

## ज्ञान चौतीसा - GYĀN CHOWNTĪSĀ

Gyān means knowledge, and chowtīsā means thirty-four. Thus the Chowtīsā is a type of poem in which the first letter of each couplet starts with a letter of the Hindi alphabet in increasing order, until all the alphabets are used. Each letter speaks, as it were, and makes a comment on an aspect of knowledge that leads to greater understanding of Reality. Guru Kabir has used this method, in this portion of the Bijak, to give his spiritual instructions. At the same time there is alliteration that emphasizes poetic rhythm, e.g. *kakka kanwal kīrn*.

ॐकार आदि जो जानै, लिख के मेटै ताहि सो मानै  
ॐकार कहैं सब कोई, जिन्ह यह लखा सो बिरला होई १

*onkār adi jo janai, likh kai metai tāhi so mānai,*  
*onkār kahain sab koi, jinh yahh lakhā so birlā hoī.*

Onkār is the Supreme, Sentient God, and is prior to everything, and is Eternal. He is beyond what can be written and erased. Everyone can repeat Onkar, but there is hardly anyone who truly realizes Him. (Guru Kabir says that Onkar preceded everything. Onkar is God, and He cannot be written in any language. It is difficult for people to realize God in their own hearts.)

कका कँवल किर्ण में पावै, शशि विगसित सम्पुट नहिं आवै  
तहाँ कुसुम रंग जो पावै, औगह गहि के गगन रहावै १

*1. kakkā kanwal kīrn men pawai, shashi vigsit sampuṭ nahin āwai,*  
*tahān kusum rang jo pāwai, owgahh gahi ke gagan rahāwai.*

The letter *ka* says that through the rays of the thousand-petalled lotus, God can be realized. The mystic moonlight (Trikuti or third eye at centre of the forehead) then keeps this lotus open to enlightenment. He, who is colored by the color of that lotus, will obtain unfathomable God in the *gagan mandal* and reside there. (The one thousand-petalled lotus, the *sahasrara chakra*, in the yoga system, is the highest chakra (*gagan mandal*) in the brain that then opens to God realization.)

खखा चाहै खोरि मनावै, खसमहिं छाँडि दहुँ दिशि धावै  
खसमहिं छाँडि छिमा हो रहिये, होय न खीन अक्षयपद लहिये २

2. *khakhā chāhai khori manāwai, khasamahin chhādi dahun disi dhāwai,*  
*khasamahi chhādi chhimā ho rahiye, hoi na khīn akshaipad lahiye.*

The letter *kha* says that if one wishes, he can follow the sensual path and, leaving God, run in all directions. If he wants forgiveness from God, then he has to give up false masters - desires and passions - then he will overcome weakness, and will obtain the eternal abode. (False masters are the objects of senses, desires, passions, ego and materialism. People indulging in these are weak in spirituality and are prevented from realizing God.)

गगा गुरु के बचनहिं मान, दूसर शब्द करो नहिं कान  
तहाँ बिहंगम कबहुँ न जाई, औगह गहि के गगन रहाई ३

3. *gagā guru ke bachanahin mān, dūsar shabd karo nahin kān,*  
*tahān bihangam kabahun na jāi, owgahh gahi ke gagan rahāi.*

The letter *ga* says that you must definitely obey the instructions of the Guru. Do not listen to the words of others. Then the bird (mind) will never wander. Being steadfast it grasps, and remains in the unfathomable being. (When the mind is steady in meditation, the soul realizes its unity with God. This knowledge does not diminish.)

घघा घट बिनसैघट होई, घटही में घट राखु समोई  
जो घट घटै घटहि फिर आवै, घटहि में फिर घटहि समावै ४

4. *ghaghā ghat binsai ghat hoī, ghatahī men ghat rākhū samoī,*  
*jo ghat ghatai ghatahi phiri āwai, ghatahi men phir ghatahi samāwai.*

The letter *gha* says that the body perishes and is born again as another body. Let the body be absorbed in the inner body. The body that perishes, again returns as a body, and the body is then merged into another body. (Because of the mind, desires, and attachments, the soul takes on one body after another. When the mind is free of desires and passions, it merges into the inner being of the soul. This ends the cycle of births of one body being in another body.)

डडा निरखत निशिदिन जाई, निरखत नैन रहे रतनाई  
निमिष एक जो निरखै पावै, ताहि निमिष में नैन छिपावै ५

5. *nyā nyā nirkhat nishidin jāi, nirkhat nain rahe ratnāi,  
nimikh ek jo nirkhai pāwai, tāhi nimikh men nain chhipāwai.*

The letter *nya* says that a person spends day and night looking around the world constantly, and with prolonged looking, the eyes become red. If for a moment he looks for God, he will find Him, as God will hide himself in his eyes. (If a person turns his mind away from material entanglements and truly seeks God, then God will come to him in a moment. God hiding himself in the eyes means that God is not visible but is realized intuitively.)

चचा चित्र रचो बड भारी, चित्र छोडि तैं चेतु चित्रकारी  
जिन्ह यह चित्र विचित्र उखेला, चित्र छोडि तैं चेतु चितेला ६

6. *chā chā chitra racho bad bhāri, chitra chhodi, tain chetu chitrakārī,  
jinh yahh chitra vichitra ukhelā, chitra chhodi tain chetu chitelā.*

The letter *cha* says that God has created a mighty picture. Let go of the picture and know the Creator. The person, who sees the picture, plays with it in many ways. Give up the picture and ponder on the Creator. (The picture is the universe, the macrocosm and microcosm, and the painter, or creator, is God. We become engaged in a multitude of activities, and we forsake God, the Creator.)

छछा आहि छत्र पति पासा, छकि किन रहहु मेटि अब आसा  
मैं तोहीं छिन-छिन समुझावा, खसम छौँडि कस आपु बँधावा ७

7. *chhā chhā āhi chhatra pati pāsā, chhaki kin rahahu meti ab āsā,  
main tohīn chhin-chhin samujhāwā, khasam chhadi kas āpu bandhāwā.*

The letter *chha* says that Yes! God is quite near to you. Why don't you give up false hope and be satisfied? I am instructing you moment after moment. Why have you given up the Master and shackled yourself in bondage? (God is Omnipresent, therefore very near. We have false hopes on the material world, which we have to leave behind. Guru Kabir is advising to realize God and be free from bondage.)

जजा ई तन जियत न जारो, जोबन जारि युक्ति तन पारो  
जो कछु युक्ति जानि तन जरै, ई घट ज्योति उजियारी करै ८

8. *jajā ī tan jiyat na jāro, joban jāri yukti tan pāro,*

*jo kuchh yukti jāni tan jarai, ī ghat jyoti ujjārī karai.*

The letter *ja* says that do not burn this living body alive. Burn up only youthful desires. Nurture it with discipline. If through discipline and knowledge the body burns, then Divine Light will dawn in it. (Burning with passions and ego burns the body alive. Through instruction by the Guru, and practice of discipline, one gains knowledge that burns up the passions and ego. The soul then becomes enlightened.)

झझा अरुझि-सरुझि कित जान, अरुझनि हींढत जाय परान  
कोटि सुमेरु ढूँढि फिर आवै, जो गढ गढै गढहि सो पावै ९

9. *jhā jhā arujhi-surajhi kit jān, arujhani hīndat jāi parān,*  
*koti sumeru dhūndhi phir āwai, jo gadh gadhai gadhahi so pāwai.*

The letter *jha* says that being entangled in quarrels, where can you go? Being entangled in quarrels you depart this life. Even if you search millions of mountain peaks, whatever fort you build, that is the fort you will have. (Life is short, but we become entangled in many types of bondage. Even if you make millions of pilgrimages, the deep desires of your heart will determine the type of body, or birth, you will have in the next life.)

जजा निग्रह सनेहू, करु निरुवार सन्देहू  
नहिं देखे नहिं भाजिया, परम सयानप येहू १०

10. *nyā nyā nigrabh sanehū, karu niruwār sandehū,*  
*nahin dekhe nahin bhājiyā, param sayānap yehuū.*

The letter *nya* says, “O people! You who advise others to practice control of passions. Please advise us to be free of doubts. The person who does not look at, or run after, the senses, is considered to be very wise”. (False gurus cannot give Divine knowledge; therefore people remain in doubts. The person who sees invisible God in his own heart, and does not run after the outward pleasures, is the wise person.)

जहाँ न देखि तहाँ आपु भजाऊ, जहाँ नहीं तहाँ तन मन लाऊ  
जहाँ नहीं तहाँ सब कुछ जानी, जहाँ है तहाँ ले पहिचानी ११

11. *jahān na dekhi tahān āpu bhajāu, jahān nahīn tahān tan man lāu,*  
*jahān nahīn tahān sab kuchh jānī, jahān hai tahān le pahichānī.*

The letter *ja* says that where you do not see Him, there you go in search for Him. There where He is not, there you apply yourself, body and mind. Where He is not, you think

that all is there. Where He is, recognize Him there. (Where people do not see God, there they diligently search for Him – temples, pilgrimages etc. They feel that they will obtain everything there. Find God where He really dwells - in the hearts of all beings.)

