

LIVE
YOUR LIFE
ON
PURPOSE

ON GOD'S GREEN EARTH

Live Your Life on Purpose on God's Green Earth

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By
Radwan Kouatli

Thank You



I would like to thank you for choosing to invest a portion of your time in reading my book. I pray that your reading experience will bring you joy and enlightenment. I would like to hear from you. Please do not hesitate to share with me your comments about this book.

Sincerely,

Radwan Kouatli
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Acknowledgment



First and foremost, I am indebted to God who guided and helped me in learning, understanding and then communicating in this book and many sermons the truth about the purpose of our existence as human beings. Secondly, I am grateful to the many authors, scholars, teachers and friends who inspired me through learning from their books, materials and comments. Furthermore, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the several editors that volunteered their editorial skills and advice to enhance the finished manuscript. I am very grateful to my dear wife for her patience, love, encouragement and support. Moreover, I am vastly grateful to my brothers for their love, care and continual support. And above all else, I am tremendously grateful to God.

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Introduction



Here we are, existing on God's green earth, but why? In hopes of answering this simple yet difficult question, we conceive of many man-made purposes of existence. As long as things are going well, we do not question the validity of these purposes. But when these purposes stop to provide peace of mind and happiness, or when a calamity occurs—the death of a loved one, getting laid off from work, a troublesome medical report, or facing a home foreclosure situation, just to name a few—these purposes no longer make sense. We cannot explain away unpleasant realities. Thus, we ask ourselves questions in order to make sense of the unpleasant events in our lives.

Why do I exist? What is the purpose of life? Does life really make sense? O God, why did you create me? I don't have what it takes to live a happy life. Is life about eating, drinking, satisfying urges, making money, chasing personal goals, and raising kids who can drive their parents bananas? Why do bananas even exist, anyway? If we turn to evolution, we will not get answers since life in the world view of evolution is the result of undirected mutations and natural processes. If we turn to God, however, we will get answers since He is the creator of life.

This book is primarily intended to help Muslims discover the God-given purpose of life and actualize this purpose in their own lives. Also, this book presents universal truths to people of God, seekers, as well as skeptics. You will find in this book plenty of passages from the Quran and the Bible that brief you about universal truths concerning the purpose of our existence. You may find the passages from the two books very similar and at times

complementary. My hope in doing so is to draw your attention to the universal message of God and to make you realize that the people of Abrahamic religions share a wonderful heritage of faith.

When you live your life on purpose, you will get great gratification out of it. I pray to God that reading the following twenty-two chapters will bring you inspiration, joy and enlightenment.

Unit One

My Purpose of Existence

Whatever gets you out of bed every morning is your personal purpose for living, at least for that day. So what is it that gets you out of bed each morning?

Is it the desire to make money, to be successful, to establish your business, to win a sporting event, to take care of your family, to be recognized, to be famous, or to have fun? Or simply to do what is expected of you?

In fact, none of these above purposes matches your true worth and importance. You are much more important than just having fun, engaging in sports, attaining fame or building wealth. God has created you for a noble and honorable purpose. Let's discover why God has made us.

1



Not in Vain

Did you think that We created you in vain?

Quran¹ 23:115

*Fear God, and keep his commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13 KJV²

Every man-made object is made with a purpose conceived in the mind of the maker. Furthermore, it is assumed that the user should use the object in a way that is consistent with the intended purpose. Not doing so can be illegal or hazardous. The refrigerator is made in order to preserve food. That means it was not created in vain. It is indeed foolish to use a refrigerator as a filing cabinet. Likewise, you were not made in vain. God said, “*Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?*” (Quran 23:115). When God created you, He was not toying with you. God made you for a specific purpose that is much greater than the Epicurean motto of “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

I have to let you know that the purpose of your existence is not about building wealth, gaining success in the business world, satisfying your ego, relishing food and drink, playing and watching sports and creating beautiful flower gardens. It is normal for you to eat, drink and be merry. It is normal to enjoy your time on God’s green earth, to create flower gardens, to relish food and drink, to be successful and prosperous. But when you give yourself over to

such objectives, then you make them the purpose of your existence. Consequently, they become the axle around which your busy life revolves. You might make your life as busy as a Bee in hopes of getting an A in life. And when events do not happen the way you want them to, you feel you are not measuring up, you are not happy, and you feel that you are not fulfilling your purpose. Also, the monotony of the routine of life and its drudgeries may put you in a passive mode of existence. Once you are in a passive mode of existence, the pace of life can make you drift away from the purpose of your existence. You'd go with the flow, and lose track of what is important. Some people become proclivity-oriented. That is not good. Be purpose-oriented in your living. Life is unpleasant when you allow it to drift you away from the purpose of your existence. However, when you live in the center of the real purpose of your life, you will be able to measure up, because God equips you for everything He wants you to be. But first who is God?

