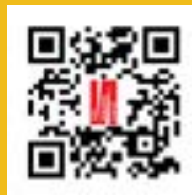


A VAISAKHI CELEBRATION

exploring the diversity of languages in the Guru Granth Sahib



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30/4

01

Welcome

A brief introduction to our speaker and the Sikh Education Council who have been invited to speak here today at the EY Sikh Community Vaisakhi celebrations

02

Introduction to Guru and Gurbani

It is imperative that we appreciate who the Guru is and what that entity encompasses as a foundation to understanding Gurbani and the way in which language is utilised to impart the teachings of the Sikh way of life

03

Language

Looking at how language expresses the Divine revelation that is the heartbeat of Sikhi, and how it came to be written and enshrined over hundreds of years

04

Examples

A look at examples of Gurbani from differing languages and relating their English-language interpretations to how we understand and apply them as teachings to our lives

ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ

What we do

The Sikh Education Council provides guidance, engages in research, and teaches the Sikh way of life to a range of audiences.

Our origins

Established in the early 1980s to promote education of the Sikh way of life, our aim has always been to work within society for the betterment of all mankind.

Who we are

Staffed by dedicated volunteers, we give our tan, mann and dhan to the SEC whose work we fund ourselves with independent donations from patrons and beneficiaries.



Harwinder Singh

is a web editor and broadcaster. He is a long-serving director and volunteer for the Sikh Education Council acting primarily as an educator in the field of Sikh Studies, with over two decades of experience presenting across a range of audiences, although focusing on students in Higher Education settings and professionals in the workplace. He holds the position of editor of 'Sikh Sunehar', our quarterly publication of Sikh studies research, and is the convener of the SEC's Sikh Studies course.



GURU & GURBANI

Guru Nanak I - X

Guru means nothing less than the Divine Light implicit in every human heart progressively revealed to him through a proper cultivation of his religious institution. The historical Sikh Gurus claim no more than that they can help man, through teaching, to cultivate this religious intuition so as to awaken the Divine Light within.

- 'Sikhism for Modern Man', Kapur Singh

SHABAD GURU

The Guru Granth Sahib stands distinguished from all other scriptures of the World for being regarded as the Guru, the sole successor of the ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, making Guruship a continuous institution ever since its inception and for ever in the future.

- 'A Study of Guru Granth Sahib', J.S. Grewal

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

The Vaisakhi of 1699 was the culmination of two hundred years of leadership, inspiration, and divine guidance from the House of Guru Nanak - it was no overnight decision or reaction. The Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh harvested what had already been sewn, nourished and grown.

Founding of the Khalsa

The Khalsa comprise initiated adherents of the Sikh way of life that follow a specific code of conduct and who have taken on responsibilities beyond those of the everyday person, akin to the Guru.

At this most significant moment, the Tenth Master recited what we call 'nitnem' bani, whilst preparing the nectar with which to initiate the 'beloved ones'. Thus the value and power of the 'Shabad' can be seen to go beyond mere words or teachings.



ang 1412

SHABAD - MORE THAN WORDS

In the House of Guru Nanak, the words of the Guru - the Shabad - are not learned writings or scholarly insights; for the Sikh they are the Guru incarnate, and so once evoked it is the Guru in our midst, guiding us with a holding hand. It is for this reason that we give ultimate reverence to the Guru Granth Sahib and why the language of Gurbani, despite its diversity and seemingly varied authorship, has given rise to the Sikh nation we behold today.



Universal Divine communication

The purpose of the Holy Gurus in composing the Bani in the popular tongues, and writing it out in a popular script rather than in the complexities of Devnagri alphabet, was to bring Divine knowledge, spiritual experience and ethical thought to the simple, working folk.

'An Introduction to Sri Guru Granth Sahib', Gurbachan Singh Talib



Language as Revolution

Sri Guru Granth Sahib redefined God rejecting about Him onefoldedness or single signified. This initiated the process of dismantling the hegemony of Sanskrit and Persian-Arabic along with the networks that situated and proliferated their message.

'Essays on Sri Guru Granth Sahib', Gurbhagat Singh



Connecting Divinity and Society

Gurbani also employs vocabulary peculiar to the Sikh tradition. Its terminology draws from the realm of public life, including words having to do with governance, administration, agriculture, business, etc.

