

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Appreciating God

[76:2-3] We created the human from a liquid mixture, from two parents, in order to test him. Thus, we made him a hearer and a seer. We showed him the two paths, then, he is either appreciative, or unappreciative.

We are either appreciative or unappreciative. There is no third path. With that in mind, what is it that can cause us to slip off the path of appreciation? And what can we do to get back or be more appreciative?

Sometimes we don't appreciate what we have in our life because we might be looking at and longing for what we don't have. We often compare ourselves and the prevailing conditions with those who have it better than us. We find the grass looking pretty lush and green on the other side of the fence. When we are concentrating on what's not happening in our life, or what we don't have, then we miss all the blessings that are already surrounding us. We can become sidetracked by the wanting, needing, and having, instead of being grateful.

It quite often happens that things might not be all we thought or expected them to be and herein lies the problem. We have put an expectation

on them, not an appreciation of them. Being grateful for what's in our life doesn't mean we can't reach for the stars, but don't overlook the gifts and blessings that are already there. Because the attitude of appreciation itself will pump in positive feelings in us and help us go further.

[16:18] If you count GOD's blessings, you cannot possibly encompass them. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

[14:34] And He gives you all kinds of things that you implore Him for. If you count GOD's blessings, you can never encompass them. Indeed, the human being is transgressing, unappreciative.

We can carefully observe the creation and design of God and be appreciative (28:73). Say, for example, you are in a park; try to experience the pleasant and gentle breeze blowing around you. You can experience the entire colony of birds sending out a melody as they settle into the treetop lodgings for the night. As you listen to all this and enjoy the entire scene, you begin to thank God for the experience and appreciate His creation. This will cause you to reflect upon and appreciate His perfect design and creative power. This will happen only if we take the

time to remember God. How often do we spend quality time simply appreciating God?

I've loved watching the sea since childhood. The vast mass of water spread all the way to the horizon looks calm from the shore. My Dad used to take my family to the sea shore on Sundays. It is mesmerizing to watch the waves rising and falling on the rocks with the loud noise. And when these waves finally die and pull back speedily into the sea, it is yet again a beautiful sight to see the milky white foam gushing back. As the sun sets over the ocean, it creates a magnificent backdrop of colour that fills the evening sky. This beautiful scene becomes a natural picture-postcard. I still sometimes visit the sea shore to enjoy its beauty. Looking at this magnificent creation of God, the word that comes to my mind is "Subhan-Allah" or "Glory be to God". The following verse points to the wonderful creations of God, which exhort us to appreciate His greatness:

[2:164] In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that roam the ocean for the benefit of the people, the water

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

that GOD sends down from the sky to revive dead land and to spread in it all kinds of creatures, the manipulation of the winds, and the clouds that are placed between the sky and the earth, there are sufficient proofs for people who understand.

Idol worship nullifies all works (39:65) but the worship of God and appreciation can save us. [39:66] *Therefore, you shall worship GOD alone, and be appreciative.*

The practices of worship such as the Contact Prayers, obligatory charity, are huge opportunities offered to us by God to redeem ourselves. I was reflecting on the blessing of Ramadan. In our life we continue to err and therefore need to collect more good deeds to make it to the Paradise. God placed the Night of Destiny in this month which I understand as a huge boost, better than a thousand months of normal credit-gathering for the soul. God is so very merciful to us and provides us with so many blessings. As I observe God and submit to Him, I actually feel the achievement of peace and satisfaction. This has happened in my life because He chose me to become a submitter. Otherwise, I was leading a life without proper directions. I truly appreciate this blessing of God.

[27:81] *Nor can you guide the blind out of their straying. The only ones who will hear you are those who believe in our revelations, and decide to be submitters.*

Life without thankfulness diminishes our love for God and the passion to serve Him. I feel faith without appreciation lacks strength. We should take time out of our busy lives to reflect upon and truly appreciate all of God's goodness. One of the main reasons that we lose our enthusiasm in life is because we become ungrateful. Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem, do not enter the neighbourhood of despair. Even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a path for you if you turn to Him alone (22:15). Be patient and appreciative.

Sometimes we spend so much time and energy thinking about where we want to go that we don't notice God is protecting us from our own wishes. We desire to achieve many things in life but we forget that what God plans for us is the best. He is in full control. Be thankful and appreciate God's blessings for what you have; you'll end up having more (14:7). If you concentrate primarily on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.

