the maidens of the Town, had gathered!

They had gathered to sing love-songs of older days;

They had gathered to raise from their virgin throats the ancient notes of human love, to rouse the hearts of men to woman's greatness!

They had gathered to sing the woman, her greatness for song, for love, for tenderness of heart, and for her faith in Man, and her worship of him, how steadfast she, like the patient earth, in his service,

She loves and calls him her God!!

Her eyes look up to no higher Heaven beyond the love of her man, faithful in life to him and ah! in her death!!

#### II

The saint paused to look at them and his mind turned to thought. "Ah! could I love my Beloved with the faith of a woman, could I sing so well and could I call Him as the love-strains of the village girls call their own, could I have the heart of a



woman, her jealousy of belief and love for one man, her oneness of mind and heart and bone and blood and flesh for her love!

Ah! could I have her spirit of infinite patience that waits for love without a thought or a wish to be seen or felt by the vulgar world around; her tender bosom doth conceal volcanoes of love's fires, beneath the simple flowers blowing on the snows of her face so calm, and yet so unwilling to confess—'I love.'

On her lips no complaints arise, her dimpling smiles tell that her gladness consists in seeing him whom once she calls her own.

Be it favours now or frowns, it is well for her as he wills!  
Her soul lives in the joy of the life she adores.

For her, her Man can never die.

No true woman deems herself a widow; whether he be gone to distant lands, or gone to the Master's country yonder, she waits for him; her Man is sure to come back, her Man for ever hers, no death can untie the knot of her arms that wreath him close to her tender bosom in love.

It is the sacred knot that God has tied with His own Hands. Who can sunder two that He joins in one? Angels and prophets give them aid.

### III

“The *Satee*-woman of love conceals a hero-soul in her tender frame, her courage rings along the aisles of Heaven, her eyes can call the Kingdom of God to help if worlds oppose!!



She is a hidden sacrifice, her love only Gods know, she  
is fate almighty;—so made by the love of man.  
Meseems the Disciple too has the soul of a *Satee*, he  
loves none else but his beloved Master!  
Like the *Satee*, his soul sings of love in the storm-girt  
silence of All-death, his every part tingles like  
a string with the music of faith in love!  
Like her, he too conceals his love and makes a whole  
Heaven to dwell invisible within his house of  
flesh.”

## IV

Thus did the saint praise woman's soul, as he gazed  
at the women and heard their songs and stood  
amidst them day by day.  
These love songs of the Five Rivers are great, how  
sweet the vibrations that fill even a saint with  
holiness!  
The longings of simple human hearts are immortal.  
The village girl, simple and untaught, has a secret hope  
to capture the lover and owner of her heart  
with nothing at all; she longs to have a home  
and a husband for whose pleasure she should  
toil and work; she longs to serve the children  
of her Lord. She toils and sweats for the joys  
of the rain of his kisses on her lips and face,  
behind the veil.  
She longs to bear him children, for the sunshine of  
whose life they both shall wait through a  
thousand days of tears.



## V

In singing procession, the crowd of the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel passed on to the Hall of the Spinning Wheel, the *Trinjan*,<sup>1</sup> the saint followed behind unseen.

Each girl sat before her own scarlet wheel, her little heart-cup brimming over with maiden joy and pride of youth.

Each girl a princess whirs her spinning wheel and hums to it some simple tragic song of love!

## VI

## THE STORY OF "SASÍ" AND "PUNÚN"

IN *Trinjans* of the Punjab still pass the camels of *Punún* laden with the Treasure of *Sasí's* heart, and behind them comes *Sasí*, Princess of the Punjab, bewailing herself.

One single night of joy they had together, and before the morn had opened her eyes, the Camel drivers from *Punún's* home came and stole the sleeping *Punún* from *Sasí's* Arms and drove the Camels across the sands of *Sasí's* lands.

<sup>1</sup> *Trinjan* is the name of the hall where the girls of the city sit together each with her own wheel to spin the cotton yarn. Once it used to be the very heart and centre of a home industry, as out of the cloth made by the spinings of these girls the parents used to make the marriage dowry for their daughters. The charms of domestic life of the old Punjab are soon disappearing. Vulgar life of imitation-civilisation is replacing an old fragrant life. The scent of *Mehdi* and *Koosambha* is replaced by alcoholic lavender to our great misfortune.



O! why did the lovers drink the draughts of sleep?  
*Sasí's* Prince of men was gone!!

*Sasí* comes seeking still her Prince of Love and there  
 searching the sands she dies still love-athirst!

The Maidens of the Spinning Wheel sing the tragedy  
 in a choric song, and bury *Sasí* in the dust of  
 songs. From that dust maidenhood blooms up  
 anew, and *Sasí's* sisters wish again to love.

No death can kill *Sasí*, nor camels take away *Punún*  
 from the Punjab, for we daily see them pass in  
 visions of love; the camels pass before the  
 half-closed eyes of love-lorn dreamy girls!

#### THE STORY OF "SOHNÍ MAHÍWÂL" <sup>1</sup>

*Sohní Mahíwâl* is another tale of love;

It tells of a Punjabi maiden of Gujrat, a potter's daughter,  
 a maiden of wondrous beauty, who casts  
 a spell on the son of a merchant-prince of  
 Bukhârâ, without her knowing of it at all!

His caravan stops there in *Sohní's* town, he pretends  
 to trade in Gujrat vessels of clay; he goes to  
 the potter's house and buys the earthen vessels  
 as *Sohní* comes laden with pieces of her father's  
 ware for sale.

He buys dear and sells cheap, an ideal merchant!

He tosses away his coins for the sake of a glimpse of  
 his God. Ah! to bask in the beaming sun of  
 her face, somehow to feel blessed, though for  
 a moment, in peace of her presence!!

<sup>1</sup> *Mahíwâl* is the name of the cowherd who grazes cows and buffaloes and looks after them. He is a poorly paid man, with a shirt of home-made coarse cotton cloth and a black blanket, armed with a long staff, and this is his all.



*Sohní* is beautiful to him as nothing else is, his *Faqír*-eyes see in her such rare perfection of curve and line!

Here doth the heart of the wild lover from distant *Irân* break up the chains of self-control; he falls on his trembling knees to worship Man and God and Love, in this one form; he is half faint from the bewildering perfume sent forth by her youth-scented tresses; half lost in wonder and worship of this grand love that makes kings the slaves of joy;—the joy of being enchained with the maiden-braids of a young girl that knows not the charm of her self and the joy in her blossoming youth, that delicate maiden-strength that seems to mock at strong Death.

The followers are all gone! the camels and horses all are sold, one by one the jewels and gems he had, no thought of return, nor of the morrow, daunted the Persian Prince!

The brave *Irâní* at last was penniless!

The potter of Gujrat made him his *Mahíwâl* for debts unpaid; no pity did he show to his customer, once so rich and great and handsome!

But wings of rumour slowly scattered on the air the news that *Sohní* now is deep in love!

To save the honour of the potter's house the potter marries his daughter to some one else.

The *Mahíwâl* is turned away from Gujrat in ruin!

The hospitable banks of the Chenâb give a hut to the *Mahíwâl* and *Sohní* too is his!

No daughter of the Punjab could dream of another Man, for her the world has but one, when found



## 14 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

it is all. She gives herself to him and no foolish rites of marriage nor law nor false honour nor shame deter her mind nor daunt her soul from loving the Man she loves.

She keeps her vow of love and her word with gods, she saves the honour of the land where she is born, faithful to her Man and God, never mind what the world says or rumour does!

*Sohní* still swims at secret time of night across the Chenâb to see her Persian Prince.

No boat she has but a pitcher of baked clay;—the potter's daughter holds by the floating pitcher, as she daily crosses the river Chenâb, in the name of God and *Mabíwâl*.

Her sister-in-law exchanges one night *Sohní's* boat of clay concealed in a secret lonely bush with a false-dyed, unbaked pitcher! And it is too late when *Sohní*, dressed in the darkness of the night, takes it in her hand.

Be as it may, life or no life, to-night too she still must swim across to him or else how could she live through the night! It was pitch dark, the night was stormy and the Chenâb was in flood; the sky thundered high as she plied her hands and swam between the bloodthirsty death-mouthed waves!!

The Sisters of the Spinning Wheel sing still how *Sohní* cried to the God of waters then.

“O *Khawâjá! Khizar!*<sup>1</sup> drown me not on my way to *Mabíwâl*, let me only swim across to my love,

<sup>1</sup> He is the God of waters according to the Arabic and Persian mythology.



but on my way back from him, take my life as thou wilt, I shall have no complaint, but take me safe across to my *Mahîwâl*!! ”

How her soul rises strong when the waves engulf her; it cries supreme:—“ Drown me! O Khizar! if thou wilt, come, try, and drown me now! What, wilt thou sink my flesh and bones! Take this flesh and take these bones, I must fly across to my *Mahîwâl*! God’s golden strings of love bind me with him so fast that thy waters cannot untie them, I am my *Mahîwâl*’s life.

My soul shall soar, breaking all thy waters, straight on to where my *Mahîwâl* waits for me. Drown me, Khizar! drown, drown me as thou wilt.”

Such cries of *Sohnî*’s soul are heard still from sweet little throats of the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel and they repeat her message to her Sisters of the Punjab *Trinjans*. The winds and waters carry her screams in all the four directions. Her soul passes, still whispering to every Punjabi heart the power of love!

In *Trinjans* of the Punjab, her comrades still celebrate the jubilee of her death!

*Sohnî*’s land is filled with songs of *Sohnî* and all hearts beat with pride; our daughters are so great though they look like simple village maids, so rude and illiterate!

Their ways of love we men imitate till we become as strong in love of our Creator as they!

We snatch the tunes from their transparent throats and fill with their cadence our hearts to make them pure and intense!



The simple Punjabi songs are like the light of morn to  
men who follow the divine love, they are part of  
the Punjab food of saints; on the soil of the  
Punjab the saints live well!

## VII

The saint saw how small yet how great is the measure  
of joy of the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!!

A mother-sent loaf of bread is enough!

A jug of water and a song sung in chorus with the  
whirring wheels and humming throats, is enough!

Enough are the rain-delights, the mango-blossoms are  
their wealth!!

They feel the blossoms hanging on the trees, as ear-  
rings in their own ears! They pluck them not,  
for very joy! The very sight of blossoms hanging  
is delicious enough for them.

The hope of pleasing the mother by spinning well;  
the hope of taking a basket of bobbins home to  
win the approving word from the mother, such  
is the innocent maiden life of the Punjab that  
the saint saw, and it pleased him well!

How lovely are the gentle ways of unlettered maidens!

The saint then murmured unto himself:—"Oh! why  
should not I work at my wheel and spin all day  
and night, fine and well, ah! as well as they do,  
lost in joyous labour of love, simple as a song,  
and gain honour from my own Lord?

What use are honours won abroad, if one is looked  
down upon at home?

I must labour as these girls toil to please the mother."



The saint said:—"The heart of the Punjab girl is the convent where worship of the son of Man is taught.

The heart of woman is the Temple where Man is enshrined as God,

The Punjab is great for the love of Man more than for the love of God."

### VIII

The visions of the *Trinjans* are fresh,  
Immortal is the past in innocent youth and lives again  
all in the mind of Man!

Great are the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!

They have the secret charm with which they call the  
spirits of the past to come and talk to them.

*Hir*<sup>1</sup> comes and sings again the tunes of her heart to  
maidens of the town:—

"The foolish world knows *Rânjhâ* as a man, my *Rânjhâ*  
is my God, O Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!

The foolish world calls him a cowherd, a mere man, to  
me the whole world is he, and God!

My soul repeats '*Rânjhâ! Rânjhâ!*' this repetition  
is my *Namâz!!*'<sup>2</sup>

### IX

The saint sees a wondrous vision in the *Trinjans*.

There yonder *Rânjhâ* is seated on a buffalo's back with  
his lute on his lips, and the buffalo standing in  
knee-deep water of a grassy swamp.

<sup>1</sup> *Hir* and *Rânjhâ* is a love story of the same type as *Sohni Mahiwâl*.

<sup>2</sup> *Namâz* is the Arabic word used for prayer, used by the Prophet Mohammed.



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From this side is seen going the Princess *Hír* with a dish of sweets for her *Rânjhâ*, and straight she goes to *Rânjhâ* looking neither to the right nor to the left,

“Come! have a morsel, friend! from the day-break you have had nothing. I bring you this dish I made myself.”

“But my hands are dusty,” says *Rânjhâ*, “why have you not brought some water for washing, O Beloved?”

“Forgive me, *Rânjhâ*, I forgot; but wash your hands, here flows water!!”

Below he washes his hands, as tears roll down her eyes like a trickling little waterfall!

Thus *Rânjhâ* was feasted by his love in the open wastes of Chenâb!

### X

Says another sister of the Spinning Wheel:—

#### (I)

Mother beats me, I cannot work, she asked me to fill her earthen lamp with oil, but my hands shook, I know not why the oil fell on the ground!

I do not know why I cannot work nor help my mother nor spin the thread!

O comrades! say what secret life is this?

My youth is now a pain, yet without it I cannot live;

O say why pain is such a pleasure?

I know not why my mother rebukes me.

She once sent me to light a lamp from the flame of a neighbour's lamp. See! my comrades! this



finger of mine is burned; I know not why my  
finger was burned. I was but just lighting the  
earthen lamp!

You are a simple girl that knows not how to conceal  
what can never be concealed!

We know you have seen the Son of Man, your youth  
cries for its owner, your heart needs the shade  
of a Man.

O comrade! say, you are in love with a Man!

Your finger is burned; but you were not there when  
lighting the lamp!

Your hand carelessly slipped the wick aside and your  
finger touched the flame that burnt it; but you  
were not there, your eyes had strayed to the Man!

O comrade! tell us the name of the Man, and confess  
to us, say, you are in love.

We will tell your mother now, we will ask for *Henná*  
leaves, we will dye your hands and feet.

We will put on you this Madder-dyed shawl!

We will weave your maiden braids!

We will sing your wedding songs, you will be now our  
love-lit bride.

O comrade, say, what share of joy will be given us, the  
Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!

(2)

O Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!

I dreamt last night, the stars of Heaven grouped round  
my head; I wore them all in my tiara, I looked  
a Queen.

I swam in air, I stood above the clouds, my hair floated



free in space, my shirt of cloth was dazzling  
white, my shawl of home-spun cotton dyed with  
*majith* shed its colour on the snowtops that lay  
below and lit the horizon in eastern tints!

What does my dream mean? O comrades mine!

Thou art a creeper in full youth of leaf and flower and  
vigour of sap.

Thy dream calls a figure of Man from the starry world  
and he shall be the King and thou his Queen!

The stars do crown with glory the woman wedded to  
love of Man.

Thus do the gods honour the wedded woman! it is the  
sign of thy wedlock union with thy Man.

The god of love visits thee in thy sleep and makes thee  
rich with Heavenly Love!

. . . . .

The saint turned aside and murmured to himself,  
“What a saint is the girl in love!!”

## XI

The saint comes oft and again to bow before the youth  
and song of beautiful maidens.

He finds delight in the blossoming flowers of Youth,  
a trance in the flowing life-perfuming tresses.

The roses are no sweeter, the snows are nowhere purer,  
than in the holy face of a youth-unconscious girl!

No fires burn brighter, no stars are quieter than her  
eyes, the eyes that see the Figure of one she



## XII

## THE WEDDING

SHE has almost forgotten if she lives and moves, as her soul drinks deep of the Fount of Vision that makes the Sun a dream, and the Night but a Palanquin in which the stars bear the Bride on high!

As the wedding day approaches, her life seems to be ebbing from her; her dress is old and tattered, her hair in sweet confusion!

Her mind is still, all thought of self-adornment is gone from her.

All is quiet in that great Hush when maidenhood sleeps, and wakes a new, new love!

Her hair is dishevelled; the bosom heaves, her heart quakes in a thousand reveried waitings for things to be, in a half unwilling consent.

Her lips are athirst, her arms vibrate with an unknown passion for life yet unknown. As the blood glows beneath the skin, so all knowledge of the life to come is behind a veil!

She almost faints with hope; this moment, pale and white and cold as the dead; the next, a flame springs from below her ashes!

Her child-like rebel pride, her naughtiness is over—  
“I am the sister of my brave brothers and the daughter of my kingly Father! How fine is my Spinning Wheel; how high is the Door of our House, where camels wait and horses neigh; how full are our stores with wheat!”

The sky is below her feet; all the world, she thinks, must wait upon her joy!



## 22 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

It is no sin to be proud like this; no death to be dead  
like this, at the feet of Love!

In a few days, she has grown so thin and frail, that  
she appears to live outside her physical frame;  
her sisters support her as she rises to go, they  
give her food and drink.

Ah! she is but a shadow of her days of laughter:  
For day and night pass alike in the silent chambers  
of her soul.

Her lacquered wheel in *Trinjans* waits, and there it  
shall wait for ever;

And the Mango-groves are waiting for the joyous  
notes she sang. They still remember her, swim-  
ming in air on her scarlet swing, hung with  
hempen ropes on their high branches. They  
remember how she shook with sheer delight  
their long boughs; and what a rapturous dance  
of leaves there was as she swung.

The Mango-groves shall wait for her for ever!

The village street that feels her joyous tread is sad.

The daughter of the town is to be wed!

Over and done with is the life of her father's roof, and  
spent are the days of her babyhood, childhood  
and girlhood.

She dies away into Love, a fit farewell to companions  
of her girlhood!

The Mango sees and the *Peepal* tree!

The scarlet wheel is witness of what has happened!

The eyes of parents are filled with tears as they hurry  
about in joy of the wedding day of their pretty  
daughter!

The brothers' silent soliloquies disturb the village air!—



“ Is my sister to go away from us, and from the roof below which she was born? Will she leave us for ever? ”

“ Who shall take my sister? ” speaks the younger brother, “ We are mighty, we will die, but we will not let our sister go! ”

The village drums are beating; the fingers of all the village women gently tap the drums, and bid them sing for mirth and merriment!

The drums resound with songs that rise ringing from the silver throats of the village wives and fair daughters!

The House is holy where one has died in Love!

Rejoicings fill the town, and all feel rich because they are giving the Bride to Love!

The earthen lamp is burning day and night in the Bridal chamber as a symbol of her heart.

As the lamp lights the room, her heart shall light a Home with Heaven's glow; burning steady and calm, like her life, in the service of dear Love.

And by her sit the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!

Well might the Queen of the three worlds envy the tenderness of soul they pour at the feet of the Bride-Queen!

They understand, and they do heru nuttered commands. Each daughter of the Punjab is a Queen; as is well known to the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel!

They know the worth of Love, of the stars that keep a solemn, sacred watch!!

The All-Provider makes the poorest father richer than kings!



## 24 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Ah! how he gives his all!

He gives his very self to Love. No leaf can be torn  
from even a tree without shedding a drop of  
its blood!

“Come, brothers! come,” the voices call within;  
“and dye the hands of your sister now!”

“The eldest first! Here take these marble-  
hands and dye the palms with these *Mehdi*  
leaves.”

The hands are cold; with tears in his eyes the brother  
puts on her palms the *Mehdi* leaves!

They have bathed the Bride, and laved her hair. Her  
maiden tresses they have combed, and parted  
them in the middle with the perfumed wax;  
full smooth is the hair on either side; a little  
vermilion traces the parting line of her tresses!

The Bride is veiled in splendour of gorgeous silk in folds,  
embroidered with gold-thread and gems.

They adorn the Bride and sing the songs in whose joys  
the man is man, a peasant, or a prince!

A thousand songs float in the air; every moment new  
tears flow and new feelings rise from depths  
below.

The Sun and Moon stand on *Dharmâ*<sup>1</sup> that gives a  
soul to another for the sake of Love.

Heaven comes down to earth to kiss the Bride almost  
dead in new, new Love!

Out of space the angels gather, and sing in Chorus with  
the Sisters of the Spinning Wheel the Triumph  
of Love!!

<sup>1</sup> The law of being.

## XIII

The Saint saw all this from day to day and said:—

“ Boast not, O Saints! God is great. On all his creatures He bestows these moments of the loftiest Love of Man to Man! How sublime this surrender of the Bride to the Bridegroom in Love!

Would I could die, like her, to this House of my childhood, and wake in that House of Love!

