

News and Notes.

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

Series IX.

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Mar. 1st = 20th Jumáda'l-Ukhra' (6th mo.)

Mar. 12th = 1st Rajab, 1339, A.H.

An Impossible Innovation.

"One harm Mr. Gandhi's movement has done which cannot be effaced for years. The foundation of parental and scholastic discipline has been undermined. The prospects of facile martyrdom and patriotic service that have been dangled before the youth of the community have had the effect of a heady potion.....Mr. Gandhi as an educational reformer is utterly out of court."

The Hon. Srinivasa Sastri in 'The Indian Review.'

THE following account of a passage of arms with a bigoted Muslim undergraduate—a boarder in a mission hostel—will not be without special interest to readers of 'News and Notes.'

Messrs. Gandhi and Shaukat Ali visited our town about the middle of December last and addressed dense crowds of people one evening out on the playing fields. They worked on the feelings of the audience, many of whom were students, by giving harrowing descriptions of the tragic events in the Punjab. It is possible that appeals were also made to all present to be more faithful and zealous in the performance of the exercises of religion. That at least is the assumption, for this particular student, a senior and a *sayyid* came back to the hostel greatly excited and late that same night, to the astonishment of everyone, made the quadrangle ring with the chant of the *ázán*. He was at it again before dawn next morning.

He had spent but two terms amongst us so that another Muslim who has been here for years came over later in the morning (I live in an adjoining compound) to inform me as to what had taken place and to ask if I would allow it. I promptly said, 'No,' and expressed my surprise at this having been done without first consulting me. I then went over to see the *sayyid* and found him very excited and running a temperature of 103°. It was not the time to discuss the matter with him for he was very 'hot' also about 'the brutal tyranny of the British over the Indians'; but I told him quietly that I could by no means permit this innovation. I refused to be drawn into a discussion of the matter. He then left for home and I wrote a letter to him making it quite clear that I could not allow the *ázán* to be called within

the hostel premises, and stated that if he found this decision irksome he was to feel free to go elsewhere. He had however changed his mind as to the length of his stay at home and was back in the hostel before receiving my letter. He had not however, so I found out, changed his mind about calling the *ásán*, so I appealed to him yet again to desist and, in the hope that an appeal to reason would be of some avail, I posted up the following notice :—

'About the middle of December it was brought to my notice that a Muslim boarder had pronounced the *ásán*, or call to prayer, in the precincts of this Hostel. I was surprised to learn this for two reasons. 1. It had been done without consulting me and without my permission. 2. To the best of my knowledge it had never been done before throughout eight years since the Hostel was opened, though Muslims have been residing here ever since. Furthermore the above mentioned boarder has himself been residing here for two terms without, as he himself admits, calling the *ásán*.

I wish to make plain my attitude in this matter since, as I have explained already to the boarder in question, I cannot permit the continuance of this practice within the Hostel precincts.

In 1912 I admitted some 40 Muslim students into this Hostel, and, at their request, readily granted them the exclusive use of one (double-seated) room for their *namás*. That privilege has been continued right up to the present, although there are now only 12 Muslim boarders and some 30 Hindus. No request was made at the outset or ever since, for permission to sound the *ásán* before prayers, nor have I ever received any complaints about this matter. I have always been given to understand that the Muslim boarders were very grateful for the reservation of this room for their prayers and that having this they were quite satisfied.

This concession has been made to them in a Hostel under Christian management, in which there is absolutely no compulsion in religious matters, and is itself a proof of the desire of the Warden that Muslim boarders should enjoy all necessary facility for prayer. But, just because it is a Hostel under Christian management and one in which Hindus, Brahmós, and Christians usually reside, I desire it to be known that this innovation cannot be allowed. The calling of the *ásán* is admittedly optional, as witness the entire absence of it in this Hostel for eight years, and I shall be glad if, only out of consideration for the students who are now busy reading for their approaching examinations, the matter can be left for this term as it has been for eight years. I am quite willing to talk over this matter personally with any boarder who would like to come and see me.'

Objection was made to the statement that the calling of the *ásán* was 'optional.' I was merely quoting the words of the boarder in question. But he now took up the attitude that an 'optional' act became compulsory (*farz*) if opposition or interference were shown by outsiders. He persisted in looking upon this matter as a religious issue, and tried to draw me into making some statement about Islamic practice which I knew he would seek to use against me after he left the hostel.

