

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Contentment

Happiness is a state of mind, it is an outcome of a content heart. It is defined by different people in different ways. When we feel positive emotions we tend to feel happy. Happiness is also regarded as the mental state of a person in an optimistic manner. It has nothing to do with the materialistic things. One might feel that people with huge amounts of material wealth are very happy and peaceful. But it is not necessarily the case. One can find people who have a smile on the face with few material possessions in life. This life itself is the greatest blessing for them, a blessing that demands to be valued, to be cherished, to be lived in the best possible form. The possibility of remaining discontented in spite of success and prosperity arises from the insatiable nature of our desires, and the common tendency to long for something better than our present condition. Life comes with ups and downs, with smiles and tears, with success and failures. All these are part of life and it's what makes life beautiful and truly worth living. Happiness motivates us to do more and failures teach us to do better.

Whatever is out of our reach seems

valuable to us till we get it, and once possessed, it can lose its value. It appears humans are always dissatisfied with what they have. This is unfortunately the character of most human beings. But a person with a contented heart will always try to find a reason to be happy.

It is said that, where there is shade there comes the sun. It takes a contented heart to know the beauty behind all the struggles, all the failures, all the setbacks that make us a beautiful and grateful person. The person with the contented heart tries to find happiness in the smallest things around him. He feels happy even by looking at the not so important things.

Life is beautiful, whether you live in a home and enjoy all the luxuries or far away from home pursuing and struggling to earn your livelihood. Life should always be considered as a great blessing from God. We should always live with hope and faith, work hard to pursue what we want to achieve, especially for the soul. We should not let go of any opportunity to serve God, may it be big or small. Seeking to please God, even through

small gestures like feeding a hungry person or wiping the tears of an orphan or showing sympathy and care to animals, can become acts of good deeds which bring contentment to our hearts with joy and happiness.

We get to see healthy relationships ruined suddenly due to some silly reasons. Mutual understanding between spouses, siblings and friends are spoiled due to lack of confidence and trust. Most of the issues crop up due to ego. It was ego that proved the reason for the downfall of Iblees. It was the ego of Noah's son that cost him the safe berth in Noah's ark. It was ego that destroyed the self-proclaimed god, Pharaoh. It's ego that clouds one's heart, causing one to ally with Satan and face painful retribution.

[48:26] While those who disbelieved were enraged, and their hearts were filled with the pride of the days of ignorance, GOD blessed His messenger and the believers with peaceful contentment, and directed them to uphold the word of righteousness. This is what they well deserved. GOD is fully aware of all things.

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Contentment of heart is an important blessing of God. Only God can grant it to whomever He chooses. Never lose hope; always trust in God. Never get bogged down by hardships in life for God promises ease after it. Appreciate the finer sides of your life and be thankful for it.

The materialistic success of this life may not be long-lasting, but contentment of heart is. Nobody can snatch it away from you. These two important aspects of life are just like our outer body and the inner self or soul. Our bodies define only our looks, whereas our souls highlight our personality. Our bodies will decay or get destroyed after death, whereas our souls are eternal. A happy life is not defined by being successful, by having the perfect job, house, cars and other luxuries. Instead it is defined by how righteously you live your life, how good an example you set, how beautiful your heart is, how empathic you are, how thankful you are.

Life is packed with the ups and downs, success and failure, tears and smiles but what makes us survive all this is hope, hope to do better, and hope to try harder next time. Hope to get God's help. God alone ensures that we receive contentment in our hearts:

[48:4] He is the One who places contentment into the hearts of believers to augment more faith, in addition to their faith. To GOD belongs all forces of the heavens and the earth. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise.

In order to receive the blessings of contentment of heart one needs to be a believer in God alone. He grants us the peace and tranquility along with the addition of more faith into our hearts. For God this is not at all difficult. He is Most High, Omnipotent.

We should always be thankful to God for everything that He has blessed us with. Life seems beautiful with a family that supports you, with a friend who defends you, with having parents

who believe in you, with siblings who understand you, with a teacher who motivates you, etc. We cannot calculate enough such blessings of God that grant peace and comfort to our hearts. Every morning we need to thank God for the new lease of life. The more we thank God the more He enhances the contentment in our hearts and protects us from all kinds of evil forces.

[76:11] Consequently, GOD protects them from the evils of that day, and rewards them with joy and contentment.

Staying contented in life with what you have is a key to a happy life. Complaining and grumbling never leads to happiness. Staying focused on the current life instead of daydreaming of the good old days teaches you to accept the reality of life. We shouldn't blame others for something that went wrong in life. Life is all about submitting to God. Stop worrying, trust God and set new goals in life.