Would I could bid, like her, that silent deep Farewell!  
But my soul! is this all what they call Death? ”





# POEMS OF A SIKH





## POEMS OF A SIKH

### THE UNKNOWN GOD

#### THE TURBAN'D MAN

A TURBAN'D Man! The owner of the skies!  
I hear his footfalls in the garden of my heart, my life  
throbs in his lotus feet!  
Eternal are his Turban Folds of Love!  
The planets wait as birds in nests as at close of night,  
for the Dawn that breaks above them.  
He is the king of Creation's heart; he wears the crown  
of love-grown cotton and love-spun thread and  
love-woven cloth.  
His crown is made of the rolling Waves of the Sea of  
Light!  
Has not the Sun dropped from those Turban Folds?  
The stars were scattered abroad at night in the sky,  
Above them I saw the Edge of his Crown of Mists!  
The Beaming Faces said, "Tis Mid-night Moon," but  
I, of the lower rank than they, at night, while  
digging earth, murmured slowly to myself  
within, lest someone heard my word: It is the  
light, the light from his Turbanned Brow.

#### AN UNKNOWN MAN

AN Unknown Man, who roams disguised on earth!  
He picked me up from a heap of the Dead at night,  
and on his back he took me to his hut,



Awake at nights, he nursed and made me whole;  
 Heaven streamed through the windows of his Eyes and  
     lit my Soul with the Fiery Dream of Dawn,  
 I forgot him in his gift of Life to me,  
 And He helped me to forget him. Such is Youth! how  
     it forgets its maker!  
 An Unknown Man who roams disguised on earth!  
 I find him still with me, he aids me on.

#### THE MAN WHO BECOMES ME

BORN of Mother Earth, and Father Heaven, that Man  
     who is becoming me,  
 His feelings are not like my feelings, his love hath not  
     the looks of love, his glances beam with God-like  
     meaning in silent depth of depths!  
 His Earth-like love! His annoying Silence!  
 The Seed, the Earth, the Air, the Water,—he that enfolds  
     me within, and makes of me a Flower Free, a  
     Fruit, a sweet Perfume and tells me it is I who  
     grow and bloom.  
 Born of the Mother Earth, the Father Heaven, the  
     Man who is being made into me.

#### THE MAN IN ME

THE Man in me! Who lives within unseen!  
 Within my brows I bear his brows, in my hair, his hair,  
 In my bones, his bones, I feel his heart in mine.  
 With him I am, I know, the Son of God for whose joy  
     and glory all Creation waits,  
 And without him, I am an emptied shell, a cry, a

wandering wail, less than the worm that creeps  
in fallen wood, less than the weed that grows in  
mud!

But no! *the man in me*, he watches, he sees, he leaves  
me not;

Hail, Master! Son of Man!

### THE MAN IN ME, AND NOT IN ME

THE Man in me! And not in me! He comes and goes  
of his own accord!

I remain as a vacant house with silent walls and dust.  
A strange friend who has his own laws of love, he would  
leave me, as if never to return;

But then comes he in a flood of rain of tears!

He makes me wait as a woman waits for man, but Ah!  
the moment when he strains me in his Embrace!

What am I? But a peal of bells, a song!!

Each hair of mine grows a tongue and enchanted bathes  
in holy bliss and grateful wonder!

Each pore of mine is nectar-laved, my very flesh cries:  
“Hail, Holy one!”

### WHEN? I KNOW NOT!

WHEN? I know not! My dawn might break at night!  
My man might return to me in sleep, in dreams lovelit  
with the splendour of a thousand days!!

And a thousand may be the number of my forlorn  
nights!!

One moment but of this Fairy sleep so condenses for  
me, Life, Love, Faith, Joy, God, Man, Heaven  
and earth in one.



## 32 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

I sleep with my soul aching and wake with the song of  
Hail, Lord! on my lips and tongue,  
And happy life like a wave flows in a thousand streams  
from translucent walls of flesh that should retain  
it all,  
But it flows to rivers, rocks and air and all.  
I give a feast of myself to the Universe!

### THE SILVER FEET

THE Soaring One of the shining Silver Feet!!  
They are his feet that in their silver flight trail in my  
heart!  
My eyes like two crying cranes soar after him in the  
holy Blue of Heaven.  
Afar he flies!  
And from the invisible heights come no news, but a  
shower of Bliss, a Nectar-Rain that feeds, and  
makes me rich.  
I sit and wait for him on the red brown earth, all wet  
and drowned below!  
Ah me! The Vision of the Invisible!  
His Silver Feet,—my Life, my prop, my stay!!

### GLORY! GLORY! EVERYWHERE!

My steps are unsteady with joy!  
I fall, I rise, I sink and soar in him.  
The Rain of Nectar floods my heart and melts my  
mind away in holiness of God,  
Enraptured thus and with his Sight I see all things are  
divine and fair.  
Glory! Glory! Everywhere.

The Earth, the Sky overhead, all things are kindled  
 with the joy of his Light of Life,  
 This man is God, he cometh everywhere.  
 All worlds in him and he in all, the deathless for ever!  
 Glory! Glory! Everywhere.

### HIS MIRACLES ARE GREAT!

(From *Âsâ-Di-V ar*)

HIS miracles are great! Day and night he hath made.  
 He sends the Spring laden with flowers; he grants  
 the gift of youth.

He created the world, and fashioned with his own  
 hands the Universe!

Woman is beautiful, and glorious is the man to whom  
 she gives her heart and soul.

He unites us, he separates, he makes us thirst and  
 hunger, he gives us wine and bread.

His Miracle it is by which we live. Our mind and soul,  
 our heart, our self, the endless space, the foot-  
 falls of ever marching time, the mountains, the  
 sea and air, all these are his miracles.

He is Great!!

In his fear blow great winds and gentle airs.

In his fear flow the countless rivers,

In his fear move the stars, and the Sun and Moon,  
 whose march of myriad miles never ends!!

In his fear live kings, adepts, heroes and gods; the sky  
 doth arch in awe, the earth lies firm, the worlds  
 are coming in and going out with his Breathings.

He subsists Unafraid above all things, the One Formless  
 Is!!



## THE TWILIGHT OF THY GLANCE

THE Twilight of Thy Glance cometh like a shower  
pouring Beauty, Youth and Flowers down!!

The dry and mouldered leaves on forest paths become  
green wetted by Thy Glance, and crown the  
trees, uplifted by the Twilight-Fall.

The Twilight of Thy Glance like an influence steals  
into my Soul and touches my heart and strikes  
the Chords with mighty force, raising a storm  
of music and song, crying: "Awake and say,  
Hail, Lord! Awake and say, Hail, Holy One."

## NÂM: THE NAME OF THE INFINITE

## I

THE Name of the Infinite! The *Sat Nâm*, that lives  
from heart to heart, from lips to lips, the Fire of  
Life that goes from man to man!!

It was ere Time began, it is and shall be.

The Spell of Love that never dies and hides the *Sat Nâm*  
in the Son of Man, where wonder opes the Door  
of Life that no thinking can unbar:

The *Nâm* fresh-dyed from red lips of Love kindles a  
perpetual Song in me! And in its glow, meseems,  
all things are good.

This world is Heaven, the winds and waters speak,  
and every blade of grass whispers its joy.

The trees with trembling leaves stand in prayer!

The morning birds raise hymns of nascent mirth!!

Insects have anklets on their little ankles and make a  
music as they march and swell one great Chorus.



All things are made of Song.

The flocks of sheep with uplifted heads, the playing  
lambs with mouths full of milk are gathering  
round the shepherd's voice;

The stars are burning bright in the firmament;

Blessed is the earthen lamp that lights my house!  
its light is the joy with which I wait for Him  
Whom I do not know how to name:—

He is my Sultan who rolls down a Sea of Life in me and  
asks not how I spend, but fills it from age to  
age out of His own stores, and floods the Soul  
with Fragrant Beauty, and hides Himself in the  
limitless expanse!!

His voice alone rings in my ears and sweet repose  
shuts in my eyes, my lips vibrate with passion  
for the Universe! Hail, Lord!

He is the Truth to Whom if we be loyal in love and  
faith, we are safe; or else we die:

The world where He is not, is death to us.

The man, woman, bird or beast, in whom if we see Him  
not, are mere deceptions, pain, and death.

Devoid of Him, all aims dissipate, all desires chain the  
Soul, and all Karma condemns.

He visits me in strange guises; strange are His ways;  
one seldom can recognise Him as He assumes  
different forms.

He comes in wars, in great catastrophes; in pain, in  
suffering, in hunger; and in the faithlessness  
of friends and beloved ones.

Alike the kings, the slaves of earth deceive when we  
are out of tune with Him.



## 36 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

When I lean on such frail weeds as these, or when I run after the mirage of the world, breathless to quench my thirst, my soul returns abashed to me, finding no support, or no fountain there.

I sit in deep sorrow, deserted by all things, deceived by the best beloved.

When suddenly, Lo, a Figure of Light in Heaven saying, "Look! I am."

Then I know, HE is. Then I recognise my Man, my Word, my Lord and Master.

My Light returns to me, casting out doubts and delusions, rekindling in me the fire of faith, giving me again a rebirth in His own Love. This is Nâm: this is the Holy One.

I forget Him in the familiar forms of Mâyâ, and often I lose myself in illusive Beauty that like fine vapour rests on the waters of Change, within the rocky waste that allures, only to take my heart, and throw it upon the rocks, and break it in pieces. But He forgets me not!

Fair God! Keep me with Thyself! Let me live in the steady light of Thy eternal shape.

Let me kiss Thy lotus Feet, resting there as the babe rests on the loving, milk-filled breasts of the Mother, covered with her shawl secure from all harm.

At Thy Feet forever; let me swing for ever in Thy Cradle of Light that hangs from Heaven with strings of gold. At Thy bidding let thine Angels rock me to and fro, and gently keep pulling me up.



Let them draw me up like a child fallen in a well, until  
the cradle of my love lie at Thy Feet.

It is this gentle drawing up, this lifting of me by Thy  
Golden Strings coming down to save me, of Thy  
own Will, that is what I know as my Life!

This communion with Thee is my Soul.

What then shall I call Thee? Thou art Law? Truth?  
Heaven? Love? *Nâm*? and Man? I under-  
stand by Thy Figure of Love within me or with-  
out, that Thou art with me, somewhere, some-  
how, in the horizon of my heart and soul!

Be with me, O Beloved! For Thou art never known  
to leave him whom once Thou callest Thine own.  
Thy Infinite Love makes me bold; and I err only to  
draw Thy Great Compassion down.

I am known to be as great a sinner as Thou a Saviour.  
But with all my sins, I still wait at Thy Door  
where Mercy waits for me.

Thy Touch alchemical turns dross into nobler metals.  
Thy Glance uplifts beings from lower depths to heights  
unknown.

For Thy Grace, O Lord, I wait!

Teach me Thy Name, let me breathe in Thy Love and  
grow young.

#### GURU NANAK

THE Buddha seated on the white Lotus with his Nepal  
tresses knotted on his brow;

The Christ with his maiden braids, his God-lit eyes,  
his transfigured face;

Mohamed of the direct glance, with his Blazing Heart  
and cleaving sword, that flash and kindle the



deserts with Heaven's Glow; All Heaven is revealed in them, as a whole nation is athrob in a single man, as a babe is a-stir in the mother's soul;—

A Man of God stands behind men, to guide and to teach; at his feet they pour out soul!!

Each soul has a divine Man, whether he will or no, behind him, on whom he trusts alike for a glimpse of God and His Universe, and for the unfoldment of his own self, trusting him when the soul is in distress.

Our thoughts and deeds assume fantastic shapes, and our daily life dogs us in man's image.

Not building ourself on the Man of God, we build our self on sand.

The dirt of daily deeds settles on us,—such is our fate.

Without the Man of God in us, all is vanity; good Karma, or bad, binds us alike.

It is true for us forever, God Himself cometh to man in the shape of Man who spells Him for us: this is *Nâm*. The Man is *Nâm*. He is the Sign and Symbol: Hail, Holy One!

He is the sign of Him, the best of all signs.

He is *Sat Nâm*, the Truth Eternal, Essence Infinite the Ever Living, who hath no shape, no colour, whom no lines contain, whom no words can define; one Indivisible Unity.

He that lives, beyond Time and Space and Thought, one like unto ourselves, whom we know as Man,

His presence, in lands, in waters, above, below!! lo, it is seen in the form of the Man of God; as the Sun in the shining lens.



The world met him in Krishna, Buddha; in Christ, in Mohamed. But I know Him as my Lord and Father,—*Bâbâ*, Guru Nanak, Him have I seen not once, but for ten generations. He, in a thousand ways gave signs to us of *Nâm*, the Holy One. Taking the three worlds in His lap, He hid himself behind a man, in his heart, He was.

Guru Angad born of Nanak's limbs was he.

I saw him, Guru Angad, concealing the All-Father once again in a majestic form of man, the silver knot of hair on high, the white beard flowing down like a river of light, a tall, ancient, stern man of love and labour, a farmer of men, the owner of *Sat Nâm*, Nanak is Amar Das!

Guru Amar Das took on the name and shape of 'Guru Ram Das, the golden Temple of God, the Guru Ram Das a continuous hymn divine, the day of the worlds of soul, the sweetness of all things.

Guru Ram Das illuminated his son Arjandev with Himself!

Guru Arjan thrilled creation with the Father's Voice.

Guru Arjander produced out of himself Guru Har Govind, who in turn bowed to Har Rai Guru! He saw Guru Nanak again in Har Krishna Guru, who sighted again "*Bâbâ Bakale*"<sup>1</sup>

Guru Tegh Bahadur rose and came like a thousand dawns and in his throat we hear the song of the Father, in his form we see the ancient Nanak, whose witnesses are the sun and moon and whom the earth and sky are still witnessing.

<sup>1</sup> Bâbâ Nanak is at Bakala. So said Guru Har Krishna at Delhi while departing from the body.



## 40 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

The stars shiver in their seats with joy as he goes  
riding his splendid steed; his blue-hued horse  
stamping worlds with thunder, and what an  
almighty thrilling of creation's Aura!

Guru Govind Singh is the name of Guru Nanak when  
he rides.

The Ancient Huntsman, before whose arrows flies the  
Stag of Death, the old Guru Nanak armed  
with shield and quiver full of arrows swung  
around the shoulder and two scimitars hanging  
below.

He wears the starry-crest and carries a hawk on his  
thumb, and flags of the True Kingship of the  
Heaven!

His flags flutter high in Heaven and Angels sing Hail,  
Lord!!

The Wearer of the Blue Garments! the Rider on the  
Blue Horse!

The Commander of the Army of his Saints, the Sikhs,  
the Disciples made as great by Him as He  
himself, the Angels and more than Angels, the  
armies of the Heroes of the world to defend the  
purposes of God on Earth!!

Behold! Guru Nanak is seen in Guru Govind Singh  
as the flash of sword, his Love takes the shape  
of arrows, his Love is a Storm of spears.

Oh! the keen, keen rays of his glance!

Death and bloodshed save the man!

There is paradise below the flying arrows!!

There is *Anhad*<sup>1</sup> in the twanging of the bows!!

There is slumber for the saints on the edge of swords!

<sup>1</sup> The hidden music of the Infinite.



The Figure of Love lies arrow-pierced on earth, no  
blood but milk of love, the *Amrit*,<sup>1</sup> flows ferti-  
lising the world with life!!

The cold steel falls on tender necks of His children;  
But what steel can touch, what fire can burn Nanak?  
No sword can cut the rays of light.

Death everywhere, death to the right, death to the  
left, but death can touch not a hair of him, nay,  
not a hair of those who are his own.

Guru Nanak is still with us, a Song, a Book; Guru  
Grantha is in every Home!!

And the Father sings still so sweet, His voice still rings  
in our ears, His figure still flits before us as a  
man whose eyes meet ours, whose lotus feet we  
touch, who talks to us.

The Master is still before us in His Sikh, in His Saint,  
the Man is still the Centre of life.

God dwells still in the voice of His Saints; this is the  
“ Changing Permanence ” of things Eternal.

The Saint reminds us of the Father's love, he tells us:  
“ Look, the Father-of-All is still standing behind,  
who sees ye, but whom ye see not.

“ Be full of reverence every moment of your life.”

“ The Father sees, the Father watches His crops, the  
Father is all awake, Bâbâ sleeps not, Bâbâ  
spreads over ye like a tree whose canopy is the  
broad blue sky, it is all His shade!! ”

It is not the sky but the Father's Tree whose leaves  
and branches are made of Angels!

This is *Harí Nâm*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nectar.

<sup>2</sup> The Name of God. *i.e.* Absorption in the love of God.



“I still am here! My children, awake and say Hail,  
Master!”

The Father still comes to us in the heart of His Saints  
in whom the Light of the Father dwells; He  
and His sons are one.

He sings to us the chants of the Father.

He lulls us to rest and sleep.

He blesses us in smiting steel, in the rain of arrows  
rain His blessings down.

He bathes us in blood, He laves us with fire.

Die glad saying Hail, Lord! This world is not all here,  
this is not the end, nor beginning here, worlds  
on worlds beyond, the Regions yet unknown,  
they shall open up after this death.

Beware! let not the Guru-given fire within die out!  
keep up the flame of Nâm, let not the flame die  
out!!

This lamp of Nâm shall light thy path beyond  
death; in scorching heat, it will spread on  
thy head a cool and dense deep shade, this,  
like a Talisman, will yield to thee all that thou  
desirest.

*Harí Nâm* will quench thy thirst in regions beyond,  
it will yield thee a pair of wings on which ye  
would fly up to the Guru singing Hail, Lord! to  
the throne of God.

Of what avail is it if ye gain the whole world and lose  
your soul, let not the Glow of Nâm fade!!

These are the distant shores where He sends thee to  
win through life or death, through pain or  
pleasure, the Treasure of Nâm for thyself.



Spend not. Accumulate the Divine Wealth, the Substance-Love of which thy Soul is made.

Naught else availeth.

At Death's Door shall lie what you, deluded, have called your own, all goodness and all virtues too.

The world received you as a living babe, a flower divine with moving ruby lips; your soul came smiling, any pair of arms could lift you up and make you their own and love!!

But see now, how they shall send you forth, a wrinkled miserable old man despised by all, they shall send you out of this world and burn the body which they embraced with so much love!!

The grains of Love, the moments spent in *Simran*, in *Nâm*, hoarded ant-like one by one, shall survive and be thy own helpers, thy guides and friends.

Thou art the architect of thy own Home beyond the realms of this life and death.

Make it then as thou wilt, make it of anguish or pain, of longing for wealth or fame or objects of sense; thy longing will be there, naught else;

Or make it a Temple where God may dwell with thee, filling thy eternity with bliss.

Say Hail, Lord! This Word the angels guard.

This Word lives in the Saints, and they all would help.

This Word doth bridge the gulf between this Near and Far, and joins this Life with That beyond what they call Death.

No Death for him who breathes each breath in Wah-Guru, who takes each step of life in Divine Communion!



## 44 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Eternity lives in one breath!!

One little breath doth make Eternity!!

The Holy One, Lord of All, is in the Saint as fragrance  
is in the rose-leaves.

The combined charm of the beauty of the rose and her  
fragrance is one!!

They are thine and thou art theirs who have given  
themselves to God and live their lives on Earth  
as Trusts of God and spend them as He wills  
in unquestioning love and faith, in continuous  
life unbroken by a breath.

Love for the Man of God is very love of God.

This faith is Nanak's love for man.

This common thing is precious beyond value,  
This is what Jewellers know.

This ruby of Nâm they alone can prize.

This Enchanted Stone contains all-God.

This is all-Sustainer, All-Encompasser Nâm.

This is that which holds the worlds all together,

This is the Charmed Word, this is Nanak:

This is Love, call what thou canst call, this is the Name-  
less, Formless, Casteless, Tasteless God.

My soul! Rise and say, Blessed be Guru Nanak!

### I AM THE CHILD LOST IN THE WORLD-FAIR!

I AM the child lost in the world-fair!

I know no language, I can only say: "Pray, take me to  
my Father." I can give no more, nor my country  
nor town, nor street.

I am afraid of men, I long for my own Mother!

Her arms alone I know, her caresses alone can soothe



me into that dewy sweet slumber, her touch I  
know, her voice I recognise.

This is my knowledge—as much as a calf has—or as  
much as the little ones of the sparrow have.

I know this is my mother at sight of her, my limbs  
would speak out what no language can.

My whole body is a tongue that calls out!

“My Father!” “My Mother!”

Nothing answers. Stars sweep on, and answer not,  
though I looked at them for hundreds of nights;  
the streams run on, the hills stand calm, the  
trees grow and winds blow heeding me not.

The sky replies not, nor doth the moon talk to me,  
no one tells me where is my Father.

My cries are lost in the wilderness, no one has a heart  
that cries.

The birds alone, my dumb companions crowd around  
me and perch on my head and shoulders, they  
sing to beguile me but I cry again!!

No songs can heal my pain, no shows amuse.

How should a little living baby, made of flesh and bone,  
cry not?

