

CHRSLMPR.

Christianity (c)

P R A Y E R S

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A COMPARISON OF A CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC

Lets us first glance hereunder at the wording used in the Christian Lord's Prayer supplied by the Bible and then ponder over the reasonable questions that arise, as given against each verse in Math - Chap 6th:

Verse 9: OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN. HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Has God only the fatherly love without the motherly attachment?
Is God only in Heaven and not on earth?

Verse 10: THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

Is earth now out of God's Kingdom i.e. out of His hold or authority? If it is not God's authority that prevails on the earth, who is then the present owner and ruler of the earth?

If it is not God's will that is always fulfilled on the earth and elsewhere in the universe, whose will is it that is being done on the earth now?

Verse 11: GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Is bread the all that man needs for his life in this world? What about clothes and the other amenities, essential for man's stay on earth? Is there any one else besides God to provide man with what he needs?

If man has to ask the Lord only for bread for the day, is it that man does not need God's help for the future?

Verse 12: AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

Can the one or two petty debts of no real worth or significance at all, which might be due to us from others, be ever

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compared to the innumerable and invaluable bounties we continuously receive from God? Can the worthless and insignificant debts of ours imaginably be worthy to ransom against our indebtedness to the infinite benevolence of the All-Merciful Almighty Lord?

Verse 13: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM
EVIL. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER
AND THE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN.

It is Satan who leads man to temptation and it is God Who can and Who does protect man against it. Does God also lead his creatures to sin? Then who is Satan and what is his quality and work?

The very second article of this prayer says 'THY KINGDOM COME' and now in this article it is asserted saying 'THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOR EVER', is it not a self-contradicting statement?

The fact is that any prayer composed by man for his use will naturally be imperfect and even defective having in it the aspects of the acknowledged limitations of the human knowledge about God.

Man, when he asks for himself, without any guidance from God to do it, will naturally ask for his own immediate demand in his material life of this world. This is proved from the wording of the above Christian prayer.

In contrast, let us now examine the wording of the Islamic prayer. Hereunder is given the translation of SURAE FATHEH which a Muslim repeats several times in his daily prayers:

Verse 1: IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL.

Verse 2: (ALL) PRAISE IS (ONLY) GOD'S, THE LORD OF THE WORLDS.

Verse 3: THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL.

Verse 4: MASTER OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT.

Verse 5: THEE (ALONE) WORSHIP WE AND OF THEE (ONLY) WE SEEK HELP.

Verse 6: GUIDE US (O'LORD) ON THE RIGHT PATH.

Verse 7: THE PATH OF THOSE UPON WHOM THOU HAST BESTOWED THY BOUNTIES NOT (THE PATH) OF THOSE INFLICTED WITH THY WRATH, NOR (OF THOSE) GONE ASTRAY.

Through this one SURA, man is educated with the essential knowledge of the basic fundamentals of this life in this world and the life hereafter. By reciting it repeatedly with concentration on the matter, man gets conditioned with sublimity and gradually becomes godly in his life on earth. And when his personality gets duly integrated with the divine attributes of God, divinity gets reflected from his conduct and character. Through this SURA, man is educated with the following factors:

- 1) The Creator and the Nourisher Lord of the universe is One, and only One, and besides Him there is none even equal to Him. Man is assured that God is the Lord - Nourisher, Cherisher, Sustainer and Protector of not any particular tribe, community or nation but of the worlds i.e. the universe as a whole. Thus man with his faith in the one True God, is once for all liberated from having to believe in host of imaginary deities.
- 2) The pre-eminent attributes of God are Beneficence and Mercy. The one who is Merciful must necessarily be the Almighty Master of His own Independent Will. He can never be unjust or cruel. The one Merciful to every life must essentially be the Ever-Living Creator of life. The one who creates life can never do it without knowledge; He must be the All-Knowing Knowledge and Wisdom being His essence. When His Mercy envelopes everything in the universe, He and none else will be bountiful and His bounties will be unlimited.
- 3) When the Beneficent and the Most Merciful One is also the Only Lord of the universe, all praise and all thanks and all gratitude will only be His and exclusively His and of none else. All prayers in expression of thanks and gratitude or for invoking Mercy will only be to Him.
- 4) Having invoked the Beneficence and the Mercy of the Almighty Lord and having paid the sincerest allegiance to Him, man need not and should not bow before any one else and shall no longer fear any one but the displeasure of his True Lord, and he need not stretch his hand for any else's favour. Thus man becomes

independent of every one else besides God with his faith and conviction in the help and protection from Him.

5) That there is surely a day of Judgement when justice in its fulness will be meted out, when none shall bear the burden of the other, when every atom of good shall be rewarded and every atom of evil shall be punished. Thus man is assured of the return for his good and evil. Belief in this makes a man work to have a desirable recompense from the All-Just Lord.

6) True guidance can be had only from God. Hence, man should always be prayerful to be guided on the right path, without being tempted by the forces of evil.

Thus the unique characteristic of this passage of the holy Qur'an is the comprehensive nature of the prayer which entitles the praying soul for every bounty and blessing the All-Merciful Lord can bestow upon His creatures. It educates mankind to assert that the kingdom of heavens and the earth is exclusively God's and He is not the One Whose Kingdom is to be awaited as that of the god of the Christian church.

(Extracted and simplified from 'The Holy Qur'an by Mir Ahmedali')