

The

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Muslim Of A Pensioner- XXVIII

Prohibition Of Usury—Interest— Life Insurance—Bank Deposits

BY M. T. AKBAR, K.C., B.A., LL.B. (Cantab).
Formerly Senior Puisne Justice of Ceylon

THERE can be no doubt that usury of any kind is sternly forbidden in Islam. As in the case of intoxication, there is an earlier revelation denouncing usury and it is followed by a later one prohibiting it.

In the Suratur Rum revealed 6 or 7 years before the Hegira (A. D. 615-616) verse 39, any increase of wealth sought for by fraudulent and corrupt means, including usury, bribery, fraudulent and deceitful trading and even profiteering is condemned in these words:—

"That which ye lay out
For increase (Riba) through
the property
Of other people, will have
No increase with God:
But that which ye lay out
For charity, seeking
The Countenance of God,
(Will increase): it is
These who will get
A recompense multiplied."

Meaning Of Riba

Riba is translated by Yusuf Ali as meaning any increase sought through illegal means and in its primary form means an excess or addition.

The contrast in the passage is between charity and riba and the deciding factor is, as in everything in Islamic religious law, a question of intention. If the expenditure is Lillahi for the countenance or pleasure or love of God, this is blessed, but if the increase is solely for one's own profit through the wrongful exploitation of other people's property this is condemned.

In Islam, the religion is on the side of labour and not on that of capitalism. It allows profit making provided it is based on one's own exertions or labour or expense and there are explicit verses allowing all honest trading, in which there is a risk not only of profit but also of loss. All acts—says our

Holy Prophet—must be judged by the intention with which they were done; and once this principle is kept in mind all difficulties relating to finance can be solved without much difficulty. Although some modern writers appear to think that only usurious transactions are forbidden, the word riba would include any interest, whether high or low, whether simple or compound. The Quranic verses dealing with interest are as follows:—

"Those who swallow down usury (riba) cannot arise except as one whom the devil has prostrated by his touch does arise; that is because they say, Trading is only like usury; and Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury," (2: 275).

"Allah does not bless usury and He causes charitable deeds to prosper, and Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner" (2: 276).

"O you who believe! be careful of your duty to Allah and relinquish what remains due from usury, if you are believers. But if you do it not, then be apprised of war from Allah and His Apostle; and if you repent, then you shall have your capital; neither shall you make the debtor suffer loss, nor shall you be made to suffer loss" (2: 2: 8, 279).

(Continued on page 8)

Board of Kathis

Appeal Decided on February, 10th 1940.

Appeal Case No. 145.—Batticaloa (Eravur, Koralai and Bintenna) Case No. 397, (Maintenance).

Umarukaththa Kalender Beebee of Valaichenai, applicant-respondent, vs. Aboobucker Lebbe Dawood Lebbe of Valaichenai, respondent-appellant.

Present:—Messrs. M. I. M. Haniffa, President, M. C. Abdul Cader, M. K. Saldin, A. H. M. Ismail, M. M. I. Kariapper.

Order delivered on February 10, 1940. In this action, the applicant-respondent on 11th August, 1939,

NOTICE

To Readers and Subscribers

We regret we are compelled, owing to the outbreak of war and the consequent rise in the prices of materials used in printing, to give notice to our readers that from 1st March, 1940, the price per copy of the paper will be raised from 5 cents to 10 cents for future subscribers and for weekly sales. As regards subscribers who have already subscribed to this paper for their yearly copies, the price will be the same as before—i.e. 5 cents per copy.

We hope to announce shortly, a scheme under which the management and printing of the paper will be placed, on a better footing, to enable the management to issue the copy twice a week and to include matters of interest to the local Muslims on subjects other than religion; Islamic culture, etc.

claimed maintenance and lying-in-expenses for her child en ventre sa mere on the ground that she was living in adultery with the respondent-appellant. When the matter came up for inquiry on 16th October, 1939, the applicant had given birth to a child. The applicant alleged that the appellant

(Continued on page 2)

Muslim Dower And How it is Abused

Dowry Hunters

[BY M. M. SALEEM.]

Payment of dower is in keeping with Islamic Law. Today the entire system is abused and misunderstood by most of the Muslims, the majority of whom live among others of diverse faiths. Dower, as prescribed in Islam, is known as 'Mahr,' which has been defined as the payment of a sum of money or the transference of some property by the husband to the wife. Without this payment the marriage becomes null and void: the payment being obligatory in Islam.

Today we live amidst the so-called 'civilized' forming various other communities which practise the dowry system in an entirely different way. According to them, the bride's husband has to pay a colossal sum of money to the bridegroom, and this is practised chiefly by the Hindus and others, among whom the Muslims have lived for so many decades. Consequently their respective customs have got diffused; for, today, the payment of money by the bride in other communities is becoming less common while it is widely carried on among the Muslims. Thus, the institution of 'Mahr' is given a secondary thought.

Indeed, what a sacrilege of an aggravated nature has been committed? The bad customs of other communities have been borrowed by the Muslims whilst our good customs are being followed by others. Does it mean that all should follow the bad customs of the so-called civilized? (other communities). We should spurn at the very idea and make them follow our customs, instead of which it is vice versa.

