

Reports of activities at the Berlin Mosque and Mission during 1939, till start of World War 2

1. Report for January 1939, including Id-ul-Adha

February 24, 1939

THE LIGHT

15

ID SERMON IN BERLIN MOSQUE

"Nature and Mode of Prayers" was the subject of an elucidating and interesting lecture delivered by Dr. Hiller, Vice-president of the German Muslim Society of Berlin, on Friday the 6th January last. The chairman in his opening speech wished a happy and prosperous new year to all present and briefly explained the idea underlying the Quranic verse.

ما خلقت الجن والانس الا ليعبدون

The learned speaker then dealt with the subject in a masterly manner and traced the various forms of prayers prevalent amongst the existing religions of the world.

On Friday, the 20th of January at 8 p.m. the members of the German Muslim Society and their friends assembled at a social gathering to hear the speech of Mr. von Ries, an Islamic Chronologist. The speaker dealt with the subject in a most befitting and scientific way. He explained the Islamic Calendar, the Hijra, the Islamic months, festivals and the method of their calculation. His discourse gave new food for thought to many of the guests, because most of the Europeans have no idea of Islamic Calendar.

On Tuesday, the 31st of January at 10 a.m. assembled a large number of Muslims from all parts of the world, residing in Berlin, to join in thanksgiving and congregational prayers at the occasion of 'Id-ul-Azha, the festival of sacrifice. The mosque hall resounded with the loud words of الله اكبر الله اكبر لا اله الا الله الى الله الله اكبر uttered by the whole congregation in chorus. This presented a scene which is very seldom witnessed by similar gatherings in other parts of the world, as they usually represent a single nation, but here were present Muslims of all parts of the world. The 'Id prayers were led by the Imam of the Mosque, Al-Haj Dr. Abdullah, who also delivered the Khutbah. Relating the sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim and Ismail, the Imam drew the attention of the congregation to the necessity and value of sacrifice in general. He exhorted the Muslims to sacrifice whatever they can to further the cause of Islam in the West. To abandon one's old and birth religion and to install a new one in its place, requires a great sacrifice. To-day we have the pleasure of witnessing such a sacrifice. Mrs. Mosler a Christian lady by birth has resolved to accept the faith of Islam.

A Lady Convert

The Imam Sahib then delivered a short sermon on the value and significance of Islam and asked her (Mrs. Mosler) to recite the Holy Kalamah

لا اله الا الله محمد الرسول الله

in Arabic as well in German, which she did accordingly. She got "Amena" as her Muslim name. It was further mentioned that her only son Mr. Mohammad Ahmad Mosler accepted Islam about two years ago and now the mother too was joining. May she remain steadfast. May she find peace and freedom in her new Faith!

The evening of the 'Id day was celebrated in the big hall of the Mosque, where a large and a

representative gathering of non-Muslim gentry turned up to attend to the discourse of Dr. Abdullah on "Islam in India, its development and present condition." Mr. Mohammad Rashid, lecturer at the Berlin University for Malay language, opened the meeting with a recitation from the Holy Quran. Mr. Dybe from Syria then accorded a hearty welcome to the guests and explained the underlying idea of the festival and the institution of sacrifice. Dr. Abdullah then delivered his lecture. The learned speaker traced the development of Islam from the time of Mohammad bin Qasim till the present time and brought home to the mind of the audience the influence of Islam and Islamic thought upon Hinduism and other Indian religions. He also worked out the influence of Islamic culture and civilization upon Hinduism and European thought brought into India through the British Government. Finally he mentioned the various new movements of the last centuries, such as Wahabi, Ahmadi, etc., and the various important organisations such as 'All-India Educational Conference' "The Muslim League," The Muslim University, Aligarh, Osmania University, Hyderabad," etc., and their influence upon the Indian Muslims.