'Guru Granth Sahib: Its language & grammar', Sikh Research Institute

ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ ॥ ਤਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ ॥

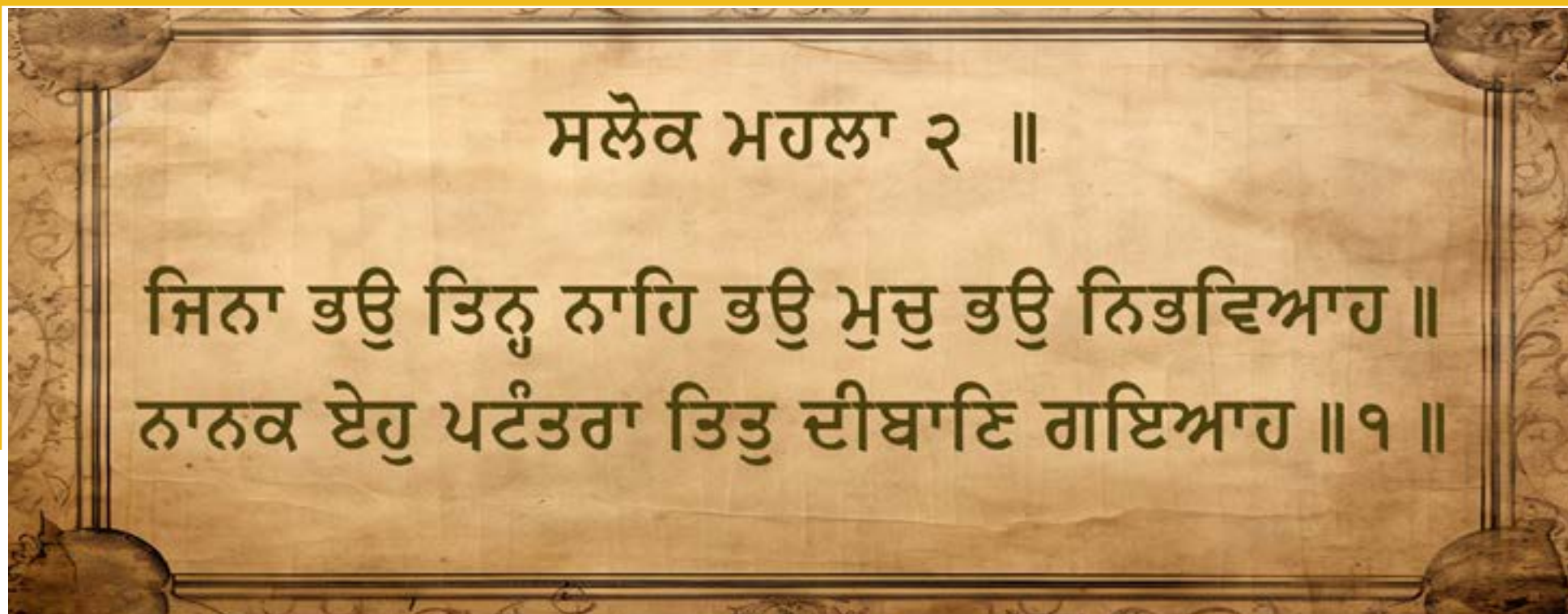
The path espoused by Guru Nanak is one which aims to answer the deepest of questions. It is not satisfactory to simply be told this Truth, for it to be revealed, contemplated and committed to memory – it must be experienced, lived and practiced so that it can be earned and expressed when ready.

Truthful Living

It is with this in mind that it is said 'Truth is the highest virtue but higher still is Truthful living'. Guru Nanak's way of life directs the individual to embrace reality - the World we reside in - and to improve its lot for the betterment of all; not to reject the World or await an afterlife paradise, but to create that utopia here and now, but at the same time to do so without becoming ensnared into thinking that this is all there is.



