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Other Traditions

Japji

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Guru Nanak (1469–1539)

Max Arthur Macauliffe (1909)

Credits

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About:

The Japji ("the recitation") is the composition that opens the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of Sikhism, and the prayer Sikhs recite every morning. It was composed by Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the founder of the religion, and is regarded as a summary of his whole teaching.

It begins with the Mul Mantar, the Sikh profession of faith ("There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator..."), and continues in 38 stanzas called pauris, which speak of the divine will (hukam), the power of God's Name, the futility of rites without devotion, and the five realms (khands) through which the soul rises to the Realm of Truth.

It closes with a short slok attributed to Guru Angad. The Guru Granth Sahib, which the Japji opens, is revered by Sikhs as their living and eternal guru, and the Mul Mantar is the best-known phrase of the whole Sikh faith.

Source: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Sikh_Religion/Volume_1/Japji

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Slok

MUL MANTAR

✦

1 There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent; by the favour of the Guru.

2 Repeat His Name

3 The True One was in the beginning; the True One was in the primal age.

4 The True One is now also, O Nanak; the True One also shall be.

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PAURI 1

✦

1 By thinking I cannot obtain a conception of Him, even though I think hundreds of thousands of times.

2 Even though I be silent and keep my attention firmly fixed on Him, I cannot preserve silence.

3 The hunger of the hungry for God subsideth not though they obtain the load of the worlds.

4 If man should have thousands and hundreds of thousands of devices, even one would not assist him in obtaining God.

5 How shall man become true before God? How shall the veil of falsehood be rent?

6 By walking, O Nanak, according to the will of the Commander as preordained.

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PAURI 2

✦

1 By His order bodies are produced; His order cannot be described.

2 By His order souls are infused into them; by His order greatness is obtained.

3 By His order men are high or low; by His order they obtain preordained pain or pleasure.

4 By His order some obtain their reward; by His order others must ever wander in transmigration.

5 All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it.

6 He who understandeth God's order, O Nanak, is never guilty of egoism.

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PAURI 3

✦

1 Who can sing His power? Who hath power to sing it?

2 Who can sing His gifts or know His signs?

3 Who can sing His attributes, His greatness, and His deeds?

4 Who can sing His knowledge whose study is arduous?

5 Who can sing Him, who fashioneth the body and again destroyeth it?

6 Who can sing Him, who taketh away life and again restoreth it?

7 Who can sing Him, who appeareth to be far, but is known to be near.

8 Who can sing Him, who is all-seeing and omnipresent?

9 In describing Him there would never be an end.

10 Millions of men give millions upon millions of descriptions of Him, but they fail to describe Him.

11 The Giver giveth; the receiver groweth weary of receiving.

12 In every age man subsisteth by His bounty.

13 The Commander by His order hath laid out the way of the world.

14 Nanak, God the unconcerned is happy.

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PAURI 4

✦

1 True is the Lord, true is His name; it is uttered with endless love.

2 People pray and beg, 'Give us, give us'; the Giver giveth His gifts;

3 Then what can we offer Him whereby His court may be seen?

4 What words shall we utter with our lips, on hearing which He may love us?

5 At the ambrosial hour of morning meditate on the true Name and God's greatness.

6 The Kind One will give us a robe of honour, and by His favour we shall reach the gate of salvation.

7 Nanak, we shall thus know that God is altogether true.

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PAURI 5

✦

1 He is not established, nor is He created.

2 The pure one existeth by Himself.

3 They who worshipped Him have obtained honour.

4 Nanak, sing His praises who is the Treasury of excellences.

5 Sing and hear and put His love into your hearts.

6 Thus shall your sorrows be removed, and you shall be absorbed in Him who is the abode of happiness.

7 Under the Guru's instruction God's word is heard; under the Guru's instruction its knowledge is acquired; under the Guru's instruction man learns that God is everywhere contained.

8 The Guru is Shiv; the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma; the Guru is Parbati, Lakhshmi, and Saraswati.

