

28th ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਨਿ ਧਾਵਹੀ ਮੂਰਖ ਲੋਗ ਅਜਾਨ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਨ ॥੨੮॥
maiaa kaaran dhaavahee moorakh log ajaan ||
kahu naanak bin har bhajan birathaa janam siraan ||28||

Literal Meaning: For the sake of Maya, the fools and ignorant people run all around. Says Nanak, without meditating on the Lord, life is wasted away.

Literal Word Meanings:

ਮਾਇਆ (maiaa) = Maya
ਕਾਰਨਿ (kaaran) = for the sake of
ਧਾਵਹੀ (dhaavahee) = run
ਮੂਰਖ (moorakh) = fools
ਲੋਗ (log) = people
ਅਜਾਨ (ajaan) = ignorant

ਬਿਨੁ (bin) = without
ਹਰਿ (har) = the Lord
ਭਜਨ (bhajan) = meditating
ਬਿਰਥਾ (birathaa) = wasted
ਜਨਮੁ (janam) = life
ਸਿਰਾਨ (siraan) = passed away

We have explored the literal meanings of the verse, along with the word-by-word breakdown. Now, we begin a deeper journey — to understand what the verse is pointing toward. The following exercises are designed to encourage out-of-the-box thinking. They may feel open-ended, and at times even challenging — that is intentional. Growth often begins where certainty ends.

Exercise 1: Observing the Chase “ਧਾਵਹੀ” “dhaavahee”

What is this politician truly running after?

- ☐ Power
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Control
- ☐ Validation
- ☐ Fear of losing relevance

Is there ever an end to this running?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Only when forced

In your own life, what feels like a never-ending chase?

Exercise 2: Blindness of Maya “ਮੂਰਖ ਲੋਕ ਅਜਾਨ” “moorakh log ajaan”

When greed increases, what decreases first?

- ☐ Compassion
- ☐ Honesty
- ☐ Inner peace
- ☐ Awareness

If someone tries to correct or warn him, how does he react?

- ☐ Ignores
- ☐ Gets angry
- ☐ Justifies himself
- ☐ Becomes more stubborn

Have you seen this kind of blindness in:

- ☐ Others
- ☐ Society
- ☐ Yourself (even in small ways)

Exercise 3: The Collapse

Imagine the moment everything is lost—

- Power gone
- Money seized
- Respect destroyed

Questions:

How fast does collapse happen compared to how long it took to build?

- ☐ Years to build, seconds to fall
- ☐ Slowly
- ☐ Unexpectedly

What remains when everything external is gone?

- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Regret

- ☐ Mental breakdown
- ☐ Inner emptiness

Why does every breath now feel heavy and painful?

Exercise 4: Wasted Life “ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਿਰਾਨ” “birathaa janam siraan”

Did this person *live long* or *live well*?

- ☐ Long ☐ Well ☐ Neither

If life ends without inner awareness, what was truly gained?

- ☐ Nothing
- ☐ Temporary pleasure
- ☐ Lasting pain

According to Guru Nanak, what makes life meaningful?

- ☐ External success
- ☐ Social status
- ☐ Har bhajan (inner Divine remembrance)

Exercise 5: Turning the Mirror Inward

In what ways can Maya control ordinary people, not just politicians?

- ☐ Career
- ☐ Image
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Ego
- ☐ Recognition

What is one attachment you fear losing?

If that attachment vanished today, what would remain inside you?

- ☐ Awareness
- ☐ Peace
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Nothing

Final Insight Question

If chasing Maya leads to blindness, collapse, and regret—
and Har bhajan leads to awareness and freedom—

Which direction are you running today?

- ☐ Towards Maya
- ☐ Towards the Divine within
- ☐ Somewhere in between

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਨਿ (maiaa kaaran) = For worldly things—money, status, attention, comfort, control

ਧਾਵਹੀ (dhaavahee) = Running around—restless chasing that never feels “enough”

ਮੂਰਖ (moorakh) = Foolish mindset—forgetting what’s lasting and what truly satisfies

ਲੋਗ (log) = People/the crowd—following trends instead of inner wisdom

ਅਜਾਨ (ajaan) = Unaware—sleeping in spiritual forgetfulness

ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ (bin har bhajan) = Without Divine remembrance—no inner anchor, no real peace

ਬਿਰਥਾ (birathaa) = Wasted/empty—busy life but hollow inside

ਜਨਮੁ (janam) = Human life—this rare opportunity for growth and awareness

ਸਿਰਾਨ (siraan) = Slips away/ends—time finishes while the mind stays distracted

Write Your Own Interpretation:

Take Action → Living the Wisdom

Follow these practical action examples to bring the teaching into your daily actions and choices.

Question your motive - Ask whether the goal serves ego, pressure, or true purpose.

Separate influence from intention - Distinguish what you genuinely want from what society expects.

Audit your effort - Notice where most of your time and energy are actually going.

Cut hollow pursuits - Slowly let go of goals that you do to only impress others, but don't bring you real peace or joy.

Reinvest in purpose - Channel your focus into pursuits that grow your character and serve others.

Reflect and Explore

These discussion questions can be explored alone or in a group to encourage reflection, learning, and honest sharing, with no right or wrong answers.

What goal are you chasing? Does it bring lasting peace or just short-term excitement?

Do you measure success only by money and status, or also by inner growth?

If life is precious, how can you avoid living only for possessions?

What does “true purpose” look like in your work or daily life?

How can you shift your energy from quick rewards to lasting values like kindness and service?
