

Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

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THE CALL OF THE HOUR

Under the above caption our friend and fellow-member, Mr. F. H. Rhodes, writes an appeal to a special issue of *The Chinese Recorder*. The whole magazine deals with the new and keener interest aroused in the problem of winning the ten million Chinese Muslim men, women and children to Christ. He points out that the need in China is for specialised effort in the preparation of workers and literature. He advocates a method that might be workable in other places than China: it is that bookrooms and guest halls be set apart for Muslims. "For those who think of opening up such premises, Arabic texts in bold type are now to be had in Cairo. The following texts have been already prepared—Matt. xi: 28; Rom. viii: 1; 1 Tim. ii: 5; Heb. ix: 12 and Heb. ix: 28. These, with the Chinese version given below, would attract attention, bring in visitors, and suggest most helpful conversations."

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He has an idea, too, in regard to the mullahs and maulvies, which we gladly pass on because of its suggestiveness for new work in the new year. He says—

"We wish to put in a plea for the Chinese mullahs. These men, like all religious leaders, are hard to reach, but God can work the seemingly impossible. Invulnerable they may be where mere argument is concerned, they may be reached by prayerful, tactful, sympathetic approach. In the past these men have been too much neglected: we have seen the "lion in the way," and lost sight of the Lord Almighty. Behind those high mosque walls, inside those often barred gates, there are mullahs whose hearts are unsatisfied, perplexed with the world-outlook, and it may be waiting for the message that you should bring. We plead for patience and consideration in dealing with these men. How many have made any provision for mullahs to meet them in a quiet room? Some workers have made such an arrangement and the response has been very encouraging. We should seek to understand the mullah's position, and like our Divine Master commend what we can commend in his belief. Then in the true spirit of humility, as one who has himself "obtained mercy," we should seek to lead the man to the only One who can satisfy the heart. It is not often possible to have a plain talk with such men in their mosques: there are too many eyes and ears for unrestrained speech. But away from their ordinary surroundings, in the quiet of the room provided, you may find a lonely soul for whom the Master has a special message."

IN AN INDIAN BEGUM'S STATE

WORK IN BHOPAL CITY

BY MISS A. P. FOWLER

Work first opened in Bhopal State in 1891, when two of the Friends Mission were invited by the then Political Agent to settle in Sehore Cantonment, 24 miles from the city of Bhopal, with the special object of visiting the new Leper Asylum there. As long as the late Begum lived, Christian work was not sanctioned outside the English Cantonment, and Bhopal City, with about 66,000 inhabitants, was completely closed to us until her death in 1901. About that time a Muslim enquirer from Sohagpur, who had become headmaster of the Sehore Mission school, asked Miss Nainby to visit several families of his relatives in Bhopal; this she did, and as they wanted the visits to continue, and others also called her, a native house was hired, and given rent free to his brother-in-law, on condition that one room should be kept as a kind of dak bungalow, for our use, when making regular visits to the city. In 1904 I was forced to settle there; a good Hindustani house was found on the outskirts, and regular zenana visiting was begun. From 12 or 13 houses open to us at first, the number has so increased that now we do not know how to take up all we are called to; amongst our pupils are many of good social position.

During the first few years our visits to the Begum were always interesting; it was noticeable that she always led the conversation towards religious topics; she constantly asked us to pray for her, and we know she read the Bible which our mission had presented to her on her accession. But lately, especially since her visit to England, there has been a difference, though we are still received when we call. As an educational factor for women she welcomes us, but as Christian teachers she is afraid of our influence. When we approached her for land for a bungalow, she refused, though she said she would give us everything if "only you will not teach about Jesus Christ."

We sometimes think that she has learnt enough of Christ's teaching to understand that if she went on further she would have to make a momentous choice. Enlightened as she is in many ways, she is steeped in Muhammadan superstitions and practices, and of late has begun lecturing on the duties of their faith at her Ladies' Club. Although openly advocating women and girls' education, it is noticeable that there are no girls' schools outside of Bhopal City, where they are conspicuous, except in old Sehore, and this was only opened after the mission school had begun to be rather successful in attracting Muhammadan girls.

Soon after our entrance, a mission worker from Sehore used to spend a few days each month in Bhopal to reach the men, and eventually a Reading Room was opened under a convert from Muhammadanism from a distance, but after two years' difficulties with him we

were obliged to close it. We had no opportunity until last year of re-commencing work amongst men, beyond the talks we had with our pupils' husbands and fathers, and the Testaments and Gospels sold in the zenanas, which we know they often read. But in the autumn of 1915 the number of Indian Christians employed by the Begum increased rapidly, and this gave us a natural excuse for the introduction of an Indian evangelist and pastor, which she could not forbid. A part of his salary is provided by the Christian community. As we have no proper building the Sunday services are always held in our verandah, where principals and teachers of the girls' schools, and others in the medical service, weavers in the Government *Kar-Khāna*, clerks in public offices, etc., coming from various churches, unite with us in worship, "All one in Christ Jesus."

