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ISLAM and the AIM of LIFE

What is your purpose in life? What is the rationale behind our life? Why do we live in this life? These questions frequently intrigue people who try to find accurate answers.

People provide different answers to these questions. Some people believe the purpose of life is to accumulate wealth. But one may wonder: What is the purpose of life after one has collected colossal amounts of money? What then? What will the purpose be once money is gathered? If the purpose of life is to gain money, there will be no purpose after becoming wealthy. And in fact, here lies the problem of some disbelievers or misbelievers at some stage of their life, when collecting money is the target of their life. When they have collected the money they dreamt of, their life loses its purpose. They suffer from the panic of nothingness and they live in tension and restlessness.

Can Wealth Be an Aim?

We often hear of a millionaire committing suicide, sometimes, not the millionaire himself but his wife, son, or daughter. The question that poses itself is: Can wealth bring happiness to one's life? In most cases the answer is NO. Is the purpose of collecting wealth a standing purpose? As we know, the five-year old child does not look for wealth: a toy for him is equal to a million dollars. The eighteen-year old adolescent does not dream of wealth because he is busy with more important things. The ninety-year old man does not care about money; he is worried more about his health. This proves that wealth cannot be a standing purpose in all the stages of the individual's life.

Wealth can do little to bring happiness to a disbeliever, because he/she is not sure about his fate. A disbeliever does not know the purpose of life. And if he has a purpose, this purpose is doomed to be temporary or self-destructive.

What is the use of wealth to a disbeliever if he feels scared of the end and skeptical of everything. A disbeliever may gain a lot of money, but will surely lose himself.

Worshipping Allah as an Aim

On the contrary, faith in Allah gives the believer the purpose of life that he needs. In Islam, the purpose of life is to worship Allah. The term "Worship" covers all acts of obedience to Allah.

The Islamic purpose of life is a standing purpose. The true Muslim sticks to this purpose throughout all the stages of his life, whether he is a child, adolescent, adult, or an old man.

Worshipping Allah makes life purposeful and meaningful, especially within the framework of Islam. According to Islam this worldly life is just a short stage of our life. Then there is the other life. The boundary between the first and second life is the death stage, which is a transitory stage to the second life. The type of life in the second stage a person deserves depends on his deeds in the first life. At the end of the death stage comes the day of judgment. On this day, Allah rewards or punishes people according to their deeds in the first life.

The First Life as an Examination

So, Islam looks at the first life as an examination of man. The death stage is similar to a rest period after the test, i. e. after the first life. The Day of Judgment is similar to the day of announcing the results of the examinees. The second life is the time when each examinee enjoys or suffers from the outcome of his behavior during the test period.

In Islam, the line of life is clear, simple, and logical: the first life, death, the Day of Judgment, and then the second life. With this clear line of life, the Muslim has a clear purpose in life. The Muslim knows he is created by Allah. Muslims know they are going to spend some years in this first life, during which they have to obey God, because God will question them and hold them responsible for their public or private deeds, because Allah knows about all the deeds of all people. The Muslim knows that his deeds in the first life will determine the type of second life they will live in. The Muslim knows that this first life is a very short one, one hundred years, more or less, whereas the second life is an eternal one.

The Eternity of the Second Life

The concept of the eternity of the second life has a tremendous effect on a Muslims during their first life, because Muslims believe that their first life determines the shape of their second life. In addition, this determines the shape of their second life and this determination will be through the Judgment of Allah, the All just and Almighty.

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With this belief in the second life and the Day of Judgment, the Muslim's life becomes purposeful and meaningful. Moreover, the Muslim's standing purpose is to go to Paradise in the second life.

In other words, the Muslim's permanent purpose is to obey Allah, to submit to Allah, to carry out His orders, and to keep in continuous contact with Him through prayers (five times a day), through fasting (one month a year), through charity (as often as possible), and through pilgrimage (once in one's life).

The Need for a Permanent Purpose

Disbelievers have purposes in their lives such as collecting money and property, indulging in sex, eating, and dancing. But all these purposes are transient and passing ones. All these purposes come and go, go up and down. Money comes and goes. Health comes and goes. Sexual activities cannot continue forever. All these lusts for money, food and sex cannot answer the individual's questions: so what? Then What?

However, Islam saves Muslims from the trouble of asking the question, because Islam makes it clear, from the very beginning, that the permanent purpose of the Muslim in this life is to obey Allah in order to go to Paradise in the second life.

We should know that the only way for our salvation in this life and in the hereafter is to know our Lord who created us, believe in Him, and worship Him alone.

We should also know our Prophet whom Allah had sent to all mankind, believe in Him and follow Him. We should, know the religion of truth which our Lord has commanded us to believe in, and practice it &

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