

Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History

Volume 24. South Asia (1800-1914)

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‘Imāduddīn Lāhiz

DATE OF BIRTH 1830
PLACE OF BIRTH Panipat, India
DATE OF DEATH 9 August 1900
PLACE OF DEATH Amritsar, India

BIOGRAPHY

‘Imāduddīn Lāhiz was one of the most prolific writers on Christian-Muslim relations in South Asia in the 19th century. His writing career began through his friendship with the two best-known Muslim polemicists of the mid-century, Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī (1818-92; *CMR* 24, 253-60) and Muḥammad Wazīr Khān (d. 1873; *CMR* 24, 237-45), though his life after 1866 had more to do with the best-known target of Muslim polemic in South Asia, Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1801-65; *CMR* 24, 188-236).

‘Imāduddīn began his formal Islamic education in Agra when he was 16. In the year before the well-known public debate took place in Agra in April 1854, he was commissioned by Wazīr Khān, Maulvī Muḥammad Maẓhar (1821-85) and other leading Muslims to preach at the royal Jāma‘ mosque in Agra against Pfander’s evangelistic activities (*Wāqī‘āt*, p. 7; Becht, *The book and the prophet*, pp. 202-3). At the debate itself, he was one of Kairānavī’s assistants against Pfander and Thomas Valpy French (1825-91; *CMR* 24, 338-44). Although he showed himself to be a staunch opponent of Christianity, he later experienced a crisis of faith and set out to find answers for himself. He became a Sufi fakir, living a life of austerity and spiritual discipline, but he found that he was disappointed by this: ‘When all this toil was over, and I went thence, I had no strength left in my body; my face was wan and pale, and I could not even hold myself up against the wind’ (*A Mohammedan brought to Christ*, 1885 edition, p. 14). He found himself in turmoil again in 1864, when his Muslim colleague, ‘Abdulḥalīm Ṣafdar ‘Alī (*CMR* 24, 765-80), converted to Christianity. In a bid to win Ṣafdar ‘Alī back to Islam, he carried out two years of intensive research into Christianity and Islam during which he read the Bible for the first time. In the end, instead of winning Ṣafdar ‘Alī back, ‘Imāduddīn himself was won over and was baptised by Robert Clark in Amritsar in 1866.

Following his conversion, ‘Imāduddīn Lāhiz played an important role in the nascent Punjabi Church. He was confirmed on 3 December 1868, appointed deacon a few days later, and ordained a priest of the Anglican



REV. IMAD-UD-DIN, D.D.

Illustration 14. ‘Imāduddīn Lāhiz

Church in December 1872. He also quickly became a Christian apologist, dedicating nearly half of the estimated 53 books he wrote to the defence of Christianity. *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya* is his autobiographical account of his struggle to find the truth, written immediately after his conversion. Two other important sources for his life are his *Kitāb intisāb al-‘Imād* (‘The ancestry of ‘Imād’, 1887), in which he sketches his genealogy back to the royal house of Persia and Abū Ḥanīfa, after whom the Ḥanafī legal school is named, and his *Khatt-i Shakāgo* (trans. Clark, ‘Dr. Imad-ud-din’s paper for Chicago’), in which he describes the effects of the preaching of the Gospel on the Muslims of India and lists the names of 117 prominent Muslim converts to Christianity (‘Imāduddīn, *Mohammedan converts*, pp. 6-16).

‘Imāduddīn’s writings during the last four decades of the 19th century take into account a number of Muslim authors in north India, including al-Ḥasan Mohanī (*Tahqīq al-īmān*, 1866; *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, 1868), Chirāgh ‘Alī (*Taqīrāt-i ta‘līqāt*, 1877), Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (*Tanqīd al-khayālāt*, 1882-3), Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad (*Tawzīn al-aqwāl*, 1893) and, of course, Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī. During this time, he served the Church in north India from Amritsar, preaching regularly and writing a number of works on Christian themes and, together with Robert Clark, Bible commentaries (‘Report of the Rev. Imad-ud-din’, 1878, p. 494; ‘Report’, 1880; cf. Ṣafdar ‘Alī, ‘Urdu review’, pp. 598-600). His sermons were greatly admired by British colleagues (‘In memoriam’, pp. 914-15). He also produced an Urdu translation of the Qur’an. In 1884, he was awarded an honorary Lambeth DD (Gracey, ‘Imad-ud-Din’, p. 4). ‘Imāduddīn passed away in Amritsar in August 1900 as one of the best-known and most loved of Indian pastors, authors, preachers and debaters of 19th-century India.

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Tahqīq al-īmān

'Investigation of the faith'

DATE 1866

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

'Imāduddīn wrote *Tahqīq al-īmān* in the year of his conversion to explain why he had embraced Christianity and to start to begin to respond to some of the anti-Christian polemic he had favoured as a Muslim. The first

thing he wrote after becoming a Christian, it runs to 140 pages and was published by the Punjab Religious Society in Lahore in 1866. The page numbers below refer to the 1878 third edition.

The book is divided into a brief introduction (*muqaddima*), two chapters, and a conclusion. ‘Imāduddīn states that he intends it for *ṭālibān-i ḥaqq* (‘seekers after truth’), especially those *maulvīs* (Muslim religious leaders) who – as he a little later expressed it at the end of his short autobiography – ignorantly and thoughtlessly put their trust in the religion of Muḥammad (*Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya*, p. 13). *Tahqīq al-īmān* is a reasoned defence of his conversion, but it also falls into a particular category of *manāẓaratī adab* (‘debate literature’) because it endeavours to establish the superiority of ‘Imāduddīn’s case for Christianity.

‘Imāduddīn begins by praising the one almighty, merciful, just God who is without any associate and who created humans with free will and commanded them to follow the *ṣirāṭ-i mustaqīm* (‘the straight path’, a quotation of Q 1:6). By his grace, God gave sufficient intellect to those who search to distinguish between good and evil. God also sent the good news through the former and later messengers so that, when sinners read God’s Word with carefulness and deep thought, or listen with an attentive ear, they will know the straight path that leads to salvation (p. 1).

Having set out that human beings are by nature designed to seek after God, ‘Imāduddīn tells his own story of how he had been in search of his Creator for the previous 20 years. He briefly outlines the stages in his search for God, beginning when he left home at the age of 15 and went to the Government College in Agra, where he studied Arabic, Persian and the Islamic sciences, and also learned from the Sufis. He preached at the royal Jāma‘ Mosque in Agra for three years and then, leaving everything, went to the city of Qaroli, where he followed extreme Sufi practices in an effort to meet God. In short, having travelled to many places he eventually came to Lahore, where he was appointed a lecturer in the teachers’ training school.

In Lahore, ‘Imāduddīn had discussions with Christians and *maulvīs*. After much reflection, deliberation and debating, doubt about Islam took a firm hold on him. His fellow Muslims did not have any strong proof for the prophethood of Muḥammad, and this appears to be the initial reason why he abandoned Islam and embraced Christianity (p. 2).

At this point, ‘Imāduddīn makes it very clear that he is challenging his former brothers in faith and also the *maulvīs* to reply to his objections and prove the truth of Islam, or otherwise to join him by accepting Christianity. The book stands as an important link between his autobiography, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya*, with its short account of his conversion, and his

detailed refutation of three popular works of Muslim polemic in *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn* (1868).

In the introduction, ‘Imāduddīn begins a response to the Muslim accusation of *tahrīf* (‘corruption’, ‘alteration’) in the Bible. He names as prime sources of this accusation Āl-i Ḥasan’s *Kitāb-i istifsār* (‘The book of questions’, 1845), Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī’s *Izālat al-awhām* (‘Removal of delusions’, 1852-3), and Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān’s *I’jāz-i ‘Īsavī* (‘Christian inimitability’, 1854-5), the three Muslim polemical works that ‘Imāduddīn had studied along with the Bible during the intense year-long investigation that preceded his baptism (*Wāqī‘āt*, p. 13). He promises to provide a full response to Muslim polemic in a later work (eventually, *Hidāya*) (p. 5).

Ch. 1 deals with the life and teachings of Muḥammad, to question whether he was a prophet of God. ‘Imāduddīn assesses the claims of Muslims that Muḥammad was the Seal of the prophets (Q 33:40), the greatest of all prophets and the chief of all earlier prophets, as well as the intercessor for sinners, and that, with the appearance of the Qur’an, all the books of pre-Islamic prophets have been abrogated and now only the Qur’an should be obeyed. He sets out four criteria for prophethood and challenges Muslims to prove that Muḥammad meets them (p. 21). They are: did he perform miracles; were his coming and character foretold by earlier prophets; did his prophecies prove to be true; and did he present excellent teachings? ‘Imāduddīn thus questions the ‘proofs’ for the prophethood of Muḥammad that are advanced by Muslim polemicists and concludes from what he has read that Muḥammad lacked the characteristics of a true prophet.

Ch. 2 then deals with the life and teachings of Jesus as a way of determining whether Christianity is from God, and by what proofs its truth is established. ‘Imāduddīn uses the same four criteria to demonstrate that Christianity is the true religion of God and that salvation is to be found in Christianity alone. This, he writes, was his reason for abandoning Islam and embracing Christianity, along with the absence of any convincing proof that Muḥammad was a true prophet of God.

