



# ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫ਼ਤਹਿ



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCEPT OF MAN

Man is the central figure in the universe. No philosophy, no religion can exist without man, as these are associated with him only. As Political Science is the study of man, state and government so it is necessary to study the concept of man in Sikhism while studying the whole political philosophy of the Sikhs.

Man is the unique creation on this earth. It is man only who is consciously aware of his surroundings. Man has capacity to master not only the forces of nature but also the living beings through his intellect. In the absence of the sentient and intellectual capacity, no allusion or assertion of any sort of Reality is possible. Thus man stands at the highest pedestal of the cosmos; he is last step of the staircase of the creation. Man, since ages, is trying to understand himself. Almost all the schools of thought have propounded philosophies on him; from where he has come, what was the purpose, what he has to do and why, where he has to go? There are many other similar questions also. Almost all schools of thought have tried to answer these and some other questions in their own way. Sikhism also answers the queries about the man in its own way.

The concept of man in Sikhism is based on the intuitive knowledge of the Gurus, some of which they have written in their *Bani*. Virtually the whole of Sikhism revolves around the goal of man *i.e.* to know the [self](#),<sup>1</sup> and how to achieve this goal. In order to understand the Concept of man in Sikhism, we have to study it under various headings, which are as under:

### (1) Man in Relation to the Universe

Man is a tiny creature in the vast natural surroundings. First of all we have to study how this universe came into existence. For Sikhism God is the Primary Cause of the creation. The Sikh thought does not agree with any theory of evolution, which does not show God as the Prime Cause. God was in unmanifested form before the creation. There was God and only God before. Guru Nanak explains the situation:

For aeons of years, there was nothing but chaos,  
 And there was neither earth, nor the sky  
 only the God's Infinite Will was.  
 And there was neither night nor day, nor the sun nor the moon, and  
 God was Seated in His Absolute trance. A.G., p. 1035

After that when He willed. He Himself came into manifested form, unfolded Himself and created this universe through His Will:

When such was His Will, He brought the Universe into being.  
 And without a seeming contraption, Upheld He its Vast Expanse.  
 And Created He also the Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and instilled in men the ever-  
 mounting desire for being attached. A.G., p. 1036

He created the universe through *Nam*, *Logos* spirit or Word. He Himself created Himself and then *Nam* (His Name). After that He created the universe and made Himself immanent. Guru Nanak puts it like this:

He the Lord of Himself Created Himself and  
 Assumed He Himself the Name.  
 And then He created Nature and Abiding within it,  
 He Revelled in His Wonder. A.G., p. 463

The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, puts it like this:

As millions of sparks arise from fire separately but again merge in fire...

Similarly non-sentient and sentient beings spring from God,  
Who is manifested in them and all will merge again in Him. Akal Ustati 17/87

But when did this creation take place? Guru Nanak says that no one can know it through his intellect. Even *Vedas* and *Kazis* could not find it. It is only God, the creator who knows it— Japuji, stanza 21. While describing the stages of evolution Guru Nanak tells that from the True God came the wind, from wind, water came into existence and from water the universe came into existence. To quote Guru Nanak:

From the True One came the wind; from wind came the water;  
From the water sprang the three worlds; and He, the Lord  
Pervaded all. A.G., p. 19

Much later Science discovered that evolution of universe started from the nebula, which literally means fog, mist, vapour or cloud etc. With the process of condensation and contraction it was converted into the state of molten material and finally solid material. According to the views of Sir James Jeans, "Our home in space came into being as a globe of intensely hot gas (air) on which no life of any kind could either gain or retain a foothold. Generally this globe of gas cools down becoming first liquid, then [plastic](#)."<sup>2</sup> The only difference is that Guru Nanak takes God as the Prime Energy or the Primary Source of all the matter.

It is really startling that Guru Nanak stated the facts from his metaphysical vision much before the scientists came to above conclusion after much of laborious work of so many years. In coming times science may also come to the conclusion that the Primary source of the Prime Energy behind the creation is God.

God, similarly, created man also and put His spirit (life) into him. Man's relationship with the universe is that of microcosm and macrocosm. The word Macrocosm has been derived "from the Greek *makros* ('great') and *kosmos* ('universe'). The term is contrasted with microcosm, from *mikros* ('small') and *kosmos* ('universe'). Macrocosm, taken to refer to universe, is set in contrast to man, the microcosm, a little [universe](#)."<sup>3</sup> The human body is not merely a part of the universe but is an epitome of it *i.e.*, microcosm in relation to the macrocosm. So we can't find anything extra in the

universe which is not there in the human body. There is complete similarity even between the physical processes of the universe and the biological phenomenon in the body of man.<sup>4</sup> Bhagat Pipa expresses the similarity in this manner:

God is in the body; the body is the temple of God,  
 In the body there are pilgrims and travellers;  
 In the body there are incense, lamps and sacrificial food;  
 In the body there are offerings of leaves.  
 After searching many regions, I have found nine treasures in the body.  
 Nothing is born and nothing dies. I say in the name of God,  
 Whatever is found in the universe is found in the body;  
 Whoever searches it, shall find it.  
 Peepa says: God is the Primal Essence; He will be known  
 through the True Guru.

A.G., p. 695

Guru Nanak also tells that the human body is the epitome of the universe:

See in the part (individual form) whatever is in the whole (the universe).

