

4th ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਬਿਰਧਿ ਭਇਓ ਸੂਝੈ ਨਹੀ ਕਾਲੁ ਪਹੂਚਿਓ ਆਨਿ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਰ ਬਾਵਰੇ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਭਜੈ ਭਗਵਾਨੁ ॥੪॥
biradh bhio soojhai nahee kaal pahoochio aan ||
kahu naanak nar baavare kiau na bhajai bhagavaan ||4||

Literal Meaning: You have become old, and you do not understand that death is overtaking you. Says Nanak, you are insane! Why do you not remember and meditate on God?

Literal Word Meanings:

ਬਿਰਧਿ (biradh) = old	ਨਰ (nar) = man
ਭਇਓ (bhio) = have become	ਬਾਵਰੇ (baavare) = insane, foolish
ਸੂਝੈ (soojhai) = understand	ਕਿਉ (kiau) = why
ਨਹੀ (nahee) = do not	ਨ (na) = not
ਕਾਲੁ (kaal) = death	ਭਜੈ (bhajai) = remember, meditate on
ਪਹੂਚਿਓ (pahoochio) = overtaking, reached	ਭਗਵਾਨੁ (bhagavaan) = God
ਆਨਿ (aan) = coming, arriving	

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: Common Understanding (Surface Reading)

Many people read this Salok as:

- ☐ Old people lose intelligence
- ☐ Aging automatically reduces wisdom
- ☐ Youth is more spiritually capable

Pause and think:

Do we see wise elders around us?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is wisdom depends on age, then is Guru Sahib talking only about the physical body?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Exercise 2: If Not the Body, Then What Has “Aged”?

Reflect deeply:

What actually becomes rigid with time?

- ☐ The body only
- ☐ Habits of the mind
- ☐ Identity built over decades
- ☐ Ego patterns

Which of these resists change the most?

- ☐ Body
- ☐ Mind

Exercise 3: The Foundation Analogy

Imagine this situation:

A building is constructed over many decades. After completion, it is discovered that the foundation is flawed.

How do people usually react?

- ☐ Accept and rebuild
- ☐ Defend it at all costs
- ☐ Deny the problem

Why?

- ☐ Too much investment
- ☐ Fear of loss
- ☐ Identity attached to it

Now apply this inward:

If a mind has lived for decades in:

- ☐ Desires ☐ Anger
- ☐ Comparison ☐ Fear
- ☐ Ego

Will it easily accept a new path of virtues?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Difficult but possible

Exercise 4: Does Not See Clearly “ਸੂਝੈ ਨਹੀਂ” “soojhai nahee ”

Think psychologically:

When identity is threatened, the mind:

- ☐ Becomes defensive
- ☐ Justifies its patterns
- ☐ Resists truth

Does this blindness come from age — or from attachment to identity?

☐ Age ☐ Attachment

Exercise 5: Time Does Not Pause

Can time be negotiated with?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Can death be delayed once it arrives?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If realization is postponed, what is actually being risked?

- ☐ Comfort
- ☐ Identity
- ☐ Life itself

Exercise 6: A Loving Wake-Up Call “ਨਰ ਬਾਵਰੇ ” “Nar Baavare”

Guru Sahib is NOT:

- ☐ Insulting humanity
- ☐ Condemning elders

Guru Sahib IS:

- ☐ Asking a piercing question
- ☐ Shaking the mind awake
- ☐ Pointing to urgency

Why call it foolishness?

- ☐ Because truth is known but delayed
- ☐ Because time is limited
- ☐ Because awareness is available now

Exercise 7: The Given Solution

What is the solution offered?

- ☐ Regret the past
- ☐ Fear death
- ☐ Begin living in virtues and awareness now

Is it ever truly too late to turn inward?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is required first?

- ☐ Courage to accept wrong patterns
- ☐ Humility to change
- ☐ Urgency to act now

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

ਬਿਰਧਿ ਭਇਓ (biradh bhio) = Old age has come—life has moved into decline

ਸੂਝੈ ਨਹੀ (soojhai nahee) = No clarity—mind and senses lose sharpness

ਕਾਲੁ (kaal) = Death/time's end—the unavoidable reality

ਪਹੁੰਚਿਓ ਆਨਿ (pahoochio aan) = Has arrived near—urgency is real, not theoretical

ਨਰ ਬਾਵਰੇ (nar baavare) = O foolish/wandering mind—lost in distraction and ego

ਕਿਉ ਨ (kiaua na) = Why not—stop delaying

ਭਜੈ (bhajai) = Remember/devote—turn inward with steadiness

ਭਗਵਾਨੁ (bhagavaan) = The Divine Presence—your true support beyond fear and decline

Write Your Own Interpretation:

Take Action → Living the Wisdom

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

Clear the mental fog - When emotions feel overwhelming, pause and take 5 slow breaths before making any decision.

Guard your inputs - Reduce exposure to negative news, gossip, or toxic conversations that cloud your thinking.

Reality check your reactions - Before reacting, ask yourself: *Will this matter in five years?*

Create daily silence - Spend at least 10 minutes without distractions to reconnect with your inner clarity.

Remember your mortality - Reflect briefly each day that time is limited, and choose actions that truly matter.

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 know when a negative mindset is affecting your decisions? Can you give an example?

What daily habits can help you let go of distractions and focus on what really matters?

What attachments—money, status, ego, or relationships—affect your peace the most? How?

How can practicing good values or remembering the Divine help you think more clearly and choose wisely?

If you remember that life is short, how would you change the way you use your time and energy?
