

The Guru Nanak of Brother Gurdas



Preface

Introduction to Sikhism

The Sikh religion was founded by the prophet Guru Nanak I (1469-1539 AD) in India. It is the 5th largest religion in the world. The first Guru Nanak was succeeded by 9 other human Gurus. The second Guru is called Guru Nanak II, the third Guru is called Guru Nanak III, the fourth Guru is called Guru Nanak IV, etc. Due to the assassination of some Sikh Gurus, Guru Nanak X decided not have any more human Gurus. So the Sikh holy book became the last, living, and eternal Guru of the Sikhs

Sikhs use the title 'Guru' as a form of respect for their prophets. The title 'Guru' is widely used in India for spiritual guides. Hence, some Sikhs prefer to use the term 'Satguru' (the True Guru) for their prophets because they knew the True Lord (God). The term 'Guru' is made of two different words ('Gu' means "darkness" and "ru" means "remover of"). Hence, a Guru enlightens by uprooting the darkness of ignorance. Sikhism is a 'New Age' spiritual movement in this 'Dark Age' (of Kaljug).

Hence, in Sikhism the term 'Guru' refers to a 'Teacher (of spiritual knowledge)'. In the Bible, Jesus was sometimes referred to as a 'Rabbi' – which also means 'teacher'. The followers or the disciples of Sikhism are called 'Sikhs', which means 'Learners (of spiritual knowledge)'. The Sikh name for the Lord God Almighty is 'Wahe-Guru', which translates as the 'Wonderful Teacher'. Sikhs believe there is only One Creator God for the whole of humanity. Others gave the same Lord God different names.

The Sikh religion has evolved over time. There is a difference between the Sikh history of the Early Guru Period (1469-1606) of the first 5 Sikh Gurus, and the Later Guru Period (1606-1708) of the last 5 Sikh Gurus. Under the fifth Guru Arjan, Sikhism had become popular. Hence, the Sikhs were persecuted and Guru Nanak V was the first Guru to be martyred in 1606. Sikhism started to change under the sixth Guru Hargobind. Guru Nanak VI started to militarise the Sikhs, for defence purposes.

Hence, the militarisation of the Sikhs began when the sixth Guru took over in 1606. It continued under the next four Gurus because the ninth Guru was martyred in 1675 - because he refused to convert to Islam. In 1699, the tenth Guru finally setup the 'Order of the Khalsa'. This organisation was a Brotherhood of 'Saint-Soldiers'. Guru Nanak X baptised the Holy Warriors in their own military uniform of the fives 'Ks'. The Khalsa also had its own form of discipline ('Rahit' - a Code of Conduct).

Hence, the tenth Guru Gobind Singh was forced to set up a new elite sect of the 'Khalsa Panth' to defend the Sikhs. The term 'Khalsa' means the 'pure'. The word 'Panth' is a Sanskrit term meaning 'path' or 'way of life'. However, not all Sikhs are baptised into the sect of the Khalsa. When the Guru Nanak X completed the Sikh holy book and made it Guru Nanak XI, he did not mention the Khalsa in the final scripture. Hence, non-baptised Sikhs could still follow the Sikh holy Scripture as their Guru.

The title 'Guru Nanak XI' obviously refers to the sacred Sikh scripture which is better known as the 'Guru Granth Sahib'. In India, baptised Sikhs are called 'Amritdhari' Sikhs and non-baptised Sikhs are called 'Sahajdhari' Sikhs. However, Sahajdhari Sikhs like myself prefer to call ourselves the followers of the 'Nanak Panth' sect of India. Western Sikhs might prefer to call the Nanak Panthi sect as the denomination of 'Nanakism'. Hence, the followers of Nanakism can be called 'Nanakites'.

The Khalsa Panth of Guru Gobind Singh has become an organised religion. Nanakism is more of a spiritual movement based on the original teachings of the first Guru Nanak. Nanakites still respect the denomination of the Khalsa. Some Nanakites might even choose to join the Khalsa. Nanakites still choose to wear at least one of the 5 Ks of the Order of the Khalsa or a turban. Like Khalsa Sikhs, Nanakites adopt the name 'Singh' (meaning lion) for males and 'Kaur' (meaning princess) for the ladies.

The purpose of this book is to provide access to the early Sikh classics to Western Sikhs, and others interested in Guru Nanak's Sikhism (Nanakism). Most classics have already been translated into the English language, from the Punjabi Gurmukhi language. I hope that this work encourages interest in the early Sikhs or the 'Nanak Panth'. The latter is an Indian term. As a Western Sikh, I prefer the term 'Nanakism' and 'Nanakites' for the early followers of Guru Nanak.

However, it's important that Western Sikhs understand the historical and the Eastern cultural background of the Sikh religion. Hence, it's important for Sikh intellectuals to learn the Punjabi Gurmukhi script, devised by the Gurus. For some Sikh words, it's difficult to find English language equivalents. The Sikh religion originated in a rural Indian patriarchal society of 500 years ago. Like Jesus, the Sikh Gurus and scholars made use of 'parables' (stories that teach a spiritual lesson).

Introduction to this book

This book introduces the Gospel (life and teachings) of Guru Nanak, according to Brother Gurdas (Bhai Gurdas). Gurdas (1551-1637) was not only the first Sikh scholar but the writer of the first biography of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. He was the best person to write this biography because he spent time with people who themselves spent some time with the first Guru.

Gurdas worked with Baba (Father) Budha (1506-1631), who first met Guru Nanak in 1518. Gurdas was born when Guru Angad (1504-1552) was the Spiritual leader of the Sikhs. It was Guru Nanak that anointed Guru Angad as the second Spiritual guide of the Sikhs. During the time of the fifth Guru Arjan, Gurdas wrote his account of the life of Guru Nanak in response to a request made by the Sikh community.

Brother Gurdas's biography of the first Guru has been described as a hagiography. The main aim of Gurdas was to explain certain points from the Scriptures and to spread the ideals of the Sikh way of life, not to write a book of history. Gurdas does provide a list of the names of the early Sikh followers of the first and the second Sikh Gurus. He personally met half of the 10 Sikh prophets (the Gurus).

Gurdas has three main literary works. Firstly there is the 'Chhands' - six poems (Slokas) with 8 verses, written in the Sanskrit language. Secondly, there is the 'Kabitt-Swayyas' written in the Brij Bhasha language. Finally, there is the 'Varan' with 40 poems and 912 stanzas. The Varan was written in the Punjabi language and the Gurmukhi script. Gurdas's work includes a code of conduct for Nanakites.

This book of mine is in four parts. In the first part, I provide some information on the life of Brother Gurdas. In the second part, I make available to the reader a sample of Gurdas's writings. This sample includes the complete English translation of his first poem with its 49 stanzas. The first 22 stanzas of poem 1 give some background information about Sikhism, before the advent of Guru Nanak.

The third part of this book, is a brief biography of Guru Nanak and 5 other Gurus (Stanzas 23-49 of Poem 1). I have also included a sample of translations of some other Poems and Stanzas of Brother Gurdas. I hope that these Verses give an idea of some thoughts of the early Sikhs on different topics. These stanzas, from his other poems, show Gurdas as the learned theologian of the Sikh faith.

The fourth and final part of this book, includes some of the teachings of the first Guru Nanak. It starts with a translation of 'Japji', the first composition of the Guru. Japji is the most comprehensive statement on Sikh theology. It starts with the 'Mul Mantra' (which is the preamble to the Japji), which represents the essence of Sikh theology. Japji is read as a prayer and is part of daily recitation.

The teachings of the first Guru (Nanak I) can be found in the 'Holy Granth', which Brother Gurdas wrote down – as dictated by Guru Nanak V. The Sikh holy scripture was completed in 1604. After this date, Gurdas produced his own writings. The fifth Guru said that Gurdas's own writings were vital in the understanding the Sikh sacred scripture. As a humble person, Gurdas didn't want a mausoleum built in his memory.

All of the original classics of Sikhism, including their holy scripture, were written in the Punjabi Gurmukhi script. As Sanskrit was treated like it was the language of the gods, knowledge was denied to women and men of low caste. The Gurmukhi alphabet was produced by the Sikh Gurus, so that God's message was accessible to all. The common people could now read and understand the Sikh scripture.

Although I have paid people to translate some work from Punjabi to the English language; the editing, the interpretation, and any analysis of the texts are my own. For example, the Gurdas poems have been translated but the titles, introduction and the footnotes (in square brackets) at the end of each verse are my own. The end of this book has the References and the Appendix for the 'Gospel of Guru Nanak'.

Introduction to the Editor of this book

Sikhs always ask about the background of authors and scholars who write about the Sikh Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. Here, although I don't give my full name, I would like to say that my parents were born in the Sikh Holy Land of the Punjab province of Pakistan (the birthplace of Guru Nanak). Hence, they moved to India as refugees in 1947, before arriving in the United Kingdom.

I was born in England to Khalsa baptised Sikhs. Although I am fluent in the Punjabi language, I think in the English language. I studied the Gurmukhi script in Sunday Schools attached to Gurdwaras (Sikh Temples). In the UK, I have studied to post-graduate level in Social Sciences. I've spent 34 years teaching Humanities in English schools and colleges. I'm interested in Comparative Religious Studies.

I have travelled widely. I have been on Sikh pilgrimages and visited most places associated with the Sikh Gurus in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. I would like to see more of the Sikh religious classics available in the English language, and to a wider western audience. I hope that the reader likes this work and is encouraged to read the other classics of Sikh literature.

I hope that 'Waheguru' (the Lord God) accepts this work, as my 'seva' (service) to the congregation.

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Biography of Brother Gur-Das (1551-1637)

For Indians, Brother Gur-das is better known as 'Bhai Gurdas'. The title 'Bhai' (which means 'Brother') is often used by Sikhs for well-known Sikhs, as a term of respect. The name 'Gur-Das' can be translated as the 'servant of the Guru' because 'Das' means 'devotee' or 'slave of God'. At birth he was named 'Gurdas Bhalla', in India in 1551 AD. His mother, who was called 'Jivani' died when Brother Gurdas was about 3 years old. The father of Gurdas was called 'Ishar-Das'.

Ishar-Das was the cousin of the third Sikh prophet, Guru Amardas (1479-1574). Hence, Ishar-Das moved to the town of Goindval, when it was founded in the Punjab in the late 1540s – a religious centre for Sikhs. Brother Gurdas was born in Bararke Gillan, a small village in the Punjab. Gurdas was the only child of his parents. He became an orphan at the age of 12, when his father died. Hence, Gurdas was adopted by his uncle Guru Amardas.

Guru Amardas took responsibility for Brother Gurdas's education. Gurdas learnt the languages of Sanskrit, Braj Bhasha (old Hindi), Persian and Punjabi. He spent his early years at Goindval and Sultanpur Lodhi. The latter is an ancient town in the Punjab. It is best known for being a place where Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of the Sikh religion, worked and lived for 14 years. It is also the place where the first Guru received his divine call to preach the true religion to the world.

Both Goindval and Sultanpur Lodhi, where on the main route between Delhi and Lahore. At Goindval, Brother Gurdas debated with the travelling 'Swamis' (Hindu spiritual leaders) and scholars. He later moved to the ancient holy Hindu city of Benares on the River Ganges. This place had also been visited by Guru Nanak during his travels. In Benares, Gurdas studied the sacred Hindu scriptures. He was quick to learn and soon became a preacher of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.

When the third Guru died in 1574, Brother Gurdas returned to the Punjab. A new fourth Sikh prophet (Guru Ramdas) took charge. Guru Ramdas (1534-1581 AD), was already married to the daughter of the third Guru. Hence, Gurdas was already related to the new fourth Guru – he was the (cousin) brother-in-law to Guru Ramdas. The Guru formally recruited Gurdas into the Sikh faith of Nanakism in 1579 and sent his disciple as a missionary to spread the teachings of Guru Nanak.

The Guru improved the missionary work by sending 'masands' to different parts of Northern India. Hence, Brother Gurdas travelled to Agra, Lucknow, Burhanpur, Rajasthan, Jammu and the Chamba hills. Many of these places already had a 'Sangat' (a congregation), from the days of Guru Nanak's visits. Elsewhere, Gurdas preached Guru Nanak's words (the 'Gurbani'). Guru Ramdas also founded the Sikh holy city of Amritsar. In 1577, Brother Gurdas helped to dig up its sacred pool.

After the death of Guru Ramdas in 1581, Brother Gurdas formed a close relationship with the fifth prophet of the Sikh religion, Guru Arjan (1563-1606). The fifth Guru already had great respect for Gurdas because he was the Guru's maternal uncle. Brother Gurdas wrote the 'Adi Granth' (the Sikh holy scripture), as dictated by Guru Arjan. He also supervised the other scribes and wrote his own 'Vaaran Bhai Gurdas'. The latter were described by the Guru, as the 'key to the holy Granth.'

Guru Arjan had many enemies. Prithi Chand (1558-1618) was the eldest son of Guru Ramdas and the eldest brother of Guru Arjan. Prithi Chand wanted to be the 5th Guru but he failed in this task. At the time, Hindu majority India was ruled by the Muslim Mughal dynasty. Hence, Prithi Chand tried to incite Akbar the Great (1542-1605) against Guru Arjan. He told the Mughal Emperor that the Sikh Guru was planning to include hymns into a holy book that were bias against the Muslims.

Brother Gurdas recited the Guru's hymns to the Emperor, when he visited Kartarpur in 1596-97. Selecting at random, he read out the Guru's verses to Akbar. As Akbar was interested in religions, he was impressed with the spiritual nature of the Guru's hymns. The fifth Guru had also compiled the 'Adi Granth' with hymns of some Muslim Sufis and Hindu Saints. Akbar offered 51 gold coins to this holy book. Brother Gurdas was presented with a pair of expensive Kashmere shawls by Akbar.

Everything changed when Jahangir became the Mughal Emperor (1605-27), after the death of his father Akbar. Akbar had preferred Jahangir's son Prince Khusrau to succeed him because he shared his tolerant religious views. The Prince, who had already met and admired the fifth Guru Arjan, turned to him for help. Jahangir used this excuse to turn against Sikhism. He accused the Guru of favouring his rival to the throne and so had him punished. The Guru Nanak V died on 30th May 1606.

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan in 1606, Guru Hargobind became the sixth Guru (or Guru Nanak VI). Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) was the only son of the fifth Guru. The new sixth Guru had received his early education and training from the most revered Sikhs of the time – Brother Gurdas and Baba Budha. The latter had met the first Guru Nanak (1469-1539) in 1518. Hence, Baba Budha (1506-1631) personally performed the anointment ceremony for five Sikh Gurus (after Guru Nanak).

Guru Harogobind constructed the 'Akal Takhat' (Eternal Throne) as the primary seat of temporal power. The origin of this lies in the concept of 'miri' and 'piri' – the synthesis of the spiritual and the worldly, introduced by the Guru. The Takhat started as a platform. The Guru laid the corner stone, whilst both Gurdas and Baba Budha finished the construction. The platform was used for the anointment ceremony of the Guru. Later, the Guru used it for the secular affairs of the community.

This Akal Takht building was built in front of the Harmandir Sahib, which is inside the sacred pool of Amritsar holy city. The word 'Harmandir' means 'Temple of God'. Guru Harogobind gave Brother Gurdas the responsibility for looking after the premises. The Guru also gave Gurdas the responsibility for teaching his youngest son, the future Guru Tegh Bahadur (or Guru Nanak VII). Hence, Brother Gurdas taught the Ancient classics to the Guru's son.

Guru Hargobind himself was the custodian of the Akal Takht. When the Guru was imprisoned at Gwalior Fort in 1612, Brother Gurdas was made the first 'Jathedar' (Head) of the Akal Takht. The Guru gave Baba Budha the responsibility for performing the services at the Harmandir Sahib. Gurdas also led some Sikhs to Gwalior Fort in Central India, where the Guru was detained on the orders of Emperor Jahangir. Jahangir was still jealous of the popularity of Sikhism.

As the Jathedar, Brother Gurdas attended the weddings of the Guru's sons in 1621 and 1629. He also attended the funeral of the Guru's mother. Gurdas recited the scripture and said prayers for Baba Budha, at the time of his death in 1631. Baba Budha died in the village of Jhanda Ramdas, on the Ravi River. His funeral rites were performed by Guru Hargobind himself. Historians believe that the Guru was released from Gwalior prison on the recommendations of Mian Mir (1550-1635).

Mian Mir was a well known Sufi saint of Lahore. Historians have traced his ancestry to Caliph Umar (584-644 AD). Mian Mir was highly respected by Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Guru Arjan invited him in 1589 to lay the foundation stone for the Golden Temple, in Amritsar. Mian Mir mediated with Emperor Jahangir on the Guru Hargobind's behalf. Today Sikhs celebrate the festival of 'Bandi Chhor' (Day of prisoner liberation) to commemorate the Guru's release from Gwalior fort.

On the Guru's release, Brother Gurdas was again sent to different places to preach Sikhism – which also included Kabul, Kashmir, and Sri Lanka. On one such mission, he was sent to purchase horses from Kabul. However, the money was stolen from him. Unable to face his Guru, Gurdas fled to Benares. Brother Gurdas was arrested and brought back to Amritsar. The Guru forgave him and he returned to his duties as the chief organiser of the scattered Sikh community.

After the death of Jahangir, Shah-Jahan (born in 1592) became the fourth Mughal Emperor in 1628. Under his reign, the oppression of the Sikhs increased. As a result, Guru Hargobind had to fight battles against the imperial Mughal forces. This represents a break from the more peaceful 'sant tradition' of the first five Sikh Gurus. At this time, the sixth Guru's militant ways caused a certain amount of unrest in the Sikh community.

Brother Gurdas rose to the defence of his Guru. For him, Guru Hargobind was 'the destroyer of enemy hordes, the hero of battles, the great Warrior' as well as the 'great benefactor.' One day in the ambrosial hour, he told the Guru that his end was near. He beautifully recited Guru Nanak's 'Japji' prayer and Guru Arjan's 'Sukhmani Sahib' (prayer of peace). The body of Brother Gurdas was covered with a sheet of cloth, while he drifted into an eternal sleep.

Brother Gurdas, who had never married, died at Goindval in 1637. His funeral rites were performed by Guru Hargobind. The Guru celebrated the life of Gurdas: 'You spread glory all over, so that the Sikh path can get the divine salvation. Your name will be remembered forever and because of you, the Sikh path will always feel elegant and attractive'. On the fourth day, after putting the remains (ashes) of Gurdas in river Beas, the Guru returned to Amritsar.

Sources of information

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The first poem of Brother Gurdas

Poem 1 contains 49 stanzas. Stanzas 1 to 22 give background information to the advent of the prophet Guru Nanak. Stanza 1 below is an invocation of the Lord – the Supreme Being.

In Sikhism, the word ‘Name’ is often used for God. (Jews abstain from using the name ‘Jehovah’ for their Lord because of fear of its irreverent use). Meditation on God’s name is one form of Sikh worship. It is believed that by the constant heartfelt repetition of God’s name, one can eventually be absorbed in the Lord. (Hence, obtain the supreme object of human birth after many reincarnations).

Poem 1, Stanza 1 (A prayer)

1. I bow before Guru Nanak who recited the 'Satnam' mantra, for the world. [In the Punjabi language 'Satnam' means the 'true name'].
2. Those who believe in this Divine Mantra, were rescued from drowning in the sea of this life. Getting the creatures across this world-ocean, they merged with the ever liberated divine light. ['Salvation' implies 'redemption' from the cycle of births and deaths, and a final union with the Lord God].
3. All my fears (of separation from God, physical disease, death, and reincarnation) vanished.
4. This world is only an illusion and temporary. Birth, suffering, and death are part of this life.
5. The fear of the Angel of Death never leaves the minds of the evil-doers. Hence, they waste this beautiful gift of human life for nothing.
6. Those who have taken shelter at the holy feet of the true Guru, were blessed with the sacred Word. The true Word, helped them achieve salvation. [The True Name implies the practice of acknowledging the continuing presence of the Lord God's Holy Spirit].
7. The liberated celebrate their meeting with the Guru, with loving devotion. They pass on the divine Word (the Lord's Name) to others and inspire them to hold absolute faith in the Guru for Salvation. ['Gurpurabs' are festivals that celebrate the lives of the Sikh Gurus by remembrance of the Lord God, charity, and holy ablution. Sikh festivals are occasions for a rededication to the Guru's path].
8. As one sows, so one shall reap. [Similar words were used by Jesus in the Christian Bible].

Poem 1, Stanza 2 (The Creation of the Universe).

Stanzas 2 to 4 looks at Creator of the Universe.

