

The background of the cover is a composite image. The upper portion shows a dark blue night sky filled with numerous stars, with the Milky Way galaxy visible as a bright, vertical band of light. The lower portion shows a desert landscape with rolling sand dunes under a soft, orange and yellow glow, likely from a setting or rising sun. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

PURPOSEFUL CREATION

God's Vision for Mankind

MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

PURPOSEFUL CREATION

GOD'S VISION FOR MANKIND

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Compiled by
Dr Farida Khanam

Goodword Books
CPS International

First published 2024
This book is copyright free
This booklet has been compiled from the writings of
Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.

Goodword Books
A-21, Sector 4, Noida-201301, Delhi NCR, India
Tel. +91 120 4131448, Mob. +91 8588822672
email: info@goodwordbooks.com
www.goodwordbooks.com

CPS International
Centre for Peace and Spirituality International
1, Nizamuddin West Market, New Delhi-110 013, India
Mob. +91-9999944119
email: info@cpsglobal.org
www.cpsglobal.org

Center for Peace and Spirituality USA
2665 Byberry Road, Bensalem, PA 19020, USA
Cell: 617-960-7156
email: kkaleemuddin@gmail.com

CONTENTS

Are Man and This World Incompatible?	4
Why Can't Man Fulfil His Desires?	7
What is the Purpose of My Life?	11
Purpose of Man's Creation	13
Quranic Interpretation of Human History	15
Creation Plan of God	19
Oneness of God	23
"Sorry, This Number Does Not Exist"	24
The Concept of God	26
Man and The Universe	29
Universal Model	30
Here To Be Tested	33
Everything To Test Man	34
The Trial of Man	35
What is Paradise?	38
Living in God's Neighbourhood	40
Two Types of Souls	42
As We Sow, So Shall We Reap	43
On The Threshold of Paradise	47
Only One Chance	50
Quran and The Creation Plan of God	52
Quran: A Reminder of God's Blessings	53
Quran: The Word of God	54

ARE MAN AND THIS WORLD INCOMPATIBLE?

Why do man and the present world seem so mutually incompatible? To solve this conundrum, we need to understand the creation plan of God.

A philosopher once remarked that it appears to be that in this vast universe, man is a strange creature. It seems that man has not been made for this world, nor has this world been made for him. Man and the world seem to be mutually incompatible.

Man is born with immense abilities. However, he uses only a minimal portion of these in this present world. By nature, man wants to live forever. However, death arrives quickly without his permission and whisks him away by a unilateral decision. Man has an ocean of desires in his heart, but not all of these desires are fulfilled. Every man's mind is a world of dreams, but not all dreams come true. In this regard, there is no difference between 'rich' and 'poor' people. As the philosopher mentioned above seems to assert, all this may be thought to suggest that man has come into a world that has not been made for him.

Why do man and the present world seem so mutually incompatible? To solve this conundrum, we need to understand the creation plan of God. This question of man and the world looking so inconsistent arises because of not knowing the creation plan of God. Therefore, we can obtain a satisfactory answer by learning God's creation plan for man.

God has created man according to His plan. Knowing this plan is necessary for the proper explanation of man. The significance of a machine can be known only when we see the intent of the engineer who created it. Nothing can clarify the machine's importance and purpose besides the engineer's mind. The same is true of man.

God created man for a specific plan. According to this plan, man must spend a period in the present, non-ideal world for the test, and after this, in line with his actions, man will obtain the right to reside in an ideal world, which is called Paradise, or else will be consigned to a place of eternal deprivation forever.

The present world has been created as a testing ground for man. Here, man is engaged in a continuous test. If he passes this test, he will obtain a place in the ideal world, Paradise, in the eternal life after death. On the other hand, if he fails this test, he will live in a state of eternal deprivation. To be eligible to enter Paradise, there are two things that man needs to do while on Earth. One is to acknowledge the Truth, and the other is to lead a principled life.

In the present world, man finds himself completely free. However, this freedom is not given to him as a right. Instead, it is simply a sort of examination paper for everyone. Man has been given freedom of choice to test him. Without any compulsion, he must bow before the Truth, and through his own choice, he should limit or control his freedom.

Firstly, man has to acknowledge the Truth without any pressure. Bowing before the Truth is undoubtedly the most enormous sacrifice for man. Acknowledging the Truth may appear to be making oneself small compared to others, but this makes a person arrive at the highest position, leading him to reach the door of Paradise.

In this regard, the second thing man must do is lead a principled life. Generally, a person's character is constructed according to his emotions. Anger, revenge, jealousy, hate, opportunism, etc.—are negative feelings that often indelibly shape a person's character. No man can enter Paradise with a character developed by such emotions. To enter Paradise, he needs to be a person of a virtuous character. For this, man should not build his character under external factors; instead, he must build it by adhering to certain moral principles. Only people of honest character can be held eligible to enter and live in Paradise in the life after death. This is the creation plan under which man has been created.

Paradise is that ideal world where a man can find perfect peace and satisfaction and be in the company of those who make his life truly meaningful. The desire for this Paradise is enshrined in every person's heart. It is this Paradise where man will find complete fulfilment. With his whole being, man is in search of this very Paradise. Moreover, Paradise is waiting with its entire existence for such people. The time is coming when Paradise and man shall meet each other. Each will find the pair made for them.

WHY CAN'T MAN FULFILL HIS DESIRES?

Man has to use the opportunities available in the present world as per God's creation plan and then become eligible to live amidst eternal joy in Paradise.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was an English poet. He once remarked, "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." It is a matter of everyday experience. Many people love to hear tragic stories. Popular novels are more often than not tragedies rather than comedies. Likewise, singers who sing sad songs are usually popular.

Why is this so? Why is it that sad poems or sad stories succeed in striking the chords of people's hearts?

It is because every person, in practice, lives in a psyche of deprivation or frustration. In such a situation, a happy story seems somehow unreal to them. In contrast to this, a sorrowful tale seems more natural to them.

If you study the issue in greater depth, you will realize that man is a pleasure-seeking being. In the vast universe, man is a remarkable creature. He is the only creature who has an acute sense of pleasure. It is a uniquely human attribute that man can enjoy pleasure. In the vast universe, there are many creatures, but man's unique ability is the quality of enjoying pleasure in this way.

For man, thinking can be a pleasure, as can seeing, hearing, speaking, eating, drinking, smelling, touching, and even walking barefoot on the grass. However, there is a strange contradiction

here. Man has a great capacity to enjoy pleasure, but enjoyment is impossible for man in this world.

Once, I went to Kashmir, where, near Pahalgam, a mountain river flowed down from a stream up in the mountains. Its water was pure. When I reached Pahalgam and saw the clean, clear water, I desired to drink it. So I had a glass of water. It was wonderful—better than any other drink. I drank a second glass, then another, until I had drunk six glasses! Even after the sixth glass, I still wanted to drink more but could not. Then, I developed a splitting headache. The pain was so severe that I had to return at once. I got back to Srinagar. I was going to have dinner at somebody's house, and several people were invited. When I reached the venue, my head hurt so badly that I could not attend the dinner.

The same predicament arises with all other pleasures. Man earns wealth, obtains power, marries according to his choice, builds a grand house, accumulates many luxuries, etc. However, after having achieved all this, he realizes that there is a decisive obstacle in deriving complete and continuous satisfaction from any pleasurable thing. Even if he has all the comforts, luxuries, and material things he desires, he still fails to obtain complete and long-lasting joy and peace.

Man's desire for material comforts and luxuries is unlimited. However, to use these comforts, he has only a limited capacity. This limitation is always a barrier between man and the objects of pleasure. Even after obtaining everything that he desires, man remains frustrated and dissatisfied. Man's bodily weakness, the

decline in vitality with advancing age, sickness, accidents, and eventually death continuously negate his desires. Man obtains objects of pleasure when he desires to use them. However, he soon reaches the limits of his strength and becomes exhausted to the extent of becoming a spent force. Finally, death buries all his desires and dreams.

