

नशा सफर का

Nasha Safar Ka

(The Intoxication of the Journey)

Subhash Khare



Himalaya Publishing House

ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED

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*30 Hindi Poems on Self-Leadership
With Interpretation in English*



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To My Parents

Dr. Murari Lal Khare
&
Mrs. Shakuntala Khare
for their amazing kindness and
abundant trust



Foreword

I have had the pleasure and privilege of knowing Subhash closely since 2014, when both of us met in the context of designing interventions for Leadership Development. In the five years hence, I have been a witness to his evolving thoughts and ideas about many of the poems featured in this book and have had illuminating conversations with him about how his poems connect to ideas and themes about self-leadership. It is on the strength of my knowing the person and his creative process intimately that I write this foreword to his unique book that is not just bi-lingual, but also a conversation between two genres – poetry and prose, each enriching the other, but yet standing alone in their own right.

Reading *Nasha Safar Ka* is an experience akin to enjoying classical music, where the notes of a raga grow on you each time you listen; and speak to you from a different place every time. Subhash's poems, based on his lived experience, are similar: multilayered, and open to the reader's interpretation, based on the reader's own experiencing of the poems. His prose explicates the meaning embedded in his poems, but without explaining them. The reader is invited to interpret the poems through the accompanying text, but the text doesn't define what the interpretation ought to be.

The themes featured in this collection are intended to urge the reader towards a journey of self-discovery, and thus unfurl her/his self-leadership. The word 'journey' conveys the true spirit of these poems and their accompanying interpretation. The reader is encouraged to embark on the journey of exploring the themes of trust, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, resilience and more; but not directed towards a

destination on any of these themes. The poems and their interpretations are rather like your companion in this journey of self-discovery; never a teacher.

Each time I read this collection of poems and their accompanying interpretations, I have been awed by Subhash's creativity as well as his clarity of purpose. And moved by the generosity with which he offers a lifetime of insights on the human condition, gently alerting us to possibilities as well as pitfalls of our paradigms; the choices available to us, as well as their consequences. The best I can wish for the reader is a similar experiencing of the rich possibilities inherent in this collection. Or is a better wish that you, the reader, have your own unique experience; find your own meaning in the process of savouring *Nasha Safar Ka*?

Ganesh Anantharaman

Author - Bollywood Melodies: A History of the Hindi Film Song
Behavioral Scientist and Organization Development Consultant

Prologue

A book of Hindi poems on self-leadership, with interpretation in English, may appear an odd combination. In a way, this book attempts to break some stereotypes – a book must be written only in one language, a book can either have poetry or prose but not both. Even the way the poems were created is somewhat unusual. I did not start with an intention of writing poems on self-leadership. As I felt the urge to write a poem, I just let the poem emerge. After a few poems were written, I could sense a common thread across all the poems, which was initially not very clear, but I had a strong feeling that the poems were held together by a common thread. A few years and many poems later, the weave became clearer – the poems were around various elements of self-leadership.

The process of writing each of the poems has been equally interesting. It starts with a counter-intuitive idea or concept around self-leadership. Even if the concept initially does not make logical sense, but instinctively I know that it has relevance and value. It could be something which I have been practicing, probably because it comes naturally to me, or something I adopted through an inspiration by observing others. Sometimes, it has been the reverse too, I see people practicing what justifies logical sense, but struggling or failing consistently. Then I pick up the opposite of that and build a concept or a framework around it. As I mull over the concept, articulate it, bounce it off with a few people, I start feeling the urge to express it through a poem. Writing poems in Hindi comes naturally to me, so I prefer that – to be in touch with the core of who I am.

Creativity does not work on demand. I have to wait for the right time and frame of mind, sometimes for a few days or even a few weeks. The way I look at it is, as if the seed of the poem is already within me but I need to wait for it to sprout – seemingly on its own. At the right time it happens, the poem starts showing up. It requires a certain humility to let the poem emerge, a belief that I am just a channel, an instrument, through which the poem is taking shape. A belief that the wisdom which is latent in the poem is not mine, it is universal.

