Oncore there was a farmer who was tired of various natural factors ruling the quality of his crop. So one day he called Shiva and said,

‘I am tired of all the natural nonsense happening; obviously you are not a farmer. I know from history that you were a hunter. You don’t know what it means to farm so why don’t you leave nature in my hands? I am a farmer. I know when it should rain, I know when there should be sunlight, I know when there should be wind. I know everything. You don’t know because you are just a hunter and you are a crazy ascetic. You are definitely not a good farmer. It’s raining at the wrong times, everything is happening at the wrong times, you leave it to me.’ Shiva was in one of those moods; he said, ‘Okay, nature is in your hands.’ Then the farmer planted his crop. So he calls out ‘Rain.’ He pokes the land with his finger and says, ‘Okay it’s soaked up to six inches.’ ‘Stop.’ Then he ploughed his field and planted maize seeds and waited for two days. ‘Rain,’ then ‘Sunlight.’

Today I’m working in the field so ‘Cloud.’ So everything just happened the way he wanted, a beautiful maize crop came. He was overjoyed. ‘Seer, it’s good, nature should be in a farmer’s hands.’

And then when it was time for the harvest, he wanted to see that no birds come. He was surprised about that because when he said, ‘No birds’ - no birds came. So he went down to his fields to harvest the maize but when he looked at the crop, there was no grain on the plants. Then he thought ‘What the hell is this? What did I do wrong?’ He couldn’t figure it out because he had managed everything - rain, water and sunshine properly. Then he went back to Shiva and asked, ‘Did I do everything right but there is no grain? Did you sabotage my crop?’ Shiva said, ‘I have been watching; you were in-charge so I didn’t want to interfere. The rain was great, the sunshine was great, everything was fine but you stopped all the winds. I used to always send gentle winds which would threaten your crop but because the plants felt pushed and threatened, they put their roots deeper into the earth and so grain happened. Now you have a great maize crop but no maize.’

So the maize crop used the winds to strengthen themselves, various situations in your life can either be used to make yourself stronger and better or you can sit and cry. This is the choice you have. Everything - it doesn’t matter what happens; even the most horrific event in your life can also be used for your growth and your well-being. The small events of your life - your business, your marriage, your children all these things are just a stepping stone. This is not new to you because in this culture they put this into you for millennia; they told you, ‘Your life is about multikar. Your marriage, your business, your social life - these are all just the means to get there. Either you go with it or you go without it but whether you are a sanyasi or you are in samsara, your only goal is multikar.’

There is no such thing as failure. Failure is an idea because success is also a stupid idea. Instead of trying to change the world, change the idea. If you just change that, everything is great. If you were a beggar on the street, today if you could walk into the restaurant and eat a masala dosa, this would be the height of success, isn’t it so? So you’ve gotten trapped in social situations and this idea of success is not even your idea, why am I creating you with this? It is somebody else’s idea of what success is, isn’t it? Every idea, thought, emotion or value that you have is picked up from somewhere and it rules you from within. Your religion, your society and your culture have trained you to believe that this is it. Don’t become a slave to somebody’s idea; that is the first and foremost success. Success and failure is not in the volumes of money flowing into your life; success and failure is not dependent upon the recognition that you find in the world. You are successful with life if you know how to walk with joy even through hell.

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For one who is seeing this life as a stepping stone for a larger possibility, for him there is no failure. For one who is looking at the simple events of this life itself as the goal of life, for him there is failure and success. If you are just seeing this life as a stepping stone for a larger possibility, whether you have a good deal or a bad deal - whatever the situation is, it’s beautiful and very useful; use that for your well-being.

Sadhguru, a yogi, is a visionary, humanitarian and a prominent spiritual leader. An author, poet, and internationally-renowned speaker, Sadhguru’s art and piercing logic provoke and widen our perception of life. www.shafoundation.org