

Chapter: 2- WAY TO SUCCESS

What is success?

Success! Human race has been searching for it for centuries. Human endeavours and persistence throughout the history has been to attain success. Many great men sacrificed their life for the sake of success and to lead the people towards it. Then, what does the word 'success' mean? Where shall we get it? Has anyone yet discovered the whole success? There are a lot of similar questions. We need a clear answer to these questions. The Almighty, Allah who created the self, who created human beings from clay and shaped it, isn't he capable of paving them towards '*success, the eternal one*'? He, the Almighty, declares: "Consider the human self, and how it is formed in accordance with what it is meant to be, and how it is filled with moral faults as well as with consciousness of God! To a happy state shall indeed attain, he who causes this self to grow in purity, and truly lost he who buries it in darkness." [The Sun, 91: 7-9]

He who causes the self to grow in purity shall indeed attain happiness. From this Qur'ānic guidance, we can define success. It's a state of mind, a feeling that is developed in 'stable mind' that traces the virtue and goodness. This state of mind is more than worldly. Of course, it is material and more than that it is spiritual. It is not temporal, but more than that. "Verily, in remembrance of God, hearts do find their rest." [Thunder, 29]

If there is an Almighty God sustaining this universe, from its tiniest electron to the greatest galaxy and if his God sent down his Revelation through his prophets to spiritually guide mankind, then the true Islamic religion itself is the way to success. It cannot be viewed as an ancient Catholic Church distributing indulgence papers like reinforcement tokens. There is no need to define another way towards success. Islam is a complete ideology of life touching every aspect of human life. Construct your faith thoroughly; define your objectives, programme your mind and entrust on All-Knowing, Omnipotent God. Surely you won't lose. He is the only hope for you.

Foundation of success

Each of us wish to be happy, healthy, reasonably prosperous, and secure, to have friends, peace of mind, good family relationships and hope. Each of these by itself is a component of success, and individually, acquiring the components is not the complete success. Out of these, peace of mind is the foundation. It is true that without head, there is no man. Similarly there is no success without mental peace. So, the success can be defined as mental peace and happiness.

Fundamentals of Success

The faith is the key factor of success and mental peace. Once we have a strong faith in the Omnipotent God, the Almighty Allah, then how can we think of being yielded to loss? Our worldly living is wonderful! If one receives anything as benevolence or blessings from Almighty, surely we will be voting our thanks to the Benevolent, the Creator. We are rewarded even for our gratefulness. On the other hand if we are being tested with any of the displeasures and hence if we are tolerant of it, surely we won't lose the reward from him. He is the Benevolent, and Dispenser of grace.

In our life we may be worried with a lot of frustrations, disappointments and setbacks and these discourage us to positively approach the future. But we should understand that what befalls us is not as important as how you handle what happens to you. We should learn to deal with what happens to us. Be it success or failure. Failure is an event, not a person. It really did end yesterday by last night. Learn to respond to difficulties instead of getting upset, which is negative. Being a Muslim, one doesn't have any failure. If he doesn't reap or reach his goals in his efforts, he can't be pessimistic or distrustful in the Almighty, the Benevolent. The belief in the hereafter, patience and tolerance should never make him disappointed. He would get the reward for his efforts, which is more than momentous. May be today or tomorrow or later or in the world hereafter. But he never loses.

Here, man is a cultivator, he sows for the next world. He prepares for that world. Nothing is lost. Every one will go there. Everyone is a wayfarer. Seek shelter for the temporal life and get equipped for the life that will come after death.

From each and every happening in our life we learn and we have to learn. Nothing is there to frustrate us. Faith is magical. It empowers us and provides mental peace. Mental peace is not based on financial abundance. Rather, immense wealth makes the living more annoying. If we choose to treat others in a pleasant and positive way, then we have prepared our way also. They will be choosing the same way to treat us in return. The way we choose should be one that pleases others and thus the Creator. Right attitude leads to the right way and thus to success. But if you are doing a favour to someone, expecting him to do the same for you, it won't work.

Think of a single mother with limited education and financial setup, who demonstrates her love and accepts her responsibilities by working to feed, clothe, and educate her children. Does she find happiness and success in doing so? Yes, she finds a mental peace. Further rewards, she shall enjoy in the world hereafter. But it depends on her belief. How can, one who doesn't have belief in God and 'hereafter', expect a reward in that world? The concept of a 'world after death' is thus significant. Certainly the 'real joyfulness' of success is beyond our perception. It is not preserved or reserved for any particular group. One who deserves will have it.

