

# United Submitters International

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## The Feast ... Continued

The stories of the experiences and choices of the disbelievers are many - another feast to learn from. Repeated in many forms, in many circumstances, the lessons are the same - God Alone. The knowledge gained from these lessons is without price to those sincerely seeking God Alone, and who recognize this existence as a temporary one. For the disbelievers, the feast of evidence given to them in support of their idol worship is equal in its abundance.

Is this overkill? Does the human being require such extraordinary measures? It is the nature of the human being to exert the least effort to obtain the most benefit for the self, the body that exists in this world. Imagine being presented with such a feast covering all questions and needs the human being could ever have, and more! And them imagine attempting to offer it as an excuse or ransom for

disbelief - imagine attempting to bribe the Supreme Host with His own property!

The "feasts" described above are for our benefit. To reassure our hearts.

*"Recall that the disciples said, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a feast from the sky?' He said, 'You should reverence God, if you are believers.' They said, 'We wish to eat therefrom, and reassure our hearts, and to know that you have brought us the truth, that we may serve as witnesses thereof.' Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'Our god, our Lord, send down to us a feast from the sky. Let it be a celebration for each and every one of us, and a sign from You. Provide for us; You are the best Provider.' God said, 'I am sending it down. Anyone among you who disbelieves after this, I will punish him as I never punished anyone else'" (5:112-115).*

With all that is provided for us in this temporary world, the many feasts for our bodies, our souls, our quest for knowledge, truth and more, our personal responsibility increases, and thus God states that there are consequences for refusing or abusing the "feast" He provides. At the core of this feast is the truth, and the truth is God Alone. All is provided as a clear path to enable our return to Him Alone. As each of us celebrate the gifts He gives us, the lessons He provides for us, His untiring effort to "polish" and purify us in this life to prepare us for our reunion with Him, surely our hearts are reassured and infinitely more peaceful as we strive in the cause of God. The believers are willing participants at this feast, knowing that to be invited at all is God's true mercy.

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In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# SUBMITTERS PERSPECTIVE

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In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

## THE GOOD WORD

*"Anyone seeking dignity should know that to God belongs all dignity. To Him ascends the good words, and He exalts the righteous works. As for those who scheme evil works, they incur severe retribution, the scheming of such people is destined to fail" (35:10).*

*"Do you not realize that God knows everything in the heavens and everything on earth? No three people can conspire secretly without Him being their fourth, nor five without Him being the sixth, nor less than that, nor more, without Him being there with them wherever they may be. Then, on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of everything they had done. God is fully aware of all things. Have you noted those who were enjoined from conspiring secretly, then insist on conspiring? They conspire to commit sin, transgression, and disobedience of the messenger. When they come to you, they greet you with a greeting other than that decreed by God. They say inside themselves, 'God will not punish us for our utterances.' Their only requital is Gehenna, wherein they burn; what a miserable destiny. O you who believe, if you have to confer secretly, you shall not confer to commit sin, transgression, and to disobey the messenger. You shall reverence God, before whom you will be summoned. Secret conspiracy is the devil's idea, through which he seeks to hurt those who believed. However, he cannot hurt them against God's will. In God the believers shall trust. 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" (58:7-11).*

Because we are in a constant refining process to purify our souls, we want to

remove all aspects of evil from our lives, God knows that people cannot avoid conflicts if they engage in lengthy conversations and vain talk. This is why we are instructed not to mingle excessively with each other like the days of ignorance, "You shall settle down in your homes, and do not mingle with the people excessively, like you used to do in the old days of ignorance. You shall observe the contact prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and obey God and His messenger. God wishes to remove all unholiness from you, O you who live around the Sacred Shrine, and to purify you completely" (33:33). While nothing can divide the real sincere and devoted people from God and each other, we must be careful with the words we choose when communicating. This takes a lot of patience and steadfastness and those who have this quality are extremely fortunate, by God's grace. Words are like weapons; if used the wrong way they can really influence someone's perception of us. Of course God knows that we may say things that don't coincide with what is in our hearts, but we should all try to engage in only righteous conversations.