9 If I knew Him, should I not describe Him? He cannot be described by words.

10 My Guru hath explained one thing to me-

11 That there is but one Bestower on all living beings; may I not forget Him!

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PAURI 6

✦

1 If I please Him, that is my place of pilgrimage to bathe in; if I please Him not, what ablutions shall I make?

2 What can all the created beings I behold obtain without previous good acts?

3 Precious stones, jewels, and gems shall be treasured up in thy heart if thou hearken to even one word of the Guru.

4 The Guru hath explained one thing to me -

5 That there is but one Bestower on all living beings; may I not forget Him!

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PAURI 7

✦

1 Were man to live through the four ages, yea ten times longer;

2 Were he to be known on the nine continents, and were everybody to follow in his train;

3 Were he to obtain a great name and praise and renown in the world;

4 If God's look of favour fell not on him, no one would notice him.

5 He would be accounted a worm among worms, and even sinners would impute sin to him.

6 Nanak, God may bestow virtue on those who are devoid of it, as well as on those who already possess it;

7 But no such person is seen as can bestow virtue upon Him.

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PAURI 8

✦

1 By hearing the name of God men become Sidhs, Pirs, Surs, and Naths;

2 By hearing the Name man understandeth the real nature of the earth, its supporting bull, and Heaven;

3 By hearing the Name man obtaineth a knowledge of the continents, the worlds, and the nether regions.

4 By hearing the Name death doth not affect one.

5 Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

6 By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

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PAURI 9

✦

1 By hearing the Name man becometh as Shiv, Brahma, and Indar.

2 By hearing the Name even the low become highly lauded.

3 By hearing the Name the way of Jog and the secrets of the body are obtained.

4 By hearing the Name man understandeth the real nature of the Shastars, the Simritis, and the Veds.

5 Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

6 By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

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PAURI 10

✦

1 By hearing the Name truth, contentment, and divine knowledge are obtained.

2 Hearing the Name is equal to bathing at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage.

3 By hearing the Name and reading it man obtaineth honour.

4 By hearing the Name the mind is composed and fixed on God.

5 Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

6 By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

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PAURI 11

✦

1 By hearing the Name, the depth of the sea of virtue is sounded.

2 By hearing the Name men become Shaikhs, Pirs, and Emperors.

3 By hearing the Name a blind man findeth his way

4 By hearing the Name the unfathomable becometh fathomable.

5 Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

6 By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

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PAURI 12

✦

1 The condition of him who obeyeth God cannot be described.

2 Whoever trieth to describe it, shall afterward repent.

3 There is no paper, or pen, or writer

4 To describe the condition of him who obeyeth God.

5 So pure is His name

6 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

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PAURI 13

✦

1 By obeying Him wisdom and understanding enter the mind;

2 By obeying Him man knoweth all worlds;

3 By obeying Him man suffereth not punishment;

4 By obeying Him man shall not depart with Jam

5 So pure is God's name

6 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

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PAURI 14

✦

1 By obeying Him man's path is not obstructed;

2 By obeying Him man departeth with honour and distinction;

3 By obeying Him man proceedeth in ecstasy on his way;

4 By obeying Him man formeth an alliance with virtue -

5 So pure is God's name -

6 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

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PAURI 15

✦

1 By obeying Him man attaineth the gate of salvation;

2 By obeying Him man is saved with his family;

3 By obeying Him the Guru is saved, and saveth his disciples;

4 By obeying Him, O Nanak, man wandereth not in quest of alms-

5 So pure is God's name -

6 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

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PAURI 16

✦

1 The elect are acceptable, the elect are distinguished;

2 The elect obtain honour in God's court;

3 The elect shed lustre on the courts of kings.

