

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Steadfastness in Tests

[2:177] Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they **steadfastly persevere** in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.

The last part of the verse deals with steadfastness and persevering in the face of persecution, hardship and war. This can be handled by holding fast to the rope of God while you go through tests. (3:103)

What is the best gift from God? Guidance. What good is wealth without guidance? What good is strength, beauty, artistic and athletic ability without God's guidance?

[2:112] Indeed, those who submit themselves absolutely to GOD alone, while leading a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[3:186] You will certainly be tested, through your money and your lives, and

you will hear from those who received the scripture, and from the idol worshipers, a lot of insult. If you steadfastly persevere and lead a righteous life, this will prove the strength of your faith.

As we learn from Quran, the proven worshipers of God ALONE start reaping the benefits of their steadfastness right in this world and their recompense in the Hereafter will be even greater.

[16:97] Anyone who works righteousness, male or female, while believing, we will surely grant them a happy life in this world, and we will surely pay them their full recompense (on the Day of Judgment) for their righteous works.

Today, if we look around we find that fear and depression are two problems spread all over the world. One can find a large collection of books prescribing methods of dealing with them. Therefore, we now have a better appreciation of the statement, "Happiness is Submission to God."

Abraham, the prophet, who was called God's friend, was put to an exacting test.

[2:124] Recall that Abraham was put to the test by his Lord, through certain commands, and he fulfilled them. ...

[37:105-6] "You have believed the dream." We thus reward the righteous. That was an exacting test indeed.

Adam and Eve were put to the test several times, and they may have lived through the loss of their righteous son. Noah lost his son twice—first he lost him as a disbeliever but still loved him, then lost him to the flood while calling on God to save him. The prophet Muhammad lost his only born son (Ibrahim) as all historical accounts mention. Muhammad spent a great deal of his life struggling with the disbelievers, going from one war to another. He was exposed to killings, wounding, and loss of friends and loved ones. Moses was tested thoroughly. Noah, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Solomon, Jesus, John, Job, Jonah, and Muhammad were all given different and challenging tests. The believers before us were tested until they were shaken up.

[2:214] Do you expect to enter Paradise without being tested like those before you? They were tested with hardship and adversity, and were shaken up, until the messenger and those who believed with him said, "Where is GOD's victory?" GOD's victory is near.

When is God's victory? Since this is a test, we would not know when, where or what

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kind of test we might be given. We do not make the choice, God does. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what's best for polishing us, and under what circumstances. He is the Almighty, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

While God controls tests for believers, the test serves to expose the hypocrites and confuse the disbelievers. Thus He leads them on in their transgression, blundering. These people do not understand God's system and think they are right. God gave us their example in the Quran in 4:78 and when He talks about the Battle of the Parties.

[33:9-12] O you who believe, remember GOD's blessing upon you; when soldiers attacked you, we sent upon them violent wind and invisible soldiers. GOD is Seer of everything you do. When they came from above you, and from beneath you, your eyes were terrified, your hearts ran out of patience, and you harbored unbefitting thoughts about GOD. That is when the believers were truly tested; they were severely shaken up. The hypocrites and those with doubts in their hearts said, "What GOD and His messenger promised us was no more than an illusion!"

But the reaction of the true believers was the opposite. *[33:22] When the true believers saw the parties (ready to attack), they said, "This is what GOD and His messenger have promised us, and GOD and His messenger are truthful." This (dangerous situation) only strengthened their faith and augmented their submission.*

So, what should the believers do? In the face of adversity or hardship, the believers are expected to submit. We are tested to see if we are truly submitters or not and to work on our weaknesses. And whether we submit to God during the bad times and the good times (2:155, 3:134, 21:90, 38:34-41). God gave us the solution to passing the tests in His book, the Quran. He asked us to submit to Him wholeheartedly. Submission to God means to accept whatever God has given us or taken away from us, to steadfastly persevere and seek God's help.

Steps to take

Don't panic. *[39:53] Proclaim: "O My serv-*

ants who exceeded the limits, never despair of GOD's mercy. For GOD forgives all sins. He is the Forgiver, Most Merciful."

Check ourselves to see if we've gotten off the right path, and correct our path if we have deviated, to stay with God alone. *[13:11] Shifts (of angels) take turns, staying with each one of you—they are in front of you and behind you. They stay with you, and guard you in accordance with GOD's commands. Thus, GOD does not change the condition of any people unless they themselves make the decision to change. If GOD wills any hardship for any people, no force can stop it. For they have none beside Him as Lord and Master.*

Submit to God, accept what's happening to us without objecting. *[2:156] When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to GOD, and to Him we are returning."*

Implore God to remove the hardship or adversity. God wants us to implore Him. Do not rush an answer; God runs everything. *[40:60] Your Lord says, "Implore Me, and I will respond to you. Surely, those who are too arrogant to worship Me will enter Gehenna, forcibly."*

Steadfastly persevere. This is among the most honorable traits of believers (31:17, 2:153, 2:45, 90:17, 2:177, 103:3, and more). God promises those who steadfastly persevere a great recompense. (23:111, 22:35, 31:17, 41:35, and more).

