

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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.

NOTES.

Religious Freedom under Muslim Rule.

We read the following in *The Missionary Review of the World* :—

On October 10, 1922, a treaty was concluded between Great Britain and the king of Iraq (Mesopotamia). This is of considerable importance to those interested in Christian missions since in a definitely Mohammedan state, under British mandate, full religious freedom is guaranteed. Articles III and VIII of the treaty read in part as follows :

" His Majesty, the King of Iraq agrees to frame an organic law for presentation to the Constituent Assembly of Iraq. This organic law shall insure to all complete freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of worship subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals. It shall provide that no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Iraq on the ground of race, religion or language, and shall secure that

the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language, while conforming to such educational requirements of a general nature as the Government of Iraq may impose, shall not be denied or impaired.

" ARTICLE XII. No measure shall be taken in Iraq to obstruct or interfere with missionary enterprise or discriminate against any missionary on the ground of his religious belief or nationality, provided that such enterprise is not prejudicial to public order and good government."

Islam has always been a champion of a religious liberty, and the king of Iraq has only abided by the Quranic injunction: "There should be no compulsion in religion." If the Christians care to contrast this freedom of thought with that bigotedness of Christianity which resulted in the persecution and prosecution of people on religious grounds in ages past, they should make a homage to Islam and Muslims.

THE LIGHT.

DATED THE 16TH JUNE 1923.

What Islam has done.

(By PROF. T. L. VARSWANI)

I salute Mohamad as one of the world's mighty heroes. Mohamad has been a world-force, a mighty power, for the uplift of many peoples. Read the old records, and you will glimpse the grace and beauty of his life. A king and a spiritual leader, he yet mends his clothes, visits the sick, loves little children in the streets, lives on simple food—sometimes taking only dates and water—milks his cattle, accepts invitations of slaves, mixes with the people as their comrade. "I sit at meals as a servant," he says, "for I am really a servant." "Show us the way that is established—the way of those on whom is peace"—this his constant prayer. For the word Islam means peace. He hearkens to the call of the unseen: "O thou enwrapped in thy mantle! Arise and preach!" They persecute him; his very life is in danger; but he is loyal to the 'Call'; he moves about preaching the Way of Peace. Again and again, he has the

'fits'; the pressure of the Unseen is upon him; and his trembling lips utter the eloquent wisdom recorded in the Quran. Yet one European critic—Sprenger—speaks of Mohamad's 'fits' as 'epilepsy'! Carlyle has better understanding of Mohamad when he speaks of him as the type of the heroic Prophet. Mohamad was a hero and a prophet; and I have often meditated on the last words whispered by him before he passed away: "Lord I grant me pardon, and join me to the fellowship on high—yes, the Blessed Fellowship on high!" Who will not say that such a man was beautiful in life, beautiful in death?

And consider for a moment what the faith he preached has achieved. Islam has given the world a religion without priests; Islam abolished infanticide in Arabia; Islam enjoined on the faithful total abstinence from drink; Islam emphasised the great qualities of faith, courage, endurance and self-sacrifice; Islam introduced a vigorous puritanism into Asia and Europe, deprecating even dancing and card-playing. 'Whoso is a Muslim,' says the Quran, 'he seeketh after the right way.' Islam moved out with its great message of 'Allah the Rahman, the Merciful,' and became the torch-bearer of culture and civilisation in Africa, in China, in Central Asia, in Europe, in Persia, in India. The Chinese Muslims are still known to be stately, strong and brave. Of the achievements of Islam in the days of the Baghdad Khalifat every Muslim may well be proud; and every Sindh too;—for Sindhis had their share in the intellectual life of the Baghdad court. Of the achievements of Islam in Europe, less is known to the Muslims and Hindus in Sind; yet even a rapid sketch will show how much Islam did for Europe in the Middle Ages. Islam founded the great University of Cordova which attracted Christian scholars from different parts of Europe. One of these scholars became, in due course, the Pope of Rome.

At a time when Europe was in darkness, the Muslim scholars of Spain held high the torch of science and literature. They taught medicine and natural history, philosophy and fine arts.

Arabian scholars translated some of the Hindu books; and helped by these translations Hindu wisdom travelled to some of the seats of learning in Europe. In the days of the Muslim king of Spain, Al Hakeem, great irrigation systems were developed in Granada, Valencia and Aragon; the Muslims also built hospitals, and asylums for the poor in several cities in Spain. Many were the industries

developed under Islam. Shipbuilding, horticulture, candied fruits, glass, iron and copper utensils, brocade, tanyards, silver mines, cotton manufactures, woollen carpets, hand-woven woollen cloth, linen manufactures, and linen paper, mines of lapis-lazuli, silks and inlaid metal work are some of the industries of Muslim Spain mentioned by Arabic writers.

