

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Submission (Islam): Keeping it simple and how I explain it to others

A few of my jobs in my life have brought me to places where it is not politically correct to be "Muslim" but I've never wavered in my faith. By God's grace, I am proud of who I am and what I believe. Instead of being confrontational I have simply adopted the following guidelines for explaining it to others. I've done my best to keep it as simple as possible (based on my experiences of what people want to know) and it seems to work. It's by no means a comprehensive guide to God's religion (for that one needs to read the Quran). I have yet to get into any argument while following these guidelines and have found many of my co-workers and friends are even more accepting and supportive of me now, thank God.

1) I believe in one God by whatever name you want to call Him (17:110). There are no others. He has no equal. I believe He created and runs everything. I believe we have one thing to accomplish in this world that is to worship Him and ultimately return to Him. I believe this with every fiber of my being.

2) Submission (in Arabic, *Islam*) is what makes sense for **ME**. So yes, I do pray 5x a day, or at least try to. I do

fast once a year and God willing will be able to do Hajj someday. The "Islam" I practice is far different than the traditional culture-based Islam portrayed in the media. The culture of Islam (what most in western civilization would see as the Middle East) is vastly different than the religion of Submission sent down by God from the time of Abraham. I converted when I was 14 and I grew up in up-state New York and urban areas of Arizona. I do not speak Arabic. My views may be a bit different than the kid born in downtown Dubai, rural Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, etc. Submission (Islam) answered a lot of questions other religions could not.

3) I do NOT require anyone else to believe the same. Freedom of religion is God's decree (2:256, 18:29). I will NEVER try to cajole, intimidate, or threaten anyone else to believe the way I do. I will happily share information on my philosophies and why I believe what I do but I expect nothing but a simple exchange of information. I expect others to extend me the same courtesy. I will not change my views on my faith at this point, God willing. I don't even expect my children or my wife to believe the same as me. I give

them information and expect them to make their own decisions. God guides whom He wills (28:56). You cannot FORCE anyone to be a submitter (10:99). Only God has this power (26:4). This is how I was taught and how I teach others.

4) I believe in all the miracles mentioned in the Old Testament, Quran and New Testament. So yes, this includes the virgin birth of Jesus, parting of the Red Sea, Jesus healing the blind, ... and the list goes on and on. I believe God did this with HIS power through the human agents that He created. God created EVERYTHING (2:29)! This includes the universe, so parting a puddle on our little mud ball (earth), having Mary become pregnant with Jesus, having Jesus speak from the crib, while pretty awesome, are not really that big of a deal once you understand the greatness of God. I look up every night at the sky, I listen to the wind blow and see miracles every day and I think they are no less convincing as proofs to me (45:3-5).

5) I believe in the principle of self-responsibility (53:38-9). I will answer to God alone for MY sins and trans-

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gressions. Not yours, not my wife's or my children's and not anyone else's. I will answer for me and me alone. I do not require Jesus, Mohammed, Moses, the saints or anyone else to save me nor do I believe they could. I need the message they taught. Believe in God alone.

6) I am neither Shia nor Sunni (God says not to make sects out of His religion, 30:32). I read the Quran and accept if for what it is. If it's not in the book I'm not worried about it. This is not meant to be disrespectful but to be blunt. It doesn't matter to me what hand Muhammad used to eat with or anything else people claim he did. Same goes for any other prophet. This includes Moses, Jesus, Noah, etc.

7) Suicide is forbidden. (4:29). I can't explain suicide bombers, don't ask me to. I think it's stupid to take your own life and evil to murder people in the name of religion.

8) Heaven and Hell are eternal (2:80-82). You go to one or the other... forever.

9) I don't eat bacon. Get over it. There are only 4 things I cannot eat. Have you seen the rest of the menu on the planet? Praise God! I'm pretty sure I can live without breaking God's prohibitions. This can be found in the Quran (6:145, 16:115).

- Carrion.
- Running blood. Remember the original Red Dawn movie where they kill the deer and drink the blood. Yeah, not going to happen.
- The MEAT of pigs. Lard is not prohibited.
- Food blasphemously dedicated to other than God.

10) I really don't understand the trinity. Please, don't try to explain it to me. Others have tried and it doesn't make sense to me. Both Jesus and Mary were created by God. Anything that was created by something can be destroyed by something. God is eternal and cannot be destroyed or die as Mary and Jesus did. Nor do I believe Jesus was God incarnate or the "son"

of God. God has no need for sons. He created everything, has power over everything, knows everything, etc.