1. In the beginning, there was neither flesh nor any breath.
There was nothing but complete darkness and mist. Nothing could be known or felt.
2. Then the body was created with the blood of the mother and the semen of the father. The Creator created the human form using the five elements.
3. The five elements are the same ones that the Lord God used to create the Universe. These elements included air, water, fire and earth.
4. The fifth element is sky (void or space) and was added to the original four. The creator God is the sixth element but in a hidden form. The Lord God invisibly permeates among all.
5. To create the human body, the five elements and twenty-five qualities (opposite to each other) were brought together. [Editor's note: Some believe that the 25 qualities mentioned here refer to the 26 qualities in the Hindu 'Gita' – but I think this is wrong].
6. The four life-generating systems (egg, foetus, sweatborn, vegetation) and the four stages of utterances were brought together to enact the drama for reincarnation.
[There are 4 successive stages in the origination or utterance of a word from the mouth – para, pasyanti, madhyama, vaikhari].
7. Hence, 8.4 million species (different forms of life) were created.

Poem 1, Stanza 3 (Human births are the greatest)

1. Among the 8.4 million species, human birth is the best form of life.
2. A human being has eyes to see beautiful things, the ears to hear noble words and the mouth to speak pleasant words of love.
3. The hands should do righteous work. The feet should take the path to the holy congregation ('Sat Sangat').
4. Only with a human life, can one earn an honest living and share one's earnings with the less fortunate.
5. The Life of God-centred ('Gurmukh') Sikhs is more fruitful. They read the holy scripture and spread its message to others, so that others can benefit from it.
[In the Sikh religion, the opposite of a Gurmukh is a 'Manmukh' - a Self-centred person].
6. The God-centred Sikhs (as believers of the Guru) take the holy water touched by their Guru's feet. [This shows that they are pleased to serve them].
7. Continue the custom of humbly touching the holy feet of virtuous persons. Humility is the true path in this Dark Age (Kaliyug).
8. A 'true Sikh' (Gursikh) of the Guru will swim across the worldly ocean, and help others to do the same (to get redemption).
['Sikh' means learner or disciple. 'Gursikh' means a disciple of a Guru. The word 'Guru' means teacher or a spiritual guide].

Poem 1, Stanza 5 (The Satjug Age)

According to Indian theology, there are four Ages. They are Sat, Treta, Duapar, and Kal. They are similar to the golden, silver, brass, and iron ages of Ancient Greece and Rome. Stanzas 5 to 7 look at these four Ages.

1. The Lord God established the four Ages (**Jugs**) – **Satjug**, **Treta**, and **Duapar**.
2. The fourth Age is the **Kaljug** (the Dark Age). Four castes were established as the Kings of the four Ages.
3. The four castes were **Brahmin**, **Kshatriya**, **Vaishya**, and **Shudra**. They became predominant in each Age. However, the Lord was supreme and predominant in all the four Ages.
4. In Satjug, the god Vishnu is said to have come to earth as the incarnation of Hansa the Swan prophet – a symbol of truth and piety. (A story of Ancient Hindu mythology).
5. During Satjug, no one had any dependence or craving for worldly goods (**Maya**). People were attached to and praised the One Lord alone.
6. During Satjug, people went into the jungles or forests to meditate and depended upon natural vegetation for their survival.
7. During Satjug, people had a very long life-span - lives that lasted many thousands of years. However, they did not build palaces, mansions, or forts.
8. In the present Age, one passes away while another thinks they are here to stay forever.

Poem 1, Stanza 6 (The Tetra and Duapar Age)

1. In ***Tetra***, the prophet Ram Chander (a Kshatriya) was incarnated into the Sun dynasty.
2. During the ***Tetra*** Age, life expectancy of the people decreased by over ninety per cent. Illusion, worldly attachment, and pride became widespread.
3. In the ***Duapar*** Age, the character of the people declined. Again, life expectancy decreased by ninety per cent. Hence, the incarnation of prophet Krishna took birth in the Yadav dynasty.
4. Following the ancient Hindu text of the 'Rig Veda', Brahmins prayed and performed the sacrificial '***Yags***'. They also faced Eastwards - thinking that God resided in that direction.
5. Following the ancient Hindu text of the 'Yajur Veda', the Kshatriyas were involved in charity. They also performed their holy deeds whilst facing South – thinking that God resided in that direction.
6. Following the ancient Hindu text of the 'Sama Veda', the Vaishyas prayed. They bowed, whilst facing the West – thinking that God resided in that direction.
7. The disciples of the 'Rig Veda' wore blue clothes. The disciples of the 'Yajur Veda' wore yellow clothes. The disciples who sang the hymns of the 'Sama Veda' traditionally wore white clothes.
8. Hence, the three Ages had three different faiths that the people were following.

Poem 1, Stanza 7 (The Kaljug Age)

1. During **Kaljug** or the fourth Age, the whole world developed lower expectations.
2. The people became reluctant to perform services and duties as laid down in the holy Hindu scriptures of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas.
3. During this Dark Age, the people were deluded. The entire world was seduced by materialism.
4. Evil appeared in the world. Hatred and degeneracy engrossed the people, who became selfish.
5. No one worshiped or showed any respect anymore. No one showed any respect for the young or the elderly anymore. People had lost the ability to distinguish between the good and the bad.
6. In this Dark Age, the Emperors became tyrants and the local rulers became butchers.
7. The righteousness of the first three Ages had disappeared. No one believed in doing good deeds for others. Only those who paid the bribe, got justice.
8. Humankind became tarnished with evil deeds.

Poem 1, Stanza 8 (The Schools of Thought)

Stanzas 8 to 14 look at the 'Shastras'. These are the Sanskrit works on the six philosophical systems of the Hindu religion.

1. Having studied the four Vedas, the Hindu scholars produced the six 'Shastras' (sacred scriptures).
2. People are singing what had been said by the Hindu gods like Brahma and his sons (angels).
[His sons were the 4 Kumars or 'Rishis' – Sanak, Sanatan, Sanandan, and Sanat].
3. Many recite, sing and contemplate but a rare person out of millions understands and reads between the lines.
4. Despite reading and contemplating, one still can't realise the mysteries of the Lord God.
5. Through the Ages, the Lord God has always been the same form. Why do people hold faith in many? In every Age, one caste is dominant – but in 'Kaljug' there are countless castes.
6. During these three Ages, the secret of the ultimate truth remained locked. Many read and pondered upon the scriptures until they were tired. However, they remained confused.
7. The four Vedas try to reveal the truth. These are complemented by the Shastras (the six philosophical systems of Ancient India).
8. All sang the praise of their own religion or viewpoint.

Poem 1, Stanza 9 (Nyaya philosophy)

1. The Indian philosopher Gotama, having reflected upon it, wrote the story of the 'Rig Veda'.
2. Having studied the Nyaya school of thought, Gotama said that everything was in the hands of the Lord God.
3. All of creation and its support, is in the hands of the Lord God. No one can interfere in God's Will.
4. The Lord God is in the beginning and at the end of this creation. Yet in this philosophy, God is shown separate from this creation. However, the Lord God remains aloof and detached of all the sins and the virtuous deeds. [Some say that Gotama created doubts by stating that Creation and Creator are different].
5. No one has seen the invisible Creator God. People remain indulged in the expansive delusions of nature.
6. The truth that Gotama reveals is that the Lord God having given the divine mantra of 'soham parbrahm', had become invisible. [For Hindus, 'Parabrahman' is the 'Supreme Brahman' or God – creator, sustainer, destroyer].
7. The 'Rig Veda' tells it's devotees that there is only One True Supreme Lord.
8. Without Satguru (the True Guru), this truth or enlightenment cannot be achieved.

Poem 1, Stanza 10 (Mimamsa philosophy)

1. Having studied the 'Yajur Veda', the Ancient Indian scholar Jaimini founded the Mimamsa School of Hindu philosophy.
2. The ultimate judgement of the Lord's Court will be based on the deeds performed through the body. You will reap what you sow.
3. Jaimini preached that God established the system of 'Karma' (deeds and actions in this world). Karma became the cause of reincarnation (the recurring births and deaths of living beings).
4. One is not able to free oneself from the doubts and suspicions. A person keeps living in the fantasy world of illusions and acting accordingly.
5. 'Suspicions' are the normal social behaviour of the world. For them, Brahma and this Illusion are identical.
6. A study of the 'Yajur Veda' created doubt by mixing delusions with Brahma, the supreme reality.
7. Mimamsa School of Thought's sermons preach that salvation depends upon ritualism. It also says that incarnation (coming and going from the world) is the result of 'karma' bondage.
8. Without the help of the True Guru, the doubts or the illusions cannot be banished.

Poem 1, Stanza 11 (Vedant philosophy)

Many Indians believe that the Sufi system is based on Vedant.

1. Having studied the 'Sama Veda', Vyas the Scholar recited his concept of 'Vedant' (the spirit of the Vedas) to the people.
2. The 'atman' (the soul or the self) cannot be described. Vyas propounded before the people the self as identical to the indescribable 'Brahm'.
[For Hindus, Brahm/Brahman is 'the unchanging reality amidst and beyond the world'].
3. Since the Lord is invisible, this self-assertion as God created more illusion besides inflating one with ego.
4. Thus they established themselves as worthy of worship.
Hence, they did not learn the mysteries of loving devotion.
5. Although Vyas studied the Vedas, he did not obtain peace of mind. He was burning himself in the fire of his doubts.
6. The negative influence of 'Illusion' did not disappear from his mind. Like a rod, it always hung over Vyas's head. He suffered from his fear of punishment by the Angel of Death.
7. Seeing his pitiful state, Narad the divine scholar advised Vyas to praise and worship the Creator.
8. No one ever sails across the world ocean without surrendering to the True Guru.

Poem 1, Stanza 12 (Sankhya philosophy)

1. As the 'Duapar' Age passed away, the Crown was placed onto the 'Kaljug' Age.
2. The teachings of the 'Artharva Veda' entered the lives of the people. The true devotees started praying, whilst facing northwards.
3. Kapila the Scholar, having studied the 'Artharva Veda', founded the Sankhya School of Hindu philosophy.
4. According to the Sankhya School, knowledge helps differentiate between the truth and falsehood, the just and the unjust. It also differentiates between what is temporary, and what is permanent.
5. Without knowledge of the truth, no one can achieve salvation.
6. Those who indulge in 'Karma' (physical deeds) will leave. (Achieving a state of equipoise through Yoga can help merge the soul with the Almighty).
7. Enlightenment (Spiritual wisdom) blesses one with happiness and comforts. The illusions of repeated re-incarnations (births and deaths) ends, leading to the emancipation of the soul.
8. The knowledgeable Gurmukh (God-centred person) would then merge with the mentor (the divine light), by treading the path defined by a True Guru.

Poem 1, Stanza 13 (Vaisesik philosophy)

1. After contemplating on the 'Atharva Veda', the 'God centred' scholar Kanada founded the Vaisesik School of Hindu philosophy.
2. Kanada produced the theory of 'one reaps what one sows'. No one gets anything before it is due to them – and that at the destined time. (We ourselves are responsible for our own good or bad actions).
3. Everything that happens in the entire universe is according to God's Will. Those obeying the Divine Command are absorbed in the Lord (merging into the serene status of tranquillity).
4. Nothing is in the hands of an individual. Nothing happens by itself. No one should be lodged as good or bad in one's mind. We should not take credit of any good or bad actions; it is all of the Lord's doings.
5. The philosopher Kanada preached, that the one who does wrong will suffer the consequences of their own deeds.
6. Look at the injustice of the Age of 'Satjug': The whole country will suffer because of the evil deed committed by a single person.
7. During the 'Tretajug' Age, a whole city suffered because of the bad deed of just one person. During the Age of 'Duapar', the name of the family was tarnished because of the wrong deeds of just one member of that family.
8. However, in the 'Kaljug' Age, the one who does wrong would suffer alone.
[Brother Gurdas agreed with such a just theory from Kanada's School of Thought].

Poem 1, Stanza 14 (The Yoga philosophy)

1. According to Hindu mythology, Sheshnag (a many headed snake) was virtuous among the serpents. He was incarnated as Patanjali the scholar. Patanjali, having contemplated upon the 'Vedas', wrote a classical yoga text.
2. Agreeing with the 'Atharva Veda', Patanjali declared that illusion and suspicion could not be removed without Yoga.
3. One cannot see one's face unless the mirror is cleansed.
4. In the same way, Yoga acts like a purifying exercise that absorbs the conscious in the region of the tenth opening of the body – where one hears the celestial music. (Similarly, asceticism is a pure stage; it helps in the concentration of the mind in mystic deep meditation).
5. Yoga raises the conscious level high. This blesses the spiritual practitioner with miraculous or supernatural powers of the eighteen 'Siddhis' (spiritual powers) and the nine 'Nidhis' (treasures).
6. Patanjali collected all the fragrances of the three earlier Ages and put them in the 'Kaljug' Age. During 'Kaljug', Patanjali discussed the fulfilment of desires that remained unfulfilled during the earlier Ages.
7. According to Brother Gurdas, loving worship is the complete achievement of Yoga. One gets its result immediately.
8. This form of worship requires remembrance of God (meditating on the Lord's Name), charity and ablution (external and internal).

Poem 1, Stanza 15 (Views on the different Ages)

Stanzas 15 to 17 again return to look at the different Ages.

1. Since time immemorial, due to the influence of unfulfilled desires, human beings have been suffering and wandering in the cycle of reincarnation.
2. Time and again the body changes its form. The mystery of this revelation can only be understood by becoming knowledgeable.
3. In 'Satjug' Age, if one is immersed in duality (attached with someone other than God), they enter a body in the 'Tetra' Age – after passing through different species.
4. During the 'Tetra' Age, one gets caught in the karma-bondage. (Hence, entangled into the bonds of destiny). They perform deeds and are bound by their outcome – hence, take birth in the 'Duapar' Age.
5. Beaten up by the parental attachment and personal ego, one degenerates talking only about oneself; one dies engulfed in these vices. (Even if one performs duties in all three Ages, one is unable to dispel the fear of repeated births and deaths).
6. Trapped by the Karmas (destiny) of the 'Duapar' Age, one bears a body form again and is reincarnated in the 'Kaljug' Age.
7. One needs to understand that an opportunity of salvation once lost, comes not again.

Poem 1, Stanza 16 (The Lord's Name in the Dark Age)

1. Listen to the spiritual quest of 'Kaljug' (the Dark Age), where nobody cares about the rituals. Performing deeds alone are not enough for breaking the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.
2. Show loving devotion in worship of God and sing the Lord's praises with affection. Without this, no one can enjoy divine support or pleasant asylum in this world or in the hereafter.
3. Due to the disciplined life in the previous Ages, the human form has been achieved in the 'Kaljug' Age. Whatever had been earned in the previous Ages can be cashed during the 'Kaljug' Age - which offers an opportunity for redemption.
4. Hence, this blessing of a human life is an opportunity to free oneself of all the waste of the previous births. If this opportunity of correcting oneself again is slipped, no other occasion or place of refuge is made available in both the worlds.
5. Listen to the redeeming features of the 'Kaljug' Age, as testified in the 'Arthava Veda'.
6. Only meaningful worship is accepted in the 'Kaljug' Age. Burnt offering and worship of the human guru was the discipline of the earlier Ages.
7. If someone performs good deeds and yet consider themselves lowly and humble, they will find acceptance in the Court of the Lord.
8. In the 'Kaljug' Age, only meditating on the Lord's Name is considered paramount and praiseworthy.

Poem 1, Stanza 17 (Changes during the Ages)

1. When the Age changes, the people also change. They abandon the duties of the Age and behave differently.
2. The world becomes unfriendly and corrupt. It is infested with anger - vice and sins become rampant.
3. Different castes and sections of society develop hatred for one another. By clashing with each other, they burn themselves (like bamboos rub against each other and produce fire).
4. People speak ill of the knowledge of the Vedas. In the dark clouds of ignorance, the people don't know what is right and what needs to be done.
5. Books that carry the true knowledge and the sermons of the Guru are the real Vedas, they can take a person across the worldly ocean at difficult times (doubts and illusions).
6. This mystery cannot be understood until the Lord God descends on Earth in the form of a prophet (the True Guru).
7. The True Guru and the Lord God are one and the same. The Guru is the true merchant and the whole world trades in the truth then.
8. When the True Guru ('Satguru') rises like the sun, the light of knowledge dawns. The darkness of ignorance and suspicion disappears. (Hence, the role of the True Guru is paramount in leading people to the truth and salvation).

Poem 1, Stanza 18 (Buddhism and other Self-willed faiths)

This stanza looks at the religion of Buddhism which originated in India in the 5th century BC.

- 1) A prophet, Buddha the enlightened one was incarnated in the 'Kaljug' Age. 'Bodh' means intelligence or wisdom. However, ignorance still prevails because people cannot see the difference between knowledge and ignorance.
- 2) No one stops anyone anymore. Everyone acts according to one's mood. (Those who are aware, act according to God's Will).
- 3) Some worship stone idols (like that of the Buddha), while others revere graves and funeral pyres in the cemetery. [Buddha's teeth, picture, and monastery were also worshiped].
- 4) Many began to indulge in fakeries and superstitions - holding their faith in charms, amulets, and the tantra mantra. Such hypocrisies have only increased disputes – the conflicts, the anger, and sectionalism were on the rise.
- 5) In their own self-interests, many other religions were also preached. Like Buddhism, they do not believe in the existence of God.
- 6) Some started worshipping the Moon and the Sun, whilst the others held the Earth and the Sky as their gods.
- 7) Some started to win the favours of the air, water, fire and 'Yamaraja' (the Angel of Death) – worshipping them as their deities.
- 8) The religiously-fake persons are deluded, as they remain merged in illusions.

Poem 1, Stanza 19 (Hinduism and Jainism)

This stanza looks at two religions that were also founded in India. Hinduism is probably the oldest surviving religion. Jainism was founded in the 6th century BC because it was opposed to Brahmanism.

1. Hatred in the world brought about the four castes and the four 'Ashrams'. The Ashrams are spiritual Indian monasteries – 'Brahmcharya' (celibacy), 'Grihast' (household), 'Banprast' (renunciation), and 'Sannyas' (Asceticism).
2. The 'Sannyasis' (the renunciatory) started their ten orders or cults (like Giri, Puri, Bharti, Sarawati, Dandi, Arnay, etc). 'Yogis' divided themselves into the twelve orders or communes.
3. The 'Jangam', 'Sarevare' and the 'Digambers' of the Jain religion created their own disputes in society. [The Jains and Shaivites began to fight with each other].
4. Many sects of Brahmins were formed when they discussed the scriptures (the Puranas, the Shastras, and the Vedas), contradicting one another.
5. The six Indian Schools of philosophy (Shastras) were debated by the learned people. At the same time, they introduced thirty-six forms of false practices (rituals and other hypocrisies).
6. The threads of charms and amulets worn on the body became religious rituals. Alchemy, tantra, and 'Kala Jadoo' (black magic) became everything for the people.
7. Having got themselves divided into many sects, they indulged in the merits and demerits of each of them.
8. Basically, the people were all caught in delusions during 'Kaljug'. (Hence, contemplating on the Lord's Name, morality and loving worship was lost).

Poem 1, Stanza 20 (The Islamic Faith)

This stanza, looks at the (non-Indian) religion of Islam. It originated in the 7th century Arabia.

1. Prophet Muhammed and his four Caliphs came with Islam.
2. However, the religion got divided into seventy two sects - that created much enmity and opposition amongst themselves.
3. Muslims observe fasting in the month of Ramadan, 'Eid' religious festivals, and praying five times a day. However, this has tied them up into rituals. (Instead of loving worship of the Lord God, they bind Muslims in fruitless rituals).
4. Saints (like Pirs), prophets, and scholars became arrogant and self-centred. They divided up the whole faith of Islam into cults.
5. They demolished the temples (of other religions) mercilessly and constructed Mosques in their place.
6. The Tyrants oppressed the people and thus sin became widespread on Earth.
7. 'Rumis' (Sufis) and 'Armenians' (Christians) were declared infidels. Women often became the cause of enmity, leading to fights.
8. Such evils, sins, and vices were widespread.

Poem 1, Stanza 21 (How the religious go astray)

Stanzas 21 and 22 looks at the faults of organised religions and their dogmas. (Hence the need for a new spiritual movement and a new prophet).

1. There are four castes in Hindu society and four sects in the Muslim world. [The four Muslim sects mentioned here, might refer to the four Schools of Thought on Islamic Jurisprudence].
2. The members of both religions are selfish, jealous, arrogant, prejudiced, and bigoted. [They are indulged in self-admiration, backbiting, boasting, and pulling against each other].
3. The Hindus go on pilgrimage to their holy Ganges River (Haridwar and Varanasi). The Muslim pilgrims go to the Kaaba, in their sacred Mecca.
4. Muslims adopted circumcision as a symbol of their faith. Hindus adopted the (consecration) saffron mark on their forehead and the (sacred) cotton thread across their body.
5. There is only One God Almighty. However, Hindus call God by the name of 'Ram' and Muslims address God as 'Rahim'. Two separate paths are the result of this misconception.
6. Muslims and Hindus have forgotten the teachings of their holy books (the Koran and the Vedas). They have been led astray by the Devil, falsehood and worldly greed.
7. The real subject of God-realisation was forgotten. Both the (Muslim) Maulanas and the (Hindu) Brahmins quarrel with each other and are caught in the web of ritualism. There was no truth, loving devotion and faithful worship amongst them.
8. Neither religion could free themselves from reincarnation (the repeated cycle of birth and death) because the purpose of life is union with God.

