

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

Monthly Bulletin of International  
Community of Submitters

www.masjidtucson.org



Published by Masjid Tucson  
Rabi I 1446

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## A Journey

The year is 1991. An old Jewish woman was then not so very old. A future grandmother in Kentucky was raised in a cult-like society in a small coal mining town. This was a society that believed all forms of joy and happiness were from Lucifer. To “earn” your way into heaven, you must live a life of suffering and pain. She was born into this society, and it wasn’t until she was 17 that she escaped it.

Fast forward to 1991, and a baby boy was born. A boy named Dana. A name that comes from the tribe of Dan; one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The grandmother prayed to GOD, “Please, let this one follow in Your ways”.

From the age of 5 the boy had suicidal thoughts, and many attempts, many dangerous and close attempts with a large kitchen knife. It seemed the whole world was against him. Other kids, adults, even family did terrible things to the boy through most of his childhood. But there was at least one ally, the best ally, the best supporter, and the best of saviors, GOD.

*[3:150] GOD alone is your Lord and Master, and He is the best supporter.*

The boy didn’t grow up with a traditional Jewish upbringing. Yet he had a conscious acknowledgement of his Creator, maybe not all the time but perhaps more so than the average child. When he became a young adult, he wanted GOD to be happy with him. So, the grandmother’s prayers were answered; the boy studied the Tanakh, the 5 books of Moses and the many writings of the prophets.

*[17:4] We addressed the Children of Israel in the scripture: “You will commit gross evil on earth, twice. You are destined to fall into great heights of arrogance.*

The boy wanted truth, the true way of GOD. He went full Orthodox, and tried to catch up on what he missed out in his childhood. But the more he learned about the Talmud (The Oral Torah) the more corruption he found.

“Do not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk” which we find in Exodus 23:19, Exodus 34:26, and Deuteronomy 14:21. Torah law only prohibits the cooking (and eating) of the meat of a domesticated animal in milk. The rabbis added that one may also not cook (or eat) the meat of a kosher wild

animal or bird with milk based on the “hidden meaning” found in those 3 verses.

The rabbis added that one may not eat meat and milk together even if they were not cooked together.

In addition, the rabbis instituted that one must wait a certain amount of time (6 hrs) between eating meat and milk.

The rabbis also decreed that two acquaintances may not share a table if one is eating dairy products and the other is eating meat products.

The boy spent much research on, “Can you be Jewish without the Talmud?” And you can, you can be a Karaite Jew. So, the boy spent the next few years just upholding the Tanakh, no additions from the rabbis.

*[6:19] Say, “Whose testimony is the greatest?” Say, “GOD’s. He is the witness between me and you that this Quran has been inspired to me, to preach it to you and whomever it reaches. Indeed, you bear witness that there are other gods beside GOD.” Say, “I do not testify as you do; there is only one god, and I disown your idolatry.”*

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But shortly after his daughter was born, he tried to implement the life-style and commandments on not only his daughter but his partner-at-the-time as well. That's when doubt crept in. He saw many strange prohibitions:

To burn a city that has turned to idol worship—Deuteronomy 13:15-17

Not to cease hating the missionary—Deuteronomy 13:9

Not to let idolaters dwell in our land—Exodus 23:33

Men must not shave the hair off the sides of their head—Leviticus 19:27

Men must not trim their beards with a razor—Leviticus 19:27

Men must not wear women's clothing—Deuteronomy 22:5

Women must not wear men's clothing—Deuteronomy 22:5

Not to tattoo the skin—Leviticus 19:28

Not only were there commandments that made his moral compass feel bad, but if the rabbis distorted Judaism with the Talmud, then who's to say they didn't distort the Torah? It's an incredibly old book, even the Dead Sea Scrolls aren't the original form of the Torah. The original text and language is long lost. The message MUST have changed, he thought.

*[2:79] Therefore, woe to those who distort the scripture with their own hands, then say, "This is what GOD has revealed," seeking a cheap material gain. Woe to them for such distortion, and woe to them for their illicit gains.*

So, the boy, now man, was agnostic for about 7 years. A good portion of those 7 years he was away from his daughter on and off, for 3 years he was all alone, struggling to just make things work. And that is when he missed GOD. He missed praying, he missed religious practices, he missed the relationship with his Creator. But he didn't know who or what they were. Till a Muslim friend planted the idea in his head, to check out the Quran. Now his

grandmother taught him to respect the Muslim people, they are cousins to the Jewish people. So, he did, he checked out the Quran and Islam.

