

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.

Islam in Borneo.

We read the following in "*the Moslem World*":—

"The total population of West Borneo is more than 320,000 inlanders and 12,000 foreigners (Europeans, Chinese, Arabs, etc.). Of the total inlanders about one-third are Mohammedans and the others heathens. The Dyaks are the original inhabitants of Borneo, and have been driven back to the mountains and inland sections of the island by the Malays, Arabs and Chinese. On the west coast there are two Malay Sultans with the princes and chiefs. In early days the Chinese gold miners were divided into two or more *kongsis* or companies, who strove to control the coast, and refused to obey the Malay Sultans, who asked the help of the Netherlands Indies Government from Java. As the result of subduing the Chinese, several trading posts were granted to the Netherlands Indies Government, who slowly introduced reforms and new laws, until now the Sultans have little power, and the Chinese have turned to rice, cocoanut and pepper planting, and the old secret societies have almost disappeared.

"The Malays are an easy-going people, satisfied to have enough for the day or hour, leaving most of the trade to the Chinese and living in contentment under the rule of the Holland Government. The Mohammedans are not fanatics, being willing to discuss questions of religion, and allowing their children to attend the Government schools and the private or mission schools. Many Malays go to Mecca, and return as *hajis* some of whom conduct prayers at the mosques, although there are a number of Arabs who serve as priests. The mosques are small, wooden buildings, often in disrepair.

"At present there are two religious societies at work among the Chinese and Dyaks, the Capuchin priests and nuns, and the Methodist Mission. Little or no work is done among the Malays or Mohammedans, though the friendship of these people is cultivated. Most of the religious work is done among the Chinese, as so many Christians come from China or Singapore, and from a nucleus for new work. A number of schools for the Dyak children have been opened by the missions, while the Government turns its attention to the Malays, thus avoiding any religious friction. A few of the Mohammedans from British India or Malay Peninsula could be reached through English schools, but this is not favoured by the Government or the missions, as the school work in Malay and Chinese will reach the greater number.

"The Dyaks have not become Mohammedans in any large numbers, at least along the coast, though some of the up-river Dyaks are said to be Mohammedans. The coast Dyaks have been so cheated and driven back by the Chinese and Malays that they have no liking for any religion presented by these folks. Wherever the Protestant and Catholic missionaries open schools for the Dyak children in the Malay or official language, the children are eager to learn a little, but have no idea of higher education, as the Government aims only at four or five years study for the native children, though there are higher schools for the brighter boys and girls."

This is enough to give an inkling of the activities of the Christian missionaries. The question is how should we the Muslims combat this vast propaganda, and where are funds and men?

Railways in Afghanistan.

It would appear that the notion of establishing a railway system in Afghanistan is being received with favour by the press in that country, and therefore it may be assumed, says *The Pioneer Mail*, that the Amir himself has given it his support. The indications are that the first railway which will be opened will

run between Kabul and Dar-ul-Aman six miles away. Engines and rolling stock have been collected at Kabul for the project under the directions of Italian engineers, and it is believed that these engineers will shortly begin the work of constructing the line. The suggestion is mooted by one paper that it would be better to make the line a kind of electric tramway and that Kabul might, by such a means of communication, be linked up with other suburbs in due course.

THE LIGHT.

DATED THE 16TH MAY 1923.

Apostasy ! and how to combat it ?

(Communicated)

(This article was originally written in Urdu by Maulvi Muhammed Ali M. A. President Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam Lahore. We have rendered it into English for the readers of the Light. Ed. L.)

It is said that about 275 missionaries are working at present in the affected area. If these men work unitedly and with a common object in view, the results are expected to be splendid. Not only the Muslims can be saved from the attacks of the idolators but a large number of Hindus too can be attracted towards Islam through the spread of true Islamic teachings in that territory. If one missionary works, say in two thousand, even then the present number of workers is enough to manage 500,000 people. But the whole thing depends upon the right way of working and a strong organization.

I deem it advisable to state here for the information of my Muslim brethren the method of work which the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam Lahore has adopted after full consultation and experience.