Mr. Datt, the evangelist, is kept very busy in personal work amongst Muhammadans, visiting them in their homes, as well as receiving them in the re-opened Reading Room. This spring we had the test of the first open conversions of two Muhammadans, carpenters, and though antagonism and anger was shown by maulvies and individuals, it has not stopped the work and no notice has been officially taken. Up to October these two pressed on through difficulties, then they suddenly disappeared. The Saturday before Mr. Datt had visited them, on Sunday they were not, as usual, at the service to which they said they were coming, and all the information he could get from the neighbours near their empty house was, that one had died of plague, which was bad in the city, and the other had left. We have no traces of them yet. I would ask prayer for them, as I doubt the death by plague, and before leaving the other would have surely communicated with Mr. Datt.

I have been glad of this opportunity of letting fellow workers among Muhammadans know of the small beginnings in this Native State, as we have to be very careful in anything we print about it, and so we cannot get all the help we might from the prayers of others.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After reading the above it was interesting to read in the *Statesman*, how at the Delhi State Banquet, "Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal was perhaps the most marked of all the chiefs. She was dressed in the orthodox Muhammadan style in a 'bourkha,' and chatted gaily all the evening to the Viceroy" (next to whom she sat).

Dr. H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton sends the following note.—

"Missionaries who desire to use the Qur'ān in dealing with Muslims should make themselves acquainted with *Miftahul Qur'ān*, by the Rev. Ahmad Shah. The concordance is not absolutely faultless, but for all practical purposes it is a complete index of every word in the Qur'ān. The glossary gives renderings of every Arabic word in the Qur'ān, both in English and in Urdu, and a supplementary index of all the roots used in the book makes reference still easier.

“The price of the book is Rs. 16 for the concordance, Rs. 8 for the glossary, or for both bound together Rs. 20. It is published by E. J. Lazarus & Co., Benares. Every mission library where work amongst Muslims is going on should certainly have the book.”

THE APPROACH TO MUSLIM MYSTICISM

Since in Bengal a new interest has been aroused in the Fakirs, we think it well to invite the attention of our members, and especially of the missionaries of India, to the unique opportunity of attempting to reach these people and others whose breath of life is some form of mysticism. Our earliest impression of the Fakir was that of a religious fanatic, who swallowed knives and practised all manner of cunning begging tricks for a living. Probably the 7,817 Fakirs recorded as the total of that class in the last Census Report of Bengal, belong to that type. But in the Province there must be millions who, perhaps without claiming the name, yet talk a higher or mystical form of Fakirism every day of their lives. This form of belief is really Sufiism adapted to the average illiterate Muhammadan villager, with certain accretions drawn from the teaching and practices of the Hindu yoga system.

The importance of this mystical and spiritual movement in Islám, affecting as it does all Muslim lands, is very great. It is a phase of the revolt against the literalism and traditionalism of orthodoxy. At the same time it reveals the need of the human heart, it displays spiritual instinct, aspiration for God, desire for perfection, and hope for the future.

And such a revolt is not peculiar to Islám; at periods there have been similar movements in Christendom, especially in the Roman Catholic communion. There have been those in both East and West who have been dissatisfied with cold ceremonialism, and have turned to a burning inner flame of love and devotion, lit at the fire of Divine Love. Amid the encircling gloom they have caught a ray of mystic light that has burned with increasing brightness the more they have entered into the experience of pure contemplative quietude. To such mystic souls the genuflexions of the mosque, temple and church have but little significance, since the temple of the heart has become the dwelling-place of their object of devotion and worship. As Rumi says—

“The only true mosque is that in the hearts of the Saints.
The mosque that is built in the hearts of the Saints
Is the place of worship for all, for God dwells there.”

Further, the faulty recital of texts, prayers and creeds is now never a hindrance or a dread, since the heart dwells not on the use or misuse of words, but on a rich experience of loving understanding with whom it lives and moves and has its being.

Is this a too idealistic picture of the Christian mystic? I think not. Is the same possible in the Muslim mystic? The writings and sayings of Al-Ghazali, Rabi 'a, Al-Junaid, Rumi, and a host of Sufis, Darwishes and Fakirs would lead one to believe that they had remarkable spiritual instinct, and their religious experience was not unlike that of many Christian mystics. In fact, the likeness is so marked that Von Kremer says, "The mysticism of Islám and Christendom have many points of contact, and by mysticism perhaps will be first bridged the wide gulf which separates Islám from Christendom."