I realized also that he was probably in touch with the leading maulvies of the town, so that my very connection with them as a missionary was at stake. For the sake of the wider issues I was prepared to show this heady controversialist considerable leniency. He was then

about to sit his test examinations for the B.A. degree. At his request I let him stay on, but appealed to him as a gentleman to refrain from calling the *azān* for such time as he remained here.

My appeal had no effect, neither would he leave the hostel of his own accord, so that I had no option but to serve him with a written order of expulsion from the hostel *on the ground of continued disobedience*. Even so, the day and hour of his expulsion were fixed for a time after his examinations were completed. (I have that with which to meet him in the future !)

He had been seeking martyrdom, but he was woefully disappointed when in my order of expulsion I made no reference to the *azān* or Muslim practice as such ! He repeatedly asked me to insert some explanatory statement. I would not be drawn.

In a final letter on his departure he made the following statements: "I am sorry to you (and to my conscience) that I could not respect your 'appeal to my honour as a Muslim gentleman.' No 'honour' is my 'honour' unless it is the 'honour' of God also..... I admit and shall continue to admit that I found in you an inspirer, a guide who spared no pains to open the eyes of those who believe in you and place confidence in you. I owe many teachings of Jesus Christ (Peace be on him) to you."

Though forbidden by my order to re-enter the hostel precincts he asked in this letter for permission to come at times to my private residence, a concession which I very gladly made. He thought it necessary to add: 'Do not bear any personal hatred. Do not take me to be a tame dog which sometimes bites his own master.' (!)

He has gone and so have seven of the others, but I expect to see him again. He has taken with him a copy of Dr. Zwemer's new book on Al Ghazali, 'A Moslem Seeker after God.' You will perhaps wonder why. I have had a Bible Class for the boarders and we have studied the life of Christ in the form of 'The Master Man.' The sayyid attended every time and finally won the second prize for a translation into his mother tongue of the parable of the prodigal son. There is much in Al Ghazali to give him pause and, who knows, the book may touch his heart. Anyway he is worth praying for.

Report of the Sub-Committee on Work Among Moslems for 1919

SOME weeks ago we received the following report of the work of this Committee for the year 1919. We have thought members might like to have a record of what was done, even though rather late in the day.

"Two things were considered by this Committee during the year.

1. The first was the question as to how the Committee might help the cause of work among Moslems. A preliminary meeting of the four members resident in Lahore was held in the month of February to confer on this subject. A circular letter was also sent to the members of the Committee as well as to the members of the Executive Committee of the Missionaries to Moslems League to ascertain their views. Among the suggestions made as to the matters on which this Committee might advise and help, the following deserve to be mentioned :—

- (i) The securing of a more general interest in work for the evangelization of Moslems in India, both in the Mission Field and on the part of the Mission Boards at Home.
- (ii) The securing of united effort on the part of missions in Moslem areas in India, e.g. by means of Inter-Provincial Evangelistic Services.
- (iii) The revision of present literature for Muhammedans, and the preparation of more literature suited to modern conditions.
- (iv) The co-ordination of literature, through mutual consultation, in the matter of good and useful books, in Indian vernaculars which might with profit be translated into other vernaculars. This might be accomplished through Provincial Sub-Committees.

2. The second question which came before the Committee was with reference to the proscription by the Bengal Government of Dr. Zwemer's book, "Islam, A Challenge to Faith." This question was taken up at the suggestion of Rev. J. Takle. A circular letter was sent to all the members calling attention to several passages in Dr. Zwemer's book to which it is probable that objection has been raised by the Muhammedans, and asking whether in view of these, it would be wise for us at the present time to agitate for the removal of this ban.

On the strength of the replies received the following action was taken, viz : that it is wise for us to be cautious in taking any decisive action at present. Meanwhile the Assam and Bengal Representative Council has taken action, and the particular matter of Dr. Zwemer's book may profitably be postponed, so far as the National Council is concerned, until the meeting next November. Furthermore, in view of the existing condition of unrest, it seemed to be exceedingly unwise to us to take up any new matter with the Government at that time. The action of the Bengal Council, it was thought, would give pause to the Governor of that Province.