टटा बिकट बाट मन माहीं, खोलि कपाटमहल मो जाहीं  
रही लटापटि जुटि तेहि माहीं, होहिं अटल तब कतहुँ न जाहीं १२

12. *tattā bikat bāt man māhin, kholi kapāt mahal mo jāhīn,*  
*rahī latāpati,juti tehi māhīn, hohin atal tab katahun na jāhīn.*

The letter *ta* says that there is a difficult path in your mind: Open the door and enter the palace of the soul. You will merge into your Self, and you will be steadfast, and do not have to seek elsewhere. (The mind creates an obstacle to reaching Self-knowledge. It thinks the path is difficult. But open the door of the heart and merge with the soul. Then you will be steadfast, and will not desire to seek elsewhere.)

ठठा ठौर दूर ठग नियरे, नित के नितुर कीन्ह मन घेरे  
जे ठग ठगे सब लोग सयाना, सो ठग चीन्ह ठौर पहिचाना १३

13. *thatthā thowr dūr thag niyare, nit ke nithur kīnh man ghere,*  
*je thag thage sab log sayānā, so thag chīnhh thowr pahichānā.*

The letter *tha* says that the goal is far away and the cheater is near; they are always cruel and always assail the mind. The one who deceives the cheater is wise. He who understands the cheater will recognize his goal. (The goal is God and the cheater is passions that afflict the mind. The wise person overcomes the passions and realizes the goal.)

डडा डर उपजे डर होई, डर ही में डर राखु समोई  
जो डर डरै डरहि फिरि आवै, डरही में फिर डरहि समावै १४

14. *daddā dar upje dar hoi, darahī men rākhū samoī,*  
*jo dar darai darahi phiri āvai, darahī men phir darahi samāwai.*

The letter *da* says that you yourself produce fear and you become fearful. You remain immersed in fear. Fear dwells in him who is afraid of fear, and fear again is immersed in

fear. (God is beyond fear and if you wish to know God, you also have to be beyond fear. Fear perpetuates itself. Spiritual life requires fearlessness.)

ढढा दूँढत ही कित जान, हीँडत दूँढत जाय परान  
कोटि सुमेर दूँढि फिर आवै, जेहि दूँढा सो कतहू न पावै १५

15. *dhadhā dhūndhat hī kit jān, hīndat dhundhat jāi parān,*  
*koti sumer dhūndhi phir āwai, jehi dhūndha so katahū na pāwai.*

The letter *dha* asks that where do you go searching? Searching and searching you lose your life! You may search millions of mountain peaks, but you will not find Him anywhere. (You may search for God your whole life and not find Him because God is the innermost part of your own Self. Your search needs to be internalized to find God.)

णणा दुई बसाये गाउँ, रेणा दूँढे तेरी नाऊँ  
मुये एक जाय तजि घना,मरे इत्यादिक केते गना १६

16. *nanā duī basāye gāun, renā dhundhe terī nāūn,*  
*muye ek jāi taji dhanā, mare ityādik kete ganā.*

The letter *na* says, “O soul! You have established two villages – one of heaven and one of the world. In the sand of the world you search for your boat. One dies and leaves his wealth here. Who can count how many have died and left their wealth?” (In this world a person is involved with heaven, earth and hell. Living on the earth is likened to living in the sand that will crumble. The boat is the path to realization, but it cannot be found in material things of the world. All material things are left behind.)

तता अति त्रियो नहिं जाई, तन त्रिभुवन में राखु छिपाई  
जो तन त्रिभुवन माँहि छिपावै, तत्त्वहि मिलि तत्त्व सो पावै १७

17. *tattā ati triyo nahin jāi, tan tribhuwan men rākhū chhipāi,*  
*jo tan tribhuwan mānhi chhipāwai, tattwahi mili tattwa so pāwai.*

The letter *ta* says, “O soul! Do not be strongly attached to the lady (Maya). Try to find that hidden Reality in your own being. He who finds the Reality in himself, will always

remain united with it". (The Reality that is eternal dwells within as the spirit. It is thus hidden. If you find that Reality through an inner journey in meditation, then you will have realization, and remain united with it.)

थथा अति अथाह थहो नहिं जाई, 'ई' थिर 'ऊ' थिर नाहिं रहाई  
थोरे-थोरे थिर होउ भाई, बिन थँभे जस मन्दिर थँभाई १८

18. *thathā ati athāhh thaho nahin jāī, ī thir ū thir nāhin rahāī,*  
*thore-thore thir hou bhāī, bin thambhe jas mandir thambhāī.*

The letter *tha* says that He is fathomless and is difficult to measure. This (mind) and that (Maya) do not remain steadfast. O brother! Slowly, slowly develop steadfastness. It will be like a temple standing without support. (The mystery of God is unfathomable until the mind becomes steady and overcomes Maya and realizes God. God is the temple that needs no support, and in that temple dwells the heart.)

ददा देखहु बिनशनहारा, जस देखहु तस करहु विचारा  
दशहूँ द्वारे तारी लावै, तब दयाल के दर्शन पावै १९

19. *daddā dekhahu binshanhārāa, jas dekhahu tas karahu bichārā,*  
*dashahun dwāre tari lāwai, tab dayāl ke darshan pāwai.*

The letter *da* says to look at all the perishable things in the world, and according to what you see, contemplate on them variously. If you meditate and open the "tenth door" then you will have a vision of the Merciful God. (Material things may perish quickly or slowly according to their nature and composition. But there is something that does not perish, and that is the Spirit dwelling within as the soul. The tenth door - *brahmrandhra* - opens in deep meditation and one then realizes Divinity.)

धधा अर्ध माँही अँधियारी, अर्ध छोडि ऊर्ध मन तारी  
अर्ध छोडि ऊर्ध मन लावै, आपा मेटि के प्रेम बढ़ावै २०

20. *dhadhā ardh mānhī andhiyārī, ardh chhodi urdh man tārī,*  
*ardh chhodi urdh man lāwai, āpā meti ke prem badhāwai.*

The letter *dha* says that as long as you are only half way, you are in darkness. Let your mind leave it and proceed onwards to God. When you give up the idea of being stuck

midway, and proceed onwards, then you will abolish ego and develop love. (When the mind is occupied with material things only, then it is in darkness. The mind should rise above materialism and the body, and go to the region of super consciousness. In this state there is no ego, but only Divine love.)

नना चौथे वो महँ जाई, राम का गदहा होय खर खाई २१

21. *nannā chowthe wo mahh jāi, rām kā gadhā hoi khar khāi.*

The fourth *na* states to go there (in the heart) where Ram resides. Many become the donkey of Ram and eat the dry grass. (Many people say that they are devotees of Ram, but do not know Ram. They are in the clutches of M, and, like a donkey, are burdened with the objects of sense gratification, and are eating the grass of worldly objects.)

पपा पाप करे सब कोई, पाप करे धर्म नहिं होई  
पपा कहे सुनहु रे भाई, हमरे से इन किछुबो न पाई २२

22. *pappā pāp kare sab koī, pāp kare dharm nahin hoī,  
pappa kahai sunahu re bhai, hamre se in kichhuwo na pai.*

The letter *pa* says that all the people are committing sins. When sins are present, there is no room for righteousness. “Oh brothers, listen to me! By committing sinful actions they do not gain any righteousness”. (Sins are committed through thoughts, words and deeds. Righteous living means that we must be pure in all these three aspects of life activities.)

फफा फल लागे बड दूरी, चाखे सदगुरु देइ न तूरी  
फफा कहे सुनहु रे भाई, स्वर्ग पताल की खबरि न पाई २३

23. *phaphā phal lāge bad dūrī, chākhe s dei na tūrī,  
phaphā kahe sunahu re bhāi, swarg patāl kī khabari na pāi.*

The letter *pha* says that the fruit of devotion is very far away. The s has tasted it but he cannot pluck it and give it to others. “O brothers listen to me! You will not find this in heaven or in hell”. (The fruit of devotion is obtained through effort and purity in the heart. It cannot be obtained by just talking and listening to scriptures, and paying superficial homage to religion. Most people are caught up in worldly activities and in satisfaction of sensual desires. Thus it is stated that devotion is far awa.)

बबा बरबर करे सब कोई, बरबर करे काज नहिं होई  
बबा बात कहे अर्थाई, फल का मर्म न जानहु भाई २४

24. *babbā barbar kare sab koi, barbar kare kāj nahin hoī,*  
*babbā bāt kahai arthāī, phal kā marm na jānahu bhāī.*

The letter *ba* says that everyone keeps talking and talking, but by talking nothing fruitful is accomplished. They keep on expounding their teachings but, “Oh brother! They do not know the secret of the fruit of devotion”. (There is a great deal of talk about religion and spirituality, but talking is cheap. In order to obtain the real fruit of a spiritual life one has to live the life of purity, honesty, integrity and truthfulness.)

भभा भभरि रहा भरपूरी, भभरे ते है नियरे दूरी  
भभा कहे सुनहु रे भाई, भभरे आवै भभरे जाई २५

25. *bhabhā bhabhari rahā bharpūrī, bhabhare te hai niyare dūrī,*  
*bhabhā kahai sunahu re bhāī, bhabhare āvai bhabhare jāī.*

The letter *bha* says that illusion is overflowing in the world, and because of it that which is near (God) has become far. “O brother, listen to me! People come to the world in illusion and leave in illusion”. (The world is full of illusion because people generally are not awake to the truth of Ultimate Reality. Lacking the realization of ultimate Truth - Self realization - people are subject to birth and death through their karmas.)