Mr. O. Peters then recited some poems pertaining to the occasion and the meeting came to a close with the concluding remarks of the chairman. The guests were then entertained to tea and light refreshments. The whole function was a great success. All praise be to God Almighty the Lord of the Worlds.

2. Report for February 1939

The Light, 24 March 1939, pages 6 and 5:

A Nazi Embraces Islam

OUR BERLIN LETTER

Under the auspices of the German Muslim Society of Berlin two very interesting and successful evenings were held. The first gathering which took place on Friday the 10th of February was in the form of a lecture delivered by Mr. Hartmann on "Mysticism in Islam." The Imam of the Mosque, Dr. Abdullah opened the meeting with the recitation of the Holy Quran. For the benefit of the German public he gave the German rendering of the same. The speaker of the evening, Mr. Hartmann then delivered his thought provoking and soul stirring lecture on Islamic Mysticism. "The ideal of a Muslim life is embodied in the words 'Fana-fillah,' that is, to get oneself absorbed in God's attributes. The present-day Europe in spite of all its achievements in sciences, economics and politics, has not been able to get to the root-cause of man's real happiness. The seat of this happiness is one's heart and so long one's heart is not at rest there can be no real happiness and luck. This solace and tranquillity of mind is not to be found in the treasures and riches one may possess but in one's "Qalb-i-Saleem" which is attained only through trying to become at-one with God," the Source of all-happiness and solace." These were the thoughts of the worthy speaker. His lecture was a real solace to one and all and thus the joy derived through his discourse was expressed in the form of long applause which followed the lecture from the side of the audience. With a vote of thanks and some concluding remarks from the chair the meeting came to a close.

The second gathering which was held on Friday the 24th of February was in the form of a "Muslim-evening." The subject under discussion was "The Origin and Collection of the Holy Quran." The Imam of the Mosque opened the meeting by reciting the first five verses of Sura 96 (the first Quranic revelation) and the Sura "Fatih-tul-Kitab," that is, the opening chapter of the Holy Book. "The first five verses of the chapter 96 constituted the first revelation of Al-Quran, but the present collection of the Book starts with "Al-Fatiha," which shows that the present order of the Quran is not the one in which it was revealed to the Holy Prophet" said the speaker of the evening. Dwelling upon the subject he said that the present order and form of the Quran is however the same which existed during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. In order to preserve this order the Holy Quran was at once put down in writing and learnt by heart by the followers of Islam according to the direct instructions of the Holy Prophet. The speaker advanced external as well as internal evidence and arguments to prove the truthfulness of his assertions. The discussion which followed was very lively and instructing. Amongst those who took active part in the discussion were two Arab friends—Mr.

Rischad-El-Kuzbari and Mr. Mahmud-El-Buraqui. The number of those who turned up was far beyond our expectations.

We cannot close this short report without mentioning two good news. The first one relates to the conversion of a Christian gentleman to Islam. Mr. A. Bartsch accepted the Faith of Islam at the hands of the Imam of the Mosque in the presence of two Arab friends as witnesses. He gets Tarik Mustafa as his Muslim name. The second tidings is with regard to the financial secretary of the German Muslim Society, Dr. Emran Husain. Our friend gets his Doctorate from the Berlin University. He comes from Assam and is the first Indian Muslim to get this distinction. Our sincerest prayers and hearty goodwishes accompany both the gentlemen. May they prove to be assets to Islam; may they prosper and live in peace and happiness, Amin.

3. Report for March 1939

The Light, 1 April 1939, page 6:

OUR BERLIN LETTER

Under the auspices of the German Muslim Society of Berlin a very interesting and instructive lecture was delivered by Dr. Klopp von Hofe, on Friday, the 3rd of March at 8. p. m. Last year the speaker had undertaken a long journey, extending over ten months through the various Islamic countries, such as Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. During his sojourn in those lands, he took about 200 coloured pictures of the places and things pertaining to Islamic culture and civilization. While throwing these on the scene the learned Doctor gave a vivid lively picture of the religious, social, cultural and political life of the people of those places. The lecture was full of information and the speaker kept the audience spell bound for a period of complete two hours. The number of those who responded to the invitation of the Society was so large that some had to go away disappointed on account of lack of space.