Poem 1, Stanza 22 (Divine Justice)

1. The Lord God came as a just judge to settle disputes in the four Ages.
2. God became the paper, the ink, and the scribe of the Lord's own Court.
3. Without the light of the Guru, there is the darkness of ignorance. Stubborn people, ignorant of the Truth, kill one another. (The people were killing themselves sticking to their dogmas).
4. Sin prevails in the world. Even Dhaval the mythical bull (which represents true religion) that is supporting the Earth is weeping because it's unable to bear the burden.
5. With no compassion left in the world, the mythical bull (representing religion) has become weak. It is lost and has fallen in the deep pits of the nether regions.
6. Standing on just one leg, the mythical bull (hence, religion) is feeling the load of the sins.
7. This sins-laden Earth cannot be upheld without the Saints. No one else can provide the much needed support to the mythical bull. No pious soul was available on the Earth at that time.
8. Religion in the form of the righteous-like bull describes the sad plight of the world, and it is crying out for help. Faith alone can save the world from destruction.

A Biography of Guru Nanak by Brother Gurdas

Stanzas 23 to 44 below provide a biography of the first Sikh Guru. The first two stanzas (23 and 24) are an eloquent tribute to the Sikh prophet, Guru Nanak.

Poem 1, Stanza 23 (The Advent of Guru Nanak)

1. The merciful Creator listened to the cries of humanity for righteousness. Thus sent Guru Nanak into this world.
2. The Guru offered prayers and taught his disciples both humility and devotional worship. He commenced the tradition of serving them with the 'Nectar' (holy water) touched by his toe.

[Editor: Charan-amrit is the water poured on the toe of a Hindu spiritual guide. Then the disciples drink it and seek the Swami's blessing. After this initiation ceremony (a Hindu custom) the Swami guides his followers to adopt his teachings as a way of life].

3. The Guru tried to move his disciples away from plural worship of multiple gods in this 'Dark Age' or the 'Age of Conflict', to reveal the unity of the Supreme Being.

[By teaching them about the true worship of the One Formless God, he preached that 'Brahm' (Saragun) and 'Parbrahm' (Nirgun) are the same and identical].

4. Religion was now established on its four pillars and all the four castes of society were amalgamated into the one single humanity.

[God has no chosen people. All notions of caste privileges or exclusiveness are forbidden. The Guru preached that all are equal in the eyes of God. Hence, everyone had the right to loving worship of the Lord].

5. The Guru treated the prince and the pauper as equals. (There was no distinction between the prince and the pauper from the religious point of view). By promoting the etiquette of humbly touching the feet of others, he showed humility to all. Hence, the heads (which are held high) bowed to the feet of the others!
6. Look at this wondrous act: The Guru taught the people to bow their heads lower, to touch the feet of others (in order to become humble). This was one of the hallmarks of his teachings to the world. (The feet which are regarded as the lowest part of the body were thus exalted above the head).
7. Father ('Baba') Nanak redeemed the people of the 'Dark Age' (the present dark period of history) by giving everyone the mantra of 'SatNam' (the True Name).

[The reference is to the traditional image of the world as a perilous ocean, and of salvation as a successful passage over it].

8. When Guru Nanak appeared on the Earth during the Dark Age, he came into the world for the redemption of humankind.

Poem 1, Stanza 24 (Nanak's Spiritual Achievement)

1. At first Guru Nanak's 'Revelation' came in God's Court. He obtained the blessings and the grace of the Supreme Lord God. Then he achieved the hard penance (rigorous discipline of the heart and the mind) and loving worship of the Lord.
2. Despite being born in a well to do family, Nanak experienced poverty. He lived on wild plant leaves of the sandy region, to appease his hunger. The Guru also slept rough on a bed of pebbles or stony ground.
3. Nanak's great austerities and extreme meditation, was to the supreme satisfaction of God. Hence, through divine providence he was accepted at the Court of the Lord.
4. The Guru received the 'Robe of Honour' from Heaven, the Kingdom of the Truth (the abode of God). Here he was blessed with meditation on the Lord's Holy Name, the gift of miraculous powers (the nine spiritual treasures) and the virtue of humility.
5. Through clairvoyance (divine sight), the Guru saw the whole world in flames - burning in a fire of lust, anger and hatred. Other vices were also rampant. Thus Nanak came to know of the huge misery and suffering of the ordinary people.
6. Without the spiritual guidance of a Guru, there was utter darkness. Nanak heard the tormenting cries of humankind.
7. To further understand the people, the Guru lived the life of one who renounced all worldly ties but still wore the clothes of a householder. He set out to preach living a truthful life through honest means: Remember the Lord at all times and remain detached from materialism (the worldly attractions).
8. Guru Nanak sacrificed all his comforts for the welfare of the world. He set out on his life's mission of reforming, to alleviate the suffering and transforming the people of the world.

Poem 1, Stanza 25 (Places of pilgrimage)

Stanza 25 starts by saying that that Guru Nanak visited sacred places of pilgrimage. None of these centres of pilgrimage are named. However, it's clear from the description given in stanzas 25-27 that the Guru made a journey of considerable length.

1. Guru Nanak visited sacred places of pilgrimage (*tirath*) and observed their holy days and festivals.
2. The people were busy performing futile rites and rituals of the old religion. However, they were all pointless without loving worship of the Lord God.
3. Having gone through the holy scriptures (the Vedas and the Smritis), it looks like 'Brahma' had not preordained them to practice love and devotional worship.
4. The Guru searched the entire world and reflected upon the conditions of the first three of the four cosmic Ages (Satjug, Treta, and Duapar).
5. Even during the 'Kaljug' Age, there was pitch darkness, and all manner of false illusion had led the people astray. Hence, many garbs and guises, sects and cults, added to the prevailing confusion.
6. The Lord is not found in such garbs, guises, or style of exclusive discipline. All efforts at disguise are of no avail without shedding ego and taking to loving worship. [Hence, if the ego is purged - no trace of false delusions will remain].
7. A disciple must go beyond the caste system and tread a lowly path. Humility is the supreme quality of the Sikh who is accepted at the Guru's door. [A Sikh place of worship is called 'Gurdwara' – which also means the "Guru's door"].
8. Only then will any record of their deeds, win approval in the divine court.

Poem 1, Stanza 26 (Before Guru Nanak)

1. There were many celibates, ascetics, immortal anchorites, yoga experts, penance practitioners, 'naths' (with pierced ears), 'Siddhs' (practicing austerity) and their disciples.
2. People had lost their true and devotional worship of the Supreme Lord. Crowds gathered to pay homage to different gods and goddesses - perfected rishis (saints), 'munis', Bhairav, Khetrapal and other protectors.
3. People also put their faith in celestial musicians and singers, fairies, evil spirits, ghosts, and wonder-workers of various kinds.
4. Many people were caught in the love for the sons of Danu and Ditti, and worshipped them to earn their pleasure. Seeing 'raksasas' (demigods) with the others (also demons, giants, and ogres) in their imagination, people were totally in the clutches of duality. Guru Nanak saw suffering, as a result of their entanglement with maya (someone other than God).
5. Everyone was caught in the web of ego. Deceit was rampant. People put their faith in cult and sect leaders, who could charm gullible people with their acquired miraculous powers. Religious priests and spiritual guides, with their followers, were getting drowned in the worldly ocean.
6. Guru Nanak roamed about around the country and visited many holy places of worship and religious fairs. Centres of pilgrimage had lost their spirit that offered tranquillity to the seekers of spirituality. However, Nanak could not find a single God-centred (Gurmukh) person. True believers were nowhere to be found.
7. Nanak saw all the Hindu and Muslim sects - 'pirs' (saints), 'paigambars' (prophets through their sacred scriptures), men of peace and nations which live by the sword.
8. He saw the blind pushing the blind into the wells.

Poem 1, Stanza 27 (The Light of Guru Nanak)

1. As soon as 'Satguru' (the True Guru) Nanak appeared on the world stage, the clouds of darkness were dispelled - the fog of ignorance and hypocrisy cleared. The people saw the light of spiritual wisdom shine forth, all over the world.
2. When the Sun rises, the Stars hide, and darkness comes to an end. Hence, the advent of Guru Nanak was like the Sun.
3. The roar of the lion in the forest makes the herd of deer run for their lives. In the presence of the Guru, sins also take to their heels like the deer.
4. Wherever the Guru set foot, that place became a place worthy of pilgrimage or a centre for worship.
5. All the Siddh centres in the world became places of Guru Nanak's teachings. The most famous religious places visited by the Guru became known by his name. [For example, 'Siddh Yogi' acquired the name of 'Nanak Mata'].
6. In every home a 'Dharamsala' (a Gurdwara or temple for holy congregation) was established. The joy of 'kirtan' (singing the Lord's hymns) had become a daily liturgy. The Kirtan was sung like it was an unending Vaisakhi festival. (This sacred or holy music inspires the soul and establishes a link with the Supreme Reality).
7. Guru Nanak's words were to give 'deliverance' to the people coming from the four corners (North, East, South, and the West) of the world. His message of salvation spread throughout the nine continents of the earth.
8. Hence, during this 'Dark Age', a God-centred Supreme Soul took birth for the Salvation of the world. The Guru destroyed the dark influence of the sins and gave serenity to the needy, by visiting them.

Poem 1, Stanza 28 (Visit to Sumer Mountain)

The first reference to an event occurs in this stanza. Here Guru Nanak climbs Sumer Mountain in Tibet. In stanzas (28-31), the Guru debates with Gorakh Nath and the other Siddh Yogis.

1. Guru Nanak viewed the entire earth and its large nine regions in their lengths and breadths.
2. The Guru climbed Sumer mountain (Kailash), where he met the assembly of 'Siddh Yogis' (the realised souls). [A 'Siddh' is a holy person who obtained occult powers through Yoga].
3. Eighty-four other Siddhs Yogis and Gorakh Nath their leader wanted to debate with him. [The Yogis practice the technique, of obtaining union of the human spirit with that of the Supreme Reality].
4. The Yogis asked the Guru: 'O young one, what power has brought you here?' [Through difficult penances, Siddhs increased their age. Some were over 300 years old. Nanak was a child to them or seen in his infancy spiritually].
5. The Guru replied that he had contemplated on the Lord's Name with deep devotion. This was the power that brought him to this place. Salvation, he said, could be achieved by meditating on the Lord's Name.
6. The Siddh Yogis then asked: 'O young one, tell us your name'.
7. The Guru replied: 'O respected Nath-ji! This Nanak has found salvation through remembrance of the Lord's Name'. (Loving devotion is far more powerful than attaining miraculous powers through penance and difficult practices –as is the path of Siddh Yogis).
8. By calling oneself lowly, one attains the highest position: 'Those that regard themselves as lowly are the ones that are exalted'. (Hence, one should give up ego, feel humble and be assured of a higher level of existence). [It's interesting to note here that, according to the Bible, even Jesus showed humility by washing the feet of his disciples].

Poem 1, Stanza 29 (The debate with the Siddh Yogis)

In stanzas 29 and 30, Siddh Yogis questioned Guru Nanak concerning the condition of the world below and received in reply a report of darkness, sin, and corruption.

1. The Siddh Yogis asked the Guru: 'O Nanak, what's been happening in the world below?'
2. From the divine radiance of the Guru's face and his answers, the Siddhs knew that he was the prophet who was to come to deliver the people from the sins of the Dark Age.
3. Nanak replied: 'O respected Nath, the Truth is like the moonlight and lies are like the deep darkness.' (The falsehood is in full operation like the darkness during the night before the new moon).
4. Nanak also said that the darkness of the moonless night of falsehood had spread. He had come into this world on a mission to search for the truth.
5. Righteousness has disappeared. Sin has enslaved the Earth. The mythical bull of compassion supporting the Earth is crying under its burden.
6. The yogis, who should have been guiding the people to the right path, are silent and have taken refuge in the mountains (hiding in the caves). Who else is going to redeem the world?
7. The Yogis (who wander on the Earth below) lack knowledge. They are just roaming around and putting ashes on their bodies. They have done nothing to dispel the existing falsehood.
8. People were left in the deceit and ignorance of the ascetics. The people were admiring the guise and the false spirituality of these ascetics, who were creating respect for themselves in the hearts of the people. Hence, without the wisdom of a true Guru, the world was drowning in falsehood (the Ocean of Existence).

Poem 1, Stanza 30 (The miserable plight of India)

1. Guru Nanak continued his discussion with the Yogis: 'O God! The mentality of the people in this Dark Age is like the vomit of the dog'. The flesh of the corpses (which is considered unrighteous) has become their diet. Thus, people did not know the difference between right and wrong.
2. Kings commit sinful deeds – corruption and dishonesty are widespread.
3. The people were blinded without enlightenment (the true knowledge). Hence, they utter falsehood and irreligious metaphors.
4. (Hindu) disciples are playing the musical instruments and their spiritual guides are dancing variously to their tunes.
5. The disciples now stay in their homes, while the spiritual teachers go to visit them.
6. The (Muslim) Qazis who administer justice have become corrupt. They accept bribes to give decisions in favour of the wrongdoer. [Hence, the rights of the individuals are ignored].
7. Women's love for men is only for their money, regardless of its source – no matter where she would visit them at the proper or improper places. [Love between a husband and a wife has been reduced to the level of financial gains. It makes no difference where they come from, where they go and what they do].
8. Basically, chaos prevails. All goodness and human values had disappeared. Righteousness had vanished from the lives of the people. The whole world was caught in the vice of sin and evil.

Poem 1, Stanza 31 (Guru Nanak is put to the Test)

In this stanza, Siddh Yogis tried to persuade the Guru to join their sect. They sent him to a nearby lakeside in order that he might be tempted by the jewels which he would find in the lake. However, their efforts failed. Guru Nanak emerges victorious from the debate.

1. The 'Siddhs' thought about converting Guru Nanak to their religious sect of 'Yogmat' ('Yog' philosophy).
2. They thought, such a Yogi person in the Dark Age would give glory to their Nath Order. (Hence, the Yogis used their occult powers to fill the nearby pond with jewels).
3. Then the head of the Yogis gave a bowl to Nanak and asked him to fetch water in it. They thought that the Guru would be tempted.
4. As Nanak approached the nearby pond, he found it filled with precious stones (pearls, rubies, and diamonds). However, the Guru had no desire for these worldly attractions.
5. Guru Nanak was a divine and a perfect prophet, beyond human understanding. Who could bear his grandeur, glory and flourish?
6. Nanak returned and said to the Head 'Yogi': 'O Nath, there is no water in the pond.' [Gorakh Nath was surprised at the failure of his illusion. His deception and trickery was exposed].
7. The Guru won over the guild of the 'Siddhs', with his teachings (hymns and sermons). His unique and distinct faith offered an altogether new way of life and a path for salvation.
8. In the Dark Age, the Lord's Sacred Name as preached by Nanak is the source of peace and happiness.

Poem 1, Stanza 32 (Guru Nanak in Mecca)

In stanzas 32 to 34, the Guru is in Mecca. According to stanza 32, the Guru went to Mecca. Here he went to sleep with his feet pointing towards the 'mihrab' – a niche in a mosque, pointing towards the 'Kaba'. Observing this, the Qazi dragged the Guru's feet away in a different direction. However, the whole of Mecca miraculously moved in the same direction as the Guru's feet.

1. Guru Nanak put on blue garments (like Muslim pilgrims) before going to Mecca - the holy place of Islam.
2. Nanak carried a rosary in his hand, a notebook under his armpit, a prayer-mat, and the earthen pot without a spout - for giving a call to the Muslim prayer.
3. Nanak went and sat in the holy mosque where the pilgrims (*haji*) had gathered to perform their rituals.
4. When night fell, Nanak laid down to sleep. His legs and feet ended up facing the holy stone (called the 'Kaba').
5. A Qazi named 'Jeevan' got very angry and kicked the Guru with his foot and asked who was this infidel committing blasphemy.
6. Jeevan said: 'This sinner has his legs pointing towards God! Why is he lying down in this sinful posture?'
7. Jeevan took hold of Nanak's feet, and dragged them so as to turn them away from the direction of the Kaba. However, the holy shrine moved in the same direction as the Guru's feet. (This proved that God resides in all directions and not in any one particular direction).
8. Everyone was amazed. All the Muslim pilgrims began to bow before the Guru.

Poem 1, Stanza 33 (Guru Nanak debates with the Mullahs)

After the event in Mecca (stanza 32), there was a debate. The Guru emphasized that 'Ram' and 'Rahim', the Hindu and Muslim names for God, are for the One and the same Lord God.

1. The Qazis, the Mullahs (scholars of Islam), and the Muslim pilgrims assembled to question Guru Nanak on the subject of God and religion.
2. The Lord God has created a great fantasy and its expanse of the Universe is beyond the understanding of anyone. [God has distributed countless number of guises, and no one can estimate the extent of the Lord's illusory world of senses].
3. The Hajjis (Muslim pilgrims), turning the pages of their books, questioned the Guru: 'Is Hinduism better than Islam or vice versa?'
4. The Guru replied: "Oh pilgrims! Without the performance of good deeds (morality and high ideals), both the Hindus and Muslims will cry repentance in the heavenly Court of the Lord".
5. Both will be denied refuge in the Lord's Court on the basis of their respective religions alone. (God judges people not by their religious labels but by their actions and motives).
6. "To label oneself a 'Hindu' or a 'Muslim' is like the colour of Safflower. It is washed away easily with water". (Hence, labels are fragile).
7. Both religions are jealous of each other, and slander each other. Hatred is a trait of immoral people and not accepted in the Divine Court. In God's eyes, there is no Hindu or Muslim. [Hence, God 'Ram' (for Hindus) and 'Rahim' (or Allah for Muslims) are the same and have equal status].
8. The whole world has gone astray, as it pursues the Devil's way (or Satan's path).

Poem 1, Stanza 34 (Guru Nanak's success in Mecca)

Having left his wooden sandals in Mecca as a relic, the Guru proceeded on to Medina in Arabia. The reference to Medina comes in stanza 37.

1. Having established himself as a genuine and a divine person, Guru Nanak earned respect in the hearts of the Muslim pilgrims. After the Guru's stay in Mecca, Nanak's wooden sandals were kept behind as a relic. [They are still said to be there].
2. Wherever the Guru went in the world, he preached moral and religious sermons. He preached his message of salvation to the people and allayed their doubts – hence, liberating them from repeated births. Nanak offered a new hope of life - both worldly and spiritual.
3. By ending the communal bias, Nanak was revered in every home, regardless whether it was a Muslim or a Hindu household. His popularity spread like the brightness of the Sun and the light of the Moon.
4. When the Sun rose, flooding the world with light – there was no eclipse. Hence, nothing that was hidden remained unrevealed.
5. When the lion roared in the wilderness, the entire herd of deer ran away in confusion.
6. When the Moon has risen in the sky (and its light spreads), it cannot be hidden by holding up a pan. (Hence, nothing could hide the Guru from reaching the unfortunate people).
7. From the farthest East to the uttermost West, Guru Nanak had all nine divisions of the Earth tilt to his viewpoint. (Hence, the Guru won over by his divine traits).
8. For such was the power which he wielded in the whole world.

Poem 1, Stanza 35 (Guru Nanak in Baghdad)

Stanzas 35 and 36 look at the Guru's visit to Baghdad. In stanza 35, the Guru camped outside the city. From there, the Guru uttered the call to prayer, whereupon the city at once became silent. A 'Pir' went out to investigate the newcomer's credentials and entered into a debate with him.

1. From Mecca, Guru Nanak went to Baghdad and camped outside the city.
2. On the one hand, the Guru was an incarnation of the Timeless One. On the other hand, he had the company of his friend – Mardana the rebeck player.
3. For the 'Namaz' (in his own unique style), the Guru gave the 'Adhan' (the Muslim call to prayer). His loud proclamation had such a mesmerising power that all those who heard the recitation of the 'Mul Mantra' in melodious voice were hypnotised.
4. The whole city of Baghdad fell silent and dumb. Its reigning 'Pir' (a Muslim saint) was amazed. When the Pir of Baghdad looked carefully, he saw a faqir (an Indian holy man) absorbed in a deep trance.
5. The Pir realised that Nanak, a carefree 'fakir', had camped just outside the city. He was annoyed that an outsider had virtually put his followers in a trance. The Pir's own sermons and call to prayer never had this effect. (The Pir did not practice what he preached and so had no impact on the minds of the people).
6. Dastgir, the 'Pir' of Baghdad, went over to Nanak and asked him: "Who are you and what sect or order do you belong to?"
7. Mardana replied: "He is Nanak, who has been sent by the Lord God in the Dark Age. He recognises only God the Creator and all the Lord's prophets as one".
8. Nanak is renowned on the earth, in heaven, and in all four directions (east, west, north, south).

