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MALAY SUPERSTITION.

THE following is a version of a roll of charms or indulgencies, which may serve to illustrate the nature of practical Muhammedanism in the Malay countries. The roll was of paper, about four yards long and two inches and a half broad, and was enclosed in a case of cloth made to tie about the body. It contained a number of painted squares, inscribed with the name of Muhammed, and was surmounted with rude figures of the temple at Mecca, the double-bladed sword of Ali, &c. &c. The writing was placed alternately with the squares. The skin of the natives of the east is frequently marked in various parts with light coloured blotches, the effects perhaps of disease, but attended with no distinct sensation of any kind. The painted squares were intended as impressions or pictures of such blotches on the body of the Prophet.

The unity of God is the rallying point of the Muhammedans; their stronghold, and the weapon with which they combat all their enemies; yet we find their system and that of heathen idolatry in practice substantially the same. The idolatrous polytheist makes an image of some imaginary supernatural power, performs his devotions before it, propitiates it with offerings, and looks to it for deliverance from his troubles and calamities. The Muhammedan unitarian entertains the utmost abhorrence of all images, and will not approach one without discovering his detestation by a visible sign; yet he makes a representation of a mark on the body of his prophet, inscribes it with the sacred name, Muhammed, and invests it with the power of accomplishing all his desires, of pardoning all his sins, and of finally conducting him to heaven without account. It will be seen from the present communication that these are not harmless playthings—mere notions—too absurd to be seriously credited by those who make the unity of God the basis of their creed. On the contrary, they have a perpetual influence over the conduct, and become the source of numerous actions, equally incompatible with the welfare of society and the personal happiness of their deluded votaries.

On the 23d December last a Malay, called Malim Dubalong, was accused before the fiscal of Padang of having robbed his guest, a native of the Madras coast, to the amount of 1,000 rupees. The party accused could not clear himself, and he was directed to give bail or to be sent to prison. He was however suffered to return home, chiefly to seek a person to bail him. In the evening the plaintiff informed the fiscal that the man had packed up his moveables and was about to abscond. The fiscal sent for him, and told him he must give bail. He named a person, who on been applied to refused, and no alternative remained but to send him to prison. On his way down stairs he suddenly attacked the plaintiff with a kris (or dagger), stabbed him, as he thought mortally, and ran up stairs and attacked the fiscal. After a severe struggle, in which they rolled down stairs, locked in each other's grasp, the man was killed by the fiscal's servants, and the fiscal himself escaped with six or eight superficial wounds. This assassin, Malim Dubalong, was a merchant of Padang well known to the Europeans. He had received the title of Malim for his strict attention to his devotional exercises. It appeared on inquiry that he had armed himself purposely for the occasion; he had covered his naked kris with a handkerchief, and had secreted his kurambi* under his head-dress. He had been to the river to wash and pray, and recite his incantations, and had tied his roll of charms upon his arm. Thus prepared and equipped, he had appeared

* The kurambi is a semicircular knife, a most dangerous instrument, used chiefly by assassins and murderers.

appeared before the fiscal; and, no doubt, fully expected the deliverance promised by his formula.

Charms and incantations are extremely common amongst the natives. They enter into most of the prescriptions and medicines of their doctors; and the priests are in the habit of making them a lucrative article of sale. Such as the one from which the following is taken are sold for ten or eight dollars; they are however of all prices, from one to twenty dollars. Like the Pope's indulgencies they extend to every crime and every calamity to which human nature is subject, and they finally transport their votaries to heaven, in that most agreeable manner, *without account!*

TRANSLATION OF THE ROLL OF CHARMS WORN BY MALIM DUBALONG ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ATTACK ON MR. MUISKEL, ASSISTANT RESIDENT AND FISCAL OF PADANG.

1. Whoever looks at this impression of the Panaw of the Prophet's superiority on *Sunday*, verily, God will preserve him from the fire of hell, and make him honourable in the sight of all his creatures. God Almighty will also release him from all the calamities of the world and of a future state; but he must read this: † There is no Lord but God, whose is the visible truth, who has no resemblance, and who hears and sees all things. O Lord, whoever thou art!

2. Whoever looks at this impression of the Panaw of the Prophet's superiority on *Monday*, verily, God will preserve him from the effects of all weapons, even if numerous as drops of rain, and will preserve him from the fire of hell; but he must read: There is no Lord but God, who is glorious and omniscient: O thou who art glorious and great!

3. Whoever looks at this impression of the Panaw of the Prophet's superiority on *Tuesday*, God will preserve him from sudden death, and will release him from the dangers of *jins* and demons, but he must read: There is no Lord but God, who is holy, and who sanctifies, even he who is compassionate and bountiful. O Lord, whoever thou art!

