

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Self-righteousness

[Continued from Sept 2018]

From last month's article: Self-righteousness is the belief that we are morally superior to others, to the point that we fail to see our own faults but are great at seeing the faults of others. What makes it so dangerous is that it looks and feels like righteousness, but it is far from righteousness.

This is the continuation of the list of items that we (myself included) can use to check if we are self-righteous.

8. Do you think the world would be a better place if everyone was like you?

God tells us that by His design He has made us into distinct people and tribes and the best among us is the most righteous (49:13). He also tells us that He has decreed different rites for the people of the scripture and He will put us to the test through the revelations He has given each of us (5:48). This is part of God's system. We do not know if we are the most righteous (3:110), nor can we change God's system. So it is up to us how to apply tolerance and respect for one another despite our differences.

The alternative would be to attempt to force people to believe per our personal guidelines. If we were to do this we

would be going against Quran (2:256, 10:99, 18:29, 28:56, 88:21-22) and we run the risk of being no different than the tyrannical governments who persecute or banish people who have religious beliefs contrary to their own.

[5:48] Then we revealed to you this scripture, truthfully, confirming previous scriptures, and superseding them. You shall rule among them in accordance with GOD's revelations, and do not follow their wishes if they differ from the truth that came to you. For each of you, we have decreed laws and different rites. Had GOD willed, He could have made you one congregation. But He thus puts you to the test through the revelations He has given each of you. You shall compete in righteousness. To GOD is your final destiny—all of you—then He will inform you of everything you had disputed.

9. Do you think your understanding on all things is the ultimate truth for all Submitters, and deep down do you believe it is a litmus test for true Submission?

In the introduction to the Authorized English Version of the Quran, written by Rashad Khalifa, we see the following excerpt.

All Believers Constitute the One Acceptable Religion

As expected from the Creator's final message, one of the prominent themes in the Quran is the call for unity among all believers, and the repeated prohibition of making any distinction among God's messengers. If the object of worship is one and the same, there will be absolute unity among all believers. It is the human factor, i.e., devotion and prejudice to such powerless humans as Jesus, Muhammad, and the saints that causes division, hatred, and bitter wars among the misguided believers. A guided believer is devoted to God ALONE, and rejoices in seeing any other believer who is devoted to God ALONE, regardless of the name such a believer calls his or her religion.

Additionally, when you open the first page of the Authorized English Version of the Quran you read the following verse.

Unity of All Submitters

[2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day,

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and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

If the focus of worship of any two people is the worship of God alone then they should be united as submitters irrespective of the name of their religion.

10. Do you have a problem saying, “I don’t know”?

As Submitters we strive for certainty in God and His revelations, promises, attributes, etc. For example, Submitters have no doubt that God is One (3:18) and that our sole purpose in life is to worship Him alone (51:56).

But, we have to understand this does not mean that God has given us the knowledge of *everything* there is to know about Submission. The longer we live, the more we learn (God willing), and even then we don’t know everything (12:76, 16:70, 20:114).

[17:85-86] They ask you about the revelation. Say, “The revelation comes from my Lord. The knowledge given to you is minute.” If we will, we can take back what we revealed to you, then you will find no protector against us.

When we look at the examples of the righteous in the Quran we see that they do not over extrapolate the knowledge that they have. When God asked the angels something they did not know, they did not attempt to fill in the blanks based on assumption; they knew that their knowledge was limited.

[2:31] He taught Adam all the names then presented them to the angels, saying, “Give Me the names of these, if you are right.” [2:32] They said, “Be You glorified, we have no knowledge, except that which You have taught us. You are the Omniscient, Most Wise.”

It is tempting to try to over extrapolate our knowledge, but this is an unwise path that Submitters would avoid, God willing. [20:114] Most Exalted is GOD, the only true King. Do not rush into uttering the Quran before it is revealed to you, and say, “My Lord, increase my knowledge.”

As humans we do not like dealing with ambiguity and find comfort in absolutes. So, when we see someone who is excessively confident in their belief on a topic we ourselves haven’t studied, we may equate that confidence with competence. The drawback is that confidence and competence can be inversely correlated. This is known as the Dunning-Kruger effect.

When people are confident in a stance it may be because they have not explored all the edge cases of their understanding, and this lack of understanding is what provides them the naivety to have such confidence and can lead to negative consequences.

[7:33] Say, “My Lord prohibits only evil deeds, be they obvious or hidden, and sins, and unjustifiable aggression, and to set up beside GOD powerless idols, and to say about GOD what you do not know.”

