

"False Guide-Books in India"

The Present Truth – April 6, 1893

E. J. Waggoner

Satan has engaged many false guides and has caused many false guide-books to be written, which claim to show the way to heaven. You will need to be careful, for he has made his false guide-books and charts appear as much like the good ones as he can, so that people will not be apt to notice the difference until it is too late.

Thousands and thousands of the people of India have taken these false guide-books as their guides to heaven, and that is the reason we find them to-day in such a helpless, hopeless condition. They have been guided here and there through the broad and crooked by-paths of sin and death, but never once into the straight and narrow path of righteousness and life. We find them no nearer heaven to-day than they were before.

The guide-books used by millions of Hindus in India are called the Vedas. One is a sort of hymn-book, another a chant or tune book, one a prayer-book, and still another, partly verse and partly prose, tells them what to do under all sorts of circumstances. Then they have other books with long names, one telling specially the duties of the priests, another the duties of the hermits, etc.

As all of these guide-books are said to come from heaven, the Hindus follow them very closely. But you can see for yourself whether they are true guide-books to heaven, or false guide-books, whether they are leading the Hindus nearer to God, or farther away from God.

The hymns and prayers in these books are not as you would suppose, to be sung and prayed to the God who created heaven and earth and all things. But they are all to false gods who can neither hear nor help them. Many of them are to the god of rain, and the god of fire; others are to the storm gods, and many, many other gods. In one of the Vedas there are a hundred and fourteen hymns, all in one part, addressed to Soma, the juice of the "moon-plant"!

The Hindus are led not only to worship millions of false gods, but the Vedas say that it is only when people have been drinking a great deal of strong drink that they are able to worship properly. So at the feasts which they give to their gods their houses are filled with drunken men and women.

Their worship consists mostly in gifts of different animals. Thousands are sometimes killed in one day around one idol, until the blood runs in streams. They even offered human beings to their gods until the British Government would not allow them to do it any more. But they do not worship their gods because they love them, but because they are afraid of them. They are led to believe that they will cause some dreadful thing to come upon them unless they offer them plenty of blood. They live in fear and dread all the time.

Their religion also leads them to treat their widows with the greatest cruelty, and they even burned them alive until the Government stopped it. But we shall speak more of some of these things at another time.

Another large class of people in India are called Mohammedans because they are following a guide by the name of Mohammed. He told them that his guide-book, the Koran, was given him from heaven. They therefore follow it very strictly. They can plainly see that the Vedas are false gods, but they cannot so readily see that the Koran and Traditions of Mohammed are false, because they teach the true God and some other things that are taught by the true guide-book. Satan has tried to get them to appear as nearly like the good guide-book as he can, but by noticing them carefully we who have seen the true guide-book can see that the most important directions in the whole journey are left out. No wonder, then, that the poor people who follow them the most faithfully become disappointed and are often in utter despair, for they find neither God nor heaven.

We know that there is only one Way and one Door to God and heaven. But the Koran says to the poor Mohammedan, "There is no door there, there is no door there!" and leads them around by another way. So although some of them have spent their whole lives wandering around trying to find the door to happiness and God, they have never found it. If they do not learn of the true way soon, they will be led into the lake of fire instead of into heaven. That is where every one of Satan's false ways lead to. What a cunning old liar Satan is! He has caused this false guide-book to appear so nearly like the true that many millions of people have been deceived by it. And it is said to-day that more people follow the Koran than follow the true guide-book.

The Koran says, "There is no God but one, and Mohammed is His prophet," that God has no Son, and that Jesus was never crucified, but was just a prophet like other prophets. Mohammed is said to be a greater prophet than Jesus.

Mohammedans must pray five times a day, at sunrise, noon, afternoon, sunset, and late evening. But on Friday their prayers must be said in the mosque, that is, the prayers of the men; the women are never allowed to enter a mosque. When they pray they must always turn their faces toward Mecca, the place where Mohammed was born and where their sacred temple is. All their prayers are in Arabic, a language which very few of them can understand.

They therefore do not know what they are praying about! Do you think such prayers can do them much good? They must always wash before they pray, if not with water, then with clean sand. "Besides learning the words of their prayers, the children have to learn a great deal about how they are to stand when they pray, how to clasp their hands, and throw themselves down on the ground, and count beads, etc."

The Mohammedans are led to treat the women "even more cruelly than the Hindus, and keep the ladies more closely shut up." The Koran tells them to fight for their religion, and Mohammed taught that it was right to kill those who did not believe as they did. They may each have four wives, while Mohammed had fourteen or fifteen. The Koran also says that everybody should make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca.

