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Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and Other Sects

Born in Franconia, the son of a rabbi, Joseph Wolff (1795–1862) was baptised in 1812. Educated in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, he later studied Arabic, Syriac and Aramaic in Vienna, and Christian theology in Rome before being expelled from the city for his heretical views. He came to England, became a member of the Church of England, and then embarked on his missionary work. Though he met with limited evangelical success, the books he went on to publish made him well known at home. Reissued here is his 1835 account of travels in the early 1830s through the Middle East and Asia, during which he experienced robbery and disease, journeyed through the Himalayas, and was hosted by numerous royal courts. This tale, exotic and extraordinary, is a remarkable source for those interested in nineteenth-century orientalism and Christian missionary zeal.

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Researches
AND
MISSIONARY LABOURS
AMONG THE
JEWS, MOHAMMEDANS, AND OTHER SECTS,
BY THE
REV. JOSEPH WOLFF

DURING HIS TRAVELS BETWEEN THE YEARS 1831 AND 1834,
FROM MALTA TO EGYPT, CONSTANTINOPLE, ARMENIA,
PERSIA, KHOROSSAUN, TOORKESTAUN, BOKHARA, BALKH,
CABOOL IN AFFGHANISTAUN, THE HIMMALAYAH MOUN-
TAINS, CASHMEER, HINDOOSTAUN, THE COAST OF ABYS-
SINIA, AND YEMEN.

“Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so
did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke vi. 26.



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Church Missionary Society's Press in Malta.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

J. H. FRERE.



DEAR SIR,

A complete stranger to you, I came to your house ;
and you not only granted me the rites of hospitality,
but at a moment when I was deprived of all the means
of executing my purpose of preaching the tidings of sal-
vation in the land of Bokhara and Affghanistaun, you
offered me, without my soliciting it, your kind assistance.

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After enjoying for several months your most instructive conversation, and wandering in spirit together through the opinions of the Ancients, and communicating our ideas on higher points, regarding the eternal welfare of human beings; I set out for my perilous journey: with your help I was able to make out my way, and to rescue myself from difficulties; and during the time of my absence, you, and your whole family, treated with the utmost kindness those that are dearest to me; so that even my boy of three years old seems to be sensible of it, and has learnt to look up to you with reverence and gratitude. To whom else, therefore, but to you should I dedicate these humble pages, containing the Acts of my Pilgrimage to Bokhara, Balkh, Cabool, Cashmeer, and Hindoostaun? especially as I hope soon to undertake

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another pilgrimage; not knowing that which may befall me, nor whether I shall ever see you again. To none then, I repeat it, can I dedicate the results of my labours with more satisfaction to myself, than to you. But I feel that I am addressing one of whom I am incompetent to speak in terms commensurate with merit; indeed, to the inhabitants of this island it were superfluous to do so: all, from the highest to the lowest, allow, that to the native poor you are looked upon as a blessing; your hospitality is known to all. And I confidently add, that I do not know where I should look for an individual, combining, like yourself, so many of the best gifts of our nature with so much profound erudition; so much benevolence with so much nobleness of intellect. In venturing to write this my genuine sentiment, it is not flattery,

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but truth which prompts me, and I am convinced that in
doing so I have the suffrages of all who know you.

This book then, thus dedicated, may remain as a mark
of the ardent gratitude of the writer, who, with prayers
for you and your whole house, is ever,

DEAR SIR,

YOUR MOST HUMBLE

AND AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

Malta, 29th. January,
1835.

AND SERVANT,

JOSEPH WOLFF,
MISSIONARY.

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P R E F A C E.



The Reader must not expect to find in the pages of my journal descriptions of ancient monuments, or of natural or artificial curiosities. The object of my journey, as I have stated in it, was solely to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ, amongst the Jews, and the tribes whom I have visited; and to seek for those tribes of Israel whom I conceive to be the Kings of the East, mentioned in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. I have however at the same time given the best account in my power of those sects which have been hitherto unknown, and of the character of those nations to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been revealed, their good qualities, and their vices; but chiefly the expectations, expressed by my own nation, the Jews, in distant countries. I have not entirely passed over in silence the adventures I met with in those countries, and the disappointments I experienced in my labours; nor the customs and manners of the nations I visited; which especially illustrate historical facts, manners, and modes of speaking, and which we frequently meet with in *sacred writ*. I have also pointed out such situations in which Missionary Societies may extend their operations; and I have spoken with impartiality of the success which Missionaries have met with in the East. So that I humbly trust, the Christian will here find sufficient motives to admire God's Providence

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PREFACE.

in preserving his servants; and Missionary Societies find matter for encouragement in the extending of their labours to those benighted countries. The individual Missionary may find matter for confirming his confidence in the Lord; the Divine, matter for research. By my openly disputing with Mussulmans at Meshed, and throughout Khorossaun, which I am enabled to testify by letters from Mohammedans of those countries, and the passports of the Princes of Persia, and the King of Bokhara, which I have annexed, it may be seen that one may travel with these objects without disguise. I have abstained from introducing subjects of controversy amongst real Christians; for my purpose in publishing this journal is, to edify all those who worship the name of our divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to encourage them in uniting together in opposition to Jews, Mohammedans, Infidels, and Pagans. If the Reader should find that these objects have been attained, it will be a great satisfaction to the Author; and if they should feel themselves in some measure disappointed in their expectations, they will take into consideration, that these pages came from a humble individual, such as,

JOSEPH WOLFF,

MISSIONARY.