

hardships reassured that as the Prophet (p) said, “**Verily, the greatness of the reward is with the severity of the trial.**”

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, except that it can be a success & a bonus for the Believer if they bear it patiently! Even while overwhelmed by grief, anxieties & 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.

Suicide in Shakespeare’s time was a paradoxical issue. On one hand, it carried the medieval Christian associations of shame & despair. On the other, it was seen as a noble & courageous act in the growing Renaissance tradition of secular, gentlemanly honour. The motto, “death before dishonour,” was at the heart of the courtly ideals which many Renaissance humanists derived from classical sources. Both Donne & Montaigne defend suicide (under certain circumstances) in their writings.

The Christian attitude toward suicide was embodied by the Biblical Judas, while the classical tradition often held up the dramatist and philosopher Seneca as the example of a noble suicide. A contemporary of Shakespeare who was caught up in the debate over suicide was Sir Walter Raleigh, a well-known public figure who attempted suicide.

Now let’s put our Islamic ethics to the test. Suicide is wrong, right? Here is a case to test your “faith.” Iraqi girls, Muslims, believers in God are raped brutally by “brave” American crap called soldiers. And then raped again; several times a day (and to repeat...by American crap...decency is holding back what really needs to be said of such grotesque monsters).

Fatima’s Letter from Abu Ghraib: My brother Mujahideen in the path of God! What can I say to you? Our wombs have been filled with the children of fornication by those sons of apes and pigs who raped us. Or I could tell you that they have defaced our bodies, spit in our faces, and tore up the little copies of the Quran that hung around our necks? God is the greatest! Can you not comprehend our situation? Is it true

that you do not know what is happening to us? We are your sisters. God will be calling you to account tomorrow.

By God, we have not passed one night since we have been in prison without one of the apes and pigs jumping down upon us to rip our bodies apart with his overweening lust. And we are the ones who had guarded our virginity out of fear of God. Fear God! Kill us along with them! Don’t leave us here to let them get pleasure from raping us! It will be an act to ennoble the Throne of Almighty God. Come at us here in the prison of Abu Ghraib. They raped me on one day more than nine times. **Can you comprehend?** Imagine one of your sisters being raped. With me are 13 girls, all unmarried. All have been raped before the eyes and ears of everyone. They won’t let us pray. They took our clothes and won’t let us get dressed. As I write this letter one of the girls has committed suicide. She was savagely raped. A soldier subjected her to unbelievable torture. She beat her head against the wall of the cell until she died, for she couldn’t take anymore. Even though **suicide is forbidden** in Islam I excuse that girl. I have hope that God will forgive her, because He is the Most Merciful of all. Kill us with them so that we might be at peace. Help! (Fatima died when an attack was launched on the prison.)

Committed suicide by banging their heads on the concrete walls to prevent more than the invasion of Iraq...an invasion of their souls. Were they Right or Wrong? Before you make your judgment just imagine (you can still do that right?) that you’re hearing the screams of one, young Muslim girl, being violated by “brave” American crap? Now multiply those screams by thousands. NOW Muslim men...**Right or Wrong?**

Muslim women...you can more empathize with girls being brutally raped...you can “feel” the pain & the horror... Rape in Iraq has now become endemic. Hail the “American Liberation.” Were the girls **Right or Wrong** to commit suicide?

St. Pelagia was a 15-year-old Christian girl who lived in the fourth century in ancient Turkish Antioch. When threatened with sexual assault by soldiers, she eluded them, and “in order to avoid outrage she threw herself to death from a housetop roof.” **Right or wrong?** Exceptions to the rule, yes?

A “thinking” religious life stabilizes. In all its forms, its object is to raise us above ourselves and

to make us lead a life superior to that which we would lead, if we followed only our own individual whims. Religious thoughts moor us. Suicidal thoughts erupt from dangerous whims setting us adrift. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. “As anyone who has been close to someone that has committed suicide knows, **there is no other pain** like that felt after the incident.” **It’s not only about YOU.**

The words of someone who overcame severe problems/depression & wanted to commit suicide: “What I finally understood is that my life isn’t really “mine.” It belongs to me, sure, **but** in the context of all the other lives it touches. And that when all the chips are down on the table, I don’t have the moral/ethical right to **destroy my life** because of the impact that would have on all the people who know and love me. Some part of “their” life is “attached to,” “dwells within,” mine. Killing myself would imply killing part of them! I could understand very clearly that **I did not want** any of the people I love killing themselves. By reciprocity I realized that they would say the same of me. At that moment I decided I had to hang on as long as I absolutely could. It was the only acceptable path forward, despite the pain it would bring. Today I am very glad I came to that decision.”

