

# Life's Purpose: A Study in Gurbani Ethics

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The purpose of life is often described differently by the various religions. The believers in Evolution Theory are of the view that the sole purpose of life is to invent more and more items so that we feel more comfortable. The Atheists say that life's main purpose is to eat, drink and be merry. The Communists opine that people should have a house for shelter, enough food to eat and clothes to wear and that the rich as well as poor should have equal status. Under no circumstance, wealthy should never resort to any exploitation of the poor. The Research Scholars think that the purpose of life is to read and teach. According to Hindus' six *Shastras*, life's purpose is also at variation. The philosophy of Mahatma Buddha is to attain salvation. The Scientists have their own philosophy.

Sikhism is however required to believe only in the Righteous faith as taught by their Gurus, the Enlightened Masters. Let us try to understand what Sikh religion tells us the purpose of life based on Divine Word enshrined in the **Guru Granth Sahib**, the Sacred Scripture of the Sikhs:

jyvf Awip qyvf qyrl dwiq ] jjin idnu kir kY klql rwiq ]

Ksmu ivswrih qy kmjwq ] nwnk nwwY bwJu snwiq ]

[SGGS: 10]

O True Lord! Your Blessings are as great as Yourself, and You have created day and night for our comforts. Guru Nanak says that whosoever forgets the Almighty God, surely comes of a low origin as without meditating on God's True *Naam*, one behaves like a demon.

ikAw KwDY ikAw pYDY hoie ] jw min nwhl scw soie ] ikAw myvw ikAw iGau guV imTw ikAw mYdw

ikAw mwsu ] ikAw kpVu ikAw syj suKwll kljih Bog iblws ] ikAw lskr ikAw nyb Kwswl AwvY mhll vwsu ]

nwnk scy nwm ivxu sBy tol ivxwsu ]

[SGGS: 10]

If our mind is not immersed in God's True *Naam*, then our food and clothes are of no avail. Similarly, eating and enjoying of fruit, clarified butter, sugar, wheat flour, and even meat is also useless. What is the use of good clothes or the comforts of beautiful cozy beds including enjoyment of worldly pleasures? There is no joy of having large troops, worldly kingdoms and big palaces. Guru Nanak advises us that except God's True *Naam*, all these are perishable and any false honour is valueless.

rYix gwel soie kY idvsu gvwieAw Kwie ] hlry jYsw jnmu hY kaufI bdy  
jwie ]1] nwmu n jwinAw rwm kw ] mUVy iPir pwCY

pCuqwih ry ]1] rhwau ] [SGGS: 156]

We human beings waste the day in eating and the night by sleeping and accordingly this priceless life is wasted in worthless actions. O foolish person! You have not tried to understand God's True *Naam* but then what is the use of repenting at the end of life? (Pause)

mY gux glw ky isir Bwr ] gll glw isrjxhwr ] Kwxw plxw hswx bwid ]

jb lgu irdY nw Awvih Xwid ]

[SGGS: 351]

O True Lord! The only qualification I possess consists of talking only, due to which I manage to carry the burden of either praising or using slander for others. But only that talk is fruitful and worthwhile, which deals with God's praises. Till we remember God and inculcate Your love in our hearts, all our activities of eating, drinking and laughing are futile and worthless.

ijnl Awqmu clinAw prmwqmu soel ] eyko AMimRq ibrKu hY Plu AMimRq hoel ]

[SGGS: 421]

The persons, who have attained self-realization have become one with God. There is only one Enlightened Tree, the Divine Knowledge, which is the source of all virtues, like *Amrit* nectar.

ijqu muiK nwmu n aUcrih ibnu nwwY rs Kwih ]  
nwnk eyvY jwxIAY iqqu muK Qukw pwih ]

[SGGS: 473]

Guru Nanak tells us that when the person does not remember God, and without reciting the True Lord's *Naam*, partakes the dainty food that person is surely spat at and discredited.

ndir kry qw ismirAw jwie ] Awqmw dRvY rhY ilv lwie ] Awqmw prwqmw eyko krY ] AMqr kl duibDw  
AMqir mrY ]1] gur prswdl pwieAw jwie ] hir isau icqu lwgY iPir kwlu n Kwie ]1]rhwau] sic ismirAY hovY  
prgwsu ] qw qy ibiKAw mih rhY audwsu ] siqgur kl AYsl vifAwel ] puqR klqR ivcy giq pwel ]2]

[SGGS: 661]

One could recite True Lord's *Naam* only when God bestows His Grace. Thus the heart becomes humble and pious by imbibing the love of God. When the human being perceives the soul and Prime-soul on par, without any distinction, then the true devotee realizes the Omnipresent God. With this realization, person casts away his dual-mindedness. The True Lord could be attained through Divine Grace by inculcating the love of God in the heart and then person does not fear of death. By reciting the True *Naam*, we get enlightened and thus one does not indulge in worldly attachments. The Greatest Virtue of the Almighty God lies in the fact that we could attain emancipation while leading a householder's life having wife and children.

ijnl n pwieE pRym rsu kMqu nw pwieE swau ] suMly Gr kw pwhuxw ijau AwieA iqau jwau ]1] sau  
aulwmHy idnY ky rwql imlinH shMs ] isPiQ slwhxu Cif kY krMgl lgw hMsu ] iPtu ievyhw jlivAw ijqu Kwie  
vDwieAw pytu ] nwnk scy nwmu ivxu sBo dsmnu hyqu ]2]

[SGGS: 790]

