

HEAVEN AND HELL - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Heaven and Hell are two concepts in most religions that believe in the afterlife. They believe God judges the deeds of people, assigns heavenly awesome rewards for the good, and hellish punishment for the evil doers. These concepts revealed by religious prophets have been narrated in their holy scriptures. However, the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS), the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, does not conform to places like heaven or hell. Instead, it emphasizes that everybody faces the consequences of good and bad deeds during life on Earth. In Sikhism, humans have direct contact with the Supreme Entity and realize Its attributes to live righteously. As the old saying goes, "As you sow, so shall you reap". These concepts to control good moral behavior are considered imaginative philosophy developed by the religious mentors for serving the self by creating a carrot and stick technique for gullible populations. Most religions believe in the metaphysical aspect of these concepts, whereas Sikhism considers it all earthly consequences of deeds performed during life. This paper will discuss the origin of these concepts, imaginative locations, inhabitants, selection criteria, and the imaginative physical form of heaven and hell.

INTRODUCTION

Heaven and Hell are established metaphysical mythological concepts created in almost every religion by humans, whereas in Sikhism, these are considered metaphoric for reference only. According to all indications, neither heaven nor hell traditions originated out of nowhere; all inherited the basics from the ancestral Proto-Indo-Iranian (Alexander 2023) lore and, at most, individually modified or developed them in the details. One great difference is that the India-rooted traditions came to widely teach reincarnation as another option besides ending in the heavenly or the hellish dimensions after death for those neither good enough for the first nor bad enough for the second birth. In contrast, the Iranian (Zoroastrian afterlife tradition generally presumed the heavenly otherworldly dimensions for the good and the hellish underworld dimensions for the bad, and, if not good enough for the first nor bad enough for the second, then some mediocre otherworldly sphere for the rest, hence, usually not thinking of a rebirth on this Earth as an option (i.e.,

basically once bodily dead, then always bound to a place in the otherworld - or at least until the global bodily resurrection which is the peculiar eschatological idea by which Zoroastrianism diverged from the Indian traditions). This is also associated with the Zoroastrian idea of everyone forever retaining one and the same identity instead of moving between different identities through multiple rebirths, which most India-rooted traditions presume. However, Yiddish, Christianity, and Islam traditionally bury their dead because of the belief that they are waiting in purgatory until their prophet will descend and take them all with him to heaven. They all believe in seven heavenly realms above and seven hellish realms below planet Earth.

Where is Heaven?

Nobody knows, and nobody has returned after death to claim any concrete evidence of heaven existing anywhere. However, Christian belief in Jesus' resurrection and telling his disciples about the heavens is written in the Holy Bible. Christ promised his followers they would live with him in heaven (John 12:26; 13:36; 14:2-3). 27. Jesus described heaven as having many rooms or dwellings

and promised that he would go there and prepare a place for us (John 14:2-3). Thus, the Christians believe that Heaven is the aim for all Christians, for their soul to be reunited with God and united with Christ.

Vedic mythology promulgates various locations (*Lokas* or heavens) for the soul's afterlife, depending upon the god, *Brahmpuri* being the ultimate heaven where, according to their belief, Brahma (the God) lives. The judgmental god, *DharamRaj*, considers other locations. Other *Lokas* are *Swargpuri*, *Shivpuri*, *Indrpuri*, and *Narakas*, which are in the southern part of the underworld. According to the Vedas, the soul must live through 14 different *Lokas* (Wikipedia) before attaining a human body again.

In the history of Sikhism, the Singularity was initially predicted by some models of the Big Bang theory to have existed in the utter darkness (Black Matter) and nothing else. (Lamb, 2010) In the description of the pre-evolutionary era, Guru Nanak clearly explained the nothingness of everything. There were no humans; thus, no one was suffering in pain or enjoying the good of life. He wrote about the non-existence of reincarnation. No one must go through multiple lives after death. Mentioned "NO AFTERLIFE", there was no birth, death, or in other words, no coming or going. He wrote

ਓਪਤਿ ਖਪਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੀ ॥

Opat k^hapat na aavan^h jaanee.