Poem 1, Stanza 36 (The Divine power of Guru Nanak)

In response to Dastgir's request for enlightenment, the Guru took Dastgir's son and took off with him into the air. In the blinking of an eye, the Guru revealed to the boy the numerous heavens and the underworlds. The two then returned, bringing with them a bowl of sacramental food.

1. Dastgir the Pir, was jealous of Guru Nanak. He asked Nanak many questions because he was convinced that the Guru was a monk blessed with divine powers.
2. Here in Baghdad, the Guru has shown a great miracle.
3. "Guru Nanak says that there are millions of Universes, galaxies and netherworlds. That is an amazing statement made by him." [Dastgir was surprised to hear about the millions of Universes. The Hindus thought that there were three Universes, and the Muslims thought that there were seven Heavens].
4. Dastgir asked the Guru to show him whatever he had seen: "Grant that we too may witness what you have discovered."
5. The Guru held the hand of a young son of Dastgir and asked him to close his eyes. Both the Guru and the boy were in the air in no time. [To prove the vastness of the Universe, the Guru took the boy on a galactic voyage. He also emphasized that one who was humble like a child was able to realise their existence].
6. In the twinkle of an eye, the boy was shown the upper and lower worlds (heavens and hell).
7. When they returned from their space voyage, the boy had a sacramental bowl of 'Karah Prasad' (consecrated food of the Sikhs) that he brought from the divine abode. The boy handed this sacred baptismal food from the heavenly places to his father, the Pir.
8. The obvious divine power of the Guru became apparent.

Poem 1, Stanza 37 (Satnam, the true name)

Stanza 37 shows that Guru Nanak visited the two holy cities of Islam on the Arabian peninsula. No details are given here of his visit to Medina. The Guru also visited Baghdad, which was once the capital city of the Abbasid Caliphate. A Caliphate is a name given to some Muslim theocracies. The Guru came to the Muslim world to attach people to the Divine Word.

1. Having humbled Mecca and Medina, Guru Nanak had now humbled the city of Baghdad with his message.
2. He won over the eighty-four sects of 'Sidh Yogis' and hypocrisies of the six schools of Hindu thought. [Hence, the Guru removed the many wrong beliefs and dogmas prevalent at the time amongst both the Hindus and Muslims].
3. Beside the numerous universes, galaxies, and underworlds, the Guru established his authority as the spiritual teacher of the entire material world. He attached people on Earth with the Divine Word.
4. The Guru triumphed over all nine areas of the Earth and spread the authority of the True Name ('Satnam'). The mantra (or the incantation) of 'Satnam' brought all the evil-doers to their knees.
5. All the angels, gods, the goddesses, the demons, Satan, the giants, Chitar Gupt, monsters, and savages fell at the Guru's feet.
6. Even god Indra and the beautiful nymphs sang songs in praise of the Guru.
7. There was rejoicing all over the world because the Guru came as the redeemer to the people of the Dark Age.
8. Both the Hindus and the Muslims saluted the Guru – they were humbled and bowed before him. With the truth finally dawning on the minds of the people, it provided them with the much awaited peace and happiness.

Poem 1, Stanza 38 (Guru Nanak at Kartarpur)

In this stanza, the Guru returned to Kartarpur in the Punjab. He began to lead a settled life, with his followers. As the Guru's sons were rebellious, Angad was given the seal of succession.

1. When Guru Nanak returned to Kartarpur, he discarded his monk-like robes that he wore on his preaching tours.
2. The Guru started wearing the householder's clothes of worldly people. He sat on his cushion (this designates a throne of spiritual authority) and started his Mission to help and give advice to everyone, particularly salvaging the misdirected people. [Here, the Guru also started a true congregation and a free kitchen].
3. When the Guru reversed the old traditions of hereditary succession, it felt like he had made the River Ganges flow in the opposite direction. Guru Nanak appointed Angad as his successor, instead of his own sons.
4. Nanak's sons did not obey him nor respect his teachings. (When the Guru tested his sons and other Sikhs, only Angad was found to be suitable).
5. The Guru uttered his gospel (message) through his hymns of divine wisdom, to enlighten the minds of his disciples. The light of his compositions wiped out the darkness of ignorance.
6. These hymns were followed by spiritual discussions, while the echoes of the mystic and blissful melodies were heard. [Theological discourses and reviews of religious topics like enlightenment became an everyday affair].
7. At Kartarpur, a set routine was followed in the lives of the Sikhs, to teach them discipline. 'Japji', the early morning prayer, was recited at dawn (in the ambrosial hours). 'Sodar' the evening prayer and 'Arti' (a composition of hymns) was sung at dusk. [A prayer, called Sodar Rehraas and Artee began to be recited in the evenings and Japujee Sahib in the mornings].
8. The Enlightened (Gurmukh) Sikhs gave up all their burdensome teachings of the ancient 'Artharv-Veda' based practices of rites, rituals, and magic spells. [Instead they put their faith in the 'Gurbani' – by adopting the Guru's way of life].

Poem 1, Stanza 39 (Guru Nanak at Achal Batala)

Stanzas 39 to 43, show the Guru at the village of Achal Batala in the Punjab. Here many Yogis gathered for the annual Shivrati fair.

1. Having heard about the Shivratri fair, Guru Nanak proceeded to Achal Batala.
2. To have a glimpse of the Guru, the people rushed to this place (from the Yogis).
3. Money in the form of priceless offerings poured in, as if 'Siddhi' and 'Riddhi' (the wives of Hindu god Ganesh) were falling at his feet. (In Hindu mythology, Lord Brahma created two beautiful women. Siddhi represented 'intellectual and spiritual powers' and Riddhi represented 'wealth and prosperity').
4. Hence, the 'Yogis' became very jealous and angry with Guru Nanak.
5. Some devotees were entertaining people by performing some scenes from the life of god Krishna. Pleased, the audience dropped some coins in the metal pot placed by the actors for this purpose. Angered at being ignored, the Yogis hid the money pot- using their mystical powers.
6. Discovering that the money pot was missing, the actors forgot about their act. They were more focused on finding the missing pot, which had their earnings. Hence, the devotees forgot about their devotion because their attention was elsewhere.
7. The Guru being a clairvoyant and knower of the innermost (hearts) knew where the pot of money was hidden. When he discovered the pot, the Guru handed it over to the devotees.
8. Having witness this, the Yogis were further enraged. This event exposed how gullible people were exploited by the Yogis. Instead of providing spiritual guidance and resolving their difficulties with their wisdom and far-sightedness, the Yogis were using occult powers to oppress them. People needed love and sympathy but this was not coming from the Yogis.

Poem 1, Stanza 40 (Yogi Bhangar Nath)

In stanzas 40 and 41, Guru Nanak is still in Achal Batala. In a debate, the Yogis sought to overwhelm the Guru with an impressive display of miracles.

1. All the envious Yogis got together and decided to have a debate with Guru Nanak. So they went over to him.
2. Then Yogi Bhangar Nath asked: 'O Guru, why have you put vinegar in the milk pot?'
3. 'O Guru, the spoiled milk cannot be churned into butter. You have added worldly tradition (vinegar) in the renunciatory (milk). Now the enlightenment (butter) would not emerge, hence no redemption.'
4. 'O Guru, having renounced the world, why have you taken off the Yogic robes and become a householder again?' [Yogi Bhangar Nath is accusing the Guru of adopting the ways of the world.]
5. The Guru replied: 'O Bhangar Nath, your wisdom is misplaced and not channelled in the right direction'.
6. 'You should have rinsed the milk pot before pouring milk in it. You spoiled the milk by your clumsy manners'. [Interpretation: 'You have not cleansed the inner-self of your body-pot. Hence, you have not put the milk in the clean vessel of your heart. Hence, through the erroneous love of the guise, you have ruined the milk'].
7. '...Although you live like a monk and divorce yourself from family life, you still go to the householders to beg for your food (at their door). Yet you still condemn them...'
8. '...You should know that one cannot receive anything without giving.' [They who give nothing get nothing].

Poem 1, Stanza 41 (The Miracles of the Yogis)

1. On hearing these words of Guru Nanak, the Yogis shouted in anger and invoked many fearsome spirits and scary forms - demons, ghosts and monsters. [Overcoming one's anger is an essential trait of a spiritual person. God-loving and a devout people do not indulge in showing their miraculous powers].
2. They said: 'Nanak of the Bedi clan has come into this Dark Age and rejected the six schools of Indian philosophy!'
3. The 'Sidh Yogis' pronounced all their spells, uttering charms and Tantric incantations (as remedy of all that the Guru had done to them). They also commented on various therapies.
4. Some Yogis changed themselves into different disguises like a lion and a wolf and displayed many tricks.
5. One Yogi wore wings and started flying just like a bird in the air.
6. Another changed himself into a cobra and started hissing, whilst the other one started a rainfall of hot coals.
7. Bhangar-Nath did hand tricks (plucking stars from the sky); another sat on a deerskin and floated on water. [The Siddhs displayed all their occult powers to scare the Guru into submission, so that he would join their sect].
8. The anger of the Siddhs could not be extinguished: 'The fire of desires in the hearts of the Siddhs, did not diminish but instead burnt even more fiercely'. [Having shown their miracles, the Yogis now expected the Guru to display his own miracles].

Poem 1, Stanza 42 (Questions and Answers of Guru Nanak)

In stanzas 42 and 43, Guru Nanak is still in Achal Batala. He showed contempt for the use of such methods as the display of miracles. The Guru eventually overcame the Yogis with his insistence upon the Name of God, as the true source of power.

1. The 'Siddhs' challenged the Guru: "O Nanak! What miracle have you shown to the world?"
2. "Why are you so slow? Show us some miracle?" they continued.
3. Guru Nanak replied: "O respected Nath! I have seen the Yogis and have nothing worth showing to you."
4. "I have no refuge except that of the Lord God, the congregation of believers, and the sacred Gospel ('Gurbani')". [The 'Gurbani' is the divine scripture that has the holy teachings of the Guru].
5. "The Lord is the Destroyer and the Creator, the immutable One – the Lord who directs this world." [The Creator who is full of blessings for all is permanent, whilst the Earth (and the material over it) is temporary. The Guru explained that the Lord's Name is the greatest miracle. The Lord's Name is as powerful as the Lord God].
6. The Siddh Yogis exhausted themselves with all their charms and incantations. The divine Word of the Guru overwhelmed their magical arts! [The Guru rendered all their petty tricks null and void by the power of his Lord's Word – which he received from the Divine Court itself. The loving worship of the Lord and knowing about God is a miracle in itself. The Lord is infinite and reaching the infinite is no mean miracle!]
7. The Guru is the giver. No one can evaluate his capabilities. [Accurate translation: The letter 'D' stands for Priceless Donor – the Guru, and the letter 'K' is for 'Keemat', the price].
8. The humbled Yogis submitted to the True Guru, falling at his holy feet. [The Guru said that the powers of miracles are petty, as they remove one away from the love of God - and entraps one in ego].

Poem 1, Stanza 43 (The Glory of the True Name)

1. Guru Nanak addressed the Yogis: "O respected Nath! Listen to the truth that I tell you. I speak the Divine Word from my mouth. Listen to the words carefully."
2. "Apart from the miracle of the True Name of the Lord that I enshrine in my heart, I have no other miracle with me."
3. "Whether if I could wear fire proof clothes, or go and live in the Himalayas mountains in a house built of snow;"
4. "Whether I could cook with iron pots and pans, or make myself master of the whole earth..."
5. "I could exercise so much power and authority that I could move the Earth to my orders."
6. "So much so that I can weigh the entire earth and heaven with just a small copper weight in the other scale."
7. "Were I to possess within myself such power that I could command anyone as I chose."
8. "However, without the Lord's Word 'SatNam', all these powers are no more than a shadow of a cloud." [Meditation on the True Name ('SatNam') is the supreme miracle that liberates one from ego. Worldly powers are short-lived, whilst the power of the Lord's Name is forever. Divine powers acquired through the Lord God must never be used as an object of demonstration. One must never become collateral of the Almighty].

Poem 1, Stanza 44 (Guru Nanak in Multan)

From Achal Batala the Guru travelled to the city of Multan, also in the Punjab. However, before the Guru could enter the city some 'Fakirs' came out to him with a cup filled with milk. The Guru responded by plucking a jasmine flower and placing it on the surface of the milk. This stanza also explains the meaning of this gesture.

1. Guru Nanak's discussion with the 'Siddh Yogis' brought peace and calmness to their minds.
2. The Guru had won over all those attending the 'Shivratri' Fair. Those who followed the six schools of Hindu philosophy paid homage to him.
3. The Siddh Yogis now spoke kindly to the Guru: "You are blessed, O Nanak! Your achievements are great and praiseworthy... An Exalted One has appeared and has caused light to shine in this 'Dark Age' (Kaljug)!"
4. "...You have emerged as a great prophet in 'Kaljug'. Through 'Nam Simran' (meditating on the Lord's Name) you have lit the lamp of knowledge".
5. The Guru arose from the fair in Achal Batala and journeyed towards Multan. [Multan was a centre of Muslim 'Pirs' who had become arrogant and were not helping the common people with the worship of God].
6. Seeing the arrival of the Guru in Multan, the Pirs brought out a wide bowl of milk full to the brim. [This meant that this place is already full of fakirs and that there is no more space for another holyman].
7. Humbly, the Guru plucked a Jasmine flower from a nearby bush and placed it on the surface of the milk. [No milk was spilt. His message was effective: By placing the flower-petal, the Guru indicated that there was always room on the top of a brimming cup without causing it to overflow. Hence, Multan could find room for one more holy man (without pushing others out). Nanak had come there to spread the fragrance (like Jasmine) of the Lord's Name – and not to trouble anybody].
8. [Brother Gurdas describes this scene]. 'The River Ganges was merging into the vast Ocean, without making any waves'.

Poem 1, Stanza 45 (Guru Angad)

After a successful journey to Multan and other places, Guru Nanak returned to Kartarpur. Here his glory increased daily and his fame spread around the world. Before he died, he appointed his disciple to succeed him as the second Guru. Then, merging his spirit in the spirit of his successor, the first Guru passed away.

1. After visiting Multan and elsewhere, Guru Nanak returned to Kartarpur.
2. Every day, his spiritual influence spread. People of the Dark Age meditated on the Lord's Name. Sikhs chanted the mantra (Nam Simran).
3. The Guru taught that asking God to grant worldly desires instead of the Divine Name is the cause of sorrow. (He firmly believed that without the Holy Name, the desire for materialism would bring suffering).
4. Having established his authority, the Guru laid the foundation of a religion free of any impurity - the "Nirmal panth" ('holy or pure path'). (The Guru promulgated the seal of "Waheguru's Order" and initiated a new way of life, free from the filth of ego).

[In the world, he encouraged the development of spirituality and started movement of altruism – Social commitment and public welfare were the important features].

5. In his lifetime, Nanak bestowed the 'Guruship' to his disciple Lehna, as his successor. The canopy of reverence was adorned over the latter's head.
6. Guru Nanak merged his own supernatural light into that of Lehna, who became Guru Angad. Hence, Guru Nanak changed his original form.

[The word 'Angad' means 'my own limb'. Guru Nanak's spirit moved from one body to another. Hence, a second phase started when Angad became Guru Nanak II].

7. This mystery is incomprehensible but the awe-inspiring Guru Nanak accomplished a wonderful task. None could understand the secret. It was a miracle - Nanak converted his body into a new form (Guru Angad).

[All this established the qualitative requirements in a disciple, who can be chosen to succeed the True Guru. The same divine light passed from one Guru to another, though outwardly they looked different].

Poem 1, Stanza 46 (Guru Amardas)

Stanzas 46 to 48 looks at the next four Gurus. Brother Gurdas survived long enough to witness the sixth Guru Harogobind (stanza 48).

1. The insignia (light) of Guru Nanak was passed on to Guru Angad. It was the same coronation ceremony – the same mark ('tikka') of consecration on the forehead, the same canopy over the head, and the same prophet seated on the true throne.
2. Guru Angad received the stamp of radiance of Guru Nanak and succeeded him as Guru with the same glow. [The same official ring of divine power from the finger of Guru Nanak].
3. Guru Angad left Kartarpur and spread the divine light. He went to reside in Khadur village, from where he lit up the beacon of the 'Divine Name'.
4. Whatever seeds of deeds had been sown in previous birth, they were now yielding fruits. For as the original seed blossomed, all others with all their cleverness failed. The divine seat of the Guru could not have been obtained by falsehood. (Datu and Dasu, the sons of Guru Angad, could not get the succession because they were unworthy of it).
5. Lehna (Guru Angad) received the honour of Guruship from Guru Nanak and now, he had to hand it over to Amar Das.
6. The (God-centred) Amar Das received the divine blessings from Guru Angad. Having received the celestial gift from Guru Angad, Amar Das acquired the immortal state. Hence, he became Guru Amardas and sat on the throne as a divine gift.
7. Guru Amardas founded the township of Goindwal (and its deep open well, completed in 1559).
8. The gift received from the earlier Gurus further enhanced the grandeur of the Divine Light. Blessings and radiance is all in the hands of God. Heavenly gifts and Divine Light only comes to those who are blessed. (The hereditary principle has no place in Sikhism. Succession to Gurudom was based on test and merit).

Poem 1, Stanza 47 (Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjan Dev)

1. This stanza describes the pontification of both the fourth and the fifth Gurus. The liabilities of the previous births have to be settled, and whatever belongs to a particular house, reaches there. (If someone is indebted, and the item that may belong to someone else is eventually bound to be returned to the rightful owner).
2. Now Ramdas of the Sodhi dynasty took the holy seat of Guruship and became 'Satguru' (the true Guru). So Guru Ramdas followed his father-in-law Guru Amardas.
3. Guru Ramdas had a holy reservoir of water at Amritsar completed. He also enlightened the people, by lighting the divine flame of the True Name there.
4. Wondrous is the play of the Master. The five rivers of the 'Punjab' go to the West to join the Arabian Sea, while the river Ganges meets the Bay of Bengal after flowing in the Easterly direction (the opposite direction, making it merge into the ocean). Guru Amardas gave the honour of the Guruship to his son-in-law and not to any of his sons (Mohan or Mohri). ['Punjab' means the land of the five rivers].
5. We get back what we have donated. No one can receive anything that he hasn't given at some time or the other.
6. Then the Gurudom came to the house of Arjan, who was the (biological) son of Guru Ramdas (according to the worldly relationship). Guru Arjan proved through his good deeds to be worthy of the divine seat.
7. The wife of Guru Ramdas (and mother of Guru Arjan) said that she would not like the Guru's seat to go beyond the Sodhi family - because its burden is unbearable for anyone else. (Mother Bhani told her son Arjan, that the Guruship is a great honour and may not be sustainable by others. The thing that belongs to this house shall remain in the house).
8. Thus the succession passed on to the descendants.

Poem 1, Stanza 48 (Guru Hargobind)

1. Hence, the first five 'Prophets' (or the 'holy teachers') are Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas, and Guru Arjan. All five Gurus promoted the five virtues (Truth, Contentment, Compassion, Righteousness, and Patience). Now the sixth Holy Soul of Guru Hargobind occupies the Guru's seat.
2. It was Guru Arjan who changed his form into that of Guru Hargobind and sat majestically on the divinely blessed seat, with regal authority.
3. Now the Sodhi lineage has started. Members of this dynasty appeared successively as the Guru, one after the other.
4. This great Warrior-Guru, who was the vanquisher of armies, became the scourge of the tyrants. He was both brave and benevolent. The sixth Guru wore two swords representing two qualities: Royalty and Spirituality (Miri and Piri), militarism plus devotion and love. Guru Hargobind took up arms, for the good of all those who were being oppressed.
5. The Sikhs prayed and asked: 'We have had the good fortune of seeing six Gurus. How many more can we be able to see and serve?'
6. The unique and immaculate True Guru replied: 'Listen, O worldly people!'
7. '...In this Dark Age (Kaljug), the Sodhi clan of the Gurus has been established on a firm foundation'.
8. '...There will be four more Sodhi Gurus incarnated after me.' This was not done to establish any kingdom or monarchy.

Poem 1, Stanza 49 (The 'Waheguru' Mantra)

This stanza, is the final stanza of the first poem of Brother Gurdas. He wrote 40 poems. Here, the formation of the 'Waheguru' mantra is explained with the belief and the faith of the people of the Four Ages.

