Synopsis of Friday Sermon
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People wander in this world literally lost. Even Muhammad (SAW) who was chosen by his Creator to be among the best of humanity and to lead the entire humankind with the universal message, there is no god but Allah, was once lost. “Did He not find you (O Prophet) lost but then He guided you?” (al-Duha, 93:7)

Man, whom Allah (SWT) crafted the entire universe for, finds himself lost in the midst of this vast creation. Man, whom Allah (SWT) appointed as His deputy (2:30), in charge of this universe has lost his sense of direction.

Equipped with all the faculties and means, endowed with intelligence and talents, man is still unable to figure it out. He guesses and speculates, conjectures and assumes and wonders, why am I here?

In order for man to overcome this upheaval, confusion and chaos; to fulfill his true mission on earth and attain happiness, contentment and pleasure, man needs to be reminded of who he really is and why he is here.

We already learned about the composition of man. Humans are a composite of spiritual and animal beings. We also learned about the great heavenly covenant when the spirits of all humans were assembled like conscripted soldiers gave their vow and pledge to their Creator, Allah (SWT), affirming His divine unity while acknowledging Him as the sole supreme Master and Lord.

We also learned that as the soul journeys from the higher-world to the lower-world it is greeted, according to the Islamic tradition, upon arrival with the recitation of the call to prayer in the right ear as a reminder of the primordial world when, without any compulsion and with absolute love for the Creator, the souls admitted, there is no god but God.

In conclusion, we learned how humans were created, what they were created from, and who created them. There remains one very important question to answer, why they were created? Throughout the ages, people have deliberated this very important question, why am I here?

The real answer depends on having access to the supernatural realm. Only the Creator of man can tell us the wisdom behind our existence. Such knowledge can only be obtained from divine revelation. We have already established that the Qur’an is God’s word that speaks the truth. “Say (O Prophet) God speaks the truth” (Aal Imran, 3:95).

According to the final scripture, the Qur’an, everything in the heavens and earth is created to serve and be subservient to man. “It is He who created all that is on earth for you, then turned to the sky and made the seven
heavens; and He has knowledge of everything” (al-Ba’qarah, 2:29). It is Allah (SWT), “[W]ho makes most excellent everything that He creates. And He began the creation of man out of clay” (al-sajdah, 32:7). “It is He who brought you into being from the earth and made you inhabit it” (Hud, 11:61).

The complex creation of the universe and the time it took to perfect planet earth as a suitable place for man is the greatest gift one can ever receive. The following is a detailed account of the amazing creation that continues to baffle people.

“He created the heavens and earth for a true purpose, and He is far above whatever they join with Him! He created man from a drop of fluid, and yet man openly challenges Him. And livestock—He created them for you. You derive warmth and other benefits from them: you get food from them; you find beauty in them when you bring them home to rest and when you drive them out to pasture. They carry your loads to lands you yourselves could not reach without great hardship—truly your Lord is kind and merciful—Horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and use for show, and other things you know nothing about. God points out the right path, for some paths lead the wrong way: if He wished, He could guide you all. It is He who sends down water for you from the sky, from which comes a drink for you, and the shrubs that you feed to your animals. With it He grows for you grain, olives, palms, vines, and all kinds of other crops. There truly is a sign in this for those who reflect. By His command He has made the night and day, the sun, moon, and stars all of benefit to you. There truly are signs in this for those who use their reason. He has made of benefit to you the many-colored things He has multiplied on the earth. There truly are signs in this for those who take it to heart. It is He who made the sea of benefit to you: you eat fresh fish from it and bring out jewelry to wear; you see the ships cutting through its waves so that you may go in search of His bounty and give thanks. He has made mountains stand firm on the earth, to prevent it shaking under you, and rivers and paths so that you may find your way, and landmarks and stars to guide people. Can He who creates be compared to one who cannot create? Why do you not take heed? If you tried to count Allah’s blessings, you could never compute them. He is truly most forgiving and most merciful” (al-Nahl, 16:3-18).