O Brother! The persons, who have neither inculcated the love in their heart and nor have they gained God's Bliss, are like the guest of a deserted house from where they have to come back disappointed. The person, who has wasted his life without the recitation of God's True *Naam*, has to hear countless unsavoury comments from others, as he is exactly like the swan, which partakes of the poison of sinful actions instead of drinking the nectar of the True *Naam*. Cursed be the life of such a condemned person, who has only eaten delicious foods to fatten his belly. Guru Nanak reminds us that without True *Naam*, all relatives are like enemies.

ijnl nwmu ivswirAw sy ikqu Awey sMswir ] AwgY pwCY suKu nhl gwfy lwdy Cwru ]  
ivCuiVAw mylw nhl dUKu Gxo jm duAwir ]3]

[SGGS: 1010]

Bereft of True *Naam*, for what purpose such faithless persons have come to the world? Carts of such persons loaded with ash, neither realize peace in life nor are remembered after their death. Such persons, who remain far away from God, suffer a lot without God's refuge.

Gwil Kwie ikCu hQhu dyie ] nwnk rwhu pCwxih syie ] [SGGS:1245 ]

Guru Nanak teaches us that the person, who earns his livelihood with honest means and shares with the needy persons, has truly recognized the True Way of Life.

Kwxw plxw hsxw sauxw ivsir igAw hY mrxw ]  
Ksmu ivswir KuAwrl klnl iDRgu jlvxu nhl rihxw ] [SGGS:1254 ]

Guru Nanak advises us that being engrossed in the worldly pleasures of eating, drinking, making merry and sleeping, you have forgotten that you are bound to die any time. Forgetting the Almighty God, you wasted your life knowing fully well that you will not last

forever.

min jUTY vyjwiq jUTw KwieAw ] ibnu sbdY Awcwru n ikn hl pwieAw ]  
gurmuiK EAMkwir sic smwieAw ]16]

[SGGS: 1285]

Some persons follow the path of falsehood, begging for alms from others. No one has ever attained the pious character without God's Divine Knowledge. Whereas Guru-oriented devotees are immersed in God's love and merge with Truth.

msit krau mUrKu jig khIAw ] AiDk bkau qyrl ilv rhIAw ] Bul cUk qyrY drbwir ] nwm ibnw kYsy Awcwr  
]1]

[SGGS: 1330]

Guru Nanak teaches by giving an example that the world considers one foolish if one remains silent, but if one talks too much, then that person cannot get imbued with the love of God. By omission or default, we should seek the refuge of Almighty God because without reciting God's True *Naam*, one cannot develop a good character.

mnmuK nwm ivhUxIAw rMgu ksuMBw dyiK n Bulu ] ies kw rMgu idn QoiVAw CoCw ies dw mulu ]  
dUjY lgy pic muey mUrK AMD gwvr ] ibstw AMdir klt sy pie pcih vwro vwr ] nwnk nwm rgy sy rMguly  
gur kY shij suBwie ] Bgql rMgu n auqrY shjY rhY smwie ]2]

[SGGS: 85 ]

Guru *Amardas* advises the faithless person that by seeing the useless flower you should never be misled because its colour lasts for a short period and it has no value. The stupid persons waste their lives in dual-mindedness and thus their life is like a worm in filth. Under Nanak's penname, Guru Sahib opines that through the guidance of Divine teachings those persons, who remain engaged in the recitation of God's True *Naam*, are always rejoicing the state of Equipoise.

mn qUM joiq srUpu hY Awpwx mUlu pCwxu ] mn hir jl qyrY nwil hY gurmql rMgu mwxu ] mUlu  
pCwxih qW shu jwxih mrx jlvx kl soJl hoel ] gur prswdl eyko jwxih qW dUjw Bwau n hoel ] min sWiq  
Awel vjl vDwel qw hoAw prvwu ] ieau khY nwnku mn qMU joiq srUpu hY Apxw mUlu pCwxu ]5]

[SGGS: 441]

O my mind! Try to realize your true worth, as you are a personification of the True Lord Himself; so try to appreciate your origin, forgetting all worldly involvements. The Divine Light is always with us and accordingly we should enjoy the Bliss of life, by meditating on the True *Naam*. Once we realize the Truth about our origin and get united with God through self-realisation, we will automatically understand the secret of birth and death. By attaining the Divine Knowledge, we will also get over our dual-mindedness and then our mind will remain attuned with God's love and devotion. Thus we will acquire peace of mind and attain emancipation. Guru Nanak says that we should ever endeavour to realize our origin because Divine light of God shines within us.

nwnk nvwHu GuiQA w hlqu plqu sB jwie ] jpu qpu sMjmu sBu ihir lieAw muTI dUjY Bwie ] jm dir bDy  
mwrlAih bhuql imlY sjwie ] sMqw nwil vYru kmwvdy dustw nwil mohu ipAwru ]

AgY ipCY suKu nhl mir jMmih vwro vwr ] iqRsnw kdy n buJel duibDw hoie KuAwru ] muh kwly  
iqnw inMdkw iqqu scY drbwir ] nwnk nwm ivhuixAw nw aurvwir n pwir ]

[SGGS:648]

The Guru tells us that without the support of God's True *Naam*, humans are lost. Being engrossed in dual-mindedness, all our meditation and penance are wasted due to our sinful actions. Accordingly we suffer due to our own deeds. There are also other types of self-centered persons who are inimical to the Guru-minded persons, being only friendly towards the sinners and demons. Such persons never achieve peace of mind but ever remain frustrated. But they are completely lost in the love of worldly desires and thus are dishonoured due to their duality. □

