

THE LIGHT.

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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.

Are the Commandments of the Gospels Practicable ?

In answer to one of the correspondents, who writes, "I have noticed on many an occasion that the Christians do not actually act up to what the holy scripture says and they do not in any way differ from the Non-Christians.....", the 'Epiphany' of September 16, observes. "Reason would tell me that if there were thousands of men who took Christ's name upon them and called themselves Christians and yet in their lives denied Him, still I must answer to God for my own allegiance though I stood alone in the world in my loyalty.....When there are failures, it is not the physician who is in

fault, but the patient who will not surrender himself to be cured." We quite agree with all this. Indeed we should judge every religion by this principle. If the followers of a religion do not observe its injunctions, we are not justified to throw the blame on its tenets. We ask our Christian brothers to put the same glasses over their eyes when viewing Islam.

The cruse of the problem is whether it is possible for the world at large to come up to the standard laid down by Christianity: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (St. Math: 5; 38-41) We are right if we say that it is mere idealistic, for we do not find any practical example. Even if this rule were followed, there would be no law, and chaos will prevail in the world. It will be a hayday for all mischief makers. Robbery, theft, and all other evils will be in the full swing, for they would find no check. It means that Christianity is no supporter of law, but of disorder. Again, those who preached the crusades, and those who took part therein were all violating the teachings of their Master. For if the Muslims had taken Palestine, they should have offered Europe also. And if Christendom were to adopt it in their politics, the glory of Europe would wane in the twinkling of an eye.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (st. Math: 6; 25). If the Christians are going to obey the commandment of their Lord they would do better to cut off all communication with the doctors and physicians, for these people tell us what we shall eat and what we shall drink, and insist on taking care of our health and life. Further they should destroy all the machinery that is working day and night to give us what we shall put on. But the case is quite the reverse. Even the Missionaries sent to preach the Gospels are mostly doctors.

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And elsewhere Christ teaches his disciples not to care for the tomorrow's bread. This needs no comment. If the world at the present stage were to observe this rule, the result is quite obvious.

From what has gone above, it is clear that the teachings of the Gospels are in no way beneficial to mankind now. In fact they strike at the root of all civilization and order. But it should not be understood that the Muslims disbelieve Christ and his teachings. They hold that he was a messenger from On High as other prophets had been. But the fact is that his teachings were not for all times and for all the world. He himself said that he had come to reclaim the lost sheep of Israel. He prophesied that another prophet will come after him. "And he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (St John : 14 ; 16) We believe that the comforter came in the person of Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and Quran is the book that will abide with the world for ever in its purest state as it has done for thirteen centuries

Islam : the religion of peace.

It may, however, be said that if Jihad does not enjoin fighting ; if it only means steering for the cause of truth and righteousness ; why did the Holy Prophet take sword in hand against unbelievers ? The answer to this question entails a great deal of the Islamic history which cannot be fully dealt with in an article. But it may briefly be mentioned that it was not in compliance with the "doctrine of Jihad" that fighting was resumed. The command of Jihad "was first revealed at Mecca, where the prophet led a most peaceful life. It was at Medina, about 13 years later that the Muslims were obliged to resort to sword ; and the verse sanctioning the use of sword is this :—

Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made, because they are oppressed XXII : 39.

Now these words clearly show that the Muslims did not take the initiative for fighting ; but they only defended themselves. The Holy Prophet and his companions had left their homes at Mecca ; and took refuge in Medina. But the enemy would not let them stay here. The Qurash had determined the wholesale slaughter of the Muslims and thus to extirpate Islam. Huge preparations for an attack on Muslims in Medina were going on in Mecca ; and the Qurash were resolved to leave no stone unturned to annihilate the Holy Prophet and his followers.

It was in these circumstances that the Muslims were allowed to wield sword. The Quraish did attack Medina and the Muslims there were compelled to defend themselves in order to save their lives. They never took offensive. They did not go to attack Mecca ; but the enemy fell upon Medina and the Muslims only took up arms to repel the attack. It is therefore the height of absurdity to say that Islam wielded sword for religion. I wrote a Series of articles, "The Prophet in war time" in the "Islamic Review," and proved from historical facts that there is not a single occasion in which the Holy Prophet wielded sword for conversion.

The fact is on the other hand, that the unbelievers persecuted and killed the Muslims for the sake of religion and yet the latter remained firm ; because their conversion was based upon conviction and not on physical force. The people of Medina readily agreed to help the Prophet and defend the cause of Islam. They actually shed their blood for their faith. Was it due to forcible conversion ?