A.G., p. 1041

Guru Nanak further says that 'in the body there are cities, shops, fortresses and cabins, wherein True trade is to be done— AG. p. 57. He further explains that 'within the city of the body is the castle of mind; wherein resides the True Lord— A.G., p. 1033. Similarly the third Guru, Amardas, says:

Everything is there in the body, the regions, the spheres and the nether worlds.  
 There are jewels in the body; there are stores of Bhakti.  
 There is the universe of nine regions within the body,  
 There are shops, bazaars and cities  
 The Name (full of nine treasures) is found in the body  
 after contemplation on the Word of the Guru..  
 There are fear and love in the body, which are obtained by the grace of the Guru..  
 Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva reside in the body.

A.G., p. 754

The Sikh concept of universe is more realistic. The Sikh Gurus never took the

cosmos as unreal. According to them it is created by the Real, it is also real. In this real world God Himself resides—A.G., p. 463. But the cosmos is not an absolute reality. It is a relative truth. Universe is finite and has an end. Because of non-permanence of this world, the Guru called it *Maya*, an edifice of smoke, a shadow etc. Everything that has been created is n permanent. Only God is permanent.

God has created this universe to create the personality of a complete man,  
we may call him saint.

To manifest the holy (saint) has He the three worlds created. A.G., p. 224

Man is the central figure in this world. He has something unique. He is the master creature in this world because he is consciously aware, due to which he rules the world of creation on this earth. All other creatures have a subordinate position. The fifth Guru says:

All other forms of existence slave for thee,  
And you are the overlord of this earth. A.G., p. 374

It is the capacity of man alone to understand and distinguish between worthy and unworthy deeds. It is man alone who, by meditating on His Name, can know about the aim of life. Only he can meditate on *Nam*. God has given the human body for this cause only. Through it he can gain knowledge about the world, the universe and beyond. This is the stage of a *Brahmajnani* depicted by the fifth Guru in the *Sukhmani*. The equivalent of this personality is depicted in the *Dhammapada* (in Pali language) of Buddhism also. The *Dhammapada* is in the form of questions and answers. The question is 'who will comprehend this earth and this realm of *Yama* and this world together with the *devas*? Who will investigate the well-taught path of Virtue, even as an expert will pick flowers?' —IV: 1

The answer is, "A disciple will conquer (comprehend) this world and this world of *Yama* with its gods. The disciple will find out the well-taught path of virtue even as a skilled person finds out the (right) flower."—IV: 2. The author of the *Dhammapada* has used the term 'Sekho', which is often pronounced as 'Sikh'. Disciple is Sanskritised translation of the term 'Sikh' or 'Sekho'. Here this term comes out as equivalent to the

term *Brahmajnani* of the fifth Guru, Arjun Dev. The Guru has answered the above-mentioned question in a similar manner. He has used the term *Brahmajnani*, in place of *Sekho*. He tells that this world is full of evil thinking and skepticism due to which one has to take births and rebirths. Only a *Brahmajnani*, who is not evil thinking and skeptic, swims across this world<sup>5</sup> and cycle of births and deaths is not imposed on him. Therefore it does not seem surprising that the Sikh Gurus used the word *Sikh* in this context instead of the traditional Sanskritised meaning, the *Shishya* or the disciple.

So it is to achieve this aim of gaining the saintliness that God has created man, after passing the soul through various other species such as worm, elephant, fish, deer, bird, serpent, bull, horse, rock, mountain, vegetation, etc. Only after wandering through such eighty-four lakhs of lives the soul has got the birth as a man. So this is the time to achieve the goal, according to fifth Guru—A.G., p. 176.

So again and again the Sikh Gurus remind the man, that it is only he, who is conscious of his purpose and advise not to forget to achieve that.

## (2) Composition of Man

Biologically man's life starts from sperm and ovum. This body takes its form in the womb from sperm of the father and ovum of the mother. To quote the fifth Guru:

You were built with the father's sperm and the mother's  
ovary in the Fire of the womb.

A.G., p. 706

Bhagat Ravidas described the composition of human body like this:

This body is the wall of water, supported by the pillar of wind; the plaster is of the  
ovary and the sperm.

The framework is of the flesh, bones and veins:

Lo, in it resides the poor bird (of our soul).

A.G., p. 659

This body is supported by food, which is taken in many forms and especially grain. Kabir says:

I seek no more than two seer of wheat flour

With a quarter seer of ghee, and a pinch of salt.

And half a seer of lentils too,  
That will support me two times a day.

A.G., p. 656

The *Adi Granth* also describes the physical development of man. Guru Nanak describes nine stages of physical evolution of man, in general:

At ten, one is a child, at twenty a youth and at thirty he is called handsome.  
At forty, he is full, at fifty his foot falls back, and sixty, old age comes on.  
At seventy he loses his intellect and at eighty he cannot perform his duties.  
At ninety his seat is on the cot and being weak he absolutely understands  
not what strength is.

A.G. p. 138

The body of man is composed of five elements: earth (*dharti*), air (*pawan*), water (*pani*), fire (*agni*) and space (*akash*). The ninth Guru says:

Of the five elements, O wise ones, is our body forged.

