

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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MORAL RELATIVITY VS GOD'S LAWS

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

I am an American with Iranian heritage who has been living in the United States since the age of four. One of the most significant aspects of becoming a submitter for me was the struggle to come to terms with the huge difference between the Western philosophies and culture I had been raised with and that which I had learned through the Quran. Like it or not, the education system, the media, and of course, the people you encounter have a tremendous influence on a person's thinking, at least on a subconscious level.

When I began attending university, I took advantage of the resources around me to help me understand and resolve the internal conflicts which had been occupying my mind. I read the classics, the works of great social scientists, books on women's studies, anything I could get my hands on. I started to develop a sense of isolation

and frustration as I noticed that most of the intellectuals whose books were major influences on our present culture and ways of thinking seemed to completely ignore the soul in their research, analyses, and philosophies.

Twentieth century science and the reason and rationality behind it found the soul a meddling and annoying thorn in its side. And so, they just ignored its existence.

In the 1880's, a philosopher by the name of Nietzsche changed the course of modern thought when he proclaimed to the world that "God is dead." With the burden of dealing with God and His mysterious ways off their shoulders, the wheels of intellectual thought began turning towards a more pragmatic and rational approach to explaining human nature and man's social structure.

Sigmund Freud, whose theories are the basis of modern pop-psychology, was a great fan of Nietzsche. Psychology became a science where all aspects of human behavior would be understood and explained by man

himself. The physical and mental regions of our mind would supposedly provide all the answers to the mysteries of human behavior. The soul and God did not fit into the equation very well, and so, they were simply disregarded. Nietzsche's "discovery" that God no longer existed brought about a revolution in how we dealt with morality, ethics, and values.

Without a God, there was no longer any absolute truth. Without truth, there was no good or evil. Without evil, there was no Satan. Everything became relative. We entered a period where nothing was black or white, but rather, various shades of gray. The way we were educated, the way social issues were dealt with, and the way standards were set in society were all becoming very vague and unstable. Without a social base of truth to rest upon, our society began to collapse.

The primary building block of any social structure is the family. The family begins with two: a man and a woman. Therefore, how the initial pair creates

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their bond will manifest the growth and development of the family structure as well as the social structure. Unfortunately, when Nietzsche took God and absolute truth out of the equation, he destroyed the concept of unconditional love and commitment. Without the shackles of religion to get in the way, so to speak, contemporary society proclaimed a new breed of sexual freedom never before present so visibly in man's history.

Although there have been periods of great sexual promiscuity in the past, our modern media magnifies the impact it has on the society in a way that was not possible before. The sixties and the women's movement just made this sexual freedom more equal among the genders. Ironically, however, the outcome of women's sexual liberation only made it easier for men to get what they wanted from women while devaluing the woman's worth at the same time.

Today in society, a lot of issues deal with the idea of sex, yet none of the issues deal with the question of the morality of sexual activity out of a marriage. All we talk about is abortions, contraceptives, AIDS, venereal disease (VD), and teenage pregnancy, all physical by-products of our society's obsession. Where would Oprah or others be without all the problems, misery, and wasted energies that they present on their talk shows?

What amazes me is the amount of money and time dedicated to informing the public about the wide variety of social problems facing our nation, yet so little is done to prevent these problems from occurring in the first place. But, let us remind ourselves that school teachers, politicians, and opinion leaders are afraid to take a stand for things such as abstinence from sex, saying no to alcohol, and obeying God's laws in a society where there is no tolerance for people

with firm and absolute beliefs. In other words, free speech is encouraged as long as what you say has no spiritual, religious, or absolute morality connected to it. It is okay if you sit in class and expose in minute detail your physical urges as a homosexual, but God forbid you speak up about God or morality! After all, nobody likes a party pooper.

It is sad for me to observe my peers struggle through unnecessary hardships because they insist upon having casual sex, drinking, and focusing all their attention on how to gain the most pleasure in this life with the least amount of pain. When bad things happen to them, like getting in a wreck due to drunk driving, or getting pregnant, they do not look at their actions to see what they did wrong. Instead, they only reconfirm in their own minds how unjust God is and how they are just victims of society.

I have presented just one example of how disregarding the existence of God and our soul is destroying a potentially wonderful civilization. When economic analysts wonder why the U.S. workers are so unproductive, why our students are falling behind, and why top research positions are held by foreigners, we should remind them that it is hard to have an efficient and productive community when everyone is so wrapped up in their personal problems.

Which brings me back to a single pair: a man and a woman. An act as seemingly insignificant as casual sex can add up to the decline of an entire civilization. I am not being dramatic. I just have eyes to observe the consequences around me every day. God knows us better than we know ourselves. Thus, we should take heed of even the most seemingly trite or irrelevant commandments in the Quran, because they are actually very profound words of guidance from God.

