

Discover the Purpose and Direction in Our Life

Have you ever felt lost, stuck, unfulfilled, or unsure of what you truly want in life?

Experts in psychoanalysis say that the key in finding clarity and meaning of life lies in the understanding of our values and aligning our goals with them.

Cao Dai teaching states that each human consists of three components:

- The first component is the invisible part called the spirit or the spark of divine light. It is the sacred and everlasting part, given by God.
- The second component is the visible part called the physical body. It is the material part belonging to this world and decomposed into dust when we die.
- The third component is the semi-visible part called the perispirit. It is given by Divine Mother to connect the sacred part and the physical body together. Being the link between the sacred and the material components, the perispirit records everything happened in our life and brings it along the sacred component when our physical body decomposes after death.

So long as the material imprints are still on the perispirit, the sacred component and the perispirit must continue the life-death cycle in this world.¹ Only when all the material imprints are washed off the perispirit, then the perispirit can bring the sacred part back to the original site² where Divine Mother releases the divine spirit so it can reunite with God Father.

¹ The prayer for the 36th day postmortem, lines 5 and 6 state:

The magic whip uses lightning to destroy the devilish energy
As the Thunder King disperses the impure light.

According to Cao Dai teaching, at the 36th day after death, the soul arrives into the Celestial Realm of golden light, where the Governor King whips up the lightning and the Thunder King applies thunder to destroy all the material imprints on the perispirit, so the soul becomes pure and light to be able to access the higher celestial realms. The soul that carries much material imprints must endure heavier blows to disperse those impurities.

² The prayer for the 36th day postmortem, lines 7 and 8 state:

Then the soul can sneak through the entrance to the Octagonal House
Where the undisturbed Samadhi fire burns up his karmic debt.

At the Celestial Realm of golden light, the impure souls cannot proceed further and must turn back to endure the life-death cycle on earth. The pure and sincere souls, who fully accomplished their work of merit and discipline, should sneak through the entrance of the Octagonal House so the undisturbed but effortless Samadhi fire can burn up their karmic debt.

Moreover, God taught as follows, in the séance of Càn Giuộc on July 17, 1926 (the 8th day of the 6th month of Bính Dần year), excerpted from the *Collection of Cao Dai Holy Teachings*, Tay Ninh Holy See.

The perispirits must be pure and vigilant so they can be lighter than air to exit beyond the universe. Their nature must be perfectly identified to those of saints, immortals, and buddhas so they can manifest as saints, immortals, and buddhas. They must have a pure and clean physical body to emerge a pure perispirit. If you practice the method of heart but observe a meat-eating diet, how can you dissolve the material imprints once you are spiritually enlightened? In this case, you

Knowing that our values are not only those in this temporal world but also in the divine and everlasting realm, we should direct our life toward both goals to fulfill our core values: one goal is to return to our inner to unleash the sacred spirit and the other is to develop our potentials so as to improve ourselves and contribute to the advancement of society and humanity.

Returning to the inner self does not necessarily mean leaving our families and becoming monks or nuns. When we gather and contribute our time and effort to prepare for prayer sessions or for religious meetings, we are returning to our inner spirit. When we pick up and move a piece of broken glass from the sidewalk to a trash bin, or when we help an elderly person cross the street, that is the time our divine light brightly shines up. When we control our wild tongue to avoid quarrels or heated debates, we are connected to our divine inner. When we see a patient in excruciating pain, we feel helpless; but if we quietly pray for the patient to be in peace and less pain, we shine our divine light toward the patient.

Any acts, speech, and thoughts, that benefit other people without expecting anything in return are expressions of our divine inner. Yet, we realize that the time we shine our divine light is much less than the time we spend for worldly activities (such as feeding, working, sleeping, chatting, etc.). It means our inner spirit and our material life are not in balance with each other. Should we adjust ourselves to achieve that balance, we will find that our life is meaningful and has a clear direction.

But normally we are hesitant or sluggish whenever we need to make an important decision -- especially when we need to choose between the sweet attractions of life and the journey full of challenges toward our sacred origin. That is why Cao Dai Great Way is open to help humans fulfill their core values, by reminding them about their spiritual origin. Divine Mother advise us as follows:

*Poor spirits! Oh, poor spirits!
Have you recalled your Home in the Jade Palace?
Hurry to get back to your original place,
Stop attaching to worldly matters.*

Divine Mother Đức Vô Cực Từ Tôn

Séance at Trúc Lâm Thiền Viện, February 2, 1065 (the 6th day of the 1st month of Ất Ty year)

The human lifetime of one-hundred years is very brief compared to the lifetime of the universe, and even much shorter than those of other species such as the trees in forests that can live hundreds or thousands of years. Therefore, we should hurry to achieve the

achieve the proof of sanctification while still embracing that material energy. Unfortunately, the impure material energy is electrical conductor. Then you would be destroyed by lightning even before you can exit the atmosphere. If you are wise, you may camouflage yourself in this world an earthly immortal; then your condemned earthly live has never ended.

spiritual-material balance. Let's shine our divine light a little more every day. Let's do more good deeds daily. And before going to bed at night, let's review all activities that day, so in the following day we keep doing the good ones and avoid the not-so-good ones. The more our divine light shines up, the lesser material imprints retain on the perispirit and the higher chance for us to get back to our sacred origin.

Returning to the sacred inner self also creates the spiritual-material balance, fulfilling our core values and direction of life. It brings peacefulness to us, regardless of our circumstances. Let's hope we all steadfastly practice this spiritual-material balance.

Diệu Đức (Trần Ánh-Tuyết)
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