

## Understanding Jap 5

**-Jarnail Singh**

ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥  
ਆਖਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ॥  
ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥  
ਮੁਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥  
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵਿਚਾਰੁ ॥  
ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ ॥ ੪ ॥

Eternal God and glories eternal  
Speaks in language of love immeasurable  
We beg 'n beseech for more and more  
The Donor is giving us since days of yore  
Then what do we have to offer to seek his blessings?  
What should we say to capture his loving attention?  
This is the time  
Time to make the most of this life that is a blessing great  
Time to contemplate deep and hard on virtues great and glories eternal  
To see the light of truth; to be an enlightened spiritual  
Be in the know, says Nanak, the True God himself is lit up everywhere.

Jap trails the journey of a person from falsehood to truth. Guru made it clear in the very first stanza. As we know God and truth are synonymous in Sikhism. In this stanza Guru shows us the way to realize God or truth. Since day one, mankind is striving for this. People have exploited this inherent desire of mankind to their benefits and are doing good business out of it. They are doing it even today. You don't have to go far to find people who have opened shops to sell sure shot ways to realized God. They even claim to make God physically present as if God is at their beck and call. You find these people at all places and in all religions with slight variation in their tricks

As usual Guru approaches this subject in a systematic and logical way discarding and repudiating many old dogmas. The fundamental question is what can we do to achieve this? Can we please God by offering gifts? Or do we have to do something else for this?

Guru rules out the first possibility in an extremely logical and convincing way. It is a common practice in all religions to offer something in kind or money at religious places to seek blessings from God. Sikhs are not an exception. However Guru says that we have nothing that can be offered to God as a gift to seek his blessings. A gift is a deliberate relinquishment of ownership of something we own in favour of a third person. We do not own anything in this world. Everything in this world has come to us as a gift from God. Guru says God and his glories are eternal. God always speaks

language of love and affection [1]. God is so loving and kind that he has bestowed on mankind all that they got. Mankind is asking for more and more and he has been giving it for ages without a frown on his face. Human beings have nothing that has not been given by God to them. So what can they offer to God? Apparently it will be extremely offensive if we offer back what we received from God a gift from us.

This in itself is a revolutionary idea. It is impossible to imagine a religious place with no offerings in money or kind. It is another thing that sometime these offerings are called donations or given any other euphuistic or pompous name. It is also a fact that these donations have become extortions in the name of religion at many places. People have been forced to give donation to avoid the wrath of God. But Guru says that it is absurd to offer something that we do not own. The idea is so revolutionary that even the Sikhs are afraid of putting it into practice. So much so that monetary offerings at special places of worship are deemed to carry special benefits. Guru categorically denies that any kind of offering to God will help us to be closure to God. People do a kind of deal with God; they offer something to God in return of more. There can be nothing farther from the teachings of Sikhism than this.

Now if we have nothing that we can offer to God as a gift, then is there anything else that we can do to seek his blessings. Guru says yes there is. This life as a human being is a blessing from God [2]. Guru says we can make the most of this life as a human being by spending it in the service of God. Guru has used the term Amrit Vela for this life. The literal meaning (in Punjabi) of Amrit is nectar and Vela means time or period. In GGS Amrit is the name given to teachings of Guru [3]. Time here stands for the life of a human being. So Amrit Vela means the time when we can understand and act on the teachings of Guru, which is life as a human being. Some scholars [4] interpret this term as early morning hours. This does not look right. If the early hours of a day are right time to spend in the service of God then it will mean that in Sikhism there is special importance for specific periods of time in a day. This is not correct. Following quotes from GGS show that the whole life is appropriate time and that time is the best which is spent in the service of God be it the early morning hours or middle of the day or late night.

ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਸੁਣਿ ਮਨ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਮਿਲੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਹੈ ਇਹ ॥  
ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਸਾਸੁ ਹੈ ਤਬ ਲਗੁ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਦੇਹ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਕਾਮਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਢਹਿ ਢੇਰੀ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਹ ॥ ੧ ॥  
੫੨੧

(O my friend, this life is the time when you can realize God. It is the time to do something as long as you are breathing and if you die without doing anything it is a waste.)

ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥ ਜੇ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਤਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੇ  
ਰਤਿਆ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੀ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਸਾਚ ਸਿਉ  
ਸਾਸੁ ਨ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਕੋਇ ॥ ੧ ॥ ੫੩੫

(If we ask what time is the best to worship God, We should worship God all the time. If you forget got even for a moment, then it is a big loss.)

