

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Lessons from the Geese

All the creatures on earth, and all the birds that fly with wings, are communities like you. We did not leave anything out of this book. To their Lord, all these creatures will be summoned (6:38).

The Geese Community: Gregarious Living

Indeed, there are many lessons we can learn from the many communities of birds. The geese are one example of such a community inspired by our Lord in which we can reflect upon. They are a species of waterfowl closely related to swans and ducks. However, they are usually intermediate in size between swans and ducks and differ from their relatives in feeding habits.

Among their species, geese tend to vary greatly in sizes and colorings. All however, have short legs, webbed feet and rather short straight bills. They have a layer of down and are covered with dense plumage as are all waterfowl (see Quran on “distinct people and tribes” in 49:13). God be glorified.

Geese are highly gregarious at all times other than when nesting, and a few of them, such as the blue and snow geese, even form massive nesting colonies. Such flocks are usually made up of thousands of individual family units that remain fairly well intact within the flock. Apparently, family members can recognize each other without difficulty. Now, if we look closely at their peaceful community, they clearly do possess such Quranic characteristic as ***the believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence GOD, that you may attain mercy (49:10). And lower your wing for the believers who follow you (26:215).*** God be glorified.

The keen eyesight and hearing sense of birds have long been useful to mankind (see 27:15-31). Do you know that the ancient Egyptians, Romans and Greeks kept captive geese as a source of food and as sentries, that could be relied on to raise the alarm when disturbed? And in the wild, the whole large flock can respond instantly to the warning calls of just a few sentries among them; and they

will be airborne in a matter of seconds! Such is their wariness. Their superb sense of ever readiness and know-how in response to the call of mobilization is truly inspiring. Let us recall these Quranic motivations: ***O you who believe, you shall remain alert, and mobilize as individuals, or mobilize all together (4:71). You shall prepare for them all the power you can muster, and all the equipment you can mobilize....(8:60).*** God be glorified.

Do they not see the birds committed to fly in the atmosphere of the sky? None holds them up in the air except GOD. This should be proof for people who believe (16:79).

Geese: Migration for the right cause and time

Since nearly all geese are found in the north temperate and Arctic zones, they have been inspired by God to leave their homes before winter and emigrate to warmer places for their survival. This is why we are able to see many flocks of geese heading south always for the winter!

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All geese species are migratory. Thus, we see that emigration may indeed be a life-saving movement! This reminds us of the following Quranic teaching: ***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*** (5:35).

God the Most Wise also has set a precedent for us all. When the disbelievers tried to burn Abraham, ***Lot believed with him and said, "I am emigrating to my Lord. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise"*** (29:26). ***Those who emigrated for the sake of GOD, because they were persecuted, we will surely make it up to them generously in this life, and the recompense of the Hereafter is even greater, if they only knew. This is because they steadfastly persevere, and in their Lord they trust*** (16:41-42).

There is also an interesting contrast mentioned in 4:97-100 for our reflection on "those who could but didn't want to" (See also 9:20). Thus, while GOD guides the geese towards spring, ***He guides those who seek his approval to the paths of peace, leads them out of darkness into the light by His leave, and guides them in a straight path*** (5:16). God be glorified.

Flight Preparation

Have they not seen the birds above them lined up in columns and spreading their wings? The Most Gracious is the One who holds them in the air. He is Seer of all things (67:19).

Depending on the species, the young develop sufficiently to begin flying as early as 40 to 85 days after hatching! And while the young learn to fly, the seniors' flight feathers and other plumage undergo their yearly renewal. By the time the brood is 2 or 3 months old, both the youths and the

seniors are ready for their greatest flight migrating to winter quarters. This system of God repeats itself yearly throughout the entire life of the goose. Their life span in the wild is up to 10 years (but they may survive twice as long in captivity). Do you realize that they spend almost their entire life flying! Shouldn't we too be spending our entire life striving in the cause of God, never wavering nor tiring? God be glorified.

On taking off, geese need more space or more of a headwind than do ducks, and geese typically run a few steps along the ground or over the water before attaining their minimum flight speed. So if time allows, the geese toss their heads a few times before takeoff to warn other birds in the vicinity of their imminent departure.