And it is no exaggeration to say that Islam has made several contributions to the thought and life of India. Islam has been one of the nationalising forces in India. Islam has enriched the art and architecture, the poetry and philosophy of India. The Taj is, perhaps the most imaginative architecture in the world. Islam carried in its heart a vision of manhood and democracy to which, however, the Muslims were not always loyal in India and other countries; but it must be remembered that the first blow at slavery was struck when Omar set all slaves at liberty after his conquest of Jerusalem. And the ideal of Akbar, the ideal of an Indian nation, a Great India, a Maha Bharata has not yet been assimilated by India's English rulers. The reform movements of the fifteenth and sixteenth century—the movements of Nanak, Kabir and Dadu—felt the influence of Islam; and Muslim saints like the Pir Tabriz of Multan and Lal Shabaz of Sewan have still a hold on Hindu hearts. Muslim poetry and literature, Muslim architecture and decorative painting made Spain famous at a time when Europe was submerged in barbarism. The Muslim Universities of Seville, Cordova and Barcelona taught sciences and philosophy in that free liberal spirit for lack of which the Christian Church burnt Bruno and persecuted Galileo; Muslim kings opened free libraries, established observatories and endowed laboratories for chemical experiments; Muslim fingers introduced a new note of chivalry and romance into the life and literature of Europe; and Muslim philosophers translated, interpreted and corrected the systems and speculations of Greek thinkers.

Two of these philosophers who greatly influenced European thought are known as Avicenna and Averroes. 'Avicenna' is a Latin corruption of Arabic Ibn Sina. This man showed the greatness of his soul when he renounced the honoured post of the Vazir in order to devote his time to philosophy; and his name is celebrated in several Turkish tales. He wrote on logic, on psychology, on physics and metaphysics and ethics. He speaks of three kinds of mind—vegetative, animal and human; his view of the

'vegetative mind' reminds one of modern studies in what Sir J. C. Bose has called the 'response of plants.' He speaks of 'active' and 'speculative' intelligence, reminding one of what, over eight centuries later, Kant called 'practical' and 'pure' reason. He speaks of 'three kinds of evil' and its 'accidental' place in the universe, reminding one of the *theodicy* of Leibnitz. Another Muslim philosopher who influenced the thought of the Middle Ages was Averroes—a corruption of the Arabic name Ibn Rushid. He speaks of the 'evolution' of matter in a way which reminds us of the idea developed in Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy; he speaks of a *soul* diffused in the heavens and the earth—an idea which reminds us of what to-day is called *panpsychism*; he interprets 'soul' in terms of 'energy'; he recognises the unity of philosophy and religion. His commentaries on Aristotle and Plato have been translated into some of the European languages, and at one time influenced Christian and Jewish thought and some of the non-Muslim centres of European culture.

The Sufi singers and thinkers of Islam have enriched poetry and the philosophy of religion. One of the world's greatest mystical thinkers was the Muslim Muhyi-ud-din-ibn-al-Arabi; and in the whole range of literature there are not many mystical books so profound, so suggestive as the four volumes of his *Futuh-at-Makkaya*. His teachings of the 'Single One, of Seven Realities, of the 'luminous darkness' that enshrouds the essence of God, of *surah* and *ruh* (form and spirit), of knowledge as a process of reminiscence of the correlation of the Creator and creature (*al-Haq* and *Khalq*), of the seven degrees of annihilation (*fana*), of man as a channel of God's self-realisation, of God as the Self of things—these and other teachings of the Muslim mystic have a profound value for modern student of religion. The Quran was given to a simple people, but has, in some of its texts, the seed of true mysticism. "Whosoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah." What wisdom in this one text of the Quran! And some of the great Muslim poets—our own Shah Latif included—sound, again and again, the purest notes of mysticism. 'Knowledge is nearer to silence than to speech.' 'I fancied that I loved him, but on consideration I saw that his Love preceded mine.' "Thou must daily die a thousand deaths and come to life again that thou mayest win the life immortal." "When thou givest to God thy nothingness, He gives to thee his All." "See in your own heart

the knowledge of the Prophet, without book, without tutor, without preceptor." 'The true mosque in a pure and holy heart is builded; there let all men worship God; for there He dwells, not in a mosque of stone.' 'He peeped through the window of my heart—He peeped and passed away' These are but a few passages taken from the songs and sayings of Muslim mystics.

Correspondence.

ID-UL-FITR IN BERLIN.

Dear Brother,

The Id-ul-Fitr, which means the festivity at the conclusion of the month of fasting, was celebrated in Berlin on the 17th of May. It was arranged that prayers should be offered in the Mosque at Wunsdorf, a village an hour and a half's run from Berlin, where the above mentioned mosque was erected by the German Government for the use of Muslim prisoners of war. It was rather a long journey made inconvenient by the early hour and by the train being packed to its utmost capacity. Every body felt an urgent need of a mosque at Berlin and Hafiz Shukri Effendi, Imam of the Muslims in Berlin, expressed his keen desire to have the mosque undertaken by me finished as quickly as possible.