And who could beguile him but his own mother whom  
his cries are calling out of time and space?

Until the child is laid with his little bosom on the  
bosom that gave it birth and Mother's lips kiss  
his cheeks and his infant hands entwine her  
neck, and mother's half-closed eyes look into  
the joy-lit baby eyes, how could a living babe  
be soothed to rest?

To the little one, mother is almighty.



## 46 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

To it her presence is all.

The baby's Mother is his God-given God: Mother is all.  
My cries would stop, my pain would cease, my face  
would beam, my soul would glow like a flower,  
when in her arms. My flesh knows her.

I am the child lost in the world-fair!

The wise men came, they took me in their lap, they  
roamed with me from tent to tent and asked  
me, is this your Father?

In endless roamings, I was taken to kings, heroes and  
saints, to prophets, poets, thinkers, young and  
old; I was taken to queens, mothers of god-like  
men, angelic women famed for all tenderness of  
heart and goodness of soul that makes a woman  
so fair and noble;

The brighter the tents, the gayer the guests, the more  
godly the dwellers, the fairer the womankind  
and the brighter the jewels they wore,—the  
more painful grew my pain and my very soul  
cried: "My Father"! "My Mother"!

I have grown up now, but not yet have I seen my  
Father; good people have toiled but not yet has  
my Mother come!

Birds have flown everywhere seeking her for me but no  
news yet, nothing avails.

Save me! I am growing mad.

My fears make me to stumble at every step.

I saw a young-old man, he had a white beard, a snow-  
white turban, I flew into his arms and cried  
"Father"!

My soul returned to me, still not finding for itself what  
no one else could find for it!!



I saw a rider, a splendid rider on a splendid steed; I  
ran after the horse; the rider turned not, the  
horse galloped away.

I knew not my madness grew and I flew into the arms  
of any man and woman, crying "My Father,"  
"My Mother!"

I was mad, I saw my Father in clouds, in air, I saw him  
under the shades of the stars, I was restless.

A boy lost from infancy and brought up on the knees  
of rocks and fed by birds of passage, whose home  
has been the market place, who never met a  
glance from among the thousand pairs of eyes  
glancing into each other, who never had a mouth-  
ful of milk where a thousand breasts feed a  
thousand lips, who never had the sensation of  
an embrace where thousands of mothers embrace  
their little ones.

The calf still lowed for the Mother-cow, the cow was  
looking for her calf, the love-lowings disturbed  
God's Creation: but such was fate, they could  
not reach each other.

One noon, on burning sands, the world-scorched mad  
man saw in dream-light a Figure of Heaven:—  
All-attracting, all-piercing Beauty that buys the soul  
of man as a slave of God by a glance, in whose  
all-containing sight the man forgets all else,  
in whose Almighty Glance the soul soars, tran-  
scending time and space, whose lifting eyelids  
signal a rain of stars.

Ah! a thousand new births and a thousand deaths in  
the space of a Glance!



## 48 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

One Glance of the all-creating Beauty!!

The dumb limbs of the universe with one pure vibration  
speak of this Beauty.

The Heavens came down to me as a tall, majestic figure  
of holy youth, joyous, tender and soft, meek  
and mild, and sweet like a rose, and common  
like a child of man, radiant, made of flesh,  
fragrant, a wonderful Being in whom I saw my  
all, my Father, Mother, Friend and Master.

This Figure is the Mother. My Mother comes.

She took me in her lap, me a man with long long hair  
and a flowing beard that had some silver from  
the dawn that breaks beyond this death, a  
beard streaked with a few reminder-rays of the  
yonder life, me a trembling old man, ill-dressed  
in tattered rags, bare-headed, bare-footed, a  
pilgrim lost in the sands.

The son of man thus lay asleep unconscious.

When the pilgrim woke, he was a holy man.

All limbs of clay were transmuted into those of gold,  
recast, remade in life of soul.

The long journey through life on life is over; the sun  
did roll for this, for this the lamps of stars!

Long tresses knotted above by her fair hands, which  
a snow-white turban covers, an iron ring on the  
wrist, two scimitars concealed at the side, a  
flowing beard—a man well-dressed like a soldier,  
the pilgrim rose from his sleep.

A little hut in the desert he makes, his own handicraft,  
his art, through whose roof made of dry grass-  
blades peep the sun and moon;



A pitcher of red clay, a shallow cup for its lid and a bed made of golden straws, neat like the inside of a bird's nest where come fair-plumed birds to drink with man a beakful of water and pick a few small grains of wheat and maize.

The Man of the hut, like a bird in its nest, now swings free in nature's infinite sun and air and cloud and rain and storm!!

Once more the son of Man is alive with God's life, devoid of the lower self, one with God, yet still with an innocent self as much as that of a bird that loves the dawn, with self just enough to be a man to vibrate with wonder and love and awe, feeling as much as one can feel on earth for others who are lost, meddling with no one's affairs, yet watching the time when best one could help without giving unrest and pain!!

He is the child-man who speaks the language newly learnt: "Hail, Master!" "Hail, Holy One!" His lips move with this Word, the Word runs in his very blood.

He cannot live without this Word.

It is his air, his sky and land.

As fish in water, this "Hail, Master!" is his sea, out of this sea he dies.

Others have much to live by, but he has none, nothing more.

All is this. It is his life and the fountain of life from whence the life flows into him.

It is his kith and kin, his name and fame, his treasure great.

His Heaven is *Nâm*, he cannot live outside his hut.



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In this Word is the life of his Saviour, this *is* his  
Saviour.

He suffocates in air devoid of *Nâm*.

The angel of his noon-dreams lives with him.

The Mother comes to him in dreams and tells him  
secrets of life.

He knows all, knowing most when knowing least, in  
sleep, all made of dreams!

He breathes freely, he depends on nothing.

No desires disturb his unrippling mind swimming like  
a lotus in a sea of perfect self-contained peace.

Borne on the wings of the heavenly zephyrs of the  
Guru-given *Nâm*, the little boat of his human  
frame sails to the Infinite.

The man by the Master's light is transformed!

I am with my Father.

I sleep and wake in Him.

He encompasseth me; when I stumble, wonder of  
wonders! I fall in His lap!

I love the moon as it ascends now from behind the  
straw-thatchings of my hut, I love to see the  
break of dawn from my bed of straw, I love to  
look at the stars, and the high and still higher  
sky whose vastness is my joy.

In the lap of my Father with my bowl filled with milk,  
I am what no kings can be.

My life is now a farewell to this world-fair!

It is my Father's call and I go.

Seated on the summits high of love, I say: "O Earth!  
O Sky! O rolling winds and waters! O day!

O night! I send from here to you, my farewell greetings!

Revolving seasons! Man, woman, O child! with folded hands, let me greet ye with my Master's salute:  
*Sat Sri Akâl!*<sup>1</sup>

Let me, at parting of the ways, repeat to you what my Master said to me: know this as truth,  
One *Nâm* alone is our saviour!

*Nâm* alone is Love, *Nâm* is truth and light,  
*Nâm* is the beginning, *Nâm* the end, *Nâm* is the way  
and lamp, *Nâm* is the end-all and be-all, no one  
phase of life can define *Nâm*, all life is in it  
contained, this is all.

Call it as you will, this is Guru Nanak's life of love! "

<sup>1</sup> The well-known Sikh cry, that addresses God as the universal Father.





# POEMS ON SIMRAN





## POEMS ON SIMRAN

### THE WHOLE HORIZON OF MY MIND

THE whole horizon of my mind is lit with the joy of  
the sight of the Stream of Heaven, as it comes  
flying down the steeps to me,

A stream of soft mists ethereal that from far far off  
flows into me; it is a volatile sense of joy that  
fills me.

It is the joy that the lotus has when it is kissed by the  
rising sun, ah! the morning joy of birds!!

The mat on which my soul kneels down to pray is this  
Joy-mist that fills me with the sense of 'Thy  
Omnipresence.

The exquisite fragrance of knowledge that Thou art  
somewhere intoxicates me.

My head reels with joy, my flesh grown translucent  
cries out for Thee!

### AS A WOMAN LOVES MAN

As a woman loves man, I love *Harí Nâm*,<sup>1</sup>

Without His Divine Presence encompassing me in my  
daily life, without the sight of the light of His  
Silver Feet, without the mists of joy of the  
touch of holiness, at all times of the day and

<sup>1</sup> The name of God.



night, heartfelt and unforgot, without that sweet  
madness for His Name that holds me fast within  
the air of the Presence of God, I am more miser-  
able than those who stand in need of bread or  
clothes or house or bed.

I need but love of God-like man to raise me from the  
slough of a wavering faith,

When out of the sphere of this Divine Attraction my  
mind is half insane, my frame is in pain as if  
a million thorns have pricked me through.

All disease is forgetfulness of my Lord of Love, all  
distress is in the outer air.

### THE MAN OF GOD

THE man of God doth live in his own paradise made of  
dreams,

And he watches calm changes of the colours of his sky  
and how with those changes change his joy and  
pride and aroma of faith!!

His life is a continuous inspiration,

At times the stream grows thin like an unspun thread  
of cotton, when spider-like he rolls it in himself  
and flies from all society,

At others, the stream surges in all the four directions  
like a shoreless roaring sea,

And the man of God comes out to oppose the whole  
world of unfaith and lower-self.

His God-inspired almighty sword doth cleave the  
Dark and save the saints and destroy all that  
is false.

And yet he is the Child of Man whose own sustenance



is but a cup of milk drawn afresh from the Golden Stream of Love that flows toward him from the Lotus Feet of God.

The man of God feels suffocated if drawn away from this Holy Presence.

The vision of His Glory redeems his mind from all wandering aims and concentrates it in a little luminous point of His *Nâm*, builds the faith that God is, and grows the man beneath the shades of mists, the primeval dreams of which man is made.

His life is Love of God, his life is Nanak-*Simran*; his is the science of growing love and faith in the life of man, his is the art of the gardener that plants the Man of God in man;

He sows a poet, a seer, a lover of God, a hero in a common Child of Man.

He exalts the common life of man to the dignity equal to or more than that of gods.

For the joy of this life all creation pines and the gods of Heaven do pine.

### OF WHAT USE TO TURN THE BEADS?

OF what use to turn the beads in my hands, if my heart, like the earth, turns not around its Sun, in its eternal journey unbroken by a step?

*Simran* is the planetary march of our life round a higher life of Heaven.

The heart-beats, the breath, the tongue, the pores of skin, the mind, the footfalls, all must repeat



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Hail, Master! with a rosary made of the beads  
of love, of tear-drops for all.

Not to be a priest with beads but to be a rosary our-  
selves made of heart-beats, moving as He may  
move, obedient to His Will; we live as the  
Children of Song!

If He give us a number of playmates, we play together;  
if He take them away, we still look up to Him  
and pray and sing;

If He put us with Himself in warm beds in cold dark  
winter nights, we sleep; if He throw us in a  
flood we swim, knowing the Great Swimmer is  
still with us, no waters can dare drown!

If He throw us in fire, Welcome! He tests not us but  
His own gold.

Be it death or worse,

We are safe in His Arms with Hail, Master!

In all tempests with our tiny arms entwined round  
His Mother-Neck, our tresses flung free in  
breezes of time, we sleep like babes in His Firm  
Embrace.

No fires can burn, no waters drown, no swords can cut,  
no kings destroy the children of the Master.

We are the sons of Guru Nanak, Guru Govind Singh.  
True! To turn our beads may be nothing, but to turn  
our beads may be all.

EACH SAINT IS A GREAT STAR OF SIMRAN LIFE

EACH Saint is a great star of *Simran* life, in whom the  
Master has planted the seed of the Song Divine  
of the *Nâm*, Hail, Master!



The Saint, the liberated soul set in the Guru is the  
centre fixed round which the lesser planets re-  
volve singing Hail! Hail, Lord and Master!

The central sun in turn is a spark of Heaven that shines  
with the light of *Nâm*!

Infinite is the Master's Being in whom all glowing  
stars of Divine life in their own seats burn as  
flames of eternal love.

It is as he ordains.

There is a sky on sky, a heaven on heaven still high  
and higher, which the Master combines in the  
soul of man.

All past is not past, all future is not to come, it is there  
as one Great Now of the seeing Soul, the Reason  
Pure that thinks not, but sees clear: God is.

This Seeing is *Simran*!

It is the restoration of man to his natural heavenly  
life of innocence and its joys and its glory.

### ON THE WHEEL OF SIMRAN

ON the wheel of *Simran*, this life or death is one  
unbroken joy, it is a bliss that gods share  
with man.

It is not near nor far; one grain, one mustard seed  
contains the sun.

Wonder of wonders! only believe the finite is Infinite!!  
The Man is God.

*Simran* is the secret *Nâm*-stream of life that flows from  
the Master to the disciple, and it is life that  
begets life; no thoughts, no ways of meditation,  
nor Yoga could bid it in us to flow, no penance



nor renunciation nor ways of giving alms could command it, nor lip-worship nor rites of thousand kinds, nor prayers that arise not from life and heart combined, nor gods of our own making, nor musings of myriad minds could make of us a star of the *Simran* sky!

It is the Master who visits us, as He wills, and lifts us up into the planetary society of saints and slowly makes of us a Sikh;

He hangs us in the Heaven of His Own Self, making us swing with a galaxy of liberated souls revolving round a sun whom He bids to attract a chosen few!

The sun is thus appointed to shine, and watch and lift on his shoulders the sons of God!

This is Guru Nanak's scheme of making this world of man and soul a shining heaven from heart to heart, soul to soul, from home to home, the kingdom of God self-contained, independent in one's own self and yet a whole, one home, one temple sublime of common worship of man and bird and beast.

Here dumb grazing animals and birds perched on green trees, swinging from bough to bough in divine ecstasy, and leaves of the forest and blades of grass raise a thousand-tuned chorus of the song of the lover of God:—Hail, Master!

#### THE GURU GATHERS THE MAN GRAIN BY GRAIN

THE Guru gathers the man grain by grain, the man who is scattered in the sands of desires, of



purposes other than God's, forgetful of his Maker till he makes him whole.

The Guru-made man discovers naught is his, all things belong to the Master, his heart and head and limbs are not his, nothing is his that he called so long his own, not a hair, not a blade of grass.

The vast world when thus he doth see in Wah-Guru, when to him Wah-Guru is all, then is the man made alive in himself;

The common man is God who shares the common lot with man, labours and sweats for his bread, he shears the soil with his plough, and sows and grows his crops that wave in the golden sun; he reaps and gathers grain by grain, does all, but not for himself.

He does all for Him; no Karma binds the man of *Simran*, for he is inebriated with joy of *Nâm*, and is but half conscious of his life on earth.

### ALL THE MARCH OF THINGS IS DIVINE

ALL the march of things is divine, be it of star or wind or water, or of the tree.

Miraculous is the movement of bird or beast.

A moving animal is God's Sign.

How do the moving winds give themselves trees whose leaves and boughs vibrate with passion!

All rocks split asunder to let the marching waters pass.

The bird in flight has a sovereign right over hill and dale, it is supreme.

Reverence is due to a moving thing.



## 62 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

*Simran* is the soul of love in earnest march to Heaven;  
long is his journey and far, far off is his home.  
But the Unseen pulls at his heart, the ends of  
the strings that pull are in the hands of the  
Guru, He propels all motion.

The traveller walks as He bids his steps to move.

Great is Guru Nanak's path that runs through action  
and strife, a slender thread of love that entwines  
round the traveller's heart on a march in the  
Infinite.

*Simran* is eternal stir in the soul of things!

### I DO NOT KNOW WHY

I do not know why, but when I say Hail, Master! the  
sun and stars seem to run in my breath, my  
muscles are as if fibres of light, my being wings  
that mingle with lands and waters, my lips  
touch gardens of flowers, my hands I exchange  
with some other hands, a stranger moves my  
tongue. The universe runs into me and I into  
the universe.

I seem a strange misty Form. Like vapour, I pass into  
the being of others, and they passing within me  
become my guests.

It seems fair forms of beauty roll as waves on the sea—

Hail, Lord! all are each other's!!

Our shape and limbs run into each other.

I find my bones at times strike within me against the  
bones of some one else.

Our deeds and thoughts jostle and run into each other.

I see a hundred souls blend in me and I interchange



my blood and brain thus with a hundred more  
in a single breath, and calm in solitude, I find  
a society.

I MET A WOMAN ONCE

I MET a woman once who was as fresh as a bush of  
roses full blown, her eyes like lotus were swim-  
ming in the azure of the world-water.  
Her step was light, like the morning zephyr, and she  
was beautiful! god-like was her form.  
I looked at her with tender eyes when I was melting  
in love of Him who made her so fair!!  
I almost lost the maker in the make.  
Her eyes ran into mine, her lips I felt vibrating on my  
lips in one music of *Nâm*.  
I vaguely saw her soul in me, and mine in her, for I had  
changed my sex.  
It took me hours to forget her; I am not given to look  
at things so tenderly.

THE PERSONS OF MEN

THE persons of men evoke worship in me so strong that  
I am flooded with love of gifts and things, for-  
getful of the Giver, of Him who made me fit to  
worship men and things, of Him who taught me,  
Love is God's gift and great!  
How strange! in men and things I forget Him who told  
me:  
"Worship Love wherever it may be, in mother's heart  
or in the babe, in the heart of a young man or  
of a maid, let thy sense supreme tell where Love



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may be, love it, be glad and sing in thyself,—  
'Love is great!'

It is life and more; it is the image of God, it is the  
bread of souls, it is the raiment of man.

He is naked; without Love, full of shame and pain."

Ah! If men and things were never too much with me!

Ah! If I could but draw the line round myself and  
live in its charmed circle, in eternal communion  
with my Beloved, only look at men and things  
from this charmed centre!

Ah! only look at men and things!

IN A THOUSAND SACRED RIVERS I HAVE PLUNGED

In a thousand sacred rivers I have plunged for a bath  
that washes off, they say, the sins of man;

But the fever of desire consumes me still, my pilgrimage  
availeth not.

When the Shower of Thy Glance falls on me, even to  
myself I am a sacred man. I feel laved. My  
heart is cleaned, my mind is cleared of thoughts;  
And my soul mounts high in regions of sinlessness, and  
cool streams flow through every channel of my  
thought-scorched frame.

A Spray of the Light of Thy Glance extinguishes the  
fiery volcanoes of the fevers of illusion, their  
mouths are filled with snow, their very soul  
freezes in cold ecstasy.

The fish is free in the river, the river in the sea, the sea  
is free in its expanse,

The Yogi feels freedom in Nirvânâ,

My bondage breaks when I bathe in Thy Glance,



Enrobed in holy sunshine of Thy *Amrit*, and adorned  
 with the light of sinlessness of Thy Blessed Love,  
 new born from Heaven's bath, my bondage  
 breaks when I catch a glimpse of Thy Lotus Feet.  
 How Thy Grace filleth me!!

### TOUCH MY HEART!

TOUCH me! Touch my heart with Thy Lotus Feet!  
 that I may dream, in world-distress and dust,  
 Thou art by me!!

Throw me not on myself!!

I forget Thy sky is above me; I forget it is Thy air I  
 breathe, Thy waters I drink, Thy stars I see,  
 Thy gardens I walk, Thy fruits I eat, Thy  
 singing rivers I hear as they roll, Thy men I  
 love! I forget that Thou art!

Lord! Throw me not on myself; at every step I forget  
 Thee.

Too much for me is this world-madness!

Keep swooping down on my heart from Thy Heaven-  
 flights!

Ah! I may know from moment to moment Thou art  
 everywhere and Thou art my Life and Joy and  
 Pride and Strength, and motion of all moving  
 things.

Pray, give me signs from Heaven that I may look and  
 wonder and say Hail, my Lord!

Let down the Love-strings that they may pull me up  
 with Thy Wheel of Change.

Lift me slowly, lift me up! Let me melt in Thy Glory  
 that makes Earth and Heaven but one.



## 66 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Touch me! Touch my eyes with Thy Lotus Feet and  
cool my heart, my burning eyes and frame;  
and let me rest at peace in Thy Tree-shadows.  
I need deep sleep to give me peace from the scorching  
sun of the world.

Ah! Let me dream, and see naught but Thee in all and  
everything.

### THE NEST IN THE GRASS-BLADES

DARK is the sky with all its stars and dark are both  
the Day and Night.

Dark is my heart!

The rise of a hundred Moons would not light my path,  
the glow of a thousand Suns would not send a  
single ray within my heart.

I wait for but one ray which He might bid to strike  
the windows of my closed soul!

He looks at me and my heart is enlightened;

The thin covering of the grass-blades is enough for the  
Nest of my Heart, I gather within it His Light  
and, all-content, I glow within, as the tempest  
of winds swings my nest in Endless Night and  
the Black outside!