4. Whoever looks at this impression of the Panaw of the Prophet's superiority on *Wednesday*, verily, God will preserve him, and grant all his requests, and will exalt his rank; but he must read: O, my Lord, fulfil thy goodness upon Muhamed the Prophet, who was ignorant of letters, and upon all his house, and give them prosperity and peace.

5. Whoever looks at this impression of the Panaw of the Prophet's superiority on *Thursday*, God will release him from all the calamities of the last day, and from all the evils of time and eternity, and he will live for ever; but he must read: There is no Lord but God, who made all things, together with his servants. Who are his servants? Those who are placed in his stead over all. O Lord, whoever thou art!

6. Whoever looks at this impression of the Panaw of the Prophet's superiority on *Friday*, verily, God will destroy all his enemies, and grant him complete prosperity, but he must read: Most holy is God, all praise be to him; there is no Lord but God; the Lord is great; there are neither works nor power but of God, who is infinitely high and great.

7. This Panaw of superiority was on the breast of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Story from Abu Bakar, the true and beloved of God: Whoever looks at this Panaw of the Prophet's superiority morning and evening, God will settle him happy, and preserve his faith, and give him an entrance into heaven without failure. God is omniscient. This impression is of the most eminent rank, and possesses numerous virtues. Whoever looks at this impression on *Saturday*, God will facilitate to him the passage of the Bridge of Trial (*sarat al muntahim*), and he will be happy day and night for ever; but he must read: There is no Lord but God, most high, most powerful, most helpful, most merciful, let me not be numbered with the oppressors. This is a Panaw of the superiority of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority

* Light-coloured blotches on the skin of Orientals.

† The contents to be read are indistinct.

morning and evening, verily, he will be beloved by all men, both high and low, and will be for ever happy, and his enemies will not be suffered to injure him; and God will finally take him to heaven without account. God is omniscient.

8. Story from Hoesin, the beloved of God. Whoever looks morning and evening at this Panaw of superiority, which was on the back of the Apostle of God (peace be upon him!), all men will fear him, and he will for ever receive happiness, together with the blessing of this mark of the Prophet's superiority, by the will of God.

9. This Panaw of superiority was on the right shoulder of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Story from Omar, son of Katub, the beloved of God. Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority morning and evening, it will be the same as a work of service to the Prophet (peace be upon him!), and no man will desire to injure him. God is omniscient.

10. This Panaw of superiority was on the loins of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Story from Othman, the beloved of God. Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority morning and evening, verily he will be honoured in the sight of all creatures, and will be continually happy, until at length he enters heaven without account. God is omniscient.

11. This Panaw of superiority was betwixt the two cheeks of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Story from Ali, the absorbed in God. Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority, God will forgive all his sins, and if he copy and carry it with him wherever he may go, he will be beloved by all the creatures of God. God is omniscient.

12. This Panaw of superiority was on the left shoulder blade of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Whoever looks at this Panaw of the Prophet's superiority morning and evening, no evil shall befall him, and verily he shall be for ever happy, and be honoured of God the most high and most holy; also he shall be honoured of all the creatures of God. This is the blessing of this Panaw of the Prophet's superiority.

13. This Panaw of superiority was on the right ear of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Story from Rukiya, the beloved of God. Whoever looks at this Panaw of the Prophet's superiority, or copies and carries it with him, all men will love him, and no enemy or danger shall ever approach him, and he shall ever be under the preservation of God, the glorious and the great. God is omniscient.

14. This Panaw of superiority was on the left ear of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Story by the mother of Kolothom (one of Muhamed's concubines) the beloved of God. Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority morning and evening, or copies and carries it with him wherever he goes, all men will love him. God is omniscient.

15. This Panaw of superiority was on the breast of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority morning and evening, or copies and carries it with him, no evil will befall him as long as he lives, and none of his enemies will be permitted to injure him. This is the blessing of this Panaw of superiority. God is omniscient.

16. Whoever looks at this Panaw of superiority on the night of *Friday* (i. e. *Thursday* night) he will obtain a vision of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority, God will preserve him from the calamities of the world and of a future state, and will confirm his faith; and if a man in prison looks at it, verily, God will quickly release him from his danger. God is omniscient.

17. Whoever looks at this Panaw of his superiority daily, or on the night of *Friday*, verily, God will open to him the door of heaven without judging him at the morning of assembly, and will render him happy at the resurrection and last assembly. God is omniscient.

18. Whoever looks at this Panaw of the Prophet's superiority daily, or on the night of *Friday*, verily, God will preserve him from all calamities, and will give him a vision of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him! and will raise him up from his grave at the morning of assembly, in company with all the *Awliyas* of God, to enter straightway into heaven.