ममा के सेये मर्म नहिं पाई, हमरे से इन मूल गमाई  
माया मोह रहा जग पूरी, माया मोहहि लखहु विचारी २६

26. *mammā ke seye marm nahin pāī, hamre se in mūl gamāī,*  
*māyā moha rahā jag pūrī, māyā mohahi lakhahu bichārī.*

The letter *ma* says that by serving Maya (illusion) you cannot fathom the secret, and you lose your capital (soul). Attachment to illusion is widespread in the world. Think carefully and give up attachment to it. (*Maya* is false perception of that which is unreal and is thought to be real. Everything that changes or vanishes in time is unreal, but people give reality to them. The only reality is the unchangeable spirit that is the Eternal. To think carefully is to realize the transient nature of things, and giving up attachments to them.)

यया जगत रहा भरपूरी, जगतहु ते है जाना दूरी  
यया कहे सुनहु रे भाई, हमहीं ते इन जै जै पाई २७

27. *yayyā jagat rahā bharpūrī, jagatahu te hai jānā dūrī;*  
*yayyā kahe sunahu re bhāi, hamahīn te in jai jai pāi.*

The letter *ya* says that the whole world is full of illusion, so the soul has to go far from the world. “Listen to me, Oh brother! He who remains unattached to the world conquers the world of illusion”. (To go far from the world means to be free from the entanglements of materialism and passions. It means to connect with the spirit that is indwelling. Detachment from the world gives freedom.)

ररा रारि रहा अरुझाई, राम के कहे दुःख दारिद्र जाई  
ररा कहे सुनहु रे भाई, सतगुरु पूँछि के सेवहु आई २८

28. *rarrā rāri rahā arujhāi, rām ke kahai dukh dāridra jāi,*  
*rarrā kahai sunahu re bhāi, s pūnchhi ke sewhu āi.*

The letter *ra* says that man remains trapped in the quarrels of the world. If he recites God’s name his poverty and suffering will vanish. Listen to me, O brother! Ask S how to render service to Him. (Quarrels in the world represent arguments, misunderstandings and all activities of the mind and senses that keep us away from God. The *s* instructs you how to find freedom from the quarrels, and how to do devotion to God.)

लला तुतुरे बात जनाई, तुतुरे आय तुतुरे परिचाई  
आप तुतुरे और की कहई, एकै खेत दूनो निर्बहई २९

29. *lallā tutture bāt janāi, tutture āi tutture parichāi;*  
*āp tutture ovr kī kahaī, ekai khet dūnon nirbahaī.*

The letter *la* says that fraudulent people are talkative and pretend to teach others. One meets another and their fraudulence increases. One fraudulent person talks about the fraudulence of another, but both operate in the same field. (Empty barrels make the most noise, or he who knows does not speak, and he who speaks does not know. The spiritually awakened person speaks very little, but the one engrossed in words, scriptures and philosophies are very talkative. They are not the ones to impart true spiritual teachings to awaken a person to Reality.)

ववा वह वह कहै सब कोई, वह वह कहे काज नहिं होई  
वह तो कहे सुनै जो कोई, स्वर्ग पताल न देखै जोई ३०

30. *wawwā wahh wahh kahai sab koī, wahh wahh kahai kāj nahin hoī,*  
*wahh toh kahai sunai jo koī, swarg patāl na dekhai joī.*

The letter *wa* says that everyone speaks about Him (God), but speaking about Him does not serve the purpose. The people who only talk and listen about God, cannot see the difference between heaven and hell. (Talking about God and listening about Him does not give a realization of Him. Thus talking or preaching does not serve the purpose. One has to go through the practice of uplifting one's worldly life to a Divine life. Not seeing the difference between heaven and hell is the same as not knowing the difference between the spirituality and materialism.)

शशा सर नहिं देखे कोई, सर शीतलता एकै होई  
शशा कहे सुनहु रे भाई, शून्य समान चला जग जाई ३१

31. *shashā sar nahin dekhe koī, sar shītaltā ekai hoī,*  
*shashā kahe sunahu re bhāi, shunya samān chalā jag jāī.*

The letter *sha* says that no one sees the pond (bliss). The pond and its soothing quality of bliss are one. "Listen to me, Oh brother! The whole world is going towards the void. (The pond refers to bliss which is the nature of the soul. Sages say that bliss and the soul are really inseparable. People moving towards the void represents them moving away from the soul, therefore they are not attaining bliss.)

षषा खरा करे सब कोई, खरखर करे काज न होई  
षषा कहैं सुनहु रे भाई, राम नाम ले जाहु पराई ३२

32. *khakhā kharā kare sab koī, khar khar kare kāj na hoī,*  
*khakhā kahain sunahu re bhāi, rām nām le jāhu parāī.*

People talk about spiritual life and liberation, but talking does not achieve anything. "Listen to me! The letter *kha* says, 'Oh brothers! Take the name of God and obtain liberation'". (Talking about spiritual life, quoting the scriptures, and still be entangled in worldly pursuits, will not give liberation from bondage. When God's name resides in the heart, and one is tuned into it, then one obtains liberation.)

ससा सरा रचो बरियाई, सर बेधे सब लोग तवाई  
ससा के घर शून गुण होई, इतनी बात न जाने कोई ३३

33. *sassā sarā racho bariyāī, sar bedhe sab log tawāī,*  
*sassā ke ghar sun gun hoī, itnī bāt na jāne koī.*

The letter *sa* says that a huge fire of desires is burning within, and the arrows of passions are destroying people.

The house of all desires is the mind. No one knows how to kill the mind. (In spiritual life desires and passions are likened to fire that consumes one. These arise in the mind. To kill the mind refers to rising above the mind into the region of consciousness. In this region the mind does not function, thus all the passions, desires and cravings are removed.)

हहा हाय हाय में सब जग जाई, हर्ष शोक सब माहि समाई  
हँकरि हँकरि सब बड गयऊ, हाहा मर्म न काहू पयऊ ३४

34. *hahhā hāi hāi men sab jag jāai, harsh shok sab māhin samāī,*  
*hankari hankari sab bad gayau, hāhhā marm na kāhū payau.*

The letter *ha* says that the whole world is in perplexity, engaging in happiness and sorrow. All those who considered themselves great, departed without knowing the secret of overcoming this perplexity. (The perplexity in the world is that people go through life either in joy or in sorrow alternately. People may sigh saying Alas! Alas! or Why me? Why me? And life passes. People who thought themselves great due to their ego went from the world. It is difficult to rise above the perplexities of the world unless one obtains true spiritual teachings.)

क्षक्षा क्षिनमें परलय सब मिटि जाई, छेबपरे तब को समुझाई  
छेबपरे काहु अन्त न पाया, कहहिं कबीर अगमन गोहराया ३५

35. *kshakshā kshinmen parlai sab miti jāī, chhewpare tab ko samujhāī,*  
*chhewpare kāhu ant na pāyā, kahahin kabīr agaman goharāyā.*

The letter *ksha* says that in a moment all will vanish. After death who will then teach you? After death no one can find the end. Kabir calls out repeatedly to realize God while in this life. (We can realize God only while we are alive and have our faculties. Death can strike at any moment and, after death, we have no means of realizing God. Guru Kabir thus strongly urges us - travellers on the journey of life - to awaken from spiritual darkness to spiritual light in this life.)

## विप्रमतीसी – VIPRAMTISI (ABOUT PRIESCRAFT)

The word *vipra* mean a Brahmin or priest, and *tis* means thirty. Guru Kabir, in thirty couplets, relates that there are priests in name only who do not have knowledge of Brahm, the Supreme Self. Thus they make priesthood a business, and they also take part in undesirable behaviour.

सुनहु सबन मिलि विप्रमतीसी, हरि बिनु बूडि नाव भरीसी १  
ब्राह्मण होय के ब्रह्म न जाने, घर मा यज्ञ प्रतिग्रह आने २  
जेहि सिरजा तेहि नहिं पहिचाने, कर्म-धर्म मति बैठि बखाने ३  
ग्रहण अमास और दुईजा, शान्ति पाँति प्रयोजन पूजा ४  
प्रेत कनक मुख अन्तर बासा, आहुति सत्य होम की आसा ५

1. *sunahu saban mili vipramtīsī, hari binu budi nāv bharīsī.*
2. *brāhman hoi ke brahman na jāne, ghar mā yagya pratigrahh āne.*
3. *jehi sirjā tehi nahin pahichāne, karm-dharm mati baithi bakhāne.*
4. *grahan amāwas ovr duijā, shānti pānti prayojan pūjā.*
5. *pret kanak mukh antar bāsā, āhuti satya hom kī āsā.*

1. All of you come and listen to the religion of the Brahmin. Without knowing God he drowns like an overcrowded boat.
2. He is a Brahmin, but does not realize Brahman. He performs rituals of the planets and brings all the gifts home.
3. He does not know the One who created this world, but he would sit and talk endlessly of karmas and righteousness.
4. On the eclipse, the dark night, and the second day of the fortnight, whatever rituals and peace prayer he performs, is mostly for his own benefit.
5. He takes the gold that is put in the mouth of the departed, and he performs the fire ceremony. But his mind is on the offerings he will get for himself.

