

360°

STRATEGIC VISION DEVELOPMENT



Abdul Nasiru-Deen

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PREFACE

In the name of The Most Gracious and Most Merciful Creator of creation. May the blessings and peace of our Creator, Allah (s.w.t) be upon our Mentor, Muhammad (saw) from whose life the best guidance can be gotten. I pray and hope to refine my life vision and mission and that of my readers with this book.

Failing to plan in life is, by default, planning to fail. But our confusions and misconceptions of vital life concepts like Vision, Mission, Purpose, Resource and Strategy, lead to weak or limited Strategic Vision in our lives. For their significance, these vital life concepts are well explained in this book. Chapter one is therefore, entirely dedicated to the discussion and clarifications of these vital life concepts.

I see eternity and tranquility to be basic human quests that our life visions mostly fail to guide us to achieve. As a result, your vision is someone's current position and your current position in life is someone's vision. Very few people seem to attain true satisfaction and fulfilment in life. This is as a result of lack of a comprehensive strategic vision that covers basic life areas. The effect of our strategic vision should not be limited to our personal lives, interest areas and localities alone. Our visions must definitely cover crucial and basic life areas like spirituality, education, health, wealth, service and advocacy for righteousness. These key life areas must be developed to steadily rise beyond our personal development to family, organisation, community, national and global development. The key basic life areas and levels we need to develop our visions are discussed in Chapter 2 of this book. Chapter 3 systematically takes us through the developmental Stages of any of the basic life areas.

This book, in its entirety, seeks to present to the reader an ideal prototype or model of a comprehensive life vision to guide him/her to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic life vision for success in life.

I pray for sincerity and guidance from this humble work extracted from the life of our Noble Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). I seek refuge from Allah s.w.t for any mistake and misguidance this book might cause to any creation. Oh My Lord, You are my Vision and Your Pleasure is my Mission. So help me Allah. Ameen.

Abdul Nasiru-Deen.

06/07/2021

FOREWORD

Pristine praise is due to the Almighty Allah, who sent mankind to this world to serve Him alone, who again sent prophet and messengers to serve as role models to humanity at large, and gifted us the Noble Quran to serve as a criterion between right and wrong how favoured we are. We continue to seek peace and blessings of Allah upon our noble Prophet, Muhammad (saw), his household, companions and all those who followed his path until the day of judgment.

In these disturbing times of acute global crisis which, inter alia, encompasses a deadly Covid virus that continues to claim millions of lives, catastrophic natural disasters resulting from sustained and continuing damage to the environment, unprecedented poverty facing billions globally, Mr. Nasirudeen's book could not have emerged at a more appropriate time.

Without a doubt the world currently needs such insightful and Divinely-inspired literary interventions such as "360° STRATEGIC Vision Development" - in our bid to fashion a better world for ourselves through a greater appreciation of what we must do to achieve such an important objective.

Mr. Nasiru-Deen's book is in itself a superlative visionary work that brilliantly encapsulates a holistic, innovative, comprehensive and multi-attitudinal approach. It aims to equip citizens of the world with the appropriate tools - both spiritual and mundane - to fashion visions that will lead to self-emancipation and self-empowerment as necessary conditions for the overall betterment of humanity. As the Illustrious writer aptly describes it himself - "Our visions must definitely cover crucial and basic life areas such as spirituality, education, health, wealth, service and advocacy for righteousness."

It is my sincere and everlasting hope that as an excellent and important narrative inspired by Divine personages as well as the Almighty Creator Himself, this book will be embraced and read by the countless citizens of the brotherhood of humanity who seek better lives as well as a better world.

I believe the Almighty Allah has given his divine blessings to this exemplary book and thus ought to be embraced by all and sundry.

Alhaji (Dr.) Ahmed Vanderpuije

2nd September, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENT

PREFACE	III
FOREWORD	V
CHAPTER 1: BASIC CONCEPTS	1
1.1 Life Journey	1
1.2 Life Vision	5
1.3 Life Mission	18
The Purpose Of Life.....	23
1.4.1 Worship.	26
1.4.2 Taqwa.....	27
1.4.3 Vicegerency.....	28
1.4.4 The Mercy And Pleasure Of Allah	30
1.5 Life Resources	31
1.6 Life Strategy.....	47
CHAPTER 2: 360° strategic vision; ideal model vision	49
2.1 Introduction	49
2.2 Systematic Levels of a Strategic Vision	53
2.3 The Key areas of a Strategic Vision	55
2.3.1 Knowledge: <i>The fuel of success</i>	56
2.3.2 Belief: <i>The engine of eternal success</i>	62
2.3.3 Health (Body)	68
2.3.4 Wealth : <i>Finance and power,</i> <i>the complementing resources for success.</i>	72
2.3.5: 5- Service: <i>The fruit of Vision.</i>	76
2.3.6 Advocacy.....	79
2.4 360° Vision	83
CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC VISION DEVELOPMENT	87
3.1 STAGE-1: V=Visualization Stage.....	88
3.2 STAGE-2= I = Internalization Stage.....	94
3.3 Stage 3: S= Strategy Development Stage.....	106
3.4 Stage 4- I=Implementation Stage	126
3.5 Stage 5- O = Outcome Observation	130
3.6 Stage 6- N = New Vision Development	133

CHAPTER 1:

BASIC CONCEPTS

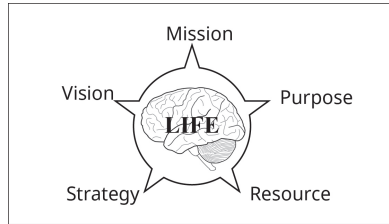


Figure 1.

1.1 Life Journey

Life is a journey. In fact, it is a fast progressing journey for the thoughtful. *Birth*, which inducts man into the physical world, marks the beginning of this journey. *Death*, which is the transition of man into the spiritual world, marks the end of this journey. Life is therefore practically like a Journey with the first step as birth and the last step as death. Is it possible for this journey to have no purpose and destination?

Many of us cannot imagine traveling without purpose and without knowing our destinations. We are, however, swift to judge that it is possible for the journey of the mentally deranged to have no destination. He may sprint with topmost speed, but without destination and direction, his journey will certainly be an unending and meaningless one. His major activity at best is *walking*. To go through life in the manner described above cannot be the ideal “**walk of life**”. Therefore, to guide us towards the discovery of the ideal **walk of life**, Allah asks this seemingly simple but thought provoking question:

Life is therefore practically like a Journey with the first step as birth and the last step as death.

Surah Al-Mulk, Verse 22:

أَفَنُيْمَشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

Is he who walks without seeing on his face, more rightly guided, or he who (sees and) walks on a Straight Way (i.e. Islamic Monotheism).?

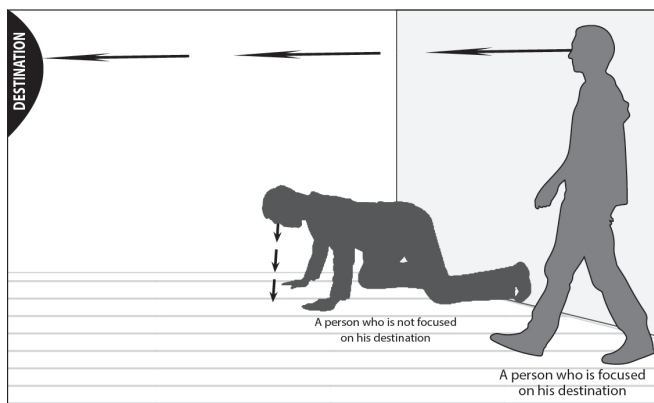


Figure 2.

In other words, can “walking” headlong groveling without seeing your destination and therefore without direction be equal to the “walking” with direction and a targeted destination? No! Not at all. The Famous Qur’an interpreter Ibn Katheer says “This is like a person walking bent over on his face (with his head down) instead

It is thus clear that a life bound to be blissful in both worlds should definitely be with purpose, direction and targeted destination.

of walking upright. This person does not know where he is going or how he is to get there. Rather, he is lost, astray and confused. Is this person more guided, or he who walks upright?”.^[1] It is therefore clear that a life bound to be blissful in both worlds should definitely be with *purpose*, *direction* and targeted *destination*. Such a life, in

1 Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Darussalam, Vol.10 pg94.

short, should have a comprehensive Mission and Vision.

This Qur’anic life principle should help us understand the famous statement of *Sir Richard Livingstone* that got its way into the “*World Famous quotations*” book. He is quoted to have said, “*An eternal trait of man is the need for vision and the readiness to follow it; and if men are not given vision they will follow wandering fires*”^[2]

Notwithstanding the plea that our journey should definitely not look like that of the mentally challenged man, there obviously are conscious beings whose journey through life is in similar respect; theirs is a journey without a destination: all activity, no productivity. Some may have a life vision. But very limited in scope and perspective. They may strive for the achievement of something great, but they don’t know what to use it for. It is obvious that a vision limited in scope and perspective cannot support and explain our natural quest for eternity and tranquility.

Obviously, our lives should not be a life without direction and destination. It should not be a life without a set of targets designed for the achievement of some set of goals. We get well motivated when we are able to imagine the final product of these set of goals, and where, when and how they can be cultivated. I simply describe the *imagined product* of our set of goals in life as our “**vision**” and the *purposeful major effort* we make towards the achievement of the vision as our “**Mission**”.

It is obvious that a vision limited in scope and perspective cannot support and explain our natural quest for eternity and tranquility.

2 R.N Munshi, World Famous quotations, Goodwill Publishing house, Pg1086.



Figure 3.

This book, in its entirety, seeks to present to the reader an ideal prototype or model of a comprehensive life vision to guide us develop and implement a comprehensive strategic life vision for success. It is the outcome of the core developmental stages of a vision and strategy that I have personally developed and applied from my little understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah. If Allah permits, I hope to share my experience in each field of this model and the experience of other successful personalities in my subsequent write-ups.

Our confusion and misconceptions of vital life concepts, like Vision, Mission, Purpose, Resource and Strategy, lead to weak or limited Strategic Vision in our lives. It is therefore, common to find many companies or individuals using these terms interchangeably and getting confused as to how to effectively make use of these concepts in planning and development.

Our confusion and misconceptions of vital concepts, like Vision, Mission, Purpose, Resource and Strategy, lead to weak or Limited Strategic Vision in our lives

A Strategic vision is a product of Strategic planning. Failing to plan is, by default, planning to fail. By the misconceptions and distortions in basic vital life concepts like vision and mission, we easily get misguided without a vision or with a weak vision. It is thus imperative to understand these concepts very well and also know how to use them for guidance and success in life. To

clear the confusion and misconception, I deem it very important to share some few ideas on these concepts to help us, at least to understand how they are used in this book and therefore know how to make maximum use of these vital life concepts. This chapter is therefore, entirely dedicated to the discussion and clarification of these vital life concepts like ***Vision, Mission, Purpose, Resource*** and ***Strategy***.

1.2 LIFE VISION

General concept:

The major words that commonly connote the literal meaning of vision are “***sight***” and “***imagination***”. That is “*the ability to see the present*” and “*the ability to imagine the future*”. ***Foresight*** seems to bring the two abilities together and is very much needed in vision development. One of the common denotative meanings of vision is “*The ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom.*” Vision is also expressed as “*the mental image of what the future will or could be like*”.^[3] Most of the technical meanings, in different fields of disciplines, are based on or derived from these key denotations.

What I have observed is that ‘vision’ is defined based on the field under which it is being discussed. As a result, most definitions of vision limit the scope and effectiveness of this vital life concept that plays a very important role in our personal development and therefore, success achievement. Some definitions limit it to organizations or companies or leadership and thus give little or no guidance to individual or personal vision development. Some also limit it to time, so much so that “*a complacent lethargy*”

An ideal vision should touch and affect all aspects of life and at all times.

3 Oxford Dictionary

sets in after the achievement of the major goals^[4]. An ideal vision should touch and affect all aspects of life and at all times.

I am not in any way making an attempt to criticize any definition or concept of vision. But I hope to guide you to understand what I mean by vision in this book. I also will like to see how best to add some Islamic flavors to the concept of vision. This way, I believe, will make vision assume its real position of being an engine of success in all fields and at all levels to individuals, organizations and humanity at large. The concept of vision I will like to discuss is that which seeks to guide you as an individual social creature to develop through the individual, family, organization, community, national and global levels. I refer to such a comprehensive life vision that touches all life endeavors as a **360° Strategic Vision**. This is the major concept of vision to be treated in this book. The Holy Prophet (saw) applied such a model of vision with wide scope and effect that made him **a universal all time model** for humanity.

One of the comprehensive definitions of vision, I find necessary to state here, is that of *Bill Newman*. In his book “*Ten (10) Laws of Leadership*”, he enumerated having a vision as one of the key laws for successful life. For effective leadership with success, the leader needs to have a vision. Bill Newman briefly describes a vision as **“the comprehensive sense of where you are, where you are going,**

The Holy Prophet (saw) applied such a model of vision with wide scope and effect that made him a universal all time model for humanity

how you are going to get there and what you will do after you get there”.^[5] This indeed, makes a practically sound definition of a vision. Most definitions of vision pay more attention to the *long-term position* of an organization and may not mention the *current state/position* of the organization. How the future position would be achieved and what to do next when

4 J. Collins et al, Harvard Business Reviews On Strategy, Harvard Business Review Press, Pg101.

5 Bill Newman, 10 Laws of Leadership, pg14.

it is achieved are hardly also mentioned. On the other hand, Bill Newman's definition vividly covers all these major components of a strategic vision.

The above comprehensive definition of a vision still lacks some vital concepts that are very significant in Islam and life in general. A major component that some experts mention that is not in the above definition, which is very crucial, especially in Islam, is the '*purpose*' or '*reason*' component of the vision. Renowned experts like *James Collins* and *Jerry I Porras* who have authored an article on *Vision Development* and published in the *Harvard Business Reviews on Strategy*, stated that '**Purpose**' is one of the core components of a strategic vision. Both agreed on the fact that *core values*, *core purpose*, *goals* and *vivid description* of the envisioned future are the key components of a Strategic Vision.^[6] Bill Newman's definition covered all these components with the exception of only the *core purpose* component, but which is very important.

In the first topic of this Chapter, "*life*", the significance of the '*core Purpose*' component of a vision is highlighted. It is a clear illustration of the significance of '*purpose*' and '*destination*' as *mission* and *vision* respectively. The *destination* of our life journey is therefore seen as our **Life Vision** and the *Purpose* as our Life **Mission**. Which one "gives birth" to the other? It's just like struggling to know between the *hen* and the *egg* which one comes from the other? Mission is sometimes associated with "*what we do*" as an effort towards the achievement of a vision. That is why I thought of discussing 'vision' first before 'mission'.

The destination of our life journey is thus seen as our Life Vision and the Purpose as our Life Mission.

6 James Collins and Jerry I. Porras, Harvard Business Press Publications, Pg85.

A Creator/Manufacturer best determines the purpose and vision of his creatures/products. Who is then The creator of human being? Most writers who got their life experience and belief from secular education don't see any link of any of the components of vision to God Almighty Allah. This is as a result of their disbelief or weak belief in God, the Almighty Allah. Believing Muslim authors like *Dr Naceur Jabnoun* dedicated the 4th Chapter of his book on "*Islam and Management*" on guiding us to link our purpose, and for that matter mission of our lives to our Creator Allah (swt)^[7]. What do we gain when we reject The Omnipotent and Omnipresent creator to live in fear of death that we cannot escape?

Another important component of Bill Newman's definition that is worth analyzing is the last aspect which talks about "*what to do next*". This component of a vision is most at times lacking in many definitions. Experts like *James Collins* and *Jerry I. Porras* termed this defect as "**complacent lethargy**". That is, we become confused and lazy after achieving our visions. This defect of "complacent lethargy" is mostly precipitated by the perspective and structure of our vision. To avoid such a defect in our concept of vision, the Qur'an motivates and guides us to develop the sense of converting our achieved visions into set of goals that should enable us to continue fighting for the achievement of a higher level of our life vision^[8]. This concept will be further elaborated in the last chapter of this book In sha'Allah (by the Will of God).

An ideal vision goes beyond only determining 'how the future will look like' to get you connected to your Creator and purpose of creation

The Islamic Concept of a Vision

Bringing all the components in the above discussions together, the concept of **vision** can be further elaborated and defined as *the*

7 Islam and Management, Dr Neceur Jab noun, pg77.

8 Qur'an 94:7

*comprehensive sense of the individual's knowledge of the existence of his/her **Creator**, the **Purpose** of his/her creation, **where** he/she wants to get to in the achievement of his/her life purpose, **how** to get there and **what** to do next after getting there.* As discussed earlier, many definitions focus on “**where** we want to get to’. That is the mental image of what we want the future to look like. But as seen in this comprehensive concept, the definition of an **ideal vision** goes beyond only determining ‘how the future will look like’ to get you connected to your creator and the purpose of your creation. To understand this definition very well you need **to** take your time to read the whole of this first chapter completely. In the meantime, to enable us understand this concept very well, I want us to briefly discuss the basic features of an Ideal Strategic Vision under the guidance of the Qur’an and Sunnah (life of the Holy Prophet).

The Basic features of an Ideal STRATEGIC Vision:

As discussed above, an Ideal **Strategic** vision should have some basic features. Without these features we are likely not to get to the full realization of our vision. I therefore find it necessary to discuss some of the basic features that can be seen in the Qur’an and the Sunnah (life of the Holy Prophet) that should characterize a strategic vision. These features include, Spirituality, Tangible Targets, Reward system, Action plan, Time-frame/Time-line, Evaluation and monitoring system, General interest, Internalization system and Complacent lethargy are the major features of the strategic vision of the believers. In this order, bringing the first letters of each features enables us to form the acronym **STRATEGIC**. This makes it simple for us to keep these features of a *strategic vision* in mind and further ensure that our visions

Linking our vision to the purpose of our creation helps us to stabilize and sustain our motivation against any challenge on our way to success

have these features. Some of these features are at the same time key developmental stages in Strategy Development which shall be discussed in Chapter 3.3. For now, let's briefly discuss these key features of a Strategic vision as stated in this paragraph starting with spirituality.

- ❖ **Spirituality:** Beyond the intellectual and emotional roots of the mission of our vision, an ideal Vision should have a **Spiritual Link** to the Creator and the purpose of creation. This means linking your vision, in any field and at any level in life, to contribute to the achievement of the main purpose of your creation as determined by your Creator. Linking our visions to the purpose of our creation helps us to stabilise and sustain our motivations against any challenge on our way to success. We are commanded and guided to create a spiritual link as means of approach to our Creator as stated in: **Qur'an 5:35**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

O you who believe! Do your duty to Allah and fear Him? Seek the means of approach to Him, and strive hard in His Cause as much as you can. So that you may be successful.

Striving hard in obedience to Allah and for the sake of Allah to earn the pleasure of Allah is a major tool for the achievement of our vision

Aside from guiding us to use our vision as a means of approach to Allah, the above verse clearly suggests the two major conditions and an effective tool to *real success in life*. The first condition is Eeman (belief in Allah). This is the level of belief in Allah in the mind and the heart. The second condition is Taqwah. This is also the God consciousness level in our hearts

and deeds. Eeman and Taqwah are both basic conditions for the acceptance of our deeds and thus real success. “***For indeed Allah only accepts from the righteous (who fear Him)***”. This is a general divine fact stated at the end of the 27th verse of the same chapter (Maa’ida) quoted above.

The effective major tool for success, expressed as “..strive hard..” in the above verse under discussion, is relentless effort. The most explicit form of this principle is expressed in Qur’an 53:39 where it is clearly stated that mankind has nothing excepts what he/she strives for. It is thus clear from the above verse that striving hard in obedience to Allah and for the sake of Allah to earn the pleasure of Allah is a major tool for the achievement of our vision. At least it is a source of assurance for the mercy of Allah which nurtures peace within believers no mater the extend of physical failure in life.

The *means* we are to seek to *approach* Allah are the good deeds we are to pursue in *obedience* to Allah and for the *sake* of Allah. This should directly or indirectly contribute to the achievement of the purpose of our creation. Our vision should therefore be a means that brings us closer and gets us connected to our Creator, Allah (swt). Identification and pursuance of *the strategic set of deeds* for the achievement of our vision for the sake of Allah should be seen as “*seeking a means of approach to Allah*”. This set of deeds should be that which is approved by Allah. Our effort should be for the sake of Allah. That is to say that the seat of our motivation should absolutely be *for the sake of Allah*. Any other source of motivation is bound to perish and to leave us devoid of passion. If you carefully select and embark on good deeds for the sake of Allah, no amount of external motivations like praises, admiration, power, money and lust can positively or negatively affect your effort and struggle.

If you carefully select and embark on good deeds for the sake of Allah, no amount of external motivations like praises, admiration, power, money and lust can positively or negatively affect your effort and struggle.

your effort and struggle. We then remain focused and keep struggling in pursuance of the pleasure of Allah.

Just as the cement is a key ingredient that binds together all the components of a building, the spirituality component of our vision should help us nurture, stabilize and sustain the motivation in our struggle for the achievement of our vision. Such sound motivation, which is not built on praises, admirations, power, money, fame and lust but springing from spirituality, can definitely bring together all factors under hard-work and perseverance for the achievement of our vision.

We therefore need to carefully look for a vision that can get us connected to our main purpose of creation and our Creator. We need to increase the “for the sake of Allah” factor in our vision and definitely let it take the seat of motivation in our vision. This will then be the link or means of approach to Allah(swt).

❖ **Tangible Targets:** It’s a key **Divine** tradition and principle to ensure that detailed planning and calculations go into any process of creation or production. Allah’s planning and measurements are seen as **Determination/Decree** as there can never be failure in His Creation. This is a fact stated in Qur’an 25:2 that “...(Allah) created each thing and determined it with (precise) determination^[9]”.

