

37th ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੈ ਰਮਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਨਿਕਸਤ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਮੀਤ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਜਿਉ ਛਾਡਿਤ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਭੀਤਿ ॥੩੭॥
man maiaa mai ram rahio nikasat naahin meet ||
naanak moorat chitr jiau chhaaddit naahin bheet ||37||

Literal Meaning: The mind is absorbed in Maya - it cannot escape it, my friend. Nanak, it is like a picture painted on the wall - it cannot leave it.

Literal Word Meanings:

ਮਨੁ (man) = mind

ਮਾਇਆ (maiaa) = Maya

ਮੈ (mai) = in

ਰਮਿ (ram) = absorbed

ਰਹਿਓ (rahio) = remained

ਨਿਕਸਤ (nikasat) = escapes

ਨਾਹਿਨ (naahin) = not

ਮੀਤ (meet) = friend

ਮੂਰਤਿ (moorat) = image

ਚਿਤ੍ਰ (chitr) = picture

ਜਿਉ (jiau) = like

ਛਾਡਿਤ (chhaaddit) = leaves

ਨਾਹਿਨ (naahin) = not

ਭੀਤਿ (bheet) = wall

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: Bring in the Addiction Analogy (Reality Check)

Think about drug or substance addiction.

How often do you see an addict not under the influence?

☐ Almost never

☐ Rarely

☐ Only when supply is unavailable

Even when they are temporarily sober, what are they doing mentally?

- ☐ Thinking about the next dose
- ☐ Planning how to get it
- ☐ Feeling restless or empty

Many addicts:

- Lose family
- Lose health
- Lose money
- Lose self-respect

Question:

If the damage is so obvious, why don't they stop for good? _____

Exercise 2: Chasing What Kind of Dopamine?

People usually say:

"It's dopamine. The brain chemistry."

Now think deeper:

Dopamine is also released when:

- ☐ Helping someone
- ☐ Being appreciated
- ☐ Achieving something meaningful
- ☐ Taking care of family
- ☐ Creating something

So ask yourself:

If dopamine can come from many healthy sources, why does the addict return to the same destructive one?

Exercise 3: The Real Problem (Inner Hook)

Reflect quietly:

Is the substance the real addiction—or the state of mind it creates?

- ☐ Substance
- ☐ Escape
- ☐ Temporary relief
- ☐ Forgetting pain
- ☐ Feeling “complete” for a moment

When rehab ends and the person returns to life, what returns with them?

- ☐ The same inner emptiness
- ☐ The same unaddressed pain
- ☐ The same restless mind

Insight:

The addiction didn’t start in the body.
It started in the mind.

Exercise 4: Now Turn the Mirror Inward (This Is the Key)

Ask yourself—no judgment:

How often is your mind not under the influence of:

- ☐ Desire
- ☐ Possession
- ☐ Achievement
- ☐ Comparison
- ☐ Constant wanting

Even when you get:

- A new phone
- A car
- A trip
- Money
- Praise

What does the mind do next?

- ☐ Wants the next thing
- ☐ Feels satisfied only briefly
- ☐ Starts chasing again

Is this very different from addiction—or just socially accepted?

Exercise 5: Understanding the Wall & the Image (Salok Metaphor)

Guru Sahib gives a powerful image:

“Like a picture carved into a wall.”

Think carefully:

Can a carved image leave the wall on its own?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What must happen for the image to be removed?

☐ The wall must break

Mapping the metaphor:

Wall = Maya (external-centered living)

Image = Your mind

Problem = The mind has shaped itself according to Maya

That’s why Guru Sahib says:

The mind cannot leave, not because it’s weak—but because it has merged its identity with the wall.

Exercise 6: The Practical Realization (Not Renunciation)

Important clarity:

- Living in the world is NOT wrong
- Enjoying nature is NOT wrong
- Earning, traveling, building life is NOT wrong

The problem is fixation.

Ask yourself:

- Do I live only outwardly?
- Or do I also live inwardly?

Exercise 7: The Exit Path (Gentle, Real, Personal)

Guru Sahib does not say:

“Destroy the world.”

He points to:

Un-carving the mind.

Ways to begin (not prescriptions, just invitations):

- ☐ Self-observation
- ☐ Helping without recognition
- ☐ Stillness / mindfulness
- ☐ Honest reflection
- ☐ Turning attention inward, even briefly

Key question to end with:

If I stopped chasing for one moment—who am I without wanting?

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

ਮਨੁ (man) = The mind—your inner attention and desire-system

ਮਾਇਆ ਮੈ (maiaa mai) = In Maya—absorbed in temporary pleasures, status, and distractions

ਰਮਿ ਰਹਿਓ (ram rahio) = Remained absorbed

ਨਿਕਸਤ ਨਾਹਿ ਨ (nikasat naahin) = Doesn't come out—can't easily detach or step back

ਮੀਤ (meet) = O friend—Guru speaks with closeness

ਮੂਰਤਿ (moorat) = A fixed form—locked into a pattern of living

ਚਿਤ੍ਰ (chitr) = Like a picture—stuck in a lifeless image-state

ਜਿਉ (jiau) = Like—an example to understand the mind's condition

ਛਾਡਿਤ ਨਾਹਿਨ (chhaaddit naahin) = Doesn't leave—habit keeps pulling you back

ਭੀਤਿ (bheet) = Wall—Maya becomes the “wall” you cling to, instead of turning towards the Divine

Write Your Own Interpretation:

Take Action → Living the Wisdom

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

Notice the pull early - Catch attachment before it becomes dependence.

Limit excess gradually - Reduce indulgence step by step instead of all at once.

Question constant upgrades - Ask if you truly need more or just want more.

Practice voluntary simplicity - Choose moderation even when you can afford excess.

Recenter on inner wealth - Strengthen character so possessions lose their grip.

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.

How do you notice yourself getting caught in money, status, or short-term pleasures?

What habits or patterns make it hard for you to break free from distractions?

How can knowing what is temporary vs. lasting help you use your time wisely?

How can you stay detached from distractions while still doing your daily duties well?

How does remembering that pleasures don't last change your goals and priorities?