There was no evolution or destruction, no coming or going.

ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਸਪਤ ਨਹੀ ਸਾਗਰ ਨਦੀ ਨ ਨੀਰੁ ਵਹਾਇਦਾ ॥੨

Khand pataal sapat nahee saagar na^hdee na neer vahaaidaa. ||2||

There were no continents, nether regions, seven seas, rivers, or flowing waters. ||2||

ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਮਛੁ ਪਇਆਲਾ ॥

Naa tad^h surag mach^h paiaalaa.

There were no heavenly realms, Earth, or nether regions of the underworld.

ਦੇਜਕੁ ਭਿਸਤੁ ਨਹੀ ਖੈ ਕਾਲਾ ॥

Dojak b^hisat nahee k^hæ kaalaa

was no heaven or hell, no death or time.

ਨਰਕੁ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਨਹੀ ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਨਾ ਕੇ ਆਇ ਨ ਜਾਇਦਾ ॥੩

Narak surag nahee jaman^h mar^haa naa ko aa^h na jaaidaa. ||3||

There was no hell or heaven, no birth or death, no coming or going in reincarnation. ||3||

ਬਰਮਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

Barahmaa bisan mahés na koee

There was no Brahma, Vishnu, or Shiva.

ਅਵਰ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੇ ਸੋਈ

Avar na deesæ éko soee

No one was seen, except the One Lord

Describing the details of that era, he wrote

ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਨਮਾ ਨਾ ਕੇ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ(4)

Naar purak^h nahee jaat na janmaa naa ko duk^h sukh^h paaidaa. ||4||

There was no female or male, no social class or caste of birth, no one experienced pain or pleasure. 4. (translation Sant Singh Khalsa)

AGGS. M.1, p.1035.

Nobody knows the origin of humanity except scientific observations, that Humans first evolved 6 in Africa, and much of human evolution occurred on that continent. The fossils of early humans between 6 and 2 million years ago come entirely from Africa. Early humans first migrated out of Africa into Asia probably between 2 million and 1.8 million years ago. Guru Nanak questioned the mythological Vedic fundamentals of reincarnation and the afterlife and asked about the origin of humanity. He wrote.

ਜਾਤੇ ਜਾਇ ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਆਵੈ ॥

Jaato jaaé kahaa té aavæ.

How can we know where we go and where we come from?

ਕਹ ਉਪਜੈ ਕਹ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥

Kah upjæ kah jaaé samaavæ.

Where did we originate, and where will we go and merge?

AGGS. M1, p.152.

And he replies,

ਮਤੁ ਕੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਜਾਇ ਅਗੈ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥

Mat ko jaanæ jaaé agæ paaisee.

Do not think that you will automatically find a place of rest hereafter.

ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਇਸੀ ॥

Jéhé karam kamaaé téhaa hoisee.

According to the actions one has committed so does the mortal become.

AGGS. M. 1, p. 730.

In the above quotations, Guru Nanak emphasizes that nobody knows the afterlife or reincarnation, but there will be consequences depending upon the deeds committed in this world. Ignoring the attributes of the Supreme Entity and the natural phenomena can lead to living a miserable life on earth. He details it as follows:

ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਦੇਖ ਭਰਮ ਸਹੀਐ

Naam visaar dok^h duk^h saheeæ.

Forgetting the Naam, one suffers the misery of his evil ways.

ਹੁਕਮ ਭਾਇਆ ਚੱਲਣਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਰਹੀਐ॥

Hukam b^haiaa chalⁿaa kio rahe^eæ.

ਨਰਕ ਕੂਪ ਮਹਿ ਗੋਤੇ ਖਾਵੈ ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੀਨਾ ਹੇ॥8॥

Narak koop mēh goté k^haavæ jio jal té baahar meenaa hé.

When the order to depart is issued, how can we remain here?

He falls into the pit of hell and suffers like a fish out of water.

ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਨਰਕ ਸਾਕਤੁ ਭੋਗਾਈਐ

Chaoraaseeh narak saakat b^hogaaeeæ.