Among the Muslims, we have very often heard of, or seen bridegrooms who are only mere dowry-hunters. If all do this 'hunting expedition,' what could a poor man with half a dozen morally sound daughters do? If for the first daughter he gives all his wealth as demanded by the bridegroom what is to happen to the other five? Are they to be left in the lurch? Then, Beware! the silent, but heart-throbbing curses of these taxed innocents will approach the Throne of God, the Almighty, and in the end, these curses will fall heavily upon the culprits concerned and upon some of the leaders who encourage this accursed custom.

Such dowry-hunters, marry the girls only for their money, and not for their behaviour and morale. In short, they sell themselves to girls, and to make matters worse they live luxurious lives maltreating the innocent girls and acting like beasts. In the long run, as could be sanely expected unpleasantness occurs and finally, bitter separations take place. This is a disgrace

(Continued on page 3)

Women's Section

SOME OF OUR GIRLS

Their Demeanour

By MISS LUBNA KHALEEL

LIKE MRS. HASSANA KAREEM I am not afraid of treading on other people's toes or even corns in a righteous cause. Hence I wish to make my observations on the topic introduced by her last week. The allegations she makes against mothers and daughters are true, but do not apply to the entire Muslim community. It applies to certain circles only.

If in a family there are young men, it is but quite natural for other young men, their friends, to visit them. When there are no young men in the family but only a girl or girls, why should the young men visit such homes? Do they really mean to select a bride from among the girls? Then why do they take years and months in making the choice and yet remain undecided. And the parents what part do they play? They play the part of the man who built castles in the air and to whom disillusionment soon came.

In really respectable Muslim families, you can never see a young man talking to a young man in some circles where respectability means giving the young man shaking hands with a Muslim girl, taking her in his arms and doing a dance, are now common. In these circles the sense of proper morality is gone. As the Almighty Allah punished Turkey recently for her revolt against orthodox

Islam, so will He punish these people at the appropriate time.

On that holy night—Friday Night—which every Muslim is expected to spend in prayer and devotion, what do we find in these circles? Girls, their young men, and even their parents gather round a table and play cards till late at night. That is their prayer; that is their devotion. And what blessings can they expect from God? Is it blessings or curses?

Much depends upon the parents. In their childhood they have not received proper training in Islamic ethics. Naturally their children become worse than they. Religion has no meaning for them. What is of importance to them is pleasure and amusement.

The parents can remedy the situation by being strict with their daughters. But they are quite indifferent. They even aid and abet. And they will reap a bitter harvest. May Allah lead them in the right path.

BOARD OF KATHIS

(Continued from page 1)

was the father of this child but the latter denied its paternity. After inquiry the learned Kathi in agreement with two of the Assessors ordered the appellant to pay to the applicant a sum of Rs. 300 per month towards the maintenance of the child. The appeal is from this order.

The evidence on record shows that the applicant had been lawfully married to a Malayalee who is alive and resident in Trincomalee. In such a case the child in respect of which the maintenance is claimed is presumed to be legitimate (except in some cases) by reason of section 112 of the Evidence Ordinance which enacts as follows:—

"The fact that any person was born during the continuance of a valid marriage between his mother and any man... shall be conclusive proof that such person is the legitimate son of that man, unless it can be shown that that man had no access to the mother at any time when such person could have been begotten or that he was impotent."

Therefore the onus is entirely on the applicant to show that the lawful

husband did not have access to her at or about the time when the child could have been begotten or that he was impotent. But the evidence discloses the fact that applicant and her mother were seen at Koddiyaram near Trincomalee, where the lawful husband of the applicant lived. The evidence of the witness Ali Udayar which the learned Kathi had accepted is to the effect that he saw the applicant, her mother and her husband in Trincomalee Market Road in February and March, 1939. This evidence is corroborated by that of the applicant's witness U. Mohamed Ismail, who had stated that he knew that the applicant had lived for about ten months with her lawful husband at Trincomalee and Kinniya. The evidence of S. A. Aravimuttu Marikar, who is the President of the Village Committee and a Marikar of the local mosque and had held an inquiry into the incident of June 19, 1939, is also to the effect that he was aware that the applicant and her mother had gone to Koddiyaram.

In the opinion of the Board the applicant has failed to discharge the burden and her claim for the maintenance of the child fails. It will not therefore be necessary to discuss any other aspect of the case. In the circumstances we allow the appeal and dismiss the applicant's claim for maintenance.

Children's Corner

The Different Parties In Medina

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS,

In Yathrib there were two Khatabite tribes the Aus and Khazraj. They had been in constant warfare with each other. And when the mission of the Prophet was announced these tribes had just made peace.

Yathrib took a change for the better with the advent of the Prophet. The Aus and Khazraj, mortal foes, forgot their enmity and united themselves under the banner of Islam. Old divisions disappeared and the noble designations of Ansar and Muhajirin became the common titles. The Ansar, were those who assisted the Prophet in the cause of Islam; and the Muhajirin were the faithful band of followers who had forsaken their homes and relations.

