

What Is the Purpose of Life?

By Khalid Yasin

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PART 1

The information which I wish to share with you may seem a bit extensive, but when you consider the capacity of the human brain and the capacity that it can store, I am sure that a few page article will not overburden you.

I am honored to have this opportunity and I would like to begin by saying that all of you have an equal responsibility. That responsibility is to read with an open heart and an open mind. In a world filled with prejudice and cultural conditioning, it is very hard to be able to find people to take a moment to think about life objectively and try to arrive at the truth about this world and the real purpose of our lives.

Unfortunately, when you ask most people the question: "What is the purpose of life?" (such a fundamental and important question), they will not tell you what they have concluded through observation or analytical reasoning. Rather, in most cases, they will simply tell you what someone else said, or they will tell you what is "commonly presumed" by others, i.e., What my father said purpose of life is, what the minister of my church said the purpose of life is, what my teacher in school said, what my friend said, etc. If I ask anyone about the purpose of eating or why do we eat, everyone will say [in one word or another] that it is for nutritional purposes, because nutrition sustains life. If I ask anyone why they work, they will say because it's a necessity in order to support themselves and to provide for the needs of their families. If I ask anyone why they sleep, why they wash, why they dress, etc., they will answer with appropriate answers, for these are common necessities for all human beings. We can follow this line of questioning with a hundred questions and receive the same or similar answers from anyone in any language from any place in the world. Then I ask you the question: Why, when we ask the question, "What is the goal and purpose of life?" that we get many different answers? It is because people are confused; they don't really know. They are stumbling in the dark, and rather than say, "I don't know"; they just offer any answer they have been programmed to give. Think about it. Is our purpose in this world simply to eat, sleep, dress, work, acquire some material things and enjoy ourselves? Is this our purpose? Why are we born? What is the object of our existence? What is the wisdom behind the creation of man and this tremendous universe? Think about those questions. Some people argue that there is no proof of any diving origin; no proof that there is a god and there is no proof that this universe has come about through any divine purpose. There are people who argue this way, and they say that perhaps this world came about by chance. A big bang, and this great world [with all its orchestration] just came together. They argue that life doesn't have any definite purpose, and that there is nothing that can prove [either through logic or science] that there is a god, or a purpose or any divine reason behind this world.

Here I would like to mention a few verses from the Holy Quran that address this subject. We seek the protection of Allah from every evil thing. Allah mentions to us in the Holy Quran, "And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is over all things competent. Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding-Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire." [Quran, Chapter 3: Verses 189-191]

Now here in these verses, Allah draws our attention to the creation of the heavens and earth, the alternation of the night and the day, the creation of the universe. He calls our attention to their creation and their precision, and mentions those who contemplate the wonders of creation and realize that this was not created for any foolish purpose, [that Allah is exalted above doing such a thing] and they seek refuge with Allah from the punishment of Hell. Truly, when you see the design of all that Allah created, you realize that it is very powerful and very precise. Something very powerful and very precise; something beyond your own calculation and imagination, cannot be foolish. It cannot be just "thrown together".

There are many examples of things that happen by chance. Let me offer one situation. If you took ten colored marbles, then numbered them one to ten and you put them inside a bag. Next, you shook that bag to mix them up. Then, closing your eyes and reaching into the bag, you tried to pull out the marbles in order- 1 to 10.

What is the chance of pulling out the marbles in order? Do you know what the chances are? It is twenty six million to one (26,000,000 to 1). And this is something within our ability to do. So now I ask you, what is the chance that the heavens and the earth just came together as they are [with the exact precision and orchestration in their existence]?