The second gathering of the month was more or less in the form of a "social gathering" and was held on Friday, the 17th of March at 8 p.m. The guests while being entertained to tea and light refreshments were also supplied with intellectual food in the form of a short speech delivered by a young German friend Mr. O. Peters. While depicting a vivid picture of the most important events of the Islamic history, he mentioned the bright and promising future of Islam which seems to be in store for it and the role it has to play once again in moulding the destinies of the various nations of our present world.

It may not be out of place to mention that besides these gatherings and lectures, a class for imparting religious instruction to the Muslim children of Berlin and two classes for teaching elementary Arabic to the Germans, are being run regularly and with success. These classes are held on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

4. Report for June 1939

6

THE LIGHT

July 16, 1939

Our Berlin Letter

Muslim Ladies Meetings Started

(Correspondent)

During the month of June 1939 two very successful gatherings were held under the auspices of the German Muslim Society of Berlin. On Friday the 9th of June at 8 p.m. a very interesting and philosophical lecture was delivered by Dr. Klinge on the subject of "Reason and Revelation in Islamic Thought". The meeting, which was attended by the Muslims as well as Non-Muslims in large numbers, was opened with a recitation of the Holy Quran by the Imam of the Mosque. The learned speaker then threw a flood of light on the subject under discussion. He showed the inadequacy of reasons alone and the importance of revelation in the guidance of human life. Dwelling upon Islamic Philosophy, the learned speaker mentioned that the foundation stone, upon which the Islamic structure was erected, was Revelation and not mere reasons and that is why the Muslim philosophers were men of deeds and not of words. The lecture was highly impressive and instructive and the meeting came to a close at about 11 p.m.

Second gathering of the month, which was held on Friday, the 23rd of June at 8 p.m., was more or less a kind of social gathering. The guests were entertained with Tea and light refreshments. A part of the introduction to the German translation of the Holy Quran by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din was read out by Mr. Abdur Rahman Barthelmas, a German convert to Islam. The readers will be glad to note that the translation has completely been printed and now placed in the hands of the Bookbinders. It is hoped that the German public will receive it by the beginning of July 1939. In recognition of the valuable services rendered by Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, and the Imam of the Berlin Mosque, the German Muslims passed a vote of thanks in the form of a resolution with the request that the same be passed on to the persons concerned, which is being done herewith.

The readers will be glad to learn that on the request of certain German Muslim ladies, Mrs. Abdullah, wife of the Imam of the Mosque, has started regular ladies' gatherings. The object of these meetings would be to acquaint the German Muslim ladies with problems and questions pertaining exclusively to the fair sex. Besides this the gatherings should serve to create a real and true Islamic spirit and zeal in the mind of Muslim women and thus try to establish a strong and well organized Islamic society among the German converts and their children. With this object in view the inaugural meeting was held on Thursday the 15th of June at 8 p.m. We take the liberty of thanking all the ladies who took part in this conference but our special gratitude is due to Mrs. Amina Mosler, who is the real spirit and driving force of this blessed proposal. She is taking a very keen interest and active part

in the propagation of Islamic thoughts among the German nation. We are sure that this new activity on the part of German and Oriental Muslim ladies in Berlin, will go a long way in making the mission of the German Muslim Society a success.

PS.—We beg to close this short report with a glad tidings of the conversion of a German youth to Islam. Mr. Tark embraced the Faith of Islam at the hands of the Imam of the Mosque and got Mohammad Ahmad as his Muslim name.