Yathrib was henceforth called Medina. Islam rapidly spread and a mosque was soon erected. The Prophet himself laid its foundation, and worked among the labourers, digging, levelling, or carrying stones and mixing mortar. It was a simple modest building with a room apart for the homeless. The plot of land on which the mosque was built belonged to two orphan brothers. The Prophet refused accepting as a free gift the plot of land from the orphans but paid them the price at which it was valued.

in Medina. One of them was composed of Ansar and Muhajirin, whose love and devotion to the Prophet was limitless; and who underwent sufferings and hardships in the cause of Islam with fortitude. The second party was the Munafikin. This consisted of lukewarm converts, who compelled by the popular enthusiasm, rather than the true belief in the teachings of the Prophet had accepted Islam. These converts were ever ready given the opportunity to turn against Islam. The last was the Jews, a formidable party who gave the Prophet immense trouble. They joined or aided the Korais to do battle with the Muslims.

Your friend,

THE EDITOR.

A. The daily *Sunnat-u-ghairil-mu'akkadah* Prayers are:—

- (1) Four *rak'ats* before the obligatory *Salat-ul-asr*.
- (2) Two *rak'ats* before the obligatory *Salat-ul-Maghrib*.
- (3) Two *rak'ats* before the obligatory *Salat-ul-Isha*
- (4) Two *rak'ats* before and two *rak'ats* after the *salat-uz-Zuhr* or *Salat-ul-Juma'* as the case may be.

(To be continued)

Simple Lessons In Islam

BY

HIS HOLINESS MAULANA MOHAMED ABDUL ALEEM SIDDIQUI

and

M. I. M. HANIFFA, B.A. (Lond.), Advocate

Performance of Prayer

(1) *Salat* of *Surat-al-* after the first(2) *Salat* of *salawat* for the Holy Prophet after the second *thabir*.(6) Special invocation for the repose of the soul of the dead, after the third *thabir*.(7) Performance of *salaam* after the fourth and last *thabir*.

Sunnat-ul-mu'Akkadah Prayer

16. Q. What is a *sunnat-ul-mu'akkadah* Prayer?

A. A *sunnat-ul-mu'akkadah* prayer is an optional prayer which the Holy Prophet enjoined his followers to offer. He himself offered it always. Though optional it should not be left out without any good reason.

17. Q. What are the daily *Sunnat-ul-mu'akkadah* prayer?A. The daily *Sunnat-ul-mu'akkadah* Prayers are:—

- (1) Two *rak'ats* before the obligatory *Salat-ul-Fajr*.
- (2) Two *rak'ats* before and two *rak'ats* after the obligatory *Salat-uz-Zuhr* or *Salat-ul-Juma'*.
- (3) Two *rak'ats* after the obligatory *Salat-ul-Maghrib*.
- (4) Two *rak'ats* after the obligatory *Salat-ul-Isha*, and
- (5) Three *rak'ats* of *Salat-ul-Witr* after the two *rak'ats* mentioned in (4).

Sunnat-u-Ghairil-mu'Akkadah Prayer

18. Q. What is a *sunnat-u-ghairil-mu'akkadah* Prayer?

A. A *sunnat-u-ghairil-mu'akkadah* prayer is a mere optional prayer, which was sometimes offered by the Holy Prophet. We may offer such a Prayer at our discretion.

19. Q. What are the daily *Sunnat-u-ghairil-mu'akkadah* Prayers?

Letters To The Editor

The Editor,
The "Star of Islam,"
Colombo.

"How to Check Mosque Disputes"

Sir,—With reference to Mr. Saleem's letter under the caption "How to check mosque disputes" that appeared on the 3rd February, of your esteemed journal, I am very pleased to state that I am in entire agreement with most of the views expressed therein.

With special reference to the Badulla Jumma Mosque, about which I am interested as I happen to be the Hony. Secretary of an institution, whose one great ideal is to create unity, Muslim Solidarity and follow feeling among the poverty stricken ignorant Muslims of Badulla and make the Jumma Mosque the centre of all activities, I have taken pains to make comments on this subject.

At the very outset, I make bold to say that my association is confronted with many difficulties which no doubt are to be surmounted. First of all that old famous office of Matichems or Trustee of the Mosque, like the defunct Sultanate of Turkey come into direct conflict with this ideal. As a glaring instance just as Mr. Saleem has rightly pointed out, about the incompetency of the present day Lebbe, I want to say what enormous difficulties I had, with the Lebbe of the Jumma Mosque of Badulla, to get a marriage solemnised between two unfortunate Muslims on the 18th ultimo. The facts of the case are follows: One Assen Kutty Mohamed, a tinker by profession earning about 50 per day went to the rescue of a young orphan muslim girl by name Ahsa Umma, who was in grave danger of being reduced by a Sinhalese car driver. Rightly or wrongly, the rescuer and

the rescued later on, become very friendly and lived as man and wife in sin, as they could not afford to spend anything to get themselves married. This man, however, managed to save some money from his meagre earnings and went through the process of purification according to the Islamic Faith as a forerunner to getting married. He then approached the Lebbe of the mosque who happened to be the Muslim Registrar of Marriages, and begged him to marry them. He was straight away told that unless and until an amount of Rs. 8'50 was prepaid to him, nothing could be done. This un'fortunate man then made application to my association for assistance. The Hony. Secretary took immediate steps, in which, he wrote a courteous letter to the Lebbe who rudely returned the letter with the remarks, "without Rs. 8'50 nothing could be done and let your Secretary do what he liked"

Therefore the Hony. Secretary promptly wrote to the Government Agent, Uva, in his capacity as the Provincial Registrar, and later interviewed him on the subject. As a result of this interview, the Muslim Registrar was ordered to register this marriage and the wedding took place at 10 a.m. on the 18th instant, in the presence of the Committee and some members. The Lebbe however refused to perform the religious side of the marriage, as he had instructions from his employer the Trustee, to refuse to do this without the payment. Under the circumstances, another Muslim from the Majliss volunteered to perform the Nikah and today these two people are living in Islam as man and wife.

