

## What is the Purpose of Creation?

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Since so many people asked that very same question regarding their personal lives, I wondered what created this question. The superficial conclusion is that there is a widespread belief that one's destiny is written in the stars or in some other heavy tomes and the person is kept in the dark regarding its contents. So he or she is at the mercy of mystics who claim to have direct access to the website of [knowyourdestiny.com](http://knowyourdestiny.com) in the Cosmic Internet. On the deeper level, this question is the reflection of the linear way of thinking wherein "meaning", significance, purpose or destiny is external to the questioner, decreed by inevitable Fate.

This line of questioning is the testimony of the assumption that there is a meaning and purpose to everything, some kind of divine design. It assumes that things don't happen by accident, that God does not play dice, that even chance is something designed and defined beforehand, supposedly according to what one deserves or does not deserve. These assumptions are rooted in the anthropocentric belief that all is designed for and revolves around man. Consequently, God created the world for man, and he created man as occupational therapy for himself, so he can have the role of providence. If the Heavenly Father is not there to do that for us, then what do we need him for? Then we could just as well go along with the theory of evolution and believe that man is the outcome of blind chance and the mechanism of the survival of the fittest, or perhaps with self-organization theories stating that chaos will evolve into organized patterns. Where is the purpose or meaning in these?

Self-organization and evolution are phenomenological facts. We cannot argue with facts. We can either hide their existence, refrain from teaching these facts in schools, so our children will become obedient church/synagogue/mosque goers with a belief in divine purpose, or we can strive to understand these phenomenological occurrences within a wider framework than that of detached facts. I choose the latter option.

When we ask what is the meaning of something, be it a personal or historical event, we want to know what caused it to happen (the causal question), why (the purpose question), and what can we learn from it (the teleological question). The purpose and teleological aspects of the quest for meaning are closely related; they both point toward the future whereas the causal aspect queries the preset conditions that brought about the event. Yet since the meaning question consists of all these aspects, perhaps we should ask, When does an event gain meaning? Or in other words, Where is the meaning? Is it the cause of the event or the result of the event? Do processes occur as the result of some kind of meaning, or do processes create a meaning? Another way of putting this question would be to ask what there was before? The chicken or the DNA.

There is Nothing External Giving Meaning or Purpose to our Lives, the Universe, or God. In that Sense, All is Meaningless.

Let's look at the moaning and groaning of an old wise man, King Solomon. He had seen everything, both the righteous and the wicked, man and woman, and he reached the conclusion that all is vanity, there is nothing new under the sun. Whether you live in mirth or misery, whether you are poor or wealthy, man or beast, you all end up the same way; and in any event, all of it was futile. You could get the impression that these are whimpers coming from an old grouch who can no longer enjoy life. That is, if you superficially skim over Ecclesiastes[1] (for the new generation, that's a book in the Old

Testament). However, if you take a deeper look, King Solomon, who is considered the wisest of men, reveals that, from an external point of view, everything has the same value, which is no value. This reminds me of what SHET said: that from the point of view of "Consciousness" there are no values, and thus we are no more valuable than a piece of discarded orange peel. Just as value is not in the object but in our way of relating to the object, neither is meaning or purpose in the object, but in our way of relating to the object. Whether the object is my ego, my life, or the universe, there is not even one gram of purpose to be found in it. However, I can choose to attribute meaning or purpose to something from my point of view and then, it has meaning and importance for me.

From that point of view, "Vanity of vanities, says Qohelet, vanity of vanities: all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). And King Solomon goes on to describe the many vanities and the meaningless state of affairs throughout this book in the Bible. He begins with the description of cyclical scenes - reminiscent of the loop - taking place both in space and time. Then through the most beautiful poetic phrases with deep wisdom and many encoded secrets, he describes how fixed relations to substructures are meaningless, how clinging to wisdom, riches, honor, etc. is meaningless. Yet at the very end of the book, something exceptional happens: instead of pain and despair, King Solomon reveals his tremendous loving strength in few words, giving hope. This phrase is repeated twice in the original Hebrew Bible, the second time presented as follows:

"The end of the matter, when all is said and done:

Be awed by God,

and his commandments

keep:

for that is

all what man is."

