Concept of Purable Karam

(Writer: Dr. Kala Singh)

According to most religions if a person did good deeds (Karam) in previous life then one lives good life now and if one did bad Karam in previous life one suffers in this life. What Karam one does now will be rewarded in next life. Guru Nanak's philosophy has been different from other religions. Let's see those differences. In other religions God's abode is in the sky on some planet. Guru says.

- ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ॥
  ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ॥ (੯੮੨)

The Bani is Guru, and Guru is the Bani, Within the Bani is the Ambrosial Nectar of spiritual knowledge and wisdom which devotee always keeps in the mind (mann). If the devotee believes and acts according to Guru Bani, Then the Guru emancipates one from worldly temptations.

- ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ (੫੧੫)

Bani (Spiritual teachings) is Guru and Guru is Bani and Bani is God. Bani is a philosophy, code of conduct which teaches how to live a perfect life. So, God is a philosophy, virtues, code of conduct.

- ਘਟ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਹਰਿ ਜੂ ਬਸੈ ਸੰਤਨ ਕਹਿਓ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ॥ (੧੪੨੭)

God's abode is in every living thing, not in the sky, another planet. As God is a philosophy, virtues, a code of conduct, every living being is under that philosophy. Among all God's creations, only human have the choice to go against or with the philosophy and code of conduct.

In other religions God punishes or rewards according to one's deeds (Karam).

- ਮਿਠ ਬੋਲੜਾ ਜੀ ਹਰਿ ਸਜਣੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੋਰਾ॥ ਹਉ ਸੰਮਲਿ ਥਕੀ ਜੀ ਓਹੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਬੋਲੈ ਕਉਰਾ॥
  ਕਉੜਾ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਗਵਾਨੈ ਅਉਗਣੁ ਕੋ ਨ ਚਿਤਾਰੇ॥
  ਪਤਿਤ ਪਾਵਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਭੰਨੈ ਘਾਲੇ॥
  ਘਟ ਘਟ ਵਾਸੀ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਨੇਰੈ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਨੇਰਾ॥
  ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਰਣਾਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਜਣੁ ਮੇਰਾ॥(੭੮੪)

God's Virtues are sweet and beneficial for all. God gives equally to everyone without looking at merits and demerits of anyone. God is nearest of the near as God's abode is in everyone. As God is a philosophy, the teachings in that philosophy, is equal for all. Whoever lives life according to those teachings realize God within. Here again Guru Nanak's

philosophy is different from other religions that God is not biased and does not look at merits and demerits of anyone.

- ਕਵਨੁ ਨਰਕੁ ਕਿਆ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ਸੰਤਨ ਦੋਊ ਰਾਦੇ॥ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੀ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕਢਤੇ ਅਪਨੇ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੇ॥
ਅਬ ਤਉ ਜਾਇ ਚਢੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਹੈ ਸਾਰਿੰਗਪਾਨੀ॥
ਰਾਮ ਕਬੀਰਾ ਏਕ ਭਏ ਹੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਪਛਾਨੀ॥(੯੬੯)

The Guru (Sant) rejects both hell and heaven. By the Grace of my Guru, I have no obligation to either of them. By the Grace of the Guru (Guru's Spiritual teachings and wisdom) I am now truthful in my life. The God and Kabir have become one. No one can tell them apart.

- ਬੈਕੁੰਠ ਨਗਰੁ ਜਹਾ ਸੰਤ ਵਾਸਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਚਰਣ ਕਮਲ ਰਿਦ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ॥ (੭੪੨)

Heaven is in that mind (mann) where God dwells in the form of spiritual teachings.

