

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Community of Submitters

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Relationships

God guides us throughout the Quran to be the best people we can be and have the best relationships with the people around us. A disclaimer: I don't claim to have the perfect relationship in any of the categories I'm going to talk about, but God willing, I am striving to be better and may God help us all in this area.

The first worldly relationship that most humans experience after being born is with their parents. 2:83 says: ... *You shall not worship except GOD. You shall honor your parents....*



That sounds easy but wait. God sets the standards extremely

high for how we should treat them in: [17:23] *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.*

Honoring your parents can take different forms depending on your physical proximity and the emotional connection you have with them. While having your parents physically and emotionally close to you has a lot of blessings it also brings with it a lot of tests. Remembering why God set this high standard for us also helps to honor our parents and be the best submitters and be the best examples for our children as well.

[31:14] *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.*

God also reminds us of the precaution to take with parents. He wants us to make sure we draw the line between honoring and worshipping our parents, or following them blindly.

[29:8] *We enjoined the human being to honor his parents. But if they try to force you to set up idols beside Me, do not obey them. To Me is your ultimate return, then I will inform you of everything you had done.*

[2:170] *When they are told, "Follow what God has revealed herein," they say, "We follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their parents did not understand, and were not guided?*

Often a close second worldly relationship is with our brother or sister or grandparents. I am going to group them as relatives. [2:83] *We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship except GOD. You shall honor your parents and regard the relatives, the orphans, and the poor. ...*

What does "regard" mean? Oxford dictionary defines regard as: "consider or think of (someone or something) in a specified way." In this case I believe it means kindly, as we see in 24:22: *Those among you who are blessed with resources and wealth shall be charitable towards their relatives, the poor, and those who have immigrated for the sake of GOD. They shall treat them with kindness and tolerance; do you not love to attain GOD's forgiveness? GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

As we grow up, we go to school and form close relationships with our peers.

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Friends can have a great influence on our behavior.

Basic Law Regulating Relations With Unbelievers

[60:8] GOD does not enjoin you from befriending those who do not fight you because of religion, and do not evict you from your homes. You may befriend them and be equitable towards them. GOD loves the equitable.

[60:9] GOD enjoins you only from befriending those who fight you because of religion, evict you from your homes, and band together with others to banish you. You shall not befriend them. Those who befriend them are the transgressors.

Do Not Befriend Hypocrites

[3:118] O you who believe, do not befriend outsiders who never cease to wish you harm; they even wish to see you suffer. Hatred flows out of their mouths and what they hide in their chests is far worse. We thus clarify the revelations for you, if you understand.

We should do our best to befriend righteous people so they help us become more righteous. On the Day of Judgment, friends cannot save us.

[43:67] The close friends on that day will become enemies of one another, except for the righteous.

[44:41] That is the day when no friend can help his friend in any way; ...

The next and very consequential relationship is one we share with our spouse. Marriage is encouraged in the Quran (24:32), so, I pray those looking for a spouse find one who is best for their souls. God tells us the purpose of having a spouse. *[30:21] Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have tranquility and contentment with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think.*

[16:72] And GOD made for you spouses from among yourselves, and

produced for you from your spouses children and grandchildren, and provided you with good provisions....

But we are also cautioned in the



Quran that our spouses can be our enemies and how to deal with it if that were the case.

[64:14] O you who believe, your spouses and your children can be your enemies; beware. If you pardon, forget, and forgive, then GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

This is our prayer: *[25:74] "Our Lord, let our spouses and children be a source of joy for us, and keep us in the forefront of the righteous."*

Some couples after marriage are blessed to have children and some are blessed not to. It's all part of God's plan. I think we have a very different relationship with our children than with our spouses or even parents. I know I tend to feel responsible for having brought my children into this life. But it was a relief to realize that they are just as much responsible for being in this world as I am. We each of us made the choice to come here with free will (33:72) and we all of us stood before God and bore witness to His greatness (7:172). And in the end we will all come before Him as individuals (19:95)

I have the responsibility to guide their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, to help them find the best path to God. *[20:132] You shall enjoin your family to observe the contact prayers (Salat), and steadfastly persevere in doing so. We do not ask you for any provisions; we are the ones who provide for you. The ultimate triumph belongs to the righteous.*

But as much as we love and care for our children they can't help us; in fact if we idolize them they can become sources of grief for us. *[9:85] Do not be*



impressed by their money or their children; GOD causes these to be sources of misery for them in this world, and their souls depart as disbelievers

So our goal is to raise our children as righteous human beings by being the most righteous examples that we can be for them, so they can join us in heaven, God willing.