A.G., p. 1426

But at more subtle level man is composed of spirit, mind and body. When we refer to a man it does not mean that the man is the body. It is not mind also. Then the question arises, where lies the man or 'I'? Guru Nanak asks the question what dies at the time of death. Does man die? To quote Guru Nanak:

The air, the water and the fire unite to create the body.  
Which plays (to the tune of) thy ever restless intellect...  
The body is but the dust; the breath is but the wind;  
Who then, O wise one, ever dies?  
The death, verily, is of the Strife, of Ego, in the mind.  
Dies not Seer within thee—the undying Self.

A.G., p. 152

The above text makes it clear that man is composed of three things: body, mind and spirit (soul). The body is gross, mind is subtle and spirit or soul is the essence, due to which both, body and mind are functioning. Bhagat Kabir tells about such composition:

Within the house (of the body) is the house (of mind) and within it  
is the great house (of soul). A.G., p. 970

The great house (*Param Kothi*) described by Kabir is part of God Himself:

Says Kabir, this soul is the Lord's offspring.

It is stable like the ink which can be erased not from the paper. A.G., p. 871

Similarly the fifth Guru says:

Our soul is the image of the Transcendent God.

Neither is this soul old nor young,

Neither dies nor it goes,

For, since the beginningless time, it is merged in its self. A.G., p. 868

So it becomes clear that till soul remains in the body, the latter and the mind function, when it goes to its Source (God) the body ceases to function. Soul is the motivating force in the body. This soul is transferred from body to body after death and it carries *samskars* with it.

### (3) Nature of Man

What is the nature of man? This question has been asked since ages. Many a philosopher has answered this question in different manners. For Greek Philosophers, man is a rational being.

For Socrates man is essentially good. It is only ignorance or lack of knowledge or lack of education that man cannot see the goodness and does evil. "The view that moral goodness is knowledge based on the assumption that all men are searching implicitly for the good, which, once they see it, they will embrace. Men cannot truly see the good and then do the evil. Contrariwise, failure to act righteously is due to ignorance of what is *right*".<sup>6</sup> For this reason Socrates stresses on moral education of man.

For Plato there are three categories of human mind. Out of these one is developed if proper education is given accordingly. He assumes that human mind has these three categories: Reason, Spirit and Appetite. Reason is the foremost category of mind. This category produces the ruling class with all rational knowledge. The second

category, *i.e.* Spirit produces military class and the third one produces the peasantry class.

Aristotle is also of the view that man or soul is essentially rational. But it needs proper education. In the *Ethics* he says, "The rational, aspect of the soul, by contrast with the irrational, is conscious and deliberate. It is developed to its full potentialities only under purposeful direction and discipline. Man in addition to being vegetative and appetitive— characteristics which he shares in some measure with all vegetables and animals—is also rational."

"By nature", Augustine holds in the *City of God*, "man is made for society and harmony. To be fully itself, an individual soul will subject the irrational to the rational, the fleshly appetites to the beatific vision. At the same time, its perfect union with God will remain its equally perfect and harmonious concord with other souls." For him human nature consists of dual character. One is that of body and second is of soul. The former is based on appetitive and possessive impulses of man's lower nature. This state is not permanent. This is due to the result of original sin *i.e.*, disobedience of the Angels. When this state will pass away the character of soul, which consists of pious deeds, will start. These are two stages in human nature.

Machiavelli's description of human nature is quite negative. For him man is self-centred, aggressive, stupid and irrational. "The times and human affairs are constantly changing, whereas men do not alter their ideas and their way of life...The wise man should command the stars and the Fates. But since there are no such wise to be found, man having, in the first place, shortness of sight, and secondly, being unable to rule his nature, it follows that Fortune changes, and thus governs men and subjects them to her yoke."<sup>7</sup>

According to the *Leviathan* of Hobbes, man is essentially selfish, contentious, quarrelsome, mean, wicked, non-altruistic, non-rational, impulsive and self-centred.

Locke's approach is quite humanistic in character. Instead of maintaining that man is merely an animal, Locke holds that man is moral and a social animal. For him "human beings are good, social, moral and rational. They are equal also, morally speaking. They are endowed with innate and inalienable rights of life, liberty and property."<sup>8</sup>

For Rousseau man ought to be free, independent, and solitary (because this is the best life for him); but that the conventions and customs of society, the various

regulations and restrictions, which political and economic institutions involve, enslave him and cause him fall from his original and blessed state of the freedom.”— Social Contract. For Burke human wants demand rights, which must not be denied.

Kant is of the opinion, “Man’s will is good not because, the consequences which flow from it are good, nor because it is capable of attaining the end which it seeks, but it is good in itself, or because it wills the *good*.”<sup>9</sup>

T.H. Green and Herbert Spencer hold the view that man has inherent instinct of rights for which he has given birth to state to protect those. For Spencer there are two fundamental laws of human nature—Law of free energy of faculty and the law of equal freedom. Both of these must be allowed to operate.