Allah’s principle of detailed measurement in creation is a guiding principle that should lead us into breaking our visions into set of achievable goals and further breaking these goals into tangible targets

It means He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements^[10]. Allah’s principle of detailed measurement in creation is a guiding principle that should lead us into breaking our visions into set of achievable goals and further breaking these goals into set of *tangible targets*. So, all strategic visions should have **specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and tangible**

9 Sahih International English Translation

10 Muhsin Khan and Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali English Translation

goals. Bringing all these attributes together under the above mentioned divine principle of creation/production in Qur'an 25:2, our visions become *smart* visions. Therefore one of the ways of making our vision a strategic vision is for us to have annual, monthly, weekly and daily tangible targets to pursue for the achievement of our vision.

- ❖ **Reward System:** The end of our strategic visions or ultimate **Reward/Result** should go beyond material rewards. The results should lead us to the acquisition of the greatest reward which is the *pleasure of the Creator*. We should be motivated by and focus on the approval of Allah. If this feature of our strategic vision is well established, then we will never focus on only material reward to the extent of disobeying Allah with the mindset that “the end justifies the means”. As believers, we need to carefully scrutinize the legality of each resource, activity and step in our strategy leading to the achievement of our vision. For the most important and the greatest reward we need from our Creator is His approval and pleasure, RidhaAllah. This is a fact clearly stated in **Qur'an 9:72**

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَمَسْكَنٍ ظَيِّفَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ

Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment.

Divine reward from Allah (swt) depends on our sincere intentions and sincere efforts in using the available legal (halal) opportunities at our disposal to benefit creation at large.

It is clearly understood in this verse that *the approval from Allah*, which is the *pleasure of Allah* is seen as a greater reward than the heaven itself. Unlike human institutions whose rewards are often based on efforts and results alone, the divine reward from Allah (swt) depends on our *sincere intentions* and *sincere efforts* in using the available legal (halal) *opportunities* at our disposal to *benefit* creation at large. One key element and a conditional dictate of the divine reward among all the above mentioned elements is sincere intention. Sincerity is the major bridge linking our good deeds to Allah, as discussed in the first feature of a strategic vision. Yes, the '*for the sake of Allah factor*' makes or destroys divine rewards. This factor is clearly seen in the concept of Sincerity in Islam called **IKHLAS**. We shall be discussing this concept under this current chapter as a major feature of a strategic vision in Islam.

- ❖ **Action Plan:** A key feature of a Strategic Vision is the guidance and motivation for implementation. We should know that a strategic vision only acquires life when we put in place efforts for it to be implemented. It is a divine and natural fact that the key pillar of our success process is *effort* and *hard work*^[11]. Therefore, a key feature of a strategic vision is the *action plan* to motivates and guides us implement our vision. Also remember that one of the conditions for success stated in Qur'an 5:35 discussed here under the first key feature of a strategic vision (Spiritual link) is "striving hard". Instead of "Jahada" to connote "effort", the Qur'an rather uses "Jaahada" which is *striving hard* to overcome resistance and obstacles on our ways to success. Our action plan should thus guide us to know the sequential list of activities we need to embark on for the achievement of our vision.

Time is a personal resource that acts as the soul of all the other resources.

11 Qur'an 53:39.

- ❖ **Time:** Time is a personal resource that acts as the soul of all the other resources. If we have everything at our disposal but have no personal or hired TIME then we can neither work nor generate any result, small or big. Qur'an chapter 103 clearly draws our attention to the fact that Time is the major dictate of success and failure in life. This fact will be discussed further in the upcoming chapters in this book.

A strategic vision should guide us to know the overall amount of time we need (Time-frame) and how to use the time (time-line) to achieve our vision. Determining a Time-frame and developing a time-line for our action plans is a must-but-difficult feature of a strategic vision. Time line Development, a key stage in strategy development, will be discussed in Chapter 3.3 of this book.

The benefits of the products of a strategic vision should also be **Timely**. This means that a Strategic vision should not be obsolete at the time of its achievement. We are thus advised to equip our vision and the successors of our vision, i.e.: our children, with ideas and competences that would be contemporarily relevant.

- ❖ **Evaluation and Monitoring System:** A strategic vision should definitely have an internal and external evaluation system to periodically assess the general progress and or challenges in the course of implementation. Istigfar (seeking for forgiveness) and Taubah (repentance) are the twin ritual exercises that are very effective in self introspection and general life evaluation. Ablution before Salaah (5 daily ritual prayers) should guide believers to check and evaluate the contribution of each of our body parts to the process towards the achievement

Our interest should be dissolved in the interest of the Creator and creation in order to enable us address challenges from local to global level

of our strategic vision.

For institutions and companies, periodic meetings, supervisions and effective reporting systems can serve as an effective evaluation system.

- ❖ **General Interest:** A very important feature of a strategic vision is that it should be developed to serve the **Interest** of creation for the sake of the Creator. Our interest should be dissolved in the interest of the Creator and Creation in order to help us address challenges from local to global level. Doing good to others as we want to be done to us is a noble character considered as a condition of faith in Islam recorded in the authentic narrations of the Holy Prophet (saw)*. But altruism and selflessness termed as **Isar** in the Qur'an, which is holding the interest of others above yours, is a nobler character recorded as part of the exemplary characters of the Companions of Holy Prophet (saw).^[12] Therefore, the genuine needs or interest of creation, and that of the Ummah and Humanity, should greatly affect our vision and must even be the seat of our vision. Our Strategic vision should go beyond achievement of individual interest. Our Strategic vision should definitely have the feature of addressing and achieving a general and global interest.

Our Strategic vision should definitely have the feature of helping us to nurture, internalize and upgrade our intentions to Sincerity and thus culminating in an unflinching motivation and determination.

- ❖ **Internalization of Intention and Ikhlas (Sincerity):** All deeds are based on *reasons* as their intellectual roots and *intentions* as their emotional roots. The intellectual roots(reasons) of our actions grant them the qualification for assessment while the emotional roots(intentions) grant our actions the qualification for divine acceptance and thus divine reward. As discussed earlier, active intention as a key

12 Qur'an 59:9

component of our Mission is a key feature of a Strategic Vision. Active intention nurtures and sustains our motivation. If our active intentions are linked to the Almighty Creator (Allah) to get them upgraded to *Sincerity* (for the sake of Allah) then no amount of challenges or obstacles can prevent us from progressing towards the achievement of our vision. Our Strategic vision should definitely have the feature of helping us to nurture, internalize and upgrade our intentions to Sincerity and thus culminating in an unflinching motivation and determination.

The key steps to Internalization of our visions is discussed into details in chapter 3.2 of this book. It is a must read stage of strategic vision development.

- ❖ ***Conquering Complacent Lethargy:*** One major challenge we have that sooner or later catches up with us is not knowing *what to do next* after the achievement of our vision. If we do not think and plan for *what to do next*, then we become confused and lazy after achieving our visions. This defect of “complacent lethargy” is mostly precipitated by the perspective and structure of our vision. To avoid such a defect in our concept of vision, every strategic vision should have a plan on what to do next after its achievement. The Qur’an motivates and guides us to develop the sense of converting our achieved visions into sets of goals that should enable us to continue fighting for the achievement of higher levels of our life’s visions^[13]. This would be an effective way of conquering complacent lethargy to eliminate confusion and laziness after the achievement of our vision. This important feature of a strategic vision

Imagination and determination of our future should definitely be guided and affected by a reason or **purpose** in order to get us motivated to start and continue work

13 Qur’an 94:7

is actually the last stage in strategic vision development discussed in Chapter 3.6.

1.3 LIFE MISSION

What we have read so far from beginning of this book reaffirms the fact that an ideal life must have a vision. A life with a vision is an ideal life that can potentially guide us to success. If you have no planned and prescribed vision guiding your life, then definitely make it a point to continue reading to the last letter of this book. “Vision” is one of the key active ingredients of a successful life. But it is not the only active ingredient needed for the development of a successful life. We need other ingredients to support and increase the effectiveness of our lives. This chapter is to guide us to understand the concept of a mission, which is one of the important ingredients for a successful life.

You certainly will agree with me that having a vision doesn’t automatically make you a successful person. A life vision helps us to imagine and determine our ideal life. But this imagination and determination of our future should definitely be guided and affected by a reason or **purpose** in order to get us motivated to start and continue work. Why should we strive to achieve that position? The drive, motivation and reasons all blend together to get expressed as a product of ***purpose*** which shapes our intentions. When our intentions affect our behavior to move us into ***action/business***, only

Our purposeful actions or works towards the realization of an envisioned future can be referred to as a Mission

then can we start the active process of realizing our visions. Otherwise, the act of imagination alone can’t convert the ideal life into a real life.

Our purposeful actions or works towards the realization of an envisioned future can be referred to as a Mission. Two basic components should basically be preserved in this concept.

That is our mission represents our **Purpose** and **Work** or business which basically connotes our efforts. The concept of mission in business management, military, religion and personal development may greatly or slightly differ from each other. However, in most cases one or both of the core components is preserved. So, some experts say that *“the mission statements of most companies say much more about the enterprise’s present **business** scope and **purpose** – “who we are, what we do and why we do it”*^[14] From this concept, we can deduce three basic components of a mission; **Identity**, **Business** and **Purpose**. These key components of your mission should guide you answer the under listed basic questions:

- 1- Who are you, what is your **Identity**?
- 2- What do you do to serve humanity and the Ummah?
- 3- Why do you do what you do?

1-Identity: Who are you?

This question helps us to establish the first component of our mission. That is our Identity. Human beings in general, are unique and excellent creatures (**Qur’an 95/4**) among the creations of Allah (swt) as His vicegerent to **ensure the implementation of divine system for temporal and permanent peace and tranquility on earth and in heaven respectively.**

Actually, the unique individual answer to this question is naturally a lifelong struggle. Because, unlike any brand of phone, car or computer that has fixed specifications, the human being is a dynamic creature whose identity is in constant change, no matter how we want to stabilize it with good “character”

To fully understand our **unique mission**, we need to be aware of the **inherent features and competencies** we can use as resources to work towards the **achievement of our vision.**

14 John Gamble, Margaret A. Peteraf, Arthur A. Thompson, Jr, Essentials of Strategic Management, pg20.

and “personality.” To fully understand our **unique mission**, we **need to be aware of the inherent features and competencies we can use as resources to work toward the achievement of our visions**. Resources, in general, and how to develop a strategy to effectively use the resources toward the achievement of our visions, will be dealt with in Chapter 1.5 and 3.3 respectively.

2-Business Activity: What do you do?

This question helps us to establish the second component of our mission. What do you have to do every day with the inherent primary resources and other available secondary and tertiary resources, toward the achievement of your vision? As a vicegerent and servant of your Creator, what services are you to embark on to serve creation at large?

Aside from seeking an answer to establish the business component of your vision, this question also conscientizes you to know that the major process toward the achievement of your vision is hard work. Our imaginations and words can only effectively help us realize our visions with the support of our actions and works. Because a human being has nothing except his sweat, as clearly expressed in **Quran 53:39**

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

It is definitely easy to get guided and motivated to do activities that we had earlier deeply thought of its immense positive impact on our vision

And that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad) ,

This verse is a clear and categorically stated life principle that guides us to understand that the most effective mode of requesting and benefiting from the providence of the Almighty Allah is for us to work hard. So,

we need to be aware of, and embark on the set of activities that could guide and drive us to the realization of our visions. Such awareness will increase our level of vigilance against embarking on unnecessary deeds and activities that have nothing to do with our vision. It is definitely easy to get guided and motivated to do activities that we earlier deeply thought of its immense positive impact on our visions.

The effect of what we do (our *activities*) on the strategy development and implementation stages of our strategic vision is further discussed into details in step 4 of chapter 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.

3-Purpose: Why do you do what you do?

What makes us take the first step in a journey and keep progressing toward our destination? We definitely will have *reasons*. It is these reasons that generate desires and actions which, when well-coordinated with an effective vision, definitely leads to great achievements that can simply be described as *success*. I simply call such reasons ‘effective intention’ or ***Purpose***. Indeed, any purposeful life can gradually get evolved into a successful life. We may call the reasons and intentions for which an action is taken for the achievement of a particular vision the *Purpose* of the vision.

From the above explanations we can simply define a mission as *the **purposeful** set of **actions/business** that need to be carried out for the achievement of a vision of an individual or organization with a unique **identity***. A mission, therefore expresses who we are, what we do and why we are into such business. An effective mission generates, drives and sustains a vision.

A Muslim’s vision must be a mission driven one because every act or achievement is valued based on the intentions

A mission could therefore be seen as the soul of an act that enables it produce a desired result.

A Muslim's vision must be a mission driven one because every act or achievement is valued based on the intentions. This is a key Islamic principle that will be discussed in the next topic. This is a key concept in life that needs to be clearly understood by every believer. As a result, I deem it crucial to share some few ideas on "a mission driven life" and "the Purpose of Life".

A MISSION-DRIVEN LIFE,

The journey from purpose to true success.

One of the first life principles the Holy Prophet (saw) nurtured in the hearts of the Ummah on his arrival in Medina was the concept of Intention, the root concept in the concept of mission. It is a very important life principle that Imam Bukhari found necessary to record it as his first narration/hadith from the holy Prophet (saw). Our beloved Prophet (saw) used his first few hours in Medina to seek to shape this key concept in the minds of the Muslims and humanity at large. With the audience of the whole Ummah the Holy Prophet (saw) released these refined words to model a key concept in the life of humanity:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى.....

Divine reward from Allah can simply be equated to "our **works** divided by our available **opportunities**, all multiplied by our sincere **intention**"

"Verily, every act is based on an intention. And for everyone is what he intended...."^[15]

This life inspiring quote points to the fact that every act is, or should by necessity be driven by an intention or a reason. While we humans reward people based on the results

15 Bukhari v.1, Hadith 1

they produce, this prophetic principle enlightens us that divine rewards are apportioned in accordance with intentions. By way of a formula, divine **reward from Allah can simply be equated** to “our **works** divided by our available **opportunities**, all multiplied by our sincere **intention**”. In that case, works based on corrupted intentions and illegal opportunities (bad deeds) will have no divine rewards from Allah (swt).

Reasons gradually get evolved into *intentions* and finally into *missions* for the achievement of specific *visions*. We should thus have no vision without an accompanying mission. Put differently, our vision must be mission-driven, always.

We may have specific missions for different visions in life. Each institution, company and organization should have a vision and a mission statement. In essence everything should have a vision and a mission. However, the most crucial yet most unanswered and unattended to question is *what is the mission of our entire life?* What is the purpose of our life? We sometimes neglect this and similar questions treating them with outright negligence. This negligence results in us paying less attention to life after death, which is a key guide and motivation for our good deeds. I therefore find it crucial for us to discuss and know the Purpose of our life.

1.4 LIFE PURPOSE

The Purpose of Life

Naturally every creation has a vision and mission determined by the creator. We can never think of a noble creation like human being to exist without a life vision and mission. To draw our attention to the purpose for which we were created, Allah drills us to a number of thought provoking statements and questions. Allah asks:

We can never think of a noble creation like human being to exist without a life mission and vision

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى

❖ Surah Al-Qiyama, 75 Verse 36:

Does man think that he will be left Suda [neglected without being punished or rewarded [for the obligatory duties enjoined by his Lord (Allâh) on him]]?

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنْمَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

❖ Surah Al-Mumenoon, 23 Verse 115:

“Did you think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us?”

In both questions, the Qur'an seeks to awaken our inherent moral and psychological senses, which our love for this world constantly keeps suppressing. Based on the above verse, our great scholars and elders draw our attention to the fact that mankind is not left without an aim. Our lives are always guided by divine instructions commanding us to do good and prohibiting us from bad deeds. These two verses remind us of resurrection from our graves for

We will easily lose our motivation to continue to do the right thing if there will not be a future divine platform of justice; judgment day, for bad people who were not caught to be punished and the good people who were not recognized to be rewarded.

judgment that will end in *rewards* for the good and *punishments* for the bad. We will easily lose our motivation to continue to do the right thing if there will not be a future divine platform of justice; judgment day, for bad people who were not caught to be punished and the good people who were not recognized to be rewarded.

Numerous life incidences should simply

guide us to the conclusion that there should certainly be life after death, when all injustices shall be addressed and all good deeds will be rewarded. Many armed robbers succeed in their robbery operations, leaving behind many innocent victim families with irreparable casualties. Such families are sometimes consigned to live miserable lives till their last breaths. We witness so many scenes of injustices that the super powers of this world, in spite of their advances, have failed to provide just solutions.

Life would be so stressful and distressful should one have virtually nothing to accomplish and enjoy at the end of it (after death). Life is indeed exciting and interesting, provided one knows why he is living and how he can attain the beautiful pleasures and tastes of life and after life.

Our common sense will have us reason that it is the manufacturer, and not the product itself, that determines its purpose. Similarly, the purpose of our creation should be determined only by our Creator, Allah. This determination is to guide us to discover the purpose of our existence and creation.

The Qur'an guides to the conclusion that the **Divine Purpose** of our creation has two major dimensions; **Belief** and **Deeds**. These are two concepts that Allah always mentions together and hardly separates them in the Qur'an. Just like every country would want you to believe and uphold its constitution and act in accordance to its constitution, the Almighty Allah who is the Creator of the universe requests that you believe and uphold His divine guidance and live in accordance to His divine guidance. God designed some set of rituals for us to nourish our belief in Him and the good Characters for us to refine our Deeds. I would like us to discuss our Purpose of creation in three basic concepts: **Worship**, **Vicegerency**,

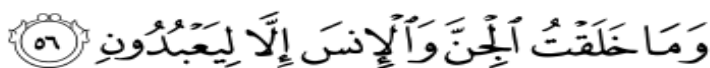
God designed
some set of rituals
for us to nourish
our belief in
Him and good
Characters for us
to refine our Deeds

Piety (Taqwa) and Mercy and Pleasure of Allah.

1.4.1 Worship.

This is the direct Purpose of our creation clearly mentioned in the Qur'an. It has at least 3 dimensions: *Awareness, Belief and Obedience*. One of the clearest verses on this concept of Purpose of Creation is

Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Verse 56:



And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.^[16]

Any act that is done in accordance with Allah's instructions and solely for His sake is considered as worship. Worship consist of obedience to Allah and not disobedience to Him, and it is not restricted to only the ritual acts like Salah (Prayers) and Tilawah (Quran recitation) which are to nourish and sustain our faith, but to any deed that pleases Allah.

Acts that are done for the sake of the Creator to benefit creatures constitute the kind of worship with great value. Because they form and perfect our character and are the deeds that weigh heaviest on the divine scale on Judgment Day. Unfortunately, so many of us limit the concept of worship to ritual acts like Salah, Qur'an recitation, and fasting. These ritual acts are to refine and model our behaviors and personalities to form noble characters that should benefit creation

16 (Translation-Sahih International)

should benefit creation. The Qur'an has thus set TAQWA (piety) as the goal and core aim of worship. That is why this Noble and Divine concept of *refined character* in Qur'an called **Taqwa** is seen as the core purpose of worship and for that matter Life in general. Allah clearly expresses this point in Qur'an chapter 2 verse 21 as follows:

Surah Al-Baqara, Verse 21:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O men! Serve your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may guard (against evil). (Sahih International)

1.4.2 Taqwa

Taqwa is *God-Consciousness*. As seen in the above verse, it is the core Purpose of life. Because we are expected to nurture Taqwa through Worship. It is the quality dimension of our deeds in which *Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)*, *Ikhlās (sincerity for the sake of Allah)* and *Ihsan (perfecting our deeds as if we are in front of Allah)* are key factors. The *key features* of the people of Taqwa (God-consciousness.) Mentioned in the Qur'an include their unique **belief** system, their general *attitudes* that drive their daily (**ritual**) **habits** and noble **characters**. The Islamic concept of belief is not therefore limited to only doctrines. Belief takes the form of **doctrine**, **rituals** and **character**. To expand the concept of Islamic belief, the Qur'an mostly mentions belief and deeds (rituals and character) together, making both the requirements for attaining worldly and eternal bliss in heaven.^[17]

Strong ritual practices seen in an ill-mannered person cannot make the person successful in both worlds.

The set of characters mentioned in the Qur'an

17 Qur'an 2:82

describing those who are conscious of obeying their Creator and guarding themselves against any evil deeds are the main pillars of the Qur’anic concept of piety called Taqwa. In summary, we as human beings and the Jinns were created to worship Allah in order to get Taqwa (piety). It is therefore clear that strong ritual practices seen in an ill-mannered person cannot make the person successful in both worlds. The role of worship is to refine our behaviors, attitudes and Characters. That is why as part of the Prayers of Prophet Ibrahim (as) for Humanity, Qur’an stated character refinement as among one of the major prophetic goals of the Holy Prophet (saw):

Surah Al-Baqara, Verse 129:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾

Our Lord! And raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (English - Shakir)

1.4.3 Vicegerency

A very important dimension of deeds seen as part of the Purpose of life in the Qur’an is also our role as vicegerents of Allah (swt).

Among all creature’s, human beings have the unique feature of controlling and managing the others

Among all creatures, human beings have the unique feature of controlling and managing the others. So Allah clearly states that the Divine vicegerency position is solely assigned to human beings among all the creatures. He informed the **Angels** and informed us as well of this mantle of responsibility:

To the Angels Allah said

Surah Al-Baqara, Verse 30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ جَاعِلٌ فِی الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةً قَالُوْۤا اَجْعَلْ فِیْهَا مَنْ
یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ اِنِّیْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا
لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾

“And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: “Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth.” They said: “Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, - while we glorify You with praises and thanks (Exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners) and sanctify You.” He (Allâh) said: “I know that which you do not know.”