While the poems were not written keeping the book in mind, the objective of including an interpretation in English, is to make the concepts of self-leadership, which were expressed through the poems, reach a wider audience. Poems have multiple layers of insights and meaning, people who are not well-versed in interpreting poems, may miss some of those layers. Making the interpretation a part of the book is my attempt to help them unravel the intricate layers of the poems.

Equally interesting has been the process of writing the interpretation of the poems. When a poem was written, I looked at it with the lens of the concept or the framework which I had in mind. But while writing the interpretation, it was amazing to discover some more layers in the poems, which I myself was not consciously aware of initially. The poems have made the concepts richer and more meaningful, the interpretation has made the deeper meaning reachable.

While the process of writing the interpretation does not appear to be as creative as the process of writing the poem, it has its own pull and enigma. An additional challenge was to make the interpretation complete in itself, so that the readers who cannot read Hindi may

still be able to read the book for the concepts of self-leadership.

I do not recommend that you read this book in one sitting. May be, not more than one chapter in a day. You need to give yourself time to absorb the poems and internalize the essence. It may be even better, to first read a poem a couple of times, and then think about it for a while, before you proceed to read the interpretation. The poems were not written in the sequence in which they appear in the book, and therefore you can consider each poem as having an independent value. However, the chapters do have a sequence – with each chapter using the concepts covered in previous chapters, and building a new concept over them. Therefore, sequential reading of the book is likely to be more helpful than random reading. But after you have read the book completely once, for a re-read you don't have to follow the sequence.

Finally, the concepts covered in the book are something I have internalized over the last few years and practiced. This has been a part of my own journey towards self-discovery. Therefore, the process of writing the book has also been governed by the same concepts which are covered in the book.

Wishing you all the best for your journey towards exploring your self-leadership.

Subhash Khare

Bangalore



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Introduction

The concept of self-leadership is not something which is much talked about, certainly not as much as the concept of leadership, which is glorified, put on a pedestal and looked up to. The concept of leadership has traditionally been used in relation to others, rather than absolute. The dictionary defines a leader as a person who has followers. With that perspective, your leadership depends on others' followership. If no one decides to follow you, then you cannot be a leader.

Obviously, such a definition does not position leadership in an inclusive manner. Can we have a definition of leadership, where not just one person in a group, but everyone can be a leader and demonstrate leadership? A definition which encourages each leader in a group, to leverage the capabilities of others.

More recently, the idea of leadership has been associated with driving change, creating transformation and accelerating progress, especially in an organizational context. This kind of leadership is about having a vision of the future, and the ability to leverage others to realize that vision. Leadership in a change journey, requires the ability to motivate and inspire others, and provide them a direction through the articulated vision.

However, even here the focus is on influencing others. This outward approach often ignores the leader's own mindsets, prejudices, fears and struggles. Before one can provide direction to others effectively, a key challenge is to deal with one's own dilemmas and vulnerabilities. A key area, self-leadership is either under-emphasized or just taken for granted.

Self-leadership is about discovering our own potential by putting ourselves through a variety of

experiences. It is about believing that we possess much higher potential than what we are aware of. The keenness to discover and deploy it, requires an experimental nature, where we are ready to take risk and even fail. Failures are important milestones in exploring our self-leadership.

People on the journey of self-leadership must be clear about the objective of such a journey. If the objective is to be more effective in your life, achieve higher levels of success and growth – then there is a conflict. Even though you may achieve all that as a byproduct of your quest, but that by itself should not be the goal. The journey of self-leadership requires an inward focus, with a certain degree of detachment to external rewards. Thus, you cannot have an external objective for an inward journey.

The objective can be simply to discover yourself and realize your potential. The objective need not be about the outcome of the journey; it can rather be about the journey itself. This may be counterintuitive, but that is the nature of this journey. Once you are on this journey, things start to unravel and make sense.