Biblical concept is that man was created as an image of God— Genesis 2: 26. So it indicates that man is a moral creature with intellect, capacity for feeling and a will. In Islam, Allah created the man with His own hands (Koran 38:75) and in a most noble image. To quote the *Koran*:

We moulded man into a most noble image. 95:4

In Islam man is essentially good because, the *Koran* holds, Allah’s own spirit He induced in man. Allah, while addressing *Satan*, says:

When I have fashioned him (man) and breathed of my spirit into him.  
Kneel down and prostrate yourselves before him. 15:29

It also holds that little knowledge is given to the *spirit*.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is prone to evil. Joseph says:

Not that I am free from sin  
man’s soul is prone to evil. 12:53

The man has been given free will to choose whatever path he likes and will be judged and given reward accordingly. To quote the *Koran*:

It (soul) shall be requited for whatever good and whatever evil it has done. 2:286

Many other revered writers from various angles have described the nature of man in Sikhism; here we shall deal only with the aspect that is concerned with Political Science. In Sikhism man is essentially good; he is like God. Kabir points out that man (soul) is the part of the Supreme Soul or God. Says Kabir:

This Soul is of the same essence as is God,

And abides ever, as does the indelible ink on paper.

A.G., p. 871

As explained in the above couplet man is like God. As God is infinitely good similarly is the man. But due to *Maya* and *Haumai* man goes astray. The term *Haumai* consists of two words *Hau* and *Mai*, which means 'I am'. Ordinarily it is translated as ego. But ego has some positive sense also, whereas this *haumai* is totally negative. Since there is no exact equivalent of *haumai* in English we may translate it as 'I-am-ness'. Ordinarily man takes birth due to *haumai* only (though this is not in the case of [realised souls](#))<sup>11</sup> This *haumai* is like chains due to which man has to take birth. This *haumai* travels with the soul of man from the previous birth in which he has not tried to renounce it and always has been in its grip. This travels with the soul in the form of *Samskars*. This *haumai* becomes the cause of births and deaths again and again. Guru Nanak tells:

In *Haumai* one comes; in *haumai* one goes.

A.G., p. 466

The second Guru describes the phenomenon as:

The trammel of *haurnai* is this that man again and again,  
enters into existences.

A.G., p. 466

Actually God abides by the man but it is the *haumai*, which acts as a wall between the two. Hence the true relation and effect of the former on the latter diminish. The fourth Guru takes God (Supreme Soul) as Groom and man (soul) as a bride while describing it:

The bride and Groom abide together.

But between the two is the stonewall of I -am-ness.

A.G., p. 1263

The second is *Maya*. *Maya* is one of the basic concepts of Hinduism. But in Sikhism *Maya* has been taken in a totally different way. The Gurus have studied *Maya* from various angles. From one angle it is the desire of material possession. Man is attracted by material and wealth and thus is taken astray. The third Guru says:

The man of riches is blind and deaf,

For he hearkens not to the Word,

his mind being filled with the noise (of riches).

A.G., p. 313

This *Maya* (riches) is such, which invariably involves the exploitation of the poor. Guru Nanak writes:

Many, O many, have been consumed and wasted away by their riches,

Which one gathers not without sinning, nor carries along when dead.

A.G., p. 417

*Maya* from another angle is attachment with the worldly relations. Man gets involved in the worldly attractions and forgets to attain his final Goal for which he has been sent to this world. The third is that the whole universe or creation is *maya*. This means that this world is transitory and one should not have any attachment to it. The fifth Guru beautifully explains *maya* in the *Sukhmani*:

All thy love of *Maya* is surely the love of illusion

For the (sense-pleasures) pass of forsooth.

Why, O why, thou lovest the passing shade of the tree,

For, it goeth soon and thou comest to grief.

All that seems, passes away;

Why then this thy love of Darkness?

He, who loves a wayfarer,

What is it that he gets from him who comes only to pass away.

A.G., p. 268

Man is thus illusioned and goes astray. He has to get rid of *Haumai* and *Maya*. But, for this he has to pray to God and with His grace and personal efforts he can get rid of the two. He becomes a complete man and man in original form. The third Guru asks man to recognise his true self after getting rid of his shackles

O my mind, thou art the spark (embodiment) of the Divine  
Light; know thy Essence.

A.G., p. 441

When he recognises his true self, the fifth Guru calls him *Brahmajnani*. Such a man becomes one with God. He comes in his original form. So his nature also becomes like God. Though he does not become God he becomes 'Godlike'. Even at the stage of Guru Nanak, man does not become God. Bhai Gurdas, the first Sikh theologian, explains it beautifully when he describes Guru Nanak as '*Akal Rup*' (Var 1: 35). He calls Guru Nanak not God but the image of God. Actually soul is part of God and it is in His Image. The *fifth* Guru says:

And our soul is the image of the Transcendent God.

A.G., p. 868

Such a man becomes totally fearless. Again:

He, who meditates on the Fearless One, loses all his fear.

A.G., p. 293

Essentially man is free by nature. It is only due to *Haumai* and *Maya* that he gets into chains. He has got freedom of will or actions, though not unlimited. Man is free to choose good or bad. This becomes clear when the Gurus repeatedly advise man to follow the right path. The fifth Guru says that man comes on this earth to gain something *i.e.*, union with God but instead of aspiring for this he starts doing bad deeds and thus wastes his life—A.G., p. 43. Sheikh Farid warns that man will have to answer for his deeds to God—A.G., p. 1379. Logically speaking, one is answerable only when one has free will.

But at the same time man cannot have a total free will. Some of the checks on free will are in the form of some social ethics. Only a person who meditates on God and observes such ethical norms and does pious deeds is a true man or a religionist.