11) If it ever walked or talked on this planet, I will never pray to it. This includes the prophets, the messengers or the "saints", which I still don't get. Apparently there are "saints" in some branches of Islam. I just found this out a few years ago. In my logic, anything that existed on this planet was created by something else which follows it can be destroyed by something else and therefore has limited power.

12) I believe in evolution, but I don't believe we evolved from monkeys (32:7, 15:28). Evolution is a divinely guided process. The Quran talks about this (21:30, 24:45). Please don't hit me with what you consider to be "hard science". I am not discounting science; I have my own reason for my belief which is actually based on mathematics and the prime number nineteen. If you're curious, ask and I'll point to the material, God willing.

As mentioned earlier, I have no expectation I will change anyone's mind. You shouldn't have expectations you will change mine either.

Jason

Fulfilling our obligations

[3:76] *Indeed, those who fulfill their obligations and lead a righteous life, GOD loves the righteous.*

[3:77] *As for those who trade away GOD's covenant, and their obligations, for a cheap price, they receive no share in the Hereafter. GOD will not speak to them, nor look at them, on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. They have incurred a painful retribution.*

From these verses of the Quran, we can see that all humans have certain obligations to fulfill in order to enjoy God's grace and be redeemed by Him. In the Quran, God has provided us with the information we need about our obligations and how to fulfill them. There are both religious obligations and obligations for everyday righteous living.

Obligation is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "An act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment."

Religious obligations

Our religious obligations include the religious practices: The Contact Prayers (*Salat*), the obligatory charity (*Zakat*) (2:110, 6:141, 20:14, 22:78), fasting during the month of Ramadan (2:185) and performing Hajj pilgrimage for those who can afford it (3:97, 22:27-29).

Observing the worship practices also helps us develop and strengthen our souls—our real selves (2:177, 30:44). Since the religious rites are so important for developing our souls, we need to be careful not to be distracted from them by this worldly life. The example of Solomon comes to mind; he became preoccupied with his beautiful horses and missed a Contact Prayer (38:30-32).

Furthermore, obeying God is part of our obligation (24:52-54). We obey God by

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Quran app: Android, iOS, Windows

[73:4] *... And read the Quran from cover to cover.*

[96:1] *Read, in the name of your Lord, who created.*

By God's grace, we have a Quran app available for your phones, tablets and PCs (Windows). You can read Quran, search for a verse, save your bookmarks and more. Please visit:

<http://www.masjiduntucson.org/quran/app/>



Quran: The Final Testament
(Authorized English Version)
Translated from the Original by Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D.

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obeying His laws and commandments (4:13, 33:70-71, 57:27). God's commandments have an inherent wisdom and we benefit as individuals and as a society when we follow them (6:151-153, 8:73).

[24:52-53] Those who obey GOD and His messenger, and reverence GOD and observe Him, these are the triumphant ones. They swear by GOD, solemnly, that if you commanded them to mobilize, they would mobilize. Say, "Do not swear. Obedience is an obligation. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do."

When there is a human messenger among us we want to obey and follow him (4:59, 20:90, 26:106-108, 43:63, 64:12, 72:19-23, 2:143). After a messenger's death we follow the message delivered by the messenger, which includes observing the practices and rites they taught us (2:135, 31:15). The Quran is a messenger of God (11:1-3, 65:10-11).

Personal obligations

Besides religious obligations, we also have personal obligations in our daily lives and affairs (3:76). Examples of fulfilling personal obligations given in the Quran include repaying loans (3:75-3:76), Moses fulfilling his work agreement (28:27-29) and the witnesses of a loan testifying when they are asked to testify (2:282). The Quran also discusses obligations in marriage and divorce (4:24, 4:34, 2:226-233, 2:240-241).

Our Covenant with God

One of the ways we can remind ourselves about our obligations to God is to think about obligations in terms of covenants.

Covenant is defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary as "a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement." An article that discusses the meaning of covenant in the Old Testament states that a covenant is elected and relational as two parties enter it by choice. Furthermore, it is "a relationship of obligation, because it always binds one or both of the parties to certain specified duties."

Therefore, a covenant is in fact an obligation we have taken upon ourselves to fulfill. We all made a covenant with God to worship Him alone (36:60-61). Making a covenant comes with responsibility (17:34). It is important for us to act responsibly and fulfill our covenants with God and others (5:1, 5:7, 6:152).

[17:34] You shall not touch the orphans' money except for their own good, until they reach maturity. You shall fulfill your covenants, for a covenant is a great responsibility.

This article is first a reminder for me. In this life we have religious and personal obligations to fulfill and when we fulfill them, we reap the rewards here and in the Hereafter.

References:

Quran: The Final Testament (Authorized English Version) translated by Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D.

