

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

Monthly Bulletin of International
Community of Submitters

www.masjiduntucson.org



Published by Masjid Tucson
Shawwal 1434

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The Immeasurable Beauty of Belonging to God

Most people rarely ask themselves, “To who or what do I really belong?” If the question comes to mind, most individuals first think of family, some group, a clan, a club, some organization, or even a country. Yet, this very important question is in the Quran.

Say, “To whom belongs the earth and everyone on it, if you know?” (24:84)

The answers to this question are also in the Quran. Here are two examples:

To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. God is in full control of all things. (4:126)

Absolutely, to God belongs everyone in the heavens and everyone on earth. Those who set up idols beside God are really following nothing. They only think that they are following something. They only guess. (10:66)

Youngsters often say, “I belong to my daddy or mommy!” I often see frightened children run to their parents, and cuddle up to one or both of them. When in a group of people especially when they are around strangers, children seldom lose sight of their parents. Children forget about their parents when they are distracted, having fun, and absorbed in play. The moment they become anxious, children scan the immediate environment looking for the “big people” who take care of and protect

them. Our Creator tells us that it is precisely when we are distracted by this world that we forget about Him.

The devil wants to provoke animosity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and to distract you from remembering God, and from observing the Contact Prayers (Salat). Will you then refrain? (5:91) Daily Contact Prayers serve as one reminder to us about Who we belong to.

This worldly life is no more than vanity and play, while the abode of the Hereafter is the real life, if they only knew. (29:64)

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. (31:33)

The late psychologist Dr. Abraham Maslow recognized that the need to belong is a major source of human motivation. He thought that it was one of eight basic needs in his Hierarchy of Human Needs. Along with physical and safety needs, an individual also seeks positive self-esteem, and self-actualization. Along with satisfying physical and safety needs, a person starts working on the longing to belong and be loved. Belonging connotes a state of being accepted and in a comfortable place; be-

longing implies being in a relationship, being attached and affiliated, and being included.

Aside from physical and safety needs that characterize all creatures, the need to belong is the major source of human motivation. Throughout life, the need to belong and be loved takes on many forms ranging from the warm cuddly hold of an adult when a person is an infant to the ultimate state of being aware that you belong to God, your Lord and Creator. The need to belong is initially cultivated in the family. Family life is reflected in every endeavor during childhood and plastered in the media. Some of you may recall family TV shows like “Leave It To Beaver,” “All In The Family,” “Bonanza,” and the “Cosby Show.” The need for acceptance and attachment is innate in humans. As a person grows older, the acceptance and attachment need is realized through the person's relationships beyond his or her childhood family. To the extent that a person is: 1) not accepted, and 2) does not gain the approval and love of others that the person deems are important to him or her, the person experiences sadness and loneliness.

But, the most peaceful serene thought is to reflect: “I belong to God. He is my Lord and Master.” The thought of belonging to God is matchless in its power and beauty, there is nothing comparable to it, and it cannot be

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measured. There is no “better belonging” than to belong to our Lord and Creator. Better yet, there is no “better belonging” than to personally know that you belong to your Lord and Creator.

When an affliction befalls them, they say, “We belong to God, and to Him we are returning.” (2:156)

Prophets Joseph and Abraham are among many examples in the Quran of people who love belonging to God.

Joseph said:

“My Lord, You have given me kingship and taught me the interpretation of dreams. Initiator of the heavens and the earth; You are my Lord and Master in this life and in the Hereafter. Let me die as a submitter, and count me with the righteous.” (12:101)

Abraham said:

“I am against them, for I am devoted only to the Lord of the universe. The One who created me, and guided me. The One who feeds me and waters me. And when I get sick, He heals me. The One who puts me to death, then brings me back to life. The One who hopefully will forgive my sins on the Day of Judgment.” (26:77-82)

When we are reminded in the Quran that everything and everyone belongs to God, it is frequently followed by mention of God’s attributes. Upon reading such verses, a believer experiences tremendous peace and praises God. There is no better one to belong to than the One Who is Lord of the universe!

He forgives whomever He wills, and punishes whomever He wills. God is Omnipotent (2:284). All matters are controlled by God (3:109). He forgives whomever He wills, and punishes whomever He wills. God is Forgiver, Most Merciful (3:129). God is Omnipotent (3:189). God is in no need, Praiseworthy (4:131). God is the only Protector (4:132). God is Omniscient, Most Wise (4:170). God suffices as Lord and Master (4:171). He creates whatever He wills. He controls life and death. You have none beside God as a Lord and Master (9:116). Absolutely, God’s promise is truth, but most of them do not know (10:55).

