

CHAPTER THREE

After Life

This chapter examines the concept of afterlife, or after-death if one prefers as contained within the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Let's begin with the narrative of afterlife as provided by the four thousand-year-old canvas. Seven main beliefs pertaining to the afterlife can be found within the *Garrud Puran* – a Sanskrit text composed in the first or second millennium BC and containing some 19,000 verses.

The first belief is Knowability. The claim is that all is fully known about the nature and character of life after death.

Second, the journey in the afterlife is outlined to a high degree of specificity. The narrative is that the departed soul navigates an incredulous journey of its own into other known and specified realms.

Third, the milestones of the journey of afterlife are provided. The four thousand-year-old canvas provides details right down to a day by day account of how the soul leaves the body, where it goes, where its stops for its different functions and what life forms it takes eventually.

Fourth, that the departed soul stops for judgement. The narrative is that it takes one year or 365 days for the soul to reach the point of judgement. The Sanskrit word for one year is one *baras*. The word *barsi* is used to commemorate this day of arrival of the soul for judgement in the court of Dharm Raj. The concept of *barsi* and of celebrating *barsis* is a concept that belongs to this pre-1469 canvas.

Fifth, the departed soul is ordered onto one of the three different routes – (i) to heaven (ii) to one of the 21 different hells or (iii) it reincarnates. These routes are determined by the outcome of judgement. In the case of reincarnation, the soul is sentenced to begin its journey of *ava gaun* (cycle of births and deaths) and then go through the entire 8.4 mil cycle of life forms to come back as a human being.

Sixth, the last rites – the funeral, cremation and burial – are critical in that they prepare the soul for this journey. They must be done right, by the right people, at the right time, in the right way, with the right paraphanelia, with the right prayers.

And finally this whole cycle repeats *ad infinitum*.

The chilling, scary and petrifying details of this journey – never known to have been travelled by anyone ever - were contained within numerous concepts on the old canvas.

All this about a journey that no one has travelled, and a destination from which no one has come back to tell a story of. It is nevertheless presented with amazing specificity and in

amazing counts – exactly 21 different types of hells, and exactly 8.4 mill life forms to reincarnate into. All this about a journey that talks about 365 days – one year – one *baras* – during a period of writing when the concept of a solar calendar and the notion of 365 days had *not* come into existence.

Nevertheless, the narrative is presented as a religious fact, a religious truth and a divine reality. And believed by millions. And accepted by millions more as their upcoming fate in their afterlife.

Imagine the illogic of it. The insanity of it. Being on a journey that is *real* in the here and now - a journey of life. But living it in fear, dread and agony in worry of an imaginary and clergy-concocted journey in the afterlife that no one knows anything about.

The fact of the matter is that this fear, and agony is not forced upon anybody. Its suffered in choice, it is suffered by choice. It is suffered by those who chose to believe in the clergy concocted tales of afterlife.

What is most chilling really is that this narrative of afterlife – drawn from the four thousand-year-old canvas - is the one that is presented by our clergy – our *granthis*, *ragis*, *parcharaks* and *kirtanias* in our gurdwaras as Sikhi beliefs. A vast majority of Sikhs celebrate *barsis* even though the basis of the *barsi* is the four thousand-year-old canvas.

Our *granthis*, *ragis* and *kirtanias* – sing *shabds* containing conscience elevating messages from the SGGS during the death ceremonies of our loved ones and their *barsis* – but present narratives derived from the *Garrud Puran* to our *sangats*. In short its *Kirtan* of Gurbani but discourse of the *Garrud Puran*. The *Kirtan* is from the Canvas of Guru Nanak. But the messages are from the four thousand- year-old discarded canvas. The *Kirtan* is from the canvas of Life and Living in the Here and Now, but the sermons are from the pre-1469 canvas that is obsessed with the afterlife. And the messages by our clergy are that Guru Nanak is *stating his acceptance* in the beliefs of the old canvas and the *Garrud Puran* through his *shabds* within Gurbani. One wonders if there can be a greater irony.

