

Life



Living our lives is a highly dynamic, fascinating process. There are various aspects to life. It has many facets and everybody has their own idea, perspective, view, interpretation, logic system, rationalization, reasoning, etc. Within this system that is prevalent, accepted and chugging along we find all or most of our views challenged most of the time. Each mind clashing with another's and either differing or challenging or defying or somewhat agreeing with another's view. Little did the mind realize that it was not meant to be so. We were not supposed to be rudderless navigating life without any guidelines or signs and directions.

So, we struggled.

We looked at the birds and wanted to fly. We couldn't. All attempts were inadequate and never succeeded, because that was never meant to be. Then we tried being like animals; eating, drinking, sleeping, running, chasing, attacking each other, thinking might is right. We thought the winner would be the one best in mind and body. But there were no winners. We lost and won randomly in various aspects of life. There was no ensuring victory. We could only try. When we won, we didn't really know how. We claimed planning, thinking, hard work. Even though it seemed to work, it wasn't without flaws. We were only floundering at best. Of course, this struggling was taken as living life. We were somewhat pacified.

Little did we realize there is a 'Master Planner'. He planned for us an approach. When we embark on this journey, life and its purpose slowly unravel like a very beautiful treasure, and as we comprehend this we are already implementing what we learnt. This - to navigate the world. And real success is for the ones who best implement it. And rewards waiting in the Hereafter. Yes. With eternal existence and giving peace and never-ending joy - relieved of difficulties, pain, suffering, insults and evil.

So, this is the answer to what is life. Each phase, each difficulty, each crossroad a learning experience.

- Not succeeding at something teaches *tawakkul* (reliance) among other things.
- Fear teaches *taqwa* and much more.
- Pain, illness, suffering, bereavement teach a higher purpose – the life of Hereafter.
- Feelings of anger and helplessness and insecurity teach *sabr*, which is mainly to persist in striving.
- Loss of wealth teaches there is more to *rizq* (sustenance) than money. It includes well-being, health, family, etc.

Why? Because He willed it so. For our 'ultimate well-being'.

And how? Let's think, see, and look at things with a different lens - the real one if you'd like to call it so.

In this, our journey, we are all equal - striving for the same goal. We have a mind. We are superior to animals. We have choice. Respect is due to every single individual. Here begins the real striving. Living this life within 'His framework'. We might see the frame as limiting, difficulty as suffering. Why we do see it so? Because we never saw the whole deen – **a complete way of life.**

If we did, we would see - see clearly that it is not confining but wide open with immense potential in working on different areas contributing to the 'ultimate success'. What seemed to be limits is only His design meant to protect us. Calmed in mind we start seeing real beauty...

His Plan. His Will. His Help. His Care. We can then understand everything in the right perspective.

The Qur'an shows us how:

- *And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]. (2:45)*

To be noted is the **how**.

With patience and prayer. And being humbly submissive. We are being trained to be obedient servants.

- *No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah – He will guide his heart. And Allah is knowing of all things. (64:11)*

To be noted is the **how**.

By His permission. And then if we accepted and believed in Him, He will guide our heart. What a blessing.

- *And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. (2:155)*

To be noted is **how**.

He tests by putting in our hearts fear, hunger, loss of wealth, and lives and fruits of our labour. But when we are patient, good tidings are given.

- *Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So, he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [success]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion. (3:185)*

To be noted is **how**.

Real success is defined. And the reality of this world and the next is clearly stated.

- *O mankind, remember the favour of Allah upon you. Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the heaven and earth? There is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded? (35:3)*

So, the question is **how** do you believe what is not true. He, our Creator provides for us. Worship is due to Him alone without partners. So find out what He wants from us every single day in every aspect of life and do it in the best possible manner.

- *Only those fear Allah from among His servants who have knowledge. (35:28)*

And **how**?

Only when we know Allah will we fear to displease Him in all matters.

A hadith states the following:

"Whoever follows a path to seek knowledge, Allah will show him the way to Paradise. The angels lower their wings being pleased with the one who seeks knowledge... The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like that of the moon over all other heavenly bodies..." (Narrated by Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

For as Allah says in the Qur'an:

- *We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. (41:53)*

And **how**?

By making evident the wisdom of the Creator. The different inclinations and opposite natures that people have, and the (divine) decrees to which man is subjected, having no power to change and over which he has no control.

- *Unquestionably He is, of all things, encompassing. (41:54)*

Yet again, to be noted is **how**.

By His knowledge and power He is controlling all things. So whatever He wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen.

- *And if Allah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving creature on the surface of the earth but He gives them respite to an appointed term. (35:45)*

And finally, **how**?

He gives us time to repent for as long as we live. Then on the Day of Resurrection, He will bring us to account and will reward or punish each one according to his deeds.

Wal-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbil-`ālameen.