

# Human Destiny – A Sikh Perspective

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THE GURUS HAVE SHED DISTINCTIVE light on the nature of Creation and the purpose of human life. All creation is involved in the transmigratory process (*Ava-gaman*). Birth and death of human beings happen according to the Will of God. God sends us and we take birth and He calls us back and we die. Gurus do not believe in any particular angels in-charge of the departments of birth and death. All happens under God's will "*Hukami Howan ji*" (*Japji*). The individual takes birth under His *Hukam*. There is no heaven and hell. To be absorbed *in Naam* is being in heaven. To be away from *Naam* is hell. The law of birth of human being is law of Karma. According to actions of our past life we assume the garb of this body. The law works both progressively and regressively.

On this planet, human being is the last progressive step in the staircase of Creation. With righteous actions and spiritual progress the individual enters into *Sach Khand* (Realm of truth) and if an individual falls, he or she continues in the cycle of births and deaths. It is expressly stated by Gurus that human being's life is the most favorable opportunity to get out of transmigration - the cycle of birth and death - and achieve realization and spiritual emancipation.<sup>1</sup>

## **Source:**

The self in the individual emanates from the light of God and nearer to its source. God put the light into the body and then human being came into this world. Two key elements are soul and body. They are in essence one, one is subtle and the other gross. The soul is the support and the essence of life. It is life itself.<sup>2</sup> The human soul is indestructible and lasts even after the destruction of the body. Although body is subject to destruction, it is not to be disregarded. It is the shrine of the indwelling spirit. Since human beings are of divine lineage, they are essentially good, not evil. Human body is temple of God, therefore any foul thought or word or act is sacrilege against the sanctuary.<sup>3</sup> We should keep the body alive and healthy. In essence, mind too is spiritual and divine, "*Mun Tu Jyot Sarup Hai*", says the Guru.

God and the soul of the individual in essence are the same. The two are the same like the sun and the ray. Like the fire and the spark. As in a stream, millions of waves are produced and since waves are made of water all become water.<sup>4</sup>

## **Unity in Diversity:**

Guru named the universe *Brahmand* and human being as *pind*. The divine element is the essence of both of them. Another simile is ocean and the drops of water. There is resemblance between human being and universe. *Sagar mahi bund, Bund mahi Sagar. Jo Brahmande soi Pinde*. Universe and the body have the same nucleus. Whatever is in the universe can be found in human being. Both in material and spiritual elements human being can be taken as universe in a small degree.<sup>5</sup>

The Guru believes in God with implicit faith that death is not the end of human being. Ethical values continue after death in this very world in the form of reincarnation. This world is an arena containing all possibilities of perfection. The Guru believes in transmigration of soul *Awa Gaman* - the cycle of birth and death.

The individual soul had to pass through so many forms of life to reach the stage of human being. The future of life is of two kinds: transmigration of soul, or going into the presence of God or merging into the Absolute Being. The basis of our individual existence is *Haumain* (ego). As long as actions are performed with the idea of *I amness* the individuation remains. If the actions are dedicated to God, the sense of selfish ego is lost, the individuation ceases to be and transmigration comes to an end. Till then the cycle of births and deaths continues.

The Guru does not believe in Heaven or Hell - places of bliss or torture. They are conditions of life in this world. "Where sacred hymns are being sung, there we have heaven *Tahan baikunth jahan kirtan tera*. The house of saint is a paradise: *Baikunth nagar johan sant wasa* – where *Naam* is, there is paradise: *Tahan baikhunth jahan naam uchrai*. A vicious man burns in his passions and thus he lives in hell. Whenever Guru speaks of transmigration he never makes mention of Heaven or Hell. He addresses people of those faiths believing in Heaven or Hell. No good or bad angels come to lead the departed souls. The law of nature works. The souls of true devotees go direct to God and of others take up other existences. The Guru rejected the theory of heaven and hell.<sup>6</sup>

According to Guru the universe is governed by law of *Dharma* (righteousness). There is a law for the transmigration of soul also. Transmigration is the worst alternative and the Guru asks his disciple to escape from it. Even the best next life is a bondage. Separation from God is suffering and the union with the parent is the eternal bliss. The *haumain* stands in its way and the liberation from it lies in *Naam*. To become God-like is the ideal of human being, after leaving the body, the soul may go direct to the presence of God and to be one with Him. The supreme state is the aim of human being which is neither heaven nor salvation. It is the total dissolution of the individual existence by re-absorption of the soul in the fountain of Light, which is transcendental conscious state of God. Such *Mukti* liberation is rejected by the Sikhs. *Mukti* is the end to be striven. It is the annulment of the cycle of births and deaths that is transmigration, and the self-abiding ever in bliss of God-consciousness.<sup>7</sup> A Sikh does not want *Mukti* but the love of the feet of God. The merger of individual in the Transcendent - Self-absorbed state of God is contrary to fundamentals of Sikhism. In the merger, the individual loses one's identity since God's creative power is expressed in His immanent aspect alone. Sikh tradition is anti-withdrawal from life; Gurus in harmony with the ethics of *Naam*, went in for full active participation in life.<sup>8</sup> "May I have millions of hands to serve Thee. Service is the way to cross the hurdles of life."<sup>9</sup>

The service of God means the service of His creation – this world – this life and human beings. Harmony with the Will of God does not mean absorption into it, but free cooperation with it.<sup>10</sup> The goal is not heaven or salvation but love of *Naam* and become instrument of His will to create God's kingdom on earth. "Heaven cannot equal God's *Naam*. The God oriented has no desire for salvation." "I seek not power, nor salvation, pray give me the love of God."<sup>11</sup>

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### References

1. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Page 192
2. Ibid 1, page 193, 194.

3. Harbans Singh. *The Heritage of Sikhs*. Page 26.
4. Ibid 1. Page 196, 197.
5. Ibid 1. Page 198.
6. Ibid 1. Page 200-204.
7. Ibid 1. Page 205-209.
8. Daljeet Singh. *Advanced Studies in Sikhism*. Page 75, 76.
9. Guru Granth Sahib. Page 781.
10. Ibid 8. Page 76, 78.
11. Ibid 9. Page 534, 1078.