In his conclusion, ‘Imāduddīn presents features found only in the Gospels and not in the scriptures of any other religion, which he argues are proof of their divine origin. He first argues that the truth and divine knowledge that can be acquired from the Vedas and *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) even with great effort do not produce broadness of heart and peace in the human individual, while a true seeker after God finds them in the Bible without any difficulty or labour. The testimonies of the pre-Islamic

prophets inspire trust to the extent that they transport a believer from the point of *‘ayn al-yaqīn* to *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (from observational certainty to certainty itself). By consulting the Bible, readers can know their own condition and the glory of God and, provided they seek truthfully, can find the way to salvation. This cannot be found in any other book and not at all in the Qur’an.

The one who caused the Bible to be written is necessarily *‘ālim al-ghayb* (‘prescient, knower of the hidden or unseen’) because the Bible reveals the secrets of every human heart and, by its teachings, brings satisfaction and hope to the anxious spirit and grants real cleanliness by purifying the heart from its pollution. From the text of the Bible, the reader knows that the one who gave this word is the absolutely holy, true and merciful God and that not a hint of deception or subterfuge is found in Him. ‘Imāduddīn contrasts this with the text of the Qur’an, which he claims reveals the deception and hypocrisy of its author. The Bible changes the hearts of men, transforming the proud and wicked into pure, humble and holy characters; and this good work goes on continually. The Qur’an, however, not only fails to accomplish this holy end, but on the contrary continues to keep followers in their natural sinful condition. He writes that, for 20 years, he read the Qur’an with great love and deep understanding but did not experience a similar change, nor did he see this change of heart in any Muslim. Rather, he claims, the same carnality, anger and prejudice remain in the heart, no matter how perfect a Muslim might be. Anyone who objectively compares the Bible and the Qur’an as a true seeker of the truth will at once reject the Qur’an and accept the Gospel. No one accepts the Qur’an after such a comparison, he insists.

‘Imāduddīn ends with a solemn statement to his Muslim friends that he has written this book out of friendship and good will, so he urges them to read it without any bias and to accept the Gospel of Christ.

SIGNIFICANCE

‘Imāduddīn mentions on the first page of *Tahqīq al-īmān* that its publication faced some opposition, which would not be surprising for the book of an ex-Muslim that compares Muḥammad with Jesus. It proved popular: the first edition had a print run of 1,500 copies, the second 5,000 copies, and the third an additional 1,000. It was the first significant *manāzaratī* book written by a learned Muslim convert to Christianity in defence of Christian truth and to refute long-held Muslim doctrines. ‘Imāduddīn was an ‘insider’ – not only a former Muslim who knew Islam extremely well,

but also one from the inner circle of the north Indian ‘*ulamā*’ who had challenged Karl Gottlieb Pfander and his *Mizān ul-ḥaqq*. The books by the Muslim polemicists Kairānavī and others whom he mentions had become the most popular weapons used by Muslims against the missionaries and Christianity. ‘Imāduddīn’s book caused a great stir among Muslims and many challenged him to debate publicly, and in the following years tried to refute *Tahqīq al-īmān*. He wrote in 1878 that, before releasing a third edition of the book that year, he read carefully through *Ṣiyānat ul-insān* (‘Protection of humanity’), a large work that ‘the Lahore Mahommedans’ had written against *Tahqīq* (‘Christian moulvie’, p. 494). Farman Ali and Humaira Ahmad attribute a second refutation titled *Tiryāq-i masmūm* (‘Antidote of the poisoned’) to Mawlāna Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī (‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, p. 136).

Avril Powell discusses *Tahqīq* against the background of the faith, writings and methods of missionaries in India during the 1850s and 1860s, especially Karl Gottlieb Pfander and his *Mizān ul-ḥaqq* (“Pillar”, pp. 239-44). Dieter Becht also traces the similarities and differences between it and Pfander’s *Mizān* (*The book and the prophet*, pp. 220-2). E.M. Wherry in 1905 found the ‘spirit’ of *Tahqīq* to be ‘kindly’ and judged it ‘very satisfactory’ as a popular presentation of the Christian faith (*Muslim controversy*, London, 1905, p. 23).

PUBLICATIONS

‘Imāduddīn, *Tahqīq al-īmān*, Lahore, 1866

‘Imāduddīn, *Tahqīq al-īmān*, Allahabad, 1870²

‘Imāduddīn, *Tahqīq al-īmān*, Allahabad, 1878³; imad_lahiz/defense_christianity (digitised version available through muhammadanism.org)

‘Imāduddīn, *Tahqīq al-īmān*, 4th edition, Lahore (mentioned by Powell, “Pillar”, p. 239 n. 51)

STUDIES

F. Ali and H. Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings of subcontinent. A comparative study of their methods, impact and cogitating on new contemporising methodology’, *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 8 (2018) 129-43

Becht, *The book and the prophet*, pp. 219-22, 413-17

Powell, “Pillar”, pp. 239-44

Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya
‘Events related to ‘Imād’

DATE 1866

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya is a short autobiography of 14 pages, written in Urdu. ‘Imāduddīn wrote it in 1866, the year of his conversion to Christianity. Published by the Punjab Religious Book Society in Lahore, it was immediately translated by the Revd Robert Clark under the title *A Mohammedan brought to Christ* in 1866, and in 1978 by Ernest Hahn under the title *The life of the Rev. Maulwi Dr. Imad-u-din Lahiz*. Although testimonial in nature, it is a highly important autobiography as it reveals ‘Imāduddīn’s inner, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual struggles before leaving Islam. It is confessional as well as apologetic, because he gives reasons for abandoning the religion that his forefathers had practised for 34 generations and also for embracing the faith he had vehemently opposed.

This is an atypical account which does not begin with customary praise and prayer. It goes straight to the heart of the matter. In the very first line, ‘Imāduddīn gives the exact date and year of his conversion as well as the reason for it, which was ‘only to gain salvation’, and he says that he seeks to address the confusion and divergent opinions concerning his conversion. He gives a brief genealogy in which he informs his readers that his family is directly descended from the renowned Sufi of Hansi, Shaykh Qūṭb Jamāluddīn, and he informs his readers that he has three brothers of whom one, Maulvī Karīmuddīn, is a renowned scholar and deputy inspector in the British Raj’s education department, and another, Munshi Khairuddīn, also works in the education department. The third died in 1865.

He tells of his journey to becoming a well-known Muslim scholar and a Sufi, beginning at the age of 15, when he left his family and moved to Agra (Akbarābād), there entering the Government College where his brother Karīmuddīn was head of the department of Urdu studies. The sole purpose of his education was to find Allāh and his search was not just through formal study at the college or formal studies of Islamic sciences.

He studied *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *tafsīr* (qur’anic exegesis), Hadith, *adab* (literature), *manṭiq* (logic) and *falsafa* (philosophy). He went to mosques, into the homes of *maulvīs*, to the tombs of Sufis, to gatherings of Sufi communities, and even to wandering and intoxicated fakirs seeking help to find Allāh. He began to have doubts about Islam as a result of conversations

with Christians and, when he turned to Maulvī ‘Abdulḥalīm, who had been recommended to him by his fellow student Ṣafdar ‘Alī, he was not given answers to his questions. He then experimented with Sufism under the direction of Muḥammad Wazīr Khān and he was also appointed to preach at the royal mosque in Agra in order to oppose Karl Pfander. Finally, he ‘abandoned the world’ and became a fakir, practising extreme asceticism and performing ritual exercises in an effort to meet Allāh. In 1856, feeling totally disappointed with Islam, he returned to his home town, Panipat, and stopped following the *sharī‘a* altogether.

A new period began when he arrived at the teachers’ training school in Lahore in 1864. He mentions a conversation with the Principal, Mr Mackintosh, about the true religion. The same year, he heard about the conversion of his college friend Ṣafdar ‘Alī to Christianity. He set himself to dispute with Ṣafdar in the hope of bringing him back to Islam. To prepare for this encounter, he re-read the Muslim apologetic literature he considered most powerful and asked Mr Mackintosh to read the New Testament with him, with the result that, ‘When I arrived at the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, I began to have doubts about the Muhammadan religion’ (‘Imāduddīn, *Mohammedan brought to Christ*, p. 17). After a year of intensive research, he came to the conclusion that Islam is not a religion from God and that salvation is to be found in Christianity alone.

‘Imāduddīn was baptised on 29 April 1866 in Amritsar. He mentions benefiting from the fellowship of missionaries and pastors such as Charles Forman, Guru Das and John Newton. In contrast, all his friends and relatives turned against him, apart from one or two who kept in touch with him. He closes the book with a prayer for his relatives and friends.

SIGNIFICANCE

Although this is only a short booklet, it is significant as the autobiography of one of the best-known and most important Muslim converts to Christianity in South Asia in the 19th century. It stands out as a compelling first-person, vulnerable and confessional account in the midst of the many polemical and apologetic books written on both sides during the middle decades of the 19th century. It stands as an example of the process of dialogue leading to a change of faith.

A second edition of *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya* was published in Ludhiana in 1874 with an appendix, and a third edition was published by the Punjab Religious Book Society in 1951. There are two English translations, which are probably better known than the original Urdu, particularly the translation by Robert Clark, which has gone through many editions. *Wāqī‘āt-i*

Imādiyya has also been translated into languages such as Arabic (F.A. Klein reports seeing the distribution of an Arabic translation in Cairo in 1882; see Stock, *History*, vol. 3, p. 515) and Mandarin (G. Harris, ‘Literature for Chinese Muslims’, *The Moslem World* 17/2 [1927] 190-3, p. 190).

