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Masjid Tucson, 739 E 6th St, Tucson, AZ 85719, USA
Telephone: (602)791-3989

Happiness is Submission to God



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ADVERSITY CONTINUED

"This is what God has given me. No one possesses power except God." You may see that I possess less money and less children than you. My Lord may grant me better than your garden. He may send a violent storm from the sky that wipes out your garden, leaving it completely barren. Or, its water may sink deeper, out of your reach. His crops were wiped out, and he ended up sorrowful, lamenting what he had spent on it in vain, as his property lay barren. He finally said, 'I wish I never set up my property as a god besides my Lord.' No force on earth could have helped him against God, nor was he capable of receiving any help."

God would like to see us appreciative under all circumstances. However, He must expose our true qualities. To accomplish this He tests the people through adversity. Sura 3:142 says, "Do you expect to enter Paradise without God distinguishing those among you who strive, and without distinguishing those who steadfastly persevere?" A perfect example found in the Quran of arrogant people whose true qualities were exposed, and who failed the test of adversity by showing their lack of belief in God, is found in Sura 3:153-154. These verses show a terrible reflection of ego, arrogance and rejection. "Recall that you rushed (after the spoils), paying no attention to anyone, even when the messenger was calling from behind you. Consequently, He substituted one misery in place of another, that you might not grieve over what you missed, nor agonize over the hardship you suffered. God is Cognizant of everything you do. After the setback, He sent down peaceful slumber that pacified some of you. Others were selfishly concerned about themselves. They harbored thoughts about God that were not true- the same thoughts they

had harbored during the days of ignorance. Thus, they said, 'Is anything up to us?' Say, 'Everything is up to God.' they concealed inside themselves what they did not reveal to you. They said, 'If anything were up to us, none of us would have been killed in this battle.' Say, 'If you stayed in your homes, those destined to be killed would have crawled into their death beds.' God thus puts you to the test to bring out your true convictions, and to unveil what is in your heart. God is fully aware of the innermost thoughts." These are the type of thoughts we must avoid, with God's help. God does promise to strengthen the sincere with the proven word, in this life, so we can withstand adversities.

God promises never to burden any soul beyond his, or her, means (2:286). Therefore we know that the adversity is a test and good for strengthening our soul. God says in Sura 3:139-141, "You shall never waver, nor worry, for you shall be the victors, if you are believers. If you suffer any hardship, the enemy suffers the same hardship. We alternate the days of victory and defeat among the people. God thus distinguishes those who truly believe, and grants martyrdom to some of you. God does not love the unjust. God thus toughens those who believe, and humiliates the disbelievers."

We always ask God to make our lives easy, peaceful, and to bless us with convenience rather than hardship. Inshallah, "God-willing," we will continue to receive assurances and contentment from God. It is also important for us to recognize and understand the meanings of hardship and adversity if we are faced with them, thereby, allowing us to strengthen and purify our souls. "He knows their past and their

future, while none encompasses His knowledge. All faces will submit to the Living, the Eternal, and those who are burdened by their transgressions will fail. As for those who worked righteousness, while believing, they will have no fear of injustice or adversity" (20:110-112).

PRAISE BE TO GOD, LORD OF THE UNIVERSE!

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SUBMITTERS PERSPECTIVE

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In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

SUBMISSION EVEN IN ADVERSITY

"They are the ones whose hearts tremble upon mentioning God, they steadfastly persevere during adversity, they observe the contact prayers (Salat) and from our provisions to them, they give" (22:35).

Adversity is a part of life, and everyone will face it during their lifetime. This is actually the best way for God to test if we will worship Him under all types of situations. It would be very easy to be appreciative, content, and submissive if everything throughout our entire lifetime were perfect. We are given many examples throughout Quran that tell us we will have to face adversity. In verses 64 and 65 of Sura 17, God instructs and permits Satan to work on us. "Go ahead and entice them with your voice, mobilize all your forces and all your men against them, and take a share of their money and children, and promise them. Anything the devil promises is no more than an illusion. As for my servants, you have no power over them." Your Lord suffices as a protector." God also speaks of the adversity we will face in Sura 2:155-156, "We must test you with some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast who say when an affliction befalls them, 'We belong to God, and to Him we ultimately return.'"

