

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

Monthly Bulletin of International
Community of Submitters

www.masjidtucson.org



Published by Masjid Tucson
Zul-Qi'dah 1440

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Striving

God mentions striving in the Quran in 27 verses. Some definitions of “strive” include: To exert oneself vigorously, to try hard; to make a strenuous effort toward any goal; to struggle vigorously as in opposition or resistance.

[5:35] O you who believe, you shall reverence GOD and seek the ways and means to Him, and strive in His cause, that you may succeed.

What is striving in God’s cause? One way to strive in His cause is with money.

[9:44] Those who truly believe in GOD and the Last Day do not ask your permission to evade the opportunity to strive with their money and their lives. GOD is fully aware of the righteous.

[9:88] As for the messenger and those who believed with him, they eagerly strive with their money and their lives. These have deserved all the good things; they are the winners.

[49:15] Mu’mens (believers) are those who believe in GOD and His messenger, then attain the status of having no doubt whatsoever, and strive with their money and their lives in the cause of GOD. These are the truthful ones.

In today’s modern society, money is

used as the predominant mode of getting provisions. It is also a very common way of giving to charity. I think when we go above and beyond Zakat, that could be a form of striving. The reason I believe it’s more than just Zakat is because Zakat is obligatory. When I read 49:14-15 striving with their money and lives is one thing that sets “believers” apart from “submitters” (and submitters would give Zakat).

[16:90] GOD advocates justice, charity, and regarding the relatives. And He forbids evil, vice, and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed.

[2:274] 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.

Charity can also take other forms, like forgiving a debt or forfeiting something you are owed. *[2:280] If the debtor is unable to pay, wait for a better time. If you give up the loan as a charity, it would be better for you, if you only knew.*

Believers also strive with their lives. What does that mean? It’s pretty clear cut how to strive with your money, but

how do we strive with our lives? Let’s take some examples from the Quran to give us a sense. Some of these are not addressed as striving in the Quran, but are mentioned because they take effort and perseverance.

Spreading the message

[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.

Feeding the poor

[90:10-14] Did we not show him the two paths? He should choose the difficult path. Which one is the difficult path? The freeing of slaves. Feeding, during the time of hardship.

[76:9] “We feed you for the sake of GOD; we expect no reward from you, nor thanks.

Emigrating

Our entire Submitter community as a whole is small. There are Submitters all around the world who are communities that consist of just one family, or a

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

few individuals, or perhaps there is only one person. God recognizes and appreciates Submitters who make the effort to emigrate.

[2:218] Those who believe, and those who emigrate and strive in the cause of GOD have deserved GOD's mercy. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

For many, it is not easy to emigrate. Moving from one place to another requires a lot of planning as well as expense. God knows the condition for each and every one of us, and knows that we may be in circumstances that prevent us from uprooting our lives and emigrating, but He does let us know that He appreciates and rewards those who do emigrate.

[4:100] Anyone who emigrates in the cause of GOD will find on earth great bounties and richness. Anyone who gives up his home, emigrating to GOD and His messenger, then death catches up with him, his recompense is reserved with GOD. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

[8:74] Those who believed and emigrated, and strove in the cause of GOD, as well as those who hosted them and gave them refuge, and supported them, these are the true believers. They have deserved forgiveness and a generous recompense.

[16:41] Those who emigrated for the sake of GOD, because they were persecuted, we will surely make it up to them generously in this life, and the recompense of the Hereafter is even greater, if they only knew.

[4:95] Not equal are the sedentary among the believers who are not handicapped, and those who strive in the cause of GOD with their money and their lives. GOD exalts the strivers with their money and their lives above the sedentary. For both, GOD promises salvation, but GOD exalts the strivers over the sedentary with a great recompense. [4:96] The higher ranks come from Him, as well as forgiveness and mercy. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful

[9:20] Those who believe, and emigrate, and strive in the cause of GOD

with their money and their lives, are far greater in rank in the sight of GOD. These are the winners.

How we treat and interact with each other

[17:53] Tell My servants to treat each other in the best possible manner, for the devil will always try to drive a wedge among them. Surely, the devil is man's most ardent enemy

[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.

Being equitable

[4:135] O you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe GOD, when you serve as witnesses, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your relatives....

[5:8] O you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe GOD, when you serve as witnesses. Do not be provoked by your conflicts with some people into committing injustice. You shall be absolutely equitable, for it is more righteous. You shall observe GOD. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.