According to the fifth Guru:

Of all religions, this one is the best:

That one Meditates on the Lord's Name and does what is Holy. A.G., p. 266

According to Sikh thought man is not complete without observing ethics. Without observing ethical norms, *Nam Simran* is of no consequence. In *Japuji*, Guru Nanak says:

Without observing good qualities not true devotion can be. Stanza 21

In Sikh thought ethics and morality form part of man's duties. Fulfilling his duties he becomes free. A complete man is always aware of his duties. Freedom of actions becomes his right.

About human freedom Rousseau observes, "Man is born free but everywhere in chains." To explain it from the Sikh angle we can say that man when born is essentially free but gets into chains due to *haumai* and *maya*. Only after the True Realisation he can achieve real freedom.

#### (4) Man and Society

At the time of the birth of Guru Nanak, man had developed a conflict with his milieu. Unable to face the world he was virtually running away from the society. The persons, who tended to be spiritual, were renouncing the world, living in forests and hilltops.

Genuine religious feeling and morality gave way to hypocrisy, empty ritualism, ceremonialism and fanaticism. Guru Nanak thus explains the situation:

Righteousness and the sense of shame have hid  
themselves and falsehood walks abroad.

A.G., p. 722

Priestly class, both of Hinduism and that of Islam, was exploiting the situation. The Guru points to the hypocrisy of the *Brahmin*, the Hindu priest:

They tax the cow and the Brahmin and with the cow-dung they hope to save themselves!

They wear dhoti, the frontal-mark and the rosary (like the Hindu), but they eat the barbarian's (Muslim's) grain.

Within, they worship (their idols), (outside),  
they read Quran, and observe the Code of the Turks.

Shed thy Deceit and Hypocrisy, O Brahmin,

For, it is through the Lord's Name that one swims across. A.G., p. 471

The Muslim priest or *Kazi* was no better. He too wore the cloak of religiosity. He tended to be religious but was misusing his judicial power to make money. Guru Nanak tells:

Becoming a Judge, he (Kazi) sits to administer justice.

He tells rosary and mutters God's Name.

Taking bribe, he does injustice.

If some one asks him, then he quotes and reads out some aphorism. A.G., p. 951

Guru Nanak tells about both Hindus and Muslims:

The man-eaters (Muslim) say the (Five) prayers!

And they who wield the knife wear the sacred thread!

And in their homes do the Brahmins blow the couch (for prayer),

But, they too relish the same tastes.

False is their stock, False their trade.

Yea, they all fill their bellies through Falsehood.

The sense of shame and honour from them is far removed. A.G., p. 471

Others, whether Hindus or Muslims, are but praters. A.G., p. 952

Not only this but both the Hindus and the Muslims were fighting with each other. The Hindus called the Muslims as *Malechhas* or the barbarians and the latter called the former as *Kafirs* or the infidels. Bhai Gurdas tells that both were fighting each

other, leaving aside the truth— *Var* 1: 2. The Muslims, being a ruling class had the upper hand. The Muslim rulers destroyed the Hindu temples and built mosques thereon—1: 20.

The Hindu society was badly divided into four castes and many sub-castes. The low caste *Sudras* were ill-treated by the other three castes. Position of women was no better. *Purdah* and Sati systems were in practice.

It was in this milieu that Guru Nanak came to the scene. He condemned the policy of renunciation. He preached to live pious and social life. According to him one must not run away from this world. Running away to forests is no solution to the sufferings and problems. He criticised the *Siddhas* who were somewhat spiritual people but had run away to the hilltops. Bhai Gurdas tells in his *Vars* that Guru Nanak condemned their policy of renunciation. He asked them to go to the world and work for reforming the society—*Var* 1: 29. The fifth Guru thus preaches:

He who, night and day, chants only the praise of the Lord, remains detached in his household, gets salvation. A.G., p. 281

The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, also rejects renunciation and beautifully explains the true *Sanyas*:

O man, practise asceticism in this way:  
 Consider thy house altogether as the forest, and remain an anchorite at heart.  
 Make continence thy matted hair, union with God thine ablutions,  
 thy daily religious duties the growth of thy nails,  
 Divine knowledge thy spiritual guide; admonish thy heart  
 and apply God's name as ashes to the body.  
 Eat little, sleep little, love mercy and forbearance.  
 Ever practise mildness and patience,  
 and thou shalt be freed from the three qualities (of *maya*).  
 Attach not to thy heart lust, wrath, covetousness, obstinacy and worldly love.  
 Thus shalt thou behold the Real Soul of this world,  
 and obtain the Supreme Being. *Sabad Hazare*

In early Vedic society also married life was treated as a better life. In the *Taittiriya Brahamana* it is mentioned that 'a person, who is unmarried is *unholy*'.<sup>12</sup> According to the *Avesta*, the holy book of Zoroastrians, oblations offered unto gods or ancestors by a maiden or a bachelor are unacceptable to them—Ashi: Yashta C. X. 54.

Then comes the turn of equality amongst human beings. The Sikh Gurus out rightly rejected caste and other systems, which tend to divide the human beings. Kabir gave the message of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. To quote him:

First, God Created His Light; and from it were all men made:

Yea, from God's Light came the whole universe:

so, whom shall we call good, whom bad?

A.G., p. 1349

The fifth Guru says:

Thou art our only Father; we are only Thy children.