My dear respected brothers and sisters, we have to ask ourselves a further question. When you see a bridge, a building or an automobile, you automatically consider the person or company that constructed it. When you see a large ship, an airplane, a rocket, a satellite; you also think about how incredible it is. [You know by its design who the maker is.] When you see a super international airport, nuclear plant or an orbiting space station you have to be thoroughly impressed with the engineering dynamics that are involved. Yet, these are just things that are manufactured by human beings. So what about the human body with its massive and intricate control systems? Think about it. Think about the brain: how it thinks, functions, analyzes, retrieves and stores information, as well as distinguishes and categorizes information in a millionth of a second, all of this constantly. Think about the brain for a moment. (And don't forget the fact that you are using your brain to consider itself!) This is the brain that made the automobile, the rocket ships, the boats, and so on. Think about the brain and who made that! Think about the heart. Think about how it pumps continuously for sixty or seventy years [taking in and discharging blood throughout the body] maintaining steady precision throughout the life of the person. Think about the kidneys and the liver and the various functions they perform. The purifying instruments of the body that perform hundreds of chemical analyses simultaneously and also controls the level of toxicity in the content of the body. All of these are done automatically. Think about your eyes, the human cameras, that adjust, focus, interpret, evaluate, discern color automatically, naturally receiving and adjusting to light and distance. Think about it-Who created them? Who has mastered their design and function? Who plans and regulates their function? Human beings do this? No, of course not. What about this universe? Think about this. This Earth is one planet in our solar system, and our solar system is one [of possible many] solar systems. Our galaxy, The Milky Way, is one of the galaxies. There are *one hundred million galaxies* in the universe. They are all in order and they are all precise. They are not colliding with each other. They are not conflicting with each other. They are swimming along in an orbit that has been set for them. Did human beings set that into motion and are human beings maintaining that precision? No, of course they are not. Think about the oceans, the fish, the insects, the birds, the plants, bacteria, and chemical elements that have not yet been discovered and cannot be detected even with the most sophisticated instruments. Yet each of them has a law that they follow. Did all of this synchronization, balance, harmony, variation, design, maintenance, operation and infinite numeration happen all by chance? Do these things function perfectly and perpetually also by chance? No, of course not. That would be totally illogical and foolish. In the least, it indicates that however it came to be-it exists beyond the realm of human capability.

We will all agree to that. The Being, The Almighty Power, God, The Creator who has the knowledge to design and proportion crated all of this and is responsible for maintaining it. He is the only one that deserves praise and gratitude.

If I were to give each one of you one hundred dollars for no reason, you would at least say thank you. What about your eyes, your kidneys, your brain, your breath, your children, and your life: Who gave you all of that? Is He not worthy of praise and thanks? Is He not worthy of your worship and recognition?

My brothers and sisters, in a nutshell, this is the goal and purpose of this life. Allah said to us in the Holy Quran: "And I did not create...mankind except to worship Me." [Quran, Chapter 51: Verse 56] this is what the Almighty said. Our purpose in this life is to recognize The Creator, to be grateful to Him, to worship Him, to surrender ourselves to Him and to obey the laws that He has determined for us. It means worship is our purpose in life. Whatever we do in the course of that worship, [i.e., the eating, the sleeping, the dressing, the working, the enjoying,] between birth and death is consequential and subject to His orders. But the main reason for our creation is worship. I don't think anyone who is analytical or scientific will have much of an argument with that purpose. They may have some other reason with themselves-but that is something they have to deal with between themselves and Almighty God.

PART 2:

What Do you know about Islam?—not what you heard, not what you have seen through the action of Muslims; because there is a difference between Islam and Muslims. There is a difference between a man and a father. A man who has children is a father. But being a father is a responsibility. If a man does not fulfill this responsibility he is not necessarily a good father. Islam is a rule and an order. If a Muslim does not fulfill these rules and orders, he is not a good Muslim. So you cannot compare Islam by Muslims. We hear the term Islam and Muslims quite often, and we read about Islam and Muslims in periodicals, textbooks at universities. We hear and we see a lot of inaccurate and misleading information through the media. And I have to admit that some of this misinformation and misrepresentation has been perpetuated by Muslims, themselves. Yet, one out of every five in this world of about 5 billion people is a Muslim. One out of 5 people in this world is a Muslim. This is a statistic that you can verify in an encyclopedia or an almanac or any other sources. How is it that 1 out of 5 people in this world is a Muslim that we don't know something about Islam?—The facts about Islam. If I were to tell you that 1 out 5 people in the world is Chinese, which is true. There are 1 billion Chinese. But we know the historical, geographical, social, economical, political facts about China and the Chinese. How come we don't know about Islam? What is it that joins 29 nations and some say 37 nations? What is it that joins these nations, this universal configuration into a common fraternity. What makes this brother from Saudi Arabia my brother when I am from America, or this brother from Pakistan my brother, and this brother from Indonesia my brother? We have a different cultural, psychological background. What is it about Islam that embraces us and automatically joins us together as a brotherhood?

It is necessary for us to be open hearted and open minded, because if we want a glass of water but turn the glass upside down, and pour water into it, then we'll never get a glass of water.

Facts alone do not lead to understanding; it takes tolerance, ambition, and the ability to appreciate and accept the truth when we hear it.

The word Islam means surrender, submission and obedience-to the law of almighty God. You can say Allah, you can say Creator, you can say Supreme Being, The All-Wise; these are all His names. We say Allah in Arabic, because this expression-Allah- cannot be applied to any created thing. Other words are used to describe created things.