As for those in this world who choose not to acknowledge and submit to God, they seek out anyone, any idea, and anything in futile attempts to satisfy their innate need

to belong, to be attached, and affiliated with something that they believe satisfies their longing for recognition and acceptance. They follow idols and are wedded to illusions.

Absolutely, to God belongs everyone in the heavens and everyone on earth. Those who set up idols beside God are really following nothing. They only think that they are following something. They only guess. (10:66)

Is God not sufficient for His servant? They frighten you with the idols they set up beside Him. Whomever God sends astray, nothing can guide him. (39:36)

Disbelievers and hypocrites are “approval addicts.” They constantly seek some form of false credit, attention, acceptance, and affiliation. Why? They discarded the worship of God alone. As one consequence, their innermost need to belong is perverted and unfilled. So “24/7” or around the clock, they crave the highest approval, attention, and acceptance from other than God.

Amidst daily life’s ups and downs, it is a great blessing to a person to know that he or she belongs to God alone and he or she will return to Him. Speaking to his followers, Prophet Jesus said:

“The world would love you if you belonged to it, but you don’t...The people of the world will hate you because you belong to me, for they don’t know God who sent me...” (John 15:18, 21)

Of course, Jesus never enjoined his followers to worship him. When he said, “belong to me,” Jesus was referring to those who worship God alone, obey God’s commands, and obey God’s messengers and prophets. This is clearly conveyed in the phrase “they [referring to disbelievers in his community at that time] don’t know God who sent me...” Guided by God, Jesus explained to his followers that the world only accepts or loves those who ‘belong’ to it, and have chosen not to worship God alone. In this sense, to belong to the world is equivalent to being in Satan’s kingdom. In contrast, believers do not forget who they belong to and where they are going. With this awareness comes tremendous contentment and peace.

To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth and therefore, the religion shall be devoted absolutely to Him alone. Would you worship other than God? (16:52)

Every soul will taste death, after we put you to the test through adversity and prosperity, then to us you ultimately return. (21:35)

Brother Douglass

VERSES ON GOD’S WONDROUS SIGNS MOUNTAINS

[79:32] He established the mountains.

[22:18] Do you not realize that to GOD prostrates everyone in the heavens and the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the animals, and many people? Many others among the people are committed to doom. Whomever GOD shames, none will honor him. Everything is in accordance with GOD’s will.

[17:37] You shall not walk proudly on earth—you cannot bore through the earth, nor can you be as tall as the mountains.

[27:61] Who is the One who made the earth habitable, caused rivers to run through it, placed on it mountains, and created a barrier between the two waters? Is it another god with GOD? Indeed, most of them do not know.

[27:88] When you look at the mountains, you think that they are standing still. But they are moving, like the clouds. Such is the manufacture of GOD, who perfected everything. He is fully Cognizant of everything you do.

[33:72] We have offered the responsibility (freedom of choice) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. But the human being accepted it; he was transgressing, ignorant.

[50:7] And we created the earth, and scattered on it mountains, and grew in it all kinds of beautiful plants.

[73:14] The day will come when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a weightless pile.

Fear

Defined as: An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain or is a threat.

‘Fear’ can cause tremendous anxiety and interfere with normal life; it can also cause us to behave irrationally. Sometimes the experience is so nerve-wracking that we may go to great lengths to avoid it—inconveniencing ourselves or even changing our lifestyle. All this because we step out of God’s kingdom and with it, we step out of His protection.

Having left my job and presently on my own without an income, the fear of “how will I manage” was foremost on my mind. Then God came to my rescue and provided for me from the most unexpected places. We know it’s Satan’s system to instill fear into us; however we let him have his way despite the knowledge. More often than not it is a small issue that we magnify to the extent of causing ourselves physical damage. In my case, low blood pressure. God clearly warns us, *Fear: The Devil’s Tool [3:175] It is the devil’s system to instill fear into his subjects. Do not fear them and fear Me instead, if you are believers.* Despite this warning I let fear get the better of me.

Mostly, I’d let Satan drive me round the bend with fear, and after I had tried everything then I’d turn to God. The last year has been a learning experience. I have now learned to first take it to God and then do what I need to do. Praise God for His guidance and understanding. It’s easy to say “God is running everything” with conviction when things are rosy but when the chips are down it is not so easy for some to truly believe that God is running everything and to stay steadfast. God puts us through different experiences so that we can improve in different areas of our lives. *[2:155] We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast.* The fears we go

through are meant to take us to the other side, confident in the knowledge that God is doing everything. And the tests we go through in life are designed to make us stronger. God has taught me to be more conscious and prepare for the unforeseen through different routes. Like the reminder that alerts us to say “Rabbi aAoothu bika min hamazati shshaya-teen. WaAAoothu bika rabbi an yahduroon”, i.e., “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from the whispers of the devils. And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they come near me.” (23:97-8).

