

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## Tests and Submitting to God

Tests are part of our life on this earth. And we must work hard to pass our tests. Each day we may face a test of some kind. Some tests we may be aware of, while some, by God's grace we may pass without realising or calling them tests. For example, when we gather for Jumu'ah, we arrive by different means of transportation, car, bus or train. Each one of us reached the Masjid by passing a certain test in travelling. But we did what we need to without thinking of it as a test. We realise only those tests which involve our mind, physical strength, time and money. All these factors are also involved in reaching the Masjid for Jumu'ah, so why did we not feel the impact of the test? The reason is a positive mindset, our love for pleasing God, our pure dedication to reach here on time. May God accept this small effort from us.

A test becomes difficult if you are not mentally prepared for it, or if you see it negatively, for example you are worried that failing it would land you in a huge loss. We know God's tests are never unreasonable (4:66). Negative thinking during a test will only make it more difficult for us. By God's grace,

we reached Jumu'ah without realising the test we face because we want to do it. We love God and therefore we are ready to deal with the traffic, crowds, public transport, or the cost of transportation or fuel. We were more interested in reaching the Masjid on time to fulfill 62:9 than anything else. We fast or give charity or strive, because we see it as a good thing, not a hardship. It is a gift from God. Do you see the difference in approach? Hence, to face any test we should seek to have the right mental approach.

### *Important Commandments to All Believers*

[62:9] O you who believe, when the Congregational Prayer (*Salat Al-Jumu'ah*) is announced on Friday, you shall hasten to the commemoration of **GOD**, and drop all business. This is better for you, if you only knew.

If we are going through a test, there is a good reason. Think of life as a polishing process. Our impurities need to be worked on so that we may stand as a gem standing before God on the Day of Judgment. The tests are designed to prove that we worship God alone under all circumstances. God's testing

is varied, and designed for that person. It may be light or hard, may involve blessings or reduction in provision. There may be different conditions like, fear, hunger, loss of money, lives or provisions (2:155). It may involve a job, an examination, a spouse, children, losing a friend, etc. (9:24). These are just a few examples. God also tests us by blessing us abundantly (Quran 24:70, 89:15). Some of you will be tested by wealth, good health, good family, good friends, good job, etc.

*[2:155] We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast. [2:156] When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to GOD, and to Him we are returning." [2:157] These have deserved blessings from their Lord and mercy. These are the guided ones.*

*\*2:155 The test is designed to prove that we worship God alone under all circumstances.*

It is a human tendency to get carried away in all the extreme conditions. We might get involved in unacceptable activities due to frustration. Then what do we need to do? One way to avoid

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

this condition is to be steadfast. To strive harder in the path of God. To seek His forgiveness and do better. Whether we have abundant resources or we face the hardships of life, we must submit to God alone. In the face of adversity or hardship, the believers are expected to submit. We will not object during the test if our mindset is fine tuned to go through it. God assures us victory as long as we remain steadfast in His path.

*[40:51] Most assuredly, we will give victory to our messengers and to those who believe, both in this world and on the day the witnesses are summoned.*

We need to understand the objective of our temporary life in this world.  
*[90:4] We created the human being to work hard (to redeem himself).*

This awareness itself is a big blessing of God to us. As the famous English proverb says, “Well begun is half done”. God has taken care of half the job. Now we just need to accomplish the other half. Praise God, even our half of the job is lightened by God.

Every human being wants to go to Paradise. You ask any person of any faith—the reply will invariably be the same. But only a few strive hard in preparation. God will definitely accept only those who have passed through the filtration system of God. He teaches us about it in the following verses:

*[29:2] Do the people think that they will be left to say, “We believe,” without being put to the test?*

*[2:214] Do you expect to enter Paradise without being tested like those before you? They were tested with hardship and adversity, and were shaken up, until the messenger and those who believed with him said, “Where is GOD’s victory?” GOD’s victory is near.*

*[47:31] We will certainly put you to the test, in order to distinguish those among you who strive, and steadfastly persevere. We must expose your true qualities.*

God says He will fill hell with humans and jinns. Whereas He will also accept the true believers into Paradise. Filling and accepting are widely different activities. You decide which lot you would like to belong with. Whether you want to be the fill or you want to be accepted gracefully. God will magnify our each and every deed. He assures the true believers of His strong support on the Day of Resurrection.

*[3:179] GOD is not to leave the believers as you are, without distinguishing the bad from the good. Nor does GOD inform you of the future, but GOD bestows such knowledge upon whomever He chooses from among His messengers. Therefore, you shall believe in GOD and His messengers. If you believe and lead a righteous life, you receive a great recompense.*

This verse instills confidence and assurance in the hearts of the true believers. The righteous, the reverent servants of God, have nothing to fear. They realize that each test is for a good reason and passing it becomes easier, provided we fulfill the essential parameters.

