

The Book and the Prophet

The Contribution of Indian Christians
to the Muslim-Christian Debate
of the 19th Century

Dieter Becht

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to the Muslim-Christian Debate of the 19th Century
[transl. by D. Becht]

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Transcription

The transcription of Urdu characters is based on ALA-LC:¹

ا = a, ā, ’	دھ = dh	غ = <u>gh</u>
ب = b	ڈ = ḍ	ف = f
بھ = bh	ڈھ = ḍh	ق = q
پ = p	ذ = <u>z</u>	ک = k
پھ = ph	ر = r	کھ = kh
ت = t	ڑ = ṛ	گی = g
تھ = th	ڑھ = ṛh	گھ = gh
ٹ = ṭ	ز = z	ل = l
ٹھ = ṭh	ژ = <u>zh</u>	م = m
ث = <u>s</u>	س = s	ن = n
ج = j	ش = <u>sh</u>	و = <u>n</u>
جھ = jh	ص = ṣ	و = w/v, ū, o, au
چ = c	ض = ḍ	ہ = h
چھ = ch	ط = ṭ	ء = ’
ح = ḥ	ظ = ḏ	ی = y, ī, á
خ = <u>kh</u>	ع = ’	ے = ai, e
د = d		

¹<https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/urdu.pdf>.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of works are based on Leistner.¹

<i>CMI</i>	<i>Church Missionary Intelligencer</i>
<i>CMS</i>	<i>Church Missionary Society</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>The Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , 2nd ed., transl. by H.A. Rosskeen (Leiden [<i>et al.</i>], 1960ff)
<i>GCAL</i>	<i>Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur</i> , by G. Graf, Vol. 1–5 (Rome, 1944–1953)
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>M</i>	Masoretic Text
<i>Q</i>	Quran (Qur’ān)
<i>SEI</i>	<i>Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , ed. and transl. by H.A.R. Gibb/J.H. Kramers (Leiden [<i>et al.</i>], 1961)
<i>SPG</i>	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
<i>SP</i>	Samaritan Pentateuch

¹Leistner, *Internationale Titelabkürzungen*.

The Background

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, India became the centre of debates between Christians and Muslims like no other country in the world. The reason is not difficult to detect: Under British rule, the Indian subcontinent with its large percentage of Muslims enjoyed a measure of religious freedom not found in any Muslim country. In India, modern Western and feudal Indian civilization collided in a manner that on the secular and religious plane was unprecedented in its harshness and immediacy. Thus it presented a perfect breeding ground for the reform movements of Muslims and Hindus as well as for orthodox counter-movements. Some discarded their own culture and sciences lock, stock and barrel and adopted the Western way of life; others just as uncompromisingly rejected Western culture. However, the vast majority found itself somewhere between these two extremes and gradually moved into modern India, in the process constantly

absorbing and blending Western cultural assets with its own cultural heritage.

In the midst of this fruitful fermentation process, a considerable number of Indian Christians emerged, who experienced a numerical upswing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the result of a mass movement of so-called Untouchables into the Church. Although the greater part of Indian Christians then as now originated from the Hindus, the present study is focused on those Christians who converted from Islam and subsequently debated with Muslims and proclaimed the Christian message amongst them.

As Islam recognized the validity of previous Scriptures, it had to relate *taurāt* and *injīl* to its own Scripture, the Quran. The radicality of its approach, however, hit the nerve of the Christian faith: It declared Jesus to be an ordinary prophet in spite of affirming the virgin birth (Q 3), denied the divinity of Jesus and replaced a number of Christian commandments with its own commandments.

Since the beginning of Islam, the task of Christian apologetics has been to point out the uniqueness of God's revelation in Jesus and the finality of Christian commandments. Christian apologetics in India also had to deal with this issue. Thus, the discussion primarily centred on two things: the uniqueness of Scripture and of the agent of revelation: Was Jesus the Son of God and the Bible the only legitimate revelation, or was Muhammad the seal of the prophets and the Quran the ultimate revelation of God to Man?

The following study concentrates primarily on the writings of the Christian apologists themselves, as these most clearly express their thoughts. Although there are several accounts of interreligious debates, these can not be considered here because of their often biased reports.

Answers to Muslim accusations against Christianity are as relevant today as they were in the time of early Islam. However, without a common ground for dialogue and a sober exploration of both the agreements and differences, there can be no real dialogue. The following account of Indian apologetics is a small historical contribution to this central issue. In a first step it focuses on clarifying the concepts used and their implications by pinpointing the assumptions of Christian writers and their Muslim opponents. Secondly, the apologetic writings of the Indian writers themselves are discussed, as in their positive and negative aspects they represent an important contribution to the debate. The present study is primarily a misiological analysis of the historical development of this debate and the issues involved.

Finding the exclusively Urdu sources of anti-Muslim apologetics in India proved to be very difficult. None of these writings are available in Germany, and even in India and Pakistan it is not easy to find such literature. Most of the books eventually found in Pakistan were privately owned by individual Christians interested in the topic; however, out of fear they hid these books and could hardly be persuaded to lend them out to be photocopied. Further literature was available in the library of Henry Martyn Institute (Hyderabad, India). Only a small portion was found in the India Office Library in London and in the library of CMS Partnership House in London.

An additional problem well-known to the Indologist was the external condition of these writings, some of which had suffered from the climate and termites; often one copy did not suffice.

Soon a further difficulty arose: There were no lists of the complete works of Indian apologists, and biographical data of the authors was sketchy. Only E.M. Wherry's

book entitled *The Muslim Controversy* and published in 1905 could serve as a first orientation. Even so, it soon became clear that many of his statements and assessments are not reliable; indeed, important information regarding the thought of the apologists is lacking.

It seems that important Christian publishers such as Punjab Religious Book Society did not secure their stock of books by storing copies abroad. When these publishing houses were handed over to local Christians after the proclamation of independence in 1947, many of these works were lost, because their historical value was not recognized. Others were presumably confiscated by the Pakistani government because of their anti-Muslim content. Thus it became necessary to first of all identify the most important apologists, compile lists of their works and ferret out sources relating to their biographical data. Only then could the literature itself be collected and the task of deciphering and evaluating the sources begin.

It soon became apparent that the apologists were answering Muslim trains of thought that can only be understood in the Muslim context. Thus it became necessary to clarify the concepts behind Muslim objections (Ch. 2) by delineating both the historical development of these terms¹ as well as systematically compiling the objections of Muslims.² As an introductory chapter, this could be no more than an outline, despite its importance for the comprehension of the following chapters.

In a further step, the central figure of K.G. Pfander was analysed, since his work *Balance of Truth* influenced all

¹I. Goldziher and W.M. Watts served as a point of departure (Goldziher, 'Ueber muhammedanische Polemik'; Watt, 'The Early Development').

²Cf. the important contributions of E. Fritsch and H. Stieglecker (Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*).

subsequent Indian apologists (Ch. 4). As in the case of Muslim apologetics, a short historical overview of Christian anti-Muslim apologetics before Pfander and its essential features was added in order to explain the particular contribution of Pfander (Ch. 3).

A final part (Ch. 13ff) strives to use impulses of Şafdar 'Alī as the base for Christian apologetics today.

Because of the general inaccessibility of biographical data on the apologists, a short biography of each apologist was added as a contribution towards a little known but instructive facet of Indian history. Selected excerpts have been attached. As the best demonstration of Indian anti-Muslim apologetics, special attention has been given to the work of Şafdar 'Alī in this supplement.

The reader who merely wants to gain an insight into the essential developments of Christian apologetics in India may wish to restrict his attention to the chapters on K.G. Pfander (Ch. 4), Şafdar 'Alī (Ch. 8) and 'Imād ud-Dīn (Ch. 9).

Chapter 2

Muslim Anti-Christian Apologetics

Muslim apologetics arose from the contact of Islam with Christianity and Judaism. It found its beginning in the Quran itself in the well-known confrontations of Muhammad with Christians and Jews.¹ At all times, it was strongly politically motivated, as the Quranic ideal of a theocracy permitted no separation of religious and political spheres. In many ways it corresponded to the close connection of Church and State in Christian countries from the time of Constantine until the late Middle Ages.

¹The unpublished dissertation of Ali Bouamama is the only recent treatise on this topic (Bouamama, 'La littérature polémique'). Unfortunately, the dedicated modernist Muslim position of Bouamama (Christianity as a "mythological," Islam as a "rational" religion) and an often imprecise methodology prevents him from achieving a more objective, historically based treatment of the subject.

Polemics against the Scriptures of the People of the Book were rather unsystematic until the 9th century but then intensified from the turn of the millennium. The reason for this was not solely due to the “absolute lack of all certain information regarding Biblical writings in the early days of Islam.”¹ No doubt an important cause is also to be found in the intense and bitter political struggles between Christians and Muslims of the time. For these, the Reconquista of Spain and the Crusades were no mere academic issues. Furthermore, it took time to find solutions for the manifold political challenges inherent in the administration of the Islamic empire and to absorb and process foreign influences.² Thus the systematic expansion of apologetics went hand in hand with the systematic expansion of other branches of science. Ibn Ḥazm is a shining example of this, for not only was he one of the first to present a systematic, “scientific” apologetics; he was also a great scientist and poet of Spain.

The Quran

The Quran does not reject the validity of *taurāt* and *injīl* but rather confirms these.³ This forms the starting point of Muslim polemics and apologetics. The legitimacy of the Bible as the previous revelation was assumed in Quranic verses that claimed that Muhammad had been prophesied in the Bible in the same way that Jesus had been prophesied in the Old Testament.⁴ However, already in Muham-

¹Goldziher, ‘Ueber muhammedanische Polemik’, 348.

²Perlmann, ‘Religion in a Religious Age’, 104.

³Cf. Q 26:195f; 3:81; 6:92; 35:31; 46:12 *etc.* (see Watt, ‘The Early Development’, 50f; Buhl, *Tahrif*, SEI, 560).

⁴This is implied in several verses and once explicitly stated in Q 7:156f (*cf.* Watt, ‘The Early Development’, 51).

mad's lifetime Muslims discovered that the content of the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians does not always agree with the content of the Quran. In fact, the Jews mocked Muhammad for this very reason. Quranic verses accusing the Jews of hiding part of the Scriptures can be understood as Muhammad's reaction to these taunts of the Jews.¹ In this context, the Jews were also accused of deliberately distorting the Scriptures.² However, a closer analysis of these Quranic passages shows that at this time, the People of the Book were only accused of concealing portions of the Scriptures and perverting the meaning of certain passages of the Bible; they were not accused of actually altering, that is corrupting the text.³

The term *tahrif* was not understood to include the corruption of the actual text until after 1000 AD. Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī formulated the classical definition of *tahrif* at the end of the 11th century, in which he distinguished between a) the corruption of the meaning of the text (*tahrif al-ma'ānī = tahrif-i ma'nawī*) and b) the corruption of the actual text (*tahrif an-naṣṣ = tahrif al-alfāz = tahrif-i lafẓī*).⁴

In post-Quranic times, Muslims developed a further explanation for Quranic deviations from the Bible; they claimed that in these points, the Quran abrogated the Bible (*naskh*). J. Burton has analysed the complex is-

¹Q 2:39,42,134,140f,146,154,159,169,174; 3:64,71.

²Thus in the use of *harrafa* in Q 2:75 (cf. 2:79); 4:46; 5:13,41; *lawā* in 3:78; 4:46; and *baddala* in 2:59; 7:17.

³Best explained by Watt, 'The Early Development', 51–53; Buhl, *Tahrif*, SEI, 560f.

⁴See the classical definition of Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d. 1209) in *at-Tafsīr al-kabīr* in his remarks to Q 2:75; 4:46,51; 5:13; repr. with transl. in Gaudeul and Caspar, 'Textes de la tradition musulmane', 61–103; cf. Buhl, *Tahrif*, SEI, 560f.

sues involved in this term,¹ which are already evident in the fact that the term *naskh* is by no means clear in the Quran:² Whilst the term expresses the replacement of one commandment by another, it does not say what exactly has been replaced.³ The classical schools of law considered the replaced commandment to be a previous Quranic verse and developed a total of three kinds of *naskh*: 1) *naskh al-ḥukm wa 't-tilāwa*,⁴ 2) *naskh al-ḥukm dūna 't-tilāwa*⁵ and 3) *naskh 't-tilāwa dūna 'l-ḥukm*.⁶

Through the first kind of abrogation the Quranic commandment was abrogated, and its mention in the Quran was expunged. In this case, the commandment was neither found in the Quran, nor was it practised. Understandably, this kind of abrogation had no practical relevance for Islamic jurisdiction. Through the second kind of abrogation, the Quranic commandment was abrogated but retained in the Quran. In other words, the commandment continued to be included in the Quran but was not practised. Through the third kind of abrogation, the Quranic verse was expunged but the commandment itself was retained. In other words, the commandment was not in the Quran but was practised. An example of this is the

¹Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'ān*, 46–104, *The Sources of Islamic Law*.

²Q 16:101; 22:52; 2:106; to the Quranic background (see Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law*, 165ff).

³The discussion of what exactly has been replaced is irrelevant for this study. J. Burton interprets āya in the three aforementioned verses as not meaning a Quranic verse but rather as denoting a previous commandment not included in the Quran. Thus, according to him the Quranic commandment does not intend to replace a previous Quranic commandment, but rather a “profane” commandment (*ibid.*, 207f).

⁴*Ibid.*, 43–55.

⁵*Ibid.*, 56–80.

⁶*Ibid.*, 122–164.

command to stone adulterers, which is not found in the Quran but is practised.

Burton demonstrated that these distinctions are artificial and were created by jurists in order to sanction various extra-Quranic commandments and in effect annul a number of Quranic commandments.

The Quran itself clearly and entirely in the sense of its understanding of revelation asserts an “external” *naskh*. In other words, it understands its commandments as an abrogation of extra-Quranic commandments, as in the case of the changed direction of prayer, *ḥajj*, *lex talionis*¹ etc. This view probably derives from the Christians, as the Quran is cognizant of the fact that abrogation was practised among Jews and Christians, even though it does not explicitly use the word *naskh* in this context. Thus it says that before the Torah was revealed, the Israelites were allowed to eat other foods.² Similarly, Christ also abrogated some Jewish laws.³ Burton attempts to prove that the Quran itself did not posit an “internal” *naskh*, that is an abrogation of Quranic commandments through later Quranic commandments.⁴ No doubt further studies are necessary to substantiate this thesis.⁵ Later jurists generally accepted at least both the internal and external *naskh* as well as the three types of abrogation. What re-

¹Ibid., 165–183, 195f.

²Q 3:93.

³Q 3:50 (on the Quranic understanding of *naskh* see Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law*, 165ff).

⁴Ibid., 184–198.

⁵Burton’s radical rejection of the historicity of the *ḥadīṣ* and his emphasis on the completeness of today’s Quran will probably remain controversial, as by doing so he radically departs from the generally accepted results of Nöldeke-Schwally and J. Schacht (Cf. Rudolph, ‘Neue Wege’; Antes, ‘Schriftverständnis im Islam’; Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 34–38).

mained controversial was the actual number of abrogated and abrogating verses.¹

The principle of external *naskh* was taken up and applied to the Bible by post-Quranic Muslims, whose Bible knowledge was better, and who were more aware of the contradictions of the Biblical commandments to the Quran than the first generations. No doubt Christian influence also played a role in this.

The Post-Quranic Period

It is difficult to trace the further development of Muslim apologetics in the period from Muhammad's death to the 9th century, as the sources are primarily the hard-to-date *hadīs* of the two Muhammad biographies compiled by Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Sa'd. At the beginning of this development we find primitive stories such as the well-known Baḥīra legend, in which a Christian monk recognizes Muhammad as the promised prophet; or the story of the Christian orphan who while reading his uncle's *injīl* encounters a sealed page that upon closer scrutiny contains a prophecy about the coming prophet Muhammad.² *Tahrīf* as the corruption of the meaning was pictorially illustrated by the action of a Jew who held his hand over a Scripture passage to conceal it.³ According to W.M. Watt, the next step in this development was the search for the promises of Muhammad in the Bible. Thus Muhammad is identified with the Paraclete (John 15:26) in the possibly fictitious

¹The reason for this was the simple fact that some commandments of the Quran contradict each other.

²Sachau, *Biographien Muhammeds*, I, 2,14–25,89; see also Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 90–95; Watt, 'The Early Development', 53–57.

³Sachau, *Biographien Muhammeds*, I, 1,104,105–110.

disputation of 782 between the Caliph al-Mahdī and the Catholicos Timothy I.¹

In this period, prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible are only sparsely mentioned. In contrast to this, a number of tales of miracles of Muhammad were already circulating, so that Ibn Ishāq (d. c. 767) could embellish his biography of Muhammad with numerous reports of miracles, predictions and descriptions of the noble characteristics of the Prophet.²

Early 9th to Early 11th Century

Real apologetics began in the ninth century, parallel to the generally enlightened atmosphere under Abbasid caliphs like al-Ma'mūn (813–833).³ This phase lasted until about the turn of the millennium. In it, supposed Biblical prophecies regarding Muhammad were systematically collected, and it was posited that the Biblical texts had been interpreted wrongly (*tahrīf-i ma'nawī*). Until now the charge of textual corruption (*tahrīf-i lafzī*) was not made, even though it was in the bud. This confirms the suspicion that until about the turn of the millennium, the possibility of textual corruption was not even considered.

The abrogation (*naskh*) of Biblical commandments through Quranic commandments was already advocated in this phase of Muslim apologetics.

¹Watt, 'The Early Development', 57–59; on this disputation cf. Graf, *GCAL*, II, 114–118. Ibn Ishāq already mentions this identification; see Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 103. The Quran itself says that Muhammad was prophesied by Jesus without linking him to Jn 15 (Q 61:6).

²Sellheim, 'Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte', 53–73, esp. 62–70.

³Watt, 'The Early Development', 59.

This development was initiated by the three contemporaries aṭ-Ṭabarī, al-Ḥasanī and al-Jādhiz:

‘Alī b. Rabban aṭ-Ṭabarī

The former Nestorian scholar aṭ-Ṭabarī converted to Islam during the reign of Mu‘tasim (833–842) and was a doctor and author of medical writings at the court of the intolerant caliph Mutawakkil.¹ His greatest achievement in the field of apologetics was the treatise *Kitāb ad-dīn wa ‘d-dawla* (*The Book of Religion and Empire*),² which consisted of a full development of apologetics proper.

That the work belongs to the early apologetic phase is very evident. For example, it mentions Biblical stories offensive to Islamic sensibilities such as Hosea marrying a prostitute merely as proof of the superior character of the Quran.³ In contrast, the apologetics after 1000 AD see this as evidence of textual corruption (*tahrif-i lafẓī*).

Aṭ-Ṭabarī primarily seeks to demonstrate that the Quran was confirmed by the preceding Scriptures by citing numerous Biblical quotations. Nevertheless, he already asserts that the Quranic commandments have abrogated Biblical commandments.⁴

In his second, not fully preserved work *ar-Radd ‘ala ‘n-naṣārā* (*Refutation of Christians*),⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī strives to refute the divinity of Jesus through Bible passages. Here again, it is

¹See the introduction to aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire*, II; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 6f.

²aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire*, I; on the question of its authenticity see A. Mingana’s Introduction to aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire*, II; Bouyges, *Le kitab addīn*, 17–20, ‘Nos informations’, 69–111. Fritsch rightly rejects his criticism; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 10–12.

³aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire*, I, 44–50.

⁴Explicitly aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire*, II, 129–134; implicitly 134–136.

⁵aṭ-Ṭabarī, ‘ar-Radd ‘ala ‘n-naṣārā’, 115–148; partly transl. by Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 213–222. On Ṭabarī’s understanding of Christ in *ar-Radd* see Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 48–71.

noteworthy that contrary to Qurānic statements, he assumes that Jesus was crucified and even uses this as an argument that Jesus was only human.¹ Even in this context it does not occur to him to bring forward the argument of textual corruption (*taḥrīf-i lafẓī*). The term *taḥrīf* is used by him exclusively to denote corruption of the meaning (*taḥrīf-i ma' nawī*);² his entire argumentation demonstrates that he is merely denouncing the wrong interpretation of Scripture by the Christians.

al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī (d. c. 860)

The Zaidite attitude of the versatile writer al-Ḥasanī is not noticeable in his book in rhymed prose entitled *Refutation of the Christians (ar-Radd 'ala 'n-naṣārā)*.³ In it, the deity of Jesus is rejected as a false interpretation of the Bible (*taḥrīf-i ma' nawī*); in the New Testament the term Son of God is used for Jesus only in a metaphorical sense. It is noteworthy that al-Qāsim does not refer to the New Testament accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus in this context: He neither attempts to use these reports as evidence that Jesus was human, nor does he reproach the Christians for corrupting them.

The author knows the Bible fairly well, for his writing contains numerous Biblical quotations, esp. from the Sermon on the Mount.⁴

'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (776–869)

Only excerpts of *Refutation of the Christians (Risala fi r-Radd 'ala 'n-naṣārā)* by the famous author al-Jāḥiẓ have been preserved. This treatise was a response to Christian objections criticizing Qurānic statements and in particular attacking passages in the Qurān that deviated from the Bible. According

¹at-Ṭabarī, *'ar-Radd 'ala 'n-naṣārā*, 21.

²Cf. *ibid.*, 8, line 7f with line 18: The parallelism of the two sentences “wa ufassiru bi-'auni 'llāh al-kalimāti 'llati ta'awwalūhā bi-khilāfi ma'ānīhā” and “wa azkuru 't-taḥrīfā wa 'l-fasād al-maujūd fihi” indicates that they are identical in content.

³Ed. and transl. by DiMatteo, *'Confutazione*, 301–364.

⁴Is the substitution of father (ab) with Lord (rabb) in the Biblical quotations due to the contextualization of a translator or a later scribal error?

to J. Finkel, this refutation was commissioned by the court of Mutawakkil.¹ *Refutation* questions the authenticity of the Gospels: Mark and Luke were not apostles, and the Gospels are full of contradictions, as the dogmatic differences among Christians also indicate.² Nevertheless, neither does al-Jādhiz accuse the Christians of textual corruption (*taḥrīf-i lafẓī*), nor does he present concrete examples for his accusations.

The *taurāt* is considered to be authentic in *Refutation*.³ In the opinion of the author, anthropomorphisms and terms like “sons of God” are metaphorical in both the Bible and the Quran, as is Jesus’ divine Sonship; in general, many Biblical expressions are figurative. Moreover, these terms stem from incorrect translations from the Hebrew.⁴ These arguments of al-Jādhiz can be assigned to the category of corruption of the meaning.

The Biblical knowledge of the author is not very good. He seeks to make up for this deficiency through taunts, suggestive remarks and insinuations. Thus the long passage at the beginning about Jews and Christians seems to be more of a rhetorical device to put the reader into the desired anti-Christian mood.

The work consists almost exclusively of somewhat indefinable polemics. The accusation of corruption of the meaning (*taḥrīf-i maʿnawī*) is present in substance, while the remarks on the contradictions in the Gospels could be regarded as a precursor to the charge of textual corruption (*taḥrīf-i lafẓī*). However, his remarks are not clear and specific enough to allow this conclusion. An actual apologetics is not developed, and Christian objections to Quranic contradictions to

¹Finkel, *Three Essays*, 20–38; partly transl. by Finkel, ‘A Risāla of al-Jāhiz’, 311–334; complete trans. by Allouche, ‘Un traité de polémique’, 123–155. While Finkel assumes that the writing was commissioned by Mutawakkil’s court, E. Fritsch thinks that it was written at the time of Maʿmūn (813–833); see Finkel, ‘A Risāla of al-Jāhiz’, 315f; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 13f. Cf. also Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 72f. On the interpretation of Christ by al-Jāhiz *ibid.*, pp. 72–91.

²Finkel, *Three Essays*, 24.

³*Ibid.*, 28.

⁴*Ibid.*, 25, 28, 35.

the Bible are merely categorically rejected. Precisely for this reason it is noteworthy that *Refutation* did not explicitly mention textual corruption (*tahrīf-i lafẓī*). The abrogation of Biblical commandments (*naskh*) is not mentioned. This can be explained by the fact that the Christian questions submitted do not attack Islamic laws.

The remaining Muslim writings up to the turn of the millennium have similar characteristics as the works of the three apologists just mentioned. Not one of them mentions the accusation of textual corruption:

Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh an-Nāshi’ al-Anbārī (d. 906)

*Book of the Middle (Kitāb al-awsaṭ fi ‘l-maqālāt)*¹ was probably written in Baghdad. In it, the Mu‘tazilite al-Anbārī describes the Christian parties of his time. He directs his criticism against Christians who invoke the Bible as well as against Christians who argue on the basis of speculation. In his opinion, the former have derived their concepts from Greek philosophy and not the Bible, which teaches neither an Incarnation nor a Trinity. Thus, the Biblical term “son of God” is not only used for Jesus but also for other people.² Al-Anbārī refutes the speculative Christians with the help of logical arguments.³

Al-Anbārī also does not accuse the Christians of textual corruption (*tahrīf-i lafẓī*). An actual apologetics does not materialize in this writing, and the claim of abrogation (*naskh*) is not mentioned. This may, however, be related to the nature of the writing or the disposition of the author.

Anonymous (9th/10th century)

The beginning and end of this anonymous writing published by D. Sourdel are missing.⁴ It is divided into three parts: 1) Christians believe in things that are not proven in their Scriptures; thus they believe in the divinity of Jesus;⁵ 2) Christians

¹Published in Ess, *Frühe mu‘tazilitische Häresiographie*.

²§43 *ibid.*, 85.

³§44ff *ibid.*, 85–87.

⁴Sourdel, ‘Un pamphlet musulman’, 1–33.

⁵*Ibid.*, 27–29.

do not act according to their Scriptures; thus they worship the cross. Their objections to Muslim practices such as polygamy can be refuted by means of the Bible itself;¹ 3) Muhammad was God's true Messenger; this is proved by his excellent rules and the subjugation of his enemies.²

The author accuses the Christians of misinterpreting the Bible (*taḥrīf-i ma' nawī*). This assertion and the many Biblical quotations cited reveal a closeness to 'Alī aṭ-Ṭabarī. The entire third part reminds one especially of the latter.³ Remarkable is his reaction to the accusation of the Christians regarding Muhammad's marriage to the wife of his adopted son Zaid:⁴ David also sinned against Uriah; however, he repented, and God forgave him his wrongdoing(!).⁵ This claim would have been considered blasphemous by later Muslim generations. It is therefore all the more revealing that in contrast to polemicists after 1000 AD, he does not try to explain this Biblical passage by resorting to the accusation of textual corruption; he does not even criticize the Biblical passage like aṭ-Ṭabarī does.⁶

The author does not mention any Biblical passages purportedly prophesying the coming of Muhammad or any prophecies or miracles of Muhammad. He does not mention the abrogation of Biblical commandments (*naskh*) either.

Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 944)

Al-Māturīdī briefly deals with Christianity⁷ in his *Book on Monotheism (Kitāb at-tauḥīd)*. However, he devotes his time to refuting the Trinity through logical arguments, which only implies a corruption of meaning (*taḥrīf-i ma' nawī*).

¹Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulman', 29–32.

²*Ibid.*, 32f.

³Thus also *ibid.*, 10.

⁴*Cf.* Q 33:37.

⁵Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulman', 32.

⁶*Cf.* aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb ad-dīn*, Ch. 6.

⁷al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb at-tauḥīd*, 210–215.

Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb (before 988)

Excerpts from the lost work of a convert from Christianity called Ibn Ayyūb have been preserved by Ibn Taimīya.¹ These are primarily concerned with a refutation of Christian dogmas on the basis of the Bible. They describe the Christological positions of the major Christian churches. Only the corruption of the meaning of the Bible is assumed.

Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī (d. 992)

In his treatise *Declaration of the Outstanding Qualities of Islam (Kitāb al-I'lām bi manāqib al-islām)*,² al-ʿĀmirī presents four arguments against the opponents of the Islam, of which at least the first two and the fourth have a Christian background. His refutation is based on objective evidence, not on written criteria, so that *tahrīf*, *naskh* or similar issues play no role. Furthermore, he does not explicitly deal with Christian dogmas. A short section covers purported prophecies about Muhammad in the Old and New Testament.³

Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013)

In a short chapter in *Kitāb at-tamhīd*,⁴ al-Bāqillānī wrote a refutation of the Christological and Trinitarian dogmas using purely logical criteria, that is without dealing with the issues of *tahrīf* or *naskh*. He does not raise the spectre of textual corruption even when discussing the crucifixion of Jesus (*tahrīf-i lafẓī*).⁵

ʿAbd al-Ḥabbār al-Hamazānī (934?–1025)

The three writings of Hamazānī dealing with Christianity assume that the meaning of the Bible has been cor-

¹Ibn Taimīya, *al-Ḥawāb as-saḥīḥ*, II, 311–343, 350–III, 4.

²al-ʿĀmirī, *al-I'lām bi manāqib al-islām*, 185–208.

³*Ibid.*, 201–208.

⁴al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb at-tamhīd*, 75–103; on the Jews cf. 160–190.

⁵*Ibid.*, 174.

rupted (*taḥrīf-i ma‘nawī*).¹ They betray a good knowledge of Christian groups in the Middle East.

The presentation of the miracles of Muhammad² and the inimitability of the Quran³ could be understood as anti-Christian apologetics. However, this does not seem to be the case; rather, in this case the subject has become an internal Muslim affair. Only this explains the fact that Hamazānī hardly mentions Christianity when dealing with the abrogating function of the Quran regarding the Law of Moses.⁴

After 1000

Only after the turn of the millennium do we find a clear concept of textual corruption (*taḥrīf-i lafzī*). This is now systematically applied to the Bible, most radically so by Ibn Ḥazm. Only now does the fully developed form of Muslim polemics and apologetics emerge. At the same time, there continue to be isolated cases of people adhering to the genuineness of the entire Biblical text, thus for example al-Ghazālī. The majority, however, takes a middle position, claiming that both authentic and corrupted texts are present in the Bible; that a distortion of the meaning (*taḥrīf-i ma‘nawī*) and of the text (*taḥrīf-i lafzī*) are both present, thus for example Ibn Taimīya. The reason for this is clear: The radical application of the principle of textual corruption excludes the possibility of

¹Thus in al-Hamazānī, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb at- tauḥīd*, V, 80–151 (a discussion of the various religious persuasions); 198–210 (a refutation of the same), *Taṣbīt dalā’il nubūwat*, I, 91–198, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 291–298.

²al-Hamazānī, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb at- tauḥīd*, XVI, 307–323.

³*Ibid.*, Vol. 16.

⁴*Cf. ibid.*, XVI, 138–142. In fact, the connection to anti-Christian apologetics is no longer apparent in the mention of the miracles and prophecies concerning Muhammad found in Ibn Ishāq’s biography.

Muhammad being prophesied in the Bible, while accepting both a corrupted and an authentic part of the Bible allows Muslims to continue to assert that Muhammad was prophesied in the Bible.

Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064)

In his well-known work entitled *Detailed Examination of Religious Communities, Heresies and Sects (Kitab al-fiṣal fi 'l-mīlāl wa 'l-ahwā' wa 'n-nihal)*,¹ Ibn Ḥazm when dealing with the People of the Book especially discusses the textual corruption of the Bible (*tahrīf-i lafẓī*). No doubt his Zaharite beliefs bolstered his disposition.

Ibn Ḥazm examines the corruption of the Old Testament² and the New Testament³ in detail. He especially exploits the presence of textual variants in order to substantiate the charge of textual corruption. Ibn Ḥazm finds no evidence for contradictions in the crucifixion reports, which he regards as inauthentic. However, he attempts to compensate for these deficiencies through insinuations.⁴ In the treatment of Biblical contradictions, he does not even bother to answer Christian objections regarding Quranic contradictions; rather, he categorically rejects any doubt that the Quran has been transmitted free of error.⁵

Other topics include the abrogation of Biblical commandments (*naskh*),⁶ prophecies about Muhammad in the Torah,⁷ miracles of Muhammad,⁸ the inimitability of the Quran⁹ and logical objections to Christian teachings.¹⁰

This review shows that the frequently made remark that Ibn Ḥazm anticipated the results of modern Biblical criticism is not

¹Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, Vol. 1–5; on the historical background of Ibn Ḥazm's polemics see Perlmann, 'Religion in a Religious Age', esp. 108ff; Roth, 'Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah'.

²Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, I, 116–224.

³*Ibid.*, II, 2–75.

⁴*Cf. ibid.*, I, 57–61; II, 73–86.

⁵*Cf. ibid.*, I, 48–65.

⁶*Cf. ibid.*, I, 100ff.

⁷*Ibid.*, I, 111f.

⁸*Ibid.*, I, 104f.

⁹*Ibid.*, I, 105–108; III, 1–22.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, I, 48–65.

really correct, as he was not consequent in his criticism. His approach is in no way historical-critical in the modern sense, as he uncritically accepts the legendary reports of Muhammad's miracles and the "proof" of purported prophecies about Muhammad in the Torah, while at the same time contending that the Torah is entirely inauthentic. On the other hand, he did not recognize the authenticity of the Biblical accounts of Jesus' crucifixion, even though he could not prove their inauthenticity by means of his own rigorous criteria. In short, he applied his critical norms only to those facts that were offensive to him. Exposing the adversaries' contradictions simply played an important role in medieval polemics, and this is the root of Ibn Ḥazm's views. In no way does he display historical-critical thinking in a modern sense. A closer examination of his work thus proves that while he was one of the most radical proponents of the theory of textual corruption, he did not apply his method consistently.

Abu 'l-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 1081)

In the 11th century, the legal scholar al-Bājī composed a response to the anonymous letter of a French monk,¹ who had called him to conversion in a generally irenic manner. Although the nature of his treatise did not allow for much detail, al-Bājī nevertheless presents the monk with all aspects of Muslim apologetics. He mentions the inauthenticity of the Bible (*tahrīf-i lafzī*),² the abrogation of the same (*naskh*),³ the excellence of Islamic teachings,⁴ the prophecies about Muhammad found in the Bible,⁵ Muhammad's miracles,⁶ the inimitability of the Quran⁷ and the sublime qualities of Muhammad.⁸

¹Dunlop, 'A Christian Mission', 259–310; in a very hypothetical reconstruction, A. Cutler identifies the monk as Abbot Hugo of Cluny; Cutler, 'Who was the 'Monk of France''.

²Dunlop, 'A Christian Mission', §25,26,29.

³*Ibid.*, §13.

⁴*Ibid.*, §32.

⁵*Ibid.*, §26.

⁶*Ibid.*, §12,29.

⁷*Ibid.*, §30.

⁸*Ibid.*, §33,34.

The author focuses on the essential differences between Christians and Muslims and on a positive exposition of his faith. Because of this, he manages to formulate his faith more theologically and dogmatically than most apologists. For this reason, this letter is one of the few Muslim writings of the Middle Ages that seriously (albeit dismissively) examines terms such as “Kingdom of God”¹ or “Blood of Jesus”² from a Muslim perspective, and one of the few that sheds light on the theological foundations of Islam.

The basic tenor of the book is that of the wise teacher, who seeks to enlighten the somewhat foolish student. It seeks to win this well-meaning but somewhat weak-minded pupil over by pointing out the pure humanity of Jesus and the uniqueness of Muhammad and his mission.

Abu 'l-Ma'ālī 'l-Juwainī (d. 1085)

Al-Juwainī's *Restitution of Anger Regarding the Textual Alterations in Taurāt and Injīl* (*Shifā' al-ghalīl fī bayān mā waqa'a fi 't-taurāt wa 'l-injīl min at-tabdīl*)³ is even more consequent than Ibn Ḥazm. The author wonders why Muhammad is not mentioned in the *taurāt* and *injīl*, although according to the Quran, this should be the case. The reason for this can lie only in the corruption of the text (*tabdīl*). The evident contradictions found in the Bible prove this; in the Old Testament contradictory numbers are mentioned regarding the ages of men from Adam to Abraham, while in the New Testament things like the genealogies of Jesus contradict each other.

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111)

If we can attribute *Beautiful Refutation (ar-Radd al-jamīl)* to the greatest Muslim theologian al-Ghazālī,⁴ then this writing is an example of a proponent of *tahrīf-i ma'nawī* in the period

¹Ibid., §14.

²Ibid., §22.

³Allard, *Textes apologétiques*.

⁴Lazarus-Yafeh, 'Étude sur la polémique islamo-chrétienne', denies the authenticity of this treatise; Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, provides good reasons for its authenticity.

after 1000: The author limits himself to a refutation of the divinity of Jesus based on the statements of the Gospels.¹

Abu 'l-Faḥ aṣh-Shahrastānī (d. 1153)

The *Book of Religious Communities and Sects (Kitāb al-milal wa 'n-nihal)* of aṣh-Shahrastānī focuses on a presentation of the teachings of various religions. In the treatment of Jews and Christians, however, several characteristics of Muslim apologetics emerge.² Thus, *taḥrīf* (including traces of textual corruption),³ anthropomorphisms⁴ and prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible are mentioned.⁵

In his discussion of the theory of abrogation, the adoption and development of Christian arguments is evident. According to him, while the *taurāt* only demands revenge and the Gospel only proclaims forgiveness, Islam prescribes both revenge and forgiveness and is therefore the preferable middle way. While the Torah only has external laws and the Gospel only internal laws, the Quran is superior to both, as it promulgates both kinds of laws. The Torah contains universal (*aḥkām 'amma*) and specific statutes (*aḥkām makhṣūṣa*). The latter have been abrogated by the Quran. This abrogation, however, does not mean that the commandments have been expunged; rather, they have been fulfilled (*takmīl*) and confirmed (*taqrīr*) in accordance with Mt 5:17.⁶

As Shahrastānī's aim was not apologetics in the narrower sense, he does not elaborate on the above-mentioned points and does not refute the various Christian dogmas, although he occasionally makes polemical comments regarding these.⁷

¹See Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*.

²The following information is taken from the edition that is printed on the margin of Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fisal*; the part about the People of the Book is in the second volume, 47–69. Cf. the translations of Haarbrücker, *Abu-'l-faḥ ' Muhammad asch-Schahrastānī's Religionsparteien und Philosophenschulen*; Watt, 'A Muslim Account', partly transl. (On the Christians) 57–68.

³Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fisal*, II, 48 (baddalū wa ḥarrāfū).

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, 51–53.

⁶*Ibid.*, II, 53f; cf. *ibid.*, 50.

⁷*Ibid.*, 61: Paul as the big impostor of Christendom.

His Islamic way of thinking becomes visible in his derivation of Christianity from Arius. In his opinion, the three great Christian communities of the Middle Ages were later heretical deviations from the “monotheistic” religion of Arius. Thus, he tries to explain Christianity as a deviation from the Islamic version of monotheism in a typically Islamic manner.

Abū Ja‘far al-Khazrajī (1125–87)

The letter of a priest from Toledo to al-Khazrajī provoked his response entitled *Maqāmi‘ aṣ-ṣulbān fi ‘r-radd ‘alā ‘ibāda al-auṣān* (*The Prevention of Crosses by Refuting Idolatry*).¹

Besides a brief exposition of the Christian faith,² the priest had listed nine objections directed primarily against things in Islam that contradict Christian values and concepts. Thus he had objected to polygamy,³ the divorce regulations,⁴ the carnal nature of Paradise,⁵ the spread of Islam through the sword⁶ and contradictions of the Quran to the Bible (e.g. the Quranic equation of the Virgin Mary with Aaron’s sister Miriam).⁷

The answer of Khazrajī mentions the usual objections: corruption of the meaning (*tahrīf-i ma‘nawī*) regarding the divinity of Jesus,⁸ textual corruption (*tahrīf-i lafẓī*), logical impossibilities (e.g. Jesus’ divinity in John 10:9),⁹ contradictions (e.g. Jesus’ genealogies),¹⁰ the sins of the prophets (e.g. Lot and his daughters),¹¹ anthropomorphisms,¹² textual variants,¹³ the abrogation of Biblical commandments (*naskh*),¹⁴ prophecies

¹The following refers to the edition printed in Cairo ²1979.

²al-Khazrajī, *Maqāmi‘ aṣ-ṣulbān*, 68–92.

³*Ibid.*, 93f.

⁴*Ibid.*, 100.

⁵*Ibid.*, 126–128.

⁶*Ibid.*, 141.

⁷*Ibid.*, 104.

⁸*Ibid.*, 155–174; *cf.* 216–219.

⁹*Ibid.*, 178; *cf.* 216–219.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 180f.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 292f.

¹²*E.g. ibid.*, 308.

¹³*cf. ibid.*, 289–292.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 323–325.

about Muhammad in the Bible,¹ miracles and prophecies of Muhammad² and the inimitability of the Quran.³

Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273?)

Al-Qurṭubī wrote *Disclosure of the Corruption and Delusional Thoughts of the Christian Religion (Kitāb al-i‘lām bimā fī dīn an-naṣārā min al-fasād wa ‘l-auhām)* in Cordoba. He does not mention textual corruption of the Scriptures. Rather, in four chapters he deals with the Christian teachings of the divine hypostases and the Incarnation of Jesus, prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible and religious regulations of Christianity.⁴

Shihāb ad-dīn al-Qarāfī (1228–1285)

According to E. Fritsch, the treatise *Glorious Answers to Ne-farious Questions (al-Ajwiba al-fākhira ‘an al-as’ila al-fājira)*⁵ by al-Qarāfī is the best apologetic achievement of Islam, since in his opinion it was not only an academic exercise, but also called the reader to conversion.⁶ It was directed against a letter written by the Christian Paul ar-Rāhib of Antioch, who based his reasoning mainly on the Quran.⁷

Al-Qarāfī lists both the corruption of the meaning⁸ and text of the Bible⁹ as well as the sins of the prophets (e.g. David as an adulterer),¹⁰ textual variants¹¹ and contradictory state-

¹al-Khazrajī, *Maqāmi‘ aṣ-ṣulbān*, 260–280.

²*Ibid.*, 240–251.

³*Ibid.*, 233–239.

⁴Ed. and transl. by Devillard, al-Qurṭubī, ‘*Kitāb al-i‘lām*’; partly ed. and transl. (Chs. 1–2) by Bouamama, al-Qurṭubī, ‘*Kitāb al-i‘lām*’.

⁵The following refers to an edition printed in Cairo in 1986.

⁶Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 22.

⁷*Ibid.*, 20–22.

⁸al-Qarāfī, *al-Ajwiba al-fākhira*, 210–221 (The refutation of the Christian claim that Jesus must be divine because he rose from the dead).

⁹*Ibid.*, 236–261.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 243f.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 253f.

ments.¹ Jesus only seemingly died on the cross, since in actual fact at his transfiguration he was raised to Heaven.²

Further points are devoted to the theory of abrogation,³ the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Christ⁴ and the Trinity.⁵ Although the author criticizes Christianity in detail, he does not render a positive presentation of his own faith.

Sa'īd b. Ḥasan al-Iskandarānī (d. 1320)

Al-Iskandarānī was a convert from Judaism. He wrote *Book of Paths of Insight (Kitāb masālik an-nazar)*,⁶ which mainly consists of a description of the purported prophecies about Muhammad found in the Bible. Sa'īd not only interprets the Biblical passages very arbitrarily but also makes arbitrary changes to the text to suit his needs. In his opinion, the textual corruption of the New Testament is proven by the fact that he can not find a reference to Muhammad in it.⁷

A paragraph deals with the inimitability of the Quran.⁸ Otherwise, the content is rather jumbled, confused and characterized by the fanaticism that sometimes goes hand in hand with a religious conversion.

Taqī ad-Dīn b. Taimīya (1263–1328)

Ibn Taimīya wrote a detailed treatise against Christians named *The Right Response to Those who Have Changed the Religion of Christ (al-ġawāb aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ liman baddala dīn al-masīḥ)*.⁹

¹E.g. *ibid.*, 254–256: The Mosaic authorship is not possible for the time after Moses' death; *ibid.*, 101–121.

²*Ibid.*, 184f.

³*Ibid.*, 197–205.

⁴*Ibid.*, 208–212, 265–271.

⁵*Ibid.*, 148.

⁶Weston, 'The Kitāb an-Nazar', 312–383.

⁷*Ibid.*, 340; *cf.* 358.

⁸*Ibid.*, 355.

⁹Ibn Taimīya, *al-ġawāb as-saḥīḥ*, Vol. 1–4; partly trans. by T. Michel, *A Muslim Theologian's Response*.

The author propagates both kinds of *tahrīf*. However, he explains most of the “wrong views” of Christians with the theory of *tahrīf-i ma‘nawī* (corruption of the meaning);¹ he devotes relatively few pages to the subject of textual corruption, regarding which he remains very vague and unspecific.²

Ibn Taimīya only marginally discusses the issue of abrogation,³ as in the main he does not explain the difference between Quranic and Biblical commandments by means of the abrogation theory (*naskh*); rather, he propagates two further theories to explain this: Islam is the middle way between the “religion” (literally: the law) of judgment (*sharī‘a al-‘adl*) and the “religion” of grace (*sharī‘a al-faḍl*).⁴ Furthermore, the original form of the religion is only proclaimed by Islam, as Judaism and Christianity have corrupted it. Nevertheless, the author adheres to the abrogation of a small part of the commandments.⁵

Other topics include the prophecies about Muhammad found in the Old and New Testament,⁶ prophecies and miracles of Muhammad, the excellent character of the prophet⁷ and the inimitability of the Quran.⁸

In the writings after 1000, Muslim apologetics was in full bloom, displaying all the characteristics of medieval apologetics. Let us now to take a closer look at these.

¹ Cf. Ibn Taimīya, *al-Jawāb as-sahīh*, III, 3–228.

² Cf. *ibid.*, I, 330–II, 27.

³ *Ibid.*, III, 228ff.

⁴ It is characteristic for the Islamic mindset of the author that he sees the difference between both religions mainly as a difference in legislation (*sharī‘a*).

⁵ See esp. Ibn Taimīya, *al-Jawāb as-sahīh*, I, 126–128; cf. 114f; 377.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 282–332; IV, 3–22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 34–233.

⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 75ff. Al-Jauziya has not been mentioned here, as his work is mainly a plagiarism of Ibn Taimīya’s treatise.

Features of Islamic Apologetics

In the later Muslim apologetic works, a pattern emerges that occurs again and again and finds expression both in *polemics* as well as in the actual field of *apologetics*.

Apologetics in the narrower sense deals with a defense of one's own belief, while polemics attacks an alien belief. For the following categorization, the term apologetics shall be used in the narrower sense of a positive exposition of one's own faith.¹

A. *Polemics*²

1. The invalidity of the Bible
 - a) The textual corruption of the Bible (*tahrīf al-alfāz*) by the People of the Book
 - i. The sins of the prophets in the Bible
 - ii. Anthropomorphisms
 - iii. Conflicting numbers and details in the Bible
 - iv. Textual variants
 - b) The abrogation (*naskh*) of Biblical commandments through the Quran
2. The untenability of Christian dogmas
 - a) The logical impossibility of Christian dogmas
 - b) The wrong interpretation of the Bible (*tahrīf al-ma'ānī*)
3. The deficiency of Christian practice

B. *Apologetics*

1. The validity of Islam
 - a) The superiority of Islam

¹Cf. Lemme, *Apologetik*, RE 1, 679–698; Tschakert, *Polemik*, RE 15, 508–513; on the relation of polemics to apologetics esp. 510; Stürmer, *Apologetik*, EKL 1, 174–178; Schrey, *Apologetik III*, RGG I, 485–489.

²This paradigm is based on the already mentioned Muslim works.

2. The validity of Muhammad as a prophet
 - a) Prophecies (*i'lām*) about Muhammad in the Bible
 - b) The miracles of Muhammad, the largest of which is the Quran
 - c) The prophecies of Muhammad
 - d) The sublime nature of Muhammad

Proving the invalidity of the Bible (A.1) conflicted with the claim that Muhammad was prophesied by the Bible (B.2.a); the more one emphasized the corruption of the Bible, the more problematic it became to assert the alleged prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible.

What exactly did these apologists present to corroborate their claims?

Corruption of the Bible (A.1.a)

The theory of corruption combined several trains of thought. The differences between the LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch and Masoretic text were noted.¹ Furthermore, contradictory numbers² and logical “impossibilities” were detected. The fact that the Bible does not depict the prophets (which according to the Quran included the patriarchs and many Israelite kings) as without sin (*iṣma*)³ was unacceptable to Muslims of the Middle Ages and thus a sure indication of the corruption of the Scriptures (*tahriḥ-i lafzī*). Stories such as the pregnancy of Lot’s

¹Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 60.

²E.g. the number of family members of Jacob in Gen. 46.

³The sinlessness of the prophets has remained one of the tenets of Islam since medieval times; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 185ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 66–70.

daughters were often used as an example.¹ The anthropomorphisms of God in the Bible also demonstrated the corrupted state of the Bible in Islamic eyes.²

Muslim scholars were accustomed to assessing the authenticity of a tradition by means of the rules laid down by classical Islam for chains of transmission (*isnād*). For this reason they rejected the Gospels on the grounds that the authors were not apostles and thus unreliable.³ The crucifixion of Jesus was also a reason for assuming the corruption of the New Testament, as the Quran denied this.⁴

Muslims found a cause of textual corruption in the first destruction of Jerusalem. In their opinion, all the Scriptures of the Jews were lost at this time; although Ezra later dictated it from memory, he was guilty of making mistakes.⁵ The apostle Paul⁶ and the emperor Constantine⁷ were particularly notorious for their supposed introduction of innovations (*bid'a*) and their alleged participation in the corruption of the Bible.

¹For the Islamic understanding of Lot see Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 241f.

²The anthropomorphisms found in the Quran itself were also a source of considerable friction for Muslims; cf. Strothmann, *Tashbīh, SEI*, 583–585; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 30f,48f,89ff.

³Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 64. But see ar-Rāzī, who on the basis of *tawātur* (the uninterrupted chain of transmission) speaks out against *tahrīf-i lafẓī*; Gaudeul and Caspar, 'Textes de la tradition musulmane', 72. On the Problem of Islamic chains of transmission see Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 594ff, esp. 602; Watt and Welch, 'Mohammed und die Frühzeit', 235–239.

⁴Cf. Q 4:157; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 66–70.

⁵*Ibid.*, 59f.

⁶Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 259–261; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 43–51.

⁷Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 320ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 49,52: Constantine was the first to strengthen Christianity by making it the state religion.

Before the appearance of the objection of textual corruption in the Muslim camp, there had already been attempts by individual Christians to prove the corruption of the Quran. The Christian al-Kindī (10th century) had even published his thoughts in writing (see below p. 55). It is likely that Muslim apologetics was influenced by Christian apologetics in this regard. Al-Kindī's writing, however, apparently remained unanswered, and even later Christians like Paul ar-Rāhib no longer knew this line of argumentation or did not wish to raise the issue.¹

In order to explain the many deviations of the Quran from the Bible numerous scholastic arguments were put forward, some of which seem fantastic in the eyes of the modern reader. As a last resort, Muslims could always have recourse to the objection of textual corruption.

Abrogation of Biblical Commandments by the Quran (A.1.b)

The abrogation theory (*naskh*) has already been treated sufficiently. The Muslim apologists made extensive use of this argument.

The full-fledged line of argument pointed out that there are cases of abrogation within the Bible; thus the theory of abrogation should be abundantly clear to the Christian. Moreover, if he compares Christian and Islamic Law, he must inevitably come to the conclusion that the Islamic commandments have abolished the Christian commandments due to their superiority. Thus, Ibn Ḥazm refers to cases of abrogation within the Torah itself: Jacob married two sisters, an act later forbidden by the Mosaic Law.²

¹Cf. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 97–99.

²*Ibid.*, 75; 134f.

Ibn Taimīya continues this train of thought by highlighting the excellent character of Islamic legislation as the middle way between the “religion” of judgment and the “religion” of grace (see above p. 37).

The Untenability of Christian Dogmas (A.2)

As a rule, Christian dogmas were considered to be the result of the corruption of the meaning of the Bible (*tahrīf al-ma’ānī*); Christians created these by distorting the actual meaning of Biblical passages.¹

Trinity

Muslims essentially considered the doctrine of the Trinity to be a confession of tritheism,² which contradicts the oneness of God (*tauḥīd*; Q 112:1–4) reflected both in the Bible and in the Quran. To refute the doctrine of the Trinity, various arguments were cited. The categories of Aristotelian logic were a preferred weapon³ in the endeavour to prove the logical impossibility of the Trinity. The monotheistic implications of this dogma were largely ignored.⁴ For example, Ibn Taimīya states that although there are things that are suprarational (*mujāzāt al-‘uqūl*), these can not be contra-rational (*muḥālāt al-‘uqūl*).⁵ It was also argued that this pluralism in the deity was not necessarily confined to three persons, but that it could

¹Ibid., 102.

²Ibid.

³Thus by Ya‘qūt al-Kindī; see [ibid.](#), 103.

⁴Ibid., 103f.

⁵Ibn Taimīya, *al-Jawāb as-saḥīḥ*, Vol. III, 123f; see Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 104.

include other persons as well.¹ As is apparent, the treatment of this subject generally had a strongly rationalistic bias.

Early Eastern theology had accepted the supranatural nature of the Trinity but had striven to express it in words and formulas. Often, however, it failed to distinguish between examples used to illustrate the Trinity and actual Biblical proofs of the Trinity. Muslims found it easy to attack alleged evidence that originally served only as an illustration of the Trinity;² and in refuting these, they felt that they had refuted the actual Trinitarian dogma. This applies to the usual Christian illustrations of the Trinity as being, life and reason;³ as sun, sunlight and sunbeam/heat; as flame, light and heat;⁴ as reason, word and spirit of Man; as Zaid the physician, the calculator and the writer; or as reason, conceived and written word.⁵

Another criticism attacked the Christian definition of God as a substance in three persons. According to Muslim reasoning, God can not have any substance, otherwise he would be subject to the laws of substances.⁶

For Muslims, the divine Sonship of Jesus implied that Jesus was begotten from the intercourse of God with Mary, a finite being. Therefore, not only did they find this idea blasphemous, but they also believed that Jesus could not be part of God, the source of all things, because part of him was finite. In actual fact, Christian theology had al-

¹Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 268f.

²Cf. Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 261ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 104f.

³Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 107–110.

⁴Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 264; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 110f.

⁵Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 111.

⁶*Ibid.*, 106f.

ways pointed out that Jesus' Sonship was in no way the result of an earthly conception.¹

The Bible verses cited by Christians to corroborate the doctrine of the Trinity were generally rejected categorically and without further explanation by the Muslim apologists. The allegorical interpretations of Old Testament passages used as proof were easily refuted, but even the important New Testament verses on the subject were only treated in passing and by means of superficial arguments.² At the same time, it was not easy for Muslims to explain Quran passages such as Q 3, which Christians used as evidence of the uniqueness of Jesus.³

Christology

The suffering of Christ was incomprehensible to Muslims, as to them it was inconceivable that a prophet (not to mention the Son of God) could die such a shameful death.⁴

In order to refute the divine Sonship of Jesus, it was argued that Jesus himself always referred to himself as a human being, and that the divine title of God is not to be understood literally.⁵ Regarding the Incarnation (*tajassum/tajassud/iltihām*) and the hypostatic union (*it-tihād/hulūl*), Muslims objected that it is impossible for the pure Spirit to materialize.⁶ Understandably, the Nestori-

¹*Ibid.*, 105f.

²*Cf.* the refutation of Mt 28:19 by Ḥasan ibn-Ayyūb and Anonymous Adillat in *ibid.*, 113.

³*Ibid.*, 114–117.

⁴Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 380ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 119f.

⁵Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 287,296–298; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 121f.

⁶Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 276ff; *cf.* Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 122–124.

ans were generally rated more positively than the other Christian Churches.¹

Soteriology

Christian Soteriology was based on the knowledge of the essential sinfulness of Man. Muslims found this concept of sin repulsive, as Islam denies this.² Consequently, they could not grasp the need for Christ's death as an atonement for sin. Not only did Muslims deny the theory of original sin, but they also taught that the prophets were essentially without sin (*iṣma*).³ For this reason, the sins of the prophets described in the Bible were seen as a clear indication of textual corruption.⁴

The Inadequacy of Christian Practice (A.3)

Muslim writers were aware of the fact that most Christian customs and festivals were not decreed by Christ.⁵ The veneration of the cross and the saints, the Lord's Supper, the liturgy and the difference of fasting regulations to Islamic practices served as special points of attack. The absence of the prayer direction (*qibla*) and of circumcision and purification rites⁶ among Christians was also objectionable.

¹Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 127.

²Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 303ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 128–130.

³More specifically, *iṣma* means “divine protection from sin” (see above p. 40, fn. 3). at-Ṭabarī (p. 24) and Anonymous (9th/10th century: p. 28) still held an opposing view.

⁴Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 185ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 130.

⁵Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 138f.

⁶*Ibid.*, 140–148.

The Validity of Islam and Muhammad (B)

To the Muslim, the superiority of Islam was evident both in its uncompromising monotheism and in its denial of Christian teachings that did not seem to conform to the oneness of God. Thus, in the eyes of the apologists Islam was superior to Christianity because of its denial of the divinity of Jesus, the doctrine of the Trinity and allegedly bad or lax Christian practices. After all, Islam possesses the pure form of divine teaching, the only legitimate and definitive revelation and the seal of the prophets, Muhammad. Muhammad's central role in medieval Islam can in some ways be compared with the central role of Christ in Christendom; for although in theory Islam always maintained that Muhammad was an ordinary human being, in practice he increasingly acquired superhuman traits, and his intermediary role between the believer and God was taken for granted (see below p. 314).

What motivated Muslims to identify and develop prophecies about Muhammad and his miracles? E. Fritsch is no doubt right in naming two source: a) certain statements of the *Qur'an*¹ and b) the influence of Muslim clashes with Christians.² Modern research has also demonstrated that converts from the Persian culture decisively influenced the image formed of Muhammad³.

Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah were applied to Muhammad with the help of numbers, symbols and gematria.⁴ One of the most well-known

¹Cf. Q 7:156f; 61:6. Other passages are mentioned by Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 537–539.

²Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 76.

³Cf. Sellheim, 'Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte', 48; Watt and Marmura, 'Politische Entwicklungen', 91f.

⁴Cf. Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 537ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 74–96.

“prophecies” was the identification of the Johannine Paraclete with Muhammad.¹ It is characteristic of the superficial Bible knowledge of most apologists that Muhammad was also identified with the “prince of this world” of the Gospel of John.²

The Christian objection that unlike Jesus, Muhammad did not perform any miracles, is in all likelihood very old and probably the reason for the emergence of the numerous “miracles” of Muhammad described in the *ḥadīṣ* and apologetic works.³ Among other things, Muhammad is said to have split the moon, made stones and animals speak and performed miraculous acts of feeding and healing.⁴ His gift of prophecy was also embellished with colourful anecdotes.⁵

The Quran was considered to be the greatest miracle, as according to Islamic doctrine it is eternal, while the previous miracles were of a transient nature.⁶ In the eyes of a Muslim, its style and eloquence have not been surpassed by any other book, and its Arabic is particularly pure and

¹This idea has its root in Q 61:6; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 557ff; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 89–92. Cf. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 104, fn. 1.

²Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 92. Other passages which Muslims generally took to refer to Muhammad were Deut 18:18; 33:2f; Isa 9:5; 40:3–5; 42,11f; Ps 45,3–6 etc. These are explained in detail by Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 541ff.

³Cf. Schreiner, ‘Zur Geschichte der Polemik’, 593–595; see below p. 53.

⁴Thus already Ibn Ishāq; see Sellheim, ‘Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte’, 53–73, esp. 62–70; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 410f.

⁵Sellheim, ‘Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte’, 65–67.

⁶Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 101.

free of any vulgar expressions.¹ The sublime nature of Muhammad is exemplified by his pure way of life, his religious and social virtues and his laudable married life. Every Muslim is obliged to follow his example in every aspect of life.²

The Christian Background of Muslim Apologetics

C.H. Becker perhaps represents the most energetic advocate of the influence of Christians on Islamic teachings.³ In a similar vein, A. Abel more recently attempted to prove the influence of John of Damascus on Islamic theology.⁴ Contemporary research has demonstrated that such generalizations are problematic.⁵ Nevertheless, there must have been a considerable Christian influence on Muslim apologetics, for it was mainly Christians who clashed with Muslims in theological debates.

On the one hand, Muslim apologetics revolved around the legitimacy of Islam. To a much greater extent, however, it dealt with the person of Muhammad. Yet the accounts of the prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible and the descriptions of his miracles, prophecies and sublime nature can surely only be understood in the context

¹Cf. Neuwirth, 'Das islamische Dogma', 166–183; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 382ff. The latter has listed the various aspects most thoroughly; see esp. *ibid.*, 371ff. Regarding the phenomenon of miracles in Islam see also the detailed exposition of Graulich, *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes*.

²Sellheim, 'Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte', 65; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 411ff.

³Becker, 'Christliche Polemik', 175–195.

⁴Abel, 'La polémique damascénienne'.

⁵Cf. Watt and Marmura, 'Politische Entwicklungen', 91f.

of clashes with Christians. After all, it was the Christians who confronted the Muslims with the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament and with his miracles, predictions and sublime nature. It was they who pointed out the inferiority of Muhammad in this regard. In fact, Christian apologetics already exerted an influence on the *Qurān*, as E. Fritsch rightly observes (see above p. 47).

It is more difficult to identify the complicated origins of Muslim polemics. It has already been pointed out that this partly has its roots in the *Qurān*. Nevertheless, the objection of textual corruption (*tahrīf-i lafẓī*) can not be explained on the basis of this. Presumably one of the roots is to be found in pagan anti-Christian sources such as Porphyry. The accusation of textual corruption may simply have been a result of the realization that the theory of the corruption of the meaning as well as the theory of abrogation customary up to the turn of the millennium re insufficient to explain the deviations of the *Qurān* from the Bible.

It has been shown that the development of the accusation of the abrogation of Biblical commandments by the *Qurān* was also not straightforward (see above pp. 19–22); it is unlikely that it derived from a Christian concept of abrogation of Old Testament commandments through the New Testament.

But perhaps it is no coincidence that the first Muslim apologist, aṭ-Ṭabarī, was a convert from Christianity. Even more remarkable is the fact that the first accusation of textual corruption was demonstrably not made by a Muslim but by the Christian apologist al-Kindī against Islam (see below p. 55).

Chapter 3

Christian Anti-Muslim Apologetics

In the following, Greek, Arabic and Latin apologetics will be analysed separately, since each developed under different circumstances. The Arab and Greek apologists belong to the culture of the Eastern Church, while the Latin apologists had the mindset of the Western Church. Furthermore, the Arab apologists lived on Islamic territory and therefore usually had to refrain from any polemics against Islam or Muhammad. The first apologists on Islamic soil, such as John of Damascus and Abū Qurra, still expressed themselves in the Greek language, but with the gradual Arabization of the Muslim Empire, Christians began to compose their writings in Arabic. Greek apologetics was therefore limited more and more to Byzantium.

This and Latin apologetics could afford to attack Islam itself.¹

Greek Apologetics

In the 8th century, Greek apologetics began with John of Damascus. It lasted until the 15th century,² although from the 13th century the significant influence of Latin works (Th. Aquinas, Ricoldo da Monte Croce, Raimund Marti and Raymundus Lullus) can be ascertained.³ For this, Greek apologists used the same finely honed tools that had been used in the fight against heresies. In the beginning, people like John of Damascus still regarded Islam as a Christian heresy. Recent research has demonstrated that core themes of Byzantine polemics and apologetics in the 8th–13th Century have significant parallels to the core themes of Muslim polemics and apologetics (*cf.* above p. 39f):⁴

¹*Cf.* Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 3–11.

²Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins*, deals extensively with works from the 8th to the 13th century; the following presentation is mainly based on these results. The time after the 13th century has not been taken into account, as it has not been researched in detail; we still know too little about the interaction of Latin influences and personal achievement in these writings. For an overview see Argyriou, ‘*La littérature grecque*’, 253–277. Contrary to Khoury, he asserts that the writings after the 13th century in fact constitute an independent and original contribution to Byzantine apologetics. See also the bibliographic compilation in *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975), 169–176; 2 (1976), 194f. 242–245; 4 (1978), 261–265. For a somewhat outdated presentation see Meyendorff, ‘*Byzantine Views of Islam*’.

³Trapp, *Manuel II.*, 34f; Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins*, 41–44.

⁴Although this paradigm is not taken from A.-Th. Khoury, it has been derived from his writings.

A. Polemics

1. The dubiousness of the Quran¹
 - a) The wrong rendering of the Biblical message²
 - b) The impossibility of the Quran being uncreated
 - c) The inferiority of the Islamic Law (the impossibility of the Islamic Law abrogating the Christian Law)³
2. The dubiousness of the teachings of Islam
 - a) The deficient Islamic Soteriology
 - b) The inferior laws
 - c) The carnal pleasures in Paradise
 - d) The ascription of evil to God in Islam⁴
3. The dubiousness of Muhammad's claims
 - a) The absence of an attestation or prophecy about Muhammad in the Bible⁵
 - b) The absence of miracles done by Muhammad⁶
 - c) The absence of the gift of prophecy in Muhammad⁷
 - d) The absence of the hallmarks of a religious founder in Muhammad⁸

B. Apologetics

1. The validity of Christianity⁹
 - a) The unsurpassable character of the Christian Law¹⁰

¹Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 41–46, *Polémique*, 141–203.

²Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 46, *Polémique*, 205–210.

³Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 46f.

⁴Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 47–52, *Polémique*, 219ff.

⁵Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 35–37, *Polémique*, 21–37.

⁶Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 38–40, *Polémique*, 42–58.

⁷Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 37f, *Polémique*, 37–42.

⁸Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 40f, *Polémique*, 59–102.

⁹Khoury, *Apologétique*, 109ff.

¹⁰Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 67f, *Apologétique*, 111–120.

- b)
 - i. The logical possibility of the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation and Redemption¹
 - ii. The Biblical proof of the same²
 - iii. The Quranic proof of the same³
- c) The correctness of Christian practice⁴
- 2. The divinity of Jesus⁵
 - a) Prophecies about Jesus in the Bible
 - b) The miracles of Jesus
 - c) Jesus' predictions
 - d) Jesus' unique nature

Astonishingly enough, hardly an attempt was made to counter the accusation of *tahrīf-i lafzī*. Apparently the apologists felt that this issue was too trivial to refute. As A.-Th. Khoury notes,

“L’attitude de nos auteurs en face de cette accusation est le dédain: on ne s’occupe pas de telles allégations, qui sont des prétextes et des échappatoires plutôt que des arguments”.⁶

Arab Apologetics

Soon after the Muslim conquests, independent Christian Arabic apologetics emerged. It found its first major representative in Abū Qurra⁷ and extended to the 15th century.

¹Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 54–66, *Apologétique*, 15–61, 90–107.

²Khoury, *Apologétique*, 68–74, 92–95.

³*Ibid.*, 74f.

⁴Khoury, *Der theologische Streit*, 67f, *Apologétique*, 121–131.

⁵Khoury, *Apologétique*, 68–74.

⁶Khoury, *Polémique*, 216; cf. 210–216.

⁷On Abū Qurra see Graf, *Die arabischen Schriften des Theodor*, *GCAL*, II, 3–26.

The period from the middle of the 15th to the end of the 19th century was characterized by the reproduction of old ideas and stagnation. New literary life only emerged in the Christian communities that maintained contact with the Occident, such as the Maronites in communion with Rome and the Orthodox Melkites in communion with the Greek Orthodox Church. But this was also marked by the adoption of Western ideas and not by independent ideas.¹ Moreover, the apologetic literature of the time is vanishingly small.²

It can be assumed that except for the differences mentioned above, the Christian Arabic apologists generally followed the same pattern as the Greek apologists.³

Understandably enough, writers such as the great apologist Yaḥyā b. ‘Adī (893–974) not only put the emphasis of their works on apologetics, but for the most part avoided any polemics against Islam.⁴

One notable exception is the anonymous, presumably Nestorian apology of al-Kindī (836?),⁵ who was not afraid

¹See Graf, *GCAL*, III, 1–77; esp. 1–9.

²*Ibid.*, 6.

³For the study of Christian Arabic literature, the five-volume *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* by Georg Graf (= *GCAL*) is still essential. For an overview see Graf, ‘Christliche Polemik gegen den Islam’, 825–842; Troupeau, ‘La littérature arabe chrétienne’, 1–20; a recent review with valuable references: Haddad, *La trinité divine*, 9–81; *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975), 152–169; 2 (1976), 194, 201–242; 3 (1977), 257–284; 4 (1978), 248f; 5 (1979), 300–311; 13 (1987), 173–180.

⁴On Yaḥyā b. ‘Adī cf. Graf, *Die Philosophie und Gotteslehre*; Périer, *Yaḥyā Ben ‘Adī*; Graf, *GCAL*, II, 233–249.

⁵Thus Haddad, *La trinité divine*, 41f. P. Krauss thinks it was composed at the beginning of the 10th century; Krauss, ‘Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte’, 335–341; thus also Graf, *GCAL*, II, 141–143. After all, the existence of the work is attested as early as 932; Haddad, *La trinité divine*, 41.

to attack the questionable transmission of the Quran, the teachings of Islam and Muhammad's person.¹

The Arabic polemics culminated in al-Kindī and far surpassed the Byzantine writings in the way of real arguments. al-Kindī seems to be the only one among the apologists to know and use the history of the transmission of the Quran in order to cast doubt on the authenticity of the same. It is noteworthy that in this case the Christian and not the Muslim opponent raises the charge of *tahrīf-i lafz*, at a time when Islam itself had not formulated this accusation against Christianity. al-Kindī more or less confines his apologetics to a depiction of the person of Jesus. For the modern reader, who finds the endless arguments of most Arab apologists striving to prove the logical possibility of Christian dogmas fatiguing, this restriction is an asset.

R. Haddad rightly observes that Muslim objections such as corruption of the Scriptures made it difficult for Arab Christians (other than al-Kindī) to cite the Scriptures and Church Fathers. For this reason they strove to prove the validity of the Christian faith primarily by means of thought patterns taken from Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism. This makes their writings seem extremely rationalistic.² Moreover, again with the exception of al-Kindī's apology, they were not missionary-minded but rather contented themselves with assuming

¹al-Kindī, *Risāla 'Abdullāh [...] wa risāla 'Abd al-Masīh [...]* It is no coincidence that the missionary-minded Orientalist and Indian government official in India W. Muir publicized this work, published English excerpts under the title *The Apology of al Kindi* and led 'Imād ud-Dīn to translate it from Arabic into Urdu. As well cf. Graf, *GCAL*, II, 135–145; Haddad, *La trinité divine*, 41–43.

²Haddad, *La trinité divine*, 247ff; Graf, 'Christliche Polemik gegen den Islam', 836ff.

a purely defensive position and maintaining their rights as a Christian minority.¹

Latin Apologetics

If we ignore sporadic apologetic attempts, such as the writing *Enlightening Proof* (*Indiculus luminosus*) by Alvarus in Spain (854),² then Peter the Venerable was the first person to make Latin Christianity aware of the need for anti-Muslim apologetics in the middle of the twelfth century.³ For the purpose of dealing with Islam, he had a number of Arabic writings including the Quran and the Apology of al-Kindī translated into Latin and even designed a compilation of Islamic doctrine (*Summa totius haeresis saracenorum*) as well as his own apologetic work (*Liber contra sectam sive haeresim saracenorum*). Despite all its shortcomings, the work of the abbot of Cluny meant a significant advance over Eastern Christian apologetics; unlike the latter, it sought to scientifically grasp

¹Haddad, *La trinité divine*, 247f; Graf, 'Christliche Polemik gegen den Islam', 841f.

²Cf. Zöckler, *Geschichte der Apologie des Christentums*, 242–244; Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, 16–18. J. Gauss surmises that Anselm of Canterbury wrote *Cur deus homo* as an anti-Muslim apologetic work; Gauss, 'Anselm von Canterbury', 250–272. In any case, it did not attain any importance in this respect and is therefore for the present study irrelevant.

³For general historical reviews see Merkel, 'Der Islam', 68–101; Burns, 'Christian-Islamic Confrontation', 1386–1434; for further literature *ibid.*, 1386, fn. 3. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, has submitted the most detailed study of the relations between the Crusades and Christian mission in the Middle Ages. An overview of the historical development of the theology of this field does not yet exist despite the appeal of Altaner, 'Zur Geschichte', 227–233.

the meaning of Islam and the Quran.¹ No doubt it helped that Western Christendom could afford to take a more detached and relaxed attitude towards Islam. Unlike Eastern Christians, in general it did not feel existentially threatened by Muslims.