PUBLICATIONS

- ‘Imāduddīn, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya*, Lahore, 1866, Ludhiana, 1874², repr. Lahore, 1957
- ‘Imāduddīn, *A Mohammedan brought to Christ*
- ‘Imāduddīn, *A Mohammedan brought to Christ, being the autobiography of the Rev. Imad-ud-Din, D.D.*, trans. R. Clark, new edition, London, 1885, repr. 1909, New Delhi, 2013 (English trans.); 101790342 (digitised version available through Hathi Trust)
- ‘Imāduddīn, *The life of the Rev. Mawlwi Dr. Imad-u-din Lahiz*, trans. E. Hahn, Vaniyambadi, 1978

STUDIES

- C. Martinez, ‘Gathering the threads. Religious autobiography in pre-colonial South Asia’, *Medieval History Journal* 18 (2015) 250-77, pp. 268-74
- Weitbrecht, *Descriptive catalogue*, p. 53

Hidāyat al-Muslimīn
‘Guidance for Muslims’

DATE 1868

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

‘Imāduddīn wrote *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, which is 450 pages long in its first edition, to answer allegations against the Bible and Christianity from South Asian Muslim polemicists. It went through several editions, the third, published in 1899, comprising 390 pages. Copies of all editions are extremely rare (copies can be found in the British Library and the library of the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad, India). The book links in two intriguing ways to the well-known public debate held in Agra in 1854 in which Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī and Muḥammad Wazīr Khān challenged Karl Gottlieb Pfander and Thomas Valpy French.

In its first edition, *Hidāya* is divided into an introduction and nine chapters, though in its third edition, which is used here, the last chapter is omitted. In the introduction (pp. 1-6), ‘Imāduddīn begins with praise to God for not withholding the blessing of salvation from him, for removing all hurdles from his way, and for pulling him out of deception and misunderstanding. He expresses the wish that others will follow suit. Having earnestly sought God’s help, he turns to the accusation of *tahrīf* (‘alteration’, ‘corruption’) in the Bible. He acknowledges that the Qur’an accuses the Jews of corrupting the meaning of biblical verses, but asserts that there is a fundamental difference between the charge of *tahrīf* levelled by the Qur’an and the accusations made by Indian *maulvīs* because Muḥammad and early Muslims never charged the People of the Book with deliberate falsification of the actual text of the Bible (*tahrīf-i lafzī ‘amdī*) but rather with distorting the meaning (*tahrīf-i ma’nawī*). Now, however, Indian Muslims are claiming that the Bible has been subject to *tahrīf-i lafzī ‘amdī*. The reason behind such an accusation, he claims, is that the teachings of Muḥammad can only be sustained if the Bible is made to appear unreliable. In more detail, Muḥammad’s teachings are contrary to the Bible and his prophethood cannot be proved: he performed no miracle, earlier prophets did not foretell his coming, his teachings are not excellent and his conduct was not good. The accusation of deliberate textual falsification of the Bible has not been proven, nor can it be.

In ch. 1 (pp. 6-28), ‘Imāduddīn explains the need for revelation, the conditions and character of a bearer of true revelation, and the forms and functions of true revelation. He concludes that Judaism and Christianity are revealed religions, while Muḥammad lacked the character necessary to be the bearer of true revelation. In saying this, ‘Imāduddīn appears to be laying the foundation for a later detailed discussion in which he would argue that Muḥammad was not a true prophet in line with the biblical prophets, and that the Qur’an is not the revealed word of God (chs 7-8).

He then turns to the book that South Asian Muslims believed destroyed trust in the Bible, *Ijāz-i ‘Īsavī*, written in 1854-5 by Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān, and in chs 2-6 he responds to the allegations about the Bible made there. Ch. 2 begins with a detailed refutation of the accusation of *tahrīf* in the Bible. ‘Imāduddīn argues that the Qur’an’s charge of *tahrīf* in Q 2:75 is about deliberate distortion of the meaning and not of the text and excludes unintentional scribal errors (*sahw-i-kātib*). He characterises Kairānavī’s accusations of deliberate textual falsification and scribal errors as novel ideas that contradict not only the Qur’an but also the earliest Muslim ‘*ulamā’*. He further argues that certain charges set out in *Ijāz*, such as

the exclusion by early Christians of some books from the Old and New Testament canons, and its suggestions that corruption of the Bible could have occurred in circumstances such as persecutions by Roman emperors, the destruction of Jerusalem and the readiness of some popes to insert interpolations into the biblical text, have nothing to do with *tahrīf* and are false and untenable. ‘Imāduddīn also states that the kind of *tahrīf* by interpretation that Muslims attribute to the Bible is also found in Muslim interpretation of the Qur’an (pp. 26-7).

Chs 3-6 continue the point-by-point answers to the *Ijāz* objections, some of them serious and genuinely challenging but many of them petty and fastidious (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 20, calls them ‘cavilling’). In chs 4 and 5, ‘Imāduddīn presents a defence of the Bible in response to further accusations, as well as positive arguments for its integrity and reliability. For example, he defends the Mosaic authorship of the Torah, citing the Jewish historian Josephus as a witness (pp. 72-8). Along with this, he makes the case that the text of the Qur’an has also suffered corruption, perhaps even more so than the Bible. Islamic tradition reports that the third caliph, ‘Uthmān, burned copies that disagreed with the exemplar he was promoting, including Qur’ans collected by the first caliph, Abū Bakr. He argues in addition that the Qur’an has suffered from deliberate textual corruption as well as from *tahrīf-i qāri’* (‘corruption due to differences between reciters’) and *tahrīf-i kātib* (‘corruption by scribes’) and interpolation. To back his claim, he quotes from Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s *Al-itqān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (‘Perfection, on the sciences of the Qur’an’) as follows:

‘Alī told Abū Bakr that he saw additions being made in the book of Allāh and he determined not to do anything until he had collected the Qur’an. This shows that ‘Alī had also collected a [separate] Qur’an. When ‘Uthmān collected all the Qur’ans and compiled one copy from them, he burned the rest of the variants. (p. 86)

In short, ‘Imāduddīn attempts to demonstrate, through compelling arguments and by using the methodology of his opponents, that the Qur’an proves to be far more corrupt and unreliable than the Bible.

In ch. 6, ‘Imāduddīn attempts to answer some 170 objections to biblical statements that Kairānavī had registered in *Ijāz* (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 20). Kairānavī’s objections ranged from variant readings in biblical manuscripts and copyists’ errors to differences in chronology or genealogy in parallel versions and include his own disagreements with the Bible’s portrayal of the character of God.

Chs 7-8 (pp. 199-380) attack the veracity of Muḥammad, the Qur’an and Islam. Ch. 7, on Muḥammad and his teachings, seems to be a short rehearsal for ‘Imāduddīn’s *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* and *Ta’līm-i Muḥammadī* (1880). In ch. 8, he denies Muslim doctrines about the Qur’an, including its miraculous style and eloquence, and the absence of contradictions in it, presenting examples of absurdities and interpolation in the Qur’anic text. And finally, he discusses the doctrine of the Trinity and asserts that the Qur’an and its author did not understand it and that arguments against the Trinity in the Qur’an arose from this ignorance.

The first edition of *Hidāya* also includes a ninth chapter about Jesus and his teachings, but this was omitted in the third edition. The third edition ends instead with a brief mention of four Muslim refutations of *Hidāya* written before 1899 (pp. 386-90).

SIGNIFICANCE

The flurry of apologetic and polemical writings published in north India from 1839 to 1880 constitutes one of the most significant sets of encounters in the whole of Christian-Muslim history. ‘Imāduddīn’s *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn* is probably the most important indigenous Christian written expression in this set of exchanges. It is certainly the most detailed reply to Muslim polemic directed against Christianity and the Bible written in South Asia in the 19th century. It was the fulfilment of a promise ‘Imāduddīn made in his *Tahqīq al-īmān* (1866) to write a response to Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī and Muḥammad Wazīr Khān’s *I’jāz-i ‘Īsavī*. According to ‘Imāduddīn, *Hidāya* was taken to Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān in Mecca but they never responded to it (‘Christian moulvie’, p. 494). Two refutations of *Hidāya* written in India were *Uqūbat ul-dāllīn fī radd ‘alā Hidāyat al-Muslimīn li-‘Imāduddīn* (‘The punishment for those who stray concerning the refutation of the *Hidāya* of ‘Imāduddīn’) by Sayyid Nāṣiruddīn Muḥammad Abūlmansūr (known as the Imam of Delhi) (Ali, ‘Christian-Muslim relations’, p. 155), and *Tanziyah al-Furqān* (‘Sanctity of the Qur’an’) by Sayyid Muḥammad of Agra. ‘Imāduddīn wrote in 1878 that, before producing a second edition of *Hidāya* he carefully read these two Muslim refutations and ‘inserted answers to all their serious objections’ (‘Christian moulvie’, p. 494). He also offered brief responses to these refutations and two others in the appendix to the third edition (*Hidāya*, 1899, pp. 380-6).