We should keep in mind that the majority of those who attempt suicide do **not** truly want to die.

Recommended Reading: *Autopsy of a Suicidal Mind* is a uniquely intensive psychological analysis of a suicidal mind. This book is a remarkable contribution to the study of suicide. It will help in understanding that suicide & psychological health are complex matters that we may never truly understand. Mental health professionals, students of human nature & persons whose lives have been touched by this merciless topic will be enlightened by this unique volume. An epistemological *tour de force*, it will speak to anyone who is concerned with human self-destruction.

Be patient to all that is unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions. Do not hurry to seek the answers. Live everything. Gradually, without knowing it, the riddles will be solved. Circumstances **do** change. You’re not a math equation or a computer.

Slow me down Lord, ease my hurried pace. Help me find true peace, through Your love & grace. Help me see the simple things that leave my heart so blessed. Calm my worries, ease my fears, let my tortured soul rest...God, I need You so...

Suicide

In the absence of normative stability & a **strong sense** of belonging, young people feel socially & culturally lost, devoid of guidance & support. As a result, they become depressed, anxious & more likely to commit suicide. If the body is able, the mind agile & the stomach full, **but the heart is empty, deceptive**, your whole world can crumble. Persons plagued by suicidal thoughts represent a profound & very moving duality. To explore with them the sources of the wasteland they sense within & around them is a way of discovering the altruism & the high hopes that have often made their **despair so overwhelming**. A Herculean effort sure enough, but necessary if we are to avert the needless loss of a precious life. We need to help them transcend their frightening emotional problems. **“Religion gets high marks as a restraint upon the suicidal impulse, but only where the social element of communal authority is strong in religion.”** The real shock absorbers on the rough road of life is **love & understanding**, given together & at appropriate times.

Prepared by: Zamals Software Company
6 Dowding St. Kitty, GT; 225-9031; zsc@networksgy.com
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The thought of suicide is a powerful solace: by means of it one gets through many a bad night. *Friedrich Nietzsche*. Suicide is defined as “all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim, which they know will produce this result.” It is not a taboo subject. In the Quran God explicitly forbids it. **“And do not kill yourselves. Surely, God is Most Merciful to you.”** [4:29]

Suicide, resorted to in times of crisis as an end to worries, is not only prohibited in Islam but it is also not an escape. It’s plummeting into hell’s inferno. However, there’s a massive link between deep shame/guilt & suicide. **Have you done something dark & evil that you don’t want your parents/friends to know about?** One evil leads to another. It’s sad but true. Do you feel pessimistic about your future? Maybe you have formed fixed ideas in your mind about “happiness.” These ideas are flawed but you cannot perceive that. And you feel “pain.” An enduring psychological pain that darkens your life. Unbearable, unendurable, unacceptable and intolerable pain. You finally conclude that it is better to stop the cacophony in your mind than to endure the unbearable noise.

The sociological explanation points out the social forces that will increase a person’s probability of committing suicide. This theory cannot predict which individuals will actually commit suicide.

Egoistic suicide is committed by people who are not strongly supported by membership in a cohesive social group. As outsiders, they depend more on themselves than on group goals and rules of conduct to sustain them in their lives. In times of stress, they feel isolated and helpless.

Altruistic suicide is committed by people who are deeply committed to group norms and goals & who see their own lives as unimportant. Basically, these suicides involve dying for a cause.

Anomic suicide is committed by people when society is in crisis or rapid change. In such times, customary norms may weaken or break down. With no clear standards of behaviour to guide them, many people become confused, their usual goals lose meaning, and life seems aimless.

