

Bhagat Kabir - Sabad 41
jal hai sootak thal hai sootak sootak opat hoiee ||
Raag Gauri Bhee Sorath Bhee, Bhagat Kabir, Guru Granth Sahib, 331

jal hai sootak thal hai sootak sootak opat hoiee ||
janame sootak mooe fun sootak sootak paraj bigoiee ||1||
kahu re pa(n)ddeaa kaun paveetaa ||
aaisaa giaan japahu mere meetaa ||1|| rahaau ||
nainahu sootak bainahu sootak sootak sravanee hoiee ||
uooThat baiThat sootak laagai sootak parai rasoiee ||2||
faasan kee bidh sabh kouoo jaanai chhooTan kee ik koiee ||
keh kabeer raam ridhai bichaarai sootak tinai na hoiee ||3||41||

Summary: The concept of Sootak challenges us to rethink purity and impurity by focusing on our internal states rather than external labels. Many rituals unjustly deem certain people, natural processes, and universal elements as impure. We should truly reflect, are they truly impure, or is this perception shaped by our intentions and societal conditioning? Impurity does not arise from universal actions but from our minds clouded by ignorance, fear, and ego. By confronting these inner obstacles, we can redefine purity as clarity, compassion, and harmony with the universe. This shift enhances our well-being and deepens our connection to all forms of life.

jal hai sootak thal hai sootak sootak opat hoiee ||
In water there is impurity; on land there is impurity; then everything arises from impurity. This means that if we label life's natural elements as impure, we cast doubt on the purity of existence itself.

janame sootak mooe fun sootak sootak paraj bigoiee ||1||
If birth is called impure and death is also considered impure, then humanity is corrupted with impurity. This suggests that when society regards the intrinsic unfolding of life as impure, it becomes trapped in concepts that obscure rather than illuminate reality. (1)

kahu re pa(n)ddeaa kaun paveetaa ||
Tell me, O scholar, who then is truly pure. This question challenges our beliefs about purity, urging us to see it not as a physical state, ritualistic superstitions or inherited privilege, but as the clarity of the mind and inner transformation.

aaaisaa giaan japahu mere meetaa ||1|| rahaau ||

Embrace such wisdom through continuous contemplation, my friend. This encourages introspection to gain insights that transcend ritual distinctions and acknowledges reality's non-dual nature. (1)(Pause)

nainahu sootak bainahu sootak sootak sravanee hoiee ||

There is impurity in what the eyes perceive, impurity in what speech expresses, and impurity in what the ears receive. This reveals a contamination of our senses: impurity shifts from external factors to our intentions, which distort and negatively influence our understanding of the world.

uooThat baiThat sootak laagai sootak parai rasoiee ||2||

If impurity attaches to every act of rising and sitting, then even the kitchen becomes subject to impurity. This shows that when impurity is defined by external factors rather than inner understanding, it becomes a never-ending and self-defeating concept that infiltrates daily life. (2)

faasan kee bidh sabh kouoo jaanai chhooTan kee ik koiee ||

Everyone knows the ways of becoming entangled, but only a rare one knows the way to freedom. This reflection shows how easily the mind gets stuck in beliefs, desires, and identities, rather than in discernment that can see through self-created bondage.

keh kabeer raam ridhai bichaarai sootak tinai na hoiee ||3||41||

Kabir says that for those who hold contemplation on the omnipresent oneness, impurity does not remain. This suggests that when awareness settles into the sustaining presence within, the spell of clean and unclean dissolves, and purity becomes a state of inner clarity rather than outer separation. (3)(41)

Essence: Bhagat Kabir emphasises that when we define impurity by external factors rather than our inner understanding, we create a cycle of self-sabotage. Our minds then tend to categorise the world as pure or impure, constantly searching for contamination where it doesn't exist. This leads to fear replacing insight, anxiety replacing mindfulness, and superstition replacing discernment. By attributing impurity to external objects or events, we overlook the internal vices as sources of our suffering. When we understand purity as the clarity of our intentions, it allows self-understanding and inner transformation.

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