The word Islam is derived from the word *Salam*; which means "to be at peace" or "to feel security". Therefore, a Muslim is a person who surrenders, submits, and obeys the laws of Allah, and through this submission obtains peace and security for themselves. We can immediately see that the definition of Islam describes the manner and way of all the prophets and messengers of almighty God. All of them: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jacob, Solomon, Ishmael, Isaac, Jesus and Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon all of them. All of these men came with the exact same message from the same God. They said one thing—the same thing: worship God. Obey God, and fulfill your purpose in life, do good actions, and you will be rewarded with another life. Don't make it more than that. *That is all they said*, regardless of what language, what time, and who they came to. If you read the scriptures carefully without your interpretation or someone else's interpretation or someone else's fabrication, you will find that this is their simple message. Not one of those prophets ever claimed, "I am God. Worship me."

You don't have to think about it; you won't find it in any book you have: not the Bible, not the Torah, not the old or the New Testament, not the Psalms of David. You will not find it in any book. You will not find it from the speech of any prophet.

Not once anywhere. So where did this come from? That is something else you have to investigate. History has a way of turning over every stone.

We can immediately see from this definition that this is what all the Prophets did. They came and surrendered themselves to God, and asked the people and insisted upon the people to do deeds of righteousness. The Ten Commandments of Moses, *what were they?* The proverbs of Solomon, *what do they say?* The Psalms of David, *for what?* The Bible? What did Jesus say? What did Muhammad say?

“And they were ordered with nothing except to worship Allah and be sincere to Him, and this is the Straight Way.”
[Quran, Chapter 98: Verse 5]

This is the original way.

And by the same token, we can consider all of the prophets as Muslims—those who surrender themselves to God and obey Him...Don't consider the language, don't think of Mecca or Saudi Arabia or Egypt. Think of someone who obeys and worships God. Everything that surrenders to the Lord is a Muslim. The sun going around in an orbit is a Muslim. The law of gravity is a Muslim. Therefore, when we willfully obey Almighty God, we are Muslims. Jesus Christ was a Muslim. His mother—his blessed mother was a Muslim. Abraham was a Muslim. All the prophets were Muslim. But they came to their people and they spoke different languages. The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) spoke the language of Arabic. And so in the Arabic language the one who submits and surrenders to God is a “Muslim.”

All the prophets and messengers came with the same message: to obey the Almighty God and be sincere towards Him. If we examine the message of each of the well-known prophets, we can easily conclude this fact. Where there is conflict is because of false assertions, fabrications, exaggerations, personalized interpretations of alleged writers, historians, scholars, and individuals. For instance, let me point something out to you that I looked into, as a Christian, before accepting Islam as the truth. How come in the Old Testament, God is always referred to as one, the Master and the Lord of the Universe. And in the commandments of Moses, He did not allow anyone to worship any other images or bow down to anyone else. That is the Old Testament. And then in the New Testaments—the four Gospels written by Mark, Matthew, John, Luke—the divinity of one unique Lord, emphasized in the Old Testament, is replaced with the concept of the trinity and Jesus as the son of God. Who are these people who wrote these gospels? Where are their last names? Since when in all of history has only the first name been accepted as documentation except in the Bible? And how could you base your faith on four gospels written by four men who didn't seem to know their last names? If I gave you check with only my first name, it wouldn't be accepted. Then after these four gospels, there are 15 other books written by a man who was an apostate, who killed Christians, tortured Christians, and then he claimed he had a vision saw Jesus and was named an apostle by Jesus.

If I told you that Hitler, after he killed millions of Jews, had a vision in which he saw Moses then he, himself, decided to become a Jew and added 15 books to the Torah, would this be acceptable to you? No, you *would never* accept it.

So how is it that these four books with authors without a last name and another fifteen books accepted, and this is the first time that God is a man, and God is called three and that God has a son. How do you accept that?

Think about it. Let's leave it at that.

The Prophet Muhammad did not bring about a new religion or a new way of life as some people may think. On the contrary, the prophet confirmed the message of all the previous prophets by way of his conduct and the divine revelation he received from the Almighty God. The scripture that Muhammad came with is called the Quran; which literally means, “that which is recited.” Because Muhammad (pbuh) did not write the Quran, he did not author it. But, the angel Gabriel came and recited it to him and Allah made his heart a receptacle to that, just as a satellite is receptive of waves and gives you images. Is there any other book in the history of the world that you know of that has been preserved, without the changing of even a dot? No book—only the Quran. Don't take my word for it. Go to the library and read any encyclopedia -read what it says about Islam, Muhammad (pbuh), and the Quran. Read what non-Muslims say about Islam, the Quran and Muslims. Then you will see that what I am saying is universally documented; that Muhammad (pbuh) was the most profound individual in the history of humanity. Profound why? Read what non-Muslims have said. The Quran is the most profound piece of literature in history. Read what they said. Islamic life is so comprehensive, precise and dynamic that it has never changed. Read what they said.

