

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Self-righteousness

In the movie cliché of cops raiding a building, we see when the cops enter the first floor, the criminals will flee to the second floor. Then as the cops get to the second floor the criminals will run to the third floor. This process continues till the criminals reach the top of the building at which point they can no longer run and instead resort to hiding.

We must be careful lest we allow a similar scenario to happen when we accept Submission. As we work to perfect our religion our egos flee (God willing). With each step towards righteousness the ego is forced to run until it realizes there is nowhere else to go. At that point the ego may stop running and resort to hiding.

In a final attempt to preserve its existence, the ego may play a very clever trick. It will begin praising us for all the righteousness we have achieved. It will remind us how far we have come and how much better of a person we are since we embraced Submission. And if we fail to recognize this ruse, before we know it our ego will transform our work towards righteousness into self-righteousness allowing it to live another day.

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.

The example of Satan serves as a shining example of self-righteousness. Before his fall, Satan was an angel (7:11, 17:61) but his perceived superiority got the best of him. He was exposed when he rejected God's commandment to prostrate before Adam on the grounds that he thought he was better than Adam (7:12-13), and as retaliation for being banished he vowed to identify and exploit the shortcomings of all the people.

What makes self-righteousness so dangerous is that it looks and feels like righteousness, but it is far from righteousness. Below is a list of twelve items that we can use to identify if we are being self-righteous. Much of the material in this list came from an article I read from Christian pastors, which shows that self-righteousness is a trick that Satan has been utilizing for some time against all believers irrespective of the name of their religion. As a disclaimer, even though I am writing this article I am not immune from falling into these traps.

1. Do you think you have “special knowledge” no one else around you does? Does this make you feel like you have an “up” on others?

According to 56:79, anyone who is sincere God will guide their heart. Our salvation is not dependent on any special information that is not available to everyone. No one has a monopoly on God's word or the truth. To think that because you have access to special information you are by default more righteous than others is putting too much weight on the information and not enough on the quality of one's soul.

For example, there are people who memorize the entire Quran yet fail to properly understand one verse. There are people who have access to vast libraries filled with scholarly works, but if they are not sincere then they will not be able to convert that information into wisdom.

[56:77] This is an honorable Quran.

[56:78] In a protected book. [56:79] None can grasp it except the sincere.

[2:171] The example of such disbelievers is that of parrots who repeat what they hear of sounds and calls, without un-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

derstanding. Deaf, dumb, and blind; they cannot understand.

2. Is it common for you to walk into a room full of submitters and think “they don’t get it”?

Logically, someone who embraces Submission today is not doing it for the popularity, but most likely out of the sheer desire to try to please God. I remember the first couple times I attended the yearly submitter’s conference and had the audacity to question the integrity of other submitters before getting to truly know them. Who was I to make such a judgment towards a fellow submitter who was striving in the cause of God? What did I gain from writing them off, nothing but the boosting of my own ego.

[2:13] When they are told, “Believe like the people who believed,” they say, “Shall we believe like the fools who believed?” In fact, it is they who are fools, but they do not know.

[83:29] The wicked used to laugh at those who believed. [83:30] When they passed by them, they used to poke fun. [83:31] When they got together with their people, they used to joke. [83:32] Whenever they saw them, they said, “These people are far astray!

3. Are you quick to label fellow submitters as hypocrites, idol worshippers or disbelievers?

It can be tempting at times to paint individuals with a wide brush by labeling them as hypocrites or disbelievers. The argument typically goes something like this: if I can prove to myself you are committing a sin, and you are not committing this act out of weakness, then by default you are following a source beside God and therefore you are an idol worshiper, hypocrite, or disbeliever. If I use this kind of logic to make broad claims against groups of submitters then chances are I am being self-righteous.

[6:52] And do not dismiss those who implore their Lord day and night, devoting themselves to Him alone. You are not responsible for their reckoning, nor are they responsible for your reck-

oning. If you dismiss them, you will be a transgressor.

4. When you give the message are people more offended by you and your delivery than the actual message?

The truth can always stand on its own. It does not need to be offensive to make an impact. We see in the example of Sāleh, that when his people were asked what caused them to believe their reply was the message (7:75). When God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh, he asked him to speak to him nicely (20:44). If we cause people to be repulsed by the message then we will have to pay dearly for that (4:85, 16:94). In 17:53 God says “Tell My servants to treat each other in the best possible manner.” And in 16:125 God says to invite people with kind enlightenment and in the best possible manner.

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

[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.