Going to Quran Studies

[18:28] You shall force yourself to be with those who worship their Lord day and night, seeking Him alone. Do not turn your eyes away from them, seeking the vanities of this world. Nor shall you obey one whose heart we rendered oblivious to our message; one who pursues his own desires, and whose priorities are confused.

Avoiding bad behavior

[17:36] You shall not accept any information, unless you verify it for yourself. I have given you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brain, and you are responsible for using them.

[49:12] O you who believe, you shall avoid any suspicion, for even a little bit of suspicion is sinful. You shall not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite one another; this is as abominable as eating the flesh of your dead broth-

er. You certainly abhor this. You shall observe GOD. GOD is Redeemer, Most Merciful.

[16:90] GOD advocates justice, charity, and regarding the relatives. And He forbids evil, vice, and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed.

What are we striving for? One of the definitions of strive is to make a strenuous effort toward a goal. What's our goal? Making it to Heaven, of course. God tells us this is the greatest triumph. We're here because we made a terrible mistake billions of years ago when we questioned God's authority. And here we are, striving to correct the mistake we made and get back to God's eternal kingdom.

[3:142] Do you expect to enter Paradise without GOD distinguishing those among you who strive, and without distinguishing those who are steadfast?

[9:16] Did you think that you will be left alone without GOD distinguishing those among you who strive, and never ally themselves with GOD's enemies, or the enemies of His messenger, or the enemies of the believers? GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.

So, while we go through our tests and strive to get to Heaven and be as close to God as we can, let's keep in mind these reminders God tells us about in the Quran.

[3:185] Every person tastes death, then you receive your recompense on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever misses Hell, barely, and makes it to Paradise, has attained a great triumph. The life of this world is no more than an illusion.

[6:32] The life of this world is no more than illusion and vanity, while the abode of the Hereafter is far better for the righteous. Do you not understand?!

This is all an illusion, yet we still have to live out this illusion, this matrix. We asked for it. Thank God we've been blessed to know the real truth ... the truth about God, the miracle of the Quran proving Gods existence, the

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

truth about why we're really here and what we have to do to get back to God's kingdom and avoid going to hell.

[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. [25:64] In the privacy of the night, they meditate on their Lord, and fall prostrate. [25:65] And they say, "Our Lord, spare us the agony of Hell; its retribution is horrendous. [25:66] "It is the worst abode; the worst destiny."

We have to work very hard to avoid hell. It's worth it.

[94:5] With pain there is gain.

[94:6] Indeed, with pain there is gain.

[94:7] Whenever possible you shall strive.

[94:8] Seeking only your Lord.

Bob

The Gift of Nature

Think about the great gift of Nature that God has so kindly provided us with. Think of our earth and its perfect address, i.e., where it has been placed in the Universe. We have just the right combination of chemical elements to support life. If we were farther out, the elements would be too scarce and if farther in, the location would be too dangerous due to the greater amount of potentially lethal radiation. Up to 99% of radiation is absorbed by God's "ozone layer". Praise God, for making us live in "prime real estate".

[14:33-34] He has committed the sun and the moon in your service, continuously. He has committed the night and the day to serve you. 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.

[51:48] And we made the earth habitable; a perfect design.

God has created the universes and everything within and without.

[40:57] The creation of the heavens and the earth is even more awesome than the creation of the human being, but most people do not know.

All power belongs to God. We are but custodians of what God has provided us with. Thus, we are accountable to God. We recognize that God created the earth for all creatures (55:10) and we should not use God's gifts of Nature in a way that would have a detrimental effect on its role. Whatever we use of Earth's resources should be done in a manner that it should not deprive others of God's provisions.

[28:77] "Use the provisions bestowed upon you by GOD to seek the abode of the Hereafter, without neglecting your share in this world. Be charitable, as GOD has been charitable towards you. Do not keep on corrupting the earth. GOD does not love the corruptors." We should not let our greed overshadow the natural sharing of the earth's resources, which should be equitably used and distributed and not wasted.

The Quran showcases the blessings and bounties of the Universe. God has granted us a brain with which we can detect natural resources which could prove advantageous to us. At the same time, we must avoid harmful exploitation so we do not deplete and wipe out the resources God blessed us with. We should work to preserve these natural gifts from God.

Plants and animals are a source of food, transport, medicine, clothing and many other uses. God grants us vast authority to use all the flora and fauna, rivers and mighty oceans, the mountains and the valleys, etc. But this permission is to utilize and appreciate, not to pollute and destroy.

