

16th ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥
bhai kaahoo kau dhet neh neh bhai maanat aan ||
kahu naanak sun re manaa giaanee taeh bakhaan ||16||

Literal Meaning: One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually wise.

Literal Word Meanings:

ਭੈ (bhai) = fear

ਕਾਹੂ (kaahoo) = anyone

ਕਉ (kau) = to

ਦੇਤ (dhet) = give

ਨਹਿ (neh) = not

ਮਾਨਤ (maanat) = accept

ਆਨ (aan) = other

ਸੁਨਿ (sun) = listen

ਰੇ (re) = O

ਮਨਾ (manaa) = mind

ਗਿਆਨੀ (giaanee) = spiritually wise

ਤਾਹਿ (taeh) = that one

ਬਖਾਨਿ (bakhaan) = call

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 Power and Fear

Think about people in your life with high power or authority (boss, teacher, senior, elder).

Have you seen anyone create fear to make others comply? How did it affect the person receiving it? _____

How did it affect the one instilling fear? _____

Reflection Question:

Does fear truly create understanding or just obedience?

Exercise 2: Fearlessness in Action

Think of a person you know who:

- ☐ Inspires without fear
- ☐ Encourages questions without judgment
- ☐ Shares knowledge freely

Question:

What is different about their approach compared to someone who dominates by using fear?

Exercise 3: Internal Fear Check

Reflect on yourself:

- ☐ Are there moments when you feel fear from authority or others?
- ☐ Are there moments when you feel fearless and confident, asking questions freely?
- ☐ Can you recall a time when you acted without fear of judgment? -----

Question:

How does inner fear influence your actions toward others?

Exercise 4: Becoming Fearless and Wise

Guru Sahib says a wise person:

- Does not have fear within themselves
- Does not use fear as a tool on others
- Can create an environment of trust, learning, and peace

Reflection Question:

How can I start embodying fearlessness in my interactions? -----

Exercise 5: Practical Reflection

Think about today or this week:

When have you used authority or influence to make someone do something? _____

Could it have been done without creating fear? How? _____

How would it feel if fearless wisdom was your approach instead? _____

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

ਭੈ (bhai) = Fear—inner panic, insecurity, or intimidation energy

ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ (kaahoo kau) = Toward anyone—no one is targeted or threatened

ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ (dhet neh) = Does not give fear—doesn't control, bully, pressure, or shame others

ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ (neh bhai maanat) = Does not accept fear—doesn't live under intimidation, anxiety, or people-pleasing

ਆਨ (aan) = From anyone/anything—status, power, criticism, or situations don't shake them

ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ (sun re manaa) = Wake up, mind—this is the mark of inner strength

ਗਿਆਨੀ (giaanee) = Truly wise—clear, grounded, spiritually awake

ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ (taeh bakhaan) = Call them enlightened—because their presence brings safety and steadiness

Write Your Own Interpretation:

Take Action → Living the Wisdom

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

Name the fear clearly - Admit what scares you instead of hiding or avoiding it.

Take one brave step - Move slightly toward the fear instead of running from it.

Breathe through discomfort - Stay present when anxiety rises rather than escaping it.

Respect others' vulnerabilities - Avoid dismissing or mocking what someone else fears.

Grow with compassion - Face your own fears while creating emotional safety for 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.

When challenged, do you react defensively, or can you stay calm and firm?

What fears affect young professionals the most—failure, judgment, or instability? How do these fears shape your actions?

The Salok says true wisdom does not create fear in others. How can fear show up in the way we lead, compete, or speak?

What is the difference between ego-based confidence and calm courage that comes from inner clarity?

What is one fear you can admit honestly? What is one small step you can take this week with courage?

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ਜਿਹਿ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਸਗਲੀ ਤਜੀ ਲੀਓ ਭੇਖ ਬੈਰਾਗ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨੁ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਤਿਹ ਨਰ ਮਾਥੈ ਭਾਗੁ ॥੧੭॥
jeh bikhiaa sagalee tatee leeo bhekh bairaag ॥
kahu naanak sun re manaa teh nar maathai bhaag ॥੧੭॥

Literal Meaning: One who has forsaken all sin and corruption, who wears the robes of neutral detachment says Nanak, listen, mind: good destiny is written on his forehead.