WHO IS GOD?

God is the Supreme Being, perfect in power, wisdom, knowledge and goodness. Prior to the existence of time and space and before anything else ever was, God always has been. He needs neither time nor space within which to exist. He is eternal, uncaused, un-originated and not restricted by any physical limitations. He neither acquires His existence from any source nor depends on anything to sustain His existence. Rather, it is He who sustains everything and everyone. He is the ever-living, sustaining God who neither dies nor ever sleeps. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and knows the past, the present and the future. He also knows everything about everything and everyone.

In our experience of the natural world, everything that has a beginning must have a cause behind it. God is eternal and therefore uncaused. The light of the created order points to its originator, God that is, the cause of all effects. Moreover, the light of the human instinct points to God. The existence of God is written on the tablets of our hearts. Thus, it is much more sensible and easily perceptible by the mind to accept that God has always existed, even before He created time and space, and has brought everything into existence by His creative power, than to conceive that matter existed by itself and then developed to such incredible levels of sophistication by chance. Surely, it is not possible that the

irreducible complexity of organisms can come into existence by chance. Through creation, God has made Himself evident. Human beings do not instinctively explain the existence of the created order through philosophical naturalism, Darwinism or mere chance. Actually, every human being instinctively explains the existence of the created order as a work of the creative power of God.

THE GOD OF THE QURAN AND THE BIBLE

The Quran tells us Muslims to say to followers of Judaism and Christianity “*Our God and your God is one*”³ (Quran 29:46). Biblical passages identify the creator of heavens and earth as Jehovah or Yahweh. Quranic passages identify the creator of heavens and earth as Allah. Some people, due to their ignorance, attempt to demonize the name Allah, thinking it refers to a god who has never existed. That is very wrong. Just as Jehovah and Yahweh are two of the biblical names for God, the LORD of the universe, likewise Allah is the quranic and Arabic name. Similarly, in the Aramaic language that Jesus most likely spoke, Alaha was the name used to refer to God. This means that Allah is not a stranger to humanity. He is the Lord of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Jonah, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Joshua, Elijah, John, Jesus and Muhammad⁴. The Bible says about God, “You alone are the LORD; you made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve and give life to everything, and all the angels of heaven worship you” (Nehemiah 9:6 NLT). The Quran says about God, “*Your Lord indeed is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, and then He rose over the Throne. He regulates and governs all affairs. No intercessor [can plead with Him] except after His leave. This is Allah your Lord, so worship Him*” (Quran 10:3).

You can detect a striking similarity between these passages because they refer to the same God, the God of Abraham, the creator of heavens and earth.

Islam can be defined as an Abrahamic ethical monotheistic religion (Quran 6:151; 22:78), which mandates surrendering to, and worshipping the one and only God of Abraham known as Allah, Jehovah, and Yahweh, also referred to in the Jewish Bible as Adonai, Elohim and Lord of Israel. All of Allah’s emissaries called their respective communities to worship Allah, and Allah alone. The Torah says, “Hear, O Israel! The Eternal is our God, the

Eternal alone”⁵ (Deuteronomy 6:4). Also, Allah said in the Quran that Noah told his people, “*Worship Allah; there is not for you any other God*” (Quran 7:59). Abraham made a similar statement to his people (Quran 29:16). Also, Jesus told his people to worship God alone when he quoted Deut 6:4, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only God” (Mark 12:29 LB). Allah sent His last Messenger Muhammad to call humanity back to worshipping Allah alone. In that sense, Islam is the culmination of the teachings of all the messengers of God. In biblical terminology, “God is called the Father:

