

## NINE HOLES

Those who have nine holes of the body defiled do not chant the Lord's Name;  
 instead, they practice evil, commit adultery, slander the saints,  
 do not listen to even a tiny bit of the Lord's Praise,  
 steal others' wealth for the sake of their own bellies,  
 but the fire (of craving) is not extinguished, and their thirst is not quenched (sggs 298).  
 By practicing control over the nine gates, one attains perfect control over the Tenth Gate.  
 There, the unstruck sound current of the absolute Lord vibrates and resounds.  
 Behold the True Lord ever-present, and merge with Him (sggs 944).



Material body by itself is inert. It comes to alive only after enlivened by the spirit soul. Without the spirit soul, this body is nothing more than nine holes in the flesh and bones! Also called gates or *Darvaaje* in the Gurbani (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, SGGS), these holes are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, one genital, and one anus. Looking at it from an another perspective, eyes, ears, nose, and tongue (mouth) combined with skin makes five senses of acquiring knowledge (*Giyān Indriyas*). Similarly, the genital, anus, and voice (mouth) combined with hands and legs make five senses of action or work (*karam Indriyas*).

Invariably, upon study, one will observe that significant portion of every bona fide scripture has been dedicated to reflect on all of these. Why? To the man with corrupted senses (ignorant or *Manmukh*), this human body is the source of suffering. But to the one with enlightened senses (wise or *Gurmukh*), this body is the vehicle of wisdom, thus the source of true joy. Hence, the scriptures tell the wise man to chew the steel-balls and strive to conquer the mind and senses. As the Self-Knowledge is not within the reach of the mind and senses, it arises only when the mind and senses cease.

Unfortunately, under the spell of the Lord's energy called Maya (cosmic delusion), most of us have these holes or senses defiled or corrupted. The result is confusion in the *Jeeva* (individual being) which sees itself as embodied in this world of names and forms. Consequently, one perceives Indivisible as divisible, Infinite as finite, Illimitable as limited, Nameless as name, and Formless as form. Due to this seed of individuality (ego-sense), we are unable to rightly understand the reality of this material world as well as the Supreme Self.

- *Kaat kotam rachant toyam repanam rakat charmnaah.....*: This fragile body-fortress is made up of water, plastered with blood and wrapped in skin. It has nine gates, but no doors; it is supported by pillars of wind, the channels of the breath. The ignorant person does not meditate in remembrance on the Lord of the Universe; because he thinks that this body is permanent (sggs 1354).
- *Kaam krodh ar lobh moh ih indree ras laptaaye*: Man's senses are beguiled by sensual pleasures of lust, by anger, greed and emotional attachment (sggs 403).

Mind, the eleventh sense, is the ring-leader as it sits on top of all. Through external senses, it gets distracted. Free to escape through the corrupted holes, the deluded mind limits the truth, and binds the beings to bondage of worldly hallucination. Thus, all senses with their respective demands, and coloring or covering (impurity) are unable to understand realized souls, scriptures or the *Shabad*.

- *Nayumee nave shidra apveet.....*: Nayumee: Those who have nine holes of the body defiled do not chant the Lord's Name; instead, they practice evil, commit adultery, slander the Saints, do not listen to even a tiny bit of the Lord's Praise, steal others' wealth for the sake of their own bellies,

but the fire (of craving) is not extinguished, and their thirst is not quenched (sggs 298)

- *Man bhoolau bharmas aaye jaaye.....*: The mind, deluded by doubt, buzzes around like a bumble bee. The holes of the body are worthless, if the mind is filled with such great desire for corrupt passions. It is like the elephant, trapped by its own sexual desire (sggs 1188).
- *Das paatayu panch sangeetaa ekai bheetar saathe. Bhinn bhinn hoyi bhaav dikhaavahi sabahu niraaree bhaakhe*: The ten senses are the dancing girls, and the five passions are the chorus; they sit together within the one body. They all put on their own shows, and speak in different languages (sggs 884).

What is the language (coloring or impurity) of each of these senses? For example, the coloring of the tongue is falsehood. It is asleep, in its desire for material tastes and flavors. When the tongue is impure, its speech is also impure. The ears are also asleep, listening to rubbish like slanderous stories of others. The eyes are corrupted, gazing upon the unholy, beauty of material objects, and wealth of another. The sexual organs are corrupted with never ceasing lust. Thus, the instinct of pleasing the senses corrupts one's sensory apparatus.