Again on the 8th instant Mohamed Umma's daughter Malison was taken married to a Sinhalese and similar circumstances. The same conditions were adopted by the Lebbe and the Trustee, as in the previous case, and

the association took prompt action and they were also legally married.

The administration of the Jumma Mosque is not what is desired. The Kathi of Badulla calls himself trustee of the mosque and cheek by jowl he holds court in a small building which was used as a library belonging to the mosque in the mosque premises, without any benefit whatsoever to the mosque funds or its administration. This self appointed Trustee has appointed a Lebbe who is also licensed to register marriages. This Trustee and his Lebbe are *Ipsso Facto* the Kathi and the Muslim Registrar (two government servants) are in power and they are a nuisance to the members of the congregation.

Mr. Saleem has rightly pointed out that religion among certain Muslims has gone to the devil and their professed religion is Leadership and their God is money, and further he is perfectly right in pointing out that all the trouble has started on account of the ignorant rich leaders and uncouthed and ignorant Lebbes. To cast away such leaders and their lieutenants to the four winds, the only alternative is to take action under the provision of the Wakfs Ordinance and a Board of management which will be responsible to the congregation be formed with legal sanction.

The Badulla Jumma Mosque had a learned Lebbe till recently who got thoroughly disgusted of the trustee's tactics and I understand he has gone on long leave prior to retirement. So the Jumma Mosque is continually down and out and in the doldrums. Will the Muslim of Badulla wake up? They will, I am sure, some day.

Yours, etc.,

S. M. H. NOOR-UD-DIN.

Badulla, Feb 14.

Muslim Dower & How It Is Abused

(Continued from page 1)

to the whole womankind—to the Muslims—to Islam and in short to all humanity. Thus, a man who disgraces a woman, disgraces his mother and his sister though not directly, and this is tantamount to an unpardonable crime.

Young men, having at least an atom of what is called self-respect should not demand dowries. Matrimony is a sacred institution and it should be treated as such and not as a game of chance in which one can try his luck. Therefore, those who seek dowries from the bride's parents are committing a heinous crime. This does not show that "these hunters" are entirely devoid of character, but, it shows that they do not have real self-respect and sufficient religion.

A man's qualifications for marriage are independence and ability to support and maintain a married life. When he is thus qualified, he can get married. On the other hand, if he fears that he cannot maintain such a life, he should desist from marrying; but, he must lead a chaste life curbing his passions by fasting and praying.

If the bride's father likes, he can give a small present of money or property or what he wills to the bridegroom: this should not be demanded except in a case where a daughter given in marriage, does not get a share of her father's wealth.

It is by the spread of Islamic Literature that this hated system could be abolished. It is only when this dower system is abolished that there can be happy unions which mean a happy world in the path of Islam. Allah be with us in the right path! AMEN!!!

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Branch Manager,
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P.O. Box 28, Colombo.

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Address.....
Occupation.....
Date of Birth.....

The Star of Islam

A CULTURAL WEEKLY

COLOMBO: FEBRUARY 17, 1940.



Muharram

ANOTHER year has dawned on us Muslims and this year it has dawned with the mutterings of thunder and the sky overcast with lowering and gloomy clouds. For two mighty armies, armed with the latest weapons that science can equip, stand facing each other over a narrow strip of no-man's land, like dogs in leash waiting to spring at each other's throat. And in Northern Europe we are witnessing a strange spectacle, a giant trying to throttle a weak and insignificant victim, who is resisting with all the courage and resoluteness that despair and an indomitable spirit can provide. And all the rest of the civilized world, instead of going to the help of this little valiant nation, afraid for their own safety, are calmly watching the unequal combat with folded arms or are sending insignificant help—insignificant in view of the importance of the issues—and their statesmen are profuse in their speeches of sympathy for this stricken nation, which is slowly but surely bleeding to death. And these other nations are supposed to be at the summit of civilization and all profess a religion which preaches of brotherly love and help. Can there be any worse omens than those presaged at the dawn of this new year?

Muharram has always been a sad and sacred month in Islam. It is one of the four months which are sacred and fighting is forbidden, except as a defensive measure (2-194).

Even during the pre-Islamic age the pagan Quraish observed a fast on the tenth of Muharram. According to IBN ABBAS, the Jews fasted on the same day, following the example of the Prophet MOSES. BUHARI (30-1) states that the tenth of Muharram was observed as an obligatory fasting day by the early Muslims before the fast of Ramadan was ordained, and even now many Muslims fast on that day, following the example of the Prophet.