5. The Light, 24 August 1939, p. 2:

Our Berlin Letter

(From Our Own Correspondent)

During the month of July, 1939, the following lectures, gatherings and meetings were held under the auspices of the German Muslim Society of Berlin :

1. On Friday the 7th of July at 8 p.m., a philosophical and thoughtful lecture on "Islam and its Fundamentals" was delivered by Dr. Abdullah, Imam of the Mosque. The speaker dealt with the five fundamentals of Islam and then threw a flood of light on such other problems as fatalism, position of women, Islam and sword, the so-called sects in Islam and finally mentioned the unique characteristics and distinctive features of Islam such as its being free from dogmas and its relation towards nature and cosmos. The meeting was very largely attended and came to a close with a hearty vote of thanks from the chair and a long applause from the side of the audience.
2. On Friday the 21st of July a social gathering was held in the garden of the Mosque. Dr. Abdullah opened the meeting with a recitation out of the Holy Book. Dr. Devraint, a member of the Society and a convert to Islam, has been on a holiday trip to Serajevo, the centre of Muslims in Jugoslavia. He was requested to relate his impressions and experiences of the Muslims there. He gave a vivid and comprehensive Description of his journey to this outpost of Islam in Europe. He was much pleased to have met his Muslim brethren there and highly impressed by their hospitality, open mindedness and simplicity of life. The guests were then entertained to tea and light refreshments.
3. On Thursdays, the 13th and 27th of July, two gatherings of the Muslim ladies of Berlin were held and subjects pertaining to womanhood were elucidated and discussed. Our new Sister-in-faith, Mrs. Amina Moslier, is a lady of untiring zeal and enthusiasm and serves as a model and example of Muslim womanhood for many an oriental and born Muslimah as well.
4. During the month of July, on account of the summer vacation, only one Arabic class was run. The classes for imparting elementary knowledge of Arabic to Germans and religious instructions to Muslim children were discontinued and will be restarted from August next.

Our readers will be glad to learn that the month of July witnessed the German translation and commentary from Maulana Sadr-ud-Din. The voluminous book, which comprises more than 1,100 pages, is now being dispatched to subscribers and scholars in Germany and abroad. We bow our heads in gratitude and thankfulness to God Almighty for having given us the strength, time and ability to publish His Last Word in the German language. May it prove to be a blessing and guide to the great German nation! Amin!

**6. Imam has to leave Berlin due to War
The Light, 16 September 1939, p. 2:**

Our Berlin Letter

(From Our Own Correspondent)

On Friday, the 4th of August, at 8 p. m. a very interesting and successful Evening was arranged by the German Muslim Society in the spacious garden of the Mosque at Berlin. The meeting was opened with a recitation from the Holy Quran by Dr. Abdullah, the Imam of the Mosque. He was followed by Dr. Puttrich of the Islamic Department of Government Museums in Berlin. He had just returned from Palestine, where he has been carrying on an excavation on behalf of the German Government. He showed some pictures of the excavation and delivered a very interesting and educative lecture elucidating the same. The guests were then entertained to tea and light refreshments in the illuminated garden of the Mosque.

On Friday, the 18th of August, at 8 p. m. a Muslim Evening was convened. The Imam of the Mosque delivered a short speech on the Seven

Articles of Faith in Islam: Belief in God, Angels, Revealed Books, Messengers, the Hereafter, the Premeasurement of Good and Evil, and Resurrection after Death. He gave a philosophical and ethical explanation of these articles and their practical bearing on the life of a Muslim. The Evening was a very successful one and lasted till 11 p. m.

It may be noted that in spite of the present political situation our work is being done smoothly and freely. Besides the above-mentioned lectures, regular Arabic Classes and Ladies' Evenings were held and conducted in a most peaceful manner. May the Almighty God protect us from all kind of evil in the future as well. We request our well-wishers to remember us in their prayers and supplications.

[This letter was written on the 30th August, 1939. The Imam had to leave Berlin when the war began—Editor.]

7. The Light, 24 September 1939:

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Notes & Comments

Berlin Mosque in War Time.