The driving force what people have can be broadly put into two categories of emotions: fear or passion. Fear is about something which may happen in future, therefore people who are driven by fear, typically live in the future rather than the present. They are likely to be preoccupied with other associated future elements like anxiety, worry, ambition, greed etc. On the other hand, passion is an emotion which is about present, people driven by their passions tend to live in the present. Self-leadership is about discovering your passions, turning your focus to the present and thereby overcoming your fears.

It is not that in the journey of self-leadership, there is no place for others. Apart from discovering your potential, you also understand how you connect with others. As you progress on this journey, your way of relating to people undergoes a change. As you discover and deploy your potential, you begin to make higher impact on others and your connection with others becomes stronger. The strength of your relationships provide an expression to your self-leadership.

Your self-leadership opens up a different and new approach to live your life. You start seeking fulfillment in whatever you do. Instead of being overwhelmed with burden, hard work and struggle, you understand the power of effortlessness. You realize that your work and life can be effortless, the way nature works, and yet much more gets done. You start leveraging your spontaneity and flexibility.

Finally, self-leadership is about discovering, valuing and celebrating your individuality and uniqueness. It is also about letting others to be different and valuing their uniqueness as well. Self-leadership, in that sense, is an individual yet inclusive journey. This journey never ends, you just make progress, and that is good enough. There is a lot to enjoy in this journey.



— Chapter 1 —

Journey vs. Destination

Introduction

In the comparison of journey and destination, journey is a metaphor for anything which has an ongoing nature – like your work. Destination is the desired outcome of your work. It appears to be common sense that as there is a cause-effect relationship between the two, work is merely the means to create the desired outcome which seems to be more important than the work.

In this chapter, we will explore the pitfalls of this conventional approach and establish a case for challenging the linear cause-effect relationship between the two. The first poem “*Nasha Safar Ka*” takes a broad view and describes the mindset of a person who values the journey more than the destination. In many ways, this poem sets the tone for the book. It is about the choices you make – and more importantly why you make those choices.

The second poem “*Manzil Ek Zaria*” makes a more direct and sharp attempt to break the conventional thinking and builds a compelling case for exploring the opportunities which lie in the journey. It also brings out the futility of the fascination with destination. A hard look is required at the conventional approach and mindset, because it is so much ingrained and looks so convincing that it is tough to shake.

The third poem “*Mera Divanapan*” draws the contrast between people who are focused on the results and people who seek fulfillment in their work itself. The two approaches look almost opposite and therefore provide very different experiences. They also require very different mindsets.

This chapter is just a beginning of challenging the current notions and mindsets which sound quite logical and convincing, but have severe limitations. If this chapter does not complete the explanation of how one can enjoy the journey, it is just because there cannot be one right answer for that, also that area will be explored in depth in the following chapters. In that sense, this chapter begins a journey of curiosity and a deep dive towards self-discovery with the right mood, ambience, and opportunity for reflection – required for such an exploration.

नशा सफर का

औरों की मैं बात सुनूँ क्यों, दिल की मैं सुनता आया
राह चुनी ना जो लोगों ने, वही मैं चुनता आया

मंज़िल की परवाह नहीं, नशा सफर का है मुझको
फ़िक्र नहीं पूरे होने की, सपने वे बुनता आया

दर्द न हो कोई तो फिर क्या, मज़ा सफर में आता है
नहीं निकाला यही सोच कर, काँटा जो चुभता आया

कठिन राह थी पथरीली भी, अनजानी और वीरानी सी
टूटे ना रफ्तार मेरी, सो कहीं नहीं रुकता आया

पक्की सड़कों पर चलने वाले, क्या जाने मेरा आलम
मेरे पीछे पीछे धूल का, गुबार कोई उड़ता आया

The Intoxication of the Journey

“It is going to be your own journey, a journey which is designed, created and experienced by you, a journey which you will value more than the destination.”

Our lives are governed by the choices we make. The factors considered while making choices and their relative importance, may differ from person to person. These differences bring out the individuality of each person. The differences are not to be resolved or tolerated but are to be valued and celebrated. Our personal preferences and choices define our identity. Given this, the path you choose reflects who you are. The choice of path is an expression of your thinking and approach.

