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THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

By Shaykh Zulfikar Ahmad

I have only created Jinn and men (so) that they serve Me
[51:56]

Reality of Life

A traveler notices even the pebbles on the road that he or she is currently traveling, and in contrast fails to notice even the looming mountains of the road that he is not on.

Life: An Exam Room

This life is not a place for fun nor is it for rest and relaxation. This life is an exam room where we as Muslims need to undergo trials and tribulations to prepare for the next life. Unfortunately people today have made this life their sole purpose and forgotten that they have to use the time allotted to them here to prepare for their Hereafter.

Purpose of Life

The purpose of life is servitude to Allah ﷻ and the purpose of existence is His remembrance. A servant is only one who has the qualities of servitude otherwise his existence is a lie and has no meaning.

Food, shelter, and occupation are all necessities in life but the real purpose is the pleasure and remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Unfortunately most of the time people reverse this paradigm by making this life their purpose.

Holy Quran: The Water of Life

The treasury of truths and wisdom that is the Holy Quran is the nourishing lifeblood for humanity. Allah ﷻ revealed this Book so that humanity would come out of darkness into light, and so whoever reads and applies it will be successful both in this life and the Hereafter.

The Holy Quran has been revealed to polish mankind's heart and character and give him dignity so that he may be successful. If this Book is implemented throughout life then Allah's ﷻ help and blessings shower upon the individual and with Allah's ﷻ help a person surely reaches his destination.

How oft, with Allah's Will has a small force vanquished a large one? Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere [2:249]

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Life Without Principles

Mankind's existence if led according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah is based on certain principles, and only such a life will have the help of Allah ﷻ. A life without principles and rules is an animal's life and not man's.

Life Governed by Nafs

Mankind is best of creation and consequently his life has a certain status. Man did not enter this world by his will and certainly will not leave by his will. Based on this he certainly has no right to spend his life according to his wishes and nafs but has to abide by the commandments of Allah ﷻ. Obeying Allah's ﷻ commands is the only guarantee of success in this life and the next.

*Life at its pinnacle is servitude to Allah ﷻ
Without this life is but shame*

A Page from the Life of Man

Each passing day is a page from a person's book of life, and it is up to that person to write good or bad on that page. However, unlike the page of a book that the reader can always refer back to, a day in life that has passed is gone forever and can never be recovered.

Thus each day is invaluable and should be utilized to its maximum potential in earning righteous deeds.

Three Days

A venerable sage would say that days are of three types. One type is yesterday, a day that has passed and hence is no longer within reach. A second type is tomorrow, a day in the future about which one does not yet know because the future is ever changing.

The third type is today, a day that is still here and within one's control. Thus this sage would say, "O man, neither should you postpone till tomorrow nor hope that tomorrow

will come. Today is in your hands so use it to please Allah ﷻ.”

Hadrat Rabia Basri's Saying

Hadrat Rabia Basri (May the mercy of Allah be upon her) used to say, “O Man! Alas your teeth have fallen out consuming the blessings of Allah ﷻ but your tongue has not worn out singing His praises.”

An Awakening Moment

Hadrat Ahmed Ali Lahori (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) once said while instructing class that at one time he met a special lover of Allah ﷻ in the bazaar. Hadrat Ahmed Ali greeted him and so this man asked a seemingly strange question. He asked, “Ahmed Ali, where do people live? Where are all the people?”

Hadrat Ahmed Ali was slightly surprised and pointing to the scores of people he said, “Hadrat, these are all people you see in front of you.” Hearing this the man cast a strange look at the people in the bazaar and said, “Really? These are all people?” Hadrat Ahmed Ali said that the man's *tawajjoh* affected him so deeply that when he looked again he only saw cats and dogs milling around.

Regarding this incident Hadrat Ahmed Ali Lahori used to say that there are very few individuals who surrender in totality to Allah ﷻ.

Whoever is for Allah then Allah is for him [Hadith]

Allah ﷻ the One Who Conceals

It is a great blessing of Allah ﷻ that an individual lives according to his own whims and yet others praise and admire him. *Kitab Akmal ul-Shaim* provides another unique perspective on this and states, “My friend, all who praise you in actuality praise the One Who conceals all.”