Major missionary impulses emanated from the Dominicans and Franciscans.² Francis of Assisi tried to meet the Sultan of Egypt in order to argue with him about the Gospel. Dominic also recognized the need for mission among Muslims. Of the Franciscans, Raymon Llull (1232–1316) took on the task of anti-Muslim apologetics. His around 250 works still arouse very different reactions today. The works written for Muslims demonstrate his firm conviction that Christian truths can be rationally proved. He believed that Muslims could be intellectually persuaded to become Christians. Even if he did not claim that Christian teachings could be understood by rational arguments,³ he never explicitly denied this view. In this, he succumbed to the temptation of many of his Christian-Arab brothers. Still, his work testifies to a kind of debate that hardly contains any polemics.⁴

¹Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*; Hagemann, *Der Qurān*, 17–31 with references; Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, 99–104.

²For a comparison of the different methods of the two mendicant orders see Blanke, ‘*Die Mohammedanermision*’, 77–87; M.A. Schmidt, ‘*Thomas von Aquino und Raymundus Lullus*’, 37–46.

³So De Franch, *Raymond Lulle*, 74–78.

⁴*Cf.* Burns, ‘*Christian-Islamic Confrontation*’, 1398–1400. An introduction and critical review of some major works can be found in Bonner, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1–2; see also De Franch, *Raymond Lulle*; on his “rationalism” see Blanke, ‘*Die Mohammedanermision*’, 83f; M.A. Schmidt, ‘*Thomas von Aquino und Raymundus Lullus*’, 38–42; Southern, *Western Views of Islam*, 72, fn. 12; Urvoy, ‘*Ramon Lull et l’Islam*’, 127–146; Lavajo, ‘*The Apologetical Method*’, 155–176.

Llull's effect was limited to the Occident,¹ and among the Franciscans essentially nobody emulated his work. In contrast, the Dominican Thomas Aquinas influenced the theological orientation of his order significantly, also with regard to missions. His *Summa contra gentiles* aimed to give the missionaries a theoretical and metaphysical foundation, while his little writing *De rationibus fidei* answered more specific Islamic objections. Thomas Aquinas provided the Dominicans with a necessary correction by making a clear distinction between truths of faith that can be rationally proved and those that are inaccessible to reason.² In spite of his sober methodology, he did not know much about Islam, unlike his contemporary, the Dominican friar Raymond Martini, whose works³ drew on Muslim sources.⁴ William of Tripoli strove to present an exposition of Islam that was objective for its time.⁵ In contrast, the writings of Ricoldo of Monte Croce (b. 1243) were more polemical; Ricoldo went to Baghdad to

¹However, in 1394, the Sultan of Fez is alleged to have used and honoured a writing by Llull in a disputation; Llull, *Buch vom Heiden und den drei Weisen*, 24f. Nicholas of Cusa used *The Book of the Gentile* as a model for his work *De pace fidei*.

²Blanke, 'Die Mohammedanermision', 81f; M.A. Schmidt, 'Thomas von Aquino und Raymundus Lullus', 43–46, 'Thomas von Aquino und die Mohammedanermision', 70–79 (for further references see the same); Hagemann and Gleis, *Thomas von Aquin*, 9–55. For an essential study regarding the Dominican mission see Altaner, *Die Dominikanermision*; see also Riet, 'La Somme contre les Gentils', 150–160.

³Especially his book *Pugio fidei adversus mauros et iudaeos*.

⁴Cf. Hagemann, *Der Qurān*, 58f. On the relationship of the writings of Thomas Aquinas and R. Martini see Burns, 'Christian-Islamic Confrontation', 1408–1410.

⁵*De statu saracenorum et mahomet pseudopropheta eorum et eorum lege et fide*; Altaner, *Die Dominikanermision*, 85–87, 'Zur Geschichte', 229; Hagemann, *Der Qurān*, 58.

learn Arabic and amongst other things wrote a significant refutation of Islam.¹

Despite the considerable intellectual achievements of the mendicant orders, their missionary activity was confined to predominantly Christian dominated territories and, above all, Spain, not least because the punishment for apostasy was death in Muslim-ruled countries. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that in addition to the conventional pattern of apologetics,² new approaches and ways were also sought.

In 1460, Nikolas of Cusa led the way with *Sifting the Quran (Cribratio Alchoran)*. This writing for the first time displays an approach that is moving towards a modern, historical view of the Quran. As a result, the author largely avoids polemically demonizing the Quran, even if the traditional issues continue to play a role.³

From the 14th century onward, there was a significant change in the way the West viewed Islam. This was exemplified by thinkers such as John Wycliffe and Martin Luther. Now they began to differentiate regarding faith and unbelief, as they realized that anti-Christian forces were not limited to distant Islamic states; rather, they were also present in the Christian Church at home.⁴ This view, which experienced a further development in the re-

¹*Contra legem saracenorum*; Hagemann, *Der Qurān*, 55–67; Altaner, *Die Dominikanermission*, 5f,25,27,29,42–44,60–62,82f,87,236. The significance of the work can be seen in the fact that it was translated into German by Luther, ‘*Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi*’, 261–396.

²An example for this is Ricoldo, who in his *Improbatio* strove to prove the invalidity of the Quran and the claims of Muhammad by mentioning the absence of miracles and the immoral customs of Muhammad.

³Hagemann, *Der Qurān*; Raeder, ‘*Der Christus des Korans*’, 71–93.

⁴Southern, *Western Views of Islam*, 67ff.

vival movements and in Pietism through the idea of “ecclesiola in ecclesia” (Spener), also had important consequences for Protestant missions among Muslims, as these mainly derived from these movements.

After Nikolas of Cusa, the real age of Islamic studies began in the 16th century. Now a more self-critical, neutral and above all more historical exploration of Islam commenced.¹ It is not possible to render a complete list of apologetic works from this period in this context.² However, the Quran translation by Ludovico Marracci (1698) deserves to be mentioned; it succeeded in displacing the Quranic translation of Ketton initiated by Peter the Venerable³ and formed the basis for the extensively annotated Quranic translation of G. Sales (1734). This was the translation that was used by all Western authorities of Islam between 1750 and 1850.⁴

The Jesuits were the first Western Christians in India to be forced into the field of anti-Muslim apologetics; when they came to the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1578, he prompted them to hold debates with representatives of other religions. In 1596, Jerome Xavier wrote *Source of Life*,⁵ which sparked a literary controversy be-

¹Endreß, *Einführung*, 16ff.

²Cf. Zöckler, *Geschichte der Apologie des Christentums*, 265–268; T. Michel, ‘Jesuit Writings on Islam’, 57–85.

³Endreß, *Einführung*, 15.

⁴Cf. Sales, *The Koran*, vf; Merkel, ‘Der Islam’, 91–96. Marracci also wrote a *Prodromus Refuting the Alcoran* (1691).

⁵The Spanish title was *Fuente de Veda*, the Persian *Ā’ina-i haqq-numā* (Mirror Exposing the Truth).

tween Muslims and Christians.¹ However, the missionary success among Indian Muslims that the Jesuits had hoped for did not materialize. Like the mendicant orders of the Middle Ages, they believed that mass conversion would occur with the conversion of the ruler and the intellectual elite; thus, they focused their energies on an intellectual engagement with these. From the point of view of literary history, the effect of *Source of Life* seems to have ceased with the end of the literary duel, and later Protestant apologists either ignored it or dismissed it in passing.²

Protestant Apologetics

Protestant apologetics remained in the tradition of Latin apologetics. However, it developed its own theological core issues. Luther's position will be presented here as a representative of the position of the Reformation.

¹Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes*, I, 232–234; Camps, *Jerome Xavier*, 175–178; on Xavier's activity in India as well as a thorough discussion and (Roman Catholic) evaluation of his works see Camps, *Jerome Xavier*, esp. 92–178. Lee, on the other hand, takes a demonstratively Protestant position. Both Camps and Lee are a bit one-sided. No doubt this stems from their different religious outlook. In essence, Xavier's work is in the apologetic tradition of the late Middle Ages; although A. Camps was unable to trace the apologetic sources of his work (Camps, *Jerome Xavier*, 169ff.), it seems unlikely that Xavier did not have any sources at his disposal, since the Jesuits had consciously and intensively studied Islam since the founding of their order; cf. T. Michel, 'Jesuit Writings on Islam', 57–85. The points that Camps regards as original had already been presented by others before Xavier and can not convince of the "originality" of the author; see Camps, *Jerome Xavier*, 170–175.

²Thus S. Lee, *Controversial Tracts*; Muir, *The Mohammedan Controversy*, 7–10.

Although Luther did not write any apologetics, he occasionally referred to Islam. His criticism of Islam differed from earlier positions in that he resisted a crusade mentality and insisted that the war against the Turks be conducted not in the name of Christ but in the name of the Emperor and as a defence against tyranny.¹

Luther was able to express himself very positively about the outward manifestation of Islam.² However, he accused both Muslims and “Papists” of believing in justification by works. Therefore he maintained that the best armor against Islam is the Gospel, “namely that Christ is the Son of God, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead so that we may live; (further) that we are righteous by faith in him and redeemed by forgiveness of sins *etc.* These are the thunderbolts that strike not only Mahometh, but also the gates of hell.”³ With this statement, Luther highlighted an issue that became important for subsequent Protestant apologetics.

Luther’s knowledge of Islam was deficient, but amongst other works he knew the Quran in Latin translation and even translated Ricoldo’s writing *Contra legem saracenorum* into German (see above p. 60, fn. 1). Despite some wrong views about Islam, he presents three criticisms that are still noteworthy today. First, Islam denies the divine Sonship of Christ and his redeeming death on the cross.⁴ Secondly, the office of civil government has been abrogated by the Quran, which allows the Muslim to rob

¹Luther, ‘Vom Kriege wider die Türken’, WA 30.2, 81–148, ‘Heerpredigt wider die Türken’, WA 30.2, 149–197.

²Luther, ‘Heerpredigt wider die Türken’, WA 30.2, 187.

³Luther, ‘Vorwort zu dem Libellus’, WA 30.2, 37–40.

⁴Luther, ‘Vom Kriege wider die Türken’, 122f.

and kill.¹ Third, the Quran abrogates marriage; polygamy and divorce clash with Gn 1:27.²

Luther's remarks are important, because they demonstrate a significant departure from earlier apologetic writings; the evaluation of religions is now based on the principles of the Reformation. Nevertheless, the apologetic achievements of Protestantism regarding Islam after Luther were for a long time of no importance. Only in the 17th century is an upward trend noticeable in *Truth of the Christian Religion* by Hugo Grotius (1622), who had received important impulses from Philippe Duplessis-Mornay. This simple as well as handy and popular guide to dealing with people of other faiths was widely used in the 17th and 18th centuries.³

However, apart from this work, there were hardly any notable achievements. Only the revival movement and resulting missionary efforts led to serious encounters with Muslims and noteworthy apologetic achievements. India was the land of the first fruitful clashes between Protestant Christians and Muslims.

¹Luther, 'Vom Kriege wider die Türken', 123–126.

²Luther, 'Vom Kriege wider die Türken', 126f. See further Raeder, 'Glaubensgewissheit', 11–27; Holsten, *Christentum und nichtchristliche Religionen*; Lamparter, *Luthers Stellung zum Türkenkrieg*.

³Zöckler, *Geschichte der Apologie des Christentums*, 319–324. On Duplessis-Mornay see *ibid.*, 314–318.

Chapter 4

Protestant Apologetics in India

Henry Martyn: the Pioneer

The first Protestant who attempted to establish an apologetic basis for his missionary activity among Muslims was a chaplain of the British East India Company: In the last six years of his life (1806–1812), Henry Martyn was not only occupied with the translation of the New Testament into Urdu, Persian and Arabic; he also devoted time to the debate with Islam. His knowledge of Islam was taken from just a few books. At his theological examination for the office of deacon, apparently questions were asked about Grotius' book *De veritate*.¹ Other sources

¹Smith, *Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar*, 35.

included G. Sale's Quran translation,¹ C. Niebuhr's description of the Middle East from 1761 to 1767 and L. Marracci's *Prodromus*.²

When he was reasonably fluent in Arabic, he began to read the Quran in the original language.³ His diaries indicate that he also studied other Arabic and Persian books,⁴ as well as Paley's *Evidences*⁵ and J. Leland's writings.⁶

His controversies with Muslims in Persia have been preserved in writing. They demonstrate that he strongly focused on Jesus' miracles and the prophecies about him found in the Old Testament. He sought to show that Muhammad could not be the founder of a religion, as he

¹Smith, *Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar*, 146. Cf. Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 75ff.

²Smith, *Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar*, 324.

³Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 75.

⁴Cf. Smith, *Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar*, 325.

⁵Cf. Smith, *Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar*, 30. W. Paley first published his book *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* in 1794. In the edition of 1822, the first part (pp. 1–208) lists proofs of the reliability of the New Testament accounts to prove that the miracles described therein must actually have happened; thus they verify and confirm the truthfulness of the Christian faith. In the second part (pp. 209–363), he lists auxiliary evidences of the veracity of Christianity. These include the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, the excellence of the moral teaching of the Gospel, the impartiality of the authors, the uniqueness of Christ's being and correspondence of information found in the New Testament with the historical dates of the time as well as its consistency. Furthermore, Christianity spread peacefully despite persecutions and in contrast to the violent spread of Islam. The last part (pp. 364–432) then deals with the objections of the Deistic opponents.

From this account, the congruence with earlier apologetic writings becomes apparent as well as the fact that the emphasis clearly lies on the confirmation of religion through miracles. At the same time, it has been presented in accordance with contemporary thought and science. The many editions underline the popularity of the work; see Zöckler, *Geschichte der Apologie des Christentums*, 407.

⁶Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 76.

neither performed any miracles, nor was he prophesied in the Old Testament.¹ This approach did not substantially differ from the old Christian response to Islam. Nevertheless, his arguments demonstrate Martyn's preoccupation with modern Christian apologists such as Paley and Leland, who opposed English Deists. Martyn wrote these writings when he was still young. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the great progress that Oriental studies made in the nineteenth century. He also failed to write a systematic work. So it was up to his followers to pick up the humble beginnings and continue to weave the threads.

In his time in India and Persia, Martyn exhibited the typical features of the English revival movement. He emphasised the need for personal sanctification and displayed a consciousness of sin evidently exacerbated and exaggerated by his sensitive nature. But he also had an ecclesiological concept that denounced both nominal Christianity as well as Islam, that proselytized both nominal Christians and Muslims, and that neither spared British officers nor the poorest Indian peasant. This piety was directed primarily at the individual and called him to repent and enter a personal relationship with God.

Three other focal points of the broader movement of Protestant theology found by Martyn were 1) the Protestant rejection of the veneration of the Virgin, saints and relics, 2) the doctrine of grace and 3) the absolute authority of Scriptures. The first two points facilitated dialogue in many ways. The worship of relics was a special target of Muslims against the Christians, and the doctrine of grace could demonstrate that Christian faith did not

¹His pamphlets were collected and translated by S. Lee, *Controversial Tracts*; cf. also Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 97-101.

only exchange one law through another.¹ Based on the third point, people focused their attention on comparing the Quran with the Bible and pointing out the difference between the Quran and the Bible. In other words, they focused far less on a comparison of the different dogmas per se, even though this was necessary in the case of the Trinity and Incarnation. The difference to earlier works is clearly evident: From now on, doctrines were always defended in the light of the statements of the Bible and the Quran. The Bible became the standard of the Christian faith and the Quran the standard of the Islamic faith. Among other things, this led to the unintended result that many Muslims began to think more “quran-centric” and to distinguish the Quran from the traditions about Muhammad (*ḥadīs*) and the *sunna*. Thus, one root of the Islamic reform movements of the last century is to be found in the conflict between Muslims and Protestant missionaries.

Karl Gottlieb Pfander: Founder of a New Apologetics

Life (1803–1865)

The first Protestant to cause a stir in the Islamic world through his apologetic activity was a German Swabian: K.G. Pfander was born in 1803 in a devout home in Waiblingen as the second of a master baker’s nine children. From the age of twelve, he attended the local Latin school.

After his confirmation he came to the Korntal Brethren for religious instruction, where he had a conversion experience at the age of 16. It seems that he was heavily

¹Cf. Blanke, ‘Die Mohammedanermision’, 86f.

influenced in Korntal.¹ During this time he applied to the Basel Mission. Pfander's affiliation to the Pietistic revival movement of his time is evident in the curriculum vitae he submitted to the Basel Mission Commission together with his application. In it he wrote, "I am compelled by love for my Saviour, who even took the bitterest death upon himself to redeem me, and by love for the poor heathens, who know nothing of a Saviour and Redeemer."² It is interesting to note that he felt called to missions even before his conversion experience.³

It was natural for him to apply to the Basel Mission. Not only was Basel relatively close; the Korntal Brethren had always been in contact with this mission.⁴ Thus, the teaching that Pfander received in Basel since the end of 1820 was a natural consequence of his religious education in Korntal.⁵

In 1825, he was stationed in Shusha (Armenia) with seven other missionaries, where he served until 1835. In Shusha he began writing books and engaging as an evangelist. For evangelistic purposes he made several journeys to Mesopotamia and Persia, where he explored the prospects of evangelising and also began learning Persian and Arabic.⁶ During this time, he wrote the first version of *Balance of Truth* (1829), published a Turkish-Tatar

¹Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 1-4; Broekema, 'Leven en Werkzaamheden', 5.

²Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 4f.

³*Ibid.*, 4.

⁴Grünzweig, *Die evangelische Brüdergemeinde Korntal*, 56-58. Pfander himself testifies that he received a major incentive to mission by reading the Basel missionary magazine in Korntal (Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 4).

⁵Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 5-7; Broekema, 'Leven en Werkzaamheden', 7-10.

⁶Waldburger, *Missionare und Moslems*, 84ff; Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 7f, 44ff.

translation of the New Testament (1855) and also learned Turkish-Tatar, Persian and some Arabic.

In 1837, Russia banned missionary activities, and the activities of the Basel Mission in Armenia came to an end. Pfander found a new field of activity in India, where he became a missionary of the Church Missionary Society in 1838. His first wife Sophie Reuss had died in 1835,¹ so in 1841 he married E.E. Swinborne, the daughter of a wealthy English leather manufacturer.² After learning Urdu in Calcutta, he moved to Agra in the year of his marriage. Here he served until 1855. In 1857–58 he moved to Peshawar in order to establish a new mission station together with the young and inexperienced R. Clark. However, he had to leave Peshawar prematurely due to the sickly condition of his wife and return to England.³ In 1858, he left for Istanbul without his family for the last time.⁴ However, his age and the hardships of his missionary activity made themselves felt during a home leave in 1865. He died in London as the result of a surgical procedure in the same year.⁵ One of his daughters describes the circumstances of his death:

Father Pfander, whose health had suffered through his long stay in a tropical climate, underwent a surgical operation in London that seemed to be successful. In early September, he moved with his family to Richmond. His intention at the time was to return to Constantinople at the beginning of spring to resume his missionary work there. His health seemed to be improve well during the first few weeks. However, one Sunday he risked attending an evening service, due to which he

¹Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 102–104.

²Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 119f; Broekema, ‘*Leven en Werkzaamheden*’, 45.

³Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 155–166.

⁴*Ibid.*, 166ff.

⁵*Ibid.*, 181ff.

was seized by chills. The next day, he fell seriously ill. After two months, he succumbed to a painful illness. He had displayed exemplary patience and steadfastness, and his devoted wife had faithfully cared for him, hoping all the time that his naturally strong constitution would win out in the end. His thoughts were always with his ministry. During the whole illness he often expressed the hope to return to Constantinople to his ministry, which was so near to his heart. He was in his right mind until the morning of his death. As usual, he had slept through the night intermittently. When he awoke in the morning, there was no apparent reason to think that this would be his last day on earth; but this seemed to be clear to him, because twice he said, 'I'm going home!' These were his last words. Shortly thereafter, he lost consciousness and slowly and peacefully fell asleep on the afternoon of December 1, 1865, a few minutes past four o'clock. He was buried in the peaceful cemetery of Ham, near Richmond. His widow survived him by 15 years and found her last resting place¹ at his side.

Since Pfander is sometimes considered to represent a typical kind of aggressive, controversial Islam missionary, the following excerpts from a portrayal by British officer Sir H.B. Edwardes may offer some correction:

Who that ever met him can forget that burly Saxon figure and genial open face, beaming with intellect, simplicity, and benevolence? He had great natural gifts for a Missionary, a large heart, a powerful mind, high courage, and indomitable good humour... Pfander was the very man for a controversy. He not only was the essence of good nature, but he *looked* it; and it was difficult for any one to be angry with him for more than a passing moment... The nearest approach to persecution which Pfander ever encountered at Agra was, I believe, the following. He had collected a large audience one day in one of the squares of the city, in front of a native restaurateur's. The master of the shop, being a great bigot, and a little bit of a wag, proceeded to fry a quantity of red-pepper pods, the pungent exhalations of which set both the preacher and his congregation into such fits of sneezing that the whole assembly was put

¹Ibid., 182f.

to flight, amid much laughter, in which Pfander himself could not help joining.¹

Ministry in India

Much more has been written about Pfander than about the indigenous apologists of India, who are not known in the West. When he came to India in 1837, he had already gained a lot of experience in dealing with Muslims through his work in Armenia, Mesopotamia and Persia. Furthermore, he had already written his major works. His discussions and debates with Muslims determined the form of his works, which he constantly revised. His famous debate with R. Kairānwī in April 1854 will be discussed in connection with the treatment of Kairānwī (see below pp. 128–131). At this stage it is sufficient to note that this dispute between Pfander and Kairānwī took on the character of a template that was taken up again and again in the 19th century. However, the debate was broken off after the second day, and the records about it diverge greatly. For this reason, the writings of both parties must be given precedence over the accounts of the debate, if we wish to arrive at a more objective assessment of the controversy. In any case, Pfander and Raḥmatullāh had already demonstrated their positions before the debate in their respective works, of which the most important were Pfander's *Mizān al-ḥaqq* and Raḥmatullāh's *I'jāz-i 'īswī*.² These positions did not change after the debate, and they strongly influenced the subsequent Christian and Muslim apologetic literature. On the Christian side, several works were written to refute *I'jāz-i 'īswī*, such as 'Imād

¹'The Late Rev. Charles Gottlieb Pfander', 100f.

²The later work *Izhār al-ḥaqq* is by and large an Arabic version of *I'jāz-i 'īswī* and shows no further development.

ud-Dīn's *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, G.L. Ṭhākūr Dās' *Iẓhār-i 'īswī* and Rām Candra's mainly polemical *I'jāz-i Qur'ān* and *Tahrīf-i Qur'ān*.

In what follows, Pfander's *Balance of Truth* will be examined, since it forms his specific contribution to the debate; unlike the *Balance*, his other main writings contained little polemic because they primarily intended to expound various aspects of the Christian faith. We will analyse only the final form of the *Balance*, that is, the shape it had after manifold revisions by Pfander.¹

Balance of Truth

In the introduction of *Balance*, Pfander lists five marks of a true revelation in order to find a common ground with his Muslim counterpart. The first part defends the validity of the Biblical revelation, which was neither abrogated nor corrupted, while the second part deals with the teachings of the Bible and the third part refutes the legitimacy of Muhammad and the Quran. In early versions, a final part described the conversions of seven people. This still appeared in the second edition published in Agra (1850), but it is missing in the English translation by R.H. Weakley (London, 1867).

Pfander seems to base this division on the apologetic writing of Hugo Grotius (1627), which enjoyed great popularity in the 19th century and was among the books of the missionary station in Shusha.²

¹Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 138ff *et al.* for a description of the evolution of *Balance*. However, the changes made are not of a fundamental nature and do not affect the structure of the work, except that the appendix is missing, as noted below.

²FC-2.2. 1828, Nr. 40-44.

This writing is specifically addressed to Dutch sailors.¹ Grotius begins the first book with an exposition of natural theology in order to create a common ground for himself and his discussion partner. The second book explains Biblical teachings, the third the authority of the Bible. In the fourth and fifth books, paganism and Judaism are refuted; in the sixth, Islam. Despite certain similarities, this book as a product of late Humanism differs considerably from Pfander's writing.

Book 1: Reason recognizes God as being one, perfect, eternal, almighty, omniscient, perfectly good, the origin of all things (Chs. 1–6) (since evil in reality does not exist, one can not postulate that God is the origin of evil or dualistic [7f]) and ruler of the universe (9). His reign is evident a) in nature (10), b) in the preservation of kingdoms (11), c) in the miracles of Israel (12–15) and d) in the prophecies of the Israelite prophets (16). Today there are no miracles (17), and wickedness prevails (18f). The soul of Man, however, is immortal and will be called to account after death according to the righteousness of God (20–23). This is also suggested to Man by his conscience (23). Therefore Man must seek his happiness beyond death (24). For this he needs true religion (25).

Book 2 explains this true religion, which is realized only in Christianity. Proof of this are a) the miracles of Christ (5f), b) his resurrection (7–9), c) the nature of Christianity, namely the excellence of its rewards (11f) and the sanctity of its commandments and worship, which agree with the holiness of God (13–18), d) the excellent character of the lawmaker both of the old covenant (Moses) and the new covenant (Christ) (20) and e) the broad spread of Christianity in spite of great obstacles (21–23).

If one examines this list, it is not surprising that Grotius was criticized even during his lifetime, as he leaves central tenets of the Bible unmentioned; even the reconciliation of Man in Christ is passed over in silence. Moreover, in discussing Ju-

¹Grotius, *De veritate religionis Christianae*, Foreword; Guggisberg, *Grotius, Hugo*, TRE 14, 278. On how the book was written see also Knight, *The Life and Works of Hugo Grotius*, 165ff.

daism (Book 5), these central Biblical issues are treated most inadequately.¹

Grotius' knowledge of the Islamic theories of Scriptural corruption and abrogation is poor; the accusation of textual corruption is merely touched on in *Book 3* (On the Authority of Scriptures) (15), while the theory of abrogation remains unmentioned. In fact, in *Book 5* he expressly states that Jesus' commandments have abrogated some Old Testament commandments (7)² without referring to the Muslim objection that Quranic commandments have abrogated Biblical commandments. The last *Book 6* (against Islam) postulates the veracity of the Bible (*cf.* Book 3) without giving any further explanation. In his opinion, since teachings of Islam and the Quran contradict the content of the Bible, they must be false. A comparison of the founders and doctrines of the two religions also shows the reprehensible nature of Islam.

A comparison demonstrates that Pfander roughly adheres to this scheme. He also tries to create a common ground in the beginning and divides his book into three parts—the authority of the Bible, Biblical teachings and polemics against Islam. Naturally, the books against paganism and Judaism are not reflected. However, this superficial resemblance only obscures the extent to which Pfander has in fact moved away from Grotius. It will be demonstrated below that his introduction as well as the other parts significantly differ from Grotius, although isolated elements have been taken from Grotius as well as from general Christian apologetics. Following these general considerations, Pfander's work now needs to be con-

¹Zöckler notes, "In this latter respect [*i.e.* regarding the doctrine of reconciliation], this part of the work appears to be so deficient that the verdict of a Catholic apologist (the recently deceased Paul Schanz in Tübingen) may be considered essentially justified: Grotius has entirely removed dogmatics from apologetics." (Zöckler, *Geschichte der Apologie des Christentums*, 322. *Cf.* Zöckler's further comments on Grotius, *ibid.*, 319–324).

²In this, Grotius differs from Pfander.

sidered in detail in order to shed more light on his roots and to formulate the difference to earlier writings.

The Introduction

Pfander first of all postulates that true knowledge and bliss can only be obtained through revelation, not through reason. A true revelation, however, must bear five characteristics:

1. It must satisfy Man's longing for eternal bliss. But this can only be satisfied if Man attains
 - a) knowledge of God (concerning God's attributes and will),
 - b) forgiveness of sins and
 - c) sanctification.
2. It must agree with the demands of the conscience that God has implanted in every human being and that can distinguish between good and evil.
3. It has to represent God as righteous and holy, as a friend of the righteous and a punisher of the unjust, since Man's conscience can recognize him as having these traits.
4. It must represent God as being one, eternal, almighty, omniscient, gracious and creator of the heavens and the earth, since these traits of God are recognizable when observing the universe.
5. It can not contain internal, logical contradictions.¹

¹Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, i–viii.

The introductory postulate already points to the historical root of these characteristics, namely Biblical-apologetic supranaturalism. In this case Pfander has derived his thoughts from the older Tübingen School founded by Gottlob Christian Storr (1746–1805),¹ which based on reason strove to prove the trustworthiness and divine authority of Scripture. At the same time it denied reason the right to criticise Scriptures. In this they apologetically used Kant's epistemological thesis that reason is not authorized to make assertions about things that transcend the senses.²

This assumption can easily be confirmed: The first school inspector of the Basel Mission, Christian Gottlieb Blumhardt (1779–1838), studied in Tübingen. One of his professors was a follower of Storr named J.Fr. Flatt.³ His brother C.Chr. Flatt, another follower of Storr, published a German translation of Storr's *Textbook of Christian Dogmatics (Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik)*⁴ in 1803 and added notes of his own.⁵ This became the official dogmatic textbook for Württemberg. Pfander inevitably became acquainted with this well-known work, as he was taught by Blumhardt in Basel. Furthermore, Storr's *Textbook* was later kept at the Basel Mission House in Shusha.⁶

If we take a closer look at Pfander's marks of true revelation, we can derive the postulate at the beginning as well as the features 2)–5) from Storr's book:

¹I am grateful to Dr. G. Maier for pointing out this connection.

²Hornig, *Storr, Gottlob Christian*, RGG 6, 391.

³Waldburger, *Missionare und Moslems*, 36.

⁴Hornig, *Storr, Gottlob Christian*, RGG 6, 391.

⁵Storr, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*; cf. the Latin version of Storr, *Doctrinae christianae*.

⁶FC-2.2. 1828, Nr. 40-44.

- The primacy of revelation over reason: Book 1;¹
- 2) and 3): §17 & 18; §69; Book 2, Ch. 1, I; §71, note 7; §72;
- 4): Book 2, esp. §21–30;
- 5): Book 1, e.g. §13, note 19, p. 205.

It makes sense that Pfander resorted to Storr, as the opponent was similar in both cases; both Muslims and rationalists considered reason to be the sole criterion and standard, and both challenged the authority of the Bible.

Supranaturalism thought it could save the authority of the Bible by demonstrating the limits of reason with the help of Kantian logic. Secondly, it established the validity of the Bible for the field that transcended reason by pointing out the reliable transmission of the Bible, the apostolic origin of the New Testament and the divine authority of Jesus as attested by the Old Testament.² In spite of the postulated limitation of reason, much was conceded to it, so that today many of the supranaturalistic arguments themselves seem very rationalistic; this also applies to the marks of revelation mentioned above. E. Hirsh notes with some justification: “As soon as we pay attention to the objective relationship to the written content, the difference between the supranaturalists and the rationalists and critics proves to be a difference of percentage of how much was found to be true after reinterpretation.”³ Nevertheless, seen positively, supranaturalism was a support for conservative forces in the Church and a means for later overcoming rationalism.⁴

¹Cf. also the earlier work of Storr, *Annotationes*; this appeared in German with additions: Storr, *D. G.Chr. Storr's Bemerkungen über Kant's philosophische Religionslehre*; cf. also Storr, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*, §116.

²Storr, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*, Book 1; cf. Hirsh, *Geschichte*, V, 73f.

³Hirsh, *Geschichte*, V, 79; Hohlwein, *Rationalismus*, RGG 797, col. 1.

⁴Hohlwein, *Rationalismus*.

Now Pfander's first mark of true revelation seems like a foreign object and can not be derived from Storr's book. The idea that the human soul longs for God has a long Christian history that has its roots in mysticism. It can already be found in the West in Augustine's writings¹ and was assimilated by Pietism and the revival movements.² However, Kant also stated that "To be happy is necessarily the wish [lit. longing] of every finite rational being, and this, therefore, is inevitably a determining principle of its faculty of desire."³ Now where does Pfander derive this motif of the human desire for God, which he considers to be part of the nature of Man? There are several possibilities.

First, a dependency on Johann Arndt's *Six Books of True Christianity* (1605ff) is conceivable. Arndt, whose work was extremely popular in Pietism, took many of his thoughts from Catholic mysticism.⁴ He describes the soul's longing for union with God in the fifth book (Ch. 10)⁵ and in the form of a prayer in *Garden of Paradise*.⁶ Like Pfander, he regards yearning to be a fundamental anthropological condition of Man.⁷

¹Augustine, *Confessions*, I 1,1: Tu fecisti nos ad te et cor nostrum inquietum est donec requiescat in te.

²See the references in Aalen, 'Die Theologie des Grafen', 319–353; esp. 325ff.

³Kant, *Werke in 10 Bänden*, Critique of Practical Reason, A45; in VI, 133. It is typical for him that he finds the root for this desire for happiness in the nature of Man himself.

⁴M. Schmidt, *Arndt, Johann*, TRE 4, 127–129. To Arndt's life and work see *ibid.*, 121–129.

⁵Arndt, *Johann Arndt's [sic] Sechs Bücher*, 692–694.

⁶*Ibid.*, 36f (1. Klasse, Das dritte Gebot, 4. Gebot).

⁷A comparison of Arndt's natural theology with Pfander's and Storr's natural theology causes the new accents and contents as well as the similarities to emerge clearly; see *ibid.*, 28–31 (Book I, Kap. 7); 297–302 (Book II, Kap. 29).

N.L. Graf von Zinzendorf's writings may also have served as a source. After his confirmation, Pfander came to the newly founded church of the Korntal Brethren. He testified that he converted at the age of 16 under the auspices of the first pastor Friedrich: "I often felt so blessed, and the Lord often gave me such happy hours, that I was able to really soar up to him."¹ The church of the Korntal Brethren was strongly influenced by Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church, to which it always maintained strong relations, even though it had come into existence independently.² Thus the idea of a Moravian influence is not far-fetched.

Zinzendorf similarly talks about Man's longing for God as part of his nature in the sixth of his *Öffentliche Gemeinreden im Jahr 1747*.³

However, there is a third source much closer to Pfander's thought, namely F.A.G. Tholuck's *The Doctrine of Sin and the Propitiator, or The True Consecration of the Sceptic*, which appeared in 1823. The fame of this work is demonstrated by the 9 editions that appeared during the lifetime of the author.⁴ The first chapter of the second section treats the question of how a person comes to God in Christ in great detail.⁵ Through a number of evocative images, Tholuck paints the dismal state of Man without God and his deep yearning for him; this leads to

¹Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 4.

²Grünzweig, *Die evangelische Brüdergemeinde Korntal*, 19–21.

³Zinzendorf, *N.L. v. Zinzendorf*, Vol. 4, 110–122. Cf. *Der teutsche Socrates* (1732) in *ibid.*, Vol. 1, 41ff. The manner in which Zinzendorf adopted mysticism was complicated and is a matter of disagreement; cf. Bettermann, *Theologie und Sprache bei Zinzendorf*, 25–37; Aalen, 'Die Theologie des Grafen', 319–353; Beyreuther, *Studien*, 35–73, criticizes Aalen's position sharply.

⁴M. Schmidt, *Tholuck*, RGG 6, 854, col. 2.

⁵Tholuck, *Die Lehre von der Sünde*, 59–95.

happiness in Christ.¹ This recalls Pfander's first mark of true revelation. Furthermore, Tholuck lists three offices of Christ that remind us of Pfander's three marks of human bliss: as a *prophet*, Christ imparts knowledge of God (God's teachings and will), as a *priest* he reconciles Man with God, and as a *king* (that is through the Holy Spirit) he sanctifies Man.²

Of the three possible sources, only Arndt's works are included in the lists of books available in Shusha.³ In spite of this, it is most likely that Pfander derived this first mark of revelation from Tholuck.

The followers of Storr do not seem to be the source for the first mark of true revelation. True, J.Fr. Flatt, who taught C.G. Blumhardt,⁴ exhibits a similar idea. According to him, Man has a natural urge that drives him towards bliss and exerts an influence on his morality. Flatt explicitly refers to Kant.⁵ Nevertheless, Flatt's formulation and reasoning point in a different direction.

As a source, K.F.A. Steinkopf seems more likely. Blumhardt met Steinkopf during his studies in Tübingen.⁶ In a homily on 1Cor 13:13 in Homburg in 1815, Steinkopf asserts that faith,

¹It is no coincidence that in this section, the aforementioned quote from Augustine's *Confessions* is cited (see above p. 79, fn. 1); see *ibid.*, 62.

²Tholuck, *Die Lehre von der Sünde*, 89–91. Tholuck himself cites Augustine as the root of this conception, *De civ. dei*, X, 6 (Tholuck, *Die Lehre von der Sünde*, 89). On Tholuck's theological anthropology see Toiviainen, *August Tholuckin*.

³*FC-2.2. 1828, Nr. 40-44*; another work by Tholuck is listed, namely Tholuck, *Einige apologetische Winke*; however, this book deals mainly with natural theology (see esp. Tholuck, *Einige apologetische Winke*, 25ff.) and has no affinity to the arguments found in the *Balance*, in contrast to *The Doctrine of Sin*.

⁴Waldburger, *Missionare und Moslems*, 36.

⁵Flatt, *Beiträge zur christlichen Dogmatik*, 96–116; esp. 101,111–115, *Vorlesungen über christliche Moral*, 156–169.

⁶Waldburger, *Missionare und Moslems*, 36.

hope and love are the three main features of a true Christian. In the context of faith, he develops a natural theology: God revealed himself in the works of creation, in Man's conscience, in the governance of the world and most perfectly in his Word:¹ Creation points to the one God (11); conscience can distinguish between good and evil, which points to the holy and just God, who implanted these feelings in Man (11f); God's governance of the world is demonstrated throughout the history of mankind, most recently through the fall of Napoleon (12f.); the Word points above all to Christ as Son of God and Redeemer of Man. Through this the Christian finds peace for his immortal soul, which can now freely confess that "he became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (14). Finally, based on reason and Scripture, the true Christian believes in retribution after this life (13–15). Steinkopf's sermon is an important testimony to the fact that not only Pfander connected the concerns of supranaturalists with the idea of Man yearning for God. However, this does not prove a dependency on Steinkopf.

At this point, the question arises why Pfander put this concept at the beginning of the five marks of true revelation. Why was he not content with Storr's enumeration of natural theology, but rather put human yearning first? In order to answer this question, one needs to take C.F. Epler's remark seriously that until 1828, Pfander worked on a "prototype" of *Balance of Truth* that is no longer available today. It is worthwhile reproducing his outline of the content taken from a report of the missionaries in Shusha in full, as this helps us to better understand the actual thrust of the *Balance*:

After greeting the Mohammedans in the name of the One True God, who created everything, he begins by citing his Word through Moses and Peter: Be holy, for I am holy (Lev 11:44; 1Pet 1:16): God is holy, and in our original state we were also holy. However, now we have fallen into sin and degenerated;

¹Steinkopf, *Drei Hauptzüge im Charakter eines wahren Christen*, 10. The following page numbers refer to this writing.

we are unable to improve ourselves or to be pleasing to God; indeed it is impossible for any creature to help us. Thus the author leads us to the need for a mediator and concludes with a description of the already existing Redeemer. Finally, we tell them that we have come from distant lands to announce and praise this Saviour of their souls, as due to his command (Mt 28:18–20) we see ourselves as their debtors.¹

The starting point of this writing is the concept that God is holy. God's holiness is then compared to the human condition: Man lost his holiness through the Fall. Subsequently he needs a mediator who can restore his original condition. But this mediation can only happen through God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

On the one hand, this outline reveals the central Pietistic concern of sanctification, while on the other hand it seems to contain essentially no polemics but rather a positive exposition of the Christian faith. On the basis of the above, we are able to reconstruct the development of Pfander's thought whilst composing *Balance of Truth*: On the one hand, he was acquainted with Grotius' attempt to seek a common ground when conversing with people of other persuasions. At the same time, his dealings with Muslims had shown him that these based their arguments on very rational criteria. Above all, they criticized the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Trinity using rationalistic arguments. This induced him to draw on Storr's line of argument, which was familiar to him from his stay in Basel; after all, this had been induced by similar arguments, namely the arguments of rationalists. Above all, through the third and fourth marks of true revelation, he was able to plausibly correlate God's holiness and righteousness with his grace: On the one hand, God's holiness and righteousness had to punish Man for his sins;

¹Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 46f.

on the other, he revealed his grace in Christ, who saved mankind. These marks also helped Pfander to infer the sanctification of Man as a child of the holy God.

Storr's marks of revelation explained God's nature in a satisfactory way. However, they only demonstrated the movement from God to Man. Now as a Pietist, Pfander felt the need to incorporate the aspect of movement from Man to God. After all, his exposition was not meant as an intellectual exercise; rather, the aim was to call people to repent and firmly place them on the path to true knowledge of God, forgiveness of sins and sanctification. This central concern was aptly expressed through the concept of Man's desire for bliss, as this stimulated the hearer to live accordingly. It was perfectly natural for Pfander to borrow this idea from a book that not only dealt with the reconciliation of Man with God but also underlined Man's response to this reconciliation: his desire, inner emotional response, his experience of God's grace and his own active role within the plan of salvation.

This reconstruction is confirmed by a letter of Pfander from the year 1856. In it he writes,

Professor Lees on Martins [sic] Controversy, some of Dr. Tholuck's works and lectures on Dr. Blumhardt on Muhammadanism, delivered when I was at the Basil [sic] Missny. College, proved of great use.¹

This letter not only proves that Pfander made use of Tholuck's works; it also makes it likely that Storr's line of argumentation was passed on by Blumhardt.

¹Pfander, *an H. Venn*, 4. Jan. 1856, *CI1/0227/26*; see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 135f,117. Powell, however, fails to recognize how Pfander used these sources.

Part I. The Validity of the Bible

In the first chapter, Pfander begs the Muslim to consider Biblical claims by pointing out that the Quran confirms the divine origin of the Bible. At the same time, he emphasizes that he does not want to prove the truth of the Bible through the Quran.¹

In response to the Muslim contention that Quranic commandments have abrogated the Biblical commandments, Pfander distinguishes between ceremonial and moral commandments (4–10) in the second chapter.² The former were not only given by God to separate the Jews from other peoples;³ they were also promulgated in order to prepare them for the spiritual worship and commandments of Christ.⁴ The moral commandments of the Old Testament were not abrogated; rather they were revealed more clearly and perfectly in the New Testament. Even the external Old Testament commandments were not abrogated in the New Testament; rather their inner sense remained valid, even though their outward form ceased. For example, Old Testament rites of purity continue to point to the need for inner human purity. Jesus' fulfillment of the Law (Mt 5,17f) needs to be understood in this context. In other words, the commandments of the New Testament have not abolished the Old Testament commandments. Thus, the claim that the Quran has abrogated

¹Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 3. The following page numbers in the text refer to this edition.

²Storr, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*, 630–632; see also 517, *Pauli Brief an die Hebräer*, 443ff; esp. 444–452, note **. The term “moral” by Storr of course had a particular edge in the Age of Enlightenment. However, see a similar tendency by S. Lee, *Controversial Tracts*, 539f.

³Cf. Storr, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*, 502f, note 2,3,4.

⁴Cf. Heb 8:5; 10:1; etc.; Storr, *Pauli Brief an die Hebräer*, *ad loc.*, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*, 630–632.

the New Testament in the same way that the Psalms abrogated the Torah and the New Testament abrogated the Psalms is false.

In the third chapter, Pfander defends the Bible's trustworthiness. He first does this negatively by presenting the Quran's corruption. Then he goes on to positively demonstrate the textual reliability of the Bible (11–22).

Part II. Biblical Teachings

After a brief outline of the books of the Bible according to the history of salvation (23–29), Pfander lists the tenets of the Christian faith. Ch. 1 describes the nature of God according to the Bible (30f), which corresponds to the marks of true revelation mentioned in his Introduction. Ch. 2 depicts the original sinlessness of Man, his Fall and the need for a Redeemer (32–38). Ch. 3 explains salvation in Christ (39–49); Ch. 4 the salvation of Man, the activity of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity (50–56); Ch. 5 the Christian way of life (57–62). Then Pfander inserts a chapter (Ch. 6) in which he lists proofs of the divine origin of the Biblical revelation: It conforms to the five marks of true revelation and changes Man for the better; furthermore, it has been confirmed by the fulfilment of its prophecies, by Jesus' miracles and resurrection and by the rapid, non-violent spread of Christianity (63–68).

The seventh chapter is a description of the activity of God in his Church as part of the history of salvation. Logically, it should have followed Ch. 5. At the same time it develops the last proof of Chapter six (69–75).

Part III. The Invalidity of Islam

The third part refutes the divine origin of the teachings and deeds of Muhammad and the Quran. In this part,

Pfander's evaluation of Muhammad and Islam is dependent on the question of whether Muhammad is a true prophet. In his view, the teachings of a prophet must conform to the five marks of true revelation. Furthermore, he lists four marks of a true prophet:

1. His teachings should not contradict those of previous prophets;
2. he must be able to perform miracles and prophesy;
3. he must be worthy of his office and act according to God's commandments;
4. he is not allowed to use force in disseminating his message (77).

In his translation of the correspondence between Henry Martyn and his Persian opponents, Lee had already written an appendix describing his own position. In this, he had pointed out how difficult it is to use miracles as the mark of a true prophet, since miracles are naturally ambiguous.¹ For this reason, he had come to the conclusion that three other criteria are preferable: 1) A true prophet must be able to prophesy; 2) his prophecy must come true and 3) he must not proclaim anything that contradicts the (already) revealed religion.² In reality this enumeration consists of only two marks of a prophet, since 1) and 2) together actually constitute one mark.

When we compare these three marks of a prophet with Pfander's four marks, then we find that Pfander's first mark coincides with Lee's third mark. However, Pfander does not delete the mark of miracles; rather he unites it with Lee's first two marks in his own second mark.

¹S. Lee, *Controversial Tracts*, 533–535. However, he is not consistent in this, as he himself implicitly continues to use the criterion of miracles; cf. *ibid.*, 565.

²*Ibid.*, 535.

Although Lee does not explicitly mention Pfander's last two marks, his critique of Muhammad's person and deeds shows that he implicitly affirms Pfander's third mark.¹ In his second writing, Henry Martyn had already used Pfander's third² and fourth marks,³ while in the first treatise he had mainly dealt with the mark of miracles.⁴

These remarks can only point in the general direction of the source from which Pfander's marks crystallized. He himself wrote that he had learned from S. Lee and Henry Martyn,⁵ and Lee's daughter testified that in the *Balance of Truth*, Pfander "had taken up and expanded a plan suggested by my father, to whom he gladly acknowledged his indebtedness."⁶ However, in no other writing do Pfander's four marks of a true prophet appear in precisely this form. Again, one possible source is Blumhardt. However, since Blumhardt's role can no longer be determined in this respect, we must assume that Pfander modified and expanded the three criteria found in Lee's book.

Let us now turn to the content of the third part. In the first chapter, Pfander refutes the assertion that Muhammad was foretold in the Bible (78–84); in the second, the inimitability of the Quran (85–87). In the third chapter he discusses the deficiencies of the Quran and its contradiction to Biblical revelation (88–104); in the fourth, Muhammad (105–124); and in the fifth, the violent spread of Islam (125–134). Thus, the first mark of a true prophet is treated in Chapter 3, the second in Chapter 2 and 4, the third in

¹S. Lee, *Controversial Tracts*, 542f, 566 etc.

²*Ibid.*, 107–113.

³*Ibid.*, 106f; see also his first writing in *ibid.*, 100.

⁴*Ibid.*, 80ff.

⁵Pfander, *an H. Venn*, 4. Jan. 1856, CI1/0227/26.

⁶A. Lee, *A Scholar of a Past Generation*, 64f; Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 128f, wrongly concludes that Lee's three marks of a true prophet influenced Pfander's five marks of true revelation.

Chapter 4, and the fourth in Chapter 5. The subject of the first chapter does not correspond to any mark of a prophet and thus does not quite fit. No doubt it was incorporated due to the great role it plays in the Christian-Muslim debate concerning the uniqueness of Muhammad or Jesus.

For his time, Pfander's *sources regarding Islam* were quite extensive. He used both Islamic works and the secondary literature of Western orientalists.

Regarding Islamic writings he used the Persian writings of the possibly most important Shiite scholar of the 17th century, Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, thus his 3-volume *Ḥayāt al-qulūb*,¹ *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* and *ʿAin al-ḥayāt*.² Further writings to which he specifically refers are the Sunni commentaries of Zamakhsharī³ and Baiḏāwī,⁴ Ibn Hishām's *Sīrat rasūl al-lāh*,⁵ the English translation of the well-known *ḥadīṣ* collection called *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*⁶ and Jamal al-Ḥusaini's *Rauḏat al-aḥbāb* [see below p. 236, fn. 2].⁷

It is difficult to determine to what extent Pfander truly read all of these writings, or whether he took his information from

¹The second volume dealing with the prophets and the 12 Imams was translated into English in 1850: *The Life and Religion of Muhammad, as contained in the Sheeāh Traditions of Hyāt-ul-kuloob*, transl. by J.L. Merrick (Boston [Mass.], 1850); see Storey, *Persian Literature*, I, 1, 196–198.

²Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 137f. Pfander had bought these three works in Tabriz in 1831; Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, 49.

³Abu 'l-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar Zamakhsharī (1075–1144), *Al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq at-tanzīl*.

⁴Abdallāh b. 'Umar Baiḏāwī (1226–1260), *Anwār at-tanzīl wa asrār at-ta'wīl*.

⁵Abd al-Malik b. Hishām (d. 834), *Sīrat rasūl allāh*.

⁶A.N. Matthews [transl.], *Mishcāt ul-masābīḥ or a Collection of the Most Authentic Sayings of Muḥammad* (Calcutta, 1809/1810).

⁷Three further works mentioned by Pfander could not be determined. Their titles are *Tafsīr-i tibyān*, *Ḥusn al-ḥusain* and *Insān al-'uyūn*.

the works of leading Orientalists of his day. He relied in particular on G. Weil, whose works were published starting in the early 1840s, as well as on G. Sale's translation of the *Quran*.¹ S. Lee's aforementioned writing also belongs to this category. Besides the already mentioned marks of a true prophet, he could adopt much found in Henry Martyn's writings regarding the miracles of Muhammad and the inimitability of the *Quran* and much found in Lee regarding textual corruption² and the criticism of the *ḥadīs*.³ Ultimately, the Orientalists were crucial for his criticism of Muhammad and the *Quran*, since he could not rely on Muslim sources for this. He especially depended on their results to prove the "secondary" nature of the existing *Quran* and the invalidity of the stories found in the *ḥadīs* regarding Muhammad's miracles. In this manner, he partially applied the results of the Western historical-critical method. Thus the common assertion that the manner of argument of the *Balance* is "oriental" is not entirely correct.

This overview shows that Pfander was well read for his time. Of course, we must not forget that he only gradually incorporated these writings into his *Balance of Truth*.

¹Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 135,138f.

²S. Lee, *Controversial Tracts*, 455ff,566ff.

³*Ibid.*, 481ff.

Assessment: Founding a New Apologetics

Positive aspects

1. A.A. Powell points out that Pfander's apologetics focused not so much on accusing Islam of being false as of being deficient; unlike many medieval apologetic writings, it primarily strove to demonstrate Muhammad's deficient qualities as a prophet as opposed to a demonization of the same. According to her, Pfander was influenced in this direction by the books of Western orientalists such as G. Weil and G. Sale.¹

This opinion is only partially correct. Certainly Pfander's argumentation lays stress on the inadequacy of the Quran and Muhammad. At the same time, however, he considers it essential to show that the Quranic teachings contradict the Biblical message and are therefore false, especially their denial of the deity and vicarious atonement of Christ.² He also points out the discrepancies between Quranic and Biblical statements in great detail to demonstrate that the Quranic statements are wrong.³

The same can be said about Pfander's treatment of the person of Muhammad; even though he can discover fairly positive aspects in Muhammad,⁴ he emphasizes that Muhammad acted both fraudulently and wrongly.⁵

¹Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 138–145. However, it is certainly inaccurate and unfair to dismiss the *Balance* as a hotchpotch of Pietistic and rationalistic thought, as Powell does; *ibid.*, 316f, 323–329.

²Cf. Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 92f.

³esp. *ibid.*, Part 3, Ch. 3.

⁴*Ibid.*, 118.

⁵*Ibid.*, Part 3, Ch. 4.

It is therefore more accurate to say that although Pfander strives to prove both the inadequacy and the falseness of Islam, he does so in a deliberately objective manner that avoids demonization and thus represents a great advance over many medieval apologists.

2. Pfander's reasoning is transparent and logical: his starting point is a question: Which book of revelation is of divine origin? After all, there are many contradictions between Biblical and Quranic statements.¹ He seeks to answer this question by taking a point of view which in his opinion lies outside of both religions. This viewpoint consists of his five marks of true revelation (Introduction). Starting from this foundation, he then proceeds through three parts that build on each other: In the first part, he defends the validity and trustworthiness of the Bible; in the second, he discusses the tenets of the Christian faith; and in the third, he refutes the validity of the Quran and of Muhammad as a prophet.

At the turn of the century, E. Wherry suggested that if Part III came before Part II, the book would leave behind it *the strong positive statements of the teaching of the Bible*.² At first glance, his suggestion makes sense. On closer inspection, however, the existing order is more in line with Pfander's thought: Swapping these Parts would have removed the organic unity of the Book, since the development of Christian doctrine must logically

¹See Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 9f.

²Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 4.

follow the defence of the validity and trustworthiness of Biblical tradition. Secondly, the Quran itself claims to be based on the message and teaching of the Bible; thus Pfander must first treat the Bible as the original revelation in order to prove that, contrary to its own assumption, the Quran does not conform to the Bible and is therefore false. Consequently, his main line of reasoning is: the reliability of the Bible (Part 1) – the doctrine of the Bible and its consistency with the nature of God (Part 2) – the contradiction of the Quran to the Bible and to the nature of God – its falseness as a consequence of the invalidity of Muhammad as a prophet (Part 3).

The same applies to Wherrys suggestion that Part II.6 should follow Part I.3: Since Pfander in II.6 refers to things he has said in II.1–5, this chapter can not simply be moved.

3. The unity of Pfander's writing is impressive. Therein lies its strength, for it provides both a defence and a positive exposition of the Christian faith as well as a critique of Islam. His somewhat peculiar combination of Pietistic and supranaturalist concerns in the five marks of true revelation are not particularly convincing today, but it must be recognized as a valuable attempt to establish a common ground of conversation with Muslims; for it endeavours to establish criteria of the nature of God that can be recognized by Muslims. Although the assumption regarding a natural knowledge of God is problematic, Pfander seems to have been able to establish recognized norms accepted by both sides. To a certain extent, this also applies to his marks of a true prophet.

Starting from the nature of God is a commendable approach. Through this Pfander can conclude that the Bible is God's Word, since its message corresponds to the nature of God. In contrast to this, the Quran is not a divine revelation, since it not only contradicts the earlier revelations of God but also the nature of God. Furthermore, the words and deeds of Muhammad also do not correspond to the nature of God. This idea was later continued in a modified form by the most important Indian apologist, Şafdar 'Alī.

4. Pfander's prophetic and revelatory characteristics are two focal points of an ellipse, which can be characterized by the words "revelation" and "agent of the revelation:" The marks of true revelation prove that the Christian revelation, *i.e* the Bible, is the only valid form of divine proclamation to Man; the marks of a true agent of revelation demonstrate that unlike Muhammad, Jesus is a true prophet and a true agent of revelation. The apologists following Pfander were also guided by these two lines of argument.
5. Pfander's implementation of the history of salvation in the second part is also noteworthy. Through this he is able to show how different from Islam many Christian concepts such as sin really are. It can also demonstrate that many alleged Biblical contradictions can be explained in the framework of the history of salvation, as part of a development. In general, his development of Christian teaching is insightful and simple, without suppressing important Biblical content.

This also applies to his presentation of the Trinity. Earlier apologists often sought to “prove” the Trinity of God through analogy or philosophical arguments, without explaining the Biblical basis. Pfander, on the other hand, explains the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in terms of the history of salvation found in the Bible; he does not want the illustrations he does give to be understood as evidence.¹

6. In the process of refuting the Muslim theory of abrogation, Pfander succeeds in simply and succinctly demonstrating the continuity of Old and New Testament commandments. He does this in a comprehensible manner using Biblical examples and developing the Biblical concept of the fulfilment of Old Testament commandments through New Testament commandments.
7. Pfander never uses Quranic passages as evidence; rather he uses them only as a point of departure. This distinction is necessary, because he does not want to make the validity of the Bible dependent on the Quran, whose legitimacy he seeks to refute. Furthermore, for every positive verdict about the Bible in the Quran there are also significant strictures, so that every argument that seeks to base the validity of the Bible solely on Quranic statements must inevitably end in failure.²

Problematic aspects

¹Man as spirit, soul and body; light and fire *etc.* Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 43f.

²*Cf. ibid.*, 3.

The discussion of the individual chapters has already touched on several weaknesses in Pfander's work. The most important must now be discussed:

1. It has been mentioned that Pfander's marks of true revelation assume a position outside of both religions. At first glance, this assumption seems to be plausible, but in actual fact it proves to be erroneous.

Pfander argues that the marks of true revelation are directly accessible to human reason. Contrary to Islam, Christianity is a true reflection of the nature of God as expressed in these marks. However, he overlooks the fact that the concept of God's nature is very different in Christianity and Islam. Not only do they diverge widely from each other; both are coherent in themselves. Christianity can accept these marks of revelation, since they correspond to its Christian values. In contrast, Islam is only partially able to accept these marks, as it has a completely different concept of God. For this reason, Pfander's appeal to so-called "universal" criteria, as is the case with the marks of true revelation, proves to be futile.

This can be demonstrated especially clearly by means of the first mark of revelation. While the Muslim can empathize with the idea of eternal bliss, knowledge of God and forgiveness of sins, the idea of Man being sanctified is beyond his comprehension, since the Quran has no concept of sanctification. For it, holiness only belongs to the divine sphere, never to the human sphere. Man can not be sanctified; he can merely be cleansed, since human

participation in the holiness of God would violate the oneness of God.¹

The same is true of Pfander's designation of God as merciful (mark 4): Pfander assumes that reason can comprehend that love is a characteristic of God's nature,² while to the Muslim, love in the sense of a commitment and faithfulness does not belong to the nature of God.³

Essentially this applies to the first four characteristics: The Muslim must needs understand them very differently than the Christian in the light of his understanding of the nature of God. Thus the common ground they strive to create is only superficial.

Ultimately this demonstrates what happens when no distinction is made between the *deus revelatus* (revealed God) and *deus absconditus* (hidden God). Although Islam knows of a *verbum revelatum* (revealed Word), a *deus revelatus* is an alien concept; its God is in the deepest sense a *deus absconditus*, whose nature can not be known because of its otherness. This nature can not even be recognized through its *verbum revelatum*, since all its attributes are subordinate to the creed of the oneness of God. Thus, God's holiness can never lead to the sanctification of Man. And for this reason, his grace can never associated with faithfulness and commitment.

This deep divide between the Christian and Islamic faith confirms the Biblical truth that *revelatio generalis* (general revelation), whose limits the Islamic

¹See below p. 296ff

²Cf. Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 36,97, etc.

³Cf. pp. 302ff.

revelation does not transcend, encompasses God's wrath and Law, but never God's mercy (Rom 1:18–20; 2:14f).¹ As the Muslim has a different concept of a gracious God, he can not use this as a point of departure to infer the grace of God in Christ. In the same way, he can not use his concept of the holiness of God as a point of departure to infer the sanctification of Man, as this would be a *contradictio in adiecto*; he would have to infer the nature of the *deus revelatus* from his knowledge of the *deus absconditus*.

It would therefore have been clearer and less problematic to declare the Christian nature of the five marks of true revelation and then to proceed to demonstrate that Islamic revelation does not possess these marks, even though it claims to proclaim the same message as the Bible.

2. a) Pfander's marks of a true prophet suffer from the same assumption as his marks of a true prophet. Here also he assumes that they must be directly accessible to reason.

Pfander's assumption that his own values are compatible with Islamic values is also evident in his fourth mark of a true prophet, for a Muslim can never accept the fundamental renunciation of violence as a hallmark of true prophethood; Muhammad himself is the model for *jihād*.

The second mark (miracles), on the other hand, can even be refuted on the basis of Biblical evidence itself, since not every prophet

¹Cf. Jüngel, 'Die Offenbarung der Verborgenheit Gottes', 163–182.

of the Bible performed miracles (e.g. John the Baptist).

- b) A further danger becomes evident when using the marks of a prophet to compare Muhammad and Jesus. On the one hand, it is understandable that Pfander in his search for a common standard for the evaluation of Muhammad and Jesus according to the Biblical model (cf. Deut 18:9ff; Mt 24:24–26; 7:15)¹ resorts to the marks of a true prophet. After all, didn't both Jesus and Muhammad claim to be prophets according to Christian and Islamic understanding? But therein lies the rub: By comparing Muhammad with Jesus, Jesus is only evaluated according this category. Is this not problematic, since his person and work are not limited to his prophethood? Is there not an unspoken tension between statements about Jesus' divine Sonship and mediation on the one hand and his prophetic and human nature on the other, a tension which is not resolved?

Presumably for this reason, Pfander lists the marks of a true prophet at the beginning of the third part about Muhammad and the Quran, thus explicitly applying them only to Muhammad. Still, Jesus is the implicit point of comparison. The uniqueness of Jesus, who is not only the agent of revelation but also revelation itself, is not clearly shown here.

Despite this possibility to misunderstand Pfander, any misunderstandings are in a sense

¹The last two Biblical passages are explicitly cited by K.G. Pfander, Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 78.

corrected through his clear development of the person of Jesus in the framework of the history of salvation in the second part and the explicit application of the marks of a prophet on Muhammad alone. However, this issue later becomes more problematic in ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s books.

3. Pfander takes up an old anti-Muslim accusation in the third part when he compares Jesus with Muhammad. To do this, he lists Jesus’ character, miracles, Old Testament prophecies about him and his own prophecies in order to prove the validity of the Christian message and the uniqueness of Jesus. Then he compares this with the deficiency, inconsistency and lack of credibility of the Quran and Muhammad.¹ *Balance* seems to have aroused the firm opposition of Muslims mainly because of its polemics against the Quran and Muhammad; probably for this reason, Pfander’s other works never reached the level of fame of this work.

It has already been pointed out that Pfander’s apologetics strives to be more objective than most works of previous apologists. Despite this, the danger of his comparison Bible vs. Quran and Christ vs. Muhammad is that he very quickly moves on to judgments regarding the revelation of Islam and its prophet which are hurtful and repugnant to Muslims, even if they are true in his view. For example, it is questionable whether his remarks on Muhammad’s sexual life and cruelty led to the anticipated renunciation of Islam; it is more likely that these

¹To the following see above p. 86.

led to aggression, contentiousness and a defensive attitude amongst Muslims.

Even if we do not take this aspect into account, a further difficulty lies in the fact that a Muslim will not automatically recognize Muhammad's actions as immoral, since he has been taught the normativity of Muhammad's life since his childhood.

All of this raises the question of whether there isn't another way to demonstrate the profound differences between Islam and Christianity without triggering hatred in the Muslim and alienating him before he has clearly been told the message of the Gospel.

This method applied by Pfander set a precedent in India: Essentially, all the apologists of the nineteenth century except Şafdar 'Alī adopted it. It is to be regretted that only the latter took a more peaceful approach.

4. Pfander's refutation of the abrogation theory shows that he has not yet grasped the classical rules of abrogation in detail. One sees this for example in his depiction of a vulgar-Muslim position that claimed that the Torah had been abrogated by the Psalms. Furthermore, he is ignorant of the fact that according to the Islamic rules of abrogation, only commandments can abrogate other commandments; things like doctrines or historical dates can not be abrogated (see above pp. 85f).

Nevertheless, in his rejection of the abrogation of Biblical commandments through Quranic commandments, he takes a step in the right direction in

showing the inner coherence of Old and New Testament commandments and thus demonstrating that they can not be abrogated. In other words, he refutes the Islamic assertion that Quranic commandments have abrogated Biblical commandments by a firm rejection of the theory of abrogation itself.

In response to this, Kairānwī searched for examples of abrogation of commandments in the Bible. Some of these seemed very convincing. For example, in the Old Testament, Jacob married two sisters contrary to the later injunctions of the Torah. And in the New Testament, the Apostolic Decree ordains regulations that seem to abrogate commandments of the Thora. Thus the refutation of Pfander is insufficient, since it only answers an objection that even Muslim scholars would not accept, namely that the Psalms abrogated the Torah. This neglect of a response to individual Muslim objections regarding the abrogation of Biblical commandments is strange. On the one hand, we must not forget that after 1854, he was only in India until 1857, during which time he was busy setting up a new mission station in Peshawar. On the other hand, at the very latest he must have become acquainted with very concrete objections at the Agra debate (see below pp. 128–131). Why did he never respond to these in later versions of *Balance*?

This already shows that Pfander's argumentation is not entirely coherent; since in the eyes of Muslims abrogation had clearly occurred (*cf.* also Eph 2:15, Gal 3), his approach seems far too simplistic and undifferentiated. Moreover, this argument led to a useless and unbearable debate for or against the

theory of abrogation itself, which had to lead to a dead end.

Thus, in the generation following Pfander, it became necessary to explain the concept of abrogation, so that people did not talk past each other. Secondly, the question had to be clarified as to whether there were cases of abrogation in the Bible or not. If one affirmed the principle of abrogation for Biblical commandments, then one had to find an answer to the assertion that Quranic commandments had abrogated Biblical commandments.

Going a level deeper, one discovers that there is no clear distinction between Law and Gospel in all of Pfander's remarks. Without this distinction, did it not look as if the main difference between Christianity and Islam existed in a different legislation? The whole later debate on the theory of abrogation might have been completely different if Pfander had made a clear distinction between the killing effect of the Law and the life-giving quality of the Gospel.

5. Pfander's refutation of the corruption theory reveals that he has neither precisely grasped the objection nor responded to it adequately:
 - a) Because he does not mention the distinction between the corruption of the meaning and the text, his answer seems undifferentiated.
 - b) He does not yet see that the Quran merely mentions the corruption of the meaning of the Bible. Although Pfander's answer is not incorrect that according to the Quran, the text was

only corrupted during Muhammad's lifetime, it needs to be supplemented. In consequence, his answer seeks to prove that manuscripts from before Muhammad's life exist that are identical to the current form of the Bible.¹ If he had recognized the Muslim distinction between corruption of meaning and text, then perhaps he himself would have come to the conclusion that the relevant Quranic passages merely mention a corruption of the meaning or the concealment of certain parts of the Bible.

- c) His remarks seek to prove both the corruption of the Quran as well as the reliability of the Bible (Part 1, Chapter III) in a general manner. Striking is the lack of a detailed refutation of the corruption theory, especially an answer to the existence of textual variants, which to Muslims is a sure indication of the corruption of the Bible.

This omission is particularly strange, as Pfander had been given very concrete examples of *tahrif* in the Agra debate.² Oddly enough, in his first manuscript he deleted a passage about Biblical textual variants.³ Was he trying to prevent the writing from becoming too tedious? More likely, however, is the assumption that he did not want to provide Muslims with a target for their theory of corruption. His omission can also not be explained by the

¹Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 14ff.

²Cf. *ibid.*, 55,57.

³MS *Wage der Wahrheit*, Archive of the Basel Mission, FC 10.9, p. 70,74, from Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 382f.

- fact that he had already written a book specifically answering the objections put forward at the Agra debate,¹ since he should have at least implicitly taken these objections into account.
- d) Perhaps the lack of a reflection on the differing concepts of inspiration in Christianity and Islam had the most serious effect; for as long as a Muslim presupposed his mechanistic concept of inspiration, textual variants had to appear to be proofs of textual corruption.
- e) Thus again and again, an essential and problematic aspect of his whole writing comes to light: *Pfander knows too little about the thought patterns of his Muslim readership. He only has a limited sense of the difference between his assumptions and their beliefs. As a result, he all too readily assumes that his Muslim counterpart shares his presuppositions.*
- f) The question also arises whether polemically questioning the textual reliability of the Quran was objectively speaking correct or tactically prudent. At first glance, it might seem advantageous to present the Bible as a monolithic block of absolute, one hundred percent textual reliability, and to prove the questionableness of the Quran by means of textual variants. On closer examination, however, this proves to be an erroneous conclusion: Muslims were able to quickly dismiss the deviations from the Quranic text cited by Pfander as insignificant differences in recitation. Even more problematic is the

¹*Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṣa kā* (Agra, 1855). Not accessible to me.

fact that Pfander's seemingly secure fortress had to collapse like a house of cards merely by referring to Biblical textual variants.

So it would have been more valid and honest to reproduce a more nuanced picture and to admit textual variants of both the Quran and the Bible, especially since Pfander originally intended to do this (see above 4.c). This would have allowed the discussion to proceed to a different, deeper level, as the way would have been paved for a debate on more fundamental differences. Based on this, the different understanding of inspiration could have been touched upon (the impossibility of textual variants according to the Muslim conception of inspiration, in contrast to the Christian understanding of inspiration). Secondly, the conversation would have been diverted away from superficial issues such as the corruption theory to the core of the difference between Christian and Islamic beliefs.

That this assessment is not incorrect is testified by the subsequent Christian-Muslim encounters, which because of the just mentioned reason generally centred around the theory of corruption and often degenerated into tit for tat accusations. It is ultimately due to this false foundation that the Christian-Muslim controversy in some ways ended up on the wrong track and Kairānwī could with such conviction use textual variants and "contradictions" of the Bible to allegedly prove the corruption of the same.

6. Explaining Biblical teaching in the second part through an exposition of the history of salvation was a sound way of helping Muslims to understand Christian teachings. Despite this, Pfander bases his assumptions too much on Christian thought patterns that are completely alien to Muslims, as already observed in 4.e. This can be illustrated by a few examples:

- a) It was crucial to explain the Christian concept of sin so that Muslims could gain access to the Christian concept of salvation in Christ. Pfander's description of sin in the context of the history of salvation (Ch. 1) is perfectly suited for this purpose. Despite this, he fails to distinguish between the Christian and Muslim understanding of sin and refrains from questioning the Muslim understanding of sin, even though this is shallow in Christian eyes.
- b) In Chapters 2 and 3, the Judaeo-Christian concepts of atonement and sacrifice are not adequately addressed, although both terms are very differently understood by Muslims.¹
- c) In Chapter 3, the Incarnation of God is described on barely one page,² which compared to the treatment of the preceding subject of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in Christ³ is too short. Given that this doctrine is

¹However, he devoted another work to this subject entitled *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt (Way of Life)* (The first Persian edition appeared in 1840 in Calcutta. Later editions followed in Urdu; cf. Broekema, 'Leven en Werkzaamheden', 78f.

²Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 44f.

³*Ibid.*, 39–41.

a stumbling block for Islam, this should have been developed more.

It would also have been better if Pfander had not presupposed the Christian concept that Man is made in the image of God and is the child of God in Christ; if he had explained these concepts, the unique Biblical understanding of the original relationship between God and Man and thus also of redemption through Christ would have become more intelligible to the Muslim.¹

7. Pfander does not bear in mind that according to Islam, the prophets were sinless. Although he mentions the sinlessness of prophetic speech in the Bible, he does not clarify that the sinlessness of prophets is not mentioned in the Quran; nor does he point out that according to the Bible, prophets are not sinless, even though Kairānwī cites this aspect as a proof of the corruption of the Bible.²

Conclusion

Indian Christians did not immediately recognize all of these shortcomings. However, they very soon felt that the formulation and refutation of the abrogation and corruption theories were insufficient and that the response was not detailed enough;³ especially the answers of Şafdar ‘Alī and ‘Imād ud-dīn sought to remedy these shortcomings. The Indian apologists therefore consciously

¹That Man was made in the image of God is mentioned only very briefly when Pfander refers to the *imago dei* in Gn 1; Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 32.

²Cf. Kairānwī, *Izhār al-ḥaqq*, Ch. V, 2.e.