Literal Word Meanings:

ਜਿਹਿ (jeh) = who

ਬਿਖਿਆ (bikhiaa) = sin, corruption

ਸਗਲੀ (sagalee) = all

ਤਜੀ (tatee) = forsaken

ਲੀਓ (leeo) = adopted

ਭੇਖ (bhekh) = robes

ਬੈਰਾਗ (bairaag) = neutral detachment
destiny

ਸੁਨੁ (sun) = listen

ਰੇ (re) = O

ਮਨਾ (manaa) = mind

ਤਿਹ (teh) = that

ਨਰ (nar) = man

ਮਾਥੈ (maathai) = forehead

ਭਾਗੁ (bhaag) =

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: Daily Emotions Check

Reflect on your daily routine:

How many negative emotions do you experience daily? (anger, fear, jealousy, sadness, etc.)

How often do these emotions affect your work, studies, or personal projects? _____

Can you identify specific triggers for these emotions? _____

Reflection Question:

How much energy, time, and peace do these emotions consume from your life?

Exercise 2: Recognizing the Poison of Emotions

Think about a recent situation:

- ☐ Did anger or sadness cause you to quit, shut down, or react impulsively?
- ☐ How did it impact your goals or productivity? _____
- ☐ Could the situation have been handled differently if you were free from emotional reactions?

Exercise 3: Understanding Detachment

Imagine responding to triggers differently:

- ☐ A person shouts at you, but you just smile or laugh
- ☐ Anger, sadness, or fear does not affect you
- ☐ Your inner peace remains intact

Reflection Question:

How does this emotional freedom change your experience of life?

Exercise 4: Mastering Inner Freedom

Guru Sahib teaches that:

Detachment from negative emotions is key to wisdom

Mastery over emotional triggers leads to peace of mind

Bliss and contentment arise when you are unaffected by vices or emotional disturbances

Reflection Question:

Which emotion do you want to master first? How will you practice detachment from it?

Exercise 5: Personal Practice

Think practically:

- Today, notice an emotional trigger
- Observe it without reacting
- Ask yourself: Is this emotion useful? Can I let it pass without disturbance?
- Record your experience and reflect on your level of freedom at the end of the day

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

ਜਿਹਿ (jeh) = The one who—this is a lived inner state.

ਬਿਖਿਆ (bikhiaa) = Vices/poisonous pulls—lust, greed, anger, ego, jealousy, obsession

ਤਜੀ (tajee) = Let go—drops the grip from the mind, not just the outward action

ਲੀਓ (leeo) = Embraced—chose a new direction for the heart

ਭੇਖ (bhekh) = Inner way/discipline—how you live daily, not just appearance

ਬੈਰਾਗ (bairaag) = Detachment with love—free from cravings while staying caring and present

ਸੁਨੁ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ (sun re manaa) = Listen, mind—this is the real sign of spiritual life

ਤਿਹ ਨਰ (teh nar) = That person—an example of steady devotion and clarity

ਮਾਥੈ ਭਾਗੁ (maathai bhaag) = Blessed destiny—because their mind is aligned with 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.

Spot the emotional hooks - Notice what you feel you “can’t live without.”

Question the dependency - Ask yourself if this attachment strengthens or weakens you.

Reduce one grip at a time - Slowly limit the hold it has on your time and attention.

Replace with purpose - Fill the space with growth, service, or inner practice.

Choose freedom daily - Remind yourself that peace is greater than possession.

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.

Which habit (anger, greed, pride, attachment) controls your reactions the most?

What are you holding onto that no longer helps your growth?

What one negative pattern can you consciously work on this week?

What does letting go of bad habits look like in a world that pushes ambition and competition?

Which hidden attachments—approval, control, habits, or results—quietly guide your decisions the most?
