

# Suicide It's Not An Escape!

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In a society that prides itself for freedom and liberty to attain maximum happiness, suicide ought to be the furthest from the mind? Yet it is not an uncommon practice and may be someone who is close to you and opens up to you and you may be the only person who can help. Suicide, resorted to in times of crisis as an end to those worries, is not only prohibited in Islam but it is also not an escape. This article illustrates how Islam provides an alternative that is worth living for!

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All praise and gratitude is to Allah - our Creator, Provider and the Maintainer of all the worlds.

## ***In Allah's care...***

He brought together the sperm and the ovum from deep within two separate individuals, lodged the fertilized egg safely and prepared the uterus for the creation of a life - helpless and dependent on its Creator from the day of conception and beyond its birth, the vibrant youth, prudent adulthood up to its death at a senile old age and beyond to another life - its real home. Not a day passes except that the same Creator sustains this life - and the six billion others like it on the planet - with attention to the most minute of its needs. It breathes effortlessly without even noticing the complex art and perfection in the organs that enable it.

## ***Why despair then...***

With such care and attention for detail in each individual, is it then warranted to despair of the help of the most Merciful?

Along the same lines we find these verses in the Quran, (their translation) "*Has there not been over man a period of time, when he was not a thing worth mentioning? Verily, We have created man from a drop of mixed fluid (of man and woman) in order to try him so We made him a hearer and seer. Verily, We showed him the way (gave him guidance in all matters), whether he be grateful or ungrateful (lit. kafoor i.e. who conceals and denies the favours or signs of Allah).*" [Surah Insan 76:1-3]

## ***For us is to worship and the provision is from Him...***

He created us with such care and attention for a noble purpose and assured us that He will sustain and look after each and every need. He informs in the Quran, (its translation) "*I did not create the Jinn or the human except that they worship me; I do not want any provision from them (neither for themselves nor for any creatures) nor do I seek that they should feed Me (i.e. provide for whom I provide). Verily, Allah He is the Provider (of all), possessor of Power, the Most Strong.*" [Surah Dhariyat 51:56-58]

## ***Why the trials and hardship...***

Thus Allah took the responsibility of providing for and looking after all affairs of each and every individual and reassured He is the One fully capable of that. Our concern is not to be anxious even in the

most trying circumstance for Allah promised to provide a way out; rather our concern is to worship Him by living a life of obedience to Him and excellence in every walk of life. Any hardship faced is no more than a trial to prove that our only concern is the approval of our actions by Allah before anyone else in the community and even before our own pleasure. Allah promised in the Quran, "*Alif, Lam, Mim, do people think that they will be left alone on (merely) saying: 'We believe,' and not be tested (in their claims)? We have indeed tested those who were before them; and Allah will certainly make it known those who were truthful and He will certainly make known the liars.*" [Surah Ankabut 29:1-2]

***Thus suicide forbidden in Quran and hadith...***

Given that Allah promised to undertake the sustenance and any delay thereafter or withholding of any of its needs being merely for a trial, then there is no room for a person to take away the life that Allah has created for an important purpose and meticulously sustaining it each second for that purpose. He prohibited the destroying of ones life in any manner as understood by the general meaning of the wording of this verse, "*And do not throw (yourselves) with your own hands to destruction; but work (deeds of) excellence for verily Allah loves the people of excellence.*" [Surah Baqarah 2:195] Thus we are ordered to not destroy ourselves rather to direct the mind and energies to doing good deeds that please Allah. In another verse, "*And do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is Most merciful to you.*" [Surah Nisaa 4:29]

In fact the taking of even one life is regarded as the taking of the life of the whole of mankind, "*Whoever kills a soul - unless for another soul or for corruption (vice and mischief spread) in the land - it is as if he had slain the whole of mankind. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved the whole of mankind.*" [Surah Ma'idah 5:32] The noun, soul (nafs) in the verse is without the definite particle. In Arabic, an indefinite noun in a conditional clause gives the meaning of generality and comprehensiveness. Thus, the verse is not only concerning the taking of a soul of another person but even ones own life for both are souls created and entrusted to us by Allah. This is not only prohibited but strongly condemned as though he killed the whole of mankind.