³Thus already Şafdar ‘Alī in 1865; cf. ‘From Şafdar Ali’, 220f.

took up the work of Pfander. Nevertheless, in processing his thoughts each one took an individual approach. Each one preferred certain ideas occurring in the *Balance*, each one contributed further sources and each one came with his own predisposition. The works following the *Balance* can therefore be characterized as “Indian variations on a theme by Pfander.”

Chapter 5

The Orthodox Muslim Reaction: Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī and Wazīr Khān

The two Muslim opponents Kairānwī and Wazīr Khān played an important role in Muslim apologetics before 1857, for it was Kairānwī who with the help of Wazīr Khān wrote the two most important contributions to 19th-century Muslim apologetics and participated in the well-known debate in Agra in April 1854 with Pfander and T.V. French.

Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī

Kairānwī (1818–1890) descended from a family that had come to India with the army of Maḥmūd of Ghazna. It had settled in Panipat and later served in the service of

the Mogul court. He was born in Kirana in 1818, where a family member received a *jāgīr* from the Mughal Emperor Akbar for his medical services. He received his first instruction from his father, who was an Islamic scholar (*‘ālim*). From the age of twelve, he studied the classical Islamic sciences at various schools in Delhi and Lucknow, the two centres of Muslim culture and jurisprudence. In 1841, he received a post as a *mīr munshī* of Mahārājā Hindū Rāo in his father’s stead. The death of his father as well as his wife and son probably induced him to return to his birthplace, where he founded a *madrasa*.¹ Other important dates are his publication of *I’jāz-i ‘īswī* (*Christian Inimitability*) in 1854 and the debate still to be discussed between him and Pfander in Agra in 1854.

It is uncertain what role Kairānwī played during the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857. If we are to believe Ḥālī’s statement at the turn of the century, the British suspected him of having participated in it, and he was only released through the intercession of Ram Candra.² Later he traveled to Mecca, where he settled.

In 1874, he founded a *madrasa* in Mecca named Saulatīya and participated in various activities such as the establishment of a vocational school and the repair

¹Uṣmānī, *Bā’ibāl se Qur’ān tak*, I, 179–184; see also Powell, ‘Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī’, 46, ‘Contact and Controversy’, 260–262.

²See below regarding the life of Rām Candra, pp. 145–146; cf. the discussion in Powell, ‘Contact and Controversy’, 442–446; she bases her statements of a possible participation of Kairānwī on the statements of certain modern Pakistani and Indian historians. These are somewhat dubious, as they do not provide sources and often incorporate modern ideologies (e.g. by calling the Sepoy Rebellion a War of Independence). Ḥālī’s statement is supported not only by the fact that Kairānwī himself did not mention his own participation in the uprising; British lists of insurgents also do not include his name, which Powell herself confirms; Powell, ‘Contact and Controversy’, 442, 446.

of a sewer system. Until his death he remained in Mecca with the exception of three trips to Istanbul. Contemporary Muslim accounts mention a confrontation of Pfander with Kairānwī in Istanbul. These, however, are legendary, for they are not confirmed by Muslim or Christian sources of the time.¹

Kairānwī took up his pen again in Mecca and wrote *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (*Unveiling of Truth*) in Arabic. His first visit to Istanbul in 1864, where he heard about the activities of Christian missionaries, may have initiated this. Apparently a scholar named Sayyid Aḥmad Dahlān had been asking him to write a refutation of Christianity for some time. *Unveiling of Truth* was published in 1864 in Istanbul.²

Wazīr Khān

Wazīr Khān was born in Lower Bengal. In 1843–1845, he studied at Medical College of Bengal. Subsequently, he got a job as sub-assistant surgeon in the prison hospital of Damoh. In 1851, the government transferred his posting to Agra, where he gained a good reputation as a doctor. At the same time, he also participated in Muslim resistance to the missionaries. He was one of the people who appointed ‘Imād ud-Dīn at the royal mosque in Agra to counteract the activities of the missionaries. He seems to have been interested in Sufism, for he was the cause for ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s turn to Sufism.³

¹Powell, ‘[Contact and Controversy](#)’, 460f, ‘[Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī](#)’, 58–61. Powell’s theory that Pfander left Istanbul because he felt that he could not count on any success among Muslims (Powell, ‘[Contact and Controversy](#)’, 460f) is patently wrong; even on his deathbed, he hoped to once more depart for Istanbul (see above p. 71).

²Powell, ‘[Contact and Controversy](#)’, 462–464.

³See below regarding the life of ‘Imād ud-Dīn, p. 201.

His contribution to Kairānwī's apologetic work was of crucial importance; as the latter was ignorant of the English language, he could only gain access to English books through the doctor.¹

Wazīr Khān took part in the uprising in 1857 and fled to Mecca after the reconquest.²

A Free Church of Scotland missionary named T.G. Clark describes Kairānwī as "a man of smooth and not unpleasing tongue" and Wazīr Khān as "a shallow but imposing man."³

Islamic Learning and Western Biblical Criticism

The most important writings of Raḥmatullāh are *I'jāz-i 'īswī* (*Christian Inimitability*) published in India in 1854 and *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (*Unveiling of Truth*), written in 1864 during a stay in Istanbul.

Christian Inimitability

In the introduction of *Christian Inimitability*, the author introduces the books of the Bible while at the same time trying to demonstrate their unreliability. In Part 1 he deals with the corruption of the Pentateuch (Ch. 1), the remaining Old Testament writings (Ch. 2) and the New Testament (Ch. 3). In the second part he addresses Pfander's objections. He concludes with a passage on the

¹Cf. Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 197: Wazīr Khān could not speak Arabic, while Kairānwī could not speak English.

²For further details see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 448–450, 'Muslim-Christian Confrontation'.

³'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Nov.) 254f.

abrogation of Biblical commandments through Quranic commandments.

Since the author of this book written in Urdu¹ repeats himself in a seemingly slightly altered but systematically improved form in the first three chapters of his Arabic work *Unveiling of Truth*, it is not necessary to go into further detail regarding this book. In the following, the latter work, which also deals with the other loci of classical Islamic apologetics, will be briefly analysed. It should be noted, however, that the indigenous Christian apologists in India only refuted the first work, since due to its Urdu, it was better known than *Unveiling of Truth*.

Unveiling of Truth

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Part I

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1 The Bible (p. 35)

1.1 The books of the New and Old Testament

1.2 The inconsistency of the Bible

1.3 The errors (*ghalaṭī*) of the Bible

1.4 The absence of divine inspiration in the Bible

Appendix

2 Signs of corruption of the Bible (p. 138)

2.1 The alteration of words

2.2 The addition of words

2.3 The omission of words

¹I only had access to a recent revised edition of *Christian inimitability* (Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'īswī-i jadīd*). However, a comparison of this version with *Unveiling of Truth* suggests that it generally conforms to the original version. Nevertheless, as a precautionary measure I will be citing the latter work, which also deals with the remaining aspects of Muslim apologetics.

²The following refers to an edition published in Cairo in 1891.

- 2.4 Deceptions (*mughālaṭa*) and their answer
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 - 5.1 The inimitability of the Holy Qur'an
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 - 5.4 Five objections of the Christian clergy (*padri*) regarding the ḥadīṣ
- 6. Muhammad, God's prophet (p. 101)
 - 6.1 Proof of His Prophethood
 - 6.1.1 The miracles
 - 6.1.2 His moral excellence (*akhlāq*)
 - 6.1.3 His pure Law (*Shari'at*)
 - 6.1.4 The spread of His teachings
 - 6.1.5 —
 - 6.1.6 The prophecies (*bishārat*) regarding the Prophet in the Bible
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 - 6.2.2 The second Christian objection: The absence of miracles of Muhammad
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 - 6.2.4 The fourth Christian objection: Muhammad's 'sins'

Content

In his introduction, Rahmatullāh deals above all with *Balance of Truth*. Chapter 1.1 reminds us of Pfander's intro-

duction to the books of the Bible and strives to demonstrate the unreliability of the Biblical writings. The author then lists a long list of contradictions (1.2) and errors (1.3) found in the Bible before invoking various Christian, European anti-Christian and Muslim authors in 1.3, who in his opinion all acknowledge the corruption of the Bible. The chapter concludes with two lines of thought to prove that the Gospels are not reliable: a) The Gospels did not have a transmission chain (*isnād*); b) Mk and Mt were not written under the supervision of the apostles.

In Chapter 2, the author distinguishes between alterations, additions and omissions of words regarding the corruption of Scriptures. As evidence of the corruption of the Bible, he lists both textual variants as well as contradictory numbers and accounts of the Masoretic text. He takes these above all from the conservative-Christian English refutations of rationalists and Bible critics.

In 2.4 the author refutes 5 Christian objections: 1) It is not the habit of Christians to corrupt texts; 2) Jesus and the apostles testified to the truth of the books of the Bible; 3) the authors are pious (and therefore would never corrupt Scriptures); 4) the Bible has become so widespread that it would be impossible to corrupt the Scriptures; 5) there are still manuscripts from pre-Islamic times today.

Chapter 3 makes a distinction between the abrogation of a) the commandments of a prophet by those of a later prophet and b) the commandments of a prophet through later commandments of the same prophet.

With Chs. 4–6 we are again completely in the traditional framework of Islamic apologetics, so that we do not need to go into further detail. Even the sources are almost exclusively traditional, except for when the author occasionally touches on the unreliability of the Bible.

Structure

The structure of *Unveiling* resembles the structure of *Balance*. A comparison demonstrates this:

Mizān al-ḥaqq

Part I

1. Introduction to the Bible
2. The abrogation of the Bible
3. The corruption of the Bible

Part II

1. Original sin—the need for the redemption of Man through Christ—the action of the Holy Spirit—the Trinity and Christology—how Christianity was spread

Part III

1. Muhammad is not the fulfilment of Biblical prophecies
2. The *Qurān* is not inimitable
3. Muhammad is not a prophet
4. How Islam was spread (negatively)

Izhār al-ḥaqq

1. Introduction to the Bible
2. The corruption of the Bible¹
3. The abrogation of the Bible
4. The Trinity
5. The inimitability of the *Qurān*
6. Muhammad a prophet
7. How Islam was spread (positive)
8. Muhammad as the fulfilment of Biblical prophecies

Kairānwī may deliberately be aping his adversary in order to ridicule him; at least the first point is best explained through this. Further structural correspondence can probably be explained by the fact that he is in the main refuting *Balance*.

In terms of content, of course, he is completely guided by the classic, stereotypical loci. The sole difference lies

¹2.4 (Deceptions and their answer) seems to be an answer to objections contained in *Balance* I.3.

in the use of Western works to attack the validity of the Bible, as is evident in its quoted sources; the Western writings are only cited in order to prove the invalidity of the Bible. Otherwise only classical Islamic sources are cited.

New Developments

The purpose of this study is not to provide a detailed analysis; rather, only the essential differences of this work to earlier Islamic apologetic achievements shall be shown.

The Big Trump: Textual Variants and Contradictions A review of the *Unveiling of Truth* shows us that the classical loci of Muslim polemics have not changed. The novelty of Raḥmatullāh's approach is his use of Western scholars of his time to underline and extend his arguments regarding textual corruption. This happened in a very eclectic manner. We have seen how Pfander criticized the *Quran* and Muhammad by using the writings of Western Orientalists as well as the works of orthodox Muslims. In a similar vein, Kairānwī now strove to use the books of Western scholars to make the Bible and Christianity seem dubious. In his case, he was mainly concerned with the proof that there are textual variants and contradictions in the Bible.

Conservative Protestant Commentaries In Raḥmatullāh's demonstration of the corruption of the Bible, the emphasis remained on textual criticism, since his writing was based mainly on conservative theological works, which mentioned text-critical variants but did not attempt any literary criticism in the modern sense. In spite of this, they carefully noted the apparent contra-

dictions in the text, even if they could not always provide explanations for these.¹

The most important sources of the author included T.H. Horne, M. Henry and T. Scott. In his *Introduction to the Bible*,² T.H. Horne dealt with Biblical textual criticism in order to show that the transmitted Biblical text is reliable. According to him, some of the apparent contradictions can easily be rejected, while the rest are due solely to scribal errors. A main reason for his detailed treatment of textual variants³ and apparent contradictions⁴ was the need to refute Deistic critics in England. This was basically also the position of Henry/Scott's *Commentary on the Bible*,⁵ in which Horne is frequently quoted. How did Kairānwī use these books? He simply sought out the objections cited and listed them as proof of textual corruption without mentioning the answers of the authors.

Another popular conservative writing was Adam Clarke's *Commentary on the Bible*.⁶ Clarke adhered to

¹A.A. Powell does not distinguish sharply enough between textual criticism and literary criticism; in the same breath, J.A. Bengel, Michaelis and Eichhorn are all labelled as "historical-critical" (Powell, *Contact and Controversy*, 379ff). By doing so, she fails to recognize that textual criticism was practised in Christianity very early on and very intensively by people such as Origen. This was never considered offensive. Later apologists in India pointed out that unlike Islam, Christianity has collected and compared the old manuscripts since its inception without editing the manuscripts or destroying divergent manuscripts. So-called "higher criticism," on the other hand, is a product of the Age of Enlightenment.

²References are from the 2nd edition (1821), the page references of which differ from the 3rd edition of Horne, *An Introduction*.

³He devotes the entire volume 4 to these.

⁴Cf. Horne, *An Introduction*, I, 580–666.

⁵Henry and Scott, *A Commentary*.

⁶Clarke, *The Holy Bible*.

the traditional Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and dealt with textual criticism quite extensively. Thus he considered the Samaritan reading of Deut 27:4 (Gerizim) to be more likely than the Masoretic (Ebal) and wrote: “Many [...] have no doubt that the Jews have here corrupted the text through their enmity to the Samaritans.”¹ Kairānwī quoted this sentence and translated “corrupted” with *ḥarrafū*, the technical Islamic term for Scriptural corruption.² Further, Clarke said:

I have only to remark here, that the *historical books* of the Old Testament have suffered more by carelessness or infidelity of transcribers than any other parts of the sacred volume, and of this the two Books of *Samuel*, the two Books of *Kings*, and the two Books of *Chronicles*, give the most decided and unequivocal proofs. Of this also the reader has already had considerable evidence; and he will find this greatly increased as he proceeds.³

Such sentences were grist on the mill for Kairānwī in his search for proofs of the corruption of the Bible.

The deliberate manipulation of statements from Clarke’s commentary by Kairānwī can be illustrated by his additions (2.2) Nos. 5–7 (Gn 22:14, Deut 2:12 and 3:11).⁴ For this he relied on Clarke’s preface to Ezra. Clarke had adopted the position of Prideaux,⁵ who expressly rejected the theory of some church fathers based on 2Ezra that Ezra rewrote the Old Testament Scriptures after their total annihilation at the destruction of Jerusalem. Instead, he postulated that many copies had

¹Clarke, *The Holy Bible*, I, 617.

²Kairānwī, *Iḏhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 142f (2.1, No. 3).

³Clarke, *The Holy Bible*, II, 1161.

⁴Kairānwī, *Iḏhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 242f.

⁵Cf. Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected*; this theological standard work was also present at the mission station in Shusha; see *FC-2.2. 1828, Nr. 40-44*.

been circulating since Josiah's reform. Through the Holy Spirit, Ezra 1) corrected the scribal errors; 2) divided the Scriptures into the Law, the prophets and Ketubim; 3) wrote a few explanatory additions; 4) replaced some place names with their modern equivalents and 5) replaced the Phoenician script with the Chaldean script.¹

Now while Clarke saw Gn 22:14, Deut 2:12 and 3:11 as additions made by the Prophet Ezra through the Holy Spirit, Kairānwī simply referred to these verses as "added passages," not as passages added by a prophet. For this view he then cited Clarke. It is even further from the truth when he cites Clarke as stating that all Christians believe that Chronicles was composed with the aid of Haggai and Zechariah; further, that the Bible itself was no longer available at the time of Nebuchadnezzar but rather that Ezra rewrote it.²

Of the conservative commentators used by Kairānwī, perhaps S. Horsely went the furthest. For example, he conjectured that Jdg 11:6,10–15 is an interpolation in the text.³ Another frequently used source is the conservative commentary of G. d'Oyly/R. Mant.⁴ Kairānwī derived most of his proofs of textual corruption from these writings.

Kairānwī and Khān generally only searched the books for contradictions without mentioning their refutation through the authors. A large portion of the proofs thus put forth as "corruption" consisted of textual variants. A smaller part consisted of contradictory numbers. The 42nd "contradiction" of Kairānwī⁵ may serve as an exam-

¹Clarke, *The Holy Bible*, II, 1609–1614.

²Kairānwī, *Izhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 145–147 (2.1, No. 16).

³Horsely, *Biblical Criticism*, I, 302; Kairānwī, *Izhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 159 (2.2, No. 23).

⁴D'Oyly and Mant, *The Holy Bible*.

⁵Kairānwī, *Izhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 63f (1.2).

ple. It points out the conflicting numbers of exiles returning to Israel. For this it cites Henry/Scott's commentary on Ezra 2.¹ However, in actual fact the authors explained many of the contradictions as scribal errors and found plausible explanations for the rest of the contradictions. Despite this, Kairānwī lists the contradictions without mentioning the explanation of the commentators and concludes with the remark, "And who knows how they will corrupt (the Bible) in future."² By continually translating corruption with the word *tahrīf*, he gives the impression that the commentators are confirming a deliberate corruption of the Bible.

Kairānwī not only perverts facts; figures and citations of authors are also often wrong. For example, a "Professor Germany" is mentioned. Apparently Bauer is meant.³ Since the sources and the work itself have been exten-

¹Henry and Scott, *A Commentary*, II, 405f.

²Kairānwī, *Iḏhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 64.

³Kairānwī, *Iḏhār al-ḥaqq*, I, 179 (2.3, No. 18.) The context indicates that he has his information from Horne's *Introduction*; see Horne, *An Introduction*, IV, 271, fn. 5, where Horne cites "Prof. Bauer, of Altdorf, in Germany." For inexplicable reasons, the sentence has been contracted to "Prof. Germany".

sively treated by A.A. Powell, this list may suffice.¹ Powell cites further examples demonstrating that Kairānwī did not actually understand historical criticism or even modern textual criticism; rather he used these sources solely for his polemical purposes.

Anti-Christian and rationalistic writings Rarely did he use the more radical criticism found in anti-Christian and rationalist European works. He does, however, mention Paul Thiry d'Holbach's *Ecce Homo* in the English translation published anonymously in London in 1813 and Andrew Norton's Unitarian writing *The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*.²

Catholic anti-Protestant works A third category of Scriptures used by Kairānwī consisted of Catholic anti-

¹For further sources and information as well as a more detailed analysis of the work see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 369–376, 398–415. 'Imād ud-Dīn names further sources not mentioned by Powell. He writes that Kairānwī and Wazīr Khān used the notes (*risāla*) of monthly debates of Brahmo Samāj and books of heretics and atheists in addition to English commentaries. In addition, they were helped by some irreligious (*bad-dīn*) Englishmen and received many books from the Roman Catholic bishop, who wanted to harm the Protestants (Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimin*, 4). The Brahmo Samāj is not quoted by Kairānwī, which is understandable, as he explicitly wanted to use Western sources to support his arguments. Wazīr Khān came from Lower Bengal and will have known the Society, which was founded there. As far as the Catholics are concerned, it is possible that the bishop provided anti-Protestant works in the hope that the Muslims, who perhaps displayed a feigned interest, would profess Catholicism. In any case, the account of the eyewitness 'Imād ud-Dīn is important evidence of the active participation of Catholics in the composition of the *Christian Inimitability*; against Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 375f.

²Norton, *The Evidences*, Vol. 1–3.

Protestant writings. For example, the anti-Protestant remarks of Thomas Ward's *Errata of the Protestant Bible*¹ and a journal published in Calcutta named *The Catholic Herald* are cited as evidence of the fact that Christians accuse each other of corrupting the Scriptures.

The Context: The Islamic Concept of Inspiration It is necessary to keep the orthodox Islamic concept of inspiration in mind in order to understand the full weight of Kairānwī's objections in the eyes of orthodox Muslims. According to these, every single letter of the Qurān is God's Word; it was revealed mechanistically, and Man had no part in the process of revelation. For this reason, Arabic as the "language of God" has a central importance for Muslims that Christians have never attached to the Biblical languages. In Christianity there has seldom been such a rigorous mechanistic doctrine of inspiration. This is even true in those cases where people have stated that the Bible is word for word God's Word. Such an understanding of revelation is in fact not possible for Christianity, since the Bible has been revealed in three languages.² This difference is also expressed in the fact that unlike Muslims, even Christians of the Early Church did not have reservations about translating the Bible into other languages. In spite of their proximity to a doctrine of verbal inspiration, Protestants in India like Pfander insisted that the Scriptures were revealed in the words and phrases of inspired human beings.³

¹Ward, *Errata*.

²Stiegler, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 89f.

³Thus Powell's treatment of Christian inspiration is not accurate, as she does not take this fundamental difference into account; see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 416–423. Pfander's statements about inspiration must be read in this light; see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 419, fn. 3.

Against the backdrop of this Islamic concept of inspiration, textual variants were enough to disqualify the Bible. Of course, Pfander's opponents readily ignored the fact that there are also textual variants of the Quran. These were taken up by later Christian apologists after Pfander and cited as evidence of the dubious manner in which the Quran was transmitted.

The Use of Islamic Thought Patterns Despite the appeal to Western authors, Raḥmatullāh's mindset was deeply rooted in the traditional Islamic sciences. This can easily be illustrated:

1. He uses the criterion of the transmission chain *isnād* for the evaluation of writings,¹ refutes the dogma of Trinitarianism on the basis of Islamic Aristotelian logic and rejects the trustworthiness of Paul as a witness of the Christian message.²
2. Similarly, the conclusion of Chapter 1 shows how strongly he is attached to Islamic presuppositions: The true Bible was lost before Muhammad's arrival, and the current form contains genuine and false parts. In Part I it also becomes clear that Kairānwī mainly raises the accusation of textual corruption (*taḥrīf-i lafzī*); for him, only the doctrine of the Trinity and Christology demonstrate the corruption of the meaning (*taḥrīf-i ma'nawī*) of the Bible (Ch. 4). And despite his criticism of the Bible's trustworthiness, he has no inhibitions about finding prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible (Ch. 8).

¹Kairānwī, *Izhār al-haqq*, I, 38 (1.1).

²*Ibid.*, I, 125 (1.4).

3. Kairānwī's thought reflects an expanded version of the classical accusation that the Bible was corrupted during the first destruction of Jerusalem.¹
4. The line of argument and sources of Chapters 4–6 (proofs of Muhammad's prophethood) are a recapitulation of classical Islamic apologetics plain and simple.
5. One of the characteristic Islamic assumptions is his criticism of the sinfulness of Biblical prophets, such as evidenced by Lot and his daughters, David and Bathsheba, Aaron and the golden calf *etc.* (for example in the first objection of Christian scholars [5.2]).

Assessment: Proofs based on Western Authors

1. The manner of argumentation in this document confirms the observation of J. Christensen regarding the Muslim mentality:

Now what is the Muslim going to do? On the one hand the book is held to be eternal, perfect, and everlastingly valid; on the other hand there are obvious faults, and developments in Muslim countries seem to contradict its validity. He just simply develops a lawyer-mentality: win your case—right or wrong. This crooked thinking is as clear as daylight in the Ahmadiya-Qadiani Movements, but it is surely also a very present evil in the thinking of every Muslim when he looks at Christianity.²

¹Kairānwī, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, I (2.4, No. 4).

²Christenssen, *The Practical Approach to Muslims*, 9f.

It has clearly been shown that the author used the results of Western writers only to the extent that they supported his accusation regarding corruption (*cf.* pp. 118–124). His actual mode of thinking, which was rooted in classical Islam, determined the tenor of his arguments and in fact blatantly contradicted the presuppositions of the Western scholars he used (*cf.* pp.125–126).

2. The real difference of this writing to previous Muslim works is the inclusion of the results of Western Bible research to prove a corruption of Scriptures. Only this explains the rapid spread of both *Christian Inimitability* and *Unveiling*. Of course, the submitted “proofs” are negligible if one subtracts the “proof” of textual variants.
3. Kairānwī focuses on specific teachings in his anti-Christian polemic. Nowhere does he attack the crucifixion of Jesus in detail, and he rejects the teachings of original sin and atonement only briefly (4.2,6). In any case, in general Western Biblical exegeses had not cast doubt on these or on the death of Christ, whereas some questioned the resurrection. On the other hand, Islam believes in Jesus’ ascension.
4. It is striking that the theory of abrogation was treated only marginally; only 14 pages were devoted to this topic. This indicates that in contrast to the theory of corruption, Kairānwī did not put much emphasis on this issue.
5. Pfander’s work was not only destructive, but also contained a constructive exposition of Christian

doctrine. In comparison, Kairānwī's work is much more destructive. Even in its non-destructive treatment of Muhammad's character and the Quran it is defensive. He does not formulate Muslim teaching as an answer to Pfander. Again, one reason may be that this was not common in classical Muslim apologetics.

6. Above all, the theory of corruption left an imprint on the Christian-Muslim controversies of the next decades. Kairānwī must be credited with reformulating and ostensibly modernizing the old Islamic objections. Subsequently, from now on Christian apologists could not refrain from answering his accusations. After all, from now on the "informed" Muslim was convinced that he had sure evidence of the sole validity of the Quran.

The Debate in Agra (April, 1854)

A.A. Powell rightly drew attention to the importance of the Agra debate for the development of the Christian-Muslim controversy.¹ The aim of this digression can not lie in a repetition of her presentation; it is merely meant as a supplement and critique of the same. Powell writes that Pfander deliberately chose the missionary method of controversy, thus causing a stir among Muslims. She presents the debate as a great victory for Muslims over the missionaries and as a skilful use of Western historical-critical results to prove the charge of textual corruption. According to her, Pfander and French were unable to respond because they were unfamiliar with the latest results of exegetical research.

¹Thus in Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī'.

A Muslim report in Urdu¹ and two summary Christian accounts of the debate still exist.² Powell seems to base her presentation solely on the Urdu report. Unfortunately, its historical value is doubtful for the following reasons:

First of all, it is unthinkable that Pfander admitted the faultiness of the genealogy of Jesus in Mt 1 as presented in the Urdu version.³ Secondly, Pfander unequivocally reports that the question of the corruption of the New Testament was only discussed on the second day due to lack of time,⁴ whereas according to the Urdu report, most of this topic was covered on the first day.⁵ The details of the debate differ in almost every detail. True, in discussing the first topic (abrogation) they agree in some details; however, in discussing the second topic (textual corruption), they hardly agree at all. Even the number of those present differs. The Muslim sources mention 200–600 listeners for the first day and over 1000 for the second, which is not possible given the size of the location where

¹This has been reproduced by Uṣmānī, *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, 186–189, 191f, who adopts the account of Wazīr ad-Din, *al-Bahṣ ash-sharīf fī isbāt an-naskh wa 't-taḥrīf* (Delhi, 1854). There are further Urdu reports of the debate; see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 276–279; Powell herself seems to base her portrayal of the debate solely on the aforementioned Urdu report.

²Both are found in 'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Nov.) 253–258. The shorter account was written by a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland present at the debate, the other by Pfander (255ff). In *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṣa kā* (Agra, 1855), K.G. Pfander presented another summary report. This was, however, not accessible. An abbreviated version of the reports contained in "Movements among Mahommedans" is found in 'Eine öffentliche Disputation', 73–80.

³Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī', 56; Uṣmānī, *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, 191.

⁴'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Nov.) 255.

⁵Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī', 56–58.

the debate was held.¹ Pfander's report that about 100 people came on the first day and about twice as many on the second day is no doubt more accurate; T.G. Clark lists 150 listeners for the first day.²

Moreover, Powell's thesis is untenable that Pfander and French were unprepared for this debate because of their ignorance of critical theological schools. According to the English reports, both of them freely admitted the existence textual variants, while on the second day, French with his academic training at Oxford was easily able to refute the objection that the numerous textual variants prove the corruption of Scriptures.

After comparing the reports from both sides, it is at the very least highly questionable to favor the Muslim report, whose author had every reason to portray the debate as a Muslim victory; at the most it has to be regarded as an example of what Muslims wanted to hear and read. What can be deduced with certainty from the Muslim report is the fact that the Muslim opponents interpreted the textual variants of the Bible as evidence of textual corruption.³ Pfander himself resignedly remarks, "The Mahommedans, I hear, intend to publish an account of the discussion, and, no doubt, all in their own way."⁴

Finally, it should not be forgotten that at least two prominent Muslims present at the debate later became Christians, namely Şafdar 'Alī and 'Imād ud-dīn.⁵ The lat-

¹Thus also Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 281.

²'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Nov.) 254.

³Cf. Usmānī, *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, 192, with the Christian reports. T.G. Clark and Pfander both agree that the opponents based their arguments against the validity of the Bible mainly on textual variants, which they saw as evidence of textual corruption.

⁴'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Nov.) 257.

⁵Several reports recount that a third Muslim spectator also became a Christian. However, as these nowhere mention his name, it is difficult to verify this information.

ter seems to support the Christian version of the debate in his account.¹

On the sideline, two further misconceptions of Powell need to be mentioned. Firstly, it is incorrect that Pfander deliberately strove to be controversial; he never aimed to become the controversial that he became. His many mainly “edifying” and non-polemical books prove this sufficiently. He himself writes of the debate: “I could not do otherwise than accept the proposal, although I was well aware that generally very little good is done by verbal public discussion.”² Secondly, Pfander was not taken to Peshawar because of his so-called “defeat;” rather, as an experienced missionary he was asked to set up a new mission station together with the young and inexperienced R. Clark.³

The Agra debate was the first of many public Muslim-Christian debates that dragged on into the 20th century. Since the end of the 19th century, they seem to have been led mainly by Aḥmadīs.⁴

Later Developments

The orthodox Muslim apologetics of the 19th century culminated in the works of Kairānwī. Although numerous other apologetic writings appeared, these remained

¹Lāhiz, *Tahqīq al-īmān*, 11.

²‘Movements Among Mahomedans’, (Nov.) 254.

³Against Powell, ‘Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī’, 58.

⁴Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 94, seems to believe that with the great debate between ‘Abdullāh Ātham and Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad in 1893, a certain line was drawn: “This was the last of the great debates between a Christian and a Muhammadan in a public assembly.” However, we have many testimonies that these debates continued even after the turn of the century until independence. Since independence there have hardly been any debates.

largely dependent on Kairānwī's position and the position of classical Islam. Only Muslim innovators (esp. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān) looked for new lines of argument after 1857. The latter, however, did not write a specifically anti-Christian book; although he seems to have begun such a polemical work on the Biblical chronology before 1857,¹ this was never published. Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad took up the traditional Muslim arsenal and merely augmented it with his claims to prophethood. The relevant writings will briefly be discussed in the treatment of Christian apologetic works.

In order to classify and evaluate the following writings of Christian apologists properly, it is necessary to continually keep traditional Muslim apologetics as well as the dispute between Pfander and R. Kairānwī in mind.

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 51.

Answers of Indian Christians

Chapter 6

Islamic Fraud: Ram Candra

Life (1821–1880)

The Hindu and Deist

Rām Candra was born in 1821 in Panipat.¹ His father, Sundar Lāl, was a strict Hindu and a Mahāvane Kāyasth of the Vasishṭha gotra of Delhi.² At first he was a *nā'ib taḥṣīldār* (Assistant Sub-collector of Revenue). Later he held a comfortable job as a *taḥṣīldār* (Sub-collector of Revenue). Due to a sudden illness, however, he had to return

¹'[The Indian Evangelical Review](#)', 260; Clark writes that at his baptism on July 11, 1852, Candra was 33 years old. R. Clark, '[Converts in India](#)', 257. According to this, he was born approximately in 1819 or 1820. E. Jacob mentions 1821. As Candra's son-in-law, his date may be more correct; see Jacob, *A Memoir*.

²The Kāyasth caste was said to be the result of the marriage of a Kṣatriya with a woman of the Shūdra caste. It was considered a scribal caste.

to Delhi, where he died in 1831. His wife and six sons struggled to survive. Candra's mother was too proud to seek relatives' support. She survived mainly by selling her jewellery.¹

Fortunately Rām Candra was able to enter the Government English School in Delhi in 1833, where each student received two rupees per month and everyone who reached the first or second level received another five rupees a month. Around this time he was married to a deaf and dumb girl named Sitā, who belonged to a wealthy Kāyasth family. Probably the marriage was arranged out of financial considerations.

At the age of 18, Candra had to leave school for two to three years to earn money for the family as a scribe. When the school in Delhi received college status in 1841, he enrolled again and soon received a monthly grant of 30 rupees, the so-called "senior scholarship," which he needed because of the financial position of his family.²

In order to understand Rām Candra's role it is necessary to remember the times in which he lived. Through the means of higher education, the British introduced entirely new and foreign ways of thinking as well as Western science. Indians visiting such schools soon realized the need to acquire this science. In a similar vein to Fort William, Delhi Government College (founded 1824)³ and Agra Government College played a key role in providing access to European thought. The students of these educational institutions with English and Oriental branches translated numerous English books into Urdu as well as

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 2–4. The jewellery of an Indian woman, which she received mainly as a bridal gift, was often the only financial resource that the family could access in times of extreme need.

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 7–9; Candra, *A Treatise*, xvi.

³Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 227.

compendiums of the same designed for school education. For instance Karīm ud-Dīn, the brother of ‘Imād ud-Dīn, played a large role in this endeavour. Similarly, Candra also translated a number of especially mathematical works from English into Urdu. Many new terms had to be created for these translations.¹ In this regard, Candra was a pioneer of the renewal movements, a fact that has also been recognized by secular historians.²

Despite the government’s final decision to promote higher level instruction in the English language and not in the national languages,³ an exception was made in the case of Delhi College, which until 1857 had a flourishing Orientalist department. The Orientalist department at Agra College, on the other hand, was gradually neglected. However, it seems to have thrived until the Sepoy Rebellion, as it was visited both by Şafdar ‘Alī and by ‘Imād ud-Dīn (see below p. 168, 200).⁴

In the course of his education, Rām Candra became a self-proclaimed Deist and rationalist. As a teacher he founded a society together with senior students that aimed at educating Indians with no English education. In order to achieve this, several journals were launched: in 1845 the twice-monthly *Fawā'id an-Nāẓirīn* (*Benefits*

¹Cf. Jacob, *A Memoir*, 9–11; Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 80ff; for a list of works and compendiums translated by Candra see *ibid.*, 80–89. The success of these translations can already be seen in people like Şafdar ‘Alī, who despite his lack of knowledge of English had a solid foundation of scientific knowledge (see below pp. 167ff). Cf. Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 1ff and 32ff as well as the foreword of the same book for a detailed account of the effectiveness of Delhi College on the background of Indian history.

²On Delhi College see Powell, ‘[Contact and Controversy](#)’, 33f, 52, 227–238, 454; on Agra College *ibid.*, 33f, 185, 187, 200f, 228f, 372f.

³For example through the Education Resolution Act (1835).

⁴Cf. Powell, ‘[Contact and Controversy](#)’, 227ff.

for the Readers) and in 1847 the monthly *Muḥibb-i Hind (Lover of India)*.¹ What were the topics of these magazines? Not only were the latest scientific achievements published; social abuses such as the extremely high level of wedding expenses and the almost entirely missing education of women were also highlighted. According to Candra, not only were the principles of Islamic and Hindu philosophy criticized; many Hindu customs and superstitious rites were attacked publicly, triggering heated discussions and a fair amount of indignation. In spite of this, Candra was not shunned by his Hindu friends and relatives, since he never gave up his own Hindu customs.² These magazines also made an important contribution to modern journalism and Urdu prose, as they sharply criticized the elegant but often artificial and obscure expressions of their predecessors as well as their topics, which were almost exclusively dedicated to praising a patron or to love. At the same time, they demanded a return to a simple, understandable style and to themes that moved the common man.³ Time was not ripe for such topics until after 1857, so the readership remained small and the journals were kept alive mainly by English sponsors.⁴ Eventually, both magazines had to be abandoned in 1855.⁵

During the Sepoy Rebellion, Candra fled to Matala. It was in keeping with his convictions that he daily tried

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 11–14; Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 34f; at the founding of the magazine in September 1847, *Muḥibb-i Hind* was named *Khair-khwah-i hind (Well-Wisher of India)* but was changed to *Muḥibb-i Hind* in November, as this title had already been taken by another journal; Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 66–71.

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 11.

³Cf. Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 35126–147. In this the influence of English Utilitarianism is evident; cf. *ibid.*, 129 *etc.*

⁴*Ibid.*, 35.

⁵*Ibid.*, 35.

to convince the owners of large estates that the British would soon be in control again.¹ In spite of this, he was not uncritical of the British, for he, too, experienced the frequently observed British contempt for everything called Indian.² His English education convinced him, however, that the British nation was indeed more powerful than India, and that India could become self-sufficient only through a fundamental reform of the educational institutions and ways of thinking.³

Candras' disciples also included the later Muslim reformers Naẓīr Aḥmad and Zakā'ullāh of Delhi, who did not avoid him after his conversion. Based on an anonymous contemporary report, Qidwā'ī even postulates that Naẓīr Aḥmad was strongly attracted to Christianity, although he never displayed this inclination due to public pressure.⁴ Altāf Ḥusain Ḥālī and Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān knew Candra well, and the latter received Christian literature from Candra.⁵

As a scholar, Candra distinguished himself by two works, namely *The Treatise on the Problem of Maxima*

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 103.

²*Ibid.*, 29f.

³Cf. Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 96ff.

⁴Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 48–50: The author maintains that for a while, Naẓīr Aḥmad substituted the words “Bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah” with the confession “Bear witness that Jesus is the Son of God” (*ibid.*, 49). Qidwā'ī combines this report with the Agra Christian Tract and Book Society's Annual Report for 1852 (see Jacob, *A Memoir*, 57), in which a Muslim student is mentioned who was secretly a Christian. On the other hand, there are several contemporary reports of Muslim seekers. For example, K.G. Pfander reports that Caman Lāl and Rām Candra introduced him to three young Muslims from distinguished families, who were secretly inclined towards the Christian religion; ‘*The Progressive Character*’, 134f.

⁵Jacob, *A Memoir*, 13, fn.

and *Minima Solved by Algebra* (1850) and *A Specimen of a New Method of the Differential Calculus, Called the Method of Constant Ratio* (1861). In these, he sought to solve the problems of differential calculus through algebra. They received international acclaim and were mainly supported by Prof. A. de Morgan of London University College.¹ Candra is the first Indian of the 19th century to make a name for himself in the natural sciences.

Ram Candra's Turn to Christ

In his autobiography, Candra writes that before his conversion, two misconceptions prevented him from seriously investigating the Christian truth: Firstly, the English themselves did not believe in Christianity, since the government did not even attempt to teach the same officially; secondly, he believed that religion is not necessary, as belief in one God is sufficient.² In this sense he understood himself to be a Deist.³

In 1844 Rām Candra received a chair of mathematics at college. During this time he fully developed his role as a renewer of Indian society and founded the above-mentioned magazines (see above p. 137). For a while he considered starting a movement in Delhi similar to the Brahmo Samāj. To this end he ordered a copy of the *Bhagavadgītā* from Calcutta. However, he could not put his thoughts into practice, perhaps because of his general skepticism concerning religion.⁴

In 1845 he was afflicted by a violent fever, and in 1849 he suffered a concussion incurred by falling from a horse.

¹*Ibid.*, 14–41.

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 44; Candra, *A Treatise*, xx.

³Jacob, *A Memoir*, 71f; *cf.* also *ibid.*, 11–14.

⁴Jacob, *A Memoir*, 72; Candra, *A Treatise*, xvii–xviii.

In both cases, he was bedridden for about three months.¹ These events may have torn him out of his complacency regarding life after death and forced him to ponder and search for answers. His own reports make this assumption likely. In these J.H. Taylor, the principal of the college, seems to have played an active role.

In addition to this, the religious climate at Delhi College seems to have been favourable to religious seekers. C.F. Andrews writes that at the time, most of the teachers and officials in North India were religious, and that unlike Calcutta, there was no tendency towards irreligiousness at Delhi College.² Rām Candra himself testifies that in contrast to other English educational institutions, the students at Delhi College were not taught to despise religion; rather, they were encouraged to clarify religious issues for themselves.³ Of course, it would be wrong to conclude that the teachers proselytized at college; as civil servants they were required to be strictly neutral in religious matters.⁴ In spite of this policy, J.H. Taylor was different from his predecessor Sprenger. He seems to have been a committed Christian, who in private conversations clearly represented a Christian position.

Candra seems to have had a warm relationship with Taylor. Religious issues must have entered their conversations frequently, as Candra reports that Taylor often unsuccessfully encouraged him to read the Bible.⁵ Taylor eventually played a role when Candra turned to Christianity, which must have taken place in 1849 or 1850. At

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 14.

²Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, 40.

³'*Delhi; by a Native Christian*', 411f.

⁴Concerning Delhi College's "religiosity," see Powell, '*Contact and Controversy*', 236–23.

⁵Jacob, *A Memoir*, 71f.

that time a British officer sent a Brahmin student from Kotah to Delhi College, as he wanted to witness a church service. Taylor invited Candra to come along. Both went out of sheer curiosity and saw some Englishmen, whom Candra considered enlightened and scientific people, pray with the utmost devotion and worship God. This aroused his interest in the Bible for the first time, and he began reading the Bible. When Taylor heard about it, he advised him to read the New Testament first. In his own words, when he began reading, he realized that the confession of monotheism does not suffice to redeem Man; only the name of Jesus Christ can save him. He then read and compared Sale's translation of the Quran and the Bhagavadgītā with the Bible.¹

He also had conversations with prominent representatives of Hinduism and Islam, e.g. with Maulvī Muhammad Hasan of Sunipat, Ulfat Ḥusain (Qāzī of Delhi),² Subḥān Baksh, Paṇḍit Harish-Candra, Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī and Paṇḍit Kesho Dās. However, these only strengthened him in his conviction that only faith in Christ leads to salvation. After this definitive decision, he began to read many Christian books along with some Hindu and Islamic Scriptures and to hold debates with representatives of the two other religions.³

¹Candra, *A Treatise*, xx; Jacob, *A Memoir*, 44f. It appears from his own report that his knowledge of Arabic and Sanskrit was not fluent enough to read these books in the original language, although E. Jacob asserts that his knowledge of these languages was very good (cf. Jacob, *A Memoir*, 14). Other words of Candra confirm this: "[...] had conversations with those who knew these books in the original language" (ibid., 45). He seems to have read a Bible that he had received years earlier from Taylor; Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 247.

²His book *A Generally Useful Debate* is a result of conversations with the latter; see below pp. 150f

³Jacob, *A Memoir*, 45.

Two weeks after his baptism, on July 25, 1852, Candra wrote that about two years ago he began to ask God in Jesus Christ to free him from certain debts. In other words, it seems that he was already a follower of Christ in 1850.¹

Ten days before his baptism, he publicly confessed his Christian faith² together with his friend Sub-assistant Surgeon Caman Lāl. In response to this, Candra's family requested a famous Paḍit to debate with him publicly. Due to the large crowd and turmoil, the debate could only take place privately in Candra's chambers, but to no avail:³ On July 11, 1852, he was baptized by the Anglican chaplain M.J. Jennings at St. James Church.⁴ At least 150 Hindus and Muslims participated in the baptism service, while a large crowd waited outside the church. The government posted Muslim bodyguards in case of disruption, but the service went smoothly.⁵ Rām Candra received the additional name Yesū-Dās, *i.e.* "Servant of Jesus;" however, generally people seem to have continued to call him by his old name.

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 73.

²*Ibid.*, 67.

³R. Clark, 'Converts in India', 258.

⁴Jacob, *A Memoir*, 77; 'The Progressive Character', 154; R. Clark, 'Converts in India', 257; later writings often erroneously cite May 11, 1852. This date derives from a typographical error in Rām Candra's autobiographical preface to *A Treatise*. Jacob's statement and the anonymous eyewitnesses of "The Progressive Character" are to be preferred; see also Jacob, *A Memoir*, 154, fn. and 134f. Candra's godparents were a Captain Lewis, whose wife was Mrs. Jane C. Lewis, and a doctor named Ross. The couple mentioned apparently played a role in his conversion and lent him Christian books before baptism (*ibid.*, 57; Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 247).

⁵Jacob, *A Memoir*, 79f; Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 249; an eyewitness even writes of hundreds of natives in the church and many thousands outside; R. Clark, 'Converts in India', 259.

Because of this incident, the number of students at Delhi College dropped for a short while.¹ Worse for Candra himself was the social ostracism. However, thanks to his high social rank, people did not clap their hands behind his back, nor did anyone throw dust in his face.² His baptism meant the separation not only from his caste, but also from his five brothers, his mother, his wife and his three daughters.

The situation simmered down gradually. In his diary, Candra notes that on August 15, 1852, he was allowed to visit his extended family for two hours excepting his wife. He was however not allowed to eat with them.³ He remained separated from his wife for 9 years until she herself became a Christian. By then, however, his daughters were all married to Hindus.⁴ Gradually he was once more fully recognized by his family and *birādari*.⁵ This is probably due to several factors: First, he did not change his habits and did not retreat into the relative security

¹Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 249f.

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 78. Throwing dust in the face of a man is a sign of social ostracism and ridicule.

³*Ibid.*, 85.

⁴Jacob, *A Memoir*, 86f. Significantly, K.G. Pfander learned that Candra's wife's resistance was due to the influence of her female relatives and her mother; 'The Progressive Character', 154.

⁵*Birādari* is the name given to a caste-like social unit in India that is common among Muslims. Hasan Ali defines the word as follows: "Beradari is the common term used to denote endogamous Muslim descent groups having a common traditional occupational background and it is widely used among Muslims both in the rural and urban areas. This connotation is thus extended to the entire ethnic group beyond the local context" (Ali, 'Elements of Caste', 19). This term was in many cases also used by Hindus to designate their caste.

of a Christian neighbourhood (*bastī*).¹ Second, after his baptism he continued to give his salary to his mother as usual according to the Indian custom; his mother then distributed it to the extended family.² Another reason is probably the relative openness of the Kāyasth, which was among the groups in India that were most eager to exploit the new educational opportunities and therefore had a strong influence on society.³

However, Candra seems ultimately to belong to those people who do not fit in any category and break the mould. This is testified by the missionary S.S. Allnutt, who described him thus:

The influence which he exercised, especially during the later years of his life (he died in 1880), can hardly be exaggerated, there was a massive power about the man which was most striking, and, so far as my experience of Indians goes, unique. His strong, rugged features were a true index of the inner man. His prime was largely spent in controversy with Muhammadans (in Hinduism, he once told me, he though a Hindu by birth felt no interest), and he was, as his opponents admitted, at once a fair and redoubtable antagonist. But if as a controversialist, he was dreaded, the respect in which he was held was very marked. This was especially seen in the position he occupied for some time before his death. A Kāyasth by birth he had been excommunicated, as was inevitable, at the time of his conversion. But gradually his consistent Christian life and his determination not to accept ostracism as debaring him from fellowship with his former caste-fellows led to his gradually being as far as the case permitted received back

¹Pfander confirms this and writes appreciatively about Caman Lāl and Candra: “I was also much pleased with their having, of their own accord, resolved to preserve their native mode of living and of dress. ‘The adoption of European manners,’ said they, ‘would have prejudiced our friends and relatives only the more against us, and proved an additional bar to the renewal of our intercourse with them” ([‘The Progressive Character’](#), 154).

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 86.

³*Ibid.*, 2.

into his caste, and I have been assured by his caste-fellows that without compromising his position as a thorough Christian he was at the time of his death virtually the head of his community in Delhi, consulted by them in matters affecting the life of the *biradri*, and loved and respected by all who knew him.¹

The Sepoy Rebellion

Unlike the other apologists, there is data available about Rām Candra's activity during the uprising. On the evening of the third day after the rebels took Delhi, he fled from the city disguised as a cook and arrived in the English camp on June 12, where he made his living by translating news. On September 20, Delhi was captured by the English troops,² who also plundered and mistreated Candra's family.³

The impartial and fair nature of Candra was evident at a time when brutal and inhumane measures were taken by both sides. He strongly opposed the demand of many Englishmen to level Delhi, and argued that the true revenge of a Christian government could be achieved only in the peaceful conquest of the hearts of its subjects by supporting Christianity.⁴

The well-known Muslim poet Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī states that the British suspected Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī of joining the rebellion or of issuing a legal pronouncement (*fatwā*) demanding a Holy War (*jihād*) against the British; the only reason he was not punished but rather released was because Rām Candra intervened for him.⁵

¹*Ibid.*, 111.

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 102–105; cf. Candra, *A Treatise*, xxii.

³Jacob, *A Memoir*, 107.

⁴*Ibid.*, 105f.

⁵*Ibid.*, 109f.

Ram Candra's Academic Career After the Sepoy Rebellion

As early as 1844, Rām Candra was a science teacher of the Oriental branch of Delhi College on a trial basis together with another Indian. On February 28, 1844, he was appointed senior teacher of the mathematical department.¹

The Sepoy Rebellion seems to have ended his career at Delhi College, which continued to exist after 1857 but did not enjoy government support and was finally closed in connection with the opening of Punjab University in Lahore in 1877.²

Following the recapture of Delhi by the British, Candra was appointed Native Head Master of Thomason Civil Engineering College at Roorkee in January 1858, where he also played an active role in developing the local missionary endeavour. In early September of the same year, however, he was appointed First Head Master of the new Delhi District School, which soon included 300 students.³ At this time he also seems to have re-established the Mission School, later called St. Stephen's College, in Delhi. Apparently he maintained it at least until the arrival of the first new missionary of SPG in Delhi in February 1859; for when the latter arrived, he found a thriving church consisting of the remaining indigenous Christians under the leadership of Candra in Delhi.⁴ In June 1861, a European officer was appointed principle of Delhi District

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 136f.

²Qidwā'ī, *Māstar Rām Candra*, 22f.

³Jacob, *A Memoir*, 139,145. Concerning his missionary role in Roorkee, E. Jacob writes: "Ram Chandra remained a member of the Roorkee Mission for 8 months and rendered assistance to Rev. Mr. J.B. DeAguilar and my father in planting the Mission there" (ibid., 139).

⁴Thompson, *Into all Lands*, 253–255; Jacob, *A Memoir*, 117f.

School, while Rām Candra was reduced to a mathematics teacher but with the same salary; the reason given was the need to raise the level of English teaching.¹ In 1866 he retired due to his poor health² and received a post as the private tutor of the Prince of Patiala. There he distinguished himself in the development of the educational institutions. In 1870 a Department of Public Instruction was set up in Patiala, and Candra was chosen as the director. Among other things, he expanded Mahindar College and set up 38 new schools in a very short time.³

Candra's first wife died on February 27, 1870. He married a second time, this time a Christian Bengali of the Kulin Brahmins, who continued to minister to Bengali women in Delhi after the death of her husband.⁴

Candra seems to have remained director until shortly before his death, as he still had this post in 1877.⁵ Presumably, however, he was de facto retired since 1875, as from this date he seems to have received a pension of 125 rupees in Delhi.⁶ He died on August 11, 1880.⁷

Rām Candra also participated in the reform efforts of the reformist elements of India after his baptism. As long as he lived in Delhi, he was a member of the Delhi Society, founded in 1865, which also included prominent Muslims such as Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib, Nawāb 'Alā' ad-Dīn Khān 'Alā'ī, Munshī Pyāre Lāl Āshob and numerous government officials. In this society, numerous issues were discussed including criticism of the English government and reform efforts; these debates were recorded in

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 153.

²*Ibid.*, 163f.

³Qidwā'ī, *Māstar Rām Candra*, 57f.

⁴Jacob, *A Memoir*, 128–130.

⁵Qidwā'ī, *Māstar Rām Candra*, 76.

⁶Jacob, *A Memoir*, 132f.

⁷'The Indian Evangelical Review', 260.

a magazine called *Risāla Delhi Society*. An important part of the society's work was the translation of English works into Urdu.¹

The debates in which Rām Candra participated show that he remained an enthusiastic reformist. For example in one debate in 1886, he demanded the government to set up schools with scholarships for girls; he also challenged the Delhi Society to play an active role in the execution of this idea.²

Ram Candra the Christian

As a Christian, Ram Candra also had access to the homes of the upper class Muslims and Hindus, i.e. the elite of India, and was even allowed to eat with the latter,³ though not at the same "table." According to E. Jacob, he taught the Gospel to at least 13 men (eight Hindus and five Muslims), who later became Christians. Of these, most were of high social rank. He also seems to have used the personal teacher-student relationship, according to which the student was entitled to private lessons outside of class, to share the message of the Gospel.⁴ His teaching of the Gospel, however, was always private and personal, and he never preached in public.

Candra supported church projects with all means at his disposal. Thus, he provided a large sum for the construction of St. Stephen's Church, which was started in 1865,⁵ played an active role in providing for Christian widows and supported the Delhi Mission Widow Fund

¹Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 55f.

²*Ibid.*, 56; for a further debate see *ibid.*, 56f.

³Jacob, *A Memoir*, 113.

⁴*Ibid.*, 54.

⁵*Ibid.*, 128.

financially.¹ In a petition dated November 10, 1875, he requested his former employer the Mahārāja of Patiala to transfer the monthly income of his (*jāgīr*) (pension in the form of land) to the Bishop of Calcutta in support of Christian widows and orphans. However, this application violated the terms of his contract with the King and was not approved.²

Candra did not hesitate to put into practice the uncompromising nature of the Gospel concerning the equality of all men. In line with this, he organized a feast for the Christians in 1870, in which 120 former Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Banyās, Mihtars, Camārs and Mlecchas ate together outdoors.³

Ram Candra was also ahead of his time when he called for the more active participation of local Christians in ministry; he recognized both the need for the financial independence of the Indian Church as well as the indispensability of Indian pastors in the ministry. For this reason, he supported the founding of a “Native Pastorate Fund,” a local fund for the financial support of pastors.⁴ In fact, in the first meeting of the Punjab Native Christian Church Council in Amritsar in 1877, he demanded that the indigenous churches finance their own pastors and elect their own parish councils to carry out the ministry. Furthermore, he suggested that the Indian Church establish its own indigenous and self-funded mission.⁵

¹*Ibid.*, 130.

²*Ibid.*, 131f. As Candra now received a monthly pension of Rs. 125, he presumably no longer had any claim on the income of this property.

³*Ibid.*, 132f.

⁴*Ibid.*, 132f.

⁵*Ibid.*, 133f.

Rām Candra's Works

Secular Works

The diversity of Candra's activity is already evident in his secular works. In 1847 he published *Wonders of the World* (*Ajā'ib-i roz-gār*) in Delhi, in which he described various curiosities from volcanoes to kangaroos, but also his views on progress in India.¹ Two years later, *Commemoration of the Perfect* (*Tazkira al-kāmilīn*) was published, which introduces a number of famous people.² These works both became very popular and experienced numerous editions. Thus they reached a wider readership than his magazines, although they also sought to enlighten the Indian people. A third, apparently lost work titled *Free of Ghosts/Care* (*Bhūt-nihang*) wanted to liberate Indians from their fear of ghosts. It must have been written during this time, that is no later than 1855. Considering the subject, it was probably written before his baptism (1852).³

Candra also published at least eight translations and compendiums of English scientific works. Most relate to mathematics.⁴ Both of his own mathematical works have already been mentioned (see above pp. 139f).

Religious Works

1. Between 1850 and 1852 there was an exchange of letters between Candra and the Judge (*qāzī*) of Delhi: Candra denied the miracles of Muhammad

¹Qidwā'ī, *Māstar Rām Candra*, 72–75.

²*Ibid.*, 75–79.

³*Ibid.*, 79f.

⁴*Ibid.*, 80–89.

while the judge defended their authenticity. This correspondence was published by W. Muir, who added a concluding passage and entitled the book *A Commonly Useful Debate on the Examination of Islam* (*Baḥs-i mufīd al-‘ām fī taḥqīq al-islām*). The so-called 23 “Karachi Questions” of ‘Abdullāh Ātham were added as an appendix.¹ E. Jacob is of the opinion that this correspondence already took place in 1850,² whereas it was published as a tract in 1852.³ As this correspondence is no longer available, this information can not be verified.

2. Three apologetic, or more precisely, polemical works against Islam have been preserved:

- a) In *The Inimitability of the Quran* (*I’jāz-i Qur’ān*),⁴ Candra attacks the Islamic claim that the inimitability of the Quran is a proof of its divine origin. He does this by discussing the manner of revelation, the purported linguistic purity and the deviations from the Bible, thus remaining within the polemical part of *Balance of Truth* by Pfander.⁵ According to E. Jacob, he wrote this in response to Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī’s *Christian Inimitability*.⁶

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 46–54; cf. Powell, ‘Contact and Controversy’, 250–254; see below pp. 157–157,164.

²Jacob, *A Memoir*, 46.

³*Ibid.*, 47.

⁴(Delhi, 1870), 156 pp. The 2nd edition was printed in the same year.

⁵This work was presumably published in Delhi in 1873. Cf. Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 68–74, who describes the contents in detail.

⁶Jacob, *A Memoir*, 122f.

- b) His second book, *The Antichrist*, identifies Muhammad with the Antichrist, invoking the Muslim idea that Muhammad was foretold in the Bible in an ironic and polemical manner. Due to the violent reaction of the Muslims, it was soon decided not to publish this work.¹
- c) In his third book, *Corruption of the Quran (Tahrīf-i Qur'ān)*,² he uses the methodology of Kairānwī and Wazīr Khān to demonstrate that the Quran itself was corrupted and therefore untrustworthy; like these, he refers to the writings of prominent Shiites and Sunnis who accuse each other of falsifying the Scriptures. For this he mainly uses two Quranic commentaries, namely the Shiite *Tafsīr-i ḥusainī* of Kamāl ad-Dīn and the Sunni commentary of Baiḏāwī.³ According to S.R. Qidwā'ī, Candra also used the treatise of a Shiite Maulvī named Ḥāmid Ḥusain with the title *Istiḡṣā' al-ifḥām (Arguments that Silence)*, in which the contro-

¹Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 78; cf. Qidwā'ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 93f.

²(Delhi[?], 1877). The 2nd edition, which was accessible to me, was printed in Amritsar in 1878 and comprises of approx. 260 pages; the present copy is incomplete and only includes pages 1–256.

³Abdullāh b. 'Umar Baiḏāwī is known by Sunnis above all for his highly respected Quranic commentary called *Anwār at-tanzīl wa asrār at-ta'wīl* (For his life and work see Brockelmann, *al-Baiḏāwī*, SEI, 58).

Kamāl ad-Din Ḥusain Kāshifī (d. 1499/1450), a brother-in-law of Jāmī, was a preacher in Herat. In 1492 he wrote a commentary on the Quran called *Mawāhib-i 'Alīya*, which is often referred to as *Tafsīr-i ḥusainī* (Storey, *Persian Literature*, I, 1, 12f).

versial points of the Shiites and Sunnis were discussed.¹

Secondly, he analyses certain verses such as the so-called “satanic verses” to show that Muhammad himself falsified the Quran for carnal reasons. Muhammad said he was the prophet of the end times; but according to Candra, he was in fact the Antichrist.²

3. E. Jacob names two more, apparently lost works. The first seems to have been called *Innovations/Heresies of the Christian Religion (Risāla-i bid‘āt-i ‘isā’ī mazhab)*,³ while the second was an extensive commentary of the Quran. Due to the writer’s death, the latter was never completed or published.⁴ Qidwā’ī mentions another work no longer available entitled *The Confession of the Quran (I’tirāf-i Qur’ān)*. This criticized confessions contained in the Quran.⁵
4. Candra participated in the publication of a journal edited by Christian cleric Tāra Cānd entitled *Exhortations on the Outcome/End of Man (Mawā’iz-i ‘uqbā)*, and wrote several articles for it. It was probably founded in 1867 but abandoned no later than

¹Qidwā’ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 94. The full title is *Istiṣā’ al-ifhām wa ‘stifā’ al-intiqām fī jawāb muntaha ‘l-kalām* (Lucknow, 1859/1860). The treatise refutes an anti-Shiite work named *Muntaha ‘l-kalām* by Ḥaidar ‘Alī Faizawī; see Storey, *Persian Literature*, I, 1, 29; I, 2, 1210).

²Cf. Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 74–78.

³(Delhi, 1880). Jacob, *A Memoir*, 126.

⁴*Ibid.*, 127, reports that he owns the manuscript.

⁵Qidwā’ī, *Māṣṭar Rām Candra*, 94f. He does not mention the date or place of publication.

1870 (presumably because the readership remained small).¹

5. More books must have been written by him, because in 1870 Candra wrote to a Brahmo that he had published a book and some articles in Urdu on the divinity of Jesus and the Trinity.² However, the writings still available today are all polemical in nature.

Assessment: Polemics Without Apologetics

Rām Candra attempts to prove the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Biblical revelation mainly by negating the Muslim position. His works are the most negative development of the polemical part of *Balance of Truth*. Three elements of Pfander are mainly represented: the corruption of the *Quran* (cf. *Corruption of the Quran with Balance*, Part 3, Ch. 3), the incorrectness of the same (cf. *Inimitability of the Quran with Balance*, Part 3, Ch. 3) and the invalidity of Muhammad as a prophet (cf. *Antichrist with Balance*, Part 3, Ch. 4).

Although polemics has been part of the intellectual struggle with other religions since the beginning of Christianity, the purely polemical manner of Candra is particularly questionable in two respects. Regarding Scriptural corruption it ignores the fact that both the Bible and the *Quran* have text variants. Ultimately it remains as superficial as Raḥmatullah Kairānwī when attempting to play off Muslim theologians against each other. Secondly, it does not offer a positive alternative, that is no Gospel, no good news.

¹Jacob, *A Memoir*, 124–127.

²*Ibid.*, 122.

On the background of these writings, it is all the more impressive that Rām Candra personally made a great impression on Hindus and Muslims, and that many leading Muslims counted him as their friend. His life itself bears eloquent testimony that he did not live from the negation of other religions, but from the positive experience of salvation in Christ.

Chapter 7

Aphorisms: 'Abdullāh Ātham

Life (c. 1828–1896)

'Abdullāh Ātham was born around 1828 in Ambala¹ and probably came from a Sayyid family.² He enjoyed a classical Muslim education. When he was about 15 years old, he felt a strong urge to deepen his religious knowledge. However, his older brother opposed him in this endeavour. Around the year 1844, a catechist, a Bengali evangelist named Medhu Sudun Seal, moved to Karachi via Ambala. Ātham received permission to travel to Karachi with Seal in order to learn English through him and thus pass

¹'[The Mission-Field](#)', (1897) 366.

²Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 113. Male members of Muhammad's family are titled "Sayyid".

one of the requirements for higher civil service. In the beginning he earned his living as a *kirdaar*¹ under a certain Major R. Marsh Hughes. However, in 1849 he requested leave from this position so that he could devote himself entirely to his interests at the “Free School” administrated by Seal.²

The conversion of two acquaintances to Christianity caused him to seriously consider the claims of Christianity for the first time. It led him to seek ways and means to disqualify the statements of the Bible and defend the Quran. To this end he also wrote several writings against Christianity.

In September 1851 his wife died.³ This impelled him to once again study the Bible and Christian literature. 23 questions that he sent to Muslim leaders show how skeptical he had already become about the claims of Islam. However, these only triggered hatred and rejection among the addressees.⁴

In February 1852, Ātham was baptized.⁵ A letter written by K.G. Pfander in Agra on March 30⁶ recounts that

¹I was unable to detect the exact position of a *kirdaar*.

²‘[The Progressive Character](#)’, 153ff; the following is mainly based on this report.

³Cf. ‘[The Mission-Field](#)’, (1897) 366. In this report it is stated that she did not die until after his conversion, and that he brought her body back to Ambala, where he suffered much disgrace. However, in this case we must give priority to Seal’s earlier report, who was an eyewitness. Furthermore, other dates included in the first article are not reliable. For example, it states that at the time of his wife’s death, Abdullāh had a single child, namely a daughter (*ibid.*), whereas he himself in the letter contained in the second article reports that he was baptized together with his two sons (‘[The Progressive Character](#)’, 156). This assumes that he had no daughter and is another indication that at the time of his conversion, his wife no longer lived.

⁴‘[The Progressive Character](#)’, 153–156.

⁵Ātham, *Cand sawālāt*, 8.

⁶‘[The Progressive Character](#)’, 155f.

Pfander's *Balance of Truth* shook his faith in Islam.¹ When one reads the accounts of Ātham, one senses the complexity and subtlety of his personality as well as the many obstacles that stood in the way of conversion.

In India, a person converting to another religion usually receives a new name. At his baptism, Ātham seems to have received the name 'Ubaid-jāh Ātham, a "Christianized" form of 'Abd-allāh. The word *allāh* (God) has been replaced by the short form of *Yahweh* and the word 'abd (servant) by the diminutive 'ubaid. Literally it means "small servant of Yahweh." In addition, this word sounds like Obadiah. As a Christian, Ātham usually signs his writings with this name, although H.M. Clark,² Ṣafdar 'Alī³ and others still continued to use his old name. He seems to have retained the name Ātham from his pre-Christian life. Sometimes he signed with *aṣīm* (sinner), which shows his Indian predilection with puns.⁴

As a Christian, he apparently had to give up his civil service post, because people feared an uproar. For a time he served as a preacher in Karachi and Lahore.⁵ In 1855, he married the eldest daughter of Rev. William Basten, a minister of the American Presbyterian Mission in Ambala. During his time in Lahore, he won the favour of the

¹'The Progressive Character', 154.

²H. Clark, *Tanqīḥ-i mubāḥaṣa*.

³'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 297.

⁴'The Mission-Field', (1897) 366. In Ātham, *Cand sawālāt*, 8, he signs with "'Abdullāh Iṣm." However, this must be a misprint for "Aṣīm," as "Iṣm" (sin) does not fit well and is not consistent with the just cited article, in which the English transliteration of "Ātham" ("Athim") is obviously derived from the Arabic aṣīm.

⁵In two reports, evangelistic journeys of Ātham with the missionary A. Matchett are mentioned (Matchett worked for the CMS in Karachi); 'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Nov) 258-263; 'Movements Among Mahommedans', (Dec) 284-288; 'Missionary Labours in Sindh', 89-96.

Lieutenant Governor and the Financial Commissioner. Subsequently, he was given the post of *taḥṣīl-dār* (Sub-collector of Revenue) first in Ajnala, then in Tarn Taran and Batala. Later he was named Extra Commissioner of Sialkot, Ambala and Karnal.¹

Ātham retired in 1883 and joined the ministry of CMS in Amritsar as an honorary member in April of the same year.² He died in Ferozepur on July 27, 1896, after being bedridden for 10 days.³

Ātham lived approximately 68 years. He witnessed major upheavals and developments in “British” India—the East India Company’s last major north-west expansion, the Sepoy Rebellion, the British government’s takeover of the country and the development of post-1857 Muslim/Hindu reform movements. His numerous works are the reflections of a man keen to come to grips with all of the Indian trends of his time. At the same time, numerous Muslim families became Christians through him,⁴ and he held several public debates with Muslims. The most famous of these took place in 1893 between him and Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad.⁵ One of his assistants was G.L. Ṭhākūr Dās.⁶ The report of this debate by H.M. Clark reflects the complicated nature of Atham:

[...] Mr. Athim, who is a man of philosophical mind, pursued a course of his own not readily appreciated by more ordinary

¹We can accept this information about his official career, even though it was taken from the otherwise not very unreliable report in ‘*The Mission-Field*’, (1897) 366f.

²‘*Extracts From the Annual Letters*’, (1884) 312.

³‘*The Mission-Field*’, (1896) 781.

⁴Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 113.

⁵Cf. the title page of H. Clark, *Tanqīh-i mubāḥaṣa*.

⁶H. Clark, ‘*A Controversy With Mohammedans*’, 98. One wonders why ‘Imād ud-Dīn was not present. However, it is surely no coincidence that in 1893, the latter’s refutation of Mirzā’s claims was published in Amritsar under the title *Tauzīn al-aqwāl*.

intellects. He dived into deep things and first principles, and passed by the obvious and effective points of attack.¹

Evidently Ātham had a philosophical bent of mind. His surviving works display a preoccupation with classical philosophical modes of argumentation. They are written in an extremely compact style that a modern reader finds difficult to understand. At the same time several reports testify to his humility and good nature. A. Matchett explicitly mentions this as a positive sign of the authenticity of his faith,² and regarding the debate of 1893 H.M. Clark wrote:

“Mr. Athim’s words have been good, but better far have been his unfailing Christian humility, patience, gentleness, and forbearance. His practical Christianity produced a grand impression. On one occasion, after an irritating and insulting piece of bluster on the Mirza’s part, Mr. Athim’s kindly Christian dignity and meekness won all hearts.”³ “[...] Mr. Athim’s gentleness and practical Christianity produced a deep effect.”⁴

This debate triggered violent negative and positive reactions amongst Muslims and subsequently led to numer-

¹H. Clark, ‘A Controversy With Mohammedans’, 99; *cf.* also the description in ‘The Progressive Character’, 153: “Abdullah is certainly a talented young man, but he was too proud of his reasoning faculties”; *ibid.*, 154: “He is naturally proud and haughty; he used to be very vain of his intellectual powers.”

²‘The Progressive Character’, 154, col. 1. It should be borne in mind that in the last century, missionaries in India set very strict standards for converts. Candidates were often baptized after a long trial period. Part of the reason was that missionaries experienced many cases of apostasy. Only later at the turn of the century were they forced to rethink this issue due to the mass movement of so-called Untouchables into the Church. At that time whole social units often joined other religious groups if they were not baptized immediately.

³H. Clark, ‘A Controversy With Mohammedans’, 101.

⁴H. Clark, ‘Conversions From Mohammedanism’, 181.

ous inquiries and several conversions to Christianity.¹ H.M. Clark reports of nine baptismal candidates as a result of this debate, six of whom later relapsed.² However, he emphasizes that the Christian side was not convinced that disproving the opponents' viewpoint was very beneficial; rather it felt that the real benefit of such a debate lay more in causing Muslims to question the tenets of their faith and to hear the message of the Gospel. Moreover, it strengthened the Christians in their faith..³

Mirzā concluded the debate with the prophecy that Ātham would die within 15 months. In fact, several assassination attempts occurred in the following months, but to Mirzā's disgust, the "death candidate" survived.⁴ In a similar "prophecy" against a Hindu leader, he was more successful: The man was murdered within the predicted timeframe.⁵

'Abdullāh Āthams Works

Ātham's style is obscure and in places almost incomprehensible. Undoubtedly this is one reason why only a few of his writings are still available. One of his writings is presented below as an example:

¹H. Clark, 'A Controversy With Mohammedans', esp. 100–102, 105, 'Some Results', 812–818, 'Conversions From Mohammedanism', 180–182.

²H. Clark, 'Conversions From Mohammedanism', 181.

³H. Clark, 'A Controversy With Mohammedans', 98f, 'Conversions From Mohammedanism', 181.

⁴H. Clark, 'Some Results', 818; 'The Mission-Field', (1894) 920f; H. Clark, 'Conversions From Mohammedanism', 180f.

⁵H. Clark, 'Conversions From Mohammedanism', 180f.

Challenge

After a foreword, the first part deals with external evidence of the veracity of Christianity, the second with internal evidence. The work is concluded by a short third part. The emphasis is on the first and second part.

As external evidence, Ātham lists Old Testament promises. In these he displays a heavy reliance on allegory. He goes on to list the miracles and prophecies of Christ as well as further New Testament prophecies.

The internal evidence pertains to the cogency of the Biblical message. According to the author, in the Bible the tension between God's mercy and his righteousness is resolved by the atonement of Christ.¹ Furthermore, the message of the Bible leads to the moral betterment of Man and enlightens his mind (71f). Another indication of its validity is the fact that its message has not changed, even though it is ancient and has been proclaimed in various books and by various prophets (72). Lastly, it frees Man from suffering (72f).

Pfander's Influence

In the first part, traces of the second central idea of Pfander can be found: Ātham's remarks on the miracles and prophecies of Jesus as well as on the promises of Jesus in the Old Testament correspond to the marks of a true prophet mentioned by Pfander. However, unlike Pfander, he makes no comparison between Jesus and Muhammad; rather, he adheres to a positive discussion of the attributes of Jesus. In this part, Ātham's preference for an allegorical interpretation of the Bible is very noticeable.