The outcome is that the narrative pertaining to the afterlife that is held within the psyche of a vast majority of Sikhs is *not* the narrative of Gurbani, but that of the four thousand-year-old canvas. And this vast majority of Sikhs mistakenly think, accept and believe the narrative of *Garrud Puran* to be the narrative of Gurbani. They further believe that Gurbani endorses, validates and approves the beliefs of the pre-1469 canvas.

Nothing can be further from the truth. Nothing can be more tragic than accepting as Gurbani truths – all that has been *rejected* as clergy-concocted narratives. Nothing is more tragic than to mire, smother and drown - into a swamp of clergy concocted narratives - a spirituality that takes us to the heights of liberation; namely the spirituality of Gurbani. Nothing can be more catastrophic than to suffocate a refreshing and revolutionary spirituality through forcing us to breathe the stale air of musty beliefs and decayed narratives.

So what is the narrative of the afterlife within Gurbani? We can develop the basic principles by examining some verses that discourse the concept.

The first thing Gurbani does is to provide a critique of the claims pertaining to Knowability of the four thousand- year-old canvas. Gurbani critiques the claims that the proponents of the old canvas *know* where the soul goes, that they *know* it is taken by the soldiers of death – *Jum Doot* - and that they *know* what happens to it all the way.

Let's begin with this verse of Guru Nanak on page 75 of the SGGS.

ਚਉਥੈ ਪਹਰੈ ਰੈਣਿ ਕੈ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਲਾਵੀ ਆਇਆ ਖੇਤੁ ॥
ਜਾ ਜਮਿ ਪਕੜਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਭੇਤੁ ॥ ਭੇਤੁ ਚੇਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਜਾ ਜਮਿ
ਪਕੜਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥ *Chauthay Pehray Raen Kaiy Vanjaria Mitra Lavee Aya Khey.*

*Ja Jum Pakarr Chaleya Vanjareya Mitra Kisay Na Miliya Bhey. Bhey Cheyt Har Kisaiy Na Mileyo
Ja Jum Pakarr Chalaya.*

This portion of verses is from a four-para *shabd* that divides our physical life into four phases. These verses above talk about the fourth and final phase ਚਉਥੈ ਪਹਰੈ *Chauthay Pehray*. The metaphor is of a field. The final phase of a field is harvesting. Hence the term ਲਾਵੀ ਆਇਆ ਖੇਤੁ *Lavee Aya Khey*. The term *Khey* represents the field and *Lavee* its farmer. So this is final phase where the farmer has come to harvest his field.

The use of such a metaphor tells us that the verse is a metaphorical narration of physical death. It is about the final phase of temporal life. It is about the end of life.

The phrase ਜਾ ਜਮਿ ਪਕੜਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ *Ja Jum Pakarr Chaleya* means "where the soldiers of death *Jum* are said to take us." This notion of soldiers of death taking the soul away comes from the four thousand-year-old canvas. Guru Nanak is mentioning it to provide a critique. He is *not* endorsing it. If he endorsed it, there would be no critique. But there is a critique. And it is a damning critique.

The critique is in the next part of the verse: ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਭੇਤੁ *Kisay Na Miliya Bhey*. It translates as "None of those who make the claim knows." Despite claims of knowing by the architects and proponents of the pre-1469 beliefs – Guru Nanak is saying in the clearest of language – they do *not* know. None of those who claim to know have come to know. The claim that they know is actually made on not knowing.

The next verse makes is absolutely clear that the *Unknowability* – the not knowing anything – refers not to anything else – but pertains to claims as to where one goes after death and in the afterlife. The verse is ਭੇਤੁ ਚੇਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਜਾ ਜਮਿ ਪਕੜਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥ *Bhey Cheyt Har Kisaiy Na Mileyo Ja Jum Pakarr Chalaya.*

The phrase ਭੇਤੁ ਚੇਤੁ ਹਰਿ *Bhey Cheyt Har* in particular the use of the word *Har* ਹਰਿ with a *sihari* is telling. The word *Har* ਹਰਿ refers to the Omnipresent Creator in Gurbani. Guru Nanak is saying that the Knowability is of the Creator. ਭੇਤੁ ਚੇਤੁ ਹਰਿ *Bhey Cheyt Har* means The Knowability Belongs to the Creator. Because matters pertaining to His creation – origin, sustenance and destruction - are His dominion.