कुल उत्तम जग माहिं कहावैं, फिर फिर मध्यम कर्म करावैं ६  
सुत दारा मिलि जूठो खाई, हरि भक्तों के छूति लगावैं ७  
कर्म अशौच उच्छिष्टा खाई, मति भ्रष्टा यमलोक सिधाई ८  
नहाय खोरि उत्तम होय आये, विष्णु भक्त देखत दुःख पाये ९  
स्वारथ लागि रहे बे काजा, नाम लेत पावक जिमि डाजा १०

6. *kul utam jag māhi kahāwai, phir phir madhyam karm karāwai.*
7. *sut dārā mili jūthā khāī, hari bhakton ke chhūti lagāwai.*
8. *karm ashouch uchishtā khāī, mati bhrashtā yamllok sidhāī.*

9. *nahāi khori utam hoi aye, vishnu bhakt dekhāt dukh pāye.*  
10. *swārath lāgi rahe ve kājā, nām let pāvak jimi dājā.*

6. In the world he is said to be of a noble caste, but again and again he allows others to do mediocre work.  
7. With his son and wife he eats each other's leftovers, but he says that God's devotee is untouchable.  
8. His actions are impure, and he eats leftovers (food offered to the dead). His thinking is destroyed and he goes to his death.  
9. He takes a bath and feels purified, but as he goes home and sees a devotee of Vishnu, he becomes hurt (discrimination between Vishnu's and Shiva's devotees).  
10. He performs deeds for his own benefit, and if someone tells him the true Name, he burns like fire.

राम कृष्ण की छोड़िनि आसा, पढि गुनि भये कृतम के दासा ११  
कर्म पढें और कर्म को धावै, जेहि पूछा तेहि कर्म दृढावै १२  
निष्कर्मी की निन्दा कीजै, कर्म करे ताहि चित्त दीजै १३  
ऐसी भक्ति भगवन्त की लावै, हरणाकश को पंथ चलावै १४  
देखहु सुमति के परकासा, बिनु अभ्यन्तर भये कृतम के दासा १५

11. *rām krishna kī chhodini āsā, padhi guni bhaye kritam ke dāsā.*  
12. *karm padhe ovr karm ko dhāwai, jehi pūchha tehi karm dridhāwai.*  
13. *nishkarmī ki nindā kījai, karm kare tāhi chit dījai.*  
14. *aisī bhakti bhagwant kī lāwai, harnākush ko panth chalāwai.*  
15. *dekhahu sumati ker parkāsā, binu abhyantar bhaye kritam ke dāsā.*

11. He gives up hope on Ram and Krishna, though he studies and expounds them to others. He, himself, has become subject to artificiality.  
12. He reads about rituals and runs after them. If someone asked him about spiritual matters, he again stresses the rituals.  
13. He blames those who are not attached to rituals, but shows interest in those performing rituals.  
14. He acts like Harnakush to destroy God's devotee, when he sees one full of devotion in his heart.  
15. See how his foolish mind is revealed. Without inner vision he becomes a slave to artificiality.

जाके पूजे पाप न उडे, नाम स्मरणी भव मा बूडे १६  
पाप पुण्य के हाथहिं पासा, मारि जगत का कीन्ह विनासा १७

ई बहनी कुल बहनी कहावै, 'ई' गृह जारे 'ऊ' गृह मारे १८  
बैठे ते घर साहु कहावै, भीतर भेद मन मुखहिं लगावै १९  
ऐसी विधि सुर विप्र भनीजे, नाम लेत पीचासन दीजे २०

16. *jāke pūje pāp na ude, nām smaranī bhow mā bude.*
17. *pāp punya ke hāthahin pāsā, māri jagat kā kīnhh vināsā.*
18. *ī bahnī kul bahni kahāwai, ī grihh jāre u grihh māre.*
19. *baithe te ghar sāhu kahāwai, bhītar bhed manmukhahin lagāwai.*
20. *aisī vidhi sur vipra bhanīje, nām let pīchāsan dīje.*

16. The ones he worships cannot remove his sins, yet he recites their names, while he drowns in the world.
17. Holding the two dice of sin and virtue he judges people, and has done great damage to the world.
18. This fire of sin and virtue burns the whole clan. It has burned this house (world) and that world (heaven).
19. Sitting in the house he is thought of as honourable, but inside he harbours evil secrets. He uses his mind to plunder others.
20. The Brahmin and his descendants behave like this. In the name of God people give him a high seat.

बूडि गये नहिं आपु सँभारा, ऊँच नीच कहु काहि जोहारा २१  
ऊँच नीच है मध्य की बानी, एकै पवन एक है पानी २२  
एकै मटिया एक कुम्हारा, एक सबन का सिरजनहारा २३  
एक चाक सब चित्र बनाई, नाद-बिन्द के मध्य समाई २४  
व्यापक एक सकल की ज्योति, नाम धरे का कहिये भौती २५

21. *budi gaye nahin āpu sambhārā, unch nīch kāhu kahi johārā.*
22. *unch nīch hai madhya kī bānī, ekai pawan ek hai pānī.*
23. *ekai matiyā ek kumhārā, ek saban kā sirjanhārā.*
24. *ek chāk sab chitra banāī, nād-bind ke madhya samāī.*
25. *vyāpak ek sakal kī jyoti, nām dhare kā kahiye bhowtī.*

21. He could not save himself and drowns. He speaks of high and low, but does not salute anyone.
22. He thinks of high and low castes, but does he not know that air and water are the same for both.
23. The clay is one, and the potter is one, and the creator of all is the same.
24. The pottery wheel is one but made any forms. The whole creation is confined in the seed.

25. One light pervades the whole creation, but many names are given to all the creatures.

राक्षस करनी देव कहावै, वाद करे गोपाल न भावै २६  
हंस देह तजि न्यारा होई, ताकर जाति कहै धौं कोई २७  
स्याह सफेद कि राता पियरा, अबरण बरण कि ताता सियरा २८  
हिन्दू तुरूक कि बूढो बारा, नारि पुरुष का करहु विचारा २९  
कहिये काहि कहा नहिं माना, दास कबीर सोई पै जाना ३०

26. *rākshas karnī deo kahāwai, bād kare gopāl na bhāwai.*  
27. *hans dehh taji nyārā hoi, tākar jāti kahai dhown koī.*  
28. *syāhh saphed ki rātā piyārā, awran baran ki tātā siyārā.*  
29. *hindū turuk ki būdho bārā, nāri purush kā karahu bichārā.*  
30. *kahiye kāhi kahā nahi mānā, dās kabīr soī pai jānā.*

26. His actions are devilish, but he is called a god. He argues at length, but does not like Gopal.  
27. When the soul becomes separated from the body, who can say what is its caste?  
28. Who can say whether the soul is black, white, red or yellow, or whether it has a caste or not, or whether it is hot or cold?  
29. Who can say if the soul is a Hindu or Turk, or old or young, and whether it is female or male. Think about this!  
30. Kabir says, “No one pays attention to what I say. Whoever accepts my word will understand my teaching.”

साखी-बहा है बहि जात है, कर गहै चहुँ ओर .  
जो कहा नहिं मानै, तो दे धक्का दुई और १

*sākhi: bahā hai bahi jāt hai, kar gahai chahu ohr,*  
*jo kahā nahin mānai, toh de dhakkā dui ovr*

People are being swept away in the water of ignorance. They wander in all directions. If they do not listen to true instructions, then leave them to their own fate.

## खहरा - KAHARA

Kahara is a song set in the morning rhythm. Guru Kabir sings this kahara to teach the perishability of mundane existence, and to awaken people sleeping in delusion.

### कहरा-१ Kahara 1

सहज ध्यान रहु सहज ध्यान रहु, गुरु के वचन समाई हो १  
मेली सृष्टि चरा चित राखहु, रहहु दृष्टि लौ लाई हो २  
जस दुख देखि रहहु यह औसर, अस मुख होइहैं पाये हो ३  
जो खुटकार बेगि नहिं लागे, हृदय निवारहु कोहू हो ४  
मुक्ति की डोरी गाढि जनि खँचहु, तब बझि हैं बड रोहु हो ५

1. *sahaj dhyān rahu sahaj dhyān rahu,*  
*guru ke bachan samāī ho.*
2. *melī shrishti charā chit rākhahu,*  
*rahahu drishti low lāī ho.*
3. *jas dukh dekhi rahahu yahh owsar,*  
*as mukh hoihain pāye ho.*
4. *jo khutkār begi nahin lāge,*  
*hridai niwārahu kohū ho.*

5. *mukti kī dorī gādhi jani khainchahu,*  
*tab bajhi hain bad rohu ho.*

1. Always remain in *sahaj* (meditation). Yes! Remain in *sahaj* meditation. Remain absorbed in the teachings of the guru. (Sahaj is the state of easy or natural realization of your unity with the Divine).
2. Make compromise with the world and keep your restless mind steadfast. See all with the eye of love.
3. Just as you experience suffering now (without meditation), just so you will have happiness afterwards.
4. If you are not quickly able to control the mind, then at least try to give up anger.
5. Do not pull forcefully on the string of liberation. You will then control the big fish (mind). (Liberation cannot be obtained forcefully. It is a steady spiritual progress through control of the mind, and meditation.)

