

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

Monthly Bulletin of International
Community of Submitters

www.masjiduntucson.org



Published by Masjid Tucson
Rabi II 1444

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God is the Best Therapist

I feel I have started to truly submit to God since COVID-19. God has unique ways of teaching us and sometimes I have caught myself saying God has a great sense of humor especially when things don't necessarily go my way (which I am so thankful for).

To start digging into the title and what that really means to me and maybe to you, I want to share a bit of an overview of who I am, as a person. I was introduced to submission when I was in my teens. Little did I know then that my whole life was going to change just with that one decision to worship God alone. It was definitely not an easy task—being a teenager, accepting submission and having non-submitting parents all at once.

As any insane teenager (not all are as crazy), I took a lot of wrong turns. I come from a very traditional family and growing up in an oppressive environment, being a rebel was my way out mentally. My teens and all of my 20s were challenging, mostly because of my wrong choices and decisions. God knew the only way I learnt was by burning excruciatingly in my own wrongdoing, so I'd understand never

to waver. It worked, and I am eternal-ly thankful to my Creator.

[94:5] *With pain there is gain.*

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

All of the wrong turns led to years of sorrow and pain. I have had severe depression for as long as I remember and that is a topic not many people like to discuss, especially if you come from a strict culture. For years, I dealt with depression, suicidal thoughts, and feeling lost.

Even after all the sins and mistakes, God was Kind to forgive me and give me the opportunity to redeem myself.

[28:16] *He said, "My Lord, I have wronged my soul. Please forgive me," and He forgave him. He is the Forgiver, Most Merciful.* I finally had gotten over the repercussions of my wrongdoing, God gifted me a wonderful home, a supporting husband, a job that allows me to do my 5 prayers. What more did I need? Everything has been perfect, God helped me through it all; however I still suffered from depression and I couldn't figure out why.

*Happiness: Now and Forever**

[10:62] *Absolutely, GOD's allies have*

nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[10:63] *They are those who believe and lead a righteous life. [10:64] For them, joy and happiness in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. This is GOD's unchangeable law. Such is the greatest triumph*

Footnote- Most people think that they have to wait until the Day of Resurrection before they receive their rewards for righteousness, or the retribution for wickedness. But the Quran repeatedly assures the believers that they are guaranteed perfect happiness here in this world, now and forever. At the end of their interim here, they go directly to Paradise (see Appendix 17)

These verses, and the message God sent through His messenger, promised perfect happiness now and forever. However, I kept failing to understand why I was yet to achieve that. I've corrected my ways as much as I can, then why do I feel so depressed? I know God controls the minds and hearts of all. ... [48:4] *He is the One who places contentment into the hearts of believers to augment more faith, in addition to their faith... then why can't He fix me and make me feel better?*

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Just as I was battling these thoughts and trying to figure out what I was doing wrong, I found myself in the middle of a pandemic. The world stopped around me (though we did manage to salvage some food and toilet paper from the store); we were locked inside the house, me and my family. The house that we were staying in started to grow smaller and smaller as days passed. People were getting laid off around me and I kept getting buried in work, wondering if I was next. Not a good recipe for someone who has severe depression.

My mental condition started to deteriorate; I was stuck and now there was no way out. God's promise wasn't coming true for me, and I blamed myself for my excruciating pain every single day. I felt He didn't love me because I deserved to suffer.

[4:79] Anything good that happens to you is from GOD, and anything bad that happens to you is from you. We have sent you as a messenger to the people, and GOD suffices as witness.

During this time, NY state was offering free counselling. I do believe that counselling, therapy sessions, advancements in medicine are all God's gift to us; they are means and resources that God has made accessible to all of us and we should avail these as long as we remember God is the only one who controls everything.

[7:54] Absolutely, He controls all creation and all commands.

Finally, I couldn't take this pain any longer. I had feelings of not wanting to exist again in spite of having it all—money, family, material luxuries. I regretted that I chose freedom of choice unlike the stars and the moon. I detested myself, I was now at the end of the road. I had no way out. I didn't want to go to counselling, I felt they wouldn't understand and I would just be another statistic in their book.

I tried hard to make the call, but I still wasn't comfortable going to a

therapist, that's when a thought crossed my mind. *[26:80] "And when I get sick, He heals me.* God is the best Healer; would God accept to be my therapist instead?

