

## 53rd ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਬਲੁ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਪਰੇ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥  
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਬ ਓਟ ਹਰਿ ਗਜ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੩॥  
bal chhuTakio ba(n)dhan pare kachhoo na hot upai ||  
kahu naanak ab oT har gaj jiau hoh sahai ||53||

**Literal Meaning:** My strength is exhausted, and I am in bondage; I cannot do anything at all. Says Nanak, now, the Lord is my Support; He will help me, as He did the elephant.

### Literal Word Meanings:

ਬਲੁ (bal) = strength  
ਛੁਟਕਿਓ (chhuTakio) = exhausted  
ਬੰਧਨ (ba(n)dhan) = bondage  
ਪਰੇ (pare) = fallen into  
ਕਛੂ (kachhoo) = anything  
ਨ (na) = not  
ਹੋਤ (hot) = happens  
ਉਪਾਇ (upai) = remedy

ਅਬ (ab) = now  
ਓਟ (oT) = support  
ਹਰਿ (har) = the Lord  
ਗਜ (gaj) = elephant  
ਜਿਉ (jiau) = like  
ਹੋਹੁ (hoh) = become  
ਸਹਾਇ (sahai) = help

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: Observe a Universal Human Experience

Have you ever reached a point where:

- ☐ Your strength felt exhausted
- ☐ Your usual coping methods failed
- ☐ Advice didn't help
- ☐ Solutions stopped appearing

At such moments, what feeling dominates?

- ☐ Panic
- ☐ Helplessness
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Surrender

## Exercise 2: What Kind of “Bal/Strength” Is Lost Here?

Is Guru Sahib talking about losing:

- ☐ Physical strength only
- ☐ Mental control
- ☐ Ego-based confidence
- ☐ Illusion of self-sufficiency

Can moments arise when:

Body is fine, but mind collapses?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Resources exist, but clarity is gone?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

So is this loss of strength is external — or internal?

## Exercise 3: Tighten “ਬੰਧਨ” “ba(n)dhan”

Notice what happens when inner strength fades:

Fear becomes:

- ☐ Louder
- ☐ Faster
- ☐ More convincing

Negative patterns appear as:

- ☐ Anxiety loops
- ☐ Self-blame
- ☐ Hopeless thinking

Are these bonds physical — or psychological?

☐ Physical ☐ Psychological

### Exercise 4: The End of Ego Solutions “ਕਛੂ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ” “kachhoo na hot upai”

This line does not mean *nothing can ever be solved*.

It means:

- ☐ Personal control has reached its limit
- ☐ Old methods no longer work
- ☐ Ego-based effort is exhausted

Reflect:

Have you noticed that clarity often appears after control is dropped?

☐ Yes ☐ No

### Exercise 5: Understanding Support “ਓਟ” “oT”

Refuge does not mean escape.

It means:

- ☐ Resting in awareness
- ☐ Letting go of panic
- ☐ Trusting deeper intelligence

Ask yourself:

When you stop fighting internally, does the situation:

- ☐ Collapse further
- ☐ Slowly open up

### Exercise 6: The Symbol of the Elephant (ਗਜ) (Gaj)

The elephant represents:

- ☐ Great physical strength
- ☐ Pride in power
- ☐ Confidence in self-ability

Yet even the elephant reaches a moment of helplessness.

What saved the elephant?

- ☐ More force
- ☐ More struggle
- ☐ Letting go and calling inwardly

So what is Guru Sahib teaching?

That surrender is not weakness — it is alignment with deeper power.

## Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

Match deeper meanings:

ਬਲੁ (bal) = Strength—your power, control, confidence, ability

ਛੁਟਕਿਓ (chhuTakio) = Slipped away—fading with time and circumstances

ਬੰਧਨ (ba(n)dhan) = Bondages—attachments, habits, fears, consequences

ਪਰੇ (pare) = Fell upon you—life’s weight closing in

ਕਛੂ ਨ (kachhoo na) = Nothing—no personal trick left

ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ (hot upai) = No way out—when ego-solutions fail

ਅਬ (ab) = Now—don’t delay until it’s worse

ਓਟ (oT) = Shelter/support—inner refuge that holds you up

ਹਰਿ (har) = The Divine Presence—within you, sustaining you

ਗਜ (gaj) = Elephant—symbol of great strength and steady support

ਜਿਉ (jiau) = Like—as dependable as that strength

ਹੋਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ (hoh sahai) = Be your helper—Divine support carries you through helplessness

## Write Your Own Interpretation:

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## Take Action → Living the Wisdom

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

**Identify your anchor** - Train your mind now to know where to turn when you feel weak.

**Pause before panic** - Turn inward before reacting outwardly.

**Reach for remembrance** - Repeat a Divine word or Gurbani Line when energy feels low.

**Seek wise support** - Talk to a trusted guide or try to find your answers in gurbani instead of trying to handle everything on your own.

**Rest in trust** - Allow yourself to lean on the Creator when yours feels depleted.

## 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 your own effort isn't enough to solve a problem?

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How can turning to your inner values or faith help when you feel stuck?

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What is the difference between relying only on yourself and also seeking guidance from your deeper principles?

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Have you ever let go of control and asked for support? Did it help?

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How can staying connected to your inner strength help you handle long-term challenges without burning out?

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