A faithless cynic must suffer 8.4 million hellish incarnations.

ਜੈਸਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਤੈਸੇ ਪਾਈਐ॥

Jæsaa keechæ tæso paaeeæ.

As he acts, so does he suffer.

AGGS. M. 1. p.1028.

The cynic may have to face the worst in suffering due to evil deeds done during life on Earth. The 8.4 million hellish incarnations are referring to various states of physical sufferings the cynic will have to go through during life. As mentioned earlier, do not think of any place hereafter. Whatever one does here on Earth, one gets consequences.

Guru Arjun, understanding the featureless form of the Supreme Entity, questioned various mythological statements of Vedic origin, particularly regarding the afterlife and reincarnation. He wrote.

ਜਬ ਏਕਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰ॥

Jab ékēh har agam apaar.

When the One only Supreme Entity was fathomless and infinite.

ਤਬ ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗ, ਕਹੁ ਕਉਨ ਅਉਤਾਰ॥

Tab narak surag kaho kaun autaar.

Please, tell me then who was going to heaven and who was for hell?

AGGS, M. 5, p. 291. (Translation Sant Singh Khalsa)

ਜਬ ਅਕਾਰੁ ਇਹੁ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਦਰਿਸਟੇਤਾ ਪਾਪ ਪੁੰਨ ਤਬ ਕਹ ਤੇ ਹੋਤਾ॥

Jab akaar ih kach^h na daristétaa. Paap punn tab kah té hotaa.

When this world had not appeared in any form, Who then committed sins and who performed the good deeds?

AGGS. M. 5, p.214.

Guru Arjun, emphasizing the Nirgun state of the Supreme Entity, is questioning the mythology of Heaven and Hell and the pre-requisites of getting into any afterlife state. It again proves that these terms were created by humans to maintain morality in society.

Kabir Ji searched the truth about reincarnation and the afterlife in the Vedas and found nothing, and he wrote:

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਤਿ ਸਭੁ ਖੋਜੇ ਕਹੂ ਨ ਉਬਰਨਾ॥

Béd puraan simrit sab^h k^hojé kahoo na oobarnaa.

I have searched all the Vedas, and Simritis, but found nothing.

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਉ ਰਾਮਹਿ ਜਪਉ ਮੋਟਿ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨਾ॥

Kaho Kabeer io raamēh jampao mét janam marnaa.

॥4॥5॥

Says Kabir, meditate on the Ram, and eliminate myth of birth and

death.

AGGS. Kabir, p. 477.

It becomes clear from Kabir observations that the reincarnation and afterlife in heaven and hell are just imaginative mythological metaphysical proposals. At the time, there were no Vedas and Simritis, thus no afterlife existed. These concepts never existed before humanity, and these are creations of the religious mentors to maintain morality and goodness in society while also creating a fearful situation of hellish attributes for selfish gains. Guru Arjun, expressing unrecognizable features of the God and nonexistence of the worldly indulgences of three Gunas (Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva in the pre-evolutionary phase, questions the existence of sin or goodness, he wrote:

ਜਹ ਆਪਿ ਰਚਿਓ ਪਰਪੰਚੁ ਅਕਾਰੁ⁵॥

Jah aap rachio parpanch akaar

ਤਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਮਹਿ ਕੀਨੇ ਬਿਸਥਾਰੁ¹⁰॥

Tihu guṇ mēh keeno bist^haar.

ਪਾਪੁ¹ ਪੁੰਨੁ¹² ਤਰਾ³ ਭਈ⁴ ਕਹਾਵਤਾ⁵॥

Paap punn tah b^haee kahaavat.

ਕੋਊ⁶ ਨਰਕ⁷ ਕੋਊ⁶ ਸੁਰਗ⁸ ਬੰਛਾਵਤਾ⁹॥

Kauoo narak kauoo surag banch^haavat.

Then who wanted heaven and who wanted hell.