The practical man of the West will urge many objections against all forms of mysticism. He sees only a certain tendency to pantheism and a weakening of the will and sense of moral responsibility; he points to an unhealthy subjectivity and an ideal of life based on egoism. With Swami Vivekananda, he says, "These creepy things—these mysticisms are generally weakening." But in saying that, all is not said. In a book, written by experts, on "The Vital Forces of Christianity and Islám," much is made of Muslim mysticism. Articles by the Rev. Professors Macdonald and Siraj-ud-Din and the Rev. W. A. Shedd endorse the contention of Canon Gairdner, of Cairo, when he says—"The hold which mysticism has upon Muslims, and the reality of the part it plays in their religious lives, cannot be exaggerated. The subject demands more careful and detailed study than it has yet received. . . . The real attraction which mysticism has for Muhammadans is a call to the Christian Church. If mysticism had at first some difficulty in finding its way into the Muslim scheme, no such difficulty existed in Christianity, for which the two words, *en Christo*, enshrined a divine mysticism in the heart of religion from the very outset, and which was unembarrassed by the formal rigidities of Islám. Do not these facts constitute a call to the Christian Church more deeply to experience all that lies *en Christo*, and further to attempt to interpret and preach that experience to Muhammadans? Let Christian Sufiism appeal to the heart of the Sufiism of Islám."

This spiritual revolt against a cold formalism, rationalism and traditionalism in the Islám that preaches a lonely, inaccessible, unfeeling deity, is spreading everywhere. At the Lucknow Conference, one of the most striking statements was made by the Rev. Ahmad Shah, when he said, concerning India: "If you carefully examine the religious books written or translated by Muslims, you will find seventy-five per cent. are on Sufiism." This shows amazing growth of a spirit or attitude really foreign to the Shari 'at. When in Colombo, Dr. Zwemer wrote: "All the Muslims of Ceylon seem to be Sunni, and most of them belong to two of the Darwish Orders. The Muslim press is very active, and is publishing in Tamil-Arabic a considerable quantity of Sufi literature." Then from Dr. Zwemer's researches in China it was found that the Province of Honan has a large and influential Muhammadan population, and "The type of Muham-

madanism prevalent in the province is Sufism, which ought to make its adherents peculiarly susceptible to the spiritual claims of the Gospel, and very accessible to the Christian Messengers."

In Bengal, the terms Fakir, Darwish and Sufi are often used synonymously. All three classes are inter-related, they have many ideas in common. The thing to remember is this: that in other countries less under foreign control, the Darwish has developed his emotionalism along political and martial lines, whereas in India the greater the strength given to the Fakir, or Darwish movement, the more it must run in the mystico-religious groove. It is well within the mark to say that in Bengal quite two-thirds of its 25 million Muhammadans belong to one or other of the five following Darwish Orders—the Qádiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, Muzaddadiyya, Chistiyya and Muhammadiyya. The last two had their origin in India, the last being a special product of Bengal, and therefore the most popular of all the Orders with the Muslims of the Province. It does not follow that all are therefore pronounced mystics. There is a passage in the Hanafi law to the effect that it is obligatory for every Muslim to become initiated into one or other of the various Orders. Although he may follow only the teaching of one, he must honour them all.

Now in regard to our approach to Fakir, Darwish or Sufi, it is possible to throw out in bold relief that teaching which gives many points of contact. It is fundamental, in both Christendom and Islám, that mysticism assumes man to be an exile from home, and longing to get back again. He has suffered a fall away from God, but longs to be united to Him again. Phraseology is similar; methods for attaining the goal are also to some extent similar. Their aim is to reach through the seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal, but the veils of selfishness cloud the vision and blind the soul. The removal of these veils is imperative, if renewed and perfect vision would be obtained. And the demand in all forms of Muslim mysticism is for a very definite spiritual experience.

The process is as follows: a man sets out to advance as a traveller (*sálik*), by slow stages (*maqamat*) on a journey (*safar*) along the mystic way (*tariqat*) to union with the only Real Self. (The early Christians looked on our Faith as "the Way.") The Sufi traveller must first seek the guidance of a director, who is called Murshid, Shaikh or Pir, and must submit himself wholly to him, the ideal life being absolute conformity to the will of the Shaikh. This is common to all the Orders. A Calcutta leader of the Chistiyya Order says: "In the first stage the disciple is expected to love and look to the Shaikh as his all in all. He acts, talks and prays like the Shaikh; he eats, drinks and walks like the Shaikh, and constantly meditates upon him. Having been, by this process, spiritually transformed into the Shaikh, the student (*murid*) is spiritually introduced to the Prophet." All the Orders agree that, "As a corpse is in the hands of the washers, so must the disciple be in the hands of the Shaikh."

