

# MANMAT? FIVE EVILS? FIVE VIRTUES?

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## ABSTRACT

The word MANMAT is being loosely used. Before we look at this we first introduce the concepts of FIVE EVILS and FIVE VIRTUES. We then address the perspective of Gurbani in relation to these concepts as well as MANMAT.

We also consider how our instinctive nature is related to these concepts. We show that these are an integral part of our being an element of the creation.

We look at how our actions from the FIVE EVILS and FIVE VIRTUES impact our wellbeing. The former has a negative and the latter a positive impact on our wellbeing.

## INTRODUCTION

In this article we address the common buzzword MANMAT and the concept of FIVE EVILS and the FIVE VIRTUES. We look at these from Gurbani perspective. We also consider how our instinctive nature is related to these concepts. Examples are used for illustration purposes to improve understanding of these concepts.

## INTERACTION WITH THE CREATION

First let us look at our interaction with the creation of which we are a part of. This creation and everything (the “goings on”, the happenings, the feelings, happiness, sadness etc.) related to it, is what is called MAYA. MAYA is impermanent because its elements will perish one day, sooner or later. Even the whole creation will perish one day. Hence it is classed as FALSE in Gurbani. Our interaction, with the elements of creation, is controlled by our mind (ਮਨ). The source of this, mind controlled interaction, is our instincts of survival and procreation.

## FIVE EVILS AND FIVE VIRTUES IN GURBANI

Gurbani relates the five evils we should shed and five virtues we should acquire. The five evils are natural instincts of ਕਾਮ, ਕਰੋਧ, ਲੋਭ, ਮੋਹ, ਹੰਕਾਰ lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego. The five virtues are ਸੱਤ, ਸੰਤੋਖ, ਦਯਾ, ਧਰਮ, ਧੀਰਜ truth, contentment, compassion, righteousness (justice, moral standard, honesty integrity), patience (tranquillity, fortitude).

## OUR INSTINCTIVE NATURE

Notice, in the previous section, the five evils are stated first. Why? This is because, these are instinctive in nature and appear natural and attractive and seem to give us direct and almost “immediate” physical but short lived benefit (happiness, satisfaction, pleasure etc.). One thing to note is that though we think we benefit from this action, a negative emotion may possibly be generated in our mind. Note that we generally interact with MAYA to derive this benefit.

The five virtues on the other hand do not give us the physical benefit but appear beneficial to the members of the creation we are interacting with. However, it gives us a “good feeling” or a positive emotion in our mind. Again note that the five virtues are executed as a part of our interaction with the creation and this, we have seen above, is MAYA; but there is no direct benefit derived. The recipient of our virtue will have a good thought in the mind and the “good vibes” generated will impact us through means yet unknown.

Can you see the difference? In one instance we benefit, in the other we do not seem to benefit. So you see this is how we are naturally inclined towards the five evils.

But, be aware, that the benefit from the five virtues will most likely be indirect, and slow at taking effect but the impact may be long lasting. Reflect on this paragraph for as long as you want and you will see what is really good for you and why Gurbani teaches us to shed the five evils and acquire the five virtues.

We are always looking at benefit for ourselves and this is the problem. We let our mind ਮਨ (internal self) to be controlled by the five evils.

We also note that both in the case of five evils as well as the five virtues, we interact with MAYA. So MAYA is sort of neutral. It is neither bad nor good. It is what OUR INTERACTION is based on when we interact with MAYA that makes it look bad or good. Gurbani refers to MAYA through our links (e.g. lust, greed, ego etc.) to MAYA.

Let us illustrate this with a simple example (example A). Let's say that I am walking on the pavement of a shop lined street behind another person. This person takes out a handkerchief from the pocket. While doing this a twenty dollar note drops on the ground but the person does not realise it. I see the note dropping.

In one scenario my mind ਮਨ, controlled by greed of and attachment to wealth tells me to pick up the money and pocket it. Here I am following my mind controlled by the evils. In this instance this action would be classed as MANMAT. In an alternative scenario because of teachings of Guru's mind ਗੁਰਮਤ the mind's intellect tells me that the money is not mine and belongs to the person in front of me. My mind instructs me to pick up the money and give it to the person in front who dropped it. In this instance I am following the teachings of my Guru and am acting as a Gurmukh ਗੁਰਮੁਖ.

## GURBANI AND THE EVILS - MANMAT

Now we discuss what MANMAT means? MANMAT is a common loosely used buzzword to judge others for example “a pilgrimage to Hemkunt is MANMAT”. In Gurbani, the action of being controlled by our mind guided by the five evils is termed MANMAT ਮਨਮਤਿ.