- ਜਿਸ ਕੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਰਾਜ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥ ਸੋ ਨਰਕਪਾਤੀ ਹੋਵਤ ਸੁਆਨੁ॥
ਜੋ ਜਾਨੈ ਮੈ ਜੋਬਨਵੰਤੁ॥ ਸੋ ਹੋਵਤ ਬਿਸਟਾ ਕਾ ਜੰਤੁ॥
ਆਪਸ ਕਉ ਕਰਮਵੰਤੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥ ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰੈ ਬਹੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਵੈ॥
ਧਨ ਭੂਮਿ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਕਰੈ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ॥ ਸੋ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਅੰਧਾ ਅਗਿਆਨੁ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸ ਕੈ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਬਸਾਵੈ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਈਹਾ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਆਗੈ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ॥ (੨੭੮)

One who has the pride of power, dwell in hell like a dog, now while living. One, who has pride in the beauty of youth, is always indulged in sensuality and is in hell like a maggot in the filth. One, who claims to act virtuously, always in cycle of spiritual death and birth and never gets peace. One who takes pride in wealth and lands is ignorant fool. Nanak says one who is mercifully blessed with abiding humility is liberated while living (Eha Mukat) and obtains everlasting peace.

Some religions believe in rebirth.

- ਸਗਲੀ ਬਣਤ ਬਣਾਈ ਆਪੇ॥ ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਥਾਪੇ॥
ਇਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਓ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਏ ਜੀਉ॥ (੧੩੧)

The whole universe is created by God and at the end everyone will merge into the one again.

- ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ॥ ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ॥
ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ॥ ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨ ਟੇਕ॥
ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਅਗਲੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ॥ ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੁ ਭਿ ਊਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ॥
ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ॥ ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ॥
ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ॥ ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ॥

ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ॥ ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ॥
ਜੋ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥ ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ॥ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ॥ (੮੮੫)

When someone dies physical body of five elements merge with the five elements of earth, the breath merges into the air, the soul blends into the supreme soul, people lament in misconception for the dead. One can discuss with the Guru (Braham Giyani) that it is the body which dies but soul never dies. No one knows what happens after death. The one who is lamenting will also die one day. Mortal beings are bound by the bonds of doubt and attachment. The union of body and soul is for a short time like a dream. The Creator created this creation. Whoever is born will one day according to the command (Hukam) of the God, but the soul does not perish, it is immortal. It is not what you think of the soul that it reincarnates. Nanak says the Guru has dispelled my doubt that the soul does not reincarnate. I am a sacrifice to the one who knows this.

– ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਖਾਣੀ ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ॥ ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਉਪਜੀ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ॥ (੧੦੩੭)

Everything was created from Primal Void and will merge with Primal Void after death.

– ਪਾਂਚ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਤਨੁ ਰਚਿਓ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਚਤੁਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ॥ ਜਿਹ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਲੀਨ ਤਾਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਾਨੁ॥(੧੪੨੭)

This body is made of five elements. When one dies these five elements and the divine light will merge once again into the one it originated from. According to Gurmat there is no reincarnation. Everyone merges into God after death.

We have seen that Gurmat philosophy is different from most of the religions. If there is no previous life than what are Purable Karam? Now let's see what concept of Purable Karam in Gurmat is. Where philosophy of other religions is against science Guru Nanak's philosophy go hand in hand with science. So, I'll discuss Purable Karam both through science and Gurmat. There are three types of Purable Karam.

1. In 1950 science accepted that this universe was created by big-bang theory. According to this theory there was a big bang. From that came gas. From gas, water formed and all creations came from water.

Almost five centuries ago Guru Nanak said:

– ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ॥(੧੯)

From God came gas. From gas water formed and all creation came from water. God permeated into all the creation. First living thing was a unicellular organism in water. Sun's ultraviolet rays were harmful to it. So, the organism would go down to the bottom of sea during day time and come up at night to feed. This created Circadian Rhythm (Body Clock). As evolution took place these genes of circadian rhythm were passed on. Even today human beings and all other species have that circadian rhythm (Body Clock). It is disturbed as with

jet lag or working shifts we suffer. Like this, what was learnt during the evolution from unicellular organism to being a human has been passed through genes and is affecting us. Those are Purable Karam.

– ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ॥
ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸੈਲ ਗਿਰਿ ਕਰਿਆ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਰਭ ਹਿਰਿ ਖਰਿਆ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥ ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ॥
ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਭਇਓ ਜਨਮੁ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ॥ ਕਰਿ ਸੇਵਾ ਭਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ॥
ਤਿਆਗਿ ਮਾਨੁ ਝੂਠੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥ ਜੀਵਤ ਮਰਹਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ॥
ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਆ ਸੁ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਹੋਗੁ॥ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ਕਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ॥
ਤਾ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਜਾ ਲੈਹਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇ॥ (੧੭੬)

In this Shabd Guru explains evolution from unicellular organism to human being. It has taken millions and millions of years from unaccountable number of species of insects, worms, birds, trees and different types of animals to be perfect creation of a human being. All these species were living in the jungle which has been imprinted in the genes and passed on to us human beings. That's why when we go to nature we feel at peace. We are not supposed to be living in the concrete jungle. Even while living in the concrete houses, we keep plants inside. Plants remind us of our evolution. This is our Purable Karams which are affecting us. More on this can be read in a paper written by Steve Hammous at Earth pages org.- Deep DNA memory theories, can we remember our ancestor's lives?

Guru used 8.4 million species in this Shabd because it was commonly known at that time. Guru said that there are uncountable and endless number of species.

– ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ॥ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ॥
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ॥ (੭)

God created nights, days, weeks, seasons, air, water, fire and the nether regions. During these, God established earth as a home for Dharma. In this sanctuary, coexist uncounted and endless species of different colors, creed and habits, who have very diversified methods and principles for their survival, living styles, desires and ambitions of life.

– ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਲਖ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਉਤਮੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸਿ ਦੇਹੀ॥ (ਭਾ. ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਵਾਰ ੧, ਪ: ੩)

Bhai Gurdas says among all these countless species human beings is the Superior most creation.

It is a common saying "To err is human". If human is liable to err then how can human be the superior most creation among all species. If human err then Guru says such humans, only belong to human species but they act like animals.

– ਕਰਤੂਤਿ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤਿ॥ (੨੬੭)

To be the superior most creation, humans must act according to teachings of Guru otherwise we are like animals.

2. Whatever our ancestors learnt has also been passed on to us through genes. For example, a child is born with golden hair but neither parent has golden hair. Then they find out that the maternal great grandmother had golden hair. So that gene with golden hair has been passed on to this child. There are two types of genes, recessive in all but became dominant in this child. If a parent has dominant genetic disease, there are 50% chances of children inheriting the disease. In the same way two siblings are different. One is saintly and other is very playful. Relatives say his great grandfather was saintly. He is exactly like him. The other child is on her aunt who is playful. That means the boy got dominant genes from his great grandfather and girl got it from her aunt. That clearly shows that we are affected by our ancestors. These are our Purable Karam.

3. Whatever we learn throughout our life becomes our Purable Karam. A child told by mother not to go in dark because there are ghosts there, develops fear of darkness and belief in the presence of ghosts. A child witness mother and siblings beaten by father develops fear of authority figure and might get rebellious as well. A child participating in religious activities become religious person in later life. These become our Purable Karam. Guru says:

- ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਕਮਾਇਅੜੋ ਸੋ ਆਇਓ ਮਾਥੈ॥ ਜਿਸੁ ਪਾਸਿ ਲੁਕਾਇਦੜੋ ਸੋ ਵੇਖੀ ਸਾਥੈ॥
ਸੰਗਿ ਦੇਖੈ ਕਰਣਹਾਰਾ ਕਾਇ ਪਾਪੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ॥ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਕੀਜੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੀਜੈ ਨਰਕਿ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ॥
ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਤੇਰੈ ਸਾਥੇ॥ ਭਜੁ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਟਹਿ ਦੋਖ ਕਮਾਤੇ॥(੪੬੧)

The actions we perform day and night will influence us in our later life. So do good deeds and remember God all the time in the company of good people. These become our Purable Karam.