We're all aware of the examples of fair weather friends found in the Quran such as in Sura 22:11, "Among the people there is the one who worships God conditionally. If things go his way, he is content. But if some adversity befalls him he makes an about-face. Thus he loses both this life and the Hereafter. Such is the real loss." It is very important for us to be appreciative and

remember God under all circumstances, and if this is not done, we become people who are appreciative and worship God only if things go our way. We do not want to be conditional worshippers of God. It is a human tendency to even deny hardship for fear that God may be humiliating us. God provides an example of this in Sura 7:94-95, "Whenever we sent a prophet to any community, we afflicted its people with adversity and hardship, that they may implore. Then we substituted peace and prosperity in place of that hardship. But invariably, they turned heedless and said, 'It was our parents who experienced that hardship before prosperity.' Consequently, we punished them suddenly when they least expected." The conditional worship of the human being and his arrogance is shown throughout the Quran. We must learn from these examples and not act like those described in Sura 39:49, "If the human is touched by adversity, he implores us, but as soon as we bestow a blessing upon him, he says, 'I attained this because of my cleverness!' Indeed, this is only a test, but most of them do not know."

There are reasons God sends down His provisions in exact measure. Sura 42:27 says, "If God increased the provision for His servants, they would transgress on earth. This is why He sends it precisely measured to whomever He wills. Surely He is fully Cognizant and Seer of His servants."

Another example of this is found in Sura 43:33, "If it were not that all the people might become one (disbelieving) congregation, we would have granted everyone who disbelieves in the Most Gracious mansions with silver roofs, and stairs upon which they could climb." A true believer submits to God's will in every aspect of his life. God knows what is best for us and we must be able to recognize this. Our Lord says in Sura 2:216, "...You may dislike something which is actually good for you, and you may like something which is actually bad for you. God knows while you do not know." Just as reductions or hardships are a test so, too, are blessings. God teaches the example of someone who was arrogant and unappreciative of his blessings in Sura 18:34-43, "Once, after harvesting, he was debating with his friend: 'I am far more prosperous than you, and I have more children.' He entered his garden, and wronged his soul by saying, 'I am secure for life; I do not think that the Hour (the Hereafter) will ever come. Even if I am returned to my Lord, I will (be clever enough to) possess an even better one over there.' His friend said to him, as he debated with him, 'Have you disbelieved in the one who created you from dust, then from a tiny drop, then perfected you into a man? As for me, God is my Lord, and I will never set up any other god besides my Lord. When you entered your garden, you should have said, (CONTINUED LAST PAGE)

FORGETFULNESS

by Shehu Adam

What would it be like if God created the human being without the trait of forgetfulness? I think that, for myself in particular, the opportunity of coming to this earth through my mother would have been missed. I happen to be the third child born to her and she confessed to me that, "Had God created humans never to forget, no woman would have given birth to a second child." To put this differently, it is a blessing from God that many pains during certain experiences in our lives, such as childbirth, are mercifully forgotten, allowing their repetition when necessary.

What else does forgetfulness entail? Is it always good to be forgetful? The answer, of course, is that forgetfulness can have severe, negative side affects. For example, Adam forgot God's commandments and allowed Satan to dupe him into disobeying his Creator by approaching the one forbidden tree in the garden. The same holds true for us as Adam's descendants. We often forget and break God's commandments by lying, cheating, gossiping, backbiting, and worst of all committing shirk, or idol worship. We commit this mother of all crimes, despite all the verses with reminders in the scripture, such as this one found in Sura 39:65, "It has been revealed to you, and to those before you that if you ever commit idol worship, all your works will be nullified, and you will be with the losers."