This contradiction is not a fundamental one. It arises out of a difference in the order of things. It has been decreed that in the pre-death phase of his life, man should obtain only an introduction, in a limited sense, to his desired pleasures and that in the post-death stage of his life, he may fully receive the pleasures that he seeks. This arrangement is not accidental or coincidental. Instead, it is part of nature. It is found in the whole system of nature. In this world, whatever success man earns, he gets in line with this principle. In this world, no success is an exception to this principle. For instance, a farmer must sow and reap only after that; one must plant a sapling in a nursery and obtain its fruits only after that. An ironsmith must first smelt iron, and only then can he produce steel. In other words, in this world, everything must go through different stages. Everything first passes through its initial period and then reaches its climax. There is no exception to this principle of nature.

The same issue holds for men. Man has been given an unlimited sense of enjoyment, but the objects from which he can derive endless pleasure have been kept in the second stage of his life—in the world that comes after death. In the first stage of his life—in the present world—man discovers his ability to pursue

pleasure. In the life after death, if he had led a righteous life in this world, he could obtain all the objects of pleasure. That is to say, in the pre-death phase of life in this world, he will experience the desire for pleasure, and in the post-death stage, he can experience the full experience of pleasure in Paradise.

In line with His creation plan, the Creator of the world has given man an initial introduction in this present world to the pleasures one will enjoy in Paradise. In this way, He conveys to man that if he wants to experience pleasure for all eternity and in the most total sense, he should create a strong desire for this and perform such actions as will hold him deserving of Paradise.

What should one do to become deserving of Paradise in the Hereafter? To put it briefly, man should make himself a purified soul. He must purify himself of every negative emotion. He should save himself from becoming a victim of greed, selfishness, jealousy, dishonesty, falsehood, anger, revenge, hate, and other negative feelings. He should develop a lofty, entirely positive character that makes him worthy of living in the neighbourhood of God in Paradise. He must be transformed into an angelic person or a divine personality.

Man's life is divided into the pre-death and post-death phases. A tiny portion of man's life is kept for the first phase, while the rest—which carries on for all eternity—is in the post-death phase. If a man's story is seen only in the pre-death phase, it will appear as a meaningless tragedy. However, if a man's story is seen in the light of the period after death, it will seem meaningful.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MY LIFE?

In line with this creation plan of God, man stands at a very critical juncture. He has to choose between two alternatives. One option is to use the available opportunities in the present world according to God's creation plan and then become eligible to live amidst eternal joy in Paradise. The other option is to lead a life of heedlessness in this world and be eternally deprived of pleasure in the next phase of life.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MY LIFE?

The realization of God is the essence of faith and the true purpose of man's life. God-Realization is the discovery of God, where God becomes the centre of a person's emotions (*Quran*, 2:165).

Helen Keller (1880–1968) famously said, “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” Keller was blind and deaf from early childhood, but she did not let this become an impediment in the way of her development and went on to become a renowned American author and educator.

The example set by Keller and those like her serves as a great inspiration. It confirms the belief that life is a gift of God. According to Islamic tradition, God created life so that man fulfils a purpose. The starting point of this purpose is that man has been granted freedom in this world for a temporary period. Those who shall rightfully use this freedom in the pre-death

world shall pass this test and become eligible for being inhabited in the eternal and perfect world of paradise.

The question is, why did God decide to put man through such a trial? This is because God created man with extraordinary qualities, but this was at a potential level. If actualized, these special qualities are enough to make man surpass all obstacles and become the best version of himself. But when can this happen? It is possible only when a man is ready to give up all distractions and fully dedicate himself to pursuing his intellectual development.

To enable the actualization of his potential, God inherently bestowed man with logical thinking and rationality. Man can not only think critically but can express his emotions and even communicate through words. He is driven by reason and logic and can engage in intellectual activities. Animals, on the other hand, are completely driven by instincts.

Now, it is up to man to face the trials and tribulations of life and awaken his conceptual thinking to reach the purpose of his creation. As man navigates through life, he shall first discover himself. Then, he shall be able to realize the endless possibilities and opportunities that his Creator has kept in this world. This realization shall dawn upon him the discovery of the Greatness and Beneficence of his Creator and shall make him bow down to Him in thanksgiving. Such a realization of God is the essence of faith and the true purpose of man's life. According to the Quran, God-Realization can be defined as the process of discovery

PURPOSE OF MAN'S CREATION

of God, where God becomes the centre of the emotions of a believer (2:165).

Paradise is eternal and ideal in every respect, but entry into Paradise shall be done on a selective basis. God is getting a record of all of man's speech and deeds made during this testing phase. According to the records of their deeds, the individuals chosen to inhabit the perfect world of Paradise shall live in a joyous environment forever. For this to happen, man has to reflect upon God's creations in this world and develop the vision to see beyond the apparent to find unlimited possibilities. It is this realization that might enable man's entry into the unparalleled world of paradise.

PURPOSE OF MAN'S CREATION

As per the divine plan, man must develop a spiritual personality in the pre-death period so that he can be selected as a deserving candidate for Paradise—his habitat—in the post-death period.

The well-known American evangelist Billy Graham (1918-2018) narrates one of his life experiences. Once, he received an urgent message from an American statesman who wanted to meet him as soon as possible. On receiving this message, Billy Graham cancelled his appointments and immediately set out to meet this man. When he arrived at the statesman's palatial home, he was immediately taken to a room where Billy Graham

and the statesman sat on chairs facing one another. Then, in a serious tone, the statesman said to Billy Graham:

“You see, I am an old man. Life has lost all meaning. I am ready to take a fateful leap into the unknown. Young man, can you give me a ray of hope?” (*The Secret of Happiness*, Billy Graham, 1955, p.2)

This is a common question. Every man and woman—consciously or unconsciously—has this question in their mind. This is the first concern of every human being. To find the real answer, we have to try to understand the Creation Plan of God. God is the Creator of this world. Only by gaining an understanding of the Creator’s Plan can we get the right answer to the question.

The Quran, the preserved Book of God, answers this question. According to the Quran, man is born as an eternal being, but his life span is divided into two parts: the pre-death period and the post-death period. The pre-death period is very short, and the post-death period is eternal.

Everyone feels that they have enormous desires, but they are not able to fulfil them. The reason is that the present world is imperfect and has many limitations.

This means that there is a contradiction between man’s nature, which seeks fulfilment of his desires, and the world, which is incapable of fulfilling man’s desires. Man, by nature, wants a world where his personality can find total fulfilment, but the present world fails to provide such fulfilment.

Sir James Jeans, in his book, ‘The Mysterious Universe,’ rightly

points out this fact in the following words: ‘It appears that man has strayed into a world that was not made for him’.

According to the Quran, the present earth is not a habitat for man forever. Man’s eternal habitat lies in the world Hereafter. In accordance with the Creation Plan of God, man must develop a spiritual personality in the pre-death period so that he is selected as a deserving candidate for this habitat or Paradise in the post-death period.

QURANIC INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN HISTORY

The present world is a testing ground for which man has been given complete freedom. Here, God is selecting individuals from the entire human history for Paradise. Those who make proper use of their freedom will be inhabited in eternal Paradise, while those who misuse it will be eternally deprived.

