

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Terrorism Has No Religion!

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Holy war, suicide bombings, fighting for faith, and killing in the name of God — from Crusaders to terrorists, from sacred shrines to New York City, history is tainted by a grave disease afflicting humankind. While all the known religions of the world call for LOVE, PEACE, TOLERANCE, FREEDOM OF BELIEF AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, many of the terrorists' acts are committed in this world by people who call themselves religious, and attribute their horrendous and evil acts to the religion. However, God condemns their acts in the scripture. The true religion of Islam forbids

the killing of innocent people, irrespective of the cause—religious, political or social beliefs. This is stated in the Quran, the holy book of Muslims.

[Quran 6:151] "...You shall not kill — GOD has made life sacred — except in the course of justice. These are His commandments to you, that you may understand."

The laws of the scriptures that apply to the Christians and Jews are repeated and emphasized for the Muslims also.

[Quran 5:32] "...we decreed for the Children of Israel that anyone who murders any person who had not committed murder or horrendous crimes, it shall be as if he murdered all the people. And anyone who spares a life, it shall

be as if he spared the lives of all the people. ..."

The religion of Islam should not be confused with what these terrorists have done. The terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida who kill innocent people are actually, by the definition of the Quran, not Muslims, but plain murderers. Who would like to describe Hitler or the likes of Ku Klux Klan as good Christians? We should not let our emotions overcome our logic and understanding. There is no religious scripture that does not condemn terrorism. Every righteous person in any religion would condemn such actions regardless of terrorist's race, country or religious background.

Cont'd on Page 4

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE

There's a well-used cliché that says "practice makes perfect." Anyone who's ever participated in a sport will tell you that while perfection is rarely attained, practice is an important component of the sport. The basketball player spends hours at the free throw line, shooting over and over again. He knows how to shoot a free throw, but he also knows that if he doesn't practice he will lose some of his skill. That's why the times spent on the court are called "practices." The football quarterback throws ball after ball to his wide receiver. He knows the mechanics of throwing a football, just as the wide receiver knows the mechanics of running down the field and cutting at just the right time. The tennis player serves hundreds of balls in every training session; the golfer stands on the driving range for hours at a time. For each of these athletes, what they're doing is practicing. Because without practice, little things slide by, skills deteriorate, and precision is lost.

I think that's the same reason that the things we do as a Submitter are referred to as "religious practices." Every time we pray the contact prayer, we say we are practicing our religion. Now, that has two meanings. The first dictionary definition is "to perform habitually or customarily; make a habit of." That's certainly what we're doing when we regularly perform our *Salat* on time and remember to give *Zakat* cheerfully at the time of harvest. But there's the deeper meaning as well. The second dictionary definition is "to exercise or perform repeatedly in order to acquire or polish a skill." That's also what we're doing when we practice our religion.

God says in 15:98-9: *You shall sing the praises of your Lord, and be with the prostrators. And worship your Lord, in order to attain certainty.* And the footnote for that verse says: "The practices of worship are our means of attaining certainty (Appendix 15)."

The more we practice—or do our practices—the better we become. That's true for the athlete who spends hours throwing or hitting the ball. And it's true for Submitters as well. God has given us these things to do to hone our skill, which in this case is the growth of our souls. These are gifts from God. We get caught up in our busy schedule and forget to think about God. Then comes time for prayer and we draw ourselves away from this world and back to the most important thing—the remembrance of God (29:45). We're given repeated opportunities to overcome our natural stinginess by calculating and giving *Zakat*. The more we do it, the more it becomes a pleasure rather than a chore. Fasting is a great privilege that allows us to think about God and all His blessings often throughout the day. Year by year, it has become easier and easier for me to fast with grace. "Practice makes perfect."

So practicing the practices helps us become better submitters. God tells us in 25:77 to say: "*You attain value at my Lord only through your worship. But if you disbelieve, you incur the inevitable consequences.*" This verse reminds us that practice will make us worthy of being with God in Heaven, but not practicing will have serious detrimental results.

The athlete who fools around in practice and doesn't prepare properly for the game will most likely play poorly. For Submitters, the consequence isn't one poor game or even one bad season. The consequence is eternal. *Recite for them the news of one who was given our proofs, but chose to disregard them. Consequently, the devil pursued him, until he became a strayer. [7:175]* If we fail to practice and grow our souls, we open ourselves up to Satan's whispers. And he pursues us constantly, looking for that opening. His goal is to mislead us and take us off of God's path. And he's had thousands of years of practice!

So when the alarm goes off tomorrow morning and you hesitate to get up—it's cold out and so warm and cozy under the blankets—remember the concept of practicing to become perfect (or at least better) at Submission. The goal isn't scoring the winning basket; it's winning in this life and in the Hereafter by worshipping God Alone.

