



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Following Blindly

Following the Parents Blindly: A Common Tragedy

[31:21] When they are told, "Follow these revelations of GOD," they say, "No, we follow only what we found our parents doing." What if the devil is leading them to the agony of Hell?

[37:69-70] They found their parents astray. And they blindly followed in their footsteps.

[43:22] The fact is: they said, "We found our parents carrying on certain practices, and we are following in their footsteps." [43:23] Invariably, when we sent a warner to any community, the leaders of that community would say, "We found our parents following certain practices, and we will continue in their footsteps."

(also 5:104, 2:170, 7:70, 11:109, 14:10)

Two stories: The Czar in Russia came upon a sentry standing at attention in a remote area of the palace garden. When he asked the sentry what he was guarding, the soldier did not know. The Czar summoned the Captain of the Guard and asked him. He replied that there was a standing order for a sentry in that spot, but he didn't know why. The Czar was now

very curious and had the palace records searched. It turned out that Catherine the Great had received a rare and lovely rosebush. When she had it planted, she commanded that a sentry be posted around the clock to protect the bush. Catherine the Great and the rosebush had both died many many years ago, but the order had never been rescinded. Every day a soldier stood guard over a bare piece of ground with no idea why.

In preparing a leg of lamb dinner for her family, a young wife cut off the end of the lamb and threw it away before putting the lamb in the roasting pan. Her husband watched her and asked why she did that. It seemed a waste of good meat. "I don't know," she replied, "My mother always did." He then visited his mother-in-law and asked her why she cut off part of the lamb before cooking. Perhaps there was some secret to proper cooking involved. But his mother-in-law only said that her mother had always done it, though she wasn't sure why. Now very curious, he called up his grandmother-in-law and asked her why she cut off part of the lamb before roasting. Grandma laughed. "My roasting

pan was too small to hold the whole leg," she answered.

These stories simply illustrate what can happen when we accept information without verifying it, without seeking the truth behind it. When we blindly follow what we are told, we can end up guarding an empty space or throwing away good food.

God has given us the intelligence to live in this world, but we have to use that intelligence or go through life blindly. [17:36] *You shall not accept any information, unless you verify it for yourself. I have given you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brain, and you are responsible for using them.*

It's a great blessing to have ears to hear with, eyes to see with, and a brain to process all the information. We need to be appreciative of that blessing. [23:78] *He is the One who granted you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains. Rarely are you appreciative.*

I think the best way to show that appreciation is to use the gifts God gave us. We hear so much nonsense every single day—from co-workers, from television, even from friends. We have to

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use our brain to filter out the bad and discard it. Don't hold onto it; certainly don't pass it on. We see things all the time with our gift of sight—movies, books, even billboards. Again, there is good and bad in these things and the job of our brain is to store the good for future use and get rid of the bad.

As submitters, our most important job is to worship God alone. Most religions say that that's their way of thinking, yet most of them have been corrupted and actually promote the worship of idols. Growing up in a Christian household, I understood that Jesus was the son of God and that I needed to accept him into my heart in order to be saved. It was simply the established rule. I never asked my parents or my minister why; I simply went along. Baptism, confirmation, reciting the Apostle's Creed, Christmas, Easter—it was all a part of my life, with no more thought than guarding a dead rose bush or throwing away good lamb.

God is the only One who can guide us out of that darkness and lead us into the light. When we begin to question the accepted norm, it can be upsetting and quite scary. How can all these millions of people be wrong?

[5:77] Say, "O people of the scripture, do not transgress the limits of your religion beyond the truth, and do not follow the opinions of people who have gone astray, and have misled multitudes of people; they are far astray from the right path."

We know now that it's not numbers that matter. [6:116] *If you obey the majority of people on earth, they will divert you from the path of GOD. They follow only conjecture; they only guess.*

In fact, claiming numbers as a proof of being on the right path is something the disbelievers do, not the believers. [19:73] *When our revelations are recited to them, clearly, those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Which of us is more prosperous? Which of us is in the majority?"*

Going against our family and friends can be daunting. But the consequences of not following God's guidance, due to peer pressure, is far more devastating.

Social Pressure: A Profound Disaster
[29:25] *He said, "You worship beside GOD powerless idols due to peer pressure, just to preserve some friendship among you in this worldly life. But then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown one another, and curse one another. Your destiny is Hell, wherein you cannot help one another."*

The most difficult pressure is our parents. They raised us and took care of us and as children we feel they can do no wrong. And God tells us to honor our parents in both the Old Testament (Exodus 20:12) and the Quran (6:151, 17:23, 46:15). But we can honor them and be kind to them and treat them well and still follow God's true guidance.