4 The attention of the elect is bestowed on the one Guru.

5 If any one say he can form an idea of God, he may say so, But the Creator's works cannot be numbered.

6 The bull that is spoken of is righteousness, the offspring of mercy,

7 Which supported by patience maintaineth the order of nature.

8 Whoever understandeth this is a true man.

9 What a load there is upon the bull!

10 Beyond this earth there are more worlds, more and more.

11 What power can support their weight?

12 The names of living things, their species, and colours

13 Have all been written with a flowing pen.

14 Doth any one know how to write an account of them?

15 If the account were written, how great it would be!

16 What power and beautiful form are Thine, O God!

17 Who hath power to know how great Thy gifts are?

18 By one word Thou didst effect the expansion of the world,

19 Whereby hundreds of thousands of rivers were produced.

20 What power have I to describe Thee?

21 So powerless am I, that I cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee.

22 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.

23 Thou, Formless One, art ever secure.

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PAURI 17

✦

1 Numberless thy worshippers, and numberless Thy lovers;

2 Numberless Thine adorers, and numberless they who perform austerities for Thee;

3 Numberless the reciters of sacred books and Veds; Numberless Thy Jogis whose hearts are indifferent to the world;

4 Numberless the saints who ponder on Thine attributes and divine knowledge;

5 Numberless Thy true men; numberless Thine almsgivers;

6 Numberless Thy heroes who face the steel of their enemies;

7 Numberless Thy silent worshippers who lovingly fix their thoughts upon Thee.

8 What power have I to describe Thee?

9 So lowly am I, that I cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee.

10 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.

11 O Formless One, Thou art ever secure.

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PAURI 18

✦

1 Numberless are the fools appallingly blind;

2 Numberless are the thieves and devourers of others' property;

3 Numberless those who establish their sovereignty by force;

4 Numberless the cut-throats and murderers;

5 Numberless the sinners who pride themselves on committing sin;

6 Numberless the liars who roam about lying;

7 Numberless the filthy who enjoy filthy gain;

8 Numberless the slanderers who carry loads of calumny on their heads;

9 Nanak thus describeth the degraded.

10 So lowly am I, I cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee.

11 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.

12 Formless One, Thou art ever secure.

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PAURI 19

✦

1 Numberless Thy names, and numberless Thy places.

2 Completely beyond reach are Thy numberless worlds.

3 Numberless they who repeat Thy name with all the strength of their intellects.

4 By letters we repeat Thy name, by letters we praise Thee;

5 By letters we acquire divine knowledge, and sing Thy praises and Thine attributes;

6 By letters we write and utter the word of God;

7 By the letters recorded on man's head his destiny is declared.

8 He who inscribeth them on others, beareth them not on His own head.

9 As He ordaineth, so shall man obtain.

10 As great Thy creation, O God, so great is Thy fame

11 There is no place without Thy name.

12 What power have I to describe Thee?

13 So lowly am I, that I cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee

14 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.

15 Formless One, Thou art ever secure.

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PAURI 20

✦

1 When the hands, feet, and other members of the body are covered with filth,

2 It is removed by washing with water.

3 When thy clothes are polluted,

4 Apply soap, and the impurity shall be washed away.

5 So when the mind is defiled by sin,

6 It is cleansed by the love of the Name.

7 Men do not become saints or sinners by merely calling themselves so. The recording angels take with them a record of man's acts.

8 It is he himself soweth, and he himself eateth.

9 Nanak, man suffereth transmigration by God's order.

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PAURI 21

✦

1 Pilgrimage, austerities, mercy, and almsgiving on general and special occasions

2 Whosoever performeth, may obtain some little honour;

3 But he who heareth and obeyeth and loveth God in his heart,

4 Shall wash off his impurity in the place of pilgrimage within him.

5 All virtues are Thine, O Lord; none are mine.

6 There is no devotion without virtue.

7 From the Self-existent proceeded Maya (athi), whence issued a word which produced Brahma and the rest-

8 'Thou art true, Thou art beautiful, there is ever pleasure in Thy heart!'

