

A bullet to my Head or 24 Pain Killers

By

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“Dear Mom, I love you with all my heart. I wasn’t just meant for this world! I hope I can find a place of peace and happiness – a place I am child enough to live, yet man enough to survive. I hurt so bad inside and I want it all to go away. I’m not afraid to die, Mom, I’m just so afraid of tomorrow.”

“What’s a few years to live in hell. That’s all I get around here. No more bills, no more driving, no more washing and ironing. No more eating leftovers. I married the wrong nag-nag-nag and I lost my life anyway.”

The above are specimens of real suicide-notes left by two victims before successfully killing themselves. The first was from an 18-year old female teenager, and the second from a 40-year old husband. The common factor between the two is that both actually desired a fulfilling life, but didn’t realize that objective in life. They couldn’t handle the challenges of their situation and lacked the faith, patience and emotional skills to navigate the bumpy road called “life.” They thus lost hope in the kindness of humanity, the beauty of living, the mercy of God and ultimately took their own life. How tragic!

People have committed suicide for various reasons over the years. These range from being shunned by society, by ones family or by one’s circle of friends, being caught up in an unhappy or abusive relationship, not being able to academically achieve in school or university, or losing a stable job, a promising contract or a substantial amount of one’s investment or savings. Some people actually ask others to kill them when they can not bear the pain of sickness, called euthanasia, many of the aged find retirement a tedious bore and take their lives in order to make the trip to the next world faster, whilst many soldiers poison themselves when being captured in war. Hitler is rumored to have committed suicide to avoid being captured and humiliated in an open trial. Ex-presidents of powerful countries have also been known to take

their own life as they couldn't picture a life wherein the world didn't revolve around them anymore or in which he is regarded as a "nobody."

In fact, we live in such a sick world today that people contemplating suicide can actually get professional help. Agencies will help them write the perfect "suicide note," draw up a will, counsel them that suicide is a natural right of man, and even advise them as to the best and most painless way of killing themselves according to the physical makeup of their body. After all, if their client doesn't die properly, he might sue them for denying him the opportunity of visiting his grandparents in the clouds!!

Statistics show that in South Africa alone, a person commits suicide every seven minutes. About 80% of first time suicides fail, but the "amateur killer" will suffer the medical and mental consequences of this suicide for a lifetime. However, the more desperate will get it right the second time round. If 24 pills didn't work the first time and the stomach was successfully purged, the second time they will take 48 pills, combine it with lethal drugs, add a few drops of whisky, and tell everyone not to look for them for a week as they will be holidaying with friends in Dubai.

Is Suicide an Option?

The occurrence of suicide is symptomatic of a cold and uncaring society, and of an individual whose faith was not strong enough to withstand the pressures of life until either God relieved him of the problem, or he came to accept it as God's will.

Suicide is not a problem of the prosperous or the poor, the sick or the healthy, the powerful or the ordinary, or the intelligent or average. It's a problem of faith...or rather the lack of it. Even a wealthy person may commit suicide if he doesn't know how to handle poverty after losing his money or if SARS uncovers his fraud. A poor man may lose hope in life if he can not handle driving a 1970 model VW Beetle on the highway, a talented person may take his life if he doesn't get the desired recognition, and an ordinary person may quietly slip into oblivion if he feels he is not making ends meet in these tough economic times. In short, people become depressed and think of committing suicide when things are not going in the direction they want it to go.

So, when things don't go as planned, is suicide an option? Definitely not. In fact, life is not meant to go as planned. If anyone deeply digests the following three facts, never mind suicide, not even depression will afflict him:

1. Life belongs to God: Life is a beautiful gift to us from God. God made us emotional and intelligent beings because He knew we have the capacity of understanding the purpose and mysteries of life. If we do so, we will fulfill our purpose of life and proceed to a higher stage of life after death. Said differently, life is God's investment in us in order to prove our worth and become deserving of paradise. We didn't pay nor ask for this investment, but it was granted to us as a divine favour. By cutting our own life short, we are destroying our own investment of the afterlife and deeply disappointing God in His expectation of us.

