

# Why Identity is the Key

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IDENTITY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE in human affairs everywhere. It is an important key by which one recognizes a country, race, culture, behaviour, etc, in general. If we lose the identity we are virtually lost in the world. In the early ages, people were known by their tribe, such as Aryans, Africans, Red-Indians, etc. Everyone had his own characteristics, culture and discipline. With the passage of time, human beings became more and more advanced scientifically and started believing - often - in materialistic life.

To guide the people and show them the right path to live a useful life, morally and spiritually, God sent many prophets from time to time. The guideline shown by the prophets became the guidelines for the religion: such as Buddhism, Jain, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc. With the passage of time, false rituals, mis-direction, selfish motives and development of science; people started to believe that religion in modern age is irrelevant and does not do any good for humanity.

Misinterpretation of spirit of religion by certain preachers reached such a level that some associated praying to God with praying to the bull, the snake, the elephants, even rats, indeed anything and everything that could be seen or sensed by the common man with either fear or curiosity. The preachers further mis-guided the masses for their own self interest, which bifurcated the human beings in caste, creed and sect. It destroyed the basic structure of the society. This created confusion in people's mind. Certain shrewd people took advantage of the same and became self proclaimed Bhagwans, and started their own *Deras*, sects, etc and at the same time misguided the innocent people. These Dera/ sect chiefs, so called godmen became rich from the offerings and became powerful, often with the political backing.

To show the right path and guide the people, Guru Nanak was sent by the Almighty God. Guru Nanak travelled to Mecca, Madina, Tibet, China, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and many other parts of the world; to show the people the right path and to believe in only one God Almighty. **At the same time, he taught them the importance of being a good human being, and to pray for welfare of all humans, whole eschewing ritualism** "Karam-Kand" (*Aval Allah Nur Upaya, Kudrat Ke Sabh Bande, Ek Noor Te Sabh Jagh Upjye, Kaon Bhale Kaon Mande*). It took 237 years of guidance, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, to make Khalsa (*ideal*) human being and follow the path to realise God.

Understandably, visible identity was given to the Khalsa, so that people can find a model and follow the path on the journey to reach God with simran of Shabad Guru (compiled in Guru Granth Sahib). The Khalsa is the one who keeps five K's (Kesh, Karra, Kanga, Kucha & Kirpan) and follows Shabad Guru. The identification of Khalsa also comes with a responsibility, so that a single Gursikh standing among lakhs of people is identified. Such a person is always going to be looked upon by others and it is natural that all acts (Good or Bad) are going to be scrutinised by the common people in society and associate the same with their unique identity. Therefore, once a person becomes Khalsa, he/ she should not do any such thing which gives bad name to their identity and Gurus who have guided us as per

the will of almighty God. jb lg Kwlsw rhy inAwrw qb lg qyj idau mYN swrw [ jb ieh ghy  
ibprn kl rlq mYN nw krMU ien kl prqlq ]

The Khalsa's foremost duty is to protect the oppressed, help the needy and share one's resources. At the same time, he/ she should stand by them and, if need be, he should also be ready to fight for the rights. Once we follow this basic principle of Khalsa, the entire community (*Qaum*) will be in *Chardi Kala*." - *Kirt Karo, Vand Chakho and Jap Karo* - is the golden rule.

