

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE LIGHT.

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The object of The Light is to disseminate Islamic doctrines and to repudiate charges against Islam but the expenses incurred in getting out the paper being very heavy and the subscription being only a nominal one, we respectfully appeal to our Muslim brethren to send donations to help the Anjuman in making a free wide circulation.

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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.

Islam in Java.

It is admitted that Java is a great field for the Islamic propaganda. There is every possibility of success if the work is carried on vigorously. Just to give an idea about the situation of Islam in the Island we give below an extract from an article of *the Moslem World*:—

From the religious point of view, central Java displays a very tenacious memory of the old Hindu and Buddhist influences, especially in the higher circles. This part may certainly count as the less Moslemized part of Java. Many of the Javanese of higher standing show an open or secret hostility to orthodox Islam,

and have a semiphilosophical inclination towards religious toleration. They belong by nature to the spiritual family of Nathan der Weise. However, it would be a mistake not to consider them as Moslems. As soon as you call them non-Moslems, they protest and proclaim their name. It is true, there are some exceptions to the rule. Notwithstanding this situation Jogjakarta and Surakarta (Solo) are centres of Moslem activity. In Solo two papers are published, which aim exclusively at Moslem propaganda and combating Christian propaganda; their names are: Medan Muslimin and Islam Bergerak, i.e., Progressive Islam. In Jogjakarta there originated and is thriving now a Moslem reform movement, inspired by the example and principles of Sheikh Mohammed Abdu of Cairo. In spite of a searching and calumnious criticism from nearly all quarters of the modern native movement, it abstains from politics, and devotes itself exclusively to raising the standard of Moslem education and instruction. Its influence is spreading continuously; not only in Java, however as two years ago, they declared their field of labor the whole of the Archipelago.

The Circulation of the Bible.

The *Missionary Review of the World* states:—

"The Bible is still the world's "best seller," the demand last year being so great that about 30,000,000 volumes were printed and distributed by all agencies in various parts of the world. One of the outstanding achievements of the Christian missionary programmes is the extent to which Bible translation has been advanced. The British and Foreign Bible Society has compiled a list of 770 languages and dialects into which some part of the Word of God has been translated. This represents the work of the various Bible Societies and other missionary organizations."

The Muslims should just ponder over these statistics and say what they have done and achieved towards the publication of the Holy Quran, which is the last Divine Code for mankind. The translation of the Holy Quran in various languages of the world is the crying need of the day.

THE LIGHT.

DATED THE 16TH NOVEMBER 1923

Some Difficulties of Propaganda.

II

(COMMUNICATED).

To come to the general masses, those who do not trouble about religion, we should sub-divide them into two classes again. (1) Those who were religious but have left the churches or sects. (2) Those who do not trouble themselves. Recently I had a visit from a gentleman, a talented writer, who wished to make declaration of faith. He told me that although he knew nothing of any Muslim movement here as far as literature or lectures went he yet studied the English translations of the Holy Quran and became convinced by these. He is a rationalist and no amount of argument from a spiritual basis would have had any effect yet the Holy Quran itself so impressed him that he realised the truth of Islam. He had been a Christian but had left the church. Here we have to face a problem, just how much do these people who have, as they think, finished with religion, desire to know about Islam? Severally speaking they have an open mind and will discuss point after point, but the one attitude which must be avoided is for the Muslim to pose as a teacher trying to instruct a pupil. This will work great harm and possibly leave the enquirer with the impression that Islam is a difficult faith only to be acquired by much patient study which he will decide would take up too much time in his busy life. May I, whilst on this point, deal a little with the question of Arabic. The average man in the West fully grasps the reason why we say prayers in Arabic and approves, but he does not so readily appreciate the fact that the Holy Quran is always recited in Arabic at meetings, lectures, etc. Invariably in the West the average man speaks only his own language, and looks upon all others as "foreign." When he reads the Holy Quran in French, German or English he understands it perfectly, but when a very zealous person tells him that he must learn to read it in Arabic,