<http://lionelwindsor.net/2010/01/26/whats-the-precise-meaning-of-the-word-covenant-in-the-old-testament/>

Farinaz

Be included in our email list for weekly reminders

God has blessed us with the opportunity to send weekly reminders to submitters on our list. The email is not long. It usually consists of a topic and the corresponding Quranic verses and links to get more information. The reminder is sent every Thursday/Friday, God willing.

[51:55] And remind, for the reminder benefits the believers.

We would like every submitter, whether receiving our newsletters or not, to be included in the list. God willing you can join the list by sending an email to info@masjidtucson.org and saying that you want to be in the weekly reminder list. If you want to make it a really short email, write "weekly reminder" in the subject line and send it. Or join via: <http://masjidtucson.org/current/weekly.html>

If you also include in the email your city and state, God willing we can compile this information and use it for the submitters who are asking to communicate with other submitters in their area.

THE REMINDER REMINDS THE REMINDER

Why does God mention "remind" so often in the Quran? Because He knows that we need constant reminders. And why does He tell us frequently to remind others? Because He knows that by reminding someone else, we are also reminding ourselves.

[51:55] And remind, for the reminder benefits the believers.

When you remind your child to do his homework, it's to his benefit to follow this advice. But if he does or doesn't do his homework, it doesn't affect you directly. If you remind your small child not to touch the hot stove, you will not be harmed if he doesn't listen.

But when you remind someone to worship God alone, this not only provides a benefit for the person being reminded, but it also, by God's immense mercy and grace, benefits the reminder. God gives you credit for remembering Him and exhorting others, in a nice manner, to do the same. Whether or not the person pays any attention to your reminder, you still receive the credit. And only God knows what's in the heart of this person; perhaps years later, he or she will remember the reminder and finally take heed.

[6:69] The righteous are not responsible for the utterances of those people, but it may help to remind them; perhaps they may be saved.

We know that the majority of people on earth will not worship God and even those that do will pollute their worship with idols (12:103 & 106).

[37:13] When reminded, they take no heed.

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[74:49-53] *Why are they so averse to this reminder? Running like zebras. Who are fleeing from the lion! Does each one of them want to receive the scripture personally? Indeed, they do not fear the Hereafter.*

This is the behavior of disbelievers. They don't want to hear it; they turn away in aversion— [26:5] *Whenever a reminder from the Most Gracious comes to them, that is new, they turn away in aversion.*

[32:22] *Who is more evil than one who is reminded of these revelations of his Lord, then insists upon disregarding them? We will certainly punish the guilty.*

Yet, we are told to remind. [87:9] *Therefore, you shall remind; perhaps the reminder will benefit.* The word "remind" means to cause someone to remember something. So, this is something we need to do for one another in submission. When we remind each other that it's time to pray, this is a benefit for everyone. When we remind each other that we need to be charitable or humble or forgiving, this benefits the person receiving the advice and the person giving it. And the person receiving the admonition needs to remember that. [25:73] *When reminded of their Lord's revelations, they never react to them as if they were deaf and blind.*

Sometimes, however, advice sounds like criticism. If someone says it's time to pray, you might react as if they are implying that without the reminder you would not remember to pray. When you're going through some hardship and someone says, "You need to repent and reform," this reminder might sound like a rebuke. You can react with anger and frustration—"I know what I have to do!"—or you can appreciate the caring of the other person and take the reminder to heart. And the person giving the reminder needs to intend it with heartfelt concern, first asking if there's any way they can be of help and offering prayers of solace. Both parties need to remember that God has set up the situation for all involved, and the reminder will remind both the remindee and the reminder. For the believers, this becomes a reason for celebration and giving thanks to God.

[38:49] *This is a reminder: The righteous have deserved a wonderful destiny.*

[50:8] *This is an enlightenment, and a reminder for every pious worshiper.*

[76:29] *This is a reminder: whoever wills shall choose the path to his Lord.*

We are told to remind, and a reminder is always of benefit if we get our ego out of the way and open up to God's guidance.

Lydia

God Willing

33rd Annual Conference
United Submitters
August 3-5, 2018
Dallas, Texas



God willing, the annual conference of United Submitters International will be in Dallas TX, on August 3-5. It is an opportunity to remember God, increase our knowledge and meet our brethren in faith (3:191-194, 18:28, 58:11, 49:10).

Registration and hotel details are available online at:

www.masjiduntucson.org/conference/

As usual, attendance will be by invitation only. To help us organize a successful conference—and God has always been generous and gracious towards us—please let us know of your plans as soon as you know. For questions or information please email: info@masjiduntucson.org.