

23rd ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਪੇਖਨਾ ਐਸੇ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ ॥
ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਵਾਨ ॥੨੩॥
jiau supanaa ar pekhanaa aaise jag kau jaan ||
ein mai kachh saacho nahee naanak bin bhagavaan ||23||

Literal Meaning: Like a dream and a show, so is this world, you must know. None of this is true, O Nanak, without God.

Literal Word Meanings:

ਜਿਉ (jiau) = like

ਸੁਪਨਾ (supanaa) = dream

ਅਰੁ (ar) = and

ਪੇਖਨਾ (pekhanā) = show

ਐਸੇ (aaise) = so

ਜਗ (jag) = world

ਕਉ (kau) = as

ਜਾਨਿ (jaan) = know

ਇਨ (ein) = these

ਮੈ (mai) = among

ਕਛੁ (kachh) = anything

ਸਾਚੇ (saacho) = true

ਨਹੀ (nahee) = not

ਬਿਨੁ (bin) = without

ਭਗਵਾਨ (bhagavaan) = God

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: Reflect on the Temporary Nature of Life

Think about your personal experiences:

☐ Recall your first friendship or first day in school or a new activity. How does it feel looking back? _____

☐ Think about moments that seemed important but now feel fleeting. List them: _____

Question:

What does this teach you about the impermanence of worldly events and experiences?

Exercise 2: Observe the Inner Self

Reflect on your inner awareness:

While your body ages and external experiences change, what in you has remained constant?

Have you ever felt a part of yourself observing everything from the start and never aged?

Describe that: -----

Reflection Question:

How does realizing this constant inner self affect your understanding of life and attachments?

Exercise 3: Connecting to the Divine

Guru Sahib points to the divine as the only permanent aspect:

How do you differentiate between temporary experiences and the eternal presence within?

What practices or moments help you connect to this inner divine awareness? -----

Question:

Why is understanding this impermanence essential for peace and contentment?

Exercise 4: Practical Reflection Exercise

Daily Practice:

1. Throughout the day, notice fleeting thoughts, emotions, and events. Label them as temporary.
2. Spend a few moments observing the constant awareness within you amidst these changing events.

3. Reflect in the evening: How did recognizing the temporary vs. the permanent influence your sense of calm and clarity?

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ (jiau supanaa) = Like a dream—life's scenes feel real

ਅਰੁ ਪੇਖਨਾ (ar pekhanaa) = Like a show you watch—roles change, moments end, nothing stays fixed

ਐਸੇ (aaise) = In this same way—apply this lens to daily life

ਜਗ (jag) = The world—work, status, praise, loss, possessions, relationships

ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ (kau jaan) = Recognize it—see impermanence clearly, so attachment loosens

ਇਨ ਮੈ (ein mai) = In these things—external achievements and temporary pleasures

ਕਛੁ ਸਾਚੋ ਨਹੀ (kachh saacho nahee) = Nothing is permanently true/lasting.

ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਵਾਨ (bin bhagavaan) = Without the Eternal Divine—only the Divine within is lasting and worth anchoring in

Write Your Own Interpretation:

Take Action → Living the Wisdom

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

Remember the temporary - Remind yourself that possessions, praise, and power do not last.

Zoom out mentally - In moments of selfish impulse, ask how this will matter years from now.

Release the tight grip - Loosen attachment knowing everything eventually changes.

Value moments over ownership - Focus on meaningful experiences rather than accumulating control.

Choose humility consciously - Act with awareness that we all return to the same dust.

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 often do you act like money or status will last forever, even though life keeps changing?

If the world is like a passing dream, how should that change the way you handle stress or failure?

What truly lasts—values, love, virtues? How can you make these a priority each day?

How can remembering that life is temporary reduce ego or attachment?

What is one small step you can take this week to focus on lasting values instead of short-term gains?