All of the previous prophets, their scriptures and their stories and the principle message they came with are mentioned in the Quran with profound detail. Did Muhammad (pbuh) meet them, talk with them, and collaborate with them to write their biographies? No, of course he didn't.

In the Quran, the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is referred to as the messenger of God, and that is his limit as a human being. Muslims do not worship Muhammad—they are not Mohammedans. We have no right to take the name Muhammad and claim that we are Mohammedans. Normal people who followed Moses were not called Mosesans, or the people who followed Jacob were not called Jacobians, and the people who followed Abraham were not called Abrahamians. So how do people call themselves Christians? Christ never called himself a Christian. We have to be Christ-like. What was Christ like? He was a servant of Almighty God. So we have to be servants of God. That's all.

As the final revelation of God, the Quran makes a very clear and concise statement: "This day I have perfected for you your religion, bestowed my favor upon you and chosen 'Islam', for you, as a complete way of life." So through the Quran, the word 'Islam' came. Islam did not come with a new God nor did it come with a new order: It is just the word Islam that is new—not the practice, not a new God—just a new name. When a car is on an assembly line, it is not an automobile, when it is complete; when it has been test driven, and accredited only then is it an automobile. Islam was the way of all of the prophets, only when it was complete was it called Islam. The Quran termed the name Islam.

Another distinction is that Muhammad, unlike his predecessors, did not come to the Arabs. He did not come just for his people. Islam is not a religion of the Arabs. Yet Muhammad was born in Mecca, and certainly an Arab by birth—consequences of his birth, choice of the Almighty. And the Quran was revealed in the Arabic language to maintain its purity and precision.

Allah says to Muhammad in the Quran, "You have not been sent Muhammad, except to the whole of humanity as a warner, as one giving glad tidings and most of the human beings simply do not know." As such, Muhammad is the finality and crown of the great prophets before him.

Since we are using the Quran in the presentation of information, we need to have some background info on the Quran itself.

First, the Quran claims to be a revelation from Allah, it says "that Muhammad is not speaking from his own opinions, ambitions, emotions or feelings, but this is a revelation, which is being revealed to him."

For anyone to be convinced of the authenticity of the Quran, we must first prove that it was impossible for Muhammad to have come up with it; and secondly, we must also prove that it was impossible for any other human agency to have written it. Let us think about this.

The Quran makes the statement: "And we created the human being from a hanging clot in the womb."

How did the Prophet know that the embryo started out as a clot hanging and clinging to the wall of the uterus of the mother? Did he have some kind of x-ray vision? How did he receive this knowledge when it was just *discovered by scientists* 47 years ago? How did he know that oceans have a barrier between them to separate the salt and the fresh water? How did he know that the sun and the moon and all the planets are in orbits? These are all mentioned in the Quran. How did he know this 1400 years ago, when our technology and science is giving us access to the information *now*? An uneducated shepherd, a man raised in the desert, a man unable to read or to write—how could he produce something like this, how could he say something like this?

And how could anyone living with him or afterwards produce something that has just been discovered recently? Impossible. How can a man who never left the Arabian Peninsula, who never sailed on a ship, who lived fifteen centuries ago make such clear descriptions that have been discovered the second half of the 20th century?

Also let me tell you, the Quran has 114 chapters and over 6000 verses. And there were many people in the time of the prophet who memorized this book entirely. How does that happen? Did anyone memorize the Bible, the Torah, the Psalms? Nobody, no one—not even the Pope. But there are millions of Muslims today who have memorized the entire Quran—the entire book! This is the ambition of every Muslim. How many Christians have you ever met who have memorized the Bible? None. Because you never met anyone who knew *what was* the whole Bible. Christians, themselves, have 700 different denominations and there are approximately thirty-nine different versions of the Bible with different books, different verses, different amounts of verses and different amount of chapters and they don't even agree to that.

The Quran has been universally preserved, without the slightest alteration in 15 centuries. If all of this is true, would you agree to say that this book is quite profound and unique, to say the least? Would you be honest enough of to say that? Of course you would, if you were honest. And you are. Within yourselves you have to come to that conclusion. Many other non-Muslims came to the same conclusion: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Winston Churchill, Napoleon Bonaparte... whether they accepted Islam openly or not—they came to same conclusion that there is *no other literature in the world* that is as profound as the Quran as a source of wisdom, healing and direction. Now that we have settled the issue of the authenticity of the Quran let us turn to another issue.