मनुवहि कहहु रहहु मन मारे, खिजुवा खीजि न बोले हो ६  
मानू मीत मितैयो न छोडे, कबऊँ गाँठि न खोले हो ७  
भोगहु भोग भुक्ति जनि भुलहु, योग युक्ति तन साधहु हो ८

जो यह भाँति करहु मतवलिया, ता मत को चित बाँधु हो ९  
नहिं तो ठाकुर है अति दारुण, करिहै चाल कुचाली हो १०

6. *manuwahin kahahu rahahu man māre,*  
*khijuwā khīji na bole ho.*

7. *mānu mīt mitaiyyo na chhode,*  
*kabaun gān̄thi na khole ho.*

8. *bhogahu bhog bhukti jani bhulahu,*  
*yog yukti tan sadhāhu ho.*

9. *jo yahh bhānti karahu matwaliā,*  
*tā mat ko chit bandhahu ho.*

10. *nahin toh thākur hai ati dārun,*  
*karihai chāl kuchālī ho.*

6. Gently say to your mind: “Remain in your limits, O Man of anger! Do not speak harshly to your mind”.
7. Do not give up the friendship of the one you befriended (God). Do not relinquish your duty.

8. You enjoy pleasures in the world, but do not forget to control your body through yoga.
9. Once you become intoxicated with this type of practice, then you should strongly hold on to it.
10. But if you follow the evil ways, then the Master (Yama - death), who is very cruel, will deal with you harshly.

बाँधि मारि डण्ड सब लेहीं, छूटहिं तब मतवाली हो ११  
जबहिं सावत आनि पहुँचे, पीठ साँटि भल टुटिहैं हो १२  
ठाढे लोग कुटुम सब देखैं, कहै काहू के न छुटिहैं हो १३  
एक तो निहुरी पाँव पर बिनवै, बिनति किये नहिं माने हो १४  
अनचीन्हे रहेउ न कियहु चिन्हारी, सो कैसे पहिचनबेउ हो १५

11. *bāndhi māri dand sab lehīn,  
chhūtahin tab matwālī ho.*
12. *jabahin sāwat āni pahunche,  
pīth sānti bhal tutahain ho.*
13. *thādhe log kutum sab dekhain,  
kahai kāhu ke na chhutihain ho.*
14. *ek toh nihurī pāwn par binawe,  
binti kiye nahin māne ho.*
15. *anchīnhe raheu na kiyahu chinhārī,  
so kaise pahichanbeu ho.*

11. He will bind you and beat you with a strong club, and you will then forget all your foolishness.
12. When the Messenger of Death comes, he will break his clubs on your back.
13. All of your relatives will stand gazing, but none of their pleadings will release you.
14. One of them will bow down at the feet of the Messenger of Death and plead, but the Messenger of Death will not pay any heed.
15. You did not recognize Him (God), in spite of the advice of others. How then can He recognize you?

लीन्ह बुलाय बात नहिं पूछै, केवट गर्ब तन बोले हो १६  
जाकर गाँठि सँमर कछु नाहीं, सो निर्धनिया होय डोले हो १७  
जिनि सम युक्ति अगमनकै राखिन, धरनि मच्छ भरि डेहरिहो १८  
जेकर हाथ पाँव कछु नाहीं, धरन लागि तेहि सोहरि हो १९  
पेलना अक्षत पेलि चलु बौरै, तीर-तीर का टोवहू हो २०

16. *līnhh bulāi bāt nahin pūchhai,  
kewat garb tan bole ho.*
17. *jākar gānthi sanmar kachhu nāhin,  
so nirdhaniyā hoi dole ho.*
18. *jini sam yukti agamankai rākhin,  
dharani machh bhari dehariya ho.*
19. *jekar hāth pāwn kachhu nāhīn,  
dharan lāgi tehi sohari ho.*
20. *pelnā akshat peli chalu bowre,  
tīr-tīr kā towahū ho.*

16. Before these sufferings, S called out to you, but you did not seek his instruction. Instead, you spoke egotistically.

17. In your pocket (heart) there is no passage money (faith, knowledge and mental control). You are like a pauper wandering everywhere.

18. If you had secured the passage money, then you would have easily caught the crocodile (mind), and controlled it in the basket of the heart.

19. The mind has no hands and feet, thus it cannot fight. With spiritual strength you can easily control and concentrate it.

20 You have a huge net (knowledge of yoga) at your disposal. Why don't you use it to catch the fish (mind)? Why are you wandering from bank to bank? (Wandering from bank to bank means to be pursuing various activities and doctrines which do not allow control of the mind.)

उथले रहहु परहु जनि गहिरे, मति हाथहु की खोवहु हो २१  
तर कै धाम ऊपर कै भुँभुरी, छाँह कतहुँ नहिं पायहु हो २२  
ऐसेनि जानि पसीझेहु सीझेहु, कस न छतुरिया छायहु हो २३  
जो कछु खेल कियहु सो कियहु, बहुरि खेल कस होई हो २४  
सासु- ननद दोऊ देत उलाटन, रहहु लाज मुख गोई हो २५

21. *uthale rahahu parahu jani gahire,  
mati hāthahu kī khowahu ho.*
22. *tar kai dhām upar kai bhumbhari,  
chhānhh katahu nahin pāyahu ho.*
23. *aiseni jāni pasījhehu sījhehu,  
kas na chhaturiyā chhāyahu ho.*
24. *jo kuchh khel kiyahu so kiyahu,  
bahuri khel kas hoi ho.*

25. *sāsu-nanad dou det ulātan,*  
*rahahu lāj mukh goi ho.*

21. Do not go into the deep water, but remain in the shallow water, so you do not lose what you already have in hand. (Deep water is the samadhi of hatha yoga, where the consciousness is “lost”. The shallow water is the *sahaj samadhi* in which you remain conscious, and realize your union with the Divine.)

22. Those without Self-knowledge suffer from burning inwardly through ignorance, and outwardly being tortured by distress. They do not find any shade (peace) anywhere.

23. O ignorant people! Why are you burning yourself in the fire (passions)? Why do you not make a small hut and take shelter (sheltering in the small hut is to take shelter at the feet of the S.)

24. Whatever games of pleasures you have played, they are finished. You will not get this opportunity again after you will have lost the human life.

25. Your mother-in-law (Maya) and sister-in-law (bad intellect) will taunt you, and then you will hide your face in shame.

गुरु भौ ढील गोनी भइ लचपच, कहा न मानेहु मोरा हो २६  
ताजी तुर्की कबहुँ न साधेहु, चढेहु काठ के घोरा हो २७  
ताल झाँझ भल बाजत आवै, कहरा सब कोइ नाचे हो २८  
जेहि रंग दुलहा ब्याहन आये, दुलहिनि तेहि रंग राँचे हो २९  
नौका अछत खवै नहिं जाने, कैसे कै लगबेहु तीरा हो ३०  
कहहिं कबीर राम रस माते, जोलहा दास कबीरा हो ३१

26. *guru bhow dhīl gonī bhai lachpach,*  
*kahā na mānehu morā ho.*

27. *tajī turkī kabahu na sadhehu,*  
*chadhehu kāth ke ghorā ho.*

28. *tāl jhānjh bhal bājat āwai,*  
*kaharā sab koi nāche ho.*

29. *jehi rang dulhā byāhan āye,*  
*dulahini tehi rang rānche ho.*

30. *nowkā achhat khewai nahin jāne,*  
*kaise kai lagbehu tīrā ho.*

31. *kahihin kabīr rām ras māte,*  
*jolahā dās kabīrā ho.*

26. Now the mast of your ship is loose, and the ropes are weakened. You did not listen to my advice. (Mast refers to the spine and the ropes represent the nerves and blood vessels. With age, the spine becomes bent and all the other tissues weaken with age.)
27. You did not develop the skill of riding an Arabian horse (perfect knowledge), but you settle for riding the wooden horse (materialistic life, passions and desires.)
28. People are playing their cymbals in rhythm, singing their songs, and dancing to the music. (People are occupied in enjoying the materialistic pleasures.)
29. In whatever color the bridegroom comes to the wedding, the bride must also dress in the same color. (The bridegroom is the mind, the bride is the intellect, and both seek the same worldly pleasures.)
30. When the boat of the human body was in good condition, you were not aware of its proper use. How will you cross the worldly ocean?
31. Kabir says that he is intoxicated with the essence of God. The weaver Kabir is now the servant of God.