Now, bear this in mind: God has endowed the geese with navigational knowledge long before man! This knowledge enables them to fly regardless of night or day. Experiments with various birds in planetariums have proved their star-navigational ability beyond doubt. On clear days, the geese evidently use the position of the sun while on starry nights, they use the constellations as guidelines for navigation. Thus, they need not rely on any specific landmarks at all for their movements. Also, note that this recent scientific discovery has already been written down for believers in the Quran over 1400 years ago in 16:16: ***and landmarks, as well as the stars; to be used for navigation.***

Do you not realize that everyone in the heavens and the earth glorifies God, even the birds as they fly in a column? Each knows its prayer and its glorification. God is fully aware of everything they do (24:41).

Geese - Flying in Formation

They fly as a flock in a 'V' formation, like the shape of a wedge, sometimes at elevations of several thousand feet.

Most interestingly, by flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. Now, this is teamwork!

This orderly formation in flight provides maximum visibility and even prevents air turbulence, caused by any member of the flock, from obstructing other flock members. And as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds immediately following! Here it goes to show that people who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

The Quran clearly says ***the believing men and women are allies of one another. They advocate righteousness and forbid evil, they observe the Salats and give the obligatory Zakat, and they obey God and the messenger. These will be showered by God's mercy. God is Almighty, Most Wise*** (9:71). Therefore, ***O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, you shall persevere, you shall be united, you shall observe God, that you may succeed*** (3:200). ***O you who believe, do not betray God and the messenger, and do not betray those who trust you, now that you know*** (8:27). God be glorified.

Should any goose fall out of formation, it will suddenly feel the drag and resistance of trying the difficult journey alone. It will quickly get into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. So, if we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going for ***God loves those who fight in His cause united in one column, like the bricks in one wall*** (61:4). Therefore, ***you shall obey GOD and His messenger, and do not dispute among***

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yourself, lest you fail and scatter your strength. You shall steadfastly persevere. GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere (8:46). Also see 8:47 for contrast. God be glorified.

Contrary to popular opinion, the lead bird of the “V” formation is not always an adult male. Geese shift their relative positions frequently during the flight. When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose readily flies point! This reminds us of God’s teachings:...**O you who believe, you shall help and support him, and regard him as he should be regarded** (33:56). **Many a prophet had godly people struggle along with him, without ever wavering under pressure in the cause of GOD, nor did they hesitate or become discouraged. GOD loves the steadfast...** (3:146). Hence, it pays to take turns doing hard jobs—with people or with geese flying south. God be glorified.

And indeed when the going gets tough, the geese honk from behind to encourage, exhort and remind those upfront to keep their speed. Indeed, keeping to the right speed is very important, for their timely scheduled stop-over will guarantee their flock the “very best spot”. Meanwhile, the tough gets going! **You shall struggle for the cause of God....and exhort the believers to do the same** (4:84). So like honking, reminders are very important in a believer’s life as it is a form of encouragement which will benefit the community in so many ways. **Therefore, you shall remind; perhaps the reminder will benefit** (87:9). And know that time is always of the essence. The present is always the right time (Sura Al-’Asr). God be glorified.

Finally, all submitters must get this; if a goose gets sick or is wounded (even by gunshot), two geese readily fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him! They will stay

with him until he is either able to fly again or until he is dead (see Quran 3:169 to 170 & 33:21 to 24). Indeed, if we have as much sense as the geese community, we will stand by each other like that. A righteous utterance for this difficult moment should be, “Do not worry; GOD is with us” (9:40). Then, the supporting geese will launch out and strive on their own or join with another formation to catch up with their own flock, if possible. Therefore, no matter how far, they can get there fast, with teammates giving them an uplift.

Let there be a community of you who invite to what is good, advocate righteousness, and forbid evil. These are the winners. Do not be like those who became divided and disputed, despite the clear proofs that were given to them. For these have incurred a terrible retribution (3:104 to 105).

PRAISE BE TO GOD, LORD OF THE UNIVERSE!

