

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Tools In Our Toolbox

A good carpenter or mechanic will have a box full of good tools perfect for any job he might need to perform. A good submitter needs a toolbox as well, and God has provided us with the tools we need to keep in there. Our number one priority here is to remember God. A priority can be defined as something that is regarded as more important than any other. If we were to make a submission priority list, the only thing that needs to be on it is: GOD ALONE. Everything else will fall in place. Everything is about God; everything belongs to God; is controlled by God. Only God guides, provides, protects and heals. God is Omnipotent.

Whatever occupies your mind most of the time is your god (33:41, 7:205). So God has given us tools to keep our mind on God most of the time. You can reach into your toolbox whenever you need a little help remembering God.

Wake up in the morning and thank God for the day, start with “in the name of God Most Gracious, Most Merciful,” / “There is no other god beside God” (in Arabic or in any language). When you eat or drink anything, remember His name and thank God for the provision. Be kind and humble with the people you meet, greeting them with “peace.” Especially

honor your parents. When you start your car, remember to acknowledge that only God subdued it for your use. As you listen to the radio, insert “praise God” into the lyrics and it makes the song much sweeter. If you see a leaf fall, think of the verse 6:59: *Not a leaf falls without His knowledge*, or a bird fly overhead, think of 16:79: *None holds them up in the air except GOD*. Even a humble fly reminds us that we can’t create even such a small thing (22:73). Be appreciative of all the beauty around you by thanking the One who created it all. When you walk along, you can use the rhythm of your footsteps to meditate on God—left foot “thank You,” right foot, “God.”

Everything we see, hear, smell, taste and feel should instantly remind us of God, our Creator.

God has given us specific tools that we can reach for—Salat prayer pulls us away from this world and brings our focus back on God; Zakat charity reminds us that what we

have is a gift from God and is meant to be shared; Fasting makes us appreciative of His blessings of food and water and inspires us to remember God frequently.

In addition, God tells us to seek forgiveness. [3:133-36] *You should eagerly race towards forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise whose width encompasses the heavens and the earth; it awaits the righteous, who give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. GOD loves the charitable. If they fall in sin or wrong their souls, they remember GOD and ask forgiveness for their sins—and who forgives the sins except GOD—and they do not persist in sins, knowingly. Their recompense is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens with flowing streams; they abide therein forever. What a blessed reward for the workers!*

He tells us to be appreciative: [14:7] *Your Lord has decreed: “The more you thank Me, the more I give you.” But if you turn unappreciative, then My retribution is severe.*

[31:12]... *“You shall be appreciative of GOD.” Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good. As for those*



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who turn unappreciative, GOD is in no need, Praiseworthy.

This life is an individual journey back to God. Each person must find the tools that work best for him or herself. What works for me might not work for you. So we can “borrow” tools from all kinds of places, finding the right tool for each one of us. I have found many of the principles and practices of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to be personally very helpful and they fit perfectly with the Quran.

For instance, remembering the Serenity Prayer: “GOD, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” [26:83] “My Lord, grant me wisdom, and include me with the righteous.

AA also encourages you to call your sponsor if you’re feeling weak, as God encourages us to consult with one another (42:38); to attend meetings, as we are encouraged to come together for Jumu’ah or Quran studies (62:9, 18:28); to help newcomers, as we are told to treat everyone in the best possible manner (17:53); to do service work, as God tells us to do righteous works (23:57-61); to be charitable, expecting nothing in return (76:7-9). They urge you to put your shoes under your bed at night, so first thing in the morning you have to get down on your knees to retrieve them, as God urges us to willingly bow and prostrate before Him (13:15, 22:77).

So, the tools in your toolbox can come from many places, whatever you find that works for your soul. We need to depend totally on God (22:15), remembering that this life is an illusion (57:20) and that we will be tested (2:214, 3:186), but that God never burdens any soul beyond what it can handle (2:286).

We want to run to the front of the line on Judgment Day and eagerly say, “Come read my record.” We especially want to avoid the “fire sandwich” which awaits the disbelievers. [39:15-6] “Therefore, worship whatever you wish besides Him.” Say, “The real

losers are those who lose their souls, and their families, on the Day of Resurrection.” Most certainly, this is the real loss. They will have masses of fire on top of them, and under them. A most miserable “fire sandwich”!

With the subtitle: *Conditions for Staying Within God's Protection*, 5:12 makes it clear what we need to do to earn God’s support and favor.

[5:12] **GOD** had taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and we raised among them twelve patriarchs. And **GOD** said, “I am with you, so long as you observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and believe in My messengers and respect them, and continue to lend **GOD** a loan of righteousness. I will then remit your sins, and admit you into gardens with flowing streams. Anyone who disbelieves after this, has indeed strayed off the right path.”

