

The purpose of man's trial

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

According to the creation plan of God, man was settled on this Earth for the purpose of putting him to the test. This divine intention is clearly stated in the Quran at several different points. One example of how God's scheme was to be carried out is alluded to in the chapter entitled Yunus (Jonah): "Then we made you their successors in the land, so that we might observe how you would conduct yourselves" (10:14).

This kind of test is basically of one's sense of moral responsibility. When a person comes to understand that he is on trial and that angels are recording all of his actions, this automatically engenders in him the requisite sense of responsibility. Now he becomes cautious in every aspect of his activities — in thinking, speaking, dealing, and in all other activities. Indeed, this understanding of how he is being tested works like a self-correcting mechanism,

which promotes deep introspection. It is the crucial factor that makes of him a good person and a good member of society.

But what is this test for? According to the Quran, the final destination of mankind is paradise, but only good people will be permitted to cross its threshold. So this test is to determine those who are truly worthy of being selected for Paradise. Thus, the knowledge that one is being tested serves as a great incentive to live up to a high moral standard. Living a disciplined life then becomes everyone's self interest. He feels that he must adhere to high principles; otherwise he will lose the opportunity to gain entry into paradise.

The above Quranic formula compels man to behave like a responsible member of his society. The whole of humanity becomes his concern and then he cannot afford to live like an irresponsible person.

www.cpsglobal.org