1. of the stars, the heavenly luminaries, because he is their creator, upholder, ruler.
2. of all rational and intelligent beings, whether angels or men, because he is their creator, preserver, guardian and protector.”⁶

The Arabic word that encapsulates the above-mentioned meanings, and more, is Rabb. Islamic terminology does not refer to Allah as Father because this term on the one hand is not quranic, and on the other hand, it describes a relationship that is less intimate than the actual relationship between Allah and His servants. The Arabic verb *rabba* means upbringing, fostering, caring, correcting, monitoring, training, nurturing and modifying. A rabb is the one who takes care of his dependents. The father of a family is referred to as the rabb of the family. Allah is the Rabb because He is the creator, preserver, guardian, protector, provider, trainer and nurturer. Allah is the Rabb of His family and He “does not allow His family to perish.”⁷ He is also the Wali. The Arabic term *wali* denotes closeness; thus, it is used to describe blood relationship, intimate friendship and closeness, and faithful loyalty owed by an ex-slave to one who emancipated him. There is no blood relation between humans and Allah. But Allah is the Wali of believers in the sense that He loves them, He is close to them, He is loyal to them, He is their intimate friend and He emancipated them from bondage to darkness. “*Allah is the Wali [Protecting Pal⁸] of those who believed, He delivers them from darkness into light*” (Quran 2:257).

The believers are the walis of Allah: “*Indeed, on the walis [intimate, loyal pals] of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. They are those who believe and practice piety*” (Quran 10:62). Believers are

the walis of Allah in the sense that they are close to Him, obey Him and loyal to Him who liberated them from bondage to darkness, thus, they are His faithful lovers and obedient servants. This mutual waliship is rooted in love.

One time, Allah's Messenger Muhammad was traveling by camel with his companions who were praising Allah loudly. The Prophet said to them, "You are not calling upon the one who is distant or deaf; you are calling upon the one who hears and is near. The one whom you call upon (Allah) is closer to you than the neck of your camel⁹."¹⁰ Allah is very close to you. The Quran documents for us that people who have a close relationship with Allah called upon Him saying, "My Rabb..." (Quran 19:4). They do not even use the particle "yaa," meaning "O," that is usually used when one calls upon another. They sensed God to be intimately close to them. After all, "O" is used to call upon one who is far away or not paying attention. Allah is never far from those who love Him.

WHO ARE YOU?

Among all the creatures of Allah, you are the only one who is created in His image in order for you to be His servant. Prophet Muhammad said, "Allah created Adam in His image."¹¹ Another narration says, "Allah created Adam in the image of the Merciful."¹²

Being created in the image of God does not mean that you look like Him, or that you are a duplicate of Him. You are not a reproduction of God. Allah makes it very clear that nothing can be of the same nature in essence or attributes when He says, "*There is nothing that equals Him*" (Quran 42:11).

Allah's divine hands molded your father Adam. (Quran 38:75). The physical shape of the human body was molded by the divine hands. Your DNA still carries the divine touch of Allah. No other living creature can claim such honor. Allah said, "*Indeed We created man in the best of shape*" (Quran 95:4).

After Allah molded the body of Adam with His own hands, He then breathed into him from His spirit. "*When your Lord said to the angels; Surely I shall create a man from mud: And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down before him prostrate*" (Quran 38:71-72).

The spirit that dwells in the body that was molded with the divine hands is attributed to Allah. You are very special and valuable because being created in the image of God means you

