

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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God's Message and Idol Worship

*He is the One who sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth,
to make it prevail over all other religions.
God suffices as a witness. [48:28]*

We learn from the Quran that all messengers came with the same general message: *La elaha illa Allah* meaning "There is no god except the one God." They are sent to the communities that have been corrupted and need reformation. The sole duty of the messengers is to deliver the message given to them and to warn the people of the consequences for their evil works and idol worship. Their objective is to purify the religion and restore the corrupted practices into what God intends us to do. The messengers are sent with the guidance to these communities as a blessing from God. (2:151) They do not ask any money from people, nor do they seek exaltation or personal attention. Yet, any time that God

sends a messenger to a community, the people of that community reject him, ridicule him or even kill him. This is not because they do not like the messenger personally, but because they just cannot stand the message of the messenger. (6:33)

The messengers are commanded to follow what God has appointed them to do. They are not infallible. They are human beings like every one else with worldly mistakes and weaknesses. They are also worried about their own necks. (21:28)

Quran: Fully Detailed

God revealed the Quran to all humanity through Muhammad in Arabic, the language of the prophet. The Quran has 114 suras (chapters) and 6346 verses including the un-

numbered Basmalaha. God said that He revealed the Quran fully detailed, and did not leave anything out of it (6:38). He send down in the Quran healing and mercy for the believers. At the same time, it only increases the wickedness of the transgressors (17:82).

Questions God also tells us the fact that if the Quran was revealed to people who do not know Arabic, they could not possibly believe in it (26:198-199). They would not know what was in it, and what to do with it. Therefore, the Quran must be translated to the language of people so that they can understand God's message.

English Translation of the Quran

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teach people the rites of the religion, to establish the truth, and to get rid of the falsehood. Those who follow the truth from their Lord are the guided ones. Unfortunately, those who scorn God's revelations, and are consequently sent astray by God, can never find a guiding teacher (18:17).

The information contained in the appendices and footnotes in the translation of the Quran by Dr. Khalifa is no more than the explanation of the verses, and the miracle of the Quran through his research. Dr. Khalifa himself stated in the appendices that he did not bring anything new. All the information he brought up was already in the Quran. This is a blessing from God for those who appreciate it since it has been made readily available to us.

There is nothing wrong in reading the footnotes, appendices or any other religious publications for that matter, as long as we don't lose our perspective where the real source of guidance is coming from and where the real source of information is. It is not what we read, hear or watch to get more insight about our faith, but it is what we do with that information and how we apply it to our lives in a manner pleasing to God.

If we form an opinion based on what we read or hear outside of the scripture, we should not expect others to follow it by forcing the issue. God has detailed what we need to know in the Quran. Anything beyond that is left up to us and to draw our conclusions. However, if other people's opinions end up being different than ours, we have to respect them. If we think

people are arriving at wrong conclusions, we need to be able to discuss with them amicably. If these opinions do not have serious ramifications on the rites of our faith and our submission to God, they should be left alone, and not be made an issue. We are all responsible for saving our necks. We are supposed to enjoin each other to do the right things without forcing others to comply with our understandings.

Idol Worship

We learn from the Quran that idol worship is an unforgivable sin if it is maintained until death (4:48). Idol worship is a gross injustice to the Almighty (31:13). We also learn that idol worship is not limited only to the worship of idols or statues. It may come in different forms, and can be very subtle. There are many examples in the Quran. We could easily idolize money, business, family, children, or any other loved ones. Our ego may become an idol. If we give priority to anything over God, and we feel that anything or anybody beside God can benefit or harm us, we fall into idol worship. So idol worship is not something to be taken lightly (30:31). It is a very serious offense. It is one of the ways Satan derails us from the straight path of God.

There is no doubt that there will be people who will fall into idol worship one way or another, through idolization of the messengers and saintly people, through idolization of their opinion, or through worshipping their ego. The community has to deal with them if God exposes their case. However, we have to be very careful not jumping to conclusions, calling names or mak-

ing generalized and all-inclusive statements to put down others. Often people are sincere and may take corrective actions when reminded amicably of their wrong. God tells us to remind each other, perhaps the reminder will benefit (87:9).

Although we are part of the larger submitter community, we are not all alike in terms of our faith in God and how we go about putting what we believe into practice. The disagreements or the differences we might have in understanding certain matters should not distract us from the path of worshipping God alone. When the disagreements happen, we should try to listen to each other, rather than fight. We should also know when it is time to say "peace" when the discussions are exhausted. We should remember not to fall into Satan's trap of wronging our souls. We all know that unfair accusations and suspicions towards other submitters are gross sins (49:12). None of us wants our souls subject to such sins to satisfy our egos. Ultimately everyone is responsible to God for his or her own neck (5:105). Furthermore, unless God has mercy on us and protects us, there is no guarantee that we may not be following our own opinions, or the opinions of the scholars, thus falling into the very idol worship we despise in others, without perceiving (18:103-104).

Abdullah

Therefore, continue on the path you have been enjoined to follow, together with those who repented with you, and do not transgress. He is Seer of everything you do. [11:112]

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BLESSING OF GIVING

A Parable

A young man, a student in one of our universities, was one day taking a walk with a professor, who was commonly called the student's friend, from his kindness to those who waited on his instructions.

As they went along, they saw lying in the path a pair of old shoes, which they supposed to belong to a poor man who was employed in a field close by, and who had nearly finished his day's work.

The student turned to the professor, saying: "Let us play a trick on the man: we will hide his shoes, and conceal ourselves behind those bushes, and wait to see his perplexity when he cannot find them."

"My young friend," answered the professor, "we should never amuse ourselves at the expense of the poor. But you are rich, and may give yourself a much greater pleasure by means of this poor man. Put a coin in each shoe, and then we will hide ourselves and watch how this affects him."

The student did so and they both placed themselves behind the bushes close by. The poor man soon finished his work, and came across the field to the path where he had left his coat and shoes. While putting on his coat he slipped his foot into one of his shoes, but feeling something hard, he stooped down to feel what it was, and found the coin.

Astonishment and wonder were seen upon his face. He gazed upon the coin, turned it around, and looked at it again and again. He then looked around him on all sides, but no person was to be seen. He now put the money into his pocket, and proceeded to put on the other shoe; but his surprise was doubled on finding the other coin. His feelings overcame him; he fell upon his knees, looked up to heaven and uttered aloud a fervent thanksgiving in which he spoke of his wife, sick and helpless, and his children without bread, whom this timely bounty, from some unknown hand, would save from perishing.

The student stood there deeply affected, and his eyes filled with tears. "Now," said the professor, "are you not much better pleased than if you had played your intended trick?" The youth replied, "You have taught me a lesson which I will never forget. I feel now the truth of these words, which I never understood before: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Submitted by Asiah

[2:270] *Any charity you give, or a charitable pledge you fulfill, GOD is fully aware thereof. As for the wicked, they will have no helpers.*

[2:263] *Kind words and compassion are better than a charity that is followed by insult. GOD is Rich, Clement.*

[2:254] *O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the provisions we have given to you, before a day comes where there is no trade, no nepotism, and no intercession. The disbelievers are the unjust.*