

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## Mirror of Our Soul

Narcissism is inherent in all of us. More in some and less in others depending on one's age, looks, build, etc. If the reflection in the mirror is appealing and satisfying and attractive, one feels happy; it boosts one's self confidence. Depending on the reflection, we may think of taking corrective measures about whatever is wrong with our reflection. Typical reactions are, "Oh! I am putting on weight. I should start jogging immediately," or "My hair is in bad shape. I need to visit the stylist," etc.

What if suddenly instead of showing our physical self, the mirror started showing the state of our soul. Would we faint with grief and sorrow?

We're so anxious to react to our physical reflection in the mirror and take corrective measures, like jogging to get our bodies in shape, or using things like anti-wrinkle cream to enhance our faces. How much more might be wrong with our invisible souls, the state of which we are totally unaware, and how much more do we need to work on it to bring it back in shape?

As submitters we know, by the grace of Almighty GOD, that it is the soul which is going to last forever. The body is going to last only as long as we live in this world. So anything compared to infinity is nil.

There is no comparison at all.

The soul needs all the nourishment and exercise we can give it, for it to withstand the physical presence of GOD on the day of resurrection. We have to constantly reflect in the mirror of our consciousness about the state of our soul, because, after all, what we see in the mirror is not the real us.

What we think, our actions and deeds based on what we think, is the real us. It's a constant endeavor till our death to keep our souls strong and healthy. And as junk food and any form of substance abuse is bad for our health while nutritious food and exercise is good for our physical bodies, in the same way refraining from all evil and bad thoughts and deeds, and inculcating soul-developing habits like Salat, Zakat, trusting in GOD alone, reverencing GOD alone is our nutritious food for the soul. And striving in the way of GOD is our healthy exercise for the soul.

[9:120-121] ... they do not suffer any thirst, or any effort, or hunger in the cause of **GOD**, or make a single step that enrages the disbelievers, or inflict any hardship upon the enemy, without having it written down for them as a credit. **GOD** never fails to recompense those who work righteousness. Nor do they incur any ex-

pense, small or large, nor do they cross any valley, without having the credit written down for them. **GOD** will surely reward them generously for their works.

What prevents us from seeing a proper reflection of our souls is our ego. It is like what GOD says in [24:39] *As for those who disbelieve, their works are like a mirage in the desert. A thirsty person thinks that it is water. But when he reaches it, he finds that it is nothing, and he finds **GOD** there instead, to requite him fully for his works. **GOD** is the most efficient reckoner.*

The heat of our ego deceives our brains and hearts. We think whatever we are doing is right although it might be wrong. That is why GOD has given the example of David, where he has to pass judgment on sheep, and how he bows and repents afterwards, fearing that he had not asked for GOD's help.

[38:23-25] *"This brother of mine owns ninety-nine sheep, while I own one sheep. He wants to mix my sheep with his, and continues to pressure me." He said, "He is being unfair to you by asking to combine your sheep with his. Most people who combine their properties treat each other unfairly, except those who believe and work righteousness, and these are so few." Afterwards, David wondered if he made the*

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right judgment. He thought that we were testing him. He then implored his Lord for forgiveness, bowed down, and repented. We forgave him in this matter. We have granted him a position of honor with us, and a beautiful abode.

It is our ego which makes us angry, makes us shout at or abuse others, feel jealous, backbite, feel superior or inferior. It's only when we start fighting against our ego that the mist of deception starts to clear ever so slowly, and you begin to see your shriveled soul in the mirror and start to take corrective action. But, believe me, fighting one's ego is the most difficult thing in the world, and one can never say for sure that one has conquered it completely. Like all cancers the cancer of ego can only be in remission. Come to think of it, it is highly egotistical to say that one has no ego!

Life is like the game of snakes and ladders which we used to play when we were small kids, with the only difference being that it is not a game of chance which depends on the throw of dice, but instead it depends on the choices one makes, according to which we land on neutral, snakes or ladders squares. And Satan has been given full freedom in this world by GOD, so Satan will try to put maximum snakes on the board where the final prize is a polished-like-gem submitter who will inherit Paradise. Therefore, it is not going to be easy. We will fall quite a lot, especially in the beginning, when we try to improve ourselves in all aspects of our life as submitters. But we have to steadfastly persevere, get up and move on, never give up, fight Satan with all our might, and strive in the cause of GOD at every opportunity, because ultimately it's a question of our souls.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the proportion of our looking at our physical self in the mirror as compared to observing the development of our souls in the mirror of our consciousness should be in proportion to how long the body is going to last compared to the soul. In other words, we should be doing an awful lot more internal reflection and a lot less worrying about our physical appearance.

## 2013 Conference

We are looking forward to hosting the conference in Tucson this year. God willing the conference will begin on August 16 at 2PM with the Friday Congregational Prayer. This will be followed by welcoming everyone, particularly all the new submitters and hearing how they came to find the message.

