
Exploring the Philosophy of Life through Qur'ānic and Prophetic Teachings

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Abstract:

This research article explores the philosophical foundations of life in light of the Qur'ān and Hadith, aiming to present a comprehensive understanding of human existence from an Islamic worldview. It examines core questions concerning the origin, purpose, and ultimate destiny of life, drawing upon primary Islamic sources to highlight that life is not a mere biological event, but a purposeful, divinely orchestrated journey. According to the Qur'ān, life is a sacred trust (amānah) from the Creator, a test (ibtīlā) for human beings to prove their moral character, and a transitional phase leading to the eternal hereafter. The Hadith literature complements this view by emphasizing ethical behavior, self-accountability, and the temporary nature of worldly attachments. This article analyzes selected Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions that elucidate the metaphysical, spiritual, and existential meanings of life. It also incorporates comparative insights from classical and modern philosophical frameworks to contextualize the uniqueness of the Islamic perspective. By doing so, the study identifies how Islamic teachings offer a holistic view that integrates the physical, moral, and metaphysical dimensions of human life. The findings of the study indicate that Islam provides a balanced and purposeful approach to existence—rooted in divine guidance—that addresses the human quest for meaning, direction, and ultimate fulfillment. This understanding encourages ethical living, inner development, and conscious preparation for the afterlife. In a world often dominated by materialism and existential doubt, the Islamic philosophy of life serves as a timeless source of wisdom, providing clarity, motivation, and spiritual depth to those seeking truth and purpose in their lives.

Keywords: Qur'ān, Hadith, Islamic Philosophy, Meaning of Life, Ethics, Existence, Metaphysics, Human Purpose

Life and Death, Both are Planned by Allah, not Accidental:

According to Qur'ān and Hadith life and death both are part of a long term planning of God and not accidental. He is God who controls all the universe and He is sustainer of all things,

He decides life and death of creatures. He is the only creator of all the living and non-living things, bodies and persons in this universe. As Qur'ān says:-

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ¹

“He who has created death and life (so that) He may test you as to which of you is best in conduct. And he is Almighty, Most Forgiving.”

Steps of Creation of Life:

According to Qur'ān and Hadith following are the steps of creation of life.

Will of God to Create Something:

The first step of creation is will of God to create or make to exist something i.e. living or non-living. He is originator of all the things. As Qur'ān says:-

"بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ"¹²

“He is the one who has originated the heavens and the earth and when he will (originate) a thing.....”

Saying of God: “Be”, and it Becomes.

After the will and decision of God to create or originate something, next step is His saying or order for that thing (living or non-living) to “Be” and that thing becomes as His will. As Qur'ān says:

وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ³

“And when He wills to (originate) a thing, He only says to it: ‘Be’, and it becomes.”

Spiritual Creation of Characteristics / Creation of Sensorial and Cognitive Things:

When we read Qur'ān and Hadith deeply, it seems that before personality and physical creation detritus concepts, characteristics or sensorial and cognitive things are created by God first. For example acts, wisdom, blessing, beauty, the womb, life, death etc. was created by God before creation of personalities and physical bodies. Some arguments about this research are as under:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ⁴

“Whilst Allah has created you and (all) your doings?”

Holy Prophet (ﷺ) says:

"لما خلق الله عز وجل العقل: قال له: قم! فقام: ثم قال له: ادبر فأدبر: ثم قال له اقعد
فقعد: فقال وعزتي ما خلقت خيراً منك -----" ⁵

"When Allah created wisdom: then ordered it to stand, it stood up. Then said to it to turn, it turned. Then said to it to sit, it sat down. Then Allah said: By Grace of mine! I never created anything better than you."

Holy Prophet (ﷺ) says:

"خلق الله الرحمة مائة رحمة -----" ⁶

"Allah created blessing as hundred blessings."