¹Ātham, *Cailanj*, 70f. The following page numbers refer to this treatise.

In the extremely short second part, the author seeks to present inner criteria for the necessity of the Christian religion. His assertion that God's mercy and justice need to be reconciled (2.1–3) echoes Pfander's marks of a true revelation.¹

This writing gives us an inkling of the complicated nature of the author, who often indulges in dark and opaque expressions formulated like aphorisms. His idiosyncratic thoughts often lack a unified concept; rather, they seem to be composed of many small "mosaic stones." Thus it is not easy to clearly pinpoint the impulses he received from Pfander. In addition, his thoughts occasionally demonstrate independent strains. For example, he includes the ancient Indian idea of liberation from suffering (*dukh*).² Still, it is clear that he processed the marks of a true revelation and prophet found in Pfander's works.

Despite this his generally irenic nature is demonstrated by the fact that in presenting the uniqueness of Jesus, he adopts the marks of a true prophet found by Pfander without resorting to polemics against Muhammad.

Further Works

The complicated but generally irenic nature of Ātham is also evident in *Model of Freedom in Bondage and Bondage in Freedom (Namūna-i āzādī dar qaid wa qaid dar āzādī)*, in which he defends the Biblical miracles. Evidently this is a response both to representatives of the Ārya Samāj, who denied the miracles of Jesus, as well as to Mirzā Qādiānī's enumeration of the miracles of Muhammad. From time to time Pfander's thoughts seem to shimmer through,

¹See below p. 358. Cf. esp. Pfander's third and fourth mark, p. 76.

²Cf. the 7th section of Ch. 2 (see below p. 357).

thus for example in Ātham's three marks of true revelation: a) It can not assert anything against any attribute of God; b) it must be confirmed by miracles; c) its final aim, namely the peace of redeemed sinners, must derive from the source of divine justice and attest the majesty of the creator.¹ The criteria a) and c) are reminiscent of Pfander's marks of a true revelation (see above pp. 76f), whereas b) reminds one of the second mark of a true prophet (see above p. 86).

In *Key of the Torah (Kalīd-i taurāt)*, Ātham deals with the legitimacy of the Quran. In his opinion, the Quran gives two reasons for its revelation. On the one hand, it claims to have been sent to counteract the false interpretation of the Bible by People of the Book;² On the other hand, the Quran was revealed so that the Arabs could have God's Word in their own language. However, the Quran does not claim that Muhammad performed miracles or that he himself was a miracle (9–12). According to Ātham, the predictions about Muhammad that Muslims find in the Quran are not true prophecies (13). Moreover, the doctrine of the Quran is unclean. An example of this is the low social position of women in Islam (19–22). The Bible is different; in the not yet fulfilled Law of the Old Testament, the first prophet Moses drew attention to the one who will reveal the true Law (22–24).

The 23 Questions that Ātham wrote to Muslim scholars shortly before his baptism question the reliability of the transmission of the Quran, the proofs given for the trustworthiness of Muhammad's miracles and the allegation of the corruption of the Bible.³ Şafdar 'Alī testifies that

¹ Cf. Ātham, *Namūna-i āzādī*, 2 with above p. 76.

² Ātham, *Kalīd-i taurāt*, 7f. The following page numbers refer to this edition.

³ Ātham, *Cand sawālāt*.

through these questions, he received important impulses when he began turning towards the Christian faith.¹

Assessment: Aphorisms Without Polemics

With his *23 Questions*, Ātham was the first Indian to publish an apologetical work. If we look at his existing works, we can recognize several promising approaches. Unfortunately, these are usually not developed and in part written in such an obscure style that the meaning is obfuscated. This becomes very evident in *Challenge* (see above pp. 162f).

In contrast to Candra's as well as Pfander's writings, Ātham's works are largely non-polemical in nature. He evidently applies Pfander's ideas when he attempts to prove the conformity of God's being with his revelation and to demonstrate the uniqueness of Jesus through his miracles and prophecies as well as through the prophecies of the Old Testament. Thus he attempts to develop the concerns contained in Pfander's marks of a true revelation and prophet. In this, Ātham's thoughts display the same strengths and weaknesses as Pfander (see above pp.95ff). However, as these arguments are not developed in detail, they do not allow any further conclusions. For this reason, the more coherent, systematic and understandable works of Şafdar 'Alī and 'Imād ud-Dīn surpass Ātham's writings.

¹'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 297.

Chapter 8

God's Nature and His Revelation: Şafdar 'Alī

The sources of Şafdar Ali's life are confined almost exclusively to the time until his conversion in 1864. Thus we know much less about his activity as a Christian than about 'Imād ud-Dīn's life following his conversion. One reason for this is undoubtedly the fact that he did not become an Anglican priest like 'Imād ud-Dīn. Thus he is rarely mentioned in the records of the Church.

The following reconstruction is based essentially on two reports, which complement each other. The first report is delivered as an undoubtedly reliable letter to the central office of CMS in London dated May 4, 1865.¹ A variant dependent on this report appeared in the shortened and less reliable translation of a missionary named Hooper of Benares. This appeared in the journal "Allahabad Pioneer."²

¹'From Şafdar Ali', 215–221.

²'The Two Converts', 49–51.

The second report is written in Urdu as an autobiographical note in the appendix of Şafdar's collection of poems.¹

A further important source is an account of his disciple Qāsim Khān describing Şafdar's conversion. As an independent and complementary report, this is a valuable contribution.²

Life (c. 1820–c. 1905)

Education in Agra (c. 1825–1856)

Like his ancestors before him, Şafdar's father was a judge (*qāzī*) in Dholpur. When Şafdar was still a child, his father had to resign for unknown reasons and move to Agra.³ We do not know if he made his living there as a teacher, but apparently he had enough leisure time to teach his son Şafdar, and his income was enough to give him a thorough education, even though it was not enough to lead a luxurious life.⁴ His family and especially his father brought him up as a pious Muslim, which promoted his religious inclination and piety.

Because of their [that is his family's] influence, the things of the world meant nothing to him (*dunyā dil par sard kar dī*), and a concern for [the outcome of] the Day of Judgment was fixed in his heart, which the Lord God in his wonderful wisdom and power caused to grow day by day.⁵

His education lasted for about 21 years. He seems to have been highly intelligent and scientifically gifted.

Şafdar was taught by more than 50 teachers. During the last seven to eight years of this period, he studied at Agra

¹Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 320–329.

²Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 129–131. Further sources can be found in the notes.

³'From Şafdar Ali', 216.

⁴'From Şafdar Ali', 216; 'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 320.

⁵Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 320.

Government College. Here he learned Persian, Arabic, Hindi and Sanskrit. At first he also learned English, but his rapid progress caused tongues to wag in town, and the bigoted Muftī of Agra issued a legal decree (*fatwā*) forbidding him to continue. "Since he loved his religion, he stopped learning English."¹ During these years, he was educated in the form of Greek science developed by classical Islam, in Hindu mathematics and philosophy and in the Western natural sciences. In private he also studied the specifically religious sciences.² For the entire duration of his studies, he received prizes. In fact, he continually received the highest scholarship. He passed with honours and even received a medal from the Lieutenant Governor, who had never before given such a prize to a student of Arabic, Persian, Hindi or Sanskrit.³

Subsequently, Şafdar was appointed to the chair of Persian at Agra College. Soon he became assistant professor of natural empirical philosophy for the students and teachers of Government Normal School and for the Hindi and Sanskrit students of the college. Parallel to this, he worked as a translator for a well-known publisher and continued to study the Islamic sciences.⁴ He was particularly interested in commentaries, *ḥadīs* and other theological works.⁵

Thus, despite his lack of English Şafdar had received an excellent education in the classical Muslim and Hindu disciplines as well as in the Western natural sciences. He had read the philosophical works of the ancient Greeks

¹Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 321.

²*Ibid.*, 321f.

³*Ibid.*, 322.

⁴*Ibid.*, 322.

⁵'From Şafdar Ali', 216.

and Hindus as well as the writings of atheists, sophists and Deists.¹ Thus he had a wide knowledge base.²

During this time, however, he remained a deeply religious Muslim. Although he found that many things in the Quran and *hadīs* did not agree with the results of science, he dismissed this with the saying, “What has reason have to do with revelation?” In his mind it seemed natural to say this, as much of Islam seemed to be superior to other systems and religions.³

Şafdar felt that the only viable way was to balance the discrepancies found in Islam; this would allow one to reach a middle, balanced path and avoid the extremes.⁴ Although he was a Sunni, he was also a secret Tafzīliya.⁵ It is no coincidence that he belonged to the Ḥanifite school of law, as this allowed him a certain amount of freedom regarding rationalistic principles.⁶

Despite his disposition to carefully research everything, he never felt the need to deal with the claims of Christianity, as he firmly believed that the Bible was corrupted and abrogated, even though he occasionally came into contact with Christians. In fact, he was present at the debate

¹Ibid., 216.

²This is also attested by E. Champion: “He knows only a little English, and this has of course shut him out from many sources of knowledge to which they [*i.e.* the anglicized Bengalee Baboos] have access. Still his knowledge of Arabic, Persian, and Mohammedan learning is first-rate, and is supplemented by a good knowledge of natural science” (“[The Two Converts](#)”, 46).

³From [Şafdar Ali](#)’, 216.

⁴From [Şafdar Ali](#)’, 216; ‘Ali, [Ghizā-i rūh](#), 323.

⁵A Sunni who, while holding on to the legality of the first three Caliphs, believes that ‘Ali’s rank is the highest; ‘[An Urdu Review](#)’, 598.

⁶See ‘[An Urdu Review](#)’, 598; *cf.* Juynboll and Wensinck, [Abū Ḥanīfa](#), *SEI*, 9–11.

with Pfander in 1854.¹ He also heard about the conversion of several thoughtful and intelligent people and obtained Christian books from two Europeans, although he never read them.² When 'Imād ud-Dīn became strongly attracted to Christianity during his studies, it was Şafdar who prevented him from getting further involved.³

Deputy Inspector of Schools in Punjab (1856–1860)

When a department of public instruction was established in Punjab in 1856, Şafdar was promoted and moved to Rawalpindi as Deputy Inspector of Schools. There he came into contact with Sufism through a certain Maulvī, who gave him *Maşnawī*, a poetry collection of the great Persian mystic Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī. He also had various encounters with Sufis. Through these he entered a new theological phase, in which he collected and studied many books on mysticism. He was attracted to the Sufi quest for purity of heart, kindness, and love for God and Man. This in turn caused an inner rebellion against the external

¹Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 24f, quotes a certain J.R. Hill regarding the debate: “The Maulvi was not unfavourably impressed by the Christian advocates; but their arguments produced no practical or conclusive effect on his mind.” It is difficult to assess whether this statement represents the opinion of Hill or reflects the opinion of Şafdar. Moreover, Hill’s remark is rather imprecise. For this reason, this statement is of little value.

²‘From Şafdar Ali’, 216. Şafdar ‘Alī reports that later he came across *Balance of Truth* while looking through his books (ibid., 217). It is probable that he had received these books from Pfander himself, as a “Mrs. Weitbrecht” reports that Pfander distributed books during the Agra debate; Weitbrecht, *Missionary Sketches*, 452.

³‘From Şafdar Ali’, 216; Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādiya*, 4f.

Islamic rules, although he continued to live according to these.¹

At this time he began practising Sufi practices and meditations: He only ate every fourth day and spent most of the night meditating, even though he had to perform his duties as a school inspector during the day. Furthermore, he practiced *zikr* until he could hold his breath for 15 minutes while repeating the word *allāh* over 1000 times.² These exercises later led to a heart condition that he never got rid of. An ecstatic vision of light also occurred during this time. However, he was not convinced that it was of divine origin. Later on when he became a Christian, he tried to explain this as an electric light in the eye caused by blood.³ He reached the stage called *ṣaḥw*.⁴ Despite this, he describes the result of his exercises as follows:

When he [Ṣafdar] obtained their company and Sufi teachings, a new earth and a new heaven were revealed before his eyes as far as religion was concerned. These had to bring about a momentous spiritual revolution [in his heart]. At the same time great difficulties appeared, and he had to undergo great hardship and difficult exercises. God's graciousness helped him to cover those long stages (*manzil*) in a short period of time. In spite of this, in the end he recognized that he had returned to the starting point of his journey. When he realized this, he could no longer suppress his sadness.⁵

This realization marks the end of the first stage of his evolution as a Sufi. After consulting pertinent mystical

¹'From Ṣafdar Ali', 217.

²See below p. 202, fn. 6.

³Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 126f. After his baptism, this suffering left him for a while ('From Ṣafdar Ali', 220), but soon returned with a vengeance; 'The Two Converts', 48f.

⁴'An Urdu Review', 598. *Ṣaḥw* literally means "cloudlessness, clarity; cloudless" and denotes the state of sobriety in contrast to the state of intoxication (*sukr*). However, the state of the "sober" Sufi does not exclude mystical experiences, as can be seen above.

⁵Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 323f.

literature and certain Sufis, he determined that he could only achieve the long-sought perfection of his practices and full assurance of faith through an infallible leader (*murshid*).¹ With this aim in mind, he seems to have joined a group of 10–12 Sufis led by a teacher. They now decided to disperse in order to find this leader and agreed that the one who found him should inform the others.²

Şafdar's work was well suited to such a search, for it brought him as far as Jhelum and Peshāwar on the north-western border of British India.³ In the end he was in the area between Lahore and Multan and spent some time in Multan, Jhang, Gugerah, Maḡhargaḡh,⁴ Pakpattan, Taunsa and Lahore,⁵ where he visited the respective Sufi centres. While many were fake in his opinion, some had a true spiritual concern. However, he sought "an infallible leader; one who can recognize and define my spiritual illness, name its cause and give me full assurance of faith; one who is neither a quack nor ill himself."⁶ In this respect

¹Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḡ*, 324; 'From Şafdar Ali', 217th; Although a Sufi teacher of Şafdar is mentioned briefly, his name is unfortunately not mentioned. Apparently he never slept and lived on one paisa a week, with which he had bought a little grain for food; Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 126. The exact student-teacher relationship of Şafdar to this Sufi is not clear.

²Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 127; 'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḡ*, 324 (Şafdar's own remark about this is very obscure).

³'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḡ*, 323.

⁴*Ibid.*, 324.

⁵'From Şafdar Ali', 217.

⁶*Ibid.* During this time of searching, two poems became guidelines for him:

"Since devils oft in human shape appear,
Thou shouldst not place thy hand in every hand."

(According to the English translator by Jalāl ad-Din Rūmī.)

"The Saviour whom we need must be like a sharpener of swords,
Who in a little moment scours off the rust of a lifetime. "

(According to the translator a Hindī couplet)

his efforts were neither successful, nor did he receive any satisfactory information from anyone.¹

Conversion in Jabalpur (1861–1864)

In 1860, Şafdar was transferred to Jabalpur,² where he found no Sufis. He decided to ask for a long leave of absence and continue his search in Arabia, especially in Mecca and Medina. He was even ready to resign if his application was rejected. His disciple Qāsim Khān, who read the Quran and *hadīṣ* with him, obtained permission to accompany him.³ Before proceeding, he had to travel back to his home town to find somebody to look after his property. However, when he arrived, he realized that he was in debt, so he had to postpone his travel plans by at least one and a half to two years.⁴

Various reports indicate that at home in his private book collection, Şafdar came across part of the Bible and Pfander's *Balance of Truth*. He began to occupy himself with these, although initially he was not at all moved by

¹‘Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 324f.

²In *ibid.*, 325, he writes that in this year he experienced “relief together with all contemporaries when the door of alleviation opened.” Is this an indication of the ultimate restoration of peace after the suppression of the Sepoy Rebellion?

³Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 129. Regarding Qāsim see below p. 176.

⁴‘From Şafdar Ali’, 217f; ‘Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 325; Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 127.

the claims of Christianity.¹ On the contrary, he decided to compose a book entitled *Radd-i naşārā* to stop the spread of Christianity. Qāsim Khān assisted him in this task. To this end, they procured as many Christian books as they could.² A few days after finding *Balance* and the Bible portion (presumably the Psalms),³ and while he was preparing his book against Christianity, he met the great Sanskrit scholar Nehemiah Goreh (Nīlakanṭh Shāstri) by chance, who had converted from Hinduism to Christianity. He discussed religious matters with Goreh for five to seven days. This aroused his interest in the Bible and the Christian religion,⁴ and crucial doubts were removed.⁵ Goreh introduced him to CMS missionary E. Champion, from whom he bought a whole Bible and other literature, and with whom he stayed in touch.⁶

¹'From Şafdar Ali', 218f; 'Recent Intelligence. India', 124. In 1866 Şafdar pays tribute to *Balance of Truth*. In his opinion, on a general level Pfander's answer to Muslim objections was satisfactory. What he however missed was a detailed answer to these objections ('From Şafdar Ali', 220f). Later, 'Imād ud-Dīn would fill in this void with his book *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*. One has to understand this need to appreciate the detailed answers of the latter book, which the Western reader finds tiresome.

²Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 129f. The exact time of this episode can no longer be ascertained with complete certainty, but it must have occurred after reading *Mizān al-ḥaqq* and before becoming acquainted with Nehemiah Goreh.

³*Ibid.*, 127,130.

⁴Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 326. Goreh was on a journey with Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall and the convert Lāl Bihārī De when he arrived in Bharshala. Since Şafdar was friends with the latter, he visited him in his tent, where he found him talking to Goreh. Goreh impressed Şafdar, and a deep friendship sprung up between them; Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 124.

⁵Şafdar later told E. Champion that in these talks with Goreh half of his difficulties were solved; see 'Recent Intelligence. India', 124.

⁶*Ibid.*, 124.

Probably towards the end of the second or beginning of the third year he wrote letters to famous Muslim scholars and Hindu Paṇḍits of Jabalpur,¹ in which he “told them about his miserable condition and asked for a cure.”² However, he did not receive a proper answer from anyone. He heard that one addressee had his letter burned, the other tore it to pieces with the comment that there was no cure and no answer for an irreligious person.³ Others avoided answering his questions.⁴ He had given up the Muslim prayers and was so open in his pro-Christian statements that the Muslims said he had become a Christian and the relatives threatened to take his wife away.⁵ When both Muslim leaders and Şafdar’s environment became hostile to him, he wrote Nehemiah Goreh a letter in Hindi sharing his doubts about Christianity and asked him to come and instruct him.⁶

The next day, Goreh travelled by horse-drawn carriage from Benares to Jabalpur:⁷

Then he came and became his spiritual father by instructing him in the true religion.⁸

Goreh stayed with Şafdar⁹ for about six months, apparently until his baptism.¹⁰ When he was ready to be bap-

¹Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 130.

²Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 326.

³*Ibid.*, 326.

⁴Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 130.

⁵‘Recent Intelligence. India’, 125.

⁶Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 326; Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 130.

⁷Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 327; Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 130.

There was no train connection yet.

⁸Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 327.

⁹*Ibid.*, 327.

¹⁰This is assumed by E. Champion in ‘Recent Intelligence. India’, 124f. The fact that Goreh became the godfather of Qāsım confirms this assumption, for he can hardly have made the arduous journey to Benares and back in between; Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 131.

tized, he informed his friends and disciples Qāsım Khān and Karīm Bakhsh about his decision in writing.¹ In his heart, Qāsım had already decided to take this step. He was baptized together with Şafdar on December 25, 1864 in a pond near Jabalpur.² Karīm Bakhsh hesitated for a few days, but on Jan. 15, 1865 he was unexpectedly baptized.³

Even a man with a high civil service post had to experience many inconveniences because of his conversion. As he himself laconically remarks, “When my people (!*qaum*) saw this, it declared me to be wrong (*hamen nā-ḥaqq par samajh-kar*) and rejected me, just as you shoo away a fly from milk.”⁴

E. Champion gives us further insight into the social ostracism that Şafdar had to endure and which extended to his family, even though it had known about his inclination to Christianity for a long time. Even today, this

¹Qāsım Khān was apparently initially a servant of Şafdar. Later he became a teacher at the government school in Sehora (Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 131,301; ‘Recent Intelligence. India’, 125). Goreh became his godfather. At his baptism he gave up his post (ibid., 131). Later he became an Anglican priest in Magitha, Amritsar (Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 128,301; see ‘From the Rev. T.R. Wade’, 312; for further details see Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 131).

Karīm Bakhsh was principle of Sehora Town School and a Maulvī of not insignificant accomplishments. After his baptism, he became a teacher at Christ Church Mission School in Kanpur and later at St. John’s College in Agra (Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 128). He was a friend of Şafdar but could not attend his baptism. It was feared that Bakhsh would be frightened off when he saw how his two friends were persecuted, but this fear proved to be unfounded (‘Recent Intelligence. India’, 125).

²Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 131; ‘Recent Intelligence. India’, 124f; ‘From Şafdar Ali’, 219.

³‘From Şafdar Ali’, 219; cf. ‘Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 327; ‘Recent Intelligence. India’, 125.

⁴Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 327–329.

ostracism by the extended family is still an insurmountable hurdle and cause of unimaginable pain for the Indian intending to convert. Şafdar's wife threw herself on the floor when his conversion was made public, refused to eat or drink and remained silent for a few days. On the fourth day, she was induced to eat. However, her resistance did not abate, but became more bitter day by day, so that Şafdar had to send her, her daughter and her father back to their home in Agra.¹

However, his conversion also caused many people in northern and central India to seriously consider the claims of Christianity. This is attested by both Imād ud-Dīn and Imām ad-Din in Lahore and Gugerah; for both, the message of Şafdar's decision was a key stimulus to their own conversions to the Christian faith.² E. Champion testifies to the missionary zeal of Şafdar in Jabalpur itself. His conversion triggered a violent reaction in the town.³ Şafdar also wrote the group of Sufis mentioned above⁴ that he had found the true leader (*murşhid*), but he only received a mocking and hostile answer.⁵

For the time after the baptism of Şafdar there is almost no information. At the time of his baptism, there were apparently people who thought he should go into full-time church ministry. E. Champion strongly argued that he should not do so: As a school inspector, he was not only financially secure; his post would give him many more opportunities to share the Gospel message with his old environment. Moreover, his motives for becoming a Christian would seem more credible if he kept his

¹'The Two Converts', 48.

²Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 317f; Lāhiz, *Wāqi'āt-i 'imādiya*, 12f.

³'Recent Intelligence. India', 125; 'The Two Converts', 48.

⁴See above p. 172.

⁵Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 127.

post.¹ Like 'Imād ud-Dīn and his teacher Goreh, he refrained from discarding his traditional clothes for Western clothes. Furthermore, he refrained from changing his old name,² although presumably he received the name Moses at his baptism.³

He was promoted to Extra Assistant Commissioner (Central Provinces) no later than 1872.⁴ Goreh reports that in 1878, he visited Şafdar for a month in Sagar when Şafdar's wife died. This seems to point to the fact that in the end, his wife returned to him. In the male-oriented world of India, this was an understandable step, as a woman without a husband had a low social status. It remains a mystery whether she, her daughter or her father became Christians or not. We learn very little about the familial circumstances of Şafdar. Does the fact that he lived with his father-in-law and not his father indicate that the latter had died?⁵ We know that his mother and some siblings died in 1889.⁶ He evidently remained in touch with Goreh, for in 1882 we find him visiting Puna,⁷ in which year he also helped with a revision of the Psalms in Urdu.⁸ He still gave lectures in 1890 and wrote an article for CMI⁹ in 1898 as a pensioner. In 1906/1907, E.M Wherry assumes that Şafdar is no longer alive.¹⁰

¹'The Two Converts', 46f.

²*Ibid.*, 46.

³Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 125,234.

⁴Alī, 'Preaching to Muhammadans', 55.

⁵In the Indian extended family it is customary for the wife to move into the household of the in-laws.

⁶Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 320.

⁷Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 271.

⁸*Ibid.*, 245.

⁹"Glad Tidings for Christians—Concerning Three Commentaries on the New Testament" in 'An Urdu Review', 598–600.

¹⁰Wherry, *Islam and Christianity*, 146.

Şafdar 'Alī only briefly met 'Imād ud-Dīn three or four times from his time in Jabalpur until the end of his life.¹

Şafdar's Theological Development

In Şafdar we can observe a theological development leading to the Christian faith. As a child, awareness of the transience of the world and concern for the outcome of the Day of Judgment was awakened, while in his Sufi phase, two things became especially important to him: First, he recognized the need for inner purity, which in turn made him more and more conscious of his sinfulness; second, he realized that he could only reach perfection and full assurance of faith through an infallible mediator and guide (*murshid*).

In the three years prior to his baptism, all the theological discoveries of Şafdar came together and found their goal in Christian doctrine and in Christ as the true mediator (*murshid*). Through the medium of Sufism, he first came to realize the necessity of an infallible mediator and leader, while later he arrived at the conclusion that Jesus is this mediator. These three years can roughly be divided into three phases. In the first phase, his faith in the validity of Muhammad and his revelation were destroyed, and he recognized both the uniqueness of Jesus and the excellence of Christian teachings over all other religions and philosophies. However, the exercises and practices of the Sufis continued to exert a certain fascination, and doubts about discrepancies in the Bible were not immediately eliminated. At this stage, the danger of agnosticism and scepticism that many Muslim seekers fall victim to must have been very great.

¹[An Urdu Review](#), 599.

In the second phase, which began with the second year, he became convinced of the vanity of mystical exercises, but his doubts about discrepancies in the Bible increased; it was not until the arrival of Goreh and the beginning of the last phase that these abated. Goreh must have helped him greatly to move from the destruction of his Muslim faith to a living Christian faith and not lapse into cynicism or agnosticism.¹

We can also observe a characteristic feature of Şafdar in his earliest report:² He thought through issues from their origin to their goal. This is particularly clear in his description of the last year before his baptism: He was convinced that God was perfect, without internal contradictions and good, and that precisely for this reason it was inevitable for him to offer a way of salvation for Man, for whose physical well-being he cares. This realization was later reflected in his book called *Petition*. It was this which made his despair as a Muslim so appalling: At first he had read the Bible in order to find contradictions. But now that he had lost the foundation of his Muslim faith and was halfway to Christianity, he felt that he could only accept the Bible if it was completely without contradictions, even though he found the teachings of the Bible excellent; for God is without contradictions, therefore his revelation must of necessity be without contradictions as well.

Şafdar's lecture "Preaching to Muhammadans" from 1872³ gives a valuable insight into his world of ideas and underlines the remarks made above:

In this lecture, Şafdar argues for a greater emphasis on the positive exposition of the Christian faith among Muslims. He expressly warns people not to spout Christian platitudes or

¹'From Şafdar Ali', 218f.

²Ibid., 218f.

³'Alī, 'Preaching to Muhammadans', 55–58.

exaggerate the evils of Islam and Muhammad: The priority of a sower is to sow, not to weed. Two books which are useful in the respect are the anonymous work *Dīn kī ṭarīq* and Pfander's *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt* (55f). Too many evangelists introduce irrelevant topics and do not stick to core issues of the Christian faith; secondly, they are often as violent as the Muslims and use harsh and contemptuous words (56).

He then draws attention to the Muslim mystics as a group that seeks God. In contrast to other Muslims, God has revealed a portion of his sacred Law to these, so that a deep awareness of their sinfulness and ignorance has arisen in their hearts (56f). He concludes by suggesting that certain people be singled out to work out answers to the reform movements of the time (57f). All preachers need to be admonished to fight together and not waste their time disassociating themselves from other Christian groups (59).

Şafdar 'Alī remained an ecumenical and broad-minded Christian throughout his life. In an article at the end of his life discussing 'Imād ud-Dīn's and R. Clark's commentaries, he praises the "catholic" attitude of the authors; they had written the commentaries as Christ's ministers and not as members of a particular church or denomination.¹

In the same article he expresses his great joy that the exegesis is in line with his own views, despite the fact that as Muslims he and 'Imād ud-Dīn had had very different opinions and had followed different paths, while even as Christians they had different spiritual fathers (598f). His joy, in turn, is related to the above-mentioned postulate that God is without contradictions; therefore through the Holy Spirit his Church must also be without contradictions (599).

¹'An Urdu Review', 599f.

Şafdar 'Alī's Works

Petition (Niyāz-nāma)

Şafdar 'Alī's contribution to Christian apologetics consists mainly of his work called *Petition*.¹ E.M Wherry's comment that "there is nothing in this book specifically new or striking"² is not entirely correct, as its theological depth and its logical and systematic power allow it to reach a level attained by no other apologetic work examined in this book. In it the author reflects on the various elements of Christianity and Islam in a precise and systematic manner. Step by step, he traces these back to their roots. In this he reminds the reader of an impartial judge, who quietly and soberly balances the pros and cons of each issue.

Şafdar's style is somewhat difficult without being laboured. It is the style of a scholar who often puzzles the modern Urdu reader with his long sentences and sentence structures. Despite its "excellence,"³ even Indians of the nineteenth century with average Urdu knowledge must have had a hard time understanding him. Nevertheless, the work received a fair amount of attention. Even the third edition of 1898 under discussion here had a print run of 1000 copies.⁴

Niyāz-nāma means "petition" and corresponds to the tone of the book. Unlike most of the apologists of the

¹The following description is based on the third edition.

²Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 97. One wonders if Wherry only read the table of contents and therefore did not thoroughly examine the book.

³*Ibid.*, 97.

⁴The work does not seem to have been significantly revised, which is evident from the fact that the 4th edition is identical to the 3rd.

nineteenth century, the author succeeds in not only remaining loyal to the truth but also in refraining from becoming crude or presenting acrid polemics against Muhammad and the Quran. However, the real novelty of this work is the theological structure that underlies it. This needs to be briefly outlined.

The book consists of three parts. In the first part, Şafdar presents contradictions of the Quran to the Bible while at the same time endeavouring to reproduce the core themes and concepts of both Scriptures. From these contradictions the two main objections of Muslims arise, namely the alleged corruption of the Bible and its abrogation by the Quran. Subsequently, in a second part Şafdar deals with the accusation of corruption and in the last part with the alleged abrogation of the Bible.

The following core themes characterize the work:

The Basic Structure of *Petition*

Christianity Derives from God's Nature The main strength of Şafdar 'Alī's book lies in the fact that his arguments derive from the nature of God. He bases all his arguments on two assumptions:

1. God's nature is holy, pure, just and merciful.¹
2. God's nature can not contradict itself.²

The main message of the book is that on the one hand the Bible reflects God's nature, whereas the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* do not do so.³ On the other hand, the teachings of the Quran do not correspond to the Bible,⁴ and thus the Quran can not be recognized as the Word of God;

¹'Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 18f; 12–17.

²*Ibid.*, 32,35,66.

³*Cf. ibid.*, 66–68.

⁴Thus Part I.

God's Word can not contradict itself, just as God can not contradict himself.¹

By starting with a definition of the nature of God that is acceptable to Christians and Muslims, the author creates a common ground of dialogue. Although in itself this is not sufficient, through this he can communicate in a manner that is logical and understandable for Muslims, as he develops all other laws step by step based on these two assumptions.

The Quran and *Hadīs* Refute Muslim Objections On another level, Şafdār argues that the Quran and the *hadīs* do not raise current Muslim objections that the Bible has been corrupted² and abrogated;³ on the contrary, they themselves claim that the Bible was God's Word at the time of Muhammad.⁴

This core theme now needs to be explained in detail:

Only the Bible Reflects the Nature of God

The Fall of Man While according to Biblical testimony, Man was created to be perfect and good,⁵ the Quran teaches that he was already flawed when he was created. However, a flawed being points to a flawed Creator, while God's nature is such that it can not do anything wrong.⁶ The Bible therefore points out that Adam's free will made the decision to sin.⁷ It is therefore in accor-

¹Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 65ff.

²Thus Part II; esp. 223–227.

³Thus Part III.

⁴Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 105–145.

⁵*Ibid.*, 53f.

⁶*Ibid.*, 54f; *cf.* 19.

⁷*Ibid.*, 57f.

dance with God's holy nature that he must punish Man, who is himself not capable of atoning for his sins.

But how can the sinfulness of Man be remedied? Christianity answers as follows: Because of his love and holy nature, God sent his Son to die on the cross as an atonement for the sins of humanity.¹ Only in this way were his holy righteousness (punishment of sin) and his love (forgiveness/atonement in Christ) made manifest. God's mercy as well as his righteousness are only reconciled in Christ, for he took upon himself the punishment of Man. Through this God's righteousness was upheld. At the same time he revealed God's loving nature as the Son of God. In contrast, Islam can not adequately demonstrate how Man can become righteous in accordance with God's demands; only the unique divine nature of Jesus can guarantee Man's salvation. As Muhammad is only a human being, he can not guarantee salvation.

The Law There are two kinds of commandments, namely moral (*akhlāqī*) and ceremonial (*rasmī*) commands. The first kind can not be changed, as it is deeply rooted in the nature of God, while the second kind is not intrinsically or essentially good or bad; it has a finite duration, since it is not rooted in the nature of God. The first kind of commandments can also be called hidden/original/true (*bātdtinī/aṣli/haqīqī*) commandments and the second outer (*ẓāhirī*) commandments. The difference between the two becomes clear when one looks at Israel: Israel received the Torah, in which both ceremonial/external commandments and moral/inner/true, hidden laws (e.g. the ten commandments) were included. The hidden laws were revealed and fulfilled in Christ, so that the external laws

¹*Ibid.*, 12–16.

were no longer necessary; the latter were given to initially lead Israel to a knowledge of God, as a child must first learn the alphabet before it moves on to the sciences, or like a patient who may not eat bread for a certain period of time. A main purpose of the external commandments was also to separate Israel from other peoples and their bad influence.

In contrast to this, the Quran has returned to the ceremonial laws. Not only that, many of its “moral” laws are bad and contradict the Bible and the nature of God, thus for example the regulations regarding divorce, the Holy War *etc.*¹

Refutation of the Corruption Theory

The Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* do not raise the objection of corruption.² For this reason, the objection of contemporary Maulvīs that the Bible is an example of *tahrīf-i ma'nawī* and *lafzī* is false. The accusation of perversion of the meaning of the Biblical text only pertains to the interpretation of the text, not to the corruption of the actual text itself.³ The fact that there are very different interpretations and translations of the Bible⁴ does not prove the charge of corruption. *Tahrīf-i lafzī* has been postulated by the Muslim scholars mainly due to textual variants. However, different readings are generally no proof of *tahrīf-i lafzī*, not even in the Quran, which also has textual variants.⁵ The variants of *SP* and *LXX* do not prove corruption of *M*, since the latter represents the original

¹Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 18–31, 256ff.

²*Ibid.*, 105–145.

³*Ibid.*, 73f.

⁴*Ibid.*, 74–79.

⁵*Ibid.*, 79–95.

text, whereas *SP* and *LXX* are translations. Moreover, they almost always coincide with *M*.¹

Only the proof of corruption of Biblical doctrines and principles can prove the charge of corruption of the Scriptures. However, these are consistent throughout the Bible.²

Looking at this part from a modern perspective, the only weakness in Şafdar's argument becomes evident, namely his historical references. Still, these were sufficient for their time and for someone who had no immediate access to English books.³ Moreover, it was sufficient for the Islamic context of the 19th century to state that Jesus and his disciples attested the inspiration of passages about which there is no clear indication that they were written by a prophet.⁴

Refutation of the Abrogation Theory

According to Şafdar, the Quran and the *hadīs* do not claim that the Bible was abrogated by the Quran;⁵ this is also technically impossible according to the rules established by the commentators. The Muslim scholars of India have introduced a new meaning of *naskh* by postulating the abrogation of the entire Bible.⁶

Again, the way in which Şafdar 'Alī recognizes the root of this issue is typical: What is questionable about the Quran is the fact that it has returned to the ceremonial laws and based itself on false commandments that do not conform to God's nature. Jesus fulfilled the laws

¹*Ibid.*, 160–162.

²*Ibid.*, 80f.

³*Ibid.*, 145ff.

⁴*Ibid.*, 189–192.

⁵*Ibid.*, 223–227, 235f.

⁶*Ibid.*, 222–233.

of the Old Testament and revealed the internal, moral laws. Because of this the external laws no longer need to be followed. The Quran, however, can not abrogate the moral laws, since it would thereby abrogate laws that have arisen from God's own nature.¹

Assessment: God's Nature Conforms to his Revelation

Positive aspects

1. The inclusion of ideas from Pfander's *Balance of Truth* is evident, especially in the development of the Christian faith from the nature of God and the distinction between ceremonial and moral commandments. However, Şafdar does not mention any marks of a true revelation or a true prophet that are supposedly accessible to reason; rather, he focuses on the fact that God's being and revelation must correspond, thus exclusively developing the subject of *revealed Scripture*. With his marks of a true revelation, Pfander above all wished to point out that divine revelation needs to correspond to the nature of God, which human reason can elicit. Although Şafdar takes up and expands the idea that true revelation corresponds to the nature of God, he does not mention the problematic postulate that human reason can recognize the nature of God. This clearly sets him apart from Pfander and 'Imād ud-Dīn.

At this point, the reader may pause and wonder if Şafdar 'Alī has not succumbed to a similar false

¹'Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 18–31,256.

conclusion as Pfander: Does he not proceed from a Christian concept of God when he postulates that God's nature is holy, righteous and merciful? As a scholar trained in the Islamic sciences, is he not aware of the fact that although God is good according to Islam, this goodness is subordinated to the creed that God is one, so that this goodness does not imply any obligation of God regarding Man? Is he not aware that the utter difference between Man and God in Islam rules out the concept that Man is made in the image of God or can become the child of God; indeed that it makes the Incarnation of God seem absurd?

If Şafdar had stated that the traits of God's nature can be elicited by human reason, then this objection would be correct. However, this is not the case. He merely assumes that Christians and Muslims both accept these characteristics. In other words, they have the character of a common platform, a common set of ideas on which both can agree.

In addition, his primary burden of proof is that the Bible represents this view of God, while the Quran contradicts this view and is therefore false; he thus fills these characteristics with Biblical content before he contrasts them with the Quranic position. In other words, the author proceeds from the idea of the *deus revelatus* and never tries to prove his nature by means of the *revelatio generalis*. Here his approach proves to be legitimate, since Islam itself assumes the fundamental agreement of the Biblical and the Quranic message. Unlike other apologists, he proceeds from the nature of God. This enables him to get to the core of the issue by arriving

at the heart of the Islamic rejection of the Christian message and answering it at the same time: The heart of the Islamic rejection is Muslim opposition to any commitment or obligation on the part of God regarding Man, while the Christian answer is based on the Trinity: Only the message of Christ can give Man the certainty of his salvation, since God's righteous holiness and love find full expression only in Christ; and only the Holy Spirit can sanctify Man. Thus the author can demonstrate that only the Trinitarian concept of God's unity is without any contradiction, not the Muslim concept of the oneness of God.

2. The avoidance of Pfander's marks of a true prophet is probably also no coincidence. Şafdar will have recognized that the application of these criteria to Jesus and Muhammad would lead to unnecessary polemics against Muhammad. For this reason, he does not need to place much importance on the miracles, prophecies and promises of Jesus and Muhammad. The advantage of this conscious omission is obvious: A Christian comparison between Muhammad and Jesus inevitably meant a disqualification of Muhammad and had to end in polemical statements about him. Şafdar recognized that this would unnecessarily antagonize his Muslim reader and close his mind. He wanted to win him over peacefully and open his heart without immediately provoking a defence of the person of Muhammad. He could accomplish this much better by exposing the fundamental theological differences between the Islamic and Christian faith, as this did not necessarily entail a comparison between Jesus and Muhammad.

This methodology had the added advantage that it was much more likely to truly convey the Gospel, the good news of Christ, as it focused on the central message of the crucified and risen Christ and not on aspects about Jesus or Muhammad's character that were unnecessary for the matter at hand. In spite of this, it did in fact arrive at the subject of the agent of revelation. However it did this in a more fundamental way than a comparison between Jesus' and Muhammad's person could do; the discussion of Jesus' person was embedded in the more fundamental discussion of God's nature.

3. Şafdar's answer to the Islamic theory of abrogation is a great advance over Pfander's answer. For one thing, he bases his refutation on a detailed account of the classical rules of Islamic abrogation. Second, he is more in line with the Biblical testimony in his acceptance of the abrogation of certain Old Testament commandments in the New Testament. In doing so, he can end the unfruitful debate for and against the theory of abrogation and instead lead Muslims to a better understanding of the contrast between Biblical and Quranic commandments.

The author manages to relate the laws of the Quran to those of the Bible in a meaningful way and at the same time demonstrate the fulfilment of the Torah through Jesus. This was no easy task, as the laws of Islam, the Torah and the New Testament had to be related to one another in such a way that they showed that Jesus fulfilled the Torah, Christians do not have to obey the ritual laws of the Old Testament, and the claim that the Quran has abrogated the Gospel is wrong. The author succeeds in finding

the common denominator that correctly correlates these points theologically.

In this line of argument as well, his reference to the nature of God proves to be particularly powerful: His distinction between outward, transient commandments and moral commandments rooted in God and therefore eternal offers a conceptually clean tool that can convincingly show that while the external Old Testament commandments have been abrogated through the New Testament, the moral commandments have never been abolished. At the same time, it can demonstrate that Islam has not only based its Law on external commandments and false moral commandments that do not conform to the nature of God; by definition it can never abolish the moral laws of the New Testament (see above pp. 185–188).

4. The Islamic theory of corruption had not yet been grasped fully or answered completely satisfactorily by Pfander. Şafdar now formulates this more precisely and repudiates it more convincingly (see above pp. 186–187). This becomes clearly evident when comparing him to Pfander. In contrast to Pfander, he distinguishes between corruption of the meaning and the text itself (*tahrīf-i ma'nawī* and *lafzī*). He also makes the correct observation that the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* do not claim that the Bible was corrupted,¹ and that these themselves have many textual variants.

But again it is characteristic of his manner of argumentation that he does not use this material polem-

¹Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 116–128.

ically like Pfander; rather, he at once directs it to a deeper level:

- a) He uses the presence of Quranic textual variants merely to bring his Muslim reader to the bargaining table and deprive him of the alleged trump of Biblical text variants. If one compares how ‘Imād ud-Dīn after him immediately took up these Quranic text variants to prove the corruption of the Quran, then the restraint of Şafdar is even more striking.
- b) By bringing the reader to the bargaining table and basing his arguments on the Quranic teaching that the Quranic message corresponds to the Bible, he can proceed to the actual issue at stake. He can show that the corruption of the Bible can only be proven by demonstrating that doctrines or principles have been changed or manipulated, not by issues such as the absence of single words.
- c) By doing this, he pulls out the rug from under the feet of the mechanistic theory of inspiration; basically it already stands refuted by the exposition of Quranic text variants. This alone must have been unsettling for the faith of many Muslims.
- d) Şafdar ‘Alī’s detailed answer to Muslim objections fills an important gap in Pfander’s work. He replies to some of the main arguments of Kairānwī’s writing called *Christian Inimitability*.¹ Even so, his answers only constitute a fraction of the “contradictions” and textual

¹Ibid., 145–187.

variants meticulously collected by the latter. At the same time, he does not allow himself to be forced into the thought patterns of his opponent; rather he again and again invokes his principles, on the basis of which most of the alleged evidence of corruption (*i.e.* text variants) proves to be baseless.

5. While Pfander's work leaves the impression that there is no difference between the Biblical and Islamic understanding of inspiration, Şafdar gets closer to the matter by pointing out that corruption can only be proven if doctrines have been perverted, not through insignificant text variants. He expresses this even more succinctly in his answer to the nineteenth Muslim objection. In it, he argues against a mechanistic understanding of inspiration and points out that God's revelations were not revealed word for word; rather the content was revealed to a prophet or apostle, who then expressed this in his own words.¹

Problematic aspects

1. The historical references of the author are partly unsatisfactory. This is due to his limited English language skills, so that his access to English historical works was limited. However, no doubt he used the material that was available to him very well.
2. Şafdar's refutation of the Islamic abrogation theory has already been mentioned. Despite his valuable contribution to the subject, his refutation also

¹Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 181–183.

carries with it a certain danger of legalism, which Pfander could not entirely escape either.

On the one hand, his distinction between moral and ceremonial Law is understandable given the fact that it can refute the Islamic theory of abrogation. On the other hand, it does not yet touch upon the most profound difference, namely the antithesis between the Law and the Gospel: It deals with the justification of the sinner, but not with the role of the Law for the justified sinner, and not in connection with the theory of abrogation. On the contrary, to the reader it might seem that Christians are also subject to the Law. It does not become clear that Man can not keep the Law, indeed especially the moral Law, and that the Law is therefore inherently deadly for him.

Furthermore, his exposition does not bring home the message that Christ has freed us from the demands of the Law, so that we no longer hear these “as a Law that kills, but as a comforting evangelical admonition;”¹ that we daily experience renewal through the Holy Spirit.

A precise distinction between the Law and the Gospel would have saved the reader from getting the impression that the difference between Christian and Islamic Law is merely of a qualitative or quantitative nature and not fundamental.

That this danger is not unfounded is demonstrated by the legalistic tendencies of many Christians in areas with Muslim majorities.

¹Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 520.

3. It has been pointed out that Şafdar's response to the Islamic corruption theory implicitly also attacked the Islamic understanding of inspiration. The thoughtful Muslim could imply the difference to any Christian understanding of inspiration.

Nevertheless, his implicit criticism of Islamic ideas of inspiration can not be a substitute for a clear formulation of the difference between the Muslim and Christian understanding of inspiration. His colleague 'Imād ud-Dīn did not contribute much more in this respect, and in the main, the apologists tended to have a view of inspiration which came close to the classical Islamic view.

4. Although his work focused on a number of details of Muslim apologetics, he did not seek to offer a comprehensive and detailed refutation, as he was more concerned with the fundamental issues. Yet in a review of *Balance of Truth*, he had demanded such a detailed refutation of Kairānwī's *Christian Inimitability*.¹ This wish was fulfilled later by his friend 'Imād ud-Dīn.
5. Şafdar 'Alī does not refute the Islamic objection that the prophets were sinless, although this plays an important role in Kairānwī's "evidence" that the Bible has been corrupted.² However, this omission is not as significant as it is for Pfander. Contrary to Pfander and 'Imād ud-Dīn, Şafdar does not base his demonstration of the divine origin of Biblical revelation on the authenticity of the agent of revelation.

¹'From Şafdar Ali', 220f.

²See above p. 126.

Conclusion

The attractiveness of Şafdar 'Alī's concept lies in the fact that the author uses his impressive logic within the mentality and the conceptual framework of the Muslims of the 19th century. At the same time, he succeeded in pointing out the essential differences between the Christian and Islamic faith without lapsing into bitter polemics. By and large, his thoughts have not lost their relevance today.

Chapter 9

Jesus or Muhammad: ‘Imād ud-Dīn Lāhiz

Life (c. 1822–1900)

The most important source for ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s life is his autobiography called *Wāqi‘āt-i ‘imādīya* written shortly after his conversion in 1866 (14 pages). He attached a short appendix of five pages to the second edition in 1873, which covers the period 1866–1873, and between his death and 1951 an anonymous posthumous epilogue of three pages was appended.

There are two English translations of the work. Robert Clark, the spiritual mentor of ‘Imād ud-Dīn, published a translation of the original version of 1866 in London under the title *A Mohammedan Brought to Christ; Being the Autobiography of a Native Clergyman in India* (20 pp.). The second edition of 1870 is still accessible. In 1978, E. Hahn published the translation of an Urdu version of 1951 without the epilogue under the title *The Life of the Rev. Mawlawi Dr. ‘Imad ud-Din Lahiz*

(Vaniyambadi, 17 pp.). He does not seem to have been aware of Clark's translation.¹

The following description is mainly based on the aforementioned Urdu edition reprinted in Lahore in 1951 (22 pp.). A comparison of this version with Clark's translation shows that the original version of 1866 has been reproduced unchanged. However, the translation of Clark is also very valuable, as Clark annotated the text and added a separate appendix (pp. 19f).

ʿImād ud-Dīn belonged to a noble family originating from the Sufi Qūṭb Jamāl of Hansi, who traced his ancestry back to Muṣḥzad, a Christian son of the Sassanid king Khusrāu I. His forefathers were wealthy at the time of the Mughal ruler Shah Jehān. However, the British confiscated the possessions of his grandfather in Hansi. The family then moved to Panipat and lived under the patronage of an Afghan nobleman named Ghulām Muḥammad Khān. It seems that since that time it earned its living through religious education.² ʿImād ud-Dīn was born in this town around 1822.³ He was the youngest son of four sons and one daughter.⁴

He left his family at the age of fifteen⁵ or sixteen⁶ (c. 1837/1838) and moved to Agra, where he was instructed

¹See Hahn's preface. This is another indication of the poorly researched situation of this field of Indian history.

²Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādīya*, 1f.

³According to his own testimony, ʿImād ud-Dīn was born around 1830; Lāhiz, 'Dr. Imad-ud-din's Paper for Chicago'; Presumably this is only a very rough approximation. After sifting all of the data, the approximate date 1822 seems to be more correct; see 'In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz', 912. It is hard to imagine that he would have been chosen as a Maulvi of the famous mosque in Agra at the age of 20.

⁴ʿImād ud-Dīn mentions his sister Imām an-Nisā' only once in passing. She died in 1886; Lāhiz, *Intisāb al-'imād*, 55.

⁵Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādīya*, 3.

⁶Lāhiz, 'Dr. Imad-ud-din's Paper for Chicago', 580.

by his oldest brother Karīm ad-Dīn. His brother was the first Urdu teacher¹ of Agra Government College. In Agra Government College he received lessons for five years and in 1842/1843 passed the highest grade of Persian and Arabic (“senior sanad”) with honours.² During this time of study he was assailed by doubts about Islam for the first time because of certain contacts with Christians, but he quickly banished these thoughts from his mind because of the rebukes and taunts of his Muslim environment.³ When his fellow student and friend Şafdar ‘Alī, a deeply religious Muslim, learned of his doubts, he admonished him and took him to a Maulvī called ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm. However, the latter found no answer to ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s questions; instead, he became so angry that the two friends soon grew weary of him and left him without having accomplished anything.⁴

These doubts did not initially lead Imād ud-Dīn to turn away from Islam but rather caused him to desist from delving into controversial issues and to immerse himself in the study of the Islamic sciences for a period of about eight to ten years. Şafdar ‘Alī describes him as an avid and intolerant Sunni, who first of all became a follower

¹Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādiya*, 4.

²Lāhiz, ‘Dr. Imad-ud-din’s Paper for Chicago’, 580, *Intisāb al-‘imād*, 56. He mentions four teachers to whom he is especially indebted: the Muslims Karīm ad-Din, Maulvī Abu ‘l-Ḥasan and Maulvī Muḥammad Maẓhar and the Christian R. Clark (ibid., 56f).

³Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādiya*, 4.

⁴Ibid., 4.

of the *ghair-muqallid*¹ movement, although he remained orthodox in practice.² Later, he is said to have been a fanatical Wahhabi.³ It seems that he belonged to the coterie gathered around Raḥmatullāh and Wazīr Khān.⁴ During this time he became acquainted with Sufism through Wazīr Khān. He began “to speak little, eat little, live alone, torment the body and stay awake at night.”⁵

¹“One who does not imitate” *i.e.* one who does not accept any of the four classical schools of law. The *ghair-muqallids* were also called *ahl-i ḥadīṣ*. This movement received decisive impulses from the Wahhabis in Arabia. Outstanding representatives of this school of thought were Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān (d. 1890) and Naẓīr Ḥusain (d. 1902). They rejected blindly imitating one of the four classical schools of law and believed that every Muslim had the right to draw his own conclusions regarding the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ*; he did not need to depend on the conclusions of the four law schools (Ahmad, *An Intellectual History*, 10f). Perhaps this already laid a foundation for ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s later critical examination of the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* when he began to turn towards Christianity.

²The word *mauqa‘dār*, which is reproduced here as “orthodox,” is today no longer common in the Persian or Urdu language. In this context it is probably to be understood as “orthodox in practice.”

³‘*An Urdu Review*’, 598. This may well indicate that he had an anti-British phase. It is unclear whether Ṣafdar is referring to the Arabic or Indian version of the Wahhabi movement. It would have been fairly natural for ‘Imād ud-Dīn to move on from being an Indian Wahhabi to becoming a Sufi, since the Indian movement contained a high degree of Sufi practices and thoughts.

⁴In Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 3, he recounts that he visited these every evening in 1853 and saw how they wrote *I’jāz-i ‘īswī*; cf. also *ibid.*, 197.

⁵Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādīya*, 6.

He recited the Quran throughout the nights as well as the poem *qaṣīda-i ghausīya*,¹ *cahal kāf*² and *ḥizb al-baḥr*.³ He constantly practiced *murāqaba*,⁴ *mujāhada*⁵ and the audible and silent form of *zīkr*,⁶ in seclusion he engraved the word *allāh* onto his heart. He hoped to receive a revelation from deceased Sufi saints by keeping watch at their graves and hoped to have a share in the power of living Sufis by keeping company with them. In addition to the five obligatory prayers, he performed three more (*tahajjud*, *aṣhrāq*, *cāshṭ*) and countless recited the Islamic confession (*kalima*) and eulogies of Muhammad (*durūd*).⁷

At this time (around 1853) he was commissioned by Wazīr Khān, Maulvī Muḥammad Maḥzar and other lead-

¹Presumably, 'Imād ud-Dīn means one of the numerous eulogies praising the founder of the Qādirīya Order 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī. These were composed by Sayyid Muḥammad Ghaus al-Qādirī (d. 1533), who introduced the order in India; see Haqq, *Some Aspects of the Principal Sufi Orders*, 154–159.

²*Cahal kāf* literally means “forty *kāfs*” and signifies a poem whose forty lines each begin with the letter *kāf*. Forty is a mystical number.

³*Ḥizb al-baḥr* is a poem of ash-Shāzīlī, founder of the Shāzīliya order, which in the Middle Ages became famous as a charm and incantation text. It was even thought that reciting this poem prevented the fall of Baghdād (see Macdonald, *Ḥizb*, *SEI*, 139, *Ḥizb*, *EI* 3, 512–514; Margoliouth, *Shādhīliya*, *SEI*, 508–511; Haneberg, 'Ali Abulhasan Schadelī', 13ff. esp. 25; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 23–25).

⁴*Murāqaba* literally means “attentively observe” and is used especially when meditating on certain verses of the Quran; Subhan, *Sufism*, 101f.

⁵*Mujāhada* means “effort, combat, combat.” In this case it signifies certain ascetic practices of the Sufis; *ibid.*, 97f.

⁶*Zīkr* is the constant repetition of a formula combined with certain exercises. A distinction is made between audible *zīkr* (*zīkr-i jalī*) and silent *zīkr* (*zīkr-i khafī*). (For a description of the practice of *zīkr* in India see *ibid.*, 98–101). A special form of *zīkr* is *ḥabs-i dam*, whereby one stops breathing while repeating a formula in one's heart. Ultimately, the practitioner can repeat this formula thousands of times in one breath (Subhan, *Sufism*, 100. Cf. *zīkr* in Gardet, *Dhikr*, *EI* 2, 223–227; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 13–20).

⁷Lāhiz, *Wāqi'āt-i 'imādiya*, 6f.

ing Muslims to counteract the evangelistic activity of Pfander by preaching in the royal Jāmi‘ mosque in Agra.¹ In this period of about three years,² he was apparently assailed by doubts about deliverance from his sins and the resulting assurance of salvation. Especially one Quranic verse tormented him in this regard: “There is not one of you but shall approach it (*i.e.* hell). That is a fixed ordinance of thy Lord.” (Q 19:71).³ The opinion of many Muslims that Muhammad will mediate for believers did not give him any certainty. These questions drove him to continually ramp up his ascetic practices.⁴

It seems that during this time he continued to be in touch with Christians; 20 years later, as a Christian, he still remembered that around 1855/1856 he had visited an Indian catechist, whose proclamation had moved him.⁵

This discontentment finally led him to complete renounce the world: Around 1856⁶ he put on the saffron robe of the mendicant monks and wandered as a fakir from place to place. After about 2,500 miles, he reached Karauli.⁷ There he lived for a while on the bank of the

¹Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādiya*, 7; the date has been calculated back from 1856; see ‘The Month’, (1876) 566.

²Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādiya*, 7, ‘Dr. Imad-ud-din’s Paper for Chicago’, 580.

³Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādiya*, 7.

⁴*Ibid.*, 8.

⁵‘The Month’, (1876) 566: “This catechist’s preaching touched Imad-ud-Din’s heart, and more than twenty years ago, he sought the catechist out, and talked with him here”.

⁶*Ibid.*, (1876) 566.

⁷A city located *approx.* 120 km southwest of Agra.

Colidār River¹ to perform an ascetic exercise called *ḥizb al-baḥr*.²

Şafdar 'Alī writes that at this time,³ 'Imād ud-Dīn attained the stage that in Sufi terminology is called *sukr* (drunkenness)⁴ His strenuous asceticism impressed the inhabitants of Karauli, who began to regard him as a saint. His many disciples included the treasurer and a minister of the Raja of Karauli.⁵

At the same time, 'Imād ud-Dīn constantly preached, causing many people to repent of their sins. Personally, however, he increasingly felt a revulsion for the "Muhammadan Law."⁶ As a result, he had completely stopped reciting the Quran or observing religious duties when he arrived in his home town Panipat after a further 250 miles on foot. He became more and more convinced that there is no true religion. On the one hand he had become a very sharp opponent of Christianity through Raḥmatul-lāh's works and the conflict with Pfander, but on the other

¹This seems to be the present-day Utangan River.

²Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādiya*, 8f. Apparently this exercise consisted of reciting the poem *ḥizb al-baḥr* (see above p. 202, fn. 3) and performing certain ascetic practices.

³'An Urdu Review', 598. As in the case of Şafdar 'Alī, it is no longer possible to determine which particular direction or order 'Imād ud-Dīn belonged to. This is complicated by the fact that an Indian Sufi can often belong to several orders. He can even eclectically piece together rites of various orders for his personal use. Thus *qasīda-i gḥausīya* is a poem of the Qādiriya Order, while *ḥizb al-baḥr* is a poem of the founder of the Shāzīliya Order. On the other hand, the exercises which 'Imād ud-Dīn performed while reciting the latter poem appear to be rites specifically prescribed by his spiritual guide (*pīr*).

⁴This refers to one who reaches the state of ecstasy. Mystics argue about the significance of this experience and how close this comes to an actual vision of God. *Sukr* is usually rated higher than *ṣaḥw*.

⁵Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādiya*, 10.

⁶*Ibid.*, 10.

hand he observed that the actions and thoughts of Muslim scholars, leaders and clergy were bad. As a result, for about six years he was content to live a comfortable life, do good and confess that God is one.¹

The dating of events between 1856 and 1864 is extremely difficult. ‘Imād ud-Dīn reports that he remained agnostic for about six years. On the other hand, he also writes that in 1864 he began to study the Bible seriously and that until 1860 he was a practising Muslim.² In addition to this we have the approximate statement that he wandered for 8–10 years.³ The problem can only be solved by assuming certain overlaps, as the 8–10 years can only refer to the entire time from his departure from the city of Agra until his arrival in Lahore. If we assume that he was in this disillusioned state until 1864, it would seem that c. 1858 marks the beginning of this agnostic period, although he remained a practising Muslim until about 1860.

However, he also reports that he spent two years in Fazilka⁴ and four years in Jhanak-sayāla⁵ before arriving in Lahore.⁶ If we set 1864 as the upper limit of his arrival in Lahore, he may have been in Fazilka at the latest in 1858 and in Jhanak-sayala in 1860. This all points to the fact that the time of his actual wanderings can not have lasted more than two to three years.⁷ It remains unclear what ‘Imād ud-Dīn did in the six years he lived in Fazilka and Jhanak-sayāla.

‘Imād ud-Dīn moved to Lahore in the early 1860s to live with his older brother, Karīm ad-Dīn, who had made a name for himself in the British educational system by

¹*Ibid.*, 10f.

²Lāhiz, ‘Dr. Imad-ud-din’s Paper for Chicago’, 580.

³Lāhiz, *Wāqi‘āt-i ‘imādīya*, 10.

⁴a town located *approx.* 135 km south of Lahore in present-day India.

⁵This town is not found on present-day maps.

⁶Lāhiz, *Wāqi‘āt-i ‘imādīya*, 56.

⁷The initial year of his wanderings can not have been much earlier than 1856, since ‘Imād ud-Dīn was present at the debate with Pfander in 1854.

publishing numerous books and acting as Deputy Inspector of Schools (Lahore Division).¹ 'Imād ud-Dīn received a teaching post at Lahore Normal School. His neglect of religious duties had become so obvious that the religious leaders in Lahore felt compelled to reprimand him. Nevertheless, he still held on to the veracity of Islam without, however, attaining inner peace.²

Şafdar 'Alī was baptized in 1864 at Christmas in Jabalpur.³ The news of his conversion seems to have reached northern India in the same year.⁴ This caused a wave of outrage among Muslims. Despite his agnosticism, 'Imād ud-Dīn was no exception :

I spent several days talking ill of Şafdar 'Alī and had all sorts of bad thoughts about him. At the same time, one question kept bothering me: Why did Maulvi Şafdar 'Alī, a pure and righteous man, leave the Muslim religion? Why had he become so foolish? For this reason I decided to have a written debate with him. However, I would do so in all honesty and without prejudice. With this goal in mind, I acquired both the Old and New Testament as well as *I'jāz-i 'iswī*, *Istifsār*, *Izālat al-auhām* and similar controversial books. I asked Mr. Mackintosh [the principal of the school] to kindly interpret the Gospel for me and assured him that I would examine it closely. He was delighted and began to teach me.

When I arrived at the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, I began to have doubts about the Muhammadan religion. Then I became so agitated that I began to study the Bible all day and often throughout the night. At the same time I talked to Christian clergy and Muslims about it. After a

¹'In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz', 914; Lāhiz, *Wāqi'āt-i 'imādīya*, 3; on Karīm ad-Dīn see Lāhiz, *Intisāb al-'imād*, 53–55.

²Lāhiz, *Wāqi'āt-i 'imādīya*, 11.

³'Recent Intelligence. India', 124. R. Clark wrongly mentions 1865 as the baptismal date; R. Clark, *A Mohammedan Brought to Christ*, 9, fn. 4.

⁴'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūh*, 317.

year of diligent investigations day and night, I came to the realization that the Mohammedan religion is not from God, that Muslims have succumbed to deception, and that salvation is only possible through the Christian religion.

I then informed the Muslim scholars who were my friends and disciples. Some became angry, but others listened to all my arguments in private. I asked them either to give clear answers to my arguments or to become Christians with me. They told me plainly: 'We know that the Muhammedan religion is not true, but what should we do? We dread¹ the ridicule of ignoramuses. At heart, we truly believe Christ to be true and know that Muhammad can not be a mediator for sinners. However, we do not want to give up our worldly honour (*'izzat*). Like us, do not let your conviction be publicized. Call yourself a Muslim in public and be a Christian at heart.' Others said, 'The religion of Christ is right and rational, but the dogmas of the Trinity and the divine Sonship of Christ are in our eyes paradoxical and contradictory, so we do not accept them.' Others again said, 'We have not become Christians because we do not like some external Christian practices.'²

This report indicates the course which 'Imād ud-Dīn took as he reflected on the claims of Islam and Christianity, a course which is also reflected in his own works against Islam: He took the Bible and polemical Muslim writings and examined them side by side. For him, the question of salvation and forgiveness of sins by God seems to have played a central role.³ By comparing Muslim and Christian writings, it apparently became obvious to him that Muhammad can not mediate for Man,⁴ but rather that Christ alone is the true mediator.⁵ R. Clark also appears to have played a key role in his conversion,

¹Literally "we have a worldly fear of"

²Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādīya*, 12f.

³] *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādīya*, 7f.

⁴Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādīya*, 12; cf. already 7f.

⁵Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādīya*, 12. Cf. also 'Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 317–319; 'Report of Mr. Imam-ud-din', 493–495.

although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact nature of this role. We know that he corresponded with 'Imād ud-Dīn at this time (see below p. 209). The latter later confessed: "Through him [*i.e.* Clark] I found God and came to a knowledge of God. All of the gifts of grace that God gave me were given to me through his hand. I am sincerely grateful to him."¹

Imād ud-Din was baptized in Amritsar on April 29, 1866 by R. Clark.²

We learn little about 'Imād ud-Din's wife Begum Bint Ghulām Rasūl, whom he married as a child. She resisted when she heard about his conversion, so he had to leave her for a while. Later, however, she too was baptized along with her five sons and four daughters³ and remained a faithful Christian to the end of her life.⁴

Shortly after his baptism, he was offered the lucrative post of Extra Assistant Commissioner, but he refused as he already felt called to serve in the Church. He was confirmed on December 3, 1868,⁵ appointed deacon on December 6, 1868 and ordained a priest of the Anglican

¹Lāhiz, *Intisāb al-'imād*, 57.

²Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādiya*, 1; *Register of Missionaries and Native Clergy from 1804-1904*, 321; R. Paul, *Chosen Vessels*, 261. 'Imād ud-Dīn gives the following reason for his baptism by R. Clark: "The chief reason why I wanted to be baptized by him was that he was the first missionary who had sent me the message of the Lord by letter and, besides, I thought much of his devotedness and zeal;" R. Paul, *Chosen Vessels*, 261.

³Apparently on Jan. 1, 1868; cf. Lāhiz, *Wāqī'āt-i 'imādiya*, 15, with R. Clark, *A Mohammedan Brought to Christ*, 8, fn. 3. She survived him; 'The Mission-Field. Punjab and Sindh', (Nov.) 853; 'In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz', 915.

⁴Lāhiz, *Intisāb al-'imād*, 52.

⁵R. Clark, *A Mohammedan Brought to Christ*, 19; *Register of Missionaries and Native Clergy from 1804-1904*, 321; R. Paul, *Chosen Vessels*, 262.

Church on December 15, 1872. In addition to pastoral duties, he was “examining chaplain to the Bishop of Calcutta for Hindustani candidates.” His field of ministry became Amritsar and the surrounding area. At this time we find him writing, lecturing and preaching.¹ He focused on evangelistic and literary work and was supported in this by his church, which often freed him from other duties so that he could devote his time to this.² His vigorous and earnest, yet simple manner attracted both Christians and Muslims.³ Later he became chaplain of the first Anglican Bishop of Lahore, T.V. French. In 1884, the Archbishop of Canterbury awarded him an honorary doctorate.⁴

He died in Amritsar on August 28, 1900, three months after his mentor R. Clark.⁵

It has already been pointed out that ‘Imād ud-Dīn had a special relationship with R. Clark. This missionary, who together with T.V. French is one of the Church Fathers of the Christian Church in Punjab, must have influenced ‘Imād ud-Dīn greatly.

R. Clark was the first missionary to expound the Gospel to him in a letter before his conversion.⁶ Although we do not know

¹I have the first 37 pages of a Muslim report on a debate held in Amritsar (March 1867) between him and Faqīr Muḥammad besides other Maulvis. The title of the debate is *A Religious Debate with Perfection (Mubāḥaṣa-i dīnī ma‘a takmila)*.

²Cf. ‘Records of the Mission. Punjab and Sindh’, 357; ‘Report of Rev. Imad-ud-din’, (1878) 493–495; ‘Report of the Rev. Imad-ud-din’, 630f.

³Cf. ‘Records of the Mission. Punjab and Sindh’, 357; ‘In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz’, 914f.

⁴*Register of Missionaries and Native Clergy from 1804-1904*, 321; R. Paul, *Chosen Vessels*, 262.

⁵‘In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz’, 912. He had already bequeathed his property to her in 1886 in the event of his death; Lāhiz, *Intisāb al-‘imād*, 53.

⁶See above p. 208, fn. 2.

anything specific, he must have played a key role in his conversion (see above p. 207f). 'Imād ud-Dīn calls him the fourth of his four teachers.¹ R. Clark baptized him and must have helped him when citing English works in *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, as he was not fluent in English. Clark also translated his autobiography (*Wāqī'āt-i 'Imādīya*) into English. His adopted son H.M. Clark translated 'Imād ud-Dīn's lecture for the "World's Parliament of Religions" in Chicago in 1893, which was entitled "Christian Efforts Amongst Indian Muslims."² Together with R. Clark, 'Imād ud-Dīn wrote commentaries on Matthew, John, Acts and maybe Revelation. He is said to have told a friend fourteen years before his death that it was his prayer that Clark and he would be laid to rest side by side, so that their dust might mingle and they be united in death as in life.³ R. Clark's death was a heavy blow for 'Imād ud-Dīn, and he was never the same man thereafter.⁴ It is not by chance that his last written words were an appreciation of R. Clark's life.⁵ On his deathbed he asked to be carried into Clark's study.

He himself does not mention having read Pfander's works before his conversion. E.M Wherry, on the other hand, writes, "His religious life was much influenced by the writings of Dr. Pfander."⁶ An analysis of his works seems to support this view, but it may well be that he did not read Pfander's works until after his conversion.

An acquaintance describes 'Imād ud-Dīn when he was already an old man:

¹See above p. 200, fn. 2. Şafdar 'Ali calls Clark the spiritual father of 'Imād ud-Dīn ('*An Urdu Review*', 599).

²Lāhiz, 'Dr. Imad-ud-din's Paper for Chicago', 579–586.

³'In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz', 913.

⁴*Ibid.*, 912.

⁵'Dr. Imad-ud-din on Robert Clark', 748–750.

⁶Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 15.

Though of advanced age, being about seventy-eight years old, the Maulvi Sahib¹ was hale and hearty, and systematically did an amount of work which might well be the envy of younger men. Call on him when one would, he was never to be found idle; even his rest was but change of work² . . . Full of shrewd common sense, witty and sympathetic, it was a pleasure and privilege to be with him. He had seen much and observed much, and his courteous grace and winning smile enhanced the value of things, new and old, which he brought forth from the full treasury of a great and good heart. One of the privileges of the writer's missionary apprenticeship has been to learn from him. He was frank, vigorous, and far-sighted, and possessed a degree of independence in judgment and character which would in any walk of life have made him a master-mind. His intellectual gifts were great, and all he had, and was, he unreservedly poured out for Christ. 'Had Dr. Imad-ud-Dīn done nothing else,' said Mr. Clark one day, 'but preach to this congregation as he has done for over thirty years, he would have done a great work.' Quiet, forceful, thoughtful, his sermons were wonderful, and showed deep insight into the things of God and the heart of Man. The sterling common sense which characterized his life also characterized his preaching. The writer thankfully remembers sermons he heard years ago from him. His final sermon in the mission church was a masterly treatment of India's sorrow in the light of the Word of God. Year after year there was no falling off or lack of freshness in his preaching. His holy genius seemed but to go the deeper and draw more fully from the wells of salvation.³

¹In the last century, the title "Maulvī" was used for anyone who had studied the Islamic sciences and was fluent in Persian and Arabic; it did not necessarily refer to his religion. Thus 'Imād ud-Dīn was also called a "Maulvi" after his conversion. Today, "Maulvī" is only applied to Muslim scholars.

²'In Memoriam — the Rev. Maulvi Imad-ud-din Lahiz', 912.

³*Ibid.*, 914f. Unfortunately, the name of the author is unknown. This article was originally printed in *The Punjab Mission News* (Sept. 15, 1900).

'Imād ud-Dīn's Theology

When we compare 'Imād ud-Dīn with Şafdar 'Alī, we find that the former was more prone to arrive at extreme positions. As a Muslim he was almost fanatical in his views, which he pushed to the extreme, unlike Şafdar, who went "the simple, middle way of orthodoxy."¹ As a Christian, this inclination is evident in his remarkable zeal and somewhat militant disposition. At the beginning of his Christian life he drew up a draft of what needs to be done to win Muslims for Christ with admirable conviction, and he spent the rest of his life carrying this out with the stubborn tenacity and perseverance of a man who saw himself as a spiritual gladiator in the arena of the world. This draft has been preserved in a lecture of 'Imād ud-Dīn on "Preaching to Muhammadans" held during the General Missionary Conference in Allahabad (1872–1873).²

He begins the lecture with the remark that much has been written and preached since Pfander (52). This remark shows how in his view, the actual controversy between Muslims and Christians began with Pfander.³ He goes on to cite some points he considers important in the current confrontation with Muslims:

1. a) Muslims take special exception to the divine Sonship of Christ and the Trinity. As the Bible reveals these doctrines, we must first demonstrate that it is the true Word of God, that has gradually been revealed to us. The general response of Christians is that the Quran testifies that the Bible is God's Word. However, this

¹"Urdu Review of Urdu Commentary," 598.