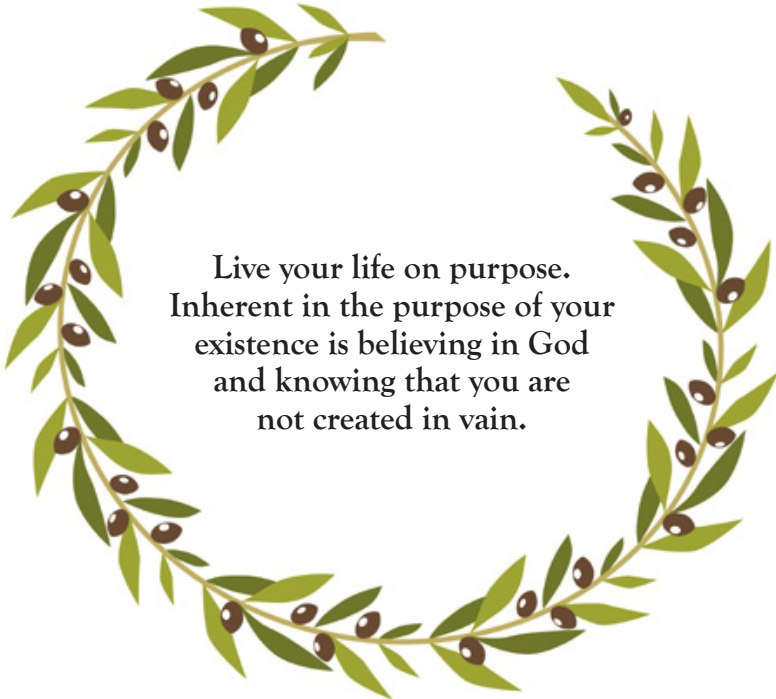
are capable of reflecting Allah's communicable attributes in your way of living. Allah's Messenger Muhammad tells us that the first group of people who will enter heaven will enter it "in the image of the moon."¹³ Being in the image of the moon does not mean that these individuals are circular and cratered, as the moon looks from earth. Rather, they will be bright like the full moon. Being in the image of something does not mean that it possesses the same nature. Being created in the image of God does not mean you are a replica of God, but it means you are capable of reflecting, within human limits, some of the attributes of God that are consistent with our status as servants, such as mercy, love, justice, knowledge, and wisdom. You have inclinations which make you stand out from the rest of creation. You have a sense of justice, mercy, and morality. Allah puts in you the desire to seek Him. You are hard-wired to have a meaningful relationship with your Maker.

Animals, plants, and fish are not created in the image of Allah. Thus, they do not seek to make things, to be prosperous, or to acquire knowledge. They are not capable of having a meaningful relationship with God, though they are aware of God. You as a human being seek to create things, to be prosperous, and to increase in knowledge because you are created in the image of your Creator. Allah created you in His image to have a meaningful relationship with you. This relationship is rooted in mutual love.

KNOW THE TRUTH

God, the creator of heavens and earth, has not created you in vain at all. He created you with a specific purpose in mind. The Old Testament tells us "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13 INV). In the Quran, God declares "*I did not create jinn¹⁴ and man except to worship Me*" (Quran 51:56). This is the truth. God gave you a life so you can live it. And He created you for the truth so that you can proclaim it. The reality of this truth is to receive God's unfathomable mercy and worship Him wholeheartedly. The children of Abraham worship the God of Abraham. This fact is established in the Old Testament and in the Quran. The Bible says that Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac" (Genesis 32:9 NIV). The Quran tells us that Jacob said to his children, "*What will you worship after me?*" *They said: 'We shall worship your God and the God of*

your fathers Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, one God, and unto Him we are submitters” (Quran 2:133).



**Live your life on purpose.
Inherent in the purpose of your
existence is believing in God
and knowing that you are
not created in vain.**

2



Receive God's Mercy and Give God Your Worship

Allah indeed with mankind is gentle, merciful.

Quran 22:65

For the Lord your God is a merciful God.

Deuteronomy 4:31 NIV

O mankind, worship your Lord who created you.

Quran 2:21

*Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name;
Worship Jehovah in holy array.*

Psalms 29:2 ASV

Rain, light, rivers, fruits, flowers, and forests are a few instances of the mercy of God. Without the mercy of God, we cannot survive. Without the mercy of God, we cannot be saved. Quranic truth tells you that God's purpose for creating you is twofold: one is related to Him, and the other is related to you. In respect to the purpose that is related to God, He said, "My mercy encompasses everything" (Quran 7:156), and "Your Lord has bestowed His mercy. And for that He did create them" (Quran 11:118). This verse tells you a very comforting truth: that God created you to be the recipient of His mercy. One of the names of Allah is "the Merciful".

The nature of Allah is mercy. One of His names is “the Loving”. The nature of Allah is love. He created you to be a recipient of His love and mercy. He created bananas, mangos, and apples for your own health and enjoyment. He made the earth a perfect place for you to live and actualize the purpose of your existence.

