

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

# Submitters Perspective

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## RAMADAN A GREAT BLESSING

I remember my first Ramadan, over 20 years ago. It was mid-May to mid-June—the hottest, longest days. I never thought I could do it. And I couldn't have, if God hadn't made it possible. Now as we near another Ramadan, and as we cycle back toward hotter, longer days, I think back on that first year and all the years between as wonderful blessings from God.

He decreed Ramadan for us, not to deprive us and make us suffer, but to use it as a time of growth and development of our souls. We tend to get caught up in this worldly life, all its pleasures and trials. We know what a blessing it is to remember to do our Contact Prayer (Salat). It pulls us back from this world and focuses our thoughts on God. Well, Ramadan does the same thing, for a whole month.

First of all, we work on taking control of our bodies, not letting our bodies control us. Simply by saying "No, I'm not going to eat, even though I'm hungry," we exercise that control over our physical shell. My friends all

wonder how I can do it; they comment that they could never fast for a month. But all we have to do is make the commitment to try, and God makes it possible. And then there are many positive benefits for our bodies as stated in Appendix 15: "Fasting during the month of Ramadan restores our expanded stomachs to their normal sizes, lowers our blood pressure through temporary dehydration, rids the body of harmful toxins, gives our kidneys a much needed rest, and reduces our weight by removing excessive and harmful fat."

But the more important benefit is spiritual, and that manifests in many ways. Every time we feel hunger or thirst, we remember that we're not eating, and that helps us to remember God. It causes us to think of God even more often during the day, not just at Prayer times. We can use those opportunities to commemorate and glorify Him.

When we feel hunger, we can appreciate the millions of people around the world who feel hunger all the time; who go to bed hungry and wake up

hungry; who don't have the supermarkets full of every kind of food imaginable. We can use that opportunity to be appreciative of the bounties God provides us with. It's something we should do every minute of every day, but we forget. Ramadan helps us to remember:

*And He gives you all kinds of things that you implore Him for. If you count God's blessings, you can never encompass them. Indeed, the human being is transgressing, unappreciative. [14:34]*

Ramadan is a time to read and appreciate the Quran. This book is a guidance and healing, a beacon and mercy. It gives us clear and concise directions on how to live our lives, and how to attain salvation. And the Quran was revealed during Ramadan. So this month gives us the chance to glorify God and to thank Him for sending the scripture, the messengers, and the guidance. We should do that every day, but Ramadan provides extra reminders, and we humans need to be reminded.

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I look forward to Ramadan now. It changes our daily schedule—we get up earlier to eat something before dawn; we can't do lunch with friends; perhaps we curb some strenuous activities because we can't drink water—but more important, it changes our thoughts. It puts the focus where it should be—on God, and all the ways He has blessed us. It helps to grow our souls.

We wish everyone a blessed and joyous Ramadan, and a wonderful Night of Destiny.

Praise be to God.

*O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation. Specific days (are designated for fasting); if one is ill or traveling, an equal number of other days may be substituted. Those who can fast, but with great difficulty, may substitute feeding one poor person for each day of breaking the fast. If one volunteers (more righteous works), it is better. But fasting is the best for you, if you only knew. Ramadan is the month during which the Quran was revealed, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings, and the statute book. Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein. Those who are ill or traveling may substitute the same number of other days. GOD wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfill your obligations, and to glorify GOD for guiding you, and to express your appreciation. [2:183-185]*

Lydia

Reference:

Quran: *The Final Testament* - Translated by Rashad Khalifa, Ph. D.

Note: God willing Ramadan is September 12 through October 11 for North America (and all parts of the Western hemisphere) with the Night of Destiny (Night of Power) on October 7, 2007.

## Anecdote:

### The Duck and the Devil

There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods; but he could never hit the target. Getting a little discouraged, he headed back for dinner.

As he was walking back he saw Grandma's pet duck. Just out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly, hit the duck square in the head and killed it. He was shocked and grieved!

In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the wood pile; only to see his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.



After lunch the next day Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes."

But Sally said, "Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen." Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck?" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing and Grandma said, "I'm sorry but I need Sally to help make supper."