A.G., p. 611

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Master, claimed:

Some men are Hindus and others Musalmans;

among the latter are Rafazies, Imams, and Shafais

know that all men are of the same caste.

Karta (the Creator) and Karim (the Beneficent) are the same,

Razak (the Provider) and Rahim (the Merciful) are the same;

Let no man even by mistake suppose there is a difference.

Akal Ustati 15/85

The Sikh thought is of the view that a true spiritualist never makes distinction on the basis of caste, colour, creed, race, religion and sex etc.

Sikhism lays great emphasis on honest living and earning one's livelihood through honest means. There is no place for parasites in Sikh society. The Gurus forbade accepting of alms and using the offerings to the religious places for personal ends. Guru Nanak says:

And, though proclaimed as a guru, begs from door to door,

Never, O men, should one fall at the feet of such a man. A.G., p. 1245

Guru Nanak instructed to earn livelihood through honest means:

He alone, O Nanak, knows the Way,  
Who earns with the sweat of his brow  
and then shares it with the other. A.G., p. 1245

The Guru condemned life of a parasite. He forbade to have an eye on the others' earnings:

Saith Nanak: To grab what is another's is evil,  
As pig's flesh to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu. A.G., p. 141

But Sikhism also lays great stress on helping the needy and the poor. As already quoted Guru Nanak advised to give in charity some part of the honest earning. It was this practice of giving part of one's earning for the welfare of others, which later led to the system of *Daswand*. Every Sikh has to give one-tenth of his income as a donation to the Guru, which is meant to help the needy, and the poor. *Daswand* is considered essential for every Sikh. This is sharing of one's earning which is called *Vand Chhakna* in the Sikh dialect. Another feature of *Vand Chhakna* is the *langar* system or the *pangat*. The importance of *langar* grew at the time of the third Guru, Amar Das. He made it compulsory for all visitors to partake *langar* before allowing an audience. According to Sikh tradition Emperor Akbar took food in *langar* before paying obeisance to Guru Amar Das. So service to community and mankind is one of the basic features of Sikhism. It has got so much importance that, according to Guru Nanak, one can find place near God through service of mankind. He says:

He who dedicates himself to the service of others in the world,  
He gets a Seat of Honour in the Lord's Court. A.G., p. 26

A Sikh is also supposed to protect the weak and the defenceless. The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur laid down his life to protect the religion of the oppressed section. The sixth and tenth Gurus took to sword for the sake of extending protection to the oppressed section of society. The Sikhs were advised to wear sword or '*Kirpan*', as a part of his dress, which literally means to protect the honour (*Kirpa+ Aan*), may it be of others or of one's own. But the Gurus did not hesitate to serve even the wounded foes in the battlefield. The example of Bhai Kanahiya can be well cited. He used to serve water to the wounded persons in battlefield irrespective of their allegiance. The Sikhs objected to it and reported the matter to Guru Gobind Singh. On asking, Bhai Kanahiya told that he saw the image of the Guru in all persons alike. For him there was no enemy. The Guru not only praised his action but also gave him the medicines also to give it to any of the wounded persons, might he be of the enemy's army. Guru Gobind Singh not only preached his Sikhs to become saintsoldiers but also himself became the true ideal.

#### (5) The Ideal and its Attainment

According to Guru Nanak God has created this world to make a personality of a complete man whom he calls as *Sant* (saint). He says:

The Lord has created these three worlds to make the  
personality of a saint.

A.G., p. 224

So with this purpose man was also created. All over the *Adi Granth* it is found written that this human body is given to the soul to achieve this aim of *Santhood*—the complete man.

Human soul is the part of the Supreme Soul *i.e.*, God. Says Kabir:

This soul is the Lord's offspring.

A.G., p. 871

It is the law of nature that everything tends to go to its source. The source of water in this world is ocean. We see that all the Water flows in the direction leading towards the ocean. It always travels downwards. All the rivers flow in this direction and

ultimately fall into the ocean and become part of it. The tenth Guru supports this phenomenon when he says that all the sparks come back to the fire, all the particles of dust come back into the dust. Similarly as our soul is part of the Supreme Soul, it tends to go back to its Source. The Guru writes:

As from one fire millions of sparks arise;  
 though rising separately, they unite again in the fire;  
 As from one heap of dust several particles of dust fill the air,  
 and on filling it again blend with the dust.  
 So from God's form non-sentient and sentient things are manifested,  
 and, springing from Him shall be united in Him again. Akal Ustati 17/87

The souls of saintly figures like Kabir and Nanak have already merged; souls of many are travelling in that direction. Every one has to pass through the stage of such great persons one-day. The only difference is of our delay in adopting the way of such great personalities.

Virtually, the whole of the *Adi Granth* tells about the goal, how to achieve it, what are the hindrances on the way, and how to overcome those. All these are instructed with proper illustrations from the history or mythology.

### The Ideal

The ideal is explained differently by all the religions and schools of thought. *Mimansa* calls it *mukti* by getting into the heaven or the *swarag*; according to *Nyaya* and *Vaisesika* it is the release from the causes of sufferings; *Sankhya* calls it detachment of *Purush* from *Prakriti*; Buddhism calls it *Nirvan*, for Jainism it is to attain the stage of *Jinn*.

