

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## How to interact in non-violent debates

The Quran describes behavioral patterns of disbelievers and provides guidance for interacting with them according to the degree of opposition they exhibit. We learn that we are to respect all peace treaties with them (9:4, 8:72, 4:90), and that we may even befriend those who don't attack us nor try to evict us from our homes (60:8-9). In the extreme, we can fight back and defend ourselves if they become violent against us (2:191).

This reminder is about Quranic guidance to behave righteously in the non-violent kinds of debates that take place between submitters and those who reject Quranic truth. It is not intended to cover violent or aggressive situations, nor is it about situations of mutual peace offerings.

Knowing certain facts about disbelievers helps us practice certain qualities, such as patience. God has already informed us that disbelievers:

- Reject Quran.

[84:21] *And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not fall prostrate.*

[84:22] *This is because those who disbelieved are rejecting (the Quran).*

- Resent God's message.

[42:13] *He decreed for you the same religion decreed for Noah, and what we inspired to you, and what we decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: "You shall uphold this one religion, and do not divide it." The idol worshipers will greatly resent what you invite them to do. God redeems to Himself whomever He wills; He guides to Himself only those who totally submit.*

- Hate the truth.

[43:78] *"We have given you the truth, but most of you hate the truth."*

[47:8] *Those who disbelieve incur misery; He causes their works to be utterly in vain. [47:9] That is because they hated what God revealed and consequently, He nullifies their works.*

- Are full of doubts.

[22:55] *As for those who disbelieve, they will continue to harbor doubts until the Hour comes to them suddenly, or until the retribution of a terrible day comes to them.*

[41:54] *Indeed, they are doubtful about meeting their Lord. He is fully aware of all things.*

- Are prevented from the guidance if they firmly decide to disbelieve.

[6:110] *We control their minds and their hearts. Thus, since their decision is to disbelieve, we leave them in their transgressions, blundering.*

[2:6] *As for those who disbelieve, it is the same for them; whether you warn them, or not warn them, they cannot believe. [2:7] God seals their minds and their hearing, and their eyes are veiled. They have incurred severe retribution.*

[7:146] *I will divert from My revelations those who are arrogant on earth, without justification. Consequently, when they see every kind of proof they will not believe. And when they see the path of guidance they will not adopt it as their path, but when they see the path of straying they will adopt it as their path. This is the consequence of their rejecting our proofs, and being totally heedless thereof.*

[27:80] *You cannot make the dead, nor the deaf, hear the call, if they turn away.*

The above divine facts about disbelievers should put our minds in calm, enlightened, and amicable modes when

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we become engaged in debates with them. When the meanings of the verses are engraved in our memories, it becomes evident that our duty during such debates is to respectfully recite God's revelations and state what we know of His truth, leaving the rest in God's hands.

Other divine teachings and facts are also essential to keep in mind during peaceful arguments or debates with disbelievers. These teachings include:

- No compulsion in religion.

[2:148] *Each of you chooses the direction to follow; you shall race towards righteousness. Wherever you may be, God will summon you all. God is Omnipotent.*

[2:256] *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.*

- God is the one who guides those whom He knows will choose and prefer His path.

[28:56] *You cannot guide the ones you love. God is the only One who guides in accordance with His will, and in accordance with His knowledge of those who deserve the guidance.*

[2:272] *You are not responsible for guiding anyone. God is the only one who guides whoever chooses (to be guided). ...*

[19:76] *God augments the guidance of those who choose to be guided. For the good deeds are eternally rewarded by your Lord, and bring far better returns.*

- Kindness, and polite manners in general are recommended by God in such peaceful debates.

[16:125] *You shall invite to the path of your Lord with wisdom and kind enlightenment, and debate with them in the best possible manner. Your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path, and He knows best who are the guided ones.*

- God will always support His servants with the proven truth.

[14:27] *God strengthens those who believe with the proven word, in this life and in the Hereafter. And God sends the transgressors astray. Everything is in accordance with God's will.*

[8:40] *If they turn away, then you should know that God is your Lord and Master; the best Lord and Master, the best supporter.*

- and He will always put disbelievers' schemes to waste.