²Lāhiz, 'Preaching to Muhammadans', 52–55.

³Thus Lāhiz, 'The Results of the Controversy', 276.

- is not enough, for our reasoning must not be based on Muhammad's testimony, but rather only on the witness of the Church (53).
- b) We need to publish a condensed Bible commentary for Muslims, because they still misunderstand many things and are thus kept from the truth (53).
 - c) The ancient sciences and fables have destroyed the reason of the Indians. Thus it is necessary that we disseminate ancient histories, Biblical stories and stories from Church History amongst them (53).
 - d) All of this needs to be published only in the Persian script and not in Roman script, since books in the latter script are only read by people in the Church (53f).
 - e) It must be shown that Christianity does not stand in the way of the ancient customs and practices of Indian culture; that its conversion to Christianity does not bring about a departure from Indian culture (54f).
2. The Christian Church, both Indian and English, is often not a good testimony to Christ's salvation and can be a stumbling block to Muslims. Here only God can bring about a change (54).
 3. Only strong, mature Christians should be allowed to preach in the bazaar, so that no Muslim is prevented from becoming a Christian by bad reasoning or harsh words (54).
 4. We should cultivate the society of Muslims and love them, even if they do not show kindness to us (54f).

Both 'Imād ud-Dīn's works and his life prove that he adhered to this program:

For this reason 'Imād ud-Dīn's books strive to prove the reliability of the Bible and the teachings of Christianity (*cf. Tahqīq al-īmān, Hidāyat al-Muslimīn, Haqīqī 'irfān, Pandra lekcar*), expound books of the Bible (*cf. his commentaries on Matthew, Luke, John and Acts*) and present secular history (*Mukhtasir tawārīkh-i Hindūstān*)¹ as well as a history of Muhammad (*Tawārīkh-i muḥammadī*). He also wrote treatises and Biblical expositions for Muslim seekers and new believers (*Kitāb kawā'if aṣ-ṣaḥā'if, Buzurg Nāthānā'el*). He attacked not only orthodox Islam (*Tawārīkh-i mudhammadī, Ta'lim-i muḥammadī*) but also analysed and criticized old and new reform efforts of Islam, such as Sufism (*Taftīsh al-auliyā*), the Ahmadīs (*Tauzīn al-aqwāl*) and Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (*Tanqīd al-khayālāt*).

His works were always printed in Persian script. Furthermore, he cultivated contacts with Muslims, as far as this was possible for an apostate, and remained entirely Indian in his thinking, actions and clothing.

'Imād ud-Dīn is very optimistic that India will be won for Christ. As early as 1875 he expressed his opinion² that Christians had already won the debate with Muslims:

We can, I think, now say that the controversy has virtually been completed, and that too successfully; and that, through God's grace, the Christians have obtained a complete victory, while our opponents have been signally defeated, and the

¹'Imād ud-Dīn wrote his outline of Indian history as a teacher in Lahore before his baptism. The purpose of the book was to facilitate the learning of history for examinations. It is less a history book in the modern sense, but rather a chronological list of dynasties and dates. According to the current historical view, he begins with Rām Candra, Sītā and the heroic figures of the Mahabharata. Most of the book is devoted to the Muslim and English periods. The Sepoy Rebellion is also briefly mentioned (Lāhiz, *Mukhtasir tawārīkh-i hindustān*, 25). Then he briefly lists the Sikh kings. He ends the work by remarking that the last king Dalīp Singh was a Christian.

²Lāhiz, 'The Results of the Controversy', 276–280.

vanity and emptiness of their arguments have been clearly demonstrated (276).

He further characterizes the situation around 1875 as follows: On the basis of the *Quran* and the *ḥadīs*, Muslims have clearly been shown that Mohammad is not a true prophet and that his teachings are not revelations of God. Therefore, they no longer argue on the basis of the *Quran* or the *ḥadīs*, but rather on the basis of reason. Indeed, some like Sayyid Aḥmad Khān wish to give Islam a whole new face (277). Many hundreds of thousands, on the other hand, have become atheists (277f). At least Christians have succeeded in destroying faith in the false prophet (278). The confrontation with Christians and English education have confused the whole country. Thirty years ago, there were few people who were not firmly religious, but today all of North India is teeming with atheists.

Within the next one or two generations all India will pass through a vast change. Either Christianity will win the day, or the people of India will sink into depths of wickedness hitherto unknown. One or the other must be the result of the present state of things. The hope which we venture to indulge, that Christianity will soon be the religion of India, is beginning to diffuse its fragrance from the buds of promise (278).

In the controversy, there are six types of Muslims: atheists, who do not accept the authority of the *Quran* and the *ḥadīs*; those who only mock and are fond of debating in order to taunt Christians; those who quietly admit defeat but are afraid of inconvenience; those who think they have to submit to fate and therefore do not take concrete steps; those who do not think at all; and finally, those who are seriously seeking God (278f).

The condition of Hindus is very similar to that of the Mohammedans. The hearts of the people of both creeds are filled with uneasiness. The anchor of faith has dropped out of their

hands. Their thoughts do not rest on any one point. They are like persons who have lost their way in a pathless desert. Very seldom indeed do any such enter the ranks of Christ's followers or seek from Him comfort and peace (279).

Imād ud-Dīn draws six conclusions from this:

1. Christians should now be gearing up to fight all the more, as the enemy has now been shattered, even though many disagree.
2. Christians should thank God and entreat him to overcome his adversaries as he overcame them [the Christians] (279).
3. It's now a waste of time to write further controversial books:

Why tread on the body of a fallen enemy? Let us now go on and work with all our heart and mind (279f).

Now it is more appropriate to prepare a handbook that compiles all Muslim objections and their answers in order to equip Christians throughout the Islamic world.
4. Christians must pay particular attention to the new bulwarks and adapt the works of the Church Fathers to the conflict in India.
5. After this victory, we must not rest on our laurels; rather we must strive to lead others to the path of life that we ourselves have found (280).
6. Lastly, let us pray to God for those who curse us, and stretch out our hands to receive them with that same love with which Christ has loved us; never avenging their hatred and scorn, but treating them with all Christian kindness and loving forbearance. If we seek to lead them, let it only be in the deepest humility, and with tenderest sympathy and love (280).

What does 'Imād ud-Dīn mean when he talks of the victory of the Christians? Clearly he means that the sole legitimacy and veracity of their religion has clearly been demonstrated. This intellectual victory must almost inevitably lead to the defeat of the hearts of Muslims. As a result, he firmly believes that India will soon become fully Christianized.

At the end of his life, he expresses this conviction once more in a lecture read in his absence at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago (1893).¹ In this lecture, he briefly introduces himself as an example of a convert and then gives some statistics for Muslim conversions to Christianity.² He sees the reason for a lower percentage of Muslim conversions as compared to Hindus in the generally backward state of Muslims, which ultimately goes back to the teachings of Muhammad (582f).

In his opinion, it is due to God's grace alone that people in India have been lead into the Church. However, there are also three external reasons for this: (a) the religious freedom of British rule, (b) the work of many men of God and (c) the many controversies and debates between Muslims and Christians, beginning with Agra(!), which forced Muslims to rethink their position (583).

So the hidden things of various faiths have been thoroughly brought to light. It is not necessary for Christians or Mohammedans now to engage in further controversy. All about Mohammedanism that it was necessary to say has been said, and whatever Mohammedans could do against Christianity they have done to the utmost. We may now truly say the battle has been fought out in India, not only between Christianity and Mohammedanism, but also between Christianity and all that is opposed to it in all the earth.

¹Lāhiz, 'Dr. Imad-ud-din's Paper for Chicago', 579-586.

²Ibid., 579-582, 584-586.

In the beginning the learned men of Islam opposed the Christian faith according to the teachings of their own religion. When they were defeated, they took counsel with the faithless of Europe, Africa, and America, and defended themselves with the thoughts and arguments of these contemners of God. They opposed us with the atheistical arguments of men of other lands. By the grace of God the Christians of this land so effectually answered them that there too they were silenced. The books of both sides now abound in every bazaar. Whoso is a true inquirer into the things of God, will by reading them without prejudice be led to the conclusion that the faith of Christ is true; Mohammedans and others are now so utterly crushed and annihilated that they will not recover themselves until the Day of Judgment. Of course the prejudiced and blinded will say as they are minded,—let them say,—but the honest follower of truth will accept none of their statements, but will for himself prove all things (583f).

For 'Imād ud-Dīn, these words were not just propaganda; they came from his heart, which is proven by records of personal discussions. Thus, R. Clark describes a conversation with 'Imād ud-Dīn in a letter of March 5, 1886:

Imad-ud-Dīn said that when, twenty and nine [!sic] years ago, he first began to read the Bible, he felt that *that Book* would overturn all the religions of India. This feeling has more and more impressed itself upon his mind ever since. He says, 'The whole country will become Christian—it must be so: Nothing can withstand Christ, and His Spirit, and His Word.'¹

'Imād ud-Dīn's Works

In India, 'Imād ud-Dīn became the most well-known Christian apologist of the second half of the 19th century,

¹'[The Month](#)', (June 1886) 517. The mention of 29 years must be a mistake. Perhaps 'Imād ud-Dīn actually said 21 years, which was misunderstood or written in an illegible handwriting by R. Clark.

not only because of his numerous and varied works, but also because of his many public debates with Muslims.

Examination of the Faith (Taḥqīq al-īmān)

This first fruit of the author was written in the year of his conversion (1866) and was one of his most popular works.¹ The following refers to the third edition of 1878.²

After an introduction, in which the objection of Scriptural corruption is briefly treated (1–18), the author discusses the life and teachings of Muhammad in Chapter 1 (18–106) and the life and teachings of Jesus in Chapter 2 (106–125). The emphasis clearly lies on a comparison of the persons of Jesus and Muhammad.

Introduction

It has already been noted that Pfander neither accurately grasped nor accurately answered the objection of Scriptural corruption as stated in *Christian Inimitability*. Like Ṣafdar ‘Alī , ‘Imād ud-Dīn now clarifies this objection by distinguishing between the corruption of the meaning and the corruption of the text itself. His contention that the Quran only propagates the corruption of the meaning is confirmed by modern Quran research (4f) (see above pp. 18ff).

In *Balance of Truth*, Pfander had not yet responded to the new objection of *Christian Inimitableness*, according to which the corruption of the Bible appeared to be

¹See Lāhiz, *Taḥqīq al-īmān*, the titlepage. The book was popular: The first edition had a print run of 1,500 copies, the second of 5,000 copies and the third of 1000 copies (See the cover page of the 3rd edition).

²*Ibid.*

proved mainly by text variants. 'Imād ud-Dīn now finds a similar answer to Ṣafdar 'Alī. First he shows that textual variants are a feature of all books that have been handed down over the centuries including the Quran. As such these are not evidence of corruption (11–16). He goes further and tries to prove that the Quran not only has textual variants but also displays signs of violent editing and thus corruption under 'Uṣmān (8–11).

Chapter 1 & 2

However, for 'Imād ud-Dīn the question of textual corruption is not crucial. Rather, the central question is: What is the nature of the founder of the religion? Moreover, what is the nature of the revelation which he conveyed? This clearly proves which religion has distorted God's revelation and which has preserved it intact.

Interestingly, 'Imād ud-Dīn concentrates his thoughts on the point that has always played the leading role in classical anti-Islamic apologetics, namely a comparison of the persons and teachings of Jesus and Muhammad.

The four criteria used here are reminiscent of Pfander's four marks of a true prophet:

Pfander	‘Imād ud-Dīn
The consistency of his teachings with previous revelations	The gift of miracles
The gift of prophecy and miracles	The gift of prophecy
The conformance of his life with God’s commandments	Prophesied by earlier prophets
No use of force in spreading his message (see above p. 86)	The moral and spiritual excellence of his teachings (21)

It must be remembered that Pfander wanted to set up criteria that would be valid for all prophets; since Muslims recognized both Jesus and Muhammad as prophets, Pfander tried to prove that Muhammad was not a true prophet by setting up marks of a true prophet supposedly universally recognizable to reason. Imād ud-Dīn, on the other hand, is content with a list of four criteria that have been claimed by both sides for the founder of their religion. Of course, the comparison of Jesus with Muhammad is also natural for the emphatically christocentric view of the Protestant ‘Imād ud-Dīn.

His first two marks are consistent with Pfander’s second mark of a true prophet. However, they are too common in Christian apologetics to prove a dependency on Pfander.¹ The third mark of ‘Imad ud-Dīn only occurs in

¹These two marks are also listed by Horne in his Introduction as marks of a true revelation. In *Guidance*, ‘Imad ud-Dīn expressly mentions his use of this work (Horne, *An Introduction*, I, 248,250ff,339ff). It is quite possible that R. Clark was involved in this process.

a different context in Pfander,¹ since it can not be a universal mark of a true prophetic for Pfander. The fourth mark of 'Imād ud-Dīn also only bears a superficial resemblance to Pfander's third mark of a true prophet, since 'Imād ud-Dīn does not derive the nature of the doctrine from the nature of God as Pfander does; he merely categorically asserts that a revealed doctrine must be good. Thus it can not be proven that he is dependent on Pfander for these marks of a true prophet.

Needless to say, in 'Imād ud-Dīn's account Muhammad performs very poorly compared to Jesus. On the one hand, the author must subject the *ḥadīṣ* to a historical critique to prove that Muhammad is neither a miracle worker (21–39) nor a prophet (39–44). On the other hand, he is compelled to prove that the passages in the Bible allegedly prophesying Muhammad are the result of an false exegesis (44–78). In discussing the teachings of Muhammad, he takes up old Christian objections such as polygamy, the Holy War and the carnal nature of many Islamic teachings and views (78–106).

The comparison between Jesus' and Muhammad's character plays a central role in 'Imād ud-Dīn and finds its strongest expression in his writing *Guidance of Muslims*. For this reason, a theological evaluation of this typically 'Imādi thought will be made in connection with the latter work.

Guidance of Muslims (Hidāyat al-Muslimīn)

The second work of 'Imād ud-Dīn, the *Guidance of Muslims*, is the fullest development of 'Imād's apologetics. It is directed mainly against the objections of Raḥmatullah

¹Cf. Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 39–42,78–84.

Kairānwī and Wazīr Khān found in *Christian Inimitability*. On the sideline it also examines a book by the Imam of Delhi (*Punishment of the Erring*) and a writing by Maulvī Sayyid Muḥammad (*Sanctity of the Quran*). Since ‘Imād ud-Dīn witnessed both the creation of the first-mentioned book and the Agra debate, his answer is also of historical interest. The first edition appeared in 1868, two years after his conversion. The following analysis is based on the third, revised edition of 1899.¹

Following a preface (1–6), the author begins by discussing the need for revelation (6–28)² in a first chapter similar to Pfander. However, he then goes on to discuss the marks of a true prophet (15–21), the forms and benefits of a revelation (21–23) and the traits of the three great monotheistic religions (23–28). Chapters 2–6 answer all of the objections raised by Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī in *Christian Inimitability* (28–199). Chapters 7–8 refute the veracity of Muhammad, the Quran and Islam (199–380). Originally, Chapter 8 was followed by a final chapter about Jesus and his teachings. This was omitted in the third edition; in its stead, a short concluding word about the Trinity (380–386) and a brief, insignificant appendix dealing with *Punishment of the Erring* and *Sanctity of the Quran* (386–390) follow.³

Pfander’s influence is noticeable in ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s introductory postulate that divine revelation is necessary

¹In the foreword, 1898 is mentioned as the publishing date of the third edition; Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimin*.

²Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, ivf.

³These works no longer seem to be available. An examination of the passages in which ‘Imād ud-Dīn refers to them shows that no new arguments were put forward by them. For this reason they will not be discussed. ‘Imād ud-Dīn himself treats these books only cursorily.

for certain issues inaccessible to reason.¹ This influence is also recognizable in the author's marks of a true prophet.²

The strong focus on the issue of corruption in contemporary Christian-Islamic disputes is reflected in *Guidance*: In Chapter 1, full 171 pages (about half of the book!) are devoted to defending the reliability of the Bible against Kairānwī's objections (Chs. 2–6). Another 181 pages attack the veracity of Muhammad, the Quran and Islam (Chs. 7–8).

In the first edition, the polemical part was followed by the equivalent of Pfander's second part, namely a treatment of Christian teachings. In the third edition, this was deleted. By deleting this more constructive part of the book, only the more negative part of the book remained, namely a defence of Christianity and polemics against Islam. The original structure of the book was more in line with Wherry's suggestion concerning Pfander's *Balance of Truth* that the negative polemics against Islam should be followed by a positive exposition of the Gospel.³

New Developments

The Marks of a True Prophet Based on Suprarationalism
 'Imād ud-Dīn realized that Muslims would only be open to the claims of the Bible once the validity of the Bible had been convincingly demonstrated. The question was, how could this validity be determined? What standard could be used for this?

In his opinion, Muslims accepted only the elements of revelation that could be understood by reason; they used

¹Cf. 1.1 with Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, ivf.

²Cf. 1.2 with *ibid.*, 77.

³Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 4.

reason to judge revelation.¹ Thus an answer had to be found that could explain seemingly irrational things mentioned in the Bible. For this reason, ‘Imād ud-Dīn began with the supranaturalist postulate of Pfander that there are things that reason can not comprehend but that are not opposed to reason. Like Pfander, there is a strong rationalistic strain in his work.²

‘Imād ud-Dīn developed this postulate more than Pfander by enumerating five things which are inaccessible to Man without revelation: the origin and goal of Man, the proper worship of the Creator, the nature of God and proper human behaviour in this world (8–13). These criteria were not derived from Pfander; they are taken from an English anti-Deistic treatise called *Introduction* by T.H. Horne.³ Now Horne denied that God’s nature can be recognized by reason. This brought ‘Imād ud-Dīn into conflict with Pfander’s postulate of the rational discernibility of God’s nature and the marks of a true revelation based on this. He was forced to drop these marks and find another standard that could demonstrate the veracity of Christianity and the falseness of Islam. In view of the comparison between the person of Jesus and Muhammad in his first book and his acquaintance with Pfander’s *Balance*, it made sense to develop this standard exclusively from Pfander’s postulate that a true prophet can be recognized by reason. Thus his own four marks of a true revelation coincide with the marks of a true prophet (see below pp. 423f):

1. The gift of miracles

¹Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 25. The following pagenumbers refer to this.

²Thus *e.g.* in the fourth mark of a true revelation (it must be recognized by reason as good); see below p. 424.

³See Horne, *An Introduction*, I, 545ff, esp. 556f.

2. The gift of prophecy
3. The impeccability of his life and teachings
4. The moral and spiritual excellence of his teaching, which reason is capable of recognizing (15–22)

1, 2 and 4 correspond to the marks which he had already established in *Examination* (see above p. 220), while the third mark of *Examination* (prophesied by earlier prophets) had to be omitted in this context. In its place, he set a criterion that was already implicitly used in *Examination* when discussing the person of Muhammad.¹

The argument that prophets must have the gift of miracles was slightly modified by him to include prophets like John the Baptist: Although these had performed no miracles, they were recognized by other prophets (16).

The Refutation of the Corruption Theory Like Şafdar, he distinguishes between *taḥrīf-i ma' nawī* and *taḥrīf-i lafẓī*. He differentiates clearly between corruption of the text and scribal errors: The scribal errors in the Bible which become apparent through textual variants are not yet a sign of the corruption of the Scriptures. Moreover, in the Quran both text variants as well as deliberate manipulations are evident (26f). In this manner, the author seeks to refute the objection of textual corruption and force the Muslim reader to a common ground and to a fair comparison of the two revelations.

The Refutation of the Abrogation Theory Like Pfander, 'Imād ud-Dīn's relatively short answer regarding the theory of abrogation is based on a similar rejection of the possibility that certain commandments can abrogate others. He also rejects cases of abrogation of the Old Testament commandments through New Testament command-

¹E.g. Lāhiz, *Taḥqīq al-īmān*, 81–101.

ments. However, his argument is somewhat different from Pfander's argumentation:

First, he points to the controversy regarding the number of Qurānic verses that have allegedly been abrogated. This proves that Muslims themselves are not in agreement on the application of the theory of abrogation (330f). Second, he writes that in Bible passages supposedly referring to *naskh*, the word *takmīl* (fulfilment) has actually be used. In a thing that is perfect (*mukammal*), there can be two forms, reality and its shadow. Nevertheless, both things are perfect (*mukammal*) (331).¹ Jesus' word that the Law has been fulfilled (*pūrā honā*) or perfected (*takmīl*) needs to be understood in this sense (332).

Answering the Question of Authorship In his response to Kairānwī's objections, he adheres to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the traditional authorship of the remaining Scriptures and the conventional view that Ezra collected and revised the books of the Old Testament, in some instances added explanatory remarks and put Moses in the third person. Josephus is cited as a witness for the latter view (72–78). According to 'Imād ud-Dīn, the church of the first three centuries testifies to the reliability of the New Testament.

In all of this he reflects the conservative theology of Horne.

English and Islamic Sources 'Imād ud-Dīn extensively uses Horne's *Introduction* and occasionally points out errors made by Kairānwī in quoting English works (e.g. 46). For example, he criticizes the use of the *Catholic Herald* as untrustworthy, as Kairānwī does not mention the name

¹Cf. Heb 10:1; 8:5 etc.

of any author (48), and points out that Kairānwī does not provide any page numbers when he gives false information. Thus he bases his claim that the Alogians (*alobjyan*) rejected the Johannine writings on Horne, although according to Horne these never existed (49). In a similar vein, Kairānwī writes that M. Bretschneider (Brshynd) also rejected the Johannine writings, whereas according to Horne's statement he had in fact withdrawn this opinion. 'Imād ud-Dīn remembers well how Wazīr Khān combed through Horne's book looking for suitable material for *Christian Inimitability*. In the case of Bretschneider, he copied half of the statement about Bretschneider from Horne and omitted the other half (49).¹

Presumably 'Imād ud-Dīn also makes use of other Western expositors such as Henry-Scott² to account for scribal errors or apparent contradictions in the Bible, but the chief source seems to be Horne. As has been shown, his *Introduction* runs through the introduction of *Guidance* like a common thread. It was natural for 'Imād ud-Dīn to resort to the same conservative theologians whose statements had been misused by Kairānwī and Wazīr Khān as witnesses of the corruption of the Bible. As an added advantage, their arguments against Deism could just as well be used in dealing with Islam.

We have seen that R. Clark must have played an important role as a teacher of 'Imād ud-Dīn. It must have been Clark who helped 'Imād ud-Dīn to access the English sources, as the latter was not fluent in English.

¹Horne, *An Introduction*, IV, 330. This statement is not found the second edition. Since Bretschneider's work *Probabilia de evangelii et epistolarum johannis apostoli. Indole, et origine*, was published in 1820, it may well be that Horne added Bretschneider's correction at the earliest in the third edition. I have not been able to investigate this.

²Cf. his treatment of the different genealogies of Jesus; Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 182.

Assessment: Jesus or Muhammad

Positive Aspects

1. The value of this treatise lies above all in the detailed answer to objections raised in *Christian Inimicability*. Şafdar 'Alī had already pointed out the need for such a treatise. In his opinion, while *Balance* had given general answers, it had not provided detailed answers to the latest objections or opinions of “atheists, heretics and infidels.”¹

Şafdar's own writing had fulfilled part of this requirement,² but his emphasis (which was also his strength) lay on clarifying the terms and laying a theological foundation. *Guidance* is the first treatise to refute all objections point-by-point.

2. In his explanation of the doctrine of inspiration, 'Imād ud-Dīn like Şafdar 'Alī before him points out that the Islamic mechanistic understanding of inspiration is very different from the Christian concept of inspiration. He expressly points out that the prophets of the Bible were only given the content of divine revelation, which they then conveyed in their own words and idioms (1.3).
3. In developing the impeccability of the prophets (3rd mark), he seems to be the first apologete to clearly state that in contrast to Islamic beliefs, the Bible does not assume that prophets must be sinless; on the contrary, they were sinful like all men, although

¹From Şafdar Ali', 220f.

²Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 145–147.

God transformed them for the better. Of all men, only Jesus Christ was sinless.¹

This difference had not clearly been brought to light by Pfander or Şafdar 'Alī. Pfander explicitly only expressed the sinlessness of the content of the prophetic message in the Bible; he did not answer the classical Islamic objection that the prophets of the Bible could not have been true prophets because of their sinful nature.² This neglect was dangerous because of the emphasis Pfander placed on prophetic ministry as a seal of true revelation. Şafdar had avoided this category and thus avoided a discussion of this aspect altogether. Thus, this omission was not as serious in his book.

In contrast, because the whole argument of 'Imād ud-Dīn depends on the marks of a true prophet, clarification of this point is essential. It is also necessary for the refutation of *Christian Inimitability*, since Kairānwī denounced the sinfulness of the prophets of the Bible as evidence of Scriptural corruption.

4. Like Şafdar, 'Imād ud-Dīn's answer to the Islamic theory of corruption is more differentiated and more precise. In contrast to the former, his arguments adopt a clearly polemical tone. Despite this, his efforts to lead the Islamic reader to a common ground is noteworthy.

However, the main accomplishment of his answer lies in the detailed refutation of the accusation of textual corruption found in *Christian Inimitability*.

¹Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 21ff.

²Pfander, *The Mizan ul Haqq*, 29.

5. His *polemics* against Muhammad, the Quran and Islam (Chs. 4–7) is much more detailed than Pfander's. 'Imād ud-Dīn's strength in polemics is his exclusive and very extensive use of orthodox Islamic sources, with which he very carefully provides evidence for all of his objections to Islam. Unlike Pfander, who only attacks the doctrines contained in the Quran, in Chapter 7 the author also refers to Islamic teachings that arose in the post-Quranic period (e.g. the five pillars). 'Imād ud-Dīn's intention in doing so is to demonstrate that they do not conform to the demands of reason or the teachings of earlier prophets ('*aql-o-naql*), i.e. of the Bible.¹ He also goes into much detail to disprove the doctrine of the purity of the Arabic of the Quran.

One notices here that as a former Maulvī, he has his finger on the pulse of Indian Islam far more than Pfander. Thus he can make his attacks much more precise and painful. At the same time, he has also incorporated Western elements such as the criticism of the *ḥadīs* found by Pfander and the Western Orientalists. It must be remembered that like Ṣafdar 'Alī, he must have acquired some Western ideas when studying at Agra College.

6. Like Ṣafdar, he grasps the issues involved in the Islamic theory of abrogation more precisely than Pfander. His indication that Muslims themselves disagree on the number of abrogated verses demonstrates this fact.

His rejection of the possibility of the Law being abrogated at first seems to make sense, as it explains Matthew 4:17–20 (Jesus as the fulfilment

¹Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 233.

of the Law) in an intelligible manner. Moreover, his distinction between reality and shadow recalls Hebrews (*cf.* 10:1; 8:5 *etc.*).

Problematic Aspects

1. Unlike Pfander, in 'Imād ud-Dīn's eyes the veracity of a revelation is entirely dependent on the veracity of the prophet, which in the case of Jesus and Muhammad is the veracity of the founder of the religion. By doing so, however, he clearly loses theological depth. Whilst Pfander develops the nature of Christianity out of the nature of God and shows how the teachings of Christianity are in harmony with the nature of God, 'Imād ud-Dīn's arguments confine themselves entirely to a comparison between the character and teachings of Jesus and Muhammad. The relationship between God and Christianity and the question of what the marks of a true revelation might be are not reflected in his arguments. Presumably, an essential difference to Pfander lies in the fact that 'Imād ud-Dīn is not so much interested in setting stringent rules as arguing in accordance with his practical needs. He is not so much a man of profound reflection as a man of action, who pragmatically seeks to convince the man on the street as quickly and easily as possible.
2. It has already been seen that 'Imād ud-Dīn rejects the postulate that God can be discerned by reason. Subsequently, he ignores the marks of a true revelation mentioned by Pfander and instead makes the veracity of true revelation entirely dependent on the veracity of the agent of the revelation. As a result, he avoids the criticism already levelled

against Pfander's assumptions regarding the marks of a true revelation (see above pp. 95f). Unfortunately, this does not eliminate the fundamental problem. He merely shifts it. The question remains: On what does he base his marks of a true prophet? In listing these, he does not cite the Bible or the Quran; he simply assumes that they are self-evident to reason.

3. Besides this epistemological problem another question arises, which has already been touched upon in the context of Pfander's works: The danger of exclusively using the marks of a true prophet to define Jesus lies in the fact that they tend to confine Jesus' person and function to his prophethood. Subsequently, we can see a latent tension at work between statements pertaining to Jesus' prophethood and others relating to his uniqueness. This tension is neither pinpointed nor solved by either author, although it is imperative that every statement of the prophetic nature of Jesus must always clearly show that his person is not confined to this aspect. In 'Imād ud-Dīn's works, this danger is more clearly evident than in Pfander's book, since he bases his whole assessment of the two agents of revelation on the marks of a true prophet. In *Guidance* this is no longer so clear, as the second part describing the person of Jesus has been deleted. However, in *Examination* the problem becomes immediately apparent: Here Jesus and Muhammad are compared according to one standard, which in itself does not yet prove the divinity and uniqueness of Jesus. Thus, the logical connection between this standard and Jesus' uniqueness does not come to light.

4. The exclusive use of Pfander's second set of ideas, namely the marks of a true prophet, also has another the problematic aspect; it can not avoid polemics against Muhammad and thus offends the Muslim reader before he can be confronted with the actual Biblical message. Perhaps it is a consequence of this methodology that 'Imād ud-Dīn unfortunately does not spend much time expounding this positive Biblical message, which is after all "good news." Only rarely does he deal with fundamental theological issues.
5. In his answer to the Islamic abrogation theory, 'Imād ud-Dīn's position is similar to that of Pfander. Like him, he rejects the possibility of Old Testament commandments being abrogated by New Testament commands as well as the possibility of Biblical commandments being abrogated by Quranic injunctions. As a result, like Pfander he is unable to explain why as a Christian, he no longer considers many of the Old Testament commandments to be binding. After all, the Apostolic Decree (Act 15) seems to be a clear example of abrogation.
6. Ultimately, a deeper problem lies at the heart of Pfander's and 'Imād ud-Dīn's line of argument. An undifferentiated rejection of the abrogation theory could not count on being accepted by Muslims; because of their own legal concepts, they could not understand why Christians did not admit that there were cases of abrogation in the Old and New Testament. Answers that distinguished between the essence and shadow of the Law were neither completely satisfying from a Biblical perspective nor plausible to the Muslim.

Here the answer should have gone deeper. The distinction made by the Reformation between the Law and the Gospel would have helped them to avoid getting pulled into the strong current of Islamic thought regarding the Law. This would have aided them in filling the word “Law” with a Christian connotation and in demonstrating that the Gospel liberates us from the Law. By doing so, they would have disproved the abrogation theory by expressing the deeper issues at stake.¹

Conclusion

The pattern set in *Guidance* and *Examination of the Faith* are applied without any modification in his remaining writings. The juxtaposition of the persons of Jesus and Muhammad forms the centrepiece of his apologetics. Unfortunately, as a rule the fundamental theological issues discussed by Şafdar ‘Alī are scarcely touched upon. Depending on the topic, here and there an aspect is developed further. However no further development of the actual approach is evident anywhere. This will briefly be discussed with reference to the following works.

Life of Muhammad (Tawārīkh-i muḥammadī) & *Teachings of Islam (Ta‘līm-i muḥammadī)*

‘Imād ud-Dīn’s books on the life of Muhammad and Islamic teachings² together constitute one work and can be regarded as an extension of Chapter 7 & 8 of *Guidance*.³

¹Cf. p. 327.

²*Tawārīkh-i muḥammadī* was published in 1878 and *Ta‘līm-i muḥammadī* in 1880 in Amritsar.

³In the introduction to *Hidāyat*, the author promises to deal with the life of Muhammad and the teachings of Islam.

Life of Muhammad (Tawārīkh-i muḥammadī) is a biography of the founder of Islam, while *Teachings of Islam (Ta'lim-i muḥammadī)* discusses Islamic teachings and commandments. 'Imād ud-Dīn mentions three reasons for these two writings: a) He wishes to show the authors of *Christian Inimitability*, *Izālat al-auhām* and *Istifsār* how slippery the floor is on which they have set their feet;¹ b) to those who can not read Persian Islamic history books or who have only focused on Islamic Law, he would like to demonstrate the true state of Muhammad and Islam (4–6); c) he would like to provide an aid for earnest Muslim seekers, so that they can make a true comparison between the Muslim and Christian religions. At the same time he wants to prevent Christians from converting to Islam due to ignorance (6f). In other words, the author believes that it is necessary to enlighten Muslims and show them what Muhammad and Islam are all about. Then they would become Christians automatically. Second, he wants to help Christians to understand the difference between their faith and the faith of Islam.

The main sources are two works entitled *Rauzat al-aḥbāb* and *Madārij an-nubūwat*.² The author writes that he has used these because they are readily available. Anyone who doubts the author's allegations can consult these

¹Lāhiz, *Tawārīkh-i muḥammadī*, 1–4. The following page numbers refer to this treatise. Regarding *Izālat al-auhām* and *Istifsār* see below p. 414, fn. 1.

²Jamāl al-Ḥusainī wrote *Rauzat al-aḥbāb fī siyar an-nabī wa 'l-āl wa 'l-aṣḥāb* in 1494/1495. This treatise describes the life of Muhammad, his family and his companions. Al-Ḥusainī was a famous Islamic scholar at the court of Sulṭān Ḥusain in the Herat and died in 1520 (Storey, *Persian Literature*, I,1,189–191).

The author of *Madārij an-nubūwa*, a detailed biography of the prophet Muhammad, was an Indian named 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī (1551–1642), who lived in Delhi and gained a high profile as a saint, traditionalist and author of many works (ibid., 194f)

books himself. Moreover, they are written in a simple style (7–9). ‘Imād ud-Dīn thus explicitly uses orthodox Islamic sources to prove his point.¹

This methodology, which seeks to discover the truth by comparing the two religions, seems to be rooted in the manner in which ‘Imād ud-Dīn himself turned to the Christian faith. He himself recounts how he armed himself with a Bible and all anti-Christian Muslim works such as *Christian Inimitability* at the time of his first real examination of Christianity. He even asked Mackintosh, the principal of Lahore Normal School, to introduce him to the teachings of Christianity. After comparing everything, he came to the conclusion that “Islam is not from God.”² This, of course, was basically the method used by Pfander as well. ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s life demonstrates that even long before his conversion, he was a critical spirit who was not afraid to test everything in order to arrive at the truth.

Life of Muhammad (Tawārīkh-i muḥammadī)

E.M Wherry has thoroughly analysed ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s biography of Muhammad.³ Wherry’s criticism that it can not stand in the light of historical-critical research⁴ misses the whole point of the book, which explicitly wishes to expose Islam to Muslims through their own orthodox sources. Moreover, the average Muslim would neither have understood nor accepted a historical-critical point of view. On the contrary, the strength of the work

¹In a sense this is comparable to the manner in which Raḥmatullāh and Wazīr Khān used the Bible and Christian commentaries to attack the veracity of the Bible (see above pp. 118–124).

²Lāhiz, *Wāqī‘āt-i ‘imādīya*, 12.

³Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 23–29.

⁴*Ibid.*, 29.

lies in very the fact that it relies on orthodox sources. Rather, the weakness of the work is the strong polemical tone evident in his description of Muhammad. This was necessarily a stumbling block for Muslim readers.¹ In contrast, *Teachings of Islam* is more neutral due to the subject of the book.

Teachings of Islam (Ta'lim-i muḥammadī)

According to 'Imād ud-Dīn, two main marks of a true prophet are his good moral conduct and his good teachings.² In *Teachings of Islam* he deals with the second mark.

He first distinguishes between teachings that arise through ignorance (*jahlī*), teachings caused by reason (*'aqlī*), carnal/worldly teachings (*naḥsānī*) and spiritual teachings (*rūḥānī*). In his opinion only the latter fulfil Man's deepest longings (3–6). In the following he seeks to show that these spiritual teachings are missing in Islam.

The book is divided into four chapters according to the traditional subjects: tenets of Islam, worship forms (*'ibādāt*), customs/laws (*mu'āmalāt*) and stories (*qiṣaṣ*).

The closing remarks of the book summarize 'Imād ud-Dīn's position (350–359): The Muslim religion is dead because it has a form but no life; it is like a doll made with great care but still lifeless (350f). In contrast to this, Christianity is not man-made (351).

The claim that Muhammad received his teachings from God needs to be proven. On the contrary, his deeds and teachings prove that this religion was caused by ignorance (*nā-wāqifi*), worldly (*naḥsānī*) cravings and human

¹ Cf. Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 29.

² Lāhiz, *Ta'lim-i muḥammadī*, 3.

reason (*'aql*) (351). God has given Man the ability to establish for himself what doctrines are only worldly and only derive from the human mind; for every doctrine reveals its origin itself.

The histories of Muhammad show that he was a capable politician and ruler, comparable to Ranjit Singh. However, God did not press his seal on Muhammad's teachings in the form of miracles, nor did he manifest his wisdom in Muhammad's teachings. Therefore these teachings can not quench the thirst of the human spirit (352).

In the first chapter, some basic doctrines are explained as stemming from the ignorance of their authors, while other doctrines are products of the human mind or taken from the Bible (352). According to 'Imād ud-Dīn, the inferior forms of worship and customs of Islam discussed in the second and third chapters correspond to the inferior basic doctrines dealt with in the first chapter, just as a mud (*kaccā*) house is only be built on a mud (*kaccā*) foundation (353). The fourth chapter demonstrates how little Muhammad actually knew about the Biblical stories and how many mistakes he made (353f).

According to 'Imād ud-Dīn, former Muslims did not pay attention to these discrepancies, because they focused only on the Quran and the stories agreeable to them. However, now the light of the Word of God has banished the darkness of the whole world, so that the light of Islam has also been extinguished (354f). For this reason, many Muslims have put aside the old commentaries and Muslim works and now try to reinterpret the Quran according to the demands of reason (355). They have come to the point where they hate their religion because of the light of Christianity. Nevertheless, they are not ready to repent and turn away from the ways of their fathers. If

they persist in their ways, they will never reach the desired goal (355f). In contrast, as the Word of God the Bible has always said the same thing and taught things worthy of the nature of God (356–359).

Thus we see that in this book, 'Imād ud-Dīn continues the pattern developed in *Guidance*. Just as the person of Muhammad was analysed by comparing him to Jesus in *Muhammad's Life*, in this book the teachings of Muhammad and Islam are analysed by comparing them with the teaching of Christ. Admittedly, he does this in a somewhat simplistic and therefore problematic manner. Take as an example his attempt to relate the Old Testament commandments to the Gospel and the commandments of Islam in such a way that it satisfactorily answers the Islamic objection that the Quranic commandments have abrogated the Biblical commandments:

'Imād ud-Dīn uses a typological interpretation of the Old Testament commandments and postulates that the Old Testament commandments are types (*namūna*) of the New Testament commandments;¹ the Gospel is spiritual (*rūḥānī*), whereas the Torah and Islamic Law are carnal (*jismānī*) (72f). Compared with Şafdar 'Alī's treatment of the subject matter, this solution seems undifferentiated and does not do justice to the Biblical testimony, which certainly recognizes the Old Testament Law as having a positive function. Above all, equating Old Testament with Quranic commandments is highly problematic.

Further Works

Like *Examination of Faith, True Knowledge (Ḥaḳīqī 'irfān)* has a more popular character. It was written in 1869.

¹Cf. Lāhiz, *Taḥqīq al-imān*, 123–125.

The marks of a true prophet established by the author in *Guidance* are also used in this work.¹ As he focuses on a positive exposition of the Christian faith, he treats Islam only cursorily. Thus this book is not as polemical as many of his works. Otherwise the book contains nothing that would qualify it as outstanding or show a shift in the position developed in *Guidance*.

The *Translation of the Quran* made at the end of his life was basically also part of the apologetic work of ‘Imād ud-Dīn, since he was convinced that if Muslims understood the teachings of the Quran and Muhammad they would automatically turn away from Islam.

‘Imād ud-Dīn devoted his attention not only to the orthodox mainstream, but also to the reformist wing—Sufism and the Aḥmadiya movement. The works that are not anti-Muslim apologetics can not be taken into account in this study:²

Against the Reformers

‘Imād ud-Dīn also wrote treatises against the two reformist Muslims Cirāgh ‘Alī and Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.

¹Cf. Lāhiz, *Ḥaḡiqī ‘irfān*, Chs. 4–12.

²His introduction to the Bible (Lāhiz, *Kitāb Kawā’if aṣ-ṣawā’if*) needs to be mentioned in passing. It was designed as an introduction to the Biblical books specifically for seeking Muslims (ibid., 1). Another book of interest is *Mirror of Man* (Lāhiz, *Mir’āt al-insān*), in which the author states that each person has a body (*jism*), soul (*jān*) and spirit (*rūḥ*). He calls the latter “speaking spirit/intelligent mind” (*nafs-i nāṭiqā*) as well (ibid., 26f). The soul and the spirit differ in that the soul is limited to the physical man, whereas the spirit exists outside of these limits and is immortal (ibid., 29). In other words, the soul actually belongs to the realm of the body. The human spirit is dead in its sinfulness until it receives life through the perfect Man Jesus and puts on the new Man.

Cirāgh 'Alī The reformer Cirāgh 'Alī¹ is evidence for the fact that there were cross-links between the reformer movements and Christians. He wrote a book in Awadh in reply to 'Imād ud-Dīn's *Life of Muhammad*, which he called *Ta'liqāt (Explanatory Remarks/Annotations)*.

His main objection was that 'Imād ud-Dīn relied entirely on the two books *Rauzat al-aḥbāb* and *Madārij an-nubūwat* without considering whether the *ḥadīs* used in these writings are reliable. In this assertion the reformist character of Cirāgh 'Alī is evident: He tries to discredit 'Imād ud-Dīn's allegations by discrediting the underlying *ḥadīs* as untrustworthy. Cirāgh had already made a name for himself as a sharp critic of the authenticity of the prophetic traditions.² 'Imād ud-Dīn's answer, the *Annihilation of Explanatory Notes*,³ is a repetition of his position as stated in *Tawārikh*: These sources and *ḥadīs* are recognized as trustworthy by orthodox Muslims including Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī (17). Moreover, these are found in all other trustworthy Muslim writings (22f). Even if one were to limit oneself to a Quranic account of history, it would contain many unpleasant things for Muslims (23f). The sections 1–10 move in this framework. The eleventh section answers the common Islamic objection that Jesus did not write down his message himself and thus did not preserve his true message. Sections 12–16 refute the claim that Muhammad is a true prophet. No new thought is expressed in these sections.

¹Cirāgh 'Alī was a close friend of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and later became an administrative officer in Hyderabad state. As a reformer, he distinguished himself by radically criticizing the *ḥadīs* (Ahmad, *An Intellectual History*, 57ff).

²Schimmel, *Der Islam im indischen Subkontinent*, 108,113.

³Lāhiz, *Taqlī'āt-i ta'liqāt*.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān It is of interest that in the early fifties, Rām Candra gave Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān Pfander's works, W. Muir's Church History and various editions of the Bible, another indication that reformist Muslims were influenced by Christians.¹

‘Imād ud-Dīn’s four-volume refutation of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān entitled *Investigation of Thoughts (Tanqīd al-khayālāt)* is much more weighty than his refutation of the objections of Cirāgh ‘Alī.²

Wherry has described the content of this work in detail.³ For this reason, only a few thoughts on the structure and thought of ‘Imād ud-Dīn shall be passed on here.

‘Imād ud-Dīn mainly considers Sayyid Aḥmad’s magazine *Tahzīb al-akhlāq* and his commentary of the Quran (*Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*) (1880–1895).

The respective topics of the four volumes are:

1. Is the human intellect the sole guide of Man?
2. Old and new Islam
3. The office of the prophet and the messenger
4. Revelation (*waḥī*) and inspiration (*ilhām*)

Sayyid’s position is marked by a pronounced rationalism. He calls Islam the most rational religion. As a reformist and self-proclaimed *mujtahid*,⁴ he no longer accepts the traditional views of Islam, but rather wishes to return to “true” Islam. This gives rise to the areas of attack for ‘Imād ud-Dīn: He must point out the inadequacy of reason and at the same time prove that this so-called “original Islam” represents a retrojection of Sayyid Aḥmad’s wishful thinking. Thus ‘Imād takes up his concept

¹Powell, ‘Muslim Reaction’, 152.

²Lāhiz, *Tanqīd al-khayālāt*.

³Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 36–57.

⁴A *mujtahid* is one who himself draws conclusions from the statements of the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* without accepting the decisions of the 4 schools of law as an authority.

of the need for suprarational revelation in order to point out that reason can not grasp everything itself.¹ Second, he attempts to show that Sayyid Aḥmad's rejection of orthodox Islamic traditions is heretical, and that his position is based on a combination of the rationalism of Brahma Samāj and a secular science that has always been against true religion.²

Against Sufism

In the phase immediately before his turn to Christ, 'Imād ud-Dīn had immersed himself in Sufi practices. As an old man he now wrote a treatise against the teachings of Sufism entitled *Investigation of the Saints (Taftīsh al-auliya*.³

In the foreword, he writes: When Sufi-minded Muslims are told that Islam is not from God, they laugh and ask, "If this is the case, why do some of the Sufis reach God?" (*khudā-rasīda*) (2f). When they heard of Jesus' miracles, they list the miracles of their Sufis. Such people do not understand anything about Pirs or messengers, nor do they comprehend the nature of miracles (3). This treatise wishes be the first of its kind to call such people to God and expose the mistakes of the Sufis.

The author believes that now the age of light has come, in which people can come to true knowledge by comparing religions. This is facilitated by modern institutions and science, e.g. trains, the telegraph, the printing press and improved literacy (4f). Everybody has been affected

¹Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 37,43,56.

²Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 40f; cf. in general Lāhiz, *Tanqīd al-khayālāt*, Vol. 1.

³Lāhiz, *Taftīsh al-auliya*'.

by these things, so that they have either left their own religion or reformed it. However, only Christianity can attract Man, the more he comes into the light of the present day and age. The Christian religion defeats all other religions because it is from God and Jesus is its light (7–9). On the other hand, Sufism can not even to be counted to be part of Islam; it is a heresy (9ff).

In answer to the question of the validity of Sufi miracles, ‘Imād ud-Dīn answers: A miracle underlines and confirms the teachings of the miracle-worker. The Sufi miracles underline and confirm pantheism (*hama-ost*) and should therefore be rejected. Second, the miracles of the Sufis as well as the miracles of Muhammad described in the *ḥadīṣ* can not be proven. As for the revelations and dreams of the Sufis, they are merely human thoughts and fantasies (29–33). In our age, Sufism has completely degenerated (160ff).

Imād ud-Dīn is right in denouncing the inherently un-Islamic and heretical nature of Sufism. The related objection that Sufi miracles underline a pantheism and therefore can not be divine can also be accepted. In other ways, however, the author makes serious mistakes that have sprung from his world of thought.

In this work the topics of true miracles and true prophecy already existing in ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s earliest writings are once more reflected. Here the firm conviction is once again expressed that only true miracles and true prophetic words can attest true revelation, a conviction that was attained by comparing the miracles and the prophetic nature of Jesus with Muhammad’s life and doctrine. However, in this case it does not prove to be very effective; for teachings can be compared, whereas a miracle is not accessible in this way. Thus, ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s first objection to Sufi miracles is justified, while the second is

rather weak; from the Christian side, the miracles of the Sufis can not be the point of attack. It is particularly regrettable that 'Imād ud-Dīn did not present a satisfactory refutation despite his own experience as a Sufi.

Against the Aḥmadiya Movement

In *Balancing of Words (Tauzīn al-aqwāl)*,¹ 'Imād ud-Dīn attacks the claims of the founder of the Aḥmadīs, Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiānī, who had recently crossed blades with 'Abdullāh Ātham in a dispute. In this work, too, Mirzā Qādiānī is measured and disproved according to 'Imād ud-Dīn's criteria of a true prophet (Ch. 5): Although he stylizes himself as the Messiah, in reality he possesses neither the marks of a prophet nor of a priest (reconciliation with God) or a king (Ch. 6).

Finally, let us take a look at Ṭhākur Dās, the last known apologist of the 19th century. This marks the end of the nineteenth century anti-Muslim apologetics in India.

¹Lāhiz, *Tauzīn al-aqwāl*; on this work compare the detailed description by Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 57–66.

Chapter 10

Signs of Age: Ṭhākur Dās

The only source I have found for the life of this apologist is a not very objective report by Thakur Das.¹

Life (1821–1880)

Dās was the son of a Brahman officer of the British army called Devī Bhajan. In 1857, his father was killed by mutinous soldiers, and the bereaved family was robbed of all of its possessions.

Due to the extreme drought of 1860, the family lost the little it still had, and it walked 700 miles before finding a home in Sialkot in the orphanage of the United Presbyterian Mission. In Sialkot, Dās' mother was baptized together with her two children.

¹Das, *Khudāwand masīḥ ke nau-ratn*, 68–79 (first edition Lahore, 1930). This biographer is not to be confused with the apologist described below!

When a mission school was founded in 1868, Dās was able to enter. In 1870, he passed the entrance examination of the University of Calcutta, but since he did not want to leave his mother alone, his plans to study there were dashed. Subsequently, he readily accepted a call from the U.P. Mission to prepare for pastoral ministry.

In 1877 he was ordained and began his work as mission superintendent in Pasrūr. There he wrote his first books. After several years here, in Jhang-bār and Gujranwala, he received a post as lecturer of Church History and Greek at Sialkot Theological Seminary. Later, he moved back to Gujranwala, where he lived for about 26 years and ministered. Here he also published a journal called *Christian Advocate*, which was devoted to debates with other religions.

In the opinion of his biographer, Dās was one of the missionaries who were instrumental in opening up the U.P. mission for the mass movement of Untouchables into the Church. He was apparently well-known for his compassion and love, and seems to have won the trust of the “unclean” castes through his free interaction with them. He was also known for his thorough monthly training seminars for church workers.

He served the best years of his life in the U.P. mission. Later, however, he left the Mission because of disagreements and began to work for the Reformed Presbyterian Mission. Then he also left this mission and moved from Gujranwala to Ferozepur, where he spent barely a year before being invited by the missionary E.M. Wherry to Ludhiana. There he managed the missionary magazine *Nūr-afshān*.

In 1904, the American Presbyterian Mission in Lahore asked him to begin an evangelistic work in the *taḥṣīl* Sharqpūr. Ṭhākur Dās seems to have been successful in

his evangelistic endeavors despite initial opposition from the people, because it was in Sharqpur that the mission later acquired land for a mission station and a church building. Parallel to this work, he also began to evangelise in the slums of Lahore.

On January 21, 1910, he died of the consequences of a cold.

Ṭhākūr Dās' Works

Christian Unveiling (Izhār-i 'īswī)

The foreword of the most important work of this author called *Christian Unveiling (Izhār-i 'īswī)*¹ mentions its goals. According to Rajab 'Alī, the author of the preface, 'Imād ud-Dīn had no knowledge of English, so he needed the help of English-speaking clergy. Moreover, his books directed against Muslims were too polemical and gave no scientific (*taḥqīqī*) answers, so that today they are derided as Asian drivel (*eshā'ī gap*). In the light of the present age with its knowledge of the scientific language [English] it is obsolete. By contrast, the work of Dās is non-polemical and seeks to prove the truthfulness of the Bible by proving the inspiration of the Biblical writers on the basis of their reliability (5).

In his introduction, Dās states that Raḥmatullāh does not propose any new idea; he merely uses the thoughts of certain Englishmen such as Horne and dresses them in an Indian garb (12). He draws attention to two facts:

1. The textual variants of the Bible passages under discussion do not cause any change in the meaning

¹Dās, *Izhār-i 'īswī*, Vol. 1–2.

of the text. As far as the majority of the text variants are concerned, the differences are negligible (13). We have to distinguish between two questions: (a) Is the whole Bible inspired? (b) Are the various texts of the Bible reliable (*ṣaḥīḥ*)? If a text is not inspired, then its inspiration is not confirmed by proof of its textual reliability either (13f).¹

2. Translations may be erroneous, but this does not prove the corruption of the original text (14).

After this introduction, the author answers all of the objections of Kairānwī one by one in a monotonous manner typical for him.

Assessment

Raḥmatullāh mainly used Horne and other theologians, who were generally conservative, and who were primarily concerned with a defence of the Bible against the objections of Deists and rationalists. Therefore, it made sense to use these authors to defend the integrity of the Bible. ‘Imād ud-Dīn had already done so, but Dās did this in an even more detailed manner. The book is generally well-structured and gives the reader a good picture of Raḥmatullāh’s objections and their respective answers.² However, the style is sometimes very laborious. One wonders if it was necessary to express fairly simple thoughts in such a ponderous and verbose manner. Dās’ manner of presenting matter is very different from ‘Imād ud-Dīn, for his polemic against Muhammad and

¹He adopts this distinction from a Prof. “Gusyn,” *Risala-i ilhām, Kutub-i muqaddasa* (New York, 1852), 84.

²Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 81f.

the Quran is limited to Ch. III.2 & 3 of the second volume, and even this is not as polemical as ‘Imād ud-Dīn’s writing. On the other hand, in *Guidance*, the writer’s humour, personality and biographical details shine through, while the style and content *Christian Unveiling* is rather dry, colourless and bookish. The balance of defensive and offensive thinking in Pfander and ‘Imād ud-Dīn is abandoned for a purely defensive apologetics. This does not mean that everything is bad. The author has gone to great lengths to use as many arguments of Western scholars regarding the integrity of the Bible as possible to support his views. In some ways he is also more scientific and accurate than ‘Imād ud-Dīn. Nevertheless, unlike ‘Imād ud-Dīn, Dās does not exhibit any creative power, and all his works bear the stamp of a pedantic spirit.

Deficiencies in content are also visible in this work:

1. First and foremost is the fact that a concept of inspiration unfamiliar to Muslims is used without being explained exactly. Although Dās rightly distinguishes between inspiration and the reliability of the Bible, he never discusses the true meaning of inspiration. Instead, his reasoning is as follows: Scribal errors in the Bible are no reason to assume that it is not inspired. The apparent contradictions of the Bible are either scribal errors or not real contradictions. A Muslim might object, “I agree that the Bible was revealed by God. However, the fact remains that these text variants, which you call scribal errors, testify that the Bible was later corrupted by Christians. In my view, every letter and accent of divine revelation is inspired, so the presence of a single scribal error already confirms the corruption of the Bible.” For this reason,

it was essential that Dās explain his Christian understanding of Scripture. However, unlike Ṣafdar ‘Alī and ‘Imād ud-Dīn, he does not even mention the difference between the Islamic and Christian understanding of inspiration.

2. Dās assumes that miracles are [only] a sign of true prophecy.¹ In this and in his defence of the inspiration of the Bible he is close to Pfander and ‘Imād ud-Dīn; in his view the inspiration of the Bible is proven by the fact that it was written by inspired prophets and apostles, who confirmed this through miracles. However, the reason for this assumption is nowhere explicitly mentioned.
3. This weakness is compounded by the lack of development of basic Christian teachings, such as original sin, forgiveness of sin, atonement, Christology, Trinity, the divine Sonship of Christ *etc.*² Dās does not seem to have any deeper insights into the principles of Islam. This can be seen in his treatment of the Virginity of Mary, which he defends in great detail, even though orthodox Muslims take this for granted. Similarly, he answers attacks on anthropomorphisms in the Bible (Volume II, Ch. VI) without pointing out that they also occur in the Quran. This lack of awareness of Muslim thought becomes critical in the absence of a definition of inspiration. However, the material core of the book is clear, and the points that seek to prove the integrity of the

¹Dās, *Izhār-i ‘īswī*, 388–390.

²Admittedly, Dās discusses these topics as well as inspiration in another book (Dās, *Hikmat al-ilhām*). However, this seems to have been composed for Christian readers.

Bible are more or less successful for their time. This is apparently also the actual goal of the author.

Further Works

Dispensability of the Quran

Dispensability of the Quran ('Adam-zarūrat-i Qur'ān) was written in 1886.¹ The aim of this book is to prove that the Quran is not necessary (*'adam-zarūrat*), since the perfect revelation has already revealed in the Bible. This is an answer to the Muslim claim that the Bible has been abrogated by the Quran.

According to Dās, prophets are necessary in order to proclaim God's will to Man. If a new prophet appears, he must be able to prove his mission (a) through miracles (3f), (b) through prophecies that are fulfilled (4), (c) through more excellent truths than those already revealed (that is truths about God, Man, the past and the future) (4–6) and d) through the greater usefulness of his teachings than the earlier Scriptures (7).

Wherry rightly notes that much of this work such as Ch. 7 & 8) is redundant.² Debates with Muslims occur again and again in the form of endless supplements. Unfortunately, these are presented in a verbose manner and do not contribute anything new to the discussion. Wherry's second criticism is also justified, that "the numerous passages presented in parallel columns would have much more point, and therefore more force, if compared in detail."³

This work could be seen as Dās' counterpart to *Ta'līm-i muḥammadī*, although the comparison here is limited

¹Dās, *'Adam-zarūrat-i Qur'ān*.

²Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 83; for an overview see 82f.

³*Ibid.*, 83.

to the Bible and the Quran. The underlying idea in both works is that a comparison of the teachings must of necessity compel the reader to acknowledge the excellence of the Bible. However, the thrust of the work is different, as Dās mainly wants to show that the Quran is superfluous and dispensable, as its teachings are already contained in the Bible. This book also tends to polemicize against the teachings and person of Muhammad.

However in this he is not fully successful, as one can not simply find all the teachings of the Quran in the Bible; as long as there are differences, the Muslim will point them out and feel that Muslim teaching is superior due to these differences.

Moreover, the similarities are only superficial, since the concept of the nature of God differs in each case (see below pp. 294ff).

As an example let us examine his treatment of (*jihād*), the Muslim Holy War. In condemning this, Dās bases his arguments on his Christian values. However, since the values of a Muslim are determined by Islam, he must inevitably come to the conclusion that it is precisely the concept of *jihād* that proves the excellence of Islam.

Again and again one can observe that the author does not understand that one can not simply compare individual points without taking the whole into account, as each religion has its own scale of values.

Gospel or Quran

In *Gospel or Quran* (*Injil yā Qur'ān*), the author deals with the same topics as in *Dispensability of the Quran*.¹ One could entitle this book *Dispensability of the Quran* as well,

¹Dās, *Injil yā qur'ān*.

because it also wants to show that the Quran is dispensable, since it contains nothing better than the Bible; in fact, much is not only inferior but also wrong.

This work is more elaborate than the *Dispensability of the Quran*. Like *Izhār-i 'iswī*, its citation of other works including Western writers is more thorough. Despite this, it suffers from the same fundamental weaknesses that have already been seen in the former work. For this reason, we can not agree with Wherry's judgment that "this work [...] will undoubtedly prove a most valuable addition to the literature of the Muslim Controversy."¹

Life of Christ and Muhammad

In the *Life of Christ and Muhammad (Sīrat-i masīḥ wa 'l-muḥammad)*,² the author compares Christ with Muhammad. His superficial knowledge of Islam is evident in his statement that the Quran does not consider Jesus sinless (Q 3).³ Moreover, the author too often lapses into crude polemical remarks, so that even the certainly not squeamish Wherry admits that "the general tone of the book is objectionable."⁴

In this as well as his other works, Dās is also guided by the marks of a true prophet presented Pfander.

¹Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 86. A number of E.M. Wherry's statements are wrong. Did not he read the work himself? Cf. *ibid.*, 83–86. Or had he only glanced at a preliminary draft (*The Muslim Controversy* was written in 1905)?

²Dās, *Sīrat-i masīḥ*.

³*Ibid.*, 15.

⁴Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 88; cf. *ibid.*, 86–88 for further details.

Three Further Works

- *Infiṣāl-i wilādat-i masīḥ* (*Judgment on the Nativity*), (Ludhiana?) 1886; 58 pp.
- *Rīvyū barāhīn-i aḥmadīya ke muqaddama, ṣafḥa 112 se 128 par* (*Review of the Introduction of Barāhīn-i aḥmadīya ke muqaddama, pages 112 to 128*), Ludhiana 1889; *approx.* 65 pp.
- *Muḥammad be-karāmat* (*The Miracle-less Muḥammad*), Lahore ¹1890; 33 pp.

Chapter 11

Summary

At the beginning of this investigation it was pointed out that in India, the Christian apologists above all had to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Christian revelation and the Christian commandments. They mastered this task in very different ways. A number of positive but also problematic approaches have come to light. The pattern of *Balance of Truth* runs through the entire Indian apologetics like a golden thread. For all apologists with the exception of Şafdar 'Alī, this influence can be observed in a focus on the uniqueness of Jesus and the Bible: Besides demonstrating the divine origin of the Bible, the apologists strove to prove Jesus' uniqueness on the basis of his miracles, prophecies about him, prophecies by him and his nature. At the same time, they endeavoured to demonstrate the inadequacy of Muhammad in this regard. This line of reasoning, which ultimately derived from early Christian apologetics, gained new impetus in

the nineteenth century; the results of Oriental studies underpinned the old Christian objections that Islamic accounts of Muhammad's miracles are false and that the accusation of corruption can be applied to the Quran. The likewise classical Christian claims regarding the morally inferior or even bad qualities of Islamic teachings and of the Prophet (see above p. 53) were primarily conveyed to the Indian apologists by Pfander, while the new impulses evident in the first, actually apologetic part of *Balance of Truth* found little resonance with them. True, in Ātham's works, traces of Pfander's marks of a true revelation can be found (see above pp. 161ff). However, only Ṣafdar 'Alī took up the positive objective of these traits and developed them further (see above pp. 188ff).

Paradoxically, through this dispute regarding the veracity of the Scriptures and their prophets, Christians and Muslims came closer to actually understanding each other. They became familiar enough with the religion of their opponents to understand the key issue: Is the Bible the true Word of God or the Quran? Moreover, are the prophets of the Bible including Jesus true prophets or was Muhammad a true prophet? Christians came to realize that the idea of Scriptural corruption and abrogation of the Bible had to block any conversation with Muslims, while Muslims grasped the idea that only a dedicated adherence to this lines of thought could disqualify the claims of the Bible and substantiate their own point of view.

Unfortunately, these interreligious debates often did not go beyond this hermeneutical issue, resulting in a narrowing of the topics under consideration. In consequence, the fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity were rarely articulated.

The destructive side of Pfander's approach is most consistently carried out by *Rām Candra*, whose works embody the purest form of Christian polemics. He tries to prove the uniqueness of Jesus and the Biblical revelation mainly by negating the Islamic position: Neither is Muhammad a true prophet, nor is his book of divine origin. The problem of polemics without the Gospel has already been pointed out (see above p. 154).

'*Abdullāh Ātham*'s position was the most difficult to erudite, as many of his works have been lost, and in any case his writing style is often difficult to comprehend. One can recognize a certain dependence on Pfander's ideas as well as a certain autonomy of thought, which however can not be formulated clearly on the basis of the few available writings. His approach was not entirely destructive; rather, he made an effort to answer the accusations raised by Muslims regarding Scriptural corruption and the abrogation of Biblical commandments. Furthermore, he strove to present the Christian faith as well. Allegory seems to play a large role in his thoughts, but the issue of true miracles and prophecies can also be seen in his works (see above pp. 161ff).

Among the Indian apologists, *Şafdar 'Alī* occupies a key position with his work, as it represents the best achievement of Christian anti-Muslim apologetics in India and should be appreciated as such. Only *Şafdar* develops the concept behind Pfander's marks of a true revelation, namely that God's revelation must be consistent and in accordance with God's nature. In doing so, he breaks new ground by dropping the supernaturalistic approach of Pfander and instead starting with common assumptions of both religions to show the inadequacy of Islam (see above pp. 188ff).

The irenical tone of Şafdar's work is again untypical of his time; his writing is notably lacking in polemics against Muhammad and the Quran. In doing so, he abandons the usual pattern of destructive polemics against Muhammad's person and the Quran without letting his beliefs concerning the uniqueness of Jesus or the deficiencies of Islam fall by the wayside. A serious dialogue between Muslims and Christians on the theological level can not ignore the earnest question of Şafdar 'Alī: To what extent does a religion agree with the nature of God? Any dialogue between representatives of the two largest monotheistic religions must consider this issue and clarify the relationship of divine revelation as manifested in the Bible to the divine revelation claimed by Muslims in the Quran (and to the *ḥadīs*), if both sides wish to find a common ground for discussion.

Şafdar's friend *Imād ud-Dīn* remains much closer to Pfander's pattern. He advocates a similar supranaturalism, which he however derives from English works. Of the apologists, he develops the comparison between Jesus and Muhammad the most: Jesus' uniqueness is confirmed by his miracles, the prophecies made about him in the Old Testament and his own prophecies, while these marks are missing in Muhammad. *Imād ud-Dīn* clarifies the individual objections and accusations of the Muslim opponents and furnishes the most extensive and detailed response (see above pp. 229ff). His numerous works deal not only with apologetics but also with pastoral and theological problems.

Imād ud-Dīn and Şafdar 'Alī are by far the most pre-eminent figures on the scene. Both were not fluent in English. Despite this, *Imād ud-Dīn* was influenced by English anti-Deistic apologetics as mediated by his mentor R. Clark. This is reflected above all in the treatment

of supranaturalism, but also in the use of English commentaries. In contrast, Şafdar 'Alī seems to have developed his work independently on the basis of Pfander's approach. 'Imād ud-Dīn's works are not so much characterized by finely polished expressions and deep thought as by a simple style that was understandable and accessible to less educated people. In contrast, Şafdar Alī represents the epitome of the intellectual Indian in his presentation of logically valid arguments, his systematic unity and his complicated sentences. In this regard, he is reminiscent of his spiritual father Nehemiah Goreh.

Ṭhākūr Dās, who originally came from a Hindu background, is of lesser importance than the other apologists. His voluminous, monotonous works tend to be dry and lack freshness. No doubt he is somewhat closer to Western thought. However, or perhaps because of this, he misunderstands essential aspects of Islam and Muslim objections (see above pp. 250ff).

It is unfortunate that essential elements of the Christian faith were not expressed throughout the debate. The omission of a distinction between the Law and the Gospel and a deficient concept of inspiration are two important examples of this.

Chapter 12

New Paths: the 20th Century

Two characteristics distinguish the apologists of the 20th century from their predecessors. On the one hand, their biographical data is, paradoxically, far more difficult to grasp than that of the apologists of the 19th century. Secondly, the tone becomes more irenic and Islam is attacked less. It is examined more neutrally and evaluated more positively.

Akbar Masīḥ still adheres to the pattern presented by Pfander and can be quite polemical, but he is one of the exceptions.¹ *Hashmatullāh* confines himself to a defence of Christianity.² In the main, *Khawāja* also abstains from polemics.³ *Ghulām Masīḥ* belongs to a separate category, as he claims that Christianity is the true form of Islam:

¹A. Masīḥ, *Qur'ān wa ibn allāh*, *Khudāwand masīḥ kī salībī maut*, *Tanwīr al-azhān*, *Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, *Zarbat-i 'īswī*.

²Thus Hashmatullāh, *Barāhīn-i nira*.

³Thus Khawāja, *Muwāzana-i Bā'ibal-o-Qur'ān*.

Monotheism was the original religion of the Arabs before it was corrupted; Muhammad restored true Islam, but it was corrupted again after his death. Through this assertion, Masīḥ can rate Muhammad and the Quran very positively.¹ *Aḥmad Shāh* published a concordance and a glossary of the Quran under the title *Key to the Quran* (*Miftāḥ al-Qur'ān*), a work that found widespread use not only among Christians.² His *Mirror of the Quran* (*Mir'āt al-Qur'ān*) is an attempt to render the Quran chronologically, a seemingly purely academic attempt to better understand the Quran.³ With his treatise *Truth of Islam* (*Ṣadāqat-i Islām*) *John 'Abd as-Subḥān*⁴ shows that Christians can have a positive and sympathetic view of Islam.

¹G. Masīḥ, *al-Furqān, Hamārī Bā'ibal, Ḥaqīqat al-islām, Kawā'if al-'arab*.

²Shāh, *Miftāḥ al-Qur'ān*.

³Shāh, *Mir'āt al-Qur'ān*.

⁴Subḥān wrote an autobiography (Subhan, *How a Sufi Found His Lord*); strongly dependent on this is a biography by Jones (Jones, *From Islam to Christ*).

Subḥān was born in 1897 in Calcutta. Before the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857, his family had resided first at the Mughul court in Delhi and later in Benares. His father, a liberal and tolerant Muslim, started a gold embroidery workshop after 1857, which he soon moved to Calcutta. As a child, Subḥān showed a tendency toward fanaticism. To counteract this, his parents enrolled him in Calcutta Madrasa, which had a reformist tendency.

Continued see next page

According to him, among other things Islam was a cause for the rise of Protestantism.¹

Already as a child he became dissatisfied with orthodox Islam and sought to satisfy his spiritual needs first through magic, then mysticism; in this he received decisive guidance from his maternal grandfather. Mysticism made him open for a fair consideration of the Bible, which a friend gave him. By reading it, he came to a gradual recognition of the claims of Christianity on his own. He began to seek out Christians and in the end came in touch with a Danish missionary named F.W. Steinthal, who led him to a living faith in Christ. When he confessed his faith in the madrasa, he was discharged. However, people helped him to enter St. Paul's School, so that he could continue his studies at this school of CMS for Christian children. In 1912 he was baptized at the age of 15. Although his parents were not happy with his conversion, they did not disown him. Soon after, he enrolled at St. John's College, Agra, in order to continue his study of Urdu and Persian for matriculation. Then he began his higher studies there. During this time he wrote *The Truth of Islam (Ṣadāqat-i Islām)*. During this time, in which he acquired a BA, he converted to Roman Catholicism, which he left after four years to finally join the Methodist Church.

In 1925, he was appointed head of a newly established Department of Islamic Studies at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Bareilly. In 1926, he married Dorothy Day. In 1930, he received a post at Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies. In this capacity, he obtained a BD from Serampore College and wrote several books (among others Subhan, *Sufism, Islam, The Muslim's Prayer*). In 1945, he was appointed bishop of the Methodist Church in India.

¹Subhan, *Ṣadāqat-i islām*.

S.M. Paul¹ accommodates Islam the most by using the *bismillāh* formula as well as the blessing formula used by Muslims for Muhammad (ﷺ). He invokes the unity of Christians and Muslims, which in his view should have the following effect: If it is not possible for a Christian to win someone from another creed for his religion, then he should make an effort to convince him to at least become a

¹S.M. Paul describes his conversion himself (S. Paul, *Main kyiun masīhī ho gayā*). According to him, he was born in Afghanistan in 1884. His father was a colonel in the Afghan army and was executed during a change of government by the new ruler Amīr ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Khān. He himself was banished to India. After several unsuccessful attempts to have his banishment lifted, he settled in Delhi and visited Fataḥpūrī Madrasa to perfect his knowledge of Arabic. In Delhi he came into contact with evangelists, who aroused in him the desire to refute them. To this end, he collected many anti-Christian apologetic works such as Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī’s *Izhār al-ḥaqq* and *I’jāz-i ‘iswī*. He also received a Bible from a missionary.

After some time he moved to Bombay to receive instruction at the feet of Maulvī ‘Abd al-Aḥad at Madrasa Zakariyā, who took a deep liking to him. In Bombay he met evangelists again and soon decided to found an association called *Nadwat al-Mutakallimūn* (“Society of Theologians”) to train Muslims in anti-Christian apologetics. His teacher explicitly warned him against reading the Bible and said that whosoever reads the Bible becomes a Christian. However, Paul did not desist from his endeavour, which kept him busy for five to six years. After a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, he founded a new society called *Ẓiyā’ al-Islām*, to which he invited Christians once a week, so that he could refute them. One day a Christian called Munshī Maṣṣūr Masīḥ gave a lecture about the inability of Islam to redeem Man that prompted Paul to begin searching in earnest. In the end he turned to Christianity. He presented the train of thought that had moved him to accept the Christian message to the society and turned his back on Islam forever. He was baptized in 1903.