Although E.M. Wherry considered *Hidāya* ‘practically out of date’ in 1905 (*Muslim controversy*, p. 21), the book contains some unique arguments that continue to be relevant to the debate on the integrity of the

biblical text, the transmission of the Qur’an, and the validity of the Muslim claim that Muḥammad was a prophet. *I’jāz-i ‘Īsavī* largely passed out of circulation in the 19th century, but its main contents saw a revival in South Asia when Kairānavī’s Arabic *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (Istanbul, 1864) was translated into Urdu and published with a long introduction by Muḥammad Taqī ‘Uthmānī in Karachi in 1966 (Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 297, cf. p. 295). Since then, the Urdu translation, known as *Bā’ibāl se Qur’ān tak*, has been widely distributed throughout India and Pakistan by the Deobandi network and other Islamic outlets and an English version was published in London in 1989.

‘Imāduddīn himself considered the religious ‘controversy’ between Christians and Muslims in north India virtually over by 1875, and declared a ‘complete victory’ for the Christian side (*Anjām-i mubāḥasah* [1875]; English trans. ‘Imāduddīn ‘The results of the controversy in north India with Muhammadans’, p. 276). In addition to *Hidāya* and *Taḥqīq al-īmān*, he also cites his *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* (1870, see below) as instrumental in the victory. He expresses great confidence that, in these books, he has answered the objections of Muslims against Christianity, and asserts that the books written in India between 1850 and 1875 provide all the information that a reasonable person could require to help them choose between the two faiths (p. 277), leaving little need to write additional books for the controversy with Islam (p. 280).

The written exchange in India actually began, however, in 1839 with the publication of *Mizān ul-ḥaqq* by Karl Gottlieb Pfander, who invited Muslim scholars to respond. Among the refutations he received were Āli Ḥasan’s Urdu *Kitāb-i istifsār* (Lucknow, 1845) and Kairānavī’s Persian *Izālat al-awhām* (Delhi, 1852-3). But the materials that Wazīr Khān brought together for Kairānavī in preparation for the 1854 debate were of a different order (*Hidāya*, p. 4; Becht, *The book and the prophet*, p. 419).

‘Imāduddīn was involved in the group of Muslim scholars in Agra who initiated and conducted the debate against Pfander and Thomas Valpy French in 1854, and he personally witnessed the composition of the *I’jāz-i ‘Īsavī* by Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān in 1853 (*Hidāya*, p. 3, Becht, *The book and the prophet*, p. 201 n. 4, cf. p. 419). Pfander left Agra for Peshawar in 1855, departed India for Istanbul in 1858, and passed away in 1865. Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān both left India for Arabia during the 1857 Uprising, never to return.

‘Imāduddīn signalled the need for a reply to *I’jāz-i ‘Īsavī* in his 1866 *Taḥqīq al-īmān* (see above), and his fellow convert Ṣafdar ‘Alī affirmed that need with a strong start towards a reply in his *Niyāz nāmāh* (1867, see

CMR 24, pp. 768-76). Now, 10 years after Pfander's departure from India, and two years after his conversion to Christianity, ‘Imāduddīn wrote his full response to *Ijāz-i Īsavī*. Among Muslims at the time, a friend of ‘Imāduddīn remarked in the latter's obituary that the *Ijāz* ‘was supposed to have demolished Christianity for ever’ (‘In memoriam’, p. 915).

Avril Powell states that the writings of ‘Imāduddīn (and Ṣafdar ‘Alī) ‘made little impact on the rest of the *‘ulamā*, who continued to affirm that the *tahrīf* issue was central to their objections to Christianity’ (‘Muslim-Christian confrontation’, p. 89). This, of course, makes ‘Imāduddīn's 1875 declaration of Christian victory in the ‘controversy’ premature, though it also suggests that the argument against Muslim accusations of *tahrīf* in *Hidāya* was relevant in its time and also arguably into the 20th century. Kate Zebiri wrote in 1997 that, in her survey of Muslim popular literature, all the authors who write on the subject of scripture claim that the text of the Bible is corrupt (*Muslims and Christians*, p. 50).

‘Imāduddīn realised that Muslims would only be open to the claims of the Bible’, writes Dieter Becht, ‘once the validity of the Bible had been convincingly demonstrated’ (*The book and the prophet*, p. 224). If ‘Imāduddīn wanted an open exchange with Muslims in South Asia that admitted the Qur’an and the Bible into the discussion on a level playing field, he would need to provide an answer to *Ijāz-i Īsavī*, the polemical work that many South Asian Muslims believed forbade the reading of the Bible altogether. His attempt to do so was *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*.

PUBLICATIONS

‘Imāduddīn, *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, Lahore, 1868

‘Imāduddīn, *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, Badaun, 1868

‘Imāduddīn, *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, Lucknow, 1878²

‘Imāduddīn, *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, Lucknow, 1899³; imad_lahiz/guiding_muslims (digitised version available through muhammadanism.org)

STUDIES

F. Ali, ‘Christian-Muslim relations in the second half of 19th century India in view of Syed Nāṣir-ul-Dīn Muḥammad Abūlmanṣūr Dehlvi (d. 1903)’, *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13 (2023) 152-63

M. Naveed, K. Shafi, and J. Rana, ‘Bar ṣaghīr men Muslim-Masiḥī manāẓarāna adab kā tajziyyātī muṭāla‘a’ (‘An analytical study of Muslim-Christian debate literature in the Subcontinent’, in Urdu), *Al-Mizān* 4/2 (2022) 104-37

Becht, *The book and the prophet*, pp. 222-8, 418-27

- G. Nickel, *The gentle answer to the Muslim accusation of biblical falsification*, Calgary, 2015 (a modern Christian attempt to respond to Kairānavī's *Izhār al-ḥaqq*)
- K. Zebiri, *Muslims and Christians face to face*, Oxford, 1997
- Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*
- Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 89
- Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 16-21
- Weitbrecht, *Descriptive catalogue*, p. 52

Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī 'Chronicles of Muḥammad'

DATE 1870

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

‘Imāduddīn wrote *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* with the stated purpose of setting before Urdu-speaking Muslims a narrative about Muḥammad along traditional Muslim lines so that they could compare his life with the life of Jesus. First published in 1870, it runs to 273 pages and is divided into 14 parts, the first 11 covering periods in Muḥammad's life in Mecca (pp. 1-95), part 12 the *hijra* and his life in Medina (pp. 95-212), part 13 his wives and family (pp. 213-61), and part 14 his particular qualities (pp. 261-73).

‘Imāduddīn begins with a reminder of his promise in *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, written a few years earlier in 1868, that he would write a complete account of Muḥammad, provided he could find the time. He spells out three main objectives for writing this narrative. First, he points out that Christian writers have aptly refuted the best-known Islamic works of polemic against the Bible, namely *Istifsār*, *Izālat al-awhām*, and *Ijāz-i ‘Īsavī*, through Karl Gottlieb Pfander's *Mizān ul-ḥaqq*, Ṣafdar ‘Alī's *Nīyāz nāmāh* and his own *Tahqīq al-īmān* and *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*. But now, some Muslims are saying that, even though they have been defeated in certain specific areas, the whole *shar‘a* of Muḥammad and the excellencies of his character remain, so ‘how could this be considered a refutation of Islam?’ ‘Imāduddīn understands that refutation of the root is also refutation of the branches, but he will nevertheless give his full attention to the law and behaviour of Muḥammad, and will present the whole truth in this book (pp. 4-6).

Second, he explains that, through meetings with Muslims in the markets, he has come to know that the majority are unaware of the full history and activities of Muḥammad, for if they were they would not be so rebellious against the true word of God or raise the absurd objections they do. Instead, they would be ashamed of themselves. But they are helpless because they do not know Arabic or Persian, the languages in which histories of Muḥammad have been written, while only some of them can read Urdu, and there is no history of Muḥammad in the Urdu language. Even the majority of *maulvīs* have not examined historical accounts about him, so how can lay people know this history? And without knowing the history of both Jesus and Muḥammad, it is extremely difficult to know which is the true religion. Therefore, he considers it appropriate to extract the full life history of Muḥammad from Arabic and Persian books and present it in Urdu so that people may become aware of it and know what kind of man they are following – and whether following him is right or not.

Third, ‘Imāduddīn explains that *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* is the first part of a two-volume work entitled *Talkhīṣ al-ahādīth* (‘Summary of the Hadiths’), which will cover both Muḥammad’s life story and his teachings. The second volume, entitled *Ta’līm-i Muḥammadī* (‘The teaching of Muḥammad’), was published ten years later. He also informs his readers that his work is largely based on *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb fī siyar al-nabī wa-l-āl wa-l-aṣḥāb* (‘The garden of those who are beloved, on the biographies of the Prophet, his family and the Companions’) by Jamāl al-Ḥusaynī (Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Aṭā’ullāh ibn Faḍlullāh al-Ḥusaynī l-Dashtakī, d. 1520) and *Madārij al-nubuwwa* (‘Ways of prophethood’) by ‘Abdulḥaqq Dihlavī (1551-1642) (see Becht, *The book and the prophet*, p. 236 n. 2). Since these sources are regarded as trustworthy by Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī, ‘Imāduddīn has chosen them so that readers will not object to the portrayal of Muḥammad he draws from them. He adds that they are written in a simple style and are readily available so that anyone who doubts his presentation can consult them for themselves. He invites those who would like to compare the history of Muḥammad with the history of Jesus to read what he calls Henry Martyn’s *History of Christ*, perhaps meaning Martyn’s Urdu translation of the New Testament, *Injīl ya’ne vasīqah jadīd Ḥazrat ‘Isā Masīḥ ‘alaihi s-salām kā* (CMR 20, pp. 102, 104).

