

The 5 Khands – Part I

Introduction

In this month's and next month's Bulletins, we explore Guru Nanak Sahib's 35th – 37th *pauris* of the Japji Sahib where the *Panj Khands* (ਪੰਜ ਖੰਡ) – Dharam Khand, Gyan Khand, Saram Khand, Karam Khand and Sach Khand – are explained. The *Panj Khands*, literally mean "five realms" and provide a glimpse into the five stages of spiritual progress in Sikhism. Sikhs strive to progress through the Panj Khands and achieve the ultimate goal of their spiritual journey - merger with the Divine (Sach Khand).

1. ਧਰਮ ਖੰਡ (Dharam Khand) – Duties and Responsibilities

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ॥

Tis wich dharti dhap rakhi dharamsaal.

In this natural setting, He established Earth as a school to learn righteousness (right-minded action /dharam) SGGSAng 7

Dharam Khand marks the first stage of spiritual development – the spiritual awakening where we start learning about what the purpose of our life in this world is, namely that the earth is where we learn to practice righteousness and that we are judged by our actions accordingly. "Dharam" means acquiring "a sense of duty". In the same way as all creatures and creation perform their duty instinctively to fulfil their role in this world with commitment, we as humans are required to perform our duty with righteousness. As such, in Dharam Khand, we are told to perform our duties according to the Hukam – to live a life of integrity, love, humility, and respect for all creation.

ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ ਹੋਇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

Karmi karmi hoye veechar.

By their deeds and their actions, they shall be judged. SGGSAng 7

2. ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ (Gyan Khand) – Complete Understanding of Life's Purpose

In this second realm of spiritual development – Gyan Khand (Realm of Knowledge or Wisdom) - the Sikh gains awareness of the limitlessness of nature and the Lord's creation. In this realm, illumination/ wisdom dawns on the Sikh. The seeker becomes aware of the universe and the mystery of its existence; he learns that knowledge is not merely intellectual or sensual, it is intuitive awareness of the way in which the creation is maintained in a balanced existence. He comes to understand that the entire creation is created as a whole by One Creator, and everybody/everything is part of His One Big Family. The mind stops differentiating between itself and others, as everybody and everything is a part of us. Thus, we are required to love everyone and serve everybody. With the dawning of this understanding, our innate narrow-mindedness/selfishness gives way to universal brotherhood and love. The mind becomes calm and filled with bliss due to the continuous remembrance of the Lord through Guru's Shabad (hymns) and Naam.

ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਪਰਚੰਡੁ ॥

Gian khand meh gian parchand.

In the realm of wisdom, spiritual wisdom reigns supreme. SGGSAng 7

As we celebrate Guru Nanak Sahib's birthday this month, may we remember the way he wanted us to live our lives and practice it. In next month's article, we will continue with the remaining three khands.