[5:105] *O you who believe, you should worry only about your own necks. If the others go astray, they cannot hurt you, as long as you are guided. To God is your ultimate destiny, all of you, then He will inform you of everything you had done.*

[3:120] *When anything good comes your way they hurt, and when something bad happens to you they rejoice. If you steadfastly persevere, and maintain righteousness, their schemes will never hurt you. God is fully aware of everything they do.*

For guidance in responding to opposing points of view during peaceful discussions or debates with disbelievers, please consider the following:

- We are to proclaim the truth and let God deal with their intentions and their spiritual growth.

[3:32] *Proclaim: "You shall obey God and the messenger." If they turn away, God does not love the disbelievers.*

[3:63] *If they turn away, then God is fully aware of the evildoers.*

- We should always hold fast to God and His truth. We should practice extreme caution not to let anyone deceive us in a way that would dilute the Quranic truth or cause us to lean towards transgression. We should be firm and clear in stating the Quranic truth without intimidation or compromise (Sura 109). But, this doesn't mean we force our belief.

[10:41] *If they reject you, then say, "I have my works, and you have your works. You are innocent of anything I*

*do, and I am innocent of anything you do."*

[42:15] *This is what you shall preach, and steadfastly maintain what you are commanded to do, and do not follow their wishes. And proclaim: "I believe in all the scriptures sent down by God. I was commanded to judge among you equitably. God is our Lord and your Lord. We have our deeds and you have your deeds. There is no argument between us and you. God will gather us all together; to Him is the ultimate destiny."*

- We should not act defensively or take their opposition as personal. God tells us that His messengers have consistently been targets of mockery and rejection, and that this will set the precedent for us. It is God's revelations that they mock and reject.

[6:33] *We know that you may be saddened by what they say. You should know that it is not you that they reject; it is God's revelations that the wicked disregard.*

[6:34] *Messengers before you have been rejected, and they steadfastly persevered in the face of rejection. They were persecuted until our victory came to them. Such is God's system that will never change. The history of My messengers thus sets the precedents for you.*

- We should know enough to stop when we have done our job and reminded. If people wish to hold fast to their views and prefer to remain uninformed and ignorant, it's time to move on. Uttering peace is not just literal. It includes our peaceful and respectful behavior as well, which might take the form of declining to respond.

[7:199] *You shall resort to pardon, advocate tolerance, and disregard the ignorant.*

[25:63] *The worshipers of the Most Gracious are those who tread the earth gently, and when the ignorant speak to them, they only utter peace.*

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- Last but not the least, we shouldn't assume failure when a discussion reaches a dead end, nor should we grieve over those who choose to not see the truth. With the Quranic teachings in mind, our duty during these debates stops at proclaiming the truth steadfastly without compromise.

*[35:8] Note the one whose evil work is adorned in his eyes, until he thinks that it is righteous. God thus sends astray whoever wills (to go astray), and He guides whoever wills (to be guided). Therefore, do not grieve over them. God is fully aware of everything they do.*

Situations that involve our engagement in civilized discussions or debates with disbelievers will serve as testimony for both parties. God intends to expose certain people to the message before they reach final conclusions, so they can never claim they did not receive a warning. At the same time, such discussions are designed to test believers to see if they will deliver the truth without any compromise or concealment, and to see if they will practice perseverance to engage in them smoothly, righteously, and productively, by God's will and according to His guidelines.

*[33:39] Those who deliver God's messages, and who reverence Him alone, shall never fear anyone but God. God is the most efficient reckoner.*

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*[3:20] If they argue with you, then say, "I have simply submitted myself to GOD; I and those who follow me." You shall proclaim to those who received the scripture, as well as those who did not, "Would you submit?" If they submit, then they have been guided, but if they turn away, your sole mission is to deliver this message. GOD is Seer of all people.*

*[17:81] Proclaim, "The truth has prevailed, and falsehood has vanished; falsehood will inevitably vanish."*

## Quran and the 12 Steps

There is no compromise whatsoever regarding illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages; they are called "abominations and the work of Satan" (5:90). In 2:219 and 5:90, we see that "intoxicants, gambling, the idols' altars, and games of chance" are strictly prohibited. The word used for intoxicants is "Khamr" from the root word "Khamara" which means "to cover." Thus, anything that covers or hinders the mind is prohibited. This includes anything that alters the mind, such as marijuana, heroin, cocaine, alcohol, hashish, and anything else that affects the mind. (Dr. Rashad Khalifa, *Quran: the Final Testament*, Appendix 35)

Several groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous are designed to aid those who are caught in addictions to find their way out of them by working through a set of 12 steps whose ultimate goal is to allow someone to turn their will and life over to the care of God as they understand Him.