### WHEN ALL THE DOORS ARE CLOSED

WHEN all the doors are closed against me,

When my own eyes and ears are closed;—no joy on  
earth, no light in my heart; when all friends are  
as strangers, and dust and dirt darken my  
vision, I no more see Thy Stars.



When I am so self-spent and dead, that I do not even  
feel that I am in distress, or dying, or dead,—

When I have no more even thirst or hunger, that old  
sweet longing that swelled the veins of my bosom  
till they throbbed with desire of Thee,—

When the river of my soul is swallowed up in the sands  
of sense, when my pleasures have killed all the  
grace in me, and buried me in shame,—

When my deeds condemn me to the death of forget-  
fulness of Thee,—

My Lord! Even then Thy Mercy shall bless, Thy door  
will be open for me!

My Lord! I hope Thou wilt draw a veil over me and  
cover me in Thy Forgiveness from all shame,  
and bathe me, ah! even me, with Thy Own  
Hands, and enrobe me with youth and life again  
and I shall again hear the music of Heaven!

In vain I loved aught else!

Killing and slaying one another, we hardly knew we  
lived.

Daily I drank the gall of pleasures, and daily drifted  
far from Thee!

I forgot Thy Omnipresence; I forgot Thy Grace Omni-  
potent that gave my very life to me.

I revelled in joys of sense and self, forgetting Thee!

I forgot the strength for sins of love was drawn from  
Thy blood.

How I carried on a traffic, trying not to know Thou  
art!

I daily lost myself, I daily wept as long as I had life  
left to shed even too late a tear.

But reckless forgetfulness made me helpless. the dust



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of daily Karmas piled on me, disease and death  
closed on me!

I drifted further and further away from Thee, but I  
saw still the Covenant signed by Thee on my  
brows and my last hope has been Thy Covenant  
which stands as my sky; sins are but clouds of  
dust in this Heaven!

I saw Thy signature arrow-writ on my breast, I found  
this my last hope in my absolute ruin: Thy  
angels stood by me in my utter dissolution.

Such is Thy Love and Compassion that reckons not,  
nor weighs, nor sits in judgment, but like a  
mother forgives!!

In infinite sunshine Thy children play.

Thy waters roll for them, Thy winds blow for them,  
Thy starry sky is arched for them.

Not a ray of light is refused, nor a grain of wheat denied.  
Thy blessings fall as ever.

Thou art the True and Steadfast Love, that gives and  
forgives and knows not the deeds of men!

### I AM THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

#### I

I AM the gardener's daughter!

My basket of sky is filled with the morning flowers,

And wrapped in the basket is the Lotus of the Sun!

I carry the basket of flowers on my head and I pass  
through the market!

The buyers bid for it amongst themselves

And many a youth cried to have it!

"It is not for sale," I said, and passed on.



The King of my country stopped me!

The King it was, who desired it!

“Let the price be fixed for it by the flower-seller,” he said.

“O Sire, not this basket! It is not for sale!”

I said; and wanted to pass on.

But I was stopped! The citizens shouted:

“O foolish Flower of a gardener! Knowest thou not it is the King who wants the basket of flowers!

And I turned to him and said:

“Sire! I am a poor gardener’s daughter!

I am thy servant and thy humble slave.

Thou art the King, our Protector.

But this is not thy basket!

This is for the King of the Kingdom of Heaven!

This is to be laid at His Feet!

Let the oblation of joy and love go free!

Great art thou, O King! Have grace upon a poor gardener’s daughter!”

The King smiled, and gave the sign. The crowds made way for me!

My steps hardly touched the ground,

I was like one flying with my basket of flowers!

My steps were weaving joy on the ground, as with the King’s grace I passed on!

## II

I am the gardener’s daughter!

My basket of sky is filled with the morning flowers,

And wrapped in the basket is the Lotus of the Sun.

I carry the basket of flowers on my head and I pass through the city lanes!



“Tarry, O Gardener’s daughter! Tarry!

I bring you a handful of wheat! Pray give me a wreath of flowers!” said a new-wedded bride and held out her arms covered with crimson-lacquered, ivory bangles up to the elbows!

“No, new Bride! No! these flowers are not for sale,” said I, and passed on.

“What a proud poor gardener’s daughter!” said she. The lanes were filled with people; dames and damsels were out of doors!

Some had their tresses flying, some but half-combed, some had their *sarís* only half wrapped around, they came out in confusion of joy!

“Flowers! Flowers! we want flowers,” a shout rose in the streets!

“Not for sale! not for sale!” said I hurriedly, and passed on!

“O sisters! we never met such a proud poor gardener’s daughter!”

### III

I am the gardener’s daughter!

My basket of sky is filled with the morning flowers,

And wrapped in them is the Lotus of the Sun!

I carry the basket on my head and I pass on out of the city lanes.

A young man caught hold of me!

“Be mine, O Gardener’s daughter! Be mine,” said he.

“I will not let thee go!

See, I am young and fair, I wish to live for thee! Be mine, to-day, be mine!

Look! I am wholly thine!!”

“ Ah, no, no! I cannot be thine!!

I am His who made me!

Leave the way clear! ”

“ Be mine! O Gardener’s daughter! be mine!

He made you for me, and me for you!

We will be each other’s; you shall be mine and I am  
yours for ever!

Come! live indeed,—not in dream.”

“ Ah, no! I was not made for you, nor you for me;  
nor were we made to live for each other!

I cannot be thine!

I am His who made me.

Life belongs to Him who gives life to us,

Neither can mine be yours, nor yours mine!

Let us give it back to Him whose it is!

Stand aside, O, stand aside!

Stay me no more, it is getting late!! ”

“ Then say, O Gardener’s daughter! How can I live  
without thy love?

How can I live without thee?

Thou art my God!

O Gardener’s daughter! I kneel down before thee and  
pray to thee under the blue sunny sky! Be  
mine! be mine in this very shape! My God!”

“ Ah, no, no! I am His who made me!

Unless He gives me to thee, I cannot be thine!

Now let me pass! pray! it is getting late!

You have wasted many moments of my precious day!

My flowers are not for sale, good Sir! This is not for  
sale!” I said shaking my head and passed on!



## IV

I am the gardener's daughter!  
 My basket of sky is filled with the morning flowers,  
 And wrapped in the basket is the Lotus of the Sun!  
 I carry the basket of flowers on my head and I pass by  
     the outstretched arms of men!  
 Eternal is my basket of sky!  
 Ever fresh my morning-flowers!  
 These are the offerings of a poor gardener's daughter,  
     the simple earth flowers placed by my little  
     hands in my basket of sky!  
 And I lay them daily at His Feet!  
 He daily accepts the offerings of a poor gardener's  
     daughter!  
 My kind, kind King of Heaven!

## V

I am the gardener's daughter!  
 My basket of sky is filled with the morning flowers!  
 And wrapped in the basket is the Lotus of the Sun!  
 And I carry the basket of flowers on my head.  
 And I daily pass through the mart, the throng, the  
     lanes, the staying hands!  
 Every day I lay my basket of flowers at His Feet!  
 Every day He takes the humble offerings, the offerings  
     of a poor daughter of a gardener!  
 Every day He says "My daughter!"  
 And every day I say "My Father!"

AN OFFERING

WHAT can I offer Thee?

I have nothing!

I have been to the loneliest flower in the desert,  
And the flower said to me: "Pluck me not, I am the  
flower of the Temple."

I have been to the snow-covered rocks that held the  
most glowing rubies!

As I touched them, the rubies oped their lips and said:  
"We are of the Treasury of the Temple."

Whenever and whatever I touch to make it mine, even  
for an offering,

An ancient voice replies: "All is God's."

All things are Thine!

All is in Thy Temple!

All Thy people are going to Thy Temple! each one has  
an offering for Thee!

The rich lady has a purse of gold and the poor a handful  
of maize or wheat!

The young girls have their white muslin-shawls full of  
roses and jasmine and narcissus!

And the young men have the reverent joy of their  
hearts enclosed in the lotus-wreaths they have  
in their hands!

The young and the old all gather in Thy Temple!

The white beards with the black side by side!

The chastened thoughtful flesh, and the young flesh  
full of a hundred new meanings, side by side in  
Thy Temple!

The throngs of pilgrims! The smiles and tears mingle  
in Thy Temple!



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The worshipping crowds in the gaiety of their life and  
in their thousand-tinted dresses, like the flowers  
in their hands, are themselves an offering!

What can I bring Thee as an offering?

I have nothing!

In every limb, in every part of myself, I found Thy  
Divine seal from old Eternity.

It were a shame to make an offering of myself before  
Thy creation, where everything, from the lowest  
clod of clay to the loftiest star, names Thee.

What can I bring Thee as an offering! I have nothing!  
To offer Thy slave for service, unless thou callest him  
to it, what would it mean but an excess of the  
“*blood of ignorance*”?

For I am one without worth.

To offer myself, without Thy calling me, what would  
it be but folly?

Ah! I know, how at times Thou didst call me and how  
I failed even to understand Thy orders!

Whatever I dared to do, I did it wrong.

There lie a thousand vessels that Thou didst give me  
to carry and I dropped them into pieces!

Ashamed of myself, I put my finger under my teeth,  
and stand with my head cast down before Thy  
creation, like an utter fool.

It is right, Thou shalt call me no more to any service!  
Full of shame, I now live far, far away from Thy palace-  
door in one of Thy out-houses, in my poverty  
and nakedness.

At last!

A lonely bed, an old man, two blind eyes; absolute  
nothing!

The sun rises for the blind man under his little low roof,  
Thou standest by my bed-side!  
I find Thee bending over Thy so unserviceable a slave!  
I find a tear from Thy eyes falling on my naked breast.  
I find Thou hast come!  
My Lord! my eyes are blind, they see not, my back-  
bone is weak, I can rise no more from my bed,  
I am Thy servant lying in one of Thy out-houses!  
My Lord! An old, unserviceable servant of Thine!  
My Lord! I have nothing to offer Thee!  
Only a pair of blind, old, shivering hands groping in  
the dark for Thee!





# READINGS FROM “ GURU GRANTH ”





# READINGS FROM "GURU GRANTH"

## JAPJI

(MAHLA I., Guru Nanak)

### I

HE is One. He is the First. He is all that *is*.

His name is Truth.

He is the Creator of all.

Fearing naught, striking fear in naught; His Form,  
on lands and waters, is Eternity; the One  
Self-existent.

Through the Grace of His true servant, continually  
repeat His Name.

\* \* \* \* \*

### II

He was in the beginning; He is through all ages, he  
shall be the One who lives for ever.

Beyond thought, no thinking can conceive Him, not  
even if the minds of men should think for ages  
and ages.

Nor silence can see Him, even if the minds of men  
meditate on Him for ages and ages.

Nor can He be known by gaining the worlds; for man's  
desire is never satiated, even though all the  
worlds laden with gold fall to his share.

No human thoughts can carry man far.



80 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

The movements of his mind, the thousand acts of wisdom of the world, leave him dark; nothing avails.

Vain are the ways of men.

How then to find Him?

How then to get rid of the dark pall?

One way there is,—to make His Will our own. No other way, naught else.

III

Great is His Will!!

All manifest things are forms of His Will.

His Will is indefinable!

Of His Will is made all sentient life;

It is His Will that some are great, some are small.

All existence is bound by His Supreme Will.

Nothing is outside the sphere of His Will; such is Truth!

Seek His Will,—this is to live.

If one sees the Universal Will at work, then one can never say “ ’Tis I.”

The bards have chanted hymns in praise of Him, His Power and His Great Gifts, and sung His Signs.

IV

He who builds and unbuilds the Universe,—in whom All Being is, coming forth from Him, and returning back to Him,—seems so far, yet so near; Omnipresent, Omniscient, Him have ages adored!

Countless millions have sung of Him, yet he still remains, unknown and unsung!

For ages and ages, have men sat at His Feet, for ages  
and ages they ate from His Hands, for ages and  
ages they have drunk of His Inspiration, and  
in such abundance that the vessels could never  
be enough to hold it all.

They are powerless to receive what He gives!

By Him are ordained many paths of life; men and  
things go whither He wills them to go.

And everywhere the Creator smiles in His Glory, in  
Eternal Repose Undaunted, Undisturbed, the  
Infinite, the whole creation's Lord!

His *Nâm* is the Substance of which all life is made. His  
*Nâm* enlarges the heart and makes it limitless.

His creatures beg their daily needs from Him, He gives  
all things to men.

Naught is our own; all is His that we possess, this life  
and all is His!

With what offerings, could we enter His Temple?

With what virtue, His Presence?

What words have we on our lips to win His Delight?

## V

Meditate on His *Nâm* at Morn, wet with the ambrosia  
of the day-break!

Our doings make this vesture of our body,

The Heaven shall cover our shame with honour, and  
by the light of His Glance we shall go free.

The Dawn of Divine Knowledge cometh from within,  
and man sees God as the Light Revealing.

High above all things is the Revealed Infinite, in Himself  
Self-resplendent, Glorious!



## 82 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Great are they and honoured of Heaven who serve His  
Will, He is the Treasure-House of all Goodness  
and Beauty.

### VI

Sing, ye men, His Greatness!  
Be wise in Him; believe in Him!  
Fill your hearts with His Love and His Greatness,  
Thus ye shall go free of pain and illusion,  
Thus ye shall be released, gaining the joy of Freedom  
in Him, who is All-Beatitude!  
It is the Master who can implant the seed of Faith in  
man, the Master is the inspirer of *Harí Nâm*.  
This divine illumination, he achieves in man.  
Through His Good Will and Love, one sees the presence  
of God in all things and everywhere.  
It is the Master's gift, this life of holy inspiration and  
love of *Nâm*,  
All gods are contained in the Master:—*Shivâ*, *Vishnoo*,  
*Brahmâ*, and the goddesses *Pârvatî*, *Lakshmî*  
and *Sarasvatî*, and the *Vedâs* are in Him and  
all song: He is the music of the Infinite!  
The All-Sustainer of souls, the All-Nourisher is But One!  
Thus has the Master proclaimed.  
Understand but one fact of all facts.—Forget Him not!  
In thy own mind is all, thou hast in it the gems and  
jewels of thought and virtue of all power, good-  
ness and beauty,  
But at the feet of the Master, learn one lesson:—  
Forget not thy Maker, the All-Giver, All-  
Sustainer, the Creator!  
(This is *Simran*! This is repetition of *Nâm*!)



## VII

If ye do His Will, it is enough *Tírath*<sup>1</sup> for ye to bathe  
     in holiness and joy,  
 If ye do not His Will, naught else availeth!  
 If a man live *yugâs* four, or tens of *yugâs*<sup>2</sup> more, have  
     fame spreading all over the nine continents and  
     all men to follow him, giving him the praise and  
     renown of the world,  
 Let him be as rich and as great as this, yet without  
     the light of His Glance beaming on him, he is  
     unseen, he is counted but a worm amongst  
     worms; he shall envy even the fate of sinners!  
 But wondrous are the ways of the Maker, He makes  
     the disabled able, the able abler.  
 Great is His All-bestowing Mercy!  
 He adds unto all out of His Own Stores, no second  
     such as can add unto Him.  
 (He is the Infinite Supreme, above all!)

## VIII

By Thee informed, O Lord, standeth the earth,  
 The stars hang in space and sky is above,  
 Inspired by Thee are the lower regions, the continents  
     of men, the adepts, guides and gods.  
 They die not who are thus informed.  
 Distress and sin to death and dust return.  
 Thou informest all gods, angels and heavens.  
 The light of Thy inspiration makes the beggar noble,  
     his raiment worthy of all praise.

<sup>1</sup> Holy rivers and places of pilgrimage.

<sup>2</sup> Yuga is a cycle of ages.



## 84 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Inspiration reveals the secrets of life and self; and one  
knoweth all, knowing Thee.

Information of Thee contains All-peace, All-truth,  
All-knowledge; all learning is noble thereby,

The mind of man itself concentrates in Self, attained  
is the Unattainable, the Unknowable is known,  
the blind finds out his path, secure from sin  
and sorrow.

Thus bathed in the bliss of holiness, Thy saints are for  
ever as full-blown blossoms of Peace.

### IX

What words can tell the state of those who live in faith  
and trust, who make His Will their own?

The Soul mounts high, Reason and mind grow clear;  
Fates wait with bated breaths,

They are freed of pain of flesh, of the dreadful grasp  
of *Yamâ's* Noose, and lost in Self, straight is  
the path of life for them.

Great is His *Nâm*.

The path of faith, nothing can bar nor mar nor change;  
they speed to Higher Regions beyond Death and  
decay, unhindered on, and gain the Seats of  
Honour hereafter.

The journey over, the men of faith have reached the  
goal!!

Saved are they and their kith and kin.

Their life gains its freedom of the Infinite.

No more, desire-pulled, it wanders a-begging.

They know Thy Will as their own; together both the  
Guru and the Disciples are saved!

All Glorious is His *Nâm*!

The door of life opens up to those who have forgone  
themselves in faith and love.

Men whom He appoints and to whom He gives authority  
are the true teachers of men, they guide and  
lay for man the path.

They are honoured of the kingdom of God.

They are the stars that make this earth a shining spot.

The chosen of God live in the Guru.

Their one fixed *Dhyân*<sup>1</sup> is His Person.

(Their breath is His Breath, their life is His Life. Their  
mind wanders not, nor their heart strays from  
the sphere of the Love of the Master!!)

## X

The works of the Architect of this Universe are above  
all reckoning; they speak foolishly who say they  
can conceive God.

They say this earth is borne on the horns of the Bull.  
But there is earth beyond earth, planets on planets  
beyond, heavy indeed is the load on the horns  
of the Bull!

It is not the Bull, it is *Dharmâ*, sprung from Love,  
who bears the weight of the worlds.

## XI

Ah! who can count the countless forms of life with  
which teems this world below and above, their  
names or species or hues?

<sup>1</sup> Meditation. Subject of meditation.



## 86 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

They are the letters writ by His Flowing Pen; who  
now can write, count or reckon that which the  
Maker has made?

How fair are forms made by the Creator!

How Mighty Thou! O Lord!

How enchantingly sweet is Thy emanation!

How great is the kingdom of Nature that Thou hast  
given to Man!

Thou didst create all this but by one word.

From one word of Thy Lips is made this thousand-  
rivered Nature!

How shall I praise Thy Miracle of Nature?

I am filled with the sweetness of its beauty!

At its altar, I fain would lay myself as a sacrifice, but  
too poor am I to gain my heart's desire, ah!  
even but once!!

Thy Will, O Beautiful! is good.

Thy Pleasure is all!

## XII

O Formless One! Thou art for ever! How various Thy  
mankind!!

Myriads of men in myriad ways of life!

Some name Thee and some are in pious penance engaged,  
Myriads recite from memory the Holy Books,

And myriads are lost in deep *Yogâ-Smâdhi* <sup>1</sup> with their  
hearts full of sadness for the evanescence of the  
*Mâyâ*, they are those who have grown indifferent  
to the world.

Myriads more are Thy devotees who meditate on Thy  
Knowledge and Beauty.

<sup>1</sup> Trance of Union.

Myriads have taken the vow of Right.  
 Generous myriads who take delight in giving themselves  
 and theirs away!  
 Myriads are the mighty Heroes Brave who bear the  
 brunt of steel in war with joy,  
 Myriads are vowed to Silence with their mind fixed on  
 the Eternal!  
 And myriads there are who are fools, blind mind and  
 heart, thieves and those that live on plunder.  
 Myriads, such as bind their fellow-men by their might,  
 Myriads, such as live the life of sin, and spread false-  
 hood, lies and scandals.

### XIII

O Infinite, how can I come to know Thy Nature?  
 Intoxicated with its Beauty, I fain would lay myself  
 at its altar as a sacrifice, but too poor to do my  
 heart's desire, ah! even but once!  
 Thy Will, O Beautiful, is good!  
 Thy Pleasure is all!  
 O Formless One! Thou art for ever!

### XIV

Beyond the reach of our senses and thought,  
 Myriads are Thy world-systems, myriad the spheres,  
 and various are the descriptions that the mighty  
 thinkers give of them.  
 This world is Thy writing!  
 This manifested emanation, these objects are the  
 Alphabets of Thy Word,



## 88 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Through these letters we name Thee, by their aid we  
praise Thee, by them is all our knowledge of  
Thee, with their aid we sing of Thy Beauty.

Magic are these letters, we write and speak.

These letters are forms of human destiny writ on every  
man's forehead!

The Forehead of Him who wrote all this is without  
these lines of form and shape and Fates.

He is free, He can never be writ!!

As He ordaineth so His creatures are!

Great is His Make and great is His Glory!

