

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE LIGHT

EDITED BY MUSTAFA KHAN B. A.

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Correspondence of literary nature may be addressed to the Editor. Short articles, letters, and questions will also be welcome. Non-Muslims are also invited to send questions to be answered.

NOTES.

Christians who are Moslems at heart.

Lord Headley, the Moslem Peer, interviewed in Cairo on his way to Mecca, explained what he meant by his recent statement that in England alone there were tens of thousands of Moslems. Lord Headley said that the people he referred to professed Christianity but were not orthodox Christians. They had overthrown the ridiculous dogmas with which the Christian religion had been founded and were at heart unconscious Moslems. An audience of several hundred Egyptians, including the highest religious dignitaries, loudly cheered this declaration made at a reception in Lord Headley's honour.

Lord Headley who has adopted the faith made a speech at Said-na-Hussain,

one of the most venerated Cairo mosques. The throng was so great that special police were summoned to control the congregation.

The Blasphemy Law.

It is an interesting measure which is receiving the attention of Parliament these days. It is known as the Bill for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. Under this Act it is a crime to utter a word against Christianity. You cannot with impunity expose the absurdity of any of the Church dogmas, nor can you dispute the truth of the Church creed. It is a State protection for the State religion. Other religions besides Christianity do not share this protection. You may throw any amount of mud on other religions without any violation of this law. Nay, even within the four walls of the Church the protection is limited to the State Church, the Established Church of England. Roman Catholics, Nonconformists and other various denominations must take care of themselves. Though obsolete now—which is but another proof how faulty man-made laws must be in practical life—it is almost incredible that in this land where the boast of freedom of conscience is so loud, there should stand to this day on the Statute Book a law such as this. When in operation, however, there were many who could not reconcile their conscience to their profession that fell a victim to this law. Many an honest person that stood up for the liberty of conscience was shut up within prison walls under this law. Thomas Carlyle, of whom any great people might well feel proud, was in his day one such unfortunate person. Though the law that convicted him is dead, and even its dead corpse is now being wiped off, the memory of Carlyle and his battle for freedom of opinion still lives in undying honour and glory.

Islamic Attitude.

It may be a surprise to those accustomed to look upon Islam as synonymous with the sword that even in the matter

of freedom of conscience Islam has a candle to show to this twentieth-century enlightenment of the West. Says the Holy Qur-an :—

There is no compulsion in religion. The right path is clearly distinct from the wrong one (ii. 256).

Nay, it goes still farther in its respect for individual freedom in the matter of religion :—

Do not abuse those whom they worship beside Allah. . . . We have made fair-seeming to every people their own deeds. To their Lord shall be their return. He will inform them of what they did (vi. 100),

The Holy Quran in Tamil.

Our readers will be glad to know that M. Daud Shah, who lately came back from Woking (England) has now made up his mind to translate the Holy Quran in Tamil, which is the mother tongue of about of 25 lacs of Muslims in Southern India. These people deplorably lack the religious education and are only nominal Muslims. Our society is considering the question of setting up a mission in Madras for the religious guidance of these people and for the propagation of Islam in general. M. Daud Shah is already editing a religious paper in Tamil, and we hope that his services in the cause of Islam will be crowned with success.

THE LIGHT.

DATED THE 16TH AUGUST 1923.

Usury or Interest.

(a). DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTEREST AND USURY.

Usury originally meant "any premium paid or stipulated to be paid for the use of money"; but its modern significance is "the practice of taking exorbitant or excessive interest or the taking of extortionate interest from the needy or extravagant" while ordinary or legal premium is termed "interest." This distinction between usury and interest is not of ancient origin but is the invention of later Christianity. The Christian fathers of old times utterly condemned usury in its ancient meaning; but the pity is that this theoretical condemnation was not carried out into practice. This resulted in making the Jews nation of money lenders.

(b) THE LEGALIZATION OF USURY.

It has been customary with early Christianity to legalize an evil by drawing a vain distinction between its severer and milder forms. For instance moderate

drinking and 'little' gambling have all been legalized, in spite of admitting the evil of excessiveness.