Allah further informed human beings of this noble mantle of responsibility in

Surah Al-Anaam, Verse 165:

وَهُوَ الَّذِیْ جَعَلَکُمْ خَلَآِٔفَ الْاَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَکُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِّیَّبْلُوْکُمْ فِی
مَاۤءَاتِکُمْۚ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ سَرِیْعُ الْعَقَابِ وَاِنَّهُ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿۱۶۵﴾

And He it is Who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others by (various) grades, that He might try you by what He has given you; surely your Lord is quick to requite (evil), and He is most surely the Forgiving, the Merciful”. (English - Shakir)

Being successors, Allah requires us to exhibit and ensure the execution of His desired life principles. By His Divine justice and mercy, we will only be tried by what we have been given. These include our natural

Using opportunities and blessings to fulfill our responsibilities as servants and vicegerents of Allah should rather be seen as real achievement of our vision.

or acquired talents/skills, wealth, power and other opportunities at our disposal. The verse is also clear on the fact that Divine trial will also depend on levels or grades of responsibility in life. Opportunities and blessings therefore increase responsibilities and expectations. Struggling to acquire the opportunities and blessings should only be seen as an effort towards the achievement of our visions. But the opportunities and the blessings should not be seen as the Vision itself. Using opportunities and blessings to fulfill our *responsibilities as servants and vicegerents of Allah should rather be seen as real achievement of our visions.*

1.4.4 The Mercy and Pleasure of Allah

Every successful institution or personality has a sound vision built on a sound mission. Just as we can't envision producing meat from a block factory directly, it is apparent that every vision of an institution should be based on the purpose/mission of the institution. Your vision should ultimately be based on your mission/purpose of life. The purpose of every product is mainly determined by the producer. As Muslims, therefore, we accept that the comprehensive purpose of creation is to ***“worship” The Creator to attain Taqwa (sound belief and character)^[18] in order to gain the mercy^[19] and pleasure of Allah for eternal life in Heaven after death.^[20]*** This

Your current position is someone's vision and your vision is someone's current position

makes life more meaningful and relieves us of the stress and distress of life.

The fact that most of the situations we call happiness are mere relief from life distress confirms the fact that the natural companion of

18 Qur'an 51:56

19 Qur'an 11:119

20 Qur'an 9:72

life is distress and struggle^[21]. Richness can be seen as a relief from poverty. Satisfaction can also be seen as a relief from hunger and thirst. Your current position is someone's vision and your vision is someone's current position. So be grateful, positive, focused becomes industrious so that success becomes the destination of your journey. We will definitely realise in life that indeed the real source of internal and external peace, and success for that matter, is the attainment of *Taqwa (Piety) for the Mercy and Pleasure of Allah*.

The foregoing discussion throws more light on some seldom considered but very significant basic features of a vision which are the comprehensive sense of the Creator and the Purpose of creation. The Creator is one and has a universal purpose for creation. This means that as humans, there should be some basic inherent possess resources that we should possess by nature and an ideal template or model of vision that we can use as a guide to develop our visions. The next two topics will focus on the concept of *resources* as well as the concept of *strategy* respectively to end chapter-1. The structure of an ideal model vision will rather be tackled in the next Chapter.

1.5 LIFE RESOURCES

It is only Allah who, as the original Creator, achieves and creates out of nothing. He neither needs materials nor any form of support to be able to create something. "His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: *"Be", so it is*"^[22]. Allah is the only Absolute,

Whatever we need to initiate, continue and sustain the process of achieving our vision can be seen as a resource

21 Qur'an 90/4

22 The Qur'an, Surah Ya Seen, Verse 82

Self-Sufficient, Independent ^[23] and surely above any need of the worlds^[24].

Unlike Allah, the Almighty Creator, we, as social creatures definitely need materials, and we need the support of one another to be able to do or achieve anything. We are thus advised to “...help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and transgression...”^[25].

Whatever we need to initiate, continue and sustain the process of achieving our visions can be seen as a resource. Literally a **resource** can broadly be defined as “A useful or valuable possession or quality...”^[26] Resources are therefore, not only limited to the raw materials and tools that we need in production. Resources also include Land, Labor, Raw materials, Tools/machines and information or standard operation procedures for the achievement of a vision. I see most of these as tertiary resources. That is to say that, before these above mentioned resources, there are very important resources that we need to guide us and facilitate the acquisition and effective utilization of these mentioned resources. I have generally classified resources as primary and secondary and tertiary resources. A brief discussing of what they are, their significance and how to acquire them comes below:

❖ *Primary Resources*

A strategic vision helps us to coordinate all other resources

The natural and basic Resources we have been inherently bestowed with in order to achieve our purpose of creation are our ***minds, hearts, souls*** and ***bodies***. We are given a capital ***TIME*** (life span) to use these afore mentioned inherent golden

23 The Qur'an, Surah Al-Ikhlās, Verse 2

24 The Qur'an, Surah Aal-e-Imran, Verse 97

25 The Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'ida, Verse 2

26 Cambridge Dictionary

Resources in a suitable *environment* that definitely has *models* we look at to pursue our visions. I refer to **time**, our intellectual faculty (**mind**), our emotional faculty (**heart**), our sense of discipline (**soul**) and our health (**body**) as our **Primary Resources**. Unfortunately many of us as a result are unaware and therefore do not regard these as resources. We end up misusing, under utilizing and even destroying them.

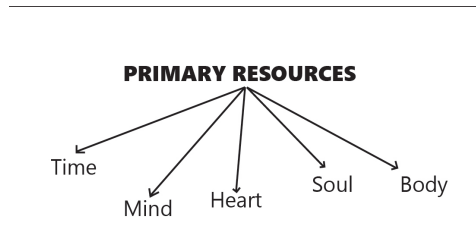


Figure 4.

❖ *Secondary resources*

We need Experience, Education and general training to develop **and** discipline the above mentioned primary resources for their effective utilization. Effective use of these primary resources can acquire us important secondary resources like **Skills and talents**, productive **habits and character** as well as guide us to identify very good **role models** within our environments. With all these resources we can develop a sound **strategic vision** for any level in any field of life. A strategic vision helps us to coordinate all other resources. I refer to our social environment, **skills, talents, habits, characters, role models** and **strategic vision**, which are products of our careful and effective utilization of the above mentioned basic or primary resources as **Secondary Resources**.

Our knowledge of the primary and secondary resources and their proper utilization can make it easier for us to acquire the needed tertiary resources

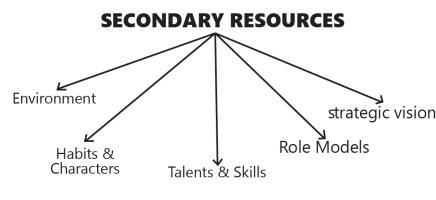


Figure 5.

❖ *Tertiary Resources.*

As per the strategic vision that we develop, we will come to realize the need for certain things we specifically need for the achievement of our strategic visions. These specific things like ***Land, Labor (human resources), Raw materials, Tools/Machines*** and ***information*** or ***standard operation procedures(SOP)*** are the resources I refer to as ***Tertiary Resources***. They are mostly specific to the vision. How to acquire them are further discussed in the strategy development stage in chapter 3.

I see primary and secondary resources as natural and general. But tertiary resources are based on our strategic vision. Our knowledge of the primary and secondary resources and their proper utilization can make it easier for us to acquire the needed tertiary resources. I will therefore like to state and discuss, without much details, some primary and secondary resources we need to definitely develop for the achievement of our visions.

One of the basic resources we need to develop and implement any vision to be successful in life is Time

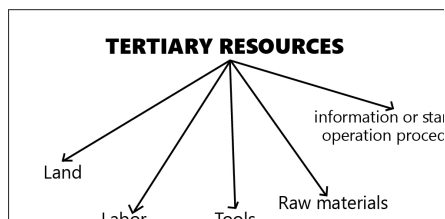


Figure 6.

Basic Primary and Secondary Resources

1- TIME: Life

One of the basic resources we need to develop and implement any vision to be successful in life is Time. This basic resource constitutes our life span without which both failure and success cannot exist. Allah therefore links time to failure and guides us as to how to come out of failure to be successful in life through belief, good deeds (service) and advocacy for the two (belief and service) as stated in:

Quran 103:1-3

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾

By Al- 'Asr (the time).

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

Verily! Man is in loss,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. enjoin one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'rûf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allâh has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic

use time as life capital only in the development, refinement and advocacy of beliefs, values and good services for the benefit of creation at large

Monotheism or Jihād, etc.).

We are to use time to nurture the *core life principles* that constitute our *beliefs and values*. Proceed to work hard to serve creation with *good deeds* in the light of our beliefs. *Advocate* for the good belief and deeds. Only then can the title of our life story be SUCCESS.

Time is our most important capital that we have no control over its *quantity, direction* and *progression speed*. We can only control its quality. Time progressively makes or breaks us, constructs or destroys us. In the absence of time all other resources become useless to us. We need to therefore learn how to manage and increase the quality of our time.

We should therefore be guided by these divine verses to be vigilant to use time as life capital only in the development , refinement and advocacy of beliefs, values and good services for the benefit of creation at large. This means that we should be careful of time ‘consumers’ like Internet, social media, watching football, unnecessary entertainments, unplanned meetings and discussions.

Every strategic vision should definitely have a ***time frame*** and a ***time-line***. Time frame guides us to mark the beginning and the end of the vision. Time-line guides us to know when each activity is supposed to be implemented for the achievement of specific set of goals. Time-line and Time frame are comprehensively discussed in Chapter 3.3.

the mind is one of the basic resources without which effective utilization of all other resources becomes impossible.

2- MIND: Determination

Asound, refined and well informed mind produces focus, direction and determination which in turn guide the heart in **its** function as the coordinator and compass of our emotions and behaviors. The mind develops with knowledge, deep reflection, education, training and experience. The more we

feed it with information and ideas the more it develops in structure (dendrite increment) and intellectual capacity. The mind is a “use and gain or disuse and lose” organ. The significance and existence of the mind is based on **its** usage in thinking, reflection, contemplation and learning in general. The Qur’an therefore uses these mental activities in over 150 verses^[27] to connote the existence of the mind and significance of using the mind instead of mentioning it’s name. The word mind (العقل) always appearing in the “verbal” form in at least 49 places points to the fact that Allah wants us to actively use the mind and make use of its content instead of gaining knowledge without application of same^[28].

We should use our minds as a resource to reflect on the purpose of our vision, look for in-depth information on the comprehensive resource and process to the achievement of our vision. Aside from time, the mind is one of the basic resources without which effective utilization of all other resources becomes impossible. We therefore need a sound mind to provide us with information, focus, direction and the requisite determination we need to undertake any activity to pursue any vision. Indeed, such a refined mind is definitely a must earned resource for the development of any strategic vision.

We should be careful with loading, polluting and engaging the mind with fake and unnecessary information on the Internet and social media that has no use to our life visions and can potentially make us lose track and focus on our vision. It is also necessary for us to be aware and careful of substances like alcohol and drugs that could destroy our minds. It’s good not to be close to any personality or environment that has such toxic and addictive substances.

we need a sound heart to produce the requisite desire, passion and interest to undertake any activity to pursue any vision

27 O.N. TOPBAŞ, Contemplation in Islam, ERKAM Publications, 2019, Pg8.

28 Prof Dr. Yaşar Fersahoglu, Intellectual Development in the Qur’an, Page 59

3- HEART: Passion

Sound heart, when properly fed with the right emotions and feelings, generated by the Right information and experience, nurtures, sieves and blends the right quantities of emotions and feelings to produce Desire, Interest and Passion.

Aside from the processing of feelings and emotions, the climate of the heart could greatly affect our knowledge and behaviors. We are guided by the Qur'an to know that the state of the heart plays a key role in our learning and understanding. So, long before scientific conclusions in Neurocardiology, that referred to the nervous system of the heart as the "the little brain in the heart" by Andrew Armour, M.D., Ph.D. in 1994^[29] the Qur'an guided us to this intellectual role of the heart over 1400 years ago in:

Surah Al-Hajj, Verse 46:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَأَعْيَاهَا
تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾

"Have they not traveled through the land, and have they hearts wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind."

the ability to control, direct and align our inner inclinations to our ideal vision is a major resource we always need in life

It is further observed that our beliefs, behaviors and characters spiritually build or destroy our heart. This fact is confirmed in several Divine revelations and Prophetic statements (Hadith). We therefore need strong *beliefs, habits and characters to refine our hearts*. For that reason, we need a sound heart to produce the requisite

29 Dr Gohar Mushtaq, The intelligent heart, the pure heart, Page 8-9.

desire, passion and interest to undertake any activity to pursue any vision. The heart is indeed a great resource that we need to pay attention to its development. For many are the times we think and design very good strategic visions, but if we lack the desire and passion to pursue the vision, we end up not taking a single step towards the achievement of the vision. I will briefly discuss how to incorporate the heart in developing our strategic vision in Chapter 3.2 Insha'Allah.

4- SOUL: Discipline

Many times we may have strong desire to work hard for the achievement of our goals. Our determination, clarity in vision as well as passion may be at the highest level. But still we are unable to work hard in real life as we had in our ideal life. So there will always exist difference in “wish” and “works”. And also ideally what we mostly think is good is not always what we feel like doing. We therefore need to have another very crucial resource that controls our sense of discipline to enable us implement our heart desires. This is because our inner inclinations could be positive or negative. So we generally need to control or regulate our internal inclinations. For many of the inclinations or desires may not be in accordance with our own ideal judgment. So ideally what we think is good is not always what we feel like doing.

One of the Qur'anic terms for the human faculty that has both the negative and positive inspirations and therefore has control on our inner inclinations is “Nafs”. It is literally translated as the “Soul”. For the significance of this concept, Allah mentions the “nafs” in over 300 places in the Qur'an. But this book does not intend to discuss the concept of the “Soul”. I am

“Mind Power”,
“Will Power” and
“Man Power”
are the three
basic powers we
need in life to
work hard for the
achievement of
our visions

only seeking to draw your attention to the divine fact that “He will indeed be successful who purifies it (soul)”.^[30] Indeed, he succeeds who purifies his own self^[31] (i.e. obeys and performs **all** that Allâh ordered, by following the true Faith of Islâmic Monotheism and by doing righteous deeds).

The divine life principle in this verse is that “The major tool we need in our lives for success is the control of our inner inclinations/ desires as the driver needs to gain full control over the steer for safe driving and therefore arrival.

There is therefore no doubt that the ability to control, direct and align our inner inclinations to our ideal vision is a major resource we always need in life. If we maintain moderation and avoid excessiveness in eating, sleeping, talking as well as the use of Internet and social media while controlling what we see, hear and do, then we are likely to gain considerable control over our inner inclinations. Especially if we are able to replace excessive eating with fasting, replace excessive sleeping with *Tahajjud* (mid night prayers), replace excessive talking with *Zikir* (remembrance of Allah) and *Tilawah* (Qur’an recitation) and reduce the time we spend on social media and rather increase the time for reading, research and strategic planning, then controlling the soul and therefore, our inner inclinations would be relatively easier for us.

Disciplined souls help us to strengthen our self-regulation and willpower. It eliminates laziness in us and finally urges the body

Health is indeed wealth that can only be utilized and enjoyed with health

to respond to the determination and passion of the mind and heart.

30 The Qur’an, Surah Ash-Shams, 91 Verse 9

31 Qur’an 87:14

Disciplined souls that nurture high sense of self discipline is a *must earned* resource that we all need to enable us work hard for the achievement of our visions.

5- **BODY**: Healthy bodies finally aid us to act and work hard in the interest of the heart under the guidance of the mind and with direction and permission of the soul which is the center of our willpower. After organizing all the above mentioned resources that is time, mind (determination), heart (passion) and soul (strong willpower) we will need another resource to help us execute our vision. And this is our healthy bodies.

“Mind Power”, “Will Power” and “Man Power” are the three basic powers we need in life to work hard for the achievement of our visions. The mind is the resource that manages our intellectual faculty to produce “Mind power”, the heart and soul manage our Emotional and Spiritual Faculties to produce “Will power” and the body manages our Physical Existence to produce “Man power”. We must therefore take good care of our bodies to nurture high level of man power. The body needs to be well nourished with balanced diet for steady development. Periodic exercises refresh the body and maintain its fitness. Enough rest is always needed to reset and energize the body. We may also sometimes need medications to restore any lost vitality. The right quality and quantity of food, exercise, rest and medication nurture and sustain our health, strength and therefore manpower.

Hardwork and resilience can only be executed by a healthy body. Health is indeed wealth that can only be utilized and enjoyed with health.

Healthy body is therefore a natural resource we need to carefully maintain with care and even further develop.

Both the Internet and social media are capable of negatively changing our moods and attitudes even in positive physical environment

6- **Environment:** Environment connotes our physical location and the people around (who motivate) us. Environment, as stated here, partly means the Location that is to serve as the land for our institution for the achievement of our visions. As a factor of production, land is indeed a resource.

However, the point I want to discuss here is our social environment as a basic resource. Conducive Environment, made up of honest people, motivates and guides us to observe, learn and work hard towards the achievement of our goals. The environment we **live** in should, indeed be very resourceful. In resourceful social environments, one is psychologically guided not to be the odd person but strive to also discipline himself. It is thus easier to incline towards drinking and illicit sex when we find ourselves in casinos as compared to when we find ourselves in the Mosque. It is also easier to incline towards reading the Qur'an in the Mosque as compared to reading the Qur'an in the sports stadium.

Every action definitely needs a location for it to be executed. We are guided in the Qur'an to carefully select and always be at where honest and truthful people are^[32]. Our friends and role models should be people who are at least truthful and not liars. For truthfulness will definitely guide us to righteousness and finally to the achievement of eternal bliss (Paradise)^[33].

your developed skills and talents will definitely save and earn you money and time sooner or later in life.

Being in an environment that is full of truthful people you love, who have the basic skills and competences you need for the achievement of your vision, is very important. We are therefore advised to carefully select an environment that is full of truthful people and devoid of liars.

32 Qur'an 9:119

33 Sahih al-Bukhari 6094.

Quran 9:119

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

*O you who believe! Be fear of Allâh, and be **with** those who are true (in words and deeds).*

This is so important because the common foundation of sinning is this ugly trait of lying. The effect of social media on our attitudes and behavior is so immense that we could rightly call the Internet and social media an “electronic environment”. Both the Internet and social media are capable of negatively changing our moods and attitudes even in positive physical environment. It is therefore very important to crosscheck the list of people on the Internet that we are in contact with via any of the social media outlets. We can easily get infected by their negative ideologies, attitudes and behaviors.

7- Skills, Talents & Competence (STC): with effort, hardwork, discipline, passion, sound knowledge and determination we should be able to nurture and develop certain useful skills, talents and competences within a conducive environment over a period of time. Skills, talents and competences are therefore products of the reaction between our inherent internal natural resources, listed above, with our conducive educational environment.

Transformation or skills development is one of the weakly achieved visions of our educational systems. Rather, we are much loaded with and tested on information/knowledge. Little attention is given to skills and talent development. We however should not personally neglect any important **competence** we might need in the future. We need to discover certain basic skills

Identifying and modeling similar visions with the same mission and perhaps strategy like yours makes your work easier.

that are relevant to the achievement of our visions and strive hard to personally develop them alongside our formal education. The opportunity to learn such skills may be on campus or outside campus. There should therefore be no any leisure time for a serious person like you. Leisure times should be times for learning a skill or developing your talent.

Driving, plumbing, electrical repairs, carpentry, tailoring, cooking, I.C.T and many others are basic life skills that we need to invest our leisure time in developing them. Common competences like communication skills, sales/trading, marketing, teamwork and leadership are worth learning before graduation. At least buy and sell something to enrich your entrepreneurial skills before you grab your first degree. Spend your holidays doing attachment in companies you can develop the basic competence you need for the achievement of your vision. Do not spend your time in companies you get money only. Because your developed skills and talents will definitely save and earn you money and time sooner or later in life. At least it would give you considerable control over your business or profession. Skills and talents are indeed basic resources that we must, by all means, strive to develop at all cost and at all times.

8- *Habits and Characters:* Our habits and characters make or unmake us. Habits and characters develop or destroy us. With bad habits, our time, determination, passion and competences may get trickled into the drains. Most resources get wasted with bad habits and Characters.

Strategic vision is a key resource that is needed to generate, coordinate and use all other resources.

We need to carefully nurture and acquire good habits and characters that will help facilitate and ease our way to success. Our lives are full of daily routines largely made up of habits and characters. If we break the bad habits and develop good habits and characters, then we ease our way

to success. Habitual routines are easily carried out with less efforts as compared to scheduled duties that are outside our habits. It is therefore important to develop good habits that will help us easily implement our plans, monitor and sustain our progress towards success.

Sleeping and waking up early, periodic (daily) planning, personal assessment and evaluation, punctuality, self-discipline, cleanliness, honesty, hardworking, Patience and fortitude, humility, tolerance, generosity and Selflessness are all examples of habits and characters that can make us successful in life.

9- **Perfect Models:** “The inclination to imitate is an important character-forming trait in every human being”^[34] Imitation is therefore a natural way of learning in life to make our struggles, to success easier. Life is thus all about modeling. Identifying and modeling similar visions with the same mission and perhaps strategy like yours makes your work easier.

Literally, a model is a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original. In this write up, I am using a **model**, with respect to **personal development**, to refer to a successful person who had similar **vision**, **mission** and **strategies** like you own. These core features can be extended to similarities in **goals**, **objectives** and list of daily **duties**. Conversely, the features of similarities can further be reduced to at least only **vision**. The least similarities to make modeling stable in personal development is **vision** and **mission**. With variations in goals and objectives, our strategies may change.

Strategic Vision guides us to acquire other resources we don't have

The Life model for believers are the Prophets, the companions and pious personalities within their societies. The best universal and final Model

34 Osman Nuri Topbas, Mohammed Mustafa the elect, Pg.

for creation at large is The Holy Prophet Mohammed (saw) who attained the highest positions in worship and character that earned him, by the mercy of Allah, the highest position in Heaven and thus the pleasure of Allah. His personality and character are indeed model solutions for human challenges. He was sent as a Mercy to the whole creation to perfect morality^[35]. God Almighty Allah (swt) therefore tells us that...

Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا



Indeed, in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad SAW) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day, and remembers Allâh much.

Whoever you are, you definitely can find a unique excellent model in the life of the Holy Prophet (saw) that can guide you to success. His life is a “school” in which children, adults, parents, teachers, businessmen, poor, rich, leaders, politicians, and any candidate of success you can think of, can definitely find a “subject” to learn. Learning and modeling the life of the Holy Prophet (saw) will indeed, earn us vital life values, qualities and principles that will guide us and pave our way to success.

