

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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The Quran's Formula for Success

Life seems very unsure these days. The global economy is in turmoil, and wars and unrest spot the globe. Serious and extreme hardships have hit developing nations, some which have already been suffering for years. Here in California, the national and state economies are in major downturns, resulting in layoffs, home foreclosures, business bankruptcies, and dreams such as college or retirement deferred.

For many of us, the issues abroad and at home aren't just headlines; they affect us personally, deeply. It's enough to make us wonder if we'll make it. As spiritual people, as Submitters, we are blessed with the following guidance on hardship from the Quran, which can bring us reassurance:

2:286 GOD never burdens a soul beyond its means: to its credit is what it earns, and against it is what it commits...

2:155 We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast.

Despite how rough things are going, we know from these verses that God won't give us challenges we aren't up to, and

that these difficulties are a part of our life test. It's why we're here, showing our true character and earning our redemption. With faith and steadfastness, we can overcome, and we will be rewarded, inshAllah (God willing).

Now, I don't want to glaze over or make light of what kind of terrible hardships people in other countries are facing. And God willing, I pray we and our loved ones will survive through these times and make it through.

But I was thinking about our loftier goals. Our hopes go beyond survival. I think many of us are driven by the need to succeed. Many people reading this message are overachievers, dedicated to performing as the best professionals, parents, academics, and servants of God.

We want more than to make it— we want to attain the highest level of achievement possible. Dare I say, we wish to perform to perfection! While only God is perfect, striving to our own personal best is doable. So how do we achieve this success we are so hungry for?

Searching the Quran for a formula for success, you'll come up with about 28 verses related to achieving success. Some of the formula is common sense, like steering

clear of the harmful things that may risk your future:

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.

And mentioned right beside the pitfalls of drugs, we see idol worship – thinking any being or thing other than God Almighty can help you – is a road block to success. God makes it clear that a healthy spiritual condition is prerequisite to success. Time and again, the emphasis is that success depends on belief, worship, and the good actions – things that strengthen our soul.

22:77 O you who believe, you shall bow, prostrate, worship your Lord, and work righteousness, that you may succeed.

That's faith in action! God also reminds us that we should not be so single minded in our earthly pursuits that we forget God's purpose on Earth for us:

5:35 O you who believe, you shall reverence GOD and seek the ways and means to Him, and strive in His cause, that you may succeed.

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Other verses specify that striving includes being charitable and not stingy (3:130, 59:9). We learn that believing is the precursor to receiving fruits from any work we do—work in His cause, or work toward our worldly pursuits. Belief is in fact the most frequently associated word with success!

Of course we know we won't succeed without hard work and determination, and scripture confirms.

3:200 O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, you shall persevere, you shall be united, you shall observe God, that you may succeed.

Supporting each other in our faith walk and our endeavors benefits us as a community, united to reach our dreams. Now, what are the obstacles to your success? In one word, ungodliness. In more words, it's disbelief, transgression, wickedness.

6:21 and 10:17 Who is more evil than one who lies about GOD, or rejects His revelations? The transgressors never succeed.

Other losers called out specifically in the Quran are those who fabricate prohibitions in God's holy name.

16:116 You shall not utter lies with your own tongues stating: "This is lawful, and this is unlawful," to fabricate lies and attribute them to GOD. Surely, those who fabricate lies and attribute them to GOD will never succeed.

Sounds awfully familiar to an Afghan like myself, I'll tell you that! And the Taliban continue to be resisted by American and international forces, unrelentingly. This is because those who reject, who hear God's revelations and brush them off only have temporary success, if at all.

Finally, no discussion of success is complete without God's definition of the topic.

87:14 Successful indeed is the one who redeems his soul.

91:9-10 Successful is the one who redeems it. Failing is the one who neglects it.

As the Everlasting One, God sees things on a time scale much longer than our measly century or so. On the scale of

eternity, all this earthly stuff is small potatoes. We might not each become world-renowned fill-in-the-blanks, and we certainly will each experience set backs (2:286) through this test that is life. But that's really not what it's about, is it?

I wish each and everyone reached by this message spiritual success, God willing.

God bless you.

Delilah

* * * * *

The thunder praises the glory of God (13:13)

Lightning is the most underrated weather hazard. It makes every single thunderstorm a potential killer, whether the storm produces one single bolt or ten thousand bolts. In the United States, lightning routinely kills more people each year than tornadoes and hurricanes combined. Tornadoes, hail and wind gusts get the most attention, but only lightning can strike outside the storm itself. Lightning is the first thunderstorm hazard to arrive and the last to leave.

[13:13] The thunder praises His glory, and so do the angels, out of reverence for Him. He sends the lightning bolts, which strike in accordance with His will. Yet, they argue about GOD, though His power is awesome.

[2:19] Another example: a rainstorm from the sky in which there is darkness, thunder, and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears, to evade death. GOD is fully aware of the disbelievers.

[2:20] The lightning almost snatches away their eyesight. When it lights for them, they move forward, and when it turns dark, they stand still. If GOD wills, He can take away their hearing and their eyesight. GOD is Omnipotent.