The modern Christendom even condemns "usury" as immoral for the consequent cruelty, hardship and evil; and champions the cause of "interest" thinking it altogether a different practice and commercial necessity for modern time. But the difficulty is that we cannot always ascertain whether the money is borrowed for business or for domestic purposes. Secondly, the rates of interest are not determined, and borrower is practically again in the clutches of the money lender. Thus so far the practical side of the question is concerned there can be no distinction between usury and interest. The fact is that Christianity is after mammon-worship. Some of the Christians argue that religion has nothing to do with holding riches. But it is defying religion; because religion is always meant to rectify all sorts of evils, social and others.

(c) REASONS FOR PROHIBITION OF USURY IN ISLAM.

Islam is invariably the advocate of the golden mean. It aims at the general betterment of mankind, and does not allow the rich to become richer still at the expense of the poor. It wants a poor man to live an honest and respectable life, and therefore encourages the loan without interest, so that the well-to-do may lend a helping hand to the poor. It may be questioned why the prohibition assumed a religious form; this law of the country should have been left free-handed to operate on the merit of individual cases instead of entire prohibition. In this connection it may be noted that the universal prohibition is based on the universal harm of the usury. For instance a business man who borrows money cannot guarantee that the business will fetch profit; yet the money lender will take interest in all circumstances. The other side of commercial interest is the bargain when ready payment is not made by the buyer of goods. It is also equally rather more harmful for the interests of Society. The buyer of goods who is more properly the borrower of money, must sell the goods at an increasingly high rate to meet the swelling sum of interest as allowed in the transaction. The burden of increased rates would, therefore, fall upon the public.

It is admitted in Christian Society that true happiness results from accumulating wealth and hoarding riches and

hence the legalization of usury under the name of interest. But the idea takes one far from the realm of righteousness. Moreover, question of growing riches and increasing poverty has grossly occupied the brain of sublime thinkers of Christendom and hence a widespread feeling of an equal distribution of wealth has become an important question in the European countries and the world at large. But the only solution for the equal distribution of wealth is found in the threefold remedy afforded by Islam, which consists in the principles with regard to charity, the prohibition of usury and the law of inheritance. The principle of charity and the injunction relating to the prohibition of usury are closely related to one another and hence in the Quran they are taken together, the subject of charity and giving alms preceding that of usury. The arrangement of the theme is quite befitting. The believers are enjoined to give alms and be charitable to the poor. The good practice would make them broadminded and more sympathetically disposed towards their fellow-beings. And immediately after this is prohibited the evil practice of usury diametrically opposed to alms and charity inasmuch as it narrows the mind and generates the feeling of self-love, selfishness and worldliness which are the root cause of a lot of demoralising evils.

(to be continued)

Correspondence.

WORTH COPYING.

To the Editor, the Light, Lahore.

Dear Sir,

Christianity with all its shortcomings is spreading fast. This marvellous success is due to the organized and methodical work of the Christian missionaries amongst the non-Christian people. In the last issue of "the Muslim World," well-known Christian organ, a writer has recounted the missionary experience in Persia for the last fifty years and has given a keynote to the success of missions in a foreign people recommending:—

1. The establishing of the medical missions. By this through the labour and skill of painstaking doctors and physicians people come to know that Christ still has power to heal the body.

2. The setting up of mission schools. Through the efforts of educators who have a reputation for turning out able and enlightened youngmen and women, the educated would stick fast to Christianity.

3. The direct evangelism. The evangelists, clerical, medical, native and foreign have gone from city to city proclaiming the "Good news" and people have fast been embracing Christianity.

Islam with all its unparalleled merits is suffering at the hands of its followers, who have so far neglected the propagnada work. But the sudden attack of Shuddhi has quite taken them aback and they have become a little alive to the sacred task of Spreading Islam. This awakening is indeed timely but the efforts will be crowned with success if made organized and methodical. The Christian example is worth following. Our goal will be half achieved if we begin with schools, medical missions, the circulation of Islamic literature, and direct evangelism.

Yours truly,

Faiz Ahmad, M. A.,

Questions and Answers.

