

What Is Our Divine Purpose?

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What is our divine purpose? Why are we here? Some would say God created us to love Him. But we aren't fawning sycophants. So why *did* God create us? Can we even know? To answer this basic question, we have to go all the way back to the beginning.

In the beginning, there was God. There was only God. God was all: good, bad, right, wrong, moral, immoral, divine, evil. In the Old Testament, someone once asked, "Who are you?" God replied, "I am." That reply tells us of God's totality. Just imagine if you were all—the totality of existence—and self-aware. Might you wonder why you are, what you are, and if your existence is adequate? Might you wonder if you could be better? If so, what of all that you are might you want to discard in order to become better? For that matter, what, exactly, *is* 'better'? How would you answer your questions? Perhaps you might gather facts, examine data, then formulate a hypothesis and test it.

So God created this multiverse; it contained all that could be and all that would be. And He started the clock—time—ticking. God created us in His image and gave each of us a part of Himself: our souls. God gave us free will for *us* to determine what to keep and what to discard.

Think about it. The Bible, except for the several verses of 'begats', is full of guidelines and instructions as to how we should live, what we should and should not do. To make a rather long story short, God gives us many broad and narrow examples of good, bad, right, wrong, moral, immoral, divine and evil. He instructs us to, in our own lives, discern good from bad, right from wrong, moral from immoral, and divine from evil. He further exhorts us ever to choose the former and always to reject the latter. This is set forth in page after page of the Bible. But we remain free to choose as we wish because we have free will.

So we live our lives, discerning, choosing and rejecting, and taking action and not taking action. They are interesting words, but what do they mean at this level? 'Discern' means to identify the differences among the things, situations, actions and events we encounter every day, every minute, and to determine if they are good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral, or divine or evil; to discern means to judge. In this context, 'choose' means to bind to ourselves—to our souls—that which we determine by using our free will to be good, right, moral and/or divine. 'Reject' means to separate from ourselves—our souls—that which we determine to be bad, wrong, immoral and/or evil. And it's not enough just to *think* of those differences. We are also called to act, or not to act, based on what we discern. We are called to judge whether ideas are worthy of God, and we are called to judge whether actions are worthy of God. So we always bind to us or we separate from us; we always discern. We have free will to make our own choices and decisions. God encourages us, sometimes very subtly, to choose good, right, moral and divine. But He allows us to make the decision.

Hell vs. Eternal Damnation

What is hell and what is eternal damnation? As St. Augustine said, hell is a state of separation from God. That state can encompass everything from *almost* one with God to *almost* totally separate from God. Even though God is all around us, in everything and everyone, we, this multiverse and its contents, and that which we choose and reject, are neither one with God nor separate from God. We exist in a state of separation from God; it is hell, as is making all those judgements we are called to make—yes, we *are* called to judge).

So how does hell differ from eternal damnation? Hell is here and now—this multiverse—because even though God is with us, we are not one with Him; we are in a state of separation from God. Eternal damnation will come after God makes the final judgement. Eternal damnation is, in fact, nothing at all; it is not a place or a state of being. After God makes the final judgement, that which He chooses will be eternally bound to Him; that which He rejects will be eternally separated from Him. Now remember that God is the alpha *and* the omega; He is the beginning *and* the end, the first *and* the last. From our perspective, only God was in the beginning and only God will be at the end of times. Thus it can only follow that that which God rejects, which He separates from Himself, will be not; it will cease to be. *That* is the true meaning of eternal damnation: to not be part of, to not be one with, God for the rest of eternity. That is, eternal damnation is simply to not be, for there will be nothing other than God. After the final judgement, that which God rejects will no longer be; it will be as if those things never existed.

And what does it mean to 'bind to our souls'? Our souls come from God, are part of God; that which we reject, we separate from ourselves and our souls and, thus, we separate from God and consign to hell. Recall that St. Augustine described hell as 'a state of separation from God'. (*See sidebar 'Hell vs. Eternal Damnation'.*) In this existence, we are, by that definition, in hell because we are in a state of separation from God. We are not one with God during this life. It is why we pray that those who die become 'one with God', that their souls return to God.

What happens to all those choices and rejections we make? They are, in a manner of speaking, recorded in our souls. As Bishop Fulton Sheen said, our souls are like cash register tapes on which every thought and deed is recorded. Thoughts are 'free'. That is, we are free to think any thoughts as part of the discernment process. We *must* be free to think all these different things for there is no other way for us to exercise our free wills, no other way to discern. We *must* be able to ponder the positives and negatives of ideas and actions before we can see where a potential choice fits. Then we decide to choose it or reject it; we judge whether it is worthy of God. Our souls record all of our decisions and actions: the ones we choose and bind to our souls and those we reject from our souls and consign to hell.

So what are we to do? How are we to fulfill our divine purpose? To determine that, we must understand the nature of the multiverse. It is bound to time, to the past, present and future. The past is all that has happened. It is immutable, it cannot be changed. Were it possible to travel to the past, we would be as ghosts: able to observe what transpired, but unable to change it. So we can only observe the past. But observation is good, for the past provides us multitudes of examples of how well, or poorly, we are collectively fulfilling our divine purpose. The future is infinite; all that could be, might be, and will be is there, waiting to happen or not to happen. (*See sidebar 'Science'.*)

Most things just happen; the ancient Greeks called this 'accident'; these things simply are. While these happenings may have no meaning, they almost always have a definite purpose. It is often asked, "Why did God let *this* wrong thing happen?" or "Why did God let *that* bad thing happen?" These are the wrong questions to ask. We must always remember that what has happened is immaterial in and of itself; nothing that has happened really matters. All that matters in this life is how we react. Becoming angry with God or rejecting God because of something that happened is maldiscernment.