Submitters are our real family, and we anticipate that there will be many new people, attending their first conference. We want to take this opportunity to remind and emphasize the Quranic commandment from God that we should treat each other nicely. God has made the believers a family [49:10] *The believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence GOD, that you may attain mercy.*

[17:53] *Tell My servants to treat each other in the best possible manner, for the devil will always try to drive a wedge among them. Surely, the devil is man's most ardent enemy.*

This is very important for us to remember. It's Satan who's trying to cause division and discord. And we fall into his trap when we resort to name-calling and abusive behavior toward one another. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but as submitters, we should be humble enough to recognize that we are in daily need of guidance ourselves (1:6-7) and should not try to coerce anyone else to follow our opinion (2:256). We should not label a submitter with a differing viewpoint as a "disbeliever," an "idol worshiper," a "hypocrite," or any other name.

*Believers Set the Example*  
[49:11] *O you who believe, no people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you mock one another, or make fun of your names. Evil indeed is the reversion to wickedness after attaining faith. Anyone who does not repent after this, these are the transgressors.*

We come from different backgrounds and we all have different strengths and weaknesses. This is part of what makes our community so wonderful. And it's, of course, part of God's system. [49:13] *O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one an-*

*other. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant.*

This verse tells us clearly that the only criterion for judging is righteousness, and we know that God is the best judge of all righteous behavior, seen and unseen.

[17:54] *Your Lord knows you best. According to His knowledge, He may shower you with mercy, or He may requite you. We did not send you to be their advocate.*

[17:84] *Say, "Everyone works in accordance with his belief, and your Lord knows best which ones are guided in the right path."*

The conference is a time for spiritual renewal, for heightening our awareness and reverence of God. It's not the time or place for personal agendas. So, let us all come together to celebrate God's favors, mercy and blessings upon us.

This is our first conference since our brother Abdullah Arik departed. The message of Worship God Alone will never die. We had to continue after Dr. Khalifa's departure in 1990, and, God willing, we will continue until our last breath, even if the disbelievers dislike it.

[40:14] *Therefore, you shall devote your worship absolutely to GOD ALONE, even if the disbelievers dislike it.*

[6:162] *Say, "My Contact Prayers (Salat), my worship practices, my life and my death, are all devoted absolutely to GOD alone, the Lord of the universe. [6:163] "He has no partner. This is what I am commanded to believe, and I am the first to submit." [6:164] Say, "Shall I seek other than GOD as a lord, when He is the Lord of all things? No soul benefits except from its own works, and none bears the burden of another. Ultimately, you return to your Lord, then He informs you regarding all your disputes."*

[3:144] *Muhammad was no more than a messenger like the messengers before him. Should he die or get killed, would you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels, does not hurt GOD in the least. GOD rewards those who are appreciative.*

The Tucson community looks forward to welcoming all submitters to God alone for the 2013 conference, God willing. Please send in your conference registrations as soon as you can. And remember to book your hotel room directly. All information is available on our website. May God bless you.

## Reflections from an orphanage trip

On January 19, 2013, I had the pleasure of accompanying a group of our community members and other volunteers in a bus trip to Casa Hogar Sion Orphanage.

There were a total of 12 members from our community on this visit, and by God's Grace we had an enjoyable experience during the entire trip. Once in the orphanage, there were craft and game activities arranged by some of the volunteers that created a fun atmosphere for volunteers and kids to mingle: there was face painting, fake jewelry making, origami and jenga games as well as one on one quality time between kids and volunteers. Some volunteers also helped with preparing and serving lunch.

Everybody had a great time, and we learned about the history of *Corazon de Vida Foundation*. Hilda Pacheco-Taylor, the founder accompanied us in the bus and shared her life story. She had been in an orphanage in Baja, Mexico as a child. Later in life, she decided to give back by helping orphans in similar establishments. It was a touching and heartwarming story.

These children showed a lot of generosity, sharing, caring and love towards one another and everyone around them. Thank God for providing us the opportunity to see this up close and to experience the practical application of some of His beautiful commandments.

This was a community effort. Many individuals supported this event in one or more ways: coming on the trip, participating in the fundraising car wash, donating money and giving input regarding how best to use the donations gathered to benefit the orphans. By God's grace, we were able to raise more than \$1,500 for this cause. After consultation, part of this money was provided to Corazon de Vida foundation and the remainder was used to buy food and supplies for the orphanages.

I am grateful to everyone who was a part of this effort and to God, the Most Gracious, for His support and for mak-

ing this possible. May He help our community engage in ways that would help us grow our souls together and strengthen our bonds of unity.

—Submitter brother in Southern California

The trip to the orphanage was a moving experience for me as well. I could see evidence of the human condition and struggle in some. Yet, it was amazing to see the apparent open hearts, curiosity, willingness to help and eagerness to learn of other children and to hear about their dreams. One girl shared that she wants to be a doctor. Another wants to study criminology. We also saw 5 young adults who are still living at the orphanage who are either University or medical students (3 University students and 2 medical students). In return for the support, they work at the orphanage. It seems that it is a very busy life for them as they juggle school and work. It was inspiring to see them reach this level of accomplishment and strive for a better life with meager means and support.