Mr. Malik Gulzar:—

Q. 1. (a) Can a *Khalifa* cancel the orders of God? (b) If not why Hazrat Umar prohibited *Muta* مَتَاع which was sanctioned by the Quran and the Holy Prophet?

A. (a) No; (b) we do not think that *Muta* is sanctioned by the Quran. It was, of course, the practice of the Arabs which was disallowed by Islam. The Holy Prophet sanctioned it in the time of war before the divine revelation prohibiting it came to him.

Muhammad Ali Affandi:—

Q. 1. It is generally said that the world is going to be drowned soon. What do you think of it?

A. We cannot say exactly what is going to happen to-morrow. What is the basis of this prophecy?

Q. 2. Was Babar a Shia?

A. No. I do not think so.

Q. (3). Is there any prophecy of the Holy Prophet about the late Mirza Sahib?

A. There are prophecies with regard to the coming of a reformer at the beginning of every century and the second advent of Jesus; and the Mirza Sahib claimed to have appeared in accordance with these prophecies. Of course we do not have actual name of a person in prophecies.

Q. 4. What is "*Ishq-i-Insani*" and "*Ishq-i-Jalali*"? Explain fully.

A. The former means love for man; and the latter love for God. Where is the difficulty?

Q. 5. Is it permissible to pray behind a Shia or Qadiani (Ahmadi)?

A. As a general principle it should be noted that according to a report of the Holy Prophet prayer is permissible behind every Muslim. But according to another report, if a Muslim calls another *Kafir*, the *Kafir* reverts to the former, therefore no such relation can practically exist between such two Muslims, one of whom calls the other *Kafir*.

Q. 6. What do you know about a "murqba" Explain fully ?

A. It is a sort of meditation, and spiritual flight.

Q. 7. You say that the late Mirza Sahib was Jesus. How do you prove it.

A. We do not say that he was exactly Jesus, son of Mary; but we only say that he was in his spirit i.e. he resembled him (Jesus) in character and the nature of work entrusted to him by God.

Q. 8. How many Musalmans are there in the world ?

A. About 400,000,000.

Q. What is the Muslim population of Arabia ?

A. Sorry, exact figures are not available.

Q. 10. Are there some "Qadianis" (Ahmadis) among the Arabs ?

A. Yes, some of them.

Syed Ghulam Hussain :—

Q. 1. What do you say of a man who does not believe in Hazrat Mirza Sahib. Is he a *Kafir* or sinner ? and why ?

A. He is a sinner; because he has not recognised the reformer or Imam of his age.

Q. 2. What is the verdict of the Qadian people about such a man ?

A. They call him a *Kafir*.

Q. 3. What are the new Gospels that Mirza Sahib had to teach, and which were unknown before.

A. As a matter of fact nothing is absolutely new. Of course generally the Muslims believe that Jesus Son of Mary went up to heaven, is still alive and will come to the world again. Mirza Sahib proved that Jesus had died natural death and that the prophecy about his second advent is fulfilled in his own person.

Q. 4. What is the difference of Mujaddid and the Messiah ?

A. The mujaddid of 14 century was also styled the Messiah because he had to deal with the Christians; of course this mujaddid has a special distinction for his scope of work.

Q. 5. Can you give me a list of all the mujaddids who came in every Century.

A. Sorry, the list is too long for these columns. You will find it in the *Asl-i-musaffa*, which can be had from our Book department.

Q. 6. Will you kindly let me know that the previous mujaddids used to claim their mujaddidship ?

A. Yes; Mujaddid Alf-i-sani of Sarhand; and Shahwali Ullah of Delhi have openly claimed this office.

Q. 7. Was the late Sir Syed Ahmad also a mujaddid ?

A. No, he did not claim to be so.

Q. 7. What is *Mojza*. Had Mirza Sahib any?

A. *Mojza* (sign) means any thing which may battle the ordinary human capacities of the opponents of a divine teacher. Yes Mirza Sahib made so many prophecies which came out true. Secondly he challenged his opponents for literary contest; but no body gathered courage to accept the challenge. I should like to request you to read some books on it say the "prophecy" by Maulvi Muhammad Ali— which can be had from our Book department.

Acknowledged with Thanks.

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