

Medieval Sourcebook: The Qu'ran - 1, 47

*The Qur'an [or Koran], is a collection of the speeches made by Muhammad, remembered by his followers, and collected, written down and edited after his death. For Muslims Muhammad is in no way the author of the Qur'an, which is understood as the direct word of God given to Muhammad. Although scholars have some idea of the order of the speeches, the standard text is organized in a remarkable way. Divided into chapters, or **surahs**, after the first - short - surah, each surah is arranged according to length, the longest coming first. Muslims' early education often consists in learning large parts of the Qur'an and so this arrangement presents little difficulty. For new readers it can make the text somewhat confusing. The message of Muhammad, however, was not difficult to grasp - stark and absolute monotheism, the evil of sin, the revelation of God in the Qur'an and through Muhammad, and the creation of a new Muslim community. This message is repeated throughout the Qur'an. Given here, from the text translated by Maulvi Sher Ali, edited by Malik Ghulam Farid, and made available on the internet, are Surah 1, and Surah 47.*

Surah 1

- 1: 1. In the name of ALLAH, the Gracious, the Merciful.
- 1: 2. All praise is due to ALLAH alone, Lord of all the worlds.
- 1: 3. The Gracious, the Merciful.
- 1: 4. Master of the Day of Judgment.
- 1: 5. THEE alone do we worship and THEE alone do we implore for help.
- 1: 6. Guide us in the straight path,
- 1: 7. The path of those on whom THOU hast bestowed THY favours, those who have not incurred THY displeasure and those who have not gone astray.

Surah 47

- 47: 1. In the name of ALLAH, the Gracious, the Merciful.
- 47: 2. Those who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of ALLAH - HE renders their works vain.
- 47: 3. But as for those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - HE removes from them their sins and sets right their affairs.
- 47: 4. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood while those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does ALLAH set forth for men their lessons by similitudes.
- 47: 5. And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and, when you have overcome them, by causing great slaughter among them, bind fast the fetters - then afterwards either release them as a favour or by taking ransom - until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance. And if ALLAH had so pleased, HE

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could have punished them Himself, but HE has willed that HE may try some of you by others. And those who are killed in the way of ALLAH - HE will never render their works vain.

47: 6. HE will guide them to success and will improve their condition.

47: 7. And will admit them into the Garden which HE has made known to them.

47: 8. O ye who believe ! if you help the cause of ALLAH, HE will help you and will make your steps firm.

47: 9. But those who disbelieve, perdition is their lot; and HE will make their works vain.

47: 10. That is because they hate what ALLAH has revealed; so HE has made their works vain.

47: 11. Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who were before them ? ALLAH utterly destroyed them, and for the disbelievers there will be the like thereof.

47: 12. That is because ALLAH is the Protector of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no protector.

47: 13. Verily, ALLAH will cause those who believe and do good works to enter the Gardens underneath which streams flow; While those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire will be their last resort.

47: 14. And how many a township, mightier than thy town which has driven thee out, have WE destroyed, and they had no helper.

47: 15. Then, is he who takes his stand upon a clear proof from his Lord like those to whom the evil of their deeds is made to look attractive and who follow their low desires ?

47: 16. A description of the Garden promised to the righteous: Therein are streams of water which corrupts not; and streams of milk of which the taste changes not; and streams of wine, a delight to those who drink; and streams of clarified honey. And in it they will have all kinds of fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord. Can those who enjoy such bliss be like those who abide in the Fire and who are given boiling water to drink so that it tears their bowels ?

47: 17. And among them are some who seems to listen to thee till, when they go forth from thy presence, they say to those who have been given knowledge, 'What has he been talking about just now ?' These are they upon whose hearts ALLAH has set a seal, and who follow their own evil desires.

47: 18. But as for those who follow guidance, HE adds to their guidance, and bestows on them righteousness suited to their condition.

47: 19. The disbelievers wait not but for the Hour, that it should come upon them suddenly. The Signs thereof have already come. But of what avail will their admonition be to them when it has actually come upon them.

47: 20. Know, therefore, that there is no god other than ALLAH, and ask protection for thy human frailties, and for believing men and believing women. And ALLAH knows the place where you move about and the place where you stay.

47: 21. And those who believe say, 'Why is not a Surah revealed ?' But when a decisive Surah is revealed and fighting is mentioned therein, thou seest those in whose hearts is a disease, looking towards thee like the look of one who is fainting on account of approaching death. So woe to them !

47: 22. Their attitude should have been one of obedience and of calling people to good. And when the matter was determined upon, it was good for them if they were true to

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ALLAH.

47: 23. Would you not then, if you are placed in authority, create disorder in the land and sever your ties of kinship ?

47: 24. It is these whom ALLAH has cursed, so that HE has made them deaf and has made their eyes blind.

47: 25. Will they not, then, ponder over the Qur'an, or, is it that there are locks on their hearts ?

47: 26. Surely, those who turn their backs after guidance has become manifest to them, Satan has seduced them and holds out false hopes to them.

47: 27. That is because they said to those who hate what ALLAH has revealed, `We will obey you in some matters, and ALLAH knows their secrets.

47: 28. But how will they fare when the angels will cause them to die, smiting their faces and their backs ?

47: 29. That is because they followed that which displeased ALLAH, and disliked the seeking of HIS pleasure. So HE rendered their works vain.

47: 30. Do those in whose hearts is a disease suppose that ALLAH will not bring to light their malice ?

47: 31. And if WE pleased, WE could show them to thee so that thou shouldst know them by their marks. And thou shalt, surely, recognize them by the tone of their speech. And ALLAH knows your deeds.

47: 32. And WE will, surely, try you, until WE make manifest those among you who strive for the cause of ALLAH and those who are steadfast. And WE will make known the true facts about you.

47: 33. Those, who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of ALLAH and oppose the Messenger after guidance has become manifest to them, shall not harm ALLAH in the least; and HE will make their works fruitless.

47: 34. O ye who believe ! obey ALLAH and obey the Messenger and make not your works vain.

47: 35. Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder people from the way of ALLAH, and then die while they are disbelievers - ALLAH certainly, will not forgive them.

47: 36. So be not slack and sue not for peace, for you will, certainly, have the upper hand. And ALLAH is with you, and HE will not deprive you of the reward of your actions.

47: 37. The life of this world is but a sport and a pastime, and if you believe and be righteous, HE will give you your rewards, and will not ask of you your wealth.

47: 38. Were HE to ask it of you and press you, you would be niggardly, and HE would bring to light your malice.

47: 39. Behold ! You are those who are called upon to spend in the way of ALLAH; but of you there are some who are niggardly. And whoso is niggardly, is niggardly only against his own soul. And ALLAH is Self-Sufficient, and it is you who are needy. And if you turn your backs, HE will bring in your place another people; then they will not be like you.

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Question: What is the main idea of the above reading? What does it say about believers and God? How do the ideas presented here compare to the ideas of Christianity?