There can be no denying that each and every thing Allah (SWT) creates serves a purpose. In examining the hierarchical order of creation one finds that at the lowest rank, God created the universe with its inanimate bodies such as the sun, the moon and planet earth strictly to serve a higher form of creation that contains life. Moving upward in the chain we find plant life was created to serve yet a higher creation, the animal kingdom.

The compounded process of creation that seems to cooperatively work well with its lower creation serves a purpose. All to serve a unique creature called man, who is both mortal flesh and also spirit. Has man ever asked whom he is serving and what his mission on earth is?

Searching for the answer depends on the utilization of the intellect. This ought to be the first station in the intellectual journey of man, searching for the soul’s purpose and mission.

Allah (SWT) created man perfectly. He gave him all the tools necessary to reach the right conclusion. Aside from the five basic senses that include the ability to hear and see, Allah (SWT) granted us the faculty of understanding, intellect, and reason. “You knew nothing when Allah brought you out of your mothers’ wombs, and He gave you hearing, sight and intellect that perchance you may be thankful” (al-Nahl, 16:78). Allah (SWT) taught humans how to express themselves intelligently, “And has taught him articulate speech” (al-Rahman, 55:4).

Truthfully, man has the capacity to, on his own with his rational mind through observation and contemplation, arrive at the conclusion that all creation was created by one Creator. It is not rocket science. For centuries people who lived a simple life were able to figure it out.

Consider a simple nomad’s remarks, “Camel droppings point to a camel’s existence. Footprints on the sand tell of a traveler. Heaven with its stars, the earth with its mountains and valleys, and the sea with its waves- don’t they point to the All-Powerful, Knowing, Wise and Caring Maker?”
Such individuals the Qur’an calls people of intellect, ‘There are indeed signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for men of understanding, who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying down and reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth (and conclude), ‘Our Lord! You have not created all this without purpose; glory be to You, so protect us from the torment of the Fire’” (Aal Imran, 3:190-191).

Such are the people of intellect with a pure, unpolluted nature who are on the right path. The Qur’an refers to this instinct as fitrah, “It is the innate nature originated by God upon which He created mankind” (al-Roum, 30:30). The Prophet (SAW) did inform, “Every newborn child is born in a state of fitrah (innate natural disposition), his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian.”

When the soul maintains the purity of the fitrah, it will inevitably recognize its Creator and come to the conclusion, ‘there is no god but God.’ The soul inherently knows God, loves and adores God. Additionally, it instinctively differentiates between right and wrong and good and evil.

What pollutes the soul is the socio-cultural environment be it at home or outside the home. The natural predisposition in man cannot change. All souls in the primordial world have acknowledged and accepted the truth.

It is on this basis humans are being tested. Will the soul who acknowledged Allah (SWT) as the sole Master and Lord, in the pre-world, the world of spirits (‘alam al-arawah), be subservient to Him or not? Will that soul who pledged its commitment to Allah (SWT) serve its Master or not? Will that soul be grateful or ungrateful to its Lord and Creator?

We were dispatched to begin our journey on planet earth. Our residence may be described as the abode of testing (dar al-bala’). The Qur’an reveals this fact.

The ayah from surat al-Mulk explains the first death and the first earthly life. It then explains the reason behind it. “Blessed be He in whose hand is the dominion (of the heavens and earth); and He has power over all things; who created death and life that He may test you (to see) who among you is best in conduct (and deeds). And He is the Almighty, the Forgiving” (al-Mulk, 67:1-2).

Elaborating on the statement, ‘that He may test you (to see) who among you is best in conduct (and deeds),’ the Prophet (SAW) described those who are best in deeds as, “Most fearing of God who abstains from the things Allah made forbidden and always ready to obey Him.” Such are the grateful souls.

It should be noted that ‘best in deeds’ indicates that it is not the quantity of actions that counts, rather the quality of actions; those actions that are done out of sincerity solely for the pleasure, love and sake of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) informed us that He will weigh, not necessarily count our deeds on the Day of Reckoning. “And whoever does an atom’s weight of good shall see it. And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil shall see it” (al-Zalzalah, 99:7-8).

