

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?

Sohbat Sheikh Hassan

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English translation

Musa: What is the meaning of life?

Sheikh Hassan: The meaning of life is to serve Allah. Allah, subhana wa ta'ala, Himself says: "I have created humans and jinn only to serve Me." Everything comes from Allah, subhana wa ta'ala. He is the Creator, and creation is in His service, so to speak. Everything that happens, everything that comes into existence—in temporary existence—and also that which exists in eternal existence, comes from Him. From Allah, through Allah and to Allah. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*. Everything that exists, everything we know and everything we do not know—and that is most of it, or almost everything—comes from Allah, through Allah and to Allah. That is the meaning of life.

The meaning of life is to be in this creation, to be a part of this creation. Daud (David), alayhi salam, asked: “Ya Allah, O our Creator, why did You create this creation? Why? What is the reason?” And Allah said:

“I was a hidden treasure, and I wanted to be known.”

(Hadith Qudsi)

So the meaning of life is to know Allah. Or you could also say, the best act of service—what is the best act of service, if Allah says, “I created humans and jinn to serve Me”? —the best act of service is to know Him; that is the best act of service. How can you know Him? There is an organ in the human being that was created specifically for the purpose to know Him. Allah does not say, “You must know Me. Look at your feet, and then you will know Me.” (Sheikh Hassan looks at his feet with an amused expression.) But I recognise nothing except my athlete’s foot. Nothing.

Allah is perfect, of course, and He has created perfection. And when He says something, He has provided all the means for it. He has provided all the means to serve Allah. All of them, at every level. There are a thousand levels, millions of levels—the number of levels, the number of degrees, is unknown—and at every level there is service. And He has taken care of everything so that you can serve Him. You can serve Him with your feet, too—where you go, why you go somewhere. You can serve Him with your hand; you can serve Him with your limbs. But the highest and

most beloved act of service—and this varies, because there are levels ranging from the lowest to the highest—is to know Him.

Because the quality of your service depends on your knowledge. Through what do you know Allah, *subhana wa ta'ala*, or something of Him—a *tajalli*, a manifestation of Him? Or you could also say: He grants you, gives you, one of His 99 beautiful Names—or more Names, one of His Names—so that you may come to know Him. Through what? The organ of knowledge is the heart—not the head. It is the heart. And the heart—as those who know, and those who experience it and have experienced it, say—must be pure in order to know Allah. Otherwise, you cannot know Allah if you are mixed, if it is not pure. The opposite of pure is mixed, after all. Pure means “only”. In German, the word is “nur”, and in Arabic it is “Nur”. *Nur*. Light. Purity is light. Purity. Unity. Or you could say: “Nothing else.” Everything else is excluded.

With us, everything is mixed. We are like a general store. You can get everything there—chewing gum, potatoes, tomatoes. And if they are not bought, they eventually go bad—the tomatoes and the potatoes. And there is laziness, so to speak... mixed in. That cannot be. It must be pure—in order to know Allah, it must be pure. That is why we strive for it. The Sheikh urges us to make an effort, to put effort into developing a pure heart. He proclaims that only a pure heart can know Allah and recognise one of His endless attributes. They are reflected.

You are like a mirror. Your heart is a mirror. In fact, your heart is a mirror—nothing more. You are a mirror. You are meant to be a

mirror. And this mirror only reflects when it is pure, when it is polished. Otherwise, it does not reflect. It cannot reflect if it is rusty, neglected, dirty or darkened. But it is supposed to reflect. Sometimes it reflects a little. If a few spots are already clean, then it reflects a little; something comes through—you get a glimpse of it. But it should reflect 100 per cent, as it does in the saints. In the saints, there is 100 per cent reflection. A one-to-one reflection. For example, of Allah's mercy. Of Allah's grace. Of Allah's *Ghafur*, *Rahim*—His forgiveness. The Forgiving, the Loving, the Generous, and so on and so forth...

You can read about this. They are listed everywhere; you can read about them. The 99 beautiful Names of Allah, as described by Al-Ghazali—there is a book by him in which all the Names are listed. The Grand Sheikh has described the Names. And they are meant to appear in human beings—that is their service; that is what the human being was created for. That is the meaning of life, exactly that. That is the meaning of life. Otherwise, you would not have been born; you were born for this purpose.