[41:33] Who can utter better words than one who invites to GOD, works righteousness, and says, “I am one of the submitters”? [41:34] Not equal is the good response and the bad response. You shall resort to the nicest possible response. Thus, the one who used to be your enemy, may become your best friend. [41:35] None can attain this except those who steadfastly persevere. None can attain this except those who are extremely fortunate.

God knows that at times carrying out this commandment can be difficult. That is why I believe God follows these verses by reminding us to seek refuge in him from the whispers of the devil. This is because it is at these sensitive times that the devil will whisper to us to lash out and be mean-hearted.

[41:36] When the devil whispers an idea to you, you shall seek refuge in GOD. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.

5. Do you guilt far more people to action than you inspire?

When we use guilt, we are adding additional weight to the hardships that others are in the process of carrying, but when we inspire, we are helping our fellow submitters by lightening their load and giving them the encouragement to be steadfast and persevere.

The Messenger’s Kindness

[3:159] It was mercy from GOD that you became compassionate towards them. Had you been harsh and mean-hearted, they would have abandoned you. Therefore, you shall pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them. ...

[9:103] Take from their money a charity to purify them and sanctify them. And encourage them, for your encouragement reassures them. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.

6. Do you judge/correct/remind out of love or out of moral superiority?

We can judge using the verses of the Quran (4:105). But when it comes to judging others we have to ask ourselves are we judging what someone is doing to make ourselves feel better or because we genuinely love to see them guided? If we care enough to judge, should we not care enough to help?

As believers we have to treat every human being as a potential believer while they are still living on this Earth. Let us love every human being as a potential believer who may become better than you and me in due time. This is by no means a blind love; our guide here is the Quran 60:8-9.

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

Abraham tried to argue on behalf of Lot’s people, until he was asked to refrain (11:74-76). Abraham didn’t

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

realize God had already judged them, and God called him “clement, extremely kind, and obedient.” When was the last time that out of sheer sincerity and love we followed up our judgment, correction, or reminder by praying for the person’s guidance—especially those outside of our immediate family or community?

When people are guided we all benefit. We have little to lose by praying for the guidance of others and much to gain.

Sometimes, I hear the argument that since God already knows who is going to be guided and who is going to go astray then there is no point in praying for the guidance of others. But this same argument can be made towards charity since God controls all provisions. God has a system and while God knows the outcome, we don’t. Therefore, let us implore God because like charity this is an opportunity for us to grow our souls recognizing that God provides for the soul and the body.

[36:47] When they are told, “Give from GOD’s provisions to you,” those who disbelieve say to those who believe, “Why should we give to those whom GOD could feed, if He so willed? You are really far astray.”

On the topic of judgments, God teaches us in the Quran we should be extremely careful. Consider the example of David judging between two brothers regarding their sheep (38:24). Keeping in mind that David was blessed with wisdom and good logic (38:20), that he was asked to judge by the brothers (38:22), and his judgement was Quranic (4:29), he still repented because there could have been the slightest possibility that he might have done something wrong. As written in the footnote: *Footnote 38:24 In this clear example, 99 on one side vs 1 on the other side, David’s extreme care to render the correct judgment caused him to ask forgiveness. Are we this careful?*

7. Do you say things on Facebook that you would not say in person?

When responding to someone online are you looking for the credibility

among your peers or from God? If you are more interested in receiving “likes” from humans rather than blessings from God, then you are trading away your soul for a cheap price.

[3:77] As for those who trade away GOD’s covenant, and their obligations, for a cheap price, they receive no share in the Hereafter. GOD will not speak to them, nor look at them, on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. They have incurred a painful retribution.

While there are times that we are to be harsh and stern (48:29), if we are to act out in such a way we must be absolutely sure and make a sincere assessment that we are justified in our actions. Given that as human beings we have a tendency to be mean it is worth considering leaning on the side of being kind and clement. (Appendix 32, Quran the Final Testament, by Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D.).

[4:94] O you who believe, if you strike in the cause of GOD, you shall be absolutely sure. Do not say to one who offers you peace, “You are not a believer,” seeking the spoils of this world. For GOD possesses infinite spoils. Remember that you used to be like them, and GOD blessed you. Therefore, you shall be absolutely sure (before you strike). GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.

[16:126] And if you punish, you shall inflict an equivalent punishment. But if you resort to patience (instead of revenge), it would be better for the patient ones. [16:127] You shall resort to patience—and your patience is attainable only with GOD’s help. Do not grieve over them, and do not be annoyed by their schemes.

[59:10] Those who became believers after them say, “Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who preceded us to the faith, and keep our hearts from harboring any hatred towards those who believed. Our Lord, You are Compassionate, Most Merciful.”