We find several examples in the Quran of God’s tests. Whether related to a prophet or a common man, God gives us every kind of example in the Quran. Some examples:

*[2:124] Recall that Abraham was put to the test by his Lord, through certain commands, and he fulfilled them. (God) said, “I am appointing you an imam for the people.” He said, “And also my descendants?” He said, “My covenant does not include the transgressors.”*

*[2:49] Recall that we saved you from Pharaoh’s people who inflicted upon you the worst persecution, slaying your sons and sparing your daughters. That was an exacting test from your Lord.*

*[2:249] When Saul took command of the troops, he said, “GOD is putting you to the test by means of a stream. Anyone who drinks from it does not belong with me—only those who do not*

*taste it belong with me—unless it is just a single sip.” They drank from it, except a few of them. When he crossed it with those who believed, they said, “Now we lack the strength to face Goliath and his troops.” Those who were conscious of meeting GOD said, “Many a small army defeated a large army by GOD’s leave. GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.”*

*[7:73] To Thamûd we sent their brother Sâleh. He said, “O my people, worship GOD; you have no other god beside Him. Proof has been provided for you from your Lord: here is GOD’s camel, to serve as a sign for you. Let her eat from GOD’s land, and do not touch her with any harm, lest you incur a painful retribution.*

In addition, there are verses related to the tests of Jesus, Noah, Solomon, Jacob, Joseph, Jonah, David and Muhammad as well. The tests only increased their faith in God. They were all tested to prove their worth in the cause of God. For us they are true role models. We must try to follow their way of submitting, their perseverance and striving in the way of God.

Believe me, God is immensely merciful to us for He has protected us from exacting tests as compared to these messengers of God. God in His mercy also gave us the solution of passing the tests in His book, the Quran. He asked us to submit to Him wholeheartedly. Submission to God means to accept whatever God is doing knowing there’s a good reason.

Let us resolve right here to strive hard in the path of God. Let us please God so He will bless us with the eternal happiness as He has promised.

*[9:72] GOD promises the believing men and the believing women gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever, and magnificent mansions in the gardens of Eden. And GOD’s blessings and approval are even greater. This is the greatest triumph.*

God has warned us to be more careful about our deeds. Never ever fall prey

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

to the illusion of this life. Just play your part in this world gracefully and go back to God's kingdom with great triumph. May He admit us into His kingdom out of His mercy.

### A Great Triumph

[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.*

### The Inevitable Test\*

[3:186] *You will certainly be tested, through your money and your lives, and you will hear from those who received the scripture, and from the idol worshipers, a lot of insult. If you steadfastly persevere and lead a righteous life, this will prove the strength of your faith.*

\*3:186 *After passing the admission tests, the proven worshipers of God ALONE enjoy a perfect life, now and forever. See 10:62, 24:55, and 29:2-3.*

Abdul G

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## DISTRACTIONS

One of the big struggles in this world is not for money, but for attention. Your attention is worth money, so much so that we have people bidding on our attention actively as we speak and putting a price on it. Ever wonder why so many online services are free? It's the ads: "If you give your attention to this ad, it will let you get what you want."

It's an ongoing challenge – people are actively fighting for our attention in this world. Distractions are everywhere and are endless. You can spend your whole life distracted, and unfortunately many people do, may God protect us.

"My Distraction Sickness — and Yours"  
Andrew Sullivan. This article appears in the September 19, 2016, issue of *New*

*York Magazine*:

"The roar and disruption of the Industrial Revolution violated what quiet still remained until modern capitalism made business central to our culture and the ever-more efficient meeting of needs and wants our primary collective goal. We became a civilization of getting things done — with the development of America, in some ways, as its crowning achievement. Silence in modernity became, over the centuries, an anachronism, even a symbol of the useless superstitions we had left behind. The smartphone revolution of the past decade can be seen in some ways simply as the final twist of this ratchet, in which those few remaining redoubts of quiet — the tiny cracks of inactivity in our lives — are being methodically filled with more stimulus and noise.

"And yet our need for quiet has never fully gone away, because our practical achievements, however spectacular, never quite fulfill us. They are always giving way to new wants and needs, always requiring updating or repairing, always falling short....

"But this new epidemic of distraction is our civilization's specific weakness. And its threat is not so much to our minds, even as they shape-shift under the pressure. The threat is to our souls. At this rate, if the noise does not relent, we might even forget we have any."

We can forget who we are as individuals, what makes us motivated, the good that we should bring to the world. Instead, it only becomes a projection of what others define as "good", which is a dangerous pit to fall into.