God first created the physical universe over a long and gradual process. Human history, from the Quranic point of view, begins with Adam and Eve. God created them and settled them in Paradise while giving them complete freedom. The guidance given to them by God was as follows:

“O Adam! Live with your wife in Paradise and eat freely from it anywhere you may wish. Yet do not approach this tree lest you become wrongdoers.” (*Quran*, 2:35)

The creation of Adam’s wife was an indication that God desired

not just a human being but a human race. The only condition set for man to be entitled to Paradise was his willingness to abide by a self-disciplined character without abusing his freedom. When Adam and Eve failed to fulfil this condition by eating the fruit of the 'forbidden tree,' God expelled them from Paradise and settled them on Earth.

This means that initially, the man was given the opportunity to live in Paradise. But when man transgressed the covenant, God decided that from then onwards, only the deserving people would be admitted to Paradise. So, after that, the selection for Paradise will be selective rather than general. In this way, God has managed human history while fully maintaining human freedom. God created the life support system on Earth, but man was given complete freedom of speech and action. Man, once again, misused this freedom. The perversion of human beings went on increasing, and ultimately, man became involved in polytheism and nature worship. If the first man had eaten only the fruit of the 'forbidden tree,' now his progeny had started worshipping the 'tree' itself, holding it to be a deity.

According to the creation plan of man, God was meant to be worshipped by him. However, as God was unobservable, man started revering some visible objects like the tree, making nature his god by virtue of its visibility. However, it was not possible to revoke human freedom. Therefore, God again opted for the method of managing human history while maintaining human freedom. Towards this end, God selected certain individuals from amongst human beings and revealed to them His Message

for humanity's guidance. These Messengers communicated to mankind that there is only one God worthy of being worshipped, and they should shun the worship of any other being. While in the traditional age, no supportive evidence for this was available, in the modern scientific age, science itself, through its findings on nature or creation, provides evidence affirming the existence of the One God, who is the Creator, Master, and Sustainer of the universe, as described in the Quran. Sincere thinking people can discover God at a purely rational level.

Any sincere, thinking person can also discover the right and wrong use of human freedom. Anyone who reflects on this seriously will discover that there exists a criterion inside every person for distinguishing between right and wrong by birth, called 'the conscience.' Everyone can learn what to do and what not to do by listening to the voice of his conscience. It is as if every person's conscience is his guide for him.

By birth itself, within everyone, a powerful emotion of acknowledgement is present. Through his conscience, every person knows he ought to acknowledge this if somebody behaves kindly to him. Man's internal guide recognizes this acknowledgement as a lofty ethical virtue. Acknowledgement reflects a high level of righteousness, while failure to acknowledge indicates corruption and moral decline. In this sense, a person who acknowledges others keeps his status as a human, while someone who does not falls from that status.

This decision of the conscience is also accurate in the same way about the Creator. In line with the voice of his nature,

every person should acknowledge his Creator. He should acknowledge the manifold blessings of his Creator—all that he owes to Him. He should consciously recognize and be grateful for all His Creator has given him. He should feel this in the depths of his heart and openly announce it through his tongue. Acknowledging God is in accordance with human nature, while non-acknowledgement deviates from human nature.

Having discovered our Creator—God Almighty, the questions that come to mind next are why God created man, and why did He send him to this world? We can find an answer to such questions by reading the Quran. According to the Quran, God created an ideal world which was perfect in all respects. He ordained that impeccable ideal human beings inhabit this perfect world.

To achieve this target, God created an ideal-seeking creature—man and divided his life into two periods—the pre-death period as a trial period and the post-death period as a reward period. That is to say, God first settled man on Earth, giving him complete freedom. As per the Quran, the present world is a testing ground. (*Quran*, 67:2) Here, it is being observed as to who makes proper use of his freedom and who misuses it. At the end of history, those who have abused their freedom will be eternally deprived, and those who may have exercised it judiciously will be selected and inhabited in eternal Paradise.

The present Earth is, therefore, a selection ground for this purpose of creation. Here, God is selecting individuals from the entire human history to inhabit eternal Paradise in the Hereafter.

CREATION PLAN OF GOD

The Quran states that on the Day of Resurrection, according to the record which the angels present based on our deeds, only selected men and women will find a place in the ideal world of Paradise (41:30-31).

CREATION PLAN OF GOD

God created a perfect realm called paradise. Since such a paradise can only be inhabited by beings of pure perfection, God created humans with the potential to seek and strive for this ideal. Placed in this finite world as a test, our actions and choices will determine our worthiness to enter Paradise.

God—the Creator, has created man according to His Plan. To become acquainted with this Plan, a man must have a thorough understanding of himself—just as the workings of a machine can only be understood when we study the drawings of the engineer who made it. Besides the mind of the engineer, there is no other thing that can clarify what the machine is meant for. The case of man is the same. The existence of man is such a unique phenomenon that no other such example can be found throughout the vastness of the cosmos. Man is rightly called the ‘best of all creations,’ which means the best and most meaningful ‘being’ among all the things created. Such a ‘meaningful being’ cannot have been created without a purpose. The Creator of man has created him according to a special Plan. The Quran, the only preserved religious scripture, sheds light on this Plan:

“Enthroned above the waters, it was He who created the

PURPOSEFUL CREATION: GOD'S VISION FOR MANKIND

heavens and the earth in six Days [periods] in order to test which of you is best in conduct.” (11:7)

“We have adorned the earth with attractive things so that we may test humankind to determine which one is best in conduct.” (18:7)

“He created death and life so that He might test you and find out which of you is best in conduct.” (67:2)

The human being was created as an eternal being, and ‘death and life’ represent both the pre-death and the post-death period of human life. So, death and life cover the entire eternal lifespan of human beings.

The Creator of man has created him according to a special Plan. His intention is that man must spend a period of trial in this present, imperfect world and subsequent to this, according to his deeds, he will earn the right to inhabit the perfect and eternal world, another name for which is Paradise.

God, according to His will, created a perfect world called Paradise: a world in accordance with all of our desires as human beings, in that it is free of all limitations and disadvantages, free of fear and pain, and free of all imperfections. It would be an eternal world where there is neither death nor old age, an ideal world where we could achieve complete fulfilment.

Less-than-perfect beings cannot inhabit a perfect Paradise. So, God created perfection-seeking beings—human beings. He intended us to spend a period of trial here. After this, according to our deeds, we will earn the right to inhabit the

perfect and eternal world. As part of this test, Paradise is kept hidden from us.

The essence of God's Creation Plan is to give a person complete freedom—not simply as a gift, but as a test. The result of this test would enable God to know who misused his freedom and who put his freedom to the best use. This was, and still is, the divine scheme of things for man. In the pre-death period of life, an individual has the chance to qualify himself for Paradise so that in the post-death period of life, he may be settled as a deserving candidate in this perfect world.

This world, therefore, has all the components necessary for a test. It has perfection-seeking beings in a less-than-perfect world, beings who have been given complete freedom to choose their actions. We thus have a choice—we can misuse our freedom to do evil, or we can use our freedom wisely, submit to God and qualify for Paradise. Those who misuse their God-given freedom are chastised thus in the Quran:

“This is the Truth from your Lord. Let him who will believe in it, and him who will deny it.’ For the wrongdoers, We have prepared a Fire which will cover them like a canopy, and if they beg for water, they will be given water as hot as molten lead, which will scald their faces: how dreadful a drink, and how evil a resting place!” (18:29)

The Creator of the world has created this world as one half of a pair—the present world, in which we pass our lives after birth, is the first half, and the next eternal world, where we live after death, is the other half.

The Creator of man has thus created him as an eternal creature and has divided his life into two periods—the pre-death period, or the life in this world and the post-death period or the life after death. The limited period before death is meant to be a test for man, while the eternal period after his death will be the period for his reward or punishment, based on his performance in the test in this life.