When¹ the Supreme Entity² displayed³ its wonderful⁴ evolution⁵ and exploite¹⁰ the three⁶ Gunas⁷ of Maya⁸; that is when¹³ this statement¹⁵ of good¹¹ and evil¹² came¹⁴ into vogue¹⁵, and then some¹⁶ people desired to be in hell¹⁷ and others¹⁶ in heaven¹⁸.

AGGS. M. 5, p. 292.

Understanding the attributes of God and internalizing them for righteous living, one can find the heavenly attributes here on earth. Guru Arjun wrote.

ਸਰਬ ਬੈਕੁੰਠ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮੋਖ ਪਾਏ॥

Sarab bækun^h mukat mok^h paaé.

Everything obscured (on Earth), the Heavens, liberation, and even deliverance.

ਏਕ ਨਿਮਖ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਏ॥

Ék nimakh har ké gun gaaé.

Singing even for an instance the glories of Hur Ji //

AGGS. M. 5, p. 290.

Sikhism believes in directly connecting with the Supreme Entity during righteous living on Earth and achieving "Muktee" (salvation); they do not believe in any metaphorical Heaven and Hell. No doubt, these terms are repeatedly mentioned in the Bani of the Sacred Scripture of Sikhs (Aad Guru Granth Sahib AGGS) as a reference to guide the seekers for righteous living; these terms are considered metaphysical in Vedic traditions and metaphorical Sikhism.

Mythological Prerequisite formalities before judgement for the afterlife?

According to Vedic mythology, every aspect of treacherous and fraudulent deeds can be averted through ritualistic activity (*kaaryaa karm*), and one can even achieve Heaven or Hell. Guru Arjun vehemently condemned such rituals when he wrote:

ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਤੀਰਥ ਕੀਏ ਬਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਬਧੇ ਬਿਕਾਰ ॥

Hom jag tirath keeé bich haumæ badh'é bikaar.

Making burnt offerings, sacrificial feasts, and going to pilgrimages to sacred shrines increases egotism, corruption, and evil deeds.

ਨਰਕੁ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਦੁਇ ਭੁੰਚਨਾ ਹੋਇ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰ ॥੨॥

Narak surag dué bhunchanaa hoé bahur bahur avtaar. ||2||

Still, one is subject to Heaven and Hell being reincarnated repeatedly //

ਸਿਵ ਪੁਰੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਪੁਰੀ ਨਿਰਚਲੁ ਕੇ ਥਾਉ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

Siv Puree Braham Eindhr Puree Nihachal Ko Thhaao Naahi //

The realm of Shiva, the realms of Brahma and Indra as well there is no permanent heavenly place anywhere.

ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਹੋ ਸਾਕਤ ਆਵਹਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥੩॥

Bin Har Saevaa Sukh Nehee Ho Saakath Aavehi Jaahi ||3||

Without serving the Lord there is no peace at all. The faithless cynic comes and goes in reincarnation. ||3||

ਜੈਸੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਉਪਦੇਸਿਆ ਮੈ ਤੈਸੇ ਕਹਿਆ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥

Jaiso Gur Oupadhaesiaa Mai Thaiso Kehiaa Pukaar //

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਹੈ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਕਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਉਧਾਰੁ ॥੪॥੧॥੧੫੮॥

Naanak Kehai Sun Rae Manaa Kar Keerathan Hoe Oudhhaar ||4||1||158||

Says Nanak, listen O' my mind, sing the hymns of the Lord's Praises, and you shall be saved. ||4||1||158|| (translation by Sant Singh Khalsa)

AGGS. M. 5, p. 214.

Understanding these terms mentioned under the dominant Hindu influence among the Sikhs, who believe in them and even that reincarnation is possible. However, the quotation above by Guru Arjun negates any permanent location for resting the souls in the afterlife. However, suffering or receiving rewards during life on this Earth is possible if one realizes the attributes of the Supreme Entity, living righteously, and being liberated. Otherwise, suffering and a miserable life will torture the evildoer. That is how the Supreme Entity revealed and asked me to say.