As a Christian, S.M. Paul also participated in religious debates.

Muslim and vice versa.¹ ‘*Abd al-Ḥaqq*’² became known for his use of classical Islamic logic, which he uses especially to explain the Trinity.³

¹S. Paul, *Hubūt-i nasl-i insān, Hamārā Qur’ān, Masīhī mazhab, ‘Arabistān men masīhīyat, Ṣultān at-tafsīr, Yisū aur ‘īsā*.

²In his autobiography (al-Ḥaqq, *Merī masīhī hone kī ḥaqīqat*), ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq writes that he was born in 1889 in a village near Gujranwala. His father was a landowner (*zamīndār*) and an *imām* (worship leader) at the local mosque. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq was taught in the classical Islamic disciplines. Through the study of philosophy he became a materialist (*dahriya*) at the age of 17.

In 1906 he happened to be in Sargodha when he had a serious bout of indigestion. At the urging of his host, he went to the mission hospital, where he met Dr. M.M. Brown and a compounder named Samuel. There he read a tract in which 1Tim 1:15 was mentioned. This verse puzzled him: He had considered the apostle Paul to be a fraud, and here he was describing himself as the greatest sinner. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq found this statement strange for an impostor. Thereupon he bought a Bible. Upon seeing it, his host immediately tore it up. This did not deter ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq from buying another one, secretly reading it and staying in contact with Christians.

This new interest in Christianity led him to accompany M.M. Brown on his medical excursions into the country as a guardian (*caukidār*) and water carrier, a severe test for a man of his social rank. During this time he did not think about becoming a Christian and continued to preach the Islamic message to the camel drivers. One night, however, the veracity of the Biblical teachings became clear to him, and he asked to be baptized. The Christians mistrusted him and put obstacles in his way for two months, which demonstrates how cautious they were in baptising Muslims. Finally he was baptized by Ṭhākūr Dās in 1908 in Lahore. For a time he was employed by the Christian magazine *Nūr-afshān* to write rebuttals, especially of the writings of the active Aḥmadiya movement. From 1912 to 1919 he studied at the theological seminary in Serampore, where he distinguished himself in debates with Muslims. From 1919 to 1926, he worked as an evangelist and pastor and from 1926 to 1939 as a professor at the seminary. Thereafter he worked as an evangelist and writer. He settled in Chandigarh in 1957.

³al-Ḥaqq, *Isbāt at-tasliḥ, Kalām-i ḥaqq, Tahrīrī munāẓara-i fījī, Radd-i buhtān*.

Lastly, *Barkatullāh* needs to be named, the most important apologetic figure of the twentieth century and the first truly modern apologist.¹ Barkatullāh preserves his critical distance to Islam without becoming polemical; he can even rate elements of Islam positively without suppressing the differences to Christianity. Barkatullah dares to break with the pattern set by Pfander regarding true prophethood. In his book *The Mosaic Torah and Muhammad*, he points out that prophecies can not be the decisive criterion of a prophet, since they are always am-

¹In his autobiography, Barkatullāh describes his conversion (Barkatullāh, *From Karbala to Calvary*). He was born in 1891 in Narowal in western Punjab. His family was very devoutly Shiite. His father Shaikh Raḥmat 'Alī was nevertheless broad-minded and tolerant and enrolled his son in a mission school. He became very well acquainted with Christianity and the Bible, but especially his bigoted uncle Muḥsin 'Alī caused him to feel a strong aversion for Christianity. The latter gave him anti-Christian literature, which he used to confront Christian evangelists in the marketplace and make them the object of derision by asking clever questions.

Nevertheless, a sense of sin intensified in his heart. The catalyst for his conversion was the conversion of his father, the president of the *Anjuman-i Islāmiya* (Islamic Society). At the time Barkatullah was in ninth grade. His dignity and love during this time of social ostracism impressed Barkatullah and let him read the Bible with new eyes. At his request, his father among other things gave him Pfander's *Balance of Truth*, 'Imād ud-Dīn's works and Tisdall's *Muhammadan Objections to Christianity* to read. Barkatullah was baptized in 1907.

In 1914, he obtained a Master of Philosophy from Punjab University and lectured at Edwardes College (Peshawar) and Forman Christian College (Lahore) until his ordination in 1923. He became the first Archdeacon of the new Anglican diocese of Amritsar. In 1956, he retired and from then on worked at the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies in Aligarh.

It should be noted that Narowal was the centre of what was probably the only, albeit small mass movement of Muslims to Christianity, in which the elder brother of Barkatullah's father, Iḥsānullāh, played a major role.

biguous.¹ He is also the first to use the Qumran discoveries to refute the corruption theory.² Still, his writings not only seek to defend the Christian faith; they also attempt to positively demonstrate its content³ and develop the difference between Islamic and Christian beliefs.⁴

The question of why the tone of the works after the turn of the century suddenly became peaceful can not be answered entirely satisfactorily, as up to the declaration of independence religious freedom was unrestricted. Did the political situation and the increasingly bloody communal clashes between Muslims and Hindus play a role? Did the Christians feel more secure regarding their own position in society? Did they realize that polemics often built walls and hardened the Muslim's heart? Another cause may also be involved: At the end of the 19th century, 'Imād ud-Dīn had stated that all possible answers and refutations have already been given. It is likely that twentieth-century Christians felt that nineteenth-century apologetics had been sufficiently exploited, and that new ways had to be found to address Muslims. However, the historical data has not yet been sufficiently researched to render a clear verdict.

¹Barkatullāh, *Tauret-i Mūsā*.

²Barkatullāh, *Siḥḥat*.

³Barkatullāh, *Kalimatullāh*.

⁴Barkatullāh, *Abūwat-i ilāhī*; = Barkatullāh, *Abūwat-i Khudā aur ibnīyat-i masīḥ*; further writings: Barkatullāh, *Daṣṭ-i Karbalā*, *Dīn-i fiṭrat*, *Masiḥīyat*, *Tauzīḥ al-bayān*, *Qānā-i galīl*, *Muḥammad-i 'arabī*, *Nūr al-hudā*, *Ishtirākīyat*.

The Relevance for Today

Chapter 13

The Positive Outcome

About 150 years ago Pfander debated with Muslim scholars in Agra. The question naturally arises: Aren't the controversial methods of that day and age hopelessly outdated? Has not much changed on both sides of the fence? Are we not living in a age in which we need to learn to promote tolerance and interreligious dialogue in the name of peace? Have people not finally realized that wars, which have often been caused by religious differences, can only be overcome through mutual learning and dialogue?

These objections are legitimate. However, they do not change the fact that most of the Islamic world continues to cling to old Muslim concepts and prejudices regarding Christianity. Christian answers to the accusations of Scriptural corruption and abrogation are just as indispensable today as they were 150 years ago, as these continue to play a significant role in Islamic apologetics. Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī's work *Izhār al-ḥaqq* has

been published in the original Arabic language, in numerous other languages and two years ago even in English,¹ while its Urdu counterpart called *ʿIjāz-i ʿīswī* has also been reprinted. Furthermore, a host of medieval apologetic writings are now increasingly being reprinted in the Arab world. This clearly indicates that these stereotypes continue to be convincing for the majority of Muslims. It must be emphasized that generally, these writings are being published primarily as antichristian polemics, not as historical documents.

O.H. Schumann comes to similar conclusions in his Tübingen dissertation on Christological aspects in Arabic Islamic literature. His in-depth analysis notes considerable new approaches in modern Islamic interpretations of the person of Jesus. At the same time, however, these also demonstrate that “the arguments and definitions established by classical polemics are still valid and are by no means outdated, even though they no longer form the subject of discussion.”²

The manifold reiteration of these Islamic objections today means that they have still not been overcome on the Islamic side. Therefore Christians need to be mindful of the fact that these concepts will continue to form the backdrop of discussions with Muslims. At the same time, they must also find answers that truly respond to the thought patterns behind the objections of the Muslim.

For this reason, the writings of the Indian apologists are of interest, since they were written by people who themselves came from the Islamic context. The review of this dispute has revealed some important principles that still need to be taken into account by Christians who encounter Muslims. Both a positive and a negative

¹Kairānwī, *Izhar-ul-Haqq*.

²Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 203.

outcome of the Christian-Muslim debate in India can be ascertained.

Keep Islamic Presuppositions in Mind

One of the outstanding achievements of Indian apologists is that they formulate the precise meaning of the Islamic theories of corruption and abrogation. The comparison of Pfander's *Balance of Truth* with the writings Şafdar 'Alī and 'Imād ud-Dīn demonstrates the great progress in this area (cf. above pp. 91–108 with 188–194, 229–232). Christian apologetics had to grasp the stereotypical objections of Islam in order to find a response that satisfied Muslims. Failure to consider these theories would otherwise have led to a monologue that would not have addressed the concerns of Muslims.

Furthermore, the responses of Indian apologists paid much better attention to the theological axioms of Islam. In contrast, many passages of Pfander's *Balance of Truth* still take many Christian thought patterns and Christian values for granted (see above pp. 95–108). The Indian debate shows that any Christian-Muslim conflict must fail if Christians do not keep Islamic concepts in mind.

Determine the Relation Between Christianity and Islam

In the context of an encounter, the relation between both religions needs to be determined. The Quran itself assumes a relationship to the Biblical message, as it claims to reflect the original, divine revelation of the Bible. Through this Islamic principle, dialogue between Christians and Muslims is possible.

The preceding overview of Christian responses to Islamic attacks in India clearly shows that the question of the authenticity of a revelation and its agent was of crucial importance to both Muslims and Christians. Moreover, this tendency can not be confined to the Indian subcontinent: The classical Islamic objections regarding Christianity were taken to the Middle East in a new guise by Kairānwī (see above Ch. 5).

In view of the outlined development and the flood of similar anti-Christian literature that has appeared in recent decades, it remains incomprehensible that the current Christian discussion in the West about and with Islam hardly takes these Muslim presuppositions into account.¹

At this point it is appropriate to pause for a moment and recapitulate the reason for the strong emphasis on revelation and its agent in Indian apologetics: In the beginning, Islam assumed the unbroken relationship of its message to the Jewish and Christian message; the theories of Scriptural corruption and abrogation only arose

¹Significantly enough, the relatively few English writings dealing with this issue come mainly from Pakistan and India. On the Protestant side, the first bishop of the Lutheran Church in Pakistan, J. Christensen, deals with questions such as textual corruption in a dedicated Lutheran manner (Christensen, *The Practical Approach to Muslims*, e.g. 597–614). The Pakistani Bishop of the Church of Pakistan, Michael Nazir-Ali, also touches this issue in an essay (Nazir-Ali, *Frontiers*, 45–52). Kenneth Cragg strives to help Muslims to recognize the integrity of the New Testament (Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim*, 75–124). Although he does not mention the issue itself, his remarks show that he is at least acquainted with it. Despite noteworthy approaches, however, all these works inadequately deal with the theories of textual corruption and abrogation.

On the Catholic side, the issue has also only been touched (e.g. Borrmann, *Wege*, 107–109). The historical treatment by J.- M. Gaudeul also needs to be mentioned (Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes*).

due to the discovery that a closer comparison reveals decisive differences between the content of the Christian and Islamic messages.

Although these presuppositions are deeply ingrained in Muslim thought, they are hardly taken into account in current encounters between Christians and Muslims. Because of this, both Christian access to Islamic thought as well as Islamic access to Christian thought is made considerably more difficult: If the Muslim recognizes the conformity of the Christian and Islamic message, then he is forced to either take the Christian revelation seriously or resort to the theories of Scriptural corruption and abrogation. If the latter is convincingly refuted, all that remains for him is to either accept the validity of Christian revelation or to reject both the Christian and Islamic message.

For this reason, it is essential for any Christian response to Islam to begin by determining its relation to Islam; the principle recognition of the Christian message by Islam provides a starting point that can prepare the acceptance of the Biblical message if used in the right way.

How to Determine this Relation

Over the centuries, the Christian West has exhibited a very broad range of attitudes to Islam ranging from disinterest and indifference to a crusader mentality. Recently, the call for dialogue in the sense of mutual understanding and enrichment has grown louder. Which of these positions is legitimate, and which is not subject to the arbitrariness of fashions and time-conditioned views? Furthermore, how can we achieve a precise assessment of the relation between Islam and Christianity that takes into account the nature of both religions?

K. Hock investigated these questions and examined various Western theological positions and approaches of the twentieth century regarding Islam. Hock rightly denounces the Eurocentrism of Western Christian approaches to Islam that only became unsure of themselves through two World Wars.¹

Following the lead of Falk Wagner,² he criticizes the positional character of many theological blueprints and wonders if it is possible to develop a clear theology that does justice to the Biblical message.³ In order to protect himself from a theology of religions based only on the fashion of the moment and constructed according to arbitrary principles, he postulates that the core beliefs of Christian faith need to be worked out on the basis of its own statements;⁴ only this can protect theologians from imposing values on the Christian message that do not do justice to the content of the Christian faith.

Hock's demand recalls ideas of Gerhard Rosenkranz that can make a significant contribution regarding Hock's legitimate concern.

Gerhard Rosenkranz

Metacentres In his work on Protestant religious studies, G. Rosenkranz fights against the absolutist tendencies of Dialectical Theology; in his opinion, this attempts to place Christianity in a position beyond all religions.⁵ Instead, he advocates a theology that respects and preserves the

¹Hock, *Der Islam*, 330ff.

²Wagner, 'Systematisch-theologische und sozioethische Erwägungen', 53–121, *Über die Legitimität der Mission*, 'Zur Konstitution', 49–72, 'Theologische Gleichschaltung', 10–43.

³Hock, *Der Islam*, 346–350.

⁴*Ibid.*, 349f.

⁵Rosenkranz, *Evangelische Religionskunde*, 16–18.

peculiarity of Christian faith yet does not disregard the reality of other religions:¹

Can a base be found beyond both the sphere of the individual religions and the stronghold of the Christian faith which enables us to freely discourse with other religions in an unburdened manner, while at the same time neither of these disappears from view?²

To answer this question, he postulates that every religion has a “metacentre:” “Every religion including the Christian religion needs to (and has the right to) determine and form its relation to other religions from within its own core.”³ This assertion forms the basis on which Rosenkranz determines the relation of religions to one another. He finds the metacentre of the Asian world religions “in [...] a holistic view of the world and Man emanating from a cosmic absolute” (243). In contrast, the vital forces of the Christian faith are founded on Christ himself; they are derived from Christ as the “metacentre.” This orientation towards Christ determines the peculiarity and uniqueness of the Christian religion (246ff).

According to Rosenkranz, it must be emphasized that Christianity is not an occidental religion and that it therefore can not be identified with Western culture (267). Because of his subject-object-thinking and his “endeavour to grasp the object by means of the concept,” the Westerner was especially open to Christianity. Nonetheless, the core of the Christian message remains alien to the nature of Western thinking (268):

¹Rosenkranz, *Der christliche Glaube*, 221. The following page numbers refer to this book.

²Rosenkranz, *Der christliche Glaube*, 220. Rosenkranz adopted the idea of an inner life principle of every religion from R. Otto; cf. Rosenkranz, ‘*Wege und Grenzen*’, 17.

³Rosenkranz, ‘*Die Notwendigkeit evangelisch-theologischen Studiums*’, 45.

“There were his [Jesus’] words that rip apart all religion with its grip on holy power, its self-deification of Man, its revocation of death in ancestral worship, its safeguarding of holy communion.” (268) “The standard of all Christian theology is eternal reality, which the Gospel conveys to the world as the personal gift of the living God (271f).

Thus, E. Troeltsch was right in his statement that the “idea of personality” in East and West is different. However, his conclusion must be rejected that the empirical form of Christianity in its current synthesis of Christian as well as ancient and modern elements should be equated with Europeanism and that therefore Christianity in principle can not be reconciled with the nature of Eastern mankind (272).¹ History itself has refuted this and shown that the Gospel “can not be equated with any image of Man, be it European, Asian or anything else; rather, it gives every kind of humanity its dignity and consecration, its mysterious depth and holiness in Jesus of Nazareth—ecce homo!”(273f).

Rosenkranz considers the dialogue between Christians and representatives of other religions to be possible. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that he bases his thoughts on Barth’s distinction between Christianity as an entity limited to this world and Christ as the metacentre of Christianity. Accordingly, Christ himself remains alien not only to other religions, but also to the worldly form of Christianity.

Following the lead of F.J.J. Buytendijk, Rosenkranz assumes that through every interpersonal encounter, “the existence of Man first begins to exist.”² The highest forms of encounter are those of the sexes and those of Man “with

¹Cf. Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums*, 70, *Der Historismus und seine Überwindung*, 76f,83.

²“Das Sein des Menschen [...] erst seiend wird.”

the bedrock of his transcendence” (282f). Now in the encounter between representatives of various religions, people meet who have been moulded by their respective experiences of transcendence (283). Furthermore, an existential confrontation is concealed in the structure of the Christian message. This urges Man to carry out this confrontation in his encounter with non-Christians: Just as the Gospel encountered the Christian as a foreign, divine message and transformed him, so too he must not give up confrontation in the encounter with non-Christians, as this belongs to the heart of Christianity (294f). In summary, one can say:

Christian faith in the face of world religions (that is belief in the personal, living God, who in history, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, became Man and is close to Man in his earthly existence) is the experience of faith, and its effect is the transformation of Man’s existence. It is the Christian’s destiny to announce this, to testify this in existential confrontation and thus to challenge Eastern and Western mankind to make a decision for the Father of Jesus Christ (301).

The Assessment of Islam and Christianity According to Rosenkranz, the “Asian” religions including Islam¹ are determined by a “view of the world and Man in its entirety that derives from a cosmic absolute, to which he considers himself to be related as a part of the cosmos” (243). Moreover, Islam can be characterized by four characteristics:

1. It ultimately assumes the impersonal nature of God. The assertion of the personhood of God in Islam vanishes in view of the fact that he can not be grasped by reason (Q 24:35).

¹Rosenkranz does not consider Christianity to be one of the “Asian” religions.

2. It believes that Man detached himself from what he was originally supposed to be on the supramundane level. According to Islamic teaching, although God created Man as his “slave,” the latter turned away from his original destiny. It assumes that salvation consists of “returning to the original oneness.” Islam therefore demands total submission to God’s will and the destruction of self-will.
3. It has appropriated various forms of mediators due to the uncertainty of God’s inclination. For this reason, Islam has a pronounced cult of holy people and the idea of the mediation of Muhammad (244f).

In contrast, the Christian faith is deeply determined by the Incarnation of the Word of God; the I–Thou relationship with the Father therefore decisively shapes the Christian faith (256,247f). Jesus’ redeeming death forms the core and vitality of Christianity (246–251), as it saves people by bringing them back to God, from whom they fell when they tried to become like God (256).

To be sure, in the history of religion there are parallels with certain manifestations of historical-empirical Christianity; thus for example saints are venerated in the Roman Catholic Church. However, these manifestations have not been determined by the heart of Christianity (252).

Rosenkranz’s Contribution in Determining the Relation Between Christianity and Islam The position of Rosenkranz can help us to formulate the relation of both revelations and their agents to one another, as it can help us to distinguish the essence of a religion from secondary aspects. Through it we can grasp its basic structure and penetrate

to the core. Thus we can avoid Hock's accusation that many theologies are only the result of temporary fashions by working out the centre of each religion.

Every dialogue which is conducted in this way will be both broad-minded and narrow. The Christian will increasingly appreciate the cultural and intellectual achievements of other cultures and peoples, but at the same time he will understand the mystery of God's Incarnation more deeply and recognize this as the centre of his life; indeed, he will increasingly place himself and his fellow Man under this aspect of the Incarnated Word of God.

If the Christian takes dialogue seriously, he will not only listen to his dialogue partner and strive to understand him; he will also communicate his most valuable good (see e.g. Mt 13:44–46; Acts 18; 2Cor 5:20), even if this leads him into an “existential confrontation.”¹

The dialogue with Muslims must also keep this perspective in mind.

Hans Küng

Global Ethic Project For many years, the Catholic theologian Hans Küng has devoted himself to the topic of inter-religious dialogue, above all dialogue between the three great monotheistic religions. The generally understandable style of his writings as well as his personal commitment to dialogue testify that as a theologian he strives to find concrete and realistic answers to urgent questions that move humanity.

His programmatic writing *Projekt Weltethos*² outlines a theology of dialogue than radically differs from

¹Rosenkranz, *Der christliche Glaube*, 301.

²The following refers to this book; Küng, *Projekt Weltethos*.

Rosenkranz. He remarks that the need for interreligious dialogue is rooted in the catastrophic situation of the world, which is marked by global wars, physical and emotional distress and environmental damage (20ff). Only a global ethic that contains some binding norms, values, ideals and goals (14,77) can overcome these problems; a coalition of believers and non-believers (61) needs to acknowledge this. Religions have the greater responsibility in this respect, as even today they determine the majority of humanity. Besides, unlike philosophy, they can not only establish the absoluteness and universality of ethical obligation (75) but also derive their ethics from an unconditioned absolute (77).

The multiple tensions between religions however tend to lead to conflicts or wars or at least foster them. Thus, the first step to world peace is interfaith dialogue leading to religious peace (98–103).

In summary one can say,

- no human coexistence without a global ethic of nations;
- no peace among the nations without peace among the religions;
- no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions (171).

What concept is behind this programme of dialogue?

Küng bases his thoughts on the theory of Th.S. Kuhn,¹ through which he develops a history of the religions. According to this, the religions have moved through a number of “paradigms” and epochs, each with its own “cultural-religious” constellations. The end of a paradigm and the beginning of a new one are characterized by historical upheavals. Humanity is presently sit-

¹T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

uated in the “contemporary-ecumenical,” “post-modern” paradigm that began with the collapse of Eurocentrism as a result of the First World War (155).

According to this concept, the present age has the messianic-apocalyptic lustre of an age that Küng regards as the ultimate goal of a development of the various religions and regions of the world towards harmonious co-existence. In this age, the religions and peoples need to accept each other; there should be no misery, no war and no environmental destruction. At the same time Küng is not propagating a religion made up of all religions: In his opinion, we should not strive to fuse all religions together (syncretism); rather, we should help them to grow together (synthesis) through firm dialogue (126,130–133,169).

But how can one work out a global ethic in the face of the contradictory statements of the different religions? In his opinion, the laws and regulations of the religions were written for another time and age and for other paradigms; they are human products and can not answer the complex questions of our time (71f). Nevertheless, there is a minimal criterion for grasping the truth of every religion, namely humanity, *i.e.* the quality of being humane; Religion should only serve humanity, promote people in their human identity, meaningfulness and value, and help them gain a meaningful and fruitful existence (120).

On the basis of this standard we can identify certain ethical perspectives effected by the Spirit which are common property such as a) the welfare of Man; b) the five great commandments of humanity (do not kill, do not lie, do not steal, do not commit fornication, honour your parents and love your children); c) the middle path between legal ethics and situational ethics, which emphasizes not the Law but rather certain dispositions, attitudes

and virtues, which are able to control Man's behaviour from the inside; d) the Golden Rule and e) the offer of a horizon of meaning and a final destination (81–85).

Prerequisite for dialogue is the abandonment of a position of narrow-minded exclusivity or superiority (105). Self-criticism is necessary, as the boundaries between truth and untruth also pass through each religion (109).

In dialogue, one must keep an eye on the external and internal perspective: The external perspective sees various true religions offering various paths of salvation, while the internal perspective (in the case of the monotheistic religions) sees only the one true religion. This can be compared with a diplomat, who acknowledges that there are other states with their own laws, but who as an obedient citizen obeys only the constitution of his own state (129f).

The Dialogue Between Islam and Christianity How does Küng think that dialogue between Islam and Christianity should take place?¹

Küng considers belief in the “one and only God” an essential common feature of both religions (187). In his opinion, Muhammad's understanding of Jesus derives from the traditions of Jewish Christianity, which have been supplanted by Hellenized Christianity. Thus there are also agreements regarding Jesus' person that need to be revealed (179–186).²

An essential difference to the Bible is the Quranic view that love does not belong to the attributes of God. Nev-

¹The following page numbers in the text are taken from the *Christentum und Weltreligionen*, Vol. 1. Although this appeared earlier, its views are consistent with the principles expressed in *Projekt Weltethos*.

²Küng, ‘[Christianity and World Religions](#)’, 90–93.

ertheless, in Sufism we also find concepts of God's love (143–145).¹

Because of these shared values, Küng thinks that dialogue is possible. Both Islam and Christianity can learn from each other. Islam should consider whether historical-critical exegesis is not as appropriate for the Quran as for the Bible (62f). What applies to the Bible also applies to the Quran: “The word of God is audible only in the human word; divine revelation can only be mediated through human experience and interpretation” (106).² Likewise, Muslims must be challenged to maintain tolerance and freedom of religion (162).

Muslim can be enriched by the Bible through the message of the loving, self-sacrificing Son of God (175f).³ Furthermore, through mutual discussion both Christians and Muslims can be guided to the conclusion that the concept of the Trinity and the Sonship of Jesus need not lead to disagreement: The original title of Jesus as the Son of God does not mean that Jesus is on the same plane of existence as the Father (174).⁴ In reality, the Father is God, while Jesus is His Incarnate Word and the Holy Spirit his power in the world (177–179).⁵

Christian must finally acknowledge that Muhammad, just like Jesus, was a true prophet who as a “prophetic warner” proclaimed the message of the one, incomparable God (48f,189).⁶

¹Küng, ‘Christentum und Islam’, 64f.

²Küng, ‘Christentum und Islam’, 62f, ‘Christianity and World Religions’, 200f.

³Küng, ‘Christentum und Islam’, 64f.

⁴Küng, ‘Jesus und sein Gott’, 9.

⁵Küng, ‘Christianity and World Religions’, 204–207.

⁶Küng, ‘Christianity and World Religions’, 83–85, ‘Christentum und Islam’, 58–60,65, ‘Christianity and World Religions’, 196–198.

Inconsistencies in Küng's Approach Given the many conflicts and misery in the world, the attempt to establish common ethics in the area of *usus civilis* on an international level is legitimate. One must heartily agree with Küng's demand that the religions cooperate and work out an internationally recognized ethic. Moreover, the concrete steps taken in this direction by organizations such as UNESCO prove that his demand is not completely utopian.¹ Finding common ethical norms derived from the traditions of the various religions is only to be welcomed.

At the same time, numerous questions arise which Küng does not answer.

1. To structure history according to paradigms is questionable. Is this not ultimately an attempt to disqualify other systems of thought and values more easily by dismissing them as belonging to another paradigm and therefore inappropriate? Indeed, the present existence of earlier paradigms is for Küng "a major cause" of the misery of our time (158). In contrast, his own new value system, his "global ethic," is legitimized because it corresponds to the paradigm of postmodernism. Can he really prove the validity of his own ethics based on so-called common features of all religions? In Rosenkranz's terminology: There are certain metacentres of every religion (e.g. in Christianity Christ and in Islam the confession of the oneness of God), which have shaped the whole structure of the respective religion and have not changed to the present day. Even though certain

¹Küng, *Projekt Weltethos*, 118–122. The following page numbers in the text refer to this book.

concepts may have changed, this centre of each religion has remained constant and has itself experienced no change. In contrast, Küng tries to suggest that the religions have fundamentally changed over time, and that they have made a “paradigm shift” in ever new value systems. If however there has never been a fundamental change in the “metacentre,” Küng’s recourse to a paradigm shift becomes less plausible.

2. The view that a religious dialogue should never degenerate into syncretism, relativism or indifferentism, as well as the plea for firm dialogue can only be underlined (125f). However, what does Küng mean when he talks about a synthesis of religions (126–129)? For him, it means the elimination of the impossible and the adoption of the possible (126), the abandonment of a standpoint of exclusivity (105) and the distinction between truth and untruth in one’s own religion (109). As long as he relates this synthesis only to empirical religion, he may be right. However, this becomes extremely problematic as soon as the metacentres of religion are attacked, since these form the axis of the respective religion: Abandoning the Incarnation and kenosis of God on the cross in Christianity or denying the oneness, otherness and self-sufficiency of God in Islam would lead to a denial of the whole religion.¹

For example, by mentioning the fact that all sorts of injustice have been perpetrated in the name of

¹Küng’s suggestions have therefore met with strong criticism from Muslims and Christians alike in concrete cases of dialogue (see for example the sharp reactions of Nasr, ‘Response to Hans Küng’s Paper’, 96; Heeren-Sarka, ‘Um der Erneuerung des Islam Willen!’, 26–31).

Christianity, Küng justifies the elimination of disagreeable elements of the Bible (109f). Without any doubt his criticism of Christianity is justified. However, this criticism is already expressed in the person of Christ, the centre of Christianity, who not only said, “Love thy enemy,” but who also realized this love on the cross. In contrast, the empirical manifestation of Christianity is a *corpus permixtum*, which does not correspond to the metacentre. Thus it can not be used to criticize the centre of Christianity itself. In contrast, if one compares the centre of Christianity with the centre of Islam, the difference immediately becomes apparent: The metacentre of Islam (the confession of the oneness of God) in some cases justifies violence and manslaughter (for instance of heathen).¹

3. The extremely dubious distinction between external and internal perspective should also be mentioned. Must such a view not end in “doublethink” or schizophrenia? The example of a diplomat who acknowledges the laws of foreign states but only acts according to the laws of his own state is highly inappropriate; his laws are only relative and regulatory, whereas religion is concerned with the ab-

See also J. Triebel’s answer (Triebel, ‘*Schriftverständnis*’, 317–332). In his answer to Küng, Triebel illustrates the necessity of formulating the metacentres by comparing the Islamic and Christian understanding of Scripture.

¹Q 9:5. The death penalty for apostates is not clearly stated in the Quran (but cf. Q 9:11f); however, it is consistently endorsed in the traditions (Heffening, *Murtadd*, SEI, 413f. Cf. also Raeder, ‘*Toleranz und göttliche Sendung*’, 6–20). In the light of this Islamic view, E.H. Waugh’s assessment that Islam can also become an “international value system” seems very optimistic (Waugh, ‘*Islam as an International Value System?*’, 32–34).

solute truth. If a Christian according to his internal perspective believes that Christ is “the way, the truth and the life” (Joh 14,6),¹ then he must also believe in it according to his external perspective if he wants to maintain his truthfulness and integrity as a person. Indeed, the possibility of separating the two seems highly questionable. What is a necessity in politics dealing with conditional situations can not possibly be applied to religions, which deal with the Absolute.

4. Küng lists certain “ethical perspectives” that he believes belong to the common good of the great religions and can lead to consensus. Among them are the welfare of Man, the Golden Rule and the five great commandments (see above p. 282). However, if one considers the ethical orientation of Islam, it is noticeable that the just mentioned “ethical perspectives” are strictly applicable only to the Islamic community (*umma*).² Muslim commandments ordering believers to kill polytheists and reduce the People of the Book to second-class citizens³ demonstrate this forcibly. The discrimination of women in the divorce law, the instructions regarding the Holy War and the claim that Islam alone has the right to rule the state ultimately can not be reconciled with the code established by Küng. The fact that these are not just arbitrary provisions is made clear by the fact that they can also be justified by the Quran

¹Küng, *Projekt Weltethos*, 125.

²For the concept of *umma* see Raeder, ‘*Umma und Gemeinde*’, 30–47.

³Regarding the status of non-Muslims in Islamic countries see Fattel, *Le statut légal*; Khoury, *Toleranz im Islam*.

and the *ḥadīs* classed as reliable by Muslims (see below pp. 334–336).

Thus the ethical “consensus” of religions presented by Küng does not stand up to closer scrutiny, as it does not apply to Islam; neither do basic Muslim values correspond to his standard of humanity nor to his ethical perspectives.

Clearly, disregarding both the whole picture as well as the metacentre of a religion can lead to extremely ambiguous or even false results.

5. Küng’s treatment of exegetical issues is also problematic. Thus he can readily use certain, by no means undisputed, results of New Testament scholars to interpret the divine Sonship of Jesus figuratively.¹ Furthermore, he can give the Trinitarian dogma an Islamic sense² and thus come close to the Muslim position. On the other hand, he has no problems in using other results of Biblical research to persuade Muslims to abandon the mech-

¹In contrast cf. Gese, ‘Der Messias’, 128–151, esp. 147ff; Stuhlmacher, ‘Achtzehn Thesen’, 192–208; Hofius, ‘Sühne und Versöhnung’, 33–49, esp. 44ff; Hengel, *Der Sohn Gottes*, esp. 90ff.

²H. Küng and Ess, *Christentum und Weltreligionen*, 177–179. E. Jüngel especially has pointed out the indispensability of the doctrine of the Trinity (Jüngel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, 514–543, “Meine Theologie”, 6f). But J. Moltmann also underlines this (Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, esp. 169–172, 221–240, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes*, 117–128, 172–193, *Der gekreuzigte Gott*, esp. 184–267, ‘Gesichtspunkte der Kreuzestheologie’, 346–365, esp. 357ff).

It is typical that in his critique of Moltmann’s essay just mentioned, Küng asks if Jesus is not too directly identified with God: By directly and not indirectly identifying Jesus with God, is the difference between Father and Son neglected in favour of the one divine ‘nature’ or ‘substance’ in the sense of the later Hellenistic and in particular Latin speculation? (H. Küng and Ess, ‘Die Religionen’, 403).

anistic inspiration of the *Qurān*.¹ The problem is not *that* he offers this criticism; rather it lies in the fact that he adopts an autonomous, not clearly definable and somewhat eclectic standpoint outside of all religions in order to seek out and define this “common” ethos. The question inevitably arises: Is his programme a dialogue between the religions, or is it a dialogue between Kūng and the religions?²

Start From Each Metacentre

Kūng’s thoughts demonstrate that if we attempt to determine the relation between Islam and Christianity without bearing the respective metacentre in mind, we arrive at inner contradictions. In this respect, his approach confirms our assertion that Christianity and Islam must be understood and assessed from the viewpoint of their respective centres.³ S. Raeder rightly emphasizes that every

¹H. Kūng and Ess, ‘*Die Religionen*’, 106. Cf. the detailed critique of Triebel, ‘*Schriftverständnis*’, esp. 329–332. It is food for thought that a leading Muslim professor not only excludes the possibility that Christian or Jewish sources were processed in the *Qurān* but also calls this idea blasphemy in the eyes of Muslims; see Nasr, ‘*Response to Hans Kūng’s Paper*’, 99.

²On the Muslim side, this criticism has also been expressed by S.H. Nasr: “One cannot assume on the other side of a dialogue a point of view that is not acceptable to the party with which one is in discourse, one that is an anomaly and hardly accepted by any serious authority in the Islamic world, to whatever part of the political or theological spectrum he may belong” (Nasr, ‘*Response to Hans Kūng’s Paper*’, 96; cf. Heeren-Sarka, “*Um der Erneuerung des Islam Willen!*?”, 30f).

In Muslim eyes, Kūng is trying to co-opt them in a similar manner as e.g. Murad Kamil, who thinks he can prove that the *Qurān* proclaims the doctrine of the Trinity (Kamil, ‘*Die Dreieinigkeit und der Koran*’, 61–71).

³In his essay on the Islamic and Christian concept of Scripture mentioned above, J. Triebel demonstrates the appropriateness of the approach of Rosenkranz (cf. Triebel, ‘*Schriftverständnis*’, 318).

religion has a determining centre of life, and that light can only be shed on the details by starting out from this centre. When this is done, things that outwardly seem to be the same often turn out to be completely different.¹ Dialogue must necessarily take into account the whole, the structure and the middle of both religions, so that these are not distorted. The example of Küng shows us that in true dialogue we can not hide behind our own positions; rather we must first hear and take the beliefs of Christianity and Islam seriously. In dialogue, it is inappropriate to impose extra-religious values on any religion; rather, we must derive any critique from the centre of the religion itself.²

There are many who like Küng claim that the religious conflict between Christianity and Islam has often led to wars. The conclusion that is generally reached is that rational and spiritual debate must be abandoned in favour of a constructive “dialogue,” how ever this much used and abused word is meant.³ It may be countered that at least in Christianity, dialogue with Islam is not enough to end violence on the part of Christians; rather, we need to reflect on the love of the crucified Son to bring this about. Only this can give a Christian the insight and power to dialogue properly. Through this love, he becomes capable of treading the arduous path that leads to an understanding of the Muslim and to mutual understanding. Moreover, he will not be able to deny the Muslim his most precious good and the centre of his existence, namely the message of the crucified and risen Christ; on the contrary,

¹Raeder, ‘Islamischer und christlicher Gottesbegriff’, 8.

²Of course, this does not mean that we discard reason; in apologetics, rational reasoning has a legitimate role.

³Thus e.g. Bakatu-Bulabubi, ‘Christlich-muslimischer Dialog’, 40ff.

he will give priority to removing any obstacles that might hinder others in understanding the Gospel. When we determine the relation between Christianity and Islam, the goal must be to make the centre of the Christian message understandable to Muslims.

The Point of Departure: Bible and Quran

When we set out to determine the relation between Christianity and Islam, it is logical to begin by considering the claims of the Bible and the Quran, as these play a central role in both religions. Both the Christian church and the Islamic community are derived from these, and the basic structure of each is based on its Book, even if many additional elements accumulated later.

At this point a question arises: To what extent do the traditions (*hadīs*) of Muhammad have to be taken into account? Does not the *sunna* continue to be the second pillar of Muslim religion next to the Quran? In fact, does it not continue to have an overpowering influence on the interpretation of the Quran in many points?¹ This needs to be clarified. First of all, the Quran is the undisputed centre of Islamic faith, while Islamic views regarding the *sunna* of the Prophet and the Prophets' companions often differ sharply, depending on which *hadīs* are considered to be authoritative.² Second, some leading Islamic representatives of the reform movements have rejected the validity or normativity of many or even all of the *hadīs*.³ It must be admitted, though, that the Muslim masses have not followed them in taking this step; even today, the image of

¹ Cf. Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, I, 48–51, 235–239.

² Goldziher, 'Die geschichtliche Entwicklung', 46–48.

³ Schimmel, *Der Islam im indischen Subkontinent*, 108; Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, 57ff.

Muhammad conveyed by the *ḥadīṣ* still forms the Muslim ideal of piety in the whole world. Indeed, commonly accepted Muslim practices prove that the *ḥadīṣ* have left a deep imprint on the self-understanding of the Muslim and his treatment of the Quran.¹ For spatial and temporal reasons, the following must be confined to the Quran; however, it will endeavour to take into account the Sunni understanding of the Quran just indicated.

Determining the Relation Leads to a Decision

Once a Muslim becomes aware of the differences and contradictions between Quranic and Biblical statements, he is forced to choose between the truthfulness of the Bible and the Quran. The conversion experiences described in the second part bear witness to how painful this process can be.

This is the point where the old Islamic theories of Scriptural corruption and abrogation kick in. These accusations have discouraged many a Muslim from seriously studying the claims of the Bible. For example, Şafdar ‘Alī admits that for a long time he did not take the Bible seriously; in fact, he even felt an aversion to Christians (see above p. 169,173).

Refute Islamic Theories of Textual Corruption and Abrogation

Even if a Muslim is made aware of Quranic contradictions to the Bible, he is prevented from seriously considering

¹Thus adequately elaborated in C.E. Padwick’s study of Islamic prayer literature; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*.

Biblical claims because of the Islamic theories of textual corruption and abrogation. These cause him to believe that he can sufficiently explain why the Quran contradicts the Bible and why Biblical commandments are not valid for him.

For this reason, when we strive to determine the relation between Christianity and Islam, it is imperative to repudiate the Islamic theory of Scriptural corruption and abrogation.

Articulate Structural Differences

Attention has been brought to the fact that most of the earlier apologists focused on polemics against Muhammad and individual Islamic teachings. As a result, their works tended to deeply offend Muslims; At the same time, the comparison was usually very superficial and did not try to detect structural similarities or differences (see above p. 53).

The Indian apologists, too, were not always able to free themselves from this apologetic pattern. Nevertheless, serious comparisons were made between the basic structure of the Bible and the Quran. Of these, especially the concept of Şafdar 'Alī stands out. Şafdar 'Alī sets up common principles of Christianity and Islam in order to work out the profound structural differences on the basis of these principles (see above pp. 188f).

His basic line of argumentation can be outlined as follows: According to Islamic and Christian teachings, God's nature is sacred, pure, righteous and merciful. While God's nature is reflected in the message of the crucified and risen Christ, the message of Islam contradicts his nature (see above p. 183).

Following the lead of Şafdar, a possible elaboration of the relation between Christianity and Islam shall now follow. Like Şafdar, it takes as its starting point the common attributes of God found in Christianity and Islam. However, it goes a step further, showing that the contradictions between the Christian and Islamic messages are based on a different concept of God; that these differences are in fact a logical development of the differing concept of God.

This method has three advantages. First, unlike Pfander's marks of a true revelation, its point of departure is legitimate, while it does not conceal the differences between both religions. As a result, this approach can move in categories that are not foreign to the Muslim way of thinking. Secondly, it contributes to the understanding of the centre of the respective religion in the sense of Rosenkranz. Third, it avoids inappropriate polemics against Islam without compromising the Christian message (see above p. 190).

Common Attributes of God

The term revelation implies that the origin is God. Thus every revelation must reflect something of the nature of God.

Orthodox Muslims claim that the *Quran* is God's uncreated, final word to Man. For Christians, on the other hand, Christ as testified in the Bible is the final, ultimate revelation and the Incarnate Word of God (John 1:14). Both religions claim to represent the truth. Can both be right, or do we have to choose one or the other? Christians and Muslims agree that God's being is reflected in his revelations, and that they can not contradict each other. However, there are obvious contradictions between the

book of Islam and the Christian message. How can we determine which religion is right or whether both are right? Are there fixed criteria that are not subject to time-conditioned views and through which can we arrive at a fair conclusion?

In the following, attributes of God common to Christianity and Islam will be examined in order to work out the differences between Christianity and Islam.

God's Holiness

Islam It is probable that Arabic usage of the root *q-d-s* in the meaning of holiness was borrowed from Aramaic.¹

In the Quran, God is called most holy King in two places (*al-malik al-quddūs*).² The precise meaning of this expression is unclear and does not become any clearer by looking at the context.³ Further uses of the root *q-d-s* shed more light on the Quranic concept of holiness. Thus the angels praise God's holiness;⁴ Moses has to take off his sandals in the presence of the burning bush because of the sanctity of the site;⁵ the Israelites enter the holy land

¹Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary*, 232; against Lagrange, *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, 145, fn. 7; cf. Chelhod, „*Qadāsa*“, *EI* 4, 372. Literature on the holiness of God in the Quran is extremely sparse. The most important contributions have been written by J. Chelhod.

²Q 59:23; 62:1; see Horovitz, 'Jewish Proper Names', 219; Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 261.

³Islamic commentators see the term as evidence of the teaching of *tanzīh* [keeping God far away from non-divine, human attributes] (cf. Macdonald, *Allāh, SEI*, 34, col. 2).

⁴nuqaddisu laka; Q 2:30. See Horovitz, 'Jewish Proper Names', 219.

⁵Q 20:11f; 79:16. See Horovitz, 'Jewish Proper Names', 218, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 125 (on Tuwā as the name of the sacred valley).

of Palestine;¹ through the Holy Spirit, God strengthened Jesus² and sent down the Quran.³

It is noticeable that the root *q-d-s* is used sparingly in the Quran. In the *ḥadīṣ* as well it only appears sporadically⁴ in contrast to the much more central term *ḥarām*. The latter includes everything sacred and unclean, that is everything separated from the world that is forbidden for the profane realm. Man must avoid this realm because of its dangerous nature and limit himself to the profane realm of *ḥalāl*. For this reason, the Quran and *ḥadīṣ* carefully distinguish between objects belonging to the domain of *ḥarām* and those belonging to the sphere of the profane (*ḥalāl*).⁵ As J. Chelhod remarks, holiness (that is usage of the root *q-d-s*) can be described as the positive pole of *ḥarām*.⁶

Holiness has its origin in God: The valley of Tuwā is holy because of the revelation of God in the burning bush; Palestine is holy as the land of God, which he designated for the Israelites; the Holy Spirit is holy because he has a special relationship with God and is sent by him as a messenger.

For Man, this holiness is *ḥarām*, and he can not approach it because he belongs to the realm of the profane. Only under certain conditions can he stand before this consuming holiness, as the example of Moses implies, who has to take off his sandals to approach the burning

¹Q 5:21. Cf. Horovitz, 'Jewish Proper Names', 218.

²Q 2:87,253; 5:110. Cf. Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 121–126.

³Q 16:102. Islam therefore identifies the Holy Spirit with the Archangel Gabriel; cf. Q 2:97; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 702f.

⁴Chelhod, *Les Structures du sacré*, 55f, „*Kadāsa*“, EI 4,372.

⁵Chelhod, *Les Structures du sacré*, 50; Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, 120f.

⁶Chelhod, „*Kadāsa*“, EI 4,372.

bush.¹ One suspects in this the root of the later doctrine of the sinlessness (*iṣma*) of the prophets: It was probably inferred that the prophets were sinless, otherwise they would not have been able to receive God's revelation; after all, this presented a considerable danger to someone who was unclean.²

Islam later adopted the term (most) holy (*quddūs*) as the fifth of the 99 most beautiful names of God and thus underlined the canonical meaning of the word as an attribute of God.³

The category of *purity* is linked to the concept of the holiness of God. In the Quran, sanctity is related only to God or things related to the Divine. In contrast, the notion of purity (*t-h-r / z-k-w*) is only mentioned in relation to Man: Man purifies himself in order to conform to God's holiness and to keep away from the power of evil.⁴

Like the Quran, the 99 most beautiful names of God do not include a term that indicates God's purity either.⁵ This confirms the fact that in Islam, purity is related only to the human/earthly realm; it is what corresponds to God's holiness in this world.

God loves the pure and wants Man to be clean.⁶ There are two movements in the process of purification. On

¹ Cf. Chelhod, *Les Structures du sacré*, Ch. 1, esp. 50ff.

² Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 185–189.

³ Cf. Walzer, *al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, *EI* 1, 714f. On the popular use of these names cf. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 104–107.

⁴ Cf. Chelhod, 'Les attitudes et les gestes', 161–188, esp. 168–171.

⁵ Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 144–148.

⁶ Q 2:222. See Paret, *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*, 48; on the concept of purity, Paret comments, "It must be remembered that according to Quranic thought, bodily purity is closely connected to ritual purity (cf. 5:6), and this in turn is closely connected to the realm of moral and religious cleansing and sanctification" (*ibid.*, 15).

the one hand, Man cleanses himself;¹ on the other hand, God is often the one who purifies Man.² Furthermore, not only is God's revelation pure;³ it also purifies Man.⁴ Ultimately, however, God's almighty will is crucial, for only he can decide whether to declare somebody to be pure on the last day.⁵

An instructive verse in this context is Q 24:21:

Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you, not one of you would ever have grown pure. But Allah causeth whom He will to grow [pure].

This saying, which is addressed to believers, implies that God is holy and that therefore Man should keep himself pure as his creature. The notable thing about this verse, however, is the statement that even the believer is not able to become completely pure; only God's mercy declares him to be fully pure. Nevertheless, God does not commit himself even regarding the faithful; rather, he displays his complete sovereignty and free will: God alone decides whether he wishes to consider a Man to be pure. At the most, Man can try to win his favour by complying with the regulations regarding purity. Moreover, this purity seems to be purely forensic.⁶

Having said this, the aspect of the holiness of God in the Quran should not be overrated; the fact that it occurs relatively rarely shows that it does not play a central role. Rather, the confession of the oneness of God (*tauḥīd*) is

¹ Cf. Q 2:232; 5:6; 7:82 (=27:56); 9:18,103,108; 33:53; 58:12; 79:18 *etc.*

² Q 2:25; 3:15,42,55; 4:57; 5:41; 8:11.

³ Q 80:13f; 98:2; cf. 56:79.

⁴ Q 2:129,151; 62:2.

⁵ Q 4:49.

⁶ The Islamic concept of encounter with holiness is vividly depicted in the account of the first revelation to Muhammad narrated by Bukhārī (*Kitāb bad' al-waḥy*); on this see Müller, 'Die Barmherzigkeit Gottes', 353–356.

a much more important concept to which the concept of the holiness of God is subordinated, as the quoted verse clearly demonstrates.¹

Christianity In contrast, the Bible exhibits a broad spectrum of concepts regarding holiness.²

Every revelation of Yahweh to the people of Israel is at the same time a revelation of his consuming holiness. Thus, because of the holiness of the burning bush, Moses must take off his sandals before he can approach it (Ex 3:5); the people must be careful not to touch Mount Sinai while Yahweh reveals himself there, lest it should perish in the face of His holiness (Ex 19:12f,21–25); the prophet Isaiah experiences his transience in the face of the holiness of God (Isa 6:5) *etc.*³

The examples cited each exhibit two aspects that are typical of every unmediated revelation: When Man encounters God's holiness, his sinfulness becomes painfully apparent; he can not tolerate this holiness because of his sinfulness.

However, God has a special relationship with Israel, which he has chosen as his people and with whom he has made a covenant (Ex 24).⁴ The awesomeness of this can be recognized in three things: First, God reveals his life-giving commandments (Ps 1; 119),⁵ which regulate

¹On the holiness of God see also Bouman, 'Die guten Werke im Islam', 14–16, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 260–264; Chelhod, *Les Structures du sacré*, 93–114.

²Kellermann, *Heiligkeit. II*, TRE 14, 697–703; Lattke, *Heiligkeit. III*, TRE 14, 703–708; Laube, *Heiligkeit. IV*, TRE 14, 708–712; Kornfeld and Ringgren, *Qdsh*, THWAT 5, 1179–1204; Proksch and K. Kuhn, *Hagios*, THWNT 1, 87–110; cf. Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 760f.

³Gese, 'Der Johannesprolog', 188f, 'Das Gesetz', 88f.

⁴Cf. Gese, 'Die Sühne', 98f.

⁵Kraus, *Psalmen*, I, 6f; *ibid.*, II.

the relationship of the Israelite to God and his neighbor in accordance with the divine will (Ex 20 *etc.*).¹ Secondly, God commits and binds himself to his people despite the many aberrations and the recurrent infidelity of the same. Thirdly, he extends his arm to Israel and lets the sinful people partake of his own holiness: “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev 19:2).²

The manifold distinctions between pure and impure in Leviticus as well as the purification rites are based on the importance of avoiding objects that cause the Israelite to lose his participation in God’s holiness.³ The believers of the New Covenant did not adopt the purification rites of the Old Testament. Nonetheless, as God’s chosen Church in Christ they took their participation in God’s holiness as well as the commandment to be holy very seriously. As 1Peter states, “You are the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy people[...]” (1Pet 2:2; *cf.* 2,11ff).⁴ This sanctification of the believer is not a static state; rather, it is a profoundly dynamic transformation of Man in God’s image through the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:15–26; 16:5–15; 2Cor 3:18).⁵

In both the Old and New Testament, the motif of cultic purity belongs almost exclusively to the human domain; it represents the response of man in this world to divine

¹ *Cf.* Gese, ‘Das Gesetz’, 59–63.

² *Cf.* *ibid.*, 66.

³ Ringgren, *Tāhar*, *THWAT* 3, 310.

⁴ On the aspect of atonement see Gese, ‘Die Sühne’, 104–106.

⁵ See also Jüngel, ‘Das Opfer Jesu’, 276–282; on the relation between holiness and the Law in the New Testament see Gese, ‘Das Gesetz’, 78–84.

holiness.¹ How then does the New Testament differ from the Old Testament? The Israelite of the Old Testament purifies himself in order to correspond to God's holiness, be pleasing to him and be able to meet him. In contrast, the laws of purity are on the one hand abrogated by Christ but on the other hand radicalised through his demand for inner purity.²

The statements of the Old Testament regarding the process of purification have two aspects. On the one hand, it is something that Man does;³ on the other hand it is something that God does to Man.⁴ In contrast, according to Hebrews the sacrificial death of Christ cleansed Man of his sins and fundamentally liberated him from sinful impulses.⁵

God's Goodness and Mercy

Islam Numerous Quranic designations of God indicate his goodness and mercy. Thus he is called noble/benevolent,⁶ Lord of majesty and honour,⁷ merciful

¹Only one verse refers to the purity of God's eyes (1:13), while his speeches ('imrāh) are often referred to as pure (Ps 12:7; 19:10 ["fear" of Yahweh is perhaps a scribal error for 'imrāh]). Because of their ambivalence, the latter can belong to both the realm of God as well as to the realm of the world (cf. Ringgren, *Tāhar*, THWAT 3, 314).

²Cf. Hauck and Meyer, *Katharos*, THWNT 3, 416–434; Negoita and Ringgren, *Zākāh/zkk*, THWAT 2, 569–571.

³Gen 35:2; Neh 12:30; 2Ki 5 *etc.*

⁴Ez 36:25; Neh 13:30; Ps 51:4; Neh 12:30 (through the priests) *etc.*

⁵Cf. e.g. Heb 1:3; 9:14; O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 96–105, 314f.

⁶al-karīm (often).

⁷zu 'l-jalāl wa 'l-ikrām (Q 55:78).

and gracious,¹ forgiving,² gladly/very forgiving,³ meek,⁴ mercifully forgiving,⁵ very thankful (for good deeds of men),⁶ very merciful,⁷ affectionate,⁸ wont to give⁹ and giver of human subsistence.¹⁰ These and similar terms encompass both the aspect of God's goodness and his benevolence towards Man and were included in the list of the 99 most beautiful names of God. This inclusion attests the

¹ar-rahmān ar-rahīm (Q 52:28; at the beginning of every sura except Sura 9). (Cf. Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 158–171; Raeder, 'Sure 55: Schöpfung und Gericht', 44; Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, 152f; Paret, *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*, 11; Horovitz, 'Jewish Proper Names', 204; Nöldeke, 'Über den Ursprung', I, 113).

²al-ghāfir (Q 52:155; 40:3).

³al-ghafūr (often); al-ghaffār (Q 22:82 *etc.*); see Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 141–151. Similarly al-'ufūw (Q 4:43 *etc.*); *ibid.*, 152–154.

⁴al-ḥalīm (often).

⁵tawwāb (Q 2:37 *etc.*); see Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 155–157.

⁶ash-shakūr (Q 35:30 *etc.*).

⁷ar-ra'ūf (Q 2:143 *etc.*).

⁸al-wadūd (Q 11:89; 85:14). Cf. Macdonald, *Allāh, SEI*, 33–37; Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 174f.

⁹al-wahhāb (Q 3:8; 38:9,35).

¹⁰ar-razzāq (Q 51:58). On the message of the benevolent Creator God see Paret, *Muhammad und der Koran*, 74–76,80–89; regarding popular beliefs see Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 245–258, esp. 247–249.

interest of Sunni Islam in this aspect of the divine nature.¹ God's "love" (expressed by the roots *ḥ-b-b* and *w-d-d*) is often mentioned. No doubt it is more correct to talk about liking or affection in this context.² Pakistani Orientalist D. Rahbar rightly emphasizes that the Quran never speaks of the unconditional love of God; rather God's "love" is something that only the righteous—those who fulfil his commandments—can hope for.³ Therefore, the Quran prefers to use the word *rahma* (mercy), "for whereas Love admits of some equality and reciprocity of relationship, *Rahma* on the other hand connotes in its object certain inferiority."⁴

The Quranic concept of divine mercy can only be understood in the light of the Islamic notion of the omnipotence and oneness of God, which is not bound or committed to

¹Cf. Gardet, *al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, EI 1, 714–717; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 144–148; Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 261f; Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, I, 221. For the popular use of these names see Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 104–107.

In this regard cf. a new attempt by G. Müller to demonstrate that the motif of God's mercy belongs to the earliest proclamation of Muhammad and not the idea of God's judgment; Müller, 'Die Barmherzigkeit Gottes', 42; following Birkeland, *The Lord Guideth*, 5; Bell, *The Origin of Islam*, 69–90; against Paret, 'Leitgedanken', 219–224. Despite his noteworthy reconstruction of the development of the motif of mercy, it raises a lot of questions. Does his world view, in which Feuerbach's thesis of religion as a human projection takes the front seat, do justice to the self-understanding of the Islamic faith? (Cf. the subtitle: Mercy as a Symbol).

²Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 172; Sweetman, 'The Theological Position', 60–62.

³Cf. Q 2:222; 3:140; 9:4,7,108f; 49:4 etc. Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 172–175; Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 174–177, 'Die guten Werke im Islam', 17f; Sweetman, 'The Theological Position', 56–62.

⁴Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 158; Sweetman, 'The Theological Position', 56–58. On the popular use of the names *rahmān* and *rahīm* see Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 101f.

doing anything. Again and again it is emphasized that forgiveness is God's prerogative, that only he in his otherness can ordain whether a person experiences forgiveness or not; his mercy is not obliged to forgive anybody.¹ This numinous aspect is for example expressed in Q 2:284:²

He owns everything that is in heaven and on earth. You may say what is in you, proclaim it or keep it secret; God will (eventually) settle it with you. He will then forgive whom he wishes to forgive and punish whom he wishes to punish. God has the power over everything.

Christianity In the Old Testament, God's goodness and mercy are expressed mainly through the roots *h-s-d* and *r-h-m*, "whereby *hæsæd* expresses the fundamental goodness of God while *rhm* expresses the special turning of God to Man in a situation of distress and guilt (*cf.*

¹*Cf.* e.g. 3:128f; 2:284; 5:18. See also Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 143f; 67ff; Sweetman, 'The Theological Position', 66–68. Rahbar postulates that according to the Quran, God's mercy is not capricious or arbitrary, but rather it manifests itself only in the reward of the righteous and the punishment of people who err. This seems to differentiate too little because of its apologetic tendency. That a crucial element of the Quranic proclamation lies in the message that God is judge is undisputed. However, Rahbar overlooks the fact that this concept is subordinate to the concept of the omnipotence and oneness of God. In other words, God is not bound to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Besides, the consequence of Rahbar's thesis would be the free will of Man, which militates against the Quranic testimony as well as against general Islamic teaching; see the critique of H. Kraemer and J. Bouman in Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 179, fn. 279. In this respect, O.H. Schumann relied too much on the position of Rahbar; Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 196.

²*Cf.* Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 178–180; Rosenkranz, *Evangelische Religionskunde*, 116; see also above, p. 299 to Q 24:21. On the concept of love in Sufism see Raeder, 'Die Liebe zu Gott', 83–102. The Quranic concept is reflected in the believer's response as evidenced in Muslim prayer manuals; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 259–272.

Isa 54:8: Because of (my) everlasting goodness, I have had compassion on you).¹ It is important to note that in these and other essential attributes of God such as *tôb*² or *æmæt*,³ the idea is never far away that God has committed himself to Man, indeed committed himself again and again despite Man's mistakes and sins. In the term covenant (*b^erît*),⁴ this unilateral commitment experiences its strongest concretion.

Thus, in the Old Testament a God is revealed who has bonded with Man from the beginning, something that is also expressed through terms such as "image of God" and "child of God."⁵ Despite the growing wickedness of Man, this God has always taken pity on him. In the Old Testament, his mercy is expressed most strikingly in the covenants (Gen 4:15; 9:1–17; 17; Ex 34), but also in the numerous manifestations of a God who binds himself to his people and deeply cares for it, even though it keeps on rebelling (*cf. e.g.* Hos 11; Eze 20; the Servant of God songs; Jer 45:3–5).⁶

In the New Testament, God's mercy and faithfulness to Man in spite of his transgressions is most fully expressed in Jesus Christ;⁷ for the crucifixion of the Son of God sig-

¹Simian-Yofre, *Rhm*, THWAT 7, 475; *cf.* 460–475; Zobel, *Hæsæd*, THWAT 3, 48–72.

²Höver-Johaq, *Tôb*, THWAT 3, 315–339; Grundmann, *Agathos*, THWNT 1, 13f.

³Jepsen, *Åman*, THWAT 1, 333–345. *Cf.* Mic 7:20; Ps 30:10; 54:7; 57:11; 108:5 *et al.*

⁴Weinfeld, *B^erît*, THWAT 1, 781–807; Zimmerli, *Grundriss*, 39–48.

⁵Zimmerli, *Grundriss*, 27–29; Jüngel, 'Der Gott entsprechende Mensch', 290–317 esp. 300–317; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 101ff.

⁶Zimmerli, *Grundriss*, 35–48.

⁷On New Testament passages regarding God's mercy see Bultmann, *Eleos*, THWNT 2, 474–483; esp. 474. *Cf.* Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 774–777.

nifies the deepest degradation and kenosis of God (Phil 2:6–11) and is thus the most perfect expression of his love for Man (John 3:16).¹ The Apology of the Augsburg Confession rightly concludes that love, unlike anger, belongs to the very nature of God.²

In the New Testament, the unique relationship of the believer to God is most clearly expressed in the fact that he is named a child of God.³

Coping With Evil in Islam and Christianity

We have seen that Islam agrees with Christianity that God is holy, good and merciful, although there are significant differences arising from the divergent concept of God. This will be discussed later. In the following, we will use these common attributes of God in order to determine the relation of Christianity to Islam. For this we will begin with the problem of evil, the sinfulness of Man and his salvation through God. Strictly speaking, the issue at stake is the nature of evil, Man's share in evil and salvation from evil through God. How do both revelations answer this question according to their common standard of God's holiness, goodness and mercy?

¹On the vicarious death of Christ see also Jüngel, 'Das Geheimnis der Stellvertretung', 249–260. Cf. also Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 154–164, for a more in-depth comparison of Jewish and Christian thought with Qur'anic statements. On the death of Jesus see Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 328ff.

²*Die Bekenntnisschriften*, 261, line 22–37 (= XII, 51f); cf. the theological development of the Lutheran distinction between *opus alienum* and *opus proprium* in Jüngel, 'Die Offenbarung der Verborgenheit Gottes', 163–182.

³Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, 175–196.

Islam

God, Man and Evil In early Islam, a fierce debate erupted concerning the question of whether God is the origin of evil. Especially the Mu‘tazilites, who were influential in the early Abbasid reign, denied that all evil originates from God.¹ The opposite view, which eventually emerged victorious and was adopted in Sunni Islam, was more in keeping with the spirit of Islam. It is obvious that the idea of God’s absolute oneness and omnipotence eventually had to deduce that evil originated from God. This is also supported by a series of Quranic passages.²

According to Islamic doctrine, the good and evil works of Man also have their origin in God.³ Q 2:30 indicates as much:

And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not. He said, ‘I know (much) what you do not know.’

¹These could base their claim on passages such as Q 18:29; 23:14; 5:110 and 4:79.

²Cf. Watt and Marmura, ‘Politische Entwicklungen’, 243–247; Q 2:7,26; 4:155; 6:25,125; 7:178,186; 11:107f; 13:16,27; 14:4; 16:37; 37:96; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 111–120; Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 15f.

³Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 46,102ff; cf. Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 183ff; Gardet, *al-Asmā’ al-ḥusnā*, EI 1, 717; Macdonald, *Allāh*, SEI, 35.

According to this, God created Man in such a way that he would do evil. The listener is also expressly denied an answer to why God acted in this way.¹

The Fall of Man It is only logical that the Quranic narratives of the Fall (7:19–25, 2:35–39, 20:117–124) significantly differ from Biblical accounts. The most important difference is that in the Quran, Adam’s sin “does not cause a fundamental change in his nature or duties or in the nature or duties of his descendants... His sin is his disobedience to the commandment given by Allah. As a punishment he, and therefore the whole human race, has to descend out of Paradise. However, his repentance has re-opened the way to divine guidance...”² In accordance with his natural state (*fiṭra*), he is able to repent and turn back to God.³

The Concept of Sin The differing concept of sin in Islam and Christianity becomes apparent in the fact that the Muslim distinguishes between small and great sins.⁴ This

¹Cf. also Q 37:96. On this basis it is easier to understand why and with what nuance the general consensus in Islam came to the conclusion that Man has no free will, even though this came about only after a fierce struggle (One must, of course, carefully distinguish the Islamic doctrine of predestination from the Western discussion of the subject; see Watt and Marmura, ‘*Politische Entwicklungen*’, 235–243).

²Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 189; Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen zum Qoran*, 61,68–77. On the etymology of Adam see Horowitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 85.

³Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 189–191; generally *ibid.*, 183ff, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 172–186; Pederson, *Ādam*, *EI* 1, 176–178; Sweetman, ‘*The Theological Position*’, 186. This view is also reflected in the fictional prayers of Adam found in Islam; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 187f.

⁴For an antecedent in the Quran see Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 173f. See also al-Ghazālī’s distinctions in Bouman, ‘*Die Theologie al-Ghazalis*’, 121f.

graded evaluation of sins and their penalties shows that Islam denies that sin essentially has the power to separate Man from God and make him worthy of death. To put it more precisely, since Man as a created being is always (even in Paradise!) separated from God, the Wholly Other, sin can never have the function of separating him from God. For this reason, sins have a very different significance; they do not fundamentally condemn human beings. After all, as a human being he was created flawed by God, the source of both good and evil.¹ For example, the Islamic assertion that certain sins of the mind do not make believers punishable before God² is unthinkable in Biblically anchored Christianity. The same is true of the doctrine that God can forgive even so-called great sins (*kabā'ir*) of the believer without the latter having to feel remorse.³

At first sight, the Roman Catholic Church's division of sins into "mortal" and "venial" sins (*peccata mortalia et venialia*)

¹Cf. Bouman, 'Die Theologie al-Ghazālī', 276–284, esp. the comparison of Augustine with Ghazālī, 282–284; Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 197f; Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 177. It is not surprising that C.E. Padwick notes, "The reader accustomed to Christian Arabic will remark the absence of a group of familiar words concerning the vileness, corruption, and defilement of sin—such words as *khubth*, *najāsa*, *danas*, and *fasād*. These words...have hardly found their way into the Muslim prayer-manuals..." Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 177.

²Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 625ff. Cf. Rom 5:12–14; 1Jn 3:4 etc.

³Wensinck, *Khatī'a*, SEI, 250f; Wensinck and Gardet, *Khatī'a*, EI 4, 1106–1109; Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 640ff. Bouman, 'Die guten Werke im Islam', Only in the case of *kufir* (unbelief) and *shirk* (idol worship) is remorse a prerequisite for forgiveness. Cf. the daily request for forgiveness in Mt 6:12=Lk 11:4; Mt 5–7; 6:4b. See also 18–29; Goldziher, 'Die geschichtliche Entwicklung', 35–79; Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, I, 233–261; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 174–177. On the ethical implications of the Islamic term for community (*umma*) in this context see Raeder, 'Umma und Gemeinde', 37f.

seems to offer a parallel.¹ However, the fundamental differences show that the Roman Catholic Church has an understanding of sin anchored in the Christian tradition: First, it firmly adheres to the doctrine of original sin; second, it teaches that every sin including venial sins must be punished and therefore demands repentance for every sin.²

Interestingly enough, despite this understanding of sin anchored in the Quran, Sufism has an awareness of the fundamental sinfulness of Man, and a daily task of the Sufi is to test and purify himself (*muḥāsiba*).³ Even the popular prayer books here and there contradict the orthodox doctrine.⁴

Coping with Evil in the Light of God's Holiness and Mercy
How is God's holiness related to his mercy? The Quran replies: He rewards good works and punishes evil deeds. On Judgment Day, Man will be held accountable for all of

¹Thus established as the norm at the council of Trent; cf. Sess. VI, Decr. de justificatione 11, in Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, 1536–1539.

²Cf. Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, 1920: Nullum est peccatum ex natura sua veniale, sed omne peccatum meretur poenam aeternam; Schoonenberg, 'Die Heilsgeschichte vor Christus', 854ff;

No doubt, however, the above-mentioned distinction has led to a casuistry that does not correspond to the Biblical testimony; see the justified criticism of Schlatter, *Das christliche Dogma*, 246,632; similarly Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik*, I, 680–684; Thielicke, *Theologische Ethik*, II, 1, 73–89.

³Cf. Wensinck, *Khātī'a*, SEI, 251; Wensinck and Gardet, *Khātī'a*, EI 4, 1109. Nonetheless, the question remains whether this drive of the Sufi to purify himself does not derive from other sources such as Neoplatonism; cf. Andrae, *Islamische Mystik*, 44–69; Raeder, 'Islam und christliche Sicht der Endzeit', 8f.

⁴Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 173–188.

his actions; nobody will mediate for him before God.¹ On the other hand, God punishes whom he wants and takes pity on whom he wants; only unbelief bars Man from receiving any form of mercy.² Sunni Islam has developed this concept in the teaching that God is not obliged to do anything for Man, otherwise he would not be free.³ Thus, in Islam the holiness and mercy of God are subordinate to the confession that the one God is Wholly Other and is not bound to do anything for Man. For this reason, the term love in the true sense is not applicable to the God of Islam, since love can never be separated from reliability, faithfulness and the granting of freedom.⁴

Even the use of the term “covenant” (*‘ahd*) in Q 9:111 can only be understood correctly in the context of the preceding statements: In 9:111, God commits himself by offering the believer Paradise in exchange for his person and his assets. The background of this commitment is war, and it is meant to encourage Muslims who are going to war. If one reads the verse detached from the Quranic context, it appears to be a parallel to the Jewish-Christian concept of the covenant. However, two aspects should not be overlooked: On the one hand, the verse must be read in the light of the fundamental unapproachability and oneness of God; on the other hand, God is demanding something in return for the reward of Paradise, namely the life and assets of the believer.⁵

¹Q 2:286; 40:17 etc. Cf. Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, I, 217–21; Paret, *Muhammad und der Koran*, 70–73; Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 228–233.

²Cf. Q 3:25,73f; 5:54; 6:29,125; 14:4; 16:93; 35:8; 57:21; 62:4 etc.; Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 151–180; Gardet, *Allāh*, EI 1, 408f; Sweetman, ‘The Theological Position’, 49–56.

³Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 134.

⁴Cf. Raeder, ‘Islamischer und christlicher Gottesbegriff’, 22f.

⁵Q 3:75f; 7:12; 8:20–25; 33:7; 95:16 Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 69f.

It is therefore not surprising that although God is called a judge in the Quran, justice (*‘adl*) is not an attribute of God;¹ To call God righteous would limit him to a certain course of action and thus limit him. Later Islam was therefore somewhat inconsistent in including this term in the 99 most beautiful names of God.² Of course, by teaching that God’s attributes are fundamentally different from the corresponding worldly attributes (*tanzīh*),³ Muslims can override this discrepancy.

Regarding the question of the relation between God’s holiness and his mercy, Islam offers a further answer, namely that of intercession (*shafā‘a*). Although some

¹ “That he [i.e. Muhammad] would have thought fit to call him ‘just’ may be doubted” (Macdonald, *Allāh*, *SEI*, 34, col.2). The three times that God is called “the best of judges” (*khair al-hākimīn*, Q 8:87; 10:109; 12:80) is ambiguous in this respect; rather, the attribute *ḥaqq* (often translated as “truth” or “justice”) expresses the reality of God (ibid.). Thus, H. Kraemer’s objection is justified that the foundation for D. Rahbar’s assertion (“Justice of God is the most essential side of the Quranic doctrine of Allah”) is weak (Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 179, fn. 279; cf. Rosenkranz, *Evangelische Religionskunde*, 116). The subordination of the righteousness of God to the confession of the oneness of God in Islam also becomes apparent when we compare Augustine with al-Ghazālī: Unlike Augustine, for al-Ghazālī the righteousness of God is a quality that derives from his omnipotence and will (Bouman, ‘Die Theologie al-Ghazalis’, 249; see also ibid., 243–250; cf. Hourani, ‘Ghazali’, 87).

²Gardet, *al-Asmā’ al-ḥusnā*, *EI* 1, 715. The designation of God as just became one of the five Mu’tazilite principles, but later it was also incorporated into Sunni thought; Watt and Marmura, ‘Politische Entwicklungen’, 235ff; Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 102f, fn. 1. Nevertheless, the name of God as just must always be qualified in Sunni Islam; for by subordinating the righteousness of God to the confession of the oneness of God, the righteousness of God loses its verifiability and its binding character regarding Man; see Bouman, ‘Die Theologie al-Ghazalis’, 249.

³Macdonald, *Allāh*, *SEI*, 37f.

