

Bhagat Ravidas – Sabad 38
naagar janaa(n) meree jaat bikhiaat cha(n)maara(n) ||
Raag Malar, Bhagat Ravidas, Guru Granth Sahib, 1293

naagar janaa(n) meree jaat bikhiaat cha(n)maara(n) ||
ridhai raam gobi(n)dh gun saara(n) ||1|| rahaau ||
surasaree salal kirat baarunee re sa(n)t jan karat nahee paana(n) ||
suraa apavitr nat avar jal re surasaree milat neh hoi aana(n) ||1||
tar taar apavitr kar maaneeaa re jaise kaagaraa karat beechaara(n) ||
bhagat bhaagaut likheeaai teh uopare poojeeaa kar namasakaara(n) ||2||
meree jaat kuT baa(n)ddalaa ddor ddova(n)taa niteh baanaarasee aas paasaa ||
ab bipr paradhaan teh kareh dda(n)ddaut tere naam saranai ravidhaas dhaasaa ||3||1||

Summary: In a society steeped in ignorance, identities are shaped by external influences, leading individuals to define themselves and judge others by superficial labels rather than true wisdom. Our sense of worth becomes linked to status, appearance, and the validation we receive from others. Over time, we may adopt socially acceptable facades that lack authenticity, while our true selves are overlooked. Those who don't conform to societal or religious norms often face ridicule, exclusion, and discrimination. Yet, they possess the power to become truly enlightened by reclaiming their identity and self-worth from within, courageously embracing their authentic selves beyond the limitations imposed by society.

naagar janaa(n) meree jaat bikhiaat cha(n)maara(n) ||
Among the city's people, my social identity is known as a lowly tanner.
This reflects how social and religious dogmas can foster discrimination.

ridhai raam gobi(n)dh gun saara(n) ||1|| rahaau ||
Yet, within my heart, I cherish and reflect upon the unparalleled essence of the universal reality. This suggests inner alignment as resonance with awareness, transcends social or religious definition. (1)(Pause)

surasaree salal kirat baarunee re sa(n)t jan karat nahee paana(n) ||
If wine is made even from the holy water of the Ganges, the wise do not consume it.
This reflects a shift from symbolic purity to lived awareness, as superior social status cannot justify a corrupted mindset.

suraa apavitr nat avar jal re surasaree milat neh hoi aana(n) ||1||

If impure wine or dirty water is poured into the holy river Ganges, it merges and does not remain distinguishable. This symbolises how understanding the essence of universal reality rises above discrimination and is not altered by external association. (1)

tar taar apavitr kar maaneeaa re jaise kaagaraa karat beechaara(n) ||

The sap of the Palmyra palm tree, used to make intoxicants, is considered impure. I wonder, should the paper made from its leaves be regarded similarly? This reflection leads me to realize that our judgments are shaped more by societal conventions than by any inherent truth.

bhagat bhaagaut likheaaai teh uopare poojeeaaai kar namasakaara(n) ||2||

But when the devotees inscribe words of wisdom on paper, it becomes scripture, which people then bow to and worship. This paradox illustrates a mindset immersed in duality, which neglects the truth that positives and negatives coexist.

merree jaat kuT baa(n)ddalaa ddor ddova(n)taa niteh baanaarasee aas paasaa ||

My caste involves preparing and cutting leather and transporting dead cattle around the outskirts of Banaras. This highlights the deep social divide in occupations, rooted in entrenched beliefs about inequality and the marginalisation of society.

ab bipr paradhaan teh kareh dda(n)ddaut tere naam saranai ravidhaas dhaasaa ||3||1||

Now I bow to those elevated scholars who contemplate the all-pervading universal awareness as inner refuge, says Ravidas, the devotee. This realised mindset transcends hierarchy by recognising wisdom inwardly rather than through societal pressure. (3)(1)

Essence: Bhagat Ravidas offers a bold critique of social and religious identity that endorses our notions of purity. He compares the Palmyra tree, whose sap is deemed impure because of its association with intoxicants, while its leaves are prized for creating paper for scriptures. This inconsistency, in which the same tree is both condemned and revered while its inherent nature remains unchanged, suggests a duality in our perceptions. This metaphor reflects a mindset that categorises purity or impurity by social comfort, hindering our ability to see wholeness. His insights highlight the transformative power of internal alignment, which can overcome hierarchies and embrace our shared universality.

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