When we do the things we need to do, then God puts a protective force field around believers. We have to keep the field fully charged by using the tools in our toolbox. Satan will try to weaken the force field and slip in through the smallest crack. So, trust in God:

[14:12] “Why should we not trust in **GOD**, when He has guided us in our paths? We will steadfastly persevere in the face of your persecution. In **GOD** all the trusters shall trust.” Implore God: [4:106] You shall implore **GOD** for forgiveness. **GOD** is Forgiver, Most Merciful. And never despair of His mercy: [39:53] Proclaim: “O My servants who exceeded the limits, never despair of **GOD**'s mercy. For **GOD** forgives all sins. He is the Forgiver, Most Merciful.”

Use the tools in your toolbox regularly. They will never break or wear out. With use, they become increasingly more useful.

Mike

[Ed. note: This article was put together from notes from a khutba that Mike gave at Masjid Tucson last spring. Mike departed this world in August, and we miss him. But his example of devotion to God and steadfastness are great reminders to us, and we wanted to share his ideas of useful tools with submitters.]

Best System of Economic Welfare

God tells us in the Quran how a nation can prosper by following God’s commandments (10:98). One of the most important commandments is for people to give Zakat (the Obligatory Charity) to the poor and the needy. The practice of Zakat came through the prophet Abraham like the other religious duties of Islam (Submission to God alone). The minimum rate of Zakat is 2.5% of one’s net income, and it must be given away as soon as such income is received (6:141). The Zakat charity is the right of the poor (30:38) and is a means of cleansing our earnings and remitting our sins (2:271). It shows our appreciation to God for His blessings. Besides giving Zakat, which is obligatory, we are also encouraged to be charitable any way we can without being extravagant (25:67).

God specifies for us the order of charity. We should consider our parents first for receiving charity if they are needy. If they are not, we are asked to give to the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien, in this order (2:215). It is a beautiful and very efficient social welfare system which encourages us to take care of our immediate family and the needy people whom we know. Thus we are assured that our charity goes where it is needed the most.

Charity is Good For Both Sides

Some people consider charity a loss, and think that they should not be responsible for the misfortune of others. However, giving charity is the best thing we can do for ourselves. God tells us that we will be rewarded manifold for the charities we give (57:18). Thus, we not only help the poor and the needy by giving them their rightful share, we reap the benefits of charity by getting more blessings in return. Both the giver and the receiver of the charity are winners.

God knows best what is good for each individual as well as for any community. The Zakat charity is a means of having a

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Complete Faith, Confidence And Total Trust In GOD

We worship God ALONE. We obey His commandments, do our best to steadfastly persevere in times of adversity, keep up our religious practices, follow His guidance and path, be appreciative and thank Him always for His numerous blessings and bounties. We are always calling upon Him, imploring Him for our needs, whenever we need His help, big or small.

Right in the beginning of the Quran in 2:186, God informs us: [2:186] *When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided.* These few words in this verse are from God—He uses the first person—“respond to ME,” “believe in ME.” This means, I feel, that we must put our complete faith, confidence and total trust in God. In the same verse, God says: *I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me.* A feeling of peace and contentment overtakes our being, knowing God is always near. He alone will answer our prayers. We keep in mind: “God is running everything.”

Therefore, it is important that we commemorate and glorify Him in advance, prepare ourselves in times of contentment or adversity, to accept His blessings and help.

When I sat down to write this, I began with the Fatehah, and requested Him to increase my knowledge. By praying to God, through the Fatehah, we are totally putting ourselves into His hands, glorifying Him, praising Him, acknowledging His supremacy, asking for His help and guidance.

The prayers and glorifications preceding our requests, or before we begin something new, are important. And we must seek refuge in God from Satan the rejected. We must begin things in the name of our Lord, and end with a prayer after He has responded to us.

[30:17-8] *Therefore, you shall glorify GOD when you retire at night, and when you rise in the morning. All praise is due to Him in the heavens and the earth, throughout the evening, as well as in the*

middle of your day.

Prophets and messengers set the example, praying, glorifying and commemorating God, and then trusting in Him.

[3:146-7] *Many a prophet had godly people fight along with him, without ever wavering under pressure in the cause of GOD, nor did they hesitate or become discouraged. GOD loves the steadfast. Their only utterance was, “Our Lord, forgive us our sins, and our transgressions, strengthen our foothold, and grant us victory over the disbelievers.”*

After God put Abraham to the test, through certain commands and appointed him an imam for the people, with instructions to purify the Kaaba, what did Abraham do? He didn’t begin his duties without remembering God first; he asked for help. [2:126] *Abraham prayed: “My Lord, make this a peaceful land, and provide its people with fruits. Provide for those who believe in GOD and the Last Day.” (God) said, “I will also provide for those who disbelieve. I will let them enjoy, temporarily, then commit them to the retribution of Hell, and a miserable destiny.”*

[14:35] *Recall that Abraham said, “My Lord, make this a peaceful land, and protect me and my children from worshiping idols.*

Before the birth of Mary, her mother implored God: [3:35] *The wife of Amram said, “My Lord, I have dedicated (the baby) in my belly to You, totally, so accept from me. You are Hearer, Omniscient.”*

And she continued to pray after the birth: [3:36] *When she gave birth to her, she said, “My Lord, I have given birth to a girl”—GOD was fully aware of what she bore—“The male is not the same as the female. I have named her Mary and I invoke Your protection for her and her descendants from the rejected devil.”*

She must have been in pain, but she remembered to remember God, that she was dedicating the baby to Him totally, and she invoked His protection for the girl child and her descendants from Satan, trusting that God would take care of Mary.