*"Do you not see that God has cited the example of the good word as a good tree whose root is firmly fixed, and its branch is high in the sky? It produces its crop every season, as designed by its Lord. God thus cites the examples for the people, that they may take heed. And the example of the bad word is that of a bad tree chopped at the soil level; it does not stand. God strengthens*

*those who believe with the proven word, in this life and in the Hereafter. And God sends the transgressors astray, God does what He wills" (14:24-27).*

*"Obedience and righteous utterances are expected of them. Thus, if mobilization is ever required, and they show their confidence in God, it will be better for them" (47:21).*

*"Why do they not study the Quran carefully? Are their minds blocked? Surely, those who slide back, after the guidance has been manifested to them, the devil has enticed them, and has misled them. This is because they said to those who hated God's revelations, 'We agree with some of the things you say,' God fully knows their secret conspiracies. How will it be for them when the angels put them to death? They will beat them on their faces and their rear ends. This is because they followed what angered God and hated to please Him. Consequently, He has nullified their works. Did those with doubts in their hearts think that God will not bring out their evil thoughts? Had we willed we could have exposed them for you, and you would have recognized them by certain marks. You can recognize them by their twisted utterances. God is fully aware of all your works. We will certainly put you to the test, in order to distinguish the strivers among you, and those who steadfastly persevere. We must expose your true qualities" (47:24-31).*

ALL PRAISE BE TO GOD



# What Goes Around Comes Around

by Linda Baruni

We all have heard the age old English language idiom, "What goes around comes around." Verses from the Quran prove this saying to be true in various aspects of our relationships with one another and our relationship with God.

The benefits of dealing with one another in a kind and humble manner are given in the following verses from the Quran:

"When greeted with a greeting you shall respond with a better greeting or an equal one. God reckons all things" (4:86).

"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" (58:11).

The result of mocking the believers is clearly stated by God below:

"The wicked used to laugh at those who believed. When they passed by them, they used to poke fun. When they got together with their people, they used to joke. Whenever they saw them, they said, 'These people are far astray! They have no such thing as (invisible) guards.' Today, those who believed are laughing at the disbelievers" (83:29-34).

The Quran warns us about scheming through verses 10:21; 8:30, as well as the subsequent verses shared:

"Others before them have schemed, but to God belongs the ultimate scheming. He knows what everyone is doing. The disbelievers will find out who the ultimate winners are" (13:42).

"They schemed, but so did God, and God is the best schemer" (3:54).

God also describes in the Quran the repercussions of forgetting the Day of Judgement:

"Those who do not take their religion seriously, and are totally absorbed in this worldly life, we forget them on that day, because they forgot that day, and because they spurned our revelations" (7:51).

"It will be proclaimed: 'Today we forget you, just as you forgot the meeting of this day. Your abode is the hellfire, and you will have no helpers'" (45:34).

Comforting indeed are several verses of the Quran dealing with the effects that our relationship with God have on us now and will, God-willing, have on us in the Hereafter:

"They will say, 'Praise God for removing all our worries. Our Lord is Forgiving, Appreciative'" (35:34).

"What will God gain from punishing you, if you became appreciative and believed? God is Appreciative, Omniscient" (4:147).

"Would you not lend God a good loan, to have it repaid to you multiplied manifold? God is the One who provides and withholds, and to Him you will be returned" (2:245).

"Who would like to loan God a loan of righteousness, to have it multiplied for him manifold, and end up with a generous recompense?" (57:11)

"You shall remember Me, that I may remember you. Be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative" (2:152).

"God will proclaim, 'This is a day when the truthful will be saved by their truthfulness.' They have deserved gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. God is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. This is the greatest triumph" (5:119).

"As for you, O content soul. Return to your Lord, pleased and pleasing" (89:27-28).

In our relationship with one another and in our relationship with God, whatever we may send forth will come right back to us. From God we came and to Him we shall ultimately be returned; He will then inform us of everything we have done.

