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News and Notes

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

Series XV

No. 11

November, 1927.

1st November = 5th Jumada'1-Ula (5th mo.), 1346, A.H.

On the use of the name 'Isa

(See N. & N. July, pp. 43-4.)

LONG before most of us were born, in fact at a date when the oldest workers now on the field were mere babes, there appears to have existed a pronounced difference of opinion among missionaries in India and elsewhere as to whether the name 'ISA, should or should not be used in intercourse with Muslims. It is salutary for those of us who are apt to think within ourselves: 'no doubt *we* are the people,' to bear in mind that men of a by-gone age had 'understanding' as well as we!!

In November, 1860, (just 67 years ago) one Isidor Loewenthal, "missionary to the Afghans," read a paper on this subject to a group of missionaries of the American Presbyterian Mission assembled at Sabathu, near Simla. The whole paper was reproduced in the third issue of *The Moslem World Quarterly* (July 1911). As many of our readers cannot have access to that article we are venturing to give here a brief summary of its main points.

At the outset Loewenthal shows that 'every nation has always claimed, and always exercised, the right of using its own words.' What we call *heaven*, the Persian has a right to call *asmān*. The Italian calls his beautiful city *Firenze*, whereas the Englishman calls it *Florence*. It will not do to say that only one can be correct and that the other forms are corruptions. 'Philology knows no more of corruption than chemistry. Each language has its own laws of formation and development, and no language has a right to charge another with corruption.'

Recognizing this principle the Westerner, when he comes among Muslims, calls the Supreme Being not by the English, German, French, Hebrew or Greek name, but says *Allah* or *Khuda*; he uses not *Egypt* or *Mitrayim* but *Misr*; not *Alexander* but *Sikandar*.

When we come then to consider the supreme task of the missionary, the making known of the name of Jesus to non-Christian peoples, it becomes a practical question as to whether we can, in any circumstances, use the form in daily use among English-speaking folk, *i.e.* JESUS.

(a) Amongst peoples who have never been reached before the very forms of their language often forbid this; *e.g.* In the Yoruba scriptures the best possible approximation is a word *pronounced* Jaysoosee; in the Otomi it is pronounced Hayzoo; in the Curacao, Hezoes (pronounced Hayzoes).

(b) Among Muslims, however, the case is different in that they already know about the person of Jesus and have their own special form for His name.

What then should be the attitude of the missionary to Muslims, continues Loewenthal. Should he ignore all common ground and, in particular, reject this name 'ISA, as some in India seem prepared to do, introducing to Muslims an entirely new personage by the name of *Yusúá*, of whom neither they, nor their fathers, have heard before?

He then summarizes under two main heads, the objections of the missionaries of his day to the use of 'ISA, and seeks to dispose of them by reasoned argument.

1. That the 'ISA of the Muslims is not the Jesus whom we adore: that they believe of Him many miracles which are not recorded in scripture, and that they have removed the two great pillars of the Christian system by denying His death and His divinity.

To which Loewenthal replies, in substance, as follows:—

(a) Were we to be able to effect a change in this name throughout the Muslim world, both in the minds of the people and in their literature, we should not thereby alter those doctrines of theirs to which we take exception.

(b) But it is not merely concerning the person and work of Christ that Muslims are in grievous error; such terms as sin, righteousness, justice, mercy, heaven, hell, forgiveness, faith, prayer,—all these convey to them ideas at variance with Christian teaching. It is not within the range of practical politics to discard these terms, on the contrary we take them and by them try to teach the pure truth. The use of the name for God is a case in point. We keep the name we find in use but seek to change the Muslim's ideas as to its content.

2. But the principal objection against the use of 'ISA seems to be that it is not the name given to Him by the angel, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. To quote Loewenthal's own words: "The allegation is, that the original name has been *corrupted*; some say, by accident, others, designedly, though some of the latter again ascribe the 'corruption' to the malignity of the Jews, whilst others say that Muhammad purposely changed the collocation of the letters of the name, in order to obscure its signification."

The writer then proceeds to show in detail that such an allegation rests upon a variety of misapprehensions. Here we can only touch on these briefly and without employing the Greek and Hebrew characters used by him in support of his arguments.

(a) He asks: What is the original form of the name to which such would turn? Presumably it is a Greek word in a Greek gospel which may be transliterated thus: *Iesous*. But, beyond question, this form is only the Greek equivalent (or if you will *corruption!*) for an original Hebrew form,

which transliterated would be *Yehoshua*, and this in the latest books of the O. T. takes the corrupted (!) form of *Yeshua*. Before this *Yeshua* passed into the Greek form *Iesous* still further modifications had to take place.