ang 628



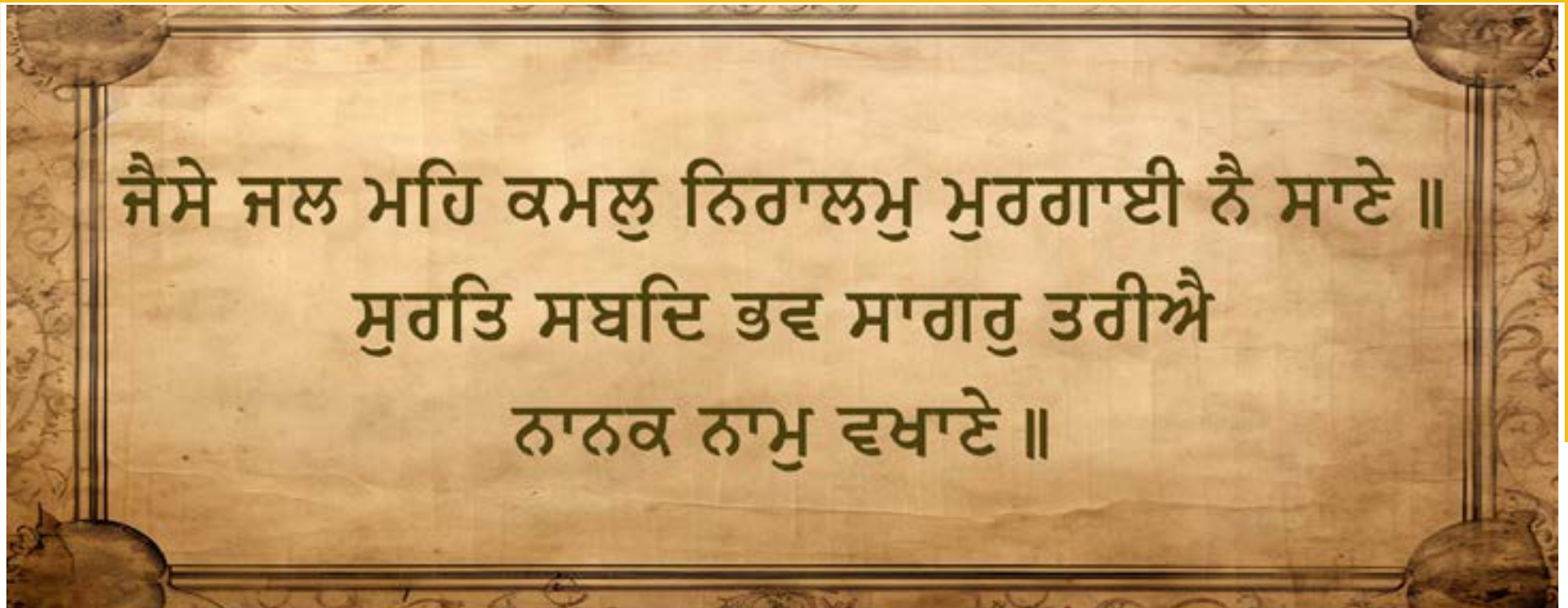
Ang 788

*"Those conducting themselves in fear of God, no other fear have; Much fear grips those bearing not fear of God.
Saith Nanak :This writ shall be deciphered only in the Court Divine. (1)"*

*"Those who have the Fear of God, have no other fears; those who do not have the Fear of God, are very afraid.
O Nanak, this mystery is revealed at the Court of the Lord. ||1||"*

PUNJABI

A significant body of Gurbani can be said to be in what we would call Punjabi. Chief amongst this work are folk ballads or vaars that can be found in the Guru Granth Sahib. Notably the 'Barahmaha' and 'Alahniya' banis are in Punjabi, as are the saloks of Guru Angad Sahib.



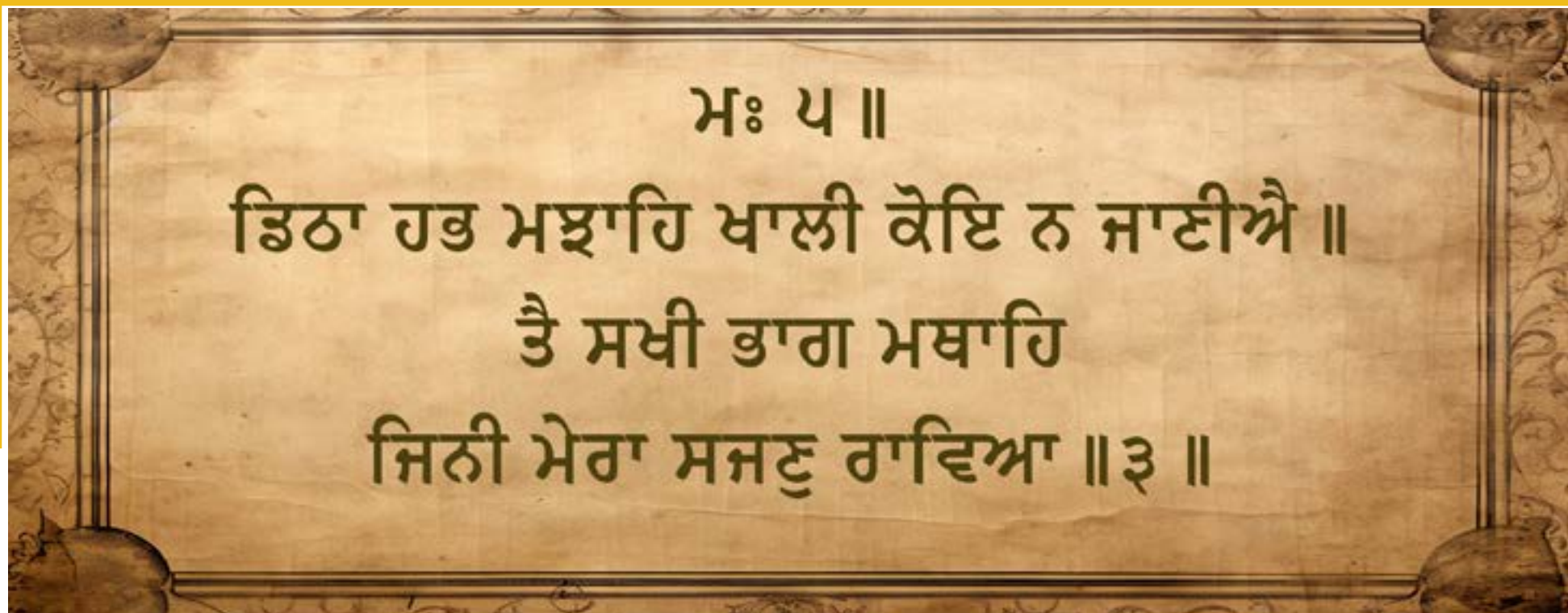
Ang 938

*"By remaining as the lotus untouched by water and the duck on the stream,
By concentrated fixing of the mind in the holy Word, By contemplation of the Name, Saith Nanak, is crossed the ocean of existence."*

