

MAKE THE BEST USE OF LIFE
IN FACE OF DEATH

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The weekly 'World Times' of July 27th 1978 published an account of how a German school master, Heiner Brandt decided to make the best of use the time that remained on being told by doctors that he was dying of cancer.

Brandt sold everything he owned including his property and flew to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. From there he made his way by landrover to the heart of the drought stricken African state to a village where people and cattle were dying for lack of water. A trained geologist, he tried every likely rock formation without finding a drop of water until a village elder told him of a place far off where animals sometimes went during droughts. He manhandled the drill for eight days and before he could locate any sign of water, every cow in the village had died and lives of villagers were hanging in the balance.

Brandt returned to the cancer specialist in Germany who had pronounced his death sentence twelve months previously only to be told by the amazed doctor "There is no longer any trace of cancer. You are completely fit."

Two things are worth noting from this anecdote.

Firstly that life and death is controlled by the creator, ALLAH. It is not in the hands of physicians nor any other category of experts to pronounce death no matter how serious a sickness be, or how visible signs of one's collapse be. However, certain good deeds do have influence on the extension of one's life span. No wonder if Brandt therefore was endowed with a new life fully cured from the scourge of cancer as a result of his noble intention and effort to alleviate human suffering from want of water in the drought stricken country. Says the holy Quran: "Surely Allah does not waste the reward of the doers of good".

Secondly death is inevitable. It is sure to come whether with or without cause, whether in early stage of life or at advanced age. It is a sign of great wisdom for one to think of the best use of meagre time one has at his disposal before death comes to knock the door. What better it could be than to embark upon a noble project of doing something for the good of mankind. And for this, what better cause ^{can} ~~comes~~ it be than to endeavour to provide water where it was most needed.

Islam has laid great emphasis on the provision of water for the living as a great deed of virtue.

Says the sixth Imam Jaffer Sadiq a.s. - "whosoever provides water at a place where it is not available, it is as if he has saved a life and ~~he~~ whosoever has saved one life, it is as if he has saved many".