

Editorial

A Purpose-Driven Life

It took several million years for us to evolve into what we are today. Each and every cell of ours encapsulates our entire past history in the form of DNA. Each cell contains the information regarding those phases we have successfully passed through - from the simplest protozoan stage to the complex mammalian phase. However, the driving force behind this entire evolutionary process is one and the same – our Mother Nature, God, or by whatever name one may prefer to call it. However, as and when the evolutionary train approached the human territory certain hitherto unheard of developments began to happen. The ever increasing momentum gave a lift to the evolutionary train and as a result now the engine at times refuses to roll on the double helix of its DNA track!

Teilhard de Chardin had his own theory to explain this phenomenon. He divides the circuit of evolution into four stages: geosphere, biosphere, noosphere, and Christosphere. Broadly the geosphere deals with inorganic (physical) evolution, biosphere with biological (organic) evolution, noosphere with psychosocial evolution and Christosphere with spiritual evolution. According to him the Alpha and the Omega points of this evolutionary cycle are one the same – the Christ (logos), and the driving force behind this divine pilgrimage is none other than the Breath (Spirit) of God, which God inhaled into the dust in the beginning of his creative extravaganza.

Our own 'living Einstein,' Stephen Hawking, prefers to explain this entire process differently. By means of his *Grand Design* he tried to promote the 'M-theory' as the ultimate answer for everything. According to him the 'Force of Gravity' has the capacity to relieve God of his age old duty of creation, preservation and annihilation. He claims that the 'Force of Gravity' is potent enough to create any

number of universes out of nothing. But, 'Where does this gravitational force come from?' is a question that he has not yet answered.

Whether it was 'God' or the 'Force of Gravity' who breathed into nothingness causing the 'Big Bang,' the evolutionary outcome of it is the same – here we are! As I mentioned earlier, until our arrival on the scene things were the same. Everything happened as per a *Grand Design*! But now the situation has changed. Human beings began claiming certain rights which none of our precursors ever did. They were utterly submissive to the *Grand Design*. They never questioned, challenged, or rebelled. In fact, they lacked the ability to do so. Everything that they were designed to do was pre-programmed and pre-installed. A 'DNA card reader' would have instantly revealed all that they were and are capable of doing. Everything was in order. They were predictable. Our Mother Nature moved too slowly. She often took millions and millions of years to take a new step forward on the path of evolution and to add a few new bits of advanced information into the already existing DNA chain of her children.

But now the situation has changed drastically. It is said that in the English language alone each year, more than 50,000 new books are published that contain many hundred billion bits of advanced information. Every year, every month, and every day, the rate at which new, useful information that are added to the human data bank is mindboggling. It is in millions if not billions, and of course, much higher than with DNA. This means that at the arrival of humankind the evolutionary course has entered a new phase and attained a new momentum. Until then evolution, as explored and discovered by Darwin, depended on natural selection and random mutations. This 'blind' course continued for billions of years until it fashioned us - Homo sapiens, who developed languages, to preserve and exchange information gathered. The quantity and the quality of information shared among contemporaries and handed down to the next improved generation after generation and now we have reached a stage that permits us to read even our genetic code and think of manipulating, rewriting, and even replacing it with custom-made microchips. As Hawking puts it, the 'internal transmission phase' of information through DNA is giving way to a more effective 'external transmission phase'. The time scale for evolution in this 'external transmission period' is suddenly collapsing. According to Hawking, we are now entering a new phase of 'self designed evolution'. Will mechanical and electronic components in the form of macromolecules eventually replace DNA based life? Is it possible for the human race

to redesign itself? These are questions, which our future generations alone can decide. But there is something that we can decide now. How are we going to live our life today?

