

Alexandria, December 31, 2007

*It's strange how an experience can change someone's way of seeing things. And even influence their whole life.*

*I grew up in Cairo as a Muslim, and in Islam we speak a lot about destiny—that each of us has a written time to come into this world and a time to leave ... and whatever happens in between is also written, written by God.*

*In a way, this has stayed in my mind forever. And I started observing my life as if I was in a cinema ... watching and witnessing every minute of my own movie. The movie was set and written before I entered the theater, and now it is time just to sit and watch.*

*Still, every now and then, I worry about things and start asking myself, why am I here? What am I experiencing? And what is the reason for life? Then I quickly remind myself that I don't need to try to figure things out ... that it was all already written up there, way before the movie started. Now I just need to relax and wait, wait till the end of the movie, till the end of it all. When the lights come on and it is time to leave, time to leave this cinema.*

*I have grown up with this idea in my mind that the end of my movie would mean I am dead, that I have completed my life. I have lived every day thinking that this might be my last, or the last day of someone I love. I prayed to God that I will be the first one to leave so I don't see anyone I love dying. That was my way of keeping everyone in my movie alive. I won't let them die before me.*

*I don't know how long this will last. Maybe my movie is a short one after all. Do we live for a purpose and die once we have finished what we are supposed to do? Why would I need to live longer if I knew that I had lived my life?*

*I remember the first time I understood the concept of people dying. I was watching an old Egyptian movie on TV when I was about four or five years old, and I asked my mother about the actors in the movie and where they were. "Most of them are dead," my mother said. It was a shocking discovery for me at that age. I was in love with all these beautiful dead people! And this somehow influenced me, and I wanted to meet all the actors I love, before they die or before I die.*

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