MERCY FOR THIS LIFE

You need Allah’s mercy to be saved during your life as much as you need it to be saved in eternity. During your life, you need the mercy of God to be saved from the ills of the soul such as sadness, dejection, condemning guilt, hatred, resentment, and envy. The mercy of God sets you free from all these debilitating attitudes. Allah’s Messenger used to pray “O Lord, in your mercy I seek refuge.”¹ You, too, seek refuge in God’s mercy. Learn to receive the mercy of Allah on a daily basis. Every day you can receive new forgiveness, new mercy, new help, new hope, and new empowerment. This is the real life; it is not a fantasy. Sins, discouragement, and sadness are part of living; there is no escape from this reality. The good news is that Allah is willing to forgive you your sins, give you new chances, and renew your power and energy. You should not feel condemned because of your sins and mistakes. On the other hand, you should not take His leniency for granted so as to volitionally, with forethought and determination, plan to disobey your Lord. Rather, you should try your best to live a life of loyalty and honesty. Keep your heart pure. When you realize that you have sinned, immediately come back to your merciful Lord and ask Him to forgive you and bestow His mercy on you. Allah said, “Say: O My servants who have sinned to a great extent, despair not of the mercy of Allah; indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful” (Quran 39:53).

You may have wasted many opportunities and made poor choices, which cause you to feel unworthy and discouraged. You may declare to yourself that the remaining part of your life is going to be without excitement, without fulfillment, and boring. Allah in His mercy is ever willing to give you more chances and opportunities. Even when Jonah left his people without the permission of Allah, Allah gave him another chance and sent him to more than a hundred thousand people, who all came to believe in him. Allah did that for Jonah because he had repented and placed his trust in his Lord. You too should put your trust in your Lord. Do not succumb

to sadness, self-blame, and negativity. Yes, there is hope. Have enough faith to hope. Put your faith in God, rely on His mercy, and ask for His forgiveness sincerely. One of the names of Allah is “the Mender,” and He will mend you. You cannot fly high with broken wings. Allah wants to mend your wings and restore you. Do not give up hope. You may feel that your problems, complications, and aggravations are unique and beyond hope. But nothing is beyond hope, when hope is rooted in faith in the mercy of the Merciful and the Mercy-Giver God. The catalyst of hope is faith. Without faith, hoping is very difficult to do and impossible to endure. Thus, accepting the status quo of mediocrity is the option for those who do not have the faith to hope. Allah’s Messenger has advised that a person should continue planting his sapling even if the Last Hour has come.² The likelihood that this sapling will grow to become a fruitful tree is zero. Yet, the hope of the believer is to be greater and deeper than what he sees to be his current reality. This hope is rooted in Allah, who created you to receive His love and mercy.

MERCY FOR ETERNITY

God’s mercy is your hope for salvation. Salvation is a matter of relationship to Allah, Jehovah, the God of Israel who said, “Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour” (Isaiah 43:10-11 ASV).

The death rate is one per person. This means that one day you will die. Moreover, one day this life as we know it will end for all of us. Then God will resurrect all human beings for them to give their answers regarding what they did with their lives. To ensure the salvation of all those who believed in Him, Allah (Jehovah) has prepared an unfathomable amount of mercy. He said,³ “Whoever meets Me with sins that fill the earth, I will meet him with equal forgiveness, if he does not ascribe any partners to Me.”⁴ Prophet Muhammad conveys to us the vastness of the mercy of Allah saying, “Allah has reserved ninety-nine installments of mercy, to bestow on His servants on the Day of Resurrection.”⁵ “Every mercy fills the space between the sky and the earth.”⁶ On the Day of Judgment, Allah will show infinite mercy. All believers will be saved from eternal damnation through Allah’s mercy. Allah’s Messenger said, “Your work will not save you from hellfire. They said, ‘even you, O Allah’s Messenger?’ He said, ‘Even I will not be saved unless Allah

bestows His Mercy on me. Therefore, do good deeds properly, sincerely and take advantage of the appropriate time to reach your destination.”⁷ One may wonder why we should bother with any good deeds if we are already saved by Allah’s grace and mercy. It is because the true believer in God must reflect, within human limits, the communicable attributes of God. Furthermore, the fact that we are saved through the mercy of Allah does not mean that our faith and deeds are irrelevant or insignificant. The relevance of our good deeds to our salvation is not that they merit salvation in themselves, but rather that they evoke the love and mercy of God on us and demonstrate that we are genuine believers. Your faith and good deeds are the vessels into which the mercy of God is poured to overflowing. The more faith and good deeds you have, the more mercy you will be able to receive.

