

MERCIFUL/LOVING FATHER

Notes from The love of God in The Koran and the Bible. Christianity and Islam series no 7. by John Gilchrist.

Oxford Dictionary says Merciful is showing compassion or forbearance; patience; self-control and tolerance to enemies or offenders of ones power.

An act of mercy is to show compassion or help out, because of pity for the suffering person.

Both the Bible and the Quran say that God is merciful but the Quran does not talk of God's love and of Him being like a Father towards us. Muslims do not understand this fantastic fact about God. God is Love.

**Sura 7:156 "He says with my punishment I visit whom I will; but my mercy extends to all things. That mercy I shall ordain for those who practice what is right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in the signs."

The Muslim commentator Abdullah Yusuf Ali says Gods mercy is in and for all things it is universal but his punishment is reserved for those who swerve away from His plan and go out of His peace.

Why should it make a difference that God loves us why shouldn't we just rely on God's Mercy?

We need God's love and His mercy.

** In Islam God's mercy and his patience, his self-control and tolerance is not due to God's Love. In our faith we know that God loves us.

Jer 31:3 "I Have loved you with an everlasting Love."

God reaches out and touches our lives not just out of pity but because of his great love for us. If we swerve away from his plan, God does not necessarily punish us and we don't automatically go out of His peace. We do feel sad and feel that we have lost peace, but God in His love is waiting for us, to turn back to Him and find forgiveness.

Why is love so important?

If God was just merciful and not loving then we could not rely on Him to always forgive us when we turn back to him. God might may tolerate us or show compassion but He would not always forgive. Yet God does forgive, because of His great Love for us.

1 Jn 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleans from all unrighteousness." We must admit to our sin and repent then God will always forgive.

1 Jn 2:12 Your sins have been forgiven on account of His name.

Eph 2:4-5 "Because of His great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions. It is by grace you have been saved."

What kind of love is this?

a) Love must be genuine

God commands us to Love Him.

Deut.11: 13 " I command you to love The Lord your God".

Mat 22:36-38 "Teacher what is the greatest commandment in the law?You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"

This seems impossible. Who can love God like this?

God provides a way for us to keep his commandment to love Him.

God chose his disciples. None came to Jesus on his own accord.

1 Jn 4:7- 21 "Love comes from God.... God is love...This is love: not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son, as an atoning sacrifice for our sins .God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him." Jesus by his holy spirit comes to live in us and therefore give us the ability to be able to love God as God commands us to do. **Rev 3:20**

**Muslims rely only on God's mercy. That means they cannot be certain of Gods forgiveness even if they confess all to Him. That means that they serve God out of duty and fear in the hope of God taking pity on them. They cannot truly serve Him out of genuine love because it is mixed with fear and anxiety of not being forgiven. They will love God in order to be forgiven.

1 Jn 4: 16 " There is no fear in love, perfect love cast out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in Love."

**Sura 3.31 “Say if you love Allah follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins”
So in Islam first you have to love God then you gain forgiveness. It is not a selfless love. It is self-motivated. It cannot help but be, because God does not provide the answer except through Christ.

The bible says God loved us before we loved Him and has provided a way for us to love Him.
Jn 3:16 God so loved the World that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

b) Love must be expressive it must show it self as being real.

You see what a relief it is to know that we are forgiven and on our way to heaven! We can truly love God and serve Him out of gratitude and certainty.

We can then demonstrate our love as Jesus tells us to do

1 Jn 3:18 “Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth”

Jn 14:21 “He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who love me”.

God wants us to obey His laws completely out of Love, not out of duty. **Read on to vs 27.**

Jn 21:15-17 Jesus reinstates Peter. Do you Love me? He tells Peter to feed His sheep 3x.

Lambs become sheep young Christians become older Christians.

c) Love must be mutual

No one can continue loving someone if the love is not reciprocal. How can someone continue to love if they are scorned? Only when we are **rooted** and grounded in Love for each other and love is mutual. Can we continue to Love another person.

Love is the greatest of all graces. **1 Cor 13:13**

When God commands us to love him with all our hearts He provides a way for us to do it, through His Son. He seeks the best form of worship for us.

He offers forgiveness of sin to all so that we can love without fear.

He shows His love for us in such a way that we can respond to Him.

He gives us a personal knowledge of His love and living experience of it in our hearts so we can develop our love between God and ourselves.

God is our Father and Jesus' Father

** Our Muslim friends seem to think that we are saying He is physically our Father we are not.

Mat 6:9 Jesus taught us to pray our Father....

Jn 14:1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled in my Father’s house are many rooms.”

Jn 8:19 “Jesus said, ‘If you knew me you would know my Father also’ vs **42** Jesus said “ If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here”.

In the Bible God is most commonly **called The Father**.

1 Jn 3:1 “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

This does not mean that we are literally his children but rather that God is prepared to draw so near to us in Love that the intimate communion which results from this is like that which exists between a loving Father and his children

Is there anything that we think that Jesus said to explain this?

Mat.7: 7 which of you if his son asks for bread will give him a stone? If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

Why is it important that God is our Father?

God is Judge of the entire world and as judge he will deal with our deeds, as they deserve. If He is only judge then we can expect no mercy because men are brought before the courts to be tried and condemned.

But a Father, in love may punish his children but will not condemn them. His purpose is correction and forgiveness not eternal condemnation. Since God is our Father and we have been adopted as His children we gain an inheritance. The Fathers kingdom is our own home and we will share this inheritance with Christ. It is totally amazing.

God feels our love. God is love. We can feel Gods love for us and know it. God is our Father in a Spiritual sense. “We are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ”. **Rom 8:17.**