

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Believers will be tested

God explains to us in the holy Quran that the believers will be tested. But He also promises us that the victory belongs to the believers in this world as well as in the hereafter.

[29:2-3] Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," without being put to the test? We have tested those before them, for GOD must distinguish those who are truthful, and He must expose the liars.

We try to pass several tests in this material world for worldly benefits. Just imagine in this world when we wish to hire someone for a job, we test many people and choose one. Then, is it not reasonable that God will test you and distinguish you before admitting you to the paradise?

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

[8:28] You should know that your money and your children are a test, and that GOD possesses a great recompense.

God may choose different tests for each of us (21:35). Some are tested with sickness, loss in business, failure

in an examination, loss of money, hunger, loss of a job, losing a friend or a close relative, etc. And other times a test is conducted through joy and God's blessings such as wealth, knowledge, children, etc. We may think we prefer the test of blessings. But a test with blessings can be more difficult. The person being blessed may lose sight it is a test (39:49) or forget God (39:8) or idolize God's gifts (7:190, 18:38). The level of testing is different from person to person and God knows best which kind of test is suitable for us. But in all conditions we must remain patient and submit to God steadfastly; this is an honorable trait of true believers (31:17).

[2:124] Recall that Abraham was put to the test by his Lord, through certain commands, and he fulfilled them. (God) said, "I am appointing you an imam for the people." He said, "And also my descendants?" He said, "My covenant does not include the transgressors."

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

God has not even exempted the prophets, messengers and their families from tests. Right from the time of Adam and Eve, all were tested. Adam and Eve

dealt with the expulsion from Paradise and coming to earth; thereafter a big test was Cain killing Abel (Genesis 4). Abraham was tested through a dream. Noah lost his son. Joseph was tested several times during his life. Solomon was tested with blessings from God, while Job was tested with adversity. Muhammad was tested with several holy wars in which he lost many of his beloved companions and relatives. Almost all of them were severely tested until they were shaken up (2:214). The tests are for our own good. They bring out our convictions, teach us to overcome our weaknesses and purify our souls. We don't want to object, we want to submit to God. Only with God's help can we persevere through our test patiently and pass it. God is Almighty, Most Gracious.

It is the system of God Almighty by which the hypocrites are exposed. In the testing times, the disbelievers are confused and they blunder in their transgressions, while the believers submit to God and grow their souls.

God has instructed us through several verses in the Quran to remain steadfast during tests, whether adversity or

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prosperity. We must remember Him and implore Him in those circumstances. The following verses will help us in remaining steadfast and submitting to God in all kinds of tests.

[2:155-7] *We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast. When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to GOD, and to Him we are returning." These have deserved blessings from their Lord and mercy. These are the guided ones.*

[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.*

[22:35] *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 to charity.*

[27:40] *... When he saw it settled in front of him, he said, "This is a blessing from my Lord, whereby He tests me, to show whether I am appreciative or unappreciative. Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good, and if one turns unappreciative, then my Lord is in no need for him, Most Honorable."*

[38:34] *We thus put Solomon to the test; we blessed him with vast material wealth, but he steadfastly submitted.**

*The Devil Afflicts Job**

[38:41] *Remember our servant Job: he called upon his Lord, "The devil has afflicted me with hardship and pain."*

**38:34 & 41 Solomon and Job represent both ends of the testing spectrum. We are put to the test through wealth, health, or lack of them, to see if we worship God alone under all circumstances.*

[6:43] *If only they implored when our*

test afflicted them! ...

[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."*

Therefore to conclude, we need to pass through tests to enter God's Paradise. What should we do to help us pass tests? We learn from the Quran to implore God for forgiveness, bow down, repent, steadfastly persevere and maintain righteousness (2:249, 3:186, 38:24, 38:34).

[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.*

**3:186 After passing the admission tests, the proven worshipers of God ALONE enjoy a perfect life, now and forever. See 10:62, 24:55, and 29:2-3.*

[38:24] *... Afterwards, David wondered if he made the right judgment. He thought that we were testing him. He then implored his Lord for forgiveness, bowed down, and repented.*

We must always seek guidance and mercy from God. We must always reverence God and fulfill all the obligations and avoid gross sins. We must rest assured that God will definitely grant happiness to believers (16:97, 24:55) and provide ease after difficulty (65:7). We must seek God's help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat) (2:45, 2:153). And we must constantly implore God in all circumstances knowing with pain there is gain, and strive to please God alone (94:5-8).