By a curious coincidence the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet's grandson, HUSSAIN, of beloved memory, took place during the first ten days of this month, and the Shi'ahs observe the anniversary of this tragic event with prayers, fasting and lamentation. The tragedy has been commemorated in English literature in one of MATHEW ARNOLD'S superb essays, a Persian Passion play. We give below a soul-stirring extract describing the tragic event given by FREYA STARK in her "Baghdad Sketches."

"No legend could bring the life and character of old Kufa more vividly before one. Less a city than a camp, spearhead of the nomad advance against the settled lands, the desert waves seem to break against this shore in a foam of blood. ALI here, made for gentler things, wore his life out, sick at heart among the fickle townsmen: and it was not far from here that HUSSAIN his son was met and turned away with his pathetic band, and left to wander up Euphrates towards the desert place of Kerbela.

"There he pitched his camp, while his enemies surrounded him and held the water: the details are as living today as they were 1,257 years ago; nor can anyone with much profit visit these Holy Cities unless he knows something of the story, for its tragedy is built into their very foundations. It is one of the few stories I can never read without weeping. It has come down with the inevitability, the slow growth of doom, of a Greek tragedy, and with the human pathos of living people humanly beloved.

"An offer of amnesty was made and refused by every one of the little band of relatives and companions: a last day's respite was given; the last night came and, in HUSSAIN'S tent, while his servant sat singing burnishing his sword, his sister ZEINAB came to say farewell—that same ZEINAB who, sent later with the other women to Damascus, is buried in a beautiful Kufic tomb in the Maidan with Shi'a and Sunni graves around her and sixteen of the severed heads of Kerbela.

"Then, in the morning, a moment of stillness fell on the surrounding army. The first arrow was shot. The slow, heart-rending process of the day is told. Fought to a finish it ended in the death of every one of the small band (every combatant is said to have been beheaded after the battle and seventy only were counted), and the last scene comes as the head of HUSSAIN is laid before OBAIDALLAH in Kufa, and as he spurns it with his foot, an old man's voice in the crowd is heard to say: "Deal gently with it, for, by GOD, many a time have I seen those lips kissed by the blessed lips of MUHAMMAD."

From The Mimbar

HEED THE WARNING-CALL.

Severe is the Punishment to the Heedless

Translation of Sermon Delivered at The Masjidul Jamiah Mosque on 2nd February, 1940.

BY KHATHEEB B. B. BAHAR

PRAISE be to Allah who revealed His wisdom to His creatures through perfect harmony in His creation. He caused the hearts of the righteous people feel the enormity of His might. He showed to those of sound insight His infinite power. He is free from all resemblance to the worlds or what they contain of things, qualities or pictures.

He knows what is concealed under the deepest of curtains. Everything is by His decision and measurement. I praise Him for His blessings and entrust myself to Him.

I bear witness that there is no God, worthy of being worshipped, but Allah, exhorting everybody to do so with a believing heart and a pronouncing tongue, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger sent at a time when the pillars of the Truth were tottering, when the evils of mankind prevailed and those who were unmindful in thought that they are not returning to the place of judgment. So Allah, by sending His Messenger Muhammad (Peace be on Him), extinguished the fire of sedition, Ignorance and darkness that threatened to cause the true religion to vanish and the religion of Islam shone high. Prophethood was perfected and He (Peace be on Him) was made the seal of it. May Allah bestow peace and blessings on Muhammad and on His followers.

O Mankind! Fear Allah and perform your duties unto Him and thus be obedient to Him.

What is the matter with the eyes that they don't see rightly? What has happened to the souls that they plunge headlong to destruction? Why are passions turning away from the sources of blessings? Is there a reasonable excuse for all this? Or is it a just cause on which the minds are bent? Or is it play that precedes to a place where perseverance is needed, or the enjoyment of this passing world? The call of warning has reached every ear but they were deaf to it. The antidote was ready but the souls discarded it. The night and the day gave enough wisdom to

those of sound minds. Blessing and punishment were allotted respectively to the pious and the wicked. Death comes to everybody above all calamities, and Allah's justice will be revealed to all mankind.

Then on what does the slave of this world depend, or its seeker wish to be excused? Its truth proves to be false and its wonders seem attractive. Let the unmindful be prepared for the coming death that will capture him, the tomb that will hide him, and the place that will press him.

May Allah bless the soul that hears the Truth and takes it to heart and sheds tears and regrets over the past sins; suppresses its worldly passions by remembering death and collects provisions for its return; and admonishments effected its limbs sharper than swords; man shall be prepared for his death after which he will be carried to a lonely place. He will meet the hereafter where people will be lowered or raised. The sinner will meet his share of punishment from which he will have no escape or defence.

Therefore be not ye O mankind! of those who sold their good for evil and they could not reap any good from their deeds. Be not ye of "Those whose effort goeth astray in the life of the world, and yet they reckon that they do good work."

Almighty Allah says;

"O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah. And let every soul look to that which it sendeth on before for the morrow. And observe your duty to Allah, Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do." Sura 59 verse 18.