he wonders why, and again the impression is conveyed that one cannot understand Islam without knowing Arabic first. This is a great stumbling block to many. We have amongst us here many intelligent men who would, no doubt, be of great value to carry on the work for Islam and two of these confessed to me that they feared to do anything because they had no time to learn Arabic. To come again to these people who have left orthodoxy behind and remain without a creed. First of all we must appreciate why they have left religion. They no longer believe in the Trinity, the Bible, and the impossible dogmas of the church. They feel on leaving the church as a man taking a breath of fresh air after leaving somewhere dark and dismal; they rejoice in a new-found freedom, but still in their hearts believe in the Creator. It is to them that we must appeal with simplicity of doctrine and with rational arguments, point out how far in their mental emancipation they have advanced towards the real truth and offer them Islam as the latest and complete code of life. It is from the ranks of this class that we can recruit so many to Islam and our efforts must be centred upon making them realise the great truths we offer and the grand universal brotherhood to which we invite them. As for those who do not trouble. There is always some reason for this. It is said sometimes that the average man enters a church but three times in his life—when he is christened, when married and lastly for his funeral service. Take this type. One man fears to go to church because he feels it is "something out of his line;" he lives a decent life, is happily married and works hard. Church calls for the giving up of his one free day—Sunday. He feels that there is so much to do at home, then there must be walks and some little pleasures for his family, to which the outlook of going to church is forbidding. This man can, and will appreciate Islam and its outlook on life, and can be reached by literature alone, as he does not attend lectures. Another man is occupied in duties which compel him to go to work at varying times, sometimes early morning, at others mid-day until late at night. If early in the morning he will not attend a meeting; nor at night, as he needs to go to rest early to prepare for the morning, if late, then he cannot attend a gathering even if he wished. Here again it is literature that must be the agent to set Islam before him. Then again there is the man who never talks about religion because "it is something beyond me" as he expresses it. He has never troubled to study Christianity

and so will not willingly read or hear anything Islamic. He is a difficult problem, but can be dealt with by social contact. He will attend an "at Home" provided he is not bored by too long a discourse. It is thus that we can meet him. The last type is the man who quite frankly says "Don't talk religion or you and I will part company." He feels a dislike of any interruption by religion of any other subject or occupation and is usually guided in all matters by his daily paper. There is one way to get at him and that is by joining with him in football, tennis or other games, by discussing current topics with him and most carefully instilling in his mind the desire to know something of your ideas on social subjects where it is easy to give him Islamic conceptions without appearing too anxious for him to study religion itself.

I hope that my readers will understand that here in the West anything which seems strange or non-European is usually avoided by the people generally, and so our task is by no means an easy one. Years of misrepresentation and ignorance have left impressions which are not readily removed. This work for Islam must be a long task, full of patience; and we find that brotherhood in the West is gradually growing. We are pioneers, and it is to the future that we look with every confidence if every Muslim takes his share of the labour.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Islam, the Religion of Tolerance.

It was a fashion sometime ago to paint in dark colour the work and ideals of Islam. Christian Missionaries preached in the West that Islam has been only destructive. We often come across with such objections in Christian magazines and newspapers that Islam made no contribution to the life of India, and it has been preached at the point of sword.

Yet a careful study of history shows that Islam is nothing but a religion of peace and it played no small part in the shaping of civilization. The Western scholars of unbiased mind appreciate the contributions of Islam to European life of Spanish Muslims in the days when Europe was plunged in darkness. In order to strengthen the statement that Islam is a religion of tolerance, I should like to quote a passage from the writings

of a non-Muslim philosopher, Mr. Vaswani of Sindh. In one of his essays entitled 'The Genius of Islam' the writer says:—"The notion that Islam is intolerant has grown partly out of interested motives, and partly out of ignorance. The very word Islam means 'peace,' and the Quran abounds with passages breathing a beautiful spirit of peace, good-will and love. Every *Surah* of the Quran begins with the significant words: 'In the name of God, Compassionate, Merciful.' In the beautiful passage in the Muslim scriptures we read: 'The people of the Books such as Christians, Jews, Muslims and those who believe in the unity and singleness of God, and the immortality of the soul, and practice charity and are benevolent and kind to the poor and take care of the orphans—they are the People of Salvation.' And in another passage we have the following remarkable injunction: 'Let there be no compulsion in religion.' The Prophet had a catholic vision; Abraham, he said was a Muslim; and one of the sayings attributed to him indicates his view of a true believer in Islam. 'A perfect Muslim' he said, 'is he from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe.' One day a bier of a Jew passed by the Prophet; being told it was the bier of a Jew, he said, 'was it not the holder of a soul from which we should take example and fear?' Yes, the Jew had a soul as much as any other child of God; how often has not Christian Europe forgotten this? Islam was tolerant not simply to the Jews but also to the Christians."