[2:186] *When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided.*

[2:153] *O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.*

Abdul G

"Exams" for the soul

It's exam season at schools and universities. Students and teachers spend a significant amount of time preparing for exams. Sometimes students wishfully ask, "Can we skip the exam?" The answer is invariably, "No." You have to be tested to pass school—so that your worldly abilities can be assessed. Similarly, tests are mandatory for our souls.

Our Claims Must Be Tested

[3:142] *Do you expect to enter Paradise without GOD distinguishing those among you who strive, and without distinguishing those who are steadfast?*

The Test is Mandatory

[29:2-3] *Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," without being put to the test? We have tested those before them, for GOD must distinguish those who are truthful, and He must expose the liars.*

We can think of this life as a school for our souls. We were deficient in our previous life (38:67-69, 43:5), and God in His Grace and Mercy sent us down, and gave us a text book (Quran). We read text books thoroughly for worldly tests. If we want our souls to succeed, we need to study the Quran carefully (17:78, 18:28, 27:84, 47:24, 73:2-4, 73:20). We don't want to be among those who say on the Day of Judgment:

[89:24] *... "Oh, I wish I prepared for my (eternal) life."*

Here are some ways in which God's tests are far better than human tests:

The test is open-book. At the university level, students read stacks of books to pass exams. And in most cases you're not permitted to use the book during the test. Compare that to God's tests. Everything we need for salvation is in

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the Quran. All the answers are in the book (6:19, 6:38, 6:114-5, 7:52, 50:45, 10:57). We can refer to it anytime during our test. God also gives us the exercises that help us stay ready for tests (2:153-5, 31:17, 27:40, etc.)

Quran: Fully Detailed

[6:114] Shall I seek other than GOD as a source of law, when He has revealed to you this book fully detailed? Those who received the scripture recognize that it has been revealed from your Lord, truthfully. You shall not harbor any doubt.

[7:52] We have given them a scripture that is fully detailed, with knowledge, guidance, and mercy for the people who believe.

We can ask God's help during the tests. At school exams, we can't ask the professor to help us solve problems. God encourages us to pray to and implore Him any time, particularly during tests (8:45, 21:90, 23:76, 2:186, 40:60, etc.). If God helps you, what more can you ask for?

*[8:45] O you who believe, when you encounter an army, you shall hold fast and commemorate **GOD** frequently, that you may succeed.*

Sufficient Time. Students sometimes feel they could do better if they had more time to study or take the test. God gives everyone a life-long attempt with many chances (35:37, 39:53-59, 46:15). Anyone whose "test-booklet is collected" before 40 years are up, makes it to lower Heaven at least (46:15).

[35:37] ... Did we not give you a life-long chance, with continuous reminders for those who would take heed? ...

Forgiveness and repentance. If you do badly on an exam, it's on your record permanently. In God's system, you can seek forgiveness and repent for poor performance on a previous test (40:3,

66:8). Repentance cleans the slate (9:11), and you may qualify for transforming your negative points into credits (25:70).

[25:70] Exempted are those who repent, believe, and lead a righteous life. GOD transforms their sins into credits. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

The Grader is infallible. Standardized tests may not accurately measure your knowledge or a teacher may miss the extent of your abilities. God is Omniscient and fully aware of all things (2:29, 2:32, 2:255, 4:33, 6:80). He takes everything we do into account (4:86, 21:47, 31:16). He is the ultimate judge and the most accurate Reckoner (6:62).

The tests are custom-designed for you! In college, some students do better on oral exams, while others prefer written tests. Some do well with applied or hands-on work, while others excel at abstract thinking. But, tests cannot be custom-designed for each student, it would take too much time and too many resources. God's tests are perfect, and custom-designed for each individual (17:54, 3:154, 28:68).