Can we change our Purable Karam? Guru says yes. Among all the countless creations only humans have the power of choice.

- ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੇਹਾ ਕੋ ਬੀਜੇ ਤੇਹਾ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਇ॥
ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬੀਜਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਫਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਏ॥
ਓਨਾ ਹਲਤਿ ਪਲਤਿ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਓਇ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਸਚੀ ਪੈਨਾਏ॥
ਇਕਨ੍ਹਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਖੋਟੁ ਨਿਤ ਖੋਟੁ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਓਹੁ ਜੇਹਾ ਬੀਜੇ ਤੇਹਾ ਫਲੁ ਖਾਏ॥ (੩੦੨)

True Guru is the field of Dharma, as one plants the seeds there, so are the fruits obtained. Those who plant seeds of good deeds, get ambrosial fruits (Everlasting Peace). Those plants seed of cruelty get fruit of misery and sorrow. That means humans can obtain knowledge and change their Karam. That's why Guru emphasized the company of good people.

- ਕਰਿ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਿਮਰੁ ਮਾਧੋ ਹੋਹਿ ਪਤਿਤ ਪੁਨੀਤ॥ (੬੩੧)

In the company of good people can get good knowledge and change ourselve. In one bad company we get wrong knowledge and even fight with saintly people. 4th Guru Ramdas had three sons, Arjun, Prithi Chand and Mahadev. All three had different disposition. Arjan had dominant genes of his father and became Guru. Prithi Chand had wrong company. Instead of living in the same household of Guru Father, he continued fighting with him because of type of knowledge he was getting from his peers. That's why Guru says do not associate with wrong types of persons. Run away from them.

- ਕਬੀਰ ਸਾਕਤ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਦੂਰਹਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਭਾਗਿ॥ (੧੩੭੧)

Behaviour can be learned from company (Sangat) one keeps or genetic as we learned from number 2 or 3 or both. The power of company (Sangat) can be seen from this example. If a raindrop falls in the mouth of pied cuckoo (Chatrik) will give life to the bird. If same rain drop falls in a dirty gutter, becomes useless. If same drop falls on a hot place will evaporate and lose its identity. If same drop falls on a petal of flower, will shine like a pearl. Same rain drop will have different fate and disposition according to the company.

- ਪੂਰਬ ਕਰਮ ਅੰਕੁਰ ਜਬ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੇ ਭੇਟਿਓ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਰਸਿਕ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ॥
  ਮਿਟਿਓ ਅੰਧੇਰੁ ਮਿਲਤ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੀ ਸੋਈ ਜਾਗੀ॥ (੨੦੪)

Recessive Saintly genes which were dormant for generations become active when we met Guru and got spiritual knowledge.

- ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ॥ ਦੇਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਇਸ ਕਾ ਬਿਸ੍ਰਾਮੁ॥ (੨੯੩)

Virtues of the God which is equal to so called nine treasures of this world abide in the mind (mann), in the form of recessive genes normally lying still, dormant and inert in human being. These Virtues can be activated by meeting Guru, getting spiritual knowledge and doing good deeds.

Conclusion

Gurmat goes hand in hand with science. There is no heaven, hell and Mukti after death. They are here and we must achieve them now. There is no previous life and it's Purable Karam. We are affected by Purable Karam in the form of what is passed on to us through genes during evolution, our ancestors and what we learn throughout our life. They all work collectively to make our Purable Karam. Whatever deeds (Karam) we did few moments ago become our Purable Karam a moment later. We got benefit or punishment of those deeds (Karam) now in form of peaceful (Heaven) or miserable (Hell) life now, not after death in next life. There is no reincarnation or after life because Gurmat says everything was created from Primal Void and will merge with Primal Void after death. We can change our Purable Karam by meeting and getting spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru. That's the only difference between animals and human beings. Animals cannot obtain knowledge and change themselves, humans can.