

The Purpose of Life on Earth

SHAMSHER SINGH PURI*

ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥

ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥

* 5235 Sterling Trace Court, Lilburn. GA 300 47. USA.

AFTER BEING SATISFIED ABOUT the basic needs of *food, clothing and shelter*, one starts thinking of the Purpose of one's life and how to make it more meaningful and satisfying. Answer to these questions gives birth to philosophy and religion.

Four objectives: The prophets of all religions came to the conclusion that if a person abides by certain laws of Nature and leads a disciplined life, he or she is physically and emotionally stronger and lives a long happy life. In practical wisdom Guru Nanak strongly affirms that a householder (*Grahasti*) should have four objectives in life to make it meaningful. These are *Kirat karni* (honest hard work), *Vand chhakna* (sharing wealth) *sewa karni* (service of humanity) and *simran karna* (meditation). They are called four *Purusharthas*, which literally means vigor and strength of a person. However, in the technical terms of *Dharma* (religion) it means *objectives of life*. Guru Nanak's four objectives thus translate into the four *purusharthas* in common life mean *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*. The basic objective is to follow *Dharma* and the final objective is to achieve *Moksha*.

Dharma of a human being is to be truthful, kind, loving, protecting, respecting, compassionate, forgiving and just to all beings. Dharma is also a set of prescribed rules which keep a person, his family, his community, and his country in perfect harmony, avoiding crises. He has some duties towards himself, that is, to keep himself in a good physical and mental health. He has some duties towards his family - as a son, as a husband, as a sibling and as a father.

He has some duties towards his community as its member and towards his country as its citizen. Dharma establishes these duties as its dictum on all its followers. Thus usually duty and dharma are synonymous.

It is a common belief that Lord always comes to help the righteous people and there are several such instances mentioned in Indian scriptures when Lord manifested to help in time of need but this belief has sometimes hurt the believers. There is a common saying in Sanskrit:

"Dharam rakshati rakshith" Dharma protects when it is protected. Mahmud Ghaznavi looted the Somnath temple because the people did not defend it, assuming that Lord Shiva would destroy the *Mlechas*. (non Hindu foreigners)

Second objective is *Artha*, which means wealth that is created for our own enjoyment and for others around us by honest and rightful means. Guru Nanak does not shun earning wealth but encourages it for a householder, as long as it is earned righteously. One may accumulate as much wealth as he desires, but it should be earned while abiding by the dictum of dharma. In other words, it should not be earned by hurting someone, by charging exorbitant interest, or by fixing and charging undue high price of commodities from the needy and poor. If one has more

wealth then he should give it in charity to help others who are hungry and need clothing and shelter.

Kama, in general means desires in general and sexual desires in particular, which hinders one's progress towards the final goal of achieving *moksha* salvation. Here, however, when we talk about *Kama* it means good desires acquiring good health, wealth, poer, position, name and fame from which we and others around us, get mental and physical happiness without hurting anybody.

Final and fourth objective of human life is attaining *Moksha*, i.e. liberation from cycle of birth and death, and miserable worldly life. This, Guru Nanak says, can only be obtained by living in His Will and Simran (remembering His Name). While busy in the daily chores of life, NAAM must be our companion. The Naam is the source of power and peace. The Naam is essence of Guru Nanak's teachings and is obtained only by Grace of Guru. And that Grace comes by performing *Simran*, continuous loving remembrance of the LORD. When we are busy just trying to remember Him, the Creator, our minds will not be occupied by the ugly thoughts that normally haunt us. For the brief spell of time we are praying, at least, our mind is free from the daily chattering of life.

With the Grace of Waheguru, *Simran* carries us further in Life which is a path of Worship. Unfortunately, we have muddled our path in search of false immortality. We go after wealth and riches. We worship worldly beauty, and crave for what is mortal and sinful.

By practicing *Simran*, we shall have a clearer picture of life, and when absorbed in *simran* a person becomes immortal - beyond cycle of birth and death, achieves union with HIM, the Creator, the Lord by giving his very self to LORD. As Guru Arjun Dev Ji has said "*Bhayee prapat manukh dehvaria, Gobind milan kee eh eri bariya*". You have been given this human life to meet HIM. This one can only do by doing Simran and Sewa: meditation and philanthropy.