Zachariah implored his Lord. [3:38] *That is when Zachariah implored his Lord: “My Lord, grant me such a good child; You are the Hearer of the prayers.” He acknowledged God before asking for something.*

Noah faced all kinds of ridicule and hardship, but he trusted God and implored: [23:26] *He said, “My Lord, grant me victory, for they have disbelieved me.”*

Moses was faced with the wrath of the world’s worst tyrant, but Moses sought God’s help and trusted that He would save them. [40:26-7] *Pharaoh said, “Let me kill Moses, and let him implore his Lord. I worry lest he corrupts your religion, or spreads evil throughout the land.” Moses said, “I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord, from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.”*

[26:52] *We inspired Moses: “Travel with My servants; you will be pursued.” [26:61] When both parties saw each other, Moses’ people said, “We will be caught.” [26:62] He said, “No way. My Lord is with me; He will guide me.”*

Saul knew to pray to God when they went to meet Goliath. [2:250] *When they faced Goliath and his troops, they prayed, “Our Lord, grant us steadfastness, strengthen our foothold, and support us against the disbelieving people.” [2:251] They defeated them by GOD’s leave, and David killed Goliath. GOD gave him kingship and wisdom, and taught him as He willed. If it were not for GOD’s support of some people against others, there would be chaos on earth. But GOD showers His grace upon the people. And Saul and the believing people trusted God. [2:249]... Those who were conscious of meeting GOD said, “Many a small army defeated a large army by GOD’s leave. GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.”*

The Quran is full of beautiful ways to commemorate and glorify and thank God, before, during, after, whenever, always. Also we are human; we make mistakes. God gave to Noah, and by example to us all, how we can ask for mercy: [11:47] *He said, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You, lest I implore You again for something I do not know. Unless You forgive me, and have mercy on me, I will be with the losers.”*

Have faith and trust in God.

[3:160] *If GOD supports you, none can defeat you. And if He abandons you, who else can support you? In GOD the believers shall trust.*

[64:13] *GOD: there is no other god besides Him. In GOD the believers shall trust.*

Hena

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prosperous nation that provides its individuals with the best economic welfare. It is the best investment against crime, economic hardship and social disparity.

Hoarding Results in Misery

There are people who spend a lot of money to secure themselves and their material possessions while they do not give away from God's provisions to them. They usually end up living a miserable life because of their hoarding. It is a divine law that there is no escape from their misery unless they give away from the things they love and seek refuge to God for genuine protection.

Principles of Giving

Here are some verses from the Quran to detail charity:

O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the provisions we have given to you, before a day comes where there is no trade, no nepotism, and no intercession... [2:254]

O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the good things you earn, and from what we have produced for you from the earth. Do not pick out the bad therein to give away, when you yourselves do not accept it unless your eyes are closed. [2:267]

If you declare your charities they are still good. But if you keep them anonymous, and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and remits more of your sins...[2:271]

When they give they are neither extravagant nor stingy; they give in moderation. [25:67]

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. [2:215]

They also ask you what to give to charity say, "The excess." [2:219]

...Give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. [3:134]

Those who spend their money in the cause of God, then do not follow their charity with insult or harm, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve. Kind words and compassion are better than a charity that is followed by insult... [2:262-263]

Those who give to charity night and day, secretly and publicly, receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve. [2:274]

...Give (to charity) for your own good. Any one who is protected from his own stinginess, these are the successful ones. [64:16]

.... Any charity you give is for your own good. Any charity you give shall be for the sake of God. Any charity you give will be repaid to you, without the least injustice. [2:272]

Your Lord has decreed: "The more you thank Me, the more I give you..." [14:7]

[Abdullah—reprinted from June 1994]

God Willing
30th

Annual Conference United Submitters

August 7-9, 2015

Tucson, Arizona



God willing, the 30th annual conference of United Submitters International will be in Tucson AZ, on August 7, 8 and 9.

We will include more details in subsequent issues of the *Submitters Perspective*, God willing. You can keep an eye on the web site for details as well:

www.masjiduntucson.org/conference/

But save the dates and start planning for another special gathering of submitters.

God willing, see you in August.