

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT

Of all the commands that God has given which would you say is the most important?

Some would say doing our duty to God and being totally submitted to Him is more important than any other obligation.

However when someone asked God's Messiah, Jesus, what is the most important commandment, he said that it was:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind".¹

αγαπησεις κυριον τον θεον σου εν ὅλη τη καρδια σου και εν ὅλη τη ψυχη σου και εν ὅλη τη διανοια σου.

Now duty is not the same as love.

The Bible² says:

"If I dish out all my goods to feed the poor and if I surrender my body to be burned but do not have love, I am not benefitted".³

καν ψωμισω παντα τα ὑπαρχοντα μου, και εαν παραδω το σωμα μου ἵνα καυθησομαι, αγαπην δε μω εχω, ουδεν ωφελουμαι.

A child could do his duty to his teacher and yet not love him. A man might fastidiously perform religious duties and help the poor and yet love neither God nor the poor. Duty alone is not enough. The terror of hell can cause a man to be religious. This is not love.

"There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear".⁴

φοβος ουκ εστιν εν τη αγαπη, αλλ ἡ τελεια αγαπη εξω βαλλει τον φοβον.

OUR DILEMMA

It would be foolish for anyone to suggest that we do not need to love God or that some other consideration could be equal to our obligation to love God. We have to love God. This command was given through Moses.⁵ It has been repeated by the Lord Jesus, yet it is not referred to at all in the Qur'an. There it only offers an option; *"If ye love Allah; Allah will love you"*.⁶

Now how can we, who are tarnished with the guilt of our misdeeds, love the Almighty One? In terror we contemplate the day of judgement. Evidently, we can approach God only if He Himself will condescend to help us. That is the dilemma we are in. Will the Almighty condescend to help us ?

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According to the Bible, God himself has taken the initiative:

"This is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us".⁷

εν τουτω εστιν ἡ αγαπη, ουχ ὅτι ἡμεις ηγαπηκαμεν τον θεον, αλλ ὅτι αυτος ηγαπησεν ἡμας

You see *"God is love"*.⁸

ὅτι ὁ θεος αγαπη εστιν.

The Almighty One is love !

May we remind those Muslim friends who think it is blasphemy to say that the Almighty God is love, that the Qur'an calls God *"alwadud"* - the loving one.⁹

Now we don't have to love God to make Him love us. He already loves us and we know that He loves us because He sent His Messiah to be the sacrifice *qurbani*..... for our sins.

"Indeed, we being without strength, at the right time, Christ (i.e.the Messiah) died for the impious, for hardly would anyone die for a just man; perhaps someone might even dare to die for a good man. But God advocates His love to us in this: We were still sinners yet Christ died on our behalf".¹⁰

ει γε Χριστος οντων ἡμων ασθενων ετι κατα καιρον ὑπερ ασεβων απεθανεν. μολις γαρ ὑπερ δικαιου τις αποθανειται ὑπερ γαρ του αγαθου ταχα τις και τολμα αποθανειν. συνιστησιν δε την ἑαυτου αγαπην εις ἡμας ὁ θεος ὅτι ετι ἁμαρτωλων οντων ἡμων Χριστος ὑπερ ἡμων απεθανεν.

This should constrain us to love Him!

THESE ARE THE FACTS

The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would die as a sacrifice for our sins approximately 700 years before it happened:

*"Yet the LORD intended to crush Him. He caused Him to suffer - **When the LORD makes His life a guilt offering.**"¹¹*

וַיְהוּהוּהוּ פָּנָיו דָּכְאוּ הַלְלִי אֱמֶת־אֱשֵׁם נַפְשׁוֹ

Approximately 1,000 years before Christ Jesus died, King David said that God would not allow His Holy one to see decay.¹²

If Jesus had not fulfilled these prophesies he would have been an imposter !

God's Messiah, Jesus, is risen from the dead !

He has ascended into heaven !

He did sacrifice himself on the cross for you !

God does love you !

This is how He enables you to love Him:

"We love because He first loved us".¹³

ημεις αγαπωμεν, `οτι αυτος
πρωτος ηγαπησεν `ημας.

Do not spurn His love!

NOW IT IS UP TO YOU

God's Messiah was willing to die and be buried for you. You must be willing to die to yourself for him and be buried by baptism into water, rising to walk in the new way of life.¹⁴

"Indeed dead to sin but in Christ Jesus living to God."¹⁵

νεκρους μεν τη `αμαρτια ζωντας δε τω θεω εν Χριστω Ιησου.

NO TERROR OF THE JUDGEMENT

"Herein is love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is so are we in this world".¹⁶

Εν τωτω τετελειωται `η αγαπη μεθ `ημων,
`ινα παρρησιαν εχωμεν εν τη `ημερα της
κρισεως, `οτι καθως εκεινος εστιν και `ημεις
εσμεν εν τω κοσμω τωτω.

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References:

- 1 Matt 22:36 - 40
- 2 *"wherein is guidance and light".*
(Qur'an 5:44-46)
- 3 I Cor.13:3
- 4 I John 4:18
- 5 Deut.6:4-5
- 6 Qur'an 3:31
- 7 I John 4:10
- 8 I John 4:8
- 9 Qur'an 11:90
- 10 Romans 5:6 - 8
- 11 Isaiah 53:10
- 12 Psalm 16:10
- 13 I John 4:19
- 14 Romans 6:4
- 15 Romans 6:11
- 16 I John 4:17

Qur'anic quotations are taken from Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall's translation "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an"

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