There is no place where His Glory is not,

Thy Will, O Beautiful! is good!

Thy Pleasure is all!

O Formless One! Thou art for ever.

## XV

The hands and feet and skin when mud-besmeared are  
washed free of dirt by water, our vestures when  
soiled are cleaned by washing;

But when the dirt of sins makes dark our mind, naught  
else but Thy *Nâm* can restore to it its fair  
transparency,

It needs be washed with the love of Thy *Nâm*, O Lord!

## XVI

The man reaps as he sows.

It is His Will, men come and go on the Wheel of Birth  
and Death.

Small indeed is the honour won outside of Self by making pilgrimage and penance, or being kind and giving charity to others, if one has not been within himself and bathed in the Ambrosial River within, if one has not felt Holy Inspiration within, if the seed of faith is not put in the soil of the heart, if love has yet not sprung!

## XVII

All kinds of Beauty are Thine, O Lord!  
No beauty whatever I have, how can I aspire to love  
Thee if Thou makest me not beautiful of heart  
and wakest me not to see Thy Beauty every-  
where!

O Self-Existent, Eternal, Beauty!  
From Thee has emanated the Holy *Nâm*-life!

What is the name of the Day and what was the time,  
what season and what month was it, when Thou  
first made the world?

The Pundits know naught of the dawn of Thy Creation  
to record it in the *Porânâs*,<sup>1</sup>

Nor have the *Qazîs* <sup>2</sup> seen that time to put it down in  
the *Qurân*,<sup>3</sup>

Nor do the Yogis know of that season, hour, date nor  
the day.

<sup>1</sup> Sacred books of the Hindus.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammedan Scribes.

<sup>3</sup> The Koran.



## XVIII

That Beautiful Hour when He made this world He  
Himself alone doth know,  
Beyond our speech, our praise, our description and  
knowledge is the Beautiful Maker!  
Still they speak of Him, each and all according to their  
mite, as one is wiser than another.

## XIX

He is the Great and the Infinite One; and great is His  
*Nâm*,  
What He wills cometh to pass.  
He knows whatever is.  
If any one else says he knows Him, he is but a fool in  
the eyes of the dwellers of higher regions.  
There are skies above skies and earths below earths  
and man's mind is tired of this great search,  
It cannot reach the end of His Vastness.  
All knowledge of man and his thousand books proclaim  
but One Truth, that there is but One Substance  
of which all this is made.  
There is but One Metal in all. None else! None else!  
How can the Infinite be reduced to the Finite? all  
attempts to describe Him are lost.  
The Infinite knows the Infinite.

## XX

Ours is to lose ourselves in worship and adoration, nor  
need we ask, Why?

No need to fathom the Unfathomable: As the rivers  
flow to the sea with their song, let us flow on  
to the Infinite, not knowing how wide is the  
ocean's flood,

Like an ocean is the Lord Almighty.

If one has wealth-heaps as high as pyramids,

Let him be ever so rich, yet is he less than the little  
ant, the ant that forgets not its Maker.

(The small man that enshrines the Sultan within is  
all-great.)

No end to Thee, O Infinite! nay, those who worship  
and love Thee have no end;

No end to Thy Forgiveness, endless are Thy Gifts.

Thy Vision and Inspiration are infinite and endless  
is Thy Purpose!!

## XXI

Endless is Thy Creation, we see neither Thy Near  
nor Thy Far, Thou hast neither this, nor that,  
shore.

For touching either end of Thine, serious minds almost  
cry with pain,

Thy secret is the pang of their souls, but they cannot  
touch Thy limits at any point.

The more we say, the more it grows; for us the more  
we know, the more is our ignorance!

Exalted is the Owner of the spheres!

Higher than our senses is His abode;

One must gain those heights before one catches a  
glimpse.



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It is He whose glance can lift us up, to see Him.  
His glance is a gift of Heaven.

Abundant is His Mercy, as great as Himself.  
He giveth and giveth, taketh not even a mustard seed  
from aught else.

The great warriors beg their might from Him and  
numberless wrecks of sin wait at His Door.

There are others who receive His Plenty and eating  
His Bread deny Him; fools think not on his  
mysteries.

XXII

In Thy courtyard die thousands of hunger and of the  
ills of flesh.

O Almighty Giver! This too is Thy Mercy, this too is  
Thy Love.

By Thy Will the chains of the prisoners drop.  
The bound are freed and the free are bound, who else  
could divine Thy Purpose, who else could say  
aught?

If any dare go against Thy Will, he will know for  
himself how painful to him is his pride.

He knows us all better than we know ourselves.  
He gives what is best for us; few are those who believe  
and bow to this truth.

Those on whom He bestows His song are greater than  
kings, those who have worship in their hearts  
are nobler by far than the great ones of this  
earth.

The poet's heart is rich!

## XXIII

Priceless and precious, Oh Lord, Thy Beauty!  
 How Thy Worth reposes on its infinite glory, in price  
 and in value one and the same!  
 Pricelessly precious are the wares of *Nâm*,  
 Thou art the Eternal Merchant!  
 Thy stores are infinite, too precious to be priced!  
 Precious beyond measure is what Thou givest and what  
 Thou takest away, the exchange is pricelessly  
 precious.  
 The rate at which Thou dealest in love is of limitless  
 worth, and how infinitely sweet the hour Thou  
 bestowest love!  
 Thy delicate balance is priceless, Thy weights and  
 weighings!  
 How common and how precious are Thy Signs!  
 Pricelessly precious is the word from Thy Lips,  
 Pricelessly precious is Thy Forgiveness!  
 How common and how precious art Thou!  
 Too common to be felt as preciousness itself, there is  
 no other value; all descriptions stutter and are  
 lost in a silence which wonders and fixes its gaze  
 on Thee for ever.

## XXIV

Though the *Vedâs* speak of Him, and the *Porânâs*,  
 Though the learned discourse on Him, and *Indrâ* and  
*Brahmâs* expound His law, *Krishnâ* and His  
*Gopî's* speak of Him, *Shivâ* and the adepts tell  
 about God and all the *Buddhas* proclaim Him,



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Though millions have spoken thus; though millions  
came and sat and left their seats and have gone,  
And if there come as many more creations, and all  
speak of Him, yet He shall forever remain The  
Undescribed!

And Thou, O Lord, art more than our minds can  
comprehend.

Thou art as Great as Thou canst be!

Thou art the Verity, Thou art the One Reality;

Thou alone knowest Thyself.

XXV

Where art Thou, O Lord? where is Thy Door? where  
is Thy Tower-House from where Thou carest  
for all, on whose walls breaks the music of the  
Universe in its Endless Song?

How many are the instruments!

How countless are the tunes and chants of this World-  
Music!

How countless are the voices that sing, countless are  
their undulations!

O Lord! the winds and waters and fires sing thee;  
the King of Right and Wrong and his angels;  
*Ishwarâ* and *Brahmâ* and the goddesses Thou hast  
clothed with Thy Beauty, sing Thee;

*Indrâ* the owner of the three worlds with His Court of  
gods, sings the same chorus!

The silence of the Adepts and Saints sings!

The Heroes of self-control, of patience, of celibacy, of  
learning, are a Song of Thee!

The Seers pass with prophecy along the ages, singing;  
 and the Goddesses, that invest the air, the sky  
 and earth, with music of their limbs and eyes,  
 their robes and gems, their life and joy, are a  
 Song.

## XXVI

The Holy Lands and Rivers roll in music, the crystal-  
 jewels of men roll in Thy Song.  
 The mighty and all-heroic are made of Song.  
 Thy Kingdoms Four sing Thee!  
 And Thy vast solar systems, Thy planets and their  
 satellites, whom Thou art holding in Thy Hands,  
 raise the music of Thy praise!  
 Only those whom Thou admittest, can enter into this  
 Song,  
 Thy poets, divinely led, whose souls are dyed with the  
 red dye of Thy Lips, are in Thy Song Eternal!  
 There is music in music, aye! music beyond music.  
 Transcendental is Thy Song!

## XXVII

The same and the same and the Eternally True is My  
 Master!  
 He forever subsists, His *Nâm* is True.  
 He is; He shall be; He cannot be thought away, nor  
 doth He depart.  
 He made this world of diverse shapes and colours,  
 fold on fold, embryo within embryo, that new  
 to newer grows and watches my Lord and His  
 in Glory!



All moves by His will.  
 He wills as He wills.  
 None can undo His will.  
 My Lord is the King of Kings, the Absolute!

## XXVIII

Of what avail are thy ear-rings, O Yogi? <sup>1</sup> better adorn  
 thy mind with peace.  
 Have no desires pulling at thy heart; mind not what  
 happens.  
 Of what use the Yogi's *Jholi* that thou wearest? make  
 retirement within the chambers of thy soul thy  
*Jholi*!  
 Be self-contained and centred in thy own Self.  
 This *Bhibút* <sup>2</sup> doth not help thee to forget thy body,  
 make *Dhyân* thy *Bhibút*, by *Dhyân* this body  
 will be that raiment which death can touch not,  
 Wear, O Yogi, this *Khinta* <sup>3</sup> of new Youth that fades  
 not.  
 Make Faith thy Staff.  
 Take the middle path and be patient.  
 Thou canst not be of *Ai* Sect of *Yogâ* by roaming with  
 the so-called Yogis; but only if thou sharest  
 thy goodness in company with the whole world.

<sup>1</sup> This is evidently addressed to a Yogi of the Ai Sect. They bore their ears and put in thick ear-rings of Jade or wood. They have a wallet like a bag of cloth swung round their shoulders in which they keep the alms. They besmear their bodies with ashes. They wear a long gown made of shreds of cloths. They also have a staff.

<sup>2</sup> Ashes besmeared on the body.

<sup>3</sup> The gown of shreds.

XXIX

The Conquest of the world is but the Conquest of thy  
Self.

Bow to Him who is the Beginning of all and Who  
Himself is without beginning, Primal, the Pure,  
Immutable, Eternal, Who is the One Life un-  
changing from age to age!

\* \* \* \* \*

Thy Bread be knowledge of God.  
And be kind to all; there is the same throb of life in all  
hearts.

All things are strung in the string of one life.  
All power of the Earth and Heaven is His.

\* \* \* \* \*

Things are made and unmade, the Wheel of Creation  
whirls around this change.

To each one is measured out nor less nor more but what  
is writ in his own destiny!

Bow to Him who is the Beginning of all and who  
Himself is without beginning,—the Pure, the  
Immutable, the Eternal, Who is the One Life  
unchanging from age to age!

The three children of *Mâyâ*<sup>1</sup> revolve around the affairs  
of the world.

One produces, the other nourishes, the third destroys,  
but these Regents work as He bids them, they

<sup>1</sup> It evidently refers to three dynamic principles that keep  
creation going.



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move as He commands, He sees them, though they see Him not.<sup>1</sup>

Salute the Beginningless Beginning, the Colourless Purity, the Deathless Verity, the Changing Permanence, which is the same through ages and ages!!

God makes, and sees what He has made.

He is the Lover of Beauty; the art of God transcends our senses.

No need of sitting in one posture, O Yogi!

### XXX

The Fair God is everywhere!!

He feedeth us in all the spheres; allotted to us is our share, even before our birth!

Salute the Beginningless Beginning, the Colourless Purity, the Deathless Verity, the Changing Permanence, which is the same through ages and ages!!

If one tongue of man were as myriads, these myriads made myriads more again; and if one single utterance were as if a wheel of sound,—whose echoes again a myriad had moved,—reverberated through the leaves of the forest and blades of grass, so that the sacred sound bound with its spell all nature with its countless threats and voices,

With such a tongue and with such a sound when Man says Hail, Lord!

<sup>1</sup> The idea is quite clear, that the three principles of Maya are all of the objective, while God is the subject, the Absolute.



Each pore of his skin sending forth a strain with the  
music of His *Nâm*,  
Then is the man at one with his Maker, then Man mounts  
high, and is one with God; there is no other way!

XXXI

We have heard the whispers of gods on high; the worm  
of the earth begins to vie with those whose  
souls are lit by the glances of God, who beam  
with Beatitude Eternal!

The Man plays the fool in thinking so much of himself.  
What are his resolves, his ideas and efforts, labour and  
pain?

Are not his deeds as fates combined against him?

Is not his past self his own undoer?

No way of escape from the wheel of birth and death  
but His Saving Mercy, His Grace and Glance!

O Lord! throw me not on myself, of my will I can nor  
speak nor observe silence.

Throw me not on my own strength; of my will I can  
nor pray nor give myself to Thee!

Nor I can follow life nor even Death!

Not by my own power can I a beggar be, or a king; throw  
me not on myself, for by myself I can nor gain  
my soul nor the knowledge of Thyself.

Throw me not on myself, for I am unable to cross the  
Sea of change.

I cannot, O Lord!

Let him who has strength in his arms try, but man is  
weak man for all that.

All men are the same, nor more nor less, when seen  
from the Eternal.



## XXXII

Day and night He made.  
 He made the seasons, He made the winds and waters  
 and fires and nether regions.  
 In mid-air is put this earth and held firm; this is the  
 land of Duty,  
 It is as the temple of God.  
 This earth is flower-dyed with diverse species of life,  
 the earth teems with their infinitude,  
 As we do here, so shall we be judged,  
 The Court of God separates chaff from wheat, there  
 shall be measured unto us our raw and ripe.  
 Each man shall stand alone: his own deeds shall avail  
 after the life of this earth.

## XXXIII

Honour is there for the Chosen of God and they shall  
 be received by Him with kindness and love and  
 He shall look at them, such is the way of the  
*Dharmâ-khand*, the Region of Action.<sup>1</sup>  
 The Spirit of Judgment rules over the Realm of Action!  
 Great God is merciful!

But the way of the Region of the Mind<sup>2</sup> is another.  
 The Spirit of Divine Knowledge reigns here!

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Realm of Limitation where the embodied souls have to work out their destiny—The *Jiva Srishti*—The Man-world.

<sup>2</sup> This is the Region of Liberation—the *Ishwar Shiristi*, the God-world.

In the mind roll winds and waters and fires,  
 In the mind are *Krishnâs*, *Shivâs*, *Brahmâs* by thousands  
 and an endless variety of name and form and  
 dress.  
 And in it are contained thousand Regions of Duty,  
 countless stars, moons and suns.  
 In it are countless Heavens, and countless again are  
 the countries and lands and homes.  
 In it are adepts, *Buddhâs*, Yogis, gods and demons.  
 In it are saints.

### XXXIV

In the mind surge the seas, and in it are jewels and  
 precious gems.  
 In it are the sources of life, and in it are countless  
 languages and countless lines of Kings.  
 In it are the Masters of the Divine Knowledge and in  
 it are those who worship.  
 There is the Infinite in the Infinite!!  
 The Region of Mind is lit with God's light.  
 There is music endless, there is bliss untold.  
 Then comes the higher Realm of Ecstasy!  
 There is the holy Rapture, here is naught but Beauty.  
 Here are the Titans at work, making idols of beauty, and  
 here in this Realm of Ecstasy are made intellect  
 and understanding, wisdom and power of men  
 and gods.  
 Beyond all words is this Sphere of Ecstasy as subtle  
 as a Trance.  
 Its reigning Deity is Beauty!!



## XXXV

Higher than the Region of Ecstasy is the Realm of Grace.

The Gods of Power rule over this Realm,—

Great masters who lift man by force as he toils to it through the three other Realms of Duty, Knowledge and Ecstasy.

Incomparable, the dwellers of the Realm of Grace;

They are mighty heroes full of God's Power!

One understandeth only when he sees this Realm, no word-paintings can picture it for us.

Here are many Queens as *Sîtâs* in Glory, whose beauty is what no one can tell another who hath seen it not.

Nor death nor delusion is for them any more, in whose heart He liveth!

Here are congregations of saints in bliss, whose minds and hearts are inebriate with God.

## XXXVI

Higher than all is the Realm of My Lord,—

The Realm Absolute! here reigns The Formless One!

Here His Glance is my soul's Beatitude!

In this Realm are contained all Regions, and all the Starry Heavens without end!

Out of the Formless Infinite come the forms and finite beings, never hasting, never resting.

## XXXVII

They whom He seeth, on whom He raineth the Light  
 of His Smiles and pours the showers of the Life  
 Eternal,  
 They on whom God bestows His Grace and Glance,  
 and whom the Kind One by one glance maketh  
 happy, toil hard at their craft as smiths:  
 Chastity of thought and speech and deed is their  
 Furnace,  
 Understanding is the Anvil on which they ply their  
 craft through the world of self and woe.  
 Divine Wisdom serves as tools for those toilers at life!  
 The devout awe of the Presence of God, and reverence  
 serve them as bellows, and sufferings or vow of  
 poverty as fire;  
 They make the Heart of Love the vessel in which melts  
 the Gold of *Nâm* and thus they cast and recast  
 their being in Love.  
 True is this Mint where Man is cast in the Image of  
 God, where Man is the Word and the Word is  
 Man:  
 On such as these, He showers His Grace!

## SLOKA

BORN of the waters, we children of great Earth learn our  
 lessons from the winds,  
 And we spin in the arms of Day and Night; they nurse  
 us well.



Before the Great Judge will be read out our Actions,  
good or bad.

By our own Actions we shall be nearer Him or farther  
off!

Those who fix their *Dhyân* on *Nâm* shall pass above  
the pain of labour.

Their task is done.

Bright are their faces!

And in joy of one liberated soul shall many more be,  
through His Great Love, made free!

## KEERTAN SOHILA, OR THE WEDDING SONG

### I

SING ye, my comrades, now my wedding song!!  
In the Temple House where saints sing His *Nâm*, where  
saintly hearts glow all day and night with His  
Love,

Sing ye, my comrades, now the song of His Praise!  
Sing the song of my Creator!  
I fain would be a sacrifice for the harmony divine that  
giveth everlasting Peace!

My Lord careth for the smallest life,  
The Bounteous Giver meets the needs of each,  
No arithmetic can count His gifts,  
Naught is it that we can render unto Him.  
The Auspicious Day has dawned!  
The Hour is fixed for my wedding with my Lord!

Come, comrades! assemble and make rejoicings,  
 Anoint the Bride with oil and pour on her your blessings!  
 Comrades! pray, the Bride may meet her Lord!  
 This message to every human being!  
 This call is for all.  
 O Man! Remember Him who calls!

## II

Thy Day too is coming fast!  
 Many are the tabernacles, many the Teachers and  
     many the lessons they give.  
 Remember there is but one Guru, The Master of Masters,  
     that meeteth man in thousand forms!!  
 O Father! keep Thy Hand on that tabernacle, make it  
     Thy own, where thy man melts into the song of  
     Hail, Lord!—not because I pray, but because  
     Thou art so great!  
 As moments and hours and days, each with its own  
     distinct import, make but one month,  
 And as months, each with its own distinct effect, make  
     seasons, each again with its own distinction!  
     and the cause of this all is the Shining Sun!  
 So is the Play of the one Maker in the Diversity of  
     Forms!

## III

### ARTI <sup>1</sup>

The sky is my Azure Salver where the Sun and Moon,  
 Thy lamps, illuminate Thy songs of praise.

<sup>1</sup> The word Arti or Arati originally meant the ceremony of waving lamps at night before an idol. (See Introduction.)



106 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

The stars are as pearls set in my Salver! O Light of  
Lights!

My incense is the fresh fragrance blown on southern  
winds from sandal forests, frankincense and  
cloves and a hundred spices,

All the herbs of the earth rise with their flowers in Thy  
Temple and lay their offerings at Thy Feet!

The breezes blow cool from East and South in Thy  
Temple high; they wave the Heavenly Fans in  
Thy Honour!

Such is Thy Arti!

O All-kind Creator! The Breaker of the Wheel of  
*Karmâ*, the great Deliverer!

Thou hast a million eyes yet no eyes!

Thou hast a million light-white feet, yet no feet!

Thou hast a million forms! yet no form is Thine, O Lord!

Thy Presence sheds a thousand perfumes and yet Thou  
hast no incense!

This Vision of the Invisible is my utmost richness!!

O Light of Lights! Thou art the light of all Hearts!

By Thee is kindled both Heaven and Earth.

The Lord maketh the Invisible Visible to man.

To wait for the Coming about of Thy Will is our best  
worship!

I thirst for Thy Lotus Feet all day and night.

I long for Thy Fragrant Presence as the bee longs for  
the flowers.

Grant me, O Lord, the Nectar of Thy Grace! I am  
athirst like the *Sârang*! <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another name for the Chatrik, the pied Indian cuckoo, who  
only drinks when the morn is in the mansion of Arcturus, and  
therefore always thirsts.



Pour in me Thy Heavenly Drop and let me repose in  
Thy Holy, Holy *Nâm*!

