

Why Did God Create Mankind? (part 3 of 4): Life as Worship

Description: The purpose for the creation of mankind is worship. Part 3: In the Islamic system, each and every human act can be transformed into an act of worship.

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Every Act is Worship

In the Islamic system, each and every human act can be transformed into an act of worship. In fact, God commands the believers to dedicate their whole lives to Him. In the Quran, God says:

"Say: 'Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for God, the Lord of all the worlds.'" (Quran 6:162)

However, for that dedication to be acceptable to God, each act must fulfill two basic conditions:

1. First, the act must be done sincerely for the pleasure of God and not for the recognition and praise of human beings. The believer also has to be conscious of God while doing the deed to insure that it is not something forbidden by God or the last Messenger, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

In order to facilitate this transformation of mundane deeds into worship, God instructed the last Prophet, to prescribe short prayers to be said before even the simplest of acts. The shortest prayer which may be used for any circumstance is: Bismillaah (In the name of God). There are, however, many other prayers prescribed for specific occasions. For example, whenever a new piece of clothing is worn, the Prophet, taught his followers to say:

"O God, thanks is due to You, for it is You who has clothed me. I ask You for its benefit and the benefit for which it was made, and seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil for which it was made." (*An-Nasa'i*)

2. The second condition is that the act be done in accordance with the prophetic way, called in Arabic the Sunnah. All of the prophets instructed their followers to follow their way because they were guided by God. What they taught were divinely revealed truths, and only those who followed their way and accepted the truths would inherit eternal life in paradise. It is in this context that Prophet Jesus, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, was reported in the Gospel according to John 14:6, as saying:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Similarly, Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood related...

"One day Prophet Muhammad, drew a line in the sand for them and said, "This is God's path." He then drew several lines [branching off] to the right and to the left and said, "These are the paths [of misguidance] on each of which is a devil inviting people to follow it." He then recited the verse: 'Verily, this is my path, leading straight, so follow it. And do not follow the [other] paths for they will scatter you about from God's path. That is His command to you in order that you may be conscious of God.'" (*Ahmed*)

Thus, the only acceptable way to worship God is according to the way of the prophets. That being the case, innovation in religious affairs would be considered by God among the worst of all evils. Prophet Muhammad, was reported to have said,

"The worst of all affairs is innovation in religion, for every religious innovation is a cursed, misleading innovation leading to the hellfire." (*An-Nasa'i*)

Innovation in the religion is forbidden and unacceptable to God. The Prophet was also reported by his wife, Aa'ishah, to have said:

"He who innovates something in our religion, that is not of it, will have it rejected." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

It is fundamentally due to innovations that the messages of the earlier prophets were distorted and the many false religions in existence today evolved. The general rule to follow in order to avoid innovation in religion is that all forms of worship are prohibited, except those which have been specifically prescribed by God and conveyed to humans by the true messengers of God.

The Best of Creation

Those who believe in One Unique God, without partners or offspring, and do righteous deeds [according to the above-mentioned principles] become the crown of creation. That is, although humankind is not the greatest creation of God, they have the potential to become the best of His creation. In the final revelation, God states this fact as follows:

"Surely, those who believe and do righteous deeds are the best of creation." (Quran 98:7)

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