It is said in a Hadith:

"⁷اعطى يوسف وامه ثلثي الحسن، حسن الناس في الوجه والبياض وغير ذلك"

"Joseph and his mother had been bestowed by one third beauty of beauty of all people by face and whiteness and in other kinds."

"انى انا الله الرحمن الرحيم: ⁸خلقت الرحم، وشققت لهما اسماً من اسى فمن وصلها وصلته
ومن قطعها بئته-"

"Indeed, I am Allah, Most Compassionate, Ever-Merciful, I created the womb and derived its name from. My own name and one who joined to it I will join to him, and one who will break relation from it I will break relation from him."

Qur'an Says:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ⁹

"He is who has created death and life."

Allah Almighty also says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسُ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا¹⁰

“Have you not had a glance of (the might of) your Lord, How he lengthens the shadow (till noon)? And had He willed, He could certainly have made it stationary.”⁽³⁾

According to this verse from Surah Al-Furqan highlights the subtle signs of Allah’s supreme authority and wisdom in the natural world. The gradual extension of the shadow until noon is not a random occurrence but a manifestation of divine order and perfect planning. It reflects how Allah regulates the universe with precision, offering benefits such as comfort, time awareness, and daily rhythm to His creation. If Allah had willed, He could have kept the shadow still and unmoving, but He chose to make it dynamic as a sign for reflection. This change in shadow, driven by the sun’s movement, symbolizes the temporary nature of worldly life and serves as a reminder of Allah’s constant control over all things. Scholars from Ahl-e-Sunnat view this verse as an invitation for believers to observe the world with insight, understanding that even the smallest aspects of nature are under Allah’s command. It encourages humility, gratitude, and deeper faith, recognizing that every element of creation serves a purpose within the divine system.

Qur’ān also says:

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَّا خَلْقَ ظِلَالًا¹¹

“And Allah is the one who has made for you shades of many things that He created.”

From all the above verses and Hadiths, it is evident that before creation of personalities and physical bodies detritus characteristics (Sensorial & cognitive), concepts, acts had been created solely by God first of all. It seems that in the same way hearts, feelings, pain, sorrow, happiness, vision, perceiving, hearing, smelling, conversation power, energies, light, sound, hardness, softness, heat, coldness, time, space, days, nights etc. had been created by God as separate realities. We can say that all sensational and cognitive realities e.g. forms of goodness and all forms of badness had been created by God as separate identities. We cannot know and have no complete knowledge that how Allah Almighty created them and in what form, but can say it was spiritual.

Spiritual Creation of Basic Personalities: (تخليق النفس)

The next step was basic creation of personalities. Allah gave feeling of existence and ego to His creatures. Now creatures were able to feel and recognize themselves and each other. They

can recognize and know their Lord (Allah), goodness and badness. Now creatures had a feeling of their basic personalities spiritually. As Qur'an says:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى

شَهِدْنَا¹²

“And (call to mind) when your Lord brought forth the human race from the loins of the children of Adam and made them bear testimony to their own souls (and said :) ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They (all) said: why not! We bear witness (that you alone are our Lord.)”.

This verse from Surah Al-A'raf (7:172) refers to the pre-eternal covenant in which Allah gathered all the souls of the children of Adam before their physical creation and made them testify to His Lordship. When Allah asked, “*Am I not your Lord?*” all souls responded, “*Yes, we bear witness.*” This moment represents a foundational truth in human nature: the innate recognition of Allah as the sole Creator and Sustainer. It indicates that belief in God is not something learned externally but is imprinted within the soul itself. This covenant establishes a moral and spiritual responsibility upon every human being, reminding them that the knowledge of divine truth has always existed within them. Though forgotten in worldly life due to distractions and trials, this internal testimony remains as a witness against a person's denial of faith or negligence. It also explains why messages of divine truth often resonate deeply within the human heart—because they awaken a memory of that original commitment. The verse calls for reflection and self-awareness, reminding individuals of their spiritual origin and accountability in this worldly test.