May Allah remove worldly passions from our hearts, guide us in the path of the righteous, forgive our sins and cover our faults. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful and Generous. —Ameen.

Translated by Moulvi M. A. Lafir

MAN AND RELIGION-IV

XIV.--Admonition Of The Creator To Follow The Right Way

By Q. A. RAB

THE Creator has endowed man with wisdom and reason with the aim that he should try to find out the right way and live accordingly. If he do so, he does the right thing; if not, he neglects his duty and would be held responsible. "Surely we have created man from a small life-germ uniting, we have chosen him above all animals, then We have made hearing, seeing; surely we have chosen him the way; he may accept or reject. 75: 2-3.

"Whoever becomes blind of the Admonition of the Beneficent Allah, We appoint a devil for him, so he becomes his associate." And most surely they turn them away from the path and they think they are guided aright." 3: 36-7 "Oh men! There has come to you indeed an Admonition from your Lord and a Healing for what is in the breasts and a Guidance and a Mercy for the believers." 10: 56-7. "Allah is beneficent to His servants: He gives sustenance to whom He pleases and He is the Strong and the Mighty. Whoever desires the gain of the Hereafter, We will give him more of that gain; and whoever desires the gain of this world, We give him of it and in the Hereafter he has no portion."

Trees cannot move. They get their food and drink ready just at their roots. Animals can move. They are to go out of their dwellings, move about, look around, find out their food and drink, enjoy them and return. Man can also move. But he cannot eat and drink like animals. He has wisdom. He goes out, grow his eatables in the field, bring them home, I prepare his food and then take it. Thus we see that the more an organic body is endowed with power and wisdom, the more it has to strive for its existence. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran asks people to observe and think over the natural things and phenomena and very often reminds them that Allah has brought them forth from the wombs of their mothers; at that time they did not know anything: He has given them ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to feel and wisdom to think and find out the truth: They are not beasts but His chosen created beings and He created them most beautifully. So they should be grateful and obedient to Him Who is their absolute Lord and to Whom eventually they shall have to return. It would be very carefully seen that animals do not break Divine Laws while it is only man who breaks them and commit sin. "Man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want; Surely to your Lord is the return." 96: 6-8.

Prosperity with irreligion leads to vice, and vice, to ruin but with religion it leads to virtue and virtue, to bliss. It is a matter of great regret that the people of the modern world who are advanced in every sphere of material side of their life should altogether neglect the spiritual side of it and absorb in materialism! Do they not see that the makers of the Seven Wonders of the world were surely mightier and wiser than they but no trace of them is now found in the world? How clearly the Creator draws the attention of man to this fact! "How many of the generations We have destroyed before them who

were better in respect of goods and outward appearance. Say: As for him who remains in error the Beneficent Allah will surely prolong his length of days until they see what they were threatened with, either the chastisement or the hour of doom then they shall know who is in more evil plight, and weaker in forces." 19: 74-5 "Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those who were before them? Mightier than these were they in a strength and in fortifications in the land but Allah destroyed them for their sins and there was not for them any defender against Allah." 40: 21. Therefore may we not reasonably hope that the proud people of the world—proud on account of power and knowledge, wealth and wisdom—should give a serious thinking to the Warning of the Creator in time and try to save themselves from the destruction? If they remain callous to the Warning and follow falsehood, they would do injustice to themselves only.

XV.—The All Round Super Excellent Ideal Character of the Prophet

That the Final Prophet, Mohammad (May the Mercy and Blessings of Allah be on him) came with the Mission of teaching the Religion of the Creator to the entire humanity is well understood when we look to the fact that he lived the life of almost all circumstances that might happen to human beings on the earth. Any man of any rank and position from the emperor down to the poorest of the poor finds no difficulty in accepting him as his ideal in life. This fact proves without a shadow of doubt that he had the right to teach all humanity and was, is and shall be the universal Prophet to mankind. Therefore every man individually and every nation collectively ought to accept him as Prophet and act according to his teachings so that peace and happiness may reign in the world.

Mr. A. Dasgupta, a great scholar and seeker after Truth has pointed out the merits and the demerits of all the principle religions of the world and very successfully proved that Islam is natural, reasonable and thoroughly practical, has a solid historical ground-work and teaches equality among men in his book, Why I Accepted Islam. He says, "Whoever wants a system simple yet grand, conventional yet instinctive, humble yet lofty, difficult yet practicable, should come and embrace Islam. Here shall he find his Maker, Here shall he find Truth. He shall have to live in this world yet renounce it, deny more than necessary ease to the body yet avoid self-torture, enjoy all pleasures yet abandon merry-making and give up luxury yet not deny the necessities of life. In fact the whole structure of Islam stands on simplicity and devotion. Edward Montet looks upon the Islamic Religion as "A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently accessible to the ordinary

understanding, might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvellous power of winning its way into the conscience of men."