"The lotus flower floats untouched upon the surface of the water, and the duck swims through the stream; with one's consciousness focused on the Word of the Shabad, one crosses over the terrifying world-ocean. O Nanak, chant the Naam, the Name of the Lord."

SANT BHASHA

Sant-Bhasha is an amalgamation of dialects used in Divine discourse by saints and holy people, particularly in a poetic form. The vocabulary used can change quite drastically from one work to another, and even within a single bani, incorporating Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi and more.



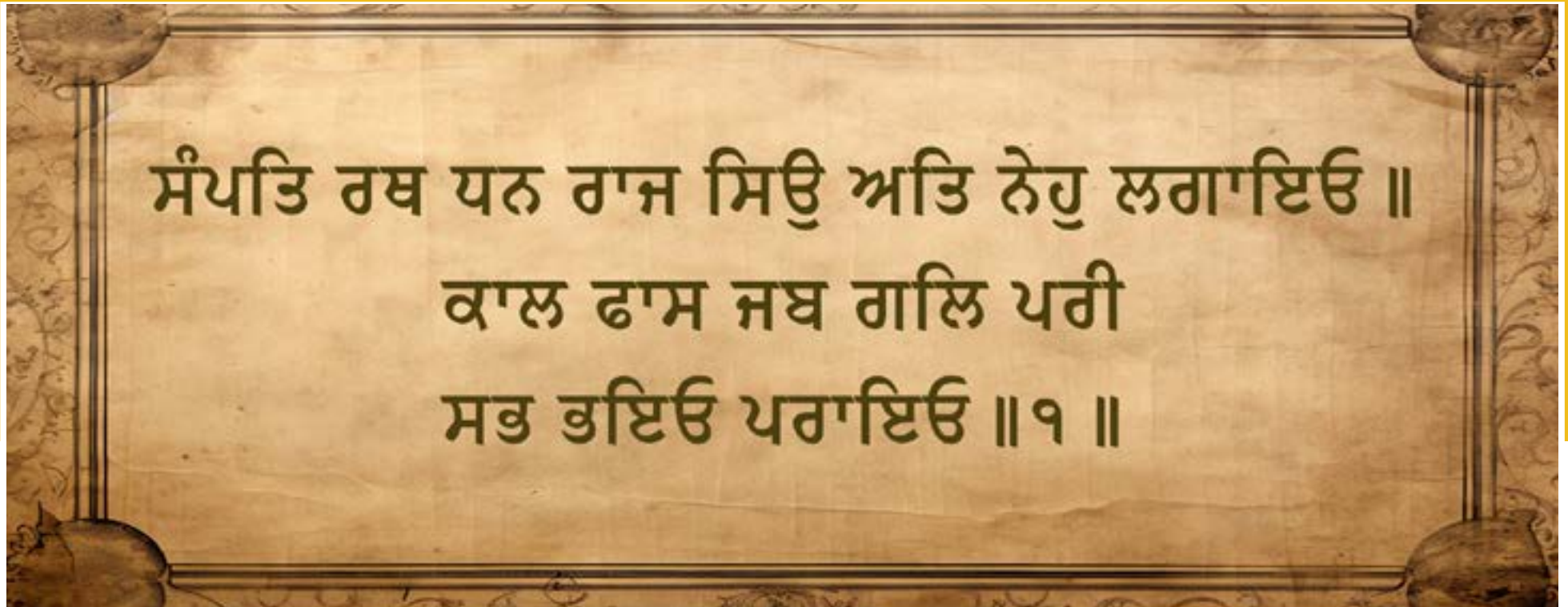
Ang 1097

*"In all beings have I beheld Him-know none of Him to be bereft.
Sister-friend ! by good fortune writ on thy forehead hast thou had bliss with Him. (3)"*

"I see Him within all. No one is without Him. Good destiny is inscribed on the forehead of that companion, who enjoys the Lord, my Friend. ||3||"

LAHIMDI

This language brings together Potohari, Multani and Jhamgi, all regional neighbours in far-West Punjab. It has a familiarity with Sanskrit but a feeling all of its own.