Actually, looking at the human condition from a Quranic perspective aren't we all in the same boat in some sense? While we may not think that we have been affected by addiction, we are here because we gave power to something other than God (for most of us, it was probably our egos). We persisted in that behavior, seeing some "reward" in it, notwithstanding the consequences for our souls. Isn't that the essence of addiction? So whether it is an addictive substance, an emotional addiction, or a spiritual addiction, we all are in this test because of our idolatrous nature. You might say that we are here because of our addiction to idolatry. We were given chances, but we kept on engaging in it, seeing some illusory benefit or reward, in spite of the damage to our souls. Why else would we have chosen freewill when given the chance to repent? *[33:72] We have offered the responsibility (freedom of choice) to the heavens and the earth, and*

*the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. But the human being accepted it; he was transgressing, ignorant.*

Recently some Submitters began working together to examine the 12 steps in light of the Quran, using its verses in our sharing. Our goal is twofold, to become better submitters ourselves and to pull together materials to help others while introducing the message of the Quran to those unfamiliar with it, God willing: *[10:57] O people, enlightenment has come to you herein from your Lord, and healing for anything that troubles your hearts, and guidance, and mercy for the believers.*

If it is pleasing to God, over the coming months we hope to present some of the verses we find that relate to each of the Twelve Steps in a series of articles, beginning here with

**Step 1: We admitted we were powerless...—that our lives had become unmanageable.** (Steps taken from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, edition 2, 1955, p. 59-60)

The first step of AA, NA and AI Anon, etc., speaks of powerlessness over addictive substances, but it can be applied to anything that we give power to other than God. The Quran shows us that any time we tend towards something that God makes clear is not acceptable to Him—including emotions like fear, anger, etc.—we essentially set up an idol... we make a "Golden Calf" for ourselves out of it. Our egos, aided by Satan, have caused us to think that something other than God is helping us or has power in our lives but: *[36:74-75] They set up beside God other gods, perhaps they can be of help to them! On the contrary, they cannot help them; they end up serving them as devoted soldiers.*

Whatever we have given power to, whether a substance, a way of thinking, an emotional attachment, our own egos, etc., it ends up as a tool for Satan to mislead us deeper into idolizing and serving

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it. As a result, our lives are filled with disaster and chaos: [30:41] *Disasters have spread throughout the land and sea, because of what the people have committed. He thus lets them taste the consequences of some of their works, that they may return (to the right works).*

[21:22] *If there were in them (the heavens and the earth) other gods beside God, there would have been chaos. Glory be to God; the Lord with absolute authority. He is high above their claims.*

We have created our own hell and jumped right into it! [3:197] *They only enjoy temporarily, then end up in Hell; what a miserable destiny.*

Recognizing this and admitting it is the beginning of the only possible solution—truly turning our wills and our lives over to God, truly submitting to Him.

**Step 2** gives us hope: **Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

As Submitters we know that God is the only one who has any power, and only He can help us in any way: [1:5] *You alone we worship; You alone we ask 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?"*

[33:43] *He is the One who helps you, together with His angels, to lead you out of darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful towards the believers.*

As we come out of the darkness we can see that we have been afflicted with a spiritual illness that only God can heal: [26:80] *"And when I get sick, He heals me.*

And a major "medicine" for that healing is the Quran: [10:57] *O people, enlightenment has come to you herein from your Lord, and healing for anything that troubles your hearts, and guidance, and mercy for the believers.*

[41:44] *If we made it a non-Arabic Quran they would have said, "Why did it come down in that language?" Whether it is Arabic or non-Arabic, say, "For those who believe, it is a guide and healing. ...*

[5:16] *With it, God guides those who seek His approval. He guides them to the paths of peace, leads them out of darkness into the light by His leave, and guides them in a straight path.*

Step 3 tells us what we need to do next: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

More next time, God willing.

*Submitters striving to heal & grow our souls with Quran*

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