[9:23] *O you who believe, do not ally yourselves even with your parents and your siblings, if they prefer disbelief over believing. Those among you who ally themselves with them are transgressing.*

[31:14-5] *We enjoined the human being to honor his parents.... If they try to force you to set up any idols beside Me, do not obey them. But continue to treat them amicably in this world....*

The most important thing is not to follow blindly. Not to follow anyone or anything blindly. We hear something and believe it to be true and, without verifying, we accept and perhaps pass it on to others as fact. This is dangerous in everything, but is especially horrible when it comes to our soul and our salvation.

[5:104] *When they are told, "Come to what GOD has revealed, and to the messenger," they say, "What we found our parents doing is sufficient for us." What if their parents knew nothing, and were not guided?*

God has given us this amazing brain. We need to continuously implore Him to increase our knowledge and under-

standing and follow His guidance, and only His guidance, to the right path. As Abraham said: [43:27] *"Only the One who initiated me can guide me."*

Lydia

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Sins

The biggest sin of all is idol worship.

The Unforgivable Sin

[4:48] *GOD does not forgive idolatry,* but He forgives lesser offenses for whomever He wills. Anyone who sets up idols beside GOD, has forged a horrendous offense.*

*4:48 *Idol worship is not forgivable, if maintained until death. One can always repent from any offense, including idolatry before death comes (see 4:18 & 40:66).*

The Unforgivable Sin

[4:116] *GOD does not forgive idol worship (if maintained until death),* and He forgives lesser offenses for whomever He wills. Anyone who idolizes any idol beside GOD has strayed far astray.*

*4:116 *A simple definition of idolatry: Believing that anything beside God can help you.*

Idol worship seems "harmless". No one got killed or hurt, did they? But God calls it a horrendous offense. One reason why it may seem "benign" is humans measure against the body. When we speak of the soul, idolatry does lead to "death"—our own—and the worst kind of misery. Hell-fire. While it's usually the self that is the victim, if one puts an eternity in hell into perspective, it's the worst thing we could do. Also, it goes hand-in-hand with other sins. If one can commit idolatry, one can block out God's commands at different levels. This may also be why it's called the "mother of all evil" in the subtitle for 14:30 and an abomination in 22:30.

Idol Worship: The Mother of All Evil

[14:30] *They set up rivals to rank with GOD and to divert others from His path. Say, "Enjoy for awhile; your final destiny is Hell."*

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[22:30] ... You shall avoid the abomination of idol worship, and avoid bearing false witness.

Another reminder of how bad idol worship is: we cannot pray for forgiveness for someone committing idol worship. Abraham, beloved friend of God, was “pulled up” for asking for forgiveness for his father. That’s a lesson for us all. It’s one of those sins one has to “fix”. We have to be worshiping God alone before we die. So, if we see ourselves leaning towards idolization of something—whether it’s work or family or money or our own ego, or whatever we’re thinking of most of the day besides God—we have to fix that here and now. The good news is that we can repent, seek God’s forgiveness, and reform and devote worship to God alone.

[2:160] As for those who repent, reform, and proclaim, I redeem them. I am the Redeemer, Most Merciful.

There’s one sin for which we do not see any type of redemption. That is deliberately murdering a believer. Instead, God says to be absolutely sure before we strike in the cause of God.

[4:93] Anyone who kills a believer on purpose, his retribution is Hell, wherein he abides forever, GOD is angry with him, and condemns him, and has prepared for him a terrible retribution. [4:94] O you who believe, if you strike in the cause of GOD, you shall be absolutely sure. Do not say to one who offers you peace, “You are not a believer,” seeking the spoils of this world. For GOD possesses infinite spoils. Remember that you used to be like them, and GOD blessed you. Therefore, you shall be absolutely sure (before you strike). GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.

Another gross offense is fabricating lies about God.

[4:49] Have you noted those who exalt themselves? Instead, GOD is the One who exalts whomever He wills, without the

least injustice. [4:50] Note how they fabricate lies about GOD; what a gross offense this is! ...

Accusing someone else of one’s sin is also terrible. So, if I steal something and blame my sister for it, it’s a blasphemy and a gross offense (4:112). Much better to accept one’s sin and ask God’s forgiveness (4:110).

[4:110] Anyone who commits evil, or wrongs his soul, then implores GOD for forgiveness, will find GOD Forgiving, Most Merciful. [4:111] Anyone who earns a sin, earns it to the detriment of his own soul. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise. [4:112] Anyone who earns a sin, then accuses an innocent person thereof, has committed a blasphemy and a gross offense.

Killing people: this should go without saying but it’s not that long ago that people settled disputes through a duel, for example. And even today, in a civilized country like USA, thousands of people are killed in violent crime.

Murder, Suicide, and Illicit Gains Prohibited [4:29] O you who believe, do not consume each others’ properties illicitly— only mutually acceptable transactions are permitted. You shall not kill yourselves. GOD is Merciful towards you. [4:30] Anyone who commits these transgressions, maliciously and deliberately, we will condemn him to Hell. This is easy for GOD to do. [4:31] If you refrain from committing the gross sins that are prohibited for you, we will remit your sins, and admit you an honorable admittance.