Parisa P.

[Ed.'s note: This article is a reprint from September 1993 S.P.]

A Canadian Submitter's Journey to Submission

I was born and raised in Quebec, Canada but moved to the capital city of Canada - Ottawa, Ontario. My parents are from the Azores Islands in Portugal. I was raised as a Catholic. In my teens, I switched to becoming a "born again Christian" in my quest for the truth. I would read the Bible, take notes, write charts and diagrams and found discrepancies and errors. In my heart I really loved God and would talk to God with many tears. I remember praying on my knees to God for many hours at a time.

I went to every different church denomination there was but was disappointed because I wanted to get closer to God but found I was alone in this quest. I later became confused because some taught Jesus was God, then there was the trinity issue. Time passed and I married and had 3 children. I divorced and one of the issues was that I wanted to pursue my quest for true devotion to God.

A high school friend of mine that I've known for many years married a non practicing Muslim. I would try to convert her to Christianity. This made her think about God and started her quest for the truth. She looked over Islamic books and watched a couple of Ahmed Deedat debate tapes (Islam vs Christianity). One day she told me that now was my turn to listen to her and she insisted that I watch this tape. I was hesitant because I thought that Christianity was the only true religion. I've never heard about Islam. Islam was not heard of back in the 90's where I live. Nobody ever told me about it. After watching this debate, I was convinced that I was in error and was deceived. Me and my friend both became Muslims in 1999 December.

My quest didn't stop there because the simplicity and joy of accepting Islam was soon to take me to another journey. I soon found out people were telling me things that were not in the Quran and telling me Hadiths. You have to understand that coming from a Christian background and my deep quest for the truth and my cries to God I could see something was wrong. It seemed like there were many sects, divisions, rules and regulations that tried to take away the simplicity of it all. I didn't believe in Hadiths, I don't wear a headscarf. I believe in only Quran. So I stopped socializing with mainstream thinking Muslims to avoid conflict. I found your site by doing google searches on topics on Quran only.

Thank you.

H.G.

THE TRUTH ABOUT DEATH

The concept of death can be derived from the verses of the Quran.

He is the One who puts you to death during the night, and knows even the smallest of your actions during day. He resurrects you every morning, until your life span is full-filled, then to Him is your ultimate return. He will then inform you of everything you had done. He is Supreme over His creatures, and He appoints guards to protect you. When the appointed time of death comes to any of you, our messengers put him to death without delay. Then everyone is returned to God, their rightful Lord and Master. Absolutely, He is the ultimate judge; He is the most accurate reckoner. (6:60-62)

The time of death is predetermined

No one dies except by God's leave, at a predetermined time. Whoever seeks the vanities of this world, we give him therefrom, and whoever seeks the rewards of the Hereafter, we bless him therein. We reward those who are appreciative. (3:145)

No one knows the time or place of one's death

With God is the knowledge regarding the Hour. He is the One who sends down the rain, and He knows the contents of the womb. No soul knows what will happen to it tomorrow, and no one knows in which land he or she will die. God is Omniscient, Cognizant. (31:34)

Every soul will experience death

Every soul will taste death, after we put you to the test through adversity and prosperity, then to us you ultimately return. (21:35)

We already experienced our first death until we were born into this world

Most exalted is the One in whose hands is all Kingship, and He is Omnipotent. The One who created death and life for the purpose of distinguishing those among you who would do better. He is the Almighty, the Forgiving. (67:1-2)

The second death concludes our life in this world

How can you disbelieve in God when you were dead and He gave you life, then He puts you to death, then He brings you back to life, then to Him you ultimately return? (2:28)

The righteous do not experience the second death

The righteous will be in a secure position. Enjoying gardens and springs. Wearing velvet and satin; close to each other. We grant them wonderful spouses. They enjoy in it all kinds of fruits, in perfect peace. They do not taste death therein—beyond the first death—and He has spared them the retribution of Hell. (44:51-56)

The angels terminate their lives in a state of righteousness, saying, "Peace be upon you. Enter paradise as a reward for your works." (16:32)

The Quran gives an example of the death of a righteous person

"And for claiming that they killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God. In fact, they never killed him, they never crucified him—they were made to think that they did. All factions who are disputing in this matter are full of doubt concerning this issue. They possess no knowledge; they only conjecture. For certain, they never killed him. Instead, God raised him to Him; God is Almighty, Most wise." (4:157-158)

They plotted and schemed, but so did God, and God is the best schemer. Thus, God said, "O Jesus, I am terminating your life, raising you to Me, and ridding you of the disbelievers. I will exalt those who follow you above those who disbelieve, till the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me is the ultimate destiny of all of you, then I will judge among you regarding your disputes." (3:54 - 55)

