

Preface

In view of obtaining a better picture of religious education in the schools, a questionnaire was prepared by a group of religious experts from the Department of Studies and Programmes (of the Ministry of Education), and copies of it were distributed to one thousand and one hundred teachers of religious instructions all over the country. The questionnaire comprised fifty-two questions, among which some were related to the educational difficulties of the students. Useful information, extracted from 800 answered questionnaires, indicated the prevailing state of religious instructions as well as that of the instructors of this branch in the various schools of the country.

The result of this survey was published in the Publication No 14 of the Department of Studies and Programmes under the heading “A Brief Survey of Religious Instructions in Schools of the Country.”

Among the fruitful results of this study was a better understanding of the religious questions and problems, encountered while studying religious issues, difficulties which were raised by the students through a compilation of 350 questions. Another result was that the attitudes and religious judgments of the teachers regarding religious problems were incoherent and in some cases antithetical.

With these matters in mind, and in order to establish a certain degree of coordination and mental correlation among the schools' pupils, the theologians decided to prepare some useful and comprehensive texts capable of answering these questions and then distribute them among the teachers.

For this purpose, our experts carefully scrutinized the questions raised by the students. Ten questions presumed to be more important were selected. As it was also of great significance to take into consideration the opinions and ideas of the instructors, a fresh questionnaire was prepared requesting divinity instructors to write down their opinion of these 10 questions together with a summary of their research and studies in this field.

Some 150 teachers answered the questionnaire. The number was considered reasonable and the supplied information was sufficient to reflect the level of the teachers' understanding of religion and also the range of their knowledge in the domain of religion. Consequently, the experts started classifying the

answers on the basis of appropriate technical criteria in order to prepare a useful list of the identical and common answers and to consequently place it at the disposal of the teachers.

Among these ten questions two, namely “Knowing Allah” and “The Ways of Proving the Existence of Allah” were given publication priority. They appeared in the first publication because they enjoyed a great importance, and all other religious problems were based on them. Although this matter is evident, everyone can be concerned with it as well as with all the problems of religious instructions. Until a proper explanations of these particular subjects are not given and until a good understanding of the same is not reached, all other themes of Islamic beliefs and education will not follow a logical and convincing pattern. In the present work, and the ones to follow, these points have been kept in mind:

1. Though the themes could have been discussed scientifically in a very specialized style, an attempt has been made to express the subject in the simplest style possible, while going into much detail. This will enable the teachers to apply an analogous and coordinated method of teaching.
2. Those opinions of the teachers which have been interesting and useful, are directly or indirectly used in the course of this book. Impressing extracts of these are also given at the end of this book.
3. Every book comprises a section which gives an account of answers received to the distributed questionnaires. The main subject is, however, examined and discussed in detail.

We hope that the school teachers of religious instructions all over the country will find the book very helpful. We also expect the teachers to collaborate with the Department of Studies and Programmes and inform us of their views and difficulties.

The translator

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