I sat down and decided to talk to God. I prayed and asked Him if He could be my Therapist. I let it all out, I cried in pain seeking His help. It was a one-way conversation, and there was no burning bush around for me to hear back. However, afterwards I felt better, maybe because I vented it all. Days passed by and every day I would talk to my Therapist about how I felt.

As I was going along trying this new personal healing project, I also made sure to use all the resources available from God. I would go through Dr Khalifa's material that God had him leave for us. I also promised myself to do a few minutes of meditation every night, no matter how tired I was. During this time, there were online Quranic studies and I started joining those as well. I also started applying a few suggestions from God's messenger in my everyday life with a hope that God would send some healing.

[5:12]..... And GOD said, "I am with you, so long as you observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and believe in My messengers and respect them, and continue to lend GOD a loan of righteousness. I will then remit your sins, and admit you into gardens with flowing streams...

Days passed by and slowly and steadily I started to feel better. I found myself to be happier, the fog that covered my brain and my heart felt like it was lifting. After a few months, someone close to me pointed out that I was different, that I wasn't sad anymore. When I realized that people around me were noticing the same difference I saw in me, I jumped in joy! Praise be to God! I don't feel that depression any more. I am a happy person now every single day, perfect happiness, now and God willing forever. I couldn't believe it was possible but here I am feeling like I never felt before.

When I run into unfavorable issues, I find myself saying God is running everything and moving along cheerfully. I do have my days of being snappy, but that is mostly because of work (who loves working for corporate anyway). I find it hard to convey in words how it feels to be happy after knowing depression for years on end. Laughing my heart out at something that is funny. My Therapist helped me, even though He didn't respond to me in words; He healed me in actions. He sent help in the form of Quran and His messenger and other submitters. He sent help in forms that I don't know. But help did arrive.

[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.

I realized connecting to God at an individual level, especially during meditation, being mindful in our contact prayers, following His messenger, reading His scripture, joining the Quranic study groups and above all denouncing idolatry in every sense and form sends healing and mercy in ways we cannot comprehend.

[2:186] When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided.

As long as we make the conscious choice of submitting to Him alone, as long as we are in His Kingdom, His healing, His love, His blessings will shine through to us.

Coming out of depression was a big milestone in my life. I am now left with happiness and a routine that surprisingly God already had mentioned which I didn't think to apply.

I make sure to read the Quran every day, as many verses as I can.

[17:82] We send down in the Quran healing and mercy for the believers...

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I make sure to do my meditation in the night.

[73:6] The meditation at night is more effective, and more righteous. [73:7] You have a lot of time during the day for other matters. [73:8] You shall commemorate the name of your Lord, to come ever closer and closer to Him.

I try not to miss my contact prayers.

[2:45] You shall seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). This is difficult indeed, but not so for the reverent, [2:46] who believe that they will meet their Lord; that to Him they ultimately return.

Lastly, I try to attend as many Quranic studies as I possibly can.

Quranic Study Groups

[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.

Now that I look back, I realize that all the pain did bring all the gain for my soul. God knows each and every single one of us, the circumstances that can bring us closer to Him are known only to Him.

[9:51] Say, "Nothing happens to us, except what GOD has decreed for us. He is our Lord and Master. In GOD the believers shall trust."

Sana

Masjid Tucson 2022 Charity Water Fundraising

Peace be upon you (my dear submitter family),

Congratulations to my dear sisters and

brothers for an amazing fundraising campaign. This was another gift from GOD with another success, mashaAllah.

In 2011 (11 years ago) when we started our first campaign, I could never have imagined that it would go so far and be so successful. Thank GOD it did and I pray that we keep going, under GOD's guidance and protection.

We chose "Charity water" based on a few facts. For example, there's a basic need for survival and good health to have safe drinkable water. Having clean water in our life is the best jumpstart that anyone can have. May GOD direct us to show our appreciation and not to ever take it for granted.

I really believe a charity like this is truly a gift from GOD to all of us whereby we get a chance to strive in the cause of GOD. At the same time we can reflect and compare our blessings with those who have less. It helps us think to realize that there are millions of people who never had a glass of safe and drinkable water in their lives. Have we thought what would be the feeling of having your first glass of water? Or having your first shower without worrying about the water?

THANK YOU GOD, that's what comes to my mind.