But many have gone further; in fact, it is becoming popular for the adoration of the master to take the place of the worship of God. And in the teaching of Fakirs, Darwishes and Sufis there is an amazing number of ideas concerning incarnation and mediation. The Pir is regarded as a bridge between the finite and the Infinite, and a sure and certain mediating agency.

Rumi, in the *Masnavi*, says—

“Come under the shadow of the man of reason (Pir).
Thou canst not find it in the road of the traditionists.
That man enjoys close proximity to Allah.
Turn not away from obedience to him in any wise.
Having chosen this Director be submissive to him.
His hand is none other than the grasp of Allah.”

Who other than Christ is the outstretched hand of a loving Father! At the back of the Sufi doctrine of the Pir or Shaikh is surely the belief that God can manifest Himself in some person. Does it not show, too, the craving of the human heart to see the Divine Image perfectly developed in some human life? The necessity for the Pir to be perfect as a Guide to the Divine Love and wisdom, would lead one to suppose this.

J. T.

(To be continued.)

“THE ECHO WORM”

BY MR. H. FRENCH RIDLEY, C.I.M.

[Mr. Ridley has worked among Muslims in China for 23 years. He writes that he could not meet Dr. Zwemer in China, as he lives 31 days' stages from the railway station. It would have taken 42 days journey to reach Kuling, where the conference was held. He says, “In the Province of Kansuh,” where he lives, “the Muslims are the greatest in number. I believe there are many secret disciples among them.”]

It was on one of my visits to a native Christian doctor, in a city 40 miles away, that I heard from his own lips the story given below, which is a strong side evidence of the Divinity of our Lord. This man was the only Christian in the city, and suffered much for the Gospel's sake, yet was ever ready to bear witness. Seated together on the brick bed, and relating some of his experiences, he said, “Once upon a time there lived a certain doctor, who was afflicted with a peculiar disease, caused by a worm in his bowels, called the Echo Worm, which weighed heavily on the man's mind, so that he was distracted beyond measure. This worm affected him so, that whatever he said there was an echo to it from the worm. If he said, ‘How are you?’ the Echo Worm

would repeat, 'How are you?' and so on, for every sentence he spoke. Being a doctor himself, he tried a few supposed remedies, without success, then went to see other doctors who, likewise, failed to cure him. Far and near he sought aid of physicians, and like the woman in the Bible spent his living, but grew not better but rather worse, the mental strain being almost more than he could bear. One day, while brooding over his condition, a thought suddenly crossed his mind, *viz.*, to borrow the book from the medicine shop with the list of medicines procurable in it. He at once put the thought into action, borrowed the book, returned home, and began at the first page, and read out the names of the medicines one by one, which the Echo Worm repeated. Reading over several pages, at last he came to a medicine called Lei-uan—Thunder Pill, to which the Echo Worm made no reply. 'That is strange,' he said to himself, and repeated the words Lei-uan, but still no reply or echo. Once more he began at the beginning of the book, and read aloud the names, one by one—to which the Echo Worm replied—until again reaching and reading out Lei-uan all was silent. 'That is the medicine for me,' he said to himself, 'the Echo Worm is afraid of it,' and off he went at once to the medicine shop, and asked for a dose of Lei-uan, a medicine almost like an acorn, took it home, ground it to powder; mixed it in tea; drank it, which killed the Echo Worm, and he was healed of his distressing malady. 'No wonder Echo Worm did not reply when I read out Lei-uan, for that was his greatest enemy,' said the doctor." This was the story which the old Christian doctor told me, then he went on to say, "I go into a shop and sit down to chat. One or two more will come in and sit down also, the shopkeeper and his assistants lean over the counter as question after question is plied, as to what the foreign missionaries eat, what kind of home have they, what do they do every day, how far is it to their country, etc., etc.; then, after many questions, I gradually begin to tell them about God, creation, Noah and the flood, and many other things, bringing in the names of many of the *holy men* of old, and they listen attentively and nod assent. I tell them how sin has brought such misery into the world, and how we suffer for our sins, to which they fully agree, and how God is a God of Love, longing for His children to obey Him, not willing that any should perish, to which they reply, *quite so, quite so*. Then I tell them that God has revealed His love to the world by giving His Son Jesus to die for us. At the name of Jesus, immediately the interest drops. 'Get about doing something,' says the shopkeeper to his assistants. 'It is meal time,' chime in some of the outside listeners, and in a moment the audience is gone. There is no Echo Worm reply to the name of Jesus from any of the listeners, for the Old Serpent knows this same Jesus is his greatest enemy, and by the acceptance of Him he would be banished from the heart of these disciples."