There are two possibilities set before us – to drift or to swim, to be in bondage or to be free, to be blind or to be enlightened, to be a follower or to find way, to be a slave or be the son. It was St Irenaeus who said, "The glory of God is man fully alive." How can a man be fully alive? "Know thyself" is an ancient Greek aphorism attributed to philosophers like Socrates, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Thales and so on. Pausanias in his travelogue claimed that he saw it inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. 'Self-awareness,' of course, is what made human race what it is today. However, it is quite obvious that there are levels of self-awareness.

Fate-Driven Life and Purpose-Driven Life

When we begin to live by a purpose, every aspect of our life improves. We end up more enthusiastic, happier, healthier and more fulfilled than we ever thought possible. Yet unfortunately, most people ignore their life purpose. Many live their lives leaving the entire responsibility to the fate. Yet, all are expecting a fulfilled life, though they never take the time to figure out exactly what could give them that fulfilment. Becoming conscious of the purpose of our lives and taking action towards the realization of it is the most rewarding and empowering gift we can ever give ourselves.

If we have a purpose in our life that will act like a powerful propeller or a constant energizer that instils passion and motivation. The challenges we encounter on the way will not deter us from chasing our dream. Hurdles on the way will be regarded as necessary steps towards our purpose. Everything we do will be in view of bringing out the best in us. When a person is focussed, his personal as well as his professional opportunities will effortlessly gravitate towards him. Since our concentration is on the goal, the negative emotions will naturally go out of focus and will be less annoying.

A life that is left to its fate is like a boat that its passenger left to drift in the ocean. Since the boat has no aim or purpose the rider in it will soon start feeling lost and unfulfilled. Every wind that blows and wave that rises will appear life threatening and frustrating. In a drifting boat our talents and potentials are never explored or manifested. We find ourselves stagnating in our career as well as in our personal life. The negative emotions and hopelessness often consume those who have no purpose in life.

Three Steps to a Purpose-Driven Life

Discovering the purpose of life is very important. This is possible only if we know ourselves. Knowledge of our likes and dislikes, dreams and fears, strengths and weaknesses will shed light into our personality and purpose of our life. Becoming aware of one's life purpose is one of the most exciting moments of life. It opens a world of possibilities and potentials. The starting point of every achievement is a vision, a dream. That dream leads to desire and if it is definite, it leads to goal setting, which in turn leads to action. However, to come to the awareness of our life purpose it is important to mute all noises that distract us. Shutting out all distractions and quieting the mind we should listen to what our heart long for. By writing down the best moments of our past and all that we like to achieve in future is a simple but power packed exercise that will enable us to skip years of searching and to get straight to the core of it. This written material will later on serve as a powerful motivating factor.

Step 1: Discovering Life-Purpose

To have a purpose in life is the preliminary step towards the higher levels of human existence and potentials. To wake up excited, to live passionately every single day of our lives is what we all want. The secret to achieve this goal is simple. It starts with a small shift in the way we view our life. There are numerous hidden potentials deep within us waiting to be discovered, polished, and exposed to the admiring eyes of the public. This has got three benefits – it brings glory to God, it is beneficial to our fellow beings and gives satisfaction to the owner.

Those dreams that often visit us are not purposeless. They are heaven-sent invitations to pursue them. All human achievements were merely dreams once upon a time. But, some of our brothers and sisters dared to chase them until they made them materialize. Today's dreams are tomorrow's reality. Very often we may picture ourselves as a great singer, an actor, a painter, a writer and so on. May be, we see ourselves as the director of a charitable organization. It need not be always career-based, this vision could also be a mission - like helping the poor, protecting the environment, and the like. Regardless of what our vision is, it never fails to remind us of one undeniable fact, that we are capable of greater things.