With the help of God and the assurance in the Quran, the true believers will make the best out of their test and wait for God's victory. They trust in God, and know that God is Just. They are absolutely sure that God's victory is coming and that God's victory is their reward. It is God's promise.

[23:109-111] "A group of My servants used to say, 'Our Lord, we have believed, so forgive us and shower us with mercy. Of all the merciful ones, You are the Most Merciful.' But you mocked and ridiculed them, to the extent that you forgot Me. You used to laugh at them. I have rewarded them today, in return for their steadfastness, by making them the winners."

Abdullah

(from a sermon given December 2006)

DERAILED!

In Submission, we walk a fortunate and blessed path that leads to the greatest triumph, blessings and approval from God Almighty.

[9:72] GOD promises the believing men and the believing women gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever, and magnificent mansions in the gardens of Eden. And GOD's blessings and approval are even greater. This is the greatest triumph.

Our lives become like a train running smoothly on its tracks, by God's will. This is the guided path. However, once we're distracted, take our eyes off the prize (the Hereafter), and make the worldly life our priority, our lives become like a derailed train. There is no such thing as a little off-track; it's a complete derailment, a disaster. You need cranes, police, and ambulances "to get the train back on track." It's a horrifying scene, and you can't help staring at the accident.

[31:33] O people, you shall reverence your Lord, and fear a day when a father cannot help his own child, nor a child can help his father. Certainly, GOD's promise is truth. Therefore, do not be distracted by this life; do not be distracted from GOD by mere illusions.

Those Who Frequent the Masjid [24:37] People who are not distracted by business or trade from commemorating GOD; they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and they are conscious of the day when the minds and the eyes will be horrified.

Even if the train didn't flip-over, but kept going on the road off-track, you would still see sparks flying everywhere, tons of noise, it would be a sight to see by God's will. Also, what kind of "new track" is this road? You have fiery sparks, ugly noises, high stress, a bumpy path, and no destination. The train is bound to stop because the road leads nowhere!

It is a blessing from Almighty God that the train stops, otherwise, what

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kind of new path is this? A miserable one, which leads to hell. This is evident from the fiery sparks, stress, and unwelcoming conditions existent on this “new” path.

[30:41] Disasters have spread throughout the land and sea, because of what the people have committed. He thus lets them taste the consequences of some of their works, that they may return (to the right works).

[38:59] “This is a group to be thrown into Hell with you.” They will not be welcomed (by the residents of Hell). They have deserved to burn in the hell-fire.

What should we do? God has given us the criteria to make it to heaven, and it starts with discarding all idol worship. By worshipping GOD Alone, believing in the Hereafter, and following God’s command, we enjoy a perfect life here and in the Hereafter. This can ensure, by God’s will, the train NEVER derails (as much as possible God willing!).

[39:17] As for those who discard the worship of all idols, and devote themselves totally to GOD alone, they have deserved happiness. Give good news to My servants.

[2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[13:29] Those who believe and lead a righteous life have deserved happiness and a joyous destiny.

Praise be to GOD.

Abeer

[42:52] Thus, we inspired to you a revelation proclaiming our commandments. You had no idea about the scripture, or faith. Yet, we made this a beacon to guide whomever we choose from among our servants. Surely, you guide in a straight path.

Quran: the source of ‘Best Business Practices’

The Quran is certainly a source of inspiration. It is the most relevant book of laws and practices. While people look to the Quran for religious guidance, a study of the Quran will show that it is not only an extraordinary source of religious guidance but also contains the supreme text for business policies and best practices. Today, there are several books on ‘Best Business Practices’, most of them teaching people through the author’s experiences. People pay a lot to buy them, and why not? The authors are business heads of some of the most successful businesses, and learning from their experiences could help further our careers or businesses. However, God has given us a Quran that holds the key to some of the most time tested practices along with *His assurance* that following these practices will ensure success; assurance that none of the other authors can give.

Some of the ‘Best Business Practices’ advocated by top business schools and encouraged by expert consultants across the globe are, develop a plan, talk to the experts, respect your customer, keep it legal, teach by using relevant examples and case studies, to mention a few. These doctrines are not new; God has disclosed them for us at the time of revelation of the Quran. All we have to do is keep an open mind and be willing to learn *from God*.

