

The dance of the mind is something we should aim to control through devotional worship and meditation.

*"Channel your dancing mind in devotional worship"* (SGGSJ, p.121)

*"Make me the slave of the Lord's slaves, so that my mind might dance in Your Love."* (SGGSJ, p.169)

*"This mind dances before the True Guru. The unstruck sound current of the Shabad resounds, vibrating the celestial melody."* (SGGSJ, p.834)

## Dancing for the Gurmukh is Worship

Finally, the Guru teaches us that when our minds are attuned to God then anything and everything we do is blessed and considered a form of worship.

*"The Gurmukh laughs, and the Gurmukh cries. Whatever the Gurmukh does, is devotional worship. Whoever becomes Gurmukh contemplates the Lord. The Gurmukh, O Nanak, crosses over to the other shore."* (SGGSJ, p.1422)

*"The Gurmukhs sing, the Gurmukhs dance, and focus their consciousness on the Lord."* (SGGSJ, p.124)

*"O people, O victims of this Maya, abandon your doubts and dance out in the open. What sort of a hero is one who is afraid to face the battle?"* (SGGSJ, p.338)

*"This is devotional worship, and this is the practice of penance. So dance in this love, and keep the beat with your feet. ||1|| Know that the perfect beat is the Praise of the Lord"* (SGGSJ, p.350)

*"Your humble servant dances and sings Your Glorious Praises."* (SGGSJ, p.381)

*"Your veil shall be true only if you skip, dance and sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord."* (SGGSJ, p.484)

*"I dance, and make this mind dance as well. By Guru's Grace, I eliminate my self-conceit. One who keeps his consciousness focused on the Lord is liberated; he obtains the fruits of his desires."* (SGGSJ, p.506)

*"Dance to the Praises of the Lord, Har, Har, Har; meet with the Sat Sangat, the True Congregation, with sincerity."* (SGGSJ, p.698)

## Summary

Dancing is used as a metaphor for God's work and Its creation. It is also used as a metaphor for our lives and the Samsara cycle of reincarnation. As Sikhs the Guru instructs us to control our dancing minds in order to merge with the Infinite God.

Dancing is not performed in a Sikh place of worship, the Gurdwara, because everything is kept internal, however it is acceptable to dance as a stress buster or as a spiritual tool in our daily lives. As always, more important is the intention we do things with, not so much what we do.



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# Sikhism & Dancing

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## Introduction

Dancing is a beautiful and creative art form and can be an excellent stress buster as well as a spiritual tool. Dancing is perfectly fine for a Sikh and there are a couple of traditional styles including Bhangra and Gidda. The Sikh Holy Scripture, the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji or SGGSJ refers to dance and dancing in six different contexts and we will explore these below.

## Dance as a Metaphor for Life and the Samsara Cycle

Our living in the world is sometimes referred to as the dance of life and when we do not follow truth our dance in life only results in pain and suffering

*"For the sake of Maya, they set the stage and dance, but they are in love with duality, and they obtain only sorrow."* (SGGSJ, p.122)

*"He comes and goes, and wanders, dancing in countless incarnations."* (SGGSJ, p.1099)

However when we develop a relationship with God our dance with reincarnation, mortality and sorrow comes to an end.

*"Says Nanak, one who meets with the True Guru, does not have to dance the dance of reincarnation again."* (SGGSJ, p.884)

*"Now, my dancing is over. I have intuitively obtained my Darling Beloved. Through the Word of the True Guru's Teachings, I found Him."* (SGGSJ, p.1203)

*"I shall not have to dance in the wrestling arena of life again. Nanak has searched, and found this opportunity."* (SGGSJ, p.74)

## When We Forget God Then Everything We Do Creates Bad Karma

Some Sikhs quote the following lines to suggest that dancing is anti-Sikh. However this could not be further from the truth as can be seen from the below six quotes from the Sikh Holy Scripture. Dancing on its own by moving the body will not link us to God. It is only loving devotion to God which can do that.

*"For the Gurmukh, loving devotional worship is the way to the True Lord. But the dances and the worship of the Hypocrites bring only pain."* (SGGSJ, p.364)

*"The fools perform devotional worship by showing off; they dance and dance and jump all around, but they only suffer in terrible pain. By dancing and jumping, devotional worship is not performed."* (SGGSJ, p.159)

When we are devoid of loving worship then not only dancing but eating, creating wealth, drinking, laughing and playing all create bad karma for us.

*"Everything they eat is impure. Intoxicated with power and thrilled with wealth, they delight in their pleasures, and dance about shamelessly."* (SGGSJ, p.142)

*"Eating, drinking, playing, laughing and showing off -what use are the ostentatious displays of the dead?"* (SGGSJ, p.188)

However, it is only through the Naam and loving devotional worship from the heart that our lives can be blessed.

*"Without music, how is one to dance? Without a voice, how is one to sing? Without strings, how is a guitar to be played? Without the Naam, all affairs are useless."* (SGGSJ, p.1140)

*"Some sing according to traditional ragas, but the Lord is not pleased by these ragas. Some dance and dance and keep the beat, but they do not worship Him with devotion. Some refuse to eat; what can be done with these fools? Thirst and desire have greatly increased; nothing brings satisfaction. Some are tied down by rituals; they hassle themselves to death. In this world, profit comes by drinking in the Ambrosial Nectar of the Naam. The Gurmukhs gather in loving devotional worship of the Lord."* (SGGSJ, p.1285)

## The Heavenly Beings Dance at the Door of God

There are many angelic beings and demi-Gods which dance at the door of the Immortal one.

*"The angels, the Siddhas, the beings of spiritual perfection, the heavenly heralds and celestial singers meditate on You. The Yakhsha demons, the guards of the divine treasures, and the Kinnars, the dancers of the god of wealth chant Your Glorious Praises."* (SGGSJ, p.455)

## God as a Dancer

The Guru even describes God as an eternal dancer, keeping the dance of life in motion.

*"You Yourself sing, and You Yourself dance. You Yourself blow the bugle."* (SGGSJ, p.1252)

## Dancing Mind to be Controlled

The Guru describes the human mind as something which dances to the 5 thieves including lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride.

*"The love of Maya makes this mind dance, and the deceit within makes people suffer in pain."* (SGGSJ, p.122)