

THE ISLAMIC PRAYER AND THE CHRISTIAN PRAYER

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Al-Fatiha (Sura 1)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent;
The Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds,
the Beneficent, the Merciful,
Owner of the Day of Judgement.

Thee (alone) we worship;
Thee (alone) we ask for help.

(Quran 2:286)

*...Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget, or
miss our mark!....*

*Pardon us, absolve us, have mercy on us, Thou
our protector.*

And give us victory over disbelieving folk.

Show us the straight path.
The path of those whom Thou has favoured;

Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger
Nor of those who go astray.

The Lords Prayer

Our Father in Heaven!

Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts
as we have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Questions

1. What are the common elements in the two prayers?
2. What are the differences?
3. Can a Christian pray the Al-Fatiha or a Muslim the Lords prayer?

1.What are the common elements in the two prayers?

Both have respect, worship; guidance; and ask for mercy. Sura 2 has temptation, and condemnation.

Both praise God, Hallowed be your name.

Both ask for help.

The Lords prayer asks for **specific help**:-or bread, for help when tempted, and to be rescued from evil. The Al-Fatiha asks for **general help**.

2.What are the differences?

The Lord's Prayer is personal, and relational and talks of forgiving enemies.

The Al-Fatiha is distant, and talks of victory.

In The Lord's Prayer, there is a request for forgiveness this is very different.

The Al-Fatiha doesn't talk of forgiveness, some other texts in the Quran invite people to forgive others but there is not a command to do so. It implies that God will only forgive those whom he favours.

Muslims were involved in warfare, physical and spiritual against the heathen in Mecca. When Mohammed entered Mecca, he did not fight the people because they surrendered and Mohammed pronounced an amnesty, Mohammed did not punish his enemies and Muslims are proud of this.

Sura 2:286 Victory over disbelieving folk. Yusuf Ali says that disbelieving folk are those who stand against the faith. The Arabic means those who haven't a sound faith.

From a Muslim perspective, Jesus doesn't follow Mohammed's teaching so Christians are disbelievers. We Christians are closer because we follow the Old Testament and New Testament prophets, but we are still unbelievers.

The Lords' Prayer, talks of specific help: for physical (food), for Spiritual (from evil).

Al-Fatiha talks of general help.

The Lord's Prayer has more of a Spiritual interpretation. But many Psalms, which now are taken in their spiritual sense, were at the time of writing taken literally. Literally asking for deliverance over existing physical enemies.

The Al-Fatiha has more of a literal interpretation. The Al-Fatiha asks for victory over existing physical enemies.

In The Al-Fatiha, God is the owner of the day of judgement.

In The Lords Prayer, God is ruler on earth and in heaven. In the end we know that judgement will come because God is the owner of judgement day.

3 Can a Christian pray the Al-Fatiha or a Muslim the Lords prayer?

There are parts of The Lords Prayer that a Muslim could pray, but does it mean the same to them?

Can they pray Our Father who is in Heaven?

God is not their father. They do not understand this personal relationship with God that we have. It would make no sense to them to pray this. God is too distant, the creator and terrifyingly awesome.

They can pray "**Hallowed be thy name**" just as they pray "praise be to Allah"

Can they pray your kingdom come, your will be done?

They are not sure that when God's kingdom comes on earth, that they will be part of the kingdom. Christians are sure that they will be part of the kingdom.

Muslims believe that, Inshallah God wills and Inshallah He doesn't will. So this means if he wants to he will do it so can they ask that God's will be done? They can't ask him not to do

something that is not his will. They can't ask him to change his mind because of a merciful cause, like Lot did. They can only hope on God's mercy and not rely on it like we can.

On earth as it is in heaven.

God is "Allah is the maker of the heavens and earth" Sura 6:14. So they can pray this.

Could they pray give us this day our daily bread?

I think so, because they can ask for food and would understand that.

What about forgives us our debts as we forgive our debtors?