ਸਾ ਵੇਲਾ ਸੋ ਮੂਰਤੁ ਸਾ ਘੜੀ ਸੋ ਮੁਹਤੁ ਸਫਲੁ ਹੈ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਿੰਦੜੀਏ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ਰਾਮ ॥  
ਮ ੪੫੫੪੦

(Those moments of time when we remember God are the one that get used properly)

ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਨਿਤ ਭੁੰਚਹੁ ਸਰਬ ਵੇਲਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ ॥

ਜਰਾ ਮਰਾ ਤਾਪੁ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਠਾ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਿਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ॥ ੩ ॥ ਮ ਪ ਪ ੬੧੧

(Drink the nectar of the praises of God every minute of the day. This will solve all your problems)

ਪਉੜੀ ॥ ਸਾ ਵੇਲਾ ਕਹੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਸੋ ਮੂਰਤੁ ਭਲਾ ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਸਾਈ ॥

ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਇ ਕੈ ਮਨ ਇਛੁ ਪੁਜਾਈ ॥ ਵਡੈ ਭਾਗਿ ਸਤਸੰਗੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਵਿ ਲਾਗਾ ਪਾਈ ॥

ਮਨਿ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀ ਪਿਆਸ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਈ ॥ ੧੫ ॥ ਮ ਪ ਪ ੭੦੯

(What is the time to realize God? That moment of time is auspicious when we realize God. Remember God every moment of the day)

So we can conclude that Guru is not referring to any early hours of the day. Guru is referring to the life as human being when we can realize God. It has been stated at many places in GGS that human life is the time when we can do this. [5] We read every day that in our Nitnem

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥ ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥ ੫ ੧੨

(You got this life as a blessing, this is the time to realize God.)

ਇਹੀ ਤੇਰਾ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਰ ॥ ਘਟ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਤੂ ਦੇਖੁ ਬਿਚਾਰਿ ॥ ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰੁ ਜੀਤਿ ਕੈ ਹਾਰਿ ॥ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਕਹਿਓ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥ ੫ ॥ ੧ ॥ ੯ ॥ ੫ ੧੧੫੯

(Kabir says it in loud and clear voice, this (birth as human) is time, this is the opportunity when you can make it or lose it.)

So we can conclude that this life is the time to realize God. The next question is what do we do to achieve this? Guru answers in the last part of this sentence. (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵਿਚਾਰੁ ॥) While we got this rare opportunity of life as a human being, we should contemplate deep and hard on the eternal virtues of God. There is some elbow room for misinterpretation here. One might be tempted to think that, if some one sits in a lonely place and thinks hard and deep about God that will do the trick. However there will be nothing farther from truth if we interpret this sentence as an advice (from Guru) to sit by ourselves and think hard and deep about God. Ever alert Guru guides us at every step. In the next line Guru says ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ।੬॥ Guru makes it clear that when we understand and appreciate the great virtues of God and then practice those virtues in our life; this results in the enrichment of our inner self and a new life germinates inside us. All this happens when we follow the teachings of Guru in our lives. When a person lives and acts according to the teachings of Guru, he or she is sort of reincarnated as a new person. This is his new birth that has been bestowed on him/her due to deeds done. This is evident in our day to day life. When a person starts practicing a new philosophy of life, people notice immediately that it is a different person. For example if an atheist becomes a theist or the vice versa, the difference is visible immediately. The last part of this line completes the answer of Guru. If we practice the teachings of Guru and appreciate virtues of God all the time, a change happens in our inner self. However it is still up to God to bless us or not with the knowledge of ultimate truth. When God is pleased, he blesses us with this ultimate knowledge [7]

In the last line of this stanza Guru tells us what happens when this ultimate knowledge dawns upon. Guru says ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ ॥ A person, who is lucky enough to reach this stage, sees the truth of God lit up everywhere, every nook and corner of this universe. All boundaries vanish. Everything happening in this world falls into place and start making perfect sense. The logic of Hukam that operates this universe becomes visible like daylight.

ਅਲਹੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਗੁੜੁ ਦੀਨਾ ਮੀਠਾ ॥

ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੰਕਾ ਨਾਸੀ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਡੀਠਾ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੩ ॥ ੫ ੧੩੫੦

(Kabir says Guru has blessed me with knowledge. I can't describe the depth of this knowledge. All my doubts have vanished and I see God everywhere.)