What are the major themes of the Quran?

1. The oneness of Almighty God, which includes his names, attributes, relationship between the Almighty and His creatures and how man should maintain that relationship.
2. The continuity of prophets and messengers, their lives, their message, and their overall mission, the insistence upon following the universal example-Muhammad (pbuh), the seal of all the prophets and messengers.
3. Reminding human beings of the brevity of this life, and calling them to the eternity of the hereafter.

Hereafter; after here. After we leave, we are going somewhere, and we are responsible because we have been told—even if you have rejected it.

The object of this life is to not for you to sit here and after this to do nothing and have no effect. Every cause has an effect—that is, we came into this life for a reason, and every decision we make during our lifetime will have consequences. You cannot accept that the grave is the end, because that would mean God has created you for a foolish purpose. And you have not gone to school, worked, or chosen a wife or chosen a name for your children or are reading this for a foolish purpose. How could you assign to God something less than that? In attempt to capture the faculties of reason, the Quran goes to a great length to explain the beauty and majesty of our universe. It expounds upon the oceans and rivers, the trees and plants, the birds and insects, the wild and domestic animals, the mountains and valleys, the expansion of the heavens, the human history, the human embryo, the purpose of life. And how could a man who was a shepherd, who could not read and write, who was never exposed to our sciences, expound upon it?

The most unique aspect of the Quran however, is that it sought to confirm all the revealed scriptures. And if you decided to become Muslim, you would not have to consider yourself 'changing your religion'. Your faith in God, your love of Jesus Christ, your love of God—you don't throw that away, you hold on to it, but make alterations where you know the truth has been revealed to you. That's all.

Islam is simple. Bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Almighty God. If I asked you to bear witness that your father is your father, your wife is your wife, I am who I am—you wouldn't hesitate.

Then why do you hesitate to accept that God is One and is the Only and is your Lord and Creator? If you were asked to give testimony that you are who you are, that your father is who he is, that your mother is your mother, that your wife is your wife, would you not do it? Why do you hesitate to accept God? Are you arrogant? Are you vain? Have you something more than He? Or are you confused? That is a question you have to ask yourself. If you thought that you would die tonight, and in front of you was paradise and in the back of you was hell fire, and you had a chance to put things straight with your conscience and to put things straight with God, and to ask God to accept the best of your deeds; if you thought you would die and had this chance, you would not hesitate there is only one God. You would not hesitate to bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of God. You would not hesitate.

But you think that you will live a little while, so you want to enjoy some things. You want to wear some more fancy suits, you want to dance a little more, sing a little more, drink some Scotch, hang out some more; and, of course, you are not ready to pray every day. That is because you think you are going to live a while. But how much is a while? How long ago was it when all our hair was black? How long ago was it, you were a child? It was yesterday. And we are going to die tomorrow. So how long do you want to wait?

Islam is acknowledging that God is the only one deserving of worship, that there will be a Day of Judgment. Islam is to acknowledge the existence of the angels with the duty of revealing the divine messages to the prophets—controlling the winds, the oceans and to take the life of those God ordered to die. Acknowledging that all the Prophets of God were righteous men and were all sent by God, and acknowledging that there will definitely be a day of resurrection after death, and that all good and evil has been proportioned by God.

In Islam is to uphold strict monotheism- Not to worship any partners besides God, not to say anything about God that you have no right to say—this means: not to say that He has a *father*, a *mother*, a *son*, an *aunt* or even a *board of trustees*—not to say anything about God that you have no right to say. To bear witness, this means that you sentence yourself either to peace and Paradise or, in declining, to a state of confusion, frustration and ultimately hellfire and punishment. You sentence yourself—you ask yourself, “Do I bear witness that there is only one God?” And if you do, say, “Yes I bear witness.”

“Do I witness that if Muhammad is who he has been explained to be, that he is a prophet of Almighty God?” “Yes I do bear witness.”

If you bear witness to this, then all of you and all of us—are Muslims.... and you don’t have to change what you were, you just have to make alterations to your thinking and practice.

May Allah bless us. May Allah help us. May Allah guide us. And I would say to all of you, you are very honest and very patient. But don’t leave this like a plate of food—no, take this and digest it. Sit down with a Muslim and let him/her explain the prescription of Islam. Take the next step. That is, wash your hands before you eat. Wash yourself before formally becoming a Muslim. Accept Islam. Know about Islam. Practice Islam. And enjoy the bounties that Allah has bestowed upon you because faith is not something you can take for granted. If you don’t put it into practice, you lose it like a fragrance.

May Allah help us. May Allah guide us. And I appreciate the honor of explaining Islam to you.