Develop a plan: A business plan is a blueprint for any business. Planning helps keep the business on track. It serves as a guide to accomplishing goals. Planning helps us articulate our thoughts and act and deliver effectively in any situation. This principle is not new to submitters. In the Quran God encourages us to *develop a plan*; one that we can use for better opportunities in this life and in the hereafter.

[3:159] ... Once you make a decision, carry out your plan, and trust in GOD. GOD loves those who trust in Him.

God controls everything and plans for the believers.

[8:44] And when the time came and you faced them, He made them appear fewer in your eyes, and made you appear fewer in their eyes as well. For GOD willed to carry out a certain plan. All decisions are made by GOD.

While submitters know that God is running everything, planning and continuous reviewing of plans, be they for business, career or submission, will help us stay on the path to success.

Talk to the experts: All business schools encourage you to *‘talk to the experts’*—people who have distinguished themselves in their field. Leaders of Fortune 500 companies are sought after in order to learn from their knowledge and experiences. Having been through many situations they are in a position to teach us without going through the mistakes ourselves. God has already told us to adopt this practice in *[25:59] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, in six days, then assumed all authority. The Most Gracious; ask about Him those who are well founded in knowledge.*

God encourages us to talk to the experts when we are unsure. While this is God’s system of teaching us the Quran, the same holds true in all other aspects of life, even our businesses or jobs. When in doubt, talk to the experts.

Respect your customers: Leaders of all successful business houses are people who respect their peers and do not disregard them. Even when they disagree with them, they treat them with utmost respect as they have to work together to run a successful enterprise. Speaking from personal experience God has shown me the power of respecting others and speaking to them in the nicest possible manner. It can truly make peers and colleagues go the extra mile for you.

[41:34] Not equal is the good response and the bad response. You shall resort to the nicest possible response. Thus, the one who used to be your enemy, may become your best friend.

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Respecting others, their opinions and their rights in difficult situations, helps to build character. In addition, it serves as an example for others to follow.

Keep it legal: Business schools emphasize the importance of being transparent and maintaining clean books. They serve to augment employee morale and enhance loyalty. If an employee watches their manager cheat and behave unethically, they are more open to cheating, and if they cheat the customer then they are more likely to cheat the organization. Additionally, the financial benefits of clean books are obvious. While business schools encourage clean books mainly for financial reasons, God tells us that this should be the standard of our behavior no matter what the situation.

[26:181-183] "You shall give full measure when you trade; do not cheat. You shall weigh with an equitable scale. Do not cheat the people out of their rights, and do not roam the earth corruptingly".

Being equitable always has its benefits.

Learn by using relevant case studies and examples: Case studies are in-depth profiles of established data and the Quran is full of case studies and examples. Every incident or narrative has a lesson to teach. Lessons that are time-tested and, most importantly, authorized by God. God teaches us through experiences; our own and those of others. Just like we are encouraged to follow the methods employed by business leaders, the lessons from the Quran could also be followed in our businesses.

[12:7] In Joseph and his brothers there are lessons for the seekers.

Sura 12, Joseph, teaches us to not to shy away from (honestly) showcasing expertise: *[12:55] He said, "Make me the treasurer, for I am experienced in this area and knowledgeable."*

It also teaches us to be patient and trust the system

[subtitle]: Believers are Blessed with God's Assurances:

[12:15] When they went away with him, and unanimously decided to throw him into the abyss of the well, we inspired him: "Someday, you will tell them about all this, while they have no idea."

All this, and many other lessons that are steeped in the experiences that Joseph and the other messengers/prophets went through. God encourages us to follow the teachings from Quran, just like we follow and practice lessons taught by business leaders.

The Quran is replete with many 'best business practices.' All we have to do is listen and follow God's instructions.

RD

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Conference Report 2014

[31:22] Those who submit completely to GOD, while leading a righteous life, have gotten hold of the strongest bond. For GOD is in full control of all things.

The 29th annual conference of United Submitters International was held Aug 8-10 in Reston, Virginia. The Friday sermon was delivered by Brother Bahram, who talked of building our Submission. The foundation must be strong, but on that foundation we must build a solid structure, using the practices of submission that God has granted us.

The presentations were very informative and thought-provoking on a wide range of Quranic topics. It made you appreciative of God's blessings. It's always wonderful to listen to so many interesting points of view. The evening commemoration of God was inspiring, as always. All of our voices raised in praise of God.

[15:98-9] You shall sing the praises of your Lord, and be with the prostrators. And worship your Lord, in order to attain certainty.

It was a beautiful location and a wonderful reunion of submitters from around the world. God gave us the opportunity of meeting many first-time attendees. May God bless us throughout the year, and allow us to come together again next year for the conference to be held in Tucson, God willing. Our thanks to the D.C.-area Submitters for their hard work in making such a grand success of the conference.

Lydia and Nargis

[61:4] GOD loves those who fight in His cause united in one column, like the bricks in one wall.