In accordance with one of the suggestions made in this correspondence a small sub-committee was also appointed to report upon statements in Muhammedan books, reflecting upon the character of our Lord. Whatever use might be made of such statements in future it would be for the Council to decide. The following members were invited to gather information within their respective areas, on which

this Committee might act—such information to be preserved for reference at such a time as it may be useful: Canon Sell, Madras; Rev. W. Goldsack, Jessore, Bengal; Rev. H. J. Lane Smith, Bombay; Prof. R. Siraj-ud-Din, Lahore; Prof. E. Ahmed Shah, Lucknow, U. P. Reports from this sub-committee have not been received. But we have no doubt that in the matter of this defensive weapon we are by no means lacking in strength. Since this whole question is to come before the National Council, we trust that further light will be shed on this difficult question of missionary policy in the matter of literature for the Moslems.

It did not seem to the Committee that a formal meeting of the whole committee was necessary during the year.

RESOLVED:—

XVII. (i) That the Council bring to the attention of Missions and Home Boards the need of greater interest and more special effort on the part of missions in the matter of direct Evangelization work among Moslems in particular and educated classes in general.

(ii) That Missions be asked to make a united effort in Moslem areas in India by means of Inter-Mission and Inter-Provincial Evangelistic Work and in other ways.

(iii) That the Committee carry on an investigation regarding:—

(1) Co-ordination of Literature.

(2) Inter-Provincial Evangelism.

(3) A Union Institution for training workers among Moslems.

(iv). That the attention of the Provincial Representative Councils be invited to the need of revising some of the present literature for Moslems in various vernaculars, and the preparation of more literature to suit modern conditions.

Muslim Politics in India.

COL. Wedgwood, writing in the "Nation" about Mahatma Gandhi as "India's Saint," makes the following statements about the part being played by certain advanced Moslems in the campaign against the Government.—

"Gandhi alone is not enough to drive India to anarchy. There are his allies, the Moslem fanatics The Saint's allies are not of his own sort. Shaukat Ali is his stable companion, and Shaukat Ali, once a cricketer and now a fanatic, stands seven feet high and five feet broad, in a great green cloak and a high, white astrachan cap. Shaukat Ali is a likeable, big, bluff, hearty man, when you meet him; but his ideas of the virtue of passive resistance are hardly skin deep. He works up the Moslem "Ulemas" and "Peers," and procures "fetwas," and gets the whole of religious fanaticism boiling. He calls the mixed crowd "brothers," but the only brothers he recognizes are brothers in the faith. The Sultan of Ram-

pur (his native State) has taken from him his family, his goods and home. He has lost all except his sixth-century faith. "Tell the Government that I am too fat to run," he says to those who warn him of imminent arrest.

A revision of the Sevres Treaty will hardly appease Shaukat Ali. For him the British are *kafirs* for whom there is no place in India. And the strength of the non-co-operation movement is among the Moslems. It is the Moslem Colleges that the students have deserted or captured. It is the Moslem seats on the Council that find no electors or candidates. It is the recalcitrant Moslems who feel the first and full weight of the social boycott. The Hindoos, writhing under memories of Martial Law, understand neither the man nor the cause, and are a little nervous of the whirlwind; while Shaukat Ali, and his brother Mahomed, would even stop cow-killing to cement the alliance and remove the rule of those who have trampled on the Khalifa and on the people of God."

Notes on the Muslim Calendar.

By Rev. Ahmad Shah.

A tradition is recorded by Uns that Mohammed used to say the following words about the beginning of the month of Rajab: Allaham barak laná fi Rajab wa Sha'bán wa balaghna Ramadhán.

There is a difference of opinion about the 27th being the night of ascent (Miráj). In Muslim countries this 'night of ascent' is considered to be very sacred and blessed, and many meetings recounting the birth, etc., of Mohammed are held everywhere. The "Miraj" of Mohammed marks a glorious epoch in the history of Islam. Holding meetings for the recital of Mohammed's life on the 27th of Rajab is extremely praiseworthy and laudable, provided proper attention is paid to the observation of the lawful ways in which these ought to be carried on. In some cities the meetings connected with Rajab are vitiated by unbecoming practices such as often mar the observance of the Maulud. These have been mentioned in notes on the month Rabi-u'l-Awwal. But the Mohammedans can be greatly profited by these meetings if they are kept clear of unseemly practices.