Nor is that all. The Greek form *Iesous* in the Gospel has, in itself, no meaning whatsoever, whereas *Yehoshua* means "God his Saviour," a meaning which would not be applicable to the interpretation of the angel. As for the abridged form *Yeshua*, it has no meaning in the known grammar of the Hebrew language. The most probable account of the matter is, that *Yeshua*, being in sound very much like another Hebrew word meaning 'salvation' it was given that meaning.

(b) The idea that the form 'Isa is due to Jewish malignity was first broached by Maracci, the Roman Catholic editor of the Quran, and it was repeated by Professor E. Henderson, in a letter to the London Religious Tract Society, dated 26th April, 1843. Maracci thought the Jews had endeavoured to assimilate the name to that of Esau. This is wrong for the Jews consider it a sin to write or pronounce the name Jesus, and habitually speak of Him as "the Crucified One."

(c) But the most prevalent opinion among certain missionaries is that Muhammad himself altered the position of the radicals, making the terminal guttural (in the Hebrew) take the initial place (in the Arabic), with a view to depriving the name of its significance. This is preposterous. We have already seen that the Greek form has, in itself, no meaning and acquires what it has through association with the Hebrew. But 'if Muhammad had wished to give our Saviour a name which should *not* have the meaning of saviour or salvation, or should have no meaning at all in Arabic, he need have done nothing but transfer the supposed Hebrew letters into Arabic (as our missionaries are attempting to do) and he would have succeeded to perfection'!

Loewenthal then goes on to make his own contribution to the discussion. The peculiar form 'Isa, he maintains, is due to a law of the Muhammadan, or perhaps more properly the Oriental mind. Witness the symmetry, proportion, and parallelism, in Muslim architecture, line answering to line, minaret to minaret etc. The same principle has produced in oriental literature a style quite *sui generis*, with its parallelisms, paranomasia, rhythmic cadences, assonance and jingle.

'A consideration of these peculiarities will put us in a position to estimate aright certain changes of names in the Quran sufficiently numerous to enable us to recognize the law by which they have been produced. It is none other than this, that names connected in some way, either historically cognate, or brought together in the sacred record, must rhyme together. This law will leave one name usually unaltered, as far as possible, and so slightly modify the other as to produce a rhyme, or at least an assonance. Thus Habil (Abel) is left unchanged but Kain is changed into Kabil. Aaron becomes, close enough, Harun, but Korah, to rhyme with it, is changed into Karun.' So we have pairs of names, Harut, Marut; Jalut—Talut, etc.

What more natural, then, than that the name of the prophet of the Christians should be made to form an assonance with that of the prophet of the Jews: 'Isa—Musa.?

It were futile, he goes on, for the missionary to attempt to crowd out the name 'Isa. Apart from the fact that it is embedded in the Quran, there are vast literatures in which the name occurs thousands of times.

Besides (and surely this is truly and beautifully put!), 'Our Lord has accepted all the conditions of our common humanity; not only was He hungry, thirsty, weary, grieved, afflicted and smitten, *but He submits also to have His earthly name undergo all the changes and mutilations to which everything earthly is subject.* To the Christian of every nation and every tongue, His name is sweet and euphonious, not intrinsically, but on account of all the blessings of which it is the emblem and the earnest.'

The contention of the opposite party, of course, was that *Yusua* should be used. The objections to this have been stated, but Loewenthal concludes with yet another, which is still full of force! The oriental mind is the oriental mind still; and, in particular, the Muhammadan mind has been formed with the assonances of the *Quran* and the regularities of the Arabic language. The same causes which produced the name 'Isa from whatever the original form may have been, will now produce 'Isa even out of *Yusua* or any other missionary invention!

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The conclusion to be drawn from all of which is clearly this—that we should gratefully receive, and without hesitation use the name for Jesus which Muslims offer us and *fill it, for their sakes, with a new content,* until they too share with the disciples of Jesus everywhere the same rich experience and can sing:

How sweet the name of 'Isa sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

Dr. Zwemer's Conferences

WE have received encouraging reports of the meetings conducted by Dr. Zwemer in Ahmedabad and Bombay. At Ahmedabad there was a total attendance of 26, six of whom were Indians. These were drawn from four different societies working in Gujerat. Fifteen lectures were delivered; ten on the presentation of the Gospel, five on other subjects. In addition to these fifteen lectures, there were visits to mosques and book-shops and four public lectures. The first, on 'The New World of Islam,' was given at Gujerat College. Although the audience was not large there was no disturbance, but great interest. Three lectures on 'The Life of Christ, His Death, and the Way to Moral Freedom, were given in a public hall with an attendance of from 200 to 300 each night. A Hindu and a Muslim presided, and on the last night 146 copies of the Gospel of Matthew in Gujerati were distributed to students who expressed a desire to read it. Six new members were secured for the League, four new members for *The Moslem World*, and seventy-six rupees' worth of books on Islam sold.