A good way to start appreciating God is to always remember Him. Remembering Him means that He becomes a part of our thoughts, words and deeds. How can we thank God if we never think of Him? When we remember Him the most, we speak and act the way He would want us to do.

Repentance and seeking forgiveness is also an amazing facilitator of appreciating God. It is a powerful way to clean up our record and start afresh in appreciating Him. We thank God that He gives us chances to fix ourselves on this earth. The harder we sincerely try, the worthier we become of receiving additional blessings.

In the face of adversity, we have two choices, either we can react to our afflictions by submitting or by rebelling, objecting and becoming bitter. The first choice leads you to a path of appreciation of God and the second one takes you astray from His path. We sometimes tend to argue or doubt God's plans when things did not turn out the way we want. But arguing (or objecting) is failing to recognize God's grace and perfect control. God consistently plans and blesses us with what is necessary for us.

[31:20] *Do you not see that GOD has committed in your service everything in the heavens and the earth, and has showered you with His blessings—obvious and hidden? Yet, some people argue about GOD without knowledge, without guidance, and without the enlightening scripture.*

[108:1] *We have blessed you with many a bounty.*

God gave us minds to think with and

hearts to thank with. Instead we use our hearts to think about the world as we would like it to be, and we use our minds to come up with rationalizations for our ingratitude. We become discontented, unhappy and ungrateful people. May God forgive us and help us turn to appreciation.

[100:6] *The human being is unappreciative of his Lord.*

[27:73] *Your Lord is full of grace towards the people, but most of them are unappreciative.*

It is easy to say I am thankful for the sweet and beautiful things in life. The challenge is recognizing things of value when things are not going our way. If you look carefully, you will find that even tough times offer many reasons to turn to God and express our gratitude. It may be an opportunity to fix some deficiency in us or to set us up for something better. God is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent. He is intricately involved in our lives and for that alone, we should be thankful. When you appreciate what you have, and feel enthusiasm for life, you move in the direction of the natural state God wants for you, i.e., happy and peaceful. The true scripture has come to us and God has guided us to understand it, so there remains no doubt whatsoever that we need to accept and appreciate His greatness.

[59:22] *He is the One GOD; there is no other god besides Him. Knower of all secrets and declarations. He is the Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

[59:23] *He is the One GOD; there is no other god besides Him. The King, the Most Sacred, the Peace, the Most Faithful, the Supreme, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the Most Dignified. GOD be glorified; far above having partners.*

[59:24] *He is the One GOD; the Creator, the Initiator, the Designer. To Him belong the most beautiful names. Glorifying Him is everything in the heavens and the earth. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.*

May God guide us all to appreciate Him consistently.

Abdul Ghani

Quran and Steps 7 & 8 of the 12 Steps

In this series of articles we have been examining the Quranic basis for Submitters using the 12 steps, which are used in many self-help groups. Articles in the February, March and June issues of this year discuss the first six steps. In this article we look at the next two steps.

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

We need to recognize that only God can help us overcome our shortcomings. God is the source of righteousness and forgiveness (74:56). At the same time we need to be ready and willing for that to happen. In the Quran God tells us that He does not change anyone's condition unless they decide to change (13:11). Thus we need to decide to change and ask Him for help: [23:88] *Say, "In whose hand is all sovereignty over all things, and He is the only one who can provide help, but needs no help, if you know."* God is the only one that can help us and He reassures us that He is always near and responds to our imploring (40:60, 2:186, 11:61): [40:60] *Your Lord says, "Implore Me, and I will respond to you. ..."* And: [2:186] *When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me.*

In the Quran God gives us a good example in Moses who specifically asked for God's help with his shortcomings. He asked for help with his temper and his speech: [20:25-28] *He said, "My Lord, cool my temper. And make this matter easy for me. And untie a knot from my tongue. So they can understand my speech."*

As we work the 12 steps we may discover that we have defects of character that are not compatible with what God teaches us in Quran. For instance, God tells us to be truthful (9:119) and equitable (4:9, 4:135, 5:42, 26:182). If we realize that we are not always truthful or equitable or

have other character defects, we should not despair for God is Forgiver, Most Merciful. If we realize that a character defect has caused us to sin we can ask God for forgiveness, repent and ask Him to help us do better: [3:135] *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.*

There is one more aspect to this step, and that is explained by the words "humbly asked Him". As in working earlier steps it is important that we kill our egos and implore God with humility. Sometimes when we have been Submitters for a while we come to expect certain things from God. We expect His help, but forget that He may be helping us in a very different way than what we think we need. Therefore, it is good to be patient, realizing that He knows both us and our needs far better than we do.