According to this Creation Plan of God, human beings are placed in situations where they have to face hardships from time to time throughout their lives as part of their test. Difficulty and sadness are integral parts of the creation plan of the Creator. No man has the power to extricate himself from this life of trial and tribulation. This arrangement is to remind man of the fact that the present world has not been made as a place of luxury and comfort but rather as a period of trial and such as will help determine whether he is eligible for eternal life in Paradise. This is the scheme of existence for this world as devised by its Creator. The Creator—God Almighty—aims to select those who are fit to inhabit the world of Paradise.

Once this desired list of accepted and rejected individuals is complete, the Creator of the universe will replace this world with an ideal world, that is, Paradise. Then, the individuals who had been selected would be settled in this Paradise to enjoy a life free from fear and sorrow forever, whereas those who had been rejected would be thrown into the universal dustbin to live a life full of intense regret and remorse for all eternity.

ONENESS OF GOD

We must accord the supreme status to God alone. We must ask Him alone to meet our needs. We must do obeisance before Him; we must trust Him implicitly, above all others.

Belief in the Oneness of God means to believe that all power lies in the hand of one God alone and that He alone deserves to be worshipped. No act in the nature of worship is lawful unless directed towards God. It is God alone who fulfils all our needs. It is God alone who is behind the functioning of the entire universe. Superiority is the prerogative of the one and only God. No one enjoys real superiority in this world. All such concepts are false as associating anyone or anything with any aspects of God's sovereignty.

We must express reverence for the true God, the Creator, a Being who truly deserves to be held in awe. On the contrary, when man bows his head before anyone else, he exalts one who is no better than himself—and, as such, has no right to be worshipped. Adoration of God glorifies Him, while worshipping anything other than God degrades the worshipper. Veneration of God makes a man a realist while prostrating himself before a non-God turns him into a creature of superstition. Bowing to God opens the door to realizing the Truth, while worshipping something other than God closes this door.

We must accord the supreme status to the one and only God. We must ask Him alone to meet our needs. We must do obeisance before Him; we must trust Him implicitly, and above all others,

we must reserve for Him the supreme status in all respects. Worship is the ultimate stage in any relationship: that is why, whatever its form, it must have God as its object. Therefore, any gesture in the nature of adulation is not permissible except when meant for God.

When an individual makes God the object of his worship, he bows before an entity which really exists. On the contrary, one who makes a non-God the object of his worship bows before something which has no actual existence, even though he may have set up some material image of his 'god'. While in the former case, one has found a trustworthy source of power, in the latter case, one has associated himself with crass superstitious notions, which have no basis in logic. God's worshippers are graced with eternal blessings; the worshippers of things other than God can expect nothing but lasting deprivation.

“SORRY, THIS NUMBER DOES NOT EXIST”

Establishing a relationship with the true God is the biggest blessing for man. Then, one receives guidance and develops a spiritual personality.

If you dial someone's number on your phone and press the wrong button, your call will not be connected to the person you want to speak to. You will not hear a 'Hello' from the other side. Instead, you may listen to a recorded message from the telephone exchange, saying, “Sorry, this number does not exist.”

One day, I experienced this myself when I tried calling someone. In this incident, there was a great spiritual lesson—and that is if a person seeks to establish a connection with God, but due to wrong thinking, he considers someone other than God to be worthy of worshipping and calls out to him, he will get no reply directly from God. Instead, he will hear another voice telling him that the ‘god’ he called does not exist.

The idea of God is embedded in every person’s nature. Man, by nature, seeks God. By birth itself, every human being aspires to find God. However, in history, it has always happened that people have made the mistake of attributing the status of God to someone other than God.

Establishing a relationship with the true God is the biggest blessing for man. The life of someone who establishes a relationship with God will be suffused with the light of guidance. He will develop a spiritual personality. He will obtain a high level of intellectual evolution. In contrast, someone who gives someone other than God the status of God will wander about in utter darkness.

Nowadays, everyone takes the name of some ‘god’ or another, including ‘gods’ like money and power. Every person ‘gives’ something or the other the status of God and believes in this. People have made things or beings other than God, their deity. They call out to some or other ‘non-god’, and in reply, they get this voice: “The number you dialled does not exist. What you call ‘god’ and call upon that ‘god’ does not even exist!”

The first responsibility of every person is to discover the true

God and find a way to connect with this God. Without this discovery, one is bound to face terrible destruction. Therefore, discovering the true God should be a person's most important aim and purpose and the focus of his efforts. It is this that makes human life meaningful. The person whose life is bereft of this discovery is the poorest, even if he owns enormous material wealth.

The discovery of God means the discovery of a Higher Truth. Moreover, discovering Higher Truth and establishing a firm connection with God makes man's life meaningful. If you have not had this discovery, your life cannot be said to be meaningful in the true sense.

An issue that one needs to bear in mind concerning the discovery of God is that a person gets this opportunity only in the pre-death phase of his life. Those who have not discovered God in their life before death will be deprived of this chance in the post-death period. Then it would be too late.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD

According to Islam, God is the One who possesses uniqueness in every aspect and is entirely pure from all forms of participation in His essence and attributes. This is the concept of Tawheed or monotheism in Islam.

Believing in God is not as difficult for humans as arriving at a correct understanding of God. Throughout the ages, humans have continued to acknowledge the existence of God, and even

today, a significant majority of the Earth's population recognizes the existence of God as the Creator. However, the real challenge lies in that, despite believing in God, people associate beliefs with Him that make acceptance and rejection equivalent.

While believing in God, some express such attributes for Him that His separate and independent existence becomes doubtful. Others, having believed in God, associate with Him such partners or close associates that, after that, the divinity of God becomes meaningless.

The reason for man to deviate from the proper understanding of God has always been only one—that is, applying to their concept of God, features or attributes that they observe in the world of human beings. For instance, in this world, people have sons and daughters, and on this basis, it was assumed that God must also have sons and daughters, and this led to the creation of a sacred divine family.

Similarly, since the emperors of the world had some close associates and courtiers to whom they had given powers and listened, it was assumed that some people were very close to God, too, to whom He had given powers and whose views He heard. In this way, belief in the intermediaries to God came into existence. In this world, many forces are seen to be at work—for example, the sun and various stars—and so, it was assumed that these are all beings that partake of Divinity and are running the universe in conjunction with the Great God. In this way, the idea of co-functionaries to God came into being. And so on.

Similarly, the concept of monism was accepted. Monism was the philosophic concept of the singularity of existence in which God and creation have the same existence. It is the belief that God manifests Himself through His creation. Philosophers initially accepted this concept as the unity of existence or the unity of being, which later came to be accepted in religions.

This concept was developed when people saw the one universe filled with innumerable diverse things, from man to the stars, and they wanted to find unity in this diversity. And so, they said that the one Absolute God manifests Himself in different forms. In this way, the concept of God became like an abstract idea, a mere imagination devoid of any independent existence. It was accepted that everything emanates from it and, ultimately, after ending, merges back into it. It is this notion that produced the belief in 'human gods.' In monistic philosophy, salvation is understood as the merging of creation with the Creator, often achieved after one's death, where the individual self dissolves into the ultimate oneness of existence.

However, all these concepts of God are mere hypothetical speculations. They have nothing to do with reality. Islam has kept the concept of God pure from all these hypothetical speculations. According to Islam, every such addition negates the pure concept of God.

According to Islam, God is the One who possesses uniqueness in every aspect and is entirely pure from all forms of participation in His essence and attributes. This is the concept of Tawheed or monotheism in Islam. In the Quran, this is stated thus:

“Say, ‘He is God, the One God, the Self-sufficient One. He does not give birth, nor was He born, and there is nothing like Him.’” (112:1-4)

MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

The perfect functioning of the universe is because it has dyed itself in the hue of divine ethics. Man must adopt divine ethics of his own free will, while the rest of the universe adopts it under compulsion.

