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Sikhism

Our present existence is determined by our former behaviour and our conduct now decides the manner in which we will return... However, our present failures, unlike those of the past, cannot be attributed to karma. They are the consequences of maya or haumai.

Maya means holding a materialist view of the world and therefore living as though its values, even its most praiseworthy such as moral rectitude, were ends in themselves. Haumai, literally 'I-I', is a difficult idea to render into English. Perhaps self-reliance is as satisfactory a term as any because though haumai results in pride this is not necessarily an immoral state. Self-reliance is often praised as a great human virtue, but for Guru Nanak it is a condition which blinds us to dependence upon God, to the need for liberation and therefore to the hope of realising it... Here we must remember that in Guru Nanak's teaching human birth was the first step on the road to liberation. It provides the opportunity for meeting God. The consequence of self-reliance is the rejection of this chance and a backward step to animal-like ignorance rather than progress to God-realisation.

Dependence upon God and obedience to the will of God (hukam) is essential for liberation. By contradicting the former haumai denies the latter and is therefore, inevitably, subject to the law of karma.

From Cole W O and Sambhi P S - *The Sikhs: their religious beliefs and practices*
(Sussex Academic Press, 1995) p75

1. (a) Clarify the argument and/or interpretation in the passage. (24)

(b) Do you agree with the idea(s) expressed? Justify your point of view and discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience. (16)

(Total 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER 1H: 40 MARKS

Start your answer on page 3.