We always say how fortunate we are to have received the wisdom and knowledge to accept submission to God alone. Let us thank God for saving us from going astray.

[39:22] If GOD renders one's heart content with Submission, he will be following a light from his Lord. Therefore, woe to those whose hearts are hardened against GOD's message; they have gone far astray.

Believing in God is the first step. Thereafter, one needs to nourish and develop the soul through the practices of worship. Taking that first step itself was a giant task which we took by God's help. We are indeed very fortunate to have done that. We find many examples of people in the Quran, who had witnessed umpteen number of live demos of the miracles, yet they could not believe. Now that we achieved this great blessing from God, let us not waste it. Let us keep magnifying God. Only then can we win the final event of making it to Paradise.

[8:2] The true believers are those whose hearts tremble when GOD is

mentioned, and when His revelations are recited to them, their faith is strengthened, and they trust in their Lord.

Please God, bless us all with contentment of heart and make us feel His closeness all the time.

Abdul Ghani

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CHARITY: GOD'S SYSTEM

Part 2: Voluntary charity

In the previous article, we talked about Zakat. We know that from the time of Abraham, the percentage is 2.5% of the income. What if someone is able and eager to give more than 2.5% of income? Or maybe they have, by God's grace, plenty of wealth and they want to give from their wealth without being extravagant (25:67)?

If one can afford to give more than just 2.5% of one's income, that's wonderful. No one should be criticized for being generous.

[9:79] Those who criticize the generous believers for giving too much, and ridicule the poor believers for giving too little, GOD despises them. They have incurred a painful retribution.

[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.

[25:67] When they give, they are neither extravagant, nor stingy; they give in moderation.

You may earn 100,000 dollars and instead of giving just 2500 to your relatives, you give 10,000. Or you give all 100,000 to relatives and orphans and poor people because you're a billionaire by God's

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grace. But of that 100,000 that you gave, only 2.5% was obligatory; the rest was voluntary.

In Arabic, there are two terms that are well-known and associated with charity, one is “sadaqah” and the other is “zakat”. Most of us understand charity as the broader term and that Zakat is a specific kind of charity because it is the “obligatory” part (see previous article in the January 2023 issue).

We see in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadaqah>: The term ‘sadaqah’ stems from the Arabic root word ‘sidq’ (s-d-q) صدق, which means sincerity and it is considered as a sign of sincere faith. The three-letter root of this word, S-D-Q, also means, “to speak the truth,” “to be sincere,” and “to fulfill one’s promise.”.

For example, the same root word is used at the end of 2:177 “sadaqum”

[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.

While the verses usually associate sadaqah with money, it’s not always the case. For example, we see in 5:45 a non-monetary form of charity:

[5:45] And we decreed for them in it that: the life for the life, the eye for the eye, the nose for the nose, the ear for the ear, the tooth for the tooth, and an equivalent injury for any injury. If one forfeits what is due to him as a charity, it will atone for his sins. Those who do not rule in accord-

ance with GOD’s revelations are the unjust.

One of the first references to “sadaqah” in the Quran also points out the mentality to give with.

[2:263] Kind words and compassion are better than a charity that is followed by insult. GOD is Rich, Clement. [2:264] O you who believe, do not nullify your charities by inflicting reproach and insult, like one who spends his money to show off, while disbelieving in GOD and the Last Day. His example is like a rock covered with a thin layer of soil; as soon as heavy rain falls, it washes off the soil, leaving it a useless rock. They gain nothing from their efforts. GOD does not guide disbelieving people.

Research shows that giving people cash along with “psychosocial support” has significant advantages. Training people in business or in other life skills can provide long lasting benefits to the recipient.

God also tells us how and what to give to charity: *[2:267] O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the good things you earn, and from what we have produced for you from the earth. Do not pick out the bad therein to give away, when you yourselves do not accept it unless your eyes are closed. You should know that GOD is Rich, Praiseworthy.*

[9:60] Charities shall go to the poor, the needy, the workers who collect them, the new converts, to free the slaves, to those burdened by sudden expenses, in the cause of GOD, and to the traveling alien. Such is GOD’s commandment. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise.