The common people name the fast of the 27th of Rajab, the Hazári fast, but there is no reliable tradition supporting the notion that it is equal to one thousand fasts. There is no harm in keeping the fast, but it is absurd to believe it is equal in value to one thousand fasts. The custom of the consecrated loaves (tabáarak kírotiyán) is equally fictitious and groundless.

Special care is taken to observe the first appearance of the moon of Shábán on the 29th of Rajab, so that no confusion may be occasioned about the moon of Ramzan.

(This brings to a conclusion Mr. Ahmad Shah's interesting Notes on the Muslim Calendar—Ed.)

The Moslem World Magazine.

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Notes

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.—The new departure of collecting members' subscriptions by the V.P.P. system in India, has been a conspicuous success. The additional registration fee insures against loss in the post. Will all members who so paid, kindly take this acknowledgment in lieu of any further receipt.

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LECTURES ON ISLAM.—As last year, Messrs W. Goldsack and Bevan Jones have recently again lectured to the Divinity Students of Serampore College, Bengal. The subjects taken this year were, 'The Traditions in Islam,' and 'The Faith of Islam.' The class followed the lectures with very keen interest.

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TRACTS FOR MUSLIMS.—We regret we have omitted to call attention to some new 4-page Urdu leaflets recently published by the Punjab Religious Book Society, Anarkali, Lahore. The titles are inscribed within the sign of a large and arresting note of interrogation, and are as follows:—(i) Where are you going?; (ii) How old are you?; (iii) What is your condition?; (iv) Has the war ended?. The price of these is Rs. 2 per 1000. We are confident that many members of the League will find these tracts useful. The P. R. B. S. have also published a new 8-page Urdu tract on 'The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.'

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THE NILE MISSION PRESS, CAIRO.—Many of us know, value and use Mr. Takle's excellent little book, 'Sirat'l Mustaqim,' written in English with the educated Muslim in view, (published by C. L. S.). It deserves a better sale than it is getting. Write to the C. L. S. Calcutta or Madras for it. Dr. Wherry has translated it into Persian Urdu though it is not yet printed. It has recently been translated by the N. M. P., Cairo, into Arabic. Mr. Upson speaks very highly of it as 'one of those books, originally written on the Mission field in 'oriental English'—by which we mean *English full of Eastern thought*—which appeal to Eastern peoples and are readily translatable to Muslim languages. This is an altogether admirable book, approaching the follower of Muhammad by the gentlest and most sympathetic way.'

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A LADY MEMBER WRITES :—' I came to take charge of the Pardah School in — and have Moslems among my pupils and generally one or two boarders. I am praying just now for a child and her father who are inclined to Christianity. The father is a doctor in a native state (India), but wishes to leave and asked me to tell him of any Mission Hospital I knew that would give him a post.....He calls himself a Mohammedan mystic but is attracted towards Christianity and I would like him to be among Christians who would help him.'

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AN INDIAN MUSLIM UNDERGRADUATE BAPTIZED.—Andrew Khan (formerly Md. Munsad Khan) first became interested in Christian truth through open-air preaching in —. For several months he read the Bible, comparing it critically with the Quran until he was convinced of the truth. On his confession of faith in Christ he was baptized on last St. Andrew's day. 'He is quite joyful,' but there may be persecution ahead. He comes of a respectable family of landholders.

For Praise and Prayer.

Let us unite to praise God for the conversion of the Indian undergraduate (p. 24). Our prayers are asked on his behalf that he may grow in grace and in his faith in Christ his Saviour, and gain strength to bear the persecutions he has yet to face.

2. Prayer is asked for the Muslim undergraduate (mentioned on pp 17-19) who has severed his connection with the mission hostel, that his new knowledge about Jesus Christ may be blessed to him.

3. Special prayer is asked on behalf of the people in China suffering from the present terrible famine, amongst them are many Moslems—that almighty God may once again overrule for blessing this fresh calamity.

NEW MEMBERS.

50. Canon J. Ali Bakhsh,	C.M.S.	Asrapur, Panjab.
59. Rev. A. Grace,	A.B.M.S.	Pabna, E. Bengal.
68. Rev J. C. R. Ewing,	A. P. Mission,	Lahore, Panjab.
78. Miss G. Harry,	A. B. M. S.	Mymensingh, E. Bengal.

(New members are at present being given numbers left vacant through resignations, etc.)

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The annual subscription to the League is now only Rs. 2-0-0. The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies 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.