Lack of knowing the ideal structure of our vision will results in restrictions and limitations in our visions

10- Strategic Vision: Strategic vision is a key resource that is needed to generate, coordinate and use all other resources. The above mentioned Primary, Secondary resources and any appropriate tertiary resource can be purposefully and successfully used only under the guidance of a strategic vision. A strategic vision is therefore the engine of effective and

successful life. Its one of the common features that all experts enumerate as core feature of successful people.

In addition to helping us to coordinate and use appropriately the resources at our disposal, Strategic Vision guides us to acquire other resources we don't have. This is extensively discussed in Chapter 3.3.7 under strategy development. Before then, let's discuss the concept of Strategy.

1.6 LIFE STRATEGY

Strategy is one of the very significant concepts that is constantly referred to and used in management, business and leadership. This is because it is a key tool needed in planning and implementation of the process towards the achievement of a vision. It is however a very complex and difficult to understand concept. An expert like *Magretta* is therefore quoted to have said that “of all the concepts in management, strategy is the one that attracts the most attention and generates the most controversy. Almost everyone agrees it is important. Almost no-one agrees on what it is”^[36]. Literally the concept of strategy is understood to be “a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.” * (Oxford Dictionary of English). Lack of adequate resources, the quest for proper management of resources to ensure efficiency in quality and quantity of production as well as manage all risks and competitions require that we carefully plan the sequential and cohesive integration of all factors and processes leading to the achievement of our visions. A Strategy is therefore “the plan that integrates goals, policies, resources

“there is a short chapter in the Qur'an, such that if it were the only chapter revealed by Allah, it would have sufficed to guide humanity to success”.

36 J.McGee et al, Strategy Analysis and Practices, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 1010, Pg1.

and action sequences into a cohesive whole based on relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes within the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponents”^[37]. A Strategic Planning can thus be simply seen as “the process of organizing resources and Actions in relation to an external environment in order to achieve desired set of goals or objectives”^[38]. Developing a Strategy is one of the difficult stages in vision development. This stage will be extensively discussed in chapter 3.3 under Strategic Vision development. Strategy is the engine of our vision that you will definitely need to know how to develop.

After knowing the major concepts in developing a strategic vision we need to also know the areas in which we should develop our vision. Lack of knowing the ideal structure of our vision will results in restrictions and limitations in our visions. The achievement of Such visions grants us limited or no self-satisfaction and may result in the insertion of laziness and leaving us confused, not knowing the next step to take. The ideal strategic vision that will guide us to comprehensively develop our visions to cover all aspects of our lives and constantly get motivated to move from one field to another and from one level to the other level is the 360° Strategic Vision model . The whole of the next chapter is going to be dedicated to this.

Time is the major ingredient that can't be eliminated in any failure (loss) or success (achievement) story.

37 J.McGee et al, Strategy Analysis and Practices, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 1010, Pg1.

38 Strategy Analysis and Practice, pg7.

CHAPTER 2

360° strategic vision; ideal model vision

2.1 Introduction

I was once listening to one of my role models, Sheikh Ishak Nuamah when he quoted Imam Shafis comment on Chapter 103 of the Qur'an (Surat al Asr). The quotation took the whole of my attention and I keenly waited to get the explanation that will follow. He quoted Imam Shafi' to have stated that "there is a short chapter in the Qur'an, such that if it were the only chapter revealed by Allah, it would have sufficed to guide humanity to success". I boldly underlined the words "humanity", "mankind" and "success" while keenly waiting for him to mention the chapter. He finally mentioned Chapter 103 of the Qur'an (Sūrat al Asr). Based on Imam Shafi's comments, I was convinced that this chapter should have an ideal formula for success that should be suitable for every human being.

The Qur'an has a universal formula for every candidate of success. Because, it is a guide to humanity at large^[39]. It is therefore very possible for the entire humanity to get guidance from Qur'an Chapter 103 as Imam Shafi' hoped. The significance of this chapter (Suratul Asr 103) naturally necessitates that it is fully quoted and given the needed explanations with respect to the subject matter in this book. The full Chapter and its English meanings in Sahih international Translation is as quoted below.

no human being
who truly needs a
balanced success
in life should
eliminate Belief,
Service and
Advocacy from
his or her vision

39 The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqara, Verse 185

In The Name of Allah, The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

وَالْعَصْرِ ١

إِنِّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ ٢

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ٣

1. By Al- 'Asr (the time).

2. Verily! Man is in loss,

3- Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.

Allah swears by TIME (in verse 1) and afterwards makes a categorical declaration of the loss mankind will suffer (in verse2) and how such loss could be converted into success (in verse3). This is a clear indication that TIME has a significant effect on both *Loss* and *Success of mankind*. Time is the “mother” of both failure and success. Time is the major ingredient that can't

If it is consciously planned for and used in fulfillment of the purpose of our creation, then wealth indeed is a must earned component of any ideal vision.

be eliminated in any failure (loss) or success (achievement) story. We therefore have to carefully utilize our limited time in pursuance of vital things that will lead us to success in this world and eternal bliss in the hereafter.

Our belief, deeds and advice (to one another) with time makes us successful people or losers in life.

Our self-esteem, self-worth, our works and our words (we receive or share) with time make us or break us. We therefore need to take time to carefully nurture our **beliefs** and get them transformed into very significant effective life principles and disciplines to produce **services** that humanity and creation at large should directly or indirectly benefit from.

Our services and products can truly be enjoyed in a peaceful environment built on order and system. To build order and maintain peace we need to **share our words of wisdom to one another**. There should be legal systems like constitution, laws and education as well as individual efforts like advice, counseling and preaching to ensure that this noble task of building peaceful nations and nationals is perfectly executed. This wonderful chapter therefore clearly guides us on what we should ultimately use our time to do in order to achieve real success, the success whose effect goes beyond our last breath.

It is therefore very clear that the major things we need to use our time to do in order to save ourselves from loss and succeed in life that the Chapter highlighted are; Strong Belief, Righteous Deeds, and Guiding and Counseling one another to truthfulness and patience. So no human being who truly needs a balanced success in life should eliminate Belief, Service and Advocacy from his or her vision. Our visions should cover and plan for these fields and beyond. These and other very crucial aspects of life that a strategic life vision should cover will be comprehensively dealt with in the next coming lines.

Aside from Belief, Service and Advocacy (Da'wa) what other areas of life should we set visions and plan for? The Holy Prophet (saw) also guides us to the understanding that the basic resources we shall be held accountable for in the

Our responsibilities are based on our strengths and opportunities

hereafter are the *life spans*, *health*, *knowledge* and *wealth* that are under our control. The responsibility of every servant for these basic resources has been clearly expressed by The Holy Prophet (saw) in the Hadith (tradition) below:

عن أبي برزة الأسلمي قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا تزول قدما عبد يوم القيامة حتى يسأل عن عمره فيما أفناه، وعن علمه فيما فعل، وعن ماله من أين اكتسبه وفيما أنفق، عن جسمه فيما أبلاه.

Abu Barzah Al-Aslami narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "The feet of the servant of Allah shall not move [on the Day of Judgment] until he is asked about his life and what he did with it, about his knowledge and what he did with it, about his wealth and how he earned it and where he spent it on, about his body and for what did he wear it out"^[40].

Life mentioned in this hadith simply means the entire time we spent on earth. That is our life span. Meaning we definitely need to plan and carefully make good use of each minute and second in our lives, for we will definitely be accounting for it.

Knowledge is the amount of information at our disposal through formal or informal education. It is therefore significant for a believer to plan as to how to acquire useful knowledge and where to use the knowledge in fulfillment of the purpose of his or her creation. So the element of education should never get missing in our vision. It has to be dully catered for.

The effect of our strategic vision should not be limited to our personal lives, interest areas and localities alone

Wealth is another key thing that the entire world is chasing. Sometimes we chase wealth at the expense of other key areas in life. If it is consciously planned for and used in fulfillment

40 Jami' at-Tirmidhi (Chapters on the description of the Day of Judgment, Ar-Riqaq, and Al-Wara') English reference: Vol. 4, Book 11, Hadith 2417. Arabic reference: Book 37, Hadith 2602

of the purpose of our creation, then wealth indeed is a necessary component of any ideal vision.

Our **body**, signifying our health, energy and for that matter our power of influence and control on ourselves and the environment is a key component of life. I simply describe this as our **Capacity**. Developing and strategically using our capacities at all levels is very significant and must necessarily be part of our vision.

Its clear from the above chapter and hadith that every individual should endeavor to have a vision in the areas of Spirituality, Service, Advocacy, Finance, Education and Capacity (Health, Power and influence). These thematic areas shall be individually discussed into details in chapter 2.3. But before then, lets critically discuss the major levels of development through which each area ideally should systematically be developed.

2.2 Systematic Levels of a Strategic Vision

Our strategic visions in any aspect of life needs to systematically develop through certain levels in life to enable us fully get to the highest level in our mission as vicegerents of The Creator, Allah (swt). Our strategic visions in any field needs to go beyond the individual or personal level to the family, organizational, Community, National and Global level depending on whatever opportunity is made available in our lives. Our responsibilities are based on our strengths and opportunities. And as explained above, we will be held accountable for what strength and opportunities we have been given^[41].

The major levels or stages of achievement in any major field can thus be summarized in these six major stages or levels of achievement:

the major product of every strategic vision should be excellent character displayed in excellent services.

41 Qur'an 6:165

- 1- Personal Level
- 2- Family Level
- 3- Organizational Level
- 4- Community Level
- 5- National Level
- 6- Global Level

LIFE WHEEL

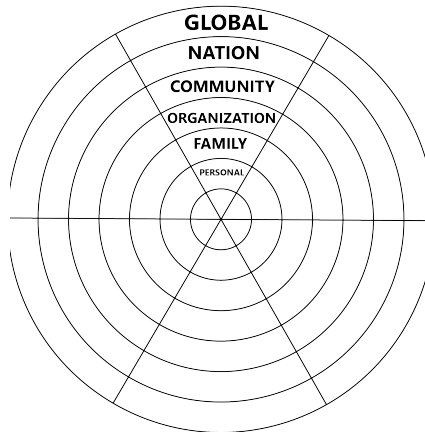


Figure 6.

The effect of our strategic vision should not be limited to our personal lives, interest areas and localities alone. The crucial areas our visions must necessarily cover should definitely be developed to steadily go through all these levels mentioned above. Let's further discuss these areas in the next coming lines to enrich our understanding of these concepts and thus make it easier for us to develop a strategic vision for each of the areas outlined above.

Knowledge of the key areas of life will earn us conceptual clarity in each field and as well guide us as to how to develop our vision in each area

2.3 The Key areas of a Strategic Vision

A close look at the key objectives of Sharia as well as Qur'an Chapter 103 and the noble statement of The Holy Prophet (saw) discussed in Chapter 2.1 and 2.2 above, makes it apparent that the ideal vision of every believer should focus on using these basic resources mentioned in the Prophetic statement to achieve the sublime Characters that are enshrined in the above mentioned chapter. So the major product of every strategic vision should be excellent character displayed in excellent services.

The key aspects of our lives that need to be strategically planned to collectively form an ideal vision for a successful life can thus be summarized as in the six major fields below;

- 1- Knowledge
- 2- Belief
- 3- Health (Capacity, Power and Influence)
- 4- Wealth (Finance)
- 5- Service
- 6- Advocacy of Righteousness

We therefore need to use the limited time at our disposal to achieve these basic things to save ourselves from Loss and to succeed in life. Our vision, which is our tool for success, should cover these basic areas. It must be part of our vision to utilize these constituent parts as a condition precedent for ultimate success. It is therefore very necessary for us to discuss these areas profoundly. Knowledge of the key areas of life will earn us conceptual clarity in each field and as well guide us as to how to develop our vision in each area. Following the divine guidance in

Knowledge supplies the roots of "belief" with ingredients that produce good behavior, skills, professions and noble character

the Qur'an we realize that the first field to be addressed was the field of knowledge acquisition (education). Let's therefore start our discussion on acquisition of Knowledge, the fuel of success.

An Ideal 360° Strategic Vision Development Process

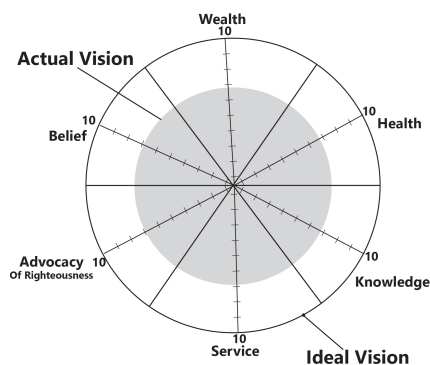


Figure 7.

2.3.1 KNOWLEDGE: *The fuel of success*

The first instruction God gave to the Holy Prophet (saw) exhorted him to read, to acquire knowledge, and to harness the blessings of the human intellect. A lot of us do know this, and we are very

Knowing the least quantity of the knowledge we need and what to do with the knowledge in the achievement of our life vision is the first active stage in our Educational vision

much aware of the esteemed place education occupies in Islam. When Allah issued that instruction, He did so mainly because He wanted us to be sufficiently informed that progress rarely occurs without enlightenment, nor does success occur without knowledge. Think of knowledge as a vital nutrient; what will become of your fate when you are deprived of the most important nutrients? How can your bodily growth and strength be

assured? Knowledge supplies the roots of “belief” with ingredients that produce good behavior, skills, professions and noble character. Knowledge is the mind’s light with which you can illuminate the paths and direct the inclinations of your heart to what is beneficial to you and pleasing to your Lord. The believer has but many instruments and weapons for attaining piety and righteousness; the most formidable of which is knowledge. The reason is not far fetched. Acquisition of knowledge is made obligatory just so that information is gathered to attain personal development and positive transformation. Information and Transformation are the notable words here. Therefore, transformation without information, even if possible is likely to nurture weak characters, whereas information without transformation bears no character at all. So important is this fact that, at no point in time is the individual Muslim in need of less or no transformation as a result of knowledge and experience.

In scurrying about for a living, one needs to plan for how he can acquire education to guide and better his only life and his circle. You should realize at this stage that not all education goes; the education you acquire should tremendously have an impact, it should equip you with productive skills, it should shape your attitude, and it should model your character. It is failure enough that you limit your education to certificate and title grabbing. An ideal educational vision goes beyond you as much as its impact should. It covers the education of your family, organization, community, Nation and the whole world. Like all other visions, we need to start locally (with personal achievement) and gradually move globally (to global achievement).

Knowledge, attitude and skills acquisition, and therefore education are basic life tools that we need first and at all times to write our success story. Knowledge is like the sea, how and when

Spending the whole of our lives in Education without any service or legacy to humanity will certainly add our names to the list of the forgotten Professors.

do you think you can exhaust the water and contents of the sea?

Knowing the least amount of the knowledge we need and what to do with the knowledge in the achievement of our life visions is the first active stage in our Educational vision. What can guide us to make our search for knowledge productive is our plan and set of goals on the least ‘quantity’ of knowledge to be acquired and what we seek to do with it. Without these thoughtful steps we may end up “wasting” our entire life in compiling certificates and leaving nothing behind for humanity to benefit. It is therefore very crucial for everybody to strategically plan his/her vision for education. Like the Prophet (saw), we never should forget to always pray, at least every morning and evening to Allah, seeking for beneficial knowledge that would be the means to attain good provisions and good deeds.

اللهم إني أسألك علما نافعا ورزقا طيبا وعملا متقبلا

O Allah, I ask You for knowledge that is of benefit, a good provision, and deeds that will be accepted ^[42].

Knowledge should refine and guide our hearts to nurture belief—the factory of our desires and the compass of our inclinations. In fact, the kind of education pursued and the nature and extent of knowledge acquired must be guided by your belief system. This is only possible with a proper understanding of what the Islamic belief system is. What is its scope and impact, and how can it be utilized to influence our life plans?

As discussed earlier, our strategic vision in Education or knowledge acquisition should not be limited to our personal education. It needs to go beyond our personal education to further cover the Education of our family, organization, community, nation and global reach. To nurture, structure and raise our awareness to this ideal encompassing

42 Ibn Majah, Sahih Ibn Majah 1/152, Majma' az-Zawaid 10/111

strategic vision in Education, we need to carefully embark on a specific self-assessment I term as ***Life Segment Assessment***.

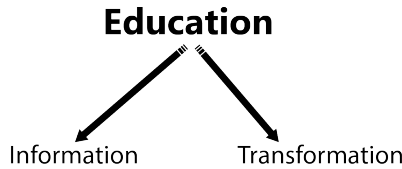


Figure 8.

Life Segment Assessment.

Life Segment Assessment is a term I use to describe our performance in each of the key aspects of development in life for a uniform and balanced life. Spending the whole of our lives in Education without any service or legacy to humanity will certainly add our names to the list of the forgotten Professors. So Spirituality should be crowned with excellent Character which should be expressed in service to creatures for the sake of the Creator. It is therefore very crucial for each and every one of us to pay attention to the steady development of each segment of our lives as well as the collective balanced development of all the segments of our lives. The pictorial or graphic representation of this is termed as “Life Wheel”. A proper life wheel should guide us to know all the important aspects in life that we need to develop for a balanced life. Life wheel assessment will be discussed in section 2.6. We will however need to do life Segment Assessment at the end of each discussion on each of the areas of Strategic Vision.

How can we do the assessment of our life Segment? Refer to Activity 2.0 below for guidance on how to do Life Segment Assessment.

Activity 2.0:

Select one of the areas discussed in section 2.3 and illustrated in figure 7 as a segment you intend to assess your performance in. Draw a table of 3 columns and 8 rows as shown in Table 2.1. Carefully reflect and resolve on the goals you will like to achieve to crown your efforts in this aspect of your strategic vision for yourself, your family, organization, community, nation and the whole world at large. Write these goals against their corresponding levels. Summarize all the goals into a single vision statement and write it in the last row of the middle column. These are goals that describe your IDEAL vision in this area of your life. Your current REAL state might be close or far away from the IDEAL state as illustrated in *figure 7*.

With careful and realistic self-assessment, determine your degree of progress at each level, considering 10 as the ideal degree of movement at each Level (60 degree life Segment). Sum all your degrees and record it in the last row of the last column. Draw and compare your Life Segment to the normal complete 60-degree Life Segment as illustrated in *figure 9* This should clearly show your performance in this aspect of your vision. The wider the gap between your real and ideal vision the lesser your level of success and for that matter you need to work harder.

Activity 2.1:

Carefully fill Table 2.1 below to enable you draw a Life Segment of your Strategic vision in Education. Follow the same procedure as described in Activity 2.0

A character built on faith is stable at all places and at all times if the faith is in Allah who is omnipresent and omnipotent.

Table 1: Strategic Vision assessment in Education

KNOWLEDGE	GOALS	DEGREES
Personal Level		
Family Level		
Organisational Level		
Community Level		
National Level		
Global Level		
STRATEGIC VISION IN SPIRITUALITY		Total Degrees out of 60:

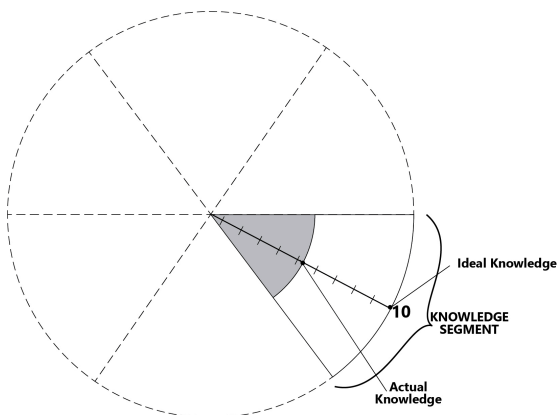


Figure 9.

Therefore, neglecting physical effort as an integral aspect of Prayers is a clear misconception that gives birth to the disease of laziness in the character of some “believers”..

2.3.2 BELIEF: *The engine of eternal success*

As discussed above, the first life principle Allah revealed to guide humanity is “Read”. Keen observation and analysis of “the content” of life, to earn us information for transformation, is an important life skill for success. We therefore need to read to earn knowledge because Sound knowledge about the Almighty Allah will lead to the formation of strong faith which definitely would affect our attitude and behavior. So the first intermediary product that knowledge should nurture is ***faith***. It is the ***engine*** of success. Because it is the main source of motivation for our deeds. A character built on faith is stable at all places and at all times if the faith is in Allah who is omnipresent and omnipotent.

Our source of energy, motivation and basic life principles that guide us to success are largely founded on our strong ***Belief***. Undoubtedly, one of the things that greatly affect success is a strong belief that leads to the formulation of productive life principles, discipline and hardwork. All successful people definitely have a strong belief that helps them nurture productive life principles to ultimately guide them to success through their hard work. It is therefore very important to strategically plan to nurture strong belief that should assume the seat of success in our lives.

A wrong belief will lead to the formation of wrong trust and attitudes that may, in the end, nurture wrong habits and thus weak or bad character. A misconception of the right belief may also produce

The compass of a believer's desire that gives directions to his emotional inclinations is the belief that there is no deity worthy of worship except the Almighty God Allah

similar results of bad habits and character. It is therefore very crucial for the act, subject and object of belief as well as its corresponding expected effect on perception, emotions, attitude, habit and character to be clearly understood. Otherwise the right belief may produce a wrong or bad behavior in believers. That was why a

man who thought that by trusting/relying on Allah (swt) he could just leave loose his camel and hope for the protection of Allah was directed by The noble Prophet (saw) to first ***tie his camel and rely upon Allah***^[43]. This definitely reechoed the significance of physical efforts aside from intellectual, emotional and verbal pronouncement of our requests to Allah (Dua). Therefore, neglecting physical effort as an integral aspect of Prayers is a clear misconception that gives birth to the disease of laziness in the character of some “believers”.

Without delving much into the concept of belief, I would want to just limit myself to the general concept expressed in **Qur'an 14:24-26**. With this general concept, I hope you will clearly identify the link between belief and success and the need to have a vision in developing and sustaining our belief for a successful life. The Qur'an verses below present a perfect model of a good and bad belief.

Surah Ibrahim, Verse 24:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾

Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word (being) like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven?

Surah Ibrahim, Verse 25:

تُؤْتِي أَكْثَرَهَا كُلِّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Yielding its fruit in every season by the permission of its Lord? And Allah sets forth parables for men that they may be mindful.