Sally just smiled and said, "Well that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help" She whispered again, "Remember the duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's; he finally couldn't stand it any longer. He went to Grandma and confessed that he had killed the duck.

Grandma knelt down, gave him a hug and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing, but because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

Thought for the day and every day thereafter?

Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done... And the devil keeps throwing it up in your face (lying, cheating, debt, fear, bad habits, hatred, anger, bitterness, etc.) ... whatever it is... You need to know that God sees all what you do. He has seen and recorded your whole life. He wants you to know that if you sincerely repent and reform, He will forgive you and your sins. He does not want to see the devil make a slave of you.

He does not want you to despair His mercy. The great thing about God is that when you ask for forgiveness; He not only forgives you, but He erases the sins from your records. He may also transform your sins into credits. It is by God's grace and mercy that we can be saved.

God is seer and knower of all things, and of all the merciful ones, He is the Most Merciful!

*[6:59] With Him are the keys to all secrets; none knows them except He. He knows everything on land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls without His knowledge. Nor is there a grain in the depths of the soil. Nor is there anything wet or dry, that is not recorded in a profound record.*

Author unknown

Submitted by Connie, with slight adaptation to comply with Quranic ideas.

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## Ramadan Special

# QURAN

## *The Final Testament*

Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D.

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## 2007 CONFERENCE REPORT

*[61:4] GOD loves those who fight in His cause united in one column, like the bricks in one wall.*

Praise be to God, the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual United Submitters International Conference was held at the Hilton Hotel in Ontario, California from July 27-29, 2007. With over 300 submitters attending, this was the largest conference ever. The focus of the conference was the strength of submitters uniting as the bricks in a wall. Each registered participant received, in their welcome packet, a sheet of paper designed to look like a brick wall, using the words from 61:4 to form the bricks, in which people signed their names, symbolizing that unity.

The Friday prayer was led by Peter from the Bay area. His wonderful khutba (sermon) reminded us to work at eliminating bad habits, and to stay away from the things that trigger unrighteous behavior, which is different for every person. Satan will always take advantage of our weak points. So we need to constantly implore God to keep us on the right path.

After Abdullah's usual warm welcome, the conference began. We had a blend of speakers—first time conference-attendees, with their enthusiasm and new ideas, plus many returning speakers to share their experience. The talks were informative, fun, heartwarming and inspirational. The sharing of thoughts and ideas helps us all to grow in submission.

Saturday evening, there was a special concert called "Night of commemoration through music." Many beautiful voices raised in glorification of God. It was a lovely way to remember and to praise Him.

When Sunday noon rolled around, it was hard to say goodbye. The picture session was very enthusiastic with joyful *zikr* as we hugged and bid farewell for another year.

May God bless the southern California volunteer submitters and all other sub-

mitters involved, for their hard work putting the conference together. The hotel was excellent—everyone was so friendly and helpful, and the food was wonderful. Thanks to Faiz, Kenan and Basma for their duties as emcees. They did a great job. Peace and blessings upon everyone who made the effort to attend—to share their ideas and absorb ideas from others. May God keep us united and at peace, and allow us to spread His message to the world.

God willing, next year's conference is planned for Tucson, Arizona, the first weekend in August. Be sure to make your plans to attend. It's a wonderful, powerful, fortifying experience for everyone. Praise be to God.

*[18:28] You shall force yourself to be with those who worship their Lord day and night, seeking Him alone. Do not turn your eyes away from them, seeking the vanities of this world.*

*[3:200] O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, you shall persevere, you shall be united, you shall observe GOD, that you may succeed.*

Peace.

*Lydia and Nargis*

## Reflections From the Conference

As we began our drive home from the conference, we saw some of the young people from our group outside a nearby ice cream shop, lined up and ready to make their sunset prayer. Our hearts swelled by leaps and bounds at the mere sight of them and yet they were totally unaware of the spirit that they ignited just by gathering to pray. It was one of those *subhan'Allah* (glory be to God) forever moments and an apropos ending to a most excellent conference we had. And while it is a personal example, it epitomizes the real meaning of the conference.