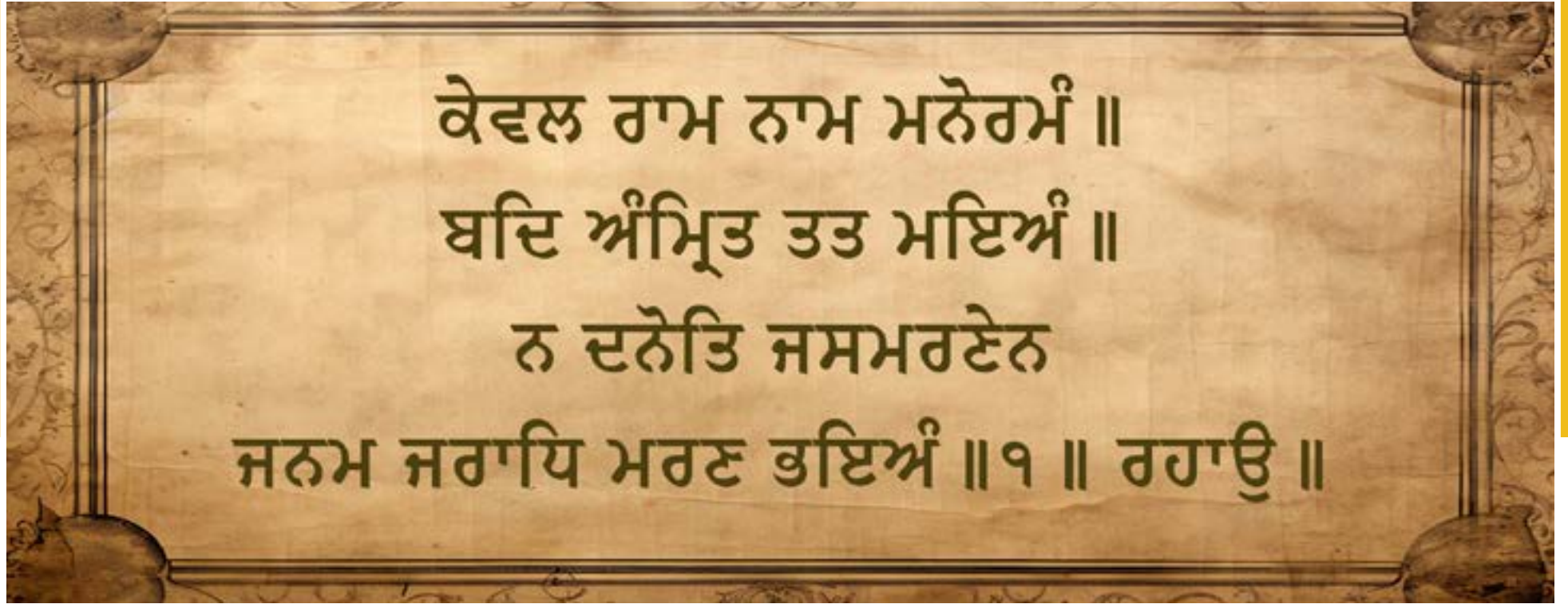
Ang 727

"To property, chariots, wealth, authority! art thou excessively attached : As death's noose encircles thy neck, all to thee shall become alien. (1)"

"You are so in love with property, chariots, wealth and power. When the noose of death tightens around your neck, they will all belong to others. ||1||"

BRAJ

Braj is widely spoken in North-Central India and is similar to Hindi. It was the language of the Bhakti devotional poets and is utilised a great deal in the bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib.