## कहरा-२ Kahara 2

मत सुनु मानिक मत सुनु मानिक, हृदया बन्द निवारहु हो १  
 अटपट कुम्हरा करै कुम्हरैया, चमरा गाँव न बाँचे हो २  
 नित उठि कोरिया पेट भरत है, छिपिया आँगन नाँचे हो ३  
 नित उठि नौवा नाव चढतु है, बेरहि बेरा बोरे हो ४  
 राउर की कछु खबरि न जानहु, कैसे कै झगरा निबेरहु हो ५

1. *mat sunu mānik mat sunu mānik, hridayā band nivārahu ho.*
2. *atpat kumharā karai kumharaiyā, chamrā gāwn na bānche ho.*
3. *nit uthi koriyā pet bharat hai, chhipiyā āngan nānche ho.*
4. *nit uthi nowwā nāw chadhatu hai, berahi berā bore ho.*
5. *rāur kī kachhu khabari na jānahu, kaise kai jhagarā niberahu ho.*

1. O man, you are a precious gem. Listen, please listen to my true instruction. Give up the obstacle of ignorance that's in your heart.
2. Your mind is like the potter making pots, but works unsystematically (involved in one thing after another, both good and bad). The cobbler (consciousness) has no proper resting-place in the village (body).
3. The weaver (senses) gets up daily and fill his belly (with sense gratification). And the cloth printer (ego) dances in the courtyard (the world is intoxicated with egoism.)
4. Every day the barber (lust) boards the boat (body), and keeps on drowning the boat. (Lust assails the body.)

5. O man! You do not know anything of your true self (soul). How will you settle the disputes (between the mind and senses?)

एक गाँव में पाँच तरुनि बसे, जेहिमा जेठ जेठानी हो ६  
आपन आपन झगरा प्रकासिनि, पिया सों प्रीति नसाइनि हो ७  
भैंसिन माहिं रहत नित बकुका, तिकुला ताकि न लीन्हा हो ८  
गाइन माहिं बसेउ नहिं कबहुँ, कैसेक पद पहिचनबेउ हो ९  
पन्थी पन्थ पूछि नहिं लीन्हा, मूढहिं मूढ गँवारा हो १०

6. *ek gāwn men pānch taruni base, jehimā jeth jethānī ho.*

7. *āpan āpan jhagarā prakāsini, piyā so prīti nasāini ho.*

8. *bhaisan māhi rahat nit bakulā, tikulā tāki na līnhā ho.*

9. *gāin māhi baseu nahi kabahu, kaisek pad pahichanbeu ho.*

10. *panthī panth pūchhi nahi līnhā, mudhahi mudh ganwārā ho.*

6. There are five maidens (5 senses) in one village (body) and with them are the bride's senior brother-in-law (mind) and his wife (desire.)

7. All the five maidens quarrel among themselves for their separate satisfactions. They thus lose love for the husband (soul) not caring what happens to him.

8. The crane (mind) lives among the water buffaloes (senses) and, being preoccupied, it does not see the soul.

9. How can the person who has not lived among the cows (intellect, discriminative power), recognize his eternal abode?

10. The traveler did not enquire about the right path to the saints and has started to follow the foolish people.

घाट छोडि कस औघट रेंगहु, कैसे कै लगबेहु तीरा हो ११  
जतइत के धन हेरिन ललचिन, कोदइत के मन दौरा हो १२  
दुई चकरी जनि दरर पसारहु, तब पैहौ ठीक ठौरा हो १३  
प्रेम बाण एक सतगुरु दीन्हो, गोढो तीर कमाना हो १४  
दास कबीर कीन्ह यह कहरा, महरा माँहि समाना हो १५

11. *ghāt chhodi kas owghat rahuge, kaise kai lagbehu tīrā ho.*

12. *jaiet ke dhan herin lalchin, kodait ke man dōwrā ho.*

13. *duī chakrī jani darar pasārahu, tab paihow thīk thowrā ho.*

14. *prem bān ek s dīnho, gadho tīr kamānā ho.*

15. *dās kabīr kīnh yāhh kaharā, maharā māhin samānā ho.*

11. You have given up the proper landing place (good company) and crawl where there is no landing (bad company). How can you reach the other shore (liberation)?
12. Because of greed for wealth you search here and there, and your mind is running after cheap grain (material pursuits.)
13. If you are not crushed between the two grindstones (dualities: sin and virtue; good and bad; love and hate), then you will reach the proper place of liberation.
14. S pulled the bowstring tightly and shot the arrow of love.
15. Kabir says the devotee who sings this song will merge into the Great One (God).

### कहरा-३ Kahara 3

राम नाम का सेवहु बीरा, दूरि नाहि दूरि आशा हो १  
 और देव का पूजहु बौरै, ई सब झूठी आशा हो २  
 ऊपर ऊपर कहा भौ बौरै, मनुवा अजहूँ बारो हो ३  
 तन के वृध कहा भौ बौरै, मनुवा अजहूँ बारो हो ४

1. *rām nām kā sewahu bīrā, dūri nāhi dūri āshā ho.*
2. *owr dev kā pūjahu bowre, ī sab jhūthī āshā ho.*
3. *upar ujar kahā bhow bowre, bhītar ajahun karo ho.*
4. *tan ke vridhh kahā bhow bowre, manuwā ajahūn bāro ho.*

1. O brave mind! Worship God's name. If you relinquish your desires, then He is quite near.
2. Why do you foolishly worship other gods? Ruining your hopes on them is false.
3. O foolish man! Why are you clean only on the outside? Inside you still remain black.
4. What does it matter if your body is getting old. Your mind even now is still young.

मुख के दाँत गये का भौ बौरै, भीतर दाँत लोहे के हो ५  
 फिर-फिर चना चबाउ विषय के, काम क्रोध मद लोभ के हो ६  
 तन की सकल संज्ञा घटि गयऊ, मनहिं दिलासा दूना हो ७  
 कहहिं कबीर सुनो हो सन्तो, सकल सयाना पहुँना हो ८

5. *mukh ke dānt gaye kā bhow bowre, bhītar dānt lohe ke ho.*
6. *phir-phir chanā chabāu vishai ke, kam krodh mad lobh ke ho.*
7. *tan kī sakal sangyā ghati gayau, manahin dilāsā dūnā ho.*
8. *kahahin kabīr suno ho santo, sakal sayānā pahunā ho.*

5. O foolish man! What does it matter if the teeth from your mouth are gone? Inside, you have teeth of iron (hard hearted.)
6. Again and again you chew the grains of passions. They are lust, anger, ego and greed.
7. All the strength of the body has gone by age, but you double your effort to satisfy your desires.
8. Kabir says, “Brothers, listen to me. All your wisdom has become valueless.”

#### कहरा-४ – Kahara 4

ओढन मोरा राम नाम, मैं रामहि का बनजारा हो १  
राम नाम का करहु बनिजिया, हरि मोरा हटवाई हो २  
सहस्र नाम का करों पसारा, दिन दिन होत सवाई हो ३  
जाके देव वेद पछ राखा, ताके होत हटवाई हो ४  
कानि तराजू सेर तिनि पउवा, तुर्किनि ढोल बजाई हो ५  
सेर पसेरी पूरा कैले, पासंग कतहुँ न जाई हो ६  
कहहिं कबीर सुनो हो सन्तो, जोर चला जहँडाई हो ७

1. *odhan morā rām nām, main rāmahi kā banjārā ho.*
2. *rām nām kā karahu banijiyā, hari morā hatwāī ho.*
3. *sahastra nām kā karon pasārā, din din hot sawāī ho.*
4. *jāke dev ved pachh rākhā, tāke hot hatwāī ho.*
5. *kāni tarāju ser tini pauwā, turkini dhol bajāī ho.*
6. *ser paserī purā kaile, pāsang katahun na jāī ho.*
7. *kahahin kabīr suno ho santo, jor chalā jahandāī ho.*

1. I cover myself with the name of God. My life’s business is definitely with Him.
2. I will conduct my business with Him because he is my commission agent.
3. If you invest (recite) the thousand names of God daily, then day by day the merit earned will increase by twenty-five percent.
4. All the priests who take the name of the various gods and the Vedas are also in business.
5. But their scales (minds) are crooked. They weigh three-quarters of the weight and say that it is the full weight. They beat the drums to impress people that their scales are correct. (Priests of each religion do not impart full spiritual teachings, and boast of its true value, and do not value other religions equally.)
6. Weighing in this crooked way, they weigh five portions when in fact they weigh half of them. The difference remains with them.
7. Kabir says, “Listen to me, O Saints! They display their power but they remain deceived”.

## कहरा-५ - Kahara 5

राम नाम भजु राम नाम भजु,चेति देखु मन माहीं हो १  
लक्ष करोरि जोरि धन गाडे, चलत डोलावत बाँही हो २  
दादा-बाबा औ परपाजा, जिन्हके यह भुई भँडे हो ३  
आँधर भये हियहु की फूटी,तिन्ह काहे सब छाँडे हो ४  
ई संसार असार को धन्धा, अन्तकाल कोई नाहीं हो ५  
उपजत बिनसत बार न लागे, ज्यों बादर की छाँही हो ६  
नाता-गोता कुल कुटुम्ब सब,इन्ह कर कौन बडाई हो ७  
कहहिं कबीर एक राम भजे बिनु, बूडी सब चतुराई हो ८

1. *rām nām bhaju rām nām bhaju, cheti dekhu man māhīn ho.*
2. *laksh karori jori dhan gāde, chalat dolāwat bānhi ho.*
3. *dādā-bābā ow parpājā, jinhke yahh bhuīn bhānde ho.*
4. *āndhar bhaye hiyahu kī phūṭī, tinhh kāhe sab chhānde ho.*
5. *ī sansār asār ko dhandhā, antkāl koi nāhīn ho.*
6. *upjat binsat bār na lāge, jyon bādar kī chhānhīn ho.*
7. *nātā-gotā kul-kutumb sab, inhh kar kown badāī ho.*
8. *kahin kabīr ek rām bhaje binu, budī sab chaturāī ho.*

1. Recite God's name, O man! Recite God's name. Look deeply into your mind and be aware.
2. You have collected a great deal of wealth and have safely buried (secured) it. But you will leave the world empty-handed.
3. Your grandfather, great-grandfather, and great great grandfather possessed land and pots (valuable articles).
4. Why did they leave these and go? Are you not aware, or are your inner eyes (perception) blind?
5. The world is engaged in a futile business. In the end no one stands by you, and you depart alone.
6. Birth and death are transient and take no time. They are like the shadows of passing clouds.
7. What is there to boast about relatives, lineage, clan and family when all are transient?
8. Kabir says that without devotion to God's name all of your cleverness drowned.