Qur'an also says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا¹³

“And by the Human Nafas (Basic personality or basic soul) and by the One who provided it with an all-dimensional poise, proportion and perfection, Then He inspired it with (discrimination between) vice and virtue.”

In this way Allah Almighty created basic personalities of all His creatures e.g. Human being, angles, jinnis, animals, trees, sun, moon, stars, earth, heavens, mountains etc etc.

Qur'an Says:

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ¹⁴

“Then He turned towards the heavenly universe-that was (all) smoke. So He said to it (the heavenly spheres) and the earth: Get in either under the influence of mutual attraction and coordination or under eversion and revulsion. ‘Both Said: we submit with pleasure.’”

This verse from Surah Al-A‘raf (7:172) refers to the primordial covenant when Allah gathered all the souls of the descendants of Adam before their physical existence and made them affirm His Lordship. He asked, “*Am I not your Lord?*” and they all replied, “*Yes, we bear witness.*” This divine moment reveals a fundamental truth about human nature: the innate awareness of Allah as the one true Lord. It suggests that the recognition of God is not acquired through external means but is embedded deep within the human soul. This covenant places a spiritual and moral responsibility on every individual, serving as a reminder that the awareness of divine reality is part of one’s original nature. Although this memory may be veiled by worldly distractions and forgetfulness, it remains within as an internal witness to the truth. This also explains why messages of faith and divine guidance often strike a deep chord within the human heart—they resonate with a truth once acknowledged by every soul. The verse encourages introspection, urging individuals to remember their spiritual beginning and to live a life of awareness, responsibility, and accountability in accordance with that eternal pledge.

Qur'an Says:

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ¹⁵

“The sun and the moon are rotating according to the configuration determined (by Him). And the herbs spread over the earth, and all (species of) the trees prostrate themselves (to Him alone).”

Allah says in Qur'an:

وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ¹⁶

“And we made (even) the mountains and the birds subservient to (the command of) Dawud (David), they all celebrate (our) praise) with him jointly.”

These verses tell that each creature recognizes his Lord Allah, and all things of the universe have their own perception, recognition, guidance, remembrance (Zikr) and personality. All things possess perception of some level which Allah Almighty knows.

Completion of Personalities: Mixing of Characteristics with Personalities:

i.e. Creation of Souls: (تخليق الروح)

After creation of basic personalities, Allah Almighty chose some groups of creatures and completed their personalities at different levels by mixing and adhering different characteristics in different proportions with their basic personalities. In this way souls come into being. Now the personalities composed of in the form of souls. There were groups of souls. Even in a group different souls possessed different characteristics e.g. knowledge, wisdom, cognizance, nature, disposition, attitude, vigour, loveliness etc etc. it should be remember that not all the creature possess soul but only selected creature have souls. There are many kinds of souls e.g. Angel's soul, Human's soul, Jinni's soul, Animal's soul. These souls have different characteristics by group and differ also by person to person within a group. Soul is a secret of Gd. No one can know it completely. We have given only a little knowledge about soul.

Qur'an Says:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا¹⁷

“And they ask you about spirit (Soul). Say: The spirit (soul) is from my Lord's command, and you have been given but a very little knowledge.”

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A) Says in a Hadith:

"ان الارواح في الهواء جنود مجنده تلتقى فتشام ، و ما تعارف منها ائتلف وما تناكر منها¹⁸ اختلف"

“Indeed, the souls are in atmosphere like armies in camps, they meet and then separate from each other, who get introduction and recognize there each other, they have affection here, and who was unacquainted there have difference here.”

From above verse and Hadith, we see that spirit is from Lord's command and souls are camping in form of armies, meet and separate each other, introduce and differ each other, recognize and evaluate each other, affectionate and hate each other. It means that souls are reacting like complete spiritual personalities. Their completion is according to their nature, fate and destiny.

Creation of Pairs of Everything:

From study of Qur'ān and Hadith, we obtain such guidance that during process of creation at some stage Allah Almighty create pairs of everything. So everything is in form of pair, we know or don't know it. It seems that this pair formation was spiritually in the beginning and it takes physical form afterwards.