The Messenger of Allah (May the peace and blessings be on him) also prohibited it as learnt from the following hadith. "*Whoever throws himself down from a mountain and kills himself, he will be in the Fire of Hell throwing himself down for ever and ever. Whoever drinks poison and kills himself will have the poison in his hand, drinking it in the Fire of Hell for ever and ever. Whoever kills himself with a piece of iron (i.e. a weapon) will have that piece of iron in his hand, stabbing himself in the stomach with it in the Fire of Hell forever and ever.*" [Compiled in Sahih Bukhari].

***The pain of suicide is for ever...***

A person, who commits suicide, does so believing it an escape from his crisis so he ends his life willing to bear a moment of pain and may throw himself of a cliff. Yet this hadith shows that he actually brings upon himself that pain not just momentarily but again and again in Hell-fire.

***But from His mercy He may forgive suicide - so why not stay alive in His mercy...***

However, from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, He may forgive any sin committed by a person no matter how grave or He may punish in this life or in Hell-fire, except for Shirk. Associating partners to Allah (Shirk) in divinity and Lordship is the only sin that Allah does not forgive. The one doing shirk may seek forgiveness from the partner he claims to Allah in divinity but he is seeking forgiveness from someone who doesn't have the authority to forgive! This principle of forgiveness is established clearly

in the Quran, “*Verily Allah does not forgive that you set up partners with Him but He forgives anything else for whoever He wishes.*” [Surah Nisaa 4:48]

A person who is confident of the mercy of Allah in forgiving him for committing suicide, shouldn't he have the same confidence that if he doesn't commit suicide, Allah from His mercy and care will alleviate his hardship and distress? If it takes time, it is no more than a temporary trial.

### ***A day's worth for a Muslim...***

An extra day alive is that much longer to work good deeds to distance oneself from the eternal torment of Hell-fire and a golden opportunity to win a better place in Paradise. It is for deserving of this mercy of Allah and a Paradise which no eye has ever seen, nor any ear has ever heard nor conceived by any mind, it is for this a Muslim is directed to strive every moment he is alive by the favour of Allah. A Believer capitalizes on each breath Allah allows him - only the ignorant would throw away such a bargain! Allah says (translated it means), “*And whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) will see it (on the Day of Resurrection to be rewarded) and whoever does mischief equal to the weight of an atom shall see it.*” [Surah Zalzalah 99:7-8]

### ***Reassurances in Quran and a purpose to live...***

Thus a person contemplating suicide finds reassurance in the Quran and purpose for life. He finds an explanation for ease or hardship. He realizes that every hardship expiates for his sins and elevates his rank in Paradise. He thus finds internal peace and pleasure even in external hardship and suffering and strives to acquire or lose the eternal comfort in the Hereafter. The feelings of depression, anxiety, hopelessness and self-loathing diminish as a Believer contemplates on the message of the Quran, reflects on life and patterns the life according to its wise injunctions. Initially, this achievement may be for moments only but with time and following the guidance of the Quran it may become a constant state.

### ***Mixing with people...***

The effectiveness of this process can be enhanced tremendously by interaction with other people, righteous Muslims and especially the people with Islamic knowledge and counselors. As negative feelings develop and pessimism sets in, they can draw attention to vital realities of life and the Hereafter as well as be the encouraging spirit. Not everyone will be sensitive nor can the person open up to just anyone, however it is good to at least with some who is understanding and able to help. As for those who make the person feel worthless for reasons that are insignificant in Allah's sight, not interacting with them is understandable.

### ***Self-worth... with people...and with Allah...***

No matter how insignificant a person is in the eyes of his peers, he is important enough in the sight of Allah that He created him with such care from even before birth. The society judges a person for wealth, power, success in career, physical attraction and other worldly traits. But a person who has none of this or has lost everything may still be the dearest to Allah, the angels and the believers who are rightly guided! In Islam, the worth of an individual is solely based on taqwa - God consciousness that produces righteousness and piety. A peasant or a bankrupt businessman may be superior to a CEO of the most successful organization on earth - if he excels in taqwa! Allah makes this point clear in the Quran, (its translation reads) “*O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that*

*(believer) who has the most taqwa (piety). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-aware.*" [Surah Hujurat 49:13]

***Even at times of weakness, step at a time...***

Although reassured that in the sight of Allah the worthiness of an individual is measured only by taqwa, a person may still be weary - especially at times of high stress, depression and anxiety - of him being able to attain this taqwa and self-worth.