It was also touching to see how they embraced life and cared for each other and to hear about their generosity despite how little they have. One girl was keeping another girl who was not feeling well company upstairs in the dormitory room for part of the day while the rest were downstairs engaged in activities and playing. During our tour, we also heard the story that sometimes orphan children were dropped off at night and found themselves in the middle of the dormitory room as there was not enough space in the orphanage. Some of the children that were already there would come to them and bring them their doll (perhaps their only belonging) in an effort to welcome and comfort them. They may have been received in this way when they arrived at the orphanage.

In addition, it was fun to interact with the kids including participating in face painting and jewelry making (made a bracelet for the girl that wants to be a doctor) and talking to them and encouraging them.

It was also heartwarming to see God's signs on this trip. A sister shared that the bus pulled into the parking lot to

pick us up at 8:19 a.m. A brother shared this regarding the date of our trip:  $1/19/13: 1+19+2013 = 2033 = 19 \times 107$ . Praise and glory be to God.

Thank God for this special experience and opportunity to put some of the verses in the Quran about orphans into practice. Also, thanks to our brother who organized this trip and to the sisters and brothers who came and helped make it a positive, good experience.

—Submitter sister in Southern California

For anyone interested in attending a trip arranged by Corazon de Vida Foundation, their website is:

[www.corazondevida.org/trips-and-events](http://www.corazondevida.org/trips-and-events)

Corazon de Vida is a non-profit organization that supports multiple orphanages in Baja. More information is at:

[www.corazondevida.org/about](http://www.corazondevida.org/about)

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[4:36] *You shall worship GOD alone—do not associate anything with Him. You shall regard the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, the related neighbor, the unrelated neighbor, the close associate, the traveling alien, and your servants. GOD does not like the arrogant showoffs.*

[2:215] *They ask you about giving: say, "The charity you give shall go to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien." Any good you do, GOD is fully aware thereof.*

[2:177] *Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.*

[3:104] *Let there be a community of you who invite to what is good, advocate righteousness, and forbid evil. These are the winners.*



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## Not An Organized Religion

I have always been discouraged with, and by, organized religion. To me everyone's relationship with God is very personal, and very much "one on one" so to speak:

*All of them will come before Him on the Day of Resurrection as individuals. (19:95)*

*Every human being is responsible for his own works. (53:39)*

That is why Submission as I understand it from the Quran and from my personal experience is such a tremendous treasure. It is, as I understand it, not an organized religion at all, but a way to live our lives:

*Say, "My Contact Prayers (Salat), my worship practices, my life and my death, are all devoted absolutely to God alone, the Lord of the universe. (6:162)*

*The life of this world is no more than illusion and vanity, while the abode of the Hereafter is far better for the righteous. Do you not understand?! (6:32)*

Of course there are some dilemmas inherent in such a situation: no one can tell you what to believe, think, say, or do beyond reminding with the scripture. It means that each Submitter must find their own personal connection with God, and stands before Him as individuals—every moment of their lives.

*You are not responsible for guiding any-*

*one. God is the only one who guides whoever chooses (to be guided)... (2:272)*

*You shall fight for the cause of God; you are responsible only for your own soul, and exhort the believers to do the same.... (4:84)*

Inevitably this leads to differences of opinion, and in many cases the appearance of conflict, if not conflict indeed. In this case, the Quran tells us how to deal with these differences:

*Tell My servants to treat each other in the best possible manner, for the devil will always try to drive a wedge among them. Surely, the devil is man's most ardent enemy. (17:53)*

*They respond to their Lord by observing the Contact Prayers (Salat). Their affairs are decided after due consultation among themselves.... (42:38)*

*If two groups of believers fought with each other, you shall reconcile them. If one group aggresses against the other, you shall fight the aggressing group until they submit to God's command. Once they submit, you shall reconcile the two groups equitably. You shall maintain justice; God loves those who are just. (49:9)*

*The believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence God, that you may attain mercy. (49:10)*

God tells us that freedom is a big part of Submission:

*There shall be no compulsion in religion: the right way is now distinct from the*

*wrong way. Anyone who denounces the devil and believes in God has grasped the strongest bond; one that never breaks. God is Hearer, Omniscient. (2:256)*

Of course individual Submitter communities may choose to organize as legal entities. They may find that certain procedures help in their community. But there is no religious hierarchy and no one has the right to impose their understanding on another.

Maximum freedom for everyone and focusing on individual responsibility may lead to differences but it also gives us great strength. If we are each individually holding fast to the rope of God, we interweave into a strong fabric. Each of us comes to our faith through examining and following God's words, not because someone pushed us into line.

God is our strength. To me He is our organization and His message is our instruction book. We come together as a family not as an organized body. At times different members of the family work together on specific projects, strive together toward specific goals, but as individuals... just as in any family.

Let us work to make our family a healthy, loving one and not allow Satan and our egos to make it an unhealthy, dysfunctional one. We have been blessed with one another, and with a wonderful diversity among us. Thank You God, for that blessing!

Lisa