

Divine Purpose of Human Life

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Man is God's crowning creation and he is placed as the head of the entire creation on earth. He is the only creature who is bestowed with many faculties, such as intelligence, wisdom, intuition, knowledge and consciousness. All the world's resources are at his command and for his benefit. The human body is God's temple and it is so precious that, according to *gurbani*, even gods and goddesses yearn for it for their salvation.

The human body, which makes life possible, is sacred. As such, it needs to be maintained, honoured, and cherished. But this divine spark of the Prime-soul - *Param Atman* - is also subject to decay and death. Guru Amar Dasji, the third Nanak, in one of his compositions, has explained that the human being is a soul and not merely a body.

My mind, thou art the embodiment

Of Divine Light, so know thy source.

O my soul, the reverend Lord is with thee,

By Guru's teaching enjoy His love.

If in thy mind comes peace, and gladness resounds,

Then alone thou shall be approved.

Thus says Nanak, O my soul, thou art

The image of the Luminous Lord.

Realize thou the true origin of thy being.

Guru Amar Dasji, using both the terms 'mind' and 'soul' in the same context, has indicated that these two spirits are one and the same. The mind is that part of the soul which is oriented towards the material world. It is, specifically, the ego which is the cause of all human worries and sufferings, but which is created by Him to foster individuality and to ensure the progress of the human race. But it is also a snare that prevents a man from entering into the kingdom of God. This is why the purpose of most religions is to tame the mind and enable it to merge with the Holy Soul.

Creation: Before creation, God existed all by Himself. The world and all the things in it lived within Him. When He manifested Himself specks of His divine light took bodily forms according to the Almighty's will and pleasure. Till the time these are reabsorbed into the essence

of God, they remain subject to change from one species to another, or within the same species, according to their deeds. The Indian faiths believe that there are 84 lacs of forms in the universe. This process of transition is known as transmigration of soul and the human form is the last step of this configuration.

Immanent: Since God resides in His creation and man is His representative or image on the earth, it is logical to conclude that man's purpose or mission is identical to the will and pleasure of his Master. Thus, a man's character and deeds need to reflect the qualities and characteristics of God.

God, besides being immanent, omnipotent, creator, sustainer, protector and benefactor, is essentially TRUTH or TRUE. Truth embraces all the above qualities. A man thus has to be true like God. Guru Nanak Devji has called such a person a *sachiara* - God incarnate with god-like qualities. To become a *Sachiara* is thus the divine purpose of human life.

Guru Arjun Devji, fifth Nanak, in his composition, the Psalm of Peace - *Sukhmani* - has explained what a *Sachiara* implies:

He lives truth, and has his being in truth.

Truth is in his heart, and truth on his lips.

He looks truth, he embodies truth.

He uses truth, and scatters truth everywhere.

When a man realizes God as truth,

He is wholly identified with it.

A '*Sachiara*' is a saintly person in whose heart burns unflickeringly the lamp of His remembrance.' But as a protector of the oppressed, he is a soldier who fights wrongs by seeking divine favour - 'bless me with the power, O Lord, that I may never be deterred from righteous action even at the cost of laying down my life.' He leads a vigorous and active life, and the well-being of the entire humanity - '*sarbat da bhala*' - is his *beau-ideal*.

The concept of '*Sachiara*,' called Khalsa by the tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singhji is a special characteristic of Sikhism. To Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, individual salvation and the desire to merge with God, though very important, wasn't enough. At his advent in the fifteenth century, he found Indians under the weight of centuries of subjugation by foreign rules, completely disempowered and lacking in will-power to stand up against oppression. Along with the spiritual awakening, he embarked upon the task of imbibing a martial spirit in his followers as well. The Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, contains many references in this regard:

* Oh ye men, whosoever wants to seek love of God and wants to become a *Sachiara* come to me with your head on the palm of your hand.

- * Acceptance of death is the prerogative of the brave.
- * Accept death and then come to me for initiation.
- * Protect the weak and holy and extirpate the tyrants.
- * Battle drum for righteous action is struck, now is the time to fight till death.
- * Death is the privilege of those who die for an approved cause.
- * Recognize him as a brave one who fights for a noble cause. He will not be deterred even if he is cut to pieces.
- * Before bringing forth the universe, God created '*khanda*' the tool of destruction of evil.

The means to become a *Sachiara* is to live holistically with an inner awakening of God's immanence and an outer service of His creation by noble and righteous deeds. The aim of life has to be achieved during life itself and not after death. Guru Nanak's concept of salvation is '*Jeevan-Mukt*' i.e., freedom from worldly pulls and pressures whilst living a normal life.

The state of spiritual equipoise - '*chardi kala*'-under all circumstances is achieved through a discipline called *sehaj-jog* - effortless and spontaneous union. The magic wand to become a *Sachiara* is by putting 'hands to work and heart to God.'