1. In the 'Satjug Age', people mediated on the name of 'Vishnu'. Hence, the letter 'V' from the word 'Vishnu' because Guru Nanak was an incarnate of 'Vishnu' of 'Satjug'.
2. In the 'Duapar Age', Guru Nanak came into this world as the prophet Hari-Krishna. So he took the letter 'H' from 'Hari-Krishna'. People started to meditate on the name of Hari Hari.
3. In the 'Tetra Age', Guru Nanak was incarnated as 'Ram'. People worshipped 'Ram' that brought them peace, comfort, and happiness. They recited the name Ram, Ram. So he took the letter 'R' from the word 'Ram'.
4. In the 'Age of Kaljug', Guru Nanak was incarnated as 'Govind'. This was the meditating mantra of the people – Govind for their redemption. Hence, letter 'G' was taken from 'Govind'.
5. All four incarnations of the four Ages, submerged into the Omniscient, permeate in the word 'Waheguru'. ['Omniscient' means all-knowing, all-seeing].
6. Combining of the four initial letters of the name of the reigning deity of each Age, and putting them together, gave the word 'Waheguru'. It was the fifth meditating mantra that the Guru blessed the congregation (the 'Sangat') with.
7. Just as four letters integrated into the word 'Waheguru', the fifth integrated the name of the Lord. Guru Nanak coined the word 'Waheguru'.
8. This mantra emerged from the different names of the Omnipotent. Thus a mortal would merge with the Lord by using this mantra for meditation. ['Omnipotent' means all-powerful, almighty].

Poem 26, Stanza 16 (Guru Nanak is the perfect Guru)

1. The True Guru (Nanak) is perfect because the Creator has made him in the Lord God's own image. [The perfect Guru is described as the embodiment of God in a human form].
2. Perfect is the justice of the complete Guru. Nothing can be added or taken from it.
3. The wise teachings of the perfect Guru are complete. He is able to make up his own mind without consulting others.
4. The mantra of the perfect Guru is infallible. Therefore it cannot be changed by anyone.
5. The person who has found the perfect Guru in the company of the Holy Congregation, has all their desires fulfilled.
6. Having crossed all twenty worldly stages, the Guru can climb the ladder of honour to reach the (higher) twenty first spiritual stage – he reached the perfect form. Hence, realised his own true self.
7. Having become complete, the Guru can merge in the perfect Lord (the Almighty Creator)

Poem 26, Stanza 21 (Guru Nanak's lessons on Salvation)

1. Guru Nanak had spiritual debates with 'Siddhs' (Yogis), 'Naths' and the prophets. He brought them around to his own personal spiritual views.
2. Babar and his entourage, including some rich Nawabs (Muslim rulers) met the Guru with humility. He also met Emperors.
3. The Guru had a comfortable family life and a successful career, whilst absorbed in the devoted worship of the Transcendental Lord. However, he separated himself from the luxurious style of the royal life. The Guru gave all this up for a higher purpose of reforming the whole of humanity. [Concerned with the good of humanity, the Guru set out to show them the right and a more rational path to discovering God].
4. Guru Nanak was the self-reliant emperor of both the spiritual and the temporal world – descended in the abode of redemption, and composed the divine 'Gurbani' (Gospel). He travelled to near and far places, teaching lessons about salvation. [The Guru freed people from the influences of rites, rituals and magicians like the Yogis and 'Naths'].
5. God the Creator created the Universe. The Guru created Sikhism, a new way of life. It's as if the Lord came down in the form of the prophet Guru Nanak.
6. Guru Nanak reunites a long separated seeker with the Lord and also helps others to meet the Lord, by weaning them away from the grip of vices.
7. In the holy congregation, the Guru arranges the glimpse of the invisible Lord. He advised the seekers to reflect on the Lord's Name in loving meditation.

Poem 26, Stanza 22 (Guru Nanak is the embodiment of the Lord God)

1. Guru Nanak is not only the True Guru and the Universal Emperor but also the perfect banker. The people of all three worlds are his clients (travelling traders). [Hence, the Guru Nanak is the embodiment of the Lord God].
2. Just as Emperors have treasures like jewels, the Guru's house has treasures in the form of loving devotion and spiritual meditation.
3. In his garden, the Guru has millions of wish-fulfilling trees (in the form of the holy congregation) and thousands of herds of wish-fulfilling cows.
4. Countless 'Lakshmis' (the goddesses of wealth) serve as maids in the Guru's house. He also has countless philosopher's stones.
5. Countless 'Indras' (the god) hold various types of nectar, which they sprinkle in the Guru's court. [All gods and goddesses serve Guru Nanak as they would serve God].
6. Countless Suns and Moons shine like lamps in his court. All mystical blessings, miraculous powers, and invaluable treasures are in the Guru's store-houses.
7. The Guru distributes all these blessings amongst those who love the truth and are absorbed in 'true devotion to meditation' (loving worship of the Lord).
8. True Guru (Nanak), the apostle of 'Nirankar' (the Formless One), is devoted to those who are in love with God Almighty.

Poem 26, Stanza 33 (Pretenders to the Guru's Throne)

This stanza looks at the Guru's dynasty and the pretender's to the Guru's throne. It starts by looking at the Guru Nanak's own children, who failed to succeed their own father because of their ego.

1. Sri Chand, elder son of Guru Nanak was celibate. He constructed a monument in memory of the Guru (against the wishes of his father) beside the river Ravi - making it his seat of work.
2. Lakshmi Das, the second son of Guru Nanak, lived as a householder. Dharam Chand, the grandson of the Guru, showed his ego through pride of his lineage to the first Guru.
3. The two unworthy sons of Guru Angad were pretender Guru, during the time of the third Guru. Both tried to attract the Sikhs of Guru Amardas. [Dasu the elder son established his seat in Goindwal, while Datu declared himself a divine 'Yogi'].
4. The two sons of Guru Amardas could not absorb divine qualities. Hence, Mohan the first son became insane and Mohari the second son lived in a grand house, to make himself look noble.
5. Prithi Chand (the eldest son of Guru Ramdas) was corrupt and sent false messages to the Sikhs.
6. Mahadev, who was another son of Guru Ramdas, became arrogant. Mahadev was led astray by Prithi Chand, his elder brother.
7. All these people were like bamboo trees, they remained egoistic because they didn't want to lose their identity. [Like bamboo trees, they lived in close proximity to the aroma of sandalwood tree (which represents the Guru) but they did not acquire the fragrance of the sandalwood].

Poem 26, Stanza 30 ('Gurmukhs' - the True Sikhs of Guru Nanak)

'Gurmukhs' maintain an ethos of friendliness and happiness, spreading love wherever they go.

1. Despite the millions of stars shining in the darkness of the night, nothing nearby is visible.
2. Even if the clouds cover the Sunlight, they can't create the darkness of the night.
3. Even if the Guru changes, the Sikhs do not lose faith in him - no doubts are created in their minds. [Gurmukhs remain firm in their love for the Guru and other Sikhs].
4. The same Sun shines during all the seasons but the owl cannot see it - because it has no vision during the day. [Gurmukhs recognise the Guru even in disguise. However, the Apostate Sikhs do not even see him when the Guru is available in his true self].
5. The lotus flower blossoms during the sunlight and the moonlight. The black bees hover around the lotus flowers whether they blossom during the day (sunflowers) or at night (moon faced). They love the lotus but not the Sun or the Moon.
6. Despite the Illusion (ie Shiva and Shakti), the Guru's Sikhs cross the levels of greed and emotions. They come and join the Holy Congregation in the ambrosial hours, to meet their Guru as soon as possible.
7. Reaching there, they show humility by bowing and touching the feet of the good and bad.

Poem 33, Stanza 4 (Sikhism is the best)

In this stanza, Brother Gurdas is advising both the Hindus and the Muslims to become Sikhs. He is also advising the Sikhs to become like a needle, that brings together the two pieces (Hindu and Muslim) of the same cloth – as represented by God the Creator (The Almighty).

1. By tying and selecting the thread of equal quality, the weaver weaving each strand of cotton yarn into knots weaves a uniform warp and weft.
2. The tailor tears the fabric into pieces. Those pieces of cloth have no value in the market.
3. The double-edged scissor cuts the cloth into pieces, with a sharp edge.
4. On the other hand, the needle sews by putting the pieces together. Hence, the separated ones are reunited.
5. The One Lord God is the Creator of both the Hindu and the Muslim. Yet both the Hindus and the Muslims have created different ways of life. [Hence, a distinction is being created in the weave of the same cotton thread].
6. Like the needle, the Sikh religion is supreme because it holds faith to the Guru's teachings. It helps the separated ones (Hindus and Muslims) to become one with the Lord. [The Guru's Sikh loves every person whatever religion they may follow].
7. The double-minded (the two-faced persons) are always confused and thus they suffer – because they are unable to become one with the Lord. [The Bible also mentions the 'Double Minded Man', under James 1:8].

Poem 38, Stanza 9 (The Guru's Sikh)

In Sikhism, the (spiritual) teacher is called a 'Guru'. The disciple of a Guru is called a 'Sikh', which means (spiritual) learner. The Sikh word for the Lord God is 'Wahe-guru', which means the 'Wonderful Teacher'.

1. Hindus and Muslims set up their own separate religious orders (different paths of life).
2. Muslims call them 'Mahzab' (sects), whilst the Hindus call them 'Varnas' (castes). Muslims call their holy men 'Pirs', whilst the Hindus call their religious guide a 'Swami'.
3. Through dishonest means they attract followers and preach sermons.
4. The Hindus meditate on their Lord 'Ram Ram', while the Muslims remember God as 'Raheem'. However, they both remain egotistically in their pride.
5. The Muslim pilgrims go to worship in Mecca. The Hindu pilgrims go to the holy Benares, on the river Ganges.
6. Hindus and Muslims have their own ways of worship, showing reverence before their respective icons. The Hindus call their fasting 'varat', whilst the Muslims call their own fasting 'Saum'. (The Muslims also prostrate when they say the 'Namaz' prayer).
7. Both of these religions cannot match even one small hair of a Guru's Sikh who has erased his sense of ego. [The Sikh way of life is based on the Guru's teachings. It is free from all rites, rituals, pilgrimages, etc. Meditation on the Lord's Name ('Wahe-guru') in the holy congregation, selfless service (Seva), humility, truth, contentment (Chardi Kala), and patience are some of the Sikh characteristics. The Guru advises the Sikhs to practice and learn divine qualities, to feel one with the Lord].

Poem 38, Stanza 10 (The Guru's Sikh is above all Indian religions)

This Stanza continues the theme that the Guru's Sikhs are above all other Indian religions because they continuously remain in the sanctuary of the Lord.

1. The six Hindu Schools of Philosophy and fourteen Sufi Orders (of education) are always in conflict with each other. [Abul Fazal's book 'Aa-i-Akbari', gives a list of fourteen orders of the Sufis who came to India].
2. The householders, the riders and the foot soldiers (in the service of the king) are all involved in the confusion of worldly activities. [Hence, the householders are stuck in the master-servant relationship, and are obsessed with the whirlwind of their homes and property].
3. Having given themselves ten different names, the 'sanyasi' (ascetic) sects go on debating amongst themselves.
4. The 'Ravals' (Yogis) have also split themselves into twelve different sects. Each sect is intoxicated in their egos.
5. The leftover is grace for Jains and their contamination is never removed. The Jains do not reduce even by one the number of cycles of births and deaths because they eat the leftovers of their disciples. [The waste (of sins) of Jains is never removed even by eating leftovers of their followers or drinking and bathing in dirty water].
6. All these rituals and efforts are not equal to one small hair of the Guru's Sikhs who have set their undivided focus on the Almighty Lord.

Poem 38, Stanza 11 (The Guru's Sikh is above other foreign religions)

Other religions do not have the concept of the Guru as deep-rooted as the one found in the Sikh faith. The life of true Sikhs so much better because of their infallible faith in their Guru and their total surrender at their feet.

1. There are many Muslim sects like the Sunnis, Shias, and Rafazis.
2. Atheists and irreligious people are deluded by illusions. As they do not accept the existence of the Universal Creator of the worlds. They believe that the world grows the same way as the grass grows from grass. They are lost in their suspicion-wandering here and there.
3. The followers of Jesus and Moses are also many who are bewildered in their own egos.
4. The French, the Armenians, and the Romans are intoxicated in their own powers and arrogance.
5. Muslim recluses (fakirs) wearing black clothes and monks (dervishes), who wear cowaries around their arms, who travel around are not worth a shell because of their vanity.
6. None of them can match even one small hair of true Sikhs - because they have sold themselves at the shop (the footsteps of the Guru). [It then becomes the responsibility of the Guru to raise the spiritual level of his Sikh as his own. The Guru is liberated and God-like. Hence, a Sikh too can become God-like ('Sachiar')].

Poem 38, Stanza 12 (The Guru's Sikh is free from ritualism)

The Guru's Sikhs do not perform rituals; their life is that of a practical householder. They lead a virtuous life and associate with the holy congregation.

1. Practices like recitations, penance, mortification, austerity, self-discipline, devotion, and other perseverance are acts of egoism.
2. - Observing fasts, doing pilgrimages, and engaging in other rituals (is done for personal ends).
3. - Worshipping gods and goddesses in temples and shrines;
4. - Through sacrificial fires, burnt offerings, chanting of Vedic hymns, free feasts and other charities.
5. - Getting struck in such deeds as religious rituals, illusions, superstitions, fear and doubt only leads to one to reincarnation.
6. Only the Guru's Sikhs get eternal happiness –the attainment of the ultimate spiritual pleasure. (The solace of reaching the 'Akal Purakh' - a Sikh name for God). The Guru's Sikhs ferry across the world-ocean, helped by the holy congregation and in the Guru's boat - because they have given up the support of their egos, and accepted the protection of the Guru.

[The acts performed by the Guru's Sikhs are those that will take them nearer to God. All rites and rituals have no purpose than satisfying one's mind that one has spent some-time in religious activity. However, the Guru's Sikhs perform deeds that the Lord has asked to be done, through the Guru. These are complimentary to God's actions and creations].

Poem 39, Stanza 8 (The 'Sanmukhs')

Sanmukhs (those who are face to face with the Guru) are of two types. Firstly, there are those who are absorbed in the Lord's Word. The others are scholars and those that are good at reciting and singing God's praises. The second group have the magic potion but they never experience its taste. The True Slaves of the Lord are rare.

1. Both servants, 'addicts' (those who meditate on the Lord's Name) and the 'teetotallers' (those who abstain from divine ways of life) were summoned in the court of (God) their king. [Here, the 'addicts' have spiritual faith, whilst the 'teetotallers' are follow the organised religion].
2. Those who were ever in the remembrance of the Lord God were marked present. Hence, those in attendance are remembered. However, those who are absent are marked absent. Those declared absent are forgotten, no matter how learned they might be.
3. Of those present, ideas were invited from the selected and wise few. The intelligent king (God) picked up a few wise courtiers from those present.
4. The diligent king (the Lord God) satisfied both – the 'addicts' and 'teetotallers' (those who carried the misunderstanding about themselves that they were devoted to God).
5. The Emperor (God) put 'teetotallers' (the religious persons) to the task of serving 'addicts' with the loving potion of spiritualism (the Lord's Name).
6. The addicts kept on enjoying whatever was served to them. They got drunk on the divine love, and reached the heavenly home of the Lord.
7. Those who remained 'teetotallers' (so-called 'religious persons') and never drank the magic potion themselves, kept straying with their heads swollen with ritualistic worship.
8. Being miserable about their religious books (the Koran and the Vedas), they kept busy in useless debates and discussions.
9. Only a rare 'Gurmukh' (true believer) attains spiritual bliss (fruit of the delight, by drinking the magic potion of the Lord's Name).

Poem 39, Stanza 9 (The Sufis and the holy cup)

Brother Gudas uses the term 'Sufi' (teetotaller) for those who keep themselves away from the loving potion of the Lord's love. These are the foolish talkers who make big claims of divine knowledge but fail to adopt it in their own lives. Those baptized in the loving potion of the Lord, make offer of this divine drink to such talkers. However, they do not accept it and thus remain in need of spiritual bliss.

1. The King (the Guru) sitting in the window of the holy congregation, gives audience to those in the arranged court.
2. Inside gather the privileged (Those who are dyed in the Lord's colour deep within) while the rest remain afar (hence, the commoners assemble outside).
3. The King (the Guru) drinks from the cup of love and invites the selected few inside to share the nectar. [Heavenly immortal food].
4. Keeping in view the 'addicts' (those meditating on the Lord's Name) and the 'teetotallers' (so-called 'religious persons'), the Lord distributes elixir (the divine wine-like nectar of love) to the addicts.
5. The 'teetotallers' ('Sufis' who are not yet intoxicated by the Lord's love) are engaged in ritualism. They neither drink the nectar (of the Lord's Name) themselves nor let others drink it either.
6. The benevolent Guru gives the cup of the Lord's grace to the rare person. Anyone who fails to taste it, repents later deeply.
7. The accumulated filth of internal and external sins on the inner self of a being causes them to refuse the Guru's offer that has so graciously been made. All sins can be pardoned by divine will.
8. No one understands the mystery of the Lord's cup of love. No one can appreciate the delightful taste of spiritual devotion. Only the Guru and those whom the Lord causes to know it, can enjoy its divine pleasure.
9. It is only the rare person to whom the Lord bestows Divine grace, to be able to understand the Incomprehensible.

Poem 39, Stanza 10 (Those without the cup of the Lord's loving nectar)

1. Both Hindu and Sufi (Muslim) scholars preach about their holy books (Vedas and the Katebas) but do not practice what they preach. Hence, both are devoid of the spiritual devotion. [Here the Katebas could refer to the revealed semitic texts of the Abrahamic religions – Jewish 'Torah', 'Psalms' of David, 'Gospels' of Jesus, Koran of the 'Sufis].
2. The Muslims believe in 'Allah', the One God ('Khuda'). The Hindus believe in 'Hari', the Supreme God. ['Khuda' is the word for the Lord God in the Persian language because it's the name for God in the Zoroastrian religion].
3. The Muslims have faith in the 'kalimas' (the prayers) and circumcision. The Hindus have faith in the anointment of the forehead with the saffron mark and the wearing of the sacred thread.
4. Mecca is the place for Muslim pilgrimage. Benares on the River Ganges is the place for Hindu pilgrimage.
5. The Muslims are absorbed in their prayers and fasts. The Hindus are absorbed in their worshipping of deities and reciting of their holy books.
6. The Muslims have their four sects and the Hindus have their four castes. The Hindus also have their own six philosophies that they preach in every home. [Some translations refer to the six 'Shastras', the sacred Hindu scripture].
7. Religious leaders of the Muslims ('Pirs' and 'Murids') and Hindus are trying to attract gullible people to join their cult or religion.
8. The Hindus worship ten different deities, whereas the Muslims worship only Allah.
9. The religious leaders of Muslims and Hindus are causing tensions. They are engaged in bringing simple and naïve people forcibly into their fold, to increase their own memberships. [Both are less concerned about living life according to their respective scriptures, yet they preach their contents to their followers in order to make their lives a success].

Poem 39, Stanza 11 (The Noble Saints)

True devotees of the Lord do not go by the names that people call God by. They are more focused on the spirit, which is the Truth. Hence the true devotees try to absorb the truth in themselves and then lodge the Supreme Truth in their consciousness, merging the two – and thus becoming identical and liberated.

1. The noble saints gathered in the assembly (the holy congregation) have drunk from the cup of spiritual devotion. They have seen the invisible Lord, whom they remember every moment of their lives.
2. The noble saints do not remember the Lord by the number of rosary beads. They meditate on the Lord every moment. [The Muslims use a rosary of 100 beads, while the Hindus use a rosary of 108 beads].
3. The noble saints make no distinction between the 'Meru' (the last bead of the Hindu rosary) and 'Imam' (the last bead of the Muslim rosary). For them, the Lord's names of 'Ram' or 'Allah' are the same.
4. In this oneness of 'Ram' and 'Allah', they consider the whole universe as a game of oblong dice.
5. By crossing the illusionary phenomenon of 'Shiva' and 'Shakti', the noble saints assume their own image after drinking from the cup of spiritualism. They realise their true self as a small part of the Lord. ['Shiva and Shakti' refers to a Hindu story].
6. Going beyond the three basic human instincts of emotions, greed and wealth; the noble saints attain the fourth (and final) stage of spirituality.
7. For noble saints, 'Guru' (spiritual guide) is God, so is 'Pir' (spiritual leader). Noble saints consider a Guru's Sikh and 'Murid' (a disciple) of the Pir as one.
8. Enlightened by meditating on the true Word (Shabad), the noble saints merge their consciousness in the Word –hence, absorbing their own true self with the Supreme Truth.
9. The noble saints consider the Timeless Lord as the only true God, and devote themselves solely and sincerely to this Truth.

Poem 40, Stanza 8 (No deliverance, without the Guru)

Having listed the titles of the religious and spiritual leaders of both Islam and Hinduism, Brother Gurdas states that none can achieve salvation without the holy congregation. [According to page 942 of the Sikh sacred scripture, a 'born-again Sikh' is 'one who dies and lives again after receiving the teachings of the Guru reaches the door of deliverance'].

