

Masjid Tucson United Submitters International

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Last Reminder 1995 Conference August 18-20, 1995 Tucson, Arizona

God willing, this year's United Submitters Conference will be held in Tucson, Arizona. The dates of the conference are August 18-20, 1995.

The conference is by invitation only. If you have not attended one of our conferences before and would like an invitation, please contact us.

We made the hotel and conference site arrangements, and are beginning to accept registrations for the conference. The registration fees are \$57 for each adult and children over 12 years of age, \$29 for children of ages 5-12. Children under 5 are free.

The registration fee includes two lunches and two dinners on Friday and Saturday, and child care costs for all three days.

The registration fee does not include the lodging. Hotel rooms are \$57 a night inclusive of tax, full breakfast, and shuttle service to and from the airport. Children 18 and under stay free with their parents. If you are single, you may share a room with other submitters. We will get you the hotel information as soon as we receive your registration fee.

Remember that this is a great opportunity to be with the submitters from all around the world. Remember also that the earlier you plan it, the better air fares you will be able to get to come to Tucson (if you are flying).

You can call us or fax to us at (520)-323-7636. God willing, we'll hear from you.

Words of Appreciation

[Editor's note: Readers should remember the brave submitting couple who were ex-communicated by Singapore's religious scholars (S.P. Vol.9, No.12). Here is welcome news from them.]

All praise be to God. Hi! everyone, we are the "ex-communicated couple." Please forgive me and my caring wife for not writing in earlier. By God's grace, we are just fine, fellow Submitters. God willing, we will steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution and proceed forward with righteousness and countering evil with goodness (28:54 and 29:13).

Thank God for giving us all of you, believers. Your warm and kind support, concern and letters are truly a blessing for both of us; very uplifting indeed. MashaAllah, please do keep up your good works. We will too. For God promises us the truth (57:19-23). And may Almighty God forgive us all (47:19).

God bless us all.

Mohd. Rafil and Rafinah

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Who Are We?

During the past fourteen centuries, traditions, customs, and myths have crept into the religion of Islam (Submission). Gradually, they have become dogma or ritual, to such an extent that anyone who questions them in the light of the Quran finds himself or herself regarded as a dangerous innovator and heretic.

Islam (Submission) today is like a precious jewel that is buried under piles upon piles of man-made innovations. Our aim is to purge these innovations by upholding the Quran and nothing but the Quran alone, and present the jewel of true Submission to the world.

Write to us for a free catalog and a complimentary issue of Submitters Perspective. Tell a friend. Help us spread the message of worshipping God alone, and following the Quran alone.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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WHEN THE ROLES REVERSE...

O people, if you have any doubt about resurrection, (remember that) we created you from dust, and subsequently from a tiny drop, which turns into a hanging (embryo), then it becomes a fetus that is given life or deemed lifeless. We thus clarify things for you. We settle in the wombs whatever we will for a predetermined period. We then bring you out as infants, then you reach maturity. While some of you die young, others live to the worst age, only to find out that no more knowledge can be attained beyond a certain limit. Also, you look at a land that is dead, then as soon as we shower it with water, it vibrates with life and grows all kinds of beautiful plants. [22:5]

In recent years many of the Submitters have had to come to grips with dramatic changes in the lives of our parents.

We have all read the above verse. We all know intellectually that our parents will grow old and eventually die, as we will grow old and eventually die (unless God wills to take them/us earlier). However, knowing that this will happen is quite different from facing those changes in our daily lives.

In modern western society, we have a tendency to block out painful issues, by ignoring them or actively running away from them. Sadly, this is true even in relation to our elderly. Anyone who has spent time with a loved one in a nursing home or an adult care facility can bear witness that a horrifying number of elderly men

and women are placed there by their families and virtually forgotten.

In many cases this is because people are so busy trying to survive themselves that they do not have the emotional energy to expend dealing with the painful changes in their parents. This is especially true for us members of the "me" generation, who have never come to grips with the fact that the world does not revolve around us. Now, as age creeps up on us, we are often terrified by the changes in our aging parents... changes which we will soon enough have to face in ourselves.