Your destination is heaven, which is the quintessential token of the mercy of Allah. Your deeds are NOT the purchase price for Allah’s mercy. Allah’s mercy is not something to be purchased with your good deeds. And your good deeds cannot save you apart from the mercy of Allah. Salvation without faith is not possible. And faith without the mercy of God does not save. Thus, your salvation is the product of Allah’s mercy applied to your faith and your good deeds. What is important to remember is that we are saved from the condemnation of God because of His mercy not because of our righteousness.

MERCY AND JUSTICE

Allah’s mercy necessitates that all believers be saved. He declares “Indeed, My mercy exceeds My wrath.”⁸ This means that one does not lose his salvation because of committing sins; and it means that Allah needs neither a cross to propitiate Himself nor a mediator to mend estranged relationships. But Allah’s justice necessitates that salvation is not one-size-fits-all. Some believers enter heaven without going through the process of giving an account and of testing their deeds, some after an easy process of giving an account and of testing their deeds, and some after a difficult process of giving an account and of testing their deeds. The justice of Allah allows for your good deeds to be factored into your salvation. Though they do not merit salvation, your good deeds that test sincere are relevant to your salvation. Quranic truth tells us, “*Whoever does the smallest good deed, he will see it; and whoever does the*

smallest bad deed, he will see it" (Quran 99:7-8).

The gift of submission to God guarantees that submitters escape from being eternally condemned. However, this does not protect disobedient ones from chastisement or from forfeiting a higher dwelling place in heaven that others will enjoy. Some habitually sinful individuals who profess belief might experience a painful adventure, including doing time in hell, before they finally make it to heaven. Furthermore, the deeds that believers do may be sincere and genuine, or they may be flawed. If they are flawed, then the owner of these deeds "himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames" (1 Corinthians 3:15 NIV). Furthermore, there are degrees of reward in heaven and degrees of punishment in hell. Our obedience to Allah is the basis on which Allah dispenses His saving mercy and allocates our ranks in heaven, even though our obedience and good deeds in themselves do not merit salvation independently from the mercy of God. Your correct response to Allah's mercy should be thankful obedience, not ungrateful disobedience.

Taken together with faith, good works add to your salvation and add to your reward. The Bible says, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Corinthians 3:8 KJV), and the Quran says, "*Enter Paradise because of what you used to do*" (Quran 16:32).

The Islamic definition of faith includes good deeds. Faith is what you acknowledge in the heart, profess in your speech, and authenticate by deed. Faith is always accompanied by good deeds. Sound faith generates good deeds commensurate with the goodness of the faith. Faith and good deeds are seldom separated in the quranic language. Allah repeatedly mentions in the Quran, "*Those who believed and did good deeds*" (Quran 7:42).⁹

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

God is giving you His saving love and mercy, and He wants you to give Him your utmost love and worship. He totally refuses to share the worship, adoration, and homage that are due to Him with any other, for no other has ever contributed to the creation, provision, or salvation of man. Throughout the history of man, God in His redemptive plan has commissioned "*in every nation a messenger proclaiming: worship Allah and shun false gods*" (Quran 16:36).

If God created us to worship Him, then it becomes crucially important to know what worship means. Worship is about submitting yourself to God. The business of worship goes far beyond rites and ritualistic movements. Worship is a blend of loving, trusting, adoring, cherishing, venerating, fearing, and being grateful to God, mankind's Creator and Mercy-Giver. Central to worship is submitting yourself to God as your voluntary response to His love and mercy. You exist because of God's love, mercy, wisdom and goodness. Worship is to make yourself a servant to Allah and to make His agenda your agenda; His goals, your goals; His purposes, your purposes.

The most important element of worship is your love to your Creator. Worship and love are intimately related. You cannot worship that which you do not know or love. The highest level of love is worship, and love is the foundation and essence of a spiritual godly living. Worship is internal and external submission, proceeding out of love, adoration and glorification to the beloved Lord. Worship is your labor of love until you reach home—heaven, that is. The full meaning of worship is submission to God. Allah, Jehovah, the LORD God, created you to submit to Him. He assigned the job of conveying this truth to His last emissary, Muhammad, saying, “*We did not send you except as a mercy to everything. Say: It is revealed to me that your God is only one God; will you then surrender?*” (Quran 21:107-108).