How can we counter this? We need to reinforce the good that God tells us to do, the deeds that are going to go with us. *Positive reinforcement*. Reinforce the reality, and the reality is God knows everything we do. The reality is that we get rewarded for our good deeds:

[10:61] *You do not get into any situation, nor do you recite any Quran, nor do you*

*do anything, without us being witnesses thereof as you do it. Not even an atom's weight is out of your Lord's control, be it in the heavens or the earth. Nor is there anything smaller than an atom, or larger, that is not recorded in a profound record.*

Use this record. We know about it, but do we take advantage of it? Is it something that we have to wait for on the day it is given to us? Are we not aware of what we are doing? Take advantage of this knowledge. Be mindful of doing good and repent for the bad.

[69:18] *On that day, you will be exposed, nothing of you can be hidden.*  
[69:19] *As for the one who receives his record with his right hand, he will say, "Come read my record.* [69:20] *"I did believe that I was going to be held accountable."* [69:21] *He has deserved a happy life.* [69:22] *In an exalted Paradise.* [69:23] *Its fruits are within reach.* [69:24] *Eat and drink happily in return for your works in days past.*

[69:25] *As for him who is given his record in his left hand, he will say, "Oh, I wish I never received my record.* [69:26] *"I wish I never knew my account.* [69:27] *"I wish my death was eternal.* [69:28] *"My money cannot help me.* [69:29] *"All my power is gone."* [69:30] *Take him and shackle him.* [69:31] *Burn him in Hell.*

Let us day in, day out positively reinforce this record. Acknowledge the good that we do and write it to our own record, by God's grace. It is true that only God knows the final record, but we know what we do day in and day out. We can acknowledge the good works, thank God for being able to do them, and get a sense of how much awareness we have of the Hereafter.

Acknowledgment of this record helps our minds focus on the true life and filter out the distractions. We can concentrate on the truth: The fact that God is holding us accountable for our deeds. The fact that whatever we do to ad-

(Continued on page 4)

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*(Continued from page 3)*

vance ourselves and regress ourselves is recorded and known to God.

*[75:12] To your Lord, on that day, is the final destiny. [75:13] The human being will be informed, on that day, of everything he did to advance himself, and everything he did to regress himself.*

*[75:14] The human being will be his own judge. [75:15] No excuses will be accepted.*

*[23:101] When the horn is blown, no relations among them will exist on that day, nor will they care about one another.*

*[23:102] As for those whose weights are heavy, they will be the winners.*

*[23:103] Those whose weights are light are the ones who lost their souls; they abide in Hell forever.*

I like to think of those weights as our good deeds. God's reward. We want to get as many good deeds as we can in this life. We can positively reinforce the good that we do and acknowledge it going into our record. Our own encouragement or pat on the back. We have to be careful not to become boastful, proud or arrogant. All good comes from God. But this check to reality can help us to not get sucked into the void of distraction.

Many times, we don't have an immediate reward directly presented to us. But we know our reward is in the Hereafter.

*[32:17] You have no idea how much joy*

*and happiness are waiting for you as a reward for your (righteous) works.*

An extension of positive reinforcement of things being written to our record is to ask God for rewards in Heaven. For instance. "Let my record show that I am here for *Jumu'ah*, paying attention, remembering God and heeding the reminder that I will be held accountable." We know God has already recorded all that, but when we consciously acknowledge it ourselves and thank God for being able to do it, it reinforces the blessing.

Then, we might add "And it would be nice if I had ... in Paradise."

Why ask? If we cannot conceive the beauty and joy that awaits in Heaven, why try? Well, why not? We can take the Quranic descriptions of Paradise and know that whatever we come up with, it exceeds it. Trying to conceive it, and knowing how beautiful it is, gives our mind this connection to the beauty that exists there. Not only do our hearts melt for the beauty of Paradise, but even our mind right now, thinking the positive thoughts, benefits from such a thought. We get double benefit.

Some personal examples: I would love to have gelato in heaven. A cherry tree I can share. Nice grass that I don't have to tend to. And so on. What beautiful things we can come up with? And again, the point isn't to get greedy or "I'll do this, so

You give me that" behavior. We know that even just making it to Paradise is great. *[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.*

It is about being able to connect to the true reality. Understanding that we have a record that will note everything we do. Understanding that we want to return to God with a record we are proud of, with heavy weights because we will be held accountable. Understanding that Paradise is the eternal abode as a reward. So, whether we get the cherry tree in this life or not, doesn't matter to us. May God make us aware of the reality. Help us stay focused on the truth of this life and avoid all the pitfalls of distractions. May God accept all of our good deeds, however small, acknowledged by us or not, and help us grow in good beyond expectations.

*[2:25] Give good news to those who believe and lead a righteous life that they will have gardens with flowing streams. When provided with a provision of fruits therein, they will say, "This is what was provided for us previously." Thus, they are given allegorical descriptions. They will have pure spouses therein, and they abide therein forever.*

Kenan