9 What the time, what the epoch, what the lunar day, and what the week-day,

10 What the season, and what the month when the world was created,

11 The Pandits did not discover; had they done so, they would have recorded it in the Purans.

12 Nor did the Qazis discover it; had they done so, they would have recorded it in the Quran:

13 Neither the Jogi nor any other mortal knows the lunar day, or the week-day, or the season, or the month.

14 Only the Creator who fashioned the world knoweth when He did so.

15 How shall I address Thee, O God? how shall I praise Thee? how shall I describe Thee? and how shall I know Thee? Saith Nanak, everybody speaketh of Thee, one wiser than another.

16 Great is the Lord, great is His name; what He doeth cometh to pass.

17 Nanak, he who is proud shall not be honoured on his arrival in the next world.

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PAURI 22

✦

1 There are hundreds of thousands of nether and upper regions.

2 Men have grown weary at last of searching for God's limits; the Veds say one thing, that God has no limit.

3 The thousands of Purans and Muhammadan books tell that in reality there is but one principle.

4 If God can be described by writing, then describe Him; but such description is impossible.

5 Nanak, call Him great; only He Himself knoweth how great He is.

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PAURI 23

✦

1 Praisers praise God, but have not acquired a knowledge of Him,

2 As rivers and streams fall into the sea, but know not its extent.

3 Kings and emperors who possess oceans and mountains of property and wealth,

4 Are not equal to the worm which forgetteth not God in its heart.

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PAURI 24

✦

1 There is no limit to God's praises; to those who repeat them there is no limit.

2 There is no limit to His mercy, and to His gifts there is no limit.

3 There is no limit to what God seeth, no limit to what He heareth.

4 The limit of the secret of His heart cannot be known.

5 The limit of His creation cannot be known; neither His near nor His far side can be discovered.

6 To know His limits how many vex their hearts.

7 His limits cannot be ascertained;

8 Nobody knoweth His limits.

9 The more we say, the more there remains to be said.

10 Great is the Lord, and exalted is His seat.

11 His exalted name is higher than the most exalted.

12 Were any one else ever so exalted,

13 Then he would know that exalted Being:

14 How great He is He knoweth Himself.

15 Nanak, God bestoweth gifts on whom He looketh with favour and mercy.

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PAURI 25

✦

1 His many bounties cannot be recorded,

2 He is a great giver and hath not a particle of covetousness.

3 How many, yea countless heroes beg of Him!

4 How many others whose number cannot be conceived!

5 How many pine away in sin!

6 How many persons receive yet deny God's gifts!

7 How many fools there are who merely eat!

8 How many are ever dying in distress and hunger!

9 Giver, these are also Thy gifts. Rebirth and deliverance depend on Thy will:

10 Nobody can interfere with it.

11 If any fool try to interfere with it

12 He shall himself know the punishment he shall suffer,

13 God himself knoweth to whom He may give, and He Himself giveth:

14 Very few acknowledge this.

15 He to whom God hath given the boon of praising and lauding Him,

16 Nanak, is the King of kings.

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PAURI 26

✦

1 Priceless are Thine attributes, O God, and priceless Thy dealings;

2 Priceless Thy dealers, priceless Thy storehouses;

3 Priceless what cometh from Thee, and priceless what is taken away;

4 Priceless Thy rate and priceless the time for dealing;