Allah ﷻ conceals the faults of people from one another, and hence the one who praises is actually praising Allah ﷻ, The Concealer of faults. If Allah ﷻ revealed everyone’s faults then one Muslim would not even be able to show his face to another out of shame.

If Allah ﷻ hides faults so that the creation of Allah ﷻ showers such undeserved praise on a Muslim, then this is all the more reason that the Muslim should shower praise and gratitude on Allah ﷻ.

Signs of Allah’s ﷻ Anger

One of the main signs of Allah’s ﷻ mercy towards someone is that He starts to reveal that person’s faults to himself so the person can recognize and make efforts to correct. In dire contrast a major sign of Allah’s ﷻ anger toward someone is that He hides that person’s faults from himself so the person keeps erring.

Hence we should regularly ponder upon our faults and take account of our actions on a daily basis.

*Our face in the mirror we do see but ignore the darkness of our heart
So in love with living Muslims have forgotten how to die.*

Words That Made Nations Bow

Where are the brave youths who would stay awake at night in worship making nations and hearts tremble with their cries of *La Ilaha Illallah?*

*With your look hearts would tremble in the breasts
Lost now is your conquering spirit.*

If people make a sincere effort to rectify their souls they can soar even higher than the angels.

The Valuable Parchment

The Holy Quran was revealed so that man may implement it throughout life and then rule the world.

*From Hira he descended and for a sleeping nation
Brought the valuable Parchment.
Like a lightning strike it fell,
And shook the whole land of Arabia.*

The Holy Quran shook all of Arabia because it entered and reformed the hearts of the noble Companions. This treasury of truth and wisdom that today merely occupies shelf space in Muslim homes was a part of the lives of the Companions so that the entire world bowed where they turned.

The Curing Prescription

If a person is suffering from a physical ailment such as heart disease he will of course get a prescription from a doctor in the hopes of being cured. However, if this same patient returns after some time complaining that his condition has

not improved but at the same time the prescription has not left his pocket and been utilized then he is the loser and has no one to blame but himself. Prescriptions have to be utilized if they are to work.

The Holy Quran is a curing prescription for all ailments whether seen or unseen, but sadly this Holy Book occupies shelf space more than it is read and implemented. Muslims then complain of one calamity after another and of their children turning rebellious until very soon the whole family disintegrates. Such chains of events are put into motion when Allah's ﷻ commands are ignored and thus lives become devoid of Allah's ﷻ mercies.

Remembrance of Allah ﷻ

We should make the remembrance of Allah ﷻ our life's purpose and never be heedless for an instant. The servant should constantly praise the One who sustains him.

A Grain of Wheat

For wheat to become bread that is consumed by humans a seed is first planted into the ground and is nourished by the sun and rain. It then grows into a plant that is reaped by a farmer and finally becomes bread for the consumer after that plant is cleaned and ground. So much of Allah's ﷻ creation and mercy is active in bringing this wheat to the table as food yet the Muslims who consume it are heedless and neglect to give thanks.

An Animal Knows Its Master

If a dog or sheep is unleashed from its master in a busy marketplace it will still be observed to follow him despite all the distractions in the market. If an animal knows its master then why is mankind so blind that it does not recognize its Master?

Difference Between Man and A Horse

A horse, being a dumb animal is nevertheless loyal to the master who raised it and subsequently owns it. If worked endlessly all day it cannot complain if it is sick or ask for water if thirsty, and will work endlessly the following day in the same way for its master. The horse can only hope for some rest only if the master happens to stop for his own business and in the same way hope for some water only if it happens to be available. It cannot stop according to its will if the need arises and has to relieve itself while pulling the cart on its way.

Moreover if given less than its full share of feed at the end of a long hard day it cannot even complain at that. The master retires to his warm bed at night but there is nothing but the cold stable for the horse, no wife and children to give it comfort and joy.

If this horse develops an open wound it still cannot complain that the master did not bandage it, and if whipped will also bravely withstand this cruelty if only because it knows the master's bidding must be done.

Standing in the ranks of battle facing the swords and arrows of the enemy the horse still does not hesitate when it feels the master's heel in its side. The horse knows that the

master wants it to advance into the enemy's ranks for battle, and it heroically charges forward despite suffering wounds from the swords and arrows because of its unquestioning loyalty to its master and recognizing that the master's bidding must be done.