(Ecclesiastes 12:13)

I took the liberty of translating the original Hebrew text as is, without the interpretation of the usual translation, which reads: "The end of the matter, when all is said and done: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for that is the whole duty of man." Fear is the translation of YIR'A (יִרְאָה), which actually means "awe", not fear. YIR'A (יִרְאָה) comes from RE'E (רָאָה), which means "see." When one sees the manifestations of God, then he feels awe, which can also include some fear, yet fear is not the main "significance" of awe. Interpreting the text with a focus on fear instead of on awe creates an entirely different connotation emanating from a worldview that pictures a humanized, angry and vengeful God who will punish you if you don't do what he says. YIR'A (יִרְאָה) means to be connected by seeing the exalted and the astounding, and by reacting to it with wonderment. This is the ineffable experience of merging the Immanent with the Transcendent, experiencing the inner language that is our essence.

Awe is Recognizing "Quality" in "Quantity", which is our Means to be Connected to God and thereby to all of Creation.

The Hebrew text does not say that the whole duty of man is to do God's commandments, but it states that doing God's commandments is what man is. There is a huge difference between these two: if that was man's duty, then man must be considered as something separate from God, and God - although more evolved - must be considered to be like a human - a humanized God. The inability to grasp an abstract God often ascribes human qualities to God, and even a human body. As Moses Ben Maimon (1135-1204), commonly referred to as Maimonides or RAMBAM, the leading Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages put it in his "The Guide of the Perplexed":

"People think that the word TZELEM (image) in Hebrew refers to the outward shape and contours of a thing. This has been a cause of crass anthropomorphism because of the verse: Let us make man in Our image after Our likeness (Genesis 1:26). They think that God is the IMAGE of man, i.e. his shape and outline, and thus fall into unalloyed

anthropomorphism, in which they firmly believe. It appears to them that by abandoning this belief they would deny Scripture, nay, the very existence of God would be called in question unless they imagine Him as a body with face and hands like themselves in shape and design, only - as they deem - bigger and brighter, and its substance not of flesh and blood. That is the highest degree of incorporeality they are prepared to grant to God... Since man is distinguished by a very remarkable function... because of this function, the divine intellect bestowed upon him, it is said of man that he is in the image and likeness of God, not because God is a body and therefore possesses a shape."[2]

The divine intellect bestowed upon man is his ability to recognize, and thereby give meaning to, patterns, moreover the ability to recognize the isomorphic patterns of Creation. The divine intellect bestowed upon man is the lawfulness that can recognize itself throughout Creation. Man created in God's image means that man recognizes the lawfulness that is his essence, his building blocks, his interactions and creations, and that he can create through the same lawfulness through which he was created. When, and only when, man knows this lawfulness can he become a creator in God's image. Knowing this lawfulness then is knowing God, knowing how God functions. God is not a "still", but the lawfulness that creates itself, the loop of Creation.

So when man grasps God as another man, only a bit brighter and more powerful than himself, then he relates to himself as a dutiful slave, whose duty is to do God's bidding. Blindly following a set of narrowly defined rules makes one God's prisoner, or rather, the prisoner of dogma laid down by humans for their own ends; whereas following the commandments in SHET's interpretation of lawfulness means participating with awe in the ongoing Creation, with God. If doing the commandments is the make-up of man, then not doing the commandments will sever the fixed relation to God and undo man. After all, what are the commandments?

The commandments relate first and foremost to God, establishing the fixed relation between man and God. They state that God is an abstraction, a lawfulness, which should not be symbolized or defined in any other way. The rest of the commandments establish some fixed relations to substructures, the way man is to relate to man. Qohelet implores his readers to knowingly express awe toward God and keep his commandments. When we look for meaning from within the loop, where everything is connected to everything else, then we can see that we consist of meaning when stabilized, whereas we give meaning to those processes that stabilize us.

To be a creator in God's image, man needs to know God, the self-creating lawfulness, and act within that lawfulness willingly and knowingly. To be a meaning and thus, able to have meaning, we need to actively feel awe. If there is any meaning to Creation, then that's the only thing that qualifies: awe. The expression of awe in Hebrew is HALLELUYA (Halleluya) praise God.

Read more about God...

In order to continue developing spiritually, which, by the way, is the only reason to have a body in the first place, you should enhance the sense of wonderment and love within yourself. This may not be easy under certain circumstances, but precisely the ability to achieve that love in such circumstances is what frees you from being trapped. How to do it? Direct your attention deliberately to seek out the beautiful and the Godly in everything and everyone. And then go with constant awareness of admiration and awe, finding All-That-Is in everything. This is an exercise to start with, and then becomes a way of life.

SHET

[1] Ecclesiastes means preacher, from ekklesia in Greek, or assembly of citizens, from ekkalein, to summon. Qohelet - Qohelet in Hebrew comes from Qahal - Qahal, which means assembly, congregation.

[2] Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, Hackett Publishing Company 1995 - pp. 51-53