‘Imāduddīn begins with an introduction to and an assessment of the books of Hadith, the kinds of Hadith, and the collectors of Hadith or *muḥaddithūn*. Muslims consider six collections to be authentic or *ṣaḥīḥ*, though ‘Imāduddīn lists 15 *muḥaddithūn* in chronological order. He rejects the authenticity of traditions on various grounds, primarily that none of

the *muḥaddithūn* had personally seen or heard Muḥammad, they were not inspired like the disciples of Christ, and the traditions they compiled contradict the Qur’an. As an example of the latter, he adduces six arguments against the miracles of Muḥammad that are reported in the books of Hadith and cites Q 17:59 to assert that Muḥammad did not have the ability to perform miracles. Since Muslims themselves reject Hadiths that contradict the Qur’an, he rejects all traditions that report Muḥammad’s miracles. Moreover, he argues, Muḥammad’s behaviour and teachings contradict the behaviour and teachings of the succession of biblical prophets. Therefore, even if he had performed miracles, according to Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and Mark 16:17 they would be considered fraudulent and deceptive. To support this, ‘Imāduddīn points out that Muḥammad loved to be praised. He had 181 poets at his service and accounts of his miracles arose out of their exaggerated and excessive praises.

From this point in the *Tavārīkh*, ‘Imāduddīn presents the details of the story of Muḥammad according to his two chosen sources, following them in dividing his life into three periods and discussing some of the details along the way. The story he recounts reflects not only the version given in *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb* but also early Muslim accounts.

In the first period, from pre-Islamic times up to Muḥammad when he reached the age of 41, ‘Imāduddīn endeavours to refute the claims that the first creation of Allāh was the light of Muḥammad, that this light was passed from Adam through holy and pure men down to Muḥammad’s father ‘Abdullāh, and that Muḥammad was descended from Abraham through Ishmael. He argues, first, that the Qur’an does not mention that the first creation was the light of Muḥammad and that this claim is only found in the Hadiths, although one Hadith states that the first creation of Allāh was the pen and another that the first creation was reason. Second, he argues that the parents of Muḥammad, ‘Abdullāh and Āmina were idol worshippers and that Muḥammad once said his grandfather was in hell because of idolatry, and third, neither the Qur’an nor the Hadiths set out Muḥammad’s genealogy. Muḥammad himself, writes ‘Imāduddīn, is reported to have said that anyone who traces his genealogy back beyond ‘Adnān is a liar (parts 1-3).

Connected with the belief that Muḥammad received divine revelation, ‘Imāduddīn narrates the strange manner in which his wife Khadija and her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal identified the being who appeared to him in the cave of Ḥirā’ as an angel rather than as a demon (part 19). He then describes the eight forms of *nuzūl-i wāḥy* (‘descent of revelation’) accepted among Muslims and concludes that some of them go against reason and

tradition, and that none of the pre-Islamic messengers ever received revelation in these forms.

The third period of Muḥammad’s life that ‘Imāduddīn discusses is his leadership of the Muslim community for 11 years in Medina. He covers Muḥammad’s battles, military campaigns, the assassinations of prominent Jews, the relationships between the Muslims and the Jewish tribes of Banū l-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayza, and the attack on the Jews of Khaybar. Focusing the episode of Muḥammad’s ruling about the Jewish couple caught in adultery, he notes that the punishment was established as stoning according to the Torah. From this he infers that the Torah is thereby declared intact – which goes against the polemical claims of Indian *maulvīs*.

‘Imāduddīn describes from *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb* details of Muḥammad’s wives and children, and the slaves and property he possessed, including his weapons, remarking that this story shows the opposite of the poverty and meekness that Muslims popularly attribute to Muḥammad. He lived like a king and at all times had 169 male and 12 female poets to praise him and condemn his opponents. ‘Imāduddīn copies from *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb* 31 privileges that Muḥammad permitted to himself alone, though if other Muslims indulged in them they would be committing a sin.

‘Imāduddīn sums up his judgement about Muḥammad in seven points. He concludes that he was a carnal man, totally ignorant of divine knowledge, and could not be a prophet of God or an intercessor for sinners (pp. 186-7; Ali and Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, p. 135). As E.M. Wherry later stated about the negative assessment of Muḥammad in *Tavārīkh*, ‘Imāduddīn

regards him as having been a fierce, passionate man, vain and fond of flattery, inexorable in his hatred towards his enemies, always putting them to death when he dared. During his whole career, he sought his own exaltation rather than the glory of God. [...] Although he at first assumed a humble rôle, yet, when he secured power, he soon gave way to pride and hardness of heart. (*Muslim controversy*, p. 29)

SIGNIFICANCE

At the time of its publication, *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* was the only narrative account of Muḥammad in the Urdu language. William Muir had published his four-volume English *Life of Mahomet* in 1858-61 while in India, but few Muslims in India could read it at that time. He had wanted to publish his own *Life of Mahomet* in Urdu but did not do so. He appreciated ‘Imāduddīn’s *Tavārīkh* greatly. As late as 1905, *Tavārīkh* was ‘the only

biography of Muhammad in the Urdu language, and for this reason is very important’ (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 29).

Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī, with a second edition in 1878 and a third in 1904 (Ali and Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, p. 135), remained in circulation well into the 20th century. It understandably attracted several refutations from Muslims, among them the *Ta’rīkh-i Muḥammadī par munṣifāna rai* (‘A just opinion on the history of Muḥammad’) by Mawlāna Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī. Maulvī Fīrōzuddīn Ḍaskavī wrote a refutation titled *Faḍā’il al-Islām fī zikar-i khayr al-inām al-ma’rūf bi-Ta’rīkh-i Muḥammadī* (‘The excellences of Islam, on recalling the best of men, known as “The history of Muḥammad”’) and Chirāgh ‘Alī wrote both ‘Muhammad the true Prophet’ in English and *Ta’liqāt* (‘Annotations’) in Urdu in response to the work (Ali and Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, p. 136; Becht, *The book and the prophet*, p. 242; Wahidur-Rahman, ‘Religious thought’, p. 59).

Farman Ali and Humaira Ahmad recently proposed that *Tavārīkh* is best understood in the context of Aloys Sprenger’s *Life of Muhammad from original sources* (1851) and Muir’s *Life of Mahomet* (‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, pp. 131-6). But there are significant differences between ‘Imāduddīn’s work and theirs, which are presented as scholarly studies based on the earliest ‘original’ Muslim Arabic narratives of Muḥammad (manuscripts of some of which were discovered by Sprenger in India in the mid-19th century). Muir and Sprenger’s preoccupation was the historical reliability of the Islamic narratives and traditions, and the overriding importance of the earliest possible sources. By contrast, ‘Imāduddīn deliberately chose a popular, readily available medieval version of the narrative as the basis for his *Tavārīkh*. E.M. Wherry appeared to criticise it when he wrote that some of its episodes about Muḥammad ‘cannot bear the light of historical criticism’ (*Muslim controversy*, p. 29), but Dieter Becht has countered that most Indian Muslims at the time would have neither understood nor appreciated a historical-critical approach. Becht considers it a strength of the book that it relies on orthodox Muslim sources (*The book and the prophet*, pp. 237-8). Another important difference between *Tavārīkh* and the lives of Muir and Sprenger is that, in writing it, ‘Imāduddīn was on home ground and knew the popular ‘chronicles’ of Muḥammad intimately from his Muslim upbringing and his extensive traditional Islamic education. This cannot be said of the two Europeans.

Wherry faults the book for its ‘controversial spirit throughout which detracts from its usefulness’ (*Muslim controversy*, p. 29), while Becht comments that ‘[T]his was necessarily a stumbling block for Muslim readers’

(*The book and the prophet*, p. 238), necessarily because of the veneration that Muslims offer to Muḥammad, not least in the Indian subcontinent (A. Schimmel, *And Muhammad is his messenger. The veneration of the Prophet in Islamic piety*, Chapel Hill NC, 1985). That ‘Imāduddīn was well-known as a Muslim leader before 1866, and was now an outspoken and well-published convert to Christianity – an apostate in Muslim terms – only accentuated the offence that could be, and was, taken (see e.g. Ali and Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, pp. 136-40). For Muir, however, writing from the midst of the remarkable Christian-Muslim written engagement in India in the mid-19th century, Sprenger’s *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad* and his own *Life of Mahomet* signalled freedom of thought for ‘educated and thoughtful’ Muslims. ‘The sword of Omar no longer checks freedom of enquiry’, he wrote in 1868, two years before the publication of *Tavārīkh*. ‘The right of private judgment and discussion is here in India as free as the air we breathe’ (W. Muir, ‘Value of early Mahometan historical sources’, *Calcutta Review* 46 [1868] 349-90, p. 389). He continued,

The honest and enlightened Mahometan ought not to shrink from a domain of enquiry, opening up to his view a long vista of history and literature, which he naturally looks up to with veneration, and portions of which he may justly regard with pride. (pp. 389-90)

Authentic Christian-Muslim written engagement is bound to consider the lives of the figures that Christians and Muslims revere as their founders. Muslims have denied Christian affirmations about the identity of Jesus since the time of the Qur’an itself (see e.g. Ali and Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, p. 129). In his *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī*, ‘Imāduddīn’s stated intention was to tell the story of Muḥammad in Urdu according to two highly-regarded orthodox Muslim accounts. He raised some questions about the historical reliability of Muslim traditions and judged negatively some of the behaviour of Muḥammad as portrayed in the Muslim sources. He invited a comparison with the behaviour of Jesus as provided in a Christian Urdu source.

