

God so loves you ...

Often, Muslim friends suggest that the love of Allah, as portrayed in the Qur'an, is far superior to that of the God revealed in the Bible. Others accept that He is merciful but consider it disrespectful to say that the Almighty God is loving. Close examination reveals that neither of these views is correct. Twice, Allah is referred to as Al-Wadud, the loving one (Sura 11:90; 85:14).

Conditions Attached

However, in two other places where Allah's love is mentioned, it depends on mankind first loving Him; 'Say, (O Muhammed, to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you... (Sura 3:31). To gain Allah's approval, the Muslim is advised to love Allah; 'if ye love Allah... Allah will love you ...' Loving someone to get in their favor is not genuine. It does not proceed from the heart.

True, mankind should love God

In the Bible, God does demand love. In the Torah, it says: "... what is the Lord your God asking of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul ...". Further, it says: "So love the Lord your God and keep his requirements, His decrees, His laws, and His commands always."

Totally and unreservedly

The Torah required them to: "... obey the commands I am commanding you today -

to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul ..." (Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:1,13).

In the Injil (the Gospel – New Testament), it is recorded, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your understanding" (Matthew 22:37).

It is not an option

However, the command to love God with "all your heart, soul and understanding" is not found in the Quran. Whereas the Qur'an leaves it as an option, "if you love Allah," the Bible commands it; "You shall love the Lord your God." Jesus called this the "Great and first commandment" (Matthew 22:38). A command is binding. We must love God. We have no choice. Failing to love God totally and unreservedly is a sin.

God's unconditional love

Is the love of God more favorably stated in the Qur'an than in the Bible?

Despite our failure to keep this command, we learn from the Bible that "... God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that everyone trusting in Him might not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16-17).

This spontaneous, unconditional love for mankind is not found in the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an, Allah's love is an expression of approval only for those who do good. For example: "Lo! Allah loveth the beneficent" and "Allah

loveth not the disbelievers" (Sura 2:195; 3:32).

God loves you!

The Injil says that God loves the world, which means the whole of mankind. God is offering peace and security to all through Jesus. That includes you!

God of fatalism or compassion?

According to the Qur'an, the outlook for everyone is bleak: "There is not one of you but shall approach it (hell). That is a fixed ordinance of thy Lord. Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil- "doers crouching there" (Sura 19:71,72). You have no choice: "...He sendeth whom he will astray and guideth whom He will..." (Sura 16:93). Islam's traditions assert that everyone's destiny is sealed.

Muhammad is alleged to have said: "God created Adam, then passed his right hand over his back and brought forth from it His offspring, saying, 'I have created these for paradise, and they will do the deeds of those who go to paradise.' He then passed his hand over his back and brought forth from it his offspring, saying, 'I have created these for hell, and they will do the deeds of those who go to hell.'" (Wali ad-Din Mohammed b. Abdullah al-Khatib, "Mishkat Al-Masabih", trans. James Robson (Lahore-M. Ashraf, 1981), p. 27

According to the above narrative, we find that Allah has already decided which individuals will go to paradise and which individuals will go to

hell. Why did Allah send (as Muslims believe) 124 thousand messengers to this world to guide mankind into the straight path? How is it that Allah of the Quran "misleadeth whom he pleases and guides whom he pleases"? (Sura 14:4) A loving God would not be like that. God, as the Bible says, "is patient... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to the repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Perplexity faces the Muslim

A Muslim cannot be sure whether he is fulfilling God's purpose or not or whether he will have any forgiveness or not. Even Muhammad was not sure, either for himself or his followers. His perplexity is revealed in the words, "... I am no new thing among the messengers (of Allah), nor know I what will be done with me or with you..." (Sura 46:9).

God reaches down to lift you up

According to Islam, a Muslim is supposed to love God as a *ghulam* (slave). Such love cannot be exemplary. A person could only expect genuine love if God is infinitely more loving than man. The Bible clearly and emphatically presents that side of God: "This is where you find love: not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son - a propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

We cannot fully love God unless He first reaches down to us, thus

bringing us to the inevitable conclusion that we love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19) We keep His commandments not solely because it is our duty but because His is such love that we are constrained to love and obey Him in return. Therefore, we consider that the Bible's portrayal of the love of God is complete and far better than that given in any other book. It is the real and true view of our Almighty God. It portrays that depth of love, which is the very essence of God. That is, "God is love". (1 John 4:8)

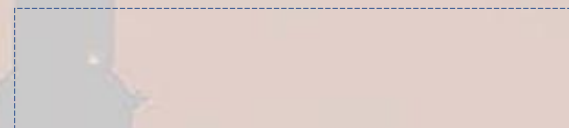
"God advocates his own love for us in this: We were still sinners, yet Christ died on our behalf" (Romans 5:8).

Assurance

The God of the Bible offers people total assurance of forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38-39) You can bury your past way of life and start completely afresh. (Romans 6:1-14) Will you accept God's gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus? (Romans 6:23).

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For further information:



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