As an example, if one realizes one is fearful one might say: "Please God I know that only You have any power. Please remove this fear from my heart, I can't do it by myself."

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

This step is often a difficult one and may seem frightening. But at this point we just work to make a list of people we have actually harmed in some manner. We don't need to think yet of doing anything with this list. Often it is helpful to refer back to our fourth step to see what kinds of harm might have been caused, remembering that perhaps the first person we have harmed is ourselves! For in hurting others we have hurt our own souls.

Once we have made our list we need to start examining our willingness to make amends. However, to do that we first need to investigate what "making amends" really means. When we amend the Constitution we make a change to it. The most important amend we can make is to change our own behavior, to reform so we do not make the same error again that caused the harm in the first place.

For this step we need to be willing to truly reform. We are not reforming if we plan on committing the same thing again. Therefore, the absolute intention should be, "I will never do that again" (with God's help). We do not want to persist in our wrong ways (3:135).

What if we want to reform but know that we are weak in a particular area? Does that mean we are doomed? Absolutely not! God gives us a wonderful example in Moses who was not able to keep his word to his teacher not to question anything he (the teacher) did (18:65-77). First, he questioned the boring of a hole in a boat. He then apologized and renewed his assurance not to question. Then he questioned the killing of the boy, again renewing his commitment not to question. Finally for a third time he could not keep his word and stay silent when the teacher restored the wall. At that point he had to leave the teacher (and the reasons for the teacher's actions were explained to him). From this story we can see that as humans we are likely to repeat our errors. If we are sincere in our repentance and intention to reform, God will help us to eventually succeed, if it is His will.

If the harm we have done to someone requires restitution or compensation, we need to be willing to make that restitution. This Quranic principle is demonstrated in the scripture with examples including compensating a victim's family for the death of their loved one (2:178) and the compensation due for breaking an engagement (2:236).

We are fighting for our very souls. We need to be willing to do whatever it takes to cleanse those souls before we die, for: [20:74] *Anyone who comes to his Lord guilty will incur Hell, wherein he never dies, nor stays alive.* At the same time, we do not want to despair for God is Most Merciful: [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."*

Submitters striving to heal & grow our souls with Quran

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Peace to you all,

Learning from your website since 2008 thank God.

Just wanted to say hi and God bless you all.

With much love from your brother & sister.

Alban and Lorena ❤️❤️❤️

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The Psalms

The Psalms of David are among the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament. Here are a few, along with corresponding verses from Quran, the Final Testament.

Psalm 104:33-34

³³ I will sing to the LORD all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.

[Quran 15:98-9] You shall sing the praises of your Lord, and be with the prostrators. And worship your Lord, in order to attain certainty.

Psalm 19:8-12

⁸ The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The decree of the LORD is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple.

⁹ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart.

The command of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eye.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

The statutes of the LORD are true, all of them just;

¹¹ More desirable than gold, than a hoard of purest gold,

Sweeter also than honey or drippings from the comb.

¹² By them your servant is warned; obeying them brings much reward.

[Quran 6:114] Shall I seek other than GOD as a source of law, when He has revealed to you this book fully detailed? Those who received the scripture recognize that it has been revealed from your Lord, truthfully. You shall not harbor any doubt.

[Quran 6:115] The word of your Lord is complete, in truth and justice. Noth-

ing shall abrogate His words. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.

[Quran 18:54] We have cited in this Quran every kind of example, but the human being is the most argumentative creature.

Psalm 1:1-2

¹ Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in company with scoffers.

² Rather, the law of the LORD is his joy; and on his law he meditates day and night.

[Quran 5:77] Say, "O people of the scripture, do not transgress the limits of your religion beyond the truth, and do not follow the opinions of people who have gone astray, and have misled multitudes of people; they are far astray from the right path."

[Quran 6:153] This is My path—a straight one. You shall follow it, and do not follow any other paths, lest they divert you from His path. These are His commandments to you, that you may be saved.

[Quran 2:208] O you who believe, you shall embrace total submission; do not follow the steps of Satan, for he is your most ardent enemy.

[Quran 7:205] You shall remember your Lord within yourself, publicly, privately, and quietly, day and night; do not be unaware.