These verses also talk about suicide and illicit gains from things that are not mutually acceptable. One example is usury (2:275-6), because someone is being forced or taken advantage of. Unfortunately money is a common idol.

[17:31] You shall not kill your children due to fear of poverty. We provide for them, as well as for you. Killing them is a gross offense. [17:32] You shall not commit adultery; it is a gross sin, and an evil behavior.

In addition to killing, 17:31-32 also deals with adultery. This is another gross sin. Adultery also is connected with abortion. Data shows that the majority of those who obtain an abortion are unmarried (85% in USA according to a Guttmacher report). The same organization also reported that about 49% of abortions were people below federal poverty level and 75% were either poor / low-income. Not surprisingly, God tells us not to kill the children due to “fear of poverty”.

Three gross offenses, Idol-worship, murder and adultery, are mentioned together in: *[25:68] They never implore beside GOD any other god, nor do they kill any soul—for GOD has made life sacred—except in the course of justice. Nor do they commit adultery. Those who commit these offenses will have to pay. [25:69] Retribution is doubled for them on the Day of Resurrection, and they abide therein humiliated. [25:70] Exempted are those who repent, believe, and lead a righteous life. GOD transforms their sins into credits. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful. [25:71] Those who repent and lead a righteous life, GOD redeems them; a complete redemption.*

The verses also leave the door open for people sincerely repenting and leading a righteous life.

Intoxicants and gambling are gross sins too.

[2:219] They ask you about intoxicants and gambling: say, “In them there is a gross sin, and some benefits for the people. But their sinfulness far outweighs their benefit.” ...

[5:90] O you who believe, intoxicants, and gambling, and the altars of idols, and the games of chance are abominations of the devil; you shall avoid them, that you may succeed. [5:91] The devil wants to provoke animosity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and to distract you from remembering GOD, and from observing the Contact Prayers (Salat). Will you then refrain?

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From the government Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 17-18% of inmates said in 2004 they committed the offense to get money for drugs. Alcohol was a factor in between 19-37% of violent crimes between 1997-2008.

The verses describe intoxicants (among other sins) as abominations. The dictionary defines "abomination" as: abhorrent, disgusting, very bad. Some abominations mentioned in Quran:

[6:121] *Do not eat from that upon which the name of GOD has not been mentioned, for it is an abomination. The devils inspire their allies to argue with you; if you obey them, you will be idol worshippers.*

[7:80] *Lot said to his people, "You commit such an abomination; no one in the world has done it before! [also: 27:54, 29:28]*

[49:12] *O you who believe, you shall avoid any suspicion, for even a little bit of suspicion is sinful. You shall not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite one another; this is as abominable as eating the flesh of your dead brother. You certainly abhor this. You shall observe GOD. GOD is Redeemer, Most Merciful.*

[61:2] *O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do? [61:3] Most abominable in the sight of GOD is that you say what you do not do.*

[40:35] *They argue against GOD's revelations, without any basis. This is a trait that is most abhorred by GOD and by those who believe. GOD thus seals the hearts of every arrogant tyrant.*

Other gross offenses listed in the Quran include: concealing God's revelations and guidance, being too arrogant and rejecting the revelations, persecuting someone who didn't do anything wrong (33:58), and falsely accusing someone of adultery or gossiping about it (24:15, 23).

[2:159] *Those who conceal our revelations and guidance, after proclaiming them for the people in the scripture, are condemned by GOD; they are condemned by all the condemners. [2:160] As for those who repent, reform, and proclaim, I redeem them. I am the Redeemer, Most Merciful.*

[7:40] *Surely, those who reject our revelations and are too arrogant to uphold them, the gates of the sky will never open for them, nor will they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the needle's eye. We thus requite the guilty.*

Another example of a gross sin is in:

[21:87] *And Zan-Noon (Jonah, "the one with an 'N' in his name"), abandoned his mission in protest, thinking that we could not control him. He ended up imploring from the darkness (of the big fish's belly): "There is no god other than You. Be You glorified. I have committed a gross sin."*

The righteous are described as avoiding gross sins (53:32, 42:37) except for minor offenses. We're not sinless, and God in His mercy allows us to repent and reform. If we can refrain from the gross sins and follow God's commands, God promises us an honorable admittance (4:31).

[53:32] *They avoid gross sins and transgressions, except for minor offenses. Your Lord's forgiveness is immense. He has been fully aware of you since He initiated you from the earth, and while you were embryos in your mothers' bellies. Therefore, do not exalt yourselves; He is fully aware of the righteous.*

[42:37] *They avoid gross sins and vice, and when angered they forgive.*

[4:31] *If you refrain from committing the gross sins that are prohibited for you, we will remit your sins, and admit you an honorable admittance.*

Faiz

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