*[11:114] You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) at both ends of the day, and during the night. The righteous works wipe out the evil works. This is a reminder for those who would take heed.*

The man went to a masjid in Alabama, witnessed a Sunni Isha prayer service, and was met with amazing hospitality and kindness. He never felt this kind of hospitality even amongst his own people! He met with the imam and they spoke for 3 hours, going over all his troubles, and doubts, and questions. The Quran was given to him, and he spent even more hours that same night reading through it. He literally couldn't put it down till his body couldn't handle it anymore. *[73:4] .... And read the Quran from cover to cover.*

But he studied the Quran and watched for certain things that could make or break this new journey he was about to embark on.

1. What's the deal with Jesus?
2. What's the deal with Satan?
3. What's the deal with airline food? (this one's a joke)
4. What are the qualifications of getting into heaven, and into hell?
5. And the big one, how is Islam corrupted?

Well, the Quran has been preserved, memorized by thousands of Muslims in its original text and language.

*[15:9] Absolutely, we have revealed the reminder, and, absolutely, we will preserve it.*

And getting into heaven is pretty easy, you don't have to have a special golf club membership to get in. And the perspective of Jesus and Satan was very reasonable. So, he was in; he was convinced. After he read the Quran in full, he took his Shahada in front of over 100 Muslims. Of course,

prior to that he learned how Islam was corrupted, the Hadiths and Sunna. The same fallacy of the Jewish people with their Talmud, had snaked its way into Islam.

*[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."*

*[20:114] Most Exalted is GOD, the only true King. Do not rush into uttering the Quran before it is revealed to you, and say, "My Lord, increase my knowledge."*

It's heartbreaking, but Satan is not a mortal, he's not a man like you or me. He is capable of terrible things. But a good, righteous Submitter has only GOD to fear (3:175, 16:99-100).

I am here. I was blessed with the Quran, and my grandmother's prayer was answered in that I was blessed by God with a heart and mind that yearns to learn the truth and follow the straight path. I have returned to the city I was born in, and Masjid Tucson is only a few miles from the street I was raised on. I am home. God has guided me down many paths to find His true religion. May this young man, not so young anymore, keep learning and growing.

*Khaleel*

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## Conference report 2024

The 39th annual conference of the United Submitters International was held in Tucson, Arizona Aug 2-4, 2024. The khutba was delivered by brother Ayyub (with his two small children!). He asked the common question: "Is God's love unconditional?" And showed us through Quranic verses who God loves and who He does not. We must all do the work to earn God's love and His eternal reward.

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After celebrating graduations (everything from second grade to university), new babies, marriages and retirements, we welcomed all the first-time conference attendees. The last one arrived a bit late, but it was God's will that he come. Someone noticed then that we had 19 new submitters on the stage. All of them had their stories of how they had found submission, the true worship of God alone, and how excited they were to be at the conference and meet so many wonderful people. May God make their journeys full of joy and blessings.

As we have for several conferences, we kicked off Friday night with a meditation session. It's a blessing to share together this commandment from God. It puts our souls in the right frame of mind to truly focus on God for the weekend.

*[17:79] During the night, you shall meditate for extra credit, that your Lord may raise you to an honorable rank.*

*[26:218] Who sees you when you meditate during the night.*

Many communities shared their charitable works, reminding us of the importance of charity in God's system.

*[2:270] Any charity you give, or a charitable pledge you fulfill, GOD is fully aware thereof...*

*[2:274] Those who give to charity night and day, secretly and publicly, receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.*

It was especially fulfilling when we were told of a matching pledge to Charity Water, if we could raise \$10,000 in the next week. Within a few minutes, the amount was nearly raised, and the full amount was reached by the end of the day! So the Charity Water campaign for 2024 was off to a blazing start. The campaign continues through October. Visit the Masjid Tucson website if you wish to contribute.

As always, we were presented with many wonderful talks. They help us focus on many aspects of God and Submission. All of His creations are awesome and each speaker brought a unique perspective for the rest of us to consider and enjoy.

One of the wonderful aspects of our conference is that we draw people from so many different cultures, languages and countries. When we started tallying up all the places people had come from, it was amazing to realize that with all this diversity, we were united in one common cause—the worship of God alone.

Another wonderful feature of all our conferences is the zikr sessions every evening. We have so many beautiful voices among us to lead us in fervent commemoration of God. And this year, we were often led by children, some as young as 2, singing with amazing voices and enthusiasm for God's words. It is truly inspiring to see the future of submission in such capable hands. May God bless these children with a life-long commitment to the worship of God.