The phrase ਭੇਤੁ ਚੇਤੁ ਹਰਿ *Bhey Cheyt Har* therefore means "The Knowability Is the Exclusive Domain of the Creator." This Knowability is not of those making these claims. Never to those claiming to know. Certainly not to those who concoct the narrative of the afterlife.

The message here is that the Knowability of afterlife as provided thus far is *not true*, it is fake. It is concocted. This is a Gurbani principle. A Gurmat principle. It is illustrated by the phrase: ਭੇਤੁ ਚੇਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ *Bhey Cheyt Har Kisaiy Na Mileyo*. Here is another verse of Guru Nanak on page 648 of the SGGS.

ਮ :੧ ॥ ਇਕ ਦਝਹਿ ਇਕ ਦਬੀਅਹਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਕੁਤੇ ਖਾਹਿ ॥
ਇਕਿ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਉਸਟੀਅਹਿ ਇਕਿ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਹਸਣਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਕਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਹਿ ॥੨॥

Ek Dajhey Ek Dabeah Ekna Kutey Khahey.

Ek Panni Vich Usateah Ek Bhee Fir Hasssan Pahe.

Nanak Eav Na Japayi Kithay Jahe Smahe.

In this verse, Guru Nanak lays out the litany of final rites that are commonly practiced. The claim, according to the four thousand-year-old canvas, is that processes pertaining to the final rites are important because they prepare the soul for its afterlife. The final rites are critical because *how* they are done will decide what happens in the afterlife. The final rites must be done properly by qualified clergy else the departed soul will not reach its destination.

Guru Nanak says, some are cremated ਇਕ ਦਝਹਿ *Ek Dajhey*; some are buried ਇਕ ਦਬੀਅਹਿ *Ek Dabeah*; others are fed to animals even ਇਕਨਾ ਕੁਤੇ ਖਾਹਿ *Ekna Kutey Khahey*. Some are given water burials ਇਕਿ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਉਸਟੀਅਹਿ *Ek Panni Vich Usateah*; others put into wells ਇਕਿ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਹਸਣਿ ਪਾਹਿ *Ek Bhee Fir Hasssan Pahe*. All of these are done according to the respective belief systems.

Guru Nanak makes his conclusion clear in the next verse - ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ *Nanak Eav Na Japayi*. Nanak these processes have no way of providing Knowability ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਕਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਹਿ *Na Japayi Kithay Jahe Smahe*. There is no knowing of *where* into the afterlife one goes – based on the last rites.

Two things are being put into the dustbin of spirituality here by Guru Nanak. One, the claim that the processes of last rites determine the journey of afterlife. And two, the afterlife itself. Both are concocted by those who don't know. Both are invented by those who are unable to know. The *process* of getting to a concocted destination has to be concocted too because the destination itself is concocted.

If I gave you directions to a destination that did not exist, then the directions – no matter how detailed and specific - are fake; by virtue of the destination itself being fake.

These verses of Guru Nanak thus lay out the Gurmat principle that the Knowability claim of the four thousand-year-old canvas is not accepted by Guru Nanak, not accepted within Gurbani and hence not a Gurmat belief. The strong and robust critique of Gurbani – as presented above – achieves two objectives.

One, it removes the claim of the old canvas that the narrative of afterlife and the detailed journey of the departed being is a truth. It is not. And two, the critique lays the groundwork for the truths of Gurbani.

What then is the accepted view of Gurbani, Sikhi and Gurmat pertaining to afterlife? Let's look at this verse of Guru Nanak on page 940 of the SGGS. This verse is taken from the *Bani* titled Sidh Gosht – dialogue with the Sidhs. The Sidhs asked Guru Nanak this very question.

ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਆਵੈ ਕਹਾ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਵੈ ਕਹਾ ਇਹੁ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

Kha(n) Tay Aveiy Kha(n) Eh Javeiy Kha(n) Eh Rhaiy Smayee.

Meaning: What Is the Origin of Life; Where does it go? What Is Its Ultimate Destination?

Guru Nanak's answer is:

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਆਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਜਾਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

Hukmaiyy Aveiy Hukmaiyy Javeiy Hukmaiyy Rhaiyy Smayee.

Meaning: The Origin of Life Is by Way of the *Hukm*; Its Ultimate Destination Is by Way of the *Hukm*.

Where is this narrative of the *Hukm*? Guru Nanak says it in the next verse:

ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਚੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਸਬਦੇ ਪਾਈ ॥

Puray Gur Tay Saach Kmavaiyy Gat Mit Shabday Payi.

Meaning: The narrative is within the messages of the *Shabd*. The complete understanding of the *Hukm* is Obtained thorough the *shabd*: ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਸਬਦੇ ਪਾਈ ॥ *Gat Mit Shabday Payi*

What then is the *Hukm* for Life after death? Let's look at this verse on page 885 of the SGGS.

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ ॥ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ ॥ ਰੇਵਨਹਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨ ਟੇਕ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਅਗਲੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਰੇਵਨਹਾਰੁ ਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥

Ramkli Mehla 5. Pavneiy Meh Pavan Samaya. Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya. Mattee Mattee Hoyi Eyk. Rovanhary Ki Kavan Teik. Kaon Mua Ray Kaon Mua. Bhrm Gyani Mil Krho Bichara Eh Tao Chalath Bhya. Rahao. Aglee Kich Khabar Na Payi. Rovanhari Bhi Uth Sidhayi.

This *shabad* contains the Gurmat and Gurbani position on three things. One, it defines physical death. Two, it tells us what happens to life after death. Three, it speaks of afterlife. Let's look at these three issues one by one.

Physical death is defined as the Return of Elements to their Source. Verse one of the *shabd* tells us such: ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ *Pavneiy Meh Pavan Samaya*. Verse three also tells us the same thing: ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ. *Mattee Mattee Hoyi Eyk*. Air returns to air, water to water and dust to dust.

In verse 5 Pathsah says ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ *Eh Tao Chalath Bhya*. Meaning – this is the cycle. Meaning – this is cyclic. The coming together of elements, and the return of the elements to their source is the cycle of physical life and physical death.

There are no exceptions. Every molecule of air, every molecule of water, every molecule of dust, every ion of physical matter within the human body – goes back to its source. No exceptions. No processes. No conditions. No exclusions. No matter what the last rites - ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ *Eh Tao Chalath Bhya*. Meaning – this is the cycle. No matter what. That's the cycle. It's for every living thing. Under *all* situations and *all* circumstances.

As for life itself, it too returns to its source – the Creator. The verse is: ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya*. That's the only journey it undertakes. Back to its origins – back to the Supreme Being. Back to its source. The phrase ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Rul Jaya* means – it merges, it returns, it become one yet again.

There is NO Journey other than ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya*.

Every one, every life, every soul, every *atma*, every *gyot*, every light – call it what you wish – goes back to its source. Every One. Every one merges: ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya*. No exceptions. No processes. No conditions. No exclusions. No Judgements of any kind after death. Every being merges: ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya*.

Why? Because the *source* of every *Jyot* is the *Param Jyot*. The source of every *atma* is the *Param-atma*. The source of every light is the Ultimate Light. The source of every being is the Supreme Being.

Just like the source of every molecule of water is the ocean. That is where every molecule of water comes from, and that is where it returns. No exceptions. No processes. No conditions. No exclusions.

That is what this whole *shabd* is about. It's about going back to the source. It's about going back to the origins. It's about going back to the root of it all. That is the cycle of everything: ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ *Eh Tao Chalat Bhya*. Meaning – this is the *cycle*. No one can break out of this cycle under any circumstances whatsoever. We are all part of this cycle of going back to the source and we are bound to the cycle. We have to abide by the cycle.