Man is just an insignificant part of the universe. The universe completely obeys its Creator and Master under compulsion, and the same thing is desired of man, too. The proper method of action for man is that he agrees to obey God of his own free will while the rest of the universe obeys God under the law of compulsion. If man submits to God, he will become a fellow traveller, as it were, of the rest of the universe. God manages all creatures in the universe. That is why the physical universe functions smoothly. In the same way, human affairs can also be rectified when one surrenders one’s will to God’s control.

The reason for the accurate and perfect functioning of the universe is that it has dyed itself in the hue of divine ethics. The secret of a truly successful human life is the same: man must adopt divine ethics of his own free will, while the rest of the universe adopts it under compulsion.

The One God is the source of all goodness. Being heedless of the One God is the root of all evil. Discovering the Oneness of God

implies the discovery of the Creator of the universe, the One who maintains and manages it, the One who sustains it, and who is the Sole Master of every sort of power—the One God. Besides Him, no one in this universe possesses any power in the real sense. From atoms to galaxies, everything in the universe is under His command. The One Master ultimately manages it. This is why the entire physical universe, with all its vastness, is precisely as it should be. In its design, no single minor defect has been observed until today. It functions with such complete accuracy that even in billions of years, it has not erred by even a second or millimetre. Only by surrendering to the One God will man's life be rectified.

UNIVERSAL MODEL

Submission to God is the best way for man to lead his life in this world. It also guarantees man's success in the eternal period of life after death.

Man finds himself in a vast universe. This universe is like a vast society. Man is only a tiny part of this society. Therefore, man must adopt that model of living that all other components of the universe have adopted in practice. It is the right and natural way for him. In this method, the secret of man's success is hidden.

What is this universal model? Observe the stars and planets spread across vast space. Each star and planet moves with extreme precision in its orbit. None of them enters the orbit of another. Because of this discipline, peace prevails throughout

the cosmos. God desires that man, too, should adopt this policy of non-interference while living in society and with others. Everyone should know that his freedom ends where another person's freedom begins.

Reflect on the world of the trees. Silently, the trees have adopted a beautiful system based on serving others. To fulfil the needs of other living beings, they supply oxygen while absorbing the non-desirable carbon dioxide emitted by these beings. It is a selfless, benefit-providing system. It is also binding on man to adopt this system in his life.

Similarly, think of the mountain springs, with their water gushing forth and rapidly flowing ahead. They repeatedly face massive boulders that appear to be barriers in their journey. However, the springs do not try to push the boulders out of their way to advance. Instead, they adopt a non-confrontational course. They swirl around the boulders and surge forward. It is, as it were, a message to man to avoid colliding against obstacles he may meet in life. The right approach is to circumvent them with tact and, in this way, be able to continue to engage in positive action.

In the same way, in the world of animals, we see that issues repeatedly arise among them, which causes them to enter into conflict. However, generally, they roar and growl or move their horns about for a while, and then they forget the issue and quickly return to normalcy as if nothing had happened. A man should live in a society in the same manner. In social life, certain

things repeatedly happen that people find upsetting. The proper way to deal with this is to accept such situations as temporary. One should not let them take the form of permanent bitterness.

The study of the world of nature tells us that everything is given to others without demanding anything in return. For example, the sun generously provides us with light without demanding anything in return. Similarly, the air continuously supplies us with oxygen, expecting no compensation. Similarly, many creatures and things are involved in serving people without any recompense. None of them presents a bill to the people who benefit from them. One learns that the world around us is a giver world. It is as if the culture of this world is a giver culture. Everything in this world continuously sends out this message—become a giver for others rather than just being a taker.

Man must adopt this same giver culture in his personal and social life. The universe around man is a model for him to emulate in this regard. The secret of man's success lies in adopting this model in his life. The only difference is that this model of submission is established compulsorily under the law of nature in the rest of the world, while man must consciously establish this universal model of submission through his own free choice.

To bring one's free will under this universal discipline is, as it were, to make oneself 'unfree' while still having freedom. This submission is the best way for man to live. It also guarantees man's success in the eternal period of life after death.

HERE TO BE TESTED

Man is provided with many essential accessories for the duration of his test. Everything will be taken away once a man's trial has run its course. Man will stand alone before God, awaiting his outcome—either eternal Paradise or eternal deprivation.

While in an examination hall, a student has several objects at his disposal. Over his head, there is the roof of the examination hall itself. Then he has a table to write on, a chair to sit on, pen and paper for his answers, and attendants to see his requirements. He sits in his place and uses these facilities freely, without restriction.

If he did not have an examination hall in which to sit, the examinee would be exposed to heat and cold. If there were no desk and chair at his disposal, he would not be able to sit comfortably. Without pen and paper, there would be no question of his writing answers.

However, a student only has these things because of the examination he is taking. They are there only so long as his test lasts. As soon as the exam is over, all its accessories will be removed from him. Due to the freedom given to him within the confines of the examination hall, one would have thought they were his by right; now, it will become clear that they were only lent to him for a short period for the purpose of testing him.

It is much the same for man in this world. Here, man has many objects at his disposal. Naturally, he considers himself free to

use them as he pleases, to live the life of his own choice. But the Truth is that whatever man has in this world is his because of the test he is undergoing. God has put man in this world to be tested. For this test, man is provided with many essential accessories, which will only remain in his possession for the duration of his test. Everything will be taken away as soon as a man's trial has run its course. After that, man will stand alone before God, awaiting his outcome—either eternal Paradise or eternal deprivation. He will be like a traveller stranded in the middle of a desert or a man left to drift in the voids of space.

And only one thing—the invisible wall of death—lies between man and the end of his test on Earth.

EVERYTHING TO TEST MAN

Everything man experiences is a test to see how he responds to different situations. Based on his response, he will be adjudged fit for Paradise or live in eternal deprivation.

Man has complete freedom of will, but only God can make things happen. Man is just being put to the test on Earth. His responses to various circumstances are being scrutinized.

Some respond to events in a patient, just and reasonable manner. Their actions earn them credit. Others react quite differently. Their hot-headedness, cruelty, and blindness to the Truth earn them nothing but blame. Some profess to be believers. But if they adopt a disparaging and deceptive attitude

towards others, their claim is immediately proved false. God will particularly help those who are wronged unjustly. Some uphold the Truth, yet they are left helpless and forlorn. Others are blind to the Truth yet have every conceivable worldly luxury at their disposal. This situation may seem paradoxical, but it occurs for a reason: to set apart those who cling to externals and deserve to be classed along with other deniers of the Truth.

Everything man experiences, whether wealth or poverty, success or failure, is a test. Worldly triumph is no cause to rejoice, nor should worldly loss cause one grief. The winners and losers are tested to see how they respond to their situations. Based on this response, they will be adjudged fit for Paradise or live in eternal deprivation.

THE TRIAL OF MAN

Life is one long trial for man in this world. Everyone is being examined; it is only the conditions under which this examination is being conducted that vary.

Life is one long trial. The great paradox is that while some enjoy life, others suffer continuously. In reality, however, all are the same, for their actions or responses to the situations they have been placed in are being scrutinized. Everyone is being examined; it is only the conditions under which this examination is being conducted that vary.

Another factor in man's trial is that God has made some weak and others strong. There is always the temptation to succumb

to the mighty and to exploit the weak. But to do this is to take the surest road to Hell. Only those who realize what is right, irrespective of circumstances, will prove themselves worthy of Paradise, for it is often the underdog who is in the right and the mighty who are in the wrong. Even when others behave in a troublesome way, the best way to respond is with mildness and circumspection, and no matter what the provocation, one should endeavour to be just and impartial.