Durkheim gave **religion high marks as a restraint upon the suicidal impulse, but only where the social element of communal authority was strong in religion. He also said one of the greatest protections from suicide is being poor.**

With over forty years of experience to support him, Dr. Shneidman concludes that “our best route to understanding suicide is not through the study of the structure of the brain, nor the study of social statistics, nor the study of mental diseases, but directly through the study of **human emotions.**” It is his belief that those persons who commit suicide do so to either avoid or to terminate **unbearable psychological pain** due to the persistent frustration of vital psychological needs. The psychological needs that he refers to were first described by Henry Murray in *Explorations in Personality*. According to Dr. Shneidman, most suicides are partially attributable to one of five clusters of frustrated psychological needs: 1) thwarted love, acceptance & belonging; 2) fractured control, predictability & arrangement; 3) assaulted self-image & the avoidance of shame; 4) ruptured key relationships & attendant grief; and 5) excessive anger, rage & hostility. The suicide is not so much a factor of the particular need but rather the intensity of the frustration of whatever need is basic to the functioning of that person.

Most people who are suicidal are also depressed. The two prime reasons that a person becomes depressed, are a loss of control, over their life situation & of their emotions. Secondly a loss of a positive sense of their future (loss of hope). Any therapy which is to be effective in reversing the depressed state & the resultant suicidal urges, will have to help the person **regain control & hope.**

Narrow View: Being depressed causes one to narrow their view of the world around them to such an extent that reality becomes distorted. It is as if they are trapped in a dark cave or possibly a tunnel that runs only from their constant pain to somewhere near hell, with no exit to heaven & no exit to joy. If depression becomes severe enough, for long enough, there comes the day when they will think “I can’t stand this any longer. And I’m not going to get over it ever. I’m a failure at everything, and I’m a drag on my

family & friends. There is really only one sensible way out.” If this line of thinking is followed to its logical conclusion it represents certain death. It also represents a terrible defeat both for the victim, and for society, because in the case of depression, in particular, there is a good chance that his/her life can be improved, with treatment, at least to the point where it is no longer unendurable.

Young people: The suicide rate is also high during the late teens & early twenties. Many studies have been made to determine why the rate is so high in this group. Many books have been written on this subject. One fact that emerges is that the victims very frequently are caught up in crises resulting from adjustment problems related to romance, sex, pregnancy, conflicts with parents. However, there may well be a serious underlying **biological depression** as well, which, while not as obvious as the emotional conflicts, is nevertheless quite capable of being deadly. Thus for young people, both biological & psychological causative agents may be present, and both require expert care. In many cases treatment can be very effective.

People considering suicide often examine their life in agonizingly minute detail. In doing so, they will recall many sides of their life long forgotten. Unfortunately, because they are in a very negative frame of mind because of acute depression, they will almost invariably discount what is “good,” and attach special importance to what is “bad.” Skilled psychiatric intervention can often play a beneficial role by helping the victim to gain a more balanced, favourable, picture & reminding them constantly of the bias induced by the biochemical imbalance in their brain. But sometimes none of this works, and the victim moves on a smaller & smaller orbit around the black hole called suicide. At some point they may become defensive about the desire to die, well before it reaches an actual decision to die.

We cannot stop all suicides. But it is important that if we see the signs in someone then we should act before that person reaches self-destruction. Listen to their words (“All I do is suffer” or “Every moment is pain”). We should not invalidate the person’s shout for help by calling their experience

a “chemical imbalance” & pushing meds. We should help in the formation of a thought process that will widen the tunnel view of depression, expediting the journey outward. Utilization of all aids in the discovery of the roots of the specific individual’s own suicidality are important. This frees them from their formerly blind pursuit of these needs, and arms them with a newfound awareness which allows them to seek their needs directly and consciously. Words can heal – and in therapy words are the roots of healing in the shared exchange of ideas and emotions.

Thoughts of suicide are flirting on the edges of your mind, wooing you, tempting you with the promises of a painless oblivion. **Stop. Worship.** It has the amazing power to renew the soul. It enables you to overcome the most impossible circumstance. But can you worship when all hope is gone. How does worship work? In the mosque, temple, church, worship was just ritual. Now in the midnight of your need, when the light of life is gone how do you find God in this darkness? It’s at this point that “natural” worship rises from your innermost being and you affirm the greatness of God. Peace arrives.

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

Even if your world seems to be falling apart and with nothing to live for... With a sense of worth for even the smallest good deeds (at this time patiently persevering is the best of good deeds), a believer bears the most trying of

And do **not** throw yourselves with your own hands to **destruction...**