"Of the other prophets", says he, "we know very little save the religious side of their character. But we know our Prophet as a son, as an orphan, as a hermit, as a shepherd, as a labourer, as a merchant, as an aristocrat, as the young husband of an old wife, as the old husband of a young wife, as the husband of many wives, as a father-in-law, as a son-in-law, as a friend, as a companion, as a preacher, as a judge, as a law-giver, as an administrator, as a leader in war, as a states-man, as a warrior and what not? No one's career had been such chequered and no one passed through such a variety of circumstances to teach mankind how to live. Look at him for any point of view and you cannot doubt what he said, "I am a man and Prophet" In fact he did not preach a new religion. He preached the religion of his predecessors. "To Walk with God—to have Him in our daily life—we too profess to seek, but in our Prophet we find this profession translated into practice. His system is neither imitative nor eclectic but was 'Inspired! His religion was not only for the heathen Arabs but also for the Jews, the Christians, the Zoroastrians and for all."

"Every one of his biographers is bound to admit that during his childhood he was a very agreeable boy who freely mixed with his Arab neighbours without acquiring any of their bad habits. As a youth we find him distinguished for his honesty, straight forwardness, humility sense of justice, uprightness, generosity and truthfulness. He was called the 'Al-Amin' or the Faithful. In his old age he was a worldly man and saint, an ascetic and a prophet. He never preached anything that he himself could not practise."

Now we think we can very reasonably say that whoever cares for religion and wants to live with peace in this world and at the same time hopes for Salvation in the world to come, cannot but accept Islam which means peace and can give peace to the acceptor.

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KNOWLEDGE AND PHILOSOPHY

Rationalism The Better Part Of Valour

(By the Sufi Movement of Ceylon)
Kandy.)

"O Pearl Divine, white pearl that in a shell
Of dark morality art made to dwell!
Alas, while common gems we prize and hoard,
Thy worth inestimable is still ignored!"—Ibn Al 'Arab.

Knowledge is a great screen. Since the dawn of time, this has been the boundless Ocean in which the cream of mankind dived for Pearls. Many merged into this Ocean exploring different regions for different pearls.—Philosophy for reason, History for memory, Poetry and Art for imagination. The best, of course, was the cause of those, who risking their normal worldly pleasures for the sake of truth and love and their ideal of liberation, spent all their lives in order to uphold the torch of philosophy to advance the cause of humanity which was in travail. This in course of time, overlapped across different lands, far and near, fertilising the hearts of the people. Knowledge continues to have the most vital influence on the intellectual life of the world today. Thus knowledge and philosophy have had the same beginning. The one is vast beyond human comprehension and the other is deep and abstruse for reflection. Varying the analogy, philosophy is a chip of the old block that is knowledge. Knowledge is vast, therefore its horizon widens, it takes immense proportions in one's eyes. It gives one the vision to see, the faith to believe the will to endure and the courage to act. In short it paves the way for liberty of thought, speech and action in harmony with the human needs.

Bacon says "Knowledge crowns man's nature with power". It is through this crown that man excels beasts. In an encounter—the largest elephant, the most ferocious tiger and the most poisonous cobra, succumb to the superior knowledge of man. In a Court of Law the wise Counsellor keeps the tyrant in his place. In public gatherings, the Orator holds the audience spell-bound by his superior knowledge. The philosopher keeps his earnest hearers conscious and feeds them with spiritual truths by his divine knowledge.

Knowledge affects one's private virtue a great deal. It takes away all levity, temerity and insolence by copious suggestion of all doubts and difficulties and acquaints the mind to balance reasons on both sides. It takes away vain admiration of anything which is the root of all weakness. The citadel of orthodoxy, behind which the Ulemas had laid themselves dormant and domineering, has at last been stormed by modern education, which has made the placid brains of the believers capable of rational thought for the first time. They began to examine their own behaviour in the light of this new liberality. The spread of knowledge and wisdom aided by the influence of spiritual religion must bring people Truth conscious. It is through the knowledge of our true being that we should be conscious of our unity with all existence.

Like Ariel who sings "Where the bee sucks there suck I," knowledge wants truth—truth at any price. It is a matter of common knowledge that a learned man is seldom or never bigoted by orthodox beliefs and traditions. Where he finds truth and reason, he lies his belief and religion.

".... for God loves the doers of Justice."—60:8. Knowledge and wisdom are never one. "Knowledge dwells in heads replete with thoughts of other men; Wisdom in minds attentive to their own," says Cowper. Knowledge is an unprofitable mass which only the wise man can rightly use or use to advantage for the good of the many.

A walking encyclopaedia of knowledge with all his laurels is proud that he has learned so much or that he could talk so much. But another who is less learned, but wise with his usual philosophical silence or calmness, humbly observes "Well I am only a child, I wish to know more." Thus knowledge and wisdom should go hand in hand to be of advantage.

Philosophy literally means love of wisdom. It is far greater than human love. In it the contemplations of man penetrate unto God or are circumscribed to nature or are reflected upon himself. Thus says Bacon, "arise three knowledges—Divine philosophy, Natural philosophy and Human philosophy or Humanity." The Stoics subdivided philosophy into three divisions, namely Physic, Ethic and Logic. Whatever divisions there may be, philosophy aims to explain the ultimate causes, the knowledge of the phenomena as explained by and resolved into causes, reasons, powers and laws. There is sound reasoning in the different philosophies to show that they represent realised knowledge.

Philosophers viewed life in different ways. This was how Omar Khayyam viewed it:—

An make the most of what we yet may spend.
Before we too in the dust descend;
Dust unto in the dust, and under dust to lie,
Sans wine, sans song, sans singer and sans end.
"Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went."