At the close of the conference, we adjourned to Masjid Tucson for our pizza / Eege's party. The closeness we enjoyed at the conference stayed on with us, with more zikr and commemoration. It's always a light and cheerful time, where we continue to sing God's praises. This year more people than ever attended this celebration. And also our Monday trip up Mt. Lemmon. It was wonderful to see so many people appreciating the cool temperatures up on the mountain. The picnic lunch and the hike were thoroughly enjoyed by so many happy submitters.

Monday night was a pot luck feast at the Mosque for all those still in town. It's always hard to say goodbye, so it's a delight to have more chances to be together, joining with others to focus on the worship of God and appreciating all His bounties. This sense of unity and purpose keeps us energized for the coming year.

We look forward to seeing you in 2025!

*Nargis & Lydia*

## DIVINE ETIQUETTE

Good manners, courtesy and cleanliness are not merely terms that have to be looked upon but we are enjoined to observe "*divine etiquette*" as part of our faith.

At the very onset we are commanded to observe the *wudu* ablution before we offer our Contact Prayers (*Salat*). Our fasting too in Ramadan is to endorse higher and finer human qualities like self-restraint and moderation in conduct. We abstain from necessities like food, water and wants for a specific period. This leads to self-control and an empathetic approach to the ethics of plenty and insufficiency.

Our conduct is defined with moderation, and also becomes a proof of our submission to the Will of God and we gain merit for the Hereafter. Our patience which is tested and done due to God's command becomes a part of our character.

Restraint and tolerance are among the better qualities that can be acquired and applied to everyday situations, especially when confronted with making critical decisions. Instead of arguments and clashes these traits would be inculcated. Patience is the basis of better conduct in social dealings. There would be fewer hostilities as part of a self-improvement regime to handle anger. Anger management has been handled by the Quran over 14 centuries ago and there will be little need to go to special classes if we can study the Quran and apply it to our lives. The emphasis is on meeting the requisites of civility, in contrast to being aggressive to those around us.

*[25:63] The worshipers of the Most Gracious are those who tread the earth gently, and when the ignorant speak to them, they only utter peace.*

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ISSN 1089-053X

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#### *Dress Code for Women*

[33:59] *O prophet, tell your wives, your daughters, and the wives of the believers that they shall lengthen their garments. Thus, they will be recognized (as righteous women) and avoid being insulted. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

#### *Etiquette*

[33:53] *O you who believe, do not enter the prophet's homes unless you are given permission to eat, nor shall you force such an invitation in any manner. If you are invited, you may enter. When you finish eating, you shall leave; do not engage him in lengthy conversations. This used to hurt the prophet, and he was too shy to tell you. But GOD does not shy away from the truth. ...*

Even though the verses refer to the prophet Muhammad, it gives us a sense of Quranic etiquette and dressing modestly. It has a global appeal to instruct us for decent behaviour.

There are social commands -

[58:11] *O you who believe, if you are told, "Please make room," you shall make room for each other to sit. GOD will then make room for you. If you are asked to get up and move, get up and move. GOD raises those among you who believe, and those who acquire*

*knowledge to higher ranks. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

[41:34-35] *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. None can attain this except those who steadfastly persevere. None can attain this except those who are extremely fortunate.*

[3:133-134] *You should eagerly race towards forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise whose width encompasses the heavens and the earth; it awaits the righteous, who give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. GOD loves the charitable.*

The Quran also lays down the morals of behaviour to be observed by people.

#### *Believers Set the Example*

[49:11] *O you who believe, no people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you mock one another, or make fun of your names. Evil indeed is the reversion to wickedness after attaining faith. Anyone who does not repent after this, these are the transgressors.*

#### *Divine Etiquette*

[24:27-29] *O you who believe, do not*

*enter homes other than yours without permission from their inhabitants, and without greeting them. This is better for you, that you may take heed. If you find no one in them, do not enter them until you obtain permission. If you are told, "Go back," you must go back. This is purer for you. GOD is fully aware of everything you do. You commit no error by entering uninhabited homes wherein there is something that belongs to you. GOD knows everything you reveal, and everything you conceal.*

[6:54] *When those who believe in our revelations come to you, you shall say, "Salāmun 'Alaykum (Peace be upon you). Your Lord has decreed that mercy is His attribute. Thus, anyone among you who commits a transgression out of ignorance, and repents thereafter and reforms, then He is Forgiving, Most Merciful."*

There is an emphasis on hygiene and discipline in food habits for one's own health.

[7:31] *O children of Adam, you shall be clean and dress nicely when you go to the masjid. And eat and drink moderately. Surely, He does not love the gluttons.*

The Quran thus sets the standard for observing decency, civility and courtesy. May we follow this to lead a righteous life.

*Alim*