But as Submitters we must not allow ourselves the "luxury" of this kind of behavior on any issue, especially when it has to do with our parents. God is extremely specific about the way in which we must treat our parents:

O people, observe your Lord; the One who created you from one being, and created from it its mate, then spread from the two many men and women. You shall regard God, by whom you swear, and regard the parents. God is watching over you. [4:1]

In several verses God tells us we must worship Him alone, and then we must honor our parents. Thus, first we must regard God, and then we must regard our parents. This was also pointed out to the Children of Israel:

We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: You shall not worship except God. You shall regard the parents.... [2:83]

We must honor our parents even when something has happened to make that difficult:

Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship except Him, and your parents shall be honored. As long as one or both of them live, you shall never say to them, "Uff" (the slightest gesture of annoyance), nor shall you shout at them; you shall treat them amicably. And lower for them the wings of humility, and kindness, and say, "My Lord, have mercy on them, for they have raised me from infancy." [17:23-24]

Certainly we have all had times when we have been upset with our parents. As we get older and more stuck in our ways, we are apt to react more strongly to them; and as they get older they often become more difficult in many ways. However, the above verses are very clear. We must not show even the slightest annoyance, we must constantly honor them. Only God Himself is honored before them. Still, God is merciful, and in the verse which follows 17:23-24 He reminds us to repent when we are unable to follow these commandments:

Your Lord is fully aware of your innermost thoughts. If you maintain righteousness, He is Forgiver of those who repent. [17:25]

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When the Roles Reverse...

continued

Why is it so important to treat our parents well? God reminds us that they have raised us from infancy. Who was it that rocked you to sleep, though they were exhausted themselves? Who fed you when they themselves were hungry? Who changed your diapers and cared for your every need?

We enjoined the human being to honor his parents. His mother bore him, and the load got heavier and heavier. It takes two years (of intensive care) until weaning. You shall be appreciative of Me, and of your parents. To Me is the ultimate destiny. [31:14]

How can we ever repay that loving care and kindness?

We never can. But we must try. The only area that we cannot yield to our parents in is our worship of God Alone:

If they try to force you to set up any idols beside Me, do not obey them. But continue to treat them amicably in this world. You shall follow only the path of those who have submitted to Me. Ultimately, you all return to Me, then I will inform you of everything you have done. [31:15]

We can never repay our parents for all that they have done for us, but some of us are given the opportunity to try, as our parents grow older. Many of us will see our parents reach that "worst age" when the roles reverse and they become the "children" and we the "parents."

It can be a difficult time for everyone, but it can also be a great blessing. As we spend more intimate time caring for them, we come to know our parents in a new light. We come to know them as other souls struggling with the same kinds of trials and tests which we ourselves go through. They become our role models for the time that we too face old age and a change in our abilities. Sometimes God blesses us with special moments together. These will be precious jewels to hold in the treasure house of our hearts, provisions for the time when they are no longer with us.

By the time we are forty, God tells us we should appreciate the blessings He has bestowed on us, and our parents:

We enjoined the human being to honor his parents. His mother bore him arduously, gave birth to him arduously, and took intimate care of him for thirty months. When he reaches maturity, and reaches the age of forty, he should say, "My Lord, direct me to appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. Let my children be righteous as well. I have repented to You; I am a submitter." [46:15]

But as Submitters we have the chance to be appreciative at any age. From my personal experience I encourage you to recognize the great blessing God gave you in your parents. Enjoy them, share with them, laugh with them as much as you can. Treasure them while you have the chance. None of us knows how long that may be.

...No soul know what will happen to it tomorrow, and no one knows in which land he or she will die.... [31:34]

Lisa Spray

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Personal Experiences

The month that God allowed me to participate in the care of my dying mother was a tremendous gift. It truly was a time when I felt I was, in very small measure, paying Mom back for all the years of love and care. As I rubbed her back, sore from lying in bed all the time, I remembered moments of great love when she rubbed my chest and throat when I had a cold. As I held her hand when she was sick, I thought of all the times she had held me when I was sick or sad. I helped her bathe just as she had bathed me all those early years. I insisted my mom help me wash my hair long after all my friends were doing that for themselves. Now I washed her hair.

