

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.

Idul-Azha at Woking

The Woking mail writes :—

Muslims from all over the world, together with a number of English converts, journeyed to the Mosque at Oriental Road, Woking, on Wednesday, for the purpose of celebrating the annual Muslim festival of Eid-ul-Azha (Qurban Bairam), in commemoration of the patriarch Abraham's sacrifice. There were about 250 pilgrims, who included Turks, Persians, Arabs, Indians, Albanians and representatives of Africa. The first part of the pilgrimage was made by many by special train, from Waterloo to Woking.

The ceremony was not quite so impressive as in former years, as the absence of sunshine and complete Oriental costume which is usually worn, detracted from the

picturesque side of the proceedings. Among the company the most notable were the Afghan Minister and members of his suite, representatives of the Kenya Legation, and the Princes Aziz and Sadiq.

The ceremonies commenced at 11:30, when Oriental carpets were spread on the lawn at the Mosque, while chairs were placed around for the spectators. When the call to prayers was given by the Imam the worshippers took their places in rows one behind the other—the women apart and the men removing their boots.

Following prayers Yukub Khan, who acted as 'Imam,' gave a lengthy 'Eid sermon on 'The Religion of Self-sacrifice,' basing his address on the text from the Quran vi : 163, 'Say : my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the Universe.' In his address the Imam said that Islam was a message of peace and goodwill to humanity. Islam, of all religions had extended the hand of fellowship to every other religion. The present occasion was one concrete illustration of that feeling of respect and regard which Islam inculcates for others. The Jews, the Christians and the Muslims, all traced their faiths to Abraham, but of all these it was the Muslims alone that to this day venerated the name of the patriarch.

The four hundred million children of Islam sent their benedictions on Abraham thirty-two times a day in their daily prayers. Again, if there existed another standing monument to that great patriarch that too existed among the Muslims, It was not the Jews, it was not the Christians who alike claim Abraham to be their forefather, but the four hundred million followers of Islam, scattered all over the surface of the earth, that celebrated that day the grand sacrifice of Abraham.

The Imam then proceeded to give a

lengthy discourse on the religion of self-sacrifice as applied to the Muslim faith and the descent of Islam from Abraham as their patriarch. He mentioned that Lord Headley (the president of the British Muslim Society) was not present on that occasion as he was in Mecca adoring with the rest of the world of Islam the one common God of Humanity, and was giving the lie to all believers in the pessimistic 'Never' of Kipling. In conclusion the Imam said if they would see peace and prosperity reign in the world, if they would have the millennium realised, it could only be done by self-surrender to the will of the Lord.

Luncheon, consisting chiefly of native dishes, was served on the lawn, and the remainder of the afternoon was spent in various ways by the festival gathering, who partook of tea at 5-30 p. m.

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DATED THE 16TH SEPTEMBER 1923.

Usury and Interest III.

(Communicated)

(a) He believes in the generality of the injunction *حرم الله الربوا* "Almighty God has prohibited usury;" but taking into consideration the context of alms preceding usury he restricts the prohibition to cases "where *riba* is taken from people, sympathy and goodness towards whom is enjoined by the Quran." But if such contextual exceptions were allowed, no important Quranic injunctions would admit of general application. Moreover, in the verse *يا ايها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله وذاوا ما بقى* *يا ايها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله وذاوا ما بقى* it is for the wholesale exercise of the prohibition that the postponed realization of the principal sum is advised in cases of borrower's straitness; and besides, it is in the very verse that all transgression is meditated to wage war against Allah and His Apostle. As a rule the Quran strikes at the very root of an evil irrespective of its moderation or excess.

(b) He, on the same contextual basis, argues the legality of charging interest in the case of well-to-do persons, who maintain their luxury through borrowing. But this is really adding to the extravagance of the extravagant, which clearly means moral degradation. Moreover Islam condemns the taking of usury as well as

the paying of it. Sir Syed's assertion, therefore, would not but contradict this solemn principle of condemnation.

(c) Commercial and banking interest is another exception to the general prohibition as advocated by him. The harms and disadvantages of this system have already been given in "Usury and interest I" and so they need not be repeated.