If there were any exceptions, conditions, processes, exclusions etc – then we need to ask – what are they? Where are they mentioned in the SGGS? Or more importantly – why are they *not* mentioned in the SGGS.

We must not confuse the concocted conditions, processes etc. of the four thousand-year-old discarded canvas with the messages of Gurbani. And we must also not confuse the meaning of the word “cycle.” The cycle being talked about in ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ *Eh Tao Chalat Bhya* is the cycle of going back to the source – not the cycle of reincarnations and rebirths as our clergy tell us.

For those of us who may be asking – will this and that person's life too go back to its source, to its origin? Will this and that evil person's life also conform to ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya*? The answer is simple. All we need to determine is whether this and that evil person's life came from a *different* source, a different origin.

If the air, water and dust in everybody's existence came from the same source, and goes back to the same source. Then everybody's life too came from the *same* source and goes back to the same source. No exceptions.

That is the cycle of Life. It Comes in *Hukm*. It goes back in *Hukm*: ਹੁਕਮੇ ਆਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਜਾਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ *Hukmai Aveiy Hukmai Javeiy Hukmai Rhaiy Smayee*. The Origin of Life Is by Way of the *Hukm*; Its Ultimate Destination Is by Way of the *Hukm*.

The *Hukm* is one of a cycle: ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ *Eh Tao Chalat Bhya*. Meaning – this is the cycle. The cycle is that all things return to their origins. Matter returns to the source of the matter. And life returns to the source of life. There is only one source of life. And that is the Creator of life.

If all of this is sounding strange it's because we have been fed with the fiction of pre-1469 beliefs in our gurdwaras and literature by our clergy for far too long. The truths of Gurbani have become stranger than fiction.

Bhagat Kabir expresses the *Gurmat* principle of the cycle of life in this way on page 1103 of the SGGS.

ਉਦਕ ਸਮੁੰਦ ਸਲਲ ਕੀ ਸਾਖਿਆ ਨਦੀ ਤਰੰਗ ਸਮਾਵਹਿਰੇ ॥
ਸੁੰਨਹਿ ਸੁੰਨੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸਮਦਰਸੀ ਪਵਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਵਹਿਰੇ ॥ 1 ॥
ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ ॥

*Udak Samund Salal Ke Sakhiya Ndee Trung Smave(n)gay. Sunney Sunn Miliya Samdarsi Pavan
Roop Hoey Javeh(n)gay. Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay.*

Meaning: Just like water from the river merges into the water of the oceans. Just like waves merge into the water. Just like air merges into air. I too will return to my pure and complete origin: ਪਵਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਵਹਿਰੇ *Pavan Roop Hoey Javeh(n)gay.*

The matter that is of issue is that I have merged with my Creator within in the Here and Now: ਸੁੰਨਹਿ ਸੁੰਨੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸਮਦਰਸੀ *Sunney Sunn Miliya Samdarsi.*

Then Kabir says ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ. *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?* Meaning: What then, is there about coming back? What then is there about after life? What then is there about reincarnating? What then is there about returning? ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?* What then is there about a second coming?

Kabir is asking a direct question: ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?* How and why then should I come back? There is no coming back if the *Hukm* is one of merging with the source. Guru Arjun ji said ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya.* Kabir is saying the same thing in ਪਵਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਵਹਿਰੇ *Pavan Roop Hoey Javeh(n)gay.*

It's a hard hitting critique at the claims of the four thousand-year-old canvas. It's a damning critique of the clergy-concocted tales that we do come back after going through the 8.4 mil cycle. It's a stinging critique of the clergy concocted claim that our coming back is determined by a string of conditions and processes – conditions and processes that the clergy *know* and are able to *change* for us at a price.

Gurbani makes it clear that there is no coming back at all. The notion of coming back is contradictory to ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ *Jyoti Meh Jyot Rul Jaya.* It is incongruous to ਪਵਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਵਹਿਰੇ *Pavan Roop Hoey Javeh(n)gay.* The notion of reincarnating is anti-thesis to ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?*

We need to ask ourselves this same question: ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?* Our clergy, *granthis, ragis, kirtanias, parcharaks* who keep harping on and promoting the rejected four thousand-year-old canvas like a broken record in our gurdwaras and in their sermons need to pay attention to this same question: ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?* How and why then should I come back?