11. Do you forget that the fact that we are here on Earth means that we are all sinners and if it wasn’t for God’s mercy we would all be in Hell right now?

As we grow our souls it is easy to get enchanted with our own righteousness, but we have to remember we are near the bottom of the barrel. Out of all the countless creatures that never questioned God’s absolute authority or the ones that accepted God’s offer to repent after the Great Feud, we were the infinitesimally few that wanted to see the demonstration ourselves. When we compare our actions against the actions of others in this experiment we are comparing ourselves against the worst of the worst and forgetting just how bad we really are. The fact is, if it wasn’t for God’s mercy and grace, we would currently be in Hell (2:30, 16:61, 35:45).

The Original Sin

[16:61] If GOD punished the people for their transgressions, He would have annihilated every creature on earth. But He respites them for a specific, predetermined time. Once their interim ends, they cannot delay it by one hour, nor advance it.

[49:14] The Arabs said, “We are Mu’mens (believers).” Say, “You have

not believed; what you should say is, ‘We are Muslims (submitters),’ until belief is established in your hearts.” If you obey GOD and His messenger, He will not put any of your works to waste. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

To think we are “Mu’men” is kind of a catch-22, because someone who is truly Mu’men would unlikely be in a position of proclaiming any sort of guaranteed or special status with God. As stated by Abraham: [26:82] “The One who hopefully will forgive my sins on the Day of Judgment.”

But as Satan knows, it is easier to fool someone than to convince them that they have been fooled. When we are overly confident in our righteousness Satan will play on our ego and have this get to our heads, nullifying our good deeds.

Mark 10:18 – The Rich Young Man

As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up and knelt before Him. “Good Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call Me good?” Jesus replied, “No one is good except God alone.”

Because of this we need to humble ourselves before our Creator and kill our egos.

12. While reading this list were you having an imaginary conversation in your head where you were arguing with me and I was losing?

As stated before, this message is as much for me as it is for anyone who may be reading this. If I stated anything inaccurately may God guide the sincere to the correct understanding.

“How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while there is still a beam in your own eye? ... First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”
– Matthew 7:4-5

[2:44] Do you exhort the people to be righteous, while forgetting yourselves, though you read the scripture? Do you not understand?

Peter

Quran and Steps 9 & 10 of the 12 Steps

If you are new to this series of articles this is the fifth in a series that examines the Quranic basis for any Submitter improving their Submission by using the 12 Steps that are used in many self-help groups. The February, March, June and August issues of this year discuss the first eight steps. In this article we look at Steps 9 and 10.

Before we look at Step 9 we need to review Step 8 because they are so closely related. Step 8 is: **Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.** If you have not read the last article (which discusses Step 8) you will probably find it helpful in understanding Step 9. You can find it online using the following link: <https://masjiduntucson.org/publications/books/sp/2018/aug/page3.html>

In Step 8 we reflect and gather a list of people we have harmed and then reflect further to become willing to make amends to those people, recognizing that we must truly reform from our errors and be ready to offer any restitution that is required to make things right, as long as doing so does not create more chaos and harm more people. We may not be ready to make all of our amends at one time. When we are ready to make the easier ones we might want to consider moving on to Step 9 for those, and work through the list bit by bit until we complete it.

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

One of the most important aspects of this step for Submitters is the chance it gives us to work on our egos, which we know we need to kill (2:54). The step can be done in many ways such as sending a

letter, making a phone call, or meeting with them, though as the above wording indicates it should be done directly to the people harmed whenever that is possible. Sometimes all that is necessary is a sincere apology and clear statement that one will never again behave in such a manner. Sometimes just apologizing is not enough.

There are verses in the Quran that demonstrate what we are talking about in the story of Moses dealing with his teacher (18:65-78). In our last article we looked at these verses and how they relate to Step 8. They also relate to this step: Moses said that he would obey any command the teacher gave him. However he was not able to meet the teacher's requirement not to question him. The first time he questioned the teacher he apologized, and they went on. After the second time he did this: [18:76] *He said, "If I ask you about anything else, then do not keep me with you. You have seen enough apologies from me."* When Moses objected again his apology was not enough and he had to make amends by leaving the teacher.

Those who work this step may find that people are much more forgiving than expected. Sometimes when restitution is due, as in the paying of an overdue debt or compensating for damage (2:178, 2:237), people will forgive the debt or compensation in part or in full (2:280). However the person working the step needs to be sincere in their intention to make things right with anyone they have harmed. If the restitution seems like a hardship but does not actually hurt anyone it may help to remember that, as mentioned in our last article, we are fighting for our very souls (39:47).