But Guru Nanak says:

I seek no dominion, nor Deliverance, for I crave for nothing but  
 the Love of Thy Lotus-Feet. A.G., p. 534

This was the level of his saintliness or love and devotion for his Lord. This is the stage,

which we have to seek for. Love for the sake of Love should be our goal. When any feeling of getting anything, may it be of the highest level, comes, then the love is not true, it demands something. True love has no demand. Sheikh Farid beautifully expresses this thought:

O Farid, where there is greed to get something in exchange there is no love.  
With such greed false is the love. A.G., p. 1378

He says when one's desire to get something, though of the highest level, is not fulfilled such false love will be finished<sup>13</sup>. At this above stage one is in tune with God, nay he becomes one with Him. He even sheds the desire for *Mukti* and wants only love, through *Nam-Simran*. The fifth Guru thus describes this state:

Not myriads of heavens can equal (the Lord's)  
Name:-(Blest with it), the Wise one sheds even  
the desire for Emancipation. A.G., p. 1078

Exactly like this Kabir had risen above the desire of heaven and the fear of hell. This is what he tells about his own state of mind:

Kabir has risen above (the desire of) heaven and (the fear of) hell  
by the Grace of God,  
And now he lives Intoxicated with the Lord's Lotus-feet,  
in the beginning as at the end. A.G., p. 1370

So we come to the conclusion that oneness with God is our aim. This has been expressed in many other terms such as *Jivan mukti*, *Chauthapad*, *Turiyawastha*, *Sahajpada*, *Sachkhand*, Opening of *Dasam Dwar*, etc. Guru Tegh Bahadur calls it *Nirban*. For the *Adi Granth* all these terms are synonymous— all pointing to oneness with God.

### Attainment

In Indian philosophy there are three margas: *Karma Marga*, *Bhakti Marga* and *Gyan*

*Marga*. These three are not absolutely exclusive of each other. In *Karma Marga*, desireless actions are emphasised. In *Bhakti Marga* the devotee presupposes some incarnation of God as absolutely perfect and considers himself extremely insignificant, humble and meek. The third is the *Gyan Marga*, advocated by Samkara, in which man is to realise God through knowledge. For this school of thought the cause of suffering is *maya* or illusion, which in turn is due to ignorance or *Avidya*.

*Nam Marga* of Sikhism does not reject these three outrightly. Some good features of all the three margas are embodied in *Nam Marga*. But in Sikhism *Karma* is not absolute. Only by doing good actions man cannot attain oneness with God. Something more is required and that is *Nam-Simran*, which is primary. Good actions, though not negated, are secondary:

All other morality and Karmas are useless  
without the Lord's meditation.

A.G., p. 682

About the *Bhakti Marga* Sikhism does not condemn the true devotion but the theory of incarnation of God, idol worship and dances etc. in *Bhakti* are not approved by the 51kb Gurus. They preached *Nirgun Bhakti* like Kabir did. According to Guru Nanak:

Yea, Wise is not he who destroys his wisdom in Strife.

Through Wisdom, one Serves God; through Wisdom, one Attains Honour.

Through Wisdom, one Realises what one reads;

through Wisdom, Charity comes into one's mind.

A.G., p. 1245

However, the Guru attach no value to knowledge, which is, devoid of *Nam-Simran*. Such knowledge leads nowhere. The third Guru says:

The world is like the crow : it crows out its wisdom,

But its within is filled with Greed, Falsehood and Ego.

So know ye, that without the Lord's Name

one's outer show is exposed in the end.

A.G., p. 832

The fifth Guru makes a clear statement:

Be one handsome in extreme, of high lineage,  
 Endowed with intellect, greatly learned in theology, wealthy,  
 Without Love for the Lord, saith Nanak, Reckon such a one as dead. A.G., p. 253

The Gurus also condemned outrightly the tendency of Samkara's *Gian Marga* towards renunciation. The ninth Guru clearly says:

Why goest thou, O man, to search God in the forest?  
 God, though ever detached dwells everywhere and  
 Abides even within thee. A.G., p. 684

Guru Gobind Singh in the Dasam Granth (Sabad Hazare) as quoted already beautifully depicts a true form of Sanyas.

### Nam Marga

While the concept of *Nam* is a topic for wider discussion here we are concerned only with its practical aspect i.e. *NamSimran*. As already discussed, the soul takes birth in some form because of *haumai*. If one is to transcend the cycle of births and deaths, the cause of which is *haumai*, then one has to do *Nam-Simran*, with His grace. Guru Nanak explains in *Asa ki Var* that how this *haumai* is to be overcome:

The trammel of ego (*Haumai*) is this that man again and again,  
 enters into existence...  
 Ego (*Haumai*) is a chronic disease, but it has also its curing medicine.  
 If the Lord be in Grace one practises the Word of the Guru,  
 Says Nanak: "Hear ye men, thus is this malady cured. A.G., p. 466

So it is practising the Word of the Guru which is called *NamSimran* which makes the man to transcend *haumai* and helps him become one with God.