According to this Creation Plan of God, human beings are placed in situations where they have to face hardships from time to time at every moment throughout their lives as part of their test. How people respond to the various situations confronting them in life will determine their eternal abode. Those who yield to the mighty and oppress the weak will surely be punished in Hell, and they would do well to remember that there are two paths which open out before them every day, one of which leads to Hell and the other to Paradise.

Difficulty and sadness are integral parts of the creation plan of the Creator. No man has the power to extricate himself from this life of trial and tribulation. This arrangement is to remind man that the present world has not been made as a place of luxury and comfort but rather as a period of trial, and as such, it will help determine whether he is eligible for eternal life in Paradise.

Despite tremendous development in the present world, adverse conditions are still very much in evidence. However, people, owing to their lack of awareness of God's creation plan, do

not understand why this is prevalent. So, they continue to react negatively to situations and, by giving such a response, prove themselves—in the eyes of God—to be failures in the examination he has set for them.

Stress is also a major problem faced by people everywhere. Many institutions have been established that claim to be able to eliminate stress. What these institutions do, in their endeavour to de-stress people, is to ask them to stop their thinking process, thus bringing on them a kind of temporary anaesthesia. This is, however, not a real solution to the problem of stress. There is only one true solution to this problem, and that is to adopt the correct attitude to stress—that of managing stress instead of trying to eliminate it or react negatively to it. In this way, we will pass our test.

It has been generally observed that those who suffer in their lives engross themselves in social service thinking: “Let no other suffer what I have suffered.” Social service, although a praiseworthy task, is against the creation plan of God as it is impossible to free the world of suffering. Unpleasantness has been put into this world so that man can learn the right lessons from it. The true lesson taught by unpleasant experiences is that man remembers the next world of Paradise. His approach thus becomes: “Let me not suffer in the Hereafter what I have suffered in this world.”

Seen in the light of this creation plan, the root of all human problems is that the unenlightened want to make their Paradise in this world prior to death, whereas under the natural laws, the situation here on Earth makes this impossible. According

to God's creation plan, man has to be content in this limited world before death so that he may be sure that in the eternal world after death, he has Paradise in store for him. The proper thing for a man to do is, therefore, to acknowledge and accept this law of creation and plan his life accordingly. His sole aim in this present world should be to make himself acceptable in the eyes of God so that he may be held eligible for admission into Paradise in the eternal world after death.

Successful is one who has realized the eternal world in this temporary world, who has discovered in the failures of the present world the secret to eternal success in the next eternal world.

WHAT IS PARADISE?

Paradise is the name of the ideal world where man attains his complete fulfilment. Those pure souls will qualify for Paradise who, in their life in this world, come up to the standard of citizenship of Paradise in the Hereafter.

Paradise is the name of the ideal world, the desire for which is lodged in the hearts of all human beings. It is Paradise where the personality of man shall achieve fulfilment in the fullest sense. Man desires this Paradise with every fibre of his being, and Paradise awaits him in its entirety.

Paradise is a world where man attains his complete fulfilment, where he thinks the way he wants to think, where he sees what he desires to see, where he listens to the sounds that give pleasure

to his ears in the real sense, where he touches those things which give him the highest degree of pleasure; where he has the company of those people who make his life highly meaningful, where the winds are life-giving zephyrs for him, where he eats such food as he eternally craved for and he sips such drinks as are only beautiful figments of his imagination today.

Those pure souls will qualify for Paradise who, in their life in this world, come up to the standard of citizenship of Paradise—a perfect world of eternal comfort and pleasure, a world which holds far greater meaning than this one. Perhaps it is this Divine Plan which Jesus Christ was referring to: “This is how you should pray: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.” (*Matthew 6:9*)

Which are the pure souls who will qualify for the citizenship of Paradise in the hereafter? Answering this, the Quran states:

“The hearts of the people of Paradise will be filled with the glory of God.” (*39:75*)

For one to be deserving of Paradise, one must discover the glory of God in the present world and acknowledge it from deep within one’s heart. Glorifying God means discovering God through thinking and reflection as the Lord of the Universe while He is unseen. This discovery must be intellectually so deep that it should bring about a revolutionary change in his personality. In this way, he becomes a divine (*rabbani*) person. (*Quran, 3:79*)

The society of Paradise will be a collection of the best individuals from the whole of human history. Every member of this society will possess the fine qualities of positive thinking, peaceful behaviour, sublime character, truthfulness, sincerity and amiable personality, idealist in thought and perfectionist in behaviour.

Those who have developed this kind of personality in the present world are competent members of such a society. Only those persons will find entry into Paradise who have qualified themselves in the present world, as mentioned in the Quran, thus:

“[In the Hereafter] man shall have only that for which he strives.” (53:39)

Paradise is not anyone's birthright, nor will one receive entry into it through recommendation or wishful thinking. Only such a person who qualifies for it will find entry into Paradise. Entry into Paradise is totally a matter of selection, and this selection will be made by none other than God Almighty in the world Hereafter.

LIVING IN GOD'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

Paradise, God's neighbourhood, is like a universal garden where only those who have made God their supreme concern in the life of this world will find a place in the Hereafter.

Paradise is another name for eternal life in the neighbourhood of God (*Quran*, 66:11). In the world before death, man lives

in the neighbourhood of God at the level of mind and feeling. After death, his living in the world of God will be a reality.

God, without doubt, is the source of all virtues. That is why man can find true peace only in the neighbourhood of God. Anything short of that cannot become a source of real peace for him.

The present world, in actual fact, is a selection ground for the right kind of people. Here, those people who, with respect to their virtues or character, are worthy of being lodged in the neighbourhood of God are being selected. Their thinking, activities, feelings, behaviour, and dealings must all meet the ethical criteria required to become God's neighbour. Only people such as these will be selected for this honour. This selection will be based on the records of man's deeds kept by the angels. The good fortune of finding a place in God's neighbourhood in the eternal life of the Hereafter will be based totally on merit.

God's neighbourhood is like a universal garden. In this universal garden, only those who find a place that measures up to the divine criterion will find it. Anything short of this will not be sufficient to guarantee a place in this universal garden.

Those selected for Paradise are the ones who have made God their supreme concern in the life of this world. Their thinking and feelings have all been devoted to God. Their mornings, as well as their evenings, have been filled with the remembrance of God. These are the fortunate souls who will be selected to live in the neighbourhood of God.

TWO TYPES OF SOULS

In the present world, man is free to choose between two courses: he can accept God's greatness and surrender before Him, or he can live in his glory.

The Quran says: "He who purifies it (his soul) will indeed be successful, and he who corrupts it is sure to fail." (91:9-10)

The present world is a testing ground for us before the life of the Hereafter dawns. It is an opportunity for us to prepare for the Hereafter. If you leave this world and enter the world of the Hereafter as a noble and pure soul, you will be settled in the delightful environs of Paradise. And if you depart from this world for the world of the Hereafter as a soul laden with evil, you will be hurled into the universal dustbin for all eternity.

The present world is, as it were, God's nursery. Different types of plants are grown in a nursery. The gardener inspects all of them. Those that he does not want, he plucks out and throws away. And the ones he finds desirable, he carefully lifts from their beds so they can grow and flourish in a garden.

In the present world, you are free to choose between two courses. You can choose to purify your soul or to pollute it. You can accept God's greatness and surrender before Him, or you can live in your glory. When you are faced with the Truth, you can choose to acknowledge it unhesitatingly. You can be concerned about the welfare of others and be just in your dealings with others. Whether in friendship or enmity, you can willingly choose to obey God's will instead of your whims or the

AS WE SOW, SO SHALL WE REAP

prodding of your ego. If this is how you choose to be and opt to lead your life, you have cleansed your soul. And you will then be settled in the beautiful world of God's Paradise.