Sister Asiah / Singapore

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Steadfastness

The Quran is filled with references to the steadfast. Who are they? Many seem to have different ideas. We need to have a better understanding of the word, steadfast, as it is referred to in the Quran. Since there are so many references, only a few verses are singled out and discussed here.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines steadfast as “firmly loyal or constant.” This is a good general definition, but the Quran adds some specifics for the believers. It indicates that the steadfast are those who: **When affliction befalls them, they say, “we belong to God and to Him we are returning.”** (2:156)

Hence the Quran defines the steadfast as those who realize that God hands them their destiny. Regular prayer is also connected with stead-

fastness. **“You shall seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat), this is difficult indeed, but not so for the reverent.”** (2:45,153)

Therefore, both the Contact Prayers and steadfastness are some aspects of righteousness. This is made clear in the definition of righteousness in the Quran:

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. (2:177)

As we see it in the above verse, another connection made throughout the Quran is the association between steadfastness and perseverance:

“Peace be upon you because you steadfastly persevered. What a joyous destiny. (13:24)

“We will surely reward those who steadfastly persevere; we will recompense them for their righteous works.” (16:96)

One can then assume that perseverance gives some longevity to the steadfastness required by God in the Quran. The Quran requires Submitters to steadfastly persevere through life’s many trials and tribulations.

“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 worshippers, a lot of insult. If you steadfastly persevere and lead a righteous life, this will prove the strength of your faith.” (3:186).

In conclusion, the steadfast are those who recognize God’s involvement in their destiny, pray regularly and persevere.

Senobar

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Comments From Incarcerated Brothers

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Assalamu alaikum beloved Brothers and Sisters,

I'm writing to inform you that I am in receipt of the information that you have sent me concerning the prayer and wanted to let you know. Plus to say brothers/sisters that I appreciate you and may Allah reward you for your kindness.

Brothers/sisters, I never realized just how much have been added to the [Contact] Prayer until now. It's scary to know that so many of us Muslims think that we are on the right path and not even realize that we might be Hell-bound. And to know that I too was among the lost is more frightening.

Praise due to Allah for His Love, Mercy and Guidance, and His Messenger.

Assalamu alaikum

Brother Alexander

Beloved brothers:

As-salam Alaikum

This is just a small reminder to inform you brothers and sisters at Masjid Tucson on the wonderful job you are doing on spreading the true authentic tenets of Allah's message.

After years of being a Sunni, I had come to agree that the Quran is the best and only Hadith we Muslims have, and only authentic one.

I also truly feel that we Muslims need to embrace modern knowledge and technology, and overcome divisions over religious dogma that have left us weakened on the world stage.

After coming across a few material of the message of the Submitters from another incarcerated brother (Submitter) at the institution, I'd come to fully accept this message wholeheartedly because nothing is lacking, or is its anything superfluous about it. It's the complete composition of a whole.

Brother, my knowledge is very limited on this beautiful message, so inshallah, can you please send any update material you may have.

Leaving you as I come in "peace." As-salam Alaikum. May Allah be your constant companion. Thanking you in advance. Thanks!!

Mashallah

Brother Keith

Greetings Brothers,

Thank you for sending the Submitters Perspective articles. They have been very helpful to me. This year in prison has truly been a learning experience. I've drawn closer to Allah. I've become much more humble. All praise to Allah.

My release date is [soon] inshaAllah (God willing), I will write letting you brothers know my new address. Then I can offer much more support inshaAllah. Once again I want to thank you for your support of this year. May Allah regard you brothers.

Peace

Brother Shakur

God Willing
25th
Annual Conference
United Submitters
July 30-August 1, 2010
Tucson, Arizona



God willing start making plans for attending the Annual Conference of the Submitters.

The registration forms and hotel information will be mailed out with the next issue of the Submitters Perspective, God willing.

The web page on the internet to circulate the conference information is

www.masjiduntucson.org/conference

God willing, the registration forms and hotel information will be posted there also with password access. The password can be obtained by emailing us at info@masjiduntucson.org

Act now and register right away for us to better organize the event, God willing.