Despite the knowledge and wisdom given to most of us, we forget that God is the only One who controls everything. This causes us to think that people possess the power to harm or benefit us. We forget the lesson of Joseph when he depended on a human to relieve his hardship, rather than God. Our Creator teaches this in Sura 12:42, "He then said to the one to be saved, 'Remember me at your lord.' Thus, the devil caused him to forget his Lord, and consequently he remained in prison a few more years." It is a shame that we cannot see our enemy Satan as he constantly waits for every oppor-

tunity of our forgetfulness to lure us, and make us disobey the Most Gracious.

We often find ourselves afraid to remind our friends if they forget and break God's commandments because we do not want to hurt their feelings. With this type of attitude, we may find ourselves in a worse situation than our friends. This is to say that if family members (submitters), for example, backbite each other in front of us, and we are afraid to tell them they are breaking God's commandments because we want to be nice, we could end up committing a more serious crime than just participating in the backbiting with them. This can be shown with simple psychology. When people say, "We want to be nice," in situations where a reminder should be given, they are only making up an excuse. This excuse of being nice and not wanting to offend or hurt people by reminding them to stop this behavior, is not the complete truth. Attempting to avoid the "hurting of feelings" is not the real reason they don't remind people with the truth. The actual reason that we do not want the backbiters to become offended, or hurt, is because they may cause some hurt to us in return. Therefore, we are protecting our own feelings in disguise. This is what we shall term a civilized form of idol worship. We have fallen into the same trap as Joseph which God warned us about in the Quran. Satan made us forget and think that someone, other than God, had power to hurt, or make us feel bad. We forget the fact that God is the only one that controls our happiness, or misery. God proclaims this in Sura 53:43, "He is the One who makes you laugh or cry."

God created us and knows our weakness of forgetfulness. This is why He tells us in Sura 33:41-42, "O you who believe, you shall remember God frequently. You shall glorify Him day and night." God also gives us examples in the Quran of tasks we can do to always remember, and not for-

get, God such as salat or the contact prayers, "Recite what is revealed to you of the scripture, and observe the contact prayers (Salat). The contact prayers (Salat) will help you avoid evil works and vice. But the remembrance of God (through Salat) is the most important thing. God knows everything you do" (29:45). Our Creator also speaks of reciting Quran and meditation, among other ways, as a means used toward remembrance. We also learn of His extreme mercy, "This is a reminder; whoever wills let him choose the path to his Lord. Your Lord knows that you meditate during two-thirds of the night, or half of it, or one-third of it, and so do some of those who believed with you. God has designed the night and the day, and He knows that you cannot always do this. He has pardoned you. Instead, you shall read what you can of the Quran. ...Observe the contact prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and lend God a loan of righteousness. ...And implore God for forgiveness. God is Forgiver, Most Merciful" (73:19-20). God, in all His kindness, even tells us what to say whenever we do forget God and His commandments, "You shall not say that you will do anything in the future without saying, 'God willing.' This is to remind you of your Lord. If you forget, then say, 'May my Lord guide me to do better next time'" (18:23-24).

We should not allow ourselves to fall into the category of those who say they believe, but do not live according to God's teachings. We must strive to remember God's teachings as much as we can. Forgetting God is not one of those situations, such as childbirth, when forgetfulness is a benefit. Whenever we forget God's commandments Satan is waiting, ever ready to entice us. "Shall we treat those who believed and led a righteous life as we treat those who committed evil on earth? Shall we treat the righteous as we treat the wicked? This is a scripture that we sent down to you, that is sacred- perhaps they will reflect on its verses. Those who possess intelligence will take heed" (38:28-29).

FINE TUNING TOWARDS SUBMISSION

"OUR LORD, MAKE US SUBMITTERS TO YOU, AND FROM OUR DESCENDANTS LET THERE BE A COMMUNITY OF SUBMITTERS TO YOU. TEACH US THE RITES OF OUR RELIGION, AND REDEEM US. YOU ARE THE REDEEMER, MOST MERCIFUL" (2:128).