[52:21] For those who believed, and their children also followed them in belief, we will have their children join them. We never fail to reward them for any work. Every person is paid for what he did.

Alongside all these relationships we have a relationship with all the people in the world around us whether they are neighbors, acquaintances or anyone else we interact with in any capacity. Any person we come across should be treated with kindness and humility (4:36, 16:125, 17:53). How can we expect anyone to accept the message if we are not setting the best examples or following what we preach?

[41:34] Not equal is the good response and the bad response. You shall resort to the nicest possible response. Thus, the one who used to be your enemy, may become your best friend.

Next I would like to talk about our relationship with our submitter family. This is one of the closest relationships we have spiritually since we are going to be together for eternity. Even though we don't see each other often or may not keep in touch as much as we would like to, it is definitely one we will cherish in heaven for eternity.

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[52:25-28] They will meet each other and reminisce among themselves. They will say, “We used to be kind and humble among our people. GOD has blessed us, and has spared us the agony of ill winds. We used to implore Him; He is the Most Kind, Most Merciful.”

The most important relationship is the one with our Creator, our Master. *[2:21] O people, worship only your Lord—the One who created you and those before you—that you may be saved.*

God not only created us to give us this final chance to redeem ourselves but also provided so beautifully in this last chance. His guidance, His mercy, His forgiveness. We must love God the most. All our relationships are shaped by how good our relationship with God is. Our relationships get better if we put God first and remember that God is the source of all good in our lives.

[2:165] Yet, some people set up idols to rival GOD, and love them as if they are GOD. Those who believe love GOD the most. If only the transgressors could see themselves when they see the retribution! They will realize then that all power belongs to GOD alone, and that GOD’s retribution is awesome.

Since all our other relationships depend on how good our relationship with God is we need to work on that relationship the most. *[6:162] Say, “My Contact Prayers (Salat), my worship practices, my life and my death, are all devoted absolutely to GOD alone, the Lord of the universe.*

When dealing with close relationships within the family, I try to remember that the person has been chosen by God for me and is the best parent / spouse / child for me. This person is a blessing and also a test. Don’t dwell

on a difficult habit or character trait but think of them as a mother who is helpful and loving, or a spouse who is honest, caring and hardworking, or a daughter whose conversations bring so much joy, or a son whose silliness brings a smile to our face. Even though I like to think I am a perfect daughter, wife and mother, my family does get annoyed by some things I do. But by God’s grace they do not hold those things against me and accept me as a fallible person who they love. I am happy and obligated to do the same to them.

God talks about relationships in the Hereafter. For the transgressors: *[23:101] When the horn is blown, no relations among them will exist on that day, nor will they care about one another.*

For the believers: *[13:22-4] They steadfastly persevere in seeking their Lord, observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), spend from our provisions to them secretly and publicly, and counter evil with good. These have deserved the best abode. They enter the gardens of Eden, together with the righteous among their parents, their spouses, and their children. The angels will enter to them from every door. “Peace be upon you, because you steadfastly persevered. What a joyous destiny.”*

May God guide us to be the best in all relationships, especially in our relationship with God so we can be among the inheritors of the blissful paradise.

Noorjahan

* * * * *

The Teacher and the Student

Recently I began to reflect on self-blame and God’s mercy and forgiveness. Why do I do it? How does it hurt me? And what can I do to remedy it?

It began with me making a mistake in my life. It was an everyday, typical mistake, and I resorted to my usual reaction: beating myself up. I kept making myself

feel bad for the mistake, and it got me thinking, why do I do that? And is it making me a better Submitter?