[14:32] GOD is the One who created the heavens and the earth, and He sends

down from the sky water to produce all kinds of fruit for your sustenance. He has committed the ships to serve you on the sea in accordance with His command. He has committed the rivers as well to serve you.

God created everything. His bounties provide service to all the earth's inhabitants.

[41:10] He placed on it stabilizers (mountains), made it productive, and He calculated its provisions in four days, to satisfy the needs of all its inhabitants. We don't just live on the land but it contains the soil we use to cultivate crops, vegetation and fruit which we and the livestock consume. We derive benefit from the land and soil including energy rich resources like oil and various minerals. Thank You God.

Observe the Creator's handiwork—the natural beauty of the earth with snow-capped mountains and lush forests. Deforestation (several billion trees per year) for so-called development has not only destroyed natural habitat but has also increased emissions of greenhouse gases and we now have the ever-increasing consequences of global warming. The effects would be worse, but we can thank God for the oceans, a natural air conditioner covering about 71 % of the Earth's surface playing a major role in climate control.

Reckless activity leads to the natural distribution of wildlife and vegetation being disturbed. Animals and plants are an essential part of life on earth. We depend on them; they depend on us. We use the oxygen plants produce and they use our carbon dioxide. Animals provide us with food, transport, clothing and medicine.

[55:10-13] He created the earth for all creatures. In it there are fruits, and date palms with their hanging fruit. Also grains and the spices. (O humans and jinns,) which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?

(Continued on page 4)

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Non-profit Org
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ISSN 1089-053X

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(Continued from page 3)

If we do not use God's gifts and bounties in the Divine design He intended for us, it could be tantamount to us being ungrateful. In other words, a "kaafir". [2:29] *He is the One who created for you everything on earth, then turned to the sky and perfected seven universes therein, and He is fully aware of all things.*

The "you" here is all of us including most of the population yet to come. God's gifts are blessings and we should realise our moral obligations to God as well as future generations. We need to act with responsibility and accountability.

Water is among God's gifts to us and among His proofs.

[21:30] *Do the unbelievers not realize that the heaven and the earth used to be one solid mass that we exploded into existence? And from water we made all living things. Would they believe?*

God designed water to be the basis of all life. As new-borns, we are about 75% water, as adults that percentage drops but remains about 55-60%. All of this is created by God who is the only One who can create life.

The Most Gracious has given us clean air and pure water essential for our survival and we should be appreciative of His blessings and not abuse them. [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. Cool winds also bring relief on hot days and push rain-bearing clouds. This provides for our cleansing as well as drinking.

This water is not just for us, but also for other creatures.

[25:48-50] *He is the One who sends the winds with good omens of His mercy, and we send down from the sky pure water. With it, we revive dead lands and provide drink for our creations—multitudes of animals and humans. We have distributed it among them in exact measure, that they may take heed. But most people insist upon disbelieving.*

[16:10-11] *He sends down from the sky water for your drink, and to grow trees for your benefit. With it, He grows for you crops, olives, date palms, grapes, and all kinds of fruits. This is (sufficient) proof for people who think.*

We can only imagine the countless forms of marine life dwelling in the waters and how perfectly God designed each one. Consider the Mariana snailfish which has been observed at depths of 8,178 meters – just over 5 miles down. The fish is named after its home, the Mariana Trench (the deepest part of the world's oceans). The pressure on it would be the equivalent of 50 jumbo jets stacked on top of one another. All the creatures designed by God play a vital role in sustain-

ing a complex ecological system.

Over 90% of the world's cargo travels on water transport. It is, by far, the most cost-effective way to move goods and raw materials around the world.

[16:14] *And He committed the sea to serve you; you eat from it tender meat, and extract jewelry which you wear. And you see the ships roaming it for your commercial benefits, as you seek His bounties, that you may be appreciative.*

We should express our gratitude to God for water which is a continuous blessing.

[56:68-70] *Have you noted the water you drink? Did you send it down from the clouds, or did we? If we will, we can make it salty. You should be thankful.*

In summary, let us appreciate God's many blessings upon us. Let us enjoy God's gifts equitably while encouraging environmental protection through conservation and prohibition of wasteful practices (30:41). God's earth is for all creatures, those here today and those to come.

[15:19-21] *As for the earth, we constructed it, and placed on it stabilizers (mountains), and we grew on it a perfect balance of everything. We made it habitable for you, and for creatures you do not provide for. There is nothing that we do not own infinite amounts thereof. But we send it down in precise measure.*

Alim