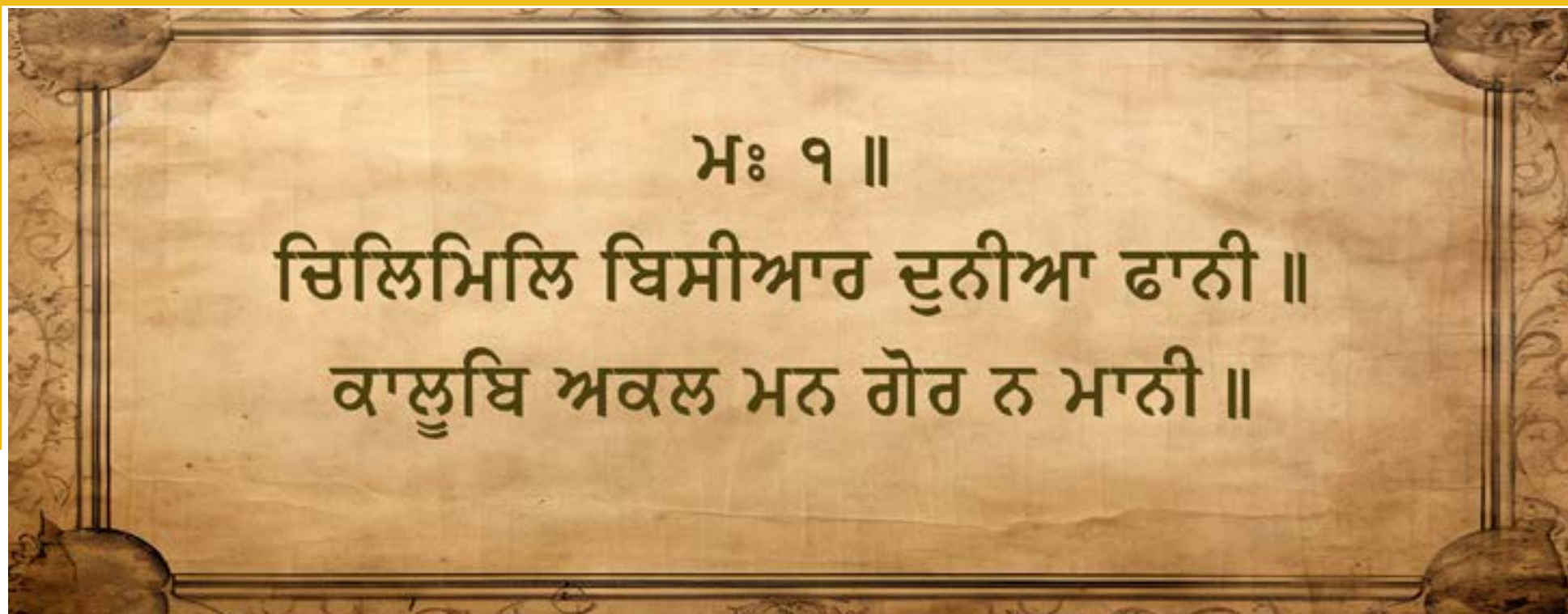
Ang 526

"The Sole Name Divine in your heart cherish. Utter the Name ambrosial, essence of all existence, By which torments not death, nor occurs birth, old age or fear of death. (I-Pause)"

"Dwell only upon the beautiful Name of the Lord, the embodiment of ambrosial nectar and reality. Remembering Him in meditation, the fear of birth, old age and death will not trouble you. ||1||Pause||"

SANSKRIT

Sub-continental culture and philosophy over the last five thousand years has been dominated by Sanskrit, known as the sacred language of the Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. Whilst some work of Gurbani is in Sanskrit, it is used with variation, although many other dialects are rooted in the language.



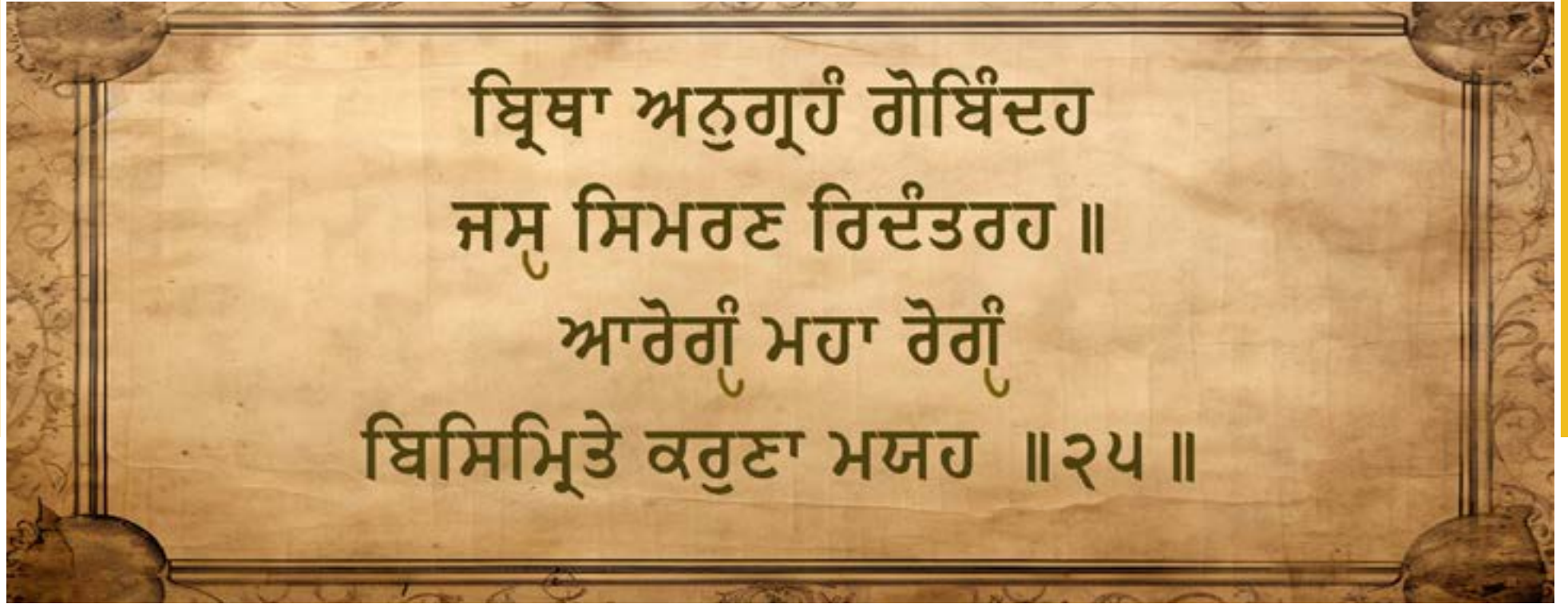
Ang 1291

"The glamorous world is all mortal; Yet my senses astray, see not the inevitable grave."

