

Sheikh Farid – Sabad 40
birahaa birahaa aakheeaai birahaa too sulataan ||
Salok, Seikh Farid, Guru Granth Sahib, 1379

birahaa birahaa aakheeaai birahaa too sulataan ||
fareedaa jit tan birahu na uopajai so tan jaan masaan ||36||

Summary: "Birha", rooted in the Sanskrit word "Virah", signifies a sacred state of separation, not as emotional despair, but as an awakened indifference, where there is no entanglement in the dualities of acceptance and rejection, pleasure, and pain. Many of us tend to resist the pain that arises from this sense of incompleteness, mistaking it for a sign of weakness. However, this discomfort is a sign of our aliveness, a longing to reconnect with wholeness, our true essence. When we stop resisting or numbing this yearning and begin to honour it, "Birha" transforms from pain into a path that leads us toward self-realisation, fulfilment, and the deeper purpose of being.

birahaa birahaa aakheeaai birahaa too sulataan ||

We call it separation or relinquishing, but longing, you are the true sovereign, symbolizing that this state of longing governs the transformation of our inner disunion.

fareedaa jit tan birahu na uopajai so tan jaan masaan ||36||

Farid says the body in which no longing arises, look upon that body as a cremation ground, representing an individual without spiritual pull, as lifeless. (36)

Essence: Sheikh Farid honours the inner state of relinquishment intertwined with longing as the highest path to spiritual awakening. He believes that spiritual barrenness, characterized by a lack of pain for separation or a dearth of longing for union, leads to a lifeless existence, similar to that of a cremation ground. Rather than viewing relinquishment and longing as weaknesses, he elevates them to a position of sovereign power that fosters true aliveness. From this perspective, the profound longing for union with one's true self serves as the spark that awakens, transforms, and sanctifies life, making it a crucial aspect of our spiritual journey.

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