IV

The human frame is filled with love's desire and passions  
of all kinds!

As it comes and touches the feet of the saint, all is  
reduced to dust.

This colliding of the man of sins with the sinless saint  
is as pre-ordained as when two stars collide in  
Heaven,

It is the good fortune of Man that he meets his Lord  
and Master, and his *Dhyân* is fixed on the  
Eternal Verity,

Break, break, O Man, at the feet of the Saint!

To do the behest of the Saint is thy highest *Dharmâ*!

Break, break, O Man, at the feet of the Saint!

Mind not the *Sâktâs*, men cut off from the Music  
Divine;

Mind not those who are out of tune with the Verity of  
Beauty, knowing not the sweet deliciousness of  
*Nâm*.

There is the thorn of pride in their heart;

The more they seem to mount, the more is the pricking  
of this thorn within their heart!

From pain to greater pain they march, they bear the  
pain of *Yamâ's* Noose.

Absorbed are God's Men in *Harî Nâm*<sup>1</sup> and have laid  
low at their feet the pain of birth and death and  
fears of the human lot.

<sup>1</sup> The name of God.



## 108 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

They have realised the Immortal Person of God.  
They have won the Universal Fame in all the stellar  
and astral systems of creation!  
O Lord! Thou art great and greatest.  
Thou art our Prop and Stay!  
Thine are we for ever!  
Make us Thine, O Lord! though we are so poor and  
weak, full of misery of soul and woe of thousand  
kinds.  
Make us Thy own slaves and let us repose in Thy *Nâm*.  
In Thy Love is the fruiting of our life.  
In Thy *Nâm* is our liberation.

### V

Thy slave longeth for the peace of lying at the feet  
of Thy saints, of being the dust of their holy  
feet.  
Make me, O Lord! the dust of thy great temple and of  
Thy saints!!  
Look up, ye friends! the Dawn of Death is breaking!  
I call ye out of the love of my heart for ye!!  
Awake and up! it is high time for ye to render up this  
life at the feet of the saints!  
Rise and earn the Treasure of *Harí Nâm* from the  
company of the saints.  
Provide for the life hereafter,  
Behold, the Dawn of Death is breaking yonder and soon  
shall ye be called!!  
God gave ye this life for this divine purpose.  
How day and night steal it from you drop by drop and  
how your heart is drained to waste!

O Man! rise and lay thyself at the feet of the saints and  
win thy life, ere it is all lost in folly!

The Man of Divine Knowledge swims across the sea of  
*Mâyâ*,

The world is in the welter deep, it shall thus remain in  
doubt.

Rise thou, O brave disciple! mind not the world and  
win for thyself the Castle of Immortality as the  
Master bids!

## VI

He knows the unknowable whom Thou wakest with  
Thy own hands and makest to drink the Cup of  
Thy delicious Love!!

## VII

Fly, my soul, fly! from the dust and smoke of life into  
the Pure!

For this achievement thou didst come.

Win thy Master's love through which shall the Love of  
God be thine.

He shall then make thy heart His abode!

Disciple, up! win this prize of life, and lie in sweet  
repose in the arms of God, with thy freedom all  
gained.

O Lord, Thou knowest the inmost of our hearts!

Thou fructifiest our desires and Thou art the Arbiter  
of our fates!

Sweet one! make me the dust of Thy Temple.



O SISTERS! IT IS THE MONTH OF RAIN

WADHANS MAHLA I. (Guru Nanak)

THE Peacocks have begun their dance,  
 O sisters! it is the Month of Rain,  
 It raineth : *Rhin Jhin, Rhin Jhin!*  
 It raineth Joy! *Rhin Jhin, Rhin Jhin!*  
 O woman! Great indeed the power of your eyes, if you  
     have conquered the All-Conqueror!  
 O Beloved! I would fain be a sacrifice myself, if thou  
     wouldst come!  
 I am sacrificed for the joy of Naming Thee.  
 They say, I am proud! I am proud because Thou art  
     mine! without 'Thee what am I? Dust, dust  
     and ashes!  
 O sisters! it is the Month of Rain!  
 It raineth indeed if He come!  
 It raineth : *Rhin Jhin! Rhin Jhin!*  
 It raineth Joy! *Rhin Jhin! Rhin Jhin!*  
 Joy! joy for them, they are with Him!  
 My comrades are with Him, they sing and live in love!

II

Vacant is my house, vacant my bed! He hath not come.  
 Now let me break my crimson-lacquered ivory bangles  
     against the crimson-lacquered bed, and scatter  
     the pieces in the empty room.  
 In vain, these jewelled arms; vain this crimson lacquer,  
     when He cometh not.

## SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL    III

For, after all this waiting, hath He not turned away  
from me?

O woman, not in crimson-lacquered bangles, not in the  
makers of bangles, and not in decked arms and  
lovely gems ;—not in these thy love shall be  
known.

### III

Ah! but where shall I go? No way, no door for me!  
And yet, O mother, are there not some who have called  
me beautiful?

But He looks not at me,  
He likes me not.

Burnt, then, be all my beauty.

I have had my hair dressed, the tresses were parted in  
the middle, they were woven and plaited down  
on either side with perfumed wax, the parting  
in the middle was filled with vermilion!

How fair I looked; and beautiful was my smooth and  
plaited hair;

But He looked not at me!

All was over in a minute! I am forlorn! bereft of His  
Love.

### IV

In my misery, my soul cries out from its very depths!  
I weep, and with me weeps the world!

The birds of the forest weep for me!

The rivers and rocks weep with me!

But weepeth not for me my own cruel self, that has  
been my ruin!



## V

In a dream once He came to me!  
 He came and went away!  
 My eyes were filled with tears, it was all a dream!  
 Alas, my Beloved! Thou art where I dare neither go,  
     nor send a messenger! Nor can I, even if I would!  
     No news comes from Thee, no message can reach  
     Thee from me!  
 Is not this Vacant Waking all one pain!  
 O sleep! come steal over me!  
 Put me to rest, perchance I may see Him again in the  
     sleep of happy dreams.

## VI

If any one came to give me the news of my Beloved!  
 Ah! if any one were to come now to me!  
 Do you know what I would give Him!  
 Oh! I have learnt it with bitter experience.  
 I would give to my Lord the whole of myself!  
 I would give it clean away!  
 I will keep nothing for myself even to serve Him with!  
 Having offered myself, I shall borrow the offerings from  
     Him and serve Him with his own!

## VII

The Peacocks have begun their dance, *Rhin Jhin,*  
     *Rhin Jhin, Rhin Jhin,*  
 O sisters! it is indeed the Month of Rain!  
 It raineth: *Rhin Jhin! Rhin Jhin!*  
 It raineth Joy! *Rhin Jhin! Rhin Jhin!*  
 Joy! joy! is the news!  
 Glory! glory! is all life!

THE MOMENT WHEN I SEE THEE NOT

MAHLA V. (Guru Arjan Dev, when quite young)

THE moment when I see Thee not, that one moment  
is a long dark age to me;

When shall I see Thee? so many days have passed!

My mind feels such a pang as that of the chatrik that  
cries for the rain-clouds!

Without seeing Thee, O Beloved Saint! neither my  
thirst abates nor do I have any rest.

Fair God! Beautiful is Thy Face, and how deep and  
sweet is the melody of Thy Voice.

Not days, ages have now gone by; Thy Chatrik has  
had not his Nectar-drop!

Blessed is that Land where Thou dwellest!

I pant for Thee, O Divine Friend!

Passes not my night, my eyes know no sleep.

When shall I see Thee, O Lord!

To-day breaks the Morn of Fortune for me.

I find to-day my dear Lord, my Saint!

All bliss is life, I have found my love within myself.

No separation now, no pining, I am now for ever at  
His Feet,

I am now for ever in His Service!



## THE HUSBAND OF THE COUNTLESS WORLDS

(Guru Arjan Dev)

THE Husband of the Countless Worlds!

The Sustainer of All-Life!

That One, the All-Nourisher, The All-Protector, the  
All-Saviour!

What ignorance! I cannot yet realise His Beauty!

I know not how to worship Him!

I know not how to pour my love at His Feet!

I only say, "Harí, Harí!" "Master, Master!"

"Harí," "Guru" are one, for me His Name is Guru  
Ram Das!

The Ocean of Peace, how it surges in its limitless expanse  
and how its billows wave along from heart to  
heart, it filleth all!

In me, he hears and sees all what I say and do.

I was so ignorant, I thought the Omnipresent to be  
somewhere outside me.

The Infinite, how can I bound by limitations of all  
kinds, speak of Him, without mis-saying Him?

How can I say what He is like?

O my Guru! speak to me the ignorant, what is He  
like?

The Husband of the countless Worlds!

The Sustainer of All-Life!

That One, the All-Nourisher, the All-Protector, the  
All-Saviour!

I am just one, through Whose graces, countless millions  
of men have obtained their freedom!  
Those who have received the inspiration from the lips  
of Guru Nanak,  
Those who have met and touched Guru Nanak,  
The chains of their bondage are cut for ever!  
They are Free!  
The Husband of the countless Worlds!  
The Sustainer of All-Life!  
That One, the All-Nourisher, the All-Protector, the  
All-Saviour!

GIVE HIM, THE BELOVED, THE NEWS OF US

(Guru Gobind Singh)

GIVE Him, the Beloved, the news of us, the disciples!  
Without Thee, rich raiment, fine linen, beds of down,—  
what are they but torment?  
The pleasures of these high mansions bite like snakes!  
The lips of the wine-cup cut us like thin-edged poniards.  
And but a draught of distress, this jug of wine, when  
Thou art not with us!  
But the pallet of pale straw! It is Heaven, if Thou be  
there!  
Burnt be the palaces, burnt and consumed the high  
palace-walls, if thou be not there!



READINGS FROM BÂVAN ANKHRÍ

MAHLA I. (Guru Arjan Dev)

I

My mother, my father, my owner is my Lord.  
 The breaker of the spell of ignorance, my friend, my  
 kinsman first and last is my dear Master.  
 He is the bestower of *Nâm* on me,  
 He has given me the gift of Eternal Repose.  
 He incarnates for me, the Heaven of Peace.  
 He is the *Pâras*, His touch is alchemical.  
 The Lord is my holy place of pilgrimage.  
 He is the fountain of the Nectar of Life;  
 All knowledge is mine, when I plunge into Him and  
 bathe myself in His Purity.  
 The Lord is my maker, He makes me blessèd and sinless.  
 It is He who lifts up the fallen, embraces the despised.  
 He is the beginning, He is the eternal ages,  
 He is the Word, the *Nâm* that saves man.  
 O God! unite me with my Lord and Teacher, bestow  
 Thy Grace on me.  
 Hush! Silence! Bow to him.  
 He is the God in man, aye, He is the God in God, the  
 Eternal Essence of things!

II

Holy is the dust of the lotus feet of Thy saints!  
 Great is Thy Glory, Thou makest such minds as these!

I wish for no property, nor do I desire Heaven,  
 I wish I were but the dust of their feet!  
 Pour in me more and more, that Heavenly Love, that  
     worships Thy saints,  
 I wish I were the dust of their feet!!  
 In the love of One, I am free.  
 The saint is the Torch of *Nâm*, he is both man and God.

## III

O disciple, bathe thy mind in the colours of His Glory,  
     fill thy heart with His Greatness,  
 And pour out His *Nâm*, from the depths of thy soul;  
     and let this gushing fountain lave thy being in  
     sweet deliciousness of His Love.  
 Recite His *Nâm* that the chords of thy being may  
     vibrate with the music of love.  
 In realms beyond death, thus shalt thou be an Honoured  
     Guest.  
 Thine shall be the life wedded to love in High Mansions  
     of Thy Lord, a life everlasting lifted off for ever  
     from the wheel of Birth and Death.  
 Such prosperous life of the spirit is theirs, whom He  
     Himself makes so fortunate.

## IV

They come and they go,  
 But they have come indeed whose lips are closed with  
     the Honey of His Praise.  
 Full-fruited is their life!!



## 118 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

They have come indeed who live in the Saint and there  
in his being drink deep the Glory Divine, their  
souls all dyed in joys of Love.

They have come indeed who have blended their souls  
with *Nâm* through the Divine Grace.

No more coming and going, for them; they live for  
ever in the Divine Presence, their eyes looking  
into His, His Eyes looking into theirs, their souls  
enwrapped in His, and His in theirs.

### V

He is very beautiful,  
He comes of a noble race,  
Great is his mind and power,  
He is a rich man.  
But ah! he is dead, for he hath not the love of the Lord.

### VI

Transparent grows my soul in converse with my Beau-  
tiful Saint.

All distress of thought is over for me, for my eyes look  
straight at the Beloved and see but One.

To-day the Lotus Feet of the Blessèd One touch me!!  
Beautiful is this day, all was for this; my life rolled for  
ages and wandered for this.

It is at His own will and pleasure that He admits me  
into His presence,

When I see Him, all thinking is lost and thoughts of  
“thee” and “me” drop away from me.

VII

O Beloved!

We are as Thy little children,

Make us the servants of Thy servants, the slaves of  
Thy slaves, who are the essence of Thy Creation,  
the life of Thy Life.

We children pray, that we may be able to give up all  
ignorance of self and walk humble on the path  
of life.

With the help of Thy saints, we, even we, the illusion-  
toys of the Shadow, attain to the Highest Verity.

VIII

Fetch that elixir then!

By which all distress may end forthwith,

When the elixir of *Nâm* invigorates the sources of Life  
in me, what is death, decay, disease or distress?

Concealed within lies this Ambrosia at the heart of  
human life, but the man knoweth not till the  
Guru opens the door of the heart;

When this is done, all is done.

IX

Hate no one, bear enmity to none, in each and every  
one is He.

That all-permeating Love deluges lands and waters  
with Himself,

Few are those who favoured by the Guru see Him thus!  
They who are inspired direct from the lips of the Guru,



120 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

they who have lighted their hearts from His  
burning heart, know this truth:—

Those hearts are clean, those minds mount high, and  
no differences divide them from the Universe.  
Their Beautiful Beloved is independent of flesh-colours  
and flesh-features; they invoke in us His Great  
Love.

X

Peace is mine, when selfishness drops from me,  
How can I be free of disease when selfishness, the root  
of all disease, feeds deep on me.  
Now that I see my Love, myself is gone, my love is all.

XI

If it be Thy wish, O Lord! even stones shall swim over  
the world-waters,  
A traitor to thy salt! I?  
A runaway from thee! I?  
Thou who gavest me birth, bestowed on me the shrine  
of this human body, and added unto me the  
thousand joys of life, my heart is empty of all  
love for Thee.  
It runneth in all directions to gather the world-sands,  
and filleth itself with dust of nothing;  
A reviler! a thief! a traitor! I?  
O my Merciful Love, Thou canst save me still with a  
Glance, but one Glance of Thine!  
Thus my all-bad will change into all-good, in the light  
of Thy Smile,  
If it be Thy wish, O Lord! even the stones shall swim  
over the world-waters.

XII

The Transcendental Beauty!  
 O Beloved! above all thought and feeling!  
 Thou holdest in Thy Hand the Inscrutable Pen, and how  
     it writes on our foreheads!  
 Our foreheads are Thy beautiful letters of destiny!  
 Who can praise Thee? for lips get sealed with honey,  
     and eyes are closed by Thy Beauty, and the  
     human soul is lost in looking at Thee.  
 May I be an eternal sacrifice at the altar of Thy Fame.

FROM JAYTESWARY DI-VAR

XIII

A MAN!  
 He lived in a broken-down hut,  
 He was clad in rags;  
 He had no caste, no rank in this world;  
 No one so poor as to notice him as he walked along the  
     roads of life,  
 All alone, no friend he had, no support;  
 He had no wealth, nor beauty of features,  
 He had no blood-relations,  
 But he was the King of Creation,  
 His mind was immersed in *Nâm*,  
 From him did drip the Honey of Love!!  
 If one gets the gift of the dust of the feet of such as he,  
     it is the sign of divine grace, for anointed with  
     this dust, a man becomes a man.



## XIV

Those who love Him, love nothing else,  
 To them nothing else is at all sweet!  
 They have seen all other things are sickening,  
 This Love Divine has broken the spell of their ignorance  
     and they have obtained deliverance from pain.  
 He abideth for ever, all else perisheth!  
 His Sacred Feet imprint gentle soft touches on their  
     heart and He is in them as the dye in the dyestuff.

## XV

As water is to the fish,  
 As cloud-drops to the chatrik,  
 As lotus-scent to the bee, that gives itself to be shut  
     within its petalous embrace,  
 Even a cobra that is near lifts its hood in love and song;  
     listening forgets its nature and stands venomless  
     and harmless, a comrade of man;  
 So is God for the Saints; seeing Him, they are to Him  
     and He is to them what no two things can be  
     to each other.

## XVI

Wait, O woman of love and longing!  
 It is He who fulfils the longings of Love!  
 Thy waitings shall bear fruit;  
 Find Him, and sorrow not nor pine,  
 One glance of His shall close the lips of all thy sweet  
     complaints.  
 Fill thy heart with the gladness of thy waitings for Him.

From His Shining Silver Feet the life-pollen falls, this  
rain of pollen from His Feet makes us holy.  
He is for ever with us.

XVII

A thousand times I would die for those, who listen to  
His story, who are informed of Him;  
They are honourable men who lay their foreheads on  
the dust before my Lord in total self-surrender!  
Those hands are beautiful, they look to me so bright  
and fair, the hands that write His praise without  
end.  
Those feet are holy that go the way which goes to my  
Lord.  
All calamity is over in company of the saints!

XVIII

O Kind One! now meet me!  
I fall at Thy door, O Kind King of the poor! protect me!  
Long have I wandered, far and wide, and I am now  
hungry and starved, weak and lean, old and  
ragged.  
They say Thy vow of Love is to lift up the fallen;  
They say Thou art as mother-cow to her calf;  
Infinite kindness of Thine has sworn, they say, to save  
man!  
O Essence! O Verity! listen to me, I have none but  
Thee!  
O Kind One, now meet me!  
Now bend low! now bend low! and take me up in Thy  
Arms,  
O Kind One, come and now meet me!



## FROM ANAND SAHIB

## XIX

PEACE!

My Mother! I have found Peace in my Lord!

He gives it to me;

Spontaneous music of triumph of soul and joy of life  
swells up in me;

In the temple of my heart is the concourse of celestials!

O celestials! Raise in me songs of the Praise of Him,  
Who having made in me His Dwelling, makes  
me a palace of music and joy.

Peace I have found in my Lord!

Now live with thy God,

Be His, put all sorrow and pain and thought aside,

Mind no business of thy own, thy concerns now are His!

Leave all else, but leave not Him who is the All-doer,  
Now live with thy Love!

O King of my heart! What is there that is not in Thy  
Stores?

All is there, but the greatest is the song of Thy Praise!  
The song of Thy Praise is bestowed on them whom  
Thou choosest!

In their heart dwells *Nâm* and their flesh resonates  
with the music divine.

Give up all else, let go these chains that bind and  
enslave;

Build thyself on the rock of *Nâm*,

Make *Nâm* thy Bread of Life!

Eat of this Bread that kills all kinds of hungers,

Behold, thy desires stand before thee as trees laden with  
fruits.

Honoured is he of the Lord who bears so much love!  
O Lovers of the Good! give your life to *Nâm*,  
All blessed is that home where the stream of this divine  
music flows, they have won self, and death lies  
low.

## XX

My mind is happy, my heart dances with joy,  
I hear my Lord will soon be here.  
O my comrades! sing together, my Lord cometh!  
To-day my house is the holy temple of the Beloved,  
to-day are we not all sacred?  
Sing ye, my comrades, the everlasting songs of love,  
let no sorrow rule within!  
This day is the day of fruits of life!  
To-day we see our Husband come, let us make to-day  
full feast with Him, it is all joy!  
He cometh of Himself to us,  
Say not now why I came into the world,  
Say not now what I have done here.  
Say not now, pray, that I love Him not.  
By His kindness, my past is vindicated now,  
My body is sacred now, for it has met its Owner,  
My mind is pure, for there the Light shines from His  
Lotus Feet.

## XXI

O eyes! my eyes! the Lord has placed his lights in  
you ; see no one else now, for these eyes have  
seen the Beloved.  
O eyes! my eyes! this great world that lies before



## 126 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

your gaze is the flesh of my Beloved, all this is  
the beauteous form of my Beloved.  
I knew it not, ere this; I know it now through His  
Grace; He is everywhere, there is none else.  
O eyes! my eyes!  
'These eyes were blind, this celestial vision has been  
given me by my dear Lord.  
See this vision now and nothing else!!