Firstly:—We have to define and determine our object. Any one who has thought over the subject for a while must have seen that our country-men have turned to Malkanas and Gujars for winning them over from Islam simply because they found them ignorant of the religion. Our country-men together with the whole world are conscious of the fact that the principles of Islam have got such a wonderful attraction, that no one who has once fully grasped them will ever think of going back to disbelief. As a matter of fact these people are told "you are in reality Hindus; and therefore you should come back to your own caste"

In these circumstances the workers there must have only one object *viz*, to

preach only the fundamental principles of Islam. I understand that the majority of Muslims concur on the point that all sects in Islam are one on principles and the differences are only minor. Thus, those who are ignorant of the very principles of Islam, should be first of all taught only the broad principles of the religion. There is no occasion for the preaching of minor differences in that part of the country and nor are the people educated enough to realize them. One who goes to the affected area, presents the so called 73 sects of Islam and claims salvation only for his own, is in reality doing a great harm to the cause of Islam; though, by mistake he may think that he is doing a service. There are so many millions of other Muslims to take part in the sectarian controversy as to which sect will go to Heaven and which to Hell. If we want to take the advantage of the ignorance of these people who in the opinion of our enemies are at the gate way of the apostasy we should naturally adopt the same methods as are resorted to by the Arya Samajists or their co-workers to attain their political aspirations. It was for this reason that we instructed our missionaries on the very first day we deputed them to enlighten the people only on the basic principles of Islam.

Secondly:—It should be borne in mind that a temporary work for a short time will be of little use. No doubt we want some work for a short time as well, but that is for defence only. Our real object, however, must be to make these people such staunch Muslims that Hindus should never again think of winning them over from Islam. Nay rather, they should begin to absorb in themselves those of their tribes who have not yet embraced Islam. Therefore, I think we should work in them at least for ten years; and even after that period they should not be left entirely to themselves.

The method of work which we have chalked out for our missionaries is this:—Every missionary has got a circle of 6 or 7 villages, with a head quarter where we have opened a school. Thus he is in position not to reform only the present generation but also the future generation, which will be brought up in the Islamic atmosphere. At present our Society is spending about 300 rupees on the salaries of the teachers of such schools and the scope of work will be extended in future according to the funds which the Society may get for this purpose. Besides the salaries of the teachers we have to pay for

books and the miscellaneous expenses as well.

Thirdly :—These schools will be ordinarily up to the 5th primary and their only advantage is that the future generation will be imbued with the pure Islamic spirit. But a nation cannot live unless it has got a class of Ulema, theologians, who should make progress in religious research, especially in the present time when we have to preach Islam on the lines of comparative study of religion. To achieve this end, we impart religious education to the promising and intelligent students from the affected area; so that after receiving education they may be able not only to defend Islam against its hostile critics but should also do the propaganda work. At present we have got three students and as the funds increase we have to extend this work as well. The Holy Quran also lays down that every tribe of Muslims should have some people who may acquire religious education in order to guide other Muslims. It says :—And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth altogether, why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religions and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious.

Fourthly :—In the present circumstances it is essential that some missionaries may be reserved for combating the activities of the Smajic propagandist. We have therefore reserved for the work, two of our best men, who have successfully carried on the propaganda against Arya Smaj: one is posted in the territory of Gujars, while the other in that of Malkanas.

Fifthly :—It is also incumbent to meet the present situation to produce religious literature in Hindi to be disseminated in this territory for the propagation of Islam. The Society therefore has undertaken the issuing and free distribution of small tracts on various doctrines.

The representatives of other societies are requested to intimate to us the number of the tracts they require for distribution so that the same may be printed according to requirements.

Sixthly :—The Society has also opened a dispensary which is of course for the benefit of the public.

Correspondence.

DEAR EDITOR SAHIB,

The question of transmigration was discussed in your issue of the 16th January but in my humble opinion the argument was advanced on a wrong basis, so I take the liberty of requesting you to publish the following few lines.