Worship entails every act that is pleasing to God. Your worship life is comprised of worshipping Allah in ceremonial and non-ceremonial acts of worship, *doing* good deeds and *being* an agent of mercy. Even though the main purpose of your existence is to worship God, you should set goals for yourself through which you worship God and also attain personal fulfillment. Your goal may be to have a large family, or to run a successful business, or to preserve the environment, or to care for the homeless, needy, abused, or orphans, or to establish trust funds for education expenses, or to clean up your neighborhood. Allah wants us to worship Him and to “*do the good*” (Quran 22:78).

TIME MANAGEMENT

Life without a purpose is a life approaching death. Life with a purpose is a life approaching immortality in heaven. God in His infinite wisdom brought us into existence to worship Him.

Make your life a purposeful one. Life is a worship ground, not a playground. Life is a journey, not a destination. Life is a business trip, not a vacation.

Your worship life comprises of worshipping God in ceremonial and non-ceremonial acts of worship, doing good deeds and being an agent of mercy. In order to live a balanced life, it is vital to manage your worship life properly and allocate time to various activities of your life. Hanthalah, one of the companions, explained to Prophet Muhammad that when he was away from him, he did not keep up the same level of spirituality that he experienced while he was with the Prophet. Do we not all experience, with Hanthalah, this fluctuation? The Prophet, in response to Hanthalah's concern, said:

I swear by the one in whose hand is my soul, if you could keep up the same level of spirituality that you have while you are with me and keep up the same level of heedfulness to Allah's presence, then angels would shake your hand [in congratulation] when you are on the streets or on your beds; but [since you cannot, then live your life] an hour and an hour [at a time].¹⁰

The expression, "an hour and an hour" means to manage your time properly. It does not mean you can allocate one hour to please Allah and one hour to do as you please. Rather, it means to allocate time for devotion and worship, time to attend to your needs and the needs of those who depend on you and time to satisfy your innate needs. Realize that "Your Lord has a right over you, your own self has a right over you, and your wife has a right over you, so give what is due to each one who has a right over you."¹¹

HOW MUCH SHOULD I WORSHIP ALLAH?

Does Allah want you to worship Him 24/7? Obviously yes. God told us this in no uncertain terms. He said, "*I did not create jinn and man except to worship Me*" (Quran 51:56). God expects us to "worship him continually" (Psalms 105:4 TEV). But Allah also told us, "*Say: Who has forbidden the embellishments of Allah and the good things of His providing which He brought forth for His servants?*" (Quran 7:32). He asks this rhetorical question to bring to our attention that enjoying life does not defy the purpose of our existence. Allah wants

you to enjoy what He has created for you. And in doing so, you fulfill the purpose of your existence.

You as a human being cannot devote all your time to worship, in the sense of ceremonial worship such as performing *salaah*¹², fasting, performing *haji* or *umrah*, or non-ceremonial worship such as reading and reflecting on the Quran, and praising God. There are human needs you must satisfy. You need to rest, you need to eat, and you need to have some fun and entertainment to refresh yourself and rejuvenate your strengths. Additionally, you desire to discover the universe and its laws, discover cures for diseases, and make other kinds of discoveries. Allah knows that. But Allah wants you to understand that the purpose of your existence is to worship Him. With this understanding in mind, you can proceed in the voyage of life, undertake actions and participate in activities that are complementary to the purpose of your existence, while keeping away from the activities that are contradictory to the purpose of your existence, such as sinful and unwholesome lifestyles. You can make your entire activities pass as good deeds when you do them in a way that pleases your Lord. This is how you incorporate those activities into the purpose of your existence. Allah's Messenger drove the point home when he said:

When you satisfy your sexual needs in a lawful way, you will be rewarded. The companions asked, "We satisfy our sexual needs and due to that we will be rewarded?" He said, "Wouldn't it be the case that if you satisfied your sexual needs in a prohibited way, you would be held accountable? Conversely, when you satisfy your sexual needs in a lawful way, you will be rewarded."¹³