Owing to the outbreak of war, the Imam of the Berlin Mosque, Dr. Sh. Mohammad Abdullah, M.Sc., Ph.D., had to leave Berlin, handing over the charge of the Mosque to some German converts to Islam. According to the latest news, he has safely reached Copen-Hagen, the capital of Denmark, awaiting instructions from the Anjuman. Copen-Hagen, is for the present out of the war zone but with the sea and air-routes cut off he is in a stranded condition along with his wife and children and needs the earnest prayers of all friends.

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German Translation of Quran.

As already mentioned in a recent issue, the German Translation of the Holy Quran is at last out. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din who devoted about five years' patient labour to this great work has rendered a unique service, to Islam as well as to the German people. There are already good many Translations of the Quran in German in the market but being all of them from the pens of non-Muslims, they naturally could not represent the correct essence of the Quranic message as a Muslim alone can grasp it. The Translation by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din who has devoted a lifetime to the study of the Quran and Hadith and has been actively engaged in Missionary work on behalf of Islam at Woking and Berlin for many years supplies a real and long-felt need. Besides it is most opportune. It has seen the light of day just at a time when Germany stands on the brink of a mighty moral revolution that is bound to come in the wake of a war of destruction and desolation in which she is just now involved. Europe in general, after the Great War, experienced a similar rude shaking from the gross materialistic view of life to which it was wedded. There was a distinct awakening towards the higher moral and spiritual values of life. The present war is bound to react on the German people by the time it is over; for it is the direct outcome of a philosophy of life and statecraft which has taken birth on the German soil. It looks like something providential that the spiritual light has already been supplied in anticipation of the coming reaction against Nazism

and when, after the present war storm has blown over, and the time for heart-searching and spiritual reconstruction comes, this Translation of the Quran may be instrumental in showing the light to many a groping soul. The other day, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din addressed a special letter to Herr Hitler, inviting his attention to a reverent study of the Quran. For the present that invitation to light has been drowned in the roar of the bomb and the cannon. The day, however may soon come when the German people, chastened by the War, will turn to the Quran for light. Herr Hitler is too busy just now for a study of the Quran. But his predecessor, the ex-Kaiser has ample leisure at Doorn and a copy of the translation may profitably be presented to him.

The Quran alone can ultimately prove as a brake on the present-day war-mongering mentality of Europe. This mentality is the offspring of the gross materialism in which the whole of the Western Civilization is steeped. That was the significance, as shown in one of our recent issues of the Prophet's description of the Dajjal as being one-eyed. In other words the Dajjal of Western Civilization has just one eye, the worldly eye, the spiritual eye being blind. The Quran alone can cure that other eye. And once that spiritual eye is also somewhat opened, the world may be saved from the greed and selfishness and the jungle life which springs from them.

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8. The Light, 24 November 1939, p. 4

Berlin Imam Back in India

Ever since the outbreak of war we have been receiving anxious enquiries from friends all over the country as to the fate of the Mosque in Berlin and the Imam of the Mosque. In a brief note in one of our past issues we informed all such friends, that they need have no anxiety on either count. The Imam, Dr. Sheikh Mohd Abdullah, M.Sc., Ph.D. had a safe conduct to Copen-Hagen, entrusting the Mosque to the care of German brethren and sisters in Islam. Now we have the pleasure to inform them that by God's grace the Imam is back in our midst, along with his wife and children. We have his first hand assurance that all is well with the Mosque and the German brothers and sisters entrusted with the work are enthusiastically looking after their sacred charge. Let there be no cause for worry on that account.

Note: After his arrival back in Lahore, Dr S.M. Abdullah served at the headquarters of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. During this period he also held the post of General Secretary of the Movement. In 1946, after the end of the Second World War, he was posted to Woking, England, to serve as Imam of the Woking Mosque. He continued to have overall charge of the Berlin Mosque and Mission at this time. He died in Woking in 1956. For further details about him, please visit this link:
www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/sm-abdullah.htm