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## IN THE NAME OF GOD, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL

# The Feast

by Kathryn Kolton

When we think of the word "feast," we think of abundance, overflow, extensive variety, more than is needed to satisfy, certainly above and beyond what was thought of as extraordinary. When we hear a phrase like, "a feast for the eyes," we think of extraordinary, unimagined beauty, beyond our wildest dreams. An entire sura is entitled, "The Feast." This sura's most important lesson is learned by the disciples of Jesus, when they request a feast from God to assure their hearts.

The word "feast" makes us think of food. A basic need of our garment in this world. And our body is a worldly priority in this life. The first five verses of this sura talk about foods that are lawful for all people, as well as those that are prohibited. The prohibited foods are so few, and we now know there are obvious health reasons for those few prohibitions. Otherwise, God tells us all foods are lawful, and good. And abundant. We cannot comprehend the provisions of God. He provides for all creatures, for all time. God provides for our basic needs, to care for and satisfy our earthly garment. Presumably, that leaves us the freedom to concentrate on all the other abundant signs God gives us that direct us to Him Alone.

Sura 2:164 describes abundant signs for the intelligent: "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that roam the ocean for the benefit of mankind, the water that God sends down from the sky to revive dead land and to sustain all kinds of creatures therein, the manipulations of the winds and the clouds hanging between the sky and the earth, there are signs for intelligent people." This verse briefly describes some of the creations of God. It concentrates on this world, our world. And our world contains many kinds of feasts for the soul, the real person.

The classes of animals and the varieties within each class, from the smallest microbe to the largest creature, are an example of the abundance of God, and from each, we learn something of the miracles of creation. The various climates the earth experiences, the various types of surfaces which encompass the earth, the various kinds of flowers, rocks, trees, etc. -all are examples of the abundance of God. There are a limited number of chemical elements, and yet unlimited combinations, which produce increasingly useful knowledge to the human being. There are seven universes, not one. One is extraordinary enough, as we cannot even imagine traveling to its limits, or counting its stars in our lifetime. The "feast" of signs He provides for us, that we might be mindful of Him. And this is a temporary world!

The descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Quran are described as "feasts" of both kinds. For the believers, the "feast" is everything ever wanted, given without the exertion of any effort on the believer's part, including clothing, jewelry of gold, and fine furnishings, pure drinks, etc. No matter what the desire, it is granted. In peace, and joy, with no tension, no worry, no limits. The disbelievers can look for another kind of feast; one which also has no limits, but which never satisfies, which is painful, lonely, with no joy, no peace, constant separation from God for all time. God describes abundant shade and flowing streams, even as He describes boiling drinks and shedding skin to begin again.

God presents us with many ways to live a righteous life, to choose Him over all things. Instead of requiring only one prayer a day, He requires five prayers a day, knowing the repeated reminders benefit the believers, and help them overcome their selfish, earth-centered na-

ture. In one lifetime, there are many thousand chances to be with God during our contact prayers. A preliminary feast, if you will, to experience the joy of being with God in this world, for the contact prayers are an audience with God. In this life.

The feast of miracles that God has presented to us, both in the past, recorded for our benefit, and daily, also for our benefit, has no end. Without listing all of those recorded in Quran, these are some: the seven sleepers of Ephesus, the plagues of Moses, the parting of the Red Sea, Jonah's surviving the big fish, the healing of the sick and blind, the raising of the dead, manna and quail in the desert appearing daily for the Israelites, water springing from rocks, Abraham and the cool fire, Jacob's vision restored with the touch of Joseph's shirt, pieces of birds flying from the hilltops, Jesus speaking as an infant, the conception of Jesus and John. And the miracle of nineteen that is perpetual, ever expanding, just as the universe continues to expand. Mirror images of each other. This does not include those daily miracles each of us experience in our lifetimes, and that we know come only from God. A feast of miracles! Until the world ends.

Quran is a feast for the soul. It is a map - complete directions for all phases of human affairs: how to deal with disbelievers; conduct ourselves with all people; treat other believers, spouses, and children; how to understand and use our charity, money, jobs, to our benefit as reminders of God Alone, to increase our appreciativeness. Instead of sending one angel, who we know to be unbelievably powerful, God sends "five thousand angels descending" to assist and protect the believers!

(CONTINUED LAST PAGE)