5 Priceless Thy justice and priceless Thy court;

6 Priceless Thy weights and priceless Thy measures;

7 Priceless Thy gifts and priceless Thy marks;

8 Priceless Thy mercy and priceless Thine ordinances.

9 How beyond all price Thou art cannot be stated.

10 Ever speaking of Thee men continue to fix their thoughts on Thee. They who read the Veds and Purans speak of Thee;

11 Learned men speak of Thee and deliver discourses on Thee;

12 Brahmas speak of Thee, and Indars speak of Thee;

13 The milkmaids and Krishan speak of Thee

14 Shivs speak of Thee, the Sidhs speak of Thee;

15 All the Budhas Thou hast created speak of Thee;

16 The demons speak of Thee, the gods speak of Thee;

17 Thy demigods, men, munis, and servants speak of Thee;

18 How many speak of Thee or attempt to speak of Thee!

19 How many depart while speaking of Thee!

20 If Thou wert to create as many more as Thou hast created,

21 Even then few of them would be able to speak adequately of Thee.

22 Thou mayest be as great as Thou pleasest.

23 Nanak, only the True One Himself knoweth how great He is.

24 If any one were to speak improperly of God,

25 Write him down as the most ignorant of men.

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PAURI 27

✦

1 What is that gate, what is that mansion where Thou, God, sittest and watchest over all things?

2 How many various and countless instruments are played! How many musicians,

3 How many musical measures with their consorts, and how many singers sing Thee!

4 Wind, water, and fire sing Thee; Dharmraj sings at Thy gate.

5 The recording angels, who know how to write, and on whose record Dharmraj judgeth sing Thee.

6 Ishar, Brahma, and Devi, ever beautiful as adorned by Thee, sing Thee. Indar seated on his throne with the gods at Thy gate sing Thee.

7 Sidhs in meditation sing Thee; holy men in contemplation sing Thee.

8 The continent, the true, and the patient sing Thee; unyielding heroes sing Thee.

9 The pandits and the supreme Rikhis, reading their Veds, sing Thee in every age.

10 The lovely celestial maids who beguile the heart in the upper, middle, and nether regions sing Thee.

11 The jewels created by Thee with the sixty-eight places of Hindu pilgrimage sing Thee.

12 Mighty warriors and divine heroes sing Thee; the four sources of life sing Thee.

13 The continents, the worlds, and the universe made and supported by Thy hands sing Thee.

14 The saints who please Thee, and who are imbued with Thy love sing Thee.

15 The many others who sing Thee I cannot remember; how could Nanak recount them? That God is ever true, He is the true Lord, and the true Name.

16 He who made this world is and shall be; He shall neither depart, nor be made to depart.

17 He who created things of different colours, descriptions, and species,

18 Beholdeth His handiwork which attesteth His greatness.

19 He will do what pleaseth Himself; no order may be issued to Him.

20 He is King, the King of kings, O Nanak; all remain subject to His will.

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PAURI 28

✦

1 Make contentment and modesty thine earrings, self-respect thy wallet, meditation the ashes to smear on thy body;

2 Make thy body, which is only a morsel for death, thy beggar's coat, and faith thy rule of life and thy staff.

3 Make association with men thine Ai Panth, and the conquest of thy heart the conquest of the world.

4 Hail! Hail to Him,

5 The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age!

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PAURI 29

✦

1 Make divine knowledge thy food, compassion thy store-keeper, and the voice which is in every heart the pipe to call to repast.

2 Make Him who hath strung the whole world on His string thy spiritual Lord; let wealth and supernatural power be relishes for others.