PUBLICATIONS

‘Imāduddīn, *Tavārīkh-i muḥammadī*, Lahore, 1870

‘Imāduddīn, *Tavārīkh-i muḥammadī*, Amritsar, 1877²

‘Imāduddīn, *Tavārīkh-i muḥammadī*, Lahore, 1904³; imad_lahiz/mohammed (digitised version available through muhammadan-ism.org)

STUDIES

Ali and Ahmad, ‘Early Christian *sīrah* writings’, pp. 136-9

Becht, *The book and the prophet*, pp. 235-8

A.N.M. Wahidur-Rahman, ‘The religious thought of Moulvi Chirāgh Ali’, Montreal, 1992 (PhD Diss. McGill University)

Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 23-9

Ta‘līm-i Muḥammadī

‘The teaching of Muhammad’

DATE 1880

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

Ta‘līm-i Muḥammadī is the second part of ‘Imāduddīn’s two-volume *Talkhīṣ al-aḥādīth*. The first part, *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī*, published ten years earlier, focused on the life of Muḥammad according to Muslim narratives that were well-known in north India. His second volume now traces the teachings that Muslims attribute to Muḥammad. *Ta‘līm-i Muḥammadī* consists of 371 pages and comprises an introduction, a prolegomenon, four main chapters, and a conclusion.

‘Imāduddīn begins by advancing the simple principle that every person is proved good or bad on the basis of his words and deeds; there is no other principle for discerning good and bad people. Whether Muḥammad was a prophet sent by Allāh can also be determined on the basis of this principle. ‘Imāduddīn claims that he was able to show in his *Tavārīkh* that the deeds and conduct of Muḥammad were not worthy of the prophets. He now sets out to describe and critique Muḥammad’s words.

The litmus test for anyone’s claim to prophethood, ‘Imāduddīn proposes, is his teachings. A person may even perform miracles, but if his teachings are not excellent it is impossible for him to be a prophet of God. Accordingly, ‘Imād ud-dīn presents and assesses the teachings attributed to Muḥammad to see whether they measure up to the teachings of the true prophets sent by God. He then describes four different kinds of teaching: *jāhalī* (irrational), *aqlī* (rational), *nafsānī* (human or carnal) and *ruḥānī* (divine or spiritual). He explains that irrational teaching is entirely false, or that in it truth is so mixed with error that it cannot be accepted. Rational teaching may be true as far as intellect goes and yet remains insufficient

because of the limitations of the human intellect. Carnal teaching is given according to the desires of the flesh and appeals to human feelings; while it may seem to satisfy reason, in reality it results in working evil. It is only spiritual teaching that relates to the real abilities of the spirit and satisfies its highest longings.

In order to evaluate Muḥammad's teachings, ‘Imāduddīn makes two separate comparisons: between Muḥammad's teachings and those of the prophets, and between Muḥammad's teachings and those of Muslim scholars. For example, he argues that the teachings about the oneness of God and against idolatry are not Muḥammad's original teachings; earlier prophets also taught this. Further, Muslim scholars have developed the teachings of Islam in such a way that their teachings and Muḥammad's appear the same. However, Muḥammad's teachings can be easily distinguished, as Muslims believe these are primarily found in the Qur'an and Hadith. To ‘Imāduddīn, therefore, the teachings of Muḥammad are those that are either not taught by the prophets or those that contradict their teachings. He divides Muḥammad's teachings into four categories: *‘aqā'id* (doctrines), *‘ibādāt* (worship), *mu‘āmalāt* (affairs, dealings), and *qiṣaṣ* (stories).

In ch. 1, on the doctrines and creeds of Islam, he discusses four main points, the first being *īmān* (faith) (pp. 12-19). Faith is the foundation of all godliness but, since there are different faiths in the world, it is necessary to search for the true faith. According to Muḥammad, faith means believing in the heart and confessing by the mouth that there is no god except Allāh and that Muḥammad is His apostle. He contrasts Muslim faith with Christian faith and distinguishes the latter as a *saving* faith. The second point concerns prophets and their books (pp. 20-7). Muḥammad is believed to have taught that Muslims should have faith in the truth of all prophets and their books. But along with this comes the Islamic teaching against acting on those books or obeying their teaching because they have been abrogated. This is a very dangerous doctrine and no thoughtful person will accept it.

About the Qur'an (pp. 27-32), Muslims believe that Muḥammad taught that it is an inspired book brought down to him by the angel Jibrīl. However, ‘Imāduddīn considers that it is not an inspired book but rather a collection of traditional stories and thoughts emanating from Muḥammad's imagination. Among other doctrines discussed here is the Islamic teaching about sin, its origin and nature, the different kinds of it, and the punishment for it (pp. 39-50). According to ‘Imāduddīn, the Qur'an is silent on the matter of the transformation of the believer. Some Hadiths teach

that people who were bad before becoming Muslims will remain bad, and those who were good will continue to be good: their characters do not change through conversion. The Qur’an says that one should love one’s friends and hate one’s enemies. This indicates that there are two kinds of ethics, one innately human and the other from outside ourselves. ‘Imāduddīn himself had been deeply moved by chs 1-7 of the Gospel according to Matthew (*Wāqī‘āt*, p. 12; cf. Becht, *The book and the prophet*, p. 206), so he knew of a second kind of ethics. Islam does not believe that human nature can be changed, he asserts, but by contrast the Bible explicitly wants to change the hearts of believers (pp. 56-8).

In chs 2 and 3, ‘Imāduddīn offers a very detailed and comprehensive account of Islamic forms of ritual worship (*‘ibādāt*) and of daily customs and behaviour between people (*mu‘āmalāt*). He sets himself to describe every form of Islamic worship and to compare it with Christian ways of worship, including *ṭahārat* (‘ritual purity’) and *namāz* (‘ritual prayer’). In ch. 3, he provides a seemingly comprehensive survey of practical conduct, including customs related to women, marriage, dowry, divorce and *iddat* (the period between divorce and remarriage), all of it familiar to him from 44 years as a Muslim and his extensive Islamic education. Characteristic of these chapters is his statement that none of the aspects of Muslim ritual prayer attributed to the teaching of Muḥammad were enjoined by the prophets. For example, praying five times a day as a duty (*farḍ*) at precisely defined times, speaking a specific set of words in Arabic (with no other language permitted), and performing specific body movements in the direction of the Ka’ba, are all unique to Islam.

‘Imāduddīn offers a discussion in ch. 4 of the narratives about the prophets that Muslims attribute to Muḥammad. He begins by observing that the stories in the Qur’an mainly appear in brief passages and not in complete narratives. Muslims have tried to give them coherence in *tafsīr*, Hadith and other writings, but they have not succeeded. He relays the stories from *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, ‘Abdulwaḥīd bin Muḥammad al-Muftī’s book in Persian on 46 prophets, in order to suggest that the best teachings of Muḥammad are related to these stories from the past, which mostly come from the Bible. Compared with these accounts of prophets, the story of Muḥammad himself shows a form of religion but it is a religion without life (see Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 34). The story of Muḥammad shows that he made himself king of Arabia and that he secured this position by political guile, just as Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) secured supremacy in the Punjab. Muḥammad was successful in the story, but ‘Imāduddīn insists that this success does not prove his prophethood.

‘Imāduddīn concludes *Ta’līm-i Muḥammadī* by intimating that he has left out all of what he calls the gross and lewd teachings of Islam and has only presented the teachings taken from the Qur’an and Hadith that the ‘*ulamā*’ regard as good. Now, after they have read his *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* and *Ta’līm-i Muḥammadī*, he claims, Muslims can know that the religion of Muḥammad has a form but there is no life in it. He likens Islam to an idol created by a man who had great skill but could not make it come to life. Islam fails to satisfy the longings of the sincere seeker after truth. He ends with the statement that the teachings of Islam are not divine, but rather have their origin in Muḥammad himself.

A portion of them came from his own genius, which was not greater than that of many other men. Another portion of these teachings had their origin in his own desires, which were those common to humanity. A still further portion he received from others. (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 34-5)

Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī and *Ta’līm-i Muḥammadī*, together making up *Talkhīṣ al-ahādīth*, which is 615 pages in all, constitute the most thorough indigenous South Asian Christian contribution to the question of whether Muḥammad was a prophet. ‘Imāduddīn was on solid ground for this investigation because of his native knowledge of everyday Islam, his traditional Islamic education in Agra, and his facility in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. In these two volumes he passes on foundational information from well-known and accepted Muslim sources. They are remarkable in their detail and nuance, and carry no echo of medieval polemic from Christendom, neither following a ‘missionary’ approach nor imitating Sprenger and Muir. The issue for ‘Imāduddīn was not his knowledge of Muslim beliefs and practices in South Asia, but rather his judgements on these based on his knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus that he had gained during 14 years as a Christian.

SIGNIFICANCE

E.M. Wherry wrote of *Ta’līm-i Muḥammadī* in 1905, ‘There is nothing offensive in this book, excepting the truth which he elicits concerning the teachings of Muhammad’ (*Muslim controversy*, p. 35). Nevertheless, it drew a number of refutations, among them *Hafwat-i ‘Imādīyya* (‘The error of ‘Imād’) by Ikram Ullah Gomovi sum Akbar Abadi (Lucknow, date unknown) and *Nafā’is irtizāya fawā’id sa’dīyya* (‘Benefits of the precious and chosen jewels’) by Zafar Ali of Madras (place and date of publication unknown). From the Christian side, Wherry recommended that the

book should be kept in print and ‘be widely circulated among enquiring Muslims’ (*Muslim controversy*, p. 35).