But, on the other hand, you can choose to be immersed in your self-perceived greatness. When confronted with the Truth, you can choose not to accept it. In your dealings, you can choose to be unjust and cruel. You can choose to follow your own will, not God's will. If you behave in this way, you have polluted your soul. The Lord of this universe will not accept you in His neighbourhood.

AS WE SOW, SO SHALL WE REAP

An eternal principle is: As we sow, so shall we reap. The pre-death period of life is the period for sowing seeds, while the post-death period is like harvesting the crop.

Man's life is divided into the pre-death and post-death periods. The limited period before death is for the test, while the eternal period after death is for obtaining the results of one's performance in the test. Those who pass the test will be blessed with Paradise, and those who fail the test will be consigned to Hell.

This is the creation plan of the Creator for this world. However, the status of Paradise and Hell are not the same. The actual purpose of creation is to select the people of Paradise. As far as the people of Hell are concerned, they are just relative

components of creation; they do not form any real part of the creation plan.

The world before death is made following the demands of the test. After the period of this test, there will be no need for this world, nor will there be a need for those who fail the test.

To make people aware of this creation plan, the Creator has made various arrangements. One such arrangement is that He has placed a deep awareness of the creation plan in the nature of man itself. Everyone experiences a task of complete peace and fulfillment in this world. It applies to almost everyone, rich or poor, powerful or weak. Nearly everyone lives in a state of dissatisfaction and dies in this condition. This general condition of dissatisfaction and frustration should remind us that our destination is somewhere else, that our desirable world is not the present world where we spend the pre-death period of life. This desirable or ideal world is somewhere else—in the Hereafter—and so, we should be motivated to make efforts to obtain it in the post-death period of life.

To make people aware of this creation plan, the Creator made this present world so that no one could acquire a life of complete comfort here. There are many problems—sickness, accidents, boredom, suffering, loss, etc. And then, after a short time, one dies. In this way, the unfavourable conditions of the world repeatedly remind man that he cannot make his desired or ideal world here. This world is insufficient to satisfy all his desires. This unfavourable situation continuously compels man to search for the Truth.

In the same way, in this present world, many people undergo suffering, which serves as a warning lesson for others. For instance, a person becomes paralyzed and is confined to a wheelchair. Alternatively, he falls victim to a disease without a cure and loses passion for life. People like them do the work of 'signposts' from God. They tell us how unreal life is in this present world. Such people silently convey that man cannot make an ideal world here according to his desires.

Some people have to face various unpleasant situations in life's training course. On the face of it, those who get the chance to play the role of such a 'signpost' appear to be in difficulty, but there is excellent news for them. On the Day of Judgement after death, even their small actions will be accepted by God. Because of the difficulties they faced in this world, they were not physically capable of doing anything significant, and because of this, just accepting the role of 'signposts' destined for them will suffice. Therefore, while they remain in this world, they should adopt patience with all their difficulties. Then, based on observing patience and complying with God's command, they will be admitted into Paradise without any additional action. That is to say, simply by patiently surrendering to God's will, without having to do anything else, they will get admission into Paradise after death.

This news is not something strange or novel for man. Through various means, man has been informed that he cannot construct the ideal world of his desires in the pre-death phase. Instead, whoever leads a righteous life here can obtain the ideal world of

his desires in the post-death period. Paradise will be inhabited in the next world, but the paradisiacal man is being made in today's world.

What is Paradise? One can understand what Paradise is like by looking at the present world. The present world is, in a sense, an introduction to Paradise. It is a miniature model of Paradise. Paradise is the complete and perfect edition of the present world. All the blessings available in the present world are present in Paradise. The difference is that the present world is imperfect, while Paradise is perfect. The present world is not ideal, while the world of Paradise is ideal. The present world is temporary, while the world of Paradise is eternal. There is fear and sorrow, noise and din, and other challenges in the present world, but it is not so in Paradise. The present world has limitations and disadvantages, while Paradise is free from these. In Paradise, man will obtain eternal fulfilment, unlike in the present world, where no one gets lasting satisfaction.

Hell is a place that is opposite of Paradise. In Hell, all those hardships will be gathered together, much more than we experience in the present world.

The pre-death and post-death periods of man's life are intimately connected. Their relationship is like that of sowing seeds and harvesting a crop. The pre-death period of life is the period for planting seeds, as it were, while the post-death period is like harvesting the crop. It is an eternal principle: As we sow, so shall we reap.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF PARADISE

The present world is now reaching its end. Now, the time has finally come for man to awaken, take lessons from the signs in nature and history, and plan his life according to God's creation plan so that it will avail him in his post-death period. One who loses this opportunity must know that another such opportunity will not come again.

Man has been seeking a Paradise on Earth for thousands of years in response to his natural urges. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the age of consumerism, man actually thought that he could build a Paradise on Earth, that the industrial age would culminate into the perfect world—Paradise—that he longed for. The superficiality of the notion that man could make a Paradise on Earth was savagely dashed with the coming of pollution, acid rain and global warming. And finally, the Covid-19 pandemic made man realize to the last extent that he cannot build a Paradise on Earth.

The situation of the present world shows that not only is it impossible to build a paradise on Earth, but the present world has almost reached its end. Such signs, both in nature and in history, appear continually. It seems that the period destined by the Creator for the present world of testing man is now reaching its end, and the time has come for this temporary world to be terminated so that the eternal world of the hereafter may replace it. These words of the Quran are indicative of this reality.

“On that Day We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll of parchment. As We originated the first creation, so shall We

PURPOSEFUL CREATION: GOD'S VISION FOR MANKIND

repeat it. This is a promise binding on Us. Truly, We shall fulfil it.” (21:104)

Today, a man stands on the threshold of Paradise. Paradise is the final period of the journey of civilization. Paradise will only be found in a state of perfection in the world Hereafter. There, man will find a life of joy, peace and happiness forever. There will be no necessity for physical labour; pleasant intellectual activities will suffice to achieve all desired goals.

Therein, all types of limitations and disadvantages will be brought to an end: there will be no fear or grief, nor will there be any noise or pain. All those potentialities that have been apparent to man from the very first day will be fulfilled in the world of paradise. In Paradise, man will find an eternal life in which old age, accidents, disease and death are absent. This will be the ideal world where man will be able to utilize the full potential of his personality, thus experiencing complete fulfilment.

Human history has a beginning as well as an end. The end of human history will be followed by another world—a flawless one in the fullest sense. This world will be inhabited by the selected people from all over human history. In a similar vein, the Quran tells us that:

“My righteous servants shall inherit the earth.” (21:105)

Man must realize that he stands on the threshold of Paradise. The question is, how can man achieve the Paradise of his dreams? In the present world of trial, any man or woman, to be eligible for Paradise, needs to have two qualifications: one is to

acknowledge the Truth of the one God, and the other is to lead a principled life. Those men and women who qualify in this test will be given a place in eternal Paradise—where all their desires will be fulfilled. For those who fail in this test, they shall spend their lives in a state of eternal deprivation.

In the present world, man finds himself totally free. However, this freedom does not belong to him as a matter of right; rather, it is a test paper. What man has to do is acknowledge the Truth of One God and surrender to him—not by compulsion but by his own choice. This surrendering before the Truth of One God is, without doubt, the greatest sacrifice that any man can make. Acknowledging the Truth of One God is like making oneself smaller, not only to God but to others as well. But this is the very virtue that will raise man to the highest position. It will take him to the very entrance of Paradise.

The second important thing in this set of requirements is to lead a principled life. Generally, what happens is that a man's character is moulded by his emotions—anger, revenge, jealousy, hatred, rivalry, etc. These are the negative feelings that shape a man's personality. But what man ought to do is to become disciplined in such matters. He should not build his character under the influence of external incentives, but by his own decisions, he should establish it on the basis of higher principles. This is what is called Divine Character. And only people with such a divine character will be selected by God to inhabit eternal Paradise.