The fact is that before the advent of the Holy Prophet, there was no liberty of thought in Arabia. The new faith preached by the Holy Prophet could not but fill the Arabs with indignation. They did not tolerate it. But Islam had come to establish the religious liberty, and it did so. The Islamic History goes to prove that all the battles that were fought and won in the Prophet's lifetime, were defensive and the only object in view of the Muslims was to establish freedom of thought. The Quran itself says :—And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters, and churches and Synagogues and Mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered XXII : 40. It is transparently clear from this verse that the Muslims fought for religious liberty, for the preservation of the "cloisters," "churches" and "synagogues." This gives only an inkling of the large heartedness of the Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. He does not only think of the mosques, but the church of every creed is a holy place to him and he is anxious for its preservation. The Muslims, as a nation are therefore the custodians of every church on the world. To them the difference of religion is not compatible with sympathy for the followers of other religions. Islam recognises the whole of humanity as one family of God ; and inculcates respect for every religion.

The Incarnation.

The incarnation of God into the person of Jesus is the hinge on which the whole framework of

Christianity turns. The Church holds that in order to redeem humanity from the curse of sin and to show the path of salvation, the spirit of God descended into the womb of Mary, and appeared in the form of Jesus. Christians say that the mercy of God compelled him to send His Son upon the earth among His suffering creatures, so that they might walk with him and talk with him face to face. Islam, they argue, puts a barrier between the Creator and the created; the Sublime Deity ever remains a great Hidden Power having no connection with His poor creatures: Christianity discards all such veils bringing God into the same level with the human beings so that they might know His Will from His own mouth.

Let us go a little deeper into this fallacy.

The object of religion is to delineate a perfect Deity worthy of adoration. Further it is its duty to prescribe measures against all kinds of evil, to turn a brute into a man, to turn a man into a godly one.

Christianity does the reverse of it. It brings the Lord of Heavens to the terrestrial level to share with human foibles. It represents the Embodiment of all Purity as turning pure water into an intoxicating and pernicious liquor (St. John, II : 9). To his mother who brought him up from infancy and whose bosom swells at his sight with maternal affection and tenderness, the All-Loving turns in a contemptible manner, "Woman! what have I to do with thee," (St. John II : 4). The all knowing One is according to its conception a simpleton who in pangs of hunger runs to a fig tree and curses it for not bearing untimely fruit (St. Mathew, XXI : 19). The Almighty Potentate controlling the incomprehensible motions of countless conglomerations in the limitless space, it says, came down upon earth to be spitted upon and mocked at by his enemies (St. Mathew, XXVI : 67-68); and ultimately in utter helplessness to undergo the tortures of the cross!

Yet after all this great *Mercy of God*, what Will does He leave behind Him? how does He redeem mankind from the curse of sin? The will He left behind was that it is in the nature of man to sin; he can not avoid doing it. The way, which He opened for redemption brings still more credit to him. My blood, He says, has washed away your sins. Could any better solution be possible?

Islam, on the other hand, gives a vivid and attractive picture of the Great Unseen. The Holy Quran begins with 'الحمد لله رب العالمين' 'All praise be to the 'rab' of all the worlds.' It must

be understood that the comprehensive word 'rab' brings in all the conception of a creator, a sustainer, and an evolver. It runs on 'الرحمن الرحيم' 'The most Beneficent, the most Merciful?' It does not end here. 'الله اسماؤه كلها' 'All the good names are His'—all the good names that have come and will come into human conception. What a Perfect and Loving picture!

The other duty, that has fallen to the lot of religion, has never been so fully discharged as by Islam. It encourages man by saying 'لقد خلقنا الانسان في احسن تقويم' 'We have created man in the best make'—every man possesses in his nature all the potentialities of limitless progress. Having soothed and propped the drooping spirit of man who thought himself born sinful, Islam further lays down all measures against brutish propensities. The brute is turned into man. The man, it raises up to God. It purges him of earthly grossness by inculcating strict ordinances against all social evils, by prohibiting wine and swine, by enjoining daily prayers, by giving reiterated injunctions to pay the poor-rate. That is not all. A Muslim, further, soars into the spiritual regions of peace and love. He is brought into communion with his Lord, and exalted to a position above the angels—where 'the plumes of Gibrael are scorched'

Christianity imbues God with the attributes of man, while Islam says 'Imbue yourself with the attributes of God'.

RAHIM BAKHSH,

Questions and Answers.

Md. Yakub Ali Q. 1. What do you mean by Mazhab, "and La Mazhab,"? Can we go on without "Mazhab"?