1. In Islam, there have been many 'Pirs' (Muslim saints), Prophets, friends of Allah (Auliyas/Gaus), and Scholars (Kutab/Ulema).
2. There have been many Sheikhs, MaiSaikhs, Sadiqs (contented ones), and martyrs.
3. There have been many Qazis, Mullahs, and Maulvis – religious and judicial appointments.
4. Among the Hindus, there are many wise people (Munis, Rishis), Jain 'Digambars (naked monks), mendicants, and many miracle-makers knowing black magic.
5. There are many 'Siddhs' (Yogis) who practice austerity and publicise their greatness egoistically.
6. None of them can be liberated without the True Guru. In fact, their attachment and ego is further increased.
7. Without the holy congregation, the ego and the pride keep one under their evil surveillance.

Poem 39, Stanza 1 (The Sikh prayer – the ‘Mool Mantra’)

This stanza is a beautiful explanation of the ‘Mool Mantra’, the Credal Statement. It is written in the Punjabi Gurmukhi language script. The ‘Mul Mantra’ is the preamble to ‘Japji’, the well-known composition of Guru Nanak. It is an invocation that makes the Sikh aware of the divine traits of God and the way that one can realise the Lord. Hence, it represents the essence of Sikh theology.

1. The Supreme reality being One (and only One), Guru Nanak wrote number One (‘Ek’) first. Then the Guru wrote the first letter ‘Oorah’ of the (Punjabi) Gurmukhi alphabet, that represents ‘Oankar’ (the Supreme Lord God)). Hence, the pronunciation ‘Ek Oankar’ (One God).
2. The Lord is ‘truth by name’ (‘Satnam’) and ‘Kartar-Purkh’ the ‘Creative Being’ (‘Kartar-Purkh’). The Lord is ‘fearless’ (‘Nirbhau’) and ‘without hatred’ (‘Nirvair’).
3. The Lord is the ‘Eternal Being’ (‘Akal- Murat’), therefore beyond Time and Space. The Lord is also ‘beyond birth and death’ (‘Ajooni’) and ‘Self-existent’ (‘Sai-bhang’).
4. The Lord God is realised by the ‘Grace of the Guru’. The Lord is the Truth that has existed continuously throughout the Ages, and before the beginning of time.
5. The Lord is the Truth and will forever continue to be the Truth. The True Guru Nanak has shown a glimpse of the True Lord, through the True path of meditation.
6. Those that merge their consciousness in the loving devotion of the Divine Word, establish a bond between the Guru and the disciple.
7. The Guru also began the tradition of crossing the twenty worldly (mundane earthly) stages into the twenty-first spiritual stage (the state of the divine being) - establishing a link between the Guru and the disciple.
8. [Disciples that devote themselves to the Guru and progress from worldliness, attune their consciousness in and with the Lord]. Hence, the True Guru (Nanak) helped his True Sikh (Guru Angad) realise the glimpse of the invisible Lord, who is the fruit of delights.

Poem 35, Stanza 12 (The misuse of places of worship)

The Sikh place of worship is called a 'Gurdwara'. The word 'Gurdwara' means the 'Guru's door'. It's a meeting place for the 'Sadh Sangat' (holy congregation). Brother Gurdas explains the Sikh code of conduct for a Sikh Temple.

1. To eat beef is sinful in the Hindu code of conduct.
2. A Muslim is forbidden to eat pork or charge interest on money.
3. It is improper (unholy like a glass of wine) for a father-in-law to drink a glass of water in his son-in-law's house.
4. A scavenger refuses to eat the meat of a rabbit, even if he is hungry or without money.
5. When a fly gets entangled and dies in the honey, the honey loses its sweet taste.
6. In the same way, the abuse of offerings made to a Temple is fatal for a Sikh. It's like sugar-coated poison. [Early Sikh temples were called 'Dharamsala'. All offerings are meant for the welfare of poor travellers who stay the night, or other needy people. Priests are tempted to misuse Temple assets for different purposes. Misuse of such offerings is not only sinful but suicidal].

Poem 26, Stanza 31 (Worldly kings and spiritual kings)

Worldly kings establish their (false) kingdoms through suspicions, conflicts and fighting. In the Christian Bible, Jesus talks about a 'Kingdom of Heaven' (or a 'Kingdom of God').

1. The worldly (temporal) King passes on the kingship to their son before they die.
2. The son proclaims his authority over all and brings his soldiers under his own command. [Worldly kings reign for a short time but they behave as if they are here to stay forever].
3. In the mosque, the King orders prayers to be said in his name. 'Qazis' or 'Mullahs' are witnesses for him. [At the time, Muslim Sultans ruled over Hindu India].
4. The King has the coins minted in his name. Both the good and the wrong deeds are committed under his orders.
5. The King controls the property and the wealth of the country. Sitting on the throne, he cares for nobody. [Kings do as they feel right but in the process, they cause much suffering to the people].
6. However, the tradition of the House of the Guru (Nanak) is different. Here, the 'Gurmukhs' (Sikh devotees) follow the straight path shown by the earlier Gurus.
7. According to this (Sikh) tradition, there is no king as great as the one primal Lord. Hence, only the one Supreme Almighty is praised. There is only one mint (the Holy Congregation), one sermon (of the holy Name), one true throne (Guruship, the Spiritual seat), and only one court (the divine court of truth and justice).
8. The Justice of the Lord is that this fruit of pleasure is given to the 'Gurmukhs' (the True Believers), who are blessed with divine comfort and peace.

Poem 11, Stanza 13 (The Sikhs of Guru Nanak)

The followers (the early Sikhs) of Guru Nanak were Hindus and Muslims. In the same way, the disciples (the early Christians) of Jesus were Jews. Each one of the Guru's disciples was important in his own way. There are many tales associated with the lives of each one of them.

1. Guru Nanak liberated Taru of the Popat clan (caste). He was a loyal follower of the Guru but had lived as a monk since childhood.
2. Mula belonged to the Kirh caste, whose deeds were strange. He was a (spiritual) slave of the Guru and loved to serve the Sikhs humbly.
3. Pirtha and Kheda of the Sonari clan (the Khatri caste) took refuge at the Guru's holy feet and so lived a life of peace and happiness.
4. Mardana the Muslim musician played the rebeck (a stringed instrument) melodiously in the fairs and the Guru's religious assemblies.
5. Pirthi Mal of the Sehgal caste was a devout disciple of the Guru. Rama, the devotee of the Didi caste, lived like a monk - but was a practicing Sikh.
6. Daulat Khan Lodhi was a noble Sikh disciple. He was a living 'Pir' (a spiritual guide) and so obtained immortality.
7. Malo and Manga were both Sikhs, who remained absorbed in the joy of the 'Gurbani' (the holy hymns).
8. Kalu (of the Khatri caste) having many wishes and desires in his heart, came hopefully before the Guru. By putting his trust in the Guru and singing the Guru's hymns, earned praise in the heavens (the celestial court of the Lord).
9. All these Sikhs received the 'Gurmat' (the wisdom of the Guru). Hence, they spread this loving worship all around, through devotional meditation.

Poem 11, Stanza 14 (The Sikhs of the First and Second Gurus)

1. Bhagata (an Ohari of the Khatri caste) and Japu Vansi (of a high caste family) performed devoted service in the times of Guru Nanak.
2. Sihan and Gajan of the Uppal (Khatri) caste were very dear to Guru Nanak.
3. Bhagirath, the chief of Malsihan town, use to be a follower of Kali (a diety of the Hindu pantheon). When he saw his goddess sweeping the house of the True Guru, he became a disciple of Guru Nanak.
4. Jita the Randhava and Bhai (Brother) Bura Budha, were Sikhs of the Jat caste. They both remembered the Lord, meditating with a focussed mind. [Brother Budha met Guru Nanak at an early age and served the 'House of the Gurus' for a long time. He was cremated by Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs].
5. Phirana of the Khaihra caste, Jodh the Sikh, and Bhai (Brother) Jivai remained absorbed in the service of the Guru Nanak.
6. Gujjar the Ironsmith (of the Lohar caste), preached sermons on Sikhism to the disciples of Guru Angad. [Gujjar was a blacksmith by trade].
7. Dhingu the barber, redeemed his whole family by serving Guru Angad.
8. The 'Gurmukhs' (God-centred Sikhs), experience the celestial fruits of devotion. Having sight of the Lord themselves, make others also have the same glimpse. [Jesus also said that: 'Blessed are they whose heart is pure, for they shall see God'].

Poem 29, Stanza 1 (Greetings)

1. Greetings to Guru Nanak (the Eternal Being) who rightly deserved to be called the 'True Guru'.
2. Sermonising the people of the four castes of society with his teachings (the spirit of Sikhism), the Guru initiated them into the path of the 'Gurmukhs' (the True Sikhs).
3. The True Guru vibrated music in the heart by singing of holy hymns ('Kirtan') in the holy congregations – where he brought out the mystic music of the 'Shabad' (divine Word).
4. The great Guru Nanak's lifestyle shows that he practiced what he preached. He delivered the sermons testifying only to his own experiences. The Guru impressed upon the people to follow his teachings that help them to sail across the worldly ocean. Hence, he got salvation himself, and emancipated the world.
5. The betel leaf, areca nuts, and catechu when mixed with lime paste give up their own individual colours - and all end up in one beautiful red colour. In the same way, the people of the four castes gave up their individual traits and were brought together by Guru Nanak - and dyed in the colour of the unique path of Sikhism.
6. Those who met the perfect Guru (Nanak) obtained the virtues of 'Gurmati' (Guru's wisdom). Hence, they have the knowledge and technique of concentration and meditation.
7. Guru Nanak himself established the abode of truth in the form of the Holy Congregation, the home of the Eternal. [By bringing people together in a holy gathering and singing the Lord's praises, he made them feel the presence of the Divine force amongst them].

Poem 29, Stanza 2 (The True Guru's way for a glimpse of the invisible Lord)

Guru Nanak brought the four sections of society into one body, the holy congregation. They were freed from their misunderstanding of belonging to a low or a high caste.

1. Guru Nanak offered salvation by freeing people from vices (slander, lust for others' women and jealousy of others' wealth). He got them to meditate on the Lord's Name, charity (sharing assets with needy) and 'internal ablution' (purification of inner-self with clean thoughts). ['External ablution' is the washing of the body, during the ambrosial hours].
2. The Guru's teachings have not only stopped people's minds going astray but also stopped them looking inward towards the self (ascetism)
3. Just as the philosopher's stone turns eight metals into gold, the Guru's teachings have helped people conquer their own mind (including lust) and consequently the whole world. (Hence, he converted all four castes into one metal - the path of Sikhism).
4. Such is the effect of Guru Nanak's teaching, that the Sikh acquires the same qualities as if a stone by touching a philosopher's stone has itself become another philosopher's stone.
5. Systematically, having won yoga as well as pleasures and getting immersed in spiritual devotion they have lost their fears. They fear only the Creator. [Whilst performing their worldly duties righteously, they lost their selves in the loving worship of the Lord – as taught by Guru Nanak].
6. Once they lost their self (ego), they realised that God pervades everywhere. The Lord is the lover of devotees, protects them and remains with them always.
7. Such divine knowledge about the Lord God is obtained only in the Holy Congregation. [Guru Nanak dispelled the people's fear that one can strive for salvation after performing all their worldly duties. He taught them to indulge in the loving worship of the Lord, purifying the mind with 'Nam Simran' and shedding their pride without wasting precious time – whilst still living the life of a householder].

Poem 8, Stanza 16 (The Semitic religions)

1. There are many Jews (followers of Moses), Christians and Sunni Muslims.
2. There are also many Shia Muslims and Pagans (who do not believe in the Day of Judgement).
3. There are many Europeans, Armenians, Romans and other great warriors fighting the enemy.
4. In the world, there are many known as 'Sayyads' (clan of Prophet Mohamed) and 'Turks' (people from Turkistan).
5. There are also many Mughals, Pathans, Africans, and Kilmaks (followers of Solomon). [Apparently, 'Kilmaki' is also a sect of the Mongol clan].
6. There are many honest souls (people who live an honest life). However, there are also many dishonest vultures (dishonest people).
7. The caste, duality and ideological differences that are accumulated cannot hide the good and bad side of a person. Hence, all these differences are mere doubts and suspicions.

Poem 15, Stanza 13 (Without the Guru, life is hard)

1. The True Guru is the Pleasure-Ocean of peace and comfort. When we leave the Guru, we experience the World-Ocean of tossing up and down in the Sea of Sufferings. (Aimlessly wandering at the doors of gods and goddesses).
2. When we leave the Guru, we are beaten by the waves of worries. We suffer in the fire of ego, which continuously burns the inner self.
3. When we leave the Guru, we are pushed and pulled around. We are also tied and beaten at the door of the Angel of Death.
4. This world is just a place to stay for a few days, like the tepees of the nomads. Many came here and spread their names like 'Jesus Christ' and 'Prophet Moses' - as if they were going to stay here forever.
5. Here, no one admits themselves in anyway lower than anyone else. (Jesus said that he alone was the path for the world to follow). Everyone claims to have found God - Moses said he had spoken to God. [Brother Gurdas believed that no religion can claim to have a monopoly on the Truth].
6. Without the Guru, they work like slaves on a ship in the World-Ocean and face problems. Some get lost. Those who are divers in the Pleasure-Ocean (symbolising the Guru), remain happy in the labour of spiritual discipline. [They discover the 'pearls of spiritual wisdom'].
7. Without the refuge of the True Guru, it is all tossing and turning. (Being pushed and shoved around). If one takes refuge in the Guru, the swamp of 'I' (ego) is cleaned out. When one merges with the Lord God, they become a true devotee. (Only the Guru alone can save us from the furnace of hell).

Poem 8, Stanza 8 (Islam)

Although there is one Islam, there are many different sects.

1. In Islam, the 'Pirs' (Muslim saints), Prophets, Aulias (friends of Allah), Ghaus, Kutab, and Waliullah are well known.
2. There are countless Sheikhs, Masheikhs (Scholars), Malang (Sufi saints/Dervishes).
3. Countless mean people, martyrs, Abdal (faqirs), Malang (Sufi saints) and carefree people can be found in Islam.
4. Countless Sindhi Rukan (fakirs), Qalandars (Sufi Saints), Ulema (Mufti), and Mullahs (Maulvis) the priestly class can also be found in Islam.
5. Many instruct rites and rituals (Sharia Law). Some debate on the basis of 'Tariqat', the path of spiritual learning.
6. Many people became famous by reaching the last stage of knowledge (Maarfat). Through the Lord's Divine Will, many have merged into the Truth (Haqiqat).
7. Although Islam has strict rules and regulations that many try to follow, yet the desires make their minds to go astray.

Poem 21, Stanza 13 (Muslim practices)

Brother Gurdas believes that one must abandon pride to experience oneness with God. Any act that does not remove duality from one's mind is a waste of this precious human life.

1. Many mentors and 'Pirs' (Muslim saints) bring together their followers.
2. Many admirers and pilgrims of the martyrs go to their mausoleums to pay their respect, and organise fairs there.
3. Millions of Muslims fast during the month (of Ramadan). They also perform regular prayers and celebrate the festival of 'Eid'.
4. Many entice their minds by being busy in questioning and answering. They pass their time in idle conversation, to amuse themselves.
5. Millions, to open the locks of their mind's temple, use the key of austerity and renunciation.
6. Only those who become (Sufi) Dervish reach the gate of the Lord's abode. They have discarded their ego, becoming both happy and humble.

Poem 8, Stanza 6 (The fruits of holy gatherings)

Here, Brother Gurdas starts by implying that there is only One Creator God but two main religious traditions. We have the Abrahamic religious tradition (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) of the West (or the Middle East/Semitic texts) and the Indian religious tradition (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism) of the East (the Sanskrit texts). Sikhism helps us to bring these two great religious traditions together.

1. Amongst the 8.4 million species of life, human birth is both rare and supreme.
2. The Hindus got divided into four castes and the Muslims got divided into four sects. Hence, humans got divided into two religious traditions – the Hindu and the Muslim.
3. Countless males and females were also created.
4. This world is caught up in the wonders of an illusion: The Hindu holy trinity of gods (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) are responsible for the three qualities -the creation, upkeep and destruction of the world.
5. The Hindus study the Vedas and the Muslims study the Koran. However, there is only One God but two separate paths have been established to reach the Lord God.
6. Those who live in the Light, indulge in Yogic practices. Those who are in the Dark, are preoccupied with worldly pleasures. [Hence, some are engaged in lust, greed and desires of the material world; whilst others are absorbed in the way of the Truth].
7. One gets good or bad results according to the company one keeps. (The company of virtuous people is good while the company of evil-doers is bad).

Poem 8, Stanza 7 (Hinduism)

There is One God but people defined different ways to reach the Lord. Each path gave birth to other sects.

1. The four Hindu castes recite the four 'Vedas', the six 'Shastras' (Schools of Philosophy) and the eighteen 'Puras' (Ancient texts).
2. Hindus started worshipping gods and goddesses. They also started visiting Temples and went on pilgrimages to their holy places.
3. Many Hindus started worshipping gods like Indra, who had his own throne on Mount Indrasan. They adopted the mythical heavenly singers, fairies, and charming nymphs.
4. Many stayed in their penances and strenuous practices and felt contented in them. Hinduism was imposed on castes, goddesses and others. They also imposed their faith on the nine 'Naths' (Heads) of 'Siddhas' (celibates) and twenty-four incarnations of God.
5. Different types of worship are observed - recitation, atonement, celibacy, oblation, burning of incenses in sacred fire, feasting, fasting, daily routine, and idol worship.
6. Wise ones of various beliefs led the people to follow the rites and rituals of their own doctrines, promising them that such acts lead to God and Salvation. These included: keeping a knot of hair on top of the head, wearing of the sacred cotton thread, rosary (necklace of beads), consecration mark on the forehead, last rites for ancestors.
7. Other Vedic rites included prayers and charity in the names of elders. Hence, they started the idea of charity, donations and virtuous actions.

Poem 24, Stanza 1 (Invocation)

In this introduction, I will look at the beginning of the second verse of this Stanza. In one translation, God is said to be the '(Divine) Husband of all men and women' because all mortals are the Lord's brides. [Christians also sometimes speak of the 'Brides of Christ' with their Lord Jesus described as the Bridegroom].

1. 'Narayan' (another name for God), the Lord of the destitutes, adopted a form to oblige all those who had a Master over them, as well as those who had no refuge.
2. The formless Lord is the God of all and the King of kings, who created various forms.
3. As the Creator, the Lord is the cause of all events and the protector of righteousness.
4. The supreme of all gods and goddesses, the Lord is subtle and beyond all mysteries.
5. The true Guru Nanak inspired people to meditate on the name of the Lord God's Eternal form.
6. In Kartarpur, Guru Nanak founded a 'Dharmshala' for spiritual activities. It was established for the holy congregation, as the abode of truth.
7. Guru Nanak gave the chant of 'Wahe-guru' (Praise be to the Guru-Lord), and taught the message of the 'Divine word' to the people. [God blessed Guru Nanak with the 'Nam' and asked him to preach that meditating upon the name of the Lord is the only way of salvation for humanity].

Poem 24, Stanza 2 (Guru of the World)

Before the advent of Guru Nanak, many prophets had been sent to this world to help those who were suffering. However, these prophets indulged in self-promotion instead of God-promotion. Those who knew the Lord, defined their own path and got their own followers to abide by it. It fell upon the Guru to reform society.

1. Guru Nanak laid the firm foundation of the abode of truth, in the form of the (heaven-like) holy congregation.
2. He initiated the path of the 'Gurmukh-panth' (Sikhism). This path was an ocean full of peace, comfort, and unlimited spiritual pleasures.
3. The 'Shabad' (the True Word) is practiced there. This divine word cannot be realised by the senses – as it is indescribable and mysterious.
4. Guru Nanak preached to all four castes of society, followers of the six Schools of Indian philosophy, and other (high and low) seekers of the Lord.
5. The 'Gurmukhs' (God-centred Sikhs) speak softly, walk meekly with humility, meditate devotionally, and worship the Lord with love.
6. Salutations are due to the primal Lord who is never ending, and cannot be destroyed or deceived.
7. Guru Nanak is the enlightener - the Guru of the whole world. [The Guru made people aware of the true God. He also defined a simple path for understanding the Lord. Practicing this path would not only help one reach the Lord God but also solve all their problems – worldly and in the world hereafter].

Poem 33, Stanza 2 (The Hindu and the Muslim)

1. By the coming together of both the male and the female, Hindus and Muslims were born. [Both are the creation of the One Lord God]. Hence, the sense of duality in their mind created two different paths. [In reality, the destination of both is the same].
2. The Hindus call the Lord 'Ram', whilst the Muslims call the Lord 'Khuda'. ['Khuda' is the Persian word for 'God'. Originally, it referred to 'Ahura Mazda' – the Zoroastrian name for God].
3. The Hindus perform their worship whilst facing the East. The Muslims bow towards the West (facing in the direction of Mecca, from India).
4. The River Ganges and Benares is holy for the Hindus. The city of Mecca is holy for the Muslims.
5. The Hindus created the four castes and the Muslims created the four sects – Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali. The Hindus also have their four scriptures (the Vedas) and the Muslims also have their own four scriptures (the Katebas). [The latter might refer to the four texts of the Semitic religions].
6. Both the Hindus and the Muslims are made from the same five elements (air, water, fire, earth, and sky).
7. The ultimate shelter for both Hindus and Muslims is the same Creator. However, they have both given different names, to the same Lord God. [Hindus chant 'Raam, Raam,' and the Muslims chant 'Allah Hu Akbar'].