[To be continued in the next *Submitters Perspective*, God willing]

Peter

Reference: S. Adebisi, 20 Easy Ways to be a self-righteous Christian

Letters from Prisoners

[Ed note: We often hear kind words from prisoners after they receive a copy of the Quran and learn that the worship of God is the only true path to eternal freedom. Thus, incarceration may be a blessing in disguise for some. It is a blessing from God on us that we can share these materials with people in dire need of them. We do this for the sake of God, not seeking thanks (76:9).]

* * *

I received the Quran by Rashad Khalifa, which is the most profound translation I have ever read. It has taught me that the worship of Allah alone is the correct way of life. Why would any Muslim need anything else (Hadith), when the Quran teaches us everything?

May Allah continue to bless you and your effort to reach the multitudes of Muslims, and teach them the only true way of life, without worshipping other than Allah.

As Salaamum Alaykum

* * *

I want to thank the brothers and sisters. I received my copy of the Quran: The Final Testament, the Understanding Islam pamphlet and 2 issues of the Submitters Perspective. They have worked wonders for me in regards to my submission and faith. I have been incarcerated for seven years. Practicing Islam the entire time, but the form of Islam I was being taught only caused more chaos as opposed to peace! The sunnah and the Arab culture were being pressed on me causing the religion to become difficult for me. This caused me to begin to despair of the mercy of Allah, driving me completely out of the fold of Islam. Up until a brother introduced me to the teaching of this Masjid and the purest form of Islam. Immediately upon receiving this information I went into my studies. After about half an hour I re-declared my faith in Allah and am a stronger, more committed Muslim than I was before! All praise and perfect thanks be unto Allah, the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving. And thanks to the community of Masjid Tucson. May Allah bless and reward this community with the best in this life and the next!

Sincerely, Sedrick (Shakur)

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Conference Report

TUG.

It stands for Thank U God. It's something we need to remember every day. There's so much to be thankful for. And one thing is our annual Submitters conference. This year it was held in Dallas, Texas August 3-5. The khutba was given by brother Yasser, who gave us the wonderful acronym to be used throughout the conference—TUG. Letter by letter, he reminded us alphabetically of things we have to be thankful for—from Allah to Zero stress! And with Allah, there is zero stress. Thank You, God.

It was wonderful to meet many submitters from all over the world attending their first conference. It is difficult to travel all the way from India, Pakistan or New Zealand, but those who made the journey from those far-flung countries were so thankful for the opportunity. We learned of their striving in God's way and following His path. Each had words to share of their journey to submission and their appreciation of God's continued guidance and mercy.

The speeches covered a wide range of topics, with the central theme of kindness and compassion. The speakers don't coordinate with one another, but God is the One who orchestrates everything and He inspired so many of the speakers to focus on God's compassion towards us and our need to be kind to one another.

[90:17] And being one of those who believe, and exhorting one another to be steadfast, and exhorting one another to be kind.

The zikr was led by many beautiful singers among us, and it was so enjoyable. It lifts your spirit to share with so many others your joy of worshiping God and striving in His cause. It is truly a unifying experience to commemorate our Lord. *[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.*

Joy for the Believers

[10:58] Say, "With GOD's grace and with His mercy they shall rejoice." This is far better than any wealth they can accumulate.

The hotel was very nice, with a friendly helpful staff, and the food was excellent. We also enjoyed a wonderful lunch Sunday at a Mediterranean restaurant, with a scrumptious buffet. Praise be to God.

The Dallas community did a great job organizing and hosting the conference. Their hospitality was warm and wonderful, may God bless them. Many people were able to stay over so there was an enjoyable Quran study Sunday evening and a fabulous brunch on Monday.

This was a lovely peaceful gathering of Submitters. A time for soul growth, learning and sharing. It is such a blessing to be able to gather in the worship of God

alone, to focus all of our attention on our practices and the nourishment of our souls. May God continue to bless these conferences and allow us to continue to spread His message of joy, love and peace in the coming year.

[2:207] Then there are those who dedicate their lives to serving GOD; GOD is compassionate towards such worshippers.

[6:103] No visions can encompass Him, but He encompasses all visions. He is the Compassionate, the Cognizant

[57:9] He is the One who sends down to His servant clear revelations, in order to lead you out of the darkness into the light. GOD is Compassionate towards you, Most Merciful.

Nargis and Lydia

Quran app: Android, iOS, Windows

[73:4] ... And read the Quran from cover to cover.

[96:1] Read, in the name of your Lord, who created.

By God's grace, we have a Quran app available for your phones, tablets and PCs (Windows). You can read Quran, search for a verse, save your bookmarks and more. Please visit:

<https://www.masjiduntucson.org/quran/app/>

Quran: The Final Testament
(Authorized English Version)
Translated from the Original by Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D.