A bolt of lightning can force an enormous amount of electricity through our body. A 120 volts of electric shock in our home can cause severe injury. Compare that to the 15 million volts from a lightning bolt! Lightning is one of the most capricious and unpredictable characteristics of a thunderstorm. Because of this, no one can guarantee an absolute protection from lightning!

[13:12] He is the One who shows you the lightning as a source of fear, as well as hope, and He initiates the loaded clouds.

Although the overall odds of being struck by lightning in the United States are estimated at one in 615,000, the likelihood increases depending on where you are during the storm. "Half the casualties of lightning occur during activities in open fields, such as soccer and baseball," warns Conrad Lautenbacher, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Parents and coaches have to know: If you hear thunder, get your children inside a substantial building. A vehicle with a metal roof and sides is a good second choice."

[67:17] Have you guaranteed that the One in heaven will not send upon you a violent storm? Will you then appreciate the value of My warning?

[6:73] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth, truthfully. Whenever He says, "Be," it is. His word is the absolute truth. All sovereignty belongs to Him the day the horn is blown. Knower of all secrets and declarations, He is the Most Wise, the Cognizant.

Cloud-to-ground lightning bolts are the most familiar and most dangerous. Most cloud-to-ground lightning strikes come from the negatively charged bottom of the cloud to the positively charged ground below. Often, cloud-to-ground lightning bolts strike the highest object, like the top of a building or the highest limb on a tree. The lightning strikes can cause fire and property damage. If a human being is the highest object in the lightning bolt's path, the strike can cause severe injury or death. Although cloud-to-ground lightning is the most dangerous, it is also the most understood because it leaves so much evidence behind. Most cloud-to-ground lightning strikes bring negative energy down to the ground, but some strikes deliver positive charge to the ground. Positive strikes are less common and emerge from the higher regions of the thundercloud. Some meteorologists believe that positive lightning strikes indicate storms that are more likely to spin out tornadoes.

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[49:18] GOD knows all the secrets in the heavens and the earth; GOD is Seer of everything you do.

The National Science Foundation Career Award winner caps two years of lightning research with a startling conclusion: The conditions inside thunderstorms that were long thought necessary to produce lightning actually do not exist in nature! If Joseph Dwyer, Florida Tech. Physicist is right, then a lot of what we knew about thunderstorms and lightning is probably wrong! "For generations, we have believed that in order to produce a lightning discharge, the electric fields inside storms must be very big, similar to the fields that cause you to be shocked when you touch a metal doorknob," said Dwyer.

The problem is scientists have searched inside thunderstorms for many years, looking for these large electric fields, only to come up empty handed! Some researchers have suggested that maybe we have not been looking hard enough; maybe the big electric fields are really there, but they were somehow just missed.

Now, Dwyer's new theory shows that these searches were actually in vain; super-sized fields simply do not exist, period! "What we have discovered is a new limit in nature. Just as a bucket can only hold so much water, the atmosphere can only hold a certain sized electric field. Beyond that, the electric field is stunted by the rapid creation of gamma-rays and a form of anti-matter called positrons," he said.

While Dwyer's research shows that lightning is not produced by large, unseen electric fields inside storms, the triggering mechanism remains a mystery! "Although everyone is familiar with lightning, we still do not know about how it really works," said Dwyer.

[6:59] With Him are the keys to all secrets; none knows them except He. He knows everything on land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls without His knowledge. Nor is there a grain in the depths of the soil. Nor is there anything wet or dry, that is not recorded in a profound record.

Plants need nitrogen to grow and the air is about 78% nitrogen, but it is a form that plants cannot use. Lightning changes ni-

trogen in the air into a form plants can use. This is called "fixation" of nitrogen. Lightning accounts for about 5% of the natural fixation of nitrogen. Nitrogen helps plants use carbohydrates to gain energy, like foods we eat help us to gain energy. Nitrogen controls how plants take their form and how they function inside, and nitrogen helps plants make protein that help them grow strong and healthy. Humans and animals benefit from eating vegetables and plants that are rich in nitrogen because proteins are passed on to humans and animals when they eat vegetables and plants.

[30:24] Among His proofs is that He shows you the lightning as a source of fear, as well as hope, then He sends down from the sky water to revive a land that has been dead. In these, there are sufficient proofs for people who understand.

[36:36] Glory be to the One who created all kinds of plants from the earth, as well as themselves, and other creations that they do not even know.

[39:21] Do you not see that GOD sends down from the sky water, then places it into underground wells, then produces with it plants of various colors, then they grow until they turn yellow, then He turns them into hay? This should be a reminder for those who possess intelligence.

The lightning bolt is one of the awesome creations of God that we experience in our tiny earth. The size of our earth is extremely insignificant in comparison to our vast universe where it belongs. Our universe is estimated to span distances in excess of twenty billion light years. But, it is the smallest and the innermost of all seven universes!

