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PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE

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Life is not for a purpose but there is a purpose for life. In this paper we will discuss where we come from and the purpose of human life. Let's start with how human life came into existence. All religions have their own belief system about that, but Guru Nanak gave theory of Big Bang for the creation of this universe which was accepted by science in 1950. According to this theory, from nothingness innumerable number of galaxies and gas formed after a big bang. From gas, water formed and all creations came into existence from water. Almost five centuries ago Guru Nanak said:

- ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ॥(੧੯)

From the God came the air, and from the air came water. From water God created the entire cosmos and abide in every molecule.

- ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥
  ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ॥
  ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
  ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸੈਲ ਗਿਰਿ ਕਰਿਆ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਰਭ ਹਿਰਿ ਖਰਿਆ॥
  ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥ ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ॥ (੧੭੬)

Guru explains evolution from unicellular organism to human being. It has taken millions and millions of years from unaccountable number of species of insects, worms, birds, trees and different types of animals to create perfect creation of a human being. For countless number of years and species there were rocks and mountains, aborted in the womb. For countless number of years developed branches and leaves, passed through countless species. Human is the only species which can obtain knowledge through company of good noble saintly people and be one with God. Here Guru used 8.4 million species, because it was a common belief at that time. In fact, Guru said there are, uncountable and endless number of species.

- ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ॥ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ॥
  ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ॥ (੭)

God created nights, days, weeks, seasons, air, water, fire and the nether regions. In the midest of these, God established earth as a home for righteousness (Dharma). In this sanctuary, coexist uncounted and endless species of different colors, creed and habits, who have very diversified methods and principles, for their survival, living styles, desires and ambition of life.

According to science all life on earth replicate with the process of evolution through survival instinct, also called survival of the fittest. For survival and replication organisms must change genetically to cope with changes in its environments. Human being is the best result of evolution. So, the theory of creation and evolution is same in both Gurbani and science though Gurbani described it more than five centuries before science. According to both Gurbani and science there is no reason for us to be on this earth expect evolution. Since human beings could not cope with natural disasters and other adversities of life, religions, faiths, belief systems, gods, prayers and sacrifices were invented for survival and security. Most religions according to their belief system punish people for their sins, which in turn created guilt and superstitions, hell and heaven after death.

In most religions the purpose of life is to stop the cycle of repeated births and deaths. Obtain salvation (Moksha), get in heaven, avoid hell and join God after death. Let's see the purpose of life in Gurmat.

– ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥
ਅਵਰਿ ਕਾਜ ਤੇਰੈ ਕਿਤੈ ਨ ਕਾਮ॥ ਮਿਲੁ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਭਜੁ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮ॥ (੧੨)

This human life has evolved after a long process. Human species is the only one who can try to be one with God, while living, not after death. For that we should keep company of Guru and enlightened people where we get spiritual knowledge and wisdom. All other rituals we do to please God are meaningless.

– ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਮਾਈ॥ ਤਬ ਇਹ ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਪਾਈ॥
ਇਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਦੇਵ॥ ਸੋ ਦੇਹੀ ਭਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ॥
ਭਜਹੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਭੂਲਿ ਮਤ ਜਾਹੁ॥ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮ ਕਾ ਏਹੀ ਲਾਹੁ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥ (੧੧੫੯)

Bhagat Kabir says human species is the only species of evolution which have the choice to meet Guru and enlightened people and get spiritual knowledge from them (Gur Seva). Even deities wish to be humans so that they can also meet Guru and enlightened people, get spiritual knowledge from them (Gur Seva). This human life is of any use (Lahu). Only if we use that knowledge and wisdom and live life according to the teachings of the Guru.

– ਦੁਲਭ ਦੇਹ ਪਾਈ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਜਪਹਿ ਤੇ ਆਤਮ ਘਾਤੀ॥
ਮਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਹੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਬਿਸਰਤ ਰਾਮ॥ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਹੂਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਉਨ ਕਾਮ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਖਾਤ ਪੀਤ ਖੇਲਤ ਹਸਤ ਬਿਸਥਾਰ॥ ਕਵਨ ਅਰਥ ਮਿਰਤਕ ਸੀਗਾਰ॥
ਜੋ ਨ ਸੁਨਹਿ ਜਸੁ ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦਾ॥ ਪਸੁ ਪੰਖੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਗਦ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇ ਮੰਦਾ॥ (੧੮੮)

This human body has been obtained after a long process of evolution. Those who don't live life according to the cosmic law, teachings of Guru, to live a perfect noble life, are spiritually, morally dead. They are worse than animals, Guru even says: "ਕਰਤੂਤਿ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤਿ॥(੨੬੭)" that their body is of human being, but their actions are of animals.

– ਆਇਓ ਸੁਨਨ ਪੜਨ ਕਉ ਬਾਣੀ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਲਗਹਿ ਅਨ ਲਾਲਚਿ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਪਰਾਣੀ॥ (੧੨੧੯)

The only difference between humans and animals is that humans can listen and read teachings of the Guru, get spiritual knowledge and wisdom to live a perfect noble truthful life and animals can't. Those who live life of temptations and don't get such knowledge, their life is futile and full of miseries.

- ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਧੇਰ ਬਿਨਾਸੁ॥ (੨੯੩)

The Guru gives spiritual knowledge and wisdom which dispel the darkness of ignorance and beautifies mind (mann) as antimony powder beautifies eyes.

- ਸਰਬ ਧਰਮ ਮਹਿ ਸ੍ਰੇਸਟ ਧਰਮੁ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ॥ (੨੬੬)

The best religion of all is to live a perfect noble truthful life according to the virtues of the God through teachings of the Guru. That means Guru is not pointing it out to believers of any particular religion but to all humanity.

- ਕਿਆ ਖਾਧੈ ਕਿਆ ਪੈਧੈ ਹੋਇ॥ ਜਾ ਮਨਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ॥
  ਕਿਆ ਮੇਵਾ ਕਿਆ ਘਿਉ ਗੁੜੁ ਮਿਠਾ ਕਿਆ ਮੈਦਾ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਸੁ॥
  ਕਿਆ ਕਪੜੁ ਕਿਆ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਕੀਜਹਿ ਭੋਗ ਬਿਲਾਸ॥
  ਕਿਆ ਲਸਕਰ ਕਿਆ ਨੇਬ ਖਵਾਸੀ ਆਵੈ ਮਹਲੀ ਵਾਸੁ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਭੇ ਟੋਲ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ॥ (੧੪੨)

If we don't remember and thank God who has provided us with all good provisions, what good is relishing good food and wearing good clothes? What good are fruits, ghee, sweet, jiggery, what good is flour, and what good is meat? What good are clothes, and what good is a soft bed to enjoy pleasures and sensual delights? What good is an army, and what good are soldiers, servants and mansions to live in? O Nanak, except the True virtues of the God which gives celestial peace, all this paraphernalia is perishable.

- ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਖਾਧਾ ਪੈਧਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਨਾਮਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਤੇ॥
  ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਹਲ ਸਰਾਈ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ
  ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿਖ ਅਭਿਆਗਤ ਜਾਇ ਵਰਸਾਤੇ॥
  ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਤੁਰੇ ਜੀਨ ਖੁਰਗੀਰ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਤ ਚੜਿ ਜਾਤੇ॥
  ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜੋ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਤੇ॥
  ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਪੋਤੈ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਹਿ ਜਾਤੇ॥ (੬੪੮)

The food and clothes and all the worldly possessions of those who are attained to the God's Name (Virtues) are worth using them. All the homes, temples, palaces and waystations are worth, where Guru's Sikhs and the monks go and take their rest. All the horses, saddles and horse blankets are worth, upon which the Gurmukhs, the Holy and the Saints, mount and ride. All the rituals and religious (Dharmic) practices and deeds are worth which are done with Virtues of the God in mind (mann). Those Gurmukhs, who have Virtues of accumulative proclivities (Sanskar) of previous deeds, accept the sanctuary of the Guru for spiritual knowledge and wisdom so that their worldly possessions and actions are worth.

- ਸਉ ਓਲਾਮ੍ਹੇ ਦਿਨੈ ਕੇ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਿਲਨ੍ਹਿ ਸਹੰਸ॥ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਲਾਹਣੁ ਛਡਿ ਕੈ ਕਰੰਗੀ ਲਗਾ ਹੰਸੁ॥
ਫਿਟੁ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਇ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਪੇਟੁ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਭੋ ਦੁਸਮਨੁ ਹੇਤੁ॥ (੭੯੦)

As swan collects pearls, human being was also supposed to get Guru's knowledge which is as precious as pearls. On the contrary human is wasting life in this world by indulging in useless desires and temptations. That's why we are suffering in endless miseries all the time.

- ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਸਬਦੁ ਨ ਰਖਿਓ ਉਰ ਧਾਰਿ॥ ਧਿਗੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਕਿਤੁ ਆਏ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ॥(੧੪੧੪)

If we don't live life according to the teachings of the Guru, our life in this world has been futile and meaningless as we have lived it in sufferings.

- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟਿਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ॥
ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥(੫੨੨)

- ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਐਸੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥ ਪੁੜੁ ਕਲੜੁ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥ (੬੬੧)

We are allowed to use and enjoy everything in life but in moderation while remembering Guru's teachings all the time so that we don't indulge ourselves only in the worldly pleasures. That's how we can attain salvation (Moksha) while living this life. Guru says we can live a perfect noble truthful life and attain salvation (Moksha) while living and enjoying life free of temptations with our family.

- ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੈ ਸਾਣੇ॥
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ॥ (੯੩੮)

We should live life in this world the way lotus flower floats and duck swims untouched upon the surface of water. Both take their nutrition from water but don't get wet. Same way we should focus our conscious mind (Surat) on the teachings of the Guru while living in this terrifying world-ocean and does not let it affect us.

Conclusion

As per Gurbani and science, we are here because human species is the best creation of replication process of evolution. Everyone irrespective of their faith and religion wishes to live a perfect noble truthful life happily without pain and suffering, in unison with God, and that is the purpose of human life. For that we need to prepare ourselves. It is a journey in which we need to acquire spiritual knowledge, wisdom, humility, compassion, love, tolerance, contentment, service to the community and honesty as per Guru's teachings. This way we can attain Moksha and merge with God now while living.