Sometimes it helps to share your experiences with submitters we may be close to, as they are in a position to give you the best advice from the Quran. They may also give you a perspective that you may not think of on your own. Recently I went through an experience where I thought that God was showing me how wicked the human being can be, maybe because I was going to do something wicked in the future. But sharing the incident with another submitter gave me a fresh perspective, where she explained to me that I could look at that incident as a blessing from God as He allowed me do a righteous work without perceiving. That really helped me deal with the situation, because I was killing myself waiting for the time when I would do something bad, beating myself over what was not in my control. All I needed was a change in perspective. God teaches us through experience and through different people. We have to let it happen and not close ourselves to new experiences and advice from others. Most of the time we are so consumed by what others will say or think of us that we are not able to think clearly. All our decisions are based on fear of what others may say, what others may think. The individual is so full of itself that it’s easy to overlook God’s helping hand.

If we put our egos aside and ask for help, believe me it will come. All we need to do is ask. *Divine Guarantee: [2:277] Those who believe and lead a*

righteous life, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), they receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[Matthew 7:7] Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Fear moved me towards ill health only because I was not following God’s commandments. Fear of the unknown, fear of the future, fear of what people will say. I let it steer my life for over a year, till God showed me what I was doing to myself. It has been a year of learning. I can’t say that I enjoyed it, but now being aware, recognizing it and facing it, has set me free and that is the freedom I value; a life of awareness and no fear. I can’t say I will not succumb to fear again but at least next time, God willing, I’m going to be prepared to deal with Satan from the start without losing focus of who my God really is.

RD

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Letter from a Serviceman

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a Muslim who recently came into contact with the writings of Dr. Rashad Khalifa. I recently obtained Dr. Khalifa’s translation of the Quran and aside from the amazing readability of the translation, I was impressed by 2 things:

1. the mathematical miracle of the Quran, and more specifically,
2. The exhortation to worship Allah (God) Alone. I have always had an issue with the seemingly idolatrous view of the prophet Muhammad that is prevalent in Sunni Islam, and am drawn to the International Community of Submitters as I realize that happiness is Submission to Allah (God) ALONE.

Jason

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ISSN 1089-053X

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My Lord is always near, responsive

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt God has disowned you or you felt the most alone person? Have you felt like nothing is working out for you, though you do your religious duties regularly? A few days back, I felt the same when the person whom I love the most after God who lives far away from me cut off the contact with me and I had no way to get the news from her; no reply of phone calls, SMS, or emails. I was praying to God and He was not answering my prayer. This particular time becomes such a big test for believers. How do we react on such situations; do we still trust Him? Do we have patience? Can you control anything by yourself?

In this critical situation, believers are tested and Satan will try his best to divert our mind from the remembrance of God and thus we make our problem our god by thinking about it most of the time. Somewhere in my heart I had the trust that God will never leave my hand unless I take my hand from God's hand. I went in my bedroom and locked the door, so that no one can see me except God. I prostrated before Him and before I could say anything I started crying and imploring Him for what I needed. I was talking to God like a small child and asking Him to control my wife's mind and let her reply to my messages. Believe me it was a miraculous moment for me when I heard the message tone

from my cell phone and guess what? It was her message. To be honest, the happiness I felt in that moment was not that she messaged me but the assurance from God and how awesomely He controls everything. A sentence "thank you, God" automatically came out of my mouth, with tears in my eyes, tears of love and happiness for my Lord.

I always read the verse which says God answer the prayers, and I kept my trust in His words. After thanking God and appreciating His love and kindness for me, I opened Quran and saw this verse:

*[11:61] To Thamûd we sent their brother Sâleh. He said, "O my people, worship GOD; you have no other god beside Him. He initiated you from the earth, then settled you in it. You shall seek His forgiveness, then repent to Him. **My Lord is always near, responsive.***

It was a big sign for me from my Lord!

God says He is near, and when He says He is near, He really means it. There are times when a believer feels that he has no one— no one to talk to him, no one to come near and say "don't worry everything will be alright," no one to hug him, no one to put his/her arm around him to say "I am with you." But here for believers God says "I am Near." And we do not have to worry. We cannot control our happiness; it is God who controls everything. We just have to continue to trust and have patience in God without wavering.

*God Answers the Prayers of
"His Servants"*

[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.

[Proverbs 3:5-6] Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

[Psalms 147:3] He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

Praise God for the His support and assurance which makes us strong believers.

Indeed my Lord is near, responsive!

Believer M

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[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."

[21:88] We responded to him, and saved him from the crisis; we thus save the believers.

[34:50] Say, "If I go astray, I go astray because of my own shortcomings. And if I am guided, it is because of my Lord's inspiration. He is Hearer, Near."