Muslims are more likely to forgive others in the faith than those outside the faith. The Quran says

If someone slaps you, then you slap them back.

We have Jesus teaching not just an eye for an eye but more than this. Mat 5:38

Well they could pray the first part because in the Quran there are Sura's asking for forgiveness but they would not completely understand the second part. The idea of forgiving others is in Islam.

Sura 2;109 Talking about the people of the book who try to make Muslims turn back from Islam it says "Forgive and overlook, till Allah accomplishes His purposes."

The Muslim commentator Abdullah Yusuf Ali says that the Arabic here means: - to forgive is to forget, to obliterate from ones mind. To overlook is to ignore and treat the matter as if it did not affect one.

The idea that "**as** we forgive then we are forgiven" is new. They would always be worried if they have forgiven enough to be forgiven themselves. (Look back on our notes on forgiveness). We have a verse that says "*If we forgive men when they sin against us our heavenly father will forgive our sins but if we do not forgive men there sins our heavenly father will not forgive our sins*" Mat 6:14. We also have a concern here and yet remember that Jesus has forgiven us and sent his Holy Spirit so that we will have the strength and the ability to forgive others.

Can they pray lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one?

Sura 3:186 says "*you shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves, and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who receive the book before and from those who worship many gods, but be on your guard against evil- then that will be the determining factor in all affairs.*"

Muslims know about temptation, but are fatalistic. They believe that if God wills it, He wills it! They don't expect to be able to ask to be delivered from it. What a hope we have and what a bridge builder to them we have here!

We can ask God to deliver us from Satan. Some Muslims are loving, respectful, and honourable. Some Muslims quote Sura 58:10 "*secret counsels are only inspired by the Evil One, in order that he may cause grief to the believers, but he cannot harm them in the least except Allah permits; and on Allah let the believer put their trust.*"

Satan cannot harm the believers of Islam. Yet in practice they cannot be certain that they believe enough not to be harmed by Satan and they wear amulets and other protective objects are used in the house.

In the Old Testament Job was protected from harm.

Job 1:12 *“The Lord said to Satan very well then, everything he has is yours but on the man himself do not lay a finger. Then Satan went out of his presence”*

Later Job was harmed, but not to death.

So we also believe that Satan has to be given permission to harm a believer, but we don't need to wear amulets we need to pray for deliverance and prayer will work.

Muslims will take them to faith healers; we can go direct to God through faith in Christ. We know that God will deliver us from Satan when we pray to Him and call upon his name. Jesus commands it and demonstrates it himself. When Jesus was in the desert he was tempted by Satan but protected from Satan. Satan tempted him and when Jesus was victorious Satan left him for another time. (Lk 4:13). Satan fights with us.

Eph 6:12 *“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of the heavenly realms”.*

Satan tempts us to disobedience (Gen 3:4-5)

Satan slanders saints (Job 1:11),

Satan sows weeds (Mt 13:38)

Satan inflicts disease (Job 2:7),

Satan opposes the righteous (Zech 3:1)

Satan will be defeated in the lake of fire. (Rev 20:10)

We can be victorious in Christ.

Can we pray the Al-Fatiha?

What do you think? If we change the word Allah to God, could we pray it?

God alone is to be worshipped. God is one in three persons. (See our study on the trinity). We have to remember though that our Muslim friends don't understand our ideas about the oneness of God.

But in our own way, and with a Christian emphasis, we can easily pray this prayer.

We might pray for the salvation of disbelieving folk rather than for victory over them. There would then be Spiritual victory over Satan.

God wants to show everyone the straight path. He wants to favour everyone who believes. He loves everyone. Jesus came for the whole world. John 3:16

We want to be on the narrow road that leads to heaven with all those who believe on Jesus' name. But Jesus came for those who are on the wide road that lead to hell to put them onto the narrow road. Mat 7:13 *“Broad is the road that leads to destruction.”*