Characters are the fruits of our “belief tree” that everybody should benefit from..

43 Tirmidhi vol.4, book 11, hadith 2517

Surah Ibrahim, Verse 26:

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَيِّئَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَيِّئَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface; it has no stability.

Ibn Katheer, like most of the Qur'an commentators, referred to the "**good word**" in the above verse as the belief that *there is no deity worthy of worship except the one and only Almighty Allah*. The **tree** is the representation of a believer's life. The compass of a believer's desire that gives directions to his emotional inclinations is the belief that 'there is no deity worthy of worship except the Almighty Allah'. This becomes a firm seat of divine guidance that the Qur'an refers to as the **firm root**. Such a stable root (belief) definitely pushes aside from any load (challenges) on it and spring out above the earth in magnificent branches (of beautiful leaves) as mentioned at the end of the verse. Abdullah Ibn Abbas's is quoted to have referred to the **branches** as the *good works* of the believers that are raised up to Allah, The Most High.

The next verse talks about the **fruits** which is part of the tree that all of us benefit from. I call this part the noble human *character*. There are indeed great lessons to be learned from this general concept of belief. Allah sets forth this parable for us to think and get a productive concept of belief that should lead us to success.

You are neither put down by the censure of naysayers nor do you call it quit when the praises are lacking.

Both verses (Quran 14:24-25) lead us to the conclusion that, just like the tree, belief has three major parts. The aspect of belief that affects our internal (intellectual and emotional) *state* can be likened to the *root* of the tree buried under the ground. The root which is the internal (intellectual

and emotional) *state* determines our mood, desire and passion. Nobody sees it. But our actions manifest it.

The corresponding effect of belief (from the internal state) on the external state is clearly seen in our deeds and general *behaviors*. Our good deeds and general behavior can be likened to the exterior of the plant (stems, branches, leaves) which are clearly visible.

Our beliefs, if correct, drive our behaviours and actions in a manner that benefits us and humanity at large. These constant, stable and beneficial behaviors, resulting from stabilized minds and hearts (belief), can be referred to as the character. Characters are the fruits of our “belief tree” that benefits everyone. The benefit should be at all times and solely for the sake of Allah.

It is clear from the above verses and explanations that The Qur’an’s model of belief is not just limited to only acceptance of something without proof. Our *beliefs* must affect our *behavior* and consequently nurture a noble *character* in us. Civilizations, societies and cultures are rated based on the quality of the set of characters they are built upon. We may like people for several reasons. We however hardly forget about them and easily remember them by their characters. We call and remember trees by their fruits. We cultivate and groom trees for their fruits. In like manner, we live for the formation of noble characters that bring the greatest benefit to others. The Holy Prophet of Islam (saw) summarized his mission of life to be the fulfillment of perfect character.

The effectiveness and span (time) of the motivation that our beliefs generate for us is dependent on the object or source of belief. If our belief is limited to our instincts, we may lose the motivation to press on. More often than not, we prematurely judge or believe that personal fulfillment and social acclaim is what must be

we are responsible for taking good care of our bodies to use them in good deeds and not in bad deeds.

associated with any success story. The unfortunate thing is that we lose our strength, and our motivations die the very moment we don't get the praises and laurels we expect. Need I illustrate that this kind of belief is alien to Islam? Being Muslim requires you to tie your work and pursuits to the hereafter. Your motivation derives from the fact that you are of service to others, and as long as your work and career undertakings are judged Islamically acceptable and relevant, you're good to go always. You are neither put down by the censure of naysayers nor do you call it quit when the praises are lacking. Your only goal and motivation is the pleasure of the omnipotent and omnipresent Allah in this world and the hereafter.

Good deeds get to the level of character through consistency. So the unique feature of the fruit (character) Allah mentioned in the above concept of belief is its consistent availability or production in all climate. The generosity of a true believer is not limited to the level of richness. So if the source of our belief is The Almighty God, who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and owner of Heaven of Eternal bliss, then our motivation to do good and therefore nurture noble character can never be limited to location, praises, richness or poverty. Wherever we find ourselves and under whichever situation, we definitely will do good deeds and live a life of noble character. An example is seen in the description of the generosity of the pious people in Qur'an 3:134.

the usefulness of the body(health) is made evident by the value(strength) it produces, and its blessings are painfully remembered when it is gone, especially for good.

I therefore deem it very significant, that everyone must have set of goals (vision) for nurturing, refining and sustaining a productive belief which is the engine of eternal success.

Activity 2.2:

Carefully fill Table 2 below to enable you draw a Life Segment of your Strategic vision

in Belief (Spirituality). Follow the same procedure as described in Activity 2.0.

Table 2: Strategic Vision assessment in Belief (SPIRITUALITY)

BELIEF	GOALS	DEGREES
Personal Level		
Family Level		
Organisational Level		
Community Level		
National Level		
Global Level		
STRATEGIC VISION IN SPIRITUALITY		Total Degrees out of 60:

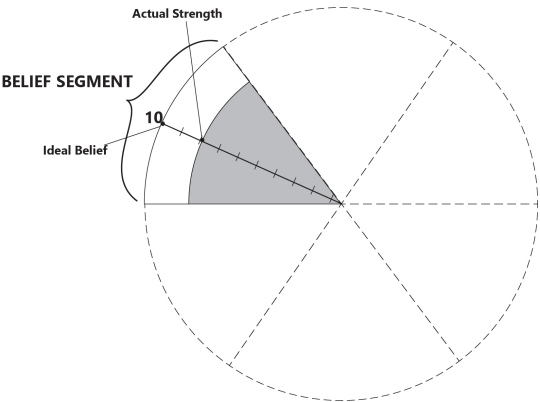


Figure 10

With Knowledge, when *our energy and vitality* gets transformed into *mind power* then we can generate, organize and control both internal and external *man powers* (of other people) as well as other *mind powers*.

2.3.3 HEALTH (Body)

Capacity; The source of energy and power and influence

We are informed by the Holy Prophet (saw) that we shall be held responsible for how we managed our bodies (Trimidhi 37/202). In other narrations “youthful exuberance” is used in place of the “body”. The first lesson a believer can get from this statement in the Hadith is the fact that we are responsible for taking good care of our bodies and to use them in good deeds; not in bad deeds. Personal care is therefore one area you can’t afford to forgo and therefore, that you plan for it. Think of a valuable resource, and you would by no means think of the body. I mean good health from which our physical strength and power are derived.

And like all natural resources, the usefulness of the body(health) is made evident by the value (strength) it produces, and its blessings are painfully remembered when it is gone, especially for good. Generally, people are ever willing to spend whatever wealth they own to restore lost health and vitality. Health and its effective utilization undoubtedly are very significant basic resources. Think about it for a moment! You would have discovered that success cannot go full circle when you’re bedridden or made incapable by vicious illness. It is for this reason that planning for your health and its effective utilization deserve a prominent attention in your scheme for strategic

It is very crucial for us to strategically plan to sustain our health, produce manpower from the health, transform the manpower into mind-power and finally gain the skills of successfully controlling and managing the external resources within our environment through ownership and leadership.

vision development. I refer to our ability to nurture, sustain and use the energy, power and competence acquired from our health to control, influence and discipline ourselves and our social environment as our **Capacity**. The significance of Capacity is such that, the Holy Prophet (saw) cited health among the list of resources

whose worth is deeply felt once they are depleted.

In reality, the invaluable blessings of health are often severely limited to physical wellbeing and strength. So it is common to see many people limiting vision in this area to earning vitality. So their major activity is going through rigorous exercises to 'keep fit.' Though important, this is a lethal misconception, particularly when seen from the perspective of strategic vision development. For a success driven life, you should begin to understand health more in terms of man-power and mind-power to control and influence ourselves and others. Health can, therefore, be seen as the productive capacities? Control and influence that manpower and mind power can procreate. Analogically speaking, we may rightfully consider a healthy body as an active, fully operational factory; food and exercise as raw materials and strength(energy) and vitality as products. It is when you are able to derive *manpower* and/or *mind power* from these products and deploy them to productive ends that constitute success. With Knowledge, when *our energy and vitality* get transformed into *mind power* then we can generate, organize and control both internal and external *man powers* (of other people) as well as other *mind powers*.

A strategic vision on health can guide us to nurture self-discipline, family and institutional management and thus sharpen our leadership skills. We then will be able to channel and manage our influences on others and become powerful leaders.

Sustaining our good health to generate manpower and mind power to take control of our environment for success in life should definitely not be left without a strategic plan. This is one of the often neglected fields in Strategic Vision Development. Negligence in this field can cost us greatly. Without proper planning in this field we may end up serving the vision of

Wealth can facilitate and lubricate/ increase the speed of our steps to success

others with our entire life against our vision and mission.

It is very crucial for us to strategically plan to sustain our health, produce manpower from the health, transform the manpower into mind power and finally gain the skills of successfully controlling and managing the external resources within our environment through ownership and leadership. The end results of a proper vision in this field will earn us health and power, the complementing resources for success.

The concept of Health, as one of the key resources to our success, should not be limited to our state of being free from illness or injuries. In different expressions, the Holy Prophet (saw) draws our attention to the significance of our bodies, health and youthful age, the peak level of physical energy and personal time. The Prophet (saw) thus warns us to be conscious of and take advantage of these resources before sickness and old age come to snatch them away from us.

Drawing our attention to the youthful age in the above hadith clearly emphasizes the fact that effective utilization of energy derived from good health is a key tool for success in life. We can therefore understand that our health, directly and indirectly, affects the level of energy in our body, mind and soul. Our consciousness, determination, passion and efforts are all definitely linked to our general state of health. Our total expression of the state of our health helps us to gradually close the gap between our ideal life and real life. The control over our minds, souls and bodies represents the level of our Self-regulation, an indispensable tool for making our real life our ideal life.

understand that wealth is a tool for the achievement of our vision but not the vision.

It is therefore apparent that in this context, the concept of health should be broadened to include effective utilization of knowledge, determination, passion, will power and energy derived from our

sound physical, intellectual and spiritual health. We therefore need to be aware of this great resource, Health. And plan to nurture, sustain and use it as a key tool to change ourselves and our physical and social environment for the achievement of our Visions.

Activity 2.3:

Carefully fill Table 3 below to enable you draw a Life Segment of your Strategic vision on health. Follow the same procedure as described in Activity2.

Table 3: Strategic Vision assessment in Health (Capacity).

HEALTH	GOALS	DEGREES
Personal Level		
Family Level		
Organisational Level		
Community Level		
National Level		
Global Level		
STRATEGIC VISION IN SPIRITUALITY		Total Degrees out of 60:

When planning the financial aspect of our vision, we need to plan for both the acquisition and utilization

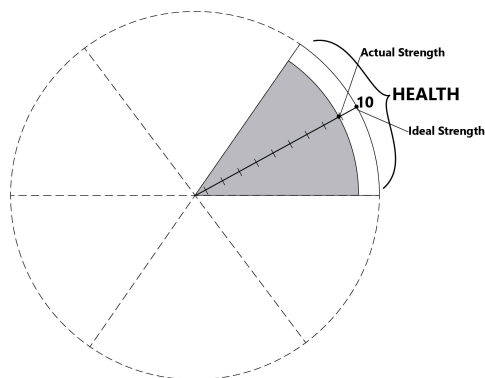


Figure 11

2.3.4 WEALTH : *Finance and power, the complementing resources for success.*

Wealth are things we own, control and can sell or exchange for another thing at any time. We can use our wealth to acquire other resources we need to be successful. Wealth can facilitate and lubricate the speed of our steps to success. It remains one of the major factors of production and for that matter success. Wealth qualifies us to give Zakat (alms to the poor), which is one of the major pillars of Islam. Wealth is also a major tool we need to embark on the Holy pilgrimage, Hajj which is also one of the major pillars in Islam.

Wealth acquisition and management, (Finance) is a major area in

Service is that aspect or area of our vision that will preserve our success in the minds of people.

life that we need to carefully develop a strategic vision. Few people understand that wealth is a tool for the achievement of our vision but is not in itself the vision. The Holy Prophet (saw), in the hadith discussed in chapter 2.1, therefore, drew our attention to the fact that we shall be held accountable for how and where we acquired

and spent our wealth. The amount of wealth you own and control doesn't matter much as compared to the source and how you used it to the benefit of creation and for the sake of the creator. Unfortunately, wealth is seen as *success* itself instead of seeing it as a means to success. Such concept, of seeing ownership of wealth as success, coupled with our deep quest for riches leads us to accumulate wealth until we die without using it. We as believers therefore, need to give equal level of attention to both **acquisition** and **utilization** of wealth. We are only keepers of whatever wealth we own and control. We shall be held accountable for it. The Holy Prophet (saw) draws our attention to the fact that all we have at hand in reality are not ours but are for our successors. We will only suffer to account for it. What really belongs to us is what we have expended to the benefit of creation for the sake of the Creator. The Prophet (saw) thus teaches that our deep love for our wealth can actually be seen as an expression of envy against our children (successors).

In developing a vision for a key area like FINANCE, we are therefore advised by the Islamic principles to keep in mind that:

1- We shall be held **accountable** for where and how we **acquired** our wealth. So we need to carefully plan and select our sources of income. Both the source and way of acquisition of income must be legal (halal).

2- We shall be held accountable for how we **spend** our wealth. We should know that there had been people who were smarter and hard-working but could not own what we have. This confirms the Islamic view (in Quran 57:7) that we are all only trustees of the wealth we possess. The real owner is the Creator, Almighty Allah. We are however expected to use our wealth to pay the obligatory alms(zakat) to the poor and to the

Our success
story can only
be told with the
“**alphabets**” of
our services

benefit of creation at large, for the sake of the Creator and generally in fulfillment of our vicegerency position on Earth.

3- The amount of wealth we own and control determines the severity of our accountability. The more wealth we have the severer our level of accountability.

4- When planning the financial aspect of our vision, we need to plan for both the acquisition and utilization. Both should be legal and Halal. Some constitutionally legal ways like bank loans with interest are not Halal (permissible) and thus *Haram (forbidden)* in Islam. So we generally need to know and live up to the expectations of the Creator, Almighty Allah peacefully in any society we find ourselves. We need to learn basics of our beliefs and their corresponding dos and don'ts.

The finance area of our vision can be well developed with a deep sense and skills of Entrepreneurship which is another field I hope to write on. Making time in holidays to buy, market and sell selected products to solve the needs of our immediate environment is a practical way of awakening the sense of Entrepreneurship in the youth. Working in smaller companies, then bigger ones before proceeding to launch our own company will certainly enable us to gain experience that would guide us in Entrepreneurship.

have a strategic plan in advocacy that should help you imbibe your vision into others who will ensure the continuation of your vision in your absence

Proper planning on how to use our wealth to the benefit of the Ummah and Humanity at large will lead us to the field of Service to humanity. It is another key area that we need to develop to complete our strategic vision. Service is that aspect of our vision that will preserve our success in the minds of people. This will be addressed in the next section.

Activity 2.4:

Carefully fill Table4 below to enable you draw a Life Segment of your Strategic vision in Wealth(finance). Follow the same procedure as described in Activity2.0

Table 4: Strategic Vision assessment in Finance (WEALTH)

WEALTH	GOALS	DEGREES
Personal Level		
Family Level		
Organisational Level		
Community Level		
National Level		
Global Level		
STRATEGIC VISION IN WEALTH		Total Degrees out of 60:

For effective advocacy of our Vision we need to have profound knowledge, deep belief and passion for our vision to enable us execute it and recommend it to others

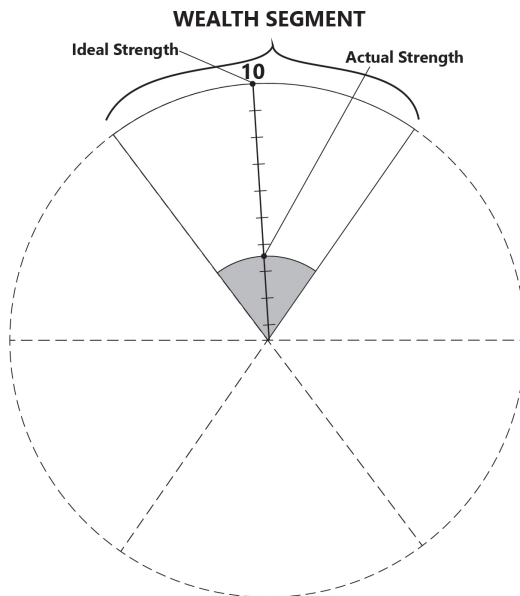


Figure 12

2.3.5

5- SERVICE: *The fruit of Vision.*

Service is the fruit of our “life tree” by which the quality of our success is defined. It is our character in action. Service is the fruit of our belief. It is an expression of the most frequently repeated attribute of Allah in the Holy Qur’an, Ar-Rahman, the most Merciful. Our success *story* can only be told with the

we should not see advice to be a *medicine* to cure only others leaving ourselves *sick*.

“*alphabets*” of our services. Indeed, successful people are remembered by the consistent good deeds that crown their character. Service is the practical field for all the other aspects/areas of our vision. There is therefore no doubt that our vision cannot be complete if it does not serve

humanity and creation in general. Whatever we seek to achieve can only be an achievement if it benefits people. The Holy Prophet (saw) perfectly summarizes the significance of Service in the Hadith below:

“The best(Leader) of a community is the Servant in the community”

Our vision of service should not be limited to those we like or consider as believers, tribe mates and partners. Our vision of service should rather cover all creation at all times for the sake of the Creator, Almighty Allah. This is because our Lord is the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of all creation and His mercy encompasses everything.

The value/reward of our service in the sight of Allah is not limited to the magnitude of physically delivered service. Mathematically speaking, the true value of our service is equal to our sincerity multiplied by our service divided by the available opportunities; all multiplied by our sincerity.

We therefore need to strategically plan on how to make creation at large benefit from any opportunity or wealth at our disposal. Our knowledge and experience, our beliefs and values, our influences and networks as well as our time and wealth are all opportunities and blessings through which creations can benefit from. Strategic planning can help us ensure the continuation of such excellent services even in our absence or beyond our death. This is something that can practically be achieved by communicating to and convincing others to accept and adopt your vision as their life vision. This is what I term as **Advocacy**; exhorting others to do good and stop bad deeds. You therefore, need to have a strategic plan in advocacy that should help you impart your vision into others who will ensure the continuation of your vision in your absence.

Advocacy is a divine expectation and solution to our life losses as mentioned in **Surah Al-'Asr 103:3**

Seeing the significance of the concept of Advocacy as a very important field of life, the next section deals with it succinctly.

Activity 2.5:

Carefully fill Table 5 below to enable you draw a Life Segment of your Strategic vision in ***Service***. Follow the same procedure as described in Activity 2.

Table 5: Strategic Vision assessment in Service

SERVICE	GOALS	DEGREES
Personal Level		
Family Level		
Organisational Level		
Community Level		
National Level		
Global Level		
STRATEGIC VISION IN SERVICE		Total Degrees out of 60:

Inclining towards and focusing on only one aspect of life at the expense of the other key areas will land us in regret and sorrow

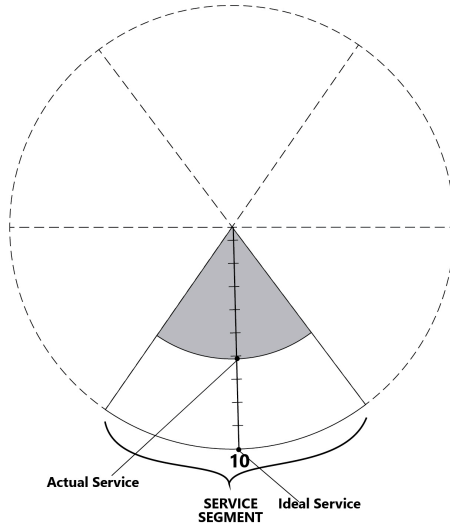


Figure 13

2.3.6 ADVOCACY

One of the effective ways of nurturing intrinsic motivation and sustaining our vision is to be strong advocate of our visions. For effective advocacy of our Vision we need to have profound knowledge, deep belief and passion for our vision to enable us execute it and recommend it to others. The act of strong support and recommendation of our vision to others is what I term as advocacy. The more elaborative form of the concept in Islam is DA'WA. This can be seen as EVANGELISM in Christianity. It is one of the key divine concepts in the vision of all the Prophets. They were the advocates of monotheism (Tawheed) as the only source of righteousness. They called creatures to the only Creator, Allah. The Prophets called and guided

Sincere introspection is critical analysis of your current life leading to the measurement of the gap between your ideal and real life

us to the mission and vision of our existence. To emphatically express this integral part (Advocacy) of the vision of the prophets and their followers, Allah instructs the Holy Prophet(Saw):

Surah Yusuf, Verse 108:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain, and glory be to Allah, and I am not one of the polytheists.

It is therefore very apparent from the above verse that every believer should make it as part of his or her vision to be an advocate of his/her own mission and vision. This will lead us to the broader platform of calling humanity to righteousness to earn the pleasure of Allah.

Advocating for righteousness is a primary responsibility for everyone who seeks to be righteous and also build a righteous family, organization, community, nation and world.

Advocacy helps to protect, guide, develop and sustain our core

360°Strategic vision is an ideal life vision that is strategically designed to cover all aspects of life and systematically develop the individual, family, organization, community, nation and the whole world at large.

beliefs, values, goals and thus strategic vision.

Advocacy is a tool for replicating and sustaining excellence. Without advocacy our vision is likely to be truncated after our death. With Advocacy we motivate and guide others to support our course. We are psychologically guided and thus motivated to practice what we say or preach. To

awaken this psychological motivation Allah says:

Surah As-Saff, Verse 2:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?

The verse conscientizes us to practice whatever we preach or advocate. So we should not see advice to be a *medicine* to cure only others leaving ourselves *sick*. This divine question is also a guide to *professional Da'wa*. We are therefore expected to use our profession as a means to inject the true beliefs, values, goals, objectives and vision into the beneficiaries of our services.

I am using this section to remind myself and you that if we want to save ourselves, and let our vision live longer than ourselves then we need to plan and effectively embark on serious advocacy. It should not be practiced by default. It should be a product of a strategic plan with specific goals, objectives and targets.