God sees all that is done to make the conference possible – public or anonymous, great or simple, direct or indirect. For those that can see and learn from even some of these strivings toward gathering for God in peace and unity, it warms our souls with reassurance and renewal.

The annual conference is so much more than the speeches, presentations, and accommodations every year. Southern California volunteer submitters can probably attest to that after all the arrangements and organizing that they did to put this year's conference together! The strength of a concerted and cumulative effort on behalf of many showed through, by God's grace. But even those that attended the conference in Ontario – those who gathered together as true brothers and sisters in faith – shared in their offering of hope and show of support for one another. The prayers of those that wanted to attend, but couldn't, were important and should be remembered also. All this combined striving for God and His cause made for a very enjoyable conference.

Each year, the conference is a refocusing of purpose and resolve to worship God alone and it helps us to find new direction in passing that message on to others. Like verse 52 in chapter 68, the Pen, tells us: "It is in fact a message to the world." As our numbers grow and the message spreads, by God's leave, the conference serves as a humbling and awesome reminder to the truth in this verse.

In the Southern California area and beyond, God bless all those that worked together in His cause for this year's conference. Thank you for all your efforts. God willing, your examples and good works will spark, encourage, and foster the righteousness of submitters everywhere – even in ways you may be unaware of.

*Donna*

*[17:19] As for those who choose the Hereafter as their priority, and work righteousness, while believing, their efforts will be appreciated.*

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## What Goes Around Comes Around

We all have heard the age old English language idiom, "What goes around comes around." Verses from the Quran prove this saying to be true in various aspects of our relationships with one another and our relationship with God.

The benefits of dealing with one another in a kind and humble manner are given in the following verses from the Quran:

*When greeted with a greeting, you shall respond with a better greeting or at least an equal one. God reckons all things. [4:86]*

*O you who believe, if you are told, "Please make room," you shall make room for each other to sit. God will then make room for you. If you are asked to get up and move, get up and move. God raises those among you who believe, and those who acquire knowledge to higher ranks. God is fully Cognizant of everything you do. [58:11]*

The result of mocking the believers is clearly stated by God below:

*The wicked used to laugh at those who believed. When they passed by them, they used to poke fun. When they got together with their people, they used to joke. Whenever they saw them, they said, "These people are far*

*astray! They have no such thing as (invisible) guards." Today, those who believed are laughing at the disbelievers. [83:29-34]*

The Quran warns us about scheming through verses 10:21, 8:30, as well as the subsequent verses shared:

*Others before them have schemed, but to God belongs the ultimate scheming. He knows what everyone is doing. The disbelievers will find out who the ultimate winners are. [13:42]*

*They plotted and schemed, but so did God, and God is the best schemer. [3:54]*

God also describes in the Quran the repercussions of forgetting the Day of Judgment:

*Those who do not take their religion seriously, and are totally preoccupied with this worldly life, we forget them on that day, because they forgot that day, and because they spurned our revelations. [7:51]*

*It will be proclaimed: "Today we forget you, just as you forgot the meeting of this day. Your abode is the hellfire, and you will have no helpers. [45:34]*

Comforting indeed are several verses of the Quran dealing with the effects that our relationship with God have on us now and will, God willing, have on us in the Hereafter:

*They will say, "Praise God for removing all our worries. Our Lord is Forgiving, Appreciative. [35:34]*

*What will God gain from punishing you, if you became appreciative and believed? God is Appreciative, Omniscient. [4:147]*

*Who would lend God a loan of righteousness, to have it repaid to them multiplied manifold? God is the One who provides and withholds, and to Him you will be returned. [2:245]*

*Who would like to loan God a loan of righteousness, to have it multiplied for him manifold, and end up with a generous recompense? [57:11]*

*You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative. [2:152]*

*God will proclaim, "This is a day when the truthful will be saved by their truthfulness." They have deserved gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. God is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. This is the greatest triumph. [5:119]*

*As for you, O content soul. Return to your Lord, pleased and pleasing. [89:27-28]*

In our relationship with one another and in our relationship with God, whatever we may send forth will come right back to us. From God we came and to Him we shall ultimately be returned; He will then inform us of everything we have done.

Linda