

The Human Life Cycle and Its Stages; Before Birth to After Death

What Are the Origin and Destination in the Human Life Cycle?

- What do you know about the human life cycle?
- If you were to map the stages of your life, where would its starting point and origin be?
- Do you really believe we were born on earth?

Those were the days! Just a few years ago, it was challenging to find the address of a place. Every day when we walked down an alley or a street, a passerby or driver would ask us for an address. Whenever we were invited to a business meeting or casual get-together in a new place, we always considered the possibility of getting lost. So we would leave the house early to have enough time to find the address. Nowadays, thanks to the global positioning system (GPS) technology, the likelihood of having these problems is almost zero, and finding the origin, route, and destination is much easier than before. Now to avoid getting lost, we can easily find our location on the map, measure the distance between our current location and our destination, and plan a route with google maps.

The same pattern has been implemented on the map of the creation of the world. On the map of creation, the origin of our life, our final destination, and the ways to reach this destination are clearly defined. It is also obvious which paths come to a dead end, which ones are prohibited to enter, how to find the shortest path, and in case of taking the wrong path, through which roundabout we must return to the main road. However, many people still have difficulty finding their path and they

lose the ultimate goal of their creation. Why does this happen? This happens because they do not know the human life cycle and origin. Usually, the people who lose the destination are the ones who do not know the origin and are not aware of the human life cycle. Contrary to popular belief, our life is not a linear path from origin to destination. Rather, it is an ongoing cycle from origin to origin. After death, we will go to the same place from which we have come. So like those with Alzheimer's who lose their way back home, if we do not know where we have come from, we cannot find our way back and will get nowhere. This is the story of billions of people throughout history, and many of them departed this life without knowing why they had come to this world.

- What is the human life cycle?
- Where is the origin and destination of life?
- How does viewing our life path as linear differ from seeing it as cyclical?

We are going to answer these questions in this article.

The Crisis of Meaning in Life Stems from Seeing Life as a Linear Path

All people have thought about the meaning of life and the philosophy of their existence in this world at least for once throughout their lives. However, not all of them come to the same conclusion. For some people, thinking about the philosophy of their creation doubles their motivation in life, while others suffer from the crisis of meaning and cannot find a convincing reason to live. The latter group, typically, attributes their lack of motivation and their depression to the hardships of life. They think they would be happier if they had a different destiny. But the reality is that the hardships of life do not cause the lack of motivation. In

fact, our viewpoint about the world is the reason for this crisis. Our biggest mistake is that we do not know the origin of life and we are unaware of the human life cycle. We think that our life begins on earth and proceeds in a linear path towards the hereafter. In simple words, we only consider the arc of ascent in our life cycle and neglect the arc of descent.

The greatest danger of this viewpoint is that it leads us to define ourselves in the wrong way and take the wrong path in life based on the fundamentally false assumptions. These assumptions define us as a bipedal, intelligent being with a male or female body, attributing all our worth and dignity to the physical body and its inherent qualities. When we define ourselves in this way, it limits our horizon and the scope of our desires. Instead, our sorrows and worries increase and a sense of emptiness and lack of motivation weighs heavy on our hearts. Our self-esteem will be tied to our house, car, spouse, and children, and by failing to achieve or losing any of these, we will lose all our dignity. All of these is the result of a linear viewpoint about the stages of life, which introduces the earth as the origin of our birth. Whereas the truth is something else.

We Were Not Born on Earth!

As we discussed in previous lessons, before entering *the Nasut* (the world), and getting a physical body, we existed as a complete being with the highest perfections in the embrace of God. Then God sent us to the earth to continue life on it. Therefore, we were not born on earth, but transferred to it, or more precisely, we descended to the earth. Do not be indifferent to this simple statement! This very simple statement can influence the entire meaning of life.

You might ask, if we once possessed all the perfections, then why is there no sign of them in us? In response, we must point out that the world we live in now is the world of potentiality. We possess infinite potential perfections or inherent qualities when we descend to the world because we are a part of the infinite whole. However, these infinitely potential perfections must be actualized. Just like a healthy newborn who is potentially capable of speaking and after going through the stages of growth, he gains the ability to actualize the potential for speech.

Considering what we have stated so far, just now we possess all the perfections and attributes of God, but they will not be actualized until we want to. In other words, at the beginning, all human beings want to become the manifestation of the supreme attributes of God, but in the end, not all of them reach that level of perfection. The only people who reach such a status and fully achieve the purpose of their creation are those who come under the guidance of the divine mentors, i.e., the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT), and actualize the infinite inherent qualities through carrying out the specialized program.

- What does the specialized program of religion mean?
- What role do the Infallibles (PBUT) play in guiding humans towards perfection?

We will answer these questions in the upcoming lessons.