This picture becomes evident and clear when we build our keys to success on the foundation of belief in God, supernatural and powerful. Belief in 'hereafter' is not such a complicated idea. Ponder upon the following hypothesis: A man kills hundreds of people without any reason. What would be the appropriate punishment for him? There is no alternative but to kill him. Yes, at last we sentence him to death. Do you think we are being just to those murdered people and their families? But what else can be done? Nothing. In this world it's surely impossible. Here comes the importance of "hereafter Court", maintained by Almighty Allah, who gives the fittest reward for every deed. But He never transgresses and goes beyond the boundaries of justice.

The case of getting or awarding the right reward is also same. Imagine, someone is very committed, good natured and helpful to all. He deserves these treatment throughout his life. And here in this world, as everyone is aware of, it is impossible to give amply what he deserves. These fruitful rewards he will be getting, by the will of Almighty, in the world *hereafter*. Rather, it is this belief that maintains the law and order in the world. If each one of us is interested in our selfish needs, and focus on it then who is there to maintain the common social well-being? That is why

each and every action of man, be it to meet his own needs or the interests of others, surely it is a good deed, as viewed by the ideology of Islam. And he is going to get its reward; the eternal success, the paradise.

“God is never unjust in the least degree....” [The Women, 4:40] But one should have complete faith in Allah, and it is essential for one’s own success and salvation. This faith is meaningful when it is translated into practice. So, fortunate is he whose belief and deeds are always meant for pleasing Allah alone. It is the fear of God that keeps the world morale. We are optimistic of His rewards. Rather we are living in between fear and hope. Our deeds are not merely constructed on hope. We are afraid and don’t know whether we did it well or not? This is the motivating force in Islamic concept. Every one is motivated to endure for his friends. And Muslims are each others friends and brothers.

Now let us try to understand how the world defines success. Imagine, tomorrow you see your photograph on the front page of the newspaper, a group of journalists in front of your house, waiting. The phone ringing, and on every step you are congratulated, people want to know about you, there is joy every where around, you are a well-known person now and you get a lot of money and all the pleasures of life. And you declare to the world that you are successful.

This is what commonly is defined as success by the modern mind, or we can say a mind which believes that religion is just a cultural aspect of life. That doesn’t mean that Islam doesn’t agree with the above definition of success, but the beauty of Islam is that it agrees with modern definition and it has a lot more to add then just the photographs and the telephone rings.

Of course, that is what we mean by temporal success? Do you think it is forever? No, the history shows us something utterly different. Or do you think, you have been given aptly for your hard work, sleepless nights and for your sacrifices?

Thus, contrary to the Islamic view on success, Western ideas and theories about success, man’s personality, motivation and behavior, are in many ways contradictory to Islam. Sigmund Freud’s philosophy was an extreme form of positivism, which considered religion dangerous and metaphysics superfluous...Freud defined religion as illusion.... A universal neurosis, a kind of narcotic that hampers the free exercise of intelligence,

and something man will have to give up. But where does it hamper with the free exercise of thinking and intelligence? It is more rational and objective. It makes the living more meaningful. Though his theories and their application are carefully sugarcoated with the attractive cover of “science”, it is basically founded on the materialistic concept about man and the universe.

At all events, we should be aware of the fact that when Western thinkers write about “religion”, they generally exhibit a biased view from their distorted Judea-Christian heritage. Many of them have little or no knowledge of Islam as an ideology and way of life. Western psychological concept of human general behaviour is too limited to deal with psycho-spiritual aspects of man. The act of constricting broad psycho-spiritual religious phenomena to reinforcement contingencies and conditioned reflexes is like the blind person who tells the shape of an elephant by only feeling his tail!

In short happiness and success is not completely materialistic or worldly. Material successes are temporary; rather the fruits of success are not completely enjoyable in this world. The prevailing prescription and outlines to achieve success, which are well known nowadays, burns its boundaries with materialistic philosophical speculation and atheistic armchair theories. It fosters a distorted concept of man and an antagonistic attitude towards both God and religion. Complete success means strong faith and right attitude. The purity of goal makes the end successful, when it is being satisfied through pure and secure methods.

Way to the success

Success is mental peace, and attained as a fruit for our endeavors to serve others, ourselves and lead a happy life. It is more than worldly. We should equip ourselves- mind, soul, heart, and body, that is, sow the seeds of success there. In this ‘field’ we shall yield many good things. It is the sum of these small efforts, being reaped day in and day out as success. A continuous process of setting goals and achieving them. It is an ongoing experience. It’s not a remote destination. One day surely we would reap it.