Let us see what Gurbani says. This word according to Mahan Kosh means one does “what the mind wants” and follows “the principle set by the mind”. It generally means that our mind is guided by the five evils (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego). This means we follow the Maya biased evil controlled intellect of the mind and Gurbani says this about MANMAT ਮਨਮਤਿ

ਮਨਮਤਿ ਝੂਠੀ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥ SGGS 222 M:1 Gaurdee Guarayree

*The intellect of the mind is false; only the Lord is True.*

The stanza encompassing this verse essentially states “Following the mind’s intellect we act in ego and get involved in duality (Maya) and this ruins us. Only God is True, Maya being false, and those who are blessed realise this”. This means that when we follow our MAN’s intellect we end up focusing on benefits derived through MAYA (which is false in the sense that the aspect of MAYA we are focusing on, will perish).

Let us consider an example (example B). My friend Charan brings Inderpal, supposedly a religious person, along during a visit to my home. Inderpal says “you have pictures of our Gurus and Martyrs in your home”. This is MANMAT, against Gurbani, because we are not supposed to pray to pictures. I get carried away, though praying to the pictures was never my intent, and get convinced to remove these pictures. In this process Inderpal sells me pictures related to Gurbani to replace those that I will be taking down. Who is acting in MANMAT? Think about it, me or Inderpal who sold me the pictures?

## EFFECT OF THE EVILS AND VIRTUES ON US

Continuing from the section “Our instinctive nature”, with our mind in control, we wholeheartedly embrace the process of getting benefit - satisfaction/ happiness/ pleasure through MAYA. This, the process of attaining benefit, usually leads us to external physical situations which inevitably affect our mind and thoughts (internal). In doing so, negative emotions are being generated in our mind. This leads to stress within ourselves. Stress as you know is the causative agent for almost all the illness one can be subject to. To illustrate let us consider example A. Having pocketed the money I quickly cross the road and walk in a different direction, my mind wondering if the person in front or someone else has seen me performing the action. This will continue until I reach home and maybe longer, all the while generating stress in my system. This is not good for our general wellbeing though we may be twenty dollars richer.

By acting on our Gurus' teachings and remembering God we can control the five evils and gain the five virtues. This generates positive emotions within ourselves. This state does not create stress and hence we are not subject to illness or illness will have minimal effect on us due to our state of mind which has attained the five virtues. Now back to example A. Having returned the money to the rightful owner we have a good feeling generating positive emotions in us. The person who got his money back would be very grateful and would have "good vibes" for us. There is no stress and we go home feeling good. There you go. Is this not a better outcome though we may be poorer by twenty dollars?

Just as an extension to this example say for instance a person, who knows you, driving on the other side of the road sees what is unfolding but passes by and goes on his or her business. This person's mind tells him or her that I would have pocketed the money and benefited even though, unknown to my "friend", I had picked up and given the money back to the owner. You see how easy it is for one to misjudge the actions of another without knowing the full story. This is why it is wrong for anyone to say that so and so going to Hemkunt or any other spiritual place is MANMAT. We do not know the intention of that person who is executing the action and hence should not make a judgement.

So we have seen that evils and virtues have a profound impact on our wellbeing. Therefore it is important that we are always aware of these operating within our system. We must make an effort to recognise their emergence in our mind and make a choice based on proper deduction. We should not blindly go by what emerges in our mind.

Which do you choose? The FIVE EVILS or the FIVE VIRTUES. Only you can decide. Follow the path of Gurbani and you will choose the latter and attain contentment and will then be happy.

## CONCLUSION

We have seen that our mind is instrumental in our interaction with the elements of the creation. This is what is classed MAYA in Gurbani. MAYA is false since its elements will perish.

Gurbani relates about five evils and five virtues through which we interact with the creation.

The five evils are instinctive and we derive short lived benefit from acting on these mind controlled actions. However these cause negative emotions which may lead to stress and impact our wellbeing adversely.

In the case of virtues, benefit is generally not derived by us but by the other members. However this gives us a good feeling and positive emotions which are beneficial for our wellbeing.

We saw that it is easy for us to misjudge the intention of people when we are not aware of the full knowledge of the entire situation.

We learnt that MANMAT is when we follow the actions directed by our mind biased towards the five evils and indulge in MAYA for our benefit.

Thank You for listening/ reading. ਗਲਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖਿਮਾ.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.