[28:68] Your Lord is the One who creates whatever He wills, and chooses; no one else does any choosing. Glory be to GOD, the Most Exalted. He is far above needing partners.

Success at school exams is important to get a good grade or a good job. However, success and failure in our "soul exams" is the difference between *life and death* (2:28, 8:24, 44:56, 45:21) and the outcome lasts for eternity (10:26-27, 18:46, 101:6-11, 14:16-17). We have time now in this world, and it is up to us to make the best of the chances (39:59, 46:15-20), with God's help, before our time is up.

[42:47] You shall respond to your Lord before a day comes which is decreed inevitable by GOD. There will be no refuge for you on that day, nor an advocate.

Your Hearing, Eyesight and Brains

[23:78] He is the One who granted you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains. Rarely are you appreciative.

BRAIN: What makes you move, enables you to think, makes you feel alive? The answer is the amazing brain God gave you. More complex than any computer, your brain is constantly receiving and processing information. Then it takes action through your body's control networks—the nervous and endocrine (hormone) systems. Your brain looks like a lump of gray putty, folded into grooves and ridges. The main part of your brain is the cerebrum. The thin outer layer of the cerebrum forms the cerebral cortex. This receives and interprets information and controls movement.

Different areas of the brain have specific functions, such as reasoning, speech, coordinating movements, controlling muscles, interpreting language, receiving input from the eyes and ears, and receiving and interpreting input from the skin. If you touch something hot or cold, sensors in your skin detect feeling and send signals racing through the spinal cord to the brain in half a second. Then your brain instantly interprets the sensation and you react, i.e., pull your hand away from a hot candle.

[16:78] GOD brought you out of your mothers' bellies knowing nothing, and He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains, that you may be appreciative.

[32:9] He shaped him and blew into him from His spirit. And He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains; rarely are you thankful.

[67:23] Say, "He is the One who initiated you, and granted you the hearing, the eyes, and the brains. Rarely are you appreciative."

EYESIGHT: The eyeball is filled with a jelly-like substance called the vitreous

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Faiz

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humor. Eye muscles rotate the eyes in different directions. The part that gives your eye color—brown, blue or hazel—is the iris. Your eye has three layers. The outer layer is the sclera, the white of the eye, with the cornea at the front. The choroid is the middle layer. It contains the lens and tiny blood vessels. The inner layer is the retina. It's the sensitive part of the eye. When you look at any object as it enters the eyes, the rays are bent by the cornea and the lens. This focuses an upside-down image onto the retina. Information about the image is sent along the optic nerve to the brain, where the image is interpreted so that you see it the right way up. The retina is packed with millions of light sensitive nerve cells called rods and cones. These nerves convert light into electrical signals to the optic nerve, then to the brain. Rods work well in dim light but do not distinguish colors. Cones detect colors best in bright light.

[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.

HEARING: Your ears detect sound waves, which are funneled into your earflaps. The waves travel down a long tube called the ear canal to the eardrum, causing the drum to vibrate. Three tiny bones called ossicles pass these vibrations on to the fluid-filled cochlea in the inner ear. Here, the vibrations move thousands of tiny hair cells, stimulating nerves to send sound signals to the brain. Then your

brain interprets those sounds for you—that my cell phone ring tone or someone else's?

In addition to being able to hear, your ears also help you stand up and move around without falling over. Special organs in the inner ear help you keep your balance by sending signals to your brain about your body's position. The three ossicles lie in the middle ear. They are called the hammer, anvil and stirrup. This is amazing that your ears—designed to allow you to hear—also are critical for balance. God's perfect design.

God can prevent us from hearing and seeing.

[2:7] GOD seals their minds and their hearing, and their eyes are veiled. They have incurred severe retribution.

[26:212] For they are prevented from hearing.

Or we can choose to appreciate these God-given gifts.

[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.

[32:15] The only people who truly believe in our revelations are those who fall prostrate upon hearing them. They glorify and praise their Lord, without any arrogance.

Taareq

God Willing

30th Annual Conference

United Submitters

August 7-9, 2015

Tucson, Arizona



God willing, the annual conference of United Submitters International will be in Tucson AZ, on August 7-9. 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.