She died in her own bed, surrounded by the whole family. What a gift from God. It was a hard, sad time, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Lydia Kelley

God blessed me to be with my mother full time for the last week of her life. She had suffered a massive stroke, and never regained consciousness, but the love that flowed in that room as my sister and I kept vigil, was a tremendous healing force in my life. It was one of God's greatest gifts to me.

With my father, God has blessed me with a different kind of experience. At 85, he has suffered some minor strokes which have left him very alert and quite functional, but totally delusional. His delusions are usually quite lovely: he has become a billionaire, President Clinton is among his best friends, and he has remarried. Initially he was also extremely paranoid, concerned that since he was now so important, people were trying to kill him. However, even in his terror we had moments of great joy.

I will always be thankful for the time that he insisted I stand next to him, because he was certain that he was getting taller. As I was in front of him, he leaned forward and with a look of great delight, he touched my nose with his. Suddenly all the years fell away, and he was a young father rubbing noses with his little girl.

Lisa Spray

Answers Without Questions

I found a dollar on the sidewalk the other day. I immediately picked it up and shoved it into my pocket. Then a strange sensation overtook me. I felt as though the dollar were burning in my pocket. I told myself, "No, this is a gift from God. It should not be burning." But I could not get rid of the feeling, so I stuffed it into the tithe box at the masjid as soon as I got there, thus relieving myself of my burden.

Were I to argue that my feelings were from God and that I believed my actions were dictated by my true, godly self, my words would not be taken well by most people. Some would say I had a guilt complex; others would say I overreacted to something trivial. I later told my fiancée about it. To my surprise, she had once had an identical experience. I concluded that, though I had asked no questions, I was given an answer. I did not argue with it.

When I look to my feelings to assist in my judgment, I may act on some latent guilt acquired during childhood, or I may act in a purely godly way, consistent with my true nature. By seeking the clarity of vision that comes from worshipping God alone, I gradually learn to accept myself as the beautiful, godly creature that God created (95:4). By coming to grips with the truth of my existence, I learn to let go of any past guilt that may have obscured my sight. When I am on the straight path, I can understand things that perhaps I could not argue so well were I to debate them with words.

This is indeed a bold assertion to make before those who find themselves unable to let go of the crutches of half-worship — those to whom the sight of the word "Allah" alone in a masjid or the sound of a *shahadah* in which the only name mentioned is "Allah" is frightening. But, in the same way in which God has made the Quran accessible to all, God has also given us all equally the capacity to know right from wrong. When I read the Quran, my heart heals (10:57), and my ability to judge all things correctly becomes ever sharper.

When, therefore, the inevitable arguments assail me and the inescapable pressure of being alone in my reverence for God alone rails against my grip on reality, let me remind myself, first, that to give in means to follow other people, instead of God, no matter how I look at it. Second, that God will most assuredly answer my questions, though in all likelihood not through the mouths of those who wish to see me yield. And, third, I will make mistakes in my quest for pure worship, but by no means does this mean that God will forsake me (Sura 93).

It takes a lot of inner strength to go it alone the way most of us do. We can find that strength by holding fast to the Quran and our worship of God alone, and by keeping in touch with each other. Perhaps, if many of us often find ourselves in debates that do little more than tax our vitality, we ought instead to leave those who seek debate with a question and then depart. ("What would the Prophet have said if he had called the *adhan* himself?" "Did God bless Bukhari with a capacity with which only angels had previously been endowed?") If the goal of the disputant is to seek truth, he will do so and leave us alone. If it is not, he will not, and at this point we should leave him alone. Confident silence may thenceforth be most eloquent.

Ultimately, my greatest obligation is to God alone. Let me keep my mind and heart clear and keep in contact with my fellow believers. I may not be able to explain to anyone's satisfaction why a dollar burns in my pocket, but my fellow believers will give me the benefit of the doubt: When God talks to you, He talks to you, not me. And if by arguing with people who do not seek real answers my mind becomes cloudy and my heart frail and I can no longer feel the dollar burning, then I have made a worthless sacrifice. I would rather have answers without questions than questions without answers.

Richard Steven Voss

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