In Bhagat Bani Kabir, in discussion with a Pandit, asked:

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਆਏ ਕਿਨ ਇਹ ਰਾਹ ਚਲਾਈ ॥

Hindoo turak kahaa té aaé kin éh raah chalaáee.

Where have the Hindus and Muslim come from?

ਦਿਲ ਮਹਿ ਸੋਚਿ ਬਿਚਾਰਿ ਕਵਾਦੇ ਭਿਸਤ ਦੇਜਕ ਕਿਨ ਪਾਈ ॥

Ðil méh soch bichaar kavaadé bhisat DOJAK kin paaee.

||1||

Just think seriously in your mind who assigned Heaven and Hell?

AGGS. Kabir, p. 480.

Kabir then asked the Kazi:

ਕਾਜੀ ਤੈ ਕਵਨ ਕਤੇਬ ਬਖਾਨੀ?

Kaajee tæ kavan katéb bakh'aaanee.

O Kaji, which book have you been reading?

ਪੜ੍ਹਤ ਗੁਨਤ ਐਸੇ ਸਭ ਮਾਰੇ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਨੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Paṛhat gunat æsé sabh maaré kinhooⁿ k'habar na jaanee. ||1|| rahaaoo.

Scholars and students have all died, and none have discovered the inner meaning. ||1||Pause||

AGGS. Kabir, p. 480.

In the quote referred to above, Kabir is telling the Kazi that all those scholars and students have not been able to understand the deep meanings of Heaven and hell. He further instructed:

ਛਾਡਿ ਕਤੇਬ ਰਾਮੁ ਭਜੁ ਬਉਰੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ਭਾਰੀ ॥

Ch'haad katéb raam bh'aj bauré julam karat hæ bh'aaeree.

Give up your holy books, and remember Ram, you fool and stop oppressing others so badly.

ਕਬੀਰੈ ਪਕਰੀ ਟੋਕ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਤੁਰਕ ਰਹੇ ਪਚਿਹਾਰੀ ॥੪॥੮॥

Kabeeræ pakree ték raam kee turak rahé pachihaaree. ||4||8||

Kabir has taken hold of Ram's support, and the Muslims have utterly failed.

AGGS. Kabir, p. 477.

Having realized the ultimate truth of divine preponderance in humanity and Understanding the prophesied heaven and hell, Kabir recommends not looking for imaginative places, but taking shelter of the Supreme Entity instead and living

righteously here on earth. He then critically reviewed the traditional ritualistic actions promulgated by the clergy and religious mentors. He wrote:

ਰੋਜਾ ਧਰੈ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰੈ ਕਲਮਾ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

Keeping your fasts, reciting your prayers, and reading the Kalma, the Islamic creed, shall not take you to heaven.

ਸਤਰਿ ਕਾਬਾ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਕੋਈ ॥੨॥

The Temple of Mecca is hidden within your mind if you only knew it. ||2||

AGGS. Kabir, p. 477.

However, Sikhism believes in a direct connection with the Supreme Entity during believing in them and even in reincarnation is possible. However, the quotation above by Guru Arjun negates any permanent location for resting the souls in the afterlife. However, suffering or receiving rewards during life on this Earth is possible if one realizes the attributes of the Supreme Entity, living righteously, and being liberated. Otherwise, suffering and a miserable life will torture the evildoer.

Having understood the falsity in Vedic liturgy and praxis, Bhagat Kabir got averted and questioned the superiority of the high-class Brahmans. He did not follow their ritualistic traditions but lived a very righteous life. He narrated and wrote Bani, enquiring the Vedic liturgy and expressing his straightforward version as follows, where he considers Heaven and Hell nothing but metaphoric myths. He wrote:

ਆਪ ਡੁਬੈ ਚਰ੍ਹੰ ਬੇਦ ਮਹਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਦੀਏ ਬਹਾਇ ॥੧੦੪॥

Aap dubé chahu béḍ mèh chélé ḍeeé bahaaé. ||104||
The Brahmans are drowned by indulgences in four Vedas, and so do their disciples.