The trouble normally starts when instead of living life in order to proceed to a higher life, we start living as if there is no afterlife. We regard this life as if we own it whereas we didn't even pay for it, and nor do we deserve it. We plan our lives like we are in total control of our destiny, and act like there is no higher power – even making decisions of when to end it! Change this conception and place your life in the most compassionate and secure embrace of the Almighty. God knew when to place you in this world and He knows when to take you. Place the burden of this decision on His shoulders, not yours.

2. Life is not lived in a 5-star hotel: Many babies may have been made in a hotel, but life is not lived in a hotel where everything from food, to laundry and massages are “room service.” Life is also not about the fairy tales we have read as children where Rapunzel was saved from the tower by her prince charming to live “happily ever after,” or like Snow White who was kept like a treasure by the seven dwarfs. This world is definitely not paradise, rather it is a ladder to climb up to paradise. At the top of the steps, there is death. Death is the door to that paradise.

Sadly, many actually think of this world as paradise on earth when there is absolutely no comparison between the two worlds. The beaches of paradise do not have bluebottles to sting you nor tsunamis to wash away your hotel. The women of paradise do not need to go shopping for makeup and then make a second trip to the mall to exchange it for a handbag, and nor will the motor vehicles need fuel to move - the same fuel which has caused so much of war in the world today. The prawns of paradise do not contain cholesterol, and there will be no annual levies for your timeshare in Durban. Indeed, all the pleasures of this world have a “sting” to it,

whilst the pleasures of paradise are pure pleasure upon pleasure. Can the two ever be the same?

Ironically, today everyone wants to build their paradise on earth, but Almighty says the world is a place of toil and difficulty. It's a place of hardship, perspiration and difficulty. From birth to death, it is one huge bundle of problems. If your neighbour is not throwing dirt in your yard, your sister is gossiping behind your back. If your boss is not planning to fire you, your wife is having an affair with your best friend. If your children are not on drugs, then you may be on the verge of a heart-attack. If you have contacts in high places, your own children may be insulting you in front of your workers. For every "high," of life in this world, there are a hundred "lows." God planned it this way.

So, if you change your mindset from *expecting* the best of the world, to *preparing* for its difficulties, you will become stronger. Depression and thoughts of suicide will never plague you.

3. The Trials of Life are for your Benefit: When a problem comes your way, it is meant as a message for you from God to change the direction of your life. The problem itself should create a closer bond between yourself and God. Your test at this stage is to see whether you will overcome it with the help of God, or break under it to the glee of satan. In His kindness, God never gives one a problem one can not handle, thus the question of suicide or depression doesn't even arise, only proceeding from strength to strength and graceful acceptance .

Remember, we live in a dangerous jungle. Many people are more cunning than wolves and more dangerous than lions. Your suicide note will not bother them in the least. In fact, people are all only for themselves, and they will only notice you if you can be of benefit to them. The irony of the world is that the people we normally turn to for help either have bigger problems than us, or would want to profit from our problems. No one is sincere. When you need money to finance a home, the bank manager will gladly give you a loan, but his bank itself will be in liquidation and he will be in constant fear of his own life since a bank is always the target of robbers. Then when you can not pay, instead of showing mercy, he actually profits from your misery and repossess your home. Is this called help? A jobless man who hasn't got money to repair his vehicle goes to his friend for help. Instead of giving him money to repair his car, he offers to buy it for peanuts. Is this the type of people or society worth dying for?

God is the only Being with no problems, so turn to Him and Him alone. He will never disappoint you. Our problems are small compared to His infinite mercy, and only a person who doubts His

mercy commits suicide. This is why suicide is a major sin in Islam, it shows our lack of faith. God can tolerate us dying without wealth... instead He prefers it that way, He can tolerate us dying without respect, knowledge and even manners, but He never tolerates us dying without faith. This is a heinous crime in His sight. Avoid it.

The above three points are remedies to combat any onset of depression or thoughts of suicide.

Lastly, a person who commits suicide deserves our sympathy as the next world which he thought would be better, might even turn out to be worse. Rather than criticizing him, pray for his forgiveness as society is partly to be blamed for not assisting him in his difficult times. Always remember that wherever there are dark shadows, look a little further. For there can be no shadow without a light nearby.