

Bhagat Ravidas – Sabad 19
jal kee bheet pavan kaa tha(n)bhaa rakat bu(n)d kaa gaaraa ||
Raag Sorath, Bhagat Ravidas, Guru Granth Sahib, 659

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haadd maas naaRa(n)ee ko pi(n)jar pa(n)khee basai bichaaraa ||1||
praanee kiaa meraa kiaa teraa ||
jaise tarvar pa(n)kh baseraa ||1|| rahaau ||
raakhahu ka(n)dh usaarahu neevaa(n) ||
saadde teen haath teree seevaa(n) ||2||
ba(n)ke baal paag sir Deree ||
eih tan hoigo bhasam kee Deree ||3||
uooche ma(n)dar su(n)dar naaree ||
raam naam bin baajee haaree ||4||
meree jaat kameenee paa(n)t kameenee ochhaa janam hamaaraa ||
tum saranaagat raajaa raam cha(n)dh keh ravidhaas chamaaraa ||5||6||

Summary: We can enhance comfort, reduce risks, and create shelter, but we cannot secure existence itself. At its core, security is an attempt to turn vulnerability into a sense of certainty. We build walls of relationships, wealth, and reputation not just to survive, but also to calm our fears of impermanence. However, physical life is subject to a limit that no strategy can overcome, remaining indifferent to time and our accomplishments. Everything we accumulate, defend, and expand will eventually be reduced to a “three and a half cubits long” grave. This symbolic truth serves as a reminder that we are all ultimately equal, urging us to recognize that our conscience is the only thing we can truly secure.

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Water is the foundation, breath is the supporting pillar, and blood is the binding mortar. This illustrates how our bodies are structured, composed of inherently fragile elements, making our physical existence transient.

haadd maas naaRa(n)ee ko pi(n)jar pa(n)khee basai bichaaraa ||1||

Our body, made up of bones, flesh, and veins, encases our pristine consciousness like a helpless bird in a cage. This imagery reminds us that, despite our vitality, we are vulnerable, constrained by our physical forms and senses. (1)

praanee kiaa meraa kiaa teraa ||

O living being, what is truly yours and what is mine? This challenges us to reflect on our claims of ownership, as everything we hold dear is part of a shared consciousness in this fleeting existence.

jaise tarvar pa(n)kh baseraa ||1|| rahaau ||

Like a bird briefly resting in a tree, this moment symbolizes the transitory nature of our existence, whether in physical or mental experiences. (1)(Pause)

raakhahu ka(n)dh usaarahu neevaa(n) ||

To build walls, foundations are laid; this reflects the effort to secure what is inherently destructible and cannot be permanently protected.

saadde teen haath teree seevaa(n) ||2||

A grave will only be three and a half cubits long. This is a reminder of our shared mortality, reinforcing that, in the end, we are all equal regardless of our accomplishments (2)

ba(n)ke baal paag sir Deree ||

Beautiful hair and fancy turbans on your head reinforce the idea that appearances often deceive, making us believe we are superior.

eih tan hoigo bhasam kee Deree ||3||

This body will become a pile of ash. This reflects the inevitable decay of the physical form, showing that vanity becomes insignificant when confronted with the reality of our mortality. (3)

uooche ma(n)dar su(n)dar naaree ||

One may have grand mansions and attractive companions. This list identifies the signs of illusions about worldly success that can lead to painful attachment.

raam naam bin baajee haaree ||4||

Without contemplation on the all-pervading awareness, the game of life is lost. This is a reminder that pursuing material wealth without spiritual values leads to missed opportunities for true fulfilment. (4)

merree jaat kameenee paa(n)t kameenee ochhaa janam hamaaraa ||

My social caste is considered low, my lineage is humble, and my birth is viewed as inferior. This reflects the rigid social stratification and the stigma attached to external identity.

tum saranaagat raajaa raam cha(n)dh keh ravidhaas chamaaraa ||5||6||

I have found the sanctuary in the sovereign, all-pervading awareness, says Ravidas, the cobbler. This profound insight reminds us that true wisdom rises above and transcends our deepest distress. (5)(6)

Essence: Bhagat Ravidas delivers a profound meditation on the fleeting nature of life, compelling us to confront the futility of arrogance. He invites us to reflect on the impermanence of our physical existence by deconstructing the human body into its core elements, water, air, and blood, to understand the inherent fragility of any physical form. While society may judge individuals based on external factors, true legacies and vitality emerge from aligning with a higher awareness. This connection urges us to challenge our attachment to ownership and to lessen the ego's hold.

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