## खहरा ६ - Kahara 6

राम नाम बिनु राम नाम बिनु, मिथ्या जन्म गमायो हो १  
 सेमर सेइ सुवा ज्यों जहँडे, ऊन परे पछिताई हो २  
 जैसे मदपि गाँठि अर्थ दै, घरहुकि अकिल गमाई हो ३  
 स्वादे वोद्र भरे धौं कैसे, ओसै प्यास न जाई हो ४  
 दर्ब हीन जैसे पुरुषारथ, मनहीं माँहि तबाई हो ५  
 गाँठि रतन मर्म नहिं जाने, पारखि लीन्हा छोरी हो ६  
 कहहिं कबीर यह अवसर बीते, रतन न मिले बहोरी हो ७

1. *rām nām binu rām nām binu, mithyā janm gamāyo ho.*
2. *semar sei suwā jyon jahande, un pare pachhitāi ho.*
3. *jaise madpi gānhi arth dai, gharahuki akil gamāi ho.*
4. *swāde bodra bhare dhown kaise, osai pyās na jāi ho.*
5. *darb hīn jaise purushārath, manahīn mānhi tabāi ho.*
6. *gānhi ratan marm nahin jāne, parkhi līnhā chhorī ho.*
7. *kahahin kabīr yahh owsar bīte, ratan na mile bahorī ho.*

1. Without of the name of God, O man! you spend your life in delusion.
2. You're like the foolish parrot on the silk cotton tree. It regrets when it pecks the pod and the cotton flies away.
3. You're like the drunken man who gives away the money in his pocket. He loses his sense, not caring for his household.
4. How can you fill your belly with the mere taste of food, and how can you quench your thirst by licking dewdrops?
5. How can a pauper invest in the welfare of others? He is wrapped up in his own misery.
6. You possess a precious gem (soul) but you do not know its secret. The appraiser thus snatches it from you.
7. Kabir says, "If you lose this opportunity (birth) you will not again get this precious gem."

### कहरा-७ - Kahara 7

रहूँ सँभारे राम विचारे, कहता हौं जे पुकारे हो १  
 मूँड मुँडाय फूल के बैटे, मुद्रा पहिर मँजूसा हो २  
 तेहि ऊपर कछु छार लपेटे, भितर-भितर घर मूसा हो ३  
 गाँव बसतु हँ गर्भ भारती, बाम काम हँकारा हो ४  
 मोहन जहाँ तहाँ लै जइहँ, नहिं पत रहल तुम्हारा हो ५  
 माँक्ष मँझरिया बसै सो जानै, जन होइहँ सो थीरा हो ६  
 निर्भय भये तहाँ गुरु की नगरिया, सुख सोवै दास कबीरा हो ७

1. rahahun sambhāre rām vichāre, kahatā hown je pukāre ho.
2. mūnd mudāi phūli ke baithe, mudrā pahir manjūsā ho.
3. tehi upar kachhu chhār lapete, bhitar-bhitar ghar mūsā ho.
4. gāwn bastu hain garbh bhārati, bām kām hankārā ho.
5. mohan jahān tahān lai jaihain, nahin pat rahal tumhārā ho.
6. mānjh manjhariyā basai so jānai, jan hoihain so thīrā ho.
7. nirbhai bhaye tahān guru kī nagariyā, sukh sowai dās kabīrā.

1. Always remember and contemplate God. I proclaim this to you loudly.
2. You shave your head and you are puffed up with pride. You wear earrings and you sit in the cave.
3. You smear your body with ashes, but inwardly your house is plundered. (These refer to the Nath yogis. Plundering refers to the passions of lust, anger, greed, etc. that rob one of equanimity.)
4. The renunciate dwells in the middle of the village, and is filled with pride and lust.
5. Attachment will make you wander here and there, and you will lose your self-respect.
6. He who knows the dweller in the midst of the heart will be a steadfast person.
7. In the city of the guru, the servant Kabir is fearless, and sleeps blissfully.

### खहरा ८ - Kahara 8

क्षेम कुशल औ सही सलामत, कहहु कौन को दीन्हा हो १  
 आवत जात दोऊ विधि लूटे, सर्वतंग हरि लीन्हा हो २  
 सुर नर मुनि जति पीर औलिया, मीरा पैदा कीन्हा हो ३  
 कहाँ लौ गनों अनंत कोटि लौं, सकल पयाना कीन्हा हो ४  
 पानी पवन आकाश जायँगे, चन्द्र जायँगे शूरा हो ५  
 ये भी जायँगे वो भी जायँगे, परत न काहू के पूरा हो ६  
 कुशल कहत-कहत जग बिनसे, कुशल काल की फाँसी हो ७  
 कहहिं कबीर सारी दुनिया बिनसे, रहे राम अविनाशी हो ८

1. kshem kushal ow sahī salāmat, kahahu kown ko dīnhā ho.
2. āwat jāt dou vidhi lūte, sarvtang hari līnhā ho.
3. sur nar muni jati pīr owliyā, mīrā paidā kīnhā ho.
4. kahān low ganon anant koti lown, sakal payānā kīnhā ho.
5. pāni pavan ākāsh jāyenge, chandra jāyenge shūrā ho.
6. ye bhī jāyenge wo bhī jāyenge, parat na kāhu ke pārā ho.
7. kushal kahat-kahat jag binse, kushal kāl kī phānsī ho.
8. kahahin kabīr sārī duniyā binse, rahe rām avināshī ho.

1. Tell me, to whom have bliss, peace and well being been given? (Bliss is needed for the soul; peace is needed for the mind, and well being is needed for the whole person.)
2. People are plundered in both coming (birth) and going (death). All are robbed in this way.
3. The gods, men, ascetics, renunciates, the priests and great personalities were all born in this world.
4. There were millions of them. For how long can I count them? All of them departed from the world.
5. Water, air, and space will all vanish. So also will the moon and the sun.
6. These things and those beings will vanish. They have not attained perfection here.
7. People are prone to saying “All is well”, “All is well”, but this uttering becomes the trap of death.
8. Kabir says that the whole world will vanish, and only God will remain as the Eternal.

### खहरा ९ - Kahara 9

ऐसनि देह निरालय बौरै, मुवल छुवै नहिं कोई हो १  
 डण्डवा की डोरिया तोरि लराइन, जो कोटिन धन होईहो २  
 उर्ध निश्वासा उपजि तरासा, हँकराइनि परिवारा हो ३  
 जो कोई आवै बेगि चलावै, पल एक रहन न पाई हो ४  
 चन्दन चीर चतुर सब लेपै, गरे गज मुक्ता के हारा हो ५  
 चौंसठ गीध मुये तन लूटै, जम्बूकन वोद्र बिदारा हो ६  
 कहहिं कबीर सुनो हो सन्तो, ज्ञान हीन मति हीना हो ७  
 एक-एक दिना याहि गति सब की, कहाँ राव कहाँ दीना हो ८

1. *aisani dehh nirālai bowre, muwal chhuwe nahin koī ho.*
2. *dandawā kī doriyā tori larāin, jo kotin dhan hoīho.*
3. *urdh nishwāsā upaji tarāsā, hankrāini pariwārā ho.*
4. *jo koi āwai begi chalāwai, pal ek rahan na pāi ho.*
5. *chandan chīr chatur sab lepai, gare gaj muktā ke hārā ho.*
6. *chownsath gīdh muye tan lūtai, jambūkan bodra bidārā ho.*
7. *kahahin kabīr suno ho santo, gyān hīn mati hīnā ho.*
8. *ek-ek dinā yahi gati sab kī, kahān rāw kahān dīnā ho.*

1. See what little value your body has. After death no one wants to touch it.

2. Even if you leave millions in wealth, people will cut your waistband (to take the money tied in it.)
3. When your breathing becomes labored, you are sorely afraid. You call all your family members close to you.
4. Whoever comes after your death will say to remove the body quickly. You will not be able to remain a moment longer.
5. Your wise relatives will place the sandal paste on your forehead, and drape you in new clothes. They will place a garland of ivory around your neck.
6. Your body might as well be fit to be plucked by vultures, and the abdomen torn by jackals.
7. Kabir says, "O noble people! Listen to me! All are deficient in proper knowledge and wisdom."
8. One day every body will face the same condition, whether he is a king or a pauper".