Our dreams are nothing but our life purpose calling us to make that unique contribution for the benefit of ourselves and the rest of mankind and to enhance the glory of God. While hanging around the Carrara

marble mines Michelangelo could hear the groaning of David, trapped within a marble block, waiting for a sculptor, to be released. Nobody listened to it except Michelangelo. Our life has a purpose. It is not something we need to invent. It is something that we are born to do. Our life's purpose is waiting for us to be discovered. Like a tailor-made dress, our life purpose fits us perfectly, and is unique only to us. The problems arise when we chase dreams of others and step into their shoes. When we chase our own dreams we will find our talents, abilities, situations, opportunities, and attributes falling into their respective places naturally and smoothly without any force or ache. Our talents and situations make us unique and matchless. Therefore, nobody can take our place.

Our life can be compared to a few hundred pieces Jigazo Puzzle made of our own self-portrait. What is significant about this puzzle is that we need to do our face as real as possible making use of all the little pieces that are made available. When every bit and piece falls into its respective position the game is successfully completed. Any piece that is forced into the gaps will disfigure the portrait. People who are impatient will leave their portrait incomplete, distorted and disfigured. Not a single trait we own is meaningless, worthless or insignificant. As Einstein rightly observed, "God does not play dice". Trifles are trifles but trifles make perfection.

Step 2: Assessing Potentials and Goal Setting

Taking stock of one's assets is an essential part of planning for the future. Such an assessment will often uncover many of the untapped resources and unexplored possibilities. Looking at our own life from a fresh new perspective, all 360 degrees of it in vivid detail will reveal to us how we are privileged and specially prepared and designed to achieve our life purpose. The knowledge of our vocation can become a powerful motivating and encouraging factor in our struggle for its realization.

The greatest, most valuable and most useful of all success techniques is goal setting. Once we have a goal, that goal will lead us forward. Successful people have a habit of writing down their goals. This habit is what distinguishes them from the ordinary people. Goals must be definite. Writing them down makes it precise and concrete. Only by writing down our goal on paper can we harness our subconscious mind to go to work to realize our goal. Unless we write down our goal on paper, we are not serious, we are merely toying. An unwritten idea will soon end up as a mere passing thought. Writing down even a mere passing thought works like magic for converting that thought

into a goal. A written down goal has more power than brilliance, luck, pull, or even genius. Writing down our goal is planting the seed. That seed will grow and draw all other success aids it needs. Writing is both physical and mental. Writing down a goal works like dynamite for converting a goal into reality. It has double power, bringing faster results than any single power. It reaches the subconscious mind.

Step 3: Illuminate Our Path

Once we have identified our life purpose, assessed our potentials and set our goals we should build our own guiding purpose system, which is an internal mechanism for staying on track and living a life of unwavering purpose. We should have personal Purpose Manifesto containing the three most important things in our life that will set us on the right path. They will work as powerful reminders during cloudy days and stop us from straying off from the path. In case of a temporary interruption our manifesto will get us back on track in a flash. The most empowering thing we can do in our life is to recognize that what we are doing is what we have chosen to be doing. If we keep on regretting and suspecting the worth of our action we will never be able to appreciate and enjoy what we are doing. We will be tragically disempowering and undermining ourselves by doing things that we do not enjoy doing. The work we do grumbling makes us all the more miserable. We need to respect ourselves through taking responsibility for our actions. Once we are in agreement with ourselves we empower ourselves to pursue our dreams by accepting and supporting the decisions we have taken. This certainly does not mean that we will never change what we are doing. When our situation and priorities change we alter our direction. We should constantly ask ourselves these two questions: 1) Am I one hundred percent certain that the purpose I'm pursuing is truly meant for me? 2) Am I doing everything I can in my life to live according to my purpose? These two questions will keep us ever fresh with our life purpose, the way we pursue it, and how consistently we live by it every day of our life. When we live according to our life purpose, a positive chain reaction resonates throughout all areas of our life - including those seemingly unrelated to our life purpose itself. People who live according to their life purpose are happier. They make better decisions. They realize more of their inner potential. Those who do not have any goal spend much of their time longing for something more, wishing for what could have been, and never honouring the immense potential within. To discover our life purpose is to LIVE!

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