### XXII

My sweet, sweet God has concealed in a cave within  
this human frame, a mystic violin whose chords  
break forth into an unheard-of music as His  
Breath passes through man.  
The music of life comes streaming through the nine gates  
of the body, the tenth portal being all closed!  
O ears! my ears! ye are sent here to hear this sacred  
Song of Truth by whose cadence the dried-up  
heart is once more made green and speech is  
lost in joy!  
Some there are, who sit at the door of the temple, and  
wait till some one opens the tenth portal.  
When this door of life opens, a million instruments of  
music strike the wedding-song of man.  
This song is only heard in the heart of Truth, this music  
is of the Real.  
O ears! my ears! ye are sent here to hear this sacred  
Song of Truth.  
I fell at the feet of my Lord and Master and I have  
heard now this Hidden Song.  
I vibrate with the wedding-joys!

## FROM RAHRAS

## XXIII

HARD! very hard indeed is the life of Love and *Nâm*  
 (because of its delicacy and tenderness, because  
 of its soft aromas, and its still softer hues).

In it I live, and out of it I die.

I feel hungry of Thee, when Thou fillest me with Thy  
 Bread of Love, all my woes depart.

Do what we may, we cannot spare even a sesame seed  
 out of His Infinite Nature,

He grows not more if we sing His Praise, nor doth He  
 grow less if we sing Him not.

One thing I know, He dies not, nor pain nor sorrow is  
 in Him.

He is my true Husband, my Mother! how can I forget  
 Him?

He gives and asks not, He goes on giving to all, this is  
 His one great sign,

Nor was one, nor can there be one like Him, His gifts  
 wear on them His likeness.

The days and nights are His, one who forgets Him has  
 no noble blood in his veins.

Without Him the lot of man is that of a widow.

## XXIV

Look! the shades of evening spread, their wings half  
 crimsoned in the rays of the setting sun.



The soft slow zephyrs blow, carrying shadows to  
and fro.

O man! why art thou so crestfallen in the thought of  
thy bread, why this "What shall I eat?" and  
"Whence?"

Behold, the flocks of cranes fly in mid-sky and they  
have their little ones safe-buried in sands behind,  
and they have no such fear; they ask not who  
shall provide for their little ones!

These birds perhaps know the secret, they only look  
up and their eyes see Him that helps,

They are flying free, singing His *Nâm*.

O man! why art thou so crestfallen? why dissipate  
thyself in vain desires?

His stores have plenty for all,

The little lives He has brought forth in the crevices  
of stones, there is bread for them stored even  
before their birth.

My friend! thy distress is not the want of bread; thy  
misery is thou hast not yet seen the Reality  
face to face.

Man attains the highest by the Divine Grace,

By the glance of the Guru towards us, we rise as  
green living trees out of the dead and decayed  
wood.

Who cares for us, my friend? father, mother, sweet-  
hearts all are for themselves and no one needs  
to care for another.

Be not crestfallen, be not so dejected and sad, for  
above us all is one sweet Beloved Who careth  
for all.

All things are held in the palms of His Hands,

O my Sweet Beautiful One! die I may a thousand times and come again a thousand times more to be a sacrifice, but there is no end to Thy delightfulness; the ever new, the ever fresh glory!!

XXV

This little shrine of human body!  
 This great opportunity of Life!  
 The object is to meet the Beloved, thy Maker!  
 Nothing else shall stand by thee, nothing else availeth!  
 Get up; go and meet the Saints and live with them in  
     their service as a torch divine of *Nâm*.  
 Death above thy head, before thee is the Great World-  
     sea of thought and desire!  
 Thy hours pass in transient self-spending pleasures of  
     *Mâyâ*.  
 No training in arts of soul-culture nor recitation of  
     *Nâm*, nor hast thou sought the kingdom within  
     thyself, nor hast thou followed the science of  
     obedience to His Will, nor hast thou served the  
     Saints.  
 Shame! O shame! Thou hast not yet seen thy God.  
 O Lord! so low in scale of life, so mean my performance!  
 Oh! For the Honour of Thy Door of Mercy protect me,  
     such as even me, my Lord!



FROM BARAN MAHAN

*The Seasons*

XXVI

FLUNG away are we from Thee, O Beloved, of our own  
freedom and by our own doings!

Now it is all over, I have seen all the ten directions and  
all the four continents, I find no home, no rest;  
I return to Thee, now it is evening of my life.

Through Thy saving Love, restore me once again to  
Thyself!

What am I without You?

As useless as a cow without milk, as a branch cut off  
from the juice of the tree,

Burnt be the town and the city where cometh not my  
Beloved!

If the Beloved is not by me,

All friends and blood-relations are as death,

All my fine decoration of self, the supremacy of orna-  
ments and robes, of the betelnut dye on my lips,  
the pride of my beautiful flesh, the tints of love  
and longings, the deliciousness of emotions—  
all, all is sour and unripe!

O God! Bestow on me Thy *Nâm*, unite me with Thy-  
self!

O Beloved! Thy Palaces never pass away!

The evening falls, my Beloved! I fall at Thy Door  
imploring protection!!

## XXVII

My soul is on fire!

The Spring is in its half-opened buds!

How great the joy if my lips ope and say His *Nâm*!

O Saints! put on my tongue that Honey which makes  
so life-giving the repetition of His *Nâm*!

The Spring indeed for those who have met Him!

In vain the mother gives birth to that life which passes  
outside the maddening circle of His Arms!

Without the cooling touch of His Love, this life is all  
fire, all pain to me!

He Who pervades all lands and waters,

He by Whose Beauty all world-forests are beautiful,  
aye, even the little grass blades as great and  
beautiful,

How great is my distress when His Love springeth not  
in me.

The Spring is now in youth, full-moon are its blossoms,  
Now pray! how can I keep quiet, how can I be patient,  
I, I who have wounds of Love within!

Shame! Shame! I forget my Beloved and pass my  
days, desire-pulled in the deserts of *Mâyâ*!

Ah! this way of ruin have thousands gone and perished!  
All is death and ruin but His Great Love, His *Nâm*.  
Pure are the hearts of those who are at the Feet of my  
Beloved!

Meet me, O Beloved! Pray come to me now!



## XXVIII

Spring is gone with all its flowers!

Hot indeed is the Tropical Summer!

It is a burning waste for those who are not with  
God!

O Soul! why art thou running to and fro aimlessly,  
seeking favours of men and women and things,  
so hard-pressed, so heat-oppressed!

Why meetest thou not the *living Man* whose life is the  
life of the whole creation!

Behold! The night passeth! The Dawn of Death breaks  
yonder!

O Soul! why sorrowest thou now, when the night of  
love, the time and opportunity thou hadst, is  
recklessly wasted?

Such is her fate, she saw not her Husband, it was so  
writ!

They who have met here their Saint attain freedom  
there.

O Beloved! This much favour I ask, that I may  
have thirst enough to drink deep of Thy  
Beauty!

O Lord! There is no other who would look at me with  
so much favour!

But not at all is the Summer hot, nay it is genial warmth,  
to those whose hearts are pure with the touch of  
His Lotus Feet,

The clouds come, the lightning flashes and it rains  
nectar-rain within their souls!

Drenched are they and fine glows the colour of their

body and soul dyed with the dye of youth and  
life of the Beloved!

In the light of this Beauty, in the presence of this  
Glancing Reality, all else is a lie, all other dyes  
are fading shadows of Illusion.

Ah! Beautiful is the waiting for the Pearl-drop of this  
Nectar from Heaven! Beautiful are the Brides!  
Beautiful are their cups of joy! Beautiful is  
the Saint, mingling with whose life their life, the  
Disciples drink so deep!

Their eyes are lighted with celestial light; from the  
humble grass blades to the mighty forests, all  
things are deluged with the Beloved.

All is fresh with the life of the All-Powerful Creator,  
the Infinite Man.

I long to meet my Love!

Ah! But no transitory dreamy sentiments can take me  
to Him!

My whole self, whatever it be, assigns me my place.

Content where I am,—O Lord, look at me, bend on  
me a kind glance.

I wish to be the slave of those who have won their seats  
on high.

O Love! Just look at me!

Fair is the Month of Rain, delicious! to those who have  
the Garland of His Arms entwined round their  
necks!

## XXIX

It is winter now!

As he sows, so the farmer reaps, this life is the soil of  
God!



The black have turned grey, the hands of man now  
 shake, the flesh creeps on the bones and con-  
 vulsive fits overcome the flesh. The messengers  
 of death have put their noose on his neck and  
 they march him on whither he knows not, nor  
 do the messengers of death tell him this. Those  
 who were his can do naught for him, so they have  
 also deserted him out of helplessness.

In vain did he pride over his all, all is lost in a moment.  
 Such is the human lot!

But never, O never, has the winter a sting for those  
 who have met the Master! The Guru protects  
 them to the very last.

All things freeze in winter, but the feelings of love break  
 open the crust of earth!

Ah! Love flows in a stream!

Some one come! and take me to the Beloved! the  
 Saints aid one on the path of love, Saints and no  
 one else.

Come, O my mother! Take me to the Saints! There  
 is no other way, my mother, no other way.

There is no other place, my mother, no other place,  
 where I can find rest.

Nothing else can please me, nothing else can make me  
 happy, restore me to the arms of my Beloved.

They who have drunk of this cup, are informed of His  
 Bliss that never breaks! Once with Him, for  
 ever with Him!

The Bride is with the Bridegroom! where is winter?  
 where is Death?

XXX

For our distress we blame no one! No one but we  
ourselves make our lot, be it good or bad.  
We invite all distress and disease to ourselves when we  
turn our backs on God.  
We suffer the pangs of separation, life after life.  
All that is, is good! All this Evanescent *Mâyâ*-splendour  
is delicious!  
But bitter indeed is the cup, when He is not amidst us.  
O Deliverer of the Bound!  
O Saviour of the Fallen!  
Grant me the society of Saints!  
All life for a Saint!  
When once again I thus shall meet my Lord, the misery  
of ages will be left behind as a mortal tale.

XXXI

Those who live with the Beloved never perish.  
I see them standing there in eternity, how bright are  
these figures of Love!  
The garlands of rubies and diamonds and pearls sparkle  
on their necks,  
I long for the life-dust of their feet!  
They are standing there doing the service of Love!  
The garlands of rubies and diamonds and pearls sparkle  
on their necks.



FROM ASA-DI-VAR

MAHLA I. (Guru Nanak)

XXXII

Thy stellar and astral systems stand; they are Truth.  
 All Forms of Thy Creation are; that is Truth.  
 All Thy Doings are Truth, and all Thy Thinkings.  
 Thy Will is Truth and Thy Presence.  
 Thy Sayings are Truth and Thy Bidding.  
 Thy Blessing is Truth and Truth is Thy Sign.  
 Thou art Truth, and Thy Power, and Thy Life,  
 And Thy Praise is Truth.  
 Thy Emanations are Truth.  
 Thy Miracle of Creation is Truth and Thy Art of  
 Creating.  
 They are true who love the Truth,  
 All else is flesh of change like fragile glass.

XXXIII

Wonder of all wonders! So wondrous the sound itself  
 and then the sound with meaning!!  
 Wonder of wonders! so wondrous this life and then this  
 life with all its mystery!!  
 So wondrous the forms of life, and then the forms of  
 life with all their feelings!!  
 So common teems all life before us, yet how secret!

How wondrous these waters, these winds, these fires  
that play!!

How wondrous the earth and the dust and the minerals  
in it!!

All kingdoms of life how various!!

Wonder of wonders! so wondrous!! The men have  
taste in their mouths, they have likings and  
dislikings!!

How wondrously we meet and part!! We feel hunger  
and we have the feeling of satiation!!

How wondrously lips pipe His Praise!!

Wonder is the path we tread and the wilderness with  
no path!!

Wonder is what is near and what is far!!

A wonder is the man that, filled with wonder, sees his  
Maker in himself and everywhere.

And how wondrous is the repose that sees the Glory  
even above the realms of wonder:

The knowledge above all knowledge, the knowing above  
the knowing of wonder, this worship, this  
illumination is the perfection of human destiny.

#### XXXIV

It is the Miracle of His Own Presence!

We see but the products of His Art of Creation!

We hear but the music of His Art of Creation!

The Awe of His Wondrous Presence, the Truth, the  
Peace are all elements of His Divine Art.

Above the skies is the display of His Art,

And below is the same.



## 138 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

All thoughts of men, their books and their process of  
thinking, aye, all inspiration is of His Art.

The arts of eating, drinking, wearing and the art of  
loving are of His Art!

The countless colour-glories, the created beings, all  
goodness and virtue, all vice and wickedness,  
all pride and glow, all humility and pallor,  
move with the all-teeming life on His Canvas.

Everything is His Expression.

O Lord! this is all Thy Art Divine.

Above all and in all art Thou, the Immaculate, the  
Supreme Immanence.

He who lives in Thee sees but One.

### XXXV

He read and read and heaped carts on carts of the books  
of learning:

He read and read, and carts behind carts of the books  
of learning moved behind him as he went:

He read and read, and ships on ships of the books of  
learning sailed:

He read and read, and heaps on heaps of the books of  
learning were buried in dust:

He read and read, years on years and centuries sped:

Let him read, let him acquire more if he likes:

Ah, but not this way, not this way!

The man needs but One Thing,

All else is vanity, dust, dust and ashes.

FROM GURU NANAK (when a boy).

XXXVI

NOT this, not this is the Sacred Thread, O Brahman!  
If divine forgiveness is in me, it will provide the cotton  
for my Sacred Thread:  
And if I am at peace with the Will of my Maker, that  
will give me the Sacred-spun:  
If I am in my centre of life and if I am true to the Truth  
in me, the fibres of my Sacred Thread are twisted  
well enough indeed!  
My Brahman! put on me the Sacred Thread such as  
this, if you can:  
My Sacred Thread shall break not, nor shall ever be soiled.  
Fires can burn it not, nor waters sink it down!  
Blessed are they who wear my Sacred Thread.

SELECTIONS FROM HYMNS OF  
GURU GRANTHA SAHIB

SRI RAG MAHLA V. (Guru Arjan Dev)

I

THE SWEETEST

(1)

By self-surrender, He is now mine.  
I have met the Man, the true Master!  
I know of none else so great!  
He is now mine!  
The Sweetest!



(2)

He is Fascination,  
Dearer than my own father and mother to me,  
I know of no affection (nor sister's, nor brother's, nor  
friend's) so intense, ever growing.  
He is now mine!  
The Sweetest!

(3)

At His bidding, it raineth here;  
It raineth on the fields of life!  
It raineth on the fields below!  
My hand is on the plough (the Truth), the seeds are in  
my hands:  
The seeds of *Nâm* I sow;  
My eyes are raised and look above; then look they down  
and I sow.  
The crops grow, the crops grow!  
He is now mine!  
The Sweetest!

(4)

I have seen Him now,  
I see no one else,  
I have known Him now,  
I know no one else,  
This is my sweet vocation,  
Be it now as He wills,  
The Sweetest!

(5)

I don the Royal Robes;  
The Five now till my lands,  
No more treason stirs in my soil,  
All is Peace, Plenty and Prosperity!  
No winds blow against me, all is in fair direction,  
He is now mine!

The Sweetest!

(6)

If I could sacrifice, in a minute I would live and die a  
thousand times for Him, and do this for ever;  
O Gods! sacrifice me at His feet endlessly.  
It is He who has decorated the ruins; the ruins of me,  
now raised high, they become my Sultan's  
palace.

Sacrifice me at His feet endlessly,

The Sweetest!

(7)

He loves me, I do nothing :  
He sends me all I wish, I do nothing:  
He cares for me and mine, I do nothing:  
He gives me the loaf of bread that is enough for all my  
hunger, I do nothing for Him,

The Sweetest!

(8)

Nothing concerns me now, neither care nor confusion,  
If He be my concern!  
The *Naming Him* is all!

The Sweetest!



(9)

I have tied His love in the knots of my garment,  
 I have fastened them with my own hands,  
 I am happy now, all Peace is mine!  
 Planted by His own Hands, the garden of *Nâm* grows  
 in me, its blossoms fill me up to my very lips;  
 The Sweetest!

(10)

He but put His hand on my forehead,  
 And I saw that all was Divine!  
 I was bound in a vision!  
 The Sweetest!

(11)

I am now in the Temple of Truth,  
 The Master chose me, I know not how!  
 I would fain wash His feet if He come!  
 I would fain fan Him with these hands if He come!  
 I would fain fall at His feet and kiss them!  
 At His feet again and again!  
 If He come!  
 The Sweetest!

(12)

I have known it all from His lips,  
 He gave me Himself and bathed me in holiness,  
 He put me in His Boat:  
 The Boat sails to the Infinite! we sail on!  
 The Sweetest!

(13)

The whole Creation vibrates with prayer!  
 Hark! The prayers rise from very stones!  
 They call the Deliverer!  
     The Sweetest!

(14)

The Kind One now so willeth,  
 A new age beginneth!  
 Henceforth no one will injure another!  
 All shall live here in Peace Absolute.  
 He reigneth here, the King of Love!  
     The Sweetest!

(15)

*Jhin! Jhin! Jhin!* it raineth!  
*Jhin! Jhin! Jhin!* the showers of Peace!  
 Silence delicious! mouths all filled with Honey!  
 They speak who speak at His bidding,  
 Endless has been my pride, the pride of being His,  
 I have moved in a thousand prides, I have thought,  
     all this is His,—  
     The Sweetest!

(16)

The Saints hunger for Him, no other hunger they have!  
 O Giver of joy! come!  
 Fulfil my longings now, come and meet me!!  
 Now spread Thy arms and receive me,  
 Receive me, my Love, in Thy embrace,—  
     The Sweetest!



(17)

I looked up and down all earth and heaven,  
I saw nothing so noble,  
All space is filled with His Glory!  
The Sweetest!

(18)

I am the champion-wrestler,  
He maintains me,  
With Him, as His, I am the greatest of the Great.  
The ring is drawn clear, the wrestlers come, the audience  
sits around,  
The sport begins.  
He sits and sees!  
The Sweetest!

(19)

The bands strike, the pipes play!  
The wrestlers strive; how they recede and how pace  
forward, and how they weave with steps the  
semicircles!  
I have thrown them down, and there they lie, the five  
young wrestlers!  
I hastened to Him,  
He patted me on my back!  
The Sweetest!

(20)

The guests are scattered one by one, they go each their  
own way,

Both death and life is the wrestling-ring, one for them  
who saw Him not, the other for those who saw  
Him!

The Sweetest!

(21)

The lines of flesh contain Him not,  
The Transcendental Good!  
I see Him where I would,  
He sweetens the lotus of Heart with Honey.  
He inspires me with His breath.

The Sweetest!

(22)

Life on life did roll for this!  
He has cut my bonds,—the strings that bound me!  
Sweeter the slumber, and sweeter the awakening!  
The dawn of freedom breaks!  
Say Guru Nanak!

The Sweetest!

DHANASRI MAHLA V., ASHTPADI

II

(1)

THE Wheel of Birth and Death turns!  
All creation whirls along it in utter confusion,  
Ah! happy am I being born a man!



## 146 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

O dear Saint! put Thy hand on me and save me, save  
me from the utter misery of this endless wheel.

By Thy Love, kindle in me the Divine.

I have travelled through many births and deaths,  
and have not felt yet any ground beneath my  
feet.

Give me Thy service to do,

Let me sit at Thy feet,

O Saint! through Thy life show me the way to my  
Gobind, my Beloved.

### (2)

I linger still, among material things,

I make a thousand efforts, but pass my days still  
dwelling here,

Ah! how to get rid of this insatiable sense?

O Gods! a meeting with the Saint, pray!

He will wash me free of this misery and incarnadine  
my soul with the Bride-blushes, as the Bride  
meets her Lord.

Oh! the showers of roses that his look would rain on me!!

### (3)

I have read all the *Vêdâs*, but the dual sense is still  
unextinguished, my doubts are still undispeled.

The five desires that live within know not for a moment  
any peace.

If He were to sprinkle the Nectar of *Nâm* on my scorched  
heart, the dry ground would become green,

Ah! the Saint I should become,—freed from Illusion,  
if He so favoured me.

## (4)

I have bathed in sacred rivers,  
 But more and more clung to me the rust of Self;  
 This tyrant bows not even to holy pilgrimage!  
 When shall my Saint come to me?  
 When shall that cooling Peace be mine,  
 And my Saint wash my soul in fire of Divine Knowledge?  
 Ah! when?

## (5)

I have tried all modes of thought;  
 My mind yet believes not, my reason *sees* not,  
 I have been washing pure the outside; but all was dark  
     within,  
 The darkness may be pure, washed and holy; but by  
     that it cannot win the dawn,  
 Only if I found a man! as good as God, a man all dyed  
     in Divine Glory.  
 He shall wash transparent my dust-laden mind.