God emphasizes our purpose in this life in Sura 11:118-119, "Had your Lord willed, all the people would have been one believing congregation. But they will always dispute the truth. Except for those redeemed by your Lord. This is why He created them. The decision of your Lord has already been issued: 'I will fill Hell with jinns and humans, all together.'"

If God had willed, he could have guided all the people. He could have made all the people believe. The idea, however, is to let the people disbelieve and dispute. We know from the Quran that the whole reason for our existence occurred when Satan claimed he could be a god besides God. Our Lord called Satan's bluff. He said, "OK, I'm going to make you a god and all the creatures will see how you handle it. It will be clear that you can never be a god."

God made Satan a temporary god. God created the planet earth as Satan's dominion and created human beings as Satan's constituents. In order to be a ruler or god, there has to be a dominion and constituents. God gave human beings free will and they could, therefore, choose Satan as their master, if this was their will. We can either join in Satan's point of view which is that God alone is not enough or choose the only true point of view which is that God alone is enough.

If all the people sided with God's point of view, there would be no further reason for our existence. We learn from the above mentioned verses in Sura 11 that God knew we would dispute and disbelieve, and that many of us would choose Satan over God alone. Anytime that we

side with Satan, we enter into his kingdom. We can see that Satan is incompetent. He cannot keep the world from having accidents, misery or pain. He cannot maintain a perfect world. We must use caution not to do anything that remotely resembles Satan's point of view or we will become his constituents. Thus, he will claim us.

One idea greatly promoted by Satan is racism. Satan is the number one racist. God quotes Satan as saying in Sura 7:12, "He said, 'What prevented you from prostrating when I ordered you?' He (Satan) said, 'I am better than he; You created me from fire, and created him from mud.'" This verse is repeated several places in the Quran. Satan was obviously looking down on the human being. This is racism and one of Satan's principles. God teaches us that we are supposed to stand against oppression. However, we have to be able to distinguish racism from oppression in all its forms. Oppression comes in many forms and racism is one of them. For the forty-seven years I've been on this planet, I've had to face racism. If I continue to complain, I am not submitting. God created me and He knows my innermost thoughts. I have to address the character defect in my own self in order to submit. God says in Sura 49:13, "O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of God is the most righteous. God is Omniscient, Cognizant." God created us all for this test.

Every nationality, every color, every size, and every shape will face the test of racism. Whatever I say or do which resembles racism will cause my entry into Satan's kingdom. For example, the celebration of Martin Luther King Day in Arizona has been subjected to debate. If I go ahead and march in protest, I have to ask myself if I am doing this because of his color, or if I'm doing this because of God.

Would I do the same thing if they cancelled Columbus Day? Washington's Birthday? Lincoln's Birthday? They are not black. They are European-Americans. Would I do the same thing? If I'm doing this for color, that makes me a racist. If I'm doing this for God, then I'm submitting. I can be a racist from any angle- as the oppressor or the oppressed. In either case Satan can claim me and I would deserve to be with him.

We don't have to wait until we die to experience heaven. The prize is attainable now. God tells us in the Quran that we can be kings and queens on earth. This can belong to us now as well as in the Hereafter. We have made a decision to worship God alone. Now we must work on fine tuning ourselves to rid ourselves of imperfections. This is comparable to polishing a stone to a fine jewel. How long does this take? It depends on the roughness of the stone, what tools you're using, and how often the polishing takes place. Fine tuning eliminates our character defects little by little.

As for myself, even though the process seems slow, things do come into focus and the light comes on. What makes the Quran so great is that you can read it over and over and still find something that is new, at a time when you are to understand it in a new way, or paying attention to it for the first time concurrent with your life experience. This, again, is called fine tuning, or taking care of shortcomings within ourselves.

Thank God for allowing us to reach this point of worshiping Him alone and letting us look at our imperfections and shortcomings. Let us move forward with the fine tuning and polishing of the stones of our shortcomings into jewels of perfection, total submission to God alone.

ALL GLORY BE TO GOD!

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