### खहरा १० - Kahara 10

हों सबहिन में हों ना हों मोहिं, बिलग-बिलग बिलगाइल हो १  
 ओढन मोर एक पिछौरा, लोग बोलें एकताई हो २  
 एक निरन्तर अन्तर नाहीं, ज्यों शशि घट जल झाँई हो ३  
 एक समान कोई समुझत नाहीं, जाते जरा- मरण भ्रम जाई हो ४  
 रैन दिवस ये तहवाँ नाहीं, नारि-पुरुष समताई हो ५  
 हों मैं बालक बूढो नाहीं, ना मोरे चिलकाई हो ६  
 त्रिविधि रहों सभनि में बरतौं, नाम मोर रमुराई हो ७  
 पठये न जाऊँ आने नहिं आवौं, सहज रहों दुनियाई हो ८  
 जोलहा तान बान नहिं जाने, फाटि बिने दश ठाँई हो ९  
 गुरु परताप जिन्हे जस भाखो, जन विरले सो पाई हो १०  
 अनन्त कोटि मन हीरा बेधो, फिटकी मोल न पाई हो ११  
 सुर-नर मुनि जाके खोज परे हैं, कछु-कछु कबिरन पाई हो १२

*1. hown sabahin men hown nā hown mohin, bilag-bilag bilgāil ho.*

2. *odhan mor ek pichhowrā, log bolain ektāi ho.*
3. *ek nirantar antar nāhīn, jyon shashi ghat jal jhānyī ho.*
4. *ek samān koi samujhat nāhīn, jāte jarā-maran bhram jāi ho.*
5. *rain diwas ye tahawān nāhīn, nāri-purush samtāi ho.*
6. *hown main bālak būdho nāhīn, nā more chilkāi ho.*
7. *trividhi rahown sabhani men bartown, nām mor ramurāi ho.*
8. *pathaye na jāun āne nahin āwown, sahaj rahown duniyāi ho.*
9. *jolhā tān bān nahin jāne, phāti bine dash thānyī ho.*
10. *guru partāp jinhe jas bhākho, jan birle so pāi ho.*
11. *anant koti man hīrā bedho, phitkī mol na pāi ho.*
12. *sur-nar-muni jāke khoj pare hain, kachhu-kachhu kabiran pāi ho.*

1. I am in all, and yet I am not in all. I see myself differentiated in all forms. (This is a state of samadhi or union with God. This is beyond all forms, and yet manifests in all forms).
2. I am covered with a single sheet (*Maya* = prakriti = undifferentiated matter), and people say that I am united with them.
3. I am one and am always present in all, just as the single moon reflects in jars of water.
4. I am the same in all, but people do not understand. If they understood this unity, their delusion about old age and death will vanish.
5. There is no night or day, and the female and male are the same. (The soul, when realized, is beyond the dualities of day and night or male and female.)
6. I am not a youth and not an old man. There is no instability in me.
7. In the three stages of life (infancy, youth and old age), I am the same. My name is *nirgun rai*.
8. If one sends me I do not go, and if one calls me I do not come. I am Omnipresent and remain in the stage of *sahaj* in the world.
9. The weaver who does not know the difference between the warp and the weft in weaving, will weave a fabric torn in ten places. (The devotee who does not know how to worship the Supreme Being gets lost in worshipping multiple deities. This could also mean that not knowing the Absolute, he worships the physical, symbolized by ten doors of the body).
10. There are rare persons who obtain the grace of the guru and understand his teachings.
11. The mind engaged in countless forms of worship, causes the diamond-like soul to lose its value.
12. The gods, noble men and sages are in search of the Absolute. Only a few have found some trace of Him.

## खहरा ११ - Kahara 11

ननदी गे तै विषम सोहागिनि, तै निन्दले संसारा गे १

आवत देखि मैं एक संग सूती, तैं औ खसम हमारा गे २  
 मोरे बाप के दुइ मेहररुआ, मैं अरु मोर जेठानी गे ३  
 जब हम रहलि रसिक के जग में, तबहि बात जग जानी गे ४  
 माई मोरि मुवलि पिता के संगे, सरा रचि मुवल सँगाती गे ५  
 आपुहि मुवलि और ले मुवलि, लोग कुटुम संग साथी गे ६  
 जौं लौं श्वास रहे घट भीतर तौ लौं कुशल परी हैं गे ७  
 कहहिं कबीर जब श्वास निकरि गौ, मन्दिर अनल जरी हैं गे ८

1. nanadī ge tai visham sohāgini, tain nindale sansārā ge;
2. āwat dekhi main ek sang sūti, tain ow khasam hamārā ge.
3. more bāp ke dui mehararuwā, main aru mor jethānī ge.
4. jab ham rahali rasik ke jag men, tabahi bāt jag jānī ge.
5. māt mori muwali pitā ke sange, sarā rachi muwal sangātī ge.
6. āpuhi muwali ovr le muwali, log kutum sang sāthī ge.
7. jown lown swās rahe ghat bhītar, town lown kushal pari hain ge.
8. kahahin kabīr jab swās nikari gow, mandir anal jarī hain ge.

1. O my sister-in-law! What an evil married woman you are. You are sleeping with the whole world. (The one speaking is a bride, or good intellect, and the sister-in-law is bad intellect. Bad intellect is persuasive and is everywhere in the whole world).
2. When I came I saw that you were sleeping with my husband (soul). You have deceived him.
3. My father (ego) has two wives, one is me and the other is my elder brother-in-law's wife (ignorance.)
4. When we lived with our husbands in the world, everybody knew about it (bad intellect, good intellect and the soul are together and the world knows it).
5. My mother died along with my father, and along with them all the other companions died. (The mother is *Maya* or illusion and the father is ego. All the relations are the passions and desires). All of these died on the realization of God.
6. My mother (*Maya*) died along with others. Even her friends and relatives died with her. (With God realization, *Maya*, passions, desires, rites and rituals, all perish).
7. As long as there is breath in the body, so long there can be benefit in this life. There is a chance to obtain God realization.
8. Kabir says that when the breath leaves, the temple (body) is burnt in the fire.

## खहरा १२ - Kahara 12

ई माया रघुनाथ की बौरी, खेलन चली अहेरा हो १  
 चतुर चिकनिया चुनि-चुनि मारे, कोइ न राखे न्यारा हो २

मौनी बीर दिगम्बर मारे, ध्यान धरन्ते योगी हो ३  
 जंगल में के जंगम मारे, माया किनहूँ न भोगी हो ४  
 वेद पढन्ते वेदुआ मारे, पूजा करन्ते स्वामी हो ५  
 अर्थ विचारत पण्डित मारे, बाँधेउ सकल लगामी हो ६  
 श्रृंगी ऋषी बन भीतर मारे, शिर ब्रह्मा का फोरी हो ७  
 नाथ मछन्दर चले पीठ दै, सिंघल हूँ में बोरी हो ८  
 साकत के घर करता-धरता, हरि भक्तन की चेरी हो ९  
 कहहिं कबीर सुनो हो सन्तो, ज्यों आवै त्यों फेरी हो १०

1. *ī māyā raghunāth kī bowrī, khelan chalī aherā ho.*
2. *chatur chikaniyā chuni-chuni māre, koī na rākheu nyārā ho.*
3. *mownī bīr digambar māre, dhyān dharante yogī ho.*
4. *jangal men ke jangam māre, māyā kinahūn na bhogī ho.*
5. *ved padhante veduā māre, pūjā karante swāmī ho.*
6. *arth bichārat pandit māre, bāndheu sakal lagāmī ho.*
7. *shrīngī rishī ban bhītar māre, shir brahmā kā phorī ho.*
8. *nāth machhandar chale pīth dai, singhal hūn men borī ho.*
9. *sākat ke ghar kartā-dhartā, hari bhaktan kī cherī ho.*
10. *kahahin kabīr suno ho santo, jyon āwai tyon pherī ho.*

1. This *Maya* of Ram is intoxicated. She roams the world playing the hunting game.
2. One by one she killed the clever and the bright ones. She did not spare anyone.
3. She destroyed those observing silence, the brave ones, and the ones that observe nakedness. She even  
 destroyed the yogi who is doing his meditation.
4. She destroyed the ascetic that confines himself to the jungle. No one can enjoy M.
5. She killed the scholars who read and study the Vedas, and the swamis occupied in their worship.
6. She destroyed the pandit who expounded the Vedas. She ensnared everyone in her reins.
7. She hunted the sage Shringi Rishi who was in the forest, and she broke the head of Brahma. (In puranic mythology Lord Shiva cut off one of the five heads of Brahma who lusted after Sati (Parvati), wife of Lord Shiva. It is Brahma's skull that Lord Shiva wears around his neck according to the Puranic Encyclopedia.)
8. Machhandar Nath turned away from her to get away, but she eventually drowned him in Singhaldweep (now Sri Lanka).
9. She is the owner and keeper in the house of the *sakat* (evil people), but she becomes a servant to the devotee of God.
10. Kabir says, "O saints! Please listen! As soon as she comes, send her back immediately." (Do not be ensnared by Maya).