## (6)

If I see Him not, in vain is even virtue, in vain is  
     learning:  
 Only if I meet my Lord, the soul wakes to the eternal  
     music of His Praise!  
 Through the dear Master's kindness, I see the Real face  
     to face!

## (7)

What worth are the forced resolutions, the ascetic vows,  
     of Piety, to curb Self down, just under a weight!



## 148 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Not a seed of this hot-house growth is to be reckoned,  
All is still in the dark!  
The light of Heaven is far away!  
All that follow the Self are groping in the dark, still in  
the great world-illusion!

(8)

If indeed there be a Bestower of Divine Bliss!  
He shall inspire in us with his lips the Divine Life!  
Then the light of Heaven shall shine!

The day breaks! and all is glory!  
Man is bathed in His Light, it is Beatitude:  
This life kindles another life.  
It is He who cuts the bonds of life-in-illusion,  
And sets the soul revolving through the firmament of  
*Nâm*,  
There is eternal Peace!  
The fearlessness of the Divine is attained.  
The life of Peace Eternal throbs in the feet of the Saint!  
I have now met my Saint!  
The pilgrimage of life is fruitful!  
All is over! The goal is reached!

### III

(1)

He has chosen to honour His slave!  
It is His Pleasure. He favours me!  
What are our little wisdoms, and our little powers?

He knows all things, He knows!  
 His Glory spreads around us, an infinite expanse!!  
 All call on Him!!  
 He put His hands on me and I am saved!!  
 He waited not, nor did He think of my good and bad,  
 He has chosen to honour His slave.

(2)

He protects me in His Embrace, lest a hot wind touch  
 me.  
 How my flesh cried for this and how my soul rolled in  
 frenzy!!  
 God is, for I am now in His Embrace!  
 He is the King of Kings, the Master of Masters!!  
 I live by *Naming Him*!  
 He has chosen to honour His slave.

## JAI JAVANTI MAHLA V

IV

(I)

EVEN if I have vexed Thee, bend on me Thy Look of  
 favour!  
 Perished be it if I look to another.  
 Let me leave not hold of the edge of Thy Garment;  
 Pray I may always have the sense of dependence on  
 Thy Favour.  
 Ever Glorious! my Gem! my Beloved, my Sustainer,  
 my All!



150 SISTERS OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Oh! how shall I call Thee!

Thou art my Friend, my Companion, my Saviour, my  
Love, I cannot name Thee.

When Thou art by me, I am rich, my joy and pride  
know no bounds;

By coming to me, Thou honourest me, me O Lord!  
the poorest.

(2)

To-day Thou art with me!

And how Thou smilest, the smile of forgiving kindness,  
Thou smilest on me, me, the poorest!

O happy one! if I then have Thy favour, so favour me  
that I see none else but Thee, depend on none  
else but Thee.

Pour into these—these opened lips—this Honey!  
Pray that I may keep it for ever in my heart!!

Beneath Thy sheltering arms, pray that my quivering  
lips may close in a holy kiss upon Thy Flower-  
Feet! May I stay, holding the edge of Thy  
garment, O King, for ever and ever!

(3)

These feet of mine, pray, they tread Thy path of Love  
for ever and ever.

These eyes of mine, pray, they look at Thee for ever and  
ever.

Favour me so that these ears of mine hear but Thy  
Praise Eternal.

(4)

Myriad is beauty, but nothing can match a single Hair  
of my Beloved!

Thou art the Maker of all, the Beautiful Master!!  
 Ah! who can speak of Thy Beauty; beyond all paintings  
 of thought and feelings.

(5)

For a moment, only for a moment, Thou art with me  
 to-day.

I know Thou hast devotees by millions and all are fairer  
 than myself, all are more innocent, more beautiful,  
 more loving and sweeter, but to-day Thou art  
 mine, though only for a moment, only for a  
 moment.

Before Thou departest, look once again on me, just for  
 a moment and just for a moment.

Be before my eyes and let me look at Thee and let my  
 eyes drink the kind Glance of Thine; just for a  
 moment, my Beloved! for a moment!

Be with me and let me be with you! Sustain, sustain  
 my frail life and hold me up in Thy arms lest I  
 faint and fall, and let this be for a moment, my  
 Beloved! for a moment!

(6)

Him at whose very sight my throbbing heart is at rest  
 and my noon-scorched mind finds a shade!

O mother! how can I forget Him of whom everything  
 here reminds me.

I did but fall on the ground, before Him,  
 I fell like a corpse,—a love-slain one.

Of Himself He came and lifted me from the dust. I had  
 no adornment but dust in my hair, dust on my  
 hands and feet!



A dusty beggar-maiden, He made His own;  
 Such has been the fruit of the true Love planted in my  
     heart by my Saint.  
 My Saint has witnessed my wedding-day!

(SORATH BÂNI BHAGATÂN, KABEER)

V

(NÂMÂ had a hut. The hut was burnt by accident. God came with His masons and put up a new hut for Nâmâ. People knew Nâmâ as a common poor man while he was a prophet, To this incident the following dialogue refers.)

*The neighbour's wife :*

Nâmâ! How beautiful is the new thatching of thy hut!  
 Please tell me who has covered thee with this wonderful  
     thatching of golden straws.

I would offer him double the wages you have offered.  
     I too want a thatching like that, so handsome!

*Nâmâ :*

O sweet woman!

I cannot tell thee who made this hut for me, nor can I  
     bring Him to thee!

Seest thou not the maker of this roof is here, there, and  
     everywhere?

This mason needs no wages, He works for Love.

Be His, He will build thy hut!

Be His and no one else's.

MAJH MAHLA V

VI

(I)

THAT season is spring when they are with Thee,  
That doing is doing when they sweat in labour for Thy  
Love;  
That heart is heart where shineth the Light of Thy  
Presence,  
Thou art the common Father of us all,  
In Thy storehouse there is plenty for us all,  
He who owns the jewel of Love given by Thee is great,  
All sit at Thy door and wait for Thy Gifts.

(2)

Thy life beats in every heart and each one holds by Thee  
as if Thou wert his and none else's.  
This is Thy great family, here each one has his share and  
each one his joy.

(3)

All mysterious is Thy life-play; here is the Saint and  
His art of sending blossoms up in the sky sup-  
ported on the thin frail rays of life,  
And there is the wheel of birth and death that turns.  
The same pulse beats in all seen things.



## GAURI MAHLA V

## VII

## (I)

O my mother! how can I aspire to see my Beloved?  
 How can I approach Him who gives me life,  
 Nor beauty, nor wisdom nor power!  
 I am a poor beggar girl, a stranger come from afar,  
     thread-bare my garments!  
 Nor youth, nor pride, nor glow of life, how can I aspire  
     to see Him?  
 Even I, I have been wandering for Him, I have no other  
     concern in life, I only wish I could but have a  
     glimpse of Him,—even I, with my hair dis-  
     hevelled, my garments outworn, and myself  
     almost naked in poverty, even I search for Him.  
 I am thirsty and no waters quench my thirst, I am  
     hungry and no bread can appease my hunger,  
 But, my mother! how can I aspire for Him, so poor, so  
     frail and so humble?

## (2)

Happy, happy news! Mother! the news from the  
     invisible!!  
 In Love of the Saint I have found Him.  
 My thirst is quenched, I now live at the Fountain,  
 I now live at the Fountain, mother!

KANRA MAHLA II. (Guru Angad Dev)

VIII

(1)

How can I praise Thee who has given me life.  
 Thou hast bought me with Thy Love and Kindness,  
 bought me—a slave, but not by gold, hast bought  
 me a slave, flesh and bone, Thine for ever.  
 Thou hast drawn me to Thee, O Roseate Beloved!  
 I am a sacrifice in Thy Glorious Sight ever and ever,  
 Thou art the King and I Thy humble slave,  
 Thou art kind for ever and ever.

(2)

How can I regale Thee, Thou Regaler?  
 How can I, I, render any service to Thee? Thou servest  
 all!  
 How can I, I, have a glimpse of Thee? Thou seest all!  
 O Immeasurable! I thirst for the Lotus of Thy feet,  
 I ask again and again so shamelessly! touch my lips  
 with the dust of the flower-feet of Thy Saint.

SARANG MAHLA V

IX

(1)

O mother! how can I live without my Beloved.  
 When He goes away I cannot live in this empty house  
 of clay.



Without Him, what is life, what is joy, what is land,  
house or cities?

O mother! how can I live without my Beloved?

(2)

O Saints of God! favour me now, and help me to sing  
His auspicious arrival!

O Saints! put your holy feet on me, put the pollen of  
your flower-hearts into my eyes; O, pray that  
I may see the Divine.

(3)

Woe be to us if we sacrifice not ourselves in the service  
of those who unite us with our Beloved.

GAURI BAIRAGAN MAHLA IV. (Guru Ram Das)

X

(1)

EVERY day I rise with the same hope, every day I have  
the same thirst, every day I have the same  
longing; to be with my Beloved.

They who have these Love-wounds understand my  
days pierced with Pain of Love.

Oh! I love Him!

(2)

Great is my Master, at whose feet I lie as a sacrifice,  
It is He who has united me with my Creator after such  
a long time of separation.

O my Beloved! I a sinner take refuge in Thee, I fall at  
Thy door; now favour me.

(3)

I cannot count, numberless are my shortcomings,  
But what of these little reckonings, when Thou art so  
kind?  
Forgive me and favour me now.

(4)

Not as a Saint but as a criminal I stand at Thy door,  
Pray! save me in the company of Thy Saints.  
Give me the gift of *Naming Thee*.

(5)

O my true Lord!  
How can I praise Thee!  
As I ope my lips and say "Glory to God," the whole of  
me is lost in wonder.  
Could there be another so kind as my Guru and could  
there be another so fallen as myself?  
Ah! how has He rescued me!

(6)

My Master is all for me,  
I pour at His feet my affections—affections of a son to  
a mother, affections of a friend to a friend,  
affections of a sweetheart to her lover,  
At His feet!



(7)

Had I not met my Master, miserable was my lot; He  
 knew it and He took pity,  
 I was a beggar, a forlorn wanderer of streets, trodden  
 under many a pair of feet, none inquiring of me,  
 nor of my misery.  
 The Master picks up a worm like me, and transmutes  
 it into the King of things,  
 Great is Guru Nanak, the Saviour,  
 I met Him and all distress is over.

## XI

(1)

The life in me gets attracted by the glitter of gold and  
 flesh-attractions of man-life.  
 I am attached to my horses; I am concerned for my  
 prosperity; I find joy in all those things that are  
 mine.  
 If I love not my Divine Husband, what am I and what  
 are these things?  
 Without Him I cannot have my freedom, my God!!  
 Such are my base inclinations, such are my vain pur-  
 suits, being Thine, I fail to be.  
 Thou art kind, forgive me all my misdeeds and strayings.  
 I have no beauty, nor long descent to boast of, nor  
 culture, nor art,  
 I bear no blossom of *Nâm* in my hands, ah! I have  
 not even loved Thee, O God!!  
 With no accomplishment then, with what face can I  
 approach Thee or aspire after Thee?

(2)

But my Guru has chosen me,  
And ushered me into Thy Divine Presence,  
I come to know Thou hast given me my all, body and  
soul, Thy waters I drink, it is Thy meat I eat,  
and Thou weavest me the garments I wear;  
above all, Thou givest the joys of life and the  
higher sense of joy.  
I know now, he is a beast who does not remember his  
Maker.

(3)

Thou art the All-Knower, Thou penetratest the inmost  
of every heart.  
What we Thy creatures do or propose,—it is all Thy  
doing.  
What Thou sayest cometh to pass.  
Guru Nanak has opened a store, He distributes Thy *Nâm*.  
The price?  
Life, the whole of it!!  
Say Guru Nanak, the Sweetest!!

## SARANG MAHLA V. CHANT

### XII

(1)

O SAINTS! tell me how does my Beloved look?  
Give me an idea of His Beauty!  
Take me and all that is mine, but pray, give me the  
news from high!



Give me the news from high, O! how my Beloved looks!  
How does he come, and when?

(2)

Sweet are the steps with which He enters my house,  
Each hair of mine is nectar-laved in ecstasy, there is  
the ambrosial flow through bone, blood and  
flesh!

He is the Infinite, the Divine Person.

He is the sweet, sweet death, He lives in every heart!

Ah! how can I tell thee how He looketh, how can I  
give thee His likeness?

The news-bearer is lost in His all-enchancing vision and  
has no self to return to say how He looketh!

Maiden! how can I give thee His likeness!

# READINGS FROM “SLOKAS”





READINGS FROM “ SLOKAS ”  
(GURU TEG BAHADUR)

I

LIFE has passed in vain,  
Unfilled with the song of His praise, the heart is run all  
dry!!  
O me! To be as fish without water in thy love and thy  
longing for thy Lord, thy God.

II

Is not life a serious thing?  
Is not death there?  
No other way of escape, but love.

III

Youth has gone,  
Old age makes the traveller infirm;  
Life is passing!  
O me! Love is not yet in sight!

IV

Old age!  
Dimmed are all senses,  
Death is at the door,  
The man is still mad, busy about nothing.



V

He is He who gave thee all this,  
 'This beautiful garment for thy soul;  
 This fair plenty and prosperity;  
 Ah! thou hast never thought of Him since,  
 Now is it not all death and ruin?  
 Too late perhaps!

VI

His *Nâm* is thy beatitude.  
 Awake then! for the Time is fleeting.

VII

The Beloved is in every heart that beats:  
 So have the Saints proclaimed;  
 Surrender then.

VIII

Whom joy elates not, nor sorrow depresses,  
 Whom the pride uplifts not, in whom resides not the  
     sense of owning aught,  
 He is God in flesh.

IX

Who fears none, nor in others inspires fear,  
 He knows.

X

He is lucky,  
 Who dons the Robe of Self-Denial.

XI

When *meum* and *tuum* is gone,  
The Divine is in the heart.

XII

He who has seen—it is He who does—  
And seeing, has lost his “ I ”;  
He is free.

XIII

The deliverer from pain,  
The lifter of veils,  
In *Kaliyuga* <sup>1</sup> is *Nâm*,  
All winnings are here.

XIV

It is a dream,  
Know nothing else is real but one He.

XV

Mortals are tossed on the waves of the sea of struggle,  
all for greed of lust and things,  
Perhaps one in a million thinks of Him.

XVI

They make great efforts for advancement in this world,  
But life is barren without His Love.

<sup>1</sup> This iron age: this black age. (Teg Bahadur was martyred.)



XVII

He who is His, is His day and night.  
Know Him aye! even as He,  
For nothing divides Him from His.

XVIII

To be my Master's,  
And as faithful as the dog is to his own.

XIX

All shall die!  
That which cometh must go to-day or to-morrow,  
Up then! on these shifting ruins, raise aloft the song  
of His Praise.

READINGS FROM “CHANTS”





## READINGS FROM “CHANTS”

BY GURU RAM DAS MAHLA IV

I

(1)

I AM bathed by *Harí Nâm*,  
The nectar streams through my eyes,  
My mind melts away!  
All is Love.  
My King of Heaven!  
On the touchstone of Heaven He rubbed me,  
There was the Streak of Pure Gold!  
My mind and flesh are dyed in the ruby-dye of the Lips  
of my Beloved!  
How good is life! How good!

(2)

Who shoots at me?  
Ah! These arrows steel-tipped with keen, keen edges!  
My heart lies wounded, arrow-pierced!  
Ah! These are the words from the lips of my Beloved,  
My King of Heaven!  
Of this beautiful death in Love, he knows who loves.

(3)

I sought His shelter,  
He gave me life.  
My King of Heaven!



By my dear Master, my Holy One, I found my God.  
 To love Him is all my craving now.  
 My mind, aye, my flesh has blossomed up in thousand-  
     tinted flowers!  
 A sea of blossoms surges in me!  
 By the love of the Saint, the love of God has now been  
     mine.

## (4)

O King of the Kingdom of Heaven! O Great Benefactor!  
 Pray, let me take refuge in Thy *Nâm*!  
 Pour into my opened lips this Honey! .  
 Thou hast covered my shame;  
 Great is Thy Vow of Love!  
 My Saviour!

## II

## (1)

After long, long, weary tossing,  
 I have found Him now, My King of Heaven!  
 In the Fort of Gold, in Life, is He.  
 I bear His diamond-cuts in me.  
 My Man of Heaven!  
 How brimful am I of sweet, sweet joy!  
 He is Goodness, Superb, Supreme.

## (2)

I stand for ever on the roadside, waiting!  
 Yet unblossomed, my maiden youth waits for Him on  
     the roadside.

My Holy One put me on the Road to Love;  
 And I go on *Naming Him*!  
 My Holy One has burnt up the poison of Self.  
 My Holy One put me here on the Road to Love;  
 And I go on *Naming Him*!  
 My meat and drink is *Naming Him*!  
 And I go for ever on the Road to Love.  
 I stand for ever on the roadside, waiting.  
 Still unblossomed, my maiden youth waits for Him,  
 My King of Heaven,—come!

## (3)

For long have I been now away from Thee,  
 Now come and meet me, my Beloved!  
 Come! My King of Heaven! Come!  
 Unbearable any longer is this pain of separation;  
 My flesh cries and flames up my heart,  
 My eyes stream with tears;  
 Unbearable any longer is this pain of separation;  
 These love-tremors shake my soul with the music of  
 sweetness.  
 Now come and meet me, my Beloved!





# READINGS FROM “SLOKAS”





## READINGS FROM “SLOKAS”

By BHEGET KABIR JI

### I

THE Death, The Death,  
All are afraid of Death:  
I am right happy, this is the way to the Beloved!

### II

Have you got the Divine Wealth?  
Be silent, ope not the mouth of thy purse:  
No mart here for this, no critic, no buyer, no price:  
In silence pass away, O Man of God!

### III

Give them thy love, who are of thy own ilk,  
Of what worth are these Pundits, Kings and Lords?

### IV

They die and die again, but know not how to die?  
Why not die that death once, that they may not die  
again.

### V

Fast as grass, hair burns.  
And flesh and bone as fast as wood;  
The thought seizes me, the World might burn as fast.



VI

Laugh not at any one;  
Be not proud even of goodness:  
Thy boat is yet on the sea,  
Who knows what may happen?

VII

I did nothing, nor shall I do anything, nor ever can I;  
I know not what my God did for me:  
My fame spreads far and wide,  
The world-lips pipe "*Kabir!*" "*Kabir!*"<sup>1</sup>

VIII

I am His Dog,  
My Name is *Mutia*,<sup>2</sup>  
The collar is here and the string in His Hand,  
I go whither he takes me!

IX

"The stroke of Death is painful,  
I cannot bear it," so I cried!  
A Saint came near me, he wrapped me up away in his  
garments.

X

What can I do, if He helpeth me not,  
Whichever branch of the Tree I touch, it breaks and  
falls off.

<sup>1</sup> His own name.

<sup>2</sup> A pearl.

XI

Let the wealth go, if it will,  
 Let the life go, if it will,  
 But leave not the Beloved,  
 Let not go the holds of Love,  
 Let me be wrapped in the lotus-corolla of His Feet.

XII

The *Vîná*! All its strings are broken!  
 Poor *Vîná*! Rest for ever!  
 Even the Player has gone!

XIII

O *Shankhá*! <sup>1</sup> Be with thy Mother-sea!  
 Or else, at every break of dawn,  
 Thou shalt be a scream, a wandering wail  
 From door to door of every shrine!

XIV

Go the way the Saint is going;  
 There is good in it.  
 Mere seeing him is Purity;  
 His closer contact is *Nâm*.

<sup>1</sup> The Conchshell that is blown in the Hindu temples every morning.



XV

Go not near a *Sâktâ*, a man broken off from the Life  
Divine,  
For the mere touch of soot blackens.

XVI

I am the perfume now, I am the Flower,  
The bees come round me in number.  
Strange! but it is true; the more they love Kabir,  
the greater grows their affection for God.

XVII

Be as a pebble on the roadside,  
But even a pebble kills a bird.  
Not a pebble then, O Man of God!  
Be as the dust on earth,  
But even the dust annoys, it flies.  
Not the dust then, O Man of God!  
Be as water, all flowing, one level,  
But even the water has its temperatures.  
Not as water then!  
Unlike anything else, be as God, O Man of God!

XVIII

Where is reality, there is right,  
Where is shadow, there is wrong,  
Where is lust, there is death,  
Where is forgiveness, there is God.

XIX

That is the path of Learning!  
The crowds follow the Pundit!  
My path is different, it runs up to these heights!  
I am on the Hill named God!

