A. Roughly speaking "Mazhab" is the collective name of the revealed laws for the guidance of man. Atheists do not believe in revealed laws and are called La Mazhab. Islam is the religion (Mazhab) which one voluntarily or involuntarily follows, in some form or the other.

Q. 2. Should we dine with non-Muslims at the same table.

A. Yes. We are allowed to have the food of the Followers of the Book; and can dine with them.

Q. 3. What is the difference between religion, and morality? Can we go on with the latter without professing the former?

A. Religion is essentially associated with and based upon revealed books; morality upon society and intellectual advancement. An atheist may be morally very good; but he cannot be a religious

man. It should, however, be borne in mind that the religion is the safest course.

Q. 4. Almost all the Maulanas of Bengal prohibit us from reading the Light; because you, as they say, are leading us—the English knowing boys—astray. Now what should we do?

A. The best counsel which I can offer you in the matter is not to take such prohibition seriously. The "Maulanas" must be preventing you from learning English as well. Do you abide by this advice?

Q. 5. Allah has no form, how can we imagine him in prayer?

A. We must think of His attributes, works and power and not His personality, as it is beyond imagination. He is not like anything.

Q. 6. Will time come when the whole world will be converted to Islam?

A. Not the whole world; but a great part of it. There is a prophecy about the Superiority of Islam in the later days.

Q. 7. Is there any religious obstacle in the Hindu—Muslim fraternization?

A. Not from the Islamic point of view; as it recognises the divine origin of every religion. But the tenets of Hinduism are a great barrier of course.

S. A. KARIM :—Q. 1. Why usury is not permissible for the Muslims in India when other races of this land exact interest from us.

A. The Qur-an has prohibited it. We should not borrow money on interest.

Sachendra Kumar Q. 1. Do you admit rebirth, if not why?

A. No; because there is no convincing proof for it.

Q. 2. Do you believe in the existence of spirit i. e. dead soul and ghosts?

A. Islam believes in the continuity of life, and recognises life-after death. But the appearance of ghosts is not supported by any authority.

Q. 3. In the Light of 1st September why did you request only Muslim brethren and not Hindu brethren for your recovery? I also pray that you may recover very soon by the grace of God.

A. I am exceedingly thankful to you. I did not know that my Hindu brethren are also subscribers of the "Light."

Fazal-ul-Karim Khan. Q. 1. What is the necessity of 'Wazu,' if I wash my body properly.

A. Purification and cleanliness. You cannot have bath five times a day.

Q. 2. What do you think of Farishta (angel)?

A. Divine functionaries are called angels.

Q. 3. What do you mean by "Meraj;" was it a dream; if so, prove it, if not, how is it possible?

A. It was a sort of "Kashf" and those whose souls are highly evolved are experienced in such matters. It was a sort of spiritual flight; or physical flight from Mecca to Medina.

Q. 4. What is 'Buraq'?

A. There does not appear any authority for it.

Q. 5. Is Non-Violence in the form in which it is in non-cooperation movement preached by Islam?

A. Islam always stands for peace and non-violence. Of course it sanctions self defence. In the Prophet's time when war was going on between Muslims and enemies of law, non-cooperation was ordered against the dead enemies of Islam. The present movement is political and not religious.

Q. A Abdul Ghani Q 1:—Who are the Imams?

A. Literally Imam means a leader, hence the theologians and learned are Imams. Some times the word is used for the inspired personalities raised by God for the reformation of mankind.

Q. 2. Was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib a Hanfee or a Shafee?

A. He was himself an Imam and the Mujaddid of this century. He followed the Quran, then Hadis, and then Abu Hanifa.

Q. 3. Is it necessary that Muslims should follow any of the Imams?

A. Muslims should follow the Holy Quran, Hadis, and then Mujaddids (reformers) that are raised after a century.

Q. 4. Who are "Kafirs" mentioned in the Quran?

A. Those who do not believe in Islam are "Kafirs" (unbelievers).

Q. 5. Can Muslims have any connection with such "Kafirs" in worldly affairs.

A. Yes.

Inam Ullah Khan Q 1:—What reasons have you for believing Rama Chandra and Krishna as prophets?

A. The Quran has laid down the universal principle that "every nation has seen its warner." India also must have her own prophets; and as those personages are generally believed to be divine; the only conclusion is that they might be prophets.

Q. 2. If Ram Chandra was not a prophet is it a sin to believe in him as a prophet.

A. It is not the question of *believing* in Rama, it is the question of principle of the catholicity of the divine revelation. Potentially Rama may be a prophet.

Q. 3. What are Aryas, Jaenis, Sikhs? Are they followers of the Book?

A. Those who believe in a revealed Book like vedas are followers of the Book.