According to Sikhism, the human body is given to the soul as an opportunity to do *Nam-Simran* and attain liberation. Virtually the whole of the *Adi Granth* is dedicated

to this aspect. It tells the goal of man and how to achieve that goal, *i.e.* through *Nam Simran*, of course on the Word of the Guru and with the grace of God. The fifth Guru tells that the human body is given to us as a chance to meet God. He tells:

Thou hast obtained from thy God a human's body,  
 Now alone is the time (turn, opportunity) to attain to thy Lord.  
 Of no avail are thy other works:  
 Join the Society of the Holy and utter nought but the  
 Lord's Name.

A.G., p. 12

Kabir says:

Through the Guru's Service, Devotion (to God) welled up within me,  
 And (through God's loving adoration) I attained unto human birth.  
 Even the gods seek to be embodied like us humans.  
 Then why dost not thou, O man, contemplate thy God through this priceless body?  
 Yea, Dwell thou on God abandon Him not;  
 For, the Attainment of God is the object of human life.

A.G., p. 1159

The hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, very forcefully remind us of our goal and to achieve it through *NamSimran*.

Thou passed through myriads of births, age after age and  
 then thou wert Blest with the vesture of man.  
 Says Nanak: "Now is the time for thee to meet thy God:  
 why dost thou Cherish (Meditate on) Him not?"

A.G., pp. 631-2

Again:

O Saints, Utter the Praise of the Lord.

The life of man is priceless: why waste it away in vain.

A. G. p. 219

It is believed that birth in human form is a chance to do *Nam-Simran*. The first thing man has to do is to get initiated. Because without a guide or Guru, one cannot do progress in *Nam-Simran*. It is the Guru who leads to God through *Nam-Simran*. It is

the Guru who makes us to do the *Nam-Simran*. Without Guru this cannot be done. It is he who unites man with God. The fifth Guru says:

Be not led astray by the illusion of the world,  
 (And know thou that) without the Guru, no one is  
 Ferried across (the Sea of Existence).  
 The Guru shows the Path to the strayers.  
 And makes one forsake the other,  
 and be dedicated to the Lord's Worship (i.e. *Nam-Simran*). A.G., p. 864

He further says that the Guru acts as a mediator between the man and God. He says:

I've seen the Guru, as was his Repute:  
 The Separated ones he Unites with God  
 and is an intercessor at the Lord's Court. A.G., p. 957

Even more clearly he tells that without the Guru's initiation and instruction one cannot have the Divine knowledge.---A.G., p. 1140. So it is the Guru who makes us to meditate on His Name and leads us further to Divine knowledge and makes us one with God.

Now the question is how to do *Nam Simran*? Guru Nanak explains it very clearly in *Japuji* that at the first stage one is to repeat the Name (or the *Gurmantra*, which is given at the time of initiation, by the Guru) again and again. He says:

Were man's one tongue to become a hundred thousand,  
 And even twenty times that;  
 Was each such tongue to utter the Lord's Name-Supreme  
 a hundred thousand times each instant. A.G., p. 7

Kabir tells the way while giving the example' of Dhru and Prahlad. He says:

Contemplate thy Lord in the same way,  
 As did Dhru and Prahlad Dwell on their Lord. A.G., p. 337

So it is clear that while starting, man is to repeat it by tongue several times every day especially in the early morning hours. Because at that time there is complete calm and quiet and mind is fresh. We can pay more devotion and attention to *Nam-Simran* without any disturbance. That is way the Gurus also laid stress on rising up early in the day.<sup>14</sup> With the passage of time and more and more time devoted to *Nam-Simran* with devotion one's spiritual stage starts rising. With man's efforts and Guru's grace there comes the state of effortless *Nam-Simran*. At this stage man is not to put in any effort. It becomes an automatic process. One even hears some unrecognisable voices which is *Nad* which after more efforts, labour, devotion and self-surrender to the Will of God become not only clearly audible but also come under control and one can hear the *Nad* of one's choice just as a radio frequency can be changed to catch any station of one's choice whenever one feels like. This is the stage of *Brahmajnani* described by the fifth Guru in *Sukhmani*. This gives the feeling of *Vismad* (wonder and bliss). With *Nam-Simran* moral qualities automatically start developing in the mind and man becomes moral. Godly attributes start accumulating in man. There comes unity and purity in thoughts, words and deeds. One transcends *haumai* and other negative qualities. Man becomes free and his mind is cleansed—Japuji-20. With the transcendence of *Haumai* man is freed from all the shackles and become one with God, which is man's final Goal.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. James Jeans, *Universe around Us*, p. 10.
3. W.L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, p. 324.
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5. *Eh Sansar Bikar Sarse Meh Taryo Brahamgyani, Adi Granth*, p. 13.
6. Mulford Q. Sibley, *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, p. 59.
7. Machiavelli, *Draft of a Letter to Pier Soderini*, quoted in Ettore Janni, *Machiavelli*, p. 212.
8. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, p. 531.

9. Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 225-26.
10. 'The Spirit is at my Lord's command, Little indeed is the knowledge Vouchsafed to you'. The Koran, 17:85.
11. A realised soul does not take birth, as a man, due to *Haumai* or any other negative reason. He takes birth of his own sweet will. Guru Nanak supports it:  
'Yea, the God-man comes and goes at his will.'" *Adi Granth*, p. 932.
12. *Ayagyo Va Aish Yogpatnik*.
13. Sahib Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan (Punjabi)*, Vol 10. p. 311.
14. *Amrit Vela Sach Nao Vadiaee Vichar, Adi Granth*, p. 2.



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