ONLY ONE CHANCE

We have only one chance to show our worth; we can waste it or put it to good use. We have only one life on Earth; we can grow a Heavenly crop or an infernal one for ourselves.

According to God's Creation Plan, man is an immortal being. He spends part of his time on Earth and the rest in the Hereafter. This world is for actions; in the next world, we will reap the consequences of our actions.

The only chance we have to work for the Hereafter is in this world. Afterwards, we shall not be able to act; we shall rather have to bear the consequences of our actions. We have very little time on Earth. Many who were once among us on Earth are now dead and gone. In the same way, we shall be removed one day from the land of the living. Our lives will end, and we shall be brought before the Lord to be judged.

This life is the first and last chance that we shall have to build an eternal future for ourselves. We have only one life on Earth, and it is in this life that we must prove our worth. We are being tried on Earth, and this trial will surely reach a decisive outcome. We shall not be able to escape the consequences of our actions.

Every second that passes is conclusive, for the time that has passed can never return. We have only one chance to show our worth; we can waste it or put it to good use. We have only one life on Earth; we can grow a heavenly crop or an infernal one for ourselves.

Now, the time has finally come for man to awaken, take lessons

from the signs in nature and history, and plan his life in a way that avails him in his post-death period. One who loses this opportunity should know that another such opportunity will not come again.

Man has been given only one chance to build his future. It is now up to him to utilize it or lose it forever. Those who make use of this chance have eternal Paradise in store for them, while those who fail to make use of this chance will have a fate such as is described in the Bible:

“And they will be cast into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth for all eternity.” (*Matthew*, 13:42)

Only death divides us from Doomsday. We are all proceeding towards a fate that will bring us eternal bliss or eternal torment. Every moment that passes brings us closer to the fate that is in store for us. Every day, the sun sets, and we lose one more day in our lives. We will never have another chance like the present to prepare for this awesome day. We have only a comparatively short time in this world but will have to endure the consequences of our life on Earth forever: either bliss or severe punishment.

We will soon leave this world where we are free to act and enter another world where we will reap the consequences of our actions; we must examine our lives before this happens. We will all have to stand before God one day. On that day, how fortunate will those be who are included among God's faithful servants, for they will be honoured in Paradise. How unfortunate will

be those whom God rejects, for they will have nothing to look forward to except eternal torment and disgrace.

THE QURAN AND THE CREATION PLAN OF GOD

The objective of the Quran is to make man aware of the Creation plan of God: man's life is divided into two periods: the pre-death period, which is a time of trial, and the post-death period, which is the time for receiving the rewards or punishment merited by one's actions during one's lifetime.

Every Book has its objective, and the objective of the Quran is to make man aware of the Creation plan of God. That is, to tell man why God created this world, what the purpose is of settling man on Earth, what is required from man in his pre-death life span, and what he is going to confront after death. Man is born as an eternal creature. When God created man as such, He divided his life span into two periods: the pre-death period, which is a time of trial, and the post-death period, which is the time for receiving the rewards or punishment merited by one's actions during one's lifetime. These take the form of eternal paradise or eternal hell. The test of man rests on his discovery of God, who is in the unseen. Before we can see Him, we should voluntarily surrender ourselves to Him. We should willingly adopt divine ethics. We should develop intellectually and spiritually until we are fit to inhabit the refined world of Paradise.

The purpose of the Quran is to make man aware of this reality.

This is the theme of this divine Book, which serves to guide man through his entire journey through life into the after-life. It would be correct to say that man is a seeker by birth. These questions lurk in everyone's mind: Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? What is the reality of life and death? What is the secret of man's success and failure? Etc. According to the Quran, the answer to these questions is that the present world is the testing ground, and whatever man has been endowed with in his pre-death period is all a part of the test. The Hereafter is the place where the result of the test will be taken into account by the Almighty, and whatever man receives in the life after death, by way of reward or punishment, will be commensurate with his deeds in this world. The secret to man's success in this life is to understand God's creation plan and map out his life accordingly.

QURAN: A REMINDER OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

The Quran is a reminder of the blessings granted by the Supreme Benefactor. It makes man understand that by enjoying these blessings of nature, man will keep his Benefactor in mind. It is in so doing that man will gain entry into eternal Paradise.

One vital aspect of the Quran is that it is a reminder of the blessings granted by the Supreme Benefactor. The most important of these are the exceptional qualities with which God endowed man when He created him. Another great blessing

is that He settled him on Earth, a planet where all kinds of support systems existed for his benefit. The purpose of the Quran is to ensure that, while enjoying these blessings of nature, man will keep his Benefactor in mind: he must acknowledge the munificence of his Creator. It is in so doing that man will gain entry into eternal Paradise; ignoring his Benefactor, on the other hand, will lead man straight to hell. The Quran is indeed a reminder of this inescapable reality.

It would be even more appropriately called a book of wisdom. The Quran does not follow the pattern of the traditional didactic Book. In fact, when the average reader picks up the Quran, it appears to him to be a collection of fragmentary statements. Apparently, this feeling is not unreal. But this arrangement of the Quran is not due to any shortcoming but is rather in conformance with the Quranic plan of retaining its original form in order to fulfil its purpose of conveying the message of Truth to the reader who may, in his forays into the scriptures, read only one page, one verse or one line at a time.

QURAN: THE WORD OF GOD

A special aspect of the Quran is that at any moment, its reader can consult its Writer, ask his questions, and receive answers, for the Writer of the Quran is God Himself. He is a living God. As man's Creator, He directly hears and answers man's call.

When you read the Quran, you will repeatedly find it stated that it is the word of God. Apparently, this is a plain fact. But when

seen in context, it is an extraordinary statement. There are many books in the world which are believed to be sacred. However, except for the Quran, we do not find any religious book that thus projects itself as the word of God. This kind of statement, appearing uniquely in the Quran, gives a point of departure to the reader. He then studies it as an exceptional book rather than as a common book written by human beings. We find recurring in the Quran statements worded more or less as follows, 'O man, it is your Lord, who is addressing you. Listen to His words and follow Him.' Even this style of address is quite exceptional. This kind of direct divine invocation is not present in any other book. It leaves a lasting impression on man. He feels his Lord is directly addressing him. This feeling compels man to take the assertions of the Quran with extreme seriousness rather than treat them like everyday statements in an ordinary book. The compilation style of the Quran is also unique. Books written by human beings usually have their material arranged in order from A to Z, according to the topic. However, the Quran does not follow a pattern of this kind, so it appears to be lacking in order to the common man. When looked at in reality, however, it will emerge as an extremely coherent and orderly book and quite majestic in its style of writing. While reading the Quran, we feel that its Writer is on a very high pedestal from where He is looking down and addressing the whole of humanity, which is His special concern. This address focuses on different groups of human beings while encompassing all of them.

PURPOSEFUL CREATION: GOD'S VISION FOR MANKIND

One special aspect of the Quran is that at any moment, its reader can consult its Writer, ask his questions, and receive answers, for the Writer of the Quran is God Himself. He is a living God. As man's Creator, He directly hears and answers man's call.

We invite you to read the Quran to understand the Creation Plan of God.

God created humans as eternal beings, with a temporary, pre-death period of trial, granting them freedom, and an eternal, post-death phase where they receive reward or punishment based on their actions. Those who wisely use this freedom, discovering and submitting to God while living a disciplined life, will be rewarded with eternal Paradise in the Hereafter. This world serves as a nursery for testing humanity, and those who display noble conduct and character—qualities suited to Paradise—will be chosen to dwell in Paradise in the Hereafter.

PDF



ISBN 978-93-94886-96-4



9 789394 886964

cpsglobal.org

goodwordbooks.com