One Mohammedan named Imaduddin learned the whole Koran and all the Mohammedan laws and traditions, so anxious was he to find God and happiness. But it did him no good. Then he became a fakir "living apart from men, talking but little, eating little, afflicting his body and keeping awake nights. He sat on the graves of holy men, said his five prayers every day, also a prayer in the night, in the very early morning, and at dawn, and was always repeating the

Mohammedan confession of faith. He often spent half the night in silence at a tomb," and finally he left the rest of the world and went into the lonely jungles. Step by step he traveled 2,588 miles "in search only of God." But the false guide-book was leading him in the wrong way and he could not find Him, and Mohammed had said that he must not look into the true guide-book. He washed in a stream, sat in a particular manner on one knee for twelve days, and repeated aloud a certain prayer thirty times every day. He ate nothing but unsalted barley bread made with his own hands, and fasted entirely during the day. He remained barefooted, and did not touch any man, nor—except at an appointed time—speak to anyone. During those twelve days he wrote the name of God upon paper 125,000 times, cut out each word separately with scissors, wrapped it in a little ball of flour and fed the fishes with it, in the way his books said. Half of the night he kept awake and in his thoughts wrote the name of God upon his heart. Poor man! he had gone everywhere the Mohammedan guide-books had told him to go, and had done everything that they had told him to do, and he was no nearer God or happiness than when he began, and was so ill and weak that he "could not hold himself up against the wind." But, thank God, he finally got hold of a true Guide-Book, and it was not long till he had found God. He is now full of peace and comfort and joy!

The Parsees, or fire-worshippers, follow a false guide-book called the Avesta. The Jains have false guide-books called Yogas and Puranas, the Sikhs follow the Granth, and other classes still other guide-books which we have not time even to mention.

No wonder that the people of India are not in the right way, and are in the "gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." It is because they are following false guides and false guide-books.

"The True Guide-Book and Guide"

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My DEAR YOUNG FRIEND, there is no need of your wandering round all your life, like the Hindu or Mohammedan, in a hopeless search for God and happiness. You may find Him now, and you may also find happiness such as this world cannot take away,—if you follow the Holy Bible, the true Guide-Book.

"How do you know it is the true Guide-Book?" you say.

I know it just the same way that you know when you have a good apple:—I have tasted and seen that it is good; I have tried it, and it is just what it professes to be; I have followed it, and it leads me just where it says it will; I have tried Jesus, the true Guide whom it recommends, and I find Him all that heart can wish; I find that He fully satisfies; I find that He knows every step of the way, has been over it before, and knows exactly how I feel and just what help I need. He is so gentle, so good, so loving, and so kind. He not only knows how to help me, but He has power to help me, for He made the heavens and earth out of nothing, and by His word stilled the stormy waters of Galilee, and He resisted Satan until he fled from Him.

I first tried to follow the Guide-Book without the Guide, but I found that that was impossible. Although it seemed to tell so plainly where to go and just what to do to find God and heaven, I found no power in myself to follow it, and no power in it to lead me. As long as I refused to follow its advice about the Guide, I found the Guide-Book of no help to me at all. But as soon as I acknowledged that I could not do it myself and accepted Jesus as my Guide, the Bible became like a lamp to my feet and a light to my path, because it is always light where Jesus is.

I just told Him that I was tired of sin and following Satan, and wanted Him to lead me. Then I studied the Guide-Book, and His life and power came into my heart with the words, until I was able to do what it said; and yet not I, but Jesus, my Guide, that lived in me. And I find that just as long as I carefully study my Guide-Book and allow Jesus to be my Guide, I do not lose my way, but each day brings me nearer and nearer to heaven.

Do you see why it is so necessary to come to Jesus? He Himself says that it is because He is the only Way and the only Door to God and heaven. So of course we cannot get there unless we come to Him any more than we could get into a room unless we went to the door. That is the reason the Mohammedan cannot find God. He is following a guide-book that does not tell him where the true Door is. You remember the Koran says that Jesus is only a man and was not crucified to open a way from us to His Father.

Although we have the true Guide-Book, it is just as necessary for us to go to the Door as it is for the children of India. When we have found the right Door then God can use us to show others the right way. But how can we show others what we do not know ourselves?

Your Bible is worth more to you than all the other books in the world, for it is the only true Guide-Book to righteousness, happiness, and heaven.

But remember that you can have a Bible on your table, another in your bookshelves, and still another in your pocket, and it never can lead you a step towards heaven until you love it, and study it, and do as it says. And you cannot do one thing that it says without Jesus the Captain, the powerful and loving Guide. He is no respecter of persons. He is just as willing to help you as He is to help me.