Quranic references point to the impossibility of intercession on the Last Day,¹ others clearly indicate that such an intercession can take place.² Not only do patriarchs³ and angels⁴ intercede for believers but also Muhammad.⁵ Only the intercession for hypocrites and infidels is expressly forbidden.⁶ Sunni Islam has developed this idea, so that today there are many kinds of mediators before God. Among these, Muhammad takes first place; through his intervention, even Muslims with so-called “great sins” (*ahl al-kabā’ir*) will be saved from hellfire.⁷ The main thought behind Islamic intercession is not the motif of atonement in the Biblical sense; rather, it is thought that the interceding person has won the special affection and closeness of God.⁸

Christianity

God, Man and Evil According to the Christian faith, sin does not derive from God; it exclusively derives from Man’s transgression of divine commandments. At all

¹Q 2:48,254; 10:18; 74:48.

²Q 39:44 (by God Himself); 2:255; 10:3; 19:87; 43:86.

³Abraham: Q 14:40f; Noah: 71:28; Moses: 7:150f; 26:86; Jacob: 12:97f.

⁴Cf. Q 21:28 with 40:7; 42:5.

⁵Q 4:64; 60:12; 47:19; 24:62; 3:159; 63:5f.

⁶Q 9:113f; 19:47; 48:11; 60:4. Cf. Bouman, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 248–252; Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, 218f.

⁷Wensinck, *Shafā’a*, *SEI*, 511f. On Islamic practices see Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 37–47.

⁸Thus those who carry God’s throne and gather around Him intercede (Q 40:7, 42:5). Consequently, the Quran knows of no atonement through bloody sacrifices, although the Arabic equivalent of the term for atonement (*kaffāra*) occurs several times; Chelhod, *Kaffāra*, *EI* 4,406f; cf. the correspondence between two Muslims of the Indian subcontinent in Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 49; on atonement in Muslim prayer manuals *ibid.*, 198–200.

times, Christianity has resisted proponents of monism, who derive evil from God. However, this resistance also applies to any dualism that distinguishes between a wicked creator God and a good saviour God. In the face of these dangers, the great denominations have emphasized man's own decision against God as the real cause of his sinfulness.¹ The Christian answer to theodicy therefore always has to point away from God and call attention to the fact that Man and his estrangement from God are the reason for all evil in the world.²

The Fall of Man According to the first creation account of Genesis, at creation Man was good (Gen 1:31f).³ However, he chose the path of disobedience (Gen 3). This act led to a paradox: What was good became bad. It profoundly changed the course of human history, since from now on Man could no longer decide to be entirely good, and he became a prisoner of the entanglements of his sinful heart. At the same time, the consequences became visible in the decay of the body and the imperfection of nature (Rom 8 *etc.*).⁴

The Concept of Sin It is significant that compared to the Quran, Gen 3 depicts an entirely different picture of man: Man's nature is not defective because God created it thus.

¹Esp. based on Gen 2 and 3; Rom; cf. Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 140–145.

²Cf. also Jüngel, 'Gottes ursprüngliches Anfangen', 151–162, esp. 158–162, 'Die Offenbarung der Verborgenheit Gottes', 163–182, esp. 180–182; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 200f.

³Zimmerli, *Grundriss*, 24–34.

⁴Zimmerli, *Grundriss*, 147–154; Rad, *Theologie*, I, 167–174; Westermann, *Genesis*, I/1, 337ff. On the usage of the concept of original sin cf. Jüngel, 'Zur Lehre vom Bösen', 183–186 (thesis 6 and 7). See also Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 122–139.

Rather, its essential wickedness as well as its transience is a consequence of the fact that Man consciously turned away from the Creator of all good; the blame lies with Man, not with God.¹ If God were the reason for human wickedness, then Man's God-forsakenness after the Fall would not be so fundamental; then there would be no fundamental difference between Man before and after the Fall.²

Coping with Evil in the Light of God's Holiness and Mercy
Man must perish in the face of his recalcitrance before God's holy righteousness (Isa 6:5). God's mercy and love, however, want to save him and help him fulfil his original purpose. How can this tension between God's holiness and his mercy be reconciled according to the Bible? The apostle Paul points out that God's holiness and love are only united in Christ (Rom 3): In the vicarious death of the Incarnate Son of God on the Cross, both God's holiness (the punishment of sinful Man) and God's love (his kenosis) were expressed. God's love found its most concrete form in the Son; only through the atoning death

¹Thus E. Jüngel notes: "Sin is essentially human action and a power that dominates man" (Jüngel, '[Zur Lehre vom Bösen](#)', 181 (thesis 4.1–4.2)). "Created beings come into existence as beings that are not disqualified by sin, but rather as beings created as good by God; moreover, the existence they come into is not qualified as sinful..." (ibid., 182 (thesis 5)).

²According to E. Jüngel, this God-forsakenness manifests itself as a "threefold relationlessness:" "In his threefold relationlessness to God, himself and the world, the sinner is guilty before God" (Jüngel, '[Zur Lehre vom Bösen](#)', 188 (thesis 10.1); cf. 181f (thesis 4.2 and 4.3). See also Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik*, 640ff; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 140–145).

of Jesus could the demands of God's holiness (the just punishment of man) and his fatherly love be fulfilled.¹

The Different Concept of God

It has been demonstrated that not only are there differences between peripheral statements of the Bible and the Quran; rather, these differences are anchored in the basic structure of each. This profound contrast can be explained by the profoundly different concept of God. While the core of the Christian message consists in the crucifixion and resurrection, the oneness of God (*tauḥīd*) forms the centre of Islam. While faithfulness, love and commitment form essential attributes of God according to Christian witness, the God of the Quran remains the Wholly Other, who in his omnipotence and oneness does not tolerate a rival; he is simply unattainable for Man. H. Kraemer very aptly notes, "Islam is theocentric, but in a super-heated state. Allah in Islam becomes white-hot Majesty, white-hot Omnipotence, white-hot Uniqueness."² And G. Rosenkranz points out that the axis of Islam, the oneness of God, does not just express itself *numerically* in the rejection of tritheism or polytheism, but also *internally* in God's intrinsic being:

Out of his concealment he permeates the world. That is the meaning of the "light verse" of the Quran: "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star." (Q 24:35) Throughout his life, Muhammad was in shock because of his experience of being overpowered by Allah, and all the praises he sings to

¹Gese, 'Die Sühne', 85–106, esp. 105f; Hofius, 'Sühne und Versöhnung', 33–49, esp. 39ff; Hengel, *The Atonement*; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 342–349.

²Kraemer, *The Christian Message*, 221.

him who appeared from his concealment are an echo of his experience of boundless divine omnipotence, self-sufficiency, omniscience and eternity.¹

This differing concept of God is expressed in many ways. Based on the preceding observations, the most important aspects will be discussed below.

The Different Concept of Sin

The Quran points to God as the source of all evil. Sunni Islam developed this idea into an unambiguous doctrine. Consistent with this view, no trace of original sin or the idea that Man was profoundly changed through the Fall can be found in the Quran. Accordingly, Man does not live in separation from God because of his sins; rather, as a creature it is necessary for him keep at a distance (in principle and apart from the question of his sinfulness).² His worship is to venerate and obey God at a proper distance.³ In principle, unless he falls prey to unbelief, his sins can not condemn him, since he was created sinfully by God; nonetheless, these sins experience a peculiar leveling in Quranic thinking, since they can be outweighed in a very reified form by good deeds.⁴

In contrast, in the New Testament Paul derives sin from Man and his free decision to disobey God (Rom 1:8–3). God did not create sinfully; rather, Man turned away from God of his own accord. Sin causes a profound separation of Man from God that was not originally there. Because

¹Rosenkranz, *Evangelische Religionskunde*, 115; cf. Raeder, 'Islamischer und christlicher Gottesbegriff', 25.

²Cf. Bouman, 'Die Theologie al-Ghazalis', 259–269.

³Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 64–74.

⁴See also Grunebaum, 'Die Erfahrung des Heiligen', 34–37; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 204f.

of the Fall, Man remains a slave of his sin and can not free himself (Romans 7:23).¹

The Different Concept of God's Holiness

According to the Quran, God alone is holy. Man does not belong to this realm of God, as he remains attached to the profane realm. Consequently, he must guard himself against coming in contact with what is holy. In contrast, in the Old Testament the chosen people of Israel are called holy, and they are told to remain holy. In the New Testament, this theme of the Old Testament is further developed: The Church of Jesus Christ sees itself as the chosen people of God, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit plays an essential role in the life of the Christian.

In this comparison, there is a striking difference between Judaism/Christianity and Islam: *Muslims observe the commandments to avoid what is holy (and impure). In*

¹*Cf.* the provocative remark of E. Jüngel: “Magnificare peccatum—that is something ‘distinctively Christian’. Christianity must learn anew to magnify sin” (Jüngel, ‘Was ist ‘das unterscheidend Christliche’?’, 297).

contrast, Jews and Christians follow God's commandments in order to avoid impurity and remain holy.¹

This difference in the Islamic concept of holiness is undoubtedly connected with the Islamic concept of God as the Wholly Other, to whom nothing human or earthly may cling. Because the realm of God is fundamentally different from the realm of Man, the believer can not penetrate into the divine sphere.²

Thus, the believing Muslim cleanses himself like the Christian in order to conform to the holiness of God. Nevertheless, unlike the Christian he has no share in this divine holiness; he experiences no sanctification in the Christian sense. In fact, the Holy Spirit, who according to the New Testament accomplishes this sanctification in the life of the believer (2Cor 3; Jn 16; 1Pet 1:2), has been

¹In passing it should be noted that any Christian-Islamic dialogue about holiness first needs to clarify this concept. The danger of neglecting this clarification can be demonstrated by the example of a dialogue presented by *Islamochristiana*. In it, the Muslim authors use the term holiness in a sense that is more akin to purity and justice and excludes a participation in divine holiness (Faruqi, 'The Concept of Holiness', 18). In the same volume, the Christian J.-M. Gaudeul points out the undifferentiated use of the term holiness for many phenomena. In spite of this, he refrains from mentioning the difference between Islamic and Christian concepts of holiness mentioned above (Gaudeul, 'A Christian Critique', 80). Only the Muslim M. Ayoub comes closest to expressing this when he points out that the Quran relates holiness only to God and that purity and justice are more appropriate Islamic equivalents (Ayoub, 'A Muslim Appreciation', 97).

²G.E. von Grunebaum rightly pointed out that "the experience of transcendent holiness" belongs to the core of Islamic belief (Grunebaum, 'Die Erfahrung des Heiligen', 29–47). Unfortunately, he did not advance to a distinction between the Islamic and Christian concept of holiness. This is manifested in the fact that he attributes Christian values to Islam when he considers preserving the community's holiness a mark of Islam (*ibid.*, 41).

assigned the position of a created messenger of God in the Quran (Q 19:17,19; 16:102; 2:87; 2:253; 5:110).¹

Furthermore, the Quran recognizes the fact that the believer will never be able to become completely pure and free of his sins; he is entirely dependent on the mercy of God. However, he can never be sure of attaining God's mercy, since God as the Wholly Other has full discretion in these matters. He may consider somebody pure or not fully independent of any human activity (Q 24:21). In contrast, according to Paul the believer not only experiences a forensic-imputative justification; he also experiences an effective justification, that is his purification and sanctification through Christ's death and resurrection.² The Christian can rest assured of this grace, because he knows that Christ's expiatory death has covered his sin once and for all, and he experiences God's salvific action in his life through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:18; 6:3f).

The Different Concept of God's Kindness and Mercy

It has already been noted that according to the Quran, God can show mercy to Man despite his defectiveness. However, this mercy extends only to the believer and is therefore conditional.³ Moreover, God has not bound himself to Man or committed himself through this: "But Allah causeth whom He will to grow [pure]" (Q 24:21), *i.e.* he is not bound by love and faithfulness and therefore essentially unpredictable.⁴

¹Raisanen, *Das koranische Jesusbild*, 46; O'Shaughnessy, *The Development*, 42–51.

²*Cf.* e.g. Rom 1:7; 11:5; 1Cor 1:3; Rom 8:33f with Rom 5:15,17; 12:3; Gal 2:9; Peters, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, 54f,310.

³Thus Rahbar, *God of Justice*, 172: "Unqualified Divine Love for mankind is an idea completely alien to the Qur'an." *Cf.* his references, *ibid.*, 172–175.

⁴*Cf.* Müller, 'Die Barmherzigkeit Gottes', 336f.

In contrast, according to the New Testament God's love expresses itself in the most concentrated form in the ministry of his Son. This also demonstrates that true love always includes reliability and loyalty. In this, his love proves to be unconditional; it frees Man from his self-inflicted bondage under the rule of sin (Romans 7:14ff).¹

It has been shown that the idea of a covenant occurring in the Quran has undergone a peculiarly Islamic twist, since God's covenant with Man can only be seen in the light of his unapproachability and is bound to conditions on the part of Man. In contrast, the Biblical message proclaims the one-sided love and commitment of God. This is precisely the secret of the Biblical message: God accepts Man, even though he can give nothing in return; indeed he can only demonstrate his rebellious nature again and again.²

At this point, it becomes clear that in Islam, God is not essentially love; that love does not belong to his *opus proprium*. This can not be otherwise in a religion that emphasizes the strangeness and otherness of God, as this would imply a "limitation" to God. Therefore, there can be no talk of a *deus revelatus* in Islam. For Man, the God of Islam is always *deus absconditus*, also and especially in his *verbum revelatum*.³

¹See also Bouman, 'Die Theologie al-Ghazalis', 150–158.

²These distinctions are insufficiently highlighted by J. Bouman; he does not differentiate between a covenant that presupposes unconditional love and a covenant that is based on reciprocation; Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 69f. On the theology of the Quran see also Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 202, fn. 13.

³Bouman, 'Die Theologie al-Ghazalis', 258: "Unlike Augustine, according to Ghazali Allah is not the God of love."

The Different Relation Between God's Holiness and Mercy

Islam can see God's holiness, goodness and mercy only in terms of the oneness and otherness of God. Holiness can only be attributed to the realm of God, and Man can never partake of it.¹ In Islamic thought, even the mercy of God loses the characteristic Biblical aspect of faithfulness and commitment.

In contrast, in Christianity God's holiness and mercy are united in the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ: God's holiness and goodness demand the punishment of the sinner, while God's faithfulness and love seek to redeem him. Through Christ, God took upon himself the punishment of Man and thus fulfilled the demand of his own holiness; through this kenosis, he gave the deepest expression of his love.² "In him, the idea that God atones for the world was not only portrayed symbolically; rather, in Him this atonement actually took place: not by means of compensation, but through—*sit venia verbo*—the ontologically adequate substitution. Therefore, he is the perfect atonement *par excellence*, sacrificed once and for all, which no further atonement can follow that makes any sense."³

Like Christianity, Islam also states that the holiness of God demands the punishment of sinful Man; the *Quran* knows that all men have earned the punishment of hell (Q 19:71). However, as these have been created defectively and live lives that are fundamentally separated from their

¹It is significant that the mystics of Islam are called Sufis, not saints.

²See also J. Bouman's comparison of Augustine's and al-Ghazālī's concept of salvation; Bouman, 'Die Theologie al-Ghazalis', 285–295. Cf. Grunebaum, 'Die Erfahrung des Heiligen', 38f.

³Jüngel, 'Das Opfer Jesu', 273.

Creator, the meaning of sin as a factor that separates from God moves out of the Islamic field of vision.

Nonetheless, the Quran also asserts that the faithful can not attain complete purity; only God's mercy can remedy this deficiency (24:21). However, it is not clear how this can be brought about; the Quran can do no more than commend the faithful to God's non-binding mercy. In contrast, according to the Bible Christ's atoning death frees Man from his guilt in a very real way and gives him assurance.

The teaching of mediation (*shafā'a*) through Muhammad or others ultimately represents an attempt to remedy this deficiency and ensure some certainty about liberation from guilt. However, no assurance can be attained through this. Even the intercession of Muhammad can not give this assurance, since he himself said that he was merely a human being like any other person; thus he, too, was bound to the realm of sin and transience. On the contrary, it is clear from the example of Islam that this mediation becomes possible only through the Incarnation of God.

Thus we see that the creed of the oneness of God (*tauḥīd*) has decisively shaped and formed the Islamic faith, so that its basic structure is completely different from the Christian faith. As W. Pannenberg aptly remarks:

The three Biblical religions display such similarities in a remarkable number of details. In spite of this, the organizing principle in each religion is so different that the difference thus established permeates and modifies all commonalities.¹

When Islam recognized this, it formulated two objections to explain the contradictions of the Quran to the

¹Pannenberg, 'Die Religionen', 306.

Bible: the theory of *abrogation* and the theory of *corruption*. When we consider these two issues, not only do their untenability becomes clear; further differences between the Christian and Islamic faith also become evident.

Chapter 14

The Negative Outcome

Avoid Invoking Reason

Pfander thought he could prove the correctness of the Biblical message by establishing a supposedly impartial judge. In his view, reason can recognize certain traits of God; thus it can establish the authenticity of every revelation. He was unaware of the fact that his list of traits stemmed from his Christian values and as such could not be accepted by Muslims.

Pfander's argument underlines the fact that it is not legitimate to deduce the traits of the *deus revelatus* from alleged traits of the *deus absconditus* (see above pp. 95f).

'Imād ud-Dīn's marks of a true prophet demonstrate the same problem, as in his view, these are directly accessible to reason (see above pp. 95f).

Avoid Comparing Jesus and Muhammad

The polemical comparison of Jesus with Muhammad and the Bible with the Quran was an old tool of Christian apologetics (see above pp. 53f) and was partially adopted by Indian apologists.

Tertium comparationis of a comparison between Jesus and Muhammad were the marks of a true prophet. Imād ud-Dīn is the strongest representative of this line of argument. He tries to demonstrate that unlike Muhammad, Jesus has the marks of a true prophet.

One danger of this comparison lay in the unconscious confinement of Jesus' person and work to his prophetic nature; this conflicted with statements regarding the uniqueness of Jesus.

Another problem arises from the resulting polemics against Muhammad: The comparison with Jesus had to lead to statements about Muhammad that deeply offended Muslims (see above pp. 233f).

Clearly Distinguish Between the Law and the Gospel

The history of Indian apologetics exemplifies the danger of not clearly distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel. This had a most adverse effect on responses to the Islamic theory of abrogation: Not one apologist clearly demonstrated that conversion to Christianity is not merely the conversion to another Law and another community; not one clearly expressed the Christian tenet that Christ is the fulfilment of the Law, and that the believer is justified only by him (Rom 5:18; pp. 101–103,234).

Unfortunately, even the greatest Indian apologist Şafdar ‘Alī when answering the theory of abrogation gives the impression that “the difference between Christian and Islamic Law is merely of a qualitative or quantitative nature and not fundamental” (p. 195). It does not become clear that Christ himself fulfilled the Law for Man, so that for the believer the Law is not longer lethal but rather “comforting evangelical admonition.”¹ Neglecting the distinction between the Law and the Gospel obscures the core of the Christian message.

In the following, this needs to be explained further.

The Relevance For the Refutation of the Abrogation Theory

The Muslim may argue that the Quran abrogates the New Testament in much the same way that the New Testament abrogated the Old Testament. In answer to this, it must first be pointed out that this is not possible according to the Islamic rules of abrogation, since according to these, only commandments can abrogate one another. Accordingly, things like narratives and poems can not be abrogated. The objection can only read that Quranic commandments have abrogated those of the New Testament in the same way that these abrogated the commandments of the Old Testament. Thus the remaining parts of the Bible such as the narratives and promises remain untouched by this objection. This is confirmed by the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* (see above pp. 19–22).

In order to answer this question, we first have to define the relation between commandments of the Old and New Testament before we can discuss the relation between the

¹Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 520.

Quranic/Islamic commandments and those of the New Testament.

Continuity between Old and New Testament: the Law and the Gospel

In order to clarify the relationship between commandments of the Old and New Testament, it is necessary to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. This distinction is often considered to be a characteristic of the Reformation, but apart from the fact that it forms an integral part of the conceptual apparatus of the New Testament, E. Schlink rightly points out that the question already occupied the Western church at an early stage, thus for example Augustine (*De spiritu et littera*) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* I, 2 qu. 106–108). Even modern Catholic theologians have turned to the subject. In actual fact, it is present at every reading of the Old Testament.¹

First of all, Old Testament Law can be distinguished from New Testament Gospel.² Both the Law of the Old Testament and the Gospel of the New Testament manifest the *dual form of God's address*, namely God's *assurance* and his *requirement*. Thus the Old Testament *promise* corresponds to the New Testament *Gospel* and the Old Testament *Law* to the New Testament *admonition*.³

In spite of these agreements, the essential difference between Old and New Testament is that the one who

¹*Ibid.*, 519.

²Peters, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, 260f; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 211ff, 416ff, 519f. See also the discussion regarding Law and Gospel in Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik*, II, 406–426.

³Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 218ff with 416ff; summarized 520.

was promised in the Old Testament is the One who arrived in the New Testament. That is why the admonition of the New Testament is so different from the Law requirements of the Old Testament, since it participates in the sin-destroying and renewing power of God working through the Gospel. The Law said: Whoever does these works will live. This no longer applies, as the Gospel says: You have received new life; now walk accordingly.¹

Especially the Old Testament scholar H. Gese has emphasized the continuity between the Old and New Testament regarding the Law. He demonstrates how Paul's concept of the Law corresponds to the Old Testament understanding of the Law; that according to Pauline understanding Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament Law through his crucifixion.²

The continuity between Old Testament and New Testament is sustained in the person of Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament promises (e.g. Acts 2:22–36) and commandments (Mt 5:17). Although the ceremonial and judicial Law ceases to apply for the Gentile Christian community,³ the basic structure of Old Testament demands, namely the twofold Law of love (Mt 22:37–40; cf. Dtn 6:5; Lev 19:18) not only continues to apply; in Jesus it is reinterpreted and surpassed (e.g. Mt 5–7; 12:1–14*par*). Paul can therefore remind the congregation in Rome of the words of the decalogue (Rom 13:9), and the first letter

¹Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 520.

²Gese, 'Das Gesetz', 55–84; esp. 78–84. P. Stuhlmacher developed Gese's ideas for the New Testament and came to similar conclusions; Stuhlmacher, 'Das Gesetz', 136–165, 'Das Ende des Gesetzes', 166–191. For an overview see Peters, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, 216–253.

³Cf. Luther, 'Vorrede auf das Alte Testament', *WA DB* 8, 17f.

of John indicates that the commandment to love is both new and old (1Jn 2:7f).¹

With Luther it must be emphasized that Man can not fulfil the Law; that according to Rom 7:23 this only causes knowledge of sin and death. Nevertheless it is a necessary presupposition for the Gospel, since only death leads to new life in Christ: The old Adam must be drowned to enable new life; desperation (*desperatio*) before God drives Man to the promise (*promissio*) of new life.² Through Christ's atoning death the Christian has died to the Law (Gal 2:19),³ so that this can no longer detain him; he is free of it and does not know of it (*nescire*).⁴

Thus, in contrast to the old covenant, the grace of God in Christ has been superimposed on the commandments of the new covenant. Only this makes the fulfilment of these possible. The Holy Spirit fulfils the spiritual Law in the heart of the Christian and changes him in a dynamic process (*cf.* Rom 8:2).⁵

¹Stuhlmacher, 'Das Gesetz', 159–162 (thesis 21 and 22); 156–158 (thesis 19); Peters, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, 319–332; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 444f.

²Luther, 'De libertate Christiana', WA 7, 52f.

³Luther, 'Galater-Kommentar', WA 40.1, 268, 26ff.

⁴Luther, 'Galater-Kommentar', WA 40.1, 27, 14; Hermann, 'Zur Bedeutung der lex', 475.

⁵Luther, 'Von den Konziliis und Kirchen', WA 50, 643, 20, 'Evangelium am 1. Adventssonntag', WA 10.1, 2, 42f; Antti, 'Die goldene Regel', 163–186; Hermann, 'Zur Bedeutung der lex', 484; Stuhlmacher, 'Das Ende des Gesetzes', 187f; Jüngel, 'Leben aus Gerechtigkeit', 346–364; Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik*, 445–448. In the Islamic context, it is especially necessary to emphasize the "freedom of a Christian;" see Jüngel, *Zur Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, 54–115.

Discontinuity Between Bible and Quran: Law Without the Gospel

Islam sees itself in agreement with the message of God as proclaimed through Moses, the prophets and Jesus. However, where can its continuity with the message of the Old and New Testament be found?

1. Islam once more imposes laws without giving the believer the assurance of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it denies both the good news of the crucified and risen Son of God and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, thus leaving out the very core of the New Testament. Without the revelation of the actual nature of God through his *opus proprium*, that is the revelation of his love, Man can have no assurance of salvation (see above pp. 322–324).¹

Can it really have been God's will to once more make laws binding that Man can not fulfil by himself in any case? Would he thereby not be contradicting his earlier revelation in Christ? This question is very important, considering the fact that post-Quranic Islam has made the *sunna* and *shari'a* as the legislation and regulation of every area of human existence obligatory for every Muslim.²

Good deeds of Man are merely his duty and correspond only to the condition in which he was created (Gen 1:31). Thus they can never count as merit before God or aid in remission of evil deeds; they cannot save him on Judgment Day (see below p. 367). In contrast, the Quran as well as the later forms of

¹Raeder, 'Glaubensgewissheit', 25.

²Goldziher, 'Die geschichtliche Entwicklung', 35–79.

Islam have underestimated the depth of the sinful nature of Man (see above pp. 318f). Therefore they can not understand that Man can never find favour with God through the mere execution of laws that he can in any case never fully fulfil.

The apostle Paul teaches that because of his sinfulness, Man can not fulfil the twofold Law of love by himself; he is “sold under sin” (Rom 7:14).¹ Only God’s Son fulfilled this Law on the cross and daily fulfils it anew in the believer through the Spirit (Rom 10:4; Gal 2:18,20 *etc.*).² Moreover, because of Easter, assurance of salvation has become an integral part of the Christian faith.³

In contrast, the Quran demands the entire fulfilment of the commandments through each person himself.⁴ At this point, however, the Muslim is in a deep dilemma, as according to Islamic teachings God has no obligation; thus Man can never be certain of being saved on Judgment Day.⁵ At most he can strive to fulfil the Islamic laws and guidelines developed on the basis of the way Muhammad lived to the best of his abilities. Even so he can never have final assurance, as this would contradict the absolute claim of the confession of the

¹ Cf. Hofius, ‘Das Gesetz’, 56–63.

² Cf. Hofius, ‘Das Gesetz’, 63–66; Jüngel, *Zur Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, 100–115.

³ Cf. the discussion of Christian assurance in Jüngel, ‘Gottesgewissheit’, 252–264.

⁴ Bouman, ‘Die guten Werke im Islam’, 14–18.

⁵ Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 134ff.

oneness and omnipotence of God.¹ Even the theory of Muhammad's intercession or the intercession of other prominent Muslims remains ultimately uncertain (see above pp. 322–324).² Amongst other things, it is this horizon of uncertainty in Islam that has prevented a consensus on the question of punishments and rewards on Judgment Day.³

2. Another question must also be asked. Undoubtedly many Islamic commandments represent an advance over polytheistic customs.⁴ Nevertheless they represent a significant step backwards from New Testament exhortation. The commandments regarding

¹Raeder, 'Glaubensgewissheit', 16–18,25; Bouman, 'Die Theologie al-Ghazalis', 118–127, esp. 127, against Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 201f, who criticizes Raeder and denies this uncertainty of the Muslim regarding his salvation. Although one has to be careful not to compare the God of Islam with an oriental despot (ibid., 196), one certainly does not do justice to the message of Islam if one simply ignores the examples cited by Raeder and follows D. Rahbar's not unproblematic position (see above p. 313, fn. 1) in asserting, "For the Muslim, it is a great comfort to know that God will surely receive the pious because of his righteousness" (ibid., 201; cf. 197). Moreover, it is questionable whether he correctly reproduces Raeder's position when he insinuates that Raeder assumes that God's righteousness "becomes arbitrary through lust or power" (ibid., 201). On the contrary, Raeder agrees with him that the Islamic concept of predestination excludes any assurance of salvation (cf. Raeder, 'Islamischer und christlicher Gottesbegriff', 23, with Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 201f).

²This risk factor in the Islamic theories of intercession is also noticeable in the prayers to intercessors (Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 37–42).

³Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 625ff; Wensinck and Gardet, *Khātī'a*, EI 4, 1106–1109.

⁴Cf. e.g. Bell, 'Muhammad and Divorce', 103–110.

Holy War,¹ one-sided divorce,² the killing of polytheists,³ the suppression of People of the Book to second-class citizens⁴ and the claim that only Islam has the right to rule the state⁵ are based on the Quran and profoundly contradict the message of Christ. The Quranic and Islamic Law is therefore a clear reversion from the universalism of Christianity to particularism, of the equality and dignity of all people to the equality and dignity of all Mus-

¹ Cf. e.g. 9:29 Macdonald, *Djihād*, SEI, 89.

² Only men have the right to demand divorce; cf. 2:228ff; 33:49; 65:1ff etc.; Schacht, *Talāq*, SEI, 564f; on the post-Quranic development *ibid.*, 566–571.

³ Sura 9, esp. 9:5; cf. Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 234–239; on the later Islamic treatment of the polytheists see Björkman, *Shirk*, SEI, 542–544.

⁴ Q 9:29. In the later development, the discrimination of the People of the Book extended to many areas of life; cf. Goldziher, *Ahl al-kitāb*, SEI, 16f; Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 239–251; Macdonald, *Dhimma*, SEI, 75f.

⁵ The Quranic ordinances regarding the Holy War and the *zimma* status of People of the Book were expressions of this attitude, which found its classical form in the later distinction between *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām*: *Dār al-islām* denotes the state that has a Muslim ruler and in which Islamic Law (*sharīʿa*) is implemented. In this state, non-Muslims (if they are People of the Book) receive protection from the state but do not have full citizenship and have to pay the so-called *jizya* tax. If these conditions are not fulfilled, then a state becomes *dār al-ḥarb*. In this case, it is the duty of every Muslim to emigrate. The Muslim may declare a Holy War on this country. Of course, practice often deviated from these theoretical principles (Macdonald, *Dār al-Ḥarb*, SEI, 68f, *Dār al-Islām*, SEI, 69).

lims,¹ from the equal rights of men and women before God to the discrimination of women (such as in the matter of divorce).² Moreover, it requires many external rituals as a prerequisite for salvation, thus for example the mode of worship³ and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).⁴

Islamic Law thus has aspects that do not agree with the twofold Law of love found in the Bible, since the neighbour of the commandment “love thy neighbour” is in essence the Muslim alone. Thus the Islamic commandments only partially and very conditionally “flow and hang”⁵ from the twofold Law of love.

3. Although the Quran maintains that God is holy and merciful, it subordinates these attributes to the confession of God’s oneness and omnipotence, thus giving them a completely different sense (see above pp. 321ff). Furthermore, the concept of sin and Law receives a different orientation from Christianity

¹On the ethical implications of the Islamic term for community (*umma*) see Raeder, ‘*Umma und Gemeinde*’, 30–47. On the status of non-Muslims see also Fattel, *Le statut légal*; Khoury, *Toleranz im Islam*; although Khoury’s evocation of a more tolerant future Islam seems somewhat optimistic (cf. 177–185).

Unfortunately, P. Antes gives a false impression by completely neglecting this component in his essay on Islamic ethics, Antes, ‘*Ethik im Islam*’, 177–255.

²Paret, *Zur Frauenfrage*; on the law regarding divorce *ibid.*, 58–64; Antes, ‘*Ethik im Islam*’, 218–21.

³Q 5:6,58 *etc.* For the later development see Wensinck, *Ṣalāt*, *SEI*, 491–499; Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, 262–264. On current practices see Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 6–9,29ff.

⁴Q 3:97; Wensinck, *Ḥadjdj*, *SEI*, 121–125; Watt and Welch, *Der Islam*, 341–347.

⁵Luther, ‘*Wider die himmlischen Propheten [1. Teil]*’, *WA* 18, 76.

due to the determining role of the confession of the oneness of God. When we contemplate the Islamic concept of Law, we see that the nature of God as revealed in Christ is not reflected in the Quran. Here again the essential difference between the Islamic and Christian faith becomes clear, namely Christ the crucified and risen Saviour. As the Incarnate Word of God he has committed and bound himself to Man, the being created through him (see above pp. 321f). He alone is God's answer to the sinfulness of Man, and only in him are God's demands on Man fulfilled and perfected.¹

Avoid Islamic Thought Patterns

Avoid the Pull of Islamic Teachings

It is striking that in some lines of argument, Pfander and Safdar 'Ali find themselves on the brink of Islamic ideas. Thus Pfander refrains from opposing the Islamic doctrine of the sinlessness of the prophets, even though the sinfulness of the Biblical prophets is an essential proof of the corruption of scriptures in the eyes of Muslims (see above p. 108; cf. p. 196).

Avoid the Pull of the Islamic Concept of Inspiration

The history of Christian-Indian apologetics shows that Indian Christians could not completely rid themselves of a mechanistic understanding of inspiration. Even the

¹Hofius, 'Das Gesetz', 63–66.

most important apologist, Şafdar 'Alī, could not clearly dissociate himself from this (see above p. 196).

In the eyes of Muslims, who assumed that their Christian opponents shared their mechanistic understanding of inspiration, the proof of the corrupt condition of the Bible was certain; for if one assumes the eternal subsistence of every word of the Bible in God, then the numerous textual variants must already suffice as a sure indication of the corruption of the Bible.

Against this background, it is indispensable to distinguish the Islamic and Christian understanding of inspiration and to formulate a Christian concept of Scripture.¹ What could this look like?

The Word as a Book or as “Flesh”?

Soon after Muhammad's death, Islam wrestled with the question of the nature of the Quran. However, a binding answer was not formulated until the rise and fall of the Mu'tazilites. Subsequently, in the early Abbasid period the dogma of the eternal subsistence of the Quran in God became the prevailing teaching of Islam. This doctrine propagates an entirely mechanistic understanding of inspiration, according to which the Quran is consid-

¹For the understanding of the New Testament writings themselves regarding Scriptures see Stuhlmacher, *Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments*, 47–76. For the following cf. Stuhlmacher's “Hermeneutik des Einverständnisses,” *ibid.*, 222–256.

ered an uncreated revelation of God, which from eternity subsisted in God, word for word, letter by letter.¹

The debate with the Mu‘tazilites shows that the Quran itself allowed a certain amount of room for other ideas of inspiration. However, these were so effectively suppressed by the victorious Sunni faction that the vast majority of Muslims today is only acquainted with the Sunni teaching that the Quran was not created.²

In contrast, the point of departure of every Christian understanding of Scripture is the assertion that the Word became flesh (Jn 1).³ The fact that God’s Word became Man in Christ opens up a completely new dimension to

¹Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, 75ff; for a brief sketch of Islamic development and a bibliography see Welch, *al-Ḳur‘ān*, EI 5, 426.

M. Arkoun attempts to relativize this principle of Islamic Scriptural understanding by pointing out the historical development of the dogma and trying to show that it does not conform to the Quranic scripture itself; Arkoun, ‘*The Notion of Revelation*’, 62–89, esp. 63–73. However, the question arises as to whether the Islamic dogma of the Quran’s uncreatedness is not a logical consequence and development of the core of Islamic faith and is therefore defended so forcefully by Muslims. Arkoun’s philological acrobatics seem to obscure rather than clarify the real issue.

²Watt and Marmura, ‘*Politische Entwicklungen*’, 248–250. On the varying nuances of the doctrine see Paret, ‘*Der Standpunkt al-Bāqillānis*’, 418–425, esp. 422–425; Bell, ‘*The Doctrine of ‘Abd al-Djabbar*’, 426–449, esp. 448f. Cf. also Triebel, ‘*Schriftverständnis*’, 320–322.

³See Triebel, ‘*Schriftverständnis*’, 324–327. H. Gese sees the roots of John’s prologue in Old Testament thought; see Gese, ‘*Der Johannesprolog*’, 152–201, esp. 173ff. Cf. Gese, ‘*Das Gesetz*’, 81, ‘*Natus ex virgine*’, 130–146, esp. 145f; Hofius, ‘*Struktur und Gedankengang*’, 1–25, esp. 16–25; On Joh 1 see also Barth, ‘*Erklärung*’, 21: “More clearly than anywhere else in the Bible except for the [...] parallel in 1Jn 1:1–4, this passage tells us just what Bible is, namely the word of revelation in relation but also in contrast to the revelation itself.” Cf. *ibid.*, 294f.

the believer.¹ Through the word of the cross, his life is written anew by the Spirit of the living God. He experiences a complete about-turn and is transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). His understanding of the Bible is thereby changed. Now he no longer interprets God's Word; rather this interprets itself and him,² once he has attained "knowledge of himself after journeying through hell."³

The author of this quote, J.G. Hamann, coined another phrase which profoundly characterizes the Christian understanding of revelation: "God a writer."⁴ The sentence this is taken from runs, "God a writer!—The inspiration of this book is as great a humiliation and abasement of God as the creation of the Father and the Incarnation of the Son."⁵ Just as the creation of the world and the Incarnation of God are manifestations of a profound kenosis, so the Bible also is a witness to this abasement. This application of the dogma of *communicatio idiomatum* to the Bible is intentional, because through it its true nature comes to light, namely an indissoluble bond of the divine and the human.⁶ The human element becomes visible in the outward form of writing, which in contrast to the Islamic doctrine of the inimitability and perfect form of the *Qurān* does not claim to be literarily perfect. Its *telos* is something else, namely the witness of God's sal-

¹The *Qurān* also calls Jesus the Word of God, but without implying the Christian meaning; cf. O'Shaughnessy, *The Koranic Concept of God*; Schumann, *Der Christus der Muslime*, 30f.

²Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 27–32.

³Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, II, 164,17f: "die Höllenfahrt der Selbsterkenntnis" (*Chimärische Einfälle*, 1762); Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 77.

⁴Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 77ff.

⁵Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, I, 5.

⁶Cf. Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 79ff.

vation and righteousness in a tyrannical, godless world (Ps 119; 2Tim 3:15–17).

It is this self-understanding of the Bible that has made historical research of the same possible. In contrast, in Islam earnest historical research of the Quran is taboo; until today, this has been blocked from all sides because of the Islamic concept of inspiration.¹

Nevertheless, we will do well to once more pay attention to Hamann's use of the concept of *communicatio idiomatum*: It implies a simultaneous intermingling and differentiation that makes it impossible to tear apart and separate the human and the divine in Scripture. Hamann resolutely resisted the attempt to select, abstract and reduce Christian truths in order to make a natural religion out of them: "If one separated all of the *Jewish* and *pagan* constituents of Christianity with the critical spirit of a Pharisee, as much of it would remain as would remain of our body if we separated it into its individual elements through a similar metaphysical process—namely a *material nothing* or a *cerebral something* that basically...comes to the same thing."² Biblical revelation cannot be grasped through dissection; it can only be understood as an organic whole, similar to the human body, which can not be understood in its individual parts but only in its entirety. Historical research of the Bible oversteps its limitations when it attempts to separate a supposed historical shell from a true core with a razor-sharp blade. Such a process is like peeling an onion in order to expose the supposed core.³ An analysis of the interpretation of Scrip-

¹Triebel, 'Schriftverständnis', 329f. Thus Nasr, 'Response to Hans Küng's Paper', 96–99; Heeren-Sarka, "Um der Erneuerung des Islam Willen!'", 27f; Abdullah, 'Der Koran', XX.

²Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, III, 142,4–9 (*Hierophantische Briefe*; 1775).

³Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 71–74.

tures throughout history demonstrates that such a procedure does not adhere to the reformational principle that Scripture interprets itself (*sacra scriptura sui ipsius interpres*) as well as the listener; rather it has led to a catastrophic introduction of the values of the interpreter into the Biblical text.¹

The above explanations were necessary, so that we do not succumb to the power of the Islamic objection and thus to the associated world view. This completely different understanding of Scripture has far-reaching consequences when it comes to answering the theory of Scriptural corruption.

Consequences For the Theory of Scriptural Corruption

Textual variants as Evidence of Corruption Islam sees the numerous textual variants of the Bible as a main indication of the corruption of the same. Now this objection is easy to refute, as the textual evidence demonstrates the fact that in the vast majority of cases, the Old and New Testament writings have been handed down extremely carefully, even to the extent of not harmonizing differing readings but rather noting the differences. Furthermore, at least in the New Testament the textual variants allow far-reaching conclusions about the original text. For this reason, researchers have succeeded in developing a “standard text” of the New Testament which is very close to the original text. Moreover, the textual variants are practically speaking irrelevant to the content and teachings of Biblical revelation. Even the comparison with the oldest,

¹Cf. Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 72–74. In the light of what has been said, Bayer has drawn attention to the problem of Barth’s hermeneutics, which seeks a “word” behind the “words” of the Bible (*ibid.*, 13f).

pre-Christian manuscripts of Qumran does not change this fact; on the contrary, it testifies to the reliability of the transmission of the Old Testament.¹

How does this compare with the Quran? There are also thousands of textual variants to the current Egyptian standard text of the Quran, which itself is only one reading, namely that of ‘Āsim. Moreover, historical research of the original Quran text has proved to be much more difficult than that of the New Testament, as the situation of the source material is very unclear; it contains very contradictory information on the nature and timing of the first hand-written records and compilations of the Quran, on the scope of the same and on various textual variants.² For this reason, there is still no Quranic equivalent to the “standard text” of the New Testament found in Christianity, not even a Quran with a text-critical apparatus.

This is not to say that the Quran in its present form is per se unreliable; however, we must be cognizant of the fact that Islam is aware of the issue of textual variants, which in part differ widely from the official text of the Quran.³

In the 10th century, Ibn Mujāhid found an answer to these Quranic textual variants. He claimed that the

¹Cf. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 29–44; Cross, ‘[The Contribution of the Qumrān Discoveries](#)’, 81–95.

²Welch, *al-Kur’ān*, EI 5, 408f. On the oldest Quran manuscript see Grohmann, ‘[The Problem of Dating Early Qur’āns](#)’, 213–231; Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 33.

³Paret, *Ḳirā’a*, EI 5, 127f; in detail in Nöldeke, ‘[Über den Ursprung](#)’, ‘[Die Sammlung des Qorāns](#)’; Paret, *Der Koran*, 389–414 (i.e. Bergsträsser, ‘[Plan eines Apparatus Criticus zum Koran](#)’, 389–397; Jeffery, ‘[Plan eines Apparatus Criticus zum Koran](#)’, 398–410; Pretzl, ‘[Aufgaben und Ziele der Koranforschung](#)’, 411f; Spitaler, ‘[Die nichtkanonischen Koranlesarten](#)’, 413f).

Quran was revealed in seven readings.¹ However, from a historical point of view this is not acceptable and is not upheld by any respectable researcher. For one thing, the actual meaning of the *ḥadīṣ* on which Ibn Mujāhid based his claim is unclear. For another, its authenticity is uncertain. Furthermore, the historical sources show that in his time there were far more than seven readings of the Quran. Ibn Mujāhid chose only seven of them according to his own criteria. In actual fact, many of his contemporaries did not recognize his selection.² Precisely the diversity of the surviving reports demonstrates that early Muslims treated the text of the Quran carefully and felt that it was important to identify the original text. It was not until later that the urge for uniformity increased and suppressed most readings.

Of course, this is a sore point for Muslims, since in contrast to Christians, their understanding of Scripture allows no scope for a response to the question of textual variants in the Quran.

An Islamic Core of the Bible? Today, Muslims continue to invoke internal contradictions and results of modern historical criticism to prove the alleged corruption of the Bible. The accusations generally deal with chronological numbers, alleged contradictions in the text and contradictions to statements of the Quran (see above pp. 118ff). Some preliminary considerations are appropriate regarding this topic.

First of all, the question must be raised as to what the allegation of corruption actually connotes. Needless to say, Christian dialogue and Christian apologetics must include a response to anti-Christian attacks and objections.

¹ Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid, *al-Qirā'āt as-sab'a*.

² Welch, *al-Kur'ān*, EI 5, 408f.

At the same time, it must be remembered that some questions attempt to push the Christian in a direction that does not do justice to the nature of the Christian message. Is it possible that the issue establishes false alternatives and thus steers the discussion in a direction that is inappropriate for the Christian message?

A large part of the apologetic writings discussed seems to confirm this. How often did the discussion get mired down in an unedifying comparison of Jesus with Muhammad and of the Bible with the Quran. Seldom were the traits and core of each religion considered in depth. If the history of Indian apologetics has a lesson to teach, it is that Christians must learn to ask the right questions. Otherwise the danger is that the answer to the question will not correspond to the nature of the Biblical message but rather to the nature of Islam, “autonomous” reason or other matters alien to the tenets of the Christian faith. Christian apologetics seeks to convince the Muslim. If it is unable to do this, it must at least proclaim the Gospel. If the Muslim has not been convinced by the Christian answers, this only confirms the fact that the Christian apologist carries “this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Cor 4:7). However, if the message of the crucified and risen Christ has not been offered to the Muslim at all, the earthen vessel proves to be empty.

What does the accusation of corruption mean? It expresses the thought that Jews and Christians have deliberately manipulated and altered the content of the Bible in order to obscure and obfuscate the original teaching, namely Islam, and to authenticate their subsequent “heresies.” The theory of corruption does not only aim to disqualify the content of the Bible; at the same time it attempts to prove that the original Biblical message corre-

sponded to the Quran.¹ These two components must not be kept apart, and the one who rejects the first component (corruption) does well to raise the issue of the second component (Islam as the original message of the Bible) too, since this is far easier to disprove and constitutes the very core and cause of the accusation.

What lies behind this accusation? The idea that an original Islamic core has been concealed by the mantle of Jewish and Christian corruption of the text. What is this core? The confession that God is one (*tauḥīd*) and Muhammad is his prophet; hence the eager search for prophecies of Muhammad in the Bible (see above pp. 47ff). However, where in the Old or New Testament can such a core be detected? In the aforementioned image of the onion, if we try to peeling away layers in order to find a core, we find nothing. On the contrary, the concept of God and Man in the Old and New Testament is so decidedly different from the Quranic concept of God and Man that the search for a Quranic core in the Bible is a hopeless endeavour.

This difference is ultimately dependent on the divergent concept of God, since at the core of Islam is the doctrine of the oneness and self-sufficiency of God, whereas in Christianity the kenosis of God in Christ and thus the love of God forms the axis around which everything revolves. Thus, the Islamic doctrine of the oneness of God (*tauḥīd*) is only superficially identical with the Christian doctrine of the unity of God, since the God of Islam is unapproachable in a manner that is in some ways related to Deism and can never be supported by Christians.

¹Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 68ff. The Muslim tendency to look for prophecies about Muhammad in the Bible corresponds to this train of thought.

This difference can be illustrated by the word of the cross: The crucifixion of Jesus under Pontius Pilate forms a historical fact undisputed by New Testament scholarship.¹ However, this is denied by Islam, which cannot accept the fact that a prophet can die such a shameful criminal death.² Even deeper and more fundamentally, the whole Quranic message of the oneness of God opposes any kind of abasement of God; it can not accept his kenosis or his nearness in the Son on the cross.³ In short, the reports of the crucifixion can neither be removed from the Bible as later additions, nor can an Islamic core be peeled out of it.

In contrast, in Judaism the word of the cross could fall on fertile ground and form the first Christian community. Although this radically shattered existing presuppositions, it nevertheless formed an inner unity with the Old Testament message of a God who binds himself to his people and abases himself to this purpose.

Above All Proclaim the Crucified and Risen One

In the Indian controversy, the Gospel was too often neglected. Rām Candra's works are a good example of

¹Hengel, *Crucifixion*; H. Kuhn, *Kreuz II*, *TRE* 19, 713–725. J. Moltmann has lately underlined the non-negotiability of a theology of the cross. It is his emphatic view that the cross must form the basis and criticism of every Christian theology; Moltmann, *Der gekreuzigte Gott*, 7–12, 66–77, 'Gesichtspunkte der Kreuzestheologie', 346–349.

²Cf. Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran*, 39ff, esp. 45ff.

³The question of whether the Quran only polemicizes against tritheism or also against the doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately irrelevant, since the Quranic message in its deepest core rejects the presupposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, namely the abasement and kenosis of God.

this. Despite their polemics against Muhammad and Islam, they offer no exposition of the Gospel (see above pp. 154f).

It is also symptomatic that in later editions of *Guidance of Muslims*, ‘Imād ud-Dīn deleted the concluding part expounding the Biblical message (see above p. 224). For this reason, the approach of Şafdar ‘Alī is preferable to any other kind of apologetics, as he can expound the Christian message through his apologetics. Apologetics must never become an end in itself; rather, besides defending the faith it must always endeavour to unambiguously express the content of the Christian faith.

Chapter 15

Summary

In *Chapter 13*, four aspects of Christian apologetics in India and their relevance for the current Christian-Muslim dialogue were set forth:

1. The Indian apologists pointed to the indispensability of a precise formulation of fundamental Islamic objections. Even today, the Islamic theories of textual corruption and abrogation have not yet been overcome.
2. The writings of Christian apologetics in India show that every fruitful Christian-Muslim dialogue must determine the relation between Christianity and Islam. Which basic conditions must be met to determine this relation? Taking our point of departure from G. Rosenkranz, it was postulated that each religion possesses a metacentre which penetrates and

determines the whole religion; in order to determine the relation of both religions to one another, we must keep the metacentres of both in mind. It was established that the revelations of Christianity and Islam must form the logical starting point for this.

In contrast, Hans Küng's (*Projekt Weltethos*) proved to be problematic, as it does not take the metacentres of religions into account.

3. The debate in India shows that when we attempt to determine the relation of both religions to each other, we must include a refutation of the Islamic theories of textual corruption and abrogation.
4. The approach of Şafdar 'Alī was adopted and developed as an alternative to the other apologetic approaches of Indian apologists. It was postulated that Islam and Christianity both agree that God's nature is holy, pure, good and merciful. While the Christian message of the crucified and risen Messiah expresses both the holiness of God (punishment of the sinner) and his mercy (Christ's atoning death), these attributes take on a completely different meaning in Islam, as they subordinate these to the confession of the oneness of God: Man can not partake of holiness, and mercy loses the Biblical aspect of faithfulness and commitment. Thus two completely different metacentres become visible: In Christianity, the message of the crucified and risen Christ forms the core of Christian faith, while the doctrine of the oneness of God is at the centre of Islamic faith.

In *Chapter 14*, the analysis of the debate between Christians and Muslims in India revealed some problematic aspects:

1. Pfander's postulate that reason can recognize the nature of God is not a legitimate means for Christian-Muslim dialogue.
2. The comparison between Jesus and Muhammad should be avoided if possible.
3. It is important to maintain a precise distinction between the Law and the Gospel, so that the aspect of the "freedom of a Christian" is expressed in dialogue. The refutation of Islamic theories of corruption must not lead to the unconscious adoption of Islamic thought patterns. It must never be forgotten that a Christian understanding of Scripture, unlike the mechanistic inspiration of orthodox Islam, must always start with the Incarnation of the Word in Christ.
4. Christian apologetics must proclaim the message of the crucified and risen Lord above and beyond any response to Muslim objections.

It is no coincidence that this statement concludes this investigation. On the one hand, our work has demonstrated the need for a healthy apologetics in the face of Islam's objections. On the other hand, it has become clear that every response must have the proclamation of the Gospel at its core. As the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ wishes to be the determining centre of Christian apologetics and to profoundly shape the Christian manner of proclamation. This is the standard against which all apologetics and every encounter with people of other faiths must be measured.

**Excerpts From the Writings
of Indian Apologists**

Chapter 16

‘Abdullāh Ātham

Bibliography

Many of Ātham’s works are no longer available. After a long search, the following could be traced:

Urdu Works

1. Cand sawālāt islām kī bābat (1852), 8 pp.¹
2. Kalīd-i taurāt (The Key to Taurāt) (?1873), 28 pp.
3. Aṣḥiyat-i da‘wā-i Qur’ān (The Reality of the Quranic Claim) (?1873), 24 pp.

¹Questions the author posed to Muslim jurists prior to his conversion. In the appendix to his Urdu anthology of Christian-Indian poetry, Ṣafdar ‘Alī reports that when he began searching after the truth, these questions and their answers gave him important impulses(‘Alī, *Ghizā-i rūḥ*, 297).

4. Hikmat-i usūl-i hamā'ost (The Wisdom of the Principles of Pantheism) (?1873), 4 pp.
5. Kār-i mashīyat dar Sayyid Aḥmad Khān Bahādur najm al-hind (The Problem of Fate in Sayyid Aḥmad Khān Bahādur, Star of India) (1887), 4 pp.
6. Hawā-i zamāna—dawā-i zamāna (The Wind of Time—The Medicine of Time) (1890), 24 pp.¹
7. Sharḥ-i abwāb 6–19 Kitāb-i mukāshafāt-i yūḥannā rasūl (Commentary of Rev 6–19)(1891), 24 pp.
8. Zu'f-i umūr-i ahm-i taḥaqquq al-islām (Significant Weaknesses of the Critique of Islam (1893), 4 pp.
9. Namūna-i āzādī dar qaid wa qaid dar āzādī (Pattern of Freedom in Bondage and Bondage in Freedom) (?), 20 pp.
10. Cailanj (Challenge), (?), 74 pp.
11. Māhīyat-i Rig-Ved ba-rū-i tarjuma-i Professor Max Müller (The Nature of the Rig Veda According to the Translation by Max Müller) (?), 7 pp.
12. Several poems in the anthology of Şafdar 'Alī, Ghizā-i rūḥ (Allahabad, 1889)

English Works

1. “What special ways should be made use of to meet the new teachings which are prevalent amongst Hindus and Mohammedans in North India in the present day?”, in: “The Punjab Native Church Council,” CMI (Nov. 1887), 686f [a short lecture held on April 4, 1887 during the 11th meeting of the Punjab C.M.S. Native Church Council]

¹A collection of poems composed by the author.

The inaccessible and presumably lost part of his writings written in Urdu:¹

1. *Ārām-i Āthamī* (Ātham's Rest) (1866), 76 pp.
2. *Nikāt-i islām-i aḥmadiya* (Critical Remarks on the Islam of Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad) (1883), 74 pp.
3. *Al-Jauhar al-qur'ān* (The Essence of the Quran) (1884), 148 pp.
4. *Miṣāl mufid al-'ām* (A Generally Useful Parable)
5. *Nubūwat-i nabī-i 'arabī dar injil* (Prophecies About the Prophet of Arabia in the Gospel)
6. *Andarūn-i Bā'ibal* (The Inside (*i.e.* the Inner Meaning) of the Bible)
7. *'Aql bar da'wā-i taḥrīf wa tansīkh-i Bā'ibal* (Reason Regarding the Claim of the Corruption and Abrogation of the Bible), 8 pp.
8. *Baḥṣ mā bain tauḥīdīya wa taslīsīyaa* (Debate between Unitarians and Trinitarians), 4 pp.
9. *Qarā'in al-qur'ān* (The Conditions in the Quran), 4 pp.
10. *Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān Bahādar kī cand ghalatīyān qābil-i i'tarāz* (Some Errors of Sir Sayyid d Aḥmad Khān Bahādur Worthy of Criticism), 4 pp.

¹Taken from the following catalogues: Weitbrecht Stanton, *A Descriptive Catalogue, 1886*; Weitbrecht Stanton, *A Descriptive Catalogue, 1886-1901*.

Challenge

The writing *Cailanj*¹ challenges Muslims to refute the statement that “only Jesus Christ can satisfy the greatest need of human nature.”

Preface (*dībāca*)

Only through our mind, which consists of intuition, conscience and wisdom, can we distinguish between the true and the false (1). As long as the universal sceptics, atheists, pantheists, fatalists, materialists, positivists and advocates of textual corruption of the Bible can not prove their claims, they can not accuse us of a false way of life or false beliefs (2f).

The textual corruption of the Bible can be proved only by proving that the content (*mazmūn*) has changed, not by the deviation of individual words (3).

There are two types of inspiration: The first concerns doctrines that can not be perceived by nature but which are not contrary to the laws of nature. The second kind can be perceived by humans, but because of human weakness, their preservation is difficult. The first kind is based on divine revelation, the second on divine preservation. Furthermore, their inspiration concerns only the content, not the individual words of revelation (3).

The book is divided into three sections:

1. External signs (*bīrūnī dalā’il*) of the religion of Christ (4–70)
2. Internal signs (*andarūnī dalā’il*) of the religion of Christ (70–73)
3. “Miscellanea” (*mutafarriqāt*) (73f)

¹Ātham, *Cailanj*.

External Signs of the [Truthfulness of] the Religion of Christ

1.1 *The prophecies of former prophets*

There are “signs” that must be interpreted allegorically/typologically; for example the name Adam means Blood and therefore points to atonement in Christ (6); Isaac’s “walking in the shadow of death” until his sacrifice is a sign that indicates Jesus’ death and resurrection (18). There are also prophecies that consist of words; as a rule, the early Church has already understood them to refer to Christ.

The *miracles of Christ* (1.2) as well as his *prophecies* (1.3) are further outward signs of the truthfulness of Christianity.

The prophecies regarding the Antichrist in Rev refer to the Pope (1.4).

Internal Signs of the Religion of Christ

1. The divine Word must explain how God’s mercy and justice harmonize with each other, how they relate to one another without conflicting with each other (70).
2. Nature has never shown that mercy triumphes over righteousness, otherwise neither would there be universal sacrificial customs and ascetic practices (*zuhd*), nor a doctrine of rebirth (71).
3. [1. Proof:] The Bible solves this tension between God’s mercy and righteousness through the atoning death of Christ.
4. [2. Proof:] In the countries that the light of the Bible has not yet reached, ethics are weak and

the mind darkened (*maghlūb*). The Bible improves morally and enlightens the mind (71f).

5. [3. Proof:] The Bible is the oldest book in the world and had to go undergo many trials. Although its words (*lafẓī*) are human (*insānī*), their content (*mazmūn*) has never been changed (72).
6. [4. Proof:] Although the various parts of the Bible were written at very different times, on different topics and by different writers, the principles (*uṣūl*) are always the same (72f).
7. Through the demands of the mind, human reason recognizes that the end of Man must somehow be free from the suffering (*dukh*). To this end, the only way to peace (*itmi'nān*) and attainment of the goal is to fulfil the demands of divine justice. Only the Bible reveals this path, setting forth the atoning death of Christ, the assurance of the Holy Spirit, the liberation from carnal desires and the end in accordance with the will of the Creator (72f).

Miscellanea

1. A wrong target is the root of all evil, and a wrong thought is the foundation of all mistakes. Therefore, only a claim or testimony whose goal and thought is free from carnal desire and human thought is acceptable (73).
2. There is a philosophy of history. Only a philosophy based on facts is true. Where a wish and a thought are not wrong, nothing wrong or void is expressed.
3. Human reason is flawed (*nāqış*) because it is limited. But it is not completely corrupt (*khoṭī*) (73).
4. Even the lame person is somehow on the right path and is not completely blind. The one who can not know can at least ask. The one who does not have the virtue of requesting commits suicide, and his blood lies on his own head (73).
5. Everyone knows that he should do what is true and good. He who rejects what is right will himself be rejected on the last day (74).

Chapter 17

Şafdar ‘Alī

Bibliography

Şafdar’s works have never attained the fame of the works of ‘Imād ud-Dīn. This is certainly partly due to his excellent but somewhat ponderous and therefore less accessible style.

C.E. Gardner wrote that Şafdar ‘Alī would write an autobiography. Unfortunately, this never seems to have been published.¹

¹Gardner, *The Life of Father N. Goreh*, 125,127. Did this autobiography fall prey to the white ants about which E.M. Wherry writes that they destroyed the work of 11 years of Şafdar’s life? Cf. Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 95.

Christian Works

1. Niyāz-nāma (Petition) (1867), 316 pp.¹
2. "Preaching to Muhammadans," *Report of the General Missionary Conference Held at Allahabad, 1872-3* (London, 1873), 55-58 [transl. by E. Champion]*
3. Ghizā-i rūḥ (Spiritual Food) (1875), 174 pp.;*² (1889), 339 pp.
4. Khullat-nāma (Friendship Letter) (1899), Vol. 1: Exhortation to Peaceful Behavior; Vol. 2: The Evils of Disunity and How to Overcome Them (96 pp.); Vol. 3: Religious Tolerance, esp. regarding Christian Converts³
5. Khulāṣa-i maḏāmīn (The Essence of Topics) (1890), 30 pp.*⁴

* = accessible to me

He also published secular poetry collections of well-known poets, thus e.g. *Bahār-i hind (Indian Spring)*,⁵ a collection of didactic poems called *Gulzār-i be-khār (Thornless Rosegarden)*⁶ and another named *Bulbulon ke naghme (The Melodies of Nightingales)*.⁷

¹The India Office Library in London has a copy of this edition, which was published in Allahabad. E.M. Wherry writes that the book consists of a series of letters that Safdar wrote to his relatives and acquaintances at his conversion (Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 95). This is unlikely, as the book can only have been conceived as a whole.

²Weitbrecht Stanton, *A Descriptive Catalogue, 1886*, 20.

³Weitbrecht Stanton, *A Descriptive Catalogue, 1886-1901*, 67.

⁴A report on the work of missions in India.

⁵See the title page of 'Alī, *Bulbulon ke naghme*.

⁶(Nagpur, 1870), Vol. 1: 34 pp.; Vol. 2: 46 pp. Available in the India Office Library.

⁷'Alī, *Bulbulon ke naghme*, 281 pp.

Petition (Niyāz-nāma)

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¹Was the first edition printed in Lucknow in 1866? The following description is based on the 3rd edition of 1898.

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corruption. The meaning of *tahrīf*.
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Muslim scholars changed the meaning of the
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8. The contradictory statements of some com- 73
mentaries regarding a particular book do not
imply that this itself has been corrupted; this
is also confirmed by commentaries on the
Quran.
9. The contradictory statements of some com- 75
mentaries regarding a particular book do not
imply that this itself has been corrupted; this
is also confirmed by commentaries on the
Quran.
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(*ikhtilāf-i qir'at*) are not proof of corruption of
the text, as the textual variants of the Quran
attest; there are more in the Quran than in the
Bible.

11. Despite many textual variants, the six recog- 100
nized collections of the *ḥadīṣ* of Muslims are
considered reliable. If the textual variants of
the Bible were a sign of textual corruption,
then the textual variants of these *ḥadīṣ* collec-
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16. (3) This very Bible existed and was known at 112
the time of Muhammad; not only in Mecca and
Medina, but in many countries and cities. This
fact refutes the claim that the Bible praised by
Muhammad was not identical with the one in
use during his lifetime.

17. (4) No Quran verse denotes the Bible as corrupted; rather, the Quran is a witness that it reflects the original text. There are some Quranic verses that accuse the Jews of Medina of hiding or misinterpreting the true meaning out of ignorance or malice. This is no confirmation of the accusation of textual corruption. 117
18. (5) Some verses from the Quran prove that the Quran in its day confirmed both the unspoiled state of the Bible and the eternal nature of this state. 128
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Outline

I. Islamic Contradictions to Biblical teachings (3 & 4)

1. The Bible teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. It is not surprising that people claim that one can not prove this, as we can not grasp the nature of God with our mental limitations. What kind of relevance would the doctrine of the Trinity have if the Bible were not the Word of God? But then how dare anyone claim that he considers the Trinity impossible if the Bible is truly God's Word? Human reason is too weak and limited to understand it. It can neither prove nor disprove the doctrine of the Trinity. Only the Word of God can reveal this. For the moment, it is not the author's aim to show the credibility of the Trinity; he only wants to point out that this doctrine has been clearly revealed in the Bible, which both the *Quran* and the *ḥadīṣ* consider to be the Word of God. In spite of this, the doctrine itself is still rejected by the *Quran* and the *ḥadīṣ* (8–10).
2. The divinity and Sonship of Jesus is taught in the Bible. This means that Jesus put on Man's garment and all of Man's nature, though he remained without sin (10f). Jesus' Sonship is not like human sonship, though Muslims think this is the case. The Sonship mentioned in the Bible is rather the unifying spiritual relationship that exists between the first two persons of the deity; it is the verbal (*zabānī*), eternal and spiritual relationship existing on a suprarational level. The *Quran* rejects this doctrine (11).
3. There is only one way to salvation: In God's pure and holy eyes, sin is an abomination because it con-

tradicts his nature, just as darkness is opposed to light. If God forgave sins without punishment, then he would violate his holy nature. However, it is not in the power of the sinner to atone for a sin, for his good works are only part of his duty. When he serves God, he is only capable of performing the works that are part of his duty. Now if all the good works that Man can do are only part of his obligatory duties, how can he atone for his innumerable sins (12)? Moreover, Man can not do good works that are perfect and without any blemish, that are pleasing to God's holy eyes and without guilt. Rather, these human works also accuse him of being a sinner who according to God's perfect righteousness deserves God's punishment (12). The human heart constantly makes people conscious of these two facts (13).

How then is it possible to gain atonement (*kaffāra*)? God loved the world so much that the Eternal Son came into this world, chose a human garment and adopted the form of a servant. What Man could not do, Jesus fulfilled in his place (*pūri karnā*). According to his eternal righteousness, he was merciful to those who no longer depended on their faulty works but believed in him; to these he counted it as righteousness. He bore many difficulties and trials in the stead of Man and gave his life on the cross so that he could be saved. By doing so he himself bore the punishment for the sins of mankind and accomplished God's righteousness (13f). Everyone who believes in Christ will be saved. Thus God's holiness as well as his mercy are realized; if every sinner had been eternally cast into hell according to his just reward, then the perfection (*kāmiliyat*) of the

righteousness of God would not have manifested itself (14).

This does not mean that anyone who believes in Jesus will be saved, no matter how much he sins. For if one has truly repented and believes, then he will neither wilfully sin nor avoid doing God's will (15).

The Bible bears witness to the train of thought just described. It is written that all animal sacrifices were signs or indications (*nishān*) of the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* reject this path and advocate another path. Now how is it possible that God first acted according to the Bible and later acted through a sinner with an imperfect mind to reveal another way that abrogates the former? How is it possible that the Holy God first reveals the only way to salvation and to this end sends his Son into the world, and then suddenly declares that the trivial ways to salvation found in the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* are sufficient (16)?

For the moment, the author does not want to say that the Bible is right; he only wishes to point out that the Bible, which is accepted by the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* as God's Word, describes a way to salvation. In this way, the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* deny their own assertions (17).

4. The Bible teaches a moral (*aḥlāqī*) and spiritual, not a ceremonial (*rasmī*), external (*ẓāhiri*) Law. Why does God give commandments? It does not benefit him if he gives us commandments. He does not give them because it gives him pleasure to put this burden on sinful people or to send people to hell because they can not obey his commandments

(18). The reason is rather that God Himself is just and pure; that is why he wants Man to be pure too. God's nature requires that good works are rewarded and evil is punished (18). This means that works are not only good or bad because they are described as such in the Bible; otherwise they would not have been declared to be good or evil before the revelation of the Word of God and would only be a pointless burden on mankind (19). Moreover, what significance would the good, holy nature of God have if something was not inherently and essentially good or evil (19)? If things were not inherently and essentially good and evil but rather on an equal footing with one another, then a distinction between the two would be meaningless. Therefore one may also necessarily call a *person* good or evil, if one can call a *thing* (*cīz*) good or evil, since every thing has an origin (19). On this basis, it can be concluded that good works are inherently good and can be traced to God, while bad works are essentially bad and can not be derived from God (20).

Therefore, the Holy One is worthy of praise. According to the demands of his pure being, he commands his intelligent creatures to do all works that are inherently good and forbids them to do those that are inherently evil. His commandments can be called internal commandments, moral Law or true Law.

The ceremonial or ritual Law is different. What it commands us to do or prohibits is not inherently good or evil; rather, what it binds or looses (*hillat-o-ḥurmat*) has been determined by the divine Law (20). The author does not mean to say that the ritual Law was given only to tyrannize people. His

point is that this Law is not the moral Law that reflects the holy and pure nature of God; thus it is not necessary in order to fulfil the demands of this nature, and it can not be considered as a sign of its perfection (20).

What is the difference between these two types of Law? It is easy for the seeker of truth and the righteous to distinguish them. Moral commandments are for example: Pray to God your Creator, and love him with all your heart; praise him and love all men. Bad moral works are for example: Have no fear of God, be ungrateful, lie and steal. (21). The heart itself testifies to what is good or evil.

The ritual commandments consist of the laws of Moses, which designate certain animals and things as unclean. It is obvious that these are not inherently impure, but that they have been determined by the Law to be unclean; for all things and creatures have been created by the holy God, who because of his pure nature can not be the cause of evil or unclean things. Therefore, these “unclean” creatures are also not contrary to his nature (22).

It can therefore be concluded that there must be another reason for a ban on these things. For example, bread is not inherently bad; on the contrary, if a person becomes ill and the doctor forbids him to eat bread, then it is not because of the inherent, essential badness of the bread, but because of the fact that the doctor wishes to achieve a certain effect. Once the intended goal has been reached, bread can be eaten again (23).

No objects of nature can be called inherently impure, since they have all been made of the same el-

ements of nature, and because they have all been created according to the same laws of nature and for certain divinely ordained purposes (23).

True impurity, that is the dirt that makes Man a sinner before God, is rooted in what a creature does according to its own will and decision. If objects that function according to the laws of nature were unclean, then God would be unclean (24). It follows from this principle that food and drink can not cleanse the heart (24).

When the whole world turned away from God, it began practising idolatry, walking in evil ways and thus became entangled in true impurity (*aşlī nā-pāki*). In answer, God imposed ritualistic rules in addition to the moral commandments (25), since human nature had become so bad that it was no longer capable (*ke lā'iq*) of understanding and following God's moral laws. Take Israel as an example: Just as a teacher first instructs a young student in the fundamentals of grammar before he moves on to the sciences, God also began teaching the basic facts to Israel, so that it could learn to walk in God's ways and lead the whole world to walk in this way (25f).

The Law of Moses was for Israel only. Although Israel had been given some moral laws (especially the ten commandments that comprise the entire moral Law), they were not yet able to comprehend and obey them. For this reason, the ceremonial laws were also given, which are the sign and reflection (*nishān-o-'alāmat-o-naqsh*) of the moral precepts proclaimed by Jesus (26).

The time came when many in Israel understood and obeyed this ceremonial Law and became worthy of the moral Law. Then Jesus appeared as the Saviour of the world and teacher of the moral Law. With him the Holy Spirit also descended in a special way and wrote the Law on the tablet of the human heart. This made the ceremonial laws superfluous (26f).

The moral Law can never be abrogated (*mansūkh*), because as mentioned above, this would mean a change or abrogation of the nature of God (27).

In contrast, the *Qurān* and the *ḥadīṣ* contradict the Bible; not only do they fetter people through ceremonial laws and try to make something that is perfect and sublime imperfect and flawed at a time when the moral Law has already been revealed; they also claim that the ceremonial Law is superior to the moral Law and make the former the basis of their religion (28).

As for the moral Law, the Bible testifies that God ordained a ceremonial and a moral Law in the time of Man's ignorance (*jahālat*). However, only the moral Law was perfect (*kāmil*). This does not mean that at that time God commanded Man to sin; rather, God did not manifest his full, perfect will because of the sinful, defective state of Man. An example of this is the law of divorce (28): It is God's will that husband and wife stay together. In actual fact he did not want to establish a law of divorce. However, because of Man's hard-heartedness, he set a limit, so that the husband could not leave his wife just like that (29).

God did not at first clearly express his disapproval of divorce due to the imperfect state of Man. Rather,

he wanted Israel to first break away a little from its evil ways and gradually approach God's ways (30). After Moses, he manifested his disapproval of divorce through other prophets. He clearly manifested his will through the Gospel and through his moral commandments (30).

In contrast, divorce is sanctioned by the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ*. In Muhammad's time, during several Holy Wars (*jihād*) even *mut'a* (marriage for a few days/temporary marriage) was allowed. This custom is common among Shiites to this day (30f).

5. Therefore it is impossible to abrogate the moral Law. God can not reject this Law because he would thereby reject his own attributes. For this reason, he can not command anything that leads to sin, nor can the Law be abrogated (Mt 5:18) (32). The Quran and the *ḥadīṣ*, however, want to change and reject the moral commandments, and they teach evil and impure things. *Examples*:

- a) Everyone knows that the faith of a true religion can not be confined to the heart, but that it must be witnessed with the tongue; *cf.* Mt 10,32. He who denies his faith sins in several ways: a) He lies and contradicts God's will; (b) he withholds truth from the ignorant—if all who know the truth would bear no witness, it would remain hidden from people not following the right path; c) he does not rely entirely on the Almighty God (33).