A horse is a dumb animal but yet so loyal and obedient that it will give its life for its master. Man who has been given intelligence is nowhere as close in his obedience and is an ingrate considering the tremendous favors of Allah ﷻ showered upon him each day. There are three hundred sixty joints in the human body, yet who gives thanks at the end of the day that every joint remained intact and no harm came to his body?

A Strange Occurrence

There are literally millions of dust particles floating through the air at any given time that one does not notice, but can see a layer of dust settle on something if it is left in one place for a long time.

It so happened once that someone got into an accident that tore off one of his eyelids. The blessing of an eyelid is that it opens and closes like a shutter thereby protecting the eye from foreign objects and it also keeps moisture flowing that in turn keeps the eye cleansed.

Now without an eyelid, this person would have to wash his eye periodically because a layer of dust would settle very quickly, obscuring his vision and threatening infection. However, constant washing of the eye also posed a threat of infection because normally the eye is not accustomed to that much direct washing. Hence it was only now that this

person realized what a tremendous blessing a seemingly insignificant part of the anatomy was. Such is the case with all humanity that takes all of Allah's ﷺ blessings for granted. There is no shortcoming in the number of people who ask everything from Allah ﷻ, but a tremendous shortcoming in those who are grateful.

The root cause of this ungratefulness is heedlessness of Allah ﷻ and all that He has provided. A heedless person has an entirely different outlook on life than someone aware of Allah ﷻ and His favors.

A Warning Sign

A youth migrated from India to Pakistan but lost touch with all his relatives over time and thus found himself all alone. An uncle had also migrated but the two became separated and thus they lost all contact. This youth was hard working and thus Allah ﷻ rewarded him with wealth and a large comfortable house.

An elderly gentleman then approached him one day and said, "I am old and alone here without any family or relation. I am willing to work and keep watch in front of this house if you employ and feed me." The youth agreed and fixed a wage for the elderly man.

Now since this man was elderly he moved slowly and sickly due to age and health. Hence if working slowly or not at all due to illness at anytime his employer would become very angry and curse him, something that would deeply hurt the old man so that he would even be reduced to weeping. Once it so happened that the young man cursed this old man so severely that the latter said, "My son, Allah ﷻ is the

Provider, so if your heart is not pleased with me I shall go elsewhere. Destiny has reduced me to this otherwise I had come with a lot of my relatives but we all became separated and I do not know what happened to them.”

Hearing this reminded the young man of his own situation regarding his own relatives he had originally started with from India. He asked, “Old man, what happened to your relatives?” Thus the old man told his entire story of migrating from India to Pakistan during which he became separated and lost from his family. The young man was stunned and realized that this was the same uncle he had come with from India who his mother would pine for since they lost all contact.

The youth now fell to his uncle’s feet weeping and begging forgiveness for his harsh words and actions. He pleaded, “Uncle I have erred please forgive me. This entire mansion is yours to live here and do as you please for the rest of your life.” However, his uncle declined the offer and said, “No my son, I now realize my place in this world and who I am.”

This youth gravely misjudged a certain situation and now the reality turned out to be something very different from what he had assumed. Realizing the truth he now begs forgiveness from the same person he was cursing a moment earlier, but regretfully cannot turn back the clock.

The situation is likewise for the believer who has become estranged from Allah ﷻ. Only when he comes in the company of those close to Allah ﷻ does he begin to recognize his Creator and realize what a wasteful life he has been living.

White Bearded Yet Twelve Years Old

A white bearded sage was once asked his age and so this venerable gentleman replied, “I must be around ten to twelve years old.” His questioner was very surprised and asked, “How can you say you are twelve years old when your hair has started to grow white?”

The elderly gentleman replied, “Yes my son, it has been twelve years since I sincerely repented for my sins. Before that I did not have a life, only shame.”

Benefits of the Shaykh’s Company

Righteous company awakens the heart and the person, just like a dying plant regains life and beauty in the hands of a competent gardener. In this very same way a seeker’s life enters full bloom when he or she takes the hand of a righteous shaykh.