"The extravagant glamour of the world is a passing show. My twisted mind does not believe that it will end up in a grave."

FARSI

Persian vocabulary can be found throughout Gurbani as well as in some works. It would have made its way to Punjab through differing conquests from the West, settling as a language of the State through the Ghaznavids a thousand years ago.



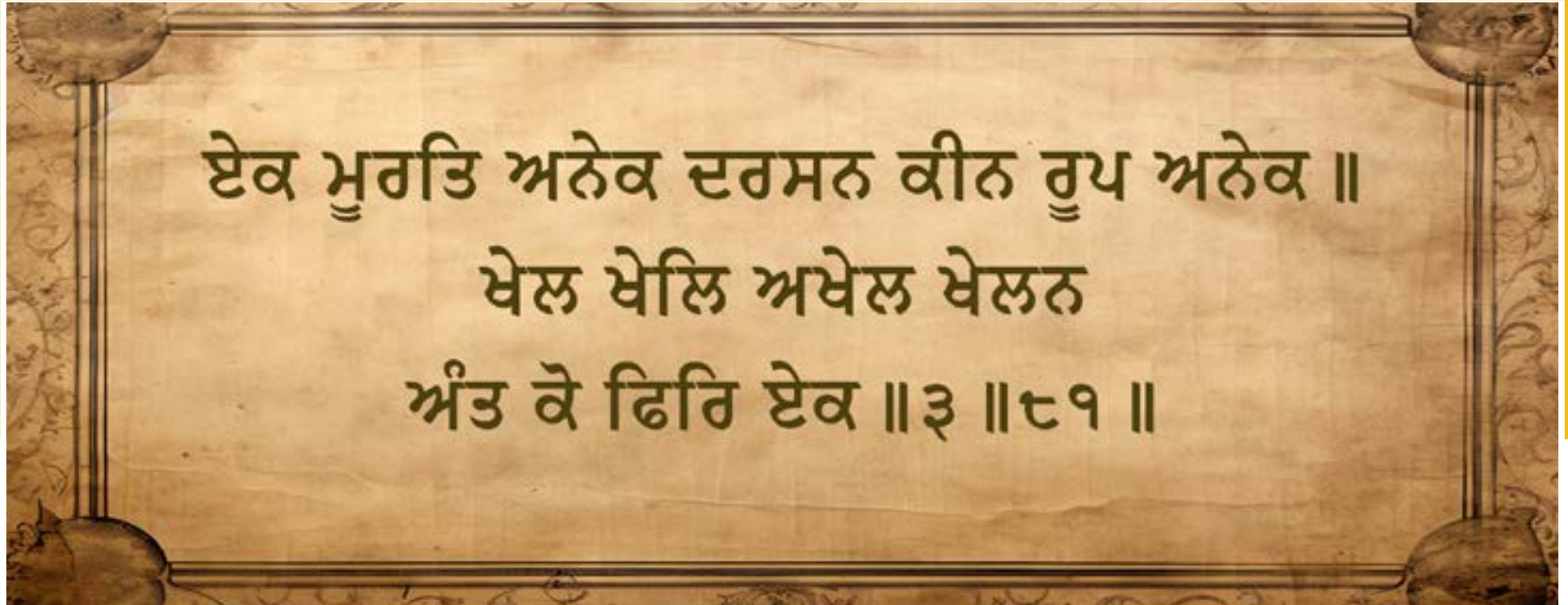
Ang 1356

*"Those devoid of Divine grace or contemplation of the Lord in heart, Even though apparently hale, are greatly sick,
By being forgetful of the Lord full of grace. (25)"*

*"Those who meditate in remembrance on the Lord in their hearts, look upon even pain as God's Grace.
The healthy person is very sick, if he does not remember the Lord, the Embodiment of Mercy. ||25||"*

SAHASKRITI

Pali, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Punjabi and Hindi all combine to give rise to Sehaskriti, which can be found as the title of two banis in the Guru Granth Sahib.