Where is heaven and where is hell? Omar Khayyam locates them.

"I sent my soul through the invisible
Some letter of that after life to spell;
And after many days my soul returned,
And said "Behold, myself, am Heaven, am Hell."

Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi has it this way:—

"Oh! hear the flutes sad tale again
Of separation I complain;
Ever since it was my fate to be
Thus cut off from my parent tree,
Sweet moan I've made with pensive sigh

While men and women join my cry.
"Man's life is like this hollow rod;
One end in the lips of God,
And from the other sweet notes fall
That to the mind the spirit call
And joins us with the All in All."

Mansur Hallaz, in these verses, prays for union with his Beloved and gives out his feeling of perfect harmony with Him.

"Betwix me and Thee there lingers
an "it is I" that torments me.
Ah! of Thy grace, take away this
"I" from between us!
"I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I,
We are two spirits dwelling in one body.

If thou seest me, thou seest Him,
And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both."

There are also:—
"Philosophers devoid of reason find
This world a mere idea of the mind;
'Tis an idea—but they fail to see
The great idealist who looms behind."

Philosophy aims at an unexcitable state of mind. It wants the calm, peace and serenity of a saint in

profound meditation. Realisation of the self or Union with the Eternal Spirit through shuhood, having passed away from selfhood (fana) to abide in God (baqa) is the ideal of the perfect man exemplified in the Holy Prophet (P.B.O.H.) and the Central lesson of the Quran. ".....God is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him; these are God's party: now surely the party of God are the successful ones."—58: 22. A great philosopher expresses this in a manner similar to the following:—just as the rivers flowing into the Ocean are lost into it losing their names and forms, so man emancipated from names and forms is lost in God. Here it must be understood, that this explanation is not materially bound. This ecstatic state knows no law and therefore, such a blessed soul is beyond infidelity and religion.

It is the philosopher that understands philosophy of religions. Take the Quran, The Bible or the Vedas, or any authority that you take for your guidance. Make a careful study of it. You are convinced of the fact that even educated people, not to speak of the average man, do not appear to understand anything more than what the words literally mean.

There are varied systems of philosophy but they have one nucleus.

The average man believes:
"Rains which fall from the skies all over,

All flow into the sea
Prayers which man offers to Gods
Of diverse names,
All reach the God of All."

Knowledge and philosophy are inseparable like "Jins and her Swans." They march down the ages ever becoming wider and wider perhaps to infinity.

This is the text of a lecture delivered by one of the members of the Movement at its monthly meeting.

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Musings of a Pensioner- XXVIII

(Continued from page 1)

"O you who believe! do not devour usury, doubling and redoubling, and be careful of your duty to Allah that you may be successful" (3: 129)."

Verse 274 of this chapter immediately preceding the above is as follows:—

274. "Those who (in charity) spend of their goods By night and by day, In secret and in public, Have their reward With their Lord: On them shall be no fear, Nor shall they grieve.

Mr. Yusuf Ali's note 324 is as follows:—

"Usury is condemned and prohibited in the strongest possible terms. There can be no question about the prohibition. When we come to the definition of Usury there is room for difference of opinion. Hadhrat Umar, according to Ibn Kathir, felt some difficulty in the matter, as the Apostle left this world before the details of the question were settled. This was one of the three questions on which he wished he had had more light from the Apostle, the other two being Khilafat and Kalalat (see iv, 12.n.518). Our Ulama, ancient and modern, have worked out a great body of literature on Usury, based mainly on economic conditions as they existed at the rise of Islam. I agree with them on the main principles, but respectfully differ from them on the definition of Usury. As this subject is highly controversial, I shall discuss it, not in this Commentary but on a suitable occasion elsewhere. The definition I would accept would be: undue profit made, not in the way of legitimate trade, out of loans of gold and silver, and necessary articles of food, such as wheat, barley, dates, and salt (according to the list mentioned by the Holy Apostle himself). My definition would include profiteering of all kinds, but exclude credit, the creature of modern banking and finance."

As Mr. Yusuf Ali's promised thesis has not so far appeared, there will be no harm done if an attempt is made to grope our way through this important question of economics, in Islamic law.

The contrast is always between charity—which is extolled—on the one hand and usury which is condemned on the other.

How very true the description of the usurer, even in our own times, given in verse 275, is!—Yusuf Ali translates that verse as follows:—

275. "Those who devour usury Will not stand except as stands one whom The Evil One by his touch Hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury." But God hath permitted trade And forbidden usury."

How many Shylocks, and Fagins flourish in modern times in all civilized cities?

Is it not a strange prediction in the Quran of the effect of usurious transactions on the usurer who thereby becomes literally a waster, a blood-sucker, a parasite and a vampire?

The mere prohibition of God has this effect for all eternity on those who violate His commands.

The prohibition is addressed to living human beings and not to corporations which have no bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned. The verses pointedly refer to the deterioration and degradation of character in the usurer, brought about by his greed for the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of the labour or property of others without any exertion on his part and without any risk of loss. To take the case of life insurance, all these elements do not appear to exist.

(To be continued.)

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