Remember that Advocacy is a divine expectation and solution to our life losses as mentioned in **Surah Al-'Asr 103:3**

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

.....and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.

Advocacy is practically the act of enjoining on each other righteousness. It is therefore clear from this verse that planning and embarking on Advocacy (Da'wa) should be an integral aspect of a strategic vision in life.

360° strategic Vision development is a process that begins with visualization and ends with an outcome that forms the bases for the development of another new vision.

Just like all the other aspects of strategic vision, we don't have to leave this crucial component without a serious plan. We need to develop goals and target for each of the levels of our Life vision. These goals and objectives should be properly outlined against a specific time frame. We should further have a detailed list of daily activities in a well-developed time-line towards the achievement of the set goals and targets within the designated time-frame. The practical steps in developing a *time-line* will be discussed under strategy development in sub section 3.3.4 below.

Activity 2.6:

To awaken our sense of advocacy and get us ready for this crucial component of our vision, I strongly advice you take time to set goals for yourself for each of the levels of your vision of advocacy as you did for the other aspects of your vision . Carefully compare your current (***real life***) with the goals (***ideal life***) you have set for yourself. Grade yourself out of 10 to reflect your actual engagement in advocacy for each of the levels; Personal, Family, Organization, Community, National and Global. With these goals and marks, fill the table below. Sum up all your marks for each of the levels to get a total mark out of 60°. Now proceed to draw the life segment of your strategic vision in Advocacy. Follow the same procedure as described in Activity 2.0. What is the difference between your advocacy in real life and in your ideal like (strategic vision)?

our thoughts
and mindset
nurtures our
ideal life which
has significant
effect on our
real life

Table 6: Strategic Vision assessment in Advocacy

ADVOCACY	GOALS	DEGREES
Personal Level		
Family Level		
Organisational Level		
Community Level		
National Level		
Global Level		
STRATEGIC VISION IN ADVOCACY		Total Degrees out of 60:

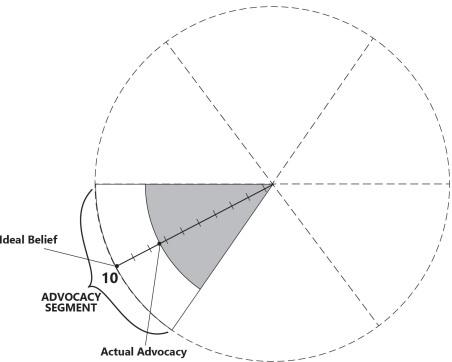


Figure 14

2.4 360° VISION

The concept of life in Islam guides mankind to carefully develop in the six major fields through the six major stages previously discussed for a comprehensive and balanced life leading to peace

Bright, positive and often remembered dreams are easier to pursue and achieve with sincere effort.

and happiness. At a particular stage in life we are naturally inclined towards focusing on one aspect of our life. This inclination may mostly be at the expense of certain other key aspects of our lives. Undoubtedly, inclining towards and focusing on only one aspect of life at the expense of the other key areas will land us in regret and sorrow no matter our level of achievement. We will thus live to regret this negligence in the future.

In our previous discussions, you were to carefully and sincerely introspect and grade yourself (out of 10 marks for each level) in the fields of *Education* (knowledge), *Finance* (wealth), *Spirituality* (Belief & Character), *Capacity* (Health, Power & Influence), *Service* (Contributions) and *Advocacy* (for righteousness). Sincere introspection is critical analysis of your current life leading to the measurement of the gap between your ideal and real life. At the end of these sincere exercises you should have graded and given yourself marks based on the gap between your ideal and real life. Collate the marks of these exercises for all the fields of an ideal vision at the different stages of vision development (individual/personal, family, organizational, Community, National and Global). Calculate your total marks (out of 60) for each field and at each stage as in the table below:

With focus,
hard work and
sincerity, despite
the traps and
tribulations, our
ideal visions
become true
with the divine
kindness of Allah

Table 7: 360 Strategic Vision assessment

	Education	Spirituality	Health	Finance	Service	Advocacy	Total Marks
Personal Level							
Family Level							
Organisational Level							
Community Level							
National Level							
Global Level							
Total Marks							

Use the total marks in each fields (as segments) for all the Stages to draw a circle that should represent your 360°Vision in life as shown in figure 15 . 360°Strategic vision is an ideal model of life vision that is strategically designed to cover all aspects of life and systematically helps you go through the personal , family, organization, community, national and global levels of development.

One of the major shortfalls that reduces the effectiveness of our vision is limiting its scope to only one field like education and/ or limiting its level to only one level, like our personal achievements. So we finally wake up to see the sharp contrast between our vision and that of our family, organization, community, nation and the world at large. As social creatures, our visions are bound to take the interest of others into consideration. Common mission and vision enliven and facilitate the development of every group of people.

This book thus seeks to humbly transform our visions into a 360° strategic vision. So, the subsequent topics shall focus on how to develop each segment of this 360°Strategic vision.

our quest to serve creation in the best manner is the seed of visualization

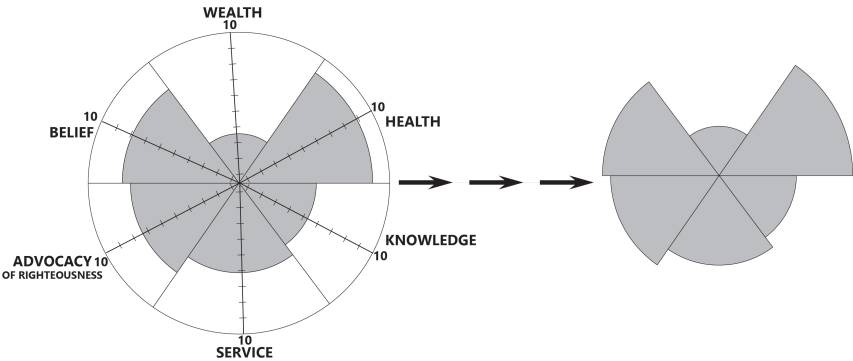


Figure 15

we are expected
to aim for
excellence in all
our deeds.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC VISION DEVELOPMENT

Successful visions come out of those visions that have been implemented. The easily implemented visions are those that are well planned and documented. Well documented visions are products of structured thoughts, desires and set of activities. 360° Strategic Vision development is a process that begins with visualization and ends with an outcome that forms the basis for the development of another new vision. The basic act for the purpose of creation, which is worship for perfection in character, is an act that is expected of us till our last breath irrespective of our level of achievement. This confirms the circular nature of our vision. The last topic under this chapter shall be dedicated for this significant circular feature of 360° strategic vision development.

Careful use of basic resources at our disposal like time (life), mind (knowledge), heart (passion), effort (health) and soul (self discipline) can naturally lead to the easy development of a secondary resource like a strategic vision for a successful life. We need to use these primary resources in the under listed stages in order to develop a strategic vision.

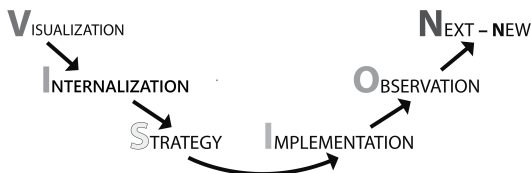


Figure 16

Visualization is a process that starts with a template, model or prototype in mind which are further brightened with knowledge, experience and wisdom

Stages of Strategic vision development

STAGE-1= V= VISUALIZATION STAGE

STAGE-2= I = INTERNALIZATION STAGE

STAGE-3= S = STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT STAGE

STAGE-4= I = IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

STAGE-5= O= OUTCOME OBSERVATION STAGE

STAGE-6= N= NEW VISION DEVELOPMENT STAGE

3.1 STAGE-1: V=VISUALIZATION STAGE

Our real life is a representation of a life in our thoughts which is our ideal life. It may not be the exact replica. That is to say that, what happens in our lives is part of what happens in our minds. What happens in our lives that is not part of what we had earlier thought of becomes what I term as an “accident”. We have no special reward for such “accidents”. Our “Labour Under Correct Knowledge” has the potential of converting this accident into what we call LUCK.

There is no doubt that our thoughts and mindsets nurture into our ideal life which has significant effect on our real life. Our ideal life is our life vision. That is what we ultimately seek to achieve in life.

If the heart doesn't “believe” the mind then we are likely to lose interest, passion and sincerity in our actions

We thus need to Brighten our ideal life in order to qualify us for a perfect real life. Visualization is the process of deciding and forming a mental image of your ideal future before your real future.

The dream of Prophet Yusuf (as) might possibly have been as a result of a practically internalized vision. He definitely might have thought of it before. He accordingly led a life that was fertile

for the realization of such an excellent dream. Bright, positive and often remembered dreams are easier to pursue and achieve with sincere effort. The dream of Prophet Yusuf (as) became both his desired ideal life vision and his accomplished real life vision.

The brothers of Prophet Yusuf (as), unlike him, had a negative picture of life they disliked. The negative life picture was painted by their assumption and imaginations that, their father liked Prophet Yusuf (as) more than them. This illusion negatively affected their thoughts and vision to the extent of planning to kill their own brother Yusuf (as). As a result of this negative ideal life they had in mind, despite staying with their parents and having all the opportunities to develop, they still could not develop successfully as Yusuf (as). Though he, Yusuf (as) did not get as much opportunity to stay with his parents to earn much parental guidance as his brothers had, but he managed to change his seemingly “negative real life” of slavery and imprisonment into a positive ideal life of high ministerial position. One of the major difference that might have created the difference between the life of Yusuf (as) and that of his brothers might apparently be the concept of visualization. For as young as he was, his transformational dream was worth divine inscription as seen in this beautiful Qur’anic statement...

Surah Yusuf, Verse 4:

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٤﴾

When Yusuf said to his father: O my father! Surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon-- I saw them making obeisance to me.

This was a vivid description of a mental image of a desired future, an ideal life after deep emotional and spiritual visualization process. With focus, hard work and sincerity, despite the traps and

Words can
only beautify
our vision but
Works realize
them

tribulations, our ideal visions become true with the divine kindness of Allah as happened for Yusuf in the Qur’anic verse below:

Surah Yusuf, Verse 100:

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَتَابَتِ هَذَانِ أَوَّلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ
جَعَلَنِي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ
نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

And he raised his parents upon the throne and they fell down in prostration before him, and he said: O my father! This is the significance of my vision of old; my Lord has indeed made it to be true; and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me forth from the prison and brought you from the desert after the Shaitan had sown dissensions between me and my brothers, surely my Lord is benignant to whom He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise. (English - Shakir)

Effective visualization process will lead to the determination of what our future should look like and its effect on creation at large. Effective visualization will serve as a guide to help us coordinate and carefully manage our limited resources. It should guide us to set realistic goals and motivate us to pursue the goals.

Visualization is a process that starts with a template, model or prototype in mind which are further brightened with knowledge, experience and wisdom (consultation). After his dream that created the awareness of a noble Vision in him, Prophet Yusuf (as) consulted his father Yakub (as) to tap from his wisdom. His father’s words of wisdom motivated him and further guided him through the challenges he faced later in life.

As believers, righteous acts are therefore the blocks we need to build our strategic vision

To set up excellent constitutional system with excellent life principles to develop, guide and protect the minds, beliefs, families, wealth and lives of people in all corners of the world to ensure peace and happiness in this world and the hereafter will indeed be the great ideal vision that one can ever think of. This was the noble vision of the Holy Prophet (saw). He brightened such a template in his mind with deep reflection in seclusion. Beyond dreaming, he received a direct revelation to guide him in the achievement of such great noble vision. Just like the role the advice of Prophet Yakub (as) played in the life of Prophet Yusuf (as), the words of wisdom from his dear wife Nana Khadija's cousin, Waraqa Bin Nawfal helped to strengthen and brighten the vision of The Holy Prophet Mohammed (saw) after the first revelation he received.

Allah guided the Holy Prophet (saw) to the most effective tool in visualization even before the first revelation. He, The Holy Prophet (saw), did not admire the life of the Arabs. He thought of a better life, a better society, a better world for creation at large in which love and mercy would breed peace and happiness. He indeed had a different mindset and belief. The effect of this mindset and belief on his life style was deeply admired and upheld by his community to the extent that they called him "al-ameen", the trustworthy.

He spent days and months of contemplation and meditation in the Cave of Hira in search for an ideal life for creation at large. The first divine guidance to the achievement of this noble vision was the Qur'anic verse **Surah Al-Alaq, Verse 1:**

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

Read in the name of your Lord Who created.

Reading, the search for knowledge, remains one of the best tool in determining what we

discuss your vision with people of experience, wisdom and God Consciousness to earn you guidance and motivation.

want to be in the future. With this tool of reading, we acquire full knowledge of the past and current life and thus the ability to determine how we want the future to look like. As discussed earlier in this book, Education (Knowledge) is one of the key components of 360° Strategic Vision. Education (Knowledge) is needed in the development of all the other components (fields) of a strategic vision. This may be the reason why the first divine instruction, as seen in the verse above, is for us to read in the name of the Creator.

Practical steps for Effective Visualization:

Step-1: The Quest for Excellence for the sake of the creator

Visualization is triggered by our quest to make the future better than the past and current life. In a broader perspective, our quest to serve creation in the best manner is the seed of visualization. Realizing that we need to make our future better than our past and current situation, becomes the first step in visualization. The Quest for Excellence in deeds for the sake of the creator is a natural divine purpose of our lives as expressed in

Surah Al-Mulk, Verse 2:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾

Who created death and life that He may try you-- which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving,

embark on a sound tahajjud that should nurture sincerity and passion for all the deeds of the day.

We are guided by this verse to fill our lives with deeds that are excellent. So as believers not only are we required to work hard, but we are also required to aim for excellence in all our deeds.

Step-2: Seeking for KNOWLEDGE

The second step in visualization is looking for knowledge to clearly determine the features of this “better future”. Continuous effective reading, general observation of life successes and challenges, Critically pondering over the past, deep reflection on current situations should gradually help us to acquire knowledge to clearly outline the general features of our desired future. At least we should determine the state, product, location, benefit and the expected time of the desired future. A personal vision of wanting to become a medical doctor only connotes our future professional state. Deciding the nature of health service, where, when and how you want others to benefit, will help to brighten your vision.

Step-3: Consult for wisdom

The third step in visualization is using the wisdom drawn from experience of others to perfect and stabilize your vision. Consulting pious people, with experience in the field you seek to develop a vision, will definitely guide and help you perfect your “imagined better future”. This is clearly seen in the two prophetic examples given above in this chapter. Prophet Yusuf (as) consulted the father Prophet Yakub (as). The Holy Prophet (as) consulted Waraqa Bin Nawfal who had in-depth knowledge about prophet-hood. In the same manner we should also Consult old successful pious professionals who are conscious of developing the youth. We should consult experienced experts we love and trust, who are anxious about our success in life. If we have no any relationship, then we can generalize any question we ask our consultants to ensure we eliminate any envy or hatred.

Visualization is a process that fully engages our intellectual faculties. It brightens our awareness. However, we need to in-cooperate our emotional

Our midnight prayers should spiritually cleanse us and get us ready for the next day

faculties in order to develop a strong desire, interest and passion to also fully engage our hearts. This sends us to the next stage of vision development called internalization.

3.2 STAGE-2= I = INTERNALIZATION STAGE

Our motivation and effort are greatly affected if there is conflict in our intellectual and emotional states. If the heart doesn't "believe" the mind then we are likely to lose interest, passion and sincerity in our actions. Internalization is the process that helps us to develop interest and passion in our vision and keep us constantly working towards the achievement of the vision. Internalized visions do have great effect on our behavior, actions, habits and character. From the Psychological point of view, Visions are internalized when the ideas, norms or values of the visions are completely embedded in individual consciousness such that there is often an unawareness of its existence and influence on behavior.^[44] To initiate and sustain actions towards the achievement of any vision, we need the internalization process to develop interest, passion and motivation.

Lack of internalization process in vision development is one of the major causes of laziness and low interest and thus the wide gap between our ideal life and real life. In such situations we dream, admire and only talk about great visions. Words can only beautify our vision but Works realize them. It is therefore very crucial for us to look for effective ways of internalizing our visions in order

Read the Quran to seek to know what your creator requests of you in each verse.

to develop interest and passion to work hard towards the achievement of our vision. In the few paragraphs below, let's together carefully look at some of the lifestyles of the Holy Prophet (saw) that led to deep internalization of his vision in his heart and the hearts of the companions.

44 Introducing organizational behavior and management, pg203

As stated above, the first set of verses and commandment to the Holy Prophet (saw) remains one of the potent tools for effective visualization. The first revelation was generally on observational, textual and practical reading towards knowledge acquisition. This is one of the basic tools of visualization as discussed in the above chapter. The second/subsequent set of verses sort to guide the Holy prophet (saw) to deepen his faith and sincerity which is a key component of the internalization process. Allah commanded him to get up in the darkness of the night to establish prayers^[45] and recite the Qur'an^[46] with great reverence and reflection. The quietness of the night should help us to focus in our reflection, assessment and evaluation of the relationship between us and our Creator, Allah^[47]

Remembrance of the Creator should remind us of our life purpose. We should find reasons to connect our vision to our life purpose and for that matter our Creator. Once this is correctly done, then we will have a firm source of motivation that should push us to work hard in the course of our Creator, Allah (swt). Recitation of the Qur'an should guide our minds in zikrullah (remembrance of Allah). Careful and slow recitation and contemplation on the meaning of the Qur'an should link us to the Creator. The verse below perfectly shows the effort of establishment of link between our vision and Allah (our life purpose) and hardworking as possible means of success.

Surah Al-Maeda, Verse 35:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and

we are to carefully read and reflect over the content of the Qur'an to help us refine our behaviors and life principles.

45 The Qur'an, Muzammil 73:2

46 The Qur'an, Muzammil 73:4

47 The Qur'an, Muzammil 73:8

strive hard in His way that you may be successful. (English - Shakir).

Any act of righteousness for the sake of the Creator is a means to gain nearness to the Creator, Allah. As believers, righteous acts are therefore the blocks we need to build our strategic vision. So, we need to pay attention to and ponder on the following questions:

- 1-What righteous acts come together to help you achieve the goals of your noble vision?
- 2-How do people or creatures in general benefit from such acts?
- 3-What challenges will your vision be addressing after its achievement?
- 4-Where and how are you going to be rewarded? Eternal reward or temporal reward of this world?
- 5-Do you expect any reward after death?
- 6-Is there the likelihood of the continuation of your vision after your death?

These and other relevant questions can awaken your intrinsic internal and eternal source of motivation and thus reasons to back the relevance of your vision. The more the reasons and motivation you have the more the interest and passion you will have for your vision. Such **depot** of interest and passion should definitely move us into action and finally lead to the establishment

Our source of motivation and reason for whatever we do should be omnipresent and omnipotent Allah.

of certain routine habits that should lead us to the achievement of our vision. No matter the challenges nothing else should be able to let us give up.

The 3 major **things** Allah instructed the Holy Prophet (saw) to do in the night that led to strong

sincerity and internalization of his faith were Midnight Prayers (Tahajjud), Recitation and Reflection on the verses of the Qur'an (Tilawah) and Remembrance of Allah (Zikrullah). Practical and psychological ways of using Tahajjud, Tilawah and Zikrullah to internalize our vision are summarized in the steps below...

STEP-1-Review of Visualization stage

Ensure you have dully read, made inquiries and finally acquired much knowledge concerning what goals you need to achieve in order to materialize your vision. Also try to see if you can work in institutions or work with individuals with the same or similar vision. This will enrich your experience and brighten your vision.

Seize every opportunity to discuss your vision with people of experience, wisdom and God Consciousness to earn you guidance and motivation. Your intention should be very clear; to seek for wisdom and guidance for the sake of Allah. Not to display your intelligence and importance to people. Frequent discussion, listening and watching lectures of successful people with similar vision like yours helps to rekindle the light of motivation within you and help start the internalization process.

This first stage of trying to start internalization by consulting and discussing whatever we have learned in the Visualization stage with successful people of wisdom and experience can be done during the day. Listening to and watching their lectures can also help us to stabilize our interest and desire in the achievement of our Vision.

But for the above mentioned points in this first step of internalization, we would be struggling to complete the stabilization of our ideas in our minds and now making an attempt to push these ideas into our hearts. At this juncture we need

Remembrance of Allah should kill all other desires in us that are obstacles to our performance

powerful tools like midnight prayers(Tahajjud), Qur'an recitation and Remembrance of Allah (Zikrullah) to help us nurture and stabilize these refined ideas of our vision in our hearts.

STEP-2-Midnight Prayers (Tahajjud)

Sleep a bit earlier to enable you wake up midnight or close to dawn time. This is the time that there is less social interruption and you can have quality private hours for reflection. We should not misuse , miss or lose these golden hours because of TV, Internet, Social Media, Football etc. We therefore need to sleep very early to enable us wake up earlier in the night instead of watching football and TV or staying long on Internet and social media.

As mentees of the Holy Prophet (saw) we should endeavour to always be in the pure state of ablution and especially before we sleep. We need to learn and recite the prayers before and after waking up from sleeping. In this manner we can easily nurture and sustain our interest in waking up for the midnight prayers. Experience shows that righteous deeds of the day contribute a lot to our ability to worship in the night and vice versa. We therefore need to be vigilant always.

Midnight worship (Tahajjud), being the first deed of worship after waking up, is like a seed buried under the ground awaiting to germinate and grow into a plant which is also like our deeds of worship during the day. A sound seed germinates into a sound plant

Midnight prayer is one of the constant psychological and spiritual “detergents” of the pious people.

to produce fresh fruits. We therefore need to pay extra attention to ensure we embark on a sound tahajjud that should nurture sincerity and passion for all the deeds of the day.

After waking up, we need to perform ablution and carefully introspect each ablution part as we wash each one of them. What can each ablution

part contribute towards the achievement of our strategic vision? What are the routine things that we use each of our ablution parts to do that can potentially lead to the construction or distraction of our strategic vision?