PUBLICATIONS

‘Imāduddīn, *Ta’līm-i Muhammadiyah*, Amritsar, 1880; imad_lahiz/mohammed_teaching (digitised version available through muhammadanism.org)

STUDIES

Becht, *The book and the prophet*, pp. 238-40, 427-32

Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 23-9

Maqsood Kamil

Later works

DATE 1877-93

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

Four works that ‘Imāduddīn wrote in his later years, *Taqlī‘āt-i ta‘līqāt* (1877), *Tanqīd al-khayālāt* (1882-3), *Taftīsh al-awliyā’* (1889) and *Tawzīn al-aqwāl* (1893), show how he turned his attention away from what he knew as orthodox Sunnī Islam in north India to other expressions of the faith that he considered influential. The earliest of these was part of his engagement with a ‘new Islam’ that he saw emerging in the 1860s and 1870s, partly in response to his own publications. “Imad ud-din kept a watchful, if critical, eye on all movements within Sunni Islam in the Punjab and its neighboring provinces’ (Powell, “Pillar”, p. 249). As it turned out, he did not always need to look far.

Taqlī‘āt-i ta‘līqāt

‘Imāduddīn wrote *Taqlī‘āt-i ta‘līqāt* (‘Annihilation of annotations’, 1877) in response to a critique by Chirāgh ‘Alī (1844-95) of his *Tavārīkh-i Muḥammadī* (1870; ‘Christian moulvie’, p. 494). The Muslim’s refutation, simply titled *Ta‘līqāt* (‘Annotations’, Lucknow, 1872), challenged ‘Imāduddīn’s presentation of the life of Muḥammad in *Tavārīkh* with an argument that the sources he used, including many Hadiths, were weak and unreliable

(Wahidur-Rahman, ‘Religious thought’, p. 62). In particular, Chirāgh ‘Alī criticised ‘Imāduddīn for taking information about Muḥammad from two popular Muslim accounts of his life, *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb* and *Madārij al-nubuwwa*, particularly what they said about the doctrine of jihad (Wherry, ‘Literature for Muslim readers’, p. 139), a subject Chirāgh ‘Alī would develop extensively later in *A critical exposition of the popular Jihād’ showing that all the wars of Mohammad were defensive* (1885). In *Ta’līqāt*, he ‘tries to discredit ‘Imāduddīn’s allegations by discrediting the underlying *ḥadīth* as untrustworthy’ (Becht, *The book and the Prophet*, p. 242).

In *Taqlīāt*, ‘Imāduddīn’s 100-page response to this attack, he more or less repeats what he had stated earlier in his *Tavārīkh*. In sections 1-10 he explains that the Muslim sources he uses are recognised as trustworthy by orthodox Muslims, including Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī (p. 17). All other sources for the life of Muḥammad that Muslims consider trustworthy contain the same details (pp. 22-3), awkward and displeasing as they may seem, and anyway, even if the account were composed on the basis of the Qur’an alone, it would still contain many details that Muslims would find unpleasant (pp. 23-4).

In section 11 of *Taqlīāt*, ‘Imāduddīn answers the objection that Jesus did not write down his message and therefore did not preserve it, responding to Chirāgh ‘Alī’s charge that the four canonical Gospel accounts are unreliable (Wahidur-Rahman, ‘Religious thought’, p. 62) and in sections 12-16 he refutes the Muslim claim that Muḥammad was a true prophet.

Tanqīd al-khayālāt

‘Imāduddīn felt ‘compelled’ to write *Tanqīd al-khayālāt* (‘Criticism of thoughts’, 1882-3) in order to refute ‘the new religious views’ of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-98; *CMR* 24, 424-47).

For a long time, I had given up the idea of writing controversial books, but when I found that the Maulvi’s efforts were directed very largely against Christianity, and were becoming a very great obstacle in the way of weaker Christians, it was deemed advisable that some effort be put forth in that direction. (‘Amritsar’ [report], in *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, eighty-third year, 1881-82*, London, 1882, 95-100, p. 99)

In preparation for this work, ‘Imāduddīn collected and carefully read all Aḥmad Khān’s books and articles and then made a plan to respond to between 15 and 20 objections against Christianity he found in them. His

intention was to release his responses, which would total 12 parts in all, gradually (‘Amritsar’, p. 100), but in the end he completed and published only four ‘tractates’ of 48, 24, 30 and 56 pages respectively through the years 1882-3 (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 36-57).

‘Imāduddīn explains at the beginning of the work that his goal is to examine statements made by Aḥmad Khān in his *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (published in a series of volumes from 1880 onwards) and *Tahzīb ul-akhlāq*, the magazine he had started in 1870. In the first tractate, he seizes on the statement that ‘reason alone is a sufficient guide’ (*Tahzīb ul-akhlāq* 1 [1870] pp. 13-14), and responds that, although reason has a large role in the lives of people, they also need revelation from God. For example, reason cannot teach people how, and especially for what purpose, the universe came into being. Similarly, reason cannot explain what humans are, where they came from, or where they go. Reason knows nothing about spiritual questions or the future life. Only revelation can provide answers to such questions and this revelation is found in the Bible.

In the second tractate, ‘Imāduddīn deals with Aḥmad Khān’s idea that the Islam that has developed through history is not the true Islam because the first Muslims rapidly departed from the original teachings. He asserts that in fact the ‘Islam’ Aḥmad Khān has advocated is a ‘new Islam’ that combines ‘the rationalism of the Brahmo Samaj’ with the teachings of secular scholarship that is opposed to religion (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 40-1). He focuses on Aḥmad Khān’s statement that ‘Islam is nature and nature is Islam’ and mounts a series of challenges to his claim that it is this that represents Islam. The reason that prophets were sent, he writes, is so that humankind could learn what the natural human mind cannot discover – including the depravity of human nature.

‘Imāduddīn extends this discussion about prophets and their purpose into the third tractate, again focusing on a particular statement by Aḥmad Khān in *Tahzīb ul-akhlāq*, that a prophet is ‘a man specially endowed with a genius to investigate and discover moral and spiritual truth alone’ (1881, p. 158). He challenges the adequacy of this from many angles, and finds it to be a naturalistic definition and mistaken. If one can speak of different kinds of prophets, he writes, they all depend on the prophets through whom God revealed His will in the Bible. These were characterised by miracles, prophecies and the ‘marvellous influences’ that have followed their teachings (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 46). Merely moral teachers may tell humans to stop their evil behaviour, but they can neither teach about the power needed to change nor give it.

In his fourth tractate ‘Imāduddīn approaches directly what was probably his central theme all along, ‘the need of a divine revelation under inspired authority’ (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 49). He begins by tracing the traditional Islamic meanings of *waḥy* (‘revelation’) and *ilhām* (‘inspiration’), and argues that the biblical revelation surpasses the teachings of merely natural religion, advancing both internal and external evidence. Inspiration is due to the power of God’s Spirit operating upon the minds of the prophets to make known to them what God would reveal to humankind. He understands that Aḥmad Khān, by contrast, has accepted a form of inspiration that is given by nature as special genius or talent, which for ‘Imāduddīn may be the kind of inspiration contained in the Qur’an, since for him it is merely a human composition. Aḥmad Khān had written that Muḥammad never worshipped idols and always held the true doctrine of divine unity by reason of his natural endowment of genius. ‘Imāduddīn appears unwilling to concede even this much: he argues that, according to the Muslim account, Muḥammad interacted with Jews and Christians in Mecca and Medina, and with others as a traveller and trader, learning what he knew from them. Aḥmad Khān’s concepts of revelation and inspiration, he concludes, leave humanity in the dark with regard to the great matters of God, the soul, salvation, and the future life (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 56).

Taftīsh al-awliyā’

‘Imāduddīn wrote *Taftīsh al-awliyā’* (‘Investigation of the saints’), which is 167 pages long, about the Sufis of north India and their teachings. Sufism had been a part of ‘Imāduddīn’s personal experience before his conversion to Christianity in 1866 (*Wāqī‘āt-i ‘Imādiyya*, pp. 6-7). Now, in 1889, he compares Sufism with Christianity in what he believes to be the ‘age of light’ (pp. 4-9). Sufism, he writes, is not even really part of Islam, but a heresy (pp. 9-13; cf. Powell, “Pillar”, pp. 247-8).

‘Imāduddīn makes a distinction between some of the teachings of the first generations of Sufis in north India and later and the teachings of contemporary Sufi communities, focusing criticisms on saint worship at the tombs of *pīrs* and the worldly lives of present-day *pīrzadas* (curators of Sufi mausoleums and shrines; pp. 161-2). In answer to the question of whether miracles claimed for Sufis validate Sufi teaching, he replies that, in general, miracles underline and confirm the teachings of the performer of the miracle and, since Sufi teaching is pantheistic, the miracles

performed by Sufis underline and confirm that form of belief, and should therefore be rejected. Furthermore, the revelations and dreams claimed by Sufis are merely human thoughts and fantasies (pp. 29-33; cf. Becht, *The book and the Prophet*, p. 245). In line with what he has said in earlier writings, ‘Imāduddīn insists that only true miracles and true prophetic words can attest true revelation.