Sometimes the person harmed is no longer living or there is another valid reason for not making amends directly to them. In some cases people have found it helpful to do something symbolic like write a letter to the person, writing out the amends. Alternatively, we can ask someone we trust to "stand in" for the person

and speak with this individual as if they were the person harmed.

Going through this process with everyone who has been harmed can be a very freeing experience. Often it is also a lot of emotional work. Having cleaned up all of our past errors, God willing, we want to do our best to keep things clean. The next step can help in this endeavor.

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Taking a personal inventory once a day is a good way to work this step. Some people will do this at night before going to sleep. Others find it easier to combine it with their response to God's telling us multiple times in the Quran to ask for forgiveness, especially at dawn:

[40:55] *Therefore, be patient, for God's promise is true, and ask forgiveness for your sin, and glorify and praise your Lord night and day.*

[47:19] *You shall know that: "There is no other god beside God" and ask forgiveness of your sins and the sins of all believing men and women. God is fully aware of your decisions and your ultimate destiny.*

[51:18] *At dawn, they prayed for forgiveness.*

Whatever time of day is chosen, reflecting on ourselves, or in other words taking a personal inventory, is recommended by God (30:8, 59:18).

[30:8] *Why do they not reflect on themselves? GOD did not create the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, except for a specific purpose, and for a specific life span. However, most people, with regard to meeting their Lord, are disbelievers.*

Step 10 also requires us to promptly admit any errors we find in our self-reflection. God gives us several examples of people admitting they were wrong once they realize their error. For instance, the queen of

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Sheba when she saw her palace moved and transformed said: [27:44] ... "My Lord, I have wronged my soul. I now submit with Solomon to GOD, Lord of the universe."

Adam and Eve also recognized their error and admitted it to God: [7:23] They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged our souls, and unless You forgive us and have mercy on us, we will be losers."

In doing a daily inventory, God willing we can catch our errors before they get out of hand. May God protect us from being like Pharaoh who left his self-reflection and repentance to the very last minute then found it was not acceptable: [10:90-92] ... When drowning became a reality for him, he said, "I believe that there is no god except the One in whom the Children of Israel have believed; I am a submitter."

"Too late! For you have rebelled already, and chose to be a transgressor. Today, we will preserve your body, to set you up as a lesson for future generations."...

Submitters striving to heal & grow our souls with Quran

Contact Prayer (Salat) times calculator app

[4:103] ... the Contact Prayers (Salat) are decreed for the believers at specific times.

By God's grace, we have a Contact Prayer (Salat) time calculator app available. Please visit: <https://www.masjiduntucson.org/salat/app/>

VERSES ON WIND: GOD'S WONDROUS SIGN

[7:57] *He is the One who sends the wind with good omen, as a mercy from His hands. Once they gather heavy clouds, we drive them to dead lands, and send down water therefrom, to produce with it all kinds of fruits. We thus resurrect the dead, that you may take heed.*

[10:22] *He is the One who moves you across the land and sea. You get onto the ships, and they sail smoothly in nice breeze. Then, while rejoicing therein, violent wind blows, and the waves surround them from every side. This is when they implore GOD, sincerely devoting their prayers to Him alone: "If You only save us this time, we will be eternally appreciative."*

[15:22] *And we send the winds as pollinators, and cause water to come down from the sky for you to drink. Otherwise, you could not keep it palatable.*

[45:5] *Also, the alternation of the night and the day, and the provisions that GOD sends down from the sky to revive dead lands, and the manipulation of the winds; all these are proofs for people who understand.*

Be included in our email list for weekly reminders

God has blessed us with the opportunity to send weekly reminders to submitters in our email list. The weekly reminder email is not very long. It usually consists of the topic of the week, and the corresponding Quranic verses and links to get more information from. The reminder is sent every Thursday, God willing.

[51:55] *And remind, for the reminder benefits the believers.*

We would like every submitter, whether receiving our newsletters or not, to be included in the list. God willing you can join the list by sending an email to info@masjiduntucson.org and saying that you want to be in the weekly reminder list. If you want to make it a really short email, write "weekly reminder" in the subject line and send it. Or join via: <http://masjiduntucson.org/current/weekly.html>

If you also include in the email the city and state that you live in, God willing we can compile this information and use it for the submitters without a community who are asking to communicate with other submitters in their area.

Please help us to help you and other submitters by joining the list and by being proactive, God willing.

[3:200] *O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, you shall persevere, you shall be united, you shall observe GOD, that you may succeed.*

[87:9] *Therefore, you shall remind; perhaps the reminder will benefit.*

Note: Your comments are also welcome and appreciated.