I thought that reprimanding and beating myself up about my mistakes made me a better Submitter. That it showed I believed in GOD, that I believed in my inadequacies. I thought that submitting to GOD meant that I should punish myself at every mistake I made. But nothing can be farther from the truth!

I realized, by God’s grace, that our relationship with God as we work on submitting to Him, is akin to a student-teacher relationship. If a teacher has a C-student, who wants to go to college, but this student knows that he has a lot of hard work to do to accomplish his goal, will the teacher berate this student for making a mistake while striving? Or will the teacher help the student get there, including guiding him and building a healthy self-confidence and self-image?

Teachers know that students will make mistakes. But if the student is sincere, they also know that the student has a goal in mind, is working towards that goal, and is aware that he needs his teacher as a guide along the way.

The teacher will encourage the student to learn from his mistakes but at the same time correct his inner critic to think positively. She will make sure that the student knows that mistakes are inevitable and that he should keep doing everything possible to reach his goal.

In our submission, we will make mistakes. But are we going to waste energy berating ourselves, OR are we going to use the energy to learn from those mistakes? Are we going to TRUST that God will fix the situation and work it out for our good, or are we going to make our lives unpleasant, thus associating a negative experience with our submission?

I realized that although I make mistakes, the way to deal with those mistakes is

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NOT by berating yourself. Rather, it's by realizing that yes, I made a mistake, repenting, and asking God to remedy my worst fears. Maybe I broke a precious glass vase that belonged to a friend, and I feared that person will hold a grudge against me and ask me to pay an amount that I cannot afford! None of that happened of course, because God put love and care in their hearts towards me, and all was forgiven! However, it's the negative self-talk that is the energy drain. And negative self-talk puts the focus on the self instead of God. Let's put the focus back on God.

Trusting that God will NOT punish me, rather teach me by use of my mistakes, and allow me grace to try again, and believing that I can learn from my mistakes and move forward, are better uses of my energy than beating myself up.

Also, learning rather than punishing makes for a more positive experience of life and consequently, Submission, than punishing oneself. I find myself more eager to learn, not afraid to make mistakes, more trusting of God, with more energy, and a more positive outlook on life! My focus is NOT on bringing myself down, rather it's on learning and moving forward. I realized, that beating myself up is a waste of energy, and you will feel that energy once you stop! God willing!

As long as we have our eye-on-the-ball, are walking the path, and are referring to our Teacher (55:2), we can trust God to guide us. So, look at your mistakes, learn what you can, and TRUST that you will learn, and that GOD WILL TEACH you, forgive you, and give you another try. Afterall, isn't that what a Most Gracious, Most Merciful Teacher would do?!

[55:1] The Most Gracious. [55:2] Teacher of the Quran.

[2:282] ...You shall observe GOD, and GOD will teach you. ...

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

[33:48] Do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites, disregard their insults, and put your trust in GOD; GOD suffices as an advocate.

Abeer

Charity Water 2024

[2:267] O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the good things you earn, and from what we have produced for you from the earth.

[2:272] ... Any charity you give is for your own good. Any charity you give shall be for the sake of GOD. Any charity you give

will be repaid to you, without the least injustice.

Praise be to God. Our 2024 Charity Water campaign was the most successful ever. Our world-wide community contributed over **65,000 dollars** for the wonderful work of this organization that will help provide clean, convenient drinking water for over **1600 individuals**. We all give charity because we know how it benefits so many people, but as the verses remind us, it is also for the good of our souls. God is always aware of any good we do, and while we expect no thanks, Masjid Tucson wishes to thank all who donated—whether \$5.00 or \$5000. The Charity Water people let us know that there were 76 unique donors. 76=19x4! Another sign from God. Check out the Charity Water site <https://www.charitywater.org/masjiduntucson-org> to follow all the great work they do, and see how your contribution will benefit so many.

May God continue to bless us and allow us to continue to help others every chance we get.



MASJID TUCSON 2024 RECAP

1627

est. people served

\$65,088.57

raised

76

unique donors