Poem 24, Stanza 3 (The True Emperor)

1. The True Guru (Nanak) is the carefree emperor, with immeasurable divine qualities.
2. Despite being the most revered person in society, he was called the protector of the poor and the helpless. The Guru is not dependent on anyone, is fearless and free of attachment.
3. The formless Lord is great, vast and undetectable. The Guru alone has recognised the Lord God.
4. The Guru's Kingdom is eternal because of his love for the One (God), who is ever present by his side and in his heart. The Hindu Vedas and the Semitic scriptures (the Torah, the Bible, and the Koran) are always present before God, for the Lord's praises.
5. The True Guru is beyond all measures. No scale can be used for judging the true Guru.
6. The whole Universe is the True Guru's Kingdom. The true Guru has no enemies that could create disturbance in the Guru's reign, or create problems for his subjects.
7. The True Guru dispenses fair justice. In his Kingdom, there is no cruelty or tyranny. No one is persecuted and no one suffers hardship.
8. Such a great Guru (Nanak) is the obvious spiritual teacher of the whole world, for both Hindus and Muslims. [Nanak is known as the 'Baba' (Father) to the Hindus and the 'Pir' (Spiritual guide) to the Sufis].

Poem 24, Stanza 4 (The true pilgrimage)

1. For Hindus, the river Ganges in Benares is their saviour (redemption). For Muslims, salvation is obtained by pilgrimage to the Kaba in Mecca.
2. Guru Nanak's path of salvation lies in singing hymns that praise the Lord, with the help of music (Cymbals, bells, drums and the rebeck create sweet tunes). [This salvation does not require visiting holy places, as God can be praised in the home with stringed instruments].
3. The Guru came from the Abode of God. Although a prophet, he was affectionate and tender towards his devotees and came to save the sinners. [Despite his divine qualities, by reforming the sinners and emancipating the down trodden, the Guru shows his humility].
4. Guru Nanak, by his grace, brought together all the four castes - so that the individual obtains salvation in the one holy congregation. [The holy congregation represents the ship that crosses the worldly ocean – freeing one from transmigration].
5. Holy congregation, like the sandalwood, changes the entire forest (sinners) into fragrance (salvation) - without any level of prejudice or discrimination towards anyone.
6. All act as ordained by the Guru. No one has the power to say no to him. [Those that had the blessings of Guru Nanak, understood his teachings well. As they were attached to praising the Lord, they needed no further lessons].
7. Guru Nanak is the Guru of the Gurus of the world. Among the Muslims, he is the supreme 'Pir'. [The Guru had divine qualities that were not found in the earlier prophets, who had visited the Earth earlier. The prophet Guru Nanak was the prophet of the whole world].

The Gospel of Guru Nanak

Japji (Introduction to the Sikh Belief)

1a, Meditate on the 'Mool Mantra' (The Fundamental Creed)

There is but One Universal Lord God. Truth is God's name. God is the Creator, and is without fear and without hate. God is timeless and without form. God's spirit is throughout the universe. God is not born, nor does God die to be born again. God is self-existent. By the Divine grace of the True Guru, God is made known to humankind.

Prayer-chant and contemplate

Before time and in the past, the Lord God was the truth.

O Nanak, now and forever the Lord God will be the Truth.

1b, The Lord God

The Lord God cannot be reduced to thought, however hard one thinks. (1)

Even if one is quiet and remains lovingly absorbed deep within the Lord's constant love;

the inner silence of the mind is not obtained. (2)

Piling up loads of worldly goods does not appease the desire of the greedy.

A million clever tricks - but not even one will accompany the self in the Hereafter.

So how can you become pure in mind? How can the veil of illusion be torn away?

Nanak says: obey the Lord's Command, and walk in the Way of God's Will.

2, By God's Will

By God's Will, bodies are created; The Lord's Command cannot be described.

By God's Will, souls come into being; By the Lord's Command some are exalted.

By God's Will, some are high and some are low;

By the Lord's Written Command, pleasure and pain are obtained. (3)

Some, by the Lord's Grace, are blessed and pardoned;

Whilst others, by God's Will, wander aimlessly forever in reincarnation.

Everyone is subject to God's Will; no one is exempt.

O Nanak, one who understands the Lord's Command, they do not give into egoism.

3a, Some sing

The mighty sing of Thy Might, and the blessed sing of Thy Light.

Others sing of God's Gifts in Sight.

Some sing of the Lord's beautiful excellences and magnificances.

Some sing of God's knowledge, that philosophers find hard to classify.

Some sing that God creates living beings and then reduces them to dust.

Some sing that God takes life away, and then gives it back.

Some sing that God seems distant and remote.

Some sing that God watches over us, face to face, ever-present.

3b, The Great Giver

There is no shortage of those who teach and preach. Millions offer stories and sermons.

The Great Giver keeps on giving, while those who receive grow tired of receiving.

Throughout the Ages, people have relied on Thee.

Through the Lord's Command, the universe is run and we are led on the path to God.

O Nanak, the Lord blossoms forth, without need or anxiety.

4, The Lord is Holy

The Lord is holy; holy is the Lord's Name - speak of it with great love.

People pray and beg, "Give to us", and the Great Giver bestows gifts from above.

What offering can we place before the Lord God, by which we might see the Lord's Court?

What words can we speak to win the Lord's Love?

In the ambrosial hours before dawn, chant only the holy Name,

and contemplate on the Lord God's Great Glory.

By the karma of good past actions, the robe of this physical human body is obtained.

By the Lord God's Grace, the Gate of Salvation is found.

O Nanak, know this well: the All-holy is Almighty, Absolute.

5a, A Mind filled with Love

The Pure One is not installed in temples, nor shaped into an idol:

The Lord God is Immaculate and Pure.

Those who serve the Pure One are honoured.

O Nanak, sing of the Lord, the treasury of great virtues.

Sing, and listen, and let your heart be filled with the Lord's love.

Your sorrows will be sent far away, and happiness will come your way (to your home).

5b, God, gods, and goddesses.

The Guru's Word is the mystic sound; (4); It is the Divine word of the Lord's knowledge.

Through the Guru's Word, the Lord is realised to be all-pervading.

The Lord Supreme is in all the gods (dieties) - the Hindu holy trinity of Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma;

And their consort-goddesses – Parvati, Lakhshmi, and Saraswati.

Even though I know God, I cannot describe the Lord God in words.

My Guru has given me this explanation: there is only the One, the Provider for all souls.

May I never forget the Lord God!

6, The Jewels and Diamonds of the Mind

If I am pleasing to the Lord, then that is my pilgrimage at holy bathing-spots.

If it does not please the Lord, what is the point of ablution and ritual cleansings?

Without the karma of good actions, God's creation does not find fulfillment -

except by Divine Grace.

Within the mind are gems, rubies, and pearls:

If you listen to the Guru's Teachings, even once.

My Guru has given me this explanation: there is only the One, the Provider for all souls.

May I never forget the Lord God!

7, The Lord God's Glance of Grace

Even if you could live throughout the Four Ages of the Universe, or longer;

Even if you were known throughout the nine continents of the earth and followed by all;

Even with a good name, with fame and praise throughout the world -

If the Lord does not bless you with Divine Grace, what happens when you fall?

Amongst worms you would be considered a lowly worm, a sinner among sinners.

O Nanak, God blesses the unworthy with virtue, and bestows piety on the pious.

I can think of no one, who could do anything for the Lord at all.

8, By absorbing holy teaching

By absorbing holy teaching, the mortal may acquire the state of enlightenment:-

- Yogic ascetic with extra-psychic powers, religious guide, spiritual hero, or a yogi master.
- is enlightened about the cosmic mysteries of the Earth, its support and sky.
- is enlightened about the oceans, the continents, and the nether regions of the world. (5)

By listening to the Lord's Name, death cannot haunt, touch or torment the mortal.

O Nanak, the devotees become immune to death and are forever in bliss.

By listening to the Lord's Name, suffering and sin are annulled.

9, By hearkening to God's Name

By listening to God's Name – one gains the status of Brahma, Shiva, and Indra.

By listening to God's Name – even foul-mouth slanders and evil doers praise the Lord.

By listening to God's Name – one understands the ways of uniting with the Lord.

By listening to God's Name – one understands the secrets of life, the body and Yoga.

By listening to God's Name – one gains scriptural knowledge (Shastras, Simritees, Vedas)

Says Nanak, the devotees are forever in bliss.

By listening to God's Name – ones pain and sin are erased.

10. By listening to the Lord's Name

By listening to the Lord's Name – brings the truth, contentment, and spiritual wisdom.

By listening to the Lord's Name – is the same as bathing at the sixty-eight holy places.

By listening, reading and reciting the Lord's Name – brings the seeker true honour.

By listening to the Lord's Name – one intuitively grasps the divine essence of meditation.

O Nanak, the devotees are forever in a state of bliss.

By listening to the Lord's Name - disease and sin are erased.

11. By hearing the Lord's Name

By hearing the Lord's Name – one dives deep into the ocean of spiritual truths.

By hearing the Lord's Name – one becomes holy like a Sheikh, a Sufi Pir, or a Shah. (6)

By hearing the Lord's Name – there is a spiritual vision (the spiritually blind find the Path).

By hearing the Lord's Name - the unreachable comes within your grasp;

The deep secrets of the ocean of truth are revealed.

As Nanak says, the devotees are forever in bliss.

By hearing the Lord's Name - sorrow and sin are erased.

12, The state of the believers

The state of the believers cannot be described.

The one who tries to describe the Lord God, repents afterwards.

No pen, no paper, and no writer can record the state of the believers.

Such is the great Immaculate Name of my Lord.

Only those who believe in God with all their heart understand this blissful state of mind.

13, The true believers

The true believer's mind has a higher consciousness: intuitive awareness and intelligence.

The true believers have inner knowledge of all spheres and worlds.

The true believers shall never be rejected in the Hereafter.

The faithful are free from the fear of death. The Angel of Death does not come near them.

Such is the perfect Name of my Lord God.

Only those who have faith, alone understand the Lord.

14, The faithful

The path of the faithful is never blocked, it is always clear.

The faithful lives in honour. They proceed to God's abode with honour and fame.

The faithful do not follow empty rituals and narrow sects of the organised religions.

The true believers are firmly bound to the true spiritual faith.

Such is the stainless Name of my Lord.

Only one who has faith can understand such a state of mind.

15, The Door of Salvation

Through faith one finds the gate of salvation, and save themselves.

The faithful uplift, redeem and save their family and relations.

The faithful are saved, and ferried across with the Sikhs of the Guru. (7)

O Nanak, the faithful do not have to beg of the crew for Divine grace.

Such is the Immaculate Name of my Lord.

Only one who has faith comes to understand such a state of mind.

16a, The Chosen Ones

The chosen ones are saints who are approved and honoured in the Court of the Lord.

These saints are given a guard of honour. They look beautiful in the Lord's royal court.

By their single-minded meditation on the Lord God, the chosen ones see the light.

16b, The Pen of God

However much one tries to contemplate, the Creator's actions cannot be counted.

The mythical Bull is piety, the son of compassion;

which through contentment, creates harmony –

which is patiently holding the earth in its place.

How great the burden the Bull must carry!

One who understands this becomes enlightened.

There are so many worlds beyond this earth.

It is God that holds them, and supports their load.

Countless are the created beings; with their different species, names and colours.

They were all inscribed by the ever-flowing Pen of God.

Who could keep this record? Just imagine what a massive scroll it would be!

What mighty power and fascinating beauty are Thine, O' Lord?

How great is Thou gifts! Who can know the extent of your blessings?

You created the vast expanse of the Universe with One Word!

Countless rivers (of life) began to flow. No one can describe your greatness.

I am unworthy even once to be sacrifice unto Thee.

Whatever pleases You is right, my Lord. You are the Eternal and the Formless One!

17, Countless are the Good

Countless are the prayer-chants and countless those who meditate on Thee with love.

Countless are Thine worships, countless are those who practice penance.

Countless are the holy scriptures, and countless the reciters of the Vedas.

Countless are the Yogis, who in their minds are detached from the world.

Countless are the devotees who reflect upon the virtues and the theology of the Lord.

Countless are the pious and countless are those who give charitable gifts.

Countless are the heroic spiritual warriors, who during battle, face the blows of steel.

Countless are those who have taken the vow of silence, to contemplate on You.

Powerless am I, O Lord, to estimate Thy greatness.

Unworthy am I even once to be made a sacrifice to Thee.

Whatever pleases You is right, my Lord. You are the Eternal and the Formless One!

18, Countless are the others

Countless are the fools, blinded by ignorance.

Countless are the thieves and fraudsters.

Countless are the brutal tyrants who rule by force.

Countless are the violent cut-throats and murderers.

Given to evil, numerous are the sinners.

Countless are the liars, who are wandering and lost in their mazes.

Countless are the dirty wretch of impure mind, who eat filth as their ration.

Countless are the slanderers, who carry the load of their stupid mistakes on their heads.

The humble Nanak considers himself as the lowliest of the lowly.

Lord, I cannot even once be a sacrifice to You.

Whatever pleases You is right, my Lord. You are the Eternal and the Formless One!

19a, Countless are Thy Names

Countless are Thy Names and Countless are Thy Places, O Lord.

Inaccessible are Thy Spheres and celestial realms.

Even to call them countless, amounts to the carrying the burden of sin on one's head.

19b, Through words comes Your Name

Through words, comes Your Name. Through words, comes Your Praise.

Spoken words chant Thy attributes and hymns can sing of Your Glory.

From written words, comes the holy scriptures and Thy spiritual knowledge.

With words we tell of our merger with Thee.

A mortal's destiny is written with words on one's forehead. Who receive what Thy Will be.

Yet the Lord God who wrote these Words of destiny is not ruled by their writ.

The created universe is the manifestation of Thy Name.

Without Thy Name, there is no place. How does one describe Thy creative power?

Lord, I cannot even once be a sacrifice to You.

Whatever pleases You is right, my Lord. You are the Eternal and the Formless One!

20. Cleansing

When the hands, feet and the body are dirty; water can wash them clean.

When the clothes are dirty, soap can wash them clean.

When the mind is polluted by sin, it can only be cleansed with the love of the Lord's Name.

Good and Evil are not mere words.

Actions repeated again and again, are engraved on the heart.

It is deeds alone that the soul carries in the afterlife. You reap what you sow.

Nanak: by the cosmic law we come and go in reincarnation, as ordained from the Throne.

21a. The sacred shrine within

Pilgrimages, penance, mercy and charity -

In the Lord's eyes, these by themselves are of little merit.

True merit and salvation lies in absorbing the holy teaching, faith and devotion -

cleanse your soul with the Lord's Name, at the sacred shrine deep within yourself.

21b. Noble qualities

All noble qualities are Thine, O Lord. I have none at all.

Without virtues, true devotional service to the Lord cannot be performed. (8)

I salute to the Lord of the World, who is the holy Word and Brahma the Creator.

Whose form is Eternal, Beautiful, and ever Blissful.

21c, When was the Universe created?

What was the occasion, the time, and the weekday; when the Universe was created?

What was the lunar day, the month and the season, when the Universe was created?

Hindu Pandits, who study the Purana, cannot find the answer in their ancient scriptures.

The Muslim Qazis, who interpret the Koran, cannot find the answer either.

Neither Yogis nor anyone else, knows the date, the day, the season or the month.

The Creator who created the Universe, alone knows the answer.

21d, How can we know the Lord?

How can we speak of Thee, O Lord? How can we praise Thee, O Lord?

How can we describe Thee, O Lord? How can we know of Thee, O Lord?

O Nanak, everyone speaks of the Lord God; each one claiming to be wiser than the other.

Great is the Master, Great is the Lord's Name. Whatever happens is God's Will.

O Nanak, anyone who claims such power for themselves is vain;

they will not be received with any glory, in the Hereafter.

22, There is only One Universe

Countless are the worlds beneath, countless are the heavenly worlds above.

Vedas the Hindu scripture says you can search for them, until you grow weary.

The Semitic scriptures (9) say that there are eighteen thousand worlds;

However, there is only One Universe.

If God's creation could be recorded, one would write;

Those attempting it have themselves departed from this life, without attempting their task.

Says Nanak: The Lord God is Great, supreme and all-knowing.

23, Praise the Lord

Admirers praise the Lord God but they understand not God's Greatness;

Just as the streams and rivers flowing into the ocean, do not know its vastness.

Even kings and emperors, with mountains and oceans of property and wealth -

Measure not to the merit of an ant, from whose mind the Lord God is never absent.

24a, There is no end

There is no end to the Lord's praises, endless are those who speak them.

Endless are the Lord's Actions, endless are the Lord's Gifts, endless is the Lord's Vision.

Endless is what the Lord sees and hears.

Endless is the Mysteries of the Lord's Mind.

The limits of the created universe cannot be imagined.

Its limits here and beyond cannot be imagined.

Many struggle to know the Lord's limits but they cannot be found.

No one can know these limits: the more you say, the more is yet to be said.

24b, Great is the Supreme Lord

Great is the Supreme Lord, High is the Lord's Heavenly Mansion.

Highest of the High, above all is the Lord's Name.

One has to be great to realise How great the Lord Almighty is.

How great the Lord God is, the Lord alone knows.

Says Nanak: Not by God's knowledge, which is beyond the reach of mortals -

but by devotion may come Divine grace.

By the Lord's Glance of Grace, is bestowed the compassionate Lord's Mercy.

25a, So many contemplate

The Lord's Blessings are abundant, there can be no written account of them.

The Lord is the Supreme Giver, who grants without the least expectation of return.

Many great and heroic warriors beg at the Lord's Door.

So many contemplate upon the Lord, yet they cannot be counted.

So many waste away to death whilst engaged in wickedness.

So many continually take gifts but then deny receiving them.

So many fools who consume without gratitude. They eat, waste and rot.

So many suffer pain, poverty and hunger –

but even these are Thine Gifts, O Great Bestower! (10)

25b, By Your Will

Liberation from bondage of reincarnation comes only by Your Will.
No one can intervene.

Should some fool attempt to unfold the Divine Mystery,

They will learn, and feel the effects of their foolishness.

The Lord alone knows our needs and the Lord gives it:

Few are they who acknowledge God's gifts.

The one whose heart is blessed with the Praise of the Lord, O Nanak, is the king of kings.

26a, Priceless are Thy Virtues

O Lord: Priceless are Thy Qualities.

Priceless is Thy Trade. Priceless are Thy Weights and Measures.

Priceless are Thy Customers, Priceless are those who buy and collect goods from Thee.

Priceless is the devotion to Thee and Priceless is the absorption in Thee.

Priceless is Thy Divine Law, Priceless is Thy Divine Court of Justice.

Priceless are Thy scales, that judge a person's actions.

Priceless are Thy Blessings, Priceless is Thy mark of approval.

Priceless is Thy Mercy, Priceless is Thy Royal Decree.

Priceless beyond word, beyond thought!

Those attempting to express it are absorbed in Thy Love and lost in ecstasy.

26b, The God of the gods

The Hindu reciters of the Puranas and Vedas texts, try to express Thy greatness.

Many scholars speak, lecture, make commentaries, and meditate on Thy Name.

The Hindu gods of Brahma and Indra try to utter Thy greatness, O Lord God.

O Lord God, the milkmaids recognise Thee and also their god Krishna.

O Lord God, the god of Shiva and the Supreme Yogis also recognise Thee.

The Lord God is also recognised by all the Buddhas, the enlightened souls.

The demons, the demi-gods, and the gods all proclaim Thee, O Lord God.

Spiritual warriors, Angels and other heavenly beings recognise Thee.

The humble saints and silent monks also recognise Thee.

26c, The Lord God cannot be described

Good many speak of Thee and attempt to describe Thee.

Many have spoken of Thee again and again; then have arisen and departed.

Were Thou to create as many as already created;

even then, they cannot describe a few virtues of Thee.

God is as Great as the Lord wishes to be. Nanak says, only the True Lord knows.

If someone boasts that they can describe God, they are the greatest of fools.

27a, Sing Thy praises

Where is that Gate, and where is that Mansion, from which Thy sit and take care of all?

Countless the instruments, the notes, and the musicians who praise Thee.

Countless the musical measures and symphonies (11).

Wind, water and fire sing of Thy glory.

The Righteous Judge of Dharmaraja (12) sings praises of Thee at Thy Gate.

Chitra and Gupta (13), recording angels of the conscious and subconscious, praise Thee.

The Dharmaraja who praises Thee, adjudicates with these recorded human deeds.

Shiva, Brahma and Devi, the goddess of Beauty - all praise Thee.

Indra, seated upon his throne, praises the Lord God with the gods at Thy Gate.

