

54th ਸਲੋਕ \ Couplet

ਬਲੁ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੁਟੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੪॥
bal hoaa ba(n)dhan chhuTe sabh kichh hot upai ||
naanak sabh kichh tumarai haath mai tum hee hot sahai ||54||

Literal Meaning: My strength has been restored, and my bonds have been broken; now, I can do everything. Nanak: everything is in Your hands, Lord; You are my Helper and Support. ||54||

Literal Word Meanings:

ਬਲੁ (bal) = strength
ਹੋਆ (hoaa) = restored
ਬੰਧਨ (ba(n)dhan) = bonds
ਛੁਟੇ (chhuTe) = broken
ਸਭੁ (sabh) = all
ਕਿਛੁ (kichh) = things
ਹੋਤ (hot) = happens
ਉਪਾਇ (upai) = remedy

ਸਭੁ (sabh) = everything
ਕਿਛੁ (kichh) = things
ਤੁਮਰੈ (tumarai) = Your
ਹਾਥ (haath) = hands
ਮੈ (mai) = in
ਤੁਮ (tum) = You
ਹੀ (hee) = alone
ਹੋਤ (hot) = are
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: Question the Idea of Power

When we hear the word power, what do we usually think of?

- ☐ Physical strength
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Authority
- ☐ Influence

☐ Control over others

Can physical strength change with time, age, or illness?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Can money or status be lost without warning?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If power can be taken away can it be the inner strength Guru Sahib is pointing to?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Exercise 2: Power That Cannot Be Taken Away

Which of the following remains available regardless of age or condition?

☐ Awareness

☐ Understanding

☐ Inner clarity

☐ Conscious choice

When you're no longer afraid, does it feel like:

☐ Weakness

☐ Strength

So could true bal be an *inner state*, not an outer ability?

Exercise 3: Understanding “ਬੰਧਨ” “ba(n)dhan” (Bonds)

Bonds are not always physical chains.

They can be:

☐ Fear

☐ Anger

☐ Attachment

☐ Guilt

☐ Ego

☐ Anxiety

When fear controls your decisions, are you free?

☐ Yes ☐ No

When awareness rises, what happens to these inner ropes?

- ☐ They tighten
- ☐ They loosen
- ☐ They dissolve

Exercise 4: Everything Has a Way “ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ” “sabh kichh hot upai”

When the mind is panicked

- ☐ Problems feel unsolvable
- ☐ I feel stuck and overwhelmed
- ☐ Everything feels urgent and out of control

When the mind is clear

- ☐ Solutions naturally appear
- ☐ I can see the situation more calmly
- ☐ A path forward becomes visible

Reflect

- ☐ The situation changed
- ☐ My perception changed — not the situation

So is Guru Sahib promising magical solutions or inner clarity that reveals solutions already there?

Exercise 5: In Your Hands “ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ” “tumarai haath”

Whose hands are these?

- ☐ A distant external power
- ☐ Fate or luck
- ☐ The divine within

If the divine is realized within:

you stop blaming others, and you stop looking outside for answers.

Does this idea make you feel:

- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Fearful

☐ Free

Exercise 6: True Support “ਸਹਾਇ” sahai

Support is not always someone rescuing us.

Sometimes support is:

- ☐ Inner stability
- ☐ Fearlessness
- ☐ Divine (God) within
- ☐ Ability to respond consciously

Has this inner support ever truly left you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Spiritual Meaning (Word → Wisdom)

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:

Take Action → Living the Wisdom

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

Release the tight grip - Stop forcing outcomes and allow space for clarity.

Drop the need to control - Accept that strength grows through surrender.

Stop protecting your pride - Let humility replace constant self-protection.

Trust the process - Believe growth can come through letting go.

Stand lighter, not harder - Discover resilience in flexibility rather than rigidity.

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 has holding on to money, status, or control drained your energy or focus?

What does “let go and trust” look like at work? Can you give an example?

How can you tell the difference between short-term strength (like money or praise) and lasting strength (like values or wisdom)?

What is one small attachment you can release today to feel more peaceful and focused?

How can trusting your deeper values help you act with more courage and less fear?