Consequently, through the corrupted sense of sight, man lusts after material objects; through the corrupted sense of hearing, man craves to hear the slow poison of flattery and other sounds that rouse his material nature; through the corrupted sense of smell, he is enticed toward wrong environments and actions; through the corrupted sense of taste, he is lured to consume such food and drink that destroy his physical and mental well being; and contaminated sense of touch lusts him for indulgence in physical comforts and lust.

- *Jihvaa joothee bolat joothaa karan netra sabh joothe....*: The tongue is impure, and its speech is impure. The eyes and ears are totally impure. The impurity of the sexual organs does not depart; the Brahmin is burnt by the fire (sggs 1195).
- *Mithiyaa baas let bikaaraa*: False is the nose which inhales corruption (sggs 269).

Fascinated by Maya (ignorance and delusion), the mind is asleep. Our body has two sets of sensors — the sensor of nerves, and the sensor of sensory apparatus. The sensor of nerves keeps our organs, limbs, and muscles functional. The sensor of sensory apparatus keeps our brain informed of the outside world of sight (eyes), smell (nose), taste (tongue), touch (skin), and hearing (ears). While the feet are corrupted by walking on inauspicious path, the hands are corrupted with unrighteous actions. The anus is filthy to begin with!

- *Man vas doota durmat doyi*: The mind is in the control of evil passions, evil intent, and duality (sggs 222).
- *Mithiyaa sravan par ninda sunahi.....*: False are the ears which listen to the slander of others. False are the hands which steal the wealth of others. False are the eyes which gaze upon the beauty of another's wife. False is the tongue which enjoys delicacies and external tastes. False are the feet which run to do evil to others. False is the mind which covets the wealth of others. False is the body which does not do good to others (sggs 268).

How do the polluted holes or senses cause us into the pitch darkness of spiritual ignorance? A step-by-step analysis of our spiritual descent will reveal that our brooding over objects of the senses cause attachment to them. From such attachment, lust or craving develops; from unfulfilled lust or craving, anger arises; from anger, mental delusion arises; from delusion comes bewilderment or loss of memory of the true Self; the loss of such memory causes loss of intelligence or the discriminating faculty (*Biveka*); upon loss of intelligence or discrimination, one falls down into the material consciousness;

which, in turn, brings annihilation of spiritual life.

- *Nave shidra sravahi apvitraa*: The nine holes pour out filth (sggs 998).

Thus, without the *Naam*, the cavities of our ears are nothing but two snake-holes, and the speech of our tongue is no better than the croak of a frog. The eyes that do not long for the *Darshan* of the Holy are like eyes on a peacock feather, totally inert. The mind or head that does not surrender to God is mere burden on this body, the hands that do not serve the Lord are hands of a corpse, and the feet that do not walk on the Waheguru's path are like immovable trees. The heart that does not melt with loving devotional worship of the Lord is nothing more than a piece of rock.

As the Gurbani says, impure tongue ought to be burnt or cut out, bit by bit; the ears which do not hear the Sound-current of the *Shabad* — those ears might just as well be plugged; and the eyes which do not see the Holy — those eyes are miserable. In a corrupt body, evils such as lust, anger, greed, emotional attachment, false ego, mental stubbornness, and enviousness foster and become very powerful within. As the old age approaches, all senses become weak, exhausted, and finally dead. The Gurbani asks us the obvious question: "O blind man, what have you obtained by coming into the world?"

- *Bhoondee chaal charan kar khisre tuchaa deh kumlaanee....*: His walk becomes weak and clumsy, his feet and hands shake, and the skin of his body is withered and wrinkled. His eyes are dim, his ears are deaf, and yet, the self-willed manmukh does not know the *Naam*. O blind man, what have you obtained by coming into the world? (sggs 1126).
- *Jaraa haakdee sabh thaakee ek na thaakas Maya....*: Driven forward by old age, all my senses are exhausted; only my attachment to *Maya* is not exhausted. O mad man, you have not obtained spiritual wisdom and meditation. You have wasted this human life, and lost (sggs 793).