To choose a path based on your own identity and preference, requires self-confidence and courage, especially if the path is different from what others choose. Many people prefer the more convenient option of going with the norm, or a safe or proven path. But that is a compromise on your uniqueness. Such compromises dilute your individuality and take away your self-respect.

Making choices what you want to make, irrespective of what others do, shows that you trust yourself. It also indicates that you are willing to take risk and have an exploratory mindset. Such choices sharpen your individuality and identity.

People who make their own choice irrespective of what the popular notion is, do so because they value the process more than the outcome. They are more interested in the journey rather than the destination. They do not look at the journey just as the means to reach the destination. Why is journey

more important than the destination for them? Because if the destination was more important, then the choice of path does not matter. When you value your instincts and spontaneity, you want to enjoy every moment of the journey. In order to enjoy the journey, it is important that the journey is yours by choice and not taken up in the pursuit of an attractive destination.

People on their own journey are not anxious about the future. They live in the present and are completely in tune with the present moment. They nurture dreams, but there is no desperation to realize their dreams. Their dreams give them a positive energy. When they deploy that energy into their work, they stop thinking about the future. They remove future out of their present. For them dreams are important not because dreams are to be realized, but because dreams provide them with positive energy and direction.

What is your outlook towards challenges and constraints? People who undertake a task with the focus on results, tend to look at these as hurdles and obstructions which come in the way of achieving the results. Therefore, they either avoid or circumvent any hurdles in their path. They get hassled and anxious if they see any difficulty in achieving their results.

But people who value their journey more than the destination, have a very different outlook towards challenges and constraints. They consider these as integral part of the journey, and as they value their journey, they also value the challenges. They know that without any challenges, the journey can become monotonous and dull. For them, challenges become

a source of energy and a trigger for innovation. They bring out their best in the backdrop of the challenges. However, they are in no hurry to resolve the challenges, they can wait for the right time and right ideas. Sometimes, they just soak in the challenge to understand it better. When there is no tearing hurry to resolve a challenge, then the peaceful mind can generate the ideas to leverage the situation rather than struggle with the challenge.

You must realize that taking an unbeaten path, is going to be a tough choice. You are unlikely to get support from others, on the other hand people may even ridicule you and discourage you from doing anything unusual. They may try to impose their mindset on you. They measure you using their own standards and norms. They want you to be like them, and no different. But if you value your individuality, you must ignore these pressures. If you want to listen to your calling and do things your way, then be prepared for a solitary journey. But it is going to be your own journey, a journey which is designed, created and experienced by you. A journey that you are going to value more than the destination. Your pace, your way of working, your signature on whatever you do, can be maintained only if you are willing to ignore the pressures from others.

People who value destination more than the journey, who have taken the safer path everyone else was taking, are unlikely to appreciate your choices. They have no clue of what you get by walking down an uncommon and unproven path with high risk. They value safety and security while you like to experiment and go through the experience. You don't need to convince them of your choices, you don't need their approval. May be while on your journey,

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you will inspire some of them to change their outlook. Since, the path you have taken is not a path people commonly take, you will leave your footprints on that path. As you walk that path, you will blow some dust, question some assumptions, challenge some practices and in the process, make the path better.



मंज़िल एक ज़रिया

मंज़िल की चाह में ही इंसान, सफर का बोझ उठाता है
पर मंज़िल आने के पहले ही, वो थक कर चूर हो जाता है

मंज़िल को पाकर भी अक्सर, खुशी नसीब ना होती है
जो कीमत चुकाई राह में, अब उसका रंज सताता है

मंज़िल के नाम से शुरू सफर, मंज़िल का असली काम यही
फिर सफर में ही है दीवानापन, जो दूँढे उसे दिख जाता है

कुछ लोग ही यह पहचानें कि, मंज़िल तो बस एक ज़रिया है
हर खुशी छुपी सफर में है, जो समझा वो पा जाता है

जिस ने खुद को सफर से जोड़ा, मंज़िल से अपने ध्यान को
मोड़ा
उसका सफर ही बनता मंज़िल, हर पल वो खुशी मनाता है

Journey is the Destination

“Once you discover the satisfaction which lies in the journey, then you really don’t need any other destination, the journey itself becomes the destination.”

