

## **What Is Divine Life, and What Are Its Characteristics?**

### **Is There a Particular Advantage to Living a Divine Life?**

The term 'lifestyle' is widely and especially discussed in various fields such as psychology, sociology, politics, medicine, sports, spirituality, and more. Broadly defined, a lifestyle is a set of habits, behaviors, decisions, relationships, and thoughts that shape how we live.

Based on the domain in which the concept of lifestyle is examined, it can be associated with various descriptive terms or modifiers, such as rural lifestyle, nomadic lifestyle, urban lifestyle, Eastern lifestyle, Western lifestyle, Islamic lifestyle, healthy lifestyle, unhealthy lifestyle, individual lifestyle, social lifestyle, and religious lifestyle!

In previous lessons, we explained the five dimensions of human existence in detail. Based on this framework, there are five types of lifestyle: inanimate (stone-like), vegetative, animalistic, intellectual, and supra-rational (unique to humans). Since the ultimate truth of our existence lies in the supra-rational realm, the lifestyle that corresponds to this is the healthiest and truest way of living we can choose, that is, divine life.

The purpose of our creation is to become like Allah. If our lifestyle does not lead us closer to this goal, we must change this style and modify our choices, relationships, behaviors, and thought patterns. The best way that brings us closer to a healthy and divine life and the ultimate human perfection is to believe wholeheartedly in Allah as our guide and Lord and to be completely submit to His will and decisions.

Understanding the characteristics of various kinds of lifestyle helps us choose them wisely. Each lifestyle has its own unique features and requirements. The important point about divine life is that according to the vastness of human existence, this type of lifestyle also has deep and vast components. In this lesson, we briefly discuss some examples of the characteristics of this type of lifestyle in order to have a touchstone for identifying our lifestyle.

### **Balance Is the Result of Living a Divine Life**

One of the most important characteristics of a divine lifestyle is maintaining balance and nourishing all the aspects of existence appropriately. Humans achieve balance when the lower aspects of their being are managed by the supra-rational dimension. This balance manifests outwardly through behaviors, thoughts, relationships, and choices, which collectively reflect one's lifestyle.

In the previous lessons, in introducing the characteristics of a normal and balanced person, we stated that Allah, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Household of the Prophet), and *jihad* (striving in the way of God) are the top beloveds of such a person. The manifestation of this feature in reality becomes clear when the demands of the supra-rational faculty can be preferred to the demands of the lower parts of existence; for example, during the Iran-Iraq war, many seminary students avoided to participate in the war under the pretext of pursuing knowledge, which is intellectual perfection, and preferred studying to their main duty at that time, which was *jihad*.

Allah, our Mentor, provides us with various role models to help us understand our responsibilities in different circumstances by emulating them. The event of Ashura

serves as a practical lesson on living a true and divine life, where people sacrifice their lower parts for the three main beloveds. Thirst, hunger, wounded bodies, love of children, family, wealth, status and nothing else prevented people from giving their lives to their beloved.

These decisions are always available and open to everyone. Throughout our lives, we encounter numerous situations where we must select between various paths. Our decisions are greatly influenced by the depth of our existential dimensions and lifestyle. Regrettably, we often compromise and debase our divine and eternal self in favor of our inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, or intellectual desires.

We should align our earthly, academic, spiritual, leisure, and financial plans in a manner that when we come to a point of decision-making, we do not experience uncertainty, hesitation, or burden. To avoid hesitation and confusion during critical moments, we must prepare in advance by nourishing all the dimensions of our existence appropriately and achieving balance. Proper nourishment means giving each aspect its due importance to prevent the lower dimensions from overpowering us and hindering our correct choices. In other words, our nourishment should be used to adjust and coordinate our lifestyle with our main beloved.

If we neglect the nourishment of our lower dimensions, such as recreation, maintaining physical health, and acquiring knowledge, and fail to maintain balance, we will certainly struggle in nourishing the supra-rational faculty. In such cases, the lower aspects may overpower the supra-rational aspect and dominate us. Even our academic and cultural activities can hinder us from reaching our ultimate goal.

## **Love Is the Characteristic of Divine Life**

Love is one of the components that helps us determine our lifestyle. In a healthy and divine lifestyle, love and kindness abound, as human growth and maturity increase one's capacity for love. This type of lifestyle obliges us to attend to our family emotionally, and we cannot shirk our duty to express affection under the pretext of studies, and social or political work.

When we choose Allah as our ultimate Beloved, our love for other beloveds becomes more heartfelt under the shadow of this divine love. For instance, spousal love for the sake of Allah is vastly different from love solely for the spouse. Acting out of love for Allah empowers us and infuses us with affection and joy.

If love for Allah flows within the members of our family and we adopt a divine life, we will never grow tired of one another. As the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) stated, as a person's faith increases, his affection for women grows as well.<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the term "women" in this saying symbolically includes men, children, parents, friends, and all people. Thus, faith and a healthy lifestyle guide us toward greater love and compassion. The more our faith increases, the more our love and affection for our spouses, family members, and even animals, plants, and other beings in the world increases.

## **Adherence to *Wilayah* Is the Outcome of Divine Life**

One of the key features of divine life is the centrality of *wilayah* (guardianship). This means that the criteria and standards in our educational system and this type of

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<sup>1</sup>. Qadi Nu'man, *Da'a'im al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 192.

lifestyle are set in such a way that in every choice, relationship, behavior, and thought, we aim to gain the satisfaction of our infallible guardian or Imam. Paying attention to this matter will undoubtedly give a distinct character to our choices regarding our field of study, career, marriage, place of residence, friends, and other decisions.

Based on the definition of a lifestyle centered on *wilayah*, the degree of connection with Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) and having a concern for removing the obstacles to his advent are essential.

If we truly seek to choose a healthy and divine life, the advent of Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance) must hold a central place in our lives. That is, we must constantly ask ourselves these questions: Where do we stand in the army of the Imam? What burden have we lifted from his shoulders? What steps have we taken to remove the obstacles to his advent? And how much of our life is tied to him?

Our only path to salvation and success at the End Times is to strive to remove the obstacles to his advent based on our abilities and talents. When we live in accordance with Imam Mahdi's teachings (May Allah hasten his advent) and bridge the gap between us and him, all our weaknesses and shortcomings will be rectified.

If all the people of the world choose a healthy and divine life and adopt the divine system of love, no wars or conflicts will arise. Such an elevated and advanced society will manifest itself with the advent of Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance). Wherever there is conflict and discord, there is undoubtedly an element of selfishness involved. What Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his

reappearance) does is to regulate our hierarchy of love so that ego and self-centeredness are set aside and give way to Allah.

In this lesson, we briefly discussed three features of divine life: balance, kindness, and the concern for supporting the Imam. When our existential faculties are balanced—meaning that the supra-rational aspect governs the lower dimensions—the conditions are created for us to move toward the best decisions, relationships, behaviors, and thoughts in life.

Kindness and compassion are other characteristics of this type of lifestyle and are the signs of human growth and maturity. The more developed we become, the greater our love and kindness toward those around us will be.

If we live a true and divine life, we must undoubtedly have a concern for supporting our Imam. This concern prompts us to reflect on aiding the Imam in our choices and relationships, and to choose paths that contribute to removing the obstacles to his advent.

Divine life has many features and characteristics, of which we only mentioned a few. What aspects of this type of lifestyle are you familiar with? We would be delighted if you share your thoughts with us.