Tawzīn al-aqwāl

‘Imāduddīn wrote *Tawzīn al-aqwāl* (‘Weighing of words’) to test the claims of Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1835-1908), the founder of the Aḥmadiyya, and to explain some points of Christian faith that Ghulām Aḥmad had misrepresented in order to support the claims he made about himself. ‘Imāduddīn wrote it after witnessing a debate between Ghulām Aḥmad and ‘Abdullāh Ātham held in Amritsar in 1893 (Kamil, ‘Unfinished agenda’, p. 260). It is maybe not coincidental that Ghulām Aḥmad’s village of Qādiān is only about 40 miles from Amritsar, where ‘Imāduddīn was living at the time. The title page declares: ‘Reverend *maulvī* ‘Imāduddīn Lāhiz, D.D. wrote this treatise for this reason, that uninformed people may be aware of the career of Mīrzā Sāhib and thus, saving themselves from his deadly teaching, they may lift up their eyes towards the truth’.

The book is 56 pages long and divided into 12 chapters or ‘rebuttals’ (*daf‘āt*). Chs 1 (pp. 3-4) and 2 (pp. 4-6) give information about the life of Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad and the declarations of north Indian Sunnī *maulvīs* concerning the claims he made about himself. Here, ‘Imāduddīn acknowledges that Ghulām Aḥmad has attracted a considerable number of followers, and he traces his family background in a kind of Sufism, which he believes accounts for many of his interpretations and claims. About Ghulām Aḥmad’s most important book, the five-volume *Barāhīn-i Aḥmadiyya* (1800-1905), ‘Imāduddīn writes that it is

full of senseless statements, which no man can read with profit. It is written in a confused style, with long and exceedingly complex sentences. This style has been adopted by the Mīrzā on the general principle that such confused and interminable sentences are incapable of a reply. (Wherry, ‘Summary’, p. 186, referring to *Tawzīn*, p. 4)

‘Imāduddīn states that a formal declaration written by Maulvī Muḥammad Ḥusain of nearby Batala and signed by 200 orthodox mullahs holds Ghulām Aḥmad to be an atheist or an infidel (p. 4).

Chs 3 (pp. 6-9) and 4 (pages 9-17) describe Ghulām Aḥmad's claim to be the Messiah, a prophet and the 'Aḥmad' of the Qur'an (Q 61:6). He says he is possessed by the spirit of inspiration and revelation on the one hand, and is the coming Messiah of Muslim tradition on the other. Regarding the name 'Aḥmad', 'Imāduddīn describes three other men with this name who might also claim to be the fulfillment of 'Īsā's prediction in Q 61:6 (pp. 11-16) and then he quips that 'The Mīrzā does not now seem to aspire so much to be Aḥmad the Fourth as to be Aḥmad the First' [meaning Muḥammad] (pp. 16-17).

Chs 5 (pp. 17-25) and 6 (pp. 25-9) describe the second coming of Christ according to the Bible and then present a refutation of Ghulām Aḥmad's claim to be the Messiah. 'Imāduddīn contrasts Christian teaching about Christ and also normative Islamic teaching about who he was with Ghulām Aḥmad's teaching about him. Ghulām Aḥmad bases his claim to be the Messiah, explains 'Imāduddīn, on two traditions, one Persian and one Syrian, making Qādiān the 'Damascus' where the Messiah will descend. 'Imāduddīn challenges Ghulām Aḥmad to show how he will establish the roles of 'prophet, priest, and king' that belong to the Messiah, then calls upon him to repent of his blasphemy (pp. 27-8).

In chs 7-10, 'Imāduddīn discusses what the Bible and the Qur'an teach about the Trinity and the Holy Spirit and contrasts this with the teaching of Ghulām Aḥmad (pp. 29-35). He also queries the identity of the qur'anic *Rūḥ al-amīn* (Q 26:193; pp. 35-39), the Gabriel of the Qur'an (pp. 39-42) and the mysterious *Shadīd ul-qua* (pp. 42-50). Interestingly, here 'Imāduddīn quotes from the famous Sufi work *Insān al-kāmil* by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jilānī (1365-1424) and explains that 'It is not lawful to call [the holy spirit] a creature. He is one of the "mouths" of Allāh, and by him all things were created. He breathed into Adam, and all human and finite spirits were created, thus he is the Spirit of all spirits' (pp. 32-3).

At the end of the book, 'Imāduddīn responds to Ghulām Aḥmad's objections to the divinity of Jesus (ch. 11, pp. 50-5) and concludes with the thought that there is no proof that Islam is the true religion (ch. 12, pp. 55-6). There are no miracles to vindicate Islamic claims, he asserts, nor is there even supremacy in the style and language of the Qur'an. He thus highlights Ghulām Aḥmad's claims that go against orthodox Islam and also counters the orthodox teachings of the Islam of which Ghulām Aḥmad had posed 'as the great defender [...] against all opposers' (Wherry, 'Summary', p. 192, referring to *Tawzīn*, p. 56).

SIGNIFICANCE

There are no indications of second editions or reprintings of any of these four works, though in the case of *Tanqīd al-khayālāt* the first two parts or ‘tractates’ are now accessible from a webpage of ‘Imāduddīn’s works. In 2003, Avril Powell noted the rarity of surviving copies of *Taftīsh al-awliyā’* (“Pillar”, p. 247 n. 77). She also commented about *Tawzīn al-aqwāl* that ‘no copy of his tract on Ahmadi beliefs has as yet been found’ (p. 250 n. 86). However, by 2025, a full pdf of the original publication of *Tawzīn* could be readily accessed online.

It may be that *Tawzīn al-aqwāl* is the publication that has attracted the most attention of these four since 1893. The main object of ‘Imāduddīn’s ‘weighing’ in this work, Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad, wrote responses in 1894 titled *Ishtihār mi’yār al-akhyār wa-l-ashrār* and *Nūr ul-ḥaqq*. Ghulām Aḥmad followed this up in 1900 with an Urdu booklet titled *Government Angraizi aur jihād* (‘The British government and jihad’) in which he grouped ‘Imāduddīn’s writings together with the writings of Ṭhākūr Dās and Ṣafdar ‘Alī as damaging to Islam. *Tawzīn al-aqwāl* and Ghulām Aḥmad’s responses have continued to be described and discussed to the present day on Aḥmadiyya websites (see the citations of these in Studies below).

Powell writes that *Tanqīd al-khayālāt* made ‘little impact in Muslim circles’ on the basis of there being no known written replies to the work from Sayyid Aḥmad Khān or others (“Pillar”, p. 252). For perspective, however, one might note that there were sufficient criticisms of Aḥmad Khān’s writings from orthodox Sunnīs in north India (see Powell, “Pillar”, pp. 249-51) for him to disregard some short treatises from a Christian convert. In her analysis of *Tanqīd al-khayālāt*, Powell faults ‘Imāduddīn for not picking up on Aḥmad Khān’s argument in his *Tabyīn al-kalām fī tafsīr al-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl ‘alā millat al-Islam* (‘Elucidation of the word in commentary of the Torah and Gospel according to the religion of Islam’, Meerut/Ghazipur, c. 1860) that, instead of corrupting the actual text of the Bible, Jews and Christians had merely altered some of the meanings of the verses (‘Clearly the conciliatory tone of Sayyid Ahmad was inconvenient to ‘Imād ud-din’ [Powell, “Pillar”, p. 252]). Instead, ‘Imāduddīn emphasises that Aḥmad Khān no longer actually speaks for Islam. The latter’s ‘modernism’, he argues, is a completely new religion based not on revelation but on no more than a pragmatic rationalism. From another perspective, E.M. Wherry wrote in 1905 that ‘The style and kindly spirit of this booklet [*Tanqīd al-khayālāt*, vol. 4], like that of the series thus far

published, commend these able refutations of the specious teachings of Sir Sayud Ahmad Khan’ (*Muslim controversy*, p. 56).

In another early Christian appreciation of ‘Imāduddīn’s writings, H.U. Weitbrecht characterised *Taftīsh al-awliyā* as ‘an interesting work, useful for those who have to deal with Sufis’ (*A descriptive catalogue*, p. xiv). Powell also analyses this work, suggesting that ‘Imāduddīn might be expected to have been favourable to Sufi forms and methods after his conversion (“Pillar”, pp. 244-6) and contrasting his comments with the more favourable comments of a later convert, John Subhan, which she regards as a kind of indigenous expression, as opposed to attitudes expressed by Western Christian authors, and remarks that in *Taftīsh al-awliyā* ‘Imāduddīn showed himself even more opposed to the Sufi masters than the missionaries. She casts him as ‘extremely unsympathetic’ to the Sufis (“Pillar”, p. 247), though she does give him credit for using Sufi terminology and language and ‘appropriate Urdu forms’ to communicate the Gospel message in the book (“Pillar”, pp. 248-9; cf. Kamil, ‘Unfinished agenda’, p. 261).

Perhaps the greatest point of significance of these four additional works is the way in which they show the conceptual range and versatility of ‘Imāduddīn himself. He lived as a Muslim for 44 years and then as a Christian for 34, was thoroughly educated in the traditional Sunnī educational system of north India, subsequently responded to that traditional system as a Christian and served the literary needs of a growing Urdu-speaking church. He then also interacted intelligently with the ‘new Islam’ of modernism and the sectarian ‘Islam’ of the Aḥmadiyya. His was a remarkable contribution to the literature on Christian-Muslim relations.

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