And the reason why this is so... well, it is beyond our ability to comprehend. But Allah, Jalla Jalaluhu, said: "If it were not for Habibullah, for My Beloved..." The greatest mirror, the best mirror, and more than a mirror, is Rasulullah, sallallahu alayhi wa sallam—he is from Him Himself, from His own Light. "...If it were not for him, I would not have created any of this. I would have created no creation, no nature, no human beings, no jinn." That is the reason. The reason is the love for the Prophet ﷺ, Allah's love for the Prophet. That is the reason. He loves him so

much. He loves him; He gives of His Love. It is beyond comprehension. I mean, we could talk about it for days and weeks, and we would get nowhere—or at least I would not. It is a love that Allah bestows.

Everything comes from love. Every atom comes from love. Every atom cries out love and expresses love—every atom, and everything smaller than an atom. And scientists have discovered that there are enormous empty spaces between atoms, in the human body, for example. Science is also, mashaAllah, our science. Huge empty spaces, enormous distances, endless distances. It almost seems impossible. But there are enormous distances between them, about which one can hardly say anything—between the billions of atoms that we have. There are mysteries, then, that never come to an end. They never come to an end.

But Allah has stated the reason, Jalla Jalaluhu: “If it were not for you, O Muhammad—if it were not for you, if you did not exist, if My love for you did not exist—then I would not have created any of this. I create it only out of love for you—to give you more, to give you more love, more love, more—and so that this creation, which I create, praises you and gives you more praise, gives you more love.”

To increase love, right? Yes. That is the reason. And from this comes the meaning of our lives.

Everyone is different and has their own character, as you can see. There are no two identical characters; everyone is different. And everyone also has their own particular task, their main task.

There are things that are the same for all human beings. And then there are things that are different—things that are unique. That is Allah, subhana wa ta'ala. There is all that which is the same, and then there are things that are unique. The human being, for example, belongs to the latter—each person is unique. You are unique. There is only one Musa. Apart from Moses, alayhi salam, there is only you as a person—once, not twice. Not twice. Nothing exists twice. In reality, everything exists only once. Everything is unique. Everything points towards Allah, subhana wa ta'ala. Everything.

That is what we are meant to recognise. We as human beings were created to recognise this, to express it, to live it, to serve, to act and to do—to do all of this. The human being alone. The human being was chosen to make this clear; he can express everything, can do everything in this respect—everything, say everything about it, know everything about it. Just as the Prophet ﷺ knows everything about it—everything. And then there are endless levels, endless *darajat* (degrees)—*darajat*, *darajat*, *darajat*—up to Sayyidina Muhammad. After him, there is no further level. That is the perspective.

We are nothing, we know nothing and we can do nothing. We have our path and our daily tasks, and we carry them out with this intention. Our intention is that Allah accepts our deeds, In-shaAllah, and that we follow the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet has told us everything we should do—how we should do it, what we should do, when we should do it, how much of it we should do. He has told us everything, everything, in a perfect manner. We do as much of it as we can and as much as we understand—as

much as possible. And that already makes us happy. That already makes us happy.

However, you cannot say that you have reached a particular level now, mashaAllah, or anything like that. No. You follow the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ with this intention. And that intention also includes something that must not be forgotten: to be nothing, to claim nothing for yourself. There are a thousand things like this. And this is where our daily life takes place—that is the meaning.

That is already the meaning of life. It fulfils you. It makes you happy. And it makes those people unhappy who do not see this meaning and do not recognise any meaning at all. It leads many of them to suicide. If you ask them why this is so, or ask a psychologist, they will say that they do not see the meaning of life. “There is no meaning.” And indeed, there is no meaning for someone who does not recognise this meaning. For them, there is no meaning. There is no meaning.

And sin—as I have said so often—the word “sin” means “to miss the goal” in its Latin wording. The Sheikh often says *sinning*, *sin*, *sins*, referring to sins. The translation is: “to miss the goal.” You aim at something (Sheikh Hassan imitates an archer taking aim)—you want to reach a target, but you miss it. You do not hit the target; you shoot wide of it, so to speak. That is sin, in the Latin sense. This is a very interesting aspect; it makes sense again. It makes sense: “to miss the goal.” To miss the goal of life, to fail to recognise the meaning of life—to miss it, to have missed it. May Allah protect us, InshaAllah, from missing the goal. And

may He guide us always to recognise our purpose; and simply, simply, simply to serve—to simply serve.

The great Sheikh, the great master Abu Yazid al-Bistami, asked: “How should I serve You? You are Allah. What do You need? How should I serve You? Tell me, how should I serve You?” He asked this and received the answer: “Serve My servants. Serve My servants—and then you serve Me.”

A clear answer. Serve people as much as you can—your fellow human beings—and then you serve Allah, InshaAllah.

Wa min-Allahi at-taufiq, bi hurmati al-Fatiha.