Our clergy have a reason to *not* ask, *not* tell, and *not* preach the truths of Gurbani. They need to keep us in fear, in distress and in anxiety – because our fear, our anguish and our anxiety keeps them at their positions of self-assumed authority and feeds their livelihoods. It also feeds their fake claims that they know all about the afterlife. But what reason do *we* have to *not ask ourselves* this question: ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਰੇ *Bahur Hum Kahe(n) Ave(n)gay?*

What reason do *we* have to choose to believe, accept and live in the dread of a four thousand-year-old canvas of a belief system that was consigned to the dustbin of spirituality by Guru Nanak?

Gurbani is liberating. It is emancipating. It frees us to live and enjoy our lives without fear, without anxiety, without disquiet of concocted tales of the non-existent. It allows us to

live our lives in the Here and Now to the fullest, live our lives virtuously, live our lives to become divine in the Here and Now.

But because liberation and fear are anti-thesis to each other, we will have to make the choice between the two. We will have to make the choice of discarding the four thousand-year-old canvas. And make the choice of discarding our clergy who feed off that discarded canvas like vultures off a carcass. The choice of our clergy is based on their needs. It does not have to be our choice. We have to make the choice of letting Guru Nanak paint over the canvas that is our mind with his portrait of Sikhi and Gurbani.

Gurbani makes it absolutely clear that this life is *all* we have. All there is to it. This life is the *only* life for us. There is no other – not a second one, not a third and certainly not the 8.4 millionth one either.

We have this verse on page 1366 of the SGGS

**ਕਬੀਰ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਬਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਬਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਕੇ ਭੁਇ ਗਿਰਹਿ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਲਾਗਹਿ ਡਾਰ ॥ ੩੦ ॥**

Kabeer Manus Janm Dulambh Hai Hoey Na Bareiy Baar. Jio(n) Bun Ful Pakay Bhoey Girhey Bahur Na Laghey Daar.

Meaning: Kabeer, Human Life is Priceless, Precious: ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਹੈ *Manus Janm Dulambh Hai*. Why is that so? Because It does *not* occur a *second* time - ਹੋਇ ਨ ਬਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ *Hoey Na Bareiy Baar*.

When something can and does happen again and again – then, by definition - it cannot be priceless. Gurbani says human life is only once. Hence it is priceless.

Kabir exemplifies ਜਿਉ ਬਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਕੇ ਭੁਇ ਗਿਰਹਿ *Jio(n) Bun Ful Pakay Bhoey Girhey* - Just Like a Fruit That Drops to The Ground When It Ripens, It Does Not Ever Go Back to The Branch Again ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਲਾਗਹਿ ਡਾਰ *Bahur Na Laghey Daar*.

The meaning of the verse is thus “Kabeer Human Life Is Priceless and Does Not Occur a Second Time. Just Like a Fruit That Drops to The Ground When It Ripens, It Does Not Ever Go Back to The Branch Again.”

What could be clearer than the message within his set of verses of Kabir? What can be a better illustration than a fruit ripening, falling off the branch to the ground and never going back to the branch ever again?

When You Stop Living in Fear of a Concocted Journey of After Life, You Start Walking the Real Journey of Real Life in Joy. And You Start Walking the Journey of the Spirituality of Liberation.

When You Stop Chasing the Spirituality of the Journey of Afterlife, You Start Living the Spirituality of Here and Now.

When you Stop Chasing the Wrong Things, you give the Right Things a Chance to Catch You.

When You Discard the Gurbani Discarded Narratives of the pre-1469 Canvas, You Start Living the Truths of Gurbani.

The next chapter examines the concept of 8.4 Million life forms. It will attempt to provide the new, redefined, and Gurbani meanings as outlined within the 1429 pages of the SGGS.