Qur'ān says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ¹⁹

“And of everything we have created two pairs so that you may concentrate and understand.”

خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا²⁰

“And He Who has created all the pairs.”

Creation / Formation of Physical Bodies Appropriate to Each Soul and Nafs:

After completion of spiritual steps Allah Almighty creates / forms appropriate physical bodies in accordance with each Nafs and soul. Each nafs and soul belongs to a special group of creation and has its own characteristics and properties, an appropriate physical body is formed for each Nafs and soul. Some groups of creation possess only Nafs (basic personality) while superior creation groups possess souls. Soul is an assembly of Nafs and additional characteristics and properties. We should not mix up Nafs and soul, each soul has a Nafs but each Nafs do not has a soul. Physical bodies are created by some special matter's essence for different and separate groups, e.g. angles from light, Jinnis from fire, Human from essence of clay / soil and maidens from saffron. Some arguments are as follows:

Qur'ān says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ²¹

“And indeed, We originated (the genesis of) man from the extract of (Chemical ingredients of) clay.”

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ²²

“And created the Jinn from a flame of fire.”

Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"خلق الله الحورالعین من الزعفران"²³

“Allah created the big eyed (heavenly) maidens from saffron.”

It should be keep in mind that light, fire, soil, saffron etc. has their own non-living Nafs perception and understating. These non-living things possess their own properties and characteristics. When a body is made by essence of anyone of these, that body possess his own non-living Nafs & perception already. Allah Almighty tells us the creation and shaping of Adam's body in such way:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ³⁾

“So when I have fashioned him perfectly and breathed into him of my spirit, then fall down to him in prostration.”

Entrance of Soul into Physical Body:

The next and final step for superior creatures is the entrance of soul into Physical body. As Allah says:

"وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَبٍ مَّسْنُونٍ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ

رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ"²⁴

“And recall when your Lord said to the angels: 'I am going to create a human being from dry, dark-sounding clay, formed from aged mud. Then, when I have fashioned him completely and breathed into him my spirit.....’”

Allah Almighty also says:

”ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ²⁵”

“Then He perfected him and breathed into him of His spirit. And He granted you hearing, sight, and hearts — yet you show little gratitude.”

Formation of an Additional Nafs:

After mixing of spiritual Nafs and matter's Nafs a new Nafs came into being which is called Nafs-e-Ammara in Qur'ānic words. This additional Nafs or Nafs-e-Ammara is center of desires, lust and evil attitudes. Qur'ān says:

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ²⁶

“Indeed, the soul is ever-inclined towards evil, except for the one upon whom my Lord has mercy.”

This new Nafs has both the attitudes of goodness and badness but towards evil its inclination is much more. After training this Nafs can be purified and sanctified.

Allah Almighty tells us:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا²⁷

" Successful indeed is the one who purifies it (the soul), and ruined is the one who corrupts it."

This verse emphasizes the central role of the human self (nafs) in achieving success or falling into ruin. It teaches that true success lies in purifying the inner self from evil inclinations, such as greed, arrogance, and lust, and nurturing it with virtues like sincerity, humility, patience, and taqwa (God-consciousness). The self that is disciplined and spiritually refined becomes a source of guidance and peace, leading one toward righteousness and closeness to Allah. On the other hand, the one who allows the nafs to be dominated by worldly desires and sinful tendencies, neglecting its purification, ultimately leads themselves to destruction—both in this life and the hereafter. This verse serves as a clear reminder of personal responsibility: every individual is accountable for their spiritual state and must strive actively to reform and improve their character. It reflects the divine law that inner transformation is a prerequisite for true success and salvation.