If we can keep charity anonymous it is better: *[2:271] If you declare your charities, they are still good. But if you keep them anonymous, and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and remits more of your sins. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

We also learn that giving charity is for our own good, and should be done only for

the sake of God: *[2:272] ... Any charity you give is for your own good. Any charity you give shall be for the sake of GOD. Any charity you give will be repaid to you, without the least injustice.*

[76:8] They donate their favorite food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive. [76:9] “We feed you for the sake of GOD; we expect no reward from you, nor thanks. [76:10] “We fear from our Lord a day that is full of misery and trouble.” [76:11] Consequently, GOD protects them from the evils of that day, and rewards them with joy and contentment.

And although we don’t do it for the worldly gain, giving to charity has benefits to the recipient and society in general. Which helps us see the wisdom in God’s system. Of course, God could have fed everyone directly, but we chose to come here and experience Satan’s kingdom. And that includes realizing that only God can provide. So, even though there is enough food, due to all kinds of worldly limitations, people still go hungry. God turned that into a test (opportunity) for people to act righteously.

And for those who do not believe in God or are not doing their charity for God, He put in worldly rewards as well.

An online article in psychologytoday.com is titled: “Worried About Money? Give Some Away”. An extract follows, discussing the research on how charity provides benefits to the giver.

Money Can Buy Happiness

Although it might seem counterintuitive, there’s evidence that giving away even a small sum may help ease your financial stress. In a study published in Science in 2008, participants were given an envelope containing either \$5 or \$20 in the morning and asked to spend the money by 5 p.m. Those randomly assigned to a “personal spending” group were told to use the money on a personal expense or gift for themselves, while those assigned to a

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MASJID TUCSON United Submitters International

PO Box 43476 Tucson AZ 85733-3476 USA

Tel: (520) 323 7636

internet web site: www.masjiduntucson.org

e-mail: info@masjiduntucson.org (or: masjiduntucson@gmail.com)

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“prosocial spending” group were told to use the money on a charitable donation or gift for someone else. At day’s end, the participants were asked to rate their happiness. Those who had spent as little as \$5 on another person or cause reported being happier than those who had spent it on themselves.

Feeling Like a Million Bucks

Why does giving money to a worthy cause or a friend in need lift your spirits? First, it may foster a sense of social connectedness. One theory posits that the more modest your means, the more you and your close family and friends may need to rely on one another to get by; hence, the greater focus on generosity.

Second, donating money gives you a sense of making a difference. That’s a welcome antidote to the feeling of helplessness that can come from watching wild stock market gyrations ...

Third, sharing even a little money may reduce your body’s stress response. Elizabeth Dunn, PhD, the same University of British Columbia psychologist behind the \$5 spending study, also led another study that looked at how monetary stinginess affects cortisol, a stress hormone. In the study, college stu-

dents played an economic game, for which they were paid \$10. Students had the option of donating some of this payment to another player. Those who kept more of the money for themselves reported feeling more shame. And greater shame, in turn, predicted higher levels of postgame cortisol.

So, we see charity has benefits for the body when done on its own. But the benefits are far greater when we do it for God—because it causes the soul to grow. A well-developed nourished soul is happy. Happiness is Submission to God.

To conclude, we see that giving to please God, whether it’s the obligatory charity, *Zakat*, or any charity we do to please God with a reverent heart (23:60) is for our own good. Charity helps remit our sins and helps us attain righteousness (3:92) and happiness. God loves the charitable (2:195, 3:134).

[23:60] As they give their charities, their hearts are fully reverent. ...

[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.

We pray that God accepts our worship and our charity and allows us to be among the righteous.

Ramadan 2023

Ramadan begins on **March 22** in USA and Canada, God willing (the Night of Destiny will start, God willing, at sunset of April 16). Most locations in USA will end fasting on April 20 (additional details below).

Full details of fasting are given in verses 2:183-187. *[2:183] O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation.*

New moon times for determining the beginning and ending of Ramadan are below for GMT/UTC (Universal time).

Mar 21, 2023: 5:23 PM (UTC/GMT)

April 20, 2023: 4:12 AM (UTC/GMT)

The local new moon time can be calculated by adjusting for your time-zone relative to UTC. To calculate the Ramadan start date, compare the local New Moon time with the local Sunset. If the new moon is before sunset, we fast the next day, God willing. Similarly, to determine the last day of fasting, compare the time of the next new moon with the local sunset. If the new moon is before sunset, the Ramadan month is complete on that day. Otherwise one fasts the next day. For more details on how dates are calculated, please see the [September 2009](#) issue of the Submitters Perspective

For more details or to use a tool to assist you in verifying Ramadan details for your location, please visit:

<https://masjiduntucson.org/Ramadan/>

Faiz