By GOD's grace so far (not including our 2022 fundraising campaign), we have funded 32 water wells, which has provided for thousands of people fresh and drinkable water for the first time in their lives. Imagine that first sip!

Our 2022 campaign was the most successful to date, praise God. We raised \$52,541 which will provide wells to serve 1313 people. I just noted that if you put those numbers side by side—525411313—it's a multiple of 19! Praise God.

So, we thank GOD for such a blessing; thanks to everyone who supported this project, those who donated from \$2 to \$10,000 and everything in between.

[3:134] Who give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. GOD loves the charitable.

Rahim

Attacks of Gratitude

This is not about some new terrorist activity! It is an idea from a newspaper article. A man was despondent when his business shut down, but then he found a great new job with a large company. So, instead of being depressed over the loss of his business, he experienced an "attack of gratitude." He realized how blessed he was, and he chose to express that gratitude through charity. The author encourages everyone that any time you're in a close call—maybe a car nearly hits you: instead of being mad, be grateful that you were saved from the accident. Instead of anger, say thank you God and perhaps give a little charity.

[4:149] If you work righteousness—either declared or concealed—or pardon a transgression, GOD is Pardoner, Omnipotent.

[34:13] They made for him anything he wanted—niches, statues, deep pools, and heavy cooking pots. O family of David, work (righteousness) to show your appreciation. Only a few of My servants are appreciative.

We know that David's family was one of the most appreciative. For example, every time something happened, Solomon thanked God.

[27:19] He smiled and laughed at her statement, and said, "My Lord, direct me to be appreciative of the blessings You have bestowed upon me and my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. Admit me by Your mercy into the company of Your righteous servants."

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Non-profit Org
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ISSN 1089-053X

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[27:40] *The one who possessed knowledge from the book said, "I can bring it to you in the blink of your eye." When he saw it settled in front of him, he said, "This is a blessing from my Lord, whereby He tests me, to show whether I am appreciative or unappreciative. Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good, and if one turns unappreciative, then my Lord is in no need for him, Most Honorable."*

We are in this world to see if we will work righteousness.

[11:7] *He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His (earthly) domain was completely covered with water—in order to test you, to distinguish those among you who work righteousness. ...*

Righteousness Defined

[2:177] *Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.*

47:2 makes a connection between working righteousness and being blessed with contentment.

[47:2] *Those who believe and work righteousness, and believe in what was sent down to Muhammad—which is the truth from their Lord—He remits their sins, and blesses them with contentment.*

There's a website, "gratefulness.org", and one of the founders, a Christian monk, says that to be happy we must be actively grateful or appreciative. The idea is that being appreciative in both words & deeds triggers happiness. There's research also that shows giving to charity triggers happiness. In the Quran we find that it's that and much more. Appreciativeness is closely linked to being a submitter. A submitter will be appreciative of God and work righteousness. And it takes being appreciative to be a submitter.

[16:120] *Abraham was indeed an exemplary vanguard in his submission to GOD, a monotheist who never worshiped idols. [16:121] Because he was appreciative of His Lord's blessings, He chose him and guided him in a straight path.*

[31:12] *We have endowed Luqmān with wisdom: "You shall be appreciative of GOD." Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good. As for those who turn unappreciative, GOD is in no need, Praiseworthy.*

[31:13] *Recall that Luqmān said to his*

son, as he enlightened him, "O my son, do not set up any idols beside GOD; idolatry is a gross injustice."

Any type of idol-worship means we are not truly appreciative of God and all that God in His Grace and Mercy has given us—including this life as a chance to redeem ourselves. "Every moment is a gift to appreciate, because it is given to you, you don't give it or control it; nor do you know if you will have more." (Gratefulness.org) And that's a good reminder: we should try our best to appreciate God now, because procrastinating on appreciation (or righteousness), is being unappreciative of that moment God gave us to remember and appreciate Him.

[14:7] *Your Lord has decreed: "The more you thank Me, the more I give you." But if you turn unappreciative, then My retribution is severe.*

[2:152] *You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.*

Am I there yet? Am I in that blissful state of submission and appreciation every moment no matter if something "nice" or "annoying" happens? No, I slip up and need to ask forgiveness on a regular basis. But I know it's worth the work it will take because of how helpful "attacks of gratitude" can be. Appreciation grows our soul in submission to God. And submission leads to happiness!

Faiz