Yet the Quran inspires and motivates even the weakest of the Believers to achieve the highest success. Allah declares in the Quran reassuringly, *"Whoever works righteousness - whether male or female - while he (or she) is a Believer, verily, to him We will give a good life (in this life with contentment etc), and certainly We shall give them a reward (in the eternal Hereafter) according to the best of what they used to do."* [Surah Nahl 16:97] Thus when overwhelmed by stress and concerns, doing noble and pious deeds may seem far, but a believer finds reassurance that he or she will be rewarded by the best acts he does at any time in his life and momentary lapses may well be forgiven by Allah the Oft-Forgiving, Merciful.

And at that moment of trauma when little seems possible, a believer is reminded in the Quran, *"And whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) will see it (on the Day of Resurrection to be rewarded) and whoever does mischief equal to the weight of an atom shall see it."* [Surah Zalzalah 99:7-8] So instead of despair, a believer is found unconcerned of the society's estimation of him or of a major worldly loss, there is neither grief over what destroyed the past nor sorrow over what the future holds, rather the only concern is to do even an atoms weight of good at that difficult moment - even if it is merely persevering patiently till a better moment later on when big acts of piety can be performed because eventually the reward from Allah, the most Merciful, is in accordance to the best actions performed by the person. In fact patiently persevering in such a difficult moment may rank as the best of deeds!

***Even the worst moment can actually become the best...***

In fact not a moment passes by in the life of a Muslim even if a catastrophe befalls him, except that it can be a success and a bonus for the Believer if he bears it patiently! Even while overwhelmed by grief, anxieties and a desire to finish it all with suicide, merely holding on till it passes away even without doing any other good deed in that state can actually turn that depressing moment into one of triumph and sure success so why resort to suicide then? The Messenger of Allah (May the peace and blessings be on him) said, *"The case of a believer is amazing! Every affair of his is good for him, and this is not for anyone except a believer: if he experiences something pleasant, he is grateful to Allah and that is good for him; and if he comes across some adversity, he is patiently persevering (i.e. has sabr) and that too is good for him!"* [Compiled in Sahih Muslim]

In fact we learn from another hadith that, *"When Allah wants well for a slave of His, He hastens the punishment in this world (rather than the severe and eternal Hereafter). And when Allah wants for His slave bad, He withholds from him (the punishment for) his sin until he takes it from him on the Day of Resurrection."* [An authentic hadith collected by Tirmidhi] Thus the one suffering hardship may actually be more beloved to Allah than one who is being left and not punished despite sins and impiety. The Prophet informed, *"Nothing strikes a Muslim - no fatigue, illness, worry, grief, hurt nor sorrow; not*

*even a prick of a thorn - except that Allah wipes off due to it some of his sins.*" [Collected in Sahih of Bukhari & Muslim]

***Even if his world seems to be falling apart...***

With a sense of worth for even the smallest good deeds, a believer bears the most trying of hardships reassured that as the Messenger of Allah said, "*Verily, the greatness of the reward is with the greatness (or severity) of the trial. Verily if Allah loves a people He tries them (with trials).*" [An authentic hadith collected by Tirmidhi]

Thus, what may seem to another as his world falling apart in front of his eyes and nothing to live for, a Believer sees in the same an equally great world of unending bliss and comfort being prepared for him or her in Paradise so long as he bears it with patience for although this life is for being tried repetitively, "*Verily along with every difficulty is relief (that comes thereafter).*" [Surah Inshirah 94:6]

***The relief is near - a guarantee from Allah...***

If the relief doesn't come immediately, it's not far. This, Allah guarantees, "*Or did you think that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) that came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, 'When will come the help of Allah?' Yes! Certainly, the help of Allah is near!*" [Surah Baqarah 2:214].

***So why then would anyone want to commit suicide!!***

It is not surprising then, with such compelling reasons to live for and reassurances of help, Allah warned of some of the most severe punishments for the one who ends his own life - a life that in fact belongs to Allah! As the above mentioned hadith of the punishment of the one who committed suicide shows, the self-infliction of the same fatal blow repeatedly in hell-fire again and again, a person who commits suicide hasn't found an escape from his worries; in fact, it's just the beginning.