

Sheikh Farid – Sabad 37
naatee dhottee sa(n)bahee sutee aai nachi(n)dh ||
Salok, Seikh Farid, Guru Granth Sahib, 1379

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fareedaa rahee su beRee hi(n)n(g) dee giee kahooree ga(n)dh ||33||

Summary: In many religious traditions, rituals, purification, and external discipline are considered essential expressions of devotion. However, this focus can hinder our quest for deeper wisdom. It prompts us to ponder: are we genuinely nurturing our true essence, or merely curating our image? An emphasis on external purity without inner awareness is a misguided effort to feel secure, seen, or spiritual. This misconception can lead to self-deception, such as mistaking the scent of incense for our natural fragrance. True spirituality calls us to discard all pretence and embrace authenticity. This inner transformation reveals the essence of eternal awareness and guides us toward genuine spiritual fulfilment.

naatee dhottee sa(n)bahee sutee aai nachi(n)dh ||
After bathing, washing, and adorning herself, she drifts back to sleep, untroubled. This ritual and ease convey a mindset that trusts external discipline and devotion alone can lead to spiritual enlightenment.

fareedaa rahee su beRee hi(n)n(g) dee giee kahooree ga(n)dh ||33||
Farid says the pungent smell of asafoetida remains, and the sweet fragrance of musk has disappeared, suggesting that ignorance has overtaken awareness. (33)

Essence: Sheikh Farid explains the difference between external efforts and inner essence. He uses the metaphor for those who undergo cleansing and then rest confidently, believing they have put in enough effort. However, despite their efforts, they still carry an unpleasant odour and lack fragrance. Spiritually, this represents individuals who think that their external discipline or religious appearance is sufficient for attaining enlightenment. Despite all their ritualistic efforts, they still bear the unpleasantness of ego and ignorance, which overshadow the beauty of humility and awareness. This message serves as a call for inner purification that transcends mere rituals and appearances, urging us to seek true enlightenment from within.

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