Kabir in another verse wrote:

ਕਬੀਰ ਜੇਤੇ ਪਾਪ ਕੀਏ ਰਾਖੇ ਤਲੇ ਦੁਰਾਇ ॥

Kabeer jété paap keéé raakhé talæ ḍuraaé.

Kabir narrated that the Pandit indulged in Maya, did several sinful deeds, and then tried to hide them under his feet.

ਪਰਗਟ ਭਏ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਸਭ ਜਬ ਪੂਛੇ ਧਰਮ ਰਾਇ ॥੧੦੫॥

Parghat bhaie nixhaan subh jub poochhae Dharm Rai
When Dharam Rai enquired all the sins are exposed.

Kabir says that dressing fraudulently and looking plausible may deceive gullible people, but with your inner sins, when they explode, you will be liable for judgment and

punished for your deeds.

Dharma Rai is considered a demigod in Vedic mythology, the administrator of judgment after life for the good and the evildoers. But Kabir said,

“ਕਬੀਰ ਸੁਰਗ ਨਰਕ ਤੇ ਮੈ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Kabeer surag narak té mæ rahio satgur ké parsaad.

Kabir said, by the grace of Satguru, I am spared from the Heaven and Hell.

AGGS, Kabir, p.1370. (Translation by Sant Singh Khalsa)

CONCLUSION

A brief description of the origin of the terms Heaven and Hell has been presented. How these terms are exploited in various religions has been explained. Most of the religions promulgate a heavenly abode for the graciously righteous living persons and hellish circumstances for the evildoers. These terms are metaphysical in most religious traditions, whereas the Sikh philosophy considers them metaphoric and refers to them aplenty in the sacred text, the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. To help the gullible Sikh population, religious mentors are promulgating the goods and bads of these terms every day, mainly for lining their own pockets. Guru Arjun clearly explained the non-existence of Heaven and Hell. However, living a righteous life and remembering the good attributes of the Supreme Entity means enjoying living in Heaven on Earth. Guru Nanak advises religious mentors and others, saying that no one gets there by merely talking about heaven. To enjoy the wonders of Heaven here on Earth, living righteously is the best. he wrote

ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ॥

Galee b'hisat na jaaeeæ ch'utæ sach kamaaé.

By mere talk, people do not earn passage to heaven; it comes only through truthful living.

AGGS. M.1, p.141.

Does everybody living in a country that provides food, shelter, and health facilities not only to human beings but even cats and dogs are well taken care than humans compared to several other countries, feels like living in heaven? Interestingly, people living in those countries take these excellent facilities for granted. These facilities are not appreciated until one goes to so-called third-world countries and finds that no such facilities exist. Are those people not living in hellish conditions? I think so. The question often asked is, if God is Universal, why is there discrepancy in the living conditions of humans in different countries or the same country?

Guru Nanak in his time observed the discrepancy in humanity as well. He explained it as the natural phenomena of the Supreme Entity when he wrote.

ਕੇਤਿਆ ਦੂਖ ਭੂਖ ਸਦ ਮਾਰ॥

Kétiaa dook^h b^hook^h sad maar.

So many endure distress, deprivation, and constant abuse,

ਏਹਿ ਭਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਤਾਰ ॥

Even these are Your gifts, O Great giver.

AGGS, Jap 25, p 5.

And Guru Arjun describing the state of various folks living on Earth, wrote in Sukhmani:

ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਕੇ ਵਾਸੀ.

kaiee kot paataal ke wasi

several million inhabit the nether regions

ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗ ਕੇ ਨਵਾਸੀ

kaiee kot nrk surg niwasi

several million are in Hell, and some in the Heavens.

AGGS. M. 5, p. 276.

Both quotations mentioned above explain the status of people living on Earth. The people doing good deeds enjoy the awesome wonders of the world, whereas the evil doers suffer hellish conditions.

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Humans first evolved in Africa, and much of human evolution occurred on that continent. The fossils of early humans who lived between 6 and 2 million years ago come entirely from Africa. Early humans first migrated out of Africa into Asia probably between 2 million and 1.8 million years ago