In this way countless Christians have become martyrs for their faith (34). In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* give Muslims permission

to deny Islam in cases of need. The same principle applies to both Sunnis and Shiites (35). Now is it possible for God to allow lies, although his nature is pure and although he demands Man to bear witness to the truth (35)? Or is it acceptable for the Holy One, who wants to spread the true religion throughout the world, to allow this?

- b) The believer is obliged to act righteously and truly, since righteousness and truth reflect God's nature and are a sign of one's own perfection (*kamāl*) (36). The Bible not only agrees with this statement, but also proclaims that the liar is damned (36f). In contrast, according to the *Qurān* and the *ḥadīṣ*, a Muslim may lie for the following reasons: to avoid the endangerment of religion, faith, life, possessions or honour (*'izzat*); to instil peace between Muslims, to win a war, to appease his wife *etc.* This has been established in the *masā'il-i ikrāh* of the Sunnis and the *masā'il-i taqīya* of the Shiites (37).

How is it possible that God first valued justice and truth so highly that he commanded Man to lie under no circumstances since the liar is damned, only to regard them in our time as so worthless that one may now lie for trifles (37)?

- c) A man has two servants. One knows his master and his commands, actions and intentions very well, while the other does not. If both act wrongly in one thing, only the first servant will be severely punished, because he

knew what his master wanted (38). Similarly, the Bible teaches that the one who knows the Word of God but does not act accordingly will be severely punished. On the other hand, the person who does not know it and does not act accordingly will be punished less. God is impartial (38f). The disobedient pagans who only have God's Law written on their hearts will not be held accountable in the same way as the disobedient who already know God's Word (39).

In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīs* assert that whosoever says the kalima will be saved without being judged and without Muhammad's mediation or other means, no matter how much evil he has done; on the other hand, the unbeliever is condemned to hell, no matter how many good works he has done (39).

- d) The Bible teaches that God is holy and that we should be holy in all our works, words and thoughts. The Islamic laws only obligate Man regarding a few words and works. All other works are merely additional meritorious good deeds (*ṣawāb*). This means that both the neglect of good works and bad thoughts are not punishable (40).
- e) The Bible teaches that all commandments must be obeyed. One can not follow one commandment and reject the other. One who acts like this breaks whole the Law (41f). In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīs* teach that one can obtain the forgiveness of all sins through a particular law, e.g. through the pilgrimage

to Mecca (*hajj*) or washing rites (*wuḏʿ*) (42). Compare also the tradition that all sins and good works are weighed on Judgment Day: Those whose good works are heavier than the bad ones will be saved. For Muslims, the good works count ten times as much as the bad ones (42f).

Now how is it possible for God to first of all demand that we keep all his commandments and remain wholly clean because of his holy nature, only to later say that a particular work is sufficient for the forgiveness of all sins, contrary to his nature (43)?

6. Accepting a belief or a religion depends solely on the desire and repentance of the heart. Tyranny and oppression can not induce this. This is also the teaching of the Bible. The propagation of the Gospel is permitted only by peaceful means such as preaching (43f).

In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīs* teach the Holy War (*jihād*), that is the oppression of unbelievers and the use of force to cause people to convert to Islam. In cases of emergency, it is also permissible to kill infidels or apostates. The Muslim chronicles report that non-Muslims who remained faithful to their beliefs were either exiled or had to pay the *jizya* tax in order to stay alive. But if they persisted in their refusal to recognize Islam, they lost their lives (46).

The fact that one can not enforce true faith is evident in the apostasy of many Arabs after Muhammad's death; only the power of Abū Bakr forced

them back into the fold. There are many other examples of this (46). No prophet before Muhammad ever gave such a command. Some Muslim scholars claim that *jihād* is the same as the extermination of the Canaanites in the Old Testament (47). The Canaanites, however, were never told that they would have to accept the Torah, otherwise they would be killed; they were never forced to accept the Jewish faith. The reason for the extermination not only of the Canaanites but also of Sodom, Gomorrah and all men except Noah and his family before the Flood was different: There are times when the cup of humanity overflows with sin, so that the holy God destroys all except a few (48).

7. The spirit of Man (*rūh*), which was created to worship God, can find contentment and dignity only through the spiritual fulfilment of love and the nearness of God, not through worldly, carnal desires (49f). Thus, the Bible tells us that the bodies of the redeemed will be transformed into the image of the body of Jesus Christ: The old body will be sown and the spiritual body be resurrected. In heaven the Christian will be perfect; there he will remain in God's presence for all eternity and worship him (50). No one will marry, for all will be like angels. We will not eat or drink (50). In contrast, the Quran and the *hadīs* propagate a different picture. For them, Paradise is the place of carnal desires and pleasures. This includes marrying as well as other things that are too shameful to be mentioned here (51). The sinful and impure desires that Man has here on earth are fulfilled in the Muslim Paradise (51f).

8. The Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* contradict the Biblical account of creation and the prophets. Assuming that the Bible is right, then they must be wrong (52f).

- a) The report on the duration and the course of creation is different in the Bible than in the *ḥadīṣ* (53).
- b) The Bible records that the perfect Creator made Man without sin and without any sinful or worldly cravings; he was the image of perfect, divine attributes and was therefore worthy to rule over all the creatures of the earth (53f).

In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* say that God made Man defectively.¹ Now how could God, who is free from sin, disobedience and impurity, make such a person? Could God, who is the source of good and wants the best for humanity, consciously create Man so that he almost always has to suffer (56)? Is it even thinkable that God would like to have such a person as his representative (*khalīfa*) on earth (56)?

- c) According to the Bible, Adam was initially in Eden, while the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* claim that he was placed into Paradise (57).
- d) The Quran states that God commanded his angels to bow before Adam. Satan, however, refused to do so and was expelled out of the presence of God. According to the Bible, however, Satan was disobedient even before Adam (57).

¹ *ẓa'īf al-khilqah aur nāqish. Cf. surah Baqr 28 and its commentary in Tafsīr-i 'azīzī etc.*

- e) The Bible says that Adam and Eve sinned through Satan, who appeared to them in the guise of a serpent. Thus Adam was cut off from God's presence and eternal joy. Not only did Adam's spirit become impure, but his body also became ill, plagued and powerless. When his heart became clouded, his mind became dark, and Man was cut off from the true knowledge, presence and love of God, his body also became weak and imperfect (57f). In contrast, the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* report that Satan sent a peacock to lure Adam and Eve to the wall of Paradise. Then he entered the mouth of a snake, climbed the wall and tempted Adam and Eve to eat from the forbidden tree. Thereupon God banished them from Paradise and caused them to become enemies of each other (59). The consequences of sin on Adam's mind and body are not mentioned in Islam. It is only said that God created Adam imperfectly (59).
- f) The Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* tell us that Kan'an and his mother were not let into Noah's Ark and died in the flood. The Bible, on the other hand, testifies that Kan'an was Ham's son and was born only after the Flood (60).
- g) In the Bible, Abraham is Terah's son. In the Quran, Abraham has another father (60).
- h) The Quran is not clear when it mentions the sacrifice of Isaac. Some *ḥadīṣ* associate this offering with Isaac, others with Ishmael (61).
- i) In the same way, many events that refer to Jacob and Joseph differ (61).

- j) In the account of the burning bush, the Quran and the *ḥadīs* differ from the Biblical account (61f).
- k) The same is true of the accounts of David, Solomon and the prophets.
- l) The author would like to mention only one thing in relation to Jesus' life and works, namely his atoning sacrifice as promised by the prophets and his resurrection. These events were clearly explained to the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus and transmitted in the Christian church.¹ In one passage of the Quran this is affirmed, while it is denied in another. Muslim scholars have explained the contradiction by saying that Jesus was not killed; rather, he was raised to heaven during his lifetime (63f).

There are two groups of Muslims. Some believe that the Bible is God's Word. But they should carefully consider the many contradictions that can be found not only in small details but also in the principles and tenets of the faith (65). Either they accept what the author has written so far and have no doubt about the false claims of Islam, or they must prove that the Quran and the *ḥadīs* agree with the Bible or that such discrepancies are worthy of the Word of God and do not contradict the nature of God (66).

Some friends say, "For God everything is possible; he can command whatever he wishes" (66). But they say so without thinking properly. For how can

¹Jamā'at-i 'amma masīhiyon kī mutawātārī shahādat detī calī āī hai.

the pure, holy God disclose the Trinity and other teachings that are in harmony with his nature in one book, only to reject them in the next book, call them unbelief (*kufr*) and replace them through the ceremonial Law (66f)?

Others claim that the Bible itself has discrepancies. Answer: For the moment, the author does not wish to discuss whether or not the Bible is from God but rather wishes to demonstrate that the Quran and the *hadīs* can not be from God. After that he will talk about the inspiration of the Bible (68). If one could truly prove that the principles and pillars of the faith in the Bible are contradictory, then this would indeed be proof of their incorrectness (68).

The Objection of Abrogation (5.) The second group of Muslim friends consists of those who accept the contradictions that emerge in a comparison of the Bible with the Quran. However, they claim what some Muslim scholars have said for some time, namely that the Bible has been corrupted; moreover, even if one found the original text, it has in any case been abrogated by the Quran; therefore it is not permissible to follow its commandments (68f).

If this statement is correct, then the Bible is really not reliable. But if this is not true, then the *hadīs* and the Quran can not be from God. From this one must conclude that these invalidate themselves if they call the Bible holy but confuse, alter, omit or reject Biblical teachings (70).

II. The Charge of Scriptural Corruption (6.–13.)

A. The Meaning of the Charge It is claimed that the discrepancies between the Bible and Islamic tradition are due to the corruption of the Bible. With this objection Muslims want to express that not only the teachings of the Bible, but also certain passages such as the prophecies about Muhammad have been corrupted (71f).¹ They are of the opinion that these doctrines (and not the actual text) have been so distorted that their original state no longer exists (72). Recently, however, some Muslim scholars have changed the meaning of *tahrīf* because they could not prove the corruption of the meaning of the Bible. For this reason, the term is defined differently in *I'jāz-i 'iswī*: It now differentiates between *tahrīf-i ma' nawī* (the book is genuine, but its interpretation is wrong) and *tahrīf-i lafẓī* (the text or certain words have been changed). It makes no difference if these were intentional or if they were distorted because of scribal errors or other mistakes (73f).

The first type of *tahrīf* (the corruption of the meaning) does not harm the actual text: Even though there are numerous interpretations of many Quranic verses, some of which are fairly strange, nobody claims that the Quran was corrupted (74f). The same applies to translations (75): The diversity of the Quranic translations of four orthodox Muslims ('Abd al-Qādir, Rafī'ī, Shāh Walī Allāh and Ya'qūb Car**k**hī) do not prove any corruption of the meaning of the Quran (76–79).

The charge of textual corruption remains. It is impossible that a book that has been handed down over the centuries contains no scribal errors; in the transmission of

¹This is probably to be regarded as a reflection on the situation in India, since this distinction had already been around for a long time; see the the introduction.

any book, it is normal for scribal errors to creep in due the incompetence, forgetfulness or inattention of the scribe (79f). By collecting all the manuscripts of a writing, one can determine the best version by comparing and listing all textual variants. Who can rightly claim that these variants consisting of diacritical points, words and phrases are a product of textual corruption, and who would call such a book unreliable? In contrast, undoubtedly a book would be unreliable if the various manuscripts contained contradictory doctrines (80f).

As an example let us look at the *Qurān*, more specifically the official 'Uṣmānian version and not the *Qurānic* form that existed before 'Uṣmān put together the various verses (81f). In the beginning there were about twenty reciters, seven of whom were particularly famous. From these emerged seven groups, of which two men were particular famous. Later, all of the (resulting) variants were collected. In the beginning, six men wrote such collections (82). It should now be clear to everyone that all these variants can not be true (83). If one looks at the way in which the present *Qurān* was passed on orally, over such a long time and through so many disturbances, then suspicion arises that today's *Qurān* can not possibly be exactly the same as the *Qurān* at the time of 'Uṣmān, and that the other versions were not necessarily all wrong. Only seven of these twenty versions have survived. The others have disappeared (83f).¹

There are about 2,250 of these variants. They not only consist of variations of recitation, but also of variants that can give words and whole sentences a completely different meaning. There are even a few laws and regulations

¹Safdar here refers to the tradition of the seven ways of reciting the *Qurān* (see Welch, *al-Ḳur'ān*, EI 5, 408, col. 2–409, col. 1).

that are different in the variants. Things have also been omitted or added (85f).

Those who call these variants recitation variants further report that the Quran was revealed according to these seven recitation variants. This is confirmed by a *ḥadīṣ* (86f). However, one can not necessarily trust the *ḥadīṣ*, since so many have proven to be spurious. Even if one wants to believe the statement of this *ḥadīṣ* that the Quran was revealed according to the seven recitation variants, it is in fact logically impossible (87–89). And even if the meaning of this *ḥadīṣ* is as asserted, there is no reason to suppose that the seven present readings (*qirā'at*) are identical to the original ones (89).

In addition, we must consider the traditions of the Shi-ites, who claim that the 'Uṣmānian version of the Quran has been corrupted. According to them, there are four possibilities of corruption: a) one word was replaced by another; b) the Quran was revealed in two ways, but some people forbade one variant (*mana' karnā*) and preferred the other; c) certain verses were shortened; d) of the seven types of recitation in which the Quran was revealed, there are two kinds each. Some were abrogated, as a surplus would be detrimental (91).

Do we now consider the Quran unreliable because it has so many variants according to Muslim scholars? Of course not (92). On the contrary, the Muslim scholars collected these variants and decided by comparison and according to the demands of their reason, which of them were right or wrong. And although there are many variants, they have not influenced the principles and tenets of Islam, so that the objection of corruption does not apply to the Quran (92f), just as it does not apply to the Bible. Is it not ridiculous, then, when scholars like Raḥmatullāh and Wazīr Khān try to prove the corruption of the Bible

by comparing translations, commentaries and heretical works? They have even gone so far as to quote agnostics and atheists (93f). By citing textual variants from the Bible, they have proved neither the corruption of Scripture nor the unreliability of the Bible, for the teachings and principles of the Bible remain untouched by them (94f).

Furthermore, we know from several reliable books of the Sunnis and Shiites that many surahs and verses were not added to the Quran of 'Uṣmān, whether out of ignorance or enmity. When considering the state of the Quranic text, there is no certainty as in the case of the Bible (95):

1. The Old Testament was handed down through prophets over a period of 1100 years. Later it was confirmed by Jesus and then by his apostles and their disciples. The Quran is different: Even at the time of 'Uṣmān's edition of the Quran, the Ṣāḥibs had many differing opinions regarding the text.
2. Although the Bible has been handed down for a very long time and in many different countries, its variants are slight (96f).
3. The Quran, on the other hand, contains variants that also alter commandments and facts (97).
4. Scholars have collected and compared many thousands of Biblical manuscripts. Thus, with the exception of a few insignificant verses, they have prepared the original text (97f). In contrast, the Quranic variants are due to verbal mistakes that therefore have more of a tendency to be flawed.

5. When the Christian scholars found a mistake, they also put it in the text along with the correct variant and the reason for the correction, so that anyone could investigate the case for themselves (98). In contrast, the Qārīs (reciters) of the Quran did not separate the right readings from the wrong ones and did not record any reasons for a correction; they merely collected them. Moreover, the reliable traditions were not written down, and several variants were simply left to the oral tradition. So you could assert one thing in one generation while asserting something else in the next generation without anyone questioning you.¹ Eventually, right and wrong variants were mixed. It was only at this time that people began to record the variants in writing. For this reason we do not know from whom or why the first twenty Qārīs and the subsequent seven Qārīs chose the variants in question, and we have no way of finding out the correct variants (98f). If Muslims even now still consider the Quran reliable, then they must also acknowledge the reliability of the Bible (99).

Another example: Muslims agree that Bukhārī's collection of *ḥadīṣ* is the most reliable (*ṣaḥīḥ*) writing next to the Quran and that you have to follow its instructions. Although the author does not claim that it is wrong or right, the Muslims consider it the most reliable and least altered work alongside the Quran. Maulvī Aḥmad 'Alī had this printed in 1264 AH. In his edition, he compared twenty manuscripts to determine the correct text. He wrote a

¹The meaning of the last two sentences is not entirely clear in the original.

text and mentioned all the textual variants in the footnotes, but without noting the countless different vowels, diacritical points or letters. However, even the variants noted by 'Alī amount to approximately 17,000 (100f). The same thing is true for Abū Dāwūd's book (101f).

The Muslim scholars can not prove their charge of *tahrīf* (102f). The following seeks to demonstrate that the Bible and the Quran themselves prove or deny the claim to be the Word of God (104).

Five questions on the claim of *tahrīf*:

1. When was the Bible corrupted?
2. Who corrupted it (104)?
3. What were the motives for textual corruption?
How could the Bible be corrupted when it had spread to many countries and there were countless Bible manuscripts?
4. Who changed the teachings and content of the Bible (105)?

B. The Testimony of the Quran and the *Ḥadīs* Regarding the Bible It is obligatory for the Muslim to first see what the *ḥadīs* and the Quran say about the Bible (105). In them, six key statements are made:

1. The Bible is the Word of God and points us to the path of God. It is perfect and true (105–107).
2. It is obligatory for People of the Book to believe in the entire Bible and act accordingly. In addition, it is obligatory for Muhammad and the Muslims to believe in the content and act accordingly.

3. The same Bible existed at the time of Muhammad and was not only well-known in Mecca and Medina, but also in many other countries and cities. This refutes the claim that the Bible which Muhammad praises is not the same as today's Bible (112–116).
4. Not a single verse in the Quran identifies the Bible as corrupted. Rather, it is a witness to the fact that the present Bible corresponds to the original text. No doubt some verses accuse the Jews of Medina of having deliberately or in ignorance concealed the true meaning or misinterpreted it *etc.* But this does not prove the charge of corruption of the Bible (neither *tahrīf-i lafzī* nor *tahrīf-i ma'navī*) (116–128).¹
5. Some verses prove that the Quran affirms the uncorrupted state of the Bible of the day and says it will always remain that way (128–138).²
6. The *ḥadīṣ* and commentaries testify to the uncorrupted state of the Bible (138–145).

C. Answers to 19 Objections of Contemporary Muslims (20)
 Muslim scholars disagree with the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* by claiming that the Bible is corrupted. Furthermore, they have expanded the meaning of *tahrīf* to include textual variants. They also object to certain facts, for example the actions of certain prophets or the authenticity of certain texts. These things do not prove the corrupted state of the Bible, as we have yet to explain. In this way they have caused people to doubt that the Bible is God's Word, thus especially *I'jāz-i 'īswī* (145–147).

¹Thus *e.g.* Q 2:75; 3:78,187; 4:46; 5:9; 13:41; 6:91; 62:5.

²*Cf.* Q 3:93; 7:159; 17:101; 10:94; 32:23; 34:6; 40:53*etc.*

1. According to some scholars, Moses wrote Genesis at a time when he was not yet a prophet. For this reason, some reject the inspiration of several books.¹

Answer: Such objections are not allowed for Muslims, because if they believe in the Quran then they must also believe that all the books in the Bible belong to the Word of God. Moreover, the question of whether a book is inspired or noble should not be confused with the issue of corruption; even if the Bible were not God's Word, its textual corruption would not be proved through this.

2. The author and date of composition of some books of the Bible are disputed (148).²

Answer: See 1): This does not confirm the correctness of the theory of corruption. If the Quran calls the whole Bible the Word of God in Muhammad's day, then a disputed authorship or date of composition is of no importance (149). Moreover, since the time of Moses, the Torah has been called the Word of God, and it has been passed down by prophets for more than 1,100 years. After that the Old Testament became famous among the Jews and was called the Word of God by Jesus and his disciples; There are therefore many references to the Old Testament in the New Testament. Since that time the Bible has been passed on unchanged by Jews and Christians (149). It is therefore legitimate to ask whether it

¹Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'īswī-i jadīd*, 8f. The following information from I'jāz comes from Şafdar and refers to an edition of the last century that was not accessible to me.

²*Ibid.*, 8–19,51–68.

is really so important to know who wrote certain books (150).

3. According to many scholars, the Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek. This translation has disappeared (150).

Answer: This also is not relevant to the objection of the corruption of the writing. The Greek version was recognized by the Quran, since only it was present at the time of Muhammad (150f).¹ Moreover, according to some reliable sources the apostle Matthew himself translated this Gospel into Greek. Even if it was translated by another believer, it is nevertheless correct, as it is consistent with the rest of the teachings and content of the Bible. Mt was recognized from the beginning by the Christian Church (*jamā'at-i 'āmma*) (151).

4. Since there was no paper, the Old and the New Testament were written on other materials for several centuries.² At that time, agnostics and heretics could easily disfigure the Bible (151).

Answer: This does not affect the objection of textual corruption, for it contradicts the testimony of the Quran, and there have always been innumerable believers who have transmitted the Word of God. Even when there were difficulties in transmitting, countless copies were still available in many countries (152).

¹*Ibid.*, 20–24.

²*Ibid.*, 37f.

5. All scriptures were destroyed at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The Old Testament was salvaged by Ezra alone (152).¹

Answer: See the answer above. Such a charge is not legitimate for the Muslim. Besides, who can prove that all manuscripts were destroyed? Moreover, Ezra was a prophet, who confirmed the uncorrupted state of the Bible of his time. Finally, there is the testimony of Jesus (153).

6. The Emperor Antiochus² ordered the destruction of all Christian books and persecuted Christians (153f).³

Answer: The Christians resisted the persecution and kept their Bibles hidden. Besides, not all Christians were killed or all manuscripts destroyed (154).

7. Until 1500, Christians used the Greek translation of the Old Testament, during which period the Hebrew text was corrupted by the Jews (155).⁴

Answer: In spite of this, the Christians at all times had many Hebrew manuscripts, which they later took and compared with the Jewish manuscripts. They were found to be identical (155).

8. The Torah speaks of Moses in the third person. This shows that Moses did not write the Torah (155f).

Answer: Why would one want to question someone as the author of a book merely because he wrote in the third person? Many authors use the third

¹Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'īswī-i jadīd*, 39–44.

²The context does not clearly show who is meant here.

³Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'īswī-i jadīd*, 39–44.

⁴*Ibid.*, 44–47.

person. How much more likely is it that Moses as the writer of God used the third person, since he wrote down God's words and not his own (156f).

9. Many books of the New Testament were not considered inspired by some people until the fourth century.¹

Answer: The Quran considers them all inspired. Besides, they were only rejected by some. The reason for this was that the Church was very conscientious regarding the question of authorship. At the time of the apostles, a writing was not considered canonical by the church until it was ascertained that it actually derived from an apostle. Therefore, the genuineness of the New Testament writings was only gradually recognized by all Christian gatherings (158).

10. The Apocrypha were later accepted as inspired and are still accepted today by the Catholic Church (158f).²

Answer: This does not prove any Scriptural corruption, since only the Greek manuscripts contain the Apocrypha, not the original Hebrew manuscripts. Neither were they written by prophets, nor were they inspired. They are the works of certain Jewish scholars written after the completion of the *taurāt*. They are used by the Church only because they are useful and instructive (159). If someone wishes to consider this issue in more depth, he may turn to books that deal with it in a detailed way (159f).

¹*Ibid.*, 28–37.

²*Ibid.*, 33–37.

11. The differences between *SP* and *LXX* prove the corruption of the Bible (160).¹

Answer: The original text is Hebrew. The two versions mentioned above are translations. These translations do not prove the corruption of the original text (160f). Moreover, scholars have found that the translations sometimes diverge from one another and sometimes from *M*. These differences, however, are very minor and are not of such a nature as to alter the principles and teachings of the Bible (161f).

12. The Hebrew manuscripts do not match. The same applies to the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (162f).²

Answer: The answer has already been given. Scholars have devoted much effort to the collection of manuscripts. Their verdict reads: Despite some scribal errors, nothing important has been changed (163f). On the contrary, looking at the myriad manuscripts available, it is amazing to see how little the original text has changed (165). Most mistakes have now been corrected by scholars by comparing manuscripts (166).

13. Many verses of the Torah can not have been written by Moses, such as those relating to his death (167).³

Answer: Ezra added some explanations. It is also believed that Joshua wrote verses about the death of Moses. As for the places where it is not clear

¹Thus *Kitāb-i Istifsār, Izālat al-auhām*; esp. Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'iswī-i jadīd*, 63–86, 105–119.

²*Kitāb-i Istifsaar, Izālat al-auhām; I'jāz-i 'iswī etc.*

³Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'iswī-i jadīd*, 51–62.

whether they were written by a prophet or not, it is enough to know that Jesus and his disciples confirm their inspiration. In any case, all these passages can be found in all the ancient manuscripts and date back to the time before Muhammad's birth (167f).

14. With the rise of the Pope, the Vulgate, which was corrupted, was imposed on many.¹

Answer: You can not reject something because of the sins of people who do not follow the Word of God. The corruption of translations does not prove the corruption of the original text, as has already been explained (168f).

15. Many heretics and atheists have criticized the repugnance of certain Christian teachings (169).²

Answer: This objection does not prove the corruption of the Bible; rather, it is a product of hypocrisy. First, Muslims must not raise objections to Biblical teachings, as according to the Quran, the Bible is inspired (168–170). Moreover, these objections can only serve as proof that the Bible is not inspired; they do not prove the corruption of the same. Textual corruption can only be proved if these offensive facts and doctrines were not included in the Bible from the beginning (170). Similarly, the corruption of the Quran is not proved by taking offence at its teachings (170f).

¹*Ibid.*, 47–49.

²*Ibid.*, 118–213.

16. Justin [the martyr] accused the Jews of having changed several verses in the Torah, and other Christian scholars have accepted his word.¹

Answer: Justin only knew the LXX, because he preferred it. Scholars who have investigated *M* and *LXX* have disproved this charge and proved the validity of *M* (172f).

17. At the time of the apostles countless fake books were written. How then is it possible to establish the reliability of the New Testament books (173)?²

Answer: The fact that there are fake books does not prove that genuine books are also fake (173f). The books presently included in the New Testament include only those identified by the Church (*jamā'at-i 'amma-i masīhīya*) as truly coming from the apostles (174f). The bogus books were never accepted by the church (175). Similarly, only the *Qurān*, *Kitāb-i Muwātdtā-i Mālik* and the six collections of *ḥadīs* are accepted by Muslims, although many other works and *ḥadīs* were written at the same time (176–178).

18. The Bible must be corrupted, as it contradicts the *Qurān* and the *ḥadīs* (178).

Answer: The *Qurān* itself is a witness of the reliability of the Bible. If its teachings contradict the statements made in the *Qurān*, this only proves the unreliability of the *Qurān* (179f). If Muslims claim that the Bible mentioned in the *Qurān* is not identical to the present Bible, then they should show a

¹The author cites *Baḥṣ-i shari'at* (1270 AH), 28 (see 'Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 172).

²Kairānwī, *I'jāz-i 'iswī-i jadīd*, 246–253.

copy of the original text or prove that in the time of Muhammad, the Bible in Arabia, Syria, Byzantium and other countries differed from the Bible today (180f).

19. It is clear that in its present form, the Bible contains both God's Word and words of Man, *e.g.* in the historical reports, letters *etc.* But the Quran is really God's Word, since God is always the person speaking.¹

Answer: a) The fact that God speaks in a book does not mean that it is inspired. Many false prophets have spoken in the name of God (181f). Rather, inspiration is determined by the spiritual activity of the divine light in the hearts of men (182). God gave his prophets and apostles permission to express his message in human language in such a way that his message was conveyed in an appropriate way (182f).

b) The requirements and excellence of the divine Word can not be proven if the revealed word is not properly ordered, if it contains no genealogies or miracles of the prophets and apostles, if it is not written in the form of a book or a letter by a prophet *etc.* Rather, it is necessary for the Word of God to contain a record of creation, the prophets and the apostles in order to guide his servants on the right path. Just as the people of the time of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles recounted their miracles, the people of later generations should also have the opportunity to read about it in God's Word and to re-

¹The author cites the *muqaddama* of *Izālat al-auhām etc.* (‘Alī, *Niyāz-nāma*, 181).

ceive comfort and assurance concerning the Word of God (184).

Furthermore, the Bible is the same Scripture that the People of the Book have always had and that the Quran affirms. But if the Quran adheres to the inspiration of the Bible and at the same time contradicts it, then it is clear which of the two books does not derive from Man (185f).

D. Proof of the Authenticity of the Bible (21–25)

Old Testament (21.) The books of the Old Testament were written between 1500 and 400 BC and then passed from one generation to the next until the present day. *LXX* was translated around 300 BC. Some Hebrew manuscripts written before Muhammad's time still exist today. Regarding *SP*: As the enemies of the Jews, the Samaritans would never have joined them in corrupting the Bible. The New Testament also contains many references to the Old Testament (188f). Whoever doubts the authenticity of the texts that have not been explicitly written by a prophet should at least accept the testimony of Jesus (189–192).

New Testament (22.) Two things need to be examined: a) Have the books of today's New Testament been accepted as inspired since the time of the apostles? b) Have they been corrupted?

1. The contemporaries of false New Testament writings would have confirmed their falseness in their own writings. However, this is not the case (194). All of the books currently in the Bible have always been accepted as genuine and as the Word of

God. This can be proved for the periods 1900–1400, 1400–400, 400–300 and 300–170 AD. [...]. If a first-century book refers to the New Testament but does not mention some of the New Testament books, it is not so much a sign that the author does not accept them; rather it only demonstrates that he does not need them for his argument. It should also not be forgotten that the books of the New Testament were written in different cities and by eight different people over a period of 60 years. Because of this, it took a long time for all the books to be collected and accepted by all (198–200); for this reason, up to about 300 AD not all churches (*jamā'at*) had established the authenticity of all books; see Origen's book list, Eusebius *etc.* (200f).

The *Apostolic Fathers* cast no doubt on the authenticity of the Biblical books, since they lived in the time of the apostles and took their authenticity for granted (202–204).

2. The uncorrupted state of the New Testament:

- a) Today there are over 1000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament from different countries. Some of them date from before 400 AD. All agree with each other (205f).
- b) Some of the translations were already done around 120 AD and agree with each other (206).
- c) The references to the New Testament of the many post-apostolic writings are consistent (206f).

The Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* are also witnesses of the veracity of the Bible (208f).

Technically, it was not possible for Christians and Jews to corrupt the Bible (209). They had no reason to do so. Moreover, it would be impossible for a true Christian to have such intentions, especially considering Dtn 42 and Rev 22:18f (210f).

There remains the charge that the Bible was corrupted through worldly motivation. In the time of Islam, however, Christians had no reason to do so for worldly reasons, since a corruption of the Scriptures was not encouraged by Muslims; rather, Christians were forced or tempted to become Muslims. Those who despite worldly advantages refused to become Muslim would not have corrupted the Bible to gain worldly gain (211–213). Moreover, the people involved in corruption could not all have changed the same words, since Christianity had already been spread to so many countries (213f). In the case of the Old Testament, these changes would have had to have been made in agreement with the Jews. In addition, one must consider the countless translations in different languages (214). In addition, there were already many sects in Christianity that were divided among themselves and therefore would not have joined forces in corrupting the Biblical text (214f).

The result of these investigations: The objection of textual corruption is wrong.

III. The Charge of Abrogation (26.–34.)

Muslims claim that the Bible was abrogated by the Quran to explain differences between the Quran, the *ḥadīṣ* and the Bible. It has already been shown that this is not possible (219f). However, since this claim is very widespread among Muslims, the author will deal with it in detail (221). Seven issues need to be considered: 1) What does

naskh mean? 2) Where is the claim of *naskh* found in the Quran? 3) Where is it raised in the *ḥadīṣ*? 4) Can God's book be abrogated by the unanimous decision of the Muslim community (*ijmā' -i umma*)? 5) Is *naskh* possible in the Bible according to the rules laid down by Muslim commentators and mujtahids? 6) The Quran states that the Bible is perfect. If it does not assert the abrogation of the Bible, does it give a reason or cause for its own revelation? 7) Why should the Quran not abrogate the Gospel if the Gospel has abrogated the Torah (221)?

1. The meaning of *naskh* and the meaning of the abrogation of the Bible: According to the Arabic dictionary, the abrogation of the Bible means that it is forbidden to read it or act according to its teachings, as these have become void (*bāṭil*). For this reason, Muslims do not follow it. These treat it like the scriptures of the Hindus and Zoroastrians with the only difference that the Bible is considered to be God's Word (222).
2. The assertion of the abrogation of the Bible contradicts the statement of the Quran (223–225).
3. No *ḥadīṣ* states that the Bible has been abrogated. One *ḥadīṣ* reports that Muhammad forbade 'Umar to read the Torah. However, this is unreliable and does not refer to its abrogation. Furthermore, another *ḥadīṣ* confirms that Muhammad said that the Word of God is not abrogated by his own word. Bukhārī and others support this statement (225–227).
4. It is clear that the abrogation theory was conceived at the time when it became clear that certain issues in the Quran are not in accordance with the

Bible. Since scholars could find no evidence for this in the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ*, they invented the doctrine that it had been decided by the unanimous decision of the *umma* (227f). Two facts make the implication of this statement invalid, even if there had been a unanimous decision of the *umma* regarding the abrogation of the Bible (228):

- a) According to Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), a unanimous decision of the *umma* is permissible only if it does not contradict the teachings of the Word of God.
- b) There must be a concrete occasion for the decision of the *umma* such as the existence of ambiguous issues (228).

5. All Muslims agree that some verses in the Quran have been abrogated. The Quran confirms this (229). But nowhere in the Quran or in the *ḥadīṣ* can the assertion be found that the Bible was abrogated by the Quran. The following rules have been established for *naskh* in the Quran (229f):

- a) *Naskh* is a feature of Muslims and has several advantages. One of them is that it makes an issue easier (230).
- b) Only commandments (*aḥkām*) may be abrogated; information (*akhbār*) such as teachings, principles, historical accounts and narratives of the Bible can not be abrogated (230f).
- c) As for the commandments, we must differentiate. *Naskh* is only possible if it is found that two commandments contradict each other and that Muhammad or one of his companions (*ṣaḥābī*) abrogated one of them (231f).

Now how can Muslims declare not just a few verses but a whole book to be abrogated, especially considering that neither the Quran nor a single “weak” *ḥadīṣ* claims this (232f)?

Some scholars distinguish between general commandments, which are binding on all, and specific commandments, which only refer to particular people or times. Only the second kind can be abrogated (233). Does this mean that all the commandments of the Bible belong to the second kind? This is impossible: There are many commandments that can only be interpreted as general (234).

6. The Quran does not say it came to abrogate and reject the Bible. On the contrary, Q 6:156 indicates that the Quran is identical with the writings of the Jews and Christians and differs only in that it was revealed in the Arabic language (235f).
7. Both the Old and the New Testament were written by inspired humans (136f). The Christians do not claim that the Old Testament was abrogated by the New Testament. On the contrary, it continues to be recognized, read and handed down as binding for Christians. The Old Testament as well as the New Testament bestow eternal life and salvation. Furthermore, God could not abrogate one of his words through another (237f). The New Testament is a witness that the Old Testament was not discarded or abrogated; rather, it continued to be read; *cf.* 1Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4; 2Tim 3:16–17 (238f).
Can God reveal the true path to eternal salvation and then reject it (239f)? Or is it possible that God

gave Man a Law only to abolish it again, since it proved to be impossible to fulfil, and to replace it with a new Law (240)? Or did God purposely reveal a worthless book in order to replace it through another book (240)?

Some modern Maulvīs such as Maulvī Kairānwī have discovered that not only can the abrogation of the Bible not be proved; everything points to the impossibility of this teaching. These people now claim that such a teaching does not exist; not the whole Old Testament is abrogated by the New Testament, but rather only a few commandments of the Old Testament. According to them, Christians made a false claim out of ignorance,¹ because in reality Muslims do not know this doctrine (241–245). However, this opinion of Raḥmatullāh is false and contradicts the books dealing with the principles of *fiqh* (245–247).

Perhaps someone would like to differentiate at this point between abrogation in the sense of the prohibition to read and write² the Bible, and abrogation in the sense of designating the Bible as void. However, this distinction is not legitimate, since reading a Scripture may only be prohibited if it is void and bad (248).

The question remains as to why the whole Gospel, or some of its commandments, can not be abrogated by the Quran. Was not the whole Torah, or at least some of its commandments abrogated by the Gospel (248)?

There are two kinds of abrogation (*manṣūkhī-omauqūfī*): If one examines the abrogating and abrogated

¹Thus the book on the religious debate in Agra, which on the advice of Kairānwī and Khān was published under the name of Sayyid 'Abdullah, pp. 28f,31,38f; *Izālat al-auhām*, 1.1.1 (Şafdar's citations).

²Unclear statement

commandments in the first kind of abrogation, one sees that the intention of the lawgiver was the same from start to finish, so that its goal becomes clear. This is not the case with the second kind. Rather, the goal and intention of the lawgiver have changed.

Take as an example a lawgiver (*ḥākīm*), who gives some people various instructions (*aḥkām*) on how to build a house. First he lets them dig up and collect stones. After a certain time, he orders them to stop and build the foundation. After they finish this, they must start mixing lime *etc.* until the house is finally finished. In this way, the lawgiver has repeatedly annulled earlier orders (*mauqūf karnā*) and issued new orders. His intention, however, has remained the same from beginning to end, namely to build a house (248f). Imagine, however, that the same lawgiver orders the people to demolish the house and tamp the gravel and earth to a flat terrace with their feet. In this case it is evident that the intention of the lawgiver has changed (249).

In the first case, it is clear that the orders to stop doing something and start something new is not actually abrogation but rather fulfilment. At the end, the intention of the lawgiver is fulfilled. This type of command is also permitted regarding the Word of God and does not affect his power or wisdom (249). It is found in the Bible (250). The second kind is not found in God's Word, as it contradicts the nature of God. The claim that the Quran has abrogated the Bible can not be from God, since this would be the second kind of abrogation (251).

The "abrogation" of commandments in the Bible is as follows: After the Fall, God decided to save Man from his sinful nature. As already mentioned, first he only gave him commandments that he could understand and follow (252–254). Israel's mind and condition were not worthy

or able to understand or obey the perfect (*kāmila*) and spiritual commandments (254). This does not mean, however, that God did not know the perfect and spiritual Law, or that he had given the Israelites an imperfect Law (*nā-kāmila*) so that they would become guilty of sin. This would contradict God's holy nature. Rather, after they had progressed through various revelations of the Old Testament and finally become worthy to receive God's ultimate revelation, he gave them his perfect and complete spiritual Law (254f). The question of why God did not immediately reveal his perfect Law can easily be answered: There is a Law in all creatures that growth and progress take place through small steps (255f).

If the Gospel has been abrogated by the Quran, then it is necessary to determine according to which rule this has happened.

The Law of the Torah is made up of hidden (*bāṭinī*) and manifest/external (*ẓāhirī*) commandments. The moral Law relates to the righteousness and purity of Man and is identical to the Law of the Gospel. It is found in a hidden form in the Old Testament, but only in an abridged (*mujmal*) and imperfect (*nā-kāmil*) manner. This was necessary in order to teach and guide the people who were at a low spiritual level (256f). Only through Jesus was this imperfect Law fulfilled and declared (*takmīl/tafṣīl/tashrīh*) (257).

[Some examples of fulfilment of Old Testament commandments follow relating to fornication, divorce (258) and loving your neighbour. The neighbour is no longer restricted to fellow Jews or other believers; rather, we are to love everybody (258f)].

In contrast, compare the inferior or bad laws of the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ*, which permit much that is incompatible with God's holy nature such as the law that Mus-

lims are not responsible for their bad deeds (260f), the laws relating to marriage and fornication (261f) and the requirement that Muslims should only love one another and not others (262). People object that it is not possible to obey the commandments of the Gospel. However, is it conceivable that God first revealed these perfect and complete commandments, but then repented and abrogated them? Or did he impose upon them these impossible laws and command them to do something impossible, only to realize later that it was useless and to abrogate the commandments (262f)?

Let us now turn to the external laws of the Torah already mentioned. The laws referring to outward things and worship ceremonies were all signs pointing to the spiritual worship revealed by Jesus. These were first given to the Israelites to pull them away from the rituals of idolatry. As they mastered this task and became accustomed to worship, God revealed the hidden reality through Jesus. The true/hidden things of which God had shown to man the image, sign and shadow through the Torah were now themselves manifested (263f). This was prophesied in Jer 31:31–33 and 32:40 and fulfilled in Christ (Heb 8 *etc.*) (264f). For this reason, the external laws were not worthless, but rather useful and wise for the period assigned to them (265).

Would it be logical for God to first reveal the outer, then the inner and then again the outer Law (that is in the Torah, the Gospel and the Quran)? Why would he return from the original to the copy, from the spiritual to the mundane (266)? The meaning of the Torah was right and excellent, and the reality revealed thereafter through Jesus greater and more excellent. In contrast, the purpose of the Quran is to take several commandments from the Torah without understanding their meaning, change

them and mingle them with many ceremonies taken from idol worshippers (266).

In the Old Testament, an innocent animal was sacrificed as an atonement for committed sins (266). This action is not sufficient in itself, but it is a sign of the true (*aşli/haqīqī*) sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The man who believes in him and accepts his atoning sacrifice is cleansed of all sins (266f). For this reason, we no longer need the animal sacrifice. Only faith in Jesus Christ counts (267f).

In contrast, Muslim Law requires animal sacrifices, while the atonement of Jesus is not mentioned at all. If this was really God's revelation, he would have abrogated the atoning sacrifice of His only-begotten Son (268).

The Torah contains external washing rituals. Their goal was to point out that spiritual purity is as important as physical purity. Spiritual cleansing has come about through Jesus and is now achieved by believing in him through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (268f). For this reason, Christians no longer wash themselves to become spiritually pure. The Muslim Law, on the other hand, requires the cleansing of the body to obtain spiritual cleansing. Here Islam has reverted to the external Law (269f).

The temple in Jerusalem was given to the Jews by God as a place of worship for sacrifices. His presence there was so real that it seemed as if he dwelled there himself. The temple was therefore a sign of the pure body of Jesus and the fact that the human heart is the place where God resides. When God became Man through Jesus, this reality became apparent, so that now the heart of every believer is the temple of God. Because of this, God destroyed the stone temple after Jesus ascended to heaven (270).

In Muslim Law, a building has once more been designated as the temple of God. Muslims even pray in the direction of this temple. It used to be an idol temple, and along with it Muslims also absorbed the idol worship ceremonies (271f). What is the true meaning of all this? Even if one believes the accounts of the *ḥadīṣ* that Adam and the angels built the foundation of the Ka‘ba, the basic problem remains: Why would God choose the Ka‘ba as his temple until the time of Ishmael, then move the place of worship to Jerusalem, later abrogate it and replace it with a spiritual temple, and finally relocate it to the (material) Ka‘ba (272f)?

Similarly, circumcision was a sign of removing¹ the carnal desires of the human heart. This found its fulfilment in the spiritual form of Israel, that is in the Church, where the heart and no longer the foreskin is circumcised (273). Therefore, external circumcision is no longer necessary. In spite of this, Islam reintroduced external circumcision (274).

The Torah also prohibits the enjoyment of certain animals. This was not good or bad in itself; rather, the Torah thereby taught the Jews to get used to God’s commandments and to separate themselves from other people, as already mentioned. Moreover, God allowed them animals, things to drink and clothes that were useful and healthy. However, once the Israelites made spiritual progress and no longer had to separate themselves from other peoples, and once the Gospel had been spread among all peoples and greater insight had been gained in worldly things, these commandments were no longer binding. Of course, harmful things are still forbidden (*ḥarām*) (274f). In this case too, the Quran has reverted to external rituals (275f).

¹literally: “cut off” (*qaṭa‘ karnā*)

The remaining laws of the Torah are of a political nature and refer to the way of governing. After the advent of Jesus, the teachings of the Gospel [regarding the Kingdom of Heaven] ruled, and the Jews were scattered. These political laws were only meant for Jews and need not be observed by other people (276).

The testimony of the Bible (34.) The Bible itself is a witness that the Gospel will never be abrogated; see the mentioned passages in the book of Jeremiah, in which it is plainly stated that the new covenant will be eternal (Jer 32:40); Thus also Mt 24:35; Mark 14:32; Lk 21:33; Jn 5:22–24 (redemption only through Christ); Gal 1:8 (the accursed nature of all doctrines except those of the Gospel) *etc.* (277–280).

The writing is concluded with an exhortation (280–282).

Chapter 18

‘Imād ud-Dīn

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¹This consists of a written correspondence between 'Imād ud-Dīn and the Shiite Mujtahid of Lucknow, Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad (Lāhiz, *Naghma-i ṭanbūrī*).

²An interpretation of Jn 1:45–51, in which secret Christians are called to publicly confess their faith (Lāhiz, *Buzurg Nathānā'el*).

³Mentioned on the back page of Lāhiz, *Intisāb al-'imād*.

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* = accessible to me

Unless otherwise noted, the page numbers and chronology of the works until 1883 that could not be consulted were taken from: R. Clark, "Literary Work of the Rev. Imad-ud-din," *CMI* (Oct. 1884), 639f. Unfortunately, these are not always reliable.

Examination of the Faith (*Taḥqīq al-īmān*)

After a Preface and an Introduction,³ 'Imād ud-Dīn presents his case that Muhammad is a false prophet in the first chapter (18–106); in the second, that Christ is the true prophet and Son of God (106–125).

In the *Preface* he names two premises for a fair comparison of both religions. First, supporters of one religion can not raise objections about another religion that can be directed against themselves. Thus, in both religions, not just in Christianity, there are facts that are suprarational (3f). Secondly, the diversity of the sects of a reli-

¹From: Lāhiz, 'Dr. Imad-ud-din's Paper for Chicago', 586.

²W. Muir praises this translation: It is more idiomatic and therefore more concise and understandable than common translations ('*Editorial Notes*', 225f). I have examined the transliterated edition of 1900 in Roman Urdu.

³Lāhiz, *Taḥqīq al-īmān*, 1–18.

gion can not be raised as an objection, since both religions have many sects; however, if their revelations have been proven to be true, then their doctrines must be judged by their scriptures and prophets (4).

The *Introduction* discusses the objection of Scriptural corruption. According to 'Imād ud-Dīn, the accusation of the Quran is directed against the corruption of the meaning (*tahrīf-i ma'nawī*), not against the corruption of the text (4f). The individual objections of *Istifsār*, *Izālāt al-auhām*¹ and *I'jāz-i 'iswī* (*Christian Inimitableness*) concerning the alleged corruption of the Bible will not be treated in this book, as a later work called *Guidance of Muslims* will be dedicated to answering this question (5). However, some basic issues need to be mentioned:

The objection that the Bible has been corrupted because Bible translations differ is unfounded; different translations always differ (5f). The author was present when *Christian Inimitability* was written. The most important answer to this objection is the fact that Jesus read the Torah and witnessed to its inspiration. He also asserted that it would never be abrogated. One could never have distorted the Torah after Jesus' time, since the Jews and Christians were hostile to each other. If one party had even attempted to corrupt something, the other would have protested immediately (6).

¹*Kitāb-i Istifsār* was written in 1845 by a Muslim jurist named Āl-i Ḥasan (born c. 1801) in response to Christian teachings. In it the author also attacks *Balance of Truth*. (On Āl-i Ḥasan see Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 207ff; on *Istifsār* *ibid.*, 218–221, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī', 49.)

Izālāt al-auhām is an earlier answer of Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī to *Balance of Truth*, which he published in 1852/1853 (*cf.* Powell, 'Contact and Controversy', 265–267). In actual fact, 'Imād ud-Dīn barely touches these two works, since they were out of date after the publication of *Christian Inimitableness* and thereafter hardly played a role in the Muslim-Christian debate.

The claim that the many bogus books of New Testament times are an indication that you can not trust the canonical books is wrong. These fake books were the product of uninspired people. For this reason, they were not accepted as the Word of God by scholars and the “community of all believers” (*ijmā‘-i ummat*) (7). One might just as well argue that the numerous *ḥadīṣ* that Muslims deem to be unreliable provide evidence of the corruption of the trusted (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīṣ* (7f). The Quran itself was originally available in several versions, all of which were burned when the authoritative Quran was established. Many verses have been omitted and others added (8–11).

The objection of textual variants as a sign of corruption must be rejected. Muslims believe that Pfander admitted that the Bible had been corrupted at the Agra debate. Actually, he only admitted that there were scribal errors (11). Textual variants can be found in every book including the Quran (11f). [Some scribal errors of the Bible and objections regarding the reliability of the Quran follow (15f).] Several alleged contradictions of the Bible are mentioned in *Christian Inimitability*. However, this is not a sign of corruption. If that were the case, then one could also call the Quran corrupted (16f).

The teachings of Christians in themselves do not prove that the text has been corrupted (17).

Chapters 1 and 2 are essentially a comparison of the characteristics of Muhammad and Jesus on the basis of four criteria: a) Can they perform miracles? b) Have they prophesied? c) Have they been predicted by earlier prophets? d) Do their teachings contain good moral and spiritual values (21). The last point will be explained in more detail in 2.4: Did they also reveal God’s glory and greatness (78)?

Unlike Jesus, Muhammad performed no miracles—the *ḥadīṣ* that report alleged miracles of Muhammad are neither reliable nor consistent; furthermore, the Quran itself claims that Muhammad performed no miracles (1.1). Moreover, he did not prophesy (1.2). The so-called prophecies about Muhammad in the Old Testament that Raḥmatullah mentioned in *Izālat al-auhām*¹ are based on a false exegesis (1.3). With regard to the teachings of Muhammad, only those that agree with the Bible are correct. However, these do not count as Muslim teachings, since (a) Muslims refer to the Bible as corrupted and abrogated (78), and (b) they have been taken from the Bible (79–81).

There are several objections to Muhammad's teachings:

1. Polygamy: Muhammad himself did not limit the number of his own wives and did not obey the other commandments of the Quran in this regard (81–101);
2. the carnal nature of Paradise (101f);
3. the Holy War (*jihād*) (103–105);
4. The secular and unspiritual nature of these teachings (105f).

Jesus performed miracles (2.1), prophesied (2.2) and was prophesied by previous prophets (2.3). Jesus' teachings are perfect. These include a) the Trinity (120f), b) the divine Sonship of Jesus (121–123), c) Jesus' atoning sacrifice for the sins of men: atonement is necessary for forgiveness of sins, as human works are useless; the Old Testament sacrifices are types (*namūna*) for Christ's atonement (123–125).

¹See p. 414, note 1.

Finally, the Bible has five excellent qualities:

1. The testimony of the history of God's Word is sufficient to convince the true seeker of the truthfulness of Christian claims and to satisfy his spiritual needs (126).
2. The author of the Bible is God, for it reveals the secrets of the heart, and through its teachings it satisfies the mind of the earnest inquirer (126f).
3. Unlike the Quran, the Bible contains no deception or deceit (127).
4. The Bible changes the hearts of people and makes even extremely proud and bad people pure, humble and holy. This good work never stops. The Quran, on the other hand, does not reach this holy goal; rather, it keeps Man in his sinfulness (127).
5. The person who compares the Quran and the Bible without prejudice will immediately reject the Quran and accept the Gospel (127f).¹

¹Cf. Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy*, 22f.

Guidance of the Muslims (*Hidāyat al-muslimīn*)

Preface

Muslims used to claim that the meaning of the Bible has been corrupted (*tahrīf-i ma'nawī*), but today they claim that its text has been corrupted (*tahrīf-i lafzī*) intentionally (*'amdī*).¹ The reason for this is that Muslim teaching, which is anti-Christian and can not prove the prophethood (*nubūwat*) of Muhammad, in this manner tries to suggest that the Bible is untrustworthy (2f). Earlier Muslims neither read about such claims in the Quran, nor did they make these claims themselves, which is why they are not found in earlier works. Only now have the Maulvīs started to mention this issue. But since their arguments are useless, some [truth-loving] Muslim scholars have recognized the invalidity of Islam. The only reason they have not publicly acknowledged it is for fear of the environment and because of their weak faith, although they have secretly confessed their convictions to the author and other Christians. Nevertheless, some are publicly becoming Christians, since they find not reason for their old religion; no miracle of Muhammad has been proved, nor has any messenger prior to him been found who witnessed concerning him. Neither was his teaching noble, nor his way of life good. The allegation of corruption of the Bible has not been proved and is therefore void (3).

In 1853, the now deceased physician Wazīr Khān and Maulvī Raḥmatullāh, now living in Mecca, composed a

¹Lāhiz, *Hidāyat al-muslimīn*, 2. This seems to be a reflection on the debate of Indian Islam with Christianity. The author uses the term *tahrīf-i 'amdī* more or less as a synonym of the term *tahrīf-i lafzī*.

book called *Christian Inimitability* (*I'jāz-i 'īswī*). In those days 'Imād ud-Dīn was also in Agra and visited them every evening (3).

Although this book is now forty-five years old, there are still some trustworthy Muslims who can attest to the situation in which it was written, e.g. Maulvī Muḥammad Maẓhar, Maulvī Abu al-Ḥasan, Ḥāfiẓ 'Abdullāh and Maulvī Karīm ad-Din (3f). These people know very well how Dr. Wazīr Khān wrote this work, for the sources and method of writing were neither good nor of good intention (4).

Why was this book written? Pfander's sermons had spread throughout Agra.

Their content was: Islam is not of God and was certainly not sent by God. At that time, people started thinking that Islam would disappear, since in *Balance of Truth* Pfander had pointed out that Islam is without a foundation (4). Although Maulvī Āl-i Ḥasan had written *Istifsār* and Raḥmatullāh *Izālat al-auhām*,¹ they themselves realized that these writings were not convincing. Since they could not prove the mission of Muhammad, Dr. Wazīr Khān decided to write a book in which he sought to cast doubt on the reliability of the Bible in the eyes of men by citing English books. Thus, the Qurān would gain glory, and ordinary Muslims would cause difficulties for preachers in the marketplaces (4).

With this in mind, he and Raḥmatullāh collected English commentaries, the accounts (*risāla*) of monthly debates of the Brahmo Samāj, as well as the books of heretics and atheists. Not only did they receive help from some irreligious (*bad-dīn*) Englishmen, but they also received numerous books from the Roman Catholic bishop,

¹See p. 414, note 1.

who had the intention of harming the Protestants (4). For a superficial person, there seems to be no answer to this book, but in reality it has no substance (4f). For this reason, Christians have not given a detailed answer to this until today. However, 'Imād ad-Dīn has observed that some people have been tempted by this book and others have been prevented from becoming Christians. This decided him in composing a detailed rebuttal of the *Christian Inimitability* (5). Where appropriate, other works will also be discussed.

Chapter 1: Inspiration

1.1 The Need for Inspiration

Inspiration (*ilhām*) means “knowledge that comes from God.” Both Judaism and Christianity as well as Islam take for granted that their prophets were inspired (6f).

There are people who dispute the need for inspiration and claim that reason is sufficient, as we can see the traces of God’s will in creation and thereby know God’s will. According to these, divine inspiration is not necessary because God has kindled a light in Man’s mind that can distinguish between good and evil. Therefore Man can grasp everything through reason (7).

In response to this it can be said that God has certainly left traces of His will in creation; indeed, the mind can certainly distinguish between good and evil. Nevertheless Man needs revelation. After all, men have been created for some purpose (*matlab*), otherwise God’s work would be unwise, which is impossible. Creation, however, is not a book that reason can clearly read. It is ambiguous, so that reason can not grasp the traces of God’s will through it. For this reason the mind of each person

interprets these traces differently. Therefore reason does not attain absolute certainty and remains unsatisfied (7f).

Besides, there are some things that reason alone can not grasp. Although it understands many things, it is unable to help us in matters that most deeply touch us (*farz-i 'ain*) and without which we can find no consolation. In such cases, it requires revelation.

The following things require revelation:

1.1.1 The question of who we are and where we come from must be revealed to us, so that we can compare our present state with our previous state. In this matter, reason has merely taken away our hope (8f).

1.1.2 Our end must be revealed, namely, whether our soul (*rūh*) remains or dies after death. If it remains, we must furthermore know whether our soul can reckon with rest or suffering, and according to what standard we will receive this; will we receive this according to our works and our faith or only according to the will of God *etc.* (9f)?

1.1.3 We must be told how to worship our Creator. We see in the world many forms of worship, all of which have been produced by reason (10).

1.1.4 The nature of God must be revealed: Is he one or more? What is his nature? What are his attributes? Is he almighty or limited?

Through revelation we learn everything we need about God [for the attainment of eternal life] and no more. Those who only rely on their own minds become perplexed or worship what their minds can understand.

As to why there is such a disagreement among those who believe in revelation, the answer is: Many of these apply their minds to matters they can not grasp (11f).

1.1.5 It is necessary that the commandments given have the seal of revelation (12f).

Conclusion: We do not want to reject reason as entirely useless, as our enemies accuse us of doing; however, it is necessary to spell out its limitations (13).

Examples of the Relationship Between Inspiration and Reason

Reason and revelation relate to one another like sunshine to the eye: When the sun shines, the eye sees everything; but in the dark, the eye sees nothing (13). Nevertheless, both elements are needed to see something: The eye is worthless without light, just as light is useless without the eye (14).

Primitive jungle dwellers can not use many objects of an urban culture until they have been taught how to use them properly. Similarly, we too have no way of assessing the state of this world until we have received true revelation (14).

Furthermore, when we look at the ruler of a country, we only see his outer glory; what he does in secret is hidden from us. How much more must the nature of the King of Kings be hidden from us. Despite this, Christians believe that God has revealed to Man everything that he needs [for salvation] (14f).

1.2 The Recognition and Requirements of True Revelation

Those who have received a revelation from God are called prophets and messengers. They have been given a large variety of tasks, and a large variety of things have been revealed to them for a large variety of people or groups of people. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the characteristics and conditions of an inspired person (15). Nevertheless, there are at least four:

1.2.1 First Requirement A prophet must have performed miracles; if not, someone who has performed miracles must have attested him either through words or by not opposing him (16).

A miracle is an event that happens contrary to the laws (*khilāf-i ʿādat*) of nature. It is done by God's power and not by humans, angels or demons. Sometimes magicians claim that they can perform miracles. However, their deeds can not be counted as miracles because they happened through satanic power. Common sense can easily distinguish in these matters, for example when a cripple is restored or a deceased person is brought back to life (16). The miracles of Moses in Egypt were all proven to be real, as the magicians were unable to imitate some of them.

Some argue that such miracles would not happen today and that what happened in the time of ignorance is not credible. The answer to the first objection is: If the same miracles occurred daily, they would be subject to the laws of nature. Thus, the regular appearance of a star in the sky is a powerful sign but still no miracle (16f). A miracle does not appear in every age. Moses, Jesus and the apostles worked wonders, but today God's power is no longer visible in this manner in the Church but rather

through other means (17f). There are no miracles today because, unlike the time of the Old and New Testaments, they are no longer necessary (18).

The answer to the second objection: At the time of Moses, Egypt was a highly developed civilization, and the writings of the time bear eloquent testimony to the excellence of Moses (18).¹ This also applies to the time of Jesus (18f).

1.2.2 Second Requirement The prophet must be able to predict. If his prophecy is correct, it is from God (19).

1.2.3 Third Requirement A prophet must be blameless in his walk and teachings. This does not exclude the possibility that he had previously lived a bad life but was changed by God for the better (19f).

1.2.4 Fourth Requirement The teaching of an inspired human being must be accepted by reason [as good], as his teaching must purify the heart and fill it with good qualities; his teaching must have a good influence (20).

Nevertheless, no prophet was sinless except Jesus. They were sinners, but they did not persist in their sin; they always repented immediately. In contrast, if someone persists in sin, he is undoubtedly not inspired.

1.3 The Forms and Benefits of Revelation

The Forms Revelation is given to the prophet 1) through angels, 2) through voices, 3) without any means, 4) through dreams, 5) through visions and 6) through the

¹Cf. Kairānwī's "Dispensationalism" (Kairānwī, *Izhar-ul-Haqq*, II, 33).

activity of God's Spirit in the prophet's heart, who thus silently inspires him to write or speak (21f).

The Benefits

1. The things that reason alone can not grasp are revealed.
2. The correctness or incorrectness of objects that reason examines becomes evident through revelation.
3. Revelation protects against mistakes in teachings.
4. Events of the past become clear and unambiguous through revelation.
5. Serious problems can be solved by a revelation.

It should also be noted that a revelation is not word for word God's Word; rather, only the content (*mazmūn*) and meaning of God is revealed (*ilqā honā*). This is expressed by the prophets in their own idioms (22f).

1.4 Revealed Religion

There are three types of religions: those based on the mind, those based on ignorance (e.g. idolatry) and those based on reason and inspiration. Only the third kind comes into consideration for us.

The books of the Jews are inspired, but many of their *ḥadīs* are not trustworthy. Their writings tell us that a Messiah will come, for whom they still wait today. The claim of a Maulvī that according to David, God's Torah is perfect (*kāmil*) does not mean that further revelation is no longer necessary; it only means that it is true and useful (23f).

The books of the *New Testament* are also inspired. Although Luke and Mark were not inspired, they served inspired apostles. Further, even though James was not an apostle, he had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (24). The requirements for inspiration were met by all New Testament writers.

In the case of *Islam* the situation is different. Muslims also believe in revelation. However, they use reason as the judge of revelation, since they accept nothing until it has been understood by reason, e.g. the unity of God, his attributes *etc.* Muhammad did not fulfil the requirements of inspiration, neither in teaching nor in action (25). There is a big difference between the statements of the Bible and the Quran, even though the Quran says that the Bible is divinely inspired. Therefore, it is necessary for Muslims to turn away from Islam and turn to the right path. Those who grew up in Islam can turn to Christianity but choose to not free themselves. If you ask them why they do not accept the Bible, they claim that it has been corrupted (*muḥarraḥ*) and changed (*badal gaya*). This was already asserted by Muhammad. However, we do not want to accuse him so much, as he meant it differently from today's Muslims; he meant *tahrīf-i ma'nawī*, not *tahrīf-i lafẓī* (26f). The Islamic interpreters also testify to this, as Ṣafdar 'Alī has stated in *Niyāz-nāma*; for this reason, Muslims today are induced to convert to Christianity. To counteract this, the Maulvīs have now raised the accusation of *tahrīf-i lafẓī*. It implies that the corruption of the Bible was done either deliberately or through scribal errors. However, there are scribal errors in both the Quran and ancient Islamic scriptures (27).¹ Furthermore, Muhammad's accusation referred to *tahrīf-i ma'nawī*, which only applies to those who explained the

¹Qur'ān men 'amdan kī qaid hai.

Bible to him (27). It can not be proven that Muhammad made the accusation of *tahrīf-i lafẓī*.

The accusation of scribal errors of the Bible, be it 10 or 20, does not harm us. Maulvī Sayyid Muḥammad’s assertion that ‘Imād ud-Dīn admits scribal errors is true. However, we call on Muslims to prove intentional textual corruption or otherwise repent; to this day, they have not been able to prove this (28).

Teachings of Islam (*Ta‘līm-i muḥammadi*)

Chapter 1: Tenets

Faith

The only prerequisite for entering the Islamic community is reciting the *kalima*—the confession that there is only one God, and that Muhammad is his messenger. The regulations of the Quran and the *ḥadīṣ* are considered good works that follow this confession.¹

Muslim scholars argue about whether faith in itself is a good work or not. Quranic statements regarding this question are ambiguous, but they tend more towards the second position (1.3). The commentaries, however, agree that one only needs to recite the *kalima* to obtain salvation (13ff).

In contrast, the Bible teaches us to believe in the triune God. Faith is like a mother putting her breast to her child’s mouth, which then begins to suck. We similarly receive the power to do good works. Both faith and good

¹Lāhiz, *Ta‘līm-i muḥammadi*, 12f.

works are required (18f). Faith consists of two components: belief in the Trinity and belief in the second person of the Trinity who came to die as an atonement for us, and who was raised from the dead (19f).

The Prophets and Writings Before Muhammad (20–27)

Muslims are commanded to believe in the teachings and writings of the earlier prophets. In spite of this, they claim that these have been abrogated. They will have no excuse on Judgment Day, since God's Word can not be annulled any more than God himself can be annulled (22).

Not only did Muhammad teach that these books were abrogated [sic!]; according to a *hadīs*, he also forbade 'Umar to read them (23f). How can Muhammad be a prophet if he calls the Bible God's Word but rejects reading that very Word (24)?

Even though many Quranic verses are considered to be abrogated (*mansukh*), it is not forbidden to read them; why should this not be the case regarding the Bible (24)? The accusation of corruption of the Scriptures has not been proved and can not be used as a reason for the abrogation of the Bible (24f).

The rules of *naskh* can only be applied to commandments, not to the whole book, *i.e.* it can not include the stories and descriptions of God, his will and his covenants (25).

The Quran

It is believed that the Quran was revealed word for word, and that it contains all the sciences in the world (27–29).

The impartial observer knows that this is not the case; rather, the Quran came into existence as a mixture of different traditions and Muhammad's imagination (29f).

The Bible has not been revealed mechanistically; rather, it came into existence under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by means of the prophets in their language and idioms (30f). It does not contain all the sciences of the world; rather, it contains all the spiritual teachings that Man needs in order to live a spiritual life (31f).

Predestination

According to the Quran, both the good and the bad was ordained 50,000 years before creation. For this reason Muslims claim that we can not understand God's wisdom in this regard. Nevertheless, Man is given the power to act; he can choose between good and bad works (33f).

Five errors in Muhammad's teachings:

1. Muhammad believes that God is the origin of evil (*bānī*). In contrast, the Bible calls Satan the origin of evil (36f).
2. Such a doctrine causes perseverance in sin, since based on this Man must believe that his works are determined by God's will (37f).
3. It encourages sinners such as adulterers and whores, as they invoke this and claim that their actions are based on divine providence.
4. God can not punish people whom He has designated to sin.
5. On the one hand God's nature is described thus; on the other the Quran prohibits evil works. This implies that God's words and deeds do not coincide (38).

The Meaning of Sin

Sin is defined as a violation of Islamic Law. Muslims do not obey the commandments of the Torah and the Gospel (39).

The Origin of Sin

Muhammad declared God to be the source of sin, while the Bible says that Satan is the source of evil (40).

The Different Kinds of Sin

There are several kinds of sins, e.g. unbelief, polytheism, dissolute life (*fisq*) and hypocrisy. Islam distinguishes between large and small (*kabīra wa ṣaghīra*) sins (40f).

Does God Hate Sin or Not?

The Quran claims that God hates sin, which is astonishing given that it also claims that he is the source of evil. Some *ḥadīṣ* show that according to Islamic understanding, God does not hate sin; on the contrary, he loves it, as due to sin Man must ask for forgiveness (41f).

The Bible asserts that God hates sin so much that death is the only deserved punishment (42f).

The Mental Sins

There are four kinds of mental sins in Islam: *hawā*, *khawāṭir*, *ikhtiyārāt* and *'awāzim*. If the Muslim perpetrates the first three, he can be forgiven; for the fourth he must be punished just a little bit (43).

The Bible says that every bad thought is sin (44–47).

The Punishment of Committed (*fi'li*) Sins

According to Islamic teachings, if a person converts to Islam, all sins are forgiven. If he commits small (*ṣaghīra*) sins after his conversion, then he may receive grace through special forms of worship, such as *ḥajj*, *jihād* etc. The great (*kabīra*) sins can be annulled after receiving the punishment established in the Quran (48). [A list of various penalties follows (48–50)].

In contrast, the Torah contained two types of punishments: those relating to the outer/external (*ẓāhiri*) kingdom and those dealing with the spiritual well-being of human beings. The first kind was outward and related to the reparation of offences against the state. The second kind was atoned for by sacrifices. When the Israelite kingdom came to an end, so did the first kind of Law. Christ then became the atoning sacrifice for spiritual sins, which must be distinguished from offences against the state, which are punished according to the verdict of the judges of this world. God has established these secular laws to provide peace and security, and Christians must also obey them (50f).

In contrast, Muhammad's kingdom was of this world; therefore he made commandments for this world (51f). This is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable that performing external rites, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca, should bring about the forgiveness of spiritual sins. All prophets agree that these sins can be forgiven only through sacrifice (52). This can only happen through the atonement of Christ.

The Transformation of the Believer

The Quran does not say anything about the moral transformation of the believer. However, some *ḥadīṣ* assert

that whosoever was bad before he became Muslim will remain bad, and whosoever was good will continue to be good; in other words, his character does not change through his conversion to the Muslim faith (53f).

The Quran says that one should love one's friends and hate one's enemies. That is the way of the world. But there are two kinds of ethics (*'ādat-o-akhlāq*), namely innate ethics and those we receive from things outside ourselves (54)¹. If the above views refer only to the first kind of ethics, *i.e.* if they are observations about how Man is, then they are correct. But if they also involve the second kind of ethics, *i.e.* how Man should be, it becomes clear that Islam does not believe that human nature can be changed (54f).

In contrast, the Bible explicitly wants to change the hearts of believers (56–58).

The Last Judgement

Bad Muslims and unbelievers will be thrown into hell, the former only for a certain time and the latter for all eternity (58f).

The last three sections discuss the Islamic doctrine of the Last Judgment (59–63), the Second Coming of Jesus (63–67) and the Islamic denial of Jesus' death on the cross and his divinity (67–70).

¹The meaning is somewhat unclear.

Key Terms

‘ālim (pl. ‘ulamā’): a scholar of classical Islamic sciences;
an Islamic jurist

dār al-ḥarb: “war zone;” area where Muslim Law does
not apply.

dār al-islām: “Muslim territory;” area where Muslim Law
(*shari‘at*) applies.

darbār: imperial court; reception hall

dargāh: palace; shrine, esp. grave of a Sufi

dharma: law, justice, ordinance, virtue, piety *etc.*

fatwā: legal opinion (of an Islamic jurist)

fiqh: Islamic Law

ḥadīṣ: Muslim tradition, narrative of Muhammad’s deeds
or words

ḥajj: Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca

ḥanafī: followers of the Sunni School of Abū Ḥanīfa (c. 699–767)

hijrat: emigration; leaving the homeland

injīl: Gospel; New Testament

isnād: chain of transmission (of a Muslim tradition)

jāgīr: feudal land ownership with the right of tax collection

jihād: Holy War

kāyasth: Member of the Hindu scribal caste

Kitab al-muwattāʾ: Law book of Mālik b. Anas (d. 795), founder of one of the four classical law schools

Kitab-i muwattā-i Mālik: ≻ Kitāb al-muwattāʾ

madrasa: school that teaches classical Muslim disciplines

masāʾil-i ikrāh: Sunni ordinances that permit the Muslim to deny his faith in certain cases.

masāʾil-i taqīya: Shiite equivalent of *masāʾil-i ikrāh*.

maulvī: a scholar of the classical Islamic sciences; an Islamic jurist. In the last century, non-Muslim Indians could also be called Maulvī.

muftī: a Muslim who issues legal opinions (*fatwā*); official interpreter of Islamic Law

muḥarrir: office worker of the government

mujāhid (pl. mujāhidīn): faith fighter, fighter in the Holy War (*jihād*)

mujtahid: legal scholar who is entitled to make his own judgments on legal-theological questions; one who interprets Islamic sources of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) independently.

munshī: private teacher; language teacher; tutor;
= *muḥarrir*.

munṣif: lowest rank of a subordinate civil judge in India

muqaddama: preface, introduction

murshid: spiritual leader

naskh: abrogation

pīr: Sufi teacher who guides his disciples on the mystical path

qārī: reciter (esp. of the Quran)

qāzī: Muslim judge

ṣāhib: companion of Muhammad

sharīʿat: Islamic Law

ṣūfī: Muslim mystic

sunna: the statements and actions of Muhammad, which have become the legally binding precedents

tafsīr: interpretation, esp. of the Quran

taḥrīf: corruption

taḥrīf-i lafẓī (= t. al-alfāẓ = t. an-naṣṣ): textual corruption

taḥrīf-i maʿnawī (= t. al-maʿānī): corruption of meaning, distortion of the meaning of a text

taurāt: Torah; Old Testament

wahhābī: disciple of the Arab reformer ‘Abd al-Wahhāb;
in India a name for disciples of Sayyid Aḥmad of
Rae Bareilly (d. 1831)

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