Yogis in God-absorption and the Saints in contemplation – sing of Thy praise.

The celibates, the zealots, the peaceful, and the fearless warriors sing of Thy praise.

Hindu scholars who recite the Vedas, and the soothsayers of all the ages, praise Thee.

Enchanting fairies, heavenly beauties who entice hearts

in this world, in paradise, and in the underworld – sing Thy praise.

The fourteen celestial jewels (14) Thy created, sing Thy praise.

The sixty-eight shrines of holy pilgrimage, sing Thy praise.

The brave warriors and the divine heroes, sing Thy praise.

All four sources of creation (15), sing Thy praise.

The entire world, planets, and solar systems, created and installed by Thee, glorify Thee.

Thy Saints, who are pleasing to Thy Will are imbued with Thy Nectar, glorify Thee.

O Nanak, many others come to mind, who glorify Thee. How can I consider them all?

27b, The King of Kings

The Lord is True, Forever True, and Truth is the Lord's Name.

The Lord created the Universe. The Lord does not depart, even if the Universe departs.

The Lord created the world, with its various colours, species of beings, and creation. (16)

The Great Lord watches over the created world.

The Lord's Will prevails. No order can be issued to the Lord God.

The Supreme Lord is the King of kings. Nanak remains subject to the Lord's Will.

Note: Stanzas 28 to 31 below covers the Theme of the transformation of the ritual practices of Yoga into the spiritual and ethical qualities to be attained.

28, Yogis, conquer your minds

Make contentment your ear-rings, humility your begging bowl and modesty your wallet.

Make meditation on the Lord's Name, the ashes you smear on your body (17).

Let the thought of death be the patched coat you wear,

let purity like that of a virgin's body, be your way in the world,

and let faith in the Lord God be your walking stick.

Let all humankind be thy sect - the highest order of the Yogis.

Conquer your own mind, and conquer the world of God; I bow to the Lord, I humbly bow.

(Conquering thyself brings spiritual fulfilment, leaving behind desire and human frailty).

The Lord is the Primal One and the Same throughout the ages:

The Pure Light, without beginning or end.

29. You cannot live on bread alone

Let Divine knowledge be thy food, and compassion thy steward.

Listen to the Divine music that rings in thy mind and beats in every heart.

The Creator is the true Lord God, Who reigns supreme in the entire universe.

Riches, and all other external tastes and pleasures, is the path of false satisfaction.

To work miraculous spiritual powers is vain, an empty show.

Union with the Lord, and separation from the Lord, is regulated by the universal system;

Our actions keep us far, or draw us near to the Lord God. I bow to the Lord, I humbly bow.

The Lord is the Primal One and the Same throughout the ages:

The Pure Light, without beginning or end.

30. The One Divine Mother

The One Divine Mother conceived in a mysterious way, gave birth to the holy trinity:

Brahma, the Creator of the World; Vishnu, the Sustainer; and Shiva, the Destroyer.

Everything happens according to God's Will and the Lord's Celestial Order.

God watches over all of us, yet no one is able to see the Lord. A wonderful mystery!

I humbly bow to the Lord. The Lord is the Primal One and the Same throughout the ages:

The Pure Light, without beginning and without end.

31, The Seats of Lord's Authority

Throughout the world are the Seats of the Lord's Authority and Storehouses.

Whatever the Lord has put into the universe, was put there once and for all.

Having created the universe, the Creator Lord watches over all of it.

O Nanak! True is the Creation of the True Lord. I humbly bow to the True Lord.

The Lord is the Primal One and the Same throughout the ages:

The Pure Light, is without beginning and without end.

32, The path to Heaven

From one tongue, let my tongues become 100,000 and then multiply twenty times.

Then I would repeat the Name of the Lord of the Universe, two million times.

On this path to our Husband Lord, there are many steps to climb to merge into the Lord.

On hearing of heaven's glory, even the vile worms want to climb the steps.

Says Nanak: by Divine Grace one may obtain an audience with the Lord God.

Vain is the boasting of false claimants on this path.

33. On my own

On my own, I have no power to speak or silence keep.

On my own, I have no power to beg or to give.

On my own, I have no power to die or to live.

On my own, I have no strength to rule, with wealth and occult mental powers.

On my own, I cannot gain intuitive understanding, enlightenment or the Lord's meditation.

On my own, I have no power to find the way to escape from the world.

O Lord, you alone have the Power in your Hands. You watch over all of us.

Says Nanak: Before the Lord, all are alike - no one is high or low.

34. They will be judged

God created nights, days, weeks, and seasons; Wind, water, fire and the nether regions -

In the midst of these, the Lord installed the Earth as a home for Righteous Action.

Upon the Earth the Lord placed numerous and various creatures, with endless names.

By their actions they shall be judged, by the True Lord. God's court is just.

In the Lord's Court are seated in perfect celestial beauty the saints, the Elect of God.

They are blessed by God's Glance of Grace and are marked with the Lord's approval.

At this Court alone, the false and the true are known.

O Nanak, their fate will be known only when they arrive there.

35, The Stages of Spiritual Growth

Such is the moral living of the Stage of Righteous. (18)

Now we look at the Stage of Wisdom and Knowledge. (19)

There are so many elements of wind, water and fires;

There are so many Krishnas and Shivas.

There are so many Brahmas, who create beautiful beings of various forms and colours.

There are so many earths and celestial mountains (20) for doing virtuous deeds.

There are so many sermons delivered to Dhruva. (21)

There are so many Indras, so many moons and suns, so many universes and countries.

There are so many supreme ascetics, wise people, enlightened Buddhas, and Nath Yogis.

There are so many Hindu demons, demi-gods and Devi goddesses of various kinds.

There are so many oceans of jewels, sources of creation, and languages.

There are so many dynasties of kings and spiritual teachers.

O Nanak, the Lord God has no limits.

36. Spiritual wisdom

In the Stage of Wisdom or Enlightenment, spiritual knowledge reigns supreme.

There is the celestial music heard by yogis in trance, sublime visions, wonder and bliss.

The Stage of Humility (22), is the sphere of spiritual effort. Beauty is the language.

Forms of incomparable beauty are created there - things that cannot be described.

One who tries to speak of these shall be shamed, and repent afterwards.

The inner consciousness, intellect and enlightenment of the mind are moulded there.

Forged there is the vision of the genius of the pious persons, gods and mystics.

37a. The Spiritual heroes

In the Stage of Grace (23), spiritual power finds expression.

No one lives there, except the mighty warriors and the spiritual heroes of fame.

Who are ever chanting Rama's Name, there are heroines like Sita with majestic glory.

Their spiritual beauty cannot be described.

They suffer neither death nor deception, within whose hearts and minds the Lord abides.

The saints of various worlds live there, cherishing the True Lord in their hearts and minds.

37b, The World of Truth

In the Stage of Truth (24), the Formless Supreme Being resides.

Having created the creation, the Lord watches over it.

By the Lord's merciful Grace, happiness is bestowed.

There are continents, planets, and universes.

If one tries to describe them; there is no limit, no end.

There are creations upon creations. As the Lord commands, so they exist.

The Lord watches over them and rejoices. The Lord has each constantly in mind.

O Nanak, to describe the World of Truth is a tough task.

38, The Holy Word of God

Make self-control thy furnace, and patience thy goldsmith.

Make understanding thy anvil, and Divine knowledge thy tools.

Make the Fear of God thy bellows, penance thy fire.

In the crucible of Lord's love, forge the Nectar of the Lord's Name

In such holy mint, shape the True Coin of the Holy Word of God.

This fulfilment comes to those favoured with the Lord's Gracious Glance.

Says Nanak: Those Blessed by the Merciful Lord's Grace, are uplifted and exalted.

Sloka (The Last sermon of Japji)

Air is the Guru, Water the Father; the Great Earth is the Mother of all.

Day and Night are the nursemaids, in whose lap the whole world plays.

The righteous Judge (12) of the Lord's Court, will read out our good and bad deeds.

Our actions will draw us closer to, or further away from God.

Those who Dwell on the Lord's Name, and have departed after putting in the toil,

They will obtain the Divine Grace, and their faces will glow with the Divine Light.

Says Nanak: they shall be saved and ferry others along with them.

Rahiras (The Straight Path) (25)

Raga Asa (26)

1, Sodar (At Thy Gate) (27)

1a, At Thy Door

There is One Universal Creator God. By The True Guru's grace, the Lord is obtained.

Where is that Gate and that House, in which Thou sit and take care of all, O Lord?

There are countless instruments, tunes, and musicians who praise Thee.

Countless are the musical harmonies and the symphonies,

The heavenly singers sing hymns of Thy glory.

The wind, water and fire chant Thy glory:

The Righteous Judge of Dharmraja (12) praises Thee, whilst sitting at Thy Gate.

The Angels (13) of the conscious and the subconscious who keep the record of actions,

and the Righteous Judge of Dharmraja who reads this record, sing of Thy praises.

Shiva, Brahma and Devi, the Goddess of Beauty – all praise Thee.

Indra, seated upon his Throne, praises the Lord God with the deities at Thy Door.

1b, All Sing Thy Praise

Yogis in God-absorption and the Saints in meditation – sing of Thy praise.

The celibates, the fanatics, and the peaceful, and the fearless warriors sing of Thy praise.

The Pandits who recite the Vedas, with the supreme sages of all the ages, praise Thee.

The enchanting Hindu Mohinis and the heavenly Muslim Houris who entice hearts –

In paradise, in this world, and in the underworld of the subconscious, praise Thee.

The celestial jewels (14) Thy created, and the sixty-eight sacred pilgrim sites, praise Thee.

The sources of creation (15), the spiritual heroes and the mighty warriors, sing Thy praise.

The entire world, planets and solar systems, created and arranged by Thee, glorify Thee.

Thy Saints, who are pleasing to Thy Will are imbued with Thy Nectar, glorify Thee.

O Nanak, many others come to mind, who glorify Thee. How can I think of them all?

1c, The Lord created the Universe

The Lord is True, forever True, and Truth is the Lord's Name.

The Lord created the Universe. The Lord does not depart, even if the Universe departs.

The Lord created the world, with its various colours, species of beings, and creation. (16)

The Great Lord watches over the created world.

The Lord's Will prevails. No order can be issued to the Lord God.

The Supreme Lord is the King of kings. Nanak remains subject to the Lord's Will.

2a, The Great Lord

By hearing of Your Greatness, everyone calls You Great, O' Lord.

Only those who have seen the Lord God, know how Great the Lord is.

No one has the power to evaluate You; No one can describe Your Greatness.

Those who try to describe You, remain lost and absorbed in You.

O' my Great Master of Unfathomable Depth, You are the Ocean of Excellences.

No one knows the extent or the vastness of Your might.

2b, The spiritual teachers

All those who contemplate have met and practiced intuitive meditation.

All the appraisers have met and evaluated Thy worth.

The theologians, spiritual guides, mystics, and the teachers of preachers –

None of these can describe even an iota of Your Greatness.

2c, Spiritual powers

Truth, penance, virtues, and the great miraculous spiritual powers of the great Yogis -

without Thee, no one has attained such powers.

By Thy Grace, they are received. No one can hinder or halt their flow.

2d, The True One

What can the poor helpless creatures utter of Thy greatness?

Thy treasures are overflowing with Thy praises.

Those, unto whom Thou Bestow (Thy Mercy), needs none else.

Says Nanak: 'The Truth alone Saves us, yea, the Truth alone.'

3, The True Name

By chanting the Lord's Name, I live; forgetting it, I die.

How difficult it is to utter the holy Name, O True One!

O Lord, when someone hungers for Thy True Name, their sorrows wither away.

O mother, how can I forsake the True Lord?

Trying to describe even an iota of the Greatness of the True Name,

people have grown weary - but found not even an iota of its True Value.

Even if everyone met together to glorify God, the Lord does not grow any greater nor less.

That Lord does not die; there is no reason to mourn. The Lord's giving knows no bounds.

This merit is the Lord's alone; there is none like the Lord – never has been, never will be.

Great as Thyself are Thy Gifts - O Lord, Thou made the night to follow the day.

Those who forget their Lord God are vile and despicable.

O Nanak, without the Lord's Name, they are wretched outcasts.

4, You have forgotten the Lord

In that (world's) pool do people make their homes,

In which the Lord has filled with the water of burning desire.

In the mud of worldly love, their feet get stuck. Many have drowned in this swamp.

O' fool! In your mind, you forgot the unique Lord; so your virtues shall wither away.

I am not celibate, nor truthful, nor a scholar. I was born foolish and ignorant into this world.

Prays Nanak, I seek the refuge of those who forget not the Lord for a moment.

Sohila (The Song of Praise)

Rag Gauri Deepaki

There is One Universal Creator God. By the True Guru's Grace, the Lord is obtained.

The house in which the Creator is remembered and the Lord's praises contemplated -

in that house, sing the Songs of Praise and meditate upon the Creator Lord's Name.

You should sing the Songs of Praise of my Fearless Lord.

I am a sacrifice to that 'Song of joy', which brings the mind to everlasting peace.

Everyday, the Lord God cares for us all; the Great Giver watches over all.

Your Gifts cannot be valued, so how can anyone be compared to the Great Giver?

The day of the wedding is fixed. Come, gather together to anoint the doorstep. (28)

Give me your blessings, O' Friends, that I may merge with my Lord.

In every home, the summons is sent out; the courier (Angel of Death) comes every day.

Contemplate on the One who summons us; O Nanak, that day must come for us all.

Rag Asa - The Teacher of the teachers

There are six schools of Hindu thought, six teachers,
and six sermons.

The Teacher of teachers (29) is the One Lord, who
appears in various forms.

Follow the scripture (30) in which praises of the Lord are
sung – in it rests true greatness.

Seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and
seasons originate from the one sun.

O Nanak, in the same way, so many forms originate
from the Creator.

Rag Dhanasari (31)

On the heavenly plate of the sky, the sun and the moon are the lamps;

The constellation of stars are the decorated pearls –Thy offering.

The fragrance of sandalwood in the air is Thy temple incense;

And the mountain-breezes are Thy fly-whisk.

The entire blossoming forests are the altar flowers in offering to Thee, O Luminous Lord.

O Destroyer of Fear, what a beautiful Ceremony of Light, Thy lamp-lit service is.

Celestial music that the Guru's Word orchestrates, is the sounding of the temple drums.

Thy have thousands of eyes, and yet Thou have no physical eyes.

Thy have thousands of forms, yet formless Thou remain.

Thy have thousands of Lotus Feet, and yet Thou do not have even one foot.

Thy have thousands of noses to smell, yet Thou have no nose.
Wonderful are Thy ways.

Amongst all is the Light. Lord, You are that Light that lights all hearts.

The Lord's Light is radiant within all. With the Guru's Teachings, the Light shines bright.

Like bees, I crave day and night for the honey-sweet fragrance of the Lord's Lotus Feet.

O' Lord bestow the water of Your Mercy upon Nanak the Chatrik (the thirsty song-bird);

So that Nanak merges in Your Name and finds eternal solace.

References

1. Ritual purification may not purify the mind.
2. Nor may absorption in trance still the mind, as the Yogi thinks.
3. Pleasure and pain stand here respectively for the joy of realisation and being cast off from Divine Grace.
4. The Yogis Wordless Harmony of the 'Nada.' It is also called the Word of the Vedas Symphony. The Vedas are scriptural texts.
5. Nether regions of the world, refers to the upper and lower worlds.
6. All these are titles used by Sufis. Sufis are a Muslim school of thought that Hindus believe originated in their Vedant philosophy.
7. The 'Sikhs' mentioned here refers to Guru Nanak's disciples of the time. During this time, Sikhs also happen to be both Hindu and Muslims. They were also called 'Nanakpanthis'.
8. Hence, without 'sewa' (service to others without expecting reward) - devotion is not real.
9. The 'Semitic scriptures' refers to the Jewish Torah, Psalms of David, Christian Bible, and the Muslim Koran.
10. This line expresses the spiritual state of resignation in all situations.
11. Originally in the Persian language. These compositions are made out of Ragas or classical measures.
12. 'Dharamraja' is the celestial Judge of human actions. He is also called the Lord of moral law or the Lord of Death.
13. These two Angels – Chitra (conscious) and Gupta (subconscious) record human deeds.
14. According to mythology, Vishnu churned the ocean to obtain nectar for the gods killed in a battle with the demons. Fourteen jewels were found in the process.
15. The 4 sources of creation are: Egg-born, Foetus or placenta-born, sweat or perspiration-born and atmosphere-born.
16. Sometimes the Indian word of 'Maya' is used here, instead of 'creation'. Maya refers to what is knowable by the senses.
17. Indian ascetics smear their body all over with ashes, as a symbol of renunciation.
18. See Appendix B. There are 5 stages of Spiritual Growth. DHARAM KHAND is the first stage.
19. GYAN KHAND is the second stage of Spiritual Growth.
20. Mount Sumeru is supposed to be the home of the gods.
21. Dhruva was a Hindu devotee. His story teaches a lot of lessons.

22. SARAM KHAND is the third stage of Spiritual Growth. Some see it as the domain of shame or self-surrender.
23. KARAM KHAND is the fourth stage of Spiritual Growth.
24. SACH KHAND is the fifth and final stage of Spiritual Growth. At this stage, there is a permanent union with God.
25. 'Rahiras' is probably a contraction of the Persian language phrase 'Rah-i-Rast' (the straight path).
26. The first part of the 'Rahiras' is similar to stanza 27 of Japji.
27. A fuller version of this 'Song of Praise' is generally recited by Sikhs before they retire to bed. It also marks the *finale* of the service for the dead. It is called 'psalm of joy' because of the individual's self's union with the Creator envisaged in it.
28. In Indian culture, mustard oil is poured over the threshold at time of the bride's first arrival after marriage, at her in-laws place.
29. In Sikhism, the word 'Guru' means 'Teacher' and the most popular word for God is 'Wahe-Guru, which means the 'Great teacher'. The word 'Sikh' means 'Learner'.
30. This refers to the 6 Shastras of Indian philosophy.
31. This 'Aarti' hymn was sung by Guru Nanak at the temple of Jagannath Puri. The famous poet Tagore once said, this hymn of the Guru , was his 'Anthem for the Universe' - because it gave a cosmological interpretation. It is part of the Sohila that Sikhs repeat at bed time.

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Appendix A

A list of the Sikh Gurus and the reigning Mughal Emperors

<u>Name of the Guru</u>	<u>Period of Guru-ship</u>	<u>Mughal Emperor</u>
1. Guru Nanak	(1469-1539).....	Babar(1469-1539)
2. Guru Angad.....	(1539-1552).....	Humayun(1504-1552)
3. Guru Amar-Das.....	(1552-1574).....	Akbar(1479-1574)
4. Guru Ram-Das.....	(1574-1581).....	Akbar(1534-1581)
5. Guru Arjan.....	(1581-1606).....	Jahangir(1563-1606)
6. Guru Har-Gobind.....	(1606-1644).....	Jahangir & Shah-Jahan (1595-1644)
7. Guru Har-Rai.....	(1630-1661).....	Shah-Jahan & Aurangzeb. (1644-1661)
8. Guru Har-Krishan.....	(1656-1664).....	Aurangzeb(1661-1664)
9. Guru Tegh-Bahadur.....	(1621-1675).....	Aurangzeb(1644-1675)
10. Guru Gobind Singh.....	(1666-1708).....	Aurangzeb & Bahadur Shah(1675-1708)
11. Guru Granth Sahib.....	(1708+)	

Appendix B

Guru Nanak's 5 Stages of Spiritual Growth

1. **Dharam Khand** = is at the Level of seeking moral **Duty**, where a person's actions are responsible for their consequences. Those who carry out their duties sincerely and honestly enter the second level.
2. **Gian Khand** = is at the Level of wisdom and **Knowledge**. Here the devotee obtains the knowledge of God and the Universe. They know their own limitations and the omnipotence of God and the vastness of God's creation.
3. **Saram Khand** = is at the Level of **Effort**. Here the mind and understanding are purified. Such efforts lead to the next Level.
4. **Karam Khand** = is at the Level of **Grace**. Here the selfless devotee acquires divine grace and receives spiritual power. With the grace of God they enter the next Level.
5. **Sach Khand** = is at the Level of the **Truth**, a state of permanent union with God. It is at the stage of ultimate spiritual reality, behind and beyond the phenomena of the Universe, where God and human beings become one and the same.

Such is the progress of human beings from the worldly level to the spiritual level.

For further information, check the website: sikhspiritualmovement.com

This book looks at the life and teachings of the 15th century prophet Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world. Brother Gurdas is best known as the first scholar of the Sikh religion. He worked with people who met Guru Nanak in person.

Gurdas was directly related to the Sikh Gurus. Hence, he was chosen to write the first biography of Guru Nanak. Gurdas was also asked to write down the works of Guru Nanak, now found in the Sikh holy book (Guru Granth Sahib). Guru Arjan said Gurdas's work is the key to understanding the Sikh scripture.