The beginning of surat al-Insan also hints to the concept of ‘the souls being tested.’ ‘Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of? We created man from a drop of mingled fluid to put him to the test; so We gave him hearing and sight; We guided him to the right path, (and it rests on his will) whether he be grateful or ungrateful (to his Lord)” (al-Insan, 76:1-3).

The fact of the matter is, most people show no appreciation to their Creator. “Say (O Prophet), ‘It is He who brought you (all) into being and has endowed you with hearing, sight and minds; (yet) how seldom you are grateful!’ (al-Mulk, 67:23).

Allah (SWT) since the dawn of man has sent innumerable prophets and messengers with instructions, guidance, scriptures and books to remind people of who they are and what their purpose in life is. ‘We never sent any messenger before you (O Prophet) without revealing to him, ‘There is no god but Me, so serve Me’” (al-
Anbiya, 21:25).

In fact, back in the world of spirits when all humans confirmed their pledge to God, Allah (SWT) assembled the spirits whom He selected from the larger pool to assume the role of a Messenger and took a firm covenant from them; that they would honor Allah (SWT) and fulfill their duty of guiding people toward Him. “And mention (O Prophet) when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (Muhammad), and from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, son of Mary. We took a firm pledge from all of them” (al-Ahzab, 33:7).

The main message that was conveyed to the people consistently by all prophets of God was quite simple. “O my people! Worship Allah, you have no god other than Him” (Hud, 11:61). Each prophet sent to his own respective people preached the exact message. Muhammad (SAW) who, unlike his predecessors who were sent to their respective nations and tribes, was sent to the entire humankind for all time to come preaching the same message with emphasis on God’s Lordship.

“O mankind! Worship (and obey) your Lord who created you and those before you, so that you may be saved (from His punishment). The One who spread out the earth for you and built the sky; who sent down rain from the sky and in so doing He produced fruits as provision for you. So, do not set up rivals to God while you know (that He is the Only Lord worthy of worship)” (al-Baqarah, 2:21-22).

Plainly, we exist for one reason, to serve Allah (SWT). Just as in the chain of creation everything below man serves him. Man, who stands at the top of Allah’s creation, has to serve God, the Creator of all. Allah (SWT) explains it plain and simple, “I have not created the jinns and humans except to serve Me” (al-Zariyat, 51:56).

Incidentally, the preceding ayah instructs the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), “And do remind (O Prophet), for truly, such a reminder will benefit the believers” (al-Zariyat, 51:55). Indeed, the pure souls need a reminder. It is a great blessing that Allah (SWT) sends us people who admonish and remind us.

To put things in perspective, the Arabic word used for “to serve Me” in the statement “I have not created the jinns and humans except to serve Me” is, liya’budooni (لِيَعْبُدُونِِ). It is a derivative of the root word, ‘abd (عبد), which connotes a slave. In other words, man is created to be a slave of God.

In a narrow sense, it is to worship and obey the Lord. In a broader sense, to be a slave of Allah (SWT) is to submit our free will and become subservient to His will, to honor Him, to love, cherish and adore Him and to exalt and glorify Him. In one word, to be grateful to Him.

The riddle of, ‘Why I was created?’ is now solved. It is no longer a mystery. All Allah (SWT) wants from us is to be truthful, uphold the pledge, honor the contract we made with Him, and fulfill the promise we promised Him, “Yes, indeed, You are our Lord.”

We must be reminded that we are on a journey, that we are aliens in this world and that we belong to Allah (SWT) and to Him is our ultimate return. We are in the abode of testing. The examination ends at time of death. The results will be announced when we all return back to Him on the Day of Judgment. And then, it will be either Paradise forever or Hell forever, in the abode of eternity (dar al-baqa’).

May we all be saved from Hell, ameen.

References regarding the fitrah
http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/DefinitionFitrah.htm