

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Today I will share with our friends some extracts from the writings, or sayings, of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) on the purpose of our life. If we have read and reread and pondered over his speech-book “The philosophy of the teachings of Islam”, this purpose should be very clear to us. But we need to remind ourselves from time to time so that we do not let ourselves be lost in the many concerns of this world. These reminders help all among us to stay focused on the ultimate purpose of our sojourn in this world. May Allah help each one amongst us to have this purpose ever present in front of us under all circumstances whether we are living in comfort or we are living through difficulties and myriad problems.

The Promised Messiah (as) says:

“Though different people, on account of their shortsightedness or lack of courage, appoint various types of objectives for their lives and stop short at worldly purposes and desires, yet the purpose that God Almighty has specified in His Holy Word is:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Translation:

“I have created jinn and men so that they should recognize and worship Me”.

According to this verse, the true purpose of human life is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and devotion to Him.

It is obvious that it is not open to man that he should himself lay down the purpose of his life by his own authority inasmuch as man does not arrive in the world of his own will, nor will he depart from this world of his own will. He is a created being and He Who created him and bestowed upon him better and higher faculties than those bestowed upon other animates, has enjoined a purpose for his life. Whether anyone comprehends that purpose or not, without doubt the purpose of man’s creation is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and to lose himself in Him.”

Citing the following verse, he said:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ
فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا قَلِيلًا

This means that the Divine Trust, by which is meant the love of God and complete obedience to Him even in the face of hardship, was offered to the angels and the whole of creation and the mountains, all apparently full of strength, but they all refused to undertake it, being afraid of its grandeur. But man undertook it for he possessed two qualities, that he could force himself in the cause of God Almighty and could advance so far in love of Him as to forget altogether everything else. [Taudih-e-Maram, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 3, pp. 75-76]

He said further:

“The real purpose of all the external and internal limbs and faculties that have been bestowed on man is understanding and worship and love of God. That is why, despite a thousand occupations, man does not find his true well-being except in God Almighty. Having acquired great wealth, or achieved high office, or having become a great merchant, or having acquired governing authority, or become a great philosopher, he departs in the end from these worldly involvements with a sense of frustration. His heart rebukes him all the time about his deep concern with the world and his conscience never approves his wiles and deceits and wrongful actions. This problem can be appreciated in another way. The purpose of the creation of a thing is determined by its highest achievement beyond which its faculties cannot rise. For instance, the highest a bullock is capable of is ploughing, or irrigation, or transportation, and therefore these are the purpose of its life and it cannot rise above them. But when we take stock of man's faculties and powers to discover his highest capacity, we find that he is invested with the faculty of seeking after God so much so that he desires that he should become so devoted to God's love that he should have nothing of his own and that everything should become God's. He shares his natural needs like food and drink and rest with other animates, and in industry some animals are ahead of him; for instance, the bees produce such excellent honey from every type of flower that man has so far not been able to compete with them. It is clear, therefore, that the highest capacity of man is meeting with God Almighty and thus the true purpose of his life is that the window of his heart should open towards God.”

Then the Promised Messiah explains to us several means for the achievement of the purpose of our existence. Explaining about the first means, he says:

“Let it be clear that the principal means for achieving this purpose is the correct recognition of and faith in the True God. If this first step is wrongly taken and a person sets up a bird, or an animal, or any of the elements, or a human being as his god, it cannot be expected that his subsequent steps would be taken along the straight path. The True God helps His seekers; but that which is dead cannot help the dead.” In the speech-book “The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam”, the Promised Messiah (as) mentions at least eight means for achieving the purpose of our existence. One may read them in Essence of Islam, Volume 2, from pages 463 to 470. It is available on www.alislam.org.

Today I will just mention the 6th means of which he speaks. He says:

“The sixth means for achieving the purpose of life is steadfastness; that is to say, that a seeker should not become tired and should not be daunted by trials, as Allah the Exalted says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَابْشُرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ
نَحْنُ أَوْلِيُّكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

“On them who affirm: Our Lord is Allah; and then remain steadfast, angels descend, reassuring them: Fear not, nor grieve, and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. We are your friends in this life and in the hereafter”.

This is an indication that the pleasure of God Almighty is won through steadfastness. It is true that steadfastness is more than a miracle. Perfect steadfastness is that one should find oneself surrounded on all sides by calamities and one should find one's life and honour in danger and nothing comforting should be available, so much so, that God Almighty should stop—by way of trials—the comforting visions and dreams and revelation and should leave one in the midst of terrifying fears, but that at such a time, one should not abandon courage and should not step back like a coward and should not let one's fidelity be weakened. One's sincerity and loyalty should not be shaken, one should be pleased with the humiliation, one should be reconciled to death, one should not await the support of a friend, one should not seek glad tidings from God, because of one's delicate situation, and one should stand up straight despite helplessness and weakness and the lack of every comfort. One should stretch forth one's neck, saying: Whatever is to happen, let it happen; one should face courageously whatever has been determined and one should not be impatient nor complain till the trial is over. This is the steadfastness the reward of which is God. This is the quality by virtue of which the dust of Messengers, Prophets, *Siddiqs* and martyrs is still so fragrant. This is indicated by the Glorious God in the prayer:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

meaning, “O Allah! show us the path of steadfastness by treading along which one wins Thy bounties and favours and Thou art pleased”.

This is also indicated in another verse:

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَ تَوْفِنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

meaning, “Lord: at this time of trial send down upon our hearts the comfort that should make us steadfast and do Thou so ordain that we should die in a state of submission to Thee”;

At the time of trials and misfortune, God Almighty causes a light to descend upon the hearts of those who are dear to Him, being strengthened by which they face misfortunes calmly and, out of the sweetness of their faith, they kiss the chains that are put round their feet in His cause. When calamities descend upon a man of God and signs of death appear, he does not contend with his Lord that He might be safeguarded against them, inasmuch as to persist at such a time in supplications for security amounts to fighting God Almighty and is contrary to complete submission. A true lover advances forward at a time of calamity and holding life as nothing, and saying goodbye to love of it, submits himself completely to the will of his Lord and seeks only His pleasure. Concerning such people, God the Glorious says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَا ۖ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

It means that the man of God dedicates his life in the path of God and, in return, earns the pleasure of Allah. These are the people who receive the special mercy of Allah.

In short, this indeed is the spirit of the steadfastness which we have described and which leads to the God. Let him who wills, grasp this point.”

May Allah help each one amongst us to truly understand the purpose of our life and to strive as best as we can to fulfill that purpose by Allah’s Grace, incha Allah. Ameen.