Writing from Bombay in the midst of the Conference a member who sends in six new names for the League, says: 'We are having a great time with the Zwemers!'

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The success of these meetings naturally depends to a great extent on the preparations made beforehand by local secretaries. May we remind those responsible for arrangements at the different centres to get together

a *Literature Exhibit* in the languages locally used? This will serve the double purpose of advertising whatever is available and revealing the wants yet to be met. The Panjab Religious Tract Society, Anarkali, Lahore, will be glad to send samples of *Urdu* literature for Muslims, also quantities for sale together with copies of Reviews of such literature, to any local secretaries who apply for same. Likewise the C.L.S. (P.O. Box, 501, Park Town), Madras, will readily supply quantities of Literature on Islam in *English*, for sale or return, together with copies of reviews of all such literature. Dr. Zwemer has been led to expect literature exhibits at each of his conferences, and we must not fail him in this respect.

Further, the pages of this monthly paper are available for any notices or corrections in regard to Dr. Zwemer's meetings and itinerary. Fully 300 members of the League reside in India and doubtless follow his movements closely. We shall welcome brief reports from local secretaries of meetings held. These will serve to guide others.

Several correspondents have been exercised as to how they are to keep confidential the fact that Dr. Zwemer is touring India and yet advertise his public gatherings. We have received a copy of a handbill used in Ahmedabad which goes to show that once our guest has arrived in any given centre his public lectures may be thus advertised in the usual way. What we imagine is to be guarded against is the use of the local press to notify people of the lectures he proposes to deliver, or to make public the remainder of his programme. The handbills are enough, and these can be distributed with discretion.

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Dr. Zwemer's programme for November has been slightly modified and is as follows:

Rawalpindi	...	...	Thurs. 27th Oct. to Tues. 1st Nov.
Peshawar	...	...	Wed. 2nd Nov.
Lahore	...	...	Thurs. 3rd Nov.—Wed. 9th Nov.
Delhi	...	...	Thurs. 10th Nov.—Wed. 16th Nov.
Lucknow	...	...	Thurs. 17th Nov.—Mon. 21st Nov.
Bareilly	...	...	Tues. 22nd Nov.—Thurs. 24th Nov.
Jubblepore	...	...	Sat. 26th Nov.—Friday 2nd Dec.

The local secretaries are:

Rawalpindi	...	Rev. J. C. Heinrich, A.W.P.M. Rawalpindi.
Lahore	...	Prof. R. Sirajuddin, Warris Rd. Lahore.
Delhi	...	Rev. J. C. Chatterji, St. Stephen's High School, Delhi.
Lucknow & Bareilly	...	Rev. J. W. Pickett, M. E. Mission, Lucknow.
Jubblepore	...	Rev. C. F. H. Guse, 130 Civil Lines, Jubblepore.

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Negotiations are in progress for giving Calcutta the dates allotted to Patna, viz., Sun. 4th Dec.—Sat. 10th Dec. The Secretary for the Calcutta Conference is Mr. John Kellas, Duff Hostel, 32/6 Beadon St. Calcutta, to whom those interested in the Calcutta meetings should address their enquiries. The dates for Dacca, and Hyderabad hold good, but we shall be glad to be able to advertise the latter portion of the itinerary, with exact dates for Madras, Bangalore and Vellore etc. Dr. Zwemer informs us that he has booked his passage by steamer from Colombo for 28th February. So apparently he will hold a Conference in Colombo. Will the local secretary there let us have particulars?

Dr. M. T. Titus is in general charge of Dr. Zwemer's tour and any enquiries should be addressed to him at M. E. Mission, Hardoi, U.P.

While Reading—

'The logical order would be to convict the Muslim of his sin, and then to point him to his Saviour; but since the Muslim has no strong sense of sin, in practice it is necessary first to point him to the Saviour, that he may come to feel that he is a sinner.'

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'The purpose of Jesus was not to enforce a rule that must be followed with labour and difficulty, but to impart a spirit which would take the place of law.'

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'The end to be obtained by the missionary approach is that the spiritual experience and dynamic offered by Jesus shall become the conscious possession of all.'

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'The Christian Church has expected its missionaries to win the Muslim World, whereas the only agency which will ever win the Muslim World is the Christian Church itself.'

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'Many of the enquirers are maulvis who have been led into Bible study by the praises of Christ in the Quran, and because of a lack of satisfaction in Islam.'

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In Defence of Islam

It has not been an uncommon thing to read, from time to time, fervent appeals in the Muslim press for funds to counteract the activities of Christian missions in India.