How we respond to thoughts and events is what truly matters. Specifically, we must discern good from bad, right from wrong, moral from immoral, and divine from evil; and then we must always choose the former and ever reject the latter. So we should really ask ourselves, "Was that event good or bad? Was my thought right or wrong? Was his choice moral or immoral? Was her action divine or evil?" The past doesn't mean much, but it is certainly instructive.

Some things do, or do not, happen because of what we discern and choose or reject; that is, some things happen as a direct result of actions we take or do not take. The present gives us the most difficulty primarily because what we perceive as 'the present' is, in fact, the past even though it only barely came to be. "But how can the present be the past?!?" you cry. Remember that sound takes time to reach our ears, light takes time to reach our eyes, and our senses take time to reach our brains. By the time we perceive something, it has already come to be and cannot be changed; it has already passed into the past. Strange as it may sound, we do, in fact, live in the past; the hell of it is that we cannot change it. But again, we must understand the past in order to guide our future.

Science

How does the modern study of physics fit in to this? Physicists speak of the uncertainty principle and of the fact that observing something changes what happens. They've observed that a photon will travel two paths, but when they measure a photon, it travels one path or the other. I suspect what they see in the former case is the very close, blurry future; they likely see a tiny bit of two universes at once. But when they perform the measurement, they see that one universe came to pass whilst the other did not; hence the photon takes one path or the other. It may well be that there is only the past and the future, that which was and that which could be. It may be that what we call the present is simply our perception of the very immediate past.

'Accident' is what it is. We cannot change it. Asking why God lets anything happen is pointless. So what are we to do? That answer is right in front of us at our fingertips. The Bible tells us what to do. What happens ('accident') is, in fact, immaterial because we cannot change it; it has already happened. What matters is *how we react*. Again, throughout the Bible except for the several pages of begats, we are called to discern, at the least, good from bad, right from wrong, moral from immoral, and divine from evil. We are further exhorted ever to choose the former and always to reject the latter; we are called to perform good and right deeds and to do moral and divine deeds.

It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. But flattery appeals to vanity, and we know God is not vain. Nevertheless, God always asks us to imitate Him. To do so, we must live good, right, moral and divine lives to the best of our ability. Some people fondly ask, "What would Jesus do?" The answer is the same.

"But," you sigh, "we are not God, so how can we be divine?" Some years ago, my brother suggested that we should try to be like God. I thought about that for a bit and disagreed, saying that doing that is akin to aiming a dart at the outer edge of the dartboard or at the backboard; on average, we aim at the generally desired vicinity. But that's not good enough. Rather, I said that we should try to *be* God. In fact, because a part of us comes from God, we *can* act divinely. Thus, we really *should* try to be God; we should always aim for the bullseye. That we cannot actually *be* God in this life is immaterial and would be a poor excuse not to try. What matters is that we always try, inch by inch, step by step. Because our goal is for most of our essence (perhaps what ancient Greeks called 'substance') to become one with God when we die. (*See sidebar 'Purgatory'*)

So every moment, we must discern; we must choose and do what is good, right, moral and divine. We must always reject that which is bad, wrong, immoral and evil. We should so love God that we try to *be* God in this life. As children and young adults, we often fail; but failure is no excuse to stop trying. It's a lifelong process of improving the consistency of our efforts. This process was intended to take a lifetime.

The more we practice living good, right, moral and divine lives, the easier it becomes to do and the more consistent we become doing it. The better we practice this foundation of life, the more elegantly the rest of life falls into place. Some people are, and have been, more successful in their efforts than others. Sadly, some don't seem to try, and still others seem to think that they have become God during their lifetimes. But what others did do or did not do is simply immaterial 'accident' that happened in the past. All that matters is that each of us strives to discern, choose and do good, right, moral and divine every moment of our lives. It is our free will to choose. In the end, God will review what we chose and how we lived and make His final judgement.

From our perspective, we must continually improve our ability to fulfill our divine purpose: to choose good, right, moral and divine thoughts and actions, and to reject bad, wrong, immoral and evil thoughts and deeds, regardless of what happens all around us. It is the foundation of our being upon which we build our lives. From God's perspective, we will and have already fulfilled our divine purpose. That purpose is to help God determine what to eternally bind to Himself and what to eternally reject from Himself, to help God determine what's worth keeping and what must be consigned to eternal damnation, that is, to be unmade. In a sentence, our divine purpose is to be God's filter.

Purgatory

Where does Purgatory fit in? Remember that time, as we know it, exists only in this multiverse. For God, there is no time as we know it; God is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Note that it was not written that God 'was the beginning' and 'will be the end'. Rather, God is the beginning *and* the end, the alpha *and* the omega. Simultaneously. At once. From God's perspective, this multiverse would be, began, was, and ended all in a moment. When we die, our souls return to God; from His perspective, the souls of all who did live, do live, and will live, return to Him all at once. And immediately become one with Him. So there is no period of 'waiting' for redemption; there is no Purgatory. And God has already made His final judgement because He already has all of our input.