Most people tend to look at the journey just as a means to reach the destination. They believe that the destination has the key to their happiness. The destination looks very attractive, desirable and rewarding whereas the journey looks burdensome and sometimes even painful. They look at the journey as an investment with a promise of reward at the end.

The problem with this approach is that the pain of the journey is here and now, in the present, while the reward of the destination is in distant future. This approach makes your present painful. Also, the belief that the destination will give you happiness is only a probability which may or may not turn out to be true, while the pain of the journey is a current reality. Often the journey is long, cumbersome requiring a lot of effort, that can leave you drained and disillusioned. Sometimes people start having doubts whether they are on the right journey, this reduces their motivation and energy to continue the journey.

After an arduous journey when finally, the destination is near, then people start thinking about the next destination or goal and the journey associated with that. The mind starts drifting away from the immediate destination which is about to arrive. When it does arrive, it does not look so attractive as one had visualized at the start of the journey. This is due to the same mindset – that present is an investment for future, therefore present

never looks rewarding. Also, in comparison of what has been achieved by reaching the destination, the pains of the journey, the compromises made, the price paid, look disproportionately high. Often, people regret and wonder whether they selected the right destination or goal. This is compounded by the anticipation of the burden of the next journey they are about to take.

What is the alternative, can there be another way of looking at life and our pursuits? The model we are about to explore is counter-intuitive but can be transformational. Let us redefine the purpose of destination. We know that without a defined destination, the journey cannot be commenced – you need to know where to go. Similarly, without an idea of the desired outcome or goal, it is impractical to put in efforts – in most cases if not all. Destination provides a direction to the journey and a reason to undertake the journey. But the moment you start the journey, the role of the destination is over. The role was just to kick start the journey. It is like the starter motor in a car which we ignite by turning the key. When the car is running, you don't need the starter force. Once you are on a journey, the thought of destination can only distract you from the journey – prompting you to violate the norms of the journey. If you can detach your mind from the destination, then you are ready to explore the potential the journey has for you.

To understand how the journey can be an end in itself, you need to explore the value of the journey. Let us take your work as a journey and the rewards you expect to get when you complete your work, as the destination. Now, if you work only for the reward, then the work will always look like a burden.

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When you take your mind off the reward, then you are ready to explore the possibilities which lie in your work. You can find elements in your work which you love and enjoy doing. Work gives you an opportunity to connect with others. Work lets you discover your hidden potential and explore your real self. You figure out what you love doing, which is linked to who you are. You can reach a zone where you are willing to work even without the possibility of the reward.

Once you discover the satisfaction which lies in the journey, then you really don't need any other destination, the journey itself becomes the destination. Most artists work in this mode – painters, musicians, singers, authors, poets – they work for the pleasure of the work and in the process, they create something remarkable. It is possible to bring such passion to any kind of work. You need to connect yourself with your work, find a link in your work that kindles your passion and creativity, that lets you be yourself. Then every moment is fulfillment, you don't need to wait for the destination.

मेरा दीवानापन

मेरे दीवानेपन पर जो अक्सर थे हँसते
उनके सयानेपन पर मुझे रोना आ गया

अपनी कामयाबी पर वो कुछ इस उछले
मानो बच्चे के हाथ में खिलौना आ गया

इतना सब पाकर भी उन्हें पाना नहीं आया
थोड़ा सा खोकर ही मुझे खोना आ गया

मीठी बातें करना तो कोई उनसे सीखे
उन्हें शब्दों को मोती सा पिरोना आ गया

अपनी नींद के बदले में क्या खरीदा उन्होंने
हमें तो घोड़े बेचकर सोना आ गया

Breaking the Cause-Effect Paradigm

“People who are detached from the outcomes don’t look for external validation.”