To-day, however, there is a new note of urgency in such demands inasmuch as Muslim leaders are properly alarmed at finding that the Hindus have entered the field with the avowed object of winning back many of the present adherents of Islam to the faith of their Hindu forefathers. Writing in a recent issue of *The Muhammadi*, Calcutta, the Khadim-ul-Islam, of the Bengal Jama'at-i-Ulema, reports that the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj, now working in Bengal, have through their host of preachers brought into the Hindu fold some 35,000 people from the non-Hindu peoples in Bengal and Assam. Needless to say the figure is a gross exaggeration, but there can be no doubt whatever that conversions are taking place.

The Khadim announces that the Jama'at are planning counter-propaganda on a large scale, and appeals for the sum of Rs. 5,000 per mensem to enable them to engage one hundred preachers at an average salary of Rs. 50 per mensem. He states that twenty preachers have already been secured, some of whom have started work, and for these the sum of Rs. 1,000 is immediately required.

Notes

New literature for Muslims. We are glad to notify members of the publication, in both Urdu and Bengali, of translations of *The Best Friend*, the Life of Jesus for Muslim readers. Each version costs one anna, and may be had from the P.R.B.S., Lahore, and C. T. Book Society, Calcutta, respectively. The name in Urdu is *Haqiqi Dost* and in Bengali, *Sachcha Dost*. We hope to publish reviews next month. Workers in Bengal will welcome a new edition of *Asha Taru* (Sweet First Fruits); price two annas, C.T.B.S., Calcutta.

Do not forget to apply for grants to enable you to publish such literature! Dr. M. T. Titus has returned and has taken over the secretaryship of the N. C. C. Committee on Literature for Muslims. All correspondence should be addressed to him at Hardoi, U. P. and not to the Secretary of the League.

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A limited number of the *Survey Report* will be available at Dr. Zwemer's Conferences. The price is twelve annas, postage extra. Copies in strictly limited numbers may be had from the N.C.C. 1 Staveley Road, Poona.

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A need is felt in Calcutta for Bible-women and teachers with a knowledge of Urdu, to work with one of our members among Muslim women in the zananas. She writes: "The work amongst Muslims here is most encouraging, but the lack of Urdu-speaking workers—teachers and Bible women—prevents progress to anything like the extent possible. The readiness to read God's word is amazing." If you are able to put this friend in touch with a source of supply please write to her: Miss A. M. Lees, C.E.Z.M.S., 1 Cornwallis Sq. Calcutta.

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Lectures for Muslims in Ceylon. 'We have with us' wrote a member recently, 'Rev. Shah Khan of Hyderabad, Deccan, who is holding lectures and discussions for Muslims which are arousing a great deal of interest locally; we shall be very glad if a petition for prayer for this work and its following up might be included in 'News and Notes.'

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We call attention to the fact that Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, London, have just published a second edition of *The Moslem Christ*, Dr. Zwemer's well-known book.

We have still a dozen copies left of 'The Persian Report' of conferences held during Dr. Zwemer's recent visit to that country. We can supply a copy to members who send eight annas in stamps to cover all postages.

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Insult to Religions. Muslims in the Panjab, and indeed throughout India, have recently become incensed over alleged scurrilous remarks about Muhammad which have appeared in published writings of the Arya Samajists.

The Government of India, feeling that existing legislation needed strengthening, have introduced a new clause into Chapter 15 of the Indian Penal Code giving magistrates the requisite power to bring offenders to book. The text of this clause has been published as follows:

"Whoever by words, either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, intentionally insults or attempts to outrage the religious feeling of any class of His Majesty's subjects, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both."

The offence is made non-bailable and non-compoundable, but the arrest shall not be without a warrant, and a magistrate below the rank of Presidency magistrate or first class magistrate shall not try it.

This is a move which needs to be closely followed by all mission workers in India. There is a danger lest injustice be done by curtailing liberty. There is this to be said, however; such an instrument can be a two-edged sword. One of the most vigorous Muslim supporters of the new measure in Bengal has himself, in time past, grossly offended against all decency in this very respect.

NEW MEMBERS

Miss M. Warburton Booth,	Z.B.M.M.	Gorakhpur, U.P.
Miss E. L. Peterson,	A.P.M.	Saharanpur, U.P.
Rev. H. Martin,	I.P.M.	Ahmedabad.
Miss Hudson,	"	Ahmedabad.
Miss McCluggage,	"	Ahmedabad.
Miss Barry,	"	Nanpura, Surat.
Miss Hensen,	C.M.A.	Virangam, Ahmedabad.
Miss Mow,	C.B.A.	Vyara, Surat.
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Miss E. High,	Z.B.M.M.	Bombay.

(This brings our membership to the new total of 567)

The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.). The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies of this issue to addresses mentioned by members, with a view to securing new subscribers. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Hon. Secretary :—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,
Baptist Mission,
Dacca, Bengal.



Edited and published by Rev. L. Bevan Jones, Dacca, Bengal, and printed at the Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, by S. F. Robinson, Superintendent.