(d) The next exception allowed by Sir Syed are the Government loans. Such loans seem attractive when taken for the internal improvement of the country *e. g.* for purposes of irrigation, railways or roads; but the most tremendous harms are discerned when they become the cause of warfare. History furnishes us with many examples where the practice has proved ruinous for mankind at large. It is for usury being in vogue that under cover of national protection, countries suffer an irreparable loss. The 'advanced' and 'civilized' Europe can get rid of wars and political unrests only through putting an end to the evil custom of usury.

It will be seen from the above that in spite of the general prohibition of usury Sir Syed's attempts at the exceptional legalization of it are simply futile and utterly ignorable.

4. (a) The other attempts are founded on distinguishing between *dar-ul-harb* (the country of war) and *dar-ul-Islam* (the country of Islam). In the later Muslim law, the former means the country in which the supreme government is in the hands of the non-Muslims, while the latter implies the country in which the supreme ruling power is that of Islam. The practice of usury is alleged to be legal in *dar-ul-harb*, but no trace is found in the Quran or the tradition in support of this allegation, nay, not the slightest clue is discovered in favour of this assertion: even in the case of a *dar-ul-harb* where it signifies a country at war with the Muslims. To go a step further the Quran makes no mention of a *dar-ul-harb* even. The basis on which the Muslim lawyers have attempted to legalize usury between Muslims and non-Muslims, are, therefore beyond understanding.

(b), However, the only report forming the basis of legality is this "Yaqoob says that sons of the Mashaikh reported

that from Makbul who reported from the Holy Prophet, that there is no *riba* between a Muslim and a non-Muslim in *dar-ul-harb*." But this tradition is believed to be untrustworthy by the learned like Imam Shafi'. Moreover, Makbul was only a *tabai'*; and also the chain of narrators is not given in this tradition, which facts make one discard it.

(c). The author of *rauz-ur-riba* one of the staunch upholders of usury, infers from the Quran thus :—

The Quran says "O believers! do not eat up your properties among yourselves unjustly;" therefore it is implied that we can eat up the property of non-Muslims justly. But this inference is simply stupid and childish!

(d). The same author argues that since usury was prohibited after the conquest of Mecca only, it is clear that it is legalized in a *dar-ul-harb* as it was amongst the Arabs before the conquest of Mecca. This statement is ridiculous in the very face of it :—(i) The prohibition was in force, long before the Meccan conquest. The verse revealed after the conquest is only repetition by way of emphasis (ii) The prohibition till a particular time does not necessitate the permission because of the circumstances existing previous to the time (iii) Wine and gambling were prohibited after Prophet's removal to Medina, would it, therefore, mean that Muslims may be lawfully addicted to the obnoxious habits in times of persecution and torture.

(e) The author of *rauz-ur-riba* claims the legalization on the ground that the prohibition is restricted only to the case of Muslim borrowers. He tries to keep up an analogy with the prohibition in the case of Israelite borrowers as we learn from Deuteronomy. But the analogous inference is simply absurd in the light of the fact that Islam is not a tribal institution but a religion of humanity as opposed to the Mosaic Law intended for a small nation.

(f) Another argument of the same author is taken from Abubekr's wager on the result of war between the Romans and the Persians under Heraclius and Ghosroes respectively. Abubekr won a hundred camels from the heirs of Obeyy for the fulfilment of the Quranic prophecy about the issue of the war. He as a

thanksgiving slaughtered them by way of sacrifice not taking them into his own possession. Had Abubekr not taken the camels from the unbelievers they would have remained strengthened against the Muslims. From this principle, the late Mirza Sahib, the founder of the Ahmadiya movement, has permitted to spend the interest of bank (when a Muslim, for its safe custody, is obliged to deposit money therein) on Islamic propaganda only. But this, too, is no legalization of usury at all.

All efforts of the writer of *rauz-ur-riba* in upholding usury and attempting to make it legal, are nothing but futile. What is proved from above refutations is the entire prohibition of the evil under all circumstances.

(f). EXCEPTIONAL CASE.

If the Quran prohibits usury how could, then, the Muslims employ their capitals? The Quran is quite plain on the point. It says *احل الله البيع وحرم الربوا* "God has allowed selling and forbidden usury." The injunction, in face of the prohibition of usury, urges the improvement of trade. Trade is doubtlessly as prosperous to the country and nation as usury is shocking for the society and the masses.