Many people live life based on a cause-effect paradigm. They do something so that it creates an outcome or the result which they want. They want success, so they work hard. Their real interest is in success and not in their work. Given a choice, they don’t want to work hard, but they do so only for the outcome. They miss the very essence of life. But people who understand the limitations of living life with a cause-effect paradigm, break this equation. They work somewhat detached from the outcome. They discover their passion, they connect with the core of who they are, thereby finding meaning and fulfillment in their work. Detachment from the outcome is a prerequisite in order to bring their focus and channelize their energy towards what they do. This kind of detachment comes from within and cannot be imposed on oneself.

If you choose the approach of detachment from the outcome, be ready to be ridiculed by the people who chase the results. They can never understand you for they cannot sense the fulfillment you get from your work. They are neither able to acknowledge their own misery nor your joy. They do not consider the possibility of fulfillment from the work, as they have never experienced it. Your approach will appear counter-intuitive to them. They may even try to convince you of the worthiness in their approach.

You don’t need their endorsement. People who are detached from outcomes don’t seek external

validation, as they trust themselves to be strong enough to sail smoothly through the headwinds of criticism and skepticism. At the same time, they are aware of the misery of the people who chase the results, they understand its futility.

People who value results, external validation and rewards, celebrate when they achieve success. That is the only moment of glory they have. But they feel disappointed when they fail. Their mind is so strongly linked to outcomes that in the desire to achieve results, they work mechanically, as if just to somehow complete the task. They don't know of any other way of approaching their work, which they always see as burden.

In order to achieve the desired outcome, they are often willing to compromise the process or the design of their work. In their desperation, sometimes they may even cross the boundary of authenticity and transparency. This may lead to disparity in what they think and what they present to others. Others may even get swayed by their charm and sweet talk, only to be disappointed eventually. Every time they bring duplicity in their behaviour, their self-leadership is compromised. The discomfort, if any, of such compromise, is often suppressed by the desire to achieve the results. Logic and reasoning dominates over their inner voice. Somewhere, deep inside they are all along aware of the fallacy of their approach, but are unable to call their own bluff. It becomes very difficult for them to accept that their approach had been flawed all along.

Even when they achieve the desired outcomes, their thirst for the results does not get satiated. Sometimes it may even increase as they keep

achieving the results one after the other. In their desire to achieve more and more they tread on a path which is divergent from their true self. As they travel that path, the more they get disconnected from their true self. They lose sleep over the uncertainty of achieving the outcomes. Their anxiety and fears show in their work and in their relationships. The overwhelming emotion they have is fear, which dictates most of their decisions.

On the other hand, people who detach themselves from outcomes and enjoy the work, do not get disappointed when they miss the outcomes. With each failure, they discover something about themselves and move closer to connecting with their true self. For them enjoying the journey is far more important than reaching the destination. They are at peace with themselves and yet have an inner passion driving them towards fulfillment in their work. Their peace is not passive, it is based on their trust and confidence that they are in charge of their lives. They get energized by their work.

In a world where most people chase the results, if you take the approach of detachment from outcomes and seeking only fulfillment in the journey, be ready for an unconventional and uncommon journey. But that is what self-leadership is all about – creating our own path.

Journey vs. Destination: Conclusion

While the commonly prevalent approach is to value the destination – and look at the journey only as a means, it does not provide any satisfaction in undertaking the journey, nor guarantees any happiness on reaching the destination.

The alternative approach of valuing the journey and finding your happiness on the way, can be a game changer. It requires a different mindset and to adopt this new mindset, you have to be ready to let go of your current mindset. The new mindset can be adopted and practiced though it requires courage to go against the stream. You need to prepare yourself first by moving out of the comfort zone of familiarity. The familiarity of walking on the beaten path.

The new path is going to be lonely, unfamiliar and rough. But the transformation it provides is fascinating. It helps you connect with yourself and discover your inherent potential that is waiting to be realized.