Qarun and His Pleading

Once a woman falsely accused Hadrat Musa عليه السلام of illicit behavior at the behest of Qarun, and Hadrat Musa عليه السلام was very hurt and angry when the truth was finally revealed. He cried to Allah تعالى in his desperation, “O Allah تعالى! He accused me of such a falsehood!”

Allah تعالى can never bear His Prophets to be in pain, so for a limited time He commanded the earth to fulfill Hadrat Musa’s عليه السلام bidding. Allah تعالى said, “My beloved Prophet, the earth will obey your every command.”

Hadrat Musa عليه السلام in his anger commanded the earth to swallow Qarun, and hence Qarun sank in the earth up to a

fraction of his body. Hadrat Musa ﷺ issued the same command and so Qarun sank deeper in the ground. Qarun started to weep loudly and beg for forgiveness but Hadrat Musa ﷺ was at the peak of his anger and issued a third and final command for the earth to swallow Qarun and thus Qarun disappeared into the earth.

When Qarun was finally gone Allah ﷻ said to Hadrat Musa ﷺ, “My beloved Prophet, you were in anger and commanded the earth three times to swallow Qarun. I swear on My Own Honor and Anger that if I was deciding the issue and Qarun was begging forgiveness I would have surely forgiven him.” Allah ﷻ loves His creation coming to Him for repentance and such a deed is very valuable to Allah ﷻ.

Sincere Repentance

An elderly gentleman passed by a group of debating youths who asked him to settle a matter between them. One of them asked, “We are debating whether Allah ﷻ keeps special watch on the heart of a righteous and sinless person or on the heart of a grave sinner who sincerely repents?”

The man replied to the youth, “My son, I am not a scholar, but I have observed one thing in my profession as a cloth weaver. As I work the spool a thread no doubt breaks and so I tie it back up, and from that point on keep a special eye on that specific thread to see that it does not break again. Its entirely possible that when someone repents from a previous satanic life and returns to Allah ﷻ that Allah ﷻ keeps a special watch on him to make sure that that heart does not slip and go astray again.”

Shaitan's Delusion

A common and dangerous misconception is that people can be anything on the outside as long as the heart itself is clean. This is a delusion of Shaitan because the effects of a clean and pure heart should resonate to the outside and rectify one's actions and personality. If this is not the case then this is clear proof that the heart *is* not clean. It is essential that people work on both hand in hand.

Muslims are weak and unable to rectify themselves unless they submit all to Allah ﷻ. If people were to work diligently on trying to rectify their outer characteristics Allah ﷻ will rectify and purify their inner being through their intention and hard work.

Abu Madhura was a youth at the time of the Messenger ﷺ of Allah who had not accepted Islam as of yet. One day he was seated with some friends laughing and mocking Hadrat Bilal's ﷺ call to prayer [*adhan*] when the Messenger ﷺ of Allah passed by. Seeing him all the children ran away except Abu Madhura, who was the oldest of the group and felt ashamed to run like the others.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah summoned him closer and Abu Madhura reluctantly complied. He started sweating in apprehension but the Prophet ﷺ calmly assured him not to be frightened and further asked him to continue the Muslim call to prayer exactly as he had been reciting it earlier. Thus Abu Madhura started imitating Hadrat Bilal's ﷺ call as he had done earlier and a change seemed to come over him as he reached *Ash-hadu anna Muhammadar RasulAllah* ﷺ.

When finished the Messenger ﷺ of Allah told him that he could go but Abu Madhura hesitated. He now said to the Prophet ﷺ, “Abu Madhura will now only go wherever the Messenger ﷺ of Allah goes.”

A moment earlier this boy had been mocking Islam’s call to prayer but as his eyes fell upon the Messenger ﷺ of Allah, Allah ﷻ in His infinite mercy turned the mockery into reality and opened Hadrat Abu Madhura’s ﷺ heart to Islam. Hadrat Abu Madhura ﷺ later became the keeper of the keys to the Kaa’ba and the prayer caller of Makkah where he performed the call to prayer for the next sixty years.

May it also be so that Allah ﷻ accepts our poor imitation and turns it into reality and rectifies our hearts through our poor efforts at trying to rectify our appearance to match that of the Messenger ﷺ of Allah. *Amin.*

*O my Creator I have brought a resemblance of Your beloved.
I have merely brought an appearance so please turn it into reality.*

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