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਵੇਖਾ ਹਰਿ ਇਕੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਏਹਿ ਨੇੜੁ ਅੰਧ ਸੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਦਿਬ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਹੋਈ ॥ ੩੬ ॥ ਮ ੩ ੫ ੯੨੨

(Guru helped me to recognize the presence of God everywhere. I was blind before Guru gave me this insight.)

## Notes

1. Guru has given a new idea here. So far people knew only that God or his middlemen have the power to curse and inflict untold miseries on people if they do not obey God. History of religions is replete with such stories. But Guru says God has no other language except love and affection.
2. It is to be noted that Guru has called this life blessing. This is also a revolutionary idea. Up till now people were told that their life is either a punishment for the Original Sin of Adam and Eve or it is a punishment for not doing well (as per theory of Karma) in your previous life.
3. There are plenty of quotes in GGS that substantiates this view. Just for the sake of reference see pages 29,40,50,67,70,87,96,100,102 and 103
4. Including Dr Sahib Singh
5. However it is to be noted here that Sikhism lays a lot of stress on being active in life. To wake up early in the morning and start your day is a part of being active in life. This must not be taken to mean that early part of the day is auspicious time. Sikh is supposed to spend every moment of his life remembering God. Unfortunately misinterpretation of this line has given birth to so many unnecessary rituals in Sikhism
6. Different scholars interpret this line differently. For example, interpreting this line Prof Sahib Singh says (in Darpan) that, when a person remembers God early in the morning, he/she is bestowed upon a robe of love by God and he/she sees God everywhere. Veer Bhupinder Singh in one of his recent articles on Sikhism has referred to this line and interpreted it as the spiritual self that takes birth on account of knowledge of Guru. Our parents are responsible for our physical birth. The knowledge of Guru gives us our spiritual birth. Bhai Kahn Singh says in Mahan Kosh (Page 295) that Kapra here means human body. The two words that are the key to the correct

understanding of this line are Karmi and Kapra. Karmi has these meanings as per Mahankosh.

- a) on account of deeds or actions (Karmas)
- b) one who acts or perform the deeds
- c) One who indulges in rituals
- d) One who blesses

The other word Kapra has following meanings as per Mahan Kosh.

- e) Clothes, Silk
- f) Robe of honour
- g) Human body

Further it is to be noted that there is another word Chola which is also a synonym of Kapra in Punjabi. This word Chola is used frequently even today to refer to human body. It is often said that when a person dies he/she has abandoned his/her chola.

This word Kapra has been used only twice elsewhere in GGS. The relevant verses are given hereunder.

ਖਿਮਾ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਕਰਿ ਗਉ ਲਵੇਰੀ ਸਹਜੇ ਬਛਰਾ ਖੀਰੁ ਪੀਐ ॥  
ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਰਮ ਕਾ ਕਪੜਾ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਵਤੁ ਰਹੈ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੭ ॥ ਮ ੧ ਪ ੧੩੨੯

ਪਉੜੀ ॥ ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਲਿ  
ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਆਇਆ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਖਾਧਾ ਰਜਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਢਾਢੀ ਕਰੇ ਪਸਾਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ੨੭ ॥ ਸੁਧੁ ਮ ੧ ਪ ੧੫੦

It is to be noted that the word kapra has been used both times as a metaphor for the change in the inner self that happens when we follow the teachings of Guru. Interpretation of Sahib Singh in Darpan is also on similar lines.

So we can safely conclude that interpretation by Veer Bhupinder Singh is closure to truth. Human birth has been referred to in the previous line as Amrit Vela and Guru advises us to contemplate deep and hard on the virtues of God. This action (Karmi) results in our new birth (Kapra)

7. Guru used the word Mokh Duaar. The word Mokh is synonym of the word Mukti (literal meaning is riddance) used in Indian religious writings. Different religions a different ways of Mukti. This is a separate subject. Here it will be suffice to say that Guru has not prescribed any way for Mukti, but has the used the common word to convey his message. In my opinion here it means knowledge. Bhai Kahn Singh has given the following meanings of this word in his Mahan Kosh

- a) Door of salvation
- b) Guru
- c) Company of the enlightened
- d) Knowledge

Prof Sahib Singh has interpreted the word Mokh as riddance from falsehood and Duaar as door to God.