3 Union and separation is the law which regulateth the world. By destiny we receive our portion.

4 Hail! Hail to Him,

5 The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age!

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PAURI 30

✦

1 One Maya in union with God gave birth to three acceptable children.

2 One of them is the creator, the second the provider, the third performeth the function of destroyer.

3 As it pleaseth God, He directeth them by His orders.

4 He beholdeth them, but is not seen by them. This is very marvellous.

5 Hail! Hail to Him,

6 The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age!

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PAURI 31

✦

1 His seat and His storehouses are in every world.

2 What was to be put into them was put in at one time.

3 The Creator beholdeth His creation.

4 Nanak, true is the work of the True One.

5 Hail! Hail to Him,

6 The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age!

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PAURI 32

✦

1 Were one tongue to become a hundred thousand, and a hundred thousand to become twentyfold more,

2 I would utter the name of the one Lord of the world hundreds of thousands of times with all my tongues.

3 In this way I should ascend the stairs of the Lord, and become one with Him.

4 On hearing of the exaltation of the religious the vile become jealous.

5 Nanak, the former have found the Kind One, while false is the boasting of the false.

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PAURI 33

✦

1 I have no strength to speak and no strength to be silent.

2 I have no strength to ask and no strength to give;

3 I have no strength to live, and no strength to die;

4 I have no strength to acquire empire or wealth which produce a commotion in the heart.

5 I have no strength to meditate on Thee or ponder on divine knowledge;

6 I have no strength to find the way to escape from the world.

7 He in whose arm there is strength, may see what he can do.

8 Nanak, no one is of superior or inferior strength before God.

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PAURI 34

✦

1 God created nights, seasons, lunar days, and week days,

2 Wind, water, fire, and the nether regions.

3 In the midst of these He established the earth as a temple.

4 In it He placed living beings of different habits and kinds.

5 Their names are various and endless,

6 And they are judged according to their acts.

7 True is God, and true is His court.

8 There the elect are accepted and honoured.

9 The Merciful One marketh them according to their acts.

10 The bad and the good shall there be distinguished.

11 Nanak, on arrival there, this shall be seen.

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PAURI 35

✦

1 Such is the practice in the realm of righteousness.

2 I now describe the condition of the realm of knowledge.

3 How many winds, waters, and fires! how many Krishans and Shivs!

4 How many Brahmas who fashioned worlds! how many forms, colours, and garbs!

5 How many lands of grace like this! how many mountains! how many Dhrus and instructors such as his.

6 How many Indars, how many moons and suns, how many regions and countries!

7 How many Sidhs, Budhs, how many Naths! how many goddesses and representations of them

8 How many demigods and demons! how many saints, how many jewels and seas!

9 How many sources of life! how many languages! and how many lines of kings!

10 How many possessors of divine knowledge! how many worshippers! Nanak, there is no end of them.

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PAURI 36

✦

1 In the realm of knowledge the light of divine knowledge is resplendent.

2 There are heard songs from which millions of joys and pleasures proceed.

3 Beauty is the attribute of the realm of happiness.

4 There things are fashioned in an incomparable manner.

5 What is done there cannot be described.

6 Whoever endeavoureth to describe it shall afterwards repent.

7 There are fashioned knowledge, wisdom, intellect, and understanding;

8 And there too is fashioned the skill of demigods and men of supernatural power.

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PAURI 37

✦

1 Force is the attribute of the realm of action.

2 Incomparable are they who dwell therein.

3 There are very powerful warriors and heroes

4 They are filled with the might of Ram.-

5 There are many Sitas in the midst of greatness,

6 Their beauty cannot be described-

7 They die not, neither are they led astray

8 In whose hearts God dwelleth.

9 There dwell congregations of saints;

10 They rejoice; the True One is in their hearts.

11 God dwelleth in the true realm.

12 He looketh on its denizens with an eye of favour, and rendereth them happy.

13 There are continents, worlds, and universes.

14 Whoever trieth to describe them shall never arrive at an end. There are worlds upon worlds and forms upon forms.

15 They fulfil their functions according to God's orders:

16 God beholding and contemplating them is pleased.

17 Nanak, to describe them would be impossible.

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PAURI 38

✦

1 Make continence thy furnace, resignation thy goldsmith,

2 Understanding thine anvil, divine knowledge thy tools,

3 The fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire,

4 Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein.

5 In such a true mint the Word shall be coined.

6 This is the practice of those on whom God looketh with an eye of favour.

7 Nanak, the Kind One by a glance maketh them happy.

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SLOK

✦

1 The air is the guru, water our father, and the great earth our mother;

2 Day and night are our two nurses, male and female, who set the whole world a-playing.

3 Merits and demerits shall be read out in the presence of the Judge.

4 According to men's acts, some shall be near, and others distant from God.

5 They who have pondered on the Name and departed after the completion of their toil,

6 Shall have their countenances made bright, O Nanak; how many shall be emancipated in company with them!

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