How to equip our mind? Mind is the part of us that thinks and reasons. It can accept and reject an idea. No person or circumstance can

cause you to think about thoughts and ideas you don't choose. So decide and structure your goals. Be in confidence with your mind. Make it aware of the significance of your efforts. Evaluate the end results. Qualities of excitement, persistence, confidence and enthusiasm make your efforts successful. As we change our attitude towards the effort we shall be able to use our skills and consequently maximize our performance.

Hope is the fundamental quality of all change. Without hope there is no action. The couple whose marriage is in trouble will not make efforts to mend the fences if they feel there is no hope in reconciling their differences. Factories are built on hope. But along with hope there is fear to play its role. The way to success is built in-between hope and fear. But whom do we have to fear? God watches whatever we do.

Objectives and goals make you move. These are the powerful forces for good that turn the wheels of the industry and the door of opportunity for you and countless thousands of other people. Fueled by greed and a lust for power, ambition is a destructive force that ultimately does irreparable damage to the individual in its grasps and to the people within its reach. It should be fueled by compassion, wisdom and integrity.

But whenever we set our goals we should do it so consciously through comparison and analysis of available data. Our sense organs should not be the only available source. We should know that what we perceive through our organs is limited. The One who knows everything, has bestowed on us with valuable instructions. We shall never go astray if we follow it. We can ask for His help. He may make our efforts more and more enjoyable.

Discipline is the habit of taking consistent action until one can perform with unconscious competence. Discipline weighs ounces but regret weighs tons. Discipline your self to eat properly, live morally, exercise regularly and avoid any drugs or alcohol, perform at your best, and reap all the rewards that go along with it.

Motivation is the spark that lights the fire of knowledge and fuels the engine of accomplishment. It maximizes and maintains momentum. Life has its up and downs. Motivation plus information is inspiration. It's not what happens to you but how you handle what happens that makes the difference. Motivation fuels the attitude and builds the confidence necessary to sustain the persistence.

All human creation originates from mind. The result you experience in your life therefore originates from your mind. Hence controlling the mind is the way to control your life. *Perception of the 'self' should be* build creatively. We should control our attitude because whatever comes to our mind may not be good. Our ambitions may be unhealthy and sometimes may misguide us. To ponder before getting started is thus healthy and advisable. This is what we mean by positive Self-Direction. We need to direct our mind and plan the way to success. Prosperity, health, happiness and inner peace are born when we direct our mind towards that. We need to develop our negative inner state. That means change those into positive ones.

Islam as an ideology and way of life, advises us to be moderate in all our dealings. We can't be greedy or hopeless. We can't go to either extreme ends in our actions, thoughts and dealings. It asks us to be moderate with truth and justice. The material earnings or success is not the sole ambition or goal of our life. Nor can we abstain completely from worldly affairs. That means whenever we approach a material world or worldly affairs we should not follow the two extreme ends. We should follow the moderate or the middle one. We should not be strictly materialistic, neither can we ignore the material world totally. "And neither allow your hands to remain shackled to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit, lest you find yourself blamed or even destitute." [Isrā', 29]

Positive attitude is the corner stone in the entire exercise of developing *human personality*. It is also important to focus your mind on the entire result. Once you are focused, your subconscious mind will flash the ideas and the methods on the conscious mind. Thus our thinking determines the person we are and we can become.

For human being and his capacities are limited, there may be shortcomings and failings. This should not discourage us. Human self at its origin is more inclined towards vices and personal desires. That is why the chance to fall into vice is high. Though for a creative man, every shotfall is a lesson. He should not curse himself and his life for the faults. Repentance is the way to wash out the impurities from our mind. Almighty Allah forgives. If we are ready to stretch our hands before him, to admit our sins, to pledge that we, in future won't redo it, then He is ready to forgive us.

One is never being condemned in his whole life. To err is human. To repent is the way to get rid of it.

If you have committed any sin, think that it was an incident of yesterday and programme your mind to get rid of it. It can be done through repentance. Repentance is re-building your mind with a new faith and belief about yourself and a forgiving God. Determine yourself that you won't do it again. Admit your sins to yourself. It strengthens your mind, never weakens it. Repentance is the creative way of dealing with failure.