The true believers are those whose hearts tremble when GOD is mentioned, and when His revelations are recited to them, their faith is strengthened, and they trust in their Lord. They observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and from our provisions to them, they give to charity. Such are the true believers. They attain high ranks at their Lord, as well as forgiveness and a generous provision. [8:2-4]

Lydia K.

GREAT HUMAN TRAGEDY: Dividing The Religion Into Sects

Prophet Muhammad preached the religion of Islam (Submission). The source of his guidance was the holy Quran that God (Allah) revealed through him. The Quran is the only book that can guide us to the best path (17:9). When the prophet died, he left behind the complete Quran for us to follow. As time passed by, this great religion has been gradually corrupted and divided and sub-divided through innovations, traditions and the idolization of humans such as the prophet, the caliphs, the saints and the scholars. First, the religion of Islam was reshaped and replaced mainly by two major sects: Sunni and Shia. Subsequently, these two have been divided into various sects and sub-sects as Muslims continued to disregard the teachings of the Quran, and follow religious sources other than the Quran.

Unlike true Islam (Submission), the Sunni and Shia sects and sub-sects are preached by their respective scholars and religious leaders. We learn from the Quran:

“Those who divide themselves into sects do not belong with you. Their judgment rests with God, then He will inform them of everything they had done.” (6:159)

“Such is your congregation- one congregation- and I am your Lord; you shall reverence Me. But, they tore themselves into disputing factions; each party happy with what they have.” (23:52-53)

If you ask the followers of these sects or sub-sects a question regarding their religion, most of the time they will refer you to the opinions of their scholars, imams, etc. No wonder these people will blame their leaders in the hereafter:

The followers will say to their leaders, “It was you who schemed night and day, then commanded us to be unappreciative of God, and to set up partners to rank with Him.” They will be ridden with remorse, when they see the retribution, for we will place shackles around the necks of those who disbelieved. Are they not justly requited for what they did? (34:33)

God tells us that the Quran, which prophet Muhammad followed, is clear to understand (54:17). All people are commanded to ponder and understand its words:

“Why do they not study the Quran carefully? Do they have locks on their hearts?” (47:24)

Yet the majority of Muslims do not make an effort to study the Quran for themselves and insist on merely reciting its words like a parrot that does not understand. They look to their imams or scholars to do the understanding for them:

When they are told, “Follow what God has revealed herein (the Quran),” they say, “We follow only what we found our parents doing.” What if their parents did not understand, and were not guided? The example of those who reject is that of one who repeats what he hears of sounds and calls, without understanding. Deaf, dumb, and blind; they cannot understand. (2:170-171).

Is it not the time now to study the Quran by ourselves? Is it not the time now to verify the authenticity of the religion or sect we have inherited from our parents with the help of the Quranic study? Is it not the most important duty in our lives? Should we not take it seriously?

God be Glorified.

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Terrorism

Cont'd from page 1

What is the ideal of Islam? Islam is not a name that defines you as better than your neighbor or rewards you a special status with God. The name itself is an Arabic word derived from the meaning to surrender or submit. Islam is submission to God's will. It is a way of life that guides your actions and forms your character. Islam is a state of awareness and appreciation of God's boundless attributes. As your soul submits, you are able to practice the meaning of peace, compassion, love, forgiveness, and charity that originate from one Source. The shades of superiority, prejudice and judgment fade as the world comes into focus with the eyes of your soul. In Islam, the best among us in the sight of God is not the white or the black, the male or the female, a person who calls himself or herself Christian, Jew, or Muslim, but rather, the one who is the most righteous.

Islam or Submission to God alone is a way of life encouraged from the time of Abraham by Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, messengers who have followed Abraham. The

one who is able to surrender the soul is called a Muslim in Arabic, or Submitter. There are Submitters to the Creator in every faith. They are those who place no limits on their belief in the Unseen and impose no judgments on the different forms of striving towards attaining God's mercy. This common striving encourages unity within a diverse group of people who advance their personal strides by learning from one another.

Thus, the love of God is not reserved for people of religious sects or denominations that cling to an exclusive belief of guaranteed "salvation." God's infinite love flows to the charitable, righteous, benevolent, equitable, and the just: Those who recognize their accountability and work towards being good.

[Quran 2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who believes in GOD, and believes in the Last Day, and leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

The Community of Masjid Tucson
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Send your comments to
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Wisdom from the Scriptures

"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living GOD, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good fortune for the time to come, they may lay hold of eternal life."

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Anyone who seeks the materials of this world should know that GOD possesses both the materials of this world and the Hereafter. GOD is Hearer, Seer.

Quran 4:134

"Use the provisions bestowed upon you by GOD to seek the abode of the Hereafter, without neglecting your share in this world. Be charitable, as GOD has been charitable towards you. Do not keep on corrupting the earth. GOD does not love the corruptors."

Quran 28:77