Introspection in ablution and the darkness of the night in tahajjud should remind us of the fact that each day in front of us is a potential judgment day. So be like the servant of Allah who is conscious of what you did yesterday and therefore plan for the next day. To motivate and guide us to carefully introspect our past deeds and plan for our future deeds, Allah says in the Quran in

Surah Al-Hasher, Verse 18:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do. (English - Shakir).

As believers, we need to be in constant and continuous awareness of our past deeds to guide us plan for our current deeds for the betterment of our future life of this world and the hereafter. Proper ablution and midnight prayers(salah) should nurture and sustain sincerity, awareness and vigilance.

We should therefore try to transfer the introspection and consciousness in ablution to a number of units of prayers (raqaats) in the darkness that nobody else sees us except

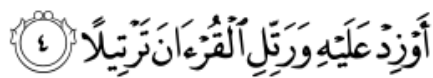
We should not therefore limit our ISTIGFAR to verbal pronouncement of words of seeking forgiveness without contemplating on the elimination of our specific sins, mistakes and negligence

Allah (swt). Our midnight prayers should spiritually cleanse us and get us ready for the next day. Midnight prayer (Tahajjud) builds our sincerity and gets us ready for the next day spiritually and psychologically.

STEP-3- Qur'an recitation (Tilawah)

Read the Qur'an and reflect on each of the verses. Tilawah is a unique slow and reflective way of reading the Qur'an that Allah commanded us to do during midnight (Tahajjud) prayers. Qur'an 73/1-4 confirms this. Especially the expression:

Surah Al-Muzammil, Verse 4:



..... And recite the Qur'an as it ought to be recited. (English - Shakir)

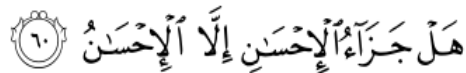
Umm Salamah (r.a) has stated that the Holy Prophet (saw) recited each word distinctly and clearly. (Tirmidhi, Nasa'i). Hudhaifah bin Yaman (r.a) says: "Once I stood beside the Holy Prophet in the Night Prayer to see how he recited the Qur'an. I noticed that he glorified Allah where He should be glorified, invoked and supplicated Allah where He should be invoked and supplicated, and sought refuge of Allah where His refuge should be sought." (Muslim, Nasa'i). Abu Dhār (r.a) has stated that once during the Night Prayer when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) came to

Allah has bestowed us with the intellectual power to be able to convert anything within our reach and control into useful resource for the achievement of our vision

the sentence: *“In to adhdhib-hmn ...”* (If You punish them, then they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You Are Almighty, All-Wise), he went on repeating it over and over again until it became dawn.”^[48]

Read the Quran to seek to know what your creator requests of you in each verse. Midnight Prayers (tahajjud) should be a special time the Qur'an is specifically revealed to you. Look for verses concerning the vision you want to achieve. What are the deeds in the process of achieving your vision that please Allah? What challenges are your vision going to address? What situations are your vision going to improve? What interest of the Ummah, Humanity and creation at large will your vision be addressing? Will it be addressing only your personal interest? What makes your vision a Qur'anic one? Any Prophetic or Qur'anic statement on the reward you are likely to get in this world and the hereafter? Generally, every good deed definitely earns us good reward as confirmed in the verse...

Surah Al-Rahman, Verse 60:



Is there any reward for goodness other than good?

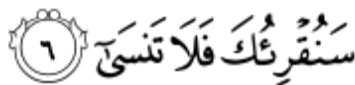
In summary, we are to carefully read and reflect over the content of the Qur'an to help us refine our behaviors and life principles. Tilawah should help us link our vision to Allah and thus motivate us to work hard for the sake of Allah (swt) towards success.

If Allah, the owner of resources and creator of results and rewards, plans and ordains for everything a measure, then we definitely need to adopt the same procedure for the achievement of our visions.

STEP-4- Remembrance of Allah (Zikrullah)

Follow your Tahajjud (midnight prayers) with silent and reflective remembrance of Allah. Repetition and elaborative review strengthens our memory. Our memory or whatever we have in mind directly or indirectly affect our behavior, actions and habits. Recitation and repetition prevents forgetfulness. In order not to forget the content of the Qur'an and to have Allah at heart always the Qur'an guides us to recite severally as enshrined in this short but scientifically profound verse....

Surah Al-Ala, Verse 6:



We will make you recite so you shall not forget, (English - Shakir)

It is one of the basic facts in cognitive psychology that recitation and repetition increases the amount of neurotransmitters and thus eases retention and retrieval in memorization. This topic has been further elaborated in my Academic Excellence write ups and lectures.

The word “Quran” meaning “most often read” emphasizes this fact. With the Tahajjud prayers and Qur'an recitation we should be able to refine and stabilize our intention and source of motivation to work hard for the achievement of our vision. Our source of motivation and reason for whatever we do should be the Omnipresent and Omnipotent Allah. We will then be having an intrinsic or eternal source of motivation, that is Allah who is Omnipresent and Omnipotent. In this state we remain motivated everywhere at anytime to work hard towards the achievement of our vision.

Strategy is the variable that injects dynamism into the structure of our vision.

This state of constant and continues consciousness and motivation cannot be achieved without Allah being at the center of our hearts controlling our emotions and inclinations. Reflective recitation or elaborative rehearsals of the attributes of Allah is one of the best forms of Zikrullah. That is, thinking about the meaning and the corresponding effect of any attribute of Allah in our intellectual, emotional and behavioral make up. Striving to let Allah take control of our inner desires, emotions and inclinations. So we do only what we think is pleasing to Him. So if we are to achieve our vision to please Him by serving His creatures then constant remembrance of Allah should motivate us to work hard. Remembrance of Allah should kill all other desires in us that are obstacles to our performance. Praises and admirations of people will not be the main source of our motivation.

As explained in step 3 above we should find the divine reason that makes our vision a commandment from our Lord Allah (swt). So in this step4 we should be looking to stabilize the remembrance of Allah in our hearts to constantly refine our mood to work hard towards the achievement of our noble vision. We should seek to remove all desires that retard our progress towards our vision from our heart. We should not let any of such negative desires like pornography, masturbation, Internet addiction, excessive watching and quarreling over football etc. to consume our time and negatively affect our moods. If we allow these things to control our time instead of obedience to Allah, then we will be much aware of our noble vision but lack the motivation to work towards the achievement of our visions. This is a psychological fact that is expressed in the Qur'an in this profound form below...

Determination, enthusiasm, hardworking and self-discipline are all positive inherent strengths needed for the achievement of any vision

Surah Al-Jathiya, 45 Verse 23:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عَاثِرِ وَخْمٍ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَلِقَاءِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ
غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his god, and Allah has made him err having knowledge and has set a seal upon his ear and his heart and put a covering upon his eye? Who can then guide him after Allah? Will you not then be mindful? (English - Shakir)

The concept of zikrullah is certainly beyond this book. I hope to explain the concept of Zikrullah further in my *Spiritual Excellence* write ups and lectures. I however want to further elaborate on some psychological and practical ways of using zikrullah as a tool of internalization.

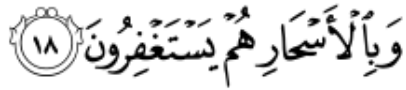
Allah describes the basic features of the pious people in several places in the Qur'an. Midnight prayer is one of the constant psychological and spiritual “detergents” of the pious people. The “active ingredient” in this detergent is repentance and seeking for forgiveness, “ISTIGFAR” after Tahajjud during dawn before the morning prayers (Fajr). The Qur'an (51:15-16) clearly states that the pious will be blessed and put into heavens of gardens and fountains for enjoyment because they use to be good and....

Volunteering to work or serve without remuneration to deepen your experience is an opportunity I will always advise the youth to make use of instead of staying unemployed

Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Verse 17-18

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَّا يَجْعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

They used to sleep but little in the night. (English - Shakir)



And in the morning they asked forgiveness. (English - Shakir)

We are expected to sacrifice part of our night to observe night prayers and proceed to ask for forgiveness before the dawn prayers. We carefully need to introspect our lives in the past day(s) in order to discover any negative desires that we fell for, for which reason we were distracted from the activities that should draw us closer to the achievement of our vision (Pleasure of Allah). Ask for forgiveness for obeying such negative desires; as a consequence, not obeying the divine inner call for Allah to work towards the achievement of our visions. We should not therefore limit our ISTIGFAR to verbal pronouncement of words of seeking forgiveness without contemplating on the elimination of our specific sins, mistakes and negligence. We should also seek to replace these negative desires that affect our moods negatively with positive divine desires of Allah that should increase our sincerity, focus and motivation to work hard. One of the best expressions of remembrance of Allah that can psychologically help us seek for forgiveness, eliminate the bad desires and nurture refined divine desires of Allah in us is the refined expression of istigfar that the Holy Prophet (saw) taught us in

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

"I seek forgiveness from Allah, the Magnificent, whom there is none worthy of worship but Him, the Living, Al-Qayyum, and I repent to him,"^[49]

49 Tirmidhi hadith number 3577

Lack of vision and a comprehensive Plan as to how to manage our time is a great threat that exposes us to the distractors.

We are assured of forgiveness after sincerely reciting this statement of istigfar with our minds, hearts and soul to the extent that it changes our behavior, actions, habits and character positively.

STEP-5- Daily Planning and Evaluation

The Midnight prayers(Tahajjud) and remembrance of Allah (Zikrullah) are two powerful tools that will be needed through out our lives to ensure the stability of our inner realm and nurture sincerity(Ikhlās). So even after complete internalization we need to continuously embark on these spiritual exercises to sustain and perfect the internalization of our vision.

Another important product that can be cultivated from both midnight prayers(Tahajjud) and remembrance of Allah (Zikrullah) is effective introspection that leads to the identification of our past mistakes and thus proper planning for the day. It is therefore prudent to evaluate your past days and review your plans for the day every morning before or after morning prayers (Fajr).

3.3 STAGE 3: S= STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT STAGE

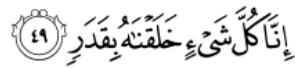
In life we naturally have limitations in resources or the ability to identify, control and make use of the resources within our reach. However, Allah has bestowed us with the intellectual power to be able to convert many things within our reach and control into a useful resource for the achievement of our visions. But for any

Resources are the Knowledge, qualities, tools and materials we need to facilitate the process towards the achievement of our vision

reason, we turn to normally find ourselves in the state of resource insufficiency. It is especially so when our quest for abundance in good, QUALITY, and excellence in production and productions, QUALITY, tend to deepen our imagination or real limitation of resources as we struggle to achieve our visions.

The above situation of limitations in resources and worry or fear of poor results can never be attributed to our creator, God almighty Allah. The last but one verse of the 36th chapter of the Qur'an (Yassin) clearly states that Allah is capable of using only the two letters "BE" to command for a result of any quality or quantity. Yet Allah establishes the principle of *measurement*, a key component of strategic planning, for us to emulate. Allah states...

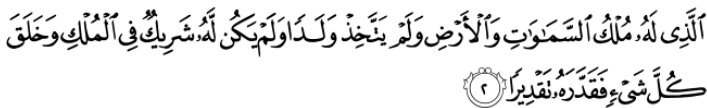
Surah Al-Qamar, Verse 49:



Surely We have created everything according to a measure. (English - Shakir)

Measurement is a product of a strategic plan. So Allah creates nothing without a plan. The same fact is repeated in chapter 25 with much emphasis on details and comprehensive nature of the plan and measurement.

Surah Al-Furqan, Verse 2:



He, whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Who did not take to Himself a son, and Who has no associate in the kingdom, and Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure. (English - Shakir).

Our environment is full of uncountable potent resources that we need the knowledge of gratefulness to uncover and utilize

In the complex processes of creation, one of the major principle Allah wishes to draw our attention to, in the Quran, is measurement and planning. If Allah, the owner of resources and creator of results and rewards, plans and ordains for everything, a measure, then, we definitely need to adopt the same procedure for the achievement of our visions.

Indeed, in such situations of limitations in resources and the quest for quality and quantity in results and reward, we definitely need a Strategy. It is the ability to make use of our limited resources in accordance to our designed policies and goals, amidst all challenges to work hard for the achievement of our visions.

A **Strategy** is a plan that integrates goals, policies, resources and action sequences into a cohesive whole based on relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes within the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponents^[50].

Strategic Planning: it is the process of organizing resources and actions in relation to an external environment in order to achieve desired set of goals or objectives^[51].

Strategy is the variable that injects dynamism into the structure of our vision. It can be changed if we don't get our desired outcome. But visualization and internalization should be constant and must not change for a strategic vision. I will like to state 8 basic steps

Allah is the creator of all the resources and our efforts are only the means for us to acquire the resources.

or things we need to do in order to develop a **STRATEGY**. I have simply coined these steps into an acronym, STRATEGY, which I will refer to as the alphabets of a Strategy. The meaning of each letter as seen below shall be discussed briefly in the coming lines as the major steps towards the development of a Strategy.

50 Strategy Analysis and Practice, pg5.

51 Strategy Analysis and Practice, pg7.

It is easier to develop and implement an effective strategy for the achievement of a vision by following these steps systematically.

- ❖ S= SWOT matrix
- ❖ T= TARGET
- ❖ R= RESOURCES
- ❖ A= ACTIVITIES
- ❖ T= TIME
- ❖ E= EVALUATION
- ❖ G= GRATE GOALS & TARGETS
- ❖ Y= YIELDS



Figure 17.

■ Step 1: SWOT analysis.

This is a strategic management tool that is used to identify and assess our internal strengths and weaknesses as well as the available external opportunities and threats to enable us assess our current circumstances relative to the achievement of our vision. It is thus an Acronym that is used to describe our current situation with respect to our readiness for the

Practically, resources are the things that you have been able to assign roles to them to include them in the process of achieving your vision.

achievement of our vision. The acronym SWOT, stands for our S= Strength , W=Weakness, O= Opportunities available and T= Threats within our environment. It is a concept that is mostly used in organizational management to asses the current state of the organization. We intend borrowing the concept to help us asses and get ourselves ready to develop a strategy for the implementation, outcome evaluation and achievement of our visions.

Strengths are our positive internal states, inclinations and competence that can lead to positive steps towards the achievement of our vision. Determination, enthusiasm, hardwork and self-discipline are all positive inherent strengths needed for the achievement of any vision. There are always some set of effective and crucial habits needed for the achievement of a specific vision. General habits like Qur'an recitation (Tilawah), Daily and Midnight prayers (Tahajjud) and Remembrance of Allah (zikrullah) as explained above in the Internalization stage of vision development are to help us nurture and refine our internal potentialities.

What are then the set of specific habits and competences you need for the achievement of your vision? Think and list them. Carefully read, observe and study the lives of such heroes or successful people who achieved similar or the same visions like yours. Hold discussions with them to elicit their success formulas to guide you build a similar one.

If you identify a must-earned habit then assign an amount of time(duration) for the specific set of acts you should do daily at the same time of the day for the development of such noble habit. This should continue daily for an average time-frame of a month and probably at the same location for the easy formation of a habit. A guide or a mentor will be a huge source of motivation to you.

An effective strategy should guide us to know the consequence of our actions and inactions

Weakness is our negative internal state or inclinations that lead to negative steps blocking our ways towards the achievement of our vision. Weak-Mindedness, Apathy, Laziness, Self-indulgence and any bad habit can distant us from our visions and possibly lead us to failure. We therefore need to make conscious efforts to eliminate these weaknesses and any such bad habit. The best tool to eliminate such weaknesses are the conscious efforts to develop our strengths described above. We only need to intend to use those strengths to eliminate the weakness.

Opportunities are the positive external state, situations and material resources available. These may be things we can reassign a new function to them to make them effective resources towards the achievement of our vision. Current resources that we misuse can be judiciously used to increase the quality and quantity of their current productivity.

Volunteering to work or serve without remuneration to deepen your experience is an opportunity I will always advise the youth to make use of instead of staying unemployed. Volunteerism can create the awareness of professional capabilities and let people feel the need for your professional Service. You can smartly create good networks through volunteerism that can be useful to you in the rest of your life and beyond. In place of unemployment volunteerism is an opportunity that the youth must by all means explore.

Threats are Negative External State or situations that have the potential of curtailing our efforts towards the achievement of our vision. The laws of the nation regarding what service our vision is to provide and the interest as well as demand level of People may be potential threats to the achievement of our vision. New research results can change favorable regulations,

A strategy must thus clearly guide us to know when to start and end the process of achieving set of goals to materialize our vision.

product specification or even ban a product of your vision. It is thus prudent to constantly follow the new research fields and results that can change the products of our visions currently or later.

The strategies of your competitors can lead to the collapse of your business. So you need to swiftly follow the steps of producers and the interest of consumers. We may need to also positively influence the interest of our customers for our mutual benefit.

A single step on the social media about our vision and its products can make or break us. We therefore need to carefully monitor and control the direction of social media to positively favor us.

Lack of vision and a comprehensive plan as to how to manage our time is a great threat that exposes us to the distractors. A comprehensive plan should guide us to have time for everything necessary in our lives otherwise we will have time for every unnecessary thing and gradually be misled.

■ Step 2- TARGET

The second stage in developing a strategy is for us to break our visions down to set of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Tangible (SMART) targets. Our visions and goals should be well determined in the first stage of Strategic Vision Development called Visualization which was discussed in Chapter 3.1. At the strategy development stage we need to clearly determine the

we can easily arrange our routine activities for the achievement of any vision around the five daily prayers to keep us constantly reminded

periodic targets we need to achieve towards the fulfillment of our goals and visions.

Determination of our daily, weekly, monthly and annual targets will guide us to select the best resources needed and the activities to be undertaken towards the achievement of our vision. Targets also determine the direction of our research and for that matter our entire

strategy. We must therefore take our time to break our visions down into goals and further break the goals down into targets. At least break your vision down into annual targets if not monthly targets.

Our targets need to be further grating into daily tasks. Grating goals or targets into task or daily activities will be explained into details in Step 8 of Strategy development.

■ Step 3- RESEARCH & RESOURCE

The third step in Strategy development is for us to embark on comprehensive research in order to know all that are needed for the achievement of our visions. Research should at least help us to know the resources and activities or processes needed for the achievement of our vision.

One of the major reasons we see the need to develop a strategy is the limitation in the availability of resources. Managing uncertainties and risks as well as the quest for both the quality and quantity dimensions of productivities are also major reasons why strategy development is crucial. The third step in developing a strategy is for us to carefully identify what resources we need to facilitate the process towards the achievement of our vision. Resources are the Knowledge, qualities/competencies, tools and materials we need to facilitate the process towards the achievement of our vision. A strategy should clearly state the primary, secondary and tertiary resources that are needed for the achievement of the vision for which the strategy is being developed.

We are guided by the Qur'an to know that we have naturally been provided with all that we need to succeed in life. The Qur'an categorically states this fact in the refined expressions below...

Deep reflection on the divine principles of life in the Qur'an in the dark and quiet hours of the night undoubtedly deepens our sense of vigilance

Surah Ibrahim, Verse 34:

وَأَتَاكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنْ
الْإِنْسَنَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favors, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful.

Our environment is full of uncountable potent resources that we need the knowledge of gratefulness to uncover and utilize. However, our unjust and ungrateful nature prevent us from identifying or recognizing and thus utilizing the resources at our disposal. I have no doubt that when we recognize these resources and are grateful to our Lord, The Creator of the resources, then the resources will automatically be blessed and increased. This is also a fact that is stated earlier in this same chapter of the Qur'an as....

Surah Ibrahim, Verse 7:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي
لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾

“And when your Lord made it known: If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, my chastisement is truly severe”

Teachers and Coaches are both means of external evaluation that should guide us to progress towards the achievement of our vision.

Gratefulness is clearly stated here as a divine means for increment and progress in general. The challenge is we limit gratefulness to only “verbal pronouncement of gratitude”. Is it not true that despite our beautiful expressions of

gratitude, our disregard and being lack of contentment as well as misuses of resources or extravagance, leading to gross disobedience of the provider will definitely not please the Provider? Hence the natural steps in expressing our gratefulness to Allah (swt) are for us to;

1. Recognize and acknowledge that Allah is the creator of all the resources and our efforts are only means by which we acquire the resources.
2. Admire and be content with whatever we have at our disposal.
3. Use the resources in doing good deeds in obedience to and for the sake of Allah, the provider of the resources.
4. Avoid extravagance but distribute any excess in the name of the absolute Provider, Allah (swt).

Verbally express our gratitude to the Provider Allah (swt) and anybody who is in the chain of the means leading to our acquisition of the resources. This is because the subject of the act of gratefulness (شكر) is stated as “you” but the *object* of the *act of gratefulness* (شكر) in the verse is not stated and left open. Meanwhile the subject of the “act of provision” is clearly stated as Allah and the object as “you”. The Holy Prophet (saw) guides us to this fact in one of his Hadith that. لا يشكر الله من لا يشكر الناس. **Meaning** “Whoever is not grateful to people is not grateful to Allah”.^[52] So what we have to do at this third step in developing a strategy is for us to identify and carefully utilize the primary resources like time, our intellectual faculty (mind), our emotional faculty (heart), our sense of

The five daily prayers can be used as continuous self-assessment tools

discipline (soul) and health (body), in an attempt to acquire the secondary resources like positive and productive environment, models, habits, skills and strategic vision. With these and with proper research we should be able to acquire the specific tools and materials we need for the achievement of the vision for which we are developing the strategy. These specific tools and materials are what I have termed as tertiary resources.

The Primary and Secondary resources were briefly explained in **Chapter 1.5** of this book. These are general resources we need in life for success. The tertiary resources are specific to the vision we intend to achieve. So we need to read wide, conduct interviews and seek for expert advice to identify and take note of the tertiary resources we need. In addition to research, it is also better to work in institutions that are also working to achieve the same or similar vision. This may enable you get direct practical information on the accurate resources you need. Such work experience may avail you to technical details that should enable you do better than even the pioneers.

■ **Step 4- ACTIVITY**

Knowing the list of resources we need for the achievement of our vision is not enough to let us automatically achieve the vision. In designing a strategy, we should know exactly what we are to use each resource to do in order to progress steadily towards the achievement of our visions. The fourth step in developing a strategy is for us to carefully assign activities (roles or functions) to the list

A time left unplanned is a time gifted to Satan.

of resources technically agreed on in step three. Practically, resources are the things that you have been able to assign roles to them to include them in the process of achieving your vision.