Learn to forgive others also as Almighty forgives you. The right attitude is left unforgettable; no matter whether you win or lose. Right attitude makes you a complete human. He who can't forgive others destroys the bridge over which he himself must pass. Behold, we are living among others. Social life makes our life more enjoyable. The friend in need is the friend indeed. If you are there for the help of your friends and poor, Allah will be with you whenever you need him. When you completely forget about your needs and become engrossed about finding a way to meet the needs of others, then solution to your problem will be coming to you.

The Way to success is thus open for all. The guidance that Almighty Allah bestowed on us through the Prophet, the religion he propagated is the best way to build up lives. Through it we shall enter the world of inner peace and happiness. Positive affirmation or confidence, in other words, faith, is the controlling input of the thoughts. When the input is positive the output is healthy. This stops negative programming. They build new constructive thought patterns within our minds and thus allow the person to find new methods. The only thing that keeps you back are self doubt and deep rooted fears of failure and insecurity.

Really nothing can limit you, and nothing can prevent you from being what you want to be. Stories of success are succession of focusing on successive ways, not on disappointments and failures. We learn from failures and try to correct the faults. That is what we intend by building personality. None is learned by birth. Each of us learns through errors and trails. If we have an intense belief, it will overthrow every thought of failure.

Commitment keeps things going when things get tough. It is the driving force that empowers you to do great things. People don't follow a

leader because of character; they follow a leader because of conviction. Concentration and determination changes even if the path is thorny.

Work on self-image. It persuades your mind to believe that you are able, capable, and determined to succeed in any endeavor. Be courageous whenever you set forward to do anything. To develop self image we should equip our minds with wisdom and knowledge. Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave. The whole universe is a teacher. Think about the universe, about the creatures around you, the sound you hear, the mighty power of God. Ponder about the animals, your fellow beings, and people around you. Think about what you have. Not about what you don't have. Thus you can be in compromise with your mind. We should keep an awareness of ourselves; that means the positive ones, not negative.

Knowledge and wisdom does everything in the way to success. Experiences make man perfect. Acquiring knowledge, one gets insights and develops ideas. Ignorance makes the world a dark place. If one is trapped in this he will not be able to find his way out. He hears anyone who is trying to escape him. But there is no benefit. And the savior can't enter the palace of darkness if he doesn't have a lamp. Our feelings are not naturally filtered thoughts. Ideas once filtered should not be necessarily true. Our self is not satisfied easily and wishes for more and more. A lamp that enlightens the inner feelings and entertains one is necessary to be escaped. Islam is the lamp that enlightens your soul and saves you from all kinds of darkness.

All of us perform better and more willingly when we know why we are doing what we have been told or asked to do. When your goals are clearly defined and intelligently set, you have, in essence, taken a major step toward success. The chief cause of failure and unhappiness is trading what you want most for what you want now. We should know what must be done at what time.

Now invest time on that. Then you are separated from the animals for your time is being used wisely. Developing a positive attitude and concentrating on our assets and strengths is the best way to build up the self-image.

Perseverance is the other factor that leads us to the success. We are ready to do hard work only when we have plans of actions, determination and a firmness, which comes from deep conviction and belief in ourselves.

Through hard work you build the palaces of victory. As you go through your attempt, never think of failure. You are never going to fail. If you have faith, it will save you even if you don't reach the end.

To place us in a position to achieve success and significance in the eyes of God and in the hearts of men is the foundation of success. Think of man, who believes in God and expects ample reward from Him for his every good deed. In psychological terms we can appreciate his confident mind. But his belief may give him this motivation. He is now motivated and committed to his mind. His faith, hope and discipline enables him to entertain his life with a series of successful events. Really he will be celebrating his life here and hereafter.

“O thou human being that has attained to inner peace. Return thou unto thy Sustainer, well pleased and pleasing Him: enter then together with My servants yea, enter thou My paradise.” (The Daybreak, 89:27-30)

CHAPTER:3 -THE KEY TO SUCCESS

- 1 Definite objectives
- 2 Knowledge of means
- 3 Determination
- 4 Thinking
- 5 Principles
- 6 Hardwork
- 7 Willpower
- 8 Self control
- 9 Self-confidence
- 10 Programming
- 11 Punctuality
- 12 Regularity
- 13 Discipline
- 14 Persistence
- 15 Dedication
- 16 Motivation
- 17 Ambition
- 18 Optimism
- 19 Reasoning