The second universe surrounds our universe and is very large. The third universe surrounds the second universe and is even larger. The outermost universe is the seventh universe. No number exists to describe the size of this outermost universe! The incomprehensible vastness of these seven universes is within the fist of God's hand!

[17:44] Glorifying Him are the seven universes, the earth, and everyone in them. There is nothing that does not glorify Him, but you do not understand their glorification. He is Clement, Forgiver.

[39:67] They can never fathom the greatness of GOD. The whole earth is within His fist on the Day of Resurrection. In fact, the universes are folded within His right hand. Be He glorified; He is much too high above needing any partners.

God fully controls everything in the seven universes and beyond, ranging from tiny sub-atomic particles to incredible gigantic lightning bolts!

[10:61] You do not get into any situation, nor do you recite any Quran, nor do you do anything, without us being witnesses thereof as you do it. Not even an atom's weight is out of your Lord's control, be it in the heavens or the earth. Nor is there anything smaller than an atom, or larger, that is not recorded in a profound record.

[13:13] The thunder praises His glory, and so do the angels, out of reverence for Him. He sends the lightning bolts, which strike in accordance with His will. Yet, they argue about GOD, though His power is awesome.

Can we comprehend the awesome power and the awesome control of God? The power of a lightning bolt is very insignificant in comparison to God. The power of a human being is utterly insignificant in comparison to a lightning bolt!

[24:35] GOD is the light of the heavens and the earth. The allegory of His light is that of a concave mirror behind a lamp that is placed inside a glass container. The glass container is like a bright, pearl-like star. The fuel thereof is supplied from a blessed oil-producing tree, that is neither eastern, nor western. Its oil is almost self-radiating; needs no fire to ignite it. Light upon light. GOD guides to His light whoever wills (to be guided). GOD thus cites the parables for the people. GOD is fully aware of all things.

[4:153] The people of the scripture challenge you to bring down to them a book from the sky! They have asked Moses for more than that, saying, "Show us GOD, physically." Consequently, the lightning struck them, as a consequence of their audacity. Additionally, they worshiped the calf, after all the miracles they had seen. Yet, we pardoned all this. We supported Moses with profound miracles.

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Yet, majority of people set up very insignificant and very powerless God's creatures like Mary, Jesus, Ali, Muhammad, Ram, Budha, Pope, ulema (religious scholars), priests or imams as partners beside God to rival Him!

[2:165] Yet, some people set up idols to rival GOD, and love them as if they are GOD. Those who believe love GOD the most. If only the transgressors could see themselves when they see the retribution! They will realize then that all power belongs to GOD alone, and that GOD's retribution is awesome.

[7:143] When Moses came at our appointed time, and his Lord spoke with him, he said, "My Lord, let me look and see You." He said, "You cannot see Me. Look at that mountain; if it stays in its place, then you can see Me." Then, his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, and this caused it to crumble. Moses fell unconscious. When he came to, he said, "Be You glorified. I repent to You, and I am the most convinced believer."

[10:18] They worship beside GOD idols that possess no power to harm them or benefit them, and they say, "These are our intercessors at GOD!" Say, "Are you informing GOD of something He does not know in the heavens or the earth?" Be He glorified. He is the Most High; far above needing partners.

The thunder praises the glory of God out of reverence for Him. It strikes in accordance with the will of God.

[13:13] The thunder praises His glory, and so do the angels, out of reverence for Him. He sends the lightning bolts, which strike in accordance with His will. Yet, they argue about GOD, though His power is awesome.

How many human beings praise the glory of God out of reverence!? How many of them submit to the will of God!?

[13:16] Say, "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Say, "GOD." Say, "Why then do you set up besides Him masters who do not possess any power to benefit or harm even themselves?" Say, "Is the blind the same as the seer? Is darkness the same as the light?" Have they found idols besides GOD who created creations similar to His creations, to the point of not distinguishing the two creations? Say, "GOD is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Supreme."

[12:103] Most people, no matter what you do, will not believe.

[12:104] You are not asking them for any money; you simply deliver this reminder for all the people.

[12:105] So many proofs in the heavens and the earth are given to them, but they pass by them, heedlessly!

[12:106] The majority of those who believe in GOD do not do so without committing idol worship.

[1:2] Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe.

New Submitter in South Africa

Salam,

I have recently become a Moslem at my masjid (mosque), after growing up as a Christian. I accepted Islam because of my firm belief in the Oneness of GOD, but that does not mean for me a rejection of my entire heritage. I grew up in a firm Reformed church environment, which despite its belief in the trinity could have much in common with Islam.

I have found however that the Moslems at the masjid find their security in the Hadith and not the Quran. To me this is strange, as I believe in the authority of Scripture alone.

Do you have people in South Africa that are related to your organization that I can perhaps make contact with?

I would love to hear from you.

Salam!

W. L.

Weekly Reminders by email are popular

God willing please join the list by sending an email to info@masjiduntucson.org and indicating that you want to be in the weekly reminder list.

If you want to make it a really short email, just write "weekly reminder" in the subject line and send it. Thank you and God bless you.

M. I.