In addition to knowing the function of each resource we need to also know how to coordinate these functions or activities to lead us to the achievement of our vision. An effective strategy, at this fourth step, must guide us to clearly know the role of each resource and the inter-functional relationship between the resources.

An effective strategy should guide us to know the consequence of our actions and inactions. We should clearly identify and prioritize the key activities that are very crucial to the achievement of our vision. We should also at this stage identify the risky steps we must avoid.

■ **Step 5- TIME**

A number of activities come together for the achievement of a vision. In Step-4 we should have determined the necessary activities we would be using the needed resources enumerated in step 3 to do. The next step now is for us to chronologically arrange the activities. The role, importance, urgency and sequence should guide us to do effective prioritization and graphically show when each activity will be executed within the time frame. The special period of time in which something occurs or is planned to take place is literally known as Time Frame (Oxford Dictionary of English). And the graphical representation of a period of time on which important events are marked is called time-line. Time frame determination and Time-line development are thus the 5th Step in developing a strategy.

Time Frame

Determining a definite period for the achievement of specific set of goals is one of the key steps in developing a strategy, the significance of which got it exemplified and enshrined in the Qur'an.

Goal grating indeed helps us to clear all obstacles on our way to the achievement of our vision.

Most of the rituals in the Qur'an have both specific time and period for them to be executed for the achievement of some specific set of goals. After Allah had clearly institutionalized fasting as a divine ritual for the achievement of some set of goals to earn us the features of the Pious God fearing Servants^[53], He (swt) subsequently drew our attention to the fact that these set of goals are to be achieved within *a certain number of days*^[54]. This is a clear emphasis on the significance of allocating time period to whichever processes that are needed for the achievement of any goal and therefore vision. The fact that the key thing Allah hammers on in the process and steps in creation is measurement or planning as stated in **Qur'an 25:2** in itself necessitate s the determination or serious calculation of the amount of time needed for the achievement of any goal or vision we seek to achieve. We therefore need to clearly state, as a key component of our strategy, when to begin and when to end the process of working hard to achieve our visions. A strategy must thus clearly guide us to know when to start and end the process of achieving the set of goals to materialize our vision.

Time Line

Time line development guides us to determine the time frame for the achievement of a particular vision. There are some key concepts we need to take note of in developing a time line. Understanding

Good and effective strategies should guide us to manage risks but not to take risks.

and factoring these concepts or principles in time line development guides us to prudently utilize and manage our time. I see it necessary to draw your attention to these concepts.

Routines: the activities should be well coordinated and sequentially well arranged for periodic routines to be developed. Any activity that is

53 Qur'an 2:183

54 Qur'an 2:183

periodically carried out before or after a routine or habit gradually becomes a routine or habit. Routines will breed consistency and this will ease the implementation.

Goals and Objectives: the activities on the time line should be well arranged and coordinated towards the achievement of some periodic intermediary objectives and goals that make the achievement of subsequent goals easier and thus lead us to the achievement of the entire vision.

Flexibility: activities should be carefully arranged in such a way that when we miss one activity in situations beyond our control, we can easily substitute it with another activity. We may not have all the resources for the execution of a particular step. But we should have list of flexible activities we can, at all time, do to keep us in constant progression to avoid stagnation.

Pivot Habits: Look for core habits that you hardly miss and schedule your activities before and after them. This will help as an easy reminder. As Muslims our common core habits are the five daily prayers. So we can easily arrange our routine activities for the achievement of any vision around the five daily prayers to keep us constantly reminded. We shall be discussing how to use the five daily prayers to constantly remind ourselves of our daily duties and also examine the quality of daily activities.

■ **Step 6- Execution and Evaluation**

The Sixth step in developing a strategy is determining specific times and systems for routine examination and evaluation. Routine introspection and evaluation of both quantity and quality of our daily scheduled activities is very important in helping us know whether or not we are progressing towards the achievement of our

No matter how small or latent it might be we definitely need effort to access the Mercy of the Almighty Allah

vision or not. So an effective strategy should help and guide us to conduct routine Examination and Evaluation.

An effective strategy should guide us to embark on daily, weekly, monthly and Annual Evaluation that should lead to improving or sustaining the rate of progress. The more frequent we evaluate our efforts and react towards the improvement of the effectiveness of our efforts, the stronger and more effective our Strategy. At least no two days should be equal. We should be in constant progression or improvement.

Our Midnight Tahajjud and five daily prayers can be very effective tools for introspection and evaluation. Among the key night worship activities recommended at dawn is careful introspection leading to seeking for forgiveness^[55] and planning for good deeds to be done to nullify the past mistakes and bad deeds^[56].

Deep reflection on the divine principles of life in the Qur'an^[57], in the dark and quite hours of the night, undoubtedly deepens our sense of vigilance and can be used as a means to introspect and evaluate the activities of the past days and as well as plan for the next days in accordance with the time-line.

The five daily prayers can be used as continuous self-assessment tools. How possible? We mostly use one or more of the parts we wash in ablution to embark on any positive or negative deed. We wash, wipe and clean our private parts, mouth, nose, face (eyes), arms, head, ears and legs in ablution. These are actually the basic parts that have key roles in the execution of the activities we need to carry out daily towards the achievement of our vision. So

When we implement visions that are not strategic, we easily get destructed by little challenges and obstacles.

55 Qur'an 51:17-18

56 Qur'an 11:114

57 Qur'an 73:4

we can carefully introspect them and evaluate their roles in the key activities that lead to the achievement of our vision. Where we fall short then we quickly ask for forgiveness verbally and behaviorally by planning what to do immediately we are done with our prayers.

Every vision of a believer should be a link to his or her Lord. If the purpose or mission is for the sake of our Lord and we constantly strive hard then our Lord Allah (swt) promises us of a possible success.

Surah Al-Maeda, Verse 35:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful.

So long as our vision is designed as a means of nearness to (seeking the pleasure of) Allah then we should have a permanent psychological source of motivation. Ablution and our five daily prayers can then be used as perfect means of introspection and evaluation.

Teachers and Coaches are both means of external evaluation that should guide us to progress towards the achievement of our vision. It is therefore, very good to have someone we trust to assess our progress and advise us accordingly.

We need to elicit the set of goals, objectives and daily tasks that should motivate us to the successful implementation of our vision

SWOT analysis in step-1 should help us know our current status. Time frame determination

in Step 5 should also help us know the entire time needed (beginning and the end of the process to the achievement of our vision). Resource allocation in Step 3 helps us to know and note all the resources we need. Activity allocation in Step 4 should help us know and list what to do with each resource. Time-line Development in Step 5 should guide us to determine at what stage and sequence as well as what amount of time will be needed for each of the activities. Evaluation Method and Period determination in Step 6 should guide us to determine the periodic internal and external assessment method and time.

■ **Step 7-Goal Grating.**

Usually our Vision may look too big to be achieved immediately. And we may seem to lack so many resources to achieve the set of goals that make up the vision. However all times we should have something to do about our vision. “Disconnection” as a result of lack of resources should never be entertained by any serious and determined person. At least, we must think about what to do immediately to get any resource we lack. The acquisition of any resource we lack should therefore be a sub-goal for us.

To ensure continuous work towards the achievement of our vision, we need to grate our bigger goals into smaller short-term objectives that we have the resources to currently pursue. Breaking our Goals

“no matter how big our vision is, we definitely need to break it down to the level that we always have something to do about it

into smaller goals that we have the resource to start immediately is indeed a strategic process that injects life into our vision achievement process. This is what I call ‘Goal Grating’. **Table 8** below is a template for goal grating which we shall be discussing in the next paragraph.

Table 8; Goal grating table

GOAL	RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	TIME	EVALUATION
G1	R1a, R1b, R1c...	A1a, A1b, A1c...	T1a, T1b, T1c...	E1a, E1b, E1c...
G2=R1b	R2a, R2b, R2c....	A2a, A2b, A2c...	T2a, T2b, T2c...	E2a, E2b, E2c...
G3= R2c	R3a, R2b, R3c....	A3a, A3b, A3c...	T3a, T3b, T3c...	E3a, E3b, E3c...
Gx=....	Rxa, Rxb, Rxc.....	Axa, Axb, Axc....	Txa, Txb, Txc....	Exa, Exb, Exc...

The above table can be used to guide us break down our visions into Goals and Objectives and finally determine the list of daily duties that must be done towards the achievement of our visions. The major goal of our vision should be written in the first row of the first Column as **G1**. We then proceed to list the needed resources for the achievement of this major goal in the first row of the second Column under the Resources Column as **R1a, R1b, R1c.....**. What we will be doing with each of the resource is also written in the corresponding *Activity* Column as **A1a, A1b, A1c....**; at what stage and duration of *time* will such activities be performed is also written in the corresponding row under the *Time* Column as **T1a, T1b, T1c....**. The *Expected results and Evaluation time* should also be written in the corresponding row in the *Evaluation* Column as **E1a, E1b, E1c....**.

When we are done with the first major goal we will realize that there may be some of the

The hardworking believer sees failure as experience that earns him reward from Allah. Such results

resources we may not currently be having. In that case that resource is moved into the next row under the goal Column as sub goal of the 1st major goal as **G2**. This could be **R1a** or **R1b** and or **R1c**. We then continue with the same exercise as we did above for G1 to fill the corresponding columns. We continue this way until we get to the sub goal that we have all the resources to achieve, shown as **Gx** in the above template of Table 8. We can then start with the corresponding activities for such resources to enable us start climbing up the table slowly until we get to G1.

Indeed, Goal Grating tables can be seen as “ladder of achievement”. Comprehensive goal grating helps us to structure and complete our time-line and guide us to know what to do at any point in time towards the achievement of our vision. No time is left unplanned for. A time left unplanned is a time gifted to Satan. It is difficult, and perhaps the most time consuming, to develop a goal grating table. But it is one of the surest and effective way of developing a strategy for the achievement of our visions. It guides us to know what to do at a particular time. Goal grating keeps us vigilant against misuse of time and conscious about self assessment. Goal grating indeed helps us to clear all obstacles on our way to the achievement of our vision.

Goal grating is an exercise I struggled to develop between the years 2001 to 2003 to help me internalize Qur'an 14:34.

Quran 14:34

Visions that are not strategic are likely to fail to give us the right dosage of determination and passion for us to implement them

وَأَتَيْنَكُم مِّن كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّا
إِلَٰهٌ ذُو الْعَرْشِ ۚ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful.

I never wanted to be an unjust and an ungrateful servant of Allah. And I had already learned from the verse 7 of the same chapter that *gratefulness* is one of the surest way of increasing the blessings or any good in my life. In struggling to count and gratefully make use of the favors of Allah on me, I developed the goal grating table. No matter the time it might take you, try as much as possible to develop a goal grating table for your visions.

■ **Step 8-Yield Harvesting**

Our visions and thus strategies are highly affected by our expectations. Just as the farmer is very definite in the type of yield he will want to harvest and his actions and strategy subsequently gets affected by the features of his expected yields, I suggest that before any strategy development is completed we carefully need to review the features of our yields. That is, the features of the set of goals and objectives will have to be clearly examined. This last stage of our strategy should guide us vividly view and identify our expectations in all situations and eliminate all kinds of doubts from our minds. We can't talk about effective strategy wherever there is doubt.

This fact should not be seen as a fact that is conflicting with the flexibility concept in step5. It means that in effective strategy; alternatives are thought of in advance even before those situations that need them occur. Risks and their potential solutions are thought of even before they occur. Good and effective strategies should guide us to manage risks but not to take risks.

To be able to start implementing our vision we need to know the set of Goals, Objectives and List of Duties we need to periodically do in accordance to our strategic plan

3.4 Stage 4- I=IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Just as designing and building a car is not for the purpose of displaying showroom in the galleries forever, but for the car to hit the street and move us to our destination, strategies and plans are not to be perfectly formulated and filed in the shelves of our offices. When beautiful cars are not moved to the street and driven they will eventually waste away. Our perfect strategies and plans when not put into action, in a systematic and well organized institution or events, then they can never help us to achieve our visions and will, most likely eventually, become **obsolete** like the packed car. So one of the most crucial and 'life earning' stage of strategic vision development that marks the physical beginning of our progress towards the achievement of our vision is the implementation stage.

Implementation is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. (Strategic Implementation, By Erica Olsen). Implementation injects life into strategies and plans and moves them into actions and effects that should produce results and products. We thus need to put in much efforts to effectively implement our strategies if only we want to succeed in life.

Two basic life principles in the Qur'an are worth repeating to retreat the significance of working hard through strategy implementation for success. First of all, The Almighty Allah explicitly states that:

Our motivation is largely affected by our emotional State/mood, our Actions, our Location and the Time we have at our disposal.

Surah An-Najm, Verse 39:

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for- (English - Shakir)

This divine guidance establishes the Life principle that there is always the need for cause (effort) for an effect (results) to be obtained. No matter how small or latent it might be, we definitely need effort to access the Mercy of the Almighty Allah. Expecting results without intellectual, emotional, verbal and physical effort can just only be compared to expecting the sun light and minerals in the darkest corners of our rooms without making efforts to come out. The natural principle in life that the Qur'an has confirmed in this verse is that no hard work goes without reward. And no reward comes without hard-work.

The second verse that guides us to be motivated and thus implement our strategies is the noble statement of Allah, The Creator of Guidance:

Surah Al-Ankaboot, Verse 69:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, we will most certainly guide them in Our ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good. (English - Shakir)

This verse guides us to know that indeed, sincere hard work and good deeds are both means of earning the guidance and pleasure of the Almighty Allah, even as we struggle to achieve our visions.

Why do we fail to implement our strategic plans?

Several reasons lead to the delay or failure in the implementation of our strategic plans towards the achievement of our vision. Fair technical causes of delay or failure in the implementation of vision are worth discussing here.

1. Lack of a Strategic Vision

Most at times we have visions that are not well developed. Visions that are not strategic are likely to fail to give us the right dosage of determination and passion for us to implement them. When we implement visions that are not strategic, we easily get destructed by little challenges and obstacles. Remember that The Holy Prophet (saw) had a well established vision even before the age of Prophethood, age 40. His reply to Bahira, The Monk at Basra, was a clear indication that he had a strong strategic vision even in those early ages and never believed in what the Arabs worshiped. When Bahira needed an answer from him at age 12 he replied: “Do not ask me anything in the name of Lat and Uzza. By Allah! I abhor nothing as much as I abhor those two idols”. This is because Bahira started his question with “Dear child I am asking you in the name of Lat and Uzza to answer me”^[58]

His strong mission and Strategic vision led to the historic reply he gave his Uncle to the Quraish notables who had come to offer power, fame, wealth and women in exchange for him to give up his Noble mission. The reply was an utmost declaration of his determination and passion for his vision: *“O My Uncle, by Allah If they put the sun in my right Hand and the Moon in my left on condition that I abandon this course, I would not abandon it until Allah has made me victorious or I perish therein”*^[59] Yes, it is only

Never give up
and never call
the result of your
sincere effort
“Failure

when we spend time and effort to deeply reflect, as discussed in Chapter 3 (internalization) that we can get our vision well rooted in our hearts to enable us give passionate answers or reactions like that of the Holy Prophet (saw) whenever we come across any challenge.

58 Muhammad Mustafa, the elect, pg.

59 The Sealed Nectar pg. 111 /Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri /Darussalam Publications

We need to elicit the set of goals, objectives and daily tasks that should motivate us to the successful implementation of our vision in accordance to our mission. In this manner we can easily get conscientized enough to face life in the same manner the Holy Prophet (saw) did with unwavering determination and passion.

2. Lack of GOLD extraction.

To be able to start implementing our vision we need to know the set of **G**oals, **O**bjectives and **L**ist of **D**uties we need to periodically do in accordance to our strategic plan. GOLD is thus the abbreviation of these crucial elements of strategic plan we need to know in order to get motivated to start. This important exercise should be started at the Stage 1 of Vision development called Visualization and finally completed in a more structured form in the Step 7 of STAGE 3 of vision development called Strategy Development stage. Lack of comprehensive and research based Visualization that should lead to clear identification of the long term Goals and short term periodic objectives as well as the daily List of Duties (GOLD) we need for the achievement of our Vision, may result in our low drive to start working towards the achievement of our vision. This is because we simply will not know where, when and how to start. Kindly refer to Step 7 of STAGE 3 of vision development (Chapter 3.3.7) to help you carry out this very important exercise in order to get motivated.

3. Lack of SALT extraction.

Most at times we may lack the motivation to implement and sustain the progress of our visions because of the negative mood in which we find ourselves. Our motivation is largely affected by our emotional State (mood), our Actions, our Location and the Time we have at our disposal. The abbreviation SALT stands for these key factors that affect our motivation for

To a believer every achieved vision automatically gets converted into a smaller goal for the achievement of a higher vision

any action or behavior. Careful reflection, leading to identification of the positive forms of these factors, is what I call *SALT extraction*. We therefore should clearly know the motivating states in which we find ourselves very resourceful. This important exercise should be comprehensively done at Stage 2 of Vision development called Internalization Stage. Lack of strong internalization process that should lead to the elicitation of our SALT may deny us the necessary motivation to implement and sustain the progression of our noble strategic plans.

4. Lack of Goal Grating.

When our vision is so big, we may get confused as to where to start from. Especially so if we do not have enough resources. To solve this challenge and get us started on our vision immediately about our vision, we need to grate our vision into long term goals, short term objectives and daily activities. Breaking our vision down into smaller goals, objectives and Duties is what I call *goal grating*. We should therefore be guided to know that “no matter how big our vision is, we definitely need to break it down to the level that we always have something to do about it”.

Goal grating is the 7th Step in Stage 3 of vision development. Lack of proper goal grating may leave us confused, not knowing where to start from. Refer to page 119 for more information on goal grating.

3.5 Stage 5- O = Outcome Observation

Allah being the Source and Pinnacle of our vision means that we cannot get to the end of our life vision

This is a very important stage in vision development. At this stage we are to carefully analyze our results. Are they the results we wanted? Can we refer to ourselves as being successful? What have we achieved? This stage can be seen as a response to the divine instruction in...

Surah Al-Hashr, Verse 18:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do. (English - Shakir).

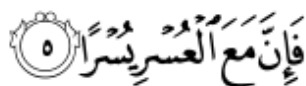
Theoretically, this stage should guide us to write down our expectation (Goals & Objectives) for each of the stages in our struggle. Practically this stage will require that we document the outcomes of our efforts and compare them to our expectations (Goals & Objectives). There are two likely situations at the end of this stage. Both cases need to be discussed.

Case 1: If the outcomes differ from our goals and objectives, then we have succeeded in discovering yet another wrong formula for the achievement of our vision. The hardworking believer sees failure as experience that earns him reward from Allah. Such results, seen as failures, can be used as experience to guide whoever seeks to achieve the same vision with the same strategy. The Prophetic guidance at this juncture is for us to return to stage 3 to review our strategy and proceed to implementation with a new and more effective Strategy. At Hudaibiyya, despite the fact that the Holy Prophet (saw) had come out with the Ummah with the vision of visiting the Holy Kaaba, the Holy Prophet had to return to Medina as a results of the Hudaibiyya agreement with the people of Mecca. The reply he gave to some of the companions who saw this as “failure” was indeed a life principle in Vision development. He said “yes indeed, I promised

It is therefore apparent that the only possible resting place for a believer is the grave.

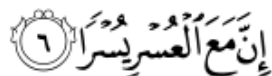
you of visiting the Holy Kaaba but I did not say today”. He thus motivated them to return to Medina. They drew inspiration from the divine principle...

Surah Al-Inshirah, Verse 5:



Surely with difficulty is ease.

Surah Al-Inshirah, Verse 6:



With difficulty is surely ease.

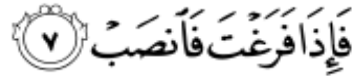
They got motivated that the results that they will be getting after reviewing their strategy will definitely be better than the results of the first strategy. They never gave up. They never changed their Vision. Instead, they teamed up around the Holy Prophet (saw) and reviewed their vision and finally succeeded in not only visiting the Holy Kaaba but concurring the Holy City in their subsequent visit. Do you remember how many experiment were carried out before the light that you enjoy today was discovered? Never give up and call your first result a failure.

Case 2: If the features and effects of Our outcomes tallies with our expectations (Goals & Objectives) then it means we have achieved our vision. This case or situation leads us to the next stage in vision development which is called *New vision development stage*. Kindly proceed to keep reading and working hard. a believer has no holidays and never goes on retirement.

3.6 Stage 6- N = New Vision Development

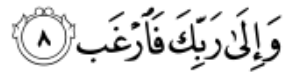
To a believer every achieved vision automatically gets converted into a smaller goal for the achievement of a higher vision. We are guided to this principle by the divine verse in,

Surah Al-Inshirah, Verse 7:



So when you have finished (your duties) then stand up (for worship).

Surah Al-Inshirah, Verse 8:



And make your Lord your exclusive object.

The pleasure of Allah being the Source and Pinnacle of our Vision means that we cannot get to the end of our life vision. The achievement of our vision therefore must assume a circular nature as illustrated in figure11. It therefore means that, every achieved vision will get automatically converted into a smaller goal for the achievement of a higher vision. All our efforts for the sake of Allah is termed as worship in Islam. So, in general, this concept is a reflection of the verse...

Surah Al-Hijr, Verse 99:

وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾

And serve your Lord until there comes to you that which is certain.

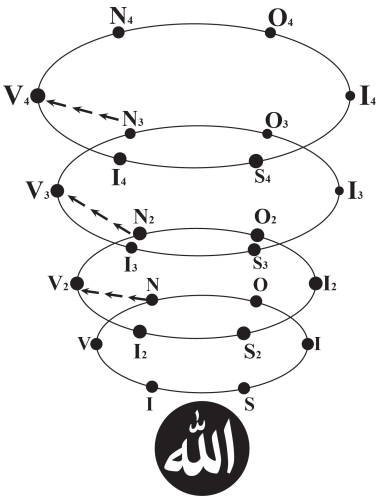


Figure 18.