Conclusion and Suggestions: The exploration of life's philosophical foundations in light of the Qur'ān and Hadith reveals a profound and spiritually enriched perspective of human existence. Islam does not view life as a random or accidental event, but as a deliberate and purposeful act of divine creation. Every stage of life—from the initial spiritual creation, the formation of the soul, and the shaping of the physical body, to the infusion of life by Allah's command—is meticulously planned and implemented according to divine wisdom. The Qur'ān clearly states that Allah created life and death to test which of us performs best in deeds, emphasizing that the purpose of life transcends mere survival or physical presence. Life is a test, a trust (amānah), and a sacred opportunity to fulfill the higher objectives of morality, worship, service to creation, and closeness to the Creator.

Through the study of selected Qur'ānic verses and Hadith, it becomes evident that life is a dynamic journey that requires awareness, reflection, and ethical conduct. The Islamic narrative stresses the inner development of the soul, the regulation of desires, and the purification of the Nafs. The Qur'ānic emphasis on the soul's progression—from the commanding self (Nafs-e-Ammārah) to the tranquil self (Nafs-e-Mutma'innah)—reflects a divine roadmap for personal growth and ultimate salvation. Furthermore, the concept of life as a trust and a test highlights the importance of accountability and conscious living. The Hadith literature complements this by offering practical examples and guidance for ethical behavior, compassion, justice, and humility. In contrast to materialistic and nihilistic views of life that are often prevalent in modern times, the Islamic worldview provides a holistic framework that integrates the physical, emotional, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of existence. This integrative approach offers clarity and direction, especially for individuals grappling with existential uncertainty. Life, in Islam, is not merely about personal gain or temporal achievements but about fulfilling one's responsibility towards God, society, and oneself. The recognition that everything—including life and death—is under Allah's absolute control instills a sense of peace, trust, and purpose in the believer.

Moreover, the process of creation described in the Qur'ān, from the will of God to the command "Be" and the creation of characteristics, personalities, souls, and bodies, affirms the metaphysical depth of existence. Each soul is unique and carries its own divine imprint, and its placement in a suitable physical body signifies Allah's perfect planning and balance in creation. The pairing of all things, the creation of the Nafs and its spiritual faculties, and the entry of the soul into the physical realm show that life is deeply interconnected with the unseen spiritual world.

In conclusion, the Islamic philosophy of life, grounded in divine revelation, presents a comprehensive and balanced model that satisfies both the intellectual and spiritual needs of human beings. It offers a purposeful direction that leads not only to inner fulfillment but also to eternal success. It is now essential to revive this understanding in personal, social, and educational settings to foster a meaningful and spiritually aligned human society. To preserve and promote this valuable understanding, it is essential to bridge the gap between Islamic teachings and contemporary life. Educational curricula at all levels should include comprehensive teachings about the Islamic philosophy of life, drawing from Qur'ān and Hadith to build a spiritually aware and ethically sound society. Teachers and scholars should be trained to present these concepts in a relevant and engaging manner to today's youth, who often struggle with questions of purpose and meaning.

Furthermore, community-based initiatives such as lectures, interactive sessions, and mentorship programs should be organized regularly to instill Islamic values in practical contexts. These efforts can help counter the rise of materialism, depression, and identity crises among individuals, especially young Muslims. Islamic centers, mosques, and media outlets can play a vital role in promoting this narrative through culturally sensitive and intellectually stimulating content. In the academic field, scholars should be encouraged to conduct interdisciplinary research combining Islamic studies with philosophy, psychology, and social sciences to produce accessible and credible literature. Comparative studies with

Western philosophical models can demonstrate the superiority and harmony of Islamic thought in addressing life's deepest questions. Collaboration between traditional scholars and modern thinkers is also vital to make this body of knowledge more inclusive and impactful.

Moreover, spiritual training programs and workshops that focus on self-purification (tazkiyah), ethical behavior, and soul development can be offered to equip individuals with tools for personal growth. This spiritual dimension should be emphasized as the cornerstone of true success in both this life and the Hereafter. Reviving Islamic teachings about life's meaning can help build a more compassionate, morally conscious, and purpose-driven global community.

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