The principle referred to in your reply does not apply to the doctrine of transmigration in as much as no judge has any hand in that question. The soul itself finds out a cell meet for its position, which is congenial and convenient to it. Just as a drunkard resorts to and finds himself at his best in the winecellar and a devotee in the mosque, similarly the soul of a warrior prefers the body of an eagle and that of a meek person the body of a dove, while the soul of a person who is voracious and dirty does not find itself out of elements in the body of a donkey or a pig. The soul continues to migrate from one body to another till it is so elevated as it does not find any place suitable for it in this world. How do the disseminators of true knowledge regard this explanation in their own way?

(We must admire your ingenuity. But the point still remains there. Why does not the soul know the consequences of its actions? There can be no hope of reformation unless it knows them. Suppose the soul of a man goes to the body of a donkey for its previous actions, do you hope that the donkey will improve and its soul will be ever so "elevated as to find any place suitable in the world"? Ed. L.)

Questions and Answers.

Mr. S. M. Abdul Hamid :—

Q. 1. Does Islam allow Parda system? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

A. The Islamic Parda is described in the Quran thus :—Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts that is purer for them, surely Allah is aware of what they do.

And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not display their ornaments except what appears thereof and let them wear their head coverings over their bosoms.

Purity of character is the great advantage of Parda.

Q. 2. Is it lawful to marry a woman who has got illicit pregnancy?

A. No.

Q. 3. Has God predetermined a certain man to be married with a certain woman, or we make our own choice?

A. No; we make our own choice, of course it does not preclude the Divine knowledge.

Q. 3. Is prayer permissible with silk clothes?

A. No; men are not expected to wear silk clothes.

Q. 4. Is it lawful to take financial help from Hindus or other non-Muslims for religious purposes.

A. Yes; there is no harm in it. But the question is "Will the Hindus choose to do so"

Mr. S. M. Saheed :—

Q. 1. What is the difference between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis?

A. Ahmadis are those who believe that the prophecy with regard to the second advent of Jesus Christ is fulfilled in the person of the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian; and that Jesus, son of Mary, died a natural death. Non-Ahmadis do not believe in it.

Q. 2. Why should one be an Ahmadi?

A. Because the Quran and the Holy Prophet expect us to follow the religious reformers, **Mujaddids**.

Q. 3. Is there any merit in reciting the Quran without knowing the meaning of it?

A. Yes; you cannot know the meaning until you recite it.

Q. 4. (a) Can the dead saints help the living men? (b) Is there any use in visiting graves and keeping relics of saints?

A. (a) No; (b) Graves are visited to pray for the dead; and for nothing else. We cannot get any thing from the dead.

Q. 5. Is there any use in giving feasts in the names of saints or Prophets.

A. No; we should give charity in the name of Allah only.

Q. 6. Please explain Parda.

A. Please see answer to question 1 from Mr. Abdul Hamid.

Q. 7. Is marriage obligatory for one who is in poor circumstances.

A. Marriage is obligatory but one can wait till things turn out for better.

Mr. Abdul Majid :—

Q. 1. Will you please mention the prophecies which were fulfilled by the advent of the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian?

A. I am afraid the answer to this question is too long for these columns. I should like to recommend the perusal of **Masih-i-Maud** and **Asl-i-Musaffa** which can be had from the Book department of our Society.

Q. 2. Was Jesus Christ born without the male agency?

A. There are two schools of thought on this question: one says Jesus had a father while the other holds that he was born without a father. Such things should not be given importance.

Mr. Ibrahim :—

Q. 1. Is it permissible to attend dramatic performances?

A. Yes, if one intends to learn some moral lessons from them; much depends upon motives.

Mr. T. M. Muni Sawami :—

Q. 1. Is music prohibited by Islam? If so why?

A. Music with musical organs is prohibited because it leads to indolence and love of pleasure.

Q. 2. Is the parda system beneficial for women?

A. Please see above where I have touched on the Islamic Parda. The Parda in vogue in India is both beneficial and harmful. The difficulty is that our society is not ripe for any change in it.

Q. 3. When soul leaves body; where does it go and settle?

A. It does not require any space.

Q. 4. May we use intoxicants as medicine.

A. Yes.

Q. 5. May we read novels or love-stories?

A. Yes, if you want to gain something from their perusal.

Q. 6. What is the simplest method by which a student can learn how to speak English?

A. He should move in English-speaking society.

Acknowledged with thanks.

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