As previously notified Muslims were to muster at Potsdamer Railway Station to take the train for Wunsdorf. Muslims residing all over the extensive town of Berlin had of course to take trains to the Potsdamer Station where the mighty conclave met to be watched by the wondering eyes of the Germans. No sooner did the train which was eagerly awaited arrive than it was closely packed, the number of those who availed themselves of standing space being three times that of those who were seated.

This conclave representing various Muslim countries was received at the Wunsdorf Mosque by the Muslims of Bukhara who were already there. The Bukhara Muslims presented the best spectacle. Each of them without exception was clad in his national costume, of which the flowing silk mantle of superb hues and the exquisite golden Kullab formed the most characteristic features. A fairly large number of young Bukharan students, mostly eleven years old in their elegant costumes, looked like Cherubim. We were equally interested in Afghan students. Out of fifty two, thirty two

are about only eleven or twelve years old in charge of Sayyid Mohammed Hashim and Dr. Iven who seemed to lavish their kindness and attention upon them. The reception was followed by the Id Service which was conducted by Hafiz Shukri Effendi. His sonorous and sweet recitation of the Holy Quran was most inspiring, but I must confess inability to have appreciated his rousing sermon, for it was in Turkish. At the conclusion of the service and the sermon we listened to a most spirited address by a clever Bukhara gentleman who commands respect for his ability and character.

It must be noted that the prayers were attended by Muslim ladies also. Most of them were Bukharan student girls.

The number of German Muslims in this country is limited. There are only seven Muslims in all, four of which have been long since Muslims. The remaining three own their Islam to the endeavours of the Khairi Brothers. One of these three Muslims is a gentleman and the other two are ladies. One of these ladies is the wife of Mr. Abdussattar Khairi and the other that of Mr. Hadayat Ahmad, an Indian gentleman. These two German Muslim ladies also attended prayers, and we were naturally much pleased to have them among us.

At the end of prayers, the entire gathering was entertained at a dinner by the Bukharan Muslims. The entertainment having concluded, we hurried to the train, which stood steaming in front of us at 2-17 to take us home to attend an afternoon party given by His Majesty the Amir of Afghanistan, arranged by His Excellency Sardar Ghulam Siddiq Khan. The entertainment was given in the very finest hotel in Berlin, befitting the dignity of an Afghan King. Everybody spoke highly of the arrangements and the delicacies provided, and most of all the people were struck with the charming personality of His Excellency Sardar Ghulam Siddiq Khan, who is a very highly cultured gentleman. It was very happy evening indeed!

This happy day was brought to a close at 7, when everybody made for home after having enjoyed the company of Islamic Brotherhood which is practical, real and universal. We bless the name of our Holy and most highly revered Prophet, and pray that Allah may ever keep his inspiring memory green, for he has given us such a unique institution

as the universal brotherhood of Islam.

Yours fraternally,

SADR-UD-DIN.

Berlin Charlottenburg, }
Giesebrechtstr 5, }
Dated, 18th May 1923. }

Questions and Answers.

Mr. Bashir Ahmad :—

Q. 1. What is the philosophy of fasting?

A. Firstly, we cannot realize the suffering of the poor who go without food, unless we ourselves go through this hardship; secondly, if we leave the use of certain lawful things under the divine command it is but natural that we will avoid the use of unlawful things.

Q. 2. Is it permissible to receive an interest on money deposited in Government saving banks?

A. Interest on money deposited in all sorts of banks should be spent on the propagation of Islam. It is prohibited for personal use.

Q. 3. Can you cite any ancient authority on the death of Jesus?

A. Yes, Imam Malik said that Jesus had died. Imam Bukhari also seems to be of the same opinion.

Q. 4. If the Promised Messiah was not to be identical with Jesus of Nazareth how is it that he is called Ibn-i-Maryam, son of Mary?

A. The expression ابن مريم is a part of his name; the Quran says :—

اسمہ المسيح ابن مريم

Please read my article in the Paigham-i-Sullh, Promised Messiah number.

Mr. Aziz Muhammad :—

Q. 1. How many Muslim missionaries are working abroad? I know only one Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

A. Yes, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din is assisted by Master Yaqub Khan, Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din and Maulvi Abdul Majid are working in Germany. Mian Ghulam Abbas and Daud Shah, have recently come back from England.

Q. 2. What Muslim periodicals can we get in India; and in which language?

A. There are many English periodicals e.g. The Islamic Review (monthly) The Light (fortnightly) The Muslim (monthly) The Muslim Outlook (daily). All of them are published from Lahore, with the single exception of the Muslim, which is published from Singapore.

Q. 3. In which part of India Muslim Missionaries are at work?

A. In the districts of Agra and Gurgaon.

Q. 4. (a) Is it necessary to say prayers in Arabic? (b) How do the English converts say their prayers?

A. (a) As a general rule prayers should be said in Arabic, but in unavoidable circumstances one can say prayers in one's mother language. (b) We have a prayer book in English and Arabic with transliteration and translation. Most of the English converts have learnt the prayer in Arabic.

Q. 5. Is there any translation of the sayings of the Prophet?

A. Yes, only a small booklet.