A ship with holes is bound to sink. Similarly, a body (ship) with impure senses (holes) is bound to doom. How can we plug these holes? Or, to put it otherwise, how can we render our senses purified and sanctified? By the Lord's *Naam*, says the Gurbani. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way!

- *Nave shidra sravahi apvitraa. Boli Hari Naam pavitra sabh kitta*: The nine holes pour out filth. Chanting the Lord's Name, they are all purified and sanctified (sggs 998).
- *Moot pleetee kapar hoye.....*: When the hands and the feet and the body are dirty, water can wash away the dirt. When the clothes are soiled and stained by urine, soap can wash them clean. But when the intellect is stained and polluted by sin, it can only be cleansed by the Love of the Name (sggs 4).

Once the senses have rid of their psychological conditioning and filth, the *Shabad* enters directly into the innermost core of one's being, just as a sharp knife pierces through a soft bar of butter. Such a Self-realized devotee (Sikh) can control all senses at will, because he never let them act independently. Through constant practice, he is able to control them according to his own plan.

- *Rasnaa uchrai Hari sarvaneesunai so udhrai mittaa.....*: Those who chant the Lord's Name with their tongues and hear it with their ears are saved, O my friend. Those hands which lovingly write the Praises of the Lord are pure. It is like performing all sorts of virtuous deeds, and bathing at the sixty-eight sacred shrines of pilgrimage. They cross over the world-ocean, and conquer the fortress of corruption (sggs 322).

When all the gates of the body are illumined by the divine knowledge, the manifestation of the goodness or purity can be experienced within. In the mode of purity, one can see things in their right perspective,

one can hear things in their right perspective, one can taste things in their right perspective, and so on. One becomes cleansed inside and outside.

- *Ustat man mahi kar nirankaar.....*: Praise the Formless Lord in your mind. O my mind, make this your true occupation. Let your tongue become pure, drinking in the Ambrosial Nectar of Naam. Your soul will be forever peaceful. With your eyes, see the wondrous play of your Lord. In the Company of the Holy, all other associations vanish. With your feet, walk in the Way of the Lord. Sins are washed away, chanting the Lord's Name, even for a moment. So do the Lord's Work, and listen to the Lord's Sermon. In the Lord's Court, O Nanak, your face will be radiant (sggs 281).
- *Sarva dwareshu dehesmin parkaash upjaaete. Giyanama yadaa tadaa vidiyaat vivradham satvamm iti utaa::* One may know that the mode of Goodness is prevalent when the light of wisdom shines through all the gates of the body (Gita 14.11).

The body endowed with purified mind and senses does not subject the man to their evil temptations; and protects him from being extroverted by not allowing doubts, and false perception or fear to invade him. Once brought under control, to the wise, the mind is an able commander of the senses, obedient servant, and a good counselor. Simply put: The body with divined mind and senses impels the man in good self-effort.

The ultimate aim of human life is to realize the mysterious Tenth Gate (the Divine Essence) which lies beyond the external nine holes of our body fortress. Within this Tenth Gate, dwells the Primal Lord, detached and unequalled. The unknowable reveals Himself to those who discipline the nine gates of their body. By controlling pulsating desires, and by forgetting all greed and emotional attachment; one attains immortality. Eliminating egotism, possessiveness and greed, one is liberated from the nine gates, and obtains a place in the Tenth Gate. Thus, one who bears the unbearable, controls the nine holes of the body, worships and adores the Lord with his breath of life, gains stability in his body-wall. When the senses are turned within ("closing off"), then the *Jeeva* rests within himself, where there is no holes or outlets!

- *Nayu dar thaake dhaavat rahaaye. Dasvai nij ghar vaasaa paye.....*: Those who close off the nine gates, and restrain the wandering mind, come to dwell in the Home of the Tenth Gate. There, the Unstruck Melody of the Shabad vibrates day and night (sggs 124).
- *Nagree ekai nayu darvaaje dhaavat varaj rahaayee. Trikutee shootai dasvaa dar khoodai taa man kheeavaa bhaayee*: There are nine gates to the one city of the body; restrain your mind from escaping through them. When the knot of the three qualities of Maya is untied, then the Tenth Gate opens up, and the mind is intoxicated, O Siblings of Destiny (sggs 1124).

--T. Singh

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