The unrighteous experience the second death

Those who disbelieve will be told, "God's abhorrence towards you is even worse than your abhorrence towards yourselves. For you were invited to believe, but you chose to disbelieve." They will say, "Our Lord, you have put to us to death twice, and you gave us two lives; now we have confessed our sins. Is there any way out?" This is because when God Alone was advocated, you disbelieved, but when others were mentioned beside Him, you believed. Therefore, God's judgment has been issued; He is the Most High, the Great. (40:10-12)

The nature of second death can be derived from these verses

If you could only see those who disbelieved when the angels put them to

death! They will beat them on their faces and their rear ends; "Taste the retribution of Hell. This is a consequence of what your hands have sent forth. God is never unjust towards the creatures." (8:50-51)

How will it be for them when the angels put them to death? They will beat them on their faces and their rear ends. (47:27)

The Quran gives examples of the death of unrighteous people

The angels put them to death in a state of wronging their souls. That is when they finally submit, and say, "We did not do anything wrong!" Yes indeed. God is fully aware of everything you have done. (16:28)

Whenever a plague afflicted them, they said, "O Moses, implore your Lord - you are close to Him. If you relieve this plague, we will believe with you, and will send the children of Israel with you." Yet, when we relieved the plague for any length of time, they violated their pledge. Consequently, we avenged their actions, and drowned them in the sea. That is because they rejected our signs, and were totally heedless thereof. (7:134-136)

The death of righteous and unrighteous can be compared from these verses

The (angels who) snatch (the souls of the disbelievers) forcibly. And those who gently take (the souls of the believers) joyfully. (79:1-2)

Finally, there is a crucial reminder in the Quran—the unavoidable end for those who may die as disbelievers:

Those who disbelieve and die as disbelievers, an earthful of gold will not be accepted from any of them, even if such a ransom were possible. They have incurred painful retribution; they will have no helpers. (3:91)

Therefore, we should work for and pray to God that we do not die except as Submitters to Him alone.

Moreover, Abraham exhorted his children to do the same, and so did Jacob: "O my children, God has pointed out the religion for you; do not die except as submitters." (2:132)

O you who believe, you shall observe GOD as He should be observed, and do not die except as Submitters. (3:102)

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GOD IS LOVE

We hear that phrase all the time: God is Love. And there is a great deal of truth in the statement. However, sometimes people construe it to mean that God loves everyone and everything. That's wishful thinking. And while it's a lovely sentiment, it can be dangerous and lull one into a false sense of security: If God loves everyone, then He must love me. Therefore, I don't have to do anything. I'm saved.

When you look up "love" in the Quran, you actually find more places where God tells us clearly what He does NOT love. This doesn't negate the statement "God is Love," but rather it strengthens it. For God loves us enough to be very clear in what we should and should not do with our lives; to give us the guidance to correct our mistakes and stay on the right path; to truly earn God's love.

Simplified, here's what God does not love:

GOD does not love the aggressors.

GOD does not love the disbelievers.

GOD does not love the unjust.

GOD does not love any betrayer, guilty.

He does not love the wasters.

He does not love the gluttons.

He does not love the transgressors.

GOD does not love any betrayer, unappreciative.

GOD does not love those who are arrogant.

GOD does not love the corruptors.

He does not love the disbelievers.

He does not love the unjust.

GOD does not love those who are boastful, proud.

It's a pretty complete list. Those are common human characteristics that we need to strive to overcome and avoid.

Of course, there are many people that God loves:

GOD loves the charitable.

GOD loves the repenters, and He loves those who are clean.

GOD loves the righteous.

GOD loves the steadfast.

GOD loves the good doers.

GOD loves those who trust in Him.

GOD loves those who are benevolent.

GOD loves those who are equitable.

GOD loves those who are just.

GOD loves those who fight in His cause united in one column, like the bricks in one wall.

So we can easily see the things to strive for—being fair and kind, being charitable and righteous, and trusting in God. If we make the effort, God will help and support us. He tells us in 5:54 and 9:108: *GOD loves those who purify themselves.* And He says in 19:96: *Surely, those who believe and lead a righteous life, the Most Gracious will shower them with love.*

The following verses are specifically addressed to Moses, but they apply to each one of us and are important to remember.*I showered you with love from Me, and I had you made before My watchful eye. I have made you just for Me. ...Do not be afraid, for I will be with you, listening and watching.* (20:39, 41, 46)

We don't want to be complacent and assume that we have God's love, but we don't need to be afraid that we can never receive that love. In 3:31, the messenger is told: *Proclaim: "If you love GOD, you should follow me." GOD will then love you, and forgive your sins. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

In His incredible mercy, He gives us chance after chance to repent and reform and lead a righteous life. God really IS Love.

Lydia