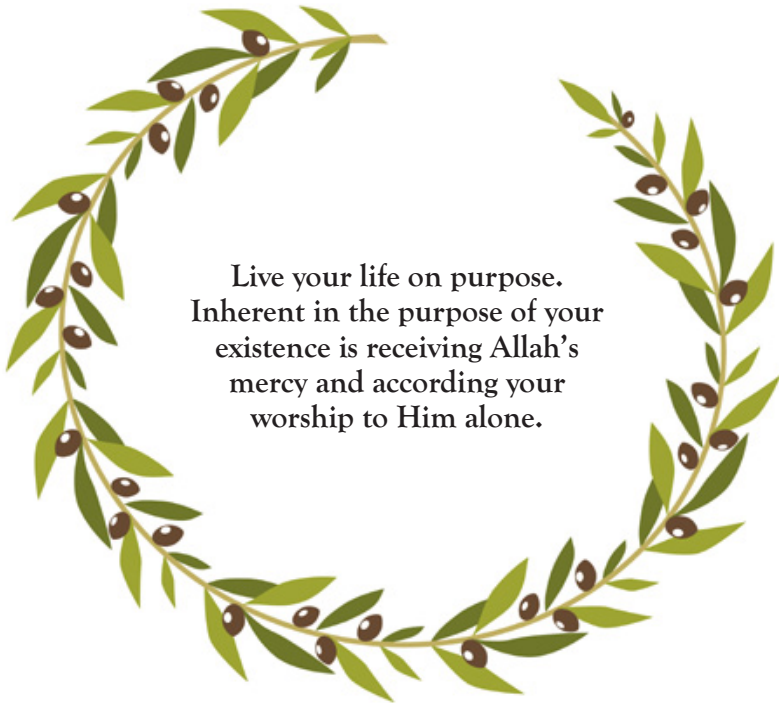
This statement gives us a very positive understanding as to how we should conduct our lives. Islam teaches that human sexuality within sanctioned bounds is one of the greatest gifts of Allah and a reason to come closer to Allah. Allah created you with a sexual drive built into you. When you use your sexuality in a lawful way, Allah will approve your practice and reward you. If you give your child a car and your child uses it responsibly and wisely, that brings pleasure to him or her and to you as a parent. Allah created you with the innate need to worship. If you worship Allah, He will be pleased with you. If you worship others, He will be displeased with you. Allah created you with the innate needs to eat, drink, be

merry, love, be loved, make love, socialize, and seek materialistic possessions. When you satisfy your innate needs in *lawful* ways, He will be happy with you and reward you. When you satisfy your innate needs in *awful* ways, He will be displeased with you. The difference between lawful and awful is the missing “L,” which comes from Legitimacy. The rule is this: when you satisfy your innate biological and social needs according to God’s plan for you, (a) you experience legitimate pleasure and (b) Allah will be pleased with you and reward you.

You can take it a step higher when you intentionally link every action you do to the purpose of your existence. Whatever you do to keep yourself alive and enjoy your life, start doing it so as to be able to worship Allah and do good deeds onto others as an agent of mercy. This is a skill you need to learn. For example, wake up in the morning and have breakfast, not because God has made it permissible for you, but because you want to have the energy so you can live up to the purpose of your existence.

The tremendous benefit in having every action you do, except sin and vain practices, linked in intention to the purpose of your existence is that all your acts of habits, needs, entertainment and even intimacy can be converted to good deeds, thus, an occasion to please God and draw closer to Him in a greater way. Eating, drinking, sleeping, resting, exercising, making love, socializing, discovering, having fun, and working—all fit in beautifully with the purpose of your existence when you do these activities in order to support the main purpose of your existence that is to worship your Maker during your earthly sojourn.

When you eat to worship Allah, then your act of eating becomes a good deed. When you drink to worship Allah, then your act of drinking becomes a good deed. When you sleep to worship Allah, then your act of sleeping becomes a good deed. When you go to work to worship Allah, then your working becomes a good deed. Consequently, you become Allah’s man or woman on His green earth to do the work He wants you to do. You become a full-time lover of Allah.



Live your life on purpose.
Inherent in the purpose of your
existence is receiving Allah's
mercy and according your
worship to Him alone.