I have told this story again and again to Muslims, shewing them as long as they call Jesus only a Holy Man it disturbs Satan not in the

least, but to proclaim Him as Son of God not only causes a ruffle in the hearts of Muslims, but of Chinese also, shewing that Satan fears no name but the name "Jesus Saviour," his greatest enemy, who finally will destroy him.

Jesus the Name high over all
In hell or earth or sky
Angels and men before it fall
And devils fear and fly.

Surely this is a side proof of the Divinity of our Lord.

MECCA PILGRIMAGE

REFORMS UNDER NEW REGIME

The following is from the *Calcutta Statesman*. LONDON, Nov. 26.

AN Arab correspondent of the *Times*, writing from Jiddah, shows how the King of the Hedjaz has reformed abuses of the Turkish regime. Pilgrims now pay no more than thirty-six shillings a day for the first three days' lodgings in Jiddah, and afterwards eighteen shillings, compared with eight to ten pounds sterling formerly. The charge for a camel for the journey from Jiddah to Mecca and Arafat and back is now three to four pounds sterling, compared with anything up to ten pounds sterling. The luggage of pilgrims is now well looked after, and everything is done for the comfort of the pilgrims. Water is given free to poor pilgrims and sold very cheaply to others. The road between Jiddah and Mecca, formerly infested with brigands, is now quite safe even for pedestrians. Bedouin police accompany the travellers from one police station in the road to another, and all pilgrims are free to stay in Mecca after the Haj, or go anywhere they like, whereas formerly the Government used to keep pilgrims at Mecca for at least a fortnight after the Haj, so that they might spend all their money. Several primary schools and military schools were opened in Mecca a year ago, and two primary schools have been started in Jiddah, and preparations are being made for others. Agricultural and geological schools will also be opened. The Arab Government has sent to Egypt and elsewhere for professors and teachers. The King has encouraged teachers of theology and expounders of the traditions of Muhammad in the sanctuary of Mecca. Three courses of religious instruction are given daily in Haram, on the lines of that given at Al Ahzar University in Cairo. There is still plenty of room for improvement in sanitation, but the municipalities of Jiddah and Mecca are endeavouring to keep the towns clean. Incinerators have been established and also good hospitals. The Public Works Department is rapidly widening the streets of Mecca, and steps are also being taken to improve the customs service. --*Reuter*.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

Request for Prayer: A Muhammadan soldier, named Barkat, in a Rajput regiment at the front, wrote to one of our members asking for a Bible. In a further communication he told how he had heard of Christ through a lad who had been in the mission for six months and was baptised before he left. The soldier says he hopes through reading the Bible to become a Christian. Please remember him in prayer.

In Benighted China.—Mrs. Thor, one of our members, has been very active in securing more members for the League. She writes: "The work being so new amongst the Muslims of Sianfu, there is not much as yet to write about. However, it is worthy of *praise* that we have been able to secure suitable premises in the Muslim community for a mission station, which were opened about a year ago. I have been well received in a number of homes. Please *pray* that the woman and girls may get freedom to come out for education and instruction in the Gospel. They are not wearing the veil as in Muslim lands, but are kept in seclusion, which is a great barrier to the work. *Pray* that workers may be set apart for the evangelization of the Muslims of China."

NEW MEMBERS

241. MISS RICE,	New Zealand, B.M.S.,	Chandpur, Tipperah, Bengal.
242. MR. C. S. RASMUSSEN,	Danish Mission,	Cairo (designated for Aden).
243. MISS M. H. FISHE,	C.I.M.,	Hokow (ki), China.
244. MISS F. L. COLLINS,	C.I.M.,	Kinki (ki), China.
245. MISS E. A. FLINKMAN,	C.I.M.,	Yungfenghsien (ki), China.
246. MR. J. L. ROWE	C.I.M.,	K h chow (ki).
247. MR. R. W. PORTEROS,	C.I.M.,	Yuanchow (ki).
248. REV. R. A. TORREY, JR.,	Amer. Press. M.,	Tsinan Fu (Sung).
249. MISS GILLESPIE,	Z.B.M.M.,	Panchgain, B.P.
250. MISS GREBE,	Nazarene M.,	Kishorganj, E.B.

*The Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (3s. 4d.).
Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to*

JOHN TAKLE,
Hon. Sec., M. M. League.

Brahmanbaria, Bengal.