- 20 Priority
- 21 Concentration
- 22 Visualisation
- 23 Initiative
- 24 Foresight
- 25 Preparation
- 26 Patience
- 27 Self-appraisal

THE FOLLOWING LEAD TO FAILURE

- 1 Lack of direction
- 2 Ignorance of means
- 3 Lack of determination
- 4 Thoughtlessness
- 5 Lack of will-power
- 6 Idleness
- 7 Lack of self control
- 8 Undecidedness
- 9 Irregularity
- 10 Lack of discipline
- 11 Lack of perseverance
- 12 Undedicated
- 13 Non-confidence
- 14 Lack of dedication
- 15 Illogicality
- 16 Inattentiveness
- 17 Pessimism
- 18 Unimaginative
- 19 Lack of initiative
- 20 Narrow-mindedness
- 21 Impatience
- 22 Lack of confidence

1. Definite Objectives:

In order to get anything in life and to become successful in attaining it, it is very important to have a definite objective. Those who wander without a definite goal, can attain nothing in life. A person should think with a calm and cool mind what he wishes to be or what he likes to get in his life time. This thought must remain in his conscious mind all the times.

Objectives of a person have been categorised by some scholars as follows:

1. Short term objectives
2. Medium term objectives
3. Long term objectives

These three objectives can be explained through the following hypothesis : A student wishes to become a good doctor. This is a long term objective of that student. To attain this objective, the student must pass the medical examination with high marks. The student realises this fact and he accepts the passing of examination as his goal. This objective, passing the medical exam, can be regarded as the medium term objective of that student. To attain this medium term objective, the student must give mind to the lessons of each day and should do his home work properly. Learning the daily lessons and doing the homework can be regarded as his short term objective. In his lifetime, a person may have thousands of short term goals, hundreds of medium term goals and numerous long term goals.

2. Knowledge of means:

Once the objectives are clear, practical ways should be found out to achieve those objectives. Common sense of a man and his knowledge of history has an important role in this matter. Ways selected by those who strived for the same objectives should be observed and followed if they are relevant and practical. It is also important to find out new ways. The ways should be easy to follow and easily achievable.

3. Determination:

Determination is very important to attain any objective. Determination is the firm belief of a person in himself that he will attain

whatever he has wished. The English proverb “Where there is a will, there is way” refers to the importance of determination. The Arabic proverb “Himmatur-rijaal Tah-dimul jibaaal” (Determination can move even the mountains) also has the same meaning. It is a historical fact that many small groups attained victory against huge armies in the battlefield only because of their determination.

4. Thinking:

We know that man is a thinking animal. It is this ‘thinking power’ that makes man different from other animals. Man can create ideas in the light of his thinking. While God blessed all other animals with natural gifts and instincts, He blessed the human beings with ‘thinking power’. Look at the birds! They make their nests in such a style which will amaze us human beings. But the birds know only that style which God has given them as their instinct. Even in this century, birds make their nests in the same style in which they used to make hundreds of thousands of years ago. Beaver is an animal which is known as the “Engineer of the jungle”. This animal, which is about one meter long and has a weight of 18 kg, makes wonderful ‘dams’ across the rivers and brooks in the jungles. Using its sharp teeth, it cuts the trees first, makes them into small pieces, takes them to the place where it wishes to make its shelter and starts to heap up the wood across the flowing brooks. Once the dam is ready, the beaver starts to make its house. The reason why the beaver blocks the river is that it wants its shelter to be stable. The Beaver does not do all these things with the intention of making a dam but only by the god-given instinct. The same instinct works in the police dogs, speaking parrots, honey-bees, ants, etc.

Instead of instinct, thinking power (or wisdom) is given to human beings. Using this quality, one should think and plan practical ways for one’s success. Psychologists have discovered that a normal person uses only 10% of his thinking power while 90% is wasted. Researches made on human mind have revealed that the brain of an average minded person can store such a large quantity of data and information which if stored in books would require twenty million volumes.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ASSIGNMENTS

1. What is the Qur'anic definition for success?
2. How should one handle frustrations, setbacks and failure in one's life?
3. People usually relate financial abundance with success. Explain is this belief contrary to Islamic view?
4. What is real and everlasting success?
5. What was Sigmund Freud's philosophy on religion?
6. Why do the western philosophers have a negative view about Islam and its ideologies?
7. Explain the five stages which come in the life span of an individual.
8. Does the development of a man end by his death?
9. How does Qur'an explain the life after death?
10. Explain any three from those factors which are regarded as the 'Key to Success'.

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