Indian Muslims are growing more and more poverty-stricken not for the prohibition as asserted by some people, but the cause of misery lies in not acting up to this injunction. Islam not only condemns the usurer but also one who pays it and one who procures debts for others. The agricultural class in India is the best representative of typical poverty on account of its turning a deaf ear to the holy injunctions.

In short, usury tops most of the evils injurious to the cause of mankind and society, and the world can get rid of most of the miseries only by acting in the true spirit of Islam.

Correspondence

To The Editor the Light Lahore.

EID QURBAN IN BERLIN.

Sir,

The Eid Qurban or Eid-ul-Azha, which means the festival of the sacrifice, was celebrated in Berlin on Wednesday the 25th of July 1923. Muslims from

various parts of the vast town of Berlin, which extends over fourteen or fifteen miles, gathered at Potsdamer Platz to board a train bound for the village of Wundsdorf—an hour and a half's run—where stands a Mosque in Turkish style, erected by the German Government primarily for the use of Muslim prisoners of war. The number of the faithful comprising the Turks, the Afghans, the Egyptians, the Bukharans, the Indians and a few other minorities, was too large for the train to hold. Most of the devotees had to content themselves with standing place. The train was as it can be imagined, packed to the full. The party was, however, too happy to think of any inconvenience caused by lack of space. The blissful journey came to an end in an hour and a half, and the train unloaded its proud burden of an international Brotherhood. An indefinitely long line moved for the Mosque, which enjoys a peaceful retreat, a few hundred yards from the railway station. There the assembly was received by the Bukharan Muslims, who had already gathered in the holy precincts of the House of God, which occupies a central position in its very vast premises. A Muslim is naturally impressed with the arrangements made by the German Government for the discharge of one of his most important religious duties. When I see the place or think of it, I am reminded of my own unpleasant campaign which I had to make in England to get a burial place for the bodies of those Muslim soldiers who died of wounds in the various hospitals along the Southern shores of England. How reluctant was the English mind and how untouched was the English heart to grant a resting place to those who laid down their lives for the glorification of the English nation. An Indian gentleman in the Indian Office was set against me with a view to bringing my efforts to naught. A burial place was, however, granted with somewhat difficulty Lord Headley, an English Muslim peer, joined me as a supporter,

and reminded the government of the Mosque in Berlin to awaken it to its sense of duty. He demanded that a similar Mosque should be built in England to commemorate the sacrifice of Muslim soldiers. But his experience was very bitter. He met with an indifferent rebuff. On the other hand we find that the German Government has been practically generous and has thus earned the appreciation and gratitude of the whole Muslim world. SADR-UD-DIN.

(To be Continued).

Questions and Answers.

S. M. Jilani :—

Q. 1. How many sects are there in Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism ?

A. There are four main sects of Islam in India at present *viz.* the Sunnis, the Shias, the Ahmadis and the Ahlhadis; two in Christianity *viz.* the Catholics and the Protestants; and two in Buddhism.

Q. 2. How many Muslims are there in America, England, Germany, France, Africa, China, Austria, and Japan ?

A. About 204,400 in America.
 „ 2,000 in England.
 „ 1,500 in Germany.
 „ 1,500 in France.
 „ 60,000,000 in Africa.
 „ 9,136,000 in China.
 „ 1,000 in Austria.
 „ 2,000 in Japan.

Q. 3. How many Christians and Buddhists are there in the world and in India ?

A. Christians are approximately one-fourth while Buddhists are about one-third of the human race. In India Buddhists are 10,500,000, and Christians 3,75,000.

Q. 4. What are the general principles of Christianity and Buddhism ? Please, describe them briefly and compare them with those of Islam.

A. 1. The general principles of Christianity are (a) Trinity (b) Crucifixion ; and (c) Atonement.

2. Of Buddhism :—(a) At distant intervals a Buddha appears to restore the world from a state of ignorance and decay (b) Nirvana is the ultimate supreme good and the highest reward of virtue among men. On the other hand Islam preaches (a) Unity of God (b) belief in His Apostles (c) Salvation is worked out through one's actions.

Q. 5. What about the Christian propaganda in India ? How many Muslims have been converted into Christianity and what is the reason of Christian success ?

A. Christian propaganda in India is not now so successful as in the past. The Ahmadiyya movement has counteracted its advance. The success of the Christian propaganda in other parts of the world is due to the organized efforts of the Christian towards evangelization.