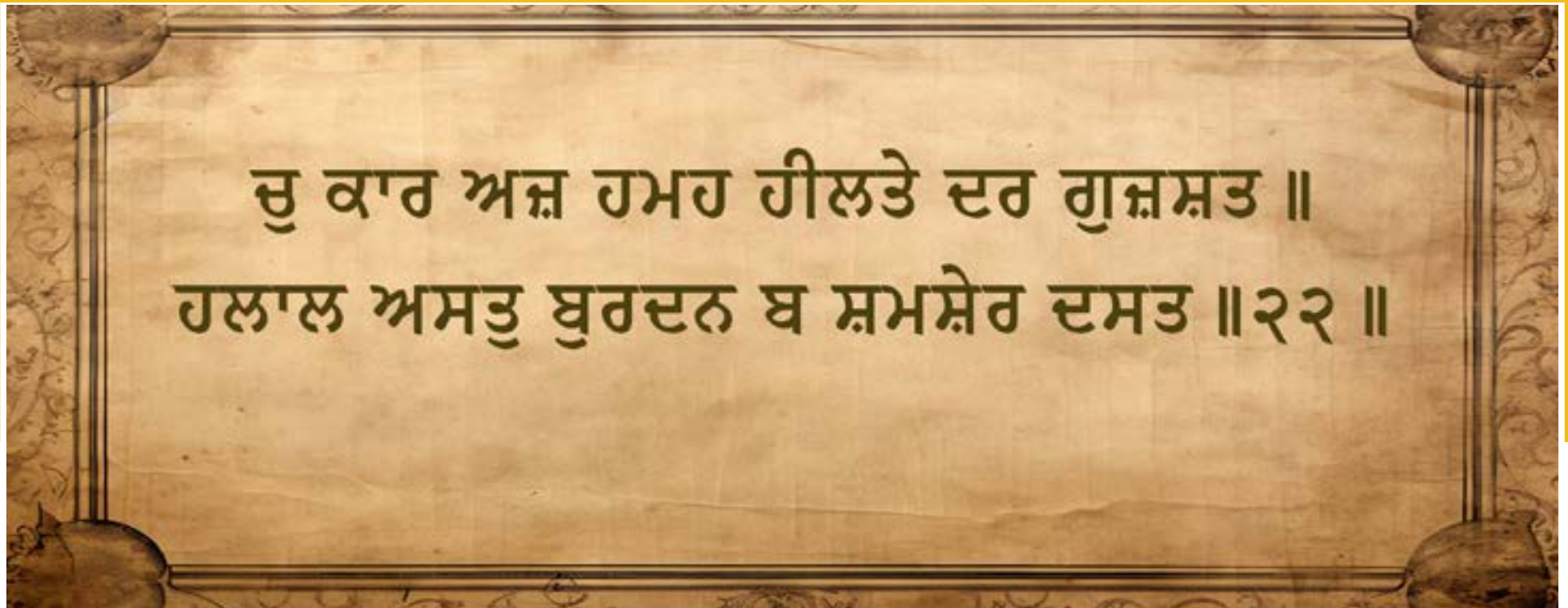
JAAP SAHIB

*"Thou, the One Entity, appearest as Many creating innumerable forms.
After playing the world-drama, when Thou wilt stop the play, Thou wilt be the same One again.81."*

*"One and yet who seems many, and enters into a myriad forms,
And plays His Play, and then winds it up, and becomes the One again!"*

BRAJ, SANSKRIT, ARABIC, PERSIAN, PUNJABI

The Jaap Sahib bani is the first work of the Dasam Granth Sahib. It is a phenomenal laudation of the Divine utilising a range of languages in its sometime singular phrases, and a vast range of vocabulary to depict the attributes and unfathomable entity that is Divinity.



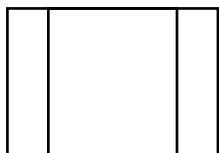
ZAFARNAMAH

*"With all modes of redressing the wrong having failed,
the raising of sword is pious and just."*

*"When an affair is past every other remedy,
It is righteous, indeed, to unsheath the sword."*

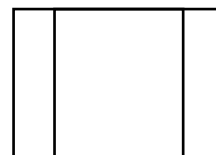
PERSIAN

The Zafarnamah is a Persian-language letter written by Guru Gobind Singh and delivered to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb following news that the younger Sahibzade had been martyred by the State. It is depicted as a letter of 'victory' due to the powerful and passionate expression throughout.



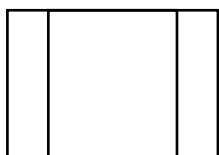
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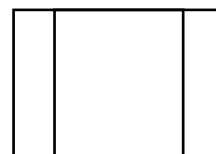
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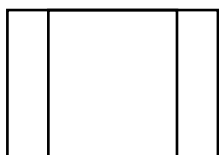
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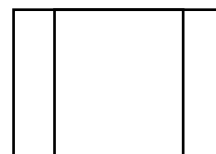
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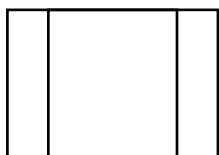
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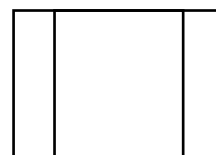
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