I have quoted such a long passage in order to eradicate the wrong impression from the minds of our non-Muslim friends that Islam is an intolerant religion as has often been misunderstood by the Christian missionaries.

Your brother in faith,
ABDUL HAI ABBASI,
of Allahabad, U. P.

Questions and Answers.

Mr. Salim-ul-Mukhtar:—

Q. 1 (a). What is the difference between retributive and vindictive justice? (b) Is it fair that an innocent child should suffer for the wicked deeds committed by his parents.

A. (a). Retribution means "repayment," i.e., paying back of an evil in a proportionate measure

without exceeding the limits; e.g., the Holy Quran says جزاء سيئة مسلمة مثله. The reward of an evil is evil like unto it. Vindictiveness, on other hand implies the wreaking of vengeance; the former is meant for reformation, the latter for satisfying the impulse of anger.

(b). It is not fair on the part of a human being; but it should be noted that one cannot claim justice from God, as relation of God to man is that of a master to a servant.

Q. 2. Is the recitation of the Quran necessary for intercession of the dead?

A. Yes, prayers are accepted for the dead, and we should pray for our dear ones who have gone to the next world?

Q. 3. Does the charity given for the dead benefit them in the next world.

A. Yes.

Q. 4. Do you believe in the story that the Holy Prophet travelled and reached North West of Africa?

A. No; there is no such event in his life. He of course travelled to *Sham* twice in his life.

Q. 5. Is it required of a husband to exercise equity in love as well in the case of polygamy?

A. No; because the Quran says

لا يكلف الله نفساً الا وسعها

Allah does not trouble any one beyond his power.

Q. 6. Was Joseph the father of Jesus?

A. There are two schools of thought on this point. Some say that Jesus was born without father; while others say that Joseph was his father.

Q. 7. Whom do you follow of the four Imams?

A. We follow the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian; but generally speaking we belong to the Hanfi school of thought.

Q. 8. Who was Ghazali?

A. Imam Ghazali has been a great philosopher of Islam, and has done great service to our religion.

Q. 9. Is it lawful for a Muslim to indulge in *Sihir*?

A. The popular idea about *Sihir* is that it is a formula the recitation of which works wonders. But it is wrong; and Muslims are not expected to believe or indulge in such things. In reality *Sihir* means anything which is charming or fascinating such as beauty, eloquence, scenery, etc.

Q. 8. Is it predicted that a disastrous plague is about to overtake any community?

A. Perhaps you are thinking of the prophecy of the late Hazrat Mirza Sahib about the out-

break of plague in the Punjab, which, of course has already been fulfilled.

Syed Ghias-ud-Din :—

Q. 1. How is it that the innocent suffer and the wicked prosper?

A. I am afraid your generalization is rather defective. As a matter of fact, we can hardly realize the inner nature of individuals. God is the best knower.

Q. 2. Can not a man attain salvation by obeying the dictates of his conscience without following prophets?

A. I am afraid one cannot; because conscience is governed to a great extent by environments. Further, you cannot have a firm faith without prophets.

Q. 3. Can the various sects of Islam be united for the propagation of Islam?

A. Yes, if they realise the importance of the work as compared to their sectarian views which of course may be retained. The Muslims should learn toleration.

S. A. Muhyi :—

Q. 1. Is it true that Kh. Kamal-ud-Din, and other *Ahmadis* do not mention the name of

Khalifatul-Muslin'in in the Sermon (خطبة)?

A. Yes, it is not essential to mention the name of Khalifa in the Sermon. This question has been fully answered in our last issue as well.

An Appeal.

In view of a keen desire from our readers to see more reading matter in "Light," our Society in considering the question of increasing number of the pages of the paper from January next. This proposal will necessitate a simultaneous increase in the subscription which most probably will be Rs. 2 and Re. 1 from Students. We are running the paper at a considerable loss as our sole object is